

SACRED TEXTS AND SACRED MEANINGS



Hebrew Bible Monographs, 28

Series Editors

David J.A. Clines, J. Cheryl Exum, Keith W. Whitelam

Editorial Board

A. Graeme Auld, Marc Brettler, Francis Landy,
Hugh S. Pyper, Stuart D.E. Weeks

SACRED TEXTS AND SACRED MEANINGS

STUDIES IN BIBLICAL LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

John F.A. Sawyer



SHEFFIELD PHOENIX PRESS

2011

Copyright © 2011 Sheffield Phoenix Press
Published by Sheffield Phoenix Press
Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield
45 Victoria Street, Sheffield S3 7QB

www.sheffieldphoenix.com

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without the publisher's permission in writing.

A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

Typeset by the HK Scriptorium
Printed by Lightning Source

ISBN 978-1-906055-94-3 (hbk)
ISSN 1747-9614

*To all my students
undergraduate, postgraduate and extra-mural
in Glasgow (1964–65), Newcastle upon Tyne (1965–94),
Lancaster (1994–2002) and Oxford (2005–2008)
without whom this volume would not have been the same*

CONTENTS

Plates	xi
Acknowledgments	xiii
Preface	xv
Abbreviations	xvii
 PART I: THE BIBLE AND ITS READERS	 1
1. THE BIBLE AND ITS READERS	2
2. A CHANGE OF EMPHASIS IN THE STUDY OF THE PROPHETS	11
3. THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF THE TEXT AND OTHER LEGITIMATE SUBJECTS FOR SEMANTIC DESCRIPTION	27
4. THE PLACE OF RECEPTION HISTORY IN A POSTMODERN COMMENTARY	35
5. THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY TO BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP	43
6. READING OTHER PEOPLE'S READINGS OF SCRIPTURE	49
7. COMBATING PREJUDICES ABOUT THE BIBLE AND JUDAISM	59
8. THE BIBLE IN FUTURE JEWISH—CHRISTIAN RELATIONS	69
9. READING THE BOOK OF JOB	78
10. EZEKIEL IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY	91
11. ENCOUNTERS WITH HEBREW IN MEDIAEVAL PERUGIA	101
12. BIBLICAL ALTERNATIVES TO MONOTHEISM	120
 PART II: READING ISAIAH	 129
13. A QUMRAN READING OF ISAIAH 6.13	130
14. THE MEANING OF THE NAME 'IMMANUEL' (7.14)	133
15. 'BLESSED BE EGYPT, MY PEOPLE': A COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH 19.16-25	138

16. 'MY SECRET IS WITH ME' (ISAIAH 24.16): SEMANTIC LINKS BETWEEN ISAIAH 24–27 AND DANIEL	151
17. <i>RORATE COELI DESUPER</i> : SOME CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATIONS OF ISAIAH 45.8	161
18. DAUGHTER OF ZION AND SERVANT OF THE LORD IN ISAIAH	167
19. 'I HAVE TRODDEN THE WINE-PRESS ALONE': RADICAL IMAGES OF YHWH IN ISAIAH 63	184
20. THE DIVINE 'HERE AM I' (<i>HINNENI</i>) IN ISAIAH (52.6; 58.9 AND 65.1)	194
21. READING ISAIAH IN THE CONTEXT OF DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT	207
22. ISAIAH AND THE JEWS: SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE CHURCH'S USE OF THE BIBLE	220
23. ISAIAH AND ZIONISM	231
24. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH	245
PART III: LANGUAGE AND IMAGERY	255
25. HEBREW TERMS FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD	256
26. SPACIOUSNESS IN BIBLICAL LANGUAGE ABOUT SALVATION	270
27. TYPES OF PRAYER IN THE HEBREW BIBLE	281
28. THE TERMINOLOGY OF THE PSALM HEADINGS	288
29. THE IMAGE OF GOD, THE WISDOM OF SERPENTS AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL	299
30. RELICS OF METALWORKER TRADITIONS IN GENESIS 4	307
31. 'O SUN, BE STILL AT GIBEON!' JOSHUA 10.12-14 AND THE SOLAR ECLIPSE OF 30 SEPTEMBER 1131 BCE	318
32. KING DAVID'S TREATMENT OF THE AMMONITES (2 SAMUEL 12.31)	327
33. THE RUINED HOUSE IN ECCLESIASTES 12.3-5	338
34. THE ROLE OF FOLK-LINGUISTICS IN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION	351

35. THE PLACE OF JEWISH STUDIES IN BIBLICAL SEMANTICS	356
36. ROOT-MEANINGS IN HEBREW	363
37. LANGUAGE AND RELIGION	374
PART IV: SHORT NOTES	385
38. THE LANGUAGE OF LEVITICUS	386
39. BIBLICAL 'LEPROSY' AND THE ETYMOLOGY OF <i>šara</i> 'AT	391
40. <i>BARZEL</i> IN EXPRESSIONS LIKE 'IRON YOKE' AND 'IRON CHARIOTS'	395
41. WHAT WAS A <i>MOSHIA</i> '?	400
42. 'FROM HEAVEN FOUGHT THE STARS': A SOLAR ECLIPSE IN JUDGES 5.20?	407
43. THE BROODING PARTRIDGE IN JEREMIAH 17.11	410
44. 'THOSE PRIESTS IN DAMASCUS': ANTI-SECTARIAN POLEMIC IN THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION OF AMOS 3.12	416
45. WAS JESHUA BEN SIRA A PRIEST?	423
46. WHY IS A SOLAR ECLIPSE MENTIONED IN THE PASSION NARRATIVE (LUKE 23.45)?	429
Publications of John F.A. Sawyer	434
Index of Biblical References	440
Index of Names	449

PLATES

Plate 1. <i>Vision of Ezekiel of the Mystic Wheel</i> by Fra Angelico (c. 1450), Museum of St Mark's Convent, Florence.	93
Plate 2. President of the Republic of Italy and Rector of the University of Perugia visiting the Biblioteca del Dottorato.	103
Plate 3. Dr Gianfranco Cialini (right) and the author showing one of the Jeremiah fragments to Israeli scholar Amira Meir.	104
Plate 4. Double page from a late-thirteenth- to early-fourteenth- century manuscript showing Jer. 31:18-32 (left); 32:20-35 (right).	106
Plate 5. Detail of Plate 4 showing Jer. 31:18-20.	108
Plate 6. Painting of the crucifixion attributed to the Maestro di Paciano, early fourteenth century.	110
Plate 7. Detail of Plate 6 showing Latin inscription above the cross, written in Hebrew and Roman characters	111
Plate 8. Restored Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of Perugia with Gustavo Reichenbach, representative of the Jewish community.	115
Plate 9. Plaque commemorating the Jewish quarter near the Etruscan Arch in the mediaeval city of Perugia.	116
Plate 10. View of Lake Trasimeno showing Isola Maggiore, where 22 Jews were rescued by Don Ottavio Posta in June 1944.	117
Plate 11. Nineteenth-century tombstone in Perugia's Jewish cemetery.	119

Notes

Plate 1 is printed by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Florence.

Plates 2–7 were kindly provided by Dr Gianfranco Cialini, University of Perugia.

Plates 8–11 are the author's own.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to the following for permission to use copy-right material:

Theology in Scotland, St Mary's College, St Andrews: Chapter 1
Cambridge University Press: Chapter 2
Universitaire Pers Leuven: Chapter 3
The Way, Campion Hall, Oxford: Chapter 6
SPCK/Sheldon Press, London: Chapters 7, 12
Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ: Chapter 8
Oxford University Press: Chapters 9, 36, 46
Continuum International Publishing Group, London/New York:
 Chapters 10, 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, 38, 40
Ugarit-Verlag, Münster: Chapter 11
E.J. Brill, Leiden: Chapters 13, 25, 26, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44
Abingdon Press, Nashville: Chapter 14
Peeters Publishers, Leuven: Chapters 17, 30
Sage Publications: Chapter 18
Palestine Exploration Fund, London: Chapter 31
Robbins Collection, Berkeley: Chapter 32
Egbert Forsten Publishing, Groningen: Chapter 35
Elsevier Ltd. Kidlington, Oxford: Chapter 37

PREFACE

In preparing these forty-six pieces for publication in a single volume, I have had occasion to review almost half a century of research, my own and that of other people, and have two observations to make. The first is how dependent my own writing has been on friends and colleagues: from the short notes on Ugaritic and the Dead Sea Scrolls published in 1964 under the guidance of Hans Kosmala, director of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem, to recent papers on mediaeval Jewish history and the use of Hebrew in Christian art, which owe their origin entirely to my friend Gianfranco Cialini, keeper of manuscripts and early printed books at the University of Perugia. At Newcastle University, where I spent 29 years in the Department of Religious Studies, the interdisciplinary demands and opportunities of our subject became obvious to me, and I owe a very great deal to colleagues, not only in Linguistics, French, Mediaeval History, Classics and Archaeology in the Arts Faculty, but also in the Departments of Geophysics, Metallurgy and Dermatology. At the same time, Newcastle was the centre of lively interfaith dialogue in those days, and much of my research was informed and inspired by friendly contacts with the Jewish and Muslim communities. Later my involvement in Jewish Studies in particular was deepened during my years in the Religious Studies Department at Lancaster, where I was privileged to have the late Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs as a regular visiting colleague.

The other observation I would like to make is how little my ideas seem to have changed over the years. Indeed, readers may notice some repetition. From the very beginning, under the influence of John Lyons in Edinburgh, Barbara Strang in Newcastle, Haim Rabin in Jerusalem and others, I saw the need to apply sound linguistic theory to the study of the Bible at every level. Fundamental to their approach was the insight that all linguistic phenomena, from individual items of vocabulary to longer passages and whole books, can have, and very often have had, more than one meaning, depending on the situations in which they are contextualized. Furthermore, for a descriptive linguist, no one meaning, however well documented, influential or popular, can claim priority, on purely linguistic criteria, over the others. The ‘original meaning’, for example, more or less convincingly reconstructed by modern scholarship, can claim chronological priority, but that is

all. In many cases it is of archaeological interest only and has little or nothing to do with what the text has meant to its Jewish and Christian readers down the centuries. To interpret the Hebrew Bible, more attention has to be given to the rabbinic, mediaeval and early modern Jewish literature, which is in any case often closer to the Masoretic Text than some of the ancient Near Eastern parallels cited, while to interpret the Old Testament, which exists only in Greek, Latin, English and other translations, more consideration must be given to the patristic, mediaeval and early modern Christian literature. Reception history should be an integral part of our discipline, and in choosing priorities among the many different interpretations of the text, we should devote as much scholarly attention to ‘later’ meanings as to the ‘original’—if not more. Hence my title *Sacred Texts and Sacred Meanings*.

The rationale of the loose four-part structure is that Part I, ‘The Bible and its Readers’ considers general questions of method and approach; Part II is devoted to the book of Isaiah; Part III examines the meaning of a selection of biblical words and images together with three aspects of linguistic theory, and Part IV is a miscellany of short notes. Cross-references have been added where appropriate to give the volume more coherence. The only updating I did was to use inclusive language. I did not update the bibliographies, as this would have turned an already lengthy task into an endless one. The selection includes some pieces not previously published, as well as some that were originally published in rather obscure places and previously seen by very few. There is a complete list of my publications at the end and an index of biblical references.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to David Clines, Cheryl Exum and Ailsa Parkin at Sheffield Phoenix Press, and to Maurya Horgan and Paul Kobelski at the HK Scriptorium, Denver, Colorado, for their encouragement, advice and professional expertise in the production of a volume which turned out to be more substantial than was originally envisaged, but which, thanks to them, will see the light of day at an auspicious moment in its author’s academic life.

John F.A.Sawyer
Perugia, May 2011

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ANET	James B. Pritchard (ed.), <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 3rd edn, 1969).
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
ASB	<i>Alternative Service Book</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).
ASTI	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i> , Jerusalem
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AV	<i>King James Authorized Version of the Bible</i> , 1611
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>British Archaeological Reports</i> , Oxford
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> , Boston
Bauer-Leander	Hans Bauer and Pontus Leander, <i>Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testamentes</i> (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1922).
BDB	Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1959).
Ben Yehuda	Eliezer Ben Yehuda, <i>Thesaurus totius hebraeae et veteris et recentioris</i> (16 vols.; Berlin: Schöneberg, Langenscheidt; Jerusalem: Hemda & Ehud Benyehuda, 1962).
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovanensium, Leuven
BHS	<i>Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament, Neukirchen
BO	<i>Bibliotheca orientalis</i> , Leiden
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> , London
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>

- BWANT Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
- BZAW Beihefte zur *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
- CAD Ignace I. Gelb *et al.* (eds.), *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (21 vols.; Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–).
- CHB Peter R. Ackroyd and C.E. Evans (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).
- CML G.R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956).
- EBib Etudes bibliques
- ExpTim *Expository Times*, Edinburgh
- Even Shoshan Avraham Even Shoshan, *millon hadash* (5 vols.; Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1962).
- EvTh *Evangelische Theologie*, Munich
- FC *Fathers of the Church*, New York
- FOTL The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
- FzB Forschung zur Bibel
- GK Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar* (ed. E. Kautzsch, revised and trans. A.E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910).
- HAL Ludwig Koehler *et al.* (eds.), *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament* (5 vols.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967–95).
- HDB James Hastings (ed.), *Dictionary of the Bible* (rev. F.C. Grant and H.H. Rowley; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963).
- HKAT Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
- HSM Harvard Semitic Monographs
- HTR *Harvard Theological Review*
- ICC International Critical Commentary
- Int *Interpretation*
- ITQ *Irish Theological Quarterly*
- JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- Jastrow Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Pardes, 2nd edn, 1950).
- JB *Jerusalem Bible* London 1966
- JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Atlanta
- JE *Jewish Encyclopedia* (12 vols.; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1904).
- JJS *Journal of Jewish Studies*, London
- JQR *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Philadelphia

JSNTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i> , Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i> , Sheffield
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i> , Supplement Series
JSQ	<i>Jewish Studies Quarterly</i> , Princeton
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i> , Manchester
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i> , Oxford
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KBL	L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994-2000).
KHAT	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
Liddell and Scott	H.G. Liddell, Robert Scott and H. Stuart Jones, <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 9th edn, 1968).
LW	Jaroslav Pelikan (ed.), <i>Luther's Works</i> (56 vols.; St Louis: Concordia, 1955-56).
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible
NCB	New Century Bible
NEB	<i>New English Bible</i> (Oxford/Cambridge 1970)
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version, Oxford 1991
NRT	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i> , Paris
NTL	New Testament Library
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i> , Leiden
PAPS	<i>Proceedings of the American Philological Society</i> , Philadelphia
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PL	J.-P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologia cursus completus . . . Series Latina</i> (221 vols.; Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844-65).
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
Rahlfs	A. Rahlfs (ed.), <i>Septuaginta</i> (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935).
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i> , Paris
REB	Revised English Bible
RGG	K. Galling (ed.), <i>Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1957-65).
RScR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i> , Paris
RSV	Revised Standard Version, New York/London 1973

SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SOTS	Society for Old Testament Study
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series
SPB	Studia postbiblica
<i>TDNT</i>	Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (eds.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> (trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–).
<i>TDOT</i>	G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> (trans. J. T. Willis; 15 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–).
<i>THAT</i>	E. Jenni and Claus Westermann (eds.), <i>Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> (2 vols.; Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1971–76).
<i>ThWAT</i>	G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), <i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> (10 vols.; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1970–).
<i>VD</i>	<i>Verbum domini</i> , Rome
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i> , Leiden
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
Vulg	Vulgate
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> , Berlin
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i> , Wiesbaden

Part I

THE BIBLE AND ITS READERS

1

THE BIBLE AND ITS READERS*

A Tribute to Norman Porteous (1898–2003)

Although I am a son of the manse, indeed a grandson and a great-grandson of the manse, brought up on jokes about the prophet Nahum and Bildad the Shuhite, I actually knew next to nothing about the Bible when I came to New College in 1959 and even less about the Hebrew Bible. So I begin my tribute to Norman with the simple acknowledgment of the fact that it was largely due to him that I became an *Alttestamentler*. Of course there were other influences. James Barr infected me with a passion for semantics from which I have never recovered, and for that I am eternally grateful. But it was undoubtedly Norman's enthusiasm that inspired me to go in the direction of Old Testament studies rather than any other. And there is another thing I owe to Norman, rather less obvious. It was with him that I first began to study Judaism, in particular the rabbinic literature. We read *Yoma* together, and I have very happy memories of his enthusiastic exegesis of the rabbis' description of Yom Kippur as it was in Jerusalem in the time of Christ—and what it must have felt like to be the scapegoat. It was not long before I was studying Talmud and Midrash in Jerusalem.

The text I have chosen from Norman's table talk is 'Read the big men'. No doubt he would have used a more inclusive expression if he were alive today to acknowledge the existence of many great women scholars. But these were the words of a humble man, a man who saw himself on the shoulders of giants, like the evangelists in the windows of Chartres Cathedral, St Matthew on the shoulders of Isaiah, St Luke on the shoulders of Jeremiah, and so on. 'Read the big men' meant 'respect the work of established scholars'. For Norman 'the big men' were mostly Germans, and he recommended them to his students because he knew them personally and

* This paper was given at a conference in New College, Edinburgh, on 14 June 2004, to celebrate the life of Norman Porteous and was originally published in *Theology in Scotland* 12 (2005), pp. 67-80.

enjoyed their company. It reminds me of something Joseph Blenkinsopp once confided in me: ‘How on earth can you read everything published these days, even on the smallest topic? What I do now is read only books written by my friends!’ Now of course Joe, like Norman, has an enormous circle of friends, but that’s not the point. Both are saying that to appreciate an argument, to understand a theory or a particular interpretation, it’s best if you know something about the person who is responsible for it—something about their background and their presuppositions.

That is why I chose reader response as the subject of my tribute to Norman. I don’t know how he would have answered the philosophers’ old question: If a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, does it make a sound? But I do believe he would have understood the point of the question, Does a text have any meaning when no one is reading it? Is it not the readers of a text that give it meaning? ‘Meaning is what happens to readers during the reading process’ (Fish 1980). The notion that we can discover one true objective original meaning of a text, divorced from its readers, has been challenged from many different directions. The ‘spin’ that politicians put on everything is an all-too-familiar example of how it is virtually impossible to get anywhere near objective facts, let alone a single meaning of a text describing those facts. What the church or biblical critics call ‘the original meaning of the text’ is often arrived at by a route that has now been exposed, by feminist, postcolonial critics and others, to be as subjective as any other meaning. The same goes for the quest for objective history. A colleague of mine in the History Department at Newcastle told me how, when he reread his doctoral dissertation on Napoleon written in the 1930s, it seemed to be more about Nazi Europe than about Napoleon. I was also very encouraged to find, by the way, that Italian schoolchildren from an early age learn history from a book entitled *La storia e il suo racconto* (‘History and its Narration’), in which there seems to be almost as much about the historians as about what actually happened.

If there is any sense in this approach to biblical interpretation, then to discover the meaning of a text a new emphasis is required—on the readers and on the role of the reader in the process of understanding the text. In reading a commentary on Isaiah, do we not hear the voices of Isaiah’s readers (including the author of the commentary) more clearly than the voice of Isaiah? In fact, many of the early mediaeval commentaries were collections of what previous authorities had said, what the ‘big men’ had said the text meant. In many ways recent interest in reader response is not new. But what is new is the interest being shown these days in ordinary readers.

It has often been pointed out that what ordinary people believe a text means is sometimes more interesting and more important—historically, ethically, aesthetically—than what the scholars and archaeologists come up with as the ‘true’ or ‘original’ meaning. The tradition that Moses wrote the

Pentateuch, for example, is more interesting than the fact that he probably did not. In the case of the church, it must be said that the church is a community made up of only a minority of specialist scholars. The vast majority of members are ordinary people who read the biblical text—or at any rate regularly listen to it being read to them—and what they make of the text is often as interesting as what the scholars are saying.

Until now this kind of material has been largely neglected. Now however the situation is changing. Numerous publications over the last few decades have begun to take this kind of material into account. There was the publication in Spanish and Portuguese of readings collected from base communities in Latin America and taken very seriously by scholars such as Gustavo Gutiérrez, Jon Sobrino and José Porfirio Miranda. Much of that work was subsequently translated into other European languages and widely read. More recently there have appeared volumes like R.S. Sugirtharajah's *Voices from the Margin* (1995) and *The Bible in Africa* edited by Gerald West and Musa Dube (2000).

There is also a rapidly increasing number of studies in reception history or *Wirkungsgeschichte*, in which the emphasis is on the impact of the text on history, art, literature, music and so on down the centuries, rather than on the original context. There is a new interest in the afterlife of the text as much as in its prehistory in the ancient world; in other words, in the readers of the text rather than in its author. My own book on Isaiah in the history of Christianity was one attempt to write the reception history of a whole book. Jeremy Cohen's '*Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it*': *The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (1989) is the fascinating history of how a single verse (Gen. 1.28) was read and used over many centuries. Two other wonderful examples are Margarita Stocker's *Judith, Sexual Warrior: Women and Power in Western Culture* (1998) and Yvonne Sherwood's study of Jonah, which has the title *A Biblical Text and its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture* (2000). Works such as *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust* (Linafelt 2001) are becoming more frequent, while reference works include the pioneering *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (Coggins and Houlden 1990), *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Jeffrey 1992) and the two-volume *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (Hayes 1999).

In all these, an obvious interest of the author is the background and presuppositions of the people whose readings or interpretations are being recorded. Many of them in some of the early collections lived in conditions of poverty, and their readings were motivated by a concern for social justice. For others, the main issue was a theological or confessional one: for them readers bring with them a religious faith and their 'horizon of expectation' is a Christian one. I remember very vividly hearing the great Sri Lankan missionary to Scotland Daniel T. Niles say in the 1950s that when you meet

someone for the first time, whether in Muslim Africa or Buddhist Tibet or pagan Scotland, you should expect to find Christ there already: you should expect to hear his voice in the language of the people and make every effort to hear it. In an ancient parallel to this, early Christian commentators, to the embarrassment of their Jewish contemporaries, expected to find Christ in the Hebrew Bible, or at any rate, in its Greek and Latin versions. Mediaeval examples abound: in art and literature the woman with her heel on the serpent's head in Genesis 3 is identified with the Virgin Mary stamping out sin, and the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 40–55 is almost universally identified with Christ. And this is not only an ancient and mediaeval phenomenon: George A.F. Knight sought to do the same thing in books such as *A Christian Theology of the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1959) and *Ruth and Jonah: The Gospel in the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, rev. edn, 1966).

Another set of presuppositions that operated in almost all the early Jewish literature, including the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, was the conviction that sacred Scripture must speak to the present, and all kinds of Hellenistic methods (e.g. allegory, typology, etymology, gematria) were used to achieve this. Modern examples would include feminism, liberation theology, postcolonialism and black theology, which in many ways have transformed biblical studies. Within this group are readers who read 'against the grain', or *Resisting Readers*, as Judith Fetterley called them in her important book on feminist approaches to literature, whose presuppositions are strong enough to do something to the text that had not been done before—hence the enormous heuristic value of much feminist criticism. Less overtly acknowledged are personal experiences that undoubtedly shape the way people read texts. There are plenty of examples of students reacting in one way or another to their teachers. Commentators with the experience of the excitement of hands-on archaeological experience belong to another category—in the case of Hebrew Bible commentaries a very large and influential category.

As an example of a slightly different kind, I would like to mention John Gray of Aberdeen, the author of many books, including *Archaeology and the Old Testament World* (London: SCM Press, 1962), *The Canaanites* (New York: Praeger, 1964), and commentaries on *Joshua*, *Judges* and *Ruth* (NCB; London: Thomas Nelson, 1967) and *I and II Kings* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1964; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 2nd rev. edn, 1970, 1977). All of these are peppered with references to the languages, cultures and topography of modern Palestine, where Gray served in the British police force. One wonders whether decisions on which of various interpretations he prefers may have been influenced by his personal experiences. I also remember G.R. Driver explaining a crux in the book of Job by reference

to an incident he witnessed once in Syria. Norman had a healthy anecdotal approach to 'big men' such as these.

A very important distinction has to be drawn, however, between such examples of the influence of personal experience on readers of the text and the more political presuppositions just mentioned. Thanks to the influence of feminism, liberation theology, postcolonialism and other ideologies, it has become the normal practice for writers at the beginning to declare their bias. This means of course that readers can put the book down if they don't agree. But it also means that the author is free to say that the text means whatever she wants it to mean, provided no claim is made that the meaning is the original meaning or the only meaning, or anything other than the meaning arrived at by a reader with her particular presuppositions. It would be interesting to imagine how Gerhard von Rad or William Foxwell Albright or G.R. Driver would have handled such a requirement: not that they would ever have thought it necessary or even desirable.

Another extraordinarily interesting development in the last decade or two is the way in which parallels are found between modern readers of the biblical text—including the commentators—and pre-critical readers such as the authors of Jewish midrash. Robert Alter and Jonathan Magonet are good examples of how sensitive literary-critical insights can combine with a good knowledge of ancient and mediaeval readings of the text to produce rich and convincing modern critical readings. Christian scholars have tended to be far less informed about patristic, rabbinic and mediaeval literature, both Jewish and Christian, than their Jewish colleagues. For example, Phyllis Trible's condemnation of Jephthah for sacrificing his daughter to fulfil a vow could have been strengthened in an interesting way if she had been able to refer to the long history of Jewish condemnations of the man. One way to rectify that situation would be to present as many readings of each text, Jewish and Christian, ancient, mediaeval and modern, as space will allow.

I am fortunate to be involved in a new commentary series published by Blackwell of Oxford which does exactly that. The emphasis is on the reception history of the text rather than on its original meaning. There have been some criticisms of the project. There are still those who consider it a waste of time to take 'late interpretations' seriously, on the historical critical assumption that 'late' means 'inferior'. Others say that we are Hebraists or ancient historians or textual critics: how can we be expected to take an interest in—let alone try to handle in a scholarly way—the patristic literature or mediaeval iconography or Reformation theology or nineteenth-century music or twentieth-century politics or all of these? Leave it to the patristics people, art historians, theologians, and the like. Another objection to the Blackwell project concerns the sheer scale of the operation. How on earth can you ever do justice to two thousand years of reception history? Isn't it

an impossible task? The late Robert Carroll's response was, 'Of course it is impossible, but that is no reason not to attempt it.'

This brings us to another question, What is the value of reception history? First, although it may seem almost too obvious to mention, the afterlife of the Bible has been infinitely more influential in every way—theologically, politically, culturally and aesthetically—than its ancient Near Eastern pre-history. In my college days, I worked in one part of the library along side one group of students, while anyone with an interest in theology or church history or homiletics or liturgy or contemporary British society or the rest of the world worked in another. There was really very little communication between biblical scholarship and the rest of the curriculum. Rabbinic and patristic interpretations were considered 'late' and therefore inferior and were not taken seriously. We were not encouraged to quote Luther or Milton or Brahms or Karl Barth. Indeed, we were encouraged to criticize theologians and preachers for their erroneous understanding of the Bible. We who were experts in Hebrew and Ugaritic and biblical archaeology always knew better. Mercifully, that situation has changed, as we have seen, and an increasing number of biblical experts now take seriously the impact of the Bible on its readers down to the present day.

Another advantage of reception history concerns the meaning of the text. When confronted with a difficult text, I was trained to go first to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century commentaries. 'Read the big men' was Norman's advice. What do the big men say? I later discovered that it is also possible, and indeed very productive, to start (like every Jewish student) by asking, What does Rashi say? and going on to see how the Reformers explained it, how Milton used it, what role it plays in hymns and sermons. Often, indeed usually, I found in those alternative sources, subtle insights into the dynamic of the text, its associations and overtones, that had been entirely missed in the majority of standard commentaries and reference works. This follows directly from our previous discussion. Readings give meaning to texts: 'meaning is what happens to readers during the reading process'. Like any other reader, you may or may not agree with a particular reading; some readings you may decide are more irresponsible, more unbiblical than others. But it seems to me to be absolutely clear that by listening to a variety of readings from a variety of contexts, you are in a better position to evaluate each reading—by whatever criterion you use, ethical, aesthetic, ideological, theological or historical-critical. The heightened awareness of the many meanings that a text has had when read by individuals and communities down the centuries has enormous heuristic value in the process of establishing and evaluating a meaning.

This brings us finally to the question of criteria. On what criteria, if any, can we describe some interpretations as correct and others as wrong? Until now the main criterion for most modern scholars was chronological

priority—the more ancient, the better; the nearer you get to the original, the nearer you are to the ‘truth’, that objective goal about which we have already spoken at some length. But if chronological priority cannot be used, what other criteria are there? An alternative is the widespread hierarchical assumption that ‘valid’ or ‘correct’ interpretations are normally those of the experts, while those of the uneducated, marginalized, anarchic or eccentric are not to be taken seriously. Again, if our aim is to listen to other voices, to let the texts and their readers speak for themselves, then important and influential readings, for example, mediaeval or renaissance readings, or contemporary, popular readings, have to be heard, and the standard academic historical-critical criteria cannot be allowed to dominate or censor.

Several scholars working in this field have concluded that it is virtually impossible to arrive at one final critical evaluation of a text, given the multiplicity of readings, each dependent on the reader’s own horizon of expectation. This may be an uncomfortable conclusion to reach, so accustomed are we to the modern assumptions that (a) the aim of biblical scholarship is to find one single correct or true meaning, and (b) with all our modern discoveries and techniques, we in the modern world are more likely to achieve that than anyone else in the past. But as we have seen, whether we like it or not, the objectivity of modern scholarship has been questioned; texts do have more than one meaning; and different meanings are largely due to differences in the reader’s hermeneutical stance or horizon of expectation—whether the reader is a trained Hebraist, a renaissance artist or a Mexican peasant. Given the opportunity to consider a variety of different readings of a text, we may evaluate them using aesthetic, theological, ethical, ideological, academic or other criteria, reflecting our own hermeneutical stance. Furthermore, we are mostly members of an interpretative community of some kind where a consensus is reached on what is acceptable, academically and ethically, and what is not.

Let me sum up what I have been saying with a quotation from *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, a famous John Ford Western made in 1962, starring John Wayne, James Stewart and Lee Marvin. When a newspaper reporter finds out that what really happened is different from the legend, his editor tells him, ‘That ain’t news. This is the West. When the legend becomes the fact, print the legend.’ This is not the West and we are not just talking about legends. As Daniel Boyarin puts it, ‘the ground zero of reading, of theory is how many dead bodies are left at the other end of the hermeneutical process, how many spirits impoverished and how many filled’. Interpretation of the Bible matters in a way that doesn’t apply to cowboy films. But there is a sense in which perhaps we should take the advice of that journalist seriously. Biblical scholars till now have seen their role as a largely negative one. It was their role to say, ‘That’s not what really happened . . . that’s not what the original Hebrew meant . . .’ In so doing

they have undervalued centuries of reception history, two thousand years of creative interaction between text and reader, which left us with a rich source of material on the meaning of the Bible. Is it not time to redress the balance and, even though we know quite well that it is different from the fact, 'print the legend'?

Whether or not Norman would agree with the half of what I've been saying, it is dedicated to his memory with gratitude, respect and affection. I would like to end with the following words in his memory, sent me by Calum Carmichael, my good friend and fellow student at New College nearly fifty years ago, who could not be here today:

בחסד בית האשורים נתן אור לאחיו תורת אמת היתה בפיהו ושפתיו
מלאות חכמה ודעת ויראת יהוה.

Norman, like Joseph before him, 'in the darkness of the prison, gave light to his fellows; instruction in truth was in his mouth and his lips were full of wisdom and knowledge and the fear of the Lord'.

Bibliography

Alter, Robert

1992 *The World of Biblical Literature* (New York: Basic Books).

Beuken, Wim, Sean Freyne and Anton Weiler (eds.)

1991 *The Bible and its Readers* (Concilium, 1991/1; London: SCM Press).

Boyarín, Daniel

2000 'Israel Reading in "Reading Israel",' in Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte (eds.), *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations* (Romans through History and Cultures; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International).

Bultmann, Rudolf

1960 'Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?' in Rudolf Bultmann, *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann* (ed. Schubert M. Ogden; New York: Meridian Books).

Carroll, Robert P.

2000 'The Reader and the Text,' in A.D.H. Mayes (ed.), *Text in Context: Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Coggins, R.J., and J.L. Houlden (eds.)

1990 *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press).

Cohen, Jeremy

1989 'Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it': *The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

Fetterley, Judith

1978 *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).

- Fish, Stanley
 1980 *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
- Hayes, John H. (ed.)
 1999 *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (2 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press).
- Jeffrey, David Lyle (ed.)
 1992 *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- Linafelt, Tod (ed.)
 2001 *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust* (New York: New York University Press).
- Magonet, Jonathan
 1994 *A Rabbi Reads the Psalms* (London: SCM Press).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
 1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Sherwood, Yvonne
 2000 *A Biblical Text and its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Stocker, Margarita
 1998 *Judith, Sexual Warrior: Women and Power in Western Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Sugirtharajah, R.S. (ed.)
 1995 *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, new edn).
- Trible, Phyllis
 1984 *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- West, Gerald O., and Musa W. Dube (eds.)
 2000 *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends* (Leiden: E.J. Brill).

2

A CHANGE OF EMPHASIS IN THE STUDY OF THE PROPHETS*

Despite frequent appeals by linguistic pioneers and considerable publicity given to their contributions to biblical criticism, there still remains a wide gap between those who employ their methods and insights and those who neither use them nor understand them, between readers of *Semeia*, one might say, and readers of *Vetus Testamentum*. One reason for this is undoubtedly the linguistic jargon—an understandable voodoo, like the one that used to prevent students faced with quaint Masoretic terminology from learning Hebrew, now holds up progress towards a more enlightened approach to biblical exegesis. Yet I believe one major contribution of twentieth-century linguistics is to be found not so much in its terminology, important though that is, as in its perspectives and attitudes. It is to the elucidation and further development of some of these within Biblical studies, along paths already well trodden by, among others, Peter Ackroyd, the recipient of this congratulatory volume, that the present contribution is dedicated.

If the sixties saw an increasing awareness among Old Testament scholars of the need for a more scientific approach to Semitic philology and lexicography, thanks to James Barr's *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961), then the seventies have witnessed a new interest in stylistics and structuralism. Building on earlier studies in stylistics, notably Luis Alonso Schökel's *Estudios de poética hebrea* (1963), James Muilenburg launched a new approach to the study of the Old Testament, which he called 'rhetorical criticism', intended to take his subject beyond form criticism, and many have found it a fruitful lead to follow (Muilenburg 1969; cf. Richter 1971; Jackson and Kessler 1974; Kessler 1980). The seventies also saw the emergence of a more technical approach, namely structural analysis, first in New Testament and more recently in Old Testament research (e.g.

* This paper was first published in Richard Coggins, Anthony Phillips, and Michael Knibb (eds.), *Israel's Prophetic Tradition: Essays in Honour of Peter R. Ackroyd* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 233-49.

Polzin 1977; Jobling 1978; Culley 1976). A comprehensive critique of all these new developments is quite beyond the scope of this essay. In any case, several excellent studies of Semitic philology, biblical structuralism and stylistics have appeared in recent years (Barr 1979; Patte 1976; Polzin 1977: 1-53; Thiselton 1978-79; Fokkelmann 1975; cf. also Alonso Schökel 1960). But I believe it is possible to identify within these new approaches certain common aims and attitudes that, to judge from not a few recent commentaries and other works, are as yet by no means standard practice in Old Testament studies but which can and do bring new life into the subject (see Buss 1979: 1-44).

A curious fact is that, although it was not until the twentieth century that these insights were identified and submitted to theoretical analysis, some of them were widely applied to biblical traditions in the exegetical literature of Judaism, Christianity and Islam from as far back as our sources go. What has happened is that, after two hundred years of higher criticism, dominated by questions about the history of the text, sources, parallels, literary form and *Sitz im Leben*, we have arrived at a stage where we can recognize common ground between the methods of Rashi and the church fathers, on the one hand, and modern scientific research, on the other (cf. Magonet 1976: 121-22, notes 91, 93; Clines 1979: 43). If, as sometimes seems to be the case, it turns out that the early scholars, like *le bourgeois gentilhomme*, were using sound linguistic methods all their lives without knowing it, then the value of the vast amount of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syriac and Arabic exegetical literature, some of it now being published for the first time, will be inestimable. Not only are these exegetical studies of interest and importance as literature in their own right; they can also assist our understanding of the biblical text. To put this another way, the gap between most modern critical commentaries and the pre-1700 literature, it seems to me, is now being bridged by the insights of modern stylistic and structural analysis. Thanks to the work of Alonso Schökel, Muilenburg, Robert C. Culley, Robert Polzin and others, rather different, perhaps more subtle, questions about the text as it stands are increasingly being asked—and these are the very questions that the Midrashim, the early Fathers and the mediaeval commentators saw it as their task to answer. Questions of form, date and source, reconstructions of the original meaning and textual emendations are still important, but they need no longer hold pride of place in our commentaries (Whybray 1979: Col. 140). It is not only the ancient scholars, pre-critical and even fundamentalist, who ask questions about the meaning of the final form of the text; these are the questions that are being asked today by descriptive linguists. In what follows, examples will be taken mainly from the prophetic literature, although the principle applies to every part of the Bible, and four areas have been selected in which the effects of this change of emphasis are evident.

(1) The degree of refinement aimed for in semantic analysis is higher than it used to be (Barr 1979: 53-54). In the first place, interest in literary and stylistic matters, as we shall see, has brought scholars back from the fields of archaeology, ancient history and ancient Near Eastern studies to the text itself. Furthermore, etymologizing rarely occurs in the crude forms in which it was familiar up to a couple of decades ago (cf. *TDOT*, where etymology and meaning are usually dealt with in separate sections). Translation is no longer assumed to be the major method of definition (*hoshia*‘ means ‘to save’; *hiššil* means ‘to deliver’). An excellent example of the dangers of relying on translation when one is aiming for a sophisticated semantic definition is examined by Hieronymus Christ in a recent monograph *Blutvergiessen im Alten Testament* (1977). His main point is that Hebrew *dam* does not mean exactly the same thing as English ‘blood’ or French *sang*. There is obviously a wide overlap between these terms, but not a complete overlap; in particular, Hebrew *dam* is never used in the positive sense of a family bond, as in ‘blood brother’ or ‘blood is thicker than water’. The Hebrew for that usage would probably be *basar*, ‘flesh’. The implications of this for our understanding of the significance of the blood in Exodus 24, for example, or Lev. 17.11, are extremely important, and have been misunderstood, Christ argues (1977: 10-11), by some of our most distinguished scholars. Similar confusion has arisen over the word *berit*, translated as ‘covenant’ in some contexts but as ‘promise’ in others, neither providing in any way an accurate definition (see Weinfeld 1977).

A fundamental concept underlying much modern linguistics is choice: Why did the author choose this word and not that? For a linguistic theorist, opposition between related words, any of which might have been chosen for a particular slot in the sentence, is a basic principle on which semantic analysis depends (Lyons 1971: 413-14; Thiselton 1978-79: 330). Thus, in practical terms, one of the best ways to define a term is by setting it in opposition to closely related terms (Sawyer 1972: 102-11). A frequent shortcoming of word studies is that the definition they offer could equally well apply to several other terms, and the question of precisely what the distinctive meaning is of this particular term is not fully explored. A recent study of the actual usage of *hitpallel* has shown that, whatever its etymology, its primary meaning cannot be ‘to intercede’ (see Chapter 27); the intercessory meaning is still primary for Stähli 1976). It does, of course, occur with the preposition *be’ad* (‘on behalf of’), but then so do a good many other words, including *ša’aq* (‘to call for help’) and *he’elah ‘olah* (‘to make a sacrifice’), which are not primarily intercessory in meaning. The choice of *hitpallel* and the noun *tefillah* is governed by the type of prayer and the nature of the occasion on which it is made: thus almost every *tefillah* in the Old Testament is in formal language, like the prayers of Hannah (1 Samuel 2) and Jonah (Jonah 2), as opposed to the patriarchs’ prayers and those of minor charac-

ters, like the sailors in Jonah, which are not so described. The post-biblical evidence (see below) confirms this: *hitpallel* is not particularly associated with intercessory prayer but is the term for liturgical prayer. Phylacteries are called *tefillin* and *bet tefillah* is a place of worship. Similar information can be collected for related terms and new light thrown on a verse such as Jer. 7.16, where three of them occur together: 'And you are not to say any prayers (*hitpallel*) for this people, or send up loud prayers (*rinnah utefillah*) on their behalf, or importune (*paga* 'me.)' The three terms are arranged in order of politeness, as it were, beginning with formal prayer and ending with the most aggressive of the terms.

It was encouraging to see that *TDOT* contains sections on 'synonyms', 'pertinent words', 'parallel expressions' and the like (see III, pp. 430, 276, 336), although, it must be said, little use is made of these in the actual semantic analysis. In the article on *darash*, for example, frequent cross-references to *biqqesh* are given, but specific distinctions between the two terms are not made the subject of inquiry (III, pp. 293-307). On the other hand, Ingrid Riesener's substantial study of '*ebed* (1979: 7) is explicitly devoted to the task of distinguishing '*ebed* from other terms in the same 'field'.

The anomalous plural form *ishim*, 'men', clearly documented in three passages (Ps. 141.4; Prov. 8.4; Isa. 53.3) and productive in post-biblical Hebrew, provides a good example of the need to search for fine distinctions in Biblical Hebrew. Most commentators simply ignore it, and the question whether there is some subtle distinction between *ishim* and the normal form *anashim*—and such distinctions are common in the case of social designations—is not even discussed (see Anderson 1972: 919-20; McKane 1970: 345; Whybray 1975: 174-75). Another example occurs in Isa. 42.2. The question why *ša'aq* is used, a verb that normally suggests crying for help or appealing for justice, was raised by D.R. Jones many years ago, although his attractive solution has not been widely accepted yet. Most commentators do not even recognize that there is a problem: *ša'aq* is not the normal word for 'to shout loudly', and, in a context of blustering injustice opposed to quiet, reliable efficiency, one would have expected *qara* 'or *heria* ' (Jones 1962: 519; cf. Whybray 1975: 72-73).

Interest in word pairs has led to an awareness of fine distinctions between synonyms. In a recent study of words for 'way, road, path', etc., N. Tidwell has shown that the word *mesillah* is distinguished in several contexts (e.g. Isa. 35.8; Ps. 84.6) from the other terms by its 'sacred religious significance' (1980: 61-62). It is to be hoped that such studies will become more frequent as attention moves away from historical or etymological issues to synchronic semantics.

(2) The enormous contribution of Jewish studies to biblical exegesis is being increasingly realized and can be illustrated in numerous ways (Magonet 1976; Clines 1979). First of all, traditional Jewish reluctance to

emend the text has led, over the centuries, to the application of considerable ingenuity and imagination to lexical problems that have baffled modern scholars, as well as to some that modern writers have not noticed or have deliberately ignored. There is an interesting example in 2 Sam. 12.31 (see Chapter 32): alongside more familiar tools there appears the *hapax legomenon magzerot*. In deciding which tool best fitted the context, Rashi correctly recognized that the passage is about God's punishment of evil, represented by the Ammonites, rather than about what David actually did, and so suggests the French translation *lime*, 'a file', with which the roughnesses of this godless people were rubbed away. It was only in modern times that the verse was taken literally or historically and David accused of inhumane treatment of his prisoners of war (or elaborately exonerated of the crime). Rashi and other pre-critical exegetes sometimes hit upon a possible nuance or allusion that we would otherwise miss.

Another example, this time from the Midrash, illustrates how some interesting detail of the text, which may loom large in the pre-critical commentaries, is simply ignored by most modern commentaries. In the book of Jonah, the big fish is *dag* (masc.) three times (2.1, 11), but *dagah* (fem.) once (2.2). Most modern scholars either ignore this distinction entirely or emend the text to achieve consistency (Allen 1976: 214; Bewer 1912: 42-43). But for the Midrash, this was a significant part of the data and, according to one tradition, cited by Rashi, there were in fact two fishes, one male and one female (Ginzberg 1911-38: IV, 249-50; VI, 350 n. 31; Bewer 1912: 43). It is very probable that the distinction is one not of sex but of style: *dag* (masc.) is the neutral term applied to any fish, whatever its sex, while *dagah* (fem.), elsewhere a collective term (e.g. Gen. 1.26, 28; Exod. 7.18, 21), is a poetic variant, selected in the verse describing Jonah praying in its belly, to highlight the miraculous or legendary nature of the fish. A parallel is the distinction between the words *shir* (masc.), 'song', and *shirah* (fem.), 'poem', a distinction well documented in post-biblical Hebrew but already detectable in the Old Testament (see Chapter 28). In BDB, the translation 'ode' is given for *shirah*. There is thus good reason to suppose that the choice of *dagah* in Jon. 2.2 was deliberate, and to ignore it is to miss a subtle and not insignificant stylistic detail. For one thing, it might suggest that the author was well aware of the unhistorical nature of the legend he was retelling.

There is another illustration of the value of the pre-critical midrashic material for modern studies of Jonah. Throughout the Jewish tradition Jonah is represented as a prophet, not merely as a representative type of exclusiveness. He is exceptional in some ways, notably in his Gentile audience, but he nonetheless bears all the marks of the traditional prophet: according to the Midrash, Jonah Ben Amittai was a disciple of Elisha, identified with the one mentioned in 2 Kgs 6.15. Elsewhere he is identified with the boy

raised from the dead by Elijah in 1 Kings 17, where the name Ben Amittai is explained by reference to *'emet*, the last word in v. 24: 'the word of the LORD on your lips is truth'. This explanation, albeit far-fetched, reminds us that the author's intention is far better investigated by following up allusions to the prophetic traditions, especially in Kings, than by seeking allegorical meanings such as the explanation that Jonah (Heb. *Yonah*, 'dove') refers to Israel (cf. Hos. 7.11; 11.11) and that Ben Amittai (Heb. 'son of truth') is an ironical comment on the fact that, of all Israel's prophets, Jonah was the most unreliable and disobedient. Are not these latter explanations rather more naive and unsubtle than the midrashic ones? (Allen 1976: 181).

There is another contribution to biblical semantics from the field of Jewish studies that is increasingly being exploited in modern research. I mean the use of post-biblical Hebrew (Barr 1979: 57-58; see Chapter 35). It is often forgotten that this vast corpus is far closer, historically, to Biblical Hebrew than Arabic or Babylonian or Ugaritic and is, for that reason, all the more relevant to the pursuit of ancient Hebrew meanings. Of course one still has to examine the texts synchronically, but subtle semantic distinctions and associations are often better documented in the later literature and provide a better starting point than traditional comparative philology. There is a *prima facie* case for the view that Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's *Thesaurus totius hebraeitis* (1908-59) is a more appropriate and more helpful aid to the Biblical Hebraist than the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* or Joseph Aistleitner's *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache*. An example will make this clear.

In trying to pinpoint the distinctive nuance of the word *hoshia'* in Biblical Hebrew, one of the most significant pieces of evidence was the post-biblical avoidance of the word except in religious or liturgical contexts (Sawyer 1975). Some prehistoric association with Arabic *wasī'a*, 'to be spacious', if there ever was such an association, has left no trace in the sources. A study of passages in which the same action is described by both *hoshia'* and *hiššil* confirms that the peculiar characteristic of *hoshia'* is that it is used almost without exception by Israelites of their God or his appointed representative and is deliberately avoided when this is not the case. In 2 Kings 19 there is a distinction, which can hardly be accidental, although ignored by NEB translators, between, on the one hand, the Assyrian's mocking use of *hiššil* in reference to Jerusalem's slender chance of being rescued (vv. 11, 12) and, on the other, Hezekiah's prayer, 'save us' (v. 19), and God's answer, 'I will defend this city to save it' (v. 34), where in both cases the verb *hoshia'* is used. Perhaps, too, the appearance on the scene of 'Isaiah' (whose name is formed from the same Hebrew root) was an immediate answer to Hezekiah's prayer (v. 20). At all events, the distinctive overtones of *hoshia'* and related terms are clear to see. Another example of this is 1 Samuel 4, where Israel's faith in the power of their

God is expressed in the words '[the ark] will save us (*hoshia*‘) from our enemies' (v. 3) and contrasted with the frightened Philistines' use of the less theological term in an exactly parallel context: 'who will deliver us (*hiššil*) from these mighty gods?' (v. 8). A similar point is being made in the taunt in Judg. 10.14 and in the mocking account of the idolatrous craftsman praying to a block of wood (Isa. 44.17). The use of *hoshia*‘ in these and other contexts is surely the author's way of highlighting the contrast between the power of Israel's God and the illusory appeal of foreign gods and human might. This is the kind of discovery about the meaning of Biblical Hebrew that comes, not from comparative philology, but from within the Hebrew language, both biblical and post-biblical.

(3) Structuralists have reminded us that there are still questions to be asked about larger literary units, whole chapters, even whole books, that have been neglected in much modern scholarship. For various reasons Old Testament research has tended to be preoccupied with the smaller units, single words and sentences, for the most part. On the one hand, Hebrew grammar has been taught primarily at the phonological and morphological levels, syntax and stylistics being conspicuous by their absence from most elementary grammar books. T. Muraoka's work on emphasis (1969; cf. Schneider 1974: 222-68) is an outstanding exception. On the other hand, preoccupation with the task of identifying distinct literary units, each originally belonging to a separate *Sitz im Leben* and each with a more or less clearly defined original function, has, for over a century, diverted attention from patterns and relationships in the large units (Alonso Schökel 1960: 161-62; Fokkelmann 1975: 1ff.). Some simple examples will illustrate the kind of results we can expect from the change of emphasis evident in much recent writing.

We may begin with the view expressed in various quarters recently that the book of Isaiah, as well as being a collection of originally separate units, is also a single literary unit (Sawyer 1977: 112-18; Childs 1979: 328ff.; Ackroyd 1978). Recurring themes and motifs, both theological and lexical, such as 'the Holy One of Israel' and 'Zion', which give the book a certain 'Isaianic unity', have frequently been noted, but the exegetical and semantic implications of this are only now being fully worked out. There are several good reasons why, as scientists, we have to take account of this fact about the book of Isaiah in our commentaries on it. First of all, it is most probable that the author of later parts of the book, chs. 40-55, for instance, was familiar with some of the earlier parts of Isaianic tradition (Petersen 1977: 19ff.; Carroll 1979: 155-56). Conversely, for anyone interested in the history of interpretation, the later parts of the Isaianic corpus, such as ch. 65, which are among the earliest documented examples, must be of particular interest. But above all, the book of Isaiah is a piece of Hebrew literature, a single work, about which questions can be asked with the same degree of

sensitivity and scientific rigour with which one would approach any other piece of literature.

Questions about the overall structure of the book have been asked before but are being treated more seriously now. Thus, the function of chs. 36–39 as a transition passage leading on to chs. 40–55 suggests that the traditional division of the book after ch. 39 can be misleading (Ackroyd 1974; Childs 1979: 325ff.). The relationship between passages in chs. 1–12 and 40–55 has been noted recently (Melugin 1976: 177–78; Bonnard 1972: 74–75; Watters 1976: 128–30). When discussing the meaning of any word or passage in Isaiah, an obvious control on free speculation might be the usage in other parts of the Isaianic corpus: the question ‘what does x mean in an Isaianic context?’ is not the same as ‘what does x mean?’ but it is an interesting and semantically justifiable question nonetheless. I venture to suggest that it is perhaps the primary question for the biblical scholar. For example, a very strong argument, it seems to me, for the view that *yir’eh* (‘or) in Isa. 53.11 means ‘he will see’ (intrans.) or ‘he will see light’, that is, ‘he will experience deliverance or salvation’ (Whybray 1975: 180; Westermann 1969: 255; North 1964: 244), and not ‘shall be bathed in light’ (NEB), is that both the former meanings occur elsewhere in the same book in 66.14 (‘you shall see’) and in 9.2 (Heb. v. 1), ‘the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light’, while the other meaning does not. Similarly, a cross-reference to the heavenly court scene in Isaiah 6 is a powerful argument for the usual interpretation of ch. 40, although many modern commentators either ignore it altogether or note it in passing as if it were of no greater significance than references to 1 Kings, Jeremiah and Amos (Whybray 1975: 48).

The same applies to the striking relationship between the gruesome description of a diseased body in Isaiah 1 and 52.13–53.12. Are we, as readers, not intended to see ch. 1 as an introduction to the book as a whole, presenting all the main Isaianic themes to be dealt with later? Among these is the unforgettable image of a people weighed down with sin (v. 4), its body covered with bruises and raw wounds (v. 5), its land looking like Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 9). It is no accident that the cure for these ills is later represented both in the image of an exalted servant and in the descriptions of the new Jerusalem and of a new heaven and a new earth (ch. 65) (Sawyer 1977: 112–18). The existence of the book of Isaiah, all 66 chapters of it, is part of our data, and we are not only free to exploit its insights but are obliged to use them as controls on our exegesis. If confirmation of a proposed interpretation can be found within the Isaianic corpus, then as descriptive linguists we would need strong evidence for rejecting it in favour of an alternative, unless we are primarily concerned with isolated units, such as one of the ‘Servant Songs’, for example, or an eighth-century BCE passage, considered on its own.

Another example of how taking into account the larger units can be valuable, is the 'Book of the Twelve'. It has long been customary to approach the Minor Prophets in chronological order, beginning with Amos and Hosea, considered alongside Isaiah and Micah, and leaving Malachi and Jonah for treatment in a later context. Such an approach is appropriate for a study of the history of prophecy in ancient Israel but, like the tripartite division of the book of Isaiah, it leaves out of account a good many factors, literary and semantic, that affect our understanding of the books in question (Clements 1977). For example, the book of Amos is most likely an exilic composition in its present form, and to approach it primarily with a view to finding out about eighth-century society is inevitably to miss important aspects of exilic thought (Childs 1979: 399ff.; Ackroyd 1968: 44-45). This question has, incidentally, been thoroughly investigated in connection with the book of Jeremiah (Nicholson 1970).

Another point about the Book of the Twelve is that it has a quite unmistakable structure of its own, which again affects our understanding of the Minor Prophets. Jonah is the most obvious example. If the book is taken out of its context among the eighth-century prophets—Hosea, Amos and Micah—the author's intention to present Jonah as a prophet, like Elijah and Jeremiah, and as living in the eighth century BCE is missed (Keller 1965; Clements 1975; Payne 1979). The date of composition has tended to dominate discussion of this book and its obvious differences from the other prophetic books, but its position in the Book of the Twelve is one part of the data that, had it not been so universally neglected, would have provided us with a valuable clue to the book's meaning. The position of the book of Daniel in the 'prophetic pentateuch' in the Christian canon is another piece of evidence to be taken into account in the commentaries, as is the association of the book of Psalms with the wisdom literature, in both the Jewish and the Christian canon.

(4) Finally, interest in the larger units has led us into the question of the canon and the 'final form of the text'. Yet this obvious point of contact between theologians (including fundamentalists), on the one hand, and literary critics and linguistic theorists, on the other, is often played down. Brevard Childs, for example, in advocating 'the canonical approach' to Scripture refuses to acknowledge common ground between his position and that of literary-critical methods (1979: 74). He distinguishes between 'the theological shape of the text' and its 'original literary and aesthetic unity'. Yet neither the theologian nor the descriptive linguist is concerned with 'originals', if both are working with the final form of the text. The 'canonical approach' cannot claim exclusive rights to work on the final form of the text, and it is not clear what the distinction is between 'interpreting the Biblical text in relation to a community of faith and practice' and describing

what the text means in a particular context such as the early church, mediæval Jewish scholarship or the like (Sawyer 1972: 6-16).

Another recent work that neglects this point of contact is Barr's critique of fundamentalism (1977), in which very little mention is made of modern structuralism or stylistics or the recent widespread interest, outside the fundamentalist tradition, in the final form of the text and in 'canonical meanings'. By concentrating on the final form of the text and 'canonical meanings', the linguist does not change into something else, either a theologian or a fundamentalist. He is simply selecting one particular context in which to study meaning. In fact, the context selected by many writers today, namely the final form of the text as understood by one or other of the religious communities that believe it to be in some way authoritative, happens to be a particularly interesting and important one, not only because of the influence it has had on the history of Western religious thought, but also because it has been neglected in mainstream biblical scholarship for most of two centuries (Sawyer 1972: 6-16). This cannot be said for other equally legitimate contexts, such as the *ipsissima verba* of the eighth-century prophets, which have dominated biblical studies for so long. Educationalists and theologians of every hue are probably right when they accuse the biblical experts of having got their priorities wrong (Ackroyd 1968: 9-10; Sawyer 1977: 1-11). In schools, universities and colleges, the Old Testament is far more frequently studied for its contribution to the history of religious ideas than as an end in itself and, in that context, in departments of theology or religious studies, the refinements of Pentateuchal source criticism and the history of ancient Israel, should belong to later, more advanced stages of Old Testament study, not to beginners' courses. Again, the descriptive approach of the modern linguist shifts the emphasis from 'What happened?' and 'Is this really by Isaiah?' to 'What is this text about?' and 'Where does this way of thinking about God, the land, the covenant, fit into a study of religious ideas?'

Two examples will illustrate the value of the 'canonical', that is, descriptive, approach to the text as it stands. As a number of writers have recently been stressing, one of the most striking differences between the original utterances or writings of ancient Israelite authors and the form in which we have them now is their titles or superscriptions. A psalm with its title means something different from the original psalm, and a decision has to be taken at the outset on the question of which meaning is to be the subject of investigation (Childs 1971; Bruce 1972). Similarly, the final editing of the prophetic collections, much of it attributable to a Deuteronomistic hand in all probability, has a decisive effect on our understanding of the prophet's words and on their authority as Scripture (Tucker 1977). The effect of attributing a whole book of 66 chapters to one eighth-century prophetic figure has already been mentioned, as has the effect of the exilic editing

of the book of Amos. In its present—that is, canonical—form, Amos can be considered a ‘prophet of coming salvation’, like the other Old Testament prophets (Clements 1977: 44). In discussing the ‘prophetic canon’, Clements rightly bypasses questions of authenticity, which Childs, in spite of his concern for canonical meanings, still feels obliged to discuss at length (1979: 408-9).

My other example concerns the contents and arrangements of the canon as a whole, a matter that, as we have seen, must be of importance to all who work synchronically on the texts, theologians, fundamentalists and descriptive linguists, and yet one that is seldom taken seriously by any of them. The fact is that the Old Testament, in the Christian canon of Scripture, is not the same as the Hebrew Bible either in terms of its contents, if we take into account the apocryphal works canonized by some authorities, or in their arrangement. There is a curious inconsistency in modern Christian tradition in that, while it is assumed that the canonical text of the Old Testament is the Hebrew text, masoretic or emended masoretic, the order and arrangement of the Old Testament are based universally on the Greek canon. Now this shifts the direction of the Old Testament from a descending line, Law–Prophets–Writings, with the emphasis on the Torah, to a line of rising, forward-looking expectation ending with the Prophets and inseparable from the New Testament. It is odd that, in spite of the evident interest in a synchronic approach to biblical interpretation, more is not made of this. A recent article on Jewish–Christian relations totally ignores this matter and, as a result, the difficult question of fulfilment becomes confused (Hayman 1979). One cannot make a straight comparison between the New Testament and the Talmud and state that ‘the Talmud . . . is the logical development of the Old Testament’ in the same way as the New Testament is (Hayman 1979: 89). From a historical-critical standpoint, it is of course true that both were composed after the Old Testament and frequently refer to it. But theologically and synchronically the New Testament and the Talmud stand in quite different relationships to the Old Testament: the New Testament, both in the arrangement of the Christian canon and in its very name, is the continuation of a line beginning at Genesis and leading forward and upward through history, poetry, wisdom and prophecy towards fulfilment, while the Talmud is a parallel line going back alongside the Torah, as it were, to Sinai, not a fulfilment (Sawyer 1977: 2-4). Christian claims about the unity of the Bible and the continuity between the two Testaments have, it is true to say, led to widespread prejudice and ignorance about Judaism, and that is to be deplored. But it is equally misleading to ignore the plain fact that the Hebrew Bible, with its own history of interpretation, and the Old Testament, with its inseparable links to the New Testament, are simply different texts.

If exegetes or linguists or literary critics, working synchronically, do not take into account this difference, they are neglecting part of the data

and their semantic analysis may be defective. The phenomenon of prophecy and fulfilment in the Bible is a good example. It is entirely normal to consider this within the 'Deuteronomistic History' (Joshua–Kings) as an artificial literary device, but as nonetheless stylistically and theologically significant, giving structure and direction to the narrative, as well as expressing a theological view about divine intervention in history (Ackroyd 1968: 62–83; Brueggemann 1968). There is every indication, as I have just suggested, that the text of the Bible, too, is structured in such a way as to make the same kind of theological and literary connection between Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfilment. It is of course hard, if not impossible, to determine when this structuring took place, and whether or not the 'redactors' responsible for it can be credited with deep theological or literary insights. In other words, the intention of an ancient author or redactor may or may not be open to our investigation, but the plain fact is that the text as it stands, a single literary work running from Genesis to Revelation, was for centuries approached as a whole, with rich and fascinating results, and there is absolutely no scientific reason why it cannot be approached in the same way today (Thiselton 1978–79: 329; Payne 1979; Magonet 1976: 12).

The question 'What is the meaning of Isa. 7.14 in the context of eighth-century BCE Jerusalem?' is a different question from 'What is the meaning of Isa. 7.14 in the context of the book of Isaiah as a whole?' But it is also true to say that its meaning in the context of the Hebrew Bible must be distinguished from its meaning in the context of the Christian (Greek, Latin, English) canon. One of the points to be made in a discussion of its meaning in the Christian canon, for example, must be its relationship to the other passage where it occurs, namely Mt. 1.23. Cross-references of this kind between different parts of the Bible are controls on exegetical speculation that are just as legitimate and valuable as cross-references within a single book or a single passage and must be taken seriously by anyone interested in synchronic semantics. The fact that such cross-references were popular in a pre-critical age is irrelevant, and so are the historical questions as to whether Isaiah actually and miraculously foretold the virgin birth eight centuries before Christ. The simple fact is that one passage provides a way of understanding the other. There can be no objection to analysing meaning in smaller units, each precisely isolated and set in its own original historical context. But equally, there is no good scientific reason why that approach should always be the primary one. 'The "setting in literature" is as important as the "setting in life" ' (Alonso Schökel 1960: 162; cf. Weiss 1972). There are good reasons, as I hope I have shown, for sometimes shifting the emphasis towards a synchronic approach to larger literary units, including the complete Christian canon.

Bibliography

- Ackroyd, Peter R.
 1968 *Exile and Restoration: A Study of the Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century BCE* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
 1974 'An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile: A Study of 2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38–39', *SJT* 27: 329–52.
 1978 'Isaiah I–XII: Presentation of a Prophet', in *Congress Volume: Göttingen, 1977* (VTSup, 29; Leiden: E.J. Brill): 16–48.
- Allen, Leslie C.
 1976 *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah* (NICOT; London: SCM Press).
- Alonso Schökel, Luis
 1960 'Die stylistische Analyse bei den Propheten', in *Congress Volume: Oxford, 1959* (VTSup, 7 (Leiden: E.J. Brill): 154–64.
 1963 *Estudios de poética hebrea* (Barcelona: J. Flors).
- Anderson, A.A.
 1972 *The Book of Psalms* (NCB; 2 vols.; London: Oliphants).
- Barr, James
 1961 *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
 1977 *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM Press).
 1979 'Semitic Philology', in G.W. Anderson (ed.), *Tradition and Interpretation: Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Ben-Yehuda, Eliezer
 1908–59 *Thesaurus totius hebraeae et veteris et recentioris* (16 vols.; Berlin: Schöneberg, Langenscheidt; Jerusalem: Hemda & Ehud Benyehuda).
- Bewer, Julius A.
 1912 Part III, *Jonah*, in Hinckley G. Mitchell, John Merlin Powis Smith, and Julius A. Bewer *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Bonnard, P.E.
 1972 *Le second Isaïe, son disciple et leurs éditeurs: Isaïe 40–66 [traduit du hébreu]* (EBib; Paris: J. Gabalda).
- Botterweck, G.J., and H. Ringgren (eds.)
 1974–75 *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vols. I and II (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; English translation of *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970–]).
- Bruce, F.F.
 1972 'The Earliest Old Testament Interpretation', *OTS* 17: 44–52.
- Bueggemann, Walter
 1968 'The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historian', *Int* 22: 386–402.
- Buss, Martin J. (ed.)
 1979 *Encounter with the Text: Form and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Semeia Supplements; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Carroll, Robert P.
 1979 *When Prophecy Failed: Reactions and Responses to Failure in the Old Testament Prophetic Traditions* (London: SCM Press).

- Childs, Brevard S.
 1971 'Psalm-titles and Midrashic Exegesis', *JSS* 16: 137-50.
 1979 *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM Press).
- Christ, Hieronymus
 1977 *Blutvergiessen im Alten Testament: Der gewaltsame Tod des Menschen untersucht am hebräischen Wort dām* (Theologische Dissertationen, 12; Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt).
- Clements, Ronald E.
 1975 'The Purpose of the Book of Jonah', in *Congress Volume: Edinburgh, 1974* (VTSup, 28; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975): 16-28.
 1977 'Patterns in the Prophetic Canon', in Coats and Long 1977: 42-55.
- Clines, David J.A.
 1979 'The Significance of the "Sons of God" Episode (Genesis 6.1-4) in the Context of the "Primeval History" (Genesis 1-11)', *JSOT* 13: 33-46.
- Coats, George W., and Burke O. Long (eds.)
 1977 *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Culley, Robert C.
 1976 *Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Narrative* (Semeia Supplements; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Fokkelmann, J.P.
 1975 *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis* (Studia semitica neerlandica, 17; Assen: Van Gorcum).
- Ginzberg, Louis
 1911-38 *The Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America).
- Hayman, A.P.
 1979 'Judaism and the Christian Predicament', *Modern Churchman* 22: 86-100.
- Jackson, Jared J., and Martin Kessler (eds.)
 1974 *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (PTMS, 1; Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press).
- Jobling, David
 1978 *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Three Structural Analyses in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 13-31, Numbers 11-12, 1 Kings 17-18)* (JSOTSup, 7; Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield).
- Jones, D.R.
 1962 'Isaiah 40-66', in Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson, rev. edn).
- Keller, C.A.
 1965 'Jonas, le portrait d'un prophète', *TZ* 21: 329-40.
- Kessler, Martin
 1980 'An Introduction to Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: Prolegomena', *Semitics* 7: 1-27.
- Lyons, John
 1968 *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Magonet, Jonathan
 1976 *Form and Meaning: Studies in Literary Techniques in the Book of Jonah* (Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie, 2; Bern: Herbert Lang).

- McKane, William
1970 *Proverbs: A New Approach* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Melugin, Roy F.
1976 *The Formation of Isaiah 40–55* (BZAW, 141; Berlin: W. de Gruyter).
- Muilenburg, James
1969 'Form Criticism and Beyond', *JBL* 88: 1-18.
- Muraoka, T.
1969 *Emphasis in Biblical Hebrew* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University).
- Nicholson, E.W.
1970 *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- North, Christopher R.
1964 *The Second Isaiah: Introduction, Translation and Commentary to Chapters XL–LV* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Patte, Daniel
1976 *What Is Structural Exegesis?* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship, New Testament Series; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Payne, D.F.
1979 'Jonah from the Perspective of his Audience', *JSOT* 13: 3-12.
- Petersen, David L.
1977 *Late Israelite Prophecy: Studies in Deutero-Prophetic Literature and in Chronicles* (SBLMS, 23; Missoula, MT: SBL).
- Polzin, Robert
1977 *Biblical Structuralism: Method and Subjectivity in the Study of Ancient Texts* (Semeia Supplements, 5; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Richter, Wolfgang
1971 *Exegese als Literaturwissenschaft: Entwurf einer alttestamentlichen Literaturtheorie und Methodologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).
- Riesener, Ingrid
1979 *Der Stamm 'ebed im Alten Testament: Eine Wortuntersuchung unter Berücksichtigung neuerer sprachwissenschaftlicher Methoden* (BZAW, 149; Berlin: W. de Gruyter).
- Ringgren, H. See Botterweck, G.J.
- Sawyer, John F.A.
1972 *Semantics in Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation* (SBT, 2.24; London: SCM Press).
1977 *From Moses to Patmos: New Perspectives in the Study of the Old Testament* (London: SPCK).
- Schneider, Wolfgang
1974 *Grammatik des biblischen Hebräisch* (Munich: Claudius-Verlag).
- Stähli, P.
1976 'p^{ll} hitp. beten', in E. Jenni and C. Westermann (eds.), *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser): II, cols. 427-32.
- Thiselton, A.C.
1978–79 'Structuralism and Biblical Studies: Method or Ideology?', *ExpTim* 89: 329-35.
- Tidwell, N.
1980 'A Road and a Way: A Contribution to the Study of Word-Pairs', *Semitics* 7:

50-80.

Tucker, Gene M.

1977 'Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of the Canon', in Coats and Long 1977: 56-70.

Watters, William R.

1976 *Formula Criticism and the Poetry of the Old Testament* (BZAW, 138; Berlin: W. de Gruyter).

Weinfeld, Moshe

1974-75 'Berith', in Botterweck and Ringgren 1974-75: II, 253-79.

Weiss, Meir

1972 'Die Methode der Total Interpretation', in *Congress Volume: Uppsala, 1971* (VTSup, 22; Leiden: E.J. Brill): 88-112.

Westermann, Claus

1969 *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).

Whybray, R.N.

1975 *Isaiah 40-66* (NCB; London: Oliphants).

1979 Review of *Critique du langage chez les prophètes d'Israel* (Paris: CNRS, 1976), by Jacques Cazeaux, in *Erasmus* 31 (1979), cols. 138-40.

3

THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF THE TEXT AND OTHER LEGITIMATE SUBJECTS FOR SEMANTIC DESCRIPTION*

An assumption that dominated the study of the Old Testament for a very long time was that ‘the original meaning of the text’ was virtually the only legitimate subject for intellectually respectable scientific research. The reasons for this narrow attitude to the history of tradition were partly archaeological, one suspects, and partly religious. On the one hand, there was the wealth of new archaeological data that swamped the field of biblical research and encouraged the overly optimistic view that now we would be able to find out what really happened and what the biblical authors originally meant. On the other hand, there was a Protestant view that many ecclesiastical abuses and theological errors were due to misinterpretations or mistranslations of Scripture, and that the hope of the church lay in getting back to the original meaning of the text (Childs 1970: 139-47).

The assumption that the nearer we can get back to what was in the original author’s mind, the nearer we are to authenticity or truth, however, has in recent years been frequently called into question. Examples of this refreshing trend would include a new interest in the final form of the text and papers on ‘the age of the Chronicler’ or the psalm headings, alongside studies of Qumran variants and the ancient versions, not just for their relevance to textual criticism but as pieces of literature in their own right (Noth 1962: 18; Ackroyd 1970; Bruce 1972: 37-52; Jellicoe 1968: 352f.). The omission of the psalm headings from the *New English Bible* (1970), because, among other things, they are not ‘original’, was a throwback to a former, less-enlightened age, and widespread disapproval of NEB’s decision on this question is a measure of contemporary interest in all levels of biblical tradition, not just the earliest (Bruce 1972: 44 n. 2). Semanticists in these permissive

* This paper was originally given at the 23rd Session of the Journées bibliques at Leuven in August 1972 and published in C. Brekelmans (ed.), *Questions disputées de l’Ancien Testament* (BETL, 33; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1974), pp.63-70 (revised and enlarged edition, ed. M. Vervenne; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989).

days, whether they are translators, commentators, theologians or lexicographers, can freeze the cumulative process of biblical tradition wherever they like, and describe the meaning of the text in tenth-century BCE Jerusalem or sixth-century BCE Babylon or third-century BCE Alexandria or first-century CE Palestine, according to their own personal interests or skills. The essential thing is that they make it clear at the outset exactly what they are doing (Sawyer 1972: 4-16, 112-14).

Before the pendulum swings too far in this direction and it becomes fashionable to argue that it does not really matter what 'the original meaning of the text' was, that in many cases we will probably never know and that there are often more interesting levels at which to describe the meaning of the biblical text, the 'original meaning' is likely to remain a fairly important concept in Old Testament studies and one that it might well be worthwhile examining. The conclusions are for the most part predictable, but in reaching them some discussion of semantic method is necessary, which it is hoped will not be out of place in the present context.

The first point to make is that the meaning of a text is just as objective a part of our data as its grammatical or literary form, so that in order to reconstruct the original meaning of a text, certain scientific procedures must be employed, corresponding to, but different from, the methods of textual and literary criticism (Sawyer 1972: Chs. 3 and 4; Lyons 1968: Chs. 9 and 10). Of the semantic methods available at present, I am not thinking primarily of comparative philology, which is basically a clumsy instrument whose value in our field is restricted mainly to giving very general clues to the meaning of obscure or rare words and phrases of doubtful meaning. Translation is another rough-and-ready method of semantic description: it is, for example, of great practical value to be able to describe *dabar* as 'meaning word in some contexts and thing in others' (Barr 1961: 133). But it is more likely that the semantic spread of *dabar* is wider than either 'word' or 'thing', even if in some varieties of Hebrew, its spread is limited by the co-presence of the Aramaic loanword *millah*. In the language of the book of Job, for example, *millah*, 'word', is much more frequent than *dabar*. An example of the 'monolingual' approach to semantic description, still a novelty in biblical research, would be the description of *hoshia* 'as closer to 'azar than *hiššil* in not being so frequently followed by the preposition *min*, but distinguished from 'azar in being restricted almost exclusively to religious contexts and in becoming unproductive in post-biblical and modern Hebrew (Sawyer 1972: 102-5).

Neither comparative philology nor translation is nearly subtle enough to describe the meaning of common Hebrew terms in any detail, or to detect overtones and associations that they may have in certain contexts. Was *šelem* in Gen. 1.26-27 selected by the author because it had fewer idolatrous associations than its synonyms? Did Isaiah choose *he'emin* in 7.9 because of the

‘stability overtones’ of its root? (see Chapter 36). Comparative philology is little help here and translation obscures the very information we want. But possible answers to this type of question may be found in an examination of the semantic fields in which the terms occur, and there is no doubt that here we have a valuable semantic technique that is going to provide new information, even at this late date, on the meaning of Biblical Hebrew (Barr 1968; Sawyer 1972: 28-59). An interesting observation on the meaning of Job 19.25-27 (‘I know that my redeemer liveth . . .’) emerged from a similar study. No fewer than seven items from the associative field of Hebrew terms for the resurrection of the dead occur in these three short verses (see Chapter 25). In discussing the goal of biblical semantics it is this kind of much more subtle information that we are aiming at, not only at explanations of textual corruptions and the more obscure *hapax legomena*.

From these few comments on the meaning of ‘meaning’, we come now to the ‘original meaning’. The term is used in two entirely different senses in our dictionaries and commentaries, one of which has been so universally criticized in recent years that fortunately it is slowly becoming obsolete. I refer, of course, to the use of ‘original’ in an etymological sense: the original meaning of *taḥbulot*, for example, derived from its root *ḥbl*, was ‘probably “rope-pulling, i.e. steering”’ (BDB, 287). Evidence that this word was in fact associated with *ḥebel*, ‘a rope’, or *rab ha-ḥobel*, ‘a ship’s captain’, comes from the Septuagint translation of the term (κυβέρνησις), and also from the rabbinic literature, so that William McKane’s translation of Prov. 1.5b has good justification: ‘and a perceptive man learns the ropes’ (1970: 211; Jastrow, 1660a). But without such contextual evidence, the ‘original meaning’ of a term can never be reliably derived from its etymology. Using the contextual criteria on which semantics ultimately depends, all that ‘original’ in this etymological sense can designate is the meaning of a term as it was used in Proto-Semitic, which may be entirely different from its use in Biblical Hebrew. In dictionaries, pride of place is still unfortunately usually given to the origins of every Hebrew word, and an ‘original’ (or ‘literal’ or ‘strict’ or ‘actual’) meaning, as derived from the customary, interesting, but usually quite unnecessary tour of the entire Semitic language family, still figures prominently in recent publications (e.g. Snaith 1967: 29; Gray 1967: 89, 112, 417; Ringgren 1966: 243). It is illuminating to see how the absence of this elaborate etymological machinery produces different definitions of some terms in William L. Holladay’s English translation of the Koehler–Baumgartner lexicon (e.g. *yeraqraq*, *ken*) (Holladay 1971).

Much more productive is the use of the term ‘original’ in a contextual sense: the original meaning of the text is the meaning that it had in its original context. Here biblical scholarship and modern semantic theory converge (Lapointe 1971: 469-87). There are two main types of argument concerning the original meaning of a text: one based on its literary context (style,

genre, *Gattung* and the like), the other on its nonverbal or situational context (social and political circumstances, the religious atmosphere or *Zeitgeist* at a particular time). The modern argument, for example, that the Hebrew word for 'immortality', *al-mavet*, in Prov. 12.28 is not original is based on factors both in its literary context and in its nonverbal or situational context. It is argued that immortality is not an original concern of the opposition between life and death in this type of Israelite sentence literature (Tournay 1962: 498; McKane 1970: 451). In other words, if it could be proved that the verse in question did not belong to this literary genre or was in some way exceptional, the argument would collapse. The situational argument is similar: *al-mavet* cannot be original because the concept of immortality is late. This would be invalid if it could be proved that in its original context there were people who believed in life after death. In another recent commentary the argument that *be'aḥarit ha-yamim* in Isa. 2.2 'originally refers to a moment within history' depends on the statement that 'the later Jewish conception of the absolute end of the present world era . . . is alien to the characteristic thinking of the Old Testament' (Kaiser 1972: 25-26).

Such arguments are linguistically unexceptionable, and it is the absence of this type of contextual information that tends to undermine a good many attempts to discover the 'original meaning of the text'. Mitchell Dahood's well-known work on the Psalms is a case in point (Dahood 1966-70). In the context of ancient Northwest Semitic religious belief and practice, as documented in the Ugaritic literature, no doubt some of the language from which Old Testament Hebrew is derived did refer to life after death or immortality, as he argues. But there is evidence that in ancient Israel, this area of religious belief was not very fully or explicitly developed. It might also be argued that associations with Canaanite religious beliefs were actually avoided. Admittedly, arguments such as these are not unassailable: for example, it could be that Psalms and Proverbs reflect beliefs that the official establishment was concerned to suppress. But whatever the situation in which this literature was produced, it has to be investigated, and it is this type of investigation that seems to be missing from Dahood's otherwise attractive arguments. The same problem arises here as in the 'etymologizing' referred to above.

There is however another level at which we can examine the original meaning of the text, and one that might incidentally support some of Dahood's conclusions on the meaning of certain passages, although not his methods. The original meaning of the final form of the text is, to coin a phrase, no less original than the original meaning of its separate units. This may appear almost too obvious to mention, and yet there is a curious inconsistency in this area of biblical research. While it is widely agreed nowadays that the final texture is as important and legitimate a subject for scientific research as its separate threads, there are very few attempts at defining words

like *hayyim* and *mavet* as they were used in the *Sitz im Leben* of the final form of the text. At the phonological and grammatical levels of linguistic description, it is also generally agreed that Biblical Hebrew has developed quite a long way from the language actually spoken in ancient Israel (Rabin 1970), and yet at the semantic level Biblical Hebrew is almost universally discussed and described in terms of its usage in ancient Israel. Probably the Masoretes sometimes succeeded in preserving ancient elements, but the language of the Hebrew Bible that we still use as the basis for exegesis and theology is certainly not identical with the language of its original authors, either phonologically or grammatically, and yet, semantically, in terms of its context and the associations or overtones that it has, we continue to treat it as if it were. The numerous homonyms discovered in modern times, and critically examined by Barr, are glaring examples of this tendency to study the final form of the text at the phonological and grammatical levels, but at the semantic level to attempt to get back to what it meant at an earlier stage (Barr 1968: 134-55).

A widely accepted linguistic classification envisages three periods in the history of the Hebrew language: (1) an Early Period down to about the fourth century BCE, when Hebrew was increasingly replaced by Aramaic and Greek as the first language of the Jews, (2) a Middle Period covering Mishnaic and Mediaeval Hebrew as well as the latest parts of the Hebrew Bible, and (3) the Modern Period (Rabin 1970: 316-39). One interesting implication of this division is that most, if not all, Biblical Hebrew belongs, not only on phonological and grammatical criteria but presumably also on semantic criteria, to the Middle Period. On literary criteria, too, a good many books of the Bible must be said to have reached their final form in the Middle Period. If this is so, then anyone who professes an interest in studying the final form of the text of, let us say, the book of Isaiah, must reckon, as Bernhard Duhm did so brilliantly 80 years ago, with theological and religious developments in Jewish communities during the last three or four centuries before Christ. One would also have to reckon with Hebrew usage throughout the Middle Period, because diversities in the Hebrew language between the beginning of this period and the end are probably not so great as diversities between the Early Period and the Middle Period.

I should like to end with one example. One of the religious or theological developments of the last few centuries before the Common Era was the emergence and elaboration of a belief in life after death. It is very hard to accept that this belief appeared suddenly, like Athene fully armed from the head of Zeus, in the Maccabean period, as some have implied (Rankin 1936: 218-19; Montgomery 1927: 471; Rowley 1956: 168; Porteous 1965: 171-72). The scantiness of our written evidence for such a belief before that time is probably due to official attempts to suppress it; but at the same time it would be hard to prove that all the writers and scholars who produced the

book of Isaiah or the book of Psalms during this period were as conservative in their attitude to these beliefs as, for example, the author of Ecclesiasticus. Indeed, a study of the associations and overtones of many of the words and phrases that are used during the Middle Period in references to and descriptions of the resurrection of the dead, suggests that as soon as passages such as Pss. 1.5; 17.15; and Isa. 53.8-12 reached their final form, they could hardly be understood except in an eschatological sense in a context where life after death was a live issue, whatever the original author had intended and whatever the official hierarchy at the time demanded (see Chapter 25). Père Tournay called such passages as these ‘relectures bibliques’, but argued that they are nonetheless legitimate and important subjects for study (Tournay 1962: 504-5). I wonder whether we might not go a step further and suggest that this was the original meaning of the text, in the sense that these passages did not reach their final form until a period when belief in life after death and resurrection from the dead was popular and well established, if controversial. The original meaning of these passages in their final form cannot be properly described without reference to their original context in the fourth or third centuries before the Common Era.

It might be objected that this somewhat arbitrary, however legitimate, procedure is going to reduce the Old Testament to the product of a particular Jewish sect at a particular, in many respects undistinguished, time. I think there are three answers to this objection. (1) This would be only part of Old Testament studies, going on at the same time as semantic description at other levels, including much earlier levels. (2) The interpretations of Pharisaic Judaism may have found in some texts rather less than the original author intended, but such interpretations do not always coincide with the original meaning of the final form of the text as it is being envisaged at the moment. It appears that the words *יִשָּׁבַע יְרָאָה מֵעַמְלֵל נַפְשׁוֹ* ‘after his suffering he will see and be satisfied’ (Isa. 53.11) originally described the resurrection of the servant from his grave among the wicked. This emerges from a comparison of the passage with other passages in the same book where the resurrection of the dead is described (e.g. 26.19), and parallels in Ps. 17.15 and Dan. 12.3 (Duhm 1914: 375; Montgomery 1927: 472; Porteous 1965: 171-72; see Chapter 25). The original reference, however, seems to have been played down by later Jewish commentators, perhaps partly because of the strong Christian associations with which Isaiah 53 was imbued from the first century CE on.

(3) Of course this is an arbitrary choice of context and meaning, but so is any other choice, and in favour of this one is the fact that it means we can turn our attention for a moment away from the quest for Israel’s earliest origins, which takes up so much of our university and college curricula, and focus instead on a period when the last chapter of Old Testament theology

was written and the religion from which both Judaism and Christianity very soon emerged, had begun to take on its final shape.

Bibliography

- Ackroyd, Peter R.
1970 *The Age of the Chronicler* (Auckland: Colloquium).
- Barr, James
1961 *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
1967 *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
1968 'The Image of God in the Book of Genesis: A Study in Terminology', *BJRL* 51: 11-26.
- Bruce, F.F.
1972 'The Earliest Old Testament Interpretation', *OTS* 17: 37-52.
- Childs, Brevard S.
1970 *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press).
- Dahood, Mitchell
1966-70 *Psalms: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB, 16, 17, 17A; 3 vols.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday).
- Duhm, Bernhard
1914 *Das Buch Jesaia* (Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 3rd edn).
- Gray, John
1967 *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (Century Bible; London: Oliphants).
- Holladay, William L.
1971 *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill).
- Kaiser, Otto
1972 *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Jellicoe, Sidney
1968 *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Lapointe, R.
1971 'La valeur linguistique du Sitz im Leben', *Bib* 52: 469-87.
- Lyons, John
1968 *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- McKane, William
1970 *Proverbs: A New Approach* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Montgomery, James A.
1927 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Noth, Martin
1962 *Exodus: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Porteous, N.W.
1965 *Daniel: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Rabin, H.
1970 'Hebrew', in Thomas A. Seboek (ed.), *Current Trends in Linguistics*, vol. VI, *Linguistics in South West Asia and North Africa* (The Hague: Mouton).

Rankin, O.S.

- 1936 *Israel's Wisdom Literature: Its Bearing on Theology and the History of Religion* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).

Ringgren, Helmer

- 1966 *Israelite Religion* (London: SPCK).

Rowley, H.H.

- 1956 *The Faith of Israel* (James Sprunt Lectures, 1955; London: SCM Press).

Sawyer, John F.A.

- 1972 *Semantics in Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation* (SBT, 2.24; London: SCM Press).

Snaith, N.H.

- 1967 *Leviticus and Numbers* (Century Bible; London: Thomas Nelson).

Tournay, R.

- 1962 'Relectures bibliques concernant la vie future et l'angelologie', *RB* 69: 498.

4

THE PLACE OF RECEPTION HISTORY IN A POSTMODERN COMMENTARY*

I am in the very fortunate position of having been working for over two years, both as author and editor, along with Chris Rowland of Oxford and Judith Kovacs of the University of Virginia, on a new type of commentary in the Blackwell Bible Commentary Series (www.bbibcomm.net). What I want to do this afternoon is to share something of that experience with you and consider some of the general methodological questions raised by the series. This is a short paper and a very practical one in three parts: (1) What are we doing? (2) Why are we doing it? (3) How are we doing it?

(1) Our aim is to encourage and enable readers to get beyond the exclusive focus on questions of date and authorship, original meanings and how things actually were when the texts were supposed to have been written, to consider how the texts have been read and interpreted and used in the long and fascinating history of their reception by Jews, Christians and others down to the present day—a shift of emphasis from the prehistory of the texts to their afterlives . . . from Babylonian laws, Ugaritic poetry and Hellenistic aretalogies, to the readings of the rabbis and church fathers, hymn writers and preachers, theologians and philosophers . . . from the excavations at Jericho and Megiddo to the mosaics and frescoes of early Christianity and Judaism, mediaeval and renaissance art and architecture, and the literary, artistic and musical products of centuries of reading, discussing and teaching the Bible. Whereas most modern commentaries are in effect *synchronic*, reflecting differences of opinion among modern scholars, ours is *diachronic*, drawing on examples of differences of interpretation from the whole of the history of the reception of the Bible.

The term ‘reception history’ or *Rezeptionsaesthetik* goes back to the sixties and to the Konstanz school of literary studies; it is more or less the

* This paper was given in the ‘Art of Hebrew Bible Commentary Consultation’ session at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Nashville, Tennessee, in November 2000 and originally published on the Web (www.bbibcomm.net).

German equivalent of the preferred American term ‘reader-response criticism’. It is particularly associated with the name of Hans Robert Jauss, a student of Gadamer at Heidelberg. It was from Gadamer that Jauss learned the importance of history, as well as his appreciation of the relationship between the private and public aspects of texts, between self-enclosed literary structures and their effect (*Wirkung*) on society. In many ways I prefer the term *Wirkungsgeschichte*, ‘impact history’, coined by Gadamer, because it places the focus on the text rather than on the reader, and on its power to influence people and events rather than on the more passive process of reception. *Wirkungsgeschichte* was the theme of a conference entitled “The Sociology of Sacred Texts” held at Newcastle upon Tyne in 1991, focusing on the notion that what texts do is often more important than what they say or mean. The term ‘reception history’ however is much commoner and more transparent than *Wirkungsgeschichte*—in English, at any rate. It did not make it into either of the two dictionaries of biblical interpretation—the one edited by Richard Coggins and Lesley Houlden, published by SCM Press at the beginning of the nineties, or the one edited by John Hayes, published by Abingdon at the end of the nineties. Nor did it make it into the *Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) or *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), but I suggest that it is now perhaps gaining ground and has become the most accurate and convenient way to describe an approach to the text that takes account of its impact on society and its many *afterlives* and *contextualizations*—two other usefully transparent terms incidentally that are now becoming increasingly popular.

In the preface to their pioneering *Dictionary*, Coggins and Houlden argue, in the typically restrained language of two Anglican clergymen, that interpretation is

not something reserved for the few who specialize in it, or for church authorities who pronounce on it, nor yet is it something sinister, the attempt to ‘put something over’ on readers who would do better without it. No, interpretation is inherent in the very act of reading, an act which sets up a conversation between text and reader or perhaps . . . a multiplicity of conversations stretching back maybe for centuries.

In the event, partly because of the stubborn ways of many of their authors, their dictionary does not entirely live up to its preface. There are excellent articles on black Christian interpretation, the Bible in art, the Bible in music, feminist interpretation, liberation theology, new religious movements, reader-response criticism and the like, but the authors of many of the entries on individual texts show a very limited understanding of ‘interpretation’: for them it *is* something reserved for the few specialists, and they

consequently ignore most, if not all, of the other conversations between text and reader that ‘stretch back maybe for centuries’.

John Hayes’s more recent two-volume *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* is much bigger and wider in scope, but it too focuses mainly on scholars and specialists, every one of whom from Félix-Marie Abel to Walther Zimmerli has an article. There are articles on Dante and Jonathan Edwards, on the Bible in music and art, and on gay/lesbian, postmodern, psychoanalytic and womanist interpretation and ideological criticism. But as in Coggins and Houlden’s *Dictionary*, the articles on individual biblical books—with some notable exceptions, for example, the article on Judges by Tim Beal and David Gunn—are studies of the history of scholarship, with scant regard for other types of conversation between text and reader. What Hayes does however is to focus with a new sharpness on readers and interpreters, whom he lumps together for the first time in a new format: Erich Auerbach with Augustine, James Barr with Johann Sebastian Bach, Brevard Childs with Chaucer, Joachim Jeremias with Jerome, Jacob Milgrom with Milton, Harry M. Orlinsky with Origen. The editorial bias is still very much in favour of modern scholars, who vastly outnumber poets, artists, preachers and the like, but the very fact that a *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* goes beyond the ivory towers of specialist scholarship at all shows how far we have moved beyond the exclusivism and dogmatism of much modern scholarship.

I think one reason why the majority of authors represented in these two dictionaries of biblical interpretation stayed within the history of biblical scholarship was a terminological one. In common parlance, the term ‘history of interpretation’ means the history of scholarship—rabbinic, patristic, mediaeval and modern—as contained in commentaries and specialist studies of the text. This is how the term is understood in the magisterial article on the subject by John Rogerson in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, for example, and in many other contexts. In my own article on the history of interpretation for Coggins and Houlden’s *Dictionary*, I enthusiastically took the editors’ advice literally and wrote my article in such a way as to shift the emphasis away from the interpretations of biblical scholars and specialists to literature, music, art, hymns and sermons, and to the political, ecclesiastical and theological uses of Scripture that have influenced the course of history down to the present day. But that was in 1990, and since then I have come to the conclusion that it is better to accept that for most people there is a distinction between the history of interpretation and reception history. Reception history implies wider terms of reference than the history of interpretation. In addition, as Jauss argued, it keeps the historical dimension in focus in a way that reader-response criticism does not. Moreover, provided that it is associated wherever possible with *Wirkungsgeschichte*,

contextualization and the afterlife of the text, it is certainly the most appropriate term for our purposes.

(2) Why are we including more reception history than anything else in our commentaries? Two quick flippant answers first, then two more serious points. The first answer is that everybody's doing it! Everyone has suddenly become interested in reception history. Since 1990 there has been a veritable deluge of studies of the afterlives of biblical texts: from single passages like the Garden of Eden and the Flood story to whole books like my own study of Isaiah, Yvonne Sherwood's new book on the afterlives of the book of Jonah (2000), and Margarita's Stocker's study *Judith, Sexual Warrior: Women and Power in Western Culture* (1998). There are also several reference works: in addition to the dictionaries of biblical interpretation mentioned above, there is David Jeffrey's *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (1992). There are two major new series dedicated to publishing patristic interpretations of the Bible. Bill Farmer's recently published one-volume *International Biblical Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998) states as one of its aims to include examples of the reception history of every text. So our new series is very much in tune with current developments. The second short answer is that, like the North Pole and Mount Everest, it's there. It's something that has not been done before. Amid all the reception histories published in recent years, there are as yet no commentaries that aim to give such prominence to the approach and to treat it so comprehensively. It is a challenge to authors and editors and publishers alike, with all the excitement and enthusiasm that challenges create.

But there are two more substantial reasons why we think it right to place the reception history of the Bible in the foreground of our commentaries. The first is that the afterlife of the Bible has been infinitely more influential in every way—theologically, politically, culturally and aesthetically—than its ancient Near Eastern prehistory. In most universities, until now there has really been very little communication between biblical scholarship and the rest of the curriculum. Rabbinic and patristic interpretations were considered “late” in the Bible department and therefore inferior and not to be taken seriously. We were not encouraged to quote Dante or Calvin or George Herbert or Handel in our essays on biblical topics. We who were experts in the original languages and biblical archaeology always knew better. Mercifully, that situation has changed, as we have seen, and an increasing number of biblical experts now take seriously the impact of the Bible on its readers down to the present day. What we want to do is to ensure that that change of emphasis is reflected in the commentaries, the basic tools by means of which readers of the Bible first study the text.

Our second reason concerns the meaning of the text. When confronted with a difficult text, I was trained to go first to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century commentaries. But later I discovered that it is also possible, and

indeed very productive, to start by asking What does Rashi say? How did the Reformers explain it, and even what role does it play in hymns and sermons? Often, indeed usually, I found in such alternative sources subtle insights into the dynamic of the text, its associations and overtones, that had been missed entirely in the majority of standard commentaries and reference works. The reasons for this are obvious. They have to do with the impact of modernity on how we approach ancient texts, and the two assumptions on which modern approaches to the Bible were based: (a) that the object of the exercise is to find one single correct or true meaning, and (b) that, with all our modern discoveries and techniques, we in the modern world are more likely to achieve that than anyone in the past. But we have now moved beyond that, into a postmodern era where life is more complicated, where the objectivity of modern scholarship is questioned, where texts have to be approached as having more than one meaning, and where the differences between one meaning and another cannot be adequately explained without reference to the reader or interpreter. So these are the two main reasons why we want to shift the focus of the commentary genre away from ancient originals to the reception history of the text: (1) to put the Bible back into the hands of the people and (2) to raise awareness of what these texts mean, what they can mean and what they have meant in all kinds of contexts. .

(3) How do our authors do it? How do we get authors to do what we want? We have three practical principles. It must be a commentary; it must be comprehensive; and it must be concise. These are the three practical principles on which we try to design the volumes. (a) They must be commentaries. There are serious problems involved in getting authors to write in a commentary mode. Many of us have written at least one commentary, usually because someone asked us to do it, but not everyone sees much virtue or pleasure in commentary writing. Some have written books on particular texts in which the material is arranged thematically or historically. My own study of Isaiah in the history of Christianity is arranged partly thematically, partly historically. It is possible to do that because major themes reflected in how the text was interpreted and used, such as the cult of the Virgin Mary, passion iconography and peace and justice, often correspond quite closely to periods of church history. But I am now engaged in writing the commentary on Isaiah for the series, using much of the same material but structured quite differently, as a commentary, verse by verse or passage by passage, always keeping the text central to the discussion.

(b) It must be comprehensive. Some of our authors are past masters at analysing texts, employing modern and postmodern literary techniques to great effect, stressing the importance of readers and the multiplicity of meanings a text can have, but they find it difficult to engage in the hard slog of researching earlier periods in the text's reception history. Others are experienced experts in one or two periods in the reception history of

the Bible. This is particularly true of those who have written on the interpretation of the Bible in the patristic period or in rabbinic literature, who may find it difficult to take the story on into mediaeval and modern history. Others—a very large number of others, I might add—are generally enthusiastic about the series aims, having immersed themselves in contemporary developments, in post-Holocaust or postcolonial interpretations, for example, but find it less congenial to cover earlier, more traditional periods of history. Others are experts in the history of interpretation as defined above, the history of scholarship rather than reception history, and have little experience of studying the use of the Bible in art, literature, music, church history, politics and so on. But we consider a comprehensive view of the whole history of the text's reception to be absolutely crucial.

(c) The commentaries must aim to be as concise as possible. The practical question of how to cope with the sheer volume of material has often been raised. It is not a problem to locate relevant material. In addition to commentaries where they exist—ancient, mediaeval and modern—there are reference works such as the *Biblia Patristica* and Jeffrey's *Dictionary* mentioned above, as well as numerous other studies that have full indexes of biblical references, for example, Gertrud Schiller's *Iconography of Christian Art* (2 vols.; Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1971–72), Tod Linafelt's *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust* (2000) and Gerald West and Musa Dube's *The Bible in Africa* (2000). In practice, authors soon find where to look. In fact, many are already familiar with much of the material: one of the commonest reactions from biblical scholars is that they have actually been using material from art and literature in their teaching all their professional lives but have not until now thought it appropriate or permissible to publish any of it or to refer to it in their publications—not even in footnotes. In other words, students have been getting the benefit of such material, even if they have not been encouraged to take it seriously or been able to follow it up in the recommended literature.

The biggest problem is not in locating the material but in the selection of it. Our authors must aim at conciseness; otherwise the volumes would soon become huge and unwieldy and take a lifetime to complete. So how on earth can you decide—confronted with two thousand years of theology, literature, art, music, film, sermons and hymns in which the Bible has played a unique and often decisive role—what to put in and what to leave out? The longest part of the *Guidelines for Authors* on the Web site deals with this question. What criteria for selection can we use? Until now the main criterion in most modern commentaries has been chronological priority—the nearest we can get to the original meaning the better, implying that 'late' means 'inferior'. Nowadays most would agree that this is arbitrary (see Chapter 3). Other criteria hinge on theological or ecclesiastical or ethical or political correctness that for many would be even more arbitrary. There is also the

widespread hierarchical assumption that ‘valid’ or ‘correct’ interpretations are normally those of the experts, while those of the uneducated, marginalized, anarchic or eccentric are not to be taken seriously. That too would no longer be acceptable to many scholars today. If our aim is to be comprehensive, to let the texts and their interpretations speak for themselves, then important and influential examples of imperialistic, oppressive, racist, sexist uses of Scripture have to be included as well as beautiful, uplifting, liberating interpretations, ancient as well as contemporary, popular as well as academic. Given that there is never going to be space to put everything in, the overriding principle of selection in a project aiming to be primarily descriptive will usually be a quantitative one: a glance at any index of biblical references shows which texts have had a particularly prominent role to play in a given context. In the reception history of Isaiah, for example, Isa. 53.8 plays a key role in early christological controversy; 11.1 in mediaeval cathedral architecture; 6.9-11 in anti-Semitic polemic; 40.8 in the Reformation period; 27.12-13 in contemporary millenarianism; 45.15 in post-Holocaust theology; 42.14 in Christian feminism and 61.1 in liberation theology.

The discussion of each verse or passage is broadly chronological: to adapt the subtitle of Jeremy Cohen’s study of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Gen. 1.28, it traces the career of each biblical text from ancient times down to the present. Hermann Gunkel, Bernhard Duhm, Sigmund Mowinckel and other modern scholars take their place near the end of each section, for example, followed where appropriate by more recent readings, literary, postmodern, ideological, feminist, postcolonial and the like. This already gives the commentary some coherence; but, in order to keep the focus on the text rather than on church history or mediaeval iconography or the like, authors are urged to bear in mind one question: What is it in the language of texts like Genesis 22 or Isa. 6.3 or Jn 3.16 that initiated such a long and significant reception history? This may prompt aesthetic, theological, ethical or ideological comment reflecting the author’s own hermeneutical stance, which in turn represents the latest stage in the reception history of the text—a stage at which the many meanings of each text and the crucial role of the reader are for the first time systematically highlighted and discussed.

Bibliography

Cohen, Jeremy

1989 ‘Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it’: *The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

Coggins, R.J., and J.L. Houlden (eds.)

1990 *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press).

Davies, Jon, and Isabel Wollaston (eds.)

1993 *The Sociology of Sacred Texts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).

- Hayes, John H. (ed.)
 1999 *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (2 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press).
- Jeffrey, David Lyle (ed.)
 1992 *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- Linafelt, Tod (ed.)
 2000 *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust* (New York: New York University Press).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
 1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Sherwood, Yvonne
 2000 *A Biblical Text and its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Stocker, Margarita
 1998 *Judith, Sexual Warrior: Women and Power in Western Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Sugirtharajah, R.S. (ed.)
 1995 *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, new edn).
- West, Gerald O., and Musa W. Dube (eds.)
 2000 *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends* (Leiden: E.J. Brill).

5

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY TO BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP*

A Tribute to Mary Douglas

Last time I met Mary was at the summer meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study in Oxford in July 2000, at which she read a wonderful paper on the scapegoat to a large audience of sceptical biblical experts. She was a lone anthropologist in a sea of biblical scholars, totally undaunted—today the situation is reversed. I must say I do feel rather daunted in a sea of distinguished social scientists, even though at Lancaster I'm luckier than most of my biblical colleagues in Britain in having a few good social scientists on hand. Paul Heelas in particular asked me to convey his greetings to you all, and I must convey from the whole religious studies department our warmest congratulations to Mary on this very happy occasion.

In that memorable SOTS paper last summer (one of her most recent), she argued, in a typically original and benign reading of Leviticus 16, that the text is about the liberation of the goat and sending him off, not to his death over a cliff as the rabbis thought, despised and rejected by everyone, but as an ambassador symbolically bearing news of God's compassion into the wilderness, that is to say, into the world. To reach such a conclusion, against centuries of Jewish and Christian tradition and scholarly commentary, she employed all the insights for which she is so famous.

(1) In the first place, she has never been put off by traditional Old Testament scholarship. Like the late Ninian Smart, she was one of those pioneers in the sixties who saw that if the only people who are permitted to study sacred texts are those who have spent years studying a number of very difficult languages—Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in the case of biblical studies—then interdisciplinary research is inevitably given a low priority and

* This paper was an address delivered in the British Academy on 25 March 2000 on the occasion of the eightieth birthday of Mary Douglas.

the insights of philosophy and the social sciences are going to be neglected. In those days I was one of those snooty academics myself who spent all their time surrounded by dictionaries, studying texts in the original languages—even in a religious studies department (Newcastle at that time)—and I consequently had very little time to read Mary's work or pretty well anything else that wasn't in Hebrew or Ugaritic. And I wasn't the only one. When Mary wrote *Purity and Danger* in 1966, quite a bit of which consists of a detailed study of the biblical text, she had to rely on English translations—but that did not cramp her style in the slightest. She approached the text with a whole host of new questions, questions that had been lost in the world of conventional biblical scholarship, and found answers that have been widely accepted ever since. She always consulted people like me on the Hebrew terms she was interested in and, like Cato the Elder, left her study of “the sacred language” till late in life.

(2) Another part of conventional Old Testament scholarship she has had to ignore is the historical-critical fragmentation of texts. Leviticus divided up into a P source and an H source is a different text from Leviticus as a whole. But because of the way modern Old Testament scholarship was set up in the eighteenth century, it was the fragmented version that everyone studied. Mary, by contrast, found in the book of Leviticus as a whole a beautiful literary structure, missed by everyone else, a structure that provides a context in which to understand what the book is about. The structure corresponds to the plan of the Temple at Jerusalem, and the passages about freedom and the value of human life are in the holy of holies, the inner sanctum, with which the book ends and which provides the key to understanding the rest of the book (Douglas 1999). She has found such structures in other texts as well, in Numbers, for example (Douglas 1993), and most recently in the story of the Aqedah, ‘the binding of Isaac’, in Genesis 22 (Douglas 2007: 18-26). In that case once again, the structure shows how central the ram is for the author, as it has been for Jews all down the centuries, a symbol of hope with its *shofar* (ramshorn), on which the call for freedom was sounded, and as a divinely appointed alternative to martyrdom.

(3) What is particularly significant about Mary's readings of Hebrew texts in translation is her ability, even—or perhaps especially—as a non-Hebraist, to challenge traditional meanings of Hebrew words. The most obvious and original example concerns the Hebrew words for ‘uncleanness’ and ‘abomination’. I learned so much from Mary's e-mails asking me, for instance, whether *sheqes* in Leviticus could mean something less abhorrent than its usual translations, or whether *tame*, usually translated ‘unclean’, could mean something else—in the context of Leviticus. All these questions come naturally from her grasp of the content and structure of the book as a whole. How could the same author who calls for compassion towards widows, orphans and foreigners and freedom for the prisoners—and by the

way it is in Leviticus that you first come across the commandment to ‘love your neighbour as yourself’—how could the same author encourage us to abhor disabled persons as unclean, and people suffering from unpleasant skin diseases as ritually impure and contagious, and to loathe most of God’s creatures as abominations?

Mary’s e-mails searching for more benign meanings had a point. And in fact it soon became clear that she had a very important point. Closer examination of the Hebrew text and the way the term *sheqes* is used showed that there is a binary opposition between *sheqes* and *shiqqus*, two words with the same root but very different vocalization. *Shiqqus*, like *gillul* and *piggul*, has horrible associations and overtones, while *sheqes* seems to have been deliberately selected or even coined by the author of Leviticus to play down those associations. *Shiqqus* is regularly used elsewhere in the Bible in passages that condemn the abominations and obscenities of idolatrous foreign religions; in contrast, *sheqes* is rare outside Leviticus. So at the very least we can say that *sheqes* is free of some of those obnoxious associations and possibly means something not to be touched, to be avoided, not because it is hideous or disgusting or obscene but because it requires special respect and protection. There is even some rabbinic evidence that the English words ‘unclean’, ‘impure’ and the like give the wrong impression of what the Hebrew word means, just as the word ‘blood’ in English has very different associations from the Hebrew word *dam*.

(4) Another of Mary’s contributions to Leviticus research comes from her constant reference to other relevant texts in the Bible. This is not in itself an original insight of Mary’s—the rabbis in Talmudic times had a hermeneutical principle known as *Ke-yoše bo be-maqom aher*. But until recently the dominant historical-critical considerations made it virtually impossible to apply—this text was written before that one so the first text can’t refer to the second, and we can’t use the second to explain the first. But, like Calum Carmichael, for many years another solitary voice in the world of Old Testament scholarship whose literary and legal insights into the meaning of the Bible have finally begun to be taken more seriously, Mary found the key to many problems in Leviticus in the book of Genesis. Calum argues that the laws (especially as formulated in Deuteronomy) were written as a kind of commentary on the Genesis stories. Mary similarly argues that the Leviticus legislation is consistent with biblical beliefs about creation, especially those expressed in the Genesis stories of creation and the Flood. For example, the swarming, teeming creatures not to be eaten according to the Leviticus laws are the same swarming, teeming creatures that in Genesis are symbols of the abundance of God’s life-giving power; and the respect for life in Genesis—and throughout history in Jewish law where *piqquah nephesh* is one of the most central and fundamental halakhic principles of

all—means that it is impossible that most of the living creatures on this planet are “abominations”.

(5) Another remarkable insight in Mary’s studies of Leviticus concerns the purpose of the book. Is it prescriptive or descriptive? Was it written by a lawgiver to give detailed rules and regulations on what people are to do and not do and how they are to live their lives? Or is it more like an educational or even prophetic work describing and interpreting things as they are, using things as they are to teach about order, justice, compassion and respect for creation? Curiously enough, in a little study I did on the language of Leviticus—my contribution to a memorable conference at Lancaster built around Mary in 1995—I discovered that imperatives are exceptionally rare in Leviticus and suggested that the torah of the leper (see Chapter 38) *torat ha-mešora* ‘and the like means ‘the teaching of Moses about the leper’, rather than ‘the instructions on what to do with the leper’. Moses of course is a prophet according to the biblical tradition rather than a lawgiver (Deut. 34.10-12). So Mary points out that the apparent hard line in Leviticus on cutting lepers off from social contact and on many other matters is not intended as a rule to be obeyed, but rather is part of an ethical and theological discourse based on how things are in contemporary society.

(6) This brings me to one final and very important contribution to Old Testament Studies that Mary has made over the years: her concern as an anthropologist for who was doing what to whom when the text was first produced. From the beginning she has emphasized the need to take very seriously the original context of the texts she studies. Now of course the quest for the original *Sitz im Leben* of every text, like the quest for the historical Jesus and the interminable discussions about which part of the Pentateuch or the book of Isaiah came from which period of ancient Israel’s history, was central to mainstream biblical scholarship from the eighteenth century on. Indeed, it was the only concern of the majority of biblical scholars and commentators, as the archaeological data were enthusiastically collected and matched with the biblical evidence, often in a rather crude manner. There was plenty of evidence for how things were, but until comparatively recently, the application of anthropological data to the Bible was pretty simplistic. There was the notion that Hebrew religion, as recorded in the Bible, developed from a primitive, animistic stage when people believed in spirits, through a polytheistic phase to monotheism. Theories about nomadism were crudely applied to some of the patriarchal stories, and it was argued that the Hebrews had a totemistic view of sacrifice (W.R. Smith) and that they could not distinguish clearly between an individual and his or her group (T.H. Robinson). More recent studies, informed by the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss, have completely undermined such generalizations about the Hebrew mind and seek instead to explain biblical laws and rituals in terms of symbolism and social structure.

In all this Mary's anthropological approach to the original sociopolitical context of the text, was, it seems to me, unusually sensitive to the dynamics of the situation she imagined and reconstructed. For example, her work on Leviticus assumes a context in the early Second Temple period, a time when there was a conflict between Ezra and the priests. Ezra's followers included the authors of Deuteronomy and subsequent rabbinic tradition (which of course traces its origins in a continuous chain back to Ezra and the 'Men of the Great Synagogue'), while the Priestly tradition is what we have in Leviticus. So this explains the contrast between Deuteronomy and Leviticus. The contrast between the hard line of Deuteronomy and the compassion in Leviticus is due to what she calls the pastoral concerns of the priests for 'their congregations', suffering from the effects of Ezra's hard-line policies. I don't think that aspect of Priestly tradition has ever been better put despite its obvious importance. The question of just how it came about that Ezra used Deuteronomy and not Leviticus/Numbers raises the issue of the identity and status of the Torah. Perhaps the Torah was still in a state of flux during that period, and it is fortunate indeed that Ezra, with all the authority of the Medes and Persians behind him (Ezra 7), didn't succeed in removing Leviticus/Numbers from it altogether—if those books were already in it, in their present form. Or could he not crack the code that was intended to give comfort to his victims?

Mary has given us all a vast number of brilliant ideas and insights over the years on all kinds of different issues. Every one of us, even social scientists, has an agenda of our own, a bit of a bias in one direction or another. Looking back over Mary's writings recently, I was struck by the frequency with which she appears to have been motivated by the desire to discover a benign interpretation of the data on which she is working. Anyone who could conclude an essay on the abominations of Leviticus with the following oft-quoted sentence must have had a very special sort of benign motivation: 'The dietary laws would have been like signs which at every turn inspired meditation on the oneness, purity and completeness of God' (Douglas 1966: 57). She was able to argue that the laws separating clean from unclean in Leviticus—even those notorious laws that have prompted so many diverse theories, allegorical, religio-historical, medical, psychological—express a worldview with important ethical and ecological implications.

So thank you, Mary, on behalf of Old Testament people all over the world, who are hugely in your debt, many congratulations and Happy Birthday. Like Moses whose contribution to biblical studies spanned three generations, may you live to 120!

עד מאה ועשרים!

Bibliography

Douglas, Mary

- 1966 *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).
- 1993 'The Glorious Book of Numbers', *JSQ* 1: 193-216.
- 1999 *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

6

READING OTHER PEOPLE'S READINGS OF SCRIPTURE*

For most of the last fifteen hundred years or so, Judaism and Christianity have developed independently, and Jews and Christians have read their Scriptures in separate worlds, largely ignorant of each other's interests and interpretations. Jews for the most part worked in isolation from the rest of Western culture, using the original Hebrew and Aramaic texts; they had no interest whatsoever in Christian interpretations of Scripture, which they regarded, often quite rightly, as erroneous. Meanwhile, Christian theologians and preachers worked in state-sponsored Christian institutions, using the ancient versions, especially Greek and Latin, and other influential translations such as the King James Authorized Version and Luther's Bible, and rarely consulted the original Hebrew. There were exceptions of course, but they were mostly at the level of scholars and professors, whose work had little influence on ordinary believers.

The fact that in modern times large numbers of Christians and non-Jews now learn Hebrew and study the Hebrew Bible, from seminarians and divinity students to people interested in ancient Near Eastern history, archaeology, Semitic languages and the like, has also had very little effect on the situation. Christians studying the Hebrew Bible (or rather their Old Testament in Hebrew) seldom come anywhere near an appreciation of Jewish beliefs and practices. In fact, Judaism is just about as far removed from the Hebrew Bible as Christianity is. You learn very little about Judaism from reading the Hebrew Bible, because the Hebrew Bible, or 'Written Torah', cannot be read apart from the 'Oral Torah', that is to say, the Jewish tradition recorded in the rabbinic literature known as Talmud and Midrash (Ginzberg 1975). Jewish students, as well as non-Jewish students of Judaism, read Talmud and Midrash more than the Hebrew Bible. Jews have Talmudical colleges rather than Bible colleges. Jewish tradition is by no means

* This paper was originally published in M. Barnes, SJ (ed.), *Spirituality and the Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (*The Way* Supplement, 97; Oxford: The Way, 2000), pp.11-20.

the same thing as the Hebrew Bible, just as the history of Christian doctrine is hardly the same thing as a history of biblical interpretation. This further widens the gap between Jews and Christians reading their Scriptures.

This century, however, has seen some major changes in the situation. The central event of our century, and not just in the history of Jewish–Christian relations, is the Holocaust. For many Jews and Christians, Auschwitz is as much a watershed in the history of their religion as Sinai or the crucifixion. The implications of this for our reading of the ‘Binding of Isaac’ (Genesis 22), the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53), the book of Job and other texts, still have to be fully explored, but they are likely to be profound (Linafelt 2000). The establishment of the state of Israel has similarly had a profound effect on Jewish readings of Scripture. Modern Zionist uses of the Bible constitute a fertile area of contemporary biblical interpretation that will have to be taken into account as well (see Chapter 23). A third new factor in the situation, and one that will increasingly influence Christian reading of Scripture, is the dramatic change in the official attitude of the churches toward the Jews in the second half of the twentieth century. Catholics, since the Second Vatican Council, for example, are now officially instructed to abandon their traditional negative, supersessionist beliefs about Judaism and to seek to appreciate Jewish tradition and its relationship to Christianity in a new way. So as we approach the third millennium, the time is ripe for a reappraisal of the relationship between Jewish and Christian readings of Scripture.

1. The Hebrew Bible Is Not the Same as the ‘Old Testament’

Before we begin to discuss questions about reading and interpretation, we must first define what we mean by ‘the Scriptures’, and in particular dispose of the widespread misconception that the Hebrew Bible of the Jews and the Christians’ Old Testament are one and the same. *The Hebrew Bible is not the same thing as the ‘Old Testament’*, and if you underestimate the differences between them, you get a distorted view of both. It has become quite common in universities, colleges and elsewhere to avoid the word ‘Old Testament’ and call it the ‘Hebrew Bible’ instead, as if they were the same book. This is because the term ‘Old Testament’ can be and often is used in a derogatory and offensive way. ‘Old Testament ethics’ often means pre-Christian (i.e. primitive or inferior), for example, and the ‘God of the Old Testament’ is thought of as a bloodthirsty warrior, a God of justice and vengeance, irrespective of the fact that there are far more texts about God as a loving mother in the ‘Old Testament’ than there are in the ‘New’ (see Chapter 18). But that must not blind us to the differences.

First of all, the *contents* of the two books are different: most of the world’s Christians have Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus and other ‘apocryphal texts’ in their Old Testaments, books that

are not in the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, some of these texts, like the Book of Wisdom, were originally written in Greek and could never have been in a Hebrew Bible. The Protestant Bible has the same contents as the Hebrew Bible because one of the reforms of Martin Luther was to remove, as noncanonical or apocryphal, those books that are not in the Hebrew Bible. But the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches still retain these books, while the Coptic and Ethiopian Churches have still more books in their Bibles, including the books of *Enoch* and *Jubilees*, thereby distancing themselves still further from the Jewish tradition.

Second, the *literary structure* of the two books is completely different: the Hebrew Bible starts with the Torah ('the Law') and the Prophets, and ends with the Writings, an arrangement obviously designed to place the Torah in a position of special honour and authority at one end and to indicate a line of descending authority to the Writings at the other end. This arrangement incidentally gives Jewish Scripture its Hebrew name, *Tanakh*, derived from the initials of its three parts: *Torah*, *Nebi'im* ('Prophets') and *Ketubim* ('Writings'). The Christian canon reverses this direction, beginning with Genesis, in the dim and distant past, and progressing through the timeless wisdom literature and the poetry of the Psalms, towards the Prophets, who point with increasing urgency and specificity towards future fulfilment in the Gospels to which they are attached. Another significant difference in the arrangement of the books is that, for Jews, Daniel is among the 'Writings' near the end of the Bible, while in the Christian tradition he is one of the Major Prophets.

The *language* of the two books is also different. The *Tanakh* is in Hebrew; but who has ever seen an Old Testament in Hebrew? Parts of it maybe, and in a different order, but I don't believe a complete Old Testament in Hebrew exists anywhere. Some of the modern translations of the New Testament into Hebrew have been appended to the *Tanakh* in one volume, but that is not the same thing. It is a curious hybrid, neither one thing nor the other. The oldest complete manuscripts of the Old Testament are in Greek and date from the fourth and fifth centuries. The oldest complete manuscripts of the *Tanakh* are mediaeval and are in Hebrew. There are some modern Jewish translations of the *Tanakh* into English, such as the Soncino commentaries and the Jewish Publication Society versions (1917, 1985). But the Bible is still read in Hebrew in the synagogue, and the Hebrew original is always more central to Jewish interpretations than it ever could be in a Christian context.

Finally, if the contents, structure and language of the two books are so different, I hardly need spend time on the totally different *context* in which the two books are read. The one is read in the context of rabbinic, mediaeval and modern Jewish exegetical tradition; the other, bound in the same volume as the New Testament, is read in the quite separate context of patristic,

mediaeval and modern Christian exegetical tradition. When a Jewish reader of the Bible wants to know what a particular word or phrase in the Bible means, he often starts with the question, ‘What does Rashi say?’ Rashi (an abbreviation for Rabbi Shlomo ben Yisḥaq) (1040–1105) is the most widely used Jewish commentator on Scripture. A native of Troyes in northeast France, he wrote massive commentaries on the whole of the *Tanakh* as well as the Talmud, and most printed editions of both have for centuries been accompanied by Rashi’s commentary (Pearl 1988). The particular strength of his commentaries is that they include, in convenient verse-by-verse format, references to material otherwise hard to locate in the rabbinic literature: this means that, in consulting Rashi, you are at the same time looking up what the Talmud and Midrash say. In the Jewish context, that is what matters most, not what the original author intended and, of course, not what St Jerome or Martin Luther or Gerhard von Rad says it means.

So great are the differences that I am not going to try to find ‘common ground’ between us. That can too often lead to distortion and oversimplification. Of course Jews and Christians are both monotheists, but Jewish monotheism is not the same as Christian trinitarian monotheism. Jews and Christians both believe in the Messiah, but Jewish messianism is very different from Christian messianism. Instead I would like to try to illustrate some of the distinctive insights of Jewish interpretation by reference to three well-known and representative examples, in the hope that Christians reading the same text may find new things there that they had not noticed before. Christians reading Jewish interpretations—and more are doing this now than ever before—often learn something about the Scriptures and about their own faith, as well as about Jews and Judaism (Larsson 1990). My three examples concern three fundamental aspects of Judaism—creation, suffering and messianism—and each illustrates one aspect of the distinctive dynamic of Jewish interpretation: language, storytelling and a sense of history. There is of course much more to be said about Jewish ways of reading the Scriptures. I have left out the whole of Jewish ethical tradition, for instance: halakhah has been neglected in favour of aggadah (Loewe 1990). But it is to be hoped that the examples selected here will be representative enough to give readers an authentic taste (Hebrew *ta’am*) of the subject and encourage them to delve more deeply into the world of Jewish exegetical literature.

2. Jewish Language, Storytelling and the Sense of History

Since ancient times the language of Scripture has been referred to as ‘the sacred language’. Hebrew is the language of the angels, so that prayers in any other language were ineffective. Adam and Eve spoke Hebrew. The words of the Torah were dictated by God to Moses in Hebrew (Weitzman

1994). The original language of Scripture has always been far more central to Jewish interpretation than it ever was in Christianity, even when it was no longer the everyday language of the Jews. Still today in most synagogues, the weekly Scripture readings are in Hebrew, and a large part of religious education is taken up with teaching students the Hebrew language. It was a father's duty, according to the rabbis, to teach his son 'the sacred language' as soon as he could speak.

The significance of this for our understanding of Jewish methods of exegesis cannot be overestimated. The first words in the book of Genesis, for example, in Hebrew do not necessarily mean 'In the beginning God created . . .': they can also mean 'In the beginning of God's creation . . .' (NRSV). In other words, before God said, 'Let there be light!', before the first act of divine creation, the formless earth, the deep, the darkness and the waters were already there, and the rabbis then had to face the philosophical problem of who created chaos, if it was not God (Cohen 1947: 1). This is not a picture of creation out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*), but a more complex picture in which God transforms chaos into order, darkness into light, in the same way that he created Israel, not out of nothing but out of slavery (Isa. 43.1, 7). In the Jewish lectionary, each reading from the Torah is accompanied by a reading from the Prophets known as a Haftarah, and in this case the Haftarah is Isa. 42.5–43.10, which superbly establishes this connection between the 'creation of heaven and earth' and the 'creation' of the people of God. Elsewhere God creates a new heart out of guilt and despair (Psalm 51) and a new Jerusalem out of sin and destruction (Isa. 65.18). 'Creation' in Jewish tradition is thus defined more by reference to God's continuing intervention on behalf of his people than by philosophical speculation about the origin of the universe.

The original language of the story of Adam and Eve similarly influences the way it is understood by Jewish interpreters (Magonet 1991: 111–22). In Hebrew, the word *adam* means either Adam, a proper name like Eve, Cain and Abel, or 'human creature', male or female. In Gen. 1.27 it is a collective noun best translated as 'human beings' or 'humankind' (NRSV): 'God created the *adam* . . . he created them male and female'. In the next chapter 'he forms the *adam* out of the dust of the ground' (2.7). Not until v. 22 is the body of the *adam* divided into a man and a woman (Ginzberg 1975: 35). There is nothing in the text to prove that only the male was created in the image of God, or that the man was created before the woman, as some Christian theologians have claimed (1 Tim. 2.13). The word *elohim* is similarly ambiguous in Hebrew: it usually means 'God' or 'gods', but it can also mean 'divine beings' or 'angels'. Being created 'in the image of God' (Gen. 1.26) might then be better explained by reference to Gen. 3.22 ('like one of us') and Psalm 8 ('a little less than angels'), texts that are manifestly less theological than rhetorical or poetic. Incidentally, the linguistic skill and

enthusiasm of Jewish interpreters were applied to the ancient Greek version of Scripture as well as the Hebrew: the four letters of the Greek form of 'Adam' were interpreted as the initials of the four points of the Greek compass, thus symbolizing the unity of all humankind (*Sib. Or.* 3.24-26).

The Aqedah, or 'the binding of Isaac', in Genesis 22 is one of the most often read stories in all of Jewish literature. The extraordinary challenge to Abraham's faith, the sacrifice of Isaac and the divine intervention at the moment of crisis, have been interpreted and reinterpreted against the background of suffering and persecution, right down to the present post-Holocaust era. No wonder that, in line with traditional Jewish exegetical method, every detail of the short biblical narrative has been pondered, every gap in the story filled in, every possible allusion explored, every clue to the responses of the protagonists meticulously examined. Here are a few examples. First, why did Abraham, a wealthy man with servants, saddle his own ass (v. 3)? Rashi explains that this was because love disregards the normal rules of social conduct: this was to be no ordinary expedition but one in which a man's love of his son, his only son (vv. 2, 12), was to be in conflict with his love of God. Why is the sentence 'and they went both of them together' repeated twice (vv. 6 and 8)? The repetition suggests that Isaac, even though still a boy, was of one mind with his father, willing to die for his faith. His mother was involved too. According to Jewish (and some Christian) traditions, Sarah died of grief when news reached her that her son was dead: for why else is her death described immediately after the Aqedah (Gen. 23.2)? (Ginzberg 1975: 128-36).

But the most striking suggestion deduced from the gaps in the biblical story concerns what happened to Isaac after the ram appeared. Isaac is not mentioned again in the narrative until ch. 24: why is this? The rabbis used this curious feature of the story as proof that Isaac was not only prepared to die but actually did die and so became a prototype for Jewish martyrdom (Spiegel 1979). References to 'the blood of Isaac' and even 'the ashes of Isaac' become more frequent in Jewish literature as the persecution of the Jews increased. The fact that the event took place 'on the third day' (v. 4) provided scriptural evidence for the additional belief that Isaac rose from the dead (cf. Hos. 6.2; Jon. 1.17), and was taken by God to paradise. Christological interpretations of the story of the 'sacrifice of Isaac' (for instance, that Isaac carrying the wood prefigures Christ carrying the cross) go some way towards this reading of the story too, but it was the Jews who, in times of persecution, developed it most elaborately and poignantly. A poem by Ephraim of Bonn (1132-1200), written under the shadow of the Second and Third Crusades, when many of Germany's Jews were massacred, is one of the most powerful and explicit examples, in which Abraham 'slaughtered him with steady hands as prescribed by law' (Carmi 1981: 379-84).

The well-known twentieth-century reading of the story by Wilfred Owen (1893–1918) was similarly prompted by the carnage of the First World War:

the old man would not so, but slew his son
and half the seed of Europe one by one (Lewis 1963: 42).

We have seen how history and interpretation are inextricably interwoven in Jewish tradition. Whatever the origin of the Aqedah story, the faith of Isaac confronting death and the dreadful dilemma of his father are not just pieces of ancient history. They are real issues in which centuries of readers have seen their own experience reflected. The Bible is not just an ancient Near Eastern text like the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh or the Egyptian Book of the Dead. It is a living text, addressed as much to contemporary readers, like Ephraim of Bonn and Wilfred Owen, as to its original readership or audience. An essential part of Jewish exegetical method involves relating it to present-day experience, applying it to the situation in which its readers find themselves, looking for connections between then and now. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of the messianic hope, the hope for a better world in the future, a world characterized by justice and peace. There is no shortage of scriptural texts about the messianic age and we end with a look at some of these as Jewish interpreters read them.

Once again we must start by distinguishing clearly between Christian messianism and Jewish messianism. For Christians, the major messianic texts are Isa. 7.14 ('Behold, a virgin shall conceive . . .') and Isaiah 53 ('he was wounded for our transgressions . . .'), while for Jews such texts are of marginal interest. The Hebrew of Isa. 7.14 actually reads 'young woman', not 'virgin', so that the miraculous element is missing, and the context is otherwise not particularly interesting. Similarly, Isaiah 53 is not part of the Jewish lectionary and has had little influence on Jewish messianic tradition. Yet, despite these obvious differences of approach, Christian writers down the ages have judged Jews on their 'erroneous' interpretation of such passages, or their 'stubborn blindness' to the evidence these texts provide. A graphic example of the almost total lack of communication between the two sides is the public debate between a Dominican friar and a Jewish rabbi that took place in Barcelona in 1263. The Christian, Friar Pablo Christiani, a converted Jew, argued on the basis of such texts as Isa. 7.14 and Isaiah 53 that the Messiah had come in the person of Jesus Christ and had suffered and died for the salvation of the human race. The Jew, Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (or Nahmanides), had no difficulty rejecting the traditional christological interpretations of the passages quoted by Pablo and based his messianism instead on the plain meaning of such texts as Mic. 4.3, where the messianic age is defined in terms of global peace: 'Yet from the days of Jesus until now, the whole world has been full of violence and plundering and the Christians are greater spillers of blood than all the rest . . . and how

hard it would be for you, my lord king, and for your knights if they were not to learn war any more!' (Maccoby 1982: 113-21).

Jews in many periods of their history have looked in vain for signs that the messianic age has arrived. There have been many false Messiahs: Shabbetai Tzevi (1626–1675) is one of the best known and most tragic examples (Scholem 1971: 78-141). Some of the mystical hasidic sects founded in eighteenth-century Europe have believed from time to time that their leader or Rebbe was the Messiah. Of these, the Brooklyn-based Lubavitchers are probably today's best known and most enthusiastic manifestation, easily accessible on the Internet. During the last century, liberal German Jews believed that the messianic age had dawned in the newfound freedom and prosperity that followed emancipation, while others, especially the victims of persecution in Europe, have found signs of messianic hope in the Zionist movement founded in 1897, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and especially in the 'miraculous' Six Day War in June 1967 (Hertzberg 1959; Glazer 1972). Significant Jewish readings of Scripture include Israeli place-names like Mevasseret Tzion, 'O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion' (Isa. 40.9), Petah Tikvah, 'door of hope' (Hos. 2.15 = MT 2.17) and Peduyim, 'ransomed' (Isa. 35.10), as well as numerous inscriptions on public monuments like the 'swords into ploughshares' text from Mic. 4.3 on a 'Monument of Peace' set up in Jerusalem after the Six Day War (Sawyer 1996: 103-6).

3. *The Reception of the Bible*

As one who has devoted most of my professional life to trying to interpret the Bible, especially the Hebrew Bible, I have come to the conclusion that one of the most important parts of my job, and one of the most neglected until very recently, is to take seriously what other people have made of it. I am not thinking only of other professional biblical scholars, historians, archaeologists, linguists, commentary writers and the like. Nor do I want to limit myself to the great religious writers like Augustine, Aquinas and Luther. The Bible has been read and interpreted and used in all kinds of other contexts as well: in art, music, politics, the media, literature and film. It is obvious that what people believe the text means is often more important than what it originally meant or what was in the original author's mind—even if that were accessible to us today.

There are signs that I am not alone in concluding that this aspect of the subject, known as the reception history, or *Wirkungsgeschichte* ('impact history'), of the Bible, is important. There have been many publications in recent years devoted to it (e.g. Beuken *et al.* 1991; Jeffrey 1992; Sawyer 1996; Sherwood 2000), and now Blackwells of Oxford are to publish a series of biblical commentaries uniquely devoted to the reception history

of every book of the Bible (Oxford 2004–). But perhaps nowhere will this change of emphasis be more significant than in relation to Jewish and Christian readings of Scripture down the centuries. How the Jewish interpreters have handled a text may be quite different from more familiar Christian traditions; but they frequently tell us something worth listening to about the meaning of the text, as well as something even more worth listening to about Jews and Judaism. I believe that reading other people's readings of Scripture, with the same sensitivity and critical expertise as anything else we read, is going to become a major component of biblical studies in the future, and one that cannot fail to make a positive contribution to Jewish–Christian relations at every level.

Bibliography

- Beuken, Wim, Sean Freyne and Anton Weiler (eds.)
 1991 *The Bible and its Readers* (Concilium, 1991/1; London: SCM Press).
- Carmi, T. (ed. and trans.)
 1981 *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (London: Penguin Books).
- Cohen, A. (ed.)
 1947 *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London, 1947).
- Ginzberg, Louis
 1975 *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, one-vol. edn).
- Glazer, Nathan
 1972 'The Year 1967 and its Meaning', in *American Judaism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn): 169–76).
- Hertzberg, Arthur
 1959 *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (New York: Harper & Row).
- Jeffrey, David Lyle (ed.)
 1992 *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- Larsson, Göran
 1990 *Bound for Freedom: The Book of Exodus in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson).
- Lewis, C. Day (ed.)
 1963 *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen* (London: Chatto & Windus).
- Linafelt, Tod (ed.)
 2001 *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust* (New York: New York University Press).
- Loewe, R.
 1990 'Jewish Exegesis' in R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (eds.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press): 346–47.
- Maccoby, Hyam
 1982 *Judaism on Trial: Jewish–Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (London: Associated University Presses).

- Magonet, Jonathan
1991 *A Rabbi's Bible* (London: SCM Press).
- Pearl, Chaim
1988 *Rashi* (London: Halban).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Sawyer, John F.A., C.C.Rowland and J.Kovacs (eds.)
2004— *Blackwell Bible Commentaries* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell).
- Scholem, Gershom
1971 *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books).
- Sherwood, Yvonne
2000 *A Biblical Text and its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Spiegel, Shalom
1979 *The Last Trial: On the Legends and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac as a Sacrifice: The Akedah* (New York: Behrman House).
- Weitzman, M.
1994 'Judaism', in R.E. Asher (ed), *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (10 vols.; Oxford: Pergamon Press): IV, 1827-31.

COMBATING PREJUDICES ABOUT THE BIBLE AND JUDAISM*

In spite of belated efforts on the part of some religious and academic institutions in the second half of the twentieth century, the language of Christianity is still encumbered with much that reflects attitudes and structures of its past history, a history in which there is much to be ashamed of, especially in regard to the Jews. The Christian terms 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament' are part of that lexical baggage. A moment's thought will show how damaging they can be at all levels, literary, theological and political. The traditional division of the Christian Bible into the 'Old Testament' and the 'New Testament' inevitably implies some kind of invidious comparison between the two parts. It suggests that what is said in the 'Old' part is somehow less authoritative or less important than what is said in the 'New', although this goes entirely contrary to official Christian teaching on Scripture. Everyday expressions like 'Old Testament ethics' and 'the God of the Old Testament' suggest cruelty and ruthless legalism, in spite of the fact that the commandment to 'love your neighbour as yourself' first appears in Lev. 19.18 and many of the most sublime and most often quoted descriptions of God's love are to be found in the Psalms and the prophets.

But it is not only books of the Bible that suffer from being labelled 'Old', superseded, inferior. Ninety-nine per cent of the world's Christians probably still believe that 'Old Testament religion' is more or less the same thing as Judaism, that is to say, a somewhat primitive pre-Christian religion characterized by the ethics of 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth', a religion superseded by 'New Testament religion' and therefore irredeemably inferior to Christianity. Although people who use such language are usually unconscious of what they are doing, their language reflects and perpetuates traditional Christian attitudes to the Jews that range from arrogance and a sense of superiority to hatred and violence.

* An earlier version of this paper was read at the 17th Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions in Rome in September 1990 and published in *Theology* 94 (1991), pp. 269-78.

In this short paper, I want to argue that there is no reason to preserve this invidious, anti-Jewish distinction between one part of the Christian Bible and another. Historically it goes back to a period of anti-Jewish polemic officially renounced by a large part of the Christian church today, and theologically it is indefensible. It is high time that the terms 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament' were dropped completely from the language of theology and religious studies and consigned, like other racist and sexist terms, to the history of language. Changing language does not on its own change attitudes, but it can heighten people's awareness of problems they had not even noticed before. Efforts are now made to avoid racist terms that imply that white people are a superior race, and sexist language that assumes that everyone should be male: one hopes that changes of attitude will follow. If, by avoiding the terms 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament' altogether, people can be made to think differently about Christian Scripture and about Judaism, then it is worth doing (Williamson and Allen 1989: 115; Braybrooke 1990: 171 n. 16).

Another piece of lexical baggage that should be got rid of at the same time, widely used in some scholarly circles, is the absurd and totally unnecessary term 'intertestamental'. It would be hard to give even approximate dates for an 'intertestamental period', and what exactly is meant by 'intertestamental literature'? Does it, for example, include the Apocrypha, which for most Christians is part of the Old Testament as well? The origin of the term is presumably related to the publication of 'ecumenical' editions of the Bible, such as the *Common Bible* (New York: Collins, 1973), in which the books that are called by some Christians 'apocryphal' or 'deuterocanonical' are printed 'between the Testaments' (Russell 1963). Once again it is not just history and literature that suffer from this kind of labelling: there are scholars who speak of 'intertestamental Judaism' (whatever that means), a term that is as gratuitously insulting as *Spätjudentum* (Klein 1978: 15-38). It too has to be removed from Christian vocabulary, along with 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament'.

In case anyone should think that this is no longer a live issue or that the problem has already been solved, it must be pointed out that the substitute usually recommended, namely 'Hebrew Bible', is not adequate either. It is certainly true that in many parts of the world, especially the United States, the term 'Old Testament' is already by and large avoided. There are few, if any, departments of Old Testament language and literature, or lecturers in New Testament studies, in American universities, and no Societies for the Study of the Old Testament, or Journals for the Study of the New Testament, as there are in Britain. Instead, the discipline is either unified under such titles as Society (and Journal) of Biblical Literature, or else—this is where the problem arises—divided up into 'Hebrew Bible' and 'Christian Origins'. There can be no problem with 'Christian Origins', but the implication

that the term 'Hebrew Bible' is a straight synonym for 'Old Testament' is manifestly wrong, as we shall see in a moment, and in fact may perpetuate some of the prejudices we are trying to avoid.

Before turning to the question of what to call them today, let us look briefly at the origin and early history of the sacred books that constitute Scripture for Jews and Christians (Barton 1990: 101-5). In the beginning there was no distinction whatever in status and authority between what Hillel, Akiba and Judah the Prince meant by Scripture and what Jesus, Paul and the Apostolic Fathers meant. The contents, the order of the books and the language in which they were written differed, but on one thing all varieties of ancient Judaism and Christianity were agreed: the authority of Scripture. Each found in Scripture the authority for their own form of religion. The Sadducees (like the Samaritans) found it in the Five Books of Moses, the 'written Torah' on its own. The Pharisees gave equal authority to the oral Torah alongside the written text of the Hebrew Bible. It seems that Christians from the beginning found the best expression of their beliefs in the Psalms and Isaiah (known later as the 'Fifth Gospel') (see Chapter 24). Thus, at first there was no suggestion that Genesis or Isaiah or the Psalms were in any way inferior to the Gospels or Paul's letters. On the contrary, there was some debate in the church about whether the 'New' writings could be afforded the same status in public worship as the 'Old'. In those early days 'Old' meant 'accepted, authoritative' rather than 'inferior, out of date, superseded', and 'New' meant 'recent, additional, newfangled' rather than 'superior'.

The change came predictably with the rise of institutionalized anti-Judaism. In the middle of the second century, the powerful Christian scholar Marcion (died c. 160 CE) was condemned as a heretic for his radical theology, not his anti-Judaism. He and his many followers in the church wanted to get rid of everything Jewish from Scripture, and it may well have been as a sop to them that part of Scripture, the original Jewish part, was labelled 'Old' in contrast to the distinctive Christian 'New' part. The church never officially doubted the canonicity of a single book of Jewish Scripture: the writings were already far too firmly embedded in Christian liturgy and theology, and had not both Jesus and Paul venerated all the books equally as Holy Scripture? How could they go against such authority and such tradition? Early attempts at dejudaising Scripture failed: the original Jewish Scriptures remained in the canon, but the term 'Old Testament' was coined to keep them separate. Like the ox and the ass in the nativity scene, interpreted as symbols of Israel's stupidity (they could recognize their master in the manger while the Jews could not: Isa. 1.3), and the blindfolded personifications of the synagogue in Christian art, the term 'Old Testament' then became one of the symbols of rejection from which Jews in Christian Europe have suffered ever since.

I

As things are now, the Hebrew Bible of the Jews is not the same thing at all as that part of the Christian Bible traditionally known as the 'Old Testament'. In the first place, the order of the books is different. The Jewish Bible begins with the Torah, the Five Books of Moses, complete in themselves, telling the story of creation, promise, liberation and the constitution of 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' with a wonderful future on the other side of the Jordan. A Torah Scroll is hallowed in a way no other book of the Bible is, encased in silver and velvet, housed in the holy ark in every synagogue, ceremoniously brought out every Sabbath and read aloud, every word of it in weekly portions, in the course of a year. The second part of the Jewish Bible, the 'Prophets', comprises not only what Christians call the prophetic books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.), known to Jews as the 'Latter Prophets', but also Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, known as the 'Former Prophets'. The third part is known as the 'Writings' and contains all the other books of the Bible: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, the five 'Scrolls' (Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther), Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.

The Christian Bible is very different. There is no break between Moses' death at the end of the Pentateuch and the rest of the story of Israel's past. The text runs without a break from Genesis to Esther (or, in some traditions, from Genesis to Maccabees), and the Five Books of Moses have no special status or authority or role to play. Indeed, almost as if to deny the literary validity of the traditional Jewish grouping of the first five books of the Bible, while at the same time highlighting the differences between the Jewish and Christian Bibles, modern Christian scholars, notably Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth, argued for a 'Hexateuch', taking Joshua as part of the same literary unit as the Pentateuch, or a 'Tetrateuch', taking Deuteronomy as the beginning of a separate literary unit, the 'Deuteronomistic history', running through to the end of 2 Kings. Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles all appear in this first part of the Bible, while in the Jewish Bible they come at the end. Next in the Christian Bible comes the 'Wisdom literature' (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, etc.) and Psalms, also grouped with the Writings at the end of the Jewish Bible.

Most significant are the position and contents of the third group, the Prophets. First, they come after the Psalms and the Wisdom literature, that is to say, immediately before and pointing towards the Gospels. If the book of Malachi comes at the very end of the Prophets, as it does in many Christian Bibles, then the prophecy about the coming of the day of the Lord heralded by Elijah is only a few pages away from the fulfilment of that prophecy in Matthew's Gospel.

Second, the Prophets in Christian Scripture contain not only the Latter Prophets of Jewish tradition but also the book of Daniel, with its apocalyptic visions of ‘one like a son of man’ in ch. 7 and the resurrection of the dead in ch. 12, promoted as it were from its position among the Writings at the end of the Hebrew Bible to that of a Major Prophet in Christian Scripture. This produces in the Christian Bible four Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel), instead of three, and these, with the twelve Minor Prophets considered as a single book, make up a ‘Prophetic Pentateuch’, almost as central to Christian tradition as the Five Books of Moses are to Judaism.

There is another crucial difference between the Hebrew Bible and what Christians have traditionally called their ‘Old Testament’. For the vast majority of the world’s Christians, Orthodox and Catholic, Scripture contains a number of books never canonized by the Jews (Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees, 1 and 2 Esdras and others), and so even the contents of the ‘Old Testament’ are not the same as those of the ‘Hebrew Bible’. Finally, if you add the very important linguistic fact that this Christian ‘Old Testament’, inseparable from the rest of the Christian Bible, has never been printed as part of Christian Scripture in Hebrew, then the differences in structure, contents and language—and we have not even mentioned interpretation—between the Hebrew Bible and what Christians call their Old Testament, are so vast as to make superficial comparisons virtually impossible, and the term ‘Hebrew Bible’ totally inappropriate as an alternative to ‘Old Testament’. If the distinction is not made, through ignorance or prejudice, then the result is that both Judaism and a large part of Christian Scripture suffer.

II

Given these obvious differences between the Jewish Bible and what Christians call their ‘Old Testament’, and the equally obvious continuity that unifies the books of the Christian Bible from Genesis to Revelation, why do we persist in labelling some parts of scripture ‘Old’ and others ‘New’? The proposal here is not to find alternative terms such as “First Testament” and “Second Testament” (Sanders 1987: 47-49) or the like, which perpetuate the distinction, but to question the separation of two parts of the Christian Bible. In addition to the historical reasons discussed above, in particular the church’s continuing low estimation of Judaism as ‘the religion of the Old Testament’, it is sometimes argued that there are also important theological reasons for retaining the two terms. They are a theological judgment to the effect that the content of the ‘OT’ belongs to a period of God’s dealings with the world that has been in some way superseded by the coming of Jesus Christ in the ‘NT’. There are various problems with this. First, while clearly

it is true that, for Christians, the coming of Christ changes things, this does not mean that, for Christians, Hebrew Scripture itself was superseded. Jesus and Paul would have been horrified at the suggestion. It is of course largely a matter of hermeneutics. If Genesis spoke only of primeval and patriarchal times, and the prophets addressed only ancient Israel, a period now superseded by centuries of later developments, then there would be some point in distinguishing between 'Old' and 'New'. But they don't. In fact, most of the 'new' dispensation is already there in the older books of Scripture for those 'with eyes to see and ears to hear'. The new covenant is first mentioned in Jeremiah (31.31), and spiritual sacrifice (Ps. 51.17), circumcision of the heart (Deut. 30.6), opposition to the Temple (Isa. 1.10-17), a suffering saviour (Isaiah 53) and many other theological ideas fundamental to Christianity are already there for Jewish interpreters like Jesus and Paul to build on. There was much else in Scripture to build on, and other contemporary interpreters—including Hillel, Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai and Rabbi Akiba, for example—built another religion on it.

Second, the church recognizes no distinction between Isaiah and the Gospels in terms of inspiration or authority, and it is most significant that in recent years Exodus and Isaiah have been just as central to some modern movements in the church, notably liberation theology, as the Gospels, and more so than much of the Pauline literature. Scriptural authority for biblical teaching on social justice and a 'God of the oppressed', for example, comes from Deuteronomy, the Psalms and the eighth-century prophets.

The third problem with the supersessionist argument for preserving the traditional distinction between two parts of Christian Scripture is that it invariably tends to be related to a crude and insulting view of Judaism as the religion of one part and Christianity of the other. The belief that Christianity supersedes 'the religion of the OT', in a way that Judaism does not, is a misconception: 'Judaism' (whether ancient Judaism at the time of Christ, or modern Judaism) supersedes 'the religion of the OT' just as much. Judaism is not 'the religion of the Old Testament' or even 'the religion of the Hebrew Bible'. Some of the religious ideas in the Hebrew Bible are more prominent in Judaism than they are in Christianity, but others are more prominent in Christianity: in this respect Judaism and Christianity are exactly parallel. Neither is identical with the religion of ancient Israel. Both are living religions that took shape in the first century of the Christian Era. Both are filled with social, political and theological insights and influences far removed from ancient Israel; and Christian supersessionism should be condemned by the church as a heresy every bit as wrong as Arianism or Pelagianism, and a good deal more dangerous. Until everyone accepts that Judaism is not the same as 'the religion of the OT'—and that is not likely to be in the near future—then the division of the Bible into an 'Old Testament' part and

a 'New Testament' part will inevitably nourish and perpetuate that heresy, and must be rejected.

III

What are the alternatives? If we dropped the terms 'OT', 'NT' and 'intertestamental' completely from current usage in the study of Judaism and Christianity, what would happen—apart from the removal from our vocabulary of some symbols of Christian oppression? How would our language cope if these terms did not exist? The practical implications of this radical proposal may be looked at under three headings: (a) Christian Scripture; (b) academic associations and faculties; and (c) publishers.

(a) In the study of Judaism, there is of course absolutely no problem: the term 'Old Testament' would never be missed. In virtually every variety of Judaism, Jews refer to their Scriptures as 'the Bible', or the Hebrew Bible, or in Hebrew *Tanakh* (a Hebrew acronym from *Torah*, *Nebi'im*, *Ketubim*): all these terms mean exactly the same thing to everyone. There is no need for anyone ever to call the Hebrew Bible the 'Old Testament'. It is also much easier for Jews to refer to parts of their Bible because from the beginning the Hebrew Bible has been clearly divided into three parts: the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings.

In the study of Christianity the situation is more difficult. In the first place, the Christian Bible is bigger and more complicated. Its composition spans a period of a century or so longer than the Hebrew Bible, and it was originally written in three different languages: the older parts in Hebrew, and the later parts in Aramaic and Greek. What is more, in the history of the church several varieties of Christianity have had the power to define their Scriptures differently, and their Bibles are all still in use. It is therefore not sufficient to distinguish a 'Christian Bible' from a 'Jewish Bible': the Roman Catholic Bible is not the same as the Protestant Bible. The publication in many languages of the *Common Bible*, a compromise that is neither the Catholic nor the Protestant Bible, may eventually go some way towards simplifying the situation.

But, that having been said, the term 'Bible' can of course be used without the slightest ambiguity in the vast majority of contexts where the terms 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament' are currently used. 'It says in the Bible . . .' is just as clear and unambiguous as 'It says in the Old Testament . . .' or 'It says in the New Testament . . .' Difficulties arise if we want to speak of different parts of the Bible without using the terms 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament', but they are not insuperable, and it must be remembered that if these two terms had never been applied to Christian Scripture, we would have managed perfectly well. Here are some obvious solutions, and notice how, as in the case of sexist and racist language, the process of devis-

ing alternative means of expression can heighten awareness and change attitudes in some interesting and salutary ways.

First, we can simply refer to separate books or traditional groupings: 'It says in Genesis . . . Psalms . . . the Prophets . . . the Gospels . . . Romans . . .' and so on. In many contexts, probably in most contexts—literary, theological, ethical, political—it does not matter whether the text quoted is from what was once known as the 'Old Testament' or not. The one exception is the Gospels, which, like the Torah in the Jewish Bible, have a special position in Christian tradition, liturgically and theologically. But apart from that, no one part of Scripture has a higher status or authority than another.

In many contexts it may be necessary to specify other groupings—according to date, for instance—and here again the avoidance of the traditional Christian nomenclature is helpful. A scholarly reference to 'the older parts of the Bible' would refer to the Pentateuch, the eighth-century prophets and the like, and 'the later parts' would include Daniel, the Wisdom of Solomon, Paul and the Gospels. After all, it is commonly accepted that the difference in date between Daniel and Paul is considerably less than that between Amos and Chronicles.

Similarly, there is no reason why we should not speak of the 'Hebrew parts of the Bible', or the 'Hebrew books', as opposed to the 'Greek books' if we want to specify. Once again, this would have the effect of grouping Wisdom and Maccabees with the Gospels and Acts, rather than with Proverbs or Kings, which would make good sense in terms of date, language, style and content.

Another possibility might be to refer to the Christian Bible as the Greek Bible, as opposed to the Hebrew Bible of the Jews. This would put the emphasis on the language, structure and contents of the earliest complete Christian Bible rather than on the three languages in which it was originally written. At the same time, it would highlight the continuity from early Jewish translations of the Hebrew Bible to Paul and the Gospels. As was pointed out before, the Christian Bible has always been printed in one language. One problem with this proposal is that in current usage the term 'Greek Bible' for some reason usually refers to the Septuagint without the Christian additions (i.e. the so-called New Testament) that are present in most of the ancient codices, but that need not always be so. It is one of the anomalies of current biblical scholarship that the 'OT' parts of the Greek uncial codices and the 'NT' parts are normally dealt with separately and by different scholars. Another difficulty is that, while the term 'Greek Bible' might be an accurate definition of Scripture for the majority of Catholic and Orthodox Christians, it would not be acceptable to Protestants, who at the Reformation rejected from Scripture some books that were in the Greek Bible but not in the Hebrew Bible, or to some of the Eastern non-Greek-speaking varieties of Christianity such as the Armenians, Copts and Syrians.

However that may be, even without the 'Greek Bible' suggestion, it cannot be denied that there are plenty of ways of referring to Christian Scripture without using the terms 'OT' and 'NT', and that it is helpful to do so.

(b) As for departments of Old Testament studies, Societies for Old Testament Study and New Testament Studies, lecturers and professors of New Testament literature and so on, what do these 'disciplines' mean? It is significant that the centre-piece of the British Society for the Study of the Old Testament, handed ceremoniously every year from one president to the next, is not an Old Testament at all, but a Hebrew Bible. Qualifications for membership do not include any acquaintance with Christian theology, which produced the term, but rather a knowledge of Hebrew, although throughout the history of the Old Testament in the church (and it has no history outside the church), it has rarely been read or studied in Hebrew until comparatively modern times, and then almost exclusively by specialists and scholars. The fact is that the Society is primarily devoted to the study of Hebrew texts, biblical and nonbiblical, ancient Near Eastern history and archaeology, Semitic languages and the like, going far beyond the confines of the Hebrew Bible, and there is really no reason why the tendentious Christian term 'Old Testament' should be applied to such studies.

Exactly the same applies to New Testament societies. Like the Old Testament, the New Testament has never existed on its own, and no 'New Testament scholar' ever studies it on its own. The study of Christian origins involves the study of far more than the New Testament, and no New Testament hermeneutics can exist without the Old Testament. Again, it would be possible to identify 'Christian origins' or 'Gospel criticism' or the like with labels that are more accurate and at the same time less offensive. A major reason, one suspects, why, in Britain and a few other places in the world, there are two societies, one for one part of the Bible and one for another, is a linguistic one: OT scholars have to know one or more Semitic languages, while NT scholars do not. The arguments for dropping the inaccurate and offensive labels 'OT' and 'NT' and having either a single 'Society for Biblical Literature', as in the United States, or separate societies for the study of ancient Semitic languages, Near Eastern archaeology, Christian origins and the like, or both, are overwhelming. Many institutions and organizations have already done so.

(c) The last obstacle to this radical proposal will come from the publishers. For centuries they have published Christian Bibles in two Testaments, sometimes separately, sometimes in one volume. Occasionally the pattern is broken, for example when the New Testament and Psalms are printed in one volume. But suppose the division were dropped. The Bible would then be perceived as a single book, as it was when it was first published by the church, in the Greek Codex Sinaiticus, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate and other ancient editions. Its structure would make sense again. If it

had to be divided into two volumes, it would divide very neatly at the end of the Wisdom literature. Volume II would then begin with the book of Isaiah ('the Fifth Gospel') and run straight through to the end of Revelation.

Some years ago Darton, Longman and Todd issued an edition of the Bible called *The Bible in Order*, that is, in chronological order, departing radically from the traditional order and in fact beginning with Genesis 12 (London, 1975). It was hard to see to whom such an experiment was directed or what it was meant to achieve, and not much has been seen or heard of it since. But it does prove that publishers of the world's best-selling book can sometimes be persuaded to break with tradition. Surely an edition of the Bible that highlighted the distinctive continuity of Christian Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, "from Moses to Patmos" (see Sawyer 1977), dropped the unnecessary distinction between the two Testaments, and afforded equal status to Psalms and Isaiah as to the Gospels and Paul, would do infinitely more good, both for Christian perceptions of Scripture and for Christian attitudes towards Judaism.

Bibliography

- Barton, J.
 1990 'Canon', in R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (eds.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press): 101-5.
- Braybrooke, Marcus
 1990 *Time to Meet: Towards a Deeper Relationship between Jews and Christians* (London: SCM Press).
- Klein, Charlotte
 1978 *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology* (London: SPCK).
- Rhymer, J. (ed.)
 1975 *Jerusalem Bible Version – The Bible in Order* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd).
- Russell, D.S.
 1963 *Between the Testaments* (London: SCM Press, rev. edn).
- Sanders, J.A.
 1987 'First Testament and Second', *BTB* 17: 47-49.
- Sawyer, John F.A.
 1977 *From Moses to Patmos: New Perspectives in Old Testament Study* (London: SPCK).
- Williamson, Clark M., and Ronald J. Allen
 1989 *Interpreting Difficult Texts: Anti-Judaism and Christian Preaching* (London: SCM Press).

THE BIBLE IN FUTURE JEWISH–CHRISTIAN RELATIONS*

As a Christian who has been engaged in various aspects of Jewish studies since 1958 when I first visited Israel and started teaching myself Hebrew, I have thought a great deal about the past history of Jewish–Christian relations, especially in relation to the Bible. A substantial chapter of my book *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) was devoted to the subject of ‘Isaiah and the Jews’ and how the church has used the Bible down the ages to provide scriptural authority for all manner of anti-Jewish writing, not to mention outright hatred and violence. In addition, last year I spent four months in Rome reading sixteenth- and seventeenth-century ‘conversionist sermons’ delivered by specially trained Christian preachers to enforced Jewish congregations in various churches in Rome and elsewhere. I looked in vain for counterexamples: Did Christian scholars never find anything good in all the Jewish literature they were encouraged to study? I tried in vain to find excuses for Christian attitudes to Judaism: the world was a different place in those days—maybe I was wrong to expect more enlightened attitudes in the past. Was I wrong to apply modern ethical criteria to Christian attitudes and assumptions of a bygone age (see Chapter 22)? However that may be, my study of the long history of ignorance and prejudice shown by the vast majority of Christians, scholars and laypeople, ancient and modern, towards Judaism in the past makes me all the more eager to tackle today’s topic about the future.

I want to begin with a question that came up in the media when I was in Rome a year ago. It concerned whether or not the pope should visit Ur of the Chaldees in southern Iraq as part of his millennium programme. It was not a question of whether it was politically wise or even medically a good idea: it was a historical question. The pope apparently thought that a visit

* This paper was read at a conference in September 1999 to mark the first year of the Centre for Jewish–Christian Relations in Cambridge and was published in James K. Aitken and Edward Kessler (eds.), *Challenges in Jewish–Christian Relations* (Studies in Judaism and Christianity; New York: Paulist Press), pp. 39–50..

to Ur would symbolize the common ground that Christians share with Jews and Muslims—because Ur was where Abraham originally came from. The distinguished Italian archaeologist Giovanni Pettinato was interviewed for *La Repubblica* and made it perfectly clear that no one knows where the site of Ur of the Chaldees is. The usual candidate, a ziggurat near Ur Junction on the Baghdad to Basra railway, is extremely unlikely to have had anything to do with Abraham. Various other sites in the North are a little more probable but totally hypothetical. ‘So is his Holiness going to make a fool of himself?’ asked the interviewer. ‘Well, maybe by going there he will make it into a symbol of some kind,’ said Pettinato. ‘It’s more about faith than history.’

I’m sure it is more about faith than history, but I’d like to question the pope’s plan for another reason. Even if it was the true site of Ur, the connection between the three so-called monotheistic religions today and their origins four thousand years ago is so tenuous as to be insignificant; and, what is even more important, in my experience, looking for common ground between us can often do more harm than good. It is the differences that we should be studying: the difference between the Aqedah in Jewish tradition and the sacrifice of Isaac in Christian tradition; the differences between the ‘Old Testament’ and the ‘Hebrew Bible’, the differences between Christian monotheism and Jewish or Muslim monotheism, the differences between Jewish messianism and Christian messianism. Looking for common ground has led to all kinds of distortions and misunderstandings. The notion that by going back to the ancient Near East we can find common ground has caused some terrible misunderstandings. I wonder, for example, how many Christians studying the Old Testament think they are studying Judaism! (see Chapter 7).

The other thing I want to do before looking towards the future in the twenty-first century, is to say something about the twentieth century, a century of unique significance for Jewish–Christian relations. The central event of our century, and not just in the history of Jewish–Christian relations, is the Holocaust. Yet a striking feature of much non-Jewish biblical scholarship, especially here in Britain, is the almost complete absence of references to the Holocaust (cf. Linafelt 1999). This applies even to discussions of sacrifice, suffering and theodicy in relation to such key passages as Isaiah 53, Lamentations and the book of Job. Commentaries written by professional biblical scholars on these and other texts seldom make any reference to the Shoah, focussing their attention exclusively on how things were in antiquity, apparently unaware of contemporary uses of Scripture—or at any rate without any interest in them. Like those orthodox Jews who believe that the Shoah changed nothing in their tradition, many biblical scholars have until recently ignored the fact that, for many Jews and Christians, Auschwitz is as much a watershed in the history of their religion as Sinai or the crucifixion.

There are other reasons for this as well as prejudice or insensitivity on the part of Christians, and we shall come back to this later.

Another new factor in the history of Jewish-Christian relations is the establishment of the state of Israel. Modern Zionist uses of the Bible and Israeli literature, especially since 1967, constitute a fertile area of contemporary biblical interpretation. I devoted a few pages of my chapter on "Isaiah and the Jews" in *The Fifth Gospel* to this topic and suggested that the role of Isaiah in the origins and development of Zionism would make a good subject for a PhD thesis and a very interesting monograph. This is not the place for me to discuss the biblical roots of Bilu or Avraham Mapu's novel *Ahavat Tziyyon* (1853) or the place-names, institutions and monuments bearing biblical names or the many works of literature, music and art, both religious and secular, inspired by biblical language and imagery (see Chapter 23). This is another aspect of biblical interpretation almost totally ignored by non-Jewish biblical exegetes. A conspicuous exception, motivated more by ideological passion than by the pursuit of truth, is the pro-Palestinian tirade against Zionist imperialism by the late Michael Prior, a Roman Catholic priest and biblical scholar, in his books *The Bible and Colonialism* (1997) and *Zionism and the Bible* (1999). He looks only at the negative influence of the Bible, particularly the book of Joshua, in the hands of modern Jewish writers and leaders. Another example where non-Jewish scholars take an interest in the contemporary situation is the suggestion that Zionism and Israeli politics have had a detrimental effect on biblical historiography (Whitelam 1996). But these are exceptions to the rule that many powerful Jewish interpretations of Scripture, inspired by the establishment of a Jewish state after centuries of forced Diaspora, have had little effect on the mainstream of biblical scholarship.

Third, the official attitude of the churches towards the Jews and Jewish-Christian relations has undergone some important changes in the second half of the twentieth century. Catholics, since the Second Vatican Council, for example, are now officially instructed to abandon their traditional negative, supersessionist beliefs about Judaism and to seek a new appreciation of Jewish tradition and its relationship to Christianity (Flannery 1981: 743-49). It is not that long ago that the charge of deicide against the whole Jewish people was dropped and some offensive language removed from the Christian liturgy at the behest of Pope John XXIII. The question of removing the word 'Jew' from New Testament translations has even been discussed, and alternatives such as 'Judeans' or even just 'the people' have been proposed as more accurate or appropriate in some contexts (Kysar 1993). There have been efforts on the part of most, though not all, of the main Christian institutions to recognize officially the horrific errors of the past when biblical texts were used to justify violence and hatred towards the Jews, and to encourage Christians to become aware of how much we can learn from Jewish writers,

ancient and modern, about our own faith as well as theirs. Again, the influence of this enormous sea change in the history of Christianity has yet to be fully appreciated and implemented within biblical studies.

This brings me back to the world of modern scholarship and what I believe to be a sea change almost comparable in its significance for Jewish–Christian relations to some of the other twentieth-century developments referred to above. There are three aspects of what I will loosely refer to as postmodern biblical scholarship, which I believe will substantially change the way we approach the Bible, and in particular the way in which we understand its role in the multicultural, largely secular, global village into which we are currently moving (Castelli 1995). The gulf between the world of biblical scholarship and the real world in which we live is being bridged in new ways. Biblical scholars are now studying the patristic and rabbinic literature, mediaeval art history, contemporary film and the like with the same degree of enthusiasm and scholarly skill that they formerly devoted to archaeology, textual criticism and various exotic ancient Near Eastern languages. Many factors have played a role in this: new insights from linguistics and literary studies, new applications of the social sciences, disillusionment with the quest for original meanings. Whatever the reason, I think there are three aspects of this revolution in biblical studies that are destined to be of enormous significance to Jewish–Christian relations in particular.

The first is a recognition of the fact that texts have more than one meaning. Not that this is a new idea: both the rabbis and the early church fathers knew this well enough. Origen believed that texts had three meanings: literal, moral and spiritual (Young 1990). There is a rabbinic tradition that “the Torah can be interpreted in 49 ways” (*Pes. R.* 14.20). But among modern scientific scholars it is a relatively new idea that biblical interpretation is not necessarily a search for the one and only correct meaning of a text but rather a critical examination of different readings, each in its own context, each with its own nuances and associations, each worthy of careful consideration in its own right. The relevance of this for Jewish–Christian relations is obvious.

I am lucky to be involved in a major new series of commentaries devoted to just this aspect of biblical interpretation, designed to provide the reader with access to the many meanings that each text has and has had in the history of its interpretation down the centuries (www.bbibcomm.net). We are at the stage of commissioning authors for each book, and the sheer size of the task confronting them has meant that a number of volumes will be written jointly by two people. What I must confess we did not think of at first is that the ideal solution would be to have a Jew and a Christian working on each book, and this is the case with the volume on Lamentations (Paul Joyce and Diana Lipton). The aim is to allow Jewish and Christian interpretations to speak for themselves side by side. In some cases the Jewish interpretation

will be the more interesting or more appealing to the modern reader than the Christian interpretation, as in the case of the story of Jephthah in Judges 11 in which the hero is roundly condemned for sacrificing his daughter (had he never heard of *piquah nephesh*?) (Ginzberg 1911–38: IV, 43–47); while in passages such as Isa. 7.14, where Christian interpreters prefer the Greek *παρθενος* to the Hebrew *‘almah*, the Christian interpretation is obviously far richer and historically far more influential than the Jewish. Heightened awareness of the potential of texts to have more than one meaning, including traditional Jewish and Christian meanings, it seems to me, is going to be a characteristic of future biblical studies, and one that will revolutionize Jewish-Christian relations.

As a matter of fact, even before this change of emphasis, access for non-Jews to many traditional Jewish interpretations had not been all that difficult: Midrash Rabbah in English is easily accessible (1951), as are some of the commentaries of Rashi, Kimḥi and Ibn Ezra and other exegetical works (Rosenbaum and Silberman 1973; Finch 1919; Friedländer 1873–77). Another, less systematic way into Jewish exegetical tradition is through modern Jewish scholars, literary critics like Robert Alter (1981) and Michael Fishbane (1998), as well as more narrowly biblical critics like Jacob Milgrom (1989), Moshe Greenberg (1983), Alex Rofé (1989) and others who frequently introduce rabbinic or mediaeval Jewish material into their commentaries. They do this far more frequently, incidentally, than their opposite numbers in Christian scholarship, who seldom show any interest in patristic or mediaeval interpretations of the texts they are discussing, however, interesting, important, or helpful they may be. So it has not been so hard to access many interesting Jewish interpretations or indeed many Christian ones: what is new is that more scholarly attention is now being given to such alternative meanings, and Jews and Christians can effortlessly learn about each other in a new atmosphere of respect and tolerance (Handelman 1982; Schwartz 1998).

Second, there has been a shift away from the historical-critical quest for the original meaning of a text towards the reception history, or *Wirkungsgeschichte*, of the text, that is to say, the history of its impact on Western culture. What people, Jews and Christians, believe the text means and how they have used it in politics, literature, art, music and film are important and can be studied with as much scholarly skill and sensitivity as its original meaning. There have been numerous scholarly studies of this kind of material from Jeremy Cohen's *"Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it": The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989) and Bill Holladay's *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), to Dan Cohn-Sherbok's fascinating collection of papers entitled *Using the Bible Today: Contemporary Interpretations of*

Scripture (London: Bellew, 1991) and David Gunn's brilliant "Bathsheba Goes to Hollywood" (1999). There are also several major reference works such as David Lyle Jeffrey's extraordinarily interesting and useful *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) and most recently John Hayes's *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (2 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999). Once again, this move away from the ancient prehistory of Judaism and Christianity to the study of how real people have read the text, and still read it, has obvious implications for Jewish-Christian relations.

A rather special example of this approach to biblical interpretation is Göran Larsson's *Bound for Freedom: The Book of Exodus in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990). Larsson was director of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem, a centre for international scholarship dedicated to improving Jewish-Christian relations. Unlike my own study of Isaiah in the history of Christianity, which is arranged thematically (Isaiah and Christian origins, the cult of the Virgin Mary, the man of sorrows, Isaiah and the Jews, women and Isaiah, the peaceable kingdom and the like), Larsson's book on Exodus is in the form of a commentary. He works through the text passage by passage, discussing each topic or phrase or image in the light of a variety of interpretations gleaned from Jewish and Christian literature (mostly Jewish to redress the balance) down the ages. The bibliography is short but very revealing and, as I see it, really encouraging: alongside the more traditional commentaries of Umberto Cassuto, Nahum Sarna and Brevard Childs, the emphasis is entirely on Midrash, Rashi, the Siddur, the Passover Haggadah and modern responses to Exodus by such writers as Martin Buber, Jon Levenson and Michael Walzer. The result is a fascinating treatment of the text devoted to how people have understood it and applied it to their lives, rather than what actually happened or what the original author meant. Sections entitled 'Three Women', 'Love your Enemies' (23.1-9), the 'Sanctuary of Freedom' and 'The Fall and the New Covenant' give an idea of Larsson's approach. It is easy to point to omissions or oversimplifications or personal bias in such a work, but it opens the way for us to see the text for what it is: not only an ancient Near Eastern text like the Law Code of Hammurabi but a source of inspiration and authority that changed the world.

This brings me, finally, to a third characteristic of the latest approaches to biblical interpretation: a greater awareness of the ethical, political and ideological implications of biblical exegesis. It has taken many centuries for scholars to recognize the extent to which the Bible has been used to authorize social injustice, hatred, oppression, even violence. The Jews, alongside heretics, blacks, women and the poor, have often been the victims of Christian biblical interpretation. I collected hundreds of examples in my work on Isaiah (1996: 108-15). Isaiah provided the church with scriptural authority

to hurl at the Jews every kind of insult: if their prophet criticized them for their blindness (Isa 6.9-10), their incredulity (65.2) and their deicide ("your hands are filled with blood," 1.15; cf. Mt. 27.25), then the church had a right to do that too. When Justin Martyr (c. 100-165), John Chrysostom (c. 347-407), Augustine (354-430) and many others called the Jews "rulers of Sodom" (Isa. 1.9), "dogs" (56.10) and "drunkards" (29.9), and accused them of "blindness" (6.9-10), "obstinacy" (65.2) and "treachery" (3.9-11), they quoted Isaiah. When they wanted to say that it was the Jews' own fault that they had been rejected (29.13-14), their cities destroyed (3.11), their lives ruined (57.1-4), they cited Isaiah. More recently and more insidiously, as Charlotte Klein showed in her invaluable little book *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology*, renowned and highly influential biblical scholars make statements on postexilic or late Judaism (*Spätjudentum*) that are offensive in the extreme (Klein 1978). In some instances, maybe these were unintentional, due to ignorance rather than prejudice, but that certainly does not apply to all of them.

Nowadays, with the appearance of ideological criticism, ethical criticism, feminist criticism, postcolonial criticism and the like alongside (not in place of) form criticism, source criticism, textual criticism and the other tools of traditional biblical scholarship, such abuses are exposed and condemned as unethical. Books such as Larsson's *Bound for Freedom* mentioned above, R.S. Sugirtharajah's *Postcolonial Bible* (1998), Robert McAfee Brown's *Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes* (1984), *The Women's Bible Commentary* (ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; London: SPCK, 1992) and a host of others are heightening our awareness of what we are doing when we read and interpret the Bible. To end with one specific example, it seems to me that Christians interpreting Isaiah 53 in a post-Holocaust world will no longer be able to ignore the Holocaust. The myth of the Jew as 'suffering servant' is now seen by many as morally and indeed historically unacceptable (Berkovits 1973: 125-27; Eckardt and Eckardt 1988: 93, 146). Indeed, many would put it even more strongly: in Irving Greenberg's words, nothing can be said about suffering that cannot be said in the presence of the burning children (1977: 34). So how are we to understand Isaiah 53? In particular, we have to ask, What has the 'prophet of consolation' to say, if anything, to survivors of the Holocaust and their children? This is, in my view, the kind of question that biblical scholars will be asking in the future. I can only imagine what the results will be, but I am sure they will be beneficial.

Bibliography

- Alter, Robert
1981 *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books).
- Berkovits, Eliezer
1973 *Faith after the Holocaust* (New York: Ktav).
- Brenner, Athalya, and Carole Fontaine (eds.)
1993–98 *A Feminist Companion to the Bible* (11 vols.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).
- Brown, Robert McAfee
1984 *Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press).
- Castelli, Elizabeth, et al. (eds.)
1995 *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Eckardt, Alice L., and A. Roy Eckardt
1988 *Long Night's Journey into Day: A Revised Retrospective on the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, rev. edn).
- Finch, R.G. (ed.)
1919 *The Longer Commentary of David Kimḥi on the First Book of Psalms* (Translations of Early Documents, Series III, Rabbinic Texts, 6; London: SPCK).
- Fishbane, Michael A.
1998 *Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts* (Oxford: Oneworld).
- Flannery, Austin (ed.)
1981 *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (Leominster: Fowler Books).
- Friedländer, M. (ed.)
1873–77 *The Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah* (4 vols.; London: Society of Hebrew Literature).
- Ginzberg, Louis
1911–38 *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America).
- Greenberg, I.
1977 'Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity and Modernity after the Holocaust', in Eva Fleischner (ed), *Auschwitz: Beginnings of a New Era? Reflections on the Holocaust. Papers Given at the International Symposium on the Holocaust, Held at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, New York City, June 3 to 6, 1974* (New York: Ktav): 1-55.
- Greenberg, Moshe
1983 *Ezekiel 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 22; Garden City, NY: Doubleday).
- Jeffrey, David Lyle (ed.)
1992 *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- Handelman, Susan A., *The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory* (SUNY Series on Modern Jewish Literature and Culture; Albany: State University of New York Press).
- Hayes, John H. (ed.)
1999 *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (2 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press).

- Klein, Charlotte
1978 *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology* (London: SPCK).
- Kysar, Robert
1993 'Anti-Semitism and the Gospel of John', in Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner (eds.), *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press): 113-27.
- Larsson, Göran
1990 *Bound for Freedom: The Book of Exodus in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson).
- Linafelt, Tod
1999 'Biblical Interpretations and the Holocaust', in John H. Hayes (ed.), *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (2 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press): 514-15.
- Mapu, Avraham
1853 *Ahavat Tziyyon* ['Love of Zion'] (Vilna, 1853); Eng.trans. by Benjamin A.M. Schapiro in *In the Days of Isaiah* (New York: B.A.M. Schapiro, 1902) and *The Shepherd Prince* (New York: B.A.M. Schapiro, 1922).
- Milgrom, Jacob
1989 *Numbers: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation and Commentary* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society).
- Midrash Rabbah
1951 (10 vols.; New York: Soncino, 2nd edn).
- Prior, Michael P.
1997 *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Biblical Seminar, 48; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).
1999 *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry* (London: Routledge).
- Rofé, Alexander
1989 *The Prophetic Stories: The Narratives about the Prophets in the Hebrew Bible, their Literary Types and History* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press).
- Rosenbaum, M., and A.M. Silbermann (eds.)
1973 *The Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Rashi's Commentary* (Jerusalem).
- Sawyer, John F.A., C.C. Rowland, J.Kovacs and D.M.Gunn (eds.)
2004– *Blackwell Bible Commentary Series* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell).
- Schwartz, Howard
1998 *Reimagining the Bible: The Storytelling of the Rabbis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Sugirtharajah, R.S., (ed.)
1998 *The Postcolonial Bible* (Bible and Postcolonialism, 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).
- Young, F.
1990 'Origen', R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (eds.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press): 501-3.
- Whitelam, Keith W.
1996 *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (London: Routledge).

9

READING THE BOOK OF JOB*

The book of Job tells the story of a comfortable, law-abiding citizen who is suddenly, for no apparent reason, struck down by a series of spectacular disasters. Messengers run in, one after the other, with news that his property has been raided and his animals stolen, that lightning has struck his flock and he has lost both sheep and shepherds, that all his sons and daughters, with their families, have been killed at a banquet. Then he himself is struck with an excruciating and hideously disfiguring skin disease, and he is forced to give up his position as a respected elder statesman in his community to live in squalor outside the city gate. A brief prose narrative at the beginning informs us that, unknown to Job, his sufferings were engineered in heaven as a test of his integrity. The main part of the book, which is poetry, makes no mention of this, and Job's attempts to find an explanation, along with those of his 'comforters', come to nothing. In the end Yahweh speaks to him 'out of the whirlwind' (38.1) and restores his fortunes.

Job in the Bible is remembered for his 'righteousness', along with Noah and Daniel (Ezek. 14.14), and for his proverbial patience (Jas 5.11), and we may assume that from an early period he was the subject of one or more legends that provide the framework for the biblical book. But it is significant that the book is grouped, both in Christian Scripture and in the Hebrew Bible, with two great poetic books, Psalms and Proverbs, rather than with any of the prose narratives in the Pentateuch or with the 'Former Prophets' (Joshua–Kings).

1. *Literary Structure*

The main characters in the book are Job, his three old friends Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, who come to

* This is an expanded version of a paper read at the Sixth International Congress of Biblical Studies in Oxford in April 1978, and published in Michael Lieb, Emma Mason, and Jonathan Roberts (eds.), the *Oxford Handbook to the Reception History of the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 25-36.

comfort him (2.11-13), and the young Elihu, who appears later (32.1-6). They are all non-Israelites. The exact location of their places of origin is unknown, but in biblical tradition Uz, where Job comes from, has Edomite connections (Lam. 4.21; cf. Gen. 36.28), as have Eliphaz and Teman (Gen. 36.10-11), while Shuah, where Bildad comes from, is related to Midian (Gen. 25.32). Zophar the Naamathite may be Ammonite (cf. 1 Kgs 14.21, 31), and Elihu the Buzite an Arab (Jer. 25.23). The appearance in the prologue of Sabaeans (Arabia) and Chaldaeans (Babylonia) confirms the foreign setting of the book (Gordis 1965: 66-68).

There is also a remarkable feature of the language they use about God that appears to make the same point. While Yahweh's name appears in the narrative framework of the book, all of the characters, including Job—with one conspicuous exception, which surely proves the rule (12.9)—avoid the name of Israel's God, using instead a variety of other names, particularly *Eloah*, 'God' (the singular of *elohim*), and *Shaddai*, 'the Almighty', which occur far more frequently in Job than in any other book in the Bible (Driver and Gray 1921: xxxv-xxxvi). Job had heard of Yahweh: in fact, at the beginning of the story he quotes a Yahwistic saying: 'The Lord [Hebrew Yhwh] gives, the Lord takes away: Blessed be the name of the Lord', 1.21), but only after his suffering and anguish does he come to know Yahweh personally. In Job's own words, 'I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee' (42.5). One effect of this is that, when Yahweh finally addresses Job (38.1; 40.1) and the comforters (42.7), these are moments of revelation, comparable to the conversion of the kings of Syria (2 Kgs 5.15) or Babylon (Dan. 4.34-37), and must be taken into account in the interpretation of the book.

The literary structure of the book confirms this. We may consider Job's colourful lament in ch. 3 as belonging more to the prologue than to his dialogue with the comforters, just as his final confession is part of the epilogue (ch. 42). Within this framework, the main part of the book (chs. 4-41) reveals an impressive symmetrical structure (Sawyer 1979). At the centre-point is a hymn in which wisdom is defined as 'fearing Yahweh and departing from evil' (28.28), exactly the words used to describe Job at the beginning of the book but with the name Yahweh substituted for God (1.1). The three cycles of speeches by Job and the comforters that come before the hymn (chs. 4-27) correspond to the three speeches after it by Job, Elihu, and Yahweh. But while the former fade out, incomplete and inconclusive—Bildad's third speech is only a few verses long (ch. 25) and Zophar makes no third speech at all—the latter speeches rise to a climax beginning with Job's humble *apologia pro vita sua* (chs. 29-31) and ending with the dazzling, uncompromising poetry of the Yahweh speeches (chs. 38-41). The literary independence of ch. 28 is confirmed by the occurrence of the name Yahweh, and this independence gives the chapter a dramatic function, rather like that

of a Greek chorus (Junker 1959: 54) or a 'musical interlude' (Gordis 1965: 278), marking the transition from human failure to divine intervention by the God of Israel.

The intervention of the gods in human affairs is reminiscent of Greek mythology and has obvious parallels also in the Gilgamesh Epic as well as in many biblical narratives. But the dramatic irony, by which the reader knows what is being planned in heaven while the human characters do not, is rare in the Bible. Normally Yahweh reveals his plans to his people in a strikingly personal way, whether to individuals like Abraham or, through the prophets, to the whole people. The scenes in heaven in which Yahweh discusses human events with Satan and the other members of his divine court (Hebrew *bene elohim*, 'sons of God', Job 1.6-12; 2.1-6) have a number of biblical parallels, notably the prophecy of Micaiah ben Imlah (1 Kgs 22.19-23) and the vision of Isaiah (Isaiah 6). In both cases a prophet has personally witnessed the scene and recounts it in the first person ('I saw the Lord . . .'). In Job, by contrast, only the reader is informed about the ways of Yahweh.

The Yahwistic literary framework of the book, however, accounts for only five of the forty-two chapters (chs. 1-3; 28; 42). The rest is composed of a series of speeches by Job, his comforters, and Yahweh. The first part is in the form of a dialogue (chs. 4-27). The appropriateness of this literary form for philosophical discussion is confirmed by its universal popularity, both in the ancient Near East (e.g. the Babylonian 'Dialogue about Human Misery' [*ANET*, 438-40]) and classical literature (Plato, Cicero, Aesop). But Job's 'dialogue' with his comforters is a dialogue only in form. The character of the participants is for the most part irrelevant, with the possible exception of the distinctively pompous and patronizing Eliphaz, and, while there are some cases where one speaker picks up on a comment made by a previous speaker, these are infrequent. For the most part the speeches are independent compositions, loosely placed in the structure of a dialogue. Indeed, Job's speeches, read on their own, have an impressive literary unity (Rosenberg 1977).

The second part of the book consists, in effect, of three long monologues, leaving little room for actual dialogue. First comes Job's soliloquy, which is in three parts. A touching account of how things were before misfortune struck (ch. 29) is contrasted with an agonizing description of his present plight ('my lyre is turned to mourning', 30.31); he is a social outcast, mocked, despised and humiliated, and in great physical pain (ch. 30). In the third part of his speech, Job protests his innocence by listing all the social and ethical principles by which he has lived his life (ch. 31) in a manner reminiscent of the 'Negative Confession' of those facing death in Egyptian funerary texts (*ANET*, 34). Next, the angry young Elihu addresses Job by name a number of times (33.1, 31; 37.14) and quotes him once (34.5-6), but again his long speech is a monologue, in which, like Yahweh, he dismisses

the three older comforters as failures ('they answer no more: they have not a word to say', 32.15) and expresses his own view at great length (chs. 32-37).

Finally, Yahweh's speech 'out of the whirlwind' (38.1; 40.6) does not address Job by name but is written almost entirely in the second person singular, contrasting Job's weakness with divine wisdom and omnipotence: 'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?' (38.4). To maintain the dialogue framework, Job makes a brief statement in reply to Yahweh at the midpoint of the speech (40.3-5), but the climax describing the awesome power of Leviathan is written in the third person (41.12-34), almost as though Job is no longer there. In the end, however, personal contact between Israel's God and the four foreign protagonists is established first by Job's answer (42.1-6), which Yahweh accepts (42.9), and then by Yahweh's direct words to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (42.7-9).

2. Some Historical-Critical Problems

Inconsistencies in style and structure, some extremely difficult Hebrew, and the problem of dating such a work have occupied scholars for several centuries and still account for a very large proportion of most commentaries. Could the same author have written both the poetic dialogue and the prose sections at the beginning and end of the book? How is it that Job apparently refers to his sons as still living (19.17), when, according to the prologue, they had all been killed? The 'patient Job' of the prologue is a very different character from the angry, protesting Job of the main part of the book. Which of the characters could have uttered ch. 28, considered by most, on both stylistic and theological grounds, to be an independent composition? Why is there no mention of Elihu in the literary framework of the book, especially at the end, when the other three comforters are named? The relevance of parts or all of the Yahweh speeches has also been questioned, as has the effectiveness of the 'happy ending', which, far from picking up the themes introduced in the prologue, in many ways undermines the whole argument of the book. There seems to be plenty of evidence for the later 'expansion, mutilation or other modification' of an original text (Driver and Gray 1921: xxxvii).

As our initial discussion of the literary structure of the book illustrates, recent scholarship has tended to favour a more holistic approach to biblical literature, not least because centuries of readers found it possible to discuss and interpret the book of Job, like the Pentateuch and the book of Isaiah, in its present form, and the value of some of their interpretations is being increasingly appreciated. Nevertheless, some of the historical-critical questions are justified, and the proposed solutions often interesting, even though there is wide disagreement among scholars on most of them. It must also

be said that some of the commentators concerned are clearly motivated as much by the subjective desire to reconstruct a shorter and more effective book as by strictly literary, linguistic or historical considerations.

First, let us look at one of those passages that is widely believed to be a 'later addition'. The value of the Elihu speeches (ch. 32-37) was questioned already by Gregory the Great, while a typical critical judgment from modern times is that of S.R. Driver, who describes these chapters as 'prolix, laboured and sometimes tautologous' (Driver 1913: 429). Elihu has nothing new to add to what has already been said by the others. He is superfluous, and his removal would make very little difference apart from shortening the book. Indeed, if his speeches were not there, the appearance of Yahweh would follow immediately after Job's soliloquy in which he pleads for an answer (31.35; cf. 30.14) and would give the book a tighter, more dramatic structure. Linguistic arguments, which are rather less subjective, include the fact that there is a significant concentration of Aramaisms in Elihu's speeches, and his preferred name for God is El, rather than the *Eloah*, 'God', and *Shaddai*, 'Almighty', of the other speakers. Perhaps most convincing is the absence of any reference to Elihu in the rest of the book.

The question then arises as to why these six chapters were inserted. A number of scholars propose that they were added by the author himself later in life, perhaps simply to add the voice of youth to the debate and therefore in a different style. Or it could have been for structural reasons, so that three speeches in the second half of the book, those of Job, Elihu and Yahweh, would balance the three cycles of dialogue in the first half (see above). More interesting is the suggestion that the position of the Elihu speeches, entirely separate from those of the three old comforters and next to the Yahweh speeches, deliberately gives prominence to one particular view of suffering, namely, that suffering is not punishment for sin but a 'source of moral discipline and a spur to ethical perfection' (Gordis 1965: 115). Eliphaz's words 'Happy is the man whom God reproves!' (5.17) are said in the context of traditional wisdom teaching on divine retribution (cf. Prov. 3.11-12) and do not really anticipate Elihu. Elihu's speeches may be a later addition, representing the thoughts of an older, more mature writer, but they are nonetheless profound and, within the debate, original. One scholar actually describes them as the 'summit and crown of the Book of Job' (Cornill 1907: 428).

Critical discussion of ch. 28 and the Yahweh speeches runs along similar lines. From a literary point of view, ch. 28 is almost universally held to be poetry of the highest quality, but it is widely regarded as a later addition. It could not have been uttered by any of the characters, since, if it were spoken by Job, for example, it would anticipate and undermine the Yahweh speeches. Perhaps it was written by the same author as the rest of the book but added later (Dhorme 1967: xcvi). The Yahweh speeches (chs. 38-41)

are less often rejected as later insertions, not least because it would be hard to envisage a book ending either at ch. 31 or with the Elihu speeches. But the variation in literary quality between its two parts, divided by Job's feeble intervention (40.3-5), has often been noted, and the speeches about a hippopotamus and a crocodile in chs. 40-41 are rejected, while the first part, 'unsurpassed in world literature' according to some (Peake 1905: 43), is retained.

We turn now to consider the date of the book. The biblical reference to Job along with two other folk heroes, Noah and Daniel (Ezekiel 14), suggests that elements in the book are very ancient. The story of Noah's flood has long been compared to a well-known passage in the Gilgamesh Epic (*ANET*, 93-96) and other ancient Mesopotamian texts, while the Ugaritic legend of a righteous king called Dan'el who loses his son Aqhat because of the jealousy of the goddess Anat (c.1400 BCE) provides interesting evidence for an aspect of the Daniel legend that is not found in the biblical book (Margalit 1989). A number of parallels to the book of Job have also been quoted from Egyptian and Mesopotamian literature. The Egyptian 'Dialogue between a Man and his Soul on Whether to Commit Suicide' (c. 2000 BCE), for example, laments the breakdown of normal social and moral conditions (*ANET*, 405-7); and there is a lengthy poem beginning 'I will praise the Lord of Wisdom' (*Ludlul bel nemeqi*), sometimes rather misleadingly called the 'Babylonian Job', which contains a passage in which the reasons for innocent suffering are explored (*ANET*, 434-37; Lambert 1967: 27). There are substantial differences, however, between such writings and the Hebrew Job, which has more significant parallels within the Hebrew Bible, particularly in Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Deutero-Isaiah.

The language of the Book of Job is likewise unable on its own to help us date it. Aramaisms are relatively common (not only in the Elihu speeches), and this is usually taken as pointing to a date in the sixth century BCE at the earliest, or more likely in the Second Temple period, when the use of Aramaic was increasingly widespread (Hurvitz 1974). The absence of any obvious Persian or Greek influence might perhaps suggest a date early in that period. Jerome mentions Arabic, alongside Hebrew and Aramaic, in the preface to his Latin translation (Weber 1994: 731), and scholars have long noted cases where the meaning of a Hebrew word is known only by reference to an Arabic cognate (Grabbe 1977). One theory proposed to explain the strangeness and difficulty of the language of Job is that it is a translation from an Aramaic or Arabic original, but this seems unlikely and, in any case, would only tell us something about the author and perhaps where he lived, but not when. The evidence of the ancient versions, including the Greek, which differs significantly from the Hebrew in places (Pope 1973: 95-96), and the Targum discovered at Qumran, is not sufficient to prove the existence of another ancient textual tradition alongside the Masoretic Text.

The period in biblical history when the most original discussions about suffering appear to have taken place is the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BCE. At least one author during that time of national crisis questioned the teaching that suffering is always punishment for sin and introduced some new ideas into the debate. The anonymous author of Isaiah 40–55 ('Deutero-Isaiah') begins by suggesting that the disasters that had afflicted Judah were out of proportion to the sins they had committed (Isa. 40.2; cf. 54.7-8) and later argues that in certain cases Yahweh can use innocent suffering for a saving purpose (ch. 53). Parallels with the book of Job are striking and have led many to conclude that the work comes from the same exceptionally creative period or soon after.

3. Theological and Philosophical Issues

The brief prose prologue must be considered to be merely setting the scene for what is a major poetic composition on the problem of suffering in a world created and ruled by Yahweh. But its literary function should not be underestimated. In the first place, it establishes the innocence of Job: 'he is blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil (1.1) . . . in all this he did not sin or charge God with wrong . . .' (1.22; cf. 2.10). Indeed, he is a legend, like Noah and Daniel, who were saved by their righteousness (Ezek. 14.14). Thus, the theory that suffering is always punishment for sin is ruled out from the start. There is the additional point that the exceptionally severe forms of suffering that afflict Job and his family are out of all proportion to any possible minor sin he might have inadvertently committed. The detailed narrative of the relentless series of personal catastrophes that befall him, entirely unexpectedly, is intended to make this point absolutely clear, as are the reactions of his wife and his three friends. His wife, described by Augustine as the 'devil's assistant' (*diaboli adiutrix*), tells him to 'curse God and die' (2.9) (Newsom 1998: 139-40), while his friends 'rend their garments and sprinkle dust upon their heads' as if he were already dead and they had come to mourn, rather than comfort, him (2.12-13).

The other element in the prologue that is both theologically and ethically significant is the glimpse the reader is given into heaven, where Yahweh is seen to be discussing Job with one of the members of his heavenly court. The role of this character, known as 'the adversary', or perhaps 'prosecutor' (Hebrew *ha-satan*; cf. 1 Kgs 11.14, 23, 25), and not yet identified with Satan (cf. Mk 1.13; Rev. 20.2), appears to be that of devil's advocate, challenging Job's integrity and provoking Yahweh into giving him the authority to test it. The notion that Job's sufferings are the result of decisions taken in heaven is reminiscent of the activities of Zeus and the Fates in Homer (e.g. *Iliad* 19.86-94) and even comes close to Shakespeare's famous image:

‘Like flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport’ (*King Lear*, IV.i.35-36). Job almost comes to this conclusion himself later in the book (ch. 10).

The adversary’s challenge, however, is, from a moral perspective, entirely justified, focusing as it does on the question of whether Job’s innocence is motivated by self-interest. First, take away his house, his wealth, and his family and see whether he still ‘fears God and turns away from evil’. Then, when Job’s integrity is unaffected by losing everything that belongs to him, the adversary, still not satisfied, says, ‘Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life . . . touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face’ (2.4). Job was like a snake that can slough off its outer skin and survive. So the ‘satan’ afflicted him with an abhorrent skin disease that covered his body ‘from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head’ (cf. Isa. 1.6). There has been some discussion as to what exactly the skin disease was, but more pertinent is the observation that skin diseases, of whatever kind, are among the commonest symptoms of poverty, and thus the second part of Job’s test is that he was forced to join the ranks of the marginalized, outside the city gates, like Lazarus (Lk. 16.20; Gutierrez 1987: 6). Yahweh’s confidence in ‘his servant’ Job is vindicated. Job passes both tests and maintains his integrity, each time citing a religious saying, one of them a Yahwistic blessing (1.21), in which he expresses his faith that whatever happens is God’s will and we have no reason to complain. The prose narrative ends with a picture of the three friends sitting in silence beside Job, certainly their most effective gesture of comfort.

Chapter 3 is about death. It is a lament by Job in which he reveals the extent of the psychological and spiritual damage caused by the disasters that have befallen him. Although it is written in verse, like most laments (cf. Ps. 22.1-18; Jer. 20.14-18), it is thus a continuation of the prologue, completing the setting of the scene for the ensuing dialogue. First Job curses the day he was born, indeed the night when he was conceived, summoning experts in the dark arts to help him delete that day from the calendar (3.8). Then he asks, if he had to be born, why could he not have died at birth? Death would have been preferable, because ‘there the wicked cease from troubling . . . the prisoners are at ease together . . . and the slave is free from his master’. There are few passages in the Hebrew Bible that give such a benign description of the underworld (cf. Sir. 41.2-4), and again its purpose is to stress the intensity of Job’s suffering. It is not a change in the character of Job between the prologue and the dialogue, as many scholars have argued, but a change in his situation, both physical and psychological. When people long for death ‘more than for hidden treasure . . . and are glad when they find the grave’ (3.21-22), then the problem of suffering in God’s world is at its most acute.

A number of logical solutions are proposed by Job and the three comforters in the next twenty-four chapters. The most frequent is the 'Deuteronomic' view (cf. Deuteronomy 28) that suffering is punishment for sin. The fundamental importance of this ethical teaching, namely that if you behave well you will be rewarded, is stressed throughout the book of Job and is beautifully expressed in some of the comforters' speeches (e.g. 11.13-20). Indeed, the book has a 'Deuteronomic' ending, in which Job is richly rewarded. But in the context of Job's experience, it is irrelevant. The logical deduction that when someone suffers he must have sinned, albeit unwittingly, does not apply to Job and, in the mouths of the comforters, sounds painfully cold and self-righteous (e.g. 5.8-16). Similarly inappropriate is the argument that no one is without sin, not even the angels (4.17-21). This almost implies that everyone suffers equally, which is manifestly not the case, as it is the disproportionate nature of Job's suffering that is one of the key issues debated.

Job also offers some theories sparked by the intensity of his personal experience of suffering, his 'existential passion' (Brueggemann 2003: 294). Nowhere does he question the existence of God, but he makes some terrifying suggestions about God's nature. Perhaps suffering has nothing at all to do with punishment, and therefore God's intervention in human affairs is haphazard and indiscriminate: 'He destroys both the blameless and wicked' (9.22). Or perhaps God is fallible, since it looks as though he does not always punish the right person: 'Are your eyes mere human eyes? Do you see as human beings see?' (10.4 NJB). Has he made a mistake? Or suppose God enjoys watching us suffer: maybe the reason he lavished so much care in creating us in all our complexity and sensitivity was that he wanted to see how we would react to pain, 'like flies to wanton boys' (10.8-17). It is clear from the language and structure of the book that the author rejects all these explanations, as he does any questioning of the belief in the existence of God. If there were no God, Job's moral and theological problems, and those of the comforters, would disappear, but that logical option is not considered.

The other theological solution that is missing from the debate is a belief in life after death, where the injustices of this world are set right in the next: 'and those who sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt' (Dan.12.2). Certainly Job's celebrated words beginning 'I know that my Redeemer liveth . . .' (19.25 AV) have strong eschatological associations in the Hebrew text as it stands ('at last . . . he will arise . . . I shall see . . . my eyes shall behold . . .'), but these are no doubt due to later developments, like those already evident in Daniel (see Chapter 25), which earned them a famous role in Handel's *Messiah*. On their own they do not provide sufficient grounds for changing the whole plot of the book.

There is, however, one other explanation offered in the book of Job as to why the innocent suffer. Suffering is a discipline from which even the wise can profit: 'Happy is the man whom God reproves' (5.17). These are the words of Eliphaz, but it is Elihu who develops the theory most eloquently: 'Behold, God is exalted in his power; who is a teacher like him? (36.22) . . . God does all these things, twice, three times, with a man, to bring his soul back from the Pit that he may see the light of life' (33.29-30). Many believe that the Elihu speeches reflect the experience of an older, wiser author and have been added later. However that may be, as they stand they challenge both the other three comforters' rejection of Job's innocence and Job's argument that God is unjust. The idea that suffering can have a beneficial function is developed in a different direction in the Suffering Servant passage in Isaiah 53 and is taken to its ultimate conclusion in the Christian doctrine that salvation comes only through the suffering and death of Christ. But in the present context it must be said that, while it is certainly true that the experience of suffering can strengthen and enrich, it often breaks and embitters even the world's wisest and most God-fearing citizens.

It remains to consider the ending of the book. This consists of three separate sections, each raising some intriguing theological questions, and on none of which can it be said that there is scholarly agreement. First, there are the two magnificent speeches of Yahweh, each introduced as being delivered 'out of the whirlwind' (38.1; 40.6) and each intended as a rebuke to Job ('Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty?', 40.2). The image of a whirlwind frequently accompanies spectacular descriptions of divine intervention, whether to rescue Israel (Ps. 77.18; Isa. 29.6) or to destroy the wicked (Nah. 1.3), but it was also by a whirlwind that Elijah was taken up to heaven (2 Kgs 2.1, 11). Either way, commentators suggest that the function of the whirlwind here is to place the emphasis as much on Job's first terrifying encounter with Israel's God as on what Yahweh actually says (Rowley 1976: 19-20). In his suffering, in his experience of solidarity with the poor, Job was able to enter into a closer relationship with God than had been possible before (Gutierrez 1987: 48).

The speeches themselves contain an accumulation of examples illustrating how ignorant, weak and helpless human beings are when confronted by the wonders of nature, yet they contain no explanation of why innocent people like Job suffer (von Rad 1972: 225-26). The first speech (chs. 38-39) draws on some of the most beautiful imagery in the Bible to describe, on the one hand, the creation of the earth, the sea and the sky and, on the other, the skills and instincts of a variety of animals and birds. The second, in two extended poems, chooses the hippopotamus (Hebrew *behemoth*) and the crocodile (Hebrew *leviathan*) as prime examples from untamed nature or, as some suggest, two mythical creatures symbolizing cosmic powers that only God can master (4 Ezra 6.49, 51; Job 3.8; Isa. 27.1). The contrast between

this view and that of Genesis 1, where humankind is the high point of creation and is given 'dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air . . .' (Gen. 1.28; cf. Psalm 104), is striking (Greenberg 1987: 298) and recalls a cynical allusion made by Job himself to Psalm 8 (7.17-18), as well as some of his other comments on the miserable plight of human beings in this world (ch. 10).

Job's response to the Yahweh speeches is in two parts. In the first he is silenced and simply capitulates: 'I have spoken once . . . but I will proceed no further' (40.4-5). But his second, longer response is more complicated (42.2-6). The usual view is that he admits he was wrong to challenge God, often in disrespectful and near-blasphemous language, and 'repents in dust and ashes' (42.6). But it has been suggested that, since the actual content of the debate is not addressed by Yahweh, Job's 'repentance' must be about something else. In Hebrew the word 'repent' is followed by a preposition that much more frequently means 'about, concerning' than 'in', suggesting that Job has accepted he was wrong to lament and mourn ('dust and ashes'). According to this interpretation, he does not retract any of his arguments, and the dialogue ends with a defiant Job and a God who fails to convince him (Miles 1995: 429-30).

The 'happy ending', in which Job is restored to a life of prosperity and happiness (42.7-17), has been seen by some as a vindication of the comforters' view that after all there is a causal connection between righteousness and prosperity. This is not borne out by the text, however, as the point is made that what Job has said, including perhaps even his most intemperate outbursts, is praised by God at the expense of his three friends, whose folly has aroused God's wrath. Furthermore, the enormity of what Job has been through, for which he is never given an explanation, is not forgotten. On the contrary, all his friends and relations come to offer their sympathy and comfort, although, as a number of scholars have noted, lost children can never be replaced and we may imagine that Job is like Rachel: 'weeping for her children, she refuses to be comforted for her children because they are not' (Jer. 31.15; Fackenheim 1980: 202).

Within the limits of the book of Job, where from beginning to end the author affirms his belief in the power of God and the integrity of his hero, the conclusion seems to be that, on the one hand, the nature of God is so complex that speculation about it can only lead to oversimplification, frustration or blasphemy, while, on the other, the vicissitudes of human experience are also so complex that the search for patterns of cause and effect is doomed from the start. But suffering, however intense and however incomprehensible, irrational or undeserved, makes no difference to anyone who has based his life on belief in God. Job's answer to suffering is the defiant belief in an all-powerful and all-loving God, in spite of the evidence, not because of it.

Bibliography

- Brueggemann, Walter
 2003 *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press).
- Clines, David J.A.
 1989 *Job 1–20* (Word Biblical Commentary, 17; Dallas: Word Books).
 2006 *Job 21–37* (Word Biblical Commentary, 18A; Nashville: Thomas Nelson).
 2010 *Job 38–42* (Word Biblical Commentary, 18B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson).
- Cornill, Carl Heinrich
 1907 *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament* (trans. G.H. Box; Theological Translation Library, 23; New York: G.P. Putnam).
- Dhorme, E.
 1967 *A Commentary on the Book of Job* (trans. Harold Knight; London: Thomas Nelson).
- Driver, S.R.
 1913 *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, rev. edn).
- Driver, S.R., and G.B. Gray
 1921 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job, together with a New Translation* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Fackenheim, E.
 1980 'New Hearts and the Old Covenant: On Some Possibilities of a Fraternal Jewish-Christian Reading of the Jewish Bible Today', in James L. Crenshaw and Samuel Sandmel (eds.), *The Divine Helmsman: Studies on God's Control of Human Events Presented to Lou H. Silberman* (New York: Ktav): 191-205.
- Good, Edwin M.
 1990 *In Turns of Tempest: A Reading of Job, with a Translation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press).
- Gordis, Robert
 1965 *The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Grabbe, Lester L.
 1977 *Comparative Philology and the Text of Job: A Study in Methodology* (SBLDS, 34; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press).
- Greenberg, Moshe
 1987 'Job', in Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (eds.), *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press): 283-304.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo
 1987 *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books).
- Habel, Norman C.
 1985 *The Book of Job. A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press).
- Hurvitz, Avi
 1974 'The Date of the Prose Prologue of Job Linguistically Reconsidered', *HTR* 67 (1974), pp. 17-34.

- Junker, H.
1959 'Das Buch Hiob', in Friedrich Nötscher (ed.), *Echter Bibel*, vol. VIII (Würzburg: Echter Verlag).
- Lambert, W.G.
1967 *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Margalit, Baruch
1989 *The Ugaritic Poem of AQHT: Text, Translation, Commentary* (Bzaw, 182; Berlin: W. de Gruyter).
- Miles, Jack
1995 *God: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).
- Newsom, Carol A.
1998 'Job', in Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (eds.), *Women's Bible Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, expanded edn).
- Peake, A.S.
1905 *Job: Introduction, Revised Version, with Notes and Index* (The Century Bible; Edinburgh: T.C. & E.C. Jack).
- Pope, Marvin. H.
1973 *Job: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB, 15; Garden City, NY: Doubleday).
- Rad, Gerhard von
1972 *Wisdom in Israel* (London: SCM Press).
- Rosenberg, David
1977 *Job Speaks: Interpreted from the Original Hebrew Book of Job* (New York: Harper & Row).
- Rowley, H.H.
1976 *Job* (New Century Bible Commentary; London: Thomas Nelson).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
1979 'The Authorship and Structure of the Book of Job', in E.A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia biblica 1978: Sixth International Congress on Biblical Studies, Oxford 3–7 April 1978* (JSOTSup, 11; JSNTSup, 2–3; 3 vols.; Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield): I, 253–57.
- Weber, R., (ed.)
1974 *Biblia sacra: iuxta vulgatam versionem* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 4th edn).

EZEKIEL IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY*

This short general paper on the reception history of Ezekiel was originally delivered at the Jewish–Christian Bible Week at Bendorf am Rhein in 1996. At that time, reception history was just beginning to be taken seriously by the experts. There was the pioneering *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* edited by Richard Coggins and Leslie Houlden (1990), although it must be said that not all of the authors found it easy to follow the editors’ instructions to focus on the history of interpretation. The early nineties also saw the publication of *The Bible and its Readers* (1991), *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (1991) and *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (1992). But that was just the beginning.

We now have a Centre for the Reception History of the Bible in Oxford (www.crhb.org) and a series of reception-history-based commentaries published by Wiley-Blackwell (www.bbibcomm.net), while no fewer than three reference works will soon be available: my own *Concise Dictionary of the Bible and its Reception* (2009), the projected thirty-volume *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* (2009–) and the *Oxford Handbook to the Reception History of the Bible* (2011). There is also an ever-increasing number of monographs, like the present one (*After Ezekiel*), on the reception history of individual books of the Bible. After more than two centuries of focusing almost exclusively on the quest for original meanings, it seems that finally biblical scholars are admitting that what people believe the Bible means is often as interesting and historically important as what it originally meant and, furthermore, that what people believe it means and how they actually use it—in everyday situations, in the liturgy, in preaching, in the media, in literature, in art, in music, in film—can be studied with the same degree of scientific sensitivity and rigour as the original.

* This paper was originally published in Andrew Mein and Paul M. Joyce (eds.), *After Ezekiel: Essays on the Reception of a Difficult Prophet* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies, 535; T. & T. Clark Library of Biblical Studies; (London: T. & T. Clark, 2011).

Most would now agree that a modern commentary on the book of Ezekiel must take some account of its role as a sacred text in the history of Judaism and Christianity.

My task is to look briefly at its role in the history of Christianity. Jewish uses and interpretations of Ezekiel are equally important and fascinating, but are very different and require separate handling. In the New Testament, unlike Isaiah, who is quoted frequently, several times by name, Ezekiel is never quoted directly, but his influence is nonetheless evident in many contexts, most of all of course in the book of Revelation, where almost every chapter draws on Ezekiel's visionary language and imagery. That is why he is represented as carrying St John the Divine on his shoulders in the famous stained glass window in Chartres Cathedral that shows the four evangelists 'on the shoulders of giants' (Klibansky 1936; Sawyer 1996: 68). But Ezekiel's influence can be identified also in passages in the Gospels about the good shepherd and his sheep (e.g. Mt. 9.36; Mk 6.34; Lk. 19.10; cf. Ezekiel 34), as well as in Paul's accounts of how the spirit of God can soften hearts of stone (2 Cor. 3.3; 11.19; cf. Ezek. 36.26) and dwell among his people (2 Cor. 6.16; cf. Ezek. 37.27).

Two texts from Ezekiel provided the church with authority for their methods of handling Scripture. The unity of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation and the relationship between its two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament, were explained by reference to the four wheels and the 'wheel within a wheel' in Ezek. 10.9-19 (cf. 1.16). Gregory the Great explains that the four wheels are the four parts of Scripture (Law, Prophets, Gospels, Apostolic Writings) and the 'wheel within a wheel' means the New Testament within the Old Testament: 'Is not the New Testament hidden in allegories within the literal meaning of the Old?' (*Hom. in Ezek.* 6.12; Migne, *PL* LXXVI, col. 834). The influence of Gregory's interpretation can be seen most notably in Fra Angelico's famous painting of the fiery wheel in St Mark's Convent in Florence (c. 1450), showing twelve Old Testament prophets in the outer panels and the four evangelists and four apostles (Peter, Paul, James and Jude) in the eight inner ones. The Latin text of Gen. 1.1-5 surrounds the outer ring, Jn 1.1-3 the inner one; and, to ensure that the origin of the image is not forgotten, the words *FLUMEN COBAR*, 'the river Chebar' (Ezek. 1.1 Vulg) are written at the bottom between the seated figures of Ezekiel and Gregory. The other well-known passage of hermeneutical significance to the early church is the account of the scroll that tasted as sweet as honey when Ezekiel ate it (2.8-3.3). According to Jerome, in his commentary on Ezekiel, the reading 'with writing on the front and on the back' (RSV; cf. LXX; Hebrew *panim ve'ahor*) would refer to things future and things past, but he prefers the reading 'written both within and without' (Vulg *scriptus intus et foris*), which points to the fundamental distinction in patristic exegesis between an inner, spiritual meaning



1. *Vision of Ezekiel of the Mystic Wheel*, by Fra Angelico (c. 1450), Museum of St Mark's Convent, Florence

(*intelligentia spirituali*) and the plain, outer meaning of the text (*in historiae littera*) (Migne, *PL* XXV, cols. 34-36).

Ezekiel has made important contributions also to Christian symbolism and the history of Christian art. The man, the lion, the ox and the eagle, traditional symbols of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John respectively, appear first—in that order—in Ezekiel (1.10; 10.14; cf. Rev. 4.7). The illuminated Bury Bible in Corpus Christi College Cambridge (c. 1135) contains an eloquent illustration of this, showing Christ enthroned beside a rainbow (Ezek. 1.28) and surrounded by the ‘four living creatures’ (1.5), which represent the evangelists, with the prophet Ezekiel in the foreground looking on. In traditional iconography, the seraphim got their six wings from Isaiah (ch. 6), but the cherubim got their four faces and their four wings from Ezek. 10.21 (cf. 1.6). Ezekiel’s extraordinary vision of the throne of God, apparently resting on four wheels and four creatures, known to art historians as the tetramorph, is far less developed in Christian tradition than it is in Judaism. Jewish writers since Jesus ben Sira (c. 180 BCE; Sir. 49.8) know it as the *Merkavah*, ‘chariot’, which subsequently provided the central motif of a major trend in Jewish mysticism. But there are a few Christian versions of the scene as well, such as a small painting by Raphael in the Pitti Palace in Florence (c. 1518), that shows the deity above the

clouds riding on the winged creatures in a scene more reminiscent of classical mythology than anything biblical, and William Blake's powerful *The Whirlwind: Ezekiel's Vision of the Cherubim and Eyed Wheels* (c. 1803–5).

More often than not, however, for Christians 'Ezekiel's vision' refers to the valley of dry bones (ch. 37), so dramatically depicted in the Dura Europos synagogue frescoes (c. 200 CE) but also a favourite theme of Christian artists. Signorelli's fresco in the Chapel of San Brizio in Orvieto Cathedral (1499–1502) is one of the most impressive, although without any explicit reference to Ezekiel, and another, with the prophet very much in evidence, is by the Spanish painter Francisco Collantes in the Prado Madrid (1630). It also appears on a number of early Christian sarcophagi, including a fourth-century child's sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum, showing Christ bringing the dead back to life with a wand while Ezekiel again looks on (Spier 2007: 209).

In the Middle Ages, thanks to a verse from the Temple Vision in chs. 40–48, Ezekiel had an important role to play in the cult of the Virgin Mary and regularly appears with Isaiah (though less frequently) in pictures of the Annunciation or the Nativity. There is a fine example by Duccio di Buoninsegna (1308–11) in the National Gallery in Washington. Isaiah holds in his hand a scroll with the words *Ecce virgo concipiet filium*, 'Behold a virgin shall conceive a son' (Isa. 7.14), while Ezekiel's verse is always 44.2: *Porta haec clausa erit*, 'This door shall remain closed.' According to this interpretation the 'door' through which God entered and which was never opened again was a type of the Virgin Mary, to which we shall return later. An interesting and very influential example of this interpretation appears on the first page of the late mediaeval *Biblia pauperum* (Henry 1987: 50). This was a popular pictorial telling of the Gospel narrative, in which Old Testament stories and images are used to prefigure events in the life of Christ. Ezekiel appears on seven of its 40 pages, including illustrations of the baptism of Christ (36.25), Christ carrying the cross (39.17), Christ's post-resurrection appearance (34.11), the last judgment (7.3) and Christ giving the crown of eternal life (24.17).

Luther's favourite verse from Ezekiel reminds us of an entirely different contribution that this prophet has made to Christian tradition. He quotes 33.11 no fewer than sixteen times in all kinds of contexts, far more often than any other verse in Ezekiel: 'As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their way and live.' This is a theme that perfectly expresses Luther's evangelical doctrine of divine grace, offered as much to the wicked as to the righteous. The next verse actually goes on to say that 'the righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver them when they transgress'. Hymns inspired by this verse include the Lutheran "So wahr ich leb", spricht Gott der Herr' by Nikolaus

Hermann (1560) and Charles Wesley's 'Would Jesus Have the Sinner Die?' (1741).

Of many other examples of the influence of Ezekiel's striking language and imagery on Christian tradition, there is the mark (Hebrew *tav*) on the forehead of those saved from destruction (9.4; cf. Rev. 7.3; 9.4; 14.1). This was interpreted from the beginning as the sign of the cross, since in ancient Hebrew script the letter *tav* was written as a cross. The so-called Tau cross, associated especially with St Francis of Assisi, is derived from the Greek letter *tau* and can therefore trace its origins to Ezekiel as well. The names of the two giants in British legend, Gog and Magog, portrayed since the reign of Henry V in the Guildhall, London, go back to Ezekiel (chs. 38–39; cf. Rev. 20.8), as do the three righteous men (ch. 14), 'like mother like daughter' (16.44), 'the soul that sins shall die' (18.4), 'showers of blessing' (34.26) and the life-giving water flowing from the Temple (47.1–12). Mention must also be made of the elaborate mediaeval Christian commentaries on the Temple Vision by Richard of St Victor (d. 1173) and Nicholas of Lyra (c. 1270–1340), as well as Milton's debt to Ezekiel in *Paradise Lost*, and William Blake's in *Jerusalem*, not to mention Ezekiel's influence on Dante, Goethe, Chaucer, Dryden, Browning, T.S. Eliot, Emily Bronte and a host of other writers.

Ezekiel's role in the Christian liturgy is no less prominent. In the post-Vatican II Catholic lectionary, for example, readings from Ezekiel are prescribed for Sunday Masses on Easter Day (36.16–28) and Pentecost (37. 1–14, 21–28), as well as for the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart (34.11–16) and the rites of baptism (47.1–9, 12) and confirmation (36.24–28). Many hymn writers have been inspired by Ezekiel. Charles Wesley's 'Come O Thou All Victorious Lord' contains the words 'Strike with the hammer of Thy Word / And break these hearts of stone', which came to him on a visit to a quarry in Portland in June 1746, while Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander wrote a remarkable paraphrase of Ezekiel 1 beginning 'From out the cloud of amber light / Borne on the whirlwind from the north / Four living creatures . . .' (1875). A collection of *Hymns Old and New* published in 1989 for use in Catholic worship, contains no fewer than six hymns inspired by verses from ch. 36 of Ezekiel, all composed since Vatican II. Still popular in Christian worship and elsewhere are several Ezekiel-inspired black gospel songs such as 'Ezekiel saw the wheel / Way up in the middle of the air' (1; 10), 'Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones' (ch. 37) and perhaps "Wade in the water, children" (ch. 47).

I hope these examples will suffice to give some idea of the kind of material that is now frequently taken into account by anyone professing some kind of specialist expertise in the study of the book of Ezekiel. Such elements are also included in any commentary that aims to give a comprehensive and true account of the prophetic book's meaning and interpretation. So

why was it that until recently so very few modern scholars and commentators showed even the slightest interest in this aspect of biblical research? One reason is, of course, the modern assumption that the original meaning of a text has some special authority that other, later meanings do not. Even in cases where we cannot be sure what the 'original' text was, let alone its 'original' meaning, chronological priority has often tended to be considered some kind of guarantee of truth (cf. Childs 1967: 124).

Another reason why this type of material was neglected for so long is the problem of accessibility. In the first place, specialists working on the Hebrew Bible are trained to read the text in the original language and are encouraged to study Ugaritic, Babylonian and maybe one or two other Semitic languages. But to study the reception history of a text in Christian tradition, English speakers need a knowledge of Greek, Latin, German, French, Spanish, Italian and so on, as well. Jewish scholars have a distinct advantage in this respect, incidentally, in that their biblical scholarship is constantly informed and illuminated by a knowledge of Jewish reception history conveniently recorded in the Midrash, Rashi, Ibn Ezra and the like, which are in the same language as the original.

But even for those working on Christian texts in translation, there is the problem of locating the relevant material in so many diverse sources—sermons, tracts, treatises, official church pronouncements, family Bibles, hymns, music, poetry, film, the media—spanning two thousand years. The problem is particularly acute because this dimension of biblical studies has been so badly neglected in modern times and, until recently, no one has done the research. But now there are reference works such as those referred to above. Many important works such as the *Cambridge History of the Bible* (1969–70) and G. Schiller's *Iconography of Christian Art* (1972) have indexes of scriptural references as well as valuable bibliographies. The same applies to the edited works of many major authors such as Augustine, Martin Luther and John Wesley, as well as countless other significant or representative works such as José Porfirio Miranda, *Marx and the Bible* (1977), *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature* (1988) and *The Bible in Africa* (2000). Many lectionaries and hymnbooks also have indexes of scriptural references. The research still has to be done, but it is not so difficult as it might appear at first sight.

There remains the problem of how to decide among all the diverse material what to put in and what to leave out. The main, if not the only, criterion of selection used to be chronological priority: What was the original meaning of the text? 'Late' meant 'inferior' or at any rate 'not worth taking seriously' and such material was simply omitted. Other criteria, used less overtly in the history of interpretation, involve decisions on theological or ecclesiastical or ethical correctness. But if our aim is to be primarily descriptive, to let the texts and their interpretations speak for themselves,

influential examples of anti-Semitic, imperialistic, oppressive, racist, sexist uses of Scripture have to be included as well as beautiful, uplifting, liberating interpretations. The reader must be given as complete and accurate a picture as possible of what Ezekiel means in as many contexts as possible.

What principle of selection could we use then? Room would have to be found for interesting and ingenious solutions to problems in the text that have puzzled commentators down the ages and for which sometimes the pre-critical commentators had the answer. For example, is there a possible instance of *gematria* in Ezek. 48.10 that would explain the 153 fishes at the end of the Fourth Gospel (Jn 21.11) (Emerton 1958: 86-89)? But maybe the overriding criterion should be quantitative: Which interpretation has had the most influence on the history of Christianity and/or Judaism? The most common and the most influential interpretations must be given priority, good or bad, beautiful or ugly, orthodox or heretical, repressive or liberating, original or late, obvious or contrived. Readers can then make up their own minds on the 'value' or 'morality' or 'validity' of particular interpretations. They may conclude, for example, that what is wrong with an anti-Semitic interpretation is its anti-Semitism, not the extent to which it is far-fetched or differs from an 'original meaning'.

Let me end with a closer look at one of the most interesting and influential examples of Christian uses of Ezekiel, the 'closed door' verse referred to above (44.2): *porta haec clausa erit; non aperietur, et vir non transibit per eam*, "This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it." Most modern commentators make no reference at all to its role in the history of Christianity, as scriptural authority for the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, either because they are unaware of it or because they consider it to be inappropriate to mention it in a scholarly context. Instead, they discuss whether it is the Lord who is speaking (as the Hebrew text has it) or Ezekiel's heavenly guide and then often conclude by deleting the divine name. Others deal with questions of whether the idea of a special processional entrance reserved for the deity was influenced by Babylonian practice, whether the orientation of the closed door has any significance (some connection with primitive sun worship perhaps?), and so on. If, on the other hand, we take a closer look at the traditional christological interpretation, I think you will agree that it is an exegetically interesting interpretation, and one that raises some important theological and historical issues that are missing entirely from the standard and somewhat arid commentaries on this verse by Davidson, Cooke, Eichrodt, Zimmerli, Blenkinsopp and many others.

First, the tenses. In Hebrew, all but one of the verb forms are certainly future. The one exception is the perfect *ba* in the second half of the verse, usually taken as a past tense: *ki Yhwh elohe yisra'el ba bo*, 'the Lord God of Israel has entered by it'. Rashi specifically tells us to interpret this as refer-

ring to the future (*le- 'atid labo*), influenced not only by all the other futures in this verse and the next but also by the future context of the whole Temple Vision. The LXX also has a future here: *eiseleusetai*. Jerome's Latin version, however, has the past tense, 'the Lord God has entered', which fits his christological interpretation. Could it be that the preference for this translation in most modern versions, against the LXX and Jewish tradition, is due to the influence of Jerome's Latin—even though his typological interpretation was eventually rejected?

Next, the genders. The Latin word *porta*, 'gate, door', is feminine, unlike Hebrew *sha 'ar*, which makes its typological application to the Virgin Mary easier. The same applies to two other Old Testament types of the Virgin Mary: 'the rod' (Latin *virga* fem.; Hebrew *hoṭer* masc.) in the famous Jesse tree passage (Isa. 11. 1) and the 'rock' (Latin *petra* fem.; Hebrew *sela' masc.*) from which the Lamb of God was hewn (Isa. 16.1). But there is more: in the phrase 'no one shall enter', the masculine word for 'man', *ish*, is clearly used in the non-gender-specific sense of 'anyone': Rashi uses the word *adam* in his paraphrase of the verse, the LXX has *oudeis*, 'no one' and the English versions mostly have 'no one'. But the Latin renders *ish* with the gender-specific word *vir*, 'man', thereby highlighting the sexual sense of the words: 'this door (fem.) shall be closed', referring to the virginity of a woman '... and no man (Latin *vir*) will enter her. . .'

Two final points on the traditional Christian use of this part of the Temple Vision that I hope will clinch the matter and conclusively prove the value of devoting as much time to studying this kind of material as to the inconclusive and often somewhat barren 'quest for the original Ezekiel'. On the one hand, there is ample scriptural authority for using the image of a temple for the human body. Jesus spoke of his body as a temple (Jn 2.21), and Paul told the Corinthians more than once to think of their bodies as 'a temple of the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 6.19; cf. 3.16f.; 2 Cor. 6.16). So the use of this verse in the context of theological discourse on the Virgin Birth, the once and for all entering of the Holy Spirit into the temple of Mary's body, is not so absurd and far-fetched as you might at first have thought.

But, on the other hand, in the context of current gender politics, there are serious objections to the idea that the body of a woman can be thought of, and treated like, an inanimate object. There are plenty of other cases in Christian iconography where, for example, the body of the Virgin Mary is thought of as a field in which God planted his seed (cf. Isa. 45.8), or a locked garden (Song 4.12), or a rock (Isa. 16. 1) or a fleece miraculously impregnated with dew (Judg. 6.36-38). In this case, the idea is that the woman is like a building and that after she has been entered by her lord and master, the gate is shut, so to speak, and she is surrounded by defences and cut off from the rest the world. This is a traditional view of women in many patriarchal religions, including Christianity and Judaism, but one that

is hardly acceptable today. In other words, the most serious modern objection to this interpretation of Ezek. 44.2 is not that it clearly differs from ‘what the original author intended’, or that it is absurd and far-fetched, but that, like many other texts both in Scripture and in the reception history of Scripture, it perpetuates a view of women that is biologically untrue and morally unacceptable. Surely this kind of popular, controversial material, with its long and influential history in the church, should be allowed into the world of biblical studies again, especially to enrich, enliven and illuminate passages like Ezek. 44.2, on which three centuries of archaeology, comparative philology and historical criticism have had virtually nothing to say.

Bibliography

- Beuken, Wim, Sean Freyne and Anton Weiler (eds.)
 1991 *The Bible and its Readers* (Concilium, 1991/1; London: SCM Press).
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph
 1990 *Ezekiel* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press).
- Childs, Brevard S.
 1967 *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (SBT, 2.3; London: SCM Press).
- Cooke, G.A.
 1936 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Davidson, A.B.
 1924 *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel: In the Revised Version, with Notes and Introduction* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Eichrodt, Walther
 1970 *Der Prophet Hesekiel* (ATD, 22; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Eng. trans., OTL; London: SCM Press, 1970).
- Emerton, J.A.
 1958 ‘The Hundred and Fifty Three Fishes in John XXI.11’, *JTS* 9: 86-89.
- Henry, Avril (ed.)
 1987 *Biblia pauperum: A Facsimile and Edition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
- Jeffrey, David Lyle (ed.)
 1992 *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- Klauck, Hans-Josef, Bernard McGinn, P. Mendes Flohr *et al.* (eds.)
 2009– *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter).
- Klibansky, R.
 1936 ‘Standing on the Shoulders of Giants’, *Isis* 26: 147-49.
- Lampe, G.W.H.
 1969 *The Cambridge History of the Bible. II. The West from the Fathers to the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Lieb, Michael, Emma Mason and Jonathan Roberts (eds.)
 2011 *Oxford Handbook to the Reception History of the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Luther, Martin

1955 *Luther's Works* (ed Jaroslav Pelikan *et al.*; St Louis: Concordia); vols. 12 and 55.

Mayhew, Kevin

1989 *Hymns Old and New with Supplement* (Avon: Bath Press).

Migne, J.-P. (ed.)

1844–64 *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina* (221 vols. ; Paris).

Miranda, José Porfirio

1977 *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression* (London: SCM Press).

Réau, Louis

1955–59 *Iconographie de l'art chrétien* (3 vols. in 6; Paris: Presses universitaires de France): vol. 2.1.

Sawyer, John F.A.

1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

2009 *A Concise Dictionary of the Bible and its Reception* (Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press).

Schiller, Gertrud

1971–72 *Iconography of Christian Art* (2 vols.; London: Lund Humphries).

Spier, Jeffrey

2007 *Picturing the Bible. The Earliest Christian Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

Sugirthirajah, R.S. (ed.)

1991 *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books).

West, Gerald O., and Musa W. Dube (eds.)

2000 *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends* (Leiden: E.J. Brill).

Wright, David F.

1988 *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press).

Zimmerli, Walther

1979–83 *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (Hermeneia; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).

ENCOUNTERS WITH HEBREW IN MEDIAEVAL PERUGIA*

Over the last five years, more by accident than design, I have been involved in various projects concerning the Jews of Perugia, where I live. Today little remains of the small but dynamic mediaeval Jewish community, but in recent years the city, under the leadership of Mayor Renato Locchi and Archbishop Giuseppe Chiaretti, made efforts to commemorate them, and by a happy coincidence a rare collection of hitherto unknown Hebrew manuscripts was discovered that put mediaeval Perugia once again on the map as a centre of Jewish scholarship. In the Università degli Studi di Perugia, there is currently only one undergraduate course on Hebrew and Jewish Studies, occasionally taught in the Department of Linguistics, and as the only resident Hebraist in the region, I was consequently the first to be consulted and to have the joy and privilege of being the first to recognize and handle some of these manuscripts. I gladly dedicate this modest, somewhat anecdotal paper, with the greatest respect and affection, to Wilfred Watson, a distinguished scholar who was a colleague for many happy years in Newcastle, and whose Hebrew—not to mention his Ugaritic and Italian—is far better than mine will ever be.

Five years ago my good friend Dr Gianfranco Cialini, the librarian responsible for the University of Perugia's collection of manuscripts and early printed books, arrived at my home on his motorbike with a CD on which there were photographs of what he thought were Hebrew manuscripts. He had noticed that the binding of twenty-four volumes of a work on jurisprudence published in 1584, had been covered with vellum manuscripts, scrubbed clean on the outside, but with the writing in places showing through from the inside. The first one I looked at (using a mirror) came from a work of halakhah that I could not identify, but the second was clearly a page from a biblical codex. Written in columns, with the *masora parva*

* An earlier version of this paper was read at a conference of the British Association for Jewish Studies in London in July 2007, and is to be published in G. del Olmo Lete, J. Vidal and N. Wyatt (eds.), *Essays in Honour of Wilfred Watson* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2011).

The next thing I knew, Gianfranco had arranged a kind of celebration in the beautiful sixteenth-century Biblioteca del Dottorato, where he works (Pl. 2). The media were there, radio and television, a rabbi from Rome, the archbishop of Perugia, the rector of the university, and other dignitaries. Gustavo Reichenberg was there too, retired professor of chemistry, who is virtually the only Jewish resident in Perugia and the official Jewish representative at interfaith events and other civic occasions. Also present was the young technician from an art restoration company based in Spoleto, who had just begun the job of ungluing these beautiful parchment manuscripts from the printed volumes to which they had been attached for over four hundred years, and without which they probably would not have survived. But the occasion was not only the celebration of a discovery of academic significance. It was also symbolic. These manuscripts are virtually all that is left of the Jewish community of mediaeval Perugia, and speakers acknowledged the reasons for this, referring to the tragic history of Jewish-Christian relations down the centuries, in Italy and elsewhere, to which we shall return later.

The forty fragments, mainly double folios, come from six different codices: the Bible (Jeremiah), the Babylonian Talmud (Tractate *Niddah*), the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides and three important thirteenth-century



2. President of the Republic of Italy and Rector of the University of Perugia visiting the Biblioteca del Dottorato.



3. Dr Gianfranco Cialini (right) and the author showing one of the Jeremiah fragments to Israeli scholar Amira Meir.

halakhic works: *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol* ('SeMaG') by Moshe ben Ya'aqov of Coucy, *Sefer Mordekai* by Mordekai ben Hillel and *Sefer ha-Terumah* by Baruk ben Isaac of Worms. The experts date the Maimonides manuscript to fourteenth-century Italy and the three halakhic works to fourteenth- to fifteenth-century France or Germany. The Bible and Talmud manuscripts are both earlier: the Jeremiah manuscript was written probably around the beginning of the fourteenth century in Germany, and the Talmud manuscript some time earlier in thirteenth-century Spain. How they came to be in Perugia is a matter of speculation. By the sixteenth century, vellum manuscripts like these were being sold to bookbinders by the kilo, without regard to what was written on them or where they came from. An interesting example of the scale and extent of the used manuscript trade is the fact that the

pages from the Talmud, used by a bookbinder in Perugia, come from the same codex as some pages found in Bologna. It should also be pointed out that these fragments are of particular importance, since the Talmud was the Hebrew book most systematically disputed, confiscated and burnt by the church.

I am going to say a little about the six Jeremiah folios, which I have had the pleasure of studying, the first person to do so for over four hundred years (Pl. 4). The folios were originally sewn together down the middle in fascicles of four or five as was the custom in the making of mediaeval codices. So each originally contained four pages, two on the back and two on the front. The six folios of the book of Jeremiah that have survived contain parts of chs. 20–34 and 39–42, and clearly come from what was once a complete codex of the book of Jeremiah, not a collection of *haftarot*: that is to say, it is a manuscript for study purposes, not for use in the liturgy.

As in numerous other mediaeval biblical manuscripts, each page is written in two columns, with the *masora parva* written between the columns and the *masora magna* above and below, but unlike any manuscript I have seen before, every verse is written twice, first in Hebrew and then in Aramaic. The script is of course identical and therefore the four columns look, at first sight, like four columns of Hebrew, but in fact they contain both the Masoretic Hebrew text and the text of *Targum Yonatan*, not in two parallel columns as later became regular practice in rabbinic Bibles, but intercalated within each verse. This practice, which is relatively common in Torah manuscripts produced in northern Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but rare in the Prophets, is an interesting indication of the value placed on the *Targum* in the study of the Bible by Jewish communities in that period.

This is not the place for textual criticism, and I am not a textual critic or a palaeographer (Pl. 5). But I would like to refer to one or two variant readings that appeared from a cursory reading of the text. First, in 31.19 the Perugia manuscript omits the word *yarek*, ‘thigh’, so that instead of ‘I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed’ (סָפַקְתִּי עַל-יָרֵךְ בִּשְׁתִּי; cf. AV, RSV), it reads ‘I smote upon my shame’ or perhaps ‘I had enough of my shame’ (סָפַקְתִּי עַל (בִּשְׁתִּי)). The fact that the LXX also omits this word makes a scribal error unlikely. Rather it suggests that mediaeval manuscripts like this one may contain evidence of ancient alternative traditions and should not be ignored by the experts in favour of the St Petersburg Codex, the Aleppo Codex and other privileged manuscripts.

The *Targum* has a few idiosyncrasies, for example, writing samekh where other editions have sin (e.g. *bsar* and *besorta*) and omitting the final aleph in genitive phrases like *melek de babel* and *ara’ de mišraim*. There are also a few slightly more substantial differences. In 32.29, for example, instead of ‘the errors of star-worshippers’ (טעויות פלחי כוכביא) the Perugia

[illegible]

[illegible][illegible]



5. Detail of Plate 4 showing Jer. 31.18-20.

manuscript has simply ‘the errors of the nations (טעויות עממא)’. In a culture where the days of the week were named after the seven planets and the signs of the zodiac are frequently represented in art, our author might be forgiven for assuming that ‘the nations’ and ‘star-worshippers’ are one and the same.

I want to turn now to the context in which these manuscripts were used. For most of the fourteenth century, the intellectual life in Perugia was flourishing, both Jewish and non-Jewish. There were between 150 and 200 Jews living in Perugia at the time, and one of the great mediaeval Jewish poets, ‘the emperor of poets’, Immanuel of Rome (1261–c. 1332), chose to live in Perugia partly because it was a congenial place for him to write, and partly because he knew he could find financial support from prominent Jews there. He produced some of his greatest works there or in nearby Gubbio: hence his name among the non-Jewish population—Manuele Giudeo di Agobbio. Influenced by his contemporary Dante, whom he never met but admired greatly, he wrote sonnets, love poetry, elegies, epitaphs, epigrams, hymns,

mystical prayers and allegorical visions, in which he took the Hebrew language, as Dante did Italian, to new heights of poetic expressiveness.

In his writings he occasionally refers in passing to what was going on in the city at the time. He tells us, for example, of a vast library of Hebrew books owned by a certain Rabbi Aharon and recounts how some of the young scribes used to organize competitions to see who could get the most copying done in the shortest time. Unfortunately, none of the recently discovered Perugia manuscripts has a colophon, and in any case they were probably written elsewhere. But a good number of fourteenth-century manuscripts are dated and signed in Perugia, including a manuscript of the Torah and *haftarot* in the Biblioteca Malatestiana in Cesena dated 1370, an illuminated manuscript of the Psalms completed by Yequtiel ben Immanuel in 1391, and no fewer than 11 manuscripts copied by Jequtiel ben Jechiel Rofé in the last few years of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth. These last include the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides, Rashi's commentary on the Torah and a *maḥzor* (prayerbook for festivals). Fourteenth-century manuscripts have survived also from Gubbio, Spoleto, Spello, Foligno, Assisi and other parts of Umbria, indicating that, in that period, there were thriving communities all over the region with the resources to support scribal activity. The university was founded in 1308, and, although the awarding of degrees in those days was the responsibility of the church and Jews were officially excluded, we know that, in December 1381, 33 Jews were given the citizenship of Perugia and other privileges, and that one of these, a distinguished doctor by the name of Gaudino di Bonaventura, was given the title of Professor of Medicine.

Before moving on to consider how it came about that these 40 manuscripts are all that remains today of that thriving Jewish community, I want to discuss a second encounter I had with Hebrew of mediaeval Perugia. This one too was brought to my attention by Gianfranco Cialini. In the diocesan museum, now housed in the splendid mediaeval castle of Pieve del Vescovo near Corciano on the outskirts of Perugia, he took me to see a painting of the crucifixion (Pl. 6), attributed to an anonymous artist known as the 'Maestro di Paciano', and dated by the experts to the beginning of the fourteenth century. It is a fairly conventional painting with Mary Magdalene at the foot of the cross, the Virgin Mary and John the evangelist on either side, and a little Dominican figure kneeling between them. What is most unconventional is the Hebrew writing in the inscription above the cross (Pl. 7). Why would anyone want to put Hebrew, the language of the Jews, in a Christian painting?

Once again, as the only Hebraist around, it fell to me to look for an answer to this question. I am grateful to another good friend, the distinguished Hebraist Ida Zatelli of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Florence, who put me on to a rare article on the subject by the late



6. Painting of the crucifixion attributed to the Maestro di Paciano, early fourteenth century.

Gad Sarfatti. Like many Israeli visitors to Florence, he had been intrigued by the appearance in Christian art and architecture of Hebrew writing, some of it unintelligible to them, like *אֵינֹה סוֹם לְיוֹקֵס מוֹנֵדִי* (*ego sum lux mundi*) in the Church of Orsan San Michele. He compiled an inventory of 261 examples, which he published with a brief introduction and notes in 2002. Among his conclusions were that the phenomenon is very rare before 1400 and that there were three possible reasons why renaissance artists chose to put Hebrew writing into their work: to achieve realism, to show off erudition and to mark a person or an object as Jewish. In particular, he refers to over 60 examples in which the inscription above the cross is written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, including paintings by Fra Angelico, Signorelli, Michelangelo, El Greco, Velasquez, Rubens and Van Dyck. Their aim was



7. Detail of Plate 6 showing Latin inscription above the cross, written in Hebrew and Roman characters.

clearly to represent with a new degree of realism and accuracy the biblical text that explicitly states that the inscription above the cross was in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin (Jn 19.20).

Our painting is not on Sarfatti's list and in almost every respect is a striking exception.

In the first place, it is much earlier and consequently displays none of the characteristics of renaissance art, in particular realism. Second, the inscription has only two scripts, Hebrew and Latin, instead of three, and only one language, as it is the same Latin inscription written twice—once in Hebrew characters and once in Roman. Furthermore, the Hebrew seems to be some variety of semi-cursive script, quite unlike the familiar bold square letters in the later examples—and, one might add, quite inappropriate for an official inscription. Finally, the use of the letter *he* twice to represent *E* in *REX* and *IUDEORUM*, as well as *samekh* for *X*, betrays a poor knowledge of Hebrew, while the prominent dot, apparently standing for a final *S* in the first three words, is very idiosyncratic. We may safely conclude that the Hebrew was not written by a Jew, and that whoever did write it had not consulted an expert Hebraist. This is an amateurish effort with little to do with achieving academic accuracy or, for that matter, showing off erudition.

On the other hand, putting Hebrew writing at the top of the cross marks the main character in the picture as Jewish. Sarfatti cites many examples where the function of the Hebrew is simply to label a building, such as the Temple in Jerusalem, or a person, such as Moses, as Jewish. But frequently the motive is blatantly anti-Semitic, as in scenes from the passion narrative, for example, in which Christ's tormentors often have gratuitous Hebrew or pseudo-Hebrew letters on their hats or their accoutrements, with the sole purpose of reminding Christian viewers that it was the Jews who crucified

Jesus. In our painting, however, there can be no question of anti-Semitism. On the contrary, by labelling the main character in this way, the painting seems to be saying, quite unambiguously, that Jesus is a Jew, and the question arises who, why and in what context anyone would want to say that. One need only think of some of the reactions to the publication of *Jesus the Jew* by Geza Vermes as recently as 1973.

We must remember the date of the picture, the first quarter of the fourteenth century. This was very early in the history of the Jews of Perugia, who had arrived in the last decades of the thirteenth century. It was also a period when the church was engaged in a systematic campaign to convert the Jews to Christianity, led by the Dominicans, a number of whom, like the notorious Pablo Christiani, opponent of Nahmanides at the Barcelona disputation in 1263, were converts from Judaism. Dominican involvement in our picture is confirmed by the presence of a kneeling Dominican by the cross, and also by the fact that the only other crucifixion from this early period with a Hebrew inscription, also not on Sarfatti's list, is one attributed to Giotto in the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, a large Dominican establishment founded in the thirteenth century. The Dominican monastery in Perugia, which today houses both the vast Archaeological Museum and the State Archive, was founded in 1220.

There were never many converts, and probably very few people who knew Hebrew, if any, ever saw this inscription. But it does look as though it was written with Jewish converts in mind, the only people who could understand Latin written in Hebrew script, such as EGO SUM LUX MUNDI referred to above. The use of Hebrew here must have had a benign motive and is surely to be interpreted as doing something extremely rare in mediaeval Europe, addressing a few friendly words on behalf of the church to the Jews: 'We are not your enemies. In fact our Lord was a Jew like you and most of our Bible was originally written in your language.' Much later a Viennese convert to Christianity used Hebrew to similar effect (Sawyer 1996: 101-2; Pl. 23), but for a Christian who, judging from his command of Hebrew, could not have been a Jew, to produce a painting with Hebrew writing above the cross at such an early date in the history of Jewish-Dominican relations, is truly astonishing.

In the fourteenth century, Perugia was a very wealthy city, and many of the most prominent bankers were Jews. But after about a century of peace and prosperity, the fifteenth century saw an abrupt deterioration in their status and condition. The main factor was a steady stream of Christian preachers, most of them Franciscans, fired up with fresh zeal to cleanse society from all kinds of sins and vices, but especially usury, which was practised mostly by the Jews. The visit of S. Bernardino of Siena in 1425 was the first of many. It resulted in all kinds of new regulations including a ban on Jewish physicians treating Christian patients, limitations on the consumption

and sale of kosher meat and wine, and the requirement that all Jews should wear a distinctive yellow badge. The effect of this kind of rhetoric on the ordinary people can be gauged from the fact that the pope at the time (Martin V) issued a decree designed to protect the Jews by prohibiting preachers of all orders from stirring up hostility and violence towards the Jews, and pointing out that plenty of them suffered from the abuses of usury as well. But the rhetoric continued: Giacomo della Marca's preaching in Perugia Cathedral in 1444, in which he singled out the Jews for specially violent invective, is said to have resulted in three Jews converting to Christianity, partly because huge financial incentives were involved but partly because of the terrifying increase in fanatical anti-Judaism. Eighteen months later rioters attacked a Jewish funeral and a member of the cortège was killed. In 1462, another Franciscan preacher, Michele Carcano from Milan, told the crowds the Jews were responsible for all the worst evils in Christian society, and he said that the city of Perugia should be excommunicated for giving concessions to the Jews.

Despite worsening conditions, in the fifteenth century a number of distinguished Jewish scholars spent some time with the Perugia community, including another poet and physician, Mose da Rieti, and the physician and philosopher Elia Medigo, who came to Perugia with his famous young student, the enlightened Christian Hebraist, Pico della Mirandola. Scribal activity also continued at Perugia during the first half of the fifteenth century, but life became steadily more difficult for the Jews. Of course military leaders, popes and local governments frequently depended on the Jews for financial support, like the mercenary Fortebraccio in 1418 and Pope Pius II in his crusade against the Turks in 1463, and this provided the motivation for some wealthy families to stay on in Perugia. But by the end of the century many had moved away to other parts of Umbria, especially Città di Castello to the north, as far away as possible from Rome and on the borders of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, which never submitted to papal government.

The sixteenth century saw a concerted onslaught on the Jews with the aim of converting them or, if that failed, preventing them from contaminating Christian society. Christian scholars, many of them Dominicans, were encouraged to study Hebrew, but not, like Pico della Mirandola, Reuchlin and others, to get at the meaning of the original text or to promote better relations with the rabbis, but to be better equipped to discredit Jewish tradition. This was a process that reached its peak one hundred years later in Giulio Bartolucci's *Magna Biblioteca Rabbinica* (Rome, 1683), which sets out to refute and ridicule, as comprehensively as possible, rabbinic traditions about God, angels, the Messiah, the resurrection of the dead and the like. As he says in his introduction, these traditions are 'the result of

the talmudists' most insolent abuse of sacred scripture' (*del più impudente abuso delle sacre scritture da parte dei talmudisti*) (see Chapter 22).

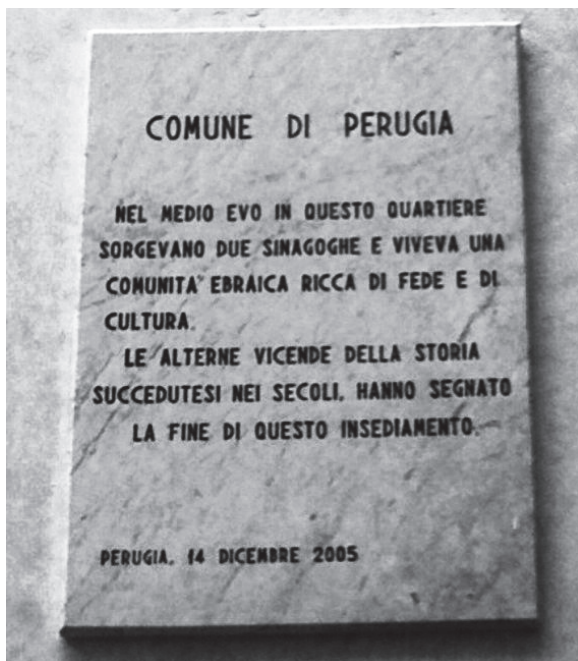
On 1 September 1553, a huge bonfire of Jewish books was lit in the Campo dei Fiori in Rome. There were similar bonfires in other cities, Perugia probably included. In 1554, a papal decree was passed (*Cum sicut nuper*) condemning the Talmud and other Jewish writings that were in conflict with the Christian Gospel. In 1555, another papal decree was passed (*Cum nimis absurdum*) that effectively instituted ghettos in the Papal States. In 1569, with another decree, Pius V expelled the Jews from Umbria; then, in 1593—just over a century after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain—the Jews were given three months to leave the Papal State or move into one of the two official ghettos, in Rome and Ancona. That was the end of the Jewish community in Perugia. Several individuals, with the help of the university and the local authorities, rose above all this: the greatest of these was undoubtedly David ben Yiṣḥaq, who graduated in medicine at Perugia and received the title Doctor at a ceremony on 27 November 1551, with the special dispensation of the papal legate and a specially worded oath omitting all the Christian terminology. The Umbrians and the people of Perugia, in particular, fiercely independent then as now, resented being ruled from Rome and went out of their way on more than one occasion to get round the church's legislation.

At all events, as soon as Umbria and Le Marche had been liberated from papal government in September 1860, Jews began to return to Perugia, many from Ancona, some of them perhaps descendants of original Perugia families who had been forced to leave three hundred years before. The university records the names of Jewish graduates and professors, including a significant number of Poles and Lithuanians, and in 1932 they had their own rabbi. In 1938, when the fascist race laws were passed in Italy, there were 167 individuals in Perugia, around the same number as there had been in the fourteenth century. But by 1945, once again there was no Jewish community in Perugia. Against this background you can see now how important it was for the head of the university and the head of the church in Perugia and a rabbi from Rome, to celebrate the discovery of those beautiful Hebrew manuscripts, the only relics of that thriving mediaeval Jewish community.

In the last few years, the civic and ecclesiastical authorities have made efforts to commemorate that remarkable chapter in the city's cultural and religious history, seeking in some ways to make amends for their predecessors' shortcomings. In December 2005, the old Jewish cemetery on Via San Girolamo on the outskirts of Perugia was restored (with financial assistance from the Rotary Club) (Pl. 8), and in the same year a plaque was put up near where the remains of a fifteenth-century synagogue can be seen (Pl. 9). In an English translation it reads as follows:



8. Restored Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of Perugia, with Gustav Reichenbach, representative of the Jewish community.



9. Plaque commemorating the Jewish quarter near the Etruscan Arch in the mediaeval city of Perugia.

In the Middle Ages in this quarter stood two synagogues and there lived a Jewish community, rich in faith and culture. The subsequent ups and downs of history down the centuries marked the end of this settlement. Perugia, December 2005

My final encounter is somewhat different and concerns the Second World War. In Lake Trasimene (scene of Hannibal's famous defeat of the Romans army in 217 BCE), a few miles to the west of Perugia, there are three islands, and in June 1944, 22 Jews were imprisoned on the one called Isola Maggiore (Pl. 10). The Nazis were systematically clearing the area as they moved north, retreating before the advance of the Allies from the south. But the night before they reached the island, the young village priest, Don Ottavio Posta, organized a flotilla of five fishing boats, which transported the Jews to safety in a village called Sant'Arcangelo on the south shore of the lake, which had just fallen into the hands of the Allies. The story was not widely known, partly it seems because of the natural modesty of Don Ottavio himself but also because many of the participants in the story and their descendants did not wish to publicize their collaboration with the Nazis. Thanks largely to the researches of my friend Gianfranco,



10. View of Lake Trasimeno showing Isola Maggiore, where 22 Jews were rescued by Don Ottavio Posta in June 1944.

who lives in Sant’Arcangelo and whose father fought with the partisans, the full story finally came out in 2005. In 2007, the High Court in Israel added the name of Don Ottavio Posta to the list of ‘Righteous Gentiles’ (חסידים אומות העולם), commemorated in a special garden in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, and in January 2008 the President of the Republic posthumously awarded him a Gold Medal, Italy’s highest civilian honour, in recognition of his ‘conspicuous loyalty, selflessness, moral strength based on the highest Christian values and human solidarity’ (*mirabile esempio di coerenza, di senso di abnegazione e di rigore morale fondato sui più alti valori cristiani e di solidarietà umana*). In the same year a monument was set up on the island with the names of the fifteen fishermen inscribed upon it, and of these the one survivor, Agostino Piazzesi, now proudly accepts invitations to tell his story at public gatherings in schools, theatres and elsewhere.

I would like to end with a little autobiography. In late August 1939, when I was three and a half years old, living in Dunbar on the east coast of Scotland, I remember a big boy in a leather jacket and other rather strange clothes arriving to stay with us for a while. His name was Tommy Graumann Hofberg and he came from Czechoslovakia. All I can remember about him is that he didn’t say very much but smiled a lot. When I was older, I understood that he was a Jew and that he had been rescued somehow from Nazi persecution. We often wondered what became of him. Then by a quite

extraordinary coincidence, just when I was working on the newly discovered Hebrew manuscripts and thinking of the little Jewish community in Perugia that had so tragically disappeared and the 22 Jews rescued from the Nazis by Don Ottavio Posta, I came across the name Thomas Graumann on the Internet in connection with a film about the 669 Czech children that had been rescued by a young English businessman called Nicholas Winton in 1939. He had written to the British government, who agreed to take them in on condition that families could be found to house them. He then set about finding suitable families through the churches and other organizations, and organized an aeroplane and a series of five trains to transport the children to Britain. This story of *Kindertransport* is now well enough known, but it came to light only by accident in 1987. Like Don Ottavio, Winton never talked about it and told no one, not even his wife, what he had done. Anyway Tom was one of those children. Born in Brno, the son of a Jewish cobbler, he escaped with his life in August 1939. He never saw his parents again, or his brother, who was on the next train after his, due to leave on 1 September but prevented from doing so because on that day Hitler's troops invaded Poland and the borders were closed. Brought up by a family in Oban in the northwest of Scotland and now married with two children, he lives between Colorado and the Czech Republic, where he teaches and lectures on the Holocaust and Jewish-Christian relations.

We spoke on the telephone, and my sister and I have exchanged emails with him. I could not help drawing comparisons between my encounter with Tom after nearly 70 years, and my encounters with the history of the Jewish community in Perugia: between Don Ottavio Posta and Sir Nicholas Winton, between Tom's narrow escape from the Nazis in Czechoslovakia in 1939 and the narrow escape of those 22 Jews from the Nazis in Umbria in 1944. When Tom was born, there were around twelve thousand Jews in Brno; now there are a few hundred. So I would just like to end with an epitaph in memory of the European *desaparecidos*, especially Tom's family, the families of the 668 other children who escaped with him, and the Jews of Perugia, both mediaeval and modern. In the words of Abigail to King David (1 Sam. 25.29), carved on many a Jewish gravestone (usually in the abbreviation 'ה' נ' צ' ב' ה' : "May their souls be bound up in the bundle of everlasting life!" תהי נפשו צרורה בצרור החיים (Pl. 11).

Bibliography

Brumana, Biancamaria, and Galliano Ciliberti (eds.)

- 2004 *Frammenti musicali del Trecento nell'incunabolo Inv. 15755 N.F. della biblioteca del dottorato dell'Università degli studi di Perugia* (Celebrazioni del VII centenario, Università degli studi di Perugia; Florence: Olschki).



11. Nineteenth-century tombstone
in Perugia's Jewish cemetery.

Cialini, Gianfranco

- 2006 *Le pergamene ebraiche del fondo antico della biblioteca del dottorato* (Perugia: Università degli Studi di Perugia).

Cohen, Jeremy

- 1982 *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

Emanuel, Muriel, and Vera Gissing

- 2001 *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation: Save One Life, Save the World* (Portland, OR: Valentine Mitchell).

Perani, Mauro

- 1995 'La "Ghenizàh" italiana: migliaia di frammenti ebraici rinvenuti negli archivi italiani', *Gazette du livre médiéval* 26: 18-26.

Sarfatti, Gad

- 2002 'Hebrew Script in Western Visual Arts', *Italia: Studi e ricerche sulla storia, la cultura e la letteratura degli Ebrei d'Italia* 13-15: 451-547.

Sawyer, John F.A.

- 2011 'Interpreting Hebrew Writing in Christian Art', in David J.A. Clines (ed.), *Essays in Honour of J.Cheryl Exum* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press), forthcoming.

Toaff, Ariel

- 1975 *Gli ebrei a Perugia* (Fonti per la storia dell'Umbria; Perugia: Deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria).
1993- *The Jews in Umbria* (SPB, 43; Leiden: E.J. Brill).

BIBLICAL ALTERNATIVES TO MONOTHEISM*

A sharp distinction between the three monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—and other religions is one that is fairly generally accepted. But it is also widely assumed that the Bible contains very few explicitly monotheistic statements and a good many passages in which the existence and authority of other gods are manifestly assumed by the writers. Of course most of these passages are in the Old Testament (von Rad 1962: 210-12), and Christian theologians have a convenient ability to turn into Marcionites when such difficulties arise. They may resort to a historical view of biblical theology and label such passages ‘primitive’, so that we need not take them seriously—a solution that is scarcely less Marcionite than ignoring the Old Testament evidence altogether. Others have attempted, with the best intentions, to prove that such texts do not mean what they say, or to maintain that monotheism is implied throughout the Old Testament, even though it is only explicit in a few passages, and to appropriate terms such as ‘incipient monotheism’ to describe the Old Testament situation (Rowley 1963). The concern to discover monotheism by hook or by crook throughout the Old Testament is of course inspired by the belief (not shared by Marcionites) that the whole Bible is canonical, and thus an integral part of Christian doctrine: if the former is not monotheistic totally, then neither is the latter. What I want to do is to look at the biblical evidence again and to suggest that, since monotheism clearly does not play a major role there, perhaps it need not figure so prominently in Christian doctrine. It may be a matter of emphasis: Is it not true to say that, while Christianity is more monotheistic than Hinduism, it is less monotheistic than Islam?

1. Explicit Monotheism

Let us look first at the texts in which monotheism is explicit, that is, statements in which the existence of all other gods apart from Israel’s God, Yhwh,

* This is the revised version of a paper read at the 1983 conference of the Society for the Study of Theology in Nottingham and published in *Theology* 87 (1984): 172–80..

is denied. There are in fact only about 20 such statements in the Bible, and virtually all of them are Deuteronomic or Deutero-Isaianic, that is, datable to the sixth century BCE, the time of the Babylonian exile (e.g. Deut. 4.35; 32.39; 2 Sam. 7.22; 1 Kgs 8.60; Isa. 45.5, 6, 14, 18, 21). The same applies to passages in which other gods are dismissed as 'nothing' (e.g. Jer. 2.5, 11). The few exceptions, such as Pss. 86.10; 18.32 = 2 Sam. 22.32, are hard to date and do not affect the general conclusion that in ancient Israel monotheism was not explicit or emphasized until the sixth century BCE.

The circumstances that led to this development need not detain us. Probably the political and military successes of Josiah (640–609 BCE), who exploited the weakness of Assyrian power and for the first time succeeded in imposing the authority of Jerusalem on the whole region, must be partly responsible. Just as, from his day onwards, Jewish sacrifice was forbidden everywhere except in Jerusalem and other sanctuaries were systematically destroyed (Deuteronomy 12; cf. 2 Kings 23), so also the existence of other gods was finally and explicitly denied. Both of these developments, the practical and the theoretical, are clearly spelt out in the extraordinarily influential Deuteronomic tradition, which dates from the mid-sixth century, contemporary with Deutero-Isaiah, and has left its mark on the language, theology and religious practice of Judaism more than any other part of the Torah. Clashes with other religions were nothing new, and calls to fight against them and worship only Yhwh go back to the earliest stage of Israelite religion. But the political muscle of Josiah gave Jerusalem the confidence to go beyond invidious comparisons between Yhwh and the gods of their neighbours (Baal, Astarte, Marduk, Nebo, etc.) and deny their very existence: 'There is no God but Yhwh'.

An obvious parallel to this development, which I can do no more than refer to in passing, is the situation in the earliest history of Islam. The traditional Muslim creed *la ilaha illa Allahu*, 'There is no god but God', does not occur in the early Meccan verses of the Qur'an, which date from the time when Muhammad had few followers and no political power. His early message stressed rather the superiority of his God over all rivals. It may be that the equally familiar Muslim formula *Allahu akbar*, 'God is great' (lit. 'greater'), originally implied comparison with other gods. Only after political success changed him into the leader of a powerful religious community did the negative formula that came to be so central in Islam, denying the existence of all other gods, come to be used. It does seem unlikely that monotheism was the result of an abstract philosophical development. In Robertson Smith's words, 'What is often described as a natural tendency of Semitic religions towards ethical monotheism is in the main nothing more than a consequence of the alliance of religion and monarchy' (Smith 1927: 74).

Monotheism is well documented in the literature of the sixth century BCE. It appears again explicitly in later texts such as the prayer of Ben Sira

(Ecclus 36.5): 'There is no god but only thou, O Lord' (cf. Wis. 12.13; 2 Macc. 1.24ff.) and that of Jesus in Jn 17.3: 'That they know thee, the only true God' (cf. Mk 12.19-32; 1 Cor. 8.4-6). These and other passages can usually be related to polemical factors in their original context, such as Christian attacks on Gnosticism or idolatry, and Jewish rejection of the Trinity, although such statements never acquired in Christian doctrine the same central position that they have in Islam. An obvious indication of this is their conspicuous absence from the Apostles' Creed ('I believe in God . . . and in Jesus Christ, his only son . . .').

2. *Implicit Monotheism*

We turn now to a second group of texts that, although not originally monotheistic, have, under the influence of the sixth-century Deuteronomic texts, been so interpreted. There are in the first place many passages in which the incomparability of Yhwh is emphasized. The Song of the Sea in Exodus 15 contains an impressive example *mi kamoka ba'elim Yhwh*, 'Who is like thee among the gods, O Lord?'), the initials of which, incidentally, provide a rabbinic etymology for the second-century BCE name Judas Maccabaeus (Hebrew *makkabi*). The idea is enshrined also in the name Michael, which means 'Who is like God?' (cf. Ps. 95.3; 97.7; Jer. 10.6). These and other passages are quoted as examples of biblical monotheism by many writers from *Targum Onqelos* on Exod. 18.11 (Hebrew has 'The Lord is the greatest among all gods'), to C.J. Labuschagne, who argues in his famous monograph that the incomparability of Yhwh is a distinctly Israelite notion and one that is often indistinguishable from monotheism (Labuschagne 1966). Be that as it may, such passages can easily be accommodated to the explicit monotheism of Deuteronomic tradition within canonical Scripture. The same applies to passages such as the celebrated description of Elijah's victory over the prophets of Baal, in which Yhwh is described as 'the God', as opposed to Baal, who is apparently sleeping, if he exists at all; and to two rather special passages that I want to discuss in a little more detail.

The first commandment (Exod. 20.3; Deut. 5.6) is still quoted by many as proof that Moses was a monotheist. Even the RSV adds a footnote that tends towards a monotheistic interpretation: the Hebrew text clearly concerns monolatry ('You shall have no other god *before* me' or 'to set against me'; cf. NEB), but the RSV footnote recommends, 'Thou shalt have no other god *besides* me'. The Jerusalem Bible goes even further in this direction with its 'except me' in the main text. Again, I do not wish to say that this monotheistic interpretation of the first commandment is necessarily illegitimate, except insofar as it might be used in the historical reconstruction of ancient Israelite religion. In the context of an emphatically monotheistic religion,

the monolatry of the first commandment would undoubtedly come to be understood in this way. The question is, as we shall see, How monotheistic is the Old Testament? Can a few explicitly monotheistic passages be used to change the meaning of other texts whose meaning is less explicit?

Before tackling these questions, however, there is another key passage whose meaning has been much discussed, namely the Shema, the confession of faith in one God, recited morning and evening by every orthodox Jew: *Shema' yisra'el Yhwh elohenu Yhwh ehad*. The syntax is difficult, but most probably the traditional view is the right one: 'The Lord our God, the Lord is one', leaving us with the problem of the meaning of *ehad*, 'one'. The context makes it clear that this is not a theoretical statement but an expression of commitment. The next verse goes on to say, 'and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . .', and that is why the most illuminating parallel is to be found in a love song rather than in theological discourse: 'There are 60 queens and 80 concubines and maidens without number. But she is one, my dove, my perfect one' (Song 6.8-9). Out of all the poet's female friends and acquaintances, she is his favourite, the one to whom all his love is directed. Surely this is what the Shema means: Yhwh is the one God above all others who demands total allegiance.

Such a statement can be and has been used to counter the doctrine of the divinity of Christ: for example, 'He hath neither child nor brother, but hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one' (*Deuteronomy Rabbah* 2.33). Yhwh is one, not three. But the Shema is interpreted as monotheistic in the Gospel narrative where the scribe replies to Jesus' citing of the prayer with the words, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that he is one and there is no other but he' (Mk 12.28ff.). Jesus had not in fact said anything more than 'the Lord is one', but its monotheistic meaning was taken for granted by the scribe. There is manuscript evidence for a similar process in Jas 2.19: Codex Vaticanus has *monos theos*, 'the only god', for *eis theos*, 'the one god'. In other words, like the rest of the passages in this second group, the original meaning as a rather positive statement about the unique nature of Yhwh and about his unique relationship to Israel has been overlaid with or ousted by a negative notion that denies the existence of other gods. As in the history of Islam, earlier positive statements about the power and generosity and faithfulness of God are later forced into second place by a negative statement on the status of other gods. If, however, the monotheism that came to its logical fulfilment in seventh-century CE Arabia was not always so central in the history of biblical interpretation, then is it not possible that the original meaning of this second group of texts remains productive? That is to say, explicit monotheism appears in only a very few passages, by no means always in the mainstream of orthodox theology.

3. Polytheism

This brings me to the third group of texts that I am going to examine, easily the largest, consisting of texts that are explicitly and embarrassingly polytheistic. There are three types of such texts. First, there are all the many references to the existence and indeed the power of the gods of Israel's neighbours. One example will suffice. In negotiations with the king of the Ammonites, Jephthah proposes that they should keep what Chemosh their god gives them to possess while the Israelites should keep what Yhwh gives them (Judg. 11.24), thus suggesting that Yhwh and Chemosh are on equal footing. Now of course Jephthah might have been pretending to believe in the authority of Chemosh for diplomatic reasons. Furthermore, this is that same Jephthah who later sacrificed his daughter because of a careless vow he had made, so he should not perhaps be used as a typical representative of Israelite orthodoxy. Nonetheless, there is little reason to doubt that this was the most commonly held view both in ancient Israel and among her neighbours. Attacks on Baal worship in the laws (e.g. Deuteronomy 12) and stories of Israel's heroes successfully challenging the authority of other gods (e.g. Elijah in 1 Kings 18; Gideon in Judges 6), together with the appeals for monolatry (e.g. Exod. 20.3; Deut. 5.7) and the stress on the distinctiveness of Yhwh over against other gods (e.g. Exod. 15.11; Ps. 95.3; 97.7) already discussed, make this conclusion inevitable.

Most if not all of such passages, however, can be reinterpreted in such a way as to remove the threat of polytheism if so desired: two methods have been traditionally employed to do this. In the first place, a pagan god might be reduced to the rank of a member of the heavenly court over which Yhwh presides: thus Baalzebub takes his place alongside Satan, Mastema and Azazel among diabolical members of the heavenly court. The existence of these *bne elohim*, literally 'sons of God', is accepted as posing no threat to monotheism (Job 1.6; Pss. 89.6-7; 82.1). Alternatively there is the belief that Yhwh unites in himself other ancient deities. Long ago it was argued that the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob were originally distinct deities, later united in Israel's God Yhwh. The first verse of Psalm 91 is sometimes quoted as another example in which two originally distinct deities, *Elyon*, 'the Most High', and *Shaddai*, 'the Almighty', are identified with Yhwh in a liturgical statement of faith: 'He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress"' (Ps. 91.1-2; cf. vv. 8-9). A possible example of such a process taken to its logical extreme, in which all worship, wherever and to whomever or whatever it is offered, is deemed to be worship of Yhwh, occurs in a late prophetic text: 'From the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name and a pure offering . . . but you profane it' (Mal. 1.11-

12). There is the implication here, at the very least, that worship in other parts of the world is more acceptable than profanities at Jerusalem. The emphasis on the name in this passage would make the additional point that the names of other gods are identical with Yhwh and they can be addressed as Yhwh. It seems a priori improbable that the passage goes quite as far as this, however, although texts such as those describing Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4.34ff.) and Darius (6.25ff.)—not to mention the people of Assyria and Egypt (Isa. 19.16-25)—as worshipping Yhwh, clearly make this kind of thinking possible.

If there is no room for other gods in the system, then the other gods mentioned in the biblical texts must either be reduced to members of Yhwh's court or somehow subsumed into his nature. Whether or not this process was systematically carried out in the history of interpretation depends on how important it was to maintain pure monotheism without turning a blind eye to such passages. The fact that denying their existence was clearly not always the solution is a further indication that the biblical evidence has not always been taken as explicitly monotheistic. This brings me to two final sets of passages in which not only is monotheism practically ruled out but the alternative seems to be almost recommended.

First, the mythical struggle between Yhwh and the powers of evil and disorder. In some passages the struggle seems to be over and the victory an event in the distant past; thus Isa. 51.9-10 (cf. Ps. 74.13):

Was it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the dragon;
Was it not thou that didst dry up the sea; the waters of the great deep;
that didst make the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?

But the implication here as elsewhere is surely that a new exodus is possible: the God who conquered the powers of chaos in ancient Egypt is challenged to another bout. The continuing reality of this struggle is reflected in the present and perfect tenses of many of these mythical passages, for example:

The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voices,
the floods lift up their roaring.
Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of
the sea, the Lord on high is mighty. (Ps. 93.3-4; cf. 89.9)

In some passages the battle is still to come, for example, 'In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea' (Isa. 27.1).

Behemoth and Leviathan in Job 40-41 probably come from the same mythological sources and provide a superb climax to the Yhwh speeches—even they are under God's control. Of course all these mythical monsters, Rahab, Leviathan, Behemoth, Nahar ('flood') and Yam ('sea'), can be stripped of their power as challenges to Yhwh or, like Satan, can be absorbed

into the heavenly hosts of angels and demons under the one true God's authority. But the difference between these passages and earlier examples is that here the struggle seems to be a real one, one that reflects the experience of the author. There is no suggestion that these other powers do not exist; on the contrary, they certainly do exist, but Yhwh is able to conquer them.

Such mythical imagery comes from Israel's neighbours, where we can find more elaborate examples, but their appearance in the Bible brings Israel and her neighbours much closer together than is often admitted. The Babylonians and Canaanites sang the praises of their one great deity, Marduk or Baal or the like, who conquered all rivals and was proclaimed king, and the Israelites preserved the nucleus of these polytheistic myths intact. Later abhorrence of dualism must not be allowed to blunt our sensitivity to the powerful and rich imagery of these biblical myths. Relics of non-Israelite mythology survive in many parts of the Bible, and among them unmistakable evidence for the belief, rooted in experience, that over against Yhwh stand evil powers, known as gods among Israel's neighbours. Like the deep and the formless earth in Genesis 1, the question of where they came from or who created them is not raised, let alone answered, but their existence and the reality of their struggle with Yhwh are assumed.

The other set of texts that seem to bring biblical traditions closer to the non-monotheistic religions than is often admitted, especially when taken along with the other evidence I have been considering, appears in the wisdom literature. It has long been noticed that the figure of Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9 bears striking resemblances to a goddess, whether she is compared to Ma'at, the Egyptian goddess of truth and justice, or to the Babylonian goddess of love, Ishtar, identified in Hellenistic times (where the passages are probably to be dated) with Aphrodite. It has been suggested that the author of some of her speeches seems to have transferred to 'a personified Wisdom motifs which elsewhere are associated with YHWH, so that Wisdom is brought into the closest relationship with YHWH and endowed with his authority' (McKane 1970: 277). To see the exegetical possibilities of these passages, one may add finally the Christian interpretation of some of these passages, according to which the figure of Wisdom is identified with Christ, begotten not made (Prov. 8.22–23). The decision on what they mean depends on how much emphasis we place on the history of interpretation, later doctrinal pressures and the evidence of other parts of the canon of Scripture, John 1, for example.

4. Conclusion

At all events, I think I have demonstrated that the plain meaning of the biblical text as a whole is far from monotheistic. Monotheism is not a major concern of the biblical writers; it is explicit in only a few passages, most of

them in the Deuteronomy and Isaiah 40–66. ‘There is no god but our God’ never looms so large in the Bible, or indeed in Judaism and Christianity, as it does in Islam; and indeed the alternatives to monotheism seem to be not only more common but possibly more interesting than the simple, perhaps rather crude negative statement of monotheism. I shall now attempt to draw a few brief conclusions on the implications of what I have been saying.

First, while for practical purposes, liturgical, ethical or polemical, it may be important to deny the very existence of other rival gods, this may not be true of all theological discourse. Could it not be, for example, that the biblical accounts of a cosmic struggle between God and evil are true, and that the faith of those who believe this and still trust in God is all the more striking? Could it not also be that the figure of Wisdom, standing alongside Yhwh, embodying, according to Proverbs, both reason and ‘the fear of the Lord’, is also divine? Perhaps simple explicit monotheism is the cruder, more negative and even more primitive idea. Maybe the situation is more complicated. Certainly the biblical texts suggest that it is, and not only obscure texts, but familiar passages like Proverbs 8 and some of the Psalms that are regularly sung in church.

Second, if the biblical texts were throughout emphatically monotheistic, as the Islamic texts undoubtedly are, then it is hard to see how the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity could have developed. Is it not true to say that the notion of three persons comes historically earlier and is closer to the biblical text than the very difficult Three-in-One doctrine worked out by the church fathers? To put this another way, Is the doctrine of the Trinity after all more biblical than we thought? Is the separate existence of Yhwh, Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the Spirit of God such a problem where the oneness and uniqueness of God are so little stressed?

Third, if by ‘God’ we mean, as Philo did, ‘the transcendent source of all that exists’, then of course by definition there can be only one God—and there is no other. But such a definition is not biblical, and if biblical texts continue to be read in church and are given canonical status, then some kind of alternative to monotheism is unavoidable. The complexity and diversity of human experience and of humans’ awareness of a personal God, far from Philo’s abstraction, are such that we cannot assume that a monotheistic theology is the only valid theology. It is certainly not the only biblical one.

Finally, it would appear that the distinction between biblical theology and that of other ancient Near Eastern religions may not have been so clear-cut. The Canaanites and Babylonians worshipped one god above all others and celebrated his victory over all rivals in much the same way as did the Israelites. Is it therefore possible that Christianity, within the broad spectrum of world religions from monotheism at one end to polytheism at the other, comes somewhere in the middle? At the very least one must admit that the negative statement that ‘there is no God but God’ is rare

and that Christian theologians, like the biblical writers, have not always stressed the imperialistic claim that no other gods exist. Perhaps instead of declaring that the gods worshipped by other people do not exist, or are merely alternative manifestations of our own God, we should acknowledge our ignorance about the nature of gods other than him whom we have experienced ourselves and, drawing upon our biblical origins, approach other religions with more sensitivity and understanding.

Bibliography

Labuschagne, C.J.

1966 *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* (Pretoria Oriental Series, 5; Leiden: E.J. Brill).

McKane, William

1970 *Proverbs: A New Approach* (OTL; London: SCM Press).

Rad, Gerhard von

1962 *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd).

Rowley, H.H.

1963 'Moses and Monotheism', in H.H. Rowley, *From Moses to Qumran: Studies in the Old Testament* (New York: Association Press): 35-63.

Smith, W. Robertson

1927 *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites: The Fundamental Institutions* (London: A. & C. Black, 3rd edn).

Part II

READING ISAIAH

13

A QUMRAN READING OF ISAIAH 6.13*

Compared with the amount of literature devoted to the sectarian documents from Qumran, relatively little has appeared so far on the biblical manuscripts. For while variants over against the Masoretic Text have been noted and, where they confirm scholars' conjectures, grasped with both hands, attempts to find out what the Qumran readings actually say have been few and far between. This is unfortunate not only for Old Testament studies in that these texts represent the only pre-Masoretic Hebrew text that we possess, but also for the study of first-century Jewish sects and thus also the New Testament, since every copy is sure to reflect, to a greater or lesser extent, the theological background and presuppositions of its scribe. By concentrating primarily on the reading of Isa. 6.13, therefore, I hope to throw some light on the interpretation of Scripture at Qumran and in passing to suggest what bearing this might have on the Masoretic Text.

IQIs^a Column 6, lines 8-10 reads as follows:

ועוד בה עשירה ושבחה	8
לבער כאלה וכאלון אשר משלכת מצבת	9
במה זרע הקודש	10
מצבתה	

The most obvious point about this verse is the distinct space between the words *מצבת* and *במה*, noted in the latest editions of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, and in the second printing of *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery* (not in the first), but ignored by S. Iwry in his article on 'Maṣṣebah and Bamah in IQIs^a 6.13' (1957). There is no place in this manuscript where so wide a gap occurs in the middle of a phrase. On the contrary, a space usually coincides with a clear pause in the sense (e.g. 8.3, 13, 23; 15.5; 19.21) and cannot therefore be ignored. In this case, as we shall see, the verse becomes intelligible only if the caesura is taken into consideration.

* This short paper was originally published in *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 3 (1964), pp. 111-14.

The last part of the verse, as is well known, is not found in the LXX, either having been accidentally omitted from the original *per homoeoteleuton* (BHS; Bright 1961: 495) or purposely added to the original by a later scribe (Gray 1912; Mauchline 1962). However that may be, in 1QIs^a the words are certainly a comment on the main thought of the passage, beginning with the word בַּמָּה, ‘in what?’ Now comments like this are not without parallel in biblical literature. There are six examples in Malachi (1.2, 6, 7; 2.17; 3.7, 8), and another in Isa. 2.22 where, curiously enough, a comment introduced by בַּי בַּמָּה is absent also from the LXX. Without going so far as to suggest that both are clearly glosses by the same scribe, it does seem more than likely that we are dealing with a comment of the same type.

Two comments before turning to what the text means. First, it is worth pointing out that this Qumran reading is apparently the explanation of the puzzling בַּם in the MT. There are a number of passages where the interrogative pronoun is spelt without ה (מִ- or מֵ-) and prefixed to the following word (e.g. 1 Chron. 13.15 ; cf. GK 37§bc), and it seems likely that Isa. 6.13 originally read בַּמִּזְרַע קֹדֶשׁ, ‘wherein is the holy seed?’ Then at some stage בַּמִּ- was separated from זֶרַע and produced the mysterious בַּם that appears in one hundred manuscripts.

Second, a word on the meaning of the term מַצֵּבַת. In Biblical Hebrew, מַצֵּבָה or מַעֲבָדָה (2 Sam. 18.18) normally means a standing stone of some kind like the ‘pillar’ set up by Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28.18; cf. Exod. 24.4; Deut. 16.22; Hos. 10.1, 2). But in Judg. 9.6 the passive participle מִצָּב is applied to a tree, or may even be a defective spelling of מַצֵּבָה (BDB), while in Isa. 6.13 the ancient versions have ‘leaves’ (Targum) and ‘branches’ (Vulg). Furthermore, in Aramaic a closely related word means ‘plant, planting’ (Jastrow, 822), and its Syriac equivalent appears in Isa. 60.21 (Peshitta) for Hebrew מִטַּע, ‘planting’ (cf. 61.3). Its application to a tree or part of a tree in this context is therefore possible.

And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burnt again, like a terebinth, or an oak, which leaves a stump. How can the holy seed be its stump?

In the Malachi passages quoted above and elsewhere in the Old Testament, בַּמָּה does not necessarily mean “wherein?” or “in what?”, but simply “how?” (cf. Judg. 16.5, 6). The meaning here seems to be: “How can the Holy Seed be its stump?” The sect at Qumran had little respect for the hierarchy of Jerusalem and Judah and went to great lengths to disparage it, even to the extent of deliberately misunderstanding Isa. 7.17 (CD 7.11-13; Kosmala 1959: 398). The extreme nationalist interpretations of the Jews on their side, for instance, in a Talmudic interpretation of Isa. 6.13 (*b. Ket.* 112b) make it probable that on occasion the Essene interpretations were no less pointed. By the simple device of changing a question and answer into a mere question, the whole spirit of the passage is changed: the proud ‘rem-

nant doctrine' of the Jerusalem hierarchy becomes the doctrine of a mere remnant like 'the two legs and the piece of an ear that a shepherd rescues from the mouth of a lion' (Amos 3.12). How could the holy seed be a lump of wood, all that is left of a burning oak-tree?

Notice finally the Qumran variant זרע הקודש, 'the Holy Seed', for MT זרע קדש, 'a holy seed'. The comment in the MT appears to be a general prophecy—perhaps *post eventum*—that the history of God's chosen people has by no means come to an end. But the Qumran version looks like a polemical reference to a corrupt "establishment" in Jerusalem, 'the holy seed' mentioned by Ezra that had become adulterated with 'the peoples of the lands' (Ezra 9.2), in contrast to the true and living remnant, זרע ישראל, 'seed of Israel' (CD 12.22), 'who went out from the land of Judah . . . and entered the New Covenant in the land of Damascus' (CD 6.5, 19).

Bibliography

Bright, John

- 1961 'Isaiah-I', in Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson, rev. edn): 481-515.

Burrows, Millar (ed.), with the assistance of John C. Trever and William H. Brownlee

- 1950 *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St Mark's Monastery: I, The Isaiah Manuscript and the Habakkuk Commentary* (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research).

Gray, George Buchanan

- 1912 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah I-XXXIX* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).

Iwry, S.

- 1957 'Maššebah and Bamah in IQIs^a 6.13', *JBL* 76: 225-32.

Kosmala, Hans

- 1959 *Hebräer, Essener, Christen : Studien zur Vorgeschichte der frühchristlichen Verkündigung* (SPB, 1; Leiden: E.J. Brill).

Mauchline, John

- 1962 *Isaiah 1-39: Introduction and Commentary* (Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SCM Press).

THE MEANING OF THE NAME 'IMMANUEL' (7.14)*

The personal name Immanuel (or Emmanuel from the Greek form of the name) occurs once in the Hebrew Bible (Isa. 7.14; see also 8.8, 10), and once in the New Testament (Mt. 1.22). It became for Christians from the very beginning a messianic title applied to Jesus, while in Jewish tradition, by contrast, the name is never used as a messianic title and does not occur at all in the rabbinic literature. The Greek version of the so-called Immanuel prophecy in Isa. 7.14 makes explicit reference to a virgin birth that is not in the Hebrew, and this is chiefly why the verse is cited at the very beginning of St Matthew's Gospel. Our first task is to try to get back behind this distinctive Greek interpretation to the meaning of the Hebrew in its original literary context. We shall then be in a position to discuss the factors leading to the origin and development of the traditional Christian interpretation.

1. *The Original Hebrew*

The section of the book of Isaiah in which Immanuel appears begins, 'In the year that King Uzziah died' (6.1), with an account, mainly in prose, of events in Jerusalem during the reign of his successor, King Ahaz (c. 742–727 BCE) (chs. 6–8; cf. 2 Kings 16). It ends with prophecies about the dawn of a new age (9.1–6; cf. 11) and a hymn of thanksgiving (ch. 12). The passage as a whole contains graphic images of approaching danger in the form of invading armies, of Syria and Israel (Ephraim), on the one hand, under their kings Rezin and Pekah, and, on the other, those of the mighty Assyrian empire under Tiglath-pileser III (744–727) and his successors.

The immediate context of the Immanuel prophecy is a dialogue between Isaiah and the king on the proper response to the Syro-Ephraimite threat. In a previous encounter (7.3–9), Isaiah had shown the king his son Shear Jashub, whose name means 'We will survive' (literally, 'A remnant will

* This article was originally published in Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (ed.), *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (5 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006–9), III, pp. 23–25.

return'), and called upon him to trust in God: 'If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established' (7.9). Now, exasperated by the king's unwillingness to listen and probably also by his readiness to negotiate with the Assyrians (cf. 2 Kings 16), he points to what he calls a sign sent by the Lord himself: 'You see that young woman who is pregnant? When she has her child, she will call him Immanu-El' (7.14, my translation). As with the identity of the other two children named in the narrative, Shear Jashub just referred to and Maher Shalal Hash Baz, who appears in the next chapter (8.1-4), the identity of the child seems to be of less importance than the meaning of his name. This is made doubly clear by the fact that, unlike Tabeel, Bethel, Samuel and similar compound names, but exactly like Shear Jashub, it is written as two separate words. The significant fact about this young woman, then, appears to be not who she was or whether she was a virgin—the text does not say—but that, in contrast to the king of Judah, she had the faith to call her son Immanu El, 'God is on our side', even in the present crisis. The image of a courageous, defiant young woman occurs elsewhere in the book of Isaiah (37.22; 52.1-2), and in this context provides the perfect 'sign' to shame the king into following Isaiah's advice to trust in God.

The sequel makes it clear that the young woman's exemplary faith, and that of Isaiah and his sons and disciples (8.16), will not go unchallenged. The land of Judah is going to be utterly laid waste. Immanuel will have to survive, like everyone else, on curds and wild honey, because there will be nothing else to eat (7.15; see v. 22). But even as Judah is overrun by the Assyrian hordes and the nations of the world take counsel together, the name will be recited like a mantra: 'God is with us . . . God is with us' (8.8, 10). In fact, it is not clear whether in this passage the personal name appears at all: the Jewish Targum and most English versions have the name 'Immanuel' in v. 8, but the translation 'God is with us' in v. 10. Verses 9-10 are in poetic form, unlike the preceding verses, and there is a parallel to this use of the Immanuel motif in poetry in one of the 'Songs of Zion' (Ps. 46.7, 11 [Heb. 8, 12]).

Immediately after the scenes of destruction and distress in chs. 7 and 8, as though to justify the young woman's faith, comes a royal hymn celebrating the birth of a son of David and the dawning of a new age of justice and righteousness (9.2-7 [Heb. 1-6]). This is followed soon after by a second royal hymn, beginning 'There shall come forth a root from the stump of Jesse' and ending with another description of a new age in which 'the wolf shall dwell with the lamb . . .' (11.1-9). Against this wider background we now turn to the process that seems to have led to a messianic interpretation of the Immanuel sign.

The birth of a son and heir, especially in a royal family, is understood in many contexts, including the present one (cf. 6.13; 9.6; 11.1-5, 10), to be

a sign of hope and evidence of divine protection, and the formula predicting it, frequent in the biblical narratives (Gen. 16.11; Judg. 13.3; Lk. 1.31) and attested also in a Ugaritic text (Nikkal 7), is similar to that used in Isa. 7.14. The question would then arise as to the identity of the young woman referred to. The prophet's wife has been suggested. She is the mother of two other significantly named sons (7.3; 8.3), but the totally different way in which she and her son are referred to in 7.14 makes this highly unlikely. Rather more convincing is the proposal to apply the prophecy to the royal family in Jerusalem at the time (see Isa. 6.13; 9.6; 11.1) and to identify Immanuel with Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz.. The chronological problems are virtually insuperable, as Hezekiah must have been already in his twenties at the time of the events referred to in Isaiah 7 (cf. 2 Kings 16; 18.1-2). But the reign of Hezekiah was remembered as something of a golden age, not least because it was during his reign that Jerusalem survived the greatest Assyrian threat of all under Sennacherib (2 Kings 18-20; Isaiah 36-39), and it would be appropriate that it should be predicted in the words of a dynastic formula of this type addressed to the family of David (cf. Isa. 11.1; 2 Chron. 22.10). It may be, as some have suggested, that it is alluded to already as a messianic prophecy in Mic. 5.2-3 [Heb. 1-2]), a famous passage cited, like Isa 7.14, in the Gospels (Mt. 2.6; Jn 7.42).

2. *The Greek Version*

The shift to a messianic interpretation of the prophecy is not hard to understand, especially in the wider context of the book of Isaiah as a whole (see chs. 9; 11; 16; 32; 42; 49). The development had already taken place by the time of the Septuagint, the earliest Greek translation of the text, cited at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel. This differs from the Hebrew in three respects: the verbs are definitely all in the future tense; the birth predicted is intended to be understood as miraculous in that the young woman is explicitly described as a 'virgin' (Greek *parthenos*); and, according to at least two normally reliable manuscripts (Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus), the prophecy is addressed directly to King Ahaz ('and you will call his name Immanuel').

Traditions about miraculous phenomena accompanying the birth of a hero or saviour figure are not uncommon. In the Bible, the birth of Isaac is a well-known example (Genesis 17-18), as are those of his twin sons Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25), Samson (Judges 13) and Samuel (1 Samuel 1). There is a highly relevant example in the book of Isaiah itself where the birth of the sons of the daughter of Zion is described as miraculous: 'before she was in labour, she gave birth . . .' (66.7-9). But there is also the possibility that the Hellenistic Greek translators of Isaiah, living in Alexandria in the third or second century BCE, were influenced by extrabiblical examples.

Danae, the mother of the mythical hero Perseus, for example, was a closely guarded virgin, while Egyptian kings, although born of human mothers, were believed to be descended from the sun god Ra.

However that may be, the prophecy in the Greek Bible now appears to be about the miraculous birth of a royal son called Immanuel, and Christians from as early as St Matthew's Gospel believed that such a prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Christ, descended through Joseph from David. There is one final development in the early Christian versions: in New Testament Greek, followed by the Syriac and the Latin, the child will be given the name 'Immanuel' not by his father but by the people (Mt. 1.22).

3. Reception History

Having traced the development of the verse from a reconstruction of its original context in eighth-century BCE Jerusalem to New Testament times, it remains to consider some of the arguments in favour of one interpretation against another that have continued down the centuries, not least in the context of Jewish-Christian polemic. Many Christian writers, clearly aware of the discrepancy between the Greek version and the original Hebrew but determined to expose the error of the Jews, devoted much effort to the controversy. When the Jews pointed out, for example, that the Hebrew word '*almah*' means 'young woman', not 'virgin', for which there is another word (*betulah*), they contended that, if it was not a virgin birth, it would not have been a miracle, though in fact the term used, '*ot*', 'sign', by no means always refers to a miracle (see Isa. 8.18; 20.3). The chronological and other problems involved in identifying the child with Hezekiah or Isaiah's son were also adduced to refute the Jews, although there is ample evidence in the Jewish exegetical literature that the Jews were well aware of these problems themselves. Some used the anti-Semitic argument that the text has both a literal sense, which is the only one the Jews, on account of their sins, could understand (Isa. 6.9-10; Mt. 13.14-17), and a spiritual one, according to which, for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, it is about the birth of Christ. Others simply pointed to the fulfilment of the prophecy in Christ as proof that the Christian interpretation is correct and the Jewish one wrong.

It was not until the modern period that Christian scholars, concerned to get back to the original Hebrew, began to see the value of some of the Jewish readings of the text. Some also found new evidence in the Canaanite, Egyptian and Hellenistic literatures for similar beliefs surrounding the birth of a divine child. Others looked for new insights in archaeological discoveries, such as Tiglath-pileser's own accounts of some of the events referred to in Isaiah, and the occurrence of the name *immanu-yah*, 'The Lord is with us', in the fifth-century BCE Aramaic papyri discovered at Elephantine in Egypt.

On the other hand, in recent years there has been fresh interest in the reception history of the Bible as a source of various different interpretations, each worthy of scholarly attention. This is particularly true of texts such as Isa. 7.14, with a rich and influential afterlife in Christianity. Jesus' last words according to Matthew, 'Lo I am with you always', seem to pick up the Immanuel theme with which the Gospel begins (22.20; cf. 1.22). The name appears as a messianic title in the second-century Greek apocalypse known as *3 Baruch* (4.15). In patristic discussions, the verse was quoted as scriptural authority for the virgin birth, the union of the divine and human natures in Christ ('God with us'), and even, in the eating of 'curds and honey', his true humanity. In Christian iconography it is the text that, in Greek or Latin, most often accompanies the prophet Isaiah. In music it appears, with two other Isaianic titles, 'rod of Jesse' (11.1) and 'key of David' (22.22), in a popular mediaeval plainchant, translated into English as the Advent hymn 'O Come, O Come, Immanuel' (1853), which provided the inspiration for James MacMillan's percussion concerto entitled *Veni Veni Emmanuel* (1992).

Bibliography

- Childs, Brevard S.
 2004 *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- Kaiser, Otto
 1983 *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 2nd rev. edn).
- Lindblom, Johannes
 1953 *A Study on the Immanuel Section in Isaiah: Isa. vii, 1–ix, 6* (Scripta minora Regiae Societatis Humaniorum Litterarum Lundensis, 1957–1958:4; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
 1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Sweeney, Marvin A.
 1996 *Isaiah 1–39: With an Introduction to the Prophetic Literature* (FOTL, 16; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).

‘BLESSED BE EGYPT, MY PEOPLE’:
A COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH 19.16-25*

The Context and Meaning of a Remarkable Passage

Modern commentators on Isa. 19.16-25, from Robert Lowth (1778) and Bernhard Duhm (1892) to Hans Wildberger (1974–78) and Ronald E. Clements (1980), are agreed on two things. First, this represents some kind of high point in the Old Testament. In George Adam Smith’s words, it is the ‘most universal and “missionary” of all Isaiah’s prophecies’ (Smith 1889: 275; cf. Cheyne 1895: 99). In this unique passage, Egypt and Assyria, elsewhere symbols of oppression and brutal tyranny, are united in harmony with Israel and blessed by the Lord of hosts. According to Wildberger, we are in these verses not far from Paul’s ‘to the Jew first and also to the Greek’ (Rom. 1.16) (Wildberger 1974–78: II, 746; cf. Duhm 1922: 122; Feuillet 1951; Heschel 1962: 185f.; Kaiser 1974: 111).

Second, the passage is somehow related to events in Hellenistic Egypt (Tcherikover 1959: 272-87; Delcor 1968: 188-205; Fraser 1972: I, 83f., 281-86; Hayward 1982: 429-43). According to Josephus, v. 19 was cited by the expatriate priest Onias in a letter to Ptolemy VI Philometor (181–145 BCE), requesting permission to build a temple at Leontopolis in Egypt: ‘For this indeed is what the prophet Isaiah foretold, “There shall be an altar in Egypt to the Lord God”, and many other such things did he prophesy concerning this place’ (*Ant.* 13.68). There is plenty of evidence in the ancient versions and commentaries that Isa. 19.16-25 was interpreted and re-interpreted in the light of Jewish attitudes towards that temple (Vermes 1970: 223f.). The fifth city in v. 18, for example, is variously named ‘the city of destruction’ and ‘the city of righteousness’ (cf. 1.26), the former presumably by oppo-

* This paper was originally published in James D. Martin and Philip R. Davies (eds.), *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (JSOTSup, 42; Sheffield: JSOT Press), pp. 21-35.

nents (including the Masoretes; cf. AV), the latter by supporters (including some of the Greek translators).

The first of these two points of agreement, concerning the theological significance of the passage, clearly transcends the immediate historical circumstances that gave rise to the second. But since all our Hebrew manuscripts, together with the ancient versions and commentaries, have been influenced by those historical circumstances, a commentary must take them into account, if only to clear a path through later interpretations to what the author originally meant. There is a third context to be considered, however, in addition to that of the original author and the Hellenistic context. The present literary context of the passage, among the 'oracles against the foreign nations' (chs. 13–23), invites us to imagine the prophecy on the lips of the eighth-century prophet Isaiah (Cheyne 1895: 106) and to ask whether the author of Isa. 19.16–25 chose his words with that context in mind. To catch the individual nuances and associations of the language, we must therefore try to think ourselves back into these three periods, and then let the text speak for itself.

1. *The Original Context*

Few nowadays would argue that any part of this passage goes back to the eighth century BCE. The arguments of Seth Erlandsson and the late Professor Mauchline, that the year 701 BCE was the 'requisite occasion' for the original proclamation (Mauchline 1962: 162), are peremptorily dismissed by Clements, for example (Clements 1980: 170). In fact, as we shall see, valuable insights are to be gained by such an approach, but they concern the author's intention to give his message Isaianic force, not the actual date of composition. Mauchline is right to stress that the 'advanced theological outlook' of the passage does not in itself preclude an eighth-century date, but when we take into account the language, which is without a doubt far removed from eighth-century Isaianic usage (Gray 1912: 332f.; Marti 1900: 156; Cheyne 1895: 100), it becomes unrealistic as well as unnecessary to argue for an eighth-century date.

The Egyptian connections, which go back, as we have seen, at least as far as the Septuagint and Josephus, have prompted others to argue for a Hellenistic date. Cheyne (1895: 100) suggests the reign of Ptolemy I Soter (d. 283), with a possible allusion to his throne-name in v. 20 ('saviour' AV; LXX *sousei* 2x), or his son Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283–246 BCE), to whose reign tradition attributes the first Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. Duhm (1892: 122) and Marti (1900: 156) recognize the hand of an Egyptian Jew living around 160 BCE. More recently, Kaiser (1974: 110) concludes that the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 BCE) is the earliest possible date. He sees in vv. 16–17 a possible allusion to the Ptolemaic occupation

of Judah in 301 BCE, and in the mention of Egypt and Assyria in vv. 23-25 references to Ptolemaic–Seleucid relations culminating eventually in the Peace of Apamea in 118 BCE.

Such an approach correctly picks up significant allusions to Hellenistic history that are present in the manuscripts and ancient versions. But these surely belong to the history of interpretation rather than the debate about the actual date of composition. The discovery of the second-century BCE Isaiah Scroll at Qumran, which of course contains our passage in its present context, without a trace of its having been a late interpolation, virtually rules out so late a date (Wildberger 1974–78: II, 738). As in the case of the other extreme, 701 BCE, this view must be rejected as highly improbable.

More convincing are the arguments of those who point to parallels with the exilic literature (Wildberger 1974–78: II, 745f.). The concern for God's people in Babylon (e.g. Jeremiah 29), Egypt (e.g. Jeremiah 44) and other developing Diaspora communities is one obvious example. The generous worldwide perspective (*Weitherzigkeit*) associated with Deutero-Isaiah may be cited as another (Duhm 1922: 127f.; Kaiser 1974: 110; Jacob 1958: 217–23). From a slightly later period, the book of Jonah contains even closer parallels (Jacob 1958: 222 n. 2). There the Assyrian citizens of Nineveh are, by implication, 'the work of God's hands' (cf. Jon. 4.10–11), just as they are in Isa. 19.25. In both, the Assyrians are transformed from a symbol of brutality and ruthlessness into the object of divine compassion. Isaiah 56; 66.18–21; Zech. 2.12–17 (Evv 2.8–13) and Mal. 1.11 are more examples from about the same era. Like the so-called 'Isaiah apocalypse' (chs. 24–27), 19.16–25 appears to build on earlier intimations of universalism, many of them Isaianic, and press them forward towards Job, 'the wise man from the east' who discovers Yhwh, Daniel who turns Nebuchadnezzar and Darius to Yhwh, and Paul who describes a situation 'where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free' (Col. 3.11). We shall probably not be far out if we date the passage to the fifth century BCE (cf. Jacob, Wildberger, Clements) and envisage our author placing this message on the lips of an eighth-century prophet, in exactly the same way as the author of the book of Jonah has done. Let us now consider the meaning of the passage in that context.

In an interesting study published in 1951 and largely neglected by recent commentators, André Feuillet moves away from attempts to identify actual historical and geographical references in the passage and concentrates instead on literary affinities (Feuillet 1951: 65–87). He recognizes, for example, in v. 18 an allusion to the five cities defeated by Joshua in the spectacular finale to the story of the Israelite conquest of Canaan (Josh. 10.1–27) (Feuillet 1951: 69ff.). One of these was Jerusalem, and this provides a clue to the identity of the fifth city, 'the city of righteousness', restored on the basis of the LXX and a familiar epithet for the 'new Jerusalem' (cf. 1.26)

(Gray 1912: 335; Feuillet 1951: 72; Kaiser 1974: 107; Seeligmann 1948: 68; Hayward 1982: 439-40). The passage is then an impressive prophecy about the conquest and conversion of Egypt, built upon traditional accounts of the victories of Joshua and the conversion of Canaan. Others have noted allusions to the exodus traditions, especially in vv. 19-22 (Kaiser 1974: 105; Wildberger 1974-78: II, 742f.). Like the authors of Chronicles and Jonah—not to mention Deutero-Isaiah, the ending of Amos (9.11-15) and countless other such passages, many of them introduced like the present one by the formula 'on that day . . . '—our author is clearly building on traditions preserved elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. It should not be difficult to grasp what he is saying without seeking to identify any actual historical events alluded to.

We begin with the 'promised land' motif, which runs through the passage from beginning to end. The subject of the first part is described as *admat yehudah*, 'the land of Judah', a striking *hapax legomenon*. Then there are the five cities, Canaan and the land of Egypt in v. 18, the 'boundary' in v. 19, the highway leading from Egypt to Assyria in v. 23, and finally the richly allusive term 'Israel my heritage' in v. 26, with which the prophecy ends. Feuillet is certainly right to look for allusions to the conquest traditions here, particularly when we are thinking in terms of a writer living some time after the end of the Babylonian exile. At that time the promise 'to Abraham and his seed forever' was an enigma, and the Jews were seeking to come to terms with Diaspora conditions. Jeremiah had advised some of them to 'build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce . . . ' (29.5). Isaiah 19 contains a similar message for Jews in Egypt:

Do not be afraid; this time the Egyptians will be afraid of you. Build cities and live in them. Take the language of the promised land with you ['the language of Canaan']. Build a new Jerusalem. Start again: like Abraham when he came to Canaan, build an altar to the Lord [Gen. 12.6-7]; set up a pillar there as Jacob did [Gen. 28.18]. When things go wrong and you cry for help, God will send you a saviour as he did in the days of the judges [e.g. Judg. 3.9, 15; 6.14-15].

Such a paraphrase highlights the author's purpose. Jeremiah sent his message to the Babylonian exiles in the form of a letter; Isa. 19.16-22 contains a very similar message, in a different form. Like the author of the book of Jonah, our author has placed his 'letter to the exiles' on the lips of an eighth-century prophet. Just as Onias, some three centuries later, cited Isaiah's authority for his actions, so here the anonymous author of Isa. 19.16-25 claims the same authority for his message to the exiles in Egypt: Egypt will be a land of promise too, with its own *Heilsgeschichte*, its own Jerusalem.

The closest parallel comes at the end of the passage: 'Blessed be my people Egypt, and Assyria the work of my hands' (v. 25). Jeremiah's letter to the exiles specifically urges them to pray for the host community in Babylon:

‘Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will find your welfare’ (29.7). Does not the blessing of Egypt in Isaiah 19, at the end of a description of Israel settling there, correspond exactly to the Jeremiah passage? An entirely new situation obtains: Jews in Egypt and Mesopotamia praying for the peace and welfare of their new homelands. That Isaiah should have preached thus in eighth-century BCE Jerusalem would be almost unbelievable (we shall return to that context later); but in the light of Jeremiah’s letter and the attitude towards the Assyrians advocated in the book of Jonah, it is somewhat less surprising to find a fifth-century BCE statement of these views.

There has been some discussion about the significance of placing Israel ‘third with Egypt and Assyria’ (v. 24). It could be that it means third in order of precedence behind Egypt and Assyria, rather like Jonah (Jonah 4) or the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15.25-32): as a rebuke to an exclusivist people or a summons to adopt a more generous attitude towards other nations. But in view of the emotive ‘promised land’ theme, and in particular the concluding *yisra’el naḥalati*, ‘Israel my heritage’, surely the point must be less carping. Is not Israel the object of the verb ‘blessed’ at the beginning of v. 25, a new Israel, living in harmony with her neighbours? A kind of triad will be completed, three great nations, basking in the peace and prosperity of God’s blessing (Slotki 1949: 93). There will be one language (the language of the promised land, v. 28); all the people will worship one God (vv. 22-23); they will travel freely to and from Egypt and Mesopotamia (v. 23); and all the families of the earth, not just Israel, will be blessed (Gen. 12.3; cf. Ps. 47.10) (Wildberger 1974–78: II, 745; Jacob 1958: 222; Kaiser 1974: 110-12).

There are many allusions and associations in this rich passage. It is hoped that this attempt to see into the original author’s mind has elucidated some of them. We move on now to the question of what the text meant in the Hellenistic period.

2. The Hellenistic Context

Our evidence for later interpretations comes, first, from the Masoretic Text itself, which contains one or two readings that do not go back to the original author. ‘*ir ha-heres*, ‘the city of destruction’, in v. 18 is one, and *moshia’ va-rab*, ‘a saviour and a great one’, in v. 20 is probably another, as we shall see. Then there are the versions, in particular the Greek translations, which were written in all probability either in Egypt or with Greek-speaking Egyptian Jews in mind. *Targum Jonathan* is also an important witness to how the text was understood in official Jewish circles, while the Isaiah Scrolls from Qumran give us a glimpse into sectarian interpretations at about the beginning of the Common Era. Finally, early commentaries, such as the

midrashic literature, together with the mediaeval commentaries of Rashi, Kimḥi and the rest give us further information on how people reacted to this remarkable passage.

As we saw, there is good reason to suppose that the original text of v. 18 referred to a city in Egypt called 'the city of righteousness' (= 'a new Jerusalem') and that the Masoretic '*ir ha-herem*', 'city of destruction', reflects Pharisaic attitudes to the temple of Onias at Leontopolis, possibly after its destruction in 73 CE (Vermes 1970: 223f.; Delcor 1968: 201-3; Hayward 1982: 438-43). Other ancient authorities express similar suspicious or polemical attitudes towards the rival temple. The Mishnah classifies worship at the Temple of Onias as illicit (*Menahot* 13.10). The Tosephta condemns it as a crime punishable by excommunication (*Menahot* 13.12-13). The Targum on Isa. 19.18 has 'the city of Beth Shemesh (= Heliopolis) which is destined for destruction'. Given this unsympathetic or hostile attitude on the part of Palestinian Judaism towards the situation in Egypt, we might expect to find other examples of a decline from the original author's universalistic intentions (Duhm 1922: 123; Gray 1912: 341). Thus, Rashi (1040-1105 CE) explains that the great blessing in vv. 24-25 comes to Israel third in *chronological* order: 'The name of Israel will be raised on high and they will be as much to be reckoned with as one of these kingdoms in blessing and greatness'. The trend goes still further in the commentary of David Altschuler known as *Metzudat David* (1770), printed along with Rashi and Kimḥi in rabbinic Bibles. This suggests that *shelishiyyah* may mean 'government, authority' (from *shalish*, 'officer', as in Exod. 14.7), not 'third' at all: '... Israel will be a ruling power over Egypt and Assyria'.

Another possible example of how the Masoretic Text appears to reflect the beliefs and attitudes of Pharisaic Judaism, rather than those of the original author, occurs in v. 20. The MT has 'he will send them a saviour and a great one (*va-rab*)', but on the basis of the LXX (κρίνων) and parallels elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Judg. 6.31; Isa. 49.25), it has been strongly argued that the original reading was 'he will send them a saviour and will defend them ...' (*ve-rab*) (*BHS*; Wildberger; Kaiser). But Jewish interpreters like Rashi and Kimḥi follow Masoretic tradition and take it as a reference to 'a saviour and a prince', thinking of Israel's guardian angel Michael, 'one of the chief princes' (Dan. 10.13). It must be remembered that the Masoretic Text comes to us from a context in which Jewish eschatology was well developed, whatever the intention of the original author may have been (see Chapter 25).

The Greek versions were written for a rather different readership. As long ago as 1948, the late Professor Seeligmann accumulated ample evidence to show that the Septuagint version of Isaiah 'regarded the diaspora of Egypt ... as the rightful recipient of the prophetically promised salvation'. In 11.16 and 28.5, for example, where 'the remnant' is mentioned, the

translator adds ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, ‘in Egypt’. Here in v. 25 he need only add the preposition ἐν, ‘in’, to change ‘my people Egypt’ into ‘my people in Egypt’. In 6.12 and 14.1, the notion of an expanding, flourishing ‘remnant’, not mentioned in the Masoretic Text, is introduced by the Greek translator, in the latter example, introducing the Aramaic loanword γιῶρας, ‘proselyte’ (Seeligmann 1948: 117). The Greek version, in other words, was written for Greek-speaking Jews in Egypt and has to be read, first and foremost, in that context, not only as a witness to what the Hebrew originally meant.

In the first place, not one of the Greek versions aims a whisper of criticism at the Temple of Onias at Leontopolis. Some contain the odd hybrid name πόλις ἀάσεδεκ, which looks like a cryptic representation of a Hebrew original ‘*ir ha-šedeq*, ‘the city of righteousness’, while others add the word ἡλίου, ‘of the sun’, to make explicit reference to Heliopolis, the nome where Leontopolis was situated (Ziegler 1939: 191; Tcherikover 1959: 277f., Fraser 1972: I, 83; II, 162-63). The Isaiah Scroll A (1QIs^a) from Qumran also has “the city of the sun” (‘*ir ha-heres*) (cf. Jer.43.13) as have several Hebrew manuscripts, the Targum and the Vulgate (BHS). Now only readers with a knowledge of Hebrew could have understood what ἀσεδεκ meant, and it may be that there is another cryptogram of the same type, this time requiring a knowledge of Arabic. Codex Sinaiticus has πόλις ἀσεδ ἡλίου, and it is tempting to imagine that here is a reference to Leontopolis itself ‘the city of the lion’ (as well as Heliopolis), since *asad* is the normal Arabic word for ‘lion’. The connection between this verse and the Temple at Leontopolis was well established from the time of Josephus at the latest, and if one translator can incorporate a Hebrew word into his Greek, then it is not impossible that another, probably from a later age, might play the same game with Arabic. Others merely reject the word ἀσεδ as a scribal error or suggest that it is a transcription of the Hebrew ‘*ir hesed*, ‘loyal city’, an expression not attested elsewhere (Gray 1912: 335-37; Seeligmann 1948: 68). However we take it, the phrase refers to Leontopolis, where some Jews believed Onias had built a new Jerusalem ‘as the prophet Isaiah had foretold’.

In v. 20 the LXX has σημεῖον εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ‘a sign for ever’ (reading *la’ad* for *u-le’ed*). This too expresses Jewish hopes for the Temple at Leontopolis, which must go back before its destruction in 73 CE, and were certainly not shared by Jews living outside Egypt (Vermes 1970: 223f.; Delcor 1968: 202f.).

It would be natural to expect the Greek versions to spell out for us in some way who the ‘saviour’ in v. 20 was (Cheyne 1895: 105f.; Hayward 1982: 440f.). For example, according to one tradition, Ptolemy I Soter (= ‘Saviour’) was noted for his ‘kindness and love of mankind’ and settled large numbers of Jews in Egypt, among them a distinguished high priest called Hezekiah. Yet none of the Greek versions translates the noun *moshia* ‘

with σωτήρ, and this could be deliberate, since according to another tradition, recorded in Josephus (*Ant.* 13.74-79), this Ptolemy was a hard task-master, and his acts in Palestine proved contrary to what was indicated by his title (Tcherikover 1959: 56). It has been suggested on the basis of a reference to 'going down [*sc.* to Egypt]' in the Isaiah Scroll A from Qumran, that the 'saviour' was Onias himself (Hayward 1982: 441). Another possibility might be suggested by the term κρίνων, 'passing judgment', in the LXX. Ptolemy VI Philometor, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 13.74-79), decided in favour of the Jews on two separate occasions, once in connection with the founding of Onias's Temple, and once to settle a dispute with the Samaritans. It was during his reign, too, that Egypt and Syria were united in a marriage alliance, and movement between the two countries was facilitated. Could this be the background of v. 23? On the other hand, there is an unmistakable anti-Egyptian slant at the end of the verse: 'The Egyptians will *serve* the Assyrians' (for Hebrew '. . . will *worship with* the Assyrians') and 'my people in Egypt' (for 'my people Egypt').

As we saw, the Isaiah Scroll A from Qumran has 'city of the sun' in v. 18, which, like the LXX readings, would encourage Onias and his followers. In fact, Leontopolis and Qumran may originally have been 'two branches of a common Zakodite movement which rejected the Jerusalem Temple and its priests' (Hayward 1982: 443). Jeshua ben Sira and his grandson, who translated his work into Greek for the Jews in Egypt, may also have been part of the same Zadokite movement (see Chapter 45). Codex Sinaiticus actually describes Ben Sira as 'a priest from Salem' (Sir. 50.27), like Melchizedek (Gen. 14.18; Ps. 110.4 [Heb. 7]; 11QMelch) (Rowley 1950).

Further investigation will no doubt reveal more examples of how this text has been activated by events in the Hellenistic world. Both as literature in their own right and as witnesses to the meaning of the original Hebrew, these texts still have much to tell us, provided we keep the issues discussed in the present section distinct from those exclusively concerned with the original meaning of the text discussed in the previous section. It remains now to look briefly at a third level of interpretation, equally distinct, and for which a different context must be reconstructed.

3. *The Literary Context*

As we saw, arguments to prove that Isa. 19.16-25 was actually composed in the eighth century BCE are unconvincing. Yet the fiction that it was is important too, since clearly the author wishes us to imagine Isaiah addressing these words to his contemporaries. Our final task is therefore to treat the text as part of the whole 'vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah' (Isa. 1.1). To ignore this level of interpretation

would be to do violence to our text by divorcing it from the literary framework to which it now belongs. One might add that, since it was the whole Bible that was canonized, not its separate parts, biblical commentators have a special responsibility to expound the book as a whole, in addition to the archaeological exercises by which its separate strata are exposed (Childs 1979: 60; Goldingay 1981: 132-37).

That the author of the books of Malachi or Jonah should have written in such marvellously universalistic terms is one thing; but that an eighth-century prophet should have spoken thus would be nothing short of a miracle. Yet this is what our author wishes us to imagine. We are to look away from the Diaspora situation of his own day and focus on the memorable events that shook Jerusalem and Judah towards the end of the eighth century BCE. Isaiah had witnessed the devastating series of Assyrian campaigns, advancing to the gates of Jerusalem itself (8.7-8; 10.28-32; 36.1), and the pathetic failure of Egypt to withstand them (20.3-6; 37.9). He also saw the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem from the armies of Sennacherib (chs. 36-37). What would 19.16-25 mean against that background?

First, the reference in v. 17 to 'what the Lord of hosts has proposed against Egypt' points back to v. 12 explicitly and establishes that vv. 16-25 are intended to be a continuation of the 'oracle concerning Egypt' that begins in v. 1 (Duhm 1922: 119; Gray 1912: 332). Just as the oracle against Moab in ch. 15 is immediately followed by a prophecy of mercy to 'the outcasts of Moab' (16.1-5), so now the oracle against Egypt turns from confusion and destruction (vv. 1-15) to salvation (v. 20), healing (v. 22) and blessing (vv. 24f.). But there is more to it than that. Salvation comes from Judah. It is to Zion that Moabites (16.1) and Ethiopians (18.7) bring gifts when their punishment is over; it is in Zion that the outcasts of Moab are to find refuge from the destroyer (16.4). It is in the new Jerusalem, 'city of righteousness' (v. 18), that the Egyptians are going to worship the Lord of hosts. This is another 'In that day . . .' passage, which, like the ending of Amos (9.11-15), adds hope to judgment and so transforms the whole prophecy from one of doom to one of new life and rebuilding after destruction (Clements 1977: 44). It also transforms it from being one of the oracles of doom against the foreign nations (chs. 13-23), which in themselves had little to say to the beleaguered citizens of Jerusalem, into a prophecy 'concerning Judah and Jerusalem' (1.1; 2.1). Visions of a new Jerusalem appear in almost every chapter of Isaiah, from the beautiful 'faithful city' poem in ch. 1 and the famous 'swords into ploughshares' prophecy in ch. 2, to the 'new heaven and a new earth' prophecy in ch. 65 (vv. 17-25; cf. 66.18-24). The 'oracles concerning the foreign nations', like the present one, are no exception.

In such a context, the problem of the referent of v. 17 becomes clear: 'the land of Judah will become a terror to the Egyptians'. Surely this must be, as Rashi and Mauchline point out, the miraculous triumph of Judah over

Sennacherib in 701 BCE (Mauchline 1962: 161f.). The fact that Isaiah did not actually utter these words at that time, or that the defeat of the Assyrian army never happened (Clements 1980), is of no importance if we are concerned to discover what the author of the passage is saying. He invites us to imagine the legendary Isaiah commenting on that legendary victory. The spectacular events described in chs. 36–37 begin with Sennacherib's attack on 'all the fortified cities of Judah' (36.1) and end with the miraculous slaying of 185,000 Assyrians and the ignominious retreat and subsequent assassination of their king Sennacherib (37.36–38). The role of the Egyptians is mentioned twice in the prose account (36.6–9; 37.9), and it is clear from passages like 20.3–6 and 31.3 that they were at the mercy of Assyria at that time. How much more had they to fear from 'the land of Judah', who had defeated Assyria and had good reason to turn their supernatural powers on Egypt next!

This brings us to the question of why, out of all the available words for 'fear, terror, panic', the author chose the enigmatic word *hogga* in v. 17. There are perhaps two clues to the special nuance of the word, which occurs only here. In the first place, the form of the word, which makes it look like Aramaic rather than Hebrew, is suggestive. Are we intended to recognize in it the frightening overtones of something foreign to the Egyptians, quite new to their experience and all the more terrifying for that? All but one of the Aramaisms of this type cited by the grammarians refer to something frightening (Isa. 19.17; Ezek. 19.2; Dan. 11.46; Lam. 3.12) or destructive (Jer. 50.11) or unpalatable (Num. 11.20; Ruth 1.20) or evil (Eccl. 10.5) (GK 80h). It is also significant that in Modern Hebrew *hogga* denotes a foreign or non-Jewish festival, used in wordplays by Bialik and others (Even Shoshan 1962: II, 366). This obvious association of *hogga* with *hag*, 'festival', may provide a second clue to the author's intention in choosing this rare word for 'fear'. In the whole book of Isaiah, only one *hag*, 'feast', is described, and that description is an unforgettably grotesque and spine-chilling one:

You shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to the mountain of the Lord, to the Rock of Israel. And the Lord will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, with a cloudburst and tempest and hailstones. The Assyrians will be terror-stricken at the voice of the Lord, when he smites with his rod. And every stroke of the staff of punishment which the Lord lays upon them will be to the sound of timbrels and lyres; battling with brandished arm he will fight with them . . . ' (Isa. 30.29–32).

This description, worthy of Hieronymous Bosch, brings together jubilant celebrations at a feast in Judah with the terror of Judah's enemies. Does the word *hogga* do the same? Is this a sinister pun in which the author is delib-

erately alluding to that Isaianic ‘terror-feast’? Or perhaps in this Egyptian context there is an allusion to the night of the Passover at which not only the Egyptians but also Philistia, Edom, Moab and Canaan are seized with terror (Exod. 15.13-18) (Kaiser 1974: 106).

For the ancient historian, no doubt events in second-century BCE Hellenistic Egypt will be of particular interest; literary and religious developments in fifth-century BCE Judaism are important too. But for those claiming this passage as a ‘high point in Old Testament theology’, surely its literary framework in the book of Isaiah as a whole must take pride of place. One final example will illustrate this. For the original author of the passage, as we saw, Egypt and Assyria were symbols or literary allusions, while for the eighth-century prophet, they meant far more. Egypt was a vain hope in whom some of his foolish contemporaries were placing their faith:

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses . . .
The Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit.
When the Lord stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble,
and he who is helped will fall, and they will all perish together (31.1-3).

The Assyrians were his people’s worst enemy, responsible for oppression and wholesale destruction. It is to such people, then, that he apparently directs this prophecy of forgiveness and hope. In the same way, the book of Jonah, divorced from its eighth-century BCE context (2 Kgs 14.23–17.7), preaches forgiveness to the Gentiles, symbolized by the citizens of Nineveh, long since dead and buried. But the author deliberately chose Jonah as his hero, not Noah or Moses or Haggai or Ezra, in order to preach forgiveness, not to any Gentiles but to those who were currently his country’s bitterest enemies. The distinction is worth making; it is there in the text for all to see; and it raises a high point in Old Testament theology even higher. Adapting Wildberger’s comment quoted at the beginning of this paper, we are in these verses, theologically and morally, not far from the words of Jesus on the cross: ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’ (Lk. 23.24).

With the greatest pleasure I offer this as my contribution to a Festschrift for William McKane, whose devotion to the subtlest nuances of the Hebrew text has been a model to me and to many others since we were colleagues in Glasgow, in the days of John Mauchline and Cecil Mullo Weir, twenty years ago.

Bibliography

- Altschuler, D.
1770 *Metzudat David* [The Tower of David] (Berlin).
Cheyne, T.K.
1895 *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah: With an Appendix Containing the*

Undoubted Portions of the Two Chief Prophetic Writers in a Translation
(London: A. & C. Black).

Childs, Brevard S.

1979 *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM Press).

Clements, Ronald E.

1977 'Patterns in the Prophetic Canon', in George W. Coats and Burke O. Long (eds.), *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press).

1980a *Isaiah 1–39* (NCB Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).

1980b *Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem: A Study of the Interpretation of Prophecy in the Old Testament* (JSOTSup, 13; Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield).

Delcor, M.

1968 'Le temple d'Onias en Egypte', *RB* 75: 188-205.

Duhm, Bernhard

1922 *Das Buch Jesaja* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 4th edn).

Even Shoshan, Avraham

1962 *Millon ḥadash* (5 vols.; Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer).

Feuillet, André

1951 'Un sommet religieux de l'Ancien Testament: l'oracle d'Is. 19.19-25 sur la conversion de l'Egypte', *RScR* 39: 65-87.

Fraser, P.M.

1972 *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (3 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon).

Goldingay, John

1981 *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation* (London: Inter-Varsity).

Gray, George Buchanan

1912 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, I–XXXIX* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).

Hayward, R.

1982 'The Jewish Temple at Leontopolis: A Reconsideration', *JJS* 33: 429-43.

Heschel, Abraham Joshua

1962 *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row).

Jacob, Edmond

1958 *Theology of the Old Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton).

Kaiser, Otto

1974 *Isaiah 13–39: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).

Lowth, Robert

1778 *Isaiah: A New Translation with a Preliminary Dissertation and Notes, Critical, Philological and Explanatory* (London: J. Nichols, 2nd edn).

Marti, Karl

1900 *Das Buch Jesaja* (KHAT; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck]).

Mauchline, John

1962 *Isaiah 1–39: Introduction and Commentary* (Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SCM Press).

Rowley, H.H.

1950 'Melchizedek and Zadok', in Walter Baumbartner *et al.* (eds.), *Festschrift, Alfred Bertholet zum 80. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr): 461-72.

Seeligmann, I.L.

1948 *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of Its Problems* (Mededelingen

en Verhandelingen van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap 'Ex Oriente Lux', 9; Leiden: E.J. Brill).

Slotki, I.W.

1949 *Isaiah: Hebrew Text and English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (London: Soncino Press).

Smith, George Adam

1889 *The Book of Isaiah* (Expositor's Bible; 2 vols.; London: Hodder & Stoughton).

Tcherikover, Avigdor

1959 *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America).

Vermes, Geza

1970 'Bible and Midrash: Early Old Testament Exegesis', in P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans (eds.), *Cambridge History of the Bible*, I, *From the Beginnings to Jerome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 199-231.

Wildberger, Hans

1974-78 *Jesaja* (BKAT, 10; 3 vols.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag).

Ziegler, Joseph (ed.)

1939 *Septuaginta Isaias* (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum graecum, 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

‘MY SECRET IS WITH ME’ (ISAIAH 24.16):
SEMANTIC LINKS BETWEEN ISAIAH 24–27 AND DANIEL*

There are a good many difficulties in the Hebrew text of Isaiah 24–27, and it is the aim of this short paper, dedicated to a good friend and colleague, who himself ‘reconsidered’ the passage just 30 years ago (Anderson 1963), to suggest that a solution to some of them can be found in the book of Daniel.

It is generally agreed that the ‘proto-apocalyptic’ form and content of these chapters bring them close to Daniel in various respects (Hanson 1975: 313–34; 1985: 480; Gottwald 1985: 587). At one time it was also widely assumed that the so-called ‘Isaiah Apocalypse’ was composed last of the many diverse components of what now make up the book of Isaiah, possibly not many years before the earliest parts of the book of Daniel (Wildberger 1974–78: II, 885–911; Kaiser 1974: 178–79; Vermeylen 1977: 349–81). Michael Fishbane explains the connection between Isaiah 24–27 and Daniel in terms of direct references in Daniel to the earlier prophet (Fishbane 1985: 493). One should not be surprised, then, to find semantic connections between Isaiah and Daniel. Without speculating on the precise sociopolitical or religious contexts in which Isaiah 24–27 and the book of Daniel were composed—and there are persuasive arguments for dating the Isaiah passage to a much earlier period than Daniel (Anderson 1963; Millar 1976; Hayes and Irvine 1987: 294–98)—it is probable that they belong to the same or a similar universe of discourse.

There is another factor, however, that is, to my mind, much more important than form, content and supposed date, and one that has not been sufficiently applied to the semantics of Biblical Hebrew. This is to do with the nature of the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible as a whole, not just Isaiah 24–27. In an article on Hebrew terms for the resurrection of the dead (Chapter 25), I argue that the textual and theological tradition preserved by the

* This paper was originally published in A. Graeme Auld and Philip R. Davies (eds.), *Understanding Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson* (JSOTSup, 152; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 307–17.

Masoretes and contained in the Leningrad Codex from which most modern biblical scholars work (*BHS* 1967–77) goes back to a variety of ancient Judaism in which an elaborate eschatology, including a belief in the resurrection of the dead, held an important place. This explains why, according to the Masoretic Text, belief in an individual resurrection, the day of judgment and other eschatological doctrines can be found in so many passages of Scripture, though probably in most cases this may not have been the original author's intention (Barr 1992: 43–44). In the context of a community that firmly believed in the resurrection of the dead, including the context in which the Masoretes worked, a substantial set of common Hebrew terms, such as *hay*, 'living', *qum*, 'to arise', *heqış*, 'to wake up', *ra'ah*, 'to see', *mishpat*, 'judgment' and '*afar*, 'dust', acquired eschatological associations that can clearly be recognized in passages like Job 19.25–27, Ps. 1.5 and Isa. 53.11 (see Chapter 25).

The book of Daniel is unique among the books of the Hebrew Bible both in the elaborateness of its apocalyptic and eschatological expression (cf. 12.1–3) and in its historical context within second-century Judaism. It must therefore have a crucial role to play in providing early evidence for the meaning of the MT. Its promotion to the status of Major Prophet, alongside Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, in the Greek Bible, which was eventually to form the basis of the Christian canon, confirms its dominant place in at least one of the surviving varieties of Judaism and further justifies its use as a kind of hermeneutical key to our understanding of the MT.

It is significant that Bernhard Duhm noted connections between Isaiah 53 and Daniel: *hişdiq* in a soteriological sense, for instance, occurs only in Isa. 53.11 and Dan. 12.3 (Duhm 1914: 375). His nineteenth-century preoccupation with historicity, however, led him to the dubious conclusion that the fourth Servant Song (52.13–53.12) must have been written at about the same time as Daniel 12. By contrast, we are not here going to be concerned with questions of dating. Our present contention is that, whatever the original date of Isaiah 24–27, the precise meaning and associations of some of the words and phrases in the Hebrew text in the form in which they have come down to us can be illuminated by reference to the language of the book of Daniel. Whether it is more correct to take the Masoretic tradition seriously as an important part of our data, or, as most modern commentaries and translations do, prefer 'Sadducean' reconstructions of the original Hebrew, emending the text and systematically excluding *inter alia* the Masoretes' eschatology, is not a question with which we shall allow ourselves to be detained. I shall simply attempt to describe what is there.

Our first passage is the song of thanksgiving (24.14–16) sung by the righteous after the day of judgment (24.1–13). They are like the few olives left on the trees after the beating and shaking have stopped, or the grapes left on the vines for the poor after the vintage (v. 13; cf. Alonso Schökel

1987: 181). An interesting Isaianic parallel to this juxtaposition is the song of individual thanksgiving in praise of God's love, sung immediately after the description of his 'trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored' in Isa. 63.1-6. This too must have been sung by the redeemed (63.4; cf. 62.12) after the horrors of 'the day of vengeance' (v. 4).

The passage begins emphatically with the independent personal pronoun 'they', marking a change of subject, from the image of the few grapes and olives clinging to the branches, to the application of this image to the righteous remnant. The LXX explains the pronoun as οἱ καταλειφθέντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, 'those who are left behind on the earth'. The last verse of Isaiah 6 makes a similar leap of faith, from the image of a smouldering stump, which is all that remains after a forest fire, to the application of that image to 'the noble stem of Jesse', which survives to produce eventually the royal seed of the Davidic messiah (cf. also 11.1 immediately following 10.33-34) (cf. Chapter 13).

The language and imagery of the verses describing the celebrations of the righteous remnant are as graphic and colourful as the rest of the chapter. The first Daniel connection is the autobiographical element in v. 16. The appearance of an observer reminds us that this is a vision, like the visions of Daniel, and must be read as such (see Chilton 1983: 53). The description of the scene and the reaction of the prophet are in Isaianic language ('and I said, "... Woe is me!"), recalling his reaction to the vision of the seraphim in ch. 6, and also perhaps his response to the mysterious voice in ch. 40 ('and I said, "What shall I cry?"; see Whybray 1971: 82). Our interpretation of these verses will be dramatically changed if we consider the possibility that the scene of horrific global destruction is being witnessed by the prophet, in an apocalyptic vision like those of Daniel.

We need not in this context discuss possible historical references such as the identity of the 'city of chaos'. The parallel with Daniel would confirm that there probably are contemporary references in this vision, for example, to the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 or the capture of Babylon by Alexander the Great in 331 or the fall of Carthage in 146, which the first hearers or readers no doubt recognized, whoever they were (Anderson 1963: 118). But such references are inevitably uncertain to us, not least because it is in the nature of apocalyptic texts that they can be, and have been, applied to many different historical events. In any case they do not significantly affect the meaning of the language and imagery of the passage (see Millar 1976: 103; Clements 1980: 198-99). We are concerned not with dating the passage but with trying to understand what it is about.

In the first place, the location of the survivors is given in three (possibly four) expressions. Two of these are straightforward: 'from the sea . . . on islands in the sea'. We must allow ourselves to picture a scene in which the whole earth is 'desolate, twisted [v. 1], utterly broken . . . rent asunder . . .

violently shaken . . .': "The earth staggers like a drunken man; it sways like a hut . . . it falls and will not rise again'(v. 20). In that context the image of bedraggled survivors washed up on the shores of distant islands, the only dry land left, is most effective. The role of the sea in Daniel's vision of the last judgment (Daniel 7) and in that of John of Patmos ('the sea gave up the dead in it . . . and all were judged . . .' Rev. 20.13), ' confirms that this is more convincingly interpreted as a reference to the sea than "the west" as some, including Kimhi, Kaiser, Hayes and most modern English versions (RSV, NEB, REB, NRSV) would have it.

The third location, 'the edge of the earth', also fits well into this scenario. But here again the image may be more subtle than appears in most English versions. The word translated 'edge' here literally means 'wing' or 'skirt', and the latter sense can be beautifully paralleled in another global description of the earth, this time from the book of Job:

Have you commanded the morning since your days began,
and caused the dawn to know its place,
that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth,
and the wicked be shaken out of it? (Job 38.18).

The image of the earth as a skirt that can be twisted and shaken so that its inhabitants are scattered far and wide, is how Isaiah 24 begins (cf. Rowley 1976: 243).

The fourth term, *ba-'urim*, 'in (or with) the fires' (AV), has elicited many suggestions, some more imaginative than others, but none based on totally convincing parallels from other texts. Those who interpret it as a geographical location mostly understand it as 'in the east' or 'the lands of light' (where the 'fires of dawn' first appear), corresponding to 'in the west' (Kaiser 1974: 186; Slotki 1949: 112; RSV, REV; cf. Ps. 113.3). Others, somewhat anachronistically, suggest 'in the tropics'. A seventeenth-century commentator proposes 'when you are in the furnace of affliction' (Poole 1700: 380), a suggestion inspired perhaps by the 'burning fiery furnace' of Daniel 4, although there are no verbal correspondences.

All these suggestions are problematic for one reason or another, and it may be that the expression does not refer to another location at all, but rather is a phrase that adds a different kind of detail to the picture of the righteous remnant celebrating their escape. 'With fires' is one possibility proposed already by the fifteenth-century Jewish commentator Isaac Abrabanel. This is what the singular '*ur*' means in all four of its occurrences elsewhere in Isaiah (31.9; 44.16; 47.14; 50.11; cf. Ezek. 5.2). Perhaps the reference is to 'beacons' passing on the good news from island to island, as in Clytemnestra's famous speech at the beginning of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (lines 280-316), although '*ur*' is not attested elsewhere in this sense and the technical term for 'fire-signal' seems to have been *mas'et* (cf.

Jer. 6.1; Lachish Ostrakon 4.10). Another tempting alternative would be to find here a reference to Hanukkah, known as *ḥag ha'urim*, 'the Feast of Lights', in Modern Hebrew (Even Shoshan 1962: I, 44). Unfortunately, no early evidence for this usage has been found either.

Finally, as the only biblical usage of the plural occurs in the phrase 'Urim and Thummim', the name of Israel's mysterious means of divination, it has been suggested that the reference is to the 'Urim' on the high priest's breastplate (Exod. 28.30) and that the meaning therefore is something like 'for illumination'. Christian commentators, for whom Isaiah was the 'Fifth Evangelist', predictably take this to mean 'pointing to Christ' (Poole 1700: 380). Jewish tradition as represented by the Targum glosses it with the words 'When light comes to the just'. This is an excellent example of a text declared by some scholars of an older generation to be 'without meaning' (e.g. Mauchline 1962: 186). In fact, readers down the centuries have never had that problem with it. The question for them was which of all the numerous meanings—not all of them by any means banal or unconvincing—was to be preferred. The comparison with Daniel's visions encourages us to take a closer look at the details of the language and imagery, even where the result may be inconclusive.

But it is in v. 16b that the link with Daniel seems to me to be especially significant—hence the title of this article. It was suggested to me by an early-twelfth-century manuscript of Jerome's Isaiah Commentary in Durham Cathedral Library, where, incidentally, George and I spent some very enjoyable weeks working on the British and Foreign Bible Society 'Translators' Translation' of Psalms. A miniature at the beginning of Book VIII (on chs. 24–27) shows both the prophet Isaiah and Jerome. Isaiah carries two scrolls, one in each hand. One, predictably, has 7.14 (*Ecce virgo concipiet filium . . .*) inscribed on it, the verse associated more than any other with Isaiah in the mediaeval church. The other has on it part of 24.16 (*secretum meum mihi, secretum meum mihi, vae mihi!*). Jerome, who in the preface to his commentary describes Isaiah as 'more evangelist than prophet', is looking up at him and saying (according to the legend on his scroll): *Dic tu Isaias, dic testimonium Christi*, 'Go on, Isaiah, tell them about Christ!' (Sawyer 1996: Pl. 1).

After his vision of the end of the world, and of the righteous remnant emerging from the chaos to praise the God of Israel, 'the Righteous One' (vv. 15–16b), the prophet comments on what he has seen:

I said, 'My secret is with me!
My secret is with me! Woe is me!'

He goes on to condemn the wicked, assuring them of the terrible fate that awaits them (vv. 17–18a), and then his vision of judgment day continues to the end of the chapter. In this apocalyptic context the most natural

interpretation of these words is the one given above (Kaiser 1974: 189-90). The word *raz* is taken in its usual sense of 'secret, mystery'. It is an Aramaism in Hebrew. The Aramaic word occurs several times in the Aramaic parts of Daniel, as well as in the Hebrew of Ben Sira 8.18, and we can assume that it was familiar to readers of the Hebrew text of Isaiah from the middle of the Second Temple period at the latest. The Greek translators of Daniel have μυστήριον for *raz* in Daniel 2 (8x) and 4.6. In the older Greek versions of Isa. 24.16, the words *razi li razi li* are not translated at all, but Theodotion renders it τό μυστήριόν μου ἐμοί, and the Targum and the Vulgate interpret the text as referring to the secrets revealed in an apocalyptic vision, like Daniel's. The passage is well handled by the Jewish Targum, which, with typical concern for the detail of the text, distinguishes between Isaiah's two secrets: 'the secret of the reward of the righteous and the secret of the punishment of the wicked' (see Chilton 1983: 83). Talmudic tradition can be cited in support of this interpretation as well (*b. Sanh.* 94a: Jastrow, 1464; Kaiser 1974: 189). Jerome, as we have seen, representing Christian tradition, interprets the passage as referring to the mysteries of Christ and his church, which no other prophet expounds more eloquently than Isaiah 'the fifth evangelist' (Sawyer 1996: 1f.). The notion of keeping the secrets to oneself, only to be revealed (Greek ἀποκαλύπτω) at 'the time of the end' is another obvious link with Daniel (cf. 12.9). It is also familiar from Isa. 8.16 and 29.11-12, passages that are also given apocalyptic interpretations in the kind of eschatological context we are considering here.

Without the Daniel connection, most modern commentators and translators, Otto Kaiser being a conspicuous exception, have had to resort to desperate philology. The older view, represented already in the Authorized Version ('My leanness, my leanness!') and in recent translations and commentaries (cf. RSV, NRSV 'I pine away, I pine away'), is that *razi* is a noun related to the common Hebrew words *razah*, 'thin', and *razon*, 'thinness'. Apart from the fact that the meaning is very strained, the noun *razi* is otherwise unknown and morphologically anomalous (Gray 1912: 419). The alternative proposed by the NEB translators and perpetuated in the REB, namely 'depravity, depravity', is also unconvincing. It comes from a comparative philologist's creation, *rezili*, morphologically sound but unknown in Hebrew (Brockington 1973: 184). This seems to be a case where the meaning of the MT is clear, well documented and convincing. It may not be the original meaning, although what that means is not always obvious (Sawyer 1989), but it is surely preferable to alternatives for which there is absolutely no evidence.

Our other text is perhaps rather better known. Chapters 25 and 26 have always been a particularly rich source for epitaphs and readings for funeral

services. St Ambrose, for example, cited 26.18-21 in the funeral oration for his brother Satyrus in 378, speaking of the divine dew that makes our bodies grow again and the hidden chambers where the redeemed can hide safely until the judgment is past (*FC*, XXII, 226). Luther lists the same passage among his 'biblical texts suitable for epitaphs' (*LW*, LIII, 327-89). Another verse from ch. 26, containing the words 'Peace perfect peace' (v. 3), was the inspiration for at least one hymn popular at funerals, sung, for example, at the funeral of William Robertson Smith at Keig in Aberdeenshire in 1894 (Moffatt 1927: 152).

These uses of our text by Christian communities down the ages are precisely analogous to the way in which some of the earliest Jewish interpreters—in the Maccabean period, for example—and their influential successors, the Masoretes, understood the text. Ancient Aramaic, Greek and Latin versions of 26.19 confirm this. The Targum turns *yihyu meteka*, 'your dead shall live', into the more personal formula *at hu mahe maytin*, 'you are the one who brings the dead back to life', reminiscent of the second of the Eighteen Benedictions that make up the Amidah, one of the oldest parts of Jewish Daily Prayer (cf. Chilton 1983: 16): 'Thou art faithful to bring the dead to life. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who bringest the dead back to life' (Singer 1892: 45). A modern Jewish commentator declares that Isa. 26.19 is the 'source of the belief in the resurrection of the dead, a fundamental of Jewish dogma . . . repeated by Daniel (12.2)' (Slotki 1949: 121). The Septuagint has the following:

The dead will arise, and those that are in their tombs will awake; and those that are in the earth will rejoice. For the dew that comes from you brings healing to them.

Tertullian's Latin version adds a further detail at the end, making the reference to physical resurrection even more explicit: ' . . . brings healing to their bones'.

What we must remember is that the Masoretic Text belongs to a similar emotionally and eschatologically charged context. In the first place, the Hebrew words for 'live', 'arise' and 'awake' carry unmistakable eschatological overtones, especially in a context where terms for 'dead', 'corpse', 'dust' and 'shades' (*refa'im*) also appear. The closest parallel in biblical Hebrew is Dan. 12.2. The concentration of such vocabulary and imagery in this one verse also separates it from passages about national restoration and revival such as Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. The wider context also opposes the fate of the wicked (vv. 11-14, 21) to that of the righteous (vv. 19-20), just as in Dan. 12.1-3, while vv. 20-21 in particular, point to a day of judgment outside history, a feature of the passage that predisposed the Targum translators to separate those on whom the dew of light falls (the

righteous) from the wicked, whose fate is to be sent to Gehenna ('the land of shades') (Stenning 1949: 82).

But there are two other links with Daniel that are even more significant. The two main subjects in the verse, as it stands in the MT, have pronominal suffixes: *meteka*, 'your dead', and *nevelati*, 'my (dead) body'. The force of the first pronoun is to identify a special relationship between these particular dead people and their God. Jewish and Christian commentators have recognized here a reference to the martyrs, a special group among the dead who died for their faith, and, as this is one of the main themes of Daniel, we are entitled to ask whether this is how we are intended to understand Isa. 26.19 as well.

The other word, *nevelati*, again follows Daniel in introducing an autobiographical element into the description of the resurrection of the dead. The grammar is odd but not impossible: 'together with my dead body' (av). The noun has the same kind of adverbial function as the word *eres* later in the same verse. But once again the meaning is unambiguous: the author, either out of piety or not inconceivably out of fear of imminent martyrdom, wishes to stress that the reference here is to individual resurrection, not national revival, and that he for one believes in it and trusts in God's power to rescue him even in death.

Some of the ancient versions, including the Septuagint quoted above, have the plural 'corpses'. Syriac and Aramaic have 'their corpses'. This provides textual critics with the authority to remove the more difficult singular 'my corpse', explaining the suffix 'my' as the result of a scribal error (dittography). But the Qumran Isaiah Scroll, which originated in the context of a variety of ancient Judaism well known to have had a developed eschatology, has the same first person singular term as the Masoretic Text and gives all the evidence we need for the view that ancient Hebrew texts from the time of Daniel at the latest, including the received text of Isa. 26.19, contain a highly developed eschatology, which the Masoretes painstakingly preserved.

Bibliography

- Adriaen, M. (ed.)
 1963 *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera: Commentariorum in Esaiaem Libri I–XI* (Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 73; Turnhout: Brepols).
- Alonso Schökel, Luis
 1987 'Isaiah', in Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (eds.), *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press): 165–83.
- Anderson, G.W.
 1963 'Isaiah XXIV–XXVII Reconsidered', in G.W. Anderson *et al.* (eds.), *Congress Volume: Bonn, 1962* (VTSup, 9; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963): 118–26.

- Barr, James
 1992 *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality: The Read-Tuckwell Lectures for 1990* (London: SCM Press).
- Brock, Sebastian (ed)
 1987 *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version*, III.1, *Isaiah* (Leiden: E.J. Brill).
- Brockington, L.H.
 1973 *The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament: The Readings Adopted by the Translators of the New English Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Burrows, Millar (ed.), with the assistance of John C. Trever and William H. Brownlee
 1950 *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St Mark's Monastery*, I, *The Isaiah Manuscript and the Habakkuk Commentary* (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research).
- Chilton, Bruce D.
 1983 *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah Targum* (JSOTSup, 23; Sheffield: JSOT Press).
- Clements, Ronald E.
 1980 *Isaiah 1–39* (NCB Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- Duhm, Bernhard
 1914 *Das Buch Jesaia* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 3rd edn).
- Even Shoshan, Avraham
 1962 *Millon ḥadash* (5 vols.; Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer).
- Fishbane, Michael
 1985 *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Gottwald, Norman K.
 1985 *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Gray, George Buchanan
 1912 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, I–XXVII* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Hanson, Paul D.
 1975 *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
 1985 'Apocalyptic Literature', in *The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Hayes, John H., and Stuart A. Irvine
 1987 *Isaiah the Eighth Century Prophet: His Times and his Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press).
- Kaiser, Otto
 1974 *Isaiah 13–39: A Commentary* (OTS; London: SCM Press).
- Mauchline, John
 1962 *Isaiah 1–39: Introduction and Commentary* (Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SCM Press).
- Millar, William R.
 1976 *Isaiah 24–27 and the Origin of Apocalyptic* (HSM, 11; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press).
- Moffat, J.
 1927 *A Handbook to the Church Hymnary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

- Poole, M.
1700 *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (3 vols.; 1700; repr., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1962).
- Rowley, H.H.
1976 *Job* (NCB; London: Thomas Nelson).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Segal, M.Z.
1954 *Sefer ben-Sira ha-shalem* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik).
- Singer, S.
1892 *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode).
- Slotki, I.W.
1949 *Isaiah: Hebrew Text and English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (London: Soncino Press).
- Stenning, J.F. (ed.)
1949 *The Targum of Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Vermeylen, J.
1977 *Du Prophète Isaïe à l'Apocalylique* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda).
- Weber, Robert (ed.)
1975 *Biblia sacra: iuxta Vulgatam versionem* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1975).
- Whybray, R.N.
1971 *The Heavenly Council in Isaiah XL 13-14: A Study of the Sources of the Theology of Deutero-Isaiah* (SOTSMS, 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Wildberger, Hans
1974–78 *Jesaja* (BKAT, 10; 3 vols.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag).
- Ziegler, Joseph (ed.)
1939 *Septuaginta Isaias* (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum graecum, 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

RORATE COELI DESUPER:
SOME CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATIONS OF ISAIAH 45.8*

Like every other verse in the Bible, Isa. 45.8 can be studied in a variety of contexts. Questions can be asked about the author's original intention, for example, or how an original audience understood him, or what the Masoretic Text originally meant. This is the kind of question asked in most recent studies of Isaiah, and, I think, in most of the papers offered at this conference. Yet in the case of Isa. 45.8, it seems to me, and indeed many other passages, some of the most interesting questions concern how it was understood long after it was originally written, and indeed after it was translated into Latin. Why did this verse become so popular and so influential in Western Christian tradition? How do Christian interpretations of the verse reflect the history of the church? And lastly, what light do they throw, if any, on what might be called an 'Isaianic element' within the biblical tradition?

Commentators can select the context they find most interesting, from the enormous range of data available, provided they make clear what they are doing and why. Two widely held assumptions, however, have tended to restrict the activities of commentators to a much narrower range of material. In the first place, it is often tacitly assumed that the original meaning of a biblical passage, in its original context, is the only legitimate goal for scholarly research. Enough has been said on this subject elsewhere to make it unnecessary for me to say much here (see Chapter 3). I will only repeat that there is absolutely no justification, historical, linguistic or logical, for this view, quite apart from the fact that the original text and its original meaning are usually not accessible to us anyway.

The other widespread assumption that has cramped and blunted exegetical technique is less often noted: namely the assumption that every passage

* This paper was read at the Journées bibliques in Leuven in August 1987 and published in Jacques Vermeylen (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah = Le livre d'Isaïe: les oracles et leurs relectures. Unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (BETL, 81; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), pp. 319-23.

in the Bible must be approached in the same way. The fact is that no two texts are the same, and it is unscientific to handle them all as if they were. Some have important and illuminating parallels in ancient Near Eastern literature, and some have not. Some have long and fascinating histories in Jewish or Christian tradition, and some have not. From a literary or ethical or theological point of view, the ‘original meaning’ of some (so far as it can be reconstructed) may be inferior to later interpretations, whether we like it or not, and where that is the case, we should say so. In one modern commentary, Isa. 45.8 is dismissed as a ‘torso . . . probably the work of a later disciple or editor’ and probably showing ‘the marks of inferior composition’. Brief mention is made of its ancient Near Eastern background, but there is nothing about its long history of interpretation in Christian tradition (Whybray 1975: 106-7; cf. North 1964: 150-53; Westermann 1969: 163). While such comments may be virtually all that can be said about some passages of Scripture, they are by no means all that needs to be said about this one (cf. Bonnard 1972: 174; Ruffenach 1932).

1. Why did this verse become so popular in Western Christian tradition? The answer clearly lies in the Latin translation. So we begin with it:

*Rorate coeli desuper et nubes pluant justum,
aperiatur terra et germinet Salvatorem
et justitia oriatur simul.
Ego Dominus creavi eum.*

In several respects it differs from the Hebrew of the Masoretic Text, but it is at the same time closer to it than the Greek versions are. In the first place, although the Hebrew contains no explicit mention of ‘dew’ and ‘rain’, the two verbs *har’ipu* and *yizzlu*, which are translated into Latin as *rorate*, ‘send dew’, and *pluant*, ‘send rain’, do imply something of the sort. The one means literally ‘to cause drops to fall’ (with *tal*, ‘dew’, as its object in Prov. 3.20), the other ‘to flow’. With the subjects ‘heavens’ and ‘clouds’ respectively (cf. Job 36.28), it is surely legitimate, and at the same time more effective, to spell out the image as many versions do, for example, ‘shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness’ (RSV) or ‘send victory like dew, you heavens, and let the clouds rain it down’ (JB). Latin, however, unlike English, has an intransitive verb for ‘to dew’ (corresponding to words for ‘to rain’, ‘to snow’, ‘to drizzle’ and the like), a beautiful and euphonious word, *rorate*, and that linguistic accident is undoubtedly one of the main reasons for the success of the Latin version of the passage. Besides being word for word closer to the Hebrew than most other versions—not in itself necessarily the most important criterion—it is also unusually vivid, rhythmical and euphonious. The LXX begins the verse

quite differently εὐφρανθήτω ὁ οὐρανός, ‘Let heaven rejoice . . .’, perhaps confusing the verbs εὐφραίνομαι, ‘rejoice’ and ἐπιπαίνω, ‘sprinkle’.

The nature imagery continues into the second part of the verse: ‘let the earth open up and bring the Saviour to life’. The first clause corresponds exactly to the Hebrew. The second introduces a new element: ‘Saviour’ instead of ‘salvation’. Perhaps the masculine singular *justum* for *sedeq* earlier in the verse, in preference to feminine singular *justitia*, and the personification of ‘righteousness’ and ‘salvation’ in 51.5, where Jerome has *justus meus* and *salvator meus* (cf. Ps. 85.10-14), contributed to this innovation (cf. Bonnard 1972: 174). However that may be, this short verse of Latin, every word of it inspired by the Hebrew of Isa. 45.8, but more beautiful and, in a Christian context at any rate, theologically more significant, has a life of its own. Incidentally the Jewish Targum finds a reference to the resurrection of the dead in the nature imagery of this verse (Stenning 1949: 155).

2. The history of how this verse has been interpreted in Christian tradition closely follows the history of the Christian church. In the early and mediaeval periods, when the cult of the Virgin Mary was central to the life of the church, the verse was interpreted both as a prayer for the Holy Spirit to come down like dew upon Mary, so that she would conceive and bear the Saviour, and thus also as a celebration of the nativity (Warner 1976: 62). The effectiveness of this interpretation is marvellously illustrated by the enormous influence it has had on the Christian liturgy. ‘Rorate Masses’ became immensely popular especially in eastern Europe during the fifteenth century, and a celebrated chapel choir established in Krakow in 1543 took its name, Collegium Rorantistarum, from the Rorate. It remained in Advent liturgies until Latin was superseded by the vernacular in the 1960s.

But this popular chant is not only a celebration of the nativity, to be sung during Advent. It is also a prayer for justice: ‘let the skies rain down justice . . . and let righteousness spring up also’. By the sixteenth century, the Rorate had taken on political overtones. William Byrd’s setting is a good example, composed in England at a time of persecution and martyrdom (Kerman 1981: 76f.). More recently John Joubert, professor of music at Birmingham University, chose to compose a setting of the Rorate. A South African by birth and a critic of apartheid, Joubert incorporates into his music black South African melodies, and the political force of his Rorate is unmistakable. Finally, in the exegetical writings of Catholic liberation theologians, such as Gustavo Gutiérrez and José Porfirio Miranda, addressing the victims of injustice and oppression in Latin America, the verse is a popular one too—and not because of its traditional role in the Advent liturgy or the cult of the Virgin Mary (Gutiérrez 1973: 154-57; Miranda 1974: 129).

3. My last question is about the place of the verse within Isaianic tradition, and whether such Christian interpretations can help us to understand

it. Interest in the book of Isaiah as a whole reveals certain recurring themes, and one of these is certainly social justice, running through the book like a leitmotif, from the demands for justice and the visions of a kingdom of justice and peace in the early chapters to the prophecies about one who will ‘bring justice to the nations’ (42.1) and ‘proclaim liberty to the captives’ (61.1) near the end. Whether we are thinking of it in Hebrew, Greek, Latin or modern vernacular translations, the Rorate is one of the best examples of the theme of social justice in the prophetic book, highlighted by even a cursory glance at the history of its interpretation.

A second Isaianic motif much discussed by recent commentators is the link between justice and creation (Vermeulen 1987). Creation means conquering the oppressor (in Egypt or Babylon), releasing captives, bringing exiles back to their homeland and establishing justice and peace in the world. The last words of Isa. 45.8, to which I have not referred so far, are about creation. But even without them, the nature imagery of the verse picks up this theme. Just as God sends rain to water the parched earth and new life springs up, so he will send justice. He is source of life as well as justice (cf. 61.11).

Finally the christology of the verse also fits neatly into its context in the book of Isaiah. For Christians, no other Old Testament book contains so many allusions to the Virgin Mary and the nativity, many of them drawing on the nature imagery we have seen in this verse. The best known and most influential is obviously 11.1, in which ‘the rod [Latin *virga*] from the stem of Jesse’ was identified with the Virgin (Latin *virgo*), and ‘the branch [Latin *flos*] from its root’ with Jesus (Warner 1976: 47-62; Watson 1934). Another is ‘the root out of dry ground’ in 53.2, which is interpreted as referring to the virgin birth in imagery very similar to that of 45.8. The first stanza of a macaronic poem by the mediaeval Scots poet William Dunbar (1460–1520?) beautifully brings these Isaianic themes together quoting 45.8 and 9.6 from the Christmas liturgy:

Rorate coeli desuper.
 Heavens distill balmy showers,
 For now is risen the bright day star
 from the rose Mary, flower of flowers;
 the clear sun whom no cloud devours,
 surmounting Phoebus in the east
 is coming from his heavenly towers
et nobis Puer natus est.

Isaiah 45.8 is at the same time a prayer for justice and a celebration of the nativity, both fundamental Isaianic themes. One could say that this verse is the hermeneutical key to a Christian understanding of the book of Isaiah, known since the patristic period as ‘the Fifth Gospel’ (see Chapter 24).

Conclusion

Is this kind of material to be taken seriously? Should it be on the agenda of Journées bibliques? I would suggest that, if it is not, then important biblical data are missing. It seems to me that, as experts in the Old Testament, we should aim to be at least as familiar with what happened to our texts after they were written as with what was going on before they were written, and to treat the post-biblical sources, Jewish and Christian, with the same sensitivity that we devote to Akkadian, Egyptian and Ugaritic studies. Indeed, I would go further and argue that we should take them more seriously than the ancient sources, since the Old Testament did not remain an ancient Near Eastern text but became something else, namely part of contemporary religious life for millions of people—and it is in that form that it comes into our hands.

The study of what people think the text means and of what they have done with it can be just as scientific and critical as the study of a reconstructed original Hebrew text. Naturally, there is no need to treat all interpretations as equal. Some may be tedious or contrived—ridiculous even. Sometimes the original meaning, so far as we can discover it, may be the most valuable. In the case of Isa. 45.8, I think you will agree the Christian interpretations are worth looking at. At all events it is surely unscientific and uncritical to reject the history of interpretation as not worth scholarly attention, and a most unfortunate fashion that has led to the neglect of all these rich sources of data on the meaning of the Bible. I hope my brief contribution to this year's Journées bibliques has at least shown the need for a change of fashion.

Bibliography

Bonnard, P.E.

1972 *Le second Isaïe, son disciple et leurs éditeurs: Isaïe 40–66 [traduit du hébreu]* (EBib; Paris: J. Gabalda).

Gutiérrez, Gustavo

1973 *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books).

Kerman, Joseph

1981 *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (London: Faber & Faber).

Miranda, José Porfirio

1974 *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books).

North, Christopher R.

1964 *The Second Isaiah: Introduction, Translation and Commentary to Chapters XL–LV* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

- Ruffenach, F.
1932 'Rorate coeli desuper', *VD* 12: 353-56.
- Stenning, J.F. (ed.)
1949 *The Targum of Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Vermeylen, J.
1987 'Le motif de la création dans le Deutéro-Isaïe', in P. Beauchamp *et al.* (eds.), *La création dans l'Orient ancien: congrès de l'ACFEB, Lille, 1985* (Paris: Cerf).
- Warner, Marina
1976 *Alone of All her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson).
- Watson, Arthur
1934 *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Westermann, Claus
1969 *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Whybray, R.N.
1975 *Isaiah 40-66* (NCB; London: Oliphants).

DAUGHTER OF ZION AND
SERVANT OF THE LORD IN ISAIAH*

This paper is a response to three recent developments in Isaiah research. The first is epitomized in the title of Tryggve Mettinger's monograph, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs: A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom* (1983). The four passages about the Servant of the Lord that Bernhard Duhm isolated as 'Servant Songs' (Duhm 1892) can now be restored to their context in Isaiah, and this has made us think again not only about what the imagery of the Servant of the Lord means but also about its relationship to other images in the same context, in particular, the 'daughter of Zion'.

Second, there is the recent scholarly interest in feminine imagery in the Bible, and in particular in the second half of the book of Isaiah. Is it possible that the same male, Christian bias that has for a century preoccupied readers and commentators with the identity and role of the man in the Servant Songs has prevented us from taking seriously the woman in the Zion songs? Of course, in Christian tradition, from New Testament times, the Servant of the Lord has been identified with Jesus, and that provided a particular stimulus, not always admitted or recognized, to Christian scholars. But whatever the reason, feminine imagery in Isaiah and elsewhere in the Bible has, apart from typological references to the Virgin Mary, rarely received much scholarly attention until the last decade or two. Now Christian feminist interpreters, concerned to find scriptural authority for a less patriarchal Christianity, have given new emphasis to a few striking passages, several of them in Isaiah, in which God is thought of as a mother (Deut. 32.18; cf. 32.11; Isa. 42.14; 45.10; 46.3; 49.15). In such contexts, the feminine associations of the term *raḥamim*, 'love, warmth, compassion' (e.g. 49.13, 14), etymologically related to *reḥem*, 'womb', are acknowledged as well (Trible 1978: 50-56, 60-71; McFague 1982: 145-92). When the numerous 'Zion' passages in these chapters also are taken into account, the concentration of

* This paper was delivered at the Winter Meeting of SOTS in London in January 1989, and published in *JSOT* 44 (1989), pp. 89-107.

feminine language and imagery is quite exceptional and demands special critical attention.

The third new factor in the situation concerns method. Biblical scholars are increasingly going beyond traditional 'atomistic' approaches to Scripture to study larger stretches of text, even whole books, whatever the original date and authorship of their separate components (Polzin and Rothman 1982; Alter and Kermode 1987). This often goes with a new interest in the history of interpretation, that is to say, in how the text has been understood and used by those religious communities, Jewish and Christian, for whom it is Scripture (see Schüssler Fiorenza 1988: 3-17; Morgan and Barton 1988: 285-96). Without entering into the debate on the relative merits of various approaches to biblical interpretation, it must be said that much has changed in the last twenty years or so, and perhaps the burden of proof is now on the 'atomizers' to justify their methods of handling Scripture. For present purposes, at any rate, there are clearly themes and images that recur and develop through the text, and to understand them fully they must be viewed together, as parts of a whole (Alonso-Schökel 1987).

1. *The Text*

We begin with a brief survey of the relevant passages in Isaiah. The 'Servant' passages are so familiar that I do not propose to say much about them at this stage, except to emphasize that, as well as those outside the 'Servant Songs' (e.g. 41.8ff.; 44.1ff., 21f.), I shall include also passages in which a man is described or addressed in similar language to that used of the servant, even though the term 'servant' does not occur (e.g. 40.27ff.; 43.1ff.).

Less familiar and more in need of some introductory remarks are the 'daughter of Zion' passages. Again I propose to include passages in addition to those in which the term 'daughter of Zion' actually occurs. There are in fact only seven of these in Isaiah (1.8; 3.16; 10.32; 16.1; 37.22; 52.2; 62.11). The term occurs much more frequently in Jeremiah (13x) and Lamentations (17x). 'Daughter of Zion' in my title is in effect shorthand for a female character who figures just as prominently in Isaiah 40-66 as the Servant of the Lord. Like him, she is sometimes named, as in 49.14 ('But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me . . .")'; sometimes she is anonymous, as in 54.1 ('Sing, O barren one, who did not bear . . . fear not').

There are several passages in Isaiah where Jerusalem is compared to a woman. The lament beginning 'How the faithful city has become a harlot!' in ch. 1 is one of the best known (vv. 21-26). There is another in ch. 37, where Jerusalem, standing firm against the Assyrians, is compared to a proud and courageous young woman tossing her head defiantly as she repels an unwelcome suitor (v. 22 NEB, JB). Jerusalem is not the only city to which such graphic female imagery is applied. Tyre is compared to a shameless

and ageing prostitute, plying her trade ‘with all the kingdoms of the world’ (23.15-18), and Sidon to a childless, rejected old woman (23.4-12). In ch. 47 the fall of Babylon is described in language as vivid and detailed as any of the passages we shall be considering, as a powerful, elegant queen, brought up to believe she is god, then pulled off her throne, stripped of her fine clothes, raped and given menial tasks to do such as laundry work and grinding flour. Her counsellors and astrologers are found wanting, her children and her husband dead. Now, even though she is named in v. 1 as the ‘daughter of Babylon’, it is important to notice that there is not one detail in this chapter that refers explicitly to a city, nothing about walls or gates or sieges. It tells the story of the overpowering and humiliation of a woman. Feminine singular forms are used throughout: ‘get down from your throne . . . sit in the dust . . . go into darkness . . . there is no one to save you . . .’ The personification is complete, the story autonomous and consistent.

Most of the best-known passages about the daughter of Zion are, like the Servant passages, in chs. 40–66, beginning in 40.1 with the command to ‘speak tenderly to Jerusalem’. Zion is addressed directly: ‘Get you up to a high mountain, *mevasseret šiyon*, herald of good tidings to Zion’ (or ‘Zion, herald of good tidings’). Whatever it means, the important fact is that the person in question, the herald (*mevasseret*) is female, addressed in feminine singular forms. But I shall return to this famous passage later.

The main concentration of ‘daughter of Zion’ passages is in chs. 49–66. Through these chapters, in a series of dramatic poems, runs the story of a woman’s life from bereavement and barrenness in ch. 49 to the birth of a son in ch. 66. Sometimes but not always she is named Zion or Jerusalem. Sometimes but not always she is identified as the city of Jerusalem by explicit references to her gates or her walls or builders. Sometimes her identity, like that of the Servant, is ambiguous. But the female imagery is so vividly described as to create in almost every case a story or a picture every bit as consistent and convincing as that of the Servant of the Lord.

Her first words are a sceptical response to triumphant expressions of faith in Yhwh’s power and love: ‘But Zion said, Yhwh has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me’. This is precisely parallel to the Servant’s doubts earlier in the chapter: ‘But I said, I have laboured in vain . . .’ (v. 4). In spite of Yhwh’s assurances of his eternal love for her and the promise of children—even if her sons and daughters were actually brought back and placed in front of her—she still would not believe it: ‘I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away . . . I was left alone: so where could they have come from?’ Her third question sums up her feeling of powerlessness: ‘Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a righteous man be rescued?’ Against the physical strength of a man, whether he is a ‘lawful’ (*ṣaddiq*) captor as the Masoretic Text has it (cf. אַף), or a ‘tyrant’ (*ariṣ*) as Isaiah Scroll A, the Peshitta, the Vulgate and most modern commentators

take it (e.g. Duhm 1892; North 1964; Westermann 1969; Bonnard 1972; cf. RSV, NEB), a woman is powerless.

In chs. 51 and 52, her plight is described in more detail: she is, as it were, drunk with the strong wine of her suffering, staggering helplessly; not one of her children is there to take her by the hand and lead her to safety, a dirty, humiliated slave. In double imperatives so typical of these chapters, she is summoned to rouse herself: 'Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion, put on your beautiful garments . . . shake yourself from the dust . . . arise . . . loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion!' Part of 51.12 also is addressed to Zion ('Who are you that are afraid of a mere mortal . . .?'), although the gender is ignored by most commentators (e.g. North) and emended to the masculine singular by some (*BHS*).

Chapter 54 continues the imperatives ('Shout for joy, barren woman . . . enlarge your tent-space . . . do not be afraid . . .'), and depicts Yhwh swearing that he will never again be angry with her or rebuke her. Chapter 60, beginning with the words 'Arise shine for your light is come', envisages the nations of the world bringing her, among other things, gifts of gold and frankincense. Chapter 62 celebrates her wedding, or at any rate the day on which the names Azubah and Shemamah (Abandoned and Desolate) are changed to Hephzibah and Beulah (My-delight-is-in-her and Married), and Yhwh rejoices over her 'as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride'. As the climax to the series, there is the remarkable poem in ch. 66 describing the birth of her children and the subsequent scene of her feeding them, carrying them on her hip and dandling them on her knee.

There is one discordant passage in all this in which she has become a whore, involved in nameless orgies, oblivious to the enormity of her crimes: 'deserting me, you stripped and lay down on your wide bed and made bargains with men for the pleasure of sleeping together . . .' (cf. NEB) (57.6-13). We shall look at its parallel among the Servant passages later (43.22-28).

But before comparing the two motifs, I propose to look in detail at two of the Zion passages (54.1-10; 66.7-14) in which the image is developed and elaborated to the point where one is tempted to take them out of their context and consider them like the 'Servant Songs' on their own. This is merely to highlight the vividness and effectiveness of the story, and the resemblance between the two motifs—the one studied almost to the point of idolatry by Christian exegetes, the other almost totally ignored. I shall then put them back in their context in Isaiah, alongside all the other Zion passages, and examine them together.

1. *Isaiah 54.1-10*

1. Shout for joy, barren woman, you who never had a child!
Break into cries of joy, you who have never been in labour!

- A woman who was abandoned will have more children than one that was married, said Yhwh.
2. Enlarge your tent-space; spread out the hangings in your home; lengthen your guy-ropes; strengthen your tent-pegs.
 3. You will burst out to the right and the left; your offspring will take over nations, and populate deserted cities.
 4. Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame.
Do not be dismayed; you will not be disgraced.
You will forget the shame of your youth;
and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.
 5. The one who made you, whose name is 'Yhwh Sabaoth' is to be your husband;
The Holy One of Israel, who is called 'God of all the earth', is to be your redeemer.
 6. Like a forsaken wife, distressed in spirit, Yhwh has called you, the wife of his youth, though once rejected, said your God.
 7. I did forsake you for a brief moment,
but my love for you is deep and I will bring you home again.
 8. In a momentary outburst of anger¹ I turned away from you,
but I love you with a love that never fails,
said Yhwh, your redeemer.
 9. This is like the days of² Noah to me,
when I swore that the waters of Noah would never flood the world again.
So now I swear never again to be angry with you or to rebuke you.
 10. Though the mountains depart and the hills are shaken,
my love will never leave you,
and my promise of peace will never be shaken,
said the one who loves you, Yhwh.

This is a passage about reconciliation: a husband promises never again to lose his temper, never again to walk out on his wife, leaving her childless and humiliated. She was partly to blame, but the single reference to 'the shame of your youth' (*boshet 'alumayik*) in v. 4 is insignificant beside the repeated references to her suffering and his love. He takes prime responsibility for the tragedy and swears he will never again be angry with her or rebuke her. The new relationship will be characterized on his part by 'love that never fails' (*hesed 'olam*) and 'deep tender love' (*rahamim*), and enshrined in a 'promise of reconciliation' (*berit shelomi*) more lasting than

1. Following the traditional view that *shaṭaf* is a variant of *shaṣaf*. Cf. Prov. 27.4.

2. Reading *kime* for MT *ki-me*: cf. RSV, NEB, JB.

the hills. Like the story of the Suffering Servant in the previous chapter, the story of the suffering woman in ch. 54 begins at the end: she will soon be singing again; her shame and loneliness are as good as over; she will have a home and a family; she will see her children and grandchildren growing up and prospering.

The story is as vivid, the language and imagery every bit as colourful and dramatic as in the Servant Songs. It is not a story about Jerusalem, any more than the Servant Songs are about Israel or Jesus or the prophet. It is about a woman, and to neglect this is to miss the dynamic of the passage. In the first place, there is not a single word in it that refers exclusively to a city. *Shomemah*, ‘abandoned’, for example, in v. 1 is used in some contexts of ruined city-walls and gates (e.g. 49.8, 19; 61.4; Lam. 1.4), but here surely its usage in the story of Tamar, raped, humiliated and abandoned by her brother (2 Sam. 13.20), is more relevant—although few commentaries note this. There it is applied, as Phyllis Trible puts it, to ‘a woman of sorrows and acquainted with grief . . . cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the sins of her brother; yet she herself had done no violence and there was no deceit in her mouth’ (Trible 1984: 52).

Allusions back to the stories of the patriarchs similarly shift the point of reference away from rebuilding the ruined city of Jerusalem. Instead, we have a scene of tent-erecting reminiscent of the story of Isaac in Gerar, where freedom to expand and live in peace is celebrated in the place-name Rehoboth: ‘For now the Lord has made room for us (*ki ‘attah hirhib Yhwh lanu*), and we shall be fruitful in the land’ (Genesis 26) (see Chapter 26). The woman in this story is also the recipient of a promise very like those given to Abraham (Genesis 12; 15), Isaac (Genesis 26) and Jacob (Genesis 28): ‘your offspring [literally ‘your seed, the seed in your womb’] will take over the nations and populate deserted cities’ (v. 3). Here too the eternal promise to Noah (Genesis 9) is cited as the model for reconciliation: ‘When I swore that the waters of Noah would never flood the world again . . .’ (v. 9).

Verse 7 contains another proof that the poem is not primarily or only about a city: *aqabbešek*, ‘I will bring you home again’. The word *qibbes* refers here and in many other contexts to the ingathering of the exiles and, like the word ‘Israel’ in the second Servant Song, points to a collective interpretation of the passage. We shall return to this later. For the present, there is more to be said about the story itself.

Unlike the woman in the poem—and the servant in the Servant Songs—the man is identified. He is of course Yhwh, and, if we take the imagery of the story seriously (McFague 1982: 31-66), this provides one of the most striking features of the poem. Yhwh, ‘the Holy One of Israel . . . God of all the earth’ (v. 5) is represented as behaving like a remorseful husband, pleading with his wife to trust him and take him back. The last four verses of the poem are apologetic in tone: ‘it was just for a moment—I lost my

temper (*be-sheṣef qeṣef*) . . . I won't do it again . . . I promise . . . I love you'. She is physically weaker than he is and socially dependent on him. He has the power to give her happiness and dignity and freedom; she knows that he also has the power to punish, humiliate and abuse her. So he has to convince her that he really loves her and that she can trust him. To do this he sets aside all hardness and pomposity, the frightening manifestations of his power and his status as 'God of all the earth', and comes to her, on bended knee as it were, to plead with her to let bygones be bygones and start again.

If you find it hard to believe that such an image of Yhwh can really appear in Scripture, then you need only look elsewhere in these remarkable chapters to find evidence that it can. In ch. 42 God is described as 'crying out and panting like a woman in labour'. In ch. 63 he appears at the gates of the city, unrecognized, a weary, bloodstained warrior, commanding our respect and sympathy rather than our fear (see Chapter 19), and in 66.7-14, to which we shall now turn, Yhwh is Zion's midwife when she is in labour. The prophet was called to 'comfort his people . . . and speak tenderly to Jerusalem'. Surely this is one of the most effective ways in which he does this.

2. *Isaiah 66.7-14*

7. Before she was in labour she had a child.
Before her labour pains began, she gave birth to a son.
8. Who ever heard of such a thing? Who ever saw anything like this?
Is a country born in one day? Is a nation brought forth in one moment?
No sooner was Zion in labour than she brought forth her children.
9. Would I assist at the labour and then not deliver the baby? said Yhwh.
Would I who allow children to be born, close her womb? said your God.
10. Rejoice, Jerusalem, be glad for her, all you who love her.
Rejoice, rejoice for her, all you who mourn for her.
11. Then feeding at her breast, you will be comforted and sated, and savour with delight the abundance of her milk.
12. This is what Yhwh said:
I will send peace flowing over her like a river,
and the wealth of nations like a flooded valley.
You shall feed at her breast; you shall be carried on her hip and dandled on her knees.
13. Like one comforted by his mother, so I will comfort you.
You will find comfort in Jerusalem.
14. At this sight your heart will be filled with joy.
And your limbs will be as fresh as grass in spring.
The hand of Yhwh will be revealed to his servants,
but anger to his enemies.

The passage comes at the very end of the book. It describes two scenes in considerable detail. Both are about Zion. In the first, she gives birth to a son. In the second, she is the proud mother of a large family and attention switches to the contentment of her children, feeding at her breast or being dandled on her knee. There are phrases in this poem that apply it to Jerusalem ('is a country born in one day? . . . the wealth of nations'). But, once more, if we are to appreciate the force of this passage, we should first take the language and imagery at face value.

Coming as it does at the very end of the book of Isaiah, it picks up themes familiar to us from earlier passages. Of these the most significant is 54.1-10, which we have just discussed. There the woman was promised a husband and lots of children; here the birth of her first child is described. Chapter 54 is written in the future tense, full of promises and assurances; this passage is in the past tense with an account of how she gave birth to a son. The birth of a son is of course celebrated elsewhere in Isaiah as a saving event in the royal, masculine language of chs. 9 and 11: 'for to us a child is born . . . there shall come forth a shoot from the stem of Jesse . . .' But here, as in ch. 54, the emphasis is on the birth itself, as an act of new creation, on the mother rather than on the child. In fact, who is born here is not clear: one child as in v. 7, or more than one as in the second half of v. 8, or a whole nation as in the first half of v. 8. The conspicuous absence of the word *ben*, 'son', from the first half of v. 7, as a parallel to *zakar*, 'male child', in the second, has been noted: *BHS* inserts it; Duhm preferred the rather unidiomatic *yaldah*, 'her child'. But that is to miss the point: this is not about the birth of a son as in chs. 9 and 11, but about birth as opposed to death, fecundity as opposed to barrenness. Like rebuilding a city or bringing back exiles, having a child provides a marvellous image of restoration or survival.

In the first place, there is the sheer number of technical or semi-technical obstetric terms in these few verses: two different words for 'labour' (the verb *hil* 3x and the noun *hevel*), two words for 'deliver' (*himliṭ* and *yalad*)³, and the word *hishbir*, 'to assist delivery' (by helping the baby through the *mashber*, 'the neck of the womb'; Isa. 37.3; Hos. 13.13). There are some tragic stories of childbirth in the Bible, Rachel dying as she gave birth to Benjamin, for example (Gen. 35.16-20), and more often than not this language is applied figuratively to painful or catastrophic situations. The pain and distress of a birth that has gone wrong are used twice in such contexts earlier in the book (26.17-18; 37.3). But in ch. 65, among the characteristics of the new heaven and the new earth, where newborn babies will never die and the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, there is the idea that childbirth

3. *himliṭ* occurs only here in this sense but in rabbinic, mediaeval and modern Hebrew it is the regular word for 'to calve, lamb, etc.' The piel means to lay eggs (Isa. 34.15).

will never go wrong (65.23). So the ultimate occurrence of this image in ch. 66 completes the return to paradise before the curse of Eve: 'no sooner was she in labour than she brought forth her children'. The unprecedented nature of this birth is described in language not unlike that used in the fourth Servant Song: 'Who ever heard of such a thing? Who ever saw anything like this?' Following on from ch. 54, we are perhaps to understand that Zion, like Sarah, was past child-bearing age. But there was another miracle as well: 'before she was in labour, she had a child'. This was a painless childbirth.

Before we leave this climax of the female imagery in Isaiah, there is one more detail to comment on. In ch. 54 we noted that Yhwh was somewhat daringly represented as a remorseful husband, pleading with his wife to trust him. Here again he has a humble role to play, this time as a woman's midwife: 'Would I assist at the labour and then not deliver the baby? Would I who allow children to be born, close her womb?' There are plenty of parallels to the second half of this verse, where Yhwh determines whether a birth takes place or not; for example, he 'closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech' (Gen. 20.18; cf. Gen. 15.3). But this is the only passage in which he is the subject of the verb *hishbir*, the technical term for the midwife's task up to the point where the baby is delivered. One is tempted to suggest that the parallel term, *holid* hi., 'cause to bring forth', used elsewhere figuratively of Yhwh (55.10), is a scribal error for the technical term *yilled* pi. 'to deliver a child' (cf. *meyaletdet*, 'midwife': Gen. 35.17; Exodus 1). Dittography (*holid* occurs in the second half of the verse) and the radical anthropomorphism would explain the error. But even without that change, the anthropomorphism is there—Yhwh once more humbling himself to assist his beloved Zion.

2. *The Literary Context*

Having looked at these two 'Daughter of Zion songs' in isolation, let us now put them back in their context and consider them as elements in a single story, parallel to the story of the Servant of the Lord. In the first place, there is the sheer extent of the elaboration of these two themes in Isaiah 40–66. In the dozen or so passages about Zion, there is a clear progression, from abandonment, loneliness and fear to fulfilment and joy; and the same goes for the Servant, whose fortunes are traced from a time when he is weak and afraid and feels like a worm (41.14) to heroic suffering and triumph in ch. 53. Neither story is told as a continuous narrative, but the plot and the characters in both cases are referred to sufficiently often and regularly for the progression and continuity to be maintained. Whether these graphic forms of expression, stories we might call them, constitute some kind of basic framework around which the rest of the material in Isaiah 40–66 has

been woven, or whether the creative process was the other way round, is impossible to say.

There is still much work to be done on the way chs. 40–66 pick up themes introduced in earlier chapters: for example, the suffering of the Servant in ch. 53 appears to echo the diseased body of Israel in ch. 1; the humiliation of the haughty daughters of Zion in all their finery in ch. 3 prepares the way for the story of her redemption in chs. 40–66; and perhaps the defiant toss of her head in ch. 37 is a transition, heralding the moment when she shakes off her bonds in ch. 52 (Jones 1955; Eaton 1959; Sawyer 1984–86: I, 1–11). But for reasons of time I shall restrict myself to chs. 40–66 (Sawyer 1984–86: II, 43–45). Both characters are introduced afresh in ch. 40. But the story of the one is completed in chs. 40–55, while the other is developed mainly in chs. 49–66. So there is an overlap in chs. 49–55. There above all the two stories intersect. Points of comparison have been noted by some commentators. The first half of ch. 49 describes the Servant's sense of loneliness and failure: 'But I said, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity"'. The second half begins: 'But Zion said: "Yhwh has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me", and goes on later 'Behold I was left alone'. The Servant in the first half is 'one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations'; Zion in the second half is 'bereaved and barren, exiled and put away'. The Servant remembers that Yhwh 'called him from the womb . . . formed him from the womb to be his servant'; Yhwh tells Zion that he loves her as a mother loves her own child. He tells the Servant that kings and princes will prostrate themselves; he tells Zion that kings and queens will bow down to her and lick the dust of her feet.

Continuity and verbal parallels have been noted also between ch. 53, the last of the so-called Servant Songs, and ch. 54, the first of the two Zion passages I discussed above (Bonnard 1972: 488ff.). Both are humiliated or afflicted, and both are finally vindicated. Both the Servant and Zion will live to see their offspring grow up. In both stories the nations of the world will be affected by what happens (52.15; 54.3). Perhaps most significant is the use of the word *shalom* in both passages: 'the chastisement that made us whole' (*musar shelomenu*) in 53.5, and Yhwh's 'promise of peace (or reconciliation)' *berit shelomi* in 54.10. The differences in language and imagery are just as striking between the two stories, as we shall see, and of course the one reaches its climax in ch. 53, while the other is still just beginning in ch. 54. But there are clearly enough correspondences between them to justify, if not to demand, that these and all the other Zion and Servant passages be studied together.

First of all, are there any ways in which Zion's story can help us understand the Servant's story better? One example comes from a comparison of the two climaxes—in chs. 53 and 66, respectively. As we saw, one of the elements in the Zion passage is the miraculous nature of the birth: 'Who

ever heard of such a thing? Who ever saw anything like this?' Does the supernatural ending to the Zion story confirm that the Servant's story also ends with a miracle, namely his resurrection from the dead?

Both stories are interrupted by sarcastic rebukes: the one is reminded how he had burdened Yhwh with his sins (43.22-24; cf. 42.19f.); the other how she had indulged in all manner of licentious behaviour (57.6-13). As we saw, her past demeanours are only fleetingly alluded to elsewhere and if 'the shame of your youth' (54.4) refers simply to being unmarried, then there is no mention of a guilty past at all. The discordant note sounded by this extended rebuke of the Servant, amid all the salvation oracles, hymns of praise and other words of comfort that make up the bulk of Isaiah 40-55, has frequently been discussed. In the present context, we may simply add that it is an element in the Zion story too and an explanation for the one must apply to the other.

A third implication of this comparison would be that Duhm's crude distinction between the Servant in the Songs and the Servant elsewhere must go. It adds another argument to those of Mettinger. If the story of the Daughter of Zion runs through continuously, in short one- or two-verse passages as well as much longer and more elaborate poems, then surely that is most likely to be the case with the Servant of the Lord passages as well. 'Why do you say . . . O Israel . . . my right (*mishpati*) is ignored (JB) by my God?' in ch. 40 must belong to the same story as 'But I said, surely my right (*mishpati*) is with Yhwh' in ch. 49 (the second Servant Song); and 44.1-5 is as much a Servant Song as any of the others: 'But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen . . . who formed you from the womb . . . I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring . . .' Almost every phrase in that quotation appears in the four so-called Servant Songs. The natural way to treat this image of the 'Servant of the Lord', like that of the 'Daughter of Zion', is surely to begin by assuming that it is all one story, and then to tackle difficulties with that interpretation as they arise. This brings us now to the question of the identity of the two characters. What light, if any, does the comparison throw on this problem?

One of Duhm's main questions was: Who is the Servant in the four songs? and it led to a quite extraordinary variety of answers (Rowley 1952: 1-57). Let us ask the same question about Zion: Who is the woman in these passages intended to represent? As in the case of the Servant, it is not always made explicit. Some passages contain clear references to the city of Jerusalem. The familiar poem beginning 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come', for example, is a case in point (60.1-14). Although there are references in it to her sons and daughters, it is throughout a poem about a city, not a woman. 'Foreigners shall build up your walls . . . your gates shall be open continually . . . they shall call you the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel . . . you shall call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise'. Some

passages, on the other hand, tell the story of a woman, at first forsaken, humiliated, afraid, later married and having children. These need not refer to the city of Jerusalem. Indeed some passages certainly do not refer to a city, but to the people in exile. Like the Servant, Zion is an image that is capable of various interpretations, both collective and individual. A collective interpretation is made explicit in 51.16, where she is identified with the exiled people of God: 'I am the Lord your God . . . stretching out the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth, and saying to Zion, 'You [masculine singular!] are my people.'

Sometimes the consistency of the story is sacrificed to one interpretation or another. As we saw above, ch. 54 ('Shout for joy, barren woman . . .') contains a detail that is inconsistent with an individual interpretation, whether a personified city or a woman: 'I did forsake you for a brief moment, but my love for you is deep and I will bring you home again.' The verb *qibbeš*, 'gather, collect', cannot easily be used with a singular object. The LXX has ἐλεήσω σε, 'I will have mercy on you.' Duhm and others suggest *aḥabbeqek*, 'I will embrace you', which would be most appropriate. What has happened is that the application of this language to the exiles has momentarily disturbed the consistency of the imagery. Then the addition of vv. 11-17 turns the image round again and makes it refer to the city: 'O afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted, I will set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of agate, your gates of carbuncles and all your wall of precious stones.' Paul applies the first verse of the passage ('Rejoice O barren one, who does not bear . . .') to the new Jerusalem (Gal. 4.27).

The possibility of individual interpretations of the same motif, corresponding to christological interpretations of the Servant, is illustrated by Rev. 12.1-6, where the woman in Isaiah 66 is identified with the Virgin Mary, and by Christian interpretations of Zeph. 3.16-17 ('Do not fear, O Zion . . . the Lord your God is within you . . . he will renew you [LXX] by his love'), where she is also identified with the Virgin Mary (cf. Zech. 2.14-15 [Eng. 2.10-11]; Lk. 1.26-38) (Thurian 1962: 19-27).

But obviously a collective interpretation of the female image is dominant, whether as applied to a people or to a city. The first verse of ch. 40 makes it clear that the story of Zion's fortunes, from desolate loneliness and rejection to happiness, marriage and the birth of her children, is a story intended to comfort and inspire its listeners and readers: 'Comfort, comfort my people, says your God, speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her time of service is ended . . .' This verse introduces the other image as well, the masculine one, called here 'my people', and the same collective interpretation must surely be dominant in the story of 'Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen' throughout these chapters (Wilcox and Paton Williams 1988: 79-102).

I hope I have drawn enough parallels between the two stories to make this a convincing conclusion. But I would like to add two more, both of them often considered obstacles to the collective interpretation of some of the Servant passages. The first is the innocence of the Servant in ch. 53, in apparent contradiction to what is said elsewhere of the Servant's sins and iniquities (e.g. 43.22-24). It seems to me that in both stories the guilt of the past is played down, with the exception of those colourful passages I mentioned. The guilt of Zion, the reason why she suffered, is only fleetingly referred to in ch. 54, and nowhere else in the main story. The point is made there and in the opening verses of ch. 40 that her suffering is out of all proportion to her guilt ('she has received double for all her sins'). Other images are operating in ch. 53 as well, notably that of a sin offering (v. 10), but the notion that his suffering was out of all proportion to anything he could have deserved is definitely part of the story there too.

The other familiar problem about a collective interpretation of the Servant is that, in some passages, he apparently has a mission to Israel: he was formed 'from the womb' to bring Jacob back to God and 'that Israel might be gathered to him' (49.5). How can Israel have a mission to himself? If we take the story of Zion as parallel to the story of the Servant, we find that the same appears to be true of her as well. In 40.9 she is told, in language that has become familiar from other parts of the Zion story: 'Get you up to a high mountain . . . lift up your voice with strength . . . fear not . . . say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God.' She is called *mevasseret šıyyon* . . . *mevasseret yerushalayim*, 'herald of good tidings to Zion . . . herald of good tidings to Jerusalem', which indicates that Zion/Jerusalem is included among the cities of Judah that are to hear her message. So the female figure who is elsewhere called Zion is sent as a herald of good tidings to Zion/Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, just as the male figure who is called Israel elsewhere is sent to 'raise up the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel'. In 52.7 another herald (masculine *mevasser*) goes up to a mountain to bring good tidings to Zion: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of a herald of good tidings who says to Zion, Your god reigns.' In a third passage (61.1-4) there is no indication which of the two it is: 'I have been anointed to bring good tidings [*levasser*] to the poor . . . and to those who mourn in Zion'—the female figure from ch. 40 or the male one from ch. 52. Naturally, tradition, especially Christian tradition, starting with Luke 4, assumes that it must have been the latter and identifies the herald in ch. 61 with Jesus. But even without this final example, it seems more than likely that the leading character in the one story, known sometimes as Zion, is described as having a mission to Zion and Jerusalem, just as the leading character in the other, known sometimes as Israel and Jacob, is described as having a mission to Israel.

Clearly there is in both stories some vacillation between the various possibilities, although by far the most frequent and consistent is the collective interpretation. Both stories tell of a sequence of events leading from suffering and humiliation to new beginnings. In addition, in most contexts, both in the book of Isaiah itself and in the history of its interpretation, both Jewish and Christian, these events are reflected in the hopes and experiences of the people of God. Just as, some years ago, it became fashionable to drop the question of who the servant is, in favour or what his office or role is, or what figures have influenced the imagery (e.g. Moses, David, Jehoiachin, Cyrus, Jeremiah) (von Rad 1968: 224ff.; Ackroyd 1968: 126ff.), so now we should perhaps give a low priority to who the daughter of Zion is and focus instead on her role in the story. To conclude, then, here are a few brief comments on the literary and theological significance of this powerful image.

3. Theological Significance

In the first place, there is the sheer appropriateness and effectiveness of this female imagery in its present context, over against the masculine imagery of the Servant. It goes beyond the language and imagery of the Servant in a number of respects. In descriptions of the plight of a people in exile, an oppressed people, a people without a homeland, the physical weakness of a woman, her vulnerability and her dependence on another person give the Zion poems a special poignancy. To illustrate this, one need only apply the imagery to the experience of real people. For instance, the Servant passages can be very powerfully applied to the history of the Jews, and have been, but there is added poignancy in the Zion passages. They tell how she has been abused, humiliated, carried off, powerless in the hands of powerful men. The fate of Babylon (ch. 47) and the daughters of Zion (3.18-26) are telling Isaianic illustrations of the vulnerability of women in situations of violence.

Then there is the language addressed to her—as a woman. The Servant is told not to be afraid. With God's help he will have the strength to overcome adversity by brute force: 'Behold I will make of you a threshing sledge, new sharp and having teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and crush them' (41.15); and in the end he will share the spoils of war (53.12). Zion is also told not to be afraid, but beyond that the imagery is quite different. She is to wake up, loose the bonds from her neck, shake off the dust, put on beautiful garments . . . and so on. These images come closer to where the people actually find themselves. The idea that they could ever have the power to conquer their almighty oppressors is beyond their wildest imaginings; but that they would one day recover their freedom and self-respect—that is not so hard to imagine.

On the other hand, the repeated imperatives in chs. 51–52 ('rouse yourself . . . stand up . . . awake . . . put on your strength . . . shake off the dust . . .') do give a revolutionary dimension to the story. It is perhaps interesting to note in passing that the Arabic verb *intafaḍa* from which the term *intifāḍa*, 'uprising', is derived, has the sense of shaking off the dust after a long period of inactivity. Like the Servant, the daughter of Zion is always dependent on her lord and master. Her role is primarily a domestic one. But like the young woman in 7.14 who shows up Ahaz's lack of faith by calling her son 'Immanuel, God-is-with-us', and the one who tosses her head defiantly at the taunts of another king in 37.22, Zion is depicted in 52.1–2 as proudly laying claim to her rightful dignity and freedom.

The way Yhwh approaches Zion is also significant and again highlights differences between the two stories. In the one he is like a judge or a king eager to demonstrate his power, while in the other, he empties himself of that exalted status, and, almost on bended knee, expresses his love, as of a man for a woman, a bridegroom for his bride, promising to be faithful to her until the mountains depart and the hills be removed (54.10). There is love in Yhwh's words to his Servant too, for example, 'you are precious in my eyes and honoured and I love you . . .' (43.4); but the almost kenotic love of Yhwh described in the Zion passages goes far beyond that.

Finally, in contrast to the very masculine imagery at the end of the heroic Servant story, the sharing of the spoils of war, the ending of the Zion story is a unique description of childbirth and the joy and contentment of a mother with her children. This appears shortly after an account of the creation of a new heaven and a new earth and a new Jerusalem (65.17–25), and, as we saw, seems to pick up some of the details from there concerning children and childbearing. The connection between creation and childbirth is obvious, and, as elsewhere in these chapters of Isaiah (e.g. 43.15; 51.9f.), the result is in both cases the creation of a new Israel. The Targum substitutes *bara'* cosmology for the childbirth image in 66.8f. and applies it to the return of the exiles (Stenning 1949: 221). But the Hebrew text is clear: the predominantly male imagery of traditional creation mythology—Yhwh, like a mighty warrior slaying the monsters of chaos (51.9f.) or a powerful king imposing his authority on the world (43.15)—is offset by the female imagery of childbearing. *Bara'* cosmology (cf. Gen. 1,1, 27; Ps. 89.8–11) is balanced by *yalad* cosmology (cf. Deut. 32.18; Job 38.8ff., 28ff.; Prov. 8.24ff). God's role in both is stressed ('Behold, I create [*bore*'] a new heaven and a new earth . . . I create Jerusalem a rejoicing . . .'; 65.17f.), but in the Zion passage, it is, as we saw, that of a midwife assisting at the birth. The first passage stresses the absence of injustice and violence in the new Jerusalem (ten negatives in nine verses); the second develops the positive images of maternal warmth, contentment and fecundity to a degree unparal-

leled in biblical tradition—a quite remarkable climax, both theologically and emotionally, to the story of the ‘Daughter of Zion’.

Bibliography

- Ackroyd, Peter R.
 1968 *Exile and Restoration: A Study of the Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century BCE* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Alonso-Schökel, Luis
 1987 ‘Isaiah’, in Alter and Kermode 1987: 165-83.” in Alter and Kermode (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1987), pp.165-83
- Alter, Robert, and Frank Kermode (eds.)
 1987 *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press).
- Bonnard, P.E.
 1972 *Le second Isaïe, son disciple et leurs éditeurs: Isaïe 40–66 [traduit du hébreu]* (EBib; Paris: J. Gabalda).
- Duhm, Bernhard
 1892 *Das Buch Jesaja* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).
- Eaton, J.H.
 1959 ‘The Origin of the Book of Isaiah’, *VT* 9: 138-57.
- Jones, D.R.
 1955 ‘The Traditio of the Oracles of Isaiah of Jerusalem’, *ZAW* 67: 226-46.
- McFague, Sallie
 1982 *Metaphorical Theology. Models of God in Religious Language* (London: SCM Press).
- Mettinger, T.N.D.
 1983 *A Farewell to the Servant Songs : A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom* (Scripta minora 1982–1983, 3; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup).
- Morgan, Robert, and John Barton
 1988 *Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford Bible Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- North, Christopher R.
 1964 *The Second Isaiah: Introduction, Translation and Commentary to Chapters XL–LV* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Polzin, Robert M., and Eugene Rothman (eds.)
 1982 *The Biblical Mosaic: Changing Perspectives* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press).
- Rad, Gerhard von
 1968 *The Message of the Prophets* (London: SCM Press).
- Rowley, H.H.
 1952 ‘The Servant of the Lord in the Light of Three Decades of Criticism’, in H.H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament* (London: Lutterworth Press): 1-57.
- Sawyer, John F.A.
 1984–86 *Isaiah* (Daily Study Bible Series; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press).

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth

- 1988 'The Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: Decentering Biblical Scholarship', *JBL* 107: 3-17.

Stenning, J.F.

- 1949 *The Targum of Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Thurian, Max

- 1962 *Marie, mère du seigneur, figure de l'église* (Taizé: Les presses de Taizé).

Trible, Phyllis

- 1978 *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Overtures to Biblical Theology, 2; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).

- 1984 *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to Biblical Theology, 13; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).

Westermann, Claus

- 1969 *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).

Wilcox, P., and D. Paton Williams

- 1988 'The Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah', *JSOT* 42: 79-102.

‘I HAVE TRODDEN THE WINE-PRESS ALONE’:
RADICAL IMAGES OF YHWH IN ISAIAH 63*

There is a widespread assumption that images are in some way inferior to abstract ideas and concepts. In a recent discussion of images in biblical poetry, Luis Alonso Schökel argues against this view: ‘when we are dealing with poets’, he says, ‘what comes before the image is not the concept, but the formless experience’ (1988: 100-101). A phrase like ‘the hand of God’, for example, does not mean the same thing as an abstraction like ‘the power of God’. Of course we can analyse the meaning of images by reference to concepts, but the imagery comes first. In a passage such as Isa. 63.1-6, the imagery has first to be taken seriously and examined in its own right as reflecting the author’s experience and relating to our own. Only then are we getting near to the meaning of the text.

There are theologians and philosophers who are taking images seriously too. For Sallie McFague, images and metaphors are as important in their own right as theological concepts and doctrines. In her *Metaphorical Theology*, for example, she shows how influential the traditional model of ‘God as Father’ has been in Christian theology, almost to the point of idolatry, and how closely bound up it is with the experience of the community or institution that developed it. Such an image has to be scrutinized very carefully, and even treated with a certain scepticism, not least because it may not have the same relevance in every age (McFague 1982: 145-92).

The search for new metaphors or models that might reflect the experiences of the modern world better does not restrict itself to the Bible. Some theologians find the biblical text so irredeemably irrelevant or patriarchal

* This is the revised version of a paper read at the IOSOT Congress in Leuven in August 1989, and published in Philip R. Davies and David J.A. Clines (eds.), *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings* (JSOTSup, 144; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 72-82.

that they look elsewhere for authority (Daly 1973). Others, like McFague and Phyllis Trible, seek to find traces of a less irrelevant or less patriarchal religion in Scripture (Trible 1978; 1984; Ruether 1983; Russell 1985; Middleton 1990). It is then a matter of selection and interpretation—'Searching for Lost Coins', to use the title of a book by another recent writer (Loades 1988), in Scripture and in tradition. McFague starts her discussion of one new model, her best-known one, namely that of 'God as friend', by quoting scriptural authority for it: Isa. 41.8, Hos. 2.23, Jn 15.13, etc. (McFague 1982: 177-78). Passages in which the image of 'God as mother' clearly occurs receive a new emphasis in today's world for similar reasons (e.g. Deut. 32.18; Ps. 131.2; Isa. 42.14; 46.3-4; 49.15; 66.13; Trible 1978: 21ff.; McFague 1982: 169ff.; Ruether 1983: 54-56).

Against this background, I want to look again at Isa. 63.1-6, where unexpected words and images, implying something quite extraordinary, are apparently applied to Yhwh. Many commentators remove them as scribal errors or resort to other methods to weaken their effect (Duhm 1914: 433-34; Box 1908: 327; Jones 1962: 533; McKenzie 1967: 186-87; Westermann 1969: 380; Stuhlmüller 1969: 384; Whybray 1975: 253-54). But before we do this, we should surely look very closely at the text as it stands to see whether, like the female images in some other passages, these are images that have been suppressed or underplayed for identifiable theological reasons. Textual emendation, even when it is supported by the evidence of the ancient versions, is not always the correct solution. The dictum *difficilior lectio potior est* is often proved correct, and sometimes it is easy to see why the 'difficult' reading or interpretation has been bypassed.

I

Verse 1. The passage begins with a question: 'Who is this?' Many commentators assume that this is a rhetorical question, such as 'Who is this coming up from the wilderness?' in the Song of Songs (8.5), or 'Who is the king of glory?' in Psalm 24 (Alonso Schökel 1988: 152; cf. Westermann 1969: 380-81). The speaker knows perfectly well who the approaching person is and the question is just a figure of speech designed to heighten the effect of the welcome he receives. But this interpretation assumes that the passage describes a normal encounter between two people, conversing with each other in everyday speech. This seems to me to be quite unjustified. In the first place, no encounter between a human being and Yhwh is normal. The very least we would expect here is a question, not a rhetorical question but a genuine one—the speaker does not recognize Yhwh at first.

Second, there is a question in v. 2 as well, which is a genuine question asking for information: 'Why the red stains on your clothes?' Surely this is another indication that the first question is a real one too, not merely a

rhetorical one. Both questions reflect the actual emotions of someone confronted by an extraordinary sight, like Moses confronted by the burning bush (Exod. 3.3) or Gideon by the angel of the Lord sitting under the oak at Ophrah (Judg. 6.11-24), or Daniel by the vision of four great beasts and the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7.15-16). The speaker's first reaction is to ask, 'Who can this extraordinary looking person be?', and then, when the figure introduces himself as Yhwh, 'In that case', he asks, 'why do you look like somebody who has just come from working in a wine-press?'

Much depends, of course, on the meaning of the rest of the question in v. 1. It consists of a description of the approaching figure in two exactly parallel clauses introduced by the demonstrative *zeh*: Who is (A) this person coming from Edom . . . and (B) this person glorious in his apparel . . . ? Each clause is divided into two halves, and it seems to me that it is the semantic opposition between these two halves that gives us the clue to what the description means. In both clauses the first half draws on traditional language and imagery and is easy to understand in the context of an anthropomorphic description of Yhwh. He comes from Edom, as in the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5.4) and elsewhere (Deut. 33.2; Hab. 3.3), and he is 'clothed with majesty' as in Ps. 104.1 (*hod ve-hadar lavashta*).

The other half of each clause, in contrast, is extremely unexpected and unconventional and has the effect of confusing and perhaps frightening the speaker. If this is the longed-for return of Yhwh to Zion, referred to in 40.10 ('Behold the Lord God comes with might'), 52.8 ('for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion') and elsewhere, then it is not at all what was expected. Can this be Yhwh, or is it someone else? Like Yhwh, he is coming, as of old, from the direction of Edom, and, like Yhwh, he is 'clothed with majesty'. But he is also *hamuṣ begadim* and *šo'eh*. Whatever these words mean, as applied to Yhwh, they must surely refer to some un-Yhwh-like features of the description in order to explain the speaker's bewildered questions—at first, Who can this be, and then, if it is Yhwh, Why does he look like this?

A widespread interpretation of the verse involves translating *hamuṣ begadim*, 'in crimsoned garments' (RSV) or the like, perhaps suggesting colours fit for a king, and emending the second participle to *šo'ed*, 'marching' (RSV) (Symmachus; Vulg; Lowth 1778; Cheyne 1881: 100; Box 1908: 327; Smith 1910: 443; McKenzie 1967: 187; Westermann 1969: 380). The first problem with this interpretation is that it completely removes the point of the speaker's two questions. If there is nothing odd about Yhwh's appearance as he marches majestically back from Edom, dressed like a king in glorious crimson garments, there is nothing to explain the speaker's apparent bewilderment. The other problem concerns the precise meaning of the two Hebrew words *hamuṣ* and *šo'eh*.

Verse 2 implies that *ḥamuš* means something like 'red, stained with red wine', for the same *begadim* that are described as *ḥamuš* in v. 1 are described in v. 2 as 'red and looking as though they had been in a wine-press'. BDB suggests that Syriac *eḥamaš*, 'to blush, be ashamed', might provide a possible etymology, but it is not a very convincing one. In a context where it is associated with the terms *gat*, 'wine vat', *purah*, 'wine-press', *darak*, 'to tread grapes', and *shakar*, 'to get drunk', the ordinary everyday Hebrew word *ḥomes*, 'vinegar', surely provides a much better explanation. There is also probably a wordplay in the choice of the Edomite place-name *bošrah*, in preference to the conventional Paran or Se'ir as parallel to Edom in v. 1, playing on its association with *bošer*, 'grape-picker', *bašir*, 'vintage', etc. (Alonso Schökel 1988: 30). So should we not translate *ḥamuš* as 'winestained', if that is what is meant, however incongruous an image of Yhwh it conjures up?

The first thing to say about the other word, *šo'eh*, is that, whatever it means, it too is incongruous in a description of Yhwh. Apart from this passage it occurs three times in the Hebrew Bible, twice in the context of imprisonment and oppression (Isa. 51.14; Jer. 48.12), and once of a prostitute (Jer. 2.20). It has become customary in modern times, mainly for etymological reasons, to take it in the sense of 'stooping, cowed, unresisting': the prisoner is 'bowed down' (RSV; cf. NEB 'he that cowers'), and the prostitute 'sprawls in promiscuous vice' (NEB). With that background, it surely cannot mean in Isaiah 63, as some have suggested, 'with his head bent back proudly' or the like (Gesenius, Delitzsch cited in Cheyne 1881: 100; Bonnard 1972: 436). In Jewish tradition, followed by the King James Version, the verb is usually glossed as *tiḥtel*, 'to wander from place to place' like gypsies or travellers with no fixed abode (Kimḥi; Ibn Ezra; Skinner 1902: 195; Even Shoshan 1962: V, 2249). It certainly cannot mean 'marching' or 'striding' without emending the text (RSV). Whether we take the sense of 'stooping' or the traditional Jewish one of 'wandering from place to place', the term, like *ḥamuš*, conjures up a picture of Yhwh acting out of character. He is wearing the majestic royal garments that befit him—but they look as if they are stained with wine; his great strength, as of the Lord of heaven and earth, is evident (*be-rob koḥo*) (Whybray 1975: 254; Bonnard 1972: 436)—but he looks lost and weary. That explains the speaker's bewilderment. Who can this ambiguous figure be?

Yhwh's answer is usually understood to be an announcement of victory and salvation, taking *šedaqah* in the sense of 'victory, vindication' (RSV): 'It is I, who announce that right has won the day, I who am strong to save' (NEB). This follows logically from the removal of all the dirt and weariness from the description of Yhwh in the preceding question, and it is then a quite conventional picture of Yhwh returning to Zion bringing news of victory. But if we retain the ambiguity of the description and the bewilderment

of the questioner, then the answer might have a different nuance. The first part also addresses the speaker's doubts: 'It is I. I am speaking *bi-šedaqah*, 'in righteousness = truthfully' (JB 'with integrity'; cf. 45.23; 48.1). The sense would then be: '(Do not be put off by appearances.) Believe me, it is I, Yhwh, mighty to save.'

II

Verse 2. The speaker's second question needs little further comment, except to re-emphasize the striking incongruity of the imagery. According to this verse, Yhwh looks like a *dorek be-gat*, 'a treader of grapes'. The image of God trampling on his enemies (including 'the virgin daughter of Zion' in Lam. 1.15; cf. Isa. 63.3; Rev. 19.15) occurs elsewhere, but here he actually looks like 'a treader of grapes', that is to say, like someone who has been working in a wine-press, tired, sweaty, his clothes stained with the juice of the grapes.

Most of the verbs in the next section (vv. 3-6), after the first one, *darakti*, 'I have trodden', appear to be modal (imperfects with *ve-*), corresponding to the implied modality in v. 1, 'Who could this be?', and suggesting perhaps the extraordinary, almost unreal, nature of the scene described: 'trampling on them myself . . . my clothes spattered with their lifeblood . . . I was panic-stricken . . .' (Davidson 1894: 90-95; Sawyer 1976: 86-89). Jewish tradition and the KJV consistently translate them as futures. The unconventional imagery of this passage may well be reflected in what seems to be a quite consistent and deliberate choice of verb forms. They are difficult, if not impossible, to translate, but that is no reason to emend them all to simple narrative past tenses with *waw* consecutive, as *BHS* and others recommend (Duhm 1914: 434; McKenzie 1967; Bonnard 1972: 434; Whybray 1975: 254). Surely it must be significant that the only normal past tenses in the text as it stands describe the successful completion of the task, in traditional theological language: *u-shnat ge'ulay ba'ah*, 'the year when my people are redeemed had come' and *va-tosha 'li zero 'i*, 'Then my own arm saved me . . .'), while the other, less conventional verbs are consistently modal.

Yhwh's answer explains why he is looking so weary and bedraggled. There was no one to help him. He had to do the whole thing by himself. This is repeated four times, twice in the first line (*le-vaddi . . . en ish itti*) and twice in v. 5, where once again we find radical anthropomorphism. The idea that the one God, creator of heaven and earth, acts alone and needs no one to help him is a familiar one, especially in Isaiah 40-66 (e.g. 40.12, 13). But this is different: here Yhwh is described as wanting help, indeed looking round desperately for help. The verb *hishtomem* is used of someone 'crushed to the ground' by his enemies and 'made to sit in darkness like those long dead' (Ps. 143.3-4) and of a man sick with terror (Dan. 8.17, 27).

It is applied to Yhwh twice: here, and in a similar context in 59.16. Unlike *hamuš* and *šo'eh* in v. 1, its meaning is well known. It differs from the other intransitive stems of the root *shamam* (qal and niphal) only in being restricted to personal subjects. While the qal and niphal forms are applied to the devastation and desolation of lands and cities as well, the hithpoel form is used only of human beings and Yhwh, of psychological or emotional devastation, as it were, not physical.

The extreme anthropomorphism implied by the application of this verb to God has once again been hard for commentators and translators to accept. One way of avoiding it is to reduce the force of the word by rendering it as 'wondered' (59.16 AV, RSV; 63.5 AV), suggesting mild surprise, or 'amazed, aghast' (63.5 NEB). Jerome goes further in this anti-anthropomorphic direction with *quaesivi*, 'asked, inquired'. As well as weakening the effect, this introduces a new and quite irrelevant anthropomorphism, namely the idea that God did not have the wisdom to realize that he had no allies in his fight against evil. Others introduce the notion of moral outrage: '(Yhwh) was outraged (NEB) or appalled (RSV) that no one intervened' (59.16) (Cheyne 1881: 101). But this moral dimension in the word *hishtomem* seems on the face of it unlikely. Surely in this context we need to understand it in its ordinary sense of shock and horror, as of someone panic-stricken and aware both of the enormity of the task to be done and of the fact that there is no one in the world who can help him do it. In the second half of the book of Isaiah, where images of Yhwh include those of a woman in labour, gasping and panting (42.14), and of a midwife assisting at the birth of a baby (66.9), not to mention that of Yhwh wandering wearily back from work, his clothes looking as if they are stained with the juice of grapes, we have no justification for playing down the anthropomorphism expressed by this verb, or any of the other radical images in this passage.

Another important point that has to be made about Yhwh's speech is that the same ambiguity or vacillation that was identified in vv. 1 and 2 runs through this also. Alongside those striking glimpses of God's stained garments, his loneliness and his horror, we find conventional references to his wrath, his day of vengeance and the saving power of his arm. In one verse he is the subject of both *hishtomem*, 'to be horrified', and *hoshia*, 'to save', just as in v. 1 he is both 'coming forth from Edom', as in days of old, and 'wearily stooping', both 'glorious in his apparel' and 'in blood-stained clothes'. He suffers, and at the same time inflicts suffering.

There is also vacillation between the image of the weary labourer returning from the wine-press and the bloodstained warrior returning from the scene of carnage on the day of judgment. The figure is that of a bloodstained warrior, but the red stains on his clothes make him look like someone who has been working in a wine-press; and this leads to a comparison between a bloody battle in which he crushes his enemies and the trampling of grapes

in a wine-press (cf. Joel 4.13 [Eng. 3.13]). Some have seen an allusion here to the Babylonian myth of the battle between Marduk and Tiamat (Westermann 1969: 382-83), and in a Ugaritic parallel the goddess Anat is covered in the blood of her victims. However that may be, the sense is clear throughout. The poet portrays Yhwh not as a triumphant gloating warrior, swaggering back from battle, unmoved by the enormity of what he has had to do, but as tired and bloodstained, barely recognizable, as someone who knows what it is to suffer.

One final point about this remarkable passage concerns its relationship to the passages immediately preceding and following it. The phrase *shnat ge'ulay*, 'the year of my redeemed ones', in v. 4 (RSV footnote) picks up the reference to 'the redeemed of Yhwh' in the picture of redemption at the end of the previous chapter (62.11-12). Redemption, especially in these chapters, involves the ruthless crushing of the forces of injustice. The 'victory' or 'salvation' at the climax of the picture in v. 5 is made possible by Yhwh's wrath ('my wrath upheld me')—anger, that is, at the injustice done to his people. It was that anger that gave him strength to fight against the oppressor, and spurred him on to crush and humiliate them so mercilessly.

Those called 'redeemed of Yhwh' feature just as prominently in the following passage, which contains some other important points of continuity as well. It is a hymn in praise of Yhwh's love for his people: 'I will tell of Yhwh's loving actions [*hasadim*] . . . all that he has done for them in his deep love . . .' Four words for 'love' are used, including *raḥamim*, a term of special significance in these chapters (e.g. 49.13-14); *hoshia*, 'to save', and *ga'al*, 'to redeem', both reappear. But most extraordinary, almost as though intended as a comment on the immediately preceding passage we have been considering, is the phrase *be-kol šaratam lo šar*, 'in all their affliction, he was afflicted' (63.9; KJV, RSV). As one would expect, most commentators cannot accept this and emend the text, for example, 'in all their troubles. It was no envoy. . .' (NEB; cf. Skinner 1902: 200; Westermann 1969: 385; Whybray 1975: 257 Bonnard 1972: 443). Kimḥi makes sense of the Hebrew text as it stands and glosses it with the sentence *va-tiqšar nafsho ba-'amal yisra'el*, 'he [God] could not endure the suffering of Israel'. He adds *ve-ha-kol derek mashal*, 'everything is by way of allegory', but I see no reason why we too should not try to understand the text as it stands, especially since, as we have seen, there seems to be a surprising consistency in the language and imagery used here (cf. Smith 1910: 450; Slotki 1949: 307).

III

To go back to Alonso Schökel's comment on images with which we began, we might ask the question, What kind of 'formless experience' preceded the extraordinary imagery of this passage? If we place it alongside a

number of similar passages in Isaiah 40–66, it is not hard to recognize behind the poet's images an experience of his God Yhwh that is consistent and convincing. Possibly in his own suffering, or in that of the community where he lives, the poet has encountered the human face of Yhwh in a peculiarly intimate way. Perhaps the term that best sums up his experience of Yhwh is *raḥamim* with its earthy associations with a mother's physiological closeness to the baby in her womb (cf. 49.14–15; 46.3–4) (Trible 1978: 31–59; Ruether 1983: 56; McFague 1982: 169–70). This experience inspired the images he uses: the mother going into labour for him (42.14), the remorseful husband swearing almost on bended knee never to lose his temper again (54.7–10), the midwife attending the birth of a baby (66.9) (see Chapter 18), and now the bloodstained soldier, returning from fighting his battle (63.1–6), alone, weary, unrecognized. The common theme in all these images is the deep, close, comforting involvement of Yhwh in the struggle for justice and freedom in the world: 'the year of my redeemed ones has come' (63.6).

As we have seen, not everyone has been able to relate to some of these radical images, and elaborate means have been sought to remove them or reduce their effectiveness. But in view of other radical innovations in these chapters, notably the new emphasis on explicit monotheism and the analysis of vicarious suffering in Isaiah 53, it is hard to deny that they are there in the Hebrew text, as Jewish traditionalists like Kimḥi as well as the KJV and others, have acknowledged, and it is a sign of the times that modern commentators have begun to take such things seriously again.

What are the implications of this for 'metaphorical theology'? The earliest interpretation of the passage in Christian tradition comes in Revelation, where it is Christ who is 'clad in a robe dipped in blood' and who will 'tread the wine-press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty' (Rev. 19.13–15). It was later also related to the crucifixion. There is, for example, in Christian art the famous scene derived from Augustine, in which the great wooden frame of a wine-press is modified to represent a cross, and, instead of grape juice, it is the blood of Christ that flows out into a chalice beneath (Lee, Seddon and Stephen 1976: 140). Both of these interpretations explain the extraordinary ambiguity of the passage by reference to the person of Christ, both divine and human, glorious, powerful and life-giving, on the one hand, and suffering, tortured and weary, on the other. They also voice the problem posed by a model of God that has been hard for commentators to accept.

But, as Calvin pointed out, the passage is actually about Yhwh, not Jesus, and thus must provide scriptural authority for a model of God rather different from the traditional ones (Smith 1910: 443; Skinner 1902: 194; Slotki 1949: 307; Sawyer 1984–86: II, 195–96). To end as we began with McFague's 'metaphorical theology' and her notion of 'God as friend', such

an image shifts the emphasis from transcendence and once-for-all salvation in a father–child mode, as she says, to a continuing adult relationship marked by sacrifice, suffering and solidarity with others: ‘God is the friend who makes sacrifices on our behalf . . . co-operates with gifts of power, perseverance and insight . . . and when we fall . . . forgives us’ (McFague 1982: 186). In Genesis 1–11, words containing the root *‘šb are used both of the ‘pain’ and ‘toil’ of Eve and Adam (Gen. 3.16, 17), and of the pain that Yhwh felt in his heart when he saw the evil that was being done on the earth he had created (Gen. 6.6). For those who have eyes to see, the Hebrew Bible contains many ‘proof-texts’ for such alternative models of God. Isaiah 63.1–6 is surely one of the most poignant.

Bibliography

- Alonso Schökel, Luis
 1988 *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics* (Subsidia biblica 11; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico).
- Bonnard, P.E.
 1972 *Le second Isaïe, son disciple et leurs éditeurs: Isaïe 40–66 [traduit du hébreu]* (EBib; Paris: J. Gabalda)
- Box, G.H.
 1908 *The Book of Isaiah* (London: Macmillan).
- Cheyne, T.K.
 1881 *The Prophecies of Isaiah* (2 vols.; London: C. Kegan Paul).
- Daly, Mary
 1973 *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press).
- Davidson, A.B.
 1894 *Hebrew Syntax* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Duhm, Bernhard
 1914 *Das Buch Jesaja* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 3rd edn).
- Jones, D.R.
 1962 ‘Isaiah II and III’, in Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson, rev. edn).
- Lee, Lawrence, George Seddon and Francis Stephen
 1976 *Stained Glass* (New York: Crown).
- Loades, Ann
 1988 *Searching for Lost Coins: Explorations in Christianity and Feminism* (London: SPCK).
- Lowth, Robert
 1778 *Isaiah: A New Translation with a Preliminary Dissertation and Notes, Critical, Philological and Explanatory* (London: J. Nichols, 2nd edn).
- McFague, Sallie
 1982 *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (London: SCM Press).

- McKenzie, John L.
 1967 *Second Isaiah: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB, 20; Garden City, NY: Doubleday).
- Middleton, D.F.
 1990 'Feminist Interpretation', in R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (eds.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press).
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford
 1983 *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (London: SCM Press).
- Russell, Letty M. (ed.)
 1985 *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
 1976 *A Modern Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (London: Oriel Press, Routledge).
 1984–86 *Isaiah* (Daily Study Bible Series; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press).
- Skinner, John
 1902 *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapters XL–LXVI in the Revised Version: With Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Slotki, I.W.
 1949 *Isaiah: Hebrew Text and English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (London: Soncino Press).
- Smith, George Adam
 1910 *The Book of Isaiah XL–LXVI* (Expositor's Bible; London: Hodder & Stoughton).
- Stuhlmueeller, Carroll
 1969 'Deutero-Isaiah', in Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy (eds.), *The Jerome Bible Commentary* (2 vols. in 1; London: Geoffrey Chapman).
- Trible, Phyllis
 1978 *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Overtures to Biblical Theology, 2; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
 1984 *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to Biblical Theology, 13; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Westermann, Claus
 1969 *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Whybray, R.N.
 1975 *Isaiah 40–66* (NCB; London: Oliphants).

THE DIVINE 'HERE AM I' (*HINNENI*)
IN ISAIAH (52.6; 58.9 AND 65.1)*

Isaiah's famous vision 'in the year that King Uzziah died', when he 'saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up' (Isa. 6.1-8), must be one of the best known and most quoted passages in the Bible (Sawyer 1996: 59-64). One reason for this is that it contains Isaiah's words 'Here am I. Send me!' In Hebrew, *hinneni*, 'Here am I', is one word and could be translated 'Behold me!' or 'Look, I am over here!' Addressed to God, it means 'I am at your disposal. I am ready to do what you ask of me.' In the story of the Sacrifice of Isaac, for example, Abraham says 'Here I am!' when God calls his name (Gen. 22.1, 11), so does Moses at the burning bush (Exod. 3.4), the child Samuel sleeping in the Temple at Shiloh (1 Sam. 3.4) and several other biblical characters, including the Virgin Mary whose 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord' is the equivalent, in the deferential language of someone addressing a superior (Lk. 1.38).

Isaiah's *hineni* (unstressed form) came to be used as a symbol of commitment, loyalty and courage. Recent examples include an Orthodox Jewish Heritage Centre in New York (www.hineni.org) and a Jewish Youth Movement based in Sydney Australia (www.hineni.org.au); *hinneni.com* is also the name of a Christian Web site run by the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Spain. It is one word in Italian as well, *Eccomi*, where it has inspired a number of popular settings, including an arrangement of Psalm 40 ('I waited patiently for the Lord') with the refrain *Eccomi, eccomi, Signore io vengo* ('Here I am, here I am, Lord, I come'), combined with Mary's words *Si compia in me la tua volontà* ('be it unto me according to thy word'). There is also a hymn about child poverty in the world, with the refrain *Eccomi, manda me* (Isaiah's exact words: 'Here am I, send me'), first performed in 2003 by a children's choir called Le Matite

* A version of this paper was delivered in the Newcastle Reform Synagogue as the Presidential Address at the Winter Meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study in January 2011.

Colorate ('The Coloured Pencils') in the presence of the late Pope John Paul II. In English there are numerous settings, of which the most popular today is probably the hymn beginning 'I the Lord of sea and sky', written by the American Jesuit Dan Schutte, with the refrain 'Here I am, Lord. Is it I Lord?/I have heard you calling in the night./I will go, Lord, if you lead me./I will hold your people in my heart.'

The reason I have spent so much time on the afterlife of Isaiah's 'Here I am'—which is not the subject of my talk—is that I find it very hard to believe, given the obvious impact of his words on later generations, that the author or authors of the later chapters of the book of Isaiah, where the divine 'Here am I' appears three times, were unaware of the connection. If Isaiah's 'Here I am' represents such a memorable moment in Isaiah's life, then *qal va-homer* how much more are we to interpret the divine 'Here am I' later in the book as something quite extraordinary. It seems that 'the Lord our God, King of the Universe' is saying to the people, even when we ignore him and turn our backs on him, 'Look, I'm over here. I am at your disposal if you need me. I will do anything for you.'

This type of reuse and development of themes and images from the earlier chapters of the book of Isaiah was missed by the more atomistic historical-critical approaches of previous generations, but now figures quite prominently in most scholarly works on Isaiah 40–66 (Williamson 1994; Sommer 1998; Tull 2006). But I do not think the connection between Isaiah's 'Here am I' in ch. 6 and the divine 'Here am I', which is unique to Isaiah, in chs. 52, 58 and 65 has yet been fully explored. It is almost as though God's repeated 'Here am I' in the later chapters is an answer to Isaiah's in ch. 6: 'as you offered to serve me and to be my prophet, come what may, look, I am here too, ready to serve you and your people, ready to be your God.' I am going to look briefly at each of the three passages, always with an eye on how they have been read and used down the centuries, and then consider what the literary and theological implications of such an interpretation might be.

1. *The Three Texts*

(a) Isaiah 52.1–12 is the last of a series of passages beginning with imperatives ('Listen . . . Rouse yourself . . . Awake, awake . . .'; 51.1–52.12), culminating in a call to take part in a new exodus, even better than the first (52.11–12). Zion is encouraged to wake up, shake off the dust and bonds of slavery and, like a queen, put on fine garments and take her proper place on a throne. Victory and restoration are at hand. The passage is well known to Jews and Christians alike: in the Jewish lectionary it is one of the seven 'consolation readings' beginning with Isaiah 40 (Elbogen 1993: 145), while

in many Christian lectionaries, the second half of the passage beginning 'How beautiful upon the mountains' (vv. 7-12) is read on Christmas Day.

We are concerned with vv. 5 and 6, where God says 'What am I doing here? My people need my help. So I will show them . . . they shall know that it is I who speak. *Hinneni* "Lo, here I am!"' (Lowth 1857: 100). In this passage, one of three unique to Isaiah, God uses a formula more familiar from Isaiah's vision (ch.6) and, as we have seen, more often associated with human beings offering their services to God, rather than the other way round (cf. Isa. 58.9 and 65.1). Yet few commentators note the oddness of the expression. Rashi simply explains it as *qiy Yamti*, 'I keep my word', and Kimḥi adds, 'as I always have done, even when my people did not recognize me during the exile. I never change.' Bernhard Duhm describes it as 'artificial and meaningless' (Duhm 1892: 363). Modern commentators compare God's words here (in the first person) to 'Behold your God!' (in the third person) in ch. 40 (Brueggemann 1998: I, 137) or to the Immanuel prophecy 'God is with us' in 7.14 (Oswalt 1998: 365) and leave it at that. Benjamin Sommer's commentary in the *Jewish Study Bible* (2004) is exceptional in recognizing the uniqueness of this usage in Isaiah, both here and in our other two passages, and compares it to the *hinneni* of Abraham (Gen. 22.1) and Moses (Exod. 3.4), though not Isaiah's (6.8). Another commentator struck by the oddness of the expression is Matthew Henry. In his rather quaint eighteenth-century language he says, "This is a very condescending expression of God's readiness to hear prayer. When God calls to us by his word it becomes us to say, *Here we are; what saith our Lord unto his servants?* But that God should say to us, *Behold me, here I am*, is strange." (Henry 1960: on 58.9).

On the other hand, this divine 'Here I am!' (v. 6) assumed special significance in the hands of ancient and mediaeval Christian commentators, such as Jerome, Ambrose and Theodoret, who understood the words as spoken by Jesus (Elliott 2007: 265). The strangeness of the expression and the somewhat daring anthropomorphism implied naturally troubled some of the Jewish writers (for example, the Targum simply omits it), whereas this theological problem is removed when it is not God the Father, creator of heaven and earth, who is condescending to offer himself to his people, but his Son in human form. Like the rabbis, ancient and mediaeval Christian commentators believed that the text of the Bible has more than one meaning, and christological interpretations of many Old Testament passages were very popular in the church, alongside attempts to understand the literal or historical meaning, until Protestant Reformers and modern scholars insisted that the text has only one meaning.

Cyril of Alexandria, in the early part of the fifth century, appreciated the significance of the divine 'Here I am!' more than most. The fact that the Greek text used by Cyril renders 'Here I am!' here and in the second

passage (58.9) with the word *pareimi* gives his christological interpretation added force, because the noun *parousia*, which comes from *pareimi*, was by then a technical term in Christian discourse for the coming of Christ, the dawning of a messianic age (cf. Mt. 24.27, 37, 39). So, according to Cyril, this divine 'Here I am' (Greek *pareimi*) refers to the fact the God the Lord 'appeared to us . . . and became a human being for our sake' (Wilken 2007: 404). Following the Greek punctuation, Cyril then takes the 'Here am I' with the first few words of the next verse and reads: 'therefore the Lord says, "Here I am—like springtime upon the mountains (vv. 6-7) and spring is the season of beauty."' Citing the Song of Solomon (2.10-12) he goes on to describe how, 'when the Only-Begotten appeared in the flesh . . . we who were withered because we had rid our souls of the lovely flowers of virtue, were brought back to life in him and filled with spiritual food' (Wilken 2007: 404). A long way from the Hebrew, but actually pretty close to the Greek version he was using.

(b) Isaiah 58 is about fasting and has been read in synagogues at the morning service on Yom Kippur from the rabbinic period down to modern times (cf. Babylonian Talmud *Megillah* 31a), while in many Christian traditions at least part of it is traditionally read at the beginning of Lent. In a recent Anglican lectionary (*ASB* 1980: 499), for example, vv. 1-8 are read on Ash Wednesday, while in the post-Vatican II Catholic lectionary (1970), the Old Testament reading for the first Saturday in Lent is 58.1-9a, ending with the words 'You shall call to him and he shall say "Here I am"', our second divine *hinneni*.

The passage condemns the sins of the people, in particular, selfishness, hypocrisy and social injustice, epitomized by their behaviour on a day of fasting. The prophet reminds them that the kind of fast 'acceptable to the Lord' (v. 5) involves more than sackcloth and ashes (vv. 1-5) and appeals to them to let the oppressed go free and to care for the hungry, the homeless and all those in need (vv. 6-7, 10). There follows a series of three promises concerning the health and happiness in store for those who fast correctly: they all begin with the word 'then' (Hebrew *az*): אֲזַיִּבְקַע כְּשַׁחַר אֹרֶךְ, 'then shall your light break forth like the dawn' (v. 8); 'then you shall call and the Lord will answer' (v. 9); and 'then you shall take delight in the Lord and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth' (v. 14). The first and last of these promises are graphic and colourful and memorable. 'And then shall your light break forth as the light of morning breaketh' is the final chorus of Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* (1846), for example, while the concluding verses about 'taking delight in the Lord' (Hebrew *hit'anneg*) are interpreted in Jewish tradition as referring to the Sabbath. The word '*oneg*, 'delight', came to be particularly associated with the Sabbath, and the rabbis deduced from this verse that 'all who take delight in the Sabbath will receive their hearts' desire' (cf. Ps. 37.4; Babylonian Talmud *Shabbat* 118b).

Our concern however is with the middle promise: ‘then you shall call and the Lord will answer; you shall cry out and he will say, “Here I am”’ (v. 9a). In this case several commentators do recognize the force of the expression. Calvin says that in these words ‘God gives a practical declaration that he is near and reconciled to us’. Others recognize a more devotional or even mystical nuance in the words and speak of ‘the presence of God vouchsafed in response to sincere prayer’ (Jones 1962: 531) and ‘authentic communion’ (Brueggemann 1998: II, 191).

(c) This brings us to the last, and in many ways the most interesting of our three passages (Isa. 65.1-16). It comes at the very beginning of what many commentators understand as a response to the long prayer in the preceding chapters (63.7–64.12). God answers the prayer by saying in his defence that, even when they turned their backs on him, he was still ready to help, waiting for them to return, and for a third and final time, he says to them *hinneni hinneni*, repeated twice presumably for emphasis. Once again the anthropomorphism of having God using words normally spoken by human beings, offering to do whatever is required of them, is ignored by most commentators. Perhaps Maimonides picked up something of the unusual force of the words: ‘I offered myself to be sought by them that asked not for me’ (Maimonides 1956: 207).

This third divine *hinneni* is even more striking than the other two, not only because the word is repeated twice, but because it is accompanied by what one commentary calls ‘an extraordinary gesture’ (Berlin and Brettler 2004: 911): God stretches out his hands to his people, like a devout worshipper in the act of prayer (1 Kgs 8.22, 38; cf. Childs 2001: 535), or, as the eighteenth-century Jewish commentator David Altschuler puts it (*Metzudat David*), followed by Samuel David Luzzatto (‘Shadal’) in the nineteenth, like someone waving to a friend. Christian commentators compare the image to that of the father in the parable opening his arms to welcome the prodigal son home (Calvin on Rom. 10.21; Wesley on 64.5; Sawyer 1986: 207). Others interpret the words as spoken by Jesus, his hands outstretched on the cross. Cyril, for example, says that this was because he wanted to embrace the ends of the earth, while Jerome says that it is a gesture of forgiveness, quoting Jesus’ words on the cross: ‘Father forgive them; they know not what they do’ (Lk. 23.24).

Before leaving ch. 65, there is another verse we must look at. In v.16 God is given a new name, which occurs only here: Hebrew *elohe amen*, which literally means ‘the God of Amen’. Like the divine ‘Here I am’, this too is unique to Isaiah. Most commentators, both Jewish and Christian, say very little about the oddness of the use of the word ‘Amen’ here. They either take it as simply a variant of a more common word like *emet*, ‘truth’, or *emunah*, ‘faithfulness’ (Westermann 1969: 403; Childs 2001: 537), or emend the text to read *emun*, *omen*, ‘faithful’ (Duhm 1914: 447f.; Cheyne 1895: 371). But

the text has 'Amen' and surely we must ask why? If the author had wanted to say *elohe emet*, 'the faithful God', as in 2 Chron. 15.3, why did he not do so? We have already seen the effect of taking another unique expression earlier in this chapter seriously, so surely before dismissing it as a scribal error or the like, we have to consider very carefully whether it too does not have some special significance here.

The late Douglas Jones of Durham University proposed that, since virtually all other occurrences of the word 'Amen' in the Hebrew Bible are liturgical responses by human speakers to God, we may conclude that what is meant here is that 'the faithfulness of God and the truthfulness of men will answer to one another' (Jones 1962: 534). Without developing this idea, he appears to be suggesting that the unique choice of 'Amen' here, like the divine 'Here I am' at the beginning of the chapter, is theologically significant. The verse comes at the end of a section, as something of climax, a context in which our author might be expected to add one final touch to his portrayal of God: the God of Israel is a god who says 'Amen' to his people's prayers. As so often, the rabbis understood this way of speaking, and Rashi in a different context may well have had this passage in mind when he says, 'God nods his head as though to acknowledge my blessing and says "Amen"' (Babylonian Talmud *Berakhot* 7a, top). The twice-repeated *Amen* in the new name by which God is to be known would then contain another anthropomorphism, not dissimilar to the twice-repeated divine 'Here I am' and the outstretched hands at the beginning of the chapter. Let us have a look now at the literary and theological implications of this interpretation.

2. Literary and Theological Implications

First of all, this divine 'Here I am' occurs only in the book of Isaiah. The words are familiar from other memorable passages, as we saw, including the Aqedah, the burning bush and the Annunciation, as well as Isaiah's own vision in ch. 6, but only in the later chapters of the book of Isaiah does the divine *hinneni* occur. Furthermore only here does the divine *hinneni* occur in the same context as the human. By the same context I mean the book of Isaiah taken as a whole. The passages in question occur in all three of what historical critics used to believe were separate divisions in the book: ch. 6 in First Isaiah, ch. 52 in Second Isaiah and chs. 58 and 65 in Third Isaiah. Nowadays scholars believe that the history of the book's composition is much more complicated, and, besides emphasizing differences in style and authorship between its various components, many commentators also look for lines of continuity running through the book as a whole. There are some obvious examples in ch. 6. Isaiah says he 'saw the Lord, sitting on a throne, high and lifted up' (*ram ve-nissa*) and exactly the same phrase is used in ch. 57 (v. 15). In ch. 6 the prophet tells us he had a glimpse into the heavenly

court, where he heard the seraphim calling to one other, and this experience seems to be alluded to in ch. 40, where he tells us that he overheard God calling to his angels, 'Comfort, comfort my people' and in response said, 'What shall I cry?' (Seitz 1990). A third example is the distinctive Isaianic expression 'Holy One of Israel', which occurs far more often throughout the book of Isaiah than anywhere else in the Bible, and which seems to have its origin in the famous vision in ch. 6 (Williamson 1994: 38-45; cf. Rendtorff 1993; McLaughlin 1994). What I am suggesting is that another example of this continuity between ch. 6 and the later chapters of the book is the use of *hineni* first in ch. 6, then in three passages later in the book, climaxing in the twice repeated *hinneni* in ch. 65.

Second, 'Here I am' is often simply what you say when someone calls your name. It's what Esau said when his father called his name (Gen. 27.1), and Mephibosheth when King David called him (2 Sam. 9.6). The Latin translation is usually *adsum* (Genesis 22; Exodus 4; Isaiah 52 and 58), which is what in the old days English public school boys said at roll call: 'Present, sir.' So when God says *adsum*, as he does in the first two passages (chs. 52; 58), there is a degree of humility, not to say obedience, implied. In the third passage his name is not called - and *adsum* is not used. On the contrary, he calls out to his people twice: 'Look I'm over here; over here', and waves his hands to attract their attention. This comes closest to ch. 6, because there no one calls Isaiah's name: there the prophet's 'Here I am' was entirely voluntary. No one asked him to offer himself. In the same way in ch. 65, God's offer is entirely voluntary: I said 'Here am I! Here am I!' to a nation that did not call on my name. Christian theologians would call this unmerited grace.

But there is another dimension in Isaiah's 'Here I am' in ch. 6. Many commentators note that it cannot have been easy for him to say these words. The rabbis tell us that God gave Isaiah a chance to think again: 'My children are wearisome and rebellious', he said. 'If you will take it upon yourself to be despised and beaten by them, then go forth on this mission, but if not, accept it not.' And Isaiah said, 'Upon this condition I go forth, namely my back I give to the smiters, my cheeks to them that pluck out my hair [Isa. 50.6], and even so I am not worthy to go forth on thy mission to thy children' (*Leviticus Rabbah* 10.2; cf. Uffenheimer 1971: 236-38). Christian commentators typically say that Isaiah could not have done it on his own. Jerome says it was possible only because his lips had been burned with a piece of coal from the altar fire and he had been cleansed by the grace of God, while Luther says that it was as though he had risen from the dead (cf. v. 5), a different person, with the courage to put his life at risk for his faith (Luther 1969a: XVI, 64). If we are to take the connection between these passages seriously, then are we to imagine the Lord God, the Holy One of

Israel, creator of heaven and earth, finding it hard to say these words and offering to suffer for the sake of his people?

To find an answer to this we need to look once more at the context. In the first place, this would not be the only passage in these chapters where God shares in his people's suffering. There is a famous verse in ch. 57, echoed later in 66 1-2, which reads, 'I dwell in the high and holy place, but also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit', while in ch. 63 the Hebrew as it stands apparently reads, 'In all their affliction God was afflicted' (63.9 RSV, NJSB). Ibn Ezra cites Judg. 10.16 in support of the text as it stands (Ibn Ezra 1877: 108). Furthermore, there is an interesting paradox in these chapters of Isaiah. On the one hand, no other book puts so much emphasis on the incomparability of God, for example, 'To whom then will you compare me, says the Holy One' (40.25); 'Who is like me?' (44.7); 'I am God and there is none like me' (46.9). On the other hand, nowhere else is there such a concentration of anthropomorphic images of God. Some are familiar, such as God as a king (43.15) or a mighty warrior (42.13) or a potter (45.9; 64.8); others are rarer and very striking, such as God as 'our Father' (63.16 [2x]; 64.8), God as a mother (49.14-15; 66.13), God as a woman in childbirth (42.14) and God as a midwife (66.8-9). But there are two others that I believe are even more remarkable and make it clear what the author wants us to make of the divine 'Here I am', especially the final, unsolicited, twice-repeated one in ch. 65.

The first is the famous passage in ch. 63 where the Lord comes back from battle, so covered with blood that he is unrecognizable, resembling someone who had been working in a wine-press. The word translated 'marching' in v. 1 does not mean that at all. The RSV, followed by the NRSV and most modern English versions, has simply emended the text without telling anyone and changed the meaning. The Hebrew *šo'eh* is used of slaves, prostitutes and itinerant workers; and, whether we take the sense of 'stooping' or the traditional Jewish one of 'wandering from place to place', the term conjures up a picture of God acting out of character. He is wearing the majestic royal garments that befit him—but they look as if they are stained with wine; his great strength, as of the Lord of heaven and earth, is evident (*be-rob kōhō*) (Whybray 1975: 254; Bonnard 1972: 436), but he looks lost and weary. This is why the speaker is bewildered. Who is this that comes from Edom? He has to explain that he had trodden the wine-press alone, he had looked for help and was horrified to see there was none, he had no one to help him. He had won the battle but it had not been easy; and it had left him looking lost and weary (see Chapter 19).

The second, less well known and perhaps even more astonishing image, appears in ch. 54, where God speaks almost like an apologetic husband, telling his wife he had lost his temper: 'in overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you' (v. 8)—but I promise I won't do it again—the

mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall never depart from you and my covenant of peace shall not be removed' (v. 10) (see Chapter 18). Most people find it hard to apologize, especially men, and here we have the Lord of heaven and earth doing just that. When we remember that in ch. 40, he admits that the punishment he had meted out to his people was disproportionate—'they had received from the Lord's hand double for all their sins'—that their sufferings had been more than they had deserved, then we have the image of the Holy One of Israel coming right down from heaven to be close to his people, confiding in them, trying to comfort them and speak tenderly to them, offering to do whatever he can to help them.

The author begins this section, which is addressed to people who had suffered terribly, with the words, 'Comfort, comfort my people, says your God . . . speak tenderly to Jerusalem', and it is as though the author will stop at nothing in thinking of ways to do this. Surely this is all the evidence we need to prove that the divine 'Here I am', which occurs three times in the later chapters of the book of Isaiah, is not a mere formality, but is just as significant, from a literary as well as a theological point of view, as Isaiah's in ch. 6. Commenting on this unique phenomenon, the thrice repeated divine 'Here I am', a more recent Jewish commentator notes that, in these chapters, there is 'a tendency to portray the Lord God as voluntarily accepting human roles out of his love for his people' (Sommer 1998: 250). God answers our prayers with the reassuring words 'Here I am', that is to say, 'I am listening, I am ready to help' (58.9). But more than that, even when we ignore him and turn our backs on him, he offers himself to us, like the prophet in ch. 6, to share our grief and do what he can to help (65.1). It is a very graphic image but not so far removed from a verse like Deut. 4.7: 'For what great nation is there that has a god so near to them as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him' (Henry 1960: On 52.6).

Why has more not been made of this till now? I quoted a few exceptions above such as Matthew Henry (1710), Douglas Jones (1962) and Benjamin Sommer in the recent *Jewish Study Bible* (2004). But for the most part the significance of the divine 'Here I am!' and its relationship to Isaiah 6, has been missed. The most obvious reason is that it is too anthropomorphic. It is well known that the Aramaic Targum of Isaiah systematically avoids anything considered too anthropomorphic (Stenning 1949: xii; Chilton 1982: 48) and, as we saw, simply removed the divine 'Here I am' from all three passages. The same tendency can be observed elsewhere as, for example, in the textual transmission of a passage such as 63.9: in some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, it undoubtedly contains the words 'In all their afflictions, he was afflicted', but not in all and

certainly not in the Targum. Interpreters who singled out such anthropomorphisms for special discussion and development, like Altschuler and Luzzatto, were probably always rare.

The other factor in the situation is the tendency especially among patristic and mediaeval Christian commentators to interpret such passages christologically. This not only removes the theological problem, if there is one, but diverts attention from what is actually being said about the God of Israel and his relationship to his people, focusing instead on an entirely different narrative. The traditional christological interpretations, which are mostly based on Greek and Latin versions of the Bible and seem at first sight to have very little to do with the original Hebrew, have until recently been studiously ignored by biblical scholars, unlike the traditional rabbinic or midrashic interpretations, which have often been used to excellent effect by our Jewish colleagues. Today however nuances and associations in the text, noted in some of the old patristic works, are increasingly appreciated by scholars. There are two major new editions of the patristic commentaries, or at least selections from them, and a series of biblical commentaries that focus mainly on ancient, mediaeval and pre-modern interpretations.

3. Conclusion

So I am going to end with an example of Christian midrash, where I think the full literary and theological significance of the divine 'Here I am', can be best appreciated. What is interesting about Cyril of Alexandria's christological interpretation is that he actually traces a literary progression through the three passages: from the first, where Jesus announces his arrival (his *parousia*)—you remember that the Greek text says it was like the coming of spring (52.6)—to the third, where one final time he says, his hands outstretched on the cross: 'Here I am, Here I am' (65.1). We must remember that for Cyril this is still the divine 'Here I am!' It is still God speaking, albeit through his Son Jesus. So in that sense he has not strayed so far from the text as you might at first imagine.

But the other point about the progression from ch. 52 to ch. 65 is that it prompts the question, Is there a similar progression detectable in the Hebrew text as well? There is not time to go into that in detail here (cf. Beuken 1991). There is certainly a progression in the story of the Servant of Lord from ch. 42 to ch. 53, and in a paper I read to the SOTS some years ago I tried to show that there is a parallel progression in the 'story' of the daughter of Zion in these chapters, from her first appearance in ch. 40 to the scene of maternal bliss in ch. 66 (see Chapter 18). Here let me just point out that the impassioned communal prayer in chs. 63 and 64, and the divine

response to it in ch. 65, in which the final and most developed 'Here I am' passage appears, seem to me in many ways to raise the level of theological discourse to a higher plane, if not the highest level in the whole book, which can be followed only by the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, and a new Jerusalem.

It is extraordinary that the significance of these expressions, unique to the book of Isaiah, and derived like others from the prophet's vision in ch. 6, has so rarely been appreciated. I singled out Matthew Henry, Douglas Jones and Ben Sommer in the Jewish Study Bible as conspicuous exceptions, and there is one other partial exception. Claus Westermann in his much used commentary had nothing whatever to say on two of our three passages or on the Amen. But on the middle passage (58.9), for some reason, he goes further than anyone else. Westermann, a Christian, quoting Martin Buber, a Jew, describes the divine 'Here am I' as nothing less than 'a definition of salvation . . . not described as a state of bliss, but as the constancy of the dialogical relationship between humanity and God' (Westermann 1969: 339). Perhaps the metaphor is best understood as one of friendship. You remember that Altschuler and Luzzatto described God's gesture in ch. 65 as 'like someone waving to a friend'. Abraham is called God's friend in the Bible (Isa. 41.8; Jas 2.23) and in the Qur'an (4.125). On Sinai God spoke to Moses 'face to face, like someone talking to a friend' (Exod. 33.11). This is the type of imagery used by the philosopher Sally McFague in her *Metaphorical Theology*: 'God is the friend who makes sacrifices on our behalf' (McFague 1982: 186). However that may be, I hope that, if I've done nothing else this evening, at least I've made it hard for you to think of Isaiah's 'Here I am. Send me!' at the beginning of the book, without giving some thought to the author's attempt to comfort his people at the end, by representing God as reciprocating in a uniquely dramatic way.

Bibliography

- Berlin, Adele, and Marc Zvi Brettler (eds.)
 2004 *Jewish Study Bible: Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Beuken, W.A.M.
 1991 'Isaiah Chapters 65–66: Trito-Isaiah and the Closure of the Book of Isaiah', in J.A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume: Leuven, 1989* (VTSup, 43; Leiden: E.J. Brill): 204–21.
- Bonnard, P.E.
 1972 *Le second Isaïe, son disciple et leurs éditeurs: Isaïe 40–66 [traduit du hébreu]* (EBib; Paris: J. Gabalda).
- Brueggemann, Walter
 1998 *Isaiah* (Westminster Bible Companion; Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press).

- Cheyne, T.K.
 1895 *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah: With an Appendix Containing the Undoubted Portions of the Two Chief Prophetic Writers in a Translation* (London: A. & C. Black).
- Childs, Brevard S.
 2001 *Isaiah* (Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press).
- Chilton, Bruce D.
 1982 *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Povenience of the Isaiah Targum* (JSOTSup, 23; Sheffield: JSOT Press).
- Duhm, Bernhard
 1914 *Das Buch Jesaia* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 3rd edn).
- Elbogen, Ismar
 1993 *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America). German original, 1913.
- Elliott, Mark W. (ed.)
 2007 *Isaiah 40–66* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament, 11; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press).
- Henry, Matthew
 1960 *Commentary on the Whole Bible in One Volume : Genesis to Revelation*, ed. Leslie F. Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan).
- Ibn Ezra
 1877 *The Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah*, ed. M. Friedländer (London Society of Hebrew Literature).
- Jones, D.R.
 1962 'Isaiah II and III', in Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson, rev. edn).
- Lowth, Robert
 1857 *Isaiah: A New Translation with a Preliminary Dissertation and Notes, Critical, Philolological and Explanatory* (London: J. Nichols, 15th edn).
- Luther, Martin
 1969a *Luther's Works, XVI, Lectures on Isaiah Chapters 1–39*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St Louis: Concordia).
 1969b *Luther's Works, XVII, Lectures on Isaiah Chapters 40–66*, ed. H.C. Oswald (St Louis: Concordia).
- Maimonides, Moses
 1956 *The Guide for the Perplexed*, ed. M. Friedländer (New York: Dover, 2nd edn).
- McFague, Sallie
 1982 *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (London: SCM Press).
- McLaughlin, J.L.
 1994 'Their Hearts Were Hardened: The Use of Isaiah 6.9-10 in the Book of Isaiah', *Bib* 75: 1-25.
- Oswalt, John N.
 1998 *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- Rendtorff, Rolf
 1993 'Isaiah 6 in the Framework of the Composition of the Book', in Rolf Rendtorff, *Canon and Theology: Overtures to an Old Testament Theology* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Minneapolis: Fortress Press): 171-80.

Sawyer, John F.A.

1986 *Isaiah: Volume II* (Daily Study Bible; Edinburgh: St Andrew Press; Philadelphia: Westminster Press).

1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Seitz, Christopher R.

1990 'The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah', *JBL* 109: 229-47.

Sommer, Benjamin D.

1998 *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Contraversions; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press).

2004 'Isaiah', in Berlin and Brettler 2004: 780-916.

Spinks, Bryan D.

1991 *The Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Stenning, J.F. (ed.)

1949 *The Targum of Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Stuhlmueeller, Carroll

1989 'Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah', in Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy (eds.), *The New Jerome Bible Commentary* (London: Prentice-Hall International).

Tull, Patricia K.

2006 'One Book, Many Voices: Conceiving of Isaiah's Polyphonic Message', in Claire Mathews and Patricia K. Tull (eds.), *As Those Who Are Taught: The Interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX to the SBL* (SBL Symposium Series, 27; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature): 279-314.

Uffenheimer, B.

1971 'The Consecration of Isaiah in Rabbinic Exegesis', *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 22: 234-46.

Westermann, Claus

1969 *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).

Whybray, R.N.

1975 *Isaiah 40-66* (NCB; London: Oliphants).

Wilken, Robert L.

2007 *Isaiah Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Church's Bible; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).

Williamson, H.G.M.

1994 *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

21

READING ISAIAH IN THE CONTEXT OF DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT*

The book of Isaiah, known to Christians as the 'Fifth Gospel', has played a unique role in the development of doctrine and liturgy. A glance at the pages of quotations from Isaiah listed in the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (1953) will illustrate the extent of Isaiah's influence on English literature and on Western European culture in general: 'swords into ploughshares', 'the wolf dwelling with the lamb', 'the desert blossoming like the rose', 'a voice crying in the wilderness', 'a light to the nations', 'a man of sorrows', 'good news to the poor' and 'a new heaven and a new earth' are only a few of the best known. Isaiah's contribution to the language and imagery of the cult of the Virgin Mary, late mediaeval passion iconography and anti-Semitism, as well as in more recent times to Christian feminism and liberation theology, has been studied elsewhere (Sawyer 1996). Isaiah has had a significant role to play in the history of Judaism as well, not least in the history of Zionism (see Chapter 23).

It is the aim of this paper to consider the texts and images from Isaiah that have been important in the context of Christian and Jewish beliefs and practices associated with death and mourning. I shall begin with images of death and life after death, and then look at some of the texts that have been used by mourners in funeral services, epitaphs and elsewhere. The list is not exhaustive by any means, but will serve to illustrate in general how successfully sacred texts can be used to express the hopes and beliefs of a community living in a world very different from that of the texts' original authors and, in particular, how rich a source Isaiah has been in this context as in others.

* This paper was originally published in J.G. Davies (ed.), *Ritual and Remembrance: Responses to Death in Human Societies* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp.86-102.

1. *Images of Death in the Book of Isaiah*

The death of kings gives the first part of the book (chs. 1–39) its overall structure. It is striking that, instead of a phrase like ‘in the year when King Ahaz came to the throne’ (cf. 2 Kgs 15.1; 16.1; 18.1; 21.1; 22.1), a more ominous formula referring to the death of the previous king is chosen twice; this is unique to Isaiah and must be significant. The first occasion is the date of Isaiah’s famous vision in 6.1: ‘In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up . . .’ The death of a king is here cited both as a watershed in the history of Jerusalem and as a turning point in the life of the prophet. The reign of King Uzziah (787–736 BCE) had been long, peaceful and prosperous but marred by a widening gap between rich and poor and countless instances of social injustice and oppression such as those described and denounced in chs. 1–5:

How the faithful city has become a harlot,
she that was full of justice! (1.21).
What do you mean by crushing my people,
by grinding the face of the poor? (3.15).
Woe to those who join house to house,
who add field to field . . .
who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
and deprive the innocent of their rights! (5.8, 23).

Uzziah’s death marks the beginning of a period of instability, during which repeated invasions by Assyrian armies led ultimately to the complete destruction of almost every city in the region (cf. Isa. 36.1). Scenes of death and destruction abound, for example, ‘cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is utterly desolate’ (6.11). ‘The year that King Uzziah died’ was also the year in which the prophet had his vision of the heavenly court and heard the seraphim singing the *Sanctus* (‘Holy, Holy, Holy’; 6.3). It was then that he received his commission to preach divine judgment to his people, interpreting the disintegration of the proud hierarchies of Israel and Judah under King Ahaz (736–725 BCE) as the punishment they deserved. He described Assyria as the rod used by Yhwh to beat his godless people (10.5; cf. Prov. 13.24; 26.3). The other occurrence of the ‘royal death’ formula is in 14.28, where it again symbolizes a significant change, this time from the reign of the wicked Ahaz who ‘did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord’ (cf. 2 Kgs 16.2) to what turned out to be the more glorious reign of King Hezekiah (725–699 BCE) who ‘did what was right in the eyes of the Lord’ (2 Kgs 18.3).

Near the end of the first part of the book, however, there are two other, more spectacular images of death, which have made a deep impression on Christian tradition and which prepare the way for the ‘chapters of consola-

tion' beginning 'Comfort, comfort my people, says your God' (40.1). The first comes in the story of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 BCE. It is told three times in the Bible (2 Kgs 18.13–19.37; 2 Chronicles 32; Isaiah 36–37), and immortalized in Byron's poem 'The Destruction of Sennacherib', beginning

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming with purple and gold

It is the story of Jerusalem's miraculous escape, alone of all the cities of Judah, and of the total destruction of the Assyrian army. The prophet Isaiah, summoned to assist the king as he confronted the Assyrian army, had compared Jerusalem to a young woman bravely dismissing a suitor with a toss of her head (37.22) and, in language reminiscent of earlier Zion faith (cf. 2.3; 7.3), had prophesied that 'a band of survivors' would escape from the besieged city (37.32). In the event the focus is not on the escape of Jerusalem but on the dramatic end of Sennacherib and his army.

The biblical account, in typically economic style, tells of two spectacular scenes of horror. The first is one verse long: 'And the angel of the Lord went forth, and slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians; and when morning came, they were all corpses' (37.36). The implication is that the whole army died in their sleep without a blow being struck. The 'angel of the Lord' is reminiscent of the 'destroyer' in the exodus story (Exod. 12.23), and Herodotus, Josephus, Jerome and others have tried to explain the fate of the Assyrian army by reference to a plague. Byron fills in the details:

Like the leaves of the forest when autumn has blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown . . .
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved and forever grew still . . .
And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail,
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown . . .
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

The second scene is almost as gruesome as the first, although again the biblical account leaves almost everything to the imagination (37.38). It tells how Sennacherib himself, having somehow escaped the fate of his army, returned home to Nineveh. There he was assassinated at the hands of his two sons while he was worshipping in the temple of his god: 'and it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adram-melech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.'

Modern scholarship questions whether these events have any basis in history at all (Clements 1980), and, as it happens, we have Sennacherib's own version of the siege of Jerusalem in 701 BCE, in which he makes no mention of it (*ANET*, 288).

Whatever actually happened, it appears that Jerusalem, alone of all the cities of Judah, survived the Assyrian invasions, and the story of its survival, embellished with such gruesome images of death, is recounted at this point in the book of Isaiah to round off the catastrophic story of eighth-century crime and punishment. In subsequent chapters Jerusalem is told that 'her warfare is ended, her iniquity pardoned' (40.2), and she is exhorted to 'awake' (52.1), 'break forth into singing' (54.1), 'fear not' (54.4) and 'arise, shine for your light is come' (60.1).

No doubt readers of Byron's poem, which is dated 19 February 1815, used these dramatic images to celebrate the end of Napoleonic power at Waterloo later that year (McGann 1981: 472). There is also a painting by Rubens of the subject in the Alte Pinakotek in Munich, painted in about 1616. But in his version of the story, very similar to his *Conversion of St Paul*, painted at about the same time, the Assyrians are still very much alive: 'a wild and raging tumult of flight caused by heavenly apparitions, with men, mostly mounted, fighting against an unearthly enemy; even the horses are beside themselves, and over the whole there pour streams of light and night' (Burckhardt 1950: 84). It is noteworthy that these two paintings were produced before the beginning of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) and are in striking contrast to his later and better-known comment on the horrors of war, *The Allegory of War*, in the Pitti Palace in Florence, dated 1638 (Burckhardt 1950: 113).

The other image of death at the end of the first part of the book of Isaiah comes in the story of Hezekiah's 'near-death experience' or, to use the biblical phrase, 'sickness unto death' (Isa. 38.1 AV). In a graphic poem, Hezekiah celebrates his unexpected and miraculous recovery from illness as though he had returned from the dead. The poem, reminiscent of some of the Psalms (e.g. 6; 13; 88), found its way into the Christian Psalter, where it is known as the 'Hezekiah Canticle', regularly sung, according to some liturgical traditions, both monastic and secular, at Lauds. It contains some interesting details picked out by preachers, manuscript illuminators and other commentators.

The first line, which gives the canticle its Latin title (*Ego dixi in dimidio dierum*) is about the youth of the king:

I thought that, halfway through my life, I was going to the gates of hell:
and that I had been deprived of the rest of my years.

Death at any age is tragic, but death ‘halfway through life’ is particularly sad. The Latin means literally ‘at half my (allotted) days’, reminiscent perhaps of the familiar words of Ps. 90.10, where our allotted years are ‘three-score and ten’. In fact, Hezekiah was miraculously cured and fifteen years added to his life (38.5). By contrast, the untimely death in battle of one of his successors, Josiah (640–609 BCE), at the age of 31 was interpreted as being due to God’s mercy, in that it saved him from witnessing the disasters that were shortly to befall his country (2 Kgs 22.20). We shall look later at a text from Isaiah (57.1-2) in which this view of death is expressed. Ben Sira’s well-known comments on death have a similar ambivalence: death is a source of bitterness to someone who is ‘at peace among his possessions’, but welcomed by someone ‘in need and failing in strength’ (Ecclus 41.1-2).

Hezekiah’s prayer also contains some vivid images of death, which inspired the illuminator of the St Alban’s Psalter to show death as a monster lurking beside Hezekiah’s feet. He also singled out a reference to Hezekiah’s failing eyesight (‘my eyes are weary with looking upward’, v. 14) as having some special significance in this context. The fear of death in terms of never ‘seeing the Lord again’ or ‘looking upon another human being’ comes at the beginning of the prayer (v. 11). This link between human life and sight occurs elsewhere in the Bible, for example, at the end of Psalm 17 and in Jonah’s prayer from the bottom of the sea (Jon. 2.4).

But it is what Hezekiah says about Sheol, the biblical Hebrew name for the place where the dead lead a colourless and shadowy existence, that is most often quoted in discussions of biblical views of death. The nature and finality of death are expressed in two ways. First, the image of ‘the gates of hell’ (see Job 38.17; Ps. 9.13; Jon. 2.6) compares dying to being locked up in a prison. Some modern English versions of the text such as the RSV and the NEB make a minor change in the punctuation of the Hebrew to heighten the effect: ‘I am consigned to the gates of hell for the rest of my years’. Sheol is also a place where there can be no communication with God, and therefore a place where there can be no hope:

For Sheol cannot thank you,
death cannot praise you;
those who go down to the pit
cannot hope for your faithfulness (Isa. 38.18).

Death according to this belief is less to do with physical decay and departing from this life than with being cut off from God. The mention of God’s faithfulness suggests an allusion to the notion of a covenant between God and his faithful servants, although the term itself is not actually used here. Elsewhere in Isaiah there is talk of a ‘covenant with death . . . an agreement with Sheol’ by which God’s enemies, by their lies and falsehood, were ‘in

league with death' and thought they could escape (28.15, 18). Wilfred Owen uses this image to devastating effect, taken up by Benjamin Britten in the *War Requiem* (Cross 1994: 141-51):

Out there, we've walked quite friendly up to Death;
Sat down and eaten with him, cool and bland . . .
We whistled while he shaved us with his scythe.
Oh, Death was never enemy of ours!
We laughed at him, we leagued with him, old chum.

But the two covenants or 'leagues', one with God and the other with Death, are mutually exclusive.

Another celebrated Isaianic description of Sheol appears in ch. 14. In a taunting, ironic lament the author portrays the king of Babylon arriving in Sheol, in images more reminiscent of Homer or Virgil or Dante than of any biblical parallel. His arrival stirs up some excitement among the inhabitants of Sheol. The ghosts of former world leaders, some apparently still on their thrones, stand up to greet him: 'You too have become as weak as we are, you have become like us!' Their insubstantial, shadowy, colourless existence in Sheol is set against their former power and regal splendour. It was from this chapter that Milton derived some of his inspiration for the description of the fall of Satan, 'hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky', at the beginning of *Paradise Lost* (Book II, line 45):

How you are fallen from heaven,
O Day Star [Latin *lucifer*], son of Dawn!
. . . you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven;
. . . I will make myself like the Most High,
But you have been brought down to Sheol,
to the depths of the pit (Isa. 14.12-15).

The second part of the lament focuses on this world and the fate of the dead body of the king of Babylon, not placed in a royal tomb like all the other kings of the nations but lying with other corpses, unburied, 'trodden under foot', on 'a bed of maggots . . . with worms as a coverlet' (v. 11).

This brings us to one final example of Isaiah's contribution to Jewish and Christian eschatology, which comes in the very last verse of the book: 'And they shall go out and look at the corpses of the people that have rebelled against me: their worm shall not die, their fire shall not go out, and all humankind will be sickened at the sight of them [*erunt usque ad satietatem visionis*]' (Isa. 66.24). According to the Jewish liturgical tradition, when Isa. 66.24 is read at public worship, the immediately preceding verses (22, 23), with their reference to 'the new heavens and the new earth', are repeated so as to avoid ending on such an ugly and frightening note.

The specific mention of unquenchable fire makes this passage a much-used scriptural proof-text for the notion of hellfire, elaborately developed

in Christian (and also, incidentally, Islamic) tradition. It is alluded to in the Greek and Latin versions of Ecclesiasticus (Sirach): ‘Cultivate great humility, since the punishment of the ungodly is fire and worms’ (7.17). According to Mark’s Gospel, it was used by Jesus in a description of hell (Greek *gehenna*) (Mk 9.47-48), and the book of Revelation, which is heavily dependent on Isaiah, describes the fate of the wicked in terms of a ‘lake burning with fire and sulphur’ (21.8; cf. 1.20; 20.10). The verse is quoted frequently in patristic and mediaeval discussions of hell. St Ambrose, on the other hand, in an entirely different use of the text, quotes it to comfort the bereaved with the hope of the resurrection of the body: if the worm of sinners does not die, he argues, how shall the flesh of the just perish (*FC*, XXII, 235)? This brings us to the second part of our survey.

2. *Isaiah and Mourning*

Isaiah 25 and 26 (part of what is commonly known today as the ‘Isaiah Apocalypse’) have always been a particularly rich source for epitaphs and texts for funeral orations. Martin Luther, for example, lists four passages from Isaiah among his ‘biblical texts suitable for epitaphs’ (Luther 1965: LIII, 328-29); all but one are from these chapters. The first focuses on victory over death: ‘He will swallow up death for ever’ (25.7-9), a passage quoted by Paul in his discourse on resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. From there it found its way, via the Anglican Order for the Burial of the Dead, into Handel’s *Messiah*. It also appears in Brahms’s *German Requiem*.

Isaiah was a particular favourite of St Ambrose, bishop of Milan (c. 339–397). According to Augustine, when he asked the bishop for advice on vacation reading, the bishop prescribed Isaiah (*Confessions* 9.5). A number of funeral orations delivered by Ambrose in Milan Cathedral at the end of the fourth century provide us with a useful case study. He used Luther’s first Isaianic epitaph from Isaiah 25 to good effect on the occasion of the funeral of his brother Satyrus in 378. In particular, by stressing the second verse, he turns the listeners’ attention to the faith that survives death: ‘It will be said on that day, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him that he might save us . . .”’ (*FC*, XXII, 224-25). The passage is still widely used as one of the readings at masses for the dead according to the *New Sunday Missal* (985), the *Lectionary* (942, 960, 964, 1001) and the *Alternative Service Book* (331-32), and it provides the last words of the Jewish ‘prayer in the house of mourning’, which I shall discuss later.

Luther’s other two Isaianic epitaphs both come from Isaiah 26. One refers to the resurrection of the dead (‘thy dead shall live . . .’; 26.19), and the other to hiding from the wrath of God (26.20). Ambrose also uses these verses in the funeral address just referred to (*FC*, XXII, 226-27). The first speaks of the divine dew that makes our bodies grow again after we die:

‘Awake and sing for joy, you who dwell in the dust! Your dew is the dew of light . . .’ The second verse provides him with scriptural authority for his belief that there are hidden chambers where the redeemed can hide safely until the judgment is past—a notion expressed more graphically elsewhere in Isaiah:

People shall go into caves in the rocks
and holes in the ground
to escape the terror of the Lord
and the glory of his majesty
when he rises to terrify the earth (2.19).

Another verse from ch. 26, containing the word ‘peace’ repeated twice and traditionally translated into English ‘peace, perfect peace’ (Isa. 26.3), provided the only text from Isaiah included in a collection of recommended epitaphs published in 1897 by J. Braithwaite & Son, a firm of undertakers, in Derby. It was also the inspiration for a hymn once popular at funerals: ‘Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin’. The author, Dr Edward Bickersteth (1825–1906), is said to have written it in a few minutes as he sat at the bedside of a dying friend and then recited it to him. It was also sung at the funeral of the great Scottish theologian and orientalist William Robertson Smith in 1894 (Moffatt 1935: 152).

Isaiah 26.3 was not one of Luther’s four Isaianic epitaphs, but his fourth does express a similar view of death: ‘The righteous perish . . . they are taken away from the evil to come. They shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds’ (57.1-2). The Latin of this passage contains the words *justus perit*, *pax* and *requiescat*, all very common in funerary inscriptions. The rest of Isa. 26.3 appears as an epitaph in a fresco by Raphael (1483–1520). This was commissioned by the papal protonotary and humanist Johannes Goritz in 1510 to overlook his tomb in the Church of Sant’Agostino in Rome (Ettlinger and Ettlinger 1987: 121–23, Pls. 117, 118). It shows Isaiah displaying a scroll with the first part of 26.2-3: ‘Open the gates that a righteous nation which keeps faith may enter’. Allusions to the themes discussed above in connection with the Hezekiah Canticle are obvious, although the papal official’s self-righteousness gives the words *goy šaddiq*, ‘righteous Gentile’ a different slant. The inscription, which is in Hebrew letters, surprisingly stops just before the twice-repeated word *shalom*, ‘peace, perfect peace’, which as we have just seen figures elsewhere in funeral traditions.

On a lighter note, it is reported that a gravestone in memory of one Obadiah Wilkinson and his wife Ruth bears an epitaph taken from 40.2: ‘Their warfare is ended’ (Simpson 1986: 59). The word ‘warfare’ (RSV ‘service’) was no doubt intended to refer, as in the original Hebrew, to this life as time spent in the service of God. Rather thoughtlessly applied to the way a

couple had spent their married life together, it cannot help suggesting something rather different!

Isaiah was as much 'prophet of the passion' as of the nativity, especially in late mediaeval iconography, and various texts and images are regularly cited in association with the death of Christ. Chapter 53 provides some of the most common. The statue of Isaiah by the French sculptor Claus Sluter, completed between 1380 and 1400, is a famous example. On the hexagonal base of what was probably once a large crucifix over a fountain in Dijon visited by pilgrims are represented six prophets, each holding a scroll with a verse about Christ's suffering. Isaiah's is 'Like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, he opened not his mouth' (53.7). Other 'epitaphs' for Jesus from the same chapter in Isaiah include the following: 'they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death' (53.9) . . . 'he poured out his soul to death' (53.12).

One of the most strikingly original features of feminist exegete Phyllis Trible's *Texts of Terror* is her appropriation of two passages from the same chapter as epitaphs for women. To Hagar, the rejected Egyptian slave woman, she gives the epitaph 'She was wounded for our transgressions; she was bruised for our iniquities' (Isa. 53.5; Trible 1984: 8), while to Tamar, princess of Judah and victim of rape, she applies the words 'A woman of sorrows and acquainted with grief' (Isa. 53.3; Trible 1984: 36).

Another messianic text used in this way comes from Isa. 11.10, a passage celebrating the final victory of 'the root of Jesse'. It ends with the words 'And his resting place [Latin *sepulcrum*] will be glorious'. This is later applied, like 53.9, to the tomb of the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea, where Christ was buried, and probably to the later veneration of the Holy Sepulchre as a shrine (Henry 1987: 102).

The apocryphal legend of the martyrdom of Isaiah, which links his death, in various grisly ways, with a tree, is also cited in mediaeval literature and iconography as a type of Christ's death on the 'tree' of the cross (Bernheimer 1952: 19-37). The wine-press in Isaiah 63, with the 'epitaph' *torcular calcavi solus* ('I trod the wine-press alone'), is another frequent image of Christ's saving death, the woodwork of the press echoing the wood of the cross, and the sacramental juice of the grapes, the blood of Christ flowing into a chalice beneath (Marrow 1979: 83; Schiller 1972: 228ff.). Even the wood of the 'tree of Jesse' (cf. 11.1), originally intended to celebrate the Davidic ancestry of Christ, often turns into a cross, or has a cross built out of it (Schiller 1972: 133ff.).

The frequent messianic references in Isaiah are occasionally used to dramatic effect in the context of death as well as in reference to messianism. Ambrose uses one such text to prove to mourners that there is nothing wrong with weeping and grief (*FC*, XXII, 166). He argues that Jesus wept

and experienced real grief, because he was human as well as divine. This he proves by reference to Isa. 9.6 ('For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given'), interpreting the two halves of the verse as referring to the two natures of Christ. He was both 'born' (of the Father and therefore divine), and 'given' (by the Virgin and therefore human). Without commenting on this highly patriarchal view of childbirth, it is to be noted that the use of Isa. 9.6 in this context is not to make a theological point concerning the true humanity of Christ. It was to apply what we must suppose was, both for the congregation and the preacher, familiar and much-loved language, in such a way as to bring comfort to the bereaved—a use of Isaiah not so different from the way the same verse is used in Handel's *Messiah*.

An intriguing example of the use of another messianic text from one of Isaiah's visions of a messianic age appears, as a kind of epitaph, in the mausoleum built by Queen Victoria for herself and her consort at Frogmore near Windsor Castle. Four statues surround the central sarcophagus on which the queen and consort lie. Isaiah is one of the four, the others being David, Solomon and Daniel. The statue of Isaiah is by Herman Hultzsck, of Dresden, working in Rome from a fresco by Raphael (Prince Albert's favourite artist) in Santa Maria della Pace. The texts on the statues of David, Solomon and Daniel are unproblematic. These deal with sunrise (2 Sam. 23.4), royal wisdom (1 Kgs 3.11) and the resurrection of the dead (Dan. 12.3), respectively, and are entirely appropriate. The Isaiah text is, 'But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand' (32.8). The application of messianic language from Isaiah to the monarch is not without parallel; the coronation service, for example, cites 11.2 at the anointing with oil: 'the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom . . .' But the choice of the Isaiah text at Frogmore, removed from its messianic context, is certainly odd. The queen, it is known, supervised every detail: could it be a reference to her favourite prime minister? Or did she know of a sermon preached on this text by John Donne in the presence of King Charles I in 1628: 'the very forme of the office of a king is Liberality, that is Providence, and Protection and Possession and Peace and Justice shed upon all' (Simpson and Potter 1956: 243).

Other Isaiah texts appear in Brahms's strikingly original *German Requiem*. This contains settings of three more texts from Isaiah, in addition to one of the passages already mentioned (25.8). The first is his magnificent choral setting of the words of 1 Pet. 1.24, citing Isa. 40.6-8. The gentle, wistful acceptance of human transitoriness ('All flesh is as grass . . .'), repeated twice, with Jas 5.7 ('Be patient therefore . . .') inserted between the two choruses, is answered by the triumphant statement of faith: 'But the word of the Lord stands forever'. By contrast, a deeply pessimistic novel by the distinguished Argentinian novelist Eduardo Mallea (1903-1982) takes its title *Todo verdor perecerá* ('all the verdure will perish') from Isa. 15.6.

The allusion to the more familiar words of 40.8 which I have just mentioned is unmistakable, but in the text so poignantly used by Mallea, there is no trace of the hope expressed in the second half of the verse. Brahms follows the 'word of God' chorus from 40.8 with Isa. 35.10 ('... sorrow and sighing shall flee away'). This was a passage familiar to Brahms from its popularity as an Advent or Christmas reading, and it provides a beautiful gloss on the impersonal theological statement preceding it. The fourth text from Isaiah set to music by Brahms in his *Requiem* is one of the few biblical passages in which God is compared to a mother (66.13).

This brings us to our final three examples from Jewish tradition. The first comes from the concluding paragraph of the 'Prayer in the house of mourning' (Singer 1892: 324):

As those who are comforted by their mother, so will I comfort you: in Jerusalem you will be comforted (66.13). Your sun shall not set again, and your moon shall not be withdrawn: the Lord shall be your everlasting light and your time of mourning shall be over (60.20). He will swallow up death for ever. The Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; and the reproach of his people he shall remove from the whole earth. The Lord has spoken (25.8).

It is entirely composed of passages from Isaiah. Only the 'God as mother' passage, just mentioned, requires comment. It is one of the few passages in Scripture in which female imagery is applied to God (Gen. 1.2, 26-27; Deut. 32.11, 18; Ps. 131.2; Isa. 31.5; 42.14; 45.10; 46.3; 49.14; 66.13; cf. Tribble 1978: 50-56; Ackerman 1992: 166-68). Of these a significant proportion are in the book of Isaiah. The concentration of female images of Zion and her children alongside those of God as mother is a striking feature of these chapters of Isaiah (see Chapter 18) and introduces a most effective additional dimension to language designed to bring comfort to the bereaved.

Second, comfort for a community mourning the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem is offered in seven *haftarot* (readings from the Prophets) from Isaiah 40-66: 40.1-26; 49.14-51.3; 54.11-55.5; 51.12-52.12; 54.1-10; 60.1-22; 61.10-63.9. These are known as the 'Haftarot of Consolation' or 'Comfort' (Hebrew *neḥāmāh*) from the first words of ch. 40: 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people'. They are prescribed to be read at public worship on the seven Sabbaths after the Fast on the Ninth of Ab (late summer), and in the synagogue are among the best-known and best-loved portions of Hebrew Scripture.

Finally, it is appropriate that it should be Isaiah who provided the name given to Yad VaShem, the Holocaust Memorial, established on the outskirts of Jerusalem in 1953. It means 'a monument and a name' and in its original context (Isa. 56.5) is applied to eunuchs who were to have a memorial 'better than sons and daughters . . . an everlasting name which shall never be destroyed'. There is an almost uncanny poignancy in the application of

the phrase, first, to efforts in general to ensure the survival of the Jewish people, and then finally to the massive international operation to collect and preserve archival material about the six million victims of Nazi persecution.

Bibliography

- Ackerman, Susan
 1992 'Isaiah', in Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (eds.), *The Women's Bible Commentary* (London: SPCK): 161-68.
- Bernheimer, R.
 1952 'The Martyrdom of Isaiah', *Art Bulletin* 34.1: 19-37.
- Burckhardt, Jacob
 1950 *Recollections of Rubens* (New York: Phaidon).
- Clements, Ronald E.
 1980 *Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem: A Study of the Interpretation of Prophecy in the Old Testament* (JSOTSup, 13; Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield).
- Cross, Eric
 1994 'Death in War: Britten and the *War Requiem*', in J.G. Davies (ed.), *Ritual and Remembrance: Responses to Death in Human Societies* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 124-51.
- Ettlinger, Leopold D., and Helen S. Ettlinger
 1987 *Raphael* (Oxford: Phaidon).
- Gombrich, E.H.
 1972 *The Story of Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 12th edn).
- Henry, Avril (ed.)
 1987 *Biblia pauperum: A Facsimile and Edition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
- Luther, Martin
 1965 *Luther's Works*, LIII, *Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- McGann, Jerome J. (ed.)
 1981 *Lord Byron: The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press): vol. 3.
- Mallea, Eduardo
 1968 *Todo verdor perecerá*, ed. D.L. Shaw (Oxford: Pergamon Press).
- Marrow, James H.
 1979 *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Ars neerlandica, 1; Kortrijk, Belgium: Van Ghemmert).
- Moffatt, James
 1935 *A Handbook to the Church Hymnary, with Supplement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
 1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Schiller, Gertrud

1972 *Iconography of Christian Art*, II, *The Passion of Jesus Christ* (London: Lund Humphries).

Simpson, Evelyn M., and George R. Potter (eds.)

1956 *The Sermons of John Donne* (Berkeley: University of California Press): vol. 8.

Simpson, James A.

1986 *Holy Wit* (Edinburgh: G. Wright).

Singer, S.

1892 *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode).

Trible, Phyllis

1978 *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Overtures to Biblical Theology, 2; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).

1984 *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to Biblical Theology, 13; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).

ISAIAH AND THE JEWS:
SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE CHURCH'S USE OF THE BIBLE*

In the story of Isaiah's role in the history of Christianity, 'Isaiah and the Jews' is certain to be one of the major themes (Sawyer 1996). Nowhere is this more evident than in literature written by Christians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the *prediche forzate*, 'conversionist sermons' (Roth 1946: 315-17; Milano 1952), preached by official *predicatori agli Ebrei* to Jews forcibly assembled in churches on the Sabbath. The custom was formally instituted by Pope Gregory XIII in edicts of 1577 and 1584 and continued for the best part of three centuries until Pius IX put an end to it in 1847. Some of these sermons have survived, mostly in the vernacular but occasionally in Hebrew, often edited into a more literary form. This study of the use made of Isaiah in such a context is presented, with the greatest affection and respect, to David Clines, who has more than most helped to push back the boundaries of his discipline.

The reasons for Isaiah's unique role in this context are not hard to find. In the first place Christian writers and preachers have traditionally found in Isaiah many of their most popular proof-texts concerning such central doctrines as the Trinity, the incarnation, redemptive suffering and the Virgin Mary. The Immanuel prophecy in 7.14 and the Suffering Servant poem in ch. 53 are two of the most obvious examples. But from the very beginning Christian writers and preachers have found hundreds of others. In fact, Isaiah provided scriptural authority for most Christian beliefs, practices, ways of speaking and institutions long before the New Testament had become Scripture. For example, Clement, bishop of Rome (c. 90 CE), quoted Isa. 60.17 as his scriptural authority for bishops. Baptism (1.16;

* This paper was originally delivered in Rome in December 1998 at a meeting organized by SIDIC (Service International de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne) in collaboration with the Pontifical Biblical Institute. Research for it was partly funded by the Leverhulme Trust. It was first published in J. Cheryl Exum and H.G.M. Williamson (eds.), *Reading from Right to Left: Essays in Honour of David J.A. Clines* (JSOTSup, 373; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2004), pp.390-401.

12.3), the Eucharist (55.1) and the Sign of the Cross (5.26; 55.13) are in Isaiah too. The wolf dwelling with the lamb, swords into plowshares, the voice crying in the wilderness, the light to the nations, the man of sorrows, good news to the poor, the new heaven and a new earth, Immanuel, the key of David, a mighty God, the Prince of Peace, the very stuff that Christian discourse is made of, all comes from Isaiah. Jerome thought that Isaiah was more an evangelist than a prophet because ‘he describes all the mysteries of Christ so clearly that you would think he is composing a history of what has already happened rather than prophesying about what is to come’. Indeed, it is possible to tell virtually the whole story of the Gospel exclusively in the words of Isaiah (see Chapter 24).

Nor does this apply only to ancient writers. A modern Italian translation of the Bible, authorized by the Conferenza Episcopale Italiana (Rome, 1996), contains a list of ‘points for reflection’ and Isaiah is everywhere: for Christ as true God and true man there are seventeen references to Isaiah (e.g. 8.3; 28.16; 40.9; 42.1; 46.13; 49.1, 6, 10, 20), for the incarnation five (e.g. 16.1; 35.4; 53.8), for the Virgin Mary eight (e.g. 11.1; 45.8), including five for her perpetual virginity (e.g. 35.1, 2; 66.7) and one for the assumption (11.10), seven to the Mass (e.g. 19.19-20; 61.6; 66.19), as well as references to the Holy Spirit (11.2), the Trinity (61.1) and numerous other Christian beliefs and practices. The list is actually different from more ancient lists: for example, the tradition that 45.8 is about the Virgin Mary (see Chapter 17) is there, though the translation and footnote ignore it, while 6.3 (‘Holy, Holy, Holy . . .’), a favourite text in earlier discussions of the Trinity, is omitted. It would be interesting to know what criteria were used for selecting some traditions for their modernized list, and not others.

The second point to make is simply that Isaiah has always been a favourite text of Jews as well, since as far back as our sources go. Ben Sira praises him above all the other prophets (48.36). Among the Dead Sea Scrolls Isaiah is exceptionally prominent both in the biblical manuscripts and in the sectarian writings. In New Testament Judaism, this prophet is quoted more often than any other part of Scripture (except for Psalms), often by name. In rabbinic tradition he is compared to Moses because he communicated directly with God (*Leviticus Rabbah* 10). In the Jewish lectionary there are more *haftarot* (‘readings from the prophets’) from Isaiah than from any other book. Most of these readings come from chs. 40–66, including the famous ‘consolation readings’ prescribed to be read on the Sabbaths after the Ninth of Ab commemorating the destruction of Jerusalem. He is the ‘prophet of consolation’ (Babylonian Talmud *Hagigah* 14a).

An interesting example of Isaiah’s special place in the hearts of Jews is his role in modern Zionism. The early secular Zionist organization Bilu took its name from the four initials of the words ‘House of Jacob, come, let us go’ (Isa. 2.5). A cursory glance at the titles of journals, books and articles

published in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century illustrates what a key role Isaiah played in the history of modern Zionism. Abraham Mapu wrote a popular novel about Isaiah entitled *Ahabat Tzion* ('The Love of Zion'), published in Hebrew in 1853 and translated into many European languages. Dozens of place-names in the modern state of Israel are derived from Isaiah such as Rishon le-Tzion ('first to Zion'; 41.27), Shear Jashub ('a remnant will return'; 7.3), Nes Harim ('A banner on the mountains'; 18.3), Mevasseret Tzion ('O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion'; 40.9), Mesillat Tzion ('highway to Zion'; 11.16; 40.3; 49.11; 62.10) and Neveh Shalom ('a habitation of peace'; 32.8). The name of the national Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem Yad VaShem comes from Isaiah too (56.5), as do the '36 Just Men', the 'Lamed-Vav' (30.18), and the Haredim, a modern term for ultraorthodox Jews (66.5) (see Chapter 23).

So we have two separate religious traditions, equally devoted to the same text, equally informed and inspired by it, but disagreeing fundamentally on how to interpret it. There were bound to be clashes. Much of the literature produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was concerned to prove the truth of Christian doctrine by reference to traditional interpretations of Isaiah. Typical are two tractates written in Rome in the mid-seventeenth century by Joseph M. Ciantes, a Jewish convert to Christianity, and their influence beyond Rome can be seen in the fact that both were quickly translated into French. One is on the Trinity 'clearly proved by the testimonies of the ancient Hebrews' (1658), the other on the incarnation 'clearly defended by the most obvious teachings of the Jews against their own arguments', and a large proportion of both works is devoted to discussing the meaning of passages from Isaiah. The same applies to a tractate from the previous century on the 'Truth of the coming of the Messiah to the Jews' (1581) by Andrea del Monte, one of the most celebrated preachers to the Jews in Rome during the papacy of Gregory XIII. Formerly a distinguished rabbi known by his Jewish name Joseph Tzarfati, he had converted to Christianity in 1552. Again the book of Isaiah is the battleground on which the Christian convert tries to defeat the Jews.

But there is a third reason why Isaiah has been so central in Christian writings addressed to Jews. The vehement and repeated attacks by this prophet on his own people gave the church scriptural authority for much of the language of hatred and rejection directed by Christians at the Jews. Ironically, there is a Jewish tradition that Isaiah was too hard on his own people. According to a well-known midrash on Isaiah 6, the reason why Isaiah had his mouth burnt was because of the violent judgmental language against his own people that came from his lips (Ginzberg 1975: 612-13). Like other prophets, Isaiah directed some powerful attacks against the foreign nations, Babylon (chs. 13-14), Moab (chs. 15-16), Syria (ch. 17), Ethiopia (ch. 18) and Egypt (ch. 19) (cf. Jeremiah 46-51; Ezekiel 25-32; Amos

1-2). But much more significant are the ferocious insults and abuse directed at Judah, both by the eighth-century prophet in ch. 1 ('sinful nation . . . rulers of Sodom . . . people of Gomorrah . . .'), and, more subtly, in chs. 56-66, where internal disputes in Judah seem to have given rise to unusually bitter feelings (65.13-15; 66.1-5).

Isaiah thus gave the church scriptural authority to direct all manner of abusive language at the Jews. If their own prophet criticized them for their blindness (Isa. 6.9-10), their disbelief (65.2) and even the crime of deicide ('your hands are full of blood'; 1.15; cf. Mt. 27.25), how much more is the church justified in doing the same. When the church fathers wanted to warn the Jews of the terrible fate that awaits them if they persist in their foolish and stubborn ways, they quote some of the appallingly bitter invective with which the book of Isaiah concludes: 'Thus says the Lord God, "My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty . . . my servants shall sing for joy, but you shall cry out in pain . . .'" (65.13-14) . . . 'and they shall go out and look at the corpses of the people who have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be extinguished and they shall be an abhorrence to the whole human race' (66.24).

The sad history of the church's treatment of the Jews and in particular the almost unceasing flow of anti-Jewish polemic down the centuries, are well documented already. I might have given this paper the title 'The Church's Use of Scripture as an Instrument of Torture', after an interesting article on the conversionist sermons subtitled 'Un sottile tormento nella vita del ghetto di Roma: la predica coatta' (Milano 1952). What are we to make of it all? What exactly is going on when Isaiah is used in this way? Are there any arguments in defence of this kind of Christian interpretation of Isaiah, any excuses or extenuating circumstances? Are there any exceptions? Does the call to go back to the original Hebrew, behind Christian tradition, have any effect? Did it bring Jews and Christians together either at the time of the Reformation or in the age of enlightened historical criticism from the eighteenth century on? There are too many questions to discuss here. No doubt the recipient of this volume would have many more. But I would like to offer a few thoughts on some of them before drawing some conclusions on the place of this kind of material within biblical studies.

First, who is being addressed in the book of Isaiah, and in what language? Let us look at the language question first. The use of the original Hebrew by Christians in all contexts is extremely rare. Very few of the conversionist sermons were in Hebrew: they were almost always in the vernacular, that is to say, in the case of the ones I looked at in Rome, in Italian. The *predicatori agli ebrei* were certainly capable of preaching in Hebrew, and some Hebrew versions of their sermons have survived. Hebrew versions

also exist of some tracts, such as the one by Andrea del Monte referred to above, and there is a work by Giambattista Jona entitled 'Christian Doctrine Briefly Translated into the Hebrew Language' (Rome, 1658). But these are exceptional. Hebrew words and phrases are frequently cited, but the discussion of them is always driven by the traditional Greek or Latin or Italian versions.

Where the Hebrew script appears in Christian art, in paintings or on public monuments, these too are rare exceptions and we have to ask why. Were the reasons aesthetic or academic or apologetic? Was it ever, for instance, so that Jews could read it? There is a painting of the *Annunciation* by Giambattista Cima da Conegliano, for example, with the words of Isa. 7.14 carved in beautiful Hebrew characters along a wooden beam at the top of the picture. It was painted in Venice in 1485. Why the Hebrew? Would a Jew ever see it? Was the artist a Jewish convert: the name Conegliano does appear in lists of Jewish names (Humfrey 1983: 106-9). Then there is the Raphael fresco, painted in 1510 in the Church of Sant' Agostino, near the Piazza Navona in Rome. It has an inscription on it with the words of Isa. 26.3 in Hebrew. In this case it might have been simply because the scholarly humanist in whose honour the painting was done just wanted to show off his linguistic skills (Ettlinger and Ettlinger 1987: 121-23). Elsewhere the Hebrew script is represented as a meaningless scrawl, as in the case of Matthias Gruenewald's *Annunciation* (1512-15), where Isaiah himself holds a scroll in the background, while Mary is reading the text written beautifully and legibly in Latin: *Ecce virgo concipiet filium . . .* (7.14). In Konrad Witz's painting *Blind Synagogue* (fifteenth century), the meaningless hieroglyphics on the tables of the law are similarly intended to ridicule the Hebrew script of the Jews.

In the case of the inscription on the facade of the Church of San Gregorio a Ponte Quattro Capi in Rome, there is no doubt why it is in Hebrew and to whom it is addressed. It stands right next to the synagogue on Lungotevere dei Cenci, beside the old Jewish ghetto, and was for the Jews to read. They were, and still are, the only regular passers-by who know Hebrew. It says in the words of Isa. 65.3, in Hebrew and Latin: 'All day long I have stretched out my hands to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; a people who provoke me to my face continually' (65.2-3a). It is certainly addressed to the Jews, and it tells them quite plainly that the Christians' God is angry with them. Furthermore, it accompanies a fresco depicting the crucified Christ, whose 'hands stretched out' on the cross imply that it is Christ himself who is addressing the chilling words of Isaiah to the Jews. Originally built in 1729 under Pope Benedict XIII, the

church was refurbished in 1858 on the instructions of Pope Pius IX (Blunt 1982: 63).

Paul cites this verse in Romans 10, but he stops after the first sentence, making it more of an appeal to the audience to come to Christ than an angry rejection. There had been a large cross near one of the gates of the ghetto since mediaeval times, bearing this inscription on it. But it would be very interesting to know exactly what the nineteenth-century authorities hoped to achieve by preserving this ugly mediaeval tradition after the ghetto had been destroyed and the Jewish communities of Western Europe emancipated. This is an example that belongs to the present day, since Jews coming out of their synagogue are still confronted by these words—in Hebrew. Since the Second Vatican Council, efforts have been made to improve relations between the church and the Jewish people, and those responsible for the upkeep of the Church of San Gregorio recently discussed having the inscription removed. But members of the Jewish community were consulted, and they requested that it be retained as a piece of their history, a reminder of centuries of Christian anti-Semitism, of which the church is rightly ashamed now.

This brings us to the question of who is being addressed in Scripture. Much of the polemic in Isaiah is directed at the men and women of Judah, that is to say, Judaeans, the word from which modern European languages get their word ‘Jew’. The same applies of course to many passages in the New Testament, where Christians have deliberately and tendentiously used the word ‘Jews’ with predictable results. It is only in the last 30 or 40 years that efforts have been made by the churches to put this situation right and remove the implication that the people condemned in the Bible are the people we know nowadays as Jews. It has even been suggested that in some New Testament contexts the nonspecific word ‘people’ might be substituted for ‘Jews’ as a possible translation for the Greek word *ioudaioi*, and phrases like the reference to ‘Jews, infidels and Turks’ in a notorious Good Friday prayer have simply been abandoned as unacceptable. But in many editions of the Bible, some still in use, sections of Isaiah, such as ch. 65, which we have just been considering, are entitled ‘Isaiah condemns the Jews’ or the like. The official Italian version mentioned above, dated 1974, is a case in point: part of ch. 5 beginning ‘Guai a voi che aggiungete casa a casa’ is entitled, quite gratuitously, ‘Minacce contro gli Ebrei infedeli’.

Does going back to the original Hebrew of Isaiah make any difference? Luther’s famous interpretation of 7.14 is an excellent example of what actually happens. He has to admit that the Hebrew does not have the normal word for ‘virgin’; *almah* is simply a ‘young woman’, who may or may not be a virgin. The usual equivalent of Latin *virgo* and Greek *parthenos*

(‘virgin’) is *betulah* and that is not what the original Hebrew has. But Luther argues that in this context the young woman must be a virgin; otherwise it would not be a miracle. Normative Christian tradition takes precedence over any Hebrew original. I came across some very similar examples in a sermon preached by the Jewish convert Vitale di Medici to the Jews of Florence in the Church of Santa Croce in 1585. He quotes Scripture, especially Isaiah, very frequently in Hebrew, but this in no way affects his interpretation of the text. He argues that Isa. 12.3; 55.1 and 37.25, for example, which he quotes in Hebrew, all refer to Christian baptism, in one case even citing the Jewish Targum to prove it. Often he cites the Hebrew but clearly bases his interpretation on the Vulgate, where thoroughly Christian words, borrowed from Greek, like *cathedra* and *ecclesia* appear. What the Jews realized long ago, but what many of our Christian predecessors—scholars, preachers, leaders, bishops—seem to have been reluctant to acknowledge, is that texts have many meanings, not just one. But from the beginning the church chose to privilege the Greek and Latin versions, in preference to the original Hebrew.

Are there any examples of preachers and artists adopting a kinder or more enlightened attitude towards the Jews? There are plenty of comforting words in Isaiah, addressed to those same Judaeans. Were these ever interpreted by the church in such a way as to provide scriptural authority for a more positive approach to the Jews? There are certainly cases of individual popes and other church leaders taking action to prevent or alleviate Jewish suffering, especially in Rome. But was the ‘prophet of consolation’ ever cited to bring comfort to the Jews? Are any of the visions of future peace and justice ever interpreted to include the Jews? Paul seems to use a verse from Isaiah in this way in Rom. 11.26–27, although the original Hebrew is different: ‘all Israel will be saved: as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion [Hebrew ‘to’; LXX ‘for the sake of’]; he will banish ungodliness from Jacob [Hebrew ‘to those in Jacob who turn from transgression’]. This will be my covenant with them, when I take away their sins’ (59.20–21; 27.9).

It has been argued that some of the polemical language used by St Augustine against the Jews must be offset by his appeal to Christians to show love, kindness and humility towards them. Pope Gregory XIII, in his pronouncement on the *prediche forzate* in 1585, stipulated that the *predicatori agli ebrei* should tackle their task ‘without rancour or anger but with great charity and modesty’ (Milano 1952: 520). The preacher referred to above, Vitale di Medici, repeatedly addresses the Jews as *nostri cari e dilette fratelli*, ‘our dear and beloved brothers’. But such comments hardly match, let alone outweigh or excuse, the repeated references to the ignorance, blindness, stubbornness, insensitivity and stupidity of the Jews. In the preface to his

two published *Omellie fatte agli Ebrei di Firenze*, for example, the convert Medici thanks God for liberating him *dalla cecità giudaica*, ‘from Jewish blindness’, and explains that the sermons are written for them to read and understand ‘if they are not too stupid and insensitive to wake up from their sleep of ignorance, not to say, their treacherous obstinacy’ (*se non saranno però al tutto stupidi e insensati di destarsi dal sonno dell’ignoranza (per non dire dalla perfida ostinazione)*).

Another argument sometimes adduced to explain the extreme language directed at the Jews, this time by St John Chrysostom in Antioch in the fourth century, is that the Jewish community posed a genuine threat to the church. Christians were converting to Judaism, and the church had to act decisively to prevent this: hence John’s extreme language. A similar explanation can be offered for the measures taken by the church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Protestants were using Scripture in the original languages to disprove and undermine traditional Catholic doctrine and were even using Jewish scholarship to do this. The church had to combat this and set up training programmes to equip its leaders with the necessary expertise in Hebrew and Jewish studies. The underlying assumption however was that the Jews were wrong.

Typical of this approach is the influential and scurrilous *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica* in four volumes compiled by the Cistercian Giulio Bartolucci towards the end of the seventeenth century (Rome, 1683). This consists mainly of entries on rabbinic scholars and texts, arranged alphabetically, every one of them indiscriminately ridiculed and rubbished. Talmudic traditions about God, the angels, the resurrection of the dead and the like may be easy to ridicule but are often theologically quite profound and reward careful study. Bartolucci dismisses them all as due to the ‘most impudent abuse of sacred scripture on the part of the talmudists’. His task was to provide Christian scholars and preachers with ammunition to combat any threat from Jewish (and, just as important, Protestant) uses of Scripture.

Many of the newly trained scholars, including some of the official ‘preachers to the Jews’, were Dominicans, and it was in the Dominicans’ archive in the Church of Santa Sabina on the Aventine that I found one interesting exception. It is entitled *Dichiarazione di cento cinquanta Psalmi di Davide con le esposizioni e virtù estratte da molti libri dei virtuosi Rabini Ebrei* (cat. no. XIV 320). No date is given, but it was probably written in the sixteenth century. We can only speculate whether other students in such a confined and prejudiced context ever found it possible to appreciate some of the riches of ancient and mediaeval Jewish literature. It would have been very difficult, and it is probably no coincidence that the one exception is anonymous.

To modern eyes, of course, the Christian interpretations of Scripture according to which references to Jesus, Mary, baptism, the Sign of the Cross, bishops and the like are to be found in Isaiah, seem methodologically very similar to the Jewish ones ridiculed by Bartolucci. Judaism and Christianity are entirely different religions, the one based on the Hebrew Bible along with centuries of highly developed Jewish tradition, the other based on the very different Greek Bible and subsequent versions, along with centuries of highly developed Christian tradition. Isaiah in Jewish tradition is a very different book from Isaiah in Christian tradition—neither, incidentally, having much to do with the eighth-century prophet to whom the biblical book is attributed. .

This brings me to my final point concerning the place of this kind of material in teaching and research programmes: Should it be left to church historians and theologians, or should it be for us biblical experts to take on? My own view is that it is extremely important for students of the Hebrew Bible to be made aware that what we are studying, especially in a predominantly Christian context, is not only an important part of the history of ancient Israel but also a vital part of the history of Christianity, especially in relation to Christian attitudes to Judaism and the Jews. This is already admitted in commentaries on Isa. 7.14 and 53, where much space is often devoted to the Jewish interpretations. But for nearly three centuries of historical criticism, how texts have been interpreted down the ages has been almost totally neglected. Now at last the situation is changing. The study of the reception history, or *Wirkungsgeschichte*, of biblical texts down the centuries is becoming more and more popular at all levels and in many institutions. There is now as much interest among scholars in reader response as in authorial intention, in the later contextualization(s) of biblical texts as in what they originally meant, and in a plurality of meanings as in one single authoritative meaning, conventionally identified with the original meaning. Let me make two points about this.

First, it cannot be stressed too much that texts have more than one meaning. The rabbis likened interpreting a text to striking an anvil with a hammer and making countless sparks, everyone different and each a light in its own right, each illuminating the darkness in its own way. My experience of examining the various meanings a text has had, in its various contexts—Jewish or Christian, Hebrew or Greek or Latin or English, ancient, mediaeval or modern, scientific or pre-scientific, literal or allegorical—is that it greatly heightens your awareness of all kinds of nuances and subtleties in the text, of which you were perhaps totally unaware before. Modern literary-critical approaches to the Hebrew Bible, especially by Jewish writers, are frequently informed and enriched by references to ancient and mediaeval Jewish sources (Alter 1981; Handelman 1982; Magonet 1991). Such

materials are usually very much more familiar to Jewish scholars, incidentally, than the equivalent patristic and mediaeval materials are to Christians.

Finally, what texts do is often as important as what they mean. The structuralists' questions about who is doing what to whom are particularly important when we are dealing with a sacred text. The fact that the Bible is believed to be divinely inspired gave the church licence to use it in a disingenuously high-handed manner, and by the late Middle Ages many of the texts in question had acquired clearly identifiable, often highly emotive overtones and associations through frequent use in such contexts. The 'christianization' of Isaiah in the church is a dramatic and, for the Jews, particularly dangerous example of this. Texts of doctrinal significance to Christians prove that Judaism is a heresy. Texts originally condemning the blindness and obstinacy of some people in ancient Jerusalem can be applied to a Jewish minority in sixteenth-century Florence or nineteenth-century Rome. Isaiah contains texts that can be used to prove that the Jews are guilty of betraying, torturing and killing the Son of God. Other texts make it clear that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the continuing sufferings of the Jews in exile are an appropriate punishment for their sin.

The story of how the church has used the Bible down the ages is a cautionary one. It shows us that sacred texts are powerful and dangerous. It shows that what they came to mean and how they were used after they became Scripture are at least as important as the endlessly fascinating preoccupation with where they came from and who originally wrote them down. Though this is hardly something the illustrious recipient of this *Festschrift* needs to be told, the post-history or afterlife of a text is as important historically and as interesting theologically, morally, and aesthetically as its prehistory.

Bibliography

Alter, Robert

1981 *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books).

Bartolucci, G.

1683 *Bibliotheca magna rabbinica de scriptoribus, et scriptis Hebraicis, ordine alphabetico Hebraicè et Latinè digestis* (4 vols.; Rome: Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide).

Blunt, Anthony

1982 *Guide to Baroque Rome* (London: Granada).

Ginzberg, Louis

1975 *Legends of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, abridged edn).

Ettlinger, Leopold D., and Helen S.

1987 *Raphael* (Oxford: Phaidon).

Handelman, Susan A.

- 1982 *The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory* (SUNY Series on Modern Jewish Literature and Culture; Albany: State University of New York Press).

Humfrey, Peter

- 1983 *Cima da Conegliano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Magonet, Jonathan

- 1991 *A Rabbi's Bible* (London: SCM Press).

Milano, A.

- 1952 'Un sottile tormento nella vita del ghetto di Roma: la predica coatta', *Rassegna mensile di Israel* 18: 517-32.

Roth, Cecil

- 1946 *The History of the Jews in Italy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America).

Sawyer, John F.A.

- 1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

ISAIAH AND ZIONISM*

This is a study in *Wirkungsgeschichte*, the history of the impact of the Bible on those who read it and use it down the centuries. When my book *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* came out in 1996, several people, including Robert, suggested I write a companion volume on Isaiah in the history of Judaism. There have been some studies of the Jewish reception history of parts of the book, for example, A. Neubauer and S.R. Driver's famous study *The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah according to the Jewish Interpreters* (reprinted by Ktav, New York, in 1969 with Raphael Loewe's wonderful introduction); Craig Evans's meticulous analysis of early Jewish and Christian interpretations of Isaiah 6.9-10 entitled '*To See and Not Perceive*': *Isaiah 6.9-10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation* (JSOTSup, 64; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989); and a fascinating article entitled 'A Prophecy for the Jews: Isaiah in Yiddish and German,' by the linguist Albert Waldinger (*Babel* 44.4 [1998], pp. 316-35). But there has not been a comprehensive study like my book on Christian uses of Isaiah and I'm not sure if I'm the right person to do it. So this is a rather hesitant first step on what would inevitably be a very long journey, focusing mainly on Isaiah's role in the origins and history modern Zionism. I gratefully dedicate it to the memory of a colleague and friend who taught me much about what texts can mean and do.

1. *Isaiah and Judaism*

Isaiah has always been a favourite text for Jews as well as Christians. But it must be remembered that the Jewish book of Isaiah is a very different text from the 'Fifth Gospel'. In the first place, it is not 'gospel', in the sense

* An earlier version of this paper was read at the Summer Meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study in Birmingham in 2001 and published in Philip R. Davies and Alastair G. Hunter (eds.), *Sense and Sensitivity: Essays on Reading the Bible in Memory of Robert Carroll* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 2003), pp. 246-69.

that it is not part of the Torah, and therefore it is less authoritative, less well known, less central to the liturgy. Second, for Jews it is a Hebrew text as opposed to the Greek or Latin or German or English versions that have played such a formative role in Christian tradition. The *'almah* in 7.14 remains an *'almah*, 'young woman', and never becomes a *parthenos* or a *virgo*, 'virgin'. A third difference is that texts traditionally interpreted by Christians as metaphors are often taken at face value (Jeffrey 1992: 746-47). For example, the prophecy that one day there will be universal peace and justice and that swords will be beaten into ploughshares means what it says. Finally, texts from Isaiah that have spoken volumes to Christian writers and preachers and artists about the Virgin Mary, Christ's passion, the Trinity and the Eucharist (Sawyer 1996) are often texts of only marginal interest to Jews, while some of the language and imagery of Isaiah that is quite unfamiliar to Christians has played an important role in Jewish culture and history. The popular association of the word *'oneg*, 'delight', with *shabbat* comes from Isaiah as does the custom of wearing one's best clothes on the Sabbath 'to honour it, not going your own ways or seeking your own pleasure' (58.13; 61.10). The legend of the 'Thirty-Six Just Men' (the 'lamed-vav-niks') finds its scriptural authority in Isa. 30.18: 'blessed are all those who wait on him' (Hebrew *lo*, that is, the numeral lamed vav) (Scholem 1971: 251-56). The Avele Tziyon, 'mourners of Zion', mediaeval ascetics mentioned by, among others, the traveller Benjamin of Tudela, got their name from 61.3 (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, I, 51). Haredim, a name given to ultra-orthodox Jews, comes from 66.5: 'Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble [*haredim*] at his word. Your brethren who hate you and cast you out for my name's sake, have said, "Let the Lord be glorified that we may see your joy," but it is they who shall be put to shame' (Harris 1992: 164-65).

Post-Holocaust Judaism, too, has found inspiration in Isaiah. The best biblical formulation of the doctrine of *hester panim*, cited by a number of theologians, is to be found in Isaiah 45: 'Truly you are a god that hides yourself, O God of Israel the Saviour'. The orthodox writer Eliezer Berkovits, for example, sees in it a creedal statement to the effect that God's absence from human history is necessary so that man may be; his presence is necessary so that evil will not ultimately triumph. Some find him in his 'absence', some miss him in his presence. Either way the God who hides himself from time to time is, in Isaiah's words, the saviour of Israel (Berkovits 1972: 63-65). The Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem Yad VaShem gets its name from Isaiah (56.5), as does the inscription on the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington which reads (in Hebrew) "Ye are my witnesses" (43.10).

Already in the narratives of Kings and Chronicles, Isaiah is far more prominent than any of the other writing prophets. Only Jonah and Jeremiah are mentioned, and they receive only a brief mention. Ben Sira singles

Isaiah out for special mention, comparable to Elijah, one who was ‘great and faithful in his vision, one who worked miracles and comforted those who mourned in Zion and revealed what was to occur at the end of time’ (ch. 48). Isaiah was a favourite of the Qumran sect, too, and it is probably no coincidence that the oldest complete biblical manuscript in existence, familiar to visitors to the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem, is the beautiful seven-and-a-half-metre-long Isaiah Scroll A. The exceptional prominence of Isaiah in the New Testament is further evidence of his special role in first-century Judaism: not only is he quoted far more often in the New Testament than any other part of Scripture (with the possible exception of Psalms), but New Testament writers often (20x) give his name when they quote him: Paul, for example, introduces quotations with phrases like ‘Isaiah cried out . . .’ (Rom. 9.27) or ‘Isaiah is so bold as to say . . .’ (10.20), a further indication that Isaiah held a special position in his heart as in the hearts of other first-century Jews. Such references put Isaiah in the company of Moses, David and Elijah, rather than that of Jeremiah, Ezekiel or any of the other writing prophets (Sawyer 1996: 20–25).

In the rabbinic literature, Isaiah is frequently compared to Moses not only because he communicated directly with God (*Leviticus Rabbah* 10) but also because of his contribution to Jewish law. According to one tradition he reduced the Ten Commandments to six, and according to another tradition, to two: justice and righteousness (= charity) (*mishpat* and *sedaka*) (Babylonian Talmud *Makkot* 24a). His notoriously hard line on the shortcomings of his people gave rise to a rabbinic interpretation of Isaiah’s vision in ch. 6, according to which the reason why he had his mouth burnt was that he had been foul-mouthing his people: ‘it was all right for him to call himself a man of unclean lips, said the Holy One Blessed Be He, but he had no right to say he was in the midst of a people of unclean lips’ (*Song of Songs Rabbah* 1,6; cf. Babylonian Talmud *Yebamot* 49b). He is also unique among the prophets in being the subject of a rich series of legends about his martyrdom at the hands of King Manasseh, some of which have a fascinating history in Christian and Islamic tradition as well as Jewish (*Yebamot* 49b; Yerushalmi *Sanhedrin* 10; Knibb 1983–85).

Isaiah’s role in the Jewish liturgy is fascinating and very significant. Best known is the Qedushah, from Isaiah’s vision in ch. 6, which is as important in Judaism as the Trisagion and the Sanctus are in the Christian liturgy, Eastern and Western. Accompanied by various blessings and responses, it was one of the Eighteen Benedictions, the *shmonesreh* or the Amidah, since ancient times. It is mentioned already in the Talmud, where it is said, ‘Since the Temple was destroyed, the whole world is sustained by it’ (Babylonian Talmud *Sotah* 46a). The special power and effectiveness of the Qedushah are a function of its divine origin: when you recite it, you are reciting the words of the angels. The history of the impact of the Sanctus—not only on

Western liturgical tradition but also, through the music of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, Britten and a host of others, on Western secular culture—is well known and has been the subject of a number of scholarly studies (Spinks 1991). Its role in the history Jewish tradition is less well known but almost as interesting. Carmi's beautiful anthology of ancient mediaeval and modern poetical works, collected for the *Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*, contains two anonymous mediaeval *piyyutim* based on the Qedushah. One of the 'Four who saw visions of God' (Carmi 1991: 243-44) is Isaiah; and a *piyyut* celebrating the sanctification of God beginning 'he wraps himself in a cloak' (Carmi 1991: 251) has eight stanzas, each a variation on a phrase from Isaiah 6. The Qedushah gains added poignancy from its association with the concept of *qiddush ha-shem*, 'the sanctification of the Holy Name', which down the ages in many contexts came to be synonymous with martyrdom (Berkovits 1973: 80-85).

In Jewish literature, from Ben Sira on, Isaiah is the 'Prophet of Consolation'. According to the Talmud, Ezekiel's consolation is said to have been like the speech of a villager, Isaiah's like that of a courtier (*Hagigah* 14a). If you see Isaiah in a dream, you can expect consolation (*Berakot* 57b). A liturgy of consolation at the end of the Daily Prayer Book, prescribed to be recited in a house of mourning, concludes with three beautiful passages from Isaiah: "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you" (66.13); 'your sun shall no more go down nor your moon withdraw itself, for the Lord will be your everlasting light and your days of mourning will be at an end' (60.20); 'He will destroy death for ever. The Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth: for the Lord has spoken' (25.8) (I. Singer 1892: 324) (see Chapter 21).

This brings us to Isaiah's role in the Jewish lectionary. Fifteen of the weekly readings from the Prophets (*haftarot*) are from Isaiah, to which must be added five for special Sabbaths and holy days: this is a far larger proportion than from any other book of the Prophets. All except four are from Isaiah 40-66 (readings from chs. 1; 6; 11-12; and 27 are the four exceptions), and of particular significance are those associated with Teshah be'Av, the fast commemorating the destruction of Jerusalem. Chapter 1, one of Isaiah's most ferocious attacks on the stupidity, hypocrisy and blindness of his people, is read on the Sabbath before Teshah be'Av, to give some kind of reason for the disaster, and the seven from chs. 40-66 known as the *haftarot ha-nehamah*, 'consolation readings', are read on the Sabbaths following it, beginning with ch. 40: 'Comfort, comfort my people, says your God' (Elbogen 1993: 145, 425-26). As far as I can see, that proportion of seven to one, seven parts consolation to one part judgment, is about right for Isaiah's role in Judaism. The need for consolation down the ages has been at least seven times greater than the need for judgment, if not seventy times seven.

The origins and history of the Jewish lectionary down the centuries are obscure, and I have no intention of tackling that topic here (Elbogen 1993: 143–49; Mann 1940–66). But the standard lectionary as printed in most modern editions of the *Ḥumash* can be important for our topic in several ways. In the first place, passages included in the lectionary, that is to say, passages read aloud and often preached on every year at public worship are likely to have had a more significant role to play in Jewish culture than passages not in the lectionary. This is going to be particularly true of passages read on special holidays, when larger than average congregations attend. ‘The wolf shall lie down with the lamb’ (11.6), for example, appears in a Passover *haftarah*. *Yad VaShem* (56.5) is in one of the *haftarot neḥama*, ‘consolation readings’, and the late Prime Minister Rabin’s famous words on shaking hands with Yassir Arafat is in a passage read on Yom Kippur, the year’s busiest days in most synagogues worldwide: ‘Peace, peace to the near and the far’ (57.19). Other examples from the *haftarot* are *she’ar yashub*, ‘a remnant will return’ (7.3), ‘surely the people is grass’ (40.7), *Rishon le-tziyon*, ‘first to Zion’ (41.27) and ‘as one whom his mother comforts’ (66.13).

Another observation about the lectionary that has often been made is that a number of passages of central significance to Christians are conspicuous by their absence. Chapter 53 is the best known and it may be that it was deliberately omitted from the Jewish lectionary because of its Christian associations (Montefiore and Loewe 1963: 544). The same may apply to the Immanuel references in chs. 7–8 and to the messianic passage beginning ‘the people that walked in darkness . . .’ in ch. 9. The *haftarah* for Exodus 18–20 stops at 7.6, just before 7.14, while the ‘christianization’ of ch. 9 can be illustrated by the problems translators have had in translating *sar shalom*. Modern translators felt that they had to avoid the phrase ‘Prince of Peace’ because it ‘exudes christology’: thus, the 1917 JPS translation has ‘Ruler of Peace’, while the 1978 version has the brilliant ‘peaceable ruler’, to go along with the ‘peaceable kingdom’ in ch. 11 (Sawyer 1996: 106). Christianization has clearly been a significant factor in Jewish uses of the Hebrew Bible.

2. Isaiah and Zionism

I hope I have shown that Isaiah has been as fertile and productive a text in the history of Judaism as it has been in Christianity. We come now to his role in modern Zionism. I wrote something on this already in my book *The Fifth Gospel*, but I would like to say a bit more now on the subject, particularly in the light of some recent publications on the Bible and Zionism. A fairly cursory search shows that the language and images of Isaiah crop up everywhere in journals, novels, musical compositions, place names,

motatoes, monumental inscriptions and other contexts associated with the origins and history of Zionism and the state of Israel. At least half a dozen journals published towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth got their titles from Isaiah: the influential *Ha-Shiloah* (Isa. 8.5), a literary journal published in Berlin, is one. Others include *Ariel* (ch. 29), *Havatzelet* from 35.1, *Mevasseret Tzion* and its English counterpart *The Zion Messenger* from 40.9, *Torah mitziyon* from 2.3 and *Yagdil torah* from 42.21. *Ha-yo 'etz* as a title probably comes from 9.5.

Rabbi Nathan Friedland, one of the *hoveve Tzion*, 'lovers of Zion', an early Russian Zionist organization, published a piece in Hebrew under the title *gol tzofayik*, 'the voice of your [Zion's] watchmen' (Hamburg, 1868), a phrase from 52.8, and two generations later Rabbi Yeshayahu Margolis chose another phrase from Isaiah as the title of a tract, *Qumi Ori*, 'Arise, shine', from 60.1 (Jerusalem, 1925). The phrase 'from the wells of salvation' (Isa. 12.3) is the title of a tract published in 1963 by Jacov Moshe Harlap, a follower of Rav Kook's son Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook, to whom we shall return later. Incidentally, this passage is part of the *haftarah* for Yom ha'atzma'ut, 'Independence Day', as well as for Passover (Isa. 10.32–12.6), since this annual post-1948 commemoration occurs near the time of Passover.

Abraham Mapu's novel *Ahavat Tziyon*, first published in 1853 and translated into many languages in several editions, is about Isaiah, a prophet characterized throughout the sixty-six chapters attributed to him in the Bible, more than any other, by his 'love for Zion'. The controversial Yiddish novelist Scholem Asch also wrote a book about Isaiah called *Der Novi* (Tel Aviv, 1951), published in English in a paperback edition (New York, 1955). A significant number of musical compositions on Isaianic themes by Jewish composers appeared in the years following the establishment of the state of Israel, including an oratorio by Jacob Weinberg for solo voices and chorus with organ accompaniment and trumpet obbligato, first performed in 1947. This was followed by Alexandre Tansman's *Isaie le prophète*, first performed in 1949, the Israeli Ben Tzion Orgad's *Isaiah's Vision* in 1953, and the American composer Robert Starer's *Ariel: Visions of Isaiah* ten years later.

A disproportionate number of place-names in the modern state of Israel are derived from Isaiah. Here is a selection: Shear Jashub ('a remnant will return'; 7.3), Nes Harim ('a banner on the mountains'; 18.3), Ariel (29.1), Mevasseret Tzion ('O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion'; 40.9), Mevasseret Yerushalayim ('O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem'; 40.9), Mesillat Zion ('highway to Zion'; cf. 11.16; 40.3; 49.11; 62.10), Hephtzibah (62.4) and Or Tal ('the light of dew'; cf. 26.19). Chapter 35, which begins with the image of the desert blossoming 'like the rose' and ends with the return of the ransomed to Zion, provided the settlers in the

Negev with another six: Havatzelet ('rose' [AV]; 'lily' [LXX, Vulg]; 'crocus' [RSV]; 'jonquil' [JB]), Tiphrah ('blossom'), Gilat ('joy') and Rannen ('singing') from v. 2, Maslul (another word for 'highway') from v. 8, and Peduyim ('ransomed') from v. 10 (cf. 51.11). To these may be added another group of three settlements in the same area, Berosh, Tidhar and Te'ashur, which were named after some of the trees in 41.19: 'I will set in the desert *berosh*, *tidhar* and *te'ashur*: *berosh*, 'cypress', is used in Modern Hebrew, but the other two cannot be identified for certain and, as in the case of *Havatzelet*, this gives them an ancient romantic flavour. Another well-known example is Bilu in the place-names Kfar Bilu and the Bilu crossroads near Gedera, a settlement founded by ten Biluim, nine men and one woman, in 1884. The Biluim were a group of secular pioneers who took their name from Isaiah. It is an acronym derived from four words in Isa. 2.5: *Bet Yaakov leku venelkah*, 'house of Jacob, come on let's go'. It is taken out of context in that it stops short before *be-or Yhwh*, 'in the light of the Lord', but is firmly associated with the preceding prophecy of all the nations going up to Zion.

Their motto comes from Isaiah 60: 'The little one shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation'; and their constitution uses other Isaianic language in its vision of the future restoration of Israel. Incidentally, Hebrew Union College took as its motto the second part of the Bilu verse: 'let us walk in the light of the Lord'. Isaiah also provided the motto of the Tel Aviv harbour authority: 'When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and through the rivers they shall not overwhelm you' (43.2). Military colleges in Haifa and Tel Aviv have as their motto 'in quietness and in trust shall be your strength' (30.15), and a 'Monument of Peace' set up outside Jerusalem after the Six Day War in June 1967 bears the inscription 'they shall beat their swords into ploughshares' (Isa. 2.4; Mic. 4.3).

3. *Uses and Abuses of Isaiah*

These examples raise many questions about how Isaiah is used in this highly charged context. I'd like to try to make a few comments on what is by any standard a remarkable phenomenon. I think it can be proved that the language and imagery of Isaiah not only inspired the Christian church but actually helped to shape its early history (Sawyer 1996: 242-43). I wonder whether the same is true of the Zionist movement. There is first the way in which Isaianic images were applied to contemporary signs of hope and optimism in nineteenth-century Europe. One of the very earliest Zionist writers Moses Hess, in his classic *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862), quoted Isa. 40.1-5 to express his hope that Jewish restoration was at hand and much more. As the Suez canal is the road of civilization being built through the desert, so the Jewish people will be the means whereby civilization will be spread out beyond Europe into the Middle East: 'the rugged shall be made level and

the rough places smooth' (Hertzberg 1997: 132-34). The same optimism and confidence can be seen in the writings of another early Zionist, Rabbi Judah Alkalay, who applies a phrase from Isa. 49.9 to the spirit of the times, in particular to the emancipation of the Jews: 'saying to the prisoners, "Go free"!' (Ravitzky 1996: 27).

The vision of universal peace and justice at the beginning of Isaiah 2 is another passage often quoted in this context. Solomon Schechter, one of the early leaders of Conservative Judaism, based his universalist understanding of Zionism on v. 3: 'out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem' (Hertzberg 1997: 512); and Ben Gurion used it to prove that the Jews were the 'first to see the vision of a new human society' (Hertzberg 1997: 607). In contrast, Yeshayahu Leibowitz, a science professor at the Hebrew University Jerusalem, argued that this is completely wrong. The Jews have no mission: that is God's task. Jews have one task and that is to be 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation', not missionaries. Isaiah's 'light to the nations' is God's light, not missionary preaching. Heretics from the apostle Paul to Ben Gurion have got it wrong: they want to cast off the yoke of the Torah and substitute for it some abstract sense of missionary vocation to the world (Dorff and Newman 1999: 454).

Rav Kook (1865–1935), first Chief Rabbi in Palestine, cited 41.4 to urge his followers to take their time—not to rush, not to 'force the hour': '(I am the Lord) who called the generations from the beginning' (Ravitzky 1996: 105). Isaiah 11.9 is another verse given prominence by many. The philosopher David Hartman, for example, interprets it as a call to spread the Jewish ethic throughout the world: 'for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea'. By contrast, Rabbi Eliezer Waldman, dean of the Kiryat Arba Yeshivah (1983), cited it as scriptural authority for his view that it is the mission of Jews to impose order on the land. For him *ha'aretz* is not 'the earth' but *eretz yisrael*, 'the land of Israel', including South Lebanon; and *de'ah Yhwh*, 'the knowledge of the Lord', he translates as 'devotion to the Lord', that is to say, devotion to the law. Combining it with 56.7, he reads it as a claim that everyone must accept the authority of God's Temple: 'my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples' (Ravitzky 1996: 84).

For Rabbi Tzevi Yehudah Kook (1891–1981), son of Rav Kook and leader of messianic religious Zionists in Israel, the service of the Temple ('*avodah*') is extended to the work ('*avodah*') of the state as a whole—'the armies of Israel are the armies of God'. It was actually his father who said that first, but that was long before there was actually a state of Israel in existence, with its own defence forces. Since Maimonides, a verse from the first chapter of Isaiah has often been cited to authorize messianic activism, the restoration of a theocracy and the reconstitution of the Sanhedrin as part of national revival: 'And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy

counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, the city of righteousness, the faithful city' (1.26) (Ravitzky 1996: 91-92).

Isaiah gives authority to those who believe that the state of Israel is part of a divine messianic process leading towards Israel's eventual repentance and final redemption. As Aviezer Ravitzky shows in his *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, such a belief draws its inspiration and its authority from the Bible and can lead to a form of messianic determinism that leaves little room for moral responsibility. So it comes about that texts of a very different kind are applied—fierce, defiant, bitter texts—to the current situation, by people still holding out in new settlements on the West Bank, swearing never to give up control of Jerusalem, and believing that what they are doing is God's work. I cited Rabbi Eliezer Waldman as one example. Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook and his followers provide another. In one text, a bitter verse from Isaiah is applied to the situation in post-1967 Israel: 'Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for the uncircumcised and the unclean shall enter you no more' (52.1) (cited in Prior 1999: 93). In this view Christians, Muslims and 'the uncircumcised and the unclean' in general have no place in Israel, the holy land, 'the pedestal of God's throne in this world', as his father called it. But unlike his father (Dorff and Newman 1999: 66-71), he believed, on the basis of another verse from Isaiah (43.21), that there was no need for repentance (*teshuvah*): it was by divine decree that historical redemption was coming to pass and the ingathering of the exiles was a reality (Ravitzky 1996: 142).

It took many centuries for scholars to recognize the extent to which the Bible had been used by Christians—and by no means only Christian extremists—to authorize social injustice, hatred, oppression and even violence. The Jews, alongside heretics, blacks, women and the poor, have been the victims of Christian biblical interpretation. I have collected hundreds of examples of anti-Jewish uses of Isaiah (Sawyer 1996: 106-25). From New Testament times, Isaiah, more than any other biblical text, provided the church with scriptural authority to hurl at the Jews every kind of insult. If their own prophet criticized them for their blindness (Isa 6.9-10), their incredulity (65.2) and their deicide ('your hands are filled with blood'; 1.15; cf. Mt. 27.25), then the church had a right to do that too. When Justin Martyr (c. 100-165), John Chrysostom (c. 347-407), Augustine (354-430), Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) and many others called the Jews 'rulers of Sodom' (1.9), 'dogs' (56.10) and 'drunkards, (29.9), and accused them of 'blindness' (6.9-10), 'obstinacy' (65.2) and 'treachery' (3.9-11), they quoted Isaiah. When they wanted to say that it was their own fault that they had been rejected (29.13-14), their cities destroyed (3.11), their lives ruined (57.1-4), they cited Isaiah.

In no way can the history of Jewish uses of Scripture be compared to such a catalogue of Christian anti-Jewish polemic, but I have to admit that

my earlier observations on Isaiah's role in the history of modern Zionism were restricted to what I believe were wholly innocent uses of Scripture to inspire and enrich the lives of those fleeing from persecution in Europe and struggling to start a new life in Palestine. I was in that respect overlooking the implications of such uses of the Bible for the indigenous population of Palestine. I had not come across, or indeed looked for, examples of morally offensive uses of Isaiah such as that of Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook cited above. The specific question raised for me by recent critiques of Zionist uses of the Bible—in particular, Michael Prior's two recent books *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Biblical Seminar 48; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) and *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry* (1999)—is, How can we distinguish between innocent uses of Isaiah and morally offensive ones? Sometimes it may be clear enough, but not always. Let me look at two examples. The first is Rishon LeTzion, 'first to Zion' (Isa. 41.27), the name of an early Jewish settlement in Palestine, established by Russians in 1882. Are we to see this as a claim by those settlers to the right to take over Palestinian land? 'We were here first—we were here before you.' Or was it a reference to the fact that those Russian settlers were among the first European Jews to arrive in Palestine? No doubt a political, colonial gloss could be put on the name, but unless there is good evidence for such an interpretation, we should recognize that Rishon LeTzion is far more often associated with Baron Rothschild and the wine trade than with anything political, and it would be unfair to read anything else into the name without first carefully investigating its origin and usage.

Another example comes from post-1967 Gaza, where there is a Jewish settlement called Morag, which means 'a threshing sledge' (41.15). Does this name suggest power, defiance, even vengeance, as it does in its original context ('new sharp, having teeth . . . you shall thresh the mountains and crush them')? Or is it God's answer to Israel's fear ('fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel, I will help you, says the Lord')? Or is it a reference to the settlers' determination to tackle agricultural work, to exchange their pens or typewriters or scalpels for agricultural implements? Whether or not we could discover what the original planners believed when they chose the name, religious fanatics like Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook and the Gush Emunim could certainly have used it in a violent, aggressive sense to bolster up their messianic plans for the expansion of the 'holy and exalted state of Israel'. As we have seen, Isaiah can certainly be used to fuel violent and aggressive aims and objectives: there is plenty of violence and vengeance in Isaiah. But whether and to what extent it has been used in that way, and precisely by whom, is not so easy to establish. It is unscholarly and dangerous to generalize. In any case, there are plenty of Jewish religious writers, following in the footsteps of Rav Kook, whose call for repentance

we have already mentioned, who condemn nationalist triumphalism. The mainstream philosopher David Hartman is one who calls for a new agenda characterized by pluralism, self-judgment and love. In his appeal to 'covenantal Jews', as he calls them in his best-known book *The Living Covenant* (1997), he quotes a remarkable verse from Isaiah, already given profound significance by Maimonides: 'You are my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified' (49.3). We shall build our Judaic society, he says, not by dogmatism and religious coercion but, like the *ḥasid*, by means of the compelling example of the way we lead our daily lives (Hartman 1997: 292-93). Similarly, the radical Marc Ellis, like Solomon Schechter and Ben Gurion, puts Isa. 2.4, the 'swords into ploughshares' passage, at the centre of his vision for the future, rather than triumphalism (Ellis 1999: 47-51).

4. *Conclusion*

Finally, we must remember that there are millions of Jews worldwide as well as in Israel for whom the biblical sentiments and attitudes we have been considering mean virtually nothing. They certainly do not provide scriptural authority for anything. Most Jews outside the academic world probably know next to nothing about the Isaianic origin of Israeli place-names and have never heard of the oratorios mentioned above and have never read Avraham Mapu or Scholem Asch. My work on the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Isaiah is, first and foremost, about Isaiah, and only secondarily on the effect he has had on history and culture, ancient and modern. The interaction between text and culture, however, seems to me to be an absolutely crucial part of our work, and one that we neglect at our peril. So I would like to conclude with a few comments on the place of this kind of material in teaching and research programmes. Should it be left to church historians, linguists, theologians and sociologists, or should it be for us biblical experts to tackle?

My own view is that it is extremely important for students of the Hebrew Bible to be made aware that what they are studying, especially in a predominantly Christian context, is not only an important part of the history of ancient Israel but also a vital part of the history of Judaism and Christianity, and especially in relation to Christian attitudes to Judaism and the Jews. This is already admitted in commentaries on Isa. 7.14 and ch. 53, where much space is often devoted to the Jewish interpretations. But for the past three centuries of modern scholarship, how texts have been interpreted down the ages has been almost totally neglected. Now at last, in a post-modern age, the situation is changing. The study of the reception history, or *Wirkungsgeschichte*, of biblical texts down the centuries is becoming more and more popular at all levels and in many institutions. In fact there

is now as much interest among scholars in reader response as in authorial intention, and in later contextualization(s) of the biblical texts they study, as in what they originally meant. I have said enough about all this elsewhere, especially in connection with the *Blackwell Bible Commentaries* project in which I am involved (Sawyer, Kovacs and Rowland 2004–). So let me restrict myself to two final points about this new interest, within the world of biblical studies, in reception history.

The first concerns the plurality of meaning: a recognition of the fact that texts have more than one meaning. Not that this is a new idea: both the rabbis and the early church fathers knew this well enough. But among modern scientific scholars it is a relatively new idea that biblical interpretation is not a search for the one and only correct meaning of a text but rather a critical examination of different readings, each in its own context, each with its own nuances and associations, each worthy of careful consideration in its own right. My experience of examining the various meanings a text has had, in its various contexts—Jewish or Christian, Hebrew or Greek or Latin or English, ancient, mediaeval or modern, scientific or pre-scientific, literal or allegorical—is that it greatly heightens your awareness of all kinds of nuances and subtleties in the text, most of which I was totally unaware of before. Whether you are trying to get back to an original Hebrew meaning or to *ipsissima verba* or to how things actually were in eighth-century BCE Jerusalem, or whether you are interested in the meaning of the canonical text in the form it had reached in, let us say, the early Second Temple period or in New Testament times—whatever your interest, the possibilities opened up when you examine the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of a text are a constant source of interest and inspiration.

The other result of more reception history is a greater awareness of the ethical, political and ideological implications of biblical exegesis. With the appearance of ideological criticism, ethical criticism, feminist criticism, postcolonial criticism and the like, alongside form criticism, source criticism, textual criticism and the other tools of traditional biblical scholarship, abuses such as those I touched upon, are exposed and condemned as unethical. Books such as *The Women's Bible Commentary* (1992), *The Postmodern Bible* (1995), Sugirtharajah's *Postcolonial Bible* (1998) and a host of others are heightening our awareness of what we are doing when we read and interpret the Bible. I have tried to show how some of Isaiah's prophecies of peace, security and a return to Zion were understood, by people who had lived for centuries under persecution and in exile, to be on the point of fulfilment, and that the political implications of some Jewish religious radical interpretations (e.g. 41.15; 41.27; 52.1) need careful analysis, not only by historians and sociologists but also by biblical scholars aware of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the texts they handle.

Bibliography

- Berkovits, Eliezer
 1972 *Faith after the Holocaust* (New York: Ktav).
- Carmi, T. (ed.)
 1991 *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (London: Penguin Books).
- Castelli, E., S.D. Moore, G.A. Phillips and R.M. Schwartz (eds.)
 1995 *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Dorff, Elliot N., and Louis E. Newman (eds.)
 1999 *Contemporary Jewish Theology: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Elbogen, Ismar
 1993 *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America). German original, 1913.
- Ellis, Marc H.
 1999 *O Jerusalem! The Contested Future of the Jewish Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press).
- Harris, I., S. Mews, P. Morris, P. Shepherd and J. Shepherd (eds.)
 1992 *Contemporary Religions: A World Guide* (Longman Current Affairs; London: Longman).
- Hartman, David
 1997 *A Living Covenant: The Innovative Spirit in Traditional Judaism* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights).
- Hertzberg, Arthur (ed.)
 1997 *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society).
- Jeffrey, David Lyle (ed.)
 1992 *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- Knibb, M.A.
 1983–85 ‘The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah’, in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday): II, 143–76.
- Mann, Jacob, and Isaiah Sonne
 1940–66 *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue: A Study in the Cycles of the Readings from Torah and Prophets, as well as from Psalms, and in the Structure of the Midrashic Homilies* (2 vols.; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion).
- Montefiore C.G., and H. Loewe (eds.)
 1963 *A Rabbinic Anthology* (Cleveland: Meridian Books).
- Newsom, Carol A., and Sharon H. Ringe (eds.)
 1992 *The Women’s Bible Commentary* (London: SPCK).
- Prior, Michael P.
 1999 *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry* (London: Routledge).
- Ravitzky, Aviezer
 1996 *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Sawyer, John F.A.

1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Sawyer, John F.A., C.C. Rowland and J. Kovacs (eds.)

2004— *Blackwell Bible Commentaries* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell).

Scholem, Gershom

1971 *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books).

Singer, I. (ed.)

1901–6 *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (12 vols.; New York: Funk & Wagnalls).

Singer, S. (ed.)

1892 *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode).

Spinks, Bryan D.

1991 *The Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Sugirtharajah, R.S. (ed.)

1998 *The Postcolonial Bible* (Bible and Postcolonialism, 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH*

Since the publication of *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* in 1996, another book of interest to biblical experts has been published under the same title: *The Fifth Gospel: The Gospel of Thomas Comes of Age*. Unlike this modern assessment of the importance of the *Gospel of Thomas*, however, fuelled no doubt by current questioning of church dogma and the romantic circumstances of its accidental discovery at Nag Hammadi, Isaiah's claim to be a Gospel goes back at least fifteen hundred years to Jerome's observation that Isaiah is 'more evangelist than prophet because he describes all the mysteries of Christ and the Church so clearly that you would think he is composing a history of what has happened rather than prophesying about what is to come'. It also reflects the views of countless generations of Christians, of all varieties, who from the very beginning have used Isaiah—in art, architecture, literature, theological treatises, sermons, hymns and paraphrases—to express every aspect of their religious traditions in as much detail and with as much conviction as they have used the four Gospels. One reason for this is that Isaiah was already very frequently quoted in the Gospels, Paul and Revelation, so that in quoting these and other New Testament texts, they are quoting Isaiah and ensuring that numerous Isaianic expressions became part of the Christian vocabulary to an extent not true of any other prophet.

The evidence of Clement of Rome, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Justin Martyr and others proves that scriptural authority for many of the key images, practices and doctrines of Christianity—the virgin birth, the Suffering Servant, the key of David, the Prince of Peace, a light to the nations, good news to the poor, a new heaven and new earth, baptism, the Eucharist, the Sign of the Cross and even bishops—was found in Isaiah probably before the other four Gospels were written, and certainly before they were canonized as 'Scripture'. In many ways it seems that Isaiah set the agenda for early

* This paper was originally published in the *Expository Times* 113.2 (2001), pp. 39-43.

Christianity. It was clearly an inspiration to Christian leaders, preachers and writers in the first century, who turned with special enthusiasm and expectation to Isaiah in their search for ways of expressing the new faith. To judge by hymnbooks and lectionaries alone, this has been the situation in the church ever since. It is only because of the preoccupation of the last three centuries of historical-critical research with 'the original meaning of the text', that such a fascinating and crucial dimension of Isaiah has been neglected.

A complete history of Isaiah's role in the history of Christianity would have to look at verses cited frequently by the church fathers in their efforts to define Christian doctrine (e.g. 6.3; 7.14; 9.6; 53.8). Passages popular in mediaeval iconography provide another major theme (e.g. 11.1-2; 19.1). The Reformers found their inspiration in verses like 40.8, a favourite of Martin Luther's followers and memorably set to music in Brahms's *German Requiem*. Missionaries focused on 11.9; 49.12; 60.9 and other references to distant lands, while more recently liberation theologians found inspiration and scriptural authority in Isaiah's visions of justice and peace (e.g. 1.17; 16.3-5; 61.1), and feminists, in the unique concentration of female images of God in Isaiah (e.g. 42.14; 49.15; 66.13). Sadly, Christian anti-Semitism also found much of its most powerful ammunition in Isaiah's bitter attacks on his own people (e.g. 1.15; 6.9-10; 65.2-3, 13-16).

The example I propose to examine in detail here is the role of Isaianic language and imagery in the telling of the complete story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. In a remarkable text entitled *Ysaye testimonia de Christo domino*, attributed to the influential Spanish scholar Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), the Gospel narrative is recounted almost entirely in the words of Isaiah. It is a kind of résumé of the tradition as it had evolved over the first half-millennium and contains all the elements that were to become so universally familiar in the cathedral architecture, liturgy and illuminated manuscripts of mediaeval Europe. The extremely popular and influential fourteenth-century *Biblia pauperum* is another graphic illustration of Isaiah's central role in the mediaeval Gospel tradition. The 'Gospel according to Isaiah' contains virtually all the details that are in the other four, as well as some that are not, for example, the ox and the ass in the nativity scene, the shattering of the idols in Egypt and some lurid details in the passion narrative. Of course these detailed allusions or references to the Gospel story are not arranged in any kind of narrative sequence, and in that respect Isaiah cannot be compared to the four Gospels. Many of the interpretations of Isaiah are based on Greek or Latin versions of the text rather than the Hebrew original, and some are so far-fetched as to be difficult for our modern minds to relate to, especially after three centuries of historical criticism. But many are still a living part of our Christian heritage, many are manifestly more interesting theologically or iconographically than 'the

original', and therefore worthy of our attention, whether as scholars or as ordinary people. Much of the most familiar language and imagery in which the life, death and resurrection of Christ are described, comes from Isaiah. The following is a selection.

The story begins, like Matthew, with Christ's ancestry: 'there shall come forth a root from the stem of Jesse' (Isa. 11.1; Mt. 1.6). There is also an allusion to Jesse's grandmother, Ruth, in Isaiah's 'Oracle concerning Moab': 'send forth a lamb to conquer the earth from a rock in the desert' (16.1 Vulg). The thirteenth-century *Bible moralisée* illustrates this verse with a picture of Isaiah pointing to the Virgin Mary, who stands in the rocky wilderness tenderly holding the Lamb in her arms, and in the Latin liturgy the *Emitte Agnum*, 'Send Forth a Lamb', became an antiphon sung on the second Sunday of Advent. The virginity of Christ's mother appears in the Greek and Latin versions of 7.14 ('Behold a virgin shall conceive . . .'; cf. Mt. 1.23), and in the Latin of 45.8 (Vulg): *Rorate coeli desuper*, 'send down dew, O heavens from above . . . and let the earth open up and germinate the Saviour'. The *Rorate* was a very popular introit on the fourth Sunday of Advent and English versions of it appear in the *English Hymnal* (No.735) and more recently in the Catholic *Hymns Old and New* (No.459) (see Chapter 17).

Isaiah 9.6 describes the nativity as having already happened ('unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given') and is one of the texts that prompted Jerome's comments on Isaiah quoted above. Patristic commentators saw in the two parallel clauses a reference to the two natures of Christ, the human 'child' of Mary and the divine 'son' of God. His divinity is confirmed later in the same verse, where he is called 'Mighty God'. The ox and the ass who recognize their Master in a crib are not mentioned in the four canonical Gospels but appear in Isaiah (1.3), as do the kings from afar who bring gifts of gold and incense (60.6). The apocryphal tradition, common in mediaeval iconography, that when the holy family arrived in Egypt, the idols miraculously tumbled down, is alluded to in 19.1.

John the Baptist, 'a voice crying in the wilderness' is alluded to in Isa. 40.3, and Christ's baptism, in 42.1: 'Behold my servant . . . in whom my soul delights . . . I have put my spirit upon him'. There is another reference to it immediately after the Jesse genealogy (11.2). His preaching ministry is described in 61.1: 'the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor' (cf. Mt. 11.5; Lk. 4.18-19), and the location of his first public appearances in Galilee is specified in 9.1 (cf. Mt. 4.15-16). Isaiah also provides the familiar description of the unreceptive audience Jesus encountered in some quarters: 'You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive' (6.9-10; cf. Mt. 13.14-15; Mk 8.18; Jn 12.39-41; Acts 28.26-27). Most of his healing miracles are mentioned in 35.5-6: 'then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped; and the lame shall leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy' (cf.

Mt. 11.5; Lk. 7.22). The 'keys of the kingdom' given to Peter at Caesarea Philippi are first mentioned in Isa. 22.22 (cf. Mt. 16.19; Rev. 1.18).

The passion narrative owes much to Isaiah. Not only do many of the graphic details given in the four canonical Gospels appear in the language of Isaiah, but there are several additional ones in the 'Fifth Gospel' that are not in the other four. Familiar allusions to ch. 53 appear already in three of the Gospels as well as in Acts, Romans and 1 Peter: 'he bore our infirmities' (Mt. 8.17); 'a sheep led to the slaughter' (Acts 8.32); 'Who has believed our report?' (Rom. 10.16); 'by his wounds you have been healed' (1 Pet. 2.24-25). Although some of the key theological aspects of the 'Suffering Messiah' motif in Isaiah 53, which became so central a part of Christian doctrine, are not stressed in the New Testament itself, the role of Isaiah, especially ch. 53, in the later evolution and elaboration of the passion narrative and its interpretation, is crucial. The 'man of sorrows' appears there (53.3), as do the robbers crucified on either side of him (53.12) and the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea (53.9). Christ's words on the cross, 'Father, forgive them . . .', are alluded to already in Isa. 53.12.

It was in the later Middle Ages that some of the graphic language and imagery of Isaiah came to be regularly used in representations of the passion, both in literature and in art. In the patristic and early mediaeval period, Isaiah could be called the 'prophet of the Annunciation', and the emphasis was on 7.14 and some of the other passages mentioned above in connection with the ancestry of Christ. But from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, he became very much the 'prophet of the passion'. Instead of 7.14, he is accompanied by verses from ch. 53, as in Carl Sluter's famous statue of Isaiah in Dijon (c. 1400): 'like a lamb before its shearer, he is dumb'. In the iconography of the prophet, we can sometimes recognize two Isaiahs: a strong youthful Isaiah who speaks in chs. 7; 9 and 11 of a victorious messiah to be born to the family of David, and an older, more solemn prophet who wrote ch. 53. The book of Isaiah as a whole certainly contains an astonishing contrast between the joyful expectancy of those early chapters and the grim solemnity of ch. 53. The two themes are beautifully brought together by Victor Hugo (1802-1885) in his poem *Booz endormi*. In a dream Boaz sees the tree of Jesse with King David at the bottom, singing, and at the top a god dying:

Un roi chantait en bas,
en haut mourait un dieu.

Three of the most gruesome details of later mediaeval passion iconography come from Isaiah. The image of the wine-press in Isaiah 63 appears already in the book of Revelation: 'he will tread the wine-press of the fury of the wrath of God' (Rev. 19.15). There the scene is one of power and

judgment. But the red garments of the wine-treader in Isaiah 63 are also quoted as a prefiguration of the sufferings of Christ drenched with his own blood (see Chapter 19). Indeed, in some grotesque interpretations of the passage, going back to the patristic period, Christ the True Vine is the victim, crushed in the wine-press so that his blood flows out, like the juice of grapes, into a chalice placed beneath. Occasionally, as in the Church of Sainte-Foi in Conches, the wooden frame of the wine-press is designed to suggest a cross so that the connection between Isaiah 63 and the death of Christ on the cross is highlighted. In some early-sixteenth-century representations of the crucifixion, Christ's bleeding feet are shown trampling on grapes, and the inscription above his head reads *torcular calcavi solus*, 'I trod the wine-press alone' from Isa. 63.3.

Two other examples illustrate how graphic new details taken from Isaiah, like the ox and the ass in the traditional nativity scene, are introduced into the story of the passion. The first comes from a combination of two verses: 'I gave . . . my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard' (50.5); 'he was . . . like a sheep before its shearers' (53.7). The implication is that Christ's tormentors were like 'shearers' removing handfuls of hair so that 'his holy hair lay strewn in the way' and he looked like a sheep that had been shorn. From patristic times an etymological connection had been noted between the mocking *Calve calve!* ('bald-head!') from the Elisha story (2 Kgs 2.23) and *Calvary*, the hill where Christ's torments reached their climax. But the most lurid variations on this theme do not appear until they are required by late mediaeval spirituality.

The other example comes from the description of a diseased and wounded body in ch. 1: 'from the sole of the foot even to the top of the head, there is no soundness in it but wounds and bruises and swelling sores' (1.6). Pondering on the meaning of this verse, writers and artists represented the suffering Christ in such a way as to suggest that no part of his precious body was spared. In one example of this lurid exegetical process, the verse was taken to suggest that Christ's tormentors started their gruesome work at his feet 'because if they had begun from the head down, His body would have been covered with blood and they would not have been able to determine if it were thoroughly wounded'.

According to many traditional authorities, Christ's resurrection from the dead is alluded to in Isa. 33.10 ('Now I will arise, says the Lord . . .') and his ascension to heaven in 52.13 ('He will be exalted and lifted up . . .'). The 'Fifth Gospel' ends like the first with the sending out of the disciples into the world: 'I will set a sign among them . . . I will send survivors to the nations, to the sea, to Africa and Lydia, to Italy and Greece, to islands afar off, to those who have not heard about me and have not seen my glory; and they will proclaim my glory to the nations' (Isa. 66.19-20). If the 'sign' is taken

as referring to the Sign of the Cross in baptism, as it frequently is, then the parallel with Matthew 28 is even closer.

What are we to make of all this kind of material? Very little of it, if any, ever appears in the standard commentaries on Isaiah. Modern commentaries often contain instead scathing comments on how this or that traditional interpretation is 'late' or 'rabbinic' or 'found only in Handel's *Messiah*', as if that ruled it out. Thankfully, that age is coming to an end, and such material is becoming increasingly popular and accessible thanks to reference works like *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (1992) and *Chapters into Verse: Poetry in English Inspired by the Bible* (1993). Coggins and Houlden's pioneering *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (1990) and Hayes's more recent two-volume work with the same title (1999) contain some good examples too, although in both cases many of the authors concentrate almost exclusively on the history of biblical scholarship down the centuries and pay scant attention to the wider history of Christianity and Judaism. There are an increasing number of special studies like my own on Isaiah, Jeremy Cohen's '*Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it*': *The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (1989) and Tod Linafelt's *Surviving Lamentations: Catastrophe, Lament and Protest in the Afterlife of a Biblical Book* (2000). There are also quite few general studies like *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century* (1990), *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature* (1988) and *The Bible in Africa* (2000). The forthcoming *Blackwell Bible Commentary* series (Oxford 2004–) will put the main emphasis on how the text has been used and interpreted down the ages, on its 'afterlife', rather than on its prehistory and what it originally meant (see Chapter 4).

It has taken many centuries for scholars to recognize the importance of the role of the Bible in the history of Western culture, or at least to take it seriously. One of the most obvious examples is the church's use of the Bible to authorize social injustice, hatred, oppression and even violence. The Jews, alongside heretics, blacks, women and the poor, have often been the victims of Christian biblical interpretation. With the appearance of ideological criticism, ethical criticism, feminist criticism, postcolonial criticism and the like, alongside form criticism, source criticism, textual criticism and the other tools of traditional biblical scholarship, such abuses are being increasingly exposed and condemned. Books like Sugirtharajah's *Postcolonial Bible* (1998), Robert McAfee Brown's *Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes* (1984), *The Women's Bible Commentary* (1992), *The Postmodern Bible* (1995) and a host of others are heightening our awareness of what we are doing when we read and interpret the Bible. What texts do and what they have done in the past can often be as significant as what they mean.

Another major step forward in recent biblical studies is the realization or admission that texts have more than one meaning. Not that this is a new idea: both the rabbis and the early church fathers knew this well enough. Origen believed that texts had three meanings, literal, moral and spiritual. There is a rabbinic tradition that ‘every word has 49 aspects’. But among modern scientific scholars it is a relatively new idea that biblical interpretation is, in effect, a critical examination of different readings, each in its own context, each with its own nuances and associations, each worthy of careful consideration in its own right, rather than a search for the one and only correct meaning of a text. Modern commentators frequently use expressions like ‘the text cannot mean X’, regardless of the fact that X is exactly the meaning the text has had for centuries in various clearly identifiable contexts. ‘The text is meaningless as it stands’ is another such dismissive comment from experts concerned with the single-minded quest for one true meaning. But that confidence, so characteristic of modernity, the notion that now we can discover one correct answer to every scientific question, has been well and truly shaken by the postmodern recognition that we cannot after all discover exactly how things were in the ancient world, despite all the dazzling discoveries of archaeology. The experience of examining the various meanings a text has had in its various contexts—Jewish or Christian, Hebrew or Greek or Latin or English, ancient, mediaeval or modern, scientific or pre-scientific, literal or allegorical—serves to heighten our awareness of all kinds of nuances and subtleties in the text, of which we were previously totally unaware. Whether you are trying to get back to an original Hebrew meaning or the *ipsissima verba* or how things actually were in eighth-century BCE Jerusalem, or whether you are interested in the meaning of the canonical text in the form it had reached in, let us say, the early Second Temple period or in New Testament times—whatever your interest, the possibilities opened up when you examine the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of a text can be a constant source of interest and inspiration.

One final comment on the role of reception history in our study of the Bible brings us back to ‘the fifth evangelist’. Many of the uses of Isaiah cited above are not particularly obscure or bizarre. Nor are they in any sense peripheral: indeed, many of them appear regularly in the lectionary or in familiar hymns as well as in music, art and literature, so that in taking them seriously as part of Isaiah’s legacy, we are engaging with Christian tradition and with Western culture in general. The nineteenth-century Advent hymn ‘O come, O come, Immanuel’, for example, contains a number of Isaianic phrases and images, which in turn inspired James MacMillan’s concerto for percussion and orchestra entitled *Veni veni Emmanuel*, first performed in 1992. Of course no one can argue that

such interpretations have much to do with the original Hebrew. For one thing, many are based on the Greek and Latin versions. But that having been said, there can be no objection to giving at least as much attention to Christian tradition as to what was going on in the ancient Near East two or three thousand years ago. The bond between the Bible and the people who use it and hold it to be sacred is a very close one. In retrospect we may ask whether it was not in many respects perverse to break that bond in the interests of science.

Bibliography

- Atwan, Robert, and Laurence Wieder (eds.)
 1993 *Chapters into Verse: Poetry in English Inspired by the Bible* (2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Brown, Robert McAfee
 1984 *Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press).
- Castelli, E., S.D. Moore, G.A. Phillips and R.M. Schwartz (eds.)
 1995 *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Coggins, R.J., and J.L. Houlden (eds.)
 1990 *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press).
- Cohen, Jeremy
 1989 *'Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it': The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
- Hayes, John H. (ed.)
 1999 *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (2 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press).
- Henry, Avril (ed.)
 1987 *Biblia pauperum: A Facsimile and Edition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
- Jeffrey, David Lyle (ed.)
 1992 *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).
- Linafelt, Tod
 2000 *Surviving Lamentations: Catastrophe, Lament and Protest in the Afterlife of a Biblical Book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Marrow, James H.
 1979 *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Ars neerlandica, 1; Kortrijk, Belgium: Van Ghemmert).
- Newsom, Carol A., and Sharon Ringe (eds.)
 1992 *The Women's Bible Commentary* (London: SPCK).
- Patterson, Stephen J., and James M. Robinson (eds.)
 1998 *The Fifth Gospel: The Gospel of Thomas Comes of Age* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International).

Sawyer, John F.A.

1996 *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Steinmetz, David C. (ed.)

1990 *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century* (Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 11; Durham, NC: Duke University Press).

Sugirtharajah, R.S. (ed.)

1998 *The Postcolonial Bible* (Bible and Postcolonialism, 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).

West, Gerald O., and Musa W. Dube (eds.)

2000 *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends* (Leiden: E.J. Brill).

Wright, David F.

1988 *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press).

Part III

LANGUAGE AND IMAGERY

HEBREW TERMS FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD*

In a semantic study of this type we are not concerned, for the most part, with the meaning of rare words or obscure *hapax legomena*, but with ordinary, everyday words like *hayah*, 'to live', *qum*, 'to arise', *heqış*, 'to wake up', *laqah*, 'to take', *mavet*, 'death', and *mishpat*, 'judgment' and the special overtones or associations that they may have in some contexts. Two techniques were found to be helpful in this case.

1. *A Precise Definition of the Terms' Context*

By context is meant not only a word's immediate linguistic environment (phrase, passage, *Gattung*, *genre*, book) but also its situational or nonverbal context, that is to say, the 'universe of discourse' in which it was used. Where, for example, the word *ve-qam*, 'and he will arise', occurs in the same linguistic environment as a description of Moses' death (Deut. 31.16), and in a universe of discourse in which the resurrection of the dead was a live issue (second-century CE rabbinic discussion), *ve-qam* refers to the resurrection of Moses from the dead (Babylonian Talmud *Sanhedrin* 90b). The original author of this verse was actually thinking of something quite different, as the rest of the verse shows, but the use of the verse in rabbinic discourse provides an excellent illustration of the power of a term's context to determine and even change its meaning.

The context of each term will thus have to be very precisely defined, and for this purpose the Hebrew sources have been divided, in line with generally accepted linguistic criteria, into three periods: (1) an Early Period down to the fourth century BCE, when Aramaic and Greek began to replace Hebrew as the first language of the Jews; (2) a Middle Period, which covers Mishnaic and Mediaeval Hebrew as well as the later parts of the Hebrew

* This paper was originally read to members of SOTS at the International Congress of Learned Societies in the Field of Religion in Los Angeles in September 1972, and published in *Vetus Testamentum* 23 (1973), pp. 218-34.

Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls and literature of that period; and (3) the Modern Period (Rabin 1970). A question that is utterly fundamental to the study of biblical semantics, but one that seems to have been all too rarely faced, is, To which period does 'Biblical Hebrew' belong? The best documented and most formative period in the history of the text, orthography and grammar of Biblical Hebrew is clearly the Middle Period, and the implications of this for biblical semantics and exegesis, as we shall see, are crucial (Sawyer 1972: Ch. 2).

2. *The Arrangement of Vocabulary in Semantic Fields*

A word's 'associative field' is not to be confused with the much more circumscribed 'lexical group' or 'set' of words of very closely related meaning. Theoretically, a word's associative field includes not only words of related meaning (synonyms, opposites, etc.) but also words that occur a number of times in the same context, words that rhyme with it, and even words that look like it or sound like it—in short, words that are associated with it in any way at all. Naturally, the outer edges of such a field merge into the rest of the vocabulary of a language, and it would probably be impracticable to list all the items in the associative field of any given term. An attempt to do this for the French word *chat* reached two thousand items (Guiraud 1956). But the fluidity of the field's boundaries need not detract from the value of this method of arranging vocabulary. It is the ideal way, for example, of defining terms without translating them into another language (A is closer to B than to C by being collocated more frequently with D), and of detecting overtones and associations in common terms. Changes in the size and structure of a field between one period and another, or between one author or literary *genre* and another, are often extremely interesting too (Sawyer 1972: Ch. 3). Within the scope of the present paper, examination of the associative field of the Hebrew term *tehiyyat ha-metim*, 'resurrection of the dead', has to be restricted to a general outline of the main lexical groups or 'sectors' within it and a few remarks on how this kind of data can be applied to the definition of some Biblical Hebrew expressions.

At the centre of the field is the normal term for the resurrection of the dead, *tehiyyat ha-metim*. This does not occur in Biblical Hebrew but is attested 4 times in the Mishnah and 41 times in the Talmud (Kasowsky 1964: 382), and is quite common in the rest of Hebrew literature of the Middle Period. It is listed in all the dictionaries of Modern Hebrew. The earliest documented example is probably to be found in the Mishnah (*Berakot* 5.2). There it is mentioned as the title of the second of the Eighteen Benedictions, which contains the words 'You are faithful to give new life to the dead. Blessed are you, O Lord, who give new life to the dead' (Singer 1892: 44-45). A charming example from mediaeval literature is Rashi's comment on Gen. 2.7: 'and

the Lord God formed (וַיִּצְרָךְ) man from the dust of the earth'. He argues that וַיִּצְרָךְ in this verse is written with two yods to symbolize two creations, creation in this world and 'the resurrection of the dead' (*teḥiyyat ha-metim*). The same word is spelled with only one yod in v. 19 (וַיִּצְרָךְ) when it refers to the creation of animals who have no share in the world to come.

The verb *ḥayah* and its causative stems *ḥiyyah* pi. and *heḥyah* hi. occur in many contexts with the sense of rising from the dead or raising someone from the dead, as in the Benediction just quoted. An example from Biblical Hebrew occurs in Isa. 26.14: 'the dead cannot live again'. Hosea 6.2 is another example (cf. 1 Kgs 17.22). In the Middle Period there are numerous instances of this eschatological usage: in the context of an early rabbinic dispute, for example, the words 'I kill and I make alive' (*va-'ahayyeh*; Deut. 32.39) are said to refer to the resurrection of the dead (*Sanhedrin* 91b; cf. 1 Sam. 2.6).

Related to this usage are the instances of *ḥayyim* in the sense of 'eternal life'. Recent attempts to trace this usage back into the Early Period, particularly in the Psalms and Proverbs on the basis of Egyptian or Northwest Semitic evidence, are not universally accepted (Kayatz 1966: 105-6; cf. McKane 1970: 296, 432, 450-52). But in the Middle Period the term *ḥayyim* in this sense is frequent in all kinds of contexts, particularly in phrases like *ḥayye 'olam*, 'eternal life' (Dan. 12.2), *ḥayye neṣaḥ*, 'everlasting life' (1QS 4.7f.), and *sam ha-ḥayyim*, 'elixir of life' (*Yoma* 72b; cf. 1QH 4.7; CD 3.20; Ps. 16.11 Rashi; Prov. 11.30 Ibn Ezra).

The rich immortality sector of the field would include also terms like '*almavet*, 'immortality' (Prov. 12.28), *yeshu'at 'olam*, 'eternal salvation' (1QH 15.16) and *laqah*, 'to take', which in some contexts, such as the legends of Enoch and Elijah (Gen. 5.24; 2 Kgs 2.3, 5, 9, 10), refers to 'the uniting of a righteous man's soul with the saints above who have no body and who never die' (Ibn Ezra on Ps. 73.24). Closely related to *ḥayah* and *ḥayyim* are all the Hebrew words for death, the grave, dust and the like, and these would also have to be included in the field.

Round the centre of the field are four other important sectors. (a) The first, of these contains terms for 'standing' or 'rising up'. The noun *tequmah*, corresponding to *teḥiyyah*, occurs once in the Hebrew Bible (Lev. 26.37) and is not uncommon in the literature of the Middle Period. But it does not normally refer to resurrection from the dead, and where it does it usually functions as a verbal noun pointing to the verb *qum* elsewhere in the same context (e.g. Rashi on Isa. 26.19). It seems to be only in Modern Hebrew that *tequmat ha-metim* becomes a common Hebrew term, and this may well be due to the influence of Greek ἀνάστασις or Latin *resurrectio*, rather than an original Hebrew usage. This suggestion is perhaps strengthened by the fact that both *tequmat ha-metim* and the verb *qum* are common in Modern Hebrew translations of Christian literature and among Hebrew-speaking

Christians in Israel (Delitzsch 1892). Conversely, the apparent avoidance of the term elsewhere in Hebrew and the obvious preference for *teḥiyyat ha-metim* could be partly due to a type of purism not uncommon in the history of Jewish–Christian relations.

The verbs in this sector, on the other hand, *qum*, ‘to get up’, and ‘*amad*, ‘to stand’, are extremely common throughout Hebrew literature. Psalm 88.11 is a good example from Biblical Hebrew: ‘Dost thou work wonders for the dead? Do the shades rise up [*yaqumu*] to praise thee?’ Another is Isa. 26.14: ‘They are dead, they will not live; they are shades, they will not arise [*yaqumu*].’

Such examples of biblical usage may well go back to the original author’s intention, since in them belief in life after death is questioned or rejected. Similarly, the ‘standing up’ of a corpse that comes into contact with Elisha’s bones (2 Kgs 13.21) is an ‘exception that proves the rule’ concerning ancient Israelite beliefs, while the ‘standing up’ of the ‘exceeding great host’ in Ezekiel 37 need not originally have referred to life after death but only to the revival of Israel after the Babylonian captivity (Martin-Achard 1960: 57–60, 93–102).

In the Middle Period, however, when Elijah, Elisha and Ezekiel were all cited as proofs of the resurrection of the dead, *qum* and ‘*amad* are both common in this sense. A good example is the rabbinic interpretation of Deut. 31.16 already referred to. Again it must be emphasized that we are concerned at the moment not with rabbinic exegetical methods but with the fact that when the verb *qum*, ‘to rise up’ occurs in collocation with words describing the death of Moses, in a universe of discourse in which the resurrection of the dead was a live issue, it can be and has been understood to refer to the resurrection. The overtones and associations of this verb in some contexts, in other words, are strongly eschatological even where the original concern of the author may have been something quite different.

Associated phrases like the biblical *yaqum le-‘olam*, ‘it will stand for ever’ (Isa. 40.8), and Mishnaic and Modern Hebrew *ḥay ve-qayyam*, ‘living for ever’, illustrate the overlap between this sector and the immortality sector discussed above. Terms for ‘true’, ‘established’ and ‘firm’ and the like may also be associated, as in another ancient prayer entitled *emet ve-yaṣṣiv*, ‘True and Certain’, which has been recited after the Shema since Mishnaic times (Elbogen 1933: 17; Singer 1892: 42). Examples of ‘*amad*, ‘stand’, in an eschatological sense occur in many contexts: ‘When they [the dead] stand up [*omedin*], will they stand naked or in their clothes?’ (*Ketubot* 111b).

(b) Another sector contains words for awaking out of sleep, notably the verb *heqīṣ*. The best known biblical example is Dan. 12.2: ‘And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake [*yaqīṣu*], some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.’ In Job 14.12 the

same verb occurs in parallel with the synonym *ne 'or*: 'So man lies down and rises not again; till the heavens are no more they will not awake [*yaqīšu*], or be roused [*ye 'oru*] out of their sleep.' The term *ne 'or* also occurs in one of the Thanksgiving Hymns from Qumran: 'At that time the sword of God will rush in at the final judgment and all his Sons of Truth will be awakened [*ye 'oru*]' (1QH 6.29).

The sleep of death is a concept attested both in the Hebrew Bible (Jer. 51.39; Ps. 13.14) and in the Ugaritic literature, where the word *šnt*, 'sleep', occurs in collocation with *qbr*, 'grave' (1 Aqhat 151). In the context of a rabbinic discourse on the Torah, a reference to the resurrection of the dead is found in Prov. 6.22: 'When you walk, it will lead you—in this world; when you sleep, it will watch over you—in the grave; and when you you awake, it will talk with you—in the world to come' (*Abot* 6.9). According to a midrash, *be-haqīš*, 'at the awakening', in Ps. 17.15 refers to the resurrection of the dead (*Genesis Rabbah* 21.7).

We should also include in this sector words for morning and light, for example, 'As the day grows dark and then grows light, so also after darkness has fallen upon the Ten Tribes, light shall hereafter shine upon them' (*Sanhedrin* 10.3). This is also where we can include words for seeing, which in some contexts are associated with waking up from the sleep of death and beholding a vision of eternity. There are two good examples in the Psalms: 'I shall see your face; and be satisfied with a vision of you when I awake' (17.15 Rashi); 'For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light' (36.9 Ibn Ezra).

(c) A third sector contains words for 'coming back' and the corresponding causative terms for 'bringing back'. The *locus classicus* for this usage in Biblical Hebrew is David's speech after the death of Bathsheba's child: 'But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back (to life) again? [*la-hashivo*]' (2 Sam. 12.23). In a midrash on Gen. 3.19, the verb *shuv*, 'to return', which occurs twice in the verse in collocation with the words '*afar*, 'dust', and *adamah*, 'earth', is said to refer to a return from the dead (*Genesis Rabbah* 20.10). In Modern Hebrew dictionaries *teḥiyyat ha-metim* is defined as 'a return to life after death' (*shivah le-ḥayyim aḥare mavet*). Mishnaic Hebrew *ḥazar*, 'to return', also occurs in the sense of coming back to life: 'As this day goes and returns not, so they [the Ten Tribes] go and return not' (*Sanhedrin* 10.3).

Probably '*alah*, 'to come up (again)', as opposed to *yarad*, 'to go down (to Sheol)', should be included here too, together with their causative stems. According to Rabbi Joshua, for instance, *morid she'ol vayya'al*, '(the Lord) sends down to Sheol and brings up again' (1 Sam. 2.6), was the song sung by the warriors raised from the dead in Ezekiel's vision (*Sanhedrin* 92b). The verse was also understood by the translators of the Targum as referring

to 'God's raising up of the dead to everlasting life' (cf. *Sanhedrin* 10.3; *Ketubot* 111b).

(d) The last of the central sectors in the field contains words for sprouting up or blossoming forth like plants and flowers. In a question addressed to Rabbi Meir, Cleopatra is reputed to have said (quoting a Psalm), 'I know that the dead bodies will live again, for it is said, "They will blossom forth [*ve-yašišu*] from the city like the grass of the earth" (Ps. 72.16)' (*Sanhedrin* 90b). A cognate verb is used in Eccl. 12.5 ('and the almond-tree shall blossom' [*ve-yaneš*]), which, according to *Midrash Rabbah*, refers to the resurrection of the body (Moore 1932: 385). A third word for 'to break through' or 'burst forth' (*bišbeš*) occurs in another discussion of the resurrection of the dead in which Ps. 72.16 is again cited (*Ketubot* 111b).

In this connection there is also the beautiful language about 'the dew [*tal*] with which the Holy One Blessed be He will make the dead live again' (*Hagigah* 12b). This is a reference to Isa. 26.19: 'O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light and on the land of shades you will let it fall' (*Yer. Berakot* 5.9b; *Yer. Ta'anit* 1.63d). The rabbis also saw a connection between rain and the resurrection of the dead (*Berakot* 5.2).

Outside this fairly clearly defined core of five sectors, represented by the verbs *hayah*, 'to live', *qum*, 'to stand up', *heqis*, 'to wake up', *shuv*, 'to come back' and *šiš*, 'to sprout forth', there are many noun phrases and adverbial expressions that, because of their recurring association with language about the resurrection of the dead, would have to be included in the associative field of *tehiyyat ha-metim*. There are, for example, many temporal expressions like *be-qeš ha-yamim*, 'at the end of time' (Dan. 12.2) and *le-'aḥarit ha-yamim*, 'in the future' (1QpHab 2.5f.). According to Rabbi Meir, the adverb *az*, 'then, at that time', refers to the resurrection of the dead in Exod. 15.1: 'at that time [*az*] Moses and the children of Israel will sing this song' (*Sanhedrin* 91b). The fact that his argument depends on a neglect (possibly intentional) of Hebrew grammar (*GK* §107c) and the narrative context of the words does not concern us at the moment: the adverb *az* in this context, and therefore maybe also elsewhere (e.g. Isa. 58.8; 1QH 6.29), can have eschatological overtones (Bentzen 1970: 19). Similar associations are detectable in the adverbial expression *ve-'aḥar*, 'and afterwards': 'and afterwards you will receive me to glory' (Ps. 73.24; cf. Ibn Ezra). In the eschatologically flavoured Habakkuk Commentary from Qumran it appears to be used in this sense too: 'and afterwards [*ve-'aḥar*] knowledge will be revealed to them abundantly like the waters of the sea' (1QpHab 11.1). In the same text, the related adjective *'aḥaron* occurs several times in phrases such as *ha-dor ha-'aḥaron*, 'the last generation', and *ha-qeš ha-'aḥaron*, 'the final age'.

Then there are forensic terms such as *mishpat*, 'judgment', which in Ps. 1.5 has usually been understood as referring to the 'Great Day' (Targum) or *yom ha-din*, 'the day of judgment' ('*Abodah Zarah* 18a). In the Qumran literature there are a variety of eschatological expressions of this type, including *mishpat* 'aḥaron, 'last judgment' (1QH 17.11), and *yom ha-mishpat*, 'the day of judgment' (1QpHab 12.14; 13.2). Perhaps Mitchell Dahood's suggestion that *be-šedeq* in Ps. 17.15 is to be understood in the same way ('At the Vindication I shall gaze on your face') is valid for the Middle Period (Dahood 1966: 99). Terms for glory, radiance and the like (*kavod*, *hadar*, etc.; cf. Ps. 73.24 Ibn Ezra; 1QS 4.8) and for contempt or humiliation (e.g. *dera'on* in Dan. 12.3; Isa. 66.24) must also be included.

As we move out from the centre of the associative field, clearly the number of words and phrases becomes increasingly unmanageable. But I hope that already the advantages of this method of arranging vocabulary are becoming obvious. Some general observations can now be made.

1. Most of the examples quoted are from the Middle Period. This is no doubt due to various factors, not least among them being that our sources for this period are peculiarly rich and, for biblical scholars, closest to their own field. But it is also due to an important development in the history of biblical theology: it was in the Middle Period, that is, from at the latest the second century BCE, that a doctrine of the resurrection of the dead began to assume a central position in some varieties of Judaism. In the Early Period, for various reasons that have been well enough analysed elsewhere, Israelite traditions about life after death seem to have been, officially at any rate, confined to the vague, shadowy pictures of Sheol with which we are familiar (Barth 1947; Rowley 1956: 150-76; Martin-Achard 1960). Doubts as to whether, apart from the most exceptional cases, notably Enoch and Elijah, there is any hope for humanity after death, are specifically voiced more than once in the Hebrew Bible. It was in the Middle Period that the conviction that death is not the end of communion with God, came to be elaborated and doggedly defended.

During the early part of the Middle Period we also know that a powerful hierarchy, both in Jerusalem and Samaria, argued that the resurrection of the dead was not to be found in Scripture and therefore was not to be taught. But although it was under the authority of this hierarchy that a book such as the *Wisdom of Ben Sira* must have been written in the second century BCE, there is no indication that all the late psalms, for example, were also orthodox in this sense, or that what later came to be known as a Pharisaic doctrine had not been firmly established among the Jews long before it is first explicitly documented. *Prima facie* it is most unlikely that such a doctrine appeared, like Athene fully armed from the head of Zeus, in the Maccabean period (Ringgren 1966: 322-24; Martin-Achard 1960: 223-24).

More probably, long before the closing of the rabbinic canon and while the latest parts of the Hebrew Bible were still being written, this doctrine was well known and popular. If this is true of the historical context of some of the later parts of the Hebrew Bible, then we cannot be dogmatic about what was in the original author's mind, let alone the original compiler's mind. Indeed, if the original authors of some of the passages we have been referring to belonged to the hierarchy themselves, they certainly laid themselves open to Pharisaic 'misinterpretation', as we have seen. This leads us to a second factor in the situation.

2. It might appear that the resurrection of the dead can be found in almost any verse in the Hebrew Bible if we afford any kind of validity to rabbinic exegetical methods and that therefore most of the examples cited above from the Middle Period are of very little relevance to the Hebrew Bible commentator. There are two answers to this objection. First, our survey of the rabbinic and mediaeval literature revealed that there are two quite distinct types of text used for this purpose, those of which we can say with absolute certainty that they originally had nothing to do with the resurrection of the dead, and a larger group of those about which we cannot be certain. Examples of the first type, such as Deut. 31.16 and Rashi's explanation of the two yods in Gen. 2.7, are confined mainly to the Pentateuch, while the majority of the second type occur throughout the Prophets and the Writings, and it is interesting to note that this distinction seems to have been observed by the rabbis themselves (*Sanhedrin* 10.1: Danby 1933: 397 n.). This implies that in dealing with texts that are genuinely ambiguous, we cannot be dogmatic until we have defined their situational context.

The second answer to the objection that by rabbinic exegetical methods almost anything can be associated with the resurrection of the dead is that, in the universe of discourse in which the passages in question were understood, resurrection was such a lively and controversial issue that a number of terms with a fairly wide semantic range were understood eschatologically. This is a piece of objective evidence that will be of the utmost importance when we come in a moment to investigate the associations of certain Biblical Hebrew terms.

3. We come to the question of where to fit 'Biblical Hebrew.' On phonological and grammatical grounds, it cannot be identified completely with the language of ancient Israel. In many cases no doubt the Masoretes have accurately preserved some ancient forms and structures, for example, in the Song of Deborah, but even the scanty documentary evidence already available to us makes it clear that they have not succeeded in doing this consistently, and that much of Biblical Hebrew, not only the latest strata, has undergone a long development that brings it out of the Early Period into the Middle Period. This raises the question of whether, at the semantic level

also, in investigating nuances and overtones, the evidence of the Middle Period is not after all of primary relevance.

The literary arguments confirm this, especially for the Prophets and Writings, with which we are primarily concerned here. While the Torah had probably reached more or less its final form by the fourth century BCE, all the evidence points to a later date for the final form of most of the rest of the Hebrew Bible. The final stage in selecting and arranging the literature of the Hebrew Bible belongs to the Middle Period, and, in reconstructing the situational context of Biblical Hebrew, it is the early part of this period that must have pride of place. This reasoning leads us to the suggestion that, if the final form of the text fits more readily into the Middle Period, into a context, that is to say, in which a doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was popular and eventually universally accepted in orthodox Judaism and Christianity, then for those of us who are interested in the final form of the text, it is not only legitimate to describe the meaning of the text as it was understood during that period, but virtually unavoidable. The decision to select this particular context, in preference to an earlier one, is of course entirely arbitrary, like the decision to focus on the finished texture of a piece of material rather than on its separate threads. But they are both legitimate and no more arbitrary than the decision to concentrate exclusively on reconstructing the earliest form of each text and its meaning in its earliest context.

Finally, having come to some conclusions on the universe of discourse in which to examine Hebrew terms for the resurrection, on where to freeze the cumulative process that has produced the Hebrew Bible, we come to some Biblical Hebrew examples. Our discussion of Hebrew vocabulary in general led to three conclusions on the biblical terms. (1) There are eight verbs in the centre of the field (*hayah*, *qum*, *'amad*, *heqış*, *ne'or*, *shuv*, *'alah*, *şıř*) with probably about 20 terms closely enough associated with them to be reliable clues to the meaning of a passage. (2) There are around 20 passages that refer to or describe the resurrection of the dead in the final form of the text as it was probably understood in the context described above. This is not evidence for ancient Israelite belief, but a biblical theology based on the final form of the text would have to include a substantial section on the subject. These passages are not just vague foreshadowings of the New Testament, as some have argued (Kirkpatrick 1903: xcvi; Rowley 1956: 175-76), but clear expressions of belief in God's power to create, out of the dust and decay of the grave, a new humanity where good lives do not end in suffering and justice prevails.

(3) The resurrection passages in the final form of the text are for the most part the same passages as those in which the resurrection of the dead has long been sought by traditional Christian and Jewish approaches (Logan 1953: 165-67), as well as by some more sophisticated, although not necessarily more convincing, philological approaches (Dahood 1966: xxxvi).

What I hope to have achieved in this paper is to show that it is possible to come to similar conclusions by means of linguistic techniques that are rather different from the traditional ones and perhaps more acceptable to our scientifically oriented minds. I should like to end by recapitulating the argument by reference to three of the best known 'resurrection passages' in the Hebrew Bible: Psalm 1; Job 19.25-27 and Isa. 53.11.

My first contention is that the historical context of the passages must be fixed. If it could be shown that in the period when a passage was originally uttered or written, no one, or very few, of the author's contemporaries believed in the resurrection of the dead, then even allowing for the creativity or originality or heterodoxy of the author, it would be improbable that it was originally about the resurrection of the dead. This is probably true of the original context of Job 19 and Isaiah 53, but not that of Psalm 1. But there are several objections to making the original historical context of a passage the only or the prime objective of biblical research. In the first place, it is extremely unlikely that the passage is in exactly the same form as it was when it left the original author's pen (or lips). This applies not only to text, phonology and grammar but also, at the semantic level, to the meaning of the text. There is of course no objection to attempting a reconstruction of the original form of the text, but, if this is not done, then semantic description of the text as it stands must take account of factors in the historical context of the final form.

Second, the passages, in the form in which we now have them, have been woven into the texture of much larger literary compositions whose original historical context is probably not the same as that of the passages on their own. We have to decide whether we are describing the meaning of a passage in isolation or in its present compositional framework. In the case of Isaiah 53, for example, we have to decide whether to examine it in isolation (as the 'Fourth Servant Song') or (as most scholars do today) in the context of 'Second Isaiah', or as part of the whole book of Isaiah. Again, there is no scientific objection to examining the text at any of these levels, but what still has to be emphasized, I think, is that there is equally no scientific reason why the earliest context of any given passage should be preferred to the earliest context of its final compositional framework.

In the case of the book of Isaiah and the Writings, including the Psalms and Job, there would be little disagreement that the earliest historical context of the finished literary form of these books as we have them falls in the early part of the Middle Period, a period when, on the evidence of Daniel 12, the Septuagint, the Targum, the Mishnah, the New Testament, Josephus and other reliable sources, the resurrection of the dead was a live issue and one that we should expect to find referred to in contemporary literature, even although the conservative establishment fought for a long time to suppress it.

The second part of the argument was based on an examination (presented in a necessarily cursory manner) of an associative field, aimed at collecting terms referring to and associated with the resurrection of the dead. Where several of these occur together in the same context, there is a very strong possibility that, whatever the Sadducaean party or their official predecessors may have said, such passages were understood by many, if not most, of the audience to refer to the resurrection of the dead. This evidence is confirmed in many cases by the ancient versions and early rabbinic or Christian interpretations of the Middle Period. It should be emphasized again that, even in this most permissive approach, in which the door is apparently being opened as wide as possible for all sorts of interpretations, the actual number of words and passages is still relatively small. But provided we define their context carefully, there is no need to go back to a ‘Sadducaean’ approach, which we know to have been officially rejected very early in the history of their interpretation.

Psalms 1.5

עַל-כֵּן לֹא-יִקְמוּ רְשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט וְחַטָּאִים בַּעֲדַת צְדִיקִים:

As far back as we can trace the meaning of this verse it has been understood to refer to the day of judgment, when only the righteous will rise from the dead. The verb *qum* stands near the centre of the resurrection field, and *ba-mishpat* is one of the adverbial phrases associated with it in a number of passages. Working back from v. 5, we come to other associated terms: the wicked in v. 4 are like ‘chaff’, which occurs in another description of the day of wrath (Zeph. 2.2; cf. Isa. 17.13), and in v. 3 the future fate of the pious hero of the psalm is described in language that not only occurs verbatim in Ezekiel’s vision of paradise (47.12) but also figures prominently in a central sector of the resurrection field surveyed above (Ps. 72.16). In the last verse of the psalm the death of the wicked is described in contrast to the happy fate of the righteous and, in the universe of discourse described above, the eschatological meaning of this passage can hardly be in doubt (Briggs and Briggs 1906–7: I, 9–10; Dahood 1966: 4–5).

Job 19.25–27

וְאֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי גִּאֲלִי חַי וְאַחֲרוֹן עַל-עֶפְרַי יָקוּם:
וְאַחֲרָי עוֹרִי נִקְפּוּזֹתַי וּמִבְּשָׂרִי אֲחַיָּה אֶלּוּהַ:
אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי אֲחַיָּה לִי וְעֵינַי רָאוּ וְלֹא-זָר כָּלוּ כְלִיִּי בַּחֲקִי:

We may start with the question, If this passage was not originally about life after death (which is probably the case), then why and in what period

did it come to be understood in that way? The answer seems to be quite simple: in the context of a community that firmly believed in the resurrection of the dead, a number of words came to be associated with this belief, and in this famous passage no fewer than seven of these words occur: *hay*, 'living', *aḥaron*, 'last', *ʿafar*, 'dust', *qum*, 'to arise', *ve-aḥar*, 'and afterwards', *ra'ah*, 'to see' and *ḥazah*, 'to see'. To these we might add an eighth *ga'al*, 'to redeem' (cf. Ps. 49.16), and there may have been a ninth in v. 26, namely *'ur*, 'to awake'. I do not claim to have solved all the textual and linguistic problems in this difficult passage, but on the question of how early this passage as it stands was understood to refer to the resurrection of Job from the dead, I hope I have convinced you that this is how it was understood in the historical context we are considering at the moment, that is to say, the earliest context of the final form of the book of Job. In such a case, there is no good reason to attempt to reconstruct a Sadducean interpretation, as many scholars have done (Snaith 1944: 89 n. 2; Mowinkel 1962: I, 240; cf. Rowley 1956: 164-65).

Isaiah 53.11

מַעֲמַל נַפְשׁוֹ יֵרָאֶה יִשְׁבַּע

Again, as in Job 19, the gruesome picture of a man's suffering and death is followed by the verb *ra'ah*, 'to see', a verb that is associated with life after death in several contexts. It has no object here, and one is tempted, in the light of the evidence of the resurrection field, to take this absolute usage as equivalent to 'after his suffering, he will have a vision' or 'his eyes will be opened'. According to a generally accepted emendation, supported by the reading of the Isaiah Scroll A from Qumran, what he saw after his suffering was 'light', with which we might compare the 'light perpetual' ('*or olamim*') mentioned in the Community Rule (1QS 4.8). Moreover, the verb *sava'*, 'to be satisfied', is associated with the verb *ḥazah*, 'to see' (which occurs in the Job 19 passage), in another passage already referred to (Ps. 17.15). It is hard to avoid the translation 'after his suffering, his eyes will be opened [*or* he will see light] and he will be satisfied'.

A connection with Dan. 12.3, the Old Testament resurrection passage par excellence, has been noted by several commentators (Driver 1922: 202; Montgomery 1927: 472-73; Porteous 1965: 171; Duhm 1914: 375-76; Skinner 1902: 133). Whatever the original author intended his readers or listeners to make of the Fourth Servant Song, the compiler of the book of 66 chapters with which we are concerned at the moment, whether he was part of the official hierarchy or not, must have been familiar with the verses from another part of the same book, quoted above: 'Thy dead shall live . . .' (Isa. 26.19). This is a reference to the resurrection of the dead that no one but a

Sadducee, ancient or modern, could possibly misconstrue, and in the light of this passage from the same book, and the parallels and associations just discussed, again there is no good reason for denying that originally, that is, in the original context of the final form of the book of Isaiah, this passage referred to the resurrection of the servant from his grave.

It may have been at least partly due to the overwhelming Christian associations that the passage accumulated that this interpretation was officially rejected in Jewish tradition. But it is nonetheless a beautiful illustration of how lexical and theological developments in the context of a passage can add a new dimension to its meaning, a dimension that we need no longer feel it is unscientific to describe as it stands.

Bibliography

- Barth, Christoph
 1947 *Die Errettung vom Tode in den individuellen Klage- und Dankliedern des Alten Testaments* (Zollikon: Evangelischer Verlag).
- Bentzen, Aage
 1970 *King and Messiah* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2nd edn).
- Briggs, Charles Augustus, and Emilie Grace Briggs
 1906–7 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Dahood, Mitchell
 1966 *Psalms 1–50: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB, 16; New York: Doubleday).
- Danby, Herbert
 1933 *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Delitzsch, Franz
 1892 *Hebrew Translation of the New Testament* (Leipzig: Dörfpling, 11th edn).
- Driver, S.R.
 1922 *The Book of Daniel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Duhm, Bernhard
 1914 *Das Buch Jesaja* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 3rd edn).
- Elbogen, Ismar
 1993 *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America). German original, 1913.
- Guiraud, P.
 1956 ‘Les champs morpho-sémantiques’, *Bulletin de la société de linguistique de Paris* 52: 265–88.
- Kasowski, Chayim Yehoshua
 1964 *Otsar ha-shemot le-Talmud Bavli* (Jerusalem).
- Kayatz, Christa
 1966 *Studien zu Proverbien 1–9: Eine form- und motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter Einbeziehung ägyptischen Vergleichsmaterials* (WMANT, 22; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag).

- Kirkpatrick, A.F.
 1903 *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; 3 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Logan N.A.
 1953 'The Old Testament and a Future Life', *SJT* 6: 165-71.
- McKane, William
 1970 *Proverbs: A New Approach* (OTL; London: SCM).
- Martin-Achard, Robert
 1960 *From Death to Life: A Study of the Development of the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd).
- Montgomery, James A.
 1927 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Moore, George Foot
 1927 *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (3 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2nd edn).
- Mowinckel, Sigmund
 1962 *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (2 vols.; Oxford: Basil Blackwell); vol. 1.
- Porteous, Norman W.
 1965 *Daniel: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press).
- Rabin, H.
 1970 'Hebrew', in Thomas A. Sebeok, *Current Trends in Linguistics*, VI, *Linguistics in South West Asia and North Africa*, (The Hague: Mouton).
- Ringgren, Helmer
 1966 *Israelite Religion* (London: SPCK).
- Rowley, H.H.
 1956 *The Faith of Israel* (London: SPCK).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
 1972 *Semantics in Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation* (SBT, 2.24; London: SCM Press).
- Singer, S.
 1892 *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode).
- Skinner, John
 1902 *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapters XL–LXVI in the Revised Version: With Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Snaith, Norman Henry
 1944 *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: Epworth Press).

SPACIOUSNESS IN BIBLICAL LANGUAGE ABOUT SALVATION*

For many years, ‘etymologizing’ has brought together spaciousness and several Hebrew words for ‘salvation’, both in lexicographical and theological writing. The following quotation is typical: ‘The king will “work salvation”, *yesha*’, in the true sense of the word, “width”, “spaciousness”’ (Mowinckel 1959: 47). Even if the tempting modern etymology that relates the Hebrew root *YŠ‘ to Arabic *wasi* ‘a, ‘be spacious’ were correct, which it almost certainly is not, there is very little evidence, either in the text itself or in the ancient versions, that the meaning of the words *hoshia* ‘, *yesha* ‘, *yeshu* ‘ah, ever had anything to do with such a ‘root-meaning’—at any rate before the eighteenth century. The use of a number of Hebrew words for ‘enlarge’, ‘give room to’, etc. in biblical language about salvation, however, is well attested, and there is no need to resort to faulty linguistics to find it there. The present study is therefore simply a description of this feature of Biblical Hebrew, together with some suggestions concerning its origin and development in biblical tradition.

Method. This is the study not of one word but of a ‘semantic field’ or, more precisely, of a lexical group within a wider ‘associative field’ (Trier 1931; Öhmann 1953; Ullmann 1964: 10-14). The lexical group that corresponds to English *wide*, *broad*, *widen*, *enlarge*, etc. contains the following Biblical Hebrew terms: the verbs *raḥab*, *hirḥib*, *ravaḥ*, *meruvvaḥ* and *yapt*; and the nouns *raḥab*, *roḥab*, *reḥabah*, *reḥob*, *merḥab*, *revaḥ* and *revaḥah*. The group is quite clearly defined, and can be referred to as ‘*raḥab*, *hirḥib*, etc.’. The associative field of *hirḥib*, on the other hand, would include not only these terms but also every word and expression associated with it in Biblical Hebrew: opposites like *ṣarah*, ‘straits, distress’; terms belonging to related lexical groups like *riḥaq*, ‘extend’ (Isa. 26.15), *higdil*, ‘enlarge’; idiomatic expressions denoting large spaces like *miqṣe ha’areṣ we-’ad miqṣe ha’areṣ*, ‘from one end of the earth to the other’ (Deut. 13.8); words related

* This paper was first published in the *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* (Jerusalem) 6 (1968), pp. 20-34.

to a metaphorical usage of *hirhib*, such as *hilleš*, ‘deliver’ (Ps. 18.20). This very much larger group is termed the ‘*hirhib*–field’. In spite of its size and the fluidity of its contours, such a field is a valuable linguistic reality, providing a basis for identifying all the relevant passages. It is not proposed to discuss all these passages here, since our main interest is in a metaphorical usage that concerns only part of the field, but reference will be made to many associated passages as well.

The passages are classified in the first instance into two groups: (1) those in which the terms in question denote literally physical dimensions, for example, ‘a good and a broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey’ (Exod. 3.8); (2) those in which they are applied, metaphorically, to various human experiences, for example, ‘Thou hast given me room when I was in distress’ (Ps. 4.2). The second of these groups is further subdivided into contexts of physical danger or distress, and contexts of psychological or spiritual distress. The resulting three groups follow, very roughly, a historical pattern; but it must be emphasized that the development is not primarily chronological, but logical. Thus, questions of dating, which are intriguing and will concern us to some extent, are of secondary importance.

The term ‘passage’ is used to denote immediate linguistic environment, and, since we are not concerned with definitions, these are quoted in an English translation (RSV). The term ‘context’ is reserved for the wider situational framework in which the words in question are applied. The method adopted for describing the groups of passages is to present the essential characteristics of each first, and then quote one example and list references to other passages.

Finally, no conclusions are put forward either on the relation between the ‘Hebrew mind’ or *Weltbild* and the Hebrew language, or on the ‘concept of spaciousness in the Bible’. It is hoped that this will prove that a number of valuable semantic and theological statements can be made concerning Biblical Hebrew, without raising either of these thorny questions (Boman 1960; Barr 1961; Hill 1967: 1-14).

1. *Territorial Spaciousness*

Apart from *ravaḥ* and *revahah*, which will be discussed later, all the words in the lexical group ‘*raḥab*, *hirhib*, etc.’ can denote physical dimensions: the extent of a land (e.g. Exod. 3.7f.), the space between two droves of cattle (Gen. 32.16), the spaciousness of a room (Jer. 22.14) and the like. *reḥob*, ‘open place’, *meruvvaḥ*, ‘spacious’, and *yapt* (Gen. 9.27), ‘he may enlarge’, occur only in this concrete sense.

The verb *hirhib*, ‘enlarge’, is applied in as heterogeneous a variety of contexts as its equivalents in other languages, but there is one recurring usage that is of particular interest in the Hebrew Bible. Of its seven occur-

rences in the context of territorial expansion, six refer to the expansion of Israel's boundaries (or part of them), all but one of these with God as subject, for example, 'For I will cast out nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither shall anyone desire your land' (Exod. 34.24; cf. Gen. 26.22; Deut. 12.20; 19.8; 33.20; Isa. 54.2). This passage and the two Deuteronomy passages (12.20; 19.8) belong to the language of God's promise of land, and with them must be grouped a number of passages in which a similar element is present but is expressed in different words, for example, 'On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, the Jebusites"' (Gen. 15.18-21; cf. Gen. 13.14-18 J; Exod. 3.7f. E; Num. 24.6 JE; Deut. 11.24; Josh. 1.4; 12.1; Neh. 9.25). To these we may add a third group, in which God is again the subject but only part of the promised land is the object, for example, 'And of Gad he said, "Blessed be he who enlarges Gad!"' (Deut. 33.20; cf. Gen. 9.27 J; 26.22 J; Judg. 18.10; 1 Chron. 4.40).

From an analysis of these passages it emerges that spaciousness was a prominent feature, as one would expect, in the language of God's promise of land from an early time. In the first place, none of the relevant Pentateuchal passages is given a late date by the critics. Four of the five Genesis passages are assigned by Eissfeldt to L (his earliest source), the rest to JE (Eissfeldt 1966: 194f., 199f). The Deuteronomist elaborates the theme, making the boundaries of the promised land extend beyond the actual lists in Joshua 12-21, and Ezra's prayer is Deuteronomic in style (Nehemiah 9). The separate tribal traditions of Gad, Dan and Simeon also, in which the spaciousness motif occurs, are all generally recognized as early: the Blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33), the legend of the inheritance of Dan (Judges 18), one of the Chronicler's genealogies (1 Chron. 4.40). There are the two folk etymologies on the names Japheth and Rehoboth: 'God enlarge [*yapt*] Japheth' (Gen. 9.27); 'for now the Lord has made room [*hirhabta*] for us' (Gen. 26.22).

Now the descriptions of the extent of the promised land in Gen. 15.18-21 (JE), and frequently in Deuteronomy and Joshua, cannot be separated from the details of Solomon's dominions as established by the victories of his father, for example, 'So Solomon held the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly, from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the Lord our God, seven days' (1 Kgs 8.65; cf. 1 Kgs 9.19). Later the northern kingdom saw a partial recovery of this empire, defined in similar terms, in the reign of Jeroboam II (cf. 2 Kgs 14.25, 28). It can safely be assumed that, at these two periods of political expansion, that is to say, the tenth century BCE and the first half of the eighth, the traditional language about God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would be enriched with

contemporary details, the earlier (J or L) passages perhaps during the reign of Solomon in Jerusalem, and the later Deuteronomic elaborations in 1 and 2 Kings during the reign of Jeroboam in the northern kingdom. At times like these, when it appeared that God's promise of land had been fulfilled, the 'remote memoranda of territorial history' were brought up to date, with references to contemporary political conditions (von Rad 1966: 73).

The language of promise is developed still more eloquently in the prophets, for example, 'Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; hold not back, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your descendants will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities' (Isa. 54.2f.; cf. Isa. 26.15; 30.23; Hos. 4.16; Mic. 7.11). Ezekiel's vision incorporates the re-establishment of ancient frontiers (47.15-20; cf. Num. 34.1-12). Zechariah, paradoxically, takes this development as far as it will go: '... till there is no room for them' (10.10b; cf. Isa. 49.19f.; etc.).

Before leaving the question of territorial expansion, a word must be said about those passages where not God but men 'enlarge their borders' at the expense of their neighbours. The only passage where the idiom *hirhib ge'ul*, 'enlarge one's border' is applied to human activity is Amos's outspoken condemnation of the Ammonites: '... because they have ripped up women with child in Gilead, that they might enlarge their border' (1.13). It may be that the prophet is deliberately 'misapplying' the idiom that is normally reserved for God's bounty, in order to heighten the effect of his attack on Ammonite hubris. Other examples of such a prophetic device can be cited from Amos as well as from other parts of the Hebrew Bible (Amos 1.2; Joel 3.16; cf. Isa. 2.3d). However that may be, human imperialism is consistently condemned in many strands of biblical tradition, for example, 'Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land' (Isa. 5.8; cf. Isa. 8.7f.; Jer. 22.13f.; Ezek. 34.18; Mic. 2.2; Hab. 1.6). There was a specific law against encroaching on a neighbour's land (Deut. 19.14).

What, then, is the difference between God's territorial expansion on behalf of Israel and human imperialism? Biblical tradition approaches the problem in three ways. In the first place, there is the constant reiteration of the language of promise: Israel had a divine right to take over Canaan, a right that can be traced back into the distant past; more than that, they had a duty to settle there and to drive out the indigenous inhabitants to ensure that the promise was acknowledged and fulfilled (von Rad 1966: 79-93). In addition to this theological argument, which can hardly convince the non-Israelite, there are the patriarchal traditions, which teach that Israel's ancestors not only founded the main sanctuaries in the land but actually made at least one official purchase of land. The punctilious official language of the

account of Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah, 'which was to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave which was in it and all the trees that were in the field, throughout its whole area' (Gen. 23.17), is intended to prove that here, if nowhere else, Israel had a legal foothold in the promised land.

Third, the ultimate aim of God's territorial expansion was the establishment of a rule of righteousness in which the whole world would share. A universalist thread runs through many layers of biblical tradition from the earliest '*karitätiven Universalismus*' of the Yahwist to the unquestioned inclusion of the book of Ruth in the canon of Scripture (Altmann 1964: 11). God's 'imperialism', unlike human imperialism, was concerned from the beginning with all nations: 'When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God' (Deut. 32.8). Israel was forbidden to encroach on the territory of Edom and Moab: that would have been human imperialism (Deut. 2.5-9).

There is thus a distinction between the two imperialisms, which makes it clear that God's territorial expansion on behalf of Israel cannot be unjust in the same way that the Ammonites' was. Where it restricts or destroys Israel's neighbours for a time, it is to preserve God's name among the nations (Deut. 4.6-8) and eventually to spread the justice that has been peculiarly revealed to Israel, to the ends of the earth, for example, 'He says, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth"' (Isa. 49.6). The 'imperialism of God', as a theological category hammered out in the history of Israel's impact on her environment, belongs, on the one hand, to the covenant love that ensures the survival of the chosen people, but, on the other hand, to the universal righteousness by which God plans to give to all the peoples of the world the spaciousness of salvation.

2. *Escape from Danger*

There are a number of passages in which *hirhib*, *merhab* and *revaḥ* are applied to escape from some kind of restricting, claustrophobic experience, clearly distinguishable from literal territorial confinement. The danger is described in terms of a nightmarish frustration, for example, 'I have been hunted like a bird by those who were my enemies without cause; they flung me alive into the pit and cast stones on me; water closed over my head; I said, "I am lost"' (Lam. 3.52-54; cf. Ps. 17.11-12; 18.4-5). Victory is escape 'into a broad place', for example, 'He brought me forth into a broad place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me' (Ps. 18.19; cf. Ps. 4.2; 118.5; Job 36.16). The exact nature of the danger is not

always specified, but the language vividly describes the confidence and delight of one who has experienced some dramatic escape from a seemingly unbreakable net of hostile circumstances, in the law court, in war, in illness, in business or in some other sphere, and has attributed that escape to the intervention of God.

The transference from physical *Lebensraum* to a more metaphorical usage is attested early in the history of Biblical Hebrew, since the two occurrences in Psalm 18 probably go back to the time of David (Cross and Freedman 1953). We might go further and suggest, in view of the colourful character of the two expressions used in this psalm, *hoši' la-merḥab*, 'bring forth into a broad place' (v. 19) and *hirḥib ša'adi taḥteni*, 'gave a wide place for my steps under me' (v. 36), that the metaphor was particularly productive in the days of Davidic or immediately post-Davidic territorial expansion. Such a development in the history of the language would be entirely natural and accords nicely with the theory of Hans Sperber that 'if we are intensely interested in a subject, it will provide us with analogies for the description of other experiences' (Sperber 1923: 67). Another example from the Hebrew Bible of this 'semantic law' is the abundance of forensic metaphors in the *hoshia*-field, for example, *ga'al, pada, šedeq, šafaṭ*. Finally, there is the fact that the somewhat peculiar idiom *hirḥib le-*, 'give room to', occurs only three times in the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 26.22; Ps. 4.2; Prov. 18.16), always in a good sense, and in collocation with *šarah*, 'distress' (Ps. 4.2), and is almost equivalent to 'help, save'. All three passages are difficult to date, but there is no reason why all of them, and the other idioms referred to already, should not be assigned to a time of unprecedented political expansion and freedom from border disputes, when contemporary history would leave its mark on the metaphorical application of these words as well as on their literal use in the language of the promise of land.

The corresponding development from *revaḥ*, 'space', to *revaḥ*, 'relief', in the isolated and late expression *revaḥ ve-ḥaššalah*, 'relief and deliverance' (Est. 4.14), involves a third term, *ruaḥ*, 'breath, spirit'. It is hardly possible to distinguish two Semitic roots here, and Akkadian *napashu*, 'be wide', alongside *napishtu*, 'life, soul' (cf. Hebrew *nefesh*, 'abundance'; *va-yinnafesh*, 'and he was refreshed'; *nefesh*, 'life, soul') provides us with a convincing parallel. The accepted fact that metaphorical transfers from concrete to abstract are far more common than the opposite type makes it clear that here again we have the development from a physical, possibly territorial usage to a figurative sense. One dictionary actually describes *ruaḥ*, 'breath', 'spirit', as a derivative of *ravaḥ*, 'be wide' (*KBL*).

One difference between the usage of *raḥab*, *hirḥib*, etc., and *ravaḥ*, *revaḥ*, etc., is that the metaphorical usage of the latter is far more frequent than the literal one: six out of the eight occurrences of this lexical subgroup are in metaphorical contexts (Exod. 8.15; 1 Sam. 16.23; Ps. 66.12 read-

ing *rewaḥah*; Job 32.20; Lam. 3.56; Est. 4.14). This may be due simply to the chance selection of usages in our corpus, but the third element in the pattern, which is also more commonly used in the sense of 'spirit' than of 'wind' or 'breath', may also have something to do with it. An interesting modern example of the convergence of *revaḥ*, 'space', with *ruaḥ*, 'wind', is Modern Hebrew *meruvvaḥ*, 'air-conditioned' (Biblical Hebrew 'spacious'; cf. Jer. 22.14).

Finally, to move for a moment beyond Biblical Hebrew into early Jewish literature, there is an exquisite illustration of the richness of this language in the 'Grace after Meals': 'O our God, our Father, feed us, nourish us, sustain, support and relieve us [*ve-harvihenī*], and speedily, O Lord our God, grant us relief [*ve-harvaḥ lanu*] from all our troubles' (Singer 1892: 281). Here the one word, *hirviaḥ*, 'give relief', is used in two senses side by side: first, taken with the preceding words, it denotes abundance and prosperity, while the second, going with the words that follow it, refers rather to liberation from danger and oppression. This third part of the prayer, traditionally entitled 'the Builder of Jerusalem', expresses the hopes of Jewish communities after 70 CE with peculiar poignancy (cf. *Berakot* 48b-49a).

3. *Spiritual Freedom*

We now come to a third application of some of these terms, namely in contexts of psychological or spiritual freedom. The verbal form *ravaḥ* occurs only in this kind of context: for example, 'And when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him' (1 Sam. 16. 23; cf. Job 32.20; Exod. 8.15). In both cases *ruaḥ*, 'spirit', occurs in the same passage, and the link between *ravaḥ*, 'be relieved', and *ruaḥ*, 'spirit', discussed above, may be of significance.

But to return to *raḥab*, *hirḥib*, etc., some of these terms too have a psychological application. First, there are the expressions corresponding to English 'broad-minded', 'big-hearted', French *largesse*, etc.: for example, *hirḥib nefesh*, 'have an insatiable appetite' (Isa. 5.14); *hirḥib pe 'al*, 'jeer at', lit., 'open the mouth at' (Isa. 57.4); *roḥab leb*, 'largeness of understanding' (1 Kgs 4.29); *raḥab levavek*, 'your heart shall rejoice' (Isa. 60.5). These require no special treatment here, except to notice that, first, they are psychological applications of the terms for 'wide, enlarge', without reference to a psychological third term like *ruaḥ*, 'spirit'; and, second, these expressions become an important part of the vocabulary of later Hebrew. Apart from the concrete nominal forms *roḥab*, 'width', and *reḥob*, 'street', it is almost true to say that the figurative use of these words is more productive than the literal one in Modern Hebrew. Many of these

usages go back to Talmudic expressions, for example, *harḥabat ha-da* 'at, 'spiritual tranquillity' (cf. *Berakot* 57b); *be-yad reḥabah*, 'generously' (cf. *Yer. Hagigah* I, 76c).

There is, however, one group of passages where the idea of spaciousness has been 'spiritualized': for example, 'I will keep thy law continually, for ever and ever; and I shall walk at liberty, for I have sought thy precepts' (Ps. 119.45; cf. vv. 32, 96; Hos. 4.16). Both AV and RSV translate *ba-reḥabah*, 'at liberty'. The LXX has ἐν πλατυσμῷ as though the metaphor was still productive in Greek, although, apart from the LXX and two cases in the Shepherd of Hermas, neither πλατυσμός nor εὐρυχωρία is attested in this metaphorical sense in Classical Greek or the Koine. The development in Biblical Hebrew is certainly a remarkable one: a word for 'freedom' in the *hirḥib*-field. Freed from territorial cramping and various kinds of national or personal danger, Israel may still be restricted and shut in by their own guilt, for example, 'Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn; can the Lord now feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture?' (Hos. 4.16; cf. Ps. 23.2). They had not reached the spaciousness of freedom from their own imperfections.

The shift from territorial spaciousness, that is, the fulfilment of a promise of land, to spiritual freedom and a new concept of the kingdom of God is developed more fully in the New Testament. There *menuḥah*, 'rest', is the term selected for this re-interpretation, for example, 'Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, that no one fall by the same disobedience' (Heb. 4.11). This is not the place to discuss the term *menuḥah*; the picture is complicated and enriched by the convergence of the idea of the peace of the promised land (e.g. Ps. 95.11) with the idea of Sabbath rest (Gen. 2.2). But the important point is that the spiritualizing process is so complete in the New Testament that 'entering that rest' is parallel to 'entering the kingdom of God' (Mt. 5.20; Jn 3.5). Nor is this the place to follow up parallel developments in other strands of Jewish tradition. Among the sectarian writings of the Qumran community there are several beautiful examples, for example, '(Thou wilt bring healing to) my wound, and marvellous might in place of my stumbling, and everlasting space to my straitened soul' (1QH 9.27f.; cf. 3.19f.; 5.33f.; 6.31).

In Psalm 119, the language of spaciousness is applied in a striking way to the spiritual freedom of those who know 'die heilschaffenden leben-erneuernden Kräfte der Torah' (Kraus 1960: 821). Far from restricting, the law of God gives freedom. Like the 'imperialism' involved in the fulfilment of God's promise of land, this spiritual self-confidence can be criticized: 'an eagerness, a growing boldness . . . that could well take a careful theologian's breath away' (von Rad 1966: 382). But this is an ideal picture of the spiritual freedom of a *ṣaddiq*, representing Israel's highest aims

together with the hope of their fulfilment. It is described from two angles in the language of spaciousness. In the first place it refers to intellectual breadth of vision, for example, 'I will run in the way of thy commandments when thou enlargest my understanding' (v. 32). The Torah gives intellectual satisfaction. With this must be compared the Solomonic traditions of wisdom: his God-given 'largeness of mind' (1 Kgs 4.29) refers, on the one hand, to his knowledge of an immensely wide range of subjects (cf. 1 Kgs 4.32) and, on the other, to the wise and intelligent mind (3.12) of a king who could deal with his subjects' problems with lateral thinking and an impressive originality (vv. 16-28) and, when there was building to be done, did not confine his plans to the narrow frontiers of his own land but knew in what part of the world he could find the best craftsmen (5.2-6). The relationship of Psalm 119 to the wisdom traditions is beyond doubt, and this intellectual ability and joy, on the purely human, secular level, are certainly there.

The other aspect of this spiritual freedom, however, envisaged by the author of Psalm 119, is more significant. The Torah also provides an escape from false ways, for example, 'Put false ways far from me; and graciously teach me thy law' (v. 29; cf. v. 133). This is more than intellectual achievement. The joy that comes from this newfound freedom is 'better than thousands of gold and silver pieces' (v. 72) and 'sweeter than honey' (v. 103). The lost sheep has been sought and found (v. 176): Israel has been led to the broad pasture (*merḥab*) from which they had by their stubbornness so long been debarred (cf. Hos. 4.16). This is a picture of liberation from personal guilt and misery and the discovery of the possibilities open to one who is guided by the light of God's law, 'a commandment which is exceedingly broad' (v. 96).

The rich poetic vision of spiritual freedom presented in Psalm 119 suggests one final development in biblical tradition. As has already been pointed out, the situations for which the psalms were originally composed are obscure, and their application in later contexts must therefore be of special interest to biblical scholars. The language in which the psalms are composed, with its lack of particularity and circumstantial details, its stereotyped phrases and the like, is ideally suited to this kind of reapplication (or 'contextualization') (see Halliday 1959; Lyons 1963: 23ff.). Thus, it is not surprising that the unspecified dangers described in the elaborate imagery of nets, waves, dogs, lions, evildoers, disease and death, include psychological and spiritual realities as well as physical distress. The freedom celebrated in Psalm 118, for instance, may originally have been 'an occasion of national jubilation', possibly in the time of the Maccabees (Cohen 1945: 389), or it may have been a long-awaited release from prison (Schmidt 1928: 8), or a miraculous recovery from illness (Weiser 1962: 724); but however that may

be, its formal language and its lack of particularity make it equally applicable to an endless variety of situations of affliction and fear.

In the light of the evidence for this development from ideas of territorial freedom, with its concomitant jubilation in the time of David and Solomon, to the colourful, poignant expressions for liberation from all kinds of restricting danger and distress, it would be unwise to reject these last spiritualizing interpretations as late or spurious. An important feature of biblical tradition is the remarkable applicability of ideas like the spaciousness of salvation to an infinite variety of human situations. This alone explains how *la-merḥab* (Ps. 18.20) can provide the title of an Israeli newspaper, defined (without reference to 'root-meanings') by a Modern Hebrew dictionary as *revahah*, *hofesh*, *yeshu'ah* (Even Shoshan 1962).

Bibliography

- Altmann, Peter
 1964 *Erwählungstheologie und Universalismus im Alten Testament* (BZAW, 92; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann).
- Barr, James
 1961 *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Boman, Thorleif
 1960 *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (Library of History and Doctrine; London: SCM Press).
- Cohen, A.
 1945 *The Psalms: Hebrew Text and English Translation, with an Introduction and Commentary* (Soncino Books of the Bible; London: Soncino Press).
- Cross, Frank Moore, and David Noel Freedman
 1953 'A Royal Song of Thanksgiving', *JBL* 72: 15-34.
- Eissfeldt, Otto
 1966 *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- Even Shoshan, Avraham
 1962 *Millon ḥadash* (5 vols.; Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer).
- Halliday, M.A.K.
 1959 *The Language of the Chinese 'Secret History of the Mongols'* (Publications of the Philological Society, 17; Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- Hill, D.W.
 1967 *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings: Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Kraus, Hans-Joachim
 1960 *Psalmen* (BKAT, 15; 2 vols.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag).
- Lyons, John
 1963 *Structural Semantics: An Analysis of Part of the Vocabulary of Plato* (Publications of the Philological Society, 20; Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- Mowinckel, Sigmund
 1959 *He That CVometh* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).

Öhmann, Suzanne

1953 'Theories of the "Linguistic Field"', *Word* 9: 123-34.

Rad, Gerhard von

1966 *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd).

Schmidt, H.

1928 *Das Gebet des Angeklagten im Alten Testament* (BZAW, 49; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann).

Singer, S.

1892 *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode).

Sperber, Hans

1923 *Einführung in die Bedeutungslehre* (Bonn: K. Schroeder).

Trier, Jost

1931 *Der deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes: Die Geschichte eines sprachlichen Feldes* (Heidelberg: C. Winter).

Ullmann, Stephen

1964 *Language and Style: Collected Papers* (Language and Style Series, 1; Oxford: Basil Blackwell).

Weiser, Artur

1962 *The Psalms: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SPCK).

TYPES OF PRAYER IN THE HEBREW BIBLE*

Some Semantic Observations on hitpallel, hithannen etc.

Despite progress in biblical semantics and Semitic linguistics in general over the last 10 or 15 years, recent studies of *hitpallel* and other Hebrew terms for 'prayer' are still preoccupied with etymologies, and more important data have consequently been neglected (Palache 1959; Speiser 1963; Herrmann 1964; *THAT*, II, 427ff.). In this short paper I propose to look at three types of evidence in particular with a view to defining the meaning of some of these terms more accurately than has been done up till now and perhaps clearing the way for a more sensitive translation of several passages in the Hebrew Bible. The three questions I shall be asking, questions that have not, as far as I can discover, been asked before in connection with these terms, are these:

1. What kind of utterance is actually described in Biblical Hebrew as a *tefillah*? To what types of prayer is the term *hitpallel* applied in the Hebrew Bible, and to what types is it not applied? To what types are the other terms actually applied?

2. What is the distinction between *hitpallel* and its closest synonyms? Given a list of synonyms like 'pray, entreat, request, intercede, beg, demand, ask, call, cry', etc., part of what linguists call the 'associative field' of the word 'pray' (Sawyer 1972: 28-59), it is the precise distinctions between them that are interesting, and a semantic analysis obviously must aim to discover what those distinctions are. Rabin and Raday's *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Language* lists twenty-three nouns under *taḥanunim* and another twenty different nouns under *tefillah* (Rabin and Raday 1973: II, 1203, 1250). Fortunately for us, only a fraction of these are biblical, but, as we shall see, that is plenty to work on.

* This article was originally published in *Semitics* 7 (1980), pp. 131-43.

3. My third question introduces an innovation into modern biblical semantics. What do the terms mean in Post-Biblical Hebrew? Semitists delight in quoting related terms from Babylonian, Amorite and Ugaritic from sources hundreds of years earlier than the earliest biblical texts, and yet often the particular nuance of a term used in the Bible may be identified by considering a semantic development better documented in the rich Post-Biblical Hebrew sources than in the Hebrew Bible itself. Of course one still has to examine the texts synchronically, but later distinctions and nuances often provide a better starting point than traditional comparative philology. For one thing, the historical relationship between Biblical Hebrew and Post-Biblical Hebrew is far closer than that between Biblical Hebrew and, say, Ugaritic or Babylonian. Second, the language of the Masoretic Text, however successful the Masoretes were in preserving the language of ancient Israel, is certainly not identical with it, and unless we resort to drastic emendation and reconstruction, then the MT, undoubtedly a 'post-biblical' variety of Hebrew in some sense, is the language to which most of our semantics is going to be applied. Over and over again I have found Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's *Thesaurus totius hebraicitatis* an invaluable heuristic tool in biblical semantic work (Ben-Yehuda 1908–59).

Equipped with these three alternatives to the etymological approach, let us now turn to the question of what *hitpallel* and related terms actually mean in the language of the Hebrew Bible (Sawyer 1972: 16–27). Six terms stand out from the rest of the word's associative field, first, as being particularly close to *hitpallel* in meaning and, second, as being somewhat indiscriminately translated into English as 'pray', 'plead', 'intercede', 'supplicate'. So for the purpose of this paper I am going to concentrate on them. They are the verbs *hitpallel*, *hithannen*, '*atar, paga*', *hillah et-pene* and the noun *rinnah*, which conveniently occur together in connection with Manasseh's celebrated prayer (2 Chron. 33.12f.) and in the equally familiar context of Jeremiah's Temple Sermon (Jer. 7.16).

1. *hitpallel* First, an investigation of the formulas used to introduce language addressed to God showed that *hitpallel* is consistently used to introduce formal prayers, often in a cultic context. Virtually every *tefillah* is written in formal language: either that of a psalm, like Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2 and Jonah's prayer (cf. Psalms 17; 86; 90; 102; 142) or in formal Deuteronomic style like the prayers of Moses (Deut. 9.26–29), David (2 Sam. 7.18–29), Solomon (1 Kgs 8.23–53), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19.15–19), Jeremiah (Jer. 32.17–25), Daniel (Dan. 9.4–19) and Ezra (Ezra 9.6–15) (Sawyer 1972: 16–26; Macholz 1971: 318–21). The patriarchs' prayers are less formal and not described as *tefillot*, nor are the prayers of minor characters like the sailors in Jonah (Jon. 1.14) or Abraham's servant (Gen. 24.12–14). Short prayers in a noncultic context are introduced by the word *qara* or

ša'aq, *qara* where the vocative 'O Lord' is prominent (e.g. Judg. 16.28; Jon. 1.14) and *ša'aq* where it is not (e.g. Exod. 17.14; Judg. 10.10).

A second conclusion, obvious to anyone who examines the actual usage of *hitpallel* in Biblical Hebrew, is that it is an entirely general term used to describe all kinds of formal prayers: confession, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession. In spite of the fact that several recent studies (and, incidentally, the *Jerusalem Bible*) maintain that 'the primary meaning' of *hitpallel* is 'to intercede', there is no evidence that this is so. The term *tefillah* only rarely refers to intercession, a fact acknowledged somewhat illogically by Hans-Peter Stähli in his etymologically based *THAT* article; and the 25 passages cited for the intercessory meaning of the verb are not convincing (Stähli, *THAT* II, 427ff.; Speiser 1963: 305; Ap-Thomas 1956: 238f.; Hesse 1951: 94). It is of course the preposition *be'ad*, 'on behalf of', that gives the passages the intercessory meaning (as in Jer. 7.16), not the verb. The preposition *be'ad* occurs also with *ša'aq*, 'to call for help on someone's behalf' (1 Sam. 7.9), and with *he'elah 'olah*, 'to make a sacrifice for someone' (Job 42.8), but this does not mean that the primary meaning of such terms is intercessory. The primary meaning of several other terms may be intercessory, but in that respect they are to be distinguished from *hitpallel* rather than equated with it.

Before we turn to the other terms, we have to consider the post-biblical evidence. This decisively confirms our preliminary conclusions that *hitpallel* is not particularly associated with intercession but is the term for liturgical prayer in general. The term *bet tefillah* is a common name for a place of worship, never *bet taḥanunim* or *bet rinnah*. The meaning of *hitpallel* is 'to say one's prayers' or 'to offer up a prayer', and, in the most general sense of the phrase, phylacteries are called 'tefillin'. There is no suggestion in the texts, biblical or post-biblical, that *hitpallel* has a more specific meaning such as 'to intercede', whatever its etymology may have been.

2. *rinnah*. 'Say no prayers for this people', then, is what Jeremiah's instructions are, and the verse goes on: 'and send up no *rinnah u-tefillah* on their behalf'. The word *tefillah* is the general term, defined by another more specific term in juxtaposition to it. The meaning of *rinnah* is not in doubt: it means a loud shout or cry, expressing joy in some contexts, in other contexts directed to God in an attempt to achieve results (Wagner 1960: 440). It is interesting that in Post-Biblical Hebrew *rinnen* means 'to slander, gossip, complain'. Thus, *tefillah* can be any kind of prayer, but *rinnah u-tefillah* in this context and in a couple of other passages in Jeremiah and in Solomon's prayer in the Temple (1 Kgs 8.28) must be a prayer in which the speaker pleads with God in a loud voice. The word *rinnah* occurs frequently in the Psalms and was perhaps a cultic term, as the verb *nasa*, 'to raise', which goes with it, suggests. But, unlike *tefillah*, in which formal language was important, *rinnah* lays more stress on the speaker's tone of voice than on the

actual words used. As a translation for the idiom *rinnah u-tefillah*, I would suggest simply ‘loud prayers’.

3. *paga‘ be-*. ‘Say no prayers for this people; do not send up loud prayers on their behalf . . . *ve-al-tifga‘-bi*. The third term in this verse *paga‘* occurs only five times in the Hebrew Bible in the sense of ‘to pray, plead, intercede for someone’ (Jer. 7.16; 27.18; Gen. 23.8; Job 21.15; Ruth 1.16), three times addressed to God. There are several clues to the distinctive nuances of this verb as opposed to *hitpallel* and the rest. First, it is followed by the preposition *be-*. In several phrases, such as *pasha‘ be-*, ‘to sin against’, ‘*anah be-*, ‘to bear witness against’, and *nilham be-*, ‘to fight against’, the preposition has what we might call a hostile or aggressive sense (BDB, 89), as opposed to the normally more benign ‘*el-* and ‘*le-*. Second, although the meaning ‘pray’ is well attested, both in Biblical and Post-Biblical Hebrew usage, the primary meaning of this verb is ‘to encounter, confront, reach’. In Gen. 28.11, *va-yifga‘ be-maqom*, although brilliantly interpreted in the Midrash as meaning ‘Jacob prayed to the Almighty’, really means ‘he arrived at the place’ (Jastrow, 1135). Third, the hiphil of the verb occurs three times in the sense of ‘intervening’ in a situation of crime and violence (Isa. 53.11; 59.16; Jer. 36.25). The evidence suggests then that there is a note of urgency in this third term for prayer in Jer. 7.16 that is not present in *hitpallel*. Like *rinnah*, *paga‘ be-* tells us not so much about what is said as about how it is said. In Modern Hebrew it can mean ‘to offend, hurt one’s feelings’, as well as ‘to entreat, importune’. All three terms then in this verse—*hitpallel*, *rinnah u-tefillah* and *paga‘ be-*—can be, and have been, translated as ‘pray’ or ‘prayer’; I hope I have shown the distinctive meaning of each.

4. *hillah*. We turn now to our other text in which, in addition to *hitpallel*, three other terms for prayer are used (2 Chron. 33.12-13). The English versions have a variety of terms here: ‘beseech, pray, entreaty, supplication’ (AV); ‘pray, seek to placate, petition and supplication’ (NEB); ‘pray, seek to appease, prayer, plea’ (JB) and the like. The first term *hillah et-pene* is in at least two respects distinct from *hitpallel*. First, like *paga‘ be-*, it is used in human contexts as well, for example, Prov. 19.6: ‘Many curry favour with the great’ (cf. Job 11.19). Second, it appears to be rather crudely anthropomorphic. It apparently means something like ‘to stroke the face of someone’ or ‘to soften or sweeten the countenance’, that is to say, to make an angry or hard or hostile countenance more friendly and lenient towards one (Ap-Thomas 1956: 239f.; BDB, 318).

Analysed like this, the term certainly does seem to have an original anthropomorphism about it. But this need not be the case in actual usage: in many passages it may simply be translated ‘to beseech’ (e.g. Exod. 32.11), and in post-biblical usage the second part of the term is dropped, leaving

the verb *hillah*, ‘to pray’, and the noun *hilluy*, ‘prayer’. What, then, is the particular nuance of this term? As with *rinnah* and *paga*’, the emphasis is obviously on how the prayer is made and what its object is rather than on what is actually said. It has been suggested that this is an idiom that originated in the language of the royal court, where etiquette and, in particular, decorous and prudent speech were at a premium (*ThWAT*, II, cols. 969-71). Here and elsewhere it is accompanied by words for bowing down. If this is so, then we may deduce that *hillah et-pene* stands at the opposite end of the spectrum from *rinnah* and *paga*’: they suggest loud and violent confrontation with God, while *hillah* should perhaps be translated, ‘In his distress he pleaded with the Lord his God . . .’ I might add, against the more analytical translations of the NEB and JB, that in Chronicles we are probably dealing with a late variety of Biblical Hebrew, and therefore the evidence already quoted that this term does not mean ‘seek to appease’ in Post-Biblical Hebrew is all the more relevant.

5. *atar*. *wayyitpallel ’elayw*, ‘Manasseh prayed to him’—*va-yē’atēr* (2 Chron. 33.13). This is the passive of our fifth term for prayer *atar* (or hiphil *he’etir*). The particular meaning of this verb can be deduced from two facts: first, unlike *paga*’ and *hillah et-panim*, *atar* is associated with ritual, but unlike the more cultic *hitpallel* and *rinnah*, it does not occur at all in the Psalms. Second, the term occurs eight times in Exodus 8–10, the plagues narrative, where the emphasis is clearly on the power of Moses to work wonders by means of his contact with God, rather than his success in addressing prayers to his God. In 9.28, for example, Pharaoh calls upon Moses to do something to stop the hailstones that ‘beat down every growing thing and shatter every tree’. What Moses in fact does is to go out and raise his hands to the Lord and the thunder and hailstones cease. There is no mention of a prayer, and the NEB is not justified in inserting the words ‘in prayer’. The other passages from 2 Samuel confirm this. The term *atar* seems originally to have referred to some kind of sign or signal made by someone to God, rather than a spoken prayer, and the passive meant ‘God was contacted by him’ (*THAT*, II, 386). After *atar*, God’s response is to act at a given signal, as it were, rather than to hear a prayer. The original ritual or magical setting of this verb no longer existed, however, by the time later varieties of Hebrew were recorded, and thus in Post-Biblical Hebrew dictionaries the meaning of *atar* is given as ‘to pray, entreat, intercede’ or the like, a development similar to that of *minḥah* from ‘sacrifice, in particular, cereal offering’ to ‘evening prayer’. What is the meaning of *va-yē’atēr* in 2 Chron. 33.13 then? It clearly cannot have the same meaning as in the much earlier Exodus and 2 Samuel passages. I would suggest that here the term has already come to be divorced from its earlier associations and means simply ‘and God received his petition’. Is it an archaic word for

formal prayer? He prayed to God, and God received his petition *va-yishma* 'teḥinnato'—which brings us to our last term.

6. The term *hiṭhannen*, along with *teḥinnah* and the more liturgical noun *taḥanunim* is not used exclusively of prayer addressed to God; it occurs in human contexts too. Job's slave does not answer when he calls 'even though I entreat him as a favour', *bemo-fi eṭhannen lo* (Job 19.16). Moreover, like *ḥillah et-panim*, it is clearly a polite word, associated with the idiom *maša ḥen be-'enayim*, and with expressions of respect, bowing down to the ground, and the like (Herrmann 1964: 585; *THAT*, I, 597; *ThWAT*, I, cols. 23-33). Third, it collocates more than any of the other terms we have been discussing with terms for asking, requesting, pleading. In the plain narrative of Gen. 32.30, Jacob asked the angel at Penuel what his name was (*va-yish'al ya'aqov va-yomer . . .*), but when the tale is retold in the poetic and more explicit language of Hos. 12.3ff., the term *hiṭhannen* is used: 'he wept and pleaded with him'. We may compare a passage from Est. 8.3: 'Esther fell at his feet and wept' *va-tiṭhannen lo . . .* Finally, the term occurs a number of times, as here in 2 Chronicles 33, along with *hitpallel*, and the question arises again: if *hitpallel* is the general term for prayers of all kinds, is *hiṭhannen* added by way of closer definition (cf. *rinnah u-tefillah*)? The answer must surely be that, while *hitpallel* is the general term that can refer to prayers of thanksgiving, confession, blessing and the like, *hiṭhannen* is specifically reserved for petitions and intercessions.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing how irrelevant and even misleading etymologies are in this case. All the recent studies of *hitpallel* devote a good deal of space, usually at the beginning, to its etymology. Most tend to the view that it is etymologically related to the noun *peṭilim*, 'judgment, assessment', and that the *hiṭhpaēl* stem therefore means 'to seek a (favourable) judgment', hence 'to intercede' (e.g. Palache, Speiser, *KBL*). Older views propose a connection with Arabic *falla*, 'to cut', hence *hitpallel* 'to cut oneself' (ritually; cf. *hitgoded* in 1 Kgs 18.22), or with *naḥal*, 'to fall'. Hence the meaning was originally 'to prostrate oneself' (cf. Ezek. 28.23; Ezra 10.1) (BDB; Wellhausen 1892: 126 n. 5; Eichrodt 1960: 172). The present study shows that the second, older ritualistic etymologies accord better with the contextual evidence than the more recent legal theory. Of course that does not mean that they are therefore more historically correct, since the connection between the original meaning of a word's root and its actual meaning in a given context may have long ago snapped. It does mean that etymological data must be used with the greatest caution as an aid to identifying meaning (Macholz 1971: 314-18; Eichrodt 1960: 172; Barr 1961: 107-60; Sawyer 1972: 50, 89f.).

In the case of *ḥillah et-panim*, proposed etymologies suggest 'to sweeten the countenance' (cf. Arabic *ḥala*) or 'to make (the king's) presence available', hence 'to gain a private audience'. As we have seen, the second, rather

less probable etymology from court protocol seems to fit the actual meaning of the term better, but this neither settles the etymological dispute nor determines the meaning of the term in Biblical Hebrew. The usual etymology of 'atar from Arabic 'atara, 'to sacrifice', (BDB, 801; Wellhausen 1892: 118, 142; Ap-Thomas 1956: 240f.) even if historically correct, is relevant only for a primitive stage in the semantic history of the term, of which traces may survive in Exodus and 2 Samuel, but for 2 Chronicles 33, as we saw, it could be misleading (Eichrodt 1960: 172; Herrmann 1964: 585; *THAT*, II, col. 386). For the other terms, etymology has not played so prominent a part. But what I hope this study has shown is that of the six terms examined, three can be just as well defined, if not better, without any reference to their etymology at all.

Bibliography

- Ap-Thomas, D.
 1956 'Notes on Some Terms Relating to Prayer', *VT* 6: 230-39.
- Barr, James
 1961 *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Ben-Yehuda, Eliezer
 1908-59 *Thesaurus totius hebraeae et veteris et recentioris* (16 vols.; Berlin: Schöneberg, Langenscheidt; Jerusalem: Hemda & Ehud Benyehuda).
- Eichrodt, Walther
 1960 *Theology of the Old Testament* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Herrmann, S.
 1964 'Prayer in the Old Testament', *TDNT*, II, pp. 785-800.
- Hesse, Franz
 1951 *Die Fürbitte im Alten Testament* (Erlangen: Universität Erlangen).
- Macholz, G.C.
 1971 'Jeremia in der Kontinuität der Prophetie', in Hans Walter Wolff (ed.), *Probleme biblischer Theologie: Gerhard von Rad zum 70. Geburtstag* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag).
- Palache, J.L.
 1959 *Semantic Notes on the Hebrew Lexicon* (Leiden: E.J. Brill).
- Rabin, Chaim, and Tsevi Raday
 1973 *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Language in Dictionary Form* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
 1972 *Semantics in Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation* (SBT, 2.24; London: SCM Press).
- Speiser, E.A.
 1963 'The Stem *pll* in Hebrew', *JBL* 82: 301-6.
- Wagner, N.E.
 1960 'Rinnah in the Psalter', *VT* 10: 440.
- Wellhausen, Julius
 1892 *Reste arabischen Heidenthums* (Berlin: Georg Reimer).

THE TERMINOLOGY OF THE PSALM HEADINGS*

Before the meaning of a term can profitably be discussed, its context must be defined, both its wider, situational context (*Sitz im Leben*) in the history of Israel, and its immediate linguistic environment in the text (Lyons 1963: 13f.). For individual items in the Psalm headings, the original *Sitz im Leben* may vary from early in the history of the monarchy to the time of the Chronicler, if not later. In the light of Ugaritic evidence, for example, it is conceivable that *le-david* at one time meant 'about David'; in the Chronicler's day however it can scarcely be doubted that the meaning was 'by David' (Eissfeldt 1966: 451f.). In this paper I propose to concentrate for the most part not on the original meaning of isolated terms in the headings, as many of my predecessors have done, but on how they were understood in the final form of the text as it has been handed down to us in the Masoretic tradition.

I

The *situational context* of this final form can reasonably be placed between the time of the Chronicler and the Maccabaeal period, and without being more precise than this, some important general observations can be made on this period that may help our understanding of the text as it stands.

(a) There is a growing discrepancy between the language of the text and the language of everyday use. Already by the fifth century, Aramaic is ousting Hebrew, and, later, Greek begins to influence the language of the Hebrew Bible. This may affect our definition of some of the terms in the Psalm headings in two ways: first, there is the possibility of borrowing from Aramaic or Greek (cf. the terms for musical instruments in Daniel 3), and, second, ancient Hebrew terms may already have tended to become obscure, even to the point of unintelligibility (cf. *eshdat* in Deut. 33.2).

* This paper was originally read at a meeting of the Glasgow University Oriental Society and published in *Transactions* 22 (1970), pp. 26-38.

(b) From at least the time of the Chronicler, we must think in terms of written literary works. This would have a bearing on any discussion of the alphabetical acrostics in the Psalter (e.g. Psalm 119), and the old suggestions that some of the psalms are acrostics based on names like Simon Mac-cabaeus (Psalm 110) or Alexander Jannaeus and his wife (Psalm 2) would have to be reviewed in the light of this. Even when a psalm was actually composed at an early date, the visual form might give rise to its application to a later age and even to minor adaptations to fit later conditions and events. Another important point to be borne in mind is the visual effect of an unpointed text. Before the fixing of tradition by a system of pointing, terms like *lmnṣḥ* (Ps. 4.1) and *mktm* (Ps. 16.1) could denote several different things, and there is evidence that rabbinic interpreters on occasion exploited this property of their language (Barr 1967: 7f.).

(c) A third general feature of this period is the prominence of David in Jewish tradition. This is a well-known characteristic of the Chronicler, who changes the traditional order of the sons of Israel, putting the Judah genealogy first (1 Chron. 2.2), omits almost all the Saul legends (1 Chronicles 10), bowdlerizes the biography of David, and attributes to him a host of religious and liturgical institutions that put him on a par with Moses (Eissfeldt 1966: 452). Against this background we can better understand the division of the Psalter into another Pentateuch, and why nearly half of the psalms (74 of them) are individually attributed to David in the headings. The Masoretic tradition is, as so often, conservative in this; the Septuagint adds another 14 to David's work, and rabbinic tradition makes David the author of all 150. Furthermore, historical settings are given for 13 psalms, all of them dependent on the narratives in 1 and 2 Samuel and quoted in a manner reminiscent of the Chronicler's references to the same source.

(d) It is a commonplace to trace the beginnings of orthodox Judaism to the time of Ezra, and the origins of rabbinic exegetical method to Alexandrian scholarship. If such an assumption is well founded, we should not be surprised to find within the later strata of the Hebrew Bible some of the imagination and humour with which we are familiar from the better-attested rabbis of later times (Preuss 1959). Is our prosaic question, Did David write actually the Psalms?, for example, not perhaps more naive than much of the lively scholarly debate of two thousand years ago? According to rabbinic tradition, Psalm 92, the Sabbath Psalm, was originally sung by Adam, who had sinned on the sixth day, but on the seventh, when God rested, he was reprieved and sang this psalm: 'Thou, O Lord, hast made me glad by thy work; at the works of thy hands I sing for joy' (Ps. 92.5). Later the psalm was forgotten, but it was remembered by David (Sarna 1962). These are not historical statements like 'Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed and went home and dwelt in Nineveh' (2 Kgs 19.36). But they are nonetheless impor-

tant and meaningful. It would not be too far from the truth to say that, in rabbinic tradition, all the psalms are by David, but some more than others.

(e) Along with the beginnings of rabbinic scholarship, we must also be on the lookout for two other elements that at this time become more prominent in the mainstream of Judaism: Wisdom traditions and the closely related Torah piety. In such a context, it is not surprising to find that the Psalter opens with a Wisdom psalm and that the longest psalm in the book is an outstanding example of Torah piety (Psalm 119). The Psalter is consistently associated with Job and Proverbs in the canon, and these three books also have their own accent system in Masoretic tradition (Kraus 1960: viii). In this period, the Psalter can hardly be said to belong exclusively to the Temple liturgy: the noncultic character of Psalm 119 is generally recognized, and Ecclesiasticus provides further evidence for the private, devotional use of the Psalms at this time. One wonders whether noncultic situations, familiar to us from as early as the sixth century BCE (Ezek. 8.1; 14.1), are not sometimes reflected in the psalms, and whether this book was not as often meditated upon, studied and discussed as it was recited in the Temple or the synagogue (Mowinckel 1962: 104-25; Russell 1967: 285).

(f) Finally there are a number of well-known Akkadian ritual texts dating from the third century BCE that contain rubrics corresponding quite closely to elements in the Psalm headings (*ANET*, 331-45). The question arises whether Israel shared with other parts of the ancient Near East as stereotyped a set of 'rubric forms', as it undoubtedly did other literary forms. An examination of the examples quoted in *ANET* yields several general conclusions.

(i) Each rubric contains a combination of some or all of the following elements:

- the cultic occasion when the composition is to be uttered
- the official appointed to utter it
- the type of composition (prayer, incantation, lamentation)
- the title of the composition
- the instrument(s) to accompany it
- the mode of utterance (singing, reciting)

The last of these is frequently omitted, producing the same type of verb-less statement that makes up the Psalm headings.

(ii) While all these elements (except the last) can without much difficulty be identified in the Psalm headings, the term *le-david*, *li-shlomo* and other historical references have no equivalents in the Akkadian texts.

(iii) The titles of the compositions consist normally of the first words, but the interesting point is that these are often quoted in Sumerian. Now hardly more than a handful of experts can have understood Babylonian in

the Seleucid era, when Aramaic was the *lingua franca*, and it is clear that the occasional Sumerian technical terms must have been equally obscure (von Soden 1952: §2h). While these parallels should not be pushed too far, the possibility that there are ancient elements in the Psalm headings whose meaning was lost before our period should warn us against too optimistic an approach to the definition of their meaning.

II

From a discussion of the wider situational context we move now to the *immediate linguistic environment*. In the Psalm headings, the linguistic context of a term brings it into two sets of relations. On the one hand, the term is related to other terms in the same heading. Thus, the definition of *mizmor* as a 'psalm accompanied by stringed instruments' stems from a disregard of its immediate linguistic environment in Ps. 5.1, where a *mizmor* is in fact accompanied by flutes (according to the same commentator) (Mowinckel 1962: 208, 210). Then there is the semantic relation between *shir* and *mizmor* in several headings (Delekat 1964: 280-82). If there is any kind of stereotyped rubric form, we should hardly expect to find in the same heading two terms with precisely the same function (e.g. both denoting the cultic setting of the psalm). At the same time, it would be surprising to find, in different headings, two terms of the same form (e.g. *le-* plus verb or '*al* plus noun) with nothing at all in common. In fact, each term has usually been discussed and defined (for convenience, no doubt) 'out of context', that is, in isolation from the other terms in its heading, with results like the definition of *mizmor* just noted.

On the other hand, there is the relation between a term in the heading and the psalm to which it refers. Again, this is a relation that has often been neglected by commentators on the grounds that the original *Sitz im Leben* of the heading is not the same as that of the psalm, and that therefore they should properly be examined separately. In Psalm 127, for example, the relation between *li-shlomo* in v. 1 and *yedido* in v. 2 is cursorily dismissed in the small print (Briggs 1907: 458). *Maskil* was once defined as a 'song with cheerful music' (Ewald, quoted by Briggs 1907: lxi) without regard for the fact that at least one *maskil* is a 'lament, unrelieved by a single ray of comfort or hope' (Weiser 1962: 586), and the context of Psalm 88 is described as a situation of chronic illness without even a passing reference to '*al mahalat* in the heading (Kraus 1960: 608).

The original *Sitz im Leben* of separate elements in the literature of the Hebrew Bible is certainly a fascinating subject for research, but the original *Sitz im Leben* of the final form of the text, in which the separate elements are united into an intelligible whole, is just as fascinating and important (if not, in the last analysis, more so) for a complete understanding of the text.

It is the aim of the rest of this paper, without attempting to solve all the problems or to be entirely original, to prove the value of a context-analysis such as I have just proposed by illustrating the kind of answers that emerge directly from it.

III

There are several distinguishable elements in the Psalm headings, some relatively easy to define, others that become steadily more obscure, until it is virtually impossible to make any useful statement about them at all. We shall start at the easy end and work gradually into the obscurer areas of the problem.

A. *Personal names* with the preposition *le-*: there are eight of these (David, Solomon, Moses, Asaph, the sons of Korah, the two Ezrahites, Heman and Ethan, and possibly Jeduthun). Enough has already been said on the need to see these terms against the background of early Judaism. Any attempt to distinguish *le-david* from the others, or to say that none of the terms refers to authorship at all, is unsupported by the early evidence and flies in the face of all that we know of early rabbinic methods.

B. Nine terms, normally without the article, and syntactically independent of the rest of the headings: *shir*; *shirah*, *tehillah*, *tefillah*, *mizmor*, *shir ha-ma'alot*, *shiggaion*, *miktam* and *maskil*. All of these, except the last two, have everywhere been understood as terms denoting the type of composition. We shall have more to say about the two exceptions later, but for the moment, since they behave in exactly the same way as the other seven and are uniformly understood as types of composition in later Hebrew, let us assume that we have here a semantic field consisting of nine terms. To these we might also add related Biblical Hebrew terms not attested in the Psalm headings, such as *zimrah*, *manginah* and *qinah*.

The basic method for defining related terms is by reference to oppositions, between, for example, technical and nontechnical ('song' as opposed to 'madrigal'), religious and secular ('psalm' as opposed to 'ditty'), general and particular ('song' as opposed to 'shanty'). Other oppositions arise from distinctions in the situation with which a term is primarily associated: thus 'paean' as opposed to 'dirge', 'marching song' as opposed to 'introit'. The distinction may be one of instrumental accompaniment: thus $\lambda\upsilon\rho\omega\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ as opposed to $\alpha\upsilon\lambda\omega\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$. Opposition is a more reliable principle to work from than 'etymologizing', which may or may not be helpful: for instance, while Greek $\lambda\upsilon\rho\omega\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is best defined with reference to the term's etymology, 'song accompanied on the lyre', Modern English 'lyric' is not. Finally, the search for English equivalents for Hebrew terms belongs to the very last stage of the discussion, since the same oppositions may or may not exist in both

languages: for instance, 'sing' and 'play' are quite distinct in English, but Hebrew *zimmer* covers both singing and playing.

The first opposition we come to in this field is that between technical and nontechnical terms. The commentaries often class all nine terms as 'technical', whereas in fact there is good evidence that four of them are nontechnical: (1) since 52 of the psalms have no designation at all, it is wrong to argue that, just because *shir*, for example, occurs in a heading, it must therefore be a technical term; (2) four terms, *shir*, *shirah*, *tehillah* and *tefillah*, occur relatively rarely in the Psalm headings but frequently elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in nontechnical contexts. There is no need to discuss these four terms here, except to note the distinction between *shir* and *shirah*: *shir* is quite general, *shirah* is reserved in Biblical Hebrew for poetical compositions quoted in full, for example, the 'Song of the Well' (Num. 21.17f.), the 'Song of David' (Psalm 18 = 2 Samuel 22), a love song (Isa. 5.1ff.), and the like. This distinction is still maintained in Modern Hebrew *shir* 'am, 'folk song', *shir leket* 'marching song', etc., as opposed to *bat shirah*, 'Muse', *shirat ha-barbur*, 'swan song', etc.

The five other terms occur only in the Psalm headings and must be considered technical as opposed to the terms just discussed. Again we begin with the easiest.

- *mizmor* is distinguished from *shir* in two ways: (1) It is less general, being applied in Biblical Hebrew only to psalms (cf. Sir. 44.5; 49.1; Delekat 1964: 280). (2) It is a religious term applied to compositions with a peculiarly religious tone: 48 out of the 57 described by the term *mizmor*, for instance, are addressed directly to God. It is distinguished from the other four technical terms by its far greater frequency and its more general application. It is applied to at least one of every literary type identified by the form critics. Thus, *mizmor* could perhaps be defined as follows: 'a technical term for any religious composition in the book of Psalms, usually addressed directly to God'. In later Hebrew it is virtually the singular of *tehillim*, 'psalms', and the English equivalent would naturally be 'psalm'.
- *shir ha-ma'alot* is distinguished from *mizmor* in four respects: (1) All 15 psalms with this designation are grouped together in the Psalter (Psalms 120–34). (2) *Shir ha-ma'alot* is the only technical term in the headings of these psalms. (3) These psalms are distinctly less religious in tone, only 8 verses out of all 15 psalms, for example, being addressed directly to God. (4) The psalms are all short, being under 9 verses in length in every case, except for Psalm 132 (18 verses). These psalms have two other distinguishing characteristics: they are mostly well known—one might almost say, popular songs—and, like *mizmor*, they comprise a very high proportion of literary forms. In view of this remarkably clear-cut picture of the *shir ha-ma'alot*, it is misleading

to take the term too literally (Mowinckel 1962: 208; Weiser 1962: 141; Kraus 1960: 608). The term means 'The Fifteen', just like 'The Eighteen (sc. Benedictions)'. Instead of calling them simply 'The Fifteen', however, the rabbis, with characteristic imagination and originality, called them after the 15 steps leading up to the Temple from the Women's Court. The Mishnah later rationalizes the name (*Middot* 2.5; *Sukkot* 5.4), and the literal rendering of the term *ma'alot* has given rise to a number of explanations (which may of course be correct) of the origin of 'The Fifteen' in festal processions, pilgrimages and the return from exile. Perhaps the best translation of the term would be 'The Songs of the Temple-Steps'.

- *miktam* is distinguished from all the terms so far discussed, on the one hand, by its application to psalms of uniform length (between 11 and 18 verses) and literary form (Individual Lament, or the closely related Psalm of Confidence), and, on the other hand, by its consistent collocation with *le-david*, a historical setting and another technical term. It is distinguished from *qinah*, 'lament', by its religious application: all psalms described by the term are addressed directly to God, while *qinah* is not applied to religious poetry in the Hebrew Bible. It seems probable that we are dealing here with one of those ancient technical terms whose precise meaning was unknown in our period. In Talmudic Hebrew it denotes a 'written document'; in Modern Hebrew an 'epigram', while Aquila and Symmachus saw in *mktm* (unpointed) a double epithet for David, made up of *mak*, 'humble', and *tam*, 'perfect'. We might reconstruct an original meaning, as Mowinckel suggests, with reference to Akkadian *katāmu*, 'cover': hence 'psalm of propitiation' or, in view of the fixed form and content of these psalms, 'incantation' (Mowinckel 1962: 209). But neither possibility is confirmed by the evidence from later Jewish tradition.
- *maskil* and *shiggaion* are even more obscure. Probably these are two more ancient terms that may originally have had nothing to do with Biblical Hebrew *maskil*, 'wise', and *shagah*, 'err, wander'. Like *mktm*, *mskyl* was taken as an epithet of David by Aquila and Symmachus. Both passages described by the term *shiggaion* in the Hebrew Bible (Psalm 7; Habakkuk 3) are laments, and it may be that there is an original connection with Akkadian *shegu*, 'lament'; but in that case the distinction between this term and *miktam* and *qinah* would still have to be defined.

C. Six terms with the preposition *le-*, which are not personal names, are immediately distinguished from *la-menaṣṣeah* in having no definite article, and from a number of terms that have instead the prepositions 'el, 'al or be-. There is never more than one of these terms in the same heading.

- *le-yom ha-shabbat* (Psalm 92) and *le-todah* (Psalm 100) clearly refer to the cultic purpose of the two psalms: 'to be sung on the Sabbath' and 'to accompany the thank-offering'. The appropriateness of the former has been examined in some detail (Sarna 1962); the question of why Psalm 100 was selected for the occasion of the thank-offering has still to be discussed.
- *le-hazkir* looks like the same type of reference: 'to accompany the 'azkara-ritual'. But there is still doubt about the precise meaning of the term (Eissfeldt 1966: 454; de Vaux 1964: 30), and the choice of Psalms 38 and 70 for this ritual has not yet been explained.
- *le-'annot* (sc. *nafshotekem*) recalls part of the ritual prescribed for the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 16.29; 23.27); and Psalm 88, to which the term is applied, is a prolonged psalm of lamentation, which would not be inappropriate 'to accompany penance' (Mowinckel 1962: 212).
- *le-lammed* (Psalm 60), a term not infrequently omitted from discussions of the Psalm headings (e.g. Eissfeldt, Kraus), should be approached in the same manner. Two other poetical compositions in the Hebrew Bible are described by this term: the Song of Moses (Deut. 32.1-43; cf. 31.19) and the Lament of David (2 Sam. 1.19-27; cf. v.18). Both passages are problematic for one reason or another, but, like Psalm 60, they are, in the final form of the text, set in the same kind of context. Von Rad notes the legal terminology in the language introducing the Song of Moses (Deut. 31.19) (von Rad 1966: 190). It may also be significant that the Lament of David is written down (2 Sam. 1.18), and that in the heading of Psalm 60 the legal term '*edut*, 'witness, testimony', appears (cf. Deut. 31.19). I would suggest therefore that, like *le-yom ha-shabbat*, *le-todah* and the others, *le-lammed* is not merely a general reference to the didactic purpose of the psalm but another technical term referring to a specific cultic occasion, possibly the recital of the law 'at the end of every seven years . . . at the feast of booths' (Deut. 31.10). The Song of Moses and Psalm 60 have an obvious relevance for such an occasion; and when we remember that in later Jewish tradition the scroll of Ecclesiastes was prescribed to be read at the same festival, the problem of the relation between David's Lament and the feast of booths need not rule out the definition of *le-lammed* as 'to accompany the teaching of the law'.
- *le-'eved Yhwh*, the sixth in this group of terms, appears in two headings, Psalms 18 and 36, and syntactically it is quite reasonably explained as an epithet of David: 'of the servant of the Lord, of David'. But there are a number of difficulties in this seemingly simple explanation of the term: (1) This would be the only epithet applied to David in the Psalm headings (apart from Aquila's *mktm* and *mskyl*). (2) It is an epithet reserved by the Chronicler for Moses and never applied to David. (3)

Where an epithet is applied to a personal name in the headings it follows the name and does not involve the repetition of the preposition *le-* (e.g. Ps. 90.1). (4) Of the six terms with the preposition *le-* (apart from personal names) this would be the only one that does not refer to the purpose of the psalm. (5) The question still remains, Why does the term appear only in these two headings? Now we have already noticed how two other ancient terms were understood in later tradition as epithets of David, namely *mktm*, ‘the humble and perfect’, and *mskyl*, ‘the wise’. That *le-‘ebed Yhwh*, ‘to accompany the ritual of the Servant of the Lord’, is a third example may be considered at least an interesting possibility, although it seems that Ivan Engnell and his followers have not made use of the argument. The two psalms in question, 18 and 36, do have a number of linguistic and thematic features in common with the Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah.

D. The term *la-menaššeah* is not to be grouped with the six terms just discussed, as Mowinckel proposes (Mowinckel 1962: 212f.) for three reasons: (1) It is far more frequent, occurring in more than one third of the headings. (2) It often occurs in the same heading as the other six terms. (3) It has the definite article. In the language of the Chronicler, the verb *niššeah*, ‘be in charge of’ shares two important characteristics with *menaššeah* in the headings: it occurs only in a religious context, namely the building of the Temple, and it is followed by the preposition ‘*al*. (4) Finally, the evidence of the Akkadian ritual texts, in which each rubric specifies an official to sing or recite the composition (the *kalu*-priest, the *mashmashu*-priest, or the like), confirms the obvious assumption that the term should be rendered: ‘to be recited by the official in charge’. Why only some of the psalms have this term in their heading, and how it is that so many of the ancient versions reject this rendering in favour of more imaginative, liturgical and eschatological inventions (‘triumphal ode’, ‘to the end of the world’) no one can say. But in the light of what we have seen of the combination of archaic terminology and rabbinic originality in the Psalm headings, it would be unwise to ignore the main bulk of the evidence for the meaning of *la-menaššeah* in Masoretic tradition.

E. There is one term with the preposition *be-*, namely *neginot*. The evidence of the Akkadian rubrics (e.g. ‘accompanied on the *halḫallatu*-instrument’), the use of the preposition *be-* after *zimmer*, ‘play, sing’, and the consensus of scholarly opinion from the earliest times till the present make it probable that this term refers to a stringed accompaniment. Possibly the noun *manginah* originally denoted a song accompanied on a stringed instrument (cf. λυρῳδία), as opposed to *mizmor*, which may originally have been a song accompanied on wind instruments (cf. αὐλῳδία). This distinction is, of course, now superseded by the religious/secular opposition represented by the usual English equivalents ‘melody’ and ‘psalm’.

F. Finally we come to the most enigmatic group of all: terms with the prepositions 'al or 'el. That these may best be grouped together is suggested by the fact that one term *shoshannim*, is attested with both (Psalms 45; 80). The isolated term 'al *tashhet* (Psalms 57–59; 75) is included here too. While the precise meaning of these terms will in all probability remain obscure for many years to come, there are some general points that can already be made. In the first place, the 'al-terms occur in collocation with *la-menaṣṣeah*, and the verb *niṣṣeah*, as we saw, regularly takes this preposition in the language of the Chronicler. This would seem to be convincing proof that these terms *hasheminit*, *ha-gittit*, *mut-la-ben*, etc., refer not to the titles of melodies (which is in any case highly unlikely) (Eerdmans 1947: 51ff.) but to elements in or areas of cultic procedure under the direction of the *menaṣṣeah*: thus, the rubric reads 'to be recited by the official who is in charge of the ritual of *hasheminit*'. References in Akkadian parallels to 'the rite of the mouth-washing of the bronze kettle-drum', '... for the case of the temple wall's falling into ruin' and the like illustrate the immense variety of rites, each with its own cultic procedure and apparently often with its own incantation or religious composition to accompany it (Mowinckel 1962: 213-17; Rowley 1967: 208-12).

Like the detailed Mishnaic regulations for the Temple ritual, and indeed the Akkadian ritual texts themselves, much of this type of literature was written down and copied long after the rituals themselves had become obsolete. This meant that the ancient terminology tended to become obscure and to provoke the scribe or teacher to ingenious invention. In the early stages of the development, the text was unpointed, so that the ancient interpreter was free to exploit the properties of a purely consonantal script. Finally, this suggests that in our more scientific, modern attempts at understanding these baffling terms, we ought to work more consistently from the unpointed text, and that we may one day discover here a complete set of terms, perhaps describing the elaborate ritual for rebuilding or repairing Israel's Temple.

However that may be, let us end with a suggested translation of one of the better preserved rubrics (Ps. 60.1). For completeness I have added an instrumental accompaniment (cf. Ps. 54.1), and the noncultic elements have been bracketed:

The official in charge of the *shoshan* 'edut ritual shall sing,
to the accompaniment of stringed instruments, the *MKTM* for the teaching
of the law (which was composed by David, when . . .).

Bibliography

Barr, James

- 1967 'Vocalization and the Analysis of Hebrew among the Ancient Translators',
in *Hebräische Wortforschung: Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Walter Baumgartner* (VTSup, 16; Leiden: E.J. Brill): 1-14.

- Briggs, Charles Augustus
 1906–7 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Delekat, L.
 1964 'Probleme der Psalmenüberschriften', *ZAW* 76: 280-82.
- Eerdmans, B.D.
 1947 *The Hebrew Book of Psalms* (OTS, 4; Leiden: E.J. Brill).
- Eissfeldt, Otto
 1966 *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- Kraus, Hans-Joachim
 1960 *Psalmen* (BKAT, 15; 2 vols.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag).
- Lyons, John
 1963 *Structural Semantics: An Analysis of Part of the Vocabulary of Plato* (Publications of the Philological Society, 20; Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- Mowinckel, Sigmund
 1962 *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (2 vols.; Oxford: Basil Blackwell); vol. 2.
- Preuss, R.
 1959 'Die Psalmenüberschriften in Targum und Midrasch', *ZAW* 71: 44-54.
- Rad, Gerhard von
 1966 *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SPCK).
- Rowley, H.H.
 1967 *Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Forms and Meaning* (Edward Cadbury Lectures, 1966; London: SPCK).
- Russell, D.S.
 1967 *The Jews from Alexander to Herod* (New Clarendon Bible: Old Testament, 5; Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Sarna, N.M.
 1962 'The Psalm for the Sabbath Day (Psalm 92)', *JBL* 81: 155-68.
- Soden, W. von
 1952 *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik* (AnOr 33; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum).
- Vaux, Roland de
 1964 *Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press).
- Weiser, Artur
 1961 *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd).
 1962 *The Psalms: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SPCK).

THE IMAGE OF GOD, THE WISDOM OF SERPENTS
AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL*

I want to suggest that the Garden of Eden story in Genesis 2–3 is an expansion of the ‘image of God’ story in ch. 1. What is said in a few verses about human beings and their resemblance to God in ch. 1 is spelled out at some length in the story of Adam and Eve in chs. 2–3. The two stories say the same things about human nature, the one in rather stark theological language, the other more in the style of a myth or fable. To understand the one we must refer to the other.

This rather obvious point about one of the world’s best-known literary masterpieces has been obscured in modern times by the exigencies of source criticism. Two centuries ago a ‘no-go area’ was established, for impeccable source-critical reasons, halfway through v. 4 in ch. 2, and thereafter the ‘image of God’ passage had to be discussed without reference to the Garden of Eden story, and vice versa. The author of 1.1–2.4a wrote what he wrote without any knowledge of 2.4b–3.24, and vice versa. Without for a moment questioning the truth of the critics’ claim that a new source begins in 2.4, I want to give three powerful reasons for the view that we are nevertheless intended—and have been since the text began—to read Genesis 1–3 as a continuous narrative, in which the second story is no more and no less than an expansion of the first.

In the first place, although 2.4a is written in the same style as the preceding verses, it is in fact a kind of title or introductory formula for what follows, as in 5.1 and elsewhere. Most commentators take it this way, and most modern English versions too (the NEB being a conspicuous exception). Yet the exegetical significance of this fact seems to have been overlooked. It means that the author of ch. 1 intended the Garden of Eden story to be read along with the first story, since he wrote the title to it himself.

* This paper was first read at a colloquium entitled ‘The Garden of Eden: Exegesis, Iconography and Literature’ at Lancaster University in January 1986, and published in Paul Morris and Deborah Sawyer (eds.), *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden* (JSOTSup, 136; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), pp. 64–73.

Second, the overlap in subject matter is far more substantial than is often admitted between the events on the sixth day according to ch. 1 and the events in the Garden of Eden according to chs. 2–3. ‘Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and the cattle . . .’ in ch. 1 corresponds to Adam naming the animals in ch. 2. ‘I have given you plants and fruit to eat . . .’ in ch. 1 is taken up in ch. 2 as well: ‘God said, “You may freely eat of every tree in the garden except the tree of knowledge . . .”’ The creation of Adam in ch. 1 is elaborated in ch. 2 in the story of how God formed him from the dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, ‘and man became a living being’. ‘Male and female he created them’ is developed in all kinds of ways in the story of Adam and Eve.

Most significant of all, and rarely noticed, is the climax of the Garden of Eden story at the end of ch. 3: ‘Behold, man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil’ (3.22). This and the ‘image of God’ passage in ch. 1 are the only two passages in the Pentateuch where God speaks in the first person plural: ‘Let us make man in our image . . .’ beside ‘man has become like one of us’. These are also the two main places where the question of resemblance between humans and God is discussed. The serpent uses a similar expression earlier in the story: ‘you will become like God (or gods), knowing good and evil’, and the ‘image of God’ language occurs again in chs. 5 and 9. But it surely cannot be a coincidence that the beginning and end of the Genesis account of the creation of Adam focus on this matter of resemblance: ‘in our image’ at the beginning and ‘like one of us’ at the end.

Finally, any idea that the image of God belongs to the first story only is ruled out by the fact that the expression appears again in chs. 5 and 9. Men and women are still in the image of God after they have been expelled from the Garden of Eden. In view of what has been said already about the overlap in structure and content between ch. 1 and chs. 2–3, we are surely intended to make a connection between the discussion of what Adam is like in the Garden of Eden story and the ‘image of God’ idea in the other chapters.

In a paper on the meaning of *be-selem elohim*, ‘in the image of God’, published in 1974, I argued that the phrase refers to some undefined resemblance or resemblances between humanity and God (or the angels). It is *prima facie* unlikely that the term is used in this context in the sense of ‘(graven) image’, referring to physical resemblance between humans and God, as many have argued, especially when we consider that both male and female are created in the divine image (1.27). It is much more likely that the term *selem* is used here in its older sense of ‘shadow, dream’, as in two psalms on the subject of human nature (Ps. 39.6; 73.20), and refers to some more abstract resemblance. The term *demut*, ‘likeness’, in Gen. 1.26 appears to confirm this, as well as the centuries of exegetical tradition, both Jewish and Christian, which have sought an abstract explanation rather than a concrete or physical one. What this resemblance is and how it came about

that Adam became 'like one of us knowing good and evil' are the plot of the Garden of Eden story. The recurrence of the 'image of God' motif after the story proves that the two stories are not intended to be understood as sequential, the creation of Adam followed by his 'fall', as is often supposed, but in parallel, the one elaborating and explaining the other. The 'image of God' story in ch. 1 is complete in itself, telling how human beings were created, male and female, with some divine resemblance in them. Chapters 2–3 tell the same story in much greater detail, explaining how it came about that a human being made out of the dust of the earth came to resemble God.

This brings us to the 'wisdom of serpents', since it was thanks to the serpent that Adam and Eve came to resemble God, 'knowing good and evil' (3.22). Why did our author choose a serpent as the catalyst? In the first place, we must understand that this serpent (Hebrew *naḥash*) is not one of the mythical monsters mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. The term is applied to Leviathan in one passage (Isa. 27.1), and, according to another (Amos 9.3), there is a *naḥash* at the bottom of the sea that bites the wicked. But in this context there is no question of that. The serpent here is one of the 'beasts of the field', a common or garden animal, like the fox and the crow, the ant and the grasshopper, the hare and the tortoise and all the other ordinary animals that appear in Aesop's fables. Such animals appear in the biblical wisdom literature too, not in fables but in proverbs such as 'Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider her ways and be wise' (Prov. 6.6; cf. 30.24–31).

For the same reason I think we must rule out any idea of magic here. There are the stories of the bronze serpent in the wilderness that could cure snakebites (Numbers 21), and Moses' miraculous staff, which changed into a snake at the court of Pharaoh (Exod. 4.3; 7.15). But the serpent in the Garden of Eden shows no signs of having any miraculous or magical powers of that kind. It is surely in proverbs and fables that we must expect to find the significance of the snake in Genesis 3.

In biblical literature, serpents seem to have been proverbial for their wisdom. Best known is Jesus' advice to his disciples about to go out into the world: 'Be wise as serpents' (Mt. 10.16). There is another example in Proverbs: 'Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on the rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden' (Prov. 30.18–19). Serpents can move along the ground without legs, for one thing. What is more, they can move very fast and are consequently very hard to catch. A regular epithet for *naḥash* in Hebrew (and also in Ugaritic incidentally) is *bariaḥ*, 'fleeing, elusive' (Isa. 27.1; Job 26.13). Jesus actually follows up his advice to be 'wise as serpents' with the words 'When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next' (v. 23). In other words, 'Don't get caught'. Another ancient Near Eastern example occurs in a royal inscription from twelfth-century BCE Assyria: 'Like a viper among the rugged mountain ledges, I climbed

triumphantly' (*Annals of Tiglath-pileser I*, 2.76-77). They can also slough off their outer skin, leaving a beautiful new skin underneath. Perhaps that is what the Satan is referring to when he says: 'Skin for skin: all that a man has he will give up for his life' (Job 2.4). Most obvious of all their powers is their venomous bite: 'they have venom like the venom of a serpent, like the deaf adder that stops its ear, so that it does not hear the voice of the charmers . . . ' (Ps. 58.4-5; cf. 10.4; Prov. 23.22; Jer. 8.17; Amos 5.19; 9.3).

With such skills and powers, the serpent is, of all the beasts of the field, the best equipped to survive. This brings us to the meaning of the word translated 'subtle, cunning' (Hebrew '*arum* ') in Gen. 3.1. The word occurs quite regularly in the wisdom literature. It refers to something that is respected and advocated in some contexts, where it is translated 'prudent', but feared and condemned in others. On the one hand, we have such texts as the following: 'The simple believes everything, the prudent [*'arum*] looks where he is going' (Prov. 14.15; cf. 12.16, 23; 13.16; 14.8, 18; 22.3; 27.12). On the other hand, Job 5.12-13 reads: 'God frustrates the devices of the crafty [*'arumim*] so that their hands achieve no success. He takes the wise in their own craftiness [*be-'ormam*], and the schemes of the wily are brought to a quick end (Job 5.12-13) . In some contexts the word is translated 'treacherously' (e.g. Exod. 21.14) or 'with cunning' (e.g. Josh. 9.4). In other words, the wisdom of serpents represents the power to succeed, the ability to survive, resourcefulness, shrewdness, not of itself good or bad. This is the wisdom that leads to life; 'Come to me', says Wisdom in Proverbs 8 and 9, 'and I will give you life'. This is the Wisdom that holds in her right hand 'life, and in her left hand riches and honour' (Prov. 3.16). This is also the wisdom that is condemned by the prophets: for example, 'Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!' (Isa. 5.21).

It is this powerful commodity, necessary for survival in a hard world, that the serpent introduces into the Garden of Eden. Without it we would be defenceless, vulnerable, naked. It is the agent whereby Adam and Eve were transformed from mere 'living beings' (Gen. 2.7) into creatures 'in the image of God . . . like one of us, knowing good and evil' (3.22). To be truly human they had to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and it was the serpent, which of all the beasts of the field comes closest to human beings in its resourcefulness and its ability to survive, that enabled them to do this. The dangers inherent in the serpent's wisdom appear in the story as well: it leads to suffering and exile, and, like those who are 'wise in their own eyes', it is thrown down from its pedestal into the dust: 'Upon your belly shall you go and dust shall you eat all the days of your life' (Gen. 3.14).

We come now to 'the knowledge of good and evil'. First, we must remember that the phrase 'good and evil', in this context, is unlikely to refer to 'what is right and what is wrong'. It may include that, but it embraces much more: success and failure, joy and sadness, victory and defeat—indeed, the

whole vast range of human experience. It is in its sheer complexity that human nature resembles God's.

Then there is an interesting wordplay at the beginning of ch. 3, which gives us another clue to what 'the image of God' in human nature refers to. The word for 'wise' at the beginning of ch. 3 is almost identical in sound and spelling to the word for 'naked' at the end of ch. 2. The contrast could not be more obvious between Adam and Eve without the 'knowledge of good and evil'—defenceless, naive, vulnerable, naked—and Adam and Eve after they had eaten from the tree of knowledge—self-conscious, complex, inventive, resourceful, shrewd. It is also significant that it is the serpent that formulates the first question, 'Did God say . . .?' (3.1). Before that there were only statements and commands. Only after they had eaten from the tree were their eyes opened: before that there were things they had not even thought about. Now they were like God, knowing good and evil, aware of themselves, aware of their nakedness and their vulnerability and aware of the world in which they lived. They were also able to take the initiative for the first time and to begin to learn how to cope with reality. They discovered they could do things for themselves, such as making clothes (3.7). Before the serpent enabled them to acquire 'the knowledge of good and evil', they just did what they were told; now they have something of God's free creative spirit in them.

Another point of resemblance between them and God is their new understanding of authority. The 'image of God' passage in ch. 1 put some emphasis on this: 'God said to them, "Fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea . . ." ' (Gen. 1.28). This is explained further in ch. 2. Before the serpent appears on the scene, Adam assumes authority over the animals by innocently naming them; at the end of the story the human beings are described as brutally stamping on the head of the serpent, in a violent picture later used to describe the Messiah's victory over Satan. Before the serpent's intervention, men and women were equal, both made in the image of God, both naked and unashamed, both tempted to eat from the fruit of the tree of knowledge. In the end, women are condemned to submit to the authority of men. Before the serpent, man is depicted as gently tilling the soil in the Garden of Eden. In the end he is destined to have an almost intolerable struggle with nature: 'Cursed is the ground because of you, in toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life'.

This seems to explain the word 'subdue' in the 'image of God' passage earlier. The word *kabash* has horribly violent and aggressive overtones. It is used of ruthless conquest and subjugation and must be intended here to suggest that it is going to be a hard struggle to 'fill the earth and subdue it'. There will be earthquakes and floods, drought and famine. Rocks will break your ploughs. Wild animals, insects and blight will destroy your harvest. The choice of this tough, aggressive word in Genesis 1 has often been com-

mented on: the curse of Adam in ch. 3 explains it perfectly. He will have to fight to survive. The unique abilities of the serpent to survive, his elusiveness, his deadly bite and so on, give us some idea of the kind of skills Adam acquired when he ate from the tree of knowledge and became 'like God, knowing good and evil'.

Such powerful wisdom does not, however, lead inevitably to life and success, as the serpent implies (Gen. 3.5) and as the glib purveyors of wisdom claim (e.g. Job 5.17-27; Prov. 3.13-18). It can also lead to suffering and death. The fruit of the tree opened our eyes to evil as well as good, failure as well as success. The end of the story consists of a catalogue of such evils: humiliation, enmity between man and beast, pain in childbearing, the subjection of one human being to another, the struggle with nature, expulsion from paradise and death. It seems to me that even here we are to recognize a resemblance between God and humans, another aspect of the complex image of God in man as outlined in ch. 1. Only a few chapters later, the story of the flood begins with the grief of God and enmity between the Creator and God's own creatures: 'And the Lord regretted having made man upon the earth and was grieved in his heart . . . and God determined to make an end of all flesh' (Gen. 6.6-7). The verb translated 'grieved' here is closely related to the words for 'pain' and 'toil', used in the curses in ch. 3. When we add two images of God from a text closely related to Genesis 1-3, we can get an idea of how rich this concept is: 'The Lord goes forth like a mighty man, like a man of war he stirs up his fury . . . now I will cry out like a woman in travail, I will gasp and pant . . . ' (Isa. 42.14). This is a passage concerned with the nature of Israel's God, in contrast to the graven images worshipped by other people. And it nicely develops the point I want to make about the image of God in Genesis: a God who created men and women in the divine image is a God capable of suffering as men and women suffer. This seems to be what the Garden of Eden story is saying: the serpent's wisdom brought power into creation, but with it came the inevitability of suffering. In this respect, too, we are 'like God, knowing good and evil'.

In another respect Adam and Eve are in the image of God. Like God, they know of the existence of a better world, and in particular about the possibility of immortality. Although driven out of paradise and barred from access to the tree of life, they know it exists. The vision of a world without suffering and without death is included in the knowledge of good and evil, which distinguishes man from beast. It raises the question of whether someone one day might be able to get past those armed sentinels at the gates of paradise and so provides a backdrop for much subsequent biblical prophecy. Towards the end of the book of Isaiah, for example, the three curses are referred to. In the new age the serpent still eats dust, but the woman's labour pains are eased by the knowledge that they will always result in the birth of a perfect child, and the man's toil is relieved by the knowledge that it will always

lead to success (Isa. 65.23-25). In the book of Revelation, the Spirit says to the church in Ephesus: 'To him who conquers, I will grant access to the tree of life which is in the paradise of God' (Rev. 2.7). But quite apart from the surprisingly few explicit references to the Garden of Eden story, such as these two, the whole idea that, like God, we have knowledge of realities beyond our immediate experience, hopes, visions, ideals is an integral part of biblical tradition, and surely another aspect of the image of God in man.

A final point of resemblance between man and God concerns our attitude to one another. If we bear in our nature something of God, then to attack or ill-treat or exploit another human being is an assault on God. The image of God is cited in connection with the prohibition of murder in Genesis 9: 'If you shed human blood, by a human hand shall your blood be shed; for God made human beings in the image of God' (Gen. 9.6). A proverb makes the same point in a different way: 'If you mock the poor, you insult their creator' (Prov. 17.5), and there is a beautiful example in a Jewish midrash too: 'R. Joshua ben Levi said: When a person goes along the road, a troop of angels proceeds in front, proclaiming, "Make way for the image of the Holy One, blessed be He"' (*Deuteronomy Rabbah*, *Re'eh* 4.4). The notion that all men and women are like God implies that they demand our respect as God does. Reverence for human life and dignity, in other words, is thus given a unique sanction by the 'image of God' idea. The Garden of Eden story adds a further dimension to this view of humanity by stating that even disobedient, humiliated, struggling men and women like Adam and Eve, refugees from paradise, are 'like God' and demand our reverence and respect as bearing in their nature the image of God.

To conclude, I have argued that the image of God in men and women is to be explained by reference to resemblances between them spelled out in the Garden of Eden story, and summed up at the end in God's words: 'The human beings have become like one of us, knowing good and evil'. The phrase 'knowing good and evil' is the key, defined partly in terms of the wisdom of serpents (i.e. the ability to survive), and partly in terms of the wisdom of God which came from eating the forbidden fruit and which raises humankind above all the beasts of the field. The alternative is to treat the two stories as entirely independent, a view that is surely to be rejected as doing violence to the text as we read it, or to take the 'image of God' passage with ch. 2 only, as dealing with human nature before 'the fall', so that ch. 3 introduces a new development. This again seems to be unjustified on two accounts. In the first place, the 'image of God' story reads like a complete narrative in its own right and even includes the discordant, aggressive term *kabash*, 'subdue'. But second, human nature is still 'in the image of God' after 'the fall'.

It may be said that the importance of sin is underplayed in the present interpretation. Certainly it was disobedience that led to the three curses and

the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden. But if we think of this as the first demonstration of human free will, with good as well as evil consequences, rather than simply the origin of sin in the world, then the story reads differently. Actually the word 'sin' does not appear until 4.7 in connection with Cain's murder of his brother, and surely the author of chs. 1–3 places more emphasis on the result of the disobedience than on the sin itself, upon how things are rather than on what produced them, upon the complexity of human nature and its resemblance to God than on the myth of Adam and Eve and the serpent. 'Good and evil' surely includes more in this story than right and wrong. Neither is it satisfactory to interpret 'the knowledge of good and evil' as sexual awareness, as many have argued. It must include 'good and evil' in their widest biblical sense of happiness and catastrophe, success and failure, life and death, and carries with it the hopes and frustrations that underlie much of biblical tradition. In the words of Ecclesiastes, 'God has put eternity into the human mind, yet so that we cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end . . . whatever God does endures forever . . . God made it so in order that we should fear before God' (Eccl. 3.11–12). Or in the words of Psalm 8, so often quoted in connection with the 'image of God' passage, 'God has made us a little less than angels': 'less' in that we are mortal and not allowed to eat from the tree of life, but only 'a little less' in that we have become like one of them, 'knowing good and evil'.

Bibliography

- Brueggemann, W.
 1972 'From Dust to Kingship', *ZAW* 84: 1–18.
- Clines, D.J.A.
 1976 'Theme in Genesis 1–11', *CBQ* 38: 483–507.
- Davies, Philip R.
 1986 'Sons of Cain', in James D. Martin and Philip R. Davies (eds.), *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (JSOTSup, 42; Sheffield: JSOT Press): 45–56.
- Gibson, John C.L.
 1981–82 *Genesis* (Daily Bible Study Series; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press).
- Gordis, Robert A.
 1957 'The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Old Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls', *JBL* 76: 123–38.
- Moberly, R.W.L.
 1988 'Did the Serpent Get It Right?', *JTS* 39: 1–27.
- Rad, Gerhard von
 1961 *Genesis: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Westermann, Claus
 1984 *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* (London: SPCK).

RELICS OF METALWORKER TRADITIONS IN GENESIS 4*

The purpose of this brief excursion into a vast and treacherous field is to suggest that, in the light of recent archaeological and sociological evidence, we are able to discover a little more about the nuances, associations and attitudes expressed in Genesis 4. We shall begin by making a few preliminary observations, then look in some detail at the Lamech traditions (Gen. 4.18-24), and finally make some comments on Cain (vv. 1-17).

Preliminary observations. (1) It now appears that the copper mining and smelting sites in the Arabah, known already to Eusebius and investigated by Alois Musil (1907), F. Frank (1934) and above all Nelson Glueck (1932-34), were for the most part abandoned by the end of the twelfth century BCE and not worked again until Roman times (Rothenberg 1978: IV, 1184-1203; Kind 1963: 56-73). Glueck's chapter 'King Solomon's Mines' is based on a misreading of the pottery from many sites in the Arabah and the area later known as Edom to the west (Glueck 1970: 59-105; Oakeshott 1983; Rothenberg 1983). References to copper mining are conspicuous by their absence from biblical traditions about David and Solomon. Throughout the Middle East, the demand for copper dropped dramatically at the end of the Late Bronze Age, mainly because the disruption of international trade routes prevented supplies of tin from getting through, without which copper is virtually useless for the manufacture of bronze (Waldbaum 1980; Muhly 1982). Other local factors may have played a role too, such as the shortage of fuel as hillsides were denuded of vegetation, and increasing technical difficulties encountered as deposits near the surface were used up. In some regions, notably Cyprus, the smiths in these circumstances turned to other metals, and iron metallurgy was developed. But this does not seem to have occurred at the Arabah sites. Copper mining, smelting and the manufac-

* An earlier version of this paper was read at the Summer Meeting of SOTS in July 1980 and later published in *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 24 (1986), pp. 155-66. I am most grateful to K.R. Maxwell Hyslop, P.R.S. Moorey, J.D. Muhly, R.F. Tylecote and A. Murray for comments and advice, and to the British Academy for a grant to spend some time in Oxford.

ture of bronze ceased there during the early Iron Age and did not restart until after the end of the biblical period, during which the traditions of the Hebrew Bible reached their present form.

The implications of this for biblical studies are obvious. In the first place, sites once famous for their association with metalworking, such as Timna and Punon, will have lost their significance. The author of Num. 21.4-9, for example, seems to have been unaware that the bronze serpent incident took place at Punon, a copper mining and smelting site (modern *Feinan*), although the itinerary in Num. 33.41-43 gives the location plainly enough. The same is true of some of the names in 1 Chron. 4.1-23 (e.g. Irnashash) and, as we shall suggest, Genesis 4.

Second, if there are references to metalworking in that region, they must presumably be ancient, that is to say, most probably from the Late Bronze Age or earlier. Copper mining in the Arabah began in the fourth millennium BCE, and therefore the nuances and associations we are looking for could be very ancient indeed. The lore of metalworkers is unusually well defined and persistent, but even so relics of it in the Hebrew Bible may be hard to detect.

Finally, the Arabah was situated in the region known in biblical tradition as Edom (Bennett 1983). Timna, for example, is listed as the first among the chiefs of Edom in Gen. 36.40 (cf. 1 Chron. 1.51). B. Rothenberg's nomenclature 'Midianite Timna' is based on a distinctive type of pottery found there, which he labelled 'Midianite' because of its Northwest Arabian provenance. Perhaps 'Qurayyah ware' would have been a less misleading name (Rothenberg 1983: 69-73). Punon, spelled Pinon but almost certainly the same place, is also listed among the chiefs of Edom (Gen. 40.41). We should therefore expect to find in early Edomite sources, if there are any, a reference to copper mining or smelting. In fact, Robert Pfeiffer assigns the Lamech tradition in Genesis 4, which refers to the origins of metalworking, to his Edomitic source, although he does not comment on the connection (Pfeiffer 1957: 159-67).

(2) The sociological evidence for the status and role of miners, smelters and smiths in society is also fascinating and important, especially when we are concerned to discover nuances in biblical texts about metalworking such as Genesis 4; Exod. 32.2-4; Num. 21.4-9; Deut. 8.9; Isa. 54.16-17; Sir. 38.28 and the like. Much has been written on the subject by social anthropologists, metallurgists and biblical scholars (Rickard 1932; Robins 1953; Eliade 1962; Forbes 1971; Tylecote 1976: 16-17). But caution is required (Rowlands 1971-72: 210-24; Sasson 1968). Even in a small area there may be a wide variety in organization from full-time specialists to part-time repairers, and a wide range of attitudes towards such craftsmen, from fear and contempt to respect and awe. Their status, for instance, might improve as their skill or the value of their product improved. This was particularly true in the early stages of iron metallurgy, when, for technical reasons, infe-

rior iron artefacts were very common. Thus, we must beware of sweeping generalizations and a too simple application of data from one area to another. Nevertheless, some metalworker traditions are so well documented in so many regions as to provide a safe starting point.

First, the peculiar powers of the smith, who could apparently produce sharp blades and *objets d'art* out of what looked like lumps of stone, usually resulted in their being given a special status in society. Frequently of foreign stock, they readily became the object of scorn and jealousy. Among the more sophisticated illustrations of this phenomenon, quoted in the literature, is the accusation that it was the smith who brought war, bloodshed and violence into the world. A mediaeval Latin lyric contains a typical example:

Woe to the sacrificial priest,
first craftsman of the blacksmith's forge,
who saw strange shapes within his fire
and hammered out ill-gotten swords (Waddell 1930: 137).

In such passages, the peaceful uses of bronze and iron—in agriculture, for example—are eclipsed by the horrors of war. In the case of no other craft or profession are attitudes and accusations so violent. Pliny the Elder is particularly negative: 'nothing is more pernicious (than iron) for it is employed in making swords, javelins, spears, pikes, arrows—weapons by which men are wounded and die and which causes slaughter, robbery and wars' (*Nat.* 34.39). Perhaps the frightening impression of smoke, heat, sparks and noise that confronts any visitor to a forge has contributed to this as well (Sir. 38.28; cf. Isa. 44.12-20). So fierce could society's aggressive attitude become that in some places, in order to protect smiths, severe penalties were prescribed for those who assaulted or insulted them.

Second, their skills often included more than metalwork. Charles Doughty remarks, in a typically graphic description of desert surgery (on a camel), that '[a]ll hearkened to the opinion of a nomad smith, which kindred of men are as well the desert farriers and, skilled in handling tools, oftentimes their surgeons' (Doughty 1888: I, 278). The ingenuity and inventiveness of Daedalus, who manufactured wings for his ill-fated son Icarus, is another example.

Finally, the peculiar powers of the smiths, which set them apart from the rest of society, tended to lead to the development of a distinctive and exclusive religion (Forbes 1971: 71-78; Eliade 1962: 98; Westermann 1976: 448). The gypsy analogy has been quoted in connection with the biblical laws of purity, various other taboos such as the ban on lighting a fire on the Sabbath (Exod. 35.3), and the fiercely independent exclusiveness of many other passages in the Bible (Burton 1889; Weber 1963: 108-16; Clébert 1976). The inner dynamic of such a community, partly forced on them by the hostility of the society in which they live, and partly the result of centu-

ries of independence and self-reliance, occurs in a particularly extreme or acute form in the case of smiths. We must leave on one side the question of whether this has any relevance for the study of Israelite religion as a whole; but it certainly has for our understanding of Genesis 4, to which we shall now turn.

The chapter divides into three sections, each introduced by the genealogical formula 'X knew his wife . . . and she bore . . .' The first and third sections concern Adam's three sons, Cain and Abel (vv. 1-16) and Seth (vv. 25-26); the middle section is about Cain's descendants Enoch to Lamech (vv. 17-24). The gratuitous mention of Cain's wife in v. 17 has the effect of, among other things, highlighting the comparison with Adam and Eve and raising Cain to the same level of importance as Adam. A third character in this chapter is highlighted in the same way by the mention of his wives, namely Lamech (vv. 19f.), in contrast to Enoch, Irad and the other names in Cain's genealogy. Adam, Cain and Lamech thus have a similar status in the chapter and indeed a certain autonomy that the other characters do not have. Lamech's appearance again in 5.28 as the father of Noah in a different genealogy, without Cain, confirms this.

Leaving aside the Adam traditions, we shall treat the Cain and Lamech stories as two separate but related narratives, and we begin with Lamech partly because bronze and iron are specifically mentioned there, and partly because it is the less problematic of the two.

(a) *The Lamech tradition.* About the immediate progenitors of Lamech, Mehujael and Methushael, no information whatever is recorded. This serves to re-emphasize the autonomy of the Lamech story, beginning as though at the beginning in v. 19 with the statement that Lamech took two wives, Adah and Zillah. The narrative then consists of two parts, the birth of Lamech's four children (vv. 20-22) and the Song of Lamech (vv. 23-24). Verse 25 begins a new section in which attention switches back to Adam and his sons. For our present purpose I have selected three elements in the passage for discussion: the women in Lamech's family, the sons of Lamech and the song of Lamech.

(i) Most discussions of the names of Lamech's wives, Adah and Zillah, and his daughter Naamah restrict themselves to etymological comments. They assume that all are somehow associated with the women's beauty: beauty in appearance (cf. *'adi*, 'ornament'; *šalal*, 'dark') or in musical talent (cf. *mešillah*, 'cymbal'; *na'am*, 'lovely') (Westermann 1976: 448f.; North 1964). Preoccupation with the etymology and meaning of the names diverted attention from a more interesting feature of two of them. Both Adah and Naamah have associations with Edom. It is odd that more has not been made of this. Adah is the name of Esau's first wife and the mother of Eliphaz, according to the Edomite genealogy in Genesis 36. Naamah is

the home of Zophar, one of Job's comforters, most probably located, like Shuah, the home of Bildad (cf. Gen. 25.2), and Teman, the home of Eliphaz (cf. Gen. 36.11), in Midian or Edom. Naamah is the sister of Tubal Cain, founder of metalworking. Is it likely that this family connection between a biblical story about the origin of metalworking and a copper-mining region is accidental? Surely this geographical detail in Genesis 4 is a relic of Bronze Age metalworking lore that has survived in biblical tradition. It is tempting to go one stage further and suggest that Tubal Cain and Naamah, brother and sister, male and female, represent two aspects of the metalworker's craft, the smith and the copper deposits in Edom that provide him with his raw materials.

The name Zillah is not attested elsewhere, unless an echo of it can be detected in 1 Chronicles 4. This enigmatic genealogical chapter has, *inter alia*, Edomite (e.g. Shobal, Ezer; cf. Gen. 36.20ff.) and metallurgical (Irna-hash, Geharashim: vv. 12, 14) connections. Could the odd name of a woman mentioned in v. 3 *haššelelponi* 'Hazzelelponi' (RSV), be related to Zillah, whatever the root *šll in the two forms means? Perhaps future discoveries will show that all three names, Adah, Zillah and Naamah, were once, like Timna (Gen. 36.12, 22), copper-mining sites in the Arabah, their names surviving among the names of the women in Edomite genealogies.

(ii) The names of Lamech's sons, Jabal, Jubal and Tubal Cain, have likewise been approached primarily from an etymological angle. 'Streaming among' (cf. *yaval*), 'rams horn' (cf. *yuval*) and even 'Vulcan' (identified in the last part of (Tu)balcain) have been proposed (Westermann 1976: 449ff.). On such evidence the names tell us nothing more than we know already from the text itself, which describes the descendants of Jabal as nomads (streaming along over the desert), those of Jubal as musicians and those of Tubal Cain as metalworkers. Again the Edomite connection of the third son has often been overlooked. Whatever the connection between Cain, Tubal Cain and the Kenites, the name Cain does appear in an Edomite context in Num. 24.18-22, and in view of what has been said of the significance of Edom in the history of metalworking and the other Edomite connections in this chapter, surely that is more important than what meaning the name may have. The Lamech tradition is, as one would expect from the metalworking reference, an Edomite one.

Second, it has been suggested that the three sons of Lamech represent three social groups, tent dwellers, music makers and metalworkers. This is unlikely for various reasons. In the first place, music making and metalworking are skills frequently practised by the same group; the music makers did not normally constitute a separate social group in ancient society. But, second, there is no apparent interest in this story in the three brothers as distinct individuals. They have no named descendants, no separate identities,

and are surely to be understood as three aspects—four if we add their sister, Naamah—of the culture and origin of one ‘family’. They were Edomite craftsmen, skilled in music making and metalworking.

The first skill, that of Jabal, is not so easy to identify. The phrase *yoshev ohel u-miqneh* is syntactically no more or less anomalous than the two, but semantically more difficult. How can *miqneh*, ‘cattle’ be the object of *yashav*, ‘to dwell’? On the basis of the LXX phrase οἰκούντων ἐν σκιναῖς κτηνοτρόφων and a parallel passage in 2 Chron. 14.14, many commentators propose the emendation *yoshev ohele miqneh*, a construct chain that defines the type of tent dweller as a herdsman: literally, ‘tent-dwellers of cattle’ (cf. NEB). Certainly metalworkers may be at the same time herdsmen, but there is an alternative that accords better with the view that Lamech’s family are represented as a metalworking community living in Edom. The term *miqneh* is not the same as *son* (e.g. Gen. 4.2, 4) and *behemah*, which refer exclusively to animals; *miqneh* means ‘possessions’, which may or may not include cattle. Thus, the phrase could perhaps mean ‘traders who dwell in tents’ or ‘tent-dwelling traders’. Such traders would deal in animals, but in many other ‘possessions’ as well, from grain and textiles to incense, jewelry and metalwork. There is thus a clear distinction in this chapter between keepers of sheep, represented by Abel (v. 2) and travelling merchants, represented by Lamech’s family.

Next we come to the problem of what exactly the description of Lamech’s third son, Tubal Cain, means: *tuval qayin loʔesh kol horesh nehošet u-varzel*. Unlike Jabal and Jubal, which are *hapax legomena*, the name Tubal occurs on its own elsewhere: Japheth has a son called Tubal (Gen. 10.2), who is usually associated with Javan ‘Greece’ (Gen. 10.2; Isa. 66.19; Ezek. 27.12). Masoretic tradition takes Tubal Cain as a single name, hyphenated in its second occurrence in Gen. 4.22, and clearly distinguished from Tubal. But we must remember that we are looking for relics of a tradition that antedates all our manuscripts by many centuries. It is at least possible that the name of Lamech’s third son was originally Tubal, and *qayin* or *qayin loʔesh* was an epithet.

The verb *laʔash* in Biblical Hebrew means ‘to sharpen, burnish’ and is certainly not the metallurgical term one would have expected in a tradition about the discovery of bronze or iron. Whether or not *qayin* was originally a term for ‘smith’ or ‘metalworker’ or even ‘craftsman’, *loʔesh* narrows the definition of Tubal’s skill considerably, and our next task is to discover the precise meaning of the word in this context and why the text has *loʔesh* rather than *šaraf*, *nasak*, *yašaq*, *harash* or some other more common general term on its own. One possibility is that Tubal was credited with the discovery of a specific technical process, namely putting a fine edge on metal, to the exclusion of other processes, such as casting it in moulds, for which the term *loʔesh* would not be used. In Greek legend, rivalry between two

processes is reflected in one of the Daedalus traditions, according to which he murdered his nephew Talus out of jealousy over the invention of a sharp metal saw (Frontisi-Ducroux 1975), and it is possible that the biblical tradition about Tubal Cain represents a particular stage in the history of metallurgy, the changeover from one technique to another. Of course the addition of the second phrase *kol horesh neḥoshet u-varzel*, ‘every worker in bronze and iron’ (cf. 1 Kgs 7.14) has the function of extending Tubal Cain’s role in the history of metalworking to embrace all types of bronze and iron work.

Alternatively, the emphasis may rather be on the type of artefact mainly associated with the verb *laṭash*, that is to say, sharp weapons of war, and on the new frightening and belligerent power brought into the world by Tubal Cain. Of the four occurrences of the word in the Hebrew Bible besides this one, three are in graphic descriptions of hostility and aggression, for example, ‘If a man does not repent, God will whet (*laṭash*) his sword; he has bent and strung his bow; he has prepared his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts’ (Ps. 7.12f. [Hebrew. 13f.]; cf. 52.2 [Hebrew 4]; Job 16.9). The idea that it was the smith who brought the horrors of war into the world has already been mentioned. In the context of Genesis 4, one of the most violent and bloody chapters in the whole Bible, it is not hard to recognize the warlike and aggressive overtones of the language in which the skills of Lamech’s third son are described. Rashi picks up this nuance. Following the midrash, he explains that what Tubal Cain did was to provide murderers with better weapons.

Finally, the contrast between the neutral and concise phraseology of the preceding verses, describing the inventions of Jabal and Jubal and the rich, difficult language of v. 22, is surely significant. It is not simply one among several traditions about the family of Lamech: it is the main tradition, the main characteristic, the climax of the description. They were a metalworking community, from the copper mining region east of the Arabah (as Tubal’s sister Naamah’s name reminds us), and claim to have discovered a new and frightening power. They were not merely merchants and musicians; it was on them that armies depended to sharpen their weapons.

(iii) The song with which the Lamech tradition concludes is a final expression of their uniquely independent role in society. Two points can be made on the Song of Lamech in the present context. In the first place, it is addressed to Lamech’s two wives, Adah and Zillah, not to society at large. It is thus composed apparently with the object of building up morale within the community rather than gloating over a defeated enemy or warning hostile outsiders to leave them alone. This is a phenomenon familiar to social anthropologists from many different periods and communities, but it is particularly well documented in the case of metalworking communities, including the gypsies.

The other point is that there is an obvious connection between the Song of Lamech and the vengeance of Cain in v. 15. Not only does the name of Lamech's third son contain the element Cain, but the vengeance of Cain is actually mentioned in Lamech's song: 'If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold' (v. 24). If metalworking traditions can be detected in the Lamech passage, not just in the Tubal Cain reference but in its Edomite/Midianite connections and the tone of the language, then we may expect to find similar indications in the Cain story, to which we shall now turn our attention.

(b) *The Cain tradition.* In its present form, the Cain story is certainly about something else, not metalworking. But this does not preclude the possibility that it originally contained attempts to answer some questions about the history, culture and status of metalworkers. Robert Eisler is well known to have taken this theory to its extreme (Eisler 1929). But in view of what has been said above about the nature of metalworking traditions in general and the need to probe beneath the surface of the text, maybe there is more in what he suggested than is usually assumed. If the name Cain meant 'smith' (cf. Arabic *qayin*; BDB, KBL), then the phrase *kol-horeg qayin* in v. 15 perhaps meant 'anyone who kills a smith', and the rivalry between Cain and Abel reflected a clash of interests between metalworkers and farming communities. I do not wish to go over the whole question in detail and should like to end with two suggestions of a rather different kind in the light of our previous discussion.

The first is merely to reiterate in the present context the point about the peculiarly violent emotions aroused by metalworking communities in many societies, and the ambivalent attitudes frequently adopted towards them. There is the striking phraseology used to describe Cain's feelings in v. 5 (repeated in v. 6), and the grim vengeful language about his murdered brother's blood in v. 10. Perhaps the choice of the word *harag*, 'kill' (vv. 8, 14, 15; cf. 23) in preference to *hikkah* (v. 15) or *hemit* is also significant: it occurs especially in contexts where innocent people are slaughtered, including brothers (2 Sam 3.30; 14.7; 2 Chron. 21.13), priests (1 Sam. 22.1), prophets (Neh. 9.26) and Jews (Est. 3.13; 7.4; 8.11), as well as in connection with other memorable massacres (e.g. Gen. 34.25 f.; cf. 49.6; Exod. 13.15; 2 Chron. 36.17). Moreover, Cain is both rejected (v. 5) and protected by God—protected, what is more, with the strongest possible sanctions (v. 15). If we penetrate the moralistic form in which the Cain story has come down to us, we can perhaps detect something of the violent attitudes associated with the skills and status of the smith in antiquity.

The other suggestion is that the tradition about Cain's forced departure from his homeland in Edom (?) might be explained by reference to the abrupt end of copper mining there. The story of Cain's murder of Abel

would be an aetiological explanation of why Cain's people, metalworkers and miners (Kenites ?), had to leave the region in which they had lived and worked for generations. We have argued for echoes of an early association between the Cain and Lamech traditions and the Edomite Arabah. According to the first of these two traditions, the region is contaminated by the blood of Cain. Translating this into the language of the parallel Lamech tradition, we might say that Tubal Cain is forced to abandon his sister Naamah, the smith to leave the now unprofitable copper-mining region.

As to where Cain went when he left his native land, the usual explanation is again primarily etymological. 'The land of Nod' is interpreted as 'the land of wandering', taking up the term *nad* from the phrase *na' va-nad*, 'a fugitive and a wanderer' in vv. 12 and 14, and 'east of Eden' as meaning 'outside, beyond Eden' (Westermann 1976: 428). Both names are thus understood in a negative or punitive sense. Remembering what has been said above about the astonishing ambivalence in some of the metalworker traditions, we may once again probe beneath the moralistic surface of the text and recognize a quite different sense. Could it be that in the original story the land 'east of Eden' where Cain settles is a land where violence, bloodshed and the horrors of war are forgotten, and the smith's skills are directed instead towards peaceful uses such as building cities (v. 17)? It may not be a coincidence that another 'son of Lamech' (5.28-29) had the skill to build an ark (Gen. 6.14-22) and an altar (8.20), till the soil (9.20), plant a vineyard (9.20) and make wine (9.21). Furthermore, the reference to the 'land of Nod, east of Eden' comes after God has heard Cain's complaint (v. 14) and offered him his protection (v. 15) and is followed by a verse in which there is no trace of punishment (v. 17): 'Then Cain knew his wife and she conceived and bore Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch.'

There remain many problems in Genesis 4 and probably many undiscovered nuances and associations as well. It is hoped that this contribution to the study of the Cain and Lamech traditions has at least proved that.

Bibliography

- Abramsky, S.
1954 'The Kenites', *Eretz Israel* 3: 116-24.
- Bennett, C.M.
1983 'Excavations at Buṣeirah (Biblical Boṣrah)', in Sawyer and Clines 1983: 9-17.
- Burton, Richard F.
1889 *The Jew, the Gypsy and el Islam* (London: Hutchinson).
- Clément, Jean-Paul
1961 *Les Tsiganes* (Paris:Tchou); Eng. trans. *The Gypsies* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976).

- Eisler, R.
1929 'Das Kainzeichen und die Qeniter', *Le Monde Orientale* 23: 48-112.
- Eliade, Mircea
1962 *The Forge and the Crucible* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Doughty, Charles M.
1888 *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): vol. 1.
- Forbes, R.J.
1971 *Studies in Ancient Technology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2nd rev. edn): vol. 8.
- Frontisi-Ducroux, F.
1975 *Dédale: mythologie de l'artisan en Grèce ancienne* (Textes à l'appui: histoire classique; Paris: F. Maspero).
- Glueck, Nelson
1970 *The Other Side of the Jordan* (Cambridge, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2nd edn).
- Kind, H.D.
1963 'Antike Kupferbewinnung zwischen Rotem und Totem Meer', *ZDPV* 81: 56-73.
- Muhly, J.D.
1982 'How Iron Technology Changed the Ancient World and Gave the Philistines the Military Edge', *Biblical Archaeology Review* 8.6: 40-54.
- North, R.
1964 'The Cain Music', *JBL* 83: 373ff.
- Oakeshott, M.K.
1983 'The Edomite pottery', in Sawyer and Clines 1983: 53-63.
- Pfeiffer, Robert H.
1957 *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Harper & Brothers).
- Pleiner, R., and J.K. Bjorkman
1974 'The Assyrian Iron Age', *PAPS* 118: 283-313.
- Rickard, T.A.
1932 *Man and Metals: A History of Mining in Relation to the Development of Civilization* (2 vols.; New York: McGraw-Hill).
- Robins, F.W.
1953 *The Smith: The Traditions and Lore of an Ancient Craft* (London: Rider).
- Rothenberg, B.
1978 'Timna', in *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (4 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press): IV, 1184-1203.
1983 'The Midianite Pottery', in Sawyer and Clines 1983: 65-124.
- Rowlands, M.J.
1971-72 'The Archaeological Interpretation of Prehistoric Metalworking', *World Archaeology* 3: 210-24.
- Sawyer, John F.A., and David J.A. Clines (eds.), *Midian, Moab and Edom: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia* (JSOTSup, 24; Sheffield: JSOT Press).
- Sasson, J.
1968 'Instances of Mobility among Mari Artisans', *BASOR* 190: 46-54.
- Singer, Karl H.
1980 *Die Metalle Gold, Silber, Bronze, Kupfer und Eisen im Alten Testament und ihre Symbolik* (FzB, 43; Würzburg: Echter Verlag).

Tylecote, R.F.

1976 *A History of Metallurgy* (London: Metals Society).

Waddell, Helen

1930 *Mediaeval Latin Lyrics* (London: Constable).

Waldbaum, Jane C.

1978 *From Bronze to Iron: The Transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology, 54; Göteborg: P. Aström).

1980 'The First Archaeological Appearance of Iron and the Transition to the Iron Age', in Wertime and Muhly 1980: 80-86.

Weber, Max

1963 *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press).

Wertime, Theodore A., and James D. Muhly (eds.)

1980 *The Coming of the Age of Iron* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

Westermann, Claus

1976 *Genesis I–XI* (BKAT, 1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag).

‘O SUN, BE STILL AT GIBEON!’ JOSHUA 10.12-14
AND THE SOLAR ECLIPSE OF 30 SEPTEMBER 1131 BCE*

1. *The Astronomical Data*

A total eclipse in which more than 99 per cent of the sun's surface is obscured is a much more impressive phenomenon than is often realized. With the onset of darkness there is an appreciable fall in temperature, especially in a hot climate; the birds stop singing, and some of the brighter stars and planets become visible during the daytime. Although total darkness rarely lasts for more than a few minutes, the curious effect has frequently been recorded, even in modern times, that observers believe an eclipse lasted for as much as two or three hours. It is a far more mysterious spectacle than atmospheric obscurations, since these are often explained by reference to sandstorms or clouds. Eclipses are also much less frequent in any one area, occurring on average about three times every thousand years. Recent research into the correlation between astronomical and literary data has shown that, when a total eclipse of the sun is known to have been observable in a region where written documents have survived, there is a very high degree of probability that a contemporary reference to it will be found there (Sawyer and Stephenson 1970: 467-89).

A second important consideration is that, in the ancient texts, precise technical terms were not always available for the description of eclipses, and a wide variety of nontechnical and often ambiguous expressions was used instead. In such cases, however, the probability that it is a solar eclipse that is being described is again very high. When the sun is 'darkened' (Joel 2.31) or 'put to shame' (Isa. 24.23) or 'eaten by flames', the literary critic can be fairly confident that the writer is describing or alluding to an

* I am most grateful to Dr F.R. Stephenson of the Department of Physics at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne for expert advice on the astronomical data. The paper was first read at the 7th Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament at Uppsala in August 1971 and published in the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 104 (1972), pp. 139-46.

eclipse, not a sandstorm or a cloudy day, and it remains for him to check with the astronomer as to whether there was an eclipse observable within the required chronological and geographical limits.

In the period of the settlement of the Israelite tribes, let us say between 1500 and 1050 BCE (giving the period its most generous limits), only two total eclipses were observable in central Palestine. At 8:40 am on 19 August 1157, there was an eclipse that was rather less than 100 per cent total for central Palestine and lasted for about two minutes. Earlier in the century, on 30 September 1131 BCE, there was an eclipse that was 100 per cent total at 12:40 pm, with the sun high in the sky (58°); it lasted for over four minutes. The 1131 eclipse was clearly very much more spectacular than the 1157 one—the whole of Palestine from Hazor to Beersheba was in total darkness for more than four minutes shortly after midday—and, as we shall see, seems likely to have been the one underlying Josh. 10.12-14. General conclusions, however, concerning the meaning and historical context of the passage would be unaffected by giving it a date twenty-six years earlier. The only two possible eclipses occurred within the space of one generation, so that if the text is about an eclipse of the sun, as has already been suggested (Wilson 1918; Noth 1938: 65), it must belong to this period.

2. *The Text*

In the text (vv. 12b-13) a solar phenomenon of some kind is described three times:

- A. 'O Sun, be still at Gibeon; O Moon, at the Valley of Aiyalon!'
- B. The sun was still; and the moon stopped, while the nation took vengeance on its enemies.
- C. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.

A is in the form of a prayer addressed to the sun and the moon and gives the location; B is in the form of a statement of fact and adds that the phenomenon occurred during a battle; C is also in the form of a statement of fact and mentions the position of the sun in the sky and the duration of the phenomenon. In the Masoretic Text, C is separated from A and B by the comment 'Is this not written in the Book of Yashar?' This is not in the LXX, and possibly C was originally a continuation of A and B (Stade 1889; Alfrink 1949; Eissfeldt 1966: 134). But if this is not the case, as some argue, and C was an addition by a 'pre-Deuteronomic compiler', or the like (Gray 1967: 100; Driver 1898: 108; Noth 1938: 64; Holladay 1968: 167), the antiquity of A and B is not in doubt, and an addition in the late twelfth century, applying these verses to the eclipse, would not be impossible. A

fresh examination of the meaning of the text, however, in the light of the astronomical considerations with which we began, makes it probable that the 1131 eclipse gave rise not only to the so-called addition C, but to the other two parts of the description as well. As most of the commentators argue, the mention of the moon in A and B but not in C is only an apparent inconsistency, *yareah* being the conventional parallel to *shemesh* in Hebrew poetry (Isa. 13.10; 60.19, 20; Ezek. 32.7; Joel 2.10; 4.15; Ps. 121.6; cf. Isa. 24.23; Job 31.26). During a solar eclipse the moon is, of course, not visible.

Two verbs are used to describe the phenomenon, *damam* and '*amad*'. It is unnecessary to repeat the arguments of Rowley, Alfrink, Scott, Noth, Gray and others who believe that in this context '*amad*, 'to be still, inactive', means 'to stop shining, be darkened' (Rowley 1945: 68; Alfrink 1949: 255; Scott 1952: 19; Noth 1938: 64; Gray 1967: 100). It is also significant that in Ps. 31.18 *damam* is associated with *bosh*, 'to be ashamed', a term used of the sun both in a Ugaritic eclipse report (Sawyer and Stephenson 1970) and in the 'Isaiah apocalypse' (24.23). Most of the commentators just mentioned, however, maintain that this dramatic passage in Joshua 10 was inspired by a cloudy day. This is, *prima facie*, extremely improbable, and to associate it with the hailstorm in v. 11, as some do, is to ignore an essential distinction between the conventional concomitants of divine intervention such as fire, smoke, hailstones and the like and this unique description. The passage from the *Iliad* (2.411ff.) most often quoted to prove that this is no more than literary convention is also unconvincing (Weippert 1971: 30 n. 79; Boman 1960: 133; Soggin 1970: 92f.). Agamemnon's prayer was simply that, before sunset, he should destroy Priam's palace and kill Hector. There is no unusual language in the passage: it contains one of Homer's beautiful, conventional descriptions of sunset and there is nothing about the sun standing still or delaying in any way to make the day longer. The sun is not personified (as Weippert makes out). Zeus is addressed, not the sun, and Agamemnon's prayer, unlike Joshua's, is unanswered. It is far more likely that the unusual and difficult language about the sun in Joshua 10 was inspired by some unique event for which there was no conventional expression immediately available.

The other verb, '*amad*', occurs in an even more difficult passage about the sun and the moon in Hab. 3.11. On the basis of this verse and an Akkadian parallel, it has been argued that this is a special usage applied to the darkening of the sun or moon (Alfrink 1949: 263). But a curious feature of eclipse reports already referred to suggests an alternative and more attractive explanation. It is recorded that observers of the 1860 eclipse at Dongola in the Sudan thought that it lasted for two hours; several English observers of the 1927 eclipse maintain that it lasted for about half an hour, and in numerous mediaeval documents the same effect is recorded (see Table, pp. 324-25). In our text the phrase *ke-yom tamim*, 'for about a whole day', looks very like

another example. But that is not all: after what seems like hours of darkness, the sun appears again in the same part of the sky. In the 1131 BCE eclipse, for example, the midday sun was darkened for what seemed like a very long time (four minutes is in fact a long eclipse) and then reappeared in the same place, still high in the middle of the sky. In other words, it appeared to have been standing still 'in the middle of the sky . . . for about a whole day'. Then the verb '*amad* has its most common meaning 'to stand in one position'.

In addition to the meteorological and literary-critical theories already mentioned, a number of other explanations of the meaning of this passage have been put forward. It was a curse aimed at the gods of Gibeon and Aiyalon (Dus 1960; Pritchard 1962: 34) or an incantation from the sphere of hemerology and astrology (Holladay 1968: 170). Other suggestions include a fourteenth-century BCE meteorite (Phythian-Adams 1946) and an optical illusion due to the steepness of the valley into which Joshua and his men plunged (Thorburn 1935–36). But it is remarkable how the two details indicated by the verbs *damam* and '*amad* fit the eclipse theory: they are not in synonymous parallelism but refer to two separate features of an eclipse, the darkening of the sun and the illusion that a long time has passed with the sun staying in the same position. A mediaeval chronicle from Cesena in Italy singled out these same two features of the 1239 CE eclipse (see Table, pp. 324–25).

3. *The Historical Background*

It is of course possible that originally this eclipse passage had nothing to do with a battle at Gibeon in the time of the Israelite settlement, and there are literary arguments for sharply distinguishing it from its immediate context. But the text as it stands states that the eclipse occurred during a battle near Gibeon, and it is astonishing how well a late twelfth-century date for the Gibeon story agrees with the historical and archaeological evidence. As a final argument for the historical feasibility of the biblical tradition, a brief (and not entirely naive) reconstruction of military and political conditions in central Palestine in September 1131 BCE is proposed.

First, the time of the eclipse fits perfectly into the biblical account of the battle. A dawn attack was successful, the enemies of Gibeon were routed, and it was not until the Israelites were pursuing them down the ascent of Beth-Horon that, with the sun high in the sky, the miracle happened. The eclipse was total in the region of Gibeon at 12:40 pm. This would, incidentally, be an argument against the 1157 eclipse, which was at 8:40 am.

Second, if the eclipse had taken place in July or August, it might have been argued that military campaigns, like that of Adonizedek and his Amorite allies, were not as a rule begun at that time of year for fear of drought (Smith 1931: 152), another argument against the 1157 eclipse, which

was in mid-August. The 1131 eclipse was at the end of September, and no fewer than four celebrated military commanders are actually recorded as having begun their assault on Jerusalem from the direction of Gibeon in the autumn: Lysias in 165 BCE (1 Macc. 4.28-59), Cestius Gallus in 66 CE (Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.19), Richard Coeur de Lion in 1191 and General Allenby in 1917 (Smith 1931: 200ff.). There is therefore good reason to suppose that Adonizedek would have chosen the same time of year to attack Gibeon.

Finally, as long ago as 1918, the 1131 eclipse was rejected as too late to be a possible explanation for the Gibeon miracle, and the hope was expressed that astronomical calculations would discover an eclipse 'in the same region several centuries earlier' (Russell 1918: 103). Since then, not only have astronomical calculations shown that there was no eclipse at all several centuries earlier, but advances have also been made in the history and archaeology of Israel, which make an 1131 BCE date for the Gibeon narrative much more plausible than it looked over fifty years ago.

When the story begins, Gibeon is 'a great city, like one of the royal cities . . . greater than Ai', and already at peace with Israel (Josh. 10.1, 2). This picture corresponds precisely to the Iron Ib city at El Jib. It was in this period, the second half of the twelfth century, that the earlier city wall of the great new Iron Age city was built, and a massive public works programme begun, which was eventually to produce the immense artificial pool (cf. 2 Sam. 2.13; Jer. 41.12), the stepped water-tunnel and the 63 great wine cellars, familiar to us from Pritchard's descriptions and reconstructions (Pritchard 1962: 39; Campbell 1963: 29f.). But doubts about the identification of this impressive site as the biblical Gibeon, have long been expressed despite overwhelming geographical and archaeological considerations (Alt 1953; Gallings 1965; Weippert 1971: 13f. n. 30). The most compelling reason for these doubts is that so far no remains of a Late Bronze Age city at El Jib have been uncovered apart from a few graves. It must be admitted that these graves contain enough elegant jewellery and imported pottery to make a reasonably prosperous Late Bronze Age occupation possible, and traces of this may still await the archaeologist's spade beneath the modern village on the site. But even then, this is not likely to have been the great Gibeon feared by the Amorites in the biblical story (Pritchard 1963; Weippert 1971: 13f. n. 30).

The absence of substantial Late Bronze Age remains at El Jib, however, may now be taken as further confirmation of its identification as Gibeon, rather than the contrary. Gibeon stands out as an anomaly in the biblical history of the Israelite settlement. It was not destroyed by the Israelites along with the other great Canaanite cities (Josh. 11.19). There was a persistent and probably somewhat embarrassing tradition that Israel had made

a treaty with Gibeon (Joshua 9; 11.19; 2 Sam. 21.1-9), so that this city was placed under divine protection in a way that no other Canaanite city ever was (Josh. 9.18ff.; 10.8-14) (Fensham 1964: 96-100; Gray 1967: 99; Noth 1938: 53-59). Some of the anomalies have been put down to aetiological invention, but this does not explain everything. A far simpler and more satisfactory explanation is that there was no Late Bronze Age Gibeon for the Israelites to destroy, and the city that the Israelites knew was founded, like the Iron Age city at El Jib, some time after they had established themselves in the region, and presumably with their consent (Campbell 1963: 30; Reed 1967: 239f.). Conditions of peaceful coexistence may well have prevailed in other regions as well, but have been recorded (perhaps for aetiological reasons) only for Gibeon (Wright 1967: 364).

The one feature of the Gibeon narrative that might require an earlier date, bringing it into association with the destruction of the Late Bronze Age cities, is the role of Joshua. But Joshua can scarcely have been present at all the victories attributed to him from Jericho to Hazor. The location of this incident on the frontiers of Ephraimite territory (Josh. 16.5; 1 Chron. 7.24), together with evidence for other sporadic activities by the house of Joseph at nearby Gezer (Josh. 16.10; Judg. 1.29) and Aiyalon itself (Judg. 1.35), would provide an adequate explanation of how this tradition came to be associated with Ephraim's most famous hero.

Alternatively, Joshua may have been an original element in this legend (Alt 1936: 179f.), and it is the other, rather more stereotyped legends about the crossing of the Jordan, the capture of Jericho, the Shechem covenant and the rest that have been attributed to him in the framework of the book that bears his name. By presenting the eclipse as an answer to Joshua's prayer, the story has given Joshua a unique role in Israelite tradition (v. 14). At the same time, this explains that it was not merely a natural phenomenon but proof of God's power and evidence that even this terrifying darkness was part of his plan. There was not another eclipse observable in Palestine anything like this one for more than seven hundred years, and this may be one explanation of why the tradition came to be re-interpreted as a quite different type of miracle, in which the day was lengthened to give Joshua more time to finish off his enemies.

To conclude, there was a spectacular eclipse of the sun in 1131 BCE that makes good sense of Josh. 10.12b-13. Traditions about Israel's peaceful relations with Gibeon and the great new Iron Ib city at El Jib make a twelfth-century date for the whole narrative unusually convincing. It seems, therefore, that the 'Song of Joshua at Gibeon', like the Song of Deborah from about the same period (see Chapter 42), has preserved a valuable core of historical fact.

Table. The Maximum Actual Duration of Total Eclipses of the Sun
Contrasted with Duration according to Contemporary Records

Date	Place of Observation	Contemporary Record	Actual Duration
14 May 812	Edessa (?) (Turkey)	‘There was a total eclipse of the Sun from the 9th hour until the 11th and the darkness was as profound as night; the stars could be seen and the people lit torches . . .’	2 min. 40 sec.
1 July 1079	Alcobaca (Portugal)	<i>Obscuratus est sol, et stetit ipsa obscuritas Ilas horas donec apparuerunt stelle in coelo. . . .</i> (Chron. Alcobacense)	5 min. 10 sec.
2 Aug. 1133	Kerkraide (Netherlands)	<i>Factae sunt tenebrae obscurato iam sole in toto orbe circa meridiem, quasi integra diei hora . . . Nam tunc velut in nocte apparuerunt stellae, et volucres coeli avolare, et terra maduit rore . . .</i>	4 min. 40 sec.
2 Aug. 1133	Admont (Austria)	<i>Facta est eclipsis, id est defectus solis, tantus ut apparentibus stellis, tenebrae factae sunt per universam terram una hora.</i>	4 min. 40 sec.
11 April 1176	Antioch (Turkey)	‘The Sun was totally obscured; night fell and the stars appeared . . . The darkness lasted for two hours; afterwards the light returned.’	3 min. 20 sec.
1 May 1185	Novgorod (Russia)	‘There was a sign in the Sun. It became very dark for an hour or longer and the stars were visible . . .’	3 min. 50 sec.
3 June 1239	Cesena (Italy)	<i>Obtenebratus est sol, et factus est niger totus: et stetit sic quasi per spatium horae . . . et fere omnes stellae videbantur aere manifeste . . .</i>	5 min. 50 sec.

6 Oct. 1241	Reichersberg (Austria)	<i>Obductus est sol mirabili nigredine aliquantulum post meridiem dum esset in claritate sua subito, ita quod nulla pars eius poterat videri et stellae visae sunt tamquam in nocte fere ad 4 horas.</i>	3 min. 30 sec.
25 Feb. 1476	Pskov (Russia)	'As the Sun was rising and people were going to markets and elsewhere in the town it suddenly began to grow darker, and the darkness lasted for a little while, less than an hour . . .'	1 min. 50 sec.
18 July 1860	Dongola (Sudan)	'Les deux minutes de l'éclipse furent pour tous deux heures'	1 min. 50 sec.
29 June 1927	South Shields (England)	'It seemed like about half an hour'	25 sec.

Bibliography

- Alfrink, B.
1949 'Het "stil staan" van zon en maan in Jos.10.12-15', *Studia Cattolica* 24: 238-68.
- Alt, A.
1936 'Josua', in P. Volz *et al.* (eds.), *Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments* (BZAW, 66; Berlin: A. Töpelmann); reprinted in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Munich: Beck, 1953-59), I, 176-92.
1953 'Neue Erwägungen über die Lage von Mizpa, Ataroth, Beeroth und Gibeon', *ZDPV* 69: 1-27.
- Boman, Thorleif
1960 *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (Library of History and Doctrine; London: SCM Press).
- Campbell, E.F.
1963 'Report on Fifth Campaign of Work at El Jib', *BA* 26: 29-30.
- Driver, S.R.
1898 *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 7th edn).
- Dus, J.
1960 'Gibeon—eine Kultstätte des ŠMS und die Stadt des benjaminischen Schicksal', *VT* 10: 353-61.
- Eissfeldt, Otto
1966 *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- Fensham, F.C.
1964 'The Treaty between Israel and the Gibeonites', *BA* 27: 96-100.
- Galling, K.
1965 'Kritische Bemerkungen zur Ausgrabungen von eḡ-ḡib', *BO* 22: 242-45.
- Gray, John
1967 *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (NCB; London: Thomas Nelson).

- Holladay, John S., Jr
 1968 'The Day(s) the Moon Stood Still', *JBL* 87: 166-78.
- Lambert, G.
 1954 'Josué à la bataille de Gabaon', *NRT* 76: 374-91.
- Noth, Martin
 1938 *Das Buch Josua* (HAT; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 2nd edn).
- Phythian-Adams, W.J.T.
 1946 'A Meteorite of the Fourteenth Century BCE', *PEQ* 78: 116-24.
- Pritchard, James B.
 1962 *Gibeon, Where the Sun Stood Still: The Discovery of a Biblical City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
 1963 *The Bronze Age Cemetery at Gibeon* (Philadelphia: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania).
- Reed, W.L.
 1967 'Gibeon', in Thomas 1967: 231-43.
- Rowley, H.H.
 1945 *The Re-discovery of the Old Testament* (Library of Contemporary Theology; London: J. Clarke).
- Russell, H.N.
 1918 'The Standing Still of the Sun (Joshua x.12-14)', *Princeton Theological Review* 16: 103.
- Sawyer, J.F.A., and F.R. Stephenson
 1970 'Literary and Astronomical Evidence for a Total Eclipse of the Sun Observed in Ancient Ugarit on 3 May 1375 BCE', *BSOAS* 33: 467-89.
- Scott, R.B.Y.
 1952 'Meteorological Phenomena and Terminology in the Old Testament', *ZAW* 64: 11-25.
- Smith, George Adam
 1931 *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 25th edn).
- Soggin, J. Alberto
 1970 *Le livre de Josué* (CAT, 5a; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé).
- Stade, Bernhard
 1888-89 *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Allgemeine Geschichte in Einzeldarstellungen; 2 vols.; Berlin: G. Grote, 2nd edn).
- Thomas, D. Winton (ed.)
 1967 *Archaeology and Old Testament Study: Jubilee Volume of the Society for Old Testament Study 1917-1967* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Thorburn, C.S.
 1935-36 'Joshua's Long Day', *ExpTim* 47: 373-77.
- Weippert, Manfred
 1971 *The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes in Palestine: A Critical Survey of Recent Scholarly Debate* (SBT, 2.21; Naperville, IL: Allenson).
- Wilson, R.D.
 1918 'What Does "the sun stood still" Mean?', *Princeton Theological Review* 16: 46-54.
- Wright, G.E.
 1967 'Shechem', in Thomas 1967: 355-70.

KING DAVID'S TREATMENT OF THE AMMONITES
(2 SAMUEL 12.31)*

In a paper read some years ago to the Glasgow University Oriental Society and in a revised form at a seminar in Newcastle University, I concluded that there were good linguistic arguments for the view that David did not punish his defeated enemies by torturing them with saws and burning them alive in a brick-kiln, as the Hebrew text of 2 Sam. 12.31, followed by King James' Authorized Version, clearly states. It was this aspect of my paper that was picked up in an article with the headline 'KING DAVID CLEARED OF MASSACRING PRISONERS' on the front page of *The Times* (9 May 1977). What I would like to do here, in a revised version dedicated with great respect and admiration to David Daube, is to reflect instead on the story of how generations of commentators reacted to the verse, and in particular on the effect of modern rationalism and liberalism on the history of its interpretation.

The general sense of this verse was not questioned before modern times: it described how David treated the vanquished inhabitants of Rabbath Ammon in Transjordan with exceptional cruelty, torturing them with saws and other sharp instruments, and burning them alive in a brick-kiln: 'And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln; and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon' (2 Sam. 12.31 AV). The question was not whether David treated his prisoners in this way but why he should single out the Ammonites for such special treatment. There was some dispute over what kinds of instruments he used,

* This paper was first published in Alan Watson (ed.), *Law, Morality and Religion: Global Perspectives* (Studies in Comparative Legal History; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 165-78. An earlier version was read at a meeting of the Glasgow University Oriental Society and later published in the *Transactions* 25 (1977), pp. 96-107. I would like to thank Dr Andrew Fairbairn of the French Department at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne for all his helpful comments and advice.

as some of the terms used are rare, but there was no whisper of a suggestion that the text meant something else until the eighteenth century.

Then suddenly we find commentators arguing that the text in fact means that David put the Ammonites to work with saws and other sharp instruments and employed them at his brick-kilns. This new interpretation, with various emendations of the Hebrew text both in 2 Sam. 12.31 and the parallel passage in 1 Chron. 20.3, was eventually so universally accepted that it appears in virtually all modern translations of the Bible. Some like the NEB (1970) and the JB (1966) do not even admit that the translation is based on an emended text. The NEB translation is typical: 'he took its inhabitants and set them to work with saws and other iron tools, sharp and toothed, and made them work in the brick-kilns.' The verb *ve-he'evir*, 'and he made (them) pass through', is emended without comment to *ve-he'evid*, 'and he made (them) work', and in the parallel passage in 1 Chron. 20.3 *va-yasar*, 'and he sawed (them) up', is emended to a causative form of the verb (hiphil), 'he caused them to saw'. What is remarkable about the modern commentaries is that no justification for these emendations is thought necessary other than the assumption that David could not have done such a thing (O'Ceallaigh 1962; Ackroyd 1973: 72; but cf. McKane 1963: 236). Yet why have no such emendations been proposed for 2 Sam. 8.2, where David apparently butchers two-thirds of the Moabites, or for 1 Sam. 18.27, where he kills and mutilates two hundred Philistines? Why is there no trace of the proposed new reading in any of the ancient versions? The text of these two verses may indeed be corrupt, but if the only reason for emending it, against all the evidence, is that it offends our modern sense of morality, then emendation is hardly justified.

It is possible to give a fairly precise date to the beginning of this modern 'whitewashing' campaign. It began with a controversial article on David by Pierre Bayle in his influential *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, first published in 1696, translated into English in 1710 and into German in 1740. So controversial was this article that Bayle was enjoined by the religious establishment in Rotterdam to rewrite it so as 'not to offend pious souls'. In the 1702 edition of the *Dictionnaire*, both the original and the bowdlerized versions were published side by side. Bayle believed in the existence of a natural morality, self-authenticating to the human conscience and enlightened by reason, and he thus felt bound to itemize rigorously all the crimes and immoralities that blackened David's character. Adultery and murder were by no means the only ones, and prominent on the list were his cold-blooded massacres of Moabites and Ammonites (Bayle 1736: 532-43). Bayle's ideas provided welcome ammunition for opponents of religious authority (Fairbairn 1975). When, for example, Samuel Chandler in 1760 preached an obituary sermon on George II, whom he flatteringly compared to King David (they both reigned for the same number of years, for one thing), the

anonymous writer of a tract entitled *The Life of David* or *The History of the Man after God's Own Heart*, bitterly catalogues almost every incident in David's life, finding there unspeakable immorality, brutality, hypocrisy or vengefulness: 'narratives that would shock in profane history are read with reverence by readers of the Bible. Even in his Psalms he breathes nothing but blood! . . . This, Britons, is the king to whom your late and excellent monarch has been compared. What an impiety to the majesty of heaven! What an affront to the memory of an honest prince!' (*The Life of David* 1820: 49, 61).

It is against this background that the first attempts to exonerate David of the charge that he tortured and massacred the Ammonites must be viewed. Lengthy arguments were amassed to reinterpret those passages in which David is presented in a bad light. Commentators went back to the Hebrew text prepared, indeed anxious, to discover something new about its meaning. Professors set their graduate students to work on it: we have at least two full-length dissertations on 2 Sam. 12.31 from the first half of the eighteenth century. The first of these, that of J.A. Danz, completed at Jena University in 1710, was entitled *Davidis in Ammonitas devictos mitigata crudelitas ceu specimen sinceritatis scripturae, Masora throno mota triumphantis* ('The mitigation of David's cruelty against the defeated Ammonites' or 'An example of the sincerity of Scripture triumphant once the masora is dethroned'). In this he argues that sawing and burning are figments of the Masoretes' imagination (*in solo masoretarum cerebro exstructae* [p. 673]), and that the true meaning is that he set them to work with saws, in iron mines and with stone-quarrying tools (*scalpra ferrea sc. in lapecidinis*), 'after he had taken them over along with their king' (reading Ketiv *be-malkan* against the Masoretic *ba-malben*). He quotes passages to prove how many carpenters, masons and stonecutters David needed for his (and his son's) building programme, and references in classical literature to the exploitation of conquered enemy manpower (pp. 671-72).

Another eighteenth-century dissertation on the same subject, that of I.C. Nimptsch and I.E. Hahn, published at Leipzig in 1731, reaches a similar conclusion. Far from blackening David's character, the verse about his enlightened treatment of the Ammonites is yet another illustration of the wisdom of this great king. Both dissertations are characterized by, on the one hand, meticulous analysis of the Hebrew text as it stands (*vitam potius perditurus quam minimum Iota de scriptura mutem* [Danz, p. 674]) but, on the other hand, concern to find blind prejudice in the work of traditional interpreters and evidence of the irreproachability of King David. Like the textual emendations of the nineteenth century, the 'semantic emendations' (Barr 1977: 300) proposed by Danz and Nimptsch and Hahn in the eighteenth century, some of them extremely unlikely, were motivated by theo-

logical and historical considerations, not by a concern for what the text actually means.

Before 1700, and before Bayle's revolutionary reappraisal of David's character, encouraged by the new attitudes and techniques of the European Enlightenment, the problem of 2 Sam. 12.31 was quite different: Why did the Lord's anointed, prototype of the Messiah, idealized king of Israel's golden age, punish a relatively insignificant nation with almost unbelievable severity? The variety of answers to this question is matched by the variety of tortures identified in the rather obscure language of the verse. There was unanimity about the saws, mentioned as instruments of punishment or torture in other biblical contexts, notably Susanna 58-59 and the *Martyrdom of Isaiah* 5.11 (cf. Talmud *Yebamot* 49b; Heb. 11.37), and *magzerot ha-barzel* were usually understood as 'iron axes'. But opinion was divided on *hariše ha-barzel*, often taken as 'iron threshing implements' (Targum, LXX, Rashi; cf. Amos 1.3). The Vulgate has 'waggons', and the AV 'harrows', anachronistically, as the harrow was unknown in the ancient Near East.

The second part of the description was interpreted in several ways. Kimḥi (1160-1235) thought that the Ammonites were burnt alive like the victims sacrificed to Moloch. Resh Lakish (c. 200-c. 275) (quoted by Kimḥi), Martin Luther (1483-1546) and many others understood *malben* to be a 'place for firing bricks' and that the victims were burnt alive in such a place. Others, including Rashi (1040-1105), take *malben* as a road or terrace paved with bricks and conceive of the torture in terms of dragging the victims through the streets (Driver 1913: 294-97). A seventeenth-century Spanish commentator thought that it meant that David 'bricked them up in a wall' (*empezedar*) (Malvenda 1650: 518).

Whatever the details, there was complete unanimity on the general sense of the verse, and various types of explanation for David's treatment of the Ammonites were offered. Some argued that the brutality was not so extreme as it seems to be. The Dominican inquisitor Peter Martyr (c. 1200-1252) (Simler 1575: 247), the French Jewish philosopher Levi ben Gershon (Gersonides, 1288-1344) and others right down to modern times (Kirkpatrick 1881: 134) have maintained that such things were customary in those days, an argument that naturally infuriated Pierre Bayle. Alternatively, David's apologists point out that he did not treat all the Ammonites in this way but only some of them. Did he not have an Ammonite in his government (2 Sam. 23.37)? Did not Solomon marry an Ammonite woman (1 Kgs 11.1)? Was not Rehoboam's mother an Ammonite (1 Kgs 14.21, 31) (Willet 1614: 79; cf. Peter Martyr)? Most commentators, however, accepted that David did treat the Ammonites with exceptional severity and put forward various historical, theological and psychological arguments in his defence.

By the seventeenth century, at least seven major crimes were imputed to the Ammonites as historical reasons for their fate at the hands of David. The most frequently quoted was their treatment of David's envoys in 2 Samuel 10, which was considered not only a humiliating act in itself but also tantamount to a declaration of war on the Lord's anointed and an assault on his dignity (Malvenda 1650; Guild 1659: 168; Piscatore 1623: 529; Smith 1899: 327). Others, including Ernest Renan in the nineteenth century, saw in the Syro–Ammonite alliance, formed expressly to fight against Israel, an exceptional threat to Israelite peace (2 Sam. 10.6ff.) (Renan 1889: 26–32; cf. Guild, Piscatore). Others, somewhat disingenuously, argued that David was reacting to the Ammonites' killing of Uriah the Hittite together with other valiant heroes (2 Sam. 11.17) (Guild, Piscatore). A fourth reason goes back to the previous generation and the threat of the Ammonite king to gouge out the right eyes of the men of Jabesh Gilead, 'to bring disgrace on Israel' (1 Sam. 11.2). The law in Deuteronomy 23.3ff. prohibiting Ammonites and Moabites from entering the assembly of the Lord on account of their obstructive tactics towards Israel in the wilderness, provided a further reason (Willet). Finally, of course, the Ammonite religion gave David good reason for treating them unsparingly: they were idolaters, which in itself would have been enough, but they were also guilty of burning their sons as sacrificial victims to Moloch (2 Kgs 23.10; Jer. 32.35). This last fact about the Ammonites showed the justice of David's action in selecting a punishment appropriate to the crime: *dignum impio et inhumano scelere supplicium ut eo ipso igne perirent quo filios suos sacrificabant*, 'it was a right and proper punishment that they should perish in the same fire as that in which they sacrificed their sons' (Malvenda; cf. Kimḥi, Piscatore, Guild, Peter Martyr).

Several commentators conclude their discussion of this verse by turning from the historical circumstances of David's own day to the question of how God deals with those who reject his Messiah:

and it may in like manner be considered what torture and torments they may expect who stubbornly stand out in impenitency against Christ Jesus the Sonne of David, and who will not in time agree with their adversary and make peace with him as other penitent believers do, who is the Prince of Peace (Guild 1659: 171f.; cf. Peter Martyr).

No doubt some of the imagery in mediaeval representations of the fate of the damned in hell owes something to the saws, harrows, threshing implements and furnaces of this verse. Rashi, Kimḥi and other Jewish commentators saw here instruments in the hand of God, not just of David and his army: the 'file' (French *lime* is Rashi's translation of *magzerah*), by which God smoothes away the roughnesses of men's character, and the 'saw', which God alone, the Master Craftsman, wields. Is it not written: 'shall the

axe set itself up against the hewer, or the saw claim mastery over the sawyer?' (Isa. 10.15 NEB).

Finally, several commentators make no attempt to justify the crime of excessive cruelty but explain it away by reference to the state of David's mind at the time. The eighteenth-century French scholar Auguste Calmet gives the best example of this:

Nous ne prétendons pas approuver cette conduite de David. Il est très croyable qu'il tomba dans cet excès de cruauté, avant qu'il eût reconnu le crime qu'il avoit commis avec Bethsabée et pendant qu'il étoit encore dans toute la souillure de son iniquité et abandonné de l'esprit de grâce (Calmet 1730: 207).

Our survey has been informative in a number of ways. From the modern period we accept that the Hebrew text is not sacrosanct and that there is a question as to what exactly David did to the Ammonites. But from the ancient and mediaeval period we can learn how important it is to keep the biblical text in the correct perspective and to look for more than a plain narrative of what happened. These are religious texts, even the historical narratives, in which theological motives, the symbolism characteristic of religious language and various other didactic techniques such as Rashi and Kimḥi delight in, probably play a far greater role than is often allowed.

It may well be the case, as I argued in the earlier version of this paper, that we have to reckon with two stages in the literary history of this narrative, reflected in the unevenness of the original Hebrew text. Two of the nouns are singular and, so far as we can judge, neutral, technical terms: one is a 'stone-saw' (*meğerah*) and the other an 'implement for making bricks' (*malben*, probably 'brick-mould') (Driver 1913: 294-97; Petrie 1917: Pl. XLVII). By contrast, the two other terms, *ḥariṣ* and *magzerah*, occur only here and their precise technical meaning is unknown, but they have unmistakable associations with torture and killing. The closely related form, *ḥaruṣ*, 'sharp', is used three times of threshing-sledges, twice in contexts of torture (Amos 1.3; Isa. 41.15); and the verb *gazar*, 'to cut', is used of 'cutting off from the land of the living' (e.g. Isa. 53.8; Ezek. 37.11; Hab. 3.17. Ps. 88.6; Lam. 3.54), cutting a baby in half (1 Kgs 3.25-20) and cutting up meat (Isa. 9.18; Gen. 15.17). Only once does it occur in the sense of felling trees (2 Kgs 6.4). These two words are further described by the word *barzel*, 'iron', which has ugly and frightening associations too, as, for example, in the well-known expressions *kur ha-barzel*, 'the iron-furnace (of slavery in Egypt)' (Deut. 4.20; 1 Kgs 8.51), *'ol ha-barzel*, 'iron yoke' (Deut. 28.48) and *ḥaruṣot ha-barzel*, 'the iron threshing sledges (with which the Syrians threshed Gilead)' (Amos 1.3) (see Chapter 40). Of the two verbs, one is a neutral term, in an entirely normal grammatical form (*va-yasem*, 'and he set them [to work]'), while the other *ve-he 'vir*, 'and he made them pass'. is

grammatically anomalous (*GK* §112pp, 6a) and another term carrying obvious associations with brutal killing. It occurs 12 times in an expression for 'putting to death by fire'. Indeed, in some passages the idiom is so familiar that it has this meaning without the addition of the explanatory phrase *ba'esh*, 'through the fire' (e.g. Jer. 32.35; Ezek. 16.21; 21.26; 23.37).

In view of these indications of unevenness in this verse, between neutral technical terms and highly charged emotive expressions, and between regular and irregular verb forms, it seems at least permissible to suggest that an earlier, more matter-of-fact text read *wayyasem ba-mege'rah u-ba-malben*, 'and he set them to work with stone-saws and brick-moulds', and that the colourful, highly emotive and irregular middle section was interpolated by a later hand, thereby introducing the savagery that elicited the variety of Christian and Jewish responses presented above. If the first goes back to the earliest annals of David's reign, the savage anti-Ammonite interpolation was probably introduced during the Babylonian exile. Most of the occurrences of *he'vir* in the sense of 'to put to death by fire' are exilic (Deuteronomy, Kings [D], Jeremiah, Ezekiel), and there is ample evidence of bitter anti-Ammonite feeling at the time. Ezekiel's polemical outburst against Ammon is typical: 'I will breathe out my blazing wrath upon you. I will hand you over to brutal men, skilled in destruction. You shall become fuel for fire, your blood shall be shed within the land and you shall leave no memory behind' (Ezek. 21.36f. [Eng. v. 31f.]; cf. Jer. 49.1-6; Ezek. 25.3; Zeph. 2.8-11). No doubt the Ammonite plot to assassinate the governor of Jerusalem and the Jews that were with him (Jer. 40.13; 41.18) was one reason for such anti-Ammonite feeling. It is also highly significant that probably the closest parallel to 2 Sam. 12.31, in terms of the savagery of its language, is another exilic passage, Isa. 41.15: 'I will make you a sharp threshing-sledge, new and studded with teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and crush them and reduce the hills to chaff.' That this refers to Israel's foes is clear from earlier verses in the chapter, and from the even more bloodthirsty language of some of the later chapters of Deutero-Isaiah (e.g. 49.22-26) (Westermann 1969: 76f.). The last verse of Psalm 137 is another well-known example of savage, vengeful polemic from the exilic period.

So can King David be 'cleared' of a hideous war crime after all? The answer is rather more complicated than it appeared to *The Times* correspondent in 1977. If the above linguistic analysis is correct, we have two quite different stories about what David did to his prisoners at the end of the war against Rabbath Ammon. One tells how he gave them saws and brick-moulds and sent them to work in stone quarries and brick factories. The other says he tormented them with a variety of horrific metal instruments of torture and burned them alive. The first is written in a more sober and annalistic style than the second and appears to be earlier. But the assumption that the earliest form of a text carries some kind of guarantee of truth

and is always to be preferred has frequently been questioned since the heyday of historical criticism (Childs 1967: 124; Sawyer 1972: 8-10; Alter 1992: 190-210). In the first place, David's 'court history' in the books of Samuel and Kings can hardly be described as an exact account of what actually happened. It has been compared to the sagas and national epics sung or recited by court poets and bards to please and entertain the royal court (Gunn 1978). Others argue that the main motive of the so-called succession narrative (2 Samuel 9-1 Kings 2) is political propaganda (Rost 1926); while others place it within the tradition of didactic or wisdom literature (Whybray 1968). Whatever the aims and interests of its author or authors, it certainly does not read like a quest for the historical David.

But more significantly, no amount of careful scholarship, some of it clearly motivated by apologetic concerns, can alter the fact that it is the second version of the story, in which David treats his prisoners of war with exceptional severity, that is the official one. There has been complete unanimity on this, right down to modern times. Whatever the historical facts are, there is no doubt whatever about the biblical account of King David's treatment of the citizens of Rabbath Ammon. He treated them, together with the citizens of all the other Ammonite cities, with hideous brutality, and commentators must ask why—and was he in so doing guilty of some kind of 'war crime'?

I would like to end by looking again at these questions, to see whether we have anything to add to the ancient and mediaeval answers discussed above. In the first place, let us look, as Auguste Calmet did in the eighteenth century, at the immediate literary context in 2 Samuel 11-12, and at David's behaviour at the time. It all happened around the time when lust led to adultery with Bathsheba and subsequently to the ruthless murder of her husband Uriah, who, like the Ammonites, was a foreigner. David is condemned by the prophet Nathan for 'despising the word of the Lord' and told to expect catastrophes soon to befall his family (2 Sam. 12.9-12). Then Bathsheba has their child, but it dies when it is only seven days old, and David's eccentric reaction shocks and amazes his courtiers: when the child was alive, he fasted, and as soon as the baby died, he stopped fasting. The picture of a king behaving wildly, not unlike Saul in some respects (cf. 1 Samuel 18-22), is further heightened by some of the circumstances surrounding the war against the Ammonites. David seems to be jealous of Joab concerning who should have the credit for defeating the Ammonites, or at least Joab seems to be afraid of how David will react if he does not allow him to have all the credit (2 Sam. 12.27). Perhaps the picture of a king returning home in triumph with a foreign crown of immense weight on his head is also intended to add a detail to this extraordinary story, the story of a 'time in David's life when the mild and gentle spirit of God was departed from him

and he was become cruel and furious as well as lustful' (S. Patrick, *Commentary on Samuel*, quoted by Nimptsch and Hahn 1731: 6).

There is also the wider context of biblical tradition as a whole. Of particular importance are the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 20 and the law in Deuteronomy 20 concerning the treatment of enemies. The author of 1 Chronicles gives a very direct and matter-of-fact account of David's treatment of the Ammonites: 'he sawed them [presumably in a general non-technical sense of 'cut them up'] with saws and iron picks and axes'. The scene depicted is still horrific, but the emotive word 'iron' is omitted, as is any reference to burning the people alive in brick-kilns. Also omitted from this version of the story is the whole Bathsheba and Uriah incident, with the result that attention is not at all on the personal life and morals of King David in Jerusalem, but rather on his relations with the Ammonites and the military activities of his generals Joab and Abishai (1 Chron. 19.1–20.3). The verse in question rounds off the story of how David's friendly gesture to the new king of the Ammonites was spurned, his envoys ridiculed, and the entire Ammonite army together with massive Syrian reinforcements mustered to challenge his authority. This story is told in 2 Samuel as well (2 Sam. 10.1–11.1; 12.26–31), with some additional details in dispatches sent from the front by Joab (2 Sam. 12.14–25), but the continuity is broken and there is apparently no connection between the Ammonites' treatment of David's envoys and the Syrian alliance at the beginning, and David's treatment of the Ammonites at the end. There is undoubtedly some force in the arguments of Ernest Renan and Henry Preserved Smith cited above, that the Syro–Ammonite alliance posed an exceptional threat to Israelite peace. This goes some way towards explaining David's exceptionally severe treatment of his defeated enemies in this case.

But there is still the question of the legality and morality of David's action, which brings us finally to Deuteronomy 20. The 2 Samuel narrative follows the law quite closely, as do other passages in the historical books (Carmichael 1985: 122–32). First, in a manner reminiscent of the first part of the Deuteronomic law, the generals exhort one another on the eve of battle to 'be of good courage' because they are fighting for Yhwh and their people (2 Sam. 10.9–12; 1 Chron. 19.10–13; cf. Deut. 20.1–9). After the battle, they make peace with the Syrians, who surrender to Israel and become their subjects ('*avad*'; 2 Sam. 10.19; 1 Chron. 19.19; cf. Deut. 20.10–11). The Ammonite capital, by contrast, apparently did not sue for peace but stood out against Israel, until they too were defeated, a great amount of spoil taken, and the 'people who were in it', presumably in this case the male population, put to death (2 Sam. 12.26–31; 1 Chron. 20.1–3; cf. Deut. 20.12–14). All the other Ammonite cities, categorized apparently as 'cities which are very far from you', as opposed to cities in the land inherited by

Israel, were treated in the same way (cf. Deut. 20.15). Without entering into the special question of the legality or appropriateness of his chosen method of execution, we may conclude that David's destruction of the Ammonites, far from being illegal, seems to conform rather more closely to the law as recorded in Deuteronomy 20 than the alternatives proposed by modern scholars. We might even ask whether it would not have been even more controversial if David had employed the people of a city that continued to defy him as forced labour in his stone quarries and brick factories.

Bibliography

- Ackroyd, Peter R.
 1973 *I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah: Introduction and Commentary* (Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SCM Press).
- Alter, Robert
 1992 'Scripture and Culture', in *The World of Biblical Literature* (New York: Basic Books): 190-210. First published in *Commentary* (August 1985).
- Anonymous
 1820 *The Life of David, or, The history of the man after God's own heart* (London: J. Carlile).
- Barr, James
 1977 *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM Press).
- Bayle, Pierre
 1736 *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (4 vols.; London: Printed for J.J. and P. Knapton et al.): vol. 4.
- Calmet, Auguste
 1730 *Dictionnaire historique, critique, chronologique, géographique et littéral de la Bible* (4 vols.; Geneva: Marc-Michel Bousquet): vol. 2.
- Carmichael, Calum M.
 1985 *Law and Narrative in the Bible: The Evidence of the Deuteronomic Laws and the Decalogue* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1985).
- Chandler, Samuel
 1766 *A Critical History of the Life of David* (London: Printed by S. Chandler for J. Buckland and J. Coote).
- Childs, Brevard S.
 1967 *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (SBT, 2.3; London: SCM Press).
- Driver, S.R.
 1913 *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd rev. edn).
- Fairbairn, A.
 1975 'King David's Enlightenment Critics and Defenders', paper read at 4th International Congress of the Enlightenment at Yale University in July.
- Guild, William
 1659 *The Throne of David, or an Exposition of the Second of Samuells wherein is set downe the pattern of a pious and prudent prince and a clear type of of [sic] the Prince of Princes Christ Iesus the Sonne of David and his spirituall Kingdome* (Oxford: Printed by W. Hall for Rob. Blagrave).

- Gunn, David M.
 1978 *The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation* (JSOTSup, 6; Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield).
- Kirkpatrick, A.F.
 1881 *The Second Book of Samuel* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- McKane, William
 1963 *I and II Samuel* (Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SCM Press).
- Malvenda, T.
 1650 *Commentarium in sanctam scripturam* (Lyons): vol. 3.
- O'Ceallaigh, G.C.
 1962 'And so David did to all the cities of Ammon', *VT* 12: 179-89.
- Petrie, W.M. Flinders
 1917 *Tools and Weapons: Illustrated by the Egyptian Collection in the University College, London, and 2000 Outlines from Other Sources* (Publications of the Egyptian Research Account and British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 30; London: British School of Archaeology).
- Piscatore, Johannes
 1623 *Commentarius in libros Samuelis* (Herborn, Nassau).
- Renan, Ernest
 1889 *History of the People of Israel* (5 vols.; London: Chapman & Hall): vol. 2.
- Rost, Leonhard
 1926 *Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids* (BWANT, 42; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer).
- Sawyer, John F.A.
 1972 *Semantics in Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation* (SBT, 2.24; London: SCM Press).
- Simler, J. (ed.)
 1575 *Peter Martyr's Commentary on Samuel* (Zurich).
- Smith, Henry Preserved
 1899 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Westermann, Claus
 1969 *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- Whybray, R.N.
 1968 *The Succession Narrative: A Study of II Samuel 9-20; I Kings 1 and 2* (SBT, 2.9; London: SCM Press).
- Willet, Andrew
 1614 *An Harmonie upon the Second Book of Samuel* (Cambridge: Printed by Cantrell Legge).

THE RUINED HOUSE IN ECCLESIASTES 12.3-5*

It has long been noted that an allegorical interpretation of Eccl. 12.2-5 cannot be sustained for every detail without straining the meaning of the Hebrew and the imagination of the reader to breaking point. This applies particularly to vv. 4-5, for which there is still no generally accepted interpretation, nor indeed any agreed translation, as a comparison between any of the modern English versions will show. Yet in spite of this, 'the famous allegory of growing old' remains at the centre of most modern interpretations of Eccl. 12.1-6 (e.g. McNeile, Barton, Cohen, Ginsberg, Rankin, Jones, Hertzberg, Zimmerli, Gordis, von Rad, Crenshaw), and a grotesque list of geriatric symptoms that have been identified in the passage can readily be compiled, for example, deafness, constipation, ischuria, acrophobia, and agoraphobia in v. 4; and anorexia, impotence and white hair in v. 5 (Power 1952: 123-26). Most commentators admit that the allegory is 'often very obscure' (Bentzen 1957: 180) or that a detailed allegorical interpretation of the passage 'destroys its impressive effect' (Bradley 1885: 129). But few suggest that it is not primarily an allegory at all (Taylor 1874; Buzy 1932; Leahy 1952). The aim of this paper is to propose a fresh explanation of the meaning of the passage and to argue that the allegorical interpretation, however ancient and well established, does violence to the original author's intention, a situation with obvious parallels in the history of the interpretation of the parables of Jesus (Jeremias 1963: 11-22). A re-examination of the text, in the light of its context, both in Qoheleth's teaching and within 'Solomonic' tradition in general, suggests a convincing alternative.

1. *Literary Context*

A frequent figure in biblical tradition, especially in the wisdom literature, is that of a house, representing human achievements or success in terms of

* This paper was originally published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975), pp. 519-31.

domestic security and contentment, and failure in terms of the collapse of a house. The best-known example is the parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 7.24-27; cf. Lk. 6.47-49). The same contrast underlies the conclusion of the first part of the book of Proverbs, where Wisdom's elegant house with seven pillars (Prov. 9.1) is contrasted with the sinister house of Folly, whose guests are 'in the depths of Sheol' (9.18). Job 27.13-23 looks like another example at the end of the dialogue between Job and the three comforters (see Chapter 9). But the figure is common throughout the wisdom literature: for example, 'Wisdom builds her house, but Folly with her own hands tears it down' (Prov. 14.1; cf. Ps. 127.1; Prov. 12.7; 14.11; 15.6, 25; 24.30-31; Job 8.15; Sir. 21.4, 8, 18; 22.16-18). Qoheleth himself quotes a similar proverb, apparently as a comment on the fate of a country ruined by the inexperience and dissoluteness of its young rulers:

Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child,
and your princes feast in the morning!
Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of a free man,
and your princes feast at the proper time,
for strength and not for drunkenness!
Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks
(10.16-18).

The most relevant example however is to be found in the first speech of the wise but unsympathetic Eliphaz to Job. With proverbial insensitivity, he draws upon his own experience to prove that Job's suffering is quite simply to be explained as the result of his folly:

The fool is destroyed by his own angry passions,
and the end of childish resentment is death.
I have seen it for myself: a fool uprooted,
his home in sudden ruin about him,
his children past help,
browbeaten in court with none to save them.
Their rich possessions are snatched from them;
what they have harvested others hungrily devour;
the stronger man seizes it from the panniers,
panting, thirsting for their wealth (Job 5.2-5 *NEB*).

He makes a similar point earlier in his speech in a heartrending picture of the disintegration of a pride of lions (4.10-11). In all these examples, the consequences of a man's folly are described as the collapse of his home and the ruin or disintegration of his family and property. There is no question of allegory in any of these, and it follows that the figure of the ruined house in Ecclesiastes 12 is, on structural grounds, more likely to be a parable about the failure of human efforts in general than an allegory about old age. An obvious parallel is the figure of a tree, which is employed to the same effect

in both proverbs (Prov. 11.28, 30) and parables (Ps. 1.3; Jer. 17.6-8; Wis. 4.3-5). Here too the reader is not intended to allegorize the details.

But there is a fundamental difference between the use of the house figure in the conventional examples quoted above and the use made of it in Ecclesiastes 12. In all the other examples, the destruction of the house is the direct consequence of human folly; for Qoheleth it is not. The blameless are just as likely to be struck down as the wicked (cf. Job 9.22-23; Eccl. 2.14-16). For Qoheleth, the house is deserted, not because of the folly of the builder or the laziness of its occupants but just because this is often the fate of human effort or 'toil' (*'amal*), a term frequently used by Qoheleth. For Job, too, his downfall, the plundering of his flocks and herds, the destruction of his family and home and his own hideous affliction were not the consequences of his folly, whatever Eliphaz and his fellow 'comforters' may have said. They were all part of a divine plan worked out behind the scenes, in the heavenly court (Job 1.6-12; 2.1-6), a secret plan that none of the characters in the drama, Job, his wife or his comforters, could understand. This is the eternally frustrating and humbling fact about God's creation that runs through Job and Ecclesiastes: 'God has made everything beautiful in its time; and put eternity into human minds, yet so that we cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end' (Eccl. 3.11; cf. 7.14; Job 28.12-13). The tyranny of time (Jones 1961: 293; Barr 1969: 103) and the uncertainty of human undertakings, from a king's ambitious building projects (2.4-8) to a laborer digging a pit (10.8), are favourite themes of Qoheleth. Everything is predetermined; if it is the time to build, then the builder will succeed; if it is the time to break down, then the builder's work will be in vain:

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter
under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up . . . (Eccl. 3.1-3).

Chapter 12 must be seen in the context of this recurring concern with the mystery of creation. Chapter 10 has a famous description of the topsyturviness of society: 'Folly is set in many high places, and the rich set in a low place. I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking on foot like slaves' (10.6-7) (McKane 1970: 85). There follows the list of unexpected and undeserved accidents at work, referred to above: 'The man who digs a pit may fall into it, and he who pulls down a wall may be bitten by a snake. The man who quarries stone may strain himself, and the woodcutter runs a risk of injury' (vv. 8-11 NEB). Chapter 11 contains a comment on the fact that 'you do not know the work of God who makes everything' (v. 5), and advice to take risks and act decisively and urgently, 'for you do not know

which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good' (11.6b; cf. vv. 1.4, 9). Qoheleth begins ch. 12, following on from the teaching of the previous chapter, by urging the young man to remember that he is a creature in a world ruled by God: 'Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come . . .' (12.1).

In one final respect, Eccl. 12.1-6 is, from a structural point of view, typical of conventional wisdom teaching. It is widely recognized that in the 'instruction literature' of the ancient Near East, a very frequent literary type consisted of an imperative, the vocative 'my son', and a motive clause (McKane 1970: 262-64). The chief biblical examples are to be found in Proverbs 1-9: 'Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching; for they are a fair garland for your head and pendants for your neck' (Prov. 1.8-9; cf. 3.1-2; 4.1-2; 5.1-2) (Whybray 1965: Chs. 2 and 3). There are a number in Ecclesiastes too (von Rad 1972: 226-27; Crenshaw 1974: 256-57). Ecclesiastes 11.9 and 11.10 are obvious examples, and if we take 12.1 as a third in sequence, then the imperative is there (v. 1a), the vocative 'O young man' is carried forward from 11.9 (cf. also 12.12), and the motive is in the form of three reasons for urgency, as it were, each introduced by the conjunction '*ad asher lo-*, 'while . . . not' (AV) or 'before' (RSV, JB, NEB). Three situations are envisaged, which may at any time interrupt the young man's progress towards achieving success and fulfilment:

(1) The first (v. 1b) describes a difficult time (*yeme ha-ra 'ah*), when you lose the enthusiasm and drive (*hefes*) with which to begin a task, and this is usually taken to refer to old age. But old age is not a subject in which Qoheleth appears to have been particularly interested, and furthermore it is one that does not fit into the framework of the unexpected. Old age, unlike death and the accidents listed in other parts of the book, comes to a man at a more or less precisely foreseeable point in his life. It seems preferable, therefore, to take this as referring again to the unpredictability of human endeavour, a recurring theme in Qoheleth and, incidentally, one that nicely mirrors the uncontrollable processes of nature, to be described next.

(2) The second (v. 2) takes up the thought of the previous chapter (cf. 11.7-8, 3-4), stressing again that the happiness and prosperity of the present may be abruptly cut short. Whether this refers to death or some other unexpected tragedy is not specified. The implication in the last part of the verse ('the clouds return after rain') seems to be that there is no point in hoping for a return to happiness after the 'darkness' or the 'rain'.

(3) There is no doubt about the third of these clauses (v. 6). It is about death, which may at any time, abruptly and without warning, cut short our ambitions. For Qoheleth, death wipes out the differences between wisdom and folly (2.15-16) and even between humans and beasts (3.18-20). Death is the supreme example of the uncontrollable assault of nature upon meticulously constructed human projects. It is in this context, between the second

and third of the three motive clauses, that the parable of the Ruined House occurs (vv. 3-5).

2. The Text

Before beginning a detailed analysis of this text, three points about it must be emphasized. (1) The allegorical interpretation is so ancient and firmly established that it may have influenced the text itself. The Masoretic Text, in other words, has an allegory here, and to recover an original, 'pre-allegorical' tradition may involve textual emendation. (2) The book of Ecclesiastes is part of 'Solomonic' tradition and of the wisdom tradition in general, and this implies that, in describing the meaning of some of the vocabulary, we should pay particular attention to the usage in Proverbs, Job, Sirach, and some of the Psalms (e.g. 1; 14; 49; 73; 91; 112; 127; 128). (3) The language of Ecclesiastes is in some respects more closely related to Post-Biblical Hebrew than to the main body of Biblical Hebrew literature (*GK* §2u, v; Barton 1908: 52-53; Gordis 1965: 59-62). Again, this means that, in attempting to discover overtones and associations in the language used by Qoheleth in the third century BCE, we may find that a Mishnaic usage or even an Aramaism not attested elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible may be important (see Chapter 35).

Between the second and third '*ad asher lo-* clauses, in which darkness (v. 2) and death (v. 6) are presented as threats to human progress, comes a colourful vignette reminiscent of a Homeric simile. It is marked off from the preceding verse by a different conjunction, *be-yom she-*, 'on the day when', and from the following verse by the third occurrence of '*ad asher lo-*, as already discussed. The most striking feature of this short passage, and one that is lost in the allegorical interpretations, is the symmetry both in its overall structure and within its component parts. Leaving aside v. 5c for the moment, we are left with two stanzas: the first (vv. 3-4a) consists of three lines in which all the verbs are *ve-qatal* forms (except, of course, the first, which has the relative prefix *she-*); the second (vv. 4b-5b) also consists of three lines, but here the verbs are all *ve-yiqtol* forms. This seems to represent a contrast between the content of the first stanza, where the subject is humanity and failing human activities, and that of the second stanza, in which the subject is the sights and sounds of indifferent nature, unmoved by the departure of the human beings from the scene (Hertzberg 1963: 213; Zimmerli 1967: 247). The verbs in the first stanza express plain statements of fact in sequence, while the *yiqtol* forms in the second stanza are modal; that is to say, they express a change in the writer's attitude to what he is saying (*GK* §§49h, 107m, q; Williams 1967: 37-38). The key to this passage is thus the contrast between failing human effort and unchanging nature, between transient humanity and indifferent creation, a theme introduced

already by Qoheleth at the very beginning of the book: 'A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains for ever' (1.4). Far from being an allegory about a subject not hitherto mentioned by Qoheleth, the parable of the Ruined House is the most poignant expression of his favourite theme and the climax of his teaching.

A. Human Downfall (vv. 3-4a). Verse 3 consists of four clauses describing the reactions of four groups of people associated with the house. The symmetry is again immediately evident. The people mentioned in v. 3a are men, those in v. 3b women; while, within each half-verse, there is another balance between the servants and the owners of the house. This is clearly a device intended to emphasize that every single person associated with the house, male and female, servants and masters, is involved in its downfall. The phrase *shomre ha-bayit* can, of course, refer to the guards or watchmen on duty outside a house (and thus, in the allegorical interpretation, to the hands), but it is preferable to take it as a more comprehensive term for servants in general, entrusted with some responsibility for looking after the house, maybe when the owner is away. This is how the term is used in the account of Absalom's rebellion, when David had to leave the palace to his concubines to look after (2 Sam. 15.16; 16.21; 20.3). In the second term, *anshe he-ḥayil*, the word *ḥayil* can refer either to physical strength (particularly appropriate for the allegory) or to material wealth; but in favour of the latter are the following facts: (1) in the wisdom literature *ḥayil* is commonly used for 'wealth', a mixed blessing (e.g. Job 31.23) and an embarrassment to the fool (e.g. Job 5.5; 15.29; 20.15, 18; Prov. 13.22; Pss. 49.7, 11; 73.12); and (2) in a sociopolitical context the phrase *anshe he-ḥayil* seems to have referred to the wealthy, landowning classes who were liable for military service (e.g. 2 Sam. 23.20; 1 Kgs 1.42) (Taylor 1874: 8-11; Williams 1922: 215).

The two verbs in v. 3a, *she-yazu 'u* and *ve-hit 'avvetu*, have almost universally been taken to refer to trembling (of the hands, in the allegory) and stooping or being bowed (of the legs). But again the original meaning may have been different. The first verb, *zua* ' , occurs in late Hebrew and Aramaic in the sense of moving out of a house, its range of meaning corresponding quite closely to that of 'to move' in English (Jastrow, 388). The reference would then be an exact parallel to the description of a disintegrating *ménage* in the second half of the verse. The active stem of *hit 'avvet* normally means 'to pervert (justice), mislead' in Biblical Hebrew (Job 8.3; 34.12; Ps. 119.78; 146.9), and in Post-Biblical Hebrew similarly 'to offend, render loathsome' (Jastrow, 216). In all periods the term occurs in forensic contexts, and 'to be ruined in a court of law' would be a particularly appropriate sense in the present context, being closely paralleled by descriptions of the ruined fool, quoted above from elsewhere in the wisdom literature (cf. Job 5.4; Ps. 127.5).

Verse 3b first refers to the women who grind flour, the most menial task in the house (cf. Exod. 11.5; Isa. 47.2), and then to elegant ladies of leisure looking out of their latticed windows (cf. Judg. 5.28; Prov. 7.6). With the ruin of the wealthy owner, the sound of grinding is heard no more (v. 4a), and the second scene fades away too (cf. Jer. 25.10). The phrase *ki mi'eṭu*, 'because they are few', has puzzled commentators, since it hardly gives a good reason for the women's stopping work. Indeed, the fewer there were, the harder they would have to work (Podechard 1912: 458-59). It makes good sense only for the allegorizers who take it as a reference to a decrease in the number of teeth and consequent difficulty in chewing. Perhaps it should be omitted as an allegorizer's gloss. Alternatively, the particle *ki* could be construed as emphatic here (cf. 1 Sam. 14.44; Job 3.13; 7.21) (GK §159ee; Williams 1967: 74), and the clause translated 'there are only a few of them' or, more idiomatically, 'the few that remain'. *hashak*, 'to be darkened', is perhaps more appropriate to the allegory than to the present interpretation, and the suggestion that we should read an original *ve-hashku* from the verb *hashak*, 'to withhold, keep back', used intransitively (as in Job 16.5 and perhaps elsewhere), is attractive (KBL, 339).

In v. 4, the contrast between the two parts of this passage, between the fading sounds of human activity and the continuing sounds of nature, is unmistakable, although missed in the allegory-oriented commentaries. This contrast indicated not only by the different verb forms, *qatal* forms in v. 4a and *yiqtol* forms in v. 4b, but also by the repetition of the word *qol*, 'sound', referring first to the fading sounds of grinding within, and then to the singing of the birds in v. 4b. The term *qum* is commonly used in the sense of coming onto the scene (e.g. Job 11.17; Prov. 24.22; Nah. 1.9) and would be the natural term to use at the beginning of a new stanza, in which indifferent nature supplants the human element in the picture.

B. Indifferent Nature (vv. 4b-5b). The phrase *qol ha-šippor*, 'the singing of the birds', replacing the sound of grinding must surely be the subject of the verb *ve-yaqum*, as several commentators have argued, and this means that the prepositional prefix *le-* in the word *le-qol* cannot be original (Symmachus, McNeile, Podechard; cf. NEB, JB). The question of why it appears in the MT (it can hardly be a scribal error) is best answered by reference to the allegorical interpretation, which dominates the Masoretic tradition. According to this, the whole passage, from v. 2 to v. 5, was taken as an allegory in which the subject throughout was an ageing mortal, naturally taken to be the subject of *ve-yaqum* at the beginning of v. 4b with *qol ha-šippor* as an adverbial phrase: 'he shall rise up at the voice of a bird'. Without the prefix, *qol ha-šippor* could have been taken as an adverbial accusative, expressing perhaps the cause of the man's rising up (cf. Isa. 7.25), but the insertion of *le-* was intended to make this clearer. When the change of subject from human beings to nature is realized, however, marked by the change of verb

form as well as the overall symmetrical structure of the poem, this somewhat tortuous line of argument becomes unnecessary. The same is true of the ingenious suggestion to emend *we-yaqum* into a verb meaning 'to grow faint' or the like, for example, *ve-yiqmal* from *qamal*, 'to decay' (cf. NEB).

The beautiful phrase *kol-benot ha-shir*, 'all the daughters of song', can be taken to refer to songbirds, on an analogy with *bat ya'neh*, 'owl' (Job 30.29 NEB) and similar terms (Driver 1954: 233) and as a parallel to *šippor*. The verb *ve-yishshahu* has usually been translated 'are brought low' (RSV), 'silenced' (JB), or the like, a usage that, incidentally, is not attested elsewhere in Biblical Hebrew for *shahah*. The allegorical interpretation of this verse, by which insomnia, a squeaky voice, impaired hearing, or other symptoms of old age are found here, is particularly problematic. But if the alternative proposed here is correct, then one would expect this verb *ve-yishshahu*, which is parallel to *ve-yaqum* and opposed to *ve-sagru . . . bi-shefol*, 'shut . . . fading away', to refer to the singing of the birds, in blissful unconcern, rather than to their falling silent. For this reason we would propose the emendation *ve-yasihu*, which involves no change in the consonantal text. The verb *siah*, 'to talk', is not uncommon in Biblical Hebrew (cf. Prov. 6.22; Job 12.8), and there is one remarkable parallel in a psalm: 'Those who sit by the town gate talk [*yasihu*] about me; drunkards sing songs about me . . .' (Ps. 69.13 [NEB v. 12]). The jeers of unsympathetic onlookers are part of the conventional description of suffering (cf. Ps. 22.8; Jer. 18.16; 19.8; 49.17; Lam. 2.15), and nicely adapted here by Qoheleth to represent nature jeering, as it were, at the dilapidated remains of human activity. In Post-Biblical Hebrew (to which the language of Ecclesiastes is probably closely related), *siah*, sometimes spelled with a samekh instead of a sin, is the regular word for 'to speak, converse'; and if any special overtones can be detected relevant to the present context and distinguishing it from *dibber*, *amar*, *millel* and related terms, they are surely to be found in passages like Ps. 69.13 quoted above, in which the word is used for gossip and idle chatter. Examples from the rabbinic literature would include 'there is to be no talking [*mesihin*] over the cup of benediction' (*Berakot* 51b), and the idiom *siḥat ḥullin*, 'profane talk' (*Sukkot* 28a).

Verse 5 now follows on naturally, and the problem of the plural subject for the verb *yir'u* is solved: 'they (the birds) will look down [cf. LXX ὄψονται] from the sky . . .' The subject throughout the second stanza is nature: 'The birds . . . the daughters of song . . . the almond tree . . . the locusts . . . the caperberries . . .' The usual view that there is an abrupt change of subject between v. 4 and v. 5, and that the plural verb refers to old men (not mentioned specifically anywhere) and their fear of heights (RSV) or steep places (cf. JB, NEB), has little to commend it either grammatically or exegetically and depends entirely on the allegorical interpretation of the verse. The proposal made here raises no grammatical difficulties and

semantically falls into line, as did the previous detail, with conventional descriptions of destruction and decay, where birds and animals are depicted as moving into the deserted ruins (e.g. Zeph. 2.13-14; Isa. 13.21-22; 34.13-15). Perhaps the meaning of another famous verse from a similar context is illuminated by this new interpretation of Eccl. 12.5, and provides the closest parallel of all: '... man is born to trouble; but the eagles [*bene reshef*] fly high above him' (Job 5.7: cf. JB).

The contrast between the human plight and insouciant nature is the same. The expression *hathattim* occurs only here in Biblical Hebrew and is usually taken as 'terrors', parallel to *yir'u*, which is then understood as 'they are afraid'. In later Hebrew, however, it normally occurs in a concrete sense as 'obstacles' (e.g. cracks in a road), things that cause dismay or embarrassment, and it seems natural to take it as a byform of *mehittah*, 'ruin, terror' (cf. Kimhi; Ben Yehuda, IV, 1819-20). This term occurs in a closely similar context: 'Thou hast breached his walls; thou hast laid his strongholds in ruins [*mehittah*]; all that pass by despoil him; he has become the scorn of his neighbors' (Ps. 89.41-42). It was apparently a conventional term in proverbial literature, where it denoted the cautionary downfall of the fool: 'Wise men lay up knowledge, but the babbling of a fool brings ruin near' (Prov. 10.14). The same idiomatic usage occurs in Prov. 10.29; 13.3; 18.7 and Job 6.21 and seems to be the proverbial equivalent of *shammah* and *shemamah*, which occur frequently in exactly parallel contexts in prophetic literature. The expression *hathattim* is then a colourful term describing the ruins by the roadside from which passers-by may draw their own conclusions (cf. Prov. 24.32). For Qoheleth they represent the failure of human efforts to make any lasting contribution to the natural order. No doubt Eliphaz and his friends would have concluded that the owner was a fool.

The next three clauses now present no difficulties, if one accepts a minor emendation proposed long ago and apparently already presupposed in the LXX: *ve-tifer*, 'and it will grow' (or *tifreh*; cf. Isa. 11.1; Podechard 1912: 463), for *ve-tafer*, 'it will fail' (RSV) or 'lose its zest' (NEB). All three clauses, then, refer to the continuing energy of nature in contrast to human failure. The Hebrew word for 'almond tree', *shaqed*, looks as though it is related to the verb *shaqed*, 'to be awake, watch' (cf. Jer. 1.11-12) and has been popularly explained by reference to the fact that it is the first tree to blossom in winter (Tristram 1868: 332-33; Taylor 1874: 31-33; KBL, 1007). It is thus an ideal symbol for the reawakening of nature after the house is deserted. Second, locusts, a threat to gardens and estates in many parts of the world, are easily frightened away when there are enough people about. If, however, there is no one left to look after the garden and the estate is abandoned, the locusts are free to settle and eat their fill in peace (Tristram 1868: 310-11). Third, caperberries (*aviyyonah*) grow on a straggling plant, rather like a bramble, called *Capparis spinosa*, which is commonly to be found among

rocks, on ancient walls, and in deserted places (Tristram 1868: 457-58). The author, just like the author of Prov. 24.31, has selected three common features of a neglected garden, and with poignant brevity and originality, presents them as symbols of nature's unconcern at the failure of human endeavour. No doubt all three terms are collective nouns, best represented by plurals in English: 'almond trees . . . locusts . . . caperberries'.

Finally, we return to v. 5c. Its grammatical relation to what precedes it is not clear, but there is a striking correspondence between the thought of v. 5c and that of the passage as a whole. As we have seen, the parable presents a contrast between human failure, on the one hand, and indifferent nature, on the other. Is it possible that the same contrast is intended in v. 5c? When human beings die and go to their eternal home, the activities of professional mourners, going round the streets touting for custom, increase. The verb *savav*, 'to go round', is used six times by Qoheleth, twice of his own vain attempts to find some meaning in life (2.20; 7.25), and twice of the wind going pointlessly round and round (1.6). Perhaps he saw in the mourners' activities, which increase when a man dies, a further example of this eerie theme (Gordis 1968: 347; Jones 1961: 345). If this is what the author originally intended—and it certainly would make the verse an extraordinarily effective conclusion to the parable—then the next step would be to take v. 5c as the point of reference for the simile in vv. 3-5b: 'as when a man is ruined and his house deserted, nature is unmoved; so when a man dies, life in the city goes on unchanged' (cf. Wis. 5.9-14). Two emendations would make the relationship between the simile in vv. 3-5b and the proverbial comment in v. 5c even clearer: (1) In v. 3, read *ke-yom she-*, 'as on the day when . . .', for MT *be-yom she-* (cf. Job 6.17; Ps. 18.1; 138.3; *GK* §130c, d). This would bring the parable into line with those quasi-proverbial allusions to Israel's history that are familiar to us from other parts of the Bible, for example, *ke-yom midian*, 'as on the day of Midian' (Isa. 9.3); *ke-yom massah . . . asher*, 'as on the day at Massah . . . when . . . ' (Ps. 95.8-9). (2) In v. 5c, read *ken*, 'so', for MT *ki*, 'for, because'. This is the normal particle introducing the principal clause after a simile of this type (cf. Amos 3.12). Both are minimal changes in the MT and readily attributable to scribal errors, influenced by the dominant allegorical interpretation (cf. Roberts 1951: 93; Würthwein 1957: 72). A translation of the restored pre-Masoretic Text might read as follows:

- 3a As when servants leave a house, and men of property are ruined;
- b the women who grind the flour stop work, the few that remain, and ladies appear at the windows no more;
- 4a the street doors are shut and the sound of grinding fades away;

- b then the sound of birds singing can be heard and all the chattering songbirds
- 5a look down upon it from the sky, a ruin by the roadside,
- b where almond trees blossom, locusts eat their fill, and caperberries grow;
- c so when we go to our eternal home, the mourners in the streets continue their ceaseless rounds.

3. Conclusion

(1) The allegorization of Eccl. 12.3-5, like that of the parables of Jesus, is very ancient. It is to be found already in Gregory Thaumaturgus (d. 270 CE) and in the Babylonian Talmud (*Shabbat* 151b-153c), and is probably earlier (Barton 1908: 18-31). It may even go back to the same period in the history of the book as its 'Solomonic framework' (1.1, 12; 12.9-14). As it now stands, the book of Ecclesiastes is a conventional piece of royal instruction literature, in which an ageing king or high official, drawing upon his own experience, instructs his young heir (11.9; 12.12) in the essentials for coping with reality. In this context, the allegory of old age, traditionally found in these verses, is not inappropriate.

(2) Modern critical scholarship found that the allegorization of the parables of Jesus is secondary and a distortion of their original meaning. There are good reasons to suppose that the same applies to Eccl. 12.3-5. In any case, no allegorical interpretation so far proposed is without serious difficulties for which there are no agreed solutions. The figure of a ruined house occurs as the concluding didactic image at the end of three other blocks of instruction literature (Proverbs 1-9; Job 3-27; Matthew 5-7), and nowhere is it intended as an allegory. Furthermore, old age is apparently not a subject that interested Qoheleth. Not only does he not refer to it elsewhere, but it does not accord with his teaching about the unpredictability of human affairs. As a parable on the fate of human efforts in a topsy-turvy world, the text makes very good sense and takes up the theme with which Qoheleth began (1.4-5).

(3) Two levels in the interpretation of this passage can thus be distinguished: (a) the original author's intention, according to which pessimism in face of the tyranny of time and the illogicality of events, is poignantly expressed as nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible; (b) a more traditional interpretation of the passage whereby the gloomy observations of an old man are presented as reasons for fearing God and keeping his commandments (12.13). The book *as it stands* implies that Solomon wrote it in his old age, when weary of life, to 'expose the emptiness and vanity of all worldly pursuits and carnal gratifications, and to show that the happiness of man

consists in fearing God and obeying his commandments' (Jerome; cited by Barton 1908: 20). It was this second level of interpretation that the Jewish and Christian communities saw fit to canonize, not the original pessimism. But this need not prevent us from probing, by means of modern techniques and attitudes, into the intentions of the original author.

Bibliography

- Barr, James
 1969 *Biblical Words for Time* (SBT, 33; London: SCM Press, rev. edn).
- Barton, George A.
 1980 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Bentzen, Aage
 1957 *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 3rd edn).
- Bradley, George Granville
 1885 *Lectures on Ecclesiastes Delivered in Westminster Abbey* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Buzy, D.
 1932 'Le portrait de la Vieillesse (Eccl. xii.1-7)', *RB* 41: 329-40.
- Cohen, A.
 1946 *The Five Megilloth: Hebrew Text, English Translation and Commentary* (Soncino Books of the Bible; London: Soncino Press).
- Crenshaw, James L.
 1974 'Wisdom', in John H. Hayes (ed.), *Old Testament Form Criticism* (Trinity University Monograph Series in Religion, 2; San Antonio: Trinity University Press).
- Driver, G.R.
 1954 'Problems and Solutions', *VT* 4: 225-45.
- Ginsberg, H.L.
 1956 'Koheleth XII.4 in the Light of Ugaritic', *Syria* 33: 99-101.
- Ginsburg, Christian D.
 1861 *Cohleth, Commonly Called the Book of Ecclesiastes, Translated from the Original Hebrew, with a Commentary, Historical and Critical* (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts).
- Gordis, Robert
 1968 *Koheleth: The Man and his World: A Study of Ecclesiastes* (New York: Schocken Books, 3rd edn).
- Hertzberg, Hans Wilhelm
 1963 *Der Prediger* (KAT, 17; Gütersloh: G. Mohn).
- Jeremias, Joachim
 1963 *The Parables of Jesus* (NTL; London: SCM Press, rev. edn).
- Jones, Edgar
 1961 *Proverbs and Ecclesiastes: Introduction and Commentary* (Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SCM Press).
- Leahy, M.
 1952 'The Meaning of Ecclesiastes xii.1-5', *ITQ* 19: 297-300.

- McKane, William
 1970 *Proverbs: A New Approach* (OTL; London: SCM Press).
- McNeile, A.H.
 1904 *An Introduction to Ecclesiastes, with Notes and Appendices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Podechard, E.
 1912 *L'Ecclésiaste* (EBib; Paris: Victor Lecoffre).
- Power, A.D.
 1952 *Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher* (London: Longmans, Green).
- Rad, Gerhard von
 1973 *Wisdom in Israel* (London: SCM Press).
- Rankin, O.S.
 1956 'The Book of Ecclesiastes', in G.A. Buttrick *et al.* (eds.), *The Interpreter's Bible* (12 vols.; New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press): vol. 5.
- Roberts, Bleddyn Jones
 1951 *The Old Testament Text and Versions: The Hebrew Text in Transmission and the History of the Ancient Versions* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press).
- Scott, R.B.Y.
 1965 *Proverbs. Ecclesiastes: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB, 18; Garden City, NY: Doubleday).
- Taylor, Charles
 1874 *The Dirge of Coheleth in Ecclesiasts XII, Discussed and Literally Interpreted* (London: Williams & Norgate).
- Tristram, H.B.
 1868 *The Natural History of the Bible, Being a Review of the Physical Geography, Geology and Meteorology of the Holy Land, with a Description of Every Animal and Plant Mentioned in Holy Scripture* (London: SPCK, 2nd rev. edn).
- Whybray, R.N.
 1965 *Wisdom in Proverbs: The Concept of Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9* (SBT, 45; London: SCM Press).
- Williams, A. Lukyn
 1922 *Ecclesiastes: In the Revised Version with Notes and Introduction* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Williams, Ronald J.
 1967 *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).
- Würthwein, Ernst
 1957 *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to Kittel–Kahle's Biblica Hebraica* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- Zimmerli, Walther
 1967 *Der Prediger* (ATD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd edn).

THE ROLE OF FOLK-LINGUISTICS
IN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION*

In recent years a number of linguists, notably Henry M. Hoenigswald and William Labov, have begun to pay more attention to what people say and believe about their language than they used to. Dialect, for instance, can be partly defined in terms of what those who speak it think about it and its relation to other dialects. This tendency to respect 'folk-linguistic' data coincides with an increasingly more positive attitude among biblical scholars towards the history of tradition: what people say the text means, whether or not this is identical with what the author originally intended, is an essential part of our evidence. The aim of this short paper is simply to isolate some problems that linguists and biblical scholars have in common and to suggest a few reasons why this important body of linguistic data should be given a more respectable place in biblical research.

A complete survey of the subject would have to include all kinds of popular beliefs about the language of the Bible: what people have said about its origin and its relation to other languages (e.g. the legend of the three sons of Noah and its place in modern linguistic theory); its social and political status (e.g. the post-biblical tradition that Hebrew is the language of the angels); what they believe about its phonology (perhaps the Shibboleth story in Judges 12 would be relevant here); and what they have thought about its grammar (e.g. some of the anthropological and psychological conclusions based on the Hebrew verbal system by Pedersen, Boman and others). But in this paper we shall be thinking mainly about what people have said about the meaning of biblical language in folk etymologies, popular interpretations, ingenious translations and so on. If I may be allowed to add yet another term to a science already overstocked with technical jargon, such a subdivision of the subject we might call 'folk-semantics'.

* This paper was read at the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem in August 1969 and published in the *Proceedings: Divre ha-Kongres* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1973), pp. 109-13.

Reference is frequently made in our textbooks to the religious significance of wordplays and personal names, beliefs in the magical power of language and the like; but a question that is not often asked is how far such ideas were actually accepted in ancient Israel. It is a question of considerable importance because the answer we give to it will to a large extent determine our attitude to folk-linguistic material. An illustration will show more clearly what I mean. The names Gad, Asher and Benjamin, together with the folk etymologies given for them in Genesis (30.10ff.; 35.18), have been used, along with other evidence, to prove that *Gut Glück*, 'Good Fortune', like *τύχη* in Greece and *Fortuna* in Rome, held an important position alongside God in the religion of Israel's ancestors. This may or may not be true, but the argument (it is that of Eissfeldt) makes two assumptions that it is worth examining in the present context. (1) It assumes that a parent who named his child Gad knew what the name meant and selected it advisedly. (2) It assumes that the folk etymologies given for the three names in Genesis were taken seriously and at face value. Now there is good evidence that the etymologically correct meaning of many personal names was not always known, and this implies that a parent might give a child a name without being aware of its linguistic and religious affinities. As for the folk etymologies, the author may have been doing no more than indulging his curiosity about names, so that his folk-linguistic statements may have nothing at all to do with religious belief. In fact, Gad is associated with an entirely different root in another part of the same book. Before you could properly use this type of argument, you would have, first, to prove that the parent knew that Gad was a deity personifying 'Good Fortune', and, second, to establish who the author of the folk etymologies was and what his interests and abilities were.

In a modern linguistic survey, such as that of Labov on the English of New York City, answers to this kind of question are relatively easy to obtain: you can prepare a questionnaire and give it to the people concerned. All we can do, apart from relying on modern analogies, is to collect what information we can on the speaker's social, cultural and religious background, and map out an area of belief, as it were, within which his beliefs probably lie. I have time to give, in a very abbreviated form, one example of the kind of information we would need and how we might set about obtaining it.

Ninety per cent of the folk etymologies in the Bible are assigned to the earliest Pentateuchal sources, most of them to J. Two interesting groupings of these may therefore reasonably be used to throw light on conditions in ancient Palestine in the time of the Yahwist (or earlier, since he was probably often using earlier material).

(1) Bilingual folk etymologies. Folk etymologies depend on a superficial resemblance between two words; but the two words need not be in the same language. In the J source the folk etymologies given for *ishsha* (Gen.

2.23), and *rehovot* (Gen. 26.22) are clearly monolingual; but *yapt*, ‘enlarge’, which is adduced to explain the name of Noah’s third son, Japheth (Gen. 9.27), is Aramaic, and so is the aphel stem of the verb *para*, ‘be fruitful’, from which the name Ephraim is derived (Gen. 41.52). These and other examples indicate a certain degree of bilingualism on the part of the author: while he wrote in Hebrew, he was also sufficiently familiar with Aramaic to be able to exploit superficial associations between some Aramaic and some Hebrew words. (2) Written folk etymologies. There seems to be a group of folk etymologies that depend not on audible similarities between two words but on the visual properties of a consonantal text. We cannot always be certain of this, since our knowledge of Hebrew pronunciation in early Palestine is limited. But it does look as if the association of Gilead with *gal’ed* (Gen. 31.46ff.) could be a visual one rather than an aural one. Perhaps the etymology given for Moses in Exod. 2.10 is another example. If this could be proved, it would be a nice piece of evidence for the literacy of the author of such folk etymologies.

A complete distributional study of biblical folk etymologies with reference to these two features has not yet been carried out, so far as I am aware. In the meantime, there are these clear hints of bilingualism and literacy, and to them we might add a third characteristic of the author that is relevant in this connection, namely his evident curiosity about linguistic phenomena: how the animals got their names (Gen. 2.10f.), why there are so many mutually unintelligible languages in the world (Genesis 11) and so on. Such a picture of the linguistic interest and abilities of an early biblical author would have two important implications for our attitude to folk etymologies in the Bible: (1) we must beware of assuming that serious religious and theological beliefs are necessarily involved in this part of folk-linguistics, and that prophetic wordplays such as those in Amos 8.1f. and Isa. 7.9 were made in dead earnest; but (2) we cannot simply write them off as the products of a primitive mind, since there is evidence that early authors knew more about their language and were able to exploit its properties more freely than we often give them credit for.

Similar observations could be made about a later and better-documented age. In the post-biblical period we probably have to reckon with a widespread increase in literacy and bilingualism, the influence of Hellenistic scholarship and educational methods on Jewish teaching, a rather subtle distinction between halakhic pronouncements and haggadic ones—all factors that should make us cautious about assuming that some of the folk-semantic statements in early rabbinic exegesis (and in the ancient versions) were as naive and inconsequential as many moderns still maintain.

These remarks lead to two practical suggestions on how folk-linguistic material might seriously and profitably be used in biblical research. (1) An absolutely clear distinction must be kept, of course, between linguistics and

folk-linguistics. If this is done, however, there seems to be no valid objection to translating *šalmavet* as 'the shadow of death' (Ps. 23.4), or the place-name Beerlahairoi as 'the well of the one who lives having seen me' (Gen. 16.14). The distinction is worth making, not only because it clears the air a little and facilitates translation but also because it implies that there is truth in a midrash as well as in the reconstructed original meaning of the text.

(2) Within folk-linguistics various types must be distinguished, each with its own characteristics and background, each demanding a special approach on the part of the modern scholar. (a) The primitive type. This would include genuine beliefs and fears about the magical power of language. There may be examples of this type in the Bible, for example, in the story of Jacob wrestling with the man at Penuel (Genesis 32), but before we assume that it is the predominant type in the Bible, I hope I have shown that there are still some anthropological and linguistic investigations to be carried out. (b) The rabbinic type. This is entirely different from the first type. It is the product of an educated, literate community, proud of its language and literary heritage, and is characterized by inventiveness, imagination and frequently a fine sense of humour. It need not necessarily be thought to be confined to the rabbinic literature, and is in fact probably more frequent in the Bible than the first type. J. Weingreen's work on 'rabbinic-type' glosses in the Bible is one indication of this, and what was said above about written folk etymologies can readily be compared to discussions of *al-tiqre* interpretations from a later age. (c) The modern type. Over the last three or four centuries a wider range of comparative and historical linguistic material has become available than ever before; and a new type of folk-linguistics has grown up, based on 'root-meanings', the 'Semitic mind' and other notions. James Barr's *Semantics of Biblical Language* incisively exposed and discredited these pseudo-scientific activities. But while those interested in folk-linguistics would agree with Barr that there can be right and wrong linguistics, they would also argue that much of this modern data is valuable and actually has some practical applications. The celebrated modern folk etymology of *dabar*, for example, from which it is deduced that the Hebrew word contains the 'innermost, hidden reality' (cf. *devir*, 'the holiest of holies'; 1 Kgs 8.6) of the thing it denotes, has a useful homiletical and exegetical function, provided that the author does not pretend that he is engaging in correct historical linguistics. This type of pronouncement is often the product of a fertile and creative imagination—an essential ingredient of scientific research—and can stimulate new lines of inquiry. A recent article on 'spaciousness' in biblical language about salvation, for example, takes as its starting point an eighteenth-century folk etymology of *hoshia*, 'to save' (see Chapter 26). Even though historically this word has nothing to do with Arabic *wasi'a*, 'to be spacious', the idea is present in the Bible in soteriological uses of words like *hirḥib* and *merḥab*, and it was the

erroneous *wasi* 'a etymology for *hoshia* ' that drew attention to it. Finally, it should be remembered that what is considered to be folk-linguistic theory in the present state of our knowledge, may, in the future, turn out to be scientific as well. The linguistic theorist would be the first to admit that we are not always right. Folk-linguistics, objectively studied, can be a valuable corrective in the rapidly booming field of general linguistics, as well as a rich source of linguistic, sociological and theological information essential to an adequate understanding of the Bible.

Bibliography

Barr, James

1961 *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Boman, Thorleif

1960 *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (Library of History and Doctrine; London: SCM Press).

Eissfeldt, O.

1963 'Gut Glück! in semitischer Namengebung', *JBL* 82: 195-200.

Hoenigswald, H.M.

1966 'A Proposal for the Study of Folk-linguistics', in William Bright (ed.), *Sociolinguistics: Proceedings* (Janua linuarum, series maior, 20; The Hague: Mouton): 19-26.

Labov, William

1966 *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics).

Pedersen, Johannes

1926 *Israel, its Life and Culture* (London: G. Cumberlege).

Sawyer, John F.A.

1968 'Spaciousness: An Important Feature of Language about Salvation in the Old Testament', *ASTI* 6: 20-34.

Weingreen, J.

1957 'Rabbinic-type Glosses in the Old Testament', *JSS* 2: 149-62.

THE PLACE OF JEWISH STUDIES IN BIBLICAL SEMANTICS*

The gap between biblical studies and Jewish studies is evident everywhere. A specialist in *Miqra* may live in a different world from a specialist in *Yahadut*: the one is concerned with ancient Israelite history and archaeology; the other, if he is interested in the Bible at all, is concerned with how it has been interpreted in post-biblical Jewish literature. I want to argue that, since the Bible is not merely an ancient Near Eastern text like the Gilgamesh Epic or the Annals of Sennacherib or the Merneptah Stele but a living document in the religious and cultural life of many communities, Hebrew-speaking and non-Hebrew-speaking, Jewish and non-Jewish, the evidence of the post-biblical Jewish sources, including Mediaeval and Modern Hebrew literature, is just as important for biblical semantics as the ancient material, if not more so.

Certainly this applies to biblical exegesis, biblical theology and other branches of biblical studies as well. I have chosen to concentrate on semantics, that is to say, that branch of linguistics devoted to discussing and describing the meaning of words and phrases, first, because, since James Barr made us all think seriously about the subject a quarter of a century or so ago, the Jewish sources have been neglected; and, second, because it highlights some of the issues by focusing on relatively small and circumscribed pieces of language. I shall present my argument first, then give some examples and finally draw some practical conclusions. I want to make four basic points—none of them unexpected—but they nevertheless add up to what I hope is a convincing case for a shift of emphasis in biblical semantics.

(1) Translation is still by far the commonest method of semantic analysis, in spite of the fact that it is manifestly the crudest and most primitive. There are plenty of familiar theoretical reasons why translation is inadequate as a

* Originally published in H.L.J. Vanstiphout *et al.* (eds.), *Scripta signa vocis: Studies about Scripts, Scriptures, Scribes and Languages in the Near East, Presented to J.H. Hoppers by his Pupils, Colleagues and Friends* (Groningen: E. Forsten, 1986), pp. 201-208.

method of describing meaning, and I need not go over them now. But obviously if it were possible to work within Hebrew some at least of the inevitable errors and confusion could be avoided. Of course I am not arguing that such definitions would inevitably be correct, or indeed that native Hebrew speakers always know best! But it is true that they can handle or detect associations, overtones, semantic overlap, distinctions between synonyms and so on, without some of the preconceptions, distortions and red herrings that are introduced by translation. One might almost say that Hebrew-speaking Jewish scholars have in some respects been using a better semantic method than some of us without knowing it. To put it another way, monolingual lexicons like Larousse and the Oxford English Dictionary, not to mention Eliezer Ben Yehuda's *Thesaurus totius hebraicitatis* and Even Shoshan's *hamillon he-ḥadash*, contain semantic material of a quite different order of subtlety from what is contained in Gesenius or BDB or KBL. It will not all be equally relevant, but it must be taken into account.

(2) The Hebrew Bible contains a relatively small and unrepresentative selection of the language actually used in ancient Israel. This will instantly be expanded when the far larger corpus of Post-Biblical Hebrew is added to it. This seems too obvious to mention, and yet the practical implications of it are still not fully realized. Conclusions are drawn from the absence of a term from the Hebrew Bible, such as the general term for metal, *mattekhet*, although the word is well known from Mishnaic times and surely absent from the Bible only by accident. Rare words like *haṣnea* or *ṣanaḥ* are discussed in isolation as if the biblical corpus was all the evidence there was. Even in the case of comparatively frequent words like *ivri* or *hoshia*, vital clues to their meaning that will emerge only from a larger corpus are missed because of the continuing compartmentalization of Hebrew studies.

(3) Philologists over the last hundred years or so have consistently favoured other Semitic languages, ancient and modern, to the virtual exclusion of Post-Biblical Hebrew. The Qumran material is the exception. A cursory look through KBL and its successor shows how definitions of Arabic cognates are far more frequent than references to Mishnaic or Modern Hebrew usage. This may be partly due to the relatively close relationship that exists between all the Semitic languages, in comparison with the far more complex, more widely dispersed Indo-European language family, and to the abundance of available material, especially from antiquity. There are still those who, when puzzled by a difficult Hebrew word, reach first for their Aistleitner or their von Soden and begin their semantics from outside Hebrew. In fact, most of the Semitic languages employed in this way are historically and geographically far more distant from Biblical Hebrew than Mishnaic, Mediaeval and Modern Hebrew, and, as can be seen from the results, frequently less helpful or actually harmful. The dangers involved in using Post-Biblical Hebrew are obvious: allowances have to be made

at every stage for a long, complex and perhaps uncertain semantic history from the biblical text to Even Shoshan. Post-Biblical Hebrew may contain artificial creations based on actual misunderstandings of the biblical text, for example. But that semantic history is seldom going to be as long, complex and uncertain as the historical link between a word in Hebrew and its cognate in Ugaritic or Assyrian. I have no intention of belittling the contribution of Ugaritic studies to the semantics of Biblical Hebrew, or for that matter to the semantics of Post-Biblical Hebrew, but to stress the importance of the vast post-biblical corpus as an integral part of all biblical semantics as well.

(4) The text of the Hebrew Bible, as we have it today, is itself a product of the post-biblical period, and therefore in a very real chronological sense closer to the Hebrew of the Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, Piyyut and the rest than to any other linguistic evidence. The Masora is not an ancient Near Eastern text. To recover ancient Near Eastern originals, containing what the writers of ancient Israel actually wrote or how they were actually understood by their contemporaries, has been the goal of biblical scholars for well nigh two centuries, and for that exercise relics of the ancient Near Eastern cultures are obviously important. But today, in the light of the recent writings of Phyllis Tribble, Robert Alter, Francis Landy and many others, surely we have discovered that the plain meaning of the text—and that usually means the Masora in the first instance—is at least as important and certainly as fascinating as the hypothetical reconstructions of ‘originals’. Recent interest in ‘reader response’ suggests that we should sometimes pay as much attention to what people thought a text meant as to what it actually, originally did mean. In the history of religion, where the study of the Bible is normally located, this is certainly a valuable insight.

Some scholars will continue to excavate the earliest layers of biblical tradition and take a special interest in ‘bedrock’ when they find it. But for those who seek to understand the text as it stands and how it has been understood down the centuries, there is still a rich fund of semantic material to be exploited in the roughly contemporary sources. The few examples I have chosen as illustrations come from my own work and that of colleagues and graduate students of mine, who have put into practice the dictum ‘Even Shoshan (or for more advanced hebraists, Ben-Yehuda) before Jastrow, Jastrow before BDB, and BDB before Aistleitner’. Such advice may smack of heresy to many, perhaps especially among the teachers of Hebrew-speaking students in Israel; but it can have valuable results, and if what has been said above contains even a grain of truth, this should be no surprise to anyone.

First I shall look at a few familiar words from Genesis 1. The word *meraḥfet* occurs only twice in the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 1.2; Deut. 32.11) but seems to have been a common enough word in Post-Biblical Hebrew. A Talmudic discussion explains it as ‘touching and yet not touching’, while

Modern Hebrew dictionaries cite as examples of current usage *sakkanah meraḥefet*, ‘impending danger’, and Bialik’s *מרחפת וקטנה יחידה בעין עב ותלויה* ‘like a small single cloud hovering, suspended’. A *merḥafah* is a ‘hovercraft’. This is all part of the linguistic evidence, at least as important as the Ugaritic and Syriac data usually quoted, and yet frequently ignored (Middleton 1985).

The word pair *deshe* and *‘esev* (Gen. 1.11f.) provides another example of how important data are neglected. *HAL* has nothing to say on their meaning in Post-Biblical Hebrew, although it carefully quotes an Akkadian cognate of *deshe* and the definition of an Arabic cognate of *‘esev*. In fact, once again Even Shoshan has some valuable examples of post-biblical usage, which distinguish the two terms: *deshe* is cultivated greenery, like ‘grass’ or ‘lawn’ in English, while *‘esev* includes all vegetation except trees. Such data would immediately assist the commentator in his search for nuances. For example, perhaps the choice of *deshe* suggests order and uniformity of colour and texture, and the *‘esev* and *‘eš*, all the rich variety of vegetation that transforms ‘dry land’ into ‘the earth’. Too much reliance on comparative philology and translation inhibits that kind of semantic analysis, whether or not this particular suggestion convinces.

Next, three words that happen to be *hapax legomena* in the Hebrew Bible but well known in post-biblical Hebrew literature. *al-mawet* occurs in Prov. 12.28. If our primary objective is to reconstruct ancient Israelite meanings, then it is probably correct to emend this to *el-mavet*, ‘to death’, and thus remove the one specific reference to immortality from the text of the Hebrew Bible. But to describe the meaning of the text as it stands is also a valid objective, and if that is the case, then once again occurrences listed in Even Shoshan, where the term is given as an ordinary word for ‘immortality’, are an essential part of our data. Incidentally, in this case the parallel *blmt*, ‘immortality’, also appears more than once in Ugaritic, indicating a remarkable degree of continuity from second-millennium BCE Syria to the post-biblical Jewish literature. The total absence of the word from the text of the Hebrew Bible (or almost total absence, if the text of Prov. 12.28 is correct), whether due to chance or to theological factors, does not prove that it did not exist in the vocabulary of ancient Israel, and it is extraordinary that *HAL* has simply omitted it altogether.

Similar considerations apply to the word *lilit* (Isa. 34.14). Post-biblical usage provides ample evidence for the meaning of the term. We are dealing in this verse with supernatural creatures coming out to haunt the ruins of Edom, and the rich post-biblical Jewish traditions about Lilith are surely closer and more illuminating than the Akkadian material usually cited.

The word *raz* in Isa. 24.16 is a third *hapax legomenon*, whose meaning, especially in the context of a passage almost universally regarded as ‘apocalyptic’ in some sense (Isaiah 24–27), is well known. The Jewish sources

have no difficulty in making good sense of the verse: *Targum Jonathan*, for instance, has ‘(then a divine voice went forth saying) “My secret is mine, my secret is mine”’. Yet modern commentators ignore this evidence entirely and translate instead ‘I pine away, I pine away’ (RSV) or ‘villainy, villainy!’ (NEB) or ‘enough, enough!’ (JB) (see Chapter 16).

The meaning of relatively common words is also discussed by reference only to biblical occurrences and evidence from other languages, as though the vast corpus of post-biblical Hebrew did not exist. The word *mishkan* is a good example. For years the ancient translations σκηνή (LXX) and *tabernaculum* (Vulg), together with the recurring word pair *mishkan/ohel*, persuaded scholars that *mishkan* denoted some kind of portable dwelling or tent. A quick glance at a dictionary of all periods of the Hebrew language shows that the word is a general term for any kind of dwelling where one makes one’s home, rarely a temporary abode like a tent. The usage of the verb *shakan*, both in the Bible and outside it, confirms this (Love 1975).

The phrase *qol demamah daqqah* (1 Kgs 19.12) has recently been discussed in a very convincing article by S. Prickett. It is interesting that a look at Rashi would have assisted the author to come to the same conclusion. Rashi explains the phrase as either referring to the sound of secret prayer, or to tinnitus, that is to say, a condition of the ears in which one hears a ringing sound that no one else can hear. Both are attempts, like that of Prickett, to interpret the phenomenon as the fourth in a series of mysterious experiences, accompanying Elijah’s confrontation with God, and nicely pick up the overtones that this strange Hebrew phrase obviously has.

Finally, another *hapax legomenon* that raises some different problems. There is little agreement about the meaning of *hogga* in Isa 19.17. Most take it as a word for ‘terror’, for example, ‘in that day . . . the land of Judah will become a terror to all Egypt’ (RSV). The question would then have to be, Why did the author choose this word for ‘terror’ and not another in this context? Can we detect any special nuance or association? The dictionaries, grammars and commentaries have nothing to suggest. But occurrences cited in Even Shoshan perhaps give us a clue. First, a play on words is quoted from the writings of Simḥa Ben Zion (1870–1932): לא חג אלא אגח היה: בירושלים, ‘it was not a feast but a terror in Jerusalem’. Perhaps there is an allusion in our verse to the first Passover (*hag*; Exod. 1.9; 12.14), a time of terror for the Egyptians. But there is a second piece of evidence contained, both in Bauer-Leander and Even Shoshan. The term *hogga* denotes a foreign or pagan festival. The final aleph, as in various other nouns, gives the word clearly identifiable foreign associations. The verse then suggests to the reader (to this reader at any rate) that Egypt ‘in that day’ will be overrun by some terrible foreign event comparable to the slaying of the firstborn on the first Passover night, and the choice of the word *hogga* subtly encapsulates that powerful intention. Such a suggestion could never be gleaned

from BDB or *HAL* or from Driver's *JTS* article on the subject. It may not be correct, but it nonetheless illustrates the degree of subtlety we should be aiming for, and for that the post-biblical corpus is invaluable.

I hope I have shown that there is a gap between Jewish studies, represented here however cursorily by dictionaries of Post-Biblical Hebrew, on the one hand, and biblical studies as represented by many of the non-Jewish commentaries and dictionaries, on the other, and that the gap is worth bridging. Let me conclude with some practical suggestions on how this might be done.

(1) We must encourage our students to become just as familiar with Jastrow and Even Shoshan (or the like) as they have traditionally been with BDB, *ANET*, *CML* and the like. This will open up a whole new dimension in biblical studies for them. It will provide them with a different way of looking at the Bible and thinking about meaning.

(2) A wider and deeper grasp of Hebrew should come before Ugaritic, Aramaic, Syriac and the other Semitic languages. This must obviously include Mishnaic and Modern Hebrew, but now that the *Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (Carmi 1981) is available, there is no reason why scholars' range of experience should not be even wider and more adventurous. Non-Jewish biblical scholars—and I would include New Testament specialists in particular—simply do not know what they are missing.

(3) With the greatest respect to the biblical archaeologists and ancient historians, who have contributed so much to biblical studies over the last two centuries, I would repeat that the Hebrew Bible is not merely an ancient Near Eastern text but a living text, and the foundation of several world religions. So long as it is still studied in departments of theology and religious studies, and so long as the Masoretic Text still holds pride of place in the study of the Bible—and I do not see any signs that this situation is changing—then the vast corpus of post-biblical Jewish literature, much of which is roughly contemporary with it, must take pride of place in biblical semantics.

It is with the greatest pleasure that I offer this as my contribution to the Hospers Festschrift. My association with Groningen was a short but happy one, and I owe that association entirely to Hans Hospers, for whose command of Semitic linguistics I have the highest regard.

Bibliography

Aistleitner, Joseph

- 1967 *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache* (Berichte über die Verhandlung der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig: Philologisch-historische Klasse, 106.3; Berlin: Akademie Verlag).

Alter, Robert

1981 *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books).

Ben-Yehuda, Eliezer

1908–59 *Thesaurus totius hebraicitatis et veteris et recentioris* (16 vols.; Berlin: Schöneberg, Langenscheidt; Jerusalem: Hemda & Ehud Benyehuda).

Carmi, T. (ed. and trans.)

1981 *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (London: Penguin Books).

Driver, G.R.

1933 'Studies in the Vocabulary of the OT. VI', *JTS* 34: 370–84.

Even Shoshan, Avraham

1962 *Millon ḥadash* (5 vols.; Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer).

Kutscher, E.Y.

1967 'Mittelhebräisch und Jüdisch-Aramäisch im neuen Köhler-Baumgartner', in *Hebräische Wortforschung: Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Walter Baumgartner* (VTSup, 16; Leiden: E.J. Brill): 158–75.

Landy, Francis

1983 *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* (Bible and Literature Series; Sheffield: Almond Press).

Love, V.

1975 'A Semantic Analysis of the Word *shakan* in Biblical Hebrew' (unpublished thesis, University of Newcastle upon Tyne).

Middleton, D.F.

1985 'Whence the Feet?', *JJS* 36: 61–71.

Prickett, S.

1981 'Towards a Rediscovery of the Bible: The Problem of the Still Small Voice', in M. Wadsworth (ed.), *Ways of Reading the Bible* (Sussex: Harvester): 105–17.

Soden, Wolfram von

1965–82 *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (3 vols.; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz).

Trible, Phyllis

1984 *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to Biblical Theology, 13; Philadelphia: Fortress Press).

Ullendorff, E.

1971 'Is Biblical Hebrew a Language?', *BSOAS* 34: 241–55.

ROOT-MEANINGS IN HEBREW*

In recent years biblical scholarship has become suspicious of theological conclusions based on faulty linguistic methods. But the conclusions may nevertheless be correct, and as yet no attempt has been made to defend them by correct linguistic methods. While the steady onslaught that began in Edinburgh in 1961 in *The Semantics of Biblical Language* continues (Barr 1961; 1964), a new approach to the study of the meaning of Biblical Hebrew is now being advocated in Jerusalem under the title 'Biblical Semantics', a course currently taught at the Hebrew University by Professor Haim Rabin (Rabin 1961). Both agree that much damage has been done to the language of the Bible by faulty linguistics, but where one emphasizes the theologians' errors, the other emphasizes the possibilities opened up by modern linguistics.

One of the errors exposed by Barr in his book was the 'root fallacy', that is to say, the very widespread view that 'in Hebrew there is a "root meaning"... which can confidently be taken to be part of the actual semantic value of any word or form which can be assigned to an identifiable root; and that likewise any word may be taken to give some kind of suggestion of other words formed from the same root' (Barr 1961: 100). More recently, in a note on the famous verse 'If you do not believe [*ta'aminu*], you will not be established [*te'amenu*]' (Isa. 7.9), Barr again denies the validity of any explanation of the play on words through the 'root-meaning'. There is no evidence that anyone in ancient Israel was aware of the existence of 'root-meanings', a comparatively modern idea, and in any case 'this introduction of a third and different reference would obscure communication' rather than heighten the effect (Barr 1964).

In his short note, several points are hinted at that emphasize the need for a clearer definition of terms like 'root,' 'word' and 'associations'. It is the aim of this article to clarify some of these points and at the same time to

* This paper was originally published in the *Journal of Semitic Studies* 12 (1967), pp. 37-50.

suggest what new lines of approach are now available. The appearance in English of the first volumes of Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* makes the need for another look at the relation between language and religious thought all the more pressing.

1. *Hebrew and Modern Linguistics*

It is still unfortunately true that Semitic linguistics lags behind other branches of linguistics: Indo-European, Ural-Altaic and even Native American languages are a long way ahead, particularly in the field of semantics. For example, the question of what a *word* is in Hebrew has hardly been discussed, let alone satisfactorily answered. Are the derived forms of a verb all separate *words* so that they should be arranged alphabetically in a dictionary, *he'emin*, 'believe', under H and *ne'eman*, 'to be established', under N rather than together in the same entry under the root *'*mn*' as is done in BDB, for example? In some cases the niph'al is simply the passive of the hiph'il; while in others it may be a different word altogether. How is it possible to distinguish the one from the other? In Isa. 7.9, what is the relation between the two verbs? The question is not unimportant, as we shall see, because, if there is not only a close etymological connection between them, but also a morphological one (e.g. active/passive), then the semantic connection that has been suggested between 'believe' and 'firm, established', in this verse and elsewhere, is perhaps also possible after all.

Another uncultivated field of research is the *lexis* of the Semitic languages (Crystal 1965: 87ff.). This is a study of the formal organization of vocabulary in a particular language. *Lexical collocation*, a term introduced by Barr into his discussion of Isaiah's wordplay, comes into this youngest branch of linguistics. It involves research into the probability that a particular lexical item will occur in the immediate environment of another and is essential to the study of jargons, idioms, metaphors, clichés and wordplays. The information available in the Hebrew Bible (or any one stratum of it) for this type of study is of course extremely limited. But before firm conclusions can be reached on the special character of the Hebrew language, which may or may not make it a better vehicle for theological truths than other languages, some research into its lexis would have to be done.

Another subject that may be of some value both for theologians and for linguists, and yet is still quite unexplored in the Semitic languages, is the interesting distinction between *transparent* and *opaque* words (Ullmann 1962: 80-115). In transparent words like 'wind-shield' or *Handschuh*, motivation comes from independently significant elements, over against opaque words like 'window', 'glove', 'gant' and so on. Frequently transparency is a historical matter, so that words originally transparent have become opaque

because of phonetic changes: thus *hlafweard* (transparent) has become *lord* (opaque). Transparency due to other motivations, such as onomatopoeia, folk etymologies and the like may be found to balance this development in some cases.

How does the situation in a Semitic language compare with this? What structural differences might affect it? There seem to be several points to note. First, apart from proper names, compounds are not natural Semitic formations. There are very few certain examples in Biblical Hebrew, if any (? *almavet*, 'immortality'; see Chapter 35), and petrified phrases like *bet ha-sefer*, 'school', seem to have been far less common there than in Modern Hebrew, where Europeanizing influences have been at work (e.g. *tappuah adamah*, 'potato'; cf. *pomme-de-terre*). Second, the root of a Hebrew word is peculiarly obtrusive, a fact that may be due to three factors: its predominantly triliteral character, the relatively small number of basic word patterns superimposed upon it, and the truly remarkable stability of the radicals in the face of more than four thousand years of phonetic development (Goshen-Gottstein 1965: 14f.).

The third factor is that, although far-reaching phonetic developments have occurred in some of the spoken languages (e.g. Moroccan Arabic and Amharic), we are concerned with written data, and in this respect again the obtrusiveness of the root is emphasized by the very form of the alphabetic script in which most of our texts are written.

Finally, the Semitic language group covers a far smaller area, geographically, than the Indo-European group. The basic divisions between, for example, the Romance and Indian branches or the Germanic and Slavonic branches, are without parallel in the Semitic group. Indeed, some linguists have gone so far as to compare the Semitic group with one branch of the Indo-European family (e.g. the Germanic group), over against the Hamitic group, which would correspond to another branch of the same family (e.g. the Slavonic group). However that may be, the history of a word, or a root, is considerably easier to trace than its Indo-European counterpart and almost always begins and ends within its relatively circumscribed Semitic environment.

Some of these phenomena, as attested in the Hebrew Bible, may be partly due to the formative influence of pious grammarians and the religious or political motives of the writers (Moscati 1965: 75). They may also be due to the limitations of our written sources and our ignorance of the spoken languages until recent times. But, whatever the reasons, these facts give us grounds for supposing that a study of semantic motivation in a Semitic language will produce very different results from similar studies on the Indo-European languages. One of these results may be that the root of a Semitic word is of some particular importance in communicating information.

2. Hebrew Roots and Recurring Consonant Sequences

This brings us to a more fundamental question. What exactly do we mean by the ‘root’ of a Hebrew word? Barr’s article implies a distinction between ‘root’ in the sense of a word (form plus meaning) from which other words have been historically derived and ‘root’ in the sense of ‘an easily recognizable common consonant sequence’ (Barr 1964: 242). Clearly the history of a word, the phonetic and morphological developments of its *etymon*, its etymological connections and so on may have nothing whatever to do with its meaning in a given context. Enough has already been said on this question to ensure caution on the part of amateur etymologists studying ‘root-meanings’ in the first, that is, historical sense. But is there any evidence that the ‘root’ in the second sense, that is, a recurring group of consonants known to linguists as a ‘discontinuous morpheme’, carries with it a common semantic element into words and contexts where it occurs (Gleason 1961: 72f.)? In other words, is there such a thing as a ‘root-meaning’ after all? If there is, how are we to discover what that meaning is?

What evidence is there, first, that in Biblical Hebrew a recurring sequence of sounds can communicate information, no matter what morphological pattern is superimposed upon it? The most obvious example is the ancient custom of folk etymology. The connection between the name *moshe*, Moses, and *mashiti*, ‘I drew him out’ (Exod. 2.10) depends entirely on the ‘root’ in the nonhistorical sense of a discontinuous morpheme. This ‘root’ is however not the *etymon* of the word *moshe*, and there is no reference at all to what is called the ‘root-meaning’ in the modern discussion. This superficial relating of one word to another, so common in biblical sagas, is entirely unscientific. Beersheba, for example, is given two mutually exclusive etymologies in one verse (Gen. 21.31). But in these folk etymologies the ‘root’ constitutes a sense-bearing element, independent of the morphological pattern.

A sequence of vowels may also carry with it a distinct meaning independent of the morphology of the word in which it appears. The vowels of the loaded word *boshet*, for example, which means ‘shamefulness, obscenity’ and is substituted for the name Baal in personal names (e.g. 2 Sam. 11.21; cf. Judg. 6.32), can be taken out of their word and inserted into the name of another foreign deity, Moloch. The resultant *Molech* means not only the god Moloch but the ‘shameful, obscene god Moloch’. Vowel patterns are also important elements in Semitic morphology: Arabic *CāCiC*, corresponding to Hebrew *CōCeC*, regularly suggests a participle or agent. Consonants and vowels together constitute distinct morphological patterns whose meaning, if not always transparent, can usually be differentiated from language to language: Hebrew *maCCeC* often implies an instrument, over against *miC-CaC*, which frequently indicates an abstract noun. Again, the influence of

the grammarians, analogy and other factors may be responsible for some of these phenomena.

It seems from these observations that the structure of a Semitic language makes possible a kind of pun that can be developed in a peculiar and subtle way. This is because certain recurring sequences of sounds, consonantal or vocalic or both, perform as independent sense-bearing elements, in many different words and in combination with an infinite variety of other elements, to an extent hardly conceivable in an Indo-European language. The important point is that the root of a word can be considered as just such a recurring sequence of sounds, with these same properties. The question is that of the relationship between this root and the etymology of the word. To return to Isaiah's pun, with which we began, the element *'mn* is common to both verbs, *he'emin*, 'believe', and *ne'eman*, 'establish': Does it carry with it a distinct meaning common to both words?

It has usually been assumed by the commentators that it does, and that the meaning common to both verbs (and also words for 'true' and 'truth')—that is, the root-meaning—is 'firm, sure'. Two questions immediately arise: (1) How do we know? Since the form **'mn* (i.e. root *in vacuo*) is not attested in Biblical Hebrew, the assumption must be based on some other evidence, presumably the comparison of all words containing the morpheme *'mn*. Does the assumption take into account all the evidence? (2) What is the relevance of this root-meaning to Isa. 7.9? Is it as much an element in the Hebrew word for 'believe' as it is, more obviously, in the word for 'establish'?

3. *Semantic Fields*

Before tackling these questions, a word about the confusion and vagueness that can arise from translation, particularly in connection with wordplays like that of Isaiah. If the two words with which we are concerned in this verse, *he'emin* and *ne'eman*, are 'well-known senses involving no appeal to etymology', as Barr suggests, then it is difficult to see how they are more than a mere verbal jingle, and this can be illustrated by juxtaposing two translations:

- (1) 'If you cannot be sure, you cannot endure'—verbal jingle.
- (2) 'If you do not have trust, you will not be trusted'—verbal jingle plus etymology.

Both translations are grammatically possible, and both suggest different conclusions about the relation between the two words in question; but neither is able to convey the Hebrew in which the meaning is closer to (1) but the form to (2). Let us then leave translation for the moment and, before

judging the issue, attempt to approach the question from within the Hebrew language.

Under the verb **ʾāman* BDB lists the following words: *ʾāman*, *ʾōmēn*, *ʾōmenet*, *ʾōmenōt*, *ʾēmun*, *neʾeman*, *heʾemīn*, *ʾōmen*, *ʾāmēn*, *ʾomman*, *ʾemūn*, *ʾemūnah*, *ʾomnah*, *ʾamanah*, *ʾumnam*, *ʾomnam*, *ʾemet*, *ʾamon*. The verb *ʾaman* occurs only once in the qal and means ‘supporting’, not the intransitive sense read into **ʾmn*, ‘to be firm or sure’. In one word, *ʾemūnah*, the two senses, firmness and fidelity, one concrete, one abstract, are found together; but of course this does prove that the one sense affects the other. The phenomena of *homonymy* and *polysemy*, whereby one word has two entirely independent meanings depending on context, are often overlooked by etymologizers (Barr 1961: 129ff.). Lastly, it will be noticed that two of these words appear to be morphologically connected to two others: *ʾōmenet*, ‘foster mother’, with *ʾōmenōt*, ‘pillars’, and *neʾeman*, ‘established’, with *neʾeman*, ‘believe’. Does this mean that, whatever their semantic relationship, the plural of *ʾōmenet* is *ʾōmenōt*, and the passive of *heʾemīn* is *neʾeman*? Or are they independent words?

Alphabetical dictionaries, however, especially that peculiarly Semitic variety which group words according to their root, even where the root is uncertain, can lead to vagueness and confusion. What are we to say, for instance, about the words translated ‘artist’ (*ʾomman*) and ‘architect’ (*ʾamon*)? Are they from the same root as the rest of the group? However that may be, there is another type of classification which divides vocabulary into semantic ‘fields’ (Trier 1931; Öhmann 1953). This is what Roget’s *Thesaurus* aims to do for English, and the 20-volume *Al-mukhaṣṣaṣ* of Ibn Sira (eighth century) for Arabic. A Hebrew one has now appeared taking in Biblical, Mishnaic and Modern Hebrew (Scharfstein 1964). But none of these is arranged according to a basic framework of fields. Before firm conclusions can be reached on the meaning of Hebrew words and the semantic relationships between them, a study of fields is essential. Some sections of Hebrew vocabulary have been studied in this way, and more are sure to follow (Rabin 1961: 22). The following fields are not complete, since this will be impossible until all Hebrew vocabulary has been systematically grouped in this way; but there is enough in these groupings to illustrate the kind of results we can expect and perhaps suggest one or two hitherto unnoticed facts about the Hebrew language.

We are concerned with two fields: (1) *ʾemet*, *ʾemunah*, *qoṣṣṣ*, *ṣedeq*, *mishpat*, *neʾeman*, *nakon*, *ken*, *qayyam*, *yaṣṣiv*, *yashar*, etc. These words can all be collocated with persons, in which case they are normally translated ‘true/truth, faith/faithful’. (2) *musad*, *ʾemunah*, *ḥazaq*, *neʾeman*, *nakon*, *mukan*, *ken*, *qam*, *niṣṣav*, *qavuaʿ*, *eytan*, *ʾamad*, etc. Words belonging to this field are frequently collocated with things and then admit of translations like ‘firmness, established, fixed’.

From a comparison of these two fields, it is immediately obvious that at least four words are common to both; that is to say, at least four words can occur both in *truth* contexts and in *firmness* contexts. Further investigation reveals that, apart from these four words, which concern only two different roots, there are two more words in the first field etymologically related to words in the second. In other words, *no fewer than four separate roots appear in the two fields*: *'mn, *kwn, *qwm and *y/nšb. Similar relationships can be demonstrated in Syriac, Akkadian and Arabic. Another look at the dictionary produces an even more remarkable pattern for three of these roots:

Root	Truth/true	Established	Pillar(s)
*'mn	'emet	ne'eman	'ōmenōt
*y/nšb	yaššiv	niššav	nešīv, mašševah
*kwn	nakon	mukan	ken

From this table it can be seen that no fewer than three of the roots represented in the Hebrew *true/truth* field present the same etymological pattern (*true/truth-established-pillar*). One is prompted to ask, in view of current interest in the Hebrew way of thinking (Boman 1960; Barr 1961: 101ff.), whether this pattern might not reflect a peculiarly Semitic thought pattern as well. It is not, however, the aim of this paper to open up the question of the relation between language and thought. It is concerned rather with the question of what part the root plays in a word's total meaning. When it appears from the above survey that the roots of three common words for 'true' also appear in three common words for 'established' and in three common words for 'pillar', in several Semitic languages, it seems possible that, whether or not the Semitic speaker was aware of the history of the words and their etymological connections, the words for 'true' in these languages had for him certain common elements relating them with words meaning 'established, firm'. If this pattern appeared in only one case, there would be little to go on, but, when it appears three times, we are not justified in dismissing the idea that the etymological group of words has some common semantic element in it too: that the root *'mn, in other words, is a sense-bearing element in the two words collocated by Isaiah in his famous pun, communicating in both *ta'aminu*, 'you shall believe', and *te'amenu*, 'you shall be established', some idea of 'firmness, solidarity' after all.

4. Overtones

Finally something must be said on the delicate question of overtones, because it has had a prominent place in the debate arising out of Barr's

book *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. While, on the one hand, it has been said more than once that Barr ‘makes insufficient allowance for the overtones of language’ (Porteous 1964: 71), Barr himself, on the other hand, explicitly leaves room for ‘the allusiveness of language and its wide use of associations’ (Barr 1964: 242).

Professional linguists as a rule avoid the word ‘overtone’ because it is so widely and loosely used. But the idea, however expressed, that a word can take on a distinctive character by being consistently used in a particular context has never been disputed. By context is meant not only a word’s immediate lexical environment, although a word constantly used in a popular idiom acquires overtones that it carries into other contexts even when they may be irrelevant there. ‘Decline and fall’, ‘duckbilled’ and ‘St Vitus’ are examples of this. If a writer or a speaker uses these words, he must make allowances for an immediate, arbitrary association with the Roman Empire, the platypus and chorea. We have surely lost much of the beauty and significance of the poetry of the Hebrew Bible, because we no longer know the idioms familiar to the poet and his audience. It is all the more satisfying, therefore, when we can detect the overtones, as in the case of Deutero-Isaiah’s allusion to the Passover saga: ‘For you shall not go out *in haste*, and you shall not go out in flight’ (Isa. 52.12). The poet is using the overtones inherent in the rare Hebrew word *hippazon*, ‘haste’ (cf. Exod. 12.11; Deut. 16.3), to enhance the novelty and unexpectedness of his theme.

The ‘context of situation’, however, can be a more significant factor in determining the meaning of a word than its lexical context. J.R. Firth, one of the chief exponents of sociological linguistics, lists (along with address, greeting, farewell, etc.) the ‘situation in which words, conventionally fixed by law or custom, serve to bind people to a line of action and to free them from certain customary duties in order to impose others. In Churches, Law Courts, Offices, such situations are commonplace’ (Firth 1964: 68). Some words became so firmly associated with one particular situation that they can hardly be used elsewhere. The word ‘missionary’, for example, has recently been dropped from much church literature because it has accumulated unsuitable overtones associated with the imperialistic environment of a bygone era. The ‘U and Non-U’ research of a few years ago showed how the semantic distinction between synonyms like mirror/looking glass and notepaper/writing paper depends on the social context of the words.

There are plenty of examples in Biblical Hebrew, although they have not yet been systematically collected. Words that have acquired predominantly theological overtones include *hoshia*, ‘to save’, which is used almost exclusively of God and God’s human agents. Any other usage is explicitly condemned, as in the story of Gideon (Judg. 7.2) and the description of Ahaz’s disobedience (2 Kgs 16.7). The verb *bara*, ‘to create’, is another word never found with a subject other than God. The phrase *ba-yom ha-hu*,

'on that day', has acquired theological content far richer than the two words on their own. The phrase 'God remembers' seems to have had cultic overtones (Childs 1962: 74), while *rib*, 'dispute', had forensic overtones (Gemser 1955). From these few examples the long neglected overlap between form criticism and linguistics becomes apparent.

Other words have an entirely different meaning according to the context in which they occur. The word 'sex', for example, as used in an army barracks has very different overtones from those that it would have in a scientific treatise on, let us say, entomology. In biblical studies very little has been done on this subject. Obviously, Baal and Asherah have entirely different overtones according to their different environments, as the Ras Shamra texts have shown. But there must be many words like *goy*, 'nation', which have strong overtones in one passage and entirely different ones in another (Gen. 15.14; Exod. 19.6; Lev. 8.24; Isa. 26.2). Documentary and chronological theories cannot explain the divergences, since both meanings appear in all strata of Biblical Hebrew. It seems at least possible that a careful search for local dialects and the jargons of different groups or sects might yield some results. It is probable, for example, that 'Judah' in some circles acquired pejorative overtones by being associated with the corrupt hierarchy in Jerusalem (Chapter 13). Possibly, too, Shechem, venerated in some circles as the centre of the covenant community (Joshua 24), while in others the subject of some rather coarse tales (Genesis 34; Judges 9), was consciously avoided in orthodox literature because of its inappropriate overtones (Deut. 11.29).

This brief discussion will perhaps have served to show how little work has so far been done on the subject of overtones. The mistake in many of the word studies and the like criticized by Barr and others in recent years is the tacit assumption that the root-meaning is the most important, if not the only, 'overtone' a word has in Biblical Hebrew. As we have seen, there is evidence for the significance of the root as a sense-bearing element in some contexts; but this is not to say that in a word's overtones the root-meaning is either the most important, or the one to be taken as a starting point for every biblical word study. The alphabetical arrangement of words by root in most dictionaries of Biblical Hebrew perpetuates this misconception. The detection of all the overtones in a dead language is an impossible task, since a great deal depends on allusions to popular idiom that we can hardly ever detect, and, in spoken languages (including prophecy), intonation, emphasis, speed of delivery and so on. It is presumably just because of the immense difficulties involved that etymologies have been given such inordinate prominence. The fewer the contexts, the more one must rely on etymology; but the shortcomings of this method, which have been realized in Ugaritic studies, where etymologizing is almost unlimited, must be admitted in biblical studies too.

Those who introduce overtones into the discussion must also agree that the overtones of every word, theological terms included, are far more complex than is usually assumed in so many etymologically oriented word studies and are often obscured by too much emphasis on the root-meaning. Overtones and associations must be sought within the language itself by research into semantic fields and within each context. Contexts can be collected and classified according to the criteria at our disposal (date, *Sitz im Leben*, idioms, recurring collocations), and some conclusions can be drawn about words that consistently appear in certain contexts. This is the kind of study that produced the generally accepted observations referred to above, for example, that *bara* and *hoshia* 'are distinguished from all other words in their field by being collocated almost exclusively with God or his human representatives. Such conclusions are far more valuable than doubtful (or even irrefutable) etymologies that may have no relevance to a particular context.

These then are some of the experiments still to be applied to the language of the Bible: a more precise definition of common terms such as 'word', 'root', and 'overtones'; a fresh study of the structure of the Semitic languages with particular reference to semantic motivation; a systematic grouping of vocabulary by 'fields' rather than alphabetically by roots; and a systematic classification of contexts. Until more is known about these problems, the question of the part played by a root in the meaning of Semitic words is still an open one, particularly when, as in Isa. 7.9, there are such striking similarities in the root, the form, the context, and the associations of two words—or two parts of the same word.

Bibliography

Barr, James

1961 *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

1964 'Did Isaiah Know about Hebrew "Root-Meanings"?' *ExpTim* 75: 242.

Boman, Thorleif

1960 *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (Library of History and Doctrine; London: SCM Press).

Childs, Brevard S.

1962 *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (SBT, 37; London: SCM Press)

Crystal, David

1965 *Linguistics, Language and Religion* (Faith and Fact Books, 131; London: Burns & Oates).

Firth, J.R.

1964 'On Sociological Linguistics', in Dell Hymes (ed.), *Language in Culture and Society: A Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology* (New York: Harper & Row).

- Gemser, B.
 1955 'The *rib-* or Controversy-Pattern in Hebrew Mentality', in Martin Noth and D. Winton Thomas (eds.), *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (VTSup, 3; Leiden: E.J. Brill): 128-33.
- Gleason, Henry A.
 1961 *An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics* (New York: Holt, Rinehard & Winston, rev. edn).
- Goshen-Gottstein, M.H.
 1965 *Hebrew and Semitic Languages: An Outline Introduction* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv).
- Moscatti, Sabatino
 1965 *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology* (Porta linguarum orientalium n.s., 6; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz).
- Öhmann, S.
 1953 'Theories of the Linguistic Field', *Word* 9: 123-34.
- Porteous, N.W.
 1964 'Second Thoughts, II, The Present State of Old Testament Theology', *ExpTim* 75: 70-74.
- Rabin, H.
 1961 'Is Biblical Semantics Possible?' (in Hebrew), *Bet Miqra* 12: 17-27.
- Scharfstein, Z.
 1964 'oṣar ha-millim ve-ha-nivim (Tel Aviv).
- Trier, Jost
 1931 *Der deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes: Die Geschichte eines sprachlichen Feldes* (Heidelberg: C. Winter).
- Ullmann, Stephen
 1962 *Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).

LANGUAGE AND RELIGION*

Religion has always played a role, often a very significant and even crucial one, in the history of language and linguistics. In this short article I shall focus on four main areas: (1) sacred texts such as the Bible, the Buddhist canon, the Qur'ān, and the Vedas; (2) special religious languages and language varieties such as Avestan, Christian Syriac, Church Latin, Church Slavonic, Ge'ez, Biblical Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic, Pahlavi, and Pali, as well as those used in blessing, cursing, euphemism, evangelism, meditation, glossolalia, preaching and the like; (3) views about language such as those enshrined in the biblical story of the Tower of Babel and the racist myth of an Aryan superlanguage, and belief in the magical power of words and names; and (4) the influence of religion on the history of linguistics due to such factors as the need for accurate transmission of sacred texts and oral traditions from generation to generation, and the impetus of missionary activities, especially Buddhist and Christian, to translate them into the vernacular. (5) After this broad survey I shall consider, as a case study, the influence of Christianity on the languages of Europe.

1. *Sacred Texts*

Sacred texts have a central role to play in most religious traditions, and the language in which they are written and read is often crucial. Sacred scripts, or 'hieroglyphics', were sometimes invented with a special religious function, and exquisite calligraphy evolved in Islamic art and in the great monastic manuscript traditions of mediaeval Europe.

In Islamic doctrine, the Qur'ān represents the actual words of the deity delivered directly, in Arabic, to Muhammad in the early seventh century CE and must be read only in Arabic. Thus, for the majority of ordinary Muslims

* These two articles were originally published under different titles in R.E. Asher (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (10 vols.; Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994), I, pp. 295-96; II, pp. 546-48.

throughout the world, who have no knowledge of Arabic, translation into the vernacular is officially discouraged, and the Qur'ān is recited in the original language with amazing devotion and accuracy but minimal understanding. Similar conservatism applies to the reading of Sanskrit texts in modern Hindu temples, Avestan texts in Zoroastrian worship, and the Bible in Hebrew, even in the more liberal or progressive Jewish synagogues. In some cases it is the language of a widely used translation that assumes this role, as in some varieties of Christianity, where Greek, Latin, Slavonic, Syriac, Ge'ez, and other versions, not to mention the King James Authorized Version, have been treated with the same awe as if they were the original text. The same applies to some versions of the Buddhist canon, which are in most contexts preferred to the original Pali.

2. *Special Languages*

In addition to the languages of their sacred texts, many religious communities employ special languages or language varieties for other purposes. Glossolalia, or 'speaking in tongues', is a conspicuous example, where utterances in a language unknown to virtually everyone present has an important prophetic function. Untranslatable or 'nonsense' languages are a feature of religious rites among the Australian aborigines of northern Arnhem land, while some American Indian medicine men use an incomprehensible language when talking to each other or to supernatural powers. Probably as much for social and political reasons as for spiritual ones, Rastafarians have evolved a distinctive mode of speech among themselves, unintelligible to the outsider. The same applies to the cargo cults and several other new religious movements. Monastic sign language is another example of a special language evolved within a purely religious context.

There are many examples of the belief that everyday language is not sacred enough for religious purposes. They include the use of Sumerian in ancient Near Eastern rituals long after it had ceased to be a living language, of Sanskrit in Hindu worship, and of Ge'ez in Ethiopian Christianity, Syriac in Eastern Christianity (in Kerala in South India, for example, to this day), Hebrew in Judaism, and, until the twentieth century, Latin in the Roman Catholic Church all over the world.

The notion that no human language at all, ancient or modern, natural or artificial, is adequate appears both in the well-known Quaker predilection for silent worship and in the 'language-transcendent' meditation techniques of some varieties of Buddhism and Christianity.

In the context of a religious community meeting regularly for worship, special varieties of language are often used for public prayer, hymn singing, and preaching, partly to heighten people's awareness of the sacredness of the moment and partly to highlight the continuity of what they are doing

with the worship of other communities elsewhere. Thus, for example, Jews all over the world using precisely the same Hebrew words as their ancestors have used for generations, as they celebrate Passover or Yom Kippur ('the Day of Atonement'), experience a sense of solidarity as 'God's people' that would not be possible if any other language were used.

The same applied until the twentieth century to the use of Church Latin in the Catholic Mass, and to the distinctive English of the 1661 Book of Common Prayer in the Church of England. The introduction of the vernacular into worship places the emphasis more on communication and the fuller participation of the people, although the precise wording of the modern Catholic 'Missal' and of the Anglican 'Alternative Service Books' is still controlled by the ecclesiastical authorities. Conservative opposition to using the vernacular in worship is common, as in the case of the Anglican 'Prayerbook Society,' dedicated to preserving the use of the 1661 Book of Common Prayer.

The dynamics of prayer, in which human individuals believe they are engaged in dialogue with a deity or saint, also determines the variety of language adopted. In the language of hymns, too, metrical constraints, the popularity of traditional melodies and other factors lead to the survival of bizarre archaisms that would rarely be heard outside that special context. Frequently, tension between a desire to uphold an ancient religious tradition, for example, by preserving Latin or Hebrew or Sanskrit, and a move towards making public worship more generally intelligible has produced interesting compromises. The need to train preachers in the use of a language variety designed to elicit the appropriate response has produced elaborate homiletical strategies down the ages, particularly in Christian tradition.

3. Beliefs about Language

Belief in the power of language to influence reality is expressed in many ways all over the world. In European tradition this implies a Platonic view of language, in which there is a direct connection between the world of names and the world of things. The Chinese doctrine of the 'rectification of names' (*Cheng-ming*) was similarly based on the belief that there is (or ought to be) a formal correspondence between names and functions, titles and duties, especially in politics. In Hindu philosophy, the sacred sound *om* was understood to be the consummation of the Vedas and as such to denote their ultimate referent Brahman, source of all intelligibility and being.

Personal names are believed to have special powers, and great care is taken by many communities to protect their children by naming them according to a set of carefully controlled rules. Some African tribes give their children unattractive names to make them uninviting to evil spirits. In some American Indian and Australian Aboriginal communities, the name

of a recently deceased person is taboo, and even words that resemble it are meticulously avoided. Jews at one time changed the names of their children to deceive the angel of death, and the name of their God was believed to be surrounded by such a powerful aura of sacredness that it was never to be pronounced except by the high priest in a very special ritual context. Some Christians apply a similar taboo to the name 'Jesus' in the late twentieth century.

Written language has a special role to play in this respect, as beliefs about the Hebrew alphabet and the Tetragrammaton in Jewish tradition illustrate. Egyptian hieroglyphics, Nordic runes, and Chinese characters also have a long and fascinating history of magical uses and beliefs.

Several religious traditions believe in the creative power of the divine word or command. In Ancient Egyptian tradition, the god Ptah created heaven and earth by his word. The same creative power is attributed to the word of the god Prajapati in Hinduism, and to the creator god of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. In Hindu iconography, the god Siva Nataraja ('Lord of the Dance') is represented as producing the sound that creates, sustains, and destroys the world. Highly complex mythological and doctrinal elaborations of this concept appear in Hinduism, Christianity and elsewhere.

Primary myths about the origin of language, on the other hand, are surprisingly rare. The biblical stories of Ham, Shem and Japheth, the three sons of Noah and the Tower of Babel; an elaborate West African example from the Dogon of Mali; and a passing reference in Greek mythology seem to be exceptions. Maybe the focus on language as a key to understanding human nature and society is a modern one.

In striking contrast to this situation are the many modern 'secondary myths', clearly motivated by political and social factors, including sixteenth-century claims that Adam and Eve spoke a Teutonic language and that the Mayan script was of Semitic origin, and more recently, quite blatant attempts to prove the superiority of the Aryan race—or the Semites or the Africans—by the use of linguistic evidence.

4. Influence of Religion on Linguistics

The belief that, to be effective ritual utterances, frequently in a language or language variety other than that of the priests performing them, have to be recited with absolute accuracy has had profound effects on the history of language and linguistics. In the first place, it means that religious authorities insist on a very large part of their educational programs being devoted to language teaching. Thus, the training of Catholic priests, Jewish rabbis, Muslim imams and Hindu brahmins had to include the study of the ancient language in which their Scriptures and their liturgy were written—Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Sanskrit, respectively—whatever their mother tongue was,

and whatever the language of the people they would be working among. At the same time, religious schools are set up in which children are taught at least the rudiments of the appropriate language to enable them to recite texts correctly from an early age. Muslim Qur'ān schools are a good example. In many cases, religious institutions exert, or are bound by, legal authority to preserve and protect the sacred language. This applies as much to the vernacular wording of the modern Catholic Mass and the English of the Church of England liturgy, as to the sacred languages of Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism. The effect on the survival or spread of such languages and language varieties, as also on perceptions of their superiority above indigenous or colloquial languages and dialects, can readily be appreciated.

Second, elaborate scribal and grammatical techniques were worked out to ensure that the sacred text was accurately transmitted. Thus, ancient languages that might have been totally forgotten have been preserved in the context of religious institutions of many types. A very large proportion of the linguistic material that has survived from the ancient world is of a religious nature, preserved in temple libraries and the like. Scribes engaged in copying a sacred text, the Jewish Masoretes, for example, worked under the strictest rules governing every aspect of their craft. They also devised elaborate systems of 'pointing' to preserve correctly every minute phonological detail, including cantillation marks, after Hebrew had ceased to be their first language. This and other developments, especially contact with Arabic grammarians, led eventually to the emergence of Hebrew linguistics.

In early Hindu tradition, by contrast, the primary form of language was speech, not writing. The Vedas are regarded as *śruti*, 'hearing', to be transmitted word-perfect from generation to generation. Here too the linguistic precision required led not only to some astonishing feats of memory but also to the appearance of some remarkable pioneers in the history of linguistics, of whom Pāṇini is certainly the most celebrated.

Finally, the communication, interpretation and translation of sacred texts have influenced language and linguistics in a number of significant ways. The history of Bible translation is by far the best-documented example of this. In many languages, such as Gothic and Old Church Slavonic, as well as countless modern spoken languages in Africa and Asia, the Bible was the first text to be written down. In many cases new writing systems had to be devised, while others like the Korean Han'gŭl system, came to be more widely used as a result of the efforts of Bible translators, so that they were no longer the possession of an intellectual elite. It is probably true to say that, because of European colonial and postcolonial educational policies, there is still very little published in most of the African languages except for church purposes.

Important contributions to all branches of linguistics have been made as a result of the activities of Christian scholars and missionaries, from the

early pioneering work of men like the Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) in China and the eighteenth-century English Baptist William Carey in India, not to mention St Jerome and Martin Luther, to the more recent and more technical research associated with the Protestant Bible Societies, the Vatican (where, incidentally, there is still a thriving Latin department), and the Summer Institute of Linguistics. As a result of their work, many languages and dialects were recorded for the first time, and the first grammars and dictionaries were produced. Theological controversies, like the ‘term question’ in nineteenth-century China, focused for the first time on important semantic issues, and some recent advances in comparative Semitic linguistics are due to the activities of a new generation of biblical scholars.

The effect of Buddhist missionary activities, especially in Central and Eastern Asia, has been considerable too, but less well documented. It appears that Buddhist teachings were from the beginning translated into regional languages and dialects. The early history of translation into Chinese, for example, can be traced for one thousand years, from the earliest attempts by polyglot monks in the second century BCE, to the establishment of official translation bureaus. It was for the purpose of translating the Buddhist canon into Tibetan that the Tibetan script was created in the seventh century CE, and this in turn was used as a model for the Mongolian writing system, created under the patronage of Kublai Khan in the thirteenth century.

5. Christianity and the Languages of Europe

Despite its Near Eastern origins in the context of ancient Judaism, the dominant language of early Christianity was a European language. Many Jews were Greek speakers, and the Hebrew Scriptures had been translated into Koine Greek long before the time of Christ. To these were added the Gospels, Paul’s Letters and the rest of what later became Christian Scripture, and these were originally written in Greek. Even the Coptic, Syriac and later Arabic varieties of Christianity were strongly influenced by Greek. The shift from Jerusalem to Greece and Rome, represented already in the life and work of the apostle Paul and described in the book of Acts, was thus from a linguistic point of view less significant than might appear at first sight, and its spread through the Roman Empire, mostly among the lower classes of society, is more understandable. By the end of the fourth century, Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire. The final split between the Western church under the papacy at Rome, and the Eastern or Orthodox Church with its centre until 1453 at Byzantium/Constantinople, took place in the eleventh century. In the sixteenth century, European Christianity was further fragmented by the Protestant Reformation and at the same time began to spread in its various forms to the United States, Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Latin was the sole liturgical language of Western Christianity until the Reformation, and it continued to hold this position in the Roman Catholic Church until the Second Vatican Council in 1962–65, which encouraged the use of the vernacular in the Mass. The Eastern Orthodox Church, in contrast, familiar with established Syrian and Armenian traditions, did not insist on linguistic uniformity, and it was with the blessing of Constantinople that Ulfilas (c. 311–383), originally from Cappadocia in Asia Minor, invented the Gothic alphabet and translated the Bible into Gothic for his mission to northern Europe. It was an Eastern emperor, too, who commissioned Cyril (826–869) to take the gospel to the Slavs, for whom he invented the Glagolitic script, based on the Greek alphabet, and wrote his Slavonic translation of the Bible. The influence of the church on the Slavonic languages can be seen in the use of the Cyrillic alphabet in Russia, Bulgaria and the Serbian parts of the former Yugoslavia, which are historically Orthodox, in contrast to the use of the Roman alphabet in Catholic regions like Poland, the Czech Republic and the Croatian part of the former Yugoslavia. By far the most influential among the other European Bible translations are Martin Luther's German Bible and the Authorized Version of King James (1611).

a. Conservatism

Out of respect for tradition, the languages and language varieties used by the church in Europe, as elsewhere, especially in the liturgy, are mostly characterized by conservatism, which separates them from everyday language. The retention of Latin by the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world until the latter part of the twentieth century is the most obvious example and corresponds to the use of Arabic in Islam and Hebrew in Judaism. The first of the Vatican II documents, published in 1963, acknowledges that 'the use of the vernacular in the Mass . . . may frequently be of great advantage to the people' and authorizes translations from the Latin 'approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authorities' (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [*Sacrosanctum concilium*] 36.2-3). Similar concerns have led in recent years to the publication of numerous translations of the Bible, official and unofficial, into every European language.

Conservative opposition to these developments, due as a rule to a mixture of theological, aesthetic and political factors, and rear-guard actions of various kinds have never been lacking. Reactions to vernacular translations range from the violence that led in the sixteenth century to the execution of the Bible translator William Tyndale in 1536 and the breakup of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe to sardonic comments like that of Thomas Hobbes: 'After the Bible was translated into English, every man, nay, every boy and wench that could read English, thought they spoke with God Almighty and understood what he said'. The 'Tridentine Mass' movement led by rebel Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, and the High Church Anglican Prayerbook

Society, dedicated to preserving the use of the 1661 Book of Common Prayer, are twentieth-century examples.

In most English-speaking varieties of Christianity, however, archaic forms like *thou*, *thee* and *ye* have now been dropped, except, significantly, in the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary. Much traditional biblical and liturgical language, borrowed, via Latin, from ancient Hebrew and Greek, has also been abandoned. Thus, for example, modern vernacular translations no longer preserve English Hebraisms like *all flesh* ('all mortals'), *children of Israel* ('Israelites'), *beasts of the field* ('wild animals') and *the bowels of Christ* ('Christ's compassion'). A few words of Greek (notably *Kyrie Eleison*, 'Lord, have mercy') and Hebrew (*Hosanna*, 'give victory', and *Hallelujah*, 'Praise the Lord') still survive, as do a number of simple Latin hymns and chants popularized by the international and ecumenical Taizé community in France.

b. *Sectarianism and Prejudice*

Divisions within the church are clearly reflected in language variation. In Britain, a Catholic priest lives in a *presbytery* and an Anglican in a *vicarage* or a *rectory*, while a Protestant minister lives in a *manse*. In the Church of Scotland a *presbytery* is not a building at all, but one of the church councils. Catholics go to *Mass* on Sunday with their *missals*, Anglicans go to *church* with their *prayer-books*. These distinctions and many others, such as that between Roman Catholic *Derry* and Protestant *Londonderry*, can be a matter of life and death, as in Northern Ireland during much of the twentieth century. Until the Act of Union in 1803, Irish Gaelic was associated with Roman Catholicism, while English was the language of the powerful, landowning Protestant settlers, including the Scots in Ulster. Sectarian conflict spawned many terms, such as *papist* (Roman Catholic) and *proddie* (Protestant), and some, like *Roman candle*, a type of firework burnt on Guy Fawkes night, have an obvious and gruesome origin in the history of persecution in England, even though it is no longer known to most people.

The history of the church's attitude to the Jews in Europe has been characterized by prejudice and hatred, frequently erupting into persecution, and, since the Holocaust, attempts have been made in the Protestant and Catholic churches, though not so far in the Eastern Orthodox Church, to remove or reword some of the blatantly anti-Semitic language of the Good Friday liturgy, including the 1661 prayer for 'Jews, Turks and infidels', and to revise some passages in the Gospels where the Greek word for 'the Jews' can arguably be translated 'the Judaeans' or even, in some cases, 'the people'. The term 'Old Testament' is still used, however, often unthinkingly, in such expressions as 'Old Testament ethics' and 'Old Testament religion', which tend to denigrate Judaism and perpetuate traditional anti-Semitic attitudes (see Chapter 7).

The language of the church has also been affected by the changing role and status of women. In 1983 the Methodist Church in the UK published a hymnbook that 'takes equal account of the place of both men and women in the church', omitting or altering such compositions as 'Rise up, O men of God'. In the ecumenical New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, published in 1991, 'inclusiveness has been attained by simple rephrasing or by introducing plural forms'. Female images of God are now common in the language of worship and theological discourse, especially that of God as Mother, for which the authority of a number of scriptural passages can be cited (Deut. 32.18; Ps. 131.2; Isa. 66.13), and a Trinity of 'Parent, Lover and Friend' has been introduced as an inclusive alternative to 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit' (McFague 1987). As expressions like 'my brothers and sisters', 'men and women' and 'humankind' become more frequent and more accepted in the liturgy, it becomes harder to retain relics of the past such 'for us men and our salvation', which is still current in some modern translations of the Nicene Creed.

Christian oaths and exclamations continue to be used outside their original religious context as in Italian *Madonna!* and Greek *Panayia!* and English *Mother of God!* Euphemistic formations that obscure the original meaning of some Christian expressions are quite common: in English they include *Zounds!* ('God's wounds'), *Cor Blimey!* ('God blind me!') and *Gee Whizz!* ('Jesus!'). In a number of countries, including England, Christian language and beliefs have a privileged status not afforded to other religions, in that they are protected by blasphemy laws.

c. Influences on Secular Language

Christian beliefs and practices have left their mark on every aspect of secular language, even though their original Christian connection has long since been forgotten, from common personal names like John and Joanna (cf. Gaelic *Ewan*; German *Johann*, *Johannes* or *Hans*; French *Jean* and *Jeanne*; Italian *Giovanni* and *Giovannella*; Spanish *Juan* and *Juanita*; Greek *Ioannes*; Russian *Ivan*; Hungarian *Janos*) to hundreds of items of vocabulary. These include not only specifically religious terms like French *Pâques* ('Easter'; Greek *pascha*, Hebrew *pesah*) and bishop (cf. French *évêque*, Greek *episkopos*) but also common everyday words like *ladybird* (cf. German *Marienkäfer*, Spanish *vaca de San Antón*, French *bête à bon Dieu*).

The days of the week in the European languages present an interesting variety. In English and other Germanic languages they bear the names of the sun, the moon and the five planets, called after the deities *Tewis*, *Wotan*, *Thor*, *Freya*, *Saturn*, and have no Christian associations at all (although in some English-speaking religious communities the 'Lord's Day' or the 'Sabbath' is preferred to 'Sunday'). Greek, on the other hand, following Jewish and biblical tradition, uses the ordinal numerals two through 5 for 'Monday'

to 'Thursday', but the Christian terms *paraskeuē* ('preparation'), *sabbaton* ('sabbath') and *kyriake* ('the Lord's Day') for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Some Latin languages compromise with a combination of both systems by calling 'Sunday' the Lord's Day (French *dimanche*, Italian *domenica*, Spanish *domingo*), but using the names of Roman deities Mars, Mercury, etc., for the rest of the week: French *lundi*, *mardi*, *mercredi*, etc., Italian *lunedì*, *martedì*, *mercoledì*, etc. The Russian word for 'Sunday', *Voskresenye*, literally '(the day of) the resurrection', survived 70 years of atheism.

Bibliography

- Eliade, Mircea (ed.)
 1987 *Encyclopedia of Religion* (16 vols.; New York: Macmillan).
- Gill, Sam D.
 1981 *Sacred Words: A Study of Navajo Religion and Prayer* (Contributions in Intercultural and Comparative Studies, 4; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press).
- Gomez, L.O.
 1987 'Buddhist Views of Language', in Eliade 1987: VIII, 446-51.
- Martin, David (ed.)
 1987 'Crisis for Cranmer and King James', *PN Review* 13: 1-64.
- McFague, Sallie
 1987 *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford
 1983 *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (London: SCM Press).
- Samarin William J. (ed.)
 1976 *Language in Religious Practice* (Rowley, MA: Newbury House).
- Tambiah S.J.
 1968 'The Magical Power of Words', *Man* n.s. 3: 175-208.
- Wheelock, W.T.
 1987 'Language', in Eliade 1987: VIII, 438-46.

Part IV

SHORT NOTES

THE LANGUAGE OF LEVITICUS*

I hope that this short paper will provide something of an introduction to the colloquium, partly by picking out some of the issues involved for preliminary discussion, and partly by raising at the outset the general question of what exactly is this text that we have come here from all over the world to discuss? In particular, can its grammar and vocabulary give us a clue to who in this text is trying to do what to whom? For present purposes, I mean the grammar and vocabulary of Leviticus as whole, not the first 16 chapters on their own, or P or H or any other corpus, but the book of Leviticus on its own as a complete literary unit, coming after the book of Exodus, in which ‘Moses finished the work’ of erecting the tabernacle and the tent of meeting, and which ends with the formula, ‘these are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the people of Israel on Mount Sinai’ (27.34). Subsequent discussion may well challenge this procedure as rather arbitrary, but I think I can show that there are some useful conclusions to be drawn from it. If that is the case, then I am only too happy to add my evidence—as a linguist—in support of Mary’s literary/anthropological conclusions on Leviticus.

With the advent of the computer, it is a lot easier to handle minute grammatical data than it used to be, and I begin with the grammar of Leviticus. Of course statistical data can be misleading, especially in the case of a text like the Hebrew Bible, in which all sorts of complex, arbitrary and often unknown factors have operated, from speakers’ or writers’ choices in their original universe of discourse in ancient Israel and Judah, right down to the fixing of the canon at Yavneh and the activities of the Masoretes in the first millennium of the Common Era. But in a survey like that published by Frank Andersen and Dean Forbes a few years ago, a few features stand out as statistically so extraordinary as to be significant. Here they are.

* This paper was read at a colloquium organized by Paul Morris and myself at Lancaster University, 30 May–1 June 1995, and first published in J.F.A. Sawyer (ed.), *Reading Leviticus: A Conversation with Mary Douglas* (JSOTSup, 227; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 16–20..

In most respects (the frequency of verbs, nouns, the definite article, passive forms, pronouns, prepositions, numerals and the like) Leviticus is normal in comparison with Biblical Hebrew as a whole. But there are two very striking characteristics of the grammar of Leviticus that distinguish it from most other books of the Bible. First, Leviticus is characterized by the extreme infrequency of imperatives (42/35: that is, a total of 42 occurrences, corresponding to 35 per 10,000 words). Most books of the Bible have three or four times as many imperatives per 10,000 words as Leviticus. Imperatives are most frequent in the language of the Prophets and the Psalms—in Psalms, for example, imperatives are ten times more frequent than they are in Leviticus (693/354). The nearest parallels to the situation in Leviticus are Esther (11/36) and Ezra (15/40), where imperatives are rare. Significantly, the relative frequency of imperatives in the Holiness Code on its own, that is Leviticus 17–26 (15/34), is almost exactly the same as for the book of Leviticus as a whole—a nice example, incidentally, of continuity or consistency from ch. 1 to ch. 27.

Direct commands using the imperative are rare in Leviticus: the incidence of direct negative commands or prohibitions (using *yiqtol* forms rather than imperatives) is not significant. The relative frequency of negatives (298/249) is not much higher than average (6,233/204) and is exceeded by Deuteronomy (445/311), Isaiah (525/310), Jeremiah (633/290), Job (366/439), Proverbs (233/337) and several of the smaller books. When it is remembered that a large proportion of the imperatives that do occur are those addressed by God to Moses ('speak to the people . . .', 'take Aaron and his sons . . . ' and so on), then the lack of prohibitions addressed to the listener or reader is very remarkable indeed.

The other feature of the language of Leviticus that distinguishes it from narrative texts like Esther and Ezra is the relative infrequency of plain statements of fact, describing what happened or how things actually are. No book in the Bible has fewer *qatal* forms (perfect) per ten thousand words than Leviticus; most have over twice as many. Similarly, no prose work (with the exception of Qohelet) has fewer *vayyiqtol* forms (narrative past) per ten thousand words than Leviticus. Conversely, *ve-qatal* (future) forms are almost three times as frequent in Leviticus (721/603) as they are anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible. Deuteronomy, Ezekiel and some of the minor prophets come a long way behind in second place. The relative frequency of *yiqtol* (future) forms, although not so high, is nonetheless above average.

So what can we conclude from this? The book is described in the closing formula as a collection of 'commandments': 'These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses . . .' (27.34); and throughout it there are such expressions as 'this shall be the law of the leper' (14.1), 'it shall be a statute to you for ever' (16.29) and 'you shall do my ordinances and keep

my statutes' (18.4). But the language in which God addresses the people and the priests through his prophetic spokesman Moses seems almost to avoid the normal direct means of phrasing obligations. The author seems instead to want us to imagine a state or a society in which some elaborate procedures are to be carried out, some things are to be done and some are not to be done. Sanctions are there, including the death penalty, and what looks very much like one of the celebrated 'do what I say or else . . .' passages appears in Leviticus, as well as Exodus and Deuteronomy (Leviticus 26; cf. Exod. 23.20-33; Deuteronomy 28).

But the emphasis is different. Direct commands concentrated in chs. 18 and 19 seem to be exceptions rather than the norm. At the end of ch. 26, the sanctions are greatly mitigated, as they are at the end of Deuteronomy: the memorable *hapax legomenon* *ve-'af gam zot*, 'and yet in spite of everything . . .', makes that clear (26.44). Of course this is not reflected in our English translations. The *yiqtol* and *ve-qatal* forms are notoriously hard to translate: should it be 'he shall bring his offering . . .' or 'he will bring his offering' or 'let him bring his offering . . .'? Should it be 'you shall not steal . . .' or 'do not steal' or 'you will not steal' . . .? And what about the terms for 'law', 'commandment' and the like. Should *torat ha-mešora* 'not be translated 'this is what you [Moses] are to teach concerning people suffering from *šara* 'at, rather than 'this shall be the law of the leper' (RSV)?

This brings me to the second part of my paper, which is about the vocabulary of Leviticus. Word frequency is a notoriously unreliable guide to how things were or are in the universe of discourse from which a text derives. The fact that the word for a 'sneeze' (*'atishah*; Job 41.10) occurs only once in the Bible, for example, does not mean that sneezing was rare in ancient Israel, any more than you can argue that ancient Israelite houses were very clean places from the fact that there is no everyday domestic word for 'dirty' in Biblical Hebrew, corresponding to *meluklak* in Rabbinic and Modern Hebrew. Conversely, the fact that Leviticus contains a disproportionately high concentration of words for 'ritually clean', 'impure' and the like has to be investigated very carefully before you can conclude that the author was obsessed with matters of purity or sacred contagion. They may, for example, mainly be confined to one short passage on the subject and alluded to only in passing elsewhere. Maybe Leviticus is not all about ritual purity and holiness, as has often been thought.

But what I think might be significant and often overlooked is that Leviticus contains some key terms and phrases not found elsewhere, or very rare elsewhere, in the Bible. One obvious example is *'azazel*, which occurs only in Leviticus 16 and, with it, *yom ha-kippurim*, which occurs only in Leviticus 23 and 25. Another word that appears alongside *yom ha-kippurim* in the last of these passages, Leviticus 25, is the highly emotive term *deror*; 'liberty, freedom', which occurs in the Torah only here; and another is *yovel*,

‘jubilee’. Another obvious one is the phrase ‘and you shall love your neighbour as yourself’, which occurs twice in ch. 19 and nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible (it recurs often enough in post-biblical texts, including half a dozen times in the Gospels and Paul).

The significance of this cannot be overestimated. While in many contexts the perception of the book of Leviticus is that of a ritualistic, legalistic priestly work, it is not called Leviticus, ‘the priestly book’, in Jewish tradition and could instead be understood as the book that uniquely focuses on ‘loving one’s neighbour’ and the ideal of a ‘jubilee’ of justice and freedom. A further reason why Leviticus has been so undervalued and its true meaning misunderstood is that many Christian commentators, ancient and modern, have no idea of the religious significance of *yom kippur*, another distinctive feature of Leviticus. In Jewish tradition, both before 70 CE (cf. Ben Sira 50) and after, right down to the present, it is a day of spiritual renewal, a high point in the liturgical year.

I would like to raise another point about the vocabulary of Leviticus, which may be rather more controversial. It is often said that priestly terminology—and that refers to most of Leviticus—is characterized by an almost technical precision. Terms are used very carefully and with great attention to detailed distinctions between related terms, with ‘unmatched precision of terminology and formulation’ (Milgrom 1983: 122). I would like to question this on two accounts. First of all, there is the obvious problem of the somewhat crude anthropomorphisms in Leviticus such as ‘a pleasing odour to the Lord’, ‘food for your God’ and similar expressions. Are contemporary readers permitted to turn a blind eye to these expressions, so to speak, and call them ‘fossils’, as commentaries frequently do, and feel free not to take them literally? If they can do that with some expressions, what is to prevent readers and listeners from doing it with others? If *leḥem ishsheh*, ‘food offered by fire’ in 3.16 is not to be understood literally, for example, why should they take *ḥuqqat ‘olam*, ‘an everlasting law’, in the next verse literally. Or if *reaḥ niḥoah le-Yhwh*, ‘a pleasing odour to the Lord’, in 2.2 is metaphorical, how should the term *qodesh ha-qodashim*, ‘most holy’, in the next verse be interpreted? Is this not the stuff of rhetoric, working on the general associations and nuances of these terms and the cumulative effect of repetition, rather than concern for the choice and exploitation of precise terminology? Another example of an entirely nontechnical use is the ‘elegant variation’ in one of the most celebrated passages in Lev. 19.15-18, where no fewer than four different terms are used for the other person, ‘neighbour, brother, companion, fellow countryman’ or the like (Noth 1965: 141-42).

A further point I would like to make on the vocabulary of Leviticus concerns supposed differences in terminology and lexical usage between different sources. What would happen when two sources, in which the same terms occur both with a technical meaning and a less technical or figurative

meaning, are combined in one text—in this case P (Leviticus 1–16 and 27) and H (the Holiness Code in chs. 17–26)? To a reader who knows nothing at all about source criticism what do they mean? The term *ma'al*, for example, ‘sacrilege’, *ṭame*, ‘ritually impure’, and *niddah*, ‘bodily discharge’, may originally have had some precise, narrow, restricted, technical sense in an ancient context, painstakingly and convincingly reconstructed by modern critical scholarship, but they no longer occur in that original context. Now they are in a context in which the original source is combined with another source or sources in which these same terms are used figuratively or in a less precise or less technical sense. Is it not then the case that the less precise, less technical or figurative sense is bound to be uppermost in the reader’s mind? Surely terms like *ma'al*, *ṭame* and *niddah* can no longer be understood as precise technical terms with a restricted meaning, and all the passages in which they occur should perhaps be interpreted accordingly. Are not the minute details of ancient priestly terminology now submerged in the rhetoric of a larger literary work whose aims and interests are perhaps more theological than practical, more prophetic than priestly. Perhaps the Hebrew title of the book *vayyiqra*, focusing as it does upon God’s first words to his prophet Moses from the newly established ‘tent of meeting’, gets closer to its overall purpose than the tendentious and misleading Greek or Latin title we use in English.

Bibliography

Andersen, Francis I., and A. Dean Forbes

1989 *The Vocabulary of the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico).

Milgrom, Jacob

1983 *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* (SJLA, 36; Leiden: E.J. Brill).

Noth, Martin

1965 *Leviticus. A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press).

BIBLICAL 'LEPROSY' AND
THE ETYMOLOGY OF *šara 'at**

It is now generally accepted that biblical descriptions of *šara 'at*, traditionally translated 'leprosy', do not refer to true leprosy as it is diagnosed and treated today, and there is no need to repeat the arguments for the view that *šara 'at* in Biblical Hebrew was applied to various 'repulsive scaly skin diseases', particularly psoriasis. The last word on the subject has probably now been written in a recent article by Dr E.V. Hulse (1975: 87-105). But one assumption that underlies several modern discussions seems to me to be in need of modification. It concerns the etymology of the word *šara 'at*. This is a question primarily of historical interest, since the 'root-meaning' may not have been productive in the usage of the term in biblical times, and Hulse wisely makes no reference to this aspect of the matter. In the complex task of identifying and explaining the peculiar overtones and associations that this term acquired, however, etymological evidence may be important, and it is the aim of this note to ensure that that evidence is correct.

It has been widely assumed that there is an etymological relationship between Hebrew *šara 'at* and Arabic *šara 'a*, 'to throw down'. G.R. Driver, for instance, begins his detailed article on 'Leprosy' in the one-volume revised edition of Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible* as follows: 'The Hebrew *šir'ah* and *šara 'at* "prostration" are general terms for any prostrating experience or disabling disease (cf. Arabic *šara 'a* "prostrated", *šarua* "was prostrated by epilepsy" and *šari'a* "submitted oneself, was feeble, weak")' (*HDB* 575). Ludwig Koehler, in his classic study *Hebrew Man*, gives the following definition of *šara 'at*: 'The Hebrew calls this disease *šara 'at* which means "stroke". The meaning of this description is clearly that God has stricken the sick man and has punished him thereby for sin'

* An earlier form of this paper was read at the History of Medicine Seminar in the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in April 1974 and later published in *Vetus Testamentum* 26 (1976), pp.241-45. I am grateful to Dr Chris Stevenson, Department of Dermatology in the Royal Victoria Infirmary, for expert advice.

(Koehler 1956: 56). The same etymology is given for *šara‘at* in the standard Hebrew dictionaries. But was *šara‘at* ever ‘a general term for any prostrating experience or disabling disease’? Are *šara‘at* and *šir‘ah* (traditionally translated ‘wasp, hornet’) synonyms in Biblical Hebrew, as Driver implies? Are we justified in reading into *šara‘at* the kind of theological explanation of disease that Koehler bases on its etymology?

1. The form of the word *šara‘at*, as well as its meaning, suggests that it belongs to a large group of medical terms in which the root manifestly indicates one of the more obvious symptoms of the disease, for example, *dalleqet*, ‘inflammation’ (cf. *dalaq*, ‘to burn’); *addemet*, ‘measles’ (cf. *adom*, ‘red’); *šahevet*, ‘jaundice’ (cf. *šahov*, ‘yellow’) (Jastrow, 1303; BDB, 863; KBL, 816-17). Modern Hebrew examples include *kallevet*, ‘rabies’ (cf. *kelev*, ‘dog’); *nazzelet*, ‘catarrh’ (cf. *nazal*, ‘flow’). Against this background, the proposed etymology that connects *šara‘at* with words for ‘to be prostrated, smitten [sc. by God]’ is highly improbable.

2. The common expression *nega‘ šara‘at*, ‘an attack of *šara‘at*’, raises a further difficulty for the ‘prostration’ etymology. Since *nega‘* is itself ‘a general term for any prostrating experience or disabling disease’, with recognizable overtones of being struck or smitten by God, the phrase would be oddly tautologous if *šara‘at* had virtually the same meaning. There are of course several words for disease or ‘plague’ related to verbs for ‘to strike’, including *maggefah*, *makkah*, *maktash* (Aramaic) as well as *nega‘*. But *šara‘at* is sharply distinguished from them both in form and usage.

3. *šara‘at* is not a general term for any disease but is clearly distinguished from related terms by being specifically reserved for skin diseases. General terms like *holi*, *maḥlah* and *nega‘* are applied to all kinds of disorders such as a headache (Isa. 1.15), diseases of the bowels (2 Chron. 21.15), the plague (Exod. 9.14) and multiple injuries resulting from a fall (2 Kgs 1.2), while *šara‘at* is applied exclusively to surface disfigurement or discoloration, either on human beings, where it refers to skin disorders of various types, or on inanimate objects such as cloth, leather and the walls of a house. The symptoms of *šara‘at*, in other words, include only visible phenomena such as inflammation, scabs and swellings.

4. The etymology of medical terms of the same type as *šara‘at* is not always known (that of *yallepet*, ‘ringworm (?)’, for example), and *šara‘at* may also contain a root of unknown meaning. But it is a priori probable that there was at one time a semantic link between *šara‘at* and a term that described some conspicuous symptom of the disease to which it was applied. Gesenius, over a century ago, was already dissatisfied with the ‘prostration’ theory based on Arabic *šara‘a* and suggested a connection with Hebrew *gara‘* (Gesenius 1833) ‘to scrape, scratch’. This provides an attractive etymology that satisfies morphological and semantic requirements but is phonologically unlikely. Brown, Driver and Briggs wisely followed Gesenius

in treating the *šara'a* theory with caution, but omitted his *gara'* suggestion (BDB, 863). Eliezer ben Yehuda similarly finds the connection with an Arabic word for 'to throw down' hard to accept (Ben Yehuda, XI, 5648). Akkadian *šerretu*, 'sheen' (cf. Num. 12.10), *šararu*, 'to drip' and *širihtu*, 'inflammation', suggest tempting alternatives, but here too the phonological difficulties seem to be insuperable (CAD, XVI, 137, 105, 207).

There is however in Hebrew another term that looks as if it is derived from the same root as *šara'at*, namely *šir'ah* assumed by Driver to have the same meaning as *šara'at*, that is, 'any prostrating experience'. The difficulties in taking *šara'at* in this sense have been discussed already, and to these we must now add that the ancient versions are unanimous in translating *šir'ah* in the three biblical passages where it occurs, as 'wasp, hornet', sent by God in the vanguard of the Israelite army to terrify the enemy (Exod. 23.28; Deut. 7.20; Josh. 24.12). The frequently quoted parallel from the classical literature οἶστρος (Latin *oestrus*), which developed from 'gadfly' to 'panic, frenzy', would suggest that the original meaning of *šir'ah* was, as the versions testify, some fearsome insect, not 'any prostrating experience'. Talmudic references to children and even an adult dying from a hornet's sting, and to public prayers for the destruction of hornets, mosquitoes, snakes and scorpions, testify to the dread in which these creatures were held in ancient Palestine (e.g. *Shabbat* 50b; *Ta'anit* 14^a; Casanowicz 1904: 606). But this does not imply that the Hebrew word *šir'ah*, 'hornet', got its name from the fact that it was a frightening insect, any more than the words for 'mosquito', 'snake' or 'scorpion'.

From what has been said above about the form of the word *šara'at*, we should expect there to be a connection between the skin condition called *šara'at* and the insect known as *šir'ah*, and it seems at least possible that the condition got its name from the fact that victims looked or felt as though they had been stung by a wasp or a swarm of wasps. References to swellings, inflammation and shiny reddish spots in biblical descriptions of *šara'at*, corresponding to some of the symptoms of what we know as psoriasis (Hulse 1975: 96), make this etymology reasonable. Furthermore there is an exact analogy in the Latin name for another skin condition, *urticaria* (Modern Hebrew *sirpedet*, 'nettle-rash'), so called from the fact that the victims look and feel as though they have been stung by a nettle (Latin *urtica*, Hebrew *sirpad*), although of course this is not necessarily the reason for their condition. Naturally, not all the symptoms of *šara'at* fit the wasp-sting theory, notably the white or silvery flakes of *šara'at* (and psoriasis); but then no etymology is likely to contain a complete description of the disease. Terms like *addemet*, 'measles', and *šahevet*, 'jaundice', single out one conspicuous symptom only, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that *šara'at* is similar in this respect. The word 'leprosy' itself is another example: although derived from the same root as Greek λέπις, 'scale, flake', and

originally referring to a skin disease characterized by white flakes, it came to be applied to a number of diseases, including true leprosy, of course, whose symptoms are entirely different.

5. We would conclude that the 'prostration' etymology based on Arabic *šara* 'a is most unlikely to be correct, and its theological implications consequently unfounded. The word *šara* 'at was probably originally a neutral medical term like *dalleget*, 'inflammation', and *qarahat*, 'baldness'. For reasons that we are no longer able to identify (but which are very unlikely to have been etymological), *šara* 'at in ancient Israel was classed as a form of ritual impurity, grouped in Levitical legislation with impurity due to childbirth, menstruation and other types of discharge (Leviticus 12-15; cf. 22.4; Num. 5.2). It was in that religious context that the term acquired the demoralizing associations and frightening social overtones that still, for no good reason, cling to the word 'leprosy' in English (Browne 1974: 18ff.).

Bibliography

- Browne, S.G.
 1974 *Leprosy in the Bible* (London: Leprosy Study Centre, 2nd edn).
 Casanovicz, I.M.
 1904 'Insects', *JE*, VI, pp. 605-7.
 Driver, G.R., R.G.Cochrane and H. Gordon
 1963 'Leprosy', *HDB*, p. 575.
 Gesenius, Wilhelm
 1833 *Lexicon manuale Hebraicum at Chaldaicum in Veteris Testamenti libros* (Leipzig: F.C.G. Vogel).
 Hulse, E.V.
 1975 'The Nature of Biblical "Leprosy" and the Use of Alternative Terms in Modern Translations of the Bible', *PEQ* 107: 87-105.
 Köhler, Ludwig
 1956 *Hebrew Man: Lectures Delivered at the Invitation of the University of Tübingen, December 1-16, 1952, with an Appendix on Justice in the Gate* (London: SCM Press).

BARZEL IN EXPRESSIONS LIKE 'IRON YOKE'
AND 'IRON CHARIOTS'*

In a study of the iron implements used by King David in his treatment of the Ammonites (2 Sam. 12.31), I proposed that *barzel*, 'iron', in that context and in others (e.g. Deut. 4.20; 28.48; Amos 1.3) has peculiarly ugly or frightening associations (Chapter 32). Further investigations in the light of recent archaeo-metallurgy now provide striking confirmation of that suggestion. It has also been proposed that the Neo-Assyrian term *parzillu*, 'iron', had similar overtones in certain contexts (Pleiner and Bjorkman 1974: 305; cf. Singer 1980: 185).

Analysis of iron artifacts from ancient Palestine, Assyria and Persia has conclusively shown that the manufacture of iron tools and weapons was still at a fairly primitive stage in most, if not all, parts of the ancient Near East until as late as the ninth or even eighth century BCE (Waldbaum 1978). Eighth-century iron blades from Nimrud, for example, where one might have expected a reasonably high standard of craftsmanship under the Assyrian authorities, are of poor quality: the hard, carburized part of the blade is near the centre while the cutting edge is weak and inefficient (Pleiner 1979). It was clearly a hit-or-miss affair, showing that the smiths were not yet in command of the complex processes and techniques necessary for the production of tempered steel. The change from bronze to iron was thus not due to the superior efficiency of iron, as is often assumed, but to other factors including the unavailability of tin (Tylecote 1976: 40f.). There is no archaeological evidence that the Philistines' superiority over the Israelites (cf. 1 Sam. 13.19ff.) was due to their monopoly of iron (Wertime and Muhly 1980). Single pieces of high-quality iron do occur at early Iron Age sites,

* This paper was originally read at a Colloquium in the University of London Institute of Archaeology, 3–4 April 1981, and subsequently published, with the other papers, in John F.A. Sawyer and David J.A. Clines (eds.), *Midian, Moab and Edom: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia* (JSOTSup, 24; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), pp.128–34.

but these are exceptions, due for the most part to chance, and were no doubt greatly treasured by their owners. On the archaeological evidence available at present, it seems virtually impossible that efficient iron tools or weapons could have been produced on anything like a large scale much before the ninth century BCE. I want to argue that the biblical evidence agrees substantially with this picture.

Early references to efficient iron metallurgy are likely to be rare and to express awe and wonderment at its peculiar qualities of toughness, sharpness and heaviness in contrast to bronze. The description of the Philistine hero Goliath in 1 Samuel 17 is a perfect example: his helmet, coat of mail, greaves and javelin were of bronze, while his spearhead, which weighed six hundred shekels, the climax of this description, was of iron. The proportion of iron to bronze in this description exactly corresponds to the archaeological picture at many Iron I sites in Palestine and elsewhere and may actually be one detail in the ancient legend that corresponds to historical reality. Another example from early legend is the miracle of the floating axe head in 2 Kgs 6.1-7. The miraculous element in the story should not be allowed to obscure the details of everyday life recorded incidentally in it: the axe head is termed simply *ha-barzel*, 'the iron' (cf. Deut. 19.5), and its special value is emphasized by the woodman's consternation when it accidentally comes off and falls in the water: 'Alas!', he cried, 'it was borrowed.' The loss of an expensive, high-quality iron axe head that would last many years, frequently sharpened, was a serious matter. No doubt its heaviness would also add to the effect of the miracle story, but its rarity and peculiar value in a small rural community are the most striking features against the metallurgical background we have been discussing. The 'iron bedstead' of King Og of Bashan (Deut. 3.11) may be another example from early legend of a rare, memorable piece of iron metallurgy, but there is another explanation possible, which we shall consider below.

Apart from these two or three rare instances, iron does not figure prominently in early descriptions of normal everyday life. It is not until later texts that *barzel* appears as an everyday metal. A conspicuous illustration of this is to be found by comparing the law banning the use of a metal implement in the building of an altar in Exod. 20.25, where the metal is unspecified, with the parallel in Deut. 27.5, where iron is specifically mentioned as though by then it was in common use. Joshua 8.31 and the still later Num. 35.16 are other examples. Among the metals employed in the building of the Temple, iron is conspicuous by its absence from the earlier account (1 Kings 6-7), but is mentioned eight times in the later Chronicles account (1 Chronicles 22-23; 29.2, 7; 2 Chron. 2.6, 13; 24.12). Iron takes its place among imports and exports only in late texts (e.g. Isa. 60.17; Jer. 6.28; Ezek. 27.19). The toughness of iron that 'breaks to pieces and shatters all things' is assumed

in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar from a still later date (Dan. 2.40). All this exactly corresponds to the archaeological evidence.

A large proportion of the occurrences of *barzel*, however, do not fit the archaeological evidence. It is historically highly improbable, for example, that the Canaanites were equipped with iron chariots before the end of the second millennium BCE (Josh. 17.16, 18; Judg. 1.19; 4.3, 13), or that in David's day iron was the normal metal for the production of other equipment (2 Sam. 12.31). If the mention of iron in these and other passages is not historical, then why is the term used and does the archaeological picture help us to understand its meaning?

A recurring feature in many passages in which *barzel* occurs, but not *nehoshet*, 'bronze', or any other metal, is iron's unmistakable association with, at best, ugliness, obstinacy and hostility and, at worst, oppression, fighting, smashing and torture. Such passages occur in all parts of the Old Testament and with reference to all periods, from the 'iron-furnace' of Egypt (e.g. Deut. 4.20; 1 Kgs 8.51; Jer. 11.4) and the Canaanites' awesome chariots just referred to, to the devastating iron in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2.40). Iron makes an effective rod for beating the enemies of Israel (Ps. 2.9), the chains of slavery (Pss. 107.10; cf. 105.18) and the instruments of brutal torture mentioned earlier (2 Sam. 12.31). All the evidence suggests that the word *barzel*, in most of the biblical passages where it occurs, was an emotive term, with unmistakably hostile and aggressive associations. The reasons for this are not hard to find.

In the first place, *barzel*, unlike *nehoshet*, 'bronze, copper', is a word of foreign origin, with no Hebrew or Semitic etymology identifiable (*HAL*, 148f.). In many cases the etymological data are irrelevant, but here the foreign origin of the word *barzel* seems to give added effect to its recurring usage in connection with Israel's barbaric enemies. Egyptians (Deut. 4.20), Amorites (Deut. 3.11), Canaanites (Josh. 17.16, 18), Philistines (1 Sam. 17.7), Syrians (Amos 1.3), Assyrians (Isa. 10.34), Babylonians (Jer. 15.12) and Greeks (Dan. 2.40) all have at least one mention in this category. David's ally Barzillai (the only derivative of *barzel* in Biblical Hebrew) was a Gileadite (2 Sam. 17.27ff.; cf. 19.31ff.), and it may be significant that his descendants were excluded by name from the priesthood as unclean (Ezra 2.61f.; Neh. 7.63f.), in spite of their ancestor's good relations with David. Gilead was actually an important source of iron (Josephus, *War* 4.454; Mishnah *Sukkot* 3.1), and this may explain the origin of the name Barzillai. The foreign origin of iron is still remarked upon in a relatively late passage (Jer. 15.12).

The fact that most of the enemy's yokes, chariots, chains, instruments of torture and other implements are iron, not bronze or some other metal, according to biblical tradition, cannot be a historical matter, as we have seen, in the majority of cases. It is a lexical matter: *nehoshet*, a pure Semitic

term with several derivatives, is more frequent in all periods than *barzel* and, as far as one can judge, is entirely without the same hostile, barbaric associations. Both the actual origin of the iron technology and the origin of the word are foreign, and this seems to have been one factor in the choice of *barzel*, over and over again, in the context of foreign aggression and oppression, in preference to what was probably the historically more accurate term, *nehoshet*, 'bronze'.

A second factor was probably the poor quality of most of the iron artifacts throughout much of the period covered by the Old Testament texts. Not only were the iron implements as a rule clumsier and uglier than bronze; they were also, in the early period particularly, of inferior quality. Techniques of carburization and quenching were not sufficiently developed to make iron weapons and equipment a dangerous new threat: iron probably played little part in Israel's wars.

It may be that unsuccessful iron technology and frequent failure on the part of iron smiths to produce what society demanded led to a third factor in the development of iron's pejorative overtones: the ingratitude, hostility and scorn with which the smith was popularly regarded. This phenomenon is well known from many societies, not only primitive ones, and it applies, as has often been noted, particularly to the iron smith (Forbes 1971: Ch. 3; Eliade 1962: 25f.). His dirty, frightening and often, one might add, unsuccessful work, and the soot, smoke, sparks, heat, bellows and hammering in his smithy frequently attracted suspicion and hatred. It seems likely that the comparison of Israel's house of bondage in Egypt to an 'iron furnace' (Deut. 4.20; 1 Kgs 8.51; Jer. 11.4) owed something to this popular impression of the working conditions of the blacksmith. A biblical example can be added to many other descriptions to confirm this: 'So too the smith sitting by the anvil, intent upon his handiwork in iron; the breath of the fire melts his flesh, and he wastes away in the heat of the furnace and he inclines his ear to the sound of the hammer . . .' (Sir. 38.28; cf. Isa. 44.12). The ambivalent attitude to the smith, who incidentally was frequently a foreigner, is probably reflected too in Genesis 4 in connection with Cain and Lamech, father of the first smith, Tubal Cain (see Chapter 30). Together with its foreign origin, then, the inferior quality of much iron metallurgy and its ugly appearance, this attitude of fear and hostility towards the smith probably contributed to the ugly overtones of the word *barzel*. It was an emotive term, suggesting, in almost all its occurrences, foreign aggression and brutality.

Of course, Israel could turn this hostile metal against her enemies, as David did when he used 'iron picks and axes' against the Ammonites (2 Sam. 12.31), or Zedekiah ben Imlah, when he made for himself 'horns of iron', and said, 'Thus says the Lord, With these you shall push the Syrians until they are destroyed' (1 Kgs 22.11). The Lord cuts down the mighty like

trees with an iron axe (Isa. 10.34) and breaks the king's enemies with a 'rod of iron' (Ps. 2.9).

Finally, it has often been pointed out that the nine-foot-long 'bedstead' of King Og of Bashan (Deut. 3.11) is unlikely to have been made of iron. The reading *bazelet*, 'basalt', has been proposed and the idea of a basalt sarcophagus introduced (*HAL*, 149; *NEB*). If such was the original reading, however, it is nonetheless interesting to ask what the text as it stands means. It may be a scribal error, but, in view of the evidence for the deliberate choice of the term *barzel* in such contexts, it is more probable that this is another example of the polemical usage we have been examining. Where any other monarch would lie, either before or after his death, upon a bed of gold or bronze or carved wood, King Og of Bashan lay on some ugly iron object, as befitted his barbaric foreign origins.

Bibliography

- Eliade, Mircea
 1962 *The Forge and the Crucible* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Forbes, R.J.
 1971 *Studies in Ancient Technology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2nd rev. edn): vol. 8.
- Pleiner, R.
 1979 'The Technology of Three Assyrian Iron Artefacts from Khorsabad', *JNES* 38: 83-91.
- Pleiner, R., and J.K. Bjorkman
 1974 'The Assyrian Iron Age', *PAPS* 118: 283-313.
- Singer, Karl H.
 1980 *Die Metalle Gold, Silber, Bronze, Kupfer und Eisen im Alten Testament und ihre Symbolik* (FzB, 43; Würzburg: Echter Verlag).
- Tylecote, R.F.
 1976 *A History of Metallurgy* (London: Metals Society).
- Waldbaum, Jane C.
 1978 *From Bronze to Iron: The Transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology, 54; Göteborg: P. Aström).
- 1980 'The First Archaeological Appearance of Iron and the Transition to the Iron Age', in Wertime and Muhly 1980: 80-86.
- Wertime, Theodore A., and James D. Muhly (eds.)
 1980 *The Coming of the Age of Iron* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

WHAT WAS A *MOSHIA* ‘?’*

Moshia ‘ is a word peculiar to Hebrew. Whatever the etymology of the root **YŠ*‘, *moshia* ‘ is a word in its own right and with its own connotations. It is a word invariably implying a champion of justice in a situation of controversy, battle or oppression. In the legal language of Deuteronomy it can be applied to anyone who happens to be at hand (e.g. Deut. 22.27), while in the language of the prophets, especially Deutero-Isaiah, it is one of the titles of the God of Israel (e.g. Isa. 49.26; Jer. 14.8; Pss. 7.11; 17.7). Etymology cannot explain these facts, and it is the aim of this study to discover by another method the original meaning and *Sitz im Leben* of this important biblical word (Guiraud 1959; Barr 1961).

The semantic method proposed here is as follows. All the contexts in which the word appears are divided into three groups according to their particular value for the study: *form contexts*, where the forms in which the word appears can be compared with particular forms in which its synonyms appear; *situation contexts*, where there are some details of the situation in which the word is used; and *definition contexts*, where the activity of the *moshia* ‘ is described in different words. Then at each stage an attempt is made, negatively, to distinguish it from its synonyms and, positively, to find some clue to its special meaning. Since we are primarily concerned with the noun *moshia* ‘, the six passages where the word functions as a verb are ignored (Judg. 6.36; 1 Sam. 10.19; 14.39; Jer. 30.10 = 46.27; Zech. 8.7).

The first group of *form contexts* is one in which those in danger cry out, ‘but there is no *moshia* ‘ (Deut. 22.27; Judg. 12.3; Ps. 18.42 = 2 Sam. 22.42). In some there is no reference to the cry for help (e.g. Deut. 28.29, 31; Isa. 47.15), but the form is the same. This first group of contexts does not distinguish the word from its synonyms, as *maššil* appears in the same negative form in no fewer than 15 out of its 18 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Deut. 32.39; Judg. 18.28), and ‘*ozer* more than half (e.g. 2 Kgs

* This short paper was originally published in *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965), pp. 475-86.

14.26; Isa. 63.5). Notice, however, that it is in this form that the word appears in the legislative passage, Deut. 22.27, which becomes formative in later Hebrew (Jastrow, 751).

The second group is the positive form of the first. Here, in answer to the cries of those in danger, 'He sent them a *moshia'*' (Isa. 19.20; cf. 2 Kgs 13.5; Neh. 9.27). This distinguishes *moshia'* quite sharply from all its synonyms (*hiššsil*, *paraq*, 'azar, etc.) In Biblical Hebrew usage, these have not lost their participial or verbal characteristics sufficiently to be used as the objects of verbs of sending and appointing, while *moshia'* has. In two instances, it appears as the object of the verb *le-haqim* (Judg. 3.9, 15), a verb found only with the following individuals: king, judge, prophet, priest, shepherd, watchman, father, son, *satan* and *moshia'*. Thus *moshia'* is separated from its more general synonyms and brought into a class of people who have a definite office or position in ancient Israel. This is further emphasized by comparison of Judg. 3.9, 15 with 2.16, 18, where *shofet* and *moshia'* refer to the same individual (Burney 1920: xxxiii, 59).

It is of course possible that, by that time, *moshia'* was a general term applicable to any hero whose position affected the fortunes of Israel. But it is also probable, in view of its treatment in these contexts and its association with men in authority, that it belonged originally to some special sphere of life—the palace, the battlefield, the Temple, the law court, the marketplace, the family—and was later applied to other wider contexts. But let us leave the discussion of the sphere to which *moshia'* originally belonged until we have completed our survey of the contexts at our disposal.

The *situation contexts* in the historical writings all have one thing in common: it is in a situation of injustice, and in particular unjust oppression of the chosen people, that a *moshia'* is needed. This applies to situations of battle (Judg. 3.9, 15; 1 Sam. 11.3; 2 Kgs 13.5; Neh. 9.27) and to situations of general lawlessness (Deut. 22.27; 28.29, 31). It is also very striking that the subject of the verb *hoshia'*, when one is mentioned, is always God or God's appointed hero such as the king (e.g. 2 Kgs 6.26; Montgomery 1951: 386). But of the many occurrences without a subject, such as those quoted under *form contexts*, all do refer to divine intervention. Deuteronomy 22.27 is a piece of legislation, and the language must be legal language. It is hardly likely that the victorious God-appointed hero of the other contexts was intended here also. There is no hint of that either in the verse itself, where the *moshia'* is merely the representative of justice in a case of unjust oppression of the weak (a woman in danger), or in the Talmudic occurrences, where the word has become almost a technical term (Jastrow, 751). It appears, then, that in the Hebrew Bible there is both a 'prophetic' usage, culminating in Deutero-Isaiah, and a 'forensic' usage, evident at least in the book of Deuteronomy. This being so, it is difficult to see how the prophetic contexts could have been earlier than the forensic, and we would therefore

expect in the third group of contexts to find some of the earlier forensic connotations still clinging to the word in its prophetic usage.

But before we go on to the definition contexts, it would be well to show at this stage how *moshia*‘ is distinguished from its synonyms. The term *maššil* does not invariably represent justice: indeed in three cases (Deut. 32.39; Isa. 43.13; Job 10.7) it is a *maššil* from God that is cried for, a usage quite alien to *moshia*‘. Second, the idea of violent action is almost invariably stressed, so that descriptions of the situation include the most violent vocabulary, and in particular the notion of spoil and plunder (e.g. Isa. 5.29; Dan. 8.4; Ps. 7.3; Job 5.4). This second observation agrees well with the meaning of other stems of the verb, notably *niššēl*, ‘strip off’ (Exod. 3.22), and *huššal*, ‘plucked out’ (Amos 4.11). A similar semantic development distinguishes *ḥalaš* from *moshia*‘. Its original meaning of ‘take off, tear out’ occurs in several passages; and again there is no suggestion of justice in the action (e.g. Lev. 14.40; Deut. 25.9; Isa. 20.2). The term *‘ozer* and the hiphil stems of the words for ‘escape’ (*palat*, *malaṭ*, *yaša*) appear in contexts very like *moshia*‘, but without any association with God or justice: the *‘ozrim* of Rahab (Job 9.11) and of Egypt (Ezek. 30.8) are the very opposite. The words *ga’al* and *padah* are similar to *moshia*‘ in that they too have both a ‘forensic’ (e.g. Num. 5.8; Ruth 4.6; Exod. 13.13) and a ‘prophetic’ (Isa. 41.14; 43.14; 2 Sam. 4.9) application. Moreover, like *moshia*‘, *ga’al* is a word peculiar to Hebrew and a word associated with the God of Israel (Isa. 49.26; 60.16). Finally, *ganan* is found only in the context of the defence of a city (in one case of a people in a city) (2 Kgs 19.34; Zech. 9.15). The Aramaic words from the root **prq* with the meaning ‘save’ never occur in the Hebrew Bible.

Thus, it seems clear that the *moshia*‘ typically appears in situations of injustice, not in contexts of violence or physical danger. He is always on the side of justice, and in this the word differs from all its synonyms; when the subject is mentioned, it is always God or God’s appointed hero. Finally, one occurrence in the language of the law court (Deut. 22.27) suggests an original forensic meaning. It will be noticed however that this group of contexts does not define the word’s meaning—that is the purpose of the third group of contexts to which we now turn.

The first of the *definition contexts* defines in two clauses the effect that the coming of a *moshia*‘ had on the existing situation: ‘And the Lord gave (them) a *moshia*‘, and they escaped from the hand of the Syrians. And the people of Israel dwelt in their homes as formerly’ (2 Kgs 13.5). The result of the coming on the scene of a *moshia*‘ was an escape from injustice and a return to a state of justice in which everyone was able to go home. While the first of these results is common to the synonyms, the second is a peculiar characteristic of passages about the intervention of a *moshia*‘.

Second, there are three passages in Deutero-Isaiah where a forensic meaning is suggested. ‘For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your *moshia*‘. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you’ (43.3). By a legal process God arranges an exchange whereby Israel is saved. If we are to say that *moshia*‘ has any specific meaning at all that distinguishes it from the other titles of God, then it is probable that the prophet chose this particular one for this context, precisely because of its forensic connotations. In another passage, the *moshia*‘ is the one who appears on behalf of Israel in court: ‘I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no *moshia*‘: I declared and *hoshia*‘ti and proclaimed . . . and you are my witnesses’ (43.11). The forensic metaphor is clear. Notice also the unambiguous association of the verb *hoshia*‘ with verbs of speaking and proclaiming. The third example is Isa. 45.20-21: ‘Assemble yourselves and come . . . Declare and present your case: and let them take counsel together. And there is no other God besides me, a righteous God and a *moshia*‘; there is none besides me.’ This seems to be another law court metaphor: the *moshia*‘ is closely connected with *el šaddiq*, one of the titles of God that is particularly appropriate in a forensic context. Such a title does not of course take the action automatically into the law court; but in a forensic context, *šaddiq*, like *šedeq*, probably has forensic connotations (cf. Deut. 16.18-20).

Another word associated with *moshia*‘ and belonging to the language of the law court is *rib*, ‘contend’ (Gemser 1955): ‘When they cry to the Lord because of oppressors, he will send them a *moshia*‘, and he will contend [*rab*] and deliver them’ (Isa. 19.20). In the action hoped for when the *moshia*‘ comes, the idea of saving or delivering is secondary. The main idea is intervening and contending on behalf of the right (cf. Exod. 2.17). In one more passage from the prophets, ‘*moshi*‘im shall go up to Mount Zion to judge Mount Esau: And the kingdom shall be the Lord’s’ (Obad. 21). Final victory means the coming of *moshi*‘im to rule like judges over Israel. The people will once again possess their own property (Obad. 17) and justice will be the foundation of the kingdom of the Lord (Obad. 15).

Finally, there are two relevant passages in the Psalms. In the first, there is the image of God as the defender (‘shield’) in a court of law: ‘My shield is with God, *moshia*‘ of the upright in heart: God is a righteous judge, and a god who has indignation every day’ (Ps. 7.11). The court scene is actually described in v. 7: ‘Let the assembly of the people be gathered about you: And over it take your seat on high.’ Once again the *moshia*‘ is associated with *šaddiq* and the judge, and, as in other instances, it is the ‘upright in heart’ that he is defending. The second is another *rib* context, where the *moshia*‘ defends a man with a just cause (v. 1) against his adversaries: ‘Wondrously show your steadfast love, *moshia*‘ of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand’ (Ps. 17.7). The last detail ‘at your right hand’, may be a touch of local colour from the law court: both the

adversary and the defender stood at the right hand of the accused (de Vaux 1961: 156).

Our study of the *form contexts*, then, showed us that *moshia* ' was more than the present participle of a verb and was even treated in some instances as an office or profession. In the *situation contexts* we saw that, where a specific situation is mentioned, it is a forensic one, either literally or metaphorically; and that, when any subject was mentioned, it is God or God's appointed hero who is the champion of justice. This last characteristic distinguished *moshia* ' from all its synonyms. The few *definition contexts* that we studied described the *moshia* ' as the defender of the unjustly accused in a law court, literally or figuratively, and brought the word into association with ideas of justice and legal procedure rather than with battle or violence.

Now very little is known of legal procedure in ancient Israel (de Vaux 1961: 152-57). In the legislative codes there is almost nothing about court procedure, and what little there is in other parts of the Bible is concerned with the protagonists in the scene only. We would not then expect to find in the Old Testament any conclusive evidence for the existence of an official in the law court called *moshia* '. But it is known that in the ancient world there were such officials (Walther 1917: 105-80; Driver and Miles 1952: 490-94; Liebesny 1943: 128-44), and in his short survey of the procedure in the court of ancient Israel, Roland de Vaux, drawing mainly on incidental evidence in the Prophets and the Psalms, remarks that 'the defender . . . was rather a witness for the defence than an advocate, for which there is no word in Hebrew' (de Vaux 1961: 156) While it would be too much to say that the *moshia* ' was equivalent to de Vaux's 'advocate', the word certainly has much in common with it in Old Testament usage and a forensic origin would be the best explanation of that.

It was stated above that *moshia* ' is a word in its own right and must be treated as such; but we have had occasion to cite several passages in which the verb *hoshia* ' appears in a similar context (Judg. 2.16, 18), and even in conjunction with *moshia* ' (Judg. 3.9; Isa. 43.11) . In the historical writings, the verb appears alongside forensic vocabulary (Judg. 3.31; 2 Sam. 8.14), and in situations either literally or metaphorically forensic (Exod. 2.17; 2 Kgs 6.26, 27). Occasionally a forensic meaning gives some extra point to the passage and perhaps suggests why the writer chose this word and not another. Moreover, the nouns appear to mean (particularly in the historical books) more than 'victory, mighty act, salvation', because time and time again they are brought forward as pieces of evidence in the course of an argument or controversy (e.g. Exod. 14.30; Deut. 20.4; Judg. 6.36f.; 1 Sam. 19.5-6). By themselves these facts prove nothing, but they add to a growing body of evidence for a possible forensic origin of the word *hoshia* ' .

Returning finally to the word *moshia* ' , we are suggesting, then, a development from a definite office within a definite sphere of life to a title of

God related anthropomorphically to that same sphere of life, and from there to a title of God in any general context. This development is found in several other words and in particular in several forensic terms. Both *go'el* and *sedeq* show an exactly parallel development, particularly in how they have been translated ('redeemer', 'victory'). In English neither 'saviour' nor 'redeemer' carries forensic connotations in their usage in prayers and hymns today, but in Biblical Hebrew *go'el* has certainly not lost its forensic associations, and I would suggest that neither has *moshia'*. We have seen many hints of a forensic meaning already, and in the remaining passages not discussed above, the meaning of 'advocate' or 'witness for the defence' fits well and adds something to the passage. One-third of its occurrences in the Hebrew Bible are in Deutero-Isaiah (e.g. 47.15; 63.8). Three of these, as we have seen, have clear references to the law court (43.3, 11; 45.2): in two, *go'el* and *moshia'* are coupled as titles of God, who avenges his chosen people, contending with those who contend with them, and in the third, the absence of a *moshia'* is parallel to a state of lawlessness.

We must beware of reading too much into one word. But, negatively, (1) there are no cases in the Old Testament where a forensic meaning for *moshia'* is impossible; and (2) none of its closest synonyms, apart from the legal term *go'el*, is used so consistently in similar contexts. Positively, (1) three-quarters of its occurrences suggest to a greater or lesser degree the language of the law court; (2) the most probable etymology suggests a forensic origin; (3) there are other examples of forensic words appearing in wider and more general contexts but still retaining forensic overtones; (4) the *moshia'* was always on the side of justice; (5) his activity seems to have been verbal rather than physical in many contexts, unlike its synonyms; and (6) there was a place in ancient Israel for an 'advocate' or a 'witness for the defence', as also for a 'witness for the prosecution'. If the *śatan* was the one, was the *moshia'*, at some time and in some part of the ancient Near East, the other?

Bibliography

- Barr, James
 1961 *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
 Burney, C.F.
 1920 *The Book of Judges* (London: Rivingtons).
 Driver, G.R., and John C. Miles (eds.)
 1952 *The Babylonian Laws* (Ancient Codes and Laws of the Near East; 2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press).
 Gemser, B.
 1955 'The *rib-* or Controversy-Pattern in Hebrew Mentality', in Martin Noth and D. Winton Thomas (eds.), *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (VTSup, 3; Leiden: E.J. Brill): 128-33.

Guiraud, Pierre

1959 *La Sémantique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France).

Liebesny, H.J.

1943 'The Administration of Justice at Nuzi', *JAOS* 63: 128-44.

Montgomery, James A.

1951 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings*, ed. Henry Snyder Gehman (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).

Vaux, Roland de

1961 *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill).

Walther, Arnold Friedrich

1917 *Das altbabylonische Gerichtswesen* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs).

‘FROM HEAVEN FOUGHT THE STARS’:
A SOLAR ECLIPSE IN JUDGES 5.20?*

A study of Josh. 10.12-14 in the light of the astronomical evidence suggests that underlying the story of a miracle at Gibeon was the spectacular eclipse of the sun which was total there shortly after midday on 30 September 1131 BCE (Chapter 31). It is in any case highly likely that so rare and unforgettable an experience would leave its mark on folklore from that region, and that contemporary writers or poets would make reference, direct or indirect, to it in their compositions (Stephenson 1975: 107-9). The date is close to that usually given for the battle ‘at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo’ (Judg. 5.19), and probably not far from the time when the Song of Deborah itself was composed: ‘the sense of participation in the events themselves is so genuine and so intense that we can hardly imagine that a later author could so well project himself into the mood which stirred men’s spirits at that time’ (Eissfeldt 1966: 101). Was it too influenced by that eclipse?

Judges 5.20 has been interpreted as a general poetic description of the intervention of the powers of heaven or, more specifically, as a reference to the host of heaven, that is to say, the angels, giving aid in some unseen way to Israel (Moore 1895: 158f.; Craigie 1969: 262f.). Other commentators, from as long ago as Josephus, have taken vv. 20 and 21 together and have understood the passage as the description of a storm. More recently this theory has been reinforced by the evidence that some ancient peoples, including apparently the people of Ugarit, believed that certain stars influenced the rain (Blenkinsopp 1961: 73; Gray 1967: 289f.; Boling 1975: 113). It has also been suggested that the verse shows that Israel’s victory was the result of a surprise attack under cover of darkness, possibly at the time of the new moon when only the stars were visible (Moore 1895: 159).

* This short paper was originally published in *Vetus Testamentum* 31 (1981), pp.87-89. I am grateful to Dr F.R. Stephenson, Department of Geophysics at Newcastle University for all the astronomical data.

One of the most astonishing features of a total eclipse of the sun, however, is the sudden appearance, while it is still daytime, of the planets and brighter stars in the darkened sky. A Ugaritic eclipse report from 1375 BCE mentions the appearance of a bright red star beside the darkened sun (Sawyer and Stephenson 1970), and this is also one of the most consistently recorded features of mediaeval eclipse reports (Stephenson 1975: 108; Sawyer and Stephenson 1970: 145). During the eclipse of 1131 BCE, which lasted for over four minutes, observers in the region of Megiddo and Taanach would have seen and possibly recognized three planets (Mercury, Venus and Mars) and at least five of the brighter stars (Regulus, Vega, Arcturus, Spica and Antares) in the darkened sky shortly after midday. The fact that these familiar stars and planets appeared to be in the wrong part of the sky for the time of year would also have puzzled the observer and may have given rise to the expression *mi-mešillotam* '(departing) from their normal celestial orbits' (Keil 1865: 320f.). The parallel *mi-shamayim*, 'from heaven, from the sky', would go against this view perhaps but is not conclusive. The emendation *mi-mazzalotam*, an astronomical term, proposed by H. Winckler, F. Delitzsch and others (Burney 1918) is not justified. At all events, the effect of this chilling, totally unexpected experience on everyone who witnessed it cannot be overestimated. There was nothing like it again in the region until the year 402 BCE (Stephenson 1975: 112).

Such a convergence between literary and astronomical data cannot be used to date historical events. The mention of a solar eclipse in Lk. 23.45 tells us nothing about the date of the crucifixion: solar eclipses simply cannot occur at Passover, that is to say, in the middle of a lunar month at the time of the full moon (see Chapter 46). Nor is it the intention of the present note to argue that the battle at Taanach took place on 30 September 1131 BCE and that an eclipse actually occurred during the battle. If that had been the case, the reference would probably have been much more explicit. The evidence does suggest, however, that the original author of the Song of Deborah, or at any rate vv. 19-22, witnessed that eclipse. This would then be another indication of the antiquity of the poem and a clue to the origin of a celebrated piece of Hebrew poetic imagery.

Bibliography

- Blenkinsopp, Joseph
 1961 'Ballad Style and Psalm Style in the Song of Deborah', *Bib* 42: 61-76.
 Boling, Robert G.
 1975 *Judges: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (AB, 6A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday).
 Burney, C.F.
 1918 *The Book of Judges* (London: Rivingtons).

- Craigie, Peter C.
1969 'The Song of Deborah and the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta', *JBL* 88: 253-65.
- Eissfeldt, Otto
1966 *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- Gray, John
1967 *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (Century Bible; London: Oliphants).
- Keil, C.F.
1865 *Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, 4; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Moore, George Foot
1895 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
- Sawyer, J.F.A., and F.R. Stephenson
1970 'Literary and Astronomical Evidence for a Total Eclipse of the Sun Observed in Ancient Ugarit on 3 May 1375 BCE', *BSOAS* 33: 467-89.
- Stephenson, F.R.
1975 'Astronomical Verification and the Dating of Old Testament Passages Referring to Solar Eclipses', *PEQ* 107: 107-20.

THE BROODING PARTRIDGE IN JEREMIAH 17.11*

The majority of commentators on this passage, both ancient and modern, favour the view that the partridge is a greedy and unattractive bird that steals eggs from other birds' nests. The NEB translation is typical of this interpretation of the proverb: 'Like a partridge which gathers into its nest eggs which it has not laid, so is the man who amasses wealth unjustly . . .' (cf. RSV, JB; Jerome, Rashi; Giesebrecht 1907: 101; Streane 1913: 109; Driver 1955: 132f.; Bright 1965: 118; Nicholson 1973: 149). According to an alternative interpretation, represented by the AV, for example, and a few modern commentators, the point is the proverbial vulnerability of the partridge's nest, exposed as it is to marauding predators of many kinds, compared to the vulnerability of the fool who puts his trust in base gain: 'As the partridge sitteth on eggs, but hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end be a fool' (AV; Volz 1922: 187; cf. Tristram 1868: 224-25; Bodenheimer 1960: 199). A fresh look at the language and ornithology of the verse, and the history of its interpretation, suggests that the minority view is probably in this case the correct one.

The linguistic argument hinges on the meaning of the verbs *dagar* and *yalad*. The verb *dagar* is the normal Hebrew term for 'to brood, incubate (of birds)'. Although it occurs only twice in Biblical Hebrew (Isa. 34.15; Jer. 17.11), there is no reason to doubt its normal meaning in this context, with *gore*, 'partridge', as its subject and *yalad* in the next clause. It was translated thus in the Vulgate (*fovire*) and by Kimḥi, who explains it as follows: *robes 'al bešim u-meḥomem otam*, 'sits on the eggs and keeps them warm' (cf. Rashi). In the Talmud the noun *degirah* is used with reference to both of the biblical passages, and again it is clear that it refers to a bird's normal care of its young (*Hullin* 140b). The question of the origin of the widespread sense of 'to gather, accumulate' is not hard to answer: in Aramaic *degar*

* This short paper was originally published in *Vetus Testamentum* 28 (1978), pp. 324-29.

normally means ‘to amass, pile up, accumulate’, used of piling up stones, for instance, in Gen. 31.46 (Targum) (Levy 1876–89: 377; Dalman 1922: 91), and this Aramaic meaning undoubtedly gave rise to the Greek translators’ συνήγαγεν, ‘gathered up’, adopted by the majority of later interpreters, both Christian and Jewish. But the normal sense of *dagar* in Hebrew is ‘to brood, incubate’, and, unless there are strong reasons for supposing that this verse is exceptional in some way—evidence, for example, that before this verse was written the partridge was popularly believed to gather up other birds’ eggs—then we must assume that the author intended us to visualize a brooding partridge. As we shall see, there is no evidence for a popular belief of the meaning ‘to gather’ before the Septuagint translation of Jer. 17.11, and we may safely conclude that, if our author had wanted us to think of that, he would have had to use one of the normal Hebrew words for ‘to collect, gather’.

The other term, *yalad*, in the second part of the proverb is usually assumed to refer to ‘laying eggs’. It is not of course a technical ornithological term like *dagar*. Isaiah 34.15 contains the four technical terms for the four stages in the breeding cycle of a bird: *qinnen*, ‘to build a nest’; *himlit*, ‘to lay eggs’; *dagar*, ‘to incubate them’ and *baqa*, ‘to hatch them’. The verb *yalad* is a quite general term with a wide range of meaning, used mostly of humans but occasionally also of animals and birds, normally denoting giving birth and used of the female. It is also used of the father in some contexts, notably the stereotyped formulae of genealogies (e.g. Gen. 10.8, 13, 15) and the adoption formula in Ps. 2.7. It is once used of both parents (Zech. 13.3). But there are indications that in Jer. 17.11 *yalad* refers to ‘producing young’, not ‘laying eggs’. In the first place, when two verbs, clearly referring to two stages in one process, are linked by the coordinating conjunction *ve-*, ‘and, but’, one would normally expect the verbs to be in some kind of sequence: thus one would expect *yalad* here to refer to something that takes place after the eggs have been laid and incubated, that is to say, to ‘hatching’. If the first verb, *dagar*, is taken in its normal ornithological sense of ‘to incubate’, then the second must surely refer to the next normal stage in the breeding cycle. Second, *dagar ve-lo yalad* is an extraordinary way of saying ‘accumulated that which it had not laid’. The difficulty is that, although the verb forms are identical and are linked by a coordinating conjunction, this sense requires that the time reference in the two clauses be different: *dagar* would be a habitual or proverbial present, while *yalad* would have to refer to a completed action in the past. Again, if the author had wished to say what the NEB and most other translations find in this verse, why did he not say *dagar asher lo yalad*?

Third, these related terms for laying eggs, incubating, hatching and the like normally occur in female forms, with female subjects; but in Jer. 17.11 *dagar* and *yalad* are both masculine. Now it has often been observed, both

in the ancient classical writers (Aristotle, Pliny) and in modern literature, that the male partridge incubates and hatches the eggs as well as the female. The female lays two broods, and one of these is incubated, hatched and reared by herself, the other by the male (Thompson 1895: 138; Harrison 1975: 121-22). It could be that *qore* here is masculine in form but feminine in meaning and refers to the mother bird, as most commentators assume; but even then it seems odd to find the masculine singular from *yalad* in a literal, physiological sense. It is hard to find convincing parallels to this usage (Ben Yehuda, IV, 2046): its use of God 'giving birth' to Israel is hardly relevant here, while in Jer. 30.6 the very idea that *yalad* can have a masculine subject is rejected as a preposterous impossibility. In any case, there is no need to choose the difficult alternative here. It is simpler and more natural to take this as an accurate description of the behaviour of a partridge: *qore* refers to either male or female parent bird, and the verbs respectively to incubation and hatching.

The point of the proverb however is that incubation is not followed by hatching, and the contrast between the warm contented scene in the first part, *ha-qore dagar*, 'the partridge broods on its eggs', and the disaster of the second, *ve-lo yalad*, 'but hatches none of them', produces a most effective cautionary parable drawn from nature, reminiscent of Eliphaz's parable of the pride of lions in Job 4.10-11. The vulnerability of the partridge is proverbial. It lives on open ground on the fringes of civilization; its nest is a shallow hollow, normally uncovered. When the bird leaves it for any reason, its eggs are poorly camouflaged; its enemies are many and vicious, including stoats, snakes, crows, falcons, and human predators of all ages and professions. Some writers add to this list the *intemperantia libidinis* of the male bird, which leads at times to breakages in the nest or to fatal delays on the part of the female dallying with her mate till the eggs grow cold (Bannerman 1963: 363; Bochart 1663: 86f.). The pathetic partridge's main defence is the sheer number of the eggs laid: up to 40 eggs in two clutches have been recorded. Of these, some at least escape damage during the 22 to 23 days' incubation period, and of the newly hatched chicks some at least will survive (Tristram, Harrison). It is thus not at all surprising that the partridge appears in several similes and idiomatic expressions in the ancient literature, as a threatened and vulnerable creature, for example, the phrase *πρώσσουσιν ὥστε πέρδικα*, 'they cowered like partridges', occurs several times in classical Greek poetry. A man who has lost his mother and is brought up by his father is described in Greek as 'a partridge's son' (Aristophanes, *Birds*, 767). Saul's pursuit of David is compared to hunting a partridge through the mountains (1 Sam. 26.20), and a 'decoy partridge in a cage' is mentioned in a simile in Sir. 11.30.

What, then, of the popular belief, quoted by modern commentators, that the deceitful, greedy partridge steals other birds' eggs? In fact, it occurs in

none of the classical sources. Jerome is wrong when he says that it occurs in the ancient natural historians, ‘especially Aristotle, Theophrastus and Pliny the Younger’. As Bochart (II, col. 85) noticed already in 1663, it is referred to only in commentaries on this verse and literature dependent on them. Hippolytus, Jerome, Isidore of Seville, Rabanus Maurus and Hugh of St Victor are all examples, as is an elaborate twelfth-century Latin bestiary, the ultimate elaboration of this line of tradition:

Moreover, it is such a perverted creature that the female will go and steal the eggs of another female. Yes, and in spite of the cheat, she does not get any good out of it. For, when the young are hatched and hear the call of their real mother, they instinctively run away from the one who is brooding them and return to the one who laid them. The Devil is an example of this sort of thing. He tries to steal the children of the Eternal Creator, and, if they are foolish or lacking in a sense of their own strength, Satan is able to collect some of them somehow, and he cherishes them with the allurements of the body (White 1954: 136-37).

Roughly contemporary with this and in almost identical terms are the commentaries on this passage by Rashi and Kimḥi, representing Jewish biblical tradition, and a little later Al-Damiri’s *Hayāt al Ḥayawān* (I, 277; cited by Bochart), representing mediaeval Arabic scientific tradition. This powerful line of pseudo-ornithological tradition almost certainly goes back to the Greek mistranslation of Jer. 17.11, where *dagar* was given its Aramaic meaning of ‘to collect’ instead of its normal Hebrew meaning of ‘to brood’, and *ve-lo yalad* consequently associated with *ve-lo be-mishpaṭ*, ‘and not by right’, in the description of the fool.

Probably this error was fostered by other, better-founded popular beliefs about the partridge. The disgusting sexual behaviour of the male, for example, is mentioned in many of the ancient sources (including Aristotle and Pliny) and would lend support to the tradition that it was an unattractive bird (Thompson 1895: 137-38); while the female’s alleged habit of feigning lameness to divert hunters from its defenceless nestlings (Aristophanes, *Birds*, 1292), might also serve to confirm this pejorative view of the bird and turn it into a mediaeval symbol of treachery. No doubt it will remain so in Jewish and Christian literary tradition.

But the proverb in Jer. 17.11 antedates this development by several hundred years. Its effectiveness depends not on the treachery of the brooding partridge but on its vulnerability, compared to the false sense of security of the fool who thinks he can get away with his criminal acquisitiveness. Nests, eggs and nestlings appear a number of times in biblical literature in this kind of context, for example, ‘Woe betide you who seek unjust gain for your house to build your nest on a height . . .’ (Hab. 2.9); ‘though you build your nest on high as a vulture, thence I will bring you down’ (Jer. 49.16); ‘My hand has found its way to the wealth of nations; as a man takes

the eggs from a deserted nest, so have I taken every land . . . ' (Isa. 10.14); 'the daughters of Moab . . . shall be as scattered nestlings' (Isa. 16.2; cf. Jer. 22.23; Obad. 4). The vulnerability of birds' eggs and nestlings is even featured in Deuteronomic law (Deut. 22.6f.).

There is also an English parallel to the cautionary proverb in Jeremiah: 'Don't count your chickens before they're hatched.' In Jer. 17.11, the fool is compared to a brooding partridge, unaware of the dangers hanging over him and defenceless when disaster strikes: like the rich fool in another familiar parable from the New Testament (Lk. 12.20-21, quoted in this context by Jerome): 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things which you have prepared, whose will they be? So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'

Bibliography

- Bannerman, David Armitage
 1963 *The Birds of the British Isles* (12 vols.; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd).
- Bochart, S., *Hierozycon, sive, bipartitum opus de animalibus Sacrae Scripturae* (2 vols.; London: Tho. Roycroft).
- Bodenheimer, F.S.
 1960 *Animal and Man in Bible Lands* (Collection de travaux de l'Académie internationale d'histoire des sciences, 10; Leiden: E.J. Brill).
- Bright, John
 1965 *Jeremiah: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB, 21; Garden City, NY: Doubleday).
- Dalman, Gustaf
 1922 *Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud und Midrasch* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann).
- Driver, G.R.
 1955 'Birds in the Old Testament II', *PEQ* 87: 129-40.
- Giesebrecht, Friedrich
 1907 *Das Buch Jeremia, übersetzt und erklärt* (HAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd edn).
- Harrison, Colin James Oliver
 1975 *A Field Guide to the Nests, Eggs and Nestlings of British and European Birds* (Chicago: Quadrangle).
- Levy, Jacob
 1876-89 *Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim* (4 vols.; Leipzig: Brockhaus).
- Nicholson, Ernest W.
 1973 *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25* (Cambridge Bible Commentary: New English Bible; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Streane, A.W.
 1913 *The Book of the; Prophet Jeremiah, together with the Lamentations* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Thompson, D'Arcy Wentworth

1895 *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Tristram, H.B.

1868 *The Natural History of the Bible, Being a Review of the Physical Geography, Geology and Meteorology of the Holy Land, with a Description of Every Animal and Plant Mentioned in Holy Scripture* (London: SPCK, 2nd rev. edn).

Volz, Paul

1922 *Der Prophet Jeremia, übersetzt und erklärt* (KAT, 10; Leipzig: Deichert).

White, T.H.

1954 *Book of Beasts, Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century* (London: Cape).

‘THOSE PRIESTS IN DAMASCUS’:
ANTI-SECTARIAN POLEMIC IN THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION
OF AMOS 3.12*

In this rather gruesome verse, the end of ‘the people of Israel’ is compared to the savaged remains of a sheep or a goat, brought back as evidence that it had been killed by wild beasts (cf. Exod. 22.13). The Septuagint identifies two groups among the victims: ‘those who dwell in Samaria . . .’ and ‘the priests in Damascus’. The early history of the LXX belongs to a period of increased sectarian activity in Judaism, and the suggestion to be discussed here is that Amos 3.12 contains polemical references to (1) the Samaritan sect, victims of several attacks from the south under John Hyrcanus and his sons in the latter part of the second century BCE (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.9-10; *War* 1.2.6-8) and (2) the priestly sect, which had left Judah to settle in ‘Damascus’, a symbolic name for the location of their communities, for example, at Khirbet Qumran (Black 1961: 21; Maier 1960: 50; Allegro 1956: 175), by about the same period. The Hebrew of the last part of the verse is quite unlike the LXX and need not concern us here. Following accepted practice in modern LXX studies, we propose to examine the verse in Greek, not as the translation of an uncertain Hebrew original but as a piece of literature in its own right (cf. Jellicoe 1968: 352f.; Würthwein 1957: 33). The manuscript evidence for the version printed in the two most modern editions of the LXX and quoted above is strong enough to make it an important stage in the history of the text, and one worth investigating, whether or not it represents the ‘original’ (Ziegler 1943; Rahlfs).

Thus says the Lord: As when a shepherd drags out two legs or a piece of an ear from the mouth of a lion, so shall the people of Israel be dragged out, those who dwell in Samaria over against the tribe [sc. of Judah?] and those priests in Damascus.

* This paper was first published in the *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 8 (1970), pp. 123-30.

The omission of the definite article before φυλῆς and ἐν Δαμασκῷ ἱερεῖς is in accordance with common usage both in Classical Greek and Koine, where the article is frequently omitted in prepositional phrases and other set expressions in common use at a particular time or in a particular speech community (Humbert 1954: §63; Bauer 1958: 1094; Turner 1963: 179; Blass and Debrunner 1967: §252f). From the LXX point of view, ‘the tribe’ par excellence was the tribe of Judah (cf. Mic. 6.9 LXX), and this would make sense of κατέναντι φυλῆς. If we are to assume that ἐν Δαμασκῷ ἱερεῖς was also a familiar idiom at the time, then perhaps ‘those priests in Damascus’ is the best way to represent it in English.

There are two indications as to the date. The *terminus ad quem* for at least one official Greek translation of the Twelve Prophets is established, by a mention in the prologue of Ecclesiasticus, as soon after c. 117 BCE (Eissfeldt 1966: 597; Jellicoe 1968: 60), and the date of this particular verse may reasonably be fixed in the same century or later by the form κατέναντι, which is not attested before the second century BCE (Liddell and Scott 1940). Thus, without raising the question of whether there was one original *Urtext* from which all our manuscripts are derived (Lagarde), or several *ad hoc* translations (Kahle), there is no chronological objection to examining the verse against the background of religious rivalries in the last quarter of the second century BCE. By the second century CE the topical allusion was no longer relevant or intelligible, and ἱερεῖς was unanimously rejected as an inaccurate rendering of the Hebrew text by Aquila and the Hebraists of his day.

From the time of Jerome it has usually been assumed that the translators of this verse could not make sense of the Hebrew, and that ἱερεῖς was the result of a straight transliteration into Greek of a Hebrew word: *et puto LXX ipsum verbum posuisse Hebraicum, quod guidam non intelligentes pro ares legerunt* ἱερεῖς. This explanation is no doubt partly correct, since, although the translators cannot be said to have been ignorant of the word ‘eres, ‘bed, couch’, because they translate it correctly in Amos 6.4, it must have been virtually unintelligible in the present context, in collocation with *bi-demesheq* and parallel to *maṭṭeh*, ‘tribe’ (MT has *miṭṭah*, ‘bed’). It seems that, as well as straight transliteration, the LXX translators also on occasion used Greek words of similar sound to the Hebrew: ἀγοῦ for ‘*agur*’ (Jer 8:7), ὕδωρ ἀφέσεως for *me aḥasim* (Ezek. 47.3), and the like (Thackeray 1909: 36ff.). But even if we cannot presuppose any conscious creative decision on the part of the original translators, or ask what they meant by καὶ ἐν Δαμασκῷ ἱερεῖς, the Greek as it stands makes sense and we are entitled to ask how this verse was understood in the context of Hellenistic Judaism.

The problem of discovering how people actually understood a text is much more difficult than that of reconstructing what an author actually wrote. The only method is to build up as complete a picture as possible of the way people thought at the time, what their main interests and preoc-

cupations were, what the live issues of the day were and so on. We would suggest that there are two ways of approaching the present question: first, by considering the nature and purpose of the LXX in the context of second-century BCE Judaism, and, second, by comparing parallels in the sectarian literature of about the same period.

There is no lack of information on the immediate purpose of the LXX. Modern research has exposed theological, haggadic, liturgical and exegetical elements there that make it clear that in many cases the LXX translators have deliberately altered the Hebrew text for specific, identifiable purposes (Würthwein 1957: 46-50; Bertram 1961: 1707-9; Schreiner 1968). Anthropomorphisms are avoided: *yad Yhwh*, for example, is regularly translated by ἡ δύναμις τοῦ κυρίου (Fritsch 1943). Laws against participation in the Hellenistic mystery religions are added to the Deuteronomic law code (Deut. 23.18b LXX) (Seeligmann 1948: 390). There are haggadic touches designed to remove various kinds of difficulty for contemporary Jews: for example, Gen. 2.2 reads 'And on the sixth day [for MT 'seventh'] God ended his work . . . ' to protect God from any suggestion that he may have inadvertently worked on the Sabbath (Barnes 1935). The Greek of Ps. 84.6b-8a apparently contains a processional rubric specifying the route to be taken from the Western Hill to the Temple (Jellicoe 1968: 322f.). Ancient Hebrew terminology is interpreted in the light of contemporary social conditions: thus ἐργοδιώκται, a Hellenistic word for 'taskmasters', is the LXX term for *ha-nogesim*, 'the slave drivers' in the exodus story (Exod. 5.6, 10, 13) (Würthwein 1957: 49).

On the question whether these alterations and reinterpretations might have included polemic against sectarian movements of the time, and in particular the Samaritans and the 'Damascus' sect, there are two points to be borne in mind. First, there seems little doubt that, until the Christian church took it over for their own apologetic purposes, the LXX represented the official Jewish viewpoint on all religious matters, including presumably the activities of rival sects (Rahlf's xxii-xxiii; Jellicoe 1968: 5-25). So far precise references to this type of contemporary religious issue have not, to my knowledge, been examined in the LXX, although traces of an official line on the Qumran sect have been investigated in a stimulating article "Spuren antikumranischer Polemik in der talmudischen Tradition" (Amussin 1967). Second, according to early Jewish tradition, as well as on the internal evidence noted above from the translation technique and exegetical method of the LXX, it was to an Egyptian audience that the LXX was first addressed, and it so happens that there is evidence for the presence of both sects in Egypt at the time. Thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls we know more about the Qumran community than about any other, but this is probably an accident of archaeology and there is good evidence that members of the same or a similar sect lived in other parts of the world too. What is more, it was in Cairo

that our first documentary evidence for the sect came to light, at first called the 'Zadokite fragments' and later the 'Damascus Document' (CD). As for the Samaritans, Josephus records quarrels between them and the Jews at this time also in Egypt (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.3.4; Montgomery 1907: 75-77). Whatever the *Sitz im Leben* of Amos 3.12 LXX, Alexandria or Jerusalem or any other centre of Hellenistic Judaism, we can be sure that these two sects were forces to be reckoned with towards the end of the second century BCE, and liable to attract the polemic of the official establishment.

Turning to the sectarian literature of the time, we find further evidence for these polemical exchanges between official and sectarian Judaism. Tendentious alterations in the Samaritan Pentateuch are well known: for example, a commandment to build a sanctuary on Mount Gerizim has been added after Exod. 20.17, and the 'centralization' formulae in Deuteronomy are adapted to make it clear that Shechem is meant, not Jerusalem (Talmon 1951; Würthwein 1957: 31f.). But it is in the Damascus Document that we find the most outspoken attacks on the establishment. Here, in similar alterations of the Hebrew text and exegetical *tours de force*, is the sect's answer, as it were, to the polemic of official Judaism (Betz 1960; Bruce 1960). The derogatory connotations of the terms 'Judah', 'the land of Judah', and 'the house of Judah' were detected more than a decade ago (Kosmala 1959: 345-47). A sectarian version of Isa. 6.13, aimed directly at the Jerusalem hierarchy, has been noted in the Isaiah Scroll A (see Chapter 13). The fierce opposition of the sect to the hierarchy in Jerusalem, increased no doubt by the intolerance of the Hasmonaean priest-kings, is hardly in dispute. For the present investigation, two rather well-known illustrations from the 'Damascus Document' are especially relevant.

The first is an interpretation of Ezek. 44.15, apparently involving a slight but significant alteration to the Hebrew text:

Those who hold fast to it [i.e. a sure house in Israel] are destined to live for ever and all the glory of Adam will be theirs. As God ordained for them by the hand of the Prophet Ezekiel, saying, *The Priests, the Levites and the sons of Zadok who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel strayed from me, they shall offer me fat and blood.*

The *Priests* are the converts of Israel who departed from the land of Judah, and the *Levites* are those who joined them. The *sons of Zadok* are the elect of Israel, the men called by name who shall stand at the end of days . . . (CD 3.20-4.4) (Vermes 1987: 85).

It is not by chance that a text adduced to prove that the community is 'destined to live for ever' and that 'all the glory of Adam will be theirs' has been selected from Ezekiel 40-48. This is a passage that has aptly been described as 'nine chapters of Zadokite propaganda' (Snaith 1951: 111). These sectarians, having 'departed from the land of Judah', seem to have

conceived of their community in terms of a new, purified sanctuary (Kosmala 1959: 363-78), comparable to Ezekiel's ideal temple. This first illustration shows how a text, thoroughly Jerusalemite in origin and purpose, can be removed from its original context and adapted to prove that the Temple in Jerusalem has been superseded by a new temple, 'a temple not built with hands' (cf. 2 Cor. 5.1), founded by the only legitimate priesthood, who had abandoned Jerusalem and settled in 'Damascus'.

The other example shows how the sect could even adapt what were originally judgment oracles as savage as Amos 3.12, in such a way as to transform them into prophecies about their salvation:

God shall visit the Land, when the saying shall come to pass which is written in the words of the Prophet Isaiah son of Amoz: *He will bring upon you, and upon your people, and upon your father's house, days such as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah* (Isaiah 7, 17). When the two houses of Israel were divided, Ephraim departed from Judah. And all the apostates were given up to the sword, but those who held fast escaped to the land of the north; as God said, *I will exile the tabernacle of your king and the bases of your statues from my tent to Damascus* (Amos 5, 26 f) (CD 7) (Vermes 1987: 88).

In Amos 5.26-27, the original Hebrew is again obscure but probably contained the names of two Assyrian deities, unknown—and indeed irrelevant—to later generations (Cripps 1955; Mays 1969). In the sectarian version, a day has come upon Israel like the day when the kingdom of Solomon was divided. This means that 'those who held fast' were free to escape from apostate Judah and start afresh in 'Damascus', taking with them the 'tabernacle', 'king', 'bases', and the rest, interpreted as referring to the religious objects they took with them into 'exile'. In the light of this example and our knowledge of sectarian exegetical methods, we await the discovery, in the caves of the Judaean desert or elsewhere, of a *Pesher Amos* in which the exiguous remnant of Amos 3.12 is the priestly community of the new covenant, snatched from the jaws of a corrupt hierarchy in Jerusalem and reborn in 'Damascus'.

To sum up, the situation out of which these sectarian attacks on the official religion arose was substantially the same as that which gave rise to the orthodox comment that we have been considering in Amos 3.12 LXX. The verse may not after all be just an enigma for bewildered translators. It makes good sense as it stands against a background of religious rivalry at an early stage in the history of the LXX and looks like our first example of anti-sectarian polemic in the LXX. It is probably not the last.

Bibliography

- Allegro, John Marco
1956 'Further Messianic References in Qumran Literature', *JBL* 75: 174-87.
- Amussin, J.
1963 'Spuren antiquumranischer Polemik in der talmudischen Tradition', in Hans Bardtke (ed), *Qumran-Probleme: Vorträge* (Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin: Schriften der Sektion für Altertumswissenschaft, 42; Berlin: Akademie Verlag): 5-27.
- Barnes, W.E.
'The Recovery of the Septuagint', *JTS* 36: 123-31.
- Bauer, Walter
1958 *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 5th edn).
- Bertram, G.
1957-65 'Septuaginta Frömmigkeit', *RGG*, V, pp. 1707-9.
- Betz, Otto
1960 *Offenbarung und Schriftforschung in der Qumransekte* (WUNT, 6; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr).
- Black, Matthew
1961 *The Scrolls and Christian Origins: Studies in the Jewish Background of the New Testament* (London: Thomas Nelson).
- Blass, F., and A. Debrunner
1967 *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Bruce, F.F.
1960 *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts* (London: Tyndale Press).
- Cripps, R.S.
1955 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Amos* (London: SPCK, 2nd edn).
- Eissfeldt, Otto
1966 *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
- Fritsch, Charles T.
1943 *The Anti-anthropomorphisms of the Greek Pentateuch* (Princeton Oriental Texts, 10; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Humbert, Jean
1954 *Syntaxe grecque* (Collection de philologie classique, 2; Paris: Klincksieck, 2nd edn).
- Jellicoe, Sidney
1968 *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Kosmala, Hans
1959 *Hebräer, Essener, Christen: Studien zur Vorgeschichte der frühchristlichen Verkündigung* (SPB, 1; Leiden: E.J. Brill).
- Maier, Johann
1960 *Die Texte vom Toten Meer, II, Anmerkungen* (Munich: E. Reinhardt).
- Mays, James Luther
1969 *The Book of Amos* (OTL; London: SCM Press).

Montgomery, James A.

- 1907 *The Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect* (Bohlen Lectures 1906; Philadelphia: J.C. Winston).

Schreiner, J.

- 1968 'Hermeneutische Leitlinien in der LXX', in Oswald Loretz and Walter Stolz (eds.), *Die Hermeneutische Frage in der Theologie* (Schriften zum Weltgespräch, 3; Freiburg: Herder).

Seeligmann, I.L.

- 1948 *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of Its Problems* (Mededelingen en verhandelingen van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap 'Ex Oriente Lux', 9; Leiden: E.J. Brill).

Snaith, N.H.

- 1951 'The Historical Books', in H.H. Rowley (ed.), *The Old Testament and Modern Study: A Generation of Discovery and Research. Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Talmon, S.

- 1951 'The Samaritan Pentateuch', *JJS* 2: 144-50.

Thackeray, H. St John

- 1909 *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Turner, Nigel

- 1963 *Syntax*, vol. III of J.H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).

Vermes, Geza

- 1987 *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 3rd edn).

Würthwein, Ernst

- 1957 *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to Kittel-Kahle's Biblica Hebraica* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).

Ziegler, Joseph (ed.)

- 1943 *Septuaginta: Duodecim prophetae* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

WAS JESHUA BEN SIRA A PRIEST?*

The suggestion that Jeshua ben Sira was a priest is not new. The fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus actually gives him the title ἱερεὺς ὁ σολυμίτης (Sir. 50.27) and the ninth-century historian Syncellus believed that he was the high priest after Simon the Just. These two authorities may, as Emil Schürer maintains, have arrived at their reading by mistake, the first from a scribal error, the second by misreading Eusebius. But this is no reason for rejecting what appears to be a very probable conclusion on other evidence. Recently a more balanced view is taken by Martin Hengel, Jean Le Moyne and others about the aristocratic background of our author, but several points seem to have been insufficiently emphasized. We shall look at the internal evidence, religious and political circumstances of the time and the question of why and how the priestly background of Ben Sira was successfully concealed by later generations.

1. The author's positive attitude to the priesthood, Temple and cult is obvious: his panegyric of Simon the high priest in ch. 50 and his eulogy of Aaron, who far outshines Moses, David and Solomon in the celebrated hymn beginning 'Let us now praise famous men' (chs. 44–50; cf. 45.6–22), are among the most familiar passages in the book. But what is not always realized is that these are unique in ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature. In almost every other respect, Ben Sira is entirely typical of that literary genre, but on this one issue, it is unique. Traditional teachers in Israel sought to inculcate into their pupils religious piety, and on occasion it is clear that this included paying one's dues at the Temple (Prov. 3.9; Sir. 7.29–31; cf. Job 1.5). But such injunctions are very rare, and what we have in Ben Sira is no less than a passionate statement of faith in the authority of the priesthood.

Ben Sira considered the everlasting covenant with Aaron and his son Phineas of more importance than the Davidic covenant. The covenant with

* This paper was read at the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem in August 1981 and published in the *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 16–21, 1981* (4 vols.; Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1982), I, pp. 65–71.

David is passed down from father to son only, while the greater priestly covenant is passed down to all Aaron's descendants (45.25). The authority of the priests extends beyond the sanctuary to the people (45.24), and it is the religious and cultic achievements of David, Israel's greatest political leader, that are stressed by Ben Sira, rather than his military and political achievements (47.8-10). The Aaron passage actually concludes with a blessing addressed directly to the priests (45.26), and in the psalm that appears in the Hebrew text after 51.12, God's choice of the sons of Zadok as priests is explicitly singled out among God's mighty acts in the history of Israel. Something of this development is already to be found in other postexilic works, notably Zechariah and Chronicles, but it is most uncharacteristic of the wisdom tradition and in striking contrast to other postexilic didactic works such as the later parts of Proverbs, some of the Psalms (e.g. 1; 34; 36; 119) and Ecclesiastes. The simplest explanation would be that this wisdom teacher was also a member of the priestly aristocracy.

2. The reference in the prologue to our author's expertise as a scholar, together with the famous eulogy of the scribe in chs. 38-39 and the conventional form and content of the book, is usually cited as evidence that the author was himself a scribe. This conclusion has indeed dominated discussions of the authorship and background of Ben Sira, and in the minds of some commentators tended to exclude the possibility of a priestly background for the book. It does not seem to have been fully recognized that a good many of the scribes and *hakamim*, whose words are recorded in the rabbinic sources, were in fact priests, for example, Hananiah, captain of the Temple (*Abot* 3.2), Jose the priest (*Abot* 2.8) and Zadok (*Abot* 4.5). The first name cited in the chain of scribal tradition after the Men of the Great Synagogue is Simon the Just, a high priest (*Abot* 1.2), and, if his saying 'By three things the world is supported, the Law, the Temple service and deeds of loving kindness' sums up Ben Sira's teaching (Snaith), then it points as much to a priestly background for the book as to a scribal one.

Going a little further back, among the contemporaries of Nehemiah are mentioned at least two other examples, namely Zadok the scribe (Neh. 13.13) and of course Ezra himself, who is described in one of the Aramaic documents as 'the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven' (Ezra 7.21). Whatever the reason for the conspicuous absence of Ezra's name from the hymn 'In praise of famous men', in which Nehemiah receives a verse in his honour (49.13), Ezra's authority, sanctioned by the Persian government, lay both in his priestly status and in his role as official expert in the law. Lay scholars were no doubt already commonplace in most Jewish communities long before the time of Ben Sira, but it is certain that many of the leading scholars were members of the Temple aristocracy. Ben Sira was surely one of them.

3. One further piece of evidence for the priestly pedigree of Ben Sira is his name. All four names recorded in the various manuscripts appear to be typically priestly or Zadokite: Jeshua, Eleazar, Simeon and Sira (50.27). The spelling Jeshua (as opposed to Joshua) is particularly common in priestly families: from Jeshua ben Jehozadak, priest with Zerubbabel after the exile (Ezra 2.2; 3.2), and Jeshua, head of the ninth division of the priests (1 Chron. 24.11), down to the high priests Jeshua ben Phiabi (35–c. 22 BCE) and Jeshua ben Dam (c. 65–66 CE). The same applies to Eleazar: not only was he the third and most important son of Aaron (Num. 20.22–29), ancestor of the Zadokites (1 Chron. 6.4), but his name, like that of Jeshua, appears frequently in the lists of priests from all periods. In the Hebrew text, the name Simeon appears as the author's name, and it too is of course another typically priestly name (Sir. 50.1).

The name Sira is unknown elsewhere but could be semantically related to the Hebrew word *qoṣ*; both words mean 'thorn', and *haqqoṣ* (Hakkoz) was head of the seventh division of the priests (1 Chron. 24.10; cf. Ezra 2.61; Neh. 3.4; 7.63). Like an alternative theory that it is derived from Greek *σειρά* and means, most appropriately, 'chain, lineage', the *haqqoṣ* suggestion cannot be substantiated, and obviously without other evidence can hardly be said to constitute convincing proof that Ben Sira's fourth name had priestly connections. But taken with his unique interest in the priesthood and Temple cult, and the well-documented link between scribal and priestly tradition, the evidence of three of his names is at least suggestive. One might almost go so far as to say that the burden of proof should now shift to those who seek to argue that our author was not a priest. The Pharisaic or 'neo-hasidic' elements in the book, such as its personal piety and didactic tone, stressed recently by J. Marböck, are the norm and require no special explanation. But how else can the striking emphasis on the priesthood, unique within the wisdom tradition, be explained?

4. If Ben Sira was a member of the priestly aristocracy, how does his book fit into the religious and political scene of the time in which it was written? At hardly any other time was the position of high priest in Jerusalem more hotly disputed than during the first half of the second century BCE. It is probable that Ben Sira was composed before the deposition of Onias in 175 and the founding of the rival temple at Leontopolis in Egypt. But threats to Zadokite supremacy in Jerusalem had no doubt arisen before then as a result of the steadily increasing diversity within Judaism, both geographical and doctrinal, and may well be reflected in such passages as 3.21–24 and 45.6–26: 'no outsider [ἀλλογενής] ever put them on but only his sons and his descendants perpetually . . . outsiders conspired against him'.

Furthermore, if Jeshua ben Sira was a member of the Zadokite aristocracy, then so presumably was his grandson, who, shortly after 132 BCE,

published a translation of Ben Sira for Jews living in Egypt. His grandfather's Zadokite sympathies would have been greeted with enthusiasm by the exiled priestly aristocracy, and it is likely that, at this earliest stage in the history of the transmission of the book, he highlighted and even interpolated some of the Zadokite motifs. He speaks of translating and completing the book (Prologue), and one wonders whether it was perhaps at that stage that the Zadokite hymn after 51.12 was added, to be later omitted in the 'Pharisaic' editions of the work that dominate the surviving manuscript traditions. At any rate, the powerful exposition of Zadokite claims, together with the nostalgic eulogies of Aaron, Phineas and Simon the high priest, fits perfectly into the context of second-century BCE priestly rivalry, and there can be little doubt with whom the sympathies of Jeshua ben Sira and his grandson would have been.

5. We come now to the question of the later history of the book. Do our conclusions shed any light on the curiously ambivalent attitude that later traditions have adopted towards it? On the one hand, Ben Sira is quoted a number of times in the Jewish sources, and copies of it have now turned up at Masada and Qumran. But, on the other hand, it is also emphatically condemned as uncanonical and heretical in the Jewish sources (e.g., Yer. *Sanhedrin* 28a). One clue is the apparently derogatory use of the term *ṣeduqim*, 'Sadducees', as opposed to *bene ṣadoq* 'Zadokites'. The rabbinic sources repeatedly class the *ṣeduqim* with heretics and traitors with 'no share in the world to come'. To the post-70 CE community, Ben Sira's work must have appeared typical of that conservative heresy. Although much of his teaching on the fear of the Lord, the evil inclination (37.3; cf. 15.14) and the like was in agreement with theirs, his preoccupation with good living (31.12–32.6), his high-handed attitude to women (chs. 25–26) and slaves (33.24–31), his rejection of the resurrection of the dead (e.g. 41.1–4) and his Zadokite sympathies betrayed him.

The reason for Ben Sira's continuing popularity, however, in spite of his Sadducean image, in both Jewish and Christian traditions, must be related to another factor, namely the evident 'Pharisaic' editing of the text. Eschatological interpolations in the Greek manuscripts, such as those at 7.17 and 48.11, are often assumed to be due to Christian influence. But it is an oversimplification to assume that the Hebrew text preserves the original or Jewish tradition while the Greek is later and predominantly Christian. 'Pharisaic' reshaping is evident in all the extant manuscripts in Greek and Hebrew. The removal of the Zadokite hymn from ch. 51 has already been noted. Ben Sira 51.29 is another example. The Hebrew text reads: חַשְׁמֵה נַפְשִׁי בְּיֵשִׁיבִתִּי, 'May my soul delight in my yeshiva . . .' But this can hardly be original, since the context is about abstract concepts such as instruction, wisdom, hard work, reward and rest, and the parallel confirms this. Earlier in the same passage occurs the famous invitation 'Draw near to me, you

who are untaught, and lodge in my school' (51.23). This early occurrence of the term *bet midrash* in the Hebrew text is usually considered to be a reference to the Beth Midrash in its technical sense of a rabbinic school, no doubt justifying the alteration to בֵּית־מִדְרָשׁ in v. 29. Familiar parallels in earlier wisdom literature, notably Proverbs 8 and 9, however, and the evidence of the Greek manuscripts, which avoid any technical term for 'school', make it probable that here too an original piece of quite general wisdom teaching has been adapted in the light of later developments.

Conclusion

Jeshua ben Sira was a typical scribe in the old priestly, aristocratic tradition, a Zadokite from the period before the rise to power of non-Zadokite usurpers in Jerusalem. Some of the priestly apologetic in Ben Sira, unique in the wisdom literature, no doubt goes back to Ben Sira himself, but his grandson, a Zadokite too of course, may well have highlighted this emphasis in his translation for Greek-speaking Jews in Egypt. Later still, when the Temple aristocracy began to lose hold on Judaism, and the term *seduqim* came to be associated with heresy in rabbinic tradition, the book underwent a considerable amount of 'Pharisaic' revision, as the many variant readings in the Hebrew, Greek, Syriac and Latin manuscripts indicate. Although it was never canonized by the Jewish authorities, it remained popular in both Jewish and Christian tradition.

Bibliography

- André Caquot
 1966 'Ben Sira et le méssianisme', *Semitica* 16: 43-68.
- Delcor, M.
 1968 'Le temple d'Onias en Egypte', *RB* 75: 188-203.
- Di Lella, Alexander A.
 1966 *The Hebrew Text of Sirach: A Text-Critical and Historical Study* (Studies in Classical Literature, 1; The Hague: Mouton).
- Duesberg, Hilaire
 1938-39 *Les scribes inspirés* (2 vols.; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer).
- Gruenwald, I.
 1979 'Jewish Apocalyptic Literature', in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, II*, 19.1 (1979), pp. 89-118 (esp. pp. 99-103).
- Hengel, Martin
 1974 *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (London: SCM Press).
- Lehmann, M.R.
 1970 'Ben Sira and the Dead Sea Documents', *Tarbitz* 39: 232-47.
- Le Moyne, Jean
 1972 *Les sadducéens* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre).

Marböck, J.

- 1979 'Sir 38:24–39:11: Der schriftgelehrte Weise. Ein Beitrag zu Gestalt und Werk Ben Siras', in Maurice Gilbert (ed.), *Le sagesse de l'Ancien Testament* (BETL, 51; Leuven: Leuven University Press).

Segal, M.Z.

- 1963 *Sefer Ben Sira ha-shalem* (Jerusalem: Bialik).

Skehan, Patrick W.

- 1971 'The *Acrostic* Poem in Sirach 51:13-30', *HTR* 64: 387-400.

Snaith, J.N.

- 1963–64 'The Importance of Ecclesiasticus', *ExpTim* 75: 66-69.

WHY IS A SOLAR ECLIPSE MENTIONED
IN THE PASSION NARRATIVE (LUKE 23.44-45)?*

As scholars since Julius Africanus have frequently noted, an eclipse of the sun at the time of the Passover, when the moon is full, is astronomically impossible (*Chronicon* 50; Swete 1908: 384; Plummer 1922: 537; Taylor 1952: 593; Lampe 1962: 841; Driver 1965: 333ff.). Besides, as Edward Gibbon sarcastically pointed out in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, no one outside the Christian church appears to have noticed three hours of total darkness over the whole of Judaea (if not the whole earth). Astronomers confirm that there was in fact no solar eclipse observable in Jerusalem at the right time. For these and other reasons the specific reference to an eclipse in Lk. 23.44-45 has often been either rejected altogether, as in the Authorized Version (following an alternative manuscript reading), or given an unusual translation, as in the Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible. But the phrase τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλειπόντος (or ἐκλιπόντος) has strong manuscript authority (ⲬBC*L), and would normally refer to an eclipse (Liddell and Scott, 511-12; Bauer 1958: Col. 481; cf. Leaney 1958: 287). That is certainly how it has almost invariably been understood in this context until modern times, in contrast to the more general phrase καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ ἥλιος, which appears in some manuscripts (ADW). It is thus hard to avoid the translations given in the Revised Version, Revised Standard Version (note), or, more recently, the Jerusalem Bible:

It was now about the sixth hour, and, with the sun eclipsed, a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Objections to this obvious translation on the whole betray a distorted view of biblical tradition. Unless it is held that every statement in the Gospels was intended first and foremost as factual information on the sequence

* The short paper was first published in *Journal of Theological Studies* 23 (1972), pp. 124-28. For the astronomical data, I am indebted to Dr Richard Stephenson, Department of Physics, Newcastle University.

of events in the time of Christ, then discussion must often move away from the question, Did it happen? or Could it happen? to Why did the author describe events in this way and not in another way?

Darkness was a conventional concomitant of divine intervention. Just as there was thick darkness over the whole land before the first Passover and the exodus of Israel from Egypt (Exod. 10.22), so there was darkness over the whole land at the time of Christ's 'exodus'. Christian writers saw these events as taking place during 'the last days' and consequently introduced the conventional eschatological language of their day, for example:

This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel, And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that . . . I will show wonders in the heaven above . . . the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood . . . (Acts 2.16-21; cf. Joel 3.1-5 [Eng. 2.28-32]; 4.15 [Eng. 3.15]; Isa. 13.10; Mt. 24.29; Mk 13.24; Lk. 21.11, 25-28).

The darkening of the sun, like the earthquake and the resurrection of the saints (Mt. 27.51-54), was part of the literary tradition employed by writers in the first centuries of the Christian era to communicate their belief that God was in Christ. In Tertullian's words, *qui id quoque super Christo praedicatum non scierunt, ratione non deprehensa negaverunt* (*Apologeticum* 21). This is certainly one reason why the first three Gospels record darkness during the crucifixion, whether or not an astronomical or atmospheric phenomenon actually occurred at the time. But it does not explain why St Luke, unlike the other Gospels, has this difficult but specific reference to a solar eclipse in 23.44-45.

There are two factors in the historical context of the passage that throw light on the problem.

1. *The eclipse of 24 November 29 CE.* A total eclipse of the sun is a much more spectacular phenomenon than is often realized, very much more mysterious and impressive, for example, than atmospheric obscurations of the sun. As the sun is eclipsed, the temperature falls appreciably, the appearance of dew has been recorded and birds and animals behave strangely. Some of the brighter stars and planets are seen although it is daytime, and so awesome is the sudden blackness, especially if it is unforeseen, that people stop what they are doing and minutes seem like hours. Such a spectacle occurs in any one area on average about three times every thousand years and is an unforgettable experience for the relatively few people who ever see it. The front-page headlines and colourful newspaper reports following the total eclipse observable in the north of England on 29 June 1927 make this clear:

When totality came, the watchers experienced a feeling impossible to describe. A vague terror seized them. The light became a weird greyish brown, the atmosphere became cold, the birds stopped singing and the sheep on the moors ceased nibbling. A second later, total darkness

descended upon the earth, and an unnatural coldness made everyone shiver. During those seconds of darkness, the stars peeped out . . . (*The Journal*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 30 June 1927).

Recent studies of the correlation between astronomical phenomena of this extremely spectacular kind and references in contemporary literature have shown that descriptions of solar phenomena, in whatever vague and nontechnical language, are almost invariably inspired by total eclipses of the sun. It is probable, for example, that the eclipse of 30 September 1131 BCE gave rise to the 'Song of Joshua' at Gibeon in Josh. 10.12-14 (see Chapter 31), and that the three total eclipses of the sun observable in Palestine in the fourth century BCE influenced another author's choice of imagery (Joel 3.3-4 [Eng. 2.30-31; 4.15 [Eng. 3.15]], and possibly also one or two of the other undated apocalyptists (Isa. 24.23 and 60.20) (Stephenson 1969).

If Lk. 23.44-45 is no exception, then it must have been inspired by the eclipse of 24 November 29 CE, since this was the only total eclipse of the sun observable in the area during the first century CE. It was total for Byzantium and parts of Asia Minor and Syria. For observers near the centre of the belt of totality, the eclipse lasted for one and a half minutes at about 11:15 am, and we may reasonably expect literature composed within that area to contain a reference, direct or indirect, to it. This must be the eclipse underlying the famous description of an eclipse by Phlegon, a freedman of Hadrian, quoted by Origen (*Contra Celsum* 2.33, 59) (Fotheringham 1920: 112).

There is an early tradition, and one that a number of scholars are for various reasons prepared to take seriously, that Luke was connected with Antioch in Syria (Wilcox 1965: 183; Bruce 1952: 7; Bultmann 1959: 78; Dupont 1964: 62ff.). The two 'we-passages' in Acts that have been adduced to prove the author's connections are set, one in Antioch in Syria (11.28 in the 'Western' manuscript tradition), the other in Troas in Asia Minor (16.10). Without going further into the problem of Luke's origins or the provenance of the Third Gospel and Acts, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the author of Lk. 23.44-45 saw the total eclipse of 29 CE, presumably as a young man in Antioch or Asia Minor, and that later he made use of this unforgettable experience in his description of the death of Christ. It is impossible to say whether he actually identified the crucifixion darkness of tradition with that eclipse, or simply compared it to the terrifying darkness at about midday that he remembered from his youth. But in either case, the astronomical evidence would provide a valuable sidelight on the historical context of the passage.

2. *Eclipse reports.* The eclipse of 29 CE lasted for about one and a half minutes at the most, and it might be objected that, had our author actually seen this eclipse, he could not have described it as lasting from about the sixth hour to the ninth hour. This may of course be too literal an interpretation of the text, and the author may simply be attempting to combine a

common tradition concerning the time of the crucifixion (cf. Mt. 27.45; Mk 15.33) with his own personal comment about an eclipse. But a more interesting explanation can be found in numerous eclipse reports of which the following from Antioch in the *Chronicle of Michael the Syrian* (20.3), is typical:

The sun was totally obscured; night fell and the stars appeared . . . the darkness lasted for two hours; afterwards the light returned.

This refers to the eclipse of 11 April 1176, which lasted for three minutes and twenty seconds, and there are many other well-documented examples of this effect from other parts of the world. It was discussed by an astronomer in 1860, and there are reports that observers of the 1927 eclipse referred to above thought that it lasted for about half an hour. The three hours in Lk. 23.44-45 fit nicely into this pattern and—far from being an objection to the theory that underlying it there is a genuine observation of the eclipse of 29 CE—actually confirm it.

In one other respect, the Lukan version of this event differs from Matthew and Mark. In giving the time of the eclipse, the author has apparently added the word *ὥσει* ‘about, approximately’. This may be no more than a stylistic variation (Plummer 1922: 536), but it is surely also possible that the approximate time of the 29 CE eclipse, which occurred at 11:15 am, that is, between the fifth and the sixth hours, was in our author’s mind as he wrote.

No doubt this last question will be considered too extravagant an application of the astronomical data to Lk. 23.44-45. However that may be, it does seem very likely that we can find in the author’s own experience the explanation of this difficult but peculiarly vivid way of describing the eclipse of the Sun of Righteousness. In the words of Cyril of Alexandria (*Catechesis* 13.34): ἐξέλιπεν ὁ ἥλιος διὰ τὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἥλιον (cf. Mal. 3.20 [Eng. 4.2]). If this is so, then the author must have been in Antioch or Asia Minor on 24 November 29 CE, a biographical detail of a kind rarely available in biblical research.

Bibliography

Bauer, Walter

1958 *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 5th edn).

Bruce, F.F.

1952 *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale Press, 2nd edn).

Bultmann, Rudolf

1959 ‘Zur Frage nach den Quellen der Apostelgeschichte’, in A.J.B. Higgins, *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of Thomas Walter Manson*,

1893–1958. *Sponsored by Pupils, Colleagues and Friends* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

Driver, G.R.

1965 'Two Problems in the New Testament', *JTS* 16: 327-37.

Dupont, Jacques

1964 *The Sources of Acts: The Present Position* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd).

Fotheringham, J.K.

1920 'A Solution of Ancient Eclipses of the Sun', *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* 81: 104-26.

Lampe, G.W.H.

1962 'Luke', in Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson, rev. edn): 820-43.

Leaney, A.R.C.

1958 *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St Luke* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black).

Plummer, Alfred

1922 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St Luke* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 5th edn).

Stephenson, F.R.

1969 'The Date of Joel', *VT* 19: 224-29.

Swete, H.B.

1908 *The Gospel according to St Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices* (London: MacMillan, 2nd edn).

Taylor, Vincent

1952 *The Gospel according to St Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indexes* (London: Macmillan).

Wilcox, Max

1965 *The Semitisms in Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

PUBLICATIONS OF JOHN F.A. SAWYER

Authored Books

- Semantics in Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation* (Studies in Biblical Theology, 2.24; London: SCM Press, 1972).
- A Modern Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (Stocksfield: Oriel Press, 1976).
- From Moses to Patmos: New Perspectives in Old Testament Study* (London: SPCK, 1977).
- Isaiah*, Vol. I (Philadelphia: Westminster Press; Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1983). Chinese translation (Hong Kong, 1984). Japanese translation, *Izaya-Sho I* (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha Press, 1988).
- Isaiah*, Vol. II (Philadelphia: Westminster Press; Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1985). Chinese translation (Hong Kong, 1986).
- Prophecy and the Prophets of the Old Testament* (Oxford Bible Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- Prophecy and the Biblical Prophets* (Oxford Bible Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, rev. edn, 1993). Japanese translation (Tokyo, 1993).
- The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Korean translation (Seoul, 2002).
- Sacred Languages and Sacred Texts* (Religion in the First Christian Centuries; London: Routledge, 1999).
- A Concise Dictionary of the Bible and its Reception* (Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, 2009).
- Isaiah through the Centuries* (Blackwell Bible Commentary Series; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming).

Edited Books

- Midian, Edom and Moab: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia* (ed. John F.A. Sawyer and David J.A. Clines; *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series, 24; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983).
- Perspectives on Suffering* (audiocassettes with handbook; Audio Visual Centre, Newcastle University, 1982).
- Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (general editor, R. Asher; religion editor John F.A. Sawyer; 10 vols.; Oxford: Pergamon Press/Aberdeen University Press 1994).
- Religion in the First Christian Centuries* (series eds., D.F. Sawyer and J.F.A. Sawyer; London: Routledge, 1995–).
- Reading Leviticus: A Conversation with Mary Douglas* (*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series, 227; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

- Concise Encyclopedia of Language and Religion* (ed. J.F.A. Sawyer and J.M.Y. Simpson; Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2000).
- Blackwell Bible Commentary Series* (ed. J.F.A. Sawyer, C.C. Rowland, D.M. Gunn and J. Kovacs; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004–).
- Blackwell Companion to the Bible and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).

Articles in Journals

- ‘Notes on the Keret Text’ (with J. Strange), *Israel Exploration Journal* 14 (1964), pp. 96-99.
- ‘The Qumran Reading of Isaiah 6.13’, *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 3 (1964), pp. 111-14.
- ‘What was a *Moshia*?’ *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965), pp. 475-86.
- ‘Root-Meanings in Hebrew’, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 12 (1967), pp. 37-50.
- ‘Spaciousness. An Important Feature of Language about Salvation’, *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 6 (1968), pp. 20-34.
- ‘Those Priests in Damascus (Amos 3.12 LXX)’, *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 8 (1970), pp. 123-30.
- ‘Literary and Astronomical Evidence for a Total Eclipse of the Sun Observed in Ancient Ugarit on 3 May 1375 bc’, (with F.R. Stephenson), *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 33 (1970), pp. 469-89.
- ‘Why Is a Solar Eclipse Mentioned in the Passion Narrative (Luke 23.45)?’ *Journal of Theological Studies* 23 (1972), pp. 124-28.
- ‘Joshua 10.12-14 and the Solar Eclipse of 30 September 1131 bc’, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 104 (1972), pp. 139-46.
- ‘Hebrew Terms for the Resurrection of the Dead’, *Vetus Testamentum* 23 (1973), pp. 218-34.
- ‘The Meaning of “in the divine image” in Genesis 1–11’, *Journal of Theological Studies* 25 (1974), pp. 418-26.
- ‘The Ruined House in Ecclesiastes 12: A Reconstruction of the Original Parable’, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975), pp. 519-31.
- ‘Response to Reviews of *A Modern Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*’, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 1 (1976), pp. 72-75.
- ‘A Note on the Etymology of *šara*’at “leprosy”’, *Vetus Testamentum* 26 (1976), pp. 241-45.
- ‘The Proverb of the Partridge in Jeremiah 17.11’, *Vetus Testamentum* 28 (1978), pp. 324-29.
- ‘The Old Testament and the Hebrew Bible’, *Association for Religious Education Bulletin* 11 (1978), pp. 17-19.
- ‘Types of Prayer in the Old Testament’, *Semitics* 7 (1980), pp. 131-43.
- ‘A Note on Judges 5.20’, *Vetus Testamentum* 30 (1980), pp. 87-90.
- ‘Biblical Alternatives to Monotheism’, *Theology* 87 (1984), pp. 172-80.
- ‘Cain and Hephaestus: Relics of Metalworker Traditions in Genesis 4’, *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 24 (1986), pp. 155-66.
- ‘Daughter of Zion and Servant of the Lord in Isaiah: A Comparison’, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44 (1989), pp. 89-107.
- ‘Combating Prejudices about the Bible and Judaism’, *Theology* 94 (1991), pp. 269-78.
- ‘The Ethics of Comparative Interpretation’, *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 3 (1995), pp. 153-68.

- 'The Gospel according to Isaiah', *Expository Times* 113.2 (2001), pp. 39-43.
- 'Impact History', *Movement: The Magazine of the SCM Movement* 114 (2003), pp. 16-17.
- 'The Old Testament and its Readers', *Theology in Scotland* 12.1 (2005), pp. 67-80.
- 'Isaia e gli Ebrei: Riflessioni sull'uso della Bibbia nella Chiesa', *Una città per il dialogo* no. 80 (Perugia 2007), pp. 26-34.
- 'L'uso della scrittura ebraica nell'arte cristiana', *Una città per il dialogo* no.85 (Perugia 2009), pp. 35-38.

Chapters in Books

- 'Context of Situation and Sitz im Leben', in *Proceedings of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne Philosophical Society* (1967), pp. 137-47.
- 'An Analysis of the Context and Meaning of the Psalm-Headings', in *Transactions: Glasgow University Oriental Society* 22 (1970), pp. 26-38.
- 'The Place of Folk-Linguistics in Biblical Interpretation', in *Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem in August 1969* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1973), pp. 109-13.
- 'The "Original Meaning of the Text" and Other Legitimate Subjects for Semantic Description', in C. Brekelmans *et al.* (eds.), *Questions disputées de l'Ancien Testament: Méthode et théologie* (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium, 33; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1974), pp. 63-70.
- 'A Historical Description of the Hebrew Root *YŠ', in James and Theodora Bynon (eds.), *Hamito-semitica: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held by the Historical Section of the Linguistics Association, Great Britain, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of March 1960* (Janua linguarum: Series practica, 200; The Hague: Mouton, 1975), pp. 142-54.
- 'David's Treatment of the Ammonites in 2 Samuel 12.31', *Transactions: Glasgow University Oriental Society* 25 (1977), pp. 96-107 (reported in *The Times* 9 May 1977, pp. 1-2).
- 'The Teaching of Classical Hebrew: Options and Priorities', in J. H. Hospers (ed.), *General Linguistics and the Teaching of Dead Hamito-Semitic Languages* (Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics, 9; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), pp. 37-50.
- 'The Authorship and Structure of the Book of Job', in E. A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Biblica 1978: Papers on Old Testament and Related Themes, Sixth International Congress on Biblical Studies, Oxford 3-7. April 1978* (*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series, 11; *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 2-3; 3 vols.; Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, 1979), pp. 253-57.
- 'Was Jeshua ben Sira a Priest?' in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 16-21, 1981* (4 vols.; Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1982), I, pp. 65-71.
- 'Some Biblical Views of Suffering', in J.F.A. Sawyer (ed.), *Perspectives on Suffering* (audiocassettes with handbook; Audio Visual Centre, University of Newcastle upon Tyne 1982), pp. 32-41.
- 'A Change of Emphasis in the Study of the Prophets', in R.J. Coggins *et al.* (eds.), *Israel's Prophetic Tradition: Essays in Honour of Peter R. Ackroyd* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 233-49.

- 'The Meaning of *barzel* in Hebrew Expressions for "iron-chariots" etc.', in J.F.A. Sawyer and D.J.A. Clines (eds.), *Midian, Edom and Moab: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 24; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983)*, pp. 180-89.
- 'Islam and Judaism', in D.M. MacEoin (ed.), *Islam in the Modern World* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 43-53.
- "'Blessed be Egypt, my people'": A Commentary on Isaiah 19.16-25', in James D. Martin and Philip R. Davies (eds.), *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 42; Sheffield: JSOT Press)*, pp. 21-35.
- 'The Role of Jewish Studies in Biblical Semantics', in H.L.J. Vanstiphout (ed.), *Scripta signa vocis: Studies about Scripts, Scriptures, Scribes and Languages in the Near East, Presented to J.H. Hospers by his Pupils, Colleagues and Friends* (Groningen: E. Forsten, 1986), pp. 201-208.
- 'Haggai, Zechariah', in C.C. Rowland and J. Rogerson (eds.), *Guidelines*, vol. V, 1 (London: Bible Reading Fellowship, 1989), pp. 112-26.
- 'Interpretations of Isaiah 45:8', in Jacques Vermeulen (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah = Le livre d'Isaïe: Les oracles et leurs relectures. Unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium, 81; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), pp. 319-23.
- 'The "Original Meaning of the Text" and Other Legitimate Subjects for Semantic Description', in M. Vervenne (ed.), *Continuing Questions in Old Testament Method and Theology* (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium, 33; Leuven: Leuven University Press, rev. edn, 1990), pp. 63-70, 210-12.
- 'The Image of God, the Wisdom of Serpents and the Knowledge of Good and Evil', in D.F. Sawyer and P. Morris (eds.), *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 136; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992)*, pp. 64-73.
- 'Radical Images of Yahweh in Isaiah 63', in P.R. Davies (ed.), *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 144; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993)*, pp. 72-82.
- "'My secret is with me" (Isaiah 24.16): Semantic Links between Isaiah 24-27 and Daniel', in A.G. Auld and P.R. Davies (eds.), *Understanding Poet and Prophet: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 152; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993)*, pp. 307-17.
- 'Isaiah as a Source-book for Scriptural Texts about Death and Mourning', in J.G. Davies (ed.), *Ritual and Remembrance: Responses to Death in Human Societies* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 86-102.
- 'The Language of Leviticus', in J.F.A. Sawyer (ed.), *Reading Leviticus: A Conversation with Mary Douglas (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 227; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996)*, pp. 16-20.
- 'King David's Treatment of the Ammonites (2 Sam. 12:31)', in Alan Watson (ed.), *Law, Morality and Religion: Global Perspectives* (Studies in Comparative Legal History; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 165-78.
- 'Judaism': introduction, 18 articles, "tree diagram" and bibliography, Taiwan Museum of "Contemporary Religions" (1999).

- ‘Reading Other People’s Readings of Scripture’, in M. Barnes, SJ (ed.), *Spirituality and the Jewish–Christian Dialogue (The Way. Supplement 97)* (London: The Way, 2000), pp. 11-20.
- ‘Isaiah and Zionism’, in P.R. Davies and A.G. Hunter (eds.), *Sense and Sensitivity: Essays on Reading the Bible in Memory of Robert Carroll* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 2003), pp. 246-69.
- ‘Isaiah and the Jews: Some Reflections on the Church’s Use of the Bible’, in J. Cheryl Exum and H.G.M. Williamson (eds.), *Reading from Right to Left: Essays in Honour of David J.A. Clines (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 373)* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2004), pp. 390-401.
- ‘The Bible in Future Jewish–Christian Relations’, in James K. Aitken and Edward Kessler (eds.), *Challenges in Jewish–Christian Relations* (Studies in Judaism and Christianity; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press 2006), pp. 39-50.
- ‘Reception History’, in H. Ingham, J. Merrygold, L. Purcell and S. Ridge (eds.), *Reading the Bible: Approaching and Understanding Scripture* (Birmingham: SCM Press, 2006), pp. 21-23.
- ‘Job’ and ‘Isaiah’, in M. Lieb, E. Mason, J. Roberts and C. Rowland (eds.), *Oxford Handbook to the Reception History of the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 25-36 and 53-63.
- ‘Anthony van Dyck’s Birmingham *Ecce Homo* “Behold the Man!”’, in M. O’Kane (ed.), *Bible, Art, Gallery* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), pp. 118-38.
- ‘Ezekiel in the History of Christianity’, in Paul M. Joyce and Andrew Mein (eds.), *After Ezekiel: Essays on the Reception of a Difficult Prophet* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies, 535; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2011), pp. 25-36.
- ‘Interpreting Hebrew Writing in Renaissance Art’, in E. van Wolde and D.J.A. Clines (eds.), *Essays in Honour of J. Cheryl Exum* (Sheffield, forthcoming).
- ‘Encounters with Hebrew in Mediaeval Perugia’, in J. Vidal and N. Wyatt (eds.), *Essays in Honour of Wilfred Watson* (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming).

Dictionary Entries

- qbs*, *shaw*’, *ta’ah*, in *THAT* II, pp. 583-86, 882-84, 1055-57.
- YŠ*’ in *ThWAT* III, 8/9 (1983), cols. 1035-59.
- ‘Etymology’, ‘History of Interpretation’, ‘Linguistics’ and ‘Semantics’, in R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden (eds.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1990).
- ‘Isaiah’ and ‘Messiah’, in Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 325-29 and 513-14.
- ‘Babel’, ‘Christianity in Europe’, ‘Hymns’, ‘Names, Religious Beliefs about’, ‘Prayer’, ‘Religion’ and ‘Word of God’, in R.E. Asher (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994).
- ‘Isaiah’, in John H. Hayes (ed.), *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (2 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), I, pp. 549-55.
- ‘Isaiah’, in Adrian Hastings (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000), pp. 329-30.
- ‘Allegory’, ‘Apocrypha, Christian’, ‘Driver, Godfrey Rolles’, ‘Oracle’, ‘Pseudepigrapha’ and Section Introductions in J.F.A. Sawyer and J.M.Y. Simpson (eds.), *The*

Concise Encyclopedia of Language and Religion (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 2002).

‘Eden’, ‘Exegesis’, ‘Isaiah’, ‘Linguistics’ and ‘Moses’, in E. Kessler and N. Wenborn (eds.), *A Dictionary of Jewish–Christian Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

‘Religion and Literacy’, in Keith Brown (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2nd edn, 2006), X, pp. 522-25.

‘Immanuel’, in Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (ed.), *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (5 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006–9), III, pp. 23-25.

INDEXES

INDEX OF BIBLICAL REFERENCES

OLD TESTAMENT		20.18	175	12.11	370
<i>Genesis</i>		21.31	366	12.14	360
1.1-5	92, 181	22.1, 11	194, 196	12.23	209
1.2	217, 358	23.2	54	13.13	402
1.26	15, 18,	23.8	284	13.15	314
	153, 181,	23.17	274	14.7	143
	217, 300	24.12-14	282	14.30	404
1.28	4, 15, 41,	25.2	311	15.1	261
	88, 303	25.32	79	15.11	124
2.2	277, 418	26.22	272, 275,	15.13-18	148
2.7	257, 263,		353	17.14	283
	302	27.1	200	18.11	122
2.19-20	353	28.11	284	19.6	371
2.23	352-53	28.18	131, 141	20.3	122, 124
3.1	302	31.46-48	353, 411	20.17	419
3.5	304	32.16	271	20.25	396
3.16-17	192	32.30	286	21.14	302
3.19	260	34.25	314	22.13	416
3.22	53, 302	35.16-20	174-75	23.20-33	388
4	307-15	36.10-11	79, 311	23.28	393
5.24	258	36.20-22	311	24.4	131
5.28-29	315	36.40	308, 311	28.30	155
6.6	192, 304	40.41	308	32.2-4	308
6.14-22	315	41.52	353	32.11	284
8.20	315	49.6	314	33.11	204
9.6	305			34.24	272
9.20-21	315	<i>Exodus</i>		35.3	309
9.27	271-72,	1.9	360		
	352	2.10	353, 366	<i>Leviticus</i>	
10.2	312	2.17	403-404	8.24	371
10.8, 13, 15	411	3.3	186	14.40	402
11	353	3.4	194, 196	16.29	295
12.3	142	3.7-8	271-72	17.11	13
12.6-7	141	3.22	402	19.15-18	59, 389
13.14-18	272	4.3	301	23.27	295
14.18	145	5.6, 10, 13	418	26.37	258
15.3	175	7.15	301		
15.14	371	7.18, 21	15	<i>Numbers</i>	
15.17	332	8.15	275-76	5.2	394
15.18-21	272	9.14	392	5.8	402
16	135	10.22	430	11.20	147
16.14	354	11.5	344	12.10	393

20.22-29	425	32.39	121, 258,	1 Samuel	
21.4-9	308		400, 402	2.6	258, 260
21.17-18	293	33.2	186, 288	3.4	194
24.6	272	33.20	272	7.9	283
24.18-22	311	36.6	64	10.19	400
33.41-43	308	34.10-12	46	11.2	331
34.1-12	273			11.3	401
35.16	396	<i>Joshua</i>		13.19-22	395
		1.4	272	14.39	400
<i>Deuteronomy</i>		9.4	302	14.44	344
2.5-9	274	10.1-27	140	16.23	275-76
3.11	396-97,	10:12-14	318-26	17.7	397
	399	11.19	322	18.27	328
4.6-8	274	12.1	272	19.5-6	404
4.7	202	16.5, 10	323	22.1	314
4.20	332, 395,	17.16, 18	397	25.29	118
	397-98	24.12	393	26.20	412
4.35	121				
5.6	122	<i>Judges</i>		2 Samuel	
5.7	124	1.19	397	1:18-27	295
7.20	393	1.29, 35	323	2.13	322
8.9	308	2.16, 18	401, 404	4.9	402
9.26-29	282	3.9, 15	141, 401,	7.18-29	282
11.24	272		404	7.22	121
11.29	371	3.31	404	8.2	328
12.20	272	4.4, 13	397	8.14	404
13.8	270	5.4	186	9	334
16.3	370	5.19-21	407-409	9.6	200
16.18-20	403	5.28	344	10:6-8	331, 335
16.22	131	6	124	10.9-12	335
19.5	396	6.11-24	186	11.17	331
19.8	272	6.31	143	11.21	366
19.14	272	6.32	366	12.9-12	334
20	335	6.36-38	98, 400,	12.14-25	335
20.4	404		404	12.23	260
22.6-7	414	7.2	370	12.27	334
22.27	400-402	9.6	131	12.31	15, 327-37,
23.18	418	10.10	283		395, 397-
25.9	402	10.14	17		98
27.5	396	10.16	201	13.20	172
28.29, 31	400-402	11.24	124	15.16	343
28.48	332, 395	12.3	400	16.21	343
31.10	295	13.3	135	17.27-29	397
31.16	256, 259,	16.5-6	131	18.27	328
	263	16.28	283	19.31-40	397
31.19	295	18.10	272	20.3	343
32.1-43	295	18.28	400	21.1-9	323
32.8	274			22.32	121
32.11	167, 217,	<i>Ruth</i>		22.42	400
	358	1.16	284	23.4	216
32.18	167, 185,	1.20	147	23.20	343
	217, 382	4.6	402	23.37	330

<i>1 Kings</i>		<i>Esther</i>		28.28	79
2	334	3.13	314	29-31	79-80
6-7	396	4.14	275-76	30.29	345
7.24	16	7.4	314	31.23	343
18	124	8.3	286	31.26	320
		1.3	314	31.35	82
<i>2 Kings</i>				32-37	80-82
16	133-35	<i>Job</i>		32.1-6	79-80
18-20	135	1-3	80	32.15	81
19	16	1.1	84	32.20	276
20	23	1.6-12	80, 124,	33.29-30	87
23	121		340	34.5-6	80
		1.21	79, 85	34.12	343
<i>1 Chronicles</i>		1.22	84	36.16	274
1.51	308	2.4	85, 301	36.22	87
2.2	289	2.9	84	36.28	162
4.1-23	308	2.11-13	79, 84	38-39	87
4.40	272	3	79, 85	38-41	79, 82-83
6.4	425	3.8	87	38.1	78-79, 81,
7.24	323	3.13	344		87
10	289	4-27	79-80	38.4	81
13.15	131	4.10-11	339	38.8-11	181
19.1-20.3	328, 335	4.17-21	86	38.17	211
24.10-11	425	5.2-5	339, 343	38.18	154
		5.8-16	86, 302	38.28-30	181
<i>2 Chronicles</i>		5.17	82, 87, 304	40-41	125
2.6, 13	396	7.21	344	40.1	79, 81, 87
14.14	312	8.3	343	40.2	87
15.3	199	8.15	339	40.3-5	83, 88
21.13	314	9.22-23	86, 340	41:12-34	81
21.15	392	10	85, 88	42	79-81, 88
22.10	135	10.4	86	42.5	79
24.12	396	11.13-20	86, 344	42.6	88
33.12-13	282, 284-	11.19	284	42.8	283
	85	12.9	79		
36.17	314	14.12	259	<i>Psalms</i>	
		15.29	343	1.3	340
<i>Ezra</i>		16.5	344	1.5	152, 262
2.61-63	397	16.9	313	2	289
7	47	19.16	286	2.7	411
9.2	132	19.17	81	2.9	397, 399
9.6-15	282	19.25-27	29, 86,	4.1	289
10.1	286		152, 265-	4.2	271, 275
			67	5.1	291
<i>Nehemiah</i>		20.15, 18	343	7	294
3.4	425	21.15	284	7.3	402
7.63-65	397, 425	25	79	7.7, 11	403-404
9.25	272	26.13	301	7.12-14	
9.26	314	27.13-23	339	(Heb. 13-14)	313
9.27	401	28	79-82	9.13	211
13.13	424	28.12-13	340	10.4	302

13.14	260	88	291, 295	8	127
16.1	289	88.6	332	8.4	14
16.11	258	89.9	125, 181	8.22-23	126
17.7	403-404	89.41-42	346	8.24-25	181
17.11-12	274	90.1	296	9.1	339
17.15	32, 260,	90.10	211	10.14, 29	346
	262, 267	91.1-2	124	11.28, 30	258, 340
18	293, 295-	92	289, 295	12.28	30, 258,
	96	93.3-4	125		359
18.1	347	95.3	122, 124	13.3	346
18.4-5	274	95.8-9	347	13.22	343
18.19	274	95.11	277	13.24	208
18.20	271, 279	97.7	122, 124	14.1	339
18.42	400	100	295	14.15	302
22.1-18	85	104.1	186	17.5	305
22.8	345	105.18	397	18.7	346
23.2	277	107.10	397	18.16	275
23.4	354	110	289	19.6	284
31.18	320	110.4		23.22	302
36	295-96	(Heb. 7)	145	24.22	344
37.4	197	113.3	154	24.30-32	339, 346-
38	295	118.5	274		47
39.6	300	119	289-90	26.3	208
45	297	119.32, 45	277	27.4	171
46.7, 11		119.78	343	30.18-19	301
(Heb. 8, 12)	134	119.96	277	30.24-31	301
47.10	142	120-134	293-94		
49.16	267	121.6	320	<i>Ecclesiastes</i>	
51.17	64	127	291	1.1, 12	348
52.2		127.1, 5	339, 343	1.4-5	343, 348
(Heb. 4)	313	131.2	185, 217,	2.4-8	340
54.1	297		382	2.14-16	340-41
57-59	297	138.3	347	3.1-3	340
58.4-5	302	141.4	14	3.11-12	306, 340
60	295	143.3-4	188	3.18-20	341
60.1	297	146.9	343	7.14	340
66.12	275-76			10.6-11	340
69.12		<i>Proverbs</i>		11.5	340-41
(Heb. 13)	345	1-9	126, 341,	11.9-11	341, 348
70	295		348	12.1-6	338-50
72.16	261, 266	1.5	29	12.5	261
73.20	300	1.8-9	341	12.9-14	348
73.24	258, 261-	3.1-2	341		
	62	3.9	423	<i>Song of Solomon</i>	
74.13	125	3.11-12	82	2.10-12	197
75	297	3.13-18	304	4.12	98
77.18	87	3.16	302	6.8-9	123
80	297	3.20	162	8.5	185
84.6	14	6.6	301		
84.6-8	418	6.22	260, 345	<i>Isaiah</i>	
85.10-14	163	7.6	344	1-5	208
				1	18, 223

<i>Isaiah</i> (cont.)		7.14	22, 55, 73,	16.1	98, 146,
1.1	145-46		94, 133-37,		221, 247
1.3	61, 247		155, 181,	16.1-5	135, 146,
1.5-6	85, 176,		196, 220,		246
	249		224-25,	16.2	414
1.9	75, 239		228, 232,	17.13	266
1.10-17	64		235, 241,	18.3	222, 236
1.15	75, 223,		246-47	18.7	146
	239, 392	7.17	131, 420	19.1	246-47
1.16	220-21	7.25	344	19.16-25	125, 138-
1.17	246	8.1-4	134-35		150
1.26	138, 140-	8.3	221	19.17	360-61
	41, 238-39	8.5	236	19.19-20	221, 401,
2.2	30	8.7-8	273		403
2.3	236, 238,	8.8-10	134	20.2	402
	273	8.16	156	20.3	136
2.4	56, 146,	8.18	136	22.22	136, 248
	232, 237-	9.1		23.15-18	168-69
	38, 241	(Heb. 23)	247	24-27	140, 151-
2.5	221, 237	9.2-7			52
2.19	214	(Heb. 1-6)	133-34	24.1-13	152-54
2.22	131	9.4 (Heb. 3)	347	24.14-16	153-55
3.9-11	75, 239	9.6 (Heb. 5)	164, 174,	24.16	151-60,
3.18-26	176, 180		216, 235-		359
5	225		36, 246-47	24.23	318, 320,
5.1-7	293	9.18	332		431
5.8	273	10.14	414	25.7-9	213, 217,
5.14	276	10.15	331-32		234
5.21	302	10.34	397, 399	26	213-14
5.26	221	11.1	41, 98,	26.2-3	214, 224,
5.29	402		136, 164,		371
6	18, 80, 93,		174, 215,	26.14	258-59
	153, 194-		221, 246-	26.15	273
	206, 222		47, 346	26.17-21	157-58,
6.1	133, 208	11.2	216, 221,		174
6.3	41, 221,		247	26.19	32, 236,
	233-34,	11.1-9	134, 235		258, 261
	246	11.9	238, 246	27.1	87, 125,
6.9-10	41, 75,	11.10	215, 221		301
	136, 223,	11.16	143, 222,	27.9	226
	231, 239,		236	27.12-13	41
	246-47	12	133	28.5	143
6.12	144	12.3	220-21,	28.15	211-12
6.13	130-32,		226, 236	28.16	221
	134-35,	13-23	146	28.18	211-12
	419	13.10	320, 430	29.1-2	236
7.3	222, 235-	13.21-22	346	29.6	87
	36	14	212	29.9	75, 239
7.3-9	133-35	14.1	144	29.11-12	156
7.9	29, 134,	14.28	208	29.13-14	75, 239
	353, 363-	15.6	216-17	30.15	237
	72				

30.18	222, 232	42:1-4	135, 164	49.13-15	167-68,
30.23	273	42.1	221, 247		185, 191,
31.1-3	148	42.2	14		201, 217,
31.5	217	42.5-43.10	53		246
32.1-8	135	42.14	41, 167,	49.19-21	273
32.8	216, 222		173, 185,	49.20	221
33.10	249		189, 201,	49.22-26	333
34.13-14	346, 359		217, 246,	49.26	400, 402
34.15	410-11		304	50.5	249
35.1-2	221, 236-	42.19-20	177	50.6	200
	37	42.21	236	51.9-10	125, 181
35.4	221	43.1	53	51.11	237
35.5-6	247-48	43.2	237	51.14	187
35.8	14, 237	43.3	405	51.16	178
35.10	56, 217,	43.4	181	52.1-2	13, 176,
	237	43.7	53		181, 210,
36-37	146-47,	43.10	232		239, 242
	208-210	43.11	404-405	52.1-12	195-97
37.3	174	43.13, 14	402	52.7	179
37.22	134, 168,	43.15	181	52.8	236
	176, 181,	43.21	239	52.112	370
	209	43.22-28	170, 176,	52.13	249
37.25	226		179	52.13-53.12	18, 32, 50,
38-39	23	44.1-5	177		55, 64, 70,
38	210-12	44.12-20	309, 398		75, 87,
40	18, 153,	44.17	17		175-80,
	200	45.2	405		191, 215,
40-66	5, 17-18,	45.5, 6	121		220, 227,
	127, 195,	45.8	98, 161-66,		235, 241,
	221		221, 247	53.2	248
40.1-5	237	45.10	167, 217	53.3	164
40.1	169	45.14	121	53.7	14, 215
40.2	84, 210,	45.15	41, 232	53.8	249
	214-15	45.18	121		41, 221,
40.3	222, 236,	45.20-21	403	53.11	246, 332
	247	46.3-4	167, 185,		18, 32,
40.6-8	41, 216-17,		191, 217		152, 265,
	246, 259	46.13	221		267-68,
40.7	235	47	169, 180	54.1-10	284
40.9	56, 179,	47.2	344		84, 170-73,
	196, 221,	47.15	400, 405		191, 201-
	222, 236	49-66	169-82	54.2	202, 210
40.12-13	188	49.1	221	54.16-17	272-73
41.4	238	49.3	241	55.1	308
41.8	185, 204	49.4	169, 176	55.10	221, 226
41.14	175, 402	49.5	179	55.13	175
41.15	180, 240,	49.6	221, 274	56	221
	242, 332-	49.9	238	56.5	140
	33	49.10	221		217-18,
41.19	237	49.11	222, 236		222, 232,
41.27	222, 235,	49.12	246	56.7	235
	240, 242				238

<i>Isaiah</i> (cont.)		65.23	175	46.27	400
56.10	75, 239	66.1-2	200	48.12	187
57.1-2	211, 214	66.5	222, 232	49.1-6	333
57.1-4	75, 239	66.7-14	135, 173-	49.16	413-14
57.4	276		75, 221	49.17	345
57.6-13	170, 176	66.8-9	189, 191,	50.11	147
57.15	199-200		201	51.39	260
57.19	235	66.13	185, 217,		
58	197-98		234-35,	<i>Ezekiel</i>	
58.8	261		246, 382	1.1	92, 95
58.13	232	66.18-21	140, 146	1.10	93, 95
59.16	284	66.19-20	221, 249,	1.16	92
59.20-21	226		312	1.29	93
60.1-14	177	66.24	212, 223,	2.8-3.3	92
60.1	210, 236		262	5.2	154
60.5	276			7.3	94
60.6	247	<i>Jeremiah</i>		8.1	290
60.9	246	1.11-12	346	9.4	95
60.16	402	2.5, 11	121	10.9-19	92
60.17	220, 396	2.20	187	10.14	93
60.19-20	320	6.1	155	10.21	93
60.20	217, 234,	6.28	396	14.1	290
	431	7.16	14, 282-86	14.14	78, 83-85,
60.21	131	8.17	302		95
60.22	237	10.6	122	16.21	333
61.1-4	179	11.4	397-98	16.44	95
61.1	41, 164,	14.8	400	18.4	95
	221, 246-	15.12	397	19.2	147
	47	17.6-8	340	21.26	333
61.3	131, 232	17.11	410-15	21.31-32	
61.6	221	18.16	345	(Heb. 36-37)	333
61.10	232	19.8	345	23.37	333
61.11	164	20.14-18	85	24.17	94
62.4	236	22.13-14	271, 273,	25.3	333
62.10	222, 236		276	25-32	222
63.1-6	153, 173,	22.23	414	27.12	312
	184-93,	25.10	344	27.19	396
	201, 215,	25.23	79	28.23	286
	248-49	27.18	284	30.8	402
63.5	401	30.6	412	32.7	320
63.8	405	30.10	400	33.11	94-95
63.9	200	31.15	88	34	92
63.16	201	31.18-32	106	34.11	94
64.8	201	32.17-35	282	34.11-16	95
65.1-16	198-99	32.20-35	108	34.18	273
65.2-3	75, 223-25,	32.35	331, 333	34.26	95
	239, 246	36.25	284	36.16-28	95
65.13-14	223, 246	40.13	333	36.25	94
65.17-25	146, 181,	41.12	322	36.26	92
	304-305	41.18	333	37	94-95, 157,
65.18	53	43.13	144		259-60

37.11	332	3.16	2.13-14	346
37.27	92	(Heb. 4.16)	3.16-17	178
38-39	95			
39.17	94	<i>Amos</i>	<i>Zechariah</i>	
40-48	94, 419	1-2	2.8-13	
44.2	94, 96-99	1.2, 13	(Heb. 12-17)	140, 178
44.15	419	1.3	8.7	400
47.1-12	95, 266,		9.15	402
	273	3.12	13.3	411
47.3	417			
48.10	96	4.11	<i>Malachi</i>	
		5.19	1.11-12	124, 140
<i>Daniel</i>		5.26-27	3.20	432
2.40	397	6.4		
4.34-37	79, 125	8.1-2	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>	
6.25-27	125	9.3	4.3-5	340
7.15-16	186	9.11-15	5.9-15	347
8.4	402		12.13	122
8.17, 27	188	<i>Obadiah</i>		
9.4-19	182	4	<i>Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)</i>	
10.13	143	15, 17, 21	3.21-24	425
11.46	147		7.17	426
12.2	86, 157,	<i>Jonah</i>	7.29-31	423
	258-59,	1.14	11.30	412
	261	1.17	15.14	426
12.3	32, 152,	2.2	21.4, 8, 18	339
	216, 262,	2.4, 6	22.16-18	339
	267	4.10-11	25-26	426
			31.12-32.6	426
<i>Hosea</i>		<i>Micah</i>	33.24-31	426
2.15		2.2	37.3	426
(Heb. 17)	56	4.3	38.28	308-309,
2.23	185	5.2-3		398
4.16	273, 277-	(Heb. 1-2)	38-39	424
	78	6.9	41.1-4	85, 426
6.2	54	7.11	44.5	293
7.11	16		45.6-22	423, 425
10.1-2	131	<i>Nahum</i>	45.24-26	424
11.11	16	1.3	47.8-10	424
12.2-6	286	1.9	48.11	426
13.13	174		49.1	293
		<i>Habakkuk</i>	49.8	93
<i>Joel</i>		1.6	49.13	424
2.10	320	2.9	50	423
2.28-32		3.3	50.1	425
(Heb. 3.1-5)	430-31	3.11	50.27	145, 423,
2.31	318	3.17		425
3.13			51.12	424, 426
(Heb. 4.13)	190	<i>Zephaniah</i>	51.23, 29	426-27
3.15		2.2		
(Heb. 4.15)	320, 430	2.8-11	<i>I Maccabees</i>	
			4.28-59	322

<i>2 Maccabees</i>		1.38	194	<i>1 Corinthians</i>	
1.24-25	122	4.18-19	247	3.16-17	98
		6.47-49	339	6.19	98
NEW TESTAMENT		7.22	247-48	8.4-6	122
<i>Matthew</i>		15.25-32	142		
1.6	247	16.20	85	<i>2 Corinthians</i>	
1.22	133, 136	19.10	92	3.3	92
1.23	22, 247	23.24	148, 198	5.1	420
2.6	135	23.44-45	408, 429-	6.16	92, 98
4.15-16	247		33	11.19	92
5.20	277				
7.24-27	339	<i>John</i>		<i>Galatians</i>	
8.17	248	1.1-3	92	4.27	178
9.36	92	2.21	98		
10.16	301	3.5	277	<i>1 Timothy</i>	
11.5	247-48	3.16	41	2.13	53
13.14-17	136, 247	7.42	135		
16.19	248	12.39-41	247	<i>1 Peter</i>	
24.27, 37	197	15.13	185	1.24	216
24.29	197, 430	17.3	122	2.24-25	248
27.25	75, 223,	19.20	111		
	239	21.11	97	<i>Revelation</i>	
27.45	432			1.18	248
27.51-54	430	<i>Acts</i>		2.7	305
		2.16-21	430	4.7	93
<i>Mark</i>		8.32	248	7.3	95
1.13	84	11.28	431	9.4	95
6.34	92	16.10	431	12.1-6	178
8.18	247	28.26-27	247	14.1	95
9.47-48	213			19.13-15	188, 191,
12.19-32	122-24	<i>Romans</i>			248
12.20-21	414	1.16	138	20.2	84
13.24	430	9.27	233	20.8	95
15.33	432	10.16	248	20.13	154
		10.20	233		
<i>Luke</i>		10.21	198		
1.26-38	178	11.26-27	226		
1.31	135				

INDEX OF NAMES

- Abel, F.-M. 37
 Abrabanel, I. 154
 Abramsky, S. 315
 Ackerman, S. 217
 Ackroyd, P.R. xviii, 11, 17-20, 22, 27,
 150, 180, 328, 436
 Aeschylus 154
 Aesop 80, 301
 Africanus, Julius 429
 Aistleitner, J. 16, 357-58
 Aitken, J.K. 69, 438
 Albright, W.F. 6
 Al-Damiri, M. 413
 Alexander, C.F. 95
 Alfrink, B. 319-20
 Alkalay, J. 238
 Allegro, J. 416
 Allen, L.C. 15-16
 Allen, R.J. 60
 Alt, A. 322-23
 Alter, R. 6, 9, 73, 89, 158, 168, 228, 336,
 358, 362
 Altmann, P. 274
 Altschuler, D. 143, 198, 203-204
 Ambrose 157, 196, 213, 215
 Amussin, J. 418
 Andersen, F.I. 386
 Anderson, A.A. 14
 Anderson, G.W. 23, 151, 153, 437
 Angelico, Fra 92
 Ap-Thomas, D. 283-84, 287
 Aquila 294-95, 417
 Aquinas, Thomas 56
 Aristophanes 412-13
 Aristotle 412-13
 Asch, S. 236, 241
 Asher, R.E. 58, 374, 438
 Atwan, R. 252
 Auerbach, E. 37
 Augustine 37, 56, 75, 84, 96, 191, 213,
 226, 239
 Auld, A.G. 151, 437

 Bach, J.S. 37, 234
 Bannerman, D.A. 412
 Barnes, M. 49, 438
 Barnes, W.E. 418
 Barr, J. 2, 11-13, 16, 20, 28-29, 31, 37,
 152, 271, 286, 289, 329, 340, 354,
 356, 363-64, 366-72, 400
 Barth, C. 262
 Barth, K. 7
 Bartolucci, G. 113-14, 227-28
 Barton, G.A. 338, 342, 348-49
 Barton, J. 61, 168
 Baruk ben Isaac 143
 Bauer, H. xvii
 Bauer, W. 417, 429
 Baumgartner, W. xix, 29, 297, 362
 Bayle, P. 328, 330
 Beal, T. 37
 Benjamin of Tudela 232
 Bennett, C. 308
 Bentzen, A. 261, 338
 Ben-Yehudah, E. 16, 282, 358
 Ben Zion, S. 360
 Berkovits, E. 75, 232, 234
 Berlin, A. 198
 Bernardino of Siena 112
 Bernheimer, R. 215
 Bertram, G. 418
 Betz, O. 419
 Beuken, W. 9, 56, 99, 203
 Bewer, J.A. 15
 Bickersteth, E. 214
 Bjorkman, J.K. 316, 395
 Black, M. 24, 132, 192, 416, 433
 Blake, W. 94-95
 Blass, F. 417
 Blenkinsopp, J. 3, 97, 99, 407
 Blunt, A. 224-25
 Bochart, S. 412-13
 Bodenheimer, F.S. 410
 Boling, R.G. 407
 Boman, T. 271, 320, 351, 369
 Bonnard, P.E. 18, 162-63, 170, 176, 187-
 88, 190, 201
 Bosch, H. 147
 Botterweck, G.J. xx, 23, 26
 Box, G.H. 89, 185-86
 Boyarin, D. 8
 Bradley, G.G. 338

- Brahms, J. 7, 213, 216, 246
 Braybrooke, M. 60
 Brekelmans, C. 27, 436
 Brenner, A. 76
 Brettler, M.Z. 198
 Briggs, C.A. and E.G. xvii, 266, 291, 392
 Bright, J. 131, 410
 Britten, B. 212, 234
 Brock, S. 159
 Brockington, L.H. 156
 Bromiley, G.W. xx
 Bronte, E. 95
 Brown, F. xvii
 Brown, K. 439
 Brown, R.M. 75, 250
 Browne, S.G. 394
 Browning, R. 95
 Bruce, F.F. 20, 27, 419, 432
 Brueggemann, W. 22, 86, 196, 198, 306
 Buber, M. 74, 204
 Bultmann, R. 9, 431
 Burckhardt, J. 210
 Burney, C.F. 401, 408
 Burton, R.F. 309
 Buss, M.J. 12
 Buzy, D. 338
 Bynon, J. and T. 436
 Byrd, W. 163
 Byron, Lord 209-210

 Calmet, A. 332, 334
 Calvin, J. 38, 191, 198
 Campbell, E.F. 322-23
 Caquot, A. 427
 Carey, W. 379
 Carmi, T. 54, 234, 361
 Carmichael, C.M. 8, 45, 335
 Carroll, R.P. 7, 9, 17, 23, 231, 438
 Casanowicz, I.M. 393
 Cassuto, U. 74
 Castelli, E. 72, 243, 252
 Cato the Elder 44
 Chandler, S. 328-29
 Chaucer, G. 37, 95
 Cheyne, T.K. 138-39, 144, 186-87, 189, 198
 Childs, B.S. 17-21, 27, 37, 74, 96, 137, 146, 198, 334, 371
 Chilton, B.D. 153, 156-57, 202
 Christ, H. 13

 Christiani, P. 55, 112
 Cialini, G. xv, 101, 104, 109, 119
 Ciantes, J.M. 222
 Cicero 80
 Cima da Conigliano, G.B. 224
 Clébert, J.-P. 309
 Clement of Rome 220, 245
 Clements, R.E. 19, 21, 138-40, 146-47, 153, 210
 Clines, D.J.A. xvi, 12, 14, 184, 220, 306, 395, 434, 437-38
 Coggins, R.J. 4, 11, 36-37, 91, 250, 436, 438
 Cohen, A. 53, 278, 338
 Cohen, J. 4, 41, 73, 250
 Cohn-Sherbok, D. 73
 Collantes, F. 94
 Coogan, M.D. 438
 Cooke, G.A. 97
 Cornill, C.H. 82
 Cowley, A.E. xviii
 Craigie, P.C. 407
 Crenshaw, J.L. 89, 338, 341
 Cripps, R.S. 420
 Cross, E. 212
 Cross, F.M. 275
 Crystal, D. 364
 Culley, R.C. 12
 Cyril of Alexandria 196-99, 203, 432
 Cyril, St 380

 Dahood, M. 30, 262, 264, 266
 Dalman, G. 411
 Daly, M. 185
 Danby, H. 263
 Dante Alighieri 37-38, 95, 108-109, 212
 Danz, J.A. 329
 Davidson, A.B. 97, 188
 Davies, J.G. 41, 207, 218, 437
 Davies, P.R. 138, 151, 184, 231, 437-38
 Debrunner, A. 417
 Del Monte, A. 222, 224
 Del Olmo Lete, G. 101
 Delcor, M. 138, 143-44, 427
 Delekat, L. 291, 293
 Delitzsch, F. 187, 259, 408
 Dhome, E. 82
 Di Lella, A.A. 427
 Donne, J. 216
 Dorff, E.N. 238-39
 Doughty, C. 309

- Douglas, M. 43-45, 47-48, 386, 434, 437
 Driver, G.R. xviii, 5-6, 345, 361, 391-94,
 404, 410, 429, 438
 Driver, S.R. xvii, 79, 81-82, 231, 267,
 319, 330, 332
 Dryden, J. 95
 Dube, M.W. 4, 40, 100, 253
 Duccio di Buoninsegna 94
 Duesberg, H. 427
 Duhm, B. 31-32, 41, 138-40, 143, 146,
 152, 167, 170, 174, 177-78, 185,
 188, 196, 198, 267
 Dunbar, W. 164
 Dupont, J. 431
 Dus, J. 321

 Eaton, J.H. 176
 Eckardt, A. and A.R. 75
 Edwards, J. 37
 Eerdmans, B.D. 297
 Eichrodt, W. 97, 286-87
 Eisler, R. 314
 Eissfeldt, O. 272, 288-89, 295, 319, 352,
 407, 417
 El Greco 110
 Elbogen, I. 195, 234-35, 259
 Eliade, M. 308-309, 383, 398
 Elliott, T.S. 95
 Elliott, M.W. 196
 Ellis, M. 241
 Emerton, J.A. 97
 Ephraim of Bonn 54-55
 Erlandsson, S. 139
 Ettlinger, L.D. and H.S. 214, 224
 Eusebius 307, 423
 Evans, C.E. xviii, 231
 Even Shoshan, A. xviii, 147, 155, 187,
 279, 357-61
 Ewald, H. 291
 Exum, J.C. xvi, 119, 220, 438

 Fackenheim, E. 88
 Fairbairn, A. 327-28
 Farmer, W. 38
 Fensham, F.C. 323
 Fetterley, J. 5, 9
 Feuillet, A. 138, 140-41
 Finch, R.G. 73
 Firth, J.R. 370
 Fish, S. 3
 Fishbane, M. 73, 151

 Flannery, A. 71
 Fokkelmann, J.P. 12, 17
 Fontaine, C. 76
 Forbes, D. 386
 Forbes, R.J. 308-309, 398
 Ford, J. 8
 Fotheringham, J.K. 431
 Francis of Assisi 95
 Fraser, P.M. 138, 144
 Freedman, D.N. 275
 Freyne, S. 8, 57, 99
 Friedland, N. 236
 Friedländer, M. 73, 205
 Friedrich, G. xx
 Fritsch, C.T. 418
 Frontisi-Ducroux, F. 313

 Gadamer, H.-G. 36
 Galling, K. xix, 322
 Gelb, I.I. xviii
 Gemser, B. 371, 403
 Gersonides 330
 Gesenius, W. xviii, 187, 357, 392
 Gibbon, E. 429
 Gibson, J.C.L. 306
 Giesebrecht, F. 410
 Gilbert, M. 428
 Gill, S.G. 383
 Ginsberg, H.L. 338
 Ginzberg, L. 15, 49, 53-54, 73, 222
 Giotto 112
 Glazer, N. 56
 Gleason, H.A. 366
 Glueck, N. 307
 Goethe, J.W. von 95
 Goldingay, J. 146
 Gomes, L.O. 383
 Good, E.M. 89
 Gordis, R. 79-80, 82, 338, 342, 347
 Goshen-Gottstein, M.H. 365
 Gottwald, H.K. 151
 Grabbe, L. 83
 Grant, F.C. xviii
 Gray, G.B. 79, 81, 131, 139, 141, 143-44,
 146, 156
 Gray, J. 5, 29, 320, 323, 407
 Greenberg, I. 75
 Greenberg, M. 73, 88
 Gregory Thaumaturgus 348
 Gregory the Great 82, 92
 Gruenewald, M. 224

- Gruenwald, I. 427
 Guild, W. 331
 Guiraud, P. 257, 400
 Gunn, D.M. 37, 74, 77, 334, 435
 Gunkel, H. 41
 Gurion, B. 238
 Gutiérrez, G. 4, 85, 87, 163
- Habel, N.C. 89
 Hahn, I.E. 329, 335
 Halliday, M.A.K. 278
 Handel, G.F. 38, 86, 213, 216, 250
 Handelman, S.A. 73, 228
 Hanson, P.D. 151
 Harlap, J.M. 236
 Harris, I. 232
 Harrison, C.J.O. 412
 Hartman, D. 238, 241
 Hastings, A. 438
 Hastings, J. xviii
 Hayes, J.H. 4, 36-37, 74, 151, 154, 250, 438
 Hayman, A.P. 21
 Hayward, R. 138, 141, 143-45
 Heelas, P. 43
 Hengel, M. 423
 Henry, A. 94, 215, 252
 Henry, M. 196, 202, 204
 Herbert, G. 38
 Hermann, N. 94-95
 Herodotus 209
 Herrmann, S. 281, 286-87
 Hertzberg, A. 56, 238
 Hertzberg, H.W. 338, 342
 Heschel, A.J. 138
 Hess, M. 237-38
 Hesse, F. 283
 Hill, D.W. 271
 Hippolytus 413
 Hobbes, T. 380
 Hoenigswald, H.M. 351
 Holladay, W.L. 29, 73
 Homer 84, 212, 320, 342
 Hospers, J.H. 356, 361, 436, 437
 Houlden, J.L. 4, 36-37, 91, 193, 250, 438
 Hugh of St Victor 413
 Hugo, Victor 248
 Hulse, E.V. 391, 393
 Hultsch, H. 216
 Humbert, J. 417
- Humfrey, P. 224
 Hunter, A.G. 231, 438
 Hurvitz, A. 83
- Ibn Ezra, A. 73, 96, 187, 201, 258, 260-63
 Immanuel of Rome 108-109
 Ingham, H. 438
 Irvine, S.A. 151
 Isidore of Seville 239, 246, 413
 Iwry, S. 130
- Jackson, J.J. 11
 Jacob, E. 140, 142
 Jacobs, L. xv
 Jastrow, M. 29, 131, 156, 284, 343, 358, 361, 392, 401
 Jauss, H.R. 36-37
 Jeffrey, D.L. 4, 38, 40, 58, 74, 232
 Jellicoe, S. 27, 416-18
 Jenni, E. xx, 25
 Jeremias, J. 37, 338
 Jerome 37, 52, 83, 92, 98, 155-56, 163, 189, 196, 198, 200, 209, 221, 245, 247, 349, 379, 410, 413-14, 417
 Jobling, D. 12
 John Chrysostom 75, 227, 239
 John Paul II 69-70
 Jona, G.B. 224
 Jones, D.R. 14, 176, 185, 198-99, 202, 204
 Jones, E. 338, 340, 347
 Jones, H.S. xix
 Josephus 138-39, 144-45, 209, 265, 322, 397, 407, 416, 419
 Joubert, J. 163
 Joyce, P. 72, 91, 438
 Junker, H. 90
 Justin Martyr 75, 239, 245
- Kahle, P. 417
 Kaiser, O. 30, 137, 138-43, 148, 151, 154, 156
 Kasowsky, H.Y. 257
 Kautzsch, E. xviii
 Kayatz, C. 258
 Keil, C.F. 408
 Keller, C.A. 19
 Kerman, J. 163
 Kermode, F. 89, 168
 Kessler, E. 69, 438-39
 Kessler, M. 12

- Kimhi, D. 73, 143, 154, 187, 190-91, 196,
 330-32, 346, 410, 413
 Kind, H.D. 307
 Kirkpatrick, A.F. 264, 330
 Kittel, G. xx, 130, 350, 364
 Klauck, H.-J. 99
 Klein, C. 60, 75
 Klibansky, R. 92
 Knibb, M.A. 11, 233
 Knight, G.A.F. 5
 Koehler, L. xviii, xix, 29, 391-92
 Kook, A.I. 238, 240
 Kook, Z.Y. 236, 238-40
 Kosmala, H. xv, 131, 419-20
 Kovacs, J. 35, 242
 Kraus, H.-J. 277, 290-91, 294-95
 Kutscher, E.Y. 362
 Kysar, R. 71

 Labov, W. 351-52
 Labuschagne, C.J. 122
 Lagarde, P.A. de 417
 Lambert, W.G. 83
 Lampe, G.W.H. 99, 429
 Landy, F. 358
 Lapointe, R. 29
 Larsson, G. 52, 74-75
 Leahy, M. 338
 Leander, P. xvii
 Leaney, A.R.C. 429
 Lee, L. 191
 Lefebvre, M. 480
 Lehmann, M.R. 427
 Leibowitz, Y. 238
 Le Moyne, J. 423
 Levenson, J. 74
 Lévi-Strauss, C. 46
 Levy, J. 411
 Lewis, C.D. 55
 Liddell, H.G. xix, 417, 429
 Lieb, M. 78, 99, 438
 Liebesny, H.J. 404
 Linafelt, T. 4, 40, 50, 70, 250
 Lindblom, J. 137
 Lipton, D. 71
 Livingstone, E.A. 436
 Loades, A. 185
 Loewe, H. 235
 Loewe, R. 52, 231
 Logan, N.A. 264
 Love, V. 360

 Lowth, R. 138, 186, 196
 Luther, M. 7, 49, 51-52, 56, 94, 96, 157,
 200, 213-14, 225-26, 379-80
 Luzzatto, S.D. 198, 203-204
 Lyons, J. xv, 13, 28, 278, 288

 Maccoby, H. 56
 MacEoin, D.M. 437
 McFague, S. 167, 172, 184-85, 191-92,
 204, 382
 McGann, J.J. 210
 McGinn, B. 99
 McNeile, A.H. 338, 344
 McKane, W. 14, 29-30, 126, 138, 148,
 258, 328, 340-41, 437
 McKenzie, J.L. 185-86, 188
 McLaughlin, J.L. 200
 MacMillan, J. 137, 251
 Macholz, G.C. 282, 286
 Maestro di Paciano 109-112
 Magonet, J. 6, 10, 12, 14, 22, 53, 228
 Maier, J. 416
 Mallea, E. 216-17
 Malvenda, T. 330-31
 Mann, J. 235
 Mapu, A. 71, 222, 236, 241
 Marböck, J. 425
 Marcion 61, 121
 Margalit, B. 83
 Margolis, Y. 236
 Marrow, J.H. 215, 252
 Marti, K. 139
 Martin, D. 383
 Martin, J.D. 138, 306, 437
 Martin-Achard, R. 259, 262
 Mason, E. 78, 99, 438
 Maxwell Hyslop, K.R. 307
 Mauchline, J. 131, 139, 146-48, 155
 Mayhew, K. 100
 Mays, J.L. 420
 Medici, V. di 226-27
 Mein, A. 91, 438
 Melugin, R.F. 18
 Mendelssohn, F. 197
 Mendes-Flohr, P. 99
 Merrygold, J. 438
 Mettinger, T.N.D. 167, 177
 Metzger, B.M. 438
 Mews, S. 243
 Michael the Syrian 432
 Michelangelo 110

- Middleton, D.F. 185, 359
 Migne, J.-P. xix, 92-93, 100
 Milano, A. 220, 223, 226
 Miles, J. 88
 Miles, J.C. 404
 Milgrom, J. 37, 73, 389
 Millar, W.R. 151, 153
 Milton, J. 7, 37, 95, 212
 Miranda, J.P. 4, 96, 163
 Moberley, R.W.L. 306
 Moffatt, J. 157
 Montefiore, C.J. 235
 Montgomery, J.A. 31-32, 267, 401, 419
 Moore, G.F. 261, 407
 Moore, S.D. 243, 252
 Moorey, P.R.S. 307
 Mordekai ben Hillel 104
 Morgan, R. 168
 Morris, P. 243, 299, 386, 437
 Moscati, S. 365
 Moshe ben Ya'aqov 104
 Mowinckel, S. 41, 267, 270, 290-91, 294-97
 Muhly, J.D. 307, 395
 Muilenburg, J. 11-12
 Mullo Weir, C. 148
 Muraoka, T. 17
 Murray, A. 307
 Musil, A. 307

 Nahmanides 55-56, 112
 Neubauer, A. 231
 Newman, L.E. 238-39
 Newsom, C.A. 75, 84
 Nicholas of Lyra 95
 Nicholson, E.W. 19, 410
 Niles, D.T. 4-5
 Nimptsch, I.T. 329, 335
 North, C.R. 18, 162, 170
 North, R. 310
 Noth, M. 27, 62, 319-20, 323, 389

 O'Ceallaigh, G.C. 328
 O'Kane, M. 438
 Oakeshott, M.K. 307
 Öhmann, S. 270, 368
 Origen 37, 72, 251, 431
 Orgad, B.Z. 236
 Orlinsky, H.M. 37
 Oswalt, J.N. 196
 Owen, W. 55, 212

 Palache, J.L. 281, 286
 Pāṇini 378
 Patrick, S. 335
 Patte, D. 9, 12
 Patterson, S.J. 252
 Payne, D.F. 19, 22
 Peake, A.S. 83
 Pearl, C. 52
 Pedersen, J. 451
 Pelikan, J. xix, 100, 205, 218
 Perani, M. 102, 119
 Peter Martyr 330-31
 Petersen, D.L. 17
 Petrie, W.M.F. 332
 Pettinato, G. 70
 Pfeiffer, R.H. 308
 Phillips, G.A. 243, 252
 Phythian-Adams, W.J.T. 321
 Pico della Mirandola 113
 Piscatore, J. 331
 Plato 80, 279, 376
 Pleiner, R. 316, 395
 Pliny the Elder 309, 412-13
 Plummer, A. 429, 432
 Podechard, E. 344, 346
 Polzin, R. 12, 168
 Poole, Matthew 154-55
 Pope, M.H. 83
 Porteous, N.W. 2, 9, 31-32, 267, 370
 Potter, G.R. 216
 Power, A.D. 338
 Preuss, R. 289
 Prickett, S. 360
 Prior, M. 71, 239-40
 Pritchard, J.B. xvii, 321-22
 Purcell, L. 438

 Rabanus Maurus 413
 Rabin, H. xv, 31, 257, 281, 363, 368
 Raday, Z. 281
 Rashi 7, 112, 15, 39, 52, 54, 73-77, 96-98, 109, 143, 146, 196, 199, 257-58, 260, 263, 313, 330-32, 360, 410, 413
 Rad, G. Von 6, 52, 62, 87, 120, 180, 273, 277, 295, 338, 341
 Rahlfs, A. xix, 416, 418
 Rankin, O.S. 31, 338
 Raphael 93-94, 214, 216, 224
 Ravitzky, A. 238-39
 Réau, L. 99
 Reed, W.L. 323

- Renan, E. 331, 335
 Rendtorff, R. 200
 Reuchlin, J. 113
 Rhymer, J. 68
 Ricci, M. 379
 Richard of St Victor 95
 Richler, B. 102, 119
 Richter, W. 11
 Rickard, T.A. 308
 Ridge, S. 438
 Riesener, I. 14
 Ringe, S.H. 75
 Ringgren, H. xx, 23, 26, 29, 262
 Roberts, B.J. 347
 Roberts, J. 78, 99, 438
 Robins, F.W. 308
 Robinson, J.M. 252
 Robinson, T.H. 46
 Rofé, A. 73
 Rogerson, J.W. 37, 437
 Rosenbaum, M. 73
 Rosenberg, D. 80
 Rost, L. 334
 Roth, C. 220
 Rothenberg, B. 307-308
 Rothman, E. 168
 Rowland, C.C. 35, 242, 437, 438
 Rowlands, M.J. 308
 Rowley, H.H. xviii, 31, 87, 120, 145, 154,
 177, 262, 264, 267, 297, 320
 Rubens 110, 210
 Ruether, R.R. 185, 191, 383
 Ruffenach, F. 162
 Russell, D.S. 60, 290
 Russell, H.N. 322
 Russell, L.M. 185

 Sakenfeld, K.D. 133, 439
 Samarin, W.J. 383
 Sanders, J.A. 63
 Sarfatti, G. 109-112
 Sasson, J. 308
 Sarna, N.M. 289, 295
 Sawyer, D.F. 299, 434, 437
 Scharfstein, Z. 368
 Schechter, S. 238, 241
 Schiller, G. 40, 96, 215
 Schmidt, H. 278
 Schneider, W. 17
 Schökel, L.A. 11-12, 17, 22, 152-53, 168,
 184-85, 187, 190

 Scholem, G. 56, 232
 Schreiner, A. 418
 Schürer, E. 423
 Schüssler Fiorenza, E. 168
 Schutte, D. 195
 Schwartz, H. 73
 Schwartz, R.M. 243, 252
 Scott, R. xix, 417, 429
 Scott, R.B.Y. 320, 350
 Seddon, G. 191
 Segal, M.Z. 428
 Seeligmann, I.L. 141, 143-44, 418
 Seitz, C.R. 200
 Sermoneta, G. 102
 Shabbetai Tzevi 56
 Shakespeare, W. 84-85
 Shepherd, P. 243
 Shepherd, J. 243
 Sherwood, Y. 4, 38, 56
 Signorelli, L. 94, 110
 Silbermann, A.M. 73
 Simler, J. 330
 Simpson, E.M. 216
 Simpson, J.A. 214-15
 Simpson, J.M.Y. 435, 438-39
 Singer, S. 175, 217, 257, 259, 276
 Skehan, P.W. 428
 Skinner, J. 187, 190-91, 267
 Slotki, I.W. 142, 154, 157, 190-91
 Sluter, C. 215, 248
 Smart, N. 43
 Smith, G.A. 138, 186, 190-91, 321-22
 Smith, H.P. 331, 335
 Smith, W.R. 46, 121, 157, 214
 Snaith, J.N. 424
 Snaith, N.H. 29, 267, 419
 Sobrino, J. 4
 Soden, W. von 257, 291
 Soggin, J.A. 320
 Sommer, B. 195-96, 202, 204
 Sonne, I. 243
 Speiser, E.A. 281, 283, 286
 Sperber, H. 275
 Spiegel, S. 54
 Spier, J. 94
 Spinks, B.D. 206, 234
 Stade, B. 319
 Stähli, P. 13, 283
 Starer, R. 236
 Stenning, J.F. 157-58, 163, 181, 202
 Stephen, F. 191

- Stephenson, F.R. 318, 320, 407-408, 429, 431, 435
 Stevenson, C. 391
 Stocker, M. 4, 38
 Strang, B. xv
 Strange, J. 435
 Streane, A.W. 410
 Stuhlmüller, C. 185, 206
 Sugirtharajah, R.S. 4, 75, 242, 250
 Sweeney, M.A. 137
 Swete, H.B. 429
 Symmachus 186, 294, 344
 Syncellus 422
- Talmon, S. 419
 Tambiah, S.J. 383
 Tansman, A. 236
 Taylor, C. 338, 343, 346
 Taylor, V. 429
 Tcherikover, A. 138, 144-45
 Tertullian 157, 430
 Thackeray, H. St J. 417
 Theodoret 196
 Theophrastus 413
 Thiselton, A.C. 12-13, 22
 Thompson, D.W. 412-13
 Thorburn, C.S. 321
 Thurian, M. 178
 Thomas, D.W. 326, 373, 405
 Tidwell, N. 14
 Toaff, A. 119
 Tournay, R. 30, 32
 Tribble, P. 6, 10, 167, 172, 183, 185, 191, 193, 215, 217, 358
 Trier, J. 270, 368
 Tristram, H.B. 346-47, 410-12
 Tucker, G.M. 20
 Tull, P. 195
 Turner, N. 417
 Tylecote, R.F. 307-308, 395
 Tyndale, W. 380
 Tzarfati, J. 222
- Uffenheimer, B. 200
 Ulfilas 380
 Ullendorff, E. 362
 Ullmann, S. 270, 364
- Van Dyck, A. 110
 Vanstiphout, H.L.J. 356, 437
 Van Wolde, E. 438
- Vaux, R. de 295, 404
 Vermes, G. 112, 138, 143-44, 419-20
 Vermeylen, J. 151, 161, 164, 437
 Vervenne, M. 27, 437
 Vidal, J. 101, 438
 Virgil 210
 Volz, P. 325, 410
- Wagner, N.E. 283
 Waddell, H. 309
 Waldbaum, J.C. 307, 395
 Waldinger, A. 231
 Waldmann, E. 238-39
 Walther, A.F. 404
 Walzer, M. 74
 Warner, M. 163-64
 Watson, Alan 327, 437
 Watson, Arthur 164
 Watson, W. 101, 438
 Watters, W.R. 18
 Weber, M. 309
 Weber, R. 83, 160
 Weiler, A. 9, 57, 99
 Weinfeld, M. 13
 Weinberg, J. 236
 Weingreen, J. 354
 Weippert, M. 320, 322
 Weiser, A. 278, 291, 294
 Weiss, M. 22
 Weitzmann, M. 52-53
 Wellhausen, J. 286-87
 Wenborn, N. 439
 Wertime, T.A. 317, 395
 Wesley, C. 95
 Wesley, J. 96, 198
 West, G.O. 4, 40, 100, 253
 Westermann, C. xx, 18, 162, 170, 185-86, 190, 198, 204, 309-311, 315, 333
 Wheelock, W.T. 383
 White, T.H. 413
 Whitelam, K.W. 71
 Whybray, R.N. 12, 14, 18, 153, 162, 185, 187-88, 190, 201, 334, 341
 Wieder, L. 252
 Wilcox, M. 431
 Wilcox, P. 178
 Wildberger, H. 138, 140-43, 148, 151
 Wilken, R.L. 197
 Willet, A. 330-31
 Williams, A.L. 343
 Williams, D.P. 178

- Williams, R.J. 342, 344
Williamson, C.M. 60
Williamson, H.G.M. 195, 200, 220, 438
Wilson, R.D. 319
Winckler, H. 408
Witz, K. 224
Wollaston, I. 41
Wright, D.F. 100
Wright, G.E. 323
- Würthwein, E. 347, 416, 418-19
Wyatt, N. 101, 438
Young, F. 72
Zatelli, I. 109
Ziegler, J. 144, 160, 416
Zimmerli, W. 37, 97, 338, 342

