JEREMIAH 46-51, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SEPTUAGINT, THE TARGUM AND JEWISH MEDIAEVAL EXEGIS

Georgina Nelson

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St. Andrews

1984

Full metadata for this item is available in
Research@StAndrews:FullText
at:
http://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/

Please use this identifier to cite or link to this item:
http://hdl.handle.net/10023/2816

This item is protected by original copyright

This item is licensed under a
Creative Commons License

In submitting this thesis to the University of St. Andrews I understand that I am giving permission for it to be made available for use in accordance with the regulations of the University Library for the time being in force, subject to any copyright vested in the work not being affected thereby. I also understand that the title and abstract will be published, and that a copy of the work may be made and supplied to any *bona fide* library or research worker.

Abstract of Thesis

Chapters 46-51 of the Book of Jeremiah contain a series of prophecies against foreign nations, and these 'foreign nation oracles' form the focus of this thesis. The opening chapter contains a discussion of several outstanding problems connected with these oracles, the chief of these being the problem of authenticity. After examination of the major arguments, the conclusion is reached that the contents of chapters 46-51 are not to be attributed to Jeremiah, but to one or more imitators who employed 'Jeremianic' language. Also discussed are the problems of the differing position and order in which the oracles occur in the Septuagint.

The major part of the thesis contains a study of the Septuagint and Targum versions of chs. 46-51, and a consideration of the mediaeval Jewish commentators Rashi, Kimchi and Abravanel. The ancient versions are consulted not as aids to the recovery of a better Hebrew text than the Massoretic text, but rather to gain an insight into the techniques employed by the translators, and to pick out and account for those elements of interpretation which each version contains. The contribution of Rashi and Kimchi to the interpretation of the Hebrew text is also considered, and a separate chapter is devoted to the commentary of Isaac Abravanel. His interest in eschatological speculation significantly affects his interpretation of certain foreign nation oracles.

The thesis is primarily concerned with the variety of answers to the problems of exegesis which are provided by the various versions and commentators, and through such answers seeks to understand their presuppositions and interpretative approach.

JEREMIAH 46 - 51,

with special reference to

the Septuagint, the Targum and Jewish Mediaeval Exegesis

- by -

Georgina Nelson

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Divinity of the University of St. Andrews in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

ST. ANDREWS, SCOTLAND

1984.

In submitting this thesis to the University of St. Andrews I understand that I am giving permission for it to be made available for use in accordance with the regulations of the University Library for the time being in force, subject to any copyright vested in the work not being affected thereby. I also understand that the title and abstract will be published, and that a copy of the work may be made and supplied to any *bona fide* library or research worker.

Abstract of Thesis

Chapters 46-51 of the Book of Jeremiah contain a series of prophecies against foreign nations, and these 'foreign nation oracles' form the focus of this thesis. The opening chapter contains a discussion of several outstanding problems connected with these oracles, the chief of these being the problem of authenticity. After examination of the major arguments, the conclusion is reached that the contents of chapters 46-51 are not to be attributed to Jeremiah, but to one or more imitators who employed 'Jeremianic' language. Also discussed are the problems of the differing position and order in which the oracles occur in the Septuagint.

The major part of the thesis contains a study of the Septuagint and Targum versions of chs. 46-51, and a consideration of the mediaeval Jewish commentators Rashi, Kimchi and Abravanel. The ancient versions are consulted not as aids to the recovery of a better Hebrew text than the Massoretic text, but rather to gain an insight into the techniques employed by the translators, and to pick out and account for those elements of interpretation which each version contains. The contribution of Rashi and Kimchi to the interpretation of the Hebrew text is also considered, and a separate chapter is devoted to the commentary of Isaac Abravanel. His interest in eschatological speculation significantly affects his interpretation of certain foreign nation oracles.

The thesis is primarily concerned with the variety of answers to the problems of exegesis which are provided by the various versions and commentators, and through such answers seeks to understand their presuppositions and interpretative approach.

JEREMIAH 46 - 51,

with special reference to

the Septuagint, the Targum and Jewish Mediaeval Exegesis

- by -

Georgina Nelson

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Divinity of the University of St. Andrews in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

ST. ANDREWS, SCOTLAND

1984.

STATEMENT

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance 350 (General No. 12) on 1st October 1979, and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. under Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 (as amended).

On 1st October 1979 I commenced research on 'Jeremiah 46-51, with special reference to the Septuagint, the Targum and Jewish Mediaeval Exegesis', which is now being submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

The thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, is my own composition, and has not previously been presented for a higher degree. The research was carried out in the University of St. Andrews under the supervision of Professor William McKane and Dr. R.B. Salters.

.....

CERTIFICATE

We certify that Georgina Nelson has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 (as amended), and is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

.....

.....

Supervisors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to all my teachers, most especially to Professor William McKane, whose classes kindled my interest in Jeremiah, and to Dr. R. B. Salters, who for my first research year was both supervisor and friend. My thanks are due to Owain, my fellow student for six years, and to Jim, who spurred me into finishing this thesis. I am grateful also to Miss Mary Taylor, whose speed and accuracy as a typist left me open-mouthed with admiration! Finally I would like to say a special word of thanks to Dr. Andrew Doig FRCP, without whom this thesis would surely never have been written.

CONTENTS

Title Page	I
Statement	II
Certificate	III
Acknowledgements	IV
Abbreviations	VI
Introductory	1
Chapter One : The Problem of the Oracles	
(i) Authenticity	6
(ii) Position of the Oracles	38
(iii) Ordering of the Oracles	57
Chapter Two : The Septuagint of Chs. 46-51	64
Chapter Three : The Targum of Chs. 46-51	98
Chapter Four : Jewish Exegesis of Selected Passages	136
Chapter Five : The Commentary of Isaac Abravanel on Chs. 46-51	184
Hebrew Text of Abravanel	243
Footnotes	260
Bibliography	267

ABBREVIATIONS

AV	Authorised Version.
AJSL	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.
BDB	Brown, F. Driver, S.R. Briggs, CA. Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.
BHK	Biblia Hebraica (3rd edition) ed. Kittel, R. Stuttgart, 1937.
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, eds. Elliger, K. and Rudolph, W. Stuttgart, 1970 (Liber Jeremiae).
Bibl.	Biblica.
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly.
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments.
HTR	Harvard Theological Review.
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual.
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal.
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature and Exegesis.
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review.
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament.
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies.
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies.
LXX	The Septuagint.
MT	The Massoretic Text.
NEB	New English Bible.
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studien.
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly.
RSV	Revised Standard Version.
RV	Revised Version.

SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology.
SVT	Supplement to Vetus Testamentum.
VT	Vetus Testamentum.
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament.
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

INTRODUCTORY

In Chapters 46-51 of the book of Jeremiah we encounter a series of oracles in which the poet describes the fate which awaits several of Israel's neighbours, and it is these 'foreign nation oracles' which form the focus of this thesis. This section of the prophetic book was deemed an appropriate area for the research, since the foreign nation oracle genre is inherently interesting as one of the earliest, if not the earliest form of Hebrew prophecy, and also since the section is recognizably a coherent whole, distinct from the surrounding material. This distinctness is emphasized by the circumstance that in the Septuagint Version, the foreign nation oracles are located in a different part of the book of Jeremiah, and it is this peculiarity, and the problems contingent upon it, which have figured very largely in scholarly work on chapters 46-51. In consequence of this it was thought desirable that the first chapter of the thesis should be devoted to a discussion both of this matter, and of the vexed question of the authenticity of the oracles. After examination of the major arguments which have been advanced, I have come to the conclusion that the oracles are not the work of Jeremiah, but are to be attributed to an imitator or imitators who employed 'Jeremianic' expressions and phraseology, but whose thoughts did not really accord with those which we can with confidence attribute to the prophet. The oracles seem to me to be expressions of nationalism, and as such they cannot be reconciled with Jeremiah's own commission to proclaim doom upon his own people.

/...

On the question of the more original position and order of the foreign nation oracles within the book of Jeremiah, I am inclined to the view that the position and order in which they occur in the Septuagint is likely to be the earlier, although it is certainly difficult to account for the subsequent move from the middle of the book to the end, which produces the present position in the Hebrew text.

These matters do not constitute the main focus of the research. What has been attempted in the remainder of the thesis is a study of the text, Versions and exegesis of chapters 46-51. In Chapters 2 and 3 we concentrate on the two ancient Versions which proved most interesting for our purposes; the Septuagint or LXX, and the Aramaic Targum. In scrutinizing these Versions our aim was not to engage in textual criticism; LXX and Targum were compared with the Hebrew text not with the object of recovering a better Hebrew text than the Massoretic, but rather to observe the translation techniques which are employed in each Version, and to pick out and account for those elements of interpretation which each Version contains. Thus, for example, in the chapter on the LXX, little emphasis has been placed upon the recovery of the Hebrew Vorlage, and its comparison with the Massoretic or Proto-Massoretic text. We are interested in the translator as an interpreter of the Hebrew text, and we take the view that the text which he translated was substantially similar to that which we know as the Massoretic text. The question which we have asked, therefore, is not 'What Hebrew text underlies this translation?' but rather 'Why has the translator rendered the Hebrew in this particular way?'

/...

Chapters 2 and 3 both begin with an attempt, using examples from chapters 46-51, to describe the character of each Version, its stylistic features, the interests and preoccupations of the translator. We have described, for example, the tendency of the Septuagint translator to transliterate certain words or phrases which he finds difficult, and we have tried to show up the didactic approach of the Targum, its elimination of metaphor, its concern to elucidate the poetry. We have also tried to identify those verses in which the translator's rôle as interpreter has been carried out in a conscious and interesting manner.

Throughout the thesis we have been concerned to keep repetition to a minimum, and to try to avoid examining the same verse in different chapters of the thesis. Not surprisingly, many verses deemed interesting or difficult by one Version or commentator were also thought interesting by others. I have tried, therefore, to deal in chapter 2 with those verses at which the LXX is especially interesting, and likewise in chapter 3, with the Targum. It was decided, however, to devote a separate chapter, chapter 4, to those verses which emerged as 'purple passages', at which two or more Versions or commentators proved interesting. In chapter 4 we were able to consider not only the contributions of the LXX and Targum, but also of the Vulgate, Talmud and Midrash, and the comments of the mediaeval Jewish scholars Rashi and Kimchi, as well as various modern commentators. Where a verse is considered in two or more chapters, it is considered from a slightly different perspective each time. Thus, for example,

/...

48:31 appears in chapter 2, to illustrate the tendency of the LXX translator to transliterate difficult words and phrases[1]; it appears in chapter 3 to show that the Targumist attempts to translate certain names of places, in this case Kir Heres[2]. In chapter 4, there is a much fuller discussion of the verse, with the contributions of Targum, Kimchi and Midrash Rabbah being considered.[3] Again, the LXX and Targum of 49:10,11 and 49:16 are discussed, along with various commentators, in chapter 4[4]; neither of these verses is discussed, therefore, in chapters 2 and 3. I have called chapter 4 'Jewish Exegesis of Selected Passages', since although it does not confine itself to Jewish exegesis, as we have indicated, it does afford a prominent place to a consideration of Rashi and Kimchi, and to Talmudic and Midrashic interpretations.

Chapter 5 is given over to a study of the exegesis of the late mediaeval Jewish commentator Isaac Abravanel. He is interesting as one who stands at the end of one era and the threshold of another. He is the last of the great mediaeval Jewish commentators, and refers back constantly to the work of his predecessors, showing his indebtedness to them even on the occasions when he disagrees with them. Yet it can also be said that his systematic and structured approach to his task as commentator points forward, and it may be said of him that no predecessor came so near as he did to the modern ideal of a commentator on the Bible. His passionate interest in eschatological speculation also makes him a worthwhile study, and this interest shows through in his understanding and interpretation of many passages in chapters 46-51. Chapter 5 concludes with a

/...

comparison of Abravanel with Rashi and Kimchi, to whom he is so deeply indebted.

In consulting this variety of material it has not been our primary intention to find acceptable solutions to the problems of exegesis with which the text confronts us, important though this search is; in many cases we discover that the problems raised by the Hebrew text do not readily admit of a solution, and that the text remains as much of an enigma for the modern as for the mediaeval or ancient scholar. Why is Egypt's 'voice' likened to a serpent's (46:22)?[5] Why does the poet mourn over Moab in the course of an oracle against that people (48:31, 2, 6)?[6] Why is Damascus called 'the praiseworthy city, my joyful city' (49:25)?[7] We cannot give a satisfactory answer to such questions. We are primarily interested in the variety of answers to these and other problems of exegesis which are provided by the various Versions and commentators, and through such answers we seek to understand their presuppositions and interpretative approach. Thus, even the kind of exegesis found in the Talmud and Midrash is reckoned to be of interest and value, though it often moves along paths unacceptable to the modern scholar, and produces interpretations which have no claim to represent true or possible or even serious exegesis as it is understood and practised by him. We study exegesis so that we may better understand the interpreter, and we consider this a worthwhile aim in itself.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM OF THE ORACLES

(i) AUTHENTICITY

The question of the authenticity of the foreign nation oracles found in chapters 46-51 of the book of Jeremiah has been much disputed in the past, and is still debated. It is difficult to find two scholars who agree concerning the extent of the Jeremianic material, if any, in these chapters. The consensus of opinion among older scholars seems to have been that the oracles are wholly spurious and inauthentic, this being the view of Vatke and Stade, among others, forcefully argued in an important article by F. Schwally[1]. Schwally's lead was followed by Duhm[2], who regarded the oracles as the work of later editors, whose practice it was to attribute to Jeremiah prophecies which they thought suitable to his position, Skinner[3] and Volz[4] (who attributed the whole collection to a single author, a 'Deutero-Jeremiah', who composed the present chapters around the time of the death of Nebuchadnezzar). This view has also found favour more recently with scholars such as Mowinkel[5], Pfeiffer[6] and Fohrer[7], although the latter tentatively accepts 46:2-12 as Jeremianic.

The authenticity of the collection has in the past been defended by scholars who are conservative in tendency, such as Orelli[8] and Cassuto[9], and S.R. Driver[10] is content to accept chapters 46-49 as substantially the work of the prophet. Most scholars, however, make the attempt to isolate from the oracular material a Jeremianic 'nucleus', a core of material which they feel able with confidence to attribute to Jeremiah himself. Thus

/...

Giesebrecht[11] accepts as genuine 47, 49:7-8, 10-11, and a nucleus of 46:3-12. Cornill[12] accepts 46:3-26 and the greater part of most of the other prophecies. Eissfeldt[13], Bright[14], Weiser[15] and Rudolph[16] adopt the same policy, and Rudolph, for example, feels able to accept a substantial amount of material (46:3-12, 13-26; 47:1-7; 49:1-5, 28-33, 34-38 and parts of the oracles against Moab and Edom).

There is a great measure of agreement regarding the oracle against Babylon found in chapters 50-51. Contradicting Jeremiah's own attitude towards Babylon as expressed in chapters 27-29, and reflecting, as it does, the exilic situation, this 'inane poem', as Pfeiffer dubs it, 'a prolix, disjointed, vacuous literary exercise abounding in reminiscences of late parts of Isaiah's book (Is. 13; 34; 49) as well as of Jer. 6:22-24; 10:12-16; 49:17-21, 26'[17] is universally acknowledged as inauthentic, endorsing the opinion put forward by Eichhorn, and more forcefully by Budde[18]. Certain scholars, such as Driver[19] and more recently Eissfeldt[20], give a certain credence to 51:59-64, and believe that Jeremiah may have uttered prophecies against Babylon at some time in his career. Eissfeldt actually holds the view that 50:17-20 may have constituted a Jeremianic kernel around which these chapters were composed. Bardtke[21] thinks that Jeremiah's own oracle against Babylon was suppressed soon after 597, to be replaced soon after 586 by the present oracle. With regard to 46-49, Bardtke finds a Jeremianic nucleus in 47; 49:34-39; 46:1, 26, 18-24; 48; 49:1-6, 7f., 22, 10f., 23-27, 28-33. His position on the question of authenticity is unique, as we shall see below.

/...

Of great significance to the discussion of the authenticity of the foreign oracles is the question of their function. It is necessary first of all to say something about the earlier history of this particular genre, and about its traditional function.

The genre 'oracle against foreign nation' was not invented by Amos. As R.E. Clements puts it:

> 'there are strong indications that the form of such oracles, the style of their presentation, and perhaps also the type of motive adduced for such threats, were already well established features of prophetic preaching'.[22]

Fohrer has described the foreign nation oracle as <u>ein Urelement</u> of prophecy,[23] and N.K. Gottwald[24] has said that:

> 'It may be claimed with probability that the form of the foreign nation oracle was one of the earliest, if not the earliest form of Hebrew prophecy'.

These conclusions are based on evidence from the Bible itself and from the wider Near Eastern context, which suggests that the proclamation of such oracles by professional prophets in a situation of warfare was one of the most characteristic functions of early prophecy.[25] This biblical and extra-biblical material has been investigated by J.H. Hayes.[26]

Hayes cites as an example one of the letters discovered on the site of ancient Mari on the upper Euphrates, which dates from the end of the first half of the second millenium B.C. This letter features an oracle against Babylon, delivered by the <u>apûm</u> prophet of the god Dagan, at a time when political relations between Zimrilim of Mari and Hammurabi of Babylon were rapidly deteriorating. The oracle is addressed to Babylon, but is meant for the ears of the king of Mari, and this immediately reflects

/...

the style of the foreign oracles in the prophetic collections of the Old Testament : the oracles are addressed to the foreign nation in question, but are meant to be heard by Israel. The Mari oracle is meant as an assurance to Zimrilim. It is a salvation oracle for Mari, prophesying the fall of the enemy nation.[27] To this Hayes adds other Near Eastern material, including a Hittite text which suggests that accusations against the enemy formed part of the ritual preparation for battle, and he notes the existence of early Egyptian[28] and Arab[29] execrations and oracles, delivered in a situation of warfare.

Hayes then turns his attention to the Biblical material, first of all to the story of Balaam (Num. 22-24), the prophet from Pethor on the Euphrates (not far from Mari, as Gottwald notes). In these chapters the rôle of the seer-prophet is depicted as one of cursing and uttering oracles against a potential enemy, in order to create victory. Episodes such as this one, and also that of 1 Sam. 17:43, in which Goliath curses David by his God, show that Israel was familiar with the practice of cursing the enemy before warfare.

Actual speeches of judgement against the enemy are found in 1 Kings 20:26-30, 1 Samuel 15:2-3 and Isaiah 7:3-9. In each case, the implication of the denunciation of the enemy is victory or salvation for Israel.

It emerges from these examples that the foreign oracle in its earlier history functioned, like the curse or the symbolic act (e.g. 2 Kings 13:14-19) as a victory or salvation creating word, and as an assurance of victory in a context of warfare it is closely bound up with nationalistic aspirations.

/...

Hayes goes on to posit a second Sitz im Leben for the foreign oracle in the cult, and thinks that it may have formed part of the cultic lamentation ritual performed by Israel in times of national distress. Such a ritual is reflected in the structure of psalms such as 74, 79, 80, 102, 142. The foreign oracle may specifically have functioned as a reassuring response to a psalm of communal lamentation, especially to those psalms of national lamentation, in which the distress of the nation is due to the activities of foreign enemies (e.g. 44:9-19; 74:4-8; 79:1-4; 83:1-8; Lam. 1:10-11; 2:15-16). Psalm 21 suggests that oracles of assurance were addressed to the king promising victory over his enemies, as part of a cultic ritual; Hayes also cites Lam.4:21-22, which combines an oracle of salvation to Zion with an oracle against Edom, as the response to the lament of 4:17-20. This provides evidence of a usage of the foreign oracle as an oracle of weal in a lamentation ritual setting, evidence which is augmented by 2 Kgs.19:14-28.

Thus Hayes investigates two possible settings within which the foreign oracle genre may have functioned. Of course, this is not to say that we must look for a cultic setting for all the oracles[30], or expect to find that all the nations mentioned were potential enemies of Israel at the period in which the oracles against them were composed. We must reckon with a prophetic detachment of the genre from its original context, and recognize simply that the themes and motifs of the cult, and the ideology of 'Holy War' have influenced to some extent the language and content of the prophetic oracles.[31] It is significant, however, that whether in a cultic context or in the context of warfare,

/...

the foreign oracle genre in the ancient Near East, and in early Israel was a salvation genre. Misfortune for the enemy meant victory for the home nation which heard the oracle pronounced. In the light of this fact, we must approach the problem of how the foreign oracles in the prophetic books are meant to function. Are they still weal oracles for Israel, or is there any evidence of a change in function?

This question can be answered more easily for the usage of the foreign oracle in the book of Amos, than for the other prophetic collections. In Amos, the oracles against Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab and Judah constitute a formal unity. They belong together - the juxtaposition is not editorial. Followed as they are by a pronouncement against the prophet's own people Israel, it is apparent that the foreign oracles in Amos cannot function as salvation prophecies. In prefacing his words against Israel with words against the peoples round about, Amos ensures that his listeners are taken completely by surprise. They are lulled into a false sense of security, hearing what they expect to hear - that is, woe for the foreigner, implying weal for themselves. Suddenly the prophet rounds on them, to devastating effect. Woe for the foreign nation does NOT imply weal for Israel.[32] In their commentaries on the book of Amos, Mays and Hammershaimb both express the opinion that in this respect, the foreign oracles in Amos stand apart from those of the other books. Hammershaimb comments:

> '... there is a not insignificant difference, in that Amos has put together these oracles to show that no people which has sinned escapes punishment, while for the other prophets, the concern is on the contrary to describe the well-earned judgement which befalls the

/...

enemies of Israel, to the delight of the listeners or readers of these prophets'[33]

In the words of Mays:

'In form, intention and content these sayings are unlike the oracles against foreign nations in the collections in the other prophetic books. The others are often implicit salvation oracles for Israel and Judah .... usually they contain simply a portrayal of the nations' downfall. A reproach is seldom used, and when it is, it is an accusation of pride and arrogance, or of hostility against Israel. Here Amos cites quite specific crimes and indictments which put little emphasis on injury to Israel and the people of Yahweh'[34]

Are these opinions justified so far as the collection in Jeremiah 46-51 is concerned? Do these foreign oracles retain their traditional function as weal prophecies for Israel? And if so, can their composition be attributed to the same prophet who uttered such devastating oracles against his own people as are found in chapters 1-6 for example, the prophet who painted the imminent destruction of his countrymen in such bold and vivid colours?

It is interesting that one scholar has answered all these questions in the affirmitive. This is Hans Bardtke, who in 1935 wrote two articles bearing the title 'Jeremia der Fremdvölker-prophet'.[35] Bardtke's thesis is briefly this: the oracles against the nations form part of a volume of foreign oracles prepared by Jeremiah, comprising 1:2a,4-10; 25:15-17; 47; 49:34-39; 46:1, 26, 18-24; 48; 49:1-6, 7f., 22, 10f., 23-27, 28-33; 25:27-29. These prophecies represent the first phase of Jeremiah's ministry, in which he functioned as a salvation prophet, and thus uttered foreign oracles which functioned as salvation oracles to Judah. It was in this sense that he was called to be a prophet 'to the nations'.

/...

'Die Kehrseite seiner FremdvölkerVerkündigung ist das Heil für sein Volk, und weil es sich nur um die Kehrseite handelt, tritt dieses Volk nur nebenbei in den Gesichtskreis bei der Berufung.'[36]

Bardtke maintains that Jeremiah was not in fact called in 626 BC, in the thirteenth year of Josiah, but around 617 BC, and it is to the years between 617 and 615 BC, in which year Jeremiah was converted into a prophet of doom, that Bardtke allocates the foreign oracles. He sees them as functioning against the background of the policy of territorial expansion pursued by King Josiah in this period.

Bardtke's thesis has commanded little support among scholars, because of its highly speculative nature; Weiser, amongst others, asks why, if we are to date these oracles in the period 617-615, Jeremiah the nationalist prophet did not utter a word against the still extant Assyria. Suffice it to say that Bardtke's thesis represents a brave attempt to bring the foreign oracles into some sort of meaningful relationship, albeit a negative relationship, with the oracles of doom for Israel which can be attributed to Jeremiah. His view illustrates two interesting points, however. First of all, Bardtke believes that the foreign oracles of Jeremiah function as salvation oracles to Israel. Secondly, as such they cannot be reconciled with Jeremiah's commission to proclaim doom upon his people. In order to allocate to these oracles a credible place in Jeremiah's ministry, Bardtke has to posit a whole new 'first phase' of that ministry. Thus he can attribute the oracles (or a substantial part of them) to Jeremiah.

Other scholars defend the authenticity of the foreign oracles in a different way. Unable to follow Bardtke, they

/...

instead express the view that as with Amos, so with Jeremiah, the taking over of the foreign oracle genre by the prophet implies a change in its traditional function. J.H. Hayes, for example, maintains that:

> 'The oracles against the nations reflect the same evaluation of historical affairs as do the oracles against Judah'.[38]

That is, both types of oracles are rooted in the belief that Yahweh was embodying his historical purpose in the form of a foreign oppressor, Babylon, the 'enemy from the north' who was to wreak his vengeance on both the nations and Judah. In the light of this, Hayes regards the foreign oracles as 'basically speeches of doom announcing disaster upon the nations', speeches which are 'surprisingly free of Judean nationalistic theology'.[39] E. Leslie is another who considers the foreign oracles to be for the most part authentic. In his comment on the oracle against Damascus, which he considers to be inauthentic, he maintains that:

> '...as compared with the authentic oracles, it is extremely mild and is entirely lacking in the moral quality which is present in every utterance of Jeremiah where he brings the nations of the area to the bar of the Lord's judgement'.[40]

Those scholars who defend the authenticity of the foreign oracles point out that there are references to the downfall of the nations elsewhere in the book, and that at his very call to the prophetic ministry, Jeremiah is designated a 'prophet to the nations'. Thus Giesebrecht has this to say:

> 'Jeremia hat das Bewusstsein Heidenprophet zu sein und spricht es selbst an mehreren Stellen aus 1:5, 10, 25:15ff, 18:7ff. In C. 36:2 besitzen wir von Baruchs Hand oder doch jedenfalls aus guter Quelle eine Nachricht darüber, dass auch das alte Buch Weissagungen über alle Heiden enthalten habe. Mag dieser Ausdruck

/...

nun auch etwas zu weit gehen, so ist doch hiernach das Vorhandensein eines grösseren Bündels von Heidenorakeln im alten Buch a priori nicht unwahrscheinlich'.[41]

Hayes takes the view that since the practice of delivering oracles against foreign nations was known in Israel from its earliest days, and since in chapter 28:8 Jeremiah clearly sees himself as carrying on the work of the earlier prophets who prophesied against 'many nations and great kingdoms', it is quite in order to accept the evaluation of his ministry as a 'prophet to the nations'. Consequently:

> 'As a prophet to the nations, oracles such as are found in 46-51 would be entirely expected'.[42]

Rudolph shares this view:

> 'Dass Jeremia als "Prophet fur die Völker" (1:5) auch heidnische Völker bedroht, kann nicht wundernehmen'.[43]

The designation of Jeremiah as prophet to the nations, the mention of the fate of the nations outside chapters 46-51, and of course the fact that 46-51 have been ascribed by tradition to Jeremiah, and so included in the book which bears his name -- all these factors ensure that many scholars are predisposed in favour of the presence of authentic material in these chapters. Having made this decision, many go on to search for criteria to employ in order to separate out the secondary accretions from the genuine material. Rudolph believes that the oracles have been very much expanded and disfigured by later additions, which accounts for some of their stylistic shortcomings, such as the disturbing mixture of prose and poetry, especially in the Moab and Edom prophecies, and for the rather muddled train of thought which seems to lie behind them. It also accounts for the

/...

evidence of extensive borrowing from other parts of Jeremiah and from other parts of the Old Testament, which is present in the collection. He maintains that by removing as secondary those elements which are prosaic, muddled in thought or reminiscent of other parts of scripture, he can arrive at the Jeremianic 'nucleus' of each of these oracles. Having done this, Rudolph and those who hold similar views go on to date the oracular material to an appropriate time in the ministry of Jeremiah.

In this endeavour extensive use is often made of D.J. Wiseman's Chronicles of the Chaldaean Kings, a publication which sheds fresh light on the history of the ancient Near East in the sixth century BC.[44] J.P. Hyatt expresses the opinion of many when, commenting on the uncertainties which attend the dating of the foreign oracles of Jeremiah, he writes:

> 'Yet now we have a specific historical situation into which we may place some of these oracles, in the light of the new texts and their revelation of the frequent contacts of Nebuchadnezzar with Hatti and Egypt'.[45]

The following gives some indication of the various dates in the ministry of Jeremiah given for the foreign oracles by those who defend their authenticity.

First of all we have an oracle against Egypt (46:3-12), which is assigned by the (secondary) superscription to the time of the battle of Carchemish. Prior to the publication of the Wiseman Chronicles, this chapter provided the only reference to this battle, apart from the later testimony of Josephus.[46] The Chronicles, however, provide us with a full account of the conflict of Carchemish[47], which took place between the forces

/...

of the Babylonians and those of the Egyptians in 605 BC and signified the struggle between these two powers for supremacy in Syria-Palestine. Egypt suffered a crushing defeat.

This oracle is most unusual, in that in verses six and ten we find a reference to a confrontation 'in the north, by the river Euphrates' - a clear indication that this oracle is to be seen against the background of the events of 605. Normally, the poetic sections of the oracles provide us with no clear indication of date. It seems, therefore, that in the case of this first Egypt oracle, the superscriptional dating is quite correct, being confirmed from within the oracle itself, and further illuminated by the Babylonian records. There is no dispute about the date of this oracle.

It is important to note, however, that although there is no doubt that this oracle is to be dated to the ministry of Jeremiah, not all scholars are persuaded of its authenticity. Chiefly on stylistic grounds Giesebrecht came to the conclusion that:

> 'das Stück ... wohl in die Zeit aber nicht in den Mund Jeremias passt'.[48]

Again, we may take note here of a telling comment of Skinner's on the whole of chapter 46, the authenticity of which he rejects on theological grounds:

> 'If we could believe ... that ch. XLVI contains genuine oracles of Jeremiah, we should have evidence that he watched the struggle with a gloating satisfaction over the impending overthrow of Egypt. But the whole chapter is so unlike anything else from the pen of Jeremiah that I must regard it as the work of an anonymous, perhaps contemporary poet, with a genius akin to that of Nahum'.[49]

The second oracle against Egypt (46:14-24) is a completely

/...

separate entity, and is much more difficult than the first to date. It is widely regarded, however, that the Chronicles of the Chaldaean Kings have thrown light on the historical background to this oracle also. In the words of Hayes:

> 'The second Egypt oracle represents, in all probability the prophet's evaluation of the encounter of the Babylonians and Egyptians in Hamath following the battle of Carchemish'.[50]

Thus the second oracle also is dated in the year 605, but since there is absolutely no evidence in the poetry itself to suggest any particular date, this is very precarious indeed. Some scholars have attempted to find in the designation of Pharaoh as 'noisy one' in v.17 a clue to the date of the oracle. Rudolph identifies him as Pharaoh Necho (609-593), and this is consonant with a 605 dating. However, Cornill, Condamin and Eissfeldt[51] detect in v.17 a play on the name of Pharaoh Hophra[52] (588-569). This accords well with the theory held by Eissfeldt that the oracle should be dated circa 585 BC. On the basis of yet another Wiseman text, Hyatt dates the oracle to 601-600 BC, the year of an indecisive battle between Babylon and Egypt fought on Egyptian soil,[53] while R.H. Pfeiffer proposes a date around 567[54]. All this goes to show that the poetry of the oracle itself gives no help whatever to the scholar who seeks to date it. The evidence of the name in V.17 is so ambiguous as to be almost useless, and tends to be cited by scholars who have already made up their minds regarding the date of the oracle, on the basis of other evidence.

The Chronicles attest an action against Ashkelon undertaken by the Babylonians in 604, and it is this which is thought by many to

/...

form the background to the oracle against Philistia in chapter 47.[55] This is the opinion of Bright and Rudolph, among others. Malamat, however, is of the opinion that chapter 47 describes an attack upon Philistia by the Scythians, which took place in 609, between the months of Adar and Tammuz, before the Pharaoh's conquest of Gaza in the autumn of that year (cf.47:1).[56]

In its account of the events of 604, the Babylonian Chronicle writes that 'All the kings of the Hatti land came before him (Nebuchadnezzar) and he received their heavy tribute'.[57] Hyatt cites this as providing a possible historical occasion for the genuine portions of the lengthy Moab oracle in chapter 48. This represents only one among many situations in the ministry of Jeremiah which could have formed a background for an oracle against Moab. Moab remained loyal to Babylon when Jehoiakim withheld tribute in the period 600-598, and even assisted the Babylonians against Judah(cf. 2 Kgs 24:2) as did the Ammonites. D. Christensen mentions two other possibilities; the period of the abortive rebellion against Babylon in c. 594, in which Moab was involved and which Jeremiah opposed (27:1-11), or alternatively, the period of the political expansion of Judah under Josiah.[58] The poetry of the oracle speaks of the offence of Moab in very vague and general terms, and does not suggest any particular historical background to the oracle. The same thing can be said for the oracles against Ammon and Edom.

The oracle against Damascus (49:23-27) finds few defenders of authenticity. It can scarcely be fitted into the known historical events of Jeremiah's lifetime. Bright comes to the

/...

uncertain conclusion that:

> '...it is possible that we are dealing with an anonymous saying much older than Jeremiah .... which has been re-applied to Damascus, perhaps in connection with one of Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns, or other events of which we know nothing'.[59]

The oracle against Kedar has been connected with the accounts in the Chronicle which tells of an expedition of the Babylonians against the Arab tribes and is dated to 599 BC.[60]

The superscription to the oracle against Elam suggests a date 597. Hyatt is forced to comment that:

> 'The Jeremianic oracle is so vague, and the earlier history of Elam so obscure, that it is not safe to date the oracle to this period'.[61]

Hayes thinks that a badly damaged Babylonian text may refer to an Elamite rebellion against Babylon in 596, and that this might have given rise to the hopes of speedy deliverance entertained by the exiles (cf. 29:15-23). He comments:

> 'Within such a contest, Jeremiah's oracles pronouncing destruction upon Elam would be completely in order, and would have served as a warning to the Judean exiles against hoping in one who's destruction Yahweh had decreed'.[62]

It is important to note that in none of the poetic sections of these oracles, apart from the first one, is there any precise information concerning the events and situations behind them. It often seems to be the case that, having decided a priori that these oracles are for the most part authentic to Jeremiah, many scholars go on to fit them into a date in the ministry of Jeremiah which seems roughly appropriate. But firm evidence for dating is scanty indeed. Some of these oracles may refer to historical situations in the ministry of Jeremiah, or they may not. It is in the majority of cases simply impossible to decide

/...

on the evidence available. It is a mistake to appeal to the Wiseman Chronicles as if they had somehow confirmed the authenticity of the oracles.

The superscriptions are of course secondary, and represent an editorial attempt to connect the oracles with the ministry of Jeremiah. Not much reliance is to be placed upon them. The same is to be said for redactional additions such as 46:25f. It is significant that apart from its occurrence in the superscriptions, the name Nebuchadnezzar only occurs twice, in 46:26 and 49:30. 46:26 is evidently an addition, in prose, which is not found in the Greek text. As for 49:30, it appears as a reference which has come into the text because of the mention of Nebuchadnezzar in the superscription. In the words of J.G. Snaith:

> 'Even the collectors of Hebrew prophetic books found the historical references in these poems vague, and felt it necessary to supplement the poems with additional passages adding precise details which identify places, people and dates'.63

Not only the editors, but the Versions and commentators as well have been faced with a decision to make regarding the date of some of these oracles. Accordingly LXX and Peshitta insert the name 'Necho' at 46:17, thus identifying the 'noisy one'. Rashi and Kimchi assume that the events lying behind the oracle against Philistia took place at the time of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in the tenth year of Zedekiah. They think that the oracles against Moab, Ammon and Edom were uttered with reference to the behaviour of those nations at the time of the fall of Jerusalem. The poetry can bear these interpretations also. And just as Rudolph and Eissfeldt differ on the question of the

/...

identity of the Pharaoh alluded to in 46:17, so the dates which other scholars assign to the oracles seem to be dependent to a large extent upon the theories which they already hold. Just as Rudolph finds a place for the majority of these oracles in the period of Jeremiah's ministry after 605, so Bardtke, for example, expresses the view that they belong to the period 617-615, when Jeremiah was a salvation prophet. Naturally, he too finds support for his thesis in the text, as when he comments on the first verse of chapter 49 thus:

> 'Die einleitende Frage .... weist in eine Zeit, in der Juda sein Gebiet zu erweitern bemüht war. Dabei wurde auch das Ostjordan-land in seinen Gesichtskreis einbezogen. Diese Zeit kann aber nur die Ära des Königs Josia sein ...'[64]

Again, Malamat finds support for his thesis that the oracle against Philistia refers to a Scythian attack on the Philistine cities which took place in the spring of 609 BC, in the fact that only Gaza and Ashkelon are mentioned in 47:5. These are 'the cities which the Scythians really passed through on their retreat through Palestine (the former very probably, the latter certainly)'.[65]

We must also mention the theory of J. Morgenstern, who assigns a very late date to the oracles against Philistia, Moab, Edom and Ammon. He believes that these nations are execrated because of some 'malicious and wanton destruction' which they had inflicted on Israel:

> 'This destruction can only be the tragic catastrophe which these very nations inflicted upon the little Jewish community of Judea in the accession year of Xerxes, King of Persia, during the closing weeks of 486 ... Of this there cannot be the slightest doubt'.[66]

He dates 46-49 around 480 BC, believing that references such

/...

as 47:4, in which the Philistines are designated 'the remnant of the Island of Kaphtor' indicate that the population of these states had been recently decimated. Xerxes of Persia had recently suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Greeks; his vast army had been cut to pieces, and this included the troops which had been sent from subject territories such as Philistia, Moab, Ammon and Edom. Thus these small states had suffered depopulation.

We see then that all sorts of theories about the date of these oracles can find support from the text - or at least, cannot be disproved by reference to it! No argument for the authenticity of the foreign oracles can therefore be based upon, or upheld by any concrete historical references in the poetry; there are none to be found.

It seems to me that the attempt made by Rudolph, Weiser and others to isolate from each of the oracles a Jeremianic nucleus is misguided. Skinner has said that:

> 'The mixed authorship of the foreign prophecies in chapters 46-51 is generally recognized; the effort to disentangle a Jeremianic nucleus in the various oracles hardly repays the labour spent upon it'.[67]

The procedure is not only futile however; it is unjustified. Chapters 46-51 constitute an independent collection of prophecies which seem to have existed for a long period as such, before being incorporated into the book of Jeremiah. This emerges clearly from the different positions which the collection holds in LXX and in MT. We are dealing with a 'floating' piece of tradition. In their present position in MT they seem almost like an afterthought, coming as they do after chapter 45, which,

/...

in the words of Mowinkel 'is meant as a conclusion and a full stop'.[68] These factors tend to suggest both that the collection has to be considered as a whole, and that the collection as a whole is inauthentic. In the view of Birkeland, it must be recognized that:

> '... man nicht ohne weiteres einzelne Gedichte herausnehmen kann, da c. 46-51 noch so spät als ca. 200 v. Chr. als selbständige Sammlung existiert hat und folglich als solche beurteilt werden muss'.[69]

Volz believes that the foreign oracles occupy their present position in MT because they were moved to the end of the book by editors who knew that the collection did not originate with Jeremiah.[70] It certainly would be fair to say that literary critical considerations throw grave doubt on the authenticity of the oracles.

Moving on to stylistic considerations, it is immediately apparent that the foreign oracles make use of expressions, motifs and speech forms which are also found elsewhere in the book of Jeremiah and which have come to be associated with the style of the prophet himself. Thus Hayes remarks, for example:

> 'In chapters 46-49 there is an explicit usage of vocabulary and motifs found in Jeremiah's earlier preaching on the enemy from the north, in chapters 4-6 .... A notable feature of the oracles against the foreigner in Jeremiah is the employment of speech forms found in the Holy War. These are the summons to battle and the command to flee. In Jeremiah these forms occur only in the oracles against the nations and in the oracles on the enemy from the north (chapters 4-6).'[71]

Expressions such as the following are listed by Driver as being 'characteristic of Jeremiah'.[72] These examples occur in the foreign oracles and elsewhere: shepherds, used figuratively of kings or rulers; the exprassion 'from the land of the north'

/...

or 'from the north'; a great destruction; behold, I bring ....; the time when I visit...; terror all around; habitation of jackals; with shaven temples; behold, I visit upon ....; sentences of the type:- fishers and they shall fish them; the kindling of a devouring fire.[73] Volz cites some further motifs such as that of the destroyer, the sword, the roaring sea, the fearful tidings, the enfeebled hands, pains like labour pains, girding with sackcloth.[74]

All this suggests to many that Jeremiah is indeed the author of the foreign oracles. Thus Christensen, for example, takes the occurrence of the Jeremianic expression 'terror all around' in the oracle against Kedar, as evidence for its authenticity. It should be noted, however, that the Babylon oracle, unanimously regarded as inauthentic, displays this same usage of Jeremianic vocabulary and motifs, expressions and 'Holy War' terminology, to a degree comparable to the usage in 46-49, suggesting that the author(s) of this oracle at least, were well acquainted with the style of the great prophet, and were desirous of imitating it.[75] We must consider also that these oracles give evidence of a good deal of wholesale borrowing of material from other parts of Jeremiah; Driver lists the principal cases of repetition of passages.[76] We must ask ourselves if this rather 'literary' procedure, bespeaking a failure of imaginative powers, is likely to have been practised to any great degree by Jeremiah.

An even more strongly marked feature of the foreign oracles is the large proportion of material which they have in common with other parts of the Old Testament. This is a much discussed phenomenon, and while it is true that it is sometimes difficult

/...

to determine who is dependent upon whom, even supporters of the authenticity of most of the foreign oracles, such as Rudolph, are constrained to admit that they give evidence of extensive borrowing and plagiarising of material from elsewhere.[77] Rudolph, of course, chooses to exclude such material from his 'Jeremianic' nucleus.[78] To a scholar such as Volz however:

> 'Diese literarische Abhängigkeit war mir der zwingende Beweis, dass unser Dichter kein Prophet ist, sondern ein Epigone der Propheten. Auch die grossen Propheten knüpfen aneinander an, aber keiner übernimmt ganze Versreihen aus seinen Vorgängern .... Unser Dichter ist nicht bloss kein schöpferischer Prophet mehr; er ist überhaupt kein Prophet .... sondern er ist ein Schriftsteller'.[79]

It is difficult to avoid value judgements when considering the general impression conveyed by the foreign oracles. Driver thought that they displayed 'considerable variety of imagery and expression, as well as greater poetic vigour than most of his other writings',[80] It seems to me however, that the constant repetition of motifs, the continuous harping on the same theme of unrelieved, inescapable destruction for the foreigner, makes of these oracles not only dull, but faintly distasteful reading. Jeremiah himself was doubtless guilty, on occasions, of repetitiveness - but surely not to this extent, not to the extent where the constant monotonous rehearsal of the nations' fate loses any force it might have had at first, and becomes almost meaningless. Schwally points out that such oracles as these could be broken off at any stage, without any thoughts being lost. From beginning to end they express but one thought with distressing and depressing insistence, seeming to employ the phraseology of the prophet without reflecting his spirit. It would also be true to say that the thought progression behind these oracles often seems muddled. This is

/...

visible in almost all of them, but is perhaps especially clear in the oracle against Moab, of which Christensen remarks:

> "Here we can detect summons to flight, summons to mourn, prophetic laments, announcements of judgement and oracles of doom. The imagery is in almost constant flux, with heralds proclaiming their messages fugitives fleeing the ravaged cities, and mourners lamenting the destruction of Moab'.[91]

All things considered, it seems to me that these oracles are the product of a limited imagination. For all the movement in them, they are curiously lifeless - uninspired and uninspiring.

As well as these shortcomings of style and composition, we must consider again the problem of the function of these oracles. As we saw above, the foreign oracle appears to be traditionally an oracle of salvation to the prophet's own nation - it was meant to be spoken in the hearing of this nation, not of the foreigner. We have mentioned the views of such scholars as Mays and Hammershaimb, who think that Amos is the only prophet to use the foreign oracle in such a way that it did not imply salvation for Israel. Hans Bardtke believes that the foreign oracle in Jeremiah retains its traditional function, whereas Hayes takes a different view, maintaining that the Jeremianic foreign oracle reflects the same evaluation of historical affairs as the oracles against Judah. Rudolph shares this view. The nations, like Judah, have been delivered into the power of Nebuchadnezzar. Judah may take no comfort from their downfall.

Ignoring for the moment that the oracles form part of the extant book of Jeremiah, it would be helpful to examine them in order to ascertain whether we can find within them any evidence to suggest that they are not meant to be oracles of salvation,

/...

any evidence of a change in the traditional function - any trace of that 'moral quality'[82] of which Leslie speaks, and which for him confirms their Jeremianic authorship. What kind of theology emerges from them? What sort of view of the nations emerges, and what reasons are given for their downfall?

The first Egypt oracle, ch. 46:3-12, gives us no explicit reason for the savage destruction which is to come upon the armies of Pharaoh; verses 7 and 8 suggest that it comes as a result of Pharaoh's hunger for power and desire for territorial expansion. In verse 10 we read that the destruction of Egypt is a bloody sacrifice brought about by the Lord on his day of vengeance, when he avenges himself on his foes. Skinner has said that this whole chapter suggests that the author feels 'a gloating satisfaction' at Egypt's downfall,[83] and this is reflected most clearly here in verse 10. Rudolph recognises the bloodthirstiness of the sentiments expressed here, but explains that Jeremiah had good reason to harbour such loathing for Egypt, given the historical circumstances:

> 'Necho hatte doch bei Megiddo den Tod des von Jer hochgeschätzten (22:15f.) Königs Josia verschuldet und dadurch, dass er den Träger der religiösen Reform in Juda beseitigte, in den Heilsplan Jahwes mit seinen Volke eingegriffen. Damit hatte er sich Jahwe selbst zum Feinde gemacht'.[84]

Rudolph also points out the bitterness which Jeremiah shows towards his own enemies in verses such as 11:20 and 12:3. It is, however, one thing to give way to an outburst of fury against a personal enemy, such as we find in these latter verses, in which the prophet vents his spleen before God. It is quite another to infuse such ire into an oracle which proclaims the wholesale

/...

destruction of a nation in the name of Yahweh.

In the second oracle against Egypt, no reason is supplied for the punishment meted out to the nation. Such is the case also in the oracles against Pbilistia, Arabia, Damascus and Elam. Moab is to be destroyed because she trusted in her strongholds (48:7), in the strength of her armies (v.14), and because in her pride she magnified herself against the Lord (vs. 29,42). Ammon boasted in her valleys (49:4). Edom too is castigated for the pride of her heart (49:16).

No real reasons for the downfall of the various nations are supplied. Where a reason is given, it is the 'pride' of the nation concerned. Just as the description of the destruction itself is couched in vague, stereotyped and generalized language, so too the reasons for the destruction are vague and generalized. In one case, a more specific reason is given, but this is chauvinistic in spirit; Ammon dispossessed Gad (49:1), and so, for an evil done to Israel, Ammon is to be punished. It is difficult to detect in all this any trace of the 'moral force' which Leslie mentions. It seems to me that prosaic expansions such as 48:10, 26-27 are entirely in accord with the spirit of the poetry. Thus, contrasting the foreign oracles of Amos with those of the other prophets, McAlpine writes:

> 'Amos speaks of the nations' peša' : the punishment is destruction, but a destruction that will give Israel little joy. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zephaniah speak of the pride of the nations : their confidence will be shattered. In these cases, the implication is salvation for Israel'.[85]

Rudolph maintains that:

> 'Inhaltlich sind diese Orakel nichts anderes als die Entfaltung der Gewissheit, die Jer in 27:6 aussprach:

/...

"nunmehr habe ich alle diese Länder in die hand meines Knechtes Nebuchadnezar gegeben" ..... Hat Jahwe dem Nebuchadnezar die Völker in die Hand gegeben, so braucht nicht bei jedem einzelnen Volk die Heimsuchung besonders begründet zu werden'. [86]

This seems to me to raise a serious problem for the defender of their authenticity, however. Rudolph is saying that no other reason for the destruction of the nations is required, other than that God has delivered them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. But this is not really a reason at all. We may still ask <u>why</u> God has sealed the nations' fate in this way. It is certainly the case that Jeremiah proclaims that Judah has been delivered over to the power of the Babylonians; but at the same time the prophet stresses that the reason for this lies in the people's repeated rejections of God and rebellion against him. And even in the face of the divine resolve to be avenged upon the perfidious nation, the prophet never ceases to exhort his countrymen to repent, nor to plead with them to turn aside from their evil ways. He continues to hope even when the time for hoping is long past. Of all this there is nothing in the foreign oracles. No reason is given for the nations' destruction, therefore no escape is possible. The nations are consigned to destruction and can do nothing to avoid their fate, just as, strictly speaking, they have done nothing to deserve it. They are a <u>massa perdita</u>, destined to annihilation at the hand of the God of Israel. It would be no exaggeration to say that the whole collection of prophecies is unrelieved by a single thought other than this. The opinion of Schwally remains valid:

'In 46 bis 49 .... tritt Jahwe durchgehends als Rachegott auf, welcher die Heiden unabänderlichem Untergang geweiht hat. Wir hören lediglich von Vernichtungsandrohungen,

/...

während die eigentliche Busspredigt, ohne welche die eigentliche Prophetie undenkbar ist .... durchaus fehlt'.

To him, the underlying motivation for the oracles

'kann ..... nur der Gegensatz zwischen dem Volke Gottes und den Gojim als solche sein'.[87]

There is nothing in these oracles to suggest that the traditional function of the foreign oracle genre has been changed in any way. There is much to suggest that it has been retained, that is, that these oracles have the character of nationalistic salvation prophecy. The theology expressed in them is not that of the prophet Jeremiah, nor do they have any rôle to play in his ministry. We conclude, therefore, that they are inauthentic.

What, then, is the significance of Jeremiah's designation as a 'prophet to the nations' in chapter 1, v.5? To what aspect of the preaching of Jeremiah does it refer? It is evident that the plural 'nations' caused the transmitter of the Greek version some difficulty, and as a result of this, some minuscules read the singular εἰς ἔθνος rather than the plural.[88] The ἔθνος in question would then be, presumably, Judah, this being thought a more suitable designation for the prophet whose ministry was, after all, principally directed towards his own nation. The same sort of reasoning lies behind the emendation put forward in 1906 by Stade.[89] He expressed the view that 'to the nations' should be emended to 'to my nation'. Scholars such as Rothstein and Bruston also found 'to the nations' somewhat incongruous; the former wishes to strike the reference out of the text,[90] the latter to emend it.[91] On the other hand, Duhm considered that the text did not require emendation. Rather, 'to the nations' was an

/...

editorial insertion reflecting a later universalistic outlook.[92] C.C. Torrey shared this view, placing the whole of verses 1-10 in the third century BC.[93] Bardtke takes the verse as part of the volume of foreign oracles which Jeremiah himself prepared. Thus he does not wish to emend the text in any way. 'Nations' means foreign nations, specifically those execrated in 46-51.

There is no justification for emendation of the text of 1:5. But if authenticity is denied to the oracles against the nations in 46-51, what then does the call narrative mean by designating Jeremiah as prophet to the nations? Volz reasoned that this meant not that he spoke to the nations, but that:

> 'er redet Worte Jahwes, die sich auf die Völker beziehen vgl. 28,8; 27,3, und die Worte, die sich auf Juda beziehen, haben weltumfassende Bedeutung'.[94]

He goes on to say that the 'nations' are meant to include Israel : they do not refer merely to 'the heathen'. Volz may be correct in that this is part of the explanation for the designation, but it is not entirely correct. Jeremiah is called a prophet to the nations principally because the Jeremiah tradition contains oracles against the nations. The account of the call narrative has been composed at a late stage in the development of the Jeremiah tradition, by which time it had come to include foreign nation oracles. It is in the light of these that Jeremiah is so designated.

In recent years scholars have begun to recognize the vital rôle played by tradition in the shaping of the prophetic books. In consequence they have begun to speak about the Jeremianic 'tradition', rather than about 'authentic' and 'secondary' material in the book of Jeremiah, thus recognizing the book as

/...

the end product of a long and remarkably complicated process of transmission and redaction, containing, certainly, a kernel of material attributable to the historical prophet Jeremiah, but also encompassing all sorts of other elements from discrete sources.[95] Within the tradition the prophet is viewed from many angles, the significance of his ministry reviewed for later situations, and the account of that ministry shaped in accordance with the requirements of later ages. The designation of Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations represents a view of his ministry from a late standpoint, which considers the whole of the developing tradition, including the lately added foreign oracles. The designation, as well as the oracles themselves, helps to mould the picture of Jeremiah in accordance with the expectations of the editors. The editors who inserted the reference in 1:5 viewed the prophet in the same way as those who added 46-51 to the tradition, and shaped the account of the encounter between Hananiah and Jeremiah in chapter 28. In this latter chapter Jeremiah is placed in a long line of prophets who prophesied 'war, famine and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms' (28:8). So also to call him a prophet to the nations, and to attribute to him foreign nation oracles, is to further stress this conventional, traditional rôle of Jeremiah. He is being cast in the rôle of a traditional prophet who preaches doom for the nations. It is of course true that the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel also contain extensive sections of foreign oracles, yet neither prophet is called a prophet to the nations in the light of these. R.Carroll suggests that the title may be applied to Jeremiah because the Jeremiah tradition contains more foreign oracle material than

/...

either of the other two.[96] It is impossible to be certain about this matter - suffice it to say that the designation 'prophet to the nations' says nothing at all about Jeremiah's 'consciousness' of his prophetic mission (against Giesebrecht) nor does 28:8 indicate that Jeremiah is seeing himself in a long line of preachers of doom against the nations (against Hayes). These verses provide us with evidence of how traditionalists saw the prophet : as such, they provide no argument for the authenticity of the foreign nation oracles.

Certain of those scholars who deny or suspect the authenticity of the oracles have attempted to explain why they have found a place in the Jeremiah tradition. Mowinkel, for example, sees the addition of foreign oracles as part of a process whereby the message of the pre-exilic prophets (essentially one of doom, he feels) has been supplemented and modified by the later addition of prophecies of salvation. This development, which affects both individual oracles and also the overall structure of the prophetic books, has taken place on the analogy of a cultic scheme with which the redactors were familiar - the ritual pattern of the New Year or Enthronement festival.

> 'The cultic-mythic situation here was: the people, the congregation, when the festival begins, are in a state of disaster; the powers of chaos, or all the united peoples, are flooding the earth, surrounding Israel and threatening their lives..... .....But then the temple prophet announces the coming of Yahweh, to the destruction of the enemies and salvation of Israel ....By this cultic-mythical view of reality and by cultic prophecies expressing it, the collection and arrangement scheme of the prophet transmitters is determined'[97]

Fohrer's view is that the concern with the fate of foreign nations is characteristic of the eschatological prophecy of the

/...

exilic and post-exilic age. The insertion of collections of foreign oracles into many prophetic books reflects this trend, and forms part of the structure which the later age imposed upon the prophetic books, moulding them according to the exilic + post-exilic Vorher-Nachher scheme, as Fohrer calls it, which saw history in terms of the distinction between two ages. As part of this scheme, the pre-exilic oracles of doom mark the period which is now past for Israel; the salvation oracles depict what is to come in the future age, while the foreign oracles mark the transitional phase between the two.

> 'Die Bestrafung der feindlichen Völker sollte das Übergangsstadium zwischen dem jetzigen Unheil und dem künftigen Heil für Israel bilden'.[98]

R. Carroll finds that the inclusion of foreign oracles in the Jeremiah tradition represents an element in that tradition which still persists in the ancient chauvinistic practice of calling down doom upon foreign nations. As such, they represent a view of life which was rapidly disappearing, as the scattered people of Israel learned to live among the nations and co-operate with them.[99] This latter approach is exemplified in, for example, the letter to the exiles in ch.29, in which the exiles are exhorted to 'seek the welfare' of the city in which they dwell. In contrast to this, chs. 50 and 51 proclaim the doom of Babylon. Carroll's view is that, since the collection of oracles contains no prediction of the fall of Persia, the fall of Babylon marked the point at which the tradition of uttering oracles against foreign nations died out. The foreign oracles are thus representative of an attitude towards the nations which was rapidly becoming obsolete. One or two difficulties arise with Carroll's

/...

thesis, if we accept the view that the foreign oracles are a very late attachment to the Jeremianic corpus. In this case, it is unlikely that a body of oracles representing an obsolete view of the nations would have been added at all. Carroll is of the opinion that they originate from a period 'before the effective establishment of the Persian empire'. It may be, however, that these scholars are correct, who take the view that the reference to the kings of Elam and the kings of the Medes in chapter 25:25 of MT is in fact a reference to the Persian empire, and that in the oracle against Elam in chapter 49:34ff., we have an oracle against Persia, thus indicating that the practice of uttering oracles against foreign nations did <u>not</u> die out after the fall of Babylon, to be superseded by a more conciliatory attitude, as Carroll believes. The foreign oracles, then, do represent a different attitude from that expressed in chapter 29, but they do not express a viewpoint which became obsolete after the fall of Babylon.

We have attempted to rehearse some of the arguments which have been advanced on both sides of the debate concerning the authenticity of chapters 46-51. I am persuaded that the oracles are not the work of Jeremiah. There seems no real reason to suppose that, as they stand, they function as anything other than nationalistic oracles proclaiming doom upon the nations and therefore implying salvation for Israel. Jeremiah calls his own people to account for their conduct, proclaims the coming disaster, entreats them to change their ways, agonizes over them, but in 46-51 the nations are not called to account in the same way. They are condemned to inexorable destruction, for very

/...

little apparent reason, and the poet seems to exult at the thought. For them there is no repentance. There is no real moral force here. To this argument from the theology of the oracles, which seems to me compelling in itself, must be added considerations of style. We have indicated that the extensive amount of borrowing of material, allied to a somewhat monotonous, imitative style, can only count as further evidence for inauthenticity. The presence of this oracle section in the book of Jeremiah, a collection of material which is likely to have existed independently for a long time, seems rather an indication of editorial policy rather than evidence of the concerns of the prophet Jeremiah; a policy which sought, through various insertions, to bring Jeremiah into the line of prophets who 'prophesied war, famine and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms'.

(ii) POSITION OF THE ORACLES IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

The foreign nation oracles of Jeremiah give rise to what is perhaps the most important, and certainly the most striking of the many discrepancies which exist between the Massoretic text of the book and its Septuagint Version. The problem is as follows; in MT the oracle section is placed at the end of the book, being followed only by the historical appendix, chapter 52, which has been taken over from the book of Kings. In the LXX, however, this oracular material is placed in the middle of the book, following upon chapter 25:13b. So in LXX the oracles are numbered 25:14 - 31:44, whereas they constitute chapters 46-51 in MT. Apart from this most obvious difference, there is another which poses a separate problem; the nations are enumerated in a different order in each text, the order in MT being Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Elam, Babylon, and in LXX, Elam, Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Edom, Ammon, Kedar, Damascus, Moab. In the face of this radical divergence between the two texts, we are forced to ask how such differing arrangements arose, and which text, if either, preserves a more original arrangement - that is, which text represents more accurately the earliest position which the oracle section occupied when it was first incorporated into the Jeremianic corpus. It is generally recognized that the foreign oracles were given a place in the book at a relatively late stage in its redactional history, and that they were themselves at that time the product of a period of transmission, more or less lengthy and complex.[1] Attempts to answer the questions posed by the LXX and MT of Jeremiah

/...

regarding the oracles inevitably lead into the more complex questions of the composition of the book of Jeremiah as a whole. S.R. Driver's view that 'the book reached its present form by successive stages, and at each stage additions were made to it'[2] remains valid, and as literary criticism has been joined by form and tradition criticism, so the process to which Driver was referring emerges as a more and more complicated one, which cannot now be fully unravelled.

We will first consider the question of the position of the foreign oracles. Scholars seem to adopt four basic standpoints on this matter:

(1) Some argue for the priority of MT over LXX, but this is by far the least popular viewpoint, held mainly by older scholars who are doughty defenders of the Massoretic text over the LXX in almost all circumstances. The view of a scholar like Keil who declared that

> '... we can seek the cause of the transposition of the prophecies against the nations only in the Alexandrian translator's arbitrary mode of handling the Hebrew text'[3]

has been rendered obsolete. Heightened respect for the LXX as a translation has now ensured that such biased assessments as Keil's are no longer tenable, and modern scholars tend to avoid such sweeping judgements as this concerning the character of the LXX text. Another champion of the MT is to be found in the person of Graf, who in his commentary of 1862 expressed the view that the words of 25:13 '... which Jeremiah prophesied concerning all the nations' occasioned the transfer of the oracle section from its original position at the close of the book to chapter 25. That this was wholly inappropriate could be seen in that, as a

/...

result of it, the LXX had to 'omit' verse 14. It also meant that the prophecies against Judah of 25:29-38 followed the foreign oracles, while according to Graf the former ought to have preceded, since such verses as 25:9, 18, 29 indicate that judgement upon Judah comes before judgement upon the foreign nations.[4] Again, Graf's standpoint arises out of his bias against the LXX, and his a priori decision that the translator had to 'omit' verse 25:14, since he found it to be inconvenient after he had moved the foreign oracles into their (wholly inappropriate!) position in chapter 25. It is very unusual nowadays to find a scholar who regards verse 14 as an LXX omission; its non-appearance in the LXX text is assessed in a wholly different way, as we shall presently see.

Mowinkel seems to take a favourable view of the MT position; he considers the oracle section to be 'Deutero-Jeremianic' and to have been appended to the book after the compilation of chapters 1-45, chapter 45 being 'meant as a conclusion and a full-stop, as unmistakable as any one may desire'.[5] Thus on these literary-critical grounds he feels that MT preserves the earlier position which the oracles held, before being integrated further into the book.

(2) A great number of older and more modern scholars defend the LXX position of the oracle section, among them Schwally, Workman, Thackeray, Eissfeldt, Weiser, Kaiser, Janzen, Thiel, Rietzschel.[6] Some of the arguments which they put forward will be mentioned below.

(3) Equally impressive scholarly weight is placed behind the argument that, while LXX certainly presents us with an arrangement

/...

which is more nearly original, in that it connects the oracle section with the related chapter 25, it still does not preserve the most original position. Thus, for example, Ewald thinks that the section ought immediately to precede chapter 25, on the grounds that

> 'It appears clearly from the manner in which the Heathen are spoken of, vv.9,11 ("all <u>these</u> nations round about") that this oracle concerning Israel presupposes the foregoing pieces'.[7]

Orelli declares that

> '... in the earliest editions of the book most of the oracles respecting foreigners now found at its close must have been found in the immediate neighbourhood of ch. XXV'[8]

while Kuhl thought that they should come after 25:29, so that verses 30-38 would form 'a resuming argument'.[9] The most popular position seems to be that the oracles should come immediately after the close of chapter 25. This view is held by Giesebrecht, Cornill, S.R.Driver, Volz, Pfeiffer, Rudolph, Fohrer.[10]

(4) The fourth view is held by those who maintain that it is wholly erroneous to speak of the LXX preserving a more 'original' position than MT, or vice versa. There is no such thing as an original position in this case, since

> 'It is plausible to suppose that these oracles circulated separately until sometime after the textual traditions lying behind LXX and MT had diverged, and then were drawn by independent processes into both'.[11]

The textual traditions to which Bright is referring are the so-called 'Palestinian' and 'Egyptian' traditions which produced text types whose existence is conjectured by many textual critics, the 'Palestinian' text being expansionist in tendency, the forerunner of MT, and the 'Egyptian' being a more conservative textual type, to which the <u>Vorlage</u> of LXX belonged. Thus in the

/...

Introduction of Oesterleyand Robinson, the view is expressed that

> 'The Palestinian scribes put it (i.e. the foreign oracle section) at the end of the book, while those of Egypt, not unnaturally, included it in the short section already devoted to the same subject, displacing a verse (XXV:14) which was no longer necessary'.[12]

This is an appropriate place to mention the view expressed by H. Birkeland in 1938.[13] He too believes that the oracles found their way into LXX and MT by independent processes, but does not have any theory of differing text types underlying the two texts. At the time when the LXX translation was prepared, the independent collection of foreign oracles, while being attributed to Jeremiah, still had no fixed place in the book, although the list of nations in ch.25:15-29 was already incorporated, with the present 25:13c 'that which Jeremiah prophesied concerning all the nations' as a superscription. The LXX translator decided that it was most appropriate to insert the collection after this superscription (thus he is considered by Birkeland to be both translator and editor). The ancestor of the present MT, on the other hand, was content to append the collection as chapters 46-51. Birkeland explains the subsequent insertion of 25:14 in MT as follows; the words 'that which Jeremiah prophesied concerning all the nations' were wrongly punctuated, and taken with verse 13, instead of being recognized as a superscription to 15ff. It was therefore considered that a transitional phrase was required between the sermon of 25:1-13 and the cup pericope of 15ff., and the present verse 14 was supplied as such a transition. Thus Birkeland says that

> 'TM hat nur in der Interpunktion geirrt, was durchaus verständlich ist, und gegen kein Pietätsgefühl dem text gegenuber verstösst. Aber dieses Missverständnis,

/...

das bei G oder gar dessen Vorlage nicht vorkommt, hat v 14 als Bindemittel mit sich geführt'.[14]

Birkeland puts forward a concise and attractive viewpoint, which certainly avoids the problems with which exponents of other views have to deal, that is, to account in a satisfactory manner for a shift of the oracle section from one place to another subsequent to its incorporation into the book. Advocates of the view of Volz and Rudolph are doubly unfortunate in this respect, since they must account for two moves - from the end of chapter 25 to the middle of it (as LXX) and to the end of the book (as MT). It is surprising that a greater number of scholars have not espoused a similar viewpoint to Birkeland's on this matter.

Since the scholarly consensus appears to be that the foreign oracles belong either in or at the end of chapter 25, we shall go on to look at the two main arguments put forward in support of this. The first of these is explained in detail by G. Fohrer,[15] who argues that the LXX form of Jeremiah conforms to a redactional scheme which can be seen at work in a number of other prophetic books. It arises from the circumstance that prophecy from Deutro-Isaiah onwards began to present its message in a way fundamentally different from that of the pre-exilic prophets of doom. Whereas the latter had presented the community with an alternative, on either-or (Entweder-Oder), the prophets of the exile and beyond delivered an eschatological message in which they spoke of two ages, the present one of tribulation and the future age of salvation to follow (Vorher-Nachher). This shift of emphasis in prophecy had its effect upon the redaction of the works of the pre-exilic prophets, in that salvation

/...

prophecies were appended to doom prophecies, and the books as a whole came to be constructed according to a two and three part scheme, corresponding to the belief that tribulation was followed by salvation. Thus to Isaiah 1-39, chapters 40-55 are appended; to Amos 1:3-9:7, 9:8-15 is appended. Into this scheme in its three part form, a section of foreign oracles was introduced, so that the judgement upon foreigners would form a transitional stage (ein Durchgangs-stadium) between the periods of doom and salvation for Israel. Such a threefold scheme Fohrer finds in Ezekiel (1-24; 25-32; 33-48), in Zephaniah (1:1-2: 3; 2:4-3:8; 3:9-20), and in the LXX of Jeremiah, which is constructed according to the pattern, doom for Judah (1:1-25:13); doom for foreign nations (25:15ff., 46-51); salvation for Judah (26-35); with a final section 36-45 comprising narratives about Jeremiah. On the basis of this argument, Fohrer feels that the LXX arrangement of the book must be the earlier one:

> 'Im Vergleich mit anderen Prophetenbüchern, die ebenfalls nach dem dreigliedrigen eschatologischen Schema aufgebaut sind .... liegt die Annahme am nächsten, dass die Septuaginta des Buches Jeremia die ursprüngliche Anordnung bewahrt hat und dass diese Gliederung durch die Umstellung des Blocks der Fremdvölkersprüche im MT geändert worden ist'.[16]

This argument is a very persuasive one, and has impressed itself upon many scholars, among them Rudolph, Weiser, Kaiser, Janzen. It must be remembered, however, that Jeremiah does not conform absolutely to the pattern which Fohrer outlines; in chapters 26-35, for example, we find a great deal more than simply promises for Israel and Judah. Also, even Fohrer analyses the book of Jeremiah into a fourfold form, with a final section of narratives (according to LXX), and this is another pointer to

/...

to the fact that the book is rather more complex in its arrangement than Fohrer would suggest. We must be alerted to the possibility that a somewhat different editorial policy may have been evolved in order to cope with the unique collection of Jeremianic material. However, it is true to say that the LXX arrangement of chapters corresponds more nearly to that found in Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zephaniah. It must be borne in mind, of course, that this very point may be used as an argument against the priority of the LXX arrangement, since the desire to conform the arrangement of the book of Jeremiah more nearly to that of the other major prophetic books may have encouraged an editorial shifting of the foreign oracle material from the end to the middle of the book, thus implying the priority of the MT position!

The second argument put forward by supporters of the LXX arrangement and by those, such as Rudolph, who think that LXX is <u>almost</u> right, concerns chapter 25. This chapter contains (v.15ff) a list of foreign nations who are to be offered the 'cup of wrath' and it is evident to many that there is some connection between this chapter and the foreign oracles. Supporters of LXX maintain that ch.25 demands the presence of the foreign oracle section, and that its removal to the end of the book has left the chapter in MT in a curiously incomplete condition, especially since the editorial work which can be detected in verses 1-13 seems to pre-suppose an immediately following series of foreign oracles. This expectation, it is argued, is in MT not fulfilled. Thus Schwally comments:

> 'Waren wir nur Kraft der Analyse von 25:1-14 berechtigt, im vorstehenden Abschnitt, 14ff. eine Sammlung von Reden gegen heidnische Völker zu erwarten, so ist diese

/...

Erwartung gründlich getauscht worden. Denn wir fanden nur eine symbolische Handlung mit einem dürren Verzeichniss von Völkernamen, woran eine Blüthenlese allgemeiner Androhungen der Vertilgung angehängt ist. Die Mehrzahl der hier stehenden Namen begegnet uns nun in einem anderen Theile des Buches Jeremia, der wirklich Weissagungen gegen Heiden enthält (Kap.46-51) und die wir hier vermissen. Dieser Umstand und die zahlreichan Berühungen mit diesem Corpus ..... weisen darauf hin, dass wir es hier mit einem Index zu ihm zu thun haben, der stehen blieb, nachdem das Corpus von seinem ursprünglichen Orte entfernt worden war.'[17]

Such an opinion is mirrored by Cornill -

'Chapter XXV: 1-13 in its existing revised form in the Hebrew as well as in the Greek clearly constitutes the introduction to the oracles against foreign peoples in their complete form',[18]

and is likewise endorsed by Volz, Weiser, Skinner etc. This therefore seems an appropriate place to look briefly at verses 1-13 of chapter 25.

These verses can be divided into two sections comprising 1-7 and 8-13. The first section consists of a Deuteronomically phrased résumé of the ministry of Jeremiah up till the fourth year of Jehoiakim, with a note to the effect that it had been a failure insofar as the nation had not repented. Verses 8-13 pronounce judgement upon Judah for the people's failure to heed the message of Jeremiah and the other prophets - and in its present form also pronounces judgement upon the foreign nations round about. That the latter section has undergone extensive editorial reworking is widely acknowledged by older and more modern scholars alike. In the course of his study of chapter 25, Thiel designates parts of v.9, 11b, 12, 13c as the verses most usually suspected by scholars.[19] The ongoing editorial activity which has marked this section emerges most clearly from a comparison of the texts of MT and LXX.

/...

There are various fairly minor deviations which are for our purposes relatively unimportant. For example, in vs.1-7 there seems to be some confusion between the two texts as to who is speaking, God or Jeremiah. MT seems to presuppose that Jeremiah speaks in 1-5, whereas in 6-7 God speaks. LXX is rather more consistent in assuming that God is the speaker throughout. We may also note here that the prose sermon of 1-7 is a generalized account which surveys both Jeremiah's mission and that of the other prophets as well. It is doubtless an editorial composition which owes nothing to Jeremiah.

Form critically speaking, 8-13 is the Drohworte which follows the Scheltworte. 8-11 announces the destruction of Judah and the other little nations, and 12-13 announces the downfall of the Babylonian oppressor. Here is a comparison of LXX and MT at those verses where they differ:

MT v.9 'Lo, I will send for all the tribes of the north, says the Lord, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land, and its inhabitants, and against all these nations round about ...'

LXX v.9 'Lo, I will send and take a tribe from the north, and I will bring them upon this land, and its inhabitants, and against all the nations round about ...'

MT v.11 'This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon for 70 years'.

LXX v.11 'And all the land will be a ruin; and they shall serve among the nations seventy years'.

MT v.12 '... I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans...'

LXX v.12 '... I will punish that nation...'

MT v.13 'I will bring upon that land all my words ... all that is written in this book (which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations) ( ) > LXX.

/...

It may also be noted that in verse 1b MT equates the fourth year of Jehoiakim with 'the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon'. It is evident that these differences between MT and LXX give us a clear insight into the editorial activity which has been carried out. If we read verses 1-11 in their LXX form, we become aware that what we are dealing with here is a sermon which was originally written with Judah in mind, and which meant to deal with neither Babylon nor the other nations. Judah failed to listen to the prophets; therefore Judah will be punished. It seems that the reference to 'all the nations round about' in v.9 of LXX and the mention of 'that nation' in v.12 mark the beginning of an editorial process which attempts to re-orientate this sermon towards Babylon and the nations; the reference to the nations in v.9 is totally out of place, since it does not make sense to say that Judah's misdemeanours(v.1-7) lead to the punishment of all the nations round about. The process of re-orientation is carried much further, and characteristically made much more explicit in MT, but it still points in the same direction; the nations are to undergo punishment, and then Babylon, whose king, Nebuchadnezzar, is explicitly mentioned several times in MT.

Most scholars are agreed that both in MT and in LXX, verse 12 marks an extension of the thought of verses 1-11, and thus belongs to a later redactional strand. The 'that nation' of LXX certainly refers to Babylon, whose fall is predicted here. It is, however, with verse 13 that the really acute problems arise.

> 'I will bring upon that land all the words which I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations'.

/...

Controversy rages over the meaning of 'that land', the content of 'this book' and the original function of the last clause. It is Rudolph's opinion that part of this verse belongs to the original kernel of 1-13, that is, to the sermon originally directed against Judah and Jerusalem. This being the case, he identifies the 'that land' of verse 13 not with Babylon (as one would naturally assume), but with Judah, and to facilitate this he concludes that the phrase originally read 'this land', thus agreeing with the 'this land' (Judah) of verses 9-11. 'This book', he identifies with chapters 1-20, to which he believes that 25:1-13 was appended as a conclusion by the Deuteronomistic editors.[20] In this view he is supported broadly by Bright, who agrees that the original reference in v.13 was to Judah, and that 25:1-13 functioned as a conclusion. He believes that 25:1ff. contain a kernel of Jeremianic words, and therefore that it may have concluded the so-called 'Urrolle' of the fourth year of Jehoiakim. 'This book' is thus for Bright, Baruch's roll.[21] Rudolph is also supported by Thiel, who believes that the 'book' of v.13 is the Deuteronomic collection of Jeremianic oracles against Judah, to which 25:1-13 formed the conclusion.

> '25:1-13 stellt in seinem Grundbestand den von D formulierten Abschluss des von ihr geschaffenen "Buches der Worte Jeremias" dar'[22]

Thiel also provides a reason why an original 'this land' (Judah) was altered into 'that land':

> '13aba ist der originale Schluss des D-Textes, den PD lediglich durch die Änderung von ursprünglichem הזאת in ההיא in die Drohung gegen Babel einbezogen hat'[23]

These three scholars regard 1-13 as a conclusion, either to a Deuteronomic compilation, or to the 'Urrolle'. Other

/...

Other scholars, such as Volz, regarded the passage as the introduction to the 'Urrolle'[24] The assessment of 1-13 put forward more recently by C. Rietzschel is different again. He does not believe that verse 13 belonged to the original Deuteronomic kernel of 1-13. Consequently he is content to read 'that land' as a straightforward reference to Babylon. As for 'this book', he maintains that this may most naturally be taken to refer to the Babylon prophecies which now stand at chs. 50-51 in MT, but which originally stood after verse 13b, forming with the editorially reworked 1-13 what Rietzschel calls a 'tradition complex'. The other foreign oracles were later inserted between these two elements by a redactor who wished to set the judgement of Judah in the context of a judgement of all nations. He argues against Rudolph's view of v.13 as a concluding sentence, pointing out that Rudolph can only do this by altering 'that land' into 'this land'.

> 'Ohne diesen Eingriff wäre Rudolph gar nicht imstande, in dem Prosatext Jer.25:1-14 eine Zusammenfassung der voraufgegangenen Unheilsweissagungen zu sehen, sondern müsste ihn als Auftakt zu einem der Fremdvölkerorakeln verstehen'.[25]

25:1-14 forms the prelude to the oracle against Babylon.

13c has caused no less controversy than the rest of this verse. How are the words 'which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations' to be taken? Most supporters of the LXX position analyse these words as a clear indication that the foreign oracles stood in chapter 25 originally, since they are construed as a superscription to the oracles, which was left behind in MT when the collection itself was moved to the end of the book, and which now stands rather awkwardly in verse 13. This view is held by,

/...

among others, Cornill, Skinner, Eissfeldt, Weiser, Rietzschel and Thiel.[26] These scholars see verse 14, which is lacking in LXX, as an editorial patch which was added in order to cover up the 'botched' text which resulted from the shift of the oracle section. Other scholars, such as Rudolph and Volz, prefer to se 13c as an original superscription to 15ff, which has become separated from it by the late addition of verse 14, having been wrongly construed in MT with the rest of verse 13. Birkeland also supports this view, and believes that the presence of 13c as a superscription to 15ff. misled the LXX translator into inserting the oracle section between the two, immediately after the superscription. 13c need not necessarily support the view that LXX preserves the original position of the oracles, if it is considered as a misplaced superscription to 15ff. It might even be argued that it started out as a marginal note placed next to verses 15ff. by an editor who noted the connection between these verses and the oracle collection at the end of the book. Its presence may then have caused some copyists or editors to transfer the oracular material to this point in chapter 25, thus producing the LXX arrangement. In this case, we could argue that the MT arrangement is the earlier.

Scholars such as Volz and Rudolph, while not accepting the LXX position as original, still maintain that the connection between 25:15ff. and the foreign oracles requires that they be placed 'in the immediate vicinity' as Orelli put it. Cornill maintains that

> '...at first their position naturally can only have been after 25:15-29(38), of which they form the prophetic-rhetorical consummation.'[27]

/...

In similar fashion, Volz designates 25:15-38 'das Einleitungsgedicht des Büchleins'.[28] Giesebrecht maintains that chapter 25:15ff. can only be understood as the symbolic proclamation of the judgement over the nations; the execution of that judgement can follow this (i.e. the foreign oracles can follow 25:15ff.) but cannot precede it (as in LXX) since their arrangement really renders the proclamation superfluous. Older scholars such as Graf, Ewald and Orelli, believed that the oracles in the LXX 'cut chapter 25 asunder in a clumsy way', to use Orelli's words.

It is easy to see why an earlier location at the end of the book might have been altered in order to bring the book into closer conformity with the other major prophetic books, but it is rather more difficult to explain why the opposite move should have taken place. Defending an original position at the end of chapter 25, Volz conjectured that 25:15ff., 46-51 were originally joined on to the book containing the prophetic oracles of Jeremiah. Later the foreign oracles were somehow separated, perhaps because it was known that they did not come from Jeremiah, but 25:15-38 remained in place. Later still, the LXX translator or the Vorlage attempted to restore what he thought to be the earlier position, but made the mistake of placing the oracles after 25:13.[29] It is interesting to note that in this explanation, Volz is actually implying that the MT arrangement is earlier than that of LXX! Rudolph finds it incomprehensible that the oracles were shifted from the end to the middle of chapter 25 (it happened 'aus unerfindlichen Gründen'),[30] but he accounts for the move to the end of the book

/...

by saying that it occurred 'out of contempt for the heathen'.[30]

Eissfeldt, a defender of LXX, suggests that the reason for the move might have been a desire 'that the book *should not* close with threats against the Judean remnant as in xliv.[31] Perhaps the threat spoken against Pharaoh in 44:30 attracted to itself the fuller threat against Egypt in ch.46, which then drew with it the rest of chs. 46-51.

Yet another view is put forward by Weiser. He thinks that the oracles were moved because

> 'after the end of the exile, the great minatory poem against Babylon became for the general public of greater immediate importance, and seemed a more suitable conclusion than the oracles about the downfall of Jewry in Egypt'.[32]

This last conclusion is questioned by Rietzschel, since he believes that the shift must have been made only at a period subsequent to the production of the LXX translation, by which time the Babylon oracle had long ceased to have any immediate relevance.[33] He himself gives another reason for the move, believing that the redactor, working in Maccabean times, did so in order to fuse the sermon (25:1-14) and the cup-pericope together in 'a new kerygmatic unit'. Both texts, Rietzschel explains, enjoyed in the course of their transmission a high standing in eschatological circles, and had been repeatedly used by them to designate the present as the end time. They were brought together, probably around the time of the failure of the Maccabean uprising, into a liturgical text in expectation of the eschaton:

> '...die hebräische Überlieferung durch die Umstellung der Fremdvölker-orakel an das Ende des Jeremiabuches Predigt und Becherperikope zu einem liturgischen Text

/...

zusammenziehen konnte, der von der Erwartung getragen ist, dass das Ende des Weltgerichtes unmittelbar bevorstehe.'[34]

In the preceding discussion we have tried to give some idea of the multiplicity of viewpoints which scholars hold regarding the respective merits of the MT and LXX positions of the foreign oracles. There is much room for conjecture, and no firm conclusion can be drawn. We must look merely for the most convincing arguments.

Despite the popularity of the view that the original position of the collection was immediately after chapter 25, it seems to me that this has least to commend it, for here we enter the realms of sheer speculation, reconstructing an 'original' arrangement which no witness supports, the dubious grounds for this being that vv. 15-38 form an introductory section, upon which the foreign oracles ought to follow. There are insufficient grounds for claiming that these verses have this character, and even if they did, it could still be said that according to the MT the oracle section does indeed follow upon them, thought not directly. This view also entails the problems of how to account in a satisfactory manner for the assumed move from the end of ch. 25 to the middle of it in LXX, and to the end of the book in MT; the variety of explanations put forward is an indication of their lack of power to convince.

Neither is there a great deal to be said in favour of the MT arrangement. It could be maintained that a collection such as this one, added at a late date to the substantially complete book of Jeremiah, would have been more probably added as an appendix to the book, before being further integrated into it

/...

at a more suitable location. We would also have to defend the present MT internal arrangement of chapter 25, by saying that v.13c is not an original superscription to the oracle collection, but rather to verses 15ff. - verses which adequately account for the marked editorial preparation for a judgement upon the nations which can be seen in 25:1-13. As for 'this book', we could either go along with Rudolph, and maintain that this refers back to a previous collection of oracles against Judah, and so belongs to the 'D' kernel of the chapter, or we could perhaps say that it refers to the book of Jeremiah as a whole, and implies the presence of oracles against Babylon at the end of it. It seems to me, however, that generally speaking, the supporters of LXX position are able to produce the most convincing arguments. Rudolph and Thiel are not justified in assuming that 25:13ab belongs to the Deuteronomic kernel of the chapter, and that 'this book' refers to a collection of oracles against Judah; this thesis requires a conjectural textual emendation which cannot be defended. (הארץ ההיא into הארץ הזאת). Verse 13ab is most naturally understood, with Rietzschel and others, as a later editorial strand added, like 1b, 9, 11b and 12, by someone who knew of the existence of oracles against the nations and Babylon and wanted 'this book' to be understood either as a reference to the Babylon oracles (thus Rietzschel) or to the foreign oracle section as a whole. In this case it is almost certain that they were meant to follow upon verse 13. 'This book' certainly cannot be taken to designate v.15ff., since in this case the follow up to the obvious editorial trends in vvs.1-13 would indeed be disappointing - as Schwally

/...

pointed out,[35] the only mention of a punishment upon Babylon, to which verses 12 and 13 look forward, being the interpolated 'And after them the king of Babylon will drink' at 25:26b. Those who defend the LXX position account most naturally for the 'this book' of verse 13, and this, coupled with Fohrer's view of the similarity of structure between the LXX of Jeremiah, and some of the other prophetic books, including Isaiah and Ezekiel, makes it very difficult not to agree that it is in all likelihood the LXX which preserves the original arrangement, despite the difficulty of accounting for the MT position.

As for verse 13c, it seems to me that to say that it is an original superscription to the oracles which somehow got left behind when they were moved is a little vague and difficult to envisage in practice. It is more likely that 13c was originally the superscription to 15ff, which has been erroneously separated from it by v.14. A slight indication in favour of this may be that 13c introduces 'that which Jeremiah prophesied against <u>all</u> the nations', which is perhaps a more appropriate superscription to 15ff. (cf. v.26 '<u>all</u> the kingdoms of the earth') than to the limited series of nations dealt with in the major collection. The presence of the words of 13c probably encouraged the introduction of the foreign nation oracles at just this point in chapter 25 in the LXX arrangement; as we have said, it seems difficult to resist the view that this happened at a point previous to the formation of the MT arrangement, which probably arose through subsequent shifting of the collection to the end of the book.

CHAPTER ONE

(iii) THE ORDERING OF THE ORACLES.

We have seen that with regard to the position of the foreign oracle section, the scholars who prefer the LXX far outnumber those who prefer MT. With regard to the question of the more primitive order of the oracles, however, the reverse is the case, the majority of scholars accepting that the order in MT is earlier, and that LXX gives evidence of a subsequent re-ordering of the material. MT order runs as follows :- Egypt, Philistia, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Elam, Babylon. LXX lists the nations in the order Elam, Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Edom, Ammon, Kedar, Damascus, Moab.

The most widely held argument for the priority of the MT arrangement points out that the nations in MT are listed in a kind of geographical sequence,[1] or at least that the first seven of them exhibit such a sequence. Thus Ewald argued that:

> 'These seven ... are so arranged,....that Egypt, which most stood forth amid the revolutions of the time to oppose the Chaldeans, is first introduced, and next, the direction from the south-west to the north-east being taken, the Philistines .... after that, beyond the Dead Sea, the three small kingdoms, always found associated, Moab, Ammon and Edom ... are considered, and finally the more distant Syrian and Arabian petty kingdoms'.[2]

He considers the LXX order to be 'only too evidently capricious'. A more recent exponent of the view that MT is to be preferred by reason of the geographical sequence of its order is G. Fohrer:

> 'Im masoretischen Text sind die Spruchgruppen 1-6 in einer lockeren geographischen Ordnung in der Reihenfolge Süden (Agypten), Westen (Philister), Osten (Moab, Ammon, Edom), Norden (Damascus) mit Jerusalem als gedachten Mittelpunkt angeordnet. Die beiden folgenden Spruchgruppen

/...

gegen arabische Stämme und gegen Elam sind daran einfach angehängt worden; die Spruchgruppe gegen Babylon bildet wegen der Wichtigkeit des Themas den Abschluss'.[3]

Of course, to acknowledge a loose geographical sequence of nations in MT is not conclusive proof of its priority. It could have arisen as a result of subsequent re-ordering of the apparently haphazard collection in LXX. There are however other arguments which are put forward in favour of MT. Hyatt, for example, feels that it reflects roughly the chronological order of the history of the nations concerned.[4] Again it is believed by some that, since the order in MT reflects that of 25:15ff., this order must be more original.[5] Rudolph is an exponent of this view, and he endeavours to bring the two lists of ch.25 and 46ff. into even closer uniformity than they are at present. He maintains that

'Vergleicht man die so von ihren Zusätzen befreite Liste 25:19ff. mit den in 46:1-49:33 genannten Völkern, so sieht man, dass deren Zahl und Reihenfolge beide Male annähernd gleich ist :-
25:19ff: Ägypten, Philister, Edom, Moab, Ammon nordarabische stämme
46ff: Ägypten, Philister, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar und die Reiche von Hazor'.

Rudolph proceeds, by striking out the Damascus oracle as inauthentic, and by rearranging the sequence of East Jordanian nations, to harmonize these two lists of nations even further.[6]

Again it must be said that the similarity between these two lists of nations need not be understood to support the priority of MT order. It could equally be said that the tendency would have been to alter the order of the foreign nation oracles so as to bring them into closer conformity with the list in Chapter 25. It must be borne in mind that there is no necessary or original

/...

connection between the two chapters. Thus, of the list in Jeremiah ch.25, Rietzschel remarks that

> 'Die dort gennanten Völker nicht im Hinblick auf die Fremdvölkerorakel des Jeremiabuches zusammen gestellt worden sind'.[7]

Despite his rejection of the validity of this argument, however, Rietzschel remains a supporter of the MT order of the oracles, since it accords with his thesis that the oracle against Babylon originally stood after 25:13, before the rest of the foreign oracles were inserted between it and 25:13. He thus supports the order in which the oracle against Babylon now stands at the <u>end</u>. His main argument for the priority of MT order concerns the superscription to the oracle against Elam, which, in MT is of such a form as is encountered elsewhere, for example in 1:2, 14:1, 46:2, 47:1. In LXX, however, the superscription is split into two parts, the date 'in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah' being found at the end of the prophecy as a subscription. Rietzschel finds this arrangement extremely artificial, and explains it thus:

> '... die LXX das Drohwort gegen Elam erst nachträglich an die Spitze der Fremdvölkerorakel gesetzt hat, wobei sie dann die volle Überschrift, wie sie noch im MT vorliegt, kürzen musste, weil sich sonst deren Zeitangabe zu hart mit dem bei ihr nur 13 Verse voraus stehenden Datum Jer.25:1 gestossen hatte'.[8]

Jer. 25:1 gives a dating in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, whereas in the superscription the Elam oracle is dated to the beginning of Zedekiah's reign; Rietzschel is suggesting that in order to lessen this contrast, which arose after the Elam oracle was moved to the first place in the collection, the date was removed from the superscription to the Elam oracle, and added in as a subscription. This argument is not original to Rietzschel, but

/...

was first put forward by Cornill.[9] Cornill, followed by Rudolph, also mentions as an argument for the priority of MT the fact that in its arrangement the dates of 46:2, 49:34 and 51:59 follow one another in chronological sequence.[10]

It is generally agreed, then, that the order of the oracles in MT is more logical, more 'planvoll und überlegt' as Cornill puts it. Those few defenders of the LXX order must do so on the grounds of the text critical maxim <u>lectio difficilior potior</u>. Thus, in the words of J.G. Janzen:

> '... we can account for a secondary development resulting in M order, while no grounds can be given to account for a secondary development producing G, so that the latter form of the text is to be preferred as <u>lectio difficilior</u>.[11]

As we shall see below, however, certain defenders of MT do in fact find grounds for a secondary development resulting in the apparently less logical order of LXX, making Janzen's assessment of the situation too simplistic.

An earlier protagonist of the LXX order, H.St.J. Thackeray,[12] chose to focus his attention upon the two phrases which occur at 48:47 and 51:64, at the close of the oracles against Moab and Babylon respectively. עד־הנה משפט מואב and עד־הנה דברי ירמיהו. Thackeray poses the question why the end of the Moab oracle, which stands in third place in the order of nations in the MT, should be so carefully marked with the words, 'Thus far is the judgement on Moab'. He concludes that this can best be accounted for when we remember that in the Greek order, Moab is the last of the nations, and thus that this subscription is more intelligible if the LXX order is the earlier. It would then mark the end of the foreign oracle section. As for the 'thus

/...

far are the words of Jeremiah' at 51:64, Thackeray takes this as the concluding phrase of the first half of the book of Jeremiah (chapters 1-28 in LXX arrangement), which circulated for a time as a separate collection before being fused to the second half. Quite apart from the complicated and speculative nature of Thackeray's thesis, it seems to me that 'Thus far is the judgement on Moab' does not read like a phrase added to conclude the foreign oracle section as a whole. It says something specific about the Moab oracle, and it can equally well be explained as an allusion to the great length of the prophecy against Moab - except for the Babylon oracle, it is the longest in the collection. As for the similar phrase at the close of this latter prophecy, it may well be meant to indicate that the prophecy of Jeremiah is now at an end, since chapter 52 is an historical appendix taken over from the book of Kings.

It is incumbent upon those scholars who defend MT order to give some account of how a secondary development could have produced the order which now exists in the LXX. It is generally recognized that in beginning with the nations Elam, Egypt, Babylon, LXX is attempting to place the three greatest kingdoms first, and most scholars are of the opinion that by Elam LXX understood the imperial power Persia. Thus Rudolph comments that

> '... G unter Elam Persien verstand und die drei Grossreiche Persien Ägypten und Babel an der Spitze sehen wollte, während bei den kleinstaaten kein Ordnungsprinzip zu erkennen ist, ausser dass das längste Orakel am Schluss steht'.[13]

Rietzschel holds a different view to the majority of scholars here. He believes that the prophecies were reordered in the LXX in order to 'actualize' the foreign oracles for the

/...

Hellenistic age, and in an effort to conform to its political realities.

> 'Sehen wir nämlich recht, so hat die LXX die Fremdvölkerorakel in der Weise umgeordnet, dass sich darin eine bestimmte Mächtekonstellation der hellenistischen Zeit widerspiegelt'[14]

He disagrees with the view that LXX identifies Elam with Persia, and sees Elam as an alias for the kingdom of Parthia. The other two nations, Egypt and Babylon, he identifies with the kingdoms of the Ptolemies and Seleucids respectively :-

> 'Denn der LXX wäre es dann bei der Reihenfolge Elam, Ägypten und Babel um nichts anderes gegangen, als ihren Lesern rein deskriptiv die drei Grossmächte vorzustellen, die zur damaligen Zeit die Geschicke des Vorderen Orients bestimmten. Von da aus gesehen ist es unseres Erachtens völlig natürlich, dass sie den Blick zuerst auf das Partherreich im hohen Norden lenkte, bevor sie zu den hellenistischen Staaten der Ptolemäer und Seleukiden überging, die sich gegenseitig die Vorherrschaft über das klassische Durchgangsland Syrien-Palästina streitig zu machen versuchten'[15]

Rietzschel gives a very late date for the re-ordering of the oracles, that is the beginning of the second century, shortly after the struggle between Antiochus III und Ptolemy V.

If arguments of the above kind seem to give an adequate account of how the present LXX order arose, and if the superior logic of the MT order is taken into account, it must be concluded that MT order is earlier. If, on the other hand, the fact that there would have been a great temptation to impose a more logical structure on the oracles, and to make them conform to the order of the nations in chapter 25, is thought to be of greater persuasive force, then it is necessary to support the order of LXX as the <u>lectio difficilior</u>. I do not find the arguments of such scholars as Rietzschel and Rudolph persuasive

/...

enough to justify the view that the LXX order represents a secondary development of the more original MT order. It seems more likely that the opposite is the case; that the superior logic of MT order reflects a secondary development of the more primitive order preserved in the LXX.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATION OF CHAPTERS 46-51 (25:14 - 31:44 in LXX)

In any study of the LXX as a translation, it is important to note first of all that the LXX represents not one translation, but many, accomplished by different translators at different times. In contrast to, say, the study of Targum Jonathan, it is not possible to infer the characteristics of the LXX of Jeremiah from those exhibited in other books of the Septuagint.

> 'Strictly speaking, the Alexandrian Bible is not a single version, but a series of versions produced at various times, and by translators whose ideals were not altogether alike'.[1]

Thackeray has attempted to classify the books of the Old Testament on the basis of the type of translation found in them.[2] He finds that the LXX employs translation techniques so diverse as to result, on the one hand, in the literalism of Ecclesiastes, and, on the other, in the free and paraphrastic rendering of the book of Job. Again, Swete could describe the Greek Pentateuch as 'a close and serviceable translation' while in Isaiah and Psalms the translation exhibits 'obvious signs of incompetence'.[3]

As we have discussed in chapter 1, the LXX of Jeremiah contains certain striking transpositions of material, the most important of these concerning the position of the foreign oracle section, and the order of the oracles within that section. Considered as a whole, the LXX of Jeremiah exhibits a further peculiarity in that its text is fully one eighth shorter than that of MT, a difference of some 2,700 words.[4] The text

/...

is characterized throughout by numerous omissions. In the face of this peculiarity, are we to accuse the translator of deliberately abbreviating his Hebrew text, as scholars such as Spohr and Graf[5] assumed in the past? It is not a question which can be answered a priori, as, for example, G.C. Workman attempted to do:

> 'The sacred character of his text ..... forbids the supposition that many ... of the omissions were due to arbitrary purpose on his part. He must have been an honest man, who did his duty conscientiously and in good faith'.[6]

More recently, a similar a priori assessment of the way in which the translator would have been likely to approach his task has been put forward by H. Orlinsky:

> 'A pious Jew, knowledgeable enough in Hebrew and Greek, decides to translate the book of Joshua or Jeremiah or Job from Hebrew into Greek. It is for him, and for his contemporary readers, a sacred text the word - or Word-of God. It seems to me inconceivable that with this attitude and motivation, the Septuagint translator would proceed to delete, whenever he felt so moved, words + phrases ... and even entire sections ... as in Jeremiah and Job - and alter extensively the order of the chapters and verses of his sacred Hebrew text - as in the book of Jeremiah .... The modern scholar has no right to assume a priori that the Septuagint translator manipulated his Hebrew text ...'.[7]

It is quite true that the scholar has no right to assume that the LXX translator tampered with his Hebrew text - but perhaps Orlinsky should not assume a priori that he did not. The question can best be decided after examination of the translation itself, from which conclusions can be drawn regarding the attitude of the translator towards his text. This attitude was not the same in every case, and so the translation technique employed cannot simply be inferred from the status of

/...

the original as Holy Writ. To take a New Testament example - although of course the phenomenon here has to do with the transmission of the text and not its translation - the scribes involved in the transmission of the New Testament were fully as convinced as the LXX translators that they were dealing with a word - or Word of God, and yet their pious labours have resulted in such diverse traditions as that of Codices B and ℵ on the one hand, and on the other, that of the radically divergent Codex D, which has been called 'the wild Western text'.

If we then look to the text to ascertain whether responsibility for its abbreviation lies with the translator, it emerges that this is unlikely to be the case. For one thing, the character of the translation at those places not affected by omissions is faithful, and as literal as the Greek language will allow it to be, without being slavishly literal, as is the version of Aquila; it is not likely that such fidelity to the original would have been coupled with a tendency to omit large sections of text, although C. Rabin has put forward a thesis which tries to accommodate both features.[8] He believes that the pioneer LXX translators employed a technique which was familiar to them from the practice of oral business translation, the main purpose of which was to get the message across. He accounts as follows for the perplexing combination of faithful translation and striking omission which meets us so often in the LXX of Jeremiah:

> 'A dragoman was trained to translate word for word, phrase for phrase, and his skill was to have ready

/...

made renderings for syntactical constructions which could be applied without much thinking, above all keeping the elements of the receptor phrase as parallel as possible with that of the source'

and further,

'...the main purpose is to get the message across. This can often be done more efficiently by condensing and omitting phraseology and stylistic ornamentation of the source'.[9]

The trouble with Rabin's thesis is that while it accounts for the phenomena of the LXX text of Jeremiah, it completely fails to do so for the rest of the LXX. The translator of Jeremiah was not a 'pioneer' in the same sense as those who translated the text of the Pentateuch - and here, and in historical books, the LXX generally contains a fuller text than does MT.[10] The translators of these latter books were not constrained to employ methods used in oral business translation, and so there is no reason that the later translator of Jeremiah should have done so, rather than follow his predecessors.

Faithful translation, then, is unlikely to be accompanied by a tendency to abbreviate on a grand scale. And if we look at some of the omissions themselves, it emerges as more likely that the translator is rendering faithfully a Hebrew Vorlage which was shorter than the present MT. For example, divine titles are rendered thus:

	MT	LXX
46(26):10	לאדני יהוה צבאות	τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ ἡμῶν
46(26):25	יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל	——
48(31):15	המלך יהוה צבאות שמו	——
49(30):5	אדני יהוה צבאות	κύριος
49:7(29:8)	יהוה צבאות	κύριος
50(27):18	יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל	κύριος

/...

	MT	LXX
50(27):25	לארני יהוה צבאות	τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ
50(27):31	ארני יהוה צבאות	κύριος
51(28):14	יהוה צבאות	κύριος
51(28):19	יהוה צבאות	κύριος
51(28):33	יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל	κύριος
51(28):57	יהוה צבאות	κύριος

Only in three instances do we have agreement - 50(27):34, 51(28):5, 51(28):57. If the shortening of these epithets is to be laid at the translator's door, we would have to assume that he carried out his policy in an exceedingly haphazard fashion. For instance in 51(28):57 we would have to say that he omitted צבאות in one half of the text, and translated it in the other.

The translator is finally acquitted of the charge of abbreviating his Vorlage by the fact that there exists among the textual material discovered at Qumran a fragment of text (4 Q Jer ^{b}) which, small as it is, exhibits the same short form of the text which appears to underlie the Greek text of Jeremiah.[11] This short text-type has been dubbed 'Egyptian' in contrast to the text of 4 Q Jer ^{a}, which is designated 'proto-Massoretic'[12], this last having a text which agrees in essentials with our MT. Old Testament text critics have long been divided in their opinions as to which text type, the short, or the long, represents an earlier, superior text of Jeremiah. There were those, such as Spohr and Graf, who supported the MT, and those, such as Movers, Scholz, Workman, Streane, Duhm, Cornill and Schmidt, who favoured the Greek Vorlage. Others

/...

still, such as Giesebrecht, Volz and Rudolph, adopt a medial position, believing that there is much secondary material in MT, but that LXX represents an abridged text nonetheless. G. Janzen believes that this position is becoming the norm.[13] It is exceedingly difficult to make a judgement about this. The material which is missing from the LXX of chs. 46-51 does not readily lend itself to evaluation.[14] There are one or two cases in which the translator, or his Vorlage, has been guilty of haplography,[15] but the others are of such a nature that their absence or presence makes little difference to the text. In eleven cases the words נאם יהוה are missing in LXX. In several instances two or more items from a lengthy list are missing. Does the MT represent an expanded text, or has LXX Vorlage omitted items which it considered to be superfluous? The canons of textual criticism generally favour the shorter text,[16] following the maxim brevior lectio potior, and it is recognised that manuscripts tend to grow in transmission. Yet when it is recognized that the material is of such a kind as to allow for the possibility of scribal omission because of superfluity, the maxim may be disregarded.[17] Nevertheless, certain features of the Massoretic text are recognized characteristics of a text which is expansionist in tendency: the lengthening of divine titles (see above), the expansion of superscriptions (as, for example, at 47(29):1, 50(27):1), the addition of complements and natural adjuncts (see 46(26):14, at which נֹף, translated in the LXX as εἰς Μέμφιν is augmented by וּתַחְפַּנְחֵס . The two Egyptian cities are mentioned together at 44:1; 2:16), the existence

/...

of conflate readings - all tend to tell in favour of the superiority of the LXX Vorlage over the expanded MT.[18] However, the question is by no means settled. It may be asked, for example, that if, as supporters of the LXX Vorlage say, the text is 'Egyptian' and 'conservative' in character, why is this 'conservative' trend not so apparent in the other books of the Old Testament, which are presumably also 'Egyptian' in character?[19] And why so much expansion and editorial activity in the MT of the book of Jeremiah, in particular?

We are not primarily concerned in this paper with arguments for the superiority of one text over another, although the LXX of Jeremiah persistently raises the question. We shall proceed to the main business of examining the text itself.

Immediately we are confronted with Greek which is of such a style as to bear the marks of its Hebrew original in almost every verse. The translator (or translators, if Thackeray's thesis be correct[20] - at any rate, if more than one dealt with the foreign oracles, they were at one in this), has apparently endeavoured throughout to cling very faithfully to his original, and in the process has adopted a style which can be called 'translation' Greek. For example, where Hebrew employs an emphatic construction, in which the infinitive absolute of the verb is preceded or followed by a finite tense of the same verb, the practice of the translator is to render this in a faithful and close, though not absolutely literal fashion:

46(26):5 מָנוֹס נָסוּ וְלֹא הִפְנוּ

φυγῇ ἔφυγον καὶ οὐκ ἀνέστρεψαν

MT is probably rightly emended in this phrase, as BHK suggests.

/...

The LXX verb plus noun in the dative is a rendering of וְגוֹס נָסַר .

50(27):34 רִיב יָרִיב אֶת־רִיבָם

κρίσιν κρινεῖ πρὸς τοὺς ἀντιδίκους αὐτοῦ

Here, LXX employs verb and accusative noun to render the Hebrew. It is also possible that the LXX is reading יְרִיבָיו for רִיבָם .

51(28):58 The construction here is rendered by a future middle verb plus participle, resulting in a somewhat mouth-filling phrase:

חֹמוֹת בָּבֶל חֲרֻחָבָה עֲרָעֵר תִּתְעָרְעָר

τεῖχος Βαβυλῶνος ἐπλατύνθη, κατασκαπτόμενον κατασκαφήσεται

Examples such as the above could be multiplied (see for example 48(31):2, 48(31):9). This type of translation seeks to reproduce the original closely, but it is not absolutely literal; for that we would require a construction such as is found at Joshua 17:13, where the LXX reads ἐξολεθρευσαι ἐξωλεθρευσαν.

Several times in the LXX of these chapters, Hebrew בְּ of agent and instrument is translated by the preposition ἐν. Gehman cites this as a literalism of translation.[21]

51(28):23 וְנִפַּצְתִּי בְךָ רֹעֶה וְעֶדְרוֹ

καὶ διασκορπιῶ ἐν σοὶ ποιμένα καὶ τὸ ποίμνιον αὐτοῦ

49(30):2 וּבְנֹתֶיהָ בָּאֵשׁ תִּצָּתְנָה

και βωμοὶ αὐτῆς ἐν πυρὶ κατακαυθήσονται

The preposition לִפְנֵי is translated by the word πρόσωπον regardless of the shade of meaning of the Hebrew:

49(30):5 וְנִדַּחְתֶּם אִישׁ לְפָנָיו

καὶ διασπαρήσεσθε ἕκαστος εἰς πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ

/...

48(31):44 הַנָּס מִפְּנֵי הַפַּחַד יִפֹּל אֶל־הַפַּחַת

ὁ φεύγων ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ φόβου ἐμπεσεῖται εἰς τὸν βόθυνον

The syntax of the following seems to show Semitic influence. Hebrew opens its relative clause with an undeclined relative pronoun, and completes it, where appropriate, with an adverb of place. This adverb, although required in Hebrew to complete the sense of the relative pronoun אשר , is quite redundant in Greek; yet, in a verse such as 46(26):28, it is reproduced in literal fashion in the LXX translation:

46(26):28 כִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה כָלָה בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִדַּחְתִּיךָ שָׁמָּה

ὅτι ποιήσω συντέλειαν ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει οὗς ἐξῶσά σε ἐκεῖ

The influence of the Hebrew can also be seen clearly in the translation of certain Hebrew idioms such as the following:

46(26):13 הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יהוה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ

Ἃ ἐλάλησε κύριος ἐν χειρὶ Ιερεμίου

The translator seems to have read בְּיַד־יִרְמְיָהוּ , and has rendered it literally.[22] Again note that the בְּ of agent is translated by ἐν.

49:15(29:16) קָטֹן נְתַתִּיךָ

μικρὸν ἔδωκά σε

49:33(30:11) בֶּן־אָדָם . . . . . אִישׁ

ἄνθρωπος . . . . . υἱὸς γηγενοῦς[23]

To what are we to attribute these pecularities of syntax and vocabulary? The language of the LXX is recognizably Koiné Greek, and can be paralleled to a great extent from contemporary pagan Greek papyri.[24] Yet it differs from the Koiné to an

/...

extent sufficient to produce differing theories as to why this should be the case. H. Gehman, on the one hand, believes that the peculiarities of LXX Greek can be attributed to the fact that it employs a Jewish-Greek dialect which was in use as a spoken language in the synagogues and religious circles of Alexandria.[25] S. Brock[26] and R. Marcus[27] represent the opposing viewpoint, which denies the existence of any such 'Jewish-Greek jargon', and which puts the differences between LXX Greek and contemporary Koiné down to the fact that the LXX is written in 'translation Greek', the Hebraic character of which betrays the fidelity of the translators towards their Hebrew text.

> 'The language of the LXX is part of the Egyptian Koiné, and differs from contemporary pagan Greek only because it is translation Greek, and not because the Jewish translators spoke a peculiar Jewish-Greek jargon'.[28]

If this is the case, it seems inevitable that some of the expressions used in the LXX, in imitation of the Hebrew, would have caused a measure of puzzlement to the reader, if such expressions were not part of his everyday speech. Rabin[29] makes the excellent point that, where religious translations are concerned, there tends to be a high degree of tolerance on the part of the hearer or reader towards unfamiliar, and sometimes even unintelligible expressions. In substantiation of this, we need look no further than to the reverential attitude of a modern conservative congregation towards the wording of the Authorised Version, hallowed by centuries of repetition from pulpits, but couched in language which is full of obscurities for the modern reader (and perhaps for the seventeenth century reader as well, since it is written in 'translation English'!). It has been pointed out in the past, by Moulton for example, that

/...

certain expressions used in the LXX and labelled 'Semitic', are actually perfectly acceptable vernacular Greek.[30] But this is not the point. It is immaterial whether vernacular parallels can be adduced for a certain expression. In these cases we must enquire about the general purpose of the translator. What led him to employ this and other expressions of recognisably Semitic cast : because they are acceptable Greek, or because they answer closely the construction of the Hebrew?

> 'Does the writer use this phrase because it was familiar in the Greek of his time, or because it was familiar in Semitic idiom? .... To the question so put, the only possible answer seems to be that it was because of Semitic usage'.[31]

The translator of Jeremiah 46-51 not infrequently makes use of transliteration. Sometimes he seems almost over cautious, abdicating responsibility for translating certain words and phrases which he finds difficult. Swete remarks that in some cases transliterations arise out of misunderstandings, but for the most part, the practice of transliteration may be taken as 'a frank expression of ignorance or doubt'.[32] Thus in 46(26):17, Pharaoh Necho is designated שָׁאוֹן הֶעֱבִיר הַמּוֹעֵד . This is apparently meant to be some sort of nickname or proverb, 'Noisy One (NEB 'big noise') who lets the appointed time go past'. The word שָׁאוֹן 'uproar' 'din' is used later at 51(28):55 to describe the noise made by the encroaching enemy. There the LXX translates it as ὄλεθρον 'destruction', but here in 46(26):17, the translator has simply transliterated the whole title, perhaps because he was puzzled as to its meaning as a name for Pharaoh. The LXX reads Σαων εσβι εμωηδ .[33] The interpretation is left to the reader. /...

At 48(31):21 the word הַמִּישׁוֹר occurs at the head of a long list of Moabite place names. At 48(31):8 the same word is correctly translated as πεδινή , but in the case of 48(31):21, the translator seems to have been unsure whether המישור is meant to indicate the proper name of a place or not. Since he had no knowledge of such a place name, but felt that one was required here, he transliterated his text as γῆν τοῦ Μισωρ.

The word אֵיתָן , an 'elative' form from the root יתן stands at 50(27):44 and its parallel passage 49:19(29:20). The meaning of איתן in the phrase נְוֵה־אֵיתָן is rather difficult in these verses, and the LXX has again resorted to transliteration of the word איתן , as if it were a proper place name. Thus at 50(27):44 we read Αιθαν , and at 49:19(29:20) τόπον Αιθαν .[34]

In 48(31):1 we find the words הֻבִישָׁה הַמִּשְׂגָּב וָחִתָּה , translated in RSV, 'the fortress is put to shame and broken down'. The noun משגב is masculine, and its occurence here with feminine verbs suggests that the Hebrew text may have suffered corruption. It is possible that המשגב , despite the definite article, may be a proper name, especially since the names of towns occur in the first half of the verse. Thus AV and NEB translate as the otherwise unattested ''Misgab'. The LXX, as generally where some uncertainty exists, transliterates Αμασαγαβ.[35]

In verses 48(31):31, 36 we find a reference to the 'men of Kir Heres'. The Targum and the Vulgate both attempt a translation of קִיר חֶרֶשׂ , although there is no real doubt that it denotes a Moabite city. The LXX transliterates κιρ Αδας . It seems that the translator has also mistakenly read חדש instead of חרש. It may be mentioned here that the text of Codex Vaticanus gives

/...

the reading κειράδας in verse 36. The word means 'shorn' and so makes some kind of sense in v.36, in the context of mourning and lamentation. Certain older scholars took this as the original translation, illustrating that the translator pursued a policy of transliterating an unfamiliar Hebrew term by a Greek word of similar sound, the meaning of which fitted tolerably well into the context. Thus this verse was dubbed by Thackeray a glaring instance

> '... of a translator who was ignorant of the meaning of the Hebrew, having recourse to Greek words of similar sound'.[36]

This is unlikely to be the case, judging from the faithful and cautious approach which the translator adopts elsewhere. The reading κειράδας is more likely to have arisen as an inner Greek corruption. Perhaps Rudolph is correct to maintain that the translator actually wrote κειρ ὰρας , which was subsequently mistaken for a Greek word and 'corrected' into κειράδας .[37]

In 48(31):34 the words שְׁלִשִׁיָּה עֶגְלַת stand in a list of Moabite place names. The words literally mean 'a three year old heifer', and even though this makes no sense in the context, the Targum and the Vulgate translate it, as does the Authorised Version. RV, RSV and NEB render the phrase as a proper name. There is some uncertainty, therefore, about the meaning of שלשיה עגלת , and so the LXX transliterates, producing Αγελα Σαλασια .[38] Codex Vaticanus reads ἀγγελίαν Σαλασεια , and it seems to me that this indicates, as in the example above, an inner Greek corruption. Ἀγγελίαν means 'message', and it looks as though a copyist has attempted to 'improve' the transliteration Αγελα into the Greek word ἀγγελια . It is noteworthy that Ziegler

/...

records that several Mss. and Vss. introduce the word εἰς [39]; this represents a further scribal attempt to make the transliteration into a Greek phrase which is just tolerable in the context – 'a message to Salisa'.[40]

We seem to have certain instances, other than omissions, in which the LXX translator is apparently reading a text which is slightly different from MT. At 46(26):12, for example, the Greek φωνήν σου seems to be a translation of קֹלֵךָ, rather than of the קְלוֹנֵךָ of MT. The reading which underlies the Greek text, is perhaps better in the context since קֹלֵךָ 'your voice' forms a closer parallel to צְוָחָתֵךָ 'your cry' in the second half of the verse than does קְלוֹנֵךָ 'your shame'. Likewise, in 46(26):5 the φυγῇ ἔφυγον of the LXX suggests a Hebrew text נוֹס נָסוּ and not מָנוֹס נָסוּ, as in MT.

In 48(31):4, MT הִשְׁמִיעוּ זְעָקָה צְעוּרֶיהָ 'her little ones have caused a cry to be heard', is translated as ἀναγγείλατε εἰς Ζογορα, suggesting that צֹעַרָה 'to Zoar' has been read in place of צעורי׳ה. This verse and the next correspond closely to Isaiah 15:5, in which the towns of Luhith, Horonaim and Zoar are mentioned. Luhith and Horonaim occur in Jer 48(31):5, and so we could reasonably expect Zoar to merit a mention also –suggesting that the LXX 'to Zoar' preserves a better reading. On the other hand, the text of MT, 'her little ones have caused a cry to be heard' recalls passages such as 49:20(29:21) and 50(27):45, which mention that 'the little ones of the flock. (צְעִירֵי הַצֹּאן) will be dragged away'. It may be true that the Hebrew <u>Vorlage</u> of the LXX has been harmonized with the parallel passage in Isaiah.

/...

In 49(30):2 we read that the town of Rabbah will become a desolate mound, and that 'its villages shall be burned with fire' (בְּנֹתֶיהָ בָּאֵשׁ תִּצָּתְנָה). LXX translates בנתיה 'its villages', literally 'its daughters', by the word βωμοὶ . This is the term which is used in the LXX to denote an idolatrous altar, the word for an altar of Yahweh being θυσιαστήριον . It seems that its Vorlage read not בנתיה but בָּמֹתֶיהָ 'its hilltop shrines'. MT perhaps preserves the better text here, since the reading במתיה may have arisen because of the mention of the King-Idol מִלְכֹּם in the previous verse. But Ammon is castigated here not for her idolatrous practices but because she dispossessed Israel, and trusted in her treasures (v.4). Therefore 'villages' is perhaps more appropriate than 'hilltop shrines'.

In most cases, differences between the LXX and MT can be accounted for without resorting to the hypothesis that a different reading underlies the Greek translation. Generally, such differences can be explained as having arisen through errors of a translator or copyist. Sometimes, however, it seems that deliberate alteration of the meaning of the Hebrew text has taken place.

At 46(26):25 it would seem that haplography has produced the LXX text.

הִנְנִי פֹקֵד אֶל-אָמוֹן מִנֹּא
וְעַל-פַּרְעֹה (וְעַל-מִצְרַיִם וְעַל-אֱלֹהֶיהָ
וְעַל-מְלָכֶיהָ וְעַל-פַּרְעֹה) וְעַל-הַבֹּטְחִים בּוֹ :

The Greek text lacks the section in parenthesis

ἐγὼ ἐκδικῶ τὸν Αμων τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς ἐπὶ Φαραω
καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς πεποιθότας ἐπ' αὐτῷ.

/...

The eye of the translator has evidently jumped from the first ועל פרעה to the second, and so he has failed to render the whole of the intervening section. Such a verse as this, with its repeated use of ועל is a likely subject for both haplography and dittography, and, while the LXX text is defective through the former, the latter seems to have been responsible for the unnecessary repetition of ועל פרעה in MT.

Similar examples of haplography occur at 50(27):35, 36 (due to the repetition of חֶרֶב), and at 51(28):21,22 (because of the repeated וּנְפַצְתִּי בְךָ). It is quite possible that a rather large omission towards the end of chapter 51(28) is due to haplography. The LXX appears to make the large jump from v.44 to v.49:

44 ends גַּם־חוֹמַת בָּבֶל נָפְלָה ...

49b reads גַּם־לְבָבֶל נָפְלוּ חַלְלֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ ...

LXX reads καὶ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι πεσοῦνται τραυματίαι πάσης τῆς γῆς.

The translator's eye may have jumped from the גם of v.44 to the גם of v.49, and the fact that the noun בבל and the verb נפל occur in both phrases may have facilitated this error. The resulting omission is quite large, and it is worth noting that if Thackeray's thesis of two translators is correct,[41] such an error as this could be explained as the result of the carelessness of the first translator, who was perhaps tiring or becoming impatient, as he approached the end of his alloted portion of the book. (Thackeray believes that it was around this point, chapter 28 in the LXX, that the second translator took over from the first, chapter 28 being a little over half way through the book). Of

/...

course, it may well be that errors such as the above are not all to be laid at the door of the translator. At least some of them may have existed as the results of scribal errors in his Vorlage. Indeed, it could be maintained that errors of the eye are more likely to be committed by copyists than by translators, since the nature of their task would render the latter more alert than the former. It is generally acknowledged that the Vorlage of the LXX has suffered from haplography to a much greater extent than the MT, and this is curious, since logically we would expect that careless or sleepy scribes would perpetuate the same sort of errors in both texts. One possible solution to this mystery has been put forward by textual critics such as F.M.Cross and W.F.Albright, who maintain a theory of local text types, of varying characteristics, which existed before the promulgation of the Massoretic text type as the official text. The Vorlage of the LXX belongs to a conservative Hebrew textual family, while the Proto-Massoretic text bears all the marks of a text which is expansionist in tendency. Both text types are represented in manuscripts of Jeremiah found in Qumran, although the 'conservative' type is thought to be of Egyptian rather than Palestinian origin. The Vorlage of the LXX does not, however, reflect this Egyptian text type in every biblical book, and in order to account for this, F.M.Cross identifies not two but three text types or textual 'families' among the manuscripts of the Pentateuch and former Prophets found at Qumran. It is, however, one thing to identify varying text types, but quite another to explain how they arose. A convincing account of this has yet to be put forward.[42]

/...

Some divergences between the LXX and MT have been caused by scribal confusion between certain pairs of consonants which, especially in a badly written manuscript would be almost indistinguishable from one another. Such confusion would be all the more likely, for example in the case of נ and מ , if the script in which the *Vorlage* of the LXX was written represented a transitional stage between the old Hebrew and the square Aramaic script.[43]

Confusion between ד and ר has occured in the following cases:

47(29):5 נִרְמְתָה אַשְׁקְלוֹן

LXX ἀπερρίφη Ἀσκαλὼν

The Greek translation presupposes the root רמה (MT. דמה)

47(29):6 וָדִמִּי

LXX καὶ ἐπάρθητι (וָרִמִּי)

49:22(29:23) הִנֵּה כַּנָּשֶׁר יַעֲלֶה וְיִדְאֶה

LXX ἰδοὺ ὥσπερ ἀετὸς ὄψεται

In this instance, יראה seems to have been read for MT ידאה

48(31):30 עֲבֹדָתוֹ

LXX ἔργα αὐτοῦ

The Greek is reading עֲבֹרָתוֹ . The Targum and the Peshitta read this also. Probably MT is inferior here.

51(28):14 וְעָבוּ עָלַיִךְ הֵידָד

LXX καὶ φθέγξονται ἐπὶ σὲ οἱ καταβαίνοντες.

הֵידָד has been read.

/...

מ and ב have been confused in the examples below :-

46(26):10 בְּאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן

LXX ἀπὸ γῆς βορρᾶ (מארץ)

46(26):25 אָמוֹן מִנֹּא

LXX τὸν Αμμων τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς

The Greek presupposes בְּנָהּ

ו and ג have caused confusion at 48(31):27:

בּוֹ תִתְגּוֹדָד

LXX ἐπολέμεις αὐτόν

Two instances of the transposition of consonants occur at 49:9(29:10) and 48(31):15:

49:9(29:10) הִשְׁחִיתוּ יָדָם

LXX ἐπιθήσουσι χεῖρα αὐτῶν (יָדָם)

48(31)15 שֹׁדַד מוֹאָב וְעָרָיו

LXX ὤλετο Μωαβ πόλις αὐτοῦ (עִירָהּ)

In certain passages, the LXX translator has interpreted his unpointed, undivided Hebrew text in a manner different from that of the Massoretes:

50(27):27 חִרְבוּ כָּל-פָּרִיהָ יִרְדוּ לַטִּבְחָה

LXX ἀναξηράνατε πάντας τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτῆς καὶ καταβήτωσαν εἰς σφαγήν.

The translator has read פִּרְיָהּ 'her fruit', whereas MT reads פָּרִיהָ 'her bulls'. He has also understood the root חרב to mean 'be dried up' and not 'slay'. In view of the idea expressed in the verse that the פריה go down 'to the slaughter', it would appear that the LXX translator is wrong to read 'dry up all her fruit', since it is rather inappropriate to use the term

/...

'slaughter' in connection with fruit. Despite the fact that mention of 'fruit' here might recall the mention of 'storehouses' and 'heaps' (of grain?) in verse 26 of MT, we conclude that the pointing of MT is superior in verse 27. 'Her bulls' are, figuratively speaking 'her warriors', or, as we might say, 'her young bucks'. NEB translates 'Put all her warriors to the sword'. Rashi points out that the prophets are wont to speak figuratively of leading men as 'bulls', 'stallions' or 'he-goats'. The word פר has this sense also in, for example, Ezra 39:18, Ps.22:13, Is. 34:7.

50(27):7 נָוֶה צֶדֶק וּמִקְוֵה אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם

LXX νομὴ δικαιοσύνης τῷ συναγαγόντι τοὺς πατέρας αὐτῶν

The LXX has read מִקְנֵה as a participle derived from the root קוה 'to collect', 'gather'. MT assumes that the noun מִקְוֵה 'hope' from קוה 'to hope', 'expect' is to be read. The Greek νομὴ indicates נָוָה 'pasture' rather than MT נָוֶה 'abode' 'habitation'. The upshot of this is that MT is saying that the enemies of Israel feel no guilt at their treatment of her, because her people in their turn are guilty of sinning against the Lord, the 'true abode' and the 'hope of their fathers'. In the LXX the נוה צדק refers not to Yahweh but to Israel, whose people have sinned against the Lord, even though she was to Him who 'gathered their fathers' 'a pasture of righteousness' or 'true pasture'.

50(27):21 עַל־הָאָרֶץ מְרָתַיִם עֲלֵה עָלֶיהָ וְאֶל־יוֹשְׁבֵי פְקוֹד
חֶרֶב וְהַחֲרֵם אַחֲרֵיהֶם

/...

There is a measure of confusion regarding the meaning of מרתים and פקוד . Are they meant to be proper names of districts in Babylon? The former is a Hapax Legomenon, but 'Pekod' occurs as a place name in Ezek.23:23. The modern translations AV, RV, RSV, NEB render both terms as place names, probably correctly.[44] The poet has been guided in his choice of these names by his desire for a word play : Merathaim suggests the root מרה with a dual ending, 'double rebellion', while Pekod suggests the root פקד which can bear the idea of visitation or vengeance.

The ancient Versions provide us with various renderings of this verse. The Targum understands Pekod as a place name, but Merathaim is taken as a reference to the character of Babylon, 'a land of rebellious people'. Vulgate translates Merathaim 'terram dominantium', while Pekod is rendered as a verb, 'visita'. The LXX reads

Πικρῶς ἐπίβηθι ἐπ'αὐτὴν καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπ'αὐτήν· ἐκδίκησον, μάχαιρα , καὶ ἀφάνισον .

The translator thinks that מרתים is related to the root מרר 'to be bitter'. The word πικρῶς means 'bitterly' or 'cruelly'. He does not render על הארץ at all, and so his translation runs 'Go up against it cruelly, and against those who dwell on it', rather than MT 'Go up against it, that is the land of Merathaim'.

פקוד is taken as an imperative , ἐκδίκησον 'avenge', and the following word is pointed חֶרֶב , not as an imperative, in order to produce the sense 'take vengeance, o sword'. Thus the differences between the LXX and MT are in this verse explained as differences of pointing and sense division.

/...

It is sometimes said that in places the LXX shows a tendency to tone down or even to eliminate some of the anthropomorphic expressions of MT. It is possible that we have evidence of such a tendency in 46(26):5, in which the words of Yahweh 'Why have I seen it? They are terrified' are rendered 'Why are they afraid' (τί ὅτι αὐτοὶ πτοοῦνται). In connection with this verse, Volz was of the opinion that

'Om. G. willkürlich, weil es ihm unbequem war'[45]

He thought that the LXX translator was not happy to reproduce רָאִיתִי with God as the subject. Janzen[46] questions this, and points out that, since instances of God 'seeing' are translated at 7:11; 13:27; 23:13,14, doubt is cast on the thesis of Volz. We may note, however, that in the examples cited by Janzen, MT reads 'I have seen it' whereas in this verse it reads 'Why have I seen it?' It could be that the note of uncertainty in the phrase has given rise to the slight alteration in the LXX. On the other hand, it is translated faithfully in the Targum, which indubitably displays anti-anthropomorphic tendencies elsewhere, and so this might make it unlikely that the LXX translator would have felt the need to alter the text here. It might simply be the case that we have to reckon with a different Vorlage for LXX, one which read מַרְוֵעַ הֵמָּה חַתִּים . The רָאִיתִי of MT could then be explained as a corruption of יִרְאוּ , which would have been a doublet of חתים . In any case it is not safe to speak of the avoidance of an anthropomorphism as the reason for the LXX translation here. Indeed, it would even appear from another verse that the LXX can be at times more 'anthropomorphic' than MT:

/...

51(28):14 נִשְׁבַּע יהוה צְבָאוֹת בְּנַפְשׁוֹ

LXX ὤμοσε κύριος κατὰ τοῦ βραχίονος αὐτοῦ

The substitution of 'arm' for 'self' is certainly not evidence for the avoidance of anthropomorphism.[47] The translation is a puzzling one, but may have arisen through the influence of Isaiah 62:8

נִשְׁבַּע יהוה בִּימִינוֹ וּבִזְרוֹעַ עֻזּוֹ

Another verse which deserves mention here is 51(28):5.

MT כִּי אַרְצָם מָלְאָה אָשָׁם מִקְּדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל ..

LXX ὅτι ἡ γῆ αὐτῶν ἐπλήσθη ἀδικίας ἀπὸ τῶν αγίων Ισραηλ

According to MT, the land of Babylon is full of guilt which is allotted to them by the Holy One of Israel (The מִן is very difficult: it probably indicates that the Holy One is somehow the source or author, or even cause of their guilt). The LXX reads 'their land is full of guilt because of the Holy People Israel'. The reference to God contained in MT becomes in the LXX a reference to Israel. The translator has probably done this so as to make it clear that Babylon was guilty specifically by reason of her conduct towards the Holy Nation Israel.

All translation involves a certain measure of interpretation on the part of the translator, and it is very doubtful that even an Aquila could exercise his function as translator without bringing certain presuppositions to bear upon his work. Listed below in the final section of this chapter are a number of passages which may be of interest, insofar as they show the translator carrying out his rôle as interpreter in a conscious and specific manner.

/...

50(27):5 בֹּאוּ וְנִלְווּ אֶל־יהוה בְּרִית עוֹלָם לֹא תִשָּׁכֵחַ

LXX καὶ ἥξουσι καὶ καταφεύξονται πρὸς κύριον τὸν θεόν διαθήκη γὰρ αἰώνιος οὐκ ἐπιλησθήσεται

MT is not absolutely clear, in that the phrase ברית עולם לא תשכח stands in apposition to the first part of the verse. The meaning is usually (AV RV RSV NEB) taken to be 'They shall come and join themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant which shall not be forgotten'. (AV, RV, RSV read the imperative ('Come'). The LXX translator has understood the last part of the verse in a slightly different way. The people of Israel do not join themselves to the Lord <u>in</u> an eternal covenant which will not be forgotten, thus implying that the previous covenant <u>had</u> been forgotten; they take refuge (καταφεύξονται) in the Lord <u>because</u> (γὰρ) the eternal covenant will not be forgotten. The translator seems to envisage only one covenant which endures forever.

49(30):2 וְיָרַשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יוֹרְשָׁיו

LXX καὶ παραλήμψεται Ἰσραηλ τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτοῦ

RSV allots the meaning 'dispossess' to the root יָרַשׁ in this verse

> '... then Israel shall dispossess those who dispossessed him'.[48]

More frequently, however, the root means 'take possession of', 'inherit', and it seems that this is the understanding of the LXX here:

> 'then Israel shall receive her inheritance' (or 'dominion')

It is unnecessary to assume, as BHS does, that a reading יִרְשָׁתוֹ lies behind this translation; having understood the verb as

/...

'possess' and reasoning that it makes more sense to possess or inherit a thing rather than a person, the translator uses ἀρχὴ 'dominion' as a free rendering of ירש . It is to be noted that the Targum provides a similar translation here. In the Targum, the house of Israel is to take possession of the 'property of the peoples' (נכסי עממיא ירתון בית ישראל). The person is altered into a thing, to accord with the meaning 'possess'. The same happens in the previous verse 49(30):1:

מדוע ירש מלכם את־גד

LXX διὰ τί παρέλαβε Μελχολ τὴν Γαλααδ

It is unlikely that the Vorlage of the LXX contained גלעד instead of גד . Rather, the translator has again altered the person, or rather tribe, Gad, into the place Gilead, Gilead being that stretch of territory east of the Jordan which was especially associated with the tribes of Reuben and Gad. (see Num.32:29; Dt.3:12; 1 Ch.5:9 etc.). The Targum has also substituted a place here, since with LXX it takes the verb to mean 'possess'. It reads 'the land of Gad'. It is of interest that in verse 1, NEB also requires a place as the object of the verb 'possess'. It adopts the same expedient as the Targum:

'Why has Milcom inherited the land of Gad?'

(Contrast RSV 'Why then has Milcom dispossessed Gad').

46(26):15 מדוע נסחף אביריך לא עמד כי יהוה הדפו

These words stand in the oracle against Egypt, and they seem to be addressed to Egypt herself. The root סחף means 'sweep away' 'prostrate'; it occurs only once elsewhere, of a 'prostrating rain' (מטר סחף) which beats down the grain (Prov.28:3).

/...

Thus the MT literally means

> 'Why have your mighty ones been prostrated?
> They did not stand fast, because Yahweh thrust them out'.

This is assuming that אבירך 'your strong ones' (literally 'your bulls') is a plural word, and that the singular verbs of MT should be tolerated or altered accordingly. Those designated would be the warriors or army leaders of Egypt. Such is the understanding of the Targum, and also of Rashi, who elucidates אבירך using the word גבורך . Kimchi attempts to reconcile this interpretation with the fact that the verbs are singular; נסחף is singular, he explains, to indicate that each of the strong ones is prostrated individually. The verb treats them as individuals, not as a group. Among modern Versions, RV translates as 'strong ones'.

The problem of the verbs is solved, however, if אבירך is understood as a plural of majesty. Vulgate 'fortis tuus' reflects this interpretation, although it gives no clue as to the identity of the strong one. Among modern commentators, Rudolph[49] adopts this view. If such is the case, we must assume that the reference is to Pharaoh (thus Rudolph) or to a god. The LXX translates as follows :-

> διὰ τί ἔφυγεν ὁ Ἄπις; ὁ μόσχος ὁ ἐκλεκτός σου
> οὐκ ἔμεινεν, ὅτι κύριος παρέλυσεν αὐτόν.

This translation is adopted by Giesebrecht and Cornill among older scholars, and by RSV and NEB among modern Versions, which read:

> 'Why has Apis fled? Why did not your bull stand?
> Because the Lord thrust him down'.

/...

In the first place, the translator of the LXX was probably unfamiliar with the rare word נסחף . Secondly, he has taken אבירין as a plural of majesty. Since the word אביר can mean 'bull', he has concluded that we have here a reference to a bull-god, more specifically to Apis, the black bull-god of Memphis. With this in mind, he has divided the Hebrew text מדוע נס חף , that is 'Why has Apis fled'.[50]

The way in which the LXX has divided the text leaves us with a well balanced three part verse, and it is certainly correct to read אבירין as a plural of majesty. It seems to me, however, that RSV and NEB are not entirely justified in following the LXX. No mention of a god is made elsewhere in the oracle, and אבירין is more likely to refer to Pharaoh, the 'Big Noise' who is mentioned in v.17. The vengeance of Yahweh is to sweep Egypt away not because of idolatry, but because of the pride and arrogance of the nation, summed up in the person of Pharaoh, the god-king. He is the שׁאון (v.17), the strong one who is to be laid low. The contest is not between Yahweh and Apis, but between Yahweh and the שאון who styles himself as a god, and is deemed such in the eyes of his people. Yahweh has thrust him down (הדפו) - we might translate this as 'Yahweh has deposed him'. The same verb is used in Is.22:17, where Yahweh berates Shebna, who comports himself like a king, even although he is only Hezekiah's steward. (Here too, Shebna is mockingly addressed as 'strong man' although the word used in this case is not אביר but גבר).

48(31):27 וְאִם לוֹא הַשְׂחֹלֶן הָיָה לְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־בַּגַּנָּבִים נִמְצָאָה
כִּי־מִדֵּי דַבֶּרְךָ בּוֹ תִּתְנוֹדָד׃

/...

καὶ εἰ μὴ εἰς γελοιασμὸν ἦν σοι Ισραηλ ;
εἰ ἐν κλοπαῖς σου εὑρέθη , ὅτι ἐπολέμεις αὐτόν.

MT asks the question 'Was he found among thieves, that whenever you spoke about him you wagged your head?' The question, of course, expects the answer 'no'; Israel was not found among thieves, and did not deserve to be held in derision by the Moabites. The LXX translator, however, failing to detect the note of irony, does not like the question, and thinks that it could be taken to imply an element of doubt as to whether Israel was indeed 'found among thieves'. He therefore alters 'among thieves' to 'among thy thefts'.[51]

With reference to the Hebrew text, Kimchi explains that it is customary to mock and jeer at a thief, and quotes Job 30:5, which reads 'they shout after them as after a thief'.

50(27):8 וְהָיוּ כְּעַתּוּדִים לִפְנֵי צֹאן

Israel (or perhaps Babylon, if the advice is meant ironically) is told to go out and 'be like he-goats before the flock'. It is probable that the figure is meant to suggest energy and fearlessness.

LXX καὶ γένεσθε ὥσπερ δράκοντες κατὰ πρόσωπον προβάτων.

If δράκοντες is the correct reading, it causes some difficulty of interpretation. What is the significance of 'dragons' or 'serpents' before the flock? It seems to me that the variant reading ἄρχοντες 'rulers' 'leaders' has more claim to be the original. We could then say that the LXX interprets the figure in the same way as the Targum which reads רברבין for עתודים . It may be asked, of course, why,

/...

if the translator decided to explain 'he-goats' as 'leaders', he did not go on to eliminate the figurative 'flock' - perhaps to substitute 'people', as the Targum does? This is not a fatal objection, however; ἄρχοντες is a superior reading to δράκοντες. For why should the translator not have used the noun ἔριφος to translate עתוד, as he does in 51(28):40, rather than employ the obscure δράκοντες? The suggestion of Ziegler, who defends δράκοντες, is that the translator read, and simply translated without attempting an interpretation, a text which contained תַּנִּים or even תַּנִּנִים in place of עתודים,[52] but this lacks plausibility.

48(31):26 הַשְׁכִּירֻהוּ כִּי עַל־יהוה הִגְדִּיל
וְסָפַק מוֹאָב בְּקִיאוֹ וְהָיָה לְשְׂחוֹק גַּם־הוּא׃

μεθύσατε αὐτόν ὅτι ἐπὶ κύριον ἐμεγαλύνθη·
καὶ ἐπικρούσει Μωαβ ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσται
εἰς γέλωτα καὶ αὐτός.

For his arrogance, Moab is to be 'made drunk', so that he might make a sorry spectacle of himself, and become an object of mockery, just as he in turn had made a laughing stock out of Israel. We are concerned with the phrase וספק מואב בקיאו. The root ספק means 'slap' or 'clap'. It can be used of the clapping of hands in mockery or anger, for example, Num.24:10, Job 27:23, or it can be used of chastisement, as in Job 34:26. BDB[53] suggests that it may mean 'splash' here in 48(31):26; that is, 'Moab will fall with a splash into his vomit'.

The LXX seems to have had some difficulty here. It runs 'And Moab shall clap his hands'. ἐπικρούω means 'to hammer'

/...

'to clap'. בקיאו has been rendered as if it were בידו . It may be that the LXX translator, acquainted as he was with the meaning of כפק 'clap', has found some difficulty in reconciling this meaning with the following 'in his vomit'. He has made sense of it by omitting to translate בקיאו , or at least, translating it as it were ידו , since he felt that 'with his hands' suggested itself as a natural complement to 'clap'. It may equally be the case that the translator was disinclined to render בקיאו , not because it accorded ill with the meaning of the verb, but rather because he regarded it as a coarse expression unworthy of the prophet. It is, of course, impossible to prove that the translator is taking a liberty in altering the meaning of the text,[54] but this explanation is much more plausible than that of Streane, for example, who maintained that the translator did not know the meaning of בקיאו , and simply decided to render it using a word of vaguely similar sound, (χειρὶ) which was appropriate to the context.[55] Whatever the reason for the non-appearance of בקיאו , the resultant translation is somewhat strained:

> 'And Moab shall clap his hands (literally, with his hand), and will himself be a laughing stock'.

The hand clapping would have to be understood as an expression of anger or frustration here.

51(28):1,2

הִנְנִי מֵעִיר עַל־בָּבֶל וְעַל־יוֹשְׁבֵי לֵב קָמָי
רוּחַ מַשְׁחִית :
וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי לְבָבֶל זָרִים וְזֵרִיהָ

What is the meaning of רוח משחית , which Yahweh is to stir up against Babylon? It could either be 'a destroying wind'

/...

or 'the spirit of a destroyer'. Rashi understands it in the latter sense, and comments that the 'destroyer' in question is the king of the Medes and Persians. RSV translates it as 'the spirit of a destroyer'. On the other hand, Vulgate 'ventum pestilentem' and also RV, AV, NEB 'destroying wind' reflect the former interpretation.

It seems likely that this question can be settled on the basis of the following verse, which begins 'And I will send to Babylon winnowers, who will winnow her...'. In view of this figurative reference to winnowing, the רוח משחית of v.1 should be understood as 'a destroying wind' 'a wind of destruction'. The arrival of a wind which is of the correct speed for winnowing would normally be an occasion for good spirits, since this is a helpful wind. But the wind of 51:1 is a wind of destruction, since it heralds the approach of those who are to 'winnow' Babylon. Thus 51:1 should be translated 'Lo, I am causing a wind of destruction to spring up against Babylon ...'. LXX ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξεγείρω ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνα καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας χαλδαίους ἄνεμον καύσωνα διαφθείροντα. It is apparent that the LXX understands רוח משחית correctly, and translates it as 'a destroying wind' (ἄνεμον διαφθείροντα). But it is not immediately evident why καύσωνα stands in the translation. Why is this רוח described as a 'hot' wind?

Perhaps we may be enlightened to some extent by looking at an earlier verse in Jeremiah, verse 11 of chapter 4. Here, the destruction which is coming upon the people of Judah is described

/...

figuratively as

רוּחַ צַח שְׁפָיִם בַּמִּדְבָּר דֶּרֶךְ בַּת־עַמִּי
לֹא לְזָרוֹת וְלֹא לְהָבֵר׃
רוּחַ מָלֵא מֵאֵלֶּה יָבוֹא לִי . . . .

'A hot (glowing) wind from the bare heights in the desert is coming towards the daughter of my people - not a winnowing or a cleansing wind. A wind much stronger than these comes at my bidding ....'

Here, as in 51:1, the wind that Jahweh stirs up is not a constructive wind, but a harbinger of destruction. Mention of winnowing is made in both verses, although its significance ia different in each case. Thus in 4:11 we are expressly told that this is not a winnowing wind, the implication being that such a wind is helpful and welcome. In 51:1, however, the wind is right for winnowing - but what sinister and terrible winnowers it brings!

At 4:11, the LXX does not render the notion of heat in רוח צח , translating it instead as πνεῦμα πλανήσεως 'a fickle wind' or 'a blustery wind'. It would seem to be the case, however, that the presence of καύσωνα in 51:1 can best be accounted for by assuming that the translator connected this 'wind of destruction' with the 'glowing wind' of 4:11. Symmachus also connects the two, since he has ἄνεμον καύσωνα at 51:1 and πνεῦμα καύσωνος at 4:11. If he is not simply following the LXX at 51:1, then the presence of καύσωνα in his translation of that verse means that he too had the hot, glowing wind (πνεῦμα καύσωνος) of 4:11 in mind.

51(28):13 Babylon who'dwells by many waters, rich in treasures' is told

אַתְּ יֹשֶׁבֶת עַל־מַיִם רַבִּים

/...

What do the last two words mean? בֶּצַע is a noun meaning 'profit' or 'gain', and אַמָּה means 'cubit' or more generally 'measure' 'limit'. Thus AV and RV translate here 'Thine end has come, the measure of thy covetousness'. The Vulgate translation 'Venit finis tuis, pedalis praecisionis tuae' that is 'Your end has come, the span of your cutting off' (or 'ending') suggests that the sense 'cut off' 'complete' contained in the root בצע , and not the idea of gain, is being understood here. Rashi has the same idea, and glosses אמת בצעך with מדת סופך 'the measure of your end'. LXX reads:

ἧκει τὸ πέρας σου ἀληθῶς εἰς τὰ σπλάγχνα σου.

'Your end has indeed come into your vitals'.

It is suggested in BHS that the translator read not בצעך but בְּמֵעֶיךָ 'into your bowels'. Whether or not this is the case, it is obvious that he has pointed the penultimate word אֲמָה , translating it ἀληθῶς . It is interesting that NEB has followed the LXX in this, translating 'your end has come, your destiny is certain'.

The translation adopted by AV and RV 'the measure of thy covetnusness' does not make very good sense, since it is difficult to know what 'measure' means. The same applies to the Vulgate, although this Version is correct in assuming that בצעך does not mean 'gain' here, but is parallel in meaning to קצך . In view of the difficulty attaching to אמה 'measure', it is probably correct to point the word as the LXX translator has done, and to translate along the same lines as NEB 'your destiny is certain' or perhaps 'your fate is sealed'.

The verb בצע is used in the sense 'sever from life' several

/...

times in the book of Job. In Job 6:9, Job wishes for death, and longs for God to crush him, and 'cut him off' (וְיַבְצְעֵנִי). Again, in 27:8, the question is asked 'What is the hope of the godless man, when he is cut off, when God takes away his life?' This is the sense of בצעך in our verse, that is 'your cutting off from life', interpreted by NEB as 'your destiny'. RSV has translated אמת בצעך as 'the thread of your life is cut'. This interpretation reflects an idea similar to that of classical mythology, which sees the span of a man's life as equal to the length of the thread which the Fates spin. When the thread has reached its appointed length, and is cut off, the man dies. Babylon's thread of life has reached its full length (אַמָּה) and is about to be cut off.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TARGUM OF CHAPTERS 46-51.

The Hebrew text of chapters 46-51 is, for the most part, in metre, and its language recognizably the language of poetry. It is, therefore, immediately striking that the Targum is a prose translation - measured, dispassionate, preserving little trace of the often lively, sometimes impressive poetic expression which characterises the original. It seems that the primary aim of the translation was not to preserve the feel and flavour of the Hebrew, but rather to ensure that its basic meaning went home to hearer or reader without any possibility of confusion or misunderstanding. Whether the translator himself had any feel for a resonant phrase or a richly textured metaphor, we cannot tell, for his task required him to render plainly and unequivocally the message which lay partially concealed by the poetic garb of the Hebrew. It is in the nature of the prophetic oracle to be less than explicit, to preserve a certain opaqueness, although this feature is not particularly strongly marked in our chapters. Where such opaqueness does exist, however, no trace of it is allowed to remain in the Targum. A typical example of this occurs at 48:40, in which we read

הִנֵּה כַּנֶּשֶׁר יִדְאֶה וּפָרַשׂ כְּנָפָיו אֶל מוֹאָב

The conquering king is alluded to under the figure of an eagle - an obvious association which the reader readily makes. In the Targum, however, further elucidation is provided:

הא כנשרא דמשתדי כן יסלק מלך במשריתיה דישרי על מואב

Again, at 50:32, where MT reads

וְכִסֵּאךָ זָרוֹן וְגָפַל וְאֵין לוֹ מֵקִים

/...

the Targum feels it necessary to identify the proud one as the 'wicked king'

וּיתקיף מלכא רשיעא ויפוק ליה מלקים

The constant sacrifice of poetic metaphor in order to gain clarity of expression invests the Targum with a blandness, a prosaic character which often verges upon the pedantic. This character evolved out of the function exercised by the Targum in the synagogue, where it fulfilled the need for an Aramaic vernacular translation of the Hebrew Scriptures which aimed to edify the masses who no longer understood the sacred tongue. A written Targum could with justification be called 'an edition for the use of the laity.'[1] Sperber puts it thus:

> 'The scholars ..... had no need for an interpretative Targum to be able to follow the reading of the Law. Hence the Targum as an institution was mainly a yielding to the needs of the less educated classes. And these apparently had little appreciation for the artistic Biblical style, but must have preferred clarity of expression'.[2]

The Targum shows forth its origins in the worship of the synagogue in that it seeks not simply to translate, but to instruct, to edify. For the role of the Meturgeman[3] was not primarily to provide a literal accurate rendering of the verse or verses of Scripture which had just been read,[4] but rather to translate in such a way that its essential relevance as a Word addressed to his own present situation, and that of his hearers, was clearly brought out. The Targum endeavours to be both translation and commentary. While remaining close to the Hebrew in that it gives a verse by verse translation, it is yet 'prepared to introduce into the translation as much interpretation as seemed necessary to clarify the sense'.[5] We may go further

/...

than this, and say that in some cases it is prepared to alter the sense, although this does not often happen. The sentiments expressed in the foreign nation oracles would have been for the most part quite congenial! On the exegetical principles underlying the Targum, P.Churgin has this to say:

> 'The general underlying principle in the exegesis of Targum Jonathan consists in an attempt to render intelligible to the fullest possible degree that which is obscure. To accomplish this, the Targum does not resort to the undersense. It is the sense, the explicit and simple, which is fundamental in the exegesis. The object of the Targumist was to translate the poetical mind of the prophet into the lay mind behind it'.[6]

We shall look briefly at the ways in which the Targum goes about achieving this in Jeremiah 46-51.

When the Targumist has to deal with singular nouns which are meant to be understood as collectives, he tends to render them using the plural, although it seems hardly likely that the Hebrew could give rise to misunderstanding. It is as if he is making an effort to banish any vestige of poetic expression from his translation. For example, the words addressed to the יושֶׁבֶת עֲרוֹעֵר [7] in 48:19 are directed at יָתְבִין בְּעַרְעֹר in the Targum. Again, in 46:3 the command עִרְכוּ מָגֵן וְצִנָּה is rendered סַדְּרוּ עַגִּיפִין וְתַרְיֵסִין . This is the usual Targumic practice, although there are exceptions, such as 51:20-23. In the latter verses, there are seven pairs of singular nouns used as collectives, four of which appear in the singular in the Targum. There is a marked tendency for the Targum to substitute the name of the nation for the name of the country, when the latter is being used figuratively to refer to those who

/...

live in it. For example 46:9b reads:

וְיֵצְאוּ הַגְּבוּרִים כּוּשׁ וּפוּט

Targum renders

וְיִפְלוֹן גִּיבָּרַיָּא כּוּשָׁאֵי וּפוּטָאֵי

Examples are too numerous to list. In chapter 48, 'Moab' is continually rendered 'Moabites', and although in most cases (e.g. 48:11,18) this is perfectly justified, in others, the emphasis of the Hebrew text seems to lie upon the land itself, and on its destruction. Thus in 48:15 שֹׁדֵד מוֹאָב means just that - 'Moab' is not being used as a figure for its inhabitants. The Targumic מוֹאָבָאֵי is therefore incorrect. This might also be the case with 47:5a, 48:29,39.

In 46:8, 'Egypt' is not understood to refer to the Egyptians in general, but to the driving force behind the rise of the nation. The Targum thus renders it correctly 'Pharaoh, king of Egypt'.

In 46:27, the Hebrew addresses words of comfort to 'my servant Jacob', announcing that 'Jacob shall return'. On both occasions 'Jacob' stands for the people Israel. The Targum does not alter the address to 'my servant Jacob', treating this as an address to the ancestor of the nation. The second phrase 'Jacob shall return' is rendered וְתָתוּבוּן דַּבִּית יַעֲקֹב [8] for it is of course the nation, and not the ancestor, which will return. The second reference to 'Jacob' in the Hebrew text is thought to have a slightly different meaning from the first, and by rendering in different ways, the Targum introduces a nuance which is not present in the Hebrew text.

The Targum is characterized by numerous small additions introduced in order to eliminate any minor obscurity which may

/...

stand in the Hebrew.

For example, in 48:2, MT reads:

בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן חָשְׁבוּ עָלֶיהָ רָעָה לְכוּ וְנַכְרִיתֶנָּה מִגּוֹי

The style of the verse is somewhat compressed, but it is evident that the second half is meant to be an example of what the conspirators whisper as they plan evil against Moab. The Targum makes this crystal clear

בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן חָשִׁיבוּ עֲלָהּ בִּישָׁא לְמֵימַר אֵיתוּ וְנֵשֵׁיצִיהּ מִלְּמֶהֱוֵי עַם

Note also that the elliptical מִגּוֹי becomes מִלְּמֶהֱוֵי עַם .

49:4 furnishes us with a similar example. Here the 'wayward daughter' Ammon is described as

הַבּוֹטֵחַ בְּאוֹצְרוֹתֶיהָ מִי יָבוֹא אֵלָי

Targum

דְּמִתְרַחֲצָא בְּגִיזַת גִּנְזָהָא אֲמַרָא מָן יְיָ עָלַי

It is interesting that the LXX displays the same tendency here, adding ἡ λέγουσα for the sake of clarity.

In 51:34 the object is not obvious in Hebrew:

אֲכָלָנוּ הֲמָמָנוּ נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל

Verse 33 was spoken by Yahweh, who is obviously not the speaker in 34. The following verse (35) would suggest that the speaker in 34 is either Jerusalem or Zion. The Targumist decides that Jerusalem is the speaker:

אָמְרַת יְרוּשְׁלֵם בַּר נִכְסִי וְשֵׁיצִנִי נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מַלְכָּא דְּבָבֶל

In the Hebrew text, 51:15 begins a section (vss.15-19) which is unconnected with what precedes and follows it.[9] It consists of a poem praising Yahweh's creative power, couched in the language of Wisdom, followed by a polemic against idols in the style of Deutero-Isaiah. It begins:

/...

עֹשֵׂה אֶרֶץ בְּכֹחוֹ מֵכִין תֵּבֵל בְּחָכְמָתוֹ

The Targumist has resolved to eliminate the slight awkwardness which is caused by the fact that this poem had originally no connection with the preceding. He binds vss. 15ff. to v.14 by adding the words אמר אלין ר :

אמר אלין דעבר ארעא בחילה עבד תבל בחכמתיה

'The one who said these things (i.e. the things which have gone before), he is the one who made the earth by his power'.

We find another type of explanatory addition in 47:3, where we are told that the despair of the Philistines is so great that

לֹא־הִפְנוּ אָבוֹת אֶל־בָּנִים

The Targum makes it clear how this action, or lack of it, indicates such an extremity of despair:

לא מתפנן אבהן לרחמא על בנין

So far from turning to help their sons, the dismay of the Philistines is so great that they do not even turn to pity them. In 48:35, the style of the Hebrew is compressed and economical:[10]

וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי לְמוֹאָב נְאֻם־יהוה מַעֲלֶה בָמָה וּמַקְטִיר לֵאלֹהָיו

The Targum expands this, making clear that the text has in mind the offering of burnt offerings and incense offerings:

ואבטיל מן מואב אמר יי מקריב קורבן על במתא
ומסיק בוסמין לטעותיה

In 51:51 Israel is ashamed and confused because

בָּאוּ זָרִים עַל מִקְדְּשֵׁי בֵּית יהוה

The Targum considers that this needs further clarification. Why should the coming of strangers into the sanctuaries occasion such shame? Because they have made it unclean:

/...

עלו נכראין ופאיבו ית בית מקדשא דידי

46:3,21,24,26; 48:19; 49:12; 50: 26,31 all furnish us with further examples of clarificatory additions introduced into the Targum. None of these are of any particular significance in themselves, but together they help to lend the Targum its peculiar flavour.

We now consider the treatment of proper names of places. Where possible and necessary, the Targumist tends to render place names using the name most familiar to his readers. This endeavour to modernize place names is also shared by LXX,[11] e.g.

	Hebrew	Targum	LXX
46:14,19	נף	מפיס	μεμφις
47:4	כפתור	קפוטקיא	καππαδοκιας
46:25	נא	אלכסנדריא	—

Otherwise the Targum transliterates, as does LXX.

In some cases there is uncertainty as to whether or not the Hebrew text is referring to a place by its proper name. In these circumstances, the Targum tends to translate the term in question, whereas LXX transliterates:

		Targum	LXX
48:1	הַמִּשְׂגָּב	בית רחצהון	Αμασαγαβ

Since Nebo and Kiriathaim are mentioned in the first half of 48:1, we would expect המשגב to represent another proper name, despite the definite article. However, nowhere else do we come across the place 'Misgab' - the word means 'refuge' 'secure height'. It is a masculine word however, and it is strange that the verbs in MT are feminine. The text is somewhat uncertain.

/...

The Targum, unlike LXX, Rashi, Kimchi, and many modern versions and commentators, treats המשגב simply as a common noun, rendering 'the house of their reliance'.

		Targum	LXX
48:24	קריות	כרכא[12]	κεριωθ

Kerioth in Moab is mentioned on the stele of Mesha as a sanctuary of Chemosh.[13] The Targum renders it as 'city' (although strictly the plural כרכין, noted in the apparatus of Sperber's text, represents a closer translation).

		Targum	LXX
49:7/20	תימן	אדומא	θαιμαν

The Targum here, as always elsewhere, translates תימן as if it were the noun meaning 'south'. In fact, it denotes a district of Edom here.

		Targum	LXX
48:31/36	קיר חרש	כרך תוקפהון	κιρ Αδας (reading חדש ?)

This probably denotes a Moabite city identical with the modern Kerak, eight miles east of the Dead Sea.[14] The noun קיר can mean 'wall' or 'city', and חרש indicates something made of earthenware. The Targum 'the city of their might' attempts a translation, although Vulgate 'muri fictilis' is perhaps more accurate. The name קיר חרש(ת) occurs again at 2 Kgs.3:25, Isaiah 16:7 and Isaiah 16:11. In both Isaiah passages, the Targum renders as in Jeremiah, and in 2 Kgs. also attempts to translate rather than transliterate.

		Targum	LXX
48:34	עֶגְלַת שְׁלִשִׁיָּה	אגלת תלתהום	Αγελα Σαλασια[15]

/...

It is very difficult to determine whether or not this is the name of a place. The words mean 'a three year old heifer', and is thus translated by Vulgate, Kimchi and AV; RV RSV NEB treat the phrase as a proper name. Commentators are uncertain, and J.Simons comments[16] that

> 'Eglath .... specified as שלשיה is wholly untelligible. The word שלשיה rather suggests a distorted, inserted marginal gloss, not a place name'.

The Targum translates the phrase. The word רבתא is perhaps meant to explain תלתום 'three year old', indicating that at this age the animal is fully grown and mature. In similar fashion Kimchi interprets שלשיה using the word גדולה . The parallel passage, Isaiah 15:5, is treated in the same way.

We now move on to the treatment of poetic expressions. In chapters 46-51 we frequently encounter words and expressions which bear a poetical stamp, and which convey more the idea of the meaning than the meaning itself. In such cases the Targum always brings out the underlying meaning, and dispenses with the poetical garb of the Hebrew. Examples :-

46:10 ואכלה חרב becomes אוכלא חיליא. So also 46:14.

46:23 כִּרְתוּ יַעְרָהּ becomes גרגהא שגיו. The 'forest' indicates the great number of Egyptians - their ranks are dense and impenetrable. The Targumist has felt that 'forest' indicates rather the nobility and loftiness of the leaders of the Egyptian army.

47:5 קָרְחָה becomes פורענותא

Baldness is usually connected with mourning rites, and is generally found alongside other mourning customs such as the

/...

sprinkling of dust on the head, the wearing of sackcloth, self-mutilation etc. (see for example Is.15:2; Jer.16:6; Ez.7:18; 27:31; Amos 8:10; Micah 1:16). Thus in our verse the 'baldness' which has come upon Gaza indicates that a state of mourning prevails in that city. Baldness can also be connected with disgrace, as at Is.3:24. The Targum provides its own exegesis of the term, translating it 'retribution'. It seems therefore that whereas the Hebrew text highlights the result or effect of the destruction of Gaza, the Targum chooses to concentrate upon its cause - the retribution of Yahweh.

48:17 מַטֶּה־עֹז מַלְכָּךְ תִּפְאָרָה

The Targum understand this to refer to the ruler of Moab:

מלכך מגאיש שלטון מגיין

The symbols of royalty found in MT, the 'mighty sceptre; glorious staff', furnish us with an example of metonymy, a device frequently employed in the Hebrew text, whereby an attributive or other suggestive word is substituted for the name of the person or thing meant. Sceptre and staff mean king, and the Targum therefore reflects a correct understanding of the Hebrew. There is, however, nothing in the Hebrew at this point to suggest that the reference is to an evil, wicked king. This is the comment of the Targumist upon the character of the Moabite monarch. Symbols of nobility used similarly elsewhere include 'forehead' and 'crown' in 48:45, rendered by the Targumist as 'nobles' and 'honoured men'.

Commenting on the Targumic treatment of metaphor, P.Churgin remarks that:

/...

'The Targumist made it a principle to render not the metaphor, but what it represents, the event described and not the description. It is the purpose which is of chief import to him'.[17]

The following is a representative selection of examples which illustrate the way in which the Targumist handles the metaphorical language of MT :-

48:11 שַׁאֲנַן מוֹאָב מִנְּעוּרָיו וְשֹׁקֵט עַל שְׁמָרָיו
וְלֹא הוּרַק מִכְּלִי אֶל־כְּלִי וּבַגּוֹלָה לֹא הָלָךְ
עַל־כֵּן עָמַד טַעְמוֹ בוֹ וְרֵיחוֹ לֹא נָמָר :

Moab the peaceful, the confident, the precocious, Moab who has been 'at ease from his youth', who has had ample leisure to pamper and indulge himself, to increase his arrogant self-reliance - he is likened here to a wine which has been left to mature on its lees, in the cask, and which has there grown mellow and full-bodied. This is a wine fit for a connoisseur, unlike a wine which has been poured from 'vessel to vessel', and which, in consequence, loses its flavour and bouquet. Targum:-

שלין מואבאי מזעורהון ושלטין אינון על נכסיהון
ולא אתגלו מן אתר לאתר ובגלותא לא הלכו
על כין אוריכו שבילא נכסיהון כחמרא דנטיר על שמריה
ולא הויה לא פגם :

The reference to Moab resting 'on his lees' has been taken to mean that he has rested upon his material prosperity,[18] which is a reasonable exegesis, since it seems that the Hebrew metaphor includes the idea of the prosperity of Moab having grown out of the fact that he has been long undisturbed. He has not been poured 'from vessel to vessel', that is he has not yet shared in the fate which so many small kingdoms and states suffered

/...

under Assyria and Babylon - 'he has not been exiled from place to place'. The Targum retains the references to taste and smell, but for the sake of clarity has turned the metaphor into a simile, a practice which it also adopts elsewhere. Moab has had a long period of undisturbed tranquility 'like wine which is kept waiting on its lees, the fragrance of which has not grown faint'. This 'grown faint' (פג) translates the niphal from the root מור - ie נמר 'be changed'. Kimchi thinks that this נמר carries the idea of faintness or feebleness here,[19] and if so, Targum פג renders accurately. LXX finds the word שמריו to be a reference to the glory of Moab or its fame - τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ.[20]

50:16 כִּרְתוּ זוֹרֵעַ מִבָּבֶל וְתֹפֵשׂ מַגָּל בְּעֵת קָצִיר

Targum שֵׁיצוּ מִלְּכָא דִּבְבֶל וּאֲחִיד חַרְבָּא בְּעִידָן קְטוֹל

When the Targum interprets a metaphor, the interpretation is generally to be derived from the Hebrew text itself. The exegesis which lies behind the Targumic interpretation of metaphorical language is usually unobjectionable and straightforward. It is perhaps worth considering, however, that in 50:16 the Targum may have been over zealous in its endeavour to transpose the language of metaphor into that of the layman. 'Cut off the sower and him who handles the sickle in the time of harvest'. Ought this to be considered as a metaphor? The Targum has thought so, and its understanding of 'sower' and 'him who handles the sickle' has been determined by its assessment of the import of the words 'time of harvest'. In verses such as Is.17:5; Jer.9:22, 51:53; Joel 3:13, the imagery of the harvest is used to depict the

/...

imminent execution of divine judgement. Here in 50:16, the Targum understands it in the same light, and has interpreted the remaining elements of the verse accordingly. If the 'time of harvest' means 'the time of slaughter', then the 'sower' who is cut off is the 'king of Babylon', and the 'sickle' becomes the 'sword'. All this may not be correct, however, since the reference to harvest may have been intended to be taken literally. Seed time and harvest, symbols of the cycle of fertility in the land, and of the regular alternation of the seasons - such things represent the essence of prosperity and stability. These very things will be taken away from Babylon, leaving nothing familiar upon which she can rely. Sowing and reaping will cease, and 'sower' and 'he who handles the sickle' are meant to be taken literally. Nor does 'harvest' bear any ominous connotation; it is rather meant to signify something which brings joy, and security against famine.

51:42 : עָלָה עַל-בָּבֶל הַיָּם בַּהֲמוֹן גַּלָּיו נִכְסָתָה

Targum: מֵלְכוּת עַל בַּבֶל מִלְּקֳדָם דְּסָגִי כְּמַיָּא[21]
הַפְּכָה דְּגַלְוָתָהּ

There are several references to 'waters' and to the sea in these chapters. These allude to the inexorable forward surge of an awesome foe. Thus in 47:2, 'waters' rise out of the north. In 51:55 the 'waves' of the destroyers of Babylon roar 'like many waters'. The enemy, harbinger of total annihilation, is thought of as a chaotic, ungovernable force which sweeps away everything in its path, and in the face of which the victims can do nothing to save themselves. Its advance is thus likened to the advance of waters or of the sea, those restless insurgent

/...

elements which according to ancient Near Eastern mythology, had to be confined by Yahweh before creation could begin. It is almost as if the coming of the enemy implies that the God of Israel has momentarily loosed his hold on these elemental forces, so that they might wreak his vengeance upon the enemies of his people.[22]

Thus at 47:2 the Targum understands 'waters' as 'nations'. In 51:55 'their waves roar like many waters' becomes 'great forces of nations gather against him'. Here in 51:42 'the sea' is rendered 'a king and his forces'. Targum has retained the reference to the sea except that in 51:42, as elsewhere, the metaphor is made into a simile.

Aside from its general tendency to render intelligible that which is thought to be obscure, the Targum is marked by certain other characteristic features. The first of these is the oft discussed tendency to use circumlocutions when speaking about God, normally referred to as the 'avoidance of anthropomorphism'. This latter word is derived from Greek ἄνθρωπος and μόρφη, and is defined as 'the attribution to God of human physical or psychological characteristics'.[23] Examples abound in the Old Testament.

The Targums in general tend to avoid reproducing anthropomorphic expressions literally, and indeed Weingreen believes this tendency to be already manifesting itself in certain Rabbinic-type glosses which stand in the Massoretic text.[24] He concludes that

"..... one may say that the avoidance of what could be

/...

taken to be anthropomorphic expressions by means of indirect references to God did not suddenly emerge. It is a gradual process, traces of which are to be found in original Pentateuchal texts alongside direct references to God's relations with man. The development of the principle of the avoidance of anthropomorphisms is seen in glosses in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and in Rabbinic literature'.[25]

This principle of avoidance of anthropomorphisms' stands out clearly in the Targums, but it is not carried through with logical consistency.[26] If it were, such oft encountered expressions as 'God said' would become unacceptable. This inconsistency suggests that there is no thoroughly worked out philosophical reasoning or conception of the nature of Deity, behind the anti-anthropomorphic tendency. It springs perhaps from a desire to emphasize where necessary the Otherness of God, the fact that he is God and not man.[27] As Schechter puts it:

> 'Eager ... as the Rabbis were to establish this communion between God and the world, they were always on their guard not to permit Him to be lost in the world, or to be confused with man'.[28]

In cases where the Tetragrammaton forms part of a construct relationship, such as 'the word of the Lord', the Targum renders using the word לקדם or מן קדם.

48:10 מְלֶאכֶת יהוה Targum: גבורא מן קדם ידי

46:1, 47:1, 49:34 דבר יהוה Targum: פתגם גבורה מן קדם ידי

The same occurs when the relationship is expressed in Hebrew using ל :

46:10 וְהָיָה הַהוּא לאדני Targum: ויומא ההוא לקדם ידי

See also 51:6

In 47:6 the phrase חֶרֶב ליהוה is slightly expanded by the Targum which evidently regards it as an elliptical expression,

/...

and renders

אחרבא ושליחא מן קדם ידי

We have two examples of קדם used with the verb חוב :

50:7 חָטְאוּ ליהוה which becomes חבו קדם ידי

50:14 כִּי ליהוה חָטָאָה which becomes אלהי קדם ידי חבת

Note, however, that in 48:27 the Targum adds to the Hebrew text the phrase

כדי לא חטן לכון

The לכון refers to the Moabites, against whom Israel had not sinned. So it seems that when the one being sinned against is not God, Targum does not require קדם , and uses instead simple 3 .

48:30 illustrates very clearly the reverential motives behind the use of קדם ,

MT אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי נְאֻם יהוה עֶבְרָתוֹ

Targum קדמי גלי אמר ידי[29] דבדבי הון

The Targum, then, seems to object to the words 'I know' when spoken by God. It does not seem to object to the expression 'As I live', however, since at 46:18 it renders חי - אני as קיים אנא .[30] Again, however, when it comes to the expression 'By myself I have sworn' (49:13), Targum introduces a circumlocution: בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי becomes קימית גמירי .[31] So also at 51:14 with 'The Lord has sworn by himself'.[32] It is difficult to discern any logical pattern in the above examples, any reason why 'I know' should be altered and 'As I live' left alone.

As can be seen in two of the examples just given, the word 'Memra' is often employed in the Targum as a circumlocution. Very

/...

frequently the expression מימרא דיוי is substituted for the simple יהוה of MT. The term literally means 'word' and[33] is confined to the Targums, occuring nowhere else in Jewish literature. Kadushin is[34] at pains to point out that the use of this and other epithets for God in no way deliberately interposes any distance between God and his creatures. Their purpose is rather 'that of cultivating an awareness of his Otherness, ... that He is other than his creatures'. Here are four examples from our chapters of the Targumic use of the term 'Memra':

46:28 MT אָנֹכִי אִתְּךָ Targum מימרי לסעדך

The word סעדא means 'help' 'support' 'mainstay', and Targum uses this phrase בסעדך מימר to render אתך אני wherever it occurs.[35]

49:16 כִּי תַגְבִּיהַּ כַּנֶּשֶׁר קִנֶּךָ מִשָּׁם אוֹרִידֶךָ

Targum: אלי תרים כנשרא קנך מתמן במימרי אחתינך

God threatens to 'bring down' the Edomites, though they make their abode as high and inaccessible as the eagle's nest. Targum has taken away the notion of direct, almost physical intervention by God which this threat conveys, rendering 'from there by means of my Memra will I bring you down'. It is easy to see in such a context as this, that the Memra could well be mistaken for some kind of divine agent, some entity apart from God.[36] This danger proved very real, and it is ironic that those terms which were introduced to emphasize the Holiness + Otherness of God, themselves threatened to become Beings independent of him. Schechter writes

/...

'It would be a mistake to think that the Rabbis attached to appellatives for God, such as Shekinah or Word, the same meaning which they have received in the Hellenistic school ..... the terms which were accepted in order to weaken or nullify anthropomorphic expressions were afterwards hypostatised and invested with a semi-independent existence, or personified as creatures of God'.[37]

51:5 קדוש ישראל ...., which is of course already a reverential way of referring to God is in the Targum made still more indirect by the addition of Memra -

50:40 .. כְּמַכְפֵּכַת אֱלֹהִים אֶת־סְדֹם וְאֶת עֲמֹרָה

Targum: דלא אתכון כמא דהוין יוי ית סדום וית עמרה

God's destruction of these cities is interpreted in the Targum to mean that his Memra went far away from them. In this case Memra seems to be very closely related to Shekinah 'divine effulgence', which rested in the beginning upon the earth, but was driven higher and higher by the sins of men, only to be brought down again by the deeds of a few righteous men.

The above examples show that the Targumist felt reluctant to refer to God directly, preferring to use more indirect appellatives and allusions. We have said that his motives were no doubt reverential. It is worthwhile noting, however, that while such examples as these indicate the deeply reverential attitude towards God which is encountered throughout Rabbinic literature, we have to reckon with another trend which seems on the face of it to contradict this. There are a number of instances in which God is spoken of or alluded to in terms which might seem to us somewhat crude, if not downright irreverent. Take, for example, the case of the saying preserved in Pirke Avoth,[38] in which the nature of divine judgement is illustrated

/...

in terms of a shopkeeper who inspects his accounts on the day of reckoning, and then sends round the bailiffs to extract payment from his debtors. Elsewhere[39] it is said that God's partiality for Israel is so great that on the day of judgement he lifts Israel's iniquities out of one pan of the great scales, and hides them under his robe while Satan is not paying attention.

Then again, there are those who deny that the Rabbinic methods of dealing with the name of God etc. are due to an 'anti-anthropomorphic' tendency, that is, to a reluctance to attribute 'human physical or psychological characteristics' to God. Schechter, for example, points out that there are many Scriptural passages which, when considered in the light of their Rabbinic interpretation

> '... represent nothing else but a record of a sort of <u>Imitatio Hominis</u> on the part of God'.[40]

Schechter feels that it is not true that the Rabbis disliked endowing God with human attributes. Indeed, they 'felt an actual delight in heaping human qualities on God whenever opportunity is offered by Scripture'.[41] What they really set themselves against was in fact the deification of man: they determined to preserve the utter distinction between man and God.

The question of anthropomorphism is therefore not as simple as it appears. It seems that some of the apparent contradictions are due to the fact that on the one hand the Rabbis wished to safeguard the personality of God, to preserve his 'knowableness', and thus they spoke of him in human terms; sayings which comment upon some aspect of the personality of God are often vivid, pithy

/...

and spiced with roguish humour. On the other hand, they felt the necessity of preserving the absoluteness of the distinction between man and God, 'For I am God, and not man'.

The Targum to our chapters gives evidence of certain concerns upon which the translator wished to lay particular emphasis.

It emerges clearly that the Targum stresses the intensely close nature of the relationship between Israel and her God, that relationship which is described in Canticles Rabbah thus:

> 'My beloved is mine and I am his' (Cant II 16). Israel says 'He is my God and I am His people, He is my father and I am His son; He is my shepherd and I am his flock; He is my guardian and I am His vineyard.....'[42]

It is this reciprocity of relationship which the Targumist wishes to stress. To injure one is to injure the other. Thus the chief cause of the nations' calling down upon themselves the destructive wrath of Yahweh is believed to be their hostile attitude to Israel, and so to Israel's God. In choosing to emphasize this, the Targum is reinforcing the kind of thinking which is already present in the Hebrew text; in this collection of oracles the nations are punished not for idolatry, but for their overweening arrogance, especially as this manifests itself in a hostile attitude towards Israel. Such an attitude amounts to contempt for Yahweh.

In 46:10 the Day of the Lord is described as a day upon which God takes vengeance upon his enemies:

יום נְקָמָה לְהִנָּקֵם מִצָּרָיו

Targum renders 'his enemies' as 'those who hate his people' (שׂנאיה).

/...

In 48:26 Moab is to be made like a drunkard because he showed arrogance towards God:

כִּי עַל-יהוה הִגְדִּיל

The Targum renders על יהוה as דיירי אמתא על. He who acts in an overbearing manner towards God's people puffs himself up before God.

50:29 tells us that Babylon's conduct has been as follows :-

אֶל-יהוה זָדָה אֶל-קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Targum: על דיירי בסרת אמרת מלין לא כשרין

קדם קדישא דישראל

MT tells us that Babylon has scorned 'Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel'. The Targum explains and amplifies this; Babylon has despised the people of Yahweh, and has uttered 'words which were not fitting' before the Holy One. These are not two separate actions; the despising and the uttering of words are one. The words with which Babylon expressed her conviction of her own invincibility, the 'I am, and there is none beside me', these are the words which are not fitting before Yahweh, and this is the attitude which led her to regard Israel as nothing more than one of countless little peoples who could be crushed upon a whim. The little horn of Daniel 7, with its mouth which spoke proud words, illustrates an attitude towards God and Israel which is identical to that of Babylon, as seen by the Targum in this verse. Thus the kind of relationship between Yahweh and Israel which the Targum envisages could be summed up in these words which Schechter quotes:

> 'He who rises up against Israel rises up against God; hence the cause of Israel is the cause of God; their ally is also his'.[43]

/...

The Targum manifests a special regard for Israel in various ways. It is concerned to emphasize the innocence of Israel, and at the same time the guilt of the nations, and the well merited nature of their punishment:

48:27 וְאִם לֹא הַשְׁחוֹן הָיָה לְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־בְּגַנָּבִים
נִמְצָאָה כִּי־מִדֵּי דַבְּרְךָ בּוֹ תִּתְנוֹדָד׃

Targum: וְעַל דְּחִיתוּן עַל תַּבְרֵיהּ דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּדוּלָא הֲוָה לְכוֹן
כְּאִילּוּ בְּגַנָּבִין אִשְׁתַּכְּחוּ וְעַל דְּאַסְגִּיתוּן עֲלֵיהּ פִּתְגָּמֵיכוֹן
בְּכֵין תִּיטַלְטְלוּן׃

The Hebrew text takes the form of a rhetorical question which enquires whether Israel had perhaps been found among thieves, that Moab treated her as an object of contemptuous amusement. The Targum is not content with this, and turns the question into a statement giving the reasons for Moab's punishment, and then pronounces sentence. Moab rejoiced at the downfall of Israel, and made no secret of it : as a result, she will suffer exile. The phrase 'although they had not done you any harm' is inserted by the Targumist to emphasize the blackness of Moab's guilt, as seen against Israel's innocence.

In 51:35, Jerusalem utters these words:

וְדָמִי אֶל־יֹשְׁבֵי כַשְׂדִּים

The Targum has translated

חוֹבַת דָּם זַכַּי דְּאִתְאַשִּׁיד בְּיַד עַל יָתְבֵי אַרְעָא כַּסְדָּאֵי

The word זַכַּי is added in order to stress that the blood shed in Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians was the blood of the innocent. In choosing to emphasize the fact that Israel was an innocent victim, the Targum is continuing further along the lines suggested by a verse such as 51:10 'The Lord has made our

/...

innocence plain to see' (NEB). The authors of this salvation oracle for Israel (chs.50-51) had absorbed so little of the essential message of the prophet Jeremiah himself, that they could still view Israel as the innocent victim of the king of Babylon, against whose kingdom the wrath of Israel's God now made itself felt. This idea is more explicitly formulated in the Targum.

That the Targum is well disposed towards Israel is demonstrated by the way in which the phrase הַבַּת הַשּׁוֹבֵבָה is translated in 49:4. The word שׁוֹבֵב is used adjectivally in three other verses in Jeremiah, all having reference to Israel:

3:14,22 בָּנִים שׁוֹבָבִים

Targum בְּנַיָּא דְּמִתְחַסְּנִין לְמִתַּב

31:22 הַבַּת הַשּׁוֹבֵבָה

Targum כְּנִשְׁתָּא דְּסַגִּיאָן תִּיוּבְתָּהָא

In each case, the expression is softened. In 49:4, however, it is used with reference to Ammon : and here, it is given its full force in the Targum:

49:4 הַבַּת הַשּׁוֹבֵבָה

Targum מַלְכוּתָא טְפֵשְׁתָּא

This regard for Israel makes itself felt again, in that the Targum makes a distinction between certain terms used with reference to Israel, and the same terms used of a foreign nation. This trait is especially prominent with respect to religious terminology. Thus, in 46:25 Egypt's gods are simply called אלהים in MT. The Targum wishes to reserve this word for Yahweh, and dubs the gods of Egypt אַתְּוָנָהּ 'her idols'.

/...

In 48:7 the Moabite deity Chemosh and his priests (כְּמוֹשׁ וְכָהֲנוֹהִי) are mentioned. But the Targum does not wish to use the word כהנא of any other priest than a priest of Yahweh, and so employs the term פלחא 'ministrant' in this case. This is one of the two words by which the Targum normally designates idolatrous priests.[45] The same substitution of terms takes place in 49:3.

In 48:46, MT עַם־כְּמוֹשׁ is translated עמא דכמוש פלחין. It is perhaps the case here that the Targumist has been reluctant to translate the phrase עַם־כְּמוֹשׁ literally, because of his desire to preserve the uniqueness of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. To call Moab 'the people of Chemosh' seemed to him to imply that this nation had a special relationship with its own god, much as Israel had with Yahweh. This risked setting Moab and Chemosh on a par with Israel and Yahweh. The Targum therefore translates as 'the people who serve Chemosh'. The phrase עַם־יהוה is always rendered literally as עמא דיי.

No mercy is accorded to foreigners. The Targum places emphasis on the idea of retribution (פורענותא) and in doing so, reinforces something which is already present in the Hebrew text. Apart from the root נקם , which is normally translated by the root פרע (eg. 46:10; 50:15; 51:11; 51:36) the Targum translates 47:5 'Baldness has come upon Gaza' as 'retribution has come ....'. In 48:21 'judgement has reached the land of the plain' becomes 'retribution has come ....'. The idea that divine retribution would befall the foreign oppressor was apparently very dear to the Targumist's heart. This is shown clearly in 51:7 :-

/...

כּוֹס־זָהָב בָּבֶל בְּיַד־יהוה מְשַׁכֶּרֶת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
מִיֵּינָהּ שָׁתוּ גוֹיִם עַל־כֵּן יִתְהֹלְלוּ גוֹיִם :

The Targum expands this quite considerably:

הָא כַּסָּא דְּדָהָבָא לְהוֹה רָגִיג בְּכַל מַלְיָא
כֵּין עִיבִי חוּבָה דְּבַל
בֵּכֵין פּוּרְעָנוּ תַקִּיפָא עַתִידָא מִן קֳדָם יוי
עַתִידִין דְּיִתְרוֹן מִלָּה לְוֹן כַּל מַלְכֵי עַמְמַיָא
וּמִכֹּל פּוּרְעָנוּתָא יִשְׁתּוּן עַמְמַיָא עַל כֵּן יִשְׁתַּגְּשׁוּן עַמְמַיָא :

The Targumist has sought first of all to explain why Babylon was 'a golden cup in the hand of the Lord', a statement which, on the face of it, does not look uncomplimentary to Babylon. The metaphor has been taken to mean that the wickedness of Babylon was surpassed by none. She was unrivalled in evil-doing, and in this she stood out, just as a precious golden vessel stands out from vessels of lesser beauty and value, and can be readily picked out from among them as something extraordinary. The reference in MT to the hand of the Lord is left untranslated. Having introduced the reference to the evil-doing of Babylon, the Targum goes on to say that 'therefore' stern retribution was about to come upon her. This doom pronouncement has no equivalent in MT, and here we see the Targum introducing a characteristic mention of 'retribution'.

The explanation of the 'golden cup' metaphor which is suggested by the Targum is not very convincing, but some explanation is necessary, since the meaning of the metaphor is not apparent. The imagery of the cup in the hand of Yahweh, who is perhaps envisaged here as a demonic host at a gruesome

/...

banquet during which the normal laws of hospitality are reversed[46], is familiar from chapter 25:15. Babylon is the agent of Yahweh's execution of vengeance upon the nations, the one through whom they would drink the 'wine of wrath'. But why should this cup which is Babylon be described as 'golden'? Kimchi thinks that it refers not to the metal of which the cup is made, but to its contents - pure, unmixed potent wine, the wine of wrath. 'Gold' for Kimchi means 'pure wine' in this context. To illustrate the use of זהב with the connotation of purity from another part of Scripture, he quotes Job 37:22, in which it is said that the dark clouds are swept away by a זהב which comes from the north. Kimchi considers this זהב to be equivalent in meaning to the רוּם of the previous verse, and so understands it as a pure, clean breeze. Thus he understands כוס זהב in our verse as perhaps 'a cup of unmixed wine'.

We encounter a different line of interpretation when we turn to a modern commentator, W.Rudolph.[47] He believes that the quality of gold which has occasioned the use of the term זהב is not, as Kimchi supposes, its purity, but rather its glitter, its rare fascination. זהב refers to to the dazzle of Babylon's power and the splendour of her culture, which fascinated the nations, and made them act in a drunken fashion:

> 'Babel hatte mit dem Glanz (זהב) seiner Macht und seiner Kultur alle Völker bestrickt, dass sie wie vom Wein berauscht jede Selbstbesinnung verloren'.

Rudolph's interpretation of זהב is, in a way, quite close to that of the Targum. Both understand זהב as a reference to the metal from which the cup is made, and both think that זהב is

/...

used to suggest something extraordinarily fascinating and arresting - and, in this case, extraordinarily evil. Kimchi, then, is of the opinion that the metaphor regards Babylon as a cup of potent wine which is offered by Yahweh to the nations. According to the other interpretation, Babylon is not the wine, only the glittering vessel which contains it. At 25:15, NEB renders כוס היין החמה הזאת as 'this cup of fiery wine'. If this is the correct translation, then 25:15 would contain the idea that the wine of wrath is especially potent, thus lending some support to Kimchi's view that כוס זהב means 'a cup of unmixed wine'. It is probable, however, that RSV has the better translation at 25:15, that is 'this cup of the wine of wrath'. It is more likely that in 51:7 Rudolph is correct to assume that זהב refers to the metal and not to the contents. Babylon is the splendid vessel, the agent through which the wrath of Yahweh is poured out.

The oracle against Babylon contains several verses which are strongly reminiscent of the style of Deutero-Isaiah. One of the best examples of this is found in 50:4-5, and here the Targum reveals that it is not only aware of the similarity to Deutero-Isaiah, but is reading one verse in the light of the other, and thus enhancing the likeness:

50:5 אִיּוֹן יִשְׁאָלוּ דֶּרֶךְ הֵנָּה פְּנֵיהֶם בָּאוּ וְנִלְווּ אֶל-יהוה
בְּרִית עוֹלָם לֹא תִשָּׁכֵחַ :

Targum לציון ישאלון למיזל תהי אורחא מלבשא קדמיהון
דיתון דיתוספון גבי עמיה דיי יגלי להון קים עלם דלא יפסון :

The translation given for דרך הנה פניהם is תהי אורחא

/...

מכבשא קדמיתון. The root כבש is used in the Targum at Jeremiah 18:15 to translate the root סלל. Thus דרך לא סלולה is translated שביל דלא מכבשין. The gist of 18:15 is that the people of Yahweh have deserted his way in order to follow the byways, ways which are not 'cast up'. The expression דרך לא סלולה denotes a way which is not well finished, straight and smooth, but rather one which is stony and full of pitfalls.

In Isaiah 40:3 stands the command יַשִּׁירוּ בָעֲרָבָה מְסִלָּה 'cast up a highway in the wilderness'. The Targum translates it כנשו ומישרא כנשין. Thus the root כבש, used with reference to a path or road, indicates that the road is level and well made, literally 'pressed down'.

The phrase used in 50:5 thus means 'the path will be pressed down flat before them'. This idea is not present in the Hebrew text of 50:5, but it is very prominent as an element in the picture of the glorious return of the exiles which Deutero-Isaiah paints. For example, Is.57:14 and 62:10 give the command 'cast up, cast up a way'; 42:16 reads 'I will make the crooked places straight'; 43:19 'I will make a way in the wilderness' echoes the same thought.[48]

The Targumist is very much aware of the relationship between Jer.50:5 and those passages in Isaiah which deal with the glory of the return from Babylon. The prophecies in Isaiah give a more detailed description of the event, with its accompaniment of miraculous happenings, and so the Targum fills in the Jeremianic picture with a detail from Isaiah.

It is possible that another prophecy from the book of Isaiah

/...

has exercised an influence on the Targumic rendering of our verse. MT of 50:5 reads 'Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord', the speakers being the returning exiles of Israel and Judah. The Targum has 'they will come and join themselves to the people of the Lord'. This reads a little oddly : Israel and Judah do not surely have to join themselves to the people of the Lord, for they themselves constitute that people. Why, then, does the Targum contain the word 'people' here? We have touched elsewhere upon the Targumic tendency to substitute 'people of God' for 'God', and we suggested that this might indicate a desire to highlight the intimate and reciprocal nature of the relationship between God and Israel. This may be the reason for the Targumic rendering of 50:5, but it does not seem so appropriate here as it did in the other examples which were cited. It could be, of course, that the addition of 'people of' before 'God' had become rather mechanical in the Targum, used as an approved way of translating references to God without regard to the context of each individual case. Again, the Targum might mean by 'people of the Lord' those Israelites who had not been exiled, and might envisage the returning exiles approaching their homeland with the idea of joining with those who already lived there. This still does not convince. 'They will come and join themselves to the people of the Lord' sounds as if the Targum is understanding the subject to be non-Israelite elements. Is the Targum importing into this verse the idea of a return to Zion not only of Israel and Judah, but of foreign elements as well? If so, it would probably be the case that certain passages in Isaiah

/...

which imply the adherence of foreigners to Judaism had exercised an influence on the Targum.[49] Kimchi thinks that such is the case here. After quoting the Targum, he remarks that:

> 'He (the Targumist) means by this that proselytes (גֵּרִים) will join up with them on their way home from Babylon, and thus it says in the prophecy concerning Babylon in Isaiah (14:1): The proselyte shall join them'.

If Kimchi is correct in assuming that the Targum is influenced by such a verse as Isaiah 14:1 here in Jeremiah, it would mean that the verse is being understood by the Targumist not to refer to the return from Babylon in the historical past - or at least not only to that - but to the events of the Messianic age. For, as Kimchi points out in his comment at Isaiah 14:1, גרים did not accompany the returning exiles in the days of Cyrus, but would indeed join themselves to Israel at the dawn of the Messianic age, when the diaspora embarked upon their glorious return. He quotes Zech. 2:15: 'and many nations shall join themselves to the Lord on that day'. It may be, therefore, that in 50:5 we have an instance in which the Targumist is influenced by the later eschatological prophecy of the Old Testament, and by the speculation current in his own day, to the extent that he refers this prophecy to the future.

We have suggested that in the above verses the Targum may owe something to the book of Isaiah. At 46:7 we have a rendering which almost certainly depends upon a prophecy in the book of Ezekiel. MT reads:

מִי־זֶה כַּיְּאוֹר יַעֲלֶה כַּנְּהָרוֹת יִתְגָּעֲשׁוּ מַיִם׃

Targum: מן דין דפלין במשריתיה כנגלא דפלין דהפי ית ארגא
כמגולא דמיין דמיטרפין מוהי׃

/...

The Version is considerably expanded, and in fact contains a whole new section '.... like the cloud that comes up and covers the earth'. The verse refers to Pharaoh, whose rise is compared to that of the Nile, in turbulence like the turbulence of the great river. But the simile which the Targum introduces is not explained by anything in the Hebrew text, and so we must look elsewhere for an explanation.

It is possible that the Targumist has had in mind some earlier descriptions of an advancing enemy, such as 4:13:

> 'Behold, he comes up like clouds, his chariots like the whirlwind'.

No mention is made of 'covering the earth, however, and in fact the only verses in which such imagery is used of the advance of an enemy occur in Ezek.38:9,16. The context is a prophecy addressed to Gog, who is told

v.9 וְעָלִיתָ כַּשּׂעָרָה תָּבוֹא כֶּעָנָן לְכַסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ

v.16 וְעָלִיתָ עַל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל כֶּעָנָן לְכַסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ

Why has the Targum connected 46:7 with Ezekiel 38? For one thing, we read in 46:8 Pharaoh's words 'I will rise up and cover the earth'. There is no doubt that these words have encouraged the Targumist to make the connection with Ezekiel.

It is difficult to assess whether the Targumist believed the connection to go any further than that of language and imagery pure and simple. It could be that the words 'I will rise, I will cover the earth' which are placed in Pharaoh's mouth have led the Targumist to conclude that what is described in the oracle against Egypt is an attempt at world domination on the part of that people, and that this has encouraged him to connect

/...

the oracle with the description of the rise of Gog in Ezekiel, and to see it against the scenario of the final attempt made by Gog and the 'many peoples' who are with him, to crush Israel and dominate the world. There too, as here (vs.27,28) the downfall of the enemy means that God has delivered his people. If such is the understanding of the Targumist, then in this verse too, as in 50:5, he would be admitting an eschatological as well as a historical dimension. However, it is fair to say that, although the Targum gives evidence of an interest in the future reference of certain prophecies, it is impossible to ascertain whether such an interest has operated here, and it may be that we have simply to reckon with a linguistic harmonization. On the other hand, it seems difficult to assert that the Targumist recognised the similarity in language between Jeremiah and Ezekiel here, and made this greater still in his translation, without any 'cross-fertilization' of exegesis taking place in his mind.

Listed below are a further selection of verses at which the Targum provides an interesting translation:

48:37/49:3

At 48:37, MT contains a list of four customs associated with violent grief and mourning:

כִּי כָל־רֹאשׁ לֹרֻחָה וְכָל־זָקָן גְּרֻעָה
עַל־כָּל יָדַיִם גְּרֻדוֹת וְעַל־מָתְנַיִם שָׂק׃

The Moabites are to display these outward signs of grief over their destruction. It is with the third clause that we are concerned: על כל ידים גרדות.

/...

Targum: מתהממין כיתן בכל

The Hebrew גדודה has two meanings: (1) 'band' 'troop'; (2) 'furrow' 'cutting'. It is evident that MT requires the second of these meanings in order to produce the translation 'on every hand, gashes'. It is equally evident that the Targumist has attempted to incorporate both meanings of גדודה into his translation, since כיתן means 'troops' or 'bands' and מתהממין means 'mutilated' or 'gashed'. He fails to render כל altogether, although there is no apparent reason why he should have left it out of his translation. The sense of the Targum is not in any case substantially different from MT : the word כיתן is used in the Targum at 1 Sam.10:10 to describe a company of ecstatic prophets, and it may be that the Targum intends to introduce a reference to some sort of religious rite here, at which bands of Moabite prophets gash themselves in a desperate attempt to persuade their god to save the people of Moab from destruction. Such a communal rite is described in 1 Kgs.18:28.

In 49:3 the Ammonites are told to make the signs of mourning for their ruined cities:

הֵילִילִי חֶשְׁבּוֹן כִּי שֻׁדְּדָה־עַי צְעַקְנָה בְּנוֹת רַבָּה
חֲגֹרְנָה שַׂקִּים סְפֹדְנָה וְהִתְשׁוֹטַטְנָה בַּגְּדֵרוֹת

We are concerned with the last clause, which the Targum translates וחמתהמתון כיתן . It looks as if גְּדֵרוֹת 'hedges' is being read as גְּדוּדוֹת 'bands' or 'furrows', and that, as at 48:37, the Targum is providing a double translation of this word, incorporating both meanings, while

/...

neglecting to translate another word – in this case, התשוטטנה 'run up and down'. The Targum comes up with the rendering 'gash yourselves in bands'.

MT literally means 'run up and down among the hedges' (or 'enclosures'). This seems a trifle odd, standing as it does at the close of a list of mourning customs. Kimchi thinks that it refers to the panic of the inhabitants of the small villages situated outside the fortified towns. They run hither and thither in directionless confusion among the little village boundary hedges which cannot protect them from the advancing enemy. They do not think of going to seek refuge behind the walls, doors and bars of the nearby city; it would be no good, since the city itself has been captured. Rashi thinks that the phrase might refer to troops running up and down among the sheep pens, or that התשוטטנה might be connected with Aramaic שוט 'despise', and rendered as if it were התנוולנה perhaps 'act wickedly'.

Modern scholars tend to think that the text of 49:3 ought to be emended. BHK and BHS both want to read, with the Targum, גְּדוּדוֹת for גְּדֵרוֹת . As for the verb, BHK suggests alteration to וְהִשָּׁרֵטְנָה 'cut yourselves'. G.R.Driver translates the clause 'gash yourselves to ribbons', construing התשוטטנה as a denominative verb from שוט 'a lash'.[50] NEB 'score your bodies with gashes' seems to follow Driver. If Driver is correct about the meaning of התשוטטנה , it means that the Targum has not failed to translate the verb, as we suggested above, but has in fact translated it correctly, the only deviation from MT then being the apparent reading of

/...

גְּרוּרוֹת for גְּזֵרוֹת .

46:2: Pharaoh Necho (נְכוֹ) is always known as Pharaoh Hagirah (הַגִּירָה) in the Targum. The Hebrew root נכה is used to convey the idea of weakness or disability in some part of the body. In 2 Sam.4:4, and 9:3 we read that Saul's grandson was נכה רגלים 'afflicted with respect to feet', that is, lame.[51] The Targum has evidently connected the name נכו with the root נכה and has translated it הגירה 'lame'.

In 51:53, Yahweh vows to be avenged upon Babylon 'even though she reaches up to heaven':

כִּי־תַעֲלֶה בָבֶל הַשָּׁמַיִם . . . .

Targum: אֲרֵי תִבְנֵי בָבֶל בְּנְיָנִין דְּרָמָן עַד צִית שְׁמַיָּא

The Targum is influenced by the story of the tower of Babel. Babylon's 'mounting up to heaven' is interpreted to mean her construction of buildings which reach up to heaven.

51:1 הִנְנִי מֵעִיר עַל־בָּבֶל וְאֶל יוֹשְׁבֵי לֵב קָמָי
רוּחַ מַשְׁחִית :

Yahweh is causing a wind of destruction to spring up against Babylon and against יושבי לב קמי . This latter phrase has been understood in various ways by the modern Versions. RV and NEB are at one in thinking that לב קמי is the name of a place. RV transliterates 'Leb-kamai' but NEB emends the text to read לקמוך . The words לב קמי could be taken literally to mean 'the heart of my adversaries' (those who rise up against me), but if they are understood in this way, the preceding יושבי ואל becomes a problem, as can be seen from AV 'and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise

/...

up against me'. AV has had to understand בתוך as 'in the midst' in order to accommodate 'ושבי' ואת. The Vulgate had earlier encountered a similar difficulty, and responded by altering the text:

> '... et super habitatores eius, qui cor suum levaverunt contra me'

This Version reads 'ושבי' ואת as if it were ושביה ואת.

The LXX reflects the third understanding of the phrase, and assumes that בתוך קמי is an 'Athbash'[52] cipher for 'Chaldeans'. RSV adopts this policy, probably correctly. The cipher is used later in the chapter (v.41) to replace בבל with לבב, and it also occurs at 25:25. It is strange that such ciphers are used in chapter 51, since it is not the case that they stand for an enemy whom the poet dare not identify openly at the time of his writing. In 51:1, for example, the cipher is used alongside an explicit reference to Babylon. We must conclude that it appears here merely as a literary device which the poet introduced for purely ornamental purposes.[53]

The Targum runs as follows:

> ואלא מיתי עם בני ישראל כסדא
> עמין קשין דרם לבהון ושפיכין בקומא רוחהון מן בתוך
> :אלהם

בתוך קמי is understood as a cipher for 'Chaldeans' and is translated ארע כסדאי. However, in the words which follow, it seems as if the Targum is giving us a second translation of the phrase, which is closer to its literal meaning. דרם לבהון 'whose hearts are haughty' looks like a rendering of לב, and ושפיכין בקומא a translation of קמי. It also seems as if we have a double translation

/...

of רוח משחית , since the phrases רוחהון מחבלא and עממין קטולין are both used to represent it in the Targum.

51:39 בְּחֻמָּה אָשִׁית אֶת־מִשְׁתֵּיהֶם וְהִשְׁכַּרְתִּים לְמַעַן יַעֲלֹזוּ
וְיָשְׁנוּ שְׁנַת־עוֹלָם וְלֹא יָקִיצוּ נְאֻם יהוה :

'They will sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake'. This is the fate of the Babylonians after the feast which is being prepared for them: they will be so intoxicated that they will never wake from their stupor. The text speaks in figurative language of the coming destruction of Babylon, and the oblivion into which she will subsequently sink. The Targum translates the 'perpetual sleep' clause in this way:

וימותון מותא תניינא ולא ייתון לעלמא אתי׳

The nobles of Babylon will 'die a second death, and not live in the world to come'. Explicit mention of the 'second death' does not occur in Jewish literature outside the Targumim[54], in which we find four occurrences : Deut.33:6; Is.65:6, Is.22:14; 65:15. It is, according to the eschatology of the Targumim, a fate reserved for the wicked of both Israel and the nations.

Deut.33:6 : Here Moses' blessing upon Reuben 'Let Reuben live and not die' is turned into a prayer that Reuben will not be numbered among the wicked at the time of the general resurrection[55]:

> 'Let Reuben live in this world, and not die in the second death, in which death the wicked die in the world to come'.[56]

Again in Is. 65:15, those who forsake the Lord are warned in the Targum that 'he will slay you with a second death'[57]. The Targum introduces this eschatological schema into 51:39, which reckons with a general resurrection of righteous and wicked alike, which is followed by the wicked being reconsigned to the

/...

dust, as it were, or dying a second death. An earlier eschatology is reflected in such biblical passages as Is.26:1-19 and Daniel 12:2-3, which envisage that only the righteous of Israel will rise[58]. A scheme such as that reflected in Test. XII Patriarchs : Benjamin 10:5-9 seems to approach that of the Targum.

> 'Then also shall all men arise, some unto glory and some unto shame. And the Lord shall judge Israel first ... And then he shall judge all the Gentiles'.[59]

In this verse, then, the Targum has transformed a figurative statement describing the complete and permanent destruction of Babylon into a prediction of her ultimate fate at the time of the last judgement. This testifies to the intense speculation and eager anticipation with which the Targumist's own generation looked forward to their final deliverance from oppression, their vindication before God and the nations. In the same way had the author of these oracles against Babylon at an earlier time eagerly awaited the liberation of his own nation which the destruction of Babylon would bring about, except that he envisaged Israel receiving this liberty in the context of the present world order.

CHAPTER FOUR

JEWISH EXEGESIS OF SELECTED PASSAGES.

The following chapter contains a study of the exegesis of certain selected verses from Jer.46-51, with special reference to Rabbinic exegesis as it is found in the Talmud and the Midrashic literature, and to the mediaeval Jewish exegesis of Rashi and Kimchi.[1]

48: 31, 32, 36

עַל-כֵּן עַל-מוֹאָב אֵילִיל וּלְמוֹאָב כֻּלֹּה אֶזְעָק
אֶל-אַנְשֵׁי קִיר-חֶרֶשׂ יֻהְגֶּה[2]:
מִבְּכִי יַעְזֵר אֶבְכֶּה-לָּךְ הַגֶּפֶן שִׂבְמָה . . . .
עַל-כֵּן לִבִּי לְמוֹאָב כַּחֲלִילִים יֶהֱמֶה
וְלִבִּי אֶל-אַנְשֵׁי קִיר חֶרֶשׂ כַּחֲלִילִים יֶהֱמֶה . . . .

The speaker in these verses seems to be Yahweh himself. But it seems rather strange that the prophet should include these references to the grief of Yahweh over the fall of Moab in the body of an oracle which pronounces doom upon Moab as a bitter enemy of Israel (see eg. v.27). The verses form part of an older poem which seems to have been taken up again independently at Isaiah chapters 15 and 16, and it may be that this older work was an elegy written by a Moabite poet to commemorate some defeat which his country had suffered.[3] If so, such sentiments as those expressed in the verses above are perfectly in order. On the other hand, it has been suggested[4] that the older poem actually took the form of a 'taunt' or 'victory song' sung by the Bedouin on the occasion of one of their victories over Moab. In this case, the expressions of grief over the fall of Moab would have been mocking and ironic. And so must these verses be understood

/...

in their present context. Rudolph, for example, believes that it is not sympathy, but malicious joy that we should see here:

> 'Dass er die schwere Heimsuchung Moabs (33. 34b. 36b. 39a) und den Jammer der Betroffenen (34a. 37. 38a) nicht aus Mitgefühl, sondern aus Schadenfreude schildert, liegt auf der Hand, und deshalb kann auch seine eigene Klage über Moabs Geschick (31f. 36a; in 31 unter Änderung der 3. Person des Originals) nicht ernstgemeint sein'.[5]

But ironic or not, the apparent sympathy for Moab which is placed on the lips of Yahweh has caused problems of exegesis, first of all for the Targumist:

דכין מואבאי מיתין ומואבאי כולהון מצחין
על אנש כרך תוקפהון ילון :
דכין כמא דאיתי משרין על יעזר
כין איתי קטולין על סבמא . . . .
על כין דכיבהון מואבאי ככינרא המן
דבכיבהון על אנש כרך תוקפהון כזמר אבובין ליו . . .

The Targumist has strongly objected to the idea of Yahweh mourning over Moab, and has therefore arbitrarily altered the subject of these verses. It is now the Moabites themselves who mourn over Kir Heres; Moabite hearts mourn like lyres and flutes. In v.32, the alteration in meaning is even more drastic; so far from weeping over the 'vine' of Sibmah, Yahweh sends murderers against her!

The treatment accorded these verses reinforces what was said previously about the Targumic tendency to blacken the character of the nations wherever possible, and to eliminate any notion of sympathy for them. In this particular case it is interesting that the perturbation of the Targumist is shared by the mediaeval commentator Kimchi, who also endeavours to alter

/...

the sense by adopting a very forced description:

31 Therefore I wail over Moab : The prophet is voicing the words of the people of Moab.

32 More than the weeping of Jazer ...: say the remaining people of the cities of Moab, when they hear the weeping of the people of Jazer.

36 Therefore my heart cries out for Moab : The prophet is voicing the sentiments of the people, for each one of them says this.

No more than the Targumist will Kimchi have it that the God of Israel experiences distress over the downfall of an enemy of Israel. The question may be asked why such an apparently vitriolic attitude should be displayed towards a nation which had long ceased to exist. It is probable that the Jews of the Targumic period saw old oppressors revived in the more recent heathen powers, such as Rome. Thus, old hatreds such as those expressed in the foreign nation oracles were redirected towards the arrogant persecutors of more modern times.[6] The same is probably true of Kimchi, although it is possible too that simple puzzlement and embarrassment may have caused him to eliminate the element of sympathy contained in these verses. Unlike the modern commentator, he could not say that they belonged originally to an older, perhaps Moabite or Bedouin poem, which had been adapted, perhaps imperfectly, to the present context. He could not reckon with the hand of more than one editor or author in the oracle against Moab, but had to strive to fit the diverse elements of thought coherently into the thought of Jeremiah. Hence his puzzlement over the apparent incongruity of these verses must have been great indeed, inducing him to provide the above explanation.

It is worthy of note that not all who saw in these verses an expression of Yahweh's compassion for Moab felt them to be a

/...

source of unease and embarrassment. We find a passage in Midrash Rabbah which runs:

> 'The Holy One, Blessed be He, did not afford the idolators an opportunity of saying in the time to come, "It is thou that hast estranged us!" What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do? In the same way as He raised up kings, sages and prophets for Israel, so He raised them up for the idolators ..... You find that all the distinctions conferred upon Israel were conferred upon the nations. In like manner He raised up Moses for Israel and Balaam for the idolators. See what a difference there is between the prophets of Israel and those of the idolators! ..... All the prophets retained a compassionate attitude towards both Israel and the idolators. Thus Jeremiah says "My heart moaneth for Moab like pipes", and it was the same with Ezekiel, "Son of Man, take up a lamentation for Tyre" (Ez.27:2). But this cruel man (Balaam) rose to uproot a whole nation for no crime!'[7]

The nations were given equal opportunities to Israel, says the Midrash. God conferred equal blessings upon them, and yet the results were very different. Jeremiah and Ezekiel could mourn over the heathen nations, whereas Balaam attempted to 'uproot' a guiltless people. To the author of this Midrash, therefore, the compassion shown towards Moab is far from being a source of embarrassment; on the contrary, it shows the excellence and great-heartedness of Israelite prophecy compared to that of the nations, typified by the mean spirited Balaam.

49:10,11

כִּי־אֲנִי חָשַׂפְתִּי אֶת־עֵשָׂו גִּלֵּיתִי אֶת־מִסְתָּרָיו
וְנֶחְבָּא לֹא יוּכָל שֶׁדַּד זַרְעוֹ וְאֶחָיו וּשְׁכֵנָיו וְאֵינֶנּוּ׃
עָזְבָה יְתֹמֶיךָ אֲנִי אֲחַיֶּה וְאַלְמְנֹתֶיךָ עָלַי תִּבְטָחוּ׃

These verses have caused Versions and commentators alike a great deal of perplexity. Yahweh is evidently the speaker in v.11, but his words, if addressed to Edom, are simply incomprehensible. The exhortation to 'Leave your orphans, I will keep them alive,

/...

and let your widows trust in me' is a word of comfort which is impossible to reconcile with the rest of the oracle against Edom. Faced with such a situation, Versions and commentators could do one of two things; assume that the addressee was not Edom, or understand the sense of the verse in a different way. The Targum has adopted the first of these expedients:

יא אתון ביתישראל לא תשתבקון יתמיכון אלא אלקיהם
אגרמתכון עם מימרי יתרחמון :

It is assumed that these words of comfort are addressed to the house of Israel, and that they form a little aside which interrupts the general flow of the tirade against Edom. The Targumist dislikes the idea of Yahweh taking care of Edomite widows and orphans, and has not hesitated to alter the addressee in quite a peremptory fashion.

The mediaeval commentator Rashi gets over the problem by altering the sense of the verse. In a characteristically terse comment:

> 'Leave your orphans : that is, those whom you orphaned in Israel'.

he seems to assume that the Edomites are told to leave those whom they made into orphans and widows in Israel, for Yahweh is to preserve their lives. Quite uncontroversial!

Of the Versions, the LXX has lessened the difficulty by carrying over the sense unit from the previous verse, v.10, which is itself not without considerable difficulties of interpretation.

29:11b; (49:10b) ὤλοντο ἐπίχειρα ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ γείτονος αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν (29:12) ὑπολείπεσθαι ὀρφανόν σου, ἵνα ζήσηται, καὶ χῆραι ἐπ' ἐμὲ πεποίθασιν.

/...

To arrive at the translation 'and it is not possible for your orphan to be left to live', it seems that the LXX has read the וא'ינו at the end of v.10 with the עזבה of v.11, thereby producing what the translator takes to be an acceptable sense. It is interesting that Kimchi also suggests this. He seems to understand וא'ינו as if it were וְאֵין אֹמֵר , and comments as follows:

> 'Leave : that is to say, after his seed, his brothers and his neighbours were despoiled, there was no one to say with respect to the fallen in battle "leave your orphans, I will preserve them alive", that is "if you fall wounded, do not worry about those who are left after you, for I will keep them alive". There is none to say this to them, for they are all dead, and there is no survivor among them. As it says in Obadiah, "And there will be no survivor to the house of Esau".'

Thus, verse 11 represents for Kimchi the words of comfort which would be spoken to the mortally wounded by those 'seed, brothers and neighbours' who would be left behind to take care of the dependants - if anyone were left to speak them! But there is no-one.

What are we to say about 49:11, then, in the face of all this confusion and evident perplexity. It is impossible to take the verse at face value and conclude that 'Leave your orphans....' is meant to be a word addressed by Yahweh to Edom. Among modern commentators, Volz assumed that what we have here is a word of comfort (ein Trostwort) for Judah, which has for some obscure reason found its way into the oracle against Edom.[8] He therefore agrees with the Targum on the question of addressee. This is certainly worthy of consideration, but is wholly conjectural. NEB adopts a similar policy to the translator of the LXX, in that the last word of v.10 has been construed with the first word of

/...

v.11, producing the translation:

> 10 '... his children, his kinsfolk and his neighbours are despoiled; there is none to help him.
>
> 11 What! Am I to save alive your fatherless children? Are your widows to trust in me?'

NEB understands עזבה as עֹזֵב, thus ואינבו עזב is translated 'there is none to help him'. Verse 11 is taken as a rhetorical question which is mockingly addressed to Edom. NEB achieves this sense without resorting to emendation of the consonantal text, and is to be commended for this reason, since such emendation is usually an admission of defeat. The reading of NEB is, however, dependant upon the special philology for עזב which is adduced by G.R.Driver, who believes it to be cognate with the Ethiopic azaba 'help' in this verse.[10] It ought therefore to be regarded with some caution.

Rudolph emends the text, reading ואין אֹמֵר instead of ואינבו,[11] and producing the rendering:

> 'his tribe is despoiled, and is no more; and as for his neighbours, not one of them says: Leave your orphans...'

Rudolph believes that the reference here to the unwillingness of the neighbours of Edom to proffer help in the time of crisis is seen again in v.8, where the neighbouring Dedanites are urged to run away and leave Edom to her fate. It is noteworthy that in his assumption that the words 'Leave your orphans ....' represent a message of comfort which will never be spoken to Edom, Rudolph has come to much the same conclusion as the commentator Kimchi.

49:25 אֵיךְ לֹא־עֻזְּבָה עִיר תְּהִלָּה קִרְיַת מְשׂוֹשִׂי :

This verse forms part of the oracle against Damascus. It is an awkward little exclamation which has no necessary connection

/...

with what precedes or follows it, and it raises several problems of interpretation. If, as seems likely in context, it refers to Damascus, why is this city called 'the praiseworthy city, the city of my joy'? Again, what is the meaning of אי'ך לא עזבה ? On the first question, the Syriac, Targum and Vulgate agree in presupposing a reading ܥܝܘܢ without the suffix ending. Likewise Aquila and Symmachus (μητροπόλιν εὐφροσύνης). Only the LXX, which reads κώμην ἣν ἠγάπησα ..., follows MT. The weight of evidence in favour of ܥܝܘܢ has persuaded Rudolph, RSV and NEB to adopt this reading, while the older AV and RV are content to follow MT. There is undoubtedly a problem with the Hebrew text. It seems that the speaker in the verse is meant to be Yahweh, but why does he call Damascus 'the city of my joy'? Rashi attempts to explain this by assuming that these are the words of the king of Damascus as he laments over the fall of his city, but there is nothing to support this conjecture. It makes the interpretation of the verse much easier if we follow the majority of the Versions in reading ܥܝܘܢ against MT. We could conclude, with Rudolph,[12] that Damascus is called 'famous' and 'joyful' because of her status as a mercantile centre, and her favourable geographical location. However, we are not entirely justified in rejecting the MT, despite the number of supporters for ܥܝܘܢ . There is no apparent reason why the less difficult ܥܝܘܢ should have been altered into the more difficult 'ܥܝܘܢ , but there is good reason for the text to have been altered in the opposite way. We may have to invoke the maxim <u>difficilior lectio potior</u>,[13] and conclude

/...

that the MT and LXX preserve the superior reading.

It is not easy to decide what אין לא עזבה means. 'How is the praiseworthy city not abandoned?' is somewhat obscure, and the Vulgate has attempted to improve the sense by leaving out the negative. In this it is followed by RSV, 'How the famous city is forsaken!' Rudolph would also strike out the negative, commenting that it started out as the marginal note of an ancient reader who, objecting to Damascus being called 'praiseworthy', indignantly wrote beside the text, 'לא'![14] Rashi meets the difficulty in another way. He comments:

> אין לא עזבה : She is not filled with earth around her wall to strengthen the wall'.

It seems that Rashi is not understanding עזב according to its usual meaning 'abandon' 'leave'; here, and at Neh.3:8, which he quotes, he believes it to mean something like 'restore', 'fortify'. 'How is the praiseworthy city not fortified.....'. This line of interpretation comes quite close to the view held by G.R.Driver.[15] He too wants to keep לא , and to translate עזב as he does in 49:11, that is 'help' (cognate with Eth. azaba). 'How helpless (not helped) is the city of praise'. It is interesting that the mediaeval commentator Abravanel also has a word to say about the meaning of עזב in this verse. He comments:

> 'The prophet says, as if in surprise, "How is it not עזבה ?" This means that, even although Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the rest of the lands, he ought to have spared Damascus, because of her beauty, and should have refrained from destroying her, since she was a celebrated and delightful city. This being the case, why did he not leave her in peace, and hold back from destroying her?'[16]

Abravanel too agrees that the most common meaning 'forsake' for

/...

עזב is not appropriate. מעזב for him means 'left alone' 'left unmolested'. This is a possible meaning for the root עזב , and may be found at Ruth 2:16, where the servants are instructed to leave grain for Ruth to glean. That is, they are to leave some be, leave it untouched. It may be that Abravanel has hit on the correct interpretation, in which case we would translate the verse 'How is the praiseworthy city not left unmolested, the city of my joy'. If, as is likely, the prophet or Yahweh is meant to be the speaker here, the city in question surely cannot originally have been Damascus. This sounds much more like a reference to Jerusalem, and in fact the verse is strongly reminiscent of those references to Jerusalem which we find in the book of Lamentations. In Lam.2:15, for example, Jerusalem is called 'the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth'; the prophet calls her 'my city' in 3:51, and asks at 2:13 'who can restore you?' It therefore seems that 49:25 actually originated as a reference to Jerusalem, and perhaps formed part of a lament over the fate of that city, such as we find in Lamentations. This is, of course, an unsatisfactory conclusion, since we cannot adequately account for its presence in the middle of an oracle against Damascus. Nevertheless, it seems that the verse can refer to no other city than Jerusalem, the 'city of praise'.

46:28

אַתָּה אַל־תִּירָא עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב נְאֻם־יהוה כִּי אִתְּךָ אָנִי
כִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה כָלָה בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִדַּחְתִּי שָׁמָּה
וְאוֹתְךָ לֹא אֶעֱשֶׂה כָלָה וְיִסַּרְתִּיךָ לַמִּשְׁפָּט וְנַקֵּה לֹא אֲנַקֶּךָּ :

Verses 27 and 28 form a separate unit from the rest of the

/...

oracle against Egypt which precedes. They occur also at 30:10,11, and this tends to suggest that they form a later interpolation into one or both of these chapters. Rudolph[17] believes that they were added after 46:26 to protest against the idea expressed there that the Egyptians would return to their land and dwell there, as in 'days of old'. Verse 28, 'I will make a full end of all the nations to which I have driven you' expresses a contrary opinion. By this means, Rudolph thinks that the words about the fate of Egypt in v.26 acquire the character of a description of something which is only temporary. This idea of Rudolph's is not new; Kimchi too regards the addition of verses 27 and 28 as qualifying the apparently hopeful note upon which v.26 ends. He comments:

> 'Because he mentions here the retribution directed towards the nations, he says regarding Israel "But you, fear not, for you are not like them". Even though they return to their land after their exile, they will not rest easy, but shall cease from being a nation. Their name will not be remembered. But Israel shall not cease; their name and their memory will stand fast'.

Verses 27 and 28 form an oracle of salvation for Israel, but the oracle seems to end on a note of warning:

> 'And I will not make a full end of you, but I will chasten you in just measure, and will certainly not leave you unpunished'.

The Targum, in contrast to the LXX and Vulgate, is not content that this oracle should end on such a stern note, and wishes it to be wholly reassuring:

וְאֵיתִי לָךְ יְסוּרִין לְאַלְפוּתָךְ בְּדִין חִסּוּךְ ...
וְלָא אֲשֵׁיצִיךְ :

The 'and I will chasten you justly' of the MT becomes 'I will bring upon you trials to discipline you, but with a favourable

/...

verdict'. This introduction of דין חסדא , which could also be translated 'a judgement of clemency', shows clearly that it is the Targumist's intention to play down the reference to chastisement, and to emphasize the favourable outcome. It is interesting that in Sifre Deuteronomy 32 we read:

> 'Trials (נסיונות) are precious in the sight of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord rests upon him who is visited with trials'.[18]

It seems likely that the Targumist has used the word 'trials' with this sort of thinking in mind, in which case he would view the chastisement of Israel not so much as a punishment for wrongdoing, but more as a test of character. We also find in the Targum that 'I will certainly not leave you unpunished' becomes 'I will certainly not destroy you'. To arrive at this translation the Targumist is drawing upon the idea of 'cleaning out' 'emptying out' which נקה contains. We find Rashi too expressing the opinion that נקה connotes destruction (השמדה) in this verse, and it appears that the same line of thought has prompted NEB to translate the final clause of v.28 'Though I punish you as you deserve, I will not sweep you clean away'. Rudolph[19] rejects this translation of נקה , especially since it results in the last clause of v.28 simply echoing the words which occur earlier in the verse, 'I will not make a full end of you'. He is surely correct here, for the element of warning inherent in 'And I will chasten you in just measure' cannot be eliminated from v.28, and in all probability extends into the last clause. נקה ought therefore to be rendered according to its more normal meaning.

As we mentioned earlier, verses 27 and 28 constitute a

/...

later addition to the oracle against Egypt. The addition has been made by an exilic or post-exilic editor who having read the oracle pronouncing doom upon Egypt, understood this as implying a contrasting fate for Israel. By the addition of verses 27 and 28 he hoped to make this contrast explicit. Israel has suffered punishment, but she shall in future have 'quiet and ease'. The nations, on the other hand, are to suffer complete obliteration. 'I will make a full end of all the nations to which I have driven you'. Verses 27 and 28 reflect an exilic or post-exilic standpoint, which recognized that the disaster about which Jeremiah had warned his people had come - and gone. Israel had indeed been chastised 'in just measure', but had not been wiped out. Thus it was that those left after the disaster could place the words 'I will not make a complete end of you' upon the lips of the pre-exilic prophet, even though it is more than likely that he himself feared and agonized over the accomplishment of just such a complete end. We see this post-exilic adjustment of the message of Jeremiah in the earlier chapters of his book. At 4:27, 5:10, and 5:18 these same words 'I will not make a full end' appear. They create rather an incongruous impression, especially at 4:27, where they form a curiously tame conclusion to the prophet's terrible vision of the disintegration of the whole created order. It seems likely that here and in the other similar verses, an original 'I will make a full end' has been altered into a negative to accord with the fact that this total annihilation did not come about.

From the verses which we have discussed so far, it is

/...

apparent that the Targum, as we might expect, displays a very marked anti-Gentile, pro-Jewish bias. Thus in the case of 48:31, 32, 36 and 49:11, the sense is blatantly altered in order to eliminate any notion of sympathy for the nations. Again, at 46:28, the reassuring aspect of the oracle is brought to the fore and emphasized. We also become aware of this anti-Gentile bias in the interpretations of the mediaeval commentators. Kimchi interprets 48:31, 32, 36 in such a way that the notion of Yahweh's sympathy for Moab is removed. Likewise at 49:11, he is not happy with the idea of Yahweh reassuring Edom about his care for Edomite widows and orphans, and interprets the text so that the words are those of the would-be helpers of Edom, and not those of the God of Israel. At 49:25, Rashi explains 'my joyful city' as an exclamation made by the king of Damascus, while at 46:28 he too, like the Targumist, assumes that the oracle ought to end on a note of reassurance, not of warning. Of course it could be argued that some of the above interpretations represent attempts to alleviate the difficulties and incongruities of the verses involved; but even in cases where the verse itself poses no problem when given its most natural meaning, we find the anti-Gentile bias coming through. For example at 50:19, Kimchi remarks grimly 'for as he took vengeance on the kings of Asshur and Babylon, so he will be avenged upon all who oppress Israel'. Kimchi has contemporary oppressors in mind here. A further noteworthy feature of the above verses is the frequency with which both ancient and modern interpreters have offered identical or similar solutions to the problems with which they have had to

/...

grapple. The modern commentator, of course, has the great advantage of not feeling himself bound to accommodate all the contradictory and incongruous aspects of the text within the thought of a single prophet.

49:16 תִּפְלַצְתְּךָ הִשִּׁיא אֹתָךְ זְדוֹן לִבֶּךָ .....

The verse has a parallel in Obadiah 3, except that there the word תִּפְלָצָת is not used. What is it, then, that 'deceives' the Edomites in 49:16? תִּפְלָצָת is a Hapax Legomenon, but is generally connected with the verb פלץ 'shudder', which occurs once in the hithpael in Job 9:6 to describe the movement of the earth's pillars. The noun פַּלָּצוּת occurs four times,[20] and means 'horror' 'shuddering'. Most versions and commentators adduce a similar sense for תִּפְלָצָת. Thus the following translations :-

Targum	:	your arrogance (ܬܪܝܨܘܬܟ)
Vulgate	:	arrogantia tua
AV. RV	:	thy terribleness
RSV	:	the horror you inspire
Driver[21]	:	in men's shuddering at thee
NEB	:	your overbearing arrogance.

These translations understand תִּפְלָצָת as 'horror', on the basis of the root פלץ. With the possible exception of AV and RV, all construe the second person suffix as an objective genitive, that is, 'the shuddering occasioned by you'. 'Your arrogance' is a further interpretation of this, which makes plain the attitude of mind engendered by the dread fear which Edom inspired.

Kimchi mentions the conventional connection of תִּפְלָצָת

/...

with the noun פִּקֻּצוֹת , but remarks that there are some who understand תִּפְקֻצָתֵךְ to mean 'your idolatry'. This interpretation rests upon the connection of תִּפְקֻצֶת with the word מִפְקֶצֶת . The latter occurs at 1 Kgs.15:13 to describe the otherwise unidentified object, a 'thing of horror' which was made by Asa's mother Maacah for the worship of Asherah. Thus מִפְקֶצֶת is thought to have the developed meaning 'an object of idolatrous worship', and תִּפְקֶצֶת is understood as 'idolatry'. In the light of this explanation noted by Kimchi, the LXX translation becomes of interest:

ἡ παιγνία σου ἐνεχείρησέ σοι . . .

It is rather puzzling that the LXX has translated the phrase 'your plaything (or sport) has attacked you'. Things become clearer, however, in the light of the rendering found in the Greek Version of Symmachus at 51:18. In this verse, MT contains a reference to מַעֲשֵׂה תַעְתֻּעִים 'works of delusion', that is, idols. Symmachus describes these as παιγνίας . It seems then, that this noun παιγνία which stands in the LXX of 49:16 denotes an idol, or refers to idolatry, and it is this which has 'deceived' the Edomites. It is interesting that the root צחק 'play' 'make sport' 'mock', for which the Greek equivalent is usually παίζειν (eg. Gen.39:17, Ex.32:6, 2 Sam.2:14 etc.) is thought in Rabbinic exegesis to contain a reference to idolatry:

> 'This term sport (צחק) refers to idolatry, as in the verse : And rose up to make sport (Ex.XXXII, 6)'[22]

We might translate ἡ παιγνία σου as 'your ridiculous thing', that is, something worthy of mockery, an idol. This is probably an erroneous interpretation of תִּפְקֻצָתֵךְ however.

/...

What we require in this word is a parallel to 'the pride of your heart', some attitude of mind which causes Edom to deem herself above censure from God or man, and to think herself secure from both in her lofty dwelling place which is 'as high as the eagle's'. Edom is not condemned for worshipping idols but for exalting herself and so showing contempt for God.[23] It is likely therefore that תִּפְלַצְתְּךָ in fact means 'the dread you inspire' or more explicitly 'your arrogance'.

As we mentioned above, this verse has a near parallel in Obadiah verse 3. In fact, the whole section 49:14-16 corresponds closely to Obadiah vv.1-4. The student of the Bible is thereby faced with the problem of the relationship between these two texts. It is interesting to notice the different ways in which the ancient and modern scholar tackles this problem. T.H.Robinson says this:

> 'It is hardly to be doubted that these two texts represent two forms of the same original. The question then arises, which of the two is nearer to that original ..... It is generally held now that the text of Jeremiah is better preserved in this passage than that of Obadiah.'[24]

This illustrates the approach of the modern scholar. He sees it as part of his task to evaluate both passages in an attempt to determine which is the more original, or which is dependent upon which : he reckons with a greater or lesser degree of textual corruption in the case of each text. The relationship between these parts of Obadiah and Jeremiah is evaluated in a completely different way in the Talmud:

> 'Rabbi Isaac said: The same communication is revealed to many prophets, yet no two prophets prophesy in identical phraseology. (Thus) Obadiah said "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee", whilst Jeremiah said "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee..."'[25]

/...

Rabbi Isaac goes on to look at the case of 1 Kgs.22, where the king of Israel is said to have gathered together some four hundred prophets, in order to enquire about the wisdom of going up to fight against Ramoth Gilead. They all answered 'Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king'. Since all these men couched their prophecies in identical words, they were manifestly false prophets, whose intelligence did not come from God. In this way the Rabbi accounts for the differences and similarities between Obadiah and Jeremiah. Both texts contain genuine oracles of these prophets, delivered to them independently of one another, by God. The very differences in wording which indicate textual corruption or intentional change to the modern scholar are viewed by the Rabbi as conclusive evidence that these are two genuinely inspired prophecies, since 'no two prophets prophesy in identical phraseology'. This dictum is also quoted by Rashi in explanation of the relationship between Jeremiah 49:9 and Obadiah 5.

51:9 רִפְאוּ אֶת־בָּבֶל וְלֹא נִרְפָּתָה
עֲזֻבוּהָ וְנֵלֵךְ אִישׁ לְאַרְצוֹ . . . .

Who speaks? Is it perhaps those who are advised to flee in v.6, or those whose 'vindication' is about to come forth (v.10)? Since the oracle against Babylon appears to be built up of a number of small, originally independent sections, and since the subject matter undergoes so many abrupt changes, it is very precarious to assume that the speaker or addressee in one section is the same as that of the section which comes before or after it in the present arrangement of the oracle. The vagueness which attaches to v.9 is also apparent in v.6 'Flee

/...

from the midst of Babylon'. Rashi believes that Israel is the recipient of this advice, but Kimchi thinks that the reference is to 'the foreign men who were in her' (Babylon), and further, that it is these foreigners who are in Babylon at the time of her fall who speak the words of v.9. Kimchi may have had in mind here either foreign mercenary troops, who must have formed a significant part of the Babylonian imperial army, or the traders and merchants, capitalists of all complexions, who tend to gravitate towards the hub of an empire. Either of these two classes of people could claim to have attempted to 'heal' Babylon; it is also the case that these same people would not hesitate to desert her and head for home in the time of her peril ('forsake her...'). There is therefore something to be said for Kimchi's interpretation of verses 6 and 9. Rashi, who as we have said, believes that v.6 is addressed to Israel, has no suggestion to offer at v.9. It would certainly not make sense to say that Israel speaks in the latter verse. How could the Jewish exiles in Babylon have 'healed' her, and how could they have wanted to?

All theories regarding the identity of the speaker in v.9 remain purely conjectural. It is interesting that in a case such as v.9 or v.6, the mediaeval commentators tend to cast around for a reasonable and logical identification. When faced with vaguenesses and obscurities of this type, the modern commentator tends to adopt a more agnostic stance, and takes cognizance of the use by the poet of literary devices and his exercise of poetic licence, in order to achieve a certain effect. Rudolph, for example, does not feel it incumbent upon him to

/...

hazard an identification of the 'we' of v.9. He comments:

> 'Babel gleicht einem Todkranken, um den man sich umsonst mit Arzneien und Ärzten bemüht (46:11, 8:22); man hat für den hohen Patienten Ärzte aus aller Welt herbeigerufen, aber ihre Diagnose 9a ist vernichtend : ihre Mittel versagen, sie lassen den Kranken liegen und gehen nach Hause (9a bleibt ganz im Bilde, man darf nicht fragen, wer mit den Ärzten gemeint ist)'.[26]

Thus for Rudolph the whole thing is simply a literary figure, a striking way of saying that Babylon's end is inevitable; It is not correct or appropriate to ask questions regarding the identity of the would be 'healers' of Babylon. Rudolph also thinks that in v.6 the advice to flee is proffered to no more specific group than those people who are caught up in the theatre of war. It could be that v.6 simply features a device calculated to increase drama, pace and tension in the oracle, and was never meant to address itself to anyone in particular.[27]

We have seen the approach of the mediaeval commentators and that of a modern commentator in verses 6 and 9; a third approach is adopted in Midrash Rabbah, and in the Babylonian Talmud. This approach is according to the derash type of exegesis, which often involves a quite fanciful interpretation of a text which is usually taken out of context and treated as if every word could be used to justify and support 'heaps and heaps of laws'. This Rabbinic method of exegesis is difficult for us to understand, and impossible to sympathize with. We believe that a text had an original meaning, which we strive to recover, albeit often with limited success. The practitioners of the derash exegesis regarded an inspired text as having not one original and thus 'true' meaning, but many meanings and endless possibilities. Midrash Rabbah uses this verse in connection

/...

with the story of the tower of Babel in Gen. ch.11:

> 'We would have healed Babylon : in the generation of Enosh
> But she was not healed : in the generation of the Flood.
> Forsake her, and let us go everyone into his own country :
> as it is written, "And the whole earth was of one
> language, etc." (Gen.11:1)'[28]

The Babylonian Talmud furnishes two further interpretations:

> 'We would have healed Babylon. Ulla said "This refers to
> Nebuchadnezzar" (that is, that God desired his descendants
> to become proselytes).
> Rabbi Samuel ben Nahmani said "By this are meant the rivers
> of Babylon" (that is, which are unfit for drinking
> purposes)[29]'

Since we have mentioned 51:6 in connection with 51:9, it seems appropriate to mention here that 51:6 is one of a number of exhortations to flee which occur throughout chapters 50 and 51. (see 50:8, 28, 51:6, 45, 50). 50:28 and 51:45 definitely refer to Israel, and there is a good possibility that the others do too, despite Kimchi's opinion to the contrary at 51:6. The whole tenor of the oracle against Babylon, interwoven as it is with descriptions of Babylon's destruction and oracles of salvation for Israel, makes it clear that doom for the one means salvation for the other. Why then is Israel called upon to flee, since the author obviously does not contemplate that the fall of Babylon threatens the exiles in any way? The exhortations to flee can only be intended as literary devices to increase the sense of drama and vividness of the oracle. We are of course reminded of the story of Lot at Sodom in Genesis 19. In 19:17, Lot is urged by his angelic visitors to flee for his life, lest he be consumed in the punishment of the city. It seems that the exhortation to flee has a much greater significance in this saga; the wrath of God is thought of as an indiscriminately destructive force, which will consume Lot if he does not flee,

/...

in spite of Yahweh's intention to spare his life. In the Babylon oracle, on the other hand, the exhortation to flee has lost this significance, and has become more of a poetic motif, a device used for dramatic effect. No real danger threatens the exiles.

49:35 כֹּה אָמַר יהוה צְבָאוֹת הִנְנִי שֹׁבֵר אֶת־קֶשֶׁת עֵילָם
רֵאשִׁית גְּבוּרָתָם׃

This verse is employed in the Babylonian Talmud in quite an interesting fashion.[30] Reflecting on the words of the Mishnah 'He who prophesies what was not told him', the Talmud gives as an example of such a person Jeremiah's opponent Hananiah ben Azur. For, having heard these words of Jeremiah concerning Elam (49:35), Hananiah took two steps which showed him to be lacking in the integrity which belongs to the true prophets.

Firstly, he drew an a minori conclusion from Jeremiah's words; if Elam, which only came to assist Babylon, was to fall in the manner specified in 49:35, how much more so the Babylonians themselves! Thus he concluded that Babylon would fall. Secondly, Hananiah added on his own authority that the fall of Babylon would take place within two years. The result was the prophecy recorded in Jer.28:2,3, 'I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon..... within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the Lord's house.....'. The Talmud comments:

> 'Since the a minori reasoning has been given for (Biblical) exegesis, it is as though it had been told to him (Jeremiah); hence only to Hananiah was it not revealed'.

That is, only the prophet who uttered the words was entitled to use the a minori reasoning in order to make a further deduction

/...

from them. Jeremiah uttered the prophecy against Elam; only he was entitled to prophesy against Babylon on the basis of that.

This Talmudic comment is interesting in that it sets the conflict between Jeremiah and Hananiah in an unusual light. Jeremiah's trenchant opposition to Hananiah (ch.28) is made to spring not from his conviction that Babylon would not fall and must not be resisted, but rather from his outrage at Hananiah's usurpation of his, Jeremiah's, own right to deduce the fall of Babylon from a prophecy against Babylon's ally Elam which had been delivered to him, and at Hananiah's further presumption in adding on his own authority that Babylon would fall within two years. It is therefore seen as a much less absolute conflict than it appears to be on the face of it, and one which does not come into contradiction with the fact that Jeremiah himself prophesied against Babylon at a later date. For if the conflict of ch.28 is seen as a clash of utterly opposing standpoints regarding the fate of Babylon and the possibility or resisting her, then we are left with a contradiction, if it is assumed that any part of the oracle against Babylon recorded in chs.50-51 stems from Jeremiah himself.[31] How could the prophet on the one hand advise surrender to Babylon, and reject out of hand any notion of Babylon's defeat, and yet on the other deliver oracles depicting the imminent fall of Babylon and salvation of Israel? It seems that by implying that the conflict between Jeremiah and Hananiah was not absolute, and that Jeremiah could still reserve the right to prophasy against Babylon on the basis of his Elam oracle, the Talmud is subtly removing the apparent

/...

contradiction between the views expressed by the Jeremiah of chapter 28 and those of the author of chs. 50-51. This is a problem with which modern defenders of the authenticity of chs. 50-51 have also to grapple.

48:30 אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי נְאֻם־יהוה עֶבְרָתוֹ וְלֹא־כֵן
בַּדָּיו לֹא־כֵן עָשׂוּ׃

The renderings of the LXX and Targum suggest עֲבֹדָתוֹ 'his work' instead of עֶבְרָתוֹ 'his wrath', but the latter occurs in the parallel verse Isaiah 16:6, and is therefore to be preferred. 'I know his wrath' is slightly obscure. Rashi and Kimchi interpret 'wrath' to mean the unreasonable hatred which Moab bore towards Israel. NEB renders the phrase 'I know his arrogance', no doubt because in the Isaiah parallel, 'wrath' is mentioned together with two words denoting pride. On the basis of the Isaiah passage, BHK suggests that the athnah in 48:30 should be shifted from כֵּן to בַּדָּיו, thus making וְלֹא־כֵן בַּדָּיו into one phrase. This seems to have been how the LXX translator understood the verse:

ἐγὼ δὲ ἔγνων ἔργα αὐτοῦ · οὐχὶ τὸ ἱκανὸν αὐτοῦ,
οὐχ οὕτως ἐποίησε.

LXX has also read יָדָיו 'his sufficiency' 'sufficient for him' instead of בַּדָּיו 'his boasting', and has understood כֵּן as 'thus' (οὕτως), presumably in both cases, although the first כֵּן is not translated. The punctuation suggested by the LXX translation is also supported by Kimchi, and the modern Versions RSV and NEB follow it. The sense of the verse is not greatly affected by the shift of the athnah. Following the Massoretic punctuation the verse could be translated:

/...

'I know his wrath, says the Lord - and it is groundless. As for his idle boasting, it is based on nothing'.

Rashi understands לֹא-כֵן עָשׂוּ to mean 'they have not done what is fitting', or 'they have not acted in a worthy manner'. He explains that they did not recompense the descendants of Abraham, even though he 'fought with the kings and rescued Lot their father'. The reference here is to Abraham's battle with the kings recorded in Genesis 14, and Rashi's exegesis can be traced to Midrash Rabbah:

> 'Lot enjoyed four boons on account of Abraham: (i) And Lot went with him (Gen.XII,4); (ii) And Lot also, etc., (iii) And he also brought back his brother Lot, and his goods (ib. XIV,16); and (iv) And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow (ib. XIX,29). Now in return for these, his (Lot's) descendants should have requited us with kindness, yet not alone did they not requite us with kindness, but they even did us evil.'[32]

Midrash Rabbah provides another interpretation of the verse, which is based on the translation of עברתו not as 'his wrath' but as 'his conception' (עִבֻּרָתוֹ). בריו is understood as 'branches' or 'scions'. The interpretation is as follows:

> 'I know his conception, saith the Lord, that it was not so. Rabbi Hanina b. Papa and Rabbi Simon disagree. Rabbi Hanina b. Papa said 'The original conception of Moab was not brought about in a spirit of immorality but with a noble motive; but his scions did not act thus, but with immoral motives, as it says: And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moab." (Num.XXV 1). Rabbi Simon said "The first conception of Moab was not with a noble motive, but in a spirit of immorality. His scions did not act thus, but with a noble motive, as it says: And she went down to the threshing floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her". (Ruth III 6)'[33]

Both Rabbis agree that the conception of Moab was not brought about in the spirit in which a similar act was committed by

/...

Moab's descendants. Hanina stresses the nobility of Moab's conception, in contrast to the ignoble actions of the descendants, whereas Simon maintains that the conception of Moab was 'in a spirit of immorality', contrasting it with the noble actions of Ruth. Both Rabbis are exploiting the obscurity of כֵּן־אִם as a comment upon 'his conception'.

This is no longer a serious attempt at exegesis; as in much midrashic exegesis, the verse has become a mere springboard for an exercise in Rabbinic logic and ingenuity. It is difficult to decide whether Rabbis Hanina and Simon really cared either way about Moab and his descendants' motives. It seems more likely that they are indulging in an academic exercise, in order to test each other's knowledge of Scripture and facility in using it to argue a point.

51:10 הוֹצִיא יהוה אֶת־צִדְקֹתֵינוּ

MT literally means 'The Lord has brought forth our righteousnesses.' The plural צדקתינו is difficult, and it may be that the singular צִדְקָתֵנוּ should be read with the Syriac Version and certain manuscripts of the Targum. The LXX seems to have read צִדְקָתוֹ (τὸ κρίμα αὐτοῦ). The older English Versions AV and RV translate the word as 'our righteousness', while RSV prefers 'our vindication' and NEB 'our innocence'. The revisers of NEB have decided that 'victory' is the best translation.

The sense of הוֹצִיא is not quite clear either. The verb can mean 'produce' 'bring into being' (see Ex.8:14, Is.54:16), or it can have the sense 'exhibit' 'reveal'. It seems that this later sense lies behind the NEB rendering,

/...

'The Lord has made our innocence plain to see'. This translation carries with it the implication that Israel has been innocent all along, and that now her God is making this fact evident. It follows that the author of this verse believed that Israel had suffered unjustly by being exiled - a view very much at odds with the preaching of Jeremiah himself.[34] An alternative translation, employing the first meaning of הוֹצִיא, would be 'The Lord has brought about our victory'. This carries no implication that Israel had not deserved exile, and is perhaps the best translation, since the notion of 'victory' is most appropriate to the context.

We may note an interesting interpretation which Rashi provides for this verse. He draws upon the Rabbinic doctrine of vicarious merit, about which Travers Herford says:

> 'Merit being taken to be a psychological fact, and not a boastful assertion of personal excellence, it was held that the merit of one who had much could be available for those who had little or none'.[35]

In the light of this doctrine, Rashi comments:

> 'We were remembered before him for merit, and the righteous acts of our fathers came before him'.

God is disposed to impute righteousness to Israel because of the accumulated merit of the fathers' righteous acts. Israel is to be delivered, as if the righteous acts were its own.[36] Thus can the delivered exiles speak of 'our' righteous acts (צִדְקֹתֵינוּ).

46:18 חַי־אָנִי נְאֻם־הַמֶּלֶךְ יהוה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ
כִּי כְתָבוֹר בֶּהָרִים וּכְכַרְמֶל בַּיָּם יָבוֹא׃

There are two aspects of this verse which are not made entirely clear in MT; the subject of יָבוֹא , and more importantly,

/...

the exact sense of the comparison with Tabor and Carmel. The context affords us little help with either of these. RSV has translated in such a way that the obscurity is not lessened: '... like Tabor among the mountains, and like Carmel by the sea, shall one come'. This Version has taken אִם־ to refer to the enemy who will overthrow Egypt, and intentionally preserves the vagueness of the allusion by translating 'shall one come'. But what does it mean to say that one shall come 'like Tabor and Carmel'? These are two of the most famous and oft mentioned mountains in the Old Testament,[37] and the reference to them here is perhaps meant to stress the idea of loftiness, majesty and grandeur. The translation of NEB suggests that the one who comes is seen to share these qualities with Tabor and Carmel: 'one shall come, mighty as Tabor among the hills, as Carmel by the sea'. A different understanding of the simile is reflected in the AV rendering 'Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come'. The enemy is not directly compared to Carmel and Tabor here. Instead, the certainty of his coming is likened to the certainty of the existence of these mountains at their respective sites in Israel. This seems a superior translation to that of RSV and NEB, since, if the comparison has to do with the might of the enemy, as NEB supposes, it means that mention of the sites of these mountains 'among the hills' and 'by the sea' is rendered rather superfluous, for the point of the comparison rests upon the strength of these mountains, and not where they are. In the AV, however, mention of the respective sites is important; as surely as these mountains are to be found at these locations,

/...

so will the enemy come. The AV translation is also noteworthy in that it seems to echo the understanding of the verse which is exhibited in the Targum and in Rashi, although these find a slightly different subject for בוא .

Targum: אלו טבור אית דתגור אית דטורא
דסגי דמתגמא בים סגין ית תגרי ה
וכרמלא בימא כין ית תגרי ה

Rashi: 'Just as it is true to say that Tabor stands firmly fixed among the mountains, and mount Carmel by the sea, so equally truly will this word come to pass concerning Egypt'.

The coming of the disaster (or word of prophesy, according to Rashi) is as certain as the locations at which Tabor and Carmel can be found.

It goes without saying that the obscurity of this verse has provided a challenge to the Rabbinic exponents of derash exegesis. They understand that the notion of 'coming' is the point of the comparison between the subject of בוא and the mountains. To the modern commentator this is completely meaningless, not to say absurd; he would not expect to find objects of permanence and fixity, such as mountains, used to illustrate the coming of an enemy, but rather something suggestive of swiftness, mercilessness, inexorability, such as the lion advancing from its lair (4:7), or the imagery of eagle and whirlwind (2:13). The Talmudic exegesis of the verse, however, is grounded in the tradition that Tabor and Carmel came to Israel at the giving of the law:

"When the Holy One came to reveal the Torah on Sinai, the mountains ran about and contended with each other, each claiming "The Torah shall be revealed on me". Tabor came from Beth Elim and Carmel from Apamea. Thus it is written: As I live .... like Tabor and like Carmel shall he come'.[38]

/...

On the basis of this tradition it is possible for the Rabbis to reason that just as Tabor and Carmel came, so shall 'he' come. Construed in this way, the verse is used by R.Eliezar ha-Kappar to demonstrate that 'the synagogues and houses of learning in Babylon will in time come to be planted in Eretz Israel'.

> 'As Tabor and Carmel came; Now, can we not draw an inference here a fortiori? Seeing that Carmel and Tabor, which came only on a single occasion to learn the Torah, are implanted in Eretz Israel, how much more must this be the case with the synagogues and houses of learning where the Torah is read and expounded!'[39]

This is not a serious attempt at exegsis in our sense of the word. The simile is intriguing in its obscurity, and the legend concerning the mountains, which the Rabbis doubtless took with a liberal pinch of salt, is utilized simply in order to explore the possibilities of the simile. Rabbi Eliezar is playing an intellectual game with the verse, and is not concerned with the 'original' meaning, or what it meant to the author. In Rabbinic exegesis a verse such as this one gains its significance by being used, however ingeniously (perhaps the more ingeniously the better!), in scholarly debate.

Finally we must mention that Kimchi records yet another interpretation. Why are the enemies of Egypt likened to Tabor? His key to understanding this comes from Hosea 5:1, 'for you have been.... a net spread upon Tabor'. Just as Tabor is a snare and a trap in this verse, so the enemies of Egypt will capture her. He is even more ingenious with respect to Carmel: 'like the trees (forests) of Carmel which lead to the sea, so they will lead them (the Egyptians) into captivity'!

/...

46:22 קוֹלָהּ כַּנָּחָשׁ יֵלֵךְ כִּי־בְחַיִל יֵלֵכוּ
וּבְקַרְדֻּמּוֹת בָּאוּ לָהּ כְּחֹטְבֵי עֵצִים׃

Translated literally, the verse means 'Her voice goes like the serpent, for they go in force, and they come to her with axes, like woodcutters'. The first half reads rather awkwardly. The feminine suffix on לָהּ refers to Egypt, but the repetition כִּי . . . . . כוּ has occasioned some suspicion. The reaction of Egypt to the fact that the enemy comes 'in force' 'like woodcutters' is described in the words קוֹלָהּ כַּנָּחָשׁ יֵלֵךְ ; but what does it mean to say that 'her voice goes like the serpent'? Both BHS and BHK propose emendations of the text. BHS suggests קוֹלָהּ כְּנַהֲם יוֹלֵדָה 'her cry is like the groan of one giving birth'. The older edition, BHK, prefers to read קוֹל כְּנָחָשׁ שֹׁרֵק 'a sound like a hissing serpent', thus following the LXX, which reads:

φωνὴ ὡς ὄφεως συρίζοντος, ὅτι ἐν ἄμμῳ πορεύσονται·
ἐν ἀξίναις ἥξουσιν ἐπ' αὐτὴν ὡς κόπτοντες ξύλα.

The LXX therefore translates the verse 'a sound like a hissing serpent – for they go (march) across the sand. With axes they come against her ....'. חָיִל is rendered as if it were חוֹל 'sand' which is probably due to a simple error of the eye, confusing י with ו . It is probable that the translator, having read 'for they go across the sand', turned his attention to the sound which 'goes like the serpent'. He has decided that the reference is to the hissing sound made by the marching of myriad feet over sand. συρίζοντος is therefore an interpretative translation of יֵלֵךְ , and BHK is mistaken in thinking that a reading שֹׁרֵק lies behind it.

/...

It does seem as if the LXX read קול and not הקולה. The Targum produces the following translation:

קל נילקוש זינהון כחילין אתין אתי נמשרין

דהכין נגיהון . . .

'The sound of the rattling of their weaponry (is) like creeping serpents, for they come upon them in troops....'. BHK suggests that the Targum may have been reading קול כְּנָחָשׁ זוֹחֵל 'a sound like a creeping serpent', but this is probably not so. As with the LXX, so the Targum is doing its best with a text that read הֵנָּה. Both translators have asked themselves in what way the sound of an army 'goes' like a serpent. The LXX decides that the sound of feet marching over sand recalls the serpent's hiss; the Targumist thinks that the rattling and clicking of weaponry recalls the sound made by 'creeping serpents', although this is a trifle obscure.

Of the English Versions, AV and RV are content to translate literally 'the sound thereof goes like the serpent'. NEB prefers 'hark, she is hissing like a snake', and RSV 'she makes a sound like a serpent gliding away'. Since the serpent has rather a limited repertoire in this respect, we are compelled to conclude that the קול כנחש must indicate one of the above sounds!

It is not clear why Egypt is compared to a snake here, but Midrash Rabbah furnishes two possible explanations.[40]

As in 46:18, midrashic exegesis interprets this verse on the basis of a legend:

> 'When the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him (the serpent) "Upon thy belly shalt thou go", ministering angels descended and cut off his hands and feet, and his cries resounded from one end of the world to the other. Thus the serpent comes to throw light upon the

/...

downfall of Babylonia[41] and is itself illumined thereby, viz: The cry thereof shall go like the serpent's.'[42]

The Rabbis therefore understand the verse to mean that just as the serpent's cry went forth far and wide, so will the cry of Egypt at her downfall. In this sense her 'voice' is like the serpent's.

Curiously enough, Rashi can think of nothing else to say in this verse except to quote the midrashic legend. This indicates the measure of his puzzlement regarding the exact sense of

קולה כנחש ילך .

48:6

נָסוּ מַלְּטוּ נַפְשְׁכֶם וּתְהִיוּ כַּעֲרוֹעֵר בַּמִּדְבָּר :

The Moabites are urged to flee for their lives, and to be like 'the Aroer in the desert'. What is this 'Aroer'? The Versions read as follows:

LXX : ὄνος ἄγριος 'wild ass' (probably reading עָרוֹד)

Vulgate : myricae 'shrub'

Targum : אַרְמְלָא דִּיתִיב בְּמַדְבְּרָא לְבַר

'the fortress (or tower) which dwells alone in the desert'.

Of the English Versions, AV and RV read 'heath', thus agreeing with the Vulgate; RSV 'wild ass' follows the LXX, while NEB has 'sand grouse', thus agreeing in principle with the LXX and RSV that the 'Aroer' is an animal.

It would seem that there is a connection between the Aroer of this verse and the 'Ar'ar in the wilderness' which is mentioned in 17:6. In the latter verse 'the man who puts his trust in man' is likened to the עֲרֹעֵר בָּעֲרָבָה , and it is said that he will 'dwell in the parched places of the desert'. The

/...

man who trusts in God, on the other hand, is like 'a tree planted by water'.

The Vulgate, followed by AV and RV, has decided that the phrases 'Aroer in the desert' at 48:6 and 'Ar'ar in the wilderness' at 17:6 mean the same thing. They denote a shrub or a heath which grows in parched land. The LXX (ἀγριομυρίκη), Targum (אתּוּנוּ), RSV 'shrub' and NEB 'juniper' are in agreement with the Vulgate that in 17:6 ערער stands for some kind of desert plant, but as we have noted above, they believe that the Aroer of 48:6 has a different meaning.

When we turn to the mediaeval commentators we find that Kimchi equates 17:6 and 48:6, and explains that what is designated is 'a great tree in the wilderness, in the land of drought'. Rashi too is aware of the tradition which links 48:6 and 17:6 : at both verses he remarks that the term in question denotes a solitary tree, one which is to be found away from the other trees of the wood. Rashi has another note at 48:6. 'Aroer', he says, means

> 'The fortress Aroer, constructed in the desert. Its environs are not inhabited even by tent dwellers. And a fortress standing in an uninhabited place seems like a ruin'.

Here he is apparently recording the Targumic understanding of Aroer in 48:6. It is difficult to know how the Targum has arrived at its translation. The name Aroer was also given to a Moabite border town, which is actually mentioned at 48:19, and it may be that the Targumist has this town in mind when he speaks in 48:6 of the 'fortress' Aroer. He may have the idea that Moab is encouraged to be like the town Aroer, which is a fortress built in the wilderness, in a solitary location.

/...

It seems probable that the Ar'ar of 17:6 and the Aroer of 48:6 must allude to the same thing. At 48:6 Rashi illustrates the root idea of 'barrenness' 'childlessness' which is inherent in both words, by quoting Gen.15:2; Abraham is said to be עֲרִירִי 'childless'. The tradition that at 17:6 at least, the word ערער denotes some kind of desert plant, goes back at least as far as the LXX ἀγριομυρίκη . Menahem[43] has later explained that it is a solitary plant which grows apart from the other desert plants, hence the idea of 'childlessness'.

It is probable that the Versions and commentators from LXX onward have decided that ערער at chapter 17 stands for a desert plant, simply because the context seems to indicate that a reference to a plant of some kind is required here. We are not therefore compelled to conclude that this is in fact what the word means, either at ch.17 or ch.48. 17:6 could be translated 'He is like a desolate wanderer in the desert' and 48:6 'Be like a solitary wanderer in the wilderness'. It is difficult to make a decision one way or the other, but it seems to me that, while the imagery at 17:6 does not demand that we see a reference to a plant in ערער , it is considerably improved if we follow the majority of Versions in understanding the word in this way. The man who trusts in God is likened to a tree planted by the water; it seems most appropriate that the man who trusts in man should have previously been likened to a solitary desert plant. Such a man will find himself alone. His existence is without purpose, and so is arid and barren as that of the solitary plant which exists amid the bleakness of the desert landscape. It seems to me that there is nothing to be gained by departing from the

/...

traditional interpretation of ערער at this chapter.

48:6 is not so easy, since unlike 17, the context gives us no help in deciding what Aroer means. Are we simply to translate according to the root idea of solitariness, without assuming that some sort of plant is meant here? I prefer to follow the policy of the Vulgate, and assume that the 'solitary one' in the desert again refers to a shrub, although this may not be entirely satisfactory.

There is an irony about this verse. If the reference is to a desert plant, then the aspects of it which the verse highlights are not, as in ch.17, its solitary nature, but rather, its hardihood and resilience. Moab is jeeringly urged to emulate the Aroer, to acquire the hardihood and tenacity which alone enables a plant to survive in the desert. Only by adopting such an environment, only by clinging to its existence with the same tenacity can Moab hope to survive. The irony of the verse consists in the utter impossibility for human life to exist under these conditions. Moab can no more adapt to the life-style of the Aroer than she can to the rocky dwelling place of the dove (v.28).[44] So she is doomed.

48:28 עִזְבוּ עָרִים וְשִׁכְנוּ בַּסֶּלַע יוֹשְׁבֵי מוֹאָב
וְהָיוּ כְּיוֹנָה תְּקַנֵּן בְּעֶבְרֵי פִי־פָחַת׃

The Moabites are advised to take up their abode in the rocky places, to imitate the nesting habits of the dove, so that they may escape destruction. This piece of advice is not meant seriously; as in v.6,[45] the advice is meant ironically. The Moabites are mockingly urged to adopt a different life-style in a completely alien environment. But it is impossible for them

/...

to survive among the rocks with the doves, as the speaker well knows. Hence the advice becomes a taunt.

The verse describes a habitat which, while alien and inhospitable to man, is actually quite natural for the dove.[46] Rashi emphasises the precariousness of the existence which the dove chooses for itself. It nests inside the hole at the mouth of a wadi, when the water level is low and the hole is empty. When the wadi is next in spate, the water sweeps away the nest, and the dove flees. This is the sort of precarious existence which the Moabites are jeeringly urged to adopt.

Kimchi concentrates on the motives behind the dove's unusual nesting habits. It puts its nest on the furthest reaches of chasms, so that men will not be able to capture the young, since from the near side they are unable to cross over to reach the nest.

The Mediaeval commentators are correct in assuming that the dove is conceived of as acting in a natural way in its own environment. The Targum, on the other hand, interprets the verse in a slightly different manner:

שבוקו לרוגא ושרו בכיפא יתבי מואב
והוו כיונה דשבקא פום שובכה ונחתא ושריא
באורעית גובא:

'Be like a dove which abandons the mouth of the dovecote, and goes down and lives at the bottom of a pit'.

The Targum assumes that the behaviour of the dove is unnatural. Only some most calamitous event could induce a dove to abandon the comfort and security of the dovecote for the darkness of inhospitable rock at the bottom of a pit. A calamity of similar proportions will force Moab to act in a similarly desperate and

/...

unnatural manner to leave home and security behind, and to search for some inaccessible hiding place in which to exist.

48:9 תְּנוּ־צִיץ לְמוֹאָב כִּי נָצוֹא תֵצֵא
וְעָרֶיהָ לְשַׁמָּה תִהְיֶינָה מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב בָּהֶן׃

The Versions disagree about the first half of the verse:

LXX : δότε σημεῖα τῇ Μωαβ, ὅτι αφῇ ἀναφθήσεται

Vulgate : date florem Moab, quia florens egredietur

Targum : אתנו כתרא מן מואב ארי מגלא תגלי

There are two problems: the meaning of צִיץ and the meaning of נָצוֹא תֵצֵא . We may begin with the question of the verb, since its meaning determines to a great extent the meaning which is allotted to צִיץ . The phrase נָצוֹא תֵצֵא constitutes something of a <u>forma mixta</u>. נָצוֹא is the infinitive absolute of the verb נָצָא (נָצָה), while תֵצֵא is imperfect from the root יָצָא 'go forth'. The Vulgate and the Targum treat the verb as if it were from the root יָצָא . The LXX αφῇ ἀναφθήσεται construes it as if infinitive and imperfect both came from III נצה . The English Versions AV RV and RSV translate the verb as 'for she would fly away', assuming that the root is נצא(ה) 'flee'. NEB has the translation 'for she shall be laid in ruins'. The translators are reading נָצֹה תִצֶּה, and are assuming that the root נצה bears the meaning 'fall in ruins' which is recorded in BDB under III נצה.[47] Rudolph also adopts this policy, translating the verb 'es wird völlig zerstört'.[48] The trouble with the translation 'for she would fly away' (RSV) is that the meaning 'fly' for נצה (equivalent to נצא) is attested in only one other place in the Old Testament, at Lam.4:15, and here the text is highly dubious and much disputed.

/...

Despite this, however, the meaning 'fly' is accepted in 48:9 by both Rashi and Kimchi on the basis of the Lamentations passage. Thus Kimchi remarks that the expression אצת אצן should be understood as if it were עוף תעוף 'she will surely fly'.

We turn now to the meaning of צ'ץ . Since Rashi and Kimchi have decided that the verb means 'fly', they naturally look for a meaning 'wings' for צ'ץ . Both gloss צ'ץ with the more familiar כָּנָף . The word צ'ץ is not attested in biblical Hebrew with the meaning 'wing', but there is an Aramaic צ'ץ meaning 'fin'. It is this that Kimchi has in mind when he describes צ'צ'ן as 'fins for flying with'. Rashi explains the meaning 'wing' for צ'ץ in another way: he seems to equate צ'ץ with the צִיצִת which is mentioned in Num.15:39 and Ezek.8:3. In the former verse the word is used to denote the tassels which the Israelites are bidden to hang upon their garments, while in Ezekiel it denotes the 'lock' of hair by which the prophet is lifted up. The word evidently describes something which is attached or appended to something else. Thus Rashi comments:

> 'Any hanging thing which is appended to or extends from man or beast is called a צ'ץ .'

Rashi is as usual rather terse, but his reasoning seems to be that if אצת אצן means 'she shall surely fly away', then the particular something which is attached, and which is designated by צ'ץ , must, in this instance, be wings.

There are two other possible meanings for צ'ץ which have been drawn upon by the Versions. The word is well attested as meaning 'blossom' or 'flower', and the Vulgate translation

/...

'date florem Moab' seems to reflect this. Elsewhere the word is used to designate something which shines, especially the plate of gold on the front of the high priest's mitre (see Lev.8:9; Ex.28:36; 39:30). The Targum has interpreted the first words of the verse 'Take away the crown from Moab'. It seems that the Targumist has understood צִיץ to mean something which shines, and has concluded that a crown must be indicated, probably with reference to Psalm 132:18, where the verb צִיץ is used of the gleaming of a crown. The LXX has the rendering σημεῖα for צִיץ. BHK expresses the view that the translator is not reading צִיץ at all here, but נֵס 'sign post' 'monument'. It may be, however, that σημεῖα means 'signal' or 'warning'. If so, it is unnecessary to assume a variant reading, since the translator may be investing צִיץ with the meaning 'shining thing', and interpreting this as a reference to some kind of fire signal or beacon.[49] The translators of the NEB appear to understand צִיץ in this way, since they translate the phrase 'Let a warning flash to Moab'.[50]

This verse presents us with a bewildering array of possible translations. The translation favoured by NEB, 'Let a warning flash to Moab, for she shall be laid in ruins' seems to be most appropriate to the context. The second half of the verse runs, 'her cities shall become a desolation, with no inhabitant in them'. The meaning 'laid in ruins' for the verb (reading נָצוּה תִּהְיֶה) accords much better with the following warning that the cities of Moab shall become desolate, than does the meaning 'fly away' supported by Rashi and Kimchi, and found in AV, RV and RSV. In any case, the latter meaning is very

/...

poorly attested for נצא(ה) .

47:5 and 49:4

The problem in these two verses revolves around the meaning of the word עֵמֶק . In 47:5 the word occurs in an oracle against Philistia:

בָּאָה קָרְחָה אֶל־עַזָּה נִדְמְתָה אַשְׁקְלוֹן
שְׁאֵרִית עִמְקָם עַד־מָתַי תִּתְגּוֹדָדִי :

The literal translation of שארית עמקם is 'remnant of their valley' (AV RV). RSV reads 'remnant of the Anakim', a translation which follows the LXX rendering οἱ κατάλοιποι Ενακιμ . NEB reflects yet another interpretation. On the basis of the Akkadian emūqu 'force' 'vigour', NEB has translated the phrase 'poor remnant of their strength'.[51]

The translation 'remnant of their valley, how long will you gash yourselves' is obscure. It may be that 'their valley' designates the coastal plain upon which the Philistine city states were located. 'Remnant of their valley' would in this case be a reference to the remnant of the Philistine nation which was left in their valley, or plain. However, the LXX translation 'remnant of the Anakim' is an interesting one. The word Anakim (עֲנָקִים) denotes the quasi mythological giants mentioned in Joshua 11:21,22; here we are told that Joshua wiped out the Anakim from the hill country of Israel and Judah until 'There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, did some remain'. These three were Philistine cities, and the mention of Anakim in an oracle against Philistia seems very appropriate. It is, therefore, tempting to follow the LXX, as RSV and Rudolph have done,[52]

/...

especially since an oracle of the exilic or post-exilic period, addressed to the long vanished Philistine people, would have been consciously archaic in any case. Mention of the ancient Anakim could only have heightened this deliberately archaic element.

The second verse under consideration is 49:4:

מַה־תִּתְהַלְּלִי בָּעֲמָקִים זָב עִמְקֵךְ הַבַּת הַשּׁוֹבָבָה
הַבֹּטֶחָה בְּאֹצְרֹתַיִךְ מִי יָבוֹא אֵלָי׃

As is the case with 47:5, AV and RV translate עֲמָקִים according to its usual meaning, 'Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley ...'. The Hebrew text is thought by BHK and BHS to be unsatisfactory, and it is suggested that instead of עמקים זב עמקך only בְּעִמְקֵךְ should be read. RSV follows this policy, 'Why do you boast of your valleys, O faithless daughter', and Rudolph has the translation 'Was rühmst du dich deines Tals'.[53] Driver also wishes to emend the text, and explains that it reached its present state because a scribe, surprised at the absolute בעמקים 'in the valleys' glossed it ז׳ בעמקך or זֶה בעמקך 'that is, in thy valley'.[54]

Even if we emend the text to read 'Why do you boast in your valleys', the meaning of the reference to valleys is not clear. Does this refer to the Ammonite pride in the fertility of her land? Is this the 'riches' in which they trusted'. This is the interpretation which the mediaeval commentators place upon the verse. Kimchi comments that she (Ammon) was rejoicing in the land of the plain which was hers, for it yielded harvests in abundance'. About זָב בְּעִמְקֵךְ he says 'this valley in which you rejoice will flow with the blood of the slain'. Rashi also

/...

believes that the reference is to the Ammonite pride in the fertile land, 'For your land is a land of valleys, and no drought affected it, nor did the heat hold sway over it'. But whereas Kimchi thinks that 'your valley flows' means that it will flow with the blood of the slain, Rashi believes that the reference is to the coming of a disastrous flood which will sweep away the produce of the land: 'A great shower of rain came, until the water flowed in the valley and washed away the roots of the crops'.

Despite these ingenious interpretations of '.... valleys, your valley flows' it is probable that in order to make sense of this verse, either MT must be emended in the manner suggested by BHK and others, or עֵמֶק must be given some other meaning than 'valley'. The NEB translation 'Why do you boast of your resources, you whose resources are melting away?' reflects the latter course of action. As at 47:5, the translators have read עמק in the light of Akkadian emuqu. This course is also followed by Dahood, who would translate, 'Why do you boast of your strength? Your strength has ebbed'.[55] Wieder prefers the translation, 'Why do you boast of your strong men? Your strong men are bleeding!'[56] Wieder justifies the use of נזל in connection with the bleeding of slain men by referring to a similar usage at Lam.4:9.

At 47:5 we may say with reasonable confidence that the LXX preserves the superior reading. The reference is not to the 'remnant of their valley' but to the 'remnant of the Anakim'. The author of the oracle against Philistia was aware of the tradition now recorded in Joshua 11:21, 22 that after Joshua's

/...

campaigns against them, a remnant of the Anakim remained in certain Philistine cities.

At 49:4 it is necessary either to emend, or to assume that עֵמֶק does not mean 'valley' in this case, but 'strength' or 'resources'. Since the latter policy enables MT to be kept as it stands, it is to be preferred. It is interesting that the Targum reads at 47:5

שׁאר תּוקפּהון עד אימתי תתחמין

and at 49:4

מא את משתבחא במישרך חרובו תוקפך

In both verses עֵמֶק has been rendered by the root תקף 'be strong'; in the light of this ancient Version it seems that the plausibility of the theory that עֵמֶק can mean 'strength' or 'resources' is greatly enhanced.

49:20 אִם־לֹא יִסְחָבוּם צְעִירֵי הַצֹּאן
אִם־לֹא יַשִּׁים עֲלֵיהֶם נְוֵהֶם׃

There is some ambiguity about this verse. As it stands the MT could be translated, 'Surely they shall drag them away, the little ones of the flock; surely he shall appal their habitation at them'. The main problem of the verse concerns the verb סחבום. Is it active or passive? Is 'the little ones of the flock' the subject of an active or passive verb? Versions and commentators are divided on this point.

LXX reads Ἐὰν μὴ συμψησθῶσαν τὰ ἐλάχιστα τῶν προβάτων, ἐὰν μὴ ἀβατωθῇ ἐπ' αὐτὴν κατάλυσις αὐτῶν.

The translator is understanding the verb as a niphal with enclitic mem (סחבום), producing the sense 'Surely the little ones

/...

of the flock shall be swept away'. According to the LXX, therefore, צְעִירֵי הַצֹּאן is the subject of a passive verb. Scholars such as Schwally, Giesebrecht and more recently Rudolph follow the LXX, and propose that the MT be emended to read יִסָּחֲבוּם or גַּם יִסָּחֲבוּ. This is also the reading recommended in BHS. RSV 'even the little ones of the flock shall be dragged away' and NEB 'the young ones of the flock shall be carried off' likewise appear to be treating יסחבום as a passive verb, although no indication that the NEB is emending the pointing appears in Brockington.[57] It could be that the translators are simply reading the MT pointing, and understanding the verb as a qal imperfect plural with an indefinite subject, a construction which is equivalent to a passive. Rashi agrees with the view that the verb יסחבום is passive. The little ones of the flock, according to him, are the Edomite worshippers of astral deities. It is these who are to be dragged away.

The Vulgate reads, 'Si non dejecerint eos parvuli gregis', that is 'Surely the little ones of the flock will thrust them out'.[58] It is apparent that in this Version, the verb is understood as an active verb, with the little ones of the flock as subject. A similar exegesis is reflected in the translation of AV, 'Surely the least of the flock will draw them out'. It is apparent that the decision as to whether the little ones of the flock is the subject of an active or a passive verb, whether they act or are acted upon, materially affects the decision of the interpreter regarding their possible identity. It seems that, for the purposes of Rabbinic exegesis, the verb was regarded as active. Thus in Midrash Rabbah we find the following

/...

comment:

> 'Phinehas said in the name of R. Samuel b. Nahman, "It is a tradition that Esau will fall at the hands of none other than Rachel's descendants, as it is written: Surely the youngest of the flock shall drag them away .... And why does he call them the youngest of the flock? Because they were of the youngest of the tribes!"'[59]

Kimchi explains that the tribes in question were the weak tribes descended from Rachel's sons Joseph and Benjamin. Edom (Esau)[60] is to be dragged away by these 'little ones', so fulfilling the prophecy 'the elder shall serve the younger' (Gen.25:23). Another Rabbinic interpretation, again based on the assumption that the little ones are the subject of an active verb, is featured in the Talmud. In this case they are identified not with the Rachel tribes but with Persia:

> 'R. Joshua b. Levi in the name of Rabbi said "Rome is designed to fall into the hands of Persia, as it was said: ..... surely the least of the flock shall drag them away"..... What indeed does the 'least of the flock' mean? The youngest of his brethren, for R. Joseph learnt that Tiras is Persia.' [61]

The name Tiras occurs in Gen.10:2; there he is named as the youngest of the sons of Japheth. Hence it was assumed that the 'least' of the flock referred to Tiras, whom Rabbi Joseph identified with Persia. This verse is used in the Talmud to elucidate something which was of vital contemporary significance to the Rabbis; the fate of Rome. The re-application to Rome of sayings originally directed towards Edom is a very common occurence in the Talmud and in the Midrashic literature.[62]

It is very unlikely that the author of this verse intended a reference to Israel in 'the little ones of the flock'. It is not Israel but God who is thought of as the one who wreaks vengeance on Edom and on Babylon (see the parallel verse 50:45).

/...

Thus the translation 'The little ones of the flock shall drag them away' is unlikely to be correct. In view of v.19, in which the lion comes up against the 'sheepfold' which is Edom, it seems most probable that the 'little ones' designate the Edomites themselves. They are to be dragged away. Hence the interpretation favoured by the LXX, and followed by RSV, NEB and BHS is likely to be correct; the little ones are the subject of a passive verb, and therefore the pointing of MT should be altered to read the niphal. It is also the case that, in the interests of parallelism of construction, the second verb should be read as a passive, as it is in the LXX, and apparently in RSV and NEB, even although this necessitates an emendation of the consonantal text (הַטַּפְּם becomes הֻטַּם). The translation should be:

> 'Surely the little ones of the flock shall be dragged away, surely their fold shall be appalled at them'[63]

The little ones refer perhaps to the smallest and most helpless members of the Edomite people. In this case, the verse sounds a note of grim pathos.

The Targum translates 'little ones of the flock' as 'mighty ones of the people'. Similarly, in 48:4, the 'small ones' of the Moabite nation become in the Targum the 'rulers'. At the latter verse Kimchi comments that the great men are referred to in Scripture as 'little ones' because of their disgrace. It may be that the Targumist has thought along the same lines as Kimchi with regard to 48:4 and 49:20. If so, he regards 'Little ones of the flock' as a mocking reference to the great leaders and warriors of Edom, and so he translates it 'mighty ones'. He may have seen a note of irony and mockery here, a note of derision

/...

at the idea of the great and mighty men of a once proud people now being hauled away. In actual fact, the verse paints a picture of the fate of the smallest and weakest which is more pathetic and grim in tone than mocking.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE COMMENTARY OF ISAAC ABRAVANEL ON CHAPTERS 46-51.

In the final paragraph of his commentary on Jeremiah,[1] Abravanel informs us that the work was written in the republic of Venice. It belongs, therefore to the last five years of his life, and reflects the views held by the scholar after a long lifetime of study, consideration and experience.

His experience had often been bitter. Jew that he was, Abravanel was no stranger to exile. Born in 1437, in Lisbon, he enjoyed a successful career as financial adviser to the king of Portugal, and during this period of his life, which lasted until 1481, he emerged as a man of influence and prestige who counted nobles and scholars among his friends. He also amassed a considerable fortune. In the latter year, however, his wealth was confiscated, and he himself obliged to flee to Spain, after he had been implicated in a treasonable plot. In Spain, his talents brought him to the notice of king Ferdinand, whom he served from 1484 until the fateful year 1492, when he and some 300,000 of his fellow Jews were expelled from Spain at the instigation of the Inquisition. From this time onwards, Abravanel lived as a sojourner in Naples, Corfu, Monopoli and finally Venice, where he remained from 1503 until his death in 1508.[2]

Abravanel enjoyed a wide education in both Jewish and secular learning, and he was well acquainted with the works of many Christian theologians. Throughout his life, kings and princes made use of his talents as statesman and financier. Above all, however, he was a Jew, suffering with his fellow Jews the perennial fate of that people in an age of crisis. To this age of

/...

crisis he directed his writings.

When we turn to his commentary on Jeremiah, and more especially to those closing chapters in which we are particularly interested, we are immediately impressed by the sheer length of the work. In marked contrast to the verbal economy practised by Rashi, Abravanel seems to take the view that nothing is too trivial or too obvious to merit comment. Of brief commentators he remarks that 'the brevity of their comments is but an indication of the brevity of their minds'.[3] His own commentary takes the form of a lengthy paraphrase of the biblical text, in the course of which he attempts to answer any difficulties which arise. His style is simple and direct, and his exegesis shows that he is thoroughly familiar with the works of his predecessors, frequently quoting or alluding to Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Rashi and especially Kimchi. He refers to the Talmud and to Targum Jonathan, and constantly mentions the views of the 'commentators' (מפרשים). It is appropriate that the man who is generally regarded as the last of the great mediaeval Jewish scholars should stand so firmly on the shoulders of his predecessors. However, his work does not consist merely in a restatement of earlier views. Often we find that he indicates the opinions of earlier commentators, only to go on to state his own views. When this exegetical method is compared with that of Rashi and Kimchi, it can be clearly seen that in Abravanel we find a commentator whose method approaches much more closely that of a modern scholar. The following examples illustrate specifically his critical assessment of earlier scholars:

49:28
לְקָדָר וּלְמַמְלְכוֹת חָצוֹר אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ /...

'It says regarding them, "Whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated". This is something which it does not say about the rest of the nations, even though they (also) were defeated by him. According to Rabbi D. Kimchi, this was because the rest were defeated on other occasions by other people; Edom, Moab, Ammon and Aram were defeated by David king of Israel. But Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor were not defeated by anyone except Nebuchadnezzar, and therefore it says about them, "whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated".

However, it might be more correct to say that the rest of the nations were destroyed because of the evil they did to Israel, so that the Lord stirred up the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar to go up against them. But Kedar, who had done no harm to Israel, suffered destruction for no other reason than that it was the pleasure of Nebuchadnezzar; it was not God's doing. That is why it specifies, "whom Nebuchadnezzar defeated".

Thus Abravanel does not hesitate to disagree with Kimchi on the question of this unusual notice. We may note that his interpretation of the phrase 'whom Nebuchadnezzar smote' is rather forced; to say that the destruction of Kedar and Hazor was specifically Nebuchadnezzar's doing and not God's fails to take account of the words of v.32, 'and I will bring their calamity from every side of them, says the Lord'. In his comment Abravanel is attempting to explain why Kedar and Hazor, who did no harm to Israel, appear in this collection of foreign nation prophecies. His clue to the answer lies in the words of the superscription 'whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote'. The destruction of Kedar and Hazor is not, as is the case with the other nations, a divine punishment for evil doing towards Israel. It was the whim of Nebuchadnezzar.

We may note also his comment on 48:9:

תְּנוּ־צִיץ לְמוֹאָב כִּי בָּצוֹא תֵצֵא

In this verse Abravanel states the views of the 'commentators', among them Rashi and Kimchi; then he looks at the Targum. Finally he gives his own interpretation:

/...

'The commentators explain that this is about their escape; that the escape is likened to the act of flying. Because a bird flies by dint of the strength of its wing feathers, so the hasty departure is likened to a flight made possible by feathers. אמרו (they say) is an infinitive form, the 'aleph standing in place of ה. The sense is therefore, "Give the power of flight to Moab, so that she can indeed fly away".

Jonathan interprets צִיץ as if it were 'crown' as it is in 'the golden diadem' (צִיץ הַזָּהָב, Lev.8:9). He translates it as, "Take away the crown from Moab, for she shall surely go into exile". Rashi remarks that the sense of the verse, according to Jonathan's rendering, would be "Take away the crown from Moab, and give it to others". This is difficult. The text actually says תְּנוּ צִיץ לְמוֹאָב but (for the Targum to be correct) it would have had to read מִמּוֹאָב and not לְמוֹאָב (Targum מִן מוֹאָב) and it would have had to read הָסִירוּ and not תְּנוּ (Targum אַעְדּוֹן).

To my mind neither of these lines of interpretation is convincing, since they are not compatible with the language of the verse. ציץ in my view denotes a plant, as it does in Numbers 17:23, "it put forth buds and produced blossom"; and also (ps.103:15), "And they will burst forth from the city like the grass of the earth, like the blossom of the field, so it will blossom". There are many other instances of this. Because the passage mentions that the Moabites are to flee and go into the wilderness, the writer says mockingly of them, "Give blossoms to Moab", that is, give to Moab plants so that he can eat them as cattle do, for he will lose all that is his. The nation of Moab will surely go out from his land, and his cities will become ruins.

Hence it is fitting to give them flowers and plants for their food, since they are men going into wilderness places, which furnish them with nothing else to eat'.

This verse affords us an excellent example of the dash and originality of Abravanel's exegetical procedure. The verse has occasioned several different interpretations among scholars ancient and modern, and these involve principally the exact meaning of ציץ, and the meaning of נָצוּ תֵּצֵא.[4]

Abravanel explains that the commentators understand ציץ to mean 'wings' or perhaps 'the power of flight'. נצה נצל is thought to be from נצל 'to fly'. We can find examples of this interpretation in Rashi and Kimchi, both of whom gloss

/...

ציץ with פרח. With regard to the Targum, Abravanel points out that the Targum translation is not compatible with the Hebrew text as it stands, but requires a substantially different text. It is therefore not worthy of consideration.

Abravanel himself thinks that ציץ stands for blossoms or flowers here, as it does elsewhere in Scripture. He remembers verse 6, in which the Moabites are advised to flee into the wilderness. The mocking tone of this verse is continued in verse 9; if they are to go into the wilderness they will need to eat flowers and plants, as cattle do, for there will be no other means of sustenance in the wilderness, and they themselves will have nothing, since their cities will be ruined and their wealth gone. In the light of this interpretation of ציץ, he understands נצא תנצא as if it were תצא אצא, from יצא 'go out'.

The two above examples show that Abravanel, while summing up what has gone before him, is yet not afraid to disagree with his predecessors and to take an original and independent stance which may or may not be more convincing. Further examples of this critical exegetical method can be found also at 50:21, 51:13, 51:46, and others will arise in the course of this chapter. It is in this summing up of the past, allied to a new and more systematic style of exegesis, that we can see in Abravanel the culmination of the era of mediaeval exegesis.

Abravanel's claim to originality is largely founded upon the way in which he organizes his commentary, in an attempt to confront in a thorough and systematic fashion the problems presented to him by the text. All his commentaries are arranged

/...

in the same way, except for some minor deviations in his works on the Pentateuch,[5] and with reference to Jeremiah 46-51 this arrangement runs as follows. The oracle collection is divided into two sections, the first comprising chapters 46-49, and the second, 50 and 51. The material is thus commented upon by Abravanel in two roughly equal parts of 121 and 110 verses respectively. Abravanel is following the natural division of the oracle collection here; chapters 46-49 proclaim the destruction of various nations at the hand of Babylon, while 50-51 announce Babylon's own downfall. His commentary is at both sections prefaced by an introductory paragraph in which he declares his intention of further sub-dividing each section into fifteen smaller paragraphs. Some of these cover a complete oracle; the first oracle against Egypt, and those against Philistia, Ammon, Damascus, Kedar and Elam are each treated as a complete unit. Lengthier oracles are considered in several sections. This practice of dividing into fifteen paragraphs looks like a somewhat artificial arrangement, adopted for the sake of convenience and uniformity.

Abravanel concludes his introductions to chs.46-49 and 50-51 by saying 'In connection with these verses I shall be asking six questions'. He then proceeds to list six questions or problems (שאלות) which seem to him to arise out of the following chapters; he endeavours to answer these in the course of his commentary. Since it happens that throughout his commentaries each section is prefaced by six questions, it would appear that again the number six is part of a somewhat artificial arrangement. Abravanel himself says that these questions function mainly as

/...

aids to the memory.[6]

Abravanel was not the first to adopt the method of prefacing his comments with questions, he may have borrowed it from the works of Alphonso Tostat, bishop of Ávila from 1414-54.[7] He is, however, the first Jewish commentator to adopt this method, which enables him to focus sharply upon problems in the text, and to go about dealing with them in a more systematic fashion than has been attempted hitherto. It seems to emphasize his feeling that a biblical book, or a readily identifiable section within a book, such as is formed by chapters 46-51, must be considered not simply as a collection of individual verses, but as a whole. Many of his questions involve not just one verse; thus his third question on chapters 46-49 deals with the superscriptions to all the oracles, while another considers the relationship between verses which appear both in chapter 49 and in chapter 50. Three of his questions focus on aspects of the relationship between chapters 25 and 46-51. Abravanel thus attempts to comment not only on individual verses, but on broader issues also. It seems to me that a study of these questions which Abravanel asks should help to indicate his particular interests and emphases as a biblical commentator.

The first two questions which he asks concern the oracle collection as a whole, and indicate one area of the commentator's interest. He feels that he must uphold the inner logic and consistency of Scripture and this requires him to explain away apparent discrepancies between one part of Scripture and another. In his first question, therefore, he concerns himself with the

/...

discrepancies between the list of nations which appears in chapter 25, who are to drink the 'cup of wrath', and the nations which feature in chapters 46-51:

> 'Why is it that of all the nations and peoples against whom Jeremiah prophesied in chapter 25 - that is, 26 of them - here he only prophesies against eleven of them, not counting Judah?'

He proceeds to list the eleven nations which appear in both collections, although, strictly speaking, some are not nations at all, only cities; Egypt, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, Gaza, Ashkelon, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Elam,[8] Babylon. The answer which he gives runs as follows:

> 'Above, in chapter 25 Jeremiah foretold all the nations which Nebuchadnezzar would destroy, or rule over and subjugate : the nations in general are considered, and not just those who had to do with Israel. Now, in this place (46-51), after having mentioned the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people of Judah, the prophet says that all the nations who had a hand in the misfortune and destruction which overtook Judah will be destroyed and exiled in similar fashion to Judah. This being the case, of the nations listed in chapter 25, he mentions (again) those which appear here (46-51) because they were involved in the destruction which came upon the people of Judah : Egypt, because they swore to help Judah against Nebuchadnezzar; they gave Zedekiah the courage to rebel against the king of Babylon, and this was the cause of the destruction and exile ..... and Philistia, Ammon, Moab and Edom, because they were involved in Jerusalem's destruction..... All of them are mentioned at chapter 25 along with the rest of the nations. He names these nations here separately (46-51) because they helped the disaster, while the rest of the nations which are mentioned in chapter 25 were far from Jerusalem, and were not involved in her destruction, so they are not mentioned here'.

Having inquired why certain peoples appear in chapter 25, but not in 46-51, he goes on in his second question to touch upon another aspect of the problem. Two nations appear in 46-51 but not in chapter 25; why is this so?

> 'Why is it that here (chapter 49) he prophesies against Damascus and Kedar, even although these two kingdoms

/...

are not mentioned among the nations at chapter 25?'

Abravanel answers this by maintaining that Kedar and Damascus although not actually named, do appear in chapter 25 - Damascus is included among the 'Philistines' and Kedar among the 'mixed peoples' who dwell in tents in the desert.

We find, therefore, that Abravanel's first concern in dealing with this collection of oracles is to account for the discrepancies which exist between it and the apparently related list in chapter 25. Those nations which appear in 25 were to be subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar; those which appear again in 46-51 are singled out for special attention because they were in some measure responsible for and involved in the calamity which overtook Judah. Egypt is mentioned because of her fickleness as an ally; Abravanel is perhaps thinking here of the events of 589, when Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, confident of the help of an Egyptian army.[9] He then mentions Philistia, Ammon, Moab and Edom.[10] His explanation of the differences between these chapters is somewhat artificial, however. He himself has to make an exception of Kedar; though this nation too is listed in 46-51, it did not harm Israel in any way, and its destruction was the will of Nebuchadnezzar. Later on we shall see that he also suggests that Elam (which is not mentioned in his answer to question one above) is included in the collection at chapters 46-51 for a reason other than that it had anything to do with the destruction of Jerusalem (although at 49:34 he does quote the sages to the effect that Elam may have helped the Chaldeans against Israel).

Abravanel fixes his attention on apparent contradictions

/...

between one part of Scripture and another, and attempts to show that no real contradiction exists. We may cite two particularly interesting examples of this, the first of which involves his fourth question concerning chapters 46-49:

> 'Why is it that at the end of the second prophecy against Egypt (46:27f.), he says, "Fear not, my servant Jacob", and the other verse of comfort, and yet does not say anything like this in any of the prophecies concerning the other nations? It is the case that the promise which says, "I will make a full end of all the nations to whom I have sent you" (46:28) is of general reference. It would have been appropriate, therefore, that this promise should have been written either at the beginning of these prophecies, or in such a way as to be understood with reference to all of them, and not just to Egypt alone - especially since Jeremiah prophesied above about the people of Judah who were coming to sojourn in Egypt, that they would be consumed there, and all die (chs.42-44). This promise here is the opposite of that other one, if it is addressed to them (the Jewish exiles in Egypt)'.

Abravanel's intention here is to try to indicate that despite the position of this little oracle of comfort to Israel at the end of the oracle against Egypt, it is of much more general reference, and does not, as might be inferred from its position, refer to those Judaean exiles living in Egypt. He points out the promise that God will make a full end of all the nations among whom the people of Judah were exiled. The promise is therefore addressed to a wider audience than the Jewish exiles in Egypt. This is in contrast to Rashi, who thinks that 46:27 is addressed to 'the righteous who are in the land of Egypt, who went into exile there against their will'. Abravanel is reluctant to see a reference to the Jewish exiles in Egypt here, because he sees that a promise of weal for these exiles would conflict with the prophecies of chs.42-44, which predict a disastrous end for those natives of Judah who fled into Egypt.

/...

He answers his question with reference to the words 'Lo, I will save you from afar' (46:27). Egypt, he maintains, is near to Israel, and so the prophet cannot have the Egyptian exile in mind here. He establishes that the references to 'Jacob' and 'Israel' indicate that the prophecy is addressed to the nation in general, that is, to the whole Babylonian exile, which included 'those who went to Babylon, and to the rest of the lands of east and west'. To them it is said:

> 'Although your exile is to a distant land and until a far off time.... and your exile is not near your land, as Egypt's was, and not for a short time, like theirs, Lo, I will save you ..... And he reveals by this that he is not prophesying about the remnant of Judah which went to Egypt and transgressed against the word of God, and his commands, for they were nearby. Rather, he is prophesying about those people of Judah who went far away'.

Abravanel's desire to explain away possible contradictions between different parts of scripture brings him into disagreement with Kimchi's interpretation of 48:47, a verse which reads:

וְשַׁבְתִּי שְׁבוּת־מוֹאָב בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים

> 'The prophet makes known that God will reverse the captivity of Moab, in the latter days. The great Rabbi David Kimchi wrote that this referred to the (eschatological) future, the days of the Messiah; the phrase באחרית הימים led him to this conclusion, because he thought that it was always used of the time of Redemption. But this is not the case (here), because concerning the Messianic king, Balaam prophesied, 'And he shall crush the forehead of Moab' (Num.24:17), and not that then God would reverse their captivity. But the phrase means (48:47) that a long time after their destruction, God will reverse their captivity, and they will return to their land'.

Abravanel wishes באחרית הימים to be understood here in a non-eschatological sense, as simply meaning 'after a long time'. His disagreement with Kimchi on this issue is not to be understood as disapproval of the practice of interpreting verses in an

/...

eschatological sense. As we will presently discover, this is very far from being the case. In fact, it is for the precise reason that Abravanel has already interpreted the Numbers passage quoted above as referring to the true 'latter days' of the Messianic age, that he cannot accept Kimchi's interpretation of 48:47. We see here that the two commentators hold slightly differing notions about the fate of the nations in the Messianic age. In the work entitled מַשְׁמִיעַ יְשׁוּעָה Announcer of Salvation,[11] in which Abravanel assembles and discusses some sixty biblical passages, with the object of showing that the Resurrection, the last day and the future Redemption had all been foretold in Scripture, he begins his discussion with this very oracle of Balaam which he quotes in the above extract. For Abravanel, the fate of the nations in the Messianic era is summed up in the words of Num.24:8, 'he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces'. Consequently he cannot brook the contradiction which would arise should באחרית הימים of Jer.48:47 be interpreted, with Kimchi, in an eschatological sense. His eschatological scheme has no place for the reversal of the captivity of the various nations. In his own interpretation of 48:47, Kimchi cites Zeph.2:9-10, verses which describe the terrible punishment which will fall upon Moab and Ammon, and give reasons for that punishment. But he then goes on to accommodate a possible return of these two nations:

> 'And although the nations will become confused on that day, perhaps they will be scattered in places near their land ..... In the latter days all nations will return to their land, and all will live under the rule of Israel, as it says in Isaiah (11:14) "They shall put forth their hand against Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them"'.

/...

Thus, although Kimchi does not expect that the nations will be returned to their former dignity, he does think that they will be returned to their land, and that 'even if they are mingled with other nations, perhaps some remembrance will be left to them'. But this hardly amounts to a promise of weal. The nations are kept in existence so as to live under Israel's rule.

True to his usual systematic approach, Abravanel explains the phrase 'And I will reverse.....' in the same way when it occurs at the close of the oracle against Ammon, and adds a note at the end of his comments on those oracles which do <u>not</u> contain a promise of return, in explanation of why this should be so. Thus, in the case of Philistia (ch.47) he says:

> 'He does not mention that their captivity would be reversed, as he does about Egypt, Moab and Ammon, because as far as the latter nations are concerned, a large proportion of the people went into captivity.... But the men of Philistia did not go into captivity, and all the destruction which they suffered consisted of massacre, and the despoiling and plundering of their goods ....'.

God will not reverse their captivity at any time, because they did not go into captivity in the first place.[12] Similar explanations occur at the end of the oracles against Edom, Damascus and Kedar.[13]

In addition to his interest in dealing with discrepancies and possible contradictions, Abravanel also concerns himself with verses which occur on more than one occasion in the book of Jeremiah. Two of his questions are relevant here; the third question which deals with the oracle against Babylon, and also the second. (These are both to be found in the second set of six questions). The former asks why the prophet sees fit to repeat

/...

chapter 10:12-16 at chapter 51:15-19. The verses contain a description of God's power as creator, followed by a polemic against idols. At chapter 10 these verses appear to be addressed to Israel, and Abravanel explains in answer to his question that they are repeated in chapter 51 because the prophet wished to refer them to the Babylonians 'who were worshipping idols and placing their trust in them'.

The second of our questions deals with the repetition of 49:19-21 at 50:44-46. He asks:

> 'How is it that the judgements and the wording came to be similar with regard to both Edom and Babylon, given that the Edom prophecy refers to the eschatological future, and the Babylon prophecy to what is in the present? And how are "the little ones of the flock" the destroyers of Edom, the same as the destroyers of Babylon, considering that there are two thousand years between the events?'[14]

The verses in question refer to the downfall of Edom and (ch.50) Babylon. Abravanel comes to the conclusion that the 'little ones of the flock' who drag Babylon away must be the historical conquerors of Babylon, the Medes and Persians. To understand Abravanel's explanation of why these verses occur in the same form in chapter 49, this time with reference to Edom, we must consult his comments on 49:20. From these we learn something which will be discussed more fully below, that is, that he is reading the words against Edom as an eschatological prophecy of the fall of Rome. In the light of this understanding, he agrees with the Talmud[15] in interpreting the phrase 'surely the little ones of the flock will drag them away' as a prediction that 'Rome is destined to fall into the hands of Persia'. In chapter 50, the 'little ones of the flock' are the Persians, the

/...

conquerors of Babylon. In chapter 49, the 'little ones' are again the Persians, a loose designation for the Arab nations who will conquer Edom-Rome in the troubled times before the dawn of the Messianic age. The fact that the 'little ones' are 'Persians' in both cases explains, according to Abravanel, why these same words are spoken with reference to Babylon and to Edom-Rome.

Therefore, in answer to his question, Abravanel explains (50:46):

> 'These verses have already been spoken above concerning the destruction of Edom, and this is not surprising, since Persia was the destroyer of Babylon, and is destined to destroy Edom (Rome); therefore he speaks in both cases in similar fashion'.

One area of Abravanel's interest which his questions serve to highlight is shared with Kimchi; that is his interest in history, and his desire to fill in the historical background of these oracles. The two commentators have a certain amount of historical material in common, and doubtless had access to the same sources. Thus at 46:2, both quote Isaiah 10:9, 'Is not Calno like Carchemish' in the course of their notes concerning the events surrounding the battle of Carchemish. At 49:1, both note that Ammon and Moab came to take over the lands which had belonged to Reuben and Gad, after the exile of these tribes.

It is no easy matter to uncover the historical sources which Abravanel employed.[16] In his comment on 51:31 (see below) he quotes from a work called the Josippon, allegedly written by Joseph ben Gorion.[17] He makes use of the chronicle Seder 'Olam,[18] in common with Rashi and Kimchi; all three cite it in their comments upon 47:1, 'before Pharaoh smote Gaza'. Abravanel comments:

> 'It is written in Seder 'Olam that in the tenth year
>
> /...

> of Zedekiah, the Chaldeans were laying siege to Jerusalem, when Pharaoh's army advanced from Egypt to come to the aid of the king of Judah against Nebuchadnezzar. The Chaldeans got wind of this, and left off besieging Jerusalem..... Then Pharaoh went with his army and sacked Gaza, and returned to his own land. At this time the word of the Lord came...'

It is difficult to pinpoint the historical incident to which Seder 'Olam is referring. In 588 B.C. an Egyptian army did march to the aid of Jerusalem, but was driven back, having done no more than distract the Babylonians temporarily from the business of besieging Jerusalem. Egypt, who had given Zedekiah the heart to rebel, thus proved herself a half-hearted ally. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Pharaoh Hophra's army sacked Gaza on the way home, as the chronicle relates. It may be that Seder 'Olam is confusing the events of 588 BC with those of 609 BC, when Gaza was indeed conquered by an Egyptian army under Pharaoh Necho, after the fateful battle of Megiddo.[19]

Abravanel and Kimchi have both appended similar historical notes to 50:13, a verse which proclaims that Babylon will not be inhabited, but shall be an 'utter desolation'. Both commentators hasten to explain that the prophecy was indeed fulfilled with regard to the first city of Babylon, and that, in Abravanel's words:

> 'The city in which Cyrus and Darius dwelt after this, and which is Babylon to this day, is not the first Babylon which existed in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, for it was destroyed, and nobody lived there any more. But another Babylon was built, a short distance away from it in that valley, which was called by its name; Babylon in the parlance of the Jews, but the Arabs do not call it that, but rather, Baghdad'.

This historical note is for the specific purpose of emphasizing that the prophet's words regarding Babylon came true. 'There is

no doubt' says Abravanel, 'that all this came about'. The Babylon which existed in the reigns of Cyrus and Darius was another city, built after the first one had been wiped out by the Medes and Persians in accordance with the prophecy. In reality, Babylon was not destroyed at this time, since it was taken without a fight.[20] By 'that valley' Abravanel is referring to the Tigris-Euphrates valley in which Babylon and Baghdad stood. The latter in its turn became the chief city of Mesopotamia under the 'Abbasid caliphs. Abravanel identifies the Babylon of Cyrus and his successors with the city of Baghdad which was well known in the commentator's own day, but in fact this city did not achieve prominence until the eighth century A.D.[21]

The commentator's lively interest in the historical background to the events related in these prophecies shows itself in connection with the fourth and fifth questions which he asks concerning the oracle against Babylon. In answer to the fourth question, he uses his historical knowledge to solve the problem of why the prophet twice mentions that the nation who would destroy Babylon would be the Medes; it troubles him that there is no mention of the Persians, although the Medes and Persians together destroyed Babylon. In addition, he asks why it is that at 51:11 and 51:28 the prophet refers to 'the kings of the Medes' when in fact 'there was only one king in Media, not many kings'. He answers these points in the course of his comment on 51:28:

> 'Observe that always, as here, the prophet mentions the Medes. But why not the Persians, when it is a fact that the two kings Darius the Mede and Cyrus of Persia destroyed Babylon? And why, if this is so, does he name them 'Kings of the Medes' when actually there was only one king of the Medes? The answer is that Darius the king of the Medes had a greater realm than the king of Persia..... Also, the Median king was old, and he gave his daughter
>
> /...

in marriage to Cyrus of Persia, who was subordinate in status to the Median king; and the two of them joined forces to destroy Babylon. For this reason the prophet calls them both 'kings of the Medes', for Media was the great kingdom, and Persia its vassal. Also Cyrus inherited the kingdom of Media through his wife, and so he calls them 'kings of the Medes' because they both ruled there'.

Abravanel does not give us his historical source here. The information which he gives us contains a basis of historical fact, but also some inaccuracies. Cyrus was indeed a vassal of the kingdom of Media. He did not, however, inherit the Median empire through his wife, although it is true that his house, the Achaemenian, was related to the Median kings; rather, he seized the empire after successfully rebelling against the Median overlord in 559 BC,[22] thereby uniting Media and Persia under one ruler. Abravanel names the predecessor of Cyrus on the Median throne as 'Darius the Mede', in accordance with Daniel 5:31. This Darius, however, remains a problematical figure, whose existence is doubted by modern historians. Cyrus actually seized power from Astyages, son of Cyaxares.

The fifth question which Abravanel asks about the oracle against Babylon shows us the commentator attempting to reconcile the sequence of events related in 51:31 with the actual historical situation as he has it from his sources. The verse reads:

> 'One runner runs to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to tell the king of Babylon that his city is taken from (every) side'.

Rather than the words 'runner runs to meet runner' Abravanel thinks that it would have been more fitting to say 'runner after runner' if all of them were going to tell the king of Babylon that his city was captured. His second query is that if the king of

/...

Babylon was in Babylon, why were they running to tell him news of his city? Finally he asks how it is that, since king Belshazzar was already dead at the time of Babylon's capture (Dan.6:30), the runners hoped to inform him of anything at all.

He deals with the last point first. He has it from his source, which he names as 'Josippon ben Gorion',[23] that Belshazzar was killed by his own officers before the Medes came upon Babylon. He goes on to try to reconcile this with 51:31 (in his comment on this verse).

> 'How can the prophet say here that the messengers came to tell the king that his city was taken, if he was already dead when this happened? But 'his city' does not denote Babylon here, but another city in the kingdom; for as Josippon wrote, the Medes first attacked the cities which were at the outer reaches of the kingdom, and captured them; this was the news that came to Belshazzar, that is, concerning the capture of cities. He in turn was sending out messengers to find out about the people who were coming, and about the actions of his armies there, and from there (that is, the front) other messengers were coming. So therefore he says "runner runs to meet runner", and not "runner after runner". And they were reporting to the king of Babylon that his city was captured from the (far) side, that is, (his city) which was at the far side of his kingdom'.

Thus we see the lengths to which Abravanel is prepared to go, even to the extent of denying that 'his city' means Babylon, in order to show that the events of this verse are historically accurate, and do not contradict the historical picture of the events of the fall of Babylon and the death of Belshazzar with which Abravanel is acquainted through study of his sources.

Another aspect of Abravanel as a commentator which emerges from his questions, is his interest in literary critical problems. The closing phrase of the oracle against Babylon 'thus far are the words of Jeremiah' (51:64) raises the following question (question 6):

/...

'If he said this about the Babylon prophecy, meaning that there was no more than what was written here, this was surely unnecessary, and anyway, nothing of the sort was said in the other oracles against foreign nations. The similar phrase "thus far is the judgement on Moab" (48:47) was said for another reason, as I explained there. And if it was said to make known that prophecy ceased from Jeremiah before his death, as the great teacher of blessed memory said, this is not correct; the Babylon prophecy, as Scripture witnesses, came in the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign. How could it be said that then his prophesying ended, when many years later he delivered prophecies in Jerusalem to Zedekiah....?'

Abravanel states and rejects two possible interpretations of this phrase. The first suggests that its function is the same as that of the similar verse at the close of the prophecy against Moab. This opinion is regarded as possible by Kimchi, who believes that both may allude to the extreme length of the respective prophecies which precede them. In refutation of this Abravanel points out that the two phrases, while similar, are not identical, as they would have to be were the meaning to be the same in both cases. The second view rejected by Abravanel is also recorded by Kimchi as an alternative to the first. The 'great teacher of blessed memory' is identified by him as Maimonides, whose analysis of this phrase leads him to conclude that it indicates that Jeremiah's prophesying ceased with the prophecy against Babylon.[24] Abravanel strongly disagrees with this; Jeremiah's prophetic career did not end in the fourth year of Zedekiah, since he was still uttering prophecies at a later date. His own view is as follows (see 51:64):

'As far as I can see, it is more correct to interpret that this phrase stands here in order to separate all that had been written in this book thus far from that which was written after this. Note that from the beginning of the book up to this point, the words are those of Jeremiah; but from here on to the end of the book they are not the words of Jeremiah, but a narrative of the events of the destruction, just as

/...

they are narrated at the close of the book of Kings. Since Jeremiah related the matter of the destruction in a brief sort of way above..... the men of the Great Synagogue came along to write at the end of this book the truth of the account of the destruction, taken from the end of the book of Kings, so that there should be no misunderstanding about what was written above... There is no need to interpret here what is written in the account of the destruction, because it is copied word for word from what is written at the end of the book of Kings, and I commented on it there already....'

Thus Abravanel involves himself in a literary critical question, concluding that the phrase 'thus far are the words of Jeremiah' does not mark the end of Jeremiah's prophetic career, but is rather an editorial note which serves to separate genuine from non-genuine material. The non-Jeremianic closing chapter has been placed here by the collectors and editors of the book of Jeremiah, that is, the 'men of the Great Synagogue'[25] who took it from the Book of Kings. Abravanel seems to think that the chapter has been placed at the close of the book of Jeremiah in order to let the reader know that Jeremiah's predictions and descriptions of the fall of Jerusalem had come into being. The chapter also serves to fill out the account of the fall of Jerusalem contained in chapter 39 of the book of Jeremiah.

In addition to the awareness of and interest in literary critical matters which the above comment reveals, it is worth noting that it also serves to emphasize the differences between the exegetical approach of Abravanel and that of Kimchi. The latter's comment on the phrase 'thus far are the words of Jeremiah' features all three of the arguments investigated in Abravanel's comment. Yet whereas Kimchi is content to list them as three possible interpretations without choosing between them

/...

or commenting upon their respective merits, Abravanel, in contrast, is much sharper, much more critical. His exegesis carries much more conviction, which is brought out by his clearly ordered scholarly method of discussion. He gives an impression of much greater modernity.

Abravanel's interest in literary critical questions also causes him to focus his attention upon the superscriptions which introduce each oracle in the collection. These are of varying length, the simplest being of the type 'concerning x' (לְמוֹאָב, לְדַמֶּשֶׂק, לְאֱדוֹם, לְבְנֵי עַמּוֹן). Others are more complicated. Abravanel attempts to account for this variation. We have already seen[26] that with reference to the superscription to the Kedar oracle, he explains that the words 'whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote' are a note explaining that Kedar, who had done no harm to Israel, was destroyed at the whim of Nebuchadnezzar alone, unlike the other nations. We will go on to investigate the way in which he deals with the other variant superscriptions.

In four of them (46:13, 47:1, 49:34, 50:1) we find either the words 'The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah' or 'the word which the Lord spoke to Jeremiah'. Abravanel comments on this in his note on 49:34:

> 'Regarding Egypt, it says in the second prophecy (46:13ff.), "The word which the Lord spoke to Jeremiah the prophet", in order to separate it from the first prophecy which came before the destruction of Jerusalem, while the second came after the destruction. ... And later, Scripture says "The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah the prophet" (47:1). This phrase serves as a general introduction to the oracles concerning Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, for all of them featured in one prophecy which was spoken for one reason : they all did harm to Israel at the destruction of Jerusalem.....
>
> /...

And when he had finished recounting the devastation which Nebuchadnezzar wrought among those nations, after Jerusalem, he foretold the destruction of Elam, which would not be at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, for it would come about in the days to come... For this reason it commences with the words "The word of the Lord which came to the prophet concerning Elam" (49:34)'

Thus Abravanel accounts for the presence of this phrase by assuming that these oracles are arranged in several different sections; the phrase in some way marks off the following prophecy from the prophecy which precedes it. In the case of 46:13, it separates the second prophecy against Egypt, spoken after the fall of Jerusalem, from the first which was spoken before it. At 47:1 it signifies that the following prophecies are to be considered as a single section, since all of them were uttered for one reason. Before the prophecy against Elam the phrase occurs again, indicating that the enemy of Elam is not, as is the case with the previous nations, Nebuchadnezzar; the prophecy is eschatological.

Several of the superscriptions contain an indication of the time at which the oracles are supposed to have been spoken, while others do not. Abravanel questions why this should be so. His answer is rather lengthy, but in the course of his comment on 46:2 he comes to the following conclusion:

> 'The prophecies which came to fulfilment before the destruction of Jerusalem contain the note saying when they were spoken, to make it clear that even although they were written down after the destruction, they were really spoken to the prophet before it. But the prophecies which were spoken after the destruction, and written down in correct chronological order, have no need of such a note; it is obvious that they were both spoken and written after the destruction of Jerusalem'.

Abravanel is in this note alluding to the fact that this collection

/...

of foreign nation oracles stands in the book of Jeremiah after the account of the destruction of Jerusalem (chapter 39). For some of these prophecies, this reflects the accurate chronological order; they were actually spoken by the prophet after this event. But for others, it does not. In the case of those prophecies which were actually spoken before the destruction of Jerusalem, the compilers of the book have added to the superscriptions notes indicating the period at which the prophecy was spoken.

Two of the prophecies which contain these indications of date are those against Elam and Babylon. We are told that the prophecy against Elam came 'in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah' (49:34) while we are given an indirect clue to the date of the Babylon oracle at 51:59. The prophecy was completed by the fourth year of Zedekiah, since at this date Jeremiah was able to give a written copy to Seraiah. In his notes on the above two verses, Abravanel gives reasons why it was doubly important that these prophecies be provided with indications of date. First, Babylon:

> 'Because this prophecy was written at the end of the book of Jeremiah, after he had written the account of the destruction (of Jerusalem) ..... and in case it would be thought that Jeremiah prophesied all this against Babylon after the destruction of the temple of the Lord, while his resentment against them was very bitter because he had seen all the wickedness perpetrated by the Babylonians in Jerusalem, so Scripture makes known that this prophecy was uttered by Jeremiah before the destruction of Jerusalem'.

Abravanel considers it to have been very important to indicate that, contrary to its position in the book of Jeremiah, this prophecy was uttered before the fall of Jerusalem. Otherwise, there would have been a danger that it might appear that Jeremiah had been moved to utter it more by his hatred of Babylon for

/...

what she had done to Jerusalem, than by God. The indication of date avoided the imputation of unworthy motives to the prophet.

With reference to the prophecy against Elam, Abravanel points out (in his comment at 49:34) that Elam is in fact a Median kingdom, and since the Medes and the Persians destroyed Babylon, the mention of the time at which the prophecy was spoken is actually a means of emphasizing the excellence of Jeremiah's prophecy, by showing that ....

> 'Before he foretold the destruction of Babylon, he prophesied and saw the destruction of Babylon's destroyer, which was Media. The words "At the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah" (49:34), show that before the fall of Jerusalem, he saw the destruction of Babylon, Jerusalem's destroyer, and even saw the destruction of Elam, who destroyed Babylon, destroyer of Jerusalem'.

The superscription shows that the prophecy against Elam was remarkable in that it foresaw a whole sequence of future events. The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Babylon were both presupposed in this prophecy about the downfall of Babylon's destroyer, the Median kingdom of Elam.

Abravanel's extensive comments on the superscriptions to the oracles show clearly his lively interest, his fascination even, with literary critical problems. This stands out all the more when we notice that neither Rashi nor Kimchi pay the slightest attention to the variation in the wording of the superscriptions.

Before moving on to discuss those passages which Abravanel interprets in an eschatological sense, we may take note of several more verses which further reveal the characteristics of Abravanel's exegesis.

We have mentioned that Abravanel was a man of affairs and an

/...

influential administrator at the courts of several rulers. His knowledge of the workings of government influences his comment at 49:7, at which the prophet asks 'Is wisdom no more in Teman?' Abravanel understands this as a failure of political wisdom, and an absence of vigorous and statesmanlike leadership:

> 'Is wisdom no more in Teman? .... that is, how has it come about that Edom cannot save himself from the king of Babylon? Is it that the wisdom of Edom's wise men has vanished? In Teman and the land of Edom there had always been wise men and experienced statesmen upon whose advice the conduct of war had been pursued'.

One comment shows him to have been a shrewd observer of human behaviour also. At 48:6-7 he writes:

> 'The prophet explains why the advice is given, "Flee! Save yourselves!" (48:6). It is because it often happens that in an attempt to hold on to his material wealth, a man will not flee away from a coming disaster. As a result, he loses that wealth, and for the sake of it he loses his life into the bargain. "Because you trusted in the fruits of your labour ..... you will also be taken" (48:7), means that not only will the wealth and the fruits of labour be lost, but your very life will be taken along with it'.

The Moabites will perish because of their avarice, their refusal to leave behind what they have amassed. As a result, they will not escape the disaster in time.[27] Abravanel himself had ample opportunity to observe how men behave in a situation of crisis, and it may be that he is drawing upon his own experience in this comment. It was certainly the case that at the time of their expulsion from Spain, the Jews were obliged to leave the bulk of their possessions behind in order to save their lives by departing swiftly. We might also think of the occasion when Abravanel had to leave his fortune in Portugal and flee for his life after having been accused of treason. It is characteristic of Abravanel to speak of the fate of the nations as being due

/...

to the Providence (השגחה) of God:

> 'How can it (the sword of the Lord) be silent, when the Lord has appointed it ... (47:7) .... He assigns the matter of their destruction to divine Providence'.

> 'We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed (51:9). It is impossible to heal her, because her malady is not due to natural causes which admit of a remedy. Rather "Her judgement has reached up to heaven" (51:9) .... And because these (those who speak of failing to heal Babylon) do not explain whether the sentence took place by the arrangement of heaven, or through God's Providence, the prophet himself explains that this is so, in the words, "The Lord has brought forth our victory" (51:10)'

> 'He speaks (in 51:47) about the fall of Babylon as something ordered by divine Providence'.

> 'The Lord is laying Babylon waste .... (51:55) for they will all believe that their downfall is due to divine Providence'.

In addition, at 50:25 and 50:39 Abravanel, though not mentioning the word Providence, chooses to emphasize that the fall of Babylon is the work of God, and is according to his plan. Allied to this emphasis on the working of Providence we may detect a playing down of the human agency, and an emphasis on the miraculous. Thus at 50:25 he remarks that,

> 'This battle was not initiated by the Medes and Persians, for the Lord God of Hosts has a work to do in the land of the Chaldeans. He commands the Medes and Persians'.

Again, at 51:44 we are told that,

> 'Even the wall of Babylon, high and strongly founded as it is, will fall to the ground of its own accord, for it will not be able to stand any more, because of God's decree'.

We have mentioned above that Abravanel does not hesitate on occasion to disagree with the interpretations of Rashi and Kimchi. This occurs at 48:32, where he comments:

> 'More than the weeping over Jazer.... I will weep for you, O vine of Sibmah'. Sibmah was the name of a city

/...

> in which there were vines and an abundance of wine and renowned fruits. Therefore he says of it, "your branches have crossed the sea", (48:32). Since these vines were of such high quality, they sent them across the sea, so that even the very vines from there went into exile'.

The destroyers of Moab will not only exile the population of Sibmah, but also send away its choice vines; this is what Abravanel understands by 'your branches have passed over the sea'. Neither Rashi nor Kimchi understand the verse in this way. Both interpret 'branches' figuratively. Rashi comments that since the prophet likens Israel to a vine, he likens her warriors to the branches of the vine. Thus the words 'your branches have passed over the sea' mean that the warriors of Sibmah have gone into exile. Kimchi thinks that the branches of the vine represent the exile of the nations, which extends far and wide. Only Abravanel understands 'branches' literally.

In the very next verse, 48:33, Abravanel and Kimchi again disagree over the meaning of כַּרְמֶל . The verse runs 'Gladness and joy have been taken away from the fruitful land of Moab' (מִכַּרְמֶל וּמֵאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב.....). Kimchi assumes that has no special significance other than denoting a place of cultivated land, but Abravanel writes:

> 'The commentators say that Carmel means a place of arable fields, but it seems to me that Carmel means the land of Israel, which is so called (in the words of Jeremiah), "Yet I brought you into the land of Carmel" (2:7). It is as if he is saying that gladness and joy will be removed from both Moab and the land of Judah; that Moab will be like the land of Judah in this respect'.

Abravanel is thus treating Carmel as another name for Israel here, because the words אֶרֶץ הַכַּרְמֶל 'the fruitful land' or 'the land of Carmel' are used to designate Israel in 2:7. So he

/...

sees a reference both to Israel (or rather, Judah) and to Moab in 48:33, no doubt encouraged in this belief by the fact that the Hebrew literally means 'from the fruitful place and from the land of Moab'. Kimchi, on the other hand, rightly believes that 'the fruitful place' and 'the land of Moab' are synonymous expressions.[28]

We have already touched upon the problem of 48:34.[29] The first part of the verse reads literally, 'From the cry of Heshbon to Elealeh, as far as Jahaz they cry aloud; from Zoar to Horonaim, Eglath Shelishiyah ....'. The text does not make good sense. It may be improved slightly with the help of the parallel passage Isaiah 15:4-5, but even this passage gives us no clue as to what עגלת שלשיה might mean. The literal meaning 'a three year old heifer' is accepted by the Targum and by the Vulgate, and Kimchi too inclines to this view, explaining that Moab is being likened to a fine, fully grown heifer. Rashi takes the view to which the modern Versions are attracted (RSV NEB); Eglath Shelishiyah is the name of a place, more specifically, according to Rashi, a strong, fortified city. Abravanel takes an independent line:

> 'Because there were some lands in the kingdom of Moab more delightful than the others, he says that "From the cry over Heshbon to Elealeh, as far as Jahaz (which were important and glorious cities) they raised their voice" (48:34). They means the Moabites, who were crying over them. "From Zoar to Horonaim" (which were more glorious still) the sound and the cry was three times as great. And therefore it says about the cry עגלת שלשיה. It alludes to the cry which, concerning this region (that is, from Zoar to Horonaim) was three times as great as it had been concerning the other regions and cities'.

It seems then that Abravanel understands the phrase to mean 'threefold' or 'three times as great' (מְשֻׁלָּשֶׁת), although it is difficult to see how he accounts for the word עגלת.

/...

His interpretation sheds no light upon this awkward text, and it is prehaps better to assume that Eglath Shelishiyah is the name of a place or a city in Moab.

There is a slight difficulty in 51:33, a verse which reads, 'The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time when it is trodden; a little while yet, and the time of harvest will come upon it'. The problem arises from the fact that the verse seems to imply that the harvest comes shortly after threshing, when in fact the opposite is the case. Rashi comments upon this as follows:

> 'Like a threshing floor at the time of treading (51:33). Lo, she is full now, as a threshing floor is full of wheat when they have threshed the harvest. A little while yet (עוֹד מְעַט) and she will be emptied out, and will be like a threshing floor at the very beginning of the harvest, when it is empty'.

Rashi thinks that the two ideas contained in this verse are of abundance and emptiness to follow. Babylon in her present prosperous condition is likened to a threshing floor full of wheat, as it would be just after the threshing of the harvest. This is in stark contrast to Babylon's future state, when she will be like a threshing floor at the beginning of the time of harvest, that is, completely empty. Thus Rashi explains that the verse does not imply that harvest comes after threshing; two images of the threshing floor at different seasons of the agricultural year are employed to illustrate Babylon's present state in contrast to her future condition. Abravanel also feels it necessary to say a word about the imagery of the verse:

> '.... she is like the threshing floor of the wheat at the time when they tread it; her time has come to be trodden and trampled by the enemy. "Yet a little .....". This does not mean that after the treading of the threshing floor the harvest comes upon it, for the harvest of course

/...

comes before the threshing. Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time of treading, which is a little while after the harvest time has come to it. It is possible to interpret in another way, namely, that he says that the daughter of Babylon, which is to be equated with the kingdom of Babylon, is like a threshing floor at the time of treading, when the Medes tread and trample and conquer her. A little while after this, and the time of harvest will come to her, that is, to Babylon the city, for after the conquest of the kingdom, the city of Babylon itself will be conquered. This was how things happened, according to Josippon'.

In his second interpretation Abravanel overcomes the problem by assuming that the 'threshing' refers to the taking of the kingdom, and the 'harvest' to the conquest of the city of Babylon. His first interpretation is equally artificial. Rather than translate the last clause 'in a short time the harvest will come to it', he seems to want to translate it 'a short time after the harvest has come to it', thus giving the correct sequence harvest--threshing.

Both mediaeval commentators are wrong to try to account in a logical fashion for the fact that threshing seems to precede harvest according to the imagery of the verse. The time of threshing and the time of harvest refer not to two events happening one after the other, but to the same event, the destruction of Babylon. The author uses the two images to emphasize the imminence of Babylon's fall, although the effect of their juxtaposition is somewhat clumsy.

Finally in this section we may note an interesting interpretation which Abravanel offers at 50:20, a verse which reads

> 'In those days and at that time, says the Lord, iniquity shall be sought in Israel, and there shall be none; and sin in Judah, and none shall be found; for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant'.

Abravanel comments:

> 'Since the Babylonian exile came about because of the sin of Israel, and their evildoing, and they did not repent

/...

> in Babylon, how then does Israel get out of there and return to Jerusalem? It is necessary for God to say "In those days and at that time, says the Lord, iniquity shall be sought ..... and none shall be found"; not because they will be innocent of wrongdoing, but because "I will forgive those whom I leave as a remnant". And it is fitting that he should say this "Iniquity shall be sought in Israel, and there shall be none"(50:20), about the neglect of the Sabbatical year - indicating that they have already been exiled according to the number of years in which they had not allowed the release of the land. The words "there shall be none", mean that they had already paid the debts in full'.

Abravanel explains that Israel returns from exile not because she has repented but because she has paid the penalty in full and received forgiveness from God. He then goes on to indicate which 'iniquity' is meant, and why none shall be found. It may be that Abravanel identifies this iniquity as the neglect of the year of release, that is, the year in which, according to the law, all debts were to be cancelled. However it seems much more likely that the 'debts' (נְשִׁיאֹתָם) which the people of Israel incurred, and which they paid off in exile, arose through their failure to observe the years of release for the land, especially since this particular offence is listed in Pirke Avoth as one of those for which the penalty is exile:

> 'Exile comes into the world on account of idolatry and incest and bloodshed and (neglect of) the release of the land' (שְׁמִטַּת הָאָרֶץ).[30]

This comment is dependant upon Lev. chapter 26, where Israel is told that if it does not keep God's ordinances, among which is the law governing the Sabbatical year, it shall be scattered among the nations. Abravanel explains that there shall be no trace of this iniquity found in Israel when it returns from Babylon, since the penalty will have been paid; Israel will have been in exile according to the number of years in which the release of the land

/...

had not been observed. Abravanel has in mind here a passage such as Lev.26:34-35:

> 'Then shall the land enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest which it had not in your Sabbaths when you dwelt upon it'.

The desolate land shall be allowed to make up for those fallow years which Israel denied it. Abravanel interprets 'and there shall be none' to mean that the debt is paid off, since Israel has already been in exile in Babylon long enough for the land to make up the number of its neglected Sabbaths.[31] Kimchi thinks that the verse is to be understood eschatologically, and that it refers to the final return at the commencement of the Messianic age. He therefore interprets the pardoning of the remnant in the light of passages such as Isaiah 4:3 and Zeph.3:13:

> 'And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called Holy'.
>
> '.....those who are left in Israel will do no wrong'.

We will now go on to say something about Abravanel's eschatological expectations and speculations. In the course of his comment on Jer.48:46, Abravanel remarks that to be sent into exile is 'many times worse than being slain'. As we said earlier, he spent much of his life as an exile, and in particular was caught up in the wholesale deportation of the Jews from Spain in 1492. This expulsion of his fellow Jews, and the privations and sufferings which befell many of them as a consequence of it, must have deeply affected Abravanel, who had been a prominent figure among his people, and who had, ironically, by his able management of the Spanish king's finances, enabled that monarch

/...

to bring his war against the Moors to a successful conclusion. This victory precipitated the measures against Spanish Jewry which culminated in the decree of 1492.[32] Abravanel lived and wrote in an age of great peril for Judaism, in which Jews everywhere were undergoing a crisis of faith and identity in the face of a triumphant, victorious and seemingly all powerful Catholic church. As a scholar and biblical commentator, his chief concern was to give new heart and hope to his people. Towards this end he directed his eschatological speculation.

We have ample evidence to show that his interest in such speculation was extremely lively. In the middle of writing his commentary on Isaiah he felt constrained to break off this work in order to compose his three main Messianic treatises; The Wells of Salvation (מַעְיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה), a Messianic commentary on Daniel; Announcer of Salvation (מַשְׁמִיעַ יְשׁוּעָה), a work in which Abravanel investigates some sixty biblical passages with a view to proving the truth of the resurrection of the dead, the Day of Judgement, the advent of the Messiah and the future glory of Israel; The Acts of Salvation of his Annointed (יְשׁוּעוֹת מְשִׁיחוֹ), a collection of all the Midrashic and Talmudic evidence for the Messiah.[33] All these works were completed before Abravanel embarked upon his commentary on Jeremiah. Presumably, then, any eschatological interpretations found in that commentary will reflect his well considered thought on the subject.

We mentioned above[34] that Kimchi too was interested in the eschatological significance of certain verses. Thus at 48:47 'I will reverse the captivity of Moab in the latter days', Kimchi sees a reference to the Messianic era at which time 'all nations will return to their land, and all will live under the rule of

/...

Israel'. It is also the case that at 49:2, 50:5 and 50:19-20 Kimchi suggests a two-fold interpretation. The verses may refer to ordinary historical events, or they may be taken to refer to the events still to come 'in the latter days', in the eschatological future.[35] It is interesting to compare Abravanel's interpretation of the above verses. We have seen that at 48:47 he disagrees with Kimchi over the meaning of באחרית הימים , which he takes to mean simply 'after a long time'.[36] When we compare the two commentators at 50:5 and 50:19-20, we discover that here again there is a difference of opinion. Kimchi stresses that the verses have an eschatological dimension which ought to be taken account of; Abravanel treats them differently. Both of these verses feature in the first of the questions which he asks concerning the oracle against Babylon. He assumes at the outset that they refer to the return of the captives from Babylon in the Second Temple period, and he inquires as to what is meant in verses 4 and 20 by 'Israel and Judah' since 'Israel' considered as the name for the ten northern tribes, did not return to its homeland at this time. In the course of his comment on v.4 he concludes that 'Israel' does not mean the exiled nation, but rather those remnants of the ten tribes who did not go into exile to Assyria, and who joined themselves to Judah, and went into exile with <u>them</u>:

> '....concerning them it says that they will return from Babylon with the people of Judah .... And this happened when Cyrus of Persia gave them permission to go up and build the temple of God in Jerusalem'.

He explains the presence of 'Israel' alongside 'Judah' in verse 20 in the same way, this time explicitly disagreeing with Kimchi:

> 'Rabbi David Kimchi applies this reference to the

/...

eschatological future,[37] and identifies the Israel spoken of here with the ten tribes, but this is not correct'.

Thus for Abravanel the return which is referred to here is the return from Babylon in the time of Cyrus, when the exiles of Judah made their way back home, accompanied by those survivors of the northern tribes who had shared the Babylonian exile. He therefore interprets the verses in a non-eschatological sense.[38]

Abravanel's own eschatological interpretations are applied to a number of verses in the foreign nation oracles, and we may begin our study of these with 46:27. He sees in this verse a word of comfort and promise addressed to the Jews of his own day. 46:26b is interpreted by him as a reference to the return of Egypt to their land after a forty year period of exile. He then goes on to voice the anguish of the Jewish exiles who still despair of ever returning home:

> 'When the people of Israel and Judah hear the Egypt prophecy, and (hear) that after a short time the ransomed ones would return to their land, that is, after forty years, they are very much afraid, and say: Because these people (that is, the Egyptians) were exiles near their land - for from Egypt to Babylon is only a short distance - they returned quickly to their land. And also they returned because they only had to endure life in exile for a short period. But those exiled to the farthest reaches of the earth, and for a lengthy period of time, such as us, who have been exiled from one end of the world to the other, and whose lot this has been for 2,000 years, truly, we will never again return home to our land'.

In these words which he puts into the mouth of the Jewish exiles, Abravanel expresses all the despair and bitterness felt by his people, whose hopes of ultimate vindication were fading, so long had they been exiled from their homeland, and who believed that the promises of the prophets had been fulfilled long since, and could no longer offer them any comfort. Abravanel goes on to

/...

interpret the verse in such a way that the promise is directly relevant to them. We have already said that he denies that 46:27 is addressed to the Jews who fled to Egypt in Nebuchadnezzar's day.[39] He holds that since the prophecy calls upon 'Jacob' and 'Israel' not to be afraid, this must mean that it is addressed to the nation as a whole, to 'those who went to Babylon, and to the rest of the lands of east and west, who went into exile far away'. To this worldwide diaspora the promise is made 'Lo, I will save you from afar'.

> 'Even although your exile is to the ends of the earth, and for a long time ..... and you are not exiled near your land, as Egypt was, nor for a short time, like them, lo, I will save you in the time of Redemption'.

In 50:5 and 50:19-20 the prophet speaks of a return to their homeland by 'Judah' and 'Israel', yet we have already shown that Abravanel interprets these as simply references to the return from Babylon in the time of Cyrus. In these verses, he explains that 'Judah' and 'Israel' do not denote the whole Jewish nation, but only those people of Judah, accompanied by some survivors of the northern tribes, who returned from Babylon (and only from Babylon) at this time. This was therefore only a partial return, not affecting the Jews scattered throughout the world;[40] as such it does not exhaust the promise of such a verse as 46:27, which has in mind the whole of the Jewish people. They will return home 'in the time of future deliverance' and then:

> 'He shall have quiet, that is, Jacob who is addressed, and he shall be at ease, that is, Israel; for all of them will return and dwell safely upon their own soil. And none shall make them afraid, for they will never again go into exile'.

Thus Abravanel interprets the prophet's words of comfort in order to make them relevant to the Jews of his own time who had

/...

languished in exile throughout the world for two thousand years. He believes that the promise is not only relevant, but is also about to be fulfilled in the imminent future. In his Messianic commentary on Daniel, Wells of Salvation, he set the date of the coming of Messiah at 1503. Later on, he altered this to 1534 or 1542.[41] In the trials which Jewry was undergoing in his own day, he thought that he recognized the 'Messianic birth pangs'.

For evidence of the intensity of Abravanel's Messianic speculation, we must turn to his comments on the oracle against Edom (49:7-22). Several of these contain lengthy and vivid descriptions of the events leading up to the last days and the coming of the Messiah. We have mentioned in passing that Abravanel understands Edom as Rome, following certain comments in the Talmud. He allows his own particular views on the prophecy against Edom to emerge by contrasting them with the views of two of his predecessors, Ibn Ezra and Kimchi. Ibn Ezra believed that the 'Edom' in this prophecy was that Edom which was near Israel, the Edom which Nebuchadnezzar overthrew. His interpretation is therefore that the prophecy deals with the events of Nebuchadnezzar's day. Kimchi, on the other hand, believed that the whole prophecy was eschatological, and referred to the downfall of (Christian) Rome. Abravanel discusses these views carefully and at some length. He does not dismiss Ibn Ezra's interpretation out of hand:

> 'It is not possible to interpret the prophecy as a whole in an eschatological sense, as Kimchi does, because in chapter 25 we find (verses 8-9) the words "Lo, I will send for all the tribes of the north, says the Lord, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them ..... against all these nations round about; I will destroy them .....". He brought ruin on all the nations whom he saw in this prophecy..... and

/...

> Edom was among them. And now, at the end of his prophecies, he prophesies against Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom etc. Now if these nations were all destroyed at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, how can it be maintained that Edom, which features among them, was not destroyed at that time, and that his prophecy, unlike the others, refers to the Messianic future?'

Thus he feels that the Edom prophecy must at least in part deal with the events of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. In the light of this he concludes that verses 7-12 (the first six verses) came to the prophet concerning the fate of Israel's neighbour Edom at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. But he agrees with Kimchi that the remainder of the prophecy is eschatological, for various reasons. He mentions verse 13, which says that Bozra shall become a horror, and her cities perpetual wastes. He points out that since the Edom of Nebuchadnezzar's day had no city of this name, the prophecy must refer to another Bozra. Bozra is Rome, he states unequivocally. Again with reference to verse 18, which likens Edom's overthrow to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, he says:

> 'Even though the king of Babylon subdued and conquered Edom under his rule, it was not destroyed absolutely, and not overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah; even today people live there. This contradicts the words "No man shall dwell there, no man shall sojourn in her". If this was not fulfilled at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, nor in the time of David, nor in the days of Hyrcanus the Hasmonean,[42] it must be eschatological and concern Rome'.

Abravanel is by no means the first to make this identification between Edom and Rome,[43] but he does attempt a detailed justification of this tradition in a lengthy excursus on Isaiah 34:6,[44] adducing a racial and religious connection between the two. In his comments on the Edom prophecy in the book of Jeremiah, he twice mentions that the descendants of Edom would settle in Italy, and grow in strength and numbers until they became rulers of a great kingdom (see verses 13 &15).

/...

From his treatises dealing with the Messianic age, we know that Abravanel expected this age to dawn imminently; he interpreted the events of his own time as evidence that the world was already tossing in the throes of the 'Messianic birth pangs'. We now turn to those sections of his commentary on chapter 49 in which he vividly describes the final sequence of events leading up to the appearance of the Messiah and the vindication of the Jews. He interprets 49:14 as follows:

> 'I have heard tidings from the Lord, and a messenger has been sent among the nations ...' etc. The meaning of this is as I wrote in ..... מעיני הישועה Towards the end of our exile, Rome and the whole of Christendom will bestir themselves to go and conquer Jerusalem, because located there are all the things sacred to their religion, and the tomb of Jesus their God, just as already on previous occasions they have bestirred themselves to conquer it for this same reason. And because today the whole of Israel, including Jerusalem, is subject to the rule of Egypt, the Christians will fight Egypt first of all, and deal a stunning blow to all its throng. And from there the news will go out into all the lands of the east and north, which are populated mostly with Arabs, who are enemies of the Christians. And when they hear that the Christians have come from their land, have destroyed Egypt and gained control of Israel, and have captured Jerusalem, which is a holy city to the Arabs also, they in their turn stir themselves and say to each other "Let us go in the name of God against these triumphant Christians, and take vengeance upon them for Egypt, and wrest the holy city from their grasp, in case the Christians spread into all the lands of the east, and come to destroy us as well". And this is the news which the prophet heard from God..... who will stir up both sides to do all this, in order to execute his judgement upon them. ....."Gather together and come against her" (49:14), that is, against Bozra (Rome) and the whole Christian world....'

He interprets the verse against the background of the final battle, the last episode in the series of dramatic and traumatic events which are to precede the coming of the Messiah. He speaks of the Christian world embarking upon a new crusade to gain control of Jerusalem, a move which brings them into conflict with

/...

the Arab nations. The ensuing struggle will be fatal for both sides. God will execute his judgement upon both the Christian and the Arab nations and the slaughter will be very great. Elsewhere Abravanel identifies this battle with the struggle of Gog and Magog.[45]

He mentions that the Christians are to fight Egypt first of all, since Israel 'is subject to the rule of Egypt'. He is alluding here to the political situation of his own day; since the thirteenth century Palestine had been under the rule of the Mamluk sultans, who directed the affairs of the province from Cairo.[46] This is what Abravanel means when he speaks of 'Egyptian' rule. At the time when he was writing his Messianic treatises and later commentaries, the Mamluk sultanate was growing progressively weaker, and its rule coming to an end; Palestine was in fact conquered in 1516 by the Ottoman Turks.[47] It seems likely that Abravanel's conception of the final struggle over the control of Jerusalem was at least partly inspired by what he must have known about the uncertain political situation which was developing over Palestine during these last years of his life. In the political climate of his day he read the signs of the approaching end.

Further detail is added at verse 20.[48] Abravanel reminds us that the 'little ones of the flock' are the Persians, as they are at 50:45, and he cites Rashi in support of this view:

> 'Rashi wrote Tiras, who was the youngest of Japheth's sons, following a view expressed in the Midrash, which states that Rabbi Simai, who made the equation with Tiras, and the Rabbis had an argument over the identity of Tiras (Gen.10:2). One said "This is Turkey"; another "This is Persia". The rest concluded that Tiras was Persia and Turkey, for the Turks were Persians'.

/...

Abravanel is pointing out that Rashi accepts the outcome of this dispute, and so agrees that Persia is meant,[49] thus supporting Abravanel's own view. He repeats the Rabbinic interpretation 'Rome will fall into the hand of Persia' (that is, the least of the flock, which is Persia, will drag Edom-Rome away). Then he mentions that in the course of the discussion of this phrase in the Talmud, the opposite meaning is also asserted for the purposes of interpretation; that is, that Persia will fall into the hand of Rome. This implies, says Abravanel, that the final struggle will mean annihilation for both sides. God will be avenged upon the Romans through the agency of the Persians, and upon the Persians at the hand of the Romans. Such would be the outcome of the war between the Christians and the Muslim Arabs which Abravanel expected soon. He also adds another detail to the picture; after the Christians have captured Jerusalem and defeated 'Egypt', they will spread their sway over the world for nine months, before the final war is fought, so as to fulfil the words of Micah 5:2, 'Therefore he shall give them up, until the time when she who is in travail has brought forth'. Rome will possess Israel for nine months, until Christians and Arabs destroy each other, and the Messiah comes.

This concludes our study of Abravanel's eschatology as far as it emerges from his commentary on Jer.46-51. He provides us with a vivid and detailed account of the events of the last days which he believed to be imminent. His eschatological interpretation of the oracle against Edom (49:7-22) is much more detailed and explicit than Kimchi's; although Kimchi remarks at the beginning of his comments on this oracle that he sees it as an eschatological prophecy, he seems to make very little of this

/...

in the course of the commentary. Except at 49:20, his comments seem largely to be unaffected by this initial conclusion. He tends to pay far more attention to expounding grammar than to discussing eschatology. For example, at v.13 he says that Bozra is the capital of Edom, but does not explain that he is understanding Bozra as Rome. This is in great contrast to the use which Abravanel makes of such verses.

Rashi deserves separate mention. Nowhere is his commentary on these chapters does he explicitly say that he understands any verse eschatologically. If we take the mention of Bozra in 49:13 as an example again, we see that, whereas Abravanel thinks that Bozra is Rome, because there was no such city in the Edom of Nebuchadnezzar's time, Rashi is content to say that Bozra appears in this oracle because a king from Bozra once ruled over Edom (Gen.36:33). He holds firmly to the view that all these oracles refer to events of the time of Nebuchadnezzar, or, in the case of 50:5, to the return of the Babylonian exile in the time of Cyrus.

Conclusion to CHAPTER FIVE:

To conclude our study of Abravanel, it remains for us to compare him with his predecessors Rashi and Kimchi, insofar as such a comparison can be carried out on the basis of the few chapters of Jeremiah which we have investigated.

In the style of his comments, Abravanel is much closer to Kimchi than to Rashi. If it can be said of Rashi's style that,

> 'Its precision of reference, its verbal economy, its subtlety and its discretion render it a text which has always initiated more questions than it has answered, and raised more problems than it has solved'[1],

it may be said of both Kimchi and Abravanel that their much more verbose, periphrastic style seeks to remove even the slightest obscurity. Rashi's habit is to comment only on certain verses which he considers worthy of his attention, while ignoring the rest; Kimchi and Abravanel tend to make some comment on every part of every verse, even if it is only to say 'This is self explanatory'. Kimchi's comments are therefore considerably longer than those of Rashi, while those of Abravanel are longer still. Abravanel displays a fondness for repeating again and again what he has said previously, and this does not make for verbal economy. The two main factors which contribute toward the disparity of length are, however, Abravanel's detailed comments on the events of the 'latter days', and secondly, his method of presentation. As we noted earlier, Abravanel singles out various aspects of his text in order to give them extended treatment and to make them the subject of one of the 'questions' with which he prefaces each section of his commentary. Within the body of the commentary itself, his exegesis often takes the form of a review of the opinions of his predecessors, followed by a statement of

/...

his own view. His commentary is thereby considerably lengthened, but also considerably enhanced, since his method of presentation allows him to highlight problems which he regards as crucial to the correct understanding of the text as a whole. And if his solutions are not always profound or convincing, they at least show evidence of the commentator's creative approach and fertility of imagination. We must allow, too, that many of the questions which he raises are very real, and still exercise present day exegetes. Moreover, as we have seen in our study of such verses as 48:9,[2] Abravanel is sufficiently independent and original to be able to review the interpretations of his predecessors (especially Kimchi, to whom he seems constantly indebted), and to proceed to give a new interpretation of his own. We may say that Abravanel's method as an exegete aims to be much more systematic than those of his predecessors, seeking to comment both on individual verses and on the wider issues raised by the text. It is thus more satisfying.

It is a well known and oft repeated fact that Rashi, Kimchi and Abravanel are all exponents of the method of exegesis known as the peshat. In contrast to the derash technique which is practised widely in the earlier Rabbinic literature, the peshat method uses linguistic and historical criteria to establish the plain meaning of a Scriptural passage, as opposed to the ingenious and often fanciful exegesis practised by the Rabbis. Although the mediaeval scholars did not invent this method,[3] certain factors which were at work throughout the period made the search for the 'plain' sense of Scripture into a quest of paramount importance. Judaism laboured under constant pressures,

/...

and was threatened from within, by Karaism, and from without, by the triumphant advance of Islam and Christianity. The peshat exegesis was employed above all as a weapon in the conflict between church and synagogue; in this atmosphere it sought first of all to meet the danger to Judaism posed by, for example, the Christological interpretation of many scriptural passages, and secondly, it aimed to affirm and strengthen the faith of mediaeval Jewry.

All three commentators are steeped in the peshat method. It is perhaps worth noting that Rashi, the earliest of them, is inclined to make use of interpretations from Talmud and Midrash, even though these may reflect an exegesis of the derash type. He has not yet managed to sever himself completely from his forbears, and in his later years admitted that if he had had the time, he would have needed to have written other commentaries according to the plain sense, 'of which new examples are thought of daily'.[4] We have noted two examples of this exegesis of Rashi in a previous chapter. At 48:30 he explains that the words לא כֵן בָּרוּ allude to the circumstance that Moab did not recompense Israel, even though Abraham fought 'with the kings' and rescued 'Lot their father'. The exegesis employed by Rashi here can be traced back to Genesis Rabbah.[5] Again, in 46:22, Rashi does no more with 'her cry shall go forth like the serpent's' than to quote the legend which we find in Genesis Rabbah, concerning the piercing cry which the serpent raised when the angels cut off his hands and feet in order to fulfil the command 'upon your belly you shall go'.[6] In the case of the last example it may be that sheer puzzlement at this peculiarly intractable verse drove Rashi to the solution provided by derash exegesis, but it

/...

must be noted that neither Kimchi nor Abravanel resort to this at either of the above verses. Thus at 46:22 Abravanel comments simply

> 'her cry - Egypt's - "shall go forth like the serpent's", and her wail will be heard far away'.

While he is avoiding Rashi's resort to derash, he makes no attempt to explain שֹׁרֵק . The peshat method of exegesis was well established by the time of Abravanel, and we find that he sticks firmly to it throughout. Only once do he and Kimchi make use of a midrashic exegesis, and that is at 49:20, to identify the 'least of the flock'. Both commentators make use of a different Midrash here; Kimchi identifies the 'little ones of the flock' into whose hands Edom-Rome is to fall, as Israel, whereas Abravanel thinks that they are Persia.[7] Thus the two commentators show that although they do not do so as a rule, they are prepared to employ midrash when they feel that elucidation of a passage depends upon it. In this case they wish to prove that 49:20 describes the fall of Rome and the Christian nations. It is to be noted, however, that both quote a derash exegesis because they feel that in this particular case it has a definite claim to represent the plain meaning of the text. They therefore quote it not as derash, but as peshat!

The quest after the plain[8] meaning of Scripture could hardly have been carried out without a renewed interest in the workings of the Hebrew language:

> 'It (mediaeval exegesis) is based on a deeper understanding of the Hebrew language through grammatical and lexicographical studies more systematic and rational than anything that has gone before'.[9]

Rashi and Kimchi both are concerned that they themselves should understand accurately the language of the text, and also that

/...

their readers should understand. It is with the latter purpose in mind that Rashi incorporates a number of vernacular mediaeval French glosses into his commentary, in order to elucidate a word or phrase which he feels might cause difficulty for his readers. Two examples will suffice:

1. In 50:17 it is said that the king of Babylon 'grawed the bones' of Israel. This is represented by the word עִצְּמוֹ which only occurs here, and which looks like a denominative verb from עֶצֶם 'bone' plus suffix ending. Rashi comments that עִצְּמוֹ is equivalent to the vernacular 'déssoser' (רישו"א ר") that is 'to bone'.

2. In 46:4 his comment on 'polish the spears (מְרֻלְּנוּ הָרְמָחִים) runs 'the same verb is used in the 'polished and rinsed' (מוּרָלָן וְשׁוּטָף) of Lev. 6:21. In the vernacular the equivalent would be 'forbir' i.e. 'furbish' (פורביר)[10].

There are quite a number of such glosses in Rashi. Kimchi too makes use of them, but to a much lesser extent. I have noted only one example at 50:39. There are no examples at all in Abravanel's commentary on 46-51.

Both Rashi and Kimchi adopt the policy of attempting to elucidate a difficult word or grammatical point on the basis of analogous usage elsewhere. Two examples:

1. At 46:20, Rashi comments that קֵרֵץ indicates a cut or has the idea of 'cutting', since it has this meaning in Job 33:6 'from clay I was cut off' (מֵחוֹמֶר קֹרַצְתִּי).

2. At 49:24 Kimchi notices the feminine singular verb with nouns צָרָה וְחֶבְלִים in the phrase צָרָה וְחֶבְלִים אֲחָזַתְּהָ . He cites two other examples in which the verb is feminine singular,

/...

having one feminine singular and one masculine noun:

Esther 9:29 וַתִּכְתֹּב אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה
Num. 12:1 תְּדַבֵּר מִרְיָם וְאַהֲרֹן

Abravanel too occasionally cites passages in this way; he too quotes Job 33:6 to explain קָרֵץ, as does Rashi, but the examples of this kind are much rarer in Abravanel than in the others. As far as the discussion of points of grammar is concerned, the differences between the three commentators are very marked. Rashi is not without interest in points of grammar, and contains a number of small observations (eg. 49:1 49:16), but when we turn to Kimchi it is clear that here we see evidence of an interest in the subject which was all consuming. His commentary is laced with innumerable grammatical notes, some of them quite lengthy, and this in part accounts for the disparity in length between his commentary and Rashi's.

He takes especial note of any instances of qeré-kethib which arise.[11] His policy is to comment upon both as if both were of equal validity. For example, when he comes up against a qere-kethib involving a choice between a singular and plural reading he deals with it thus:

50:6 צאן אובדות היה עמי : 'The kethib regards the people as a collective entity, whereas the qeré envisages a number of individuals. (The kethib היה is singular, the qere היו is plural).

50:11 כי תשמחי כי תעלזי : 'The kethib, in the feminine singular form, applying to Babylon, refers to the community as a collective unit; the qeré, in the plural, refers to the inhabitants of Babylon as individuals'. (kethib תעלז singular, qeré תעלזו plural).

So also at 51:34 and elsewhere, Kimchi seems to make a practice of using this דרך פרט . . . . דרך כלל formula in cases such as the above. In other examples we find him treating the qeré-kethib as if they complemented each other, and together brought out the

/...

full meaning of a verse.

48:44 הֵנִיס מִפְנֵי הַפַּחַד 'The kethib contains yodh: this is to say, "he who made his sons take flight, and his cattle", as it says (in Ex.9:20) "He made his slaves and his cattle flee". (הֵנִיס אֶת עֲבָדָיו). The qeré presupposes הָנָס ; this refers to the flight of the individual himself. There were both types among them - those who fled, and those who caused others to flee'. (The kethib הֵנִיס is hiph'il perfect, the qeré הָנָס is a qal participle, 'the one fleeing').

When a slight problem arises owing to the fact that a plural noun is the subject of a singular verb, Kimchi concludes that the plural noun should be regarded as a collection of individuals, each of which forms the subject of the singular verb:

51:29 קָמָה עַל-בָּבֶל מַחְשְׁבוֹת יהוה ' קָמָה is a singular verb, yet מחשבות is plural; this means that each and every plan which he laid against her is coming to fruition'.

46:15 נִסְחַף אַבִּירֶיךָ 'this indicates that each of your strong ones, one by one is prostrated'.

So also 48:41 etc. On a more general note, Kimchi rarely lets a form or a construction which is in the least unusual pass without comment.

50:34 הִרְגִּיעַ וְהִרְגִּיז 'These are both infinitives. The ה is pointed with hireq, as if this were a perfect tense; see similarly Isaiah 31:5 (גָּנוֹן וְהִצִּיל פָּסוֹחַ וְהִמְלִיט) and 1 Kgs.15:29, 2 Kgs.10:17 (עַר־הַשְּׁמִידוֹ).

46:8 אוֹצִיאָה 'this is from the hiphil conjugation. Normal usage would lead us to expect אאוציאה but this form has been produced through the quiescence of the aleph'.

46:20 עֶגְלָה יָפָה־פִיָּה מִצְרַיִם . יפה־פיה - these two words are meant to be understood as if they were one word. The same can be said of the פְּקַח־קוֹחַ of Isaiah 61:1, and the גַּאֲוֹנִים (qeré גְּאֵי יוֹנִים) of Psalm 123:4. These are all instances where two separate words contribute to one meaning'.

Thus we see that Kimchi displays much more than a passing interest in grammatical problems. Herein lies perhaps the greatest contrast between his work and the work of Abravanel, who is indebted to him in so many other areas. Abravanel shows no interest whatever in points of grammar, and in the whole of his

/...

lengthy commentary on Jeremiah 46-51 spares them not a single word. It would seem that Kimchi, writing at an earlier period, was still concerned to emphasize the necessary and indissoluble connection between peshat exegesis and accurate knowledge of grammar and lexicography. Abravanel could afford to take this for granted, and largely to ignore a field of study which had been so thoroughly ploughed by his predecessors, and above all, by Kimchi himself. In the ספר מכלול, his major two-part grammatical work,[12] the latter recognized that:

> '...the era of new contributions and refinements had reached its conclusion; that virtually all that the Middle Ages had to learn about grammar had been learned'.[13]

The existence of works such as this, aptly entitled The Book of Completion, freed Abravanel from the necessity of tackling purely grammatical problems, and enabled him to apply his talents to the problems of exegesis which really interested him.

Abravanel and Kimchi share an interest in the historical setting of the incidents alluded to in these oracles, and their comments in this area are often very similar, for example 46:2, 49:1, 50:13. We have seen that at 47:1 all three commentators quote from Seder 'Olam,[14] but in general Rashi shows no especial interest in supplying historical detail. The concern to set a verse of scripture in its historical context is part of the peshat method of exegesis, which meant 'correct linguistic analysis and historical interpretation'.[15] As with Abravanel, so we find with Kimchi that his historical notes often do more than supply detail for its own sake; they are required in order to solve some difficulty which the commentator finds in the text.

/...

Thus at 49:3 Kimchi adds such a note in order to explain why a Moabite town appears in a prophecy against Ammon:

> 'Wail Heshbon, for Ai is despoiled. Heshbon belonged to Moab after the Gadites and Reubenites went into exile. Ai belonged to the Ammonites (there was another Ai in the land of Canaan) .... and when Nebuchadnezzar came up into the land, he first of all swept away the Ammonites, and then Moab. 'When he came to the Ammonites, he attacked them first, hence "Wail Heshbon.....".

Heshbon is told to wail because the Babylonian attack against Ammon signifies that Moab is next.

At 50:28 he supplies a historical note to reconcile the fact that in this oracle against Babylon, Israelites are referred to as 'those who flee and escape', with the fact that Cyrus bade them return home peacefully and unmolested. Those who 'flee and escape' do so not under Cyrus, he explains, but under the king whom Kimchi takes to be Cyrus' predecessor, Darius the Mede:

> 'Those who flee and escape are Israel, although they did not have to flee, for Cyrus proclaimed throughout his kingdom (Ezra 1:3) "Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him....". But Darius who was king before Cyrus, came up, and he subdued Babylon and destroyed it. And when his army fell upon Babylon, some Israelites fled from the midst of her, and went to Zion, for they recognized it as the word of the Lord which Jeremiah prophesied - that is, the destruction of Babylon'.

We have said something above[16] about the differences between Rashi, Kimchi and Abravanel in their treatment of the various prophecies which they regard as eschatological. In conclusion I will say a few more words about this.

Kimchi is the only one of the three who at certain verses wishes to combine historical with eschatological interpretation, and thus understand the prophecies on two levels. Having characteristically placed the verses firmly in their historical context, he then goes on to say that they may also be interpreted

/...

on the eschatological-Messianic level. That is, they can be taken as prophecies of events to come in the prophet's near future, or as eschatological prophecies. Kimchi makes a comment to this effect at three verses:

49:2 And Israel shall possess her dispossessors. 'This does not have in mind that time when retribution came upon these nations (ie 'her dispossessors') at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, for then Israel was in exile; rather, because it says that the Ammonites possessed the land of the Gadites, it implies that the time when Israel shall possess Ammon her dispossessors is still to come. This will be in the latter days, as it says in Isaiah 11:14 "And the Ammonites shall obey them". And it may be that the words "And Israel shall possess her dispossessors", could mean that the Ammonites were also oppressed at the hands of the Medes and Persians, as it says in Ezekiel (25:4) "Lo, I am handing you over to the peoples of the east for a possession". Israel went up out of exile with the authorization of Cyrus, king of Persia, and he gave them jurisdiction over the land of the Ammonites.....'

50:5 They (the people of Israel and Judah) shall ask the way to Zion, saying 'Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord....'. 'In part the verse refers to the coming up from Babylon, and in part it has an eschatological reference, that is, it alludes to the Messianic era'.

50:19-20 'this verse and the next are about the return of the Babylonian exiles, or, they have an eschatological reference....'

This type of two-fold exegesis which Kimchi employs is perfectly in line with the aims of peshat interpretation. The adoption of peshat exegesis by the mediaeval commentators served a dual purpose. It sought to combat Christological interpretations, and it aimed to affirm and strengthen the faith of mediaeval Jewry. Desire to accomplish the first of these aims produced the concern with the historical context of a given Scriptural passage which Kimchi shows forth so clearly. The second aim could best be accomplished by finding an eschatological dimension, by interpreting Scripture in such a way that, while the historical sense was not violated, it could be seen to contain a promise of the ultimate redemption and vindication which was awaited

/...

with such eagerness by the Jews.

Abravanel's interpretation of 50:5 and 50:19-20 is, as we have seen,[17] quite unequivocal. They are not eschatological prophecies but refer to the first return from Babylon in the time of Cyrus. His exegesis of chapter 49, the prophecy against Edom, asserts with equal vigour that the events referred to are those accompanying the imminent fall of Rome and the Christian nations. We are never left in doubt as to how Abravanel interprets a passage or a verse. And although Kimchi's commentary on 49:7-22 contains none of the lengthy descriptions of the final battle between Rome and Ishmael which Abravanel provides, he does at least indicate that he understands the prophecy to be eschatological by the brief remark which he makes at the outset, נבואה זו עתידה , and by his exegesis of 49:20. As a commentator, however, Rashi is much more difficult to pin down. At 49:7, he says that the Edom to which the prophecy is addressed is 'the Edom which is to the south of the land of Israel, as it says in Num.34:3 : Your south side shall be from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom'. Abravanel explicitly denies that this Edom is the one addressed by the prophet. The remark of Rashi's suggests that he is not about to make the identification between Edom and Christian Rome in chapter 49, and so does not think that the prophecy refers to the events of the 'latter days'. At 49:20, at which the exegesis of Kimchi and Abravanel is so revealing, Rashi comments briefly that the 'little ones of the flock' refers to 'the despoiled of the heathen' (בזויי העובדי כוכבים). He also cites without comment the Rabbinic interpretation of the 'little ones'

/...

as Persia; we are still left uncertain about his views on this prophecy as a whole. Similarly, we find that in Ezekiel's prophecy against Edom (Ez.25:12-14), Kimchi and Abravanel explicitly assert that the prophecy is eschatological. Rashi's only comment, however, is on v.14, which runs, 'And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel'. Rashi explains that Edom will be 'my messengers to execute my vengeance'. The comment is again allusive, not to say elusive, and leaves us uncertain. It seems to be the case that even in passages where there is little doubt that Rashi sees a reference to Rome, or to the events of the 'latter days', his comments are never explicit, as those of Kimchi and Abravanel tend to be. Thus in Obadiah's prophecy against Edom, Kimchi remarks in the first verse that 'The prophet prophesies that God will take vengeance upon them (Edom) at the end of the days, when Israel comes up from exile'. In v.21 he identifies the 'saviours' who are to go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau as 'the Messianic king and his associates'. At the latter verse Rashi is content to remark that the 'saviours' are 'the leaders of Israel'. We might notice also that at Micah 7:8, 'Rejoice not over me, O my enemy', Rashi interprets 'enemy' as 'Babylon and the guilty city'. The latter presumably refers to Rome, but again the comment is allusive rather than explicit. Elsewhere, we find instances where Rashi displays much more caution than the other two commentators when it comes to eschatological interpretations. One such example would be Jeremiah chapter 30. Characteristically, Abravanel provides us with a lengthy argument proving that 'the days..... when I restore the fortunes of my people' (v.3)

/...

must refer to the Messianic era, after the end of the wars of Gog and Magog. Kimchi says the same in fewer words and with less detail. Rashi, however, admits of the possibility that the words refer to the fall of Babylon:

> v.5 'We have heard a cry of panic'. 'Some explain this as being about the news of Babylon, at which those who were exiled there went into a panic. Midrash Aggada thinks that the verse is about the battle of Gog and Magog'.
> v.7 'That day is so great'. 'The day of the killing of Belshazzar and the fall of Babylon, or alternatively, the day of the fall of Gog'.

We may say, then, that in Jer. chapters 46-51, the greatest contrast between Rashi on the one hand and Kimchi and Abravanel on the other, is that Rashi does not provide us with an eschatological interpretation at any passage. He believes 46:27 to be addressed to 'the righteous who are in Egypt, who went into exile there against their will'. At 50:5, he believes that the first return from Babylon is meant. At some passages which seem significant to Kimchi or Abravanel, such as 50:19-20 or 50:33,[18] he makes no comment whatever. And in chapter 49 he makes it very difficult to determine whether or not he has in mind the traditional identification of Edom with Christian Rome.

We noted above that Abravanel and Kimchi disagree over the interpretation of 48:47, 'In the days to come I will reverse the captivity of Moab'.[19] Kimchi assumed that this is to happen in the Messianic age, when 'all the nations will return to their land, and all will live under the rule of Israel'. Abravanel disagrees, pointing out that Num.24:17, which he interprets eschatologically, says that the 'forehead' of Moab will be crushed, but mentions nothing about a reversal of her captivity. Abravanel sees only the Israelite exiles returning to their

/...

land at the last, and so he can interpret 'I will reverse the captivity of my people Israel' at Jer.29:14 and 30:3 in an eschatological sense. When the same is said of certain other nations, it is not an eschatological prophecy, but means simply that after a long time their captivity will be reversed. Apart from this slight difference between Kimchi and Abravanel, the eschatologies of both seem very similar. Both reckon with a final terrible battle between Edom and Ishmael, that is between Christians and Muslims, which will involve all the nations; some of them will survive, however, to have their speech changed 'to a pure speech' (Zeph.3:9)[20]. In his comment on the latter verse Abravanel adds that the nation of Edom is not included in Zephaniah's promise, because 'they are enemies of God and his Torah'. He stresses often that, unlike the other nations, Edom is to be totally annihilated. Thus at Obadiah 21, he says that the other nations are to wipe Edom out, and that 'even though those nations will fall, and suffer a devastating defeat..... the destruction of Edom will take a more extreme form..... none of those (Edomites) who come to that battle will be left'. Both he and Kimchi stress that the words of Obadiah 18 'there shall be no survivor to the house of Esau' are not contradicted by Amos 9:12, which promises that Israel will possess 'the remnant of Edom'. This 'remnant', they say, refers to the territory of Edom, and not to any surviving Edomites. Hence Kimchi may see the other nations returning to their lands at the last to live under the rule of Israel, but this does not apply to Edom, whose land Israel will take over. And Abravanel may believe that there will be survivors of the other nations,

/...

but Edom, he asserts, will be wiped from the earth.

At 49:20, Kimchi commented that Rome was destined to fall into the hand of Israel. Abravanel adopted the alternative exegesis; Rome was destined to fall into the hand of Persia. At first this might suggest that Abravanel does not envisage Israel taking any active part in the final battle, a view which seems to be reinforced by his exegesis of Obadiah 21. In the latter verse he identifies the 'saviours' with 'the other nations who come to fight against the Christians in the Holy Land', whereas Kimchi thinks that the 'saviours' are 'the Messianic king and associates'. However, if we look at Abravanel's comment on Obadiah 18, we discover that he does on occasion envisage Israel actually participating in the fighting of the final battle:

> 'They (the house of Jacob and the house of Joseph), will accompany the nations who come to that battle, and they will fight the Christians and consume them to the extent that there will be no survivor to the house of Esau. And thus the sages remarked that the seed of Esau would not fall save by the hand of Rachel's descendants'.

It is noteworthy that in this verse Abravanel is adopting the alternative Rabbinic exegesis of 49:20. Having argued that the 'little ones' are Persia (in his exegesis of 49:20), he now goes on to use the alternative exegesis to show that the Jews will indeed take an active part in the final struggle, and that Rome will fall at the hand of Rachel's descendants.

Abravanel's intense Messianic speculation, and his expectation of a divine retribution which would mean disaster for the nations in general, and total annihilation for the forces of Christianity, the 'enemies of God and his Torah', is very

/...

remarkable when we recall that here was a man who for many years of his life held high office under a number of Christian rulers, and who consequently moved to a much greater extent, and with much greater assurance in a Christian milieu than Kimchi, the teacher of Talmud, ever did. Then again, he also had greater first hand experience of the hazards of being a Jew in a Christian world. It is almost as if Abravanel were two different men; the respected adviser who moves with assurance at the courts of kings, and the Jew in exile who identifies totally with his own people, and who in his writings comforts them with promises of imminent vindication and the fall of the Christian oppressor. The two are far removed from each other, and it is small wonder that they could not happily co-exist; Abravanel wrote no commentaries while he was employed in government.[21] His periods as a fugitive and exile not only afforded him the leisure for their composition, but also without doubt brought home to him with greater clarity the realities of the Jewish predicament.

The Commentary of Isaac Abravanel on Jer. Chs. 46-51.

Taken from:

Commentarius celeberrimi Rabbi Ishak Abarbanel super Iesaiam, Ieremiam, Iehazkelem et prophetas XII minores. Amsterdam, 1642.

לבביהם ז"ל שהנה בלו בזה שלא היה תכלית הנבואה כדי להשלים כחם הנביא בהתדבקה בשכל הפועל וכי אין הנבואה לבד טבעי מגעת בטבע האדם בהשתלותו ושלא כמכשה מבחוץ כן נראה להיותו כלתי מוכן אליה במו שכותב הרב המורה בפרק ל"ב ח"ב ונמשך אחריו הרב רבי דוד קמחי בפירושו למקום הזה כי הנה בכיך מוכן היה לנבואה בטבעו ולימודו אבל להיות הנבואה לבד נפי' מפעל הרצון השלם מביא לנביא לחכלית היסרת העם לכן בהיות העם כלתי ראוי לכך היתה הנבואה נמנעת ומזה הנבל כונה לומר מפלת העם נמנעה מבחוץ כמו שהעידו עליו הפסוקים וזהו אמרו ז"ל כרם אין ציין למה נלין אין רועה למה וזהו אמתת הדברים הזה והמתפלספים מחכמי עמנו לא שעבו בו ונשבה הדעת האמתי זה כונה לומר שלא היתה הנבואה מגעת מפני הכנת הנביא כי אם לצורך ישראל בהדבה מקומות מדבריהם ז"ל כי הנה במקום הנזכר אמרו קודם התאמל

תחילתה

אשר היה דבר ה' אל ירמיהו הנביא על הגוים וכו' עד הדבר אשר דבר ה' אל בבל ויש בה חמשה עשר פרשיות הראשונה אשר היה דבר ה' אל ירמיהו הנביא אל הגוים השנית הדבר אשר דבר ה' אל ירמיהו הנביא לבא בכוכב נגר מלך בבל למעלה יפפיה מנרים הרביעית ואתה אל תירא עבדי יעקב החמישית אשר היה דבר ה' אל ירמיהו הנביא אל פלשתים השישית לפרעה כה אמר ה' השביעית לכן הנה ימים באים השמינית כי כה אמר ה' הנה כנשר ידאה התשיעית לבני עמון העשירית לאדום כה אמר ה' נבלות העשר כי כה אמר ה' הנה אשר אין משפטם השנים עשר לכן שמעו עצת ה' אשר יען השלשה עשר לקדר ולממלכות חצור המשה עשר אשר היה דבר ה' אל ירמיהו הנביא על עילם ושאלתי בפסוקים האלה ששת השאלות :

השאלה הראשונה

למה זה מכל האומות והעמים אשר נבא עליהם ירמיהו בפרש' כולם היין המה שהם כ"ו אומות לא נבא פה כי אם על ז' מהם מלבד יהודה וזה כי הנה בנבואות שלמעלה נבא על מרבן מלכות יהודה וערין ובאן נבא על מנרים ועל פלשתים צור וצידון עזה ואשקלון ועל מואב ועל בני עמון ועל אדום ועל בבל שהם עם מלכות יהוד' שנים עשר ועל השאר לא נבא בפרש והנה פרשת הכוס כוללת לאותם שזכר ולאשר לא זכר שהם כל הערב כל מלכי ארבן העון עקרון ושארית אשדוד מלכי אלי אשר בעבר הים דדן תימא בוז קצוצי פאה מלכי ערב מלכי הערב השוכנים במדבר מלכי זמרי מלכי מדי מלכי הצפון הקרובים הרפוקים :

השאלה השנית

למה נבא בכאן על דמשק ועל קדר בהיות אותם שתי האומות לא נזכרו בתוך הגוים בפרשת כוס היין המה ודעו שאין ענין הפרשה ההיא שלא ליעד שיאכלו ויפרכו אותם האומות ולמה אם כן לא נזכרו בתוך הנסרבים ההמה :

השאלה השלישית

למה נקבת הנבואות האלה זכר הכתוב הנה שנאמרו בה ובקנתם לא נזכרה כי הנה בנבואה הראשונה שנבא על מנרים אמר שבאה בשנה הרביעית ליהויקים ובנבואה השנית שנבא גם כן על מנרים לא זכר בה דבר מזה וכן בתואב ובני עמון ובאדום לא אמר מתי נאמרו ולא גם כן בדמשק וקדר אמנם בעילם נאמרה בראשית ממלכת צדקיהו ונבואת בבל שהיא האחרונה לא נזכר בה מתי נאמרה ומה היה החלוף הזה :

השאלה הרביעית

למה בסוף הנבואה השנית שנבא על מנרים אמר ואתה אל תירא עבדי יעקב ושאר הפסוקים שבאותה נחמה ולא אמר כזה בשום נבואה מנבואות שאר האומות וידוע שהייעוד האחד כולל שאומר כי אעשה כלה בכל הגוים אשר הדחתיך שמה ולכן היה ראוי שיכתב הייעוד הזה אם בתחילת הנבואות האלה או באופן לשיובן על כולן לא במנרים בלבד ועוד כי הנה ירמיהו נבא למעלה לבני יהודה הבאים לגור מנרים שם יתמו ויתותו כולם והייעוד הזה הוא הפכי לאותו הייעוד האחר הנזכר אם עליהם נאמר גם ראוי לעיין למה אמר שני פעמים ואתה אל תירא עבדי ובראשונה הוסיף ואל תחת ישראל ולא אמר כן בשנית :

השאלה החמישית

מהו אדום שעליו נבא ירמיה הלא הוא אותו קרוב לאחרים כשהלכו במדבר ואשר נכה דוד המלך והניב שם שניים ואשר נכה הורקנוס המלך בזמן בית שני והכריחם לבוא בברית מילה אם הוא אדום אחר ואם מרבן אדום שנבא בכאן הוא מה שעשה נבוכד נצר או הוא שעשה בהם דוד המלך עליו השלום או הוא העתיד להיות באחרית הימים ובפירוש הפרשה אראיב הדבור בזה הפסק כפי ענינו :

השאלה הששית

מדוע אמר כאן על אדום בלבד כי כה אמר ה' הנה אשר אין משפט לשתות הכוס שתו ישתו ואתה הוא נקה תנקה לא תנקה כי שתה תשתה והוא כי כדומה לזה אמר הנביא למעלה בפרש' כוס היין המתה ובאמר שם על כל האומות וכאן אמרו כייחוד על אדום ולא זכרו בשאר האומות ולזה והנני מפרש הפסוקים באופן יותרו השאלות האלה כולם :

הכוונה הכוללת

בנבואות האלה הוא להודיע ולייעד מרבן ונשות על כל גוים אשר הכעיסו לישראל במורבן ירושלים וגלות עמו כי אחרי שזכר הנביא הנבואות אשר נבא על מרבן ירושלים וגלות בני יהודה ואיך כתקיימו כולם זכר אחריו מה שנבא גם כן על כל הגוים שעזרו לגלות מרבנה כדי להודיע שקדש ישראל לה' כאשית תבואתה כל אכליו יאשמו רעה תבא אליהם נאם ה' וכמו שיתבאר בפסוקים :

אשר היה

דבר ה' אל ירמיהו הנביא על הגוים עד הדבר אשר דבר ה' אל ירמיהו הנביא לבא נבוכד נצר מלך בבל למעלה בפרשת כוס היין המה נבא ירמיהו כל האומות שיחריב נבוכ' נצר או שימשול עליהם ויכנעם בדרך כלל לא בעבר ישראל ואתה במקום הזה אחרי שזכר מרבן ירושלים וגלות בני יהודה זכר הנביא שכל האומות שעזרו בגלותו ובמרבנו אל יהודה יחרבו ויגלו כמוהו ולזה לא זכר שהאומות אלה אלו שנזכרו כאן נבוכ' לפי שאלה היו במרבנן של בני יהודה אם מנרים כי הם שבאו ואמרו לעזור אותם כנגד נבוכד נצר בתנו לב לנדקיהו למרוד במלך בבל ונוהיתה שבת המרבן והגלו שהנבי' הוציאו מילם לעוזרם ושבו לתנרים נבוכד נצר כשבאה זה הנביא עליה' המבוך עד שהחריב את ירושלים ואם פלשתים עמון ומואב ואדום לפי שהיו בסוכבה ובמ"ש המשורר כי נועצו

אשר היה דבר ה' אל ירמיהו הנביא על הגוים

אשר היה דבר־יהוה אל־ירמיהו הנביא על־הגוים׃ למצרים על־חיל פרעה נכו מלך־מצרים אשר־היה על־נהר־פרת בכרכמיש אשר הכה נבוכדראצר מלך־בבל בשנת הרביעית ליהויקים בן־יאשיהו מלך יהודה׃ ערכו מגן וצנה וגשו למלחמה׃ אסרו הסוסים ועלו הפרשים והתיצבו בכובעים מרקו הרמחים לבשו השרינות׃ מדוע ראיתי המה חתים נסוגים אחור וגבוריהם יכתו ומנוס נסו ולא הפנו מגור מסביב נאם־יהוה׃ אל־ינוס הקל ואל־ימלט הגבור צפונה על־יד נהר־פרת כשלו ונפלו׃ מי־זה

יקדו עליך בכית יכרותו אהלי אדום ויסמעאים תואב והנרים נבל ועתון ועמלק פלשת עם יושבי כור והנה דמשק גם הוא היה בכלל הפלשתים וקדר הוא מבני ערב השוכנים ב באהלים במדבר והם ישמעאלים ונזכרו כולם בפרשת כוס היין המה בכללות שאר האומות הנה אם כן זכר אלה האומות כאן בלבד לפי שהם עזרו לרעה ושאר האומות שנזכרו בפרשת כוס היין המה היו בקוקים מירושלים ולא היו בסוכבה ולכן לא נזכרו כאן והותר' בזה השלום הלאה והכ' : והנה הנבואה הראשונה מאלה זכר הכתוב שהיתה בשנה הרביעית ליהויקים להגיד שנבא אותה ירמיהו קודם מפלת מנרים כי לפי שהיה הענין ההוא קודם זמן הרבה מה מים הוונך הכתיב להודיע שגם היות שנבאתה כאן הנבואה הזאת הנה נאמרה קודם שקרה המלחמ' ההיא בשנה הרביעית ליהויק' אבל הנבואה השנית לתנרים שנאמרה

כִּיאֹר יַעֲלֶה כַּנְּהָרוֹת יִתְגָּעֲשׁוּ מַיָּמָיו׃
מִצְרַיִם כִּיאֹר יַעֲלֶה וְכַנְּהָרוֹת יִתְגּוֹעֲשׁוּ
מַיִם וַיֹּאמַר אַעֲלֶה אֲכַסֶּה־אָרֶץ אֹבִידָה
עִיר וְיֹשְׁבֵי־בָהּ׃ עֲלוּ הַסּוּסִים וְהִתְהוֹלְלוּ
הָרְכָב וְיֵצְאוּ הַגִּבֹּרִים כּוּשׁ וּפוּט תֹּפְשֵׂי
מָגֵן וְלוּדִים תֹּפְשֵׂי דֹרְכֵי קָשֶׁת׃ וְהַיּוֹם
הַהוּא לַאדֹנָי יְהוִה צְבָאוֹת יוֹם נָקָמָה
לְהִנָּקֵם מִצָּרָיו וְאָכְלָה חָרֶב וְשָׂבְעָה
וְרָוְתָה מִדָּמָם כִּי זֶבַח לַאדֹנָי יְהוִה
צְבָאוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן אֶל־נְהַר פְּרָת׃ עֲלִי
גִלְעָד וּקְחִי צֳרִי בְּתוּלַת בַּת־מִצְרָיִם
לַשָּׁוְא הִרְבֵּתִי רְפֻאוֹת תַּעֲלֶה אֵין לָךְ׃
שָׁמְעוּ גוֹיִם קְלוֹנֵךְ וְצִוְחָתֵךְ מָלְאָה
הָאָרֶץ כִּי־גִבּוֹר בְּגִבּוֹר כָּשָׁלוּ יַחְדָּיו נָפְלוּ
שְׁנֵיהֶם׃ הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ
הַנָּבִיא לָבוֹא נְבוּכַד־רְאֻצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל
לְהַכּוֹת אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם׃

כיאר יעלה כנהרות יתגעשו מימיו. מצרים כיאר יעלה וכנהרות יתגועשו מים ויאמר אעלה אכסה ארץ אבידה עיר וישבי בה. עלו הסוסים והתהוללו הרכב ויצאו הגבורים כוש ופוט תפשי מגן ולודים תפשי דרכי קשת. והיום ההוא לאדני יהוה צבאות יום נקמה להנקם מצריו ואכלה חרב ושבעה ורותה מדמם כי זבח לאדני יהוה צבאות בארץ צפון אל נהר פרת. עלי גלעד וקחי צרי בתולת בת מצרים לשוא הרבית רפואות תעלה אין לך. שמעו גוים קלונך וצוחתך מלאה הארץ כי גבור בגבור כשלו יחדיו נפלו שניהם. הדבר אשר דבר יהוה אל ירמיהו הנביא לבוא נבוכדראצר מלך בבל להכות את ארץ מצרים.

הגידו במצרים. ונומר על אשר היה דבר ה' אל ירמיהו הנביא לפלשתים בעבור שמלכן המלכים הוא כשיבאו להלחם זה בזה להודיעו שיקח כלי מלחמתו ויכין נכונו כי הוא בונה להלחם בו וזה כדי שלא יאמרו שבאו בנגבים ובודדי לילה פתע פתאום לכן אמר כאן הנביא הגידו במצרים שהוא כלל המלכות והשמיעו במגדול שהוא מקום קרוב למצרים כמו שאמר בין מגדול ובין הים וכן בנוף ובתחפנחס עני ממלכה לפרעה והמשמיעים יאמרו אל מצרים התיצב והכן לך לקראת נבוכד נצר כי אכלה חרב סביבך ירמוז לארץ יהודה שבבר הקריבה נבוכד נצר והוא יבא גם כן עליך ואחרי שקודם בואו גלו את ארץ מצרים וידע זה מדוע אם כן נפקד אביריך ונדודיך ולא עמד בונה לומר כל אחד מהם לא עמד בפני הכשדיים אבל כרמו הכל אין זה אלא שה' הדפו לאמרים ומאמר מסיבה שתחרב מצרים לפי שהוא היה הסבה בחרבן בית יהודה ונפקד הוא מלשון מטר פוקד וכא כמשו אביריך בלשון רבים ונפקד ולא עמד והדמו בלשון יחיד לכל א' מהם ובכל יובה גם כן שה' הדפו מאמר שהרבה כוסל והיו רובם כשלים ונופלים במלחמה וזהו גם כפלאים ל' רעהו בונה לומר שהיו נכשלים זה בזה ונופלים אלבה

שבאמרה עתה על מה שיהיה אחל כך לא הודיע הכתוב בה מתי כאמר לפי שבידוע שבאמרה עתה אחרי הרבה קודם שבתקיימה ויבתה לעומל וכן נבואת פלשתים בעבור שבבר עברה קודם לזה ובכתב עתה הוצרך הכתוב לומר בה שבאמרה לירמיהו קודם המעשה והוא אומרו בעבור יכה פרעה את עזה וכן עולם לפי שלבדה מלך בבל קודם מרבן ירושלים הוצרך לומר בה שהיתה בראשית ממלכה נדקיהו אבל למואב ולעמון ולאדום ולקדר ולבבל למה שהיה הרבנם אחר מרבן ירושלים ובכתבה נבואתם קודם בוא מרבנם לא הוצרך הכתוב להודיע בהם מתי באמרה הנה התבאר ש שהנבואות שקדמו לחרבן ירושלים באמר בהם מתי באמרו להגיד כי עם היות שבתבו אחר החרבן הנה באמת באמרו לבני קודם החרבן אבל הנבואות שבאמרו אחר החרבן ובתבו כפי סדרם ומאיהם לא הוצרך הכתוב לומר דבר מזה כידוע שבאמרו כמו שבתבו אחרי חרבן ירושלים והוצרכו בזה השלה השלישי: ואשוב אל פי הפסוקים ואומר שהנה זכר כאן על מבריח שתי נבואות לפי שהתי פעמים נפלו ביד מלך בבל כי בראשונה אחרי שפרעה נכה הלך על נהר פרת בכרכמיש שבבלים מלך אשור ומלך אדם כמו שאמר הלא בכרכמיש כלנו וגומ' והנה יראיהו בהלנו שמה אדכו לו יתי המנור על הסמה הרביעית ליהויקים שסבב הקדוש ברוך הוא כדי לנקום נקמת ירמיהו שיעלה עליו שמה נבוכד נצר ובכם מכה רבה ואז כיב' ירמיהו נבואתי זאת ואמר על הכשדים ערכו מגן ונכה וגושו למלחמה שיגשו להלחם כל המבריח הבראשונה הזאת לאמרו הסוסים ונומר ואחלי שאמרו כנגד המבריח שיתחזקו ויעמדו כנגד פיל נבוכד נצר וזכר שהיה אומר להם כן לפי שראה המה פתים רוצה לומר שהיה רואה את המבריח ירקים ופוחדים נסוגים אחור מפני

והמתרגם סירס נס כפל מלשון אל הכשדים אתה כופל והוא שתרגם ואף ישתמעו גבר לחבריה על ש שהנכרים שהיו בהם שבאו לעזרת מבריח היו אומרים זה לזה קומה ונשובה אל עמנו ואל ארץ מולדתנו מפני חרב היונה שהוא נבוכד נצר שחרבו מכלה את הכל וקראו יונה לפי שכל בני אדם היו נכנעים לפניו בהוכאות דבריו והמפרשים פירשו היונה האונסת שאין מי שיעמוד כנגדו וכן והאכלתי את מוניך אונסיך ולא יוכו עוד כשאי את עמי ויוכתן תרג' מעכין יין חרבא דמלכא דהא כתיב בחויא וזכר הנביא מפחיתות פרעה שעם היות שידע מביאת נבוכד נצר עליהם הנה לא יבא לקראתו להלח' בו וזהו קראו שם ובתפרסם במבריח שאון רוצה לומר בזה ופחיתות גדול שפרעה מלך מבריח העביר המועד שהיה נועד למלחמה ולא יבא אליה וכלי בזיון וקנף ופירש רש"י קראו שם במלחמה במקום תחנה בכל הכריזו פרעה מלך מבריח שאון רוצה לומר פרעה מלך מבריח שהיה שאון מגביה קול תשואות להתהלל בחיילותיו הנה עתה העביר המועד ולא בא למלחמה ולפי שלא היו מלמים המבריח שיבוא נבוכד נצר אל אחן מבריח לכן הוצרך הנביא להודיע על זה

פיל נבוכד נצר ונבוזראדן יוכתו מכה רבה ומכות גם וכרתו ולא יפנו רוצה לומר שלא ההזיקו פניהם כנגד הלוחמים הלודפים אחריהם אבל היה בלבם מנוד מסביב ופחד שחבל פלה יבאו הכשדים עליהם ולא הנביא שלא ינוס הקל עם כל קלו ואל ימלט הנבור עם כל נבורתו בפלת נפון לבבכתים שהוא על יד בחל פרת לפי שכל החנרים כשלו ונפלו ואמר כמלבנו מי זה כיאור יעלה שהוא מבריח שבבוי חיליו היה עולה על הארץ כנהר בעת שיעלה ויכסה את הארמה בבוב מימיו והיה מתהלל ואומר אעלה אכסה ארץ אובדה עיר רוצה לומר אובד עיר כרכמיש ויושבי בה עלו הסוסים של פרעה על הארץ והתהוללו הרכב שהיו רגיל לבאן ולבאן בהוללות ושמחה ויצאו הגבורים ממבריח וכוש ופוט היו בלים לעזרם שהם אנשים רגליים תופשי מגן ולודים שהם דורכי קשת אבל לא יהיה דבר כ כמחשבותם כי יהיה היום ההוא יום נקמה לה' צבאות להנקם מבריו שהם המבריים ממה שעשו לישראל שהמיתו פרעה נכה ולהנקם מזה תאכל חרב הכשדים במבריח ושבעה ורותה מדמם ונומר עלי גלעד שם היו עושים הנרי הטוב וקחה לך משם אתה בתולת בת מבריח נרי למכתך כי בלי ספק לשוא יהיה רב הנרי לפי שרפואות תעלה אין לך ואילו לא היה נודע בגויים הקלון הזה היתה זאת נמתך אבל לא יהיה כן כי ישמעו גויים קלונך ונוחתך רוצה לומ' נעקתך תמלא הארץ לפי שנבבר ונבוכ כשלו הם גבורי מבריח בגוסם שהיו נכשלי' זה בזה ויפלו נפלו שניהם הנה התבארה הנבואה הראשונה הזאת שבאמר על מפלת מבריח בראותו בל כרכמיש והיא קדמה לחרבן ירושלים ואחריה יזכור המפלה השנית כאשר בא מלך בבל להכות את ארץ מבריח שהיה זה אחר חרבן ירושלים בשנת שבעה ועשרים למולכו:

הגידו במצרים והשמיעו במגדול והשמיעו בנף ובתחפנחס אמרו התיצב והכן לך כי אכלה חרב סביבך׃ מדוע נסחף אביריך לא עמד כי יהוה הדפו׃ הרבה כושל גם נפל איש אל רעהו ויאמרו קומה ונשובה אל עמנו ואל ארץ מולדתנו מפני חרב היונה׃ קראו שם פרעה מלך מצרים שאון העביר המועד׃ חי אני נאם המלך יהוה צבאות שמו כי כתבור בהרים וככרמל בים יבא׃ כלי גולה עשי לך יושבת בת מצרים כי נף לשמה תהיה ונצתה מאין יושב׃ עגלה יפה פיה מצרים קרן מצפון בא בא׃ גם שכריה בקרבה כעגלי מרבק כי גם המה הפנו נסו יחדיו לא עמדו כי יום אידם בא עליהם עת פקדתם׃ קולה כנחש ילך כי בחיל ילכו ובקרדמות באו לה כחטבי עצים׃ כרתו יערה נאם יהוה כי לא יחקר כי

37 ז לז א כאומרו

רַבּוּ מֵאֹד וְאֵין לָהֶם מִסְפָּר׃ הַבִּישָׁה בַת־מִצְרַיִם נִתְּנָה בְּיַד עַם־צָפוֹן׃ אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי פֹקֵד אֶל־אָמוֹן מִנֹּא וְעַל־פַּרְעֹה וְעַל־מִצְרַיִם וְעַל־אֱלֹהֶיהָ וְעַל־מְלָכֶיהָ וְעַל־פַּרְעֹה וְעַל־הַבֹּטְחִים בּוֹ׃ וְנָתַתִּים בְּיַד מְבַקְשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וּבְיַד נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וּבְיַד עֲבָדָיו וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן תִּשָּׁכֵן כִּימֵי קֶדֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃ וְאַתָּה אַל־תִּירָא עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב וְאַל־תֵּחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי הִנְנִי מוֹשִׁיעֲךָ מֵרָחוֹק וְאֶת־זַרְעֲךָ מֵאֶרֶץ שִׁבְיָם וְשָׁב יַעֲקוֹב וְשָׁקַט וְשַׁאֲנַן וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד׃ אַתָּה אַל־תִּירָא עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי אִתְּךָ אָנִי כִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה כָלָה בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הַדַּחְתִּיךָ שָׁמָּה וְאֹתְךָ לֹא אֶעֱשֶׂה כָלָה וְיִסַּרְתִּיךָ לַמִּשְׁפָּט וְנָקֵה לֹא אֲנַקֶּךָּ׃

בלומר מי לבי נתן המלך ה׳ נבואות שמו כי הוא המלך הלעתי לא מלכי הלדמה כי כתבור בהרים הוא דבר קיים שלא ישתנה ולא יהו מהקומו וכרמל שהר הכרמל נטוע על הים לא ימיש מקום כן יבא כונה לומר יבוא נבוכד נצר להחריב את מצרים ולא ישתנה ולא יהו מביאתו שמה ולזה נטה יוחנן בתרגומו ולכן כלי גולה עמי לך יושבת בת מצרים שלוה ושקטה שתחסוב שתתיל תשב לבטח כי נוף שהיא עיר מלוכה למלך מצרים לשתה תהיה ונגתה ונשרפה בלם תהיה מכלי שיש לך בה יושב והכל״ק פירש בשם אביו כי כתבור בהרים כמו שהר תבור מיועד לבול שם ולפרוס שם רשתות וכמו שאמר ורשת פרוסה על תבור כן יבולו אותם הכשדיים וכמו שעני הכרמל יביאוס בים כן יביא נבוכד נצר את המצריים בים בשביה ולפי שמצרים היה מלכות נאה ויפה מאד קראתו הנביא עגלה יפפיה רומה לומר יפה מאד ומעודנת כעגלת מרבק ואתה דע לך כי עם כל שמנך ולשנותך קנה קרן שקוא לשון כריתה כמו מחומר קורנתי מנפון שהוא הנד שבכל היה בו בא וכדי לחוק האמת כפל הענין בא בא. ואמר שלא ליי שהמצריים אנשי הלבן היו עגלה יפפיה אבל גם שביבים כל כך היו מתענגים ונוטים להנאות הגופיות שהיו כעגלי מרבק שהם העגלים שמפטמין ועומדים בבית כדי לפטמם לא יוציאו אותם המונה כן אותם הזכרים יוצאים בבתים אוכלים ושותים ומינים יונאים להלחם והרגיה על זה כי גם המה יפנו עורף במלחמה לנוס ושהו נסו יחדו לא עמדו כלילויוס לידם בא עליהם עת פקודתם ושהם בשעת המות ככה נסו ולא עמדו קולה של מצרים כמתם ילך ונעקתה תשמע למרחק כי בחיל לבו הכשדיים עליהם ובקרדומות יבאו על מצרים לכרתם כעצים כרתו יערה יש לפרשו מלשון נווי כתו מרבו מאד יאמר הנביא כנגד הכשדיים הבאים על מצרים בקרדומות כרתו יערה של מצרים כי אתם יכולי לכורתה לפי שלא יחקר הרבוי והעונש של הכשדיים כי רבו מארבה ואין להם מספר ואם נפרש כרתו יערה מלשון עבר יהיה ענינו והנה הכשדים כרתו והכריתו כל יער מצרים בקרדומות״ פעמים לפי שלא יחקר רבויים כי רבו מארבה וגומ׳ ועם היות שעדיין לא היה זה כן הוא דרך הנבואות שיזכרו פעמים רבות הדברים העתידים בלשון עבר לפי שהנביא רואה אותם בביאור כאילו כבר היו בפעל לעיניהם וכאשר יהיה זה תבוא ותכלם את מצרים יען כיתנה ביד עם נפון שהם הכשדיים הבאים מבבל ולפי שהיה כל זה למצרים בשונם מה שעשו לבני ישראל ובני יהודה בעזרה שנדבו לתת להם ושקרו באמונתם לכן אמר אמר ה׳ נבאות אלהי ישראל הנני פוקד אל אמון מנוא וכתבו המפרשים שהיא נוא שם עיר גדולה ואמון שם המלך המולך בה וק״י אמון כמו המון ותרגם מנו על אלסכנדריא הא אבא מפעיל על אתרנשית אלסכנדריא כי עם היות שאלסכנדריא היום בנאה אלסכנדום מוקדון הנה קודם לכן היתה שמה על שפת יאור מצרים עיר שהיתה נקראת אלסכנדריא וכמו שכתבו המפרשים הקדומים וחכמי זכר אלסכנדריא כראשונה כפי פירוש המתרגם ואחר כך אלכות מצרים בכלל לפי שהיא על שפת הים והבאים על מצרים כראשונה יפגעו בה וזכר בפסוק הזה שתי פעמים על פרעה להגיד שבראשונה יבא פרעה אל אותה עיר שיקרא נוא למנוע את הכשדיים שלא יבנסו בה ולא יוכל לעכבם ויבלם מהם ויחזר בעקום אחר באמון הבדים בהרים ויהיה מבוצר וכבלו לפני כן ולזה אתי פעמים יבבם ויהיה מבוצר ונתתים ביד מבקשי נפשם שהם הכשדיים וביד נבוכד נצר ועבדיו שהם הזכרים הבאים עליהם ואמנם אומרו ואחרי כן תשכון כימי קדם כבר פירש אותו יחזקאל שיהיה תקון ארבעים שנה ולא אמר כימי קדם במעלתה כי הנה יחזקאל אחר והיה שם מלכי שבלה אבל אמר שתשכון באמנו מבלי גלות כימי קדם ואמנם אומרו ואתה אל תירא עבדי יעקב וגומר כבר באמרה הנבואה חזקת לתעלה בשבוי מלות מועטות וענינה במקום הזה הוא כי הנה בני ישראל ובני יהודה בשמעם נבואת מבלי ובאחר זמן מועט ישובו בנשים לארצם לא׳ שבה ייבאו ויפקדו לומר הבית אשר להיותם גולים לקבוב מלבני כי ממבלי ועד בבל מרחק מעט וקטון הוא שבו במהרה מפני זה לארצ׳ ונם שבו לפי שהיה האמן קבל שישבו בגלי אבל הגולי למרחקי ארץ ויחיים ושבים רבים מאד כתבנו שבלינו מקבה הארץ ועד קבהו וזה לבו אלפים מן הבנים באמ׳ לא כשו לארצנו עוד הנה מפני זה לבל הנביא על לב אנשי הגולה ואמר ואתה אל תירא עבדי יעקב שהוא מלכות יהודה וכמו שאמר ישעיהו עליו בית יעקב לכו ונלכה באור ה׳ ולכן קראו עבדי לפי שהיה ביניהם מקדש ה׳ ועבודתו ואמר גם קמת ישראל על מלכות אפרים ואפשר לומר שהוא כפל ענין והרגון בישקט וישראל על הלומה בבלה והוא היותר נכון כי הנני מושיעך מרחוק כ״ל לעיפ שגלותך הוא למרחקי ארץ ולזמן ברוק כי הכל בכלל המקום והזמן במלת מרחוק ואיך גולה בקרוב תרבך כמנרים ולא בזמן מועט כמו הנני מושיעך בעת הגאולה וגלה בזה שלא היה מנבא על שלבית יהודה אשר הלכו למנרים שעבדו על דבר הדם ומנותו כי הם היו בקרוב והוא היה מנבא לאותם בני יהודה שהלכו למרחוק ולזה אמר גם כן ואת זרעך מארץ שבים כ״ל מהארץ שהלכו שם בשבי והנה אמר זה כדי למעט נ״כ ולאפוקי אותם שהלכו למנרים ברצונם ולא שבויי בבל כי לא יפקיים בהם הייעוד הטוב הזה כמו שיתקיי׳ באותם שהלכו לבבל ולשאר ארצות המזרח ולארצות המערב שהלכו למרחו׳ והלכו בשבי ולפי שמבני יהודה שבו מבבל אל ירושלים בפקידת בית שני לכן אמר ושב יעקב ולא אמר בשיבה הזאת ישראל והשיבה ההיא לא תתמיד שמה אבל אח״כ בזמן התשועה העתידה שקם מ״ל יעקב הנזכר ושארן ישראל כי כלם ישובו ונשבו לבעם על אדמתם ואין מסריד אותם כי לא ילכו עוד בגלות אחר כמו שהלכו מפקידת בית שני ולפי שאולי ישאר עדיין פחד אחר הלבב הגלים שיקר׳ אליהם בארצו׳ גלותם כאשר קרה ליהודים היושבים במנרים כי בהתנבר מלך בבל עלה על מנרים והחריבה וכלה את כל הגוים שהיו בתוכה ושכן יהיה בארצות אחרות שהם בדמי יהודה וישראל שיעלו עליהם גוים אחרים להלחם אלו בלו ויחרימום ויגלו את ישראל הגולים כיבשים הנה ע״ז אמר לומר בנגד האומות אתה אל תירא כי אתה עבדי ולכן אעשה כלה בכל הגוים אשר הדחתיך שמה שבלם יכלו ולא יזכר עוד שמם כאשר היום הזה בלים מותב ונשון פלשתים ועמלק והשאר אבל אותך לא אעשה כלה ואמר לא יסוף ויסרתיך כפי שונותיך במשפט ומדת הדין אבל נקה לא אנקך שהוא מלשון כריתה וכליה וכמ״ש ישעיהו כן יעמוד זרעכם ושמכם והותרת בוא הזאת הל׳:

מז

אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל־פְּלִשְׁתִּים בְּטֶרֶם יַכֶּה פַרְעֹה אֶת־עַזָּה׃ כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנֵּה מַיִם עֹלִים מִצָּפוֹן וְהָיוּ לְנַחַל שׁוֹטֵף וְיִשְׁטְפוּ אֶרֶץ וּמְלֹאָהּ עִיר וְיֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ וְזָעֲקוּ הָאָדָם וְהֵילִיל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ׃ מִקּוֹל שַׁעֲטַת פַּרְסוֹת אַבִּירָיו מֵרַעַשׁ מַרְכְּבֹתָיו הֲמוֹן גַּלְגִּלָּיו

אשר היה דבר ה׳ אל ירמיהו הנביא אל פלשתים וכו׳ עד למואב כה אמר ה׳ נבאות כתוב בסדר עולם שבשנה העשירית לנדקיהו כשהיו הכשדיים נגים על ירושל׳ כאשר עלה אל פרעה המצרי׳ לבוא לעזור את מלך יהודה כנגד נבוכ׳ נצר ושמעו הכשדי׳ את שמעם ויעלו מעל ירושל׳ כמו שכתוב למעלה אז פרעה הלך עם מלו ושטף את עזה ושב לארצו ואז בלותו זמן היה דבר ה׳ אל ירמיהו ונבוא אל הכשדים וכו׳ את ארץ פלשתים וכ״ל נאמר כאן

לא הִכָּנוּ אֲכוֹת אֶל־בָּנִים מִרְפְּיוֹן יָדָיִם׃
עַל־הַיּוֹם הַבָּא לְשַׁדּוֹד אֶת־כָּל־
פְּלִשְׁתִּים לְהַכְרִית לְצֹר וְלְצִידוֹן כָּל
שָׂרִיד עֹזֵר כִּי־שֹׁדֵד יְהוָה אֶת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים
שְׁאֵרִית אִי כַפְתּוֹר׃ בָּאָה קָרְחָה אֶל־
עַזָּה נִדְמְתָה אַשְׁקְלוֹן שְׁאֵרִית עִמְקָם
עַד־מָתַי תִּתְגּוֹדָדִי׃ הוֹי חָרֵב לַיהוָה
עַד־אָנָה לֹא תִשְׁקֹטִי הֵאָסְפִי אֶל־תַּעֲרֶךָ
הָרְגִּעִי וְדֹמִי׃ אֵיךְ תִּשְׁקֹטִי וַיהוָה צִוָּה לָהּ
אֶל אַשְׁקְלוֹן וְאֶל־חוֹף הַיָּם שָׁם יִעֲדָהּ׃

מהמון גלגלי הכלים עם המרכבות ועם הסוללות מהקול ההוא היה בפלשתים כל כך תהיה אלא יכנו חבות על כנים להכילם אף על פי שהלכות הם מרחמים בטבע על הכנים וזה מסבת כפיון יד הם וחולשת לבותם על היום ההוא הבא עליהם לשדוד את פלשתים להכרית לבוד ולצידון כל שריד עוזר כונה לומר להכרית לבוד ולצידון שהו תלויות בלכן פלשתים כתיב וגם מה לעזר לי בוד וצידון וכל גלגלי פלשתים שכלי מהם נבוכנצר כל שוכל להיות עוזר לפלשתים כלומר שיאלומהם נגיס וטף ולא לים שריד שיהיה עוזר בענין המלחמה לפי שנזר הקב"ה שורלו את פלשתים וקרא שארית אי כפתור לפי שהיו הפלשתים והכפתורים אחים כמו שאמר אשר יצאו מעם פלשתים את כפתורי' כלו אמר שגם מכפתור שהיה זרע פלשתים לא ישאר שארית ולפי שבעה כמו שנזכר הכה כלאוב' את עזה ונכוב' נגר הכה לותה שבית לכן אמר הנביא בלה קרחה אל עזה שבשאר' כקרח מבלי שום דבר נדמתה כ"ל נדמתה אשקלון ועל הפלשתים שהיו רבים ויושבי' בעמק אמר שארית עמקם ויוכתן תרגם שארית עמקם אבל לא הולך אבשיה בשבי כאשר עשה למואב ולעמון :

מח

למואב כה אמר ה' נבלות וכו' עד אל דבן

עמדי' לפי יושבת ערוער אמר בנבואת מואב כה אמר ה' נבלות אלהי ישראל לפי שמואב הנר והרע מאד לישראל עד שאפני זה היתה נבואתו גדולה מאד כמו שיתבאר ולזה אמר שגולה חזק כי ה' אדון כל נבלות הנמים הוא אלהי ישראל והוא רצה להנקם ממואב על אשר עשו בנבדש וזכר עבי מואב כל אחת בשמה הוי אל נבו כי שודדה עיר שהיתה שמה נבו הובישה נלכדה ק' קריתים עיר אחרת ששמה כך קריתי' והיתה חזקה מאד לא תיכל מהאויב ולכן הובישה כאשר ראתה שנלכדה וכן הובים המגבב עיר אחרת ששמה כך מגבב להיותה נשגבה בענתה ולכן בושה וחתה בראותה שלכדוה האויבים וכן אמר עלעיר חשבון אין לו תהלת מואב בחשבון כי אין לאוי שיתהלל מואב עוד עם חשבון כיון שלא עמדה בפני האויבים שחשבו עליה רעה והוא לשון כופל על הלשון חשבו מחשבון וכן גם עדר מדמן תדומי ולא תתהלל עוד כיון שאחרי תלך חרב וזכר גם כן מוכוכים עיר אחר' שבשמע תשם קול נעקה מהשוד והשבר הגדול שבא עליהם ובכלל בשבלה מואב השמיעו נעקת נעיריה והם הנכים הקטנים שהלכו בשבי ויוכתן תרגם נעיריי' שלעיניהון ואמרו כי מעלה הלוחית בבכי יעלה והמלת' הזה תמצאהו גם כן בלבכי יעציהו בקונגו על מואב עכינו שהמואביים כאשר באו חילי נבוכד נצר עליהם מפחדים היו עולים ללוחית שהוא מקום נבוה להשגיח שם וזכר הנביא שבאשר יעלו בבכי עולים ובוכים לפי שבמורד מוכוכים שהיה בשפל נכי רוכה לומר נרים היו משמיעים נעקת שבר מהרעות שהיו עושים שם ולכן עלו למעל' הלחית כדי להנקל מהרעו' שיעשו הנכרים במקומות השפלים ונכי הוא כמו נרים על דרך חלוני שקופי' לטומים והיה הנביא מיעץ את ה המואבי' כסו מלטו נפשיכם ותהיינה רוכה לומר הערים כערוער במדבר והוא הענן הנדל במדבר באחן כיה וית כמגדל ערוער דישבן בשבוכן במדבר ופרשה שערוער אין מכיבו ישוב אל יושבי אהלים במדבר ובילל

אל תוקביהון על מתי תתגודדי רוכה לומר תשבטי הנה בכל התגודדת מתבז פרצה ובתה שבית ממכת כבוכד נצר עד מתי תתגודדי עוד ובדרך התק נכים לומר מכה לה' עד מתי לא תשקטי ולמה זה על מלך בבל נבוכד נצר שהוא המכה שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על עולמו לאוי היה שתחל מהרה עוד ותבגיעי שהוא מלשון מבגוב אבל איך תשקטי וה' נוה לה והיה זה מפני מה שעשו הפלשתים מהרעות ליסראל בחרבנם ולכן יהם עכין חרבנם אל ההשגחה האלהית והנה לא זכר בפלשתים שיעיב שבותם כמו שאמרו בחנכים ובמואב ובעמון לפי שבאומות ההם הלכו ב בשביה עם רב מהם ולכן אמר ושבתי את שבותם אבל מהפלשתים לא הלכו אנשים בשביה וכל הרגנם היה בהכיגה וביזה ואבל נכסיהם ולכן לא נזכר בהם גלות כלל אבל אמר לשד ד את פלשתים כי שודל ה' את פלשתים וכן היה שנבוכד נצר כשבא על נוד אבל את כל רכושה

אבל לא הולך אבשיה בשבי כאשר עשה למואב ולעמון :

למואב כה אמר ה' צבאות אלהי ישראל הוי אל נבו כי שדדה הבישה נלכדה קריתים הבישה המשגב וחתה׃ אין עוד תהלת מואב בחשבון חשבו עליה רעה לכו ונכריתנה מגוי גם מדמן תדמי אחריך תלך חרב׃ קול זעקה מחרונים שד ושבר גדול׃ נשברה מואב השמיע זעקה צעריה׃ כי מעלה הלחות בבכי יעלה בכי כי במורד חורנים צרי צעקת שבר שמעו׃ נסו מלטו נפשכם והיתם כערער במדבר׃ כי יען בטחך במעשיך ובאוצרותיך גם את תלכדי ויצא כמוש בגולה כהניו ושריו יחד׃ ויבא שדד אל־כל־עיר ועיר לא תמלט ואבד העמק ונשמד המישור אשר אמר יהוה׃ תנו־ציץ למואב כי נצא תצא ועריה לשמה תהיינה מאין יושב בהן׃ ארור עשה מלאכת יהוה רמיה וארור מנע חרבו מדם׃ שאנן מואב מנעוריו ושקט הוא על־שמריו ולא הורק מכלי אל־כלי ובגולה לא הלך על־כן עמד טעמו בו וריחו לא נמר׃ לכן

הנביא למה זה היה מיען נסו מלטו נפשיכם והוא שבעמים רבות הלכם כדי לשמו' ממנו לא יכולו יכרח מן הרעה ואבד העושר ההוא ויאבל נפשו ג"כ כעבוכו וזהו כי יען בטחך במעשיך והוא בית ושדה וכרם ובלוכותיך גם את תלכדי כנה לומ' לא לבד תאבד הממון והמעשים אבל גם נפשך תלכד עמו ואף האלוה שלו מואב והוא הנקרא כמוש כמ"ש כמוש אלהיך גם האלוה ההוא ילך בגולה וכהניו ושריו עמו כי הכשדיי' שללו גם הפסלים מפני הכסף והזהב אשר עמהם ולפי שזכר הנביא בנבואתו את ערים מיוחדים בשם אמר שלא יחשבו שאלו הערים אשר לא זכר בשמם יבלו כי הנה יבוא שודד אל כל עיר ועיר לא תמלט אחת מהנה ואבד העמק כ"ל הערים אשר בעמק ונשמד המישור וכל זה יהיה לפי שאמר ה' ונזר בחכמתו שיהיה כן כי לפי שקנף מואב גדל על קנף שלו האומו' וכל זה בהם ואומרו תנו כן למואב כי נצא תצא פרשוהו המפרשים על בריחתם כי הבריחה כמשלה לעופפות ולפי שהתוף יעופף בכח הכונה לכך כמשלה הלכה המהירה בנונה ובכח הוא מקור והאליף תמוכת ה"א יאמר תנו בריחה למואב כי בכוח תברח ויוכתן תרגם כן כמו כתר כמו כן הוהב אמר אעדו כתרא מן מואב אחי מגלת תגלי ופירש רש"י שבכן הפסוק לדשתו הסירו ה הכתר ממואב ותנו אותה לאחרים ויהיה קשה אבלו אומרו תנו כן למואב שהיה לו לומר הסירו לא תנו והיה לו לומר ממואב ולא למואב ואין דעתי נוחה עם אחד מהפרושים האלה להיותם בלתי מתישבים על הלשון אבל כן הוא אבלי שם עשב כמו ויצא פרח ויבן בן ונוחר ואמר ויבינו מעיר כעשב האבן בכן הבדה כן יבן וכמוהו רבים ולפי שזכר שיבכמו המואבים וילכו במדבר אמר כמלעיב מהם תנו בן למואב רוכה לומר תנו למואב העשב לשיאכל ממנו בבהמות כי הנה יאבד את כל אשר לו יבא תנא אומת מואב מאבנו ועבים על מואב לשמה תהיינה מאין יושב בהן ולכן ראוי לתת להם

37 2 לז ב הבין

הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי־לוֹ
צֹעִים וְצֹעֻהוּ וְכֵלָיו יָרִיקוּ וְנִבְלֵיהֶם
יְנַפֵּצוּ׃ וּבֹשׁ מוֹאָב מִכְּמוֹשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר־בֹּשׁוּ
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבֵּית אֵל מִבִּטְחָם׃ אֵיךְ
תֹּאמְרוּ גִבּוֹרִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְאַנְשֵׁי־חַיִל
לַמִּלְחָמָה׃ שֹׁדֵד מוֹאָב וְעָרָיו עָלָה
מִבְחָר בַּחוּרָיו יָרְדוּ לַטֶּבַח נְאֻם־הַמֶּלֶךְ
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ׃ קָרוֹב אֵיד מוֹאָב
לָבֹא וְרָעָתוֹ מְהֵרָה מְאֹד׃ נֹדוּ לוֹ כָּל־
סְבִיבָיו וְכָל יֹדְעֵי שְׁמוֹ אִמְרוּ אֵיכָה נִשְׁבַּר
מַטֵּה־עֹז מַקֵּל תִּפְאָרָה׃ רְדִי מִכָּבוֹד
יֹשְׁבִי בַצָּמָא יֹשֶׁבֶת בַּת־דִּיבוֹן כִּי־שֹׁדֵד
מוֹאָב עָלָה בָךְ שִׁחֵת מִבְצָרָיִךְ׃

אֶל־דֶּרֶךְ עֹמְדִי וְצַפִּי יוֹשֶׁבֶת עֲרוֹעֵר שַׁאֲלִי־
נָס וְנִמְלָטָה אִמְרִי מַה־נִּהְיָתָה׃ הוֹבִישׁ
מוֹאָב כִּי־חַתָּה הֵילִילוּ וְזַעֲקוּ הַגִּידוּ
בְּאַרְנוֹן כִּי שֹׁדַד מוֹאָב׃ וּמִשְׁפָּט בָּא אֶל־
אֶרֶץ הַמִּישֹׁר אֶל־חֹלוֹן וְאֶל־יַהְצָה וְעַל־
מֵיפָעַת׃ וְעַל־דִּיבוֹן וְעַל נְבוֹ וְעַל־בֵּית
דִּבְלָתָיִם׃ וְעַל קִרְיָתַיִם וְעַל־בֵּית גָּמוּל
וְעַל־בֵּית מְעוֹן׃ וְעַל־קְרִיּוֹת וְעַל־בָּצְרָה
וְעַל־כָּל־עָרֵי אֶרֶץ־מוֹאָב הָרְחֹקוֹת
וְהַקְּרֹבוֹת׃ נִגְדְּעָה קֶרֶן מוֹאָב וּזְרֹעוֹ
נִשְׁבָּרָה נְאֻם יְהוָה׃ הַשְּׁכִּירֻהוּ כִּי עַל־
יְהוָה הִגְדִּיל וְסָפַק מוֹאָב בְּקִיאוֹ וְהָיָה
לְשְׂחֹק גַּם־הוּא׃ וְאִם־לוֹא הַשְּׂחֹק הָיָה
לְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־בַּגַּנָּבִים נִמְצָאָה כִּי מִדֵּי
דַבְּרְךָ בּוֹ תִּתְנוֹדָד׃ עִזְבוּ עָרִים וְשִׁכְנוּ
בַּסֶּלַע יֹשְׁבֵי מוֹאָב וְהָיוּ כְּיוֹנָה תְּקַנֵּן
בְּעֶבְרֵי פִי־פָחַת׃ שָׁמַעְנוּ גְּאוֹן מוֹאָב
גֵּאֶה מְאֹד גָּבְהוֹ וּגְאוֹנוֹ וּגְאוּתוֹ וְרָם
לִבּוֹ׃ אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה עֶבְרָתוֹ וְלֹא־
כֵן בַּדָּיו לֹא־כֵן עָשׂוּ׃ עַל־כֵּן עַל־מוֹאָב
אֵילִיל וּלְמוֹאָב כֻּלֹּה אֶזְעָק אֶל־אַנְשֵׁי
קִיר־חֶרֶשׂ יֵהָנֶה׃ מִבְּכִי יַעְזֵר אֲבַכֶּה לָּךְ
הַגֶּפֶן שִׂבְמָה נְטִישֹׁתַיִךְ עָבְרוּ יָם עַד יָם
יַעְזֵר נָגַשׁ עַל־קֵיצֵךְ וְעַל־בְּצִירֵךְ שֹׁדֵד
נָפָל׃ וְנֶאֱסְפָה שִׂמְחָה וְגִיל מִכַּרְמֶל
וּמֵאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב וְיַיִן מִיְּקָבִים הִשְׁבַּתִּי לֹא־

כנין והעשב למאכלם כאנשים הולכים במדבריות ולא דבר אחר ואמר כנגד המשגיחים אחור עושה מלאכת ה׳ כמיה שקרא השחתת מואב וחרבנו מלאכת ה׳ וקללו מי שיעשה אותה במרמה וירפה ידו מהם וזהו ואחור מונע חרבו מדם והכה אמר זה במואב מה שלא אמר על אומה אחרת מעאר האומות לפי שהקדוש ברוך הוא הזהיר את ישראל אל תגר את מואב והם הרעישו לעצו׳ להם ולכן השחתתם היתה מלאכת ה׳ ובגזרתו ואמר הנביא שלא יתהללו באמרם שלא הלכו בגולה בשום זמן מהזמנים וזהו שאכן מואב מנעוריו דומה לומר מהזמן שהתחילה האומה הזאת ונם היום שוקט הוא על שמריו ולא הוכרח מכלי אל כלי כיין הטוב המשומר בענביו ולכן עמד טעמו בו וריחו לא נמר ולא נתחלף כי הנה הקדוש ברוך הוא גזר שהנה ימים באים עתה ושלחתי נועים עליו והם המריקים כי נועים פרש״י מריקים מלשון מהר נועה להפתח הוא הלוך מעים בשלול ונעוהו דומה לומר יריקו אותם שלם הם לא הוכרחו מכלי אל כלי עתה יריקו אותם ב בלמת ולפי שעשה כמואב מאל היין

אל דרך: עמדי זנפי זכו׳ עד לבני עמון יאמר הנביא אל דרך עמדי כ״ל עמדי על הדרך את יושב ערוער ותנפי לרעת הרעה הזאת שתבא על מואב אומתך ופש״ל את הנסים והנמלטים מזאת עדי אז זב שבאו עליהם הכשדים תפלה ואמרי בשאלתך מה נהיתה דומה לומר מה הדעה שהיתה בהם ואיך נם בלשון זכר ונתלטה בלשון נקבה כלומר מה איש אז אשה גם כי בנבואות בכר יבוא כן פעמים רבים הזכר כנגד הנס והנקבה כנגד הכבשיה ולפי שהיה עיר מואב ראש המלכות כלו אמר בוגים מואב כי מפה מדינתו הלילי העקיזעשש פלך השמועה אל ארנון כי שודד מואב וכי נלה משמע מלהים אל ארנון המישור אל כל העדים אשר זכר בשם נאומן שתדעה קרן מואב והוא מזקו ויופיו ואמר הנביא כנגד המשחיתים את מואב בשבירתו כי על ה׳ הגדיל דומה לומר תכו לו כדי שבר זיין הרבה שישאבל הרבה מכום המתה כי על ה׳ הגדיל פה והגדיל לשון שאמר שלא יכול להמלט ובאשר יסיה מואב משחבר יפפוק בקיאו כמו השכור שמתגולל ומתהפך מנד אל נד בהקיאו היין שתה ומופק בגופו לאחרן והיה לשחוק גם הוא כמו שהיה ישראל ובדרך שאלה אמר כנגד מואב אם בשחוק היה לך ישראל כן תהיה אתה עתה לשחוק אם בגנבים תמצא כלומר הכמצא ישראל בגנבים ש שנשחוק עליו כמו שישחקו ויכעסו על הגנבים כשיתפשום כמו שאמר יכעסו עליהם כנגד בימי דבריך בו בישראל תתנודד ותכעס כאשר עזבו ערים ושכנו בסלע יושבי מואב דומה לומר אין ראוי שנשבו בערים כי יבא הלוחם עליכם אבל שכנו בסלעים כי שם תנגבו מ

לכן אמר בו וכלו יריקו ונבליהם יכפצו והם הנב׳ ם שבהם ישתו היין מלשון כל בכל ימלא יין יכפצו אותם כבלליהם ויסברים ואז תבוש מואב מכמוש אלהיהם וידעו שאין בו כח להבילם כאשר בשו בית ישראל מבית אל שהיו בוטחים בענל שהיה שמה והנביא מוכיח את כמי מואב איך תאמרו גבורים אנחנו תאמרו נבורים אנחנו כיון שאודל מואב ועריה עלה דומה לומר בכסף אז ובעריה עלה השודד אשר זכר והבחר בחוריו אל מואב ירדו לטבח כמו שהיה עתיד להיות אמר כאם המלך ה׳ נבאות שמו כי גזרת מלך היא ואמר שלא יהיה זה לזמן רחוק וימים רבים כי קרוב איד מואב לבוא לבוא ורעתו מהרה מאד ולכן כל סביביו ראוי שינודו ויקונם עליו ויאמרו איך נשבר מטה עז מקל תפארה כי היה מואב בגבוריו מטה עוז וכפיו ופשרו היה נקרב העמים מקל תפארה אבל מכאן והלאה רדי מכבוד דומה לומ׳ רדי מהכבוד שהיה לך מקל׳ ועתה בגלו׳ תשב בצמא ומוסר כל טוב:

אל־דֶּרֶךְ עֹמְדִי וְצַפִּי יוֹשֶׁבֶת עֲרוֹעֵר שַׁאֲלִי־
נָס וְנִמְלָטָה אִמְרִי מַה־נִּהְיָתָה׃ הוֹבִישׁ
מוֹאָב כִּי־חַתָּה הֵילִילוּ וְזַעֲקוּ הַגִּידוּ
בְּאַרְנוֹן כִּי שֹׁדַד מוֹאָב׃ וּמִשְׁפָּט בָּא אֶל־
אֶרֶץ הַמִּישֹׁר אֶל־חֹלוֹן וְאֶל־יַהְצָה וְעַל־
מֵיפָעַת׃ וְעַל־דִּיבוֹן וְעַל נְבוֹ וְעַל־בֵּית
דִּבְלָתָיִם׃ וְעַל קִרְיָתַיִם וְעַל־בֵּית גָּמוּל
וְעַל־בֵּית מְעוֹן׃ וְעַל־קְרִיּוֹת וְעַל־בָּצְרָה
וְעַל־כָּל־עָרֵי אֶרֶץ־מוֹאָב הָרְחֹקוֹת
וְהַקְּרֹבוֹת׃ נִגְדְּעָה קֶרֶן מוֹאָב וּזְרֹעוֹ
נִשְׁבָּרָה נְאֻם יְהוָה׃ הַשְּׁכִּירֻהוּ כִּי עַל־
יְהוָה הִגְדִּיל וְסָפַק מוֹאָב בְּקִיאוֹ וְהָיָה
לְשְׂחֹק גַּם־הוּא׃ וְאִם־לוֹא הַשְּׂחֹק הָיָה
לְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־בַּגַּנָּבִים נִמְצָאָה כִּי מִדֵּי
דַבְּרְךָ בּוֹ תִּתְנוֹדָד׃ עִזְבוּ עָרִים וְשִׁכְנוּ
בַּסֶּלַע יֹשְׁבֵי מוֹאָב וְהָיוּ כְּיוֹנָה תְּקַנֵּן
בְּעֶבְרֵי פִי־פָחַת׃ שָׁמַעְנוּ גְּאוֹן מוֹאָב
גֵּאֶה מְאֹד גָּבְהוֹ וּגְאוֹנוֹ וּגְאוּתוֹ וְרָם
לִבּוֹ׃ אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה עֶבְרָתוֹ וְלֹא־
כֵן בַּדָּיו לֹא־כֵן עָשׂוּ׃ עַל־כֵּן עַל־מוֹאָב
אֵילִיל וּלְמוֹאָב כֻּלֹּה אֶזְעָק אֶל־אַנְשֵׁי
קִיר־חֶרֶשׂ יֵהָנֶה׃ מִבְּכִי יַעְזֵר אֲבַכֶּה לָּךְ
הַגֶּפֶן שִׂבְמָה נְטִישֹׁתַיִךְ עָבְרוּ יָם עַד יָם
יַעְזֵר נָגַשׁ עַל־קֵיצֵךְ וְעַל־בְּצִירֵךְ שֹׁדֵד
נָפָל׃ וְנֶאֱסְפָה שִׂמְחָה וְגִיל מִכַּרְמֶל
וּמֵאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב וְיַיִן מִיְּקָבִים הִשְׁבַּתִּי לֹא־

מהכשדיים וכהיותכם שמה בגלע תהיו כיונה שתקנן בלומר שתעשה הקן שלה בגדלי הפחת כדי שלא יקחו בני אדם אותה ואת אפרוחיה כי מפני הפחת לא יוכלו האנשים לעבור אליה והפחת היא מקום ושוחה עמוקה ואומר הנביא תדבר בשם שאר האומות שמעבו נאון מואב שהיה בשלותו מתגאה מאד ולכן אמר לשונות הרבה מהגאוה גאה מאד גבהו וגאונו וגאותו ורם לבבו שהוא כלו להפליג אותו ואמר הנם אני ידעתי גאותו וידעתי עברתו שהוא מתקנף מהרה על כל הגוים והוא נשבע להחריבם ולהחרימם ומגדל פה בגדריו אבל לא כן בדיו אינם כן ואמת דבריו והם הכוזבים אשר ידבר כי לא כן עשו דומה לומר עתה בבוא הכשדיים עליהם לא עשו כמו שהיו אומרים בגאותם שיעשו אבל כן על מואב איליל שהיה גלה מאד ונפל בבזון ובושה ושפלות גדול ומכר אנשי קיר חרש שהיא עיר ממלכו׳ מואב ושניהם קורא אותה קיר חרש ואמר יהנה דומה לומר לבני יהנה בו ומכבי אשר יעזר שהיא עיר אחר׳ אבכה אני בעבורך הגפן שבמה שבמה שם עיר שהיו בה גפנים ויין הרבה ופירות משובחות ולכן אמר בה כשבותיך עברו ים שהוליכו הגפרים ההם להעת׳ לך משובחות לעבר הים כי גם הגפרים משם הלכו בגולה על קינן ועל קיצן שודד נפל כאשר לוקח שכא הלוחם השדוד בדבר הקן ולכן לא נעשה ביניהם לא פירות הקן המשובחות שהיו שם ולא נפל היין מפני רעת הלובים ולכן בלשפה שמחה וגיל כי השמחה תבוא עם התכיות ובלשון נוכן ובקב לא יעשה זתיבות יכתם גם בלשפה ובלשה שמחה וגיל לא תהיה בלכן ואמרו מכרמל ומארץ מואב מיבשו

המפרשים

ידרך הידד הידד לא הידר: מזעקת
חשבון עד־אלעלה עד־יהץ נתנו קולם
מצער עד־הרונים עגלת שלישיה כי גם־
מי נמרים למשמות יהיו: והשבתי
למואב נאם־יהוה מעלה במה ומקטיר
לאלהיו: על־כן לבי למואב כחללים
יהמה ולבי אל־אנשי קיר־חרש
כחללים יהמה על־כן יתרת עשה אבדו:
כי כל־ראש קרחה וכל־זקן גרעה על
כל־ידים גדדות ועל מתנים שק: על
כל־גגות מואב וברחבותיה כלה מ
מספד כי־שברתי את־מואב ככלי אין־
חפץ בו נאם־יהוה: איך התה הילילו
איך הפנה־ערף מואב בוש והיה מואב
לשחק ולמחתה לכל־סביביו:
כי־כה אמר יהוה הנה
כנשר ידאה ופרש כנפיו אל־מואב:
נלכדה הקריות והמצדות נתפשה
והיה לב גבורי מואב ביום ההוא כלב
אשה מצרה: ונשמד־מואב מעם כי
על־יהוה הגדיל: פחד ופחת ופח עליך
יושב מואב נאם־יהוה: הנס מפני
הפחד יפל אל־הפחת והעלה מן־
הפחת ילכד בפח כי־אביא אליה אל־
מואב שנת פקדתם נאם־יהוה: בצל
חשבון עמדו כחה נסים כי־אש יצאה
מחשבון ולהבה מבין סיחן ותאכל
פאת מואב וקדקד בני שאון: אוי־לך
מואב אבד עם־כמוש כי־לקחו בניך
בשבי ובנתיך בשביה: ושבתי שבות־
מואב באחרית הימים נאם־יהוה עד־הנה משפט מואב:

מט

לבני עמון כה אמר יהוה
הבנים אין לישראל אם־יורש אין לו
מדוע ירש מלכם את־גד ועמו בעריו
ישב: לכן הנה־ימים באים נאם־יהוה
והשמעתי אל־רבת בני־עמון תרועת
מלחמה והיתה לתל שממה ובנתיה
באש תצתנה וירש ישראל את־יורשיו אמר

כמלכים כמלך מקום שלות ונישה ולי נראה שאמר כמלך על אכן ישכל
שבקרא כן כמ"ש ואכיל לתכם אל אכן הכמלך וכאילו אמר שמואב ואכן
יהולה תלסף תשתיהן אחת ונ"ל כי תהיה מואב כמו שהיא אכן יהודה
בעכין הזה ולפי שייעד שיבות היין מהיקבים אמר לא ידכוך הידד הידד
לא הידד כי הידד הוא הקול שלומרי
הזוכרים בעת שהם דורכים יאמר
שלא ידכוך הדוכך הלומר הידד
הידד כי לא יקראו שם עוד הידד
לפי שלא ידרכו ולפי שהיו אדכות
במלכות מואב יותר מזובחות מ
מהאחרו' לכן אמר כי מזעקת חשבון
עד אלעלה עד יהץ שהמה היו עכים
בכבדות ויקרות כתכו קולם רוכה לומ'
המואבי' שהיו נוצקים עליהם מכועד
עד חוכוכים שהיו יותר יקרות מהם
היה הקול והנעקה מגולת ולכן
אמר עליה עגלה שלשיה יכמוו
לנעקה שהיתה על אותו מסוו מגולת'
מעל שאר המחוות והעכים כי מי
נמרים למשמות יהיו והיא הלכן
הבמתדת בעיכי המואביים הנה אם
כן לא אמר עגלה שלישיה אלא על
הנעקה שתהיה מגולת ומפני שהיו
המואבי' אדוקים כאמונתם לשהיהם
אמר והשבתי למואב מעלה במה
תנה לומ' מעלה עולה בבמה ומקטיר
לשקיו וכעבור שהיה זה תכלית הכעה
בעיניהם לכן אמר הנביא עליו בשם
המואביים על כן לבי למואב כחללים
יהמה כ"ל כמו שיהמה אדם על החללי
כן יהמה מואב על ביטול עבודת
אלהיהם וכן יהמה שאנשי קיר מכשת
שהלכו בשביה כחללים כמו אלו היו
חללים כולם ואומרו על כן יתרת
עשה אבדו עכינו כפרש"י על כן אבדו
ועבדו המואבי' על היתרונו' והגלות
אשר היו עושים וה"ל דוד קמתי
פירשו על הנכסים על אשר עשו
מהנכסים והמתון אבדו הכל ואמר
שיהמה לבו למואב לפי שכל כאב
מהם קרהה כי מכעו שבות כאשיה'
מתוך הזכל וכל זקן גרועה שבעבור
האבל יגלחו זקן לפי' שהיא תפארת
האדם על כל ידים נכוכות רוכה לומ'
שכועו' כבשר מי ואל מתנים שק וכל
מקומו' הספד לפי שבשרתי את מואב
שביר' מוחלטת ככלי אין הפן בו ולכן
יאמרו בהספדים איך אתה מואב וכן
הילו איך הפנה עורף מואב והיה
לבושה לשחוק ולמחתה לכל הגוים
סביביו ומפני שכל הנכואה עד עתה
היתה כדברי מליצת הנביא בא עתה
לבאר הנמשלה והו' אומרו כי ככשר

לבני עמון כה אמר ה' וכו' עד
לאדום כה אמר הש
כשגלו בני גד ובני ראובן על ידי
מלך אשור בלו עמון ומואב שהיו
שכנים להם ולקחו את ארצם באמרם
שמקדם היה הארץ הזאת שלהם
ולכן הם היו בה הוכשים ומפני
זה אמר הנביא פה הבנים אין לישראל
אם יורש אין לו מדוע ירש מלכם את
בני עמון את ארץ גד ועמו בעריו
בעריו של גד ישבו ופרש"י שמלכם היה
אלוה בני עמון כי כן כתוב ולמלכום
תועבת בני עמון ונראה שהיה מנהגם

לכנות מלכותם אלהי"ן שלהם
ולכן אמר מדוע ירש מלכם הע"ו
שלהם את גד הנה ימים באים שיקבלו
בני עמון את עונשם והוא שהשמעתי
אל רבת בני עמון והיא העיר הגדולה
מושב המלכים תרועת מלחמה מ
מהכשדיים שיבאו עליהם וילכדוה
והיתה לתל שממה ובנותיה הם שאר
ערי המלכות באש תצתנה וישרפו
אותן ואומרו וירש ישראל את יורשיו
אפשר לפרשו על אבשי בית שני כי
בעלותם לירושלם עברו בארצות כולם
מלך פרס באלכן בני עמון וירשו
האלכות

יהוה: הֵילִילִי הַשְּׁבוֹן כִּי־שֻׁדְּדָה־עַי צְעַקְנָה
בְּנוֹת רַבָּה חֲגֹרְנָה שַׂקִּים סְפֹדְנָה וְ
וְהִתְשׁוֹטַטְנָה בַּגְּדֵרוֹת כִּי מַלְכָּם בַּגּוֹלָה
יֵלֵךְ כֹּהֲנָיו וְשָׂרָיו יַחְדָּיו: מַה־תִּתְהַלְּלִי
בָּעֲמָקִים זָב עֲמָקֵךְ הַבַּת הַשּׁוֹבָבָה
הַבֹּטֶחָה בְּאֹצְרֹתַיִךְ מִי יָבוֹא אֵלָי: הִנְנִי
מֵבִיא עָלַיִךְ פַּחַד נְאֻם־אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
מִכָּל־סְבִיבָיִךְ וְנִדַּחְתֶּם אִישׁ לְפָנָיו וְאֵין
מְקַבֵּץ לַנֹּדֵד: וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן אָשִׁיב אֶת־
שְׁבוּת בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

בני עמון אמר הנביא ואין זה לעתיד לבוא אלא אמר אותו זמן כמו שפירשתי במואב:

לאדום כה אמר ה' נבואות וגו'
עד כי הנה קטן נתתיך
דעת הרא"ע הוא שכל נבואת אדום
באמרה על ארץ אדום הסמוכה לארץ
ישראל ועל הקרבן שעשה בה נבוכד
נצר מלך בבל אמנם ה"ר רבי דוד
קמחי סבר שאדום הנאמר בנבואה
הזאת הוא אומת הנצרים המכוכים
היום אנשי היהודים בשם אדום
שהיא כולה נבואה לעתיד לבא
מהסברא שתהיה ברומי כאשר האומה
שני הדברים בכללות הנבואה הזאת
בלתי אמתיים בעיני אם דעת ה"ר
אברהם אבן עזרא לפי שאמר כאן
כי בי נשבעתי נאם הנביא כי לשמה
לחרפה ולקללה תהיה בצרה
וכל ערים תהיינה לחרבות עולם
והנצרה הנזכרת כאן היא רומה
כמו שתרגם יונתן כי באדום
לא היתה עיר שתקרא בצרה אלא
במואב במו שאמר למעלה ועל
קריות ועל בצרה ועל כל ערי ארץ
מואב אבל באדום לא היתה
בצרה אלא רומי שנקראת כן בדברי
ישעיהו בפרשת קלבו גויים לשמוע
ובדברי ירמיהו כאן וזה להיותה עיר
בצורה ומוצלת בעמים ומתי היתה
לשמה לחרפה ולקללה וכל ערים
חרבות עולם אלא שזה ייעוד עתיד
בהכרח לבוא עליה וכן אומרו והיתה
אדום לשמה כל עובר עליה ישום
ויסרוק על מכותיה כמהפכת סדום
ועמורה וזכריה אמר ה' לא ישב
שם איש ולא יגור בה בן אדם וידוע
שאדום עם היות שבבשה מלך בבל והכניעה תחת ממשלתו לא נחרבה
בהחלט ולא נהפכה כמהפכת סדום ועמורה שגם היום יושבים עליה הפך
מה שאמר לא ישב שם איש ולא יגור בה בן אדם ואם זה לא נתקיים
ע"י נבוכד נצר ולא בימי דוד ולא בימי הורקנוס המלך מבית חשמונאי
הנה אם כן הוא ייעוד לעתיד לבא בהכרח על רומי גם מה שאמר לכן
שמעו עצת ה' אשר יען על אדום ומחשבותיו אשר חשב אל יושבי תימן
אם לא יסחבום צעירי הצאן ונומר ואמרו דוד במסכת יומא פ"ק כפי
מה שהיה מקובל ביניהם עתידה רומי שתפול ביד ערב שנאמר לכן שמעו
עצת ה' אשר יען על אדום ומחשבותיו אשר חשב על יושבי בצרה אם
לא יסחבום צעירי הצאן ונומר אם כן על רומי נאמר הפסוק הזה ולא
תאמר לה"ר דוד קמחי ולא תשגיח אליו שכתב שצעירי הצאן אמר על

לְאֵדוֹם כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת הַאֵין עוֹד חָכְמָה בְּתֵימָן אָבְדָה
עֵצָה מִבָּנִים נִסְרְחָה חָכְמָתָם: נֻסוּ
הָפְנוּ הַעֲמִיקוּ לָשֶׁבֶת יֹשְׁבֵי דְדָן כִּי אֵיד
עֵשָׂו הֵבֵאתִי עָלָיו עֵת פְּקֻדָּתִיו: אִם־
בֹּצְרִים בָּאוּ לָךְ לֹא־יַשְׁאִירוּ עוֹלְלוֹת אִם־
גַּנָּבִים בַּלַּיְלָה הִשְׁחִיתוּ דַיָּם: כִּי־אָנִי
חִשַּׂפְתִּי אֶת־עֵשָׂו גִּלִּיתִי אֶת־מִסְתָּרָיו
וְנֶחְבָּה לֹא יוּכָל שֹׁדַּד זַרְעוֹ וְאַחָיו
וּשְׁכֵנָיו וְאֵינֶנּוּ: עָזְבָה יְתֹמֶיךָ אֲנִי אֲחַיֶּה
וְאַלְמְנֹתֶיךָ עָלַי תִּבְטָחוּ:
כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנֵּה
אֲשֶׁר־אֵין מִשְׁפָּטָם לִשְׁתּוֹת הַכּוֹס שָׁתוֹ
יִשְׁתּוּ וְאַתָּה הוֹא נָקֹה תִּנָּקֶה לֹא תִנָּקֶה
כִּי שָׁתֹה תִשְׁתֶּה: כִּי בִי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי
נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי־לְשַׁמָּה לְחָרְפָּה לְחָרֶב
וְלִקְלָלָה תִּהְיֶה בָצְרָה וְכָל־עָרֶיהָ
תִּהְיֶינָה לְחָרְבוֹת עוֹלָם: שְׁמוּעָה
שָׁמַעְתִּי מֵאֵת יְהוָה וְצִיר בַּגּוֹיִם שָׁלוּחַ
הִתְקַבְּצוּ וּבֹאוּ עָלֶיהָ וְקוּמוּ לַמִّלְחָמָה:

לעתיד לבא כדברי הרד"ק לפי שבפרשת הכוס יין חמה כתוב
בתחלתה הנני שולח ולקחתי את כל משפחות נפון נאם ה' אל נבוכד נצר
מלך בבל עבדי והביאותים על הארץ הזאת ועל יושביה ועל כל הגוי' האלה
סביב והחרמתי אותם לשמה ולשריקה ולחרבות עולם ומיד הביא אבדון
כל הגוים שבא' בנבואתו שיתים את הכוס ובכלל הוא אדום ועתה בסוף
נבואותיו ביבא על הבבלים ועל פלשתים ועל מואב ועמון ואדום ודמשק
וקידר ועילם ואם האומות ההם כולם נחרבו ע"י נבוכד נצר איך יאמר
שאדו' שבא בתוכם לא נחרב בזמן ההוא ונבואתו אינה כשאר הנבואות
אבל שהיא לעתיד לבא ואיך אם כן בא בתוכם אף כי בו בא' הנה אשר
אין משפטם לשתות הכוס שתו ישתו ואתה הוא נקה תנקה והם הדברים
שנאמרו בפרשת כוס יין חמה שהיא על ידי נבוכ' נצר ויון אלא
נוכל לפרש

מיליהם כי הנה אלכם מלך מואב הישב בגבה לו יהיה מלכם העבודה
זרה שלהם בגולה ילך וכהניו ושריו יחדו ילכו בשבי ואמר בשם האויב
כאילו היה תחרף ומנדף את בני עמון ואומר מה תתהללי בעמקים
כלומר מה היית מסתכם באדמות העמקים שהיו לך שהיו רבות ה
המבוחות כי הנה עתה זב עמקך
רוצה לומר העמק שלך יזוב דם
המלחמה ואתה הבת הסובבה הבוטחת
באוצרותיה מי יבא אלי רוצה לומר
מי משלכם יבא להלחם עמי ולהגלו
מידי ואפשר לפרש כל זה בשם האל
יתברך שהנביא אומר בשמו מה
תתהוללי מי יבא אלי רוצה לומר
להתחזק לפני עליכם כי הנני מביא
עליך פחד נאם ה' מכל מסביבך
שיבאו עליך שם הכשדים והרומיים
ונדחתם איש לפניו רוצה לומר שכל
אחד יהיה נדחה נגד פניו לבוש שלא
יתקבצו הנשים זה עם זה ולא יבאו
זה לזה אבל כל אחד יהיה נדחה נגד
פניו ולא יתבאו מקבץ לנודד מהם
כמו שהם לא קבצו את ישראל בנודדם
האחרים אחר כך אשיב את שבות
בני עמון אמר הנבי' ואין זה לעתיד לבוא אלא אחר אותו זמן כמו
שפירשתי במואב:

ישראל כי בלתם לא כאמר אלא על
הפרסיים שבידם תפול רומי כקבלתם
ז"ל והבליה המוכחת על זה שהנה
בחרבן בבל באמר פסוק אחר
דומה לזה לכן שמעו עצת ה' אשר
יען אל בבל וגומר אם לא יסחבום
צעירי הצאן וידוע שצעירי הצאן ש
שהביבו בבל הם פרס ומדי כמו
שיתבא' אח"ל וכמו שצעירי הצאן אח'
שיסחבו בבל הם הפרס' כן צעירי
הצאן שיסחבו את אדום הם הפרס'
ונדקו מאמריהם ז"ל עתידה רומי
שתפול ביד פרס והתבונן בסמיכת
שבזכרון הפסוק הזה בדבריהם ז"ל
שמו הלשון כי במקום שהנבי' אומר
עצת ה' אשר יען על אדום ו
ומחשבותיו אשר חשב אל יושבי תימן
אמרו הקדושים ז"ל בדרשתם
ומחשבותיו אשר חשב על יושבי בצרה
ולא טעו בפסוק הזה אבל הענינו
היות צעירי הצאן פלס מתה שנאמר
כן בחרבן בבל שהיה על ידי פרס
ולכן שמו בזה הפסוק ענין הכשדים
להעיר על אותה הבליה שזכרתי גם
אמר הנבי' כאן באדום מקול כפלס
כעשה כל הארץ נעק' כים סוף בשמע
קולם ולמה תהיה ההפלגה הזאת
בבבוש נבוכ' נצר ארץ אדום הסמוכ'
לארץ ישראל אלא שזכר בזה בחרבן
אומה אחרת מן האומות אשר כבשו
הנה מכל המקומות האלה יראה שלי
אפשר לפרש הנבוא' הזאת על חרבן
אדום בימי נבוכד נצר כה"ר אברהם
אבן עזרא וכן אי אפשר לפרשה כולה

כוכל לפרש הנבואה כולה כי כדרך ה"ל רש"י אבותם בן עזרא ולא הרד"ק
באמרו שמקבצתה כפרש בדרך אחד ומקבצתה בדרך אחר כי הנה בתחילתה
אין מדבר מהתחלת הנבואה ליעד שיעבור כוס בכוכל נגד על אדום כמו
שעבר על שאר האומות אשר סביבות ארץ ישראל ועל זה אחר הדין עוד
מכתה בתימן לפרה ענה מבכים כ"ל איך היה הדבר הזה שאדום לא יוכל
להמלט כפשוט תיר מלך בכל הלשון אבדה חכמת מכתיו של אדום והנה
בתימן ואדרן אדום היו תמיד חכמים ובעלי תחבולות ובהם תעצה המלחמה
בין בני אדם וכמו שאמר וה אבדתי חכמים מאדום ותבונה מהר עשו
ואין לשון כן אבדה ענה מבכים רוצה לומר מבכים ואבדי ביבה כי בלמת
בסערה ובמקלה ובלשה מכמתם לפי שבאשר אמרו אליהם המבשרים
כמו כלומר מהאויבים הבנו העתיקו לשבת רוצה לומר כתחבלו במחבולות
עמוקים ויושבי דדן שהיו האדירים שבהם וזלת היתה רעתם לפי שאיר
עשו והחרבן הבאתי לו כפי רשעתו הבאתי עליהם כאשר פקדתי עוונותיו
הבאשרים מתה שדדף את יעקב אחיו ובקש להרגו ועתה על בניו אלה
הבאתי עליהם אידו והוכיחם על אשר נחבאו באומרו אם בוצרים באו
לך לא ישאירו עוללות והוא מאמר בתמיהה כאומר למה נחבאת לבצרון
אף על פי שבאו בוצרים על בכירך והוא משל לבעלים הלא ישאירו
עוללות כי לא יתכן שיהרגו וינלו כולכם יחד ואם יהיו גנבים בלילה
הלא השחיתו דים אבל לא הכל בהחלט אמנם עתה שנחבאת אני חשפתי
את עשו רוצה לומר הוא נחבא ואני גליתי את מ
מסתריו ונחבה לא יוכל כלו' לא יוכל אדם להיות נחבא לפי שאני גליתיו
ולכן שולד זרעו של עשו שהם בני אדום ואחיו ושכניו ואינם רוצה לומר
ואין אים שיאמר עזבה יתומיך אני אחיה אין אים שיאמר' על אדום בהקמיו
עזבה והוא נוי כלומר עזוב את יתומיך ואני אחיה אותם ואלמנותיך עלי
תבטחו לפי שיחות זרע אדום ואחיו ושכניו ואין מרחם עליו וכל זה אין
ספק שעל אדום הקרובה לירושלים ועל חרבנה על ידי נבוכד נצר
בבל והמה בלו כלבנים האלה בשנוי מעט בדברי עובדיה אשר כיבא
על אדום והנה אמר ה' לאדום הנה אין מדפסים לשתות הכוס וגו' כאומר
הנה מנרים פלשתים דאשק קדר ועילם לא היה להם קורבה עם בני
אדום וישראל ועם כל זה כעבור מה שעזרו ושמחו בחורבנם שתו מכוס
הקמת ואיך תנקה אתה אדום הלא אם עשו ליעקב כאם ה' ונוה השם
יתברך לא תתעב אדומי כי אחיך הוא ואתה הרעות עמו על כן לא תנקה
כי שתה תשתה מכוס החמה על ידי נבוכד נצר כאשר שתו הם הנה על
כאן כיבא על ענין נבוכד נצר ואמרם אומרו עוד כי כי נשבעתי וגומר

כי הנה קטן נתתיך וכו' על
לדתשק אמר הנביא כנגד
אדום הנה כימים הקדמונים בתחלת
ממשלתך קטן נתתיך וקטון היית
בגוים והוא עם אדום היושב קרוב
לארץ ישראל ובזוי היית אתה מאד
באדם אבל אחרי שבאו מזרע אדום
למלוך בארץ ובתחלתם כל הארץ
מאוכלוסי אדום גדלה ממשלת רומי
בידי האדומיים עד שנעשית גבורת
כל הממלכות וזהו תפלנתך הזדה
אותך כי הנה תפלנתך הוא מ
מלשון פלגות בעתתי רוצה לומר
אימתך ופחדך שהיתה תשלת על כל
הארצות עשתה שבבשלך וזהו שהזדה
אותך והוא זדון לבך כלומר אתה
שוכני בגוי סלע מגדל עוז וכאשר
שהם תופשים גבעה רמה שחוסים
שאין מי שיוכלים ממנה והנה לא
יהיה הדבר כן כי אם תגביה כנשר
שהוא הצוף שמעופף יותר ... ע
קלון כאור מכל העופות עשה
אורך כאשר' הנה אם כן כל זה
אמר הנביא על נגרם שהוא רומי
ועל אומת בני אדום שבתחלה מהם
ועליהם אמר והיה אדום לשמה כל
עובר עליה ישום וגו' אמם כהפכת
סדום ועמורה ונכרתה אמר ה' לא
שב שם איש ולא יגור בה בן אדם
רוצה לומר שתתהפך בגרה כמו
שנהפכה סדום ועמורה ונכרתה שהם
שאר ערי הככר ולא ישב בה אמר
כך שום אדם ומזה יתבאר שזה הייעוד
הוא לעתיד כי עד עתה לא היה זה והנה כמנהגי אמר שיסוב את שבותה
ובמאלה ובשמן ג"כ אבל באדום לא אמר ככה כי אם כאשר שלא ישב אדם

עד סוף הנבואה הנה הוא בלי ספק ייעוד לעתיד לבא כי הנה כאשר
הכלה השם לנביא מרבן אדום על יד נבוכד נצר הכלהו אחריו גם
כן מרבן אחר שיבא על ארץ אדום ואוכלוהו אשר כתיבתו בלשון שהם
הנקראים הוס הזה אדום ובעבור שהיה בלא מחמלתם ואמונתם בבותי
רבתא לכן אמר אחרי תשלום ענין נבוכד נצר כי כי נשבעתי נאם ה' כי
לשמה להרפה לחרב ולקללה תהיה בנרה שהיא רומי כמו שזכרתי וכל ערי
תהיינה לחרבות עולמי שאחרי שתחרבנה בזמן הגאולה לא ישב בהם אדם
עוד ואחרים אומרו שמועה שמעתי מאת ה' ונציר בגוים שלוח ונאמר עמיו
מה שכתבתי בספר מעיני היסודה ובפירוש ישעיהו ובמקומות אחרים
שבומי וכל אומת הנוגרים באחרית ימי גלותינו יתעוררו לעלות לבבוא
את ירושלים מפני שהם כל קדושת דתם וקבר ישו"ע אלהיהם וכמו שכבר
בזמן העבר התעוררו פעמים אחרות גם כן לכבשה לזאת הקבה בעצמה
ומפני שהוס כל אדם ונושלים תחת מלכות מגרים ולמו הנוגרים
באזונה במגרים ויכו את כל המונה מכה מופלגת ומזה מנא הסמועה
בכל ארצות המזרח והצפון שבונים שמעאלים והם אויבי הנוגרים וכאשר
ישמעו שבאו הנוגרים מאדנים אחריבו את מגרים וכבשו את אדם
וילכדו את ירושלים שהיא ג"כ עיר קדושה לישמעאלים יתעוררו הישמעאלים
עצמם ויאמרו אים אל אתיו לכו ונלכה בשם הא"ל על הנוגרים האדירים
האלה ונקח מהם כקמת מגרים ונוגיא מידיהם הערי הקדושה כן יתפשטו
הנוגרים בכל ארצות המזרח ויבאו להחרים גם אותנו ואז היתה ה
השמועה אשר שמע הנביא עתה מאת השם שהודיעו מכבר הסבות ית'
שהוא יעורר לבב אלה ואלה לעזות כל זה כדי לעשות מחפצו בחם ועליו
אמר עובדיה שמועה שמענו מאת ה' ונציר בגוים שלוח מאתו לאתו על
הזדמנים לבא למלחמה הזאת וזהו התקבצו ובאו עליה רוצה לומ' על בבלה
ועל אומת הנוגרים וקמו למלחמה וכבר ביבא ימוקאל על מפלת מגרים
בידי הנוגרים ואמר ביום ההוא יבאו מלאכים מלפני כנים להחריד את
כוש בטח והיתה חלחלה בהם כיום מגרים כי הנה באת וכבר יורה אומרו
אחרי ענין נבוכד נצר שמועה שמעתי מאת ה' שהיה זה ייעוד אחרי קדם
אבלו ולזמן רחוק כי ענין נבוכד נצר לא יאמר שמע עתה שמועתו מאת
ה' ולא גם כן ונציר בגוים שלוח כי מי שלח הציר למי וכן קומו ונקומה מי
הם אלה בימי נבוכד נצר כי הוא היה מולך לבדו אלא שהשמועה היא מה
שנתחדש אבלו עתה מהייעוד העתיד שיהיה בקבון הנוגרים ובציר שלך
במלוכה מפה אל פה להודיע הענין והגוים המתחלפים הם האומרים אל
לאבלו קומו ונקומה עליה למלחמה:

כי הנה קטן נתתיך בגוים בזוי באדם:
תפלצתך השיא אתך זדון לבך שכני
בחגוי הסלע תפשי מרום גבעה כי
תגביה כנשר קנך משם אורידך נאם
יהוה: והיתה אדום לשמה כל עבר
עליה ישם וישרוק על כל מכותיה:
כמהפכת סדם ועמרה ושכניה אמר
יהוה לא ישב שם איש ולא יגור בה בן
אדם: הנה כארי יעלה מגאון הירדן
אל נוה איתן כי ארגיעה ארצנו מעליה
ומי בחור אליה אפקד כי מי כמוני ומי
יעידני ומי זה רעה אשר יעמד לפני:
לכן שמעו עצת יהוה אשר יעץ אל
אדום ומחשבותיו אשר חשב אל ישבי
תימן אם לוא יסחבום צעירי הצאן אם
לא ישים עליהם נויהם: מקול נפלם
רעשה הארץ צעקה בים סוף נשמע
קולם: הנה כנשר יעלה ויראת ויפרש
כנפיו על בצרה והיה לב גבורי אדום
ביום ההוא כלב אשה מצרה:

כה עוד ואמרם אומרו הנה כאריה
יעלה כי כשהו המפרשי' על האויבים
שיבואו על בבלה שיעלו עלית בחזקה
כמו שיעלה האריה מגאון הירדן
שהם יכבשו הארצות בעלותו אל נוה
איתן רוצה לומר אל נוה רועים
איתן ומלא בשר כי זהו איתנו ובאמר
איך יהיה זה ואמר כי אגיעה
ארצנו מעליה רוצה לומר כשיגיע
רגע התשועה ונעתה כמו שאמר
בשתה אחיזנה הנה בתחלת ארצנו
כלומר את ישראל מעליה כמו ש
שגורשו ישראל מארץ אדום ומכל
ממשלת בבלה וזה ארצנו את ישראל
מעליה ואחר כאתו מארץ אדום
מי בחור אליה אפקוד רוצה לומר
כל עם וגוי שיהיה בחור וחזק אפקוד
על ארץ אדום ובבלה להחרבה כי
מי כמוני להנקם מבני ומי יועידני
להלחם עמי ומי זה רועה יעמוד
לפני להכל כאלו מידי מי הוא זה
המלך והמושל שימלוהו לכו לזה ואמר
לפני הנה כאריה יעלה על נבוכד
נצר אחרי שיעד על אדום שיכבשה
אלן בבל. ויצד עליו עוד התבונן
הגדול שיהיה כאחרית הימים כתן
מפסטים בכל אחד מהייעודים ההם
וכנגד הייעוד הראשון מענין נבוכד
נצר אמר הנה כאריה יעלה מגאון
הירדן. ובאמרו רוצה לומר שיעלה
נבוכד נצר על ארץ אדום כמו האריה
כשיעלה מגאון הירדן על נוה
רועים איתן אבל אמר כך שבגים
שבא לבטל מחשבתו מעל כל האדם ההיא כולה ומי בחור אליה יפקוד
יהיו לכולם מלך כדם שהוא הבחור שיפקוד למשול על הארץ ולנקום

נקמתו

הנקמתו מבבל כי מי כמוני לחת לי את הארץ ביד נבוכדנצר ומי יעידני
להסיר ממשלתו ומי זה רועה אשר יעמוד לפני לעתיד לבא כשאבוא
והכתי את כל הארץ חרב והכה כלו הדברים בנבואה הזאת כלותו לשון
שבאה בהם עובדיה ואמרם איך היה זה והכי אמרו חז"ל שלין סנגון אחד
עולה לשני נביאים ולא יתכבדו שביהם בסנגון אחד הנה הוא שהנביאים
לא היו מכבדים כלותו לופן שהיה מבבא משה רבינו עליו השלום כי הוא
היה מבבא מאת ה' לא לבל הנביאים אבל גם הדברים והמלות כמו שהיה
שומע אותם היה כותבם על ספר התורה בלותם המלות אשר שמע אמרם
שאר הנביאים היו רואים בנבואותיהם כללות הענינים שודעים הקדוש
ברוך הוא והנביאים היו מסדרים וכותבים אותם בלשון ענמם ומפני
זה בלותם ענין אחד יליבו אותו פעמים בלותם המלות והדברים שבאו
וידעו שבאו אותם נביאים אחרים ולכן דוד ע"ה אמר במזמור קל"ה כי
ידין ה' עמו ועל עבדיו יתנחם שאמרו משה רבינו בפרשת האזינו ושעיהו
אמר כי עזי וזמרת יה הוא ויהי לי לישועה והוא משירת הים וכאלה רבים
לא שתבואם הנבואה בלותם המלות שבאו למשה רבינו ובמדרגתו אלא
שהם לאו ענינים ומענמם הלינו אותם בלשון הפסוקים שהיו רגילים
בהם וכן היה ענין ירמיהו בנבואה הזאת בספרו אותה בלשון עובדיה
ואחרי שנתן המשפט הנזכר בענין ייעול נבוכדנצר נתן משפט אחר
בייעול העתיד לבא על אדום ובנבה והוא אומרו לכן שמעו עצת ה' וגו'
רונה לומר לכן שזה הדבר שמצתי מאת הש"ת לכן אמיענה לכם אותה
הענה היעונה שיען ה' על אדום ומחשבותיו אשר חשב על יושבי תימן
שהם בני אדום ענמם והענה היא בשבועה אם לא יקחום כלומר אם
לא ירמסום בגליהם מן קטון והשלך נעורי הצאן אם לא ישים ושומם

לדמשק בושה שמה ונומר על סוף הנבואה כ
ביבא הנביא גם כן על דמשק שיכבשה נבוכדנצר ובעבור שחמת
ואכפר היו עריה גדולים קרובים לדמשק לכן אמ"כי שמוע"רעה שמעו
והיא שהיו הכשדיים באים עליהם
ואשר שמעו זה נמונו במוכך לב
בים הלחנה כי לרוב דאגתם אמר
בים דאגה ומפני זה דמשק שוכר
השקט לא יוכל וכפתה בכפיון ידיה
ומולדת הלב והשתדלה לנוס ולא
יכלה לפי שרעש המוזיקה והוא הבית
והפלגות הנמשך מהפחד עד שהיה
לה כרס ומבלים כיולדה ואמר הנביא
כמתמיה איך לא עזבה רונה לומר
אף על פי שנבוכדנצר מלך הבבל שאר
הארצות היה לו לכבוש על דמשק
מפני יופיה ולהמנע מהחריבה ל
להיותה עיר תהלה קרית משוש ואם
כן איך לא עזבוה ולא נמנע מלהשחית
לכן מפני שהיא עיר תהלה קרית
משוש יפלו בחוריה בכמובותיה
אלים וכל אנשי המלחמה לא היו
נמצאים שבארמו מהלחם כי אלה
יאמרו גם כן רונה לומ' נכבתו ונהרגו
ביום ההוא וכאילו מן השתים ידליקו
ויבערו אז בחומת דמשק ואכלה
ארמנות בן הדד שהוא היה מלך
דמשק כשהחריבה נבוכדנצר והיה
המלך נקרא בכן כשהחריבה סנחריב
ובכל זכר הנביא עתיד שהיה זה
אל דמשק בעבור מה שעשו לישראל
על דרשם בחרושו' הכרזל את הגלעד
והנה לא זכר הנביא ושבתי את שבות
דמשק לפי שעם היות שהלכו בגולה
מהארמיים כמו שאמר וגלו עם ארם
קירה הנה אנשי דמשק לא הלכו
בגולה כי הם מתו בתלחמ'בחמובותיה
ומפני זה לא הוצרך לומר בה ושבתי
את שבות דמשק וכן ביבא על קדר
וממלכות חצור ואמר בהם אשר
הכה נבוכדנצר מלך בבל מה שלא
אמר כן על שאר האומות אף על
פי שלקו על ידו כפי הלר דוד קחתי
לפי שהארמות לקו על ידי אחרים
פעם אחרת שהני אדום ומואב

לדמשק בושה חמת ונפלו בחוריה בחוצותיה כל אנשי המלחמה נדמו ביום ההוא נאם יהוה צבאות:
ואבערתי אש בחומת דמשק ואכלה ארמנות בן הדד:
לקדר ולממלכות חצור אשר הכה נבוכדראצר מלך בבל כה אמר יהוה קומו עלו אל קדר ושדדו את בני קדם:
אהליהם וצאנם יקחו יריעותיהם וכל כליהם וגמליהם ישאו להם וקראו עליהם מגור מסביב:
נסו נדו מאד העמיקו לשבת יושבי חצור נאם יהוה כי יעץ עליכם נבוכדראצר מלך בבל עצה וחשב עליהם מחשבה:
קומו עלו אל גוי שליו יושב לבטח נאם יהוה לא דלתים ולא בריח לו בדד ישכנו:
והיו גמליהם לבז והמון מקניהם לשלל וזרתים לכל רוח קצוצי פאה ומכל עבריו אביא את אידם נאם יהוה:
והיתה חצור למעון תנים שממה עד עולם לא ישב שם איש ולא יגור בה בן אדם:
אשר היה דבר יהוה אל ירמיהו הנביא אל עילם בראשית

ועמון ואדום לקו על ידי דוד מלך ישראל אבל קדר וממלכות חצור לא לקו אלא על ידי נבוכדנצר מלך בבל אמר בהם אשר הכה נבוכדנצר מלך בבל ויותר נכון לומר שאשר האומות נאחרכו מפני מה שהרעו לישראל כי העיר ה' את רוח נבוכדנצר לעלות עליהם אבל קדר שלא הרע לישראל לא היה מרכבו אלא מרכבן נבוכדנצר לא מהשם וזהו אשר הכה ונומר ובעבור שבני קדר לא היו להם ארמנות ובתים כי היו שוכני' באהלים במדבר לכן אמר כה אמר ה' קומו עלו אל קדר שדדו את בני קדם כי הם היו באים מאלכן המזרח וביאר מה ישודדו מהם ואמר לא אהליהם וצאנם יקחו רונה לומר השודדים ויריעותיהם שהם האהלים וכל כליהם וגמליהם שלו הכשדיים ויקחום וקראו עליהם מגור מסביב רונה לומר שיפחדו אותם לאמר אליהם נסו ונדו מכאן והם ככה עשו כי העמיקו לשבת יושבי חצור רונה לומר שיושבי חצור להיותם יותר פחותי הלב נכנסו במקומות עמוקים להתחבא שמה מפני שנבוכדנצר חשב לעלות עליהם לא לקחת את ארמנם כי לא היתה להם ולא להיותם אבל מנותו אלא להיותו נוי שלו יושב בשלוה לבטח מבלי עיר וחומה שתסגר בדלתים ובריח והם בדד ישכנו כי אין להם עזר מהשכנים ולכן בנקלה יהיו גמליהם לבז והמון מקניהם יהיו לשלל כי הם בעלי מקנה כמו שאמר כל נאן קדר יקבצו לך ולא היה דעתו להוליכ'בגלות ושביה אלא לזרותם ולהפיצם לכל רוח ופאה בקצות האלכן וזהו קצוצי פאה מענין קן כי הפא'היא קן וסוף ואמר ומכל עבריו אביא את אידם לרמוז שלא יהיה זה בקדר מבלית נבוכדנצר אותם כי הם לא עשו עמו מלחמה אבל מכל עבריו של נבוכדנצר יבא אידם של בני קדר כי הם בחדתם יבאו עליהם לשלם ובעבור שמנוח היה מיר מקדם מלך שהיה מושל על כל בני קדר היושבים באהלים

אמר והיתה

מַלְכוּת צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר׃ כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הִנְנִי שֹׁבֵר אֶת־קֶשֶׁת עֵילָם רֵאשִׁית גְּבוּרָתָם׃ וְהֵבֵאתִי אֶל־עֵילָם אַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת מֵאַרְבַּע קְצוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְזֵרִתִּים לְכָל הָרוּחוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָבוֹא שָׁם נִדְּחֵי עֵילָם׃ וְהַחַתִּתִּי אֶת־עֵילָם לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיהֶם וְלִפְנֵי מְבַקְשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם וְהֵבֵאתִי עֲלֵיהֶם רָעָה אֶת־חֲרוֹן אַפִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אַחֲרֵיהֶם אֶת־הַחֶרֶב עַד כַּלּוֹתִי אוֹתָם׃ וְשַׂמְתִּי כִסְאִי בְּעֵילָם וְהַאֲבַדְתִּי מִשָּׁם מֶלֶךְ וְשָׂרִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃ וְהָיָה בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים אָשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבוּת עֵילָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃

הנבואה השבעה עשר

הנה מה שכיבא ירמיהו על מרכן בכל תמלתה הדבר אשר דבר ה׳ אל בכל על בן עזריס ואחת שנה בלקיהו במלכו וש בנבואה הזאת ע״ו פרשיות הא׳ הדבר אשר דבר ה׳ אל בבל אל ארץ כשדים הב׳ שה פורה ישראל הג׳ על הארץ מרתים הל׳ השמיעו אל בבל הה׳ הנני אליך זדון הו׳ כה אמר ה׳ נבאות עשוקים הז׳ הנה עם כא מצפון הח׳ כה אמר ה׳ הנני מעיר על בבל הט׳ עושה לכן בכחו ה׳ מפן אתה לי הי״א כי כה אמר ה׳ נבאות חומת בבל הי״ב לכן כה אמר ה׳ הנני רב את ריבך הי״ג לכן הנה ימים באים הי״ד כה אמר ה׳ נבאות חומת בבל הט״ו הדבר אשר צוה ירמיהו הנביא את שריה והנה שאלתי בדברי הנבואה הזאת שבת השאלות:

השאלה הראשונה באומרו בייעול פקידת בית שני ועלות היהודים שמה מבבל יבא בני ישראל המה ובני יהודה יחדו הלוך ובכו ילכו ואת ה׳ אלקיהם יבקשו וכן אמר ושובבתי את ישראל אל נוהו ורעה הכרמל והבשן ובהר אפרים הנלעד ונומר ואמר עוד בימים ההם ובעת ההיא יבוקש את עון ישראל ואינכו ואת חטאת יהודה ולא תמצאנה ונומר וידוע שישראל והם עשרת השבטים לא שבו לירושלים בפקידת בית שני:

השאלה השנית באומרו בחרבן בבל הנה כארי יעלה מגאון הירדן אלהה איתן כי ארגיעה ארצים מעליה ונומר לכן שמעו עצת ה׳ אשר יען ונומר והנה אלה הפסוקים ענמים כאמרו למעלה במפלת אדום ואיך באו המשפטים והמאמרים שוים ודומים באדום ובכל כל שכן בהיות נבואת אדום לעתיד לבא ונבואת בבל לשעתה ואיך יהיו נעיני הכאן המתריבים אדום הם ענמים מקריבי בבל בהיות ביניהם אלפים מהשנים:

השאלה השלישית בפרשת עושה אדם בכחו מכין תבל בחכמתו שנאמרה במפלת בבל ו ותמצאה למעלה אחרי פרשת כדבא תאמרון לגוים ומה כאה הנביא לשנות כל אותם הפסוקים ומה נוכח בהשנות הדברים הקטור קנבה לשונו לאבא אחרים ומה היקש אשר לאותם הפסוקים במקום הזה אשר הבאים פה:

השאלה הרביעית במ״ב הנביא שני פעמים בייעדו שהגוים שיקריבו את בבל יהיה מדי ובמו שאמר הפיר ה׳ את רוח מלכי מדי ולא זכר פרס וידוע שפרס ומדי שניהם המרכבה גם אומרו מלכי מדי יקשה מאד כי מלך אחד היה במדי לא מלכים רבים:

השאלה החמישית באומרו כן לקבאת כן מגיד לקבאת מגיד להגיד למלך בבל כי נלכדה עירו מקנה ויקשה המאמר הזה אם מאומרו כן לקבאת כן שהיה כאוי לומר כן אמר כן אם כל הרבים והמגידים היו הולכים להגיד את המלך ואם מפני שמלך בבל בבבל היה ואיך יהיו אל״כ הרבים להגיד לו כי נלכדה עירו גם שבאשר נלכדה בבל כבר היה מת המלך בלשצר ואיך אמר אל״כ להגיד למלך כי נלכדה עירו וכבר לא היה שם מלך:

השאלה השישית באמרו בסוף הנבואה עד הנה דברי ירמיהו כי לא אמר זה על נבואת בבל שלא היתה יותר ממה שנכתב כאן הנה זה לא היה נוכן בה ולא כאמר כזה בנבואות שאר האומות ומה שכא׳ עד הנה מצפון מואב הוא לסלה אחרת כמו שבארתי שם ואם כאמר להודיע שנפסקה הנבואה מירמיהו קודם מותו כדברי הרב המורה ז״ל הנה זה אינו נודק כי נבואת בבל היתה כמו שהגיד הכתוב בשנה הרביעית למלכות צדקיהו ואיך כאמר שאז פסקה נבואתו כי הנה אחר זה שנים רבות כיבא נבואות ביחזקאל אל צדקיהו ואחרי כאתו מצר אל אבי הגולה היוצרים למלכים כמו שנזכרו למעלה בזה הספר:

והנני מפרש הפסוקים באופן יותכו הצלנות כולם:

שבשנה כא שנה והוליד הכתיב בזה מעלת נבואת ירמיהו שקודם שביא מרכן בבל כיבא ואיה מרכן המקריב את בבל שהיה אל״ו והו בבא שית מלכות צדקיהו כי קודם מרכן ירושלים ראה מרכן בבל המקריב אותו ואיה מרכן עילם המקריב את בבל מקריב ירושלים ומזה תכין שאמרו כאן אשר היה דבר ה׳ אל ירמיהו בראשית מלכו׳ צדקיהו לא אמרו בבבל על נבואה עילם שנתי הנבואות האלה היו בראשית מלכות צדקיהו וכמו שיתבא׳ בסוף נבואת בבל בשליחות שריה ובעבור שהיו המדיים מושכי קשת ובזה היה יותר גבורתם לכן אמר הנני שובר את קשת עילם כי היא ראשית גבורת׳ והמפרשי׳ פירשו קשת עילם חוקם ותקפם ואמר והבאתי אל עילם ד׳ רוחות להגיד שתבא נכתם לא לבד שמלך בבל שבזר האומות אשר זבר כי גם מבל עבר ומבל כוח שהם ד׳ רוחות העולם תבוא עליהם הנכה וכן יורה אותם בשבי וגולה לכל ד׳ רוחות השמים ולא יהיה הגוי כ״ל לא יהיה גוי ואומה בעולם שלא יבא עליהם והם יהיו כלמי עולם כי לא ישיב ה׳ שבות׳ כמו שאמר במצרים ובמואב ועמון ואתתי את עילם לפני אויביהם שיפלים ויכניעם לפניהם ויבית עליהם רעה את חרון אפו ורב האויבים עד כלותו אותם והייעוד הזה הוא לעתיד לבא. בהכרח לכן אתם דבריו באומרו ושמתי כסאי בעילם ואאביד ממנה מלך ושרים כי לא ימלוך עוד בתוכה מלך מקשיב על שפת שקר כלאשורים ולא שר מרשיע ואלבד את ישראל כהמן שהיו בעילם המדינה ופירש כס״י כסאי בעילם מנוד ונסי להקריבה:

הנבואה השבעה עשר

הנה מה שכיבא ירמיהו על מרכן בכל תמלתה הדבר אשר דבר ה׳ אל בבל על בן עזריס ואחת שנה בלקיהו במלכו וש בנבואה הזאת ע״ו פרשיות הא׳ הדבר אשר דבר ה׳ אל בבל אל ארץ כשדים הב׳ שה פורה ישראל הג׳ על הארץ מרתים הל׳ השמיעו אל בבל הה׳ הנני אליך זדון הו׳ כה אמר ה׳ נבאות עשוקים הז׳ הנה עם כא מצפון הח׳ כה אמר ה׳ הנני מעיר על בבל הט׳ עושה לכן בכחו ה׳ מפן אתה לי הי״א כי כה אמר ה׳ נבאות חומת בבל הי״ב לכן כה אמר ה׳ הנני רב את ריבך הי״ג לכן הנה ימים באים הי״ד כה אמר ה׳ נבאות חומת בבל הט״ו הדבר אשר צוה ירמיהו הנביא את שריה והנה שאלתי בדברי הנבואה הזאת שבת השאלות:

השאלה הראשונה באומרו בייעול פקידת בית שני ועלות היהודים שמה מבבל יבא בני ישראל המה ובני יהודה יחדו הלוך ובכו ילכו ואת ה׳ אלקיהם יבקשו וכן אמר ושובבתי את ישראל אל נוהו ורעה הכרמל והבשן ובהר אפרים הנלעד ונומר ואמר עוד בימים ההם ובעת ההיא יבוקש את עון ישראל ואינכו ואת חטאת יהודה ולא תמצאנה ונומר וידוע שישראל והם עשרת השבטים לא שבו לירושלים בפקידת בית שני:

השאלה השנית באומרו בחרבן בבל הנה כארי יעלה מגאון הירדן אלהה איתן כי ארגיעה ארצים מעליה ונומר לכן שמעו עצת ה׳ אשר יען ונומר והנה אלה הפסוקים ענמים כאמרו למעלה במפלת אדום ואיך באו המשפטים והמאמרים שוים ודומים באדום ובכל כל שכן בהיות נבואת אדום לעתיד לבא ונבואת בבל לשעתה ואיך יהיו נעיני הכאן המתריבים אדום הם ענמים מקריבי בבל בהיות ביניהם אלפים מהשנים:

השאלה השלישית בפרשת עושה אדם בכחו מכין תבל בחכמתו שנאמרה במפלת בבל ו ותמצאה למעלה אחרי פרשת כדבא תאמרון לגוים ומה כאה הנביא לשנות כל אותם הפסוקים ומה נוכח בהשנות הדברים הקטור קנבה לשונו לאבא אחרים ומה היקש אשר לאותם הפסוקים במקום הזה אשר הבאים פה:

השאלה הרביעית במ״ב הנביא שני פעמים בייעדו שהגוים שיקריבו את בבל יהיה מדי וכמו שאמר הפיר ה׳ את רוח מלכי מדי ולא זכר פרס וידוע שפרס ומדי שניהם המרכבה גם אומרו מלכי מדי יקשה מאד כי מלך אחד היה במדי לא מלכים רבים:

השאלה החמישית באומרו כן לקבאת כן מגיד לקבאת מגיד להגיד למלך בבל כי נלכדה עירו מקנה ויקשה המאמר הזה אם מאומרו כן לקבאת כן שהיה כאוי לומר כן אמר כן אם כל הרבים והמגידים היו הולכים להגיד את המלך ואם מפני שמלך בבל בבבל היה ואיך יהיו אל״כ הרבים להגיד לו כי נלכדה עירו גם שבאשר נלכדה בבל כבר היה מת המלך בלשצר ואיך אמר אל״כ להגיד למלך כי נלכדה עירו וכבר לא היה שם מלך:

השאלה השישית באמרו בסוף הנבואה עד הנה דברי ירמיהו כי לא אמר זה על נבואת בבל שלא היתה יותר ממה שנכתב כאן הנה זה לא היה נוכן בה ולא כאמר כזה בנבואות שאר האומות ומה שכא׳ עד הנה מצפון מואב הוא לסלה אחרת כמו שבארתי שם ואם כאמר להודיע שנפסקה הנבואה מירמיהו קודם מותו כדברי הרב המורה ז״ל הנה זה אינו נודק כי נבואת בבל היתה כמו שהגיד הכתוב בשנה הרביעית למלכות צדקיהו ואיך כאמר שאז פסקה נבואתו כי הנה אחר זה שנים רבות כיבא נבואות ביחזקאל אל צדקיהו ואחרי כאתו מצר אל אבי הגולה היוצרים למלכים כמו שנזכרו למעלה בזה הספר:

והנני מפרש הפסוקים באופן יותכו הצלנות כולם:

הכוונה הכוללת בנבואה הזאת היא ליעד שתחרב בבל ע״י מדי ופרס שיעלו עליה ושחיתוה ושגבוריה יהיו לאין ושריה לאפס ותתפך בבל כמהפכת סדום ועמורה ושיהיה זה נקמה מהש״י שינקום לש עמו ושריפת היכלו ומרכן ביתו ושמתוך מרכן בבל יצאו בני ישראל וישובו אל ירושלים ויבנו את בית ה׳ ויספר זאת הנבואה כיבא אותה ירמיהו בשנה הרביעית למלכות צדקיהו ושלחה אל בבל ביד שריה כשלחו המלך צדקיהו לבבל על עניניו ונוה הנביא את שריהו שיקרא את המגלה הזאת ויקריה בנהר פרת ויאמר ככה תשקע בבל וכמו שיתבאר בפסוקים:

הדבר אשר דבר ה׳ אל בבל אל ארץ כשדים ונומר על זה פורה ישראל אריות הדיחו כמו שנאמר בפרשת כוס היין המתה ומלך שסן ישתה בלתוכה שיזכור מרכן מלך בבל שהוא שסך בלתוכה לתת זכרון מרכן שאר האומות כן עשה שבסוף ירבניו בכא על בבל המדינה נבכת במדינות ועל עם הכשדי׳ כולם שהתריבו שאר הארצות

נ

הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עַל־בָּבֶל עַל־אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים בְּיַד יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא׃ הַגִּידוּ בַגּוֹיִם

וְהַשְּׁמִיעוּ וְשָׂאוּ נֵס הַשְׁמִיעוּ אַל־
תְּכַחֵדוּ אִמְרוּ נִלְכְּדָה בֵּל הֹבִישׁ מְרֹדַךְ
חַתָּ מְרֻרָךְ הֹבִישׁוּ עֲצַבֶּיהָ חַתּוּ גִלּוּלֶיהָ׃
כִּי עָלָה עָלֶיהָ גּוֹי מִצָּפוֹן הוּא יָשִׂים
אַרְצָהּ לְשַׁמָּה וְלֹא יִהְיֶה יוֹשֵׁב בָּהּ
מֵאָדָם וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה נָדוּ הָלָכוּ׃ בַּיָּמִים
הָהֵמָּה וּבָעֵת הַהִיא נְאֻם־יְהוָה יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי־
יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵמָּה וּבְנֵי־יְהוּדָה יַחְדָּו הָלוֹךְ
וּבָכוֹ יֵלֵכוּ וְאֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם יְבַקְּשׁוּ׃
צִיּוֹן יִשְׁאֲלוּ דֶּרֶךְ הֵנָּה פְּנֵיהֶם בָּאוּ וְנִלְווּ
אֶל־יְהוָה בְּרִית עוֹלָם לֹא תִשְׁכָּחַה׃
צֹאן אֹבְדוֹת הָיָה עַמִּי
רֹעֵיהֶם הִתְעוּם הָרִים שׁוֹבְבוּם מֵהַר אֶל־
גִּבְעָה הָלְכוּ שָׁכְחוּ רִבְצָם׃ כָּל־
מֹצְאֵיהֶם אֲכָלוּם וְצָרֵיהֶם אָמְרוּ לֹא
נֶאְשָׁם תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר חָטְאוּ לַיהוָה נְוֵה־
צֶדֶק וּמִקְוֵה אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם יְהוָה׃ נֹדוּ מִתּוֹךְ
בָּבֶל וּמֵאֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים יֵצֵאוּ וְהָיוּ כְּעַתּוּדִים
לִפְנֵי־צֹאן׃ כִּי הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי מֵעִיר וּמַעֲלֶה
עַל־בָּבֶל קְהַל גּוֹיִם גְּדוֹלִים מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן
וְעָרְכוּ לָהּ מִשָּׁם תִּלָּכֵד חִצָּיו כְּגִבּוֹר מ
מַשְׁכִּיל לֹא יָשׁוּב רֵיקָם׃ וְהָיְתָה כַשְּׂדִים
לְשָׁלָל כָּל־שֹׁלְלֶיהָ יִשְׂבָּעוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃
כִּי תִשְׂמְחוּ כִּי תַעֲלֹזוּ שֹׁסֵי נַחֲלָתִי כִּי
תִפּוּשִׁי כְּעֶגְלָה דָשֵׁא וְתִצְהֲלִי כָּאַבִּירִים׃
בּוֹשָׁה אִמְּכֶם מְאֹד הָפְרָה יֹלַדְתְּכֶם הִנֵּה
אַחֲרִית גּוֹיִם מִדְבָּר צִיָּה וַעֲרָבָה׃ מִקֶּצֶף
יְהוָה לֹא תֵשֵׁב וְהָיְתָה שְׁמָמָה כֻּלָּהּ כָּל
עֹבֵר עַל־בָּבֶל יִשֹּׁם וְיִשְׁרֹק עַל־כָּל־מ
מַכּוֹתֶיהָ׃ עֶרְכוּ עַל־בֶּכֶל סָבִיב כָּל־דֹּרְכֵי
קָשֶׁת יְדוּ אֵלֶיהָ אַל־תַּחְמְלוּ אֶל־חֵץ כִּי
לַיהוָה חָטָאָה׃ הָרִיעוּ עָלֶיהָ סָבִיב נָתְנָה
יָדָהּ נָפְלוּ אַשּׁוֹתֶיהָ נֶהֱרְסוּ חוֹמֹתֶיהָ
כִּי נִקְמַת יְהוָה הִיא הִנָּקְמוּ בָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר
עָשְׂתָה עֲשׂוּ־לָהּ׃ הַרְתוּ זוֹרֵעַ מִבָּבֶל
וְתֹפֵשׂ מַגַּל בְּעֵת קָצִיר מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַיּוֹנָה
אִישׁ אֶל־עַמּוֹ יִפְנוּ וְאִישׁ אֶל־אַרְצוֹ יָנוּסוּ׃

אמר נודו מתוך בבל ומלכן כשדים רומה לומר מצאן כצרים שבלכן הכשדים יצאו בני הגולה ומפני שרבים הם נשאלו שמה לכן אמר והיו כעתודי לפני צאן שדמה הצוללים כנבוכת חכיותם לבן יודים והנשאלי שמה לכלן המלוסות כי הנה אנכי מעיר ומעלה על בבל קהל גוים גדולים מלכן נפון והם פרס ומדי וערכו לה רומה לומר שיערכו מלחמה עליה משם תלכד בבל מלותו מקום שיערכו המנוח לא יפרכו ללכת אל מקום אחר מכו כנבוכ משכיל כלומר מכי הקהל הזה יהיו כמכי נבוכ משכיל שלא ישוב ריקם בידוע שלא יהיה כן יהיו מכי כל הכלמים על בבל והיתה הכשדים לשלל רומה לומר שתהיה מלכן כשדים כולה לשלל וכל שוללה ישבעו כי יאספו כל כך מהממון שישבעו מהשלל ההוא ונתן הסבה למה תבא הרפה ההיא כולה על בבל באומרו כי תשמחי כי תעלוזי שוסי נחלתי ובא בכתוב הזה תשמחי תעלוזי בלשון נקבה ידידה כנגד בת בבל ושוסי נחלתי בלשון זכרים רבים כנגד הכשדים יאמר והנה יהיה זה בעבור שתשמחי ותעלוזי כאשר הסכבתם ירושלם והייתם שוסי ושוללי נחלתי כי אז תפושי כעגלה דשא ותפושי הוא מעכין רבוי כמו וינאתם ופשתם כעגלי מרבק יאמר והייתם פשים ורבים בטוב מרבי כעגלה דשא והיא העגלה שרועה תמיד בדשא ולא עלה עליה עול ולא עשתה עבודה לבל תמיד היא אוכלת מרישה וכן אתם הייתם נוהלים בשמחה בהיותכם מנצחים את בני יהודה ואמנם עתה לא תנהלו לא תשמחי בת בבל אבל בהפך כי בושה אמכם מאד הפרה יולדתכם והם כולם תואר לבת בבל ותהיה הבושה בראותם שהנה אחרית גוים כלומר אחרית הכשדים הוא שתהיה אבנם במדבר ציה וערבה מבלי יושב והנה לא ישב בה עוד בן אדם מקצף הנם נבאות שקצף על בבל ולכן תהיה שממה כולה וכל עובר על מדינת בבל ההוללה תבהל ישום ויסרוק על כל מכותיה ואין ספק שבתקיי כל זה כי נחרבה בבל רבתא והעיר אשר ישב בה אחר כך דריוש וכורש ואשר היא בבל עד היום הזה איבה בבל הראשונה שהיתה בימי נבוכד נצר כי היא מחרבה ולא ישב בה עוד בן אדם אבל נעשית בבל אחרת הרסק ממנה מעט באותה בקצה שקראה בשמה בבל בלשון היהודים אבל הישמעאלים לא יקראו לה אלה בג"ד ואמר הנביא בשם הש"י כנגד פרס ומדי ערכו על בבל סביב כ"ל ערכו מלחמה כל דורכי קשת ידו אליה אל תחמלו אל חץ ולא תחוסו עליו לאמר אולי לא יכה אדם וילך לבטלה כי לה' חטאה ולכן אתם תנקו וכל החצים אשר תשליכו שמה יהרגו בני אדם וכדי להבהיל את הכבליים הריעו על בבל מסביב כי היא נתנה ידה רומה לומר תמסר ענמה אל האויבים כי לא תוכל לעמוד כנגדם נפלו אשותיה רומה לומר יסודותיה וחומותיה יפלו אבנה ובא בפסוק עבר במקום עתיד והסבה בכל זה כי נקמת ה' היא הנקמו בה כ"ל בבבל כאשר עשתה לירושלם עבו לה ואחרי חרבנה בתו

זונע

ובבר נאית בדברי הנביא שהיה נהוג אצלו לומר מלת אל במקום על ובמקומו אל ההרים לא אכל ורבים כמוהו ולפי שבוכד נצר החריב עתים רבים ולבנות רבות לכן אמר הנביא כלן הבילו בגוים והשמיעו רומה לומר שיגילו בשורה זו מחרבן בבל וכשדים בקרב הגוים ולחזק הענין אמר שני פעמים והשמיעו ואלו גם השמיעו אל תכחדו והוא שבלבל בבל לפי שאלוהות בבל לא יכלו להכיל את עמה לכן אמר הנביא הודיע כל מת מרודך שהם שתות הפסילים שהיו הבבליים מאמינים בהם אלהות ועובדי' אותם וזהו אומרו במלות שונות בדרך כלל הודיעו ענביה מתו גלוליה שהם הפסילים שהיו המה עובדים להם ובאמר למה יבושו באומרו כי עלו עליה רומה לומר על מלכות בבל גוי מצפון והם מדי ופרס השוכנים לבל בפון ואותו גוי העולה עליה ישית את ארצה לשמה ולא יהיה בה יושב עוד ואמרם ועד בהמה שהיו בבבל בדדו הלכו בגולה ובשני וכימים ההמה כאשר הלכו בגולה לבבל עם בני יהודה ובנימן וזה כי כשגלו עשרת השבטי' נשאלו אנשים מועטים מהם בוכים ונפונים באדרן כמו שנאמר בדברי חזקיהו וישמיהו ונטפלו עם בני יהודה והם אשר גלו עמהם ועליהם אמר שישובו עם בני יהודה יחדו מבבל ואת ה' אלקיהם יבקשו וזה היה כשבתן להם רשות כורש מלך פרס לעלות ולבנות בית ה' בירושלם ואמר הלוך ובכו להגיד שיבכו מרוב השמחה ובזכרם מבכן ירושלם ובריפת בית ה' ובשובם מגלות בבל ביון ישאלו דרך שישאלו זה לזה איזה דרך ביון לפי שהנה פניהם יהיו מכוונות לשם יתברך ויאמרו איש אל אחיו בואו ונלוו לה' ולא כשוב לאחוה לפניו אבל יהיה בריתנו אתו בברית עולם לא תשכח ואם תאמר אם אמן ה' בתשועת עמו למה זה שלחם בגלות להשיב לזה אמר כאן אובדות היו עמי כובה לומר כמו הכאן האובדות היו עמי והם האובדים מן הצדר ורועיה המלכי' התעום כי במקום שהיה מושל על הרועי' לשמרם כדי שלא יאבדו' הם היו המעעי' אותם להאביד אותן ואותם הרועים שובבו אותן אל ה' ההרים ושובבום הוא מלשון ושובבתיך והענין שהרועים בהשגחתם האבידו אותן והם שובבום ללכת בגולה מהר לגבעה וכזה הדרך שבאו בבבם רומה לומר בשבאו מאבנם כי הוכנלו בבל לשבת בארצן ארביהם ובהיותם בארצן אובדות הולכות בהרים כל מוצאיה' אכלום זבריהם שעושים להם נכות אומרים לא נאשם כלומר אין עון ולא אשמה באוכלנו הכלן האלה לפי שהם מעלו לה' אדון הגולם שהוא כוה ומקום הנדק כולו והוא מקוה אבותיהם וכמו כוה לרבים שדבר נבוזר אדון בשם נבוכד נצר לנבוכה ירמיהו ס' אלקיך דבר את הרעה הזאת אל המקום הזה ויבא ויעש ה' כאשר דבר כי חטאתם לה' ולא שמעתם בקולו אמנם המפרשים פירשו מה שנאמר כאן תחת אשר חטאו להשם נוה נדק ומקוה אבותיהם השם שהם דברי הנבי' שאמר ולא תשאלו למה קרהם כל זה דעו כי הוא תחת אשר חטאו להשם ונומר וגם בכן הוא ובמייעד על תשובת היהודים מבבל

שה פורה ישראל וכו' עד הנה
עם כח מנפון אמר הנביא
כמו שהשה הפזור ס"ל מעדנו אכול
בשדה כן היה ישראל אריות הדיחו
כונה לומר הדיחו אותה והכריחוה
מעדרה הראשון אכלו מלך אשור כי
הוא היה כאריה שכא על השה ההוא
ואכל את בשרו ולא השאיר בו כי אם
העצמות כי מלך אשור הגלה עשרת
השבטים והעצמות שנשארו הם יהודה
ובנימין וזה האחרון עצמו נכוכל ככל
מלך בבל הוא אכל את העצמות ש
שנשארו ממלך אשור כי הוא הגלה
יהודה ובנימין הנשארים וגזה עצמו
את השה כי שבר כל עצמותיו ולא
נשאר ממנו דבר ולכן כה אמר ה'
צבאות שהוא אלקי ישראל ונואלם
הנני פוקד על מלך בבל ועל ארצו
כאשר פקדתי על מלך אשור ושובבתי
ואמשוך ואשיב את ישראל שהיו גולים
בבבל אל נוהו שהוא יכושלם ולפי
שהמשילו בשה פורה אמר בו ורעה
את הכרמל כונה לומ"אותו שה פורה
תרעה את ארץ הכרמל והבשן ובהר
אפרים והגלעד תשבע נפשו מכוב
דשא וזכר המקומות ההם לפי שהם
כולם ארץ מרעה ולפי שגלות בבל
היה על קצת ישראל ובשבטים והם
לא עשו תשובה בבבל ואיך אם כן
פנא מפם ותקוור לירושלם הוכרך
הפם לומר בימים ההם ובעת ההיא
כאם הפם יבוקש את עון ישראל ואיננו
ואת חטאת יהודה ולא תמצאנה לא
להיותם נקיים מעון אלא לפי שאמלא
לאשר אשאיר ויתכן שאמר זה יבוקש
את עון ישראל ואינו על ביטול
השמצות כי בבר יהיו גולים כמשפל
הסנים שלא שמעו בארץ וזהו אינו
כי בבר שלמו בשיים ואמנם אומרו
בנבואה הזאת ישראל ויהודה אין כאלו
שיובן שם ישראל כאן על עשרת ה
השבטים אבל אמרו על הנשארים
מהשבטים שלא הלכו עם אחיהם
בגולת אשורה ונשארו כטפלים עם
יהודה ובנימין ולהראות זה אמר כי
אפלם לאשר אשאיר יכמו לנשארים
מעשרת השבטים והותרה בזה השאר
הראשונה וה"ר דוד קמחי פירש
הייעוד הזה לעתיד לבא וישראל
הנאמר כאן על עשרת השבטים ואינו
נכון ולפי שאמר הנביא שלא ימצא
עון יהודה וישראל בימים ההם אמר
מיד שבענין בבל יהיה הדבר בהפך
כי העון והחטאת יעלה עליה וזהו
על האלה מרתי יעלה עליה והמפרשי
פירשו אלה מרתים על בבל כי היא
מדינת המרד והפשע וכן תרגם
על אכעא דיצמא מרכן וכן תרגם
ואל יושבי פקוד שהיה פקוד שם עיר
מערבי בבל ויותר נכון לפרש שעל
האלה כונה לומר אלה בבל כי היא
האלה הידועה בשקים הזה מרתים
המרדים שעשה בבלופצציה אמר ה'
בנגד כל מדי אתם עלה עליה ואל
יושבי פקוד כונה לאנשי ואל יושבי
הארצה שהם הכשדים וקרלים יושבי
פקוד כלומר המתמידים בהארצה
והחסדון לפי שהיו תמיד הולכים
עמים מלשון ולא נפקד ממנו איש
אותם ולפי שהקונים כתבואות הם אנשים שבאים מארץ אחרת לקנות
לכן אמר איש אל עמו יפנו ואיש אל ארצו ינוסו ולא יקנו עוד:

שָׂה פּוּרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲרָיוֹת הִדִּיחוּ הָרִאשׁוֹן אֲכָלוֹ מֶלֶךְ
אַשּׁוּר וְזֶה הָאַחֲרוֹן עִצְּמוֹ נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר
מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל׃ לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי פֹקֵד אֶל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל
וְאֶל־אַרְצוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר פָּקַדְתִּי אֶל־מֶלֶךְ
אַשּׁוּר׃ וְשַׁבְתִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־נָוֵהוּ
וְרָעָה הַכַּרְמֶל וְהַבָּשָׁן וּבְהַר אֶפְרַיִם
וְהַגִּלְעָד תִּשְׂבַּע נַפְשׁוֹ׃ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם
וּבָעֵת הַהִיא נְאֻם־יְהוָה יְבֻקַּשׁ אֶת־עֲוֹן
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵינֶנּוּ וְאֶת־חַטֹּאת יְהוּדָה וְלֹא
תִמָּצֶאנָה כִּי אֶסְלַח לַאֲשֶׁר אַשְׁאִיר׃
עַל־הָאָרֶץ מְרָתַיִם
עֲלֵה עָלֶיהָ וְאֶל־יוֹשְׁבֵי פְקוֹד הַרֹּב ו
וְהַחֲרֵם אַחֲרֵיהֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה וַעֲשֵׂה כְּכֹל
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ׃ קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בָּאָרֶץ וְשֶׁבֶר
גָּדוֹל׃ אֵיךְ נִגְדַּע וַיִּשָּׁבֵר פַּטִּישׁ כָּל־
הָאָרֶץ אֵיךְ הָיְתָה לְשַׁמָּה בְּבֶל בַּגּוֹיִם׃
יָקֹשְׁתִּי לָךְ וְגַם־נִלְכַּדְתִּי בָבֶל וְאַתְּ לֹא
יָדַעַתְּ נִמְצֵאתְ וְגַם־נִתְפַּשְׂתְּ כִּי בַיהוָה
הִתְגָּרִית׃ פָּתַח יְהוָה אֶת־אֹצָרוֹ וַיּוֹצֵא
אֶת־כְּלֵי זַעְמוֹ כִּי־מְלֶאכֶת הִיא לַאדֹנָי
יְהוִה צְבָאוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים׃ בֹּאוּ־לָהּ
מִקֵּץ פְּתָחוּהָ מַאֲבֻסָיהָ סֹלּוּהָ כְּמוֹ־ ע
עֲרֵמִים וְהַחֲרִימוּהָ אַל־תְּהִי־לָהּ שְׁאָרִית׃
חְרִבוּ כָּל־פָּרֶיהָ יֵרְדוּ לַטֶּבַח הוֹי
עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי־בָא יוֹמָם עֵת־פְּקֻדָּתָם׃ קוֹל
נָסִים וּפְלֵטִים מֵאֶרֶץ בָּבֶל לְהַגִּיד
בְּצִיּוֹן אֶת־נִקְמַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִקְמַת
הֵיכָלוֹ׃ הַשְׁמִיעוּ אֶל־בָּבֶל יֹרֵי כָּל־
דֹּרְכֵי קָשֶׁת חֲנוּ עָלֶיהָ סָבִיב אַל־יְהִי־
פְלֵיטָה שַׁלְּמוּ־לָהּ כְּפָעֳלָהּ כְּכֹל
אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה עֲשׂוּ־לָהּ כִּי אֶל־יְהוָה זָדָה
אֶל־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל׃ לָכֵן יִפְּלוּ בַּחוּרֶיהָ
בִּרְחֹבֹתֶיהָ וְכָל־אַנְשֵׁי מִלְחַמְתָּהּ יִדְּמוּ
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃ הִנְנִי אֵלֶיךָ זֵדוֹן
נְאֻם־אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה צְבָאוֹת כִּי בָא יוֹמֵךְ עֵת
פְּקֻדָּתִיךְ׃ וְכָשַׁל זָדוֹן וְנָפַל וְאֵין לוֹ
מֵקִים וְהִצַּתִּי אֵשׁ בְּעָרָיו וְאָכְלָה כָּל־
סְבִיבֹתָיו׃ כֹּה
אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עֲשׁוּקִים בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּבְנֵי־יְהוּדָה יַחְדָּו וְכָל־שֹׁבֵיהֶם הֶחֱזִיקוּ

מכוב כלומר מכוב תהכב אותם ואם
ינוסו וימלטו מהם לנשים החכם
לאויביהם ועזה בכל אשר נותיך
והכל דכוב לנגד העון והמכל של
הכבלים שהוא יעלה עליהם ויחריב
והוא על דרך עונותיו ילכדוהו את
הרשע והמפרשים פירשו עלה עליה
וכל הפסו' על דריוש מלך מדי שהשם
נתן לו שיחריב את בבל ולכן אמר
הנביא שהוא כאלו שומע קול מלחמה
בארץ ושבר גדול בבבל והוא תמה
על זה באומרו איך נגדע ונשבר
פטיש כל הארץ כונה לומר בבל
שבחזקה ותוקפה היה כפטיש שובר
ומפוצץ הכל ועתה איך היה זה שנשבר
והקדוש ברוך הוא אומר יקשתי לך
וגם נלכדת בבל כונה לומ' לאלי שמתי
לך מוקש שנלכדת בו ואת לא ידעת
מהמוקש ההוא שהיה לפניך כי אילו
ידעת אולי היית נמלט מידי פרס
ומדי אבל לפי שלא ידעת דבר מ
מציאתם לכן נמצאת וגם נתפשת
כי לא יכולת לברוח ותפשוך והיה
המכשול הזה ממני לפי שבה' התגרית
כונה לומר נלחמת והוא מלשון ואל
תתגר בם מלחמה עתה תדע שמאתי
היתה כל כעתך כי פתח ה' את אוצרו
והוציא את כלי זעמו יען היתה
המלחמה הזאת לא לפרס ומדי כי
מלאכה היא לאדני הצבאות לעשות
בארץ כשדים והוא מנוה את המדיים
והפרסיים ואומר אליהם בלו לה
מקן כונה לומר לבבל מעת שבאה
קנה פתחו מאבוסיה המקומות
שאוכרים שמה התבואות והפירות
קון מן העיר שלקחו אותם הלוחמים
בכוחם עליה סונה כמו ערמים
כונה לומר דרכו עליה במסילה כמו
שדורכים על הערמים לדושם והל
דוד קמחי כשם אביו פירש עשו
תלים תלים כמו ערמים מסלה כי
לדעתו כל לשון מסלה ענין הרמה
הוא והחרימוה אל תהי לה שארית
ואמנם כנגד השרים אמר חרבו כל
פריה ירדו לטבח וחרבו הוא מלשון
חרב ופריה הוא כנוי לשרים שהוא
כמו מנבוני פרים כבים וכן תרגם
יונתן יאמר הרגו כל שריה וירדו
לטבח בענין שיאמרו כל אדם הוי
עליהם כי בא יומם עת פקודתם
ולזה הנביא בנבואתו כאילו כבים
מבני ישראל שהיו בבבל היו נסים
ופלטים מפם ובאים לירושלם להגיד
בציון את נקמת הפם אלקינו ונקמת
היכלו שנשרפו הכשדים ולזה עוד
בנבואתו כאילו בעת בוא פרס ומדי
על בבל היו משמיעים קול הכשדים
ומלשפים עם רב להבל מהם וזהו
השמיעו אל בבל כונה לומר אספו
כל בבל כי הנה רבים והם המורים
בחנים מלשון ויהי רובה קשתו ויתרבהו
ורבו שהם המורים בחנים דורכי
קשת יתכולה סביב אליה לה פליטה
כי אל ה' ודה שחטא בבל לבא בודון
על עם ה' ועל בית מקדשו ובאותו
עון יהודון יפלו בחוריה בחמובותיה
וכל אנשי מלחמתה שלבבל ידמו
ויכרתו ביום ההוא כאם ה' ובזכותו
ולפי שבעל הודון היה מלך בבל מזכע

38 לח ב אותו

בֹּם מְאֹנוּ שַׁלְּחֵם׃ גֹּאֲלָם חָזָק יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ רִיב יָרִיב אֶת־רִיבָם לְמַעַן
הָרְגִּיעַ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהִרְגִּיז לְיֹשְׁבֵי בָבֶל׃
חֶרֶב עַל־כַּשְׂדִּים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְאֶל־יֹשְׁבֵי
בָבֶל וְאֶל־שָׂרֶיהָ וְאֶל־חֲכָמֶיהָ׃ חֶרֶב אֶל־
הַבַּדִּים וְנֹאָלוּ חֶרֶב אֶל־גִּבּוֹרֶיהָ וָחָתוּ׃
חֶרֶב אֶל־סוּסָיו וְאֶל־רִכְבּוֹ וְאֶל־כָּל־
הָעֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹכָהּ וְהָיוּ לְנָשִׁים חֶרֶב
אֶל־אוֹצְרֹתֶיהָ וּבֻזּוּ׃ חֹרֶב אֶל־מֵימֶיהָ
וְיִבָּשׁוּ כִּי אֶרֶץ פְּסִילִים הִיא וּבְאֵימִים יִת
יְהֹלֵלוּ׃ לָכֵן יֵשְׁבוּ צִיִּים אֶת־אִיִּים
וְיָשְׁבוּ בָהּ בְּנוֹת יַעֲנָה וְלֹא־תִשָּׁב עוֹד
לָנֶצַח וְלֹא תִשְׁכֹּן עַד־דּוֹר וָדוֹר׃
כְּמַהְפֵּכַת אֱלֹהִים אֶת־סְדֹם וְאֶת־
עֲמֹרָה וְאֶת־שְׁכֵנֶיהָ נְאֻם־יְהוָה לֹא־יֵשֵׁב
שָׁם אִישׁ וְלֹא־יָגוּר בָּהּ בֶּן־אָדָם׃

הִנֵּה עַם בָּא מִצָּפוֹן וְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וּמְלָכִים
רַבִּים יֵעָרוּ מִיַּרְכְּתֵי אָרֶץ׃ קֶשֶׁת
וְכִידוֹן יַחֲזִיקוּ אַכְזָרִי הֵמָּה וְלֹא יְרַחֵמוּ
קוֹלָם כַּיָּם יֶהֱמֶה וְעַל־סוּסִים יִרְכָּבוּ
עָרוּךְ כְּאִישׁ לַמִּלְחָמָה עָלַיִךְ בַּת־בָּבֶל׃
שָׁמַע מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל אֶת־שִׁמְעָם וְרָפוּ יָדָיו
צָרָה הֶחֱזִיקַתְּהוּ חִיל כַּיּוֹלֵדָה׃ הִנֵּה כְּאַרְיֵה
יַעֲלֶה מִגְּאוֹן הַיַّרְדֵּן אֶל־נְוֵה אֵיתָן כִּי־
אַרְגִּיעָה אָרוּצֵם מֵעָלֶיהָ וּמִי בָחוּר אֵלֶיהָ
אֶפְקֹד כִּי מִי כָמוֹנִי וּמִי יוֹעִדֶנִּי וּמִי־זֶה
רֹעֶה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֹד לְפָנָי׃ לָכֵן שִׁמְעוּ עֲצַת־
יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר יָעַץ אֶל־בָּבֶל וּמַחְשְׁבוֹתָיו
אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב אֶל־אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים אִם־לֹא
יִסְחָבוּם צְעִירֵי הַצֹּאן אִם־לֹא יָשִׁים עֲלֵיהֶם
נָוֶה׃ מִקּוֹל נִתְפְּשָׂה בָּבֶל נִרְעֲשָׁה הָאָרֶץ
וְזַעֲקָה בַגּוֹיִם נִשְׁמָע׃

נא

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנְנִי מֵעִיר עַל־
בָּבֶל וְאֶל־יֹשְׁבֵי לֵב קָמַי רוּחַ מַשְׁחִית׃
וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי לְבָבֶל זָרִים וְזֵרוּהָ וּבוֹקְקוּ אֶת־
אַרְצָהּ כִּי־הָיוּ עָלֶיהָ מִסָּבִיב בְּיוֹם רָעָה׃
אֶל־יִדְרֹךְ יָרֹךְ הַדַּרְכּוֹ קַשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶל־

מותו כשל נבוכל נגד לכן כיצא כנגדו הנני אלך ודון כוכה לומר אני אלקים עליך כי בא יומך והגיע העת אל פקודתך ואז יכשל ודון ונפל והוא מלך בלשנר שהרגוהו ואין מקום לו כי לא יהיה עוד מוכשו מולך בבבל ואבעד אם בעבי בבל ואכלה כל פגיבותיו העוזרים אותו ואתה מלך בבל מסבת שבני ישראל ובני יהודה כל המחזיק בהם יוכה בהם לעד אין הדבר כן כי הם שלוחים הם בידכם עתה הם עשוקים ואמר בני ישראל כנגד הסבעים שהלכו גולים לאשור ובני יהודה כנגד גלות בבל וכל שוביהם מלבד הרעה אשר עשו בגלות אותם הנה עוד היום החזיקו בהם מאנו שלחם דעו כי כי גואלם חזק ה' נבאות שמו והוא יריב את ריבם למען הרגיע את האדון שהיה מלך בבל מרגיז אותה בהכנעה רבה ובמותו יהיה מרגוע בבל האדון והרגיז ליושבי בבל ומפני זה היתה הגזרה העליונה שיהיה חרב על כשדים וסריסים וחכמיהם ולפי שהמלחמה תעשה בחכמה וגבורה כמו שאמר ענה וגבורה למלחמה כנגד הענה אמר חרב אל הבדים ונואלו כונה לומר שחכמי בבל וקוסמיו היו מיעלים הכשדיים בהכלמה וכבול ועתה שידעו כי בדים הם ובוזבים יהרגום מלשון בדיך מתים יחריבו ואמנם כנגד הגבורים אמר חרב אל גבוריה וחתו חרב אל סוסיו וגומר ולפי

הנה עם בא מצפון וכו' עד מצפון אתה לי כלי מלחמה עתה יבקר הנבי' איך יהיה חרבן בבל ואמר הנה עם בא מצפון והוא גוי גדול ומלכים רבים כונה לומר גדולים מלשון על כל רב ביתו יעורו מירכתי ארץ והם דריוש מלך מדי וכורש מלך פרס קשת וכידון יחזיקו שהם הקשת שמוריס בו בחנים והכידון הוא הרומח כמו שאמ' וינתק לרעת כידון להב חנית וכידון וזכר מתכונתם שלכוריים המה על כל בריה: קולם כים יהמה בבואם ועל סוסים ורכבו לרוב גבורתם והעם הזה הוא ערוך כונה לומ' בכליון בלים הנכון הכא למלחמה וכלם בלים עליך בת בבל ולהיות בוחו דבר אלקי מאת השם היה שכאשר שמע מלך בבל את שמעם רפו ידיו מתוך הכאב ומוכן הלב נפה החזיקתהו חיל כיולד' בעת שתלד והנה הכבלים רפו ידיהם והמדיים והפרסיים היו בהפך כי עלו על בבל כמו האריה כאשר יעלה מגאון המדבר אל נוה רועים איתן וה"ר ר' דוד קמחי פירש שהעם הבא כאריה יעלה ויהיה זה מגאון הירדן כונה לומר מסבת גאון הירדן שהוא השם יתברך ואדון ישראל כי בסבתו עלה העם הזה כאריה על נוה איתן שהוא בבל שהוא נוה ומקום חזק כי אדגיעה ארוצם מעליה כונה לומר בגלות שעת הפקדה על בבל ארוצם ואבריח את הכשדים מעליה ומי בחור אליה אפקוד ימנו לכורש שהוא הבחור שיפקוד למשול בבבל כי ל דריוש לא מצא בה כי אם שבה אחת כי מי כמוני לתת המלחה לבבל ונגזרתי ויעדני להם בה מתנו ומי

שהיו נכריים רבים בבבל אמר ואל כל הערב אשר בתוכה כונה לומר ערב רב שהיו בתוך בבל או אמר ואל כל הערב על ה הסוחרים שהיו בהם מלשון ועורבי מערבך ואמר שכל הקסמים והנבוכים והערב כולם יהיו לנשים בתולותם ופקדם ולפי שהבבליים היו בוטחים בעושרם ואונכותיהם אמר חרב אל אונכותיה ובוזו שישלו הלוכים אותם ולפי שנהר פרת היה עובר בתוך בבל והיה עולה על האדון כבלום במגרים ומתמיו היו מתבלבלים תבואותיהם אמר חרב אל מימיו ויבשו כי יבשת המים יקלה מכבה וקרב ולחוי הוא שיהיה כל אשר להם לחרב לפי שאדון פסילים היא בבל ובאימים שהם הבלמים יתהוללו ושתגעו אבל יוכתן תרגם ובטעוותא מ משתכחין שתרגם יתהוללו מלשון הלול ומהלל ולכן להיות בבל אדון פסילים ואלילים תהיה תשפעה שתחרב ושבו ציים את איים והבנות יענה שהם. החיות השוכנות באדון ציה ולא תשב עוד אדון בבל ולא ישכון בה אדם עד דור דור וזה לפי שאדון בבל תתהפך מאת ה' מן השמים כמהפכת סדום ועמורה' ושכניה שהם ערי הכבר וכמו שבאדון סדום ועמורה לא שכן בה אדם כן יהיה בבבל:

זה רועה אשר יעמוד לפני להמליך את כורש בעולם לכן שמעו ענת ה' אשר יען על כשדים וגומר המה התגאו במעלתם וממשלתם אם יקחנו וירמסו ברגליהם ארצנו בעודי הכלן והם פרס ומדי אם לא ישום ושומם זה העם הכא עליהם הנוה והמקום שלהם בבל ושמע חרבן בבל כי רבה היא כי מקולו ושמועת תפיסת בבל נרעשה האדון כולה וזעקה בגוים כשמעה וכבר כאמרו הפסוקים האלה למעלה בחרבן אדום ואינו מן התימה כי לפי שהיה פרס המחריב את בבל והוא העתיד להחריב את אדום לכן אמר בזכיהם הפסוקים האלה שוה בשוה גם בי אופן החרבן והמהפכה תהיה שוה בזכיהם והוקרה בזה הסגלה הזנית ואמר הנני מעיר על בבל ואל יושבי לב קמי כוח מסגית להגיל ש שהוא יעיר כוח מסגית והוא בנין פרס ומדי שיתחדש עליהם בנין בהערת השם יתברך ל להסגית את בבל ועל יושבי לב קמי המה הכשדיים כי הם הקמים על השם שהיו יושבים תמיד בלב ובנין לקוש כנגד השם ועתה וכן כתבו הלאשונים שלב קמי הוא כשדים בלתיכם ומלתי לבבל זרים ונכרים שלא יכמו עליה אבל יזרו אותה ויפזרוה לכל כ יכוח או יהיה חזרה מלשון זר שלא יקחוהו עליה כמביר ואוהב כי אם באכזריות כזרים ואמר ובוקקו את ארצה שהוא לשון כ ביקות שיביקו אותה מכל שלה ואומרו אל ידרוך הדורך קשתו וגומר

עם כא מצפון וכו' עד מצפון אתה לי כלי מלחמה עתה יבקר הנבי' איך יהיה חרבן בבל ואמר הנה עם בא מצפון והוא גוי גדול ומלכים רבים כונה לומר גדולים מלשון על כל רב ביתו יעורו מירכתי ארץ והם דריוש מלך מדי וכורש מלך פרס קשת וכידון יחזיקו שהם הקשת שמוריס בו בחנים והכידון הוא ה הרומח כמו שאמ' וינתק לרעת כידון להב חנית וכידון וזכר מתכונתם שלכוריים המה על כל בריה: קולם כים יהמה בבואם ועל סוסים ורכבו לרוב גבורתם והעם הזה הוא ערוך כונה לומ' בכליון בלים הנכון הכא למלחמה וכלם בלים עליך בת בבל ולהיות בוחו דבר אלקי מאת השם היה שכאשר שמע מלך בבל את שמעם רפו ידיו מתוך הכאב ומוכן הלב נפה החזיקתהו חיל כיולד' בעת שתלד והנה הבבליים רפו ידיהם והמדיים והפרסיים היו בהפך כי עלו על בבל כמו האריה כאשר יעלה מגאון המדבר אל נוה רועים איתן וה"ר ר' דוד קמחי פירש שהעם הבא כאריה יעלה ויהיה זה מגאון הירדן כונה לומר מסבת גאון הירדן שהוא השם יתברך ואדון ישראל כי בסבתו עלה העם הזה כאריה על נוה איתן שהוא בבל שהוא נוה ומקום חזק כי אדגיעה ארוצם מעליה כונה לומר בגלות שעת הפקדה על בבל ארוצם ואבריח את הכשדים מעליה ומי בחור אליה אפקוד ימנו לכורש שהוא הבחור שיפקוד למשול בבבל כי ל דריוש לא מצא בה כי אם שבה אחת כי מי כמוני לתת המלחה לבבל ונגזרתי ויעדני להם בה מתנו ומי

יִתְעַל בְּסִרְיוֹ וְאַל־תַּהְמֹלוּ אֶל־כָּהֲרִיהָ
הַחֲרִימוּ כָל־צְבָאָהּ: וְנָפְלוּ חֲלָלִים
בְּאֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים וּמְדֻקָּרִים בְּחוּצוֹתֶיהָ:
כִּי לֹא־אַלְמָן יִשְׂרָאֵל וִיהוּדָה מֵאֱלֹהָיו
מֵיהוָה צְבָאוֹת כִּי אַרְצָם מָלְאָה אָשֵׁם
מִקְּדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: נָסוּ מִתּוֹךְ בָּבֶל וּמַלְּטוּ
אִישׁ נַפְשׁוֹ אַל־תִּדְּמוּ בַּעֲוֹנָהּ כִּי עֵת
נְקָמָה הִוא לַיהוָה גְּמוֹל הוּא מְשַׁלֵּם לָהּ:
כּוֹס זָהָב בָּבֶל בְּיַד־יְהוָה מְשַׁכֶּרֶת כָּל־
הָאָרֶץ מִיֵּינָהּ שָׁתוּ גּוֹיִם עַל־כֵּן יִתְהֹלְלוּ
גּוֹיִם: פִּתְאֹם נָפְלָה בָבֶל וַתִּשָּׁבֵר הֵילִילוּ
עָלֶיהָ קְחוּ צֳרִי לְמַכְאוֹבָהּ אוּלַי תֵּרָפֵא:
רְפָאנוּ אֶת־בָּבֶל וְלֹא נִרְפְּאָתָה עֻזְבוּהָ
וְנֵלֶךְ אִישׁ לְאַרְצוֹ כִּי נָגַע אֶל־הַשָּׁמַיִם
מִשְׁפָּטָהּ וְנִשָּׂא עַד־שְׁחָקִים: הוֹצִיא
יהוָה אֶת־צִדְקֹתֵינוּ בֹּאוּ וּנְסַפְּרָה בְּצִיּוֹן
אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: הָבְרוּ
הַחִצִּים מִלְאוּ הַשְּׁלָטִים הֵעִיר יְהוָה
אֶת־רוּחַ מַלְכֵי מָדַי כִּי עַל־בָּבֶל מְזִמָּתוֹ
לְהַשְׁחִיתָהּ כִּי־נִקְמַת יְהוָה הִיא נִקְמַת
הֵיכָלוֹ: אֶל־חוֹמוֹת בָּבֶל שְׂאוּ־נֵס
הַחֲזִיקוּ הַמִּשְׁמָר הָקִימוּ שֹׁמְרִים הָכִינוּ
הָאֹרְבִים כִּי גַם־זָמַם יְהוָה גַּם־עָשָׂה
אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֶל־יוֹשְׁבֵי בָבֶל: שֹׁכְנָתִי
עַל־מַיִם רַבִּים רַבַּת אוֹצָרֹת בָּאָה
קִצֵּךְ אַמַּת בִּצְעֵךְ: נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
בְּנַפְשׁוֹ כִּי אִם־מִלֵּאתִיךְ אָדָם כַּיֶּלֶק
וְעָנוּ עָלַיִךְ הֵידָד: עֹשֵׂה אֶרֶץ בְּכֹחוֹ
מֵכִין תֵּבֵל בְּחָכְמָתוֹ וּבִתְבוּנָתוֹ נָטָה שָׁמָיִם:
לְקוֹל תִּתּוֹ הָמוֹן מַיִם בַּשָּׁמַיִם וַיַּעַל
נְשִׂאִים מִקְצֵה אָרֶץ בְּרָקִים לַמָּטָר
עָשָׂה וַיּוֹצֵא רוּחַ מֵאֹצְרוֹתָיו: נִבְעַר כָּל־
אָדָם מִדַּעַת הֹבִישׁ כָּל־צוֹרֵף מִפֶּסֶל כִּי־
שֶׁקֶר נִסְּכוֹ וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם: הֶבֶל הֵמָּה
מַעֲשֵׂה תַּעֲתֻעִים בְּעֵת פְּקֻדָּתָם יֹאבֵדוּ:
לֹא כָאֵלֶּה חֵלֶק יַעֲקֹב כִּי יוֹצֵר הַכֹּל
הוּא וְשֵׁבֶט נַחֲלָתוֹ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ:

ואמר הוא כסוף מקומם ושיעורו אל הלוכן שילכן קצתו ואל אחר יתעל בסריונו כוכה לומר התהלל ותתעלה בסריונו וכוכבו וכנגד מבני המלחמה היה אומר ומכוה לא תמלו אל כחוכיה של בבל אבל תמרימו כל נכאה כאופן שיהלו מלים בלבן כשדים ומדוקרים בחוצותיה וכל זה למה לפי שלא תלמן ישראל ויהודה מלקיו ה' נכאות כי הוא מי נאלם ואין יהודה וישראל אם כן אלמן מלקיו שלכנס של הכשדים מלאה אשם מקדוש ישראל ממה שעשו נגד רבונו ואין ישראל ויהודה כאשה אלמנה שמת בעלה אבל בעלה חי ואם עזבה בגלות עוד יפקדנה ושוב תליה ויפקוד על אויביה ואמר הנביא כ כנגד הנכרים שהיו בבבל שבאו שמה מלכות אחרות או כנגד היהודים שהיו בה כמו מתוך בבל ומלטו איש את נפשו מן הכעס אל תדמו ותכריתו בעונה בהיותכם בתוכה כי עת נקמה היא לה' ג והוא לבבל הענשתי גמול הוא משלם כי לא תחשבו שזה ענין אכזרי ממדי ופרס אלא כוס זהב בבבל ביד ה' משכרת כל הארץ הכוס שלזהב שהיה לבבל והוא כמו אל הארץ שהמריב נבוכד נצר את כל הגוים - וקבלו כוס זהב לפי שבפי הבלתו ובכוח ממשלתו היה הכוס אשר בידו כוס הזהב ד ומתנו שתו כל הגוים והתהוללו בשכורים והמשוגעים ואותו כוס היה ביד ה' כי ממנו היתה המשלה והמלכות לנבוכד נצר אמנם עתה כשבאה פקודתו פתאום נפלה בבל ותשבר ולכן הילו וקוננו עליה אם קחו בכי למכתה אולי תרפא ואמר זה בדרך לעג וכאלו הזכרים ההם משיבים כפאנו את בבל ולא נרפאתה ולכן עזבוה ונלך איש לארצו כי לא יכול לרפאתה לפי שאין תליה ומכתה דבר טבעי שתקבל רפואה אלא שנגע עד שמים משפטה ונשא עד שחקים רוצה לומר שבגזרת עדין פתגם מבוכנה - וכמימר קדישין נפילתה לא תכף איבודי ולפי שאלו לא בילו המשפט ההוא שזכרו האם הוא ממערכת השמים או מהשגחת הש יתברך לכן בילו הנביא באומרו הוציא ה' את צדקותינו ולא אמר והלהות ישראל נדיקים כי בהשגת' בעבור לא שנקם נקמתם מהמקריבי' אותם שהוא יתברך מעבר והכשדים עזרו לרעה ולכן היו ישראל אומרי' באו ונספר' בציון את מעש' ה' אלהינו שעשה בחרבן בבל וכנגד הלוכים אמר הנביא הבכו הקנים והוא לשון מריקה וברור כמה מן בבל וכן תרגם יונתן שביבו והר רבי דוד קחתי בשם אביו פירש הבכו מלשון אבר כיוצא לא אורך הלבר שעבינו שימו כוכה בחנים ליבשם מלאו הצליעים כוכה לומר אספו המגנים וכן קלאום אחריך מלא עבין אמיפה וקטון ונתן הסבה למה יבוה אותם על זה כאומרו העיר ה' רוח מלכי מדי כי על בבל מזימתו כוכה לומר הקלום בכוך הוא להשחיתה לפי שנקמת ה' כלומר הנקמה אשר הוא נוקם מבבל היא נקמת היכלו ממה שבאבו הבשלים את היכל ה' לא בעבור מה שעשו לבלר הלומות ומבני זה אל חומת בבל שלו גם כוכה לומר אתם המדיים שלו הגם שלבם על חומת בבל כי כן דרך הגרים על עיר כשיכבשה ישימו נסים עליה להודיע שבבר היא בידיהם ולא תבחרו מהבבלי אבל הבוקו המשחר בשנבו על העיר הקיתו הבומרים כלי ב אלא יבאו הבבלים בוקים אין העיר הכינו הלוכים לתבשם אם יבכמו בשלה כי לא היה זה במקרה אלא גם זמם ועשה ה' לעשותנם עשה בבבל כאשר זמם ואמר שבי פעמים גם לבות כל אחד על מכינו כמה שאמר גם אתם גם מלבבם ועל בבל אמר שבבת על מים רבים שהוא נתן לעושר שהיה בה ולכן אמר רבת אוצרות גם לבוי המימות שהיו בבבל ועתה בא קיצך ואומרו אמת בנעך פירש הלר בבי דוד קתי אמה על הזרוע שהיה בוכע בנצ ונוזל במוקה ואינו בכון וכשי פירש אמת בנעך שאמה היא מדה ובנעך הוא מלשון תשלום כמו כי יבנע ה' וגם הוא בלתי מ מתיבב במלת הכתוב אבל פירושו בא קצך ובא אמת בנעך כי מדת הבנע שלך בבר בשלמה ובאה לא יהיה עוד נשבע ה' בנפשו שעבינו בענתו ואמתתו כי אף שתמלא אדם וכבוי אנשים בקרבך כולך הצדה על כל פרים יענו עליך הלוחבים הידד והוא קול הדורכים כמו שבזכר למעלה ואל תתמהו מהיות הלל יתבכך מהעדה מ מלכין ומהקם מלכין כי הוא עושה לכן בכחו וקבלו עושה בלשון הווה לפי שהוא מלבד שבבא הוא סיבה שומבת לותו והוא המכין תבל בחכמתו ובתבונתו נטה שמים וגם בלבביהם הטבעיים תראה נבונתו לקול תתו המון מים ב בשמים כוכה לומר כשתשמע קולות וכעמים המוכים על המים ועם זה העלות הלידים שיעלה כשיאים והם הלידים מקנה הלכן ובכקים למטר עשה ואף על פי שיתחכמו כל הלותות וההכנות המוכות על המטר הנה לא יכל כי אם כפי רצונו וזהו ויוצא רוח מלוצרותיו שיבא רוח שיפוך הלידים העולים ולא יכלו הנשמים ובזה נבער כל אדם מדעת כוכה לומר כל ה הנמשך כפי הדעת והחכמה נבער ולא ידע סבת זה וכל שכן שהיה נבער ובוש כל צורף מפסל בלותו שלא יוצילו בזה הפסילים כי שקר נסכו של הצורף ההוא ולא רוח בם כוכה לומר בלותם ה הפסילים אבל שהכל המה מעשה תעתועים בעת פקודתם כשיפקוד הלדם כחם ומעשיהם יאבדו ואין כן אלוה ישראל וזהו לא כאלה חלק יעקב כלומר שחלק יעקב ואלקיו אינו כפסילים כי יוצר הכל שמים ולכן הוא ויעקב הנזכר הוא שבט נחלתו שמשנים בו בפרט ה' בבלות שמו והפסוקים הללה כבר נוכרו למעלה אחר כדבה תלמדון להוש ויש בניהם שבוי מלות מעט ונבה אותם לזוכרם פה מפני הבבלים שהיו עובדים אליהם ובוטחים בם והותבה בזה הנחלה הבלים :

פס

מַפִּץ אַתָּה לִי כְּלֵי מִלְחָמָה
וְנִפַּצְתִּי בְךָ גּוֹיִם וְהִשְׁחַתִּי בְךָ מַמְלָכוֹת:
וְנִפַּצְתִּי בְךָ סוּס וְרֹכְבוֹ וְנִפַּצְתִּי בְךָ
רֶכֶב וְרֹכְבוֹ: וְנִפַּצְתִּי בְךָ אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה
וְנִפַּצְתִּי בְךָ זָקֵן וְנַעַר וְנִפַּצְתִּי בְךָ בָּחוּר
וּבְתוּלָה: וְנִפַּצְתִּי בְךָ רֹעֶה וְעֶדְרוֹ
וְנִפַּצְתִּי בְךָ אִכָּר וְצִמְדּוֹ וְנִפַּצְתִּי בְךָ
פַּחוֹת וְסְגָנִים: וְשִׁלַּמְתִּי לְבָבֶל וּלְכָל
יוֹשְׁבֵי כַשְׂדִּים אֵת כָּל־רָעָתָם אֲשֶׁר
עָשׂוּ בְצִיּוֹן לְעֵינֵיכֶם נְאֻם יְהוָה:
הִנְנִי אֵלֶיךָ הַר הַמַּשְׁחִית נְאֻם־יְהוָה הַמַּשְׁחִית
אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ וְנָטִיתִי אֶת־יָדִי עָלֶיךָ וְג
וְגַלְגַּלְתִּיךָ מִן־הַסְּלָעִים וְנָתַתִּיךָ לְהַר־
שְׂרֵפָה: וְלֹא־יִקְחוּ מִמְּךָ אֶבֶן לְפִנָּה
וְאֶבֶן לְמוֹסְדוֹת כִּי־שִׁמְמוֹת עוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה
נְאֻם־יְהוָה: שְׂאוּ־נֵס בָּאָרֶץ תְּקַעוּ שׁוֹפָר
בַּגּוֹיִם קַדְּשׁוּ עָלֶיהָ גּוֹיִם הַשְׁמִיעוּ עָלֶיהָ
מַמְלְכוֹת אֲרָרָט מִנִּי וַאַשְׁכְּנַז פִּקְדוּ
עָלֶיהָ טַפְסַר הַעֲלוֹת סוּס כְּיֶלֶק סָמָר:
קַדְּשׁוּ עָלֶיהָ גּוֹיִם אֶת־מַלְכֵי מָדַי אֶת־
פַּחוֹתֶיהָ וְאֶת־כָּל־סְגָנֶיהָ וְאֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ
מֶמְשַׁלְתּוֹ: וַתִּרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ וַתָּחִיל כִּי
קָמָה עַל־בָּבֶל מַחְשְׁבוֹת יְהוָה לָשׂוּם
אֶת־אֶרֶץ בָּבֶל לְשַׁמָּה מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב: חָדְלוּ
גִבּוֹרֵי בָבֶל לְהִלָּחֵם יָשְׁבוּ בַּמְּצֻדוֹת
נָשְׁתָּה גְבוּרָתָם הָיוּ לְנָשִׁים הִצִּיתוּ מ
מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיהָ נִשְׁבְּרוּ בְרִיחֶיהָ: רָץ
לִקְרַאת־רָץ יָרוּץ וּמַגִּיד לִקְרַאת מַגִּיד
לְהַגִּיד לְמֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל כִּי־נִלְכְּדָה עִירוֹ
מִקָּצֶה: וְהַמַּעְבָּרוֹת נִתְפָּשׂוּ וְאֶת־
הָאֲגַמִּים שָׂרְפוּ בָאֵשׁ וְאַנְשֵׁי הַמִّלְחָמָה
נִבְהָלוּ: כִּי כֹה אָמַר
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּת־בָּבֶל
כְּגֹרֶן עֵת הִדְרִיכָהּ שׁוּד מְעַט וּבָאָה עֵת־
הַקָּצִיר לָהּ: אֲכָלָנוּ הֲמָמָנוּ נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר
מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל הִצִּיגָנוּ כְּלִי רִיק בִּלָּעָנוּ
כַּתַּנִּין מִלָּא כְרִשׁוֹ מֵעֲדָנַי הִדִּיחָנוּ:
חֲמָסִי וּשְׁאֵרִי עַל־בָּבֶל תֹּאמַר יוֹשֶׁבֶת
צִיּוֹן וְדָמִי אֶרְצִי כַשְׂדִּים תֹּאמַר

מפץ אתה לי וכו' עד הכה ימים בלילה ובקדתי עלמפלי בבל והכיתי כלילה על הכלי תלילי העמים ומתמלת בלא יתכבן בקרב הלכן מעבין נבוכד נצר שהוא היה עד עתה כלי מפנו בידו והנפון הוא שבירת הלבנים ופוור מלקיהם הכה והכה וכן היה נבוכד נצר מפן שביפן הב"ה בו את הגוים והשחית את המלכות בכבשו לוקים וכן נפן והשחית סוס ורוכבו ורכב ורכבו אשר על הרכב וכן איש ואשה זקן ונער בחור גם בתולה אף רועה ועדרו היה מכפן בו כאשר עשה לקדר ולמקנהו וכן איכר שהוא עובד האדמה ונמד הבקר אשר לו לחרוש הכל היה מכפן מלך בבל כי מפקדת יפונו הכל מפה ומפה וכן הפחו' והסגנים עם כל גדולתם אבל לא כעבם מלך בבל המפן על כפנו הגוים הללה כולם אבל אבי אשלם לבבל ולוזבי כשדים את כל רעתם אשר עשו לציון לעיניכם רונה לומר לעיני האומות כולם כי כה אמר ה' הנני אליך הר המשחית שהוא בבל שהיה משחית לכל הארצות ועם היותה בקצה קרלה הר מפני חוקה וגיונידה ממעלתה ותהיה הר שרפה לפי שתשרף ותתהפך כמהפכת סדום ועמורה ולפי שפעמים תשרף עיר אחת ותבנה ממנה ומאבני' עיר אחרת יעד שלא יהיה כן בבל שלא יקחו ממנה לפנה רונה לומר להיות פנה ויסוד לעיר אחרת כי שממות נצחי תהיה בה וכיון שכך נזר הש"ת על בבל אתם בני אדם המדיים והפרסיים שאו נס לבוא עליה תקעו שופר בגוים אשר בפאת כפון וקדשו עליה רונה לומר הזמינו גוים לעלות להלחם בה ואומרו השמיעו עליה ממלכות אדרט עכינו אספו וקבצו על בבל אותם הממלכות להחריבה והשמועה בכאן מלשון ושמע שאול את העם כי מפני שיעשו הקבון מתוך השמעת הכרוז יכונה הקבון בשם שמיעה ואדרט מכי ואשכנז שמות המלכיות הממלכות שבאו עם דריוש על בבל ופקדו עליה טפסר הוא מענין מנוי שיפקדו שר שיהיה פקיד על הלוחמים לזרוס למלחמה וטפסר הוא שר כמ"ש וטפסריך כגוב גובי סוס כילק סמר פירוש שהסוס יהיה מתעובר להלחמה וכמו הילק שיתנועע מהרוח כן הסוס תסמר שערת בשרו בעת הקרב כי זהו דרך הסוסים הטובים בעלי כח ולב ולפי שאמר קדשו עליה גוים ולא פירש מי הם הגוים הללה הוצרך ל לפרשו ולכן אמר שבית קדשו עליה גוים כנגד מלכי מדי כאילו אמר ואמרתי למעלה קדשו עליה גוים כנגד מלכי מדי פחותיה וסגניה והתבונן כי תמיד הנביא יזכור בבלן מדי ולמה לא זכר פרס ויוון שגם המלכים המרבו את בבל דריוש מלך מדי וכורש מלך פרס ולמה לא כן יקרלא מלכי מדי ומתדי לא היה בי"ל מלך אחר בלבד אבל ת תשובת זה הוא שדריוש מלך מדי היה יותר גדול במלכותו ממלך פרס ולכן נתגל' להשורים כשיוכר שביהם מקרים תמיד מדי שבאמר כלת מדי ופרס וגם ה' מלך מדי זקן והוא נתן את בתו לאשה אל כורש מלך פרס שהיה נכנע למלך מדי ושניהם נועדו להשחית את בבל ובעבור זה קרלא הנביא שניהם מלכי מדי כי היה מדי המלכות הגדול והיה פרס משועבד אליו וגם כורש מלך פרס ירש את מלכות מדי בסבת אשתו ולכן קרלא שניהם מלכי מדי כי שניהם מלכו במדי והותרה בזה הפלגה הל' וזכר הנביא שבעשה הלכן ותמול שלשום היל ביולדה כאשר ראו שקמה עלבבל מחשבות ה' לשום את ארץ בבל לשמה ואף נבוכי בבל הגבורים אשר מעולם מדלו מהלכם כי נגעה בם יד ה' והיה מפולשתם שלא יצאו להלחם באויביהם על מרומי שדה אבל ישבו במצדות שהם המגדלים המוקים לפי שבאתה ופסקה גבורת' והם בפחדם וקולשתם ובכשים ובהיות שלא יצאו הגבורים לעתות לפני אויביהם עצמו כח האויבים לשבוף ולהבית משכנותיה ולבוא על שערי בבל ולשבור בריחיה כי אין אדם ימנעם מלעשות כרצונם כן לקראת כן ירוץ ומגיד לקראת בבל כי נלכדה עירו ונומר הנה יוסיפון בן גוריון כתב והוא האמת שבלשנר מלך בבל הרגוהו סריסיו קודם בוא המדיים על בבל ואיך יאמר הנביא כאן אם כן שבאו המגידים להגיד אל מלך בבל כי נלכדה עירו והוא היה בבר מת כאשר נלכדה בבל אלא שלא אמר עירו על בבל אבל על עיר המלכות כי הנה כמו שכתב יוסיפון המדיים באו תחילה על ס הערים שהיו בסוף המלכות ולכדו אותם והיא השמועה שבאה ל בלשנ' מלכידת הערים והוא היה שולח גירים לדעת מהעם הבא ומתעצה גבוריו שהיו שמה ומשם היו באים גירים אחרים ולכן אמר כן לקראת כן ומגיד לקראת מגיד ולא אמר כן אחר כן ואיו מגידים למלך בבל כי נלכדה עירו מקבה רונה לומר אשר בקבה מלכותו ושהמעברות נתפשו מהאויבים והאגמים שהם מקומות עשב כב שכפו באש ואנשי המלחמה נבהלו הנה כל זה יאמר לבלשנר בהיות האויבים בתחלת מלכותו והותרה השאלה הש' ואמר הנביא שאין לתמוה מזה כי כה אמר ה' נבאות להיותו אלקי ישראל ונוקם נקמתו בת בבל והוא מלכות הכשדים בכללו הוא כמו הנוכן עת הדריכם רונה לומ' כנוכן הקטה בעת שידרכו אותה שהגיעה עתה להדרך ולהיותה נרמסת על ידי האויבים ואומרו עוד מעט ובאה עת הקציר אין ענינו שאחרי דריכת הנוכן יבוא לה עת הקציר כי הנה הקציר קודם לנוכן אבל פירושו כנוכן עת הדריכה שהוא עוד מעט אחרי שבאה עת קציר לה ואפשר לפרשו באופן אחר גם כן שאמר בת בבל שהוא המלכות כנוכן עת הדריכה שדרכוה ויכמסוה ו ויכבשוה המדיים עוד מעט אחר ובאה עת הקציר לה רונה לומר לבבל כי אחרי כבישת המלכות תכבש בבל העיר עצמה וכן היה הענין כמו שכתב יוסיפון ולא היה זה אלא לפי שאכלנו המתנו נבוכד נצר מלך בבל עם המלכות ההוא והמתנו הוא מלשון בהלה ושבכון כמו ואשם בלבל עצלתו הגיענו כלי ריק רונה לומר הענידנו ככלי הריק שאין בו דבר

כבה הוא

ירושלם: לכן כה אמר יהוה הנני־רב את־ריבך ונקמתי את־נקמתך
והחרבתי את־ימה והובשתי את־מקורה: והיתה בבל לגלים מעון
תנים שמה ושרקה מאין יושב: יחדו
כפרים ישאגו נערו כגורי אריות:
בחמם אשית את־משתיהם והשכרתים
למען יעלזו וישנו שנת־עולם ולא יקיצו
נאם יהוה: אורידם ככרים לטבוח
כאילים עם־עתודים: איך נלכדה ששך
ותתפש תהלת כל־הארץ איך היתה
לשמה בבל בגוים: עלה על־בבל הים
בהמון גליו נכסתה: היו עריה לשמה
ארץ ציה וערבה ארץ לא־ישב בהן כל־
איש ולא־יעבור בהן בן־אדם: ופקדתי
על־בל בבל והוצאתי את־בלעו מפיו
ולא־ינהרו אליו עוד גוים גם־חומת
בבל נפלה: צאו מתוכה עמי ומלטו
איש את־נפשו מחרון אף־יהוה: ופן־
ירך לבבכם ותיראו בשמועה הנשמעת
בארץ ובא בשנה השמועה ואחריו
בשנה השמועה והכס בארץ משל על־משל:

בכס הוא שלל לותנו והשאילנו לקיס בלעגו כתכן שהוא בולע ואינו
לועס מלא כריסו מעדני כונה לומר מלא בטנו מהמעדנים שלו והוא
מלא שמלא את לכן בכל מעוב בני יהודה וירושלים הדיחנו שגרשנו מעל
אדמתנו והתפרסים פירנו הדיחנו מעכין שעיפה והדפה כמו שידיח
הלדס את הכלי שלא ישאר בו דבר
ונס זה ענין דמייה הוא ולכן תאמר
יושבת בת ציון וירושלים חמסי ושאדי
על בבל כונה לומר חמסי על הגזל
ושאדי מההריגה שעשה בקרבי לו
אמר ושאדי על הגולים שהלכו בשביה
שעם שהלכו לאכזרות לחכות זולת
בבל הנה שבת הכל היה בבל ולמי
שהוא דם המתים והחרגים אינו
מועיל אלא על יושבי בשדים ולכן
בה אמר ה' אני אלקי ישראל ובוקש
נקמתם הנוקמים חמס ונקמה מבבל
הנני רב את ריבך מבבל ונקמתי
את נקמתך ממנה והחרבתי את ימה
של בבל שהוא מגל לעוכה ועוזרה
וכוב הספינות שהוא כמימי הים הרב
מאד והיתה בבל לגלים מעון תנים
שמה ושרקה שישרוק עליה כל עובר
ותהיה חרבה מאין יושב במקום ש
שהיתה יפה כוף משום האכן והבבליי
שלא יעשו גבורות למלא את כפשם
אבל יחדו כולם ברפירים ישאגו והם
גורי הארות שישאגו שאגת אריה
ולא יעשו דבר כי כאשר אין להם
עכף לא ישאגו וזהו אומרו נערו
כגורי אריות הקטנים שיש להם הקול
ואינם יכולים עדיין לעכוף ונערו
הוא כמו שאגו וכיבא הנבי' בכאן על
ענין בלשנר בעת משתהו באומרו
בחומם אשית את משתיהם כ"ל בזמן
החום אשית ואסבוב שיעשו משתיהם
כדי שבעבת החום ישתו הרבה ו
ושתכרו בשמחתם כי כן עשה בלשנר
לא כשתכר ויין ובהיותו יין ביה
בליל קטיל בלשנר מלכא כשדאי
מי הרגוהו בהיותו יין ועליו אמר
כאן וישנו שנת עולם ולא יקיצו ובשמת
בלשנר מיד נלכדה בבל ואבדו לב
גבוריו וזהו אורידם ככרים לטבוח כשכרים ואילים ועתודים
כשמביאי אותם לטבוח איך נלכדה ששך כונה לומ' מלכד המלך והגבורים
הנה עוד בבל בעצמה היתה כל כך קרייה בגורה שלא יתכן להכבש ואיך
אם כן נלכדה וששך היא בבל באותיו' לת"כ והפסוק הזה מעיד עליו ולפי
שהיתה שאלתו איך נלכדה ששך כתן תשובה בדבר עלה על בבל הים והוא

מבל לעם כך שצלו עליה וכהמון גליו שלו הים ההוא נכסתה כלומר שכסה
אותם הים ההוא ואמרי שבלבלה בבל שאר העכים שהבשדי' היו לבמה
וכולם היו ביה ומרבה לא יבש בהם לים ולפי שהיו הבבלים בוטחים
בעבודת אלהיהם שהיה נקרא בל לכן אמר ופקדתי על בל בבבל שיבבו
את כלמו האוביים ויצאו את זהבו
וכמו שאמר יצאיהו ברע כל קולם
נכו והוצאתי את בלעו מפיו ולא
יבהלו אליו גוים כונה לומר שלא
יביאו עוד לפניו מנחה ונסך ולא
יכבדו כל הגוים לפניו והוא על דרך
מיל בלעג ויקיאנו והיה ויבהלו כמו
ויכונו כי לכן נקרא הנהר כהל מפני
מהומת המים שם ואפילו מומת בבל
שהיא גבוה ומיוסדת בחוזק רב תפול
לארץ מענמה כי לא תוכל לשבת עוד
בגזרת הדס ואמר הנביא בנגד
היהודים שהיו בבבל שבאשר יהיה זה
תבוא עליה' עובה והיא שיבאו מתוכה
וישובו להתגורר בארץ יהודה ושימלטו
את נפשם ויבנלו מחרון אף ה' הבא
על בבל ואמנם אומרו פן ירך לבבכם
ותיראו בשמועה ונומר שזכר בפסוק
הזה שלשה פעמים שמועה לדעת
כש"י הוא להבטיחם שלא ייראו
מהשמועה הנשמעת בארץ והיא מ
ממיתת בלשנר המלך ובה בשנה כונה
לומר בשנה ההיא ענמה השמועה
שנחרבה בבל ונהשבה מלת ה' מן
השמים ואחריו בשנה ההיא גם כן
השמועה הטובה לכם שישמיע כורש
מי בבל עמו ויהי אלקיו עמו ויעל
לירושלים ויותר נכון לפרש שהבטיחם
שלא יפחדו בשמועה הנשמעת בארץ
והיא שמלכי פרס ומדי עולים להלחם
במלך בבל ובא בשנה השמועה כונה
לומר וגם לא תיראו מאשר בא מיל
מדי ופרס בשנה שבשמעה השמועה
כי כתקיימה ובא הדבר לפועל ואחרי
בואם בשנת השמועה ענמה היה חמס
בארץ והוא לכידת בבל ומושל על
מושל שדריוש מלך בבל היה מושל
בבבל על כורש מלך פרס אחנו שהיה
מתחת ידו כמו שביארתי למעלה הנה אם כן בשנה אחת בתחילה באה
השמועה מהמדיים שיבאו על מלך בבל ובשנה ההיא ענמה באו המדיים
במלכות הכשדיי להלחם בהם ובשנה ההיא ענמה נלכדה בבל ובשמעה
שמועת מפלתה בארץ והיה בתוך בבל חמס הכשדיים ושני מלכים מושלים
זה על זה מושל על מושל ולא יפחדו מכל זה שהבל יהיה לטובתם:

לכן הנה ימים באים ופקדתי
על־פסילי בבל וכל־ארצה
תבוש וכל־חלליה יפלו בתוכה: ורננו
על־בבל שמים וארץ וכל אשר בהם כי
מצפון יבא־לה השודדים נאם־יהוה:
גם־בבל לנפל חללי ישראל גם־לבבל
נפלו חללי כל־הארץ: פלטים מהרב
הלכו אל־תעמדו זכרו מרחוק את־
יהוה וירושלם תעלה על־לבבכם:
בשנו כי־שמענו חרפה כסתה כלמה
פנינו כי באו זרים על־מקדשי בית יהוה:
לכן הנה ימים באים
נאם־יהוה ופקדתי על־פסיליה ובכל־
ארצה יאנק חלל: כי־תעלה בבל

לכן הנה ימים באים ופקדתי
על פסילי בבל
וכו' עד כן עדיין אחת שבה נדקיהו
אמר שלהיות מפלת בבל דבר מסודר
מפלת הסנגה לכן יפקוד הדס על
פסילי בבל והפקידה היא שילכו בשבי
ויבאו המדיי' אותם ויקרפום ויבוזום
וכו' כל אבל' בבל תיבוש כי בהיות'
בועמים בהם יבשו ויכלמו באותם
שבבל המה מעצה תעתועים וכן
תבוש כל הארץ באותם שבבל חלליה
יפלו בתוכה כלומר שלא יבאו להלחם
עם האויבים אבל בתוך העיר יפלו
חללים בבשים ותהיה מפלת בבל כל
כן גדולה כפי המספר שהבנו שמים
ולכן עליה כי השמים כיוצרכותיהם
יזעקו על מפלתה והארץ וכל הגוים
שהיה פחד בבל עליהם יבנו בגלותו
הבבשים וגם יבנו בגלותם כי מצפון
יבואו לה השודדים כי כיון שיצפון
תבא הרעה על בבל ובאי הארץ גלוי
הוא שגם כן מצד תבוא הרעה על
בבל מקום המספר שהה הרשע ונתן

הטעם למה חללי בבל יפלו בתוכה
באומרו גם בבל לנפול חללי ישראל
כונה לומר גם בבל היה סבה לנפול
חללי ישראל וגם לבבל נפלו חללי כל
הארץ כי הם כולם נפלו בפיהם
ולכן היה מהמספר שגם הם נפלו
חללים בבבל וכיון שהדס יתבבן נקם
נקמתכם אתם בני ישראל אשר בבבל
פלטים מחרב בבוכד נצר וגלותם
לבבל הלכו כונה לומר לכו מבבל אל
ירושלים אל תעמדו בבבל וזכרו את
ה' מרחוק שהוא בבל או מרחוק הוא
מקום שבעים שנה והזכירה היא מ
מעבודתו שבטלה וירושלים תעלה על
לבבכם כדי שתשובו שיהיה ומה שתזכרו
מירושלים הוא מחרבנה ולעתה:
כי בשנו כי שמענו חרפה שהיו
האויבים מחרפים אותנו בגלותנו
וכסתה כלימה פנינו על אשר
באו זרים על מקדש ה' שהם
הרגיל ההיכל והאולם שבלם
קדש לה' והיו הבבליים מחרפי' אותנו
באמרם שקנאה יל ה' מהוביעבו
ומהוביע

ומהושע מקדשו ולכן מפני אותה הדפה אמר ה׳ שבכל יבאו ימים שבכל
יפקוד על כל פסיליה ובכל ארן בבל יאנק חלל כ״ל ינעק החלל כי החללי
בעת תבא בשתם יתבקו ואף שתעלה בבל השמים וכי תבצר מרום עוזה
כ״ל אפי׳ שיעשה מבצרים כמרום עוזה לא יועיל לה כי עכ״פ מאתי יבאו
לה השודדים ואז ישמע קול נעקה
מבבל ושבר גדול מארץ כשדים ולא
ינעקו מהמדיים אלא מהשם יתברך
כי שודד ה׳ את בבל ואבד ממנה קול
גדול הכוב העם אשר בה כי כולם
יאמינו שתהיה בעתם מפלת ההשנאה
ולכן יאבד קול גדול מבבל אבשיו
שקולם זה היה גליהם כמים רבים
כיתן שאון קולם ואותו קול ושאון
שהיה להם קולם זה יאבד עתה לפי
שבא עליו כ״ל על בבל שודד והוא
מדי ופרס ונלכדו גבוריה מתתה
קשתותם כ״ל קשת גבורת הכבליים
שבבל בבל מעלתיה שברה לפי שאל
גמולות ה׳ משלם גמול לאויביו:
והשברתי שריה וחכמיה כ״ל אשבר אות׳
באופן שהחכמים לא יועילו בענתם
והגבורי׳ לא יועילו בגבורתם כי יהיו
כולם כשכורים עד שישנו שנת עולם
והוא רמז למיתה ולא יקיצו ממנה כי
יהרגו כולם ולא יקיצו עוד ואין
לך שתאמר שחוזק הקומות יעמוד להם
יותר מהגבורים כי כה אמר ה׳ ק
מותת בבל הרחבה רוצה לומ׳ כל אחת
מקומותיה עם היות שהיא רחבה
ערער תתערער והוא ענין שבר
והריסה מלשון ערו ערו עד היסוד
תה ושעריה הגבוהים בלא יצתו רוצה
לומר יסרפו ויגעו העמים אשר בבבל
בדי ריק רוצה לומר לריק ולאמים
בדי אש כי יהיה אש תכליתם ויעפו
מכעס ובדי ריק הוא כמו בריק כלו׳
לריק וללא תועלת ופירש רש״י בדי
ריק בהרבה ריק ולפי שהנבוא׳ הזאת
נכתבה בסוף ספר ירמיהו אחרי
שכתב ספור החרבן ומעשה היהודים
אשר ירדו למצרי׳ והיה לחושש שיחשוב
שביא כל זה ירמיהו על בבל אחרי
חרבן בית ה׳ בקשו את קנאתו מהם
בעבור שראה כל הרעה אשר עשו
הכבליים בירושלם לכן הודיע הכתוב
בכאן שזאת הנבואה ניבא אותה
ירמיהו קודם חרבן ירושלם כי הנה
בהיות נדקיהו מושל ומלך ביהודה
בשלחו את שריה בן נריה בן מחסיה
מירושלם לבבל על ענינו בשנה הר׳
למלכות נדקיהו בהיות שריה שר
מנוחה למלך והוא השר הנומך תמיד
עם המלך בעת מנוחתו לדבר עמו
מסתרות לבו וכן תרגם יונתן שר
תקרובתא רוצה לומר שעל ידו היו
רואים פני המלך המביאים לו מנחה
הנה אז כשהלך שריה לבבל במנות
המלך נדקיהו כתב ירמיהו הנביא
על ספר אחד כל הדברים האלה אשר

מצא על בבל ונתן את שריהו בנוחך בבל ובאת ובאת את כל הדברים
האלה כוונה לומר הספ׳ הזה לא תעתק לאותו ולא תקרא מה שכו עד שתבא
לבבל ובנוחך שמה תראה הספר וקראת את כל הדברים האלה ואתה
ותקבורים תאמר לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא ה׳ אתה דברת אל המקום הזה
רוצה לומר בבל להכריתו ולהחרים
כדי שלא יהיה בו יושב מאדם ועד
בהמה כי הדברים האלה שניבא ירמיהו
בלמת מאתך המה ואחרי שתאמר זה
תקשור על הספר אבן והשלכתו אל
תוך נהר פרת ואמרת ככה תשקע
בבל ולא תקום כלומ׳ שתחרב בהחלט
ולא תקום בקימה ומעלה עוד מפני
הרעה אשר הנה מביא עליה ויעפו
גבורים ולא יהיה להם כח להלחם
באויביהם גם אמר ויעפו להגיד
שהכבליים יעפו ויבלבו מזרוכם וכוונ
לבבם הנה התבאר מזה שבשנה הר׳
למלכות נדקיהו ניבא ירמיהו הנבואה
הזאת ושלח אל בבל להשליכה
תוך פרת והנה נכתבה בסוף הספר
לפי שבראשונה זכר הנביא כל ה
הנבואות שניבא על ישראל ואיך
נתקיימו בחרבן ירושלם ואחר כך
זכר מה שניבא על כל הגוים מחרבנן
וזכר נבואת בבל באחרונה משום
המלך שנתן ישתה אמרי׳ ואומרו אחר
זה עד הנה דברי ירמיהו פירשו בו
שכמו שאמר למעלה עד הנה משפט
מואב כן אמר פה בבבל עד הנה
דברי ירמיהו ואינו נכון שהיה לו
לומר עד הלה משפט בבל לא דברי
ירמיהו והרב המורה כתב שהנבואה
היתה מפסקת מהבבלים ערם מותו
זמן קטון או גדול ושעל זה כאמר
עד הנה דברי ירמיהו רוצה לומר
שאחרי נבואת בבל לא ניבא עוד
והיותר נכון אצלי הוא זה שאמר זה
להגדיל כל מה שכתוב בזה הספר
ע״כ ממה שנכתב אמר זה כי הנה
מראש הספר ע״כ הם דברי ירמיהו
אבל מכאן ואילך עד סוף הספר
אינם דברי ירמיהו אבל הוא ספור
דברים מהחרבן כמו שסופר בסוף
ספר מלכים כי מפני שלמעלה ספר
ירמיהו ענין החרבן בדרך קצרה כמו
שבארתי שם באו אנשי כשדים הגדולה
לכתוב בסוף זה הספר אחרית החרבן
איך היה לקוח מסוף ספר מלכים כדי
שלא נטעה במה שנכתב למעלה והותר׳
בזה השאלה הו׳ואין נוכן לפ׳ פה
מה שנכתב מספור החרבן לפי שהוא
מועתק מלה במלה ממה שכתו׳ בסוף
ספר מלכים ובכל פירשתיו שם ואין
תועלת בהשנות הדברים:

ובזה נשלם מה שכתבתי לבאר
על הספר הזה
והשלמתיו במדינת ויניציא״ה ערב מנ
השנועות שנת כי לא כלו רחמיו:

הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכִי תְבַצֵּר מְרוֹם עֻזָּהּ מֵאִתִּי
יְבֹאוּ שֹׁדְדִים לָהּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה׃ קוֹל זַעֲקָה
מִבָּבֶל וְשֶׁבֶר גָּדוֹל מֵאֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים׃ כִּי־
שֹׁדֵד יְהוָה אֶת־בָּבֶל וְאִבֵּד מִמֶּנָּה קוֹל
גָּדוֹל וְהָמְיוּ גַלֵּיהֶם כְּמַיִם רַבִּים נִתֵּן
שְׁאוֹן קוֹלָם׃ כִּי בָא עָלֶיהָ עַל־בָּבֶל
שׁוֹדֵד וְנִלְכְּדוּ גִבּוֹרֶיהָ חַתָּתָה קַשְׁתוֹתָם
כִּי אֵל גְּמֻלוֹת יְהוָה שַׁלֵּם יְשַׁלֵּם׃
וְהִשְׁכַּרְתִּי שָׂרֶיהָ וַחֲכָמֶיהָ פַּחוֹתֶיהָ וּס
וְסִגְנֶיהָ וְגִבּוֹרֶיהָ וְיָשְׁנוּ שְׁנַת־עוֹלָם וְלֹא
יָקִיצוּ נְאֻם־הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ׃
כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
חוֹמַת בָּבֶל הָרְחָבָה עֲרָעֹר תִּתְעָרְעָר
וּשְׁעָרֶיהָ הַגְּבֹהִים בָּאֵשׁ יִצָּתוּ וְיָגְעוּ
עַמִּים בְּדֵי־רִיק וּלְאֻמִּים בְּדֵי־אֵשׁ וְיֵעָפוּ׃
הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יִרְמְיָהוּ
הַנָּבִיא אֶת־שְׂרָיָה בֶן־נֵרִיָּה בֶּן־מַחְסֵיָה
בְּלֶכְתּוֹ אֶת־צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בָּבֶל
בַּשָּׁנָה הָרְבִיעִית לְמָלְכוֹ וּשְׂרָיָה שַׂר
מְנוּחָה׃ וַיִּכְתֹּב יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶת כָּל־הָרָעָה
אֲשֶׁר־תָּבֹא אֶל־בָּבֶל אֶל־סֵפֶר אֶחָד אֵת
כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הַכְּתֻבִים אֶל־בָּבֶל׃
וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־שְׂרָיָה כְּבֹאֲךָ בָּבֶל
וְרָאִיתָ וְקָרָאתָ אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה׃
וְאָמַרְתָּ יְהוָה אַתָּה דִּבַּרְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם
הַזֶּה לְהַכְרִיתוֹ לְבִלְתִּי הֱיוֹת־בּוֹ יוֹשֵׁב
לְמֵאָדָם וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה כִּי־שְׁמָמוֹת עוֹלָם
תִּהְיֶה׃ וְהָיָה כְּכַלּוֹתְךָ לִקְרֹא אֶת־הַסֵּפֶר
הַזֶּה תִּקְשֹׁר עָלָיו אֶבֶן וְהִשְׁלַכְתּוֹ אֶל־
תּוֹךְ פְּרָת׃ וְאָמַרְתָּ כָּכָה תִּשְׁקַע בָּבֶל
וְלֹא־תָקוּם מִפְּנֵי הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי
מֵבִיא עָלֶיהָ וְיָעֲפוּ עַד־הֵנָּה דִּבְרֵי יִרְמְיָהוּ׃

נב

בֶּן־עֶשְׂרִים וְאַחַת שָׁנָה צִדְקִיָּהוּ בְּמָלְכוֹ וְאַחַת עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה מָלַךְ בִּירוּשָׁלִַם וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ חֲמִיטַל בַּת־
יִרְמְיָהוּ מִלִּבְנָה׃ וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יְהוֹיָקִים׃ כִּי־עַל־אַף יְהוָה הָיְתָה
בִירוּשָׁלִַם וִיהוּדָה עַד־הִשְׁלִיכוֹ אֹתָם מֵעַל פָּנָיו וַיִּמְרֹד צִדְקִיָּהוּ בְּמֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל׃ וַיְהִי בַשָּׁנָה
הַתְּשִׁיעִית לְמָלְכוֹ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשִׂירִי בָּעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ בָּא נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל הוּא וְכָל־חֵילוֹ עַל־
יְרוּשָׁלִַם וַיַּחֲנוּ עָלֶיהָ וַיִּבְנוּ עָלֶיהָ דָּיֵק סָבִיב׃ וַתָּבֹא הָעִיר בַּמָּצוֹר עַד עַשְׁתֵּי־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה לַמֶּלֶךְ
צִדְקִיָּהוּ׃ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרְבִיעִי בְּתִשְׁעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ וַיֶּחֱזַק הָרָעָב בָּעִיר וְלֹא־הָיָה לֶחֶם לְעַם הָאָרֶץ׃ וַתּُבָקַע
הָעִיר וְכָל־אַנְשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה יִבְרְחוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ מִן־הָעִיר לַיְלָה דֶּרֶךְ שַׁעַר בֵּין־הַחֹמֹתַיִם אֲשֶׁר עַל־גַּן הַמֶּלֶךְ

וכשדים

NOTES TO INTRODUCTORY SECTION

1. See p.75

2. See p.105

3. See pp. 136ff.

4. See pp. 139ff., 150ff.

5. pp. 165ff.

6. pp. 136ff.

7. pp. 142ff.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE (i)

1. F. Schwally 'Die Reden des Buches Jeremia gegen die Heiden. xxv xlvi-li'. ZAW 8. 1888, pp. 177ff.

2. B. Duhm Das Buch Jeremia Tübingen,1901

3. J. Skinner Prophecy and Religion Cambridge, 1922

4. P. Volz Der Prophet Jeremia Leipzig, 1928[2]

5. S. Mowinkel Prophecy and Tradition Oslo, 1946

6. R.H. Pfeiffer Introduction to the Old Testament London, 1952

7. G. Fohrer Introduction to the Old Testament London, 1970

8. C. von Orelli Der Prophet Jeremia, übersetzt und ausgelegt München, 1905[3]

9. U. Cassuto 'The Prophecies of Jeremiah concerning the Gentiles' (1917) in I. Abrahams Biblical and Oriental Studies Vol. I Jerusalem, 1973

10. S.R. Driver The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah London 1906
" " " Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament Edinburgh 1913[9]

11. F. Giesebrecht Das Buch Jeremia, übersetzt und erklärt Göttingen, 1894

12. C.H. Cornill Das Buch Jeremia Leipzig, 1905

13. O. Eissfeldt The Old Testament, An Introduction Oxford 1965

14. J. Bright Jeremiah New York, 1965

/...

15. A. Weiser Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia Göttingen, 1955
" " Introduction to the Old Testament London, 1961

16. W. Rudolph Jeremia Tübingen, 1958

17. op. cit. p.507

18. K. Budde Jahrbuch für deutsche Theol. 23, 1878, pp. 428ff., 529ff.

19. Introduction p.268

20. Introduction p.362. See also 'Jeremias Drohorakel gegen Ägypten und gegen Babel' in A. Kuschke (ed.) Verbannung und Heimkehr (Rudolph Festschrift) 1961 pp. 31-37.

21. H. Bardtke 'Jeremia der Fremdvölkerprophet' ZAW 53, 1935, pp. 209ff., ZAW 54, 1936, pp. 240ff.

22. R.E. Clements Prophecy and Tradition Oxford, 1975, p.60-61.

23. G. Fohrer Die Propheten des Alten Testaments Band 4. Die Propheten um die mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts, Gütersloh, 1975 p.61. Also 'Vollmacht über Völker und Königreiche' in Forschungen zur Bibel 2 (Festschrift J. Ziegler), 1972, p.152.

24. N.K. Gottwald All the Kingdoms of the Earth New York, 1964, p.49.

25. See also G. von Rad Old Testament Theology Vol. II London, 1977, pp. 36 and 199. While maintaining that it is impossible to point to any single basic 'form' of prophetic speech and identify it as prophecy's original starting point, von Rad holds the view that an old form 'perhaps the oldest' is preserved in the cries uttered by the prophets in the context of sacral war enterprises. See also R. Bach Die Aufforderungen zur Flucht und zum Kampfim altestamentlichen Prophetenspruch Neukirchener Verlag, 1962. On form-critical grounds, H.Gunkel found that the oracles against foreign nations exhibited features which belonged to the style of the very earliest prophecy. The hallmarks of the earliest prophetic style were to be found in oracles which foretold the future, which were enigmatic in tone, and which flitted unexpectedly from one subject to another. They displayed an abundance of concrete and visual images, and were couched in language of a passionate intensity. Gunkel illustrates all these features from the foreign oracles, which he regards as particularly clear examples of the earliest and most characteristic prophetic style. Westermann doubts whether the foreign oracles should be regarded as the true prophetic genre, pointing out that the features enumerated by Gunkel are also present in the oracles against Israel. See J. Pelikan (ed.) Twentieth Century Theology in the making Vol. I London, 1970 pp. 61-75. Also C. Westermann Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech London, 1967 p.27.

/...

26. J.H. Hayes 'The Usage of Oracles against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel' JBL 87, 1968, pp. 81-92. Also The Oracles against the Nations in the Old Testament : Their usage and Theological Importance Princeton, 1964.

27. For the text of the letter see A. Malamat 'Prophetic Revelations in New Documents from Mari and the Bible' SVT 15, Leiden, 1966, pp. 214-219.

28. For a study of the foreign oracles of Amos in the light of the Egyptian Execration Texts, see A. Bentzen 'The Ritual Background of Amos $1^2 - 2^{16}$' OTS 8, 1950, pp. 85-99. Bentzen points out that in the Egyptian Texts, the nations in question are execrated in a fixed order; the arrangement of the oracles in Amos, he believes, furnishes evidence for the prophet's conscious or unconscious imitation of an execration ritual pattern similar to the Egyptian one. He goes on to speak of the Sitz im Leben of the ritual cursing of national and international enemies, placing it in the context of the New Year Festival.

29. In Arabia the cursing was done by a divining poet who 'had the power of humiliating and disarming his enemies by curses and spells woven into the jingle of his rhymes. He was a tribal asset of inestimable value'. A. Guillaume Prophecy and Divination London, 1938, p.171. The poet is an inspired person, the source of his inspiration being a Shaitan, which is said by J. Pedersen to correspond to the ruah speaking in the Israelite prophets. J. Pedersen 'The Rôle played by Inspired Persons among the Israelites and the Arabs' Studies in Old Testament Prophecy ed. H.H. Rowley Edinburgh, 1950, p.133.

30. H. Graf Reventlow tends to do this as far as the foreign oracles in Amos are concerned. He believes that both the foreign oracles and those against Israel and Judah in the opening chapters of Amos are rooted in a cultic ritual. Amos is the incumbent of a cultic office, which lays upon him the duty of proclaiming both doom and salvation oracles in the context of a covenant renewal festival. Basic to Reventlow's view is his assessment of the prophet as one who fulfils the role of 'covenant law speaker'. H. Graf Reventlow Das Amt Des Propheten bei Amos FRLANT 80, 1962. See also R.E. Clements op.cit., pp. 9ff. For a critique of the dogmatic application of form criticism to the prophetic writings, see G. Fohrer 'Remarks on the Modern Interpretation of the Prophets'. JBL 80, 1961.

31. S. Erlandsson shows that the Zion ideology, and especially the motif of Yahweh's victory over the nations, provides a theme which is prominent throughout all the Isaianic prophecies against the nations. S. Erlandsson The Burden of Babylon. A Study of Is.13:2-14:23 Lund, 1970. See also note 28 for Bentzen's view of the relationship between Amos' foreign oracles and the New Year Festival. G. von Rad op.cit. pp. 36 and 199 mentions that the Jeremianic foreign oracles

/...

contain elements which derive from the usage of the old holy wars. Two such elements are the command to get ready for battle, and the exhortation to flee (see 46:3f.; 49:8, 14, 30f; 50:14f., 21, 29; 51:11, 27; 50:8; 51:6). See R. Bach op.cit.

32. See J. Barton Amos' Oracles against the Nations Cambridge, 1980, ch. 5.

33. E. Hammershaimb The Book of Amos Oxford, 1970, p.22.

34. J.L. Mays Amos London, 1969, p.26.

35. H. Bardtke op.cit. ZAW 53, 1935, pp. 209-239; ZAW 54, 1936, pp. 240-262.

36. ZAW 53 p.215.

37. A. Weiser Introduction p.216

38. Hayes The Oracles against the Nations in the Old Testament p.236.

39. op.cit. p.248

40. E. Leslie Jeremiah. Chronologically Arranged, Translated and Interpreted New York 1954, p.285.

41. Giesebrecht op.cit. p.228.

42. op.cit. pp. 233f.

43. W. Rudolph op.cit. p.149

44. D.J. Wiseman Chronicles of the Chaldean Kings 626-556 B.C. London, 1956.

45. J.P. Hyatt 'New Light on Nebuchadnezzar and Judean History' JBL 75, 1956, p.282.

46. Josephus Antiquities X. 9 (Sections 84-6).

47. Wiseman op.cit. pp.66-68.

48. Giesebrecht op.cit. p.229

49. J. Skinner op.cit. pp.240-1.

50. J.H. Hayes op.cit. p.242. The text in Wiseman op.cit. pp. 67, 69 runs 'He (i.e. Nebuchadnezzar) accomplished their defeat and to non-existence (beat?) them. As for the rest of the Egyptian army which had escaped from the defeat (so quickly that) no weapon had reached them, in the district of Hamath the Babylonian troops overtook and defeated them, so that not a single man (escaped) to his own country'.

/...

51. O. Eissfeldt 'Jeremias Drohorakel gegen Ägypten und gegen Babel' p.33.

52. Eissfeldt mentions that this theory was first put forward in 1841 by H. Ewald in his Die Propheten des Alten Testaments II p.200. He detected in הֶעָבֹר an allusion to the Egyptian w:ḥ-'b-p:r = ḥ"-ʿ-b-r'.

53. J.P. Hyatt op.cit. p.283. D.J. Wiseman op.cit. pp. 70f. runs 'In the month of Kislev he took the lead of his army and marched to Egypt. The king of Egypt heard (it) and mustered his army. In open battle they smote the breast of each other and inflicted great havoc on each other. The king of Akkad and his troops turned back and returned to Babylon'.

54. R.H. Pfeiffer op.cit. p.507

55. Wiseman op.cit. pp. 68f. This account has been thought by some to throw light upon an Aramaic letter sent to Pharaoh by one of the rulers of Palestine, in which the writer applies to Pharaoh for military aid against the Babylonians. It has been suggested that this letter, discovered at Saqqarah, should be dated 604 B.C., and that the writer was the king of Ashkelon. See A. Malamat 'A New Record of Nebuchadnezzar's Palestinian Campaigns' IEJ 6, 1956 pp. 246-256. J.D.Quinn 'Alcaeus 48 (B16) and the Fall of Ascalon (604 B.C.)' BASOR 164, 1962 pp. 19-20. For the text see H.L.Ginsberg 'An Aramaic Contemporary of the Lachish Letters' BASOR 3, 1948, pp. 24-27.

56. A Malamat 'The Historical Setting of Two Biblical Prophecies on the Nations' IEJ 1, 1950/1, pp. 149ff. Malamat wrote this article before the publication of the Wiseman Chronicles. Pfeiffer calls this oracle an 'Apocalyptic Vision'. Introduction p.508.

57. Wiseman op.cit. pp.68f.

58. D. Christensen Transformations of the War Oracle in Old Testament Prophecy Harvard, 1975, p.242.

59. J. Bright op.cit. p.337

60. Wiseman op.cit. pp. 70f.

61. Hyatt op.cit. p.283

62. Hayes op.cit. p.248. See Wiseman op.cit. p.73. See also A. Malamat 'The Twilight of Judah in the Egypto-Babylonian Maelstrom' VTS 28, 1974, pp. 123-143.

63. J.G. Smith 'Literary Criticism and Historical Investigation in Jeremiah chapter XLVI' JSS 16/1, 1971, p.29.

64. Bardtke op.cit. p.250.

65. A. Malamat op.cit. IEJ 1, pp. 158-9.

/...

66. J. Morganstern 'The Rest of the Nations' JSS 2, 1957 p. 227. See also 'Jerusalem - 485 B.C.' HUCA 27, 1956 pp. 101-179.

67. J. Skinner op.cit. pp. 240-1.

68. Mowinkel op.cit. p.62.

69. H. Birkeland Zum Hebräischen Traditionswesen : Die Komposition der prophetischen Bücher des. A.T. Oslo 1939, p.49.

70. P. Volz op.cit. p.381.

71. Hayes op.cit. p.240.

72. S.R. Driver Introduction, pp. 275-277.

73. Shepherds, used figuratively of rulers occurs at 2:8, 3:15; 10:21; 22:22; 23:1, 2, 4; 25:34-36; 50:6. From the land of the North, 6:22; 10:22; 50:9; 46:20; 47:2; 46:10, 6, 24 etc. A great destruction, 4:6; 6:1; 14:17; 48:3; 50:22; 51:54. Behold, I bring, 5:15; 6:19; 11:11; 19:3, 15; 31:8; 35:17; 39:16; 45:5; 49:5. The time when I visit them, 6:15; 49:8; 50:31; 8:12; 10:15; 46:21; 50:27. Terror on every side, 6:25; 20:3, 10; 46:5; 49:29. Habitation of Jackals, 9:11; 10:22; 49:33; 51:37. Shaven Temples, 9:26; 25:23; 49:32. Behold, I visit upon.... 11:22; 23:2; 29:32; 46:25; 50:18. 'Fishers, and they shall fish them' type, 16:16; 23:4; 48:12; 51:2. Kindling of devouring fire, 17:27; 21:14; 49:27; 50:32.

74. P. Volz op.cit. p.386.

75. Christensen op.cit. p.263 '... this remarkable eschatological poem against Babylon is thoroughly Jeremianic in language'.

76. 6:22-24 is parallel to 50:41-43; 49:18 with 50:40; 51:15-19 with 10:12-16; 46:21b with 50:27b; 49:19-21 with 50:44-46; 50:30 with 49:26; 46:27f. with 30:10f.; 21:13f. with 50:31f; 49:22 with 48:40, 41b; 46:11 paraphrases 8:22.

77. The chief examples of material which is shared with other parts of the Old Testament are :- Jeremiah 49:7-22 and Obadiah vv. 1-6; 50:39-40 and Is.13:19-22; 48:32, 3 and Is.16:8-10; 48:5 and Is.15:5; 48:31 and Is.16:7; 48:29-38 and Is.15:2-3, 4-7; 48:45, 6 and Num.21:27-29; 48:43-4 and Is.24:17-18. For a discussion of the problem of literary relationships, see the commentaries. Also H. Bekel 'Ein vorexilisches Orakel über Edom in der Klageliederstrophe - die gemeinsame Quelle von Obadja 1-9 und Jeremia 49:7-22' Theologische Studien und Kritiken 80, 1907 pp.315-343. T.H. Robinson 'The Structure of the Book of Obadiah' JTS 17, 1916 pp.402-408. W. Rudolph 'Obadia' ZAW 49, 1931, pp. 222-231. W.Rudolph 'Jesaia XV-XVI' in Hebrew and Semitic

/...

Studies eds. D.W.Thomas and W.D.McHardy Oxford, 1963, pp. 130-143.

78. Rudolph op.cit. p.246.

79. Volz op.cit. p.388.

80. S.R.Driver op.cit. p.275.

81. Christensen op.cit. p.242.

82. Leslie op.cit. p.286.

83. See above, note 49.

84. Rudolph op.cit. p.249

85. T.H.McAlpine The Word against the Nations SBT V/1, 1975 p.13.

86. Rudolph op.cit. p.246.

87. See Schwally op.cit. pp. 204-206

88. See J. Ziegler Septuaginta : Jeremia. Baruch. Threni. Epistula Jeremiae Göttingen, 1976, p.150.

89. B. Stade '"Der Völkerprophet" Jeremia und der jetzige Text von Jer. Kap 1' ZAW 26, 1906, pp. 97-123.

90. Rudolph op.cit. p.5.

91. C.Bruston 'Jérémie fut-il prophète pour les Nations?' ZAW 27, 1907, pp. 75-78.

92. Rudolph op.cit. p.5.

93. C.C.Torrey 'The Background of Jer.1-10' JBL 56, 1937, pp. 193-216.

94. Volz op.cit. p.4

95. Contrast, for example, the viewpoint expressed in the oracles against Babylon in chs. 50-51 with the attitude of ch.29, especially v.7, in which the exiles are told 'But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare'.

96. R.Carroll From Chaos to Covenant London 1981 p.54. The foreign oracle section of Jeremiah is 231 verses long. Those of Isaiah and Ezekiel contain 189 and 197 verses respectively. Carroll puts forward two other explanations of why Jeremiah is called a prophet to the nations, explanations which do not connect the title directly with the foreign

/...

oracle section. He thinks it might reflect the fact that Jeremiah lived and worked during two Babylonian invasions of Palestine, and experienced the events of 587, as well as being involved with the Babylonians (39:11-14; 40:1-6) and active in Egypt (43,44). Or, the reference may have included an acknowledgement of the community's existence among the nations, and have directed the tradition at them.

97. Mowinkel op.cit. pp. 81ff.

98. G. Fohrer Die Propheten um die Mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts p.11.

99. Carroll op.cit. p.252.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE (ii)

1. See especially C. Rietzschel Das Problem der Urrolle. Ein Beitrag zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Jeremiabuches Gütersloh, 1966, pp. 47ff.

2. S.R. Driver The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah London, 1906 p. xlix.

3. C.F. Keil Kommentar über den Proph.Jeremia und die Klagell. Vol. I Leipzig, 1872. E.T. The Prophecies of Jeremiah Edinburgh, 1873-4, p. 35.

4. K.H.Graf Der Prophet Jeremia Leipzig 1862, p.L.

5. Mowinkel op.cit. pp.61-2.

6. Schwally op.cit. pp. 177-217. G.C.Workman The Text of Jeremiah Edinburgh, 1889. H. St.J.Thackeray 'The Greek Translators of Jeremiah' JTS 4, 1902-3 pp.245-266. O.Eissfeldt The Old Testament. An Introduction Oxford, 1965, pp.346-365. A. Weiser Introduction to the Old Testament London, 1961, pp. 208-221. O.Kaiser Introduction to the Old Testament Oxford, 1973, pp. 237ff. J.G. Janzen Studies in the Text of Jeremiah Harvard, 1973. W. Thiel 'Die Deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1-25', WMANT 41, 1972. C. Rietzschel op.cit.

7. G.H. Ewald Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament Vol. III (trsl. by J.Frederick Smith) London, 1878, p.220.

8. C. von Orelli The Prophecies of Jeremiah (trsl. by J.S.Banks) Edinburgh, 1889, p.27.

9. Quoted in Orelli op.cit. p.27

10. F. Giesebrecht op.cit. C. Cornill Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament (trsl. by G.H. Box) New York, 1907. S.R. Driver op.cit. P. Volz op.cit.

/...

W. Rudolph Jeremia. G. Fohrer Introduction to the Old Testament London, 1970.

11. J. Bright op.cit. p. LXXVIII

12. W.O.E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament London, 1961, p.313.

13. H. Birkeland op.cit.

14. op.cit. p.46.

15. G. Fohrer Die Propheten um die Mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts, pp. 10-20.

16. G. Fohrer 'Vollmacht über Völker und Königreiche' pp.145-153.

17. F. Schwally op.cit. p.189.

18. Cornill op.cit. pp. 311-12.

19. Thiel op.cit. p.263.

20. W. Rudolph Jeremia p.148. 'Zum Jeremiabuch' ZAW 60, 1944, p.93.

21. J. Bright op.cit. p.163.

22. Thiel op.cit. p.273.

23. Thiel op.cit. p.271.

24. Volz op.cit. p.252.

25. Rietzschel op.cit. p.27.

26. Cornill op.cit. p.311. J. Skinner op.cit. p.241. O.Eissfeldt op.cit. p.364. A.Weiser op.cit. p.215. Rietzschel op.cit. p.44. Thiel op.cit. p.271.

27. Cornill op.cit. p.312.

28. Volz op.cit. p.378.

29. Volz op.cit. p.378. See also p. xliv.

30. Rudolph 'Zum Jeremiabuch' p.97.

31. Eissfeldt op.cit. p.364.

32. Weiser op.cit. p.215.

33. Rietzschel op.cit. p.85.

34. Rietzschel op.cit. pp. 46-7.

35. See note 17.

/...

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE (iii)

1. See e.g. R.H.Pfeiffer Introduction to the Old Testament, p.487. K.H. Graf Der Prophet Jeremia. G.Fohrer Introduction p.397.

2. H.Ewald Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament Vol. III (trsl. by J.Frederick Smith) London, 1878, p.197.

3. G.Fohrer 'Vollmacht über Völker und Königreiche' p.146.

4. J.P.Hyatt 'The Book of Jeremiah.' Interpreter's Bible Vol. V, New York, 1956, p.1104.

5. F. Giesebrecht Das Buch Jeremia Göttingen, 1894, p.XXXIII. Schwally op.cit. p.190.

6. W.Rudolph Jeremia[2] p. 245f. See also 'Zum Jeremiabuch', pp. 97-8.

7. C. Rietzschel op.cit. p.45.

8. op.cit. p.46.

9. C.H.Cornill Das Buch Jeremia p.439.

10. Rudolph 'Zum Jeremiabuch' p.98.

11. J.G.Janzen op.cit. p.116

12. H. St.J.Thackeray op.cit. pp. 245ff.

13. Rudolph 'Zum Jeremiabuch' p.98.

14. C.Rietzschel op.cit. p.82.

15. op.cit. p.84.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. H.B.Swete Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek Cambridge, 1914, p.315.

2. H. St.J.Thackeray A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek Vol.1, Cambridge, 1909.

3. op.cit. pp. 315-316.

4. H.Orlinsky 'The LXX as Holy Writ and the Philosophy of the Translators' HUCA Vol. XLVI, 1975. R.W. Klein Textual Criticism of the Old Testamant Philadelphia, 1974, p.20.

5. See J.G.Janzen Studies in the Text of Jeremiah Harvard, 1973, pp. 2-3.

6. G.C.Workman The Text of Jeremiah Edinburgh, 1889, p.20.

/...

7. op.cit. pp. 109-110

8. C. Rabin 'The Translation Process and the Character of the Septuagint' Textus 6, 1968, pp. 1-26.

9. op.cit. p.23.

10. Janzen op.cit. chapter 1, note 32.

11. F.M.Cross 'The Contribution of the Qumran discoveries to the Study of Biblical Text' IEJ 16, 1966, p.82. See also Klein op.cit. p.20.

12. Cross op.cit. p.82.

13. Janzen op.cit. chapter 1.

14. Omissions in the LXX of Jer. 46-51. Chapter 46(26)
v.2 בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ v.6 נהר
v.8 וכנהרות יתגעשו מים v.13 הנביא \ נבוכדנאצר
v.25 ועל פרעה .... ועל מצרים v.26 missing
Chapter 47(29)
v.1 אשר היה .....את עזה v.4 כפתור
Chapter 48(31)
v.1 וְחֶתֶה v.4 זעקה
v.5 צרי v.8 ועיר
v.10 ארור v.15 נאם המלך יהוה צבאות שמו
v.25 נאם יהוה v.27 מרי ויבריך
v.29 גֵּבְהוֹ v.40, 41 missing ex. כי כה אמרי
v.43 נאם יהוה v.44 נאם יהוה
vv.45-47 missing.
Chapter 49(30)
v.6 ואחרי כן אשיב את שבות בני עמון
v.12 הוא נָקֹה תנקה לא תנקה v.22 וידאה ו
v.24 צרה וחבלים אחזתה כיולדה v.26 ביום ההוא
v.31 נאם יהוה v.39 נאם יהוה
Chapter 50(47)
v.1 הנביא / אל ארץ כשדים ביד / v.2 ושאו נס
v.3 גרו הלכו v.4 נאם יהוה
v.7 יהוה v.8 מעלה \ גדולים
v.10 נאם יהוה v.14 כי ליהוה חטאו
v.30 ביום ההוא v.35 נאם יהוה
v.36 חרב על הבדים ונאלו
Chapter 51(28)
v.22 ונפצתי בך זקן ונער v.25 נאם יהוה
v.41 ששך vv.44b-49a missing

15. See above pp. 78-9.

16. B.M.Metzger The Text of the New Testament : Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration Oxford 1964, p.161.

17. Metzger op.cit. p.209.

18. For examples of such characteristic expansions in the New Testament Mss., see Metzger op.cit. pp. 198-206.

/...

19. For a recent study of the problems of the long and short texts of Jeremiah, see J.G.Janzen op.cit.

20. H. St.J.Thackeray 'The Greek Translators of Jeremiah' JTS 4 1902, pp. 245-266. His theory is that two translators worked on the book of Jeremiah, which was divided roughly into halves for the purpose of translation, the division being made halfway through the section of foreign nation oracles. We are not greatly concerned with this thesis, since our study is too limited to grapple seriously with it. At any rate, those characteristics which Thackeray takes to be typical of each translator, distinguishing him from the other, do not emerge clearly in the foreign oracle section; Thackeray acknowledges a certain blurring of characteristics and admixture of styles on either side of the translation division.

21. H.Gehman 'The Hebraic Character of Septuagint Greek' in A.Kraft Septuagintal Lexicography Montana, 1972, pp.94-5.

22. Gehman op.cit. p.101.

23. See also 46(26):16; 46(26):27; 48(31):2; 48(31):7; 49(30):3; 49:20(29:21); 51(28):35.

24. J. Moulton A Grammar of New Testament Greek Vol. I, Edinburgh, 1906, chapter 1.

25. op.cit. p.92.

26. S. Brock 'The Phenomenon of the Septuagint' OTS XVII, 1972, p.31.

27. R.Marcus 'Jewish and Greek Elements in the Septuagint' American Academy for Jewish Research, Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume New York, 1945, pp.227-245.

28. Marcus op.cit. p.233.

29. C.Rabin op.cit. p.11.

30. Moulton op.cit. p.75, cites expressions such as γάμῳ γαμεῖν 'in true wedlock', φυγῇ φεύγειν 'to flee with all speed'.

31. R.R.Ottley A Handbook to the Septuagint London, 1920, p.164.

32. Swete op.cit. p.324.

33. For a note on the form εσβεα see J. Ziegler Beiträge zur Ieremias - Septuaginta Göttingen, 1958, p.84.

34. Different manuscripts provide us with several different transliterations of אתן . For a discussion of the LXX representation of Hebrew vocalization see W.E.Staples 'The Hebrew of the Septuagint' AJSL 44, 1927-8, pp. 6-30. Also J.Barr 'Vocalization and the Analysis of Hebrew among the Ancient Translators' VTS 16, 1967, pp. 1-11.

/...

35. For a note on this word, see W.Rudolph 'Zum Text des Jeremia' p.274. Also Ziegler op.cit.

36. Thackeray Grammar p.14.

37. Rudolph op.cit. p.273.

38. The translator of the LXX of Isaiah pursued a different policy. In the parallel passage to Jer.48(31):34, that is, Isaiah 15:5 the translator actually translates עגלת שלשיה - δάμαλις τριετής

39. See also H.B. Swete (ed.) The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint Vol. III Cambridge, 1887-94, p.296.

40. The same sort of diorthosis on the part of scribes could possibly account for the alteration of the transliteration αραρετ (ararat) into ἄρατε ('raise up') which stands in Swete's text at 51(28):27.

41. Thackeray op.cit. See above, note 20.

42. J.G. Janzen 'Double Readings in the Text of Jeremiah' HTR 60, 1967, p.447. For further explanation of the theory of local texts, see F.M.Cross op.cit. pp.81-95. See also W.F.Albright 'New Light on Early Recensions of the Hebrew Bible' BASOR 140 1955, pp. 27-33.

43. See Swete op.cit. p.321.

44. BDB suggests that מרתים could refer to the Babylonian 'Marrâtim' that is, a land by the mar marrâtu 'bitter river' (the Persian Gulf), probably southern Babylonia. פקוד is thought to allude to a tribe, 'Pukûdu' of S.E. Babylonia.

45. P. Volz Studien zum Text des Jeremia Leipzig, 1920, p.295.

46. J.G. Janzen Studies in the Text of Jeremiah, pp.108-109.

47. For a short discussion of the LXX and anthropomorphism, see R.Marcus op.cit. p.239.

48. G.H.Jones An Examination of some Leading Motifs in the Prophetic Oracles against the Nations Bangor, 1970, p.131, believes that the clause 'And Israel shall dispossess those who dispossessed him' is suspiciously like a later addition to MT, since the idea of possession of land otherwise plays no part in the foreign oracle genre. Nor is it credible that Israel is God's instrument against Ammon, as is suggested in this verse. The fact that Israel is to benefit directly from Ammon's downfall emphasises that the Ammon oracle was understood, by whoever inserted this idea, as having the character of a salvation oracle for Israel.

49. W. Rudolph Jeremia, p.251.

/...

50. חף does not occur elsewhere in the O.T. as a divine name. The word Ḥp denotes the name of the god Apis in Egyptian. See L.Koehler and W.Baumgartner Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament Leiden, 1967³, p.325.

51. He also fails to translate מרי רברין and seems to read תתגוורון from גור to attack or fight, rather than MT's תתבוורון , since he renders ἐπολεμεῖς.

52. Ziegler Beiträge p.25.

53. p.706

54. Such a concern may have operated in the Targum, which reads here 'and the Moabites shall reel', that is to say, there is no translation of יגעו . On the other hand, 'reel' may simply have been thought adequate to convey the phrase. In Is.19:14 the word יגע is faithfully represented in the Targum (תוגה).

55. A.W. Streane The Double Text of Jeremiah Cambridge, 1896, p.56.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. A phrase of Prof. Arnold's, quoted in L.P.Smith 'The Prophetic Targum as a guide and defense for the Higher Critic' JBL 52, 1933, p. 121.

2. A Sperber The Bible in Aramaic IVB The Targum and the Hebrew Bible Leiden, 1973, p.21.

3. See M.McNamara Targum and Testament Shannon, 1972, p.48.

4. Indeed, in the case of some biblical expressions he was forbidden to do so. 'In the second century A.D., a dictum ascribed to R.Judah ben Ilai, gives as a principle for rendering the Hebrew Text, "He who translates a verse quite literally is a liar, while he who adds anything thereto is a blasphemer". He illustrates through Ex.24:10, which in the biblical text runs "and they saw the God of Israel". To translate this literally would give a false sense, since no man can see God and live. To insert the word "angel" for God would be blasphemous; an angel would be substituted for God. The only possible rendering of the verse, according to him, is, "and they saw the glory of the God of Israel" which is substantially the rendering of all extant Targums'. See M.McNamara op.cit. p.99.

5. J.Bowker The Targums and Rabbinic Literature Cambridge 1969, p.13.

6. P.Churgin Targum Jonathan to the Prophets New Haven, 1928.

7. The number of instances in which a people, country or city is personified as a woman makes this a common characteristic of the prophetic oracle.

/...

8. Manuscript γ (Ms.Or 1473 of the British Museum) reads שמרי in both places, but is unsupported by the other Mss. which Sperber lists. A.Sperber The Latter Prophets Leiden, 1962 p.241.

9. It is most probably a later insertion into this context. The poem also stands at 10:12-16, and this setting seems more fitting and original.

10. BHK thinks that the elliptical מעלה במה , literally 'he who causes to go up a high place' strains grammar too far. It suggests either עלה על הבמה or מעלה עלה על הבמה . Perhaps a reading מעלה על הבמה ought also to be considered, i.e. 'he who offers (a sacrifice) at the high place'. This forms a good parallel to מקטיר לאלהיו , and appears to be supported by the Targum.

11. 'A natural tendency in any translation desirous of being meaningful to its readers is to replace ancient names with what the translator considers to be their contemporary equivalents'. McNamara op.cit. p.34.

12. כרכא stands in the basic text used by Sperber, which is Ms. Or. 2211 of the British Museum. There is a variant כרכיא noted in the margin of this Ms., and קריות is read by the first and second Rabbinic Bibles (Venice 1515 and 1524) and by the Antwerp Polyglot Bible (1569).

13. J. Simons Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament Leiden, 1959, p.450. See the text in D.W.Thomas Documents from Old Testament Times New York, 1961, pp.196-197.

14. Perhaps the capital of Moab. Oxford Bible Atlas London, 1974[2] p.133.

15. See above, p.76.

16. op.cit. p.436.

17. op.cit. p.85.

18. The 'thickening on lees' metaphor is used again at Zeph.1:12, this time with reference to the men of Jerusalem. The Targum again uses נכסיהון for שמריהם .

19. He sees the Targum's use of פג as equivalent in meaning to the Hebrew root פוג , as it occurs in Gen.45:26, Lam.2:18, Hab.1:4. That is, it conveys the idea of faintness or feebleness.

20. At Zeph.1:12, LXX renders הקפאים על שמריהם 'those who thicken upon their lees' as τοὺς καταφρονοῦντας ἐπὶ τὰ φυλάγματα αὐτῶν 'those who despise what has been given into their care'. The translator assumes that the men of Jerusalem thicken upon their lees by despising their heritage and setting at naught the relationship between God and Israel. Thus the

/...

metaphorical language is interpreted differently when it is applied to Moab in Jeremiah and to the men of Jerusalem in Zephaniah.

21. מַרְעָה is feminine. Masculine מַרְעֶה is read (correctly) by many of Sperber's Mss. Sperber op.cit. p.258.

22. For the mythological background of such imagery see H.G.May 'Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabbim, "Many Waters"' JBL 74, 1955, pp.9-22.

23. Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol.3 Jerusalem, 1972, p.50.

24. See the discussion of 2 Sam. 22:7 and Amos 6:8 in J.Weingreen From Bible to Mishnah Manchester, 1976, pp.42-3.

25. op.cit. p.45. Barthélémy sees the development of this principle of the avoidance of anthromorphisms as taking place especially in the last three centuries before the capture of Jerusalem. 'Si l'on en juge par les tendances que manifestent le livre des Chroniques et la Septante ancienne, on peut dire que le souci d'éliminer de la Bible des expressions qui pouvaient nuire à La gloire de Dieu caractérise plus spécialement l'oeuvre des scribes pendant les trois siècles qui précédèrent la prise de Jérusalem par Pompée.' D. Barthélémy 'Les Tiqquné Sopherim et la critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament' SVT 9 Leiden, 1963, p.292.

26. See M. Kadushin The Rabbinic Mind New York, 1972, pp. 332-335.

27. For a full discussion see Kadushin op.cit. pp.273ff.

28. S. Schechter Aspects of Rabbinic Theology New York, 1975, p.35.

29. The Targum evidently read עֲנִיָּתוֹ for עֶבְרָתוֹ .

30. And so always. See Is.49:18, Jer.22:24, Zephaniah 2:9 etc.

31. See the discussion of בנפשו in Amos 6:8 in Weingreen op.cit. p.43

32. Amos 6:8 in MT reads 'Yahweh has sworn by himself, says Yahweh, God of Hosts I abhor.....'. The underlined words are missing in the LXX, and Weingreen takes them to be a Rabbinic-type gloss which 'looks like an authorised interpretation of the first phrase, and is meant to remove what might be construed as an anthropomorphism, because of the word benapšo which, literally, could mean "by his life" with reference to God. That is to say that the phrasing of the expression conveying the idea that God's determination, if taken literally, could lead to a description of God's nature in terms of human emotion and conduct'.

33. For a discussion of this and other Targumic circumlocutions for God, see H.L.Strack and P.Billerbeck Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch II Munich, 1924, pp.302-333.

/...

The conclusion is reached that the Memra was in no way a hypostasis, and was in fact 'an empty, formal substitution for the Tetragrammaton'.

34. Kadushin op.cit. p.332.

35. See J. Lévy Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim und einen grossen Theil des Rabbinischen Schriftthums Leipzig, 1867-8, p.177.

36. G.F. Moore Judaism Vol. 1. Cambridge, 1927, p.419 'The appearance of personality which in some places attaches to the word is due solely to the fact that the "Memra of the Lord" and similar phrases are reverent circumlocutions for God, introduced precisely where, in the original, God is personally active in the affairs of men; and the personal character of the activity necessarily adheres to the periphrasis'.

37. Schechter op.cit. p.39-40.

38. Pirke Avoth III 20, 'He (Akiba) used to say "All is given in pledge, and the net is spread over all the living; the shop is open and the shopman gives credit, and the account book is open and the hand writes, and everyone who would borrow, let him come and borrow; and the collectors go round continually every day and exact payment from a man, with or without his knowledge. And they have whereon to rely, and the judgement is a judgement of truth, and all is made ready for the banquet"'. R. Travers Herford The Sayings of the Fathers New York, 1975, p.89.

39. C.J. Montefiore and H.Loewe A Rabbinic Anthology New York, 1974, p.72. Satan cannot find the iniquities which God has hidden in his robe, though he seeks for them. The saying is actually intended as an exegesis of Jer.50:20, 'The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none'.

40. Schechter op.cit. p.37.

41. op.cit. p.38.

42. Quoted in Montefiore and Loewe op.cit. p.66.

43. op.cit. p.50. Schechter quotes from Mechilta 39a, 39b; Sifré 29b and parallels.

44. BHK suggests that לְשִׁחֵן be read, following LXX, Peshitta, Vulgate. For נמצאה read נמצא .

45. The other word is כומרא .

46. See W. McKane 'Poison, Trial by Ordeal and the Cup of Wrath' VT 30, 1980, pp.474ff.

47. W.Rudolph Jeremia p.284.

48. See also 40:3ff., 49:8-13. The casting or building up of a highway through the rough terrain is only one of a catalogue

/...

of miraculous events which will speed the exiles on their return journey through the wilderness.

49. See 14:1; 49:22-23; 55:5; 56:3-8; 62:10.

50. G.R.Driver 'Linguistic and Textual Problems in Jeremiah' JQR 28, 1937-8, pp.124-5.

51. At 2 Sam.4:4 and 9:3 the Targum does not translate נכה using the root חגר . It uses the phrase 'גלגתן גלגתה' .

52. אתבש The name gives a clue as to how the cipher works. א is replaced by ת , ב by ש , ג by ר and so on.

53. See also M.J.Dahood 'The Integrity of Jeremiah 51:1' Biblica 53, 1972, pp. 542ff.

54. The theme is taken up in the New Testament, Rev.2:11, 20; 6:14.

55. McNamara op.cit. p.123.

56. McNamara comments 'Deut.33:6 was in fact the locus theologicus in Rabbinic Judaism for proving the resurrection of the dead, as we can see from the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 92a "Rabbah said: How do we prove the vivification of the dead from the Torah? He said: Let Reuben live and die not. Let Reuben live - in this world; and die not - in the world to come"'.

57. The other two passages are Is.22:14, in which Yahweh declares to Israel 'Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you till you die'. Targum '.... till you die the second death', and Is.65:6, in which repayment for sin takes the form of condemnation to the second death, '.... and I will hand their bodies over to the second death' (Targum).

58. See R.H.Charles Eschatology London 1899, pp.127, 132ff., 198. Also Moore op.cit. Vol. II p.297.

59. See W.O.E. Oesterley The Jews and Judaism during the Greek Period London, 1941, p.189. The idea also occurs in 4 Esdras 7, 37f. See Moore op.cit. p.385.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. The text of the commentaries of Rashi and Kimchi is taken from Miqraot Gedolot Nebi'im 'aharonim Tel Aviv, 1959.

2. BHK suggests 'l.c.Q^or l Ms. יָאֲהָגָה'

3. See eg. R.H.Pfeiffer op.cit. p.507

4. A. van Zyl The Moabites Leiden, 1960, pp. 20-21.

5. W.Rudolph Jeremia, p.261.

/...

6. This is certainly true in the Talmud; Edom is frequently identified with Rome.

7. Midrash Rabbah : Numbers, p.786. All quotations from Midrash Rabbah are taken from H.Freedman and M.Simon (eds.) Midrash Rabbah. Translated into English with Notes, London 1939.

8. P.Volz 'Studien zum Text des Jeremia' BZAW 25 Leipzig, 1920, p.319.

9. L.H.Brockington The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament Oxford, 1973, p.214.

10. G.R.Driver 'Linguistic and Textual Problems in Jeremiah' p.126.

11. Rudolph op.cit. p.266.

12. op.cit. p.271

13. See B.Metzger op.cit. p.112. The phrase used by Bengel, whose prime canon of textual criticism this was, is 'Proclivi Scriptioni praestat ardua'.

14. W.Rudolph 'Zum Text des Jeremia', p.285.

15. op.cit. p.126.

16. The edition consulted is Commentarius celeberrimi Rabbi Ishak Abarbanel super Iesaiam, Ieremiam, Iehazkelem et prophetas XII minores Amsterdam, 1642.

17. Jeremia, p.253.

18. Quoted in M.Jastrow A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic literature London, 1926, p.582.

19. Jeremia p.174.

20. Ps.55:6, Is.21:4, Ezek.7:18, Job 21:6.

21. G.R.Driver op.cit. p.125.

22. Freedman and Simon op.cit. Genesis p.470.

23. We find very few references to idolatry in the foreign nation oracles. Great emphasis is laid upon arrogance as a reason for punishment. Explicit mention of idolatry is made in 51:15-19, but this passage is an interpolation from ch.10. It is probably not Jeremianic anyway; it consists of a Wisdom-type poem followed by an idol polemic in the style of Deutero-Isaiah.

24. T.H.Robinson op.cit. p.403.

/...

25. I.Epstein The Babylonian Talmud London, 1935[8], p.592. All quotations from the Talmud are taken from this.

26. Jeremia pp. 284-5.

27. Although it is perhaps more likely that 51:6 refers to the Jewish exiles in Babylon.

28. Midrash Rabbah : Genesis p.304.

29. Epstein op.cit. Sanhedrin p.652. The text is 'The Holy One, blessed be he, purposed to lead the descendants of that wicked man (Nebuchadnezzar) under the wings of the Shekinah, but the ministering angels protested before him "Sovereign of the universe! Shalt thou bring him under the wings of the Shekinah, who laid thy house in ruins and burnt thy temple?" That is meant by the verse "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed". Ulla said "This refers to Nebuchadnezzar". R.Samuel b. Nahmani said "By this are meant the rivers of Babylon....."'.

30. Sanhedrin pp.591-593.

31. The oracle is inauthentic. See Chapter One (i) p.7.

32. Midrash Rabbah : Genesis pp.334-5.

33. Midrash Rabbah : Genesis pp.449-450.

34. See also 49:12. Are 'those who did not deserve to drink the cup' thought to be Israel? 49:12 appears to be an adaptation of 25:29, which runs, 'I begin to do evil in the city which is called by my name, and shall you (the nations) go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished....'. The city is Jerusalem. In 49:12 this has become 'those who did not deserve to drink'. Israel is held to have suffered unjustly.

35. R.Travers Herford The Pharisees London, 1924, pp.123ff.

36. See also the saying of Rabban Gamaliel in R.Travers Herford The Sayings of the Fathers New York, 1975, p.41. '.... And let all who labour with the congregation labour with them for the name of Heaven. For the merit of their fathers is their support, and their righteousness standeth forever. And ye - I confer upon you, saith God, (plenteous) reward, as if ye had wrought'.

37. They were also considered especially significant in Rabbinic exegesis. See for example the comment on Isaiah 52:7 contained in Pesikta de-Rab Kahana, 'These words teach you that the Holy One will bring down Jerusalem, built anew, from Heaven, and will set it (as upon four pillars) upon the tops of four mountains - Sinai, Tabor, Hermon and Carmel'. H.G.Braude and I.J.Kapstein (eds.) Pesikta de-Rab Kahana London, 1975, p.484. See also pp.339-40.

/...

38. Midrash Rabbah : Genesis p.972. A comment on 'Why look ye askance, ye mountains of peaks?' (ps.68:17). For a fuller account of the rivalry among the mountains at the giving of the law, see L. Ginzberg The Legends of the Jews Vol. I Philadelphia, 1946, pp.82-84. See also a liturgical poem for the feast of weeks, written sometime between 9th and 11th centuries, and reproduced in T. Carmi The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse London, 1981, p.245.

39. I. Epstein op.cit. Megillah p.176

40. Midrash Rabbah : Exodus, p.122. 'Just as the serpent hisses and slays, so does the kingdom of Egypt hiss and slay, for they put men in prison and silently plan to slay them. Another explanation; Why did God compare the kingdom of Egypt to a serpent? Just as a serpent is twisted, so does the kingdom of Egypt pervert her ways'.

41. Freedman and Simon op.cit. notes that the reference is to Egypt, not Babylonia. Elsewhere in Midrash Rabbah the reading is Egypt.

42. Midrash Rabbah : Genesis, p.162.

43. Menahem Ibn Saruk, a tenth century philologist who was the author of Mahberet Menahem, a dictionary of the Hebrew language.

44. See the following example, on 48:28.

45. See the previous example.

46. D.C. von Orelli The Prophecies of Jeremiah Edinburgh, 1889, p.338 comments 'The wild pigeon often builds a nest in Palestine on cliffs over the abysses'.

47. L.H.Brockington op.cit. p.213.

48. Jeremia p.254.

49. Of the sort attested in the Lachish letters. See D.W.Thomas Documents from Old Testament Times New York, 1961, p.216.

50. NEB is translating נ'ס as 'warning', that is, they are not following LXX σημεια . There is no indication in Brockington op.cit. that NEB is following LXX.

51. Following the translation of G.R.Driver 'Difficult Words in the Hebrew Prophets' in H.H.Rowley (ed.) Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Edinburgh, 1950, p.61.

52. As well as many older scholars such as Graf, Hitzig, Giesebrecht, Cornill, Rothstein.

53. Jeremia p.264.

54. G.R.Driver 'Linguistic and Textual Problems in Jeremiah' p.125.

/...

55. M.J.Dahood 'The Value of Ugaritic for Textual Criticism' Biblica 40, 1959, p.166.

56. A.A.Wieder 'Ugaritic-Hebrew Notes' JBL 84, 1965, pp. 162-3.

57. L.H.Brockington op.cit.

58. The edition consulted is Biblia Sacra Latina London, 1977.

59. Midrash Rabbah : Genesis p.672

60. For a full discussion of the frequent identification of Esau and Edom, see J.R.Bartlett 'The Brotherhood of Edom' JSOT 4, 1977, pp. 2-27.

61. Epstein op.cit. Yoma, pp. 42-44.

62. See for example Midrash Rabbah : Genesis p.566, pp. 372-3.

63. For the suggestion that עז׳הם might conceal an original עֵז׳הם , see J.S.Kselman 'A note on Jer.49:20 and Zeph.2: 6-7' CBQ 32, 1970, pp. 579-581. He translates עז׳הם בוהם as 'the nurslings of their pasture', a parallel to 'the little ones of the flock', pointing out that in poetry the construct state may carry a pronominal suffix.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. All quotations are translated from Commentarius celeberrimi Rabbi Ishak Abarbanel super Iesaiam, Ieremiam, Iehazkelem et prophetas XII minores. Amsterdam, 1642.

2. For information on the life of Abravanel see H.Loewe 'Isaac Abravanel and his Age' in J.B.Trend and H.Loewe (eds) Isaac Abravanel Cambridge, 1937. See also Suarez Fernandez Documentos acerca de la expulsión de los Judios Valladolid, 1964, p.48, in which Abravanel is described as 'uno de los cuatro hombres más prestigiosos de la communidad hebrea'.

3. Quoted in L.Rabinowitz 'Abravanel as Exegete' in Trend and Loewe op.cit. p.81.

4. See above, pp. 173ff.

5. Rabinowitz 'Abravanel as Exegete' in Trend and Loewe op.cit. p.81.

6. Rabinowitz op.cit. p.82.

7. Rabinowitz op.cit. p.82

8. Elam does not actually appear in the list in the text of Abravanel used. This is certainly simply an error, since Elam, no less than the others, appears in both lists of nations, in chapter 25 and in chs.46-51, and its presence is required in

/...

the list quoted here in order to make up the number eleven which Abravanel mentions.

9. J. Bright A History of Israel London, 1972, p.329.

10. Edom and Moab fought on the side of the Babylonians in 589 B.C., see H.L.Ginsberg 'Judah and the Transjordan States from 734 to 582 B.C.E.' in S.Liebermann (ed.) Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume New York, 1950, pp.347-361. As far as Damascus and Ammon are concerned, Abravanel may have in mind the events of 600-598 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar dispatched 'bands of Arameans, Moabites and Ammonites' to harry Judah. J.Bright op.cit. p.326. Ginsberg op.cit. p.363.

11. See M.Gaster 'Abravanel's Literary Work' in Trend and Loewe op.cit. pp. 62-63.

12. Abravanel shares with Rashi, Kimchi and all the ancient Versions the view that שוב שבות means 'reverse the captivity'. More recently, other interpretations have been put forward, such as 'bring about the restoration of' 'restore the fortunes of'. For a discussion see W.L.Holladay The Root Sûbh in the Old Testament Leiden, 1958, pp.110-115.

13. 49:36b runs וְלֹא יִהְיֶה הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָבוֹא שָׁם נִדְּחֵי עוֹלָם
The translation adopted by RSV and NEB reads the qeré and also a plural verb יָבֹאוּ , following the Targum and the Vulgate. 'There is no nation to which the fugitives of Elam will not come'. Abravanel seems to read the Kethib עוֹלָם , and a singular verb, producing a translation 'There will be no nation which will not come there; (they will be) outcasts forever'. He explains, 'there will not be a nation in the world which will not come upon them, and they will be exiles forever, for the Lord will not reverse their captivity'. It is very odd that Abravanel comments on the absence of a prediction of the reversal of Edom's captivity in 49:36, when v.39 does in fact contain such a prediction. It may be that his translation of נדחי עולם 'fugitives forever' in v.36 has caused him to make this error in overlooking v.39.

14. אלפים is a dual. Abravanel identified Edom with Christian Rome, and interpreted the oracle against Edom as an eschatological prophecy about the fall of Rome. He expected this fall imminently, in his own lifetime, and calculated several different dates for it. In this verse he is giving 2,000 years as the approximate period of time between the fall of Babylon and his own day, which was soon to witness the fall of Rome.

15. I.Epstein op.cit. Yoma pp.42-44. For a translation, see p.181, above.

16. See E.I.J. Rosenthal 'Don Isaac Abravanel : Financier, Statesman and Scholar, 1437-1937' Bulletin of the John Rylands Library XXI, 1937, p.455 note 1, pp. 467-9.

17. The Josippon is an historical narrative written in Hebrew in the 10th century by an anonymous author, and describing the

/...

period of the second temple. See Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol. 10, Jerusalem, 1974 pp. 296-298.

18. Seder 'Olam Rabbah. An historical chronicle allegedly written in the 2nd century, covering the great events from the Creation to the Bar Kokhba rising. Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol.14, p.1091.

19. See A.Malamat 'The Historical Setting of two Biblical Prophecies on the Nations' IEJ 1, 1950-51, p.154.

20. J.Bright op.cit. p.360-61. It remained one of the royal residences of the Persian kings, along with Susa, Persepolis and Ecbatana.

21. Abravanel and Kimchi are not alone in identifying Babylon and Baghdad; they are following an older tradition. See D.S.Sassoon A History of the Jews in Baghdad Letchworth, 1949.

22. S.Hermann A History of Israel in Old Testament Times London, 1975, p.294.

23. See above, note 17.

24. S. Pines (ed) The Guide of the Perplexed II Chicago 1963, p.396.

25. See R.Travers Herford The Sayings of the Fathers p.20.

26. See above, p.186.

27. Compare Abravanel's explanation of Gen.19:26, at which we are told that Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt because she 'looked back'. He interprets this to mean that she busied herself trying to save their property. 'Since she was so preoccupied in saving their wealth, she did not leave together with her husband. The result was that catastrophe overtook her'. This is quoted in L.Jacobs Jewish Biblical Exegesis New York, 1973, p.128.

28. LXX fails to translate all of this phrase, rendering simply 'from the land of Moab'. The translator evidently found difficulty in understanding מכרמך ומארץ מואב ; he has left מכרמך out. In 2:7 he translates כרמך as the proper name of a district in Israel.

29. See p.76, p.105f.

30. R.Travers Herford op.cit. p.132.

31. See also 2 Chron.36:20-21.

32. Rosenthal op.cit. pp.448-9. See also I.Gonzalez Llubera 'Spain in the Age of Abravanel' in Trend and Loewe op.cit. pp.36-7. Also J.R.Marcus The Jew in the Mediaeval World New York, 1960, chapter eleven.

/...

33. See Gaster 'Abravanel's Literary Work' in Trend and Loewe op.cit. pp.56-66.

34. See above, p.194.

35. pp. 235ff.

36. p.194

37. When Kimchi comments that a prophecy is לעתיד or עתידה he means not simply that it has a future reference - all of these prophecies were presumably understood by him as predictions by the prophet - but that it has an eschatological reference. This is made explicit in 50:5, where the prophecy is said to be לעתיד בימות משיח. In 50:19 events which are לעתיד are contrasted with events of ordinary history which the prophet predicted. זה הפסוק ואשר אחריו בשיבת גלות בבל או הם לעתיד.

38. An exception being 49:2, where he does agree with Kimchi that the words 'And Israel shall dispossess her dispossessors' might be understood eschatologically, although he also says that the rest of the verse refers to the events of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

39. See p.193.

40. Abravanel believes that the Babylonian exile under Nebuchadnezzar extended far beyond Babylon itself; the settlement of the Jews in Europe dates from this time. Cyrus' decree permitted the king's Babylonian Jewish subjects to settle in Palestine, but did not affect the worldwide diaspora. See Trend and Loewe op.cit. p.89.

41. Rabinowitz 'Abravanel as Exegete' in Trend and Loewe op.cit. p.87. See also pp.57ff. for an example of the complicated calculations which Abravanel makes, with the help of astrology, in order to fix the date of the Messiah's coming.

42. John Hyrcanus 1st (135-105 BC) forcibly converted the Idumeans in 126 B.C., compelling them to undergo circumcision. P.Hitti History of Syria London, 1951, p.246.

43. It is already common in the Talmud and Midrashim. Genesis Rabbah interprets Jer.49:22 to mean that the Romans will become like women (Freedman and Simon op.cit. p.566). Likewise, 49:21 is applied to Rome (Freedman and Simon op.cit. p.373). The tradition is continued by the mediaeval Jewish Exegetes. See G.D.Cohen 'Esau as Symbol in Early Mediaeval Thought' in A.Altmann (ed) Jewish, Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies Harvard, 1967, pp.19-48.

44. Discussed in Rabinowitz op.cit. pp.84-86.

45. In his comment on Jer.30:3, and in מעיני הישועה

46. P. Hitti op.cit. pp.627ff.

/...

47. Hitti op.cit. p. 663.

48. See above, pp.179ff. for a discussion of this verse.

49. That is, that the 'least of the flock' who drag Edom away refers to Tiras, who in Gen.10:2 is the 'least' of the sons of Japeth. And Tiras is Persia, according to Rabbi Simai.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE (CONCLUSION).

1. F.E. Talmage David Kimchi : The Man and his Commentaries Harvard, 1975, p.60.

2. See above pp.173ff., pp. 186ff.

3. See E.I.J. Rosenthal 'Mediaeval Jewish Exegesis : Its Character and Significance' p.266.

4. Quoted from R.B.Salters 'Observations on the Commentary on Qoheleth by R. Samuel ben Meir' Hermathena CXXVII Dublin, 1979, p.54.

5. pp. 159-160, above.

6. pp. 166ff, above.

7. p.180, pp. 224ff, above.

8. For a discussion of the term peshat see R. Loewe 'The Plain Meaning of Scripture in early Jewish Exegesis' in J.G.Weiss (ed) Papers of the Institute of Jewish Studies, London Vol.I London, 1964, pp. 140-186.

9. Rosenthal op.cit. p.266.

10. פורבי'ר is the spelling given in A.Darmesteter 'Les Glosses Françaises de Raschi dans la Bible' Révue des Études Juives Vol. 54, 1907, p.226.

11. Talmage op.cit. p.93 gives Kimchi's explanation of how qeré-kethib readings arose in the first place.

12. ספר מכלול, first printed in Constantinople in 1532-34. This is a comprehensive exposition of Hebrew Grammar. The second part is a lexicon of the Bible, and was more widely known as ספר השורשים The Book of Roots.

13. Talmage op.cit. p.55.

14. See above, pp. 198-9.

15. Rosenthal op.cit. p.272.

16. See above, pp. 221ff., p.194f.

17. See above, p. 218f.

/...

18. Abravanel applies 50:33 to the exiled Jews of his own day, 'He says "the sons of Israel" about the tribes who went to Assyria as exiles, and "the sons of Judah" about the Babylonian captivity..... even to this very day their captors have held them fast and refused to let them go'. Kimchi understands this verse in the same way, as he shows when he quotes it in his comment on Psalm 146:7, 'Who executes justice for the oppressed (146:7). Throughout every generation he executes justice on their behalf against their oppressors. So also will he do for Israel who are oppressed in exile, as it says "The people of Israel are oppressed.... (Jer.50:33)"'. J. Baker and E.W.Nicholson <u>The Commentary of R.David Kimchi on Psalms CXX-CL</u> Cambridge, 1973, p.143.

19. See above, p.194.

20. Rashi makes no comment on Zeph.3:8-9 except to say that קוּמִי לָעֵד (v.8) means 'I will rise to bear witness against you'.

21. Rabinowitz <u>op.cit.</u> pp.77-78.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Albright, W.F. 'New Light on Early Recensions of the Hebrew Bible' BASOR 140, 1955, pp.27-33.

Alcalay, R. The Complete Hebrew/English Dictionary Jerusalem, 1970.

Ashkenazi, S. and Jarden, D. Thesaurus of Hebrew Abbreviations (Hebrew) Jerusalem, 1965.

Baker, J. and Nicholson, E.W. (eds.) The Commentary of Rabbi David Kimchi on Psalms CXX-CL Cambridge, 1973.

Bach, R. Die Aufforderungen zur Flucht und zum Kampf im alttestamentlichen Prophetenspruch Neukirchener Verlag, 1962.

Bardtke, H. 'Jeremia der Fremdvölkerprophet' ZAW 53, 1935. ZAW 54 1936.

Barthélémy, D. 'Les Tiqqunê Sopherim et la Critique Textuelle de L'Ancien Testament' SVT 9, 1963.

Bartlett, J.R. 'The Brotherhood of Edom' JSOT 4, 1977.

Barr, J. 'Vocalization and the Analysis of Hebrew among the Ancient Translators' SVT 16, 1967.

Barton, J. Amos' Oracles against the Nations Cambridge, 1980.

Bentzen, A. 'The Ritual Background of Amos $1^2 - 2^{16}$' OTS 8, 1950.

Bentzen, A. Introduction to the Old Testament (2 vols) Copenhagen, 1948, 1951.

Biblia Sacra Latina ex Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editonis Sixti V et Clementis VIII London, 1977.

Birkeland, H. Zum hebräischen Traditionswesen : Die Komposition der prophetischen Bücher des Alten Testaments Oslo, 1939.

Bowker, J. The Targums and Rabbinic Literature Cambridge, 1969.

Bright, J. Jeremiah New York, 1965.

Bright, J. A History of Israel London, 1972.

Brock, S.P. 'The Phenomenon of the Septuagint' OTS XVII, 1972.

Brockington, L.H. The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament Oxford, 1973.

Brown, F. Driver, S.R. and Briggs, C.A. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament Oxford, 1907.

Bruston, C. Jeremie fut-il prophète pour les Nations?' ZAW 27, 1907.

/...

Carroll, R. From Chaos to Covenant London, 1981.

Cassuto, U. 'The Prophecies of Jeremiah concerning the Gentiles' (1917), in Biblical and Oriental Studies Vol. I. Jerusalem, 1973.

Charles, R.H. Eschatology London, 1899.

Christensen, D. Transformations of the War Oracle in Old Testament Prophecy Harvard, 1975.

Churgin, P. Targum Jonathan to the Prophets New Haven, 1928.

Churgin, P. 'The Targum and the Septuagint' AJSL 50, 1933/4.

Clements, R.E. Prophecy and Tradition Oxford, 1975.

Cohen, G.D. 'Esau as Symbol in Early Mediaeval Thought' in Altmann A. (ed.) Jewish, Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies Harvard, 1967.

Commentarius celeberrimi Rabbi Ishak Abarbanel super Jesaiam, Ieremiam, Iehazkelem et prophetas XII minores Amsterdam, 1642.

Cornill, C.H. Das Buch Jeremia Leipzig, 1905.

Cornill, C.H. Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament (trsl. by Box, G.H.) New York, 1907.

Cross, F.M. 'The Contribution of the Qumran Discoveries to the Study of the Biblical Text' IEJ 16, 1966.

Dahood, M.J. 'The Integrity of Jeremiah 51:1' Bibl 53, 1972.

Dahood, M.J. 'The Value of Ugaritic for Textual Criticism' Bibl 40, 1959.

Darmesteter, A. 'Les Glosses Françaises de Raschi dans la Bible' Révue des Études Juives Vol. 54, 1907.

Dimant, D. 'Targum Jonathan to Isa. XVI:6 and Jer. XLVIII:29f' JSS Vol. 18, 1973.

Driver, S.R. The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah London 1906.

Driver, S.R. Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament Edinburgh, 1913.

Driver, G.R. 'Linguistic and Textual Problems in Jeremiah' JQR 28, 1937-8.

Driver, G.R. 'Difficult Words in the Hebrew Prophets' in Rowley, H.H. (ed.) Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Edinburgh, 1950.

Duhm, B. Das Buch Jeremia Tübingen, 1901.

Eissfeldt, O. The Old Testament. An Introduction Oxford, 1965.

/...

Eissfeldt, O. 'Jeremias Drohorakel gegen Ägypten und gegen Babel' in Kuschke, A. (ed.) Verbannung und Heimkehr. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie Israels im 6 und 5 Jahrhundert v. Chr. Tübingen, 1961.

Emerton, J.A. 'A Problem in the Hebrew Text of Jeremiah VI 23 and L 42' JTS (NS) 23, 1972.

Englander, E. 'Grammatical Elements and Terminology in Rashi's Biblical Commentaries' HUCA XI, 1936.

Epstein, I. The Babylonian Talmud London, 1935.

Erlandsson, S. The Burden of Babylon Lund, 1970.

Ewald, G.H. Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament Vol.III (trsl. J.Frederick Smith) London, 1878.

Fohrer, G. 'Remarks on the Modern Interpretation of the Prophets' JBL 80, 1961.

Fohrer, G. 'Vollmacht über Völker und Königreiche. Beobachtungen zu den prophetischen Fremdvölkersprüchen anhand von Jer.46-51' in J. Schreiner (ed.) Wort, Lied und Gottesspruch Vol.2. Würzburg, 1972.

Fohrer, G. Die Propheten des Alten Testaments Band 4 Die Propheten um die mitte des 6 Jahrhunderts Gütersloh, 1975.

Freedman, H. and Simon, M. (eds.) Midrash Rabbah London, 1939.

Gehman, H.S. 'The Hebraic Character of Septuagint Greek' in Kraft,A. Septuagintal Lexicography Montana, 1972

Gehman, H.S. 'Some types of Transmission Errors in the LXX' VI 3, 1953.

Giesebrecht, D. Das Buch Jeremia, Übersetzt und erklärt Göttingen, 1894.

Ginsberg, H.L. 'Judah and the Transjordan States from 734 to 582 BCE' in Liebermann, S. (ed.) Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume New York, 1950.

Ginsberg,H.L. 'An Aramaic Contemporary of the Lachish Letters' BASOR 3, 1948.

Ginzberg, L. The Legends of the Jews Vol.I Philadelphia, 1946.

Gottwald, N.K. All the Kingdoms of the Earth New York, 1964.

Graf, K.H. Der Prophet Jeremia Leipzig, 1862.

Guillaume, A. Prophecy and Divination London, 1938.

Hammershaimb, E. The Book of Amos Oxford, 1970.

/...

Hayes, J.H. The Oracles against the Nations in the Old Testament : Their Usage and Theological Importance. Princeton, 1964.

Hayes, J.H. 'The Usage of Oracles against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel' JBL 87, 1968.

Hermann, S. A History of Israel in Old Testament Times London, 1975.

Hitti, P. A History of Syria London, 1951.

Höffken, P. 'Zu den Heilszusätzen in der Völkerorakelsammlung des Jeremiabuches' VT 27, 1977.

Holladay, W.L. The Root Sûbh in the Old Testament Leiden, 1958.

Honeyman, A.M. 'Magor Mis-sabib and Jeremiah's Pun' VT 4, 1954.

Hyatt, J.P. 'New Light on Nebuchadrezzar and Judean History' JBL 75, 1956.

Jacobs, L. Jewish Biblical Exegesis New York, 1973.

Janzen, J.G. 'Double Readings in the Text of Jeremiah' HTR 60, 1967.

Janzen J.G. Studies in the Text of Jeremiah Harvard, 1973.

Jastrow, M. A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature London 1926.

Jones, G.H. An Examination of some Leading Motifs in the Prophetic Oracles against the Nations PhD. Thesis, Bangor, 1970.

Kadushin, M. The Rabbinic Mind New York, 1972.

Kaiser, O. Introduction to the Old Testament Oxford, 1973.

Klein, R.W. Textual Criticism of the Old Testament Philadelphia, 1974.

Kselman, J.S. 'A note on Jer. 49:20 and Zeph.2:6-7' CBQ 32, 1970.

Landes, G.M. 'The Fountain at Jazer' BASOR 144, 1956.

Leslie, E. Jeremiah. Chronologically Arranged, Translated and Interpreted New York, 1954.

Lévy, J. Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim und einen grossen Theil des Rabbinischen Schriftthums Leipzig, 1867-8.

Liber, M. Rashi New York, 1906.

Liddell, H.G. and Scott, R. A Greek-English Lexicon Oxford, 1968.

/...

Loewe, R. 'The Plain meaning of Scripture in Early Jewish Exegesis' in Weiss, J.G. (ed.) Papers of the Institute of Jewish Studies, London Vol. I London, 1964.

McAlpine, T.H. The Word against the Nations SBT V/1, 1975.

McKane, W. 'Poison, Trial by Ordeal and the Cup of Wrath' VT 30, 1980.

McNamara, M. Targum and Testament Shannon, 1972.

Malamat, A. 'Prophetic Revelations in New Documents from Mari and the Bible' SVT 15 Leiden, 1966.

Malamat, A. 'A New Record of Nebuchadrezzar's Palestinian Campaigns' IEJ 6, 1956.

Malamat, A. 'The Historical Setting of Two Biblical Prophecies on the Nations' IEJ 1 1950/1.

Malamat, A. 'The Twilight of Judah in the Egypto-Babylonian Maelstrom' VTS 28, 1974.

Marcus R. 'Jewish and Greek Elements in the Septuagint' Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume New York, 1945.

Marcus, J.R. The Jew in the Mediaeval World New York, 1960.

May, H.G. 'Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabim "Many Waters"' JBL 74, 1955.

Mays, J.L. Amos London, 1969.

Metzger, B.M. The Text of the New Testament : Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration. Oxford, 1964.

Miqraot Gedolot. Nebi'im 'aharonim Tel Aviv, 1959.

Montefiore, C.J. and Loewe, H. A Rabbinic Anthology New York, 1974.

Moore, G.F. Judaism Vol. 1 Cambridge, 1927.

Morganstern, J. 'The Rest of the Nations' JSS 2, 1957.

Morganstern, J. 'Jerusalem - 485 BC' HUCA 27, 1956.

Moulton, J.H. A Grammar of New Testament Greek Vol. I Edinburgh, 1906.

Mowinkel, S. Prophecy and Tradition Oslo, 1946.

North, F. 'The Oracle against the Ammonites in Jer.49:1-6' JBL 65, 1946.

Oesterly, W.O.E. The Jews and Judaism during the Greek Period London, 1941.

/...

von Orelli, C. Der Prophet Jeremia, übersetzt und ausgelegt München, 1905.

von Orelli, C. The Prophecies of Jeremiah (trsl. J.S. Banks) Edinburgh, 1889.

Orlinsky, H. 'The LXX as Holy Writ and the Philosophy of the Translators' HUCA XLVI, 1975.

Ottley, R.R. A Handbook to the Septuagint London, 1920.

Pelikan J. (ed.) Twentieth Century Theology in the Making Vol. I London, 1970.

Pines, S. The Guide of the Perplexed II Chicago, 1963.

Pfeiffer, R.H. Introduction to the Old Testament London, 1948.

Quinn, J.D. 'Alcaeus 48(B16) and the Fall of Askalon, 604 BC' BASOR 164, 1962.

Rabin, C. 'The Translation Process and the Character of the Septuagint' Textus 6, 1968.

von Rad, G. Old Testament Theology Vol. II London, 1977.

Rietzschel, C. Das Problem der Urrolle. Ein Beitrag zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Jeremiabuches Gütersloh, 1966

Robinson, T.H. 'The Structure of the Book of Obadiah' JTS 17, 1916.

Rosenthal, E.I.J. 'Don Isaac Abravanel : Financier, Statesman and Scholar, 1437-1937' Bulletin of the John Rylands Library XXI, 1937.

Rosenthal, E.I.J. 'Mediaeval Jewish Exegesis : Its Character and Significance' JSS 9, 1964.

Rowley, H.H. (ed.) Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Edinburgh, 1950.

Rudolph W. 'Zum Text des Jeremia' ZAW 48, 1930.

Rudolph, W. 'Zum Jeremiabuch' ZAW 60, 1944.

Rudolph, W. Jeremia Tübingen 1968[3].

Salters, R.B. 'Observations on the Commentary on Qoheleth by R. Samuel ben Meir' Hermathena CXXVII, Dublin, 1979.

Schechter, S. Aspects of Rabbinic Theology New York, 1975.

Schwally, F. 'Die Reden des Buches Jeremia gegen die Heiden XXV. xlvi-li' ZAW 8, 1888.

Simons, J. Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament Leiden, 1959.

/...

Skinner, J. Prophecy and Religion. Studies in the Life of Jeremiah Cambridge, 1922.

Snaith, J.G. 'Literary Criticism and Historical Investigation in Jeremiah chapter XLVI' JSS 16/1, 1971.

Sperber, A. The Bible in Aramaic Vol. III The Latter Prophets Leidan, 1962.

Sperber, A. The Bible in Aramaic . Vol. IVB The Targum and the Hebrew Bible Leiden, 1973.

Stade, B. '"Der Völkerprophet" Jeremia und der jetzige Text von Jer. Kap. 1' ZAW 26, 1906.

Staples, W.E. 'The Hebrew of the Septuagint' AJSL 44, 1927-8.

Streane, A.W. The Double Text of Jeremiah Cambridge, 1896.

Swete, H.B. Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek Cambridge, 1914.

Talmage, F.E. David Kimchi : The Man and his Commentaries Harvard, 1975.

Thackeray, H.St.J. 'The Greek Translators of Jeremiah' JTS 4, 1902-3.

Thackeray, H.St.J. A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek Vol. 1 Cambridge, 1909.

Thiel, W. 'Die Deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1-25' WMANT 41, 1972.

Travers Herford, R. The Pharisees London 1924.

Travers Herford, R. The Sayings of the Fathers New York, 1975.

Trend J.B. and Loewe, H. (eds.) Isaac Abravanel Cambridge, 1937.

Volz, D.P. Studien zum Text des Jeremia Leipzig, 1920.

Volz, D.P. Der Prophet Jeremia Leipzig 1928[2].

Weingreen, J. From Bible to Mishnah Manchester, 1976.

Weiser, A. Introduction to the Old Testament London, 1961.

Weiser, A. Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia Göttingen, 1955.

Westermann, C. Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech London, 1967.

Wieder, A.A. 'Ugaritic-Hebrew Notes' JBL 84, 1965.

Winton Thomas, D Documents from Old Testament Times New York, 1961.

/...

Wiseman, D.J. Chronicles of the Chaldaean Kings 626-556 B.C. London, 1956.

Workman, G.C. The Text of Jeremiah Edinburgh, 1889.

Ziegler, J. Beiträge zur Ieremias-Septuaginta Göttingen, 1958.

Ziegler, J. Septuaginta : Jeremia. Baruch. Threni. Epistula Jeremiae Göttingen, 1976.

van Zyl, A. The Moabites Leiden, 1960.