



“HE WILL RAISE AN ENSIGN TO A NATION AFAR, WHISTLE TO ONE AT THE END OF THE EARTH”: THE ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN ARMIES AS DESCRIBED IN PROPHETIC TEXTS AND MESOPOTAMIAN INSCRIPTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the accounts of the Assyrian and Babylonian incursions into Syro-Palestine given in the prophetic literature and Mesopotamian inscriptions. The two sets of descriptions differ in genre and perspective, the former reflecting a theopolitical outlook according to which the invasions were punishment for the Israelites' violation of the covenant, the latter boasting of the king's divine right and mighty feats. They also represent the viewpoint of conqueror and conquered, the campaigns expanding the imperial territory and destroying the kingdom of Judah. The form of battle, weapons, tactics, defense, and destruction are all depicted in the sources, together with those targeted and the outcome. Two later examples—the invasions of the Huns and Mongols into Europe—are also adduced in order to throw the ancient portraits into comparative relief.

This article examines the descriptions of the Assyrian and Babylonian armies that attacked Israel and Judah found in the prophetic literature and Mesopotamian inscriptions. These sources differ widely with respect to their genre and goals. The prophets sought to inculcate ethical and moral norm, their theopolitical views dictating their perception of invasion from the north as punishment for having broken God's covenant. Their depiction of the armies that would wreak havoc upon the land was thus intended to prompt the nation to repent—primarily on the ethical plane.¹ They thus rejected the pragmatic policy of making alliances and forming coalitions designed to avert the impending threat.²

The Assyrian sources, in contrast, were designed to commemorate the military feats of the king, who ruled by divine grace. Indicating the bitter fate anyone who refused to accept their yoke or attempted to rebel after having sworn allegiance could expect to befall them, they formed part of the imperialist ideology.³ In practical terms, the Assyrian acts of barbarity broke the resistance of the defenders, the intimidation factor making it easier for them to impose their rule.⁴ While the Assyrian sources provide a wealth of detail in this respect, their Babylonian counterparts are much more meager, reflecting a much more concise and laconic style of writing.⁵

Let me begin with the motif of the “enemy who comes from afar.” The phrase “distant country” occurs as early as the story of the Gibeonites in Joshua: “And they said unto him, ‘From a very far country thy servants have come

because of the name of the LORD thy God” (Joshua 9:9). Hezekiah employs the same expression in reference to Merodach-baladan's envoys: “They have come from a far country, even from Babylon” (Isaiah 39:3; cf. 2 Kings 20:14).⁶ The El-Amarna letters likewise present Assyria and Babylon as “far off countries.”⁷ On the other side of the map, Sargon II of Assyria characterizes Judah as “The subduer of the country Judah [Ia-ú-du] which is far away.”⁸ Kush (Nubia), Media Ashdod, and even the Arabs were also identified in similar fashion: “The Tamudi, Ibadidi, Marsima[ni] and Hayappâ, who live in distant Arabia.”⁹ The prophets also speak of the invaders as coming from “a far country” or “from afar,” depicting their geographic location as the “sides of the earth” or the “end of heaven.”¹⁰ The greater the distance from which the enemy came, the stranger and more dangerous he appeared.¹¹

Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel all associate the foreign enemy with the north.¹² Historically and geographically, the majority of invasions did, in fact, come from this direction.¹³ In the biblical texts, the “north” thus became a symbol of calamity, assuming a mythic dimension.¹⁴ According to Jeremiah, Babylon itself would be punished by nations coming from the remote north (Jeremiah 50:3, 41–43).¹⁵

Despite the distances involved, invading armies made their way swiftly and smoothly. Isaiah notes, “And He will lift up an ensign to the nations from afar, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth; and behold, they shall

come with speed swiftly” (Isaiah 5:26)—possibly alluding to the Assyrian forces that have yet to reach Judah.¹⁶ Irrespective of the distance, the Assyrians frequently boasted of the speed of their military response. Sargon notes of his suppression of the second revolt that broke out in Ashdod led by Yamani, for example: “In the ebullience of my heart, I did not gather the masses of my troops, nor did I organize my camp. With my warriors—who never leave my side in (hostile or) friend[ly terri]tory—I marched to Ashdod.”¹⁷ The Azekah inscription depicts the quality of his soldiers’ fighting force: “[By packed-down ramp]s and applying mighty (?) battering ramps, infantry attacks by min[es ...], [... the approach of my caval]ry they saw and heard the sound of Ashur’s mighty troops and were afraid.”¹⁸

From Isaiah’s perspective, they appeared as a formidable foe—a war machine trampling everything in its path:

None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken; whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses’ hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind (Isaiah 5:27–28).¹⁹

The superior enemy forces that are still a long way off are portrayed in mythopoetical language as a type of “superhero.”²⁰ In general terms, the whole arena takes on the hues of an eschatological drama.²¹

Jeremiah similarly observes: “It is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say; Their quiver is as an open sepulcher; they are all mighty men” (Jeremiah 5:15b–16). Although in Jeremiah’s days the people of Judah were already familiar with the Assyrian and Egyptian armies, they were now faced with a new threat whose antiquity increased its power.²² This depiction creates the impression that the whole nation was full of warriors.²³ The indecipherable language heightens the sense of mystery and fear the enemy inspires.²⁴ Like Isaiah, Jeremiah does not explicitly refer to the Babylonians by name.²⁵ Ezekiel and Habakkuk similarly note the quality of the Babylonia army (Ezekiel 23:24; Habakkuk 1:6–7)—including their ability to attack at night: “Prepare ye war against her! Arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! For the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out; Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces” (Jeremiah 6:4–5).²⁶

The motif of night attacks occurs in other biblical passages, indicating the fighting qualities of the aggressors and possibly also their determination to overcome the defenders rather than needing to lay lengthy sieges (cf. Judges 7:9–18; Isaiah 15:1).²⁷ Sargon boasts in this respect: “[...] it was dark, and the sun never shone on it, its waters located in dar[kn]ess, its outflow [...] its mo[uth (?)] was cut with axes and a moat was dug around it [...] [soldiers]

skilled in the battle, he stationed in it, he girded his weapons, in order to [...]”²⁸ His claim that he mobilized a great force that raised a loud cry whenever he went to war (see above) is corroborated by Isaiah: “Woe to the multitude of many people, who make a noise like the noise of the seas, and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!” (Isaiah 17:12).

Some scholars suggest that the sound of water alludes to a Canaanite myth that describes the cosmic struggle against Yamm, the sea.²⁹ Ezekiel similarly prophesies of a mighty foe that will engulf Tyre like a flood (Ezekiel 26:3, 27:7). Here, too, some scholars adduce the motif of the sea describing the enemy’s army as a mighty flood, recalling the destruction wrought by the Flood or that portrayed in the *Enuma elish*.³⁰ Isaiah speaks of the calamity God is sending on Samaria as a torrent or hailstorm (Isa 28:2), Nahum applying the same image to Nineveh (Nahum 1:8).

Jeremiah relates to the noise the invader makes: “The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets and climb up upon the rocks; every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein” (Jeremiah 4:29; cf. Isaiah 13:4; Nahum 2:5).³¹ Sargon similarly describes the effect the noise of his forces had on Re’e, the commander-in-chief (*turtānu*) of Egypt, who set out from Rapihu against him: “Re’e became afraid at the noise of my weapons, and he fled, and his place was not found.”³² Tumult is characteristic not only of the hostile invaders but also of the inhabitants of the land called upon to defend it. Jeremiah thus admonishes: “Declare ye in Judah and publish in Jerusalem, and say, ‘Blow ye the trumpet in the land! Cry, gather together and say, ‘Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the fortified cities!’” (Jeremiah 4:5; cf. vv. 15–16).

As elsewhere in the biblical text, the blowing of the shofar serves as an alarm signaling the approach of enemy forces. Jeremiah calls on the Judeans living outside defended cities—shepherds and farmers—to take refuge from the invaders within the fortified towns (cf. Nahum 3:3).³³ The trumpet is accompanied by mourning and the cries of the wounded: “Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyre: Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee?” (Ezekiel 26: 15).³⁴ The uproar is frequently followed, however, by an eerie silence: “Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be brought to silence in that day, saith the LORD of hosts” (Jeremiah 49:26; cf. 50:30). When directed against Damascus, the prophecy notes that in the wake of the fierce street battles that would undoubtedly be accompanied by loud shouts and cries, the city would be cloaked in deathly silence.³⁵ The same scene is also portrayed in Lamentations and the laments over the destruction of Ur (Lamentations 2:21).³⁶ Nor will the noise of routine and celebration be heard anymore: “Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the candle” (Jeremiah 25:10).³⁷ The silencing of the grinding of

the millstone is also known from Esarhaddon’s succession treaty: “[M]ay the sound of mill or oven be lacking from your houses, may the grain for grinding disappear from you.”³⁸ The sounds of singing and playing are also muted: “And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease, and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard” (Ezekiel 26:13). The motif of the muting of lyre, harp, and singing due to calamity occurs both in other biblical passages (Isaiah 24:8; Jeremiah 7:34; Amos 5:23) and the curse lists in ancient Near Eastern contracts and Esarhaddon’s inscriptions.³⁹ Sennacherib testifies in this respect that, under the terms of his defeat, Hezekiah gave him “his male and female singers.”⁴⁰

A common theme is the combination of the senses of sight and hearing in connection with warfare: “How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?” (Jeremiah 4:21; cf. Nahum 2:5, 3:3). Although those attacked naturally attempted to defend themselves against the invading armies in the open field or in the fortified cities, when facing vast imperial forces these lines rapidly collapsed. In the Azekah Inscription, Sargon II notes: “[His] great [walls] like a pot [I smashed].”⁴¹ On the Israelite side, Habakkuk states: “And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them. They shall deride every stronghold, for they shall heap up dirt and take it” (Habakkuk 1:10).⁴² Like their predecessors the Assyrians, the Babylonians were confident in their siege skills—despite the fact that they were not always victorious.⁴³ Standing before Jerusalem’s walls, Rabshakeh declares:

“Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? Have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?” (Isaiah 36: 18–20; cf. 2 Kings 18: 33–35.)

Isaiah records that the Assyrian king declared:

“Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols and whose graven images excelled them of Jerusalem and of Samaria, shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?” (Isaiah 10:8–11.)

Isaiah appears here to adopt the language of the aggrandizing Assyrian inscriptions.⁴⁴ In this case, the enemy not only defeats and destroys but also alters the geopolitical map by changing borders and deporting populations, thereby establishing the Pax Assyrica.⁴⁵

The cuneiform descriptions of the military campaigns contain descriptions of the invaders’ cruelty. Shalmaneser III depicts himself as merciless.⁴⁶ The Assyrian rulers in general provide graphic accounts of the fate in store for those who oppose them.⁴⁷ Tiglath-pileser III’s scribe, for example, asserts: “I filled [the plain] with the bodies of their warriors [like gras].”⁴⁸ The princes of Aram and Ebron were hung—alive or dead—for all to see: “I advanced to Ekron and slew its officials and nobles who stirred up rebellion and hung their bodies on watchtowers all about the city.”⁴⁹ Sargon II boasts that he flayed Yaubidi of Hamath alive.⁵⁰ An inscription of Ashurbanipal—who made an example of the inhabitants of Tyre and Acre who rebelled against him—indicates a similar practice.⁵¹ Jeremiah also attests to the enemy’s cruelty: “I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days” (Jeremiah 6:11). Employing a merismus, he declares that the enemy will be heartless and strike the whole population, including children and the elderly. This statement closely resembles the Deuteronomist portrayal: “a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old nor show favor to the young” (Deut 28:50)—reflecting the influence of the Deuteronomistic school on his prophecies.⁵² The slaughter of children and women is also adduced in a prophecy that envisions the fall of Babylon. Although found in First Isaiah, this probably dates from a later period: “Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be despoiled and their wives ravished” (Isaiah 13:16. cf. Zechariah 14:2).⁵³ The Assyrian reliefs also refer to the women and children being led captive.⁵⁴ Elsewhere, Jeremiah threatens Judah with Babylonian cruelty: “They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel and have no mercy” (Jeremiah 6:23; cf. 50:42), portraying the Babylonian army as well organized and equipped with state-of-the-art weaponry.⁵⁵ Ezekiel calls the invaders the “worst of the heathen” (7:24) and “the terrible of the nations” (28:7, 31:11–12).⁵⁶

The fear these armies inspired in their foes was prompted from the moment Assyria entered the region in the days of Shalmaneser III.⁵⁷ According to Ashurbanipal, Taharka, the Egyptian king, literally went mad from fear:

Taharka heard in Memphis of the defeat of his army and the (terror-inspiring) splendor of Ashur and Ishtar blinded him (thus) that he became (like) a mad man. The glamour of my kingship with which the gods of heaven and nether world have endowed me, dazzled him and he left Memphis, to save his life, into the town Ni (Thebes).⁵⁸

Isaiah speaks of the “terror” that fell upon the Israelites (Isaiah 17:14; cf. Jeremiah 20:4, 49:28), Ezekiel warning that the people of Tyre would remove their clothes and be overcome by fear (Ezekiel 26:16). The fright was so great

that it prevented both fight and flight: “We have heard the fame thereof; our hands wax feeble. Anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain as of a woman in travail” (Jeremiah 6:24; cf. 49: 23–24; Isaiah 13: 8). It could also induce psychosomatic ailments: “My heart, my heart! I am pained at my very heart! My heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war” (Jeremiah 4:19; cf. Isaiah 21: 3–4).⁵⁹ Even the men are stricken with fear lest in the hour of war they became like women (Jeremiah 49:22; cf. 50:37; Nahum 3:3)—i.e., will be unable to defend themselves.⁶⁰ Nor were leaders exempt from this apprehension: “... that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder” (Jeremiah 4:9). From this we learn that, facing calamity, the political and religious leadership collapsed.⁶¹

At the enemy’s approach, the inhabitants of the cities cried out to God and began mourning in anticipation of the woes they were about to suffer: “O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes. Make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation; for the despoiler shall suddenly come upon us” (Jeremiah 6:26). The pain resembles that of a mother who loses her only son.⁶² Micah asserts in his prophetic lamentation to the Judeans:

Declare ye it not at Gath, weep ye not at all; in the house of Aphrah roll thyself in the dust. Pass ye away, thou inhabitant of Shaphir, having thy shame naked. The inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of Bethel; he shall receive from you his standing. For the inhabitant of Maroth waited anxiously for good, but evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem. (Micah 1:10–12.)⁶³

The panic caused by the approaching enemy led to the abandonment of settlements (Isaiah 10:30–31). The prophets also envision the siege that will be laid on the land as a whole. Most hard struck, however, were the cities, leaving no safe place for the inhabitants to take refuge from the invaders (Jeremiah 4:17, 6:3, 24).⁶⁴ On several occasions, the prophets note that the enemy will inflict great damage: “And they shall eat up thine harvest and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat; they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees. They shall impoverish thy fortified cities, wherein thou trusted, with the sword” (Jeremiah 5:17); “And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together (Jeremiah 6:12a).⁶⁵ The same fate is prophesied of Hazor, Tyre, and even Babylon itself.⁶⁶

Some descriptions refer to the destruction and burning of cities (Isaiah 2:15; Jeremiah 4:7, 22:7; Ezekiel 23:25). According to the prophets, the cities that are attacked become barren, although the invading enemy is not always the one who will subjugate the land.⁶⁷ Generally speaking,

the depiction of the calamities recalls the curses in the Pentateuch (Leviticus 26:29; Deuteronomy 28:51–53).⁶⁸ With respect to damage, the cuneiform inscriptions frequently speak of plunder and the imposition of tributes and taxes.⁶⁹ The claim that its army has destroyed and burned cities also often occurs in the Assyrian inscriptions.⁷⁰ Despite the concise form of the Babylonian chronicles, they nonetheless detail the destruction of Ashkelon: “He marched to Ashkelon and in the month of Kislev he captured it, seized its king, plundered [and sac]ked it. He turned the city into a ruin heap”⁷¹ (cf. Jeremiah 47:5). As an important trading city, Ashkelon’s razing greatly impacted the economy of the region.⁷²

In conclusion, let me briefly compare the Mesopotamian invasions and incursions of Syro-Palestine with two examples from European history in order to illustrate the phenomenon under discussion.⁷³ Such comparative research is useful even in the field of history—including that of the ancient Near East.⁷⁴

The first example is the invasion of Europe by the Hun in 395 CE (prior to Attila).⁷⁵ Before the arrival of the Huns, the Romans knew very little of them, including their methods of warfare and fighting capabilities and weaponry.⁷⁶ One of the most fascinating descriptions of their appearance is given by Jerome who, residing in Bethlehem, fled to the coast. Although he does not appear to have had firsthand experience of the Huns, he notes that they were “wild peoples” who could not be kept behind the Caucasus:

... speeding here and there on their nimble-footed horses, they were filling all the world with panic and bloodshed ... Everywhere their approach was unexpected, they outstripped rumour in speed, and, when they came, they spared neither religion nor rank nor age, even for wailing infants they had no pity. Children were forced to die before it could be said that they had begun to live; and little ones not realizing their miserable fate might be seen smiling in the hands and at the weapons of their enemies ... we were anxious as for the chastity of the virgins who were with us. Just at that time also there was dissension among us, and our intestine struggles threw into the shade our battle with the barbarians.⁷⁷

Similar accounts occur in other contemporaneous and slightly later sources, these highlighting their capabilities as horsemen.⁷⁸

The second example is the Mongol invasion in 1241 under Ogodei, son of Genghis Khan. Up until this point, Europeans had been virtually completely unaware of far eastern Asia, their knowledge being based primarily on mythical speculation.⁷⁹ During Ghengis Khan’s rule, the Mongols were already pressing towards Europe at a heady rate of 60 km per day.⁸⁰ With their expansion under Ogodei, they won significant battles in Poland, Bulgaria,

and Hungary, becoming a stereotypical symbol in Europe for cruel conquerors who regarded destruction as a goal in and of itself—even though this perception was not always accurate.⁸¹ The English Benedictine monk Matthew Paris gives us an account of the 1241 invasion:

They have horses, not large, but very strong, and that require little food, and they bind themselves firmly on their backs. They use darts, clubs, battle-axes, and swords in battle, and fight bravely and unyieldingly. But their chief prerogative is their use of the bow, and their great skill in fighting. Their back armour is thin, that they may not be tempted to run away; and they never retreat from battle until they see the chief standard of their leader retreating. When vanquished they never ask for mercy, and themselves never spare the vanquished. In the intention and fixed purpose of reducing all the world under their dominion, they all persist as one man; nor yet they can be reckoned at a thousand thousand. Their satellites, in number six hundred thousand, are sent forward to prepare quarters for the army, on fleet horses, and perform three days journey in one night. They suddenly disperse themselves over a whole province, and falling on the inhabitants unarmed, undefended, and scattered, they make such havoc that the king or prince of the beleaguered country cannot muster men to bring into field against them.⁸²

Both these accounts exhibit affinities with the biblical and ancient Near Eastern descriptions we discussed above—the enemy coming from afar, advancing swiftly with impressive military forces; relentless and merciless, they cause confusion and havoc, sowing fear, and easily overcoming the local resistance.

This article analyzes the prophetic descriptions of the military threats posed by Assyria and Babylon, examining the affinities between these depictions and the Mesopotamian accounts of power and force. Despite the difference in genre, perspective, and purpose, both literary texts served their authors’ specific needs. While the prophets portray the fearsome invading armies who will come from afar as punishment for failing to observe the covenant, the Mesopotamian sources extol Mesopotamian military might and its intimidation factor. In conclusion, the similar representation of the invasion of Europe by the Huns and Mongols is adduced.

¹ Martin Buber, *The Prophetic Faith*, trans. C. Witton-Davis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 152–191; Yair Hoffman, *Jeremiah: Introduction and Commentary*, Mikra Leyisra’el (Tel Aviv/Jerusalem:

Am Oved/Magnes, 2001), 83 (Hebrew); Carolyn J. Sharp, *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in the Deutero-Jeremianic Prose* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 120–122; Rannfrid I. Thelle, “Babylon in the Book of Jeremiah (MT) Negotiating a Power Shift,” in Hans M. Barstad and Reinhard G. Kratz (eds.), *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 187–233, here 193–194.

² Yair Hoffman, *The Prophecies Against Foreign Nations in the Bible* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1977), 1:102 (Hebrew); Alexander Rofé, *The Prophetic Stories: The Narrative about the Prophets in the Hebrew Bible, Their Literary Types and History* (Jerusalem: Magnes), 84 (Hebrew); Christopher T. Begg, “2 Kings 20:12–19 as an Element of Deuteronomistic History,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 48 (1986): 28–29, here 27–38; Matthijs J. DeJung, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 233–240; Izabela Eph’al-Jaruzelska, *Prophets, Royal Legitimacy and War in Ancient Israel* (Warsaw: Warsaw University Press, 2009), 95.

³ Hayim Tadmor, “Observations on Assyrian Historiography,” in Maria De Jung Ellis (ed.), *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein* (Hamden: Archon, 1977), 209–213; Hayim Tadmor, “Propaganda, Literature, and Historiography: Cracking the Code of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions,” in Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995* (Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 1997), 325–338; Theodore J. Lewis, “‘You Have Heard What the Kings of Assyria Have Done’: Passages vis-à-vis,” in Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (eds.), *Isaiah’s Vision of Peace in Biblical and Modern International Relations: Swords into Plowshares* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2008), 75–100, here 76; Simo Parpola, “Assyria’s Expansion in the 8th and 7th Centuries and Its Long-Term Repercussions in the West,” in William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin (eds.), *Symbiotic, Symbolism and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestine* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 99–111, here 101; Bustenay Oded, *War, Peace and Empire: Justification for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Wiesbaden: D.R. Ludwig Reichert, 1992), 87–98; Philip S. Johnston, “Faith in Isaiah,” in David G. Firth and Hugh Williamson (eds.), *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 104–121, here 108; John Goldingay, “The Theology of Isaiah,” in David G. Firth and Hugh Williamson (eds.), *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 168–190, here 182; Mario Liverani, *The Ancient Near East: History, Sociology and Economy*, trans. Soraia Tabatabai (London: Routledge, 2014), 485.

⁴ Gershon Galil, *Israel and Assyria* (Haifa: Haifa

- University Press, 2001), 22 (Hebrew).
- 5 John A. Brinkman, “The Babylonian Chronicle Revisited,” in Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller (eds.), *Lingering Over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William C. Moran* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 73–104, here 73–74.
 - 6 Biblical quotations are taken from the King James Version.
 - 7 EA 7:14–25, 16:35–36. See also Avraham Malamet, “‘Distant Country’ as a Special Category in Biblical International Relations,” in Zipora Talshir, Shamir Yona, and Daniel Sivan (eds.), *Homage to Shmuel: Studies in the World of the Bible* (Jerusalem/Beersheba: Bialik Institute/Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2001), 283–286.
 - 8 Mordechai Cogan, *Historical Texts from Assyria and Babylonia: 9th–6th Centuries BCE* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2003), 69 (Hebrew); James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 287; Otto Kaiser (ed.), *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments Band I. Rechts- und Wirtschaftsurkunden – Historisch-chronologische Texte 4. Historische Texte I (sumerisch, akkadisch)* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1984), 387 line 8.
 - 9 Kush: 2.218E: 109–110; Pritchard 1969, 286; William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (eds.), *The Context of Scripture, volume 2: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World* (Leiden: Brill 2000), 297; Kaiser 1984, 384; Media: H. Winckler, *Die Kleinschrifttexte Sargons* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1889), 170 (line 12); Ashdod: Great Summary Inscription (2.118E): 102; Pritchard 1969, 286; Hallo and Younger 2000, 296; Kaiser 1984, 384; British Museum Smith Collection Sm 2022, VII^A: 40^o; Pritchard 1969, 287; Kaiser 1984, 382; Arabs: 2.118A:121; Pritchard 1969, 286; Hallo and Younger 2000, 293; Kaiser 1984, 380.
 - 10 Isaiah 13:5; Jeremiah 4:16, 5:15, 6:23, 25:32, 50:41; Habakkuk 1:8.
 - 11 S. Vargon, *In the Bible Lands: Studies in Biblical Prophecy, History, and Historiography* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2015), 43–44.
 - 12 Isaiah 5:26, 14:31; Jeremiah 5:15, 20:4–6, 25:8–11; Ezekiel 26:7. See Hoffman, *Jeremiah*, 1:232.
 - 13 Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelly, and Joel F. Drinkard Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1991): 73.
 - 14 Shmuel Vargon 2015, 96–97; Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Biblical Commentaries (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 246, 336, 371.
 - 15 Yair Hoffman, *Jeremiah*, Olam Hatanach (Tel Aviv: Davidson-Ittai, 1994), 22 (Hebrew); Robert Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 834; Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 508, 518.
 - 16 Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Biblical Commentaries (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 253; Vargon 2015.
 - 17 Great Summary Inscription (2.118E): 97–100; Hallo and Younger 2000, 296; Pritchard 1969, 286; Kaiser 1984, 385.
 - 18 Azekah Inscription 2.119D: 15–17; Hallo and Younger 2000, 304.
 - 19 Peter Machinist, “Assyria and its Image in the First Isaiah,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103.4 (1983): 719–737, here 722.
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