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The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra

Bodi, Daniel

Abstract: This research attempts to demonstrate the likelihood that in the formulation of certain themes and motifs of the Book of Ezekiel, its author or redactor knew and used a contemporary Akkadian composition called the Poem of Erra. Twelve features shared by both works have been analyzed. These points of contact have been divided into two categories following a descending degree of probability. In the first category are four features which appear uniquely in the Book of Ezekiel. In the second category are eight features which are present in Ezekiel and in the rest of the Old Testament. The source of the first four features would most probably be extra-biblical, and more specifically the Poem of Erra. The source of the second category of motifs would be in antecedent Old Testament prophetic traditions. Nevertheless, the Poem of Erra might have influenced the formulation and presentation of some aspects of these motifs. By virtue of the comparisons established in this research the book offers a detailed analysis of twelve features of the Poem of Erra thus contributing to a better understanding of this remarkable piece of Akkadian literature. The survey of research on the Babylonian influence on the Book of Ezekiel offers a richly documented review of the over one hundred years old tradition of the interpretatio Babylonica of the Book of Ezekiel. The concluding section explores the particular poetic strategy used in the composition of a major theme and motifs of the Book of Ezekiel defined as literary emulation – creative synthesis of traditional material. This research strikes one by the straightforwardness of this working hypothesis and the elegant solution it offers to the problems raided in this book. It has the marked advantage of bringing all the parallel to a single source – the relatively short Babylonian Poem of Erra. It offers guidelines and a demonstration of some principles of the comparative-contrastive approach, showing the considerable heuristic value but also the limitations of the comparative study of the Ancient Near Eastern literature.

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Daniel Bodi

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PREFACE

This book represents a significantly remodeled and expanded version of my Ph.D. disseration entitled, *Terminological and Thematic Comparisons Between the Book of Ezekiel and Akkadian Literature with Special Reference to the Poem of Erra* (Union Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y., 1987).

Herewith I would like to express my gratitude to the persons who have contributed to the strengths of this research and who have helped me to see it published: Dr. George Landes, my mentor, for helping me focus on the main statement of this work; the Dean Dr. Milton McCormick Gatch, for providing me with indispensable scholarships and tutorships allowing me to concentrate on study and research; Dr. Stephen Garfinkel, for discussing with me the issues concerning the method adopted in the present research; Dr. Marc Van De Mieroop, for his critical comments on the Akkadian sections of this work which have saved me from many errors; Dr. Moshe Greenberg, for the detailed comments with which he has provided me and the encouragement to publish this work without, however, endorsing my point of view; Dr. Henri Hochner for his help in the verification of the Talmudic references; Dr. Martin Rose for helping me clarify questions of terminology; Dr. Christoph Uehlinger, for the valuable suggestions on how to improve the presentation of this work; Dr. Othmar Keel for having accepted to publish this research in the *OBO* series. Special gratitude goes to Dr. Jean-Georges Heintz, who has suggested to me this research topic allowing me to use the resources of the research center G.R.E.S.A. (Groupe de Recherches et d'Études Sémitiques Anciennes) which he conducts. He has generously put at my disposal his dossiers on the absence of the divine statue, the net and the sword.

The work has retained some of the original characteristics of a doctoral dissertation written in an American institution. The American spelling and way of using punctuation marks have been retained. The abbreviations and style of quoting follow the "Instructions for Contributors," *JBL* 95 (June 1976) and *CBQ* 38 (July 1976). For the sake of space, the translations of the quotations from French and German works have been eliminated. The scholarly public for whom this work is

intended will probably have no difficulties in following the quotations in the original languages. In transcribing Akkadian we have followed the *CAD*. However, we use a macron to indicate the secondary length of a preceding short or shortened vowel resulting from the addition of a pronominal suffix, ventive *-nim*, or enclitic *-ma*. Unfortunately there is no commonly adopted convention in normalizing Akkadian texts. For the differences between the normalizations of Von Soden (*GAG, AHw*), Ungnad-Matouš (*AG*) and the official *CAD* policy see J. A. Brinkman, *BiOr* 34 (1966) 293-96. Throughout this book the Akkadian text of the Poem of Erra has been quoted from L. Cagni, *L'Epopea di Erra* (StSem 34, Rome: Instituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma, 1969), and in the majority of cases provided with my translation. The inconsistencies in italicizing Akkadian are due to the limitations of Nota Bene SLS.

Finally, the work is dedicated to my teachers of Akkadian, Dr. Jean-Jacques Glassner, Dr. Anne Draffkorn Kilmer and the regretted Dr. Moshe Held, who made me love Akkadian literature. The work reflects the methodological approach of my French and American teachers and represents an attempt to blend the interpretations of several issues discussed in this book which have been reached on both sides of the Atlantic. However, the responsability for what is said, whatever may be its inadequacy, I accept as my own.

October, 1989
Neuchâtel, Switzerland
and Strasbourg, France

Daniel Bodi

ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	*Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, University of Liverpool, Institute of Archaeology
AASF	Annales Academiae scientiarum Fennicae
AASOR	*Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
AB	Anchor Bible
AHAW	Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften
AOB	Altorientalische Bibliothek
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AHw	W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*
AION	*Annali del'Instituto Orientale di Napoli*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*, J. B. Pritchard, ed.
ANET	*The Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, J. B. Pritchard, ed.
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
ARM	*Archives Royales de Mari*
ArOr	*Archiv Orientalni*
AS	Assyriological Studies
ASGW	Abhandlungen der sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften philologisch-historische Klasse
ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
Atra.	The Atraḫasīs Epic
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BA	*The Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*
BBK	Berliner Beiträge zur Keilschriftforschung
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BETL	*Bibliotheca Ephemeridium Theologicarum Lovaniensium*
Bib	*Biblica*
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BJ	*La Bible de Jérusalem*
BK	Biblischer Kommentar
BM	Museum signiture of the British Museum
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BR	*Biblical Research*
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BBVO	*Berliner Beträge zum Vorderen Orient*
BT	Babylonian Talmud = תלמוד בבלי (Jerusalem: Sivan Press, 5729 = 1969)
BVSGW	Berichte über die Verhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, philologisch-historische Klasse
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	*Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quartely*
CBSC	The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

Cooke, G. A., *The Book of Ezekiel, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936, 1985)

CRB	Cahiers de la Revue Biblique
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
DBS	*Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément*
DLZ	*Deutsche Literaturzeitung*
DNTT	*Dictionary of New Testament Theology*
EA	El Amarna Tablets: J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln (1-358)*; A. F. Rainey, *El Amarna Tablets (359-79)*
EE	Cagni, L., *L'Epopea di Erra* (StSem 34, Rome: Instituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma, 1969)
Eichrodt, W.,	*Ezekiel, A Commentary* (OTL, Engl. transl. by C. Quinn, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970)
En. el.	*Enūma eliš*
EPHE	*Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études*
ETL	*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAG	W. von Soden, *Grundriss der akkadisschenGrammatik*
Gilg.	The Gilgameš epic
GK	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* eds. E. Kautzsch Engl. transl. by A. E. Cowley
Greenberg, M.,	*Ezekiel 1-20,* (AB, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983)
HAL	*Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament* eds. W. Baumgartner, B. Hartmann, E. Y. Kutscher vol. I, 1967; W. Baumgartner, B. Hartmann, E. Y. Kutscher, Ph. Raymond, J. J. Stamm, vol. II, 1974; W. Baumgartner, J. J. Stamm, Z. Ben-Ḥayyim, B. Hartmann, Ph. Raymond, vol. III, 1983.
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSMS	Harvard Semitic Monograph Series
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
HWB	F. Delitzsch, *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch*
IB	*The Interpreter's Bible*
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
IDB	*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBS	*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplementary Volume*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IrThQ	*Irish Theological Quarterly*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBLMS	Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JEOL	*Jaarbericht ex oriente lux*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNWSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Sosiety*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAI	H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KB	Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek
KBL	L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient
LD	Lectio Divina
LSS	Leipziger semitische Studien
LXX	Septuagint

MAOG	*Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft*
MCAAS	*Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts & Sciences*
MDOG	*Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*
MIO	*Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung*
MŠL	*Materialen zum Šumerischen Lexikon*
MUN	Mémoires de l'Université de Neuchâtel
MVAG	*Mittelungen der vorderasiatisch-ägyptischen Gesellschaft*
MT	Masoretic Text
MUSJ	*Mélenges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*
MVAeG	*Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen-Aegyptischen Gessellscahft*
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NHL	Neues Handbuch des Literaturwissenschaft
NIV	New International Version of the Bible
NJPS	The New Jewish Publication Society of America Translation of the Bible (1962-83), one volume 1985.
NTOA	Movum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
Or	*Orientalia*
OTL	The Old Testament Library
OTS	*Oudtestamentische Studiën*
PBSB	Petite Bibliothèque des Sciences Bibliques
PE	Cagni, L., *The Poem of Erra* (SANE I, Malibu: Undena, 1977)
PN	Personal name
RA	*Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RdE	*Revue d'Égyptologie*
RHPR	*Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse*
RHR	*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*
RLA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie*
RSR	*Recherches des Sciences Religieuses*
RSThPh	*Revue des sciences théologiques et philosophiques*
RThPh	*Revue de Théologie et Philosophie*
RSV	Revised Standard Version of the Bible
SANE	Sources and Monographs on the Ancient Near East
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibel Studien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SJT	*Scotish Journal of Theology*
StOr	*Studia Orientalia*
StSem	Studi Semitici
TAPS	Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
TB	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TCAAS	*Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts & Sciences*
TCL	Textes cunéiformes du Louvre
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TOB	Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible
ThStKr	*Theologische Studien und Kritiken*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UM	C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual*
VAB	Vorderasiatische Bibliothek
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTS	*Vetus Testamentum Supplement*
WO	*Die Welt des Orients*
WdM	*Wörterbuch der Mythologie* (ed. H. W. Hausig, Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1965)

WVDO Wissentschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft
YOS Yale Oriental Series
ZA *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete*
ZÄS *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*
ZAW *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZDPV *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Palästina Vereins*
Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I, II, = Ezechiel* (BKAT XIII/1-2, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969, Engl. transl. in Hermeneia, *Ezekiel*, vol. I, R. E. Clements, vol. II, J. D. Martin, Philadelphia: Fortress, vol. I 1979, vol. II 1983)
ZK *Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Talmudic tradition, Rabbi Hananiah ben Hezekiah, a sage of the first century AD, consumed what at the time was considered to be an impressive amount of three hundred jars of oil while he attempted to explain the difficult passages in the Book of Ezekiel.[1] But even with the work of Hananiah, the difficulties were not solved for the Talmudic tractate *Menaḥoth* 45a, states, regarding passages such as Ezek 44:31; 45:18, that the problems will be solved only by Elijah when he makes known all truth in preparation for the Messianic age. Thus from rabbinic times this prophetic book was considered to be a hurdle for exegetes. Many scholars have since poured oil into their lamps while trying to explain the "obscurities"[2] of this work. Yet many of its enigmas still remain to be clarified.

On the one hand, the book of Ezekiel contains serious theological problems which had already troubled the ancient rabbis.[3] On this account the public reading and even the private study of Ezekiel was restricted. Ezek 1 was for some time banned as a *haftorah* reading in the liturgy (*Mishnah Megillah* 4.10, cf. *Toseftah Megillah* 4.34). A minimum age limit of thirty was set for its study (BT *Ḥagîgah* 13b), and restrictions were imposed even on the class size (*Mishnah Ḥagîgah* 2.1). On account of its particular character the rabbis considered "withdawing" (גנז)[4] the Book

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[1]BT *Sabbath* 13b; *Ḥagîgah* 13a; The passages relate how the Book of Ezekiel, on account of its discrepancies with the teaching in the Torah, was in danger of being "withdrawn," had it not been for the patient labors of Hananiah ben Hezekiah: "What was it that he did? Supplied with three hundred jars of oil, he sat in his upper chamber and explained it," חלמוד בבלי (Jerusalem: Sivan Press, 5729 = 1969) *ad loc.* Cf. also S. Spiegel, "Ezekiel or Pseudo-Ezekiel?" *HTR* 24 (1931) 245-321, esp. pp. 245 and 257, reprinted in C. C. Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy* (New York: Ktav, 1970).

[2]The expression comes from Jerome who spoke of the many *obscuritates* which the Book of Ezekiel contains, *Epistola 53 ad Paulinum*, quoted in Spiegel, *HTR* 24 (1931) 245. The patristic exegesis of the Book of Ezekiel has been surveyed by W. Neuss, *Das Buch Ezechiel in Theologie und Kunst bis zum Ende des XII. Jahrhunderts* (Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens 1-2, Münster: Aschendorff, 1912).

[3]Even in recent times M. Astour, (in "Ezekiel's Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin," *JBL* 95 [1976] 567-79, esp. p. 571), affirms that Ezekiel must have "hated" (*sic*) Judah, so vehement is his invective, and so relentless is his prophecy of total annihilation.

[4]In Talmudic literature there are five relevant passages where the rabbis discussed the possibility of withdrawing (גנז) particular biblical books; *Sabbath* 13b, and *Ḥagîgah* 13a (concerning Ezek); *Sabbath* 30b (two passages concerning Prov and Qoh); and Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan 1:4 (concerning Prov, Qoh, and Cant). These passages have been discussed by S. Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Mishnaic*

of Ezekiel from circulation.[5] On the other hand, it presents a number of literary and philological enigmas which still preoccupy modern interpreters.[6] The reason why the text of the Book of Ezekiel suffered so much injury in the course of transmission has been aptly expressed by Cooke,

> ... Much uncertainty prevails about the text, due partly to the usual accidents of transmission, but even more to the extraordinary nature of the events described. The copyist found himself in difficulties over rare words and obscure architectural terms; well-meant explanations of readers became incorporated from the margin, only to lead to worse confusion. We may blame the scribes; yet the very state of the text, with all its corruptions and inaccuracies, bears witness to the eager handling of those who studied it.[7]

1.1. The Task

The contention of this research is twofold. On the one hand, it is argued that the recovery of the Akkadian "*toile de fond*" of the Book of Ezekiel will increase our understanding of a number of expressions,

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Evidence (*TCAAS* 47, Hamden, Connecticut: Archon, 1976) 42. Leiman argues that the verb does not mean that the books in question risked withdrawal from the official, canonical list of the Sriptures (p. 42). Rather, the rabbis discussed whether these books were sufficiently holy to need "storing" in a sanctified storeroom (a genizah) where scrolls of the law that were worn out or contained errors were stored away.

[5]However, J. Barton, *Oracles of God. Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986) 67, disagrees with Leiman's explanation. He surmises that the rabbinic issue of "withdrawal" (גנז) "has to do with the belief that inconsistencies in Scripture are a danger to the simple, not because they show Scripture to be imperfect (God forbid!) but *because they are a signal that the text contains deeper meanings which are best left to the learned*" (italics his). "There are some scriptural books which are meant for those who are more advanced in spiritual understanding, and others which all can be permitted to hear and meditate upon. And the Torah comes into the second class, not the first. For a thinker who adopts this way of thinking, a book such as Ezekiel thus has a higher status, in one very important sense, than the Law itself" (p. 72).

[6]Already R. Smend Sr. thought that the text of Ezekiel together with the text of the Books of Samuel belong among the worst preserved of the Old Testament, "Der Text des Ezechiel gehört neben dem der BB. Samuelis zu den schlechtesten des A. T. An einer grossen Zahl von Stellen scheint er heillos verderbt zu sein," in *Der Prophet Ezechiel (KeH 8, Leipzig: S. Hirzel,* ^{2}1880) xxix. Cf. also W. Irwin, "The Problem of Ezekiel Today: A Study in Methodology," *Doron: Hebraic Studies* (eds. I. Naamani and D. Rudavsky, New York: National Association of Professors of Hebrew, 1965) 139-74.

[7]G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936, 1985) xxvii. He repeats Smend's statement that "in the Hebrew Bible perhaps no book, except 1 and 2 Samuel, has suffered more injury to its text than Ezekiel," p. xl.

themes and motifs which, so far, have been misunderstood, gratuitiously emended, completely overlooked or termed "obscure." The special focus in this background material will be the Poem of Erra. Just as ordinary political cartoons of our day are meaningless without the knowledge of their background, so, we may suggest, the themes and motifs of the Book of Ezekiel lose their point unless interpreted in the light of contemporary literature, religious beliefs and practices.[8] On the other hand, the present research will attempt to demonstrate the likelihood that in the composition and the formulation of certain themes and motifs of the Book of Ezekiel its author or redactor knew a contemporary masterpiece of Akkadian literature called the Poem of Erra. We suggest to view the relationship between the two works in terms of "literary emulation," an expression used on purpose because the issue is not one of literary plagiarism. The Poem of Erra is a work of "vertiginous erudition"[9] in which are incorporated a number of major themes of the classics of Akkadian literature. The author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel has employed some of these themes and motifs in a form modified to suit his purpose.[10]

Heretofore, the Poem of Erra has not received adequate attention in Old Testament studies. Its importance is only recently being realized. This is due to the fact that the recovery and the collation of all available fragments of the Poem of Erra has been effected only in 1969 and 1970 by L. Cagni.[11]

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[8]For example, the quintessentially American expression, "To put or sign one's John Hancock," is incomprehensible to most non-Americans unless someone explains to them or one reads about the historical basis for this expression.

[9]The expression "*érudition vertigineuse*" comes from J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (l'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* IVe section (1977-78) 107-64, esp. p. 161.

[10]Cf. the conclusions of S. P. Garfinkel's work, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1983) 168-70.

[11]L. Cagni, *L'Epopea di Erra* (StSem 34, Rome: Instituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, 1969); *idem., Das Erra-Epos. Keilschrifttext* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970); *idem., The Poem of Erra* (SANE I, Malibu: Undena, 1977). The first edition by E. Ebeling, *Der akkadische Mythus vom Pestgotte Era* (BBK II/1, Berlin: Im Selbstverlag des Herausgebers, 1925), was based on just a few fragments known at the time. The work of F. Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos* (Würzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1955), was not received by the scholarly community because of its incompetent character, cf. the review by G. W. Lambert, *AfO* 18 (1957-58) 395-401, "signs of general incompetence are liberally strewn through the book," (p. 395).

The issue of the "Babylonian Influence on the Book of Ezekiel" is not new, as will be shown in the "Survey of Research" section. However, there is a disproportion in the scholarly effort allotted to the Book of Ezekiel. One group of scholars has concentrated primarily on the philological problems related to this book, and have made significant contributions in clarifying its *hapax legomena.* Another group of scholars has focused on iconographic studies of the Book of Ezekiel. Using ancient Near Eastern iconographic evidence, they have elucidated the obscure figures which occur in Ezekiel's visions. However, this approach was useful for the clarification of only a very few chapters of the book, most noteworthy the vision of Yahweh's chariot and the cherubim in Ezek 1 and 10. In recent times an attempt has been made to extend the research to the rest of the Book of Ezekiel and to trace the Akkadian background of some of its major themes. Moreover, a consensus is emerging among several scholars (Frankena,[12] Heintz,[13] Anbar,[14] Maarsingh[15]), that the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel might have known and used the Poem of Erra in the composition of Ezekiel. The present investigation continues with the approach of this last group of scholars. Building on their insights it attempts to break new ground. Since a comparison between the Book of Ezekiel and certain themes from the Poem of Erra has been suggested only in articles and footnotes there is a need for a systematic and comprehensive treatment of these points of contact. The present research attempts to fill this lacuna.

1.2. The Basic Assumptions

In the light of Gadamer's[16] conclusive demonstration of the

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[12]R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965).

[13]J.-G. Heintz, *Le Dieu au filet* (Unpublished thesis, École Biblique de Jérusalem, 1964). For a résumé see *idem.*, "Oracle prophétique et 'Guerre Sainte' selon les archives royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 112-37; and also "De l'absence de la statue divine au 'Dieu qui se cache' (Esaïe 45/15): Aux origines d'un thème biblique," *RHPR* 59 (1979) 427-37.

[14]M. Anbar, "Une nouvelle allusion à une tradition babylonienne dans Ézéchiel (XXII 24)," *VT* 29 (1979) 352-3.

[15]B. Maarsingh, "Das Schwertlied in Ez 21,13-22 und das Erra-Gedicht," in *Ezekiel and His Book. Textual and Literary Criticism and their Interrelation*, ed. J. Lust, *BETL* 74 (1986) 350-58.

[16]H.- G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), esp. pp. 235-274, II 1 (A) "The Hermeneutical Circle and the Problem of Prejudices." According to Gadamer in order to avoid the naïveté of historicism in historical research one has to admit and state the assumptions with which one works. Cf. similarly, J. D. Smart, *The Interpretation of Scripture* (London: S.C.M. 1965) 29, "The claim of absolute scientific objectivity in interpreting scripture involves the interpreter in an illusion about himself that inhibits objectivity." For an excellent assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of

impossibility of having an absolutely presuppositionless exegesis[17] and interpretation of ancient texts we state here the basic assumptions which inform our research.

The first assumption of this research is that the Book of Ezekiel should be studied as a work of particular literary artistry, an assumption which is not new. Already in 1841, H. Ewald expressed the view that the Book of Ezekiel "arose almost entirely out of literary effort."[18] E. Reuss stated this position in an extreme form when he affirmed,

> Il n'y a pas, dans tout ce livre, une seule page que nous devrions supposer avoir été lue ou débitée publiquement. Ézéchiel n'a pas été orateur; il est écrivain. Ce qu'il nous donne, ce sont des élucubrations littéraires, le produit d'un travail de cabinet, le fruit de recueillement et de la contemplation.[19]

The view of the book of Ezekiel as a product of a sophisticated "*littérateur*" is due to its highly polished form, to its neat structure and skillfully executed plan.[20] From the beginning of the critical study of the book, the scholars recognized this particularity. Indeed, the same assumption is made concerning Ezekiel in the book itself. The prophet is presented as a successful entertainer and is compared to someone who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument. According to M. Greenberg, Ezekiel's particularity is that he delivers his message mostly indoors.[21] However, in a recent treatment of Ezekiel's

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Gadamer's position see A. C. Thisselton, *The Two Horizons* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1980), esp. chapter XI.

[17]Cf. already R. Bultmann, "Ist voraussetzungslose Exegese möglich?" *ThZ* 13 (1957) 409-17.

[18]H. Ewald, "Jeremia und Hezeqiel," *Die Propheten des Alten Bundes erklärt* (Stuttgart: A. Krabbe, 1840-41, Göttingen, ^{2}1868) vol II. 207, "dass er (i.e., Ezekiel) mehr Schriftsteller als Prophet war und sein grosses Buch fast allein schriftstellerischer Musse hervorging."

[19]E. Reuss, *La Bible, L'Ancien Testament*, (Traduction nouvelle avec introductions et commentaires, *Les Prophètes*, Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, VII vols, 1874-81; 1876) vol. III. 10.

[20]Cf. the view of H. G. May, "One of the most impressive aspects of the book, despite the opinion of some scholars, is its considerable homogeneity," "The Book of Ezekiel," in *The Interpreter's Bible VI* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956) 45.

[21]Cf. M. Greenberg, "The Dumbness of Ezekiel," *JBL* 77 (1958) 100-5, "It is the fact, (...) that of the literary prophets whose careers were of comparable length, Ezekiel alone is never found speaking in the forum, in the streets, among the people. Isaiah moves about Jerusalem; he meets the king and officers. Jeremiah does too. But Ezekiel is never found outside his house, save for the necessity of one symbolic act (12:3). (...) The audiences of the prophet in chapters 1-33 are consistently depicted as having come to him, or seated themselves before him (8:1, 14:1, 20:1, 33:30)" (p. 103).

symbolic acts B. Lang has argued for viewing Ezekiel as a "creative performer" who used the medium of "street theater" in order to capture the attention of his audience.[22] Moreover, L. Ramlot described Ezekiel's symbolic acts as "the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek drama."[23] Ezekiel delivers his message in front of an auditorium eager to hear the accomplished performer but unwilling to obey his admonitions,

> (31) And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it;
> (32) And look, for them you are like the singer of love songs (כְּשִׁיר עֲגָבִים)[24] who has a beautiful voice (יְפֵה קוֹל) and plays skillfully (וּמֵטֵב נְגַן), for they hear what you say but they will not do it (Ezek 33:31-32).

In v 32, Ezekiel is compared to someone who "sings love songs."[25] The

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[22]B. Lang, "Street Theater, Raising the Dead, and the Zoroastrian Connection in Ezekiel's Prophecy," in *Ezekiel and His Book. Textual and Literary Criticism and their Interrelation*, ed. J. Lust, *BETL* 74 (1986) 297-316.

[23]L. Ramlot, "Les actions symboliques," *SDB VIII* (1972) cols. 969-73 esp. 973, "Les actions [symboliques] veulent rendre plus percutant le message des prophètes. C'est l'équivalent hébreu, et vécu, du drame grec." B. Lang, *art. cit.*, p. 300, adduced a chronologically closer parallel to Ezekiel's symbolic actions. Esarhaddon's (680-669 BCE) inscriptions relate how a vassal who rebelled demonstrated his willingness to submit to Esarhaddon. When the latter besieged the rebel's city the sons of the vassal brought out a sculpture (*ṣalam*) showing the penitent vassal in chains, clothed as a slave and kneeling at a hand mill. The bringing out of the sculpture demonstrated the vassal's complete submission. Esarhaddon understood the gesture, "They brought it [the sculpture] out to myself in order to appeal to my compassion and to save his life" (l. 23); Cf. R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* (*AfO* Beiheft 9, Graz: E. Weidner, 1956) #68 II 18-23, p. 105.

[24]LXX φωνὴ ψαλτηρίου; L^{s} *vox psalterii*; Targ. זמר אבובין "pan-pipes," probably due to a confusion with a musical instrument עוגב; V *carmen musicum*; Syriac *zmyrt'*; S. Spiegel, "Ezekiel or Pseudo-Ezekiel?" *HTR* 24 (1931) 295 n. 22, explains שִׁיר as a קָטֶל-form analogous to צִיר (masc. noun = "envoy, messenger"), with the meaning "singer." He refers to J. Barth, *Die Nominalbildung in den semitischen Sprachen* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, ^{2}1894) #127c. If this suggestion is correct, Ezekiel could be compared to what A. Lord calls "the singer of tales" a bard who entertains his audience with his songs, cf. his book, *The Singer of Tales* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960, 1981). In the light of our working hypothesis it is significant that the Poem of Erra defines itself as a "song" (Erra V 49, 59 *zamāru*). Is it too bold to suggest that Ezekiel, the poet and maybe "a singer?" in an attempt to enlarge his *répertoire* became acquainted with one of the most popular songs of his time, the Akkadian *šar gimir dadmê*?

[25]The *NJPS* version understands v 32 as being more than just a simile: "To them you are just a singer of bawdy songs, who has a sweet voice and plays skillfully"; However, the verse is usually understood as being only a simile, cf. *Bible de la Pléiade*: "Te voilà pour eux comme un chantre d'amour doué d'une belle voix et jouant de la belle musique"; *TOB*: "Au fond, tu es pour eux comme un chant passionné, d'une belle sonorité, avec un bon accompagnement."

expression (כשיר עגבים) is a simile.[26] It would be tempting to see Ezekiel as someone who actually sings his compositions accompanied by an instrument as has been suggested by H. G. May.[27] However, such an interpretation of the simile might not be warranted. In the Book of Ezekiel the terms עָגַב "to love passionately," and עֲגָבָה "inordinate love," occur in the most striking description of the amorous relationships of Samaria and Jerusalem with foreign lovers (Ezek 23). In fact, the term עָגַב could be considered as another of Ezekiel's particular creations since it appears almost exclusively in the Book of Ezekiel.[28] As we will attempt to show in the section 5.6. (on Ezekiel and Išum as watchmen and intercessors), one of the special roles of Ezekiel is to watch over the love relationship between Yahweh and Jerusalem.[29]

The prophet is vexed because his audience is not taking him seriously. All they see in him is the poet and the accomplished artist. They are impressed by the artistic form but are unwilling to accept the content of his message.[30] In Ezek 21:5, the opinion of the audience concerning

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[26]M. Dahood, "An Allusion to Koshar in Ezekiel 33,32," *Bib* 44 (1963) 531-32. Dahood suggests the pointing (כֹּשֵׁר עֲגָבִים) "skillful flutist," and translates the line in the following way, "And look, for them you are but a skillful flutist, fine voiced, and a maker of sweet-music." He further refers to a parallel made by U. Cassuto in האלה ענת (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1951) 75 [= *The Goddess Anath*, Jerusalem: Magnes, 1971, 112]. The latter compared (יָפֶה קוֹל וּמֵטִב נָגֵן) with a line in *'nt* I 20, *yšr gzr ṭb ql* "The sweet-voiced hero sings," where the unnamed singer might be Koshar, the Canaanite patron of music. Dahood argued that in Ezek 33:32, "the author intended an allusion to the Canaanite god" (p. 532). However, his entire argument is far from being compelling and cannot be followed.

[27]H. G. May, "The Book of Ezekiel," *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York/Nashville: Abingdon, 1956) 250 "Like one who sings love songs, read כשר עגבים for כשיר עגבים. The allusion to singing may be pertinent in part because the prophet chanted his oracles. Music sometimes may have accompanied the prophetic oracle, cf. 1 Sam 10:5; 2 Kgs 3:15."

[28]The verbal form occurs six times in the Book of Ezekiel 23:7, 9, 12, 16, 20, and only once in Jer 4:30. The noun occurs twice in Ezek 23:11 and 33:32. (On the problematic reading in 33:31 see the commentaries). According to *BDB* 721d, the name of the musical instrument עוּגָב might be related to the same root.

[29]The Book of Isaiah mentions a "love song" as well, although the term used to designate it is different לידידי שירת דודי ("a love song ... to my beloved" 5:1).

[30]L. Alonso-Schökel, "Hermeneutical Problems of a Literary Study of the Bible," *VTS* 28 (1975) 1-15, esp. 3. The author wonders, "if the form was a hinderance, why did Ezekiel compose and recite in artistic fashion?" According to M. V. Fox, "The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of the Bones," *HUCA* 51 (1980) 1-15, esp. p. 2 n. 4, the passage indicates that "literary artistry," as one of "the rhetor's necessary instruments," may "interfere with his rhetoric." However, in our opinion it is more correct to say with S. Lasine, "Fiction, Falsehood, and Reality in Hebrew Scripture," *Hebrew Studies* 25 (1984) 24-40, esp. p. 33, that "literary artistry provides the occasion for the prophet's message to be 'fictionalized' by audiences which do not want to be touched by it."

Ezekiel is reflected in the question, "Is he not a maker of משלים? (מְמַשֵּׁל [pi'el ptc] מְשָׁלִים)." Ezekiel is perceived as a creative author who composes the משלים and not just as one who repeats them.[31] On the basis of this verse A. Heschel argued that already the contemporaries of Ezekiel perceived the Bible as literature.[32]

Moreover, Ezekiel says that before commencing his work he had to "eat a scroll" (אכול את המגלה) containing an ominous message for his contemporaries (Ezek 2:8-3:3). This notion of ingestion as a means of appropriating the divine word has been compared with the Hellenistic practice of ingesting magical inscriptions in order to facilitate their memorization.[33] As pointed out by Olsson, the important thing is not the act of swallowing the scroll but the memorization of its particularly difficult content.[34] In the context of the Book of Ezekiel such a vivid physical image may serve to underline the connection between orality, memorization and writing. One may interpret this simile as an avowal by the author of the Book of Ezekiel either of some preliminary literary activity or of memorization of another oral or written work prior to the composition of Ezekiel. It may also serve to underline the fact that the prophet's literary activity was prompted by divine instigation, i.e., it was ultimately divinely inspired.

In an anthropological study of the pedagogical system of Palestinian rabbis, M. Jousse emphasizes the importance of memorable gestures and figures in the act of learning. Manducation of the scroll corresponds to an act of memorization of its verbal content:

> Dans un milieu rhythmo-catéchistique ... nous retrouvons ... ce

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[31]Here we follow the distinction suggested by G. M. Landes, "Jonah: A *māšāl*?" in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of S. Terrien* (eds. J. G. Gammie, *et al.*, New York: Union Theological Seminary and Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978) 137-58, esp. p. 154 n. 35 (on Ezek 21:5). The author points out that the qal active ptc משלים usually has the nuance, "to say a משל," while the pi'el form would signify "to compose or make a משל."

[32]A. J. Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Harper, 1955, 1966) 248 n. 1.

[33]Cf. B. Olsson, "Die verschlungene Buchrolle," *ZNW* 32 (1933) 90-91. The author suggests Ezek 3:1-3 as the probable source of the scroll eating mentioned in Rev 10:9.

[34]B. Olsson, *art. cit.*, p. 91, "... das ganze Verfahren dazu dienen sollte, das Gedächtnis des Magus zu stärken, 'das er im Stande sei, die komplizierten Namen, Formeln und Antworten der erscheinenden Götter und Dämonen zu behalten'... Die Hauptsache war ja für den Zauberer oder Propheten nicht, das Schreibmaterial in den Körper aufzunehmen, sondern das darauf Geschriebene..."

> souci de rejouer, de répéter en écho, de 'mishnaïser' tous les gestes corporels, manuels et oraux de celui qui enseigne. En effet, dans un milieu de Style oral, on prend les paroles de l'enseigneur dans sa bouche et on les mange. C'est précisément cette manducation -mémorisation du rouleau - ou plutôt de son contenu verbal - qui'il nous faut remettre en son relief ethnique. Autrement, on ne comprend plus ce que c'est que de 'manger un texte.'"[35]

The author refers explicitly to Ezekiel's eating of the scroll as an instance of the act of memorization and notes that the simile is comprehensible only to those sensitive to the palpable "texture" of the oral language.[36]

The second assumption is that there exists an inter-connectedness of themes, motifs and expressions among the literatures of the ancient Near East. The literature of the Bible is seen as part of this broad category with which it builds a cultural and literary continuum.[37] This is the application to literary studies of the basic principle of historical research,

> Alles Geschehen steht in einem beständigen korrelativen Zusammenhang und muß notwendig einen Fluß bilden, indem

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[35]M. Jousse, *La manducation de la parole* (L'anthropologie du geste 2, Paris: Gallimard, 1975), p. 45 and p. 48. On the remarkable blending of anthropological, ethnological and linguistic data in the work of Jousse see P. Scheffer, "Marcel Jousse (1886-1961) ou le service de la parole, humaine et divine," *ETR* 3 (1988) 367-78 (with bibliography of Jousse's works).

[36]Cf. E. F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll. Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1987) chapter III "Swallowing the Scroll: The Role of the Prophet," pp. 61-101 (to appear in the JSOT Supplement series in 1989). The author sees the connection between Ezekiel's call - particularly the swallowing of the scroll - and his dumbness as a primary relation to be understood in terms of the emergence of Scripture in Israel and the effect of that development on the prophet's historical ministry (p. 76).

[37]A similar assumption is made in J. B. Pritchard's anthology of texts entitled, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, ^{3}1969). Cf. the view of E. A. Speiser, "The Biblical Idea of History in its Common Near Eastern Setting," *IEJ* 7 (1957) 201-16, "The people of the Bible, (...) were neither politically nor culturally isolated from other societies. (...) Hence the ultimate achievement that is the Bible cannot be properly understood, still less appreciated, except in terms of the setting in which this work originated, and of the initial values which it went on to transfigure and transcend. (The Bible) is essentially a philosophy of history. Now any historiosophy, by definition, presupposes an advanced intellectual and spiritual background. It requires the backdrop of a major civilization." (p. 202). Cf. also M. Smith, "The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 71 (1952) 135-47; and more recently, J.-G. Heintz, "'Bible et Orient': Pour de nouvelles perspectives de recherches et d'analyse documentaires en exégèse biblique (Ancien Testament)," in *Lectures Bibliques* (Bruxelles: Publications de l'Institutum Iudaicum, 1982) 143-64.

> Alles und Jedes zusammenhängt und jeder Vorgang in Relation zu anderen steht.[38]

This assumption allows one to apply the principle of analogy in our comparison between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra. In the enumeration of the principles of the traditional *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, E. Troeltsch offered the following description,

> Die Beobachtungen von Analogien zwischen gleichartigen Vorgängen der Vergangenheit gibt die Möglichkeit, ihnen Wahrscheinlichkeit zuzuschreiben und das Unbekannte des einen aus dem Bekannten des anderen zu deuten.[39]

However, in the application of the principle of analogy we bear in mind the important distinction between analogy and univocity. Two terms, expressions, texts, and events may be analogous without, however, meaning the same thing.[40] In the final analysis the contextual meaning is the most important.

Although the present research follows the approach of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* one does not want, however, to repeat its mistake where *vergleichen* (= "to compare") became *ausgleichen* (= "to equalize" i.e., to ignore the differences). Therefore, a concern will be maintained to point out the specific ways in which the themes and motifs in the Book of Ezekiel are different from those in the Poem of Erra, but also, in what ways there are points of contact between these two works. This research is not in the line of the pan-Babylonian school of Friedrich Delitzsch and his followers (H. Winckler, A. Jeremias, P. Jensen and E. Schrader).[41] The Akkadian material is used for the sake of comparison

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[38]E. Troeltsch, "Ueber historische und dogmatische Methode in der Theologie," in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1913, [2]1922, 4 vols.) 2, 729-53, esp. p. 733.

[39]E. Troeltsch, *art. cit.*, p. 732. On the validity of this principle in contemporary Old Testament exegesis see M. Rose, "Approches classiques de l'Ancien Testament: Techniques exégétiques et implications théologiques," *ETR* 3 (1988) 337-360, esp. p. 350. However, we do not share Troeltsch's belief in what he called "die Allmacht der Analogie."

[40]This distinction has been pointed out by W. L. Moran, in his discussion of the conflicting interpretations of the reasons for the Deluge in the Atraḫasīs epic, see his article, "Some Considerations of Form and Interpretation in Atra-ḫasīs," in *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to E. Reiner* (AOS 67, ed. F. Rochberg-Halton, New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1987) 245-55, esp. p. 253.

[41]When in his inaugural lecture R. Frankena adopted the stance of viewing Assyriology as *ancilla Theologiae* he reverted to a nineteenth century conception of the relationship between Assyriology and Biblical studies, cf. his *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 3. In our opinion it is an error to view Assyriology in the light of servitude to the Bible. Frankena should have heeded the

and in order to reveal specific nuances of both domains.[42] Our approach corresponds to what W. Hallo calls "the contextual or contrastive approach."[43]

The third assumption is that of a Babylonian locale as the environment in which the Book of Ezekiel was originally composed,[44] and where the prophet exercised his ministry.[45] Nevertheless, we do not hold that the book, as compiled in its present form, necessarily stems from Ezekiel himself. Closely related to this assumption is the view that the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel was influenced by the

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arguments of B. Landsberger, "Die Eigenbegrifflichkeit der Babylonischen Welt," *Islamica* 2 (1926) 355-72 (= *The Conceptual Autonomy of the Babylonian World*, Engl. transl. by T. Jacobsen, B. Foster and H. von Siebenthal, SANE 1/4, Malibu: Undena, 1976). Cf. also H. W. F. Saggs, *Assyriology and the Study of the Old Testament* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969) esp. pp. 12-14.

[42]As L. Ramlot put it, "Pour bien juger d'une oeuvre, l'art de la comparaison est utile pour faire jouer les ombres et les lumières," in "Une décade de théologie biblique," *Revue Thomiste* 65 (1965) 95-135, esp. p. 105.

[43]See W. W. Hallo, "New Moons and Sabbaths: A Case-Study in the Contrastive Approach," *HUCA* 78 (1977) 1-17; *idem.*, "Biblical History in Its Near Eastern Setting: The Contextual Approach," in *Scripture in Context, Essays on the Comparative Method* (eds. C. D. Evans, *et al.*,., Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1980) 1-26, esp. p. 2.

[44]Contra C. C. Torrey, to name just the most notorious among the proponents of the opposite view. Torrey denied the purported origin of the Book in Babylonian exile and argued that the real setting of Ezekiel's book is Jerusalem and Palestine. The Book represents an eye-witness account of a person who was there. For Torrey the Book of Ezekiel was a pseudepigraph, purporting to come from the time of Manasseh, but in reality written in 230 BCE., see C. C. Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy* (Researches, YOS 18, New Haven, 1930; reprinted with critical articles by S. Spiegel and C. C. Torrey, and Prolegomenon by M. Greenberg, New York: Ktav, 1970). For a critical examination and refutation of this view see C. G. Howie, *The Date and Composition of Ezekiel* (JBLMS 4, Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1950) and G. Fohrer, *Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel, BZAW* 72 (1952). However, in the chapters on the fate of Tyre (Ezek 26-28), Ezekiel's detailed knowledge of the Tyrian ships and commerce might reflect Ezekiel's actual visit to Phoenicia at some time. The idea that the book was a historic fiction of the Persian period had been put forth a century prior to Torrey by L. Zunz (*Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, Berlin: A. Asher, 1832), who likewise rested his view on linguistic study, emphasizing the presence of Aramaisms in the text.

[45]The "call" of Ezekiel has also to be placed in Babylonia (1:1, 4, 28; 2:3). As pointed out by H. M. Orlinsky, (in "Where did Ezekiel Receive the Call to Prophesy?" *BASOR* 122 [1951] 34-6), it is inconceivable that a prophet who received his call in Judah and Jerusalem, as C. C. Torrey assumed, would suppress this fact, and claim instead a foreign land as the birthplace of his prophetic career. On the call of Ezekiel see R. Wilson, "Prophecy in Crisis: The Call of Ezekiel," *Int* 38 (1984) 117-30.

culture and literature of the land of his exile and that this feature is reflected in the book. On this point we agree with M. Astour,

> There is little wonder that Ezekiel had access to Babylonian literature or some of its works. He spent at least a quarter of a century in the heartland of Babylonia, was politically extremely pro-Babylonian, was receptive to foreign myths, and knew about the Babylonian practice of haruspicy Ezek 21:26). He could hardly have failed to learn the official language of the country and to absorb some of its ancient culture.[46]

We follow the testimony of the Book of Ezekiel concerning the date of Ezekiel's sojourn and ministry in Babylonia which is placed between 597 and 571 BCE. During the first deportation to Babylonia, in 597, he was brought to תל אביב on the river Chebar, a canal running from Babylon through Nippur to Uruk,[47] (1:1; 3:15). According to the latest date given in the Book (29:17), his ministry lasted until 571.[48]

The fourth assumption, or in this case a methodological principle, is our use of the Book of Ezekiel in its final form. While we follow the Masoretic text we do not share a dogmatic belief in its supremacy. By working with the MT our study has the advantage of being based on an actual text - difficult though it may be - rather than depending on a reconstructed text. As pointed out by A. Hurvitz,[49] the latter is sometimes freed of difficulties and is easier to work with, but one can never be absolutely certain that such a reconstructed text ever existed.

1.3. The working Hypothesis, the Plan, and the Method

The present investigation has as its working hypothesis the existence of a definite relationship between expressions, themes and motifs in the

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[46]M. Astour, "Ezekiel's Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin," *JBL* 95 (1976) 579. Cf. the view of J. de Savignac concerning the influence of Babylonian culture on Jewish social elite during its sojourn in exile, "Assurément il est impossible que le long séjour de Jéhojachin et des siens auprès de la cour royale à Babylone, attesté non seulement par la Bible mais aussi par plusieurs documents babyloniens, n'ait pas amené une connaissance des grands monuments de la littérature babylonienne dans l'élite juive," in "La sagesse du Qôhéléth et l'Épopée de Gilgamesh," *VT* 28 (1978) 318-23, esp. p. 321.

[47]Cf. E. Vogt, "Der Nehar Kebar: Ez 1," *Bibl* 39 (1958) 211-16.

[48]Cf. E. Sellin - G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Engl. transl. by D. Green, Nashville/New York: Abingdon, 1968) 404.

[49]A. Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel* (CRB 20, Paris: Gabalda, 1982) 19.

Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra.[50] Consequently, in the course of this research we will attempt to demonstrate the likelihood that in the formulation of certain themes and motifs of the Book of Ezekiel, its author or redactor knew and used a contemporary Akkadian song called the Poem of Erra.

The introductory section 1. is followed by the "Survey of the Babylonian Influence on the Book of Ezekiel" 2. The purpose of the latter is to show that there exists an established scholarly tradition which sees Akkadian elements in the Book of Ezekiel. The contention of this research should not be seen as an isolated and unique view which falls outside of the existing approaches to the Book of Ezekiel. On the contrary, the present research is in line with a well established tradition.

Section 3. offers a short discussion of the Poem of Erra. Its purpose is to set forth the views which we have adopted concerning its dating, genre, historical background, and method of composition.

Sections 4. and 5. represent the heart of this research where twelve features shared by both works are analyzed. These points of contact are divided into two categories following a descending degree of probability.[51] Here again we apply to literary studies a basic principle of historical criticism,

> Daß es auf historischem Gebiet nur Wahrscheinlichkeitsurteile gibt, von sehr verschiedenen Graden der Wahrscheinlichkeit, vom höchsten bis zum geringsten, und daß jeder Überlieferung gegenüber daher erst der Grad der Wahrscheinlichkeit abgemessen werden müsse, der ihr zukommt.[52]

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[50]In the "stochastic process" (involving probability) one makes a hypothesis and then one tests its validity.

[51]Cf. W. F. Albright, *From The Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1940, [2]1957) 25-26, "The question of method is, or should be, quite as important to the historian as to the scientist. Only by competent analysis of methods employed in obtaining factual data can one determine, for example, where these data stand in the hierarchy of probability, whether they may be considered certain, probable, possible, improbable, or impossible. Only where there is a sufficiently broad basis of critically sifted data can inductive reasoning lead to sound generalizations." Cf. S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influence in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York, Columbia University, 1983) as an example of a research which attempts to establish a hierarchy of probability of presumed Hebrew and Akkadian cognates in the Book of Ezekiel.

[52]E. Troeltsch, "Ueber historische und dogmatische Methode in der Theologie," in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1913, [2]1922, 4 vols.) 2, 729-53, esp. p. 731.

When Troeltsch speaks of *jede Überlieferung*, he expresses the view that the biblical texts should not be exempted from such a determination of the degree of probability concerning the origin and transmission of their traditions.

In the first category are four features which appear uniquely in the Book of Ezekiel. In the second category are eight features which are resent in Ezekiel and in the rest of the Old Testament. The origin of the first four features should most probably be sought in extra-Biblical sources, and more specifically in the Poem of Erra. The origin of the second category of motifs would be in antecedent Old Testament prophetic traditions. However, the Poem of Erra might have influenced the presentation and formulation of some aspects of these motifs.

4. Features unique to the Book of Ezekiel and present in the Poem of Erra:

4.1. Hebrew שאט and Akkadian *šēṭu/leqû* šēṭūtu "to show contempt/treat with despite."
4.2. Hebrew השמל etymologically related to Akkadian *elmēšu*.
4.3. The motif of the seven executioners.[53]
4.4. The flood motif.

In presenting the material in section 5. we have been guided by an important principle of comparative reasearch enunciated by S. Talmon,

> Before positing the resemblence of a biblical phenomenon with a contemporaneous or a pre-biblical counterpart, it is imperative to examine first the biblical literature itself for possible parallels, foremost the immediate context under discussion.[54]

5. Features found in antecedent Old Testament traditions but used by the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel in such a way as to suggest that their formulation might have been influenced by the Poem of Erra:

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[53]The analysis of motifs corresponds to what the Germans call *Motivgeschichte* or *Motivkritik* cf. W. Richter, *Exegese als Literaturwissenschaft. Entwurf einer alttestamentlichen Literatur Theorie und Methodologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971) 153 n. 8, 136. H. Groß, "'Motivtransposition' als überlieferungsgeschichtliches Prinzip im Alten Testament," *Sacra Pagina I. BETL* 12-13 (1959) 325-334.

[54]S. Talmon, "The 'Navel of the Earth' and the Comparative Method," in *Scripture in History & Theology: Essays in Honor of J. C. Rylaarsdam* (eds. A. L. Merrill and T. W. Overholt, Pitsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1977) 243-68, esp. p. 245.

5.1. Hebrew חמס and Akkadian *ḫubūru* "din," but also with a metaphorical meaning *hybris*.
5.2. Hebrew and Akkadian *šakān kamāri/šēti* "to throw a net."
5.3. A theme common to the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra: the "Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine."
5.4. The navel motif.
5.5. The "Song of the Sword" in Ezek 21.
5.6. The watchman motif.
5.7. The remnant-restoration motifs.
5.8. The recognition formula.

The last two features in the second category acquire their importance only when seen together with other features thus contributing to the cumulative force of our argument. The presence of a statistically important number of corresponding motifs in both works makes the correlation between them probable and diminishes the factor of mere coincidence.

Heeding J. Barr's remarks, in the examination of the lexicographic parallels emphasis is layed primarily on the autonomous contextual meaning of a given word or expression.[55] We have attempted to avoid the error of "root fallacy" and excessive confidence in etymological studies.[56] Moreover, in line with Moshe Held's approach[57] one will look for Hebrew and Akkadian expressions which stand in a relationship of

[55]Cf. J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961) "Roots and Ideas" pp. 100-6; "Etymologies and Related Arguments" pp. 107ff. *idem.*, "Limitations of Etymology as a Lexicographical Instrument in Biblical Hebrew," *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1983) 41-65.

[56]Cf. the view of W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City, N.Y.: [1]1940, [2]1957, p. 46, "... No competent lexicographer in any language fixes the precise meaning of a word by its etymology but rather by collecting as many passages where the word occurs as possible or practicable and by listing all meanings and shades of meaning in them. Words change their meaning through use to such an extent that the etymological method of fixing significance is only employed as a last resort, where other evidence is inadequate."

[57]Beginning with his unpublished Ugaritic Lexicon M. Held undertook detailed lexical studies where he subordinated the etymological approach to the principle of interdialectical distribution based on functional equivalence, cf. a series of his articles, "*mḫṣ/*mḫṣ* in Ugaritic and Other Semitic Languages (A Study in Comparative Lexicography), *JAOS* 79 (1959) 169-76, esp. p. 169, speaking of interdialectal variants, i.e., functionally identical terms belonging to different languages of the same family; *idem.*, "Studies in Comparative Semitic Lexicography," *Fs B. Landsberger* (eds. H.-G. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen, Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1965) 395-406; *idem.*, "Studies in Biblical Homonyms in the Light of Akkadian," *JANES* 3 (1971) 71-9; *idem.*, "Pits and Pitfalls in Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew," *Fs Th. Gaster JANES* 5 (1973) 173-90; *idem.*, "Hebrew *ma'gāl*: A Study in Lexical Parallelism," *JANES* 6 (1974) 107-16.

functional equivalence.[58] We are primarily concerned with the identification of interdialectical semantic equivalents[59] with the exception of שמל which is etymologically related to Akkadian *elmēšu*.

Furthermore, we will try to show formal parallelism between passages in Erra and in Ezekiel and to point out similarities in content. However, our working hypothesis does not exclude the likelihood of other literary influences on the Book of Ezekiel. On the one hand, one can recognize other themes and motifs from prophetic and other literature of the Bible. On the other hand, as suggested by the works of Gruber[60] and Garfinkel,[61] there are other Akkadian sources which might have influenced the Book of Ezekiel. The prophet Ezekiel appears to have been a many-faceted and most versatile personality in the history of Israel's religion,

> In him are combined in a unique fashion the activities and interests of the prophet, priest, pastor or "watchman," apocalypticist, theologian, "architect," of the new Temple, and the organizer of the ecclesiastical community.[62]

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[58]E. A. Speiser speaks of terms which are semantically identical and not necessarily etymologically related, cf. his article, "Background and Function of the Biblical *Nāśî'*," in *Oriental and Biblical Studies* (eds. J. J. Finkelstein and M. Greenberg, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967) 113-22, esp. p. 119 where he correlates Hebrew נשׂא with Akkadian *šušqū* in *En.el.* I 158 ^{d}*Kingu šušqū* "Kingu was duly elevated."

[59]For an example of such a study see S. M. Paul, "Unrecognized Biblical Idioms in the Light of Comparative Akkadian Expressions," *RB* 86 (1979) 231-9; Y. Muffs, *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine* (*Studia et Documenta ad Iura Orientis Antiqui Pertinentia*, vol. VIII, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969, reprint New York: Ktav, 1973) 116 n. 3: "The present study is in a limited sense an exercise in comparative legal lexicography based on the principles of interdialectal distribution."

[60]M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1970).

[61]S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1983); cf. especially the 2nd and 3rd part of his dissertation "On Briers and Scorpions," (a comparison with the Akkadian incantation series *Maqlû*), and "On the Dumbness of Ezekiel," where the author suggested that the prophet's dumbness (Ezek 3:22-27) need not be taken as a reflection of his physical or psychological state, but that it may be modeled after Akkadian incantation texts.

[62]So aptly J. Muilenburg, "Ezekiel," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (eds. M. Black and H. H. Rowley, London: T. Nelson, 1962) 569. A radical critic might argue that such a many faceted personality as Ezekiel reflects the preoccupations of several redactors where each one left the imprint of one's own interests. However, the problem of the authorship of Biblical books could by itself be a topic of a doctoral dissertation and is beyond the scope of the present research. The problem is compounded by the fact that "those responsible for the actual editing of the text did their best to obscure their own identity," so correctly B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 78.

Therefore, to postulate Ezekiel's interest in Akkadian literature does not appear as incongruous.

Our principal corpus of texts represents the Book of Ezekiel on the one hand and the Poem of Erra on the other. In our working hypothesis we assume that the possible point of entry of certain Akkadian themes and motifs into the Book of Ezekiel might be through the Poem of Erra. This assumption, however, does not preclude the examination of other works of Akkadian literature (e.g., the Gilgameš epic, the Atraḫasīs epic, *Enūma eliš*, Mari prophetic letters, the royal inscriptions, the apocalyptic literature). In certain cases the examination of the wider Akkadian literature might strengthen our hypothesis. For example, Akkaddian *ḫubūru* in the Poem of Erra which, it is argued, corresponds to Hebrew חמס in Ezekiel have similar connotations in both works. They describe the "din" of humans which signifies an irreverent, insolent and disrespectful attitude toward the gods Marduk, Erra and Yahweh respectively. Admittedly, in certain passages in the Atraḫasīs epic the "din" has the connotation of *hybris*, insolence and rebellion where the Igigu or the humans respectively, overstep the limits set by the gods. While the issue of overpopulation is a prominent motif in the Atraḫasīs epic, its importance should not be overstated. Such a motif does not occur in the Book of Ezekiel and is mentioned only once in the Poem of Erra. Hence, it would appear that the context in which חמס is used in Ezekiel is closer to that found in the Poem of Erra than to the one in the Atraḫasīs epic.

1.4. The Issue of the Glosses in the Book of Ezekiel

We have to state our position concerning the glosses in Ezekiel since the issue has direct bearing on our investigation of certain terms in Ezekiel which are often deleted by commentators as glosses (e.g., חמס).[63]

G. Fohrer has repeatedly investigated the glosses in Ezekiel and has offered their detailed classification. He uses the following terms:

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[63]On the basis of the fact that the LXX omits parts of the verses where the MT mentions חמס, Fohrer deletes this term 16 times from his text and omits systematically all these "problematic" verses from his commentary. If Fohrer were to be followed, 60% of all the occurrences of חמס in Ezekiel should be deleted as glosses. By contrast, having perceived that the term חמס in the context of the whole Book of Ezekiel is part of an important message, Zimmerli refused to follow Fohrer and simply bracketed his translation whenever he deemed the verse problematic without deleting it (except once in 7:11).

"erläuternde, ergänzende, variierende, deutende, etymologische und dogmatische Glosse."[64] K. S. Freedy produced a similar study of Ezek 1-24 in which he classified the glosses under the following headings: "cue, lexical, explicative, rubrical, editorial, and exegetical glosses."[65] Fohrer's treatment of the Hebrew text in his commentary has been recognized by scholars as deficient:

> In (Fohrer's) commentary which otherwise has some good qualities, the treatment of the Hebrew text is methodologically unsound and contrary to all acceptable philological principles, for the author constantly rewrites the MT in a way one would have thought belonged to the past.[66]

In his preliminary work on Ezekiel, Greenberg called into question the reigning methodology in biblical textual criticism.[67] Taking the text in Ezek 2:1-3:11 as a sample, Greenberg points out that Fohrer reconstructs a text diverging from the MT by over 20%. Zimmerli's reconstructed text diverges from the MT by 14%. Combining the results of our comparison between Fohrer and Zimmerli (cf. our note 63), with that provided by Greenberg, one concludes that textual criticism of Ezekiel resembles "more an art than a science." Greenberg called for a redefinition of the task of textual criticism, saying that it should abandon the illusion of recovering the "original text."[68] Instead, Greenberg argues,

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[64]G. Fohrer, "Die Glossen im Buche Ezechiel," *ZAW* 67 (1952) 33-53; *idem., Ezechiel* (HAT 13, Tübingen: Mohr, 1955) 43, 45, 151, 171, 177, 179, 181: "später ergänzender Endzusatz," 217, 218: "später etymologischer Einschub," *idem.*, "Die Glossen im Buche Ezechiel," in *Studien zu alttestamentliche Prophetie, BZAW* 99 (1967) 204-221.

[65]K. S. Freedy, "The Glosses in Ezekiel I - XXIV," *VT* 20 (1970) 29-52. The author defines the gloss as the smallest unit of tradition growth.

[66]So correctly G. Widengren, "Yahweh's Gathering of the Dispersed," *In The Shelter of Elyon, Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* (eds. W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer, JSOT Supplement Series 31, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 227-45 esp. p. 243 n. 18.

[67]M. Greenberg, "The Use of the Ancient Versions for Interpreting the Hebrew Text," *VTS* 29 (1978) 131-48. The recent discussion of the glosses in Ezekiel by M. Dijkstra, "The Glosses in Ezekiel Reconsidered, Aspects of Textual Transmission in Ezekiel 10," in *Ezekiel and His Book. Textual and Literary Criticism and their Interpretation*, ed. J. Lust, *BETL* 74 (1986) 56-77, has omitted mentioning M. Greenberg's treatment of the glosses. Fortunately, this omission has been remedied in the article by the editor of the volume, J. Lust, "The Use of Textual Witnesses for the Establishment of the Text, The Shorter and Longer Texts of Ezekiel, An Example: Ez 7," *BETL* 74 (1986) 7-20, esp. p. 10.

[68]In the critical study of modern English literature a similar redefinition of the task of textual criticism has been advocated by J. J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983). The author argues against the exclusive reliance on an author's original or "the best" text or manuscript. Often, he insists, "authors demonstrated a number of different wishes and intentions about what text they wanted to be presented to the public ... these differences reflect accommodations to changed circumstances, and sometimes to changed publics" (p. 32).

one should compare the message and the context of individual textual traditions like the MT or the LXX texts and weigh the effect of the divergences in the message of the respective versions.

> If the *Vorlagen* show divergence, too often critics have supplanted the Hebrew by it without realizing that what is at stake is not an isolated reading, but an entire context and message, or without awareness that they may be contaminating the text of one edition by that of another.[69]

In order to determine a text-segment as secondary or inauthentic, Greenberg suggested the following criteria on a descending scale of probability:

> 1.) Historical - anachronism; reflection of a manifestly different situation; language or ideas belonging demonstrably to a later time.
> 2.) Syntactical - elements causing incoherence that cannot be explained by ancient literary habit or as some textual corruption.
> 3.) Contradiction - a weak ground unless the contradictory elements are close to each other and the contradiction cannot be accounted for on rhetorical grounds.[70]

According to him, composition should be perceived as a social process, and "final authority" does not reside in some initial authorial intention, but in the agreement reached between "the author [and] his affiliated institution" (p. 54).

[69]M. Greenberg, "The Use of the Ancient Versions for Interpreting the Hebrew Text," *VTS* 29 (1978) 131-48, esp. p. 147. Greenberg's translation and commentary aims at maximum fidelity to the MT. In *Ezekiel 1-20* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1983) 21-2, he adds, "indeed the ancient versions do not preserve key words (...) - often derivatives of the same root that in translation lose their similarity - or reflect the many echoes of passages outside the book. Moreover, they are inconsistent in rendering a given word (thus effacing connections present in Hebrew), and at times render literally, at times paraphrase." The accuracy of Greenberg's statement is confirmed in the specific case of הֲמוֹן. In Ezekiel the LXX translates this word in seven different ways, πληθος "multitude" (7:12-14; 26:13, 29:19; 30:10, 15; 31:2, 18; 32:32); ίσχύς "strength" (31:18, 32:12, 16, 18, 20, 26, 31); δύναμισ "power" (32:24); πολυάνδριον "populous" (39:15, 16); ἁρμονια "accord, harmony" (23:42); θορύβοσ "noise" (7:11); ἀφορμὴ "resources, wealth" (5:7).

[70]M. Greenberg, "What are Valid Criteria for Determining Inauthentic Matter in Ezekiel?" in *Ezekiel and His Book. Textual and Literary Criticism and their Interrelation*, ed. J. Lust, *BETL* 74 (1986) 123-35, esp. p. 133. cf. also J. D. Levenson, "Review of Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II* and Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*," *Int* 38 (1984) 210-217. The author juxtaposes Zimmerli's traditional approach to textual criticism according to which one should attempt to discover the basic form of the text which "has been obscured by additions and accretions" (*Ezekiel II*, 169) with Greenberg's proposal for a new way of pursuing textual criticism.

Similarly, in 1954, R. Tournay protested deleting too many "glosses" and "repetitions" in Ezekiel. He wanted to preserve them on the basis of Ezekiel's repetitive style. The repetitions were omitted in the Greek text because, Tournay argues, the translators abridged or curtailed them.[71]

In the present research, in dealing with glosses and secondary material in the Book of Ezekiel we have followed the guidelines stated by Greenberg.

1.5. Defining Terms

In reviewing the literature discussing themes and motifs one is struck by a considerable variety in the way scholars define these terms.[72] Moreover, since in the present research we propose to analyze motifs and a theme, a few remarks about what is meant by these terms are in order.

In studying oral poetry of illiterate Balkan bards and comparing it with the Homeric epic, M. Parry and A. Lord have pointed out the existence of traditional themes which they defined as "groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song."[73] For example, the several stereotyped descriptions in the *Odyssey* of a visitor being welcomed by a hospitable host constitute a "theme" in Lord's sense of the term. Lord specified that a theme is not necessarily limited to one set of words; rather, it is a matter of a "grouping of ideas".[74]

R. Scholes and R. Kellogg proposed an alternative to the term "theme." They prefer to use the term *topos*. They define it in the following way:

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[71]R. Tournay, "Review of J. Steinmann, *Ézéchiel* (1953)," *RB* 61 (1954) 428-32, "Ce style à répétition est tout à fait caractéristique de la manière d'Ézéchiel, comme il le sera du second Isaïe. N'oublions pas qu'il parle à des gens 'rebelles'; il lui faut insister et revenir sans cesse sur les mêmes vérités, dures à entendre. Les 'doublets' n'étaient pas inutiles; ils s'imposaient au contraires, pour convaincre des gens qui ne voulaient pas écouter."

[72]Cf. D. J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch* (JSOT Supplement Series 10, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978) 12, "... so slight has been the attention given in the critical literature to the systematization of terms like theme, motif, plot, that discussion of a rational division of labour among them is only to be welcomed..."

[73]A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960. 1981) 68. Cf. also *idem*., "Composition by Theme in Homer and Southslavic Epos," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 82 (1951) 71-80, esp. p. 73, where he defined a theme as "a recurrent element of narration or description in traditional oral poetry."

[74]A. Lord, *op. cit.*, 96.

> A *topos*, whether it occurs in an oral narrative or a written one, is a traditional image. It is not identifiable or even analyzable on the basis of either the formulas or the uniquely arranged words a poet might use to construct it, but rather on the basis of the image to which the words refer. Insofar as a *topos* refers to the external world its meaning is a motif; insofar as it refers to the world of disembodied ideas and concepts its meaning is a theme.[75]

However, since the above definition of the *topos* renders its identification in the Biblical literature a rather complex enterprise we have refrained from using this term.

G. Fohrer[76] defines a motif as a *geprägtes Bedeutungssyndrom* which an author may use in order to express a thought, or to call the attention of the reader to the presence of a particular theme. According to Fohrer motifs do not have an independent existence. They serve as a signal, pointing to a theme, and provoking certain associations concerning a particular theme (*Hinweischarakter des Motivs*).

A theme represents "the central or dominating idea in a literary work ... the abstract concept which is made concrete through its representation in person, action, and image in the work."[77] A motif could be cosidered as an elementary unit of a theme.[78] A theme may contain among other

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[75]R. Scholes and R. Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) 26-27. The authors define a *topos* as consisting of a narrative and a conceptual element; e.g., a combination of narrative motif of a hero's descent to the nether world and a conceptual theme of the search for wisdom. The *topoi* of oral narratives are identifiable on the basis of their consistent association of a given motif with a given theme.

[76]G. Fohrer, *et al., Exegese des Alten Testaments. Einführung in die Methodik* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1973) 102-6: "Klärung des Terminus 'Motiv,'" 107-8: "Klärung des Termini 'Geprägtes Thema' und 'Geprägtes Zug.'"

[77]Cf. W. F. Thrall and A. Hibberd, *A Handbook to Literature* (New York: Odyssey, 1960) 486, quoted in D. L. Petersen, "A Thrice-Told Tale: Genre, Theme and Motif," *BR* 18 (1973) 30-43 esp. p. 36.

[78]Cf. D. J. A. Clines, "Theme in Genesis 1-11," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 483-507. The author defines a "theme" by distinguishing it from terms like "intention," "motif," "plot," and "subject." "Theme is both narrower and broader than "the intention of the author" (p. 484). It is "broader than 'author's intention' in that it cannot always be stated adequately in terms of what the author had consciously in mind." "Theme" is broader than "motif," or "topos," or "typical scene," or "narrative pattern," or "theme" in the sense used by Parry and Lord ... (*ibid*). It is deeper than "plot," and allows one to understand the work more deeply than knowing its "subject" (p. 485). "Theme ... arises out of the subject, but because it is a matter for deeper perception its identification is more complex and involves more subjective considerations ... In a literary work, unlike a scientific or technical work, theme is not usually explicit" (*ibid*). Cf. also *idem., The Theme of the Pentateuch* (JSOT Suppl. Series 10, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978).

features several motifs.[79] A motif might be limited to a single idea, and several motifs may constitute a larger theme. To give some Biblical examples, in the Pentateuch one may speak of the "Murmuring Motif." As M. Noth defined it, "it is a narrative motif which became stereotyped within the larger theme of the 'leading through the wilderness.'"[80]

In dealing with the Pentateuchal traditions, M. Noth understood themes as brief statements of a confessional or hymnic character derived from Israel's early history.[81] These "fixed formulas" "primary confessions" and "kernels of the whole Pentateuchal traditions" were subsequently added to one another and expanded by narrative material in order to form the basis for the further expansion of the Pentateuchal traditions. He identified the following five major "themes": Guidance out of Egypt, guidance into the arable land, promise to the patriarchs, guidance in the wilderness, revelation at Sinai. Hence, *Überlieferungsgeschichte* deals with the history of transmission of themes at an *oral* stage of the tradition.

In the present research a theme is defined as a stereotyped group of ideas having a central or dominant role in a *literary* work. In our analysis of one of the major themes in the Book of Ezekiel, (section 5.3: "The Absence of the Divinity from Its Shrine"), we understand it in the sense of the *Traditionsgeschichte* which deals primarily with the literary phase of the complexes of traditional material.[82] The traditional material related to the departure of the divinity and its absence from the shrine is traced in the Mesopotamian literature and in the Book of Ezekiel. By its dominant character a theme has a structuring function in a work. This

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[79]Cf. also D. Madelénat, "Thème, critique thématique" in *Dictionnaire des littératures de la langue française* (eds. J.- P. Beaumarchais, D. Couty and A. Fray, Paris: Bordas 1984, 3 vols.) 3, 2296-2298.

[80]"Ein stereotyp gewordenes Erzählungsmotiv innerhalb des Themas 'Führung in der Wüste'" in M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte* des Pentateuch (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1948) 136, Engl. transl. by B. W. Anderson, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972) 122. Cf. also J. Guillet, "Le thème de la marche au désert dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testaments," *Recherches des Sciences Religieuses* 36 (1949) 179-81.

[81]M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1948), Engl. transl. by B. W. Anderson, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972) 46, and pp. 47-62.

[82]For a convenient clarification of this convention of German exegetes to reserve the term *Überlieferungsgeschichte* for the study of the oral pre-literary stage of biblical texts and *Traditionsgeschichte* for the literary stage, see M. Rose, "Approches classiques de l'Ancien Testament: Techniques exégétiques et implications théologiques," *ETR* 3 (1988) 337-60, esp. p. 345.

feature may aptly be illustrated with reference to the central theme of the Sîn-liqi-unninī's version of the Gilgameš epic. The main theme which runs through this epic and serves as its unifying factor is Gilgameš's quest for immortality.[83]

A motif, as used in this research, stands for a concept in a *literary* work as well as for a material object or carving in the domain of ancient Near Eastern iconography. Thus a motif can have both an iconographic and literary expression.

In his analysis of the theme of *hybris* in the Old Testament, P. Humbert pointed out that from a formal point of view this theme includes two closely related and logically connected elements (or motifs): an act of immoderation which aims to go beyond the human limits and attain the divine, and a catastrophic descent subsequent to the impetus of *hybris*, standing for the reaction of the divinity and the chastisement of human insolence.[84]

Here are a few instances of motifs in Biblical literature: Within the so-called "Succession Narrative," H. Hagan identified eighteen instances of the motif of deception which he perceives as a function of a larger theme of fidelity and infidelity present in this story.[85]

In the story of David and Bathsheba (2 Sam 11-12), J. Blenkinsopp detects a literary motif of the woman who brings death.[86]

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[83]So J. H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982) 6, cf. also pp. 8-9, where Tigay lists a series of motifs and phrases which serve to underpin the main theme of the epic. According to T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1976), the main theme of the Gilgameš epic "may be phrased either in positive terms as a quest for achieveing immortality or in negative terms, as a flight, an attempt to avoid death" (p. 215). Cf. Jacobsen's diagram on p. 216, showing how a series of motifs and minor themes are arranged around the main theme.

[84]P. Humbert, "Démesure et chute dans l'Ancien Testament," in (*Hommage à W. Vischer*, Montpellier: Causse, Graille, Castelnau, 1960) 63-82, "Au point de vue formel le thème comprenait nécessairement et régulièrement deux éléments étroitement et même logiquement unis: un acte démesuré pour dépasser les limites de l'humain et atteindre au divin, et une chute catastrophique consécutive à cet élan d'hybris et qui marque la réaction de la divinité et le châtiment de l'insolence humaine" (p. 77). Several times Humbert designated this theme simply "*démesure-chute*" (e.g., p.71).

[85]H. Hagan, "Deception as Motif and Theme in 2 Sm 9-20; 1 Kgs 1-2," *Bibl* 60 (1979) 301-26, esp. p. 303.

[86]J. Blenkinsopp, "Theme and Motif in the Succession History (2 Sam. XI 2ff.) and the Yahwist Corpus," *VTS* 15 (1966) 44-57, esp. pp. 52-6. An example of this motif would be the case of the marriage of Judah with the daughter of the Canaanite Shua described in Gen 38, which is followed by the violent death of the first two children born to their marriage. Blenkinsopp also suggests that at the beginning of the primeval history, Eve represents *the* Woman who brings death. This interpretation of the figure of Eve is questionable in the light of the fact that she is called "the mother of all the living." For a corrective see I. M. Kikawada, "Two Notes on Eve," *JBL* 91 (1971) 33-5; Ch. Uehlinger,

"Eva als 'lebendiges Kunstwerk,' Traditionsgeschichtliches zu Gen 2,21-22(23.24) und 3,20," *BN* 43 (1988) 90-99; Ph. Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Fortress: Philadelphia, 1978) pp. 72-143, "A Love Story Gone Awry." D. M. Gunn, "Traditional Composition in the 'Succession Narrative,'" *VT* 26 (1976) 214-29, esp. pp. 222-23, points out several other examples of this literary motif in the Old Testament. The quarrel over Rizpah, Saul's concubine, whom Abner took for himself after the death of the former (2 Sam 2:7) leads indirectly to the destruction of both Ishbosheth and Abner (2 Sam 3:8-11). The two sons of Rizpah along with the five sons of Michal (2 Sam 21:1ff) were executed. The seduction of Bathsheba brings in its train the death of Uriah and of the illegitimate child. The rape of Tamar leads to the death of Amnon and Absalom; and finally David's concubine Abishag is the occasion of the deaths of Adonijah and Joab. Gunn also notes the regular occurrence of two deaths in relationship with the motif of the woman who brings death and concludes that the material is built around a traditional folk motif (p. 223).

2. SURVEY OF RESEARCH OF THE BABYLONIAN INFLUENCE ON THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

The primary goal of the present survey is to show that there exists a well established tradition, over one hundred years old, in which scholars sought to demonstrate the Babylonian linguistic, cultural and literary influence on the Book of Ezekiel. Moreover, it provides a context in which the present research should be viewed. The survey does not aim at being exhaustive since there are works with extensive bibliographical references for each of the approaches listed below.[1]

2.1. Philological Studies

The issue of the Babylonian influence on the Book of Ezekiel arose as soon as Assyriology established itself as a discipline. In (1883), Friedrich Delitzsch explained several *hapax legomena* found in Ezekiel on the basis of Akkadian.[2] In a preface to S. Baer's *Liber Ezechielis* (1884), Delitzsch presented a list of over 30 *hapax legomena* and other terms in Ezekiel which he explained as Akkadianisms.[3] A year later, in a four-part article,[4] Delitzsch applied the results of his Assyriological research to Hebrew lexicography. In part IV[5] he dealt with the philological

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[1]Cf. the article by S. Spiegel, "Ezekiel or Pseudo-Ezekiel?" *HTR* 24 (1931) 244-321, esp. pp. 301-9, for philological and thematic studies; S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1983) 1-11, for philological studies, and O. Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst* (SBS 84/85, Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977) 361-83, for bibliography on the iconographic approach to the Book of Ezekiel.

[2]F. Delitzsch, *The Hebrew Language Viewed in the Light of Assyrian Research* (London/Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1883) see Index. The book represents an expanded edition of a series of articles which appeared in *Athenaeum* in 1883. For a critique of Delitzsch's etymologies see T. Nöldeke, "Review of F. Delitzsch, *Prolegomena eines neuen hebräisch-aramäischen Wörterbuch zum AT*," *ZDMG* 40 (1886) 718-43.

[3]F. Delitzsch, "Specimen Glossarii Ezechielico-Babylonici," in S. Baer, *Liber Ezechielis* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1884) X-XVIII.

[4]F. Delitzsch, "Assyriologische Notizen zum Alten Testament, I-IV," *ZK* 2 (1885) 87-98, 161-78, 284-94, 385-98.

[5]F. Delitzsch, "Assyriologische Notizen zum Alten Testament IV. Das Schwertlied Ezech. 21,13-22," *ZK* 2 (1885) 385-98. In *Babel und Bibel*, Dritter (Schluß-) Vortrag (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1905) 51 n. 9, Delitzsch argued that the expression בן אדם in Ezekiel should be understood in the light of Akkadian *mār awēlu* i.e., a designation of a free person or a noble. This interpretation is erroneous as shown already by E. König, *Geschichte der Alttestamentlichen Religion* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1915) 456. It is more appropriate to translate it with "mortal," designating a creature belonging to the category of humans whose characteristic is mortality as over against the divine beings who are immortal. Each time Ezekiel is addressed with בן אדם he falls upon his face in προσκύνησις. Ezekiel's action underlines his inferior position. Hence, to ascribe to בן אדם the meaning of Akk. *mār awēlu* would be inappropriate here. On the expression בן אדם see C. B. Houk, "בן אדם Patterns as Literary Criteria in Ezekiel,"

problems of the Poem of the Sword in Ezek 21. This was the first study in which Akkadian expressions were used in order to clarify the problematic Hebrew of the poem. The author displayed a considerable respect for the Masoretic text, an attitude contrary to the prevailing trend among scholars of the time who indulged in facile textual emendations. For each problematic item Delitzsch adduced the negative judgment of R. Smend or T. Nöldeke and then proceeded to show how each one of the apparently difficult terms could be explained in the light of corresponding Akkadian expressions. The value and farsightedness of Delitzsch's approach can be realized when one compares his method with the one propounded by his contemporary R. Smend. The latter argued that the origin of the names of numerous precious stones mentioned in Ezek 28:13-14, as well as the background of the vision of the cherubs should be sought in India![6]

In his Halle dissertation (1890), F. Selle, reduced Delitzsch's list of difficult words in Ezekiel which have been traced back and explained through Akkadian to 25.[7] The author defended a thesis of an unusually strong Aramaic element in the Book of Ezekiel.

In C. H. Toy's notes to the text of Ezekiel (1899),[8] one can find repeated references to Akkadian expressions and parallels. However, in most of the cases these stem from P. Haupt, the editor of the series.

JBL 88 (1969) 184-90; J. Burnier-Genton, *Ézéchiel fils d'homme* (EB 5, Genève: Labor et Fides, 1982).

[6]R. Smend, *Der Prophet Ezechiel* (KeH 8, Leipzig: S. Hirzel, ^{2}1880) 221.

[7]F. Selle, *De Aramaismis libri Ezechielis* (Dissertatio inauguralis philologica, Halis Saxonum: Formis Kaemmererianis, 1890). As pointed by S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1983) 3-4, the issue of Aramaisms is quite complex. Some Aramaisms may be taken as originating in Akkadian, cf. S. A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influence on Aramaic* (AS 19, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). Other examples should be considered influences of Akkadian which touched both Hebrew and Aramaic independently. One has also to take into account the influence of Aramaic on Akkadian, cf. W. von Soden, "Aramäische Wörter in neuassyrischen und neu- und spätbabylonischen Texten. Ein Vorbericht. I (*agâ* - **mūš*)," *Or* 35 (1966) 1-20; "II (*n* - *z* und Nachträge)," 37 (1968) 261-71.

[8]C. H. Toy, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text with Notes*, in *The Sacred Books of the Old Testament*, part 12, (ed. P. Haupt, Leipzig: Hinrichs; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press; London: D. Nutt, 1899). Cf. also J. Barth, *Wurzeluntersuchungen zum Hebräischen und Aramäischen Lexicon* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902).

In 1905 F. Perles explained the *hapax* in Ezek 16:4 "nor were you washed with water to cleanse you (לְמִשְׁעִי)" from Akkadian *mašā'u* meaning "to rub."[9] The Akkadian term appears in connection with the washing of a child, *enūma awēlu ṣiḫru tumaššā'u* "when you have rubbed the little one."

In 1906, L. Venetianer, identified Hebrew חַשְׁמַל with Akkadian *tarmanu* which can also be read as *ḫašmānu* "a blue green stone" (in certain texts explained as *saggilmud* stone). Venetianer argued that the term refers to malachite, a bluish green mineral used as a source of copper ore.[10]

In 1910, H. Torczyner[11] demonstrated that Ezekiel's orthography of the term for a measure of flour שְׂאוֹר (45:11 לִשְׂאֹת), follows closely the Akkadian *še'u* (1/180 of a shekel),[12] while in the rest of the Old Testament the word occurs with a samek סְאוֹר (cf. *BDB* 684b).

B. Meissner (1911) related Ezekiel's cherubs to the colossal representations of bulls and lions on Assyrian reliefs.[13] He related the Hebrew term כְּרוּב to Akkadian *kuru* and examined a number of texts where this term occurs.

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[9]F. Perles, *Babylonisch-jüdische Glossen, Sonderabzüge aus der Orientalischen Litteratur-Zeitung* (Berlin: W. Peiser, 1905) 8. Unfortunately the author did not list the source in which this Akkadian phrase occurs.

[10]L. Venetianer, *Ezekiels Vision und die Salomonischen Wasserbecken* (Budapest: F. Kilian, 1906) 37-38. For a review and a critique of various identifications of Hebrew חַשְׁמַל see our section 4.2.

[11]H. Torczyner, in *Anzeiger der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, philologisch-historische Klasse*, 1910, XX, and repeated in *idem*., "Anmerkungen zu den Papyrusurkunden von Elephantine," *OLZ* 15 (1912) cols. 397-403, esp. col. 402, "Wie der Babylonier Ezechiel schreiben auch die unter babylonischem Einfluss stehenden Juden in Aegypten שׂ für ס. Also שְׂאֹר = סְאוֹר."

[12]Cf. R. Labat, *Manuel d'Épigraphie Akkadienne* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1976) p. 327, *še'u* "grain, mesure de poinds (1/180 du sicle)." *AHw* 122, renders *še'u* simply with "Gerste, Getreide" ("barley, cereals"). ŠE = *še'um* is also used as a surface measure, cf. F. Thureau-Dangin, "Le 'grain', mesure de surface," *RA* 35 (1938) 156-7. סְאוֹר could equally be used as a liquid measure and as a square measure according to the Talmudic tractates *Miṇḥôth* 12.4, "... in a reservoir containing forty סְאוֹר he can bathe for purification ..."; *Sebi'îth* 3.2, where סְאוֹר is used as a square measure designating a piece of land requiring one סְאוֹר of seed. In the light of this parallelism between Hebrew סְאוֹר, שְׂאוֹר and Akkadian *še'um*, Ellenbogen's suggestion to identify סְאוֹר with Akkadian *sūtu* might be erroneous. Cf. M. Ellenbogen, *Foreign Words in the Old Testament. Their Origin and Etymology* (London: Luzac, 1962) 118.

[13]B. Meissner, "Bemerkungen zu den Asarhaddoninschriften," *OLZ* 14 (1911) cols. 474-77, esp. cols. 476-7. Cf. also P. Dhorme - L. H. Vincent, "Les chérubins," *RB* 35 (1926) 328-58, esp. p. 336, "Nous n'hésitons point à reconnaître au mot כְּרוּב la même racine qu'au mot *kāribu* des Babyloniens."

The work of H. Zimmern (1913/14)[14] dealt with all the words in the Hebrew Bible which could be related or derived from Akkadian. Most words from Delitzsch's list of Hebrew-Akkadian cognates in Ezekiel have been incorporated in this work.

In 1914, the Belgian Catholic scholar A. van Hoonacker,[15] explained some of Ezekiel's *hapax legomena* and rare words in the light of Sumerian. However, Hoonacker's identifications have not stood the test of further research. His explanation of the name Magog as a contraction of MA (= *mātu* "country, land") and GUG "darkness" is not without linguistic difficulties.[16] However, one might be dealing here with a particular hermeneutical procedure attested in Babylonian texts (cf. our section 5.5. nn. 84-88).

In 1916, S. Landersdorfer[17] attempted to demonstrate how through Akkadian a number of Sumerian words were transmitted to other Semitic languages like Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac and Arabic.[18] Besides some proper names which have been transmitted through Sumerian into

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[14]H. Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluss* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913/14, [2]1917), see Index. For a critical assessment of Zimmern's work see S. A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (AS 19, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974) 2-3.

[15]A. van Hoonacker, "Éléments sumériens dans le livre d'Ézéchiel?" *ZA* 28 (1914) 333-36, cf. p. 336, "Magôg est *la* région des ténèbres ou *du ténèbreux, le Nord.*"

[16]Cf. G. R. Driver, "Lingustic and Textual Problems: Ezekiel," *Bibl* 19 (1938) 60-69; 175-87, esp. p. 183, who tries to explain away the difficulties. Cf. M. Streck, "Das Gebiet der heutigen Landschaften Armenien, Kurdistân und Westpersien nach den babylonisch-assyrischen Keilinschriften," *ZA* 15 (1900) 257-382, esp. p. 321 n 1. Cf. also F. Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies? Eine biblisch-assyriologische Studie* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1881) 246. Delitzsch drew attention to the name of a city prince *Gāgu*, "a powerful ruler of a warlike mountain people not too far to the north of Assyria," mentioned in the Annals of Aššurbanipal.

[17]S. Landersdorfer, *Sumerisches Sprachgut im Alten Testament, Eine biblisch-lexikalische Studie* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916). In his work, *Der* BAAΛ TETPAMOPΦOΣ *und die Kerube des Ezechiel* (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums IX, 3, Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1918), he collected evidence from various writings of Syrian poets who lived between the 3rd and the 6th century A.D. concerning a Phoenician idol with four faces or βααλ τετραμορφοσ which presumably existed in the time of Manasseh. In a short final section entitled "Die Kerube des Ezechiel" (pp. 52-61), Landersdorfer mentions the vision of the cherubs in Ezek 1 and 10, suggesting that these might have some connection with βααλ τετραμορφοσ. For a critique of Landersdorfer see E. Vogt, "Die vier 'Gesichter' (*pānîm*) der Keruben in Ez," *Bibl* 60 (1979) 327-47. "Aber zu dieser 'Feststellung' kann er nur durch eine gewagte Interpretation und Kombination vereinzelter jüngerer Texte" (p.330).

[18]Cf. now S. Liebermann, *The Sumerian Loanwords in Old-Babylonian Akkadian* (HSS 22, Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977).

Semitic languages, the author also analyzed the so-called *Kulturwörte* which are used with great frequency and easily cross linguistic frontiers. A number of words found in the Book of Ezekiel were traced through Akkadian back to Sumerian.

In 1926, P. Haupt produced a philological analysis of Ezekiel's Song of the Sword in the light of Akkadian.[19]

In line with his critique of C. C. Torrey's hypothesis and in an attempt to give additional support for the view of a Babylonian locale of the Book of Ezekiel, S. Spiegel (1931),[20] summarized the discussion of the Babylonian loanwords. He reiterated F. Selle's conclusion that there are a number of words in Ezekiel for which no other derivation is known but Akkadian.

In the course of his philological work, G. R. Driver pointed out in a number of articles[21] the Akkadian background of certain terms in the Book of Ezekiel.

With reference to the enygmatic phrase in Ezek 8:3, 5, מושב סמל הקנאה המקנה "the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy" (*RSV*), Albright[22] (1942) had argued that מושב represents the niche in the wall in which was placed a figured slab (סמל related to Akkadian *sim[m]iltu* "stone slab"), of the type known in northern Syria, Asia Minor, and northern Mesopotamia. This explanation is plausible.

In 1946, Torczyner[23] had suggested to explain the Hebrew term, סמל, in the light of Akkadian *šamallū* "commercial agent, representative."

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[19]P. Haupt, "Etymological and Critical Notes 6. Ezekiel's Song of the Sword," *AJP* 47 (1926) 305-18, esp. pp. 315-18.

[20]S. Spiegel, "Ezekiel or Pseudo-Ezekiel?" *HTR* 24 (1931) 244-321, especially section 6. "Language and Landscape" pp. 301-9. cf. also *idem*., "Toward Certainty in Ezekiel," *JBL* 54 (1935) 145-71, esp. pp. 148-59.

[21]G. R. Driver, "Linguistic and Textual Problems: Ezekiel," *Bibl* 19 (1938) 60-69; 175-87; *idem*., "Difficult Words in the Hebrew Prophets," in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* (ed. H. H. Rowley, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950) 52-72; *idem*., "Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision," *VT* 1 (1951) 60-62; *idem*., "Ezekiel: Linguistic and Textual Problems," *Bibl* 35 (1954) 145-59, 299-312.

[22]W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1942) 165-66, 221.

[23]H. Torczyner, "SEMEL HA-QINA'H HA-MAQNEH*," *JBL* 45 (1946) 293-302, esp. p. 301, "The difficulties of Ez 8:3-5 are thus solved. Although the *semel* was nothing but a stele of stone or wood, it was regarded as a living agent of redemption, a person sitting on a מושב (seat), and so it aroused the anger of the prophet no less than an abominable idol."

However, his interpretation collapses under the weight of too many assumptions.[24]

In his Marburg *Habilitationschrift* (1949), G. Fohrer summarized the main issues related to the study of the Book of Ezekiel.[25] The author subscribes to the traditional view of Ezekiel as a prophet who lived and exercised his ministry in Babylonia. He also included a section on the "Babylonian Influence on Ezekiel's Proclamation" (pp. 236-40) and reproduced a list of Hebrew terms which might be of Babylonian origin.

In reviewing Fohrer's book, R. Tournay (1953),[26] completed the list by adding 20 more terms which could reflect the Babylonian background of the Book of Ezekiel. Tournay maintained his basic thesis of an Akkadian influence on Ezekiel's vocabulary in a series of review articles,[27] and concluded with an article which dealt specifically with this issue.[28]

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[24]Torczyner's argument is based on the following assumptions: i.) He interprets Hebrew סמל as an old loan word from Akkadian *šamallū* (the term being originally West Semitic). On the basis of the different pronunciation of the sound š in Assyria and Babylonia, Torczyner assumes that it came into Hebrew from Assyria; ii.) He reinterprets the term קנאה to mean "redemption" and not "jealousy;" iii.) On the basis of Mishnaic and New Testament references he assumes that there were commerical agents within the Jerusalem temple in the time of Ezekiel; iv.) He finally assumes that the term סמל although referring just to a stele was considered as a redeeming agent. He offered the following translation, "the agent for giving redemption who causes redeeming," (p. 302 n. 10).

[25]The work was subsequently published under the title *Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel, BZAW* 72 (1952).

[26]R. Tournay, "Review of G. Fohrer, *Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel," RB* 60 (1953) 417-19.

[27]R. Tournay, "Review of J. Steinmann, *Le Prophète Ézéchiel," RB* 61 (1954) 428-32; *idem.*,"Reviews of A. Van Den Born, *Ezechiël*; G. C. Aalders, *Ezechiël* I; R. Augé, *Ezequiel*; W. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel I," RB* 64 (1957) 126-30, 601-3; *idem., RB* 65 (1958) 446, 612-13.

[28]R. Tournay, "A propos des babylonismes d'Ézéchiel," *RB* 68 (1961) 388-93. This article represents a refutation of the view expressed by P. Auvray, "Remarques sur la langue d'Ézéchiel," *BETL* 12/13 (1959) 461-70. The latter argued that the terms in Ezekiel which are ascribed to the presumed Babylonian influence can equally well be attributed to the normal development of the Hebrew language. The rabbinic tradition is also opposed to Auvray's view. Cf. the view of the Spanish-Jewish exegete Don Isaac Abrabanel (1437-1509, his name is occasionally spelled Abarbanel), in the "Preface to Ezekiel" in *La Bible, traduction nouvelle* (French translation by S. Cahen, Paris: Imprimerie de Wittersheim, 1841, tome XI) 36, "Il est certain que le prophète Ézéchiel n'était pas versé (בקי) dans la langue sainte ... C'est pourquoi il y a chez lui des mots barbares (מלות זרות) et tantôt des lettres de trop, ou des lettres manquantes." While Abrabanel's view is certainly exaggerated it nevertheless expresses the impression a rabbi had while reading the peculiar vocabulary of Ezekiel.

M. Ellenbogen (1957), offered an etymological study of the foreign words in the Old Testament including a few found in Ezekiel.[29] The author criticized and rejected a number of Zimmern's and Landersdorfer's explanations.

In his introductory essay on the language of the Book of Ezekiel, W. Zimmerli (1969),[30] has argued that the claim of a strong Aramaic coloring of Ezekiel's vocabulary is an exaggeration which does not stand up to closer examination.[31] Zimmerli supports the works of Fohrer and Frankena who argued for the presence of Akkadianisms and the influence of Akkadian literature on the Book of Ezekiel.

M. I. Gruber's M.A. thesis (1970),[32] discussed Akkadian influences on the Book of Ezekiel. The author analyzed a number of place names as well as trade, mineral, plant, cultic, political and military terminology as evidence of a Babylonian linguistic-cultural influence on the vocabulary of Ezekiel. The references to many place names, which are peculiar to Ezekiel among biblical literature, were sought in the records of the land where Ezekiel heard them. In addition to these place names a number of idioms and terms were clarified by reference to the Akkadian language.

In 1977, M. Greenberg[33] clinched the issue concerning the interpretation of a crux in Ezek 16:36 with a reference to Akkadian, the commentary of Rashi and a Talmudic anecdote. In Ezek 16, Jerusalem is described as a nymphomaniacal harlot. She is rebuked for her wanton

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[29]M. Ellenbogen, *Foreign Words in the Old Testament. Their Origin and Etymology* (Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 1957, London: Luzac, 1962).

[30]W. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel* (BKAT XIII/1-2, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969, Engl. transl. in Hermeneia *Ezekiel*, vol. I, R. E. Clements, vol. II, J. D. Martin, Philadelphia: Fortress, vol. I 1979, vol. II 1983) Introduction 5. A. "The Language and Form of the Prophecies of the Book of Ezekiel," I 21-4.

[31]Cf. E. Kautzsch, *Die Aramaismen im Alten Testament untersucht*. I. Lexikalischer Teil (Halle: Niemeyer, 1902) 102. Of the 153 words which Kautzsch examines as Aramaisms, Ezekiel has 16, perhaps 17, examples. Cf. also M. Wagner, *Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch, BZAW* 96 (1966). Referring to Wagner's study Zimmerli says, "viewed in the number of words appearing, it emerges that in the 48 chapters of the book of Ezekiel there are 25 (+3) (Aramaic) words against the 14 (+8) words of the 39 chapters of Isaiah, which is a scarcely noticeable increase," (p. 21).

[32]M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1970).

[33]M. Greenberg, "NḤŠTK (Ezek. 16:36): Another Hebrew Cognate of Akkadian *naḫāšu*," in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of J. J. Finkelstein* (*MCAAS* 19, ed. M. de Jong Ellis, Hamden, Connecticut: Archon, 1977) 85-86.

behavior, "because your נחשת poured out and your crotch was exposed." The Hebrew *hapax*[34] is a cognate of Akkadian *naḫšātu* designating an abnormal female genital overflow. According to Greenberg, in Ezek 16:36 the sense would not be pathological but erotic, indicating a sexually particularly aroused female.

In 1979, S. Paul analyzed a series of Hebrew terms and expressions in the light of Akkadian equivalents.[35] The Hebrew idiom לבקש מיד (Ezek 3:18,20; 33:8) and לדרש מיד (Ezek 33:6; 34:10) meaning "to hold responsable," has as the exact interdialectal semantic equivalent in the Akkadian idiom *ina qāti bu'û*.

In the first part of his doctoral dissertation (1983), S. P. Garfinkel[36] analyzed over 70 of the presumed Akkadianisms in Ezekiel which have been proposed by scholars. After a critical examination of each suggestion the author rated the item in a hierarchy of probabilities. He concludes by determining whether the etymology is definite, probable, possible, improbable, or impossible. Chapters 2 and 3, of his dissertation represent a thematic study demonstrating the likelihood of Ezekiel's familiarity with Akkadian literature (see below).

2.2. Iconographic Studies

In 1848, A. H. Layard, the excavator of Kuyunjik, ancient Niniveh, had suggested that Ezekiel's vision of the כרובים might have been inspired by tha Assyrian winged human-headed lion figures guarding the portals.[37]

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[34]נחשׁ in Ezek 16:36 is not an absolute *hapax* since it might be related to נָחָשׁ in Gen 30:27. Greenberg refers to J.J. Finkelstein, "Old Babylonian Herding Contract and Genesis 31:38ff.," *JAOS* 88 (1968) 30-36, esp. p. 34 n. 19, who explained נָחָשׁ in Gn 30:27 as a cognate of Akk. *naḫāšu* "rich, abundant."

[35]S. M. Paul, "Unrecognized Biblical Legal Idioms in the Light of Comparative Akkadian Expressions," *RB* 86 (1979) 231-9.

[36]S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York 1983).

[37]A. H. Layard, *Niniveh and Its Remains* (London: J. Murray, 1849) vol. I 69-70; II 464-5. "The resemblence between the symbolical figures I have described, and those seen by Ezekiel in his vision, can scarcely fail to strike the reader. As the prophet had beheld the Assyrian palaces, with their mysterious images and gorgeous decorations, it is highly probable that, when seeking to typify certain divine attributes, and to describe the divine glory, he chose forms that were not only familiar to him, but to the people whom he addressed - captives like himself in the land of Assyria" (II p. 464). "It will be observed that the four forms chosen by Ezekiel to illustrate his description - the man, the lion, the bull, and the eagle, - are precisely those which are constantly found on Assyrian monuments as religious types," (II p. 465).

In his illustrated treatment of the Old Testament books (1881), F. Vigouroux suggested that the cherubs in Ezekiel stem from the Assyrian reliefs which the prophet saw in Babylonia,

> Le prophète (Ézéchiel), du reste, ayant vécu en Mésopotamie et ayant eu sans aucun doute les "*kirubi*" sous les yeux, a pu emprunter ... à l'art assyrien, et s'en servir pour rendre ses visions plus intelligibles à ses frères.[38]

R. Dussaud's study (1898), of the visions in Ezekiel represents a discussion of the iconographic procedure which Ezekiel employed in describing his visions, or as the author termed it, "*le procédé iconologique*."[39] The author argued that in analyzing Ezekiel's visions one finds elements of the actual Babylonian reliefs and images which the prophet observed in the land of his exile, "...dans toute vision se retrouvent les éléments de l'image précédemment vue" (p. 312).

H. Gressmann's collection of ancient Near Eastern texts and pictures relating to the Old Testament (1909), offers several illustrations of items found in the Book of Ezekiel.[40]

In 1917 L. Dürr[41] published a combined iconographic and literary study of the visions of Yahweh's chariot and the cherubs in Ezek 1 and 10. This study was decisive in demonstrating that the models for Ezekiel's visions should be sought in Babylonian iconography. In spite of

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[38]F. Vigouroux, *La Bible et les découvertes modernes en Palestine, en Égypte et en Assyrie avec des plans, des cartes et des illustration* (Paris: Berche et Tralin, ^{3}1881, 2 vols) I 204 n. 1. cf. esp. pp. 203-207, for a discussion of the origin of the cherub figures. He also quotes an earlier suggestion by F. Lenormant, *Essai de commentaire des fragments cosmogoniques de Bérose d'après les textes cunéiformes et les monuments de l'art asiatique* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1871) 81, "l'imagination poétique des Hébreux se représentait des Kerubim gardant la porte du paradis terrestre comme leurs analogues celles des palais assyriens."

[39]R. Dussaud, "Les visions d'Ézéchiel," *RHR* 37 (1898) 301-313, esp. p. 305.

[40]H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament* (in collaboration with A. Ungnad and H. Ranke Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1909; revised edition Berlin/ Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1927); for an illustration of the cherubs see figures 378, 379, 382, and for the net in Ezek 17 cf. figure 181.

[41]L. Dürr, *Ezechiels Vision von der Erscheinung Gottes (Ez. c.1 u. 10) im Lichte der vorderasiatischen Altertumskunde* (Münster i. W.: Aschendorff, 1917). For suggestions about the ancient Near Eastern and Israelite background of the vision in Ezek 1 see S. Sprank, *Ezechielstudien* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1926) 26-73; and H. Schmidt, "Keruben-Thron und Lade," *Eucharisterion* (ed. H. Schmidt, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923) 120-44.

the rich iconographic material adduced by Dürr, there is not a single iconographic example of a being with four different faces as in Ezek 1.[42]

The work of A. Jeremias (1930),[43] represents a running pictorial commentary on the Old Testament. A considerable number of items from Ezekiel are illustrated with motifs from Babylonian iconography.

A. Parrot had compared two Old Babylonian bronze statuettes of a four-faced god and a goddess with Ezekiel's vision of "four living creatures" each with four faces.[44] These statuettes cannot be taken as exact parallels of Ezekiel's vision since they have four identical human faces. As noted by Greenberg, "the symbolism of four distinct faces (in Ezekiel's vision) must be different, and for that we have no analogues."[45]

In his dissertation entitled *The God with a Net* (1965),[46] presented at the École Biblique de Jérusalem, J.- G. Heintz combined the iconographic approach with a thematic study of the motif of the net as a divine weapon. He traced the motif in texts from Sumer (the Stele of the Vultures), Akkad and in the Mari "prophetic" texts, and related it to the Biblical חרם "net," a term which occurs several times in Ezekiel.

In 1977, O. Keel elucidated Ezek 1 and 10 in the light of ancient Near Eastern seal impressions.[47] First, using literary analysis Keel established

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[42]For a critique of Dürr see E. Vogt, "Die Vier 'Gesichter' (*pānîm*) der Keruben in Ez," *Bibl* 60 (1979) 327-47. "Bis jetzt is keine altorientalische Darstellung eines Kopfes mit vier verschiedenartigen Gesichtern bekannt geworden" (p. 329).

[43]A. Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, [1]1904, [4]1930) 698-710 "Ezechiel."

[44]The tiny bronze statuettes were found in Ischchali in central Mesopotamia and have been dated to the 19th century BCE, see A. Parrot, *Sumer. The Dawn of Art* (Engl. transl. by S. Gilbert and J. Emmons, New York: Golden Press, 1961) 284, figs. 351 and 352; French original, *Sumer* (Collection: l'Univers des formes 1, Paris: Gallimard, 1960).

[45]M. Greenberg, "Ezekiel's Vision: Literary and Iconographic Aspects," in *History, Historiography and Interpretation. Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures* (eds. H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld, Jerusalem: Magnes and Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983, 1984) 159-168, esp. p. 164. Greenberg suggests that the symbolism of the divinity with four identical human faces is that of "all-observing potency." However, the exact determination of what these tiny bronze figurines symbolize is rather difficult without some clarification found in ancient texts.

[46]J.- G. Heintz, *Le Dieu au filet, Étude d'un thème de souveraineté divine du Proche-Orient antique dans ses rapports avec les origines du "herem" biblique* (Unpublished thesis, École Biblique et Archéologique Française, Jerusalem 1965). For a résumé of some parts of this work see *idem*., "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les Archives Royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 112-137, esp. pp. 129-37.

[47]O. Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, Eine neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* (SBS 84/85, Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977). On the basis of ancient Near Eastern seal impressions Keel points out that the creatures with four wings and two faces had the role of supporting the heavens and separating the holy from the profane ("Zweigesichtige Himmelsträger" pp. 230-31). He criticizes Zimmerli and other commentators who are

the interdependence between Ezek 1 and 10. Then he offered a collection of iconographic material which might have some bearing on the figures of these visions.[48]

In 1987, Ch. Uehlinger,[49] analyzed the abundant iconographic material which has been brought in relationship with Ezek 4 where the prophet is asked to represent graphically the siege of Jerusalem. He points out that the numerous plans of Mesopotamian cities do not really depict a siege situation and therefore their use as comparative iconographic material becomes questionable. He concludes his article with the analysis of the relationship between the image and the accompanying prophetic word. While the image communicates typical representations the explicative word provides it with individual and historical relevence.

2.3. Thematic Studies

The Harvard Professor C. H. Toy (1881), was among the first to identify the Babylonian ideas and motifs found in the Book of Ezekiel.[50]

In his *Ezechiel-Studien* (1885), D. H. Müller included a chapter on "Cuneiform Parallels" to the Book of Ezekiel which he collected from the royal inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE), and Aššurbanipal (668-627 BCE).[51] He argued that in the descriptions of carnage and

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"too enthusiastic about the revolutionary theophany of Yahweh in an unclean land!" (p. 233). The author affirms the contrary, arguing that the mention of such creatures in Ezekiel points out a radical separation between Yahweh's holiness and the unclean land of Babylon.

[48]For a critique of Keel's work see E. Vogt, "Die vier 'Gesichter' (*pānîm*) der Keruben in Ez," *Bibl* 60 (1979) 327-47. "O. Keel hat die Zahl der altorientalischen Darstellungen von mehrgesichtigen und mehrköpfigen Mischwesen sehr erweitert. Aber auch er kann kein Beispiel eines Kopfes mit vier verschiedenartigen Gesichten anführen" (p. 329). Cf. also *idem.*, p. 338 n. 37.

[49]Ch. Uehlinger, "Zeichne eine Stadt ... und belagere sie! Bild und Wort in einer Zeichenhandlung Ezechiels gegen Jerusalem (Ez 4f)," in *Jerusalem. Texte - Bilder - Steine* (NTOA 6, Zum 100. Geburtstag von H. + O. Keel-Leu, eds. M. Küchler - Ch. Uehlinger, Freiburg/Schweiz: Universitätsverlag - Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987) 111-200.

[50]C. H. Toy, "The Babylonian Element in Ezekiel," *Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis* 1 (1881) 59-66.

[51]D. H. Müller, *Ezechiel-Studien* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1885). See especially his chapter on "Keilschriftliche Parallelen," pp. 56-62. According to R. Dussaud, "Les visions d'Ézéchiel," *RHR* 37 (1898) 301-13, esp. p. 313 n. 1, the most original and valuable part of Müller's work is this chapter where the author attempts to show that Ezekiel was influenced by Akkadian literature.

destruction Ezekiel used some stereotyped formulations and literary motifs found in cuneiform inscriptions:

> I will strew your flesh upon the mountains,
> and fill the valleys with your carcass.
> I will drench the land even to the mountains
> with your flowing blood; and the watercourses
> will be full of you (Ezek 32:5-6).

> Cf. Annals of Tiglath-pileser I, III 23-7,
> *šalmat* (24) *qurādīšunu ina gišallat šadī*
> (25) *kîma raḫiṣi lukimir dāmīšunu* (26)
> *ḫurri u bamāti ša šadī* (27) *lušardi*[52]

> I piled up the corpses of their warriors
> on mountain ledges (and) made their blood flow
> into the hollows and plains of the mountains.[53]

Müller had also pointed out the stereotyped threefold and fourfold pattern in the announcement of calamity upon a certain people found in the Book of Ezekiel and in Akkadian literature, (cf. Ezek 6:11; 7:15; 12:16, "sword, famine, pestilence" and 5:17; 14:15-19, where the "wild beasts" are mentioned as the fourth element of the scourge).

In 1905, S. Daiches[54] compared Ezek 14:12-20, with the Babylonian account of the Deluge as found in tablet XI of the Gilgameš epic. Daiches characterized Ezekiel as a "scholar" who worked out his material carefully, sometimes laboriously. On the one hand, Ezekiel appears to be thoroughly acquainted with the older prophetic writings. On the other hand, the Babylonian similes and expressions present throughout the book demonstrate Ezekiel's familiarity "with the literature of the country in which he has spent the greater part of his life" (p. 441). According to Daiches, "it is in perfect agreement with the scholarly nature of Ezekiel

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[52]Akkadian text from D. H. Müller, *Ezechiel-Studien*, 56. The Assyrian royal inscriptions have also been treated by E. Ebeling, B. Meissner, E. Weidner, *Die Inschriften der altassyrischen Könige* (AOB 1, Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1926); Cf. the translation from D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926-27) I 78, "The corpses of their warriors I threw on the tops of the mountains like a downpour, their blood I shed over ravines and the tops of hills."

[53]Translation from A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972-1976, 2 vols.) II, p. 9.

[54]S. Daiches, "Ezekiel and the Babylonian Account of the Deluge, Notes on Ezek. xiv. 12-20," *JQR* 17 (1905) 441-55.

to make use of poetry and myth without regard to their origin" (*ibid.*). Daiches pointed out that in *Gilg.* XI 180ff. just as in Ezekiel there is mention of a remnant. Instead of a Deluge an alternative is offered consisting of four scourges, "the lion, the wolf, the famine, the pestilence."[55] The author also discussed some stylistic and formal similarities between the two texts. Daiches concludes that Ezekiel made use of the Babylonian account which he remodeled in order to suit his purpose.

In 1908, G. B. Gray suggested that the vision of the new temple in the Jerusalem to come (Ezek 40-43), might have been influenced by similar Babylonian visions.[56] Gray mentioned Gudea's dream in which the gods reveal to the king the plan of the temple in accordance to which he subsequently builds it.

The work of A. Jirku (1923), represents a commentary of Old Testament books in the light of Akkadian literature.[57] In the Book of Ezekiel he traced the motifs of the divine chariot and the cherubs in Akkadian texts.

The work of G. Hölscher (1924), is primarily a literary treatment of the Book of Ezekiel in which he espoused a radical thesis that only the poetic parts of the book are authentic, stemming from Ezekiel.[58]

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[55]In this case the pestilence is designated with ^{d}Erra. Since Erra was also the god of pestilence his name was often used in order to designate it.

[56]G. B. Gray, "The Heavenly Temple and the Heavenly Altar," *The Expositor* 5 (1908) 385-402, 530-46, esp. p. 531. "... the possibility and even the probability that Ezekiel is here influenced by Babylonian ideas may be admitted on these grounds: (1) that he shows elsewhere much openness to the influence of his Babylonian surroundings; (2) that the belief in temples built according to plans given from heaven is known to have existed in Babylon," (pp. 532-33.). On the Gudea cylinders see W. Förtsch, "Zu Gudea, Zylinder A 17,15-16," *ZA* 31 (1917-18) 164-5; A. Van Selms, "Eine neue Gudea-Inschrift," *AfO* 13 (1939-41) 62-63; M. Lambert, "Le rêve de Gudéa et le Cylindre BM. N° 89115," *RA* 41 (1947) 185-200; M. Lambert - J. R. Tournay, "Le cylindre A de Gudéa," *RB* 55 (1948) 403-37; *idem.*, "Le cylindre B de Gudéa," *RB* 55 (1948) 520-43; *idem.*, "La statue B de Gudéa," *RA* 45 (1951) 49-66; *idem.*, "Les statues D, G, E et H de Gudéa (Textes concernant la déesse Bau)," *RA* 46 (1952) 75-86. One of the best translations of the Gudea cylinders is found in A. Falkenstein - W. von Soden, *Sumerische und Akkadische Hymnen und Gebete* (Die Bibliothek der Alten Welt. Reihe der Alten Orient 2, Zürich/Stuttgart: Artemis, 1953) 137-82; I. Diakonoff, "The Inscriptions of Gudea of Lagaš," *MIO* 15 (1969) 525-32; R. R. Jestin, "Sur un passage des statues de Gu-de-a," *RA* 64 (1970) 161-6.

[57]A. Jirku, *Altorientalischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament* (Leipzig/Erlangen: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung W. Scholl, 1923) "Ezechiel" pp. 209-13.

[58]G. Hölscher, *Hesekiel, der Dichter und das Buch, BZAW* 39 (1924). Hölscher recognized twenty-one passages as genuine, of which sixteen were in poetry. These together cover in whole or in part some 170 verses out of a total of 1273 contained in the book.

However, Hölscher argued that Ezekiel has been more influenced by Babylonian mythology than any other prophet (p. 9). He enumerated themes which he deemed to be of Babylonian origin, "The garden of God" (Ezek 31:8); "The mountain of God" (28:14, 16). He interpreted the seven executioners in Ezek 9 as the seven Babylonian planetary deities.[59] Furthermore, Hölscher called on the Assyriologists to examine the particular expressions used by Ezekiel which appear to be of Babylonian origin. He compared the expression בן אדם, which occurs often in Ezekiel, with the way the god Ea addresses the Babylonian Noah, the hero Ut-napištim in *Gilg.* XI 38, with *amēlu* (cf. already Delitzsch).

In his last lecture series H. Gressmann (1928), discussed the Babylonian background of Ezekiel's vision of the Jerusalem to come (Ezek 40-48).[60] He pointed out that to the king Gudea of Lagaš (ca. 2200 BCE), the building plan of the temple was revealed in a dream, while to Ezekiel (40:2), it was revealed in a vision (p. 61).

H. G. May (1937), was the first scholar who attempted to interpret certain parts of the Book of Ezekiel in the light of the Poem of Erra.[61] He suggested that the seven executioners in Ezek 9 may have antecedents in the Sebetti in the Poem of Erra.

In the light of neo-Assyrian and neo-Babylonian vassal oaths, M. Tsevat (1959), argued for the specific and radical way in which Ezekiel applied the oaths of vassalage to the king of Judah.[62] According to Tsevat, other Old Testament prophets did not blame the kings of Judah and Israel when these violated the oath, though sworn by their own God, because it referred to a religious, judicial and social framework not their own, and thus had no foundation relevant to them (p. 201).

In 1965, the Dutch Assyriologist, the late R. Frankena, made his inaugural address at the University of Utrecht entitled, "Remarks of an

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[59]For a critique of this view see our section 4.3. "The Seven Executioners."

[60]H. Gressmann, *The Tower of Babel*, The Hilda Stich Stroock Lectures at the Jewish Institute of Religion (ed. J. Obermann, New York: Jewish Institute of Religion Press, 1928) esp. pp. 56-73. cf. p. 62 "The oldest prophecies concerning the Jerusalem to come, which we can accurately date, can be traced to Jewish prophets resident in Babylonia, that is to say Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah."

[61]H. G. May, "The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh," *JBL* 56 (1937) 309-21, esp. p. 312, and 320 n. 39.

[62]M. Tsevat, "The Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Vassal Oaths and the Prophet Ezekiel," *JBL* 78 (1959) 199-204. For a critique of Tsevat's view see M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983) 321.

Assyriologist on Ezekiel."[63] He argued that the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel knew the Poem of Erra and that the latter influenced his way of expressing and formulating certain themes. He made a preliminary study of the expressions and themes which the Book of Ezekiel shares with the Poem of Erra.[64] In the present research we have reexamined and accepted a number of Frankena's suggestions. In another study,[65] Frankena pointed out that several kings of Judah were vassals of Assyria and Babylon. The Annals of Esarhaddon and of Aššurbanipal mention the king Manasseh as a vassal, *menasi šar Yaudi*.[66]

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[63]R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965). The address was delivered on the occasion of the inauguration of a chair at the University of Utrecht which Frankena occupied, entitled, *Hoogleraar in het Hebreews de Hebreewse Oudheidkunde in het Babylonisch-Assyrisch* = "The Chair of Hebrew, of ancient Hebrew Culture and of Babylonian-Assyrian." Frankena projected to elaborate further the hypothesis he espoused in his inaugural lecture but never had time to complete his work. He died on November 23, 1974, cf. F. R. Kraus' preface to R. Frankena, *Kommentar zu den altbabylonischen Briefen aus Lagaba und anderen Orten* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978).

[64]Frankena analyzed the following items from the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra: Heb. הַמּוֹן and Akk. *ḫubūru*; the expression *ana šakān kamāri*; Heb. עֹשֵׂה שִׁפְטִים and Akk. *šiptu*; Heb. שֵׂאת and Akk. *leqû šēṭūtu*; the motif of the seven executioners and the symbolism of the ת sign in Ezek 9. Frankena's equation of Heb. עֹשֵׂה שִׁפְטִים with Akk. *šiptu*, has been criticized and rejected by J. J. M. Roberts in his book, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972) 27-8. Frankena's identification of the ת sign in Ezek 9 with the diagonal intersecting lines on the Erra tablets is inconclusive. It has not yet been clearly demonstrated that for the ancients the sign of a "sloping cross" had an apotropaic quality. On the contrary, the sign has been assigned different values.

[65]R. Frankena, "The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy," *OTS* 14 (1965) 122-54. On the covenant formulations see, G. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: Presbyterian Board of Colportage of Western Pennsylvania, 1955); K. Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary in Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Christian Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971); D. H. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969); D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (AnBib 21, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963); *idem., Old Testament Covenant: A Survey of Current Opinions* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1972); M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[66]R. Frankena, The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon...," *OTS* 14 (1965) 151 who quotes R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* (*AfO* Beiheft 9, Graz: E. Weidner, 1956) 60 (Nin. A, V, 55, *menasi šar Yaudi*); Manasseh is listed in the Annals of Aššurbanipal (A, I, 72ff. + C, I, 25ff.), where together with other vassals he had to send troops to Assurbanipal for the battle against Tirhakah of Egypt, on which occasion they were called *ardāni dāgil pānīya*, i.e., "vassals," cf. M. Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergang Niniveh's* (VAB VII, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916) II 8f., 138.

Hezekiah was a vassal of Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18:7), while Zedekiah was the vassal of Nebuchadrezzar (Ezek 17:19). On the basis of well established conventions in the ancient Near East, Frankena conjectured that there existed a certain number of cuneiform copies of the suzerain-vassal treaties in the Jerusalem royal archive. He argued that the writers and redactors of certain Biblical books like Deuteronomy and Ezekiel knew and used these extra-Biblical sources when describing the covenant between Yahweh and the people of Israel and formulating the curses and the consequences of breaking the covenant.

In 1970, O. Loretz made a rapprochement between Ezek 23:20 and a Sumerian proverb and suggested that both references reflect an ancient literary tradition.[67]

In 1973, J.- G. Heintz[68] discussed the motif of the "Devouring Fire," as a symbol of divine judgment in the Old Testament, including the Ezekiel passages. He made a rapprochement with ancient Near Eastern texts and in particular the Poem of Erra where the god Išum, who is associated with fire, plays an important role. In an article on the "Absence of the Divine Statue," (1979), the same[69] examined the evidence relating to this phenomenon in the ancient Near Eastern literature including the Poem of Erra. Although he brought the theme into connection with אֵל מִסְתַּתֵּר "the hiding God" in Isa 45:15, his analysis is relevant for the theme of Yahweh's presence leaving the Jerusalem temple in Ezekiel. In 1983, Heintz[70] analyzed the symbolism of the lion and the sword in connection with the Tell Rimah stele. He discussed the motif of the sword in relationship with the Song of the Sword in Ezek 21:13-22, and the sword in the Poem of Erra.

M. C. Astour (1976),[71] analyzed Ezekiel's prophecy against Gog (Ezek 38-39), in the light of the didactic poem known as the Cuthean

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[67]O. Loretz, "Eine sumerische Parallele zu Ez 23,20," *BZ* 14 (1970) 126.

[68]J.- G. Heintz, "Le 'Feu Dévorant,' un symbole du triomphe divin dans l'Ancien Testament et le milieu sémitique ambiant," in *Le Feu dans le Proche-Orient antique, aspects linguistiques, archéologiques, technologiques, littéraires, Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg*, 1972 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) 63-78.

[69]J.- G. Heintz, "De l'absence de la statue divine au 'Dieu qui se cache' (Ésaïe 45/15): Aux origines d'un thème biblique," *RHPR* 59 (1979) 427-37.

[70]J.- G. Heintz, "Langage métaphorique et représentation symbolique dans le prophétisme biblique et son milieu ambiant," in *Image et signification, Rencontres de l'École du Louvre II,* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983) 55-72, esp. pp. 63-66 "Les symboles du lion et de l'épée."

[71]M. C. Astour, "Ezekiel's Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin," *JBL* 95 (1976) 567-79. Most of these features occur in the Poem of Erra which, however, Astour failed to mention. Cf. our section 5.4.1.

legend of Narām-Sîn. According to Astour, Ezekiel condensed and remodeled a long list of ills and plagues from the Narām-Sîn legend. He retained its essential items like anger of the divinity, terror, tremor, plague, slaughter, flood rains, fire, internecine slaughter, and the divine intervention in battle. Astour emphasized strongly the importance of Ezekiel's Babylonian background for the understanding of his book.

In his detailed and richly documented study of Ezekiel's political parables B. Lang (1978) has traced their ancient Near Eastern background.[72] He has analyzed the motifs of the eagle, the cedar, the vine, the lion, with reference to Akkadian and other texts and has offered some iconographic material as illustration.

In 1979, M. Anbar[73] traced a particular tradition found in Ezek 22:24, according to which the land of Israel was spared the Deluge, to a line in the Poem of Erra which says the same about the "eternal city" Sippar.

Chapters 2 and 3 of S. P. Garfinkel's dissertation represent a thematic study.[74] The author attempted to demonstrate the likelihood that Ezekiel used some Akkadian sources in the formulation of certain passages. Ezekiel's commissioning as well as his dumbness might have been patterned after Akkadian incantation texts.

Most recently (1986), B. Maarsingh,[75] following a suggestion of Frankena, compared the Song of the Sword in Ezekiel 21 with the Poem of Erra. The author has established a number of parallels in form and content between the two works. This article testifies to the increased realization among scholars of the relevance of the Poem of Erra for the study of the Book of Ezekiel.

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[72]B. Lang, *Kein Aufstand in Jerusalem. Die Politik des Propheten Ezechiel* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1978); cf. also *idem., Ezechiel: der Prophet und das Buch* (Erträge der Forschung 153, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981).

[73]M. Anbar, "Une nouvelle allusion à une tradition babylonienne dans Ézéchiel (XXII 24)," *VT* 29 (1979) 352-53.

[74]S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1983), chapter 2, "On Briers and Scorpions," and chapter 3, "On the Dumbness of Ezekiel."

[75]B. Maarsingh, "Das Schwertlied in Ez 21,13-22 und das Erra-Gedicht," in *Ezekiel and His Book, Textual and Literary Criticism and their Interrelation, BETL* 74 (Leuven: University Press, 1986) 350-58. To the thematic studies one may add J. De Fraine, "Gilgameš apud Ezechielem?" *VD* 26 (1948) 49-52.

3. THE DISCUSSION OF THE POEM OF ERRA

3.1. Introduction

In many respects the neo-Babylonian Poem of Erra represents an outstanding work of Mesopotamian literature.[1] Its place is among the "classics" such as the Babylonian story of the Flood (the Atraḫasīs epic), the Gilgameš epic, the Babylonian Creation Epic (*Enūma eliš*), and the Descent of Ištar to the Nether World. The poem enjoyed an extraordinary fame in the ancient Near East as demonstrated by the fact that it was diffused in unaltered editions with exceptional rapidity over a wide geographical area. Fragments of the tablets containing the Poem of Erra have been unearthed at various archaeological sites, indicating that the Poem was known in Nineveh (the library of Aššurbanipal), Aššur, Babylon, Ur, and was attested even at Sultantepe, near ancient Harran.[2] L. Cagni points out that not even the Gilgameš epic enjoyed such wide circulation in the first millennium BCE.[3]

The Poem was written on five tablets and consisted of about 750 lines. Today about two thirds of the Poem have been recovered. The text on tablets II and III cannot yet be fully reconstructed. Most of the fragments contain the text from a single tablet. Only *KAR* 169 contains all five tablets together.[4] Fragments of the Poem of Erra have been discovered

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[1]Cf. J. M. Durand, "Les écrits mésopotamiens," in *Écrits de l'Orient Ancien et sources bibliques* (ed. A. Barucq, *et al.*, Paris: Desclée, 1986) 109-55, esp. p. 135, "Par la vigeur de certains passages et la grandeur de l'évocation de la puissance de la guerre et du mal, cette oeuvre mérite d'être considérée comme une des *productions majeures* de la littérature mésopatamienne" (italics mine).

[2]For a discussion of the provenance of each fragment see B. Hruška, "Zur letzteren Bearbeitung des Erraepos," *ArOr* 42 (1974) 354-65, esp. pp. 355-58. Cf. also *idem.*, "Einige Überlegungen zum Erraepos," *BiOr* 30 (1973) 3-7. These articles are based on Hruška's previous work *Epos o Errovi* (Dissertation, Die Philosophische Fakultät der Universität Prag, 1967) (unavailable to me). For a basic bibliography on Erra see R. Borger, *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1967) I, 157-8 (*s.v.* Gössmann); (1975, II, 26, *s.v.* Cagni).

[3]L. Cagni, *The Poem of Erra* (SANE I, Malibu: Undena, 1977) 5. In the light of this wide circulation and since the work is much younger than the "classics," it might be more appropriate to call it the "first best seller" of Mesopotamian literature. Cf. P. Machinist, "Rest and Violence in the Poem of Erra," *JAOS* 103 (1983) 221-26, "The Poem about the god Erra must clearly be reckoned one of the major texts of Mesopotamian religious literature, whether gauged by its content and literary artistry or by the evidence of its ancient popularity," (p. 221).

[4]So D. O. Edzard, "Irra (Erra)-Epos," *RlA* 5 (1976) 166-70, esp. p. 166.

since 1872,[5] some of which, however, have not been immediately published. For a long time only a few fragments were known and the Poem could not be properly interpreted, which renders most of the early studies unreliable.[6] Even as late as 1931, S. Langdon's discussion of the Poem of Erra contains very little that is correct and represents a hodgepodge of guesswork.[7] The primary value of the much criticized work of F. Gössmann[8] is that it instigated the recovery and publication of additional fragments which were lying unpublished in museum cellars.[9] Owing to the critical edition of the Poem by L. Cagni in 1969[10] and

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[5]G. Smith, "The Exploits of Lubara," in *The Chaldean Account of Genesis* (London/New York: Mansell, 1872, [4]1876) VIII 123-36; M. Jastrow, *A Fragment of the Babylonian "Dibbarra" Epic*, Publications of the University of Pennsylvania, Series in Philology, Literature and Archaeology I/2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1891) pp. 42 + 2 figures; E. Harper, "Die Legende von Dibbarra," *BA* 2 (1894) 425-37; L. W. King, "New Fragments of the Dibbarra-legend on Two Assyrian Plague-tablets," *ZA* 11 (1896) 50-62; M. Jastrow, "The Legend of Dibarra," in *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* (Boston: Ginn, 1898) 528-37.

[6]P. Jensen, "Der I(U)ra-Mythus," in *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen* (KB VI/1, Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1900) 56-73, 372-88; O. Weber, "Der Ira-Mythus," in *Die Literatur der Babylonier und Assyrer* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907) 104-108; A. Ungnad, "Urra und Išum," in *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament* (eds. H. Gressmannn, A. Ungnad, H. Ranke, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1909) 71-5; *idem.*, "Irra und Išum," in *Die Religion der Babylonier und Assyrer* (Jena: E. Diederich, 1921) 155-59; H. Zimmern, "Zum Ura-Mythus (*šar gimir dadmê* Epos)," *ZA* 34 (1922) 89-90; E. Ebeling, *Der akkadische Mythus vom Pestgotte Era* (BBK II/1, Berlin: Im Selbstverlag des Herausgebers, Als Manuskript gedruckt 1925); *idem.*, "Der Mythos 'Herr aller Menschen' vom Pestgotte Ira, in *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament* (ed. H. Gressmann, Berlin/Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, [2]1926, 1927) 212-30.

[7]S. Langdon, *Semitic Mythology, Mythology of All Races* (eds. J. A. MacCulloch and G. F. Moore, Boston: Archaeological Institute of America, 1931) 137-47.

[8]F. Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1955); Cf. the reviews, W. G. Lambert, *AfO* 18 (1957-58) 395-401; J. Bottéro, *RHR* 154 (1958) 230; E. Reiner, "More Fragments of the Epic of Erra, A Review Article," *JNES* 17 (1958) 41-8; A. Falkenstein, *DLZ* 79 (1958) cols. 13-16; J. Van Dijk, *OLZ* 54 (1959) 381-85; J. Aro, "Bemerkungen zum Era-Epos," *StOr* 23 (1958) 24-6; P. Garelli, *RA* 54 (1960) 104-6; B. Kienast, *ZA* n.f. 20 (1961) 244-49.

[9]W. G. Lambert, "Three Fragments: Era Myth; HAR-ra = hubullu; and a Text Related to the Epic of Creation," *JCS* 10 (1956) 99-100; R. Borger, "Das Era-Fragment *KAR* 311," *Or* 26 (1957) 143; R. Borger and W. G. Lambert, "Ein neuer Era-Text aus Ninive (K 9956 + 79-7-8,18), *Or* 27 (1958) 137-49; R. Borger, "Ein Nachtrag zu R. Borger - W. G. Lambert: Ein neuer Era-Text," *Or* 28 (1959) 375; W. G. Lambert, "The Fifth Tablet of the Era Epic," *Iraq* 24 (1962) 119-25; M. Civil, "Texts and Fragments: 50. MM 841," *JCS* 17 (1963) 53.

[10]L. Cagni, *L'Epopea di Erra* (StSem 34, Rome: Instituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma, 1969) transliteration, Italian translation, commentary, glossary. For reviews see W. Schramm, *Or* 40 (1971) 268-72; G. Rinaldi, *BibOr* 13 (1971) 76-7; M.- J. Seux, *OrAnt* 11 (1972) 72-4; W. H. Ph. Römer, *ZA* 63 (1973) 312-15.

1970,[11] who collated all the available fragments, we can finally have a better comprehension of this work.[12] The scholarly work of both Assyriologists and Biblical savants was inhibited by this long delay of an adequate tool for research.[13]

3.2. The Date and the Historical Background of the Poem of Erra

The dating of the Poem of Erra is related to the invasions of Babylon and other Mesopotamian cities by the Sutû,[14] Aramean tribes which the Poem mentions and which represent its most probable historical substratum. The Sutû are mentioned as enemies several times (Erra IV 54, 69, 133, V 27) which leads to the belief that it was precisely their aggression against the land of Akkad that inspired the Poem of Erra.[15]

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[11]L. Cagni, *Das Era-Epos Keilschrifttext* (Studia Pohl 5, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970). For reviews of Cagni's edition of the cuneiform text see W. Röllig, *ZA* 61 (1971) 328; H. Hunger, *JNES* 32 (1973) 261; R. Frankena, *BiOr* 30 (1973) 433.

[12]Cagni's masterful edition was facilitated by the works of several scholars e.g., R. Frankena, "Het Epos van de Pestgod Irra," *JEOL* 14-15 (1957-58) 160-76; *idem.*, "Untersuchungen zum Irra-Epos (Tafel I-II)," *BiOr* 14 (1957) 2-10; *idem.*, "Weitere kleine Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Ira-Epos (Tafel I)," *BiOr* 15 (1958) 12-15; *idem.*, "Die Worte der Sibitti in der I. Tafel des Irra-Epos," *JEOL* 16 (1959-63) 40-47; cf. also A. L. Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Mythology III," *Or* 19 (1950) 155-58; A. Pohl, "Die Klage Marduks über Babylon im Erra-Epos," *HUCA* 23 (1950-51) 405-9; F. M. De Liagre Böhl, "Bijbelse en Babylonische Dichtkunst," *JEOL* 15 (1957-58) 150-53; A. Falkenstein, "Zur ersten Tafel des Erra-Mythos," *ZA* 19 (1959) 200-8; W. L. Moran, "PAR-sa-a," *Or* 29 (1960) 103-4.

[13]For some recent treatments of the Poem of Erra see R. Labat, "Le Mythe d'Erra," in *Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique* (eds. R. Labat, A. Caquot, M. Sznycer, M. Vieyra, Paris: Fayard/Denoël, 1970) 114-37; L. Cagni, *The Poem of Erra* (SANE 1/3, Malibu: Undena, 1977); cf. P. Machinist, "Review of L. Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*," *JAOS* 101 (1981) 401-3; J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* IVe section (1977-78) 107-64, reprinted in J. Bottéro, *Mythes et rites de Babylone* (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études IVe section, Genève/Paris: Slatkine/Champion, 1985) 221-78, "Le poème d'Erra;" J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 680-727 "La dernière grande composition mythologique, le Poème d'Erra."

[14]J.-R. Kupper, in *Les nomades en Mésopotamie au temps des rois de Mari* (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1957) "Les Sutéens," pp. 83-145; *idem.*, "Sutéens et Ḫapiru," *RA* 55 (1961) 197-200; M. Heltzer and S. Arbeli, *The Suteans* (Naples: Instituto Universitario Orientale, Seminario de Studi Asiatici, Series Minor XIII, 1981).

[15]The Sutû and G/Qutu (Erra V 133) were identified with the people of שׁוּא and קוֹעַ (Ezek 23:23) by F. Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies? Eine biblisch-assyriologische Studie* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1881) 236. Cf. also M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1970) 7-8. Cf. however, the view of W. W. Hallo, "Gutium (Qutium)," *RlA* 3 (1957-71) 702-20, who thinks that the mention of Guti together with Lullubi in Erra should be seen as an annalistic cliché (p. 717). He adds that "there is little likelihood that the Qo'a of Ezekiel 23:23 preserve their name as sometimes suggested" (p. 719).

The particular difficulty with the Sutû invasions as date indicators is the fact that they are mentioned in historical texts beginning with the second millennium BCE and until the time of Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE). This means that one can suggest only an approximate date for the composition of the Poem of Erra. The Poem of Erra describes the historical events related to the fall and restoration of Babylon. According to Bottéro this sequence in relationship with the Sutû invasions corresponds historically to the decline and restoration of Babylonian power between 1100 and 850 BCE.[16] Similarly, according to Lambert,[17] the earliest possible date for the composition of the Poem is the Sutû invasion of Babylonia around 1050 BCE.[18] The latest possible date would be around 750 BCE because the author of the Poem looks forward to the rise of Akkad (= Babylon) which must be placed before the Assyrians had undisputed power in Mesopotamia. Thus Kabti-ilāni-Marduk drew the inspiration for his Poem, on the one side, from the unhappy past events of political, military and social upheavals which struck Babylon and several other Mesopotamian cities, and on the other, from a current strong hope in a proximate "resurrection" of the country.[19]

By blending precise historical, archaeological and astronomical data Von Soden[20] attempted to establish a more precise date for the

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[16]J. Bottéro, *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 144-47 = "Le poème d'Erra," in *idem., Mythes et Rites de Babylone* (Genève/Paris: Slatkine/Champion, 1985) 259-61. Bottéro points out that during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1124-1103 BCE) Babylon was at the height of its political and religious power. The period of decadence lasting over two centuries began with the reign of Adad-apla-iddina (1067-1046 BCE) and the raids of the Sutû who wrought havoc in Babylonia shortly after 1100 BCE. The resoration of Babylonian power occurred under Nabû-apla-iddina (887-855 BCE) who staved off the Sutû invaders.

[17]W. G. Lambert, "Review of F. Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos," AfO* 18 (1957-58) 395-401. "Nabû-apal-iddina shows exactly the same philosophy to current affairs as the Era Epic. (...) he asserts that he is the avenger of the Sutû, and divinely appointed to rebuild Akkad. He busied himself with new editions of literature as well as with material structures. Since he had an active interest in literature it is possible - even probable - that the epic was composed at his order to chronicle the fall and rise of Akkad" (p. 400).

[18]Cf. also W. W. Hallo, "Akkadian Apocalypses," *IEJ* 16 (1966) 231-242, esp. pp. 237-8, who argues that the historical allusions in the Poem of Erra point to the reign of Marduk-šapik-zeri, whom he dates in *circa* 1130-1046 BCE. cf. also idem, "Gutium (Qutium)," *RlA* 3 (1957-71) 702-20, esp. p. 717, (The Poem of Erra) "can best be dated to the time of the Isin II Dynasty in Babylonia, more specifically to the early 11th century."

[19]Cf. J. A. Brinkman, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia 1158-722 B. C.* (AnOr 43, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968) 362, "Era Epic - a theological myth describing the divine machinery behind the Sutean invasions in Babylonia from the eleventh through ninth centuries."

[20]W. von Soden, "Etemenanki vor Asarhaddon nach der Erzählung vom Turmbau zu Babel und dem Erra-Mythos," *UF* 3 (1971) 253-63.

composition of the Poem of Erra. He placed the date of its composition between the end of 765 and the beginning of 763 BCE, during the reign of Eriba-Marduk (769-761 BCE).

> Damit wird das Abklingen der Pestepidemie von 765 zum *terminus post quem* und die Sonnenfinsternis von 763 zum *terminus ante quem* für die Dichtung. Der Erra-Mythos lässt sich also auf das Jahr 764 oder Anfang 763, allenfalls auch Ende 765 datieren. Wir gewinnen eine so genaue Datierung, wie sie für keine andere der grösseren Dichtungen in Babylonien und Assyrien möglich ist.[21]

However, the data concerning the building of the temple Esagila in Babylon and the interruption of the Ištar worship in Uruk (Erra IV 52-63), on which Von Soden builds his argument, are imprecise. One may question as to whether a certain imprecision was sought in the historical perspective and poetic language of Kabti-ilāni-Marduk allowing his work to reflect different historical situations.[22]

3.3. The Author of the Poem of Erra

The Poem bears the signature of its author Kabti-ilāni-Marduk,[23] the son of Dābibi.

V 42 *kāṣir*[24] *kammīšu*[25] *Kabti-ilāni* ^{d}*Marduk mār Dābibi*

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[21]W. von Soden, *art. cit.*, p. 256.

[22]For a critique of Von Soden's proposal see J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (l'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 147 n. 34. For a discussion of various dates proposed by scholars see Cagni, *EE*, pp. 37-45.

[23]The name means, "Marduk, the most honored or venerable of the gods." In a bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian lamantation the term *kabti* is applied to Enlil. Thureau-Dangin translated the expression *amat kabti* whith "ô parole de l'Auguste," in "Une lamentation sur la dévastastion du temple d'Ištar," *RA* 33 (1936) 103-11, esp. p. 105 l. 5, and 107 n. 2.

[24]Cf. *CAD K* (1971) 257 *kaṣāru* "to tie, bind together, to join, to collect"; and p. 259d "to compose a text." Cf. S. Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts Relating to the Capture and Downfall of Babylon* (London, 1924, reprint New York/Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1975) pl. 9 v 12, U_4.SAR ^{d}*Anum* ^{d}*Enlil ša iskuru Adapa* "(the astrological series) which Adapa had composed," (quoted in *CAD K* [1971] 259). On *kaṣāru* in *En.el.* I 6, see D. T. Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2, A Linguistic Investigation* (JSOT Supplement 83, Sheffield,: JSOT Press, 1989) 81 n.59 (with additional bibliography).

[25]The word *kammû* is rather rare. It recurs in *KAR* 105 24 in parallelism with *zamāru*, and in the well-known Aššurbanipal passage in which he speaks of his education, "I read the involved Sumerian *kammû*." M. Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergage Niniveh's* (VAB VII, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916) 256, line 17. Cf. also, A. L. Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Mythology III," *Or* 19 (1950) 129-58, esp. pp. 155-58.

43 *ina šāt mūši ušabrīšūma kī ša ina munatti idbubu*
ayyâmma ul iḫṭi
44 *ēda šuma ul uraddi ana muḫḫi*

42 Kabti-ilāni-Marduk the son of Dābibi (was) the composer of its tablet (= of this poem).
43 In the night he (= Išum?) revealed it to him, and in the morning, when he recited (it), he did not skip a single (line).
44 Nor a single line did he add to it.[26]

We have translated the word *kāṣir* with "composer" because Kabti-ilāni-Marduk was not just a compiler. Rather, he offered a creative synthesis of ancient Mesopotamian traditions applying them to a particularly difficult situation in the history of Babylon which he attempted to elucidate in his manner.[27]

These lines are important for the understanding of the origin, the writing down and the first delivery of the Poem of Erra. They have received different interpretations.[28]

Von Soden argues that one should see here an indication concerning the way the Poem has been composed,

> Wenn wir diese Aussage entmythologiesiren, so besagt sie, daß die Dichtung (in ihrer Grundzügen) an e i n e m Tag

[26]The term *ušabrīšūma* can be parsed as Š preterite 3. masc. sing. from the verb *barû*. However, the identity of the god who revealed the Poem to Kabti-ilāni-Marduk is not clear. Cf. W. G. Lambert, "A Catalogue of Texts and Authors," *JCS* 16 (1962) 59-77, esp. p. 70, "The verb *ušabrīšuma* is active in form, 'he revealed it to him,' but there is no obvious subject in the context." Lambert renders it in an indefinite way "it was revealed to him." However, his use of the passive in order to translate an active verbal form is questionable. In the light of what is said about the night activity of Išum several authors attribute the revelatory activity to Išum, so H. Zimmern, "Zum Ura-Mythus (*šar gimir dadmê*-Epos)," *ZA* 34 (1922) 89-90. J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 706, "Išum la lui a révélée, une nuit;" Cagni (*EE*, 255), is in favor of Išum but recognizes that there is a lack of sure arguments in order to settle the issue.

[27]Cf. J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 725-6, "(Kabti-ilāni-Marduk) a réussi à expliquer, à sa manière, et toujours selon les présupposés et le code de la mythologie, à la lumière de ses représentations religieuses, un moment particulièrement 'scandaleux' et sybillin de l'histoire de son pays. Là est son originalité: non pas dans l'invention des mythes et des articulations de leur développement, mais dans leur usage et application."

[28]Cf. W. G. Lambert, "Ancestors, Authors, and Canonicity," *JCS* 11 (1957) 1-14, and 112, "...a certain Kabti-ilāni-Marduk professes to have drawn up the tablets of the Era Myth, as well as having received this work in a vision, a tacit admission that the wording did not originate with him" (p. 1). Cf. *idem*., "A Catalogue of Texts and Authors," *JCS* 16 (1962) 59-72, esp. pp. 70-1 (concerning Kabti-ilāni-Marduk).

> konzipiert und dann in einem einzigen Arbeitsgang in den Monaten danach niedergeschrieben wurde. Wir haben keinen Anlass, diese Aussage in Zweifel zu ziehen, da offenbar ein Werk aus einem Guss vorliegt.[29]

We are more inclined to follow the interpretation of L. Oppenheim who sees here the ancient Near Eastern manner of claiming authenticity and legitimization for a literary work.

> Whether it be in the field of fine arts or in that of literature (cf. presently), the creativeness of the Near Eastern artist derives its authenticity and legitimation only from the fact that his opus reflects faithfully its prototype in heaven which was revealed to him either in a dream or through a specific and special divine intervention.[30]

The way the Poem of Erra was used is indicated in the fifth tablet offering some valuable clarifications concerning the manner the Poem was to be delivered and further transmitted. The Poem of Erra seems to have been used in a variety of ways and by diverse group of people. It addressed itself to the learned and literate as well as to the illiterate masses. The knowledge of the Poem was transmitted in an oral, written or even visual form.

First, there is mention of an *oral* delivery of the Poem by singing: V 53 "a singer, or musician, who chants it" (*nāru ša išarraḫu*).[31] We know that there were singers employed by the temple or the palace since the Sumerian times.[32] Moreover, Erra V 60 indicates that the Poem was to be heard (*lišmāma*).[33]

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[29]W. von Soden, "Etemenanki vor Asarhaddon nach der Erzählung vom Turmbau zu Babel und dem Erra-Mythos," *UF* 3 (1971) 256.

[30]A. L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East* (TAPS 46,3 Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1956) 193 and 225. The author places Erra V 43 in the same category as revelatory dreams prior to the building of a sanctuary, and adduces some OT passages, 1 Chr 28:19, "All this, said David, Yahweh made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern;" cf. also Ex 25:9; Num 8:4.

[31]On the Sumerian origin of the term *nāru* "singer" see H. Zimmern, "Das Nergallied Berl. VAT 603 = Philad. CBM 11344 = Lond. Sm. 526," *ZA* 31 (1917-18) 11-121, esp. pp. 119-20.

[32]Cf. the extensive study of the term *nāru* "singer or musician," by C. Wilcke, "Untersuchungen zum Priestertum der altbabylonischen Zeit," *ZA* 59 (1969) 140-230, esp. pp. 172-187, "*nāru*."

[33]On the relationship between oral poetry and written texts see V. Afanasjeva, "Mündlich überlieferte Dichtung ('Oral Poetry') und schrifliche Literatur in Mesopotamien," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 22 (1974) 121-35; B. Alster, *Dumuzi's Dream. Aspects of Oral Poetry in Sumerian Myth* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1972) Alster applies the theories of Milman Parry and Albert Lord to the Sumerian literature. According to this theory extensive use of formulas is an

Second, the Poem was further transmitted in a *written* form: V 55 mentions a scribe (*tupšarru*) who learns it by heart, while V 56 speaks of the "academy of the sages"[34] (*ina aširti ummâni*). Cagni argues that Kabti-ilāni-Marduk himself should be ranked among Mesopotamian "theologians," or "sages, i.e.," members of the sacerdotal school.[35]The use of some recondite etymologies implying the knowledge of Sumerian (e.g., I.ŠUM = *ṭābiḫu na'ādu*) indicates that the poet addressed himself to a highly educated public fully conversant with the possibilities of word plays based on Sumerian cuneiform signs.[36]

Third, V 57 speaks of a "house in which this tablet is placed" (*ina bīti ašar ṭuppu šâšu šaknu*). This may be taken as a reference to a library or more probably to any house indicating private uses of the Poem of Erra. Because of the promise of salvation and protection against desaster in V 53-58, the fifth tablet of the Poem was used as an amulet. Several copies of the fifth tablet have been found in the form characteristic of Mesopotamian amulets.[37] Hence, one may speak of both the *visual* and the apotropaic use of the Poem of Erra.

3.4. The Genre of the Poem of Erra

The genre determination of the Poem of Erra which is generally

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unmistakable mark of oral poetry. By tracing a number of links which turn up more or less identically in the same or different compositions Alster argues that Sumerian literature too was originally composed by means of an oral traditional technique. Th. Jacobsen, "Oral to Written," in *Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East, Studies in Honour of I. M. Diakonoff* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1982) 129-36, points out that the passage from oral to written literature occurred quite early in Mesopotamian society. "Professional singers, such as the "elegist" (gala) and "bard" (nar Akk. *nāru*) were originally almost certainly performers in the oral tradition but by the time of Ur III they may well have become dependent on a fixed written repertoire" (p. 129)."

[34]Cf. J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Epopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 107-64, esp. p. 135, "les lettrés, qui en leur académie."

[35]Cagni, *PE*, 13. The terms for "sage" (*apkallu*) and "expert, scholar" (*ummânu*) were sometimes interchangeable, cf. B. R. Foster, "Wisdom and the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Or* 43 (1974) 344-54, esp. p. 345 n. 4.

[36]Cf. C. Wilcke, "Die Anfänge der akkadischen Epen," *ZA* 67 (1977) 153-216, esp. p. 198: "Mit der spielerischen Deutungen des namens ^{d}Išum ... zeigt der Dichter, daß er sich an ein gelehrtes Publikum wendet, das des Lesens kundig war und das Epos gewiß lesen sollte."

[37]See L. W. King, "New Fragments of the Dibbara-legend on Two Assyrian Plague - tablets," *ZA* 11 (1896) 52-62; E. Reiner, "Plague Amulets and House Blessings," *JNES* 19 (1960) 148-155.

considered to be a *unicum* in Akkadian literature is still debated.[38] Both E. Reiner,[39] and L. Cagni[40] have pointed out the difficulty in ascribing an appropriate genre to the Poem of Erra. Von Soden calls it "Erra-Mythos," while Gössmann and Lambert call it "Erra Epic." Until the issue is settled Cagni has suggested to follow the Poem's own designation *zamāru* (V 49, 59) i.e., simply a "poem."[41] This is the designation which we have adopted in the present research. However, it is doubtful whether this term has a generic significance.[42] A comprehensive examination of its occurrences in Akkadian literature would be most welcome.[43]

One of the characteristics of the epic genre is that the protagonists of the action are human heroes or at most semi-gods. In the Poem of Erra all the main characters are divine: Erra, Išum, the Sebetti, Marduk, Anum. In epics, narration or narrative poetry predominates. The striking feature of the Poem of Erra is that almost the entire text consists of discourse and inordinately long dialogues. Its characters do nothing, as it were, but talk. According to the statistics of P. Machinist, out of 642 lines of the Poem which have been preserved, about 505 are connected with

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[38]On the problem of genre classification of Mesopotamian literature and some proposals for its solution see H. Vanstiphout, "Some Thoughts on Genre in Mesopotamian Literature," *BBVO* 6 (1986) 1-11.

[39]E. Reiner, "More Fragments of the Epic of Erra," *JNES* 17 (1958) 41-8, "It is true that this composition represents a little known genre, and one of the reasons for our failure in understanding it may be due to its difference from the Babylonian epic tradition" (p. 41).

[40]Cf. the long discussion on different genres like "epic, myth, didactic poem," and the reasons why these seem to be inadequate in describing the Poem of Erra, in L. Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*, 6-14.

[41]Cf. L. Cagni, *PE*, 6-14. In one of the colophones published by Cagni, *EE*, 131 N° 5 (K 1282), one finds the designation *eškar* ^{d}*Er*[*ra*] = "The Erra Series," cf. *Gilg.* Nin. VI 195 *eškar* ^{d}*Gilgameš* "the Gilgameš Series."

[42]Cf. K. Hecker, *Untersuchungen zur akkadischen Epik* (AOAT Sonderreihe, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker - Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974) 25 n. 2, "Im Akkadischen existieren mehrere Ausdrücke, die im Sinne von 'Epos' gebraucht werden können, ihr Bedeutungsspielraum ist jedoch so weit, daß keiner von ihnen als literarische Gattungsbezeichnung in Frage kommt: a) *ṭuppu*; b) *kammû*; c) *eškaru*; d) *zamāru*.. Hecker considers the Poem of Erra to be an epic.

[43]A tablet from Aššur, *KAR* 158 has preserved some 275 songs and hymns, and lists ninety-three titles of Akkadian *zamāru*. However, this term is used in connection with a variety of genres like the "love or amatory songs" (*Māruma rā'imni* = "O young man loving me," *KAR* 158 viii 3; *Murtāmī* = "The lovers"); "pastoral songs" (*Uršāna rē'â azammurma* = "I shall sing of the brave shepherd" *ibid.*, i 6); Sumerian tigi composition *ibid.*, iii 16, 28; and of adab hymns *ibid.*, iii 46, viii 11). Cf. J. A. Black, "Babylonian Ballads: A New Genre," *JAOS* 103 (1983) 25-34, esp. pp. 25-28.

speeches.[44] Less time is spent describing Erra's actual destructions than expounding, in a series of dialogues in tablets I-III, his plans for destruction. When the destruction is eventually presented, it is again conveyed in a long speech by Išum in tablet IV. Finally, Mesopotamian epic literature is characterized by poetic works of considerable length. The neo-Assyrian redaction of the Gilgameš epic contains about 3600 lines. The Atraḫasīs epic contains 1245, and *Enūma eliš*, 1000 lines. The relative brevity of the Poem of Erra (750 lines) would suggest that it should not be classified in the epic literary genre.

Myth can be defined as a narrative with gods as protagonists, concerning the events of origins, the creation and order of the world situated in some special time (*illo tempore*) outside of the historical time sphere. These characteristics are absent in the Poem of Erra because the Poem does not deal with the issue of origins. Moreover, the actions described in it reflect events which can be related, although imprecisely, to a certain time span in the known history of Mesopotamia.

The author of the Poem of Erra conveys the teaching that the network of human history must be seen with a spiritual eye. Beyond the horizons of the phenomenon one must recognize that the "Ruler of History" is the deity. The way the author attributes directly to the god Erra the devastation and subsequent reconstruction of Babylon represents a religious way of interpreting history. One could speak of a religious transposition of the historical reality. According to J. Bottéro, the author has produced a "theology of history."[45] This approach resembles the work of the "Deuteronomic school."[46] Kabti-ilāni-Marduk offered a religious explanation of why the illustrious city of Babylon, seat of Marduk, and "navel" of the whole world, had suffered such a devastation and humiliation. Using his knowledge of the previous history of Babylon, he pointed out the reasons for the ruin: the scorn shown to the statue of Marduk and to Erra and the Sibitti by the inhabitants of the city, as well as the irreligious arrogance and negligence of the humans toward the

[44]P. Machinist, "Rest and Violence in the Poem of Erra," *JAOS* 103 (1983) 221-26, esp. p. 225, n. 25.

[45]J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes, L'Épopée d'Erra," *Annuaire EPHE* IVe section (1977-78) 107-64, esp. p. 148. cf. also R. Labat, "Le Mythe d'Erra," in *Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique* (eds. R. Labat, A. Caquot, M. Sznycer, M. Vieyra, Paris: Fayard/ Denoël, 1970) 114-37, esp. p. 115.

[46]The Poem of Erra should be added to the list of works mentioned by E. Osswald, "Altorientalische Parallelen zur deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbetrachtung," *MIO* 15 (1969) 286-96.

gods expressed by the terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu*, "din." The author ended his theology of history with a note of hope. Marduk will secure a remnant of the Babylonians and restore the glory of his city. Consequently, the Poem of Erra could be characterized as a religious, didactic and sapiential Poem (*Lehrgedicht*).

3.5. Human Offenses Against the Gods in the Poem of Erra

Here we have to state the interpretation which we have adopted in the present research concerning the reasons why the god Erra and the Sebetti decided to destroy the Mesopotamian cities. We reject the view of certain scholars who maintain that no reason at all is given in the Poem of Erra for the divine anger and that nothing but the god's whims govern the course of events.[47] Moreover, in the light of Moran's[48] critique of Pettinato's[49] interpretation of *ḫubūru* in the Atraḫasīs epic as "*böses treiben, Aufstand*" ("to plot evil, rebellion"), it is important to show the valuable contribution which the Poem of Erra makes to this discussion. In the latter *ḫubūru* is closely related to the human offenses against the gods.

R. Frankena was among the first who pointed out several passages in the Poem of Erra which indicate that humans have neglected the worship due to Erra and that this offense was the real ground for Erra's resolve

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[47]F. Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos* (Würzburg: Augustinus, 1955) 62, "'Unbegründet' ist, soweit der heutige Zustand des Werkes ein Urteil gestattet, die gesamte Handlung im Era-Epos von Anfang bis zum Ende. Im Grunde ist Willkür und Laune Ursache alles Geschehens." Cf. also W. G. Lambert, "The Fifth Tablet of the Era Epic," *Iraq* 24 (1962) 119-25, esp. p. 119, "No grounds, ultimately, for this anger are suggested: it was the god's nature." J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 149, "nulle part il ne suggère la moindre culpabilité des hommes, des Babyloniens ou de leur 'Gouverneur,' qui aurait provoqué les malheurs déclenchés sur eux par Erra." E. Reiner, "Die akkadische Literatur," in W. Röllig, ed., *Altorientalische Literaturen* (NHL 1, Wiesbanden: Athenaion, 1978) 151-210, "Der Grund für Irras Absicht, das Volk aus Babylon auszurotten, wird aus den erhaltenen Textpartien nicht ersichtlich" (p. 166).

[48]W. L. Moran, "Atraḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood," *Bib* 52 (1971) 51-61.

[49]G. Pettinato, "Die Bestrafung des Menschengeschlechts durch die Sintflut," *Or* 37 (1968) 165-200, esp. pp. 197-87 "Erra-Epos." In our opinion, the part of Pettinato's article which deals with the Poem of Erra should be rehabilitated. With reference to Pettinato's article, von Soden's judgment is more balanced, "er enthält eine grosse Zahl von wichtigen Beobachtungen und sehr fruchtbaren Überlegungen," W. von Soden, "Als die Götter (auch noch) Mensch waren," *Or* 38 (1969) 415-32, esp. p. 415. Von Soden, however, disagrees with Pettinato's interpretation.

to lay waste the country.[50] In our opinion, B. Hruška's understaning of *ḫubūru* in the Poem of Erra as a general designation of human offenses is to the point: "Das Wort *ḫubūru* ist hier eine Gesamtbezeichnung für die menschlichen Verfehlungen."[51] The Poem offers several reasons for Erra's rage against humans and against the whole creation.

(i) The humans do not fear Erra's name and hold him in contempt. These lines may imply that Erra is not properly worshiped and that his cult is waning. In this context the expression *leqû šēṭūtu* conveys the notion of "*lèse divinité*," provoked by the scorn, negligence and disloyalty to the god Erra.

I 120 *u nišī ṣalmat [qa]qqadi leq[û] šēṭūtum*
121 *anāku aššu lā išḫutū zikrī*

120 And the dark-headed people are holding (me) in contempt!
121 Therefore, as they have not feared my name.[52]

Although there is no pronominal suffix on the stative verb *leqû* the 1. sing. masc. possessive pronominal suffix in *zikrī* "my name" (l. 121) makes it clear that Erra is the one whom the people are holding in contempt.

In I 73 the Sebetti say to Erra, "Let humans be frightened and may their din subside." The injunction implies that humans have lost the fear of Erra. Their din might express their tendency to overstep the boundaries and the divinely imposed limits to their self-expression.

(ii) Moreover, the humans show disrespect toward Marduk. His word is being slighted.

I 122 *u ša rubê Marduk amassu idduma [e]ppušū kî libbuš*

122 And slighted prince Marduk's word, they (the humans)

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[50]R. Frankena, "Het Epos van de Pestgod Irra," *JEOL* 15 (1957-58) 160-76, esp. p. 174. Cf. already G. Smith, "The Exploits of Lubara," in *The Chaldean Account of Genesis* (London/New York: Mansell, 1876) 124, "The point of the story in these tablets appears to be, that the people of the world had offended Anu god of heaven, and that deity ordered Lubara (= Erra) to go forth and strike the people with the pest. It is evident here that exactly the same views prevailed in Babylonia as those among the Jews, visitations from pestilence or famine being always supposed to be sent by the deity in punishment for some sin."

[51]B. Hruška, "Einige Überlegungen zum Erraepos," *BiOr* 30 (1973) 3-7, esp. p. 6. Cf. also L. Cagni, *L'Epopea di Erra*, see his comments on I 119-20; IIID 16; V 6.

[52]While Cagni (*PE*, 30), translates the stative *leqû* with an English present "people hold (me) in contempt," we have tried to render the atemporal designation of a state or the lasting effect of an action which the stative conveys by translating with a present continuous tense: "holding (me) in contempt."

act according to the promptings of their heart.[53]

As pointed out by Haldar, this passage contains expressions which we meet more than once in the Old Testament.[54]

(iii) The Babylonians have committed cultic offenses. They have neglected to take proper care of Marduk's statue. It has fallen into decrepitude, indicating indifference, improper worship and impious neglect to the god Marduk.

I 127 What happened to your statue (*šukuttu*) to the
insignia of your lordship, magnificent as the stars in the sk[y]?
It is [d]irtied!
128 Your lordly crown, which used to light up Ehalanki
like Etemenanki is dimmed![55]

(iv) Erra and Marduk are not the only divinities who are being outraged. Sebetti as well complain of suffering an affront. The animals are holding the gods (i.e., the Sebetti) in contempt.

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[53]The translation of the second part of the line is problematic. Fragment D has *epušū* (3. m. pl.) *libbuš* (sing. poss. suff.), while fragment S has *epuš* (3. m. sing.) *libbuš* (sing. poss. suff.) "he (Marduk) may act as he wishes." Ebeling translates, "nach ihrem Herzen tu(e)n (sic!)," in "Der Mythos 'Herr aller Menschen' vom Pestgotte Ira," *ATAT* (ed. H. Gressmann, Berlin/Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1926) 216. He is followed by Bottéro who translates, "ils (n')en [f]ont (qu')à leur gré," in "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (l'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977/78) 117. So also R. Labat, "Ils agissent à leur guise," in *Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique* (ed. R. Labat *et al.* Paris: Fayard/Denoël, 1970) 120.

[54]A. Haldar, *Associations of Cult Prophets Among the Ancient Semites* (Uppsala: Almquist & Wicksell, 1945) 73. The author adduced several passages from Jeremiah which use the formulation, "to refuse to hear the word of the god and to act according to one's own heart": Jer 9:12-13, "... they have not obeyed my voice (לא שמעו בקולי)...13 but have stubbornly followed their own hearts... (וילכו אחרי שררות לבם)"; 11:8 (ולא שמעו וילכו אחרי שררות לבם); 13:10 "Who refuse to hear my words, who stubbornly follow their own heart (המאנים לשמוע את דברי ההלכים בשררות לבם)." cf. also 11:10.

[55]Cf. the highly pertinent comments of Cagni, *PE*, 33 n. 36, "The decision of Marduk to leave his chair is meant to express the scorn of the offended god and implies in Mesopotamian theology, the cessation of divine protection." Cf, also J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 710, "(Erra) lui fait remarquer que sa statue et le diadème qui le couronne se sont amatis avec le temps et ne brille plus comme avant (I 124-128), peut-être du fait de la négligence de ses sujets qui, 'en dépit des ordres' de leur monarque, 'n'en auraient fait qu'à leur tête' et auraient négligé d'entretenir cette image sacrée (I 122). Un pareil argument ne pouvait que peser d'un grand poids dans un pays et une culture où la luminosité, le brillant, étaient le signe direct de la vitalité et de la supériorité ontologique."

I 77 *būl Šakkan u [na]mmaššê leqû šēṭūtni*

77 Šakkan's herds and the (wild) animals are holding us in contempt.[56]

Here again the possessive pronominal suffix is attached to the noun *šēṭūtum* (1. person pl. suffix *-ni*).

(v) The herds are trampling and destroying the grazing ground which sustains the country. Moreover, the lion and wolf strike down the herds (I 83-86).

I 83 The herds are trampling the arable land, (which are) life to the country.
84 [Bit]terly does the farmer grieve over his (destroyed) [crops?]
85 Lion and wolf strike down Šakkan's herds.
86 Because of his (ravaged) flocks the shepherd cannot rest by day or night, (but) entre[ats] you.

These lines may be interpreted as an indication of a general corruption of nature.

(vi) The Anunnaki are deprived of sleep because of the din of humankind. The din of the humans might be an echo of the motif of population explosion in the Atraḫasīs epic.

I 81 *ana* ^{d}*Anunnaki [r]ā'im šaḫrarti damiqti epša*
82 ^{d}*Anunnaki ina [ḫu]būr nišī ul ireḫḫū šittum*.[57]

81 To the Anunnaki who love deathly silence,[58] do something good:

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[56]In the Poem of Erra the expression *būl Šakkan* or "Šakkan's herds" stand for the animals useful to humans, Šakkan being their patron god, so Cagni, *PE*, 29 n. 13.

[57]In Erra I 186 the Anunnaki are said to live in the Apsû. The name Anunnaki is a loanword from Sumerian DINGIR A.NUN.NA = "the princely seed," so D. O. Edzard, *Wörterbuch der Mythologie* (ed. H. W. Haussig, Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1965) I 42. For an extensive listing of Sumerian evidence concerning these gods see A. Falkenstein, "Die Anunna in der sumerischen Überlieferung," in *Studies in Honor of B. Landsberger* (eds. H.-G. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen, AS 16, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965) 127-40; for the evidence in Akkadian literature see B. Kienast, "Igigū und Anunnakū nach den akkadischen Quellen," 141-58 *ibidem*.

[58]In Sumero-Akkadian literature in relationship to the nether world there is a taboo of silence. Anyone descending to the nether world must beware of violating it, namely one must not make a noise. If one breaks this taboo one will be surrounded by the "stewards" and the shades inhabiting the lower regions and will be held fast by the "Outcry of the Nether World" a still mysterious expression. Once seized by this "outcry" it is impossible for a mortal to reascend to the earth unless someone or another god intervenes on his or her behalf. Cf. *Gilg.* XII 23 "A sound against the nether world thou shall not make" (*rigma ana erṣetim lā tašakkan*); (28) "The wailing of the nether world would seize thee!" (*tazzimti erṣetim iṣabbatka*); Akkadian text from R. Campbell Thompson, *The Epic of Gilgamish* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930) 68, translation from E. A. Speiser, ^{3}*ANET*, 97; cf. also S. N. Kramer, "Death and the Nether World According to the Sumerian Literary Texts," *Iraq* 22 (1960) 59-68; and *Death in Mesopotamia, Papers read at XXVIe RAI* (ed. B. Alster, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980).

82 Because of men's noise the Anunnaki cannot fall asleep.

The increased number of humans represents a threat to the gods. I 79 "Before the whole country overwhelms us." As noted by Bottéro, the Poem of Erra adds an additional feature to the traditional motif of the demographic increase which provokes the excessive human din. In the Poem of Erra the humans with their numbers and their noise represent a direct threat to the gods![59] This is the main trust of the argument of the Sebetti: the situation is dangerous and Erra should take appropriate measures.

(vii) Erra himself mentions the "sin" (*ḫīṭu*) of humankind which prompted him to ravage the country, killing both good and bad.

V 6 *mindema anāku ina ḫīṭi maḫri aḫsusa lemuttim*
7 *libbī agugma nišī asappan*
10 *kî šalil māti kina u raggi ul umassa ušamqat*

6 No doubt I plotted mischief at the time of the former sin;
7 In the fury of my mind I wished to overwhelm the people.
10 Like the ravager of a land, I made no distinction
between good and bad, but slew (them alike).[60]

We are inclined to follow Cagni, who argues that the expression "former sin" refers to the contempt the humans showed to Erra, mentioned in I 120-122.[61] In this passage the moral grounds for Erra's

[59]J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 709, "Aux fins de l'y (Erra) décider plus efficacement, ils (les Septs) reprennent le thème du *Supersage* et du Déluge, qu'ils avaient déjà invoqué (I 43): le 'tapage' des hommes, leur rumeur causée par leur nombre et par leur grouillement, qui importune les dieux et les empêche de dormir (I 78-83; même motif dans I 73; IIC 45'). A quoi ils ajoutent un argument inattendu, et que nous n'avions rencontré nulle part encore, sorte de renforcement du thème en question: la multiplication excessive des hommes ne serait pas seulement pour les dieux une cause de troubles et d'insomnie, mais une menace (I 79)!"

[60]English translation from W. G. Lambert, "The Fifth Tablet of the Era Epic," *Iraq* 24 (1962) 119-25, here p. 121.

[61]Cagni, *EE*, 248 n. 6. Hruška adduced some additional offenses which the humans committed against the gods. However, some of these occur in texts too damaged to allow reliable interpretation, see his article, "Einige Überlegungen zum Erraepos," *BiOr* 30 (1973) p. 6 and p. 6 n. 32, as well as "Zur letzten Bearbeitung des Erraepos," *ArOr* 42 (1974) 354-65, esp. p. 360. Likewise, B. Albrektson, in his work *History and the Gods* (Lund: Gleerup, 1967) 33-34, cites a passage dealing with the upheavals and downfall of the city of Uruk (Erra IV 60-62), showing that the author of the Poem of Erra was well acquainted with the idea of the destruction of a city as a cionsequence of social and cultic offenses against the patron deity.

destructive actions against the humans are explicitly stated. In our opinion, one finds here a significant nuance which the Poem of Erra makes as over against the Atraḫasīs epic where the reasons for the destruction of humanity are not stated with the use of the term ḫīṭu, "sin."

A somewhat similar phenomenon occurs in tablet XI of the Gilgameš epic, which, as recognized by the scholars, is dependent on the Atraḫasīs epic. Presumably in the twelfth century BCE an editor of the Gilgameš epic inserted at an appropriate place what was already a classic story and in so doing reshaped it in some ways.[62] In *Gilg.* XI 14, we learn initially that the gods were driven by a rash decision, "their heart prompted the great gods to bring a deluge" (*ana šakān abūbi ublā libbāšunu ilāni rabūti*).[63] Ea's outcry against Enlil after the flood in *Gilg.* XI 180, mentions the sin of the humans: "On the sinner lay his sin; on the transgressor lay his transgression" (*bēl ḫīṭi emēd ḫīṭāšu bēl qillati emēd qillassu*).[64] While the line tells nothing of the nature of humanity's "sin," it does imply that, however excessive Enlil's punishment may have been, human beings did commit a crime that warranted a punishment. The reference to sin, however, is a later addition and is incongruous with the main theme of the Gilgameš epic which deals with the desire for immortality and is not concerned for any ethical considerations.[65]

(viii) Išum, Erra's lieutenant and intercessor on behalf of the humans accuses Erra of indiscriminate slaughter. Išum however, makes a certain concession implying that some humans were rightly punished because they have "sinned (*ḫaṭû*) against Erra" (IV 106). The basis of Išum's *plaidoyer* is that in the course of Erra's punitive action, which is justified

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[62]So H. Schmökel, "Eleventh tablet of the Akkadian epic of Gilgamesh: the flood," in W. Beyerlin, ed., *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Engl. transl. by J. Bowden, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978) 93-7, esp. p. 93; J. H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982) "The Flood Story" pp. 214-240. On the composite nature of the Gilgameš epic see S. N. Kramer, "The Epic of Gilgamesh and Its Sumerian sources," *JAOS* 64 (1944) 7-23, 83; and H. Ranke, "Zur Vorgeschichte des Gilgamesch-Epos," *ZA* 15 (1949) 45-9.

[63]Akkadian text from R. Campbell Thompson, *The Epic of Gilgamish* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930) 60, as translated by A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946, 1965) 80. On the idiom *libba w/babâlu* which denotes an impulsive and uncontrolled action see A. L. Oppenheim, "Idiomatic Accadian, (Lexicographical Researches)," *JAOS* 61 (1941) 251-71, esp. p. 256.

[64]Akkadian text from R. Campbell Thompson, *Gilgamish*, 64, as translated by A. Heidel, *Gilgamesh*, 88.

[65]So correctly W. L. Moran, "Atraḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood," *Bib* 52 (1971) 51-61 esp. p. 56 n. 6, and p. 57 n. 1.

only in respect to the guilty humans, he also killed the innocent victims. Išum points out that the killing of "those who have not sinned" is unjustified!

IV 104 *qurādu* ^{d}*Erra kināmma tuštamit*
105 *lā kināmma tuštamit*
106 *ša iḫṭukāma tuštamit*
107 *ša lā iḫṭukāma tuštamit*

104 Hero Erra, you killed the righteous one.
105 You killed the unrighteous one.
106 You killed the one who sinned against you.
107 You killed the one who did not sin against you.

In our opinion this passage represents the strongest case for the interpretation of the Poem of Erra which we have adopted in the present work: the humans are punished because they have *sinned* against Erra. This religious-cultic usage of the expression "to sin against the deity" is not very different from the numerous instances in Akkadian literature where in legal contexts it designates some offense (*ḫīṭu*), against the suzerain, breaking a covenant or a treaty, or failing in keeping up with some obligations. In his detailed analysis of this term in the domain of public and private obligations, Kestemont points out that, "*ḫaṭû* 'commettre un *ḫīṭû*' répond négativement au terme *naṣāru* 'observer' et signifie donc 'ne pas observer, commettre un manquement.'"[66]

One may affirm that in the Poem of Erra the punishment of humankind is a consequence of their offending the gods. In such a context one is justified in interpreting the terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* as part of the human offenses against the gods (see below section 5.1.).

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[66]G. Kestemont, "La faute et le délit dans la terminologie juridique du palais. L'opposition *arnu-ḫīṭu*," *in La palais et la royauté, XIX*^{e} RAI ed. P. Garelli, Paris: Geuthner, 1974) 473-487, esp. p. 475.

4. FEATURES UNIQUE TO THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL AND PRESENT IN THE POEM OF ERRA

4.1. HEBREW שאט AND AKKADIAN *šēṭu/leqû šēṭūtu* = "TO SHOW CONTEMPT"

4.1.1. שאט[1] in the Book of Ezekiel

The term שאט occurs six times in the Book of Ezekiel and cannot be found in the rest of the Old Testament. We are dealing here with a term unique to the Book of Ezekiel which appears for the first time in the literature of the Old Testament. It occurs three times as a participle (Ezek 16:57 שָׂאטוֹת qal fem. pl. active ptc., 28:24, 26 שָׂאטִים qal masc. pl. active ptc.), and three times as a noun שְׂאָט (Ezek 25:6, 16; 36:5). According to *BDB* the verb שאט (listed under שוט II) means "to treat with despite" while the noun שְׂאָט is translated with "despite, contempt."[2] There is a clear consistency in the way Ezekiel uses these terms. They designate the contempt expressed by different nations in respect to Judah and the land of Israel, at the moment when Judah went into exile.

> Ezek 16:57 (an oracle concerning Jerusalem):
> So must you now bear the mockery (חרפת) of the daughters of Aram
> and all her neighbors, the daughters of Philistia who jeer at you
> on every side (*NJPS*) (הַשָּׂאטוֹת אוֹתָךְ מִסָּבִיב) (qal active ptc. fem. pl.
> with the accusative of person).
> cf. *RSV*: "those round about you who despise you."

Here the term שאט appears in relationship with חרפה "reproach, mockery."[3]

> Ezek 28:24 (oracles of consolation for Israel):
> And for the house of Israel there shall be no more a briar to prick
> or a thorn to hurt them among all their neighbors who despise them
> (הַשָּׂאטִים אוֹתָם), (qal active ptc. masc. pl. with the accusative of person),
> cf. *RSV*: "who have treated them with contempt."

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[1]The vocalization of the qal verbal form of the root שאט is not attested in the OT. N. Ph. Sander and I. Trenel, *Dictionnaire Hébreu-Français* (Paris, 1859, Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1982) 722, suggested to vocalize it שְׂאָט.

[2]In *BDB* 1002b. *GK* #72p cannot determine whether שאט is to be derived from a root with medial ו or medial א.

[3]On the term חרפ see M. A. Klopfenstein, *Scham und Schande nach dem Alten Testament. Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu den hebräischen Wurzeln bôš, klm und ḥpr* (ATANT 62, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972) 170-83, "Das Verbum ḥpr II."

Ezek 28:26 ... They shall dwell securely, when I execute judgments upon all their neighbors who despise them (הַשָּׁאטִים אוֹתָם), (qal active ptc. masc. pl. with the accusative of person), cf. *RSV*: "who have treated them with contempt."

Because various nations despised the people of Judah and plundered their land they implicitly scorned Yahweh their God. Therefore, the latter threatens these nations with revenge and utter annihilation.

Ezek 25:6 (an oracle against the Ammonites): For thus says Yahweh God: Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced over the land of Israel with such utter scorn (בְּכָל שְׁאָטְךָ בְּנָפֶשׁ) (*NJPS*).

Here the noun שְׁאָט occurs with a pronominal suffix ךָ.

Ezek 25:16 (an oracle against the Philistines):
Thus says Yahweh God: Because the Philistines, in their ancient hatred, acted vengefully, and with utter scorn (בְּשָׁאט נֶפֶשׁ) sought revenge and destruction... (*NJPS*)

Ezek 36:5 (an oracle against Edom):[4] Therefore says Yahweh God: I speak in my hot jealousy (בְּאֵשׁ קִנְאָתִי)[5] against the rest of the nations, and against Edom, who gave my land to themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and utter contempt (בְּשִׂמְחַת כָּל נֶפֶשׁ) that they might possess it and plunder it. (36:6) ... I speak in my jealous wrath (בְּקִנְאָתִי וּבְחֲמָתִי), because you have suffered the reproach (כְּלִמַּת גּוֹיִם) of the nations (*NJPS*).

In this verse שאט appears in close relationship with כלמה = "insult, reproach, ignominy."[6] Furthermore, in Ezek 36:3, another term is employed with reference to the mockery to which the mountains of Israel

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[4]According to J. Morgenstern, "The Rest of the Nations," *JSS* 2 (1957) 225-31, Ezek 25:6, 16; 36:5 refer to the nations immediately surrounding Judah, Ammon, Edom, Philistines (and Moab), and to "the tragic catastrophe which these very nations inflicted upon the little Jewish community of Judaea in the accession year of Xerxes, King of Persia, during the closing weeks of 486 and the first months of 485 B.C. Of this there cannot be the slightest doubt." (p. 227). Cf. also his article, "Jerusalem - 485 B.C.," *HUCA* 27 (1956) 101-79. Morgenstern's argument is insufficiently founded and has rightly been rejected by Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II*, 237.

[5]For an analysis of the term קנאה "jealousy, zeal," in Ezekiel see B. Renaud, *Je suis un Dieu jaloux* (LD 36, Paris: Cerf, 1963) 73-90, "La littérature exilienne: Ézéchiel." Cf. also H. Torczyner, "SEMEL HA-QINA'AH HA-MAQNEH*," *JBL* 65 (1946) 293-302, who replaces the meaning "jealousy," with "redeemer" in Ezek 8:3, 5. For a critique and rejection of this proposal see our section 2.1.

[6]M. A. Klopfenstein, *Scham und Schande nach dem Alten Testament. Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu den hebräischen Wurzeln bôš, klm und hpr* (ATANT 62, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972) 109-169, "Die Wortgruppe *klm*."

have been subjected. The term דִּבָּה = "mocking calumny" occurs only here in Ezekiel.[7] These related terms shed light on the meaning of שָׁאַט. These oracles against the nations indicate that the prophet did not operate in a timeless world but in the political sphere.[8]

4.1.2. Different Explanations of Hebrew שָׁאַט

a. In 1908 Mayer Lambert argued that the term שָׁאַט should be dissociated from the root שׂוּט.[9] In his opinion the confusion stems from the erroneous Masoretic punctuation of the participal forms (cf. Ezek 28:24, 26), as if these were stemming from the root שׂוּט. Moreover, the Hebrew root was associated with Aramaic שׂוּט which means "to despise, reject". Lambert rejected this identification saying that the meaning "to despise" is wholly inappropriate in Ezekiel and suggested that it would be more appropriate to translate it as "*impulsion, élan.*" For Ezek 26:6 he offered the following translation, "Tu t'es réjoui de tout l'élan de ton âme." He further suggested that all the three participal forms should be translated as "*attaquant*" = "attacking." In spite of the fact that Lambert was unable to offer any Arabic or Akkadian cognates of Hebrew שָׁאַט in support of his translation he was nevertheless followed by scholars like Joüon[10] and Auvray,[11] who are likewise unable to undergird their

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[7]*BDB* 179b renders דִּבָּה with "whispering, defamation, evil report." According to H. Haag, *Was lehrt die literarische Untersuchung des Ezechiel-Textes*? (Freiburg/Schweiz: Paulusdruckerei, 1943) 20, דִּבָּה in Ezek 36:3 as in Jer 20:10 = Ps 31:14, describes the "whispering of hostile people." The term is not attested elsewhere in Ezekiel but occurs four times in P (Gen 37:2; Num 13:32; 14:36, 37). Cf. also Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II* , 237.

[8]Cf. D. L. Petersen, "The Oracles Against the Nations: A Form-Critical Analysis," *SBL* Seminar Papers 1 (1975) 39-61; J. H. Hayes, "The Usage of Oracles Against the Nations in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 87 (1968) 81-92: B. Causse, "Le recueil d'oracles contre les nations d'Ézéchiel XXV-XXXII dans la rédaction du livre d'Ézéchiel," *RB* 93 (1986) 535-62.

[9]M. Lambert, "Notes exégétiques et lexicographiques," *RÉJ* 55 (1908) 281-84, "On traduit généralement ce mot, qu'on ne rencontre que dans Ézéchiel, par 'mépris', en se fondant sur l'araméen שׂוּט. La Masora a, il est vrai, ponctué שָׂאטִים et שָׂאטוֹת, comme si ce participe venait de שׂוּט; mais שָׁאַט et שׂוּט sont deux racines différentes, et le sens de 'mépris' ne convient à aucun de des passages où ce trouve soit le substantif שְׂאָט soit le participe שָׁאַט (p. 282).

[10]P. Joüon, "Notes de lexicographie hébraïque," *Bibl* 8 (1927) 51-64, esp. p. 57. Cf. also his *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique* (Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifical 1923, 1965) #80k where he suggested that the participles in Ezek 28:24, 26, should be vocalized שֹׂאֲטִים from the root שָׁאַט = "to attack, to harass".

[11]P. Auvray, "Remarques sur la langue d'Ézéchiel," *BETL* 12-13 (1959) 461-470, esp. 466 n. 7. In an attempt to invalidate Tournay's linguistic argument of a pronounced Akkadian influence on the language of Ezekiel, Auvray sides with Joüon and Lambert. This Lambert-Joüon-Auvray explanation has been rightly rejected by Garfinkel, *Studies in the Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation,

argument with any cognate. Hence this suggestion should be rejected as being unsubstantiated.

b. In the nineteenth century, Friedrich Delitzsch[12] has offered a comparison which, in our opinion, pointed the right direction in a search for cognates of Hebrew שאט. He was the first to suggest that Akkadian *šāṭu* might correspond to Hebrew שאט. He translated שאט as "contempt" and pointed out that Assyrian lexical series equate *šāṭu* with *na'āṣu*.

In 1942 Albright analyzed a cuneiform tablet (*EA* 333) found on Palestinian soil (Tell el-Ḥesī) dating from 1375 BCE. It contains a Canaanite expression *šuṭ mulka* = "the scorn shown to the kingdom or disloyalty to the crown"[13] which appears several times. He too equated the Akkadian term *šāṭu, išīṭ* "to scorn, to neglect, to act in an unseemly, rebellious or disloyal way toward someone," with the term שאט in Ezekiel and mentioned the relationship between Akkadian *šāṭu* and *na'āṣu* = "to scorn." He also pointed out the use of the expression *leqû šēṭūtu* to describe a rebellious attitude toward the king.[14]

In a series of review articles R. Tournay reiterated his basic thesis of an Akkadian influence on the language of Ezekiel. In 1953, he too endorsed the relationship between Hebrew שאט and Akkadian *šāṭu*.[15]

Columbia University, New York, 1983) 132.

[12]F. Delitzsch, "Specimen Glosarii Ezechielico-Babylonici," in S. Baer, *Liber Ezechielis* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1884) x - xviii esp. p. xvi.

[13]W. F. Albright, "A Case of lèse majesté in Pre-Israelite Lachish, with some Remarks on the Israelite Conquest," *BASOR* 87 (1942) 32-8, esp. p. 33 n. 8. In this cuneiform letter the verb *šyṭ or šwṭ* occurs three times, EA 333,5 *taššāṭuna Šipṭi-Ba'lu u Zimredda* = "Šipṭi-Ba'lu and Zimredda speak disloyally;" 333,20 and 21, (19) *u adimi utiru[mi]* (20) *šûṭ mulka* (21) *ša ušāṭ milka* (22) *Paapu* ... = (19) "And yet re rejects (the accusation) (20) of disloyalty to the crown (saying) (21) the one who is dislotal to the king (22) is Paapu..." Albright was followed by *KBL* 936. Cf. W. L. Moran, *Les Lettres d'El Amarna* (LAPO 13, Paris: Cerf, 1987) 551, who follows Albright in parsing all the three instances of the verb as unusual forms of the D conjugation. *AHw*, 1205, classifies the forms as Canaanite passifs of *šāṭu* "to despise."

[14]On the prism of Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) one reads that the king punished "those who were insolent (*šēṭu*) toward the kings my fathers" *ša ana*šarrāni *abbēya išuṭūma*, cf. V. Scheil, *Le prisme S d'Asaraddon, roi d'Assyrie* (Paris: H. Champion, 1914) p. 22, who translates, "Ceux qui envers les rois mes pères avaient été insolents;" cf. now R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* (*AfO* Beiheft 9, Graz: E. Weidner, 1956) p. 57, who, on the basis of new documents restores the entire line V 3, *ša ana šarrāni abbēya išūṭūma etappalū zêrati* = "Leute, die sich gegen meine königlichen Vorfahren frevelhaft benommen und ihnen Gehässiges geantworten hatten."

[15]R. Tournay, "Review of G. Fohrer, *Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel," RB* 60 (1953) 417-19. Cf. especially his article, "A propos des babylonismes d'Ézéchiel," *RB* 68 (1961) 388-93, esp. p. 390.

In 1965 Frankena brought a further clarification by insisting that Hebrew שאט should be identified with Akkadian *šēṭu* I, which means "to scorn," and strictly dissociated from another Akkadian root *šēṭu* II, which means "to spread, to draw."[16]

In his doctoral dissertation Garfinkel evaluated over seventy of the presumed Akkadian-Hebrew cognates in Ezekiel including the relation beteween Hebrew שאט and Akkadian *šāṭu/šēṭu* I.[17] He pointed out that there is an etymological problem since the source of the vocable in Ezekiel might be Aramaic, given the medial א formation. Nevertheless he retains the semantic equation and characterizes the relation between the Hebrew and Akkadian vocables as "possible." Concerning the meaning of Akkadian *šāṭu/šēṭu* I, Garfinkel examines the equation of the former with *nāṣu* "to scorn," found in the lexical series *Antagal* VIII 64,

IGI.TUR = *nāṣu*
IGI.TUR.TUR = *šāṭu*.[18]

c. Aramaic שט and Hebrew שאט

The purpose of this section is to present the data on Hebrew שאט in as complete a fashion as possible. We begin with a long-standing *crux* in the Aramaic Sefire treaties (I A 24) where, it is argued, the vocable שום appears. The passage has been adduced by Puech in order to clarify the six occurences of שאט in Ezekiel. The inscription has generated a considerable number of scholarly articles, and of late has become a

[16]R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 15-17. For the difference between *šēṭu* I and *šēṭu* II, see Von Soden, *AHw* 1221-22. In the verse account of Nabonidus (555-539 BCE) ii 13 we read, *tēmmenšu ištēti uzaqqiru rēšāšu* = "he spread (*šēṭu* II) out the foundation, made high its summit," cf. S. Smith *Babylonian Historical Texts* (London, 1924, reprint New York/Hildesheim: Olms, 1975) 84. This same line is translated with "seinen Grundstein gründet er," by B. Landsberger and T. Bauer in "Zu neuveröffentlichen Geschichtsquellen der Zeit von Asarhaddon bis Nabonid," *ZA* 37 (1927) 61-98, esp. p. 90. Cf also the boasting of Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) in Nin A IV 70, *kīma buqli ašṭati pagar qurādēšu* = "like malt I spread around (*šēṭu* II) the corpses of their warriors," so R. Borger *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* (*AfO* Beiheft 9, Graz: E. Weidner, 1956) 56. In his article "Assyrian Medical Prescriptions for Diseases of the Stomach," *RA* 26 (1929) 47-92, esp. p. 51 n. 1, R. Campbell Thompson argued that *buqlu* means "millet grains" suggesting that this phrase makes a comparison with the "tossing i.e., winnowing of the grains of millet."

[17]S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in the Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1983) 16 and 132.

[18]Cited in *CAD N/2* 53a. Akkadian *nāṣu* "to scorn," and Hebrew נאץ with the same meaning have also been equated in *AHw* 758a. cf. the nominal form נאצה "taunt" in Ezek 35:12, pointed out by Garfinkel, *op. cit.*, 132 n. 561.

subject of a heated controversy. The correct reading of the problematic line is disputed. In 1958, A. Dupont-Sommer[19] established the following reading of Sefire I A 24, ושבע בכחה יהבן בשט לחם ואל יהרגן, which has been followed by Donner and Röllig.[20] The translation proposed by Dupont-Sommer, however, makes little sense, "Et que sept poules aillent en quête de nourriture, et qu'elles ne tuent rien!"[21]

In 1964 D. R. Hillers suggested to read בנחה instead of בכחה and offered the following translation, "And may his seven daughters go looking for food, but not seduce (anyone)."[22] By translating the phrase in this way Hillers makes it parallel to the Tell Halaf malediction; "Whosoever erases (my) name and puts (his) name, may he burn his seven sons before Adad, may he release his seven daughters as prostitutes for Ištar."

J. Fitzmyer criticized and rejected this translation by pointing out the radical difference between the two curses.[23] In the Tell Halaf

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[19]A. Dupont-Sommer avec la collaboration de J. Starcky, *Les Inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré (Stèles I et II)* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1958) 17. Dupont-Sommer relates Aramaic שט to a relatively common Hebrew verb שוט I "to go to and fro." "De la racine שוט, 'rôder' ('umherstreifen, umherschweifen') attestée en judéo-araméen comme en hébreu; cf. Job 1:7; 2:2. (On Hebrew שוט I "go or rove about," see *BDB* 1001). C.- F. Jean - J. Hoftijzer, *Dictionnaire des inscriptions sémitiques de l'ouest* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 293, quote Dupont-Sommer's translation saying that his interpretation is uncertain. They suggest to relate Aramaic שט to Hebrew שוט II, "ici avec le sens manquer?".

[20]H. Donner-W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968) No 222, vol I text, vol II translation, commentary and bibliography. Their translation, "und sieben Hennen sollen auf Nahrungssuche gehen und werden doch nichts töten," (vol. II, p. 239), repeats the one by Dupont-Sommer.

[21]For the *editio princeps* see P. S. Ronzevalle, "Fragments d'inscriptions araméennes des environs d'Alep," *MUSJ* 15 (1930/31) 237-60, has proposed a different reading. Here are some more recent studies: D. R. Hillers, *Treaty Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (BO 16, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964) 71-4; J. C. Greenfield, *Studies in West Semitic Inscriptions I, Stylistic Aspects of the Sefire Treaty Inscriptions* (AnOr 29, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965) 1-18. J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (BO 19, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967) 43-4; G. Garbini, "Appunti di epigrafia aramaica," *AION* 17 (1967) 89-92; J. C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions II, Aramaic Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975) 38-9; E. Lipinski, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics I* (Orientalia Lovaniensa Analecta, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1975) 28; The survey of the reasearch with exhaustive bibliography can be found in A. Lemaire - J.- M. Durand, *Les inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré et l'Assyrie de Shamshi-ilu,* EPHE IVe Section, Sciences historiques et philologiques (Hautes études orientales 20, Genève/Paris: Droz, 1984) 3-21, "État de la question."

[22]D. R. Hillers, *Treaty Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (BO 16, Rome, Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964) 71-74.

[23]J. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (BO 19, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967) p.43. He translates בשט לחם with "looking for food," literally "in search of food." He parses שט as an infinitive Peal without preformative מ of שוט "rove about," (p. 44).

malediction the curse is prostitution itself. In the Sefire malediction it would be the impossibility of the daughters to practice prostitution, i.e., the curse is the lack of men for the prostitutes seeking business. Therefore he prefers Dupont-Sommer's rendering and translates, "should the seven hens go looking for food, may they not kill (anything)."

In 1981, the epigraphist A. Lemaire adopted Hiller's reading בנחה instead of בכחה, offering the following translation, "et que ses sept filles aillent pour un morceau de pain et qu'elle ne soient pas désirées."[24] On the basis of the inscription שש on a Phoenician-Aramaic weight measure meaning "fraction," he translated the expression בשש לחם with "a piece of bread."[25] According to Lemaire, in this instance, Aramaic שש stems from a root unrelated to שוש "to despise." Aramaic בשש לחם corresponds to Hebrew בפתותי לחם "for pieces of bread," (Ezek 13:19).

Dissatisfied with Lemaire's explanation, E. Puech rejects both readings בכחה and בנחה.[26] He compared the problematic line with a similar curse found in the bilingual Tell Fekherye inscription (ll. 35-36 Akkadian version): "one hundred women bakers shall not fill an oven." Therefore he proposes to read אפחה and translates, "et que ses sept boulangères s'en aillent tandis que brûle (grille) le pain, et qu'elle ne soient pas tuées."[27] Puech derives Aramaic שש of the Sefire inscription from the root שיש and relates it to Arabic šyṭ/*šawwaṭa* = "to burn, to broil,

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[24]A. Lemaire, "Sfiré I A 24 et l'araméen šṭ," *Henoch* 3 (1981) 161-70 (with additional bibliography). This translation was reiterated in A. Lemaire - J.- M. Durand, *Les inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré et l'Assyrie de Shamshi-ilu,* EPHE IVe Section, Sciences historiques et philologiques (Hautes études orientales 20, Genève/Paris: Droz, 1984).

[25]Cf. F. Bron - A. Lemaire, "Poids inscrits phénico-araméens du VIIIème siècle av. J.-C.," (Premier Congrès International d'Etudes Phéniciennes et Puniques, Rome, 1979) published in *Atti del I Congresso Internazionale di Studi Fenici e Punici III* (Rome, 1983) 763-770, tav. CXLV. Lemaire relates Aramaic שש to Akkadian *šaṭāṭu* "to tear to pieces," Ethiopic *saṭata* "to tear, to split," and dialectal Arabic *šaṭṭa* "to split, to cut, to tear," in *Henoch* 3 (1981) 166.

[26]E. Puech, "Les inscriptions araméennes I et III de Sfiré" nouvelles lectures," *VT* 89 (1982) 576-87; cf. also his second article where he applied the results of his research to שאט in Ezekiel, "La racine śyṭ - š'ṭ en Araméen et en Hébreu. A propos de Sfiré I A 24, 1 Q Ha III, 30 et 36 (= XI, 31 et 37) et Ézéchiel," *Revue de Qumran* 43 (1983) 367-78.

[27]S. A. Kaufman in his article, "Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh (sic)," *Maarav* 3/2 (1982) 137-175, esp. pp. 170-72, has also referred to the Tell Fekherye inscription in order to solve the crux of Sefire I A 24. Although despairing about the damaged state of the line which prevents accurate reading he nevertheless assures us that the problematic word (בשש) stands for an "oven": "In any case, the form - whatever the reading - must mean 'oven'" p. 172. For Sefire I A 24 he offers the following reading: "And may his seven daughters bake bread in an oven (?) but not fill (it)."

to scorch, to roast," following Ronzevalle and Gibson. Concerning שאט in Ezekiel, Puech rejects the existence of a presumed root שוט II meaning "to despise, to scorn" saying that such a root is not attested in Biblical Hebrew nor in ancient Aramaic. He argues that Hebrew שאט, which Puech reads as שאט, should also be related to the Aramaic root šyṭ and Arabic šyṭ/*šawwaṭa*, all with the basic meaning "to burn, to broil." Moreover, in Arabic this root has a metaphorical sense meaning "to excite, to desire ardently." Puech argues that all the six occurrences of Hebrew שאט in Ezekiel have a corresponding metaphorical meaning derived from the basic one, "to burn" : "brûler de désir, désirer ardemment, ardeur vive, inflammation, excitation de l'esprit, bouillonement intérieur, irritation." Therefore he proposes to translate שאט in Ezekiel as "excitation interieure intense."

The Tell Fekherye inscription has also influenced the reading of F. M. Fales, "*wšb' bnth yhkn bšṭ ḥṃ w'l yhryn* = E le sue sette figlie si cederanno per un 'bastone di pane', ma non rimarrano incinte."[28]

The suggestion made by E. Puech should be rejected.[29] It is superfluous to belabor an argument starting from the metaphorical meaning of the Arabic šyṭ/*šawwaṭa* and to relate it to the presumed Hebrew cognate when the contexts and the synonyms of שאט in Ezekiel make its meaning sufficiently clear.

4.1.3. Preliminary Conclusions

It may remain disputed whether Hebrew שאט should be derived from a root with a medial aleph or from a root with a medial waw.[30] Nevertheless, the meaning of this term can be ascertained beyond reasonable doubt on the basis of the contexts in which it is employed. In

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[28]F. M. Fales, "Massiomo sforzo, minima resa: maledizioni divine da Tell Fekherye all' Antico Testamento," *Annali della Facolta' di Lingue e Litterature Straniere di Ca' Foscari* XXI,3 (1982) 1-12. On the Tell Fekherye inscription see A. Assaf, P. Bordreuil, A. R. Millard, *La statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne* (Recherches sur les civilisation, Paris, 1982).

[29]Cf. A. Lemaire - J.- M. Durand, *Les inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré et l'Assyrie de Shamshi-ilu*, EPHE IVe Section, Sciences historiques et philologiques (Hautes études orientales 20, Genève/Paris: Droz, 1984), who reject Puech's reading: "si la deuxième lettre de *bnth* peut être un *k*, un *p* ou un *n*, la première est clairement un *b* et non un ': paléographiquement la lecture *'pth*, "ses boulangères', est donc exclue (p. 133). The authors reiterate Lemaire's original rendering (p. 121). Cf. also A. Lemaire, "Notes d'épigraphie nord-ouest sémitique," *Syria* 62 (1985) 31-47, esp. pp. 33-35, "La lecture de Sfiré I A 24" (with photographs of the problematic line.

[30]For example, in the Supplement to *KBL*, p. 188 the root שאט is equated with שוט II.

Ezek 36:5, the nominal form of שאט occurs in relationship with its synonym כלמה "reproach," while in 16:57 it occurs alongside חרף "to mock." Therefore, the traditional meaning of שאט "to despise, to show contempt" found in the lexica should be retained as correct.

Concerning the *crux* in Sefire A I 24, the additional epigraphic evidence adduced by Lemaire tilts the balance in favor of his interpretation. The Aramaic expression בשט לחם in this inscription cannot be ralted to שאט in Ezekiel. Rather, the expression corresponds to Hebrew בפחותי לחם "for pieces of bread," (Ezek 13:19).

4.1.4. Akkadian *šēṭu/leqû šēṭūtu* in the Poem of Erra

The expression *leqû šēṭūtu* "to have scorn for," "to hold someone in contempt,"[31] holds a central place in the Poem of Erra where it occurs four times (I 77, 120, IIID 15, IV 133). Frankena has aptly described it as the *Leitmotiv* of the entire poem.[32] Once it refers to the Sebettu who complain of being scorned by the humans and three times it refers to the outraged Erra who is likewise "held in contempt." Because of irreverence, neglect and scorn, Erra and the Sebetti decide to punish humanity. The Sebetti complain and urge Erra to battle,

I 77 *būl* ^{d}*Šakkan* [*u*] [*na*]*mmaššê leqû šēṭūtni*

Šakkan's herds and the (wild) animals are holding us in contempt.[33]

Here the formula *leqû šēṭūtu* appears for the first time in the Poem with the pronominal suffix *ni*, which, however, is not affixed to the verb as one would expect but to the noun *šēṭūtu*. As noted by Bottéro, the Sebetti mention the reason which violently provokes Erra's ego and prompts him to undertake necessary action in order to remedy this unfavorable situation,

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[31]*AHw* 1221, *šêṭu(m)* = "gering achten, mißachten; frevlen;" 1222, *šē/īṭūtu(m) leqû(m)/laqā'um* = "Mißachtung bezeigen, verachten." Literally the expression means "to take (someone) in disdain" or "to take (the attitude) of disdain," cf. F. Thureau-Dangin, *Une relation de la huitième campagne de Sargon* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1912) p. 15 n. 9 line 80, *šēṭūtu PN šarri bēlīšu ilqû* = (PN) "qui avait pris du dédain à l'égard de PN." On the verb *leqû(m)* see also A. Goetze, "The *t*-form in the Old Babylonian Verb," *JAOS* 56 (1936) 297-334, esp. p. 329.

[32]R. Frankena, "Untersuchungen zum Irra-Epos," *BiOr* 14 (1957) 2-10, esp. p. 5, "ich möchte diesen Gedanken fast als das Leitmotiv des Epos betrachten."

[33]*būl* ^{d}*Šakkan* stand for the animals useful for humankind and of whom the god Šakkan is the protector, cf. Cagni, *PE*, p. 28 n. 13.

> Ils ont glissé (la raison) qui touchera le plus Erra dans son orgeuil et son amour-propre, ce qu'il rappellera plus d'une fois dans le cours du *Poème*, et qui constituera comme le nerf psychologique de toute son action: la peur qu'il a d'"être inférieur à sa réputation et méprisé" par les hommes, voire les animaux (I 77; et comp. I 20; IID 15; IV 113), s'il ne se manifeste point par des hauts faits...[34]

In I 120, Erra complains that the inhabitants of Mesopotamian cities are showing a lack of respect toward him, implying that his cult is being neglected,

I 120 *u nišī ṣalmat [qa]qqadi leq[û] šēṭūtum.*
121 *anāku aššu lā išḫutū zikrī*[35]

120 And the dark-headed people are holding (me) in contempt!
121 Therefore, as they have not feared my name.[36]

Erra decides to destroy the people because they do not fear his name (I 121), slight Marduk's word and act according to the promptings of their heart (I 122).[37]

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[34]J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 709.

[35]Erra complains because of religious offenses on the part of humans. In the Babylonian poem *Ludlul bēl nemēqi*, the term šēṭu is employed to designate precisely a cultic offense, *ibtilu ūmū ilī išēṭu eššeši* = "Who has done nothing on holy days, and despised sabbaths," W. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960) p. 39, ii 16. In an Old Babylonian poem of the innocent sufferer the term šēṭu is used to designate the cultic offense against the divinity. A man (*eṭlum*) presents a supplication on behalf of his innocent friend. He protests to the patron god against the calamity which has befallen his friend. He exclaims that he knows of no cultic offense committed by him, *libbim šeṭ epūšu lā idi* = "Et de faute involontaire commise par lui, je n'(en) connais pas!" so J. Nougayrol, "Une version ancienne du 'Juste Souffrant,'" *RB* 59 (1952) 239-50, esp. p. 242 line 9.

[36]Although there is no possessive suffix on the stative verb *leqû* the 1. sing. m. poss. suffix on *zikrī* "my name" in l. 121 makes it clear that Erra is the one whom the people are holding in contempt. On the contempt shown to Erra as one of the reasons which prompted him to launch his destructive actions against the humans see our section 3.3. "Human Offenses Against the Gods in the Poem of Erra."

[37]In his article, "Le rituel pour l'expédition en char," *RA* 21 (1924) 127-37, esp. p. 134 n. 8 and 9, F. Thureau-Dangin pointed out the synonyms of šēṭu such as *egû* "negligent," and *qullulu* "to treat lightly or with contempt." *q/gillatu* and *q/gullultu* are terms frequently used to designate "sin or fault" meaning literally "lightness or indulgence." He adduced several examples like the following one, *mannu lā išiṭ iau lā uqallil* which he rendered, "qui n'a péché par négligence, qui n'a péché par légèreté?" The phrase is found in L. W. King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery, being the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand* (London: Lusac 1896, reprint Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1978) No 11, line 10.

In IIID 15, Išum, Erra's lieutenant, who is also an intercessor for humans, attempts to placate the wrathful Erra. Using elaborate rhetoric he assuages Erra's feeling of outrage. Išum's approach is a sly one: Since Erra is esteemed and held in honor by the gods and the heavenly realm, why should his ego be offended because of the disrespect shown by the insignificant humans? Išum extols the valor and power of Erra and thus furnishes a premise for the subsequent reprovals.

IIID 15 *u tatami ina libbīka umma leqû* šēṭūtu

So you said in your heart: "They are holding me in contempt!"?[38]

The context of Erra IV 113, deals with the intercessory role of Išum who, in a display of eloquent rhetoric, succeeds in placating Erra. He shows him that his destructive impetuosity has gone beyond all bounds; nearly all life on earth is threatened with extinction, while the very seat of Marduk is endangered. The destruction started when Erra realized that humans were holding him in contempt,

IV 113 *u tatama ana libbīka umma leqû* šēṭūtu

So you said within your heart: "They are holding me in contempt!"

4.1.5. Parallels, Contrasts, Conclusions

First, one notices the similarity of usage between Hebrew שׂאט and Akkadian *šēṭu/leqû* šēṭūtu. In Akkadian the expression occurs both with and without a pronominal suffix, (with a suffix: Erra I 77; IIID 15, IV 113).[39] (without a suffix: Erra I 120). In Ezekiel there is one instance with the pronominal suffix, Ezek 25:6 בכל שְׂאָטְךָ, while the five other cases are without a pronominal suffix. This grammatical similarity of usage represents one important feature in any attempt to argue for a relationship of functional equivalence between the terms in question.

Second, while an etymological relationship between Hebrew שׂאט and Akkadian *šēṭu* might be uncertain, in part because of the medial א in the

[38]In this case *leqû* šēṭūtu could also be translated with "to show disrespect". Thus in *ARM* II 113 27, Inib-šarri, one of the court ladies of Zimri Lim, writes to him saying, (Istur-Addu) "showed me no disrespect" *šēṭūti iyattam ul ilqe*, in C.-F. Jean, *ARM II, Lettres diverses* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1950). Cf. also W. von Soden, "Neue Bände der Archives Royales de Mari," *Or* 22 (1953) 193-209, esp. p. 20.

[39]For other examples of šēṭūtu with a pronominal suffix see F. Thureau-Dangin, *Une relation de la huitième campagne de Sargon* (Paris: P. Gauthner, 1912) p. 15 n. 9.

former, one is justified in postulating at least a functional equivalence between these two terms. They are used in similar contexts where they refer to the offended ego of the deity. Both שאט in the Book of Ezekiel and *leqû šēṭūtu* in the Poem of Erra express a similar notion of "*lèse divinité*."

In light of our working hypothesis of a relationship between certain themes and terms found in the Book of Ezekiel and those in the Poem of Erra one can draw some further conclusions. The term שאט is specific to the Book of Ezekiel, being absent from the rest of the Old Testament. The Akkadian expression *leqû šēṭūtu* is prominent in the Poem of Erra where it occurs four times as a *Leitmotiv*. In the Poem it designates the cultic offenses or disrespect shown toward Erra which provoke his wrath and prompt him to destroy the humans. Erra's ego has been hurt to the point that the god annihilated almost all life in the Mesopotamian cities. Owing to the able intervention and the propitious words of Erra's lieutenant, Išum, a "remnant" has been wrenched from Erra's murderous fury.

In the Book of Ezekiel the ego[40] of Yahweh is likewise offended when Yahweh sees the contempt shown toward the people of Israel by their neighbors. In the oracle against the Ammonites in Ezek 25:6-7, because they scorned Judah, Yahweh threatens them with complete extermination from among the nations,

> (25:7) Assuredly, I will stretch out My hand against you and I will give you as booty to the nations; I will cut you off from among the peoples and I will wipe you out from among the countries and destroy you. And you shall know that I am Yahweh.

The ego of Yahweh is clearly the focal point of the threat, expressed by the constantly repeated first person singular verbal forms. Yahweh cannot leave this contempt unpunished, because to despise Judah equals despising Yahweh. The use of the recognition formula in this context emphasizes the fact that the Ammonites will become aware of this close relationship between Yahweh and his people. The Book of Ezekiel offers an ineluctably theocentric representation of the basis of Israel's existence.

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[40]In order to avoid being too trivial in speaking about Yahweh by using a Freudian psychoanalitic term which has been almost entirely co-opted by contemporary psychological usage, we would prefer to talk about Yahweh's "*amour-propre*." However, there is no equivalent English translation of this French expression.

In the Poem of Erra the contempt expressed by the humans is directed against the god Erra and once against his seven executioners, the Sebetti. By contrast, in the Book of Ezekiel the object of contempt is the people and the land of Judah. However, as pointed out already by Frankena, this is a rather minor difference,[41] since in the Old Testament to mock Judah is to mock Yahweh.[42] As noted above, this connection is particularly emphasized in the Book of Ezekiel. B. Renaud points out that the relationship between קנאה and חמה "jealousy, zeal," and "wrath," (Ezek 36:6) appears to be Ezekiel's particular creation.[43] The reproach which the people of Yahweh suffer provokes Yahweh's wrath. Moreover, in the threefold description of the defeated Judah in the beginning of the oracle against Ammon (Ezek 25:4), Yahweh's sanctuary is mentioned as the first object of the Ammonites' scorn, "... Because you cried 'Aha!' over My Sanctuary when it was desecrated, and over the land of Israel when it was laid waste, and over the House of Judah when it went into exile." As Zimmerli pointed out,

> what is odious from the human point of view becomes abuse of the sanctuary. Instead of being terrified at the unheard-of fact of the profanation of the holy place in Jerusalem and recognizing in that fact Yahweh's burning righteous anger, Ammon laughs, thereby despising the holy one...[44]

Yahweh decides to annihilate the Ammonites because of a cultic offense.[45] At least on this point the cause of the divine wrath is identical in Ezekiel and in the Poem of Erra.

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[41]R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 16-17.

[42]Cf. 2 Kgs 19:4, "...the word of Rabshakeh whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock (לחרף) the living God."

[43]B. Renaud, *Je suis un Dieu jaloux* (LD 34, Paris: Cerf, 1963) 84, "c'est une création d'Ézéchiel lui-même."

[44]W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II*, 13.

[45]Similarly in Akkadian literature the term *šeṭṭu* "negligence, oversight," appears in a context of a cultic offense in respect to a sanctuary. In a neo-Babylonian inscription king Neriglissar (559-556 BCE), relates how he rebuilt a section of the Esagila. In order to protect himself from any cultic offense he consulted the earlier plans of the temple. In this connexion *šeṭṭu* occurs together with *ḫīṭu* "offense, sin"): (20) *šeṭṭim u ḫīṭitim ana lā subši* (21) *tēmmenša laberi aḫit abrema* = "To avoid oversight and offense I sought the old foundation plans and found them," in S. Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (VAB IV, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912) p. 216 (Nariglissar Nr. 2. II 20-21), who translates, (20) "Versäumnis und Vergehen zu beseitigen, (21) suchte ich nach der alten Bauurkunden und fand sie."

4.2. HEBREW חשמל AND AKKADIAN *elmēšu* "AMBER"

4.2.1. Hebrew חשמל in the Book of Ezekiel

The enygmatic term חשמל occurs only in the Book of Ezekiel (Ezek 1:4, 27 and 8:2). It occurs twice in connection with the description of the divine being which Ezekiel saw in a theophany at the Kebar canal (1:4, 27), and once in a subsequent reference to that theophany (8:2). In an attempt to explain its meaning the commentators have produced a considerable number of etymological explanations based on Sumerian, Elamite and Akkadian. Nevertheless, the word continues to puzzle commentators.

4.2.2. The Testimony of the Versions

The oldest recorded explanation of the term חשמל is the Greek LXX rendering ἤλεκτρον[1] meaning either amber or an alloy of gold and silver. The Old Latin version and Jerome's Vulgate translated it with *electrum*. Thus the versions probably understood the Hebrew חשמל as "amber." This is the basis of the rendering "amber" in the *KJV*. For the ancient Greek and Roman writers the term ἤλεκτρον/*electrum* was applied to two different things. On the one hand, it designated the yellow amber imported from northern parts of Europe like Jutland, the southern shores of the Baltic Sea and Cornwall. In this sense ἤλεκτρον is used by Homer.[2] On the other hand, it could designate a highly valued metal of pale yellow color being an alloy of gold and silver.[3]

4.2.3. Rabbinic Explanations

The Talmud contains a curious rabbinic tradition according to which the person who understood the meaning of the term חשמל lost his life. Apparently, this mysterious term was considered to represent a mortal threat for the uninitiated. This point is illustrated by the story of a child

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[1]The Greek word ἤλεκτρον became the source of the English word "electricity," a phenomenon which was discovered by rubbing amber. Similarly, the classical Hebrew חשמל became the source of modern Hebrew חשמל meaning "electricity."

[2]*Odyssey* 4.73; 15.460, 17.196. cf.A. Bailly, *Dictionnaire Grec-Français* (Paris: Hachette, 1950) 896a.

[3]According to *Strabo* III 146, and Pliny, *Natural History* XXXIII 4, ἤλεκτρον/*electrum* represents an alloy made out of five parts of gold and one part of silver, cited in A. Bailly, *op.cit.*, p. 896a.

who "apprehended what חשמל was, whereupon a fire went forth from חשמל and consumed him," (BT *Ḥagîgah* 13b). Rab Judah (BT *Ḥagîgah* 13b) regards the term as a name for some fiery angelic creature on the order of the seraphim mentioned in Isa 6:2, 6. The celebrated commentators Rashi (1040-1105) and Qimḥi (1160-1235) explained חשמל as an accrostic for either חיות אש ממללות "fiery beings who speak," or עתים חושת עתים ממללות "at times silent, at times speaking."[4] Ibn Ganah described חשמל as a color similar to תכלת, a kind of blue.[5] *Midrash Massehet Hehalôth*[6] explains the term חשמל on the basis of the numerical value of its consonants saying that it contained 378 rays. M. Jastrow, who mentions some of the above rabbinic speculations, gives two meanings of חשמל as "glittering substance, amber" and as metallic ore of lead "galena?"[7] In rabbinic commentaries one occasionally finds the understanding of חשמל as "a sort of precious stone."[8]

4.2.4. Suggested Derivations of Hebrew חשמל

a. From Akkadian *ešmarû*

Friedrich Delitzsch (1884) was the first who suggested to relate the Hebrew noun חשמל with Akkadian *ešmarû*, which was originally thought to represent "polished bronze."[9] However, *ešmarû*, is now taken to denote a kind of silver.[10]

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[4]Rashi's and Qimḥi's Commentary on Ezekiel in the Rabbinic Bible quoted in Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 23.

[5]Abuwalid Merwan Ibn Ganah, *Sepher Haschoraschim* (Berlin, 1896) 178, quoted in M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Inlfluences on the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M. A. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1970) 19.

[6]Jellinek, *Bet-Hamidrash*, II 41, quoted in L. Venetianer, *Ezekiels Vision und die Salomonischen Wasserbecken* (Budapest: F. Kilian, 1906) 38.

[7]M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targunim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Judaica Press, 1975) 511.

[8]So e.g., L. Wogue, *Le Pentateuque, nouvelle traduction suivie de la traduction des Haphtarôth* (Paris: Durlacher, 1867, 5 vols) IV 597 n. 8, חשמל "sorte de pière précieuse." He mentions also the view of Bochart (*Hieroz*, III, 871, 876): "il décompose le mot חשמל en נחש מלל akkadien cuivre et or et y voit une espèce de similor ou de chrysocal (chrysocalque) *aurichalcum* des anciens."

[9]F. Delitzsch, "Specimen Glossarii Ezechielico-Babylonici," in S. Baer, *Liber Ezechielis* (Leipzig: B. Tauschnitz, 1884) XII.

[10]So *CAD E* 366b-67a; *AHw* 257a.

H. Zimmern (1917) endorsed the rapprochement of Akkadian *ešmarû* designating a precious metal, with Hebrew חשמל and Egyptian *ḥsmn* "Silbergold, Elektrum."[11]

In 1936, G. A. Cooke[12] still maintained that Hebrew חשמל designates some kind of bright metal corresponding to Akkadian *ešmarû* "polished bronze" and Egyptian *ḥsmn* "bronze." According to Cooke, "on philological grounds the connexion between חשמל and the Akk. *ešmarû* need not be questioned."[13] Furthermore, Cooke rejected the translation of חשמל with amber saying first, that there is no evidence that amber was imported into Palestine as early as the sixth century BCE, and second, that the cognate Akkadian and Egyptian terms certainly denote a metal (p. 11).

Both points made by Cooke need to be corrected in the light of the present knowledge.

First, it is now held that *ešmarû* means "silver" rather than "bronze."[14] Thus the bricks of the pavement of the Ezida at Borsippa are described alternatively as *agur ešmarê* "brick of *ešmarû*," and *agurru kaspi ebba* "bricks of shining silver."[15] Hence, if the author of the book of Ezekiel wanted to compare the brightness of the divine being to the glimmer of silver he had at his disposal an existing Hebrew vocable for silver - כסף.

Second, Ezekiel's vison assumes a Babylonian locale as its background and today we know that amber was a well known commodity in Mesopotamia as early as the middle of the second millennium BCE (see below).

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[11]H. Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluss* (Leipzig: Hinrichs [2]1917) 59, cf. however his index on p. 78, where Hebrew חשמל is classified in the category of those words for which the exact derivation is uncertain. B. Landsberger, "Akkadisch-hebräische Wortgleichungen," *VTS* 16 (1967) 176-204, esp. p. 196 n. 2, questions Zimmern's suggestion.

[12]G. A. Cooke, *Ezekiel*, p. 10.

[13] Cooke, *Ezekiel*, p. 23, citing C. Brockelmann, *Kurzgefaste vergleichende Grammatik* (Porta linguarum orientalium XXI, Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1908) 104; and E. König, *Historisch-kritisches Lehrgebäude der hebräischen Sprache* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1881-97. 2 vols. in 3) II, 99.

[14]So *CAD E* 366b-67a; *AHw* 257a.

[15]S. Langdon, *Die neubabylonische Königsinschriften* (VAB IV, Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1912) p. 128, (III 56), p. 158 (VI 36), pointed out by M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M. A. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1970) p. 20.

b. From Sumerian HUŠ.MAL

In 1914 A. van Hoonacker[16] suggested to derive Hebrew חשמל directly from Sumerian HUŠ meaning "bright red, or scarlet,"[17] augmented by the particle MAL used for the formation of nouns and adjectives.

S. Landersdorfer[18] (1916) accepted Van Hoonacker's suggestion of a Sumerian derivation of Hebrew חשמל rejecting Delitzsch's equation of Hebrew חשמל with Akkadian *ešmarû*. However, it is highly unlikely that Hebrew חשמל would be derived directly from Sumerian, the chronological gap between the two languages being considerable. Moreover, neither van Hoonacker nor Landersdorfer were able to adduce any corresponding Sumerian texts where one could first, attest to the existence of such a Sumerian word and second, examine its usage in various contexts. Therefore, the derivation of this term from Sumerian should be rejected as being insufficiently grounded.

c. From Elamite *ismalu*

J. A. Montgomery[19] (1936) was the first to suggest an etymological relationship between Elamite *ismalu*, Akkadian *ešmarû*, Hebrew חשמל, Ugaritic *azmar* and Old Persian *ismaruv*. All these terms were supposed to designate some kind of metal, probably bronze.

Montgomery's suggestion has been followed by G. G. Cameron[20] (1948). The word *ismalu* occurs on a tablet from the Achaemenid period. Cameron understands the term to designate "inlay" or "overlay," i.e., the gold or lapis lazuli inlay fitted into holes found in the relief representations of the garments and crowns of the Achaemenid kings. Cameron notes that the three occurrences of Hebrew חשמל are all preceded by עין, which in his opinion has erroneously been understood figuratively and translated "the luster or gleam" of metal. According to

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[16]A. van Hoonacker, "Eléments sumériens dans le livre d'Ezéchiel," *ZA* 28 (1914) 333-36, esp. p. 333.

[17]Cf. R. Labat, *Manuel d'Epigraphie Akkadienne* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1976) sign N° 402, Sumerian HUŠ = Akkadian *ḫuššu* "rouge feu;" *ḫuššû* "vêtement écarlate."

[18]S. Landersdorfer, *Sumerisches Sprachgut im Alten Testament. Eine Biblisch-Lexikalische Studie* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916) 70-71.

[19]J. A. Montgomery *apud* R. G. Kent, "The Present State of Old Persian Studies," *JAOS* 56 (1936) 208-225, esp. p. 220. For a summary of different views including an etymology from Elamite *ismalu* see *HAL* 348a.

[20]G. G. Cameron, *Persepolis Treasury Tablets* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948) 129-30, tablet 27 (Pl. XVII) line 7.

Cameron, the shining pieces of inlay were "eyes" on the surface of the relief. He translates חשמל כעין with "a piece of metal inlay." Cameron's interpretation has been endorsed and reiterated by W. A. Irwin (1952).[21]

However, Cameron's explanation of חשמל כעין in Ezekiel is erroneous. As listed in *BDB* 744d, besides its usual sense "eye," the term עין can also have transferred meanings. It can designate i) the "surface" (Ex 10:5, 15; Num 22:5, 11); ii) the "appearance" (Lev 13:5, 37, 55 [corr.], Num 11:7; 1 Sam 16:7); or iii) the "gleam" and "sparkle" of jewels or metals. Out of 9 occurrences in the Old Testament where the term עין designates this gleaming aspect of objects it is used 7 times in such a way in Ezekiel where it consistently expresses comparisons (כעין). In Ezek 1:22, the expanse (רקיע) has an awe-inspiring gleam "as of ice/hail" (כעין הקרח הנורא).[22] The "wheels gleamed like the Taršiš-stone" כעין תרשיש, Ezek 1:16; 10:9). The four creatures have hoofs which sparkled like burnished bronze (כעין נחשת קלל) Ezek 1:7; Dan 10:6. In Ezek 1:4, 27 and 8:2 the gleaming aspect of divine being appearing in a theophany is rendered with (כעין חשמל). The consistent way in which כעין is used in Ezekiel speaks against Cameron's suggestion.[23]

Greenberg's comments on the use of כעין and דמות in Ezekiel are to the point,

> (It) signifies unwilligness to commit oneself to the substantial identity of the seen with the compared: it looked like torches, sapphire, a human being, but that is not to say that torches, sapphire, and a human being were actually there. The use of these buffer terms indicates that the prophet wished to prevent his reader from assuming the substantial identity of the seen with the compared, although there is no ground for supposing he had any reservations respecting the precision and adequacy of these comparisons.[24]

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[21]W. A. Irwin, "Hashmal," *VT* 2 (1952) 169-70.

[22]The MT and Targum have ice, a meaning well established in the rest of the OT. Job 6:16 קרח "ice"//שלג "snow"; 38:29 קרח "ice"//כפר "frost"; 37:10; Ps 147:17. However, the LXX, the Peshitto and the Vulgate rendered the word with "crystal," probably on the basis of its resemblance to ice. Cf. also Rev 4:6, and Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 18.

[23]Cf. P. Auvray, "Sur le sens du mot ayin en Ez. i 18 et x 12," *VT* 4 (1954) 1-6. "Bien plus, une étude attentive du style du prophète permet de noter qu'ayant plusieurs mots à sa disposition pour signifier 'apparence', 'ressemblance' (מראה, דמות) il shoisit régulièrement עין chaque fois qu'il veut marquer l'aspect brillant d'une chose. C'est donc bien que pour lui עין signifie non pas seulement 'apparence' comme dans d'autres livres bibliques mais plus précisément 'apparence brillante', 'éclat'" (pp. 4-5).

[24]M. Greenberg, "Ezekiel's Vision: Literary and Iconographic Aspects," in *History, Historiography and Interpretation. Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures* (eds. H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld, Jerusalem: Magnes and Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983, 1984) 159-168, esp. p. 161.

d. From Akkadian *ḫašmānu*

HAL 348a, equates the Hebrew vocable with Akkadian *ḫašmānu*, "a blue green color" (referring to wool),[25] or "blue green stone,"[26] which repeats Ibn Ganah's suggestion (cf. above). This blue material is mentioned in Akkadian texts from Ras Šamra as a type of linen died blue along with *uqnātu* "purple" (RŠ 11.732 B),

> (5) 1 *ṣubāt kitû* 1 *meat šipātu uqnātu* 1 *meat šipātu*
> (6) *uqnātu ḫašmāni ana awēl tuppannu*[*ri*]
>
> 1 tunic, 100 bales of purple linen, 100 (bales) of
> purple and blue linen for the *tuppanuru* officials.[27]

One may object to this identification by pointing out that Biblical Hebrew has a term which corresponds to Akkadian *ḫašmānu*, e.g., Ps 68:32, חשמנים "blue linens."[28] Why invent a completely new word in order to refer to the same thing? Moreover, Gruber objects by saying that contextually in Ezekiel there might be a problem with the blue color, in that it would provide insufficient contrast to its background.[29] Finally, as pointed by S. Garfinkel, there might be a chronological incompatibility with the appearance of the term חשמל in Ezekiel since the term *ḫašmānu* is not attested in NA, NB, or LB periods.[30]

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[25]Cf. *CAD H* 142 *ḫašmānu*. Cf. also J. Bottéro, *Archives Royales de Mari, VII* (Paris: Geuthner, 1958) 296, and review by H. Cazelles in *VT* 9 (1959) 211-12.

[26]*AHw* 334b, takes the vocable to denote the actual object rather than the color of the stone. Cf. also L. Venetianer, *Ezekiels Vision und die Salomonischen Wasserbecken* (Budapest: F. Kilian, 1906) 37-38, who identified Hebrew חשמל with Akkadian *tarmanu* which can also be read as *ḫašmānu* "a blue green stone" (in certain texts explained as *saggilmud* stone). Venetianer argued that the term refers to malachite, a bluish green mineral used as a source of copper ore.

[27]For the Akkadian text see Ch. Virolleaud, "Lettres et documents administratifs provenants des Archives d'Ugarit," *Syria* 21 (1940) 247-76, esp. p. 257, and 259 n. 1, where Virolleaud discussed the possible identification with Hebrew חשמל Cf. also Ch. Virolleaud, "Les nouvelles tablettes de Ras Shamra 1948-49," *Syria* 28 (1951) 55, where *ḫašmānu* appears together with *takiltu* (= תכלת). Cf. also C. Gordon, "Observations on the Akkadian Tablets from Ugarit," *RA* 50 (1956) 127-33, who understands *takiltu* as blue colored material and *ḫašmānu* as referring to the blue-green color of dyed wool.

[28]Cf. W. F. Albright, "Notes on Psalm 68 and 134," *Norsk theologisk tidsskrift* 56 (1956) 1-12, esp. p. 4.

[29]M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1970) 20.

[30]S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. diss. Columbia University, New York, 1983) 81 n. 335.

e. From Akkadian *elmēšu*

Paul Haupt (1923) was the first to suggest the identification of Hebrew חשמל with Akkadian *elmēšu* (= *ḫalmašu*) which he understood to be a metal *electrum* (an alloy of gold as principal metal and of some other metal or substance like silver, lead, copper, sulphur, tellurium etc.)[31]

Haupt's suggestion has been followed by R. Campbell Thompson concerning the mention of *elmēšu* in the Epic of Gilgameš. In *Gilg.* VI 10-11, Ištar promises Gilgameš as follows,

10 *lušaṣmidka narkabti* ^{abnu}*uqnî u hurāṣi*
11 *ša magarrūša ḫurāṣamma elmēšu qarnāša*[32]

10 I will harness for you a chariot of lapis and gold,
11 whose wheels are gold and whose horns are *elmēšu*.

Thopmson's translation of *elmēšu* with *electrum* has been endorsed by H. Lewy, "because the mixture of silver and gold called by the Greeks electron is actually known from the discoveries at Ur to have been used by the ancient Babylonian goldsmiths together with silver and gold."[33]

In our opinion the above lines from the Epic of Gilgameš do not support univocally the meaning of *elmēšu* as a metal alloy. One notices a chiastic structure. In l. 10, the lapis stone is followed by gold, while in l. 11, after the mention of gold one would expect the amber stone.

In 1939 Landsberger reiterated the identification of Hebrew חשמל in Ezekiel with Akkadian *elmēšu*.[34] Initially, Landsberger thought that *elmēšu* represents a glittering metal being an alloy with arsenic. In 1957 he

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[31] P. Haupt, "The Hebrew Terms for Silver and Gold," *JBL* 43 (1923) 116-17, esp. p. 118, "Heb. חשמל may be identical with Ass. *elmēšu*... The final ל in חשמל may be a secondary addition as it is in Hebrew כרמל and גבעל."

[32] Akkadian text from R. Campbell Thompson, *The Epic of Gilgamish* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930) 38. "In the present instance Ishtar refers, doubtless, to the custom of overlaying wood with electrum, as was the custom in Egypt..." (p. 80, a long note on *elmēšu*).

[33] H. Lewy, "Studies in Assyro-Babylonian Mathematics and Metrology," *Or* 18 (1949) 40-47, 137-70, esp. p. 164, n. 3. In support of her argument she quotes, H. J. Plenderleith, "Metals and Metal Techniques," *apud* L. Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery, Ur Excavations* (London: British Museum and Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1934, Vol. II, Texts) 297 (concerning the decorative use of the alloy on bowls, a broach, and tubular handle-rings).

[34] B. Landsberger apud J. J. Stamm, *Die akkadische Namengebung (MVAeG* 44, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1939) 256, n. 7.

retracted this identification.[35] In 1967 Lansberger[36] made a thorough examination of a variety of texts mentioning *elmēšu* concluding that the term designates amber stone. He excludes the possibility that it may designate a metal saying that such a meaning could not account for *elmēšu* being used as a seal (Erra IV 43), as a personal name,[37] as a mythical lamp (IV R 61 III 29-35), and as growing on trees (Erra I 148). He points out the fact that if *elmēšu* were a metal it is highly surprising that it never occurs in economic texts.[38] In spite of his insitance on *elmēšu* being just a stone Landsberger had to admit that the textual evidence is somewhat ambiguous and that in certain texts the term refers to a metal.

Akkadian *elmēšu* corresponds to Sumerian sud-ága and the numerous Sumerian texts where the term appears have been analyzed by Falkenstein.[39] He pointed out that in Sumerian texts sud-ága is often used to designate the exceptional brilliance and shimmer of astral bodies. M. Civil argued that sud-ága should be understood as referring originally to the metal alloy of electrum.[40] With the evolution of gold metallurgy the use of electrum became progressively more rare, the term presumably underwent a semantic change and could to designate something else beside the metal alloy. Civil also notes the frequent figurative sense of the term sud-ága as a substantive meaning "bright light," and as an epithet of gods "shining, brilliant."

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[35]B. Landsberger apud A. Falkenstein, "sù-ud-ága," *ZA* 52 (1957) 304-7, esp. p. 304 n. 6, where he quotes R. J. Forbes, *Metallurgy in Antiquity*, p. 255: "it is almost certain, that arsenic was not known in antiquity."

[36]B. Landsberger, "Akkadisch-hebräische Wortgleichungen," *VTS* 16 (1967) 176-204, esp. pp. 190-198.

[37]Cf. [f]*Elmēšuġ* in J. J. Stamm, *Die akkadische Namengebung (MVAeG* 44, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1939) 256, who quotes Ranke, *Early Babylonian Personal Names* (Philadelphia, 1905) 186.

[38]B. Lansberger, *art. cit.*, p. 195.

[39]Cf. A. Falkenstein, "sù-ud-ága," *ZA* 52 (1957) 304-7. Although Falkenstein argued that sud-ága represents a metal or a meteorite, he nevertheless listed a series of texts in which sud-ága clearly represents a stone. In the following text which describes the way Urnammu decorated city gates sud-ága could be either a stone or a metal, SRT II 22-23: (22) "The 'Sublime' Gate, the 'Large' Gate, the 'Salvation' Gate to the 'Storried Mountain', the Gate of the 'unknown grain', (23) with splendent sù-du-ága ku-me-a (and) pure silver he adorned their 'brow', (quoted in G. Castellino, Urnammu. Three Religious texts," *ZA* 53 [1959] 106-132, esp. pp. 107 and 109). Sud-ága (= *elmēšu*) appears as a last item in a list of metals dating from the time of Ur, cf. V. Scheil, "Vocabulaire pratique," *RA* 18 (1921) 49-71, esp. p. 52.

[40]M. Civil, "The 'Message of lú-dingir-ra to his Mother' and a Group of Akkado-Hittite 'Proverbs,'" *JNES* 23 (1964) 1-11, esp. pp. 7-8.

Apparently the controversy whether *elmēšu* originally represented a metal or a stone cannot be settled because of the rather ambiguous textual evidence. In certain texts sud-ága = *elmēšu* appears to represent a metal, while in other texts it refers to amber stone. This ambiguity continues in Greek and Latin terminology as well: ἤλεκτρον/*electrum*, being both a metal (alloy of silver and gold) and amber stone.

G. R. Driver (1951) related Hebrew חשמל to Akkadian *elmēšu* which he understood, however, to mean "brass."[41] The Akkadian text which Driver mistranslates in order to show that *elmēšu* is a metal demonstrates that in this context *elmēšu* represents some kind of stone. In the following text *elmēšu* appears together with a series of terms which are preceded by a determinative ^{aban} indicating a stone:

(30) *šamû elūti* ^{aban}*luludanitu ša* ^{d}*Anim* 5x60 ^{d}*Igigi ina libbi uš*[*ibū*]
(31) *šamû qablūti* ^{aban}*saggilmud ša* ^{d}*Igigi bēlum ina libbi paramaḫḫi ina libbi*
(32) *ina parakki* ^{aban}*uqnî ûšib* ^{is}*buṣi* ^{aban}*elmēši ina libbi unammir*
(33) *šamû šaplūti* ^{aban}*ašpû ša* ^{kakkab}*lumaši ša ilāni ina muḫḫi ēṣir*
(34) [*ina dann*]*at erṣetim elîti ziqiqu amēlūta ina libbi ušarbiṣ*

(30) The upper heaven of *luludanitu*-stone[42] belongs to Anum, 5x60 Igigi dwell in it,
(31) the middle heaven of *saggilmud*-stone[43] belongs to the Igigi, The lord (i.e., Marduk) (is) in the holy of holies,
(32) he took his seat on a lapis lazuli[44] throne in it he lit a lamp made of amber stone,
(33) the lower heavens of jasper upon which he has marked the *lumaši*-stars of the gods
(34) on the base of the upper earth the wind makes the humans to lie flat.[45]

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[41]G. R. Driver, "Ezekiel's Inaugural Vison," *VT* 1 (1951) 60-62, esp. p. 61. Driver based himself on R. Campbell Thompson, *A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936) 76-79, who abanoned his earlier understanding of *elmēšu* as electrum in favor of "brass." Cf. G. Meier, "A Review of R. Campbell Thomson, *A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology*," *AfO* 13 (1939-41) 71-3.

[42]*CAD L* 243-4, leaves *luludanitu* untranslated but describes it as a multicolored stone.

[43]*CAD S* 23-4, *saggilmud* "a stone"; *AHw II* 1022-23, "ein bläulicher Stein." In the lexical series har-gud B IV 113 and in *MSL* 10 33, sag.gil.mud is equated with *ḫasmānu*.

[44] Akk. *uqnû*, Ug. *iqnu*, Sum. ZA.GIN, "Lapislazuli," *RlA* 6, 488-9 (A. Philologisch, W. Röllig), 489-92, (B. Archäologisch, G. Hermann - P. R. S. Moorey) (with bibliography).

[45]E. Ebeling, *KAR*, 307 = E. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach der Vorstellungen der Babylonier* (Berlin/Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1931) 33.

CAD E (1958) 108, identifies the enygmatic Hebrew term חשמל with Akkadian *elmēšu* "a precious stone," which it defines in the following manner,

> The word must be taken as referring to a quasi-mythical precious stone of great brilliancy and with a color which one tried to imitate with dyes. In this particular quality, *elmēšu* may well be connected with Heb. חשמל which likewise appears only in similes referring to the extraordinary sheen of a quasi-mythical stone.[46]

Garfinkel (1983)[47] rated this identification as probable. According to Garfinkel the identification of Hebrew חשמל with Akkadian *elmēšu* is supported by the fact that the latter represents some kind of a brilliant stone and is attested in mythological contexts reminiscent of that of Ezekiel as seen in the following Neo Assyrian oracle:

> *kussâka ina šapal šamê rabûte uktin ina massiki (= maštaki)*
> *ša ḫurāṣi ina qabal šamê aḫarridi*
> *nūr ša elmēši ina pān Aššur-aḫḫa-iddina šar Aššur ušanammara*
>
> I (Ištar) have stablished your throne under the great heaven;
> I watch (over you) from a golden abode in the midst of the heaven;
> I light the lamp of amber before Esarhaddon, the king of Aššur.[48]

Until recently archeologists of European prehistory were fond of reconstructing the Bronze Age "European amber trade routes." It was argued that amber was transported from the Baltic regions along the river Rhine to the headwaters of the Adriatic via the Brenner pass and to the Aegean islands.[49] Owing to the highly developed Mediterranean trade of the pre-Hellenic Greeks amber would eventually reach the Near East, Egypt and Mesopotamia. A magnificent amber necklace composed of 119 amber beads was found in a grave at Mycenae dating from *circa* 1600 BCE.[50] The origin of 14 amber beads of an Egyptian necklace

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[46]*CAD E* (1958) 108.

[47]S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation Columbia University, New York, 1983) p. 15, and pp. 81-82.

[48]H. C. Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* (London, 1861ff) IV R 61, III 29-35, quoted in *CAD E* 107, and in Garfinkel, *op. cit.* p. 82.

[49]Cf. J. M. de Navarro, "Prehistoric Routes Between Northern Europe and Italy defined by the Amber Trade," *Geographical Journal* 66 (1925) 481-507; J. R. Maréchal, "Le commerce de l'ambre dans l'antiquité," *Techniques et civilisations* 5 (1956) 128-48.

[50]Cf. G. E. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 104 fig. 102; C. W. Beck, "Analysis and Provenience of Minoan and Mycenaean Amber (parts I and II)," *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 7 (1966) 191-211, and 9 (1968) 5-19.

together with other beads made of different material dating from *circa* 1400 BCE was traced to the European Northern shores.[51]

However, this hypothesis has come under severe criticism by Rotländer who claims that all studies of amber have been based upon a false premise.[52] The presence of succinic acid in amber which was used in order to demonstrate its Baltic origin is a misleading factor. Rottländer's conclusion have been endorsed by Muhly who likewise argues that,

> the famous European amber routes may actually be based upon faulty technical evidence as the assumed test for Baltic amber may actually indicate the presence of a normal oxidation product of amber.[53]

One could expect to find amber in the regions where pine wood grows. Therefore amber might have been brought to Mesopotamia from any region which had pine wood.

4.2.5. Akkadian *elmēšu* in the Poem of Erra

The term *elmēšu* occurs three times in the Poem of Erra, I 148; I 167; IV 43. The way it is used in this Poem sheds some additional light on the meaning and origin of *elmēšu*.

The context of the following line is a conversation between Marduk and Erra. Marduk is initially unwilling to leave his shrine in Babylon and makes a series of objections. He points out to Erra that on the occasion of the Deluge he had relocated the *mēsu* tree which produces *elmēšu*-amber necessary for the fabrication of divine statues.

> I 148 *ša mēsi elmēši ašaršun unakirma ul ukallim mamma*
>
> I changed the place of the *mēsu* tree (bearing) the *elmēšu*-amber:
> I did not reveal (the new place) to anybody.[54]

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[51]See J. D. Muhly, *Copper and Tin. The Distribution of Mineral Resources and Nature of the Metals Trade in the Bronze Age* (*TCAAS* 43, New Haven, Hamden: Archon Books 1974) esp. p. 249 who quotes J. V. S. Magaw, "Across the North Sea: A Review," *Antiquity* 35 (1961) 45-52.

[52]R. C. A. Rottländer, "On the Formation of Amber from *Pinus* Resin," *Archaeometry* 12 (1970) 35-71. Cf. also G. Clark, "The Invasion Hypothesis in British Archaeology," *Antiquity* 40 (1966) 172-189, 298-99.

[53]J. D. Muhly, *Copper and Tin. The Distribution of Mineral Resources and Nature of the Metals Trade in the Bronze Age (TCAAS* 43, New Haven, Hamden: Archon Books 1974) pp. 343-4.

[54]This translation follows the one in *CAD E* 108.

There are two ways of understanding the terms *mēsi elmēši* in this line. Cagni followed by Bottéro translate, *mēsu*-tree (and) *elmēšu*-amber.[55] By contrast, the translation offered by *CAD E* 108, and Landsberger, "*mēsu*-tree (bearing) *elmēšu*-amber," indicates the connection between the *mēsu*-tree and the *elmēšu*-amber, i.e., that *elmēšu* comes from trees. Furthermore, Landsberger points out the word play between *mēsu* and *elmēšu*.[56] If this renedering is correct then the relationship between the *mēsu*-tree and the *elmēšu*-amber might be interpreted as an indication that already the Babylonians knew something about the origin of amber as being a product of a particular tree. In this case the meaning of *elmēšu* as amber would be settled.

In the course of their conversation, Erra counters Marduk's objection and declares himself able to make the *elmēšu* stone rise up again on the earth and probably other precious objects necessary for the reparation of Marduk's statue. The line is fragmentary,

I 167 *elmēšu ebba x*-[... ...]*x-rīšu* DUL.DU [.....]

The glittering *elmēšu* (-amber) ..... of his .... I shall make ascend[57]

In the above passages *elmēšu* stone appears as a precious material used for the fabrication of divine statues.

After Erra had ravaged Babylon, Marduk, the god of Babylon utters a long lament over his destroyed city (IV 36-44),

IV 43 *ua Bābili ša kīma kunukki elmēšu addûšu ina tikki* ^{d}*Anim*

Ah Babylon that like a cylinder seal (made) of *elmēšu*

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[55]Cagni, *PE*, p. 32 and p. 33 n. 41.

[56]B. Landsberger, "Akkadische-hebräische Wortgleichungen," *VTS* 16 (1967) 176-204. "Wenn sich im Erra-Epos der senile Marduk darüber beschwert, daß er nach der Sintflut die vorsintflutlichen (im wahren Sinne des Wortes!) *mēsu*-Bäume, von denen das *elmēšu* kommt (das Wortspiel *mēsu: elmēšu* ist zu beachten!), nicht wieder auffinden konnte, so wird sicher niemand Bekanntschaft mit den antediluvialen Bernsteinwäldern voraussetzen; wohl aber die halbmytische Vorstellung, daß Bernstein ein Baumharz sei bzw. eine Variante der Fabel, daß 'Bernstein von Nußbäumen' stamme" (p. 198). Lansberger cites I. Löw, *Die Flora der Juden* (Wien/Leipzig: R. Löwit, 1924, vols. I-IV) II 61 n. 1, who mentions that in the first century A.D. Pliny the Elder reflects the knowledge of amber as a resinous substance. In the sixteenth century an Arab writer Daud el Antaki thought that amber was produced by walnut trees.

[57]Translation from Cagni, *PE*, 34.

stone I had hung on Anum's neck![58]

4.2.6. Parallels, Contrasts, Conclusions

The appearance of the term חשמל, which seems to be of Akkadian derivation, may be considered as an additional link between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra. In Ezek 1:27 and 8:2 the divine being is described in the following way, "he appeared all fire from the loins down, and from his loins up his appearance was glittering like חשמל כעין." The glittering of חשמל corresponds to a similar feature of Akkadian *elmēšu*. In numerous texts the term refers to the exceptional brilliance of astral bodies. In the following hymn to Nergal/Erra from the Achemenean period, *elmēšu* and *kīma birki* "like lightning" are juxtaposed in the description of the outward appearance of this divinity,

9 *kīma ibḫu elmēšu usuk[kāšu]*
10 *kīma birqi ittanabriq lētāšu*
11 *ša* ^{d}*Nergal elmēšu usukkā*[*šu*]
12 *kīma birqi ittanabriq lētāšu*

9 his upper cheeks are like an ...? of amber
10 his lower cheeks flash constantly like lightning
11 the upper cheeks of Nergal are like amber
12 his lower cheeks flash constantly like lightning.[59]

In Ezekiel חשמל is used in the description of a shining divine being who appeared in a vision, took him by his forelocks and lifted him up, while in Erra I 148, *elmēšu* is used for the fabrication of divine statues where this precious stone contributed to the shining aspect of the statue.

In our opinion it is not a mere coincidence that the term חשמל unique to the Book of Ezekiel, is well attested in the Poem of Erra in its corresponding Akkadian form.

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[58]Our translation follows that of *CAD E* 108.

[59](AO 17642) in J. Nougayrol, "Textes et documents figurés," *RA* 41 (1946) 23-53, esp. pp. 38-41 (cuneiform text, transliteration and translation), p. 39, ll. 9-12. Nougayrol thought that *elmēšu* represents a diamond. However, his translation of these lines is erroneous, "(9) Comme un écrin? en diamant sont ses demeures! (10) Comme l'éclair, son pouvoir de toutes part foudroie! (11) De Nergal, en diamant sont ses demeures! (12) Comme l'éclair, son pouvoir de toutes parts foudroie!" Cf. the corrected reading in *CAD E*, 108 and in M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1970) 19-21.

4.3. THE MOTIF OF THE SEVEN EXECUTIONERS IN EZEKIEL 9 AND THE DIVINE SEVEN (*Sebetti*) IN THE POEM OF ERRA

4.3.1. The Seven Executioners in Ezekiel 9

The vision of the seven executioners in Ezek 9 is part of the vision described in chapters 8-11 which, according to the Book of Ezekiel, the prophet saw while enraptured in Babylon. In chapter 8, the abominations practiced in the Jerusalem temple are described, while in chapter 9, Ezekiel sees the coming of Yahweh's agents of judgment. Ezek 9:1 reads, "Draw near, you executioners of the city (פקדות העיר)[1] each with his destroying weapon in his hand."[2] At Yahweh's behest they break forth upon the city with their weapons of slaughter (Ezek 9:2),

> six men (ששה אנשים) came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, every man with his weapon of slaughter in his hand (כירו v 2, משחתו v 1, ואיש כלי מפצו) and in the midst of them was a man (ואיש אחד בתוכם) clothed in linen, with a writing kit at his side (וקסת הספר במתניו).

The majority of the commentators are identifying here a total of seven executioners (6 + 1).[3] The figure clothed in linen with a scribe's kit was

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[1]For the analysis of the term פקד see E. A. Speiser, "Census and Ritual Expiation in Mari and Israel," in *Oriental and Biblical Studies* (eds. J. J. Finkelstein and M. Greenberg, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967) 171-86, and J. Scharbert, "Das Verbum PQD in der Theologie des Alten Testament," *BZ* 4 (1960) 209-26. According to Speiser, there is probably no other Hebrew verb that has caused translators as much trouble as פקד. Its semantic range would seem to accomodate "to remember, investigate, muster, miss, punish, number," and the like. Actually, however, this seemingly lawless profussion reduces itself readily to the single common denominator of "to attend to with care." Speiser pointed out that Hebrew פקד and Akkadian *paqādum* have a special technical connotation and occur both in a military context of a census or mustering of an army and in a cultic setting.

[2]Here Ezekiel might be continuing a tradition of prophetic announcement of judgment where the word פקדה is employed. Cf. Hos 9:7 באו ימי הפקדה = "the days of punishment have come;" Jer 6:6 (against Jerusalem) היא העיר הפקד = "She is the city destined for punishment" (*NJPS*); The term can also designate the "overseer" e.g., Mic 7:4 יום מצפיך פקדתך באה = "the day of your watchman, your punishment has come." 2 Kgs 11:18 וישם הכהן פקדות על בית יהוה = "and the priest posted overseers over the house of Yahweh;" Ezek 44:11 פקדות אל שערי הבית = "overseers at the gates of the temple." In Ezek 9:1 the term should be rendered, "executioners of the city" because of the context: First, it is an oracle announcing judgment in line with a long prophetic tradition and second, in the same line the weapon of destruction (כלי משחתו) is mentioned. So correctly *RSV*, Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 102 and Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 174.

[3]H. Gunkel, "Der Schreiberengel Nabû im A. T. und im Judentum," *ARW* 1 (1898) 294-300, "In einem der Geschichte Ezekiel's treten 6 Männer auf, jeder mit seinem 'Zerschmetterungswerkzeug' (Mordwaffe); in ihrer Mitte einer (d.h. ein anderer, also siebenter), der Linnenkleidung trägt und ein Schreibzeug an seiner Seite hat." So also Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 104; G. Fohrer, *Ezechiel*, 53; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 246, and Greenberg,

ordered to draw a *taw* sign on the forehead of those who "sigh and cry" (ענה; ענק)[4] over the abominations committed in Jerusalem. These alone will escape the blood bath since they have been marked to live.[5] To the other six Yahweh commanded to destroy mercilessly all life in the city,

> (9:5) Pass through the city after him, and smite; your eye shall not spare and you shall show no pity; (9:6) slay old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one upon whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary.

Seeing the slaughter, Ezekiel breaks out in a cry of intercession to Yahweh (9:8). He is told however, that the guilt of the house of Judah is so great that Yahweh will have no compassion. For the third time the *Leitmotiv* of the merciless destruction is repeated: "My/your eye will not spare, nor will I/you have mercy" (8:18; 9:5, 10). This short chapter, containing only eleven verses, closes with the announcement made by the "man clothed in linen with the scribe's kit," saying that he has executed Yahweh's command (9:11). We may conclude that the seven executioners in Ezek 9 represent a motif which constitutes a part of the larger theme of "divine judgment or retribution."

4.3.2. The Motif of the Destroyer

Ezekiel 1-20, 175, "Six men. Plus the heavenly scribe makes seven, a number symbolizing completion."

[4]Cf. W. Zimmerli, "The Message of the Prophet Ezekiel," *Int* 23 (1969) 131-57, esp. p. 142. The word ענק denotes the groaning of the wounded in its two occurrences in the qal (Ezek 26:15; Jer 51:52). In the niph'al it connotes the sighing as an expression of grief (Ezek 9:4; 24:17).

[5]Here we find another motif which Ezek 9 shares with Akkadian literature. The writing down of names or marking certain individuals could on certain occasions be a very ominous process. According to the Gilgames epic, on periodic occasions, the gods made lists which determined who among the mortals was to live and who was to die. "In the House of Dust...[lives] Ereskigal, Queen of the Nether World. [And Bēlet-]ṣēri, recorder of the Nether World, kneels before her. [She holds a tablet] and reads out to her" (*Gilg.* VII iv 49-52), quoted by Speiser, "Census and Ritual Expiation in Mari and Israel," in *Oriental and Biblical Studies* (eds. J. J. Finkelstein and M. Greenberg, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967) 171-86, esp. p. 183. Speiser finds a reference to this motif in Exod 32:32-3 where Moses says to God, "...blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book, which thou hast written." But the Lord said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." For a discussion of the motif of "divine bookkeeping" in Sumerian, Akkadian and Biblical literature see S. M. Paul, "Heavenly Tablets and the Book of Life," *JANES* 5 (1973) 345-53 (*The Gaster Festschrift*).

In what follows we will list various suggestions that have been made in scholarly literature in an attempt to identify the seven executioners of Ezek 9. These examples are of relative value and it is not certain that they belong to the same tradition as Ezek 9.

a. In the Old Testament

Both Cooke and Zimmerli[6] suggested that the office of the seven executioners in Ezek 9 recalls that of the destroyer (המשחית) in the Passover tradition. They point out several terms which occur in both accounts,

> Ex 12:23 (J) For Yahweh will pass through (ועבר) to slay the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the doorposts, Yahweh will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer (המשחית) to enter your houses to slay you. (cf. 12:13 P).

עבר: cf. Ezek 9:4 ויאמר יהוה אלו עבר בתוך העיר
9:5 עברו בעיר
המשחית: cf. Ezek 9:8 יהוה המשחית אתהאת כל שארית ישראל
נגה: Ex 12:29 (J) ויהוה הפה כל בכור (cf. 12:12 P)
cf. Ezek 9:5, 7, 8, והכו; והכו; בהכותם.

However, the similarity of the vocabulary may be due to the similarity of the action described. In both accounts the number of the executioners is significantly different. In our opinion, the dependence of Ezek 9 on Exod 12 should not be too hastily accepted.

In 2 Sam 24:16 (= 1 Chr 21:15), the narrative of David's census of the people ends with the appearance of the destroyer (מלאך המשחית) who turns against Israel.

In 2 Kgs 19:35 (= Isa 37:36) a messenger of Yahweh (מלאך יהוה) liberates the besieged people of Jerusalem by destroying the Assyrian army.

In an oracle against the king of the house of Judah, Jeremiah proclaims in the name of Yahweh, "I will prepare destroyers (משחיתים) against you, each with his weapons (איש וכליו)..." (Jer 22:7).

The following example relates only to the figure clad in white linen in Ezekiel. In Dan 10:5; 12:6, 7, Daniel has a vision of a figure clad in linen garments (והנה איש אחד לבוש בדים).[7] Cf. Ezek 9:2, 3, 11; 10:2, 6, 7.

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[6]Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 104; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 246. B. Stein, "Der Engel des Auszugs," *Bib* 19 (1938) 286-307. E. Jacob, "Variations et constantes dans la figure de l'ange de YHWH," *RHPR* 68 (1988) 405-414.

[7]בד is found as a material out of which different priestly vestments were made, Lev 16:4, 23, 32. This detail might indicate Ezekiel's familiarity with priestly garments. Cf. also D. B. Weisberg, "Wool and Linen Material in Texts from the Time of Nebuchadnezzar," *Eretz Israel* 16 (1982) 218-26.

b. In the Deutero-Canonical Literature

Cooke suggests that Ezek 9 must have influenced the various accounts of the seventy angel-shepherds found in Enoch 89:59ff. These have the task of destroying a certain number of the sheep, while "another" i.e. the guardian angel of Israel, probably Michael, is to "observe and mark everything the shepherds will do to those sheep," and to "record against every individual shepherd all the destruction he effects."[8]

c. In the New Testament

In Mt 12:43-45 (= Lk 11:26), one finds the teaching of Jesus concerning an unclean spirit who, once gone out of a person, brings out "seven other spirits more evil than himself" (ἑπτὰ ἕτερα πνεύματα πονηρότερα ἑαυτοῦ)[9] and they repossess the person whose last state becomes worse than the first.

In Rev 8:2, 6, seven angels appear before God and each one blows a trumpet to signal a disaster coming upon the inhabitants of the earth. The fifth disaster comes only "upon those of humankind who have not the seal of God upon their foreheads" (9:4). This seal upon the forehead corresponds to the *taw* sign upon the forehead of the Jerusalemites whom Yahweh decides to spare in Ezek 9:4. Rev 15:6 mentions seven angels with plagues, "and out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues robed in pure white linen..."

d. In the Talmudic Tradition

The seven executioners in Ezek 9 were regarded by the third century Rabbi Ḥasida' as personified attributes of God. Following Ps 78:49, he

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[8]Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 104. The number seven came to be regarded as significant of angelic rank. Thus Tob 12:15 speaks of "Raphael one of the seven holy angels." The latter are distinguished by name and duty in Enoch 20:1-8, where the seven angels are named, Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqiel, Gabriel, and Remeiel. However, H. D. F. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984) 1 Enoch XX:1-8, cites only six angels.

[9]Zimmern pointed out that the New Testament ideas about seven demons might go back to some Persian influence which in turn may have Babylonian precursors, in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1902, 3rd ed. with H. Zimmern and H. Winckler) II 462 n. 6. Cf. also H. Gunkel, "Der Schreiberengel Nabû im A. T. und im Judentum," WRA 1 (1898) 294-300, esp. p. 299. For some additional bibliography and a discussion concerning the seven angels see P. Prigent, *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean* (Lausanne/Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1981) 130 n. 4.

described them as קצף = "wrath," אף = "anger," חמה = "fury," משחית = "destroyer," משבר = "shatterer," מכלה = "annihilator."[10] Rabbi Aha ben Ḥanina equated the seventh figure, the celestial scribe of Ezekiel's vision with the angel Gabriel.[11]

4.3.3. Preliminary Conclusions

The figure of the seven executioners seems to be specific to Ezekiel. Although the ancient Passover tradition in Ex 12 already knew the figure of the destroyer, the major difference is in the fact that in Exodus and in the rest of the Old Testament there occurs only one figure and never seven. Therefore, we are justified in looking for an analogy to Ezek 9 in extra-biblical material, and more specifically in Akkadian literature from Babylonia where Ezekiel lived and exercised his prophetic and literary activity.

4.3.4. The Divine Seven (*Sebetti*)[12] in the Poem of Erra

The god Erra received the Divine Seven, or in Akkadian simply

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[10]BT *Sabbath* 55a. Cf. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 175. In describing the evils which Yahweh sent upon the Egyptians, Ps 78:49 uses different terms, "He let loose on them his fierce anger (חרון אפו), wrath (עברה), indignation (זעם), and distress (צרה), a company of evil messengers" (משלחת מלאכי רעים). The word employed to describe these messengers is רעים, and not a derivative from the root שחת. This verse from the Psalms is not really a parallel to the executioners in Ezek 9 and is less relevant for our analysis.

[11]BT *Yôma* 77a; *Sabbath* 55a: "Rabbi Aha b. Hanina said: God said to Gabriel (Ezek. IX,4), 'Go and mark a *Tau* of ink upon the foreheads of the righteous, so that the angel of destruction may have no power on them. But mark a *Tau* of blood upon the forehead of the wicked, so that the angel of destruction may have power over them." quoted in C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (New York: Shocken, 1974) #796. Qimḥi commenting on Ezekiel, remarks that, as stated by Rab, *Tau*, in a judicial pronouncement, could stand for חחיה, "Thou shalt live," or, equally well, for חמות, "Thou shalt die," since both words have the same initial: hence the difference between the *Tau* of blood (for sinners) and the *Tau* of ink (for saints), *ibidem*., p. 308.

[12]D. O. Edzard, "Sebettu," in *Wörterbuch der Mythologie* (ed. H. W. Hausig, Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1965) I 124-5, transliterates the name of the divine seven with Sebettu. However, in his article on "Irra (Erra) - Epos," *RlA* 5 (1976) 166-77, he adopted the reading Sebetti. J. Bottéro, "Les divinités sémitiques anciennes en Mésopotamie," in *Le antiche divinità semitiche* (ed. S. Moscati, Rome: Istituto di Studi Orientali - Università, 1958) 17-63, esp. pp. 48-49, transliterates simply Sibî. J. J. M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon* (A Study of the Semitic Deities Attested in Mesopotamia before Ur III, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977) 115 n. 435, transliterates Sibi, or Sibitti. Cagni in *PE*, 18, reads Sibitti.

Sebetti[13] (= "the seven"), as his weapons who march on his side. The first tablet introduces the protagonists of the Poem and a long description is accorded to the Sebetti. They have been created by the supreme deity Anu who impregnated the Earth (*erṣetu*). The latter gave birth to seven gods (I 28-29 *sebet ilāni*). They are in consequence chthonian deities.[14] Anu gave them to Erra to march beside him "as his fierce weapons" (I 44 *kakkûka ezzūti*).[15] The Akkadian seven gods may be a continuation of the ancient Sumerian numina known as the "seven sons of Enmešarra."[16] Enmešarra, a chthonian deity whose name means "The Lord of all the ME," had been dethroned by later Babylonian gods like Anu, "who bound the divine heptad, the sons of Enmešarra."[17]

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[13]In the Poem of Erra the name of the Divine Seven is written DINGIR.IMIM.BI, once DINGIR.IMIN^{ti}, and [DINGIR] se-be-et-t[i] V 57. cf. D. O. Edzard, "Irra (Erra) - Epos," *RlA* 5 (1976) 168. The correct reading of their name suggested by Landsberger had been confirmed in a Sumerian bilingual text where DINGIR.IMIN.BI is rendered DINGIR.MEŠ *Sebetti* = *ilū Sebetti* and not ^{d}*Sebettu*, see B. Landberger *apud* E. Reiner, "Another Volume of Sultantepe Tablets," *JNES* 26 (1967) 177-211, esp. p. 184. S. Graziani, "Note sui Sibitti," *Annali dell'Instituto Orientale di Napoli* 39 (1979) 673-90. Among older studies the most extensive analysis of the Sebetti in the Akkadian literature can be found in J. Hehn, *Siebenzahl und Sabbat bei den Babyloniern und im Alten Testament* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907) 19-26: "Die babylonische Siebengottheit;" 26-34: "Die Siebengottheit in den Beschwörungstexten." *idem.*, "Zur Bedeutung der Siebenzahl," *BZAW* 41 (1925) 128-36, = (*Festschrift K. Marti*, ed. K. Budde).

[14]The Sebetti are a product of a cosmic hierogamy. The mating of Heaven (AN) and Earth (KI) is an old mythological theme. It occurs already in a Sumerian text published by J. Van Dijk, "Le motif cosmique dans la pensée sumérienne," *ActOr* 28 (1964) 1-59, esp. p. 36. We quote only Van Dijk's translation: (4) "Avec la grande (et) bonne Dame du ciel, (5) avec la grande soeur d'Enlil (6) Ninḫursaga (7) (Anu) il cohabita (8) il la baisa (9) dans son sein il implanta le sperme des sept..." (*MBI* II 4-9). In the Greek mythology the Titans, gigantic beings with extraordinary strength, were considered as children of Ouranos and Chthonos, *Prometheus ench.* 205: Τιταναϲ και Οὐρανοῦ τε και Χθονὸϲ τέκνα, and Hesiod, *Theogony* 133-87; 616-23, cf. R. Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin books, 1977) #6a.

[15]In the Sumerian hymn to god Ḫendursanga who corresponds to Išum of the Poem of Erra, the IMIN.BA (=Sebetti) are described as formidable creatures who spread terror in the land of Sumer and accomplish what the gods have ordained. In the Poem of Erra the Sebetti appear in relationship with Išum while in this hymn the IMIN.BA appear associated with Ḫendursanga. cf. D. O. Edzard and C. Wilcke, "Die Ḫendursanga-Hymne," in *Kramer Anniversary Volume* (AOAT 25, eds. B. L. Eichler *et al.* Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976) 139-76, esp. p. 149, ll. 78-89; l. 166.

[16]Cf. for example D. O. Edzard, "Enmešarra," *WdM* (1965) I 62.

[17]The text was published in transliteration and translation by E. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babilonier* (Berlin and Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1931) 38.

The intervention of the Sebetti is merciless. To the sixth, Anu said, "Strike upwards and downwards, spare nobody!" (I 37). To the seventh Anu ordered, "Kill (all) that lives!" (I 38).

Cagni points out that the description of the destructive action of the Sebetti represents a literary anticipation of the subsequent actions of Erra.[18]

The Sebetti	**Erra**
I 33 to the 2nd: "Burn like flame!"	I 113 "In the reed thicket [I am] the fire" IIC 28 "like fire [I shall] bur[n] (them)" IV 149 he burned (them) like fire"
I 34 to the 3rd: "Take a lion-like aspect!"	IIIC 21-22 "Who Erra...a lion-like aspect" IV 21 "You took a lion-like aspect"
I 35 to the 4th: "At the wielding of your fierce weapons may the mountain be razed to the ground!"	IV 142 "He raised his hand and levelled the mountain"
I 36 to the 6th: "Blow like the wind check the (entire) orbit (of the world)"	I 115-116 "Like the wind I blow, like the sun I survey the entire orbit (of the world)"

The above lines are proleptic and foreshadow the subsequent unfolding of the story in the Poem of Erra.[19] Although the Sebetti are only mentioned in tablet I, the above correlation between passages from

[18]Cagni, *EE*, pp. 152-3.

[19]For the prolepsis in Akkadian literature see A. L. Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Mythology I," *Or* 16 (1947) 207-38, esp. p. 214, concerning the Ea story as told in En.el. I 71-8, "It is used (in a proleptic way) ... very skillfully by the poet as an overture which touches briefly upon the main 'Leitmotifs' (sic) and thus instills curiosity, and prepares the listener for what is to come." cf. J. Renger, "Review of Lambert-Millard, Atra-Ḫasīs," *JNES* 32 (1973) 342-4. The author deplores the rather meager accomplishments in Akkadian literary criticism. Such stylistic features as word-play, chiasmus, *parallelismus membrorum*, and we may add anticipation through the use of prolelpsis, have not been treated thoroughly in works on Akkadian epic literature (p. 343). However, the remarkable study of J. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), heralds a new stage in Akkadian literary criticism.

tablet I and the rest of the Poem of Erra shows that Erra's destructive actions are the work of the Sebetti. They represent some of his weapons.

The veneration of the Sebetti is attested at a very early time. As pointed out by Bottéro, already in pre-Sargonic times in the texts from Lagaš one finds names like *Bît* (=É) ^{d}*Sibi* = "The Temple of the (divine) Seven," and UR ^{d}*Sibi* = "The Servant of the Seven."[20] According to Bottéro the first name, "The Temple of the (divine) Seven" would suggest "that this group of divinities was already enjoying an official cult."[21] To the pre-Sargonic texts mentioning the Sebetti one may add the Louvre collection of cylinder seals dating from Sumero-Akkadian times published by C.- F. Jean.[22] The cylinder reveals all the characteristics of the Sebetti as found in the Poem of Erra. The seven small circles representing the Sebetti surround the sword wielded by a divinity.[23] In texts dating from the First Babylonian Dynasty (19-16th centuries BCE) one finds theophoric names like *Arad* ^{d}*Sebetti* and *Pû* ^{d}*Sebetti*.[24]

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[20]J. Bottéro, "Les divinités sémitiques anciennes en Mésopotamie," in *Le antiche divinità semitiche* (ed. S. Moscati, Rome: Istituto di Studi Orientali - Università, 1958) 17-63, esp. p. 49, who cites H. de Genouillac, *Tablettes sumériennes archaïques* (Paris; P. Geuthner, 1909) 12 VIII 7 and 10 VI 3'.

[21]J. Bottéro, *art. cit.* p. 49, "elle donne à penser que ce groupe de divinités recevait dès lors un culte officiel."

[22]C.- F. Jean, "^{d}VII-bi," *RA* 21 (1924) 93-104, esp. pp. 94, fig. 1, and 101, reproducing cylinder impressions from L. Delaporte, *Catalogue des cylindres orientaux et des cachets assyro-babyloniens, perses et syro-cappadociens de la Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1910) pl. 13 N° 154.

[23]According to A. Falkenstein, in discussing the Sebetti one should exclude the instances where this term designates the Pleiad or the seven stars which serve to illustrate Assyrian royal inscription on reliefs and monuments alongside other "great gods," cf. his "Review of Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos*," *DLZ* 79 (1958) cols. 13-16 esp. col. 15. Falkenstein's suggestiom should be rejected. He offered no explanation for this categorical exclusion of iconographic evidence. Moreover, in an omen text dealing with the position of the *bibbu*-comet in respect to the known constellations, the Pleiad and the Sebetti stand in a narrow relationship, [*I* ^{k}*bib*]*bu* ^{k}*kakkabu ikšud ilāni* ^{d}*Sebetti* [*mātu ikkal*ū] = "(Si) un '*bibbu*' atteint les Pléiades, les sept dieux dévoreront le pays," in R. Largement, "Contribution à l'étude des astres errants dans l'astrologie chaldéenne (I)," *ZA* 52 (1957) 135-65, esp. pp. 246-7, text #XIII 59.

[24]C.- F. Jean, "^{d}VII-bi," *RA* 21 (1924) 93-104, esp. p. 101. The iconographic evidence concerning the Sebetti has been collected and analyzed by V. Seidl, *Die Babylonische Kudurru-Reliefs. Symbole Mesopotamischer Gottheiten* (OBO 87, Freiburg/Schweiz: Universitätsverlag - Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989) 101-103, "Siebengestirn." According to her analysis there is no iconographic evidence of the Sebetti in the OB times. However, the evidence is abundant for the MB-MA; NA-NB times. Moreover, the bulk of the iconographic evidence stems from NB times, which testifies to the importance of these divinities in the period of Ezekiel's exile in Babylonia.

A topographical list presumably dating from the 12th century BCE, shows that in the city of Babylon there existed a street named after the Sebetti (*sūq* ^{d}*Sebetti* = "The Sebetti street"). The same list enumerates the cult centers in Babylon and mentions 12 cultic sites (*manzāz* = "stations") dedicated to to Sebetti.[25] These data demonstrate the importance and veneration which the Babylonians accorded to the Sebetti.

In the eight century BCE Sefire inscription, a treaty is concluded between Barga'ya, the king of KTK and Mati'el, the king of Arpad. They swore allegiance in front of a series of West Semitic gods like El and Elyon whom they invoked, including the Sebetti, וקדם סבת = "and in the presence of Sebetti."[26] This Aramaic inscription confirms the fact that the cult of the Divine Seven was not limited only to the eastern part of the Fertile Crescent. As pointed out by H. and J. Lewy, one must assume "that the worship of this group of numina extended all over the countries of the Fertile Crescent, for its name occurs in various sources of heterogeneous origin and from different periods."[27]

The Sebetti are mentioned as divine witnesses in a treaty of Aššurnirâri V (Rev VI 20),[28] as well as in a treaty between Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) with Ba'al of Tyre,

> ^{d}*Sebetti ilāni qardūtê ina kakkêšunu* [...*k*]*unu liškun*
>
> The Divine Seven, the heroic gods, with their weapons
> may they bring about your [defeat]."[29]

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[25]This topographical list is thought to have been composed as early as the time of Nebuchadrezzar I (1125-1104 BCE) in whose reign Babylon and its god Marduk took pre-eminent place following the recovery of the stolen statue of Marduk from Elam (cf. our section IV B). The list was copied in various scribal schools until the first century BCE, when an exemplar survives in Greek, see D. J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon* (The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1983, Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 1985) 45, 47, 49.

[26]Sefire I A 11. See J. Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire I and II," *JAOS* 81 (1961) 178-222, esp. p. 192; Donner-Röllig, *KAI*, N° 222 (A) 11.

[27]H. and J. Lewy, "The Origin of the Week and the Oldest West Asiatic Calendar," *HUCA* 17 (1942-43) 1-152, esp. p. 34. (cf. section III. "The Time Unit of Fifty Days and Its Relation to the Divine Heptads and Pentecontads," pp. 25-47).

[28]E. F. Weidner, "Der Staatsvertrag Aššurnirâris VI [= V] von Assyrien mit Mati'ilu von Bît-Agusi," *AfO* 8 (1932-33) 17-34.

[29]R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien (AfO* Beiheft 9, Graz: E. Weidner, 1956) p. 109, Vertrag IV 5, "Die 'Siebengottheit', die kriegerischen Götter, möge mit ihren [schonungslosen?] Waffen eure [Niederlage] bewirken."

Since the name of the Sebetti is mentioned in several treaties one may conclude that they were customarily invoked beside other divinities. As Dhorme had suggested, in the treaties the "Seven gods" are often placed at the end of a long enumeration of deities as a kind of all-inclusive term which allows one to take into account the gods that have not been mentioned by name.[30]

The Sebetti are basically the gods of war and destruction. They are without individual names and they act as a unit to the point that the agreement of grammatical forms is often in the singular instead of the plural. Just as Erra is called ^{d}*Erra qarrād ilāni* = "Erra the hero of the gods," so are the Sebetti described as a unit with a singular ^{d}*Sebetti qarrād lā šanān* = "the Seven, the unrivaled hero" (I 8, 18, 23, 97, IIIC 12, 25, IV 140). In the treaty between Esarhaddon and Ba'al of Tyre quoted above, the precative *liškun* represents a 3. m. singular form, although one would expect *liškunū* (3. m. pl.). There is a polarity in their function in that they are sometimes hostile to humans as in the Poem of Erra, and sometimes favorable as in the incantations (*šiptu*) against evil demons. In the following incantation they are associated with the sword and appear in a positive role,

19 *namṣāru musaḫḫip namtari*
20 *mamlu munamir* [amēlūti]
22 *ilāni Sebet muḫaliq lemnū*ti

19 The sword, cutting Namtar[31] down
20 powerful, illuminating [the humans]
22 The seven gods, destroying the enemy![32]

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[30]"Le chiffre sacré s'appliqait aux sept dieux des cieux ou au sept dieux des enfers, avec l'arrière-pensée d'exprimer ainsi la totalité des dieux bienfaisant ou malfaisants. Souvent le nom de 'Sept' terminera une énumération de divinités, comme pour englober celles qu'on a omises," in E. Dhorme, *Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (Les anciennes religions orientales II, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949) 79.

[31]Namtaru is the divinity who personifies the Sumerian nam.tar, "Fate." E.Dhorme compared it to the *fatum* of the Romans and the μοιρα of the Greeks, in *Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (Collection "Mana," Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1945) 40. R. Jestin, "La religion sumérienne," in *Histoire des religions* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970, 3 vols.) I 180, "le mot sumérien nam signifie proprement 'détermination' passage de la puissance à l'acte... le mot tar qui, littéralement, veut dire 'couper, trancher', signifie ici que la détermination reçoit son effet." Both the Sumerians and the Akkadians considered Namtar as the evil messenger of death, so D. O. Edzard in *WdM* I (1965) 108. Hence in this quotation the Sebetti have a positive role of preserving humans from impending death.

[32]H. Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Religion* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901) No 54 19-22.

The Sebetti appear again in a positive role in the battle against the evil bird Anzû who stole the tablets of destinies from Enlil.[33]

Edzard suggested the separation between the good and the bad Sebetti.[34] This has rightly been rejected by Roberts:

> The attempt to separate the good DINGIR.IMIN.BI
> from the bad DINGIR.IMIN.BI strikes me as artificial.
> The favorable DINGIR.IMIN.BI have the same warlike character
> as the bad ones: it is just turned to a different purpose.[35]

In an attempt to find the probable sociological background of the Sebetti, Roberts suggests that they may best be seen as professional soldiers who do not care which side they fight for as long as they can take part in a good fight.[36] Similarly, Bottéro suggests that the speech of the Sebetti expresses the views of a warrior class, a strata of Mesopotamian society which specialized in combat and was virtually incapable of doing anything else. The warriors disliked the state of prolonged inactivity. The Sebetti and their speech incarnate a "'philosophical' justification of carnage" as a necessity for the proper functioning of the universe.[37] A building inscription left by Esarhaddon aptly describes the warlike character of the Sebetti:

> ^{d}*Sebetti ilāni qardūti tāmeḫū tilpānu u uṣṣī*
> [*ša t*]*ibūšunu tamḫāru šašm*[*u*]
>
> The Divine Seven, the heroic gods, holding bow and arrows
> [whose] assault is battle and fight."[38]

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[33]Cf. V. Scheil, "Fragments de la légende du dieu Zû," *RA* 35 (1938) 14-25, esp. II 38-40 (pp. 16 and 17.) *rapšam irtim muttabbilu sebettim qabli* "le magnanime qui conduit les sept du combat." According to Scheil the epithet *rapšam irtim*, lit. "the one of large breast" applies to the divinity Ninâ/Ningirsu. Cf. also J. Nougayrol, "Ningirsu vainqueur de Zû," *RA* 46 (1952) 87-97, esp. p. 91, "le (dieu) à large poitrine qui mène au combat la septaine."

[34]D. O. Edzard, "Sebettu," in *WdM* I (1965) 124-5.

[35]J. J. M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972) 115 n. 435. In this assessment Roberts has been followed by Cagni, *PE*, 18.

[36]Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, 53.

[37]J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (l'Épopée d'Erra)," *EPHE Annuaire* (1977/78) 139.

[38]R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien (AfO* Beiheft 9, Graz: E. Weidner, 1956) 79, *AsBbA* 13: "Die 'Siebengötter', die kriegerischen Götter, die Bogen und Pfeile führen, deren Aufstehen Kampf und Streit bedeutet."

4.3.5. Other Suggested Parallels to the Seven Executioners in Ezekiel chapter 9

In 1898, Gunkel had suggested identifying the seven executioners in Ezek 9 with the seven planetary deities of the Babylonian pantheon: Šamaš, Sîn, Nergal, Nabû, Marduk, Ištar, Ninib. Nabû, the heavenly scribe who writes the destinies of all the humans would correspond, in Gunkel's opinion, to the seventh figure with the writing kit.[39] This identification should be rejected as improbable. As pointed out by Frankena,[40] there is not a single Akkadian text where one finds these seven planetary deities engaged together in a punitive expedition.

Tournay suggested that the seven executioners of Ezek 9 should be identified with the seven evil demons (*utukkê lemnūti*).[41] In our opinion this identification is probably erroneous. The number seven is not really characteristic of the *utukkê lemnūti*.[42] As pointed out already by G. Contenau, although they are called the seven they often appear as six or

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[39]Gunkel, "Die Schreiberengel Nabû im A.T. und im Judentum," *ARW* 1 (1898) 294-300. Gunkel's suggestion has been followed by H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (Berlin: Reuther & Reicherd, 1903) II 625, "Mit grösserer Sicherheit gehen auf die 7 Planetengötter die 6+1 Männer (Engel) in dem Geschichte Ezech 9f. zurück;" G. Hölscher, *Hesekiel, das Dichter und das Buch, BZAW* 39 (1924) 9, "... die sieben die das Gericht an den Götzendienern Jerusalems vollstecken, (9:2); ihre Siebenzahl weist auf das Vorbild der sieben Planetengötter, und der eine von ihnen, der mit Schreibzeug und Griffel ausgerüstete, ist offenbar dem Nebo, dem Schreiber des Schicksalsbuches, nachgezeichnet;" Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 104; G. Fohrer, *Ezechiel* (HAT, Tübingen: Mohr, 1955) 54; W. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (German ed. 1965-66, Engl. transl. 1970) 130.

[40]R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965) 18. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I* 246, too rejected Gunkel's identification, he suggested relating the seven executioners with either the Sebetti of Erra, or the seven evil demons (*utukkê lemnūti*) of the incantation texts, cf. A. Ungnad, *Die Religion der Babylonier und Assyrer* (Jena: E. Diederich, 1921) 62-5. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 175, does not give great weight to Gunkel's supposed Babylonian parallel.

[41]R. Tournay, "Review of Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*," *RB* 65 (1958) 612-13, esp. p. 612. On the *utukkê lemnūti* see E. Ebeling, "Zwei Tafeln der Serie *utukku lemnûtu*," *AfO* 16 (1952-53) 295-304.

[42]For a collection of incantations against the *utukkê lemnūti* and on Babylonian demonology in general, see R. Cambell Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia Being Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations Against the Demons, Ghouls, Vampires, Hobgoblins, Ghosts, and Kindred Evil Spirits Which Attack Mankind* (London: Luzac, 1903, 1904 II vols.); and *idem., Semitic Magic: Its Origin and Development* (London: Luzac, 1908, reprint New York: Ktav, 1971); cf. also A. Falkenstein, *Die Haupttypen der sumerischen Beschwörung literarisch untersucht* (LSS n.f. 1, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1931).

even as twelve.[43] In one text it is explicitly stated that they are seven while only six are enumerated: *utukku, alû, etēmmu, gallû, ilu, rābiṣu.*[44] It is also said that they appear as "two times seven."[45] Moreover, in several incantation texts the Sebettu are invoked as a protection against the evil demons.[46]

The "great demons" (*gallê rabūti*) are also called "the Seven" although in the following text only four are enumerated,

> *antalû riḫṣu murṣu mūtum gallê rabūti* DINGIR.MIN.BI
> (= *Sebetti*) *maḫar* ^{d}*Sîn ittanaprikū*
>
> The eclipse, inundation, sickness, death,
> the great demons, the Seven, who stand before Sîn.[47]

In the above example the number seven is used as a metaphor and should not be taken as reflecting the exact number of the demons. The *gallû* demons cannot be identified with the Sebetti of the Poem of Erra because in the Poem, Erra and his weapons, the Sebetti, are set in opposition to these creatures,

> I 67 *gallû lišmūma ina rama[nīšunu lilli]kū*
>
> May the *gallû*-demons hear (Erra's battle cry) and
> spon[taneously withdraw.

4.3.6. Parallels, Contrasts, Conclusions

The identification of the seven executioners in Ezekiel with the Divine Seven (Sebetti) in the Poem of Erra which we presented and hold

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[43]G. Contenau, *La magie chez les assyriens et les babyloniens* (Paris: Payot, 1947) 86. Their generic name is *uttuk*ū which is often followed by an adjective *lemnu* ("evil"). In Sumerian and Akkadian their names appear as follows: UDUG (*utukku*), ASAG (*asakku*), ALA (*alû*), GALLA (*gallû*), DINGIR.HUL (*ilu lemnu*), GIDIM (*etēmmu*), NAMTAR (*namtāru*). To these seven Contenau adds the following five: *rābiṣu, lamaštu, labaṣu, aḫḫazu, lilû* (p. 86).

[44]CT XVI iii 14-26, 27-28, quoted by C.- F. Jean, "^{d}VII-bi," *RA* 21 (1924) 93-104, esp. p. 103.

[45]"Ils sont sept, ils sont sept, et même deux fois sept," CT XVI pl 15 56-57, quoted in C. - F. Jean *art. cit.*, pp. 102-3. According to F. Delitzsch the expression "two times seven" refers to the fourteen demons of sickness who stand at the seven double doors of the netherworld, in *Das Land ohne Heimkehr, Die Gedanken der Babylonier-Assyrer über Tod und Jenseits* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1911) 26.

[46]Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Religion* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901) N° 41-42 II 13; 45 II 17; 46-47 I 15; 53 16.

[47]Ch. Virolleaud, *L'Astrologie chaldéenne*, Sîn, XXXV 52-53.

as the most probable one is not new. In 1937 H. G. May had already suggested it.[48] In 1965, Frankena further elaborated it.[49] Here we have reiterated this identification in the line of our working hypothesis of a probable influence of the Poem of Erra on the Book of Ezekiel. Moreover, we have adduced additional evidence in support of this identification.

In both Ezekiel and in the Poem of Erra the seven executioners and the Sebetti are employed to implement the divine judgment. In Ezekiel they turn against the idolaters and those who commit abominations, while in Erra they turn against the humans, who are accused *en bloc* of having neglected the worship of Erra and Marduk, i.e., of having committed religious offenses.

The Sebetti in the Poem of Erra and the seven executioners in Ezek 9 are not free to act as they please. Their activity is controlled and directed by a superior divinity, Erra or Yahweh respectively.

The striking feature of the description of the Sebetti in Erra is that not a single trait of goodness characterizes them in the whole action of the Poem. Even in tablet V they remain excluded from the work of reconstructing the country. There is an absolute lack of bipolarity in their function which is quite unlike what is known about them from other Akkadian literature.[50]

By contrast, the seven executioners in Ezek 9 are not allowed to destroy all life in Jerusalem. Yahweh commanded the heavenly scribe to mark the remnant which should be spared. In Ezekiel there is a notion of mercy in the midst of judgment. Although the Poem of Erra speaks of a remnant of the people of Akkad, the survivors remained *in spite* of Sebetti's merciless intervention. In Ezek 9 the survivors remain *because* Yahweh *willed* it so. In Ezek 9 Yahweh has the ultimate control. Yahweh decides between those who are going to die and those whose life will be spared.

The life of the individuals in Ezek 9 is spared on the basis of some principles of moral, ethical and religious conduct which Yahweh requires, and which certain inhabitants of Jerusalem have kept. In the Poem of Erra, salvation from Erra's wrath and from the Sebetti is

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[48]H. G. May, "The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh," *JBL* 56 (1937) 309-21, esp. p. 320 n. 34.

[49]R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965) 18-19.

[50]Cf. L. Cagni, *PE*, 18-19.

available to *anyone* who is willing to chant praises to Erra, "The singer who chants (it) shall not die in destruction" (Erra V 53). Moreover, the Poem ends with the assurance that to ward off destruction it suffices to have a tablet of the Poem as an amulet,

> To the house in which this tablet is placed
> - however furious Erra may be,
> however murderous the Sebetti may be -
> The sword of destruction shall not come near:
> salvation shall alight on it (Erra V 57-58).

In the Poem of Erra salvation is sought through magic. The tablets of the Poem of Erra were extremely popular among 8th century BCE Babylonians because of their presumed apotropaic quality in warding off evil and destruction.[51] In Ezekiel the possibility of influencing Yahweh through magic is not present.

KAR VII 298, a tablet supplementing a ritual for the purification and protection of a house, gives detailed instructions as to how various prophylactic figures, including the amulets of the Divine Seven should be made.[52] They were buried at various places in the house in order to serve as protective *genii* for its inhabitants. What is important for our comparison with the seven executioners in Ezek 9 is the fact that the *ṣalmê* ^{d}*Sebetti* = "the statues/figurines of the Divine Seven" carried in their hands weapons. In the right hand a *zirtum* (a part of a bow), in the left hand a dagger of copper or bronze (*patar erî*, var. *siparri*), bows and quivers at their sides (*qašāti ispāti ina idēšunu*), and bound about their waist with a girdle of copper (*našū misir erî ina qablīšunu*) (*KAR* VII 298 obv. II 21-25).[53] In another ritual text the conjurer is enjoined to burn incense in front of the seven figurines of the Sebetti each carrying a sword, *maḫar* VII *ṣalmē* ilāni *Sebetti* VII *ṣalmē šut paṭrē* = "Before the seven figurines of the Sebetti

[51]See E. Reiner, "Plague Amulets and House Blessings," *JNES* 19 (1960) 148-55; cf. also J. Marquès-Rivière, *Amulettes, talismans et pantacles dans les traditions orientales et occidentales* (Paris: Payot, 1938).

[52]The figures excavated and photographed have been fully described and compared with the cuneiform descriptions by L. Woolley, "Babylonian Prophylactic Figures," *JRAS* (1921) 689-713. In the same article the Akkadian text from *KAR* VII 298 has been translated by S. Smith pp. 695-701, (on the Sebetti see esp. p. 697).

[53]For the Akkadian text in transliteration with translation see O. R. Gurney, "Babylonian Prophylactic Figures and Their Rituals," *AAA* 22 (1935) 31-96, *KAR* VII 298 21-25, esp. p. 67. Cf. also the valuable comments by H. and J. Lewy, "The Origin of the Week and the Oldest West Asiatic Calendar," *HUCA* 17 (1942-43) 1-152, esp. pp. 28-29.

gods, seven figurines with swords."[54] One is reminded of the detailed description of the way the seven executioners are equipped in Ezek 9:1-2, (ואש כלי משחתו בידו) "each with his destroying weapon in his hand," and one "with a writing kit at his side" (חקסת הספר במתניו). The textual tradition reflected in the LXX has preserved another reading. Instead of the "writing kit," one finds a "girdle of sapphire around his waist" (ζώνη σαπφείρου ἐπι τῆς ὀσφύος αὐτοῦ), Ezek 9:2, just ζώνη in 9:3, 11). Hebrew קסת is explained by Lambdin as a late borrowing from Egyptian *qštj* = "the scribe's palette."[55] It is surprising to see that the translators of the LXX who presumably worked in Egypt failed to understand this Egyptian loan word and instead of "writer's kit" rendered it with "girdle." Hence, one should not exclude the probability that the LXX translators worked with a Hebrew text which actually mentioned a "girdle." If this suggestion is correct it would add an additional similarity between the description of the outward appearance of the seven executioners in Ezek 9 and the Babylonian Divine Seven.

The use of the Sebetti as prophylactic figures in Babylonian homes implies that they were common items, comparable to modern "consumer goods." In patterning the description of the seven executioners in Ezek 9 after the Babylonian Divine Seven, the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel were not reverting to an obscure or unique reference in Akkadian literature. On the contrary, it seems that they used a well known item common both in a popular Akkadian Poem of the time and in contemporary Babylonian society.

The fact that in the Book of Ezekiel the seven executioners are presented as six plus one might reflect a tendency on the part of the author or redactor of Ezekiel to distance his description of destruction from the one found in the Poem of Erra. In the latter, the Sebetti act as a unit of seven.

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[54]H. Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Rreligion* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901) p. 150, (N° 41-42 II 13).

[55]T. O. Lambdin, "Egyptian Loan Words in the Old Testament," *JAOS* 73 (1953) 145-55, esp. p. 154. Cf. already M. Müller, "Zwei ägyptische Wörter im Hebräischen," *OLZ* 3 (1900) 49-51; H. Grimme, "Zu hebräischem קסת," *OLZ* 3 (1900) 149-50; R. Eisler, "*qštj* = Κάστου τοῦ γραμματέως = קסת הספר im Danielkommentar des Hipollytos von Rom," *OLZ* 33 (1930) 585-87; J. Zandee "Egyptological Commentary on the Old Testament," in *Travels in the World of the Old Testament, Studies Presented to M. A. Beek* (ed. M. S. H. G. Heerma Van Voss *et al.*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974) 269-81, the author has ommitted to discuss the term קסת as an Egyptian loanword.

4.4. THE MOTIF OF THE PRESERVATION FROM THE FLOOD

4.4.1. The Motif of the Preservation from the Flood in the Book of Ezekiel

In Ezek 22:24 one finds a unique reference in the Old Testament to the land of Israel which has not been rained upon in the day of wrath,

בן אדם אמאר לה את ארץ לא מטהרה היא לא גשמה ביו זעם

Mortal, say to her: You are a land which has not been purified,
not rained upon in the day of indignation.

The verb מְטֻהָרָה of the Massoretic text represents a pu'al feminine singular participle from the root טהר "to be clean, pure."[1] This understanding finds support in the reading of the Targum where Aramaic מרביא represents a corresponding pa"al passive participle.[2] The LXX understands the root to be מטר "to rain"[3] (οὐ βρεχομένη "not wetted by rain"), implying a translation "a land not rained upon."[4] In our opinion, the translation of the *TOB* "une terre qui n'a pas été purifiée," and of the *NJPS* "you are an uncleansed land," is the correct one because the context immediately preceding Ezek 22:24 speaks of the purification of silver by fire.[5] Moreover, the reproach in Ezek 22:24 is clarified by a "sermon" on the topic "you are not a purified land."[6]

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[1]This term is quite common in the Book of Ezekiel. In Ezek 36:25 the people will be purified by Yahweh in an eschatological intervention by sprinkling "pure water" מים טהורים upon them; cf. also 36:33 where owing to Yahweh's intervention of purification the land will become like the garden of Eden again (v 35); 24:13 (2x); 39:12 (purifying the land from corpses); 43:26, the altar of the court by the sin-offerings;

[2]Aramaic רבי/א means "to be clean, pure" cf. M. Jastrow. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: The Judaica Press, 1975) 307. On the grammatical form see F. Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Wisbaden: Harrassowitz, 1974) 67.

[3] From the verb βρέχω "to wet, to inundate, to rain."

[4]So *BDB* 372b. The *NEB* follows the second solution, "You are like a land on which no rain has fallen; no shower has come down upon you..." So also Fohrer, *Ezechiel* 129, "a land not rained upon and not wetted," and Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 465, "you are a land which has not been 'rained upon,' upon which no shower has fallen."

[5]Ezek 22:23, "As silver is melted in a furnace, so you shall be melted in the midst of it; and you shall know that I Yahweh have poured out my wrath upon you."

[6]This has rightly been noted by Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 468. He nevertheless decided to follow the LXX as over against the Massoretic text.

The term גשמה should probably be parsed as a pu'al perfect since the syntax requires a verbal form.[7] It represents a simple continuation of the preceding participal clause and contains an affirmation.

In this verse the rain (גשם) is connected with the day of judgment. This is in opposition to what one reads about the rain in Ezek 34:36, where the rain is synonymous with blessing, "...I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing (גשמי ברכה)." Likewise, in the rest of the Old Testament the rain is generally considered to be a blessing.[8]

This state of affairs led Zimmerli to question and ultimately to reject the Massoretic reading, "The inner force of this metaphorical description of a day of judgment, which is without any analogy in Ezekiel, inevitably raises the question whether the MT, with its reading, can still be right."[9]

Zimmerli's assessment of the problem related to this verse might need a corrective since in Ezek 13:11,13 and 38:22 one finds references to the "flooding or torrential rain" (גשם שוטף) in the context of the announcement of Yahweh's judgment.

If one looks in the rest of the Old Testament for the connection between rain and judgment the passage which comes immediately to one's mind is the Genesis flood story. In Gen 7:12, the word (גשם) is employed to describe the torrential rain which fell upon the earth forty days and nights. Hence it is not surprizing to find an ancient rabbinic tradition according to which Ezek 22:24 refers to the waters of the Deluge which have not come over the land of Israel.[10] In our opinion this

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[7]This solution has been suggested by C. F. Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Engl. transl. by J. Martin, G. Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, n.d.) IX 317. He has been followed by Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 247, and by Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 465. The Mappiq in the ה of the Massoretic text should be deleted and placed in the ש. H. Bauer - P. Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, [1]1922, 1965) #72i parsed it as a noun with a 3rd feminine singular suffix. However, this proposal should be rejected since such a form is not attested in the rest of the Old Testament and this clause is meaningless without a verb. By contrast for a denominative verbal form see Jer 14:22, מגשים hip'il masc. pl. ptc.

[8]The rain insures the abundant crops and increased yield: cf. Lev 26:4 "then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit"; Deut 11:14, "I will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil."

[9]Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 468.

[10]Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 468 cites BT *Zebahim* 113a; cf. also J. Heinemann, "Anti-Samaritan Polemics in the Aggadah, " *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies III* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, R. H. Hacohen Press, 1977) III 57-69, esp. pp. 60-61. *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (Tell Aviv: Yavneh, 1957) 37, "the land of Israel was not submerged by the Deluge." Cf. A. J. Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth* (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1916) 15, who quotes *Midrash Bereshith Rabba,* xxxvii, ro.a 1,20.

rabbinic interpretation can stand the test of critical judgment.

Summary: In v 24 the rain does not represent the blessing as usual but refers to the Deluge rain of Yahweh's indignation which the land of Israel had not experienced. Yahweh decided to remedy this omission by sending a judgment with fire. The pericope ends with a significant verse, "Therefore I have poured out my indignation (זעמי) upon them; I will consume them with the fire of my wrath; their way I will requite upon their heads, says Yahweh God" (Ezek 22:30).

4.4.2. The Motif of the Preservation from the Flood in the Poem of Erra

In describing the flood, the Poem of Erra offers several new features which do not appear in the flood stories[11] known to us from the Sumerian fragment,[12] the Atraḫasīs epic[13] and the XIth tablet of the Gilgameš epic.[14]

a.) In the Poem of Erra the flood is presented as a dislocation of the universe where the "bond of heaven and earth was untied" (I 136). To put it in Bottéro's words, "Avec le temps, l'horizon s'est comme élargi, et nous avons ici du même Déluge une présentation beaucoup plus apocalyptique que celle du *Supersage* et de ses tenants."[15]

b.) The god responsable for the flood is no longer Enlil. Marduk, the god of Babylon takes his role.

c.) The cause of the flood is neither the overpopulation nor the "din" of the humans as in the Atrahasis epic. In the Poem of Erra these

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[11]G. Pettinato, "Die Flutberichte in Keilschriftlicher Überlieferung," *BieOr* 11 (1965) 109-23; 159-73.

[12]M. Civil, "The Sumerian Flood Story" in W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, Atraḫasīs, *The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969) 138-145; Th. Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," *JBL* 100 (1981) 513-529.; S. N. Kramer, "The Sumerian Deluge Myth," *AnSt* 33 (1983) 115-121; J. M. Durand, "Les écrits mésopotamiens" in *Ecrits de l'Orient ancien et sources bibliques* (PBSB 2, eds. A. Barucq, *et al.* Paris: Desclée, 1986) 136-37; J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme. Mythologie mésopotamienne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) pp. 564-68, "Le récit du Déluge en sumérien."

[13]For bibliography on the Atraḫasīs epic see our section 5.1.

[14]J. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982) 214-40: "The Flood Story"; E. Dhorme, "Le déluge babylonien," *RB* 35 (1930) 481-502; E. Fisher, "Gilgamesh and Genesis: The Flood Story in Context," *CBQ* 32 (1970) 392-402.

[15]J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme. Mythologie mésopotamienne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 711.

reasons have been taken over and offered as some of the grounds for Erra'a raging against the Mesopotamian cities. According to the Poem of Erra, the flood was caused by the departure and absence of the god Marduk from the center of the universe, i.e., from his shrine and statue in Babylon. He alone is capable to insure the cohesion of the universe and its harmonious functioning.

d.) After the flood there is no mention of a single great hero who survives the flood like Ziusudra, Atra-ḫasīs or Uta-napištim. Some humans are still alive but their offspring has diminished so that Marduk himself had to sow their seed like a farmer (I 137-138).

e.) The final difference has a particular importance for our analysis in this section. The Poem of Erra contains what appears to be a unique reference in Akkadian literature[16] of a city of Sippar being spared the Deluge,

IV 50 *ša Sipar āl sâti ša* ^{d}*Bēl mātāti ina aqar pānīšu abūbu lā ušbi'ušu*

As to Sippar[17] the primeval city, through which the Lord of the countries did not let the Deluge pass because she was the darling of his eyes.

If one may speak of a traditio-historical development of the flood tradition in Mesopotamian literature, the Poem of Erra contains either the lattest stage of the flood tradition which has incorporated and elaborated some new features, or a completely different tradition unrelated to the one found in the Atraḫasīs epic and Gilgameš XI.

4.4.3. Parallels, Contrasts, Conclusions

M. Anbar was the first who argued that this singular reference to the day of indignation in connection with the Deluge rain in Ezekiel may

[16]Cf. Cagni, *EE*, 231 "In my knowledge, the reference that the city of Sippar was spared the Deluge owing to the good will of Enlil is not confirmed by any other Mesopotamian source." While Cagni interprets ^{d}*Bēl* as a reference to the god Enlil, Bottéro sees here a reference to Marduk, "Le caractère particulier de la tradition du Déluge, telle qu'on la trouve ici, se voit au fait qu'à l'en croire Sippar avait, par la grâce de Marduk, échappé au Cataclysme (IV 50)," in J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme,* p. 711 n. 1.

[17]On Sippar see D. Charpin, "Sippar: deux villes jumelles," *RA* 82 (1988) 13-32. The author challenges the traditional view according to which Sippar represents a principal city of an agglomeration comprising several suburbs called Sippar-Yahrurum, Sippar-Amnânum, Sippar-*ṣêrim,* Sippar-*rabûm*, etc., On the basis of some new texts he establishes equations between these different names and argues for the existence of twin cities; "il n'a jamais existé que deux villes jumelles, toutes deux appelées Sippar, mais que l'on a distinguées selon les lieux, les époques et/ou les genres de textes de façons différentes... (p. 26).

well stem from a local Babylonian influence and in particular from the Poem of Erra.[18]

If this suggestion is correct the Book of Ezekiel would be the first place where this motif from the Poem of Erra had been mentioned. In the first centuries of the common era the motif reappears in the rabbinic writings. Furthermore, the Samaritans have adapted it to their own use, transferring it to Mount Gerizim as the site which has been spared the Deluge.[19] Finally the Muslims in their turn have freed from the Deluge their sacred shrine in Mecca, the Ka'aba, the site of the black stone, "Ibn Hisham relates that the waters of the Deluge did not reach the Ka'aba, but that they surrounded it."[20]

There is an additional similarity concerning the way in which the motif of the preservation from the flood is used in the Poem of Erra and in the Book of Ezekiel. In the Poem of Erra Marduk says to Erra that the city of Sippar had been spared the Deluge. The city survived that great calamity but it did not resist the subsequent destruction provoked by Erra, "You destroyed her wall against the will of Šamaš: you pulled down her rampart" (IV 51). In Ezek 22:24, the land of Israel had been spared the rains of the Deluge in the day of indignation. However, the evildoers have not been spared the subsequent destruction by fire.

In another context R. Gordis has suggested the following criterion in any attempt to demonstrate a dependence of a biblical text on an extra biblical one, "Unless some strikingly unique feature is to be found in two documents, the theory of dependence must be regarded as unproved."[21]

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[18]M. Anbar, "Une nouvelle allusion à une tradition babylonienne dans Ézéchiel (XXII 24)," *VT* 29 (1979) 352-53. "Nous supposons qu'Ézéchiel a rapporté au pays d'Israël tout entier la tradition, unique dans la littérature babylonienne, d'après laquelle Sippar, qui était considérée comme une ville éternelle (*ālsâti*), un centre religieux (*maḫāzu*), ne fut pas inondée par le Déluge" (p. 352).

[19]Cf. J. Heinemann, "Anti Samaritan Polemics in the Aggadah," *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, R. H. Hacohen Press, 1977) III 57-69, esp. p. 61. In Bereshit Rabba fol xxxv ro. b, it is told how Rabbi Jonathan on a journey was invited by a Samaritan to perform his prayers on Gerizim. When he asked: "Why?" he was answered: "Because it was not submerged by the Deluge." quoted in A. J. Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth* (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1916) 15.

[20]*Khamis* I, 92, 21 quoted in Wensinck, *op. cit.*, 15.

[21]R. Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations* (New York: Ktav, 1974) 127 (with respect to the hypothesis of a dependence of the Book of Lamentations on the tradition of Sumerian city laments).

In our opinion, the flood motif which appears both in the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra fulfills this requirement.

The above analysis of the motifs of the preservation from the flood allow us to make an important point concerning the way the material from the Poem of Erra has been used in the Book of Ezekiel. The comparisons make it clear that one may not speak of a blind and undiscriminate use of the extra-biblical material on the part of the author or redactors of the Book of Ezekiel. The material from the Poem of Erra has been used in a creative way, thoroughly reworked and fully adapted to the specific points which the Book of Ezekiel makes. For example, in Ezek 22:25ff., the destruction by fire comes because of a series of moral wrongdoings, "Her gang of prophets are like roaring lions in her midst rending pray" (*NJPS*).[22] There follows a casuistic enumeration of offenses characteristic of a priest. The people have practiced extortion and robbery, oppressed the poor and the sojourner, the priests have made no difference between the clean and the unclean. In the case of Sippar, the concern is material, where Marduk complains because of the destruction of the city walls and ramparts. Literary emulation might be an appropriate way of describing the relationship which exists between the Poem of Erra and the Book of Ezekiel.

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[22]In the Poem of Erra the furor of Erra's destruction is described with the simile of a roaring lion, V 11 "One cannot snatch a dead body from the jaws of a roaring lion" (*ina pî labbi nā'iri ul ikkimu šalamtu*). In IV 21 Erra "takes on the form of a lion." M. Jastrow commented on this line in the following way, "The metaphor of the war-god taking on the form of a lion confirms the identification of Dibbarra (= Erra) with Nergal, who is generally pictured as a lion," in *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* (Boston: Ginn, 1898) 530. The lion is one of the symbols of Nergal. According to an ancient tradition Erra is Nergal. In the Poem of Erra this identification is further confirmed. In the city of Kutha (mentioned in 2 Kgs 17:24), Nergal's temple was Emeslam. Twice in the Poem of Erra (IIC 8 and V 22) Emeslam is cited as Erra's abode. Moreover, the name Nergal appears twice, once in a damaged context (IIIC 31), once in parallel with Erra (V 39-41). A new text published by W. G. Lambert, ("Review of E. von Weiher, *Der babylonische Gott Nergal," BiOr* 30 [1973] 355-63), confirms that this identification goes back to at least the Old Akkadian Dynasty. The association of Erra/Nergal with the lion might be reflected in 2 Kgs 17:24-25. The king of Assyria settled the people from Babylon and Kutha, presumably some worshipers of Erra/Nergal, in Samaria. (25) "And at the beginning of ther dwelling there, they did not fear Yahweh; Therefore Yahweh sent *lions* among them which killed some of them." In the New Testament the devil is compared to "a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (I Pet 5:8). In a text of Rîm-Sîn, the king of Larsa, Nergal is called "the fierce lion," cf. F. Thureau-Dangin, *Les inscriptions de Sumer et d'Accad* (Paris: Geuthner, 1905) 308-309 b., quoted together with the Biblical references by E. Dhorme, *Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (Collection "Mana" Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1945) 44 and 52.

5. FEATURES WHICH THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL SHARES WITH ANTECEDENT OLD TESTAMENT TRADITIONS AND WHICH APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN MODIFIED IN THE LIGHT OF THE POEM OF ERRA

5.1. HEBREW הָמוֹן AND AKKADIAN *ḫubūru/rigmu* = "NOISE, DIN"

5.1.1. The General Meaning of the Term הָמוֹן in the Old Testament

We will first examine the general meaning of the term הָמוֹן in the Old Testament and then point out instances in Ezekiel where הָמוֹן has a particular or "skewed" meaning. A similar procedure will be applied to the analysis of the terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* in Akkadian literature. The term *ḫubūru*, it is argued, as used in Akkadian literature in general and in the Poem of Erra in particular, stands in relationship of functional equivalence with Hebrew הָמוֹן in certain passages in the Book of Ezekiel.

Simplifying the entry הָמוֹן in *BDB*[1] and *HAL*[2] one can list the following meanings:

a. The term הָמוֹן has a basic meaning: "sound, murmur, rush, roar, tumult," cf. Ezek 26:13, הָמוֹן שִׁירֶיךָ וְקוֹל נְבָלֶיךָ = "murmur of your songs and the sound of your lyres"(*NJPS*).

b. It also has a quantitative meaning: "crowd, multitude, abundance, wealth."

> Therefore thus says Yahweh: I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon; and he shall carry off her wealth (נְשָׂא הֲמוֹנָהּ) and take her spoil and seize her booty; and she shall be the recompense of his army (Ezek 29:19).

c. *HAL* adds another meaning which we have designated as metaphorical: "pomp."[3]

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[1]F. Brown, S. R. Driver, C. H. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907, 1968) 242.

[2]L. Koehler - W. Baumgartner, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexicon zum Alten Testament* (3rd revised edition in collaboration with B. Hartmann and E. Y. Kutscher, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967) 240.

[3]*HAL* 240. The authors suggest that in the following instances, Ezek 7:11, 12, 13, 14; 30:10, 15; 31:2, 18; 32:12a,b, 16, 18, 20, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32; 39:11c,d, 15, הָמוֹן should be translated with "Aufzug, Gepränge" ="train, pomp."

d. המון can also mean "agitation, excitment, inner commotion or emotion," cf. Isa 63:15, המון מעיך = "lit. the commotion of your bowels" (referring to Yahweh's compassion).[4]

Combining the data from Mandelkern's and Even-Shoshan's *Concordances*,[5] one can establish the following statistics: The term המון occurs 84 times in the OT, 27 of which are found in the Book of Ezekiel.

a. References Where המון has a Basic Meaning: "noise, sound, rush, roar, murmur," (for the sake of space the pertinent examples alone are quoted in full); Amos 5:23 המון//זמרת נבליך[6] שריך = "noise of your songs//sound of your lute"; Isa 5:14; 13:4; 31:4; 32:14 המון עיר עזב = "the noisy city forsaken" (*NJPS*); Jer 3:23 אכן לשקר מגבעות המון הרים = "Surely, from the hills a lie, a noise from the mountains;"[7] 10:13 = 51:16; 47:3; 51:42; 1 Sam 4:14 וישמע עלי את קול הצקה ויאמר מא קול ההמון הזה = "And when Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he asked, 'What is this uproar?' (this example is important because of the parallelism between המון and צעקה); 14:19; 1 Kgs 18:41; Jb 39:7 ישחק להמון קריה = (Yahweh) "scoffs at the tumult of the city"; Dan 10:6;

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[4]Cf. the corresponding exepression with the verbal form המה in Jer 31:20 המו מעי לו. This confirms Jakob Barth's explanation of המון as a *nomen verbale* derived from the verb המה + *an*, (in *Die Nominalbildung in den semitischen Sprachen* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1894] #197c.). Cf. also G. Gerleman, "Die lärmende Menge, Der Sinn des hebräischen Wortes המון," *Wort und Geschichte (Fs K. Elliger*, eds. H. Gese and H. P. Rüger, AOAT 18, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, and Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973) 71-5. E. Baumann, "המה, המון ...," *TDOT III* 414-18 (bibliography). In the MT המה occurs 34 times, always in qal. 11 of these occurrences are in the Psalms. The verb המה has a meaning closely related to that of the noun המון. It designates a "jumble of noise and movement," "tumult," and "groaning" (so Baumann).

[5]S. Mandelkern, *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae* (Jerusalem: Shocken, 1959) 334; A. Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1985) 306.

[6]W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II,* 37 postulates a verbal dependence of Ezek 26:13 on Am 5:23. The word המן occurs in eighth century BCE Aramaic. In the Sefire inscription I A 29, the silencing of the sound of lyres is listed in a series of curses. If Mati'el of Arpad breaks the treaty with Barga'yah the following should occur, ואל תישמע קל כנר בארפד ובעמה הנ למרק וה[מן וזע]ב[] = "Let not the sound of the lyre be heard in Arpad and among its people, but (the sound) of affliction and [confusion]," translation in J. C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* II (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975) 30-1.

[7]In a context of a pagan rite on the hills, the translation "noise or sound" is more appropriate than "orgies" as *RSV* has it.

b. References Where המון has a Quantitative Meaning: "multitude, troops, crowd, horde, abundance, wealth," Gen 17:4, 5 והיית לאב המון גוים = "and you shall be a father of a multitude of nations"; Jdg 4:7 את סיסרא ואת המונו = "Sisera ... and his troops";[8] 1 Sam 14:16; 2 Sam 6:19; 18:29; 2 Kgs 7:13 (2 x); 25:11; Isa 5:13; 16:14; 29:5, 7, 8; 49:32; 60:5; Joel 3:14 (H 4:15); Ps 37:16 טוב מעט לצדיק מהמון רשעים = "Better is a little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked"; 42:5; Jb 31:34; Qoh 5:9; Dan 11:10, 11a, b, 12, 13; 1 Chr 29:16; 2 Chr 11:23; 13:8; 14:10; 20:2, 12, 15, 24; 31:10; 32:7.

c. The Metaphorical Meaning of המון: According to Zimmerli,[9] in the prophetic oracle from the wars between Israel and Aram, the word המון stands for "pomp" or "*hybris*." In 1 Kgs 20:13, 28 the prophet says to Ahab, כה אמר יהוה הראית את כל ההמון הגדול הזה הנני נתנו בידך היום = "Thus says Yahweh: 'Have you seen all this great host, see, I will deliver it into your hand today.'" Although there is mention of boasting in v 11, (הלל), the term can be understood as referring to Ben Hadad's troops which were quite numerous (32 kings are mentioned in 20:1). Hence, the usual translation, "multitude" is adequate. The reference in Isa 33:3, is of course metaphorical, מקול המון נדדו עמים = "at (Yahweh's) roaring, peoples have fled" (cf. Akk. *rigim* ^{d}*Adad*). However, this metaphor is not within the immediate purview of the present research. Ps 65:8, where it is said that Yahweh "stills the roaring sea and the tumult of the people," is probably closest to the metaphorical usage of המון in Ezekiel.[10] Cf. also Isa 17:12 "Ah, the roar (המון) of many peoples that roar as roars the sea (כהמות ימים יהמיון). The rage of nations that rage as rage the mighty waters" (ושאון לאמים כשאון מים כבירים ישאון) (*NJPS*).

5.1.2. The Particular Meaning of the Term המון in Ezekiel

The 27 occurrences of the term המון in Ezekiel[11] represent 32% of its total number of occurrences in the Old Testament. The statistical data

[8]Cf. L. Kopf, "Arabische Etymologien und Parallelen zum Bibelwörterbuch," *VT* 9 (1959) 247-87, esp. p. 254, who compares the semantic development of Hebrew המה "to utter a jumble of noise" and המון "troop" with the semantic development of the Arabic term *hîš* "troop." The utility of this comparison is limited since we are dealing with two different roots.

[9]Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 210.

[10]Cf. E. Baumann, *TDOT III* 418, "the wildly surging sea was well adapted to be a vivid image for chaos and hybris."

[11]In Ezekiel the term occurs in the following verses: Ezek 5:7; 7:11, 12, 13, 14; 23:42; 26:13; 29:19; 30:4, 10, 15; 31:2, 18; 32:12a,d, 16, 18, 20, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32; 39:11c,d, 15, 16. Here we have included also the so-called "glosses" which mention the term המון.

point to the frequency of the term in Ezekiel and to the prominence of the motif it embodies. In Ezekiel הָמוֹן serves as a catchword appearing at key points in the book and in theologically important contexts. Hence, the occurrences of הָמוֹן in Ezekiel should not be lightly dismissed as glosses (contra Fohrer).[12] In spite of its frequency the translators and commentators can not find an adequate translation for this term in Ezekiel. Davidson and Cooke translate it consistently with "multitude," and "wealth."[13] Both the English[14] and the French[15] versions follow preponderantly the quantitative meaning of the term הָמוֹן. The German versions differ.[16] The genius of Luther's translation has often been praised. Luther noticed that in Ezekiel the term has a particular meaning. In the majority of cases he rendered it by "stolzes Volk." In this way Luther blended the quantitative ("people," "crowd") with the metaphorical meaning ("pride," "*hybris*"). There is a steady tradition among German commentators and lexicographers who uphold a particular metaphorical meaning for the term הָמוֹן in the Book of

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[12]We have stated the position concerning the treatment of glosses which we have adopted in the present research in 1.4. "The Issue of the Glosses in the Book of Ezekiel."

[13]A. B. Davidson, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (CBSC, revised by A. W. Streane, Cambridge: University Press, 1916). Only in Ez 26:13, Davidson translated הָמוֹן with "sound." G. A. Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel* (ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark,1936); M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20* (AB, Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1983) pp. 100. 112, 150, translates only once with "more tumultuous" (5:7), while in 7:12, 13, 14 with "masses."

[14]The *KJV, RSV, NASB*, translate הָמוֹן with "multitude" in most cases, and sometimes by "abundance" or "riches." The *NJPS* version has continued the same tradition in spite of the use of words like "masses," "wealth," "hordes," and "abundance." All these different renderings of the term הָמוֹן remain in the category of its quantitative meaning.

[15]The French versions like *TOB, BJ* (Ezek: P. Auvray), *Bible de la Pléiade* (Ezek: J. Koenig), Darby and Segond, prefer consistently the quantitative meaning of הָמוֹן and translate it with "multitude," "richesse," "foule." Only once, in Ezek 5:7, the *TOB* version comes close to what we think is the appropriate meaning of הָמוֹן in Ezekiel by translating with "insolence."

[16]Luther generally used the expression "stolzes Volk" but also "Reichtum," "Heerhaufen," "Geschrei," and "Getön." The version of Hans Bruns seems to have captured best the particular meaning of הָמוֹן in Ezekiel. He translates it with "Gepränge" (= "pomp"), "Prahlen" (= "boast"), and "Herrlichkeit" (= "splendor"). The rendering of the *Einheitsübersetzung* is not very felicitous being divided between "Pracht" (= "magnificence"), and "Gefolge" (= "retinue," "train"). Cf. also *Bücher der Kündung* (Verdeutscht von M. Buber gemeinsam mit F. Rosenzweig, Köln/Olten: J. Hegner, 1958, vol. III), the translators often opt for the basic meaning of הָמוֹן, "toben, Getümmel, tümmelnde Menge."

Ezekiel. Cornill,[17] Kraetzschmar,[18] Zimmerli,[19] and Eichrodt,[20] usually translate it with "Gepränge" (= "pomp," or "ostentatious display"). The rendering "pomp" is adequate in many cases. Nevertheless, the metaphorical meaning of הָמוֹן in Ezekiel is not exhausted by this translation. We agree with Frankena who suggested that the particular meaning of the term הָמוֹן in Ezekiel might stem from the Babylonian background of the book.[21]

We will examine several instances in Ezekiel where the particular meaning of הָמוֹן had been missed by translators and commentators. In Ezek 5:7 Yahweh says to the people of Jerusalem,

> Because you are noisier (or more tumultuous) than the nations
> (יַעַן הֲמֹנְכֶם מִן הַגּוֹיִם) ... I will execute judgment in the midst of you.

The majority of commentators emend הֲמֹנְכֶם to הַמֹּרְתָם and translate, "more rebellious" (from the root מָרָה = "be contentious, refractory" *BDB* 598).[22] This emendation is unnecessary and should be rejected.[23] It misses a prominent feature of Ezekiel's message: Yahweh's wrath against the excessive "din," or "noise" of certain groups. The commentators are obviously puzzled with this apparently unintelligible statement. Why should Yahweh be angry at excessive noise? In our opinion, this particular way of speaking can be clarified in the light of the motif of the divine wrath upon the excessive noise of humans which appears in the

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[17]C. H. Cornill, *Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1886)

[18]R. Kratzschmar translates הָמוֹן with "Gepränge" ("pomp") 23 out of 27 times in *Das Buch Ezechiel* (HAT, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900).

[19]W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I-II* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979, II 1983).

[20]W. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel, A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970)

[21]R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: Brill, 1965) 9-12.

[22]F. Delitzsch, *Die Lese- und Schreibfehler im Alten Testament* (Berlin and Leipzig: Vereinigung Wissenschaftlicher Verleger, 1920) 94, #97a takes it as a scribal error. So also *BHS*. Davidson, *Ezekiel*, 41 emends it to הַמֹּרְתָם. He is followed by Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 66, who parses הֲמֹנְכֶם as an infinitive construct after יַעַן as often in Ezek (15 times, 13:8, 22; 21:29; 25:3; 28:6). It occurs with *o* in the second syllable like לְמֹרְדְכֶם in Josh 22:16. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 151, says, "With Bötscher, Cornill and others we should certainly emend to הַמֹּרְתָם." Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 80: "the MT is a scribal error."

[23]F. Zorell has recognized the inadequacy of traditional emendation of הָמוֹן in Ezek 5:7, which he translates in the following way, *quia [impie] tumultuamini*? in *Lexicon Hebraicum et Aramaicum Veteris Testamenti* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968) 194.

Poem of Erra. In certain passages in this Poem the excessive noise of humans stands for insolence and irreverence.

In Ezek 7:11-14 המון occurs four times. The wrath of Yahweh is upon Judah because of the "din" of her inhabitants. The phrase כי חרון אל כל המונה = "For (my) wrath is upon all her din" is repeated three times as a *crescendo* (vv 12, 13, 14). The context is that of the announcement of Yahweh's judgment upon the land and its inhabitants which explains the 3rd fem. sing. suffix "her din."[24] The commentators dismiss the phrase as a gloss following a questionable methodology.

In chapters 29 to 32 which contain the oracles announcing Yahweh's judgment against Egypt, the word המון occurs no fewer than 16 times, and of these 13 refer specifically to Egypt and the Pharaoh (29:19; 30:4, 10, 15; 31:2, 18; 32:12a,d, 16, 18, 20; 32:31, 32). Zimmerli and Eichrodt following earlier German commentators translate המון in these instances consistently with "pomp." Their translation may be followed only for lack of a better word. Zimmerli describes the connotation of the word המון in the following way, "It was a word which could denote presumptuous human *hybris* against the divine greatness. Not first the violent deed, but the insolent *hybris* which puffs itself up against God ..."[25] Eichrodt adds in a similar vein, "The swelling pomp, with overweening arrogance employed for its own self-glorification, will be consumed by Yahweh's furious wrath."[26]

In Ezek 32:12 המון occurs in parallelism with גאון which confirms the understanding of המון as "*hybris*,"

> They shall bring to nought the pride of Egypt and all its
> "pomp" shall perish (ושדדו את גאון מצרים ונשמד כל המונה).

With relationship to Ezek 32 which describes the descent to hell of Egypt's pomp, Humbert speaks of the sin of *"démesure"* which stands for

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[24]The textual problems in Ezek 7:11 have elicited a series of articles, cf. J. Bewer, "On the Text of Ezekiel 7:5-14," *JBL* 45 (1926) 223-31; *idem*., "Beiträge zur Exegese des Buches Ezechiel," *ZAW* 63 (1951) 193-201; T. H. Gaster, "Ezekiel and the Mysteries," *JBL* 60 (1941) 289-310; J. Reider, "Etymological Studies in Biblical Hebrew," *VT* 4 (1954) 276-95. The LXX^{B} omits the phrase in all three instances while Fohrer and Zimmerli simply delete it from the MT. We hold such a procedure unacceptable as stated in our section 1.4. The following comment by Eichrodt is to the point, "That it is wanting in the LXX is not a sure proof of its secondary origin," *Ezekiel*, 100.

[25]Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 210.

[26]Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 102-3.

Pharaoh's excessive pride.[27] In our opinion this larger context should be taken into account in determining the meaning of הָמוֹן.

According to Bertram,[28] the main equivalent of LXX *hybris* is Hebrew גָּאוֹן. In Ezek 32:12 the LXX translates הָמוֹן with ἰσχὺς "might, strength," while גָּאוֹן is rendered with *hybris*. However, in Ezek 7:24 Hebrew גָּאוֹן is rendered ἰσχύος by the LXX. Moreover, in Ezek 30: 6, 18, Yahweh threatens to overthrow the overweening pride of Egyptian power, ἡ ὕβρις τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτῆς (2x). Since Greek ὕβρις and ἰσχὺς are used interchangeably this supports our understanding of הָמוֹן as *hybris*. Admittedly, our interpretation may receive only partial support from references to *hybris* in the LXX.[29] Nevertheless, according to Bertram, one well established meaning of hybris in the LXX is presumptuousness, impudence, impertinence and insolence toward God.

While Fohrer deletes הָמוֹן most of the time, he points out other terms which show the prominence of pride in the invectives of Ezekiel. He makes a theological point concerning the specific meaning of sin found in Ezekiel, "Sin means arrogance, presumptuous pride, exaggerated self-assurance and self-reliance, haughtiness and *hybris*."[30] B. Lang criticizes the commentators who translate הָמוֹן with "pomp" or "*hybris*" arguing that a "traditional Christian sin theology" is being imposed on the Ezekiel material.[31] He argues that the term הָמוֹן Ezekiel has only a quantitative meaning. In our opinion Lang's critique is unjustified.[32]

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[27]P. Humbert, "Démesure et chute dans l'Ancien Testament," in *Maqqél shâqédh la branche d'amandier, Hommage à W. L.Vischer* (Montpellier: Causse, Graille, Castelnau, 1960) 63-82.

[28]G. Bertram, art. "ἡ ὕβρις," *TDNT VIII* 295-307, "In the Old Testament," pp. 299-302.

[29] One has to bear in mind that the LXX uses the term *hybris* to translate a series of Hebrew terms like גָּאוֹן "loftiness, arrogance," זָדוֹן "presumtiousness, impudence," רוּם, גבה, גדל "to be great, lofty, exalted," but also "to be boastful, proud arrogant," הָמָה (Pr 20:1), as well as other terms.

[30]G. Fohrer, *Ezechiel* (HAT, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1955) xxvii, "Sünde bedeutet Überheblichkeit und anmaßenden Stolz, hochfahrende Sicherheit und irreführendes Selbstvertrauen, Hochmut und Hybris."

[31]B. Lang, *Kein Aufstand in Jerusalem, Die Politik des Propheten Ezechiel* (Stuttgart: Katolisches Bibelwerk, 1978) 106, "Hier scheint aber eine Anschauung der traditionellen christlichen Sündentheologie vorzuliegen und nicht die theologische Reflexion Ezechiels."

[32]Contrary to Lang's insistence on הָמוֹן having simply a quantitative meaning, one can point to the fact that already the Septuagint translators understood the verb הָמָה as related to *hybris* (cf. Pr 20:1, which offers a moral advice against the excesses of wine drinking, לֵץ הַיַּיִן הָמָה שֵׁכָר "Wine is a babbler, strong drink a browler;" LXX ἀκολάστου οἶνος, καὶ ὑβριστικὸν μέθη "wine is an unruly/intemperate (thing), and strong drink (full of) arrogance." The drink is credited with the characteristics which it produces in men, cf. H. N. Richardson, "Some Notes on לוּץ and Its Derivates," *VT* 5 (1955) 163-79, 434-6, esp. pp. 176-7. Here הָמָה has a metaphorical meaning referring to the arrogance of the browlers and the exultant bravados of the intoxicated.

First, sin characterized as *hybris* is not an invention of Christian theology. *Hybris* is perceived as a major fault or sin in classical Greek literature.[33] It is beyond doubt that the idea of *hybris* as sin had originated and was developed long before Christian authors and thinkers. Second, when Josephus, who was not a Christian, speaks of sin in the Old Testament he explicitly uses the Greek term *hybris*![34] Third, there are several instances in the Book of Ezekiel where *hybris*,[35] and ὑπερηφανία "arrogance, insolence" of the people of Judah is denounced.[36]

However, we agree with Lang when he excludes the following understaning of *hybris* in relationship with Israel's view of its king, "Erst recht ist der Ausdruck 'Hybris'(...) irreführend: sofern er impliziert, der Mensch setze sich an die Stelle Gottes, ist er falsch."[37] In analyzing Ezek 19 Lang deals with the issue of royal ideology in Israel. He points out that Israel's neighbors divinized their kings citing Ezek 28:2 (the king of Tyre who "sits in the seat of the gods"); and 29:3, 9 (the pharaoh who perceives himself as a divine creator). He is correct when he says that such a divinization of the king in Israel did not occur. However, he is less than accurate when he makes the above generalization and starting from one correct point on Israelite royal ideology excludes the notion of *hybris* from the Book of Ezekiel. There are several instances in the Book of Ezekiel which express the *hybris* of the people of Judah.[38]

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[33]Del Grande, C., *Hybris, Colpa e castigo nell'espressione poetica e letteraria degli Scrittori della Grecia antica* (Napoli, 1947). Cf. below - **Excursus: Hybris in Classical Greek Literature.**

[34]For numerous references in Josephus see G. Bertram, art. "ἡ ὕβρις," *TDNT VIII* 295-307, esp. p. 303.

[35]In Ezek 7:10 the day of judgment and doom is announced against the *hybris* (= זְדוֹן "impudent, presumptuous") of the inhabitants of Judah. The verse represents the immediate context of a passage where חָמָס occurs four times. (vv 12, 13, 14 repeat three tinmes the phrase "For my wrath is against all her חָמָס "din, arrogance, insolence"). In Ezek 30:6, 18 Yahweh is opposed against the *hybris* of the Egyptians. In Ezek 33:28 Yahweh is against the land of Israel, against the moral depravation of its inhabitants and against their *hybris*.

[36]According to Ezek 16:49, 56; and 7:20, pomp (גָּאוֹן), satiety, wealth and careless ease (cf. v. 13) lead to arrogance (גָּבַהּ).

[37]B. Lang, *Kein Aufstand in Jerusalem. Die Politik des Propheten Ezechiel* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1978) 105.

[38]Cf. P. Humbert, "Démesure et chute dans l'Ancien Testament," in *Maqqél shâqédh la branche d'amandier, Hommage à W. L.Vischer* (Montpellier: Causse, Graille, Castelnau, 1960) 63-82, p. 65 for a list of Hebrew terms in Ezekiel which convey some aspects of *hybris*.

Moreover, according to A. Caquot one could perceive the downfall of Judah's monarchy on account of the "political *hybris*" which the kings of Judah had manifested in their foreign policy. The Judean kings committed the sin of "démesure" or political *hybris* by assuming a major role in the international politics. Their claim was completely out of proportion.

> "Ézéchiel n'a qu'une chose à dire sur l'institution monarchique: elle a succombé sous l'effet du courroux de YHWH, attiré par la démesure dont elle a fait preuve en prétendant tenir une place dans le concert des nations, alors qu'elle ne le pouvait plus,"[39]

As we will try to show the notion of "*hybris*" in Ezekiel may well be an echo of a similar motif in Akkadian literature.

- Excursus: Hybris in Classical Greek Literature

A discussion of the term *hybris* is deficient without at least mentioning the classical Greek understanding of it. Moreover, it might be helpful to analyze it at this stage of our discussion since our definition of *hybris* as human tendency to overstep the divinely imposed limits follows the classical understanding of it.[40] Moreover, some aspects of the classical Greek understanding of *hybris* might have been anticipated in Akkadian literature. The topic of *hybris* has been amply investigated in the scholarly literature. Here it will suffice to mention only the results of this

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[39] A. Caquot, "Le messianisme d'Ézéchiel," *Sémitica* 14 (1964) 1-23. The theme of human *hybris* is found on several occasions in the OT without, however, being related to human excessive "din" as in Ezekiel. The eating of the forbidden fruit in defiance of God in Gen 3:5-22, is motivated by the desire to acquire knowledge which will allow humans to become "like the Elohim." It is a religious offense of reaching beyond a divinely imposed limit. In Gen 6 one finds another act of "*lèse-divinité*," or as T. E. Fretheim put it in *Creation, Fall and Flood. Studies in Genesis 1-11* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1969) p. 123, it reflects human attempt "to overstep the bounds of creatureliness." The tower-building in Gen 11, may be seen as "an assault on heaven, an attempt at self-divinization" (so D. J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch* [JSOT Suppl. 10, Sheffield: JSOT Press 1986] p. 69). Cf. also A. de Pury, "La Tour de Babel et la vocation d'Abraham. Notes exégètiques," *ETR* 53 (1978) 80-97. For a detailed analysis of the theme of *hybris* in the Old Testament see P. Humbert, "Démesure et chute dans l'Ancien Testament," in *Maqqèl shâqédh la branche d'amandier, Hommage à W. Vischer* (Montpellier: Causse, Graille, Castelnau, 1960) 63-82. Humbert argued for an extra-Biblical origin of this theme: "En soi le thème a un caractère tellement mythologique et païen qu'une origine extra-israélite paraît s'imposer à première vue déjà" (p. 78).

[40] R. Walton, "Hybris," *RGG*^{3} (1959) 497-8 (bibliography). "Später wurde die Hybris mehr als Beleidigung der Götter par excellence aufgefaßt, als eine Überschreitung der Menschen und Götter trennenden Grenzen in Wort, Gedanken oder Tat," (p. 497).

research and to point out some aspects of the classical Greek understanding of *hybris* which might shed some additional light on our discussion of חמס in Ezekiel as an expression of *hybris*.

The term *hybris* embodies a prominent concept in the works of Greek philosophers, writers and historians who often use this term to designates some violation or encroachment upon the divine sphere.[41] According to Bertram the noun ὕβρις,

> means originally an act which invades the sphere of another to his hurt, a "trespass," a "transgression," of the true norm in violation of divine and human right. Arrogance of disposition is often implied. Thus *hybris* ... calls for *nemesis* (the vengeance of the gods). The reference is to a wicked act, also insult, scorn, contempt...[42]

Hybris, represents obstinate self-assertion of mind and will, irreverence toward the gods, and absence of humility of which the Great Ajax is the best illustration.[43]

Furthermore, in the myth of five human races elaborated in the *Works and Days*, a composition of the 8th century BCE Greek poet Hesiod, the *hybris* of one race of humans is described in the following way, "The silver race, by contrast, were immature; they manifested *hybris*, selfish indulgence, to each other, and *impious neglect to the gods*."[44]

> *Hybris* (from 5th century BCE) includes man's πλεονεξία, against deity, which is the real sin for the Greeks.[45] Greek tragedy deals with human *hybris* in the tragic sense. This raises the problem of *hybris* as an attempt on man's part to cross even the religious boundaries set for the individual in society and to be himself.[46]

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[41]K. Latte, "Schuld und Sünde in der griechischen Religion," *ARW* 20 (1920-21) 254-98.

[42]G. Bertram, art. "ἡ ὕβρις," *TDNT VIII* 295-307, esp. p. 295 (with reference to the 8th century BCE works of Homer, *Odyssey* 14.262; 17.431; *Iliad* 1.203.)

[43]Cf. R. Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1955, 1977, 2 vols) 2, #160p. (p. 282) "As he went aboard his vessel, Telamon gave him this parting advice: 'Set your mind on conquest, but always with the help of the gods.' Ajax boasted: 'With the help of the gods, any coward or fool can win glory; I trust to do so even without them.' By this boast, and others like it, he incurred divine anger."

[44]G. S. Kirk, *Myth. Its Meaning and Function in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970, 1973) 227, (italics mine).

[45]G. Bertram, art. "ἡ ὕβρις," *TDNT VIII* 295, n. 4.

[46]G. Bertram, art. "ἡ ὕβρις," *TDNT VIII* 296-7.

The Greek tragedy operates with a dialectic polarity between φθόνος and ὕβρις, i.e., the jalousy of the gods, and the human arrogance and tendency to overstep the divinely imposed limits.[47] In order to justify the divine retribution the Greek elegy writers like Simonides (556-468 BCE), Theognis (5th-4th centuries BCE) and the Athenian lawgiver Solon (640-559 BCE) depict the humans as the culprits.

> The wise men tried to moralize divine φθόνος by reducing it to a punishment for hybris and proposing a non-tragic genesis for hybris: success begets a desire for more and more - πλεονεξία, - greed begets complacence, and complacence begets arrogance. Thus evil does not come from φθόνος; it is *hybris* that is first.[48]

Thus among several classical writers "*hybris* has become the 'primal evil,' (πρῶτον κακόν), the sin whose wages is death, which is yet so universal that a Homeric hymn calls it the θεμισ or established usage of mankind, and Archilochus (a Greek poet in the 7th century BCE), attributes it even to animals."[49] It appears that the classical Greek understanding of *hybris* might have some antecedents in Akkadian literature and notably in the Poem of Erra. The *hybris* of the animals of which Archilochus speaks is strikingly similar to what the Poem of Erra says concerning the animals who show contempt toward the Divine Seven, "Šakkan's heards and the (wild) animals are holding us in contempt" (Erra I 77). Therefore they urge Erra that even the animals should be punished.

Moreover, the term *hybris* appears in the context of the economic upheaval which occured in the Greek society as consequence of the

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[47]Cf. R. Schaerer, "La composante dialectique de l'Orestie," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 58 (1953) 49-79; A. Bremond, "La 'Théologie' d'Eschyle," *RSR* 15 (1925) 162-63; A. Bonnard, "La pensée religieuse d'Eschyle," *RThPh* 21 (1933) 192-221; G. Nabel, *Weltangst und Götterzorn, eine Deutung der griechischen Tragödie* (Stuttgart, 1951); Max Scheler, *Le phénomène du tragique* (trad. fr., M. Dupuy, Paris: Aubier, 1952). H. Lewy, "Zur Vorstellung vom Neide der Götter," *ARW* 25 (1927) 194-7.

[48]So P. Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Engl. transl. by E. Buchanan, Boston: Beacon, 1969) 217. P. Ricoeur, "Culpabilité tragique et culpabilité biblique," *RHPR* 23 (1953) 285-307. Cf. also J. Lévêque, *Job et son Dieu* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1970) I, 106, "...la jalousie des dieux n'est pas première; c'est l'hybris humaine qui déclanche tout; c'est elle qui est le πρῶτον κακόν. La réussite de l'homme engendre en lui la πλεονεξία, c'est-à-dire l'avidité, l'appétit du surplus; l'avidité engendre à son tour la souffrance, et celle-ci l'ὕβρισ; enfin l'hybris engendre le malheur. Le φθόνος est donc présenté comme la punition de l'hybris."

[49]So E. R. Dodd, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951) 31, and 52 n. 13, quoting *Theognis* 151f.; *H. Apoll.* 541; Archilochus fr. 88; Heraclitus fr. 43 D.

introduction of money economy into a traditionally agricultural society. In the Homeric times the wealthy chieftains of noble households were called the ἀγαθοι. They were the virtuous ones, honored for their unstinting support of public welfare. Virtue (ἀρετή) was coterminous with wealth. The introduction of the money economy brought about the problem of the *nouveau riche*. Suddenly the wealth became the appanage of people who were formerly considered as κακοι. Solon tried to retain the traditional values of the disappearing order by distinguishing between "god-given wealth" (θέοςδατα) and illicit gain, obtained through *hybris*.[50]

Summary: Outside of the Book of Ezekiel the most common connotation of the term הָמוֹן is quantitative: 36 times it stands for "multitude," while only 15 times for "noise." The word is relatively frequent in Isaiah where it occurs 13 times (7 times "multitude," 4 times "noise," once "commotion" and once as the metaphor of Yahweh's roaring). In 1-2 Chronicles it occurs 10 times and it always means "multitude." In Daniel it occurs 6 times (5 times "multitude," and once "noise"). It occurs only 3 times in the Psalms. The use of הָמוֹן in Ps 65:8 and Isa 17:12 may come very close to the way it is used in Ezekiel. According to this analysis, one cannot say that the metaphorical sense of הָמוֹן as "pomp," or "*hybris*" is common outside of Ezekiel.

We have rejected as arbitrary the approach which, partly on the basis of the LXX and partly for stylistic reasons, deletes 60% of all the occurrences of הָמוֹן in Ezekiel as glosses. The high statistical frequency of הָמוֹן in Ezekiel indicates that one is dealing with an important catchword in the overall structure of the book. In certain instances in Ezekiel the term הָמוֹן has a particular meaning. While הָמוֹן may be translated with "din," it stands for irreverence, *hybris* and insolence on the part of humans toward Yahweh. It is used in theologically significant contexts and carries a prominent message as well: Yahweh is opposed to the excessive pride, irreverence and insolence of humans. Therefore, Yahweh's wrath comes upon the "din" of certain groups and individuals described in the book.[51]

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[50]A. W. H. Adkins, *Moral Values and Political Behaviour in Ancient Greece From Homer to the End of the Fifth Century* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972) 53.

[51]In our analysis of the semantic field of the vocable הָמוֹן we have pointed out that its most common meaning is "multitude, abundance, wealth." Its metaphorical meaning "pomp," or "*hybris*," occurs particularly in Ezekiel in theologically significant contexts: Yahweh is opposed to the irreverence and insolence of humans. Here the result of our analysis finds some points of contact with the results G. Bertram's research in connection with a synonym of הָמוֹן, i.e., שְׁאוֹן "noise, sound," which is also rendered with "arrogance, presumptuousness" (αὐθάδεια) and "abundance, wealth," (πλοῦτοσ) by the LXX: "Damit ist שְׁאוֹן offenbar doppelt übersetzt, und es bestätigt sich hier wieder, daß Reichtum und Überheblichkeit zum gleichen Wortfeld gehören oder daß Sattheit

In classical Greek literature *hybris* appears in a variety of contexts. However one well establish meaning of *hybris* is (*Maßlosigkeit*) and "démesure anti-divine, d'un sens faible (p.ex. ostentation) on passe progressivement au sens fort d'un acte de lèse divinité."[52]

5.1.3. Some References to *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* in Akkadian Literature

a. The Connotations of *ḫubūru* and *rigmu*

Both von Soden [53] and *CAD*[54] derive the noun *ḫubūru* from *ḫabāru* "to be noisy." Landsberger relates the problematic *ḫabiru* to *ḫubūru* and translates the former as *"Getriebe, (böses) treiben"* = "to pursue or practice evil."[55] In a lexical series *Malku* V 93, the following equation is found showing that the word *ḫubūru* may have a wide semantic range:

[*ḫa*]*bāṣu* = *ḫubū*[*ru*] (*ḫabāṣu* = "happiness, joy," *CAD H* 8)
ḫašāšu = *ḫubūru* (*ḫašāšu* = "noise, din," *CAD H* 138)

According to Nougayrol, the term *rigmu* can have several connotations depending on context: (i) *Rigmu* is the term par excellence for thunder e.g., *rigim Adad*; When in the Mari letters the governor of Sagarātum reports to the king the ravages of a catastrophic storm which befell his area he speaks of *rigmāt Adad* "the thunders of Adad." On this occasion Adad had thundered more than before: *elīma ša ina pānītim rigimšu udannin.*[56]

Übermut hervorbringt. Das ist in mancherlei Aussagen des Alten Testaments angedeutet und wird in LXX hier als Merkmal der Gottlosen gebrandmarkt," G. Bertram, "'Hochmut' und verwandte Begriffe im griechischen und hebräischen Alten Testament," *WO* 3 (1964) 32-43, esp. p. 40. Bertram points out the way LXX translators understood and rendered Hebrew זדון in Isa 24:9.

[52]P. Humbert, "Démesure et chute dans l'Ancien Testament," in *Maqqél shâqédh la branche d'amandier, Hommage à W. L.Vischer* (Montpellier: Causse, Graille, Castelnau, 1960) 63-82, esp. p. 63.

[53]W. von Soden, *apud* J. Bottéro, *Le problème des Ḫabiru* (4e RAI, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1954) 158 *ḫubūrum* = "lärmende Unruhe" related to *ḫabbiru* = "ein Gewohnheitsadjektiv mit der Bedeutung 'sehr laut und unruhig.' Cf. also *AHw* 352 *ḫubūru(m)* II "Lärmen."

[54]*CAD H* 220 *ḫubūru* B, "din."

[55]B. Landsberger, "*Ḫabiru* und Lulaḫḫu," in *Kleinasiatische Forschungen* (eds. F. Sommer and H. Ehelolf, Weimar: H. Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1929) I 321-334, esp. p. 328.

[56]*ARM XIV* 7 4-6. Cf. A. Finet, "Allusions et Reminiscences comme source d'Information sur la Diffusion de la Littérature," *BBVO* 6 (1986) 13-17, esp. p. 15, who thinks that the scribe of this Mari letter reveals here his "literary culture" (*culture littéraire*) by making an allusion to the "clamor of the humans" rigim awīlūti of *Atra*. IV 39. However, the fact that *rigim Adad* represents a common expression for thunder would preclude such an interpretation.

In *EA* 147, 13 Abi-Milku writes to the Pharaoh comparing the voice of the latter to that of the storm god, *ša iddin rigmāšu ina šamê* "who utters his voice in heaven." The expression *iddin rigmāšu* is functionally equivalent to Hebrew נתן קול.[57] *rigmu* can also designate the "roar,"[58] thus in *Gilg.* III iii 18, the monster Huwawa who keeps the access to the cedar forest is described in the following way, *dHuwawa rigmāšu abūbu* = "Huwawa -his roaring is the flood-storm."[59] (ii) *rigmu* also connotes the complaint, lament, and moaning of the sick person; (iii) *rigmu* can designate a legal complaint.[60]

Von Soden's entry on *rigmu(m)*[61] is extensive and shows that the term occurs in a variety of literary contexts. We are dealing with a very common word. While the term *ḫubūru* is relatively rare, *rigmu* is very common. In certain contexts *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* appear to have related meanings. However, one cannot say with confidence that they are synonyms. In the existing lists of synonyms like an.ta.gál = *šaqû* and erim.ḫuš = *anantu*, these two terms are not listed as synonyms.[62]

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[57]So J. Jeremias, *Theophanie. Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlicher Gattung* (WMANT 10, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, [2]1977) esp. pp. 72-90.

[58]In Ps 68:28 appears the *hapax* רגמה which S. Landersdorfer, *Sumerisches Sprachgut im Alten Testament* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916) 17, related to Akkadian *rigmu*, and suggested to translate it with "Lärmende Menge" (= "a noisy crowd," cf. *RSV*: "in their throng"; *NJPS*: "who command them"). He further pointed out that personal names רגם (1 Chr 2:47) and רגם מלך (Zech 7:2) may reflect Akkadian *ragimu*, an epithet of the storm god Adad. Cf. also the Akkadian personal names listed in J. J. Stamm, *Die Akkadische Namengebung (MVAeG* 44, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1939) *Ṭāb-rigim-ili* "Beautiful is the voice of god;" *Ṭābā-rigimatu- dAdad* "Beautiful is Adad's voice" (p. 235); cf. also (p. 277).

[59]Akkadian text from R. Campbell Thompson, *The Epic of Gilgamish* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930) 26, translation from E. A. Speiser, [3]*ANET* 79.

[60]J. Nougayrol, "Textes hépatoscopiques d'époque ancienne conservés au Musée du Louvre (III)," *RA* 44 (1950) 1-40, pl. I-IV, esp. p. 26. In the following text from the time of Hammurapi dealing with a hepatoscopic consultation, *rigmu* stands for a legal complaint, *naplāssum ana kak[kim] iturma ruqam ittul rigmum* = "(Si) le 'regard (divin)' vers une 'arme' se retournant, regarde la 'membrane': plainte," (OB text AO 9066 lines 23-25), transliteration and translation from Nougayrol, p. 23. Cf. also W. von Soden, "Nominalformen und juristische Begriffsbildung im akkadischen: Die Nominalform *'qutulla*," in *Symbolae ad iura orientis antiqui pertinentes Paulo Koschaker dedicatae* (eds. T. Folkes, *et al.*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1939) 199-218, "Von *rgm* 'die Stimme erheben, schreien' wird ebenso ein Abstraktum *rignu* 'Ruf, Geschrei' gebildet; das 'Geschrei' zur Geltendmachung eines Anspruchs vor Gericht, die förmliche 'Klage', ist aber *rugummû*" (p. 200).

[61]W. von Soden, *AHw* 982-3.

[62]Cf. J.- R. Kupper, "Notes lexicographiques," *RA* 45 (1951) 120-130. He calls these lists "vocabulaires groupés." "On sais que ces deux séries ont pour but de présenter des vocables groupés pour des raisons de similitude ou d'opposition" (p. 120).

b. *Ḫubūru* and *rigmu* in the Atraḫasīs Epic

The epic dates from the time of the First Babylonian Dynasty.[63] Both *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* occur in the Atraḫasīs epic, although the latter term predominates.[64] The terms run like a *Leitmotiv* throughout the epic. Since the meaning of these terms depends on the way one understands and interprets the causes of the Deluge in Atraḫasīs, we must analyze this epic in a more extensive way.[65] *Rigmu* has a variety of connotations and only the context allows precise determination.

At the outbreak of the Deluge *rigmu* is the thunder of the storm, *ištagna* ^{d}*Adad ina erpeti ila išmu rigimšu* = "Adad roared in the clouds. As soon as he (i.e., Atraḫasīs) heard his voice" (i.e., thunder) (III ii 49-50).

Rigmu also appears as a "cry of complaint." Mother-goddess Mami hears humans crying (*rigmu*), overwhelmed by the Deluge. Their bodies are carried away like flies on the surface of the water. Touched by

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[63]Some tablets of the Atraḫasīs epic are datable to the time of Ammiṣaduqa (1646-1626 BCE), while the Assyrian recension comes from Aššurbanipal's library in Nineveh. cf. J. Laessoe, "The Atraḫasīs Epic: a Babylonian History of Mankind," *BiOr* 13 (1956) 90-107. The first fragment of the Epic was published by F. Delitzsch in his *Assyrische Lesestücke* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, ^{3}1855) 101. A series of scholars like G. Smith, P. Jensen, V. Scheil, A. T. Clay, H. Zimmern, and A. Boissier, played a major role in the extraordinary story of its recovery. Only in 1956 the correct sequence of the fragments was definitively established by J. Laessoe, *art. cit.*

[64]W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs, The Babylonian Story of the Flood*, with The Sumerian Flood Story by M. Civil (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969) see the glossary, s.v. On the Sumerian Flood story see also S. N. Kramer, "The Sumerian Deluge Myth," *AnSt* 33 (1983) 115-121. D. D. Luckenbill, "An Early Version of the Atra-ḫasīs Epic," *AJSL* 39 (1923) 153-60; Cf. also L. Matouš, "Review of Lambert-Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs*," *ArOr* 38 (1970) 74-6; J. Renger, "Review of Lambert-Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs*," *JNES* 32 (1973) 342-4; H. Cazelles, "Review of Lambert-Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs*," *RA* 64 (1970) 175-181. W. von Soden, Die erste Tafel des altbabylonischen Atramḫasīs-Mythus. 'Haupttext' und Parallelversionen," *ZA* 68 (1978) 50-94; *idem.*, "Konflikte und ihre Bewaltigung in babylonischen Schöpfungs -und Fluterzählungen. Mit einer Teil-'Ubersetzung des Atramḫasīs-Mythus," *MDOG* 111 (1979) 1ff. J. P. van der Westhuisen, "Some Proposed Restorations to Atraḫasīs," *BBVO* 6 (1986) 89-92.

[65]On the problems in translating the first line of the epic see, B. Gronenberg, "Terminativ- und Lokativadverbialis in altbabylonischen literarischen Texten," *AfO* 26 (1978-9) 15-29. R. Oden, "Divine Aspirations in Atraḫasīs," and in Genesis 1-11," *ZAW* 93 (1981) 197-216 (with bibliography and a review of different suggestions concerning the translation of the first line of *Atra*ḫasīs); Th. Jacobsen, "*Inuma Ilu awīlum*," *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of J. J. Finkelstein (MCAAS* 19, ed. M. de J. Ellis. Hamden: Connecticut, 1977) 113-7; A. D. Kilmer, "Notes on Akkadian uppu," *ibidem.*, pp. 129-38; J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 527-67, "Le Poème d'Atraḫasīs, ou du Supersage."

compassion for her creation she cries until she has no more tears, and her cry (*rigmu*) died away.

III iii 43 And to my own hurt I have listened to their cry
(*rigimšina ešme*) (L-M p. 95 "noise")
44 my offspring-cut off from me have become like flies!
46 And as for me, like the occupant
47 of a house of lamentation, my cry has died away
(*ina bît dimmati šaḫurru rigim*).[66]

The noise of the land is contrasted with the noise of the flood,

III iii 10 [*kīma karpati r*]*igimša iḫpi*
11 [...ita*ṣa*] *abūbu*
23 rigim *a*[*būb*]*i*

10 and shattered its noise [like a pot]
11 [...] the flood [set out]
23 the noise of the flood.

For our anaylysis it is significant that *rigmu* occurs in a context of rebellion and conflict between the gods. The beginning of the epic depicts the junior gods (the Igigi) doing the menial work, digging the beds of the waterways, at the behest of the senior gods (the Anunnaki). The younger gods found their *corvée* type of work unbearable.[67] They

[66]*Rigmu* connotes a "complaint" in the context of the forced labor of the gods I 179, [*tukku kab*]*i*[*t ni?še*]*me rigma*. Although Lambert-Millard translate: "[The lamentation was] heavy, [we could] hear the noise," in this line it might be more appropriate to translate *rigmu* with "complaint" in the light of what is said in I 177, *kabit dullāšun m*[*âd*] *šapšaqšun* = "Their work was heavy, their distress was much!" In the following context, *rigmu* might be a complaint out of distress as the gods feel oppressed by heavy labor I 242-243 *tašta'ita (=taštêta) rigma ana awēlūti aptur ulla andurā*[*ra aškuṭ*]*n* = "You have raised a complaint (asking for) humankind (to be created), I have loosened the yoke, I have established freedom."On *tukku* as a synonym of *rigmu* as attested in lists of synonyms see, J.- R. Kupper, "Notes lexicographiques," *RA* 45 (1951) 120-30, esp. pp. 120-125. Kupper takes the basic meaning of *tukku* to be "cri bruyant," and in certain contexts "cri d'alarme."

[67]According to von Soden this part of the Atraḫāsis epic may reflect the relationship between the Sumerian overlords and the various Semitic immigrants, called the Martu-people. During the Ur III period the latter were employed as canal diggers as well as for various building projects, cf. W. von Soden, "'Als die Götter (auch noch) Mensch waren' Einige Grundgedanken des altbabylonischen Atramḫāsis-Mythus," *Or* 38 (1969) 415-32, esp. p. 429. cf. also J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (Poème d'Atraḫāsis)," *Annuaire EPHE* IVe section (1967-68) 89-122, esp. pp. 113-22. According to Bottéro this passage shows that in ancient Mesopotamia corvée workers were occasionally instigating revolts, (*Atra*. II 1-7) "Tout le passage est important en ce que, tiré certainement de l'expérience, il contribue à montrer que les corvéables de l'ancienne Mésopotamie se révoltaient parfois," (p. 116); cf. also *idem*., "Le 'Dialogue pessimiste' et la Transcendance," *RThPh* 99 (1966) 7-17, esp. p. 14 n. 3; P. Garelli, "Asie occidentale ancienne," in *Histoire générale du travail* (ed. L.- H. Parias, Paris: F. Sant'Andréa et J.- G. Tronche, 1959) 50-104, esp. pp. 100, "les révoltes," and p. 102, "les grêves;" G. Evans, "The

held a meeting, decided to implement a "revolution" and to overthrow their taskmaster Enlil. (I ii 61-62) "Now proclaim war. Let us mingle hostilities and battle." Similar to the modern-day revolutionary slogan "burn, baby, burn," they burned their tools (I ii 65-66). In the night they went to besiege Enlil's temple. The god slept but his watchman Kalkal observed the approach of the attackers. He woke Nusku the vizier "and they listened to the noise" (I ii 77). In this context *rigmu* may stand for a riot, a violent public disturbance of the peace, and for hostility. The young gods were breaking an ancient social custom, the sacredness of the sleep.[68] The two major features of the Atraḫasīs epic are thus introduced: The sleep of the gods which is being upset and the excessive din causing annoyance.

An extraordinary session is held. The assembly of the great gods sends a messenger to inquire into the cause of the disturbance. The junior gods respond, "[Excessive] toil [has killed us], [our] work was heavy, [the distress much]" (I ii 149-50). It is hard to miss the irony and humor of this statement. The divine assembly decides to make a substitute do the work. The birth-goddess Mami is enjoined to supervise the creation of humankind. She asked for Enlil's assistance. He prepared the clay by mixing it with the flesh and blood of a slaughtered god Wê or Wê-ila,[69]

Incidence of Labour-Service at Mari," *RA* 57 (1963) 65-78; J. A. Brinkman, "Forced Laborers in the Middle Babylonian Period," *JCS* 32 (1980) 17-22. S. A. Picchioni, "Principi di etica sociale nel poema di Atraḫāsis," *OrAnt* 13 (1974) 83-111.

[68]The German commentators speak of "die Heiligkeit des Schlafes." In the ancient Near East during the night the neighbor should not be disturbed, his or her sleep being considered sacred. cf. L. Koehler, "Archäologisches," *ZAW* 36 (1916) 21-28, esp. p. 22; H.-J. Stoebe, *Das erste Buch Samuelis* (KAT, Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1973) 357. The motif of the assault at night appears as part of the "Sodomite theme" in Gen 19 and Judg 19. The outrage committed by the rapists is twofold: They disturb the sleep of their neighbors and they make a breach of the custom of hospitality. On Judg 19 see S. Niditch, "The 'Sodomite Theme' in Judges 19-20: Family, Community and Social Disintegration," *CBQ* 44 (1982) 365-78.

[69]According to Anne Kilmer there might be a wordplay between the name of the slaughtered god Wê-ilu and the Akkadian term for humans, *awēlu* in "The Mesopotamian Concept of Overpopulation and Its Solution as Reflected in the Mythology," *Or* 41 (1972) 160-77, esp. p. 164. The presence of another wordplay has been suggested by R. Labat in J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (Poème d'Atraḫasīs)," *Annuaire EPHE* IVe section (1967-68) 119. The god Wê was chosen because he had a *ṭēmmu* = "personality, spirit," (I 223). A few lines latter it is stated that the "spirit" (*eṭemmu*) of the humans was created from the flesh of the god (I 228 and 230). Labat pointed out that one fragment of the Atraḫasīs epic contains the unique reading of *weṭemmu* for *eṭemmu* which underlines this relationship. For a detailed treatment of this section of the epic see W. L. Moran, "The Creation of Man in Atraḫasīs I 192-248," *BASOR* 200 (1970) 48-56, and J. Bottéro, "La création de l'homme et sa nature dans le Poème d'Atraḫasīs," in *Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East, Studies in Honour of I. M. Diakonoff* (ed. J. N. Postgate *et al.*, Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1982) 24-32.

and gave it to the mother goddess. After other gods spat on it she made fourteen lumps of clay, while reciting the birth incantations. Seven males and seven females were created with the assistance of fourteen womb-goddesses, "they completed them in pairs in her (Mami's) presence" (S obv. iii 12-13). However, Mami is credited for the work, and she receives all the honor. In connection with her work she is called *Bēlet-kala-ilī* = "Mistress-of-All-the Gods."[70] As pointed out by P. Hanson, the creation process was a divinely sanctioned and supervised activity implying that *divine limits* must be set on the creative process generating the human race, "The point is that creation of mundane creatures is a serious business not to be engaged in lightly, but only at the consent of the convened assembly of the gods and in a way ordained by that body."[71]

The epic continues with the motif of overpopulation as part of the theme of encroachment and defiance of the limits set by the assembly of the gods. The human race multiplied and their noise became such that Enlil, who still dwelled on earth among humans, could not sleep. The term *ḫubūru* occurs seven times and always in parallelism with *rigmu*. Lambert and Millard translate them by "noise" and "uproar" respectively (I 355, 358-59; II i 7-8; S iv 2-3, 6-8, 40-41; X i 2'-3'). The rest of the Atraḫasīs epic describes Enlil's different control devices to reduce the human population and to silence their din. However, the humans did not heed the warnings which Enlil was sending in the form of plague, famine, drought, and blight. Enlil finally decides that the human race should be exterminated by the Deluge. Warned by Enki, Atraḫasīs, the hero of the epic, like the Biblical Noah, builds a boat and survives the Deluge.

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[70]This honorific name following the formula "X of all the Y" has been compared to Eve's title, חוי כל אם = "Mother of all the Living," by I. M. Kikawada, "Two Notes on Eve," *JBL* 91 (1972) 33-5. Cf. also Ch. Uehlinger, "Eva als 'lebendiges Kunstwerk' Traditionsgeschichtliches zu Gen 2,21-22(23.24) und 3,20," *BN* 43 (1988) 90-99. Kikawada has also traced some structural similarities between the Atraḫasīs epic and Gen 1-11, in *Literary Conventions Connected with Antediluvian Historiography in the Ancient Near East* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1979); *idem.*, "Literary Conventions of the Primeval History," *Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute* 1 (1975) 3-21; cf. also I. M. Kikawada and A. Quinn, *Before Abraham Was: A Provocative Challenge to the Documentary Hypothesis* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985). W. F. Albright, "The Babylonian Matter in the Predeuteronomic Primeval History (JE)," *JBL* 58 (1939) 87-103; On the myths concerning the creation of humans see G. Pettinato, *Das altorientalische Menschenbild und sumerischen und akkadischen Schöpfungsmythen* (AHAW Phil.- hist. Kl., Heidelberg; C. Winter, 1971); H. Kümmel, "Bemerkungen zu den altorientalischen Berichten von den Menschenschöpfung," *WO* 7 (1973) 25-38.

[71]P. D. Hanson, "Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6-11," *JBL* 96 (1977) 195-233, esp. p. 214.

The repeated efforts of the gods to enforce distinct limits upon the human race and the sending of the Deluge as the radical solution reminds one of the story in Gen 6. Underlying Gen 6:1-4 we find the theme of setting limits to the extension of the human race. In v. 1, we are told that humanity had multiplied (לרב) on the face of the earth. The increase in population becomes problematic when some divine beings (בני האלהים) add their sperm to the process. The transgression has a certain sexual sense and is related to irregular procreation. The divergent, anomalous and uncontrolled offspring from such unions offer unique problems. Being demigods (נפלים and גברים) they would live inordinately long lives. Yahweh is annoyed and decides to limit human life to hundred and twenty years (v. 3). The passage makes it dramatically clear that illicit procreation amounts to rebellion, to defiance of the divine order and to the blurring of the divinely set limits.[72] "Therefore, whether the root דון in v 3 is associated with the meaning "strive," or "abide," the lesson drawn is a common ancient Near Eastern theme: divine limits must be set on the creative process generating the human race."[73] The degeneration of the human race (v. 5, "every plan devised by his mind was evil all the time," *NJPS*),[74] prompted Yahweh to exterminate humanity.

There is a heated controversy among scholars whether the terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* in Atraḫasīs express some fault on the part of the humans

[72]Cf. H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901, [9]1977) 57, "Aber Jahveh schreitet gegen die Menschen ein aus demselben Motiv wie 3^{22}und 11^{6-8} : durch die Vermischung mit den Gottessöhnen hat die Menschheit Anteil an der göttlichen Natur bekommen: nach v 4 sind die Kinder jener Ehen Riesen."

[73]So P. D. Hanson, "Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6-11," *JBL* 96 (1977) 195-233,esp. p. 213. cf. also p. 215: "From all this it can be concluded that in ancient thought, the propagation of earthly beings was not a trifling activity to be entered into lightly. The relations between heaven and earth, as two realms separated since an age preceding the human race, were regulated by severe controls, and especially population growth was a complex phenomenon requiring control mechanisms such as barren women, virgin priestesses, pestilence and drought. Gods (or humans) who violated those sanctions were vulnerable to severe punishment. (...) Any unauthorized procreative activity was an unmistakable, blatant act of rebellion against the assembly of the gods."

[74]Only the Priestly source speaks of the violence (חמס, vv. 11, 13) which filled the earth. For a highly innovative interpretation of Gen 6:1-4, in the light of Babylonian hermeneutical device of "décomposition syllabique" (cf. the exegesis of Marduk's names and of the name Išum in the Poem of Erra, section 5.5.), see J. Koenig, *L'herméneutique analogique du Judïsme antique d'après les témoins textuels d'Isaïe* (*VTS* 33, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982) 396-403.

and whether the Deluge comes as a consequence of human depravity. On the one side, Heidel (1946),[75] von Soden (1969),[76] (but differently in 1973, see below) Moran (1971, 1987),[77] Kilmer (1972),[78] Frymer-Kensky (1977),[79] and Albertz (1980),[80] argue that the moral issue is either

[75]A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946, 1965) 268, "The main Babylonian flood story, (*Gilg.* XI) ... is 'steeped in the silliest polytheism' (...) in none of the other Babylonian legends do we find any reason at all for the deluge, (...) in the Babylonian stories it is nowhere emphasized that the gods were actuated by moral ideals or that the flood was a divine visitation on human corruption." According to Heidel here lies the main difference with the Biblical narrative, "In the Book of Genesis the deluge is a righteous retribution for the sins of the ungodly" (p. 226).

[76]W. von Soden, "'Als die Götter (auch noch) Mensch waren' Einige Grundgedanken des altbabylonischen Atramḫasīs-Mythus," *Or* 38 (1969) 415-32, esp. p. 426. In this earlier article von Soden expressed a negative view concerning the existence of a moral issue in the Atraḫasīs epic. He argued that the epic offers no clear statement about the guilt or culpability of humankind as a reason for the Deluge, "über dessen (von Menschen) Schuldhaftigkeit sich das Epos nicht ganz eindeutig äussert."

[77]W. L. Moran, "Atraḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood," *Bib* 52 (1971) 51-61. Moran criticizes and rejects Pettinato's argument that the term *ḫubūru* has a moral connotation of rebellion. In his article "Some Considerations of Form and Interpretation in Atra-ḫasīs," in *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to E. Reiner* (ed. F. Rochberg-Halton, AOS 67, New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1987) 245-55, Moran has reviewed once again a number of arguments for the guilt of humans in Atraḫasīs epic in an attempt to invalidate them.

[78]Kilmer argues for the primacy of the "theme of overpopulation," in "The Mesopotamian Concept of Overpopulation and Its Solution as Reflected in the Mythology," *Or* 41 (1972) 160-77.

[79]T. Frymer-Kensky, "The Atraḫasīs Epic and Its Significance for our Understanding of Genesis 1-9," *BAR* 40 (1977) 147-55, restates that the Atraḫasīs epic deals primarily with the problem of overpopulation.

[80]R. Albertz, "Die Kulturarbeit im Atraḫasīs im Vergleich zur biblischen Urgeschichte," in *Werden und Wirken des Alten Testaments. Festschrift C. Westermann* (ed. R. Albertz *et al.*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980) 38-57. The originality of this article is the application of the method of *Traditionsgeschichte* to the Atraḫasīs epic. In this epic the author sees the blending of two originally independent traditions. The first part of the epic deals with the creation of humans destined for work "*Kulturarbeit*" (defined as cultivation of soil but also as the realization of socio-cultural achievements of civilization) and would stem from the Sumerian myth of Enki and Ninmaḫ The second part of Atraḫasīs deals with the Deluge and the human noise. It has as its precursor the Sumerian Deluge myth. Albertz criticizes von Soden's view of *ḫubūru* as an expression of human noisy activities in their strivings to go beyond the basic "*Kulturarbeit*" which the gods imposed upon them. According to Albertz, *ḫubūru* belongs to the Deluge myth and not to the "*Kulturarbeit*" tradition. However, Albertz's neat explanation is invalidated by the fact that in the Sumerian Deluge myth the human "Kulturarbeit" is a prominent feature. In the Sumerian Deluge myth one reads about the irigation, city building, and kingship. cf. Th. Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," *JBL* 100 (1981) 531-529, "(Ninḫursag) decided to call mankind home from a nomadic, vagrant existence, to have them build cities and temples, and thus become sedentary and civilized" (p. 514). "She is planning to provide mankind with leadership, giving them a king to organize the work and carry out the necessary rites," (p.

nonexistent or secondary, overshadowed by the problem of overpopulation. On the other side, Jensen (1900),[81] Speiser (1955),[82] Laessoe (1956),[83] Finkelstein (1958),[84] Kramer (1961),[85] Frankena (1965),[86] Pettinato (1968),[87] and Durand (1986),[88] argue that there exist moral reasons which prompt Enlil to send the Deluge in the Atraḫasīs epic. Moreover, the terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* express in a metaphoric or mythological guise human wicked behavior and rebellion, i.e., the noise of their rebellious activity. The following quote comes from the introduction to Enlil's complaint before the first and second plague.

II 2 *matūm irtapiš niš*[ū *im*]*līdā*

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517).

[81]P. Jensen, *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen* (KB VI, Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1900) 541 *ḫub(p)ur*= "vielleicht Sünde," cf. his lengthy discussion on pp. 307-309.

[82]E.A.Speiser, "Atraḫasīs," ³*ANET* 104. He describes Atraḫasīs as "a large epic cycle dealing with man's sins and his consequent punishment through plagues and the deluge."

[83]J. Laessoe, "The Atraḫasīs Epic: a Babylonian History of Mankind," *BiOr* 13 (1956) 90-102. "The Neo-Assyrian version of the Atraḫasīs Epic (K 3399+, "obv.") suggests that man's continued failure to mind Enlil's warnings - man's obstinate disobedience to the divine will - lead to the final decision that mankind should be exterminated by a flood (*abūbu*)" (p. 92).

[84]J. J. Finkelstein, "Bible and Babel," A Comparative Study of the Hebrew and Babylonian Religious Spirit," *Commentary* 26 (1958) 431-44, esp. p. 437. "Noise and clamor" are seen as metaphors for human wicked behavior.

[85]Kramer speaks of the "repeated efforts (of the sage Atraḫasīs) to save mankind from destruction at the hands of the gods angered by man's chronic depravity and evil doing." He describes humankind as "noisy, rebellious, and clamorous" in *Mythologies of the Ancient World* (ed. S. N. Kramer, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961) 127.

[86]R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: Brill, 1965) 9-12. Frankena compared *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* to Hebrew חָמָס, arguing that in Atraḫasīs, Erra and in Ezekiel the terms designate human presumptuousness and *hybris*.

[87]G. Pettinato, "Die Bestrafung des Menschengeschlechts durch die Sintflut," *Or* 37 (1968) 165-200. Pettinato's main contention is that human "din" in Atraḫasīs implies "böses treiben, Aufstand" (= "to pursue evil, rebellion"), so that Enlil did not destroy the human race for mere noise.

[88]Although we have included Durand's opinion within this category his view is somewhat more nuanced. J. M. Durand, "Les écrits mésopotamiens," in *Écrits de l'Orient ancien et sources bibliques* (ed. A. Barucq et al. Paris: Desclée 1986) 109-155. "Ce 'bruit' tout physique est l'annonce de la 'clameur d'iniquité' qui s'attache à l'homme dans la version biblique. (...) Si l'interprétation moralisante peut déjà être proposée, comme pour la Bible, le narrateur n'a pas éprouvé, cependent, le besoin de l'expliciter de façon construite" (p. 139).

3 [*m*]*ātum kīma lî išabbu*
4 [*in*]*a ḫubūrīšina ilu itta'dar*
5 [^{d}*Enl*]*il išteme rigimšin*
6 *issaqar ana ilī rabûtim*
7 *iktabta rigim awēlūti*
8 *ina ḫubūrīšina uzamma šitta*

2 When the land extended and the peoples multiplied.
3 The land was bellowing like a bull,
4 The god became disturbed with their uproar.
5 Enlil heard their noise.
6 And addressed the great gods,
7 The noise of humankind has become too intense for me
8 With their uproar I am deprived of sleep.[89]

According to Moran, "There is ... no hint of rebellion in the *rigmu* of this passage, and so such a connotation may not be read into the word ... The obvious meaning is that an ever increasing population had resulted in such a din and racket that sleep became impossible."[90] First, the fact that the size of the population is mentioned indicates that it is connected with the "din." Second, in the introduction to the second plague in the Assyrian recension, Enlil first notes that "The people have not diminished, their numbers are more excessive than before" [*niš*]*ū lā imtâ ana ša pāna ittatrā*. In Moran's opinion, "the numbers of the people and the noise could hardly be associated more closely."[91] Working independently, Anne Kilmer argued that the epic reflects the ancients' concern for the problem of overpopulation.[92] Humankind increased uncontrollably and famine, epidemics and the Deluge were interpreted as signs of divine displeasure with the situation. Before the Deluge human fertility was thought to have been limitless. The epic reveals that both gods and humans take measures to keep the size of the population down. On the one hand, barrenness among women and infant mortality is interpreted as divinely sanctioned. The plague, pestilence, drought and

[89]Akkadian text and translation from Lambert-Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs, The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969) 73. For the expression *uzamma šitta* "I am deprived of sleep," see S. Smith, "Miscellanea," *RA* 22 (1925) 57-70, esp. pp. 67-8.

[90]W. L. Moran, "Atraḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood," *Bib* 52 (1971) 51-61, esp. p. 56.

[91]W. L. Moran, *art. cit.*, 56, the Assyrian recension is quoted from Lambert-Millard, 108 l. 39.

[92]A. D. Kilmer, "The Mesopotamian Concept of Overpopulation and Its Solution as Reflected in the Mythology," *Or* 41 (1972) 160-77.

other disasters are seen as "natural" means by which gods control human numbers. On the other hand, humans introduced some social innovations like celibacy, cloistered women, and in another text, methods of intercourse that would avoid pregnancy.[93]

This Malthusian reading of the Atraḫasīs epic centered on the problem of overpopulation has been questioned in recent scholarly discussion without, however, really invalidating it. The most extensive critique of this interpretation comes from R. Oden,[94] inspired by Von Soden's recent article. Von Soden,[95] followed by Oden, remains unconvinced by the overpopulation hypothesis, saying first, that the argument is not supported by a thorough examination of the key terms in the epic, and second, that this interpretation is not supported by other texts. According to Oden and Von Soden, one finds no mention of this motif either in omen literature or in royal inscriptions.[96] This objection is of limited value since the motif of overpopulation as a threat to the gods occurs in the Poem of Erra (I 77), a reference which both authors failed to take into account. The Sebetti are alarmed and urge Erra to take prompt action, "Before the whole country overwhelms us." A few lines latter it is affirmed that the sleep of the gods is disturbed, "Because of men's noise the Anunnaki cannot fall asleep," (I 81). However, the Poem of Erra adds a new feature by emphasizing that the demographic explosion represents a threat to the gods. This feature is absent in Atraḫasīs. Nevertheless, the Poem of Erra reflects the same connection

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[93]A. D. Kilmer, "The Mesopotamian Concept of Overpopulation and Its Solution as Reflected in Mythology," *Or* 41 (1972) 160-77, esp. p. 172, and R. Harris, "The *Nadītu* Woman," in *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute 1964) 106-139.

[94]R. A. Oden, "Divine Aspirations in Atraḫasīs and in Genesis 1-11," *ZAW* 93 (1981) 197-216. Cf. also S. A. Picchioni, "Principi di etica sociale nel poema di Atraḫasīs," *OrAnt* 13 (1974) 83-111, esp. p. 109 n. 6.

[95]W. von Soden, "Der Mensch bescheidet sich Nicht, Überlegungen zu Schöpfungserzählungen in Babylonien un Israel," in *Symbolae Biblicae et Mesopotamicae F. M. T. De Liagre Böhl Dedicatae* (eds. M. A. Beek, A. A. Kampman, C. Nijland, J. Ryckmans, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) 349-58. In criticizing A. Kilmer's article (*Or* 41 [1972] 160-77), Von Soden says, "Sie stützt ihre Auffassung allerdings weder auf eine gründliche Untersuchung der wesentlichen Termini noch auf die Prüfung der Frage, was in Texten anderer Gattungen zu diesem Problem gesagt wird" (p. 358).

[96]R. A. Oden, "Divine Aspirations in Atraḫasīs and in Genesis 1-11," *ZAW* 93 (1981) 207, "A second consideration which weakens the overpopulation reading of the myth is this: never elsewhere, not in omen texts' predictions of bad-luck, not in the threats in royal inscriptions, is there any mention of overpopulation as a phenomenon to be feared."

between the sleep of the gods which is upset and the overpopulation motif as in the Atraḫasīs epic.

The following objection, made by Oden, is again of very limited value since it is an *argumentum a silentio*. Oden insists on the fact that at least thirty lines of Tablet III vii are either too fragmentary to read or entirely missing. While those post-flood regulations which remain for us to read do deal with methods of population control, we do not know the content of the regulations which are now lost. "These observations may mean that the birth control regulations which remain at the end of Atraḫasīs are wholly misleading for one interested in the nature of the human crime which brought on the flood."[97] Furthermore, Oden suspects that Moran and Frymer-Kensky are overstating the issue of overpopulation in an attempt to see in the Bible a direct refutation of the conclusions in Atraḫasīs.[98]

Von Soden has argued that *ḫubūru* means more than simply "noise as such" (*Lärm als solchen*) and rather indicates "noisy activities" (*lärmende Aktivitäten*).[99] This means that the humans went beyond their original task of relieving the gods from their hard work. Overstepping their limits they undertook to do much more. Their planning capacity was given to them through the blood of the rebel god *Wê* who was sacrificed and who possessed the *ṭēmu* (*Planungsfähigkeit*).[100] According to Von Soden, the

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[97]R. A. Oden, *art. cit.*, p. 208.

[98]W. L. Moran, "Atraḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood," *Bib* 52 (1971) 51-61, esp. p. 61, "Gen 9:1ff. looks like a conscious rejection of the AtraAtraḫasīs Epic"; T. Frymer-Kensky, "The Atraḫasīs Epic and Its Significance for our Understanding of Genesis 1-9," *BA* 40 (1977) 147-55, esp. p. 150, (Gen 9:1) is "an explicit rejections of the idea that the flood came as a result of attempts to decrease man's population"; R. A. Oden, "Divine Aspirations in Atraḫasīs and in Genesis 1-11," *ZAW* 93 (1981) 207, "The appeal of this reading of Atraḫasīs in the light of Gen 9 is so strong that one ought to be aware of the strong potential for eisegesis here."

[99]W. von Soden, "Der Mensch bescheidet sich Nicht, Überlegungen zu Schöpfungserzählungen in Babylonien un Israel," in *Symbolae Biblicae et Mesopotamicae F. M. T. De Liagre Böhl Dedicatae* (eds. M. A. Beek, *et al.*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) 349-58, esp. p. 353. The author refers to a passage in his article, "Die Unterweltvision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen," *ZA* 43 (1936) 1-31, esp. p. 18, line 61, *ina ḫubūrīšin[a š]amrāti lā irḫīka šitt[u]*, = "auf daß bei ihre[m r]asenden Lärmen der Schla[f] sich nicht über dir ergieße." cf. E. A. Speiser, ^{3}*ANET* 110, "Because of their fierce uproar sleep shall not engulf thee." Von Soden points out that in this passage *ḫubūru* is followed by a feminine plural attribute *šamru* "heftig, ungestüm," (= "fierce, impetuous, vehement"). The line appears in a context of a threat or a curse against Kumâ (the Assyrian prince) if he forgets Nergal: "The maddening racket" will deprive him of sleep.

[100]W. von Soden, "Der Mensch bescheidet sich nicht," p. 353-4: "Wenn dem so ist, wird also die Störung der Götter im AM nicht durch den Lärm als solchen, sondern durch lärmenden Aktivitäten verursacht. Das bedeutet aber, daß die Menschen damals bereits über ihren ursprünglichen Auftrag, den Göttern schwere Arbeit abzunehmen, hinausgingen und selbständig viel mehr unternahmen. Die Fähigkeit dazu war ihnen mit dem Blut des planungfähigen Gottes auf den Weg gegeben worden."

"fault" of the humans before the flood was their striving to reach always for more through their diverse activities, more than what the gods wanted to allow them, refusing to remain resignated with their lot.

> Die 'Schuld' der Menschen vor der Sintflut war also nicht einfach ihre 'Sünde' (so Pettinato, *Or* 37,165ff.), sondern ihr Bemühen, durch mannigfache Aktivitäten immer mehr zu erreichen, mehr als die Götter ihnen zugestehen wolten. Sie waren nicht bereit, sich zu bescheiden.[101]

In support of von Soden's interpretation of *ṭēmu* ("power to plan")[102] as an expression of human desire for self-determination and their decision to "strike it on their own" irrespectfully of what the gods wanted them to do, one may point out that this term is used to describe Marduk's self-determination and self-begettal.

> *ša ina ṭēmīšu ibanû anāku* who was born of his own will, am I.[103]

The same is affirmed of other gods like Sîn who is born (created) of his own will, *ša ina ramānīšu ibanû*, of Aššur, *banû ramānīšu*, and in a prayer to Marduk used on the fifth day of Nissan for the Akîtu festival, *mulu* NE.NE.GAR *ša ina ramānīšu banû* "the star NE.NE.GAR who is born of his own will."[104] These examples show clearly the relationship between self-will and self-procreation and might shed some valuable light on our interpretation of the Atraḫasīs epic which deals with the problem of irregular procreation on the part of humans.

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[101]W. von Soden, *art. cit.*, p. 354. A somewhat similar view is held by T. Jacobsen in his discussion of Atraḫasīs, "Man's existence is precarious, his usefulness to the gods will not protect him unless he takes care not to become a nuisance to them, however innocently. There are, he should know, limits set for his self-expression." *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1975) 121.

[102]Cf. E. Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1959, 1970) 2, "Denken ist Überschreiten."

[103]Akkadian text and translation from W. G. Lambert, "An Address of Marduk to the Demons," *AfO* 17 (1954-56) 310-21, esp. p. 315 (fragment F, l. 6), and pp. 318, 320.

[104]The references with full Sumerian and Akkadian quoatations are listed in W. G. Lambert *art. cit.*, p. 320, (Sîn) IV R 9 22-23; (Aššur) Craig *ABRT* I, p. 83, l. 1; (prayer to Marduk) F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadien* (Paris: Leroux, 1921) 138 l. 311 ("L'astre NE.NE.GAR. qui est créé de lui-même"). As pointed out by Lambert, the self-begettal of a god is an intermediary step between a god born by the will of his parents, and a god with no beginning. "The doctrine itself probably arose from the automatic 'rebirth' of stars after eclipses and after periods when they were not visible" (p. 320).

Oden has combined Pettinato's and Von Soden's interpretations of Atraḫasīs saying that their readings are not, after all, significantly different,

> The two can be combined into one sentence descriptive of Atraḫasīs: the crime for which humanity is punished in the Atraḫasīs Epic is the crime of rebellion (G. Pettinato); and the source of this rebellion is the human tendency to over-reach its limits and to encroach upon divine territory (W. von Soden).[105]

Summary: While the arguments of Von Soden and Oden against the overpopulation theory are not equally compelling they bring a corrective to our understanding of the Atraḫasīs epic. The interpretation of this epic should not be centered exclusively on the overpopulation motif. The fact that beside the Atraḫasīs epic only the Poem of Erra mentions the motif of overpopulation indicates that in Mesopotamian literature in general this phenomenon was not considered as a major problem. Moreover, it is only in the rather late Poem of Erra that the overpopulation is presented as a threat to the gods. In the Atraḫasīs epic there is no indication that the gods are threatened by the excessive numbers of the humans. Therefore, one should explore the meaning of the overpopulation motif in the overall context of the Atraḫasīs epic. What does it express in an epic which deals extensively with the creation of humans, and the issue of birth regulations? What kind of irregularity or offense does it represent? The motif of the disturbance of the gods provoked by human *ḫubūru* might be as important for the correct interpretation of the Atraḫasīs epic as the problem of overpopulation. In spite of Moran's criticism[106] of Von Soden's and Oden's interpretations we still think that they capture some of the meaning of the terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* in the Atraḫasīs epic. In our opinion, the two interpretations of the Atraḫasīs epic (overpopulation theory of Kilmer and Moran) and human self-assertion over against the will of the gods (Von Soden and

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[105]R. A. Oden, "Divine Aspirations in Atraḫasīs and in Genesis 1-11," *ZAW* 93 (1981) 208. "The combination of ...*ṭēmu* with the flesh and blood of the newly created *awīlum*, ... seems designated to lead to raucus, demanding assemblies - to meetings of scheming humans noisily planning ways to alter the divinely established order so that their status might become something more than workers for the gods. That, we submit, is the crime committed by the first humans in Atraḫasīs, and the crime against which the Epic's concluding "Hear!" is a warning," (p. 210).

[106]W. L. Moran, "Some Considerations of Form and Interpretation in Atra-ḫasīs," in *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to E. Reiner* (ed. F. Rochberg-Halton, AOS 67, New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1987) 245-55, esp. pp. 251-55.

Oden), should not be seen in an either/or alternative. Rather, they seem to be intimately related as wee will try to show. However, the primary meaning of the terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* in the Atraḫasīs epic should be sought in relationship to the human irregular procreation manifest in their excessive pursuit of fertility, and to this we now turn.

Elena Cassin has attempted to reconcile the two conflicting interpretations of the Atraḫasīs epic by combining the issue of overpopulation with the interpretation of *ḫubūru* as an expression of human *hybris*.[107] According to Cassin, *ḫubūru*, a key word in the epic, evokes "movement, agitation, turbulence." She defines it as a "resounding provoked by everything which grows and multiplies in a limited space." She sees it as a consequence of overpopulation.[108] However, she argues that the demographic incontinence of humans represents a form of *hybris*, "L'incontinence démographique des hommes est en définitive une forme *d'hybris* qui se manifeste par le vacarme produit par les masses humaines."[109] In our opinion this interpretation which connects the overpopulation motif with *hybris* is the most promising one. Human procreation in the first part of the Atraḫasīs epic (parts of which appear to have been used as a birth incantation) is presented as an activity under special divine sanction and control (cf. P. Hanson), while the epic ends with the imposition of the means of birth control. The tendency of human beings to go beyond the limits set by the gods to their self expression is a reflection of their *hybris* (cf. Von Soden, Jacobsen and Oden). However, the human *hybris* is already manifest in the demographic incontinence. The Atraḫasīs epic speaks of human pursuit

[107]E. Cassin, "La contestation dans le monde divin," *La voix de l'opposition en Mésopotamie* (ed. A. Finet, Bruxelles: Institut des Hautes Etudes, 1973) 89-110, "*ḫubūru* "signifie la résonnance provoquée par tout ce qui croît et se multiplie dans un espace limité. (...) Il s'agit essentiellement d'un phénomène lié à la croissance et au foisonnement. Le mythe d'Atraḫasīs fait apparaître un ordre du monde dont la loi est la fixité. L'équilibre qui règle le rapport numérique entre les dieux et les hommes, créés pour servir les dieux, ne doit pas être rompu ni dans un sens, ni, surtout, dans l'autre" (p. 90 n. 3).

[108]Cf. already A. Kilmer, "The Mesopotamian Concept of Overpopulation and Its Solution as Reflected in the Mythology," *Or* 41 (1972) 167: "Our understanding of man's offense must be based primarily on his numerical increase, and only secondarily on his noisiness, which may be regarded as the natural consequence of the many lively beings." However, Von Soden has pointed out that *ḫubūru* may be provoked as a result of multiple "noisy activities," and not only as a result of demographic increase.

[109]Cassin, "La contestation dans le monde divin," p. 90 n. 3.

of fertility carried to excess (cf. S. Smith).[110] It depicts human sexual action probably for the sake of cultural advance in the realm of agriculture, (i.e., in order to have a greater working population). The amazing extension of human fertility in this epic is the result of human *hybris* of going beyond the imposed limits. It entails the breaking of the taboos of procreation; it provokes the natural infertility reflected in the plagues; it angers the gods who send the flood, and brings about the break down of order and organization of a sedentary society. These have to be restored by new means of control. As G. S. Kirk put it, "irregular procreation leads to unfortunate results."[111] Seen in this light *ḫubūru* could well express human immoderation, insolence and tendency to go beyond the divinely imposed limits, descriptions which correspond to our definition of *hybris*.[112]

c. *Rigmu* in *Enūma eliš*

The Babylonian Epic of Creation enjoyed considerable popularity beginning with the eleventh century BCE.[113] The first tablet depicts the primordial condition when the heavens and the earth were not yet named (i.e., created I 1-2).[114] The only thing which existed was the

[110]The idea of excessive human fertility as the problem in the Atraḫasīs epic has been intimated in 1925 by Sidney Smith, "Miscellanea," *RA* 22 (1925) 57-70, esp. p. 68. Discussing *Atra*. II 4, he suggested that the term *ḫubūru* should be understood "in the sexual sense" and he compared it with Hebrew עבר as used in Job 21:10 שׁוֹרוֹ עבר חלא יגעל = "Their bull breeds and does not fail" (*NJPS*)

[111]Cf. G. S. Kirk, *Myth, Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, 1973) 107, cf. his entire section on "Irrigation and fertility," (pp. 90-107). This connection with Kirk's analysis of sexual activity and irrigation has been suggested by Oden who, however, elaborates his own interpretation.

[112]The sin of irregular procreation in Gen 6:1-4 parallels to a certain degree some features of the Atraḫasīs epic. The epic does not denigrate human "Kulturarbeit" as something negative. It criticizes the means used by humans in order to achieve cultural advancement by pointing out the dangers of excessive human fertility for a sedentary and agricultural society. Further cultural advancement requires particular regulations.

[113]In the course of the New Year (*Akītu*) festival at Babylon a battle in which Marduk ritually defeated Ti'âmat was ritually enacted, cf. W. G. Lambert, "Myth and Ritual as Conceived by the Babylonians," *JSS* 13 (1968) 104-122. In the course of the same festival *Enūma eliš* was recited to the statue of Marduk by a priest, so F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1921) 136. According to Lambert, the only period when one can be sure that this ritual took place is from 625 to 539 BCE under the late Babylonian kings. Late Assyrian sources confirm that the festival was essentially the same from about 750 BCE. No evidence exists to ascertain how much farther back the festival went.

[114]Cf. the translation of *En.el.* I 1-2 offered by M. Held, "Two Philological Notes on *Enūma eliš*," *Kramer Anniversary Volume* (ed. B. L. Leichty, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976) 231-39, esp. pp. 231-2, "When on high heaven had not (yet) been created, Earth below had not (yet) been brought into being."

immobile, stagnant, and dormant watery mass called Apsû (the subterranean sweet water) and Ti'âmat (the salt water). Their waters intermingled creating a fertile life-giving milieu. The couple Ti'âmat and Apsû beget children who represent the forces carriers of a new world. The junior gods are agitated as over against the senior ones who are inert, silent and immobile. To the need of quietude and sleep of the older generation is opposed the turbulence of the younger one.[115] The latter with their movements, singing and dancing roil violently Ti'âmat's interior. This excessive agitation annoys Apsû who, prompted by one of his descendants, Mummu, decides to exterminate his children.

I 21 *innendūma aṯḫū ilāni*
22 *ešū Tiamatma namuššunu ištappū*
23 *dalḫūnima ša Tiamat*[116] *karassa*
24 *ina šu'āri šu'duru qereb Andurunna*
25 *lā našir Apsû rigimšun*

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[115]According to Cassin the need for sleep in connection with gods indicates that they are losing an essential quality: vigilance. The god is no more the one who sees and knows everything. Cf. E. Cassin, *La splendeur divine, Introduction à l'étude de la mentalité mésopotamienne* (Paris: Mouton, 1968) 32-35. In the Bible the "sleep motif" is used in a similar way, cf. Ps 44:23 "Rouse yourself! Why do you sleep, O Yahweh? Awake! Do not cast us forever! (24) Why do you hide your face!" In 1 Kgs 18:27, Elijah's makes a sarcastic remark in his contest with the prophets of Baal, "perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." Moreover, sleep may also be a metaphor for death. *Gilg.* X vi 33, may refer to the similarity of the sleeping and the dead. Gilgameš who desired immortality was unable to fend off sleep (XI 203-4), intimating that his quest was going to end in failure. His inability to stay awake foreshadows his inability to live eternally. In Job 3:11-13 sleep is a metaphor for death, (11) "Why did not I die at birth? ...(13b) "For then I should have slept"; cf. also 1 Cor 15:6. In the Talmudic tradition "sleep is one-sixtieth of death" (BT *Berakot* 57b). In *Iliad* 14,231 and the *Aeneid* 6,278 sleep is death's brother, cf. J. H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982) 5 n. 2. J. G. S. Thomson, "Sleep: An Aspect of Jewish Anthropology," *VT* 5 (1955) 421-33.

[116]In his article on "The Book of Nahum," *JBL* 26 (1907) 1-53, esp. p. 44 n 9, P. Haupt derived תְּהוֹם from the root הוּם and brought it into relationship with Akkadian *ûmu, mûmu* and *Ti'âmat*. According to Haupt these words are from the same semantic field. The primary meaning of Heb הוּם would be "to roar" and is comparable to Akkadian *ûmu* = "the roaring of a tempest." *Ti'âmat* (a feminine noun, cf. Hebrew תְּהוֹם, a masc. form) denotes the roaring of the billows of the sea. A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942, 1963) 99, has argued the contrary, saying that although תְּהוֹם and Ti'âmat are etymologically related their semantic fields are different. Cf. also Baumann's article "תְּהוֹם ,הָמָה" in *TDOT III* 414-18, who dissociates the term תְּהוֹם from הוּם (against Haupt). For a detailed analysis of these terms see D. T. Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2. A Linguistic Investigation* (JSOT Supplement 83, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989)

26 *u Tiamat šuqummumat ina pānīšun*
27 *imtarṣāmma epšetāšun elī*[*š*]*a*
28 *lā ṭābat alkassun šunūti igamela*

I 21 The divine brethren met together
22 and nimbly stepping toward one another, they roiled Ti'âmat,
23 roiled Ti'âmat's belly.
24 By dancing they had the heart of heaven's foundation worried.
25 Apsû could not subdue their clamor (*rigmu*),
26 and Tiamat kept silent before them.
27 Though their doings were noisome to her,
28 and their ways not good, she indulged them.[117]

Considering the cluster of words such as *ešû* = "to confuse, bewilder,"[118] *dalāḫu* = "to becloud, roil,"[119] *šu'duru* = "to frighten," *šuqummumu* = "to be speechless," as well as the comment that what the young gods were doing "was not good"(28),[120] Pettinato questions the

[117]For the Akkadian text we follow W. G. Lambert - S. B. Parker, *Enūma eliš, The Babylonian Epic of Creation, The Cuneiform Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), and C. Wilcke, "Die Anfänge der akkadischen Epen," *ZA* 67 (1977) 153-216, esp. pp. 163-168, with the translation of T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1975) 170. According to Jacobson one might be dealing here with a projection of an earthly situation into a heavenly realm. He suggests the progression from initial anarchy to primitive democracy to monarchy as the major structural line in the epic. The first part of the epic would reflect the unstable socio-political organization of the Old Babylonian period. An *ad hoc* war leader, chosen in the general assembly when common danger called for unanimity, imposed his supremacy, which in turn resulted in permanent monarchy.

[118]The verb *ešû* occurs in the Old Babylonian Kutha Legend where presumably Narām-Sîn describes his bewilderment having lost altogether 540,000 troops in an attempt to stave off the invader, iii 8, *anāku essiḫi enniši* = "I became confused, I was bewildered." (N forms of *seḫu* and *ešû*), so J. J. Finkelstein, "The So-Called 'Old Babylonian Kutha Legend,'" *JCS* 11 (1957) 83-8. Finkelstein dates this fragment to the same time as the Atraḫasīs epic.

[119]The primary meaning of *dalāḫu* is "to roil, agitate (water)." In *The Descent of Ištar* (Assyrian version l. 27) Ištar is called *dāliḫat apsî maḫar* ^{d}*Ea* = "she who stirs up the deep before Ea." cf. also *Gilg.* VI 56. This corresponds to Hebrew רלח מים "trouble the waters," in Ezek 32:2, 12. In support of Pettinato's interpretation one may point out that *dalaḫu* may also convey the notion of political confusion, e.g., *mātu iddallaḫ*, "the country will be thrown into confusion," (*CT* 27,2, obv. 8 quoted in *CAD D,* 46); *awēlū qaqqadātam ša mātam annītam idluḫū*, "the ring leaders who have caused a disturbance in this country," (*ARM* V 2 r. 6, quoted in *CAD D,* 44). For a detailed discussion of this term see M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation Columbia University, New York, 1970) 41-2.

[120]We would compare the expression *lā ṭābat* = "not good," to a similar expression *lā* damqa equally meaning "not good," but which in the following example carries a connotation of "evil." In an incantation against the evil spirits *Utukkê lemnūti*, KAR 24 17, they are described in the following way, [*sebettīšunu ša ina šamê zizāti unašširu ša*] *rigimšunu lā damqa* = "These are the seven who in heaven diminish the portions, whose roar (*rigmu*) is evil." Akkadian text with translation from O. R. Gurney, "Babylonian Prophylactic Figures and Their Rituals," *AAA* 22 (1935) 31-96, esp. p. 95.

traditional interpretation which sees here simply excessive exuberance and youthful vivacity of the juniors. He interprets this passage as a plot of the younger gods to overthrow the existing order.[121] Oppenheim saw here a disguised age-old story of primeval incest[122] while according to Jacobsen, the passage reflects "the parricide theme."[123] The context is that of a theomachy, a war and power-struggle between the younger and the older gods. The former want to seize power, and the very foundation of heaven is challenged. Their "dance" culminates in a parricide. It is a foreboding dance akin to a *danse macabre*. Out of the dead carcass of one of the parents the world is created. Apsû is alarmed,

I 37 *imtarṣāmma alkassun elīya*
38 *uriš lā šupšuḫaku mūšiš lā sallaku*

37 Their ways have become noisome to me!
38 I am allowed no rest by day, by night no sleep.[124]

In our opinion the context seems to support Pettinato's interpretation. With reference to *Enūma eliš*, E. Cassin, speaks of the "conflict of generations" and makes a rapprochement with the Atraḫasīs epic.[125] In the latter the gods impose control devices and offset the newly strengthened position of the humans. By contrast in *Enūma eliš* the

[121]G. Pettinato, "Die Bestrafung des Menschengeschlechts durch die Sintflut," *Or* 37 (1968) 196, suggests that *rigmu* should be translated with "Kriegsgeschrei." His proposal has been criticized by W. L. Moran, "Atraḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood," *Bib* 52 (1971) 57 n. 3. However, one can hardly characterize the dance which leads to parricide as simply "not pleasant" as Moran suggests.

[122]A. L. Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Mythology I," *Or* 16 (1947) 207-238, "Not only did he (the poet) substitute the motif of "noise" for that of incest, but he attempts also to hide the individuality of the main actor - and we have every reason to assume that Ea was the lover of Tiamat - behind the anonymous plurality of the expression *at-ḫu-ú ilāni* (line 21)" (p. 210).

[123]T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1975) 186, "An open conflict of generations follows and ends in parricide, after which the slayer founds his own house upon the body of the dead parent."

[124]Akkadian text from W. G. Lambert - S. B. Parker, *Enūma eliš, The Babylonian Epic of Creation, The Cuneiform Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966) *ad loc.*, translation from T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1975) 171. Cf. J. Krecher, "Review of Lambert-Parker, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation. The Cuneiform Text*," *ZA* 60 (1970) 216-17.

[125]E. Cassin, *La splendeur divine. Introduction à l'étude de la mentalité mésopotamienne* (Paris/La Haye: Mouton, 1968) 36. cf. also R. Caplice, "Review of E. Cassin, *La splendeur divine*," *Or* 38 (1969) 482-83.

younger gods gain the upper hand in the conflict and succeed in dislodging the older forces. In this context *rigmu* may express hostility.[126]

Soon Apsû, the father, is killed by his rebellious progeny. In an attempt to revenge Apsû's death Ti'âmat will be defeated by Ea's formidable son Marduk.

d. *Ḫubūru* in the So-Called Kutha Legend of Narām-Sîn

The legend belongs to a genre called "*narû*-literature." It imitates the style of royal inscriptions on commemorative stelae (*narû*).[127] It is an imaginary narrative purportedly written by Narām-Sîn (2254-2218 BCE) of Akkad.[128] Astour aptly compared the genre with the biblical

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[126]Cf. H. R. Chaim Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic* (SBLDS, Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978) 138 n. 78a. Cohen points out a text where Akkadian *ikkillu* "noise, clamor" (a synonym of *rigmu*) is identified with hostility, *šumma bītu ikkil*[*la*] *īšu āšib libbīšu nakru šumma bītu ikki*[*la*] *lā īšu libbi āšibīšu ṭâb* = "If a house is noisy, its residents will be hostile; If a house is not noisy, its residents will be contented (*CT* 40, 5, 13-14).

[127]A well known specimen of the *narû*-literature is the Legend of Sargon which resembles in many points the birth-story of Moses. Cf. B. Lewis, *The Sargon Legend* (ASOR Dissertation Series 4, Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1980). J.- J. Glassner, "Le récit autobiographique de Sargon," *RA* 82 (1988) 1-11, offered some critical remarks on the work of B. Lewis. For bibliography on *narû* literature see, A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto/Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975) 8 n. 11. Cf. also, C. D. Evans, "Narām-Sîn and Jeroboam: The Archetypal Unheilsherrscher in Mesopotamian and Biblical Historiography," in *Scripture in Context II* (ed. W. W. Hallo, *et al.*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 97-125. H.- G. Güterbock, "Die historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern bis 1200," *ZA* 42 (1934) 1-91, esp. p. 19, introduced the term *narû*-literature. A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies," *JCS* 18 (1964) 7-30, esp. p. 8, suggested to call this literature, "poetic autobiographies," designating poetic narratives of historical events told in the first person by a king. This term was changed to "pseudo-autobiographies," by A. K. Grayson in his *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*, p. 7; and *idem.*, "Assyria and Babylonia," *Or* 49 (1980) 140-94, esp. pp. 187-8. However, J. G. Westenholz, "Heroes of Akkad," *JAOS* 103 (1983) 327-336, esp. p. 327 n. 7, defends the use of the term *narû*-literature saying that the designation "(pseudo)-autobiography" puts too much stress on the use of the first person, or on the fictional character of the texts. She defines *narû*-literature as any text which purports to be a copy of an authentic royal inscription (p. 328). On the difficulties in finding an appropriate designation for *narû*-literature see E. Reiner, "Die akkadische Literatur," in W. Röllig ed., *Altorientalische Literaturen* (NHdL 1, Wiesbaden: Athenaion, 1978) 150-210, esp. pp. 179-80.

[128]In an Old Babylonian text (BM 120003 [1928-7-16,3]) which G. W. Lambert dates in the time of Narām-Sîn, the god Erra accompanies Narām-Sîn in battle: (33) *ilum Erra u Narām-* ^{d}*Sîn* (34) *puḫriš illikū ru'šu u* šū (35) *tattakpiš mātam qabalšu* (36) *itnallak ištāšu qurādum Erra* = "(33) The god Erra and Narām-Sîn (34) went together, his companion and he. (35) His battle overwhelmed (?) the land (36) As the warrior Erra went with him." For the cuneiform text, transliteration and translation see W. G. Lambert, "Studies in Nergal," *BiOr* 30 (1973) 355-365, esp. p. 361.

pseudepigrapha.[129] Here we are only concerned with the Old Babylonian fragment of the Kutha legend since it is the only one which uses the term *ḫubūru*.[130] This and other differences prompted Finkelstein to conclude that it "can no longer be regarded simply as an Old Babylonian version of the Assyrian story."[131]

The *Kutha Legend* attempts to show the folly and disastrous consequences of impious self-confidence. After Narām-Sîn has failed to receive a positive answer from the gods, he is sceptical over the practical value of piety, and decides to act with self-assertive autonomy.[132] Here

[129]M. C. Astour, "Ezekiel's Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sîn," *JBL* 95 (1976) 567-79, esp. p. 572. On the *narû* genre in general see H.-G. Güterbock, "Die historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern bis 1200, I," *ZA* 42 (1934) 1-91, esp. pp.19-24, and pp. 65-76, for the four Nineveh fragments. For the Hittite version see H.-G. Güterbock, "Die historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern II," *ZA* 44 (1938) 45-145, esp. pp. 49-67. The cuneiform text of the Sultantepe tablet has been published by O. R. Gurney and J. J. Finkelstein, *The Sultantepe Tablets I* (London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1957) No 30. For a transliteration, translation and commentary see O. R. Gurney, "The Sultantepe Tablets IV. The Cuthean Legend of Narām-Sîn," *AnSt* 5 (1955) 93-113, with important corrections based on Landsberger's suggestions in *AnSt* 6 (1956) 163-4. Cf. the review articles by E. Reiner, *JNES* 19 (1960) 23-35, and *JNES* 26 (1967) 177-200.

[130]For the cuneiform text with transliteration, translation and commentary see J. J. Finkelstein, "The So-Called 'Old Babylonian Kutha Legend,'" *JCS* 11 (1957) 83-8. According to Finkelstein the composition might have been written in the time of Ammiṣaduqa (1646-1626 BCE). For some additional OB fragments of the Narām-Sîn legend see A. Boissier, "Inscription de Narâm-Sîn," *RA* 16 (1919) 157-64; H.- G. Güterbock, "Bruchstück eines altbabylonischen Narām-Sîn-Epos," *AfO* 13 (1939-41) 46-50; P. Michalowski, "New Sources Concerning the Reign of Narām-Sîn," *JCS* 32 (1980) 233-246. There exist Hittite versions (cf., H. H. Hoffner, "The Hittites," *Or* 49 [1980] 283-332, esp. p. 319), four fragments from the Aššurbanipal library, and a fifth Neo-Assyrian fragment from Sultantepe (seventh century BCE).

[131]J. J. Finkelstein, "The So-Called 'Old Babylonian Kutha Legend,'" *JCS* 11 (1957) 87. According to Hallo there are two traditions about Narām-Sîn. In the more positive tradition A, the lost ending of the Kutha legend presumably described the deliverance of Narām-Sîn's empire from the rampaging hordes of Anubanini. Similarly in other fragmentary texts Narām-Sîn seems to have extricated himself from a rebellion by his Akkadian and Sumerian subordinates. The more negative tradition B, depicts Narām-Sîn as the model of the hapless ruler who came to grief, his fall is brought on by his sacrilege, in the Sumerian version against Enlil in Nippur, and in the Akkadian version against Marduk in Babylon. See W. W. Hallo and W. K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East* (New York: H. B. Jovanovich, 1971) 63.

[132]O. R. Gurney, "The Sultantepe Tablets VI. The Cuthaean Legend of Narām-Sîn," *AnSt* 5 (1955) 93-113, esp. pp. 102-3, ll. 80-82 "What lion ever observed omens? What wolf ever inquired of a dream interpreter? I will go like a bandit in the good pleasure of my own heart (*megir libbīya*)."

he committed the fatal error of *hybris* as reflected in the fact that the three huge armies which he sent out without the approval of the gods "in the good pleasure of his own heart," are almost totally annihilated. The *Kutha Legend* conveys a particular moral: "Man must trust in his gods, not in himself, *ina ramānīšu*."[133]

In the following quote "Narām-Sîn" describes how the formidable invader destroys the Akkadian plain and cities comparing the destruction to the roar of Adad,

iv 4 xxx *ša* ^{d}*Adad issu eli mā[tim]*
5 *ḫubūrša iktabas ṭēmša ispuḫ*
v 15 *āl̄ānī ubbutū tilānū sapnū*
16 *ḫubūr mā[tim] uteqqima iktabas*

4 The ... of Adad roared over the land;
5 It trampled its tumult, it shattered its purpose.
15 The cities were obliterated, the tells were swept away.
16 The tumult of the land is brought low and trampled.[134]

The human enemy is described metaphorically as a storm.[135]

Oden interprets line 5, as an example of synonymous parallelism A:B :: A':B' "It trampled its tumult, it shattered its purpose," indicating that the terms *ḫubūru* and *ṭēmu*, (= "purpose, plan, scheming"), are in some sense synonymous.[136]

In another article Finkelstein has identified the phrase in iv 5, as a "stock line of a type which is found in various genera of cuneiform literature, both in Sumerian and Akkadian, in contexts involving the destruction of lands and cities by divine design."[137] However, in

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[133]In this interpretation of the moral of the *Kutha Legend* we follow J. J. M. Roberts, "The Young Lions of Psalm 34,11," *Bibl* 54 (1973) 265-7, esp. pp. 266-7.

[134]Transliteration and translation from Finkelstein, "The So-Called 'Old Babylonian Kutha Legend,'" *JCS* 11 (1957) 86.

[135]The following quotation which deals with the god Enlil may as well be applied to Adad, "The utter destruction of the city was wrought, in our terms, by the barbaric hordes which attacked it. Not so in terms of the Mesopotamian's own understanding of his universe: the wild destructive essence manifest in this attack was Enlil's. The enemy hordes were but a cloak, an outward form under which that essence realized itself.(...) the barbaric hordes were Enlil's storm wherewith the god himself was executing a verdict passed on (Akkad) and its people," T. Jacobsen in *Before Philosophy, The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (ed. H. Frankfort, *et al.* New York: Penguin books, 1946, 1974) 154.

[136]R. A. Oden, "Divine Aspirations in Atraḫasīs and in Genesis 1-11," *ZAW* 93 (1981) 205.

[137]J. J. Finkelstein, "Hebrew חבר and Semitic *ḫbr," *JBL* 75 (1956) 328-31, esp. p. 330. cf. also T. Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (AS 11, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939) 59 n. 113.

Sumerian texts instead of the *ḫubūru* one finds *milku(m)* (Sumerian GALGA)= "counsel." The word very likely refers to the deliberations of the communal assembly of the city, or the advice of the consultative council of the king. From this interchange Finkelstein concludes that *ḫubūru* may stand for the constant sound of discussion and argument which was most characteristic of the meetings of the assembly. According to Finkelstein, in the *Kutha Legend, ḫubūru* might express the "discussion," and "disputation" or the "planning" and "deliberation" of the city assembly. However, before reverting to analogous Sumerian and Akkadian texts where the term occurs one should try to establish its immediate contextual meaning. The meaning of *ḫubūru* in this passage is determined by the context of this legend which deals with the consequences of Narām-Sîn's *hybris*. The divine sanction fell upon the ill-adviced attempt of Narām-Sîn to extricate himself from his unfavorable position trusting uniquely in his own will and plans.

5.1.4. **The Meaning of the Terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* in the Poem of Erra**

The motif of the "din" of humankind expressed by the term *ḫubūru* appears four times in the Poem of Erra, I 41, 73, 82 and IV 68. One should also include the four references where the related term, *rigmu* occurs, I 61, IIB 43 ("loud cry"), IIC 45 ("clamor"), and IIIA 18 *rigim* ^{d}*Alala*. The terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* do not always have the same meaning. Only the *context* allows one to determine their specific connotation.

We will start by analyzing the passage in I 60-75 which is central to the Poem since it sets its warlike tone. In agreement with Bottéro on this point, one can only repeat his statement, "... La guerre. Tout le Poème la respire" (= "War: The entire Poem exudes it").[138] It also gives to the term *rigmu* a specific meaning of "battle cry." First, one must consider the larger context. The first tablet of the Poem depicts Erra lying in his bedroom[139] and making love (*epēšu ulṣam* I 20) with his consort Mami.[140]

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[138]J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE*, IVe section, (1977/78) 107-164 esp. p. 138. As noted by Bottéro the war vocabulary permeates the Poem, *tāḫāzu*: "battle" (I 6, IIIC 31, IIID 13); *saltu*: "combat" (I 119, IIID 14, cf. IV 76); kakkū: meaning both "arms and armies" *CAD K*, 51, 54 (I 17, 35, 44, 60, 98); kamāru: "net" as a war weapon (I 42); apluḫtu: "togs of war" (IIID 14); *alāk ṣēri*: "go to a military campaign" (I 49, 51, 54, 60, only *ṣēru* in I 76); *šumqutu*: "to knock down i.e., to kill" (I 38, 43, 85, IIC 26, 29 etc.); *ḫulluqu*: "to eliminate" (I 103, IIB 14 etc); *sapānu*: "to ruin" (I 13, 103, 123, IIB 14 etc.).

[139]M.-J. Seux, "Review of Cagni, *L'Epopea,*" *OrAnt* 11 (1977) 73 translates the term *uršu* with "chambre à coucher" = "bedroom" as over against Cagni's "letto" = "bed." This correction might not be necessary as one might be dealing here with the figure of speach called *pars pro toto*.

[140]In his article, "Erra - Scorched Earth," *JCS* 24 (1971) 11-16, J. J. M. Roberts explains the somewhat surprising conjugal relationship between Erra and Mami in the

Erra appears as a married person more concerned with his love life and the preservation of his "bourgeois" indulgences than with the furor of war and destruction. He is undecided about breaking his rest. Immediately the Sebetti, the divine seven who spread death and destruction, step on the stage and start the whirlwind of war which dominates the entire poem. In the first part of their vehement tirade (I 46-59) they extol the stern, active outdoor life of the warriors as over against the enfeebling and sedentary existence of the city people.[141] We will quote a part of their speech which is bracketed by an *inclusio*. It starts in I 60 with an appeal by the Sebetti to the hero Erra (*qurādu Erra*) and ends with the same term (I 75 qurā*dīka*). The Sebetti urge Erra to battle.

60 Hero Erra, take the field. Make your weapons resound!
61 Raise your powerful battle-cry (*rigmu*),[142] may the
above and below be shaken!
62 May the Igigi hear (it) and praise your name!
63 May the Anunnaki hear (it) and fear your name!
64 May the gods hear (it) and bend under your yoke!
65 May the kings hear (it) and prostrate (themselves) at your feet!
66 May the countries hear (it) and pa[y] tribute to you!
67 May the gallu-demons hear (it) and [turn awa]y by themselves!
68 May the powerful one hear (it) and bite his [lips]!
69 May the high mountains hear (it) and [struck with terror] lower their tops!
70 May the billowy seas hear (it) and be convulsed, may
they make the[ir produce] vanish!
71 From the rush thicket may the strong stalks be plucked out!
72 Of the impenetrable reed thicket may the reeds be broken!

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following way. Erra personifies the power of fire. Mami is the goddess of fertility and procreation. Roberts suggests that the ancient Mesopotamians were using the common agricultural technique of burning fields in order to increase their yield. The initial "rest" of Erra and Mami resembles the beginning of *Enūma eliš* where Apsû and Ti'âmat intermingle their waters, enjoying tranquility.

[141]The speech of the Sebetti besides being a piece of extraordinary eloquence, is also a statement of principles. It expresses the values of the warrior strata of Mesopotamian society. This highly specialized class finds the meaning of its existence in the search for glory, power, domination, and booty. As Bottéro says, "if one reads the Poem attentively, one will find ... incorporated in it a sociology, or a 'political philosophy' of war, which we were seeking vainly in other works, yet expressed here with remarkable candidness," in "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE*, IVe section, (1977/78) 107-164, esp. pp. 138-39.

[142]In the OB version of the Myth of Zû, the goddess Mammi encourages her son, the hero Ningirsu, before the battle with Zû in a similar way: II 64 *arat rigimka tak*[*iltam*] *lidišum* "Que la malédiction de ton cri abatte en lui (Zû), la confiance." Transliteration and translation from J. Nougayrol, "Ningirsu vanqueur de Zû," *RA* 46 (1952) 87-97, esp. pp. 92-93.

73 Let the humans be frightened and may their din (*ḫubūru*) subside!
74 May the herds tremble and turn into clay!
75 May the gods, your fathers, see and praise your heroism!

Cagni translates *rigmu* with "loud cry."[143] In this context it might be more appropriate to translate it with "battle-cry."[144] One can compare it to the Hebrew תרועה/רוע which can have the same meaning.[145] The "din" (I 73 *ḫubūru*) of the humans is set in opposition to Erra's *rigmu*. While the latter should resound as powerfully as possible, the former should subside. The confrontation which the Poem of Erra describes is between the gods and the humans. Unlike other Akkadian epics, the Poem does not mention a theomachy. The Sebetti point out the consequences of Erra's prolonged inactivity. Even the animals are accused of despising the gods. "Šakkan's herds and the (wild) animals are holding us in contempt" (I 77 *leqû šēṭūti*). Moreover, the humans multiplied so much that they are a threat to the gods. The Sebetti present the situation as urgent and invite Erra to quench the rebellion. They urge Erra to act "before the whole country overwhelms us!" (I 79). "Because of men's din the Anunnaki cannot fall asleep."

In Erra I 41 the term *ḫubūru* occurs in relationship with the determination of Sebetti's fate. The divine seven are created by Anu and appointed as Erra's weapons to march on his side during the latter's punitive action against the humans.

I 40 (Anum) gave them to Erra, the hero of the gods, (saying):
"Let them march beside you.

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[143]L. Cagni, *PE*, 28.

[144]This is the way E. Cassin translates *rigmu*, "cri de guerre" in "La contestation dans le monde divin," in *La voix de l'opposition en Mésopotamie* (ed. A. Finet, Bruxelles: Institut des Hautes Études, 1973) 89-110, esp. p. 106. A somewhat similar opinion was expressed by A. L. Oppenheim who thought that the Poem of Erra "was apparently used as a 'battle-charme (sic)' by warriors," in "Mesopotamian Mythology III," *Or* 19 (1950) 129-58, esp. p. 157. B. Hruška, "Einige Überlegungen zum Erraepos," *BiOr* 30 (1973) 3-7, esp. p. 6, n. 38, translates it with "Kriegsgeschrei."

[145]In his analysis of the תרועה in the OT, P. Humbert descibed it as a "terrifying growl produced by a thousand throats in unison as a prelude to a battle" *La Terou'a. Analyse d'un rite biblique* (Neuchâtel: Université de Neuchâtel, 1946) 29. The Teutonic tribes in their battles against the Romans used a similar raucous sound, in Latin called *barritus*. With the inclusion of Germanic soldiers into the Roman legions this battle cry also became the custom of the Romans, so, F.- M. Abel, "Les stratagèmes dans le livre de Josué," *RB* 56 (1949) 321-39, esp. p. 329, (with reference to the תרועה in Jos 6:5, 10, 16, 20, וירעו כל העם תרועה גדולה v 5.

41 When the din (*ḫubūršina*) of the inhabitants becomes unbearable to you,
42 and your heart moves you to throw a snare
(*ublamma libbāka ana šakān kamāri*),[146]
43 to kill the dark-headed (people and) to slaughter Šakkan's herds,
44 let them be your fierce weapons, let them march beside you!

To *ḫubūru* in the above example one may appropriately apply the designation "*démesure*": *ḫubūru* stands for human din out of proportion. It is unbearable to Erra, provoking his anger and prompting him to set a snare.

In Erra IV 65-69, Ištarān, the patron god of Dēr, accuses Erra of having provoked the total annihilation of the inhabitants of the city of Dēr.

IV 67 *nišī ša ina libbīšu kî qanê tuḫaṣṣiṣ*
68 *kî ḫubuš pān mê ḫubūršina tubtalli*

67 her population you broke like reeds,
68 like foam[147] on the surface of the water you silenced their din.

In this passage *ḫubūru* refers to the human noise heard in a lively city which in this case has been choked as a consequence of Erra's destruction of the city.

Tablet II of the Poem presents Erra's long discourse. Erra enters his temple Emeslam, his "heart raging" (IIC 10), decides to take the warpath and to launch a punitive expedition against the inhabitants of Mesopotamian cities. He announces his plan of destruction,

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[146]In the translation of this line we follow A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949) 226, and R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 12, "to throw a net," instead of Cagni's "to make devastations." Just as the Sebetti are given to Erra as his weapons so here the net stands as a war weapon. Moreover, one should recognize the net as the weapon *par excellence* of divine retribution, see our section 5.2.

[147]Cagni puts a question mark after *ḫubuš* = "foam." This is no longer necessary. H. Cohen, "'Foam' in Hosea 10:7," *JANES* 2 (1969) 25-29, has pointed out that we are dealing here with an idiom found in Akkadian and in Hebrew. In Hos 10:7 one reads, נִדְמָה שֹׁמְרוֹן מַלְכָּהּ כְּקֶצֶף עַל פְּנֵי מָיִם = "Samaria's monarchy is vanishing like foam on (the surface of) the water" (*NJPS*). According to Cohen, the meaning of the phrase "like foam on the surface of the water," can be derived from the parallelism with "her population you broke like reeds." Just as the reed is swiftly broken, so is the din of humans quickly extinguished. The semantic link between "wrath" and "foam" which Cohen establishes in the first part of his article is present in the parallelism between *imtu* and *ḫubuš* in IIB 10-11, which he omitted to quote, (Ea) 10 *libbāti imtali* [....] 11 *minsu aššu ḫubuš pā*[*n mê*...] "(Ea) 10 he was filled with wrath....11 (isn't it) on account of the foam on the surfa[ce of the water]." For *minsu* cf. *GAG* #121d "ist nicht? = doch wohl."

IIC 45 *rigim [amēlūti] [aparr]asma ḫidūta eṭerši*

I shall [sto]p the clamor [of men] and I shall deprive (them) of all joy.

Rigim amēlūti in this line is to be dissociated from *rigim alala* mentioned in Erra IIIA 18, *rigim* ^{d}*Alala ina qerbiti ušassa*. The latter phrase should be translated, "in the fields I shall do away with the *alala* song."[148]

In the Poem of Erra the terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* acquire a particular meaning owing to the context. As stated in our introductory treatment of the Poem of Erra (Section 3.4.) there is sufficient evidence in the Poem itself which indicates that Erra destroys the humans as a consequence of their offending the gods. In such a context Hruška's definition of *ḫubūru* as a "general designation for human offenses"[149] is appropriate.

5.1.5. Parallels, Contrasts, Conclusions

a. There is no etymological relationship between Hebrew חמון and Akkadian *ḫubūru* and *rigmu*.[150] Nevertheless, in our opinion, these

[148]Although *CAD A/I* 328-29, followed by Cagni, suggest that *alala* represents an "interjection or exclamation of joy," we are more inclined to follow Oppenheim's interpretation according to which "*alala* does not mean 'cry of jubilation' but is to be considered a technical term denoting a specific ritual song to be accompanied by a flute," (in "Assyriological Gleanings IV," *BASOR* 103 [1946] 11-14). As demonstrated by Oppenheim ^{d}*Alala* is a figure of the Tammuz circle if not directly a manifestation of that god. The *alala* song was associated with the harvest customs and was of a *melancholy* or *mournful mood*. The dying of the grain-god under the sickle of the harvester was mourned with special rites which included the singing or playing of the alala song. The Greek terms ἀλαλά, ἀλαλή, ἀλαλαγμός, (which can mean "battle cry" and "sound of a flute"), and the verb ἀλαλάζω = "to shout a battle cry or out of fear and anguish," are probably related to Akkadian *alalû* (Sumerian ALALA). The connotation of a mournful cry is found in Latin *ululare* "to howl" as well as in French and English ululation (i.e. to howl, to wail or lament loudly). The "sweet alala" mentioned in an Aššurbanipal inscription refers in all probability to the melancholy mood of the song, *rigim amēlūti kibis alpī u ṣēnī šisīt alala* (var. ^{d}*Alala) ṭābi uzammâ ugarīšu* = "I deprived his fields of human shouts, of the stamping of cattle and sheep and the sound of sweet (i.e., melancholy) *alala*," see M. Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's* (VAB VII, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916) vol II, p. 56-57, Rassam Cylinder Col. VI 101-102. cf. also *Ludlul bēl nemēqi* I 101-102, *ina qirbeīya ušessū* ^{d}*Alala kî āl nakiri ušqamemū āli* = "They have excluded the harvest cry from my fields, and silenced my city like an enemy city," W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960) 36 (ll. 101-2).

[149]B. Hruška, "Einige Überlegungen zum Erraepos," *BiOr* 30 (1973) 6.

[150]J. J. Finkelstein, "Hebrew חבר and Semitic *ḫbr," *JBL* 75 (1956) 328-31, has argued that Hebrew חבר in Prov 21:9 and 25:24 בית חבר is etymologically related to Akkadian *ḫubūru*. Hence instead of translating, "Dwelling in a corner of a roof is better than a contentious wife in a spacious house," (so *NJPS*), one should translate, "in a noisy house." On this identification see also O. Margalith, "ארבעה פסוקים במשלי," *Beth Miqra* 67 (1976) 522-23; and C. Cohen, "לסרוף בית חבר ...," *Beth Miqra* 67 (1975) 598-99. It is significant that in Prov 21:9; 25:24, חבר "noisy," is associated with strife מרון =

terms stand in a relationship of functional equivalence.

There are some grammatical similarities in the way המון and *ḫubūru* are being used. Both terms commonly appear with pronominal suffixes (frequently in the third person):

Kutha iv 5, *ḫubūrša* (3rd. f. sing. poss. suff.); *Atra.* III iii 10, *rigimša*; cf. Ezek 7:12, 13, 14; 30:4; 32:12b, המונה (3rd. f. sing. poss. suff.).

En.el. I 25, *rigimšun* (3rd. m. pl. poss. suff.) cf. Ezek 7:11 מהמונם (3rd. m. pl. poss. suff); 39:11 המונה (3rd. m. sing. poss. suff).

Erra I 61, *rigimka* (2nd m. sing. poss. suff.) cf. Ezek 32:12a המונך; 5:7 המנכם (2nd m. pl. poss. suff.).

Erra I 41; IV 68, *Atra.* II 4, = *ḫubūršina*; *Atra.* III iii 43 *rigimšina* (3rd f. p. poss. suff.); Erra I 73; *Atra.* II 5, = *rigimšin* (abbreviated form common in poetry).[151]
While in Ezekiel one finds המון with the 3rd m. pl. poss. suff. the form with the corresponding feminine plural suffix is not attested.

Erra IIC 45, *rigim* [*amēlūti*] [*aparr*]*asma* can be compared to Ezek 30:15 ונשמר כל המונה; 32:12 והשבתי המון שיריך; 26:13 והכרתי את המון נא.

b. Hebrew המון and Akkadian *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* have in common a similar semantic range. These terms basically connote "din, noise, clamor." Moreover, a certain degree of imprecision of the term המון is an additional feature which allows one to make a rapprochement with Akkadian terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu*. One is unable to determine to what kind of "noise" they refer unless one considers their immediate context. Both Hebrew המון and Akkadian *ḫubūru* reflect a similar indetermination.

"contention," (cf. *BDB* 193b). Cf. also R. H. C. Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and and Ugaritic* (SBLDS, Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978) p. 138, n. 78a, "the attempt by Finkelstein in his aforementioned study to compare Akkadian *ḫabārum* "to make noise" with Hebrew חבר "to charm (with words)" in such passages as Deut 18:11; Isa 47:9, 12; Ps 58:6; Job 16:4 cannot be accepted because Akkadian *ḫabārum* is never used in this way." There is another Hebrew (לחש) and Akkadian word (*luḫḫušu*) meaning both "to whisper" and "to charm," Ps 58:6 מלחשים "charmers;" 2 Sam 12:19; Ps 41:8 לחלחשו "to whisper with one another."

[151]Cf. R. Labat, *Le poème babylonien de la création* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1935) 88, n. 27. The author notes that in *Enūma eliš* the 3rd m. p. poss. suff. *-šunu* is often abbreviated to *-šun* (I 27; IV 70, 74, 146; VII 17, 38), while the corresponding feminine suffix *-šina* never appears without its final vowel (I 104; VI 112, 117, 118; VII 33), "contrairement à l'usage poétique."

c. Our analysis of the Poem of Erra has confirmed the appropriateness of Hruška's definition of *ḫubūru* as a "general designation for human offenses" against the gods. It describes adequately the way this term is used in the Poem. In our opinion a conspicuous feature of the Poem of Erra is the fact that the destruction of the Mesopotamian cities and their population is amply accounted for in the Poem itself. Other known Akkadian epics are not as explicit in providing moral or ethical reasons in justifying divine punishment as the Poem of Erra. However, the meaning of *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* in the Poem of Erra is similar to the meaning of these terms in the Atraḫasīs epic. The interpretation offered by E. Cassin that "demographic incontinence" represents a form of *hybris* describes appropriately the meaning of the issue of overpopulation in this epic. In *Atra.* I ii 77 (the rebellion of the Igigi against the forced labor imposed by Enlil) and in *En.el.* I 25 (the overthrow of Apsû by the younger gods), the term *rigmu* is used with a connotation similar to that found in some passages of the Poem of Erra.

d. In the Book of Ezekiel the term הָמוֹן has been given great prominence. It occurs 27 times and represents a catchword. The word is not used in a private or esoteric way; rather, it points to a sophisticated *littérateur* who has adapted to his purpose a prominent motif of Akkadian literature. The contexts in which הָמוֹן and *ḫubūru* are used in Ezekiel and in the Poem of Erra respectively, are similar. This feature supports our contention of the existence of a definite relationship between these two works. It is not likely that the motif of human "din" which provokes divine anger stems from Atraḫasīs. The latter contains as one important yet not the principal motif, the issue of overpopulation. The specific context in which the din of humankind occurs in this epic diminishes the probability that הָמוֹן in Ezekiel would have been influenced by it. In the Atraḫasīs epic, *ḫubūru* should be seen as an expression of *hybris* related to the the demographic incontinence. It is not likely that it stems from *Enūma eliš* either, since this epic deals with the successful rebellion of the younger generation of gods against the older. *Rigmu* in *Enūma eliš* is not applied to humankind but to gods. This leaves the Poem of Erra as the most likely source and background of הָמוֹן in the Book of Ezekiel. The evidence allows one to suggest the existence of literary emulation: the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel adapted to a new context a term related to a prominent motif in the Poem of Erra which in turn had its origin in Akkadian literature.

This conclusion is further supported by what we know of the considerable popularity of the Poem of Erra in the time of Ezekiel's prophetic and literary activity in Babylon. The Poem of Erra had been in circulation for at least 150 years prior to the time of Ezekiel (if one follows Von Soden's dating) and was prized for its apotropaic qualities. A person living in Babylon in the sixth century BCE could come across the Erra tablets displayed on the house walls and doors as amulets against plague and disaster.[152] The Poem of Erra which defines itself as a "song" (*zamāru* V 49, 59), was relatively short and could have been memorized without particular difficulty. An accomplished performer and poet like Ezekiel could well have become acquainted with one of the most popular songs of his time.

e. In the light of the above analysis some instances of חמס in Ezekiel could be translated in the following ways,

"Insolence, arrogance, impertinence," in 5:7; 7:11; 39:16;
E.g., Ezek 5:7, "Because you are more insolent than the nations around you."
cf. *RSV*: "Because you are more turbulent";
NJPS: "Because you have outdone the nations."
TOB (correctly): "A cause de votre insolence, pire que celle des peuples."

Ezek 7:11, "Nothing (remains) of their arrogance"; cf.
RSV and *NJPS*: "nor their abundance." *TOB*: "rien de leur clameur."

Ezek 7:12, 13, 14, "For my wrath is upon all her din (or arrogance)";
cf. RSV and *NJPS*: "upon, against her multitude";
TOB: "la fureur menace toute la richesse du pays."

"Din" with the metaphorical meaning of "insolence, arrogance,"
in Ezek 7:12, 13, 14; 30:10, 15.

"Pomp" in Ezek 31:2, 18; 32:12d; 32:20, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32; 39:11c, d, 15.

In our opinion the above discussion has shown the error of emending or dismissing the instances of חמס in Ezekiel as secondary glosses. The term is associated with an important theological message: Yahweh is opposed to any form of irreverence. The theme of human *hybris* is found on several occasions in the Old Testament. However, this theme expressed in relationship with human excessive "din" appears only in

[152]Cf. E. Reiner, "Plague Amulets and House Blessings," *JNES* 19 (1960) 148-155, and L. W. King, "New Fragments of the Dibbarra-legend on Two Assyrian Plague-tablets," *ZA* 11 (1896) 52-62.

Ezekiel. Therefore, in our opinion, the term חמס may well reflect a similar feature present in Akkadian literature and in the Poem of Erra in particular. It appears as a functional equivalent of Akkadian *ḫubūru* which in certain contexts expresses *hybris*, insolence and a disrespectful attitude of going beyond the divinely imposed limits. Such an attitude provokes the wrath of the gods.

5.1.6. Appendices

a. The Term חמס in the Flood Tradition

In 1956 Finkelstein had proposed the correlation of *ḫubūru* in the Atraḫasīs epic with חמס = "violence" in the Genesis Flood story.[153] "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence חמס," ([P] Gen 6:11). However, Finkelstein had to admit the difference between the two terms, "חמס 'violence' is a much stronger word than *ḫubūrum*, as the biblical narrator visualizes the episode on a higher moral level than his Babylonian counterpart. The words nevertheless occupy analogous places in the two versions."[154]

b. The Outcry (צעקה) in the Sodom and Gomorrah Tradition

Two years later, in discussing the Atraḫasīs epic and the din of humankind which disturbs the gods and prevents them from sleeping, Finkelstein argued that "there can be little doubt that the noise ... is only the metaphoric or mythological guise for what is clearly meant to be wicked behavior of man."[155] Faced with the fact that the Akkadian terms

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[153]J. J. Finkelstein, "Hebrew חבר and Semitic *ḫbr," *JBL* 75 (1956) 328-31.

[154]J. J. Finkelstein, *art. cit.*, esp. p. 329, n. 7. The relationship between the Atraḫasīs epic and חמס in the Genesis Flood story has been reexamined by T. Frymer-Kensky, in "The Atraḫasīs Epic and Its Significance for our Understanding of Genesis 1-0," *BAR* 40 (1977) 147-55. She notes that the term חמס in the Old Testament encompasses almost the entire spectrum of evil in the Bible (p. 153). The term has been thoroughly examined by J. Pons, *L'Oppression dans l'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1981) 27-52, "Étude de חמס."

[155]J. J. Finkelstein, "Bible and Babel, A Comparative Study of the Hebrew and Babylonian Religious Spirit," *Commentary* 26 (1958) 431-44, esp. p. 437. Finkelstein's interpretation has been reiterated by R. A. Oden, "Divine Aspirations In Atraḫasīs and in Genesis 1-11," *ZAW* 93 (1981) 210, "The Hebrew word here (צעקה), "cry, clamor," is the perfect semantic parallel to Akkadian *rigmu*. This, combined with the observation that the flood and the Sodom and Gomorrah narratives in Genesis are similarly structured, makes it most likely that in both Gen 18 and Atraḫasīs a word meaning "cry," "shout," or "clamor," is used with the specific connotation of criminal behavior." For structural parallels between Gen 6 and Gen 18, see M. W. Clark, "The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History," *ZAW* 83 (1971) 184-211.

ḫubūru and *rigmu* are rather vague in the sense that they basically designate "noise, din and clamor," Finkelstein attempted to make their meaning more specific by arguing from the biblical material back to the Akkadian. He referred to the Sodom and Gomorrah tradition (especially Gen 18:20-21 and 19:13). In the Bible these two cities have become epitomes of sinfulness and depravity.

> Gen 18:20, Then Yahweh said, "Because the outcry/clamor (זעקת) of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin (חטאתם) is very grave, (21) I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry (הכצעקתה) (lit. her), which has come to me; and if not I will know."[156]
> Gen 19:13, ... for we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before Yahweh (כי גדלה צעקתם את פני יהוה), and Yahweh has sent us to destroy it.

MT has literally, "the outcry against them." The pronoun does not refer to the place which is the actual antecedent, but by extension to the inhabitants (so Speiser). In the Old Testament the term צעקה is used in a rather specific way. It stands for the demand for justice usually made by the oppressed as in Ex 3:7, ואת צעקתם שמעתי מפני נגשיו = "I have heard their outcry because of their taskmasters." Cf. Job 19:7, אצעק חמס = "I cry out (because) of wrong" (done to me). In Gen 4:10, Abel's blood is crying out (צעקים) from the ground against murder. In Hab 2:11, the stones of a house cry out (קזעק) against a ruthless tenant. In Job 31:38, the land complains (קזעק) against injustice. In 1 Sam 4:14, המון and צעקה stand in parallelism in a context where המון has a basic meaning "noise, sound, rush, roar, murmur."[157]

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[156]According to E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubeday, 1964) 133, the noun זעקה "outcry/clamor," is subtly distinguished from its synonym צעקה which is construed objectively to yield "outcry against one." However, the Samaritan version has צעקה in both cases. There is probably no semantic difference between the two forms. Westermann explains the term as a "loud outcry" (*Zetergeschrei*) of someone who is suffering oppression, and quotes approvingly Franz Delitzsch, *"Ruf nach Strafe," Genesis 12-36* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981) 353.

[157]The OT texts dealing with the murmuring motif as part of the larger theme of the wanderings in the wilderness have been analyzed by G. W. Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness. The Murmuring Motif in the Wilderness Traditions of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968). The most characteristic vocable used to express the murmuring motif is the verb לון with the preposition על = "to murmur against." With one exception (Josh 9:18ff), this combination is found in the Pentateuch (Exod 15:24; 16:2, 7, 8; 17:3; Num 14:2, 27, 29, 36; 16:11; 17:6, 20, and as a noun, [תלנה] Exod 16:7, 8, 9, 12; Num 14:27; 17:20, 25; In Ps 59:15-16 the verbs המה and לין stand in close proximity and refer to the same action. The psalmist implores God to be delivered from his enemies, whom he compares to "howling" (יהמו) and "whining or murmuring" (וילינו) dogs. There are several difficulties in an attempt to see לון as a functional equivalent of Akk. *ḫubūru*. First, it is debated whether וילינו in Ps 59:16 is a form of

We do not think that the above terms represent functional equavalents of *ḫubūru*. As pointed out by J. Pons, חמס stands for violence, exploitation, false witness, and does not connote sound or noise. Hence it cannot be compared with *ḫubūru*. צעקה has a preponderantly specific meaning as the cry of the oppressed. We are not aware of a text where *ḫubūru* would have such a connotation. *Rigmu* however, can stand for the complaint in a legal sense and moaning of a person oppressed by sickness or distress.[158] However, it appears that in certain contexts Hebrew צעקה may well represent a semantic equivalent of Akkadian *rigmu*.[159]

In the light of the above analysis it would seem that Hebrew המון appears as semantic equivalent of Akkadian *ḫubūru*, Hebrew צעקה of Akkadian *rigmu*.

לון. Second, on the basis of the 9th century BCE Phoenician inscription (Kilamuwa i 10) it appears that the expression "to murmur/whine like a dog" is a common Semitic idiom. Third, as Coats points out, in the murmuring motif the juxtaposition of לון with the preposition על gives the verb a somewhat more specific connotation, "It moves the action described by the verb from an inarticulate complaint to a well-defined event ... The event itself consistently involves a face to face confrontation between the murmurers and the object of the preposition" (p. 24). In our opinion the expression לון על cannot be considered as a semantic equivalent of Akk. *ḫubūru*.

[158]E.g., *Atra.* I 179, where *rigmu* connotes a complaint in the context of the corvée labor of the Igigu. In *Atra.* III iii 43, *rigmu* designates the cry of distress of the humans in the flood who are carried away like flies on the surface of the water. Cf. however, W. L. Moran, "Some Considerations of Form and Interpretation in Atra-ḫasīs," in *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to E. Reiner* (ed. F. Rochberg-Halton, AOS 67, New Haven, Connecticut, American Oriental Society, 1987) 245-55, esp. p. 255 n. 45, who is more categorical in rejecting any relationship between these terms, "the זעקה is not at all comparable to *rigmu* either in Atraḫasīs or in general, for it is a cry of distress, a cry for help, often to those legally bound to assist (vassals of a common suzerain in EA 366:24) and in the case of Genesis, the rest of the legal community..." (i.e., to the ultimate custodian of the community and its law).

[159]It is significant that in the Book of Ezekiel one finds references to both the Flood and the Sodom and Gomorrah traditions. Cf. Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel, From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (Engl. transl. by M. Greenberg, New York: Schocken, 1960, 1977) 433, "Ezekiel is fond of describing Israel's sin in 'Sodomic' terms. The land 'has become full of violence' (7:23; 8:17; חמס) - an echo of the Flood story (Gen 6:11). The burning of Jerusalem by an angel recalls the fate of Sodom. Jerusalem is Sodom's sister, but viler than she (16:46ff)."

5.2. HEBREW רשת פרש AND AKKADIAN ana *šakān kamāri/šēti* = "TO THROW A NET"

The "net" was a very common utensil in the ancient Near East. It was used as a military weapon, as well as in fishing and hunting both wild animals and fowls. Hence it is not surprising to find a great variety of nets being mentioned in the Old Testament.[1]

5.2.1. The "Net" in the Old Testament

The exact identification and classification of Old Testament net terminology is somewhat complicated by the fact that various terms are often used synonymously. Moreover, the net is often referred to in a figure of speech. Words from several Hebrew roots are translated "net" in the Old Testament.[2]

a. The term רשת from the root ירש "to subdue, take possession of," (*BDB* 439-440), seems to be the most frequent term for net in the Old Testament. It refers to a hunter's net, a fisherman's net and a fowler's net. In Prov 1:17 it serves to catch birds, in Ezek 32:3 a fish, and in Ezek 17:20 a lion, (the references in Ezek have a figurative use, see below). Around the altar of burnt offering of the tabernacle was placed a bronze grating of net design (Exod 38:4 and 27:4-5 מכבר מעשה רשת נחשת "a grating of bronze network"). The pillars before Solomon's temple were decorated with a net design called שבכה (1 Kgs 7:17.18.20). The term is used figuratively to designate a snare of the wicked person in Job 18:8-9, "For he is cast into a net (רשת) by his own feet, and he walks on a pitfall (שבכה). A trap (פח) seizes him by the heel, a snare (צמים) lays hold of him." However, the figurative usage of the term רשת predominates. It is used figuratively of the plots of evil men (Pss 9:15; 25:15; 140:6; Job 18:8), of the enemies of the psalmist (Pss 35:7-8; 57:7; 140:6[3]), of

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[1]On the net in the OT see O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World, Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Eng. transl. by T. J. Hallett, New York: Seabury, 1978) 90-94; J. A. Thompson, "Nets," *New Bible Dictionary* (ed. J.D. Douglas, Leicester: Inter-Varsity, [2]1982, 1987) 827-28; W. S. McCullough, "Net," *IDB III* (1962) 539-40; G. Dalmann, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina* (Gütersloh: C. Bartelsmann, 1928-1939, vols. 1-6) vol. 6, pp. 335-37; 343-63.

[2]Cf. רשת *BDB* 440b; פח *BDB* 809a; מצרה *BDB* 845a; חרם *BDB* 357a; שבכה *BDB* 959a; צמים *BDB* 855d.

[3]Ps 140:6, "Arrogant men laid traps טמנו פח with ropes for me; they spread out a net פרשו רשת along the way; they set snares מקשים for me" (*NJPS*).

merciless exploitation of the poor (Ps 10:9), of trouble (Pss 25:15; 31:5), of the snare of an enemy nation (Ps 9:16), of priests and rulers entangling people in sin (Hos 5:1). In Prov 29:5 it typifies the wiles of the flatterer. The verse in Lam 1:13, פרש רשת לרגלי "He has spread a net for my feet," might reflect the military usage of a net in battle.[4] Nevertheless, one should not completely exclude the possibility of seeing in Lam 1:13, a reference to the net motif as the weapon of divine retribution. The only unequivocal reference to the term רשת in the context of a judgment of Yahweh over a people is in Hos 7:12. Yahweh threatens the people (of Ephraim?) with a fowler's net: אפרוש עליהם רשתי "I will throw my net upon them."[5]

b. The term חרם "net," is related to the root חרם "to slit, or perforate," (in *BDB* 357).[6] It is a rather rare word in the Old Testament. It occurs four times in Ezekiel and five times in the rest of the Old Testament.[7]It is used figuratively of an evil woman's heart (Qoh 7:26 מצודים//חרמים), of predatory individuals (Mic 7:2), and of the Babylonian military power (Hab 1:15).

c. The term מצודה from the root צוד "to hunt," (*BDB* 844-45) is a fish-net in Qoh 9:12. F. Delitzsch related Hebrew מצודה to Akkadian

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[4]So R. K. Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations* (Tyndale OT Commentaries, Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1973, 1979) 210, "By employing the figure of fire, a snare and faintness, the author gives graphic expression to all the horrors of siege which have overtaken Jerusalem." Cf. also C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament. Jeremiah, Lamentations* (G. Rapids: Michigan: Eermans, n.d. vol. VII, C.F. Keil) 370, "In [Lam] 1:13-15, the misfortunes that have befallen Jerusalem are enumerated in a series of images"; cf. also p. 371, "The city is regarded as a person whose happines in life has been destroyed, and whose health has been broken."

[5]For a discussion of this verse cf. F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Hosea* (AB, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980) 470, who compare Yahweh with Enlil as the divine bird-catcher who flies through the air with his net.

[6]Cf. J.- G. Heintz, *Le Dieu au Filet, Étude d'un thème de souveraineté divine du Proche-Orient antique dans ses rapports avec les origines du "ḥerem" biblique* (Unpublished thesis, École Biblique et Archéologique Française, Jerusalem, 1965). Heintz has attempted to link the meaning of חרם as "net" and "ban" in relationship to the iconographic representation of the Stele of the Vultures where Eannatum throws the net of the god Ningirsu on the oath-breaking people of Umma (cf. below).

[7]Hab 1:15, 16, 17; Mic 7:2; Qoh 7:26; Ezek 26:5, 14; 32:3; 47:10. Cf. P. Humbert, *Problèmes du livre d'Habacuc* (MUN 18, Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'Université, 1944) 129, חרם "terme du language de métier."

ṣaddu "trap, snare."[8] The terms מצוֹד, מצוּדה are used figuratively of God as Job's hunter (Job 19:6); In Ps 66:11 it designates Yahweh's chastisement of Israel. מצוֹד in Prov 12:12 is used figuratively as the snare of an evil person.

d. The terms מכמר and מכמרת fall in the category of rare words in the Old Testament. מכמר occurs twice (Ps 141:10 and Isa 51:20) and מכמרת three times (Hab 1:15, 16, twice in parallelism with חרם, Isa 19:8). These terms are cognates of Akkadian *kamāru* "net, snare."[9] In Isa 19:8, it is a net which Egyptian fishermen spread over the water. In Isa 51:20 מכמוֹר is used to catch an antelope.[10] In Ps 141:10 מכמר is figurative of the plots of the wicked. In Hab 1:15 one finds the following parallelism, מכמרת//חרם;

e. Terms like מקשׁ and פח primarily refer to the traps used for catching birds.[11]

5.2.2. The "Net" in the Book of Ezekiel

The expressions "to throw a net," and "to take someone in a snare," occur with considerable frequency in the Book of Ezekiel (פרשׂ רשׁת in 12:13 מצוּדה//רשׁת; 17:20 מצוּדה//רשׁת; 19:8, 9 מצוּדה//רשׁת; 32:3a חרם//רשׁת;

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[8]Cf. the line quoted by F. Delitzsch, *The Hebrew Language Viewed in the Light of Assyrian Research* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1883) 29, *W.A.I.* IV 26, no 2, *ṣaddu ina pāt kišti retû, šētu suparrūtu* (or *saparru*) *ša ana tāmtim tarṣu, itāni ša nūnu ul uṣṣû*, which he rendered, "a trap placed at the edge of the forest, a net spread out over the sea, a net which allows no fish to escape." Delitzsch compared this line with Judg 2:3, "and (the peoples) shall be unto you לצרים, and their gods shall be a snare למוֹקשׁ unto you." Cf. (*RSV*): "adversaries," and (*NJPS*): "oppressors," which apparently follow the reading לצרים, possibly presupposed by the LXX.

[9]Cf. F. Delitzsch, *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1896) 336. This equation has been followed by H. Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluss* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1917) 15.

[10]O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World, Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (New York: Seabury, 1978) 93, compares it with nets erected vertically into which the querry was driven (fig. 119). It was held by men and used in Egypt for catching quails (fig. 118). Cf. also M. Alliot, "Les rites de la chase au filet aux temples de Karnak, d'Edfou et d'Esneh," *RdE* 5 (1946) 57-118.

[11]C. O. Keel, *op. cit.*, p. 89, fig. 112, "It is logical to assume that in antiquity, as today (fig. 113 and 114), many local varieties of traps were in use, and that all were called פח (respectively, מקשׁ), just as they are presently called *faḫḫ* in Arabic," (p. 91). Cf. also D. R. Driver, "Hebrew מקשׁ, 'striker,'" *JBL* 73 (1954) 131-6; B. Grdseloff, "Zum Vogelfang," *ZÄS* 74 (1938) 52-55, 136-39.

another expression משטח חרמים "to spread nets," occurs in 26:5, 14; 47:10). The contexts in which these expressions occur are most illuminating. In the Book of Ezekiel the net motif is used almost exclusively in relationship with divine judgment upon the rulers against whom Yahweh is indignant, upon the people whom the king represents, and upon a city and its inhabitants (with the exception of Ezek 47:10). We are discussing here a prominent motif present not only in the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra but throughout Akkadian literature. However, in both the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra, the net motif is used in a similar way, i.e., mainly as a divine weapon and in contexts of divine punitive actions. The net motif as used in both the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra corresponds to the definition found in the phenomenological studies which consider it as the "archetype of divine or cosmic retribution."[12] The recovery of the background of this motif is necessary for a proper understanding of an important point which is made in the Book of Ezekiel. The net is mentioned in several oracles against the political leaders of Judah reflecting "Ezekiel's own critical attitude toward the monarchy ... (His) verdict on the monarchy is radically negative. It went wrong right from the start and was the principal architect of Israel's ruin."[13]

In Ezek 12:13, in an oracle of judgment, one reads about the wrath of Yahweh directed against the leader of Jerusalem.[14]

And I will spread my net over him,	ופרשתי את רשתי עליו
and he shall be taken in my snare;	ונתפש במצודתי
and I will bring him to Babylon...	והבאתי אתו בבלה
yet he shall not see it.[15]	ואתה לא יראה

[12]Cf. M. Eliade, *Images et symboles. Essais sur le symbolisme magico-religieux* (Paris: Galimard, 1952) 149, 159. Cf. also H. Sundén, "Le mythe de la peine et la rétribution cosmique. Quelques remarques psychologiques," in *Le mythe de la peine* (ed. E. Castelli, Paris: Aubier, 1967) 435-45.

[13]So J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983) 201, and 206.

[14]According to Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 274, the metaphor of the king captured in a net must have originated in the simile of the lion in 19:8. It was then connected in 17:20 with the reference to bringing to Babylon and the scattering of Zedekiah's bodyguard. In 2 Kgs 25:7, and in Jer 39:7, one finds the corresponding reference to the blinding of king Zedekiah and to his being brought to Babylon.

[15]F. E. Deist, "The Punishment of the Disobedient Zedekiah," *JNWSL* 1 (1971) 71-2, compared the events of the fall of Jerusalem (the conquest and burning of the city, the slaughter of the nobles and the blinding of Zedekiah, Jer 39:6, 7, 8,) with the curses in the Aramaic Sefire treaty (ca. 750 BCE). In the case of the breach of the treaty as a punishment I Sefire A 35-40, mentions the burning of the city l. 35; blinding of the king l. 39; and slaughtering of the nobles l. 40. Deist concludes, "Thus the penalty which befell Zedekiah was not just another extreme cruelty so familiar to Assyro-Babylonia but in fact an inescapable consequence of breaching the oath of loyalty," p. 72.

As noted by Cooke[16] the significant thing which connects this passage to the sword pericope in Ezek 21, is the fact that Yahweh uses the implements in the execution of judgment (cf. "my sword" in 21:8, 9, 10, and here "my net," "my snare."). Here the term for "net" רשת occurs in parallelism with מצודה "snare."

In Ezek 17:20, one finds the oracle against the king Zedekiah who broke the vassal treaty with the king of Babylon, Nebuchadrezzar (cf. 17:13 "he took one of the seed royal and made a covenant with him"). The fact of Zedekiah's disloyalty is stated in an emphatic way by repeating twice the political perjury and the breach of treaty ("whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke" אשר בזה את אלחו ואשר הפר את בריתו vv 16, 18). In a remarkable accusation Ezekiel regards it as a breach of Yahweh's oath.

> (19) Therefore thus says Yahweh God: As I live, surely my oath (אלחי) which he despised, and my covenant which he broke, I will requite upon his head. (20) I will spread my net over him (ופרשתי עליו רשתי) and he shall be taken in my snare (במצודתי) and I will bring him to Babylon and enter into judgment with him there for the treason which he has committed against me (מעלו אשר מעל בי).

Both Zimmerli[17] and Tsevat[18] have argued that in Ezekiel, prophecies against the breach of vassal loyalty have been "radicalized" in a unique way where the offense against the king of Babylon is perceived as an offense against Yahweh. The way the key phrase is repeated in vv 16, 18, 19, would support this view. It is argued that according to Babylonian practice of covenant making the vassals had to swear by their own deities.[19] Yahweh, the God of Israel, was presumably appealed to by

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[16]Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 132. According to Cooke, the text refers to king Zedekiah who is simply called הנשיא.

[17]W. Zimmerli, "Die Eigenart der prophetischen Rede des Ezechiel," *ZAW* 66 (1954) 1-26.

[18]M. Tsevat, "The Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Vassal Oaths and the Prophet Ezekiel," *JBL* 78 (1959) 199-204. Cf. also R. Frankena, "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy," *OTS* 14 (1965) 122-54, esp. p. 131, and *idem., Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 12-3.

[19]See G. E. Mendenhall, "Puppy and Lettuce in Northwest Semitic Covenant Making," *BASOR* 133 (1954) 26-30 esp. p. 30, n. 16. cf. also M. Noth, "Das alttestamentliche Bundschliessen im Lichte eines Mari-Textes," in *Mélanges Isidore Lévy* (Bruxelles, 1955) 433-44, reprinted in *idem., Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1966) 142-54, Eng. transl. "Old Testament Covenant-Making in the Light of a Text from Mari," in *Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966) 108-17; For a critique of Mendenhall's interpretation of data see M. Held, "Philological Notes on the Mari Covenant Rituals," *BASOR* 200 (1970) 32-40. Cf. also M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (SBLMS 19, Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1974) 46f; H.- W.

both Zedekiah and Nebuchadrezzar as a witness in the vassal oaths between them.[20] Consequently, Yahweh turns against the oath and treaty breaker, Zedekiah.[21] J. Milgrom[22] has clarified the Biblical concept of מעל (Ezek 17:20), as representing a trespass either upon the *sancta* or name of God. The latter occurs in oath violations such as this one. He also pointed out that the sin of "violating the covenant" with Yahweh in Lev 26, is expressed with the same words, מעלם אשר מעלו בי "the trespass which they committed against me," (Lev 26:40). Milgrom comments on Ezek 17:19-20, in the following way:

> The Ezekiel passage is most illuminating: the condemnation of Zedekiah is based on the violation of the covenant with Nebuchadnezzar not with God! Yet since the one involves a solemn oath as much as the other, its violation constitutes *ma'al*, i.e., a trespass against God.[23]

Wolff, "Jahwe als Bundesvermittler," *VT* 6 (1956) 316-20.

[20]Cf. however, J. Scharbert, "art. אלה," *TDOT I* 261-66, who argues that "when Yahweh calls the curse my curse" (אלחי), i.e., clearly "curse made by calling on my name," it is little likely that the heathen overlord called on the name of Yahweh: only the king of Judah would have mentioned him in his oath (curse)" (p. 264). This view is contradicted by 2 Kgs 18:25 = Isa 36:10 where the Assyrian envoy, Rabshakeh, argues that Yahweh has sent the Assyrians to avenge the infraction of the oath sworn by his name, "Is it without Yahweh that I have come up against this place to destroy it. Yahweh said to me: Go up against this land and destroy it!" Cf. also M. Weinfeld, "The Loyalty Oath in the Ancient Near East," *UF* 8 (1976) 379-414.

[21]This scholarly consensus has been recently challenged by M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 321, "Now, that Nebuchadnezzar (or any neo-Babylonian king) imposed on his vassals an oath of allegiance by their own gods is otherwise unknown. The neo-Assyrian evidence cited by Tsevat (...) is mostly supplied by conjectural fillings-in of lacunae. There is one clear case of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon including Phoenician gods in the curses sanctioning his treaty with Baal of Tyre (^{3}*ANET*, p. 534); but that appears as a special concession (see Cogan). The only evidence for neo-Babylonian practice is II Chron 36 - probably based on the Chronicler's understanding of our Ezekiel passage and therefore no independent witness (Mendenhall, cited by Zimmerli, bases himself on nothing else)." However, see V. Korošec, "Die Götteranrufung in den keilinschriftlichen Staatsverträgen," *Or* 45 (1976) 120-29. This issue requires additional study. It will be settled only with further extra-Biblical evidence allowing a more reliable interpretation.

[22]J. Milgrom, "The Concept of *ma'al* in the Bible and the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 96 (1976) 236-47.

[23]J. Milgrom, *art. cit.,* 238. Milgrom points to a series of OT texts where מעל occurs where one trespasses against the taboo of חרם (e.g. Josh 7:1ff; 22:20; 1 Chr 2:7; 1 Sam 15:3ff; 1 Kgs 20:24). J.- G. Heintz, *Le Dieu au Filet* (Unpublished thesis, École Biblique Archéologique Française, Jerusalem, 1965), has argued independently that the net motif in the Old Testament is related to the concept of חרם.

In Ezek 19:8-9 one finds an allegory of the lioness and the whelps in a קינה lament over Israel's leaders[24] whose exact identity is disputed.[25] One of the leaders of Israel is described as a whelp caught in the net set by the nations.

> They spread their net over him (ויפרשו עליו רשתם). He was caught in their pit. They put him, shackled, in neckstocks and led him to the king of Babylon - led him in toils (i.e., nets, במצדות).[26]

Here occurs a blending of the background from lion hunting[27] and a motif of divine judgment over disloyal rulers. As pointed out by Zimmerli, "in the indefiniteness of the word גוים (also v 4) the mystery of the authoritative Lord is hinted at, who rules as sovereign over peoples..."[28]

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[24]On the Hebrew term נשיא (Ezek 7:27; 12:10; 12:12; 19:1; 21:25), see E. A. Speiser, "Background and Function of the Biblical נשיא," in *Oriental and Biblical Studies* (eds. J. J. Finkelstein and M. Greenberg, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967) 113-22, who concludes his analysis by saying that one should avoid translating נשיא with "prince" the latter term "being misleading in its primary sense and meaningless in its customary derivative usage." With clans and tribes the title is best reproduced as "chieftain," and with larger units like political states, "leader," should satisfy the requirements, pp. 121-2. Cf. M. Noth, Exkursus III, "Gebrauch und Bedeutung des Wortes [נשיא]," in *Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1930) 151-62; J. van der Ploeg, "Les chefs du peuple d'Israël et leur titres," *RB* 57 (1950) 40-61, esp. pp. 47-51.

[25]Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 204, identifies the princes as Jehoahaz and Jechoiachin. M. Noth, "The Jerusalem Catastrophe of 587 B.C. and its Significance for Israel," in *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays* (Engl. transl. by D. R. Ap-Thomas, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967) 260-80, argued that the second prince represents Jehoiakim. But cf. E. Vogt, "Jojakîn collario ligneo vinctus (Ez 19:9)," *Bib* 37 (1956) 388-89; H. Oort, "Ezechiël 19; 21, 18, 19v., 24v.," *ThT* (1889) 504-14, argued that the two princes represent Jehoahaz and Zedekiah. Cf. the thorough discussion of this point in Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 393-4, and most recently, B. Lang, *Kein Aufstand in Jerusalem, Die Politik des Propheten Ezechiel* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1978) 101-6, who interprets the lioness and whelps allegory as a general indictment of the abuses and misbehavior of the royal house.

[26]For this rendering see M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 352. According to E. F. Weidner, "Jojachin, König von Juda, in babylonischen Keilschrifttexten," in *Mélanges syriens offerts à R. Dussaud* (Paris: Geuthner, 1939) II 923-35, in Babylon Jehoiachin was treated as a royal hostage. He is named (*Yaukînu* and *Ya'u*-DU = *Ya'ukînu*) in Babylonian tablets, dated between 595 and 570 BCE, as receiving rations at the court in company with his five sons.

[27]Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 395, refers to the pictures from Assyrian royal hunts where the servants go out with hunting dogs, spears, and nets, *ANEP* 298, 307.

[28]So Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 395.

In Ezek 32:3b,d in another קינה lament[29] over the Pharaoh (מלך מצרים),[30] Yahweh's judgment is announced,

I will throw my net over you	ופרשתי עליך את רשתי
and I will haul you up in my dragnet	והעלוך בחרמי

In this verse two terms for net occur in parallelism: רשת and חרם. Here the judgement over the ruler of Egypt is expressed with the imagery taken from fishing. In Ezek 29:3-6 and 32:2, the Pharaoh is referred to with the term התנין (with emendation cf. *BHS*),[31] which in this context might designate a large fish. Gunkel[32] suggested that these verses reflect the Babylonian account of the fight against the monster where Ti'âmat is caught in Marduk's net.[33] Gunkel's suggestion is probably erroneous

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[29]Cf. H. Jahnow, *Das hebräische Leichenlied im Rahmen der Völkerdichtung, BZAW* 36 (1923) 228-31. Cf. also L. Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles Against Egypt. A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29-32* (BibOr 37, Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980).

[30]Cf. Speiser, "Background and Function of the Biblical נשיא," in *Oriental and Biblical Studies* (eds. J. J. Finkelstein and M. Greenberg, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967) 113-22, esp. p. 114, "Ezekiel makes a distinction between מלך and נשיא which is partly qualitative and partly ideological. His מלך is primarily the head of a major political power, such as Egypt or Babylonia. Lesser foreign rulers, on the other hand, are given the title of נשיא, as is also the ideal future ruler of Judah. Thus in Ezekiel's view, great temporal power does not appear conducive to spiritual excellence, hence the prophet's personal preference for a modest principality as opposed to an ambitious empire." For the analysis of some key terms of rulers see also B. Halperin, *The Constitution of the Monarchy in Israel* (HSM 25, Chico, Calif.,: Scholars Press, 1981)

[31]In the Old Testament תנין occurs 13 times. Its infrequent appearance with the article (Gen 1:21; Deut 32:2, 33; Ezek 29:3; 32:2) have been taken by M. Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) to suggest that in poetic passages, where the absence of the article cannot guide us, תנין (alone, parallel or in opposition to Rahab or Leviathan) can be read as a "generic term." On תנין see G. R. Driver, "Mythical Monsters in the Old Testament," in *Studi Orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida* (Rome: Publicazioni dell'Instituto per l'Oriente 52, 1956, II vols.) I 234-49, esp. pp. 243-8. In his book, *Die Semitischen Fremdwörter im Griechischen* (Berlin: R. Gaertner, 1895) 14, H. Lewy argued that the Greek word θύννος "tunny fish" derives from the Semitic *tannîn*. Presumably the Phoenician sailors brought this term to the Greeks. θύννος is the largest edible sea fish. It can reach the length of 5 meters and according to Pliny's *Natural History* ix 15, its tail can be 2,5 elbows large. Hebrew תנין corresponds to Ugaritic *tnn* in Ba'al and 'Anat V AB, D 37, (vocalized tunnānu). Cf. E. Greenstein, "The Snaring of the Sea in the Baal Epic," *Maarav* 3 (1982) 195-216, esp. p. 207 with additional bibliography.

[32]H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, [1]1895, [2]1921) 71-7. This identification has been followed by H. Fredriksson, *Jahwe als Krieger, Studien zum alttestamentlichen Gottesbild* (Lund: Gleerup, 1945) 74-5.

[33]*En.el.* IV 41 *epušma sapāra šulmu qerbiš Tiamat* "He made a net to enclose Ti'âmat within it," cf. also IV 44; V 83; IV 95 *ušparrirma bēlum saparrāšu ušalmēši* "The lord spread out his net and enmeshed her"; As for the gods, Ti'âmat's allies who marched at her side, Marduk "imprisoned them and broke their weapons, in the net they lay and in the snare they were" IV 112 *sapariš nadūma kamāriš usbū*. In this last line *saparru* appears in parallelism with *kamāru*. Akkadian text from R. Labat, *Le poème babylonien*

since Ti'âmat represents a watery mass while התנין in nonmythological contexts designates some kind of fish. Whether Ezek 32 should be considered as a passage with mythological overtones is still debated.[34]

In Ezek 26:5, 14 in an oracle of judgment against Tyre, the prophet threatens the complete destruction of the city.[35] It will become a bare rock and a place for the "spreading of the nets." Instead of רשת, the term חרם with the meaning "net" is used. Ezek 26:5, "She shall be in the midst of the sea[36] a place for the spreading of nets," (In Ezek 26:14b, the divine judgment is reiterated by the use of the same expression, "You shall be a place for the spreading of nets," (משטח חרמים תיהיה). The only exception to the use of the net in contexts of divine judgemnt in the Book of

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de la création (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1935), as translated by A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942, 1963). A more probable reflex of the Babylonian version was identified in Job 26:13 by Tur-Sinai, who nevertheless, has to emend the MT text, ברוחו שמם ים שפרה "With his wind he put Sea in his net" in parallelism with הללה ידו נחש ברית "His hand pierced the twisted serpent." N. H. Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1957) 383-4. The association between Job 26:13 and *En.el.* IV 95, is reinforced by the use of the Hebrew שפרה "net," a cognate of Akkadian *saparru*. On this equation see H. R. Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic* (SBLDS, Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978) 50, 97-98 (with additional bibliography). But even this apparently clear dependence of a Biblical text on *En.el.* has been questioned. Heidel, Jacobsen, and Greenstein have argued for a western (probably Ugaritic) source of the motif of the snaring of the sea, cf. A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942,1963) 110-1; T. Jacobsen, "The Battle between Marduk and Tiamat," *JAOS* 88 (1968) 104-8; G. A. Barton, "Tiamat," *JAOS* 15 (1893) 1-27; E. Greenstein, "The Snaring of the Sea in the Baal Epic," *Maarav* 3 (1982) 195-216.

[34]G. Fohrer, *Ezekiel* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1955) 166, and O. Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres, BZAW* 78 (1959) 148, argued that תנין refers to a crocodile rather than the mythological creature. In recent times, however, the mythological interpretation has been defended by C. Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles Against Egypt. A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29-32* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1980) 27-8, 131-2, and J. Day. *God's Conflict With the Dragon and the Sea. Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 1988) 93-5. Day elaborates six points in defence of his interpretation and concludes by saying that "Ezekiel's use of this mythological imagery is comparable to his employment of mythological motifs elsewhere in the oracles against foreign nations to depict the judgment that befalls hybris (Ezek 28:1-19 and 31)" (p. 95).

[35]On the Ezek 26 see H. J. Van Dijk, *Ezechiel's Prophecy on Tyre (Ez 26,1 - 28,19). A New Approach* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968); and C. A. Newsom, "A Maker of Metaphors - Ezekiel's Oracles Against Tyre," *Int* 38 (1984) 151-164.

[36]Hebrew בתוך הים corresponds to Akkadian *ša qabal tāmtim* "in the midst of the sea" used by Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) in his description of the conquest of Tyre, "I conquered Tyre which lies in the midst of the sea," R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (*AfO* Beiheft 9, Graz: E. Weidner, 1956) 86.

Ezekiel is found in Ezek 47:10. Here it occurs in a positive context in the midst of the eschatological promise of restoration, "From En-gedî to En-'eglayîm it will be a place for the spreading of nets," (משטוח לחרמים יהיו). What was said in Ezek 26:5, 14 to Tyre by way of threat is stated here as a description of exquisite conditions of the coastal settlements along the Dead Sea which will be swarming with various kinds of fish. Hence, the meaning of this particular expression משטח חרמים depends on the context. In an oracle of judgment it represents utter desolation, in a promise of restoration it is a symbol of blessing and abundance.

Summary: The great variety of nets and their use in war as well as in fowling, hunting, and fishing shows that the net was an important weapon and ustensil in ancient Near Eastern societies. Therefore, it is not surprising to find the relatively frequent mention of nets, traps, snares, toils in the Old Testament. The Old Testament writers use the imagery of the net in their similes in order to convey the plots of wicked men (Ps 140:6); the snares of a woman (Qoh 7:26); the social and religious manipulation of the priests (Hos 5:1); the person who exploits the poor (Ps 10:9); the murderer who waits with a net (Mic 7:2). By contrast, in the majority of cases in the Book of Ezekiel, the net is used as the weapon with which Yahweh implements his judgments. In Ezekiel the net motif occurs consistently in oracles of judgment with one exception (Ezek 47:10).

5.2.3. The "Net" in the Poem of Erra

The terms for net occur five times in the Poem of Erra, I 42; IIIC 33; IV 18, 19; IV 94; Statistically this feature is important as it testifies to the prominence of the "net" motif in the Poem of Erra.

In Erra I 42 the god Anu creates the Sebetti. He gives them to Erra to assist him in his punitive actions against the "din" (*ḫubūru*) of the inhabitants of Mesopotamian cities as well as against the domestic animals.

I 41 *kî ša nišī dadmê ḫubūršina elīka imtarṣū*
42 *ublāmma libbāka ana šakān kamāri*
43 *ṣalmat qaqqadi ana šumutti šumqutu būl* ^{d}*Šakkan*

When the din of the inhabitants becomes unbearable to you and your heart is driven to throw a net,[37] to kill the dark-headed

[37]Here we follow R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 12, who translates *ana šakān kamāri* with "to throw a net." Cf. *CAD K* 111, *kamāru* A, "a trap with a snare," and *En.el.* IV 112, sapariš *nadūma kamāriš usbū* "thrown into a net, they crouch in the trap."

people and to slaughter Šakkan's herds.

In Erra IIIC 33, Išum has a polemical dialogue with Erra about the mercilessness of Erra's destructive plan.

kî ša lemna ^{d}*Anza ana kamēšu šuparrura[at še-et-su]*[38]

As if (it were) to catch the evil Anzû [his net]?[39] is (likewise) spread out!

Išum in his role as intercessor is trying to appease Erra, saying that the Mesopotamians are just humans and there is no need to deploy the same battle preparations as if it were a fight with the evil Anzû bird. Išum's statement implies that the offense of the humans should not be viewed by Erra to be as grave as the one committed by the Anzû bird who stole the tablets of destinies from Enlil. In so doing Išum attempts to minimize the offenses of the humans. As pointed out by Landsberger,[40] it is only in this relatively late work which is the Poem of Erra that the Anzû bird is characterized as "evil" (*lemnu*), an adjective which is usually applied to demons like *eṭemmu, alû, gallû, rābiṣu*. Išum attempts to reason with Erra

[38]Cagni (*EE*, 98) hesitates between the readings Anzû or Zû. For the reading Anzû confirmed by some new fragments see M. Civil, "The Anzu-Bird and Scribal Whimsies," *JAOS* 92 (1972) 271; and J. S. Cooper, "More Heat on the AN.IM.DUGUD Bird," *JCS* 26 (1974) 121. ^{d}*Anzû* (Landsberger's reading is to be preferred over the one by Scheil, Lambert and Grayson ^{d}*Zû*), represents a mythical divine bird with a leonine head which stole the tablets of destinies from Enlil, cf. B. Landsberger, "Einige unerkannt gebliebene oder verkannte Nomina des Akkadischen," *WZKM* 56 (1960) 109-29 (part I), and especially (part II) *WZKM* 57 (1961) 1-23; For a critique of Landsberger's interpretation see W. L. Lambert, "The Gula Hymn of Bullutsa-rabi," *Or* 36 (1967) 105-32, esp. p. 130. For the OB version see V. Scheil, "Fragments de la légende du dieu Zû," *RA* 35 (1938) 14-25, and J. Nougayrol, "Ningirsu vanqueur de Zû," *RA* 46 (1952) 87-97. For the NA version see E. Ebeling, "Eine neue Tafel des akkadischen Zû-Mythos," *RA* 46 (1952) 25-41. T. Fish, "The Zû-Bird," *BJRL* 31 (1948) 162-71. For an English translation of "The Myth of Zû," see A. K. Grayson, in ^{3}*ANET* 514-17. B. Hruška, *Der Mythenadler Anzû in der Literatur Mesopotamien und Vorstellung des alten Mesopotamien* (Budapest: Eötuös Lorand Tudomanyegyetem, 1975), offered and exhaustive study of the Anzû myth. For a recent discussion on Anzû see H. W. F. Saggs, "Additions to Anzû," *AfO* 33 (1986) 1-29.

[39]Although the term for net (*šēṭu*) is supplied by Cagni in this line, his restoration is supported by a similar line in *CAD E* 8a, *iṣṣūru* ^{d}*Za ina šēṭu ibilu* = "(I, Nabû, am) the one who bagged the Zû bird in a net." Moreover the verb *suparruru* is used in a context of a battle between Marduk and Ti'âmat where the former envelops her in his net, *En.el.* IV 95, *usparrirma bēlum saparrāšu ušalmēši*, "Mais déployant son filet, le Seigneur l'en enveloppa," R. Labat, *Le poème babylonien de la création* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1935) 130. Cf. the commentary in Cagni, *EE*, 220.

[40]B. Landsberger, "Einige unerkannt gebliebene oder verkannte Nomina des Akkadischen," *WZKM* 57 (1961) 1-23, esp. p. 10 n. 45.

saying that the humans should not be fought against with the same fierceness.

In Erra IV 18-19 one finds two different words for "net" in parallelism, *arru* "snare, decoy," and *šētu* "net."

18 *āšib Bābili šunūti šunu iṣṣūrumma arrāšunu attāma*
19 *ana šēti takmiššūnima tabir tatabat qurādu Erra*

The inhabitants of Babylon then - they the bird, you their decoy -
You entangled in your net, you caught, you slew them, hero Erra.[41]

Here the people of the city of Babylon are described as being caught in Erra's net which he uses in his punitive action.

In Erra IV 94, Išum reports to Erra the words of the people whose city was destroyed by Erra. They complain of being like herds with a god who is a "slayer,"[42] who enmeshes and kills them in his net.

93 *nišīšu būlumma māḫiṣu ilšin*
94 *u ša šēršu inša piqatūma ḫa'iri lā išlupūma imūtū ina kakki*

-Its people the herds, their god the slayer, whose net is close-meshed:
married men were not rescued (out of it), but they died by the weapon.[43]

The expression *ina kakki* "with/by the weapon" refers to Erra's net (*šētu*). In the above examples the net appears as a divine weapon.

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[41]Translation from Cagni, *PE*, 48.

[42]The term *mḫṣ* occurs both here and in I 112. Erra says of himself, *ina [b]ūlim māḫiṣakku* "Among the herds I am the beater," (I 112). Cagni translates in both cases with "beater," *PE*, p. 31 n. 25. While this translation follows the primary meaning of the root *mḫṣ* "to strike," the action implied is not just simple beating. It is a matter of slaying, slaughtering and butchering. Cf. the rendering of J. Bottéro, "Parmi les [tr]oupeaux, le Boucher," in "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) p. 117. cf. also R. Labat, "[parmi] le bétail, je suis l'égorgeur," while in IV 94, he translates with "et le tueur leur dieu," in *Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique* (eds. R. Labat, *et al.*, Paris: Fayard/Denoël, 1970) 120, 133. *muḫḫuṣ* in Akkadian means "to wound," Delitzsch *HWB* 400a. In the OT the term חמץ occurs 15 times, Num 24:8, 17; Deut 32:39; 33:11; Judg 5:26; 2 Sam 22:39; Isa 30:26; Hab 3:13; Ps 18:39; 68:22, [24]; 100:5, 6; Job 5:18; 26:12. The neat differentiation between Akkadian *maḫāṣu* "to beat" and *dakû (šagāšu)* "to kill, to slay," suggested by M. Held, "*mḫṣ/*mḫš* in Ugaritic and Other Semitic Languages (A Study of Comparative Lexicography)," *JAOS* 79 (1959) 169-76, is not confirmed by the two references to *mḫṣ* in the Poem of Erra.

[43]Instead of "beater" we have rendered *māḫiṣu* with "slayer" with the meaning of "butcher." In several Ugaritic administrative texts the term *mḫṣm* designates "butchers," e.g., *UT* 115:15; 147:1; 170:9; etc. cf. C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (AnOr 38, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965) glossary p. 432. The same interpretation is suggested by E. Greenstein, "The Snaring of the Sea in the Baal Epic," *Maarav* 3 (1982) 210.

5.2.4. Some References to the "Net" in Other Mesopotamian Literature

Under this heading we will cite a few examples from Mesopotamian literature where the net is mentioned as a weapon of the gods.[44] In phenomenological studies the net is considered as the "archetype of cosmic or divine retribution." The motif is very ancient indeed, being present already in Sumerian texts.[45] It appears both in inscriptions and in iconographic representations. The various texts which mention the net as a divine weapon will allow us to understand better the meaning of this motif and shed further light both on its use in the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra.

In connection with Ezek 17:19-20, where the divine judgment against Zedekiah, the perjurer, is expressed in terms of Yahweh's net, Heintz has pointed out the central role which the divine net has in contexts of political perjury.[46] Such an instance is found in the so-called "Stele of the Vultures." Here the motif of the net as the weapon of divine retribution is expressed with an almost classical perfection in both a graphic[47] and

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[44]Cf. J.- G. Heintz, *Le Dieu au Filet, Étude d'un thème de souveraineté divine du Proche-Orient antique dans ses rapports avec les origines du "ḥerem" biblique* (Unpublished thesis, École Biblique et Archéologique Française, Jerusalem, 1965). Some sections from this work have been published in *idem*., "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les Archives Royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 112-37, esp. pp. 129-37.

[45]Cf. A. Poebel, "Sumerische Untersuchungen II," *ZA* 37 (1927) 161-76, 245-72. In several bilingual Sumerian and Akkadian incantations appears the identification of Marduk's word with the "net." Poebel quotes four later texts in order to illustrate the motif in an ancient Sumerian inscription. Here we quote just one Akkadian line, *iau awātim ellitum saparru rabû ina itanīša ṣiḫḫirutim*, "Mein heiliges Wort ist ein großes *saparu*-Netz, aus seinen feinen Maschen kann kein Vogel entrinnen," *SBH* Nr. 56, 68-73, Poebel, *art. cit.* p. 263.

[46]J.- G. Heintz, "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les Archives Royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 112-37, esp. pp. 133-6.

[47]For a photographic reproduction or a drawing of the "Stele of the Vultures" see *ANEP* N° 298, and p. 183 (fragments D and E); A. Parrot, *Tello, vingt campagnes de fouilles (1877-1933)* (Paris: A. Michel, 1948) pp. 95-101, Pl. VI fig. 23; *idem., Le Musée de Louvre et la Bible* (CAB 9, Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1957) pp. 14-6 fig. 5; *idem., Sumer, The Dawn of Art* (Engl. transl. by S. Gilbert and J. Emmons, New York: Golden Press, 1961) p. 134, fig. 163B, p. 135, fig. 165, p. 137, fig. 166; J.- G. Heintz, "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les Archives Royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 112-37, esp. p. 132, fig. 3 and 4.

literary way.[48]

The perjurers are enmeshed in a net. The stele dates from about 2450 BCE. It has been erected by king Eannatum of Lagaš (present day al-Hiba), in order to celebrate his victory over the neighboring city of Umma. The relief shows the god Ningirsu throwing a net upon a group of people, probably the inhabitants of Umma, as a graphic warning that this is the punishment which awaits the perjurers. In the oath of the vassal treaty which represents the central part of the inscription, the king of Umma repeats nine times the same phrase,

> "If I violate (the boundaries/or the given word),
> then may the šušgal-net[49] of Enlil, by which I have sworn,
> be hurled down on Umma from heaven."[50]

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[48]The inscription has been reproduced in L. Heuzey and F. Thureau-Dangin, *Restitution matérielle de la Stèle des Vautours* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1909) pl. I-IV, and in E. Sollberger, *Corpus des Inscriptions "Royales" présargoniques de Lagaš* (Genève: Droz, 1956) pp. IX and 9-16. M. T. Barrelet, "Peut-on remettre en question la 'restitution materielle de la Stèle des Vautours'?" *JNES* 29 (1970) 233-258; For a transliteration and translation see F. Thureau-Dangin, *Die Sumerische und Akkadische Königsinschriften* (VAB I/1, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907) pp. 10-20. To the bibliography adduced by J.- G. Heintz, "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les Archives Royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 112-37, esp. p. 133 n. 4, one may add the following more recent translations, E. Sollberger and J.- R. Kupper, *Inscriptions royales sumériennes et akkadiennes* (LAPO 3, Paris: Cerf, 1971), and T. Jacobsen, "The Stele of the Vultures Col. I-X." in *Kramer Anniversary Volume* (ed. B. L. Eichler *et al.*, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976) 247-59.

[49]For an illustration of the šušgal-net see J. B. Nies, "A Net Cylinder of Entemena," *JAOS* 36 (1917) 137-39. One side of the cylinder has a design of a net in relief. According to Nies ŠA.ŠUŠ.GAL means "a great covering net, such as the gods were said to throw over their enemies so as, presumably by drawing the cord strung through the edges, to enclose them" (p. 138).

[50]Translation from S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians, Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963) 310-13. For some corrections of Kramer's translation see, M. Lambert, "Review of S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians*," *RA* 59 (1965) 133-36.

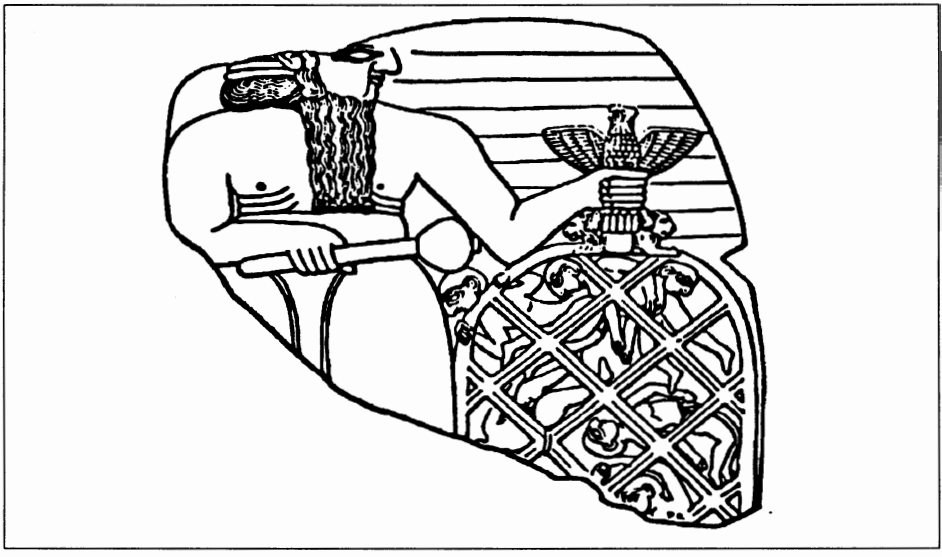

Figure 1. The Stele of the Vultures in A. Parrot, *Le Musée du Louvre et la Bible* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1957) p. 15, fig. 5.

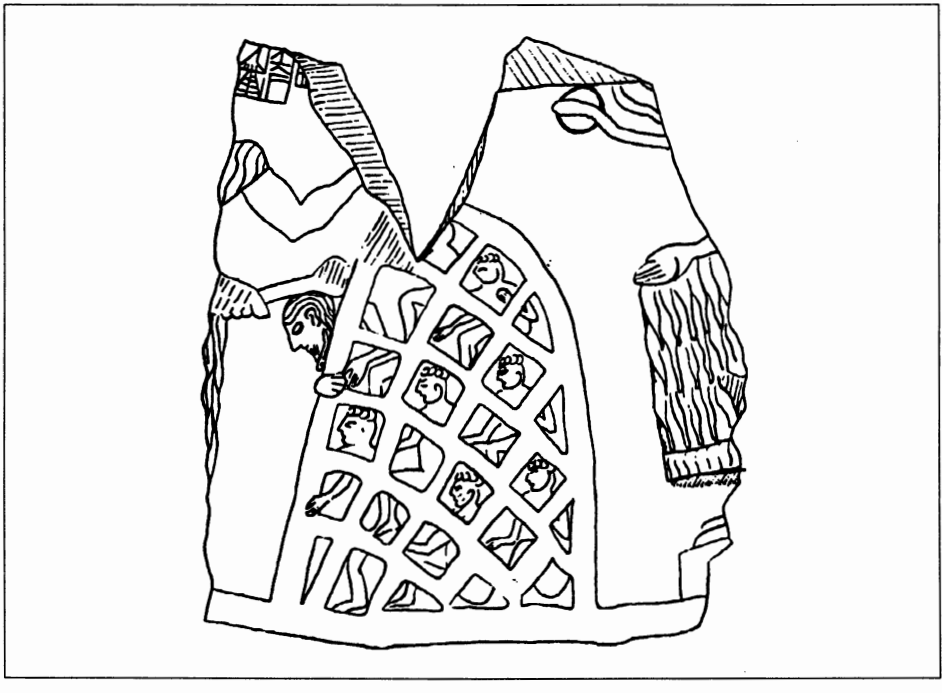

Figure 2. Sargon's Victory Stele in A. Spycket, "Illustration d'un texte hépatoscopique concernant Sargon d'Agade (?)," *RA* 40 (1945–46) 151–56, esp. p. 152, fig. 1. The iconographic evidence on the net motif has been collected and published by J.- G. Heintz, "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les Archives Royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 112–37, esp. p. 132. These reproductions show that the Semites have adopted the ancient Sumerian net motif.

In the Mari "prophetic" letters the divinity whom the king consults through an intermediary, promises on several occasions to overpower his enemies by throwing a net on them. In the letter published in *RA* 42 (1948) 131, the god Dagān promises a victory to Zimri-Lim.

37 *u šarrā[ni]* [*ša* DUMU.MEŠ]*iamina*[51] *ina ṣuṣṣul*
38 *bā'i[rī luša-]bilšunūtima*[52]
39 *maḫyrīka* [*luška*]*nšunūtu*

I will carry the Yaminite sheiks in
the basket-net of the fishermen
(and) place them in front of you.[53]

The term *ṣuṣṣul* might be translated with "basket-net."[54] As pointed out

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[51]Cf. G. Dossin, "Benjaminites dans les textes de Mari," in *Mélanges Syriens offerts à R. Dussaud* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939, 2 vols.) II 981-996; *idem*., "A propos du nom des Benjaminites dans les 'Archives de Mari,'" *RA* 52 (1959) 60-62; H. Klengel, "Benjaminiten und Hanäer," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität,* Gesellsch.-Sprachwiss. Reihe 8 (1958-59) 211-27.

[52]This word has been restored in different ways. G. Dossin, "Une révélation du dieu Dagan à Terqa," *RA* 42 (1948) 125-34, esp. p. 131 restores, [*lu-pa-a*]*ššilšunūtima* "j'[emmè]nerai." W. von Soden, "Verkündung des Gotteswillens durch prophetisches Wort in den altbabylonischen Briefen aus Mari," *WO* 1 (1950) 397-403, esp. p. 398 reads, [*lu-ša-a*]*pšilšunūtima* "zappeln lassen," (to let wriggle). A. Malamat, "'Prophecy' in the Mari Documents," *Eretz Israel* 4 (1956) 74-84, esp. p. 82, reads [*lu-ša-a*]*bšilšunūtima* and translates, "cooked in a fisherman's spit." His reading is followed by Moran, [3]*ANET* 623, n. 6. J.- G. Heintz, "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les Archives Royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 130, n. 4, who follows Dossin, parses the verb as a D stem of *pašālu* "tirer, traîner" = "to haul, to drag." However, the term *pašālu* means "to crawl," especially of people grovelling before a conqueror, and is inappropriate here. Cf. F. Thureau-Dangin, *Une relation de la huitième campagne de Sargon* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1912) p. 12 l. 58: *uṣallūnima ina pānīya eli irbi ritīšunu iptaššilū kīma kalbi* "they prayed to me and crawled before me on all fours like a dog," and p. 52 l. 345: *aššu eṭīr napišīšunu eli irbi ritīšunu iptaššilūma qāīšunu* "to save their lives they crawled on all fours." The rendering of A. Finet, "Citations littéraires dans la correspondance de Mari," *RA* 68 (1974) 35-47, esp. p. 41, "les rois des Yaminites je les ferai frétiller dans la nasse des pêcheurs," follows that of von Soden. Our restoration *lušabil*, assumes here a precative *lu* + 1 p. sing. m. preterite, (*ušabil*) Š stem of the verb *wabālu* "to carry," cf. *GAG*, verb paradigm 25 (following a suggestion of our teacher, the late Moshe Held). Cf. Erra V 37, *Idiglat Purattu lišabila mê nuḫ*[*ši*] "May Tigris and Euphrates carry fertilizing waters."

[53]Akkadian text from G. Dossin, "Une révélation du dieu Dagan à Terqa," *RA* 42 (1948) 125-134, esp. p. 131, with our translation. For additional bibliography and a list of different readings of these lines see J.- G. Heintz, "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les Archives Royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 129-30.

[54]According to Moshe Held, *ṣuṣṣul bā'irim* might represent a fisherman's basket sealed tight with bitumen so that water does not leak out. He adduced Am 4:2 as a possible parallel, "Yahweh God has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with baskets (בְּצִנּוֹת), even the last of you with fish baskets (בְּסִרוֹת דּוּגָה, cf. *RSV* "hooks" and "fishhooks" which is probably

by Heintz, there is a great variety of nets and fishing devices which can be described either as a basket or a net.[55] However, until further research has clarified the reconstruction of the verb in l. 38 and established the exact identification of the term *ṣuṣṣul*, we must place a question mark on the above translation.

In *ARM X* 80, 14b-15, Zimri-Lim is warned that the conciliatory overtures of "a man of Ešnunna," the ruler of that city state, are sheer treachery. This ruler cannot be trusted, and the god Dagān reassures the king,

14b *u ana šētim*
15 *ša uqaṣṣāru akammiššu*[56]

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erroneous), [so M. Held in the Seminar in Assyriology and Northwest Semitic Dialects, Columbia University, Fall semester 1983: "Mari Prophetic Letters"]. The verse in Am 4:2 is a *crux*. S. J. Schwantes, "Note on Amos 4:2b," *ZAW* 79 (1967) 82-3, suggested to derive Hebrew צנוח from Akkadian *ṣinnitu, ṣerretu* "nose rope, reins, chains," cf. *En.el.* I 72 *Mummu ittamaḫ ukâl* ṣerressu = "Il empoigna Mummu et renforça ses chaînes," R. Labat, *Le poème babylonien de la création* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1935) 85. However, *BDB* 696c, explains סיר "pot" as an Egyptian loanword. G. R. Driver, "Babylonian and Hebrew Words," *WO* 2 (1954-59) 19-26, esp. p. 20, argues that סיר in this verse must be translated "fish-pots." For a lengthy discussion of various possibilities of reading see J. De Waard and W. A. Smalley, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Amos* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1979) 79, 233 nn. 59-64. Cf. also S. L. Harris, "The Second Vision of Jeremiah, Jer 1:13-15," *JBL* 102 (1983) 281-82, who understands סיר as some kind of plant.

[55]J.- G. Heintz, "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les Archives Royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 133 n. 1. The author quotes the work of T. Monod, "Notes pour une classification fonctionnelle des engins de pêche," in *4e Conférence Internationale des Africanistes de l'Ouest* (Madrid, 1954) 119-42 (1 fig.). For a glimpse of the variety of nets in the ancient Near East one may see O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World, Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Eng. transl. by T. J. Hallett, New York: Seabury, 1978) 90-94; cf. also A. Salonen, *Die Hausgeräte der alten Mesopotamier nach sumerisch-akkadischen Quellen. Eine lexikalische und kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (AASF Series B. 139, Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia, 1965) 245; *idem., Die Fischerei im alten Mesopotamien nach sumerisch-akkadiscen Quellen. Eine lexikalische und kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (AASF Series B. 166, Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia, 1970) 79.

[56]Akkadian text from G. Dossin, *La correspondance féminine (ARM* vol. X , Paris: P. Geuthner, 1967) pl. 35a. M. Anbar, "La durée du règne de Zimri-Lim," *Israel Oriental Studies* 9 (1979) 1-8. J. F. Craghan, "The ARM X 'Prophetic' Texts: Their Media, Style, and Structure," *JANES* 6 (1974) 39-57; *idem.*, "Mari and Its Prophets. The Contributions of Mari to the Understanding of Biblical Prophecy," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 5 (1975) 32-55; S. Dalley, "**ARMT X** Reviewed, with a Discussion of *šar mātim* and *Sitrum*," *BiOr* 36 (1979) 289-92. On the topic of Mari prophecy see M. Dietrich, "Prophetie in den Keilschrifttexten," *Jahrbuch für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte* 1 (1979) 15-44; M. Anbar, "Laspect moral dans un discours 'prophétique' de Mari," *UF* 7 (1975) 517-18; E. Noort, *Untersuchungen zum Gottesbescheid im Mari. Die Mariprophetie in der alttestamentlichen Forschung*, (AOAT 202, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker - Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1977); A. Schmitt, *Prophetischer Gottesbescheid in Mari und Israel -Eine Strukturuntersuchung* (BWANT 114, Stuttgart, 1982)

I am going to gather him into a net which holds fast.[57]

In *ARMT XIII* 23, 9b-10a, the god Dagān threatens Babylon,

9b *ana pūgim*
10a *upaḫḫar-x-ka*[58]

(O Babylon!...) I am going to gather you into a net.[59]

In his discussion of this letter Malamat refers to the "Stele of the Vultures" as the background of this motif. He points out that the ensnaring in the net by the deity constitutes special punishment for violation of a treaty, "an offense which is apparently the basis of our prophecy."[60]

5.2.5. Parallels, Contrasts, Conclusions

The expression "to throw or to gather into a net" does not represent only a lexicographic parallel between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra but also a motif which the two works share in common.[61] In line with our definition of the motif, the net represents a material object which is often depicted graphically on reliefs and stelae. Moreover, the net occurs in the context of divine judgment and retribution against the person or the people who committed a breach of loyalty, political perjury or some kind of offense.

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[57]Translation from W. L. Moran, "Akkadian Letters," [3]*ANET* 632 #x. cf. also the criticism of Dossin's translation in W. L. Moran, "New Evidence from Mari on the History of Prophecy," *Bibl* 50 (1969) 15-46, esp. p. 53 n. 1. In order to illustrate the duplicity and dishonesty of the "man of Eshnunna" the author of the letter quotes a proverb, "Under the straw the waters course." (l. 13). It probably means that one cannot trust appearances: While the straw may be lying motionless on the surface of the water underneath the current continues to flow.

[58]Akkadian text in J, Bottéro, *Textes divers (ARMT* vol. XIII, Paris: P. Geuthner, 1964) pp. 42-3. For an explanation of the rare word *pûgu(m)* see J.- G. Heintz, "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les Archives Royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *VTS* 17 (1968) 131 l. 9.

[59]Translation from W. L. Moran, [3]*ANET* 625 #i. Cf. also A. Malamat, "Prophetic Revelations in New Documents from Mari and the Bible," *VTS* 15 (1966) 207-27, esp. p. 215. The author offers a discussion of the background of this letter.

[60]A. Malamat, *art. cit., VTS* 15 (1966) 218.

[61]Cf. M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 214, who also mentions the net as a motif, "the deity as a hunter seizing his (worshipers') enemies in a net is an ancient Near Eastern *motif*." A. Malamat too, calls it a "motif" "Prophetic Revelations in New Documents from Mari and the Bible," *VTS* 15 (1966) 217.

The references to the net from other works of Mesopotamian literature have brought further clarification on the "net" motif. In a number of texts which we have quoted one notes the breach of loyalty which provokes the divinity to throw the net and punish the offenders. In the late texts published by Poebel, the word of Marduk is equated with a great *saparru*-net (*saparru rabû*). In this connection it is important to note that the Poem of Erra (I 122), explicitly mentions that "the word of Marduk has been slighted by the humans." This can be interpreted to mean that Marduk's worshipers have become disloyal and neglectful. The consequence of their offense is the punishment of being caught in the net of Erra and the Sebetti. In our analysis of the expression *leqû šēṭūtu* we have pointed out that it represents the contempt shown toward Marduk and Erra in terms of indifference and negligence in worship. Moreover, in the Poem of Erra, the terms *ḫubūru* and *rigmu* express not only the "din" of humans but also their irreverent, insolent and unrespectful i.e., "sinful" attitude toward those two gods. Hence, the punishment of the inhabitants of Mesopotamian cities who are described as being entangled and killed by Erra's net appears as a consequence of their disloyalty toward Marduk and Erra. In the Poem of Erra the net appears as a divine weapon with which the god Erra destroys Mesopotamian cities and its inhabitants.

The passage concerning the political perjury of king Zedekiah in respect to his suzerain, the king of Babylon (Ezek 17:19-20), comes immediately to our attention as an instance of a disloyalty being punished with a divine net. However, we would question Zimmerli's interpretation that Ezekiel radicalized in a unique way the disloyalty to a human partner (in this case the king of Babylon), as being an offense toward Yahweh. In light of the oath of the covenant found in the Stele of the Vultures, it appears that this supposed "radical" understanding of the breach of loyalty as an offense against the gods was a general assumption of suzerain vassal treaties. In our opinion, Zimmerli's and Tsevat's interpretation needs to be modified since what they considered to be radical and new is simply common coin. Instead of arguing for a transfer of demands from individual to collective responsibility[62] as Tsevat and

[62]On the issue of individual and collective responsibility in Ezekiel see J. Harvey, "Collectivisme et individualisme. Ez. 18,1-32 et Jér. 31,29," *Sciences Ecclésiastiques* 10 (1958) 167-202; B. Lindars, "Ezekiel and Individual Responsibility," *VT* 15 (1965) 452-67; P. M. Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1987). The author argues that the common view of Ezekiel as Israel's first great proponent of individual responsibility warrants reassessment; *idem*., "Ezekiel and Individual Responsibility," *BETL* 74 (1986) 317-21.

Zimmerli do, it is more appropriate to view Ezekiel's polemics in the light of his religious and theological view of history:

> es drückt sich weder in der individualistischen, noch in der rechtlichen, sondern in der religiösen Tendenz aus. Ähnlich dem deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk unternimmt es Ezechiel, die Geschichte und Politik unter fast ausschliesslich religiösen Gesichtspunkte zu sehen, ja Politik auf Religion und zuvörderst sakralrechtliche Fragen zuruckzuführen: nur die Religion bringt für ihn das Wesentliche zutage; weil politische Verfehlungen gleichzeitig Sünde gegen Gott sind, ist Religion geradezu das Wesen der Politik.[63]

Lang's comment about Ezekiel could as well be applied to the Poem of Erra. Both works reflect a similar religious outlook:[64] religion and politics are seen as facets of the same reality. In the Poem of Erra, political events of history are viewed and interpreted in the light of Babylonian theological and literary tradition. As Bottéro expressed it, the Poem of Erra reflects a "raisonnement théologique" where the author produced a "theology of history" akin to the deuteronomic school in Israel several centuries later.[65]

Furthermore, as pointed out by Greenberg,[66] the reference to Zedekiah's breach of the covenant refers as well to the violation of the

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[63]So correctly B. Lang, *Kein Aufstand in Jerusalem. Die Politik des Propheten Ezechiel* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1978) 60.

[64]This religious outlook is known in the scholarly discussions as "the common theology of the ancient Near East," Cf. M. Smith, "The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 71 (1952) 135-47.

[65]J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (l'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 148. Cf. his section on "La théologie de l'Histoire et la composition d'Erra" pp. 148-57. Cf. the article by J. Pons, "Le vocabulaire d'Ézéchiel 20: le prophète s'oppose à la vision deutéronomiste de l'histoire," *BETL* 74 (1986) 214-33, who argues that the author of Ezek 20 used the deuteronomic vocabulary, giving it a new meaning in an attempt to counter the deuteronomic interpretation of history. The deuteronomic circles in exile attempted to find a continuity in Israelite history comparing the exile with the sojourn in Egypt. Pons argues that Ezekiel presents another interpretation of exile as a new and radically different beginning illustrated with the metaphors of the new heart (Ezek 36:26) and the dry bones which come back to life (Ezek 37). However, for a very different perception of the issues related to Ezek 20 see W. Zimmerli, "Le nouvel 'Exode' dans le message des deux grands prophètes de l'exil," in *Maqqèl shâqédh la branche d'amandier, Hommage à W. Vischer* (Montpellier: Causse, Graille, Castelnau, 1960) 216-27. The author sees the source of polemics in Ezek 20 in the dispair of the exilic community. He argues for the continuity in God's faithfulness to Israel. The new exodus is simply a renewal of ancient promises: "Ce que Dieu déclare maintenant au sujet de son peuple dans sa nouvelle initiative créatrice, n'est autre chose que le renouvellement de la parole qu'il avait dite aux premières origines," (p.227).

[66]M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 322. The author quotes 1 Kgs 12:28ff., 14:15f., pointing out that the historian of the Book of Kings holds it as an established doctrine that the Israelite kings are responsible for covenant violations of their kingdoms.

covenant between Yahweh and the people of Judah in general. This interpretation finds support in Ezek 16:59-60,

> Yea, thus says Yahweh God: I will deal with you as you have done,
> who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, yet I will remember
> my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish with
> you an everlasting covenant.

The religious straying of the kingdom of Judah in terms of the disloyalty to Yahweh is blamed upon their leader, king Zedekiah. This view is explicitly stated in Ezekiel's prophecy against the "shepherds"[67] (i.e., leaders and kings) of Israel because of whom the people strayed and were scattered (Ezek 34:1-6).[68] If this interpretation is correct, then the net motif in the Book of Ezekiel is used in a way similar to the net motif in the Poem of Erra: The net of the gods falls upon the culprits as a sign of punishment and judgment because of the religious disloyalty, irreverence and neglectfulness on the part of the people toward their respective divinities. While this parallel between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra is not conclusive by itself, it becomes probable when seen together with other points of contact identified in this research.

In using themes and motifs from the Poem of Erra the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel seems to have given an emphasis of his own. While in the Poem of Erra the net is directed against the disloyal population from various Mesopotamian cities, in the Book of Ezekiel the leader of the straying Israelites is directly threatened.

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[67]Cf. W. H. Brownlee, "Ezekiel's Poetic Indictment of the Shepherds," *HTR* 51 (1958) 191-203. cf. also F. Smyth-Florentin, "Le vrai berger (Ez 34)," *Assemblées du Seigneur* 65 (1973) 4-9.

[68]In his article on the "Doctrines of Causality in Hittite and Biblical Historiography: A Parallel," *VT* 5 (1955) 1-12, A. Malamat, has pointed out a parallel between Biblical and Hittite way of interpreting national catastrophes where "the guilt was laid to a king, who, as the representative of the entire people, seems to have been held responsible for a disaster of national proportions" (p. 12).

5.3. THE ABSENCE OF THE DIVINITY FROM ITS SHRINE - A MAJOR THEME COMMON TO THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL AND TO THE POEM OF ERRA

In this section we will try to demonstrate that the theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine," represents a formal and content parallel between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra, and trace its history in Mesopotamian literature. In the presentation of the comparative material we have followed the methodological guidelines stated by J. J. M. Roberts,

> An adequate comparative study must examine the theological interpretations of historical events across the whole spectrum of literary genres native to the cultures being compared. One way of doing this is to take a typical event ... and then to trace the theological reflections on that event through the literature of both cultures.[1]

5.3.1. The Theme in the Rest of the Old Testament

The theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine" *as dramatically depicted* in Ezekiel cannot be found in the rest of the Old Testament. Such a grandiose, detailed and graphic depiction is specific to the Book of Ezekiel where it represents a major theme. However, one cannot say that this theme is completely unknown prior to the Book of Ezekiel. In the rest of the Old Testament one can find individual verses referring to Yahweh leaving the temple or abandoning a person. In Am 9:1 Yahweh stands beside the altar and orders the destruction of the sanctuary. Ps 78:60 mentions Yahweh abandoning (נטשׁ) the sanctuary at Shiloh.[2] In Jer 12:7 Yahweh says, "I have forsaken (עזבתי) my house, I have abandoned (נטשתי) my heritage..." During the ceremony of the dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8:57), Solomon prays, "Let him (Yahweh) not leave us (אל יעזבנו), nor abandon us (ואל ישׁשׁנו)." In Ps 27:9 a petitioner prays to Yahweh, "Leave me not (אל תטשׁני), neither forsake me (ואל תעזבני). Moreover, one can trace some related themes like the theme of "Divine Aloofness," also called the theme of the "Hiding of God's Face." This theme is prominent in the Psalms and is important in our study insofar as the Sumerian and Akkadian hymns

[1] J. J. M. Roberts, "Myth *Versus* History," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 1-13, esp. p. 13.

[2] Cf. Ezek 29:4; 32:5 where Yahweh threatens to abandon (נטשׁ) the Pharaoh in the desert.

which might have influenced it in the Hebrew psalms appear to be a literary and liturgical outgrowth of the theme of the "Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine" (cf. the section 5.3.4.[v]).

a. S. Balentine has analyzed the semantic field of the major Old Teastament "hide" vocabulary (סתר, חבה/חבא, ספן כחר, טמן, and עלם). The author concentrated particularly on the expression הסתיר פנים = "to hide the face,"[3] which occurs always in hiph'il and is the most frequent. It occurs 26 times with reference to God.[4]

Pentateuch	Psalms	Prophets	Wisdom
Deut 31:17,18; 32:20	10:11; 13:2; 22:25; 27:9; 30:8; 44:25; 51:11; 69:18; 88:15; 102:3; 104:29; 143:7;[5]	Isa 8:17; 54:8; 59:2; 64:6; Ezek 39:23,24,29; Mic 3:4; Jer 33:5;	Job 13:24 34:29

The only three references to the "hiding of the face" in the Pentateuch occur in contexts in which Yahweh threatens to forsake (עזב) the Israelites when they forsake Yahweh and break the covenant.[6] Deut 31:17 ועזבתני והסתרתי פני מהם "I will forsake them and hide my face from them," stands in antithesis to Deut 28:20 and 31:16 ועזבני "(this

[3]S. E. Balentine, *The Hidden God, The Hiding of the Face of God in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

[4]This chart has been adapted from S. E. Balentine, *op. cit.*, 45. The references in Ex 3:6; Isa 50:6; 53:3 have been omitted since it is a person rather than God who is the subject of the verb.

[5]The distribution of the phrase is uneven. In the Pentateuch it occurs 3 times and it is limited to Deuteronomy only. In the wisdom literature it occurs 2 times. Of the 9 examples in the Prophets the phrase occurs more than once only in Deutero-Isaiah (except 8:7) and in Ezekiel (3 times). Micah and Jeremiah contain but one reference each. In other prophetic books the phrase is not present at all. Hence, it cannot be considered common in the prophetic books. It occurs most frequently in the Psalms, more particularly in the laments. (Pss 13; 22; 51; 69; 88; 102; 143; have been classified as individual laments by G. Fohrer in his *Introduction to the Old Testament* [Engl. transl. by D. E. Green, Nashville: Abingdon, 1968] 285-293). The genre of the lament is the most appropriate to articulate the experience of forsakenness and to cope with it. Here the biblical genre is the closest to its Babylonian prototype. As pointed out by Balentine the lament psalms both in Mesopotamia and in Israel reflect something of the antiquity of the problem, (in *The Hidden God, The Hiding of the Face of God in the Old Testament* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983] p. 170).

[6]For the analysis of the expression הפר ברית "to break the covenant" see W. Thiel, "Zum Bundbrechen im Alten Testament," *VT* 20 (1970) 214-229.

people) will forsake me."[7] The verb עזב occurs in Ezek 8:12; 9:9 "Yahweh has forsaken the land."[8] These verses in Deuteronomy are probably the closest to the Ezekiel passages: the same term (עזב) is employed and the contexts deal with idolatry.[9] However, in Ezekiel, Yahweh's absence is emphatically expressed with the graphic description of the departure of Yahweh's glory from the temple.

The terms "aloofness" and "hiddenness" imply some kind of presence while absence does not. The theme we are examining in the Book of Ezekiel places the emphasis on Yahweh's absence from the temple and the land of Israel.

b. In his *magnum opus*, S. Terrien[10] argues that the theme of God's simultaneous presence and hiddenness represents the core of both Testaments. As a motto of his book he chose Pascal's phrase: "A religion which does not affirm that God is hidden is not true. *Vere tu es Deus absconditus* = "Truly, you are a hidden God."[11] According to Terrien it is

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[7]Cf. P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT, G. Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1976) 372, "Having forsaken God, the people would then be forsaken by God, with the inevitable result that disaster would fall upon them at every turn. The awful realization would dawn that the disaster was a result of God's absence from their midst."

[8]There are other occurrences of the term עזב in Ezekiel. Cf. Ezek 23:29 where Oholibah shall be "left" naked. Oholah has not "left" her harlotry 23:8. The Israelites have not "forsaken" the idols of Egypt 20:8. In an oracle of encouragement the "forsaken" cities are promised restoration Ezek 36:4. This last verse is comparable to Isa 60:15 and 62:4 where the same promise is made to the "forsaken" Zion. In connection with Ezek 8:12 and 9:9 it might be of some significance that Hebrew עזב and Akkadian *uzubbû* are also used as legal terms for "divorce," (Prov 2:17; Isa 54:6). Cf. W. von Soden, "Nominalformen und juristische Begriffsbildung im akkadischen: Die Nominalform *'qutulla*,'" in *Symbolae ad iura orientis antiqui pertinentes Paulo Koschaker dedicatae* (ed. T. Folkes, *et al.*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1939) 199-207, "*uzubbû* zu (*'zb* 'verlassen'), das die gesetzlich geregelte Form des 'Verlassens' der Frau, die 'Scheidung' bezeichnet" (p. 200); J. J. Rabinowitz, "The 'Great Sin' in Ancient Egyptian Marriage Contracts," *JNES* 18 (1959) 73.

[9]For the study of the dt-dtr elements in the Book of Ezekiel see K. Liwak, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Probleme des Ezechielbuches. Eine Studie zu postexilischen Interpretationen und Kompositionen* (Dissertation Bochum, Ruhr Universität, Bamberg: Difo-Druck, 1976).

[10]S. Terrien, *The Elusive Presence, Toward a New Biblical Theology* (San Francisco/New York: Harper, 1978). For some pertinent comments on Terrien's method see W. Brueggemann, "A Convergence in Recent Old Testament Theologies," *JSOT* 18 (1980) 2-18.

[11]Dissatisfied with the passive understanding of God's hiddenness implied in the term *absconditus* (passive participial adjective), Terrien quotes Isa 45:15, where Hebrew uses an active rather than passive form, אֵל מִסְתַּתֵּר. The author brings to the fore the active meaning of the hitpa'el verbal reflexive and translates it as "a self-concealing God" (p. 1 and p. 251). Thus the "active and sustained determination which the Hebrew original carries" is conveyed emphasizing God's freedom and sovereignty. God's presence is "elusive and unpredictable," transcending "human techniques of ritual or moral

the dynamic polarity of God's hidden presence which provides the key to understanding not only the Old but also the New Testament. Divine hiddenness or elusive presence differs from divine absence, and this topic appears to be peripheral to the theme we are investigating.

5.3.2. **In the Book of Ezekiel.**

The departure of Yahweh's glory (כבוד) from the Jerusalem temple implying the absence of the divinity from its shrine is a prominent theme in Ezekiel. The opening vision of the book (Ezek 1:1), indicates immediately the relocation of Yahweh's כבוד among the exiles there (1:28). Chapters 8-11, offer a retrospective description of the departure of Yahweh's glory from the Jerusalem temple. In the closing chapters (43 and 48), Yahweh's presence is restored in the temple. Hence, the chapters describing the departure and return of Yahweh's glory may be perceived as an *inclusio within* the Book of Ezekiel.[12] This כבוד is a technical term in ancient priestly tradition for the mysterious manifestation of the divine presence in worship which came to be associated with the Jerusalem temple.

R. Rendtorff points out the central importance of the כבוד passages for the overall structure of the Book of Ezekiel:

> At the beginning the prophet sees the "glory" (כבוד) of YHWH, while he is among the exiles in Babylonia (1:1ff); then he is carried off to Jerusalem and there sees the כבוד of YHWH second time (chs 8-11), first of all within the temple, and then going out of the city, on the "hill which lies east of the city" (11:22); finally, he is witness to the return of the כבוד in the temple "from the east" (43:1ff). In the last passage reference is explicitly made to the two previous appearances of the כבוד (43:3).[13]

In the eschatological vision of the new city and temple, Yahweh's glory returns to its shrine,

> ... the glory of the God of Israel came from the east; and the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with his

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manipulation" (p. 27).

[12]*Inclusio* appears as a framework around material, like "ring composition" in the Greek literature. The phenomenon has long been noticed, C. Kuhl, "Die Wiederaufnahme - ein literarkritisches Prinzip," *ZAW* 64 (1952) 1-11; I. L. Seeligmann, "Hebräische Erzählung und biblische Geschichtsschreibung," *TZ* 18 (1962) 314-24.

[13]R. Rendtorff, *The Old Testament, An Introduction* (Engl. transl. by J. Bowden, London: SCM Press, 1985) 210.

> glory. And the vision I saw was like the vision which I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision which I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. As the glory of Yahweh entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and see, the glory of Yahweh filled the temple (Ezek 43:2-5).

The last sentence in the book states that the name of the new city and temple is יהוה שמה = "Yahweh (is) there" (48:35). The phrase corresponds to 8:4 where Yahweh's glory was still in the temple, והנה שם כבוד אלהי ישראל.

Several scholars have pointed out that chapters 8 to 11 should be perceived as a literary unit with the exception of certain verses in Ezek 10[14] which repeat features from chapter 1.[15]

The structure with wheels in Ezek 1 and 10, may be seen as a mobile throne of Yahweh corresponding to the mobile ark in the wilderness according to the priestly tradition (Ex 40:34-38). Blenkinsopp suggests a connection with the story of the exile and the return of the ark during the Philistine wars saying that the "teaching of the prophet, as transmitted by his disciples, has been organized in a thematic unity that moves between the poles of exile and return, divine absence and presence."[16]

In Ezekiel's vision the departure of Yahweh's glory is gradual. In the description of the idolatrous practices in the temple and the temple precinct Yahweh is presented as being driven from the Jerusalem temple, "to drive me far from my sanctuary" (8:6). The seventy elders

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[14]On Ezek 10 see C. B. Houk, "The Final Redaction of Ezekiel 10," *JBL* 90 (1971) 42-54.

[15]E. Balla,"Ezechiel 8, 1-9, 11; 11, 24-25" in *Fs R. Bultmann* (ed. E. Wolf, Stuttgart/Köln: Kohlhammer, 1949) 1-11; W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I,* 215-264; M. Greenberg,"The Vision of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 8-11: A Holistic Interpretation" in *The Divine Helmsman, Fs. L. H. Silberman,* (ed. J. L. Crenshaw and S. Sandmel, New York: Ktav, 1980) 143-164; *idem., Ezekiel 1-20,* 164-206. J. Becker, "Ez 8-11 als einheitliche Komposition in einem pseudoepigraphischen Ezechielbuch," in *Ezekiel and His Book. Textual and Literary Criticism and their Interrelation*, ed. J. Lust, *BETL* 74 (1986) 136-50; F. L. Hossfeld, "Die Tempelvision Ez 8-11 im Licht unterschiedlicher methodischer Zugänge," *BETL* 74 (1986) 151-65. H. van Dyke Parunak, "The Literary Architecture of Ezekiel's מראות אלהים," *JBL* 99 (1980) 61-74.

[16]J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983) 196-97. In the rabbinic tradition the wheeled structure in Ezek 1 was perceived as Yahweh's throne. "Rabbi Eliezer said: God sits upon His glorious throne with His hands outstretched beneath the wings of the living creatures (Ezek I, 8) towards the penitent, and He says, 'O, when will Israel repent perfectly before me?' in *Tanna de Be Eliyyahu* (ed., M. Friedmann, Vienna, 1902), Pseudo-Seder Eliahu Zuta p. 37, quoted in C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (New York: Schocken, 1974) #854.

involved in idolatry affirm Yahweh's absence from the temple, "Yahweh does not see us, Yahweh has forsaken the land" (8:12). The phrase is repeated in 9:9. In both cases Yahweh conveys to Ezekiel what is being said.

In 9:3 the glory of Yahweh moves from the cherub (sing.) on which it rested and goes to the threshold of the temple (אל מפתן הבית). In 10:4 the phrase is repeated. In 10:18-19 the glory of Yahweh makes a further move on its way out of the temple. From the threshold it places itself over the cherubim (pl.). "And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth...and they stood at the door of the east gate of Yahweh's temple (בית יהוה);[17] and the glory of the God of Israel was over them." Finally, in 11:22-23, the glory of Yahweh withdraws from the temple, leaves the city of Jerusalem and stations itself on the Mount of Olives on the east side of the city.

> Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them. And the glory of Yahweh went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.

As pointed out by Wilson, the departure of Yahweh's glory from Jerusalem has an important theological significance,

> By leaving the city God has in fact destroyed it, and there can be no word of hope for it until the judgment has taken place. Only after the fall of the city (chap. 33) does Ezekiel's final vision describe in detail the return of God's glory to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple (chaps. 40-48).[18]

B. Keller has noted that the expression אדמאת ישראל, which is unique to the Book of Ezekiel, is used in a particular way in order to designate "the land deserted by the glory of Yahweh."[19] It appears 17 times in the

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[17]J. Morgenstern pointed out that the term בית יהוה became the regular designation of the Jerusalem temple from the time of Jeremiah and is used particularly in the Deuteronomic passages of the Old Testament. In his article, "The Book of the Covenant," *HUCA* 5 (1928) 1-151, esp. pp. 50 n. 60, and 51, he analyzed most of the pertinent passages.

[18]R. R. Wilson, "Prophecy in Crisis: The Call of Ezekiel," *Int* 38 (1984) 117-30, esp. pp. 125-6.

[19]B. Keller, "La terre dans le livre d'Ézéchiel," *RHPR* 55 (1975) 481-90, "אדמאת ישראל c'est ארץ ישראל désertée par la 'gloire de YHWH' et privée de la présence du peuple en sa totalité" (p. 489); cf. also L. Rost, "Die Bezeichnungen für Land und Volk im Alten Testament," *Fs O. Procksch* (ed. A. Alt, Leipzig: Daichert & Hinrichs, 1934) 125-44; E. Jacob, "Les trois racines d'une théologie de la 'Terre' dans l'Ancien Testament," *RHPR* 55 (1975) 469-80.

section from Ezek 7:2 to 39:28, but not a single time in Ezek 40-48.[20]

In 1953, F. Horst made an important form-critical observation. He pointed out that the vision in Ezek 8-11 reflects "formal elements of a definite type of vision."[21] In order to show the correctness of this observation we will make a digression and introduce immediately the corresponding Akkadian material. In Ezek 8:3 a shining figure which had the appearance of fire "put forth the form of a hand, and took me (Ezekiel) by the lock of my head" (וישלח תבנית יד ויקחני בציצת ראשי).[22] A similar expression is found in "The Vision of the Nether World by an Assyrian Crown Prince."[23] The tablet comes from Ashur and may

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[20]Ezek 7:2; 11:17; 12:19, 22; 13:9; 18:2; 20:38, 42; 21:7, 8; 25:3, 6; 33:24; 36:6; 37:12; 38:18, 19.

[21]F. Horst, "Exilsgemeinde und Jerusalem in Ez VIII-XI," *VT* 3 (1953) 337-360, esp. p. 345.

[22]Hebrew **ציצית** is functionally equivalent to Akkadian *abūšātu*. Stephens suggested that it is "in some way related to Akkadian *ṣiṣiktu*," (*sic*) meaning literally "something that projects." F. J. Stephens, "The Ancient Significance of **ציצית**," *JBL* 50 (1931) 59-70 esp. p. 59, n. 1. "In Ezek **ציצית** means a lock or tuft of hair which projects from the head. In Num 15:37 and Deut 22:12 **ציצית** means a "tassel" and is related to Akkadian *ṣiṣiktu* only in meaning," (p. 67). The latter is used in contexts where the worshiper is said to have seized the *ṣiṣiktu* of the god, "O king of heaven and earth, I have sought after thee; have turned to thee, like the *ṣiṣiktu* of my god and my goddess, thy great *ṣiṣiktu* I have seized; because it is in thy province to give judgment, to announce decisions, and to establish well-being," in an incantation to Šamaš IV R^2 60a, 34-37 (quoted by Stephens, p. 61). R. A. Brauner, "'To Grasp the Hem' and 1 Samuel 15:27," *JANES* 6 (1974) 35-8, has demonstrated that Akkadian *aṣbat ṣiṣṣiktu* corresponds to Hebrew **חזק בנף** "to seize the hem" in an act of supplication. Cf. also D. Conrad, "Samuel und die Mari-'Propheten.' Bemerkungen zu 1. Sam. 15:57," XVII. Deutscher Orientalistentag ... 1968 in Würzburg, *ZDMG* Supplement 1 (1969) 273-80; A. Finet, "Les symboles du cheveu, du bord de vêtement et de l'ongle en Mésopotamie," in *Eschatologie et cosmologie* (in coll. Annales du Centre d'Etudes de Religions 3, Bruxelles, 1969) 101-30; For the expression **חזק בכנף** in Zech 8:23 see P. Kalluveetil, *Declaration and Covenant. A Comprehensive Review of Covenant Formulae from the OT and the Ancient Near East* (AnB 88, Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982) 26-27.

[23]W. von Soden, "Die Unterweltvision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen," *ZA* 43 (1936) 1-31. In the entry, "Höllenfahrt," ^{3}*RGG III* 408, von Soden suggested that the name of the Assyrian prince Kummaya (or Kummâ) represents a pseudonym for Aššurbanipal whom he dates in the years 669-627 BCE. The text was first translated by E. Ebeling, in his work *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier* (Berlin and Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1931) 1-9 "Höllenfahrt eines assyrischen Königs." On p. 6 note l, Ebeling suggested the comparison with Ez 3:14 and 11:1, where there is no mention of the "seizing by the lock" and omitted to adduce the more obvious comparison with Ez 8:3. After von Soden's critique of his translation Ebeling offered a new treatment of this text in "Kritische Beiträge zu neueren assyrologischen Veröffentlichungen," in *MAOG* 10 (1937) 1-33. This parallel has been duly mentioned by Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, p. 167.

be dated in the latter years of Esarhaddon, around 670 BCE.[24] An Assyrian prince, for an unknown reason, wishes to see the nether world. To this end he sacrifices to Ereškigal, the queen of the nether world, and prays to her and to Nergal. (In this period the latter was identified with Erra). His request is granted and in a dream he receives a vision of the nether world. He sees Nergal as a shining figure "from whose arms lightning was flashing" (l. 52) and whose "terrifying splendor (*melammu*) overwhelmed him" (l. 54). Nergal "took me (the prince) by the locks of my forehead and dre[w me] before him,"[25] *[ina?] abūṣātīya iṣbatannīma ana maḫrīšu uqar-[riba]nni.*[26]

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[24]So G. Buccellati, "Towards a Formal Typology of Akkadian Similes," in *Kramer Anniversary Volume* (ed. B. L. Eichler, *et al.*, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976) 59-70, esp. pp. 68-70, "Excursus: Of a Prophetic Topos in Assyria and Ancient Israel." The author interprets this story as an account of the psychological state of the messenger. Kummâ's confrontation with Nergal and the awareness of the unpopularity and resulting danger of his message cause fear in him. He compares it to Jer 1:6; 15:10; 20:8-9. According to Buccellati, the Akkadian text should not be seen as a specific parallel to any Biblical text. "Rather it would seem to give evidence of a general trait which accompanied the prophetic 'profession' in ancient Southwestern Asia. It had become a prophetic 'topos' to express reluctance in front of divine vocation, a reluctance borne out of a sense of awe for God as the originator of the message, a feeling of inadequacy for one's own potential, and - especially in the case of unpopular messages - the real fear of harmful consequences, to the point of persecution and the loss of life" (p. 70).

[25]An English translation is found in E. A. Speiser, "A Vision of the Nether World" in [3]*ANET* 109-10, and in A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965) 132-36 (only the reverse of the tablet). In the "Vision of the Nether World" there is a description of 15 awe-inspiring figures surrounding Nergal some of whom appear with two heads. One is reminded of the description of the cherubim with four faces, the whirling wheels and the numerous eyes described in Ez 10. It seems to me that a fruitful comparison could be made between these two vision accounts.

[26]Von Soden, "Die Unterweltvision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen," *ZA* 43 (1936) p. 17 l. 53. *CAD A/1* 92, offers the following translation "he (Nergal) seized me by my forelocks and brought me before him." *abūṣātu* is a *plurale tantum*. The word occurs again in connection with Nergal in O. R. Gurney, "The Myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal" *AnSt* 10 (1960) 105-31, where it is said that Nergal "seized her by her tresses" Gurney: *isbaṣīma [ina ab]būtīša* p. 126 VI 33, but *CAD* reads *abūṣātīša*. Cf. also M. Hutter, *Altorientalische Vorstellungen von der Unterwelt. Literar- und religionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen zu "Nergal und Ereškigal"* (OBO 63, Freiburg/Schweiz: Universitätsverlag - Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985). E. F. Weidner, "Vokabular Studien," *AJSL* 38 (1922) 153-213, esp. p. 201, quotes the following lexical equation [*ab*ūṣ]*ātu* = *šārat* [SAG-KI]. SAG-KI is an ideogram for *pûtu* = "forehead" and *nakkaptu* = "temple," *abuṣātu* therefore can designate "forelock" or "temple-lock."

The Assyrian vision and Ezekiel's vision reflect certain parallelism in form and content. Ezekiel was transported by the Spirit between earth and heaven[27] (בין הארץ ובין השמים).[28] The Assyrian prince was transported in the opposite direction, from earth to the nether world.

5.3.3. The Theme of the Absence of the Divinity From its Shrine in the Poem of Erra

A major feature of the Poem of Erra is the absence of Marduk, the god of Babylon, from his shrine and the disastrous consequences of his departure. Moreover, a similar description is made in the case of another god in the Poem, Ištarān, the patron deity of the city of Dēr.

a. With Reference to Marduk:

Any discussion of the theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine" has to start with Lambert's penetrating analysis of this theme in the Poem of Erra.[29] According to Lambert the most important feature of the Poem is the light which it sheds on the "theology" of the divine statue and on the relationship between the divinity and its image. By this he is referring to Marduk's decision to depart from his statue and his shrine in Babylon and to leave free rein to Erra's destructive wrath. In tablet I of the Poem when Erra decides to let loose destruction upon Babylon and other Mesopotamian cities, he goes to Marduk and tries to persuade him to leave Babylon. Apparently, Erra cannot destroy Babylon as long as Marduk, its patron deity, is dwelling in it and protecting it. "To avoid

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[27]J. J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," *Semeia* 14 (1979) 21-59, surveyed the different apocalyptic visions in Early Judaism, dividing them into two main groups: those describing a heavenly journey and those without such a description. Cf. also, B. Otzen, "Heavenly Visions in Early Judaism: Origin and Function," *In the Shelter of Elyon. Fs G. W. Ahlström* (eds. W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer, *JSOT* Supp. 31, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 199-215.

[28]Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 167, mentions an apocryphal story influenced in all probability by Ezek 8, called "Bel and the Dragon." In it the prophet Habakkuk is carried to Babylon to bring food to Daniel who is starving in the lion's den. He is transported by an angel who "lifted him up by the hair of his head, and with the blast of his breath/wind" (Theodotion v 36) in W. Davies, "Bel and the Dragon" in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (ed. R. H. Charles, Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1963) I 663. In Codices A and B of Theodotion the story is preceded by the words "*Vision* xii (Gr. ὅρασις)," i.e., it forms the twelfth and the last of the series of *visions* into which the enlarged Book of Daniel is divided (So W. Davies, p. 652).

[29]W. G. Lambert, "Review of F. Gössmann, *Das Erra-Epos," AfO* 18 (1957-58) 395-401.

being present at the time of the disaster he (Marduk) must separate himself from his statue. Without an understanding of this point the greater part of the first three tablets is meaningless."[30] Erra seems confident that he will succeed in persuading Marduk to leave since the Babylonians have become neglectful in their worship of Marduk (Erra I 120-123),

120 And the Dark-headed people are holding (me) in contempt! (*leqû šēṭūtu*)
121 (Therefore), as they have not feared my name
122 And slighted prince Marduk's word (*amāssu idūma*),
they act according to the promptings of their heart (*epušū libbuš*)
123 I will make prince Marduk wrathful: I will cause him
to rise from his seat and I will fell the men!

When he arrives at the temple Esagila in Babylon, Erra points out to Marduk that the accoutrements of his statue are dirtied. In so doing he is embarrassing Marduk and provoking his anger (Erra I 127-128),

127 What happened to your statue (*šukuttu*),[31] to the insignia of your lordship, magnificent as the stars in the sk[y]? It has been [d]irtied!
128 Your lordly crown, which used to light up Ehalanki (the temple of his consort Sarpanitu) like Etemenanki (the temple tower in Babylon) is dimmed!

Apparently, Erra suggested that Marduk have his statue cleaned to compel Marduk to leave his statue and his temple leaving ample time for Erra to carry out his plan of destruction.[32] Marduk reminds Erra that

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[30]W. G. Lambert, *art. cit.*, p. 399.

[31]Here we follow E. Cassin, *La splendeur divine* (Paris: Mouton, 1968) 49 n. 86 who translates *šukuttu* with "statue." There are as many renderings as there are translators: F. Gössmann, *Das Erra-Epos* (Würzburg, Augustinus, 1955) 44: "Schatz"; *CAD E* 64: "jewelry"; *CAD B* 202: "adornment"; *CAD A/I* 78: "finery"; Lambert, "Review of Gössmann, *Das Erra-Epos*," *AfO* 18 (1957/58) 399: "the statue is apparently called *šukuttu*, which we shall render 'jewel,' though it might equally be some other precious object"; J. Van Dijk, "Review of Gössmann, *Das Erra-Epos*," *OLZ* 54 (1959) 385: "sakraler Schmuck"; Cagni, *EE*, 182 n. 127: "prezioso apparato," *idem.*, *PE*, 31 n. 34: "attire ... (referring to) all that constitutes the decoration of the statue of Marduk (precious metals and stones, tiara, vestments, etc.)"; J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (LÉpopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977/78) 152: "précieuse image," (repeated in all of his subsequent translations of the Poem of Erra).

[32]Cf. J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babuloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977/78) 152, = *idem.*, *Mythes et rites de Babylone* (Genève: Slatkine, Paris: Champion, 1985) 266, "S'il acceptait cette toilette de son revêtement, Marduk serait bien obligé de s'en libérer un temps, et, par suite, de quitter les lieux pour se retirer en quelques résidence surnaturelle (IIA:1s) laissant ainsi les mains libres à Erra."

what he proposes cannot be carried out because it is too dangerous. When Marduk left his shrine on a previous occasion, it resulted in a catastrophe of cosmic proportions. The stars slipped from their course and the Deluge submerged the earth. The statue of Marduk had also suffered damage. It had been knocked about (Erra I 140), and its "appearance" (*šiknu*) was dimmed. After the Deluge, Girra, the fire god, was summoned "to make my visage bright, and to cleanse my garments" (I 141). Once the refurbishing of the statue was completed Marduk resumed his residence (I 143). Moreover, the necessary personnel and materials for the work on his statue are not available any more. Marduk had dispatched the carpenters down to Apsû (I 146), and he changed the place of the *mēsu*-tree bearing *elmēšu*-amber (cf. section 4.2.), a material used in the fabrication of divine statues (I 147). The goldsmith, the metalworker, and the seven wise *apkallu* have to be called back from the Apsû (I 150-162).[33] In reply Erra offers "generously" his services to Marduk. He suggested that Marduk himself should go and bring up the precious materials and the craftsmen from the Apsû. Erra reas-sures Marduk that in his absence he will "watch" over the world order. Persuaded by Erra's words, Marduk leaves his statue and his temple in Babylon and descends to the Apsû (I 190-193).

B. Landsberger described the figure of Marduk in the Poem of Erra with the expression, *"der senile Marduk."*[34] At first sight Marduk appears unaware or unable to denounce the decrepitude in which, through the neglect of his worshipers, his statue had fallen. Erra brings to his attention the sad state of his cult (I 127-128). Marduk the ruler of the universe lets himself be duped by Erra to whom he yields that prestigious rule. The results are disastrous. With a single-minded determination Erra provokes a systematic annihilation of Mesopotamian cities and threatens to dislodge the universe, "the bond between god and humans is undone" (IIIC 49), "I (Erra) want to do away with the stars in the sky" (IV

[33]For some helpful comments on this passage from Erra with reference to the *apkallu* see E. Reiner, "The Etiological Myth of the 'Seven Sages'," *Or* 30 (1961) 1-11, esp. p. 9. cf. also H. Zimmern, "Die sieben Weisen Babyloniens," *ZA* 35 (1924) 151-4; Y. Rosengarten, "Le nom et la fonction de 'sage' dans les pratiques religieuses de Sumer et d'Akkad," *RHR* 162 (1962) 133-46. B. R. Foster, "Wisdom and the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Or* 43 (1974) 344-54. J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 198-202, "Les Sept Sages."

[34]B. Landsberger, "Akkadische-Hebräische Wortgleichungen," *VTS* 16 (1967) 176-204 esp. p. 198. This opinion has been wholeheartedly endorsed by Cagni, *PE*, p. 19 who describes it as one of Landsberger's "genial intuitions."

124). However, whether the Poem of Erra depicts Marduk as "senile" and as an "old fuddy-duddy,"[35] is a moot question. It might be more important to see the way the dialogue between Erra and Marduk functions in the overall structure of the Poem. Bottéro points out a similar situation in the Sumerian myth of "Inanna and Enki." Inanna, the patron goddess of Uruk, wants to obtain the "ME" (the prerequisites of civilization)[36] for her city, from Enki, the god of Eridu. She visits him and together they enjoy a banquet. While the latter is intoxicated she easily obtains her wish, and at once makes off for Uruk with her spoils. On recovering Enki realizes that he was duped. The remainder of the story is the contest between Enki, who tries to have the shipment stopped, and Inanna, who eventually reaches her destination. The myth says that Uruk obtained the precious attributes of civilization. In no way is it implied that the city of Eridu is inferior and that its god is "senile." In the Poem, the dialogue between Erra and Marduk serves to provide a *satisfactory reason* for Marduk's absence.[37]

b. With Reference to Ištarān:

J.- G. Heintz[38] has adduced another passage from the Poem of Erra which deals with the same theme (Erra IV 65-72),

65 Ištarān thus answered:
66 The city of Dēr you turned into a desert.

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[35]So T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976) 227.

[36]"ME" designates a theological concept developed by the Sumerian thinkers to answer the problem as to what keeps the cosmic and social entities and phenomena, once created, operating continuously and harmoniously. The myth gives a full list of ME's, categorizing civilization into over one hundred culture traits such as political, religious and social institutions, the arts and crafts, music and musical instruments, and varied assortment of intellectual, emotional, and social patterns of behavior, see S. N. Kramer, *Mythologies of the Ancient World* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961) 115, and [3]*ANET* 456, n. 24. Cf. also G. Farber Flügge, *Der Mythos "Inanna und Enki"* (Studia Pohl 10, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1973). J.- J. Glassner, "Inanna et les ME," *Actes de la XXVe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (Philadelphia, 1988, to appear in print in 1989).

[37]Cf. J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (l'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977/78) 153, "De même ici suffisait-il que le prétexte avancé par Erra fournît une raison satisfaisante de l'absence de Marduk, sans autoriser pour autant des conclusions fâcheuses touchant sa courte-vue ou sa faiblesse," = *idem., Mythes et rites de Babylone* (Genève: Slatkine, Paris: Champion, 1985) 267.

[38]J.- G. Heintz, "De l'absence de la statue divine au 'Dieu qui se cache' (Esaïe 45/15): aux origines d'un thème biblique," *RHPR* 59 (1979) 427-437.

67 You broke her people like reeds,
68 like foam on the surface of the water you silenced their noise (*ḫubūru*).
69 You did not spare me either: to the Sutû you delivered me!
70 On account of Dēr my city, I
71 will no longer sit in judgment of equity,
will no longer make decisions for the country,
72 nor give orders nor grant instructions! [39]

Ištarān is the patron deity of the city of Dēr. He accuses Erra of having brought the Sutû hordes who, in despoiling the city, carried away his statue. This text in Erra reflects the "spoliation of divine images" a recurring phenomenon in the conquest of a city by an invader.[40] Ištarān's departure from the city has grave social consequences. The god interrupts his activity of legal arbitration, and social disorder follows:

IV 73 Humans have forsaken equity to embrace violence,
74 have rejected justice to plot evil.

The corrupt human behavior provokes Ištarān's anger, and the divinity decides to destroy the rest of the city's population, establishing a vicious circle of calamities, IV 75f,

75 I shall stir up the seven old winds on this one country.
76 Who has not died in the struggle, will die in the destruction.
77 Who has not died in the destruction, the enemy will plunder.
78 Whom the enemy has not pl[undered], the thief will kill.
79 Whom the thief has not ki[lled], the king's weapon will hit.
80 Whom the king's weapon has not hit, the prince will strike down.
81 Whom the prince has not struck down, Adad will wash away.
82 Whom Adad has not washed away, Šamaš will carry away.
83 Who has gone outdoors, the wind will sweep away.
84 Who has repaired to his house, the rābiṣu demon will strike down.
85 Who has gone up on a hill will die of thirst.
86 Who has gone down in a valley will die in a flood.[41]

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[39]On different ways of writing the name Ištarān and on the background of this divinity see W. G. Lambert, "The Reading of the Name ^{d}KA.DI," *ZA* 59 (1969) 100-103; and G. Dossin, "AN.KA.DI, le dieu suprême de Dēr," in *Kramer Anniversary Volume* (ed. B. L. Eichler, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976) 135-38.

[40]See the exhaustive analysis of the Assyrian texts which mention this phenomenon in M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (SBLMS 19, Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1974) 22-41, "Assyrian Spoliation of Divine Images."

[41]We follow Cagni, (*PE*, 54) in seeing here the continuation of Ištarān's speech. Cf. 1 Kgs 19:17 for an example of the literary device of gradation, "And him who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay."

This stylistic device of gradation and amplification of evil and calamity is comparable to the one found in Ezek 6:12, He that is far off shall die of pestilence;

> and he that is near shall fall by the sword;
> and he that is left and is preserved shall die of famine.

Ezek 7:15, continues in the same vein,

> The sword is without, pestilence and famine are within;
> he that is in the field dies by the sword;
> and him that is in the city famine and pestilence devour.[42]

Ezek 15:7, ("Though they escape from the fire, the fire shall yet consume them"), is seen by Simian-Yofré as another example of Ezekiel's use of the literary device of gradation.[43]

c. With Reference to the Gods of Akkad:

Toward the end of the Poem, the god Erra pronounces an oracle where he promises restoration to the decimated population of Babylon. To Išum his lieutenant he orders to bring back into the temples the gods who fled their dwellings (V 31),

> *ilāni māti ša iznū tušallam ana šubīšunu*
> Safely bring to their dwellings the gods of the land who were angry.[44]

On the one hand, an allusion is made to the removal or spoliation of divine statues from their shrines, and on the other hand to the anger of the gods. The motif of the divine wrath against humans appears several times in the Poem.[45] The gods are angered as a consequence of the

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[42]J.-G. Heintz, compared this stylistic device to the one found in Amos 5:19, "As if a man fled from a lion and a bear met him; or went into a house and leaned with his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him," in "De l'absence de la statue divine au 'Dieu qui se cache' (Esaïe 45/15): aux origines d'un thème biblique," *RHPR* 59 (1979) 427-437.

[43]H. Simian-Yofré, "La métaphore d'Ézéchiel 15," *BETL* 74 (1986) 235-47, "Le châtiment sera double ou successif: ceux qui n'ont pas succombé dans le premiers temps, mourront dans le second. Ézéchiel connaît ce type de gradation (cf. 5,11-15)" (p. 241).

[44]Transliteration and translation from W. G. Lambert, "The Fifth Tablet of the Era Epic," *Iraq* 24 (1962) 119-25, esp. pp. 122-23. Cagni, *PE,* 58, translates this line differently, "You shall reconcile the gods of the country, who were angry, with their (own) abodes."

[45]Erra I 123 "I will make prince Marduk wrathful" (because the dark-headed people hold Erra in contempt [l. 120], and have "slighted prince Marduk's word" [l. 122]); I 133 (Marduk) "I became angry long ago" (speaking about the Deluge); IIIC 52 "Prince Marduk's glance expresses fury!" V 40, "For Erra had burned with wrath and planned to lay waste the countries and slay their peoples."

improper worship. By negligence in the matters of cult and morals, the humans provoked the gods who left their shrines and caused the destruction of the country.[46]

5.3.4. The Theme of the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine in the Sumero-Akkadian Literature

a. The Hypothesis of A. Spycket.

Before considering further material it is necessary to summarize the important and controversial work of Agnès Spycket,[47] which has direct bearing on some aspects of our theme.

Spycket has argued that the earliest Mesopotamian religion did not have the statues of gods in the shrines. She makes the striking observation that since 1877 when Ernest de Sarzec discovered the Sumerian civilization at Tello, the archaeologists have not found a single divine statue *in situ* i.e., in the Sumerian shrine they were excavating. However, in a postscript, she mentions a recently reconstructed divine statue in the Louvre Museum, dating from the Agade period.[48] Spycket "canonizes" the silence and lack of archaeological evidence concluding that in the pre-Sargonic period (2800-2350 BCE) and down to the Agade or Sargonic period (2350-2150 BCE), the shrines did not contain divine statues. She suggests that the presence of divine statues in shrines characterizes the period from 2000 BCE onwards. However, Spycket's claim does not stand the test of textual evidence.[49]

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[46]So Cagni, *EE*, 252.

[47]A. Spycket, *Les statues de culte dans les textes mésopotamiens des origines à la Ire dynastie de Babylone* (CRB 9, Paris: Gabalda, 1968); For a review of this work see W. von Soden, *ZA* 60 (1970) 170-71. In her latest work, *La statuaire du Proche Orient ancien* (HdO, Abt. 7 Band 1, Abschn. 2, Lfg. 2, Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1981), she reaffirms her hypothesis.

[48]In *Les statues de culte*, "Postlude" p.106, Spycket recognizes it as "the oldest divine statue" but does not feel compelled to revise her hypothesis since it is an isolated example. She concludes her book by saying, *Testis unus testis nullus* = "one witness no witness." Cf. also her article, "Une grande déesse élamite retrouve son visage," *Syria* 45 (1968) 67-73.

[49]For a critique of Spyckets's hypothesis see, W. W. Hallo, "Cult Statue and Divine Image: A Preliminary Study," in *Scripture in Context II* (W. W. Hallo, *et al.*, eds., Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 1-17, "More fundamental objections can be raised against Spycket's view on textual grounds" (p. 9). Cf. the collection of pre-Sargonic texts which mention sacrifices and food offerings to the divine statues in Y. Rosengartner, *Le concept sumérien de consommation dans la vie économique et religieuse. Étude linguistique et sociale d'après les textes présargoniques de Lagaš* (Paris: E. de Brocca, 1960) pp. 106; 275 n. 8; 313-14; "Plusieurs tablettes mentionnent des sacrifices aux statues ou à la stèle de l'É-sagu: huit statues d'après *DP* 53, IX, *TSA* 1, IX, *NIK* 23, XI, une stèle selon *DP* 55, V. Il est vraisemblable qu'un sanctuaire de 13 m^2 les contienne" (p. 162).

In the examination of Sumerian texts one finds references to the divine statues in the shrines, or to the statues being carried away from temples as booty.[50]

The theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine" appears in several genres of the Sumero-Akkadian literature. Since the material is abundant, to quote it extensively would extend this section beyond reasonable proportions. We will limit our discussion to a short description and adduce pertinent bibliography. In order to understand the following examples one has to bear in mind that Mesopotamian deities both inhabit their statues and transcend them.[51]

b. The theme occurs in historiographic and quasi-historical inscriptions:

(i) "The Lamentation Over the Destruction of Ur" (Sumerian).

In the first "song" (out of eleven), a number of gods have abandoned their shrines following a stereotyped formula,"the divinity X has abandoned its shrine/house/stable." The most important cities and temples of Sumer are enumerated. According to Kramer the poem was both composed and inscribed around 2000-1800 BCE. It bewails the destruction of Ur following the invasion of the Elamites and Subarians. In the seventh "song" the goddess is urged to return to her stable and fold (VII 378, "O mother Ningal, like an ox to thy stable, like a sheep to thy fold").[52]

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[50]For the Sargonic period one inscription reports how Sargon (2350-2295 BCE), prostrated himself before the god Dagān, *Šarrukīn šarru ina Tuttuli ana* ^{d}*Dagān ušgên ikrub* = "Sargon, the king, in Tutul before Dagān prostrated himself and prayed," in H. Hirsch, "Die Inschriften der Könige von Agade," *AfO* 20 (1963) 1-82, esp. p. 38, Sargon Inscription B2:17-23. Cf. also S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) p. 309, a text relating how in a war of a pre-Sargonic king statues had been carried away as booty.

[51]For an analysis of this ambiguous relationship see T. Jacobsen, "The Graven Image," in *Ancient Israelite Religion, Essays in Honor of F. M. Cross* (P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson and S. Dean McBride, eds. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 15-32.

[52]S. N. Kramer, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* (AS 12, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1940); *idem*., ^{3}*ANET* 455-463; A. Falkenstein - W. von Soden, "Klage um die Zerstörung von Ur" in *Sumerische und Akkadische Hymnen und Gebete* (Die Bibliothek der Alten Welt. Reihe der Alten Orient 2, Zürich/Stuttgart: Artemis, 1953) 192-213 notes pp. 376-377; H. de Genouillac, *Textes religieux sumériens du Louvre* (Paris: Geuthner, 1930) No 40ff.; H. Limet, "Contribution à l'établissement du texte de l'élégie sur la destruction d'Ur," *RA* 63 (1969) 5-10; C. Wilcke, "Drei Phasen des Nidergangs des Reiches von Ur III," *ZA* 60 (1970) 54-69. P. Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* (Mesopotamian Civilization Series, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1988).

At present five Sumerian city-laments are known. Besides the one just quoted one should include the "Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur." Here the absence of the divinities from their shrines as a result of enemy invasion is constantly repeated.[53] The "Nippur Lament,"[54] the "Uruk Lament,"[55] and the "Eridu Lament,"[56] should also be taken into consideration.[57] The particularity of the city-laments is their reference to a specific historical event. Moreover, unlike the balag-laments (see below) no copies of the city-laments were made after the OB period.[58]

(ii) "The Curse of Agade: The Ekur Avenged."[59] (Sumerian).

Kramer described this composition as "a historiographic document written in a highly poetic prose."[60] It represents one of the earliest

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[53]S. N. Kramer, "Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur," *3ANET* 611-612, cf. (l. 153: "Inanna was carried off from Erech, was brought to enemy territory"); (l. 414: "Its divine statues that filled the shrines they cut to pieces").

[54]Sections of the "Nippur Lament" are quoted by D. O. Edzard, *Die "Zweite Zwischenzeit" Babyloniens* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1957) 86-90.

[55]Edition in preparation by M. Civil and M. G. Green. For a survey and discussion of the Sumerian literature with ample bibliography see W. W. Hallo, "Toward a History of Sumerian Literature," in *Sumerological Studies in Honor of T. Jacobsen* (ed. S. J. Liebermann, AS 20, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975, 1976) 181-203.

[56]M. W. Green, "The Eridu Lament," *JCS* 30 (1978) 127-67; *idem., Eridu in Sumerian Literature* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1975) ch. 10 "The Eridu Lament."

[57]W. C. Gwaltney, "The Biblical Book of Lamentations in the Context of Near Eastern Lament Literature," in *Scripture in Context II* (ed. W. W. Hallo *et al.,* Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 191-211, esp. p. 196, suggested the period *circa* 1925 BCE as the *terminus ante quem* for these city-laments.

[58]These two points of difference were made by M. E. Cohen, *Balag-Compositions: Sumerian Lamentation Liturgies of the Second and First Millennium B.C.* (SANE I/2, Malibu: Undena, 1974) 11.

[59]J. S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (The Johns Hopkins Near Eastern Studies XII, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); Cf. also P. Attinger, "Remarques à propos de la 'Malédiction d'Accad,'" *RA* 78 (1984) 99-121. J.- J. Glassner, *La chute d'Akkadé. l'Événement et sa mémoire* (BBVO 5, Berlin: D. Reimer, 1986)

[60]S. N. Kramer, *From the Tablets of Sumer* (Indiana Hills, Colo.: The Falcon's Wing, 1956) 267; *idem.*, *3ANET* 646 n. 1. A. Falkenstein, "Fluch über Akkade," *ZA* 57 (1965) 43-124 esp. p. 48, rightly expresses a reservation concerning its historical value stressing that the work reflects a certain *"anti-akkadische Tendenz."* See also C. Wilcke, "Politische Opposition nach sumerischen Quellen: Der Konflikt zwischen Königtum und Rechtsversammlung. Literaturwerke als politische Tendenzschriften," in *La Voix de l'Opposition en Mésopotamie* (Colloque de l'Institut des Hautes Études de Belgique, 1973, ed. A. Finet, Bruxelles: Institut des Hautes Études, 1973) 37-65, esp. p. 63.

recorded attempts to give a theological interpretation of a historical event. One fragment of the poem has been found in an Ur III strata and, therefore, the poem could have been written by 2100 BCE.[61] The text begins by describing a period of prosperity for the city of Akkad which it enjoyed in the Sargonic period. According to Jacobsen, this part of the composition preserves correct memories of the city as a prosperous trading center.[62] The fortunes of the city change when Inanna abandoned her shrine in Akkad and turned against the city. "Ulmaš (Inanna's temple) is fear-ridden (since) she has gone from the city, left it; like a maid who forsakes her chamber, the holy Inanna has forsaken her Agade shrine."[63] The city was destroyed by the Gutian invasion. In searching for the causes behind the disaster the poet offers a religious answer. Narām-Sîn (2254-2218 BCE), the ruler of Akkad, presumably sacked the neighboring city of Nippur and there desecrated Enlil's temple. The outraged Enlil brought the Gutian hordes to destroy Akkad and avenge his beloved temple. Eight prominent Sumerian deities in an attempt to soothe the spirit of their enraged ruler Enlil, cursed Akkad that it should remain forever in ruins. In a puzzling way the text ends with a line of praise to Inanna for the destruction of her city Akkad although it is Enlil who ordained its ruin. In our opinion this feature might be related to her role as a titulary deity of the city. Similarly, the Poem of Erra begins with a praise to Marduk, the patron god of Babylon, although it is Erra who destroys it.[64] The text distorts the sequence of

[61]Falkenstein, "Fluch über Akkade," *ZA* 57 (1965) 44, 49. For Falkenstein's earlier attempts to date the poem see his "Review of Kramer, *Sumerische literarische Texte aus Nippur* (1961)," *OLZ* 7-8 (1962) 366-373, esp. col. 370, and *idem*., "Review of M. Cig, H. Kazilyay and A. Salonen *Die Puzriš Dagān Texte* (1954)," *OLZ* 3-4 (1958) 135-145, esp. col. 142. For the previous edition of the text see H.- G. Güterbock, "Die historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern bis 1200," *ZA* 42 (1934) 1-91, esp. pp. 28ff.

[62]T. Jacobsen, "Iphur-Kishi and His Times," *AfO* 26 (1978-79) 1-14, esp. p. 13.

[63]S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians. Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963) 63. Cf. the translation of P. Attinger, "Remarques à propos de la 'Malédiction d'Accad,'" *RA* 78 (1984) 101, (59) "Il (Enlil) l'avait chargée de faire trembler Agadé, de plonger Ulmaš dans l'effroi. (60) Elle quitta la ville (pour se rendre) vers son (ancienne/autre résidence). (61) Tel (quelqu'un) abandonnant une jeune femme dans son appartement, (62) la splendide Inanna abandonna le sanctuaire Agadé."

[64]For the interpretation of Erra I 1, as referring to Marduk see E. Reiner, "More Fragments of the Epic of Erra," *JNES* 17 (1958) 41-8, esp. p. 42. "The Curse of Agade" reflects a very ancient belief found throughout the ancient Near East. The political, social and historical events are seen as prompted by the gods. Military success, territorial acquisition and economic prosperity are understood as a gift of the gods. Prosperity is a sign of the deity's presence and control of history. Conversely, disaster is often perceived as a manifestation of divine wrath and as a direct consequence of the absence of the divinity from its shrine. This entire topic has been conveniently presented by B.

historical events since the earliest attestation for the Gutians is found in the date formulas from the reign of Šarkališarri (2217-2193 BCE), Narām-Sîn's successor.[65] Contrary to the "Curse of Agade," the fall of Akkad must be placed in a period of anarchy that followed Šarkališarri's 25-year reign, i.e., much later than the time of Narām-Sîn.

(iii) "The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic" (Middle-Assyrian).[66]

On the basis of formal characteristics and narrative structure this composition has been classified in the genre of "victory songs."[67] It shares with other Sumero-Akkadian literature the theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine." It gives an official Assyrian version of the events that led to the submission of Babylonia for the first time to an Assyrian king. Its historical value is limited since it is written with a definite *Tendenz* offering a theological interpretation of events.[68] The epic can be dated in the Middle-Assyrian period (1250-950 BCE). The account relates how the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 BCE) defeated Kaštiliaš IV (1242-1235 BCE), the Cassite king of

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Albrektson, *History and the Gods* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1967) pp. 24ff., "Historical Events as Divine Actions."

[65]W. W. Hallo, "Gutium," *RLA III/8* 708-20, esp. section 2, "Gutian contacts in the reign of Šarkališarri." Cf. also W. W. Hallo and W. K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East, A History* (New York: H. B. Jovanovich, 1971) 63. Cf. T. Jacobsen, "The Graven Image," *Ancient Israelite Religion, Essays in Honor of F. M. Cross* (P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson and S. Dean McBride, eds., Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 15-32, esp. p. 16, who cites a text on the return of the statue of Marduk from the land of the Haneans during the reign of the king Agum kakrime of Babylon (1602-1585 BCE).

[66]The first fragments of this composition were published by R. Campbell Thompson, "The Excavations on the Temple of Nabu at Nineveh," *Archaeologia* 79 (1929) 126-33; *idem.*, "The British Museum Excavations at Nineveh 1931-32," *AAA* 20 (1933) 116-26, Pls CI-CIV; E. Weidner, *Die Inschriften Tukulti-Ninurtas I. und seiner Nachfolger* (*AfO* Beiheft 2, Graz: E. Weidner, 1959); W. G. Lambert, "Three Unpublished Fragments of the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic," *AfO* 18 (1957-58) 38-51; Cf. also Albrektson, *History and the Gods* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1967) 103.

[67]P. C. Craigie, "The Song of Deborah and the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta," *JBL* 88 (1969) 253-265. Craigie examined the over-all structure of the epic and compared its formal characteristics to the Song of Deborah. Cf. P. Machinist, "Literature as Politics: The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic and the Bible," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 455-82. The author points out that the Epic is "no simple historical narrative but a sophisticated integration of a variety of forms and themes" (p. 458).

[68]E. Ebeling, "Bruchstücke eines politischen Propagandagedichtes aus einer assyrischen Kanzlei," *MAOG* 12 (1938) 1-42. Ebeling interprets the epic as a piece of political propaganda serving the Assyrian interests. It is a "*Tendenzgedicht*" portraying the "Babylonians as villains while the Assyrians appear in the nicest light" pp. 2-3.

Babylonia. In the first fragment (following Lambert's reordering of the fragments), the downfall of Kaštiliaš is set in motion by the withdrawal of the gods from their respective shrines and cities in Babylonia. The gods of Babylonia, so tell us the Assyrians, are angry with the king Kaštiliaš because he committed a political perjury: he broke the oaths.[69] This feature resembles Ezek 17:19-20, where Yahweh is angry with Zedekiah because the latter broke his oaths to the king of Babylon,

32 x x x *ṣalbe šarru kašši ina šurin*[*ni* ...
33 *ana etiq māmīti Kaštilašu ilāni šut šamê erṣeti*
35 *itti parriki rē'īšina šabsu u* x [...
38 *umeššer* ^{d}*Marduk atmanšu ṣīra ālu* x [...
39 [*i*]*rur āl naramāīšu ālu Kâr* x [...

32 x x x impious Cassite king at the symb[ol ...
33 Against the oath-breaker Kaštilaš the gods of heaven [and earth ...
35 They were angry with the overseer, their shepherd, and
38 Marduk abandoned his lofty shrine, the city of ...
39 He [cu]rsed his beloved city Kâr- (BM 98730 32-39).[70]

In both "The Curse of Agade" and in "The Tukulti Ninurta Epic" once the gods left the shrine they curse the city.

(iv) The Accounts of Marduk's Sojourn in Elam.

At the end of the Cassite period (*circa* twelfth century BCE) the statue of Marduk was carried off by plunderers to Elam. "Such a transportation of the divine statue indicated the god's displeasure with his city in that he had chosen to reside elsewhere."[71] In the reign of

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[69]The king Tukulti-Ninurta makes a complaint to Šamaš about the treaty violation of Kaštiliaš and adds a request that the verdict be given through the ordeal of combat IIIA 9'-20.' Cf. J. Harvey, *Le Plaidoyer prophétique contre Israël après la rupture de l'alliance* (Montreal: Bellarmin, 1967); *idem*., "Le '*Rîb*-Pattern': réquisitoire prophétique sur la rupture de l'alliance," *Bib* 43 (1962) 172-96, who has demonstrated definite structural parallels between the form of legal indictment that Tukulti-Ninurta uses against Kaštiliaš and the Biblical *rîb*.

[70]Akkadian text and translation from W. G. Lambert, "Three Unpublished Fragments of the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic," *AfO* 18 (1957-58) 43-44.

[71]So W. G. Lambert, "The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion," in *The Seeds of Wisdom, Essays in Honor of T. J. Meek* (ed. W. S. McCullough, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964) 3-13. For the historical background see J. A. Brinkman, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia* (AnOr 43, Rome, Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968) 104-110. In Akkadian the name is *Nabû-kudurrī-uṣur*: "O Nabû, protect my offspring," so Brinkman, p. 104. Concerning Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562), Ezekiel's contemporary, Cooke (*Ezekiel*, p. 289), notes that in the Book of Ezekiel his name is always correctly spelled נבוכדראצר.

Nebuchadnezzar I (1124-1104 BCE) Babylon recovered enough for an attempt to return the god. In a successful campaign against Elam, the king retrieved the precious statue. The impact of this return on the Babylonians cannot be overestimated: three accounts of it are preserved! One account written in Akkadian poetry begins with the king and his people praying to Marduk in Babylon, "How long, lord of Babylon, will you dwell in an enemy land?" (*CT* 13, pl. 48, 8) The prayer is answered and they receive a revelation from heaven: Elam is to be given over to Nebuchadnezzar. After defeating Elam "he took the hand of Bēl,[72] and carried Ria (an Elamite god) with Bēl to Babylon."[73] A bilingual religious text was composed to commemorate Marduk's return (IV R^2 20, no. 1).[74]

(v) "The Esarhaddon Inscription" (Neo-Assyrian).

Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) recounts how he had to destroy the city of Babylon. He charged the Babylonians with three major offenses: a) Political - they committed treason and perjury by using the gold of the Esagila temple in Babylon to buy military help from the Elamites against Assyria; b) Moral and social offences -"The people who dwelt in it said to each other Yes (while in their heart they meant) No, they spoke falseness" (3 a1 and b 21-24); "In the midst of the city oppression and corruption, in the street the son cursed his father" (3 c1 9-15); c) Religious offenses - They stole the property of Marduk's temple and

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[72]Cf. J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 198, n. 1, "*Bēl* (de *bēlu*) 'le seigneur' est une épithète akkadienne de *Marduk*, à peu près aussi vieille que sa promotion à la souveraineté universelle, et qui, avec le temps, a fini par lui servir quasiment de nom propre."

[73]L. W. King, *Babylonian Boundary Stones and Memorial Tablets in the British Museum* (London: British Museum 1912) No. 24, 11-12. Cf. also J. J. M. Roberts, "Nebuchadnezzar I's Elamite Crisis in Theological Perspective," in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of J. J. Finkelstein (MCAAS* 19, ed. M. de Jong Ellis, Hamden, Conn.,: Archon Books, 1977) 183-87. Cf. also T. Jacobsen, "The Graven Image," *Ancient Israelite Religion, Essays in Honor of F. M. Cross* (P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson and S. Dean McBride, eds. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 15-32, esp. p. 17.

[74]Published by T. J. Meek, "Some Bilingual Religious Texts," *AJSL* 35 (1918-19) 134-44, and W. G. Lambert, "Enmeduranki and Related Matters," *JCS* 21 (1967) 126-33, esp. p. 130. The following lines describe Marduk's departure from Babylon, i (17) "The lord became angry and got furious, (18) He gave the command and the gods of the land abandoned it [...] its people were incited to commit crime. (19) the guardians of peace became furious and went up to the dome of heaven, the spirit of justice (*mīšaru*) stood aside. (21) Evil demons filled the land... (23) The wicked Elamite...(24) carried off the gods, he ruined the shrine."

incurred his wrath (4 a 28-33). Marduk sent an inundation resembling the Deluge (*tamšil abūbi*) and destroyed his temple Esagila and Babylon, while the gods who dwelt in it "flew up to heaven like birds," (8 a:A 43b-46, B 17),

ilāni (ištarāti) (āšib libbīšu	The gods and goddesses who dwell
iṣṣūriš ipparšūma) elū šamāmiš	in it fled like birds and went up
šēdē [...ippar]šiddūma	to heaven. The protective gods
ittanamgišū aḫāti	[...ran] off and withdrew.[75]

(vi) "The Nabonidus Inscription" (Neo-Babylonian).

On a tomb inscription of the mother of Nabonidus (555-539 BCE), a religious reason is given for the destruction of Harran and the shrine of the god Sîn by the Umman Manda hordes.[76]

> ...in the 16th year of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon when Sîn, the king of all gods, became angry with his city (i.e., Harran) and his temple, and went up to heaven and the city and the people in it became desolate.[77]

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[75]Akkadian text from R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien (AfO* Beiheft 9, Graz: E. Weidner, 1956) 14, translation from M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eight and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (SBLMS 19, Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974) 12. Cogan was the first to analyze three related motifs, ch. 1, pp. 9-21: "The Assyrian Empire and Foreign Gods - The Motive of Divine Abandonment;" ch. 2, pp. 22-34, "Assyrian Spoliation of Divine Images;" and pp. 35-41, "Repatriation of Images and Cult Restorations." He collected and analyzed a considerable number of neo-Assyrian texts. We see these motifs as part of the larger theme of the "Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine." Several of the above Esarhaddon texts have been brought into relationship with the Poem of Erra by B. Hruška, "Zur letzten Bearbeitung des Erraepos," *ArOr* 42 (1974) 354-365, esp. p. 359 n. 35.

[76]Nabonidus relates in this stela, now at Istanbul, that at the beginning of his reign he restored the temple of Sîn at Harran, which had been destroyed 54 years before, i.e., in 609, by the Umman Manda, cf. S. Langdon, *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (VAB IV, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912) 284. P.- R. Berger, "Zur Nabonid Inschrift Nr. 3 und ihren Duplikaten," *ZA* 60 (1970) 54-69. For another text from the inscription of Nabonidus dealing with the Assyrian king Sennacherib (705-681 BCE) mentioning that Marduk left his residence in Babylon and dwelt twenty-one years in Aššur, see T. Jacobsen, "The Graven Image," *Ancient Israelite Religion, Essays in Honor of F. M. Cross* (P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson and S. Dean McBride, eds. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 15-32, esp. p. 17. R. H. Sack, "The Nabonidus Legend," *RA* 77 (1983) 59-67. Cf. also M. McNamara, "Nabonidus and the Book of Daniel," *IrThQ* 37 (1970) 131-49. W. von Soden, "Eine babylonische Volksüberlieferung von Nabonid in den Danielerzählungen," *ZAW* 53 (1955) 88-89. J. T. Millik, "Prière de Nabonide (4Q or Nab)," *Revue de Qumran* 9 (1978) 483-495.

[77]A. L. Oppenheim,"The Mother of Nabonidus," [3]*ANET* 560-562, esp. p. 560. cf. also Oppenheim, "The Family of Nabonidus," *ibid.*, 311-312. For the Akkadian text see C. J. Gadd, "The Harran Inscription of Nabonidus," *AnSt* 8 (1958) 35-92, esp. pp. 56-65. Cf. also E. Dhorme, "La mère de Nabonide," in *Recueil Édouard Dhorme* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1950) 325-50; H. Tadmor, "The Inscriptions of Nabunaid: Historical Arrangement," in *Studies in Honor of B. Landsberger* (eds. H.- G. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen, AS 16, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965) 351-63; B. Landsberger, "Die Basaltstela Nabonids von Eski-Harran," in *Halil Edhem Hatira Kitabi* (Ankara:

The Babylonians had to go into exile, as slaves for 70 years according to Marduk's decree. However, the merciful Marduk relented from his wrath and brought the exiles back to rebuild Babylon after only 11 years (10 a:A 2b-9). The period of 70 years of exile as a consequence of the wrath of a divinity appears to be an Ancient Near Eastern motif which is reflected in the Old Testament as well.[78]

In our opinion the motif of the spoliation of divine images should be seen as part of the larger theme of the "Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine." For example, in one of his prisms Esarhaddon mentions how his father Sennacherib conquered an Arabian fortress Adumu and carried away its gods, i.e., divine statues as booty.

> *ilānīšu* [*ša šar*] *Aribi išlulāma* [*ana Aššur*]
>
> his gods, those of the king of Aribi he took as booty to Aššur.[79]

Later, however, Esarhaddon decided to restore the gods back to the Aribi people.

(vii) "The Cyrus Cylinder."

On an inscription found on a clay barrel, Cyrus (557-529 BCE), the king of the Medes and the Persians, boasts how he entered Babylon in 538 without fighting. Marduk, the patron god of Babylon "made him enter his city Babylon without fighting or battle." It was Marduk himself who "put an end to the power of Nabonidus the king who did not show him reverence." The preamble lists the offenses by which Nabonidus

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Druckerei der Türkischen Historischen Gesellschaft, 1947) 115-151. The historical period of the reign of Nabonidus has been conveniently summarized by S. Smith, *Isaiah chapters XL-LV* (The Schweich Lectures, 1940, Oxford/London: Oxford University Press, 1944) 24-48 "History of the Years 556-539." The inscription has been brought into relationship with Ezek 8 by M. Greenberg, in "The Vision of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 8-11: A Holistic Interpretation," *The Divine Helmsman, Fs L. H. Silberman* (eds., J. L. Crenshaw and S. Sandmel, New York: Ktav, 1980) 159.

[78]Cf. Jer 29:10, "For thus says Yahweh: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfil to you my promise and bring you back to this place" (cf. also 25:12). Cf. C. F. Whitley, "The Term Seventy Years Captivity," *VT* 4 (1954) 60-72; A. Orr, "The Seventy Years of Babylon," *VT* 6 (1956) 304-6; P. R. Ackroyd, "The 'Seventy Year' Period," *JNES* 17 (1958) 23-7; R. Borger, "An Additional Remark on P. R. Ackroyd, *JNES* XVII, 23-27," *JNES* 18 (1959) 74.

[79]Akkadian text from V. Scheil, *Le prisme S d'Assaraddon, roi d'Assyrie 681-668* (Paris: H. Champion, 1914) IV 9 lines 4-6, p. 19, cf. also R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien (AfO* Beiheft 9, Graz: E. Weidner, 1956).

incurred the wrath of the gods: he replaced the images of the gods on their thrones with imitations; he installed incorrect rituals and inappropriate prayers; the changed the worship of Marduk into an abomination; he imposed corvée-work upon the population.

9 *ana tazimtīšina* ^{d}*Bēl ilāni izziš igugma ....*
kisuršun ilāni āšib libbīšun admanšun
10 *ina uggati ša ušeribi ana qereb Bābili*[80]

9 Upon their complaints the lord of the gods became furiously angry and [he departed from] their region, the gods dwelling in their midst left their abodes,
10 wroth that he had brought them into Babylon.[81]

c. Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine in a Prophetic Letter from Mari (*ARM X* N° 50).

The letter dates from the time of Zimri-Lim (18th century BCE), the king of Mari. Dossin, Ellermeier and Heintz classify it as "prophetic."[82] It is suitable to compare it with the visions of Ezekiel since it recounts a visionary dream. A court lady[83] Addu-dūrī conveys to Zimri-Lim by a letter a premonitory dream which appears to be a threatening omen (l. 5 *ittu* = "sign," "omen"). In a dream she entered the shrine of Bēlet-ēkallim but the statue was absent (l. 10). The goddess, the guardian deity of the royal house, has left her place implying that the king is without divine protection. Moreover, the statues which were usually placed before the

[80]Akkadian text from F. H. Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden* (VAB III, Lepzig: Hinrichs, 1911) 2.

[81]For English translations see T. Fish, "The Cyrus Cylinder" in *Documents from Old Testament Times* (ed. D. Winton Thomas, London: Nelson, 1958) 92-94, Plate 6; A. L. Oppenheim, "Cyrus" ^{3}*ANET* 315-314. R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (New York/Cincinnati: Abingdon, 1912) 380-384.

[82]G. Dossin, "Sur le prophétisme à Mari," in *La divination en Mésopotamie ancienne* (XIVe RAI, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966) 77-86, esp. p. 84; F. Ellermeier, *Prophetie in Mari und Israel* (Herzberg: Jungfer, 1968) 64-66, 129, 145-147; J.-G. Heintz, "De l'absence de la statue divine au 'Dieu qui se cache' (Esaïe 45/15): aux origines d'un thème biblique," *RHPR* 59 (1979) 430; *idem.*, "Prophetie in Mari und Israel," *Bib* 52 (1971) 643-45; K. Koch, "Die Briefe 'prophetischen' Inhalts aus Mari," *UF* 4 (1972) 53-77; H. Schult, "Vier weitere Mari-Briefe 'prophetischen' Inhalts," *ZDPV* 82 (1966) 228-32: F. Nötscher, "Prophetie im Umkreis des alten Israel," *BZ* 10 (1966) 161-97; J. H. Hayes, "Prophetism in Mari and OT Parallels," *Anglican Theological Review* 49 (1967) 397-409.

[83]Cf. J.- M. Durand, "Les dames du palais de Mari à l'époque du royaume de Haute Mésopotamie," *M.A.R.I.- Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires* 4 (1985) 385-36.

goddess were absent as well. In her second dream she heard a voice crying, "*Tura Dagān, tura Dagān*" = "Come back Dagān, come back Dagān,"

1 *ana bēlīya qibīma*	Say to my lord:
2 *umma* ^{d}*Addu-dūrī amatkāma*	thus Addu-dūrī, your servant.
3 *ištu šulum bēt abīka*	Since the fall of your
4 *mātima šutam annītam*	father's House I have not had
5 *ul āmur ittatūya*	such a dream. My earlier
6 *ša pananum*	omens were of such kind.
7 [*an*]*nittān*	In my dream I entered into
8 *ina šutīya ana bēt* ^{d}*Bēlet-ēkallim*	the temple of Bēlet-ēkallim
9 *irubma* ^{d}*Bēlet-ēkallim*	Bēlet-ēkallim was not there,
10 *ul wašbat u ṣalmū*	and the statues standing in
11 *ša maḫrīša ul ibašū*	front of her were not (there)
12 *u āmurma arṭup bak*āma	When I saw it I began to weep
13 *šuti annītum ša barārim*	This was the dream of the first watch of the night.[84]
14 *aturma Dada šaṇgûm*	(another one) I saw Dada,the priest
15 [š]*a Ištar-pišrā*	of Ištar-pišrā standing at the
16 [*i*]*na* bāb ^{d}*Bēlet-ēkallim*	temple door of Bēlet-ēkallim
17 *izzazma pû nakru*	a hostile voice kept calling
18 [*ki*]*am ištanassi*	out in the following manner:
19 *ummami t*[*ur*]*a* ^{d}*D*[*ag*]*ān*	"Come back Dagān,[85]
20 *tura* ^{d}*D*[*ag*]*ān kiam*	Come Back Dagān!" thus
21 *ištanassi šanītam.*[86]	it was calling.

[84]*barārītu(m)* designates the first watch of the night. In *Maqlû* I 3, it appears in parallelism to other two watches, *alsi barārītu*$_4$ (var. *-ta*) *qablītu u namrītu* = "I am calling the evening, the midnight, and the dawn watch" (cf. *CAD B,* 105). On different statues which existed in Mari shrines see Spycket, *Les statues de culte dans les textes mésopotamiens des origines à la Ire dynastie de Babylone* (CRB 9, Paris: Gabalda, 1968) 94-8, esp. pp. 97-98 with reference to the above text.

[85]Our translation follows von Soden's corrections found in "Einige Bemerkungen zu den von Ellermeier *Prophetie in Mari*...erstmalig bearbeiteten Briefen aus *ARM 10*," *UF* 1 (1969) 198-99. In l. 3 instead of "restoration of your father's House" we read "since the fall of your father's House," following von Soden. What is meant is the murder of the family of Zimri-Lim and the sacking of Mari by Šamši-adad of Aššur. Cf. also H. Schmökel, "Predictions and Prophetic Sayings," in *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (ed. W. Beyerlin, Engl. transl. by J. Bowden, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978) 126-7, who compares the absence of Zimri-Lim's guardian deity from the temple with Yahweh's departure from the Jerusalem temple in Ezek 8:1-11:25, (p. 126, n. b).

[86]Akkadian text from G. Dossin, *Correspondance féminine (ARM X,* Paris: P. Geuthner, 1978) 84-86. For some penetrating comments on the nature of this letter see J. F. Craghan, "The *ARM X* 'Prophetic' Texts: Their Media, Style, and Structure," *JANES* 6 (1974) 31-57.

d. The Theme of the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine in Sumero-Akkadian Hymns, Prayers and Incantations

The determination of the genre and *Sitz im Leben* of the Sumero-Akkadian hymns represents a major problem. Although a hymn often comes with a rubric indicating the genre and the purpose for which it was used, its structure and formulaic language often correspond to a genre unrelated to the superscription. For example, concerning the incantation whose genre has been indicated in the rubric as INIM.INIM.MA.DINGIR. ŠA.DIB.BA.GUR. RA.DA.KAM. = "Incantation for Appeasing an Angry God," Lambert says, "Beyond indicating in a general way the purport of the text this rubric is largely irrelevant."[87]

Bearing the above reservation in mind and with no attempt to be exhaustive, we will point out several types of hymns,[88] prayers and incantations which reflect our theme.

(i) Balag-laments:

The genre derives its name from the balag instrument which accompanied the recitation of these Sumerian works. It was either a drum or a harp.[89] The balag-laments appear from about 1900 BCE as a continuation of the older city-laments. These compositions are mournful in tone, bewailing the destruction that has beset the shrines, cities, and entire land. The use of balag-laments was more flexible. The reference to the destruction of temples made these compositions suitable for the

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[87]W. G. Lambert, "DINGIR.ŠA.DIB.BA Incantations," *JNES* 33 (1974) 267-305, cuneiform texts 306-322, esp. p. 267. "Large numbers of other incantation prayers in Sumerian and Akkadian are equally concerned with the same end though they never bear this rubric... From this the conclusion might be drawn that the rubric indicates the context and manner of performance of the piece rather than its content" (p. 267). The irony of this situation is examplified by the numerous cases where M.- J. Seux had to disregard the superscription and reclassify the hymn into a different category cf. p. 169 (A Prayer to Marduk): "Malgré son en-tête conjuration et sa souscription (INIM.INIM.MA ŠU.IL.LA MARDUK.KAM) qui le classent explicitement parmi les prières conjuratoires à main levée, le texte ... est à rattacher aux prières pénitentielles et à comparer ... aux prières ER.ŠA.ḪUN.GA avec lesquelles il présente des similitudes frappantes" (cf. also p. 186) in *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (Paris: Cerf, 1976).

[88]A. Sjöberg and E. Bergmann, *The Collection of Sumerian Temple Hymns* (Texts from Cuneiform Sources III, Locust Valley, N.Y.: Augustin, 1969). For a review of this work see W. Heimpel, *JAOS* 92 (1972) 285-88.

[89]So, M. E. Cohen, *Balag-Compositions: Sumerian Lamentation Liturgies of the Second and First Millennium B. C.* (SANE I/2, Malibu: Undena, 1974) 31-32, "The balag instrument."

rituals involving razing of partially destroyed temples.[90] It served to appease the divine anger the city might incur while the workmen were tearing down the sacred structures. In the balag-lament called "The Elevated Warrior of the Land" following the incipit addressed to god Ninurta, the third stanza describes the aftermath of an invasion. The city and its shrines are destroyed. The consort of Ninurta wanders around the temple and the city. The lament urges: "Come [May you turn back] (ll. 130, 134, 141).[91] The main concern of this part of the lament was to placate the divinity and to forestall her departure.

(ii) Eršemma compositions:

The term is Sumerian and means "the wail of the šem-drum." All eršemmas were not mournful since some were used to praise a divinity. Kramer published two Old Babylonian eršemma-incipit catalogues listing 109 eršemmas.[92] An eršemma may occur as a stanza (kirugu) of an entire balag-lamentation.[93] In his study of the eršemma compositions Cohen lists four characteristics: written in the Sumerian emesal dialect; addressed only to deities; consist of one single literary unit, and the opening lines contain a list of epithets, cities or buildings.[94] A certain number of eršemmas deal with the city or temple destructions which occur while Inanna, Dumuzi, or Gestinanna are away from their shrines, i.e., in the nether world. In eršemma N° 79 (Cohen's numbering), while the goddess is absent, trapped in the nether world, her shrine and the city have been ravaged (ll. 20-24). In eršemma N° 32, Inanna laments the destruction of the Eanna temple complex, her residence in Uruk. She pleads for her city before Enlil. Inanna is referred to as "she who roams the netherworld." This indicates that the ruin of the temple complex was

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[90]Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[91]Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-26: "The Elevated Warrior of the Land."

[92]S. N. Kramer,"Two British Museum irršemma Catalogues," *StudOr* 46 (1975) 141-66.

[93]Cohen, *Balag-Compositions: Sumerian Lamentation Liturgies of the Second and First Millennium B. C.* (SANE I/2, Malibu: Undena, 1974) 31. cf. also J. Krecher, *Sumerische Kultlyrik* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966), and R. Kutscher, *Oh Angry Sea* (a-ba-ba ḫu-luḫ-ḫa): *The History of a Sumerian Congregational Lament* (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1966, published in Yale Near Eastern Researches 6, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

[94]M. E. Cohen, *Sumerian Hymnology: The Eršemma (HUCA* Supplements 2, Cincinnati, 1981) 18.

perceived as a direct result of Inanna's absence.[95] Finally, in eršemma N° 106, Inanna laments how her looted shrine, has become a haunted house (l. 22), with its precious objects carried away.[96]

(iii) Ér.šà.ḫun.gá compositions:[97]

The term is Sumerian and means "the lament to appease the heart" i.e., of the angry god. In one bilingual composition entitled, "Ér.šà.ḫun.gá to any God," the gods known and unknown together with Ištar and mother goddess are urged to return to their places (ll. 1-17). The petitioner confesses his or her unwitting offenses (l. 32) and entreats the divinity to "turn unto him/her" (*unnini agabbi* ll. 5, 9, 11, 13, 17, etc.).[98] The purpose of the prayer is to claim relief from suffering, which the petitioner understands as a result of some infraction of divine law. The tablet comes from the library of Assurbanipal. This prayer represents a blending of the language from the theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine" with that of "Divine Aloofness."

(iv) Šu.íl.lá to Nanna, or a prayer of the raising of the hand to Nanna.

The prayer is a bilingual Sumerian and Akkadian text. It was found in Aššurbanipal's library copied from an older tablet. According to Thureau-Dangin and Langdon,[99] it was popular in Babylonian rituals

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[95]This interpretation follows Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

[96]To this three eršemmas should be added "The Fragment of a Liturgy to Inanna of Erech - eršemma," IV R 19 N° 3, in S. Langdon, *Babylonian Penitential Psalms* (Oxford Edition of Cuneiform Texts VI, Paris: P. Geuthner, 1927) 37-39.

[97]For bibliography on ér.šà.ḫun.gá compositions see W. Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen "Gebetsbeschwörungen"* (Studia Pohl 5, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976) 31 n. 63, and W. W. Hallo, "Individual Prayer in Sumerian: The Continuity of a Tradition," *JAOS* 88 (1968) 71-89, esp. p. 80.

[98]S. Langdon, *Babylonian Penitential Psalms* (Oxford Edition of Cuneiform Texts VI, Paris: Geuthner, 1927) 39-44 (IV R 10), cf. also F. J. Stephens, "Prayer to Every God" in ^{3}*ANET* 391-392.

[99]F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens* (Paris: Leroux, 1921) 44,9; and S. Langdon, *Babylonian Penitential Psalms* (Oxford Edition of Cuneiform Texts VI, Paris: Geuthner, 1927) pp. 6-11, esp. p. 6. The Akkadian text is quoted from Langdon's edition. For bibliography on šu.íl.lá prayers see W. Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen "Gebetsbeschwörungen"* (Studia Pohl 5, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976) 31, n. 63. A. Guillaume, *Prophecy and Divination Among the Hebrews and Other Semites* (New York and London: Harper, 1938) 27-31, drew a list of similar literary features between Hebrew Psalms and Sumerian šu.íl.lá (Akkadian *niš qāti*) prayers. Cf. also E. R. Dalglish, *Psalm Fifty-One in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Patternism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962).

and was employed particularly for the celebration of a temple reconstruction. At the end of a long litany Sîn is invited to "look upon his temple and city" (22 *būka napliš ālaka napliš*) and to "rest" in it. A series of divinities like Ningal, Šamaš, Igigi, Anunnaki, and others are urged to say *bēlum nuaḫ* = "lord rest." (25-39). We would interpret these closing lines as an invitation to the god Sîn to regain his shrine.[100]

(v) In our opinion the theme of "Divine Aloofness" should be related to the theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine." The former is a literary and liturgical outgrowth of the latter. The relationship consists in the use of similar language and expressions in order to express the feelings of abandonment, depression, and sickness of the penitent.[101]

e. The Theme of the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine in the Babylonian "Apocalyptic" Literature

Another category of texts which deal with the theme under consideration is variously designated as "prophecies" (Grayson and Lambert) or "apocalypses" (Hallo).[102] The exact genre has not yet been

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[100]Cuneiform text: H. C. Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* (London, 1861ff.) VI 9; Transliteration and translation: H. Zimmern, *Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905) 11f.; E. G. Perry, *Hymnen und Gebete an Sîn* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907) 1f.; Translations: B. Landsberger,- H. Haas, *Textbuch zur Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1922) 301-3; A. Falkenstein - W. von Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete* (Zürich and Stuttgart: Artemis, 1953) 222-25, notes 379,44; R. Labat, "Sîn, le dieu Lune," in *Les religions du Proche Orient asiatique* (ed. R. Labat *et al.*, Paris: Denoël/Fayard, 1970) 280-83; O. Loretz and W. R. Mayer, ŠU-ILA *-Gebete, Supplement zu L. W. King, Babylonian Magic and Sorcery* (AOAT 34, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978).

[101]For the pertinent bibliography see, F. Stummer, *Sumerisch-akkadische Parallelen zum Aufbau alttestamentlicher Psalmen* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1922); For a critique of Stummer's work see the book review by B. Landsberger's in *OLZ* 28 (1925) 479-83. Landsberger considers as improbable that Sumerian and Old-Babylonian hymns influenced Hebrew psalms. He bracketed his view, however, as a "possible personal prejudice" p. 479, n. 1. F. Stummer, "Die Psalmengattungen im Lichte der altorientalischen Hymnenliteratur," *JSOR* 8 (1924) 123-34. S. Balentine, *The Hidden God, The Hiding of the Face of God in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) ch. II: "The Historical Background," 22-44. Cf. G. Widengren, *The Accadian and Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation as Religious Documents, A Comparative Study* (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksell, 1936) who speaks of "The Aloofness of the Protective God" in Akkadian psalms (p. 136). See also his juxtaposition of select Akkadian and Hebrew lines which reflect the same theme (pp. 94-5).

[102]A. K. Grayson, and W. G. Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies," *JCS* 18 (1964) 7-30; A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975); Lambert, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic* (1977 Ethel M. Wood Lecture, London: Athlone, 1978); W. W. Hallo, "Akkadian Apocalypses," *IEJ* 16 (1966) 231-42; S. A. Kaufman, "Predictions, Prophecy, and Apocalypse in the Light of New Akkadian Texts," *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, R. H. Hacohen Press, 1977) I 221-28; H.

determined. The one constant feature is their *vaticinia ex eventu* character of pretended predictions. We will quote only one text excavated in the 1969 Warka Expedition in Uruk.

> (3) After him a king will arise, but he will not provide justice
> in the land, he will not give the right decisions for the land.
> (4) He will remove the ancient protective goddess of Uruk
> from Uruk and make her dwell in Babylon;
> (5) a goddess who is not the protective goddess of Uruk
> he will make dwell in her sanctuary and devote to her
> people not belonging to her (Reverse ll. 3-5)[103]

The text dates from the sixth century BCE but refers to events from the reign of Eriba-Marduk (eighth century) when Ištar's statue had been removed from her shrine in Uruk.[104]

5.5.5. Conclusions, Parallels, Contrasts

a. The theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine" is of central importance for the plot of the Poem of Erra and is crucial for the correct understanding of the Poem. Only when Marduk absents himself from his shrine in Babylon can Erra carry out his destruction. It should be recognized that Marduk leaves his shrine in the first place because of a cultic offense on the part of the Babylonians. They have neglected his statue, implying improper worship. The dissolution of the

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Schmökel, "Predictions and Prophetic Sayings," in *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (ed. W. Beyerlin, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) 118-122; J.-G. Heintz, "Note sur les origines de l'apocalyptique judaique, à la lumière des Prophéties akkadiennes," in *L'Apocalyptique* (coll. Études d'Histoire des Religions, Paris: P. Geuthner, 1977) 71-87.

[103]The Akkadian text in transliteration with translation and commentary is found in H. Hunger and S. A. Kaufman, "A New Akkadian Prophecy Text," *JAOS* 95 (1975) 371-75, esp. p. 372. For further literature on this genre see R. Borger, "Gott Marduk und König Šulgi als Propheten. Zwei prophetische Texte," *BiOr* 28 (1971) 3-24; R. D. Biggs, "More Akkadian Prophecies," *Iraq* 29 (1967) 117-32; *idem*., "Babylonian Prophecies, Astrology, and a New Source for 'Prophecy Text B'" in *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to E. Reiner* (ed. F. Rochberg-Halton, AOS 67, New Have: Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1987) 1-14; P. Hanson, "Jewish Apocalyptic Against Its Near Eastern Environment," *RB* 78 (1971) 31-58.

[104]Some other apocalyptic texts referring to the theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine" have been adduced by J.-G. Heintz in "De l'absence de la statue divine au 'Dieu qui se cache' (Esaïe 45/15): aux origines d'un thème biblique," *RHPR* 59 (1979) 433-34. Cf. also E. F. Weidner, "Babylonische Prophezeiungen," *AfO* 13 (1939-41) 234-37.

social and political order is perceived as a consequence of Marduk's absence. Erra symbolizes the forces of destruction and chaos which are unleashed once the restraining power of Marduk's presence is lacking. A similar picture is found in the case of the absence of Ištarān from the city of Dēr. In the fourth tablet of the Poem of Erra one finds Marduk's lament over the destruction of Babylon. As pointed out by Oppenheim, here the Poem of Erra takes up an old Sumerian literary tradition, the lamentations over destroyed temples and cities.[105]

b. Concerning the development of the theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine," we suggest the following reconstruction:

i) The origin of the theme should be sought in all probability in the historical event of the destruction of the Sumerian cities with the looting of shrines and the spoliation of divine statues as the most coveted booty.[106] Moreover, the carrying away of the divine statue was the most devastating psychological blow to the inhabitansts of the city. Without their gods the people felt utterly lost.[107]

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[105]A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia, Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964, revized ed. completed by E. Reiner, 1977) 268. Cf. also A. Pohl, "Die Klage Marduks über Babylon im Irra-Epos," *HUCA* 23 (1950-51) 405-9.

[106]The divine statues, because of their material and religious value, were, it seems, systematically carried away. The wars in the ancient world were often carried out for the booty. Hence, the lengthy enumerations of the captured booty in Assyrian inscriptions. To judge from the Poem of Erra the divine statues were made of exquisite material and required the highest craftsmanship. They were usually covered with gold and inlaid with lapis lazuli, cf. A. L. Oppenheim, "The Golden Garments of the Gods," *JNES* 8 (1949) 172-93. The divine statues were probably the most precious objects in a city and would be the most desired booty.

[107]The god in a very real sense resided in the statue as illustrated in the incident with the Sippar statue of Šamaš. The statue was destroyed by the Sutû invaders in the mid-eleventh century BCE. As pointed out by Lambert, "Review of Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos,*" *AfO* 18 (1957-58) 395-401, esp. 399, "The god and the statue were so closely related that when the latter was lost nothing could be done to replace it. Šamaš had gone. The providential finding of the model alone made possible the manufacture of a totally new statue, for had one be made without the model, it would not have been Šamaš." In the reign of Nabu-apal-iddina (885-852 BCE), "a baked clay drawing of his statue (*uṣurti ṣalmīšu*) (showing) his appearence and regalia" was found by the banks of the Euphrates. Cf. L. W. King, *Babylonian Boundary-Stones and Memorial Tablets in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1912) No. 36; J. A. Brinkman, "A Note on the Shamash Cult at Sippar in the Eleventh Century B.C.," *RA* 70 (1976) 183-84. J.-G. Heintz, "Ressemblance et représentation divines selon l'A.T. et le monde sémitique ambiant," in *L'Imitation aliénation ou source de liberté? Rencontres de l'Ecole du Louvre III* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1985) 89-106, esp. pp. 96-101 + fig. 3 A-B; R. Labat, *Les Religions du Proche-Orient asiatique* (eds. R. Labat, *et al.,* Paris: Fayard/Denoël, 1970) 115-16. For some helpful comments on the Sippar statue of Šamaš see T. Jacobsen, "The Graven Image," *Ancient Israelite Religion, Essays in Honor of F. M. Cross* (eds., P. D.

As pointed out by Kramer, the incipient germ of Sumerian city-laments may be traced as far back as the days of Uruka(inim)gina in the 24th century BCE. One of his archivists left a document with a detailed list of the shrines of Lagaš that were burnt, statues looted and defiled by another Sumerian ruler, Lugalzaggesi of Umma, "He has laid hands on..(and) the house of Amageštin from (the statue) of (the goddess) Amageštin he carried off her precious metal (and) lapis lazuli, threw it (the statue) into its well."[108]

However, so far no laments have been found from the Sargonic, Gutian and Ur III periods.

ii) In the post Ur III period (around 2000 BCE), laments were composed as a response to the calamity suffered throughout Sumer as a consequence of the sack of Ur.[109]

iii) Since the city-laments were not copied after the Old Babylonian period, Kutscher suggested that they were composed for one specific ritual ceremony and thereafter, having lost their ritual value, were relegated to scribal schools.[110] The theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine," was carried over into the balag and eršemma compositions which originated around 1900 BCE. These compositions were in direct relationship with the city laments (so Cohen), but showed greater flexibility in usage. They were adopted for various liturgical ends and were copied over and over down to the Seleucid era.

iv) The liturgical flexibility and diversification of usage manifest in the balag and eršemma compositions may also be responsible for the emergence of a related theme of "Divine Aloofness," reflected in certain šu.íl.lá and ér.šàḫun.gá prayers. This latter theme may also be seen as a

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Miller, *et al.*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987) 20.

[108]S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians, Their History, Culture and Character* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1963) 323; *idem*., "Lamentation over the Destruction of Nippur," *Eretz Israel* 9 (1969) 89-93, esp. p. 89.

[109]Here we follow W. G. Gwaltney, "The Biblical Book of Lamentations in the Context of Near Eastern Lament Literature," in *Scripture in Context II,* (Eds. W. W. Hallo *et al.,* Winona Lake, Ind., Eisenbrauns, 1983) 195. Cf the view of H. L. J. Venstiphout, "The Death of an Era: The Great Mortality in the Sumerian City Laments," in *Death in Mesopotamia* (XXVI RAI ed. B. Alster, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980) 83-89, who argued that all the five known city laments refer to a single unique event: the downfall of Ur III which caused the death of Sumerian civilization (p. 84).

[110]R. Kutscher, *Oh Angry Sea*, (a-ab-ba ḫu-luḫ-ḫa): *The History of a Sumerian Congregational Lament* (Yale Near Eastern Researches 6, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

literary outgrowth of the previous one. Namely, the theme of "Divine Aloofness" is present in genres which do not have a conspicuous liturgical usage, like "wisdom" literature, royal inscriptions and correspondence, etc. (cf. Balentine).

c. The feature which the Book of Ezekiel shares with the Poem of Erra and with a number of Akkadian texts is the fact that the divinity leaves its shrine because of moral, social, cultic and political offenses. Ezek 8, describes the cultic abominations and irregularities committed in the Jerusalem temple. In Ezek 9:9 further moral and social crimes are cited as reasons for Yahweh's merciless destruction of the population, "The guilt of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the land is full of blood, and the city full of injustice" (cf. also 11:2, 6).

The political perjury of the Judean king Zedekiah has already been mentioned (cf. section 5.2.). In the Tukulti Ninurta Epic the gods left their shrines in Babylonian cities because Kastilias, the king of Babylon, broke the treaty with the Assyrian king. Similarly in the Esarhaddon inscription the moral, social and political offenses of the Babylonians were listed.[111] In the case of Nabonidus the gods vacated the shrines in Babylon because the king committed cultic and social offenses. In the Poem of Erra, Marduk agrees to leave the temple because the Babylonians became neglectful in worshiping him. They have allowed his statue to fall in decrepitude. Erra, too, mentions that the "humans are holding him in contempt," (cf. section 4.1.). In the ancient Near East the gods leave their shrines for definite and often clearly stated reasons. The "qualitative difference" which Perlitt claims for Yahweh's hiding is simply not substantiated by the facts,

> Wenn Jahwe sich vor Israel geschichtlich verbirgt, dann ist etwas *qualitativ anders* als die vom einzelner Beter erfahrene Verborgenheit (des) Gottes in ... Babylon. Jahwe ist also gerade nicht verborgen, weil sein Wille "dämonisch undefiniert" wäre, sondern umgekehrt ist seine Verborgenheit ... die Antwort auf die Verachtung seines

[111]Cf. the section entitled, "Violation of Morality as Cause for Destruction," in M. Weinfeld, "Ancient Near Eastern Patterns in Prophetic Literature," *VT* 27 (1977) 178-95, esp. pp. 193-95, who compared the description of the moral and social decay of Babylon as found in Esarhaddon's inscription with Micah 7:2 ff, "There is none upright...they all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts his brother with a net. (3) ...the prince and the judge ask for bribe, (6) the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother."

definitives Willens.[112]

A year prior to Perlitt's article, Greenberg expressed a similar view in respect to Jeremiah 44, "While in paganism, one could not always fathom the cause of divine anger, biblical thinkers regularly ascribed it to the breaking of Israel's covenant with God."[113]

In our opinion, in order to find the "specificity" of the Hebrew view of God, both Greenberg and Perlitt are simplifying a complex issue. It might be more correct to say that in the Hebrew Bible as well as in the Akkadian literature the absence of the divinity either from its shrine or from the life of the individual was perceived in a considerable number of cases as a result of some moral or cultic offense. However, at times both the Hebrews and the Mesopotamians were equally perplexed and unable to give an adequate explanation for divine absence, or for certain destructive actions which they attributed to the gods.[114] For both the Israelites and the Babylonians the divinity remains unpredictable and unfathomable. They both have an experience in common: the divine world is ultimately beyond human control.[115] No matter how elaborate

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[112]L. Perlitt, "Die Veborgenheit Gottes," in *Probleme biblischer Theologie, Fs G. von Rad* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1971) 367-82, esp. p. 378.

[113]M. Greenberg, "Prolegomenon" in C. C. Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy* (New York, Ktav reprint, 1970) xi-xxxv, esp. p. xxvi. Greenberg refers to a quote from *Ludlul bēl nemēqi*, II 34-38 "What is proper to oneself is an offence to one's god, What in one's heart seems despicable is proper to one's god" translation from W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960) 41. However, the assertion that the will of God is unfathomable to humans can be found in Job and Isaiah. H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978) 241, cites a Sumerian text where Uruka(inim)gina of Lagaš, convinced of his innocence, accuses Nidaba, the personal goddess of Lugalzaggesi of Umma, of crime when the latter raided his city. In this text the disaster seems unrelated to human guilt. The storm that destroyed Eridu was "a storm possessed of neither kindness nor malice, familiar with neither good nor evil," cf. M. W. Green, "The Eridu Lament," *JCS* 30 (1978) 127-67, esp. p. 127. W. L. Moran, "Some Considerations of Form and Interpretation in Atraḫasīs," in *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to E. Reiner* (ed. F. Rochberg-Halton, AOS 67, New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1987) 245-55, esp. p. 255, argues that "the Mesopotamians were quite familiar with disasters that were in their lack of discrimination, beyond considerations of good and evil and unrelated to human guilt." However, it would be helpful to collect the texts which reflect such an attitude and to determine to what degree they are representative of the Mesopotamian's way of viewing a calamity. Is there a sufficeint number of such texts to build a convincing argument? One has the impression that they represent a minority.

[114]Cf. the conclusions in our section 5.6. "The Watchman and Intercessor," concerning the apparent irrationality of Yahweh's way of dealing with Israel.

[115]This point has been fully discussed by J. J. M. Roberts, "Divine Freedom and Cultic Manipulation in Israel and Mesopotamia," in *Unity and Diversity, Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (eds. H. Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975) 181-90. "In spite of all the means of persuasion available to humans, the inscrutable gods sometimes turned a

the ritual, earnest the confession or convincing the reason adduced by the petitioner, everything ultimately depended upon the good will of Yahweh or the pagan deity respectively. In our opinion, it is inappropriate to characterize divine freedom and unpredictability with a term like "*das Dämonische.*"[116]

d. In the quoted Sumerian and the Akkadian material the theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine" was often expressed in a single line as a statement of fact. On occasion, as in the "ér.šà.ḫun.gá prayer to any God," the same line would be repeated several times. The departure was not depicted as gradual. Only the balag-lament, mentioned above, depicted the deity wandering in the destroyed temple and city. In the Poem of Erra the departure of Marduk from his temple is preceded by a lengthy dialogue between Erra and Marduk. The latter points out the reasons why his departure could be disastrous as it happened on the occasion of the Deluge. In the narrative structure of the Poem this dialogue serves to delay Marduk's departure. The protracted dialogue may be perceived as a narrative technique used to provoke the effect of delay in the story. This feature may be compared with the description of the gradual withdrawal of Yahweh's glory from the temple. In the structure of the Book of Ezekiel, the detailed description of every move of Yahweh's כבוד has a similar function. It delays the moment of Yahweh's definitive departure.[117]

e. The Poem of Erra depicts Marduk's departure and return to his city and temple. Erra cannot execute his plans as long as Marduk is in his

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deaf ear to their human subjects. Not even the most submissive and conscientious obedience to the divine will could guarantee the desired blessings - covenant or no covenant" (p. 187); *idem.*, "Myth *Versus* History," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 1-13. Cf. also K. van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia* (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1985) ch. 4. "The Wrath of the Gods. Religious Interpretations of Adversity and Misfortune"; ch. 5. "In Search of the Secret Sin. Confessions of Ignorance and Pleas for Illumination." For a review of this work see D. Bodi, *RHPR* 2 (1989) 193-4.

[116]E.g., P. Volz, *Das Dämonische in Jahwe* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1924).

[117]The early interpreters found a definite theological purpose in this postponement. Rabbi Jonathan said, "For three and a half years the Presence tarried on the Mount of Olives, proclaiming thrice daily, 'Return wayward sons' (Jer 3:22). Seeing they would not repent it flew away, saying, 'I will go back to my [heavenly] abode till they realize their guilt; in their distress they will seek me and beg for my favor' (Hos 5:15)." (*Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 13.11) quoted in Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 201. The gradual withdrawal was seen as an expression of Yahweh's patience and hope that the disaster might be avoided.

temple in Babylon. Once Marduk has vacated his statue Erra can start with the whirlwind of war and destruction which dominates much of the Poem. At the end of the Poem, Erra, appeased, orders Išum to bring the gods back to their shrines. This movement of departure and return of Marduk and the gods resembles Yahweh's departure from and return back to the Jerusalem temple. Yahweh's glory leaves the temple in Ezek 9 and returns to dwell in the new temple toward the end of the Book of Ezekiel. Indeed, this parallel reveals a striking similarity of conception and composition of both the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra. This is a point of similarity in the overall structure of both works.

f. Finally, in the light of the fact that the theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine" appears in the city laments and *post eventum* descriptions of looting of temples and shrines, one is justified in suggesting that the vision in Ezek 8-11 arose as a consequence of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 586 BCE.[118] The vision of Yahweh's departure from the Jerusalem temple may be a product of Ezekiel or his disciples composed with reference to an ancient Mesopotamian literary tradition reflected in the Poem of Erra and in the light of the circumstances which prevailed after the looting and desecration of the Jerusalem temple.

[118]This view has already been propounded by G. R. Berry, "The Glory of Yahweh and the Temple," *JBL* 56 (1937) 115-17.

5.4.JERUSALEM AND BABYLON AS THE NAVEL OF THE EARTH

In the scholarly discussion the omphalos myth was first investigated in the field of classical studies,[1] and was subsequently extended to the Semitic domain.[2]

5.4.1. The Navel Motif in the Old Testament

Outside of the Book of Ezekiel (38:12) the only occurrence of the expression טבור הארץ in the Old Testament is in Judg 9:37.[3] Two watchmen of Shechem saw Abimelech and his warriors "coming down from the 'Navel of the Earth,' and one company is coming from the direction of the 'Diviner's Oak.'"[4] It is significant that the localization of the route taken by the invaders is made with reference to two cultic places. As pointed out by Soggin, the "navel of the earth," and the "diviner's oak," seem to be two elements in the complex of sanctuaries

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[1]W. H. Roscher, *Omphalos. Eine philologisch-archäologisch-volkskundliche Abhandlung über die Vorstellung der Griechen und anderer Völker vom "Nabel der Erde,"* in *ASGW* philologisch-historische Klasse, Band 29 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913); *idem., Neue Omphalos Studien. Ein archäologischer Beitrag zur vergleichenden Religionswissenschaft, ASGW*, Band 31, (Leipzig: Teubner, 1915); R. Meringer, "Omphalos, Nabel, Nebel," *Wörter und Sachen* 5 (1913) 41-91; J. Defradas, "L'omphalos de la terre," in *Les thèmes de la propagande delphique* (Thèse, Faculté des Lettres, Université de Paris, Paris: Klincksieck, 1954) 102ff. F. Robert, *Thymélé. Recherches sur la signification et la destination des monuments circulaires dans l'architecture religieuse de la Grèce* (Thèse, Faculté des Lettres, Université de Paris, Paris: De Boccard, 1939) 278-83. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston: Beacon, 1950, 1955) 21.

[2]S. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion," *VT* 20 (1970) 315-338; A. J. Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth* (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1916), the author traced the motif in Josephus, the rabbinic literature, Syrian writers and in the Quran but omitted the Sumerian evidence and only occasionally referred to Akkadian texts. W. H. Roscher, *Der Omphalosgedanke bei verschiedenen Völkern, besonders den semitischen. Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Religionswissenschaft, Volkskunde und Archäologie, BVSGW* Band 70 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1918); T. H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith, 1969, 1981) 428, 533 nn. 1-13; *idem., Thespis, Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Norton, 1950, 1977) 183.

[3]MT טבור הארץ; LXX ὀμφαλοῦ τῆς γῆς

[4]The mention of the Diviner's Oak cannot refer to any ordinary tree but to a well known cultic site. For some still pertinent information on the trees as sites of divination see, W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites, The Fundamental Institutions* (New York: Schocken, 1972) 196; J. Lindblom, "Theophanies in Holy Places in Hebrew Religion," *HUCA* 32 (1961) 91-106.

situated at Shechem an in its neighborhood.[5] That the expression "navel of the earth," should be understood as a reference to a cultic site is further corroborated by the fact that in the Judaism of the intertestamental period the "navel of the earth" was applied to Zion as the "holy place."[6] Similarly, in the classical Greek world the ὀμφαλος was associated with a cultic site being situated within the shrine.[7] S. Talmon's translation of טבור with "plateau" disregards this religious context and renders his argumentation unconvincing.[8]

> The context of Jdg ix 37 strongly suggests for the "navel" a limited emplacement, a monument or object in apposition to the other object referred to in connection with the precise intelligence of troop movements. (...) Thus it is very likely that as at Delphi, some feature (stone object) was exhibited as the symbol of the cosmic omphalos.[9]

The cosmic significance of the place was later attached to Mount Gerizim which continued to be considered as the center of the world in the Samaritan tradition.[10]

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[5]J. A. Soggin, *Judges. A Commentary* (OTL, Engl. transl. by J. Bowden, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981) 189.

[6]See the Book of Jubilees (written between 153 and 105 BCE) 8:19, "Ils savent que le jardin d'Éden est le saint des saint, la demeure du Seigneur, que le mont Sinaï est le milieu du désert et que le mont Sion est le milieu du nombril de la terre. Ils ont (tous) les trois été créés comme des lieux saints, l'un en face de l'autre," translated by A. Caquot in *La Bible de la Pléiade. Écrits intertestamentaires* (eds. A. Dupont-Sommer et M. Philonenko, Paris: Gallimard, 1987) 676-7.

[7]Cf. *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen altertumswissenschaft* (eds. G. Wissowa - W. Kroll, Stuttgart, 1931) Supplementband V, 123, #208, "Der Omphalos," (bibliography). The ὀμφαλος inside the shrine is mentioned by Aeschylus (525-456 BCE) in his tragedy *Eumenides* 39, and by Euripides (480-406 BCE) in *Ion* 222.

[8]S. Talmon, "Har," *TDOT III* 427-47, esp. pp. 437-40 "Omphalos" (extensive bibliography).

[9]So G. R. Wright, "The Mythology of Pre-Israelite Shechem." *VT* 20 (1970) 75-82, esp. p. 86. Cf. also R. Boling, *Judges* (AB, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975) 178, "The navel of the earth. An old poetic designation for the geography of the Shechem area. The navel of the earth was its mythological center - the link between heaven and earth."

[10]W. Harrelson, B. Anderson, and G. E. Wright, "Shechem, the 'Navel of the Land,'" *BA* 20 (1957) 2-32; G. R. H. Wright, "The Mythology of Pre-Israelite Shechem," *VT* 20 (1970) 75-82. For a different view see S. Talmon, "טבור הארץ and the Comparative Method," *Tarbiz* 45 (1975-6) 163-77 (In Hebrew with an English summary); *idem*., "The 'Navel of the Earth' and the Comparative Method," in *Scripture in History and Theology. Essays in Honor of J. C. Rylaarsdam* (eds. A. L. Merrill and T. W. Overholt, Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1977) 243-68.

5.4.2. The Navel of the Earth in Ezekiel

In Ezek 5:5 in an oracle of judgment against Jerusalem, one finds a reference to the city of Jerusalem as "the center of the nations." In 38:12 (LXX ὀμφαλοῦ τῆς γῆς), there is mention of the people who dwell in a place which represents the "navel of the earth." Commentators in general link those two verses in Ezekiel together as referring to the same motif of the "navel of the earth."[11]

> (Jerusalem's) situation *in the centre of the nations* reflects not only the actual layout of the siege and the armies that surround her, but also her place theologically as the cenetrepiece of God's favour in the world and the object of His covenant-love. From this idea there sprang up the concept of Jerusalem as "the navel of the earth" (38:12), a belief popular in rabbinical writings and carried over into the early Fathers and into medieval cartography.[12]

In Ezek 5:5 one reads, "Thus says Yahweh God: This is Jerusalem;[13] I have set her (שַׂמְתִּיהָ) in the midst of the nations (בְּתוֹךְ הַגּוֹיִם), with countries (וּסְבִיבוֹתֶיהָ אֲרָצוֹת) round about her."[14] As pointed out by Zimmerli,

> It is used here in an elevated style as a saying in *parallelismus membrorum* in order to stress the uniqueness of Jerusalem as the locality of the "center" of the entire world of nations. This idea of the "center" is expressed still more clearly in 38:12 with the metaphor "navel of the earth."[15]

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[11]Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 58; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 174-5; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 88; Fohrer, *Ezechiel* (HAT 13, Tübingen: Mohr, 1953) 35 n. 3.

[12]Thus J. B. Taylor, *Ezekiel* (Tyndale OT Commentaries, ed. D. J. Wiseman, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979) 86. The author cites *Jubilees* 8:12, 19; BT *Yoma* 54b; *Sanhedrin* 37a; and the map of the world by Richard of Haldingham in Hereford Cathedral (*circa* 1280). Cf. also Josephus. *Jewish War* III 3,5 ὠμφαλον της χωρας referring to Jeruslem.

[13]The meaning of this entire section (Ezek 4:1-5:5) and particularly of Ezek 5:5, has been thouroughly investigated in the light of iconographic evidence by Ch. Uehlinger, "Zeichne eine Stadt ... und Belagere sie! Bild und Wort in einer Zeichenhandlung Ezechiels gegen Jerusalem (Ez 4f)," in *Novum Testamentum und Orbis Antiquus* 6 (1987) 111-200 = *Jerusalem, Texte-Bilder-Steine, zum 100 Geburtstag von Hildi und Othmar Keel-Leu* (Freiburg/Schweiz: Universitätsverlag - Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987).

[14]It is characteristic of Ezekiel to link the terms גּוֹיִם/עַמִּים with אֲרָצוֹת, which in this book consistently refers to heathen peoples and heathen lands.Ezek 5:5f; 6:8; 11:16; 12:15; 20:23, 32, 34, 41; 22:4, 15; 25:7; 29:12; 30:23, 26; 34:13; 36:19, 24.

[15]Zimmerli, *Ezekiell*, 174.

The point of this oracle of judgment is that although Yahweh had manifested a particular favor toward the city of Jerusalem by setting her in the midst of the nations, she had forfeited her privileged status by rebelling and acting worse than the nations round about.

J.- J. Glassner points out a feature of one of the geographical divisions of the world in Akkadian literature where the city of Akkad is placed in the center while other countries are subsumed under the expression *kibrāt arba'im*.

> Dans la titulature de Narām-Sîn, le centre était symbolisé par la capitale, Akkadé, résidence royale, lieu magnifique puisqu'auréolé du déterminatif divin; les quatres contrées excentriques était désignées par l'expression *kibrāt arba'im*, "quatre régions" ou "quatre rives."[16]

In the oracles of judgment against the land of Israel (Ezek 7:2), one finds the corresponding Hebrew idiom. The end is first announced upon the whole earth with the expression, על ארבעת כנפות הארץ, (cf. 5:3 בכנפיך). The idiom ארבעת כנפות הארץ has already been compared to Akkadian *kibrāt arba'im*.[17] In the immediate context of the Ezek 5:5, the idea of the city of Jerusalem in the center with countries around her is expressed with וסביבותיה ארצות (repeated in 5:5, 6, 7[2x], 14).

In Babylon, Greece,[18] Rome, and even in China,[19] the motif of the center was employed as a proud expression of national vanity and self-importance.[20] According to Eichrodt,[21] the text in Ezekiel gives a

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[16]J. - J. Glassner, "La division quinaire de la terre," *Akkadica* 40 (1984) 17-34, esp. p. 18.

[17]M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M.A. dissertation Columbia University, New York, 1970) 45. The phrase "four corners, or shores of the earth," occurs again in Isa 11:12. In Isa 8:8, the invasion of the Assyrian army is compared to a tampestuous flooding river whose waters go beyond its shores, מלוא כנפיו (cf. *TOB*, "l'extension de ses rives") indicating that the term כנף in certain instances corresponds to Akkadian *kibru* ("shore, region"). The image of the world as an outspread surface comparable to a sheet with four courners (Job 38:13) represents another Hebrew conception of the world. On the Ugaritic expression *'rb' pnwt hbyt* "four corners of the house," see W. L. Michel, *Job in the Light of Northwest Semitic* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1987) I 21.

[18]W. Caspari, "נבור (Nabel)," *ZDMG* 86 (1932) 49-65, esp. p. 61 n. 1 (bibliography).

[19]China was called the "Empire of the Middle" implying the center of the world, cf. G. Dumézil, *Mythe et épopée* (Paris; Gallimard, 1971, 3 vols.) II, 251-258, "Les partages du monde." Dumézil traces the motif of the five fold division of the world (four regions plus the center) in the Indo-European literature.

[20]The vanity which such presumptuousness entails is reflected in the rather amusing belief according to which Samoa, a small group of islands lost in the midst of the Pacific represent the sacred center of the world. *Sa* means "sacred" while *moa* means "center," cf. K. R. Lambie, *History of Samoa* (Apia, West Samoa: Commercial Press, 1979); G. Stuebel, *Myths and Legends of Samoa* (Wellington, New Zealand: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1976).

particular biblical perspective to the common motif of being the center in the community of nations. It is only because Yahweh has allotted to Jerusalem a special place and role that the city acquires a particular importance. There is no assumption of any naturally given preeminence. The election and historical role of Jerusalem and its people rests on a free divine affirmation.[22] In our opinion one should not press this difference too far.

The larger context of Ezek 38:12 is a description of an invasion of the mythical enemy from the "uttermost parts of the north"[23] (38:6, 15; 39:2). It is an apocalyptic vision of the final, miraculous defeat of the forces of evil in the land of Israel. Gog and his cohorts, a great host, riding horses, appear as a nebulous mass, i.e., "like a cloud" invading Palestine in order

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[21]Cf. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 88. The idea of Jerusalem as the navel is reflected in the Midrashim: "God created the world like an embryo. Just as the embryo begins at the navel and continues to grow from that point, so too the world. The Holy One, blessed be He, began the world from its navel. From there it was stretched hither and yon. Where is its navel? Jerusalem. And its (Jerusalem's) navel itself? The altar." Jellinek, *Beth ha-Midrash* V 63, quoted by D. Sperling, "Navel of the Earth," *IDBS* (1976) 622.

[22]We cannot agree with M. Greenberg's interpretation that "amidst the nations" means originally a nation among the nations in the sense of being on equal footing with other peoples, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 110. This interpretation disregards a major issue in the Book of Ezekiel, namely that the Israelites were not on equal footing with other nations. They were a nation with a covenant with Yahweh but have forfeited their specificity and have become like or worse than the heathen. The exile is Yahweh's radical intervention in order to purge their wanton heart. cf. Ezek 20:32 "Let us be like the nations (גּוֹיִם), like the tribes of the countries (אַרְצוֹת) and worship wood and stone." 20:34, "I will bring you out from the peoples (עַמִּים) and gather you out of the countries (אַרְצוֹת) where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out."

[23]B. Alfrink, "Der Versammlungsberg im äussersten Norden (Is. 14)," *Bibl* 14 (1933) 41-67; H. Donner, "Der Feind aus dem Norden," *ZDPV* 84 (1968) 46-54. As pointed out by B. S. Childs, "The Enemy from the North and the Chaos Tradition," *JBL* 78 (1959) 187-98, the north in the Old Testament has an ambivalent meaning. On the one hand, it carries a negative connotation as the direction out of which the demonic enemy descends (cf. Jer 4:6; Ezek 38-39). On the other hand, it has a positive connotation as the seat of the deity and the source of blessing, cf. Ps 48:1-2 "the city of our God! ... holy mountain ... Mount Zion, in the extreme north, the city of the great King." H. Gressmann has suggested the Canaanite background of this idea even before the discovery of Ugaritic texts, *Der Messias* (FRLANT 26, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1929) 169. According to O. Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon, Zeus Kasion, und der Durchzug der Israeliten durch Meer* (BRA 1, Halle: Niemeyer, 1932) 5f., the term "north" in its primary sense is to be understood locally as referring to the mountain Zaphon, the seat of the chief Canaanite god, Baal Zaphon. Cf. also A. Lauha, *ZAPHON, Der Norden und die Nordvölker im Alten Testament* (Helsinki: Der Finnischen Literaturgesellschaft, 1943) esp. pp. 68-72.

to plunder (38:10).[24] They turn against the repatriated people who dwell in unwalled cities lacking bars and gates (v 11), who live in "the navel of the earth." "To assail the waste places which are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations (גוֹיִם), who have gotten cattle and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth (יֹשְׁבֵי עַל טַבּוּר הָאָרֶץ)."[25] The invasion of Gog falls "in the latter days" (38:8, 16), indicating that the events described have passed from the plane of history and entered the apocalyptic age.[26] D. Sperling has argued that the reference to the "navel of the earth" tells nothing about the victim's cosmology.[27] Rather, it is to be interpreted as a sign of vulnerability. Presumably "the intended victims are as unprotected as the human navel in the center of the body."[28] However, this interpretation disregards the mythical content of the chapter. As pointed out by B. S. Childs, the navel of the earth in Ezek 38:12 designates a "mythical space."[29] In the hour of

[24]Cf. M. C. Astour, "Ezekiel's Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin," *JBL* 95 (1976) 567-79. Astour argued that in the composition of Ezek 38-39, the author adapted the long list of ills and plagues from the didactic poem known as the Cuthean legend of Naram-Sîn. A number of features from the Narām-Sîn legend occur in the Poem of Erra. It would be worthwhile to investigate the relationship between the Narām-Sîn legend and the Poem of Erra. For example Narām-Sîn is so impressed by the irresistible progress of the *seven* kings, sons of Annubanini who invade Mesopotamian cities that he sent an officer to find out whether they are "evil spirits, ghosts and fiends, creatures of Enlil" (l. 67-68). This reminds one of the Sibitti in the Poem of Erra. Historically, Annubanini was the king of the Lulubi people mentioned in Erra IV 134. The author of the Narām-Sîn legend says that he deposited a copy in the temple of Nergal in Kutha (149-151). J. van Dijk, "Review of Gössmann, *Das Erra-epos*," *OLZ* 54 (1959) 379-85, identifies Erra with the god Nergal. The internecine slaughter described in the Narām-Sîn legend, (l. 136) "City will fight city, house with house, (137) father with father", brother with brother, (138) young man with young man, friend with companion," reminds one of Erra's decree of the destruction of Akkad's enemies, "A house the (other) house, a man the (other) man, a brother the (other) brother must not spare. May they slay each other!" (Erra IV 135).

[25]H. Holma, "Zum 'Nabel der Erde,'" *OLZ* 18 (1915) 41-3.

[26]Cf. B. Renaud, *Je suis un Dieu jaloux* (LD 36, Paris: Cerf, 1963) 88, "Dieu annonce l'effondrement définitif de Gog l'adversaire par excellence, l'ennemi eschatologique présenté sous des traits apocalyptiques."

[27]D. Sperling, "Navel of the Earth," *IDBS* (1976) 621-23.

[28]D. Sperling, *art. cit.* p. 622. He compares it to an Old Babylonian omen text where an invasion is described as a penatration to the "navel of the enemy's land" *abunnat māt nakrim, YOS* X 33 iii 41.

[29]B. S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (SBT 27, London: SCM Press, 1960, 1968) 84-94, "The Analysis of Mythical Space," esp. p. 86. The term "mythical space" comes from E. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. II *Mythical Thought* (Engl. transl. by R. Manheim, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955, 1965) 83-94, "The Articulation of Space in the Mythical Consciousness." Cf. also M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969) 23-30, "Le symbolisme du centre."

danger Yahweh appears as the true protector of the people who live in open settlements. The divine intervention is depicted as a cosmic upheaval. Nature fights the invader in an apocalyptic manner: the mountains collapse, the cliffs topple and the wall crumbles to the ground (v 21). Pestilence and bloodshed breaks out, torrential rain, hailstones and sulfurous fire falls upon the invader (v 22). Yahweh provokes the terror which causes the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the beasts in the field, all creeping things and every human being to quake (רעש) before Yahweh (vv 19, 20).[30] According to Childs' analysis, the term (רעש) has become a *terminus technicus* within the language used to depict a return, or threatened return, of chaos at the end of the current era.[31] We subscribe to his conclusion:

> The description which began on the nebulous fringes of history has been elevated into the trans-historical, into an arena beyond direct relation to contemporary reality. Gog has become the representative of the cosmic powers of the returned chaos which Yahweh destroys in the latter days, powers which cannot be described as historical, though present partly in historical dress.[32]

In such a context, the "navel of the earth," refers to a mythical space which stands under divine protection.[33] The depiction of the gigantic world battle with apocalyptic proportions is further underlined with the addition of the armies coming roughly from the four main geographical

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[30]In the "before me" v 20, "there is a reference to the fact that in this cosmic upheaval we are dealing with an event in the presence of the judge who will come," so Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II,* 313. In this passage the author finds features of a Yahweh war.

[31]B. S. Childs, "The Enemy from the North and the Chaos Tradition," *JBL* 78 (1959) 187-98, esp. 189.

[32]B. S. Childs, *art. cit.,* p. 196. W. Caspari, "טבור (Nabel)," *ZDMG* 86 (1932) 49-65 criticized the interpretation of Jdg 9:37 as a reference to the omphalos myth but nevertheless interpreted טבור הארץ in Ezek 38:12 as a reference to Jerusalem as the "center of the earth," i.e., as a kind of cosmic midpoint.

[33]S. Talmon, "Har," *TDOT III* 427-47, esp. pp. 437-40 "Omphalos." Concerning Ezek 38:12, Talmon is categorical in his conclusion that "no mythical element whatsover adheres to the term." It is hard to follow such a statement when the context of Ezek 38 represents a depiction of an invasion of a mythical enemy from the north, cf. S. Talmon, "The 'Comparative Method' in Biblical Interpretation - Principles and Problems," *VTS* 29 (1970) 320-56, esp. p. 351. The author quotes with approval a methodological principle enunciated by I. Engnell, "The context is the guide to interpretation, and disregard to context leads to chaos," in "The Traditio-Historical Method in Old Testament Research," *Critical Essays in the Old Testament* (Engl. transl. by J. T. Willis with collaboration of H. Ringgren, London: SPCK, 1970) 3-11, esp. p. 5. However, Talmon failed to apply this principle in his interpretation of Ezek 38.

points of the world. From the north come Gog and the armies of Gomer (usually identified with the Gimirrai of the Assyrians, or the Cimmerians of the Greek literature, who came originally from the north of the Black Sea). The armies of Cush come from Ethiopia or the south. Put being probably Cyrenaica in North Africa, come from the west in respect to the land of Israel, and Beth-togarmah is probably Armenia, in the north-east.[34] This symbolic representation of an apocalyptic conflict has been taken over in Rev 20:8, where after the Messianic period the hostile forces will wage war against the people of God. In Rev 20:8 the four corners of the earth are explicitly mentioned, τὰ ἔθνη τὰ ἐν ταῖς τέσσαρσιν γωνίαισ τῆς γῆς.[35]

Moreover, as pointed out by S. Terrien, one of the chief characteristics of the omphalos myth is precisely that it points not only to the sacred space which unites earth to heaven, but also that it recalls the proximity of the primeval rivers and the mythical access to the subterranean waters of chaos.[36] There is a literary motif in Akkadian literature where the invader is identified with the powers of chaos. For example, in the Narām-Sîn legend the invaders from the north are described as "sucklings of Tiamat."[37] Hence, the mention of the mythical space called "the navel of the earth," in a context which deals with the battle between Yahweh and the mythical forces of chaos appears quite appropriate.

5.4.3. The Navel Motif in the Poem of Erra

The motif of the navel of the earth is very ancient indeed, occurring in Sumerian and Akkadian literature. Sumerian DUR.AN.KI "Bond of Heaven and Earth," was the name of sanctuaries at Nippur,[38] at Larsa,

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[34]For these identifications see J. B. Taylor, *Ezekiel* (Tyndale OT Commentaries, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979) 245. For abundant bibliography on Gog and Magog see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II*, 281-3.

[35]We disagree with K. G. Kuhn, "Γὼγ καὶ Μαγώγ" in *TDNT I* 789-91, who argued that this apocalyptic dimension has been introduced only in Rev 20:8.

[36]S. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion," *VT* 20 (1970) 315-338, esp. p. 323. Cf. also L. Wächter, "Unterweltvorstellung und Unterweltsnamen in Babylonien, Israel und Ugarit," *MIO* 15 (1969) 327-336. E. Ebeling, "Eine Beschreibung der Unterwelt in sumerischer Sprache," *Or* 18 (1949) 285-87.

[37]Cf. O. R. Gurney, "The Sultantepe Tablets, IV The Cuthaean Legend of Naram-Sin" *AnSt* 5 (1955) 93-133, and 6 (1956) 163-4; line 34 *Tiamatu ušeniqšunūti* = "Ti'âmat suckled them."

[38]Cf. R. Labat, *Manuel d'Épigraphie Akkadienne* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1976) sign N°. 108 (DUR). Sumerian DUR is rendered into Akkadian with *riksu* or *markasu* "bond" and DUR.AN.KI is the Sumerian name of Nippur.

Sippar,[39] while the corresponding Akkadian expression *markas šamê u erṣeti* was applied to the city of Babylon.[40]

The motif of the navel of the earth linking the heavenly and the earthly realms appears on several occasions in the Poem of Erra. In IV 1-2 Išum accuses Erra that in his fury the latter has untied the "knot" of the universe in the city of Babylon.

1 *qurādu* ^{d}*Erra ša rubê* ^{d}*Marduk zikiru lā tašḫut*
2 *ša* DIM.KUR.KUR.RA *ālšar ilāni rikis mātāti taptaṭar rikīssu*

Hero Erra, you did not fear prince Marduk's name!
You have untied the bond of Dimkurkurra, the city of the king of the gods (= Marduk), the bond of (all) the countries.

The Sumerian term DIM.KUR.KUR.RA is immediately rendered into Akkadian with *rikis* (= DIM) *mātāti* (= KUR.KUR) "the bond of the countries." It refers to Babylon, the sacred city of Marduk, which was considered to be the "knot" of the universe or the center of the world.[41]

[39]For bibliographical references and a discussion of this term see E. Burrows, "Some Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religion," in *The Labyrinth, Further Studies in the Relation Between Myth and Ritual in the Ancient World* (ed. S. H. Hooke, London: SPCK 1935) 45-70, esp. p. 47.

[40]Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562 BCE) describes his palace in Babylon with the term *markas māti* "the bond of the lands" (Nabukadnezar Nr. 15 VII 37) in S. Langdon, *Die neubabylonische Königsinschriften* (VAB IV, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912) p. 136. In the same royal inscription Nebuchadnezzar says that he built the temple E.DIM.AN.NA "The House/Temple of the Bond of Heaven" upon the wall of Ezida at Borsippa (Nabukadnezar Nr. 15 IV 63-64) Sumerian DIM is rendered into Akkadian with *riksu* "bond, tie," while DIM.GAL is rendered with *tarkullu* "post," cf. R. Labat, *Manuel d'Épigraphie Akkadienne* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1976) sign N° 94 (DIM). E. Burrows, *art. cit.* p. 47, mentions the ancient Sumerian terms like "DIM.GAL of the land," i.e., "The great binding-post of the land," which was the name of the temple of Dēr, a name given to Gudea's temple at Lagaš, and to the temple of Sauska at Nineveh.

[41]Cf. L. Cagni, *PE,* 49 n. 114. On Babylon as the navel of the world see E. Unger, *Babylon, Die heilige Stadt nach der Beschreibung der Babylonier* (Berlin and Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1931) esp. pp. 20-24 (with figures), ch. III "Babylon der Nabel der Welt." Cf. A. Goetze, "Review of E. Unger, *Babylon,*" *TLZ* (1932) 145-48; B. Landsberger, "Bemerkungen zu einigen in Ungers *'Babylon'* übersetzten Texten," *ZA* 41 (1933) 287-99; H. Schmökel, *Ur, Assur und Babylon, Drei Jahrtausende im Zweistromland* (Zürich: Fretz & Wasmuth Verlag, 1955) 144; F. Wetzel & F. H. Weissbach, *Das Hauptheiligtum des Marduk in Babylon, Esagila und Etemenanki* (I. Nach dem Ausgrabungen, F. Wetzel, II. Nach den keilschriftlichen Quellen, F. H. Weissbach), WVDO 59 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1938); F. Wetzel, E. Schmid, A. Mallwitz, *Das Babylon des Spätzeit* (Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Mann, 1957); R. Koldeway, *The Excavations at Babylon* (Engl. transl. by A. Johns, London: Macmillan, 1914); A. Parrot, *Babylon and the Old Testament* (Engl. transl. by B. Hooke, London: SCM, 1958).

The term represents a poetical name of Babylon,[42] and is found in a Series containing several names of this city, (Ashmolean tablet 1924-849 Obv.)

1 *bābilu ša qa[dašti u rīšāti saṭaršu]*
Babylon, the holiness and joy of which this is a document
2 *šubat nu[ḫši]*
abode of luxury
3 *šubat ba[lāṭi]*
abode of health
4 *e[muq šamê]*
power of heaven
5 *[nūr] šamê*
light of heaven
6 *[mark]as šamê*
band of heaven
Rev.
13 DIM.KUR.KUR.RA *rikis mātāta*
the band of the countries.[43]

There are two additional references to the bond of heaven and earth in the Poem of Erra. The god Marduk explains to Erra that when he left his statue and his temple in Babylon on the occasion of the Deluge, the bond between the earth and the heaven dissolved.

I 136 *šibit*(!) *šamê u erṣetim ša uptaṭiru nag[b]u*
imtaṭīma mīli ittaḫsu atūr āmurma ana šibê imtarṣa

The bond of heaven and earth which dissolved
(caused) that the source diminished and indundation
receded. I gazed again, it was difficult to tie it.[44]

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[42]Cf. F. Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos* (Würzburg: Augustinus, 1955) 51. The Akkadian name Babylon (*bāb ili*; neo-Babylonian: *Bābilāni*) means "The Gate of the God(s)" It represents a translation of the Sumerian KA.DINGIR.RA or KA.DINGIR.KI, cf. E. Unger, *Babylon, Die heilige Stadt nach der Beschreibung der Babylonier* (Berlin and Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1931) 25 ch. IV, "Name und Geschichte von Babylon." Unger points out that the designation KA.DINGIR.RA.KI "The Gate of God" is not only a general term for the city of Babylon but also the name of the city-quarter in which four temples were located. *op. cit.*, p. 79.

[43]Akkadian text and translation from P. E. V. D. Meer, "A Topography of Babylon," *Iraq* 5 (1938) 55-64, esp. pp 55-6.

[44]Our translation follows the one of J. Aro, "Bemerkungen zum Era-Epos," *StOr* 23 (1958) 24-26, esp. p. 25, "Die Fuge vom Himmel und Erde, die gelockert war, (verursachte es, daß) die Quelle abnahm und die Fluten verebbten. Ich habe sie erneut betrachtet, und sie war schwer zusammenzufügen."

The reading of the reference in Erra I 136 rests on a conjecture by Landsberger.[45] J. Aro points out the parallelism between *šibit*(!) "the tie, the bond," at the beginning of the line, and *ana šibê imtarṣa* "difficult to tie," at the end.[46] The term *šibit* is thus related to the verb *šebû* "to tie."[47]

During the protracted dialogue between Marduk and Erra, the latter attempts to persuade Marduk to leave his temple in Babylon. In order to prevent the dissolution of the bond of heaven and earth, Erra promises to watch so that what happened during the Deluge does not happen again.

I 182 *adi ulla araddūma šibit šamê u erṣetim udannam*

Until then I will rule holding fast the bond of heaven and earth.[48]

5.4.4. Parallels, Contrasts, Conclusions

In Ezek 5:5 Jerusalem is designated as being placed in the midst of the countries. In the Poem of Erra the city Babylon is described in a similar way, as the bond of the countries, i.e., a rallying point of the nations of the world. Jerusalem derives its importance from a divine decision. A similar notion of a divine election of a city is present in the Poem of Erra. After Erra had ravaged Babylon, Marduk, the god of Babylon utters a long lament over his destroyed city (IV 36-44),

IV 43 Ah Babylon that like a seal of *elmēšu*(-amber)[49] I had hung on Anum's neck!

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[45]Landsberger's explanation is incorporated in the article by J. Aro, "Bemerkungen zum Era-Epos," *StOr* 23 (1958) 24-26. Landsberger explained the term *šibit* from an expression found in medical texts, *šibit qaqqadi* "the suture of the head," in R. Labat, *Traité akkadien de diagnostics et pronostics* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1951, 2 vols.) I 20 lines 15, 16, 17 (although Labat left the term untranslated). Landsberger rendered Erra I 136 in the following way, "the suture of heaven and earth."

[46]J. Aro, "Bemerkungen zum Era-Epos," *StOr* 23 (1960) 25.

[47]Landsberger's conjecture has been followed by J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 118 n. 9. Bottéro translates the line in the following way, "Le Lien du Ciel et de la Terre s'étant défait, la Nappe souterraine diminua, et le niveau des eaux descendit! A mon retour, je vis (comme) il était malaisé de (tout) raccommoder!" However, W. von Soden, *AHw* 1247b sees in Erra I 136 the verb *šebû* "to satiate," which is followed by Cagni, *PE*, 32, "one can hardly sate oneself." Moreover one Sultantepe fragment of the Poem of Erra reads *petê* instead of *šibê*. This reading is followed by A. Falkenstein, "Zur ersten Tafel des Erra-Mythos," *ZA* 53 (1959) 200-9, esp. p. 206 n. 136, *atūr ānurma ana petê imtarṣa* = "ich schaute erneut: Sie (= die Quellen) zu öffnen, war schwierig." One has to admit that the interpretation of the line is somewhat problematic.

[48]Here we follow the translation of Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (l'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 120.

[49]The enygmatic term חשמל which occurs only in Ezekiel (1:4, 27, 8:2) has been identified with Akkadian *elmēšu* "a precious stone," in *CAD E* 108. Cf. our extensive discussion of these terms in section 4.2.

44 Ah Babylon that I had held in my hands like the Tablet of Destinies,
handing her over to nobody else![50]

The conception of Jerusalem and Babylon as cities under special divine favor appears to reflect a similar religious outlook. In the course of history the claim about the cities of Babylon, Sippar, Nippur, Dēr, as the bond of heaven and earth proved to be part of clever religious and political propaganda. The belief in Jerusalem as a city under divine favor has at times been used as part of such a propaganda.[51] However, it has the advantage of representing even today a powerful religious symbol which generates faith in both Jewish and Christian men and women.

It is remarkable that the motif of the navel of the earth appears in conjuction with the motif of the preservation from the flood (cf. above the section 4.4.). This conjunction between the two motifs has been pointed out already by A. J. Wensinck,[52] and W. Caspari, who attributed it to the Babylonian influence.[53] In the light of our working hypothesis it is significant that both motifs are present in the Book of Ezekiel and in the Poem of Erra. This correlation justifies our conclusion that the relationship between the motifs found in the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra is far from being coincidental.

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[50]For a discussion of this passage see A. Pohl, "Die Klage Marduks über Babylon im Irra-Epos," *HUCA* 23 (1950-51) 405-9.

[51]Cf. S. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion," *VT* 20 (1970) 315-338, esp. p. 333, "After the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., it was above all the belief in the Zion-space myth which enabled the surviving Judahites to maintain their sociological identity and thus to create Judaism. It was precisely at that moment that the prophet Ezekiel explicitly referred to Jerusalem as the navel of the earth." According to the traditional Jerusalemite royal theology because of Yahweh's presence in the temple both the temple and the city were inviolable. On this royal theology see F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973); J. H. Hayes, "The Tradition of Zion's Inviolability," *JBL* 82 (1963) 419-26; J. Schreiner, *Sion-Jerusalem Jahwes Köngissitz. Theologie der Heiligen Stadt im Alten Israel* (SANT 7, München: Kösel, 1963).

[52]A. J. Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth* (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1916) 15. Cf. also M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969) 25. The navel and the flood motifs appear related in the Rabbinic, Samaritan and Muslim traditions. The above discussion has demonstrated that the motifs are very ancient indeed.

[53]W. Caspari, "טבור (Nabel)," *ZDMG* 86 (1932) 49-65, esp. p. 51, Wohl ist auffällig, daß Rabbiner Palästina von der Sintflut ausnehmen, Ber. r. 37a.; doch liegt die Bedeutung dieses Zugeständnisses, ... wohl auf dem literarkritischen Gebiete und bezeugt in spätester Zeit mittelbar immer noch örtliche Überlieferungen, welche sich mit einer Ausdehnung des babylonischen Erzählungsstoffes auf Palästina nicht vertrugen."

5.5. THE SONG OF THE SWORD IN EZEKIEL 21 AND IN THE POEM OF ERRA

5.5.1. The Sword in the Old Testament[1]

As pointed out by Gressmann[2] and Fredriksson[3] the motif of the sword is quite frequent in the Old Testament. In the tradition of the wars of Yahweh there appears a messenger of Yahweh with a sword (Josh 5:13). The several references to Yahweh's attendants, a divine being (angel or cherubim) with drawn sword in the Old Testament (Gen 3:24; Num 22:31; 2 Sam 24:16; 1 Chr 21:27, 30) have been interpreted as a reflexion of the Canaanite messengers of Yamm who appear as warriors, flaming and with swords.[4] There are a few passages in the Old Testament where the sword and the fire occur in parallelism, e.g., Nah 2:14 (oracle against Niniveh: "I will burn (בער) her chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour (תאכל חרב) her young lions;" 3:15 "There will the fire devour you (תאכלך אש), the sword (חרב תכרתך) will cut you off;" Isa 66:16, "For by fire will Yahweh execute judgment, and by his sword upon all flesh;" However, in these verses the parallelism fits the pattern described by Kugel[5] "A, and what's more, B." The Book of Ezekiel makes a particular contribution to the sword motif in the Old Testament. It contains the Song of the Sword.

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[1]J. W. Wevers, "Sword," *IDB IV* 469-70; G. Fohrer, "Schwert," *Biblisch-Historisches Handwörterbuch* (eds. L. Rost - B. Reicke, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962-66, 3 vols) 3, 1750-51; W. Michaelis, "μάχαιρα" *TDNT IV* 524-27; *idem.*, "ῥομφαια" *TDNT VI* 993-98. Cf. F. Zorell, *Lexicon Hebraicum et Aramaicum Veteris Testamenti* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968) 265, who has divided the approximately 410 OT occurrences of the term sword into (1) literal, (2) metonymical, and (3) metaphorical usage.

[2]H. Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1905) 76-82, esp. pp. 78-9 (on Ezek 21).

[3]H. Fredriksson, *Jahwe als Krieger, Studien zum alttestamentlichen Gottesbild* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1945) 95-7 (ch. V "Jahwes Bewaffung: חרב): Lev 26:33; Deut 32:41-2; 33:29; Judg 7:20; Isa 27:1; 34:5; 51:9; 66:16; Jer 12:12; 15:3; 21:7; 25:29, 38; 46:10; 47:6; 49:37; 50:16, 35ff; Amos 4:10; 7:9; 9:11; Zeph 2:12; Nah 2:14; Zech 13:7-9; Ps 7:12ff; 17:13; Job 26:13.

[4]P. D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973) 31-32, 129.

[5]J. L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry, Parallelism and its History* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1981).

5.5.2. The Song of the Sword in the Book of Ezekiel[6]

Our primary concern is the analysis of the Song of the Sword in Ezek 21:13-22. Nevertheless, a few comments will be made on the chapter as a whole which is its larger context. Ezek 21, reflects a composite nature and might have been formed from a number of originally independent fragments. First, the formula for the reception of a message from Yahweh by the prophet is repeated four times (H 21:1, 6, 13, 23 = *RSV* 20:45; 21:1, 8, 18,"And the word of Yahweh came to me."). Moreover, while the formula "Thus says the Lord (אדני)" appears once (21:14 = *RSV* 21:24), the two כה אמר אדני יהוה (H 21:3, 33 = *RSV* 20:47, 21:28), form an *inclusio*.[7] Second, the redactional device employed in order to join all these fragments together seems to be the use of the catchword "sword" which appears fifteen times in the chapter.[8] In outlining the contents of Ezek 21, scholars cannot agree on the number of sections into which the chapter could be appropriately divided. There are almost as many suggestions concerning the way the verses should be divided and sections determined as there are scholars (*quot homines tot sententiae*).[9] One may doubt whether the pursuit of a traditional literary-critical approach to Ezek 21 will make any new and significant contribution toward the understanding of this chapter. A different approach is needed

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[6]The sword is a prominent motif in the Book of Ezekiel, being mentioned throughout, cf. Ezek 5:1, 2, 12, 17; 6:3, 8, 11, 12; 7:15(2x); 11:8, 10; 12:14, 16; 14:17, 21; 16:40; 17:21; 21:8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 19(3x), 20, 24, 25, 33; 23:10, 25, 47; 24:21, 25:13; 26:6, 8, 9, 11; 28:7, 23; 29:8; 30:4, 5, 6, 11, 17, 21, 22, 24, 25; 31:17, 18; 32:10, 11, 12, 20(2x), 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32; 33:2, 3, 6, 26, 27; 35:5, 8; 38:4, 8, 21(2x); 39:23, cf. G. Lisowsky, *Konkordanz zum hebräischen Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1958) 526f.

[7]Cf. R. J. Tournay, "Le poème de l'épée, Ézéchiel 21:13-22 et ses relectures," in *I. L. Seeligmann Volume, Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World* (eds. A. Rofé and Y. Zakovitch, Jerusalem: E. Rubinstein, 1983, vol. III Non-Hebrew Section) 249-62. "La formule du v 14, 'Ainsi parle le Seigneur,' est unique dans le livre d'Ézéchiel" (p. 250).

[8]The use of the catchword "sword" as the principle of organization of the material in Ezek 21, might correspond to what M. Buber calls *Leitwortstil*, cf. his article, "Leitwortstil in der Erzählung des Pentateuchs," in M. Buber - F. Rosenzweig, *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung* (Berlin: Schocken, 1936) 211-38.

[9]Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I,* 419-51, divides Ezek 21 into three sections: 1-12, 13-22, 23-37; Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 226-39 divides it into four: 1-12, 13-22, 23-32, 33-37; G. Hölscher, *Hesekiel, Der Dichter und das Buch, BZAW* 39 (1924) 111, divides it into four but assigns verses differently to each section: 1-5, 6-12, 13-22, 23-37; V. Herntrich, *Ezechielprobleme, BZAW* 61 (1933) 104, divides it into four sections with verses differently assigned: 1-5, 6-22, 23-32, 33-37; G. Fohrer, *Ezechiel*, 117-26 divides it into six sections: 1-10, 11-12, 13-22, 23-29, 30-32, 33-37; H. H. Guthrie, "Ezekiel 21," *ZAW* 74 (1962) 268-81, divides it into six sections: 1-5, 6-10, 11-12, 13-22, 23-32, 33-37, p. 269.

where greater attention is accorded to the content of the chapter. If one decides to work with the final form of the text, one is immediately struck by the highly polished structure of Ezek 21.[10] Without claiming to offer the most adequate outline, we suggest viewing Ezek 21 in the following way:

part I. Ezek 21:1-12 (RSV 20:45-21:7) Jerusalem Threatened With Fire and Sword
part II. 21:13-22 (*RSV* 21:8-17) The Song of the Sword (sections):
A vv 14-16;
B vv17-18;
C vv 19-22
part III. 21:23-32 (*RSV* 21:18-27) The Sword of the King of Babylon on its Way against Jerusalem
part IV. 21:33-37 (*RSV* 21:28-32) The Sword and the Fire Against Ammon

A few words concerning the overall structure of the chapter are in order. Parts I and IV form an *inclusio*. In part I (21:1-12), there is mention of fire and sword against Jerusalem and the land of Israel. In part IV (21:33-37), the same is repeated against Ammon but in a reversed order, first the sword v 33 and then the fire vv 36-37.[11]

The catchword "sword" dominates the interpretation of the parable. In part I it occurs three times, (vv 8, 9, 10). The "sword" holds a central place in the Song of the Sword (part II), where it occurs eight times (vv 14 [2x], 16, 17, 19 [3x], 20). In part III (21:23-32), the word "sword" occurs two times (vv 24, 25,). In part IV (21:33-37), the word "sword" occurs twice (v 33). Closer examination reveals further that in the "sword" oracle against Ammon part IV (21:33-37), statements from the Song of the Sword in part II (21:13-22), reappear.[12]

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[10]On the literary structuring as a conspicuous feature of the Book of Ezekiel see the following articles, S. Talmon and M. Fishbane, "Aspects of the Arrangement of Sections in the Book of Ezekiel" *Tarbiz* 42 (1972-73) 27-41 (Hebrew); S. Talmon, "Literary Structuring in the Book of Ezekiel," *Beth Mikra* 63 (1975) 315-27 (Hebrew); S. Talmon and M. Fishbane, "The Structuring of Biblical Books: Studies in the Book of Ezekiel," *ASTI* 10 (1976) 129-53.

[11]This has already been noted by H. H. Guthrie, "Ezekiel 21," *ZAW* 74 (1962) 268-81, "Even the prose framework around the two poems (i.e. 21:1-4 and 6-12) seems to be meant to be parallel, vss 1, 3, and 4 matching vss. 6, 8, and 10 in form. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that either one section followed the other as a model or they were consciously composed as companion pieces. Moreover, it is difficult to avoid the further conclusion that the two of them (presumably the two poems) have been placed here so that this unit (chapter 21 as a whole) would have a beginning in which its conclusion is matched" (p. 271).

[12]For this reason Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I,* 419, refuses to treat parts III and IV as separate units. "They are at least joined together redactionally by vv 33-37."

In part I (Ezek 21:1-12), Jerusalem is threatened with fire and sword. A glance at the content shows that vv 1-4 and 6-12 are joined together by v 5 into an overall unity of parable and interpretation. Furthermore, v 1 parallels v 6, v 2[13] corresponds to v 7, v 3 matches vv 8-9, and v 4 parallels v 10. In the parable Yahweh kindles a gigantic forest fire which devours (אש ואכלה) (v 3). The fire will be all encompassing, scorching (צרב)[14] every face from the south to the north. The people do not take the prophet's threats seriously, saying that as usual he is spinning parables (ממשל משלים) (v 5).[15] In the interpretation the fire which devours is equated with the "sword." In the Book of Ezekiel the judgment of Yahweh is often referred to under the metaphor of fire.[16] In our opinion, it is erroneous to equate the fire in Ezek 21:1-4, with references to fire found in other prophets like Isaiah,[17] Zechariah[18] and

[13]On the idiom שים פניך "set your face" corresponding to Akkadian *ašar pānam ašakkanu, AHw* II s.v. *pānu(m)* "Gesicht hinwenden" see W. H. Brownlee, "'Son Of Man Set Your Face,' Ezekiel the Refugee Prophet," *HUCA* 54 (1983) 83-110. However, Brownlee interprets this idiom as the formula of dispatch, and proceeds in reconstructing Ezekiel's travels to Phoenicia and Egypt. For an overview of Brownlee's idiosyncratic views concerning the Book of Ezekiel see his article "Ezekiel," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* (ed. G. W. Bromiley, G. Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1977) II 250-61.

[14]The verb ונצרבו is unusual (niph'al 3 p. pl. "to scorch"). It occurs only here in the Old Testament. However, it is not an absolute *hapax legomenon* since one finds an adjective צרב in Pr 16:27 and a feminine noun צרבת in Lev 13:23.

[15]On the difficulties on finding an appropriate English word to translate Hebrew משל see G. M. Landes, "Jonah: A *māšāl*?" in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien* (eds. J. G. Gammie, *et al.*, New York: Union Theological Seminary and Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978) 137-58; cf. also T. Polk, "Paradigms, Parables, and *Mešālîm*: On Reading the *Māšāl* in Scripture," *CBQ* 45 (1983) 564-83; D. Stern, "Rhetoric and Midrash: The Case of the Mashal," *Prooftexts* 1 (1981) 261-77; D. Boyarin and D. Stern, "An Exchange on the Mashal," *Prooftexts* 5 (1985) 269-80;

[16]Cf. Ezek 5:4 (in a symbolic action the prophet is ordered to burn with fire a part of his hair); 10:2, 6-7 (burning coal and fire in the execution of judgment over Jerusalem); 15:4-7 (reference to the fire which consumes the vine, a metaphor of the destruction of the inhabitants of Jerusalem); 16:41 (mention of fire in an oracle against the harlotry of Jerusalem); 19:12, 14 (the fire which consumes the vine); 21:37 (the Ammonites will be "fuel for the fire" in an oracle of doom); 23:25, 47 (oracle of judgment against Oholah and Oholibah, the fire will consume their descendents); 24:10, 12 (in a symbolic action of the burning of Jerusalem). Cf. also the references to "the fire of wrath" in 21:36; 22:21, 31; 38:19.

[17]Isa 9:17 "wickedness burns like fire"; 10:17 The flame of the Holy One of Israel will consume the thorns and briers.

[18]Zech 11:1 "Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may consume your cedars!"

Jeremiah.[19] In so doing Zimmerli[20] misses the specific connection which exists in the interpretation of the parable of the fire in Ezek 21:6-12. In this particular instance the fire is equated with the sword which is indicated by the exact parallelism of structure between 21:4 and 10.[21] Scholars like Gressmann and Fredriksson (cf. above) have pointed out that the motif of the sword occurs quite frequently in the Old Testament. However, they failed to recognize the particularity of this motif in Ezek 21 in which the fire and the sword are equated. In the light of our working hypothesis of a relationship between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra, it is significant that in the latter the fire is identified with the sword in the figure of Išum.

In part II (Ezek 21:13-22), one finds the Song of the Sword which is our primary concern of investigation. The pericope contains some of the most striking poetry in the Book of Ezekiel. So far, the scholarly effort in the analysis of this section has been directed in an attempt to show its composite nature,[22] to eliminate its explanatory glosses,[23] or to etymologize its rare words.[24] Already in 1885 Friedrich Delitzsch sounded an alarm against the excessive deletion of so-called glosses and interpolations.[25] He suggested that the recovery of the Akkadian background of this Song would prove more useful in gaining a better understanding of its content. In his recent study of Ezek 21:13-22, R.

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[19]The reference in Jer 21:14 speaks only of the fire which devours the forest, "I will kindle a fire in her forest, and it shall devour all that is round about her."

[20]Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I,* 423.

[21]So correctly Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 287.

[22]Cf. for example H. H. Guthrie, "Ezekiel 21," *ZAW* 74 (1962) 277, "the passage ... resulted from the combination of three primary elements: the sword poem of vss. 13-16; the description of a symbolic action in vss. 17-18; and the similar description underlying vss. 19-22. (...) Given the predominance of descriptions of symbolic actions, it is by no means certain that the "song of the sword" is the primary element in the complex, although it did exert considerable influence in the process of transmission." Cf. also Zimmerli's critique of Hölscher in *Ezekiel I,* 431.

[23]Cf. the analysis of Cooke in *Ezekiel*, 229-31; J.Bewer, "Beiträge zur Exegese des Buches Ezechiel, 5. Hes 21, 14-22," *ZAW* 63 (1951) 197-200; G. Fohrer, *Ezechiel*, 121.

[24]Cf. P. Haupt, "Etymological and Critical Notes, Ezekiel's Song of the Sword," *AJP* 47 (1926) 305-18, esp. pp. 315-18.

[25]F. Delitzsch, "Assyriologische Notizen zum Alten Testament IV. Das Schwertlied Ezech. 21, 13-22," *ZK* 2 (1885) 385-98; *idem*., "Nachtrag zu meiner IV. Assyriologischen Notiz," *ZA* 1 (1886) 51.

Tournay attempted to demonstrate how the subsequent reading of the Song of the Sword in the Maccabean period (i.e. the phenomenon of *relecture*) affected its text.[26]

The pericope reflects a certain structural pattern. It can be divided into three sections A:14-16; B:17-18; C:19-22. The sections are joined together with the repeated formula to prophesy, v 14, בן אדם הנבא; v 19, ואתה בן אדם הנבא; in v 17 the formula occurs with some variation, זעק והילל בן אדם "cry and wail, O mortal" (*NJPS*). According to Guthrie, the introductory formula "And thou, O mortal" is, either alone or as part of an expanded formula, consistently the sign of the beginning of a new section in the book.[27] On the basis of the fact that this formula appeares so regularly with genuine oracles, W. A. Irwin argued that it was "almost an index of original material somewhere in the immediately following verses. Rarely a genuine oracle occurs without this introduction."[28]

While the Song of the Sword is linked to what has gone before by the use of the catchword, it differs from the saying about the sword of Yahweh found in part I (21:1-12) by the unfamiliar form which the message of menace takes. The sword, as an instrument of judgment, appears here to take on an independent personal existence. There occurs a hypostasizing of the sword.[29] While in Isa 27:1, the sword is spoken of as the sword of Yahweh, in Ezek 21:21, the prophet addresses the sword directly as if it were a living being!

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[26]R. J. Tournay, "Le poème de l'épée, Ézéchiel 21:13-22 et ses relectures," in *I. L. Seeligmann Volume, Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World* (eds. A. Rofé *et al.*, Jerusalem: E. Rubinstein, 1983) III 249-62. The article reflects the great learning of the scholar. However, several of his explanations are based on emendations with reference to the Aramaic of the Qumran scrolls.

[27]"And thou, O mortal," or just "And thou," occurs 35 times in the Book of Ezekiel: 13 of these occurrences are in passages describing symbolic actions. Cf. H. H. Guthrie, *The Origin and Structure of the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The General Theological Seminary, New York, 1958), and *idem.*, "Ezekiel 21," *ZAW* 74 (1962) 272 n. 20. The expression בן אדם alone occurs 99 times in the Book of Ezekiel, so C. B. Houk, "בן אדם Patterns as Literary Criteria in Ezekiel," *JBL* 88 (1969) 184-90.

[28]W. A. Irwin, *The Problem of Ezekiel* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943) 40.

[29]So correctly Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I,* 432; and B. Maarsingh, Das Schwertlied in Ez 21,13-22 und das Erra-Gedicht," in *Ezekiel and His Book, Textual and Literary Criticism and their Interrelation* ed J. Lust, *BETL* 74 (1986) 350-58, esp. p. 351. Here lies the specificity of the Song of the Sword in Ezekiel as over against other sword passages in the Old Testament and in Ezekiel where it is said that the sword is Yahweh's, cf. Lev 26:33; Deut 32:41; Isa 66:16; Zeph 2:12; Ezek 5:2,12; 12:14; 32:10; Ps 7:12; 17:13.

Section A:14c-16 of part II, describes how the sword has been readied for slaughter.

14c A sword, a sword (חרב חרב) is sharpened (הורד)and also polished (מרט)
15a It is sharpened (חרד) in order to wreak slaughter (טבה טבה)
b polished (מרת) to flash like lightning (ברק)
c How can we rejoice?[30] My son it scorns the rod and every stick (*NJPS*).
16a It has been given to be polished (מרת) (and) for the hand to grasp;
b for this has the sword been sharpened (חרד), for this polished (מרת) -
c to be put into the slayer's hand (ביד הורג).

In this section great emphasis is laid on the preparation of the sword. Three times it is repeated that it is sharpened (חרד, hoph'al perfect 3 fs., vv 14, 15, 16), and four times that it is polished (מרת v 14c qal ptc. pass. f., vv 15, 16 pu'al perf. 3 fs.). Delitzsch attempted to explain the connection between the lightning (ברק) and a sharpened (חרד) sword from a common Semitic background. He pointed out that in Akkadian the lightning (*birqu*) and sword (*namṣāru, patru*), are represented with the same ideogram ád which conveys the idea of a penetrating lightning-like sharpness of a sword.[31] Both Delitzsch and *BDB* 292b, list Akkadian *adadu*, D *uddudu* "to sharpen" as cognate of Hebrew חרד.

The hand of the slayer (v 16c), is left in mysterious anonymity in the text of the Song itself. By adding part III the redactor suggests that in Ezekiel's day the sword in the slayer's hand was interpreted as the sword of the king of Babylon (21:24).

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[30]Cf. R. Tournay, "Le poème de l'épée, Ézéchiel 21:13-22 et ses relectures," in *I. L. Seeligmann Volume, Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World* (eds. A. Rofé *et al.*, Jerusalem: E. Rubinstein, 1983) III 249-62, esp. pp. 252-3, who translates this verse in the following way, "Je fairai chanceler le sceptre de mon fils, rebut de tout bois" = "I will cause the sceptre of my son to falter, refuse of all wood." The verse is a threat against Zedekiah, the Davidic ruler i.e., "son." The author explains the problematic אוֹ נשׁישׁ as אוֹ נסס "I will cause to falter," implying an Aramaic orthography ס for שׁ. Furthermore he explains Hebrew נסס as another Akkadianism in the Book of Ezekiel since Akkadian *nassusu* in the D stem means "to shake, to stagger."

[31]F. Delitzsch, "Assyriologische Notizen zum Alten Testament IV. Das Schwertlied Ezech. 21, 13-22," *ZK* 2 (1885) 385-98, esp. p. 387, cf. R. Labat, *Manuel d'Épigraphie Akkadienne* (Paris: Geuthner, ^{5}1976) sign N° 10, ád, át, áṭ, gír = *patru* "glaive;" *namṣāru* "épée;" *barāqu* "fulgurer." Delitzsch suggested that Deut 32:41 should not be translated "If I whet my glittering sword" but "If I whet my sword lightning-like sharp."

Section B:17-18 of part II, is eliminated by Zimmerli[32] and left out of consideration by Maarsingh[33] as a secondary addition which originally did not belong to the Song of the Sword. However, this section fits well in the overall structure of the Song. Namely, v 18, "Consider: How shall it fail to happen, seeing that it even scorns the rod?..." corresponds to the problematic v 15c. Unfortunately the text appears to be corrupt in both cases. In v 17, the prophet is ordered "to smite his thigh."[34] The use of a symbolic gesture connects this section with the following one (cf. vv 19 and 22 where the clapping of hands as a sign of anger is mentioned). In the light of the corresponding gestures in section C and the Akkadian parallel, the meaning of the smiting of the thigh in this context may be to express anger. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that in its final form the Song of the Sword appears as an intricately intertwined and highly structured composition.

Section C:19-22 of part II, is marked off with an *inclusio*. In v 19, the prophet is ordered to clap hands[35] while in v 22, Yahweh decides to do

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[32]Cf. Zimmerli's comment on 21:19 "the original song of the sword then followed directly on v 16 with a second strophe," *Ezekiel I,* 433-4. Cf. already Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 230.

[33]B. Maarsingh, "Das Schwertlied in Ez 21,13-22 und das Erra-Gedicht," *BETL* 74 (1986) 350, "Das Schwertlied besteht aus zwei Teilen..."

[34]The expression occurs again in Jer 31:19, where the smiting of the thigh represents a sign of remorse. According to E. Lipinski, "Se battre la cuisse," *VT* 20 (1970) 495, "on se battait la cuisse en signe de déplaisir, de chagrin ou de douleur." Lipinski compares the Hebrew expression with Akkadian *tamḫaṣ pēnša*. On *pēnu* meaning "thigh" see H. Holma, "Zum akkadischen Wörterbuch," *Or* 14 (1944) 102-115, esp. pp. 106-7: "Akk. *pēnu* 'Schenkel.'" In the Akkadian literature to strike one's thigh appears as a sign of "anger and consternation" so A. D. Kilmer, "How Was Queen Ereshkigal Tricked? A New Interpretation of the Descent of Ishtar," *UF* 3 (1971) 299-309, esp. p. 302. After Aṣušunamir requested for waterskin which is in fact the dead Istar, Ereškigal realizes that she has been tricked. She reacts with gestures of anger and consternation and "slaps her thigh and bites her finger," (100) *Ereškigal annīta ina šemīša* (101) *tamḫaṣ pēnša taššuka ubānša* "When Ereškigal heard this, she smote her thigh and bit her finger," (*art. cit.,* p. 303). However, in *Gilg.* VII iv 1-3, the smiting of the thigh occurs as a sign of admiration. Enkidu changes his curse of the harlot into a blessing, "My mouth which cursed thee shall turn and bless thee. Governors and nobles shall love thee. He who is one league away shall smite his thigh ([*manma? a i*]*mḫaṣ šaparšu*)," Akkadian text in R. Campbell Thomson, *The Epic of Gilgamish* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930) 46, as translated by E. A. Speiser, *ANET* 86. For other symbolic gestures in Akkadian literature see A. Kilmer, "Symbolic Gestures in Akkadian Contracts from Alalakh and Ugarit," *JAOS* 94 (1974) 177-83; Z. W. Falk, "Gestures Expressing Affirmation," *JSS* 4 (1959) 268-69.

[35]In the Old Testament this gesture has different meanings depending on the context. In Num 24:10, Balak claps his hands in anger against Balaam. In 2 Kgs 11:12, the people clap hands when the young Joash is proclaimed as the new king. In Isa 55:12 and Ps 98:8, the clapping of hands appears as a sign of joy and jubilation.

the same. The meaning of the clapping of hands in this section is determined by its context. The objective of the sword is clearly stated: it is to massacre and wreak a widespread slaughter. The clapping of hands intensifies the effect of the sword. In v 22, the fury and anger of Yahweh is connected with the clapping of hands, "I also will clap my hands, and I will satisfy my fury (חמתי)." With the prophet's emphatic gesture, the clapping of hands, the destructive force of the sword is multiplied, its capacity for carnage is doubled and tripled, "Let the sword strike a second time and yet a third time; it is a sword for massacre (חרב חללים),[36] a sword for great carnage (חרב חלל הגדול), which encompasses (חרר)[37] them" (v 19). Several commentators have suggested that what we have here is some kind of weapon magic.[38] The prophet has been ordered to "prophesy and clap hands" (v 19) by Yahweh and the entire action is endorsed by Yahweh. The power and the legitimacy of the prophet's action depends ultimately on the decision and the authority of Yahweh.[39]

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[36]For the analysis of the term חלל in Ezek 21:19, see O. Eissfeldt, "Schwerterschlagene bei Ezechiel," in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* (ed. H. H. Rowley, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950) 73-81. The author argued that the expression חרב חללי does not refer to those who have fallen in a battle but those who have been "murdered or executed" in a judgment. If his suggestion is correct, the Song of the Sword would depict a sword of judgment. Cf. also J. J. Glück, "*Ḥalālîm (Ḥālāl)* 'carnage, massacre'," *RQ* 27 (1970) 417-9; and R. Tournay, "Le poème de l'épée, Ézéchiel 21:13-22 et ses relectures," in *I. L. Seeligmann Volume, Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World* (eds. A. Rofé *et al.*, Jerusalem: E. Rubinstein, 1983) III 249-62, esp. p. 257, n. 32, who notes that חרב in relationship with חלל occurs quite often in Ezekiel, 11:6-8; 21:19; 25:28-32; 31:17-18; 32:20-21; but also in Isa 14:18; 22:2; Lam 4:9; Num 31:8; Josh 13:22. Cf. also F. Maass, art. "חלל, entweihen," *THAT* I (1978) cols. 570-75, who does not explain the relationship of this verb with what is listed in the lexica as חלל II.

[37]The verb חרר (qal ptc f.s.) appears only here in the OT. Cf. *BDB* 293c. *NEB* translates, "whirling about them."

[38]H. Oort, "Ezechiël xix: xxi, 18, 19v., 24v.," *ThT* 23 (1889) 504-514. Oort compared our passage to 2 Kgs 13:18-19, where Elisha ordered king Joash to strike the arrows to the ground. The king struck only three times which angered the prophet, "You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria until you had made an end of it, but now you will strike down Syria only three times." Cf. also Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 293, "This is weapon-magic, a subject which deserves more attention than it usually gets." Cf. B. Maarsingh, "Das Schwertlied in Ez 21,13-22 und das Erra-Gedicht," *BETL* 74 (1986) 351, "*eine magische Handlung.*"

[39]Cf. the valuable critique of the supposed magical power of words and the guidelines set by A. Thiselton, "The Supposed Power of Words in the Biblical Writings," *JTS* 25 (1974) 283-99. Referring to the works of O. Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament, BZAW* 54 (1934), and L. Dürr, *Die Wertung des göttlichen Wortes im Alten Testament und im antiken Orient* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1938). Thiselton points out "that they have collected examples of what words were thought to effect when behind them stood the authority of a god, or when special kinds of utterance were spoken by specially appointed speakers on the basis of conventionally accepted procedures." On the magical power of words see also A. Strus, *Nomen-Omen: la stylistique sonore des noms propres dans le Pentateuque* (AnBib 80, Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978).

In the context of the whole Book of Ezekiel it might be more appropriate to view this action in line with other symbolic actions which the prophet Ezekiel had been ordered to perform by Yahweh.[40] On the other hand, the Song of the Sword might represent just a literary imitation of the genre incantation for making the weapon more effective.[41]

In v 21, the MT התחדי is problematic. It could be parsed as a hithpa'el imperative from the root אחד (not attested elsewhere in the OT), assuming that it has the same meaning as יחד "to unite," so *NJPS*: "be united." Cf. Gn 49:6 בקהלם אל תחד כבדי = "in their council let not my honor be united," (for other examples of יחד see Jb 3:5; Isa 14:20; Ps 86:11). However, Cooke expressed doubts concerning the existence of a Hebrew verb אחד. Moreover, to command a sword "to be united" does not make sense. In order to circumvent these objections Sander and Trenel further assume a secondary meaning of the verb אחד with the sense "to gather or unite one's strength."[42] Their attempt to preserve the MT reading at any price is based on too many asumptions. Zimmerli suggested another approach. Following the LXX reading ὀξύνου = חדד "be sharp," he emends the MT to התחדי (hithpa'el imperative f. from חדד) (so also *BHS*). If this conjecture is correct the term חדד would link section C with section A (vv 14, 15, 16). Similarly, the term ברק in v 20, corresponds to ברק in v 15b. The sword is hypostatized and addressed directly, "Sharpen thyself! turn right; be (...?), turn left..."

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[40]Cf. R. P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed, Reactions and Responses to Failure in the Old Testament Prophetic Traditions* (London: SCM Press, 1979) 58-61, who lists various prophetic acts which he considers to be of magical nature. According to Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel* (Translated and abridged by M. Greenberg, New York: Schocken, 1977) 301-4, in Babylonian and Egyptian incantations the speech articulated the magical-mythological sense of the rite. He argued that Israelite cult had no such magical elements in it. However, for a different view see B. Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord. A Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974) 56-91.

[41]In another incantation from Babylonia dating from the end of the second millennium BCE, one finds the same attribution of the incantation to the gods in order to increase its effectiveness. Ultimately, it is the divine authority which makes an incantation work. II (16) *šiptu ul âttun šipat* ^{d}*Ea u* ^{d}*Asalluḫi* (17) *šipat* ^{d}*Damu u* ^{d}*Gula* (18) *šipat* ^{d}*Ningirim bēlet šipti* tu_6. én = "The incantation is not mine, it is the incantation of Ea and Asalluḫi, the incantation of Damu and Gula, the incantation of Ningirim, mistress of the incantation." Cf. W. G. Lambert, "Fire Incantations," *AfO* 23 (1970) 39-45, esp. p. 41.

[42]N. P. Sander and I. Trenel, *Dictionnaire hébreu-français* (Paris, 1859, Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1982) 18a, "assemble tes forces." Abuwalid points to the Arabic *ḥd* which in the ištaf'ala conjugation (corresponding to Hebrew hithpa'el), means "to isolate oneself." On this basis, Smend suggested the following meaning for Heb. אחד, "to direct one's entire power, attention to something" (cited in Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I,* 430).

Part III (Ezek 21:23-32),[43] depicts the sword of the king of Babylon on its way against Jerusalem. The king is pictured as standing at the parting of the ways, (אם הדרך, lit. "mother of the road" v. 26). The expression has been compared to Akkadian *ummu harrāni* "the mother of the road," leading into two branch roads,[44] and to *ummu ša iṣi* "mother of the wood" or a ramification of a tree.[45]

In part III the metaphor of the devouring sword appears. In our opinion the expression "the mouth which opens for slaughter" should be related to the sword with which this section begins (v 24). Ezek 21:27, reads, לפתח פה ברצח literally, "to open the mouth in murder."[46] Unfortunately the commentators prefer to emend the Masoretic text and instead of reading רצח "murder, slaughter,"[47] they read צרח "a cry, a

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[43]To arrive at a decision the king of Babylon was to apply three methods of magic, קלקל בחצים (tossing of inscribed arrows known as belomancy); שאל בתרפים (asking an oracle of the teraphim) and ראה בכבד (divining by the liver or hepatoscopy). On belomancy with reference to Ezekiel, see S. Iwry, "New Evidence for Belomancy in Ancient Palestine and Phoenicia," *JAOS* 81 (1961) 27-34. Concerning the mention of the teraphim as a means of divination in Ezek 21:26, S. Smith considers it as "very difficult, from an Assyriological point of view," (in "What Were the Teraphim?" *JTS* 33 [1932] 33-36, esp. p. 35). "Divination by such objects was, so far as we know, never adopted at Babylon." Therefore, he emends תרפים to תרנים and relates the latter to Akkadian *tiranu* "the twisted entrails of the sacrifice, derived from *tāru* 'to turn'" (p. 35). Smith argued that the passage refers to the observation of the entrails of the sacrificial animal. However, C. J. Gadd, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948) 95, argued for the use of the תרפים in divination on the basis of Akkadian evidence. On hepatoscopy see F. Oefele, "Die Leberschau in Ezek 21:26," *ZAW* 20 (1900) 311-14; M. Rutten, "Trente-deux modèles de foie en argile inscrits provenant de Tel-Harirī (Mari)," *RA* 35 (1938) 36-52; D. C. Snell, "The Mari Livers and the Omen Tradition," *JANES* 6 (1974) 117-23; E. Reiner, "Fortune-telling in Mesopotamia," *JNES* 29 (1960) 23-35. For further bibliography see T. H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1981) II, 621; and H. G. May, "The Book of Ezekiel," *IB* (New York/Nashville: Abingdon, 1956) *ad loc.*

[44]Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 238, and M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Influence in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1970) 45.

[45]R. Tournay, "A propos des babylonismes d'Ézéchiel," *RB* 68 (1961) 388-93, esp. p. 392.

[46]H. E. del Medico, "Le rite de la guerre sainte dans l'A.T.," *L'Ethnographie* 45 (1947/50) 127-70, suggested that originally there was a sword divinity which was worshiped in Palestine. The underlying assumption would be that the Sword-god devours the warriors (p. 147). However, the existence of such a divinity in Palestine is questionable.

[47]The noun רצה "murder, slaughter," occurs again only once in Ps 42:11, ברצח בעצמותי חרפוני צוררי "with a shattering in my bones (i.e., like murder in my bones) my enemies taunt me" Cf. C. A. Briggs, *Psalms* (ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906, 1976) I, 366, "While (the slayer) crushes in my bones." The verb רצח is relatively common in the Old Testament. Prov 22:13, "The sluggard says,'There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!" (ארצח, niph'al imperf.); In pi'el the verb means to "assassinate" cf. Ps 94:6 where it occurs in parallelism with הרג, "They slay (יהרגו) the

shout."[48] In our opinion this emendation is erroneous and unnecessary. First, one should recognize that a metaphor often involves unprecedented linguistic maneuvers.[49] Second, this emendation is made out of ignorance of the way the ancients conceived and spoke about the sword as a devouring animal. Third, it misses an important literary and iconographic motif present in the ancient Near East and reflected in the Biblical writings. It is part of the same motif rendered with the Hebrew idiom לפי חרב "(up) to the mouth of the sword," and corresponding to Akkadian *pî patri šakānu* "to put to the mouth of the sword."[50] The expression לפי חרב usually with the verb נכה has traditionally been translated "to smite with the edge of the sword."[51] However, this translation is wrong since פה means "mouth" and not "edge" and the preposition ל is not commonly used to express means or instrument in Hebrew (cf. *BDB* 514a). The meaning of this idiom has been correctly interpreted by J. T. Meek[52] and J.- G. Heintz.[53] Since their correct interpretation based on archaeological evidence seems to be ignored in the recent articles on the sword in the Old Testament[54] it might be useful to reiterate it here with some detail. In their opinion ל should be

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widow and the sojourner and murder (טרצחו) the fatherless." Cf. also Ps 62:3.

[48]So e.g. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I,* 437; Cooke, *Ezekiel,* 233; Fohrer, *Ezechiel,* 123, who translate "to open (his) mouth with a 'cry,' or a 'war-cry'."

[49]Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Biblical Hermeneutics," *Semeia* 4 (1975) 29-148. Ricoeur explains a metaphor as an innovative form of expression "which has no status in established language and which exists only in the attribution of unusual predicates," (pp. 78-79).

[50]The Akkadian phrase *nišê pî patar parzille iššaknū* was rendered by Von Soden in the following way, "sie lieferten die Bewohner an die Schärfe des Eisenschwertes aus" in *AHw* 874. However, it is erroneous to translate the idiom *pî patri* as referring to the "sharpness" of the sword.

[51]In a recent treatment of this problem by P. Grelot, "La bouche du glaive," *Semitica* 35 (1985) 61-5, the author suggested to translate the phrase לפי חרב with "au fil de l'épée," which obscures even more the meaning of this Semitic idiom. Nevertheless, the article is valuable for the analysis of the classical Greek evidence for the expression (στόμα μάχαιρας).

[52]J. T. Meek, "Archaeology and a Point of Hebrew Syntax," *BASOR* 122 (1951) 31-3.

[53]J.-G. Heintz, *Le Dieu au Filet, Étude d'un thème de souveraineté divine du Proche-Orient antique dans ses rapports avec les origines du "ḥerem" biblique* (Unpublished thesis, École Biblique et Archéologique Française, Jerusalem, 1965) 154; *idem.*, "Langage métaphorique et représentation symbolique dans le prophétisme biblique et son milieu ambiant," in *Rencontres de l'École du Louvre II, Image et Signification* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983) 55-71 esp. p. 64.

[54]E.g., O. Kaiser, art. "חרב" *TDOT V* 155-165.

taken in its usual terminative sense, "to smite (up) to the mouth of the sword," i.e., to smite up to its hilt which was occasionally ornamented with a representation of an open mouth of an animal. On the one hand, the sword is often presented under the metaphor of a devouring monster which "eats flesh" (אכל בשר) and "drinks blood" (שכר דם).[55] A similar conception of the sword is found in Akkadian texts. In the treaties of Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) one reads, *namṣāru likulāšu* = "may daggers devour him."[56] Moreover, as pointed out by B. Couroyer, the same understanding of the sword in found in Egyptian texts: *ḫrp mrkbt ... mḥ.f r.f* = "the sword of your chariot ... devours (lit. fills its mouth)."[57] On the other hand, this interpretation is supported by the evidence of archaeology. In excavations throughout the Middle East swords and battle axes have been found in which the blade is represented as the tongue sticking out of the open, ravenous mouth of a lion or dragon, which constitutes the base of the sword hilt or the head of the axe as the case may be. A number of these are illustrated in the swords and axes from various excavations appearing in Figures 3 to 6. Occasionally, the hilt of the sword or the head of the axe consists of one animal head.[58] In Judg 3:16, the words read literally, "a sword which had two mouths" (חרב ולה שני פיות). That reminds us of the swords and axes with two animal heads, and the famous axe from Ras Shamra, with the blade issuing from the mouth of two lions.[59]

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[55]Cf. Deut 32:42 (the sword together with the arrows) "and my sword shall devour flesh- with the blood of the slain and the captives" (והרבי תאכל בשר מדם חלל ושביה); 2 Sam 2:26, "Shall the sword devour for ever?" (אכל חרב); 2 Sam 12:25 (אכל חרב); Isa 31:8 (oracle against Assyria, "a sword not of humans shall devour him" (*NJPS*); Jer 46:10, "The sword shall devour and be sated, and drink its fill of their blood" (ואכלה חרב ושבעה ורותה מדמה) cf. also v 14; 2 Sam 18:8; Isa 1:21; Jer 2:30; 12:12, etc.

[56]*CAD A/I* 254b.

[57]B. Couroyer, "Le 'glaive' de Béhémoth," *RB* 84 (1977) 59-79, esp. p. 75 n. 73. The author quotes the Egyptian text from W. R. Dawson - T. E. Peet, "The So-Called Poem on the King's Chariot," *JEA* 19 (1933) 169, R 13-14.

[58]Cf. Figure 3, A, B, C, D, E, G.

[59]Illustrated in C. F.-A. Schaeffer, *Mission de Ras Shamra, Ugaritica* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939) vol. III, 111 fig. 102, Plate XXII, cf. also p. 118, fig. 107. For other examples see R. Dussaud, "Haches à douille de type asiatique," *Syria* 11 (1930) 245-71, esp. p. 250, figures 8-12, Plate XLII bis; A. Parrot, *Tello, vingt campagnes de fouilles (1877-1933)* (Paris: A. Michel, 1948), Plate 26b.

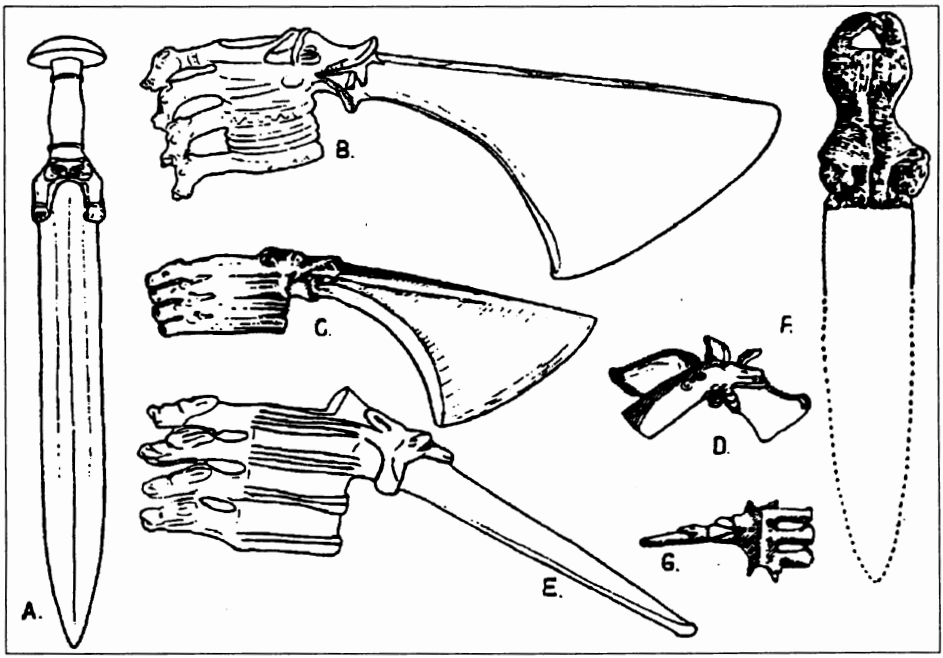

Figure 3. C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica* (Paris: Geuthner, 1939) vol. III, p. 118, fig. 107.

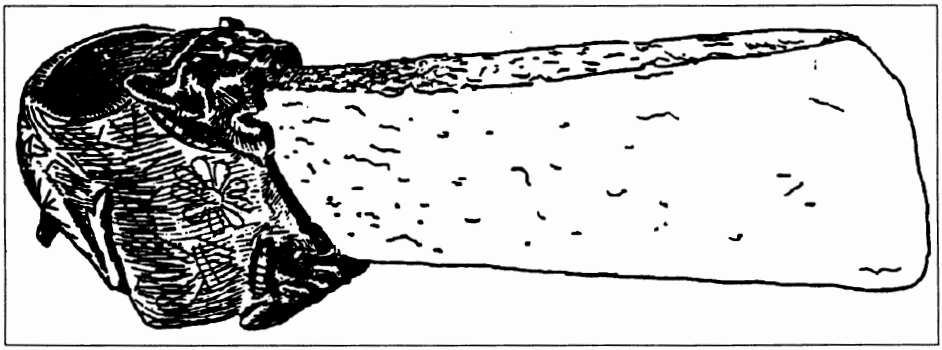

Figure 4. The axe from Ras Shamra with the blade issuing from the mouth of two lions, cf. Judg 3:16.
C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica* (Paris: Geuthner, 1939) vol. III, p. 111, fig. 102.

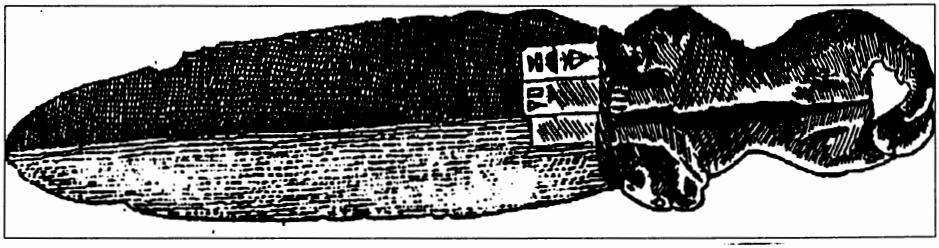

Figure 5. A. Parrot, *Tello, vingt campagnes de fouilles (1877-1933)* (Paris: A. Michel) p. 109, plate 26b.

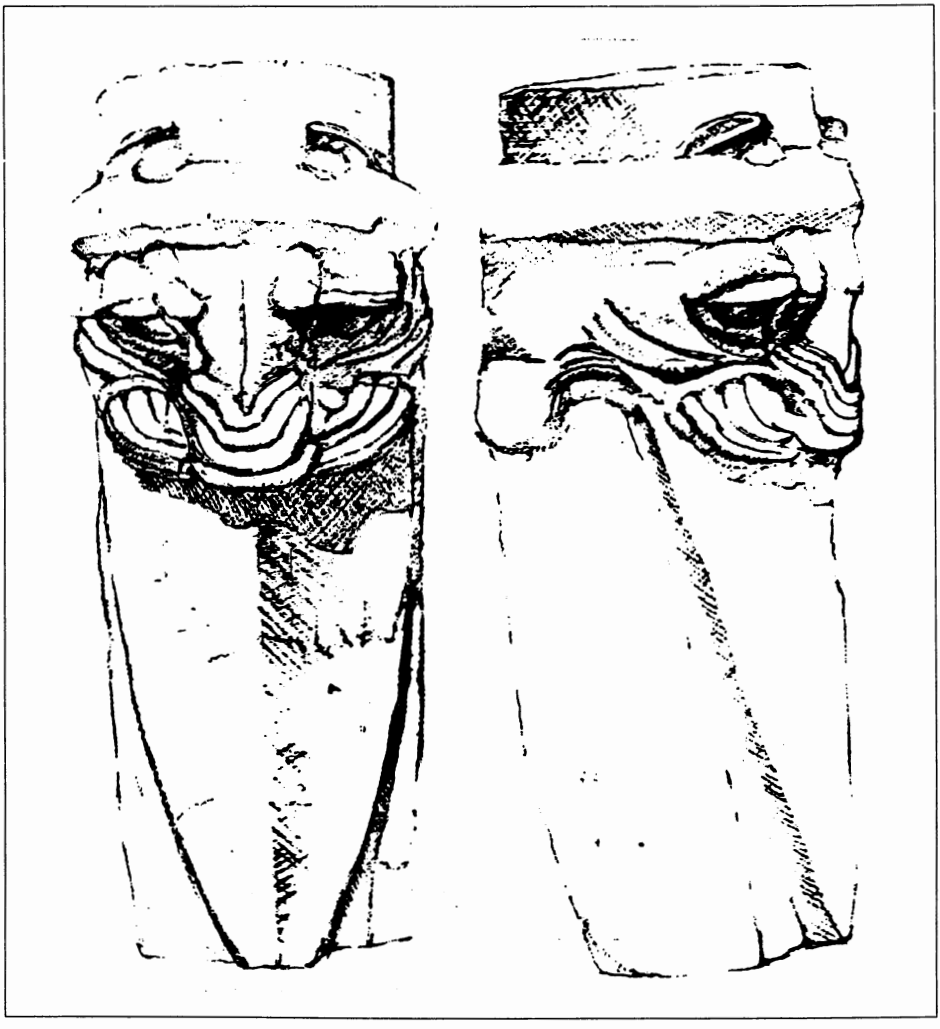

Figure 6. The Tell-Rimah Stele from the neo-Assyrian temple of Adad from the time of Adad-nirâri III (810-783 BCE). The iconographic evidence on the sword motif has been collected and published by J.- G. Heintz, "Langage métaphorique et représentation symbolique dans le prophétisme biblique et son milieu ambiant," in *Image et signification, Rencontres de l'Ecole du Louvre II* (Paris: La Documentation Française 1983) 55-78, esp. pp. 58 and 62, figures 1-6.

In 21:32, occurs the threefold עוה עוה עוה אשימנה traditionally rendered, "a ruin, ruin, ruin, I will make it." (*RSV, NJPS*).[60] On the basis of parallels from an Assyrian collection of magical incantations *Maqlû*, J. Hermann argued that the expression carries something of the echo of a coercive magical saying.[61] This form, called *trigemination*, occurs in *Maqlû* and Šurpu incantations, *Maqlû* I 37, én. *erṣetum erṣetum erṣetūmma* "Incantation: land, land, land indeed."[62] *Šurpu* IX 88-89, én.šu.luḫ.ḫa.me.en šu.luḫ.ḫa.me.en (89) šu.luḫ.ḫa.me.en "Incantation: Your hands are washed, your hands are washed, (89) your hands are washed."[63]

In part IV (21:33-37), concerning v 33, G. R. Driver[64] compares the Hebrew expression חרב פתוחה לטבח "a sword is drawn for the slaughter," with Akkadian *namṣāru petû* "drawn sword."

5.5.3. Parallels and Contrasts Between the Song of the Sword and the Poem of Erra

The parallels between the Song of the Sword in Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra can be established at different levels of comparison. The

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[60]For a discussion of this line see W. L. Moran, "Gen 49,10 and its Use in Ez 21,32," *Bibl* 39 (1958) 405-25. Moran suggests another translation, "Distortion, distortion, distortion I will make it." He adds a comment on his translation, "Everything loses its identity, nothing is fixed or stable. That the low should become high, and the high low, is but another expression of the same idea. Summing it all up, one word, repeated three times, completes the picture: עוה, distortion" (p. 418). According to Moran the fem. noun עוה is not an absolute xapah since related verbal forms which mean "bend, twisted," appear in Isa 24:1, Lam 3:9 (pi'el), Isa 21:3, Ps 38:7; Prov 12:8 (niph'al) etc. cf. *BDB* 730c who probably erroneously suggest עוה I and II.

[61]J. Hermann, "Zu Jer 22:29; 7:4," *ZAW* 62 (1949/50) 321-22. The author is followed by Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 447, and O. Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, Eine Neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* (SBS 84/85, Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977) 118. Cf. Jer 7:4, "temple" [3x]; 22:29 "land" [3x]; Nah 1:2 "Yahweh is avenging" [3x]; although the trisagion in Isa 6:3, might represent only a stylistic device.

[62]G. Meier, *Die assyrische Beschworungssammlung Maqlû* (*AfO* Beiheft 2, Berlin: E. Weidner, 1937). cf. also I 42-43 "my city Zabban [3x]; III 158-9, hand, hand, mighty hand of humans;" VI 37-8, your hands are washed [3x].

[63]E. Reiner, *Šurpu. A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations* (*AfO* Beiheft 11, Graz: E. Weidner, 1958) 48. The form of *trigemination* appears to be common knowledge in magical practices and was transmitted probably through Greek and Latin writers to European sorcerers. For example, it was known in medieval England: Shakespeare, *Macbeth* I iii 9-10, one of the three witches makes an incantation in order to shipwreck a sailor, "And like a rat without a tail, I'll do, I'll do, I'll do."

[64]G. R. Driver, "Notes on Hebrew Lexicography," *JThS* 23 (1922) 405-10, esp. p. 406.

evidence for possible relations between Ezekiel 21 and the Poem of Erra has to be weighed differently on each of these levels.

a. The Claim of Divine Inspiration and Authentication

In the literary analysis of the Song of the Sword we have suggested that it could be understood as a literary imitation of the genre of incantations used for the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of the weapon and to invoke destruction. However, whether one may imply a corresponding public ceremony actually performed by the prophet might be a moot question. While several passages in the Book of Ezekiel show that the prophet's audience knew and indulged in some Babylonian magical practices,[65] the prophet maintained a polemical attitude and attacked these practices. Nevertheless, the Song of the Sword displays the characteristics of an incantation and reflects the notion of the power of words and actions whose effect is assured by Yahweh. In the Song of the Sword in Ezek 21 one is struck by the insistence that it has been uttered on the command of Yahweh. The divine authentication is constantly emphasized by the use of several formulas, ("The word of Yahweh came to me" v 13;[66] "Thus says Yahweh God" v 14;[67] "The oracle of Yahweh God" v 18; "I Yahweh have spoken" v 22). M. Noth[68] was among the first to point out that such formulas of legitimation used by Old Testament prophets have an extra-biblical origin in the so-called messenger formulas. He has compared Ezek 2:4 ("I send you to them; and you shall say to them, 'Thus says Yahweh God'") to the way a prophet in Mari claimed divine sanction and backing of his message,

> Und wenn in den ... Mari-Text(en) (*ARM III* 40 13; *ARM II* 90), der Gottesbote vor dem königlichen Beamten sich damit legitimiert, daß er auf seine Sendung hinweist mit den Worten: 'Der Gott hat mich gesandt' bzw. 'Der Gott Dagan hat mich gesandt', so ist daran zu erinnern, daß auch die alttestamentlichen Propheten sich mit fast den gleichen Worten auf ihre Sendung berufen haben. Sie haben es vor allem dann getan und tun müssen, wenn ihre Legitimation angezweifelt wurde und ihr oft hartes Wort erbitterte Gegnerschaft hervorrief (p. 238).

[65]Cf. Ezek 13:18, 20; 14:3, 4, 7; 21:26.

[66]The formula is repeated in vv 1, 6, 13.

[67]Cf. also vv 29, 31, 33.

[68]M. Noth, "Geschichte und Gotteswort im Alten Testament," *Bonner Akademische Reden* 3 (Krefeld: Scherpe, 1949) = *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Munich: Kaiser, 1966) 230-47, esp. p. 238.

Another device which Ezekiel uses in order to establish his claim of divine authority and inspiration for his message and literary work is his image of ingesting a scroll which once eaten had become sweet in his mouth (Ezek 2:8-3:3). As pointed out by R. R. Wilson, "by speaking of the divine origin of a completely filled scroll, Ezekiel in fact claims that his entire book was given directly by God."[69] However, it is wrong to argue that such a claim implies complete absence of Ezekiel's creative involvement in the elaboration of his message. Ezekiel is not an "automaton, an individual who has no human personality (and who) is totally under the control of the divine will," as Wilson suggests. Jeremiah too, speaks of eating Yahweh's words which are a joy and a delight of his heart (Jer 15:16). The purpose of such affirmations is simply to claim the divine origin of their inspiration.

The claim of divine inspiration and authentication finds a parallel in the Poem of Erra. Kabti-ilāni-Marduk, grounds the apotropaic quality and effectiveness of the Poem of Erra in the fact that "it was revealed to him during the night" (V 43) presumably by a deity although without specifying which deity. The Poem of Erra claims to have originated by direct divine inspiration. Thus the author of the Poem of Erra Kabti-ilāni-Marduk affirms that the Poem has been revealed to him during the night and that in the morning when he recited it he did not skip a single line,

V 42 Kabti-ilāni-Marduk the son of Dābibi
(was) the composer of his tablet (= of this poem):
43 (The deity) revealed it to him during the night,
and in the morning when he recited (it), he did notskip a single line
44 Nor a single line (of his own) did he add to it.

Cagni points out the unique interest of this information:

> (Here) evidently the same conception of 'inspiration'that we know in Judeo-Christian tradition makes an appearance. Such a conception is not elsewhere known in Mesopotamian literature and so constitutes, as far as we know, a new contribution of Kabti-ilāni-Marduk and an interesting problem of cultural relations.[70]

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[69]R. R. Wilson, "Prophecy in Crisis: The Call of Ezekiel," *Int* 38 (1984) 117-30, esp. p. 127.

[70]Cagni, *PE* 61, n. 169. Cf. also B. Maarsingh, "Das Schwertlied in Ez 21,13-22 und das Erra-Gedicht," *BETL* 74 (1986) 350. Cf. our section 3.2.

Both the Song of the Sword in Ezek 21 and the Poem of Erra claim divine inspiration and authentication although in somewhat different ways.

b. The Power of Words in the Song of the Sword and in the Poem of Erra

We would argue that the power of words in both the Song of the Sword and the Poem of Erra ultimately stems from a divine source. We agree with P. Machinist,[71] who sees the "power of language" as the constitutive element of the Poem of Erra. The conscious emphasis on this reaches its most explicit expression in the conclusion of the Poem (V 39-61). There the focus is no longer either the divine protagonists or even the human composer of the text (V 42), but the text itself and its power in warding off disaster. The final lines proclaim that the very remembering and reciting of the Poem (*zam*āru V 49, 59) - not merely by humans, but by gods as well - will provide the needed defense against a repetition of Erra's violent behavior.

> The poem of Erra, thus, may be understood, in conception and execution, as a kind of incantation - that form of literature where, one might argue, the power of language is most explicitly recognized and celebrated, and put to use, as here, both to expose a problem of potentially cosmic dimensions to its source and to offer a means for its resolution or neutralization.[72]

This understanding of the power of language of the Poem of Erra is confirmed by the fact that several copies of tablet V where the special effectiveness of the Poem is emphasized have come to us as amulets.[73] The physical form of the amulet may be perceived as an outward sign of the deeper, fundamental character of the Poem itself. However, we disagree with P. Machinist when he argues that the burden of stopping the destruction and havock which Erra provokes is thrown upon the text alone. The power of words depends on the authority and status of the speaker who utters them. Therefore, we understand Kabti-ilāni-

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[71]P. Machinist, "Rest and Violence in the Poem of Erra," *JAOS* 103 (1983) 221-26, esp. p. 226.

[72]P. Machinist, *art. cit.*, p. 226.

[73]B. Hruška, "Zur letzten Bearbeitung des Erraepos," *ArOr* 42 (1974) 354-65, esp. pp. 356-7. Hruška argues that the apotropaic quality of the Poem of Erra in warding off disaster should not be perceived as a secondary development in the history of its function. On the contrary, the author of the Poem has indicated its *Sitz im Leben* by enjoining its readers to recite it as a protection from evil.

Marduk's concern to show that his Poem is a product of a supernatural inspiration.

In the Song of the Sword the words do not have magical power by themselves. Their power stems from Yahweh who endorses the utterance made by the prophet. Using the messenger formula the Poem of the Sword is incorporated within the divine speech and thus agrees with the thoroughly theocentric view of the Book of Ezekiel.

Although the genre determination of the Poem of Erra is still debated, the purpose for which it was used can be ascertained beyond any doubt. The Poem had a highly practical purpose as an apotropaic device in order to protect from destruction and scourge. The Poem enjoined its readers or hearers to chant it as a sort of incantation for warding off evil (Erra V 53-58). Here lies the major difference between the Song of the Sword in Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra. While the first invokes destruction upon the people of Israel the latter was used in order to abate the furor of the gods and to protect the Babylonians from the destructive sword. Ezekiel's Song of the Sword finds its effectiveness in Yahweh's authority and endorsement. Similarly, the effectiveness of the Poem of Erra is grounded in the fact that it was revealed to the author in the night by a deity without telling us which deity (Erra V 43). Owing to this feature the Poem of Erra provides protection even when Erra and the Sebetti intend the contrary.

c. The Fire-Sword Conjuction

According to J. J. M. Roberts, the name Išum represents a masculine form of *išātum* "fire," which elsewhere in Akkadian always appears in the feminine.[74] The masculine form of the term for fire is so unusual in Akkadian that Bottéro characterized it as a kind of "linguistic fossil."[75]

[74]J. J. M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon, A Study of the Semitic Deities Attested in Mesopotamia before Ur III* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972) 40-41. "Išum has a Semitic etymology, is written without the determinative, and is limited to Akkadian sources, so he is clearly Semitic" p. 40. Cf. also W. G. Lambert, "Review of Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos," AfO* 18 (1957-58) 395-401, esp. p. 400, who notes the author's love for etymologies. In I 4 the name Išum is rendered by the Sumerian elements I.ŠUM "famed slaughterer" while in I 10 he is addressed as "torch," taking his name as masculine of *išātu* "fire" and in I 12 as "sword," referring back to the Sumerian derivation. Roberts *op. cit.*, p. 103, n. 302 disregards the Sumerian etymology as a spurious one.

[75]"Une sorte de fossile linguistique," in J. Bottéro, "Les divinités sémitiques anciennes en Mésopotamie," in *Le antiche divinità semitiche* (ed. S. Moscati, Studi Semitici 1, Rome: Instituto Di Studi Orientali - Università, 1958, vol. I) 17-63, esp. p. 42. Cf. also the view of E. Dhorme, "Les dieux Uraš et Išum," *OLZ* 12 (1909) cols. 114-15, "On sait aussi qu'il s'agit spécialement d'un dieu du feu. Nous sommes donc en présence du mot *išu*, masculin de *išātu* 'feu.' A cette forme *išu* correspond l'hébreu אש.

Roberts argues that Išum originally represented the divinization of a natural phenomenon of fire and burning. The relationship had been obscured by subsequent humanization of the deity.[76] This connection of Erra and Išum to fire is important for our research in the light of the prominence of fire in the Book of Ezekiel. In Ezek 21:3-4, there is mention of the fire which devours,[77]

> Say to the forest of the Negeb, Hear the word of Yahweh: Thus says the Lord Yahweh, See, I will kindle a fire (אֵשׁ) in you, and it shall devour (אכלה) every green tree in you and every dry tree; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from south to north shall be scorched (נצרבו) by it. All flesh shall see that I Yahweh have kindled it; it shall not be quenched.[78]

If J. J. M. Roberts' explanation of the names of Erra and Išum is correct, the above verse in Ezekiel would describe the kind of natural phenomena he suggested for Erra as "scorched earth" and Išum "fire."[79]

The interpretation of the parable in 21:6-12 is particular in the sense that the fire is identified with the sword, (cf. the correspondence of vv 4 and 10).[80] Now, in the Poem of Erra Išum is given several identifications.

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[76]Similarly, Roberts explains the name of Erra as a *ḫ-*r-r*, "to scorch, char." Erra would represent the divinization of the natural phenomenon resulting from a grass or forest fire - "scorched earth," cf. his article, "Erra - Scorched Earth," *JCS* 24 (1971) 11-16, esp. p. 13. The divine name Erra occurs quite early as part of theophoric names, cf. D. O. Edzard, "Neue Erwägungen zum Brief des Erra-Dagan von Mari (TM.75.G.2367)," *Studi Eblaiti* 4 (1981) 89-97.

[77]Išum is called both "fire" *išātu* and "sword." As pointed out by J.-G. Heintz, it is characteristic of both the fire and the sword that they devour, see his article, "Langage métaphorique et représentation symbolique dans le prophétisme biblique et son milieu ambiant," in *Rencontres de l'Ecole du Louvre, Image et Signification* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983) 55-71, esp. pp. 61 and 65.

[78]Cf. also Ezek 10;6; 22:20; 24:10; 28:18; 30:8; 30:14; 30:16; 38:22; 39:6; 39:9-10, etc. The motif of the "devouring fire" in the OT has been thouroughly investigated by J.- G. Heintz, "Le 'Feu Dévorant' un symbole du triomphe divin dans l'Ancien Testament," in *Le feu dans le Proche-Orient antique. Aspects linguistiques, archéologiques, technologiques, littéraires* (Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg 1972, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) 63-78.

[79]J. J. M. Roberts, "Erra - Scorched Earth," *JCS* 24 (1971) 11-16, esp. p. 13. The author quotes Ezek 15:4-5 where the terms אֵשׁ and חרר occur.

[80]The numerous parallels collected from Akkadian literature which G. Dossin has adduced as a possible background of the mention of fire in Ezek 21:1-4, and in other Old Testament passages does not take into account this specific equation of fire with sword, cf. his article "Le dieu Gibil et les incendies de végétation," *RHR* 55 (1934) 28-62, esp. p. 45. Dossin's suggestion has been adopted by B. Lang, in his work *Kein Aufstand in Jerusalem, Die Politik des Propheten Ezechiel* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1978) 110. Cf. one of the examples quoted by Dossin, concerning the way Adadnirâri II (911-891 BCE) describes himself, *mušaḫmeti šadê ša matātē anāku zikaru qardu mulīṭ rē'ûtūšu ḫitmuṭ raggi u ṣini anāku kīma* ^{d}*Gišbar aḫamat kīma abūbe ašapan*, "Je suis celui qui enflamme les landes des pays, je suis un héros vaillant, qui illumine son pastorat de l'embrassement des méchants et des rebelles; je brûle comme le Feu, je dévaste comme

In I 10[81] he is addressed as "torch" implying, as suggested by Lambert,[82] that his name has been taken as a masculine form of *išātu* "fire." In I 12, however, Išum is identified with the sword, *namṣāru*,

> I 12 *attā namṣārūma ṭābiḫ[u]* You are the broadsword: slaught[erer]

Kabti-ilāni-Marduk, the author of the Poem of Erra, was a savant who enjoyed displaying his erudition. On several occasions he indulged in recondite etymologies which were clearly beyond the understanding of the ordinary reader or hearer of the Poem. According to Bottéro,[83] this reflects the typical mentality of the scholars, the erudites, the literati, and particularly of the "theologians" of the time. Indeed, in the Poem of Erra in a way similar to the "exegesis" of the names of Marduk in *Enūma eliš*, one finds a particular exegetical procedure where one advances in the knowledge of a subject by analyzing names. As pointed out by Bottéro, the prologue of the Poem of Erra remains incomprehensible unless one grasps this particular procedure,

> Le prologue du Poème d'Erra, par exemple, ne se comprend guère si, à travers les épithètes conférées notamment à Išum, on n'entrevoit toute une hérmeneutique bilingue du même type que celle à laquelle notre "commentaire" (*En.el*) nous a accomodés."[84]

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le déluge," Dossin, *art. cit.* p. 37 n 3. In this enumeration of a series of methaphors the sword, however, is not mentioned. Hence, it is not really a parallel to Ezek 21:1-12.

[81]I 10 *attā diparumma inattalū nūrka* "You are the torch (humans) stare at your light."

[82]W. G. Lambert, "Review of Gössmann, *Das Erra-Epos*," *AfO* 18 (1957-58) 400.

[83]J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 159, "C'est un ouvrage savant, parfaitement représentatif de la mentalité, de la vision des choses, du fonctionnement de l'esprit des lettrés de son temps, et plus spécialement des 'théologiens'. N'y manquant même pas de ces procédés érudits et abscons d'une exégèse particulière, fondée sur le type même de l'écriture en usage, et connue surtout par la dernière partie (VI 122 - VII 162) de l'*Enûma eliš*, qui consistait à analyser les noms pour avancer dans la connaissance des choses."

[84]J. Bottéro, "Les noms de Marduk, l'écriture et la 'logique' en Mésopotamie ancienne," in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of J. J. Finkelstein (MCAAS* 19, ed. M. de Jong Ellis, Hamden, Connecticut: Archon, 1977) 5-28, esp. p. 24. "Or, ces opérations, que *nous* serions tentés d'interpréter au mieux comme ludique, nétaient pas le moins du monde, aux yeux de leurs usagers, des 'jeux de mots,' ni des jeux tout court. Le sérieux de leur sujet écarte d'emblée une pareille explication: notre document (*En.el*) est un traitéde théologie, et il porte sur une des oeuvres les plus vénérables et 'sacrées' de la littérature religieuse du pays" (p. 24).

Thus the presumed exegesis of the name Išum as "sword" (*namṣāru* I 12) and "fire" (i.e., *dipāru* "torch" in I 10) involves considerable mental acrobatics. Following Bottéro's explanation the Akkadian term *namṣāru* can be translated with two different Sumerian ideograms:[85] GIR which phonetically evokes Akkadian Girru "fire," and U.GUR[86] designating both Nergal and his lieutenant Išum.[87] This partricular logic rest on the realistic conception of the function of a word as a way of naming a thing and on its value as a written sign. The word acquires its full value once it is written. The name of a thing determines or materializes its destiny.

Glassner has aptly summarized this procedure of Babylonian hermeneutics:

> La pluralité des interprétations résultait le plus souvent du monnayage du terme analysé en un certain nombre de sumérogrammes et à leur traduction akkadienne, le nom s'expliquant par l'analyse de ses éléments supposés (...) De la simple association phonétique aux associations sémantiques les plus inattendues, l'éxplication pouvait être complexe et révèle une érudition étonnante. Chaque signification appelait immédiatement la nuée de toutes les significations supposées

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[85]Cf. J.- G. Heintz, "Langage métaphorique et repésentation symbolique dans le prophétisme biblique et son milieu ambiant," in *Rencontres de l'École du Louvre* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983) 55-72, especially pp. 63-6. Heintz was the first who brought Bottéro's explanation into relationship with the sword in Ezek 21.

[86]U.GUR = *namṣāru* (*ŠL* II 417,2 = *MŠL III 143, Sb B 208) quoted in H. G. Güterbock, "A Votive Sword with Old Assyrian Inscription," in Studies in Honor of B. Landsberger* (eds. H.- G. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen, AS 16, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965) 197-8, Plates XIII-XV. The author analyzes an inscription found on a sword with lions decorating the hilt, *bālum ša ḫubšal*, which Güterbock identifies with U.GUR (= Nergal) *ša ḫubšal* from a certain list of gods. The author thinks that the sword was dedicated to Nergal, whose Sumerian ideogram U.GUR means "sword," and who is called *naš patri* "he who carries a sword." On the symbolism of the lion and the sword in the OT see, J.- G. Heintz, "Langage métaphorique et repésentation symbolique dans le prophétisme biblique et son milieu ambiant," in *Rencontres de l'École du Louvre* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983) 55-72, esp. pp. 63-6, "Les symboles du lion et de l'épée."

[87]For bibliographical references on these idendifications see, J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 160. GIR and UGUR are two different ideograms yet both can stand for Akkadian *namṣāru*. For GIR see, R. Labat, *Manuel d'Épigraphie Akkadienne* (Paris: Geuthner, 1978) N° 10, and for UGUR N° 417. On DINGIR.UGUR = "sword," as the name of the vizier of the god Nergal see, E. von Weiher, *Der babylonische Gott Nergal* (AOAT 11, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1971) 42. However, W. G. Lambert, "Review of E. von Weiher, *Der babylonische Gott Nergal*," *BiOr* 30 (1973) 355-363, esp. p. 356, disagrees with the reading "sword" and suggests to read *Uqur*, which he understands as the Akkadian imperative "Destroy!" (cf. *Gilg.* XI 24).

présentes dans le terme étudié qui s'enrichissait par d'infrangibles imbrications de sens variés.[88]

The identification of the fire with the sword which occurs in both Ezek 21:4, 10, and the Poem of Erra I 10, 12, might indicate that the author or the redactors of the parable of the fire were adapting to their specific use the similar material found in the Poem of Erra. However, one should not press this point too far and its relative value must be recognized. The close relationship between the fire and the sword which devour may well be a common ancient Near Eastern motif.[89] Still, both works share the same feature. They both describe the execution of the divine judgment with fire and sword.

d. Hypostatization of the Sword

Just as in the Song of the Sword in Ezek 21:21, in the Poem of Erra the weapons are directly addressed as if they were living beings:

I 7 *itami ana kakkêšu litpatā imat mūti* he (Erra) says to his weapons:

"Smear yourselves with deadly venom!"

I 17 *itama ana kakkêšu ummedā tubqāti* To his weapons he says:

"Stay in the racks!"

Here too the weapons are made to flash i.e., pierce like lightning:

I 5 *ana šubruq ulmešu seruti* And to make his sharp spears flash!

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[88]J.- J. Glassner, "La philosophie mésopotamienne," *Encyclopédie Philosophique Universelle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989) I 1637-1642, esp. pp. 1638-39. Cf. also J. Koenig, *L'herméneutique analogique du Judaïsme antique d'après les témoins textuels d'Isaïe* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982) who traces the same hermeneutical device in certain Old Testament texts and in the Midrash. A. Cavigneaux, "Aux sources du Midrash: L'herméneutique babylonienne," *Aula Or* 5 (1987) 245-55;

[89]It occurs in Ugaritic texts, *UT* 49 II 30-33, *tiḫd bn ilm mt bḥrb tbq'nn bhtr tdrynn bišt tšrpnn* "She (Anath) seized the Divine Môt: With a sword she split him; With a pitchfork she winnowed him; With fire she burned him." Translation from P. L. Watson, "The Death of 'Death' in the Ugaritic Texts." *JAOS* 92 (1972) 60-64, esp. p. 60. Cf. also *UT* 137 32, *išt ištm yitmr ḥrb ltšt*, "A flame, two flames, they appear sword(s) of sharpnes." Translation from P. D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973) 31. For a different understanding of this line see the translation of J. Cathcart, *Nahum in the Light of Northwest Semitic* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1973) 144. For the term *ḥrb* in Ugaritic texts see, G. Chenet, "ḤRB de Ras Shamra-Ugarit," in *Mélanges syriens offerts à R. Dussaud* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939) I 49-54. P. D. Miller, "Fire in the Mythology of Canaan and Israel," *CBQ* 27 (1965) 256-61.

IIIC 65 *ana šubruq nam*[*ṣāri*] To make the sword flash.

Similarly to Ezek 21:16c, there is mention of the hand of the slaughterer which wields the weapon:

I 4 ^{d}*Išum ṭābiḫu na'ādu ša ana naše kakkêšu ezzūti qātāšu ašma*

Išum, famed slaughterer whose hands are fit to wield fierce weapons.

e. A Point of Text Emendation

In line with the author's love for etymologies the name of Išum is etymologized by the Sumerian elements I.ŠUM "famed slaughterer."[90] The Akkadian term *ṭabāḫu* "slaughterer" brings us to a discussion of a corrupt line in Ezek 21:20, על כל שעריהם נחתי אבחת חרב. The *RSV* rendering "I have given the glittering sword!" represents guesswork. The translation found in the *NJPS* is probably closer to what the line means, "At all their gates I have appointed slaughter by the sword." In 1883, Friedrich Delitzsch had suggested to see here a scribal error and instead of the unintelligible אבחת חרב to read טבחת חרב "slaughter of/by the sword."[91] Most commentators revert to this emendation which is supported by the LXX.[92] It renders טבח in Ezek 21:15 (2x), 33 consistently with σφάγια "slaughter," and in v 20 the translation σφάγια ῥομφαίας "slaughter by the sword" assumes the presence of the same term טבח. The emendation is further supported by the Targum קטלי חרבא and claims the evidence of other Biblical passages in which טבח is used together with חרב (Jer 50:27 and Lam 2:21 בחרב הרגתה ... טבחתה). We reject any derivation of Hebrew אבחה from the presumed Akkadian **abāḫu*.[93] Both terms appear to be "ghost words." Nevertheless, we accept

[90]So W. G. Lambert, "Review of Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos*," *AfO* 18 (1957-58) 395-401, esp. p. 400. Sumerian 'I' corresponds to *na'ādu*, *MŠL* III p. 132, 20; and ŠUM to *ṭabāḫu MŠL XII p. 101, 160), so J. Bottéro, "Anitiqités assyro-babyloniennes (l'Épopée d'Erra)," Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 160.

[91]F. Delitzsch, *The Hebrew Language Viewed in the Light of Assyrian Research* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1883) 28-9, repeated in F. Delitzsch, "Specimen Glosarii Ezechielo-Babylonici" in S. Baer, *Liber Ezechielis* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1884) p. X; *idem*., "Assyriologische Notizen zum Alten Testament: Das Schwertlied Ezech 21, 13-22," *ZK* 2 (1885) 386, 395.

[92]Cf. *BHS ad loc*.; *BDB* 5a, 370b; *KBL* 346; Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 238; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 286. For a different proposal see G. R. Driver, "Abbreviations in the Massoretic Text," *Textus: Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project* 1 (1960) 112-31, esp. p. 124.

[93]It was proposed by Delitzsch in *Hebrew Language Viewed in the Light of Assyrian Research* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1883) 28-29 and then retracted by Delitzsch himself since in *HWB* 112b he does not equate Akkadian *ṭabāḫu* with an imaginary **abāḫu*. This identifiaction was rejected by T. Nöldeke, "Review of F. Delitzsch, *Prolegomena eines neuen hebräisch-aramäischen Wörterbuchs zum Alten Testament*,"

the above emendation and maintain a rapprochement between Hebrew טבח and Akkadian *ṭabāḫu* "to slaughter." In the Poem of Erra the term *ṭabāḫu* occurs several times in close association with the sword. As noted above Išum is called the "famed slaughterer" (*ṭābiḫu na'ādu*) in I 4, while in I 12 Išum is designated as "You are the broadsword: slaughterer" (*atā namṣārūmma ṭābiḫu*). In I 91 the Sebetti complain that "Through (long) lack of slaughter our sword has put on rust" (*patarni ina lā ṭabāḫi itt[ad]i šuḫû*).

f. Remarks Concerning the Redaction of Ezek 21

A few words of conclusion may be added concerning the way Ezek 21 has been compiled. The analysis has revealed a certain number of parallels in form and content between Ezek 21 and the Poem of Erra (cf. Maarsingh). However, we do not think that the parallels are sufficient to argue that Ezek 21 should be seen as a unity from the moment of its composition. Rather, the redactor may have collected various "sword oracles" from different sources of Ezekiel's work.[94] The analysis of part I (Ezek 21:1-12) and part II (21:13-22) has revealed a significant correlation with the Poem of Erra. It allows us to conclude that the author or the redactor who composed and formulated some of the sword oracles may have been cognizant of the Poem of Erra. However, parts III and IV, which reflect a knowledge of other Akkadian sources might have been brought into relationship with parts I and II by one of Ezekiel's disciples who took and adapted them from other Ezekiel sources.[95] Parts

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ZDMG 40 (1986) 718-43, esp. p. 729. For a critique of the different suggestions concerning the derivation of Hebrew אבחה see S. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1983) pp. 18-20.

[94]According to H. H. Rowley, "The Book of Ezekiel in Modern Study," *BJRL* 36 (1953-4) 146-90, esp. pp. 160ff, the editor who compiled the Book of Ezekiel undoubtedly contributed something to it. He worked with more than one source which, however, stem from Ezekiel. This might be the reason why the Book leaves an impression of being a work of a single personality. Zimmerli supports the view that the measure of editorial additions should not be exaggerated and that even when redaction is discernible, it does not drift very far from Ezekiel himself, (in "Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel," in *I am Yahweh* [Engl. transl. by D. W. Scott, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982] 29-98, p. 144 n. 14). For more recent studies of the redactorial activity within the Book of Ezekiel see J. Garscha, *Studien zum Ezechielbuch. Eine redaktionskritische Untersuchung von Ez 1-39* (Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe 23, Band 23, Bern/Frankfurt, 1974); F. Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Theologie des Ezechielbuches* (Forschung zur Bibel 20, Würzburg: Echter, 1977).

[95]Cf. J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983) 201, "the oracle against Ammon (21:28-32) belongs logically to the sayings against hostile nations (chs. 25-26), but it has been drawn into association with the preceding sayings (21:1-27) by the catchword 'sword.'"

III and IV reflect the influence of the *Maqlû* and *Šurpu* incantations,[96] and contain the unique mention in the Bible of the Babylonian practice of hepatoscopy. One cannot argue that the Poem of Erra is the only source that might have been used in composing the sword oracles. For example, Ezek 30:25, where Yahweh says, "When I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon..." reflects a religious outlook similar to the one found in Neriglissar's (559-556 BCE) neo-Babylonian inscription,[97]

12 *ana eṭīri nišim gamālu māti*
13 ^{d}*Gîrra šagapuru ilāni iddinūšu kakkūšu*

for the protection of the people (and) preservation of the land Gîrra, the ruler of the gods, gave him his weapon.

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[96]Cf. the work of S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, New York, 1983) chapters 2 and 3, who argued that in the composition of Ezekiel's commissioning (2:6), and the episode of the prophets's dumbness (3:22-27), the Akkadian *Maqlû* incantation texts might have been used.

[97]S. Langdon, *Die neubabylonische Königsinschriften* (VAB IV, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912) p. 210-11 (Nr. 1 I 12-13). This parallel has been suggested by R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 23 n. 53. On the sword motif see also D. C. T. Scheriffs, *Empire and the Gods: Mesopotamian Treaty Theology and the Sword in the First Millennium B.C.* (D. Litt. Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1976).

5.6. EZEKIEL AND IŠUM IN THE ROLE OF WATCHMAN AND INTERCESSOR

5.6.1. The Watchman in the Old Testament

In discussing the watchman figure in the Old Testament one should differentiate between references to actual watchmen and the literary motif of the watchman. On the one hand, there are references to the watchmen drawn from the daily experience of the people like the watchmen of the city, the guards of the vineyard and the watchmen in times of war. On the other hand, there are a few instances where the term watchman is applied metaphorically to some prophets.

a. In the Old Testament several terms are used to designate the watchman: שמר, שמרת (*BDB* 1036b, 1038); צפה (*BDB* 859) and הרצים. The last term designates a special royal guard,[1] while the term שמר is most commonly used to designate a watchman. The figure of the watchman is drawn from the daily experience of the people.[2] From the watchtower he guards the vineyards (Isa 5:2); in time of war his task is to watch the movement of the enemy (1 Sam 14:16 הצפים לשאול "the watchmen of Saul" observing the Philistine camp); at the advance of the enemy he has to blow the שופר as a sign of alarm (Hos 5:8; 8:1; Am 3:6; Jer 4:5; 6:17); from a tower or a roof he observes and reports about an approaching individual or a group of people (2 Kgs 9:17 הצפה עמר על המגדל; 2 Sam 18:24-27); the watchmen go the rounds of the city (Cant 3:3; 5:7 השמרים הסבבים בעיר). In relationship to the night watch, both Hebrew and Akkadian differentiates between the first watch of the night (Lam 2:19, ראש אשמרות functionally equivalent to Akkadian *barārītum*); the second or middle watch of the night (Jdg 7:19, האשמרת התיכונה cf. Akkadian *qablītum*); and the third watch of the night (Ex 14:24, 1 Sam 11:11, אשמרת הבקר cf. Akkadian *šadduru* or *namrītu* cf. *CAD B* 105).[3] To the Judeans in the time of Ezekiel the watchman in the context of war represented a

[1]Cf. 1 Sam 22:17; 1 Kgs 14:27, 28 = 2 Chr 12:10,11; 2 Kgs 10:25; 11:4, 6, 11, 19. *BDB* 930bc relates the word to the root רוץ "to run."

[2]Cf. J. Muilenburg, in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (eds. M. Black and H. H. Rowley, London: T. Nelson, 1962) 584.

[3]Cf. F. Delitzsch, "Assyriologische Notizen zum Alten Testament III. Die drei Nachtwachen," *ZK* 2 (1885) 284-94.

well known reality.[4]

b. The motif of the prophet as a watchman does not have a long tradition in Israel. Jer 6:17 represents the only instance prior to Ezekiel where the term צפה "watchman" is used in a figurative sense.[5] In the literary motif of the watchman which appears in Jer 6:17, Judah's obstinacy is denounced, "I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Give heed to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not give heed.'"

5.6.2 Ezekiel as Watchman (צפה) and Intercessor

The parable of the watchman in the Book of Ezekiel is important for the understanding of the prophet's sense of mission as well as the

[4]Nah 3:17 contains a *hapax* מנזריך which refers to some kind of guard. H. Torczyner, "Presidential Address," *JPOS* 16 (1936) 1-8, esp. p. 7, emends the MT to מנזזיך and makes it a cognate of Akkadian *manzāzu*, a frequent Akkadian term for a high official. He refers to such phrases as *manzāz ēkalli* "official of the palace," *manzāz bābi* or *abulli* "door prefect," *manzāz pāni* "chamberlain," or *manzāz rēši* "body guard." However, since the time of H. Zimmern, the Hebrew *hapax* has been equated with Akkadian *manṣāru*, a dissimilated form of *maṣṣāru* "guard" which appears in phrases such as *maṣṣār bābat ēkalli* "guard of the palace gate," and *maṣṣār ēkalli* "guard of the palace," cf. E. Schrader, H. Zimmern, H. Winckler, *Die Keilschriften und das Alte Testament* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, ^{3}1902) 400, 651. cf. also Von Soden, *AHw* 621. The probable reason why Torczyner rejected this identification is that Akkadian *manṣāru* belongs to the root *nṣr* which according to the rules of phonemic correspondence ought to be ṣ and not *z* in Hebrew (so K. J. Cathcart, *Nahum in the Light of Northwest Semitic* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1973] 146.). Against the objection that it would be unlikely to find Hebrew borrowing and adopting an Akkadian unassimilated form A. Haldar (*Studies in the Book of Nahum* [Uppsala, 1947] 75), points out that such forms occur on Canaanite ground in EA period (*man/ṣārtu* "garrison, guard, watch").

[5]So P. Auvray, "Le prophète comme guetteur, Éz., XXXIII, 1-20," *RB* 71 (1964) 194, n. 5. *idem.*, "Ezéchiel I-III. Essai d'analyse littéraire," *RB* 67 (1960) 481-502, esp. p. 488. The dating of the passage in Isa 21:11-12, mentioning the prophet as שמר is disputed. Cf. P. Lohmann, "Das Wächterlied Jes 21.11-13," *ZAW* 33 (1913) 20-29; K. Galling, "Jesaja 21 im Lichte der neuen Nabonidtexte," *Tradition und Situation. Studien zur alttestamentlichen Prophetie, Festschrift A. Weiser* (eds. E. Würthwein, O. Kaiser, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963) 49-62, attempted to find a definite place in history for the oracle. After the military attack upon Arabia by the neo-Babylonian invader, Nabonidus (555-539 BCE), and the severe repression of the region in 550-545 BCE, some fugitive Arabs came from Edom to a prophet in Judah to inquire from him whether their servitude under the Babylonians was coming to an end. Such a view excludes authorship by Isaiah. Cf. also H. Wildberger, *Jesaja* (BK X/2, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978) 794, who follows Galling's date *circa* 545 BCE, "Doch kann das Lied zweifeloss nicht als jesajanisch betrachtet werden." In Hos 9:8 it is not clear whether the term צפה applies to Ephraim or to the prophet, so F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Hosea* (AB, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980) 533. In Isa 56:10 (an exilic or post-exilic text), the "watchmen" (vv 10-11a), and the "shepherds" (vv 11b-12), apply to the leaders of Israel in a figurative sense. Cf. also Hab 2:1.

structure and the editing of the book. Modifying somewhat the analysis of Brownlee,[6] the parable consists of three parts: (I) 33:1-6, which is preserved in chapter 33 alone; (II) 33:7-9,[7] with its close verbal parallel in 3:17-19; and (III) 3:20-21, which is preserved principally in chapter 3 (although there are some relationships with 18:24, 26). Thus each chapter contains two of the three parts - chapter 33 containing the first two and chapter 3 the last two, each of them sharing the central portion. Until recently there existed a general consensus among scholars that 33:1-9[8] should be taken as the original text, 3:17-21 being a secondary editorial development, while chapter 18 represents a further elaboration.[9] The consensus has been challenged by Greenberg on thematic grounds: "The specific use to which themes common to chs. 3, 18, and 33 are put in our passage argues against the contention that it is a secondary concoction."[10] In our opinion the issue of which text is original will remain a question to which no definite answer can be given.

The editors of the Book of Ezekiel who gave the book its final form have placed the conception of the prophet's task at key points in the

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[6]W. H. Brownlee, "Ezekiel's Parable of the Watchman and the Editing of Ezekiel," *VT* 28 (1978) 392-408.

[7]On Ezek 33 see J. Schreiner, "Vom übertragenen Wächteramt. Meditationen zu Ez 33, 1.7-20," *Bibel und Leben* 12 (1971) 118-121; F. Smyth-Florintin, "Et toi, je t'ai établi comme sentinelle (Ez 33)," *Assemblées du Seigneur* 54 (1972) 4-9; R. P. G. Del Olmo Lete, "Estructura literaria de Ez. 33.1-20," *Estudios Biblicos*, Jan.-March (1963) 5-31; W. Eichrodt, "Das prophetische Wächteramt, Zur Exegese von Hesekiel 33," in *Tradition und Situation. Fs A. Weiser* (eds. E. Würthwein- O. Kaiser, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1963) 31-41.

[8]Cf. P. Auvray, "Le prophète comme guetteur, Éz., XXXIII, 1-20," *RB* 71 (1964) 191-205, who sees Ezek 33:1-9 as original and 3:17-21 as secondary," ... le morceau, détaché de son contexte, ait été placé au début du livre d'Ézéchiel, comme un complément de sa vocation. Car le doublet que l'on rencontre en III, 16b-19 paraît bien inséré là de façon plus ou moins artificielle."

[9]Cf. Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 44; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I,* 143; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 75. Cf. also H. Lamparter, *Zum Wächter Bestellt: Der Prophet Hesekiel* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1968). "The watchman's call (3:16-21) seems unnecessary after the initial call vision (1:1-3:15) and is also repeated in a clearer and more elaborate form in Ezekiel 33:1-9, where it seems to mark a new phase in Ezekiel's career following the fall of Jerusalem," so R. R. Wilson, "Prophecy in Crisis: The Call of Ezekiel," *Int* 38 (1984) 117-30, esp. p. 128. For a discussion of various approaches to Ezek 3:16-27 (20-21) see also *idem*., "An Interpretation of Ezekiel's Dumbness," *VT* 22 (1972) 91-104.

[10]Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 92. M. A. Schmidt, in his article "Zur Komposition des Buches Hesekiel," *ThZ* 6 (1950) 81-98, had already voiced a reserve against the prevailing view, see esp. p. 92.

book. Brownlee described adequately the function of the watchman passages in the book,

> After the more limited watchman passage of Chap. iii, he (Ezekiel) had served as watchman to Israel; In Chaps. xxv-xxxii, he had assumed the role of watchman for the nations; and now, in Chap. xxxiii, he takes up once more his role as a watchman for Israel. In this way Ezekiel's parable of the watchman was made to serve not merely double duty by its repetition in Chap. xxxiii, but triple duty by dividing his career into three periods of watchman's service.[11]

The term שוב serves as a catchword which connects Ezek 3:19, 20 with 18:21, 22, and 33:9, 11.[12] The term in these contexts denotes primarily a divine offer to the backsliding people to return to their God.[13] "This 'turning' (the literal meaning of the Hebrew תשובה, usually translated 'conversion'), meaning a radical redirection of one's life, is one of the most important aspects of Ezekiel's preaching to the גולה community."[14]

Wilson discerns a particular function which the parable of the watchman in Ezek 3:20-21 serves in the present context. It reinforces or

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[11]W. H. Brownlee, "Ezekiel's Parable of the Watchman and the Editing of Ezekiel," *VT* 28 (1978) 392-408, esp. p. 399.

[12]Cf. E. Baumann, "שוב שבות, Eine exegetische Untersuchung," *ZAW* 47 (1929) 17-44; R. Borger, "Zu שוב שבות/ית," *ZAW* 66 (1954) 315-16; W. Holladay, *The Root Šûbh in the Old Testament With Particular Reference to its Usage in Covenantal Texts* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958). Cf. the conclusion concerning the term שוב in Ezekiel by E. Würthwein, in his article, "μετανοέω," in *TDNT IV* 980-89, (The conversion for Ezekiel) "is primarily the conversion of the individual, or, more precisely, the רשע (18:21, 27; 33:9, 11, 12, 14 etc.). The רשע is defined more casuistically as the one who offends in cultic, ritual, or ethical matters (18:5ff.). (...) For Ez., then, to convert is to change one's sinful way (3:19; 18:21, 23, 27; 33:12, 14, 19 etc.), to leave off the sins of the רשע, to become צדיק rather than רשע," (p. 988).

[13]Cf. H. G. Reventlow, *Wächter über Israel, Ezechiel und seine Tradition, BZAW* 82 (1962) 118, 131. The author argues that the term שוב appears in a context of a "declaratory formula" announced to the participants in the cultic celebration. The person is offered a possibility to avoid the judgment of "life" or "death" by returning to God. Reventlow builds on Zimmerli's argument that the sentencing to life or death or deciding on what is clean or unclean, had its setting in sanctuary-entry rites performed by priests. That was part of the priestly Torah instruction. Consequently, Ezekiel's duty as a watchman represents a prophetic application of the priestly function of declaring the torah. Cf. W. Zimmerli, "'Leben' und 'Tod' im Buche des Propheten Ezechiel," *ThZ* 13 (1957) 494-508, reprinted *idem., Gottes Offenbarung* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1963) 178-91; *idem.*, "The Special Form- and Traditio-Historical Character of Ezekiel's Prophecy," *VT* 15 (1965) 515-27, esp. p. 523; Zimmerli's view has been accepted by B. Lindars, "Ezekiel and Individual Responsibility," *VT* 15 (1965) 452-67, esp. p. 456.

[14]So J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983) 199.

modifies four themes that appear in the initial call vision in Ezek 1:1-3:15,

> First, there is no doubt about the identity of the enemy against whom Ezekiel is to warn the people. God is personally responsible for giving the death sentence and is therefore directly responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem and the punishment of the exiles. Second, the prophet is to exercise his office faithfully, no matter what the reaction of the people. Third, even though there is little hope that the wicked will repent, God still appoints the prophet to warn them of the approaching divine wrath. (...) Finally, in contrast to the situation in the initial call, not everyone ignores the prophetic warning. The "righteous," perhaps the disciples of Ezekiel, do repent and remain righteous, thus saving themselves from the coming judgment.[15]

Prophetic intercession is present in the Book of Ezekiel.[16] There are three passages in Ezekiel which deal with the prophet as intercessor. The first passage is found in Ezek 9:8. Distressed at the appalling thoroughness of the slaughter, the prophet appeals to Yahweh not to destroy all the remnant of Israel. When Ezekiel breaks out in a cry of intercession to Yahweh at the carnage commencing in the midst of the temple he is acting as a true prophet. Intercession and prayer for the welfare of the community belonged especially to the office of the prophet.[17] The second passage which depicts the prophet as an

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[15]R. R. Wilson, "Prophecy in Crisis: The Call of Ezekiel," *Int* 38 (1984) 129.

[16]According to H. W. Hertzberg, "Sind die Propheten Fürbitter?" in *Tradition und Situation, Studien zur alttestamentlichen Prophetie. Festschrift A. Weiser* (eds. E. Würthwein, O, Kaiser, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963) 63-74, the classical prophets should not be considered as intercessors. However, his view is rather idiosyncratic. One may speek of a consensus among scholars of viewing the prophets as intercessors, cf. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (Engl. transl. D. M. G. Stalker, New York: Harper & Row, 1962-1965, 2 vols.) I 97, 294, 323; II 131, 275-7, 403; F. Hesse, *Die Fürbitte im Alten Testament* (Unpublished dissertation Erlangen, 1949); A. S. Herbert, "The Prophet as Intercessor," *Baptist Quarterly* 13 (1949) 76-80; S. M. Paul, "Prophets and Prophecy," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971) vol. 13, cols. 1150-81; For an extensive list of Old Testament passages pertaining to intercession see A. B. Rhodes, "Israel's Prophets as Intercessors," in *Scripture in History & Theology: Essays in Honor of J. C. Rylaarsdam* (eds. A. L. Merrill and T. W. Overholt, Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1977) 107-128.

[17]So G. von Rad, "Die falschen Propheten," *ZAW* 51 (1933) 109-20; A. R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, ^{2}1962); P. A. H. de Boer, "De voorbede in het Oude Testament," *OTS* 3 (1943) 42-120; Cf. Am 7:2-3, (2) "O Yahweh God, forgive, I beseech thee! How can Jacob stand? He is so small! (3) Yahweh repented concerning this; 'It shall not be' said Yahweh." Cf. H. Graf Reventlow, *Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos* (FRLANT 80, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962) 34, "die Fürbtitte (ist) ein untrennbarer Bestandteil des prophetischen Amtes." Jer 27:18; On several occasions Jeremiah was explicitly commanded by Yahweh not to intercede for his people, Jer 11:14; 14:11, "Do not pray for the welfare of this people." Cf. H. Graf Reventlow, *Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremiah* (Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1963) 140-205.

intercessor is found in 11:13 mentioning the incident of the death of פלטיהו whose name may be translated "Yahweh's Remnant" (cf. our section 5.7.). The sudden death of a man bearing such a *Redende Name* might have appeared as an evil omen to Ezekiel and again he breaks out in intercession for the remnant of Israel. This intercession leads into a messages relating to the hopeful future for the exiles.[18] The third passage is Ezek 13:5. Ezekiel passes a judgment on the false prophets for not going up into the breaches when Yahweh threatened the nation. Here the Book of Ezekiel expresses clearly what the prophets should have done: "They ought to have protected Israel, taken up their posts in her defence."[19] This is exactly what Ezekiel does as watchman.

5.6.3. Preliminary Conclusions

There is clear difference between Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's understanding of the watchman. In Jeremiah the watchman function was stated only in terms of message-bearing. By contrast in the Book of Ezekiel the prophet's task is presented with unparalleled urgency. It is delineated as a matter of life and death - for the prophet no less than for his audience,[20] cf. Ezek 3:20, "But his blood I will require at your hand," and 33:6, "But his blood I will require at the watchman's hand."[21] The watchman's very life depends upon fulfilling the task assigned to him.

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[18]In this connection we may mention that Hebrew כרוב has links in Akkadian cognate *karābu* = "pray, intercede," and *karubu, kāribu* = "intercessor." This connection was first established by S. Langdon, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923) 190 n. 3. Langdon traced Akkadian *kāribu* to Sumerian ALAM SUB.SUB.BE meaning "interceding statue," which then came to mean "intercessor." Cf. also Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 112 "A Note on Cherubim." We would suggest that the כרובים in the vision in Ezek 1 and 10, by the fact that they appear in the land of exile, may reflect this ancient Babylonian character of intercessors. Cf. also Ezek 11:16 where Yahweh himself becomes a sanctuary for his people in exile. In our opinion, intercession should not be considered as a peripheral feature in the Book of Ezekiel. Cf. also P. Dhorme - L. H. Vincent, "Les chérubins," *RB* 35 (1926) 328-58, esp. p. 336 with a series of Akkadian texts where the *kāribu* appear as interceding or praying figures.

[19]So aptly G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (Engl. transl. G. D. M. Stalker, New York: Harper& Row, 1965) II 275. Cf. Ps 106:23 which praises Moses for entering into the breach (Exod 32).

[20]Thus Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 90.

[21]Cf. H. G. Reventlow, "Sein Blut komme über sein Haupt," *VT* 10 (1960) 311-27; P. P. Nober, "Sein Blut komme über uns und unsere Kinder!" in *Freiburger Rundbrief* 41/44 (1958-59) 73-7; W. Zimmerli, "'Leben' und 'Tod'im Buche des Propheten Ezechiel," *ThZ* 13 (1957) 494-508, reprinted in *idem., Gottes Offenbarung* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1963) 178-91.

According to Auvray we have here a new feature in the history of prophecy, Ezekiel's particular definition of the prophetic role, "Le fait est nouveau dans l'histoire du prophétisme et la notion même du prophète présentée ici paraît particulière à Ézéchiel."[22]

Ezekiel's appointment as a watchman has been expressed at the beginning of the book (Ezek 3:17-19), connected with the call account. In the present form of the book, Ezek 33:1-9 has something of the weight of a second call to the prophet after the fall of Jerusalem.

5.6.4. Išum as Watchman and Intercessor in the Poem of Erra

In the Poem of Erra Išum has several roles. He is Erra's lieutenant or second-in-command, but he also has the role of the watchman and intercessor on behalf of humans.

Išum appears as a loyal lieutenant who executes Erra's orders. When the latter decided to restore the fortunes of Babylon, Išum went to destroy all the enemies who threatened its total annihilation (Erra IV 130-150).

The following passage presents Išum as a night watchman (Erra I 21-22),

21 ^{d}*Engidudu bēlu muttallik mūši mutarrû rubê*
22 *ša eṭla u ardatu ina šul[m]i i[tt]anamu unammaru kīma ūmi*

21 The divine night watchman,[23] the lord who goes about
in the night, who watches over the prince (Erra),
22 Who watches for the well-being of lads and girls
and makes (them) radiant as day(light).[24]

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[22]P. Auvray, "Le prophète comme guetteur, Éz., XXXIII, 1-20," *RB* 71 (1964) 191-205, esp. p. 203.

[23]The meaning of the Sumerian epithet EN.GI^{6}.DU.DU is immediately rendered into Akkadian with the expression *bēlu muttallik mūši* = "the lord who goes about in the night," just as later in IV 2, DIM.KUR.KUR.RA is rendered *rikis mātāti* = "the bond of the countries." The epithet "the watchman of the night," is applied to different divine figures who sometimes have a subordinate role like Sulak and Nusku "The Torch" *KAR* 58, 45 and rev. 1. but also to Nergal in IV R 24 no 1, 42. cf. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 113 n. 5.

[24]Our translation follows that of J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) p. 113, and that of E. Reiner, "More Fragments of the Epic of Erra," *JNES* 17 (1958) 41-48. Cf. Cagni's translation, "O Engidudu, the lord who goes about in the night, who always is a guide to princes, Who always leads young men and girls to (good) health and makes them as splendid as day(light)," *PE*, p. 26.

Išum is presented as the guardian of prince Erra and other humans. Both E. Reiner[25] and J. Bottéro[26] see here the role of Išum as the one who provides divine protection in the love-making of gods and humans. The context supports this interpretation since in Erra I 19-20, Išum acts as a watchman who goes to stir up Erra who is making love with his consort Mami.

According to Cagni,[27] the description *bēlu muttallik mūši*, "lord who goes about in the night," of Erra I 21, should be compared with *nāgir mūši* "herald of the night,"[28] and with *nāgir sūqi šaqummi* "herald of the quiet street."[29] Since these two latter examples are applied to the Sumerian divinity Ḫendursanga, Išum appears to have assimilated the features of his Sumerian precursor.[30] The dark and narrow streets of Mesopotamian cities had their dangerous spirits too, for in one place the demoness Lamaštu is called "sister of the gods of the streets."[31] Išum's role as a

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[25]E. Reiner, "More Fragments of the Epic of Erra," *JNES* 17 (1958) 41-8, esp. p. 43, n. 7, suggested that the scene resembles a motif found in medieval romance lyrics (in the Provençal and French love songs called *alba* or *aube*), in which the night watchmen "who keep guard over the lovers and wake them when dawn is at hand," cry out "Alba!" (dawn), and thus warn the lovers that the secrecy and protection of the night is over. She refers to F. Brittain, *The Medieval Latin and Romance Lyric to A. D. 1300* (Cambridge: The University Press, [2]1951) 29.

[26]J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (l'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 113 n. 5.

[27]Cagni, *PE*, 17.

[28]*CT* 16,49 304-5.

[29]*Utukkû lemnūtu* series *CT* 16,15 V 21-22. In a Middle Babylonian roster of forced laborers one finds two other terms used to designate the watchmen, *maṣṣār abulli* "watchmen at the city gate," and *āpil bābi* "door-keeper," cf. J. A. Brinkman, "Forced Laborers in the Middle Babylonian Period," *JCS* 32 (1980) 17-22, esp. p. 19.

[30]So e.g., D. O. Edzard and C. Wilcke, "Die Ḫendursanga-Hymne," in *Kramer Anniversary Volume* (ed. B. L. Eichler, *et al.*, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976) 139-76, esp. p.143: "Ḫendursanga ist gewiß schon im III. Jahtausend mit Išum gleichgesetzt worden." The authors quote an additional late text: *nagiru rabû rabiṣu ṣîri ša ilî ina rēšīšu lizzizma ina mūši lu naṣiršu*, which they translate in the following way, "(Ḫendursanga/Išum) der große Herold, der höchste Gerichtskommissar der Götter, stehe ihm zu Häupten und sei des nachts sein (sum. mein) Beschützer," in *CT* 16,46 178-180. In the "Hymn to Ḫendursanga" the god Ḫendursanga appears in association with the Divine Seven (IMIN.BA) ll. 78-85, which corresponds to Išum and the Sebetti in the Poem of Erra.

[31]Cf. F. Thureau-Dangin, "Rituel et amulettes contre Labartu," *RA* 18 (1921) 161-98, esp. p. 198, l. 13 (*aḫat ilāni ša sūqāti*), cf. also C. J. Gad, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient Near East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948) 64-5, who points out the that there were chapels opening off the public streets where a protective god could be worshiped and whose assistance could be invoked.

"night watchman" might have been to protect the belated passers-by from evil spirits roaming in the streets at night.

There is another Akkadian expression to designate the "night watchman" (*maṣṣār mūši*) which appears together with *maṣṣār ēkalli* the "watch(men) of the palace."[32]

Išum was a secondary deity in the traditional Mesopotamian pantheon, representing in all probability the deification of the powers of fire. The name Išum appears as a component of a theophoric name dating from pre-Sargonic times as UR-I-ŠUM = "The Servant of Išum."[33] Divine names with mimation such as Allatum, Sarpanîtum, Nabium, do not appear until after the Old Akkadian period. In this respect the name Išum which occurs already in pre-Sargonic times is an exception.[34]

The author of the Poem of Erra depicts the benevolence of Išum toward the Babylonians and humans in general in several ways: Firstly, Išum exercises a continued moderating action over Erra, as if it were an ideological quarrel between one divinity blinded by wrath and another endowed with composure and sense.[35] Secondly, in the first tablet of the Poem of Erra, the Sebetti are introduced as eager to start the fight and to slaughter the humans and the cattle. Erra, however, declined to go to battle for a moment and Išum restrained them by keeping them inactive,

I 27 ^{d}*Išum daltuma edil pānūšun*

Išum was a door - bolted in their (the Sebetti's) face.[36]

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[32]V R 13,15-26b quoted by F. Delitzsch, "Assyriologische Notizen zum Alten Testament III. Die drei Nachtwachen," *ZK* 2 (1885) 284-94, esp. p. 293. cf. also V R 32 No 3,29.30, *maṣṣaru bābi* "door watchman."

[33]So J. Bottéro, "Les divinités sémitiques anciennes en Mésopotamie," in *Le antiche divinità semitiche* (ed. S. Moscatti, Università di Roma: Centro di Studi Semitici, 1958) 17-63, esp. pp. 42-43, who quotes *OIP* XIV pl. 22 N° 48, II 7'.

[34]So I. J. Gelb, "Sullat and Haniš," *ArOr* 18 (1950) 1889-98, esp. p. 197, = *Symbolae ad Studia Orientis Pertinentes Frederico Hrozny Dedicatae*, vol 18, No 1-2, pars tertia.

[35]In the "Vision of the Netherworld by an Assyrian Crown Prince," Išum is portrayed as a benevolent deity who intercedes for humans. When the presumptious visitor of the nether world appears before Nergal, the latter in his wrath attempts to kill him but Išum steps in and calms the wrathful divinity. Rev 56 ^{d}*Išum malikšu mukil abbutti ētir napištim rā'im kinati u ki'am iqtabi eṭlum lā tušmata šar erṣeti d[an]u*, "Išum, his counsellor, the intercessor, who saves lives, who loves righteousness and so forth, spoke up: Put not the fellow to death, thou do[ugh]ty ruler of the nether world," Akkadian text from W. von Soden, "Die Unterweltvision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen," *ZA* 43 (1936) 1-31 esp. pp. 17 and 24, as translated by E. A. Speiser, "A Vision of the Nether World," ^{3}*ANET* 110.

[36]For the translation and some helpful comments on this line see W. G. Lambert, "Line 10 of the Old Babylonian Etana Legend," *JCS* 32 (1980) 81-85, esp. p. 83. According to Lambert, the expression "to bolt the door," in this line is not literal and should be understood in the sense of preventing someone to exercise an activity.

Thirdly, in order to stave off the oppression of the invaders Išum undertakes a destructive expedition against the enemies of the Babylonians, localized on the mountain Ḫêḫe (Erra IV 138-150). Fourthly, the work of the reconstruction of Babylonia was expressly entrusted to Išum by Erra in V 23-34.[37]

The benevolent attitude of Išum toward humans is reflected in another text which represents an incantation for the healing of a sick person,

> [d]*Išum nāgiru rabû rābiṣa ṣîru ša ilāni ina rēšīšu lizzizma ai ipparku*
>
> May Išum, great overseer and far-famed messenger of the gods, stand at his head and not cease (his vigil).[38]

In this incantation Išum is invoked as the one who has the power to command the evil spirits (*uttukê lemnūti*) to return to their infernal abode.

5.6.5. Parallels, Contrasts, Conclusions

a. The Indiscriminate Slaughter of the Wrathful Deity and the Need for a Watchman

A remarkable similarity between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra is the indiscriminate slaughter which accompanies divine wrath calling for the presence of a watchman. Both the god Erra and Yahweh need a watchman whose role is to protect humans from the excesses of the divine wrath. In his wrath Erra wrought havoc in Mesopotamian cities. If it were not for Išum his counsellor who appeased him, all life would have been annihilated. Išum, Erra's lieutenant and intercessor on behalf of humans, accuses Erra of utter mercilessness. In his murderous fury he had ordered the slaughter of everyone indiscriminately,

> IV 104 Hero Erra, you killed the righteous one (*kināmma*).
> 105 You killed the unrighteous one (*lā kināmma*).[39]

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[37]So correctly Cagni, *PE*, p. 17.

[38]Akkadian text with translation from O. R. Gurney, Babylonian Prophylactic Figures and Their Ritual," *AAA* 22 (1935) 31-96, esp. p. 87 (l. 126). Gurney translates *nāgiru* with "overseer."

[39]Akkadian *kinu, kēnu* means the "just, the righteous one," and corresponds to the Hebrew adjective כֵּן "right, veritable honest." The relationship between the Akkadian stative verb *kânu* (medial ū) "be firm, right" and Hebrew verb כוּן had already been noted by F. Delitzsch *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1896) 321.

106 You killed the one who sinned against you.
107 You killed the one who did not sin against you.
108 You killed the priest eager to bring the offerings to the gods.
110 You killed the old men on the threshhold.
111 You killed the young girls in their chambers.

In the fifth tablet Erra admits his excesses, saying "Like one who ravages a country I made no distinction between good and bad: I slew them (alike)" (V 10).

These descriptions of the disastrous results of Erra's wrath correspond to a similar statement concerning Yahwhe's warth. In Ezek 21:8, which is usually considered as a contradictory verse, Yahweh's intent is to kill both the righteous and the wicked alike with no distinction: "Thus says Yahweh: See I will draw my sword out of its sheath, and will cut off from you both the righteous and the wicked (צדיק ורשע)" (= *RSV* 21:3).[40] In certain verses in the Book of Ezekiel, the wrath of Yahweh is presented as blind, undiscerning and threatening to everyone. Ezek 21:8-9, repeats twice the profoundly disturbing message that the sword of Yahweh will cut indiscriminately both (צדיק ורשע). One's righteousness will not save a person before the terrible, indiscriminate wrath of Yahweh. Ezekiel has to "sigh with breaking heart" for indeed, it is a tiding which makes "every heart melt, and every spirit faint." As pointed out in our section 5.5. the unique feature of the parable in Ezek 21:1-12, is the equation of the sword with the fire. Yahweh's judgment by the sword is realistically portrayed as indiscriminate as a gigantic forest fire which devours (21:3).

The issue of Yahweh losing self-control and needing a watchman or some sort of self-imposed covenant in order to prevent the catastrophic consequences on humans as in the case of the Deluge, would merit an independent study.[41]

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[40]The statement is in apparent contradiction to Ezek 18 and to the notion of a righteous remnant in Ezek 9. The Talmudic explanation which interprets the righteous as "only incompletely pious" shows how much difficulty the statement occasioned (BT *'Abodah Zarah* 4a). Zimmerli (in *Ezekiel I*, 424), explains away the difficulty by saying, first, that the expression "righteous and wicked" represents a stylistic device called *merismus* and should not be taken literally. And second, that in Ezek 21, unlike chapter 18, the address is not to those who have already been smitten and abandoned to the death of exile and who are summoned to return, but to those who still think that they can escape the judgment.

[41]For some helpful comments on this topic see J. Hempel, "Gottes Selbstbeherrschung als Problem des Monotheismus und der Eschatologie," in *Gottes Wort und Gottes Land, Festschrift H.- W. Hertzberg* (ed. H. G. Raventlow, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965) 56-66. The author discussed this issue in the light of Ea's accusation of Enlil in *Gilg.* XI 86, who likewise lost self-control and sent the Deluge to annihilate humanity.

The indiscriminate doom announced in this verse and the radical theological implications which it entails have been aptly described by Fishbane,

> The point of this astonishing tirade, of course, is that personal merits count for nothing: not only can one's righteousness not save another person, it cannot even save oneself. Had anything been left to salvage from the sharp contradictions between Ezekiel 14, 18, and 20, one might have supposed that at least the inviolability of the righteous person was an irreducible datum. With the oracle of 21:8, however, this too is utterly demolished. Ezekiel now proclaims that before the terrible swift sword of YHWH's wrath, righteousness earns no more merit than sin - surely a bleak and violent teaching, enough to set father's and son's teeth on edge.[42]

The traditional way of dealing with this apprent contradiction would be to ascribe the verse to a person other than "authentic" Ezekiel. The latter is presumably the champion of repentance, inviolability of the righteous person and of individual responsability. In the rest of the Book of Ezekiel a greater degree of differentiation is introduced between the righteous and the wicked. In Ezek 9 the accused are specified while in Ezek 18 the distinction between the two groups is established with a casuistic precision characteristic of a priest.[43]

We would suggest, however, that the apparent contradiction present in Ezek 21:8 describes an important feature of the divine wrath: its tenebrous and ultimately unscrutable nature. The unpredictability and indiscriminate slaughter which accompanies the divine wrath is one *raison d'être* for the watchman. Here one finds an additional point of

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[42]M. Fishbane, "Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel," *Int* 38 (1984) 131-50, esp. p. 145.

[43]E.g. Ezek 18:5-9, "If a man is righteous and does what is lawful and right- (6) if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of impurity, (7) does not oppress any one, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, (8) does not lend at interest or take any increase, withholds his hand from iniquity, executes true justice between man and man, (9) walks in my statues, and is careful to observe my ordinances - he is righteous, he shall surely live, says Yahweh God" (*RSV*). For comparative examples for such lists of sins see M. Weinfeld, "Instructions for Temple Visitors in the Bible and in Ancient Egypt," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 28 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982) 224-50. Some of Ezekiel's lists of sins make explicit reference to earlier Levitical laws, cf. Ezek 22:10-11 and Lev 20:10-18. According to M. Fishbane, (*Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1985] 293), such references may be used in bringing a corrective to the traditional critical stance that the prophets preceded the law. Cf. J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Gloster, Mass.: P. Smith, 1973, [1]1878) 399. "It is a vain imagination to suppose that the prophets expanded and applied the law."

contact between the Poem of Erra and the Book of Ezekiel: the wrath of both the god Erra and Yahweh is unpredictable and threatening to everyone. One may offer a socio-historical explanation for this indiscriminate slaughter. In the final analysis this particular depiction of the wrath of the gods may stem from a frequently recurring phenomenon associated with great national disasters. In the destruction, looting and indiscriminate killing which accompanied the conquest of the cities of Babylon and Jerusalem, the killing of innocent victims was inevitable. This is the predicament of any war. In the religious descriptions of historical events, the innocent victims might be identified with "the righteous" ones.

The tenebrous nature of the divine wrath and its unpredictable consequences represent some of the reasons why Ezekiel had been called as a watchman. His task is to warn the people of Judah against Yahweh (Ezek 3:17; 33:7, בן אדם צפה נתתיך לבית ישראל ושמעת מפי והזהרת אותם ממני = "Mortal, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel, when you hear a word from my mouth, you must warn them against me!"). [44] The God of Israel has become the source of danger.[45] The commentators in general capture the scandal of such a depiction of Yahweh's character,

> The enemy of whom Ezekiel is to give warning is not any foreign foe but - no room is left for any doubt about it - Yahweh himself! It is from Yahweh that the danger threatens Israel; it is his action as judge that overhangs the nation and constitutes the most genuine and most menacing of dangers.[46]

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[44]For the translation of the second part of this verse we follow Grenberg, (*Ezekiel 1-20,* 84), who points out that הזהיר "admonish" is found with מן only in these two passages: "An appropriate sense for all its occurrences is 'advise of the danger or evil consequences coming from someone or something' - in other words 'warn against.'" The LXX has attempted to avoid the offense of such a representation of Yahweh by translating 3:17 with διασειλήσῃ αὐτοῖς παρ' ἐμοῦ = "threaten them from me (i.e., in my name); apparently followed by (*RSV*) "you shall give them warning from me," and (*NJPS*) "you must warn them for Me."

[45]The God of Israel may on occasion become an oppressive presence and a source of danger in the life of the believer. For extensive analysis of such OT texts see P. Trible, *Texts of Terror, Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (OBT 13, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) and J. L. Crenshaw, *A Whirlpool of Torment* (OBT 12, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984). After a painstaking analysis of pertinent passages relating to the life of Saul, D. Gunn was unable to determine the exact reason for Saul's rejection by Yahweh. He concludes by saying that the ultimate reason for Saul's demise is to be sought in "the dark side of Yahweh," cf. D. M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul, An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (JSOT Suppl. 14, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980).

[46]Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 443.

Ezekiel has been appointed a watchman who, when he hears a word from Yahweh's mouth, has a stern duty to warn his people concerning the wrath of their God. Ezekiel's task is not limited only to the delivery of a legal death sentence to the people as Wilson suggests.[47] His role as watchman is broader. Moreover, Ezek 3:20 adds that if Yahweh lays a stumbling block (מכשול) in front of a righteous person, that person will die because the watchman (Ezekiel) has not uttered a warning. The expression "to put a stumbling block" occurs only in one other place, Lev 19:14, where the Israelite is forbidden "to put a stumbling block before" a blind person.[48] The divine judgment is described in terms of an act prohibited to humans. Yahweh follows ethical rules which differ from those which he requires from humans. Ezekiel must be on a constant *qui vive* in respect to Yahweh. He is appointed to act as someone who has been given the prerogative to avert such an ignominy. In Zimmerli's opinion,

> the complete irrationality of the divine activity is discernible in this announcement: Yahweh, the enemy of his people, who draws the sword against them to annihilate them because of their disobedience - Yahweh at the same time, however, the God who sets up a watchman for his people, who will warn them of the sword in which he himself comes, and thus tries to make that sword ineffectual.(...) Such is divine logic![49]

However, in this context, it might be inappropriate to draw conclusions concerning the irrationality of divine activity or the incoherence of the divine logic. Yahweh's irrationality is not the issue in the Book of Ezekiel. Rather, the appointment of Ezekiel as a watchman underlines Yahweh's benevolence toward his people. The watchman with his specific activity of uttering a warning makes it possible for the righteous to escape, offerring an equal possibility for the wicked to repent. Thus in the Book of Ezekiel wrath and benevolence have their source in Yahweh himself. By contrast in the Poem of Erra, the

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[47]According to R. R. Wilson, "An Interpretation of Ezekiel's Dumbness," *VT* 22 (1972) 91-104, Ezekiel's task is simply "to deliver to the accused a legal decision which Yahweh has already given. Thus the image of the prophetic watchman who warns of imminent danger has been influenced by the image of the prophet who is the messenger of the Divine Judge. No other task is given to the prophet in iii 16b-21. He is only to bring Yaheh's word to the people" (p. 96). In our opinion, the text does not warrant such a severe limitation of Ezekiel's role as a watchman.

[48]So Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 85.

[49]Zimmerli, *Ezekiel, II,* 185.

benevolence toward the humans comes almost entirely from Išum. The benevolent Išum succeeds in placating the wrathful god Erra and in so doing saves a remnant.

A certain similarity exists between Išum the intercessor for the Babylonians who tries to placate Erra's wrath, and the prophet Ezekiel who attempts to appease Yahweh's anger against the people of Judah. As pointed out in our section 4.1. on שׂאם and *leqû šēṭūtu* = "holding someone in contempt"), both Išum and Ezekiel have a role in placating the offended *amour propre* of Erra and Yahweh respectively.

b. Ezekiel and Išum as Guardians of a Love Relationship

A further correlation may be suggested between the role of Išum as the protector of divine and human love-making and Ezekiel's rebuke of Jerusalem because of her unfaithfulness to Yahweh. The Poem of Erra begins with the god Erra in his chamber making love with his consort Mami (I 20). Išum, whose role is to watch over this serious activity which in the ancient Near East was considered to be under particular divine protection and regulations,[50] goes to stir up his master.

Moreover, in the incantation texts Išum is presented as the one who has the power to rebuke the evil spirits. Išum's role appears to be in warding off the destructive powers which could harm persons making love. In one prayer to Nergal, the petitioners begs the god of pestilence, who was also identified with Erra, not to harm or strike the "man who in love approaches a woman."[51] In this prayer Erra/Nergal is presented as a god who on occasion becomes a danger and destroyer of love among the people. This feature reappears in the Poem of Erra (cf. below).

If one may speak of Yahweh's consort, in the Book of Ezekiel it is the city of Jerusalem which occupies this role. Ezek 16:8 describes a love and marriage relationship between Yahweh and Jerusalem,

> ...you were at the age for love (עת דדים); and I spread my skirt over

[50]On this point see our discussion of the Atraḫasīs epic in our section 5.1. We may suggest that love-making had to be under Išum's divine protection because of the possibility of procreation. An unsanctioned creative act was bound to have disastrous consequences: grotesque, unnatural, fearsome, destructive offspring, the likes of monsters, demons, evil spirits, chaotic beasts of all sorts. On the problems which illicit procreation entailed in the ancient Near East see P. D. Hanson, "Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6-11," *JBL* 96 (1977) 195-233, esp. p. 215.

[51]Cf. H. Zimmern, "Das Nergallied Berl. VAT 603 = Philad. CBM 11344 = Lond. Sm. 526," *ZA* 31 (1917-18) 111-21, esp. pp. 112-3.

you, and covered your nakedness; yea, I plighted my troth to you and entered into a covenant with you says Yahweh God, and you became mine.

The fact that the term אהב is not used in the Book of Ezekiel to designate the love between Yahweh and Jerusalem is not a major obstacle for the interpretation we are suggesting. In our section 5.7. we point out that the remnant motif in the Book of Ezekiel occurs in passages where the key terms which designate the remnant do not appear. Nevertheless, the Book of Ezekiel contains an elaborate doctrine of the remnant. The Book of Ezekiel speaks of love between Yahweh and Jerusalem, but as a love gone awry. Therefore, Ezekiel uses a rare word עגבה which designates the betrayal of that love. The term is used in a highly *polemical* way. By speaking of carnal lust, of ignoble and illicit relations, Ezekiel denounces the religious infidelity and straying of Jerusalem and her sister.

The depiction of Jerusalem as Yahweh's unfaithful and ungrateful wife (Ezek 16), of the inordinate love (עגבה) and the multiple amorous affairs of the two sisters who became prostitutes (Ezek 23) represent the most striking passages in the Book of Ezekiel. The numerous attempts to psychoanalyze Ezekiel have drawn extensively on these chapters in order to demonstrate the prophet's unconscious sexual regression. However, in the light of Išum's role as the protector of divine and human love-making we would be inclined to see Ezekiel's invective against Jerusalem's unfaithfulness as an example of his role as a guardian of the love relationship between Yahweh and Jerusalem. The prophet Ezekiel has been likened to a singer of love songs (שיר עגבים, Ezek 33:32), and indeed chapter 16 offers a detailed description of all the stages of the love relationship between Yahweh and Jerusalem including its deterioration: his pity at her birth (vv 4-5); Jerusalem's maidenhood and desirability (v 6-7); betrothal and marriage (v 8); Jerusalem's multiple infidelities (vv 15-35, esp. v 32 "adulterous wife who receives strangers instead of her husband"); His judgemnt upon her as upon "women who break wedlock" (v 38); renewal of the covenant which Yahweh made with Jerusalem "in the days of her youth" (v 60). Ezek 23 further develops the imagery of adultery of the two sisters Samaria and Jerusalem. In our opinion, Ezekiel's message should not be perceived as an announcement of the definitive rupture of the love relationship between Yahweh and Jerusalem. Ezekiel is its guardian. As pointed out by A. Néher, the symbolism of the "marital relationship" used by Ezekiel places an emphasis on the children who are a guarantee of the future of

the nation, "La logique même du symbolisme conjugal veut que l'union actuelle ait un landemain. Ce sont les enfants qui incarnent ce landemain, eux qui prolongent l'amour et en attestent la réalité."[52]

By denouncing the relationship which went afoul, Ezekiel fights in an indirect way for the restitution of the pure love. This is part of his prophetic activity as a watchman. Ezekiel is comparable to Išum in this role of warding off negative, destructive influences.

Ezekiel's polemic against the religious infidelity of Jerusalem and her sister portrayed in terms of lascivious and nymphomaniacal behavior, is compararable to the polemical attitude reflected in the Poem of Erra concerning the city of Uruk and its orgiastic practices (Erra IV 52-62).

52 In Uruk, the seat of Anum and Ištar, a city of prostitutes, courtesans
and hierodules, (*kezrē*[*ti*] *šamḫātu u ḫarimā*[*ti*])[53]
53 whom Ištar deprived of husbands and whom she put under their own authority,[54]
54 the Sutû men and women vociferate,
55 they rose in Eanna the transvestites and cultic dancers (*kurgarri u issinn*[*i*])[55]
whose manhood Ištar turned into wom[anliness]

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[52]A. Néher, "Le symbolisme conjugal: expression de l'histoire dans l'Ancien Testament," *RHPR* 34 (1954) 30-49, esp. p. 42. Cf. also A. Fitzgerald, "The Mythological Background for the Presentation of Jerusalem as a Queen, and False Worship as Adultery in the Old Testament," *CBQ* 34 (1972) 403-16.

[53]The *kezrētu*-prostitutes are women with a special hair-do characterizing their status (so *CAD K* 314); The *ḫarīmtu*-women are another kind of prostitutes (*CAD* Ḫ 101). However, see the view of D. Arnaud, "La prostitution sacrée en Mésopotamie, un mythe historiographique?" *RHR* 183 (1973) 111-15, who qustions the aleged existence of cultic prostitution in Mesopotamia.

[54]In the understanding and translation of this line we follow Cagni, *PE*, 51 n. 128.

[55]On *kurgarrû* und *assinnu* see *CAD K* 558; *CAD A/II* 341. These terms designate members of the temple personnel, most often mentioned in connection with Ištar. They were performing games, plays, dances and music as part of the ritual of the great festivals, and were dressed in distinctive garments. In *The Descent of Ištar* the reference to the *kurgarrû* as neither male nor female may indicate that they were transvestites performing in female apparel. The possibility that in certain epoques these terms referred to homosexuals should not be excluded, cf. W. H. Ph. Römer, *Sumerische "Königshymnen" der Isin-Zeit* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 166; *idem*., "Randbemerkungen zur Travestie von Deut 22,5," in *Travels in the World of the Old Testament, Studies Presented to M. A. Beek* (ed. M. S. H. G. Heerma Van Voss *et al*., Assen: Gorcum, 1974) 217-22; J. Bottéro, "Homosexualität," *RlA IV* 459-68. Cf. also a somewhat different explanation of J.- J. Glassner, "Innana et les me," *Actes de la XXVe RAI* (Philadelphia, 1988, to appear in 1989) p. 10, "le monde de l'enfance: le nom kur.gar.ra, vraisemblablement 'fais des petits tas,' comme du reste pi.li.pi.li, "qui ne cesse de faire pipi," semble bien faire allusion, de façon imagée, à des êtres non encore arivés à maturités et qui, de ce fait, car ils échappent aux normes contraignantes de la société, sont aptes à se débrouiller dans des situations transitoires."

in order to strike people with religious awe,
56 the carriers of daggers and razors, of stylets and flint knives
57 Who, to the delight of Ištar's heart, give themselves
up to forbidden actions (*asakku akālu*).[56]
58 A severe and stubborn governor you placed over them,
60 who maltreated them and ne[glected] their rites.
61 Ištar was angered and wrathful against Uruk.
62 She levied the enemy and swept away the country
like grain on the surface of the water.

Bottéro sees the causes which are at the origin of the capture of Uruk by the Sutû in the upheaval provoked by the excesses of the lascivious Ištar cult. The disturbances in the city have brought about a new governor who tried to control the situation by interfering in the affairs of the Ištar temple in the city. This in turn angered the goddess who punished the city by delivering it up to the enemy.

> A Uruk, ce sont apparemment les rites plus ou moins orgiaques et lascifs, de tradition dans cette ville, autour de la déesse Ištar... qui avaient déclanché, d'abord, une émeute de la partie métèque de la population, laquelle avait provoqué la mise en place d'un nouveau "gouverneur", ennemi de ces liscences et qui les avait interdites, irritant ainsi la déesse: celle-ci avait donc, en retour, ouvert la cité à l'"énnemi" et causé sa ruine.[57]

Išum accuses Erra of having brought about the conditions which have provoked Ištar's anger so that she stopped protecting her city. Išum's polemic is ultimately directed against Erra, because the latter, with a Machiavellian scheming, had provoked the disturbance of Ištar's cult, initiating a vicious circle - religious negligence of the cult angered the goddess who abandoned her city.

Alberktson, sees the destruction of Uruk as a consequence of the religious negligence in the cult which angered Ištar. Her anger is manifest in enemy hordes invading the city of the culprits.

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[56]Cf. *CAD A/II* 326-7, *asakku akālu*, "to infinge upon a taboo." F. Thureau-Dangin, "Asakku," *RA* 38 (1941) 41-3.

[57]J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 715-16. Cf. also W. von Soden, "Etemenanki vor Asarhaddon nach der Erzählung vom Turmbau zu Babel und dem Erra-Mythos," *UF* 3 (1971) 253-63, esp. p. 255, "die in Tafel IV 56-62 geschilderten Unruhen in Uruk, die offenbar auch den Tempelkult stark in Mitleidenschaft zogen ... (der Text spricht) von dem Zorn der Ištar über die an ihrem Heiligtum verübten Frevel." Von Soden's attempt to relate these disturbances in Uruk to the time of Eriba-Marduk (770-760 BCE) has been questioned by Bottéro.

> It seems to yield a more satisfactory interpretation and a better continuity in the narrative if we understand l. 60 as a description of the act of negligence which aroused Ištar's anger in l.61. This gives a natural sequence in ll. 61-63: the cause, the fact, and the result of the deity's anger.[58]

In the composition of chapters 16 and 23, the author or redactor appears to have have drawn his material from several sources. On the one hand, the legal motif of the charge of adultery may stem from the ancient ordeal imposed upon a woman accused of adultery.[59] On the other hand, as pointed out by A. Néher, the symbolism of the "marital relationship" between Yahweh and Israel, is found in Hosea and Jeremiah as well. We would suggest that the role of Išum as the guardian of the love relationship of gods and humans might be reflected in Ezekiel's concern for the love relationship between Yahweh and his people.

c. The Difference Between Ezekiel and Išum

Hruška notes that Išum as Erra's lieutenant is somewhat different from other vizier figures in Akkadian literature like Usmu, Namtar, Ninsibur, Nusku.[60] Išum never repeats the command of Erra word for word. He appears as someone who is Erra's partner in a dialogue of equals, and not as a servant or a subordinate. Išum pays homage to and praises Erra (IIC 2-7; IIID 2-15; V 17-19), but he never bows in front of him nor kisses Erra's feet. Or as Hruška puts it, "Von einer untertätigen Haltung oder Verharrung in Proskynese kann nicht die Rede sein."[61] In the case of Ezekiel he does not converse with Yahweh as his equal. Before uttering an intercessory prayer in order to preserve the remnant of Israel from Yahweh's wrath, Ezekiel falls upon his face in *proskynesis* (Ezek 9:8 ואפלה על פני ואזעק ואמר אהה אדני יהוה). In the Book of Ezekiel, the inferior relationship of the creature toward the creator is preserved.[62]

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[58]B. Alberktson, *History and the Gods* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1967) 33-34. On the basis of this text Alberktson shows that the author of the Poem of Erra was familiar with the idea that negligence in the field of worship could provoke the divine wrath.

[59]Cf. M. Fishbane, "Accusations of Adultery: A Study of Law and Scribal Practice in Numbers 5:11-31," *HUCA* 45 (1974) 25-45, esp. 42 (on Ezek 16 and 23).

[60]B. Hruška, "Einige Überlegungen zur Erraepos," *BiOr* 30 (1973) 3-7, ep. p. 5.

[61]B. Hruška, *art. cit.*, p. 5.

[62]The prophet is addressed 92 times with בן אדם. Yahweh speaks to him without using his name (the name Ezekiel occurs only twice). K. Koch, *The Prophets. The Babylonian and Persian Periods* (Engl. transl. by M. Kohl, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 89, notes that the "collective word אדם has an underlying note of helplessness and frailty."

Frankena was the first to suggest that exploring the possible similarities between the respective roles of the prophet Ezekiel and Išum might prove fruitful.[63] He intended to produce a more extensive study of the parallels which he could only mentioned in his inaugural lecture. Unfortunately he never continued the task he proposed in his relatively short lecture. The above analysis confirms the correctness of his suggestion. There exists a functional correspondence in the roles of these two figures in the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra respectively. What is particularly significant is the existence of content parallels between the two works. Both Išum and Ezekiel are present in order to placate and reason the wrathful divinity and they both watch over the love relationships of Erra and Yahweh respectively.

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[63]R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 21.

5.7. THE REMNANT AND RESTORATION MOTIFS IN THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL AND THE POEM OF ERRA

5.7.1. The Motif of the Remnant in the Old Testament[1]

In the Old Testament the motifs of the remnant and the promise of restoration can be seen as part of a larger theme of divine grace and clemency in the midst of judgment.[2] The motif of the remnant is found in the announcements of several prophets like Amos,[3] Isaiah,[4] Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and Micah.[5] The prospect of mercy and

[1]Here are some works which treat the motif of the remnant in the OT, G. F. Hasel, *The Remnant. The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Andrews University Monographs, Studies in Religion V, Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1972, [2]1974); W. E. L. Müller, *Die Vorstellung vom Rest im Alten Testament* (Leipzig and Borsdorf: W. Hoppe, [1]1939, Neuauflage, durchgesehen, überarbeitet, mit Ergänzungen und einem Nachtrag versehen, von H. D. Preuss, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973); G. Gerleman, "Rest und Überschuss. Eine terminologische Studie," in *Travels in the World of the Old Testament, Fs M. A. Beck*, in coll. *Studia Semitica Neerlandica* 16 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974) 71-4. H. Dittmann, "Die heilige Rest im A.T.," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 87 (1914) 603-18; O. Schilling, *Rest in der Prophetie des Alten Testaments* (Unpublished diss., University of Münster, 1942); S. Garofalo, *La nozione profetica de "Resto d'Israele"* (Contributo alla theologia del V.T., Rome, 1942); D. M. Warne, *The Origin, Development and Significance of the Concept of Remnant in the Old Testament* (Unpublished diss., University of Edinburgh, 1958).

[2]A notable example of this relationship may be found in the flood story (Gen 7:23 [J]), "Only Noah was left (וַיִּשָּׁאֵר), and those that were with him in the ark"; (Gen 6:8[J]) mentions the grace (חֵן) which Yahweh had for Noah. R. de Vaux described the relationship between divine judgment and grace in the following way, "Le châtiment qu'annoncent les Prophètes est rarement si total qu'il ne fasse la part de la miséricorde divine, ni l'horizon qu'ils découvrent, si obstinément noir, qu'on n'y puisse voir poindre l'aube du salut," in "Le 'reste d'Israël' d'après les prophètes," *RB* 42 (1933) 526-39, esp. p. 526, reprinted in R. de Vaux, *Bible et Orient* (Paris: Cerf, 1967) 25-39, Engl. transl. by D. McHugh under the title "The Remnant of Israel' According to the Prophets," in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971) 15-30.

[3]P. Mamie, "Le livre d'Amos, le châtiment et le Reste d'Israël," *Nova et vetera* 37 (1962) 217-23. J. Meinhold, *Studien zur israelitischen Religionsgeschichte* (Band 1, *Der heilige Rest*, Teil 1, *Elias, Amos, Hosea, Jesaja*, Bonn: A. Marcus & E. Weber, 1903); P. Zerafa, "Il Resto d'Israele nei profeti preesilici," *Angelicum* 49 (1972) 3-29.

[4]G. F. Hasel, "Linguistic Considerations Regarding the Translation of Isaiah's Shear Yashub. A Reassessment," *AUSS* 9 (1971) 36-46; S. H. Blank, "The Current Misinterpretation of Isaiah's She'ar Yashub," *JBL* 67 (1948) 211-15. U. Stegemann, "Der Restgedanke bei Isaias," *BZ* 13 (1969) 161-86; F. Dreyfus, "La doctrine du Reste d'Israël chez le prophète Isaïe," *RSPhTh* 39 (1955) 351-86; R. Hoshizaki, *Isaiah's Conception of the Remnant* (Unpublished diss., Louisville, 1955).

[5]F. Dreyfus, "Reste d'Israël," *DBS X* (1981) cols. 414-437, offers a résumé of the motif of the remnant in each of the Old Testament prophets.

restoration is found in Zeph 3:13; Zech 8:6, 11; Mic 2:12; 4:7; 5:7; Isa 11:11-16. Isaiah at times looks forward to a total destruction of people and city (6:11-13a; 5:13f.; 29:1-6; 32:11-14), yet at other times he believes firmly that a remnant (שאר ישוב) will return (7:3; 10:20-22; 28:5). R. de Vaux,[6] had suggested to distinguish three stages in the idea of the remnant in the Old Testament: a.) When the pre-exilic prophets, Amos, Micah and Isaiah talk about the remnant they refer to the Israelites left in Palestine after the military disasters; b.) In the exilic period, and for Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Ezechiel, the remnant does not refer to the survivors in Palestine but to the exiles who will eventually return from Babylonia to form the new Israel; c.) Among the prophets of the restoration, the remnant which became the bearer of messianic hopes, is identified with the community around Ezra.

In the Old Testament there occur six different terms which together with their derivatives express the idea of the remnant, שאר, פלט, מלט, יתר, שרד, and אחרת.

5.7.2. The Remnant and Restoration Motifs in the Book of Ezekiel[7]

Here we are primarily concerned with the terms used to designate the remnant in the Book of Ezekiel: יתר, מלט, פלט, שאר, and אחרת. According to the statistics of Heaton,[8] Wildberger,[9] and Hasel,[10] in Ezekiel שאר occurs four times as a verb in the niph'al form (נשאר) and seven times as a noun (שארית). This term has a rather limited significance

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[6]R. de Vaux, "Le 'reste d'Israël' d'après les prophètes," *RB* 42 (1933) 526-39, esp. p. 530.

[7]Y. Hattori, *The Prophet Ezechiel and his Idea of the Remnant* (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1968) cf. *Dissertation Abstracts International* 29 (1968-69) N° 1946.

[8]E. W. Heaton, "The Root שאר and the Doctrine of the Remnant," *JTS* 3 (1952) 27-39, esp. p. 30-31. According to this author the basic meaning of the root שאר is "to remain or be left over from a larger number or quantity which has in some way been disposed of," p. 30. Heaton argued that שאר primarily directs attention, not forwards to the residue, but backwards to the whole of which it had been a part and to the devastation and loss by which it had been brought into being" (p. 31).

[9]H. Wildberger, "שאר übrig sein," *THAT II* (1979) cols. 844-55. In the OT the root שאר occurs 226 times, the noun שאר (27x), the noun שארית (66x) and the rest as a verb mostly in niph'al (94x), hiph'il (38x) and only once in qal.

[10]Cf. G. F. Hasel, "Semantic Values of Derivatives of the Hebrew Root שאר," *AUSS* 11 (1973) 152-69 esp. p. 155. Hasel criticizes and rejects Heaton's supposed "backward" reference of the term שאר (p. 159).

in the Book of Ezekiel, since out of eleven[11] occurrences only five refer to Judah: 5:10 (against Jerusalem) "And I will scatter all your survivors (שאריתך) to the winds" (*NIV*); 9:8 and 11:13 (שארית ישראל); 6:12 (against the children of Israel) "and the one who is left ... shall die of famine" (והנשאר); 17:21 (against king Zedekiah and his entourage) "And the survivors (והנשרים) shall be scattered to the winds." Five times it refers to the rest or residue of the nations (שארית הגוים, i.e., nations surrounding Judah),[12] 36:3, 4, 5, 36; 25:16 (שארית הופ הים "the remnant of the sea-coast, i.e., the Philistines), and once to Ezekiel himself, 9:8 ונאשאר אני "I was left alone." It is clear from these examples that the term שאר is not found in contexts with an explicit message of hope and restoration. As Heaton put it, "This is not to deny that the prophet (or one of his disciples) looks forward to the rebirth of Israel in the Babylonian exile, but for this new people the root שאר is never employed."[13]

In Ezekiel 9 the existence of a pious remnant of the Jerusalemites is implied. In the midst of the carnage wrought in Jerusalem by the seven executioners of Yahweh, Ezekiel left alone (נאשאר)[14] (9:8) breaks out in a cry of supplication, "Ah, Yahweh God! will you destroy all that remains of Israel (כל שארית ישראל) in the outpouring of your wrath upon Jerusalem." The fact that he intercedes although he has already been shown (9:4) that a "remnant" of the pious will be saved, can be explained

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[11]The root שאר (11x) in Ezekiel, 5:10; 6:12; 9:8 (2x); 11:13; 17:21; 25:16; 36:3, 4, 5, 36. In Ugaritic š'r means "piece, remains" e.g., the fowls eat the dead Môt šir lšir "piece by piece" *UT* 49 II 35, cf. P. L. Watson, "The Death of 'Death' in the Ugaritic Texts," *JAOS* 92 (1972) 60, n. 4.

[12]In his article, "The Rest of the Nations," *JSS* 2 (1957) 225-31, J. Morgenstern pointed out that the expression שארית הגוים designates all that was left of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Philistines after a calamitous event which left each but a remnant of what it had been previously (pp. 226-7). However, his argument that these nations were decimated in the course of Xerxes' fatal campaign against the Greeks in 481 BCE where they presumably participated as allies of the Persians is inconclusive; for a critique see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II,* 237. On the remnant of the nations see also V. Herntrich, "The Remnant and the Nations" in "λεῖμμα," *TDNT IV* 208.

[13]E. W. Heaton, "The Root שאר and the Doctrine of the Remnant," *JTS* 3 (1952) 30. Hasel concludes his study on the semantic values of the root שאר in the Old Testament, saying that the term displays a bi-polarity of negative and positive aspects. Negatively, derivatives of שאר can express total loss or painful decimation with emphasis on utter insignificance. Positively, they can express the immense future potentiality inherent in the remnant, no matter what its size. This bi-polarity interacts constantly by forming different emphases according to the particular semantic value of each individual context, "Semantic Values of Derivatives of the Hebrew Root שאר," *AUSS* 11 (1973) 169.

[14]*GK* #64i explain the anomalous form as a fusion of ואשאר and ונשאר. Cf. the thorough discussion of this problematic form in Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 110.

as a stereotyped formulation of such intercessory prayers.[15] It can also stand for the astonishment of the prophet: "If the sanctuary gave no asylum, what hope was there for those outside?"[16] The expression is repeated in Ezek 11:13.

We must turn to verses in Ezekiel where other words for remnant or rest are found and which express the expectation of the deliverance and restoration.[17]

In Ezekiel the root פלט occurs ten times as a noun and once as a verb.[18] In the niph'al form the verb means "to escape, get oneself to safety, make for safety," and in the pi'el form "to deliver, to save, let escape." Four times the noun פליט designates the fugitive or refugee who escaped and survived the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 587 BCE. (Ezek 24:26, 27, 33:21, 22). Such fugitives came to consult the prophet Ezekiel in exile. In 6:8, 9 and 14:22[19] the noun פליטי (construct state)

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[15]So Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I,* 248, who compares it to the expression "the remnant of Joseph" in Am 5:15. Eichrodt's reserve concerning this stereotyped formulation does not seem justified, *Ezekiel,* 141.

[16]So Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 178. Hasel has classified the reference in Ezek 9:7(8) among instances where שארית "expresses the positive aspect of the salvation of God's people," in "Semantic Values of Derivatives of the Hebrew Root שאר," *AUSS* 11 (1973) 162. However, the context has nothing positive about it. On the contrary, Ezekiel is astounded over Yahweh's merciless destruction where apparently no remnant will be left.

[17]Seeing the way the motif of the remnant is described in Ezekiel we find the methodological requirement espoused by Heaton inadequate. He argues that "if we are to retain the word 'remnant' as characterizing the prophets' hope for Israel's future, it must surely be established that they employ the root שאר in that connexion. To use such phrases as 'the notion of the Remnant' and 'the concept of the Remnant' of oracles where the root does not occur is to run the risk of serious confusion," in "The Root שאר and the Doctrine of the Remnant," *JTS* 3 (1952) 27. Herntrich's methodological approach is more appropriate, "... expectation of the deliverance of the 'remnant' often occurs in verses in which the words for remnant or remaining are not found. But these verses can be used to fix the theological meaning only if there is a clear explication of the concept of the 'remnant,' of 'remaining,' or of 'being delivered,' " in "The 'Remnant' in the OT," article "λεῖμμα," *TDNT IV* 196-209, esp. p. 198 n. 12.

[18]The root פלט (10x) in Ezekiel, 6:8 (noun, פליטי חרב "who escape the sword"); 6:9 (noun with a suffix, פליטיהם "those of you who escape"); 7:16 (2x), (as a verb in qal 3 pers.masc.pl. פלטו, and as noun with a suffix, פליטיהם); 11:1, 13 (a proper noun, פלטיהו, a masculine personal name); 14:22 (noun, פלטה "remnant"); 24:26, 27; 33:21, 22 (noun, הפליט "the fugitive"). Cf. S. Mandelkern, *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae* (Jerusalem/Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1978) 950; G. Fohrer, "The Stems פלט and מלט in the Old Testament," in the article "σῴζω," *TDNT VII* 978-80; E. Ruprecht, "פלט retten," *THAT II* (1979) cols. 420-27; G. F. Hasel, "Remnant," *IDBS* (1976) 735-6. According to Hasel the root פלט occurs 89 times in the OT.

[19]Ezek 14:21-23 states that when the exiles behold the sins of some of the survivors of Jerusalem's destruction they will be comforted in the justice of divine judgment. M. Fishbane, "Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel," *Int* 38 (1984) 131-50, notes that these verses represent "an outright contradiction of the principles enunciated in verses 12-20, for the sin-filled survivors are saved despite their sins: as an object lesson for the exiles and not because of their own righteousness" (p. 137).

occurs in a context reflecting the positive aspect of salvation. The remnant is left for a purpose. Twice (6:7, 10), the term is related to the stereotyped "recognition formula" (*Erkenntnisformel*: "You shall know that I am Yahweh"), while in 14:22 the purpose of the remnant is to justify the harshness of Yahweh's judgment. In 11:1, 13, one finds the masculine personal name פלטיהו, which can be translated as "Yahweh's Remnant."[20] From an onomastic point of view the Hebrew name פלטיהו corresponds to similar Akkadian names like *Riḫat* ^{d}*Anu* = "Anu's Remnant," and ^{d}*Nabû-riḫta-uṣur* = "Nabû, protect the remnant!"[21] In the spirit, Ezekiel was transported to the gates of the temple in Jerusalem and there he saw the abominations perpetrated in it. The sudden death of a man bearing such a significant name appeared as an evil omen to Ezekiel.[22] He exclaimed, "Ah Yahweh, will you make a full end of the remnant (שארית) of Israel!" (11:13). He receives a "word from Yahweh" telling him that Yahweh counts on his fellow exiles for whom, in the meanwhile, Yahweh has become a sanctuary. Moreover, he is given the promise of return and restoration, "I will gather you (קבץ) from the peoples, and assemble (אסף) you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel" (11:17). According to Ezek 11:14-21, the Israelites left in Jerusalem regarded the exiles as castaways and assumed that the blessing of God is with those left in Jerusalem. The word given to Ezekiel is that Yahweh is with the people who went into exile and will bring them back and give them possession of the land.

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[20]Cf. J. Goettesberger, "Zu Ez. 9:8 und 11:13," *BZ* 19 (1931) 6-19, who translates the name with "Jahwe lässt entrinnen"; cf. also R. de Vaux, "Le 'reste d'Israël' d'après les prophètes," *RB* 42 (1933) 536; However, see L. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees. The Sociological Background of their Faith* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, ^{3}1962) 688, n. 27, who seeks to find in פלטיהו one of the elders of Ezek 8:1 sitting in Ezekiel's house in Babylonia. This view has been rightly rejected by Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I,* 260. In 1 Chr 3:21, occurs the name פלטיה, the grandson of Zerubbalel who might correspond to the person mentioned in Neh 10:23. While in 1 Chr 4:42 there is mention of another פלטיה, a Simeonite. The name was not popular only in exilic and postexilic period. One finds formations with the root פלט in earlier periods as well, cf. פלטיאל, the name of Michal's second husband, 2 Sam 3:15 = 1 Sam 25:44 (פלטי) (cf. also פלטי in Num 13:9, a Benjaminite; and פלטי a priest in Neh 12:17).

[21]Cf. J. J. Stamm, *Die akkadische Namengebung (MVAeG* 44, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1939, ^{2}1968) 305, 288, *Aššur-riḫta-uṣur* cf. also 306, *Eriḫam* = "Er ist mir übrig geblieben."

[22]Cf. J. Strus, *Nomen-Omen: la stylistique sonore des noms propres dans le Pentateuque* (AnBib 80, Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978).

The root מלט occurs four times in the Book of Ezekiel, 17:15, (2x), 18 (all in the niph'al form); 33:5 (in the pi'el). In 17:15, 18 it refers to the king Zedekiah who broke the suzerain-vassal treaty with the king of Babylon. Several questions are asked, "Will he who does such things escape (ימלט)? Shall he break a covenant and escape (ונמלט)? In 17:18 the verdict is pronounced, "He shall not escape (לא ימלט)." The context is clearly that of judgment, and מלט denotes here the escape from punishment. In the case of Zedekiah he will not escape punishment. In Ezek 33:5 מלט in the pi'el form is used in a conditional clause where the person who would have taken the watchman's warning "would have saved his/her soul."

In the Book of Ezekiel the restoration commences with the Israel that should arise from the death of the exile, expressed in the vision of Israel's revivification in the valley filled with dry bones. New flesh grows upon them while the breath of God infuses them with new life (Ezek 37:11-14). In Rowley's words, "the Remnant was not the unsullied faithful who should maintain their purity through the general disaster, but the new Israel that should be born again, and that should fulfill its mission in a new devotion to its God."[23]

Moreover, it is emphasized that the restoration is not promised because of Israel's merit but rather in spite of it. They are offered a new hope because of God's love for God's own glory and name. "It is not for your sake that I am acting, O house of Israel! But for my holy name which you have profaned ... And I will hallow my holy name, now profaned among the nations, in whose midst you profaned it" (Ezek 36:22-25).[24] The existence of the remnant and the promise of restoration in the Book of Ezekiel must be perceived in the light of the Biblical witness to the redemptive activity of the God of Israel.

> It is called into being by God acting in judgment and grace, not by secular condition or accident of history. That is to say that the continuity of Israel's history is not expressed in any

[23]H. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election* (London: Lutherworth, 1950, [2]1952) 78. For a discussion of the doctrine of the remnant from the point of view of Systematic Theology see J. C. Campbell, "God's People and the Remnant," *SJT* 3 (1950) 78-85 (with reference to K. Barth's treatment of the remnant in his *Church Dogmatics*).

[24]The view reflected in this verse does not support Hammershaimb's argument that in the exilic period there emerged the idea of a remnant in a sense of a small group who on account of their righteousness escaped the fate of the guilty majority. Cf. E. Hammershaimb, *Some Aspects of Old Testament Prophecy from Isaiah to Malachi* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1966) 110.

> of the forces or tendencies of secular history. It comes from the redemptive action of God. One might say that Israel exists in spite of all that secular forces do.[25]

The root יתר and its derivatives occur 11 times in the Book of Ezekiel.[26] In 6:8 יתר occurs in close relationship with פלט, "Yet I will leave some of you alive (והותרתי בהיות)... some who escape the sword (פליטי חרב)." The pericope ends with a recognition formula (*Erkenntnisformel*). In 12:16 a remnant is left for a definite purpose, that they may confess their abominations among the nations, "I will let a few of them escape from the sword... (והותרתי ... מחרב)." In 14:22 a faint possibility is envisaged of leaving some survivors in Jerusalem, "Yet if there should be left (נותרה) any survivors (פלטה)." Here again יתר occurs in close relationship with פלט. In 34:18 יתר occurs twice but is not related to the motif of the remnant. It refers to the "rest of the pasture."[27]

In the prophecy against Gog it is spoken of those who will bury "those remaining (הנותרים) on the face of the land," 39:14. In 39:28, the context is that of an explicit promise of restoration. Yahweh will bring all the exiles back to their homeland," I will leave none of them remaining (ולא אותיר עוד מהם)." In 48:15, 18, 21, 23 יתר occurs in the context of the allocation of the land to the different tribes, and except in v. 23 it does not refer to the motif of the remnant.

The two occurrences of the noun אחרית in the Book of Ezekiel refer to the remnant.[28] In the oracle against the whoring Oholiba (23:25)

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[25]So J. C. Campbell, "God's People and the Remnant," *SJT* 3 (1950) 78-85, esp. p. 79. Cf. also H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel* (London: SCM, 1956) 103 n. 3.

[26]Ezek 6:8 (hiph'il); 12:16 (hiph'il); 14:22 (niph'al); 34:18 (2x niph'al ptc; and noun); 39:14 (niph'al ptc); 39:28 (hiph'il); 48:15, 18, 21 (niph'al); 48:23 (noun). On יתר see R. de Vaux, "Le 'reste d'Israël' d'après les prophètes," *RB* 42 (1933) 528 n. 1. De Vaux pointed out that the root יתר is used synonymously with שאר. He described the meaning of יתר in the following way, "(Le mot) dit ce qui est en surplus, ce qui excède ... c'est-à-dire qu'il tire l'attention non pas vers le reste qui subsiste, mais vers l'ensemble auquel ce reste était adjoint." E. W. Heaton, "The Root שאר and the Doctrine of the Remnant," *JTS* 3 (1952) 29 n. 1. Heaton defines the difference between the meaning of יתר and שאר by saying that יתר does not direct one's attention as consistently as שאר backwards to an antecedent loss.

[27]The ruling classes are charged with appropriating the best for themselves, damaging the means of life for others and inflicting callous wrongs to the poor. It is an old prophetic protest, cf. Isa 1:23; 3:14; 5:8; Hos 4:7-11; 7:7-6; Amos 3:9; 4:1-6; Mic 3:13, so Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 376.

[28]Cf. G. F. Hasel, "Remnant," *IDBS* (1976) 735; E. Jenni, "אחר," *THAT I* (1978) 110-18.

Yahweh threatens, "and your remnant (ואחריתך) shall fall by the sword, ... and your remnant (ואחריתך) shall be devoured by fire." There is no promise of restoration here.

In an important article Widengren[29] has demonstrated that in analyzing the motif of the remnant and restoration one must take into account the motif of "gathering the scattered people." The stereotyped formula "I will scatter (פוץ) you/them among the nations, and disperse (זרה בארצות) you/them in the countries" occurs on several occasions in the Book of Ezekiel, (11:16 only פוץ; 12:15; 20:23; 22:15; 29:12 Egypt; 30:23, 26 Egypt; 36:19).[30] The proclamation of disaster has its corresponding prophecy of restoration where the gathering of the dispersed is promised.[31] One notes the existence of a stereotyped form with two word-pairs in apposition פוץ/קבץ = "scatter/gather" and זרה/אסף = "disperse/assemble." There are also some variations where the terms לקח, בוא and שוב are introduced. Widengren has collected a series of examples from Akkadian literature where corresponding Akkadian word-pairs occur, *sapāḫu* "to scatter," opposed to *paḫāru* "to

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[29]G. Widengren, "Yahweh's Gathering of the Dispersed," in *In the Shelter of Elyon, Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* (eds. W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer, *JSOT* Supplement 31, Sheffield: Almond, 1984) 227-45. While he mentions the earlier studies by J. Meinhold and by W. E. L. Müller, he has apparently neglected to consult Hasel's study on *The Remnant*, which in terms of the Akkadian material covers similar ground. Contrary to what Widengren affirms (cf. p. 234), the concept שוב שבות is not lacking in Ezekiel. שוב occurs 20 times(!) in Ezekiel, cf. E. Würthwein, "The Prophetic Concept of Conversion," *TDNT VI* 984-89, and H. G. Reventlow, *Wächter über Israel, Ezechiel und seine Tradition, BZAW* 82 (1962) 118, 131; E. L. Dietrich, *Schûb schebôt. Die Endzeitliche Wiederherstellung bei den Propheten, BZAW* 40 (1925).

[30]According to J. Pons, "Le vocabulaire d'Ézéchiel 20: Le prophète s'oppose à la vision deutéronomiste de l'histoire," *BETL* 74 (1986) 214-33, esp. pp. 224-5, the term פוץ in hiph'il with God as subject occurs 22 times in the Old Testament. The term occurs only twice in Deuteronomy (4:27-28 and 28:64). Ezekiel is using the term in a particular way by combining it with זרה בארצות ("to disperse among the countries") an expression unique to Ezekiel (12:15; 20:23; 22:15; 29:12; 30:23, 26) (with one exception in Ps 106:27). Likewise זרה in niph'al occurs only in Ezekiel (6:8; 36:19).

[31]The verbs used are קבץ "to gather" and אסף "to assemble." Cf. 11:16 פוץ in opposition to קבץ and אסף of v 17; in the case of Egypt, 29:12 פוץ and זרה in opposition to קבץ of v 13; To the proclamation of doom in 36:19 (זרה and פוץ) corresponds the prophecy of restoration in 36:24 "I will take you (לקח) from the nations and gather (קבץ) you from all the countries, and bring you (בוא) into your own land." In 39:27, one finds simply the promise of restoration, "When I have brought them back (שוב) from the peoples, and gathered (קבץ) them from their enemies' land..."

gather."[32] In most cases it is the king who acts as the gatherer of the dispersed, and once the god fulfills the same function.[33] These examples demonstrate that the motif of restoration is very ancient indeed, spanning the time from Hammurapi, Esarhaddon and as late as the period of Ezekiel and Cyrus. The latter is said "to have gathered the inhabitants and restored them to their habitation."[34]

5.7.3. Preliminary Conclusions

The remnant motif in the Book of Ezekiel confirms G. Hasel's conclusion that in the study of this motif one should avoid excessive stress upon the meaning or the presence of the root שאר,[35] or other terms

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[32]In the 18th century BCE prologue of the Codex Hammurapi the Babylonian ruler calls himself, *mupaḫḫir nišī sapḫāti Ɏa Isin* "the gatherer of the scattered people of Isin." (*CH* II 49), cf. A. Finet, *Le Code de Hammurapi* (Paris: Cerf, 1973) 35. Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE), says of his own actions toward Babylon, *nišāšu ḫāti upaḫḫirāma utēr ašrūšin* "Its scattered people I gathered and then restored to their place" R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* (*AfO* Beiheft 9, Graz: E. Weidner, 1956) 21 Ep 23.18.

[33]In a psalm of lamentation a god is said to gather the dispersed, *ša sapḫi t[upaḫḫara gā]nunšu* "The house of the scattered thou gatherest." E. Ebeling, *Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung"* (Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953) 44.53., as translated by G. Widengren, "Yahweh's Gathering of the Dispersed," in *In the Shelter of Elyon, Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* (eds. W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer, *JSOT* Supplement 31, Sheffield: Almond, 1984) 227-45, esp. p. 236.

[34]Cyrus (557-529 BCE) in his Cylinder declares, "I gathered all their inhabitants and restored to their habitations (*kullat nišīšunu upaḫḫirāma utēr dadmīšun*). Furthermore, I resettled upon the command of Marduk, the great lord, all the gods (*ilāni*) of Summer and Akkad whom Nabonidus has brought into Babylon (ŠU.AN.NA.KI) to the anger of the lord of the gods, unharmed, in the chapels, the place of the gladness of heart," translation from Widengren, *art. cit.* p. 236; cf. Oppenheim's translation in ^{3}*ANET* 316. For the Akkadian text see H. Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden* (VB III, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1911) 6. For comments and bibliography on the role of Cyrus "the messiah" (Isa 45:1), see G. Widengren, "The Jewish Community under the Persians" in *Israelite and Judaean History* (eds. J. H. Hayes and J. M. Miller, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977) 515-23, and H. Cazelles, "La politique religieuse de Cyrus," in *Histoire politique d'Israël des origine à Alexandre le Grand* (Paris: Desclée, 1982) 207-16.

[35]G. F. Hasel, "Semantic Values of Derivatives of the Hebrew שאר," *AUSS* 11 (1973) 154. According to Hasel שאר designates the residual part which is left over or remains after the removal of the balance of a small part, half, or the larger whole. It may also designate the whole without the loss of any part. Hasel points out that the great variety of threats in the natural, social, political, and religious spheres precludes derivation of the root שאר from any single threat, whether the politico-military practice of total warfare (against W. E. Müller), or the Yahweh wars (against H. Wildberger). Moreover, the remnant motif has its origin neither in eschatology (against H. Gressmann), myth and cult (against S. Mowinckel), election (against O. Schilling), but in the life-and-death problem, i.e., the fundamental question of human existence and its continuity, (pp. 168-9); *idem., The Remnant. The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs: Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1972, ^{2}1974) 388.

like אחרת , יתר , מלט , פלט.[36] Such an approach, although necessary, does not succeed in describing the motif of the remnant in Ezekiel. One must pay particular attention to the contextual meaning of the above roots and their derivatives since the basic unit of oral and written communication is not the word but the sentence. As shown in the above discussion some of the key terms occur in contexts which have no direct bearing on the remnant motif. Moreover, in Ezekiel the remnant motif occurs in passages where the above roots are omitted altogether. To have a remnant means to possess continued existence, to have a possibility of restoring and continuing one's name and history. It guarantees life through perpetuation of progeny. In the Book of Ezekiel the remnant motif is closely related with that of restoration. The remnant is preserved for a definite purpose which is expressed in combination with the recognition formula (*Erkenntnisformel*), e.g., Ezek 39:28,

> Then they shall know that I am Yahweh their God because I sent them into exile among the nations, and then gathered them into their own own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations any more.

The motif of the remnant is found in the announcements of several Old Testament prophets antedating Ezekiel. However, there are some features which are highlighted in Ezekiel's proclamation of the remnant. First, he sees only a faint remnant among the population of Jerusalem.[37] The remnant of the Jerusalemites is not the primary group to which he

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[36]Most of the studies of the remnant motif have fallen short in what J. Barr aptly termed "root fallacy" and "etymologizing," *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961) 100ff., 111ff. A case of a root fallacy: It would be nonsense to argue from the common root לחם "bread" and מלחמה "war," that battles are waged for the sake of bread. In connection with the presumed etymological relationship of Akk. *Ti'âmat* and Heb. תהום, A. Heidel has offered the following illustration of the error of "etymologizing": French *actuellement* ("at present") and German *selig* ("blessed") are derived from the same root as English "actually" and "silly," respectively, yet their meanings are completely unrelated, cf. *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942, 1963) 99.

[37]Here Ezekiel partially agrees with Jeremiah, e.g., Jer 24:8-10, the bad figs are the king Zedekiah and the "remnant of Jerusalem" which shall be utterly destroyed. The "good figs" are the exiles in Babylon who will be brought back to their homeland. Jeremiah, however, combines with this relentless view the prospect of mercy by constantly warning the Jerusalemites, Jer 6:8 "Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest I be alienated from you, lest I make you a desolation;" 8:3; 45:15-17, 19-22; 44:28 (concerning a remnant of the Jerusalemites) "And those who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah, few in number; and all the remnant of Judah who came to the land of Egypt to live, shall know whose word will stand, mine or theirs." Cf. also Jer 23:3; 31:7.

announces the hope of restoration. They will not survive the coming disaster they will be scattered and destroyed (cf. Ezek 5:10).[38] Second, if there is a remnant left in Jerusalem the only purpose of their survival is to bring home to the exiles a proof of the massive destruction of Jerusalem and its inhabitants. In Ezek 12:16, the few survivors are to "confess all their abominations among the nations where they go," i.e., the self-condemnation of Israel.[39] Third, Ezekiel fixes his hope for the future, not on the survivors from the overthrow of Jerusalem, but on the faithful among the exiles out of whom the new Israel will be created, (Ezek 33-37).[40]

For Ezekiel and Jeremiah alike, the true remnant is represented by the company of exiles, i.e., by those who have survived the catastrophe through deportation. They are the ones, according to Ezekiel, to whom God appears, for whom Yahweh becomes a sanctuary (Ezek 11:16). The term שאר in Ezekiel does not designate this new people.

5.7.4. The Remnant and Restoration Motifs in the Poem of Erra

The references to the remnant motif in Akkadian literature have been collected and analyzed by G. Hasel.[41] There is no point in repeating his analysis and here we will limit ourselves only to the analysis of the remnant motif in the Poem of Erra. The remnant motif occurs

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[38]Cf. Ezek 5:10; Ezek 7:16,"And if any survivors escape (פלטו פליטהם)they will be on the mountains, like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, every one over his iniquity." In Ezek 14:22 the possibility of any survivors from Jerusalem is rather faint, "Yet, if there should be left (יותר) in it any survivors (פלט)..."

[39]This point is made by W. Günther and H. Krienke, "Remnant, Leave," *DNTT III* 247-254, esp. p. 249. Cf. also Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 190-91, "The special treatment received by Jerusalem: 14:21-23."

[40]Cf. Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 60: "Ez. holds no doctrine of a remnant among the people of Jerusalem who will survive the coming disaster." Cf. however the more balanced view of Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20,* 177: "It is true that Ezekiel's doctrine of a remnant does not suppose any righteous Jerusalemites (see 6:9; 7:16; 12:16; 14:22f.), yet it would be forcing his words here to follow (the view of) Abarbanel (that none were to be spared)."

[41]See G. Hasel, *The Remnant. The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs: Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1972, ^{2}1974) for the analysis of the remnant motif with basic bibliographical references in Sumerian texts of different genres (pp. 50-64); in *En.el.* (pp.64-67); in *Atra.* (pp. 67-75); in *Gilg.* (pp. 75-79); in Erra (pp. 79-87); in "Akkadian Prophecies" (pp. 87-88); in Assyrian royal inscriptions and letters (pp.89-100). The text quoted by Hasel from *En.el.* I 40, "That quiet may be restored. Let us have rest," has no bearing on the remnant motif. Here "rest" refers to sleep, cf. R. Labat, *Le poème babylonien de la création* (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1935) 81, "pour que nous ... puissions dormir!"

particularly in connection with Sumerian and Akkadian flood stories. In our opinion the author of the Poem of Erra refers to these ancient traditions about the flood, although in a significantly modified form.

In the Poem of Erra there occur several terms which designate the remnant motif. The adverbial noun *rīḫaniš* "remnant"[42] (V 41), is used here for the first time in the Akkadian literature in order to designate a national entity.[43] The stative (*rēḫa* I 146) occurs in parallelism with the verb *sâtu* "to remain over" (I 145).[44] Moreover, the "remnant," i.e., the humans, are compared to "the seed" (I 137) which has the capacity to sprout and replenish the devastated country.

Tablet I, contains a dialogue between Erra and Marduk where a reference is made to the Deluge[45] and to the greatly reduced number of humans who survived. The dialogue begins with Erra's attempt to persuade Marduk to vacate his shrine in Babylon so that Erra may have free rein for the execution of his plan. Marduk reticent, says that when he left his shrine once before, a devastating flood ensued which greatly diminished the human race.

I 133 I became angry long ago: I rose from my seat and contrived the Deluge (*abūbu*),

136 The bond of heaven and earth which dissolved; (caused) that the source diminished and inundation receded. I gazed again, it was difficult to tie it.[46]

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[42]On *rēḫtu(m)* "remnant" see *AHw* 968, and for the adjective *rē/īḫu(m)* "übrige, übriges," 969a.

[43]This has been pointed out by G. F. Hasel, *The Remnant. The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs: Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1972, ²1974) pp. 83-84, cf. his analysis of the material in the Poem of Erra on pp. 81-6.

[44]On the verb *sâtu* see *AHw* 1033a, and the noun *sittūtu* "die Übriggenbliebende," 1052.

[45]W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard think that the allusions to the flood in the Poem of Erra (I 132-48 and IV 50), refer to another flood unrelated to the one mentioned in *Atra.* and in *Gilg. XI*: "every detail referred to is either lacking from, or cannot be reconciled with, the various versions of the story of the great flood" (in *Atra-ḫasīs, The Babylonian Story of the Flood* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1969]) 27. In Erra I 127-45, Marduk appears as originator of the flood and not Enlil as in *Gilg. XI.* However, from the reference to "long ago" (Erra I 132), we gather that Marduk speaks of the great flood. Both Gössmann, *Das Era Epos* (Würzburg: Augustinus, 1955) 65, and Cagni, *PE*, p. 33, n. 36, argued that Marduk made a reference to the great flood. The fact that Marduk appears instead of Enlil is not such a surprise since beginning with the new Babylonian theology as found in *Enūma eliš*, Marduk replaced Enlil as supreme among the Babylonian gods.

[46]For this translation see J. Aro, "Die Fuge vom Himmel und Erde, die gelockert war, (verursachte es, daß) die Quelle abnahm und die Fluten verebbten. Ich habe sie erneut betrachtet, und sie war schwer zusammenzufügen," in "Bemerkungen zum Era-Epos," *StOr* 23 (1960) 25. A. Falkenstein, "Zur ersten Tafel des Erra-Mythos," *ZA* 53 (1959) 200-9, esp. p. 206 n. 136, offers another translation, *atūr amūrma ana petê imtarṣa* = "ich schaute erneut: Sie (= die Quellen) zu öffnen, war schwierig."

137 The offspring of the living diminished, and I did not restore them,
138 Until like a farmer I sowed their seed with my hand.[47]

After the Deluge the country was repopulated owing to Marduk who took the remaining humans whom he sowed like a farmer. The remnant of those who survived the flood was still threatened,

I 145 *nišī ša ina abūbi isitama*[48] *emura epeš šipri*
146 *kakkê[i]a usatbima uḫallaq rē[eḫa]*[49]

I 145 The people who survived the deluge and saw the carrying out of (that) work.
146 (Should I) raise my weapons to destroy the re[st]?[50]

The Poem of Erra ends with what has been aptly termed "an oracle of bliss."[51] The god Erra decrees the restoration of the ravaged country and promises the decimated Babylonians a glorious triumph over the hated enemies. The scattered remnant is assured that it shall again become a mighty people to which the inhabitants of all countries will bring tribute. Erra V 23-37,

23 He (Erra) summoned Išum to address an utterance to him,

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[47]The translation follows the one of J. Bottéro, "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 118. Cf. also J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 711, "On aura noté á quel point les auteurs (d'Erra) ont modifié la vision première du Déluge ... car il s'agit bien de ce dérnier, nommé en toutes lettres *abūbu* (I 132; 140; 145)."

[48]The verb *sâtu* means "to remain over." cf. "Counsels of a Pessimist" line 9, *nišī ibna ul isit ana dariš* "[Whatever] "humans build does not remain for ever," see W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960) pp. 108-9, more references on p. 315 n. 9. H. Wildberger, *THAT II* (1979) col. 844, relates the personal name *Isitaman* "Wer ist mir übrig geblieben?" to the same root, cf. J. J. Stamm, *Die akkadische Namengebung* (MVAeG 44, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1939, ²1968) 306.

[49]Cagni remarks that *rēḫa* differs somewhat from the noun *rī/ēḫtu*. He parses *rī/ēḫu* as a Stative feminine plural referring to *nišī* (*EE*, p. 72, p. 189 n. 146). Cf. *GAG* #44j, #134g; cf. #77a "Statives ... are conjugated nouns. Every noun can be found in a Stative when it refers to persons."

[50]Both Bottéro and Labat understand the phrase to be interrogative. Bottéro translates, "Te laisserai-je tirer tes armes pour (en) anéantir la descen[dance?], in "Antiquités assyro-babyloniennes (L'Épopée d'Erra)," *Annuaire EPHE* (1977-78) 119 (he repeats this translation in all of his subsequent publications of the Poem of Erra); Labat renders, "Brandissant mes armes, en detrurai-je (maintenant) le reste?" in *Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique* (eds. R. Labat *et al.*, Paris: Fayard/Denoël, 1970) p. 122.

[51]B. Albrektson, *History and the Gods* (Lund: Gleerup, 1967) 90.

24 To instruct him concerning the scattered people of Akkad (*nišī Akkadî sapḫāti*),
25 "Let the sparse people of the land (*nišī māti i*[*ṣa*]*at*[*i*]) multiply again,
26 Let short and tall alike tread (Akkad's) road,
27 Let crippled Akkad throw down the mighty Sutû,[52]
28 May one drive off seven as if they were sheep.
29 Turn their cities into ruin, and their pastures[53] into a waste,
30 Carry off their massive plunder into Šuanna,
31 Safely bring to their dwellings the gods of the land who were angry,
32 Bring down Šakkan and Nidaba to the land,
33 Make the pastures bear their abundance, and the sea its tribute,
34 Make the desolated fields bear their tribute,
35 May the regents of all habitations bring their massive tribute to Šuanna,
36 Let the heads of the ruined temples rise up like the morning sun,
37 May Tigris and Euphrates carry fertilizing waters.[54]

Tablet V 40-41 explicitly mentions the remnant. Owing to the able intervention of Išum, the wrath of the god Erra abated and the god decided to leave a remnant,

40 *ša Erra igugūma ana sapān mātāti u ḫuluq nišīšin iškunu pānīšu*
41 *Išum mālikšu uniḫušūma izibu*[55] *rīḫaniš*[56]

40 For Erra had burned with wrath and planned to
lay waste the countries and slay their peoples,
41 But Išum, his counsellor, appeased him and (Erra) left a remnant![57]

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[52]Cf. W. G. Lambert, "Review of Gössmann, *Das Era-Epos*," *AfO* 18 (1957-58) 397, "In Tablet V 27 Era, when reviweing the whole affair in retrospect, utters what might be termed a prophecy: 'Let crippled Akkad throw down the mighty Sutû.'"

[53]On this line see A. Heidel, "A Special Usage of the Akkadian Term *šadû*," *JNES* 8 (1949) 233-5. The author suggested that the term *šadû* besides designating a mountain or a mountainous region can also stand for a "steppe," or "open country." He rendered this line in the following way, "Thou shalt turn his cities into mounds and his open country into a desolate place" (p. 234).

[54]Akkadian text in Cagni, *EE*, 124-26; English translation from G. W. Lambert, "The Fifth Tablet of the Era Epic," *Iraq* 24 (1962) 119-25, esp. p. 123.

[55]For *ezēbu(m)* meaning "left behind," see *AHw* 267. In Ezek 8:12; 9:9; 20:8; 23:8, 29; 36:4, the corresponding Hebrew verb עזב occurs meaning "to leave, forsake," used however, in a different context.

[56]*AHw* 968, transliterates, *rēḫaniš* and translates "die Übrigbleibende." The form *rē/īḫaniš* is not the common term for "remnant," cf. K. Deller, "Zur Terminologie neuassyrischer Urkunden," *WZKM* 57 (1961) 29-42, esp. p. 41.

[57]R. Frankena, "Untersuchungen zum Irra-Epos," *BiOr* 14 (1957) 6, argued that the lines V 40-44, were a secondary interpolation. However, we follow the methodological approach of working with the text in its final form. This principle is applied equally to the Book of Ezekiel and to the Poem of Erra. A. Haldar, in his work, *The Associations of Cult Prophets Among the Ancient Semites* (Uppsala: Almquist & Wicksells, 1945) 70-73, referred to Erra V 40-41, in order to illustrate the presence of remnant motif in Akkadian literature.

H. Gressmann was among the first to recognize the importance of the Poem of Erra for the understanding of the remnant motif. He summarized succinctly the *dénouement* in the Poem of Erra,

> Babylon ... falls into great distress, is devastated by the plague-god and his seven evil demons, as it seems, in connection with a war of all against all; thus the beloved city of the gods is punished for her sins. But when it is greatly reduced, the remnant shall be saved. The city shall be restored and the Babylonian shall receive world-dominion.[58]

In the Book of Ezekiel the remnant and the restoration motifs are closely related. In the fifth tablet of the Poem of Erra the same relationship is present. In V 24 the god Erra gives instructions to Išum concerning the scattered (*sapāḫu*) people of Akkad. A little later the remnant is mentioned V 41 (*rīḫaniš*).[59] In the light of the evidence on *sapāḫu/paḫāru* "to scatter/to gather," collected by Widengren, it is significant that in the Poem of Erra it is the divinity who decides to restore the scattered people. In the great majority of cases the kings act as the gatherer of the dispersed.[60] Apparently, the motif is part of the royal ideology. In the Book of Ezekiel it is Yahweh who decides and promises to gather the dispersed. Likewise in the Poem of Erra, it is the

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[58]H. Gressmann, *The Tower of Babel* (The Hilda Stich Stroock Lectures at the Jewish Institute of Religion 1, Edited with a Preface by J. Obermann, New York, 1928) 52. The author compared remnant motif in Erra with the oracles of Isaiah against Assyria and the allied nations, "His polemic against the sins of Jerusalem demands the punishment of the city. In all these oracles, however, he proclaims the miraculous salvation, at least of a remnant, after ill-fortune has befallen the city."

[59]Although *paḫāru* "to gather" occurs three times in the Poem of Erra IIB 36; IV 6, 31, the context does not refer to the remnant and restoration motifs. In IIB 36 *paḫāru* occurs in a poorly preserved fragment which mentions the cleaning i.e., the restoration of Marduk's statue.

[60]E.g., in the "Prophetic speech of Marduk" it is the king who will gather together the scattered people." Fragment from Aššur IV 4-5: "...This ruler will be powerful and [will have no] rivals. He will take care of the city, he will gather together those who are scattered (*sapḫūti*)." Akkadian text in A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies," *JCS* 18 (1964) 7-30, esp. p. 22. cf. also R. Borger, "Gott Marduk und Gott-König Šulgi als Propheten, Zwei Prophetische Texte," *BiOr* 28 (1971) 3-24, esp. p. 16. Translation by H. Schmökel, "Predictions and Prophetic Sayings," in *Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (ed. W. Beyerlin, Engl. transl. by J. Bowden, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978) 121. The original fragment is dated in the time of Nebuchadnezzar I (1127-1105 BCE). Although Schmökel quotes Ezek 11:17; 20:34, 41, as possible parallels he failed to mention the difference. In Ezekiel the god Yahweh gathers the dispersed as over against the human ruler.

god Erra who decides and decrees the restoration of the dispersed Babylonians. Here, in our opinion appears a significant link between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra.

5.7.5. Parallels, Contrasts, Conclusions

a. Restoration as Regained Fertility

A certain similarity between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra is found in their respective descriptions of the restoration in terms of regained fertility. In the Poem of Erra the restored Babylonian land is perceived as a country which has become fertile again. The pastures and desolated fields bring forth a flush vegetation, and the sea swarms with fishes (V 33-34). The ruined temples are restored while the Tigris and Euphrates carry fertilizing waters (V 36-37).[61] In Ezekiel 40-48,[62] one finds a grandiose vision of restored and fertile land of Israel.[63] In Ezek 47:1-12, the regained fertility of the land is depicted in considerable detail. From below the threshold of a magnificent temple he saw a river flowing toward the east (47:1). It is greatly emphasized that the river is well supplied with water (47:3-5).[64] On both banks of the river there

[61]The motif of the fertile river occurs in the "Prophetic speech of Marduk." (Fragment from Niniveh III 6'-9': "The rivers will bring forth fish, the field of the pasture (?) will be rich in produce, the winter grass will last until the summer, the summer grass will be enough for the winter," Translation (with bibliography) by H. Schmökel, in *Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (ed. W. Beyerlin, Engl. transl. by J. Bowden, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978) 121-22. We might be dealing here with a common ancient Near Eastern literary motif. However, this parallel is important in our research representing another feature which the Poem of Erra and the Book of Ezekiel share in common.

[62]Cf. M. Greenberg, "The Design and Themes of Ezekiel's Program of Restoration," *Int* 38 (1984) 181-208. The author defends the plausibility of seeing Ezek 40-48 as stemming from the prophet Ezekiel. Cf. also S. Niditch, "Ezekiel 40-48 in a Visionary Context," *CBQ* 48 (1986) 208-24. Niditch suggests that Ezekiel displays "traits of a spirit medium." She finds features of the vision in Ezek 40-48 comparable to a three-dimensional mandala in Tibetan Buddhism. However, it is a sound principle of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Methode* first to explore the immediate Semitic context of a Biblical text. W. Lemke, "Life in the Present and Hope for the Future," *Int* 38 (1984) 165-80. M. Haran, "Ezekiel's Code (Ezek. 40-48) and Its Relation to the Priestly School," *Tarbiz* 44 (1974-75) 30-50 (Hebrew).

[63]Cf. the traditio-historical analysis of Ezek 40-48 by H. Gese, *Der Verfassungsentwurf des Ezechiel* (Beträge zur historischen Theologie 25, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1957). For a more recent analysis of these chapters see J. D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* (HSMS 10, Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976).

[64]The description of the river abundant with water in Ezekiel differs significantly from the gently flowing waters of Siloah in Isa 8:6. The latter are contrasted to the strongly flowing waters of the Euphrates which the gloss in Isa 8:7 interprets as "the king of Assyria and all his glory."

were many trees (47:7). The influx is so abundant that the stagnant waters of the Arabah (i.e. the Salt Sea)[65] become fresh again (47:8), "everything will live where the river goes" (47:9).[66] The sea produces such an abundance of fish that the fishermen spread their nets from En-gedi to En-eglaim (47:10). These are places on opposite sides of the Dead Sea.[67] The latter will be as rich in the wealth of fish as the "great sea" i.e., the Mediterranean. Because the water flows from the sanctuary the trees will bear fresh fruit every month (47:11). The flora attains an unimagined abundance of a regained paradise. Here lies the difference between the restoration in the Poem of Erra and the Book of Ezekiel. The latter sees the restoration in an eschatological and messianic perspective.[68]

b. Similarities and a Major Difference

In both the Poem of Erra and the Book of Ezekiel the divine wrath was provoked on account of cultic offenses and insolence on the part of the worshipers.[69] In both works the large-scale destruction which left only a remnant in existence was caused by similar reasons.

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[65]In Dtn 3:17; "the Sea of Arabah" is called "the Salt Sea."

[66]Cf. P. Raymond, *L'eau, sa vie et sa signification dans l'Ancien Testament, SVT* 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1956).

[67]Cf. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II*, 513-14. Ezek 47:1-12 might have exercised an influence upon the Qumran community in its choice of this region for a dwelling place since it associated this geographical spot with the promise of the advent of salvation for the time of redemption. For this possibility see W. R. Farmer, "The Geography of Ezekiel's River of Life," *BA* 19 (1956) 17-22; and A. S. van der Woude, *Die messianische Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumrân, Studia Semitica Neerlandica* 3 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1957) 237. The influence of Ezek 47 can be seen in Rev 22:1, "Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb," and possibly in Jn 7:38, cf. P. Grelot, "Jean VII,38: Eau du rocher ou source du Temple?" *RB* 70 (1963) 43-51.

[68]Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, II 514-5, has pointed out the differences between Ezek 47:1-12 and some similar OT traditions like Gen 2:10ff (the garden of God with its abundant water); Ps 46:4 (a river whose streams make glad the city of God). Ezek 47 influenced Joel's apocalyptic vision (Joel 4:18-21) where a great future fruitfulness is decribed. The scholars in general agree for a post-exilic dating of Joel, around 400 BCE., cf. H. Cazelles, (ed.) *L'Ancien Testament. Introduction historique et critique* (Paris: Desclée 1973) 461. Zech 14:8, likewise might have been influenced by Ezekiel, although he mentions only the living waters flowing from Jerusalem without mentioning the temple. For the date of Zechariah around 520 BCE see Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Engl. transl. by D. E. Green, Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1968) 460.

[69]In the Book of Ezekiel the term חמה "wrath" is quite frequent, 5:13, 29; 6:12; 13:15; 16:38, 42; 20:33, 34; 24:13.

Rowley pointed out what he considered to be a major difference between the motif of the remnant in the Poem of Erra and in the Old Testament in general,

> (In Erra) the leaving of the Remnant is not born of the mercy of the God, but is due to the intervention of his counsellor (Išum), whereas in the Old Testament it is always the issue of God's grace; (in Erra) the leaving of the Remnant is not related to any Divine and beneficent purpose which the Remnant will serve, whereas in the Old Testament such a thought is of the essence of the doctrine.[70]

In his statement of a presumed difference Rowley has wrongly characterized the Poem of Erra. The similarity between the remnant motif in Ezekiel and in the Poem of Erra is greater than the difference.

First, one may point out that Išum is a divine figure and hence the initiative of sparing a remnant of the Babylonians comes from a divine counsel. The preservation of the remnant in the Poem of Erra may be ultimately attributed to the grace and compassion of the gods. In our opinion, Ebeling's characterization of the the Poem of Erra is more accurate:

> "Der Mythos *šar gimir dadmê* (= Erra I 1), hat eine bestimmte politische Situation als Thema, bei der Babylon in grosse Not geraten ist. Die Dichtung zeigt, dass es trotz der Heimsuchungen aus einem kleinen Rest wieder dank göttlicher Fügung zu einem grossen Volke werden muss."[71]

Second, the Poem of Erra ends with a call to the inhabitants of all countries to celebrate Erra's heroism, and to know and glorify Erra's name. The Poem ends with a statement of recognition comparable to what Zimmerli has identified in the Book of Ezekiel as the *Erkenntnisformel* "the recognition formula," (on Erra V 60-61, see our section 5.8.).

The remnant in the Poem of Erra is left for a definite purpose similarly to the Book of Ezekiel. In the latter the remnant is left for the express purpose "that the nations know that I am Yahweh."

Third, the Poem of Erra represents the first instance in Akkadian literature where the remnant motif is used to refer to a national entity. In this sense it corresponds to the way the remnant motif is used in the Book of Ezekiel and other Old Testament books.

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[70]H. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election* (London: Lutherworth, 1950, [2]1952) 83.

[71]E. Ebeling, "Bruchstücke eines politischen Propagandagedichtes aus einer assyrischen Kanzlei," *MAOG* 12 (1938) 2 n. 1.

Hasel's description of the Poem of Erra captures accurately the importance of this Poem for the understanding of the remnant motif,

> What is new in the Erra Epic is not so much that there remains a remnant, but that the poet speaks of a remnant of his own people. The Akkadians were threatened with total annihilation had not the gods intervened and "left a remnant" (Tablet V 41)... Thus the remnant motif appears here in the context of the destruction of a capital city with its surrounding cities and their inhabitants of whom only a remnant survived. But the survival of the remnant was a gracious act on the part of the gods, because in this remnant the future existence of the Akkadians was preserved, linking past and future existence in a straight, uninterrupted line.[72]

A major difference between the Poem of Erra and the Book of Ezekiel is that in the former the restoration means the return to the previous polytheistic setting. To express it in a somewhat colloquial manner the restoration in the Poem of Erra means the return to "business as usual," as far as the polytheistic way of worship is concerned. One assumes, however, that the people have learned the lesson not to repeat the negligence in worship which has provoked Erra's wrath. The gods will return to their temples and the polytheistic worship will resume. In the Book of Ezekiel the express pedagogical aim of Yahweh's severe judgemnt is that the people of Israel may never again return to their former syncretistic practices which are an abomination to Yahweh. He provokes a major rupture and radical break in the way Israel worships. After the exile these practices have been definitely relegated to Israel's past.

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[72]G. Hasel, *The Remnant. The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Andrews University Monographs, Studies in Religion V, Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1972, [2]1974) 86.

5.8. RECOGNITION FORMULA IN THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL AND THE STATEMENT OF RECOGNITION IN THE POEM OF ERRA

5.8.1. The Recognition Formula in the Old Testament[1]

The analysis of the recognition formula (*Erkenntnisformel*) "And you (sing./pl. or they) shall know that I am Yahweh," is associated with W. Zimmerli and his work on the Book of Ezekiel.[2] With this formula it is stated that "Yahweh acts, judges, and is merciful so that his people or people at large (the subject can vary) will know that 'I am Yahweh (אני יהוה)'"[3] He suggested that the *Erkenntnisformel* might have developed from the specially pregnant expression of Yahweh's self manifestation and disclosure (אני יהוה). He pointed out that the wording of the *Erkenntnisformel* is peculiarly awkward because a nominal clause with Yahweh's "I" as the subject surprisingly appears as the object clause. One naturally asks why all this could not be expressed simply with, "They will know me." This smooth manner of speech occurs only once in Ezek 38:16. In the majority of cases one finds the more complex formulation. According to Zimmerli, "this preference can only be the result of the forcefuleffect of the fixed formula of self-introduction (*Selbstvorstellungsformel*), whose powerful content is supposed to resound in the statement of recognition."[4]

Zimmerli has presented the evidence that the formula of self-introduction (or self-representation) is to be understood as an

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[1]R. C. Dentan, *The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel* (New York: Seabury, 1968); R. Rendtorff, "The Concept of Revelation in Ancient Israel," in *Revelation as History* (ed. W. Pannenberg, Engl. transl. by D. Granskou, London: Macmillan, 1968) 23-53.

[2]W. Zimmerli, *Erkenntnis Gottes nach dem Buch Ezechiel, eine theologische Studie* (ATANT 27, Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1954) 5-75, = "Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel," in W. Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh* (Engl. transl. by D. W. Scott, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 29-98, esp. 32.

[3]W. Zimmerli, "Ich bin Yahweh," in *Geschichte und Altes Testament. Beiträge zur historische Theologie 16. Festschrift A. Alt* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1953) 179-209, = "I am Yahweh," in *idem., I am Yahweh* (Engl. transl. by D. W. Scott, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 1-28, esp. p. 5.

[4]Zimmerli, "I am Yahweh," in *I am Yahweh*, 6; *idem.*, "Das Wort des göttlichen Selbsterweises (Erweiswort), eine prophetische Gattung," *Mélanges bibliques A. Robert* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1957) 154-64, = "The Word of Divine Self-Manifestation (Proof-Saying): A Prophetic Genre," in *idem., I am Yahweh* (Engl. transl. by D. W. Scott, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 99-110.

independent sentence, and therefore should be rendered "I am Yahweh." This is valid for the translation of the introduction to the Decalogue, in which אנכי יהוה אלהיך should be rendered "I am Yahweh, your God," as over against Poebel's suggestion of interpreting the first person singular pronoun as an apposition, "I, Yahweh, am your God."[5] Furthermore, H. Gunkel had shown that the formula of self-introduction of the divinity is indispensable in a society which operates with a multiplicity of gods.[6] Therefore the origin of this formula is clearly polytheistic. The recipient of a manifestation of the divinity must ascertain which god is addressing him.

Through the connection with the verb ידע[7] the formula of self-introduction (אני יהוה) forms a new formula ידע כי אני יהוה (or *Erkenntnisformel*). Zimmerli has traced its usage throughout the Old Testament beginning with the sources in the Pentateuch (Ex 8:10; 9:14; 9:29; 14:4), continuing in the stories of the prophets (1 Kgs 20:13, 28), occurring particularly in the Book of Ezekiel and ending with post-Ezekiel traditions (Isa 45:3, 6; 49:23, 26; 43:10). The expression does not vary showing that the profession of God occurs in relationship with his activity in history.[8]

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[5]A. Poebel, *Das appositionell bestimmte Pronomen der 1. Person sing. in den westsemitischen Inschriften und im Alten Testament* (AS 3, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932).

[6]H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901, [9]1977) 267, "Jedenfalls ist diese Redeweise uralt; denn sie stammt aus einer Zeit, die an 'viele Herren und viele Götter' glaubte," (with examples from Ancient Near Eastern texts). On the Ancient Near Eastern background of the formula of self-introduction see also H. Gressmann, "Die literarische Analyse Deuterojesajas," *ZAW* 34 (1914) 254-97, esp. pp. 285-93; K. Elliger, "Ich bin der Herr-euer Gott," *Theologie als Glaubenswagnis, Festschrift K. Heim* (eds. K. Elliger, A. Weiser, E. Würthwein, O. Bauernfeind, Hamburg: Furche, 1954) 9-34; Cf. also H.- M. Dion, "Le genre littéraire sumérien de 'l'hymne à soi-même' et quelques passages du Deutéro-Isaïe," *RB* 74 (1967) 215-34. The author makes a difference between the genre which he investigates and the formula of self-introduction, (p. 30).

[7]On the knowledge of God in Old Testament prophets in general see A. Néher, *L'essence du prophétisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955) 101; *idem., Amos, contribution à l'étude du prophétisme* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1950) 258; H. W. Wolff, "'Wissen um Gott' bei Hosea als Urform von Theologie," *EvTh* 12 (1952) 533-54; *idem.*, "Erkenntnis Gottes im Alten Testament," *EvTh* 15 (1955) 426-31.

[8]Cf. R. Rendtorff, "The Concept of Revelation in Ancient Israel," in *Revelation as History* (ed. W. Pannenberg, Engl. transl. by D. Granskou, London: Macmillan, 1968) 23-53, esp. pp.41-48.

5.8.2. The Recognition Formula in the Book of Ezekiel

For our purposes it will suffice to summarize some of the results of Zimmerli's analysis and to point out the form, content, and use of the recognition formula in the Book of Ezekiel reflecting features similar to a statement of recognition found in the Poem of Erra.

First, the recognition formula occurs in the Book of Ezekiel with great frequency. Of 947 occurrences of the stem ידע (to know") in the Old Testament, 99 are found in the Book of Ezekiel where in the majority of cases the term appears in a context of a theologically significant statement.[9] For the sake of comparison one may point out that the Book of Psalms is second with 93 occurrences while the Book of Job is third with 71.[10] The Book of Ezekiel distinguishes itself from other Old Testament books by the high frequency of statements concerning the knowledge of God which various divine interventions aim to provoke in the people concerned. The importance of the recognition formula in Ezekiel had been underlined since the beginning of the critical study of this book. Already Kraetzschmar had pointed out that, "the general *Tendenz* of the book is rooted in the formula which appears 50 times (you [they] shall know that I am Yahweh). It points to the glorification of Yahweh's unlimited and by humans not yet properly honored omnipotence."[11]

Second, Zimmerli has made an important form-critical observation concerning the positioning of the formula of recognition. In a great number of cases the latter occurs as the final constituent part of a divine discourse. It functions as the concluding target statement of a larger discursive structure.[12]

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[9]S. Mandelkern, *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1978) 458f. W. Schottroff, "ידע erkennen," *THAT I* (1978) 682-701 (bibliography); D. W. Thomas, "The Root ידע in Hebrew," *JTS* 35 (1934) 248-306.

[10]So Zimmerli, "Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel," in W. Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh* (Engl. transl. by D. W. Scott, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 29-98, esp. p. 30.

[11]R. Kraetzschmar, *Das Buch Ezechiel* (HAT III, 3.1, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900) p. vi.

[12]Zimmerli, "Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel," in W. Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh* (Engl. transl. by D. W. Scott, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 29-98, esp. p. 33. "We can assert without qualification that the statement of recognition never appears in an isolated position. Instead, it frequently functions as a conclusion, is firmly anchored in the context of prophetic speech, and is always preceded by a statement concerning a divine act" (p. 35).

Third, there are two passages in Ezekiel in which the verb ידע is replaced by ראה ("to see"): Ezek 21:5 "And all flesh shall see (ראה) that I Yahweh have kindled it (the fire);" Ezek 39:21, "And all the nations (גוים) shall see (ראה) my judgment which I have executed, and my hand which I have laid on them." Verses 22 and 23 which follow add a double statement of recognition referring to Israel and to the nations respectively: Ezek 39:22, "The house of Israel shall know that I am Yahweh their God (...); 39:23. "And the nations (גוים) shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity..." This close relationship between the verbs ראה and ידע shows that they function in a similar way within the recognition formulas.

Fourth, the formula of recognition is associated with the oracles concerning foreign nations. This feature in particular has been investigated by H. G. Reventlow,[13] who demonstrated that foreign nations play an important role in the message of Ezekiel. According to Reventlow one can identify an additional stereotyped formula in this connection: the expression, "in the sight of the nations (לעיני הגוים) occurs thirteen times in the Book of Ezekiel.[14]

Fifth, the focal point of the formula "in the sight of the nations" is the recognition of the glory and honor of Yahweh's *name*. According to Reventlow the real motif of all the historical dealings of Yahweh with Israel is the issue of the honor of Yahweh's name:

> Jahwes Ehre ist der einzige Grund für die Langmut Gottes im Verlauf dieser Geschichte, seines immer wieder erneuten Entschlusses, die an sich längst durch den beständigen Ungehorsam des Volkes verdiente Strafe noch einmal hinauszuschieben, es nicht gänzlich zu vernichten, sondern es bei einer Teilstrafe bewenden zu lassen.[15]

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[13]H. G. Reventlow, "Die Völker als Jahwes Zeugen bei Ezechiel," *ZAW* 71 (1959) 33-43.

[14]5:8, 14; 16:41; 20:9, 14, 22, 41; 22:16; 28:18, 25; 36:34; 38:23; 39:27. לעיני הגוים occurs seven times 5;8; 20:9, 14, 22, 41; 28:25; 39:27; once one reads לעיני גוים without the definite article (22:16); once לעיני גוים רבים (38:23); seven times לעיני is followed by another noun which in fact represents a variation of the term גוים (5:14; 16:41; 28:18; 36:34), cf. Reventlow, *art. cit.*, 39.

[15]H. G. Reventlow, *art. cit.*, p. 40,

This is an adequate comment on verses like Ezek 20:9, 14, 22, "But I withheld my hand, and acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I have brought them out (v 22)."[16]

R. Martin-Achard describes Ezekiel as "The Witness of the Honor of Yahweh," whose central concern is to speak against the profanation of Yahweh's name.[17]

Closely related to the honor of the name of Yahweh is adoration as one of the theological purposes expressed by the recognition formulas. As pointed out by Zimmerli,

> (the) highest concern is neither the restoration of a healthy people nor the reestablishment of social balance within the people; rather it is above all else the adoration that kneels because of divinely inspired recognition, an orientation toward the one who himself says "I am Yahweh." The majority of the statements are concerned with the recognition that is to take place within the people of Israel. Beyond that, however, we see that this same recognition is expected from the rest of the world's nations.[18]

5.8.3. Parallels With the Statement of Recognition in the Poem of Erra

First, we may point out that in the Poem of Erra one finds the statement of recognition of Erra's name and a call to praise it three times (I 62, 63, 61),

I 61 Let all the people of the world see it (i.e., the tablets of the Poem of Erra) and glorify my name!"

I 62 May the Igigi hear (it, i.e., Erra's battle-cry) and praise your name;

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[16]Cf. also Ezek 20:9 "But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations..." 39, "But my holy name you shall no more profane with your gifts and your idols." Ezek 36:22 "But for the sake of my holy name which you have profaned among the nations to which you came" (also vv 20 and 23 combined with the recognition formula). Ezek 39:7, 25; 43:7; according to F. Maas, "חלל entweihen," *THAT I* (1978) 570-75, the verb "to profane" occurs 31 times in Ezekiel. 11 times it refers to the profanation of Yahweh and Yahweh's name; (7x profanation of the sabbath); (7x profanation of the temple).

[17]R. Martin-Achard, "Ézéchiel, témoin de l'honneur de YHWH," in *Mélanges A. Néher* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1975) 165-74. In his article one finds the analysis of the כבוד יהוה and שם יהוה. He describes Ezekiel's message as emphatically theocentric (p.173).

[18]W. Zimmerli, "Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel," in W. Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh* (Engl. transl. by D. W. Scott, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 29-98, esp. p. 88. cf. also G. J. Botterweck, *"Gott Erkennen" im Sprachgebrauch des Alten Testamentes* (BBB 2, Bonn: P. Hanstein Verlag, 1951) 98, "In Ezekiel ist 'Gott erkennen' ein mehr oder weniger passives Erfahren und Erleben der Heils- und Strafmacht Jahwes in der fernem Zukunft."

I 63 May the Anunnaki hear (it) and fear your name;

Moreover, two times particular divine promises are made to the persons who praise, venerate and faithfully repeat the name of Erra (V 51, 56),

V 51 May the king who extols my name rule the (whole) world!
V 56 In the sanctuary of (those) sages where they constantly mention my name, I will grant them wisdom;

Twice the hearers are enjoined to recognize and praise Erra's heroism (I 75, V 60)

I 75 May the gods, your fathers, see and praise your heroism;
V 60 Let all the countries hear it (i.e., the Poem of Erra) and celebrate my heroism!

Furthermore, there is a long passage urging Erra to utter his battle-cry (*rigmu*) while the gods, the demons, humans, and the whole nature are enjoined to recognize it and to praise, to fear, or to adore in prostration the god Erra or some of his attributes (I 60-75).[19] In light of the fact that the Poem is relatively short the frequency of this statement of recognition is significant.

Second, the fifth tablet of the Poem of Erra ends with a divine discourse by the god Erra who promises blessings upon whomever will hold his poem in honor. At the end of this discursive structure appears a concluding declaration which represents a statement of recognition,

V 59 *zamāru šâšu ana mātima liššakinma likūn gadu ulla*
60 *mātāti napḫaršina lišmama linada qurdīya*
61 *nišī dadmê limurama lišarba šumī/ē*[20]

May this song last for ever! May it endure for all time!
Let all the countries hear it and praise my heroism!
Let all the people of the world see it and glorify my name!

As far as the formal positioning is concerned the statement of recognition in the Poem of Erra corresponds to the recognition formula found in the Book of Ezekiel.

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[19]See the discussion of this passage in our section 5.1.4.

[20]Akkadian text from W. G. Lambert, "The Fifth Tablet of the Erra Epic," *Iraq* 24 (1962) 119-125, esp. p. 124.

Third, on two occasions in the Poem of Erra the statement of recognition appears with the verb "to see" (*amāru*), I 75 "May the gods, your fathers, see and praise your heroism;" and V 61 "May the people of the world see it and glorify my name!" In this last line the verb "to see" can also have the connotation "to know," and is rendered in this way in Cagni's translation, "May (all) the dwellers know (it) and glorify my name!"[21] The use of the verb "to see" in the statements of recognition in the Poem of Erra corresponds to the use of the verb ראה in the recognition formulas in the Book of Ezekiel. The meaning of the recognition formula in the Book of Ezekiel does not necessarily mean taking up praise of Yahweh, for in connection with the oracles of judgment against the nations (Ezek 25:5, 7, 11, 17), the subject of the verb ידע - a gentile nation - is destroyed - whereupon that nation "knows" that Yahweh is God. The dead cannot praise Yahweh. What the destroyed gentile nations realize is "Yahweh's vengeance" (Ezek 25:14 וידעו את נקמתי). However, the destruction of certain individual nations has the pedagogical aim of inspiring fear and awe of Yahweh in "*all* the nations" who are called as witnesses of Yahweh's punitive acts, (cf. Ezek 21:5, "and all (וירו כל בשר flesh shall see...;" Ezek 39:21, "and all nations shall see (וירו כל הגוים) my judgment which I have executed..."). The same global appeal is found in the Poem of Erra V 61 "may the people of the world see" (*nišī dadmê limurama*).

Fourth, in the Poem of Erra the reference is made to the "people of the (inhabited) world" (*nišī dadmê*) together with the "countries" (*mātāte*) as the ones who are to recognize Erra's heroic deeds which the Poem describes and to glorify his name (V 61). In another line, the "countries" are invited to hear Erra's battle cry and to pay tribute to him (I 66). These are the witnesses of whom worship and adoration of Erra is requested. Moreover, in the passage where Erra is urged to utter a battle-cry (I 60-75) a series of witnesses are enjoined to respond with respect to the god Erra. Here again one finds a similarity with the role of the nations (גוים) as Yahweh's witnesses in the Book of Ezekiel. According to E. A. Speiser the noun גוי "labels large conglomerates held together, so to speak, from without rather than from within."[22] The term גוי comes close to the modern definition of a nation. To express "nation"

[21]Cagni, *PE*, 60.

[22]E. A. Speiser, "'People' and 'Nation' of Israel," *JBL* 79 (1960) 157-63, esp. p. 159.

Akkadian resorts to the term *mātum*, a word with the primary meaning of "country," and a secondary ethnogeographic value that appears also in Hebrew גוי.[23] Hence, according to Speiser's analysis Hebrew גוי and Akkadian *mātum* stand in the relationship of functional equivalence.

Fifth, in the Book of Ezekiel a point is explicitly made that the name of Yahweh has been profaned, Ezek 36:22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel,... my holy name which you have profaned..." In Ezek 20:39 the Israelites are accused of a cultic offense in respect to Yahweh's name, "But my holy name you shall no more profane with your gifts and your idols." In the Poem of Erra there is a reference to the fact that humans do not fear Erra's name and hold him in contempt,

I 120 *u nišī ṣalmat [qa]qqadi leq[û]* šēṭūtum
121 *anāku aššu lā išḫutū zikrī*

> And the dark-headed people are holding (me) in contempt!
> Therefore, as they have not feared my name.

Moreover, in I 127, Erra points out to Marduk that his statue is dirtied, which in our opinion should be interpreted as a sign of cultic negligence.

In our discussion of the human offenses against the gods in the Poem of Erra and of the expression *leqû* šēṭūtu we have adopted the view shared by a number of scholars[24] that the reasons for Erra's destructive action against Mesopotamian cities are the contempt shown toward him as well as the excessive human din as an expression of disrespect toward the gods. When the Sebetti say to Erra, "Let humans be frightened and may their din subside" (I 73), their injunction implies that humans have lost the fear of Erra. In our opinion, one of the goals of Erra's actions in the Poem is to instill respect and fear of his name. Another purpose of Erra's deeds is expressed in the statement of recognition found in the

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[23]E. A. Speiser, *JBL* 79 (1960) 161.

[24]R. Frankena, "Het Epos van de Pestgod Irra," *JEOL* 15 (1957-58) 160-76, esp. p. 174. The author was among the first to point out several passages in the Poem which indicate that humans have neglected the worship due to Erra and that this offense was the real ground for the god's resolve to lay waste the country. Frankena's interpretation has been followed by B. Albrektson, *History and the Gods* (Lund: Gleerup, 1967) 33. G. Pettinato, Die Bestrafung des Menschengeschlechts durch die Sinflut," *Or* 37 (1968) 165-200, esp. 197-98 "Erra-Epos;" L. Cagni, *EE*, see his comments on I 119-20 IIID 16; V 6; B. Hruška, "Einige Überlegungen zum Erraepos," *BiOr* 30 (1973) 3-7, esp. p. 6.

concluding lines of the Poem, V 60-61: praise and glorification of Erra's heroism and veneration of his name. "All the countries" are called to hear the Poem and to praise Erra's heroism. "All the people of the world" are invited to see the tablets of the Poem and to glorify Erra's name!

While in the Poem of Erra the statement of recognition is associated with the "countries" or "people of the world," it does not contain the formula of self-introduction (*Selbstvorstellungsformel*). In this respect it differs from the recognition formula in the Book of Ezekiel. This particularity can be explained by the fact that the Poem of Erra represents a discourse between gods. The formula of self-introduction occurs in cases where a divinity introduces himself or herself to humans as in the following oracle of encouragement (*Ermutigungsorakel*) to Esarhaddon,

(5) [Esarhad]don, king of the countries, fear not!
(14) I am the great divine lady, I am the goddess Ištar of Arbela, who
(15) will destroy your enemies from before your feet.[25]

The above analysis has revealed several parallels in form and content between the recognition formula in the Book of Ezekiel and the statement of recognition in the Poem of Erra. It is not justified to argue that the former stems from the latter, since Ezekiel's *Erkenntnisformel* has its source in antecedent Old Testament traditions. Moreover, the statement of recognition in the Poem of Erra lacks the formula of self-introduction. However, it is probable that in the formulation of certain facets of the recognition formula the author or redactors of the Book of Ezekiel were influenced by the statement of recognition found in the Poem of Erra. The call to recognize and glorify Erra occurs several times in tablets I and V of the Poem of Erra and therefore should not be compared to the call to praise a god as found at the *end* of *Ludlul bēl nemēqi*, or at the end of Biblical psalms of praise.

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[25]Translation from R. H. Pfeiffer, "Akkadian Oracles and Prophecies," 3*ANET* 449. cf. also p. 450, (Oracle of the woman Rumutu-allate of the city Darahuya) (16) "Fear not, Esarhaddon! I, the god of Bēl, speak to you"; (Oracle from the lips of the woman Baia of Arbela); iii 15, "I am Ištar of Arbela, O Esarhaddon king of Assyria."

6. CONCLUSIONS

The above analysis tends to confirm the likelihood that the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel knew the Poem of Erra. It appears that he used a theme as well as some motifs from the Poem of Erra which he adapted to the specific points of the Book of Ezekiel. Without exhausting all the parallels between the two works, we were able to trace and examine over twelve features shared by both works. This significant correlation excludes the possibility of explaining the relationship between these two works as mere coincidence. It also confutes the explanation that the features which the two works have in common stem uniquely from the fact that they share a common ancient Near Eastern background. The correlation is too high to allow such an explanation of a general nature and warrants our claim of the existence of a more specific relationship. The fact that we were able to point out not only formal parallelism between the two works (e.g., the narrative structure of both works follows the departure and the return of the deity to its shrine), but also similarities in content is particularly revealing. These similarities make it probable that the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel was acquainted with the Poem of Erra and used it as one of his sources in the composition and formulation of a number of motifs including one major theme. The former has influenced the way certain themes and motifs were expressed in the Book of Ezekiel. Frankena's suggestions which he made in his relatively brief inaugural lecture[1] were our starting point. However, we were able to find additional points of contact between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra. In our opinion, all the parallels between the two works have not been exhausted in the above analysis.[2] Nevertheless, those which we have adduced are sufficient to justify the claim made in this work. In the following lines we will recapitulate

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[1]R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 1-32, esp. pp. 1-24.

[2]For example, the symbolism of the lion is prominent in both works. The parallel suggested by Frankena between the protective sign *taw* in Ezek 9 and the magical diagonal lines on the tablets of the Poem of Erra requires additional research. Cf. M. Pope, "The Saltier of Artagatis Reconsidered," in *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century, Essays in Honor of N. Glueck* (ed. J. A. Sanders, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970)178-96, on the presumed apotropaic value of the *crux decussata* (intersected chest bands); G. F. Dales, "Necklaces, Bands and Belts on Mesopotamian Figurines," *RA* 57 (1963) 21-40; E. Dinkler, "Zur Geschichte des Kreuzsymbols," *ZTK* 48 (1951) 148-72; A. Jellinek, *Zur Geschichte der Kreuzzüge nach handschriftlichen hebräischen Quellen* (Leipzig: J. M. Goldberg, 1854).

briefly the results of our research as they confirm our working hypothesis.[3]

The twelve features shared by both works have been divided into two categories following a descending degree of probability. In the first category (**section 4.**) are four features which appear uniquely in the Book of Ezekiel. In the second category (**section 5.**) are eight features which are present in Ezekiel and in the rest of the Old Testament. The origin of the first four features is sought in extra-Biblical sources, and more specifically in the Poem of Erra. The origin of the second category of motifs would be in antecedent Old Testament prophetic traditions. However, the Poem of Erra might have influenced the presentation and formulation of some aspects of these motifs.

The only references to the term שאט in the Old Testament are found in the Book of Ezekiel (4.1.). This term appears as Ezekiel's particular creation expressing the contempt shown to Judah by the surrounding nations at the moment of exile, as well as the cultic offense against Yahweh's sanctuary by the Ammonites (Ezek 25:4). The reproach which the Israelites suffer provokes Yahweh's wrath. In his zeal and on account of the reproach and cultic offense, Yahweh threatens Ammon with utter annihilation. The connection between Yahweh's zeal and wrath appears to be Ezekiel's particular creation as well (so B. Renaud). To despise Judah is to despise the Holy One. Hebrew שאט appears as functional equivalent of Akkadian *šēṭu/leqû* *šēṭūtu*, a *Leitmotiv* in the Poem of Erra. The latter express the cultic offenses and disrespect shown toward Erra, offending and prompting him to destroy the Mesopotamian cities and annihilate its inhabitants. Both שאט in the Book of Ezekiel and *šēṭu/leqû* *šēṭūtu* in the Poem of Erra express a similar notion of "*lèse divinité*."

Another important lexicographic parallel between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra is found between Hebrew חשמל and Akkadian *elmēšu* (**4.2.**). The enygmatic term חשמל occurs only in Ezek 1:4, 27; 8:2 and corresponds to Akkadian *elmēšu* in Erra I 148; I 167; IV 43. The glittering of חשמל corresponds to a similar feature of *elmēšu*. In Ezek 8:2, חשמל appears in connection with the description of the brilliance of a divine being while in Erra I 148, *elmēšu* is used for the fabrication of divine statues giving them a particular brilliance. The appearance of the term חשמל, which seems to be of Akkadian derivation, may be considered

[3]For more detailed conclusions one should consult the heading "Conclusions, Parallels, Contrasts," at the end of each section of this work.

as an important additional link between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra.

It seems that the most probable identification of the seven executioners in Ezek 9 is found in the Divine Seven or Sebetti of the Poem of Erra (4.3.). Their use as prophylactic figures in Babylonian homes implies that they were common items of the epoch. In patterning the description of the seven executioners in Ezek 9 after the Sebetti the author or redactor of Ezekiel was not reverting to an obscure and unique reference in Akkadian mythology. On the contrary, it appears that he used a well known item common both in the Poem of Erra and in contemporary Babylonian society.

In Ezek 22:24 one finds the unique reference in the Old Testament to the land of Israel "not being rained upon in the day of indignation" presumably referring to the waters of the Deluge (4.4.). Similarly, the Poem of Erra contains what appears to be a unique reference in Akkadian literature concerning the city of Sippar being spared the waters of the Deluge (IV 50).

We have rejected as erroneous the emendation or deletion of the instances of הָמוֹן in Ezekiel as secondary glosses (5.1.). The term carries an important theological statement: Yahweh is opposed to any form of irreverence. It may well reflect a prominent motif in Akkadian literature and in the Poem of Erra in particular. הָמוֹן may stand as a functional equivalent of Akkadian *ḫubūru* which in certain contexts may express *hybris*, insolence and disrespectful attitude of going beyond the divinely imposed limits. Such an attitude expressed by impious tumult incurs the wrath of the gods Erra and Yahweh respectively.

Hebrew פרשׂ רשׁת and Akkadian *ana šakān kamāri* "to throw or to gather into a net," stand in a relationship of functional equivalence (5.2.). Moreover, the "net" motif is shared by both the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra. The punishment of the Babylonians who are described as being entangled and killed by Erra's net, appears as a consequence of their disloyalty toward Marduk and Erra. In Ezek 17:19-20, the political perjury of king Zedekiah is perceived as a sin against Yahweh. The ruler's disloyalty is punished with a "divine net." Moreover, the religious straying of Judah in terms of disloyalty to Yahweh is blamed upon their ruler who is perceived as the representative of the whole people. Both the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra interpret political events in religious terms and reflect a similar "*raisonnement théologique*" (cf. J. Bottéro).

The theme of "the Absence of the Divinity from its Shrine" represents a formal and content parallel between the two works and also a major theme in Akkadian literature in general (5.3.). At the beginning of the Poem of Erra, Marduk vacates his statue and temple in Babylon so that Erra, the god of war and pestilence, may start his whirlwind of destruction. At the end of the Poem, Erra appeased, orders his lieutenant Išum, to bring the gods back to their shrines and orders the restoration of Babylon's glory. This movement of departure and return of Marduk and the gods resembles Yahweh's departure and return from and back to the Jerusalem temple (Ezek 9-11 and 40-48, respectively). This parallel reveals a striking similarity in conception, composition, and content of both works. In the light of the fact that this theme appears in city laments and *post eventum* descriptions of looting of temples, one may suggest that the "vision" in Ezek 8-11 arose as a consequence of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 586 BCE. The depiction of the destruction of the Mesopotamian cities with its shrines and inhabitants found in the Poem of Erra was composed probably after the sack of Babylon by the Sutû invaders (ca. 9th century BCE).

In Ezek 5:5 Jerusalem is designated as being placed in the midst of the nations (5.4.). This idea of the "center" is expressed still more clearly in 38:12 with the metaphor "navel of the earth." The only other occurrence of this expression in the Old Testament is in Judg 9:37. In the Poem of Erra, the city of Babylon is described in a similar way (IV 36-44), as Marduk's privileged possession. Moreover, Babylon is called the "bond of (all) the countries" (IV 1-2), being considered as the "knot" of the universe and the center of the world.

In the Song of the Sword (5.5.) in Ezek 21:13-22 the sword is addressed as a living being (v 21). In the Poem of Erra, the weapons of the god Erra are similarly hypostatized and directly addressed (I 7, 17). The identification of fire with the sword in the parable found in Ezek 21:1-12, shows similarities with the description of Išum, the personification of fire, who is presented as being both "fire" and *namṣāru* "sword" (I 10, 12). This might indicate that the author or redactor of the parable of the fire was adapting to his specific purpose the similar material found in the Poem of Erra.

A striking similarity between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra is the description of the tenebrous and unpredictable results of the divine wrath (5.6.). Both Erra and Yahweh need a watchman whose role is to protect humans from excesses of divine fury and to appease, reason,

or supplicate the wrathful divinity. A further parallel between Išum (called "the watchman" in Erra I 21), and Ezekiel the watchman (33:1-6), may be suggested in the content of their respective activities. Išum as the protector of divine and human love-making corresponds to Ezekiel's role in rebuking Jerusalem, the city of Yahweh's covenanted love because of her unfaithfulness (Ezek 16). In Ezek 33:32 the prophet is compared to someone who sings "love songs" (שיר עגבים). In Ezek 23 the prophet rebukes Samaria and Jerusalem for their inordinate love (עגבה), and amorous relationships with foreign lovers. Except for one instance the term עגב occurs only in Ezekiel and may be considered as his particular creation. In his concern for the divine love of Yahweh as dramatically depicted in Ezek 16 and 23, Ezekiel corresponds to Išum whose role is to watch over the love of the gods and the humans.

Both the Poem of Erra and the Book of Ezekiel end with a promise of restoration (5.7.). Erra concludes with an "oracle of bliss" describing how the waters of the Tigris and the Euphrates restore the fertility of the land (Erra V 33-37). In Ezek 40-48 one finds a grandiose vision of the restored and fertile land of Israel with a river flowing from the temple toward the East (47:1-5). The Poem of Erra represents the first instance in Akkadian literature where the remant motif is used to refer to a national entity. The remnant motif is used in such a way in Ezekiel.

Finally, throughout the Book of Ezekiel appears the recognition formula (*Erkenntnisformel*) "You/they shall know that I am Yahweh," with which various groups are enjoined to recognize Yahweh's honor and power (5.8.). The Poem of Erra ends with a concluding declaration which represents a statement of recognition (V 59-61). There are similarities as to formal positioning of this formula as well as to the variations with the use of ראה instead of ידע (Ezek 21:5; 39:21), which corresponds to *amāru* in Erra I 61, 75. It appears that in the formulation of certain facets of the recognition formula, the author or redactors of the Book of Ezekiel were influenced by the statement of recognition in Erra.

The above parallels are not equally compelling when seen independently. However, together they have a considerable cumulative force and tend to confirm our working hypothesis. The comparisons which we have drawn do not allow one to speak of a blind and indiscriminate use of extra-biblical material on the part of the author or redactors of the Book of Ezekiel. The material has been used in a creative way, being thoroughly reworked and fully adapted to the specific points which the Book of Ezekiel makes.

Further research that would be of value should concentrate on studying vocables and expressions which are unique to the Book of Ezekiel and which have corresponding Akkadian equavalents in the Poem of Erra or other extra-biblical works, i.e., one should try to increase the number of parallels in the section 4.

We do not exclude, however, the likelihood of other literary influences on the Book of Ezekiel. On the one hand, the Book of Ezekiel shares themes and motifs from prophetic and other literature of the Bible.[4] On the other hand, scholars like D. H. Müller,[5] S. Daiches,[6] M. Gruber,[7] M. Astour,[8] S. Garfinkel,[9] have identified and drawn parallels with other Akkadian sources which might have influenced the composition of the Book of Ezekiel. The present research provides complementary evidence for the correctness of the approach which recognizes the Babylonian background of the Book of Ezekiel. Namely, the recovery of the Akkadian backdrop of the Book of Ezekiel facilitates the understanding of a number of expressions, *hapax legomena*, rare words (cf. Akkadian *elmēšu* and Hebrew חשמל), themes and motifs which have been misunderstood, misinterpreted, or overlooked.

This research has shown the necessity of revising and abandoning certain views about the author or redactors of the Book of Ezekiel. R. H. Pfeiffer's opinion that Ezekiel represents "the first fanatic in the Bible," who displays traces of a "black and savage atrocity of mind,"[10] is simply a misinterpretation of his writings. Moreover, the trend of psychoanalyzing Ezekiel or interpreting his symbolic acts in the light of contemporary

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[4]Cf. G. Fohrer (K. Galling) *Ezechiel* (HAT 13, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1955) pp. XXII-XXIV, "Verhältnis zu Tradition und zeitgenössischer Theologie;" K. W. Carley, *Ezekiel among the Prophets. A Study of Ezekiel's Place in Prophetic Tradition* (SBT Second Series 31, London: SCM Press, 1975).

[5]D. H. Müller, *Ezechiel-Studien* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1885) 56-62, "Keilschriftliche Parallelen."

[6]S. Daiches, "Ezekiel and the Babylonian Account of the Deluge, Notes on Ezek. xiv. 12-20," *JQR* 17 (1905) 441-55.

[7]M. I. Gruber, *Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1970).

[8]M. C. Astour, "Ezekiel's Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin," *JBL* 95 (1976) 567-79.

[9]S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1983), chapters 2 and 3.

[10]R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1941) 543.

textbooks of psychopathology[11] is a method which has completely overlooked the cultural and literary background of the Book of Ezekiel. We hope that scholars will become better acquainted with the comparative studies and abandon the view which assumes that Freud's *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* represents the most appropriate interpretive grid for the Book of Ezekiel.[12] *Wer den Dichter will verstehen, muss in Dichters Lande gehen.* Of no one is this more true than of the author of the Book of Ezekiel.[13]

We perceive two major differences between the *Weltanschauung*[14]

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[11]K. Jaspers, "Der Prophet Ezechiel. Eine pathographische Studie," in *Arbeiten zur Psychiatrie, Neurologie und ihren Grenzgebieten. Festschrift K. Schneider* (Heidelberg, 1947) 77-85. Jaspers argued that the Book of Ezekiel allows one to trace a typical course of the development of a schizophrenia. The initial phase is characterized by disturbances reflected in the visions and colourful poems at the beginning of the Book. The final chapters of the Book (40-48) reflect a later phase of a greater calm and of the relaxing of anxiety and disturbance, (summarized in Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 18). Cf. N. H. Cassem, "Ezekiel's Psychotic Personality: Reservations on the Use of the Couch for Biblical Personalities," in *The Word in the World* (Fs F. L. Moriarty, eds., R.J. Clifford and G. W. MacRae, Cambridge: Weston College Press, 1973) 59-69; G. Krinetzki, "Tiefenpsychologie im Dienste der alttestamentlichen Exegese. Zu Stiel un Metaphorik von Ezechiel 27," *TQ* 155 (1975) 132-43.

[12]Cf. E. C. Broome, "Ezekiel's Abnormal Personality," *JBL* 55 (1946) 277-92. The author interprets Ezekiel's mentioning of the scroll (Ezek 2:9-3:3), as a "penis-symbol" (p. 288), the digging of a hole in the wall and seeing abominable creeping things in it (Ezek 8:7ff.), as a sign of Ezekiel's inversion and fear of coitus (p. 289), and his ecstatic experiences of flying as purely sexual symbolism (p. 282). Moreover, the author finds that Ezekiel was a victim of "catatonic schizophrenia ...unconscious sexual regression, schizophrenic withdrawal, delusions of persecution and grandeur." This interpretation is an example of what G. R. Driver called on another occasion "a *tour de force* of academic imbecility," in "Farewell to Queen Huzzab!," *JTS* 15 (1964) 296-98, esp. p. 297, with reference to some scholarly suggestions concerning a *crux* in Nah 2:8. Cf. also B. Baentsch, "Pathologischer Züge in Israels Prophetentum," *ZWTh* 50 (1908) 52-81; K. Van Nuys, "Evaluating the Pathological in Prophetic Experience (particularly in Ezekiel)," *JBR* 21 (1953) 244-51.

[13]Quoted by J. Muilenburg, "Ezekiel," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (eds. M. Black and H. H. Rowley, London: T. Nelson, 1962) 568. In the light of the above analysis the following conclusions drawn by R. R. Wilson, in his article, "Prophecy in Crisis: The Call of Ezekiel," *Int* 38 (1984) 117-30, need to be revised, "For Ezekiel, the eating of the scroll indicates that God has supplied the prophet with oracles in a fixed form that cannot be changed. All of the words which Ezekiel speaks are precisely the same words which God literally put inside the prophet. (...) (p. 127). The overall effect is to portray Ezekiel as an automaton, an individual who has no human personality but is totally under the control of the divine will" (p. 126). Instead of viewing Ezekiel as an automaton wee see him as a highly creative artist and sophisticated *littérateur* who displays an extraordinary breath of knowledge reflected in his book.

[14]We use the term *Weltanschauung* as defined by H. Gese, "The Question of a World View," in *Essays on Biblical Theology* (Engl. transl. by K. Crim, Minneapolis: Augsburg 1981) 223-46. It represents "the summary of all metaphysical concerns and convictions, (and) includes also the evaluation of all forms of being and life," (p. 223).

reflected in the Poem of Erra and the one expressed in the Book of Ezekiel. First, the Poem of Erra is thoroughly steeped in polytheism. It is the story of the angered and offended gods Marduk, Erra, the Sebetti, Išum, Ištarān and others. The Poem has a didactic purpose to teach the Babylonians never to slack in the worship of their gods. After the punishment comes the restoration which is presented as the return of the gods who are no longer angry to their dwellings.[15] The polytheistic worship resumes. The Book of Ezekiel has a didactic goal as well. The express pedagogical purpose of Yahweh's judgment is that the people of Israel may never again return to their syncretistic practices. The exclusive and single-minded worship of Yahweh is presented as the condition *sine qua non* of any dealings with Yahweh. A radical demand for monolatry dominates the message of the Book of Ezekiel.

The second major difference is the pronounced tendency of the Poem of Erra toward magical thinking. The Poem of Erra ends with a significant statement endowing the tablets of the Poem with the magical power of protection from disaster. The lines in Erra V 53-58, reflect a common feature of magical practices known as *ex operae operandi*, i.e., "effective by virtue of performance." The Poem of Erra provides protection even when Erra and the Sebetti intend the contrary. Owing to the promise of salvation and to the fact that in the latter period the name of the god Erra became identified with plague epidemics, exemplars of the Poem containing the whole or parts of the text were used as protective amulets against plague. These were provided with a perforated handle through which a fine cord was threaded to facilitate hanging them on house walls.[16] By contrast, in the Book of Ezekiel there

[15]Cf. the instruction of Erra to his lieutenant Išum at the end of the Poem, V 31, "Safely bring to their dwellings the gods of the land who were angry." Translation from W. G. Lambert, "The Fifth Tablet of the Era Epic," *Iraq* 24 (1962) 119-125, esp. p. 123.

[16]So Cagni, *PE*, 61 n. 171. Cf. L. W. King, "New Fragments of the Dibbarra-legend on two Assyrian Plague-tablets," *ZA* 11 (1896) 50-62; E. Reiner, "Plague Amulets and House Blessings," *JNES* 19 (1960) 148-55, who examined the amulets with the Poem of Erra. Whatever part of the tablet remained blank, it was inscribed with intersecting diagonals and framed by lines so that the result is a quadrangle divided into four triangles (p. 151) Within these triangles formulas were inscribed expressing the veneration of Marduk, Erra, Išum, and the Sebetti. The purpose of such formulas was to insure the good will of the gods toward the possessor of the tablet. On different kinds of amulets see J. Marquès-Rivière, *Amulettes, talismans et pantacles dans les traditions orientales et occidentales* (Paris: Payot, 1938); C. L. Woolley, "Babylonian Prophylactic Figurines," *JRAS* (1926) 689-713; O. R. Gurney, "Babylonian Prophylactic Figures and their Rituals," *AAA* 22 (1935) 31-96; E. D. Van Buren, "Amulets in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Or* 14 (1945) 18-23.

is no magical device by which humans can manipulate or ward off Yahweh's furor.[17] Instead of magical manipulation, the Book of Ezekiel places the moral and ethical demands of Yahweh at the center of its proclamation.

We may point out probable reasons why would one revert to the Poem of Erra for some terms and motifs which were incorporated in the Book of Ezekiel. First, it is a fact that both works attempt to give an explanation for a similar catastrophe. In the Poem of Erra Kabti-ilāni-Marduk grappled with the staggering fact that the city of Babylon, Marduk's seat and the navel of the universe was devastated. He offered a theological explanation where the ultimate causes of the destruction were seen in the offenses against the gods on the part of humans. The Poem of Erra is an attempt to answer the question how it occurred that the god Marduk allowed such a calamity to fall upon his city and his people. Moreover, the author endeavored to restore the confidence and faith of the people who felt betrayed and abandoned by their national divinity Marduk. The prophet Ezekiel lived and worked in Babylonia. There he heard about the devastation of the city of Jerusalem. As a religious and community leader he had to explain to the dismayed Judaeans the shattering news: Why did Yahweh allow such desolation and humiliation of the land of Israel and its capital, the navel of the earth (Ezek 38:12), and the seat of Yahweh's כבוד? The fall of Jerusalem created the same kind of religious problem for the author of the Book of Ezekiel as did the devastation of Babylon for the author of the Poem of

[17]According to two scholars some Israelites in exile were wearing protective amulets upon their breasts, cf. Le Compte du Mesnil du Buisson, "Une tablette magique de la région du Moyen Euphrate," in *Mélanges syriens offert à R. Dussaud* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939) I 421-34, esp. p. 421 n. 2 "L'expression על לבם (Ezek 14:3, 4, 7) 'sur le coeur,' nous paraît à comprendre ici à la lettre. Les גלולים étaient sans doute portés sous les vêtements." This literal interpretation of the גלולים as protective amulets worn upon the breasts was defended and further elaborated by J. Schoneveld, "Ezekiel XIV 1-8," *OTS* 15 (1969) 193-204. Greenberg's translation, "idols in their thoughts," (*Ezekiel 1-20,* 248) is not convincing. The term גלולים occurs 39 times in Ezekiel where it definitely represents a material object. Otherwise it is found only in Lev 26:30; Jer 50:2; Deut 29:16; and 1 Kgs 15:12; 21:26; 2 Kgs 17:12; 21:11; 23:24 (Statistics in H. G. May, "The Book of Ezekiel," *The Interpreter's Bible* [New York/Nashville: Abingdon, 1956] p. 96). In the light of what we know about the popularity which the Erra tablets enjoyed in Ezekiel's time it would not be improbable that some Jews in exile were adopting the practices of their Babylonian neighbors who believed in the apotropaic qualities of the fragments of the Poem of Erra, and started wearing them as amulets.

Erra.[18] However, the author of the Book of Ezekiel had a marked advantage in the fact that the Poem of Erra had already dealt with the same issue. Moreover, the Poem was already in existence for at least 150 years and in his time was enjoying an extraordinary popularity because of its presumed apotropaic qualities in warding off disaster. It does not strike one as improbable that the Jewish intellectual elite in Babylonia, in an attempt to deal with the most shattering event of Hebrew national history, would consult the way another nation dealt with a similar event.[19] The issue is not of a literary plagiarism. Rather, one should view it as an example of literary emulation, since the Poem of Erra is a work of "vertiginous erudition." This interpretation is further supported by ample extra-biblical evidence which demonstrate that the leading segments of the Jewish community in a relatively short period achieved leadership roles in the Babylonian society. The tablets found in the Murašû archives of an influential Babylonian family of business people reveal commercial and banking transactions of Jews living in Babylonia. The fact that a considerable number of typical Hebrew names appear in such a limited and highly specialized collection of tablets testifies to the important social and economical role which leading members of the Babylonian Jewish community achieved by the middle of the fifth century BCE.[20]

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[18]This has been pointed out by R. Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioolog bij Ezechiël* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 24-25, and J. Bottéro - S. N. Kramer, *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 721, "à la façon des Judéens de la Bible, qui n'arrivaient pas à comprendre comment Jérusalem, la ville sainte, le propre siège de Yahvé, avait pu succomber devant ses assaillants, l'auteur d'Erra (...) se trouvait, lui aussi, confonté à une situation incompréhensible et absurde: pourquoi ces longs siècles de décandences, d'humiliation et de malheurs dans un pays dont la métropole servait de résidence et d'habitacle à Marduk, le plus grand dieu, le roi du monde?"

[19]Cf. S. P. Garfinkel, *Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel*(Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1983) 10, "A priest in the exile, such as Ezekiel (Ezek 1:3 יחזקאל בן בוזי הכהן), might well have been exposed to local literary works, as are the religious and intellectual leadership of any age. The *literati* somehow find common grounds despite political or social pressures toward segregation."

[20]Cf. G. Cardascia, *Les archives des Murašû, une famille d'hommes d'affaires babyloniens à l'époque perse 455-403 av. J.- C.* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1951) "Pour que la bigarrure des populations transparaisse dans des sources aussi spéciales, il faut qu'elle ait été un trait dominant de cette société" (p. 6). L. Gry, "Israélites en Assyrie, Juifs en Babylonie," *Le Muséon* 35 (1922) 153-85, 36 (1923) 1-26; D. Sidersky, "L'onomastique hébraïque des tablettes de Nippur," *RÉJ* 87 (1929) 177-99; S. Daiches, "Kommt des Tetragrammaton YHWH in der Keilinschriften vor?" *ZA* 22 (1908) 125-36; M. D. Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents* (HSM 7, Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976)

Second, a particularly striking feature of the Book of Ezekiel is its pronounced pro-Babylonian stance. This is evident when compared with a contemporary lament of the exiled Jewish community. The powerful words of Ps 137:9 express a profound desire for revenge on the Babylonians, "Happy shall be he who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!"[21] In the same time the author or redactors of the Book of Ezekiel affirm that the military conquests and imperialism of the Babylonians meet Yahweh's full approval! Ezek 30:25 "I (Yahweh) will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon ... When I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon..." This remarkable statement makes Nebuchadrezzar the servant of Yahweh! As noted by G. Hölscher, the Book of Ezekiel contains prophecies against Tyre and Egypt, the opponents of Babylon, but there is no word of threat against the Babylonians![22] Hölscher described Ezekiel as a political supporter or partisan (*Parteigänger*) of Babylon.[23]In the oracles against foreign nations, seven nations come within the circle of denunciation except the Babylonians: Ammon (Ezek 25:1-7); Moab (25:8-11); Edom (25:12-14); the Philistines (25:15-17); Tyre (26-27); Sidon (28:20-23); Egypt (29-32). As pointed out by Cooke, "Babylon is not included in the list; but Babylon, though the chief aggressor, stood apart from the rest, as being the instrument of Yahweh's justice, ordained, in the prophet's eyes, to punish Israel."[24]

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[21]Here we follow the dating of H.- J. Kraus, *Psalmen* (BK XV/2 Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag [5]1978) 1083 ,"Es ist vielmehr wahrscheinlich, dass der Psalm aus einer Klagefeier der Exilierten hervorgegangen ist." Kraus correctly points out that the expression "by the rivers of Babylon" עַל נַהֲרוֹת בָּבֶל (Ps 137:1) corresponds to Ezek 1:1; 3:15 עַל נְהַר כְּבָר.

[22]G. Hölscher, *Hesekiel der Dichter und das Buch, BZAW* 39 (1924) 8, "Hesekiel war, wie sein Zeitgenosse Jeremia, Parteigänger Babyloniens gegen Ägypten. (...) Den Gegnern Babyloniens, Tyrus und Ägypten, weissagt er Unheil; gegen Babylonien hat er kein Wort der Drohnung."

[23]Cf. the view of R. Kittel, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, [2]1929) vol. III, 170, who suggested that Ezekiel refused to condemn the Babylonians for reasons of his personal security. Similarly, L. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees, The Sociological Background of Their Faith* (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1938) I 388, suggested that Magog is a cryptogram for Babel. Ezekiel, he assumes, sought to conceal in this way his message from the Babylonian secret police. However, this does not explain why the Book of Ezekiel states Yahweh's approval and support for the king of Babylon.

[24]Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 281, "It is indeed remarkable that Ez. nowhere utters a direct prophecy against Babylon" (p. 408). Cf. also Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II,* 304, "Again and again it has been observed with justified astonishment that nowhere in the book of Ezekiel is Babylon specifically threatened with Yahweh's judgment."

Indeed it is remarkable that Nabuchadrezzar, the pagan king *par excellence* who destroyed Jerusalem is portrayed as Yahweh's servant. As pointed out in our analysis of the net motif, Zedekiah's breach of the vassal oath with Nebuchadrezzar has been connected to the disloyalty of the Israelites toward Yahweh. In this light, Nebuchadrezzar's invasion of Judah is perceived as Yahweh's judgment over the disloyal people. There is a striking difference between the deferential portrayal of Nabukadrezzar in the Book of Ezekiel and the latter denigration of the same king in the Book of Daniel. The latter tradition has transformed Nabuchadrezzar into a mad king (Dan 4:33) who forsakes his god and requires the worship of another by his subjects (Dan 3:1-3), a detail taken from the history of the sacrilegous king Nabonidus.[25]

Another striking feature of the Book of Ezekiel is the fact that the 42 occurrences of the term תועבה are consistently applied to the people of Judah, the land of Israel, the social crimes, and cultic abominations perpetrated in the Jerusalem temple.[26] The term is never applied to the pagan Babylonians. The latter are not the issue in the Book of Ezekiel. Hence to object to the interpretation propounded in this research by saying that the priest-prophet Ezekiel would have shrunk from using a piece of pagan literature like the Poem of Erra for his literary inspiration is simply not supported by the general, rather positive attitude of the Book of Ezekiel toward the Babylonians. The irony of the Book of Ezekiel is the fact that the Israelites have forfeited their favorable position and have become worse than the pagans round about them (Ezek 5:7).[27]

Furthermore, in the survey of research we have listed philological studies which have identified a considerable number of Akkadianisms in the vocabulary of the Book of Ezekiel. Together with the literary

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[25]Cf. R. H. Sack, "The Nabonidus Legend," *RA* 77 (1983) 59-67, esp. p. 65, (Concerning Nabuchadrezzar in the Book of Daniel) "The capture of the city of Jerusalem, the dismantling of the temple of Solomon, and the deportation of the captives were acts never to be fogotten; the author of such horrible deeds had to be portrayed in such a way as not only to place emphasis on destruction and wickedness but also to show that the apparent power of might of the king of Babylon was merely the result of Yahweh's punishment of the Hebrews."

[26]Ezek 5:9, 11; 6:9, 11; 7:3, 4, 8, 9, 20; 8:6(2x), 9, 13, 15, 17; 9:4; 11:18, 21; 12:16; 14:6; 16:2, 22 36, 43, 47, 50, 51 58; 18:12, 13, 24; 20:4;22:2, 11; 23:36; 33:26; 33:29; 36:31; 43:8: 44:6, 7, 13.

[27]Cf. Ezek 3:5 "For you are not sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language, but to the house of Israel...(6) ... Surely if I sent you to such, they would listen to you. (7) But the house of Israel will not listen to you."

comparisons which we have made in this research it is quite plausible to defend a Babylonian provenience for at least some stages of the work, stages which are integral to the Book of Ezekiel.

Third, the Poem of Erra which defines itself as a "song" (*zamāru* V 49, 59), was relatively short and could have been memorized without particular difficulty. An accomplished performer, poet and (singer?) like Ezekiel could well have become acquainted with one of the most popular songs of his time, the Akkadian *šar gimir dadmê* (Erra I 1). This is a reason why we would suggest that the prophet Ezekiel himself would be the most probable person who reverted to the Poem of Erra and modified some of its material in order to suit the particular points made in the Book of Ezekiel. In our opinion, Ezekiel was not, as Hölscher believed, uniquely a poet who was transformed into a *littérateur* by his editors. We would argue that the influence of the Poem of Erra on the Book of Ezekiel was operating at the level of the prophecy's origin and should not be seen as being introduced only at the redactional level. However, since the primary goal of the present research was to demonstrate the probable relationship between the Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra, the method which we have used was not conceived in such a way as to provide an answer concerning the author of the Book of Ezekiel. Therefore, throughout the present work we have referred to the author or the redactor of the Book of Ezekiel.

Fourth, the research of E. Davis has underlined the fact that the Book of Ezekiel represents a watershed in the history of Old Testament literature.[28] The Book of Ezekiel reflects a definite literary consciousness (cf. already A. Heschel). Moreover, Ezekiel's metaphor of swallowing the scroll (Ezek 2:8-3:3) may be perceived both as a claim to divine inspiration for his literary activity and message and as an avowal on the part of the author of having followed a certain existing model. As pointed out by M. Eliade, for the ancients everything which lacked an exemplary model was "meaningless" i.e., it lacked reality, "Ainsi, la *réalité* s'acquiert exclusivement par *répétition* ou *participation*; tout ce qui n'a pas un modèle exemplaire est "dénué de sens," c'est-à-dire manque de réalité."[29]

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[28]E. F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll, Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1987, to appear in JSOT Supplement Series, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989)

[29]M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour, archétypes et répétition* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947, 1969) 48 (italics his); Engl. transl. *Cosmos and History, The Myth of Eternal Return* (New York, 1959), esp. pp. 34-48. For the demonstration of the presence of this principle in Mesopotamian literature see B. Alster, "The Paradigmatic Character of Mesopotamian Heroes," *RA* 68 (1974) 49-60.

In our opinion, the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel should be viewed as a sophisticated humanist who followed ancient canons of literary style which placed a premium on saying things in conventional ways. As pointed out by J. H. Tigay,

> this involved the use of standard formulas, similes, epithets, and the like. But beyond this ancient writers drew extensively upon larger components, such as topoi, motifs, groups of lines, and episodes, which had their original settings in other compositions. Sometimes they composed passages imitating such elements, and at other times they simply transferred such elements verbatim into their own compositions. (...) by the standards of the ancient Near East, these phenomena reflected a highly valued reliance on tradition.[30]

In the light of our analysis this quotation is an apt description of the way the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel approached its composition. The extra-biblical material has not been used in an indiscriminate way.

The term plagiarism is a modern concept and inappropriate to describe the approach of the ancients toward literary composition. Therefore, we have suggested to view their literary techniques in the light of literary emulation. By this we want to designate the attempt of an artist or an author to adapt to a new context and apply in the best possible way an expression or a motif stemming from another composition. Literary emulation stands for creativity while plagiarism reflects it absence. Emulation does not mean that the Poem of Erra being a literary masterpiece, the author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel attempted to compete by composing a similar work. The expression does not mean the emulation of a work as a whole. Rather, it designates a creative adaptation of individual motifs, expressions or themes to a new end. It represents more than simple translation of older composition. It concerns a particular poetic strategy. To a certain degree it is comparable to what Nougayrol called "métamorphose littéraire,"[31]

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[30]J. H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982) 162. A good illustration of such an approach to literature is found in the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, cf. P. Machinist, "Literature as Politics: The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic and the Bible," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 455-82. The author has pointed out the range of literary traditions on which the Epic is drawing. The composition represents a "sophisticated integration of a variety of forms and themes" (p. 458). In it "Babylonian as well as Assyrian and other traditions are creatively adapted to a new end" (p. 475).

[31]J. Nougayrol, "Ningirsu vanqueur de Zû," *RA* 46 (1952) 87-97, esp. p. 97. Nougayrol limited this expression to the adaptation of the OB Anzû myth which celebrated the heroism of Ningirsu to Ninurta in the NA version. For the NA version of this myth see E. Ebeling, "Eine neue Tafel des akkadischen Zû-Mythos," *RA* 46 (1952) 25-41. In comparing the OB with the NA version Ebeling said, "Allerdings stimmen sie beide nicht vollkommen überein. Es gibt Zeilen, die jeweils in der einen, wie der anderen

or to what Thomas Mann characterized in another regard, as *"zitathaftes Leben."*[32] The author or redactor of the Book of Ezekiel appears to have used such a technique of "literary metamorphosis" by applying to Yahweh and to the prophet the features which originally belonged to Erra and Išum respectively. Moreover, he apperas to have been eclectic using multiple sources, Babylonian as well as older prophetic traditions without, however, following these traditions in a slavish way. Rather, he molds them in a highly creative and sophisticated manner adapting them to his specific purposes.

Bearbeitung fehlen. Auch der Wortlaut ist nicht immer identisch. Andererseits fördern sie wechselseitig des Verständnis" (p. 26). These differences may be interpreted as indications of the creative involvement of the latter editor of the myth with his material. The nature of this creative work has been adequatly described by J. H. Tigay in respect to the epic of Gilgameš.

[32]T. Mann, "Freud und die Zukunft," in *Gesammelte Werke* (Franfurt-am-Main: Fischer, 1960) IX, p. 496, "(Der Verfasser) suchte in der Vergangenheit ein Vorbild, in das er wie in eine Taucherglocke sclüpfe, um sich so, zugleich geschützt und entstellt, in das gegenwärtige Problem hineinzustürzen." Cf. M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), who adapts Mann's expression to his own use by defining it as "the dependence of great religious cultural formations on authoritative views which are studied, reinterpreted, and adapted to ongoing life" (p. 1).

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Summary

This research attempts to demonstrate the likelihood that in the formulation of certain themes and motifs of the Book of Ezekiel, its author or redactor knew and used a contemporary Akkadian composition called the Poem of Erra. Twelve features shared by both works have been analyzed. These points of contact have been divided into two categories following a descending degree of probability. In the first category are four features which appear uniquely in the Book of Ezekiel. In the second category are eight features which are present in Ezekiel and in the rest of the Old Testament. The source of the first four features would most probably be extra-biblical, and more specifically the Poem of Erra. The source of the second category of motifs would be in antecedent Old Testament prophetic traditions. Nevertheless, the Poem of Erra might have influenced the formulation and presentation of some aspects of these motifs.

By virtue of the comparisons established in this research the book offers a detailed analysis of twelve features of the Poem of Erra thus contributing to a better understanding of this remarkable piece of Akkadian literature.

The survey of research on the Babylonian influence on the Book of Ezekiel offers a richly documented review of the over one hundred years old tradition of the interpretatio Babylonica of the Book of Ezekiel. The concluding section explores the particular poetic strategy used in the composition of a major theme and motifs of the Book of Ezekiel defined as literary emulation – a creative synthesis of traditional material.

This research strikes one by the straightforwardness of its working hypothesis and the elegant solution it offers to the problems raised in this book. It has the marked advantage of bringing all the parallels to a single source – the relatively short Babylonian Poem of Erra. It offers guidelines and a demonstration of some principles of the comparative-contrastive approach, showing the considerable heuristic value but also the limitations of the comparative study of the Ancient Near Eastern literature.