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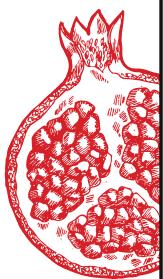
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2021

SAIL, PRAY, STEER:
ASPECTS OF THE SACRED BELIEFS
AND RITUAL PRACTICES OF PHOENICIAN
SEAFARERS

Aaron Brody

Abstract

Ancient seafarers faced dangers and fears posed by the sea and hazards of sailing. Accordingly, specialized sacred beliefs and ritual practices developed among Phoenician mariners – the focus of this study – which were a subset of terrestrial religion. Sailors honored deities whose maritime, celestial, or meteorological attributes could either benefit or devastate a voyage. While on land, these divine patrons were worshipped in harbor temples and promontory shrines. While at sea, divine protection came from the ships themselves, which were considered to be imbued with a spirit of a deity; the vessels also contained sacred spaces that allowed for continued contact with the divine. Mariners performed religious ceremonies to enlist and ensure divine protection and success for their voyages. Maritime features were also part of the funerary practices and mortuary rituals of seafarers. These specialized sacred beliefs and ritual practices were generated by the liminality of the deep and the unique uncertainties and perils at sea, and aided in Phoenician maritime exploration, commercial exchanges, and settlement that eventually spread throughout the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic coasts of Iberia and Morocco.

Les marins de l'antiquité devaient affronter les dangers et les peurs liées à la mer et aux risques de la navigation. En conséquence, des croyances sacrées spécialisées et des rituels – des sous-ensembles de la religion terrestre – se sont développés auprès des marins phéniciens. Ces derniers seront au centre de cette étude. Les marins honoraient des déités dont les attributs maritimes, célestes ou météorologiques pouvaient favoriser ou au contraire mettre en péril un voyage. Sur la terre ferme, on rendait culte à ces bienfaiteurs divins dans des temples portuaires et des sanctuaires sur des promontoires. En mer, la protection divine provenait des navires eux-mêmes, qu'on pensait imprégnés de l'esprit de la déité. Les vaisseaux contenaient également des espaces sacrés qui permettaient un contact continu avec le divin. Les marins accomplissaient des cérémonies religieuses pour mobiliser et assurer la protection divine, et garantir le succès de leurs voyages. Des caractéristiques maritimes se retrouvaient également dans les pratiques funéraires et les rituels mortuaires des marins. Ces croyances sacrées spécialisées et ces pratiques rituelles étaient occasionnées par la liminalité des profondeurs, les incertitudes spécifiques et les périls rencontrés en mer. Elles ont contribué aux explorations maritimes des phéniciens, ainsi qu'aux échanges commerciaux et à l'établissement de populations qui s'étendront finalement sur le pourtour méditerranéen et sur les côtes atlantiques de l'Ibérie et du Maroc.

SAIL, PRAY, STEER: ASPECTS OF THE SACRED BELIEFS AND RITUAL PRACTICES OF PHOENICIAN SEAFARERS

Aaron Brody

3

Humans have been venturing out on the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, to forage, fish, trade, explore, raid, and migrate, from prehistoric times to the present. While the sea has always had great potential for opening up routes of contact and communication, sailors encountered uncertainties, challenges, and fears posed by the liminality of the waters, which posed both physical and psychological boundaries. The dangers of sailing and navigating on the Mediterranean Sea and the whimsy of its winds and currents generated sacral needs for seafarers that were not shared by members of society who never left dry land. These specialized religious beliefs and ritual practices of sailors were a subset of the religion practiced by the cultures from which the mariners hailed, which were uniquely maritime focused.

In order to identify varied aspects of the religion of Phoenician seafarers,[1] I have developed a framework that helps to better systematize the diverse data available (Brody 1998), based on comparative research on the maritime religions of classical Greek and Roman cultures (Wachsmuth 1967; Rougé 1975; Göttlicher 1992, 2006; Romero Recio 2000, 2008; Atkins 2009; Demetriou 2010; Tusa 2010; Eckert 2011; Ferrer Albelda, Marín Ceballos, and Pereira Delgada 2012; Irwin 2012–2013; Galili and Rosen 2015; Šešelj 2015; Higueras-Milena Castellano and Sáez Romero 2018; Tito 2018; Brown and Smith 2019; Bricault 2020) and on anthropological studies of the religions of modern traditional seafaring communities (Bassett 1885; Sébillot, 1968; McNiven 2003; Kennerley 2007; Rich 2012; Gambin 2014). While this study is focused on Phoenician maritime religion, I have found that the similarity of concerns posed by the sea and the dangers of sailing allows this framework, or model, to be critically applied to the study of the religious beliefs and ritual practices of most traditional seafaring groups. The classification has five interrelated parts: (1) patron deities

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[1] Use of the term Phoenician has recently come under criticism by Quinn 2018 and Martin 2017, since it was a Greek (read outsider's) descriptor of the people that inhabited the littoral of the eastern Mediterranean from the plains of Amrith in the north (modern Syria) to the Carmel coast in the south (modern Israel), who traded and eventually established daughter cities throughout the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts of Iberia and Morocco in the late Iron Age and Persian periods. While divided into at least four kingdoms, the people of this region shared a common northwest Semitic language, similar religious beliefs and practices, and material cultural expressions that testify to a diverse but related people group that their Greek neighbors called Phoenician, see Sader 2019 and Edrey 2019. Thus, I will follow Sader and Edrey and continue to use the term Phoenician in this study, despite its acknowledged limitations; see also Oggiano 2019 who proposes using "Phoenician" in quotation marks to acknowledge the problematic nature of the name while continuing its use. Descendants of the Phoenicians in the western Mediterranean are also referred to as Carthaginians or Punic, the Latinized version of Phoenician, in both a cultural and chronological sense. For the sake of consistency, I will use Phoenician as a blanket term for peoples of Levantine origin and heritage throughout the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts in the first millennium BCE.

with special maritime, celestial, or meteorological attributes that are important to the well-being of sailors or a ship's voyage; (2) seaside temples and shrines with special associations for mariners; (3) the concept of the ship itself possessing a divine spirit and sacred spaces on board the vessel; (4) religious ceremonies performed by seafarers in order to help ensure individual safety and the protection and success of the voyage; and (5) funerary practices and mortuary rituals with connections to the sea.

Phoenician sailors adopted certain gods and goddesses from their varied pantheon as divine benefactors, in order to provide sacred assistance and divine protection throughout a voyage. These patron deities were worshipped while on land, in varied locations dedicated to the divinities, typically before leaving on a journey and upon safe arrival in port. While at sea, the ship physically protected mariners from the deep while divine spirits imbued within the vessel also guarded the seafarers on board. Additionally, there were sacred spaces and shrines on ships that allowed for continued contact and communication with deities while away from land. A variety of religious rituals and ceremonies were performed by sailors in order to try and ensure the safety and success of a voyage; before, during, and after the completion of a journey, and in order to safeguard personal welfare. Thanks were given to protective gods and goddesses and sacred vows were fulfilled when mariners were saved from disaster. When death occurred at sea there appear to have been special mortuary rituals; and, on occasion, seafarers took symbols of their profession with them to the grave.

Utilizing this framework allows for a reconstruction of aspects of the religious beliefs and ritual practices of Phoenician seafarers based on fragmented data over a broad period of time, which demonstrates that a specialized religion existed among Levantine seafarers.[2]

[2] Textual, archaeological, and pictorial data are all utilized in this study because of a dearth of information from any one category of evidence related to the topic. Unfortunately I have also had to cover evidence from numerous time periods from a broad sweep of the second to first millennia for the same reason, a generally sparse set of data from any one historic period. I realize the differences

The success of maritime commercial exchange and settlement of the Phoenicians can be attributed not only to their impressive vessels that plied the waters and the knowledge and skill of the ships' crews, but also to their relationship to the divine. Both pragmatic and religious practices sustained the unprecedented maritime colonization and seaborne exchanges of the Phoenicians from the Levantine homeland throughout the Mediterranean, and beyond the Pillars of Herakles to the Atlantic coasts of the Iberian Peninsula and Morocco.

Patron deities
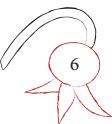
Because of the unusual physical and spiritual dangers of seafaring, Phoenician sailors took on patron gods and goddesses from their pantheon for divine aid support throughout a voyage. The sea itself posed the biggest threat and created the greatest trepidation for mariners, so it was crucial to be protected from the hazards of the waters and its guardian deities. The sacred patrons of sailors guarded them from the spiritual dangers of the depths while the presence of the hull of the ship provided physical safety and protection from the waters of the deep. Deities of two types were especially crucial to Phoenician mariners: gods and goddesses that controlled winds and storms, and those who could aid in the safety and success of navigation and the voyage itself.

The storm god Ba'al's importance to seafaring is distinctly recorded in a seventh-century BCE treaty between Assyria and its vassal territory, the Phoenician city-state of Tyre. The document's section of curses calls on three epithets of the Phoenician storm god, Ba'al Shamêm, Ba'al Malagê, and Ba'al Zaphon, to raise an "evil wind" that will cause the waves of the sea to sink Tyrian ships if there are any broaches of the agreements stipulated in the treaty (full text in Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 24–27; analysis in Brody 1998: 10–11; Lipiński 1995; Niehr 2003).

in beliefs and practices between Phoenician city-states and daughter colonies, which also developed and changed over this long stretch of time; however, these do not impact my overall thesis.

Centuries prior to this Assyrian treaty, Ba'al Zaphon was worshipped in one of the acropolis temples in Ugarit, the capital of a prominent maritime city-state located one kilometer inland from the north Syrian coast. The temple contained an inscribed stele dedicated to Ba'al Zaphon (Levy 2014) as well as numerous stone anchors, which were worked into the sacred building's foundations and were left as offerings by sailors inside and outside of the sanctuary. A vivid depiction of the storm god as a divine warrior was carved on another stele found just outside the temple, which may originally have been located within the temple precinct (Yon 2006: 106–108). The neighboring temple on Ugarit's acropolis dedicated to the god Dagan lacked any maritime votives, as did several other sacred buildings excavated at the site, such as the Temple of Rhytons and the Hurrian Temple (Yon 2006: 106–10).

The temple of Ba'al Zaphon may have acted as a navigational aid for ships leaving and entering port one kilometer west of Ugarit, given its reconstructed height and key position at the western part of the city's acropolis or high point easily visible from the sea (Yon 2006: 110). The nearby mountain of Jebel el-Aqra is known from texts uncovered at Ugarit as Mount Zaphon, the deified mountain of Ba'al Zaphon, and was the mythic location of the storm god's palace. This prominent natural feature likely also served as a landmark and directional aid for seafarers sailing the waters off of the coast near Ugarit. Zeus Kasios, the Hellenized equivalent of Ba'al Zaphon, was honored with the offerings of model ships and his name was inscribed on anchors to ensure the god's aid when they were dropped during storms (Tito 2012; Collar 2017).

Phoenician marine deities also had special links to seafarers. The Greek myth of Cadmus relates how the legendary Phoenician prince prayed to Poseidon for protection during several storms. After his safe arrival in port on the island of Rhodes, Cadmus founded a temple dedicated to Poseidon in accordance with his vows to the god, made in distress at sea (Diodorus 5.58.2). Hanno, the leader of a Phoenician colonizing sea voyage in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, established a temple to Poseidon on a seaside promontory. This dedicatory act was undertaken to thank the god and likely to further ensure the safety of Hanno's fleet. We are not sure of the Phoenician name of the

deity that was translated by ancient Greek authors as Poseidon (Brody 1998: 23–26). It is possible that an unnamed maritime god, portrayed on fifth- and fourth-century BCE Phoenician coins as an archer riding over the seas on the back of a mythic, composite sea creature, the hippocamp, is the equivalent of Greek Poseidon (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Warship with horse headed prow, riding on hippocamp, coin, Byblos; and "Marine God" on his hippocamp, coin, Tyre. Source: Brody 1998, Fig. 22 and 23.

Goddesses played a vital role in the protection of sailors, as well. An Egyptian Middle Kingdom, or Middle Bronze Age, coffin text says that Hathor, who is equated in the text with the Lady of Byblos, which is an epithet of the Canaanite mother deity Asherah, holds the rudders that guide the voyage of funerary boats (Brody 1998: 28–29). The Canaanites are the Bronze-Age ancestors of the Phoenicians, or conversely the term Phoenician is the Greek name of the Levantine culture group that may have called itself Canaanite.[3] A port on the Red Sea was called Elath, indicating that the settlement was dedicated to the goddess Asherah under her original name, Elath, meaning "Goddess" (Deut 2:8; 2 Kgs 14:22; 16:6). The inscription "Elath of Tyre" is found minted on a coin that depicts the goddess standing in a galley as its protector deity (Brody 1998: 29). The goddess Tinnit, a Phoenician deity who is likely

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[3] See Edrey 2019, Elayi 2018, various studies in López-Ruiz and Doak 2019, and Sader 2019. I would like to thank Helen Dixon for help accessing recent Phoenician publications during the COVID-19 pandemic.

a later form of the great goddess Asherah, is commonly associated with the emblem of the crescent moon or crescent-and-disk (Lipiński 1995; Brody 1998: 30–33; Martin 2018: 84, 90). This lunar symbol is found on standards depicted at the stern of Phoenician ships carved on votive stelae and represented on coins. These symbols of the moon represent the guardianship of the goddess Tinnit over these vessels, and suggest her protection over proper navigation, since pilots maneuvered steering oars located at the stern of ships. The "sign" of Tinnit, which may represent the goddess Tinnit or an aspect of this divinity,[4] is also depicted on standards at the prow and stern of a ship carved on a memorial stele from Carthage suggesting her divine safeguarding of the vessel (Fig. 2). Recently a bronze pendant of the sign of Tinnit was found near several ship graffiti carved on the walls of a Phoenician tomb at Maresha in the rolling hills, or Shephelah, of modern southern Israel, tentatively suggesting another link between the divine symbol and seafarers (Haddad, Stern, and Artzy 2018: 125; Wolff, Stern, and Erlich 2019: 34).

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[4] Whether or not the so-called sign of Tinnit actually represent the goddess Tinnit is, like many aspects of Phoenician religion, ambiguous. Some scholars caution against the direct link between Tinnit and the symbol that has been given her name, which resembles a triangle with a cross piece at its apex and a circle on top (see Brown 1991: 123–31; Mendleson 2003: 7; D'Andrea 2014: 57; Martin 2018). Martin complicates the simple correspondence of the symbol with the goddess, interpreting it instead as representing aspects of the relationship between Tinnit and Baʿal Hamon. I do not accept portions of her interpretation as, to my knowledge, the symbol is never directly associated with a male representation, whereas on Carthaginian coins from the third century BCE the sign of Tinnit is linked specifically to a female image in profile, presumably of the goddess herself, as well as other symbols of the goddess such as the dolphin (Brody 1998: 32 Fig. 11). This suggests that the sign of Tinnit is linked with the goddess Tinnit, and not a male deity, even if it is not a representation specifically of a kind of shorthand of an anthropomorphic figure; despite the fact that very late, second-century BCE to second-century CE representations of the sign of Tinnit have changed to include very human aspects in the symbol. I would like to thank Becky Martin for sharing her work and ideas with me, and appreciate her critical scholarship.
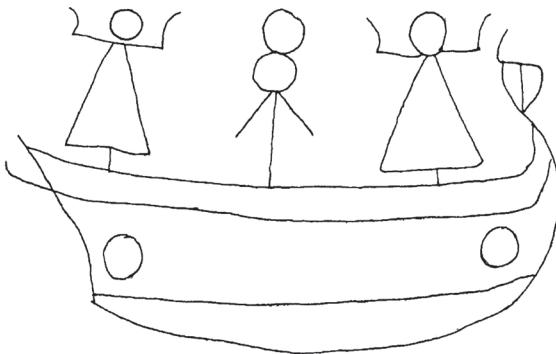
Fig. 2: Signs of Tinnit and caduceus on ship's standards, sacrificial stele, Carthage. Source: Brody 1998, Fig. 16.

The god Melqart's importance to Phoenician seafarers is verified by numerous data (Lipiński 1995; Brody 1998: 33–37). The reasons why Melqart was a patron god of sailors, however, are not well understood, despite the spread of the worship of this deity so important to the mother city of Tyre to its settlements throughout the Mediterranean basin and Atlantic (Martí-Aguilar 2017; Quinn 2018: 113–34). Melqart, a god of pestilence and possibly an underworld god, may have had sacred powers over granting success, a trait vital for the protection of travelers and merchants and for guarding sea voyages and mariners.[5]

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[5] Scholars have often mistakenly attributed the qualities of a storm god to Melqart, based on the fact that he is called Ba'al Tsur, and on his misidentification with the "marine" god riding the winged seahorse on fifth- to fourth-century BCE Tyrian coins. The appellation Ba'al Tsur is more accurately translated as "the lord of Tyre" rather than "Ba'al (the storm god) of Tyre". This is proven in the Esarhaddon/Ba'al of Tyre treaty which lists three aspects of the Tyrian storm god separately from Melqart (Akkadian ^{d}mi-il-qar-tu). While Ba'al Shamêm, Ba'al Malagê, and Ba'al Zaphon control the marine storm, Melqart and Eshmun are described as having effects on the land and its fecundity (for the Assyrian text see Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 24–27). It should also be stressed that ancient Greek speakers, and several bilingual inscriptions in both Phoenician and Greek, translated Melqart as Herakles, or Tyrian Herakles, and not as Zeus, which suggests these ancients viewed Melqart as a divine hero and not a storm god. I have already discussed the problems of the identification of the Phoenician god

Melqart may also have been a tutelary deity of commerce, an aspect that was of extreme importance to the Phoenician economy and expansion throughout the Mediterranean. Classical sources demonstrate that numerous promontories, islands, and harbors were dedicated to Melqart, typically recorded under his equivalent name in Greek, Herakles (Semple 1927: 366; for the links between Herakles and Melqart see Malkin 2011: 128–29). The Phoenician god is also divinely linked to ship building, seafaring, exploratory voyages, and maritime adventure in classical textual traditions (Williams-Reed 2018: 143–49); and to tuna and the tuna run in the western Mediterranean (Bartoloni and Guirguis 2017; Fernández Camacho 2017).[6] Inscriptions in Phoenician note a "Rosh Melqart," a headland or promontory dedicated to the god (Bonnet 1988: 267–69). One Phoenician ship was also named Melqart, a form of devotion to the deity or indication that the vessel was imbued with the god's spirit (Herakles in the Greek; Arian, *Anabasis of Alexander* 2.24.6), and sacrifices were made to ask for the god's protection before setting sail and in thanksgiving after safe arrival (Heliodoros of Emesa, *Aethiopica* 4.16.8; Strabo, *Geography* 3.5.5).

Seaside temples and shrines

Phoenician seafarers worshipped these gods and goddesses among their diverse pantheon of deities while on land in order to ask for protection before setting sail on a voyage, or to give thanks to a divine patron after a safe arrival on shore. Temples dedicated to guardian deities provided sacred space in harbors for mariners to give propitiations to their divine protectors (Brody 1998: 39–54). Some of these offerings were unique to sailors and their maritime world. These included model ships, votive anchors, and anchor parts.

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on the seahorse/hippocamp, above, and his misidentification as the Phoenician Poseidon. It should be stressed, though, that there is also no primary evidence that equates this god on the hippocamp with Melqart either.

[6] I would like to thank Pamina Fernández Camacho for sharing her fascinating article with me.

Evidence of Canaanite maritime votives is found in the dedicatory stone anchors and bronze model ships from the Temple of Obelisks and other sacred areas at Byblos. These offerings date to the beginning phase of the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1950–1750 BCE), a period when Byblos was one of the most important harbor sites in the central Levant and sea trade was opening up with Cyprus, Egypt, and Crete. During the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550–1175 BCE), eastern Mediterranean maritime exchange expanded even further and increased in the quantities of goods exchanged. From this international period, ritual offerings of stone anchors are found in the Temple of Baʿal in Ugarit, a powerful Late Bronze commercial center located near the coast of north Syria as detailed above. This acropolis temple had two types of anchor offerings; ones built into the foundation of the structure itself, and others placed near the building's entrance or in its courtyard. These may represent the fulfillment of different types of vows made to Baʿal Zaphon, the patron god of the city to whom this particular temple was dedicated. Three contemporary temples and shrines have been excavated at Ugarit, as discussed above, none of which contained any type of maritime votive offerings. This suggests that sailors focused their divine thanks in the structure devoted to the storm god.

The tradition of offering anchors and model ships as dedications related to human–divine vows continued in later periods. Votive anchors and anchor parts are found in Phoenician temples at Tell Sukas on the Syrian coast, in its Period G[2] tripartite sanctuary dating to the early sixth century BCE; Kition-Bamboula on Cyprus,[7] in two phases of its sanctuaries dating to the mid-seventh to sixth century BCE; and at Coria del Río, near Seville in Spain, the westernmost point of the Phoenician colonial expansion (Riis 1970: 64; Caubet

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[7] Ethnicity on Cyprus in the Iron Age is a notoriously tricky set of issues. The Cypro-Archaic period at Kition was likely populated by autocthonous peoples and Phoenicians. Phoenician evidence from the Bamboula sanctuaries, and elsewhere at the site, include ostraca and monumental stone inscriptions in the Phoenician language and Phoenician style ceramics made locally, Caubet, Fourrier, and Yon 2015. For the Phoenician or Cypro-Phoenician identification of the Bamboula sanctuaries see Calvet 2002; Caubet 1984: 112, 118; and Caubet, Fourrier, and Yon 2015.

1984: 107–18; Neville 2007: 127–28; Romero Recio 2008: 79; Caubet, Fourrier, and Yon 2015). A clay model ship was among the offerings uncovered in an eighth- to sixth-century BCE Phoenician temple dedicated to Ba'al and Astarte, overlooking the Guadalquivir river in Seville, which in antiquity was on the coast of the Atlantic (Celestino and López-Ruiz 2016: 239–43). The sanctuary at Kition-Bamboula, an important Phoenician, or Tyrian, colonial site on Cyprus, gives us the most detailed information. The temple contained stone anchors left as ritual offerings in two of its phases dating to ca. 650–500 BCE. This sacred structure was located in an area of the city overlooking the harbor, adjacent to ship sheds that were used for dry-docking warships (Yon 2001; Caubet, Fourrier, and Yon 2015). The temple appears to have been dedicated to several Phoenician deities, including Melqart, Ba'al, and Astarte (Bloch-Smith 2014: 173–76). Thus, it is difficult to attribute the votive anchors as offerings to a specific Phoenician god or goddess.

Both Melqart and Ba'al have been identified as divine patrons of mariners above. There have been several recent attempts to link Astarte, goddess of the hunt, war, kingship, and apotropaic magic, to the protection of Phoenician seafarers (Acquaro, Filippi, and Medas 2010; Ruiz Cabrero 2010; Christian 2013). This claim is rooted in misconceptions of Astarte's attributes imbedded in the secondary literature. I still cannot find any direct, indisputable primary data that demonstrate that Astarte was a patron goddess of Phoenician mariners, although it may be hinted at given the orientation of Phoenician temples dedicated to Astarte towards the planet Venus, a probable astronomical navigational aid for seafarers (see Esteban and Escacena Carrasco 2013: 140–41; Bloch-Smith 2014; Esteban and Pellín 2016: 165). Yet Astarte's irrefutable links to the maritime patron goddesses Aphrodite and Isis suggest that we may be missing the Phoenician data (Brown and Smith 2019; Bricault 2020),[8] not a surprise given the paucity of indigenous evidence for Astarte's powers, and interactions

13

[8] I would like to thank Laurent Bricault for sharing his important 2020 book on Isis Pelagia and the goddess's importance to mariners with me during the recent pandemic, which resulted in me not having access to a research library.

with the divine or human realms. The convergence of evidence from Kition-Bamboula of a temple dedicated to the goddess and other gods, votive anchors, neighboring military ship sheds, which overlooks the city's harbor may tentatively link Astarte in her warrior aspect as a protector of Phoenician warships and their crews. It should be noted, however, that both Melqart and Ba'al, who were worshipped at Kition-Bamboula, were also depicted as warrior gods, and were divine patrons of Phoenician warships (Brody 1998: 20, 33–34, Woolmer 2012) (Fig. 3). Thus, the offerings of anchors may have been related to any, or all, of the three deities worshipped in the temple at Kition-Bamboula.
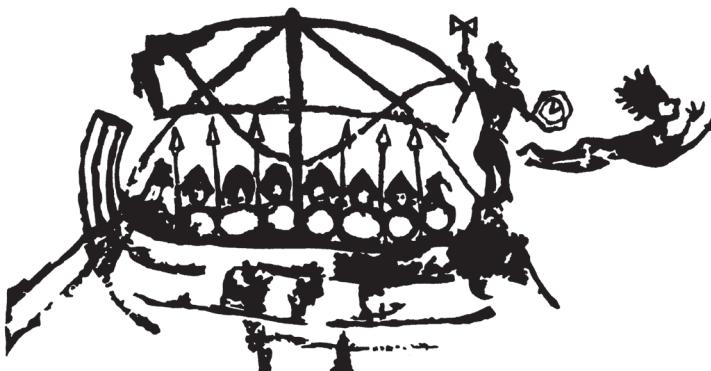
Fig. 3: Smiting god on prow of Phoenician warship, seventh- to sixth-century BCE(?) tomb painting (for confusion of dating see Camps and Longerstay 2000; López-Bertran, Garcia-Ventura, and Krueger 2008), Kef el Blida. Source: Brody 1998, Fig. 24.

Morphological changes in anchors themselves may explain the subsequent disappearance of votive anchors or anchor parts from the inventory of offerings found in the excavation of sanctuaries dedicated to the patron deities of seafarers (Brody 1998: 52). The later of the two maritime offerings at Kition-Bamboula was a large piece of a stone anchor stock, the weighted cross-piece of anchors that resemble ones we still use today. It is possible that anchors, or parts of anchors, like the stock, were offered in Phoenician temples dating later than the evidence from Sukas, Kition-Bamboula, and Coria del Río; however, developments in anchor technology meant that elements, like stocks,

were made from lead, a metal that is easily recycled, or from wood, which biodegrades. Thus, probable maritime votive offerings of lead or wooden anchor parts would no longer remain in the archaeological record.

Temples in harbor cities may have also served as navigational aids and landmarks for sailors, thus providing a very pragmatic and yet spiritual link for mariners seeking to dock their vessel safely on arrival. The Bronze Age Temple of Ba'al at Ugarit has already been detailed above as a likely navigational aid for ships docking at its port; and an earlier, Early Bronze–Middle Bronze temple from Byblos, the Tower Temple, was visible from sea and may have served as a kind of proto-lighthouse for nearby ships (Frost 2002: 62–64). Five stone anchors form the first step of the stairway leading up to this Byblian Tower Temple, demonstrating the structure's importance to seafarers. A recent GIS study reconstructs the critical role that all three major temples at the Phoenician settlement of Gadir (Cadiz) in Spain, the southern sanctuary dedicated to Melqart and two northern temples consecrated to Astarte and Ba'al Hammon, likely played in guiding ships to safe anchorage at the site (López-Sánchez, Niveau-de-Villedary y Mariñas, Gómez-González 2019: 286–305).

While voyaging away from port, shrines built on isolated promontories of land were visible to sailors in their travel between harbors. These shrines served sacral and functional purposes: they continued the link between seafarers and their holy patrons while distant from port, served as landmarks for safe navigation, and typically marked the location of freshwater sources (Semple 1927; Morton 2001; Vella 1998: 374–90). Classical authors provide us with the details of numerous Phoenician promontory shrines, found in locations from the eastern Mediterranean littoral to the Atlantic shores of Spain and Morocco. Excavated examples are more rare, likely because of their isolated locations. Discoveries spanning the second–first millennia at Nahariyah, Ashkelon, Mevorakh, Makmish, Tell Sukas, Kommos, Capo San Marco at Tharros, Kition, and Ras ed-Drek show material remains of these shrines that marked Canaanite and Phoenician routes throughout the Mediterranean (Brody 1998: 55–60; Vella 1998; Bartoloni 2018). Malta was home to at least four Phoenician promontory temples or shrines,

protecting seafarers during their approach to the island regardless of their direction of travel (Gambin 2002–2003).

Similarly, natural features that provided important landmarks from the sea could take on sacral qualities. Headlands or mountain peaks served as navigational aids from onboard ship and were often dedicated to patron deities. It is clear that several sacred caves were important features for Phoenician mariners, who drew dedicatory images of their ships, warships, or parts of their vessels on the walls of the cave sanctuaries at the Grotta Regina in Sicily and Laja Alta in Spain (Vella 1998: 164–66; Brody 2005: 179–81; López-Bertran, Garcia-Ventura, and Krueger 2008: 347–48; Christian 2013, 2014). The Grotta Regina also contained depictions of the sign of Tinnit, a divine symbol portrayed on a Carthaginian ship likely representing the goddess Tinnit, as detailed above. Further Phoenician cave sanctuaries are located near the sea, such as Es Culleram on Ibiza and Gorham's Cave on Gibraltar, and may have served as important landmarks that were visible from the water and thus were vital for Phoenician navigation over the sea lanes of the Mediterranean (Vella 1998: 254–63; Brody 2005: 179–81).

Sacred space aboard ship

In both ancient and modern traditional seafaring cultures, ships are considered to contain divine spirits that protect mariners from the dangers of the deep. This belief is manifested in several forms: by the representation of a deity or protective totem at the prow or stern of a vessel; by the addition of oculi, or eyes, at the ship's prow to guide the vessel and ward off harm; the attachment of ornamental horns on the prows of warships; and the naming of ships after a deity known for traits beneficial to sailors (Brody 1998: 62–73; Woolmer 2012). These vessels' divine spirits and other divinities were worshipped at sacred spaces onboard ship, typically found at the prow or stern of a vessel.

Evidence for the concept that ships were imbued with divine spirits is found in diverse sources. There are very few extant Levantine or Phoenician maritime texts, yet we know from the Late Bronze Age Ugaritic Kirta epic that the sacred mountain, Mount Zaphon, was

represented as a ship; and a parallel reference from a New Kingdom Egyptian papyrus details that Ba'al Zaphon was worshipped in the form of a ship (Brody 1998: 15–18). In later periods, seafarers dedicated ships, or model ships, to Zeus Kasios, Ba'al Zaphon's direct Hellenic counterpart, or more generally to Zeus the Savior, Zeus Soter. A letter from the king of Tyre to the king of Ugarit details the sinking of a ship in a storm (Bordreuil and Pardee 2009: 238–29). This ship is said to have literally died in the tempest (Ugaritic *mtt by gšm 'adr*; Bordreuil and Pardee 2009: 238, Text 26 lines 13–14), suggesting an animate spirit that perished with the loss of the vessel. Classical authors supply occasional details about Phoenician ships: such as, merchant vessels and warships that are named after protective deities; figureheads representing gods, goddesses, or divine creatures at the prow of vessels; and the worship of images of deities at the stern portion of war galleys (Brody 1998: 65–67).

17

The excavation of shipwrecks has provided a source of material cultural remains related to the sacred and rituals aboard ship (Abdelhamid 2015). A figurine of a Levantine goddess was found in the excavations of a Late Bronze Age ship at Uluburun, Turkey, providing direct evidence of a deity onboard the vessel. The location of the female figurine among the scatter of artifacts indicates that it was housed at the prow of the doomed ship (Wachsmann 1998: 206–208), and likely represents the goddess to whom the vessel was dedicated. A Phoenician ship sank of the southeastern coast of Spain, floundering on a submerged rock outcrop called the Bajo de la Campana. Among a wealth of recently excavated cargo, a single stone altar was discovered, marking sacred space aboard this fated ship (Polzer 2014: 238–39). A recent find of a bronze ram from a Carthaginian warship in the waters off the west coast of Sicily has an inscription in Phoenician (Tusa and Royal 2012: 43; Biggs 2017: 355; Schmitz forthcoming). Preliminary readings of this direct evidence, from the rare find of material remains of a Phoenician war galley, suggest that the warship was dedicated to either Ba'al, or Tinnit and Reshep.

Reshep, a Phoenician deity not discussed thus far, was the god of pestilence. The other two deities possibly named in the inscription on the ram have been shown above to be divine patrons of Phoenician

seafarers. We look forward to further research on this important find, so we can better determine which god, goddess, or gods were worshipped aboard this third-century BCE Punic military vessel.[9]

Maritime iconography provides the richest source of evidence we have for ritual space aboard ships (Brody 1998: 68–72). These depictions show anthropomorphic prow ornaments that typically represent a guardian deity and animal totems that were companions to the gods or messengers between the earthly and heavenly realms. The Phoenicians were known for their horse-headed ships, which are mentioned by several classical authors and are depicted in Assyrian representations of Phoenician ships (Friedman 2015). It is possible that the horse-headed prow figure depicts an abbreviated form of the winged seahorse, or hippocamp, a composite creature with the head of a horse, wings of bird, and a sea-serpent's body and tail. This winged seahorse is shown directly below ships on coins from Byblos and Aradus, representing the protection of the hippocamp's companion god over these vessels (Fig. 1). A smiting god is depicted on the prow of a ship from a Phoenician tomb at Kef el-Blida, likely portraying Melqart (Fig. 3),[10] while another smiting god is found on the prows of ships depicted on coins, representing the storm god, Ba'al. Prow figures of goddesses are also found on ships depicted on coins. However, the representations lack enough details to be able to identify any individual goddesses from the Phoenician pantheon (Fig. 4). A war galley with a lion-headed prow is shown on coin from Byblos. The lion is a companion to both Asherah and Melqart, so it is difficult to interpret which of these deities was protecting the Byblian warship.

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[9] I would like to thank Philip Schmitz for sharing his unpublished research on this inscription on the Phoenician ship's ram discovered in deep waters off of the Egadi Islands with me (Schmitz forthcoming).

[10] The cultural identity of this painting of a warship is interpreted variously as Libyan or Phoenician; see Camps and Longerstay 2000 and López-Bertran, Garcia-Ventura, and Krueger 2008. I view this war galley as Phoenician or Punic because the iconography of its prow figure, the bearded smiting god with an axe, conical cap, and shield, is par excellence that of the Phoenician god Melqart; see Bonnet 2007.
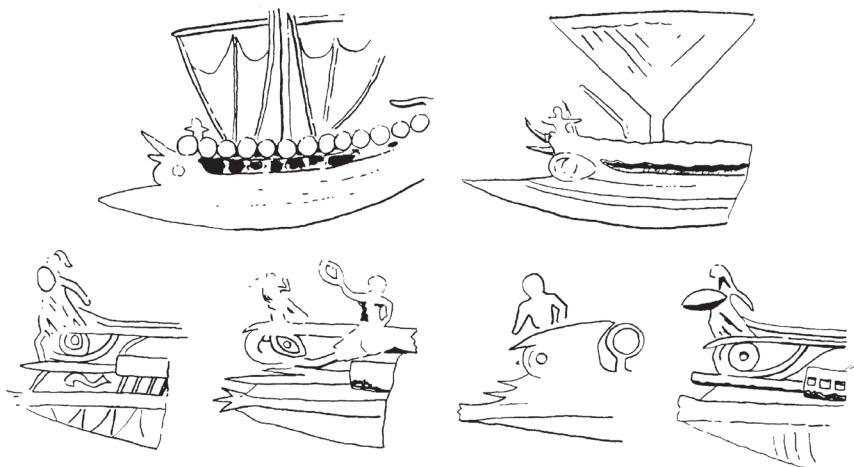
Fig. 4: Phoenician ships with anthropomorphic figures and apotropaic eyes at their prows, coins. Source: Brody 1998, Fig. 65.

Various divine symbols adorned the prows of Phoenician warships (Woolmer 2012: 238–52), and decorated the tops of poles placed both at the prow and stern of fishing vessels, merchant ships, and war galleys (Fig. 4). These decorations included the caduceus, crescent, crescent-and-disk, and the sign of Tinnit (Brody 1998) (Fig. 2). These emblems represent the protection over ships of all types offered by the major goddess of Carthage, Tinnit. Oculi, or ships' eyes, are very common in representations of ships and are depicted on several different kinds of Phoenician vessels; they are also occasionally uncovered in the excavation of shipwrecks or ship sheds (Figs. 2 and 4; Galili and Rosen 2015: 51–53, 91). Representations of parts of ships, such as prows or sterns, or ships' equipment, such as rudders and anchors suggest that specific areas of vessels or objects on board had sacral significance (Fig. 4). This interpretation of the Phoenician data is supported by classical texts that detail the concepts of the sacred anchor and holy steering rudder, as well as maritime votive offerings, such as stone anchors, anchor stocks, miniature anchors, rudders, steering oars, miniature steering oars, model boats, and even the prows or rams from captured enemy warships (Brody 1998: 76; Galili and Rosen 2015; Tito 2018).

19

Religious ceremonies performed by seafarers

Special religious ceremonies were performed by Phoenician sailors, in order to please divine patrons, ensure safety during a voyage, and aid in proper navigation. These rites typically involved some type of sacrifice, prayer, offering, libation, or vow at stages in a journey that required sacred protection. The sea itself was a liminal zone, and travel over the water was a particular rite of passage. Rituals were often conducted during transitional stages in a voyage: in port, propitiations took place before the journey or upon safe arrival; and onboard ship, rituals were conducted while leaving or entering harbor, while passing a landmark or headland, or in times of danger or need.

According to classical authors, Phoenician seafarers made sacrifices to Melqart before setting sail and after landing in harbor (Brody 1998: 75). Archaeological remains of anchors, anchor stocks, and model ships placed as offerings in temples in Canaanite and Phoenician coastal sites suggest that celebrations were performed or sacred vows fulfilled in these sanctuaries, perhaps as dedications after sailors survived numerous dangers faced at sea.

While away from the relative safety of harbor, Phoenician seafarers continued contact with their protective deities through the dedication of promontories and landmarks to their sacred patrons, and by building shrines on headlands. These sanctified natural features and sacred structures were a focus in mariners' rituals conducted while out on the water. They may also have indicated places to moor where ceremonies could be conducted, as well as marking the location of vital natural resources, such as fresh water.

Evidence for prayers taking place on board vessels as they arrived safely in port is found in several different Egyptian representations (Brody 1998: 78–79; Fabre 2004–2005). Wall reliefs dating from the Old Kingdom depict Levantine and Egyptian passengers on Egyptian ships with their hands raised up in a typical gesture of prayer as the vessels dock safely in Memphis. A painting from the New Kingdom tomb of Kenamun shows a convoy of Levantine ships mooring after arriving at the end of their voyage in Egypt. Some members of the crew hold

their hands up in prayer, while high-ranking crew members and captains burn incense and offer libations to celebrate the success of their journey. Incense burners have been discovered on several Phoenician shipwrecks, from the eastern to the western Mediterranean, dating from the eighth century BCE down through the Hellenistic period (Brody 2005: 178–79; Polzer 2014: 238). Musical instruments discovered on the much earlier, Late Bronze Age Uluburun shipwreck may have been used in shipboard ceremonies. Religious pendants from the Uluburun wreck, which would have been worn around the necks of sailors, are evidence of the personal piety of individuals on the ill-fated expedition. Several of the crew members on the ships depicted in Kenamun's tomb wear similar protective medallions (Brody 1998: 79–80).

While facing perils at sea, whether from tempests or battles, mariners made vows to their divine guardians in order to solicit their sacred protection. The fabled Phoenician prince, Cadmus, is portrayed praying for help from Poseidon while his craft was tossed by storms (Diodorus 5.58.2). After making landfall safely, Cadmus built a temple for Poseidon in fulfillment of his storm-driven vows. During a violent storm, the crew of the ship carrying the Israelite prophet Jonah pray to their storm gods, desperate to calm the winds (Jonah 1). After the sea is calmed, the mariners, some of whom were likely Phoenician, make sacrifices and offer vows to Yahweh, thanking Jonah's god for quieting the storm. In the heat of a naval battle, a Carthaginian marine is portrayed praying to his warship's deity for divine aid (Silius Italicus, *Punica* 14.436–41). When this galley is sinking, its pilot sacrifices himself to the ship's patron god by literally spilling his own blood on the statuette of the deity on board the warship.

Because of the hazards faced at sea, forecasts were essential for the safety of a voyage. A bad omen, read from a sacrifice to Melqart, was enough to turn around an expedition from Carthage to Gadir in western Spain (Strabo, *Geography* 3.5.5). A Phoenician navigator is commended for his capacity to predict what future winds will be like, and soothsayers were brought on a voyage from Carthage along the Atlantic coast of Africa (Silius Italicus, *Punica* 14.455–56; Periplus of Hanno). On board the ship carrying Jonah to Tarshish,

a western Phoenician location, the crew cast lots to reveal who was causing the storm threatening their craft (Jonah 1:7). An animal knucklebone, or astragalus, was found on the Late Bronze Age Cape Gelidonya shipwreck, which may have been rolled to read omens. This artifact hints at one of many possible methods that pilots or soothsayers may have used to predict future sailing conditions or divine the will of the gods.

Maritime mortuary ritual and burial practices

During a lifetime at sea, particular religious beliefs and practices protected the lives of seafarers; mortuary rites for their dead also show specialized traits (see Stewart 2007 for historic archaeological analogies). The only text that details the mourning rites of Phoenician mariners is found in the book of Ezekiel (27:27–31) in the Hebrew Bible. The passage indicates that the sailors did not perform mortuary rituals while onboard their ships; instead, they postponed their grieving until after they had arrived on dry land. Given ancient and modern traditional parallels, it is probable that mourning the dead while at sea was taboo because death rites would pollute a vessel, or bring it bad luck, and so was prohibited.

Mortuary rituals and sacred beliefs may also be interpreted from burials. A small number of tombs from the Middle and Late Bronze Age harbor sites of Byblos, Ugarit, Ashkelon, and Tel Akko have stone anchors seemingly built into their structures or have stone anchors left as burial offerings inside of the burial chamber (Brody 1998: 89–92). Later Phoenician burials sometimes include model ships among their grave goods, and several Phoenician tombs in north Africa and Maresha in the Shephelah of modern Israel include the depiction or graffiti of ships (Basch 1987: 303–307; Camps and Longerstay 2000; Hadad, Stern, and Artzy 2018: 121–24). These familiar maritime votives symbolized the profession of the interred, but were also charged with sacred significance in seafarers' rituals, and thus may have been a final tribute to a mariner's divine patron.

22

Conclusions

The evidence presented relate the specific nature of the religious beliefs and ritual practices of Phoenician seafarers, which was a subset of more generalized Phoenician religion generated by the unique concerns, fears, hazards, and spiritual needs faced at sea. Specialized religion is comprised of the unique sacral beliefs and rites of groups within a society, generated by their profession and/or their rank, role, or how they are viewed within their culture or kinship structure. While aspects of religion are found throughout a society, other characteristics may vary based on a group's or individual's position within a culture, or through constructed perceptions of gender and sexuality. This concept has generally been overlooked in the study of ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean religions, which are typically reconstructed in a monolithic form, based primarily on textual data that derive from elite strata of ancient societies.

23

I have presented archaeological, textual, and iconographic evidence that reveal aspects of the religion of Phoenician seafarers, traditionally a non-elite group within its parent society. Comparative evidence from classical and modern traditional seagoing societies was used to construct a framework to better organize and interpret the scattered evidence, and allow me to demonstrate that Phoenician mariners had specialized religious beliefs and practices. These Levantine sailors focused on sacred relationships with divine patrons that controlled winds, storms, and aspects of wayfinding that aided ships through safe and successful voyages. The deities include Ba'al, Asherah, Tinnit, and Phoenician Poseidon. Melqart also had a special relationship with seafarers, perhaps as a tutelary deity of voyaging or maritime commerce. These patron deities were worshipped in harbor temples before setting sail, and upon safe arrival in port, sometimes with maritime offerings such as stone anchors, anchor stocks, or model ships. While at sea, the vessels themselves protected sailors from the deep while the spirits of deities imbued within the vessels provided divine guardianship, symbolized by various prow figures of gods, goddess, their companions, and other divine symbols. There were sacred spaces aboard vessels, and sacred mountains, divine headlands, and promontory

shrines allowed for continued communication with the gods as well as aiding in successful navigation. Ceremonies were performed at various liminal stages within a voyage in order to continue divine connection and protection, and when disasters were averted sacred vows were fulfilled in harbor temples and promontory shrines. When ships sank or death happened at sea, special mortuary rituals took place, and maritime symbols accompanied some sailors with them to their graves. This focused subset of Phoenician religion allows us to connect vital aspects of seafarers' spiritual life with what we have long known about the crucial importance of nautical technology and maritime trade to the early Levantine culture that pioneered exploration, commerce, and sailing. Related themes and artifacts are attested throughout the Mediterranean basin and beyond the Pillars of Herakles to the Iberian and African shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

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29

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DAS SOGENANNTE *ÄGYPTER-ARCHIV* VON ASSUR (N31): ARCHÄOLOGISCHE BEMERKUNGEN ZUM KOMPLEX N31A+D

Melanie Wasmuth

Abstract

The contribution at hand discusses a detail of the documentation history of the excavations undertaken by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft at Assur in 1908. Its concern is the archaeological documentation of the so-called archive(s) of the Egyptians, which – in the view of the author – needs urgent correcting as it has created an interpretational dynamic that is based on problematic premises. The enormous merits of Pedersén's fundamental 1985/86 study on the archives and libraries from Assur notwithstanding, the suggested mixing of tablets from what he introduced as 'archive' N31A and N31D is not born out by the excavation documentation. I showcase in my contribution the evidence for explicit observation of Middle and Late Assyrian strata including tablet finds from either stratum in both excavation areas (eA7II and eE6V) as well as indications for area-internal mixing of the Middle and Late Assyrian tablets. This is a much more likely explanation for the presence of Middle and Late Assyrian tablets in the find complexes Ass. 13319 (N31A; eA7II) and Ass. 13058 (N31D/M7; eE6V) than a cross-area mix in the excavation house. The correction has major implications also on a socio-cultural level, as it shows that the documentation of the financial, administrative and juridical activities of the Egyptians living in Assur was spread at least over four different living quarters across the town.

32

DAS SOGENANNTE *ÄGYPTER-ARCHIV* VON ASSUR (N31): ARCHÄOLOGISCHE BEMERKUNGEN ZUM KOMPLEX N31A+D

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33

Einleitung

Ziel des vorliegenden Beitrags[1] ist es, die bislang erfolgten enormen Leistungen bei der Aufarbeitung der Befunde der frühen Assur-Grabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft fortzuführen durch

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eine Korrektur der Befundpräsentation des sogenannten Ägypter-Archivs (N31). Hier hat die forschungsgeschichtliche Bearbeitung der Fund- und Befundkomplexe in den vergangenen 110 Jahren zu einer Kombination von archäologischen und kulturgeschichtlichen Unstimmigkeiten geführt, die die weitere Forschung zum philologischen Befund erheblich erschweren. Kern des vorliegenden Beitrags ist die kultur- und dokumentationsgeschichtlich problematische Zusammenziehung der Befunde aus unterschiedlichen Grabungsbereichen in EIN Archiv (trotz Unterrubriken). Dies zementiert die inhaltlich unbegründete Wahrnehmung einer ghettoartig zusammenlebenden ägyptischen Expat-Kommune. Wie eng oder weit verzweigt das soziale Netz der handelnden Personen war, deren Dokumente zu N31 zusammengefasst wurde, und wieweit ein Großteil von ihnen in der Tat aus der Niltalregion stammen, ist separat näher zu eruieren.[2] Der vorliegende Beitrag konzentriert sich auf den archäologischen Befund, der einer entsprechenden Siedlungskonzentration der ägyptischen Kommune entgegensteht. Ist schon die Zusammenziehung in Unterkategorien inhaltlich problematisch, erweist sich die mittlerweile erfolgte Gruppierung von N31A und N31D zu einem Archiv N31A+D als stratigraphisch unhaltbar.

[2] Wasmuth, in Vorbereitung (Forschungsstipendium nach Habilitation der Gerda Henkel Stiftung; Juli 2021–Juni 2023). Zur grundsätzlichen Problematik der biographischen Mehrdeutigkeit von *Ägyptern* (*miṣirayyu*) und der unhaltbaren Generalisierung der Gleichung *ägyptischer Name = geographisch und kulturell ägyptische Herkunft* siehe bereits Wasmuth 2011 und Wasmuth 2016.

Die Befundproblematik

Die hier zu diskutierenden Tontafeln traten im Winter 1907/1908 in den Siedlungskontexten im Umkreis der Ištar-Tempel und des Nabû-Tempels im nördlichen Teil des zentralen Stadtgebiets von Assur zutage. Bis auf wenige Ausnahmen wurden für die Tafeln Konvolutnummern vergeben, die sowohl Hort- als auch Streufunde beinhalten. Die beiden größten Tafelkomplexe, Ass. 13058 aus den Planquadraten eE6V/7I (Pedersén N31D) und Ass. 13319 aus Planquadrat eA7II (Pedersén N31A) beinhalten sowohl mittel- als auch spätneuassyrische Tontafeln. Pedersén (1986) und in Folge Faist (2007) schlagen hierfür folgende Lösung vor:[3] Ass. 13319 (N31A) kennzeichne das Tontafelkonvolut der spätassyrischen Wohnhauskontexte im Südwesten des Nabû-Tempels und Ass. 13058 dasjenige des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsgebäudes im Osten der Ištar-Tempel (sowie des späteren Nabû-Tempels, der diese teilweise überlagert[4]; zu den Fundkontexten vgl. Abb. 1, 3 und 6). Die beiden Fundkomplexe seien im Grabungshaus durchmischt worden. Entsprechend seien die mittelassyrischen Tafeln aus N31A (Ass. 13319, aus eA7II) der Fundnummer mit mittelassyrischen Texten aus N31D (Ass. 13058, aus eE6V) zuzuordnen und *vice versa* die neuassyrischen Tafeln aus N31D denjenigen aus N31A.[5]

Anlass für die Archivrecherchen, die dem vorliegenden Beitrag zugrunde liegen, ist die Verwunderung aus feldarchäologischer Praxis über einen derartigen Durchmischungsvorgang, denn die Fundnummern stammen aus verschiedenen Grabungsarealen, die zu unterschiedlichen Zeiten ergraben wurden. Daraus ergab sich die Fragestellung, ob die Grabungsdokumentation Hinweise auf plausiblere Lösungen liefert. Für beide Areale, die in (spät)neuassyrischer Zeit unterschiedlichen Stadtvierteln zugehören, lässt sich zeigen, dass sowohl mittelassyrische als auch neuassyrische Schichten beobachtet, aber die Tafelfunde nicht konsequent separiert wurden. Für das Areal südwestlich der Tempelkomplexe (eA7II, Ass. 13319) kommt der Befund einem Beweis nahe. Es lassen sich in der schriftlichen Grabungsdokumentation explizite Angaben für die Beobachtung von

35

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[3] Pedersén 1986, 128–29; Faist 2007, 125–29.

[4] Für die Befundsituation des Ištar-Nabû-Komplexes vgl. Schmitt 2012.

[5] Zur Diskussion der Befundlage und Argumentation Pederséns s.u.

mittelassyrischen Schichten inklusive Tontafelfunden finden, für die keine neuen Fundnummern vergeben, sondern die dem neuassyrischen Tontafelkomplex zugeordnet wurden. Für den noch fragmentarischeren Befund im Osten des Tempelkomplexes lässt sich selbiges zumindest gut plausibilisieren. Aus archäologischer und kulturgeschichtlicher Perspektive ist folglich dringend anzuraten den Komplex N31 in wenigstens vier 'Archive' (und nicht Subarchive!) zu trennen entsprechend der ursprünglich dokumentierten Fundkomplexe:

- die spätassyrischen Tontafeln aus dem Quartier nordöstlich des Nabû-Tempels (eE6V/7I), die problematischerweise bereits auf der Grabung dem mittelassyrischen Fundkomplex Ass. 12979/80+13058/59 zugeordnet wurden (entspricht weitgehend N31D, jedoch explizit nicht "belonging to group A", wie von Pedersén 1986: 129 vorgeschlagen und seither tradiert). Diese sollten eine neue, eigene Fundnummern erhalten, jedoch keinesfalls der Fundnummer Ass. 13319 zugeordnet werden.

- die spätassyrischen Tontafeln aus dem Quartier südwestlich des Nabû-Tempels (eA7II), die zumindest einen dezidiert beobachteten Hortfund (= ursprüngliche Fundnummer Ass. 13319) sowie Streu-, Schutt- und Fundamentfunde umfassen, die der Hortfundnummer im weiteren Verlauf der Grabung zugeordnet wurden (entspricht weitgehend N31A). Da die mittelassyrischen Tontafeln laut Grabungsdokumentation aus älteren Schichten stammen, sollten diese eine eigene Fundnummer erhalten, jedoch keinesfalls Ass. 12979/80 oder Ass. 13058 zugeordnet werden.

- die spätassyrischen Tontafeln aus Assur-Mitte/Süd (Ass. 14671), deren näherer Kontext derzeit nicht zu klären ist, da sie aus dem Suchschnitt in gE9I stammen (entspricht N31B); vermutlich Hortfund aus dem Schutt eines neuassyrischen Privathauses (Miglus g9:4).[6]

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[6] Das Grabungstagebuch beinhaltet keinen Eintrag zum entsprechenden Fund und es gibt meines Wissens auch keine Fundeinmessung desselben. Die einzige erhaltene Information ist der Eintrag im Inventarbuch, bei dem – soweit heute noch nachvollziehbar – wie bei den anderen Hortfunden (vgl. Ass. 13319) von Beginn an die Tontafeln gezählt und vermerkt wurden, während bei explizit angelegten Schuttkontext-Fundnummern (vgl. Ass. 13058) die Zahl offengelassen

- die spätassyrischen Tontafeln aus Oberflächenstreufunden (Ass. 20833) und ähnlichem (z.B. CNM 8612), die derzeit als N31C und N31E geführt werden.

Kulturgeschichtlich und stratigraphisch wäre bereits der zweite Komplex (N31A) in zumindest sechs beobachtete Befundkomplexe in Areal eA7II zu trennen (s.u.). Da deren interne Vermischung bereits auf der Grabung erfolgte, sind der ursprüngliche Hortfund und die jeweiligen Streufunde jedoch nicht mehr mit Sicherheit zu trennen. Ähnliches gilt für den überwiegend mittelassyrischen Befund, dem die spätneuassyrischen Tafeln N31D auf der Grabung zugeordnet wurden.
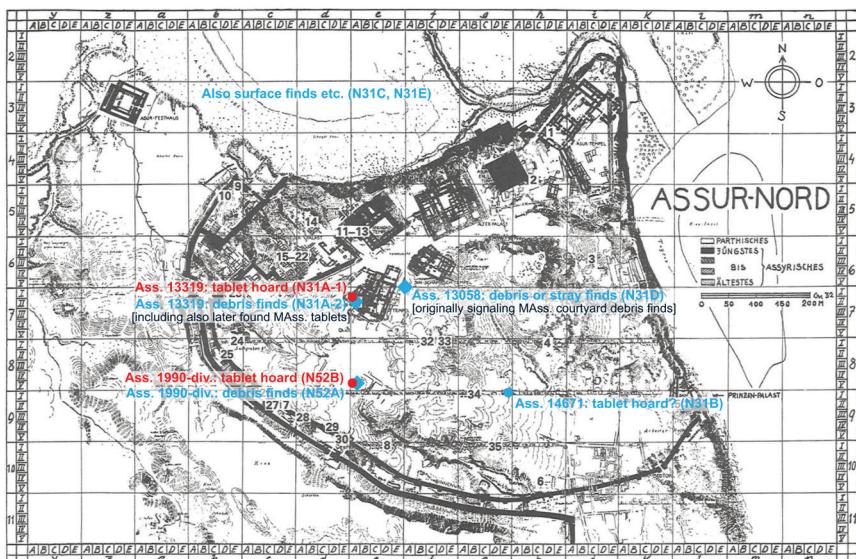
Abb. 1: Das Stadtgebiet von Assur. Fundorte der sog. Ägypter-Archive (Abbildung: Wasmuth 2021; nach Pedersén 1986, 10 fig. 7; Andrae and Jordan 1908). Roter Kreis: expliziter Hortfund (= Privathausarchiv); blaue Raute: Schutt- und Streufunde aus Wohnquartierkontext (= unklare Archiv-Zugehörigkeit); blauer Kreis: unsichere Hortfundzuschreibung (= mögliches Privathausarchiv).

oder mit Bleistift und damit leicht korrigierbar eingetragen wurde. Assur Inventar v, 8: „14671. | [Dezember] 14. | 44 Ungebrannte Tontafeln, klein, z.T. envelopp. | [Ass. Ph.] 4162 | Mitte, 1m unter Hügeloberfl. i. Schutt | gE9I". Vgl. Miglus Pläne 53 und 137.

Für alle, die mit der Grabungs und Dokumentationsgeschichte von Assur und seinem 'Archiv' N31 nicht vertraut sind, seien der konkreten Befunddiskussion zunächst einige forschungsgeschichtliche Eckpunkte vorangestellt: zur Dokumentationsgeschichte von N31, zur Archiv-Definition von Pedersén und zu den Schichtenhorizonten im Umfeld der Befundkomplexe, aus denen die Tontafelfunde aus N31A und N31D stammen.

Die Dokumentationsgeschichte von N31

Wie bereits erwähnt, sind die zur Diskussion stehenden neuassyrischen Tontafeln und ihre archäologischen Befunde in den Grabungskampagnen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft unter Leitung von Walter Andrae 1907–1908 auf dem Gebiet des heutigen Qalʿat Sherqat im Nordirak zutage getreten, und zwar – soweit bekannt – in den Planquadraten eA7II und eE6V/7I (sowie gE9I). Gemäß damaliger Regelung zwischen der deutschen Expedition und dem Osmanischen Reich wurden die Fund(komplex)e geteilt. Im Wesentlichen fiel eine Hälfte an das heutige Vorderasiatische Museum Berlin, die andere an das Archäologische Museum Istanbul, die Grabungsdokumentation blieb hingegen Eigentum der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft.[7] Die Artefakte sowie die Fund- und Befunddokumentation sind folglich auf drei Institutionen in zwei Ländern aufgeteilt. Seit Wiederaufnahme der Grabungen der DOG in den 1990ern kommen der Irak und das Irakische Nationalmuseum in Baghdad sowie diverse Universitäten hinzu.[8] Die wechselhafte außen- und innenpolitische Lage erschwert seit Grabungsbeginn die Publikation der Altgrabungen, die mit Einsetzen des 1. Weltkrieges ausgesetzt werden musste. Zum zeitlichen Abstand und zur Schwierigkeit der Publikation von fremdem

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[7] Für die Praxis der Fundteilung etc. in Assur vgl. einleitend Crüsemann 2003b, besonders 57–60, sowie Crüsemann 2003a.

[8] Für die vorliegende Thematik ist hier vor allem die Universität Heidelberg bzw. das Grabungsprojekt zu Assur-West unter der Leitung von Peter Miglus von Bedeutung (vgl. v.a. Miglus, Radner, and Stępniowski 2016 sowie die Übersicht der gemeinsamen Assur-Projektseite »assur.de«).
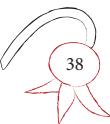
Dokumentationsmaterial kommt die teilweise reduzierte Kooperationsbereitschaft bzw. -erlaubnis der verschiedenen beteiligten Institutionen hinzu.[9]

Einen Meilenstein bei der Publikation der Archive der DOG-Altgrabungen hat Olof Pedersén 1985/1986 mit seinem grundlegenden zweibändigen Werk *Archives and Libraries in the City of Assur* gesetzt.[10] Durch die systematische Katalogisierung der Tontafelkomplexe und ihrer Kontextualisierung im archäologischen Befund hat er die Grundlage geschaffen für die weiteren Forschungen zu den mittel- und neuassyrischen Archiven aus Assur, darunter das neuassyrische 'Archiv' N31, das großteils Geschäftsakte zwischen Personen mit ägyptisch etymologisierbaren Namen dokumentiert. Seit den 1990er Jahren sind die von Pedersén als N31 klassifizierten Tontafeln Teil der großangelegten archäologischen und philologischen Aufarbeitungskampagnen der Altgrabungen von Assur. Die archäologisch-stratigraphische Befunddarstellung erfolgte teilweise im monumentalen Stratigraphie-Band von Peter Miglus zum *Wohngebiet von Assur* von 1996, teilweise im 2012 erschienen Band von Aaron Schmitt zu den *Jüngeren Ischtar-Tempel*[n] *und* [zum] *Nabû-Tempel in Assur*.[11] Als philologische Grundlagenwerke unter anderem zu N31 sind die Texteditionen von Veysel Donbaz und Simo Parpola zu den *Neo-Assyrian Texts in the Istanbul Museum* (StAT 2) sowie von Betina Faist zu den *Alltagstexte*[n] *aus neuassyrischen Archiven und Bibliotheken der Stadt Assu*r (StAT 3)

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[9] Vgl. hierzu z.B. die charakteristisch eingeschränkte Zugänglichkeit zu zentraler Dokumentation, die Pedersén's Werk (Pedersén 1985, 1986) umso herausragender machen und den Mangel an archäologischer Information in der Textedition der Istanbul-Texte (Donbaz and Parpola 2001) erklären. Die internationale und institutionelle Komplikation erklärt auch die entsprechende Trennung der neuassyrischen Textedition nach Institution (Berlin, Istanbul), nicht nach Fundkontext. Entsprechend konnten z.B. auch die diesem Beitrag zugrunde liegenden Archivrecherchen erst nach eigentlichem Projektabschluss durchgeführt werden und, wie im Falle von Pedersén, erneut nur unter teilweiser Zugangserlaubnis im Falle mehrfacher Institutionszugehörigkeit von Dokumentation und dokumentierten Artefakten.

[10] Pedersén 1985; Pedersén 1986.

[11] Miglus 1996; Schmitt 2012.

zu nennen.[12] Hinzu kommen Ergänzungs- und Korrekturvorschläge zu den Istanbul-Texten anhand der Fund- und Befunddokumentation in Berlin ebenfalls durch Betina Faist sowie durch Olof Pedersén.[13]

Die vorliegenden Ausführungen ergänzen die enormen Anstrengungen und Resultate der Auswertung der Funddokumentation insbesondere von Olof Pedersén (1985, 1986) und darauf aufbauend von Betina Faist (2004, 2007) für einen Sonderfall aus archäologischer Perspektive.

Pederséns Archiv-Definition und die Anwendungsproblematik für N31

Wie bereits angerissen gilt es hier, die archäologischen Hintergründe und historiographischen Folgen der Klassifizierung der entsprechenden Tontafelkomplexe von Assur neu zu beleuchten, die Pedersén als N31 [= Archiv mit neuassyrischen Texten Nr. 31] zu einem *Archiv* gruppierte.[14] In einem ersten Schritt sei hierfür die seinem Werk zugrunde liegende Archiv-Definition unter die Lupe genommen:

> The texts are divided into libraries containing literary texts in a broad sense of the word (including also e.g. incantations, medical prescriptions and lexical lists), and archives containing documents in a broad sense of the word (often loan and purchase documents, but also e.g. letters).[15]

Die Definition ist eine pragmatische aus philologischer Sicht. Die stratigraphische Fundvergesellschaftung, die gegebenenfalls Aufschluss über eine gemeinsame Deponierung geben könnte, ist für die Klassifizierung von untergeordneter Bedeutung, wenn auch implizit (und in den meisten Fällen) vorhanden, wie die Fortführung des Texts deutlich macht:

> Archives and libraries were found in both official buildings and private houses. In the private houses the archive was often found in the inner room which had the graves of the family under the floor.[16]

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[12] Donbaz and Parpola 2001; Faist 2007.

[13] Faist 2004; Pedersén 2003.

[14] Pedersén 1986, 125–29.

[15] Pedersén 1986, Abstract; see also in more detail Pedersén 1985, 20–21.

[16] Pedersén 1985, Abstract; Pedersén 1986, Abstract.

Im Fokus des vorliegenden Beitrags steht die Aussage Pederséns zur Gruppe D seiner Archivkategorie N31: "D. Clay tablets given wrong numbers but belonging to group A."[17] Dieser Kommentar ist explizit in seiner *Critical note on texts*:

> A mixture of some texts between Ass. 13319 and the Middle Assyrian Ass. 13058 (M7) was made during the excavation, but was partly corrected already in the original photo catalogue for Ph. Ass. 3506, 3511. This is further corrected here by transferring the Middle Assyrian Ass. 13919[sic!]f*, ar*–at*, ay* to Ass. 13058 as M7: 250–254, and by transferring the Neo-Assyrian Ass. 13058iv*, ix*, iz*, kb*, kf*, kk* here (as group D), where they, when legible (56, 57, 59), belong according to the persons treated.[18]

Wie unten v.a. anhand der schriftlichen Grabungsdokumentation zu zeigen sein wird, erfolgte – mit an Sicherheit grenzender Wahrscheinlichkeit – auf der Grabung keine derartige areal-übergreifende Durchmischung der spätneuassyrischen Texte aus eA7II (Ass. 13319, N31A) mit den mittelassyrischen Texten aus eE6V/7I (Ass. 13058, M7), sondern jeweils areal-intern eine Zusammenziehung bzw. mangelnde Trennung spät- und mittelassyrischer Texte (und Befunde). Aus archäologisch-sozialgeschichtlicher Sicht sind zudem beide Kriterien für die Durchmischung problematisch: 1) die Angabe einer expliziten Korrektur im Photoinventar sowie 2) die Gruppierung in Archive nach Inhalt statt zunächst nach archäologischem Befund.

Zu 1. Vom Photoinventar stehen das handschriftliche Original und eine maschinengeschriebene Abschrift zur Verfügung.[19] Notiert sind im wesentlichen die Fundnummern der auf dem Photo dokumentierten Artefakte. Eingeschoben in die Befunddokumentation (Ziegelpflasterreste, Kieselgründungen, Mauern, Bestattungen, Brennöfen) ist eine Reihe von zwölf Photo-Tafeln (Ph. Ass. 3501–3512), die vor allem aus dem Konvolut Ass. 13058 stammen, sowie in geringerem Maße aus dem Konvolut Ass. 13319.

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[17] Pedersén 1986, 129.

[18] Pedersén 1986, 129 (Ass. 13919 ist zu korrigieren nach Ass. 13319, vgl. auch Pedersén 1985, 81).

[19] Ich danke Helen Gries für die Recherche und Zugänglichmachung des Dokumentationsbefundes.

Handschriftliches Original:

3506 || 6. Fünf ungebrannte Tontafeln 13319 z / aq / ah | aa / f. } V + R || 2.55 192 | 70 2X

3511 || 5. Vier ungebrannte Tontafeln 13319 k / 13058 fw | [13319] m / 13319 n } V + R || 3.45 192 | 90 2X

Maschinengeschriebene Abschrift:

3506. Fünf ungebrannte Tontafeln | 13319 z aa / aq / ah f } V + R

3511. Vier ungebrannte Tontafeln | 13319 k / 13058 fw | 13319 m / 13319 n} V + R[20]

Eine indirekte Korrektur der Fund-/Areal-Zugehörigkeit geht meiner Interpretation nach aus den Einträgen nicht hervor, sondern die gemeinsame Ablichtung einzelner späterer, zunächst nur beschrifteter, aber noch nicht photographisch dokumentierter Tontafelfunde aus Areal eA7II (Ass. 13319) mit Tontafelfunden aus Areal eE6V/7I (Ass. 13058) aus praktischen Gründen der photographischen Dokumentation. Im Gegenteil, die handschriftlichen Korrekturen machen deutlich, dass die Fundnummern bei Eintrag ins Photoinventar erneut geprüft wurden und darauf geachtet wurde, die unterschiedliche Befundzugehörigkeit zu erhalten und zu dokumentieren.

Zu 2. Im Unterschied zu den meisten von Pedersén identifizierten 'Archiven' erfolgte im Fall von N31 mit seinen Unterkategorien A–E die Zuordnung zu *einem* 'Archiv' aufgrund der Überschneidung der in den Texten genannten Personen, obwohl die Tontafeln aus unterschiedlichen Planquadraten bzw. allgemein aus der Siedlung stammen oder ohne Herkunftsangabe sind.[21] Dies ist selbst bei Sicherstellung der gleichen Personenidentifizierung problematisch. Eine derartige Gruppierung verstellt den Blick dafür, dass die gleiche Person in verschiedenen Transaktionen tätig sein kann, deren Niederschlag sich potentiell – oder, je nach Kontext, sogar wahrscheinlich – in verschiedenen Archiven findet. Gerade für die Personengruppe, die in N31 fassbar wird, unterstreicht die erfolgte Klassifizierung als *ein* 'Archiv' die Annahme einer Ballung von als Ägyptern wahrgenommener Personen, die ghettoartig vor allem untereinander vernetzt sind und

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[20] Assur Photoinventar 2006–4603, ohne Seitenangabe.

[21] Pedersén 1986, 128–29; zur inhaltsbezogenen Zuordnung auch der Gruppe B zu N31 ebenda, 127.

auch in engem Umkreis voneinander wohnen. Eine breitere Streuung der 'ägyptischen Kommune' über das Stadtgebiet hinweg belegt der Grabungsbefund von 1990, der u.a. eine Gruppe von im Handels- und Finanzwesen aktiver Ägypterinnen in Assur-West dokumentiert.[22] Selbiges ist jedoch bereits aus N31 ableitbar,[23] auch wenn dieser Befund zur Zeit doppelt verschleiert wird (vgl. Abb. 1):

- durch die Zuordnung zu einem 'Archiv' (N31A–E), statt zu vier bis fünf separaten 'Archiven' (N ##–N ##): drei für die Tontafelfunde aus den jeweiligen Wohnquartieren, die den Tontafelkonvoluten N31A, N31B und N31D entsprechen, sowie ein bis zwei für die Oberflächen- und sonstigen Streufunde.
- durch die *korrigierte* Zuweisung der neuassyrischen Tafeln der Fundgruppe Ass. 13058 zum Konvolut N31A und die Zuordnung der mittelassyrischen Tafeln der Fundgruppe Ass. 13319 zur Fundgruppe Ass. 13058, die in der weiteren Forschungsrezeption zu einer Zusammenfassung von N31A und N31D zu *einem* 'Archiv' N31A+D geführt hat.[24]

Die zentralen Ursachen für den vorliegenden Interpretationsfehler liegen vor allem in dem riesigen Anspruch und der problemati- schen Dokumentations- und Publikationsbasis zu sehen, die Pederséns enormem Unterfangen zugrunde liegen. Zudem fördert die seinerzeitige (sowie derzeitige) Fachorganisation, dass derlei Fehler nicht frühzeitig auffallen. Nicht nur finden die archäologische und philologische Aufar- beitung in der Regel weitgehend getrennt statt, auch innerhalb der Philologie nahmen und nehmen sich unterschiedliche SpezialistᴉɴɴᴇN der weiteren Bearbeitung und Auswertung der mittel und der neuas- syrischen Texte an.[25] Die Trennung und Umgruppierung haben nicht

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[22] Vgl. Radner 2016, 101–10.

[23] Pedersén (1986, 125–29) notiert die Herkunft aus den verschiedenen Planquadraten.

[24] Faist 2007, 125–29. Für N31B stellt sich die Frage nicht. Die Herkunft aus einem anderen Quartier von Assur als N31A+D wurde von Pedersén und den QuelleneditorᴉɴɴᴇN der Texte nicht bezweifelt.

[25] Für die Erstedition der neuassyrischen Texte, die als N31 gruppiert sind, sind dies vor allem Betina Faist, Veysel Donbaz und Simo Parpola (Faist 2007, 125–49, 172; Donbaz and Parpola 2001, 117–54).

nur organisatorische, sondern auch inhaltliche Folgen. So stellt sich die Frage, ob auf der Ebene des antiken Archivs eine entsprechende Trennung von älteren und jüngeren Dokumenten in unterschiedliche Archive seine Berechtigung hat. Es ist grundsätzlich für jeden Einzelfall zu prüfen, ob laufende Archivkontexte in gewissem Umfang auch ältere, und gegebenenfalls sogar wesentlich ältere, Textbestände umfassen. Dies ist gerade für langlebige Wertgegenstände, Immobilien und bedeutende personenbezogene Dokumente wie Heirats- oder Freilassungsurkunden möglich bis wahrscheinlich. Für N31 (A, D) ist die Frage aufgrund der dafür unzureichenden Grabungsmethodik – oder zumindest ihrer Dokumentation – nicht abschließend zu klären. Die vorhandenen Indizien sprechen hier jedoch für eine Separierung (s.u.). Zudem gehen wichtige sozialgeschichtliche Informationen verloren, wenn die inhaltliche Zugehörigkeit der archäologischen Befundzugehörigkeit übergeordnet wird. Es ist von interpretatorisch hoher Bedeutung, ob die Geschäfts-, Verwaltungs-, und Rechtsdokumente einer bestimmten Personengruppe miteinander aufbewahrt wurden oder in verschiedenen Archiven, die über das Stadtgebiet verstreut liegen; oder ob die Trennung bzw. Zusammenziehung im zeitlichen Umfeld der Niederschrift erfolgte oder erst nachdem die Dokumente obsolet geworden waren.[26]

Die Schichtenhorizonte im Umfeld der Tempel für Ištar und Nabû

Für die Vergesellschaftung der mittel- und neuassyrischen Tontafeln in den dokumentierten Fundkomplexen ist die Siedlungsgeschichte im

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[26] Eine entsprechende inhaltliche Analyse, die Text und archäologischen Kontext verknüpft, sprengt den Rahmen des vorliegenden Beitrags. Ihr ist ab Juli 2021 ein Projekt gewidmet, das die Autorin im Rahmen des Finnish Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires, Universität Helsinki, durchführen wird, gefördert mit einem zweijährigen Forschungsstipendium nach Habilitation der Gerda Henkel Stiftung. Vgl. hierzu bereits in Ansätzen den Exkurs in Hauser 2012: 81–82, Fußnote 276. Anhand der biographischen Informationen einzelner Hauptakteure in N31B und N31A/D zeigt Hauser auf, dass trotz überschneidendem Personenkreis inhaltlich zumindest zwei unterschiedliche Archivbesitzer auszumachen sind.

Umfeld der Tempel für Ištar und Nabû zu beleuchten, also dem Bereich von Assur, dem die Textkonvolute Ass. 13319 (N31A) und Ass. 13058 (N31D) entstammen. Von Relevanz sind hier die mittel- bis spätneuassyrische Zeit, die in den zur Diskussion stehenden Texten greifbar wird, sowie die etwas jüngeren Schichten, da die Tafeln nicht aus laufenden (= zum Zeitpunkt der Deponierung noch aktiven) Archiv-Kontexten stammen müssen. Für jüngere Befundkomplexe kommen hier v.a. Abfall- und Auflassungskontexte in Frage, die gegebenenfalls nicht als solche erkannt und dokumentiert wurden, prinzipiell jedoch auch die Weiterführung bzw. weitere Aufbewahrung älterer Archive in späteren Zeiten. Für die vorliegende Fragestellung sind folglich die Schichtenhorizonte SH II$_1$, SH III A–D und SH IV von Interesse, die nach Miglus im Bereich der Ištar und Nabû-Tempel folgende Siedlungsphasen umfassen:[27]

- SH II$_1$: nachassyrische und vorparthische Reste;
- SH III A: spätassyrische Wohnhäuser, die nach der Gründung des Nabû-Tempels errichtet wurden bzw. damals noch bestanden;
- SH III B–C: zwei bis drei Bauschichten mit neuassyrischen Wohn-häusern aus der Zeit zwischen Salmanassar III. und Sîn-šar-iškun;
- SH III D: Anlagen, die möglicherweise vor Salmanassar III. entstanden sind;
- SH IV: mittelassyrische Wohnhäuser, die zur Zeit des Ištar-Tempels des Tukultī-Ninurta I. bestanden haben müssen (der SH IV A entspricht der Schicht des von Aššur-rēša-iši I. gebauten Ištar-Tempels);
- die älteren Hausreste sind für eine genauere Beschreibung und Bestimmung zu fragmentarisch und zu unvollständig dokumentiert. Ihr Verhältnis zu den Tempelanlagen läßt sich oft nicht ermitteln.

Das einzige von Miglus dem Schichtenhorizont II$_1$ zugeordnete Gebäude e7:26 befindet sich in einem anderen Planquadrat (eC7IV) als die Befunde, aus denen die zur Diskussion stehenden Tontafelfunde

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[27] Miglus 1996, 129. Vgl. auch Schmitt 2012, 77–79, der auf dieser grundsätzlichen Ebene die Datierung von Miglus übernimmt bzw. mit ihr übereinstimmt. Für die im Detail teilweise abweichende v.a. auch graphische Zusammenstellung der Befunde und ihre erneute leichte Adaptierung aufgrund der vorliegenden Beitragsresultate s.u.

stammen. Es stellt sich jedoch die Frage, ob dies auch der stratigraphischen Realität entspricht oder nur dem zeichnerisch dokumentierten Befund. Gerade für den Bereich eE6V/7I gibt der – zugegeben unzureichende – schriftlich dokumentierte Befund Hinweise auch auf Bebauung im Schichtenhorizont SH II$_1$ (s.u.).[28]

Der Befund zu N31A

Die Funde aus Areal eA7II wurden von Pedersén als erste Gruppe (A) des 'Archivs' N31 klassifiziert. Daher sei mit ihnen angefangen, auch wenn sie erst ca. einen Monat später gefunden wurden als die Tontafelfunde in eE6V/7I (N31D), nämlich ab Mitte März 1908.

Die archäologischen Befunde der mittel- bis neuassyrischen Zeit in eA7II

In Planquadrat eA7II wird eine Abfolge von Siedlungs- und Kultbauschichten greifbar, deren stratigraphischer Befund sich aufgrund der Grabungsmethodik und des Erhaltungszustandes im Detail letztlich der Klärung entzieht. Im entsprechenden Bereich (i.e. eA7II) ist der Befund größerflächig gestört. Zuoberst ist ein zusammenhängendes Wohngebiet greifbar, das sich über den gesamten Bereich des spätneuassyrischen Nabû-Tempels erstreckt und in die parthische Zeit datiert.[29] In Planquadrat eA7II gehören hierzu die Häuser e7:1–2 und eventuell das Südende einer Gasse (vgl. Abb. 6).

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[28] Bedauerlicherweise lässt sich die Schichtenbeschreibung im Bereich eE6V/7I nicht mit den Angaben in den Plänen korrelieren. Nach Schichtenhorizont-Definition sollten die Fußböden des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsgebäudes den Schichtenhorizonten SH IV bis max. SH III D angehören, nicht – wie in Miglus 1996, Plan 120 verzeichnet – den Horizonten SH III A-B. Die vorliegende Kennzeichnung reflektiert vermutlich die ursprüngliche Schichtenzählung der Ausgräber, nach der das mittelassyrische Verwaltungsgebäude zur Bearbeitungsschicht 3 gehört (vgl. Aufnahmeplan 2.–3. Bearbeitungsschicht, Miglus 1996, Plan 22).

[29] Vgl. besonders Miglus 1996, 129–33 und Pläne 19, 115.

Darunter haben sich Reste neuassyrischer Wohn- und Tempel-bebauung erhalten. Für das Planquadrat eA7II ist die Befundlage oder zumindest deren Dokumentation vage, was angesichts des Hortfundes von 41 Tontafeln (die ursprüngliche Fundnummer Ass 13319; s.u.) ausgesprochen bedauerlich ist. Wie Miglus herausgestrichen hat, ist anzunehmen, dass die Häuser d7:1 und e7:27, die zwischen einer Gasse (*Neue Straße*) und dem Nabû-Tempel liegen, zum Zeitpunkt der Erbauung und während der Nutzung des Nabû-Tempels bewohnt waren.[30] Die Anlage des Nabû-Tempels bewirkte, dass ein Teil der früheren Wohnbebauung östlich (und gegebenenfalls östliche Teile) dieser Gebäude abgegraben wurde. Dieser stratigraphisch unklare Bereich erstreckt sich über große Teile von eA7II und damit über den Befundkontext des hier zur Diskussion stehenden Fundkomplexes Ass. 13319.

Zur Schwierigkeit, dass Randbereiche von Planierungen für Neubauten (Nabû-Tempel) verstärkt von Störungen betroffen sind, kommt hinzu, dass während der Ausgrabung dieses Bereiches die Grabungsleitung wechselte und zudem das für die Dokumentation und weitere Grabungsaufsicht zuständige Team der DOG aufgrund eines Ausfluges nach Hatra stark reduziert war.[31] Auch verschob sich der Grabungsschwerpunkt, der die Ausgrabung des Tempels, nicht der Privatwohnhäuser zum Ziel hatte, zur Süd- und Ostgrenze des Tempels.[32]

Vielleicht aufgrund der schlechten Erhaltung, vermutlich auch wegen der genannten Faktoren, wurden allfällige Aufschluss gebende Befunde zur Abfolge älterer Siedlungsschichten nicht oder nur äußerst fragmentarisch zeichnerisch dokumentiert. Sie wurden jedoch zumindest in Ansätzen beobachtet und schriftlich festgehalten (s.u.; vgl. auch Abb. 3).[33] Der Fund von mittelassyrischen Tontafeln im Schutt älterer Siedlungsschichten spricht für eine bis in die mittelassyrische

47

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[30] Miglus 1996, 134–135.
[31] Andrae and Jordan 1908, 25–26.
[32] Jordan in Andrae and Jordan 1908, 26.
[33] Jordan in Andrae and Jordan 1908, 26.

oder zumindest frühneuassyrische Zeit zurückreichende Besiedlung auch im Bereich der Südwestecke des späteren Nabû-Tempels. Teilweise kann es sich jedoch auch um umgelagerte Funde im Zuge der Planierungsarbeiten handeln. Die Dokumentationslage, die im Folgenden näher zu besprechen ist, lässt hierzu keine sichere Entscheidung zu.

Der stratigraphische Kontext der Tontafelfunde in eA7II [N31A]
Für die mittel- und neuassyrischen Tontafelfunde in Areal eA7II stehen aufschlussreiche Informationen aus dem Tagebuch, dem Inventarbuch und den Briefen an die Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft zur Verfügung. So ist am 14. März 1908 im Inventarbuch unter der Fundnummer Ass. 13319 vermerkt:
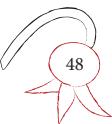
> März 1908 | 14. | 13319 | 41 vollständige u. ziemlich vollständige ungebrannte Thontafeln | [Photo-Nrn.:] 4160, 4161, 3448–53, 3511, 3163–3464 | ca. 1.00ᵐ unter Hügeloberfläche | eA7II.[34]

Der korrespondierende Tagebuch-Eintrag lautet:

> März 1908 | 14. | In eA7II in spätassyrischen Haus nur 1 m unter H. Oberfläche Lager kleiner Tontafeln, ungebr., datiert z.B. Belikbi, Nebosakil [Skizze Keilschrift] Alte Urkundenbruchstücke finden sich in den jüngsten Fundamenten unter den Lesesteinen.[35]

Ass. 13319 bezeichnet folglich einen Hortfund spätassyrischer Tontafeln, der wohl als Archiv im Sinne der gemeinsamen Lagerung zu Aufbewahrungs- und Konsultationszwecken zu werten ist. Dies legt auch der gute Erhaltungszustand der ungebrannten Tafeln nahe. Unsicher ist, was mit den „Urkundenbruchstücken" gemeint ist. In Andrae's Jargon sind dies üblicherweise Inschriften-tragende Artefakte verschiedenster Art, z.B. Prismen oder beschriftete Steintafeln.[36]

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[34] Assur Inventar iv: 84.

[35] Assur Tagebuch iv: 150.

[36] Vgl. hierzu die entsprechende Deutung des vorliegenden Eintrags durch Schmitt (2012, 100). Einer der ReviewerɪNNEN des vorliegenden Beitrags versteht dies als strikte terminologische Trennung: „Tontafeln" versus „Urkunden" (= alle anderen

Wieweit dies konsequent der Fall ist oder wieweit "Urkunde" von ihm und seinen Kollegen, in unserem Fall besonders Julius Jordan, (zumindest auch) als übergreifender Genre-Begriff für alle Arten von beschrifteten Artefakten gebraucht wurde, ist unsicher. Falls diese "Urkundenbruchstücke" auch ältere (bis mittelassyrische?) Tafeln beinhalten, wurde keine separate Fundnummer vermerkt, sondern diese zu den spätassyrischen Hortfundtafeln gruppiert (= potentielle Kandidaten für die einzelnen mittelassyrischen Tafeln[37] im Konvolut Ass. 13319).

Ein weiterer Hinweis auf Tontafelfunde in eA7II findet sich in der Notiz Andraes an die Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft vom 17.03.:

> Assur, 17. März 1908. In einem spätassyrischen Privathause in e A 7 II sind ungebrannte Tontafeln herausgekommen, darunter 6 mittleren und 15 ganz kleinen Formats in leidlich guter Erhaltung. Im Schutt des Tempels finden sich Bruchstücke alter und ältester Urkunden, in den Pflasterresten zahlreiche Inschriftziegel Sinšariškuns.[38]

49

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beschrifteten Artefakte, insbesondere aus Stein). Aus Schmitt (2012, 100) geht dies nicht zwangsweise hervor. Die Argumentation dort ist explizit *ex silentio*: da im Inventarbuch im Kontext der Fundamente ausschließlich andere beschriftete Artefakte genannt sind, bezieht sich der Tagebucheintrag (bzw. der DOG-Brief-Eintrag, s.u.) auf diese. Dies ist ein in sich schlüssiges Argument, schließt aber die Möglichkeit einer potentiellen Subsumierung jeglicher inschriftlicher Funde nicht aus, denn die Tontafeln müssen nicht separat vermerkt, sondern könnten (wie andernorts belegbar) der letzten Konvolut-Nummer (Ass. 13319) zugeordnet worden sein.

[37] Pedersén 1986, 129. In seiner *Critical note on texts* führt Pedersén vier mittelassyrische Tafeln an, die aus Konvolut A zu extrahieren seien: Ass. 13919f*[sic!], ar*–at* und ay* (zu korrigieren nach Ass. 13319, s.o.). Die Zuordnung zu M7 (250–254), also dem Tontafelkonvolut aus dem Schutt über bzw. auf dem Hofpflaster des Verwaltungsgebäudes e7:40 sind sie hingegen explizit nicht zuzuordnen. Sie stammen aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach aus den älteren Siedlungs- bzw. den Planierschichten im Südwesten des neuangelegten Nabû-Tempels wie in der schriftlichen Grabungsdokumentation vermerkt.

[38] Andrae in Andrae and Jordan 1908, 25.

Mangels weiterer Inventarbucheinträge im entsprechenden Zeitfenster (9.–17. März) ist anzunehmen, dass sich diese Notiz auf das Fundkonvolut Ass. 13319 bezieht. Es fallen jedoch erhebliche Diskrepanzen zum Inventar- und Tagebucheintrag auf. So wird im DOG-Brief der Hortfund nicht als solcher charakterisiert. Leicht ließe sich das durch hinzugerechnete Schuttfunde erklären, für die es weitere Hinweise gibt (s.u.). Ergänzend stellt sich erneut die Frage, was Andrae unter „Urkunden" subsummiert; wie oben die „Lesesteine" sind hier „Inschriftenziegel" expliziert separiert. Entsprechend ist erneut auch eine generischere Konnotation von „Urkunden", die Tontafeln nicht zwangsläufig ausschließt, denkbar, aber nicht notwendig. Eine stratigraphische Klärung ist nicht mehr möglich, es wurden wohl auch hier in beiden Befundkontexten Funde geborgen, aber nicht in unterschiedliche Fundnummern getrennt.
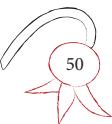
Das bereits am 14. (bis 17.?) März aus mehreren Kontexten zusammengezogene Fundkonvolut Ass. 13319 wurde in weiterer Folge erneut mit Tontafelfunden aus älteren Schutt- bzw. Verfüllungsschichten durchmischt. Ca. zehn Tage später – nach der Übergabe der Grabungsleitung und Dokumentation an Julius Jordan am 19. März[39] – sind in älteren Verfüllungsschichten im selben Grabungsareal nochmals Tontafeln gefunden worden. So vermerkt Jordan im Tagebuch:

> März 1908 – 26. | Weitere Tontafeln (ungebr.) im Wohnschutt des spät-
> 27. | assyrischen Privathauses in eA7II.[40]

Im Inventarbuch ist erneut kein korrespondierender Eintrag vermerkt. Folglich ist auch hier die Weiternutzung der ursprünglichen Hortfundnummer Ass. 13319 anzunehmen. Ergänzt wird der Eintrag um eine Notiz im DOG-Brief vom 31.03.:

> Assur, 31. März 1908. Bei der Untersuchung des Nebo-Tempels wurde bisher die Westgrenze des Tempelgebietes in e A/B 7 I/II ermittelt. Spätassyrische Wohnhäuser, aus deren Schutt ungebrannte Tontafeln

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[39] Andrae in Assur Tagebuch iv: 150.
[40] Jordan in Assur Tagebuch iv: 151.

herauskommen, liegen in e A 7 I/II mit geringem Zwischenraum westlich vom Tempel. Eine ältere Schicht assyrischer Privathäuser wurde durch die Anlage der westlichen Lehmziegel-Untergründungen für den Tempel durchschnitten.[41]

Für die weitere Diskussion sind insbesondere drei Informationen interessant:

1. Der Schuttbereich, der den weiteren stratigraphischen Kontext zum ursprünglichen Hortfund spätneuassyrischer Tontafeln Ass. 13319 bildet, blieb bei der Grabung produktiv für weitere, nicht mit neuer Fundnummer versehene Tontafelfunde.

2. Zumindest ein Teil dieser Funde stammt aus dem Bereich unmittelbar westlich des Tempels, also aus nicht zeichnerisch dokumentierten Befunden und/oder aus dem Gassen- und Gebäudebereich Miglus e7:28 (vgl. Abb. 6). Wieweit dies auch für den Hortfund vom 14. März gilt, ist nicht zu eruieren.

3. Es wurde wenigstens eine deutlich erkennbare ältere Siedlungsphase unter den spätassyrischen Wohnhäusern der Schichtenhorizonte SH III beobachtet, die zumindest im Bereich eA7II/III nicht bzw. kaum zeichnerisch dokumentiert wurde (vgl. Abb. 3–5). Wie alt diese Siedlungsspuren sind, bleibt unklar. Die Formulierung „ältere Schicht assyrischer Privathäuser" in Kontrast zu „spätassyrisch" lässt ältere neuassyrische Besiedlung gleichermaßen zu wie mittelassyrische.[42] Zudem kann das Fundmaterial dieser Schuttschichten, die stratigraphisch nur ungenau erfasst wurden, aus der laufenden Gebäudenutzung bzw. Siedlungsphase stammen, aus anderen Siedlungsbereichen im Zuge der Planierungsarbeiten für den Tempelbau oder aus den Fundamenten (von Andrae explizit als „ältere und älteste Urkunden" bezeichnet, s.o.).

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[41] Jordan in Andrae and Jordan 1908, 26.

[42] Vgl. hierzu auch Schmitt (2012, 49–50), der für eine zeitweise gleichzeitige Nutzung des Ištar-Tempels Tukulti-Ninurtas I. und des Privathauses Miglus e7:38 argumentiert sowie daraus abgeleitet für eine nur kurze Verfallzeit bis zur Anlegung der neuen Straße und des neuen Kanals.

Für die aus den älteren Schichten stammenden Tontafeln wurden keine neuen Fundnummern vergeben, sondern sie wurden der ursprünglichen Hortfundnummer zugeordnet, die für Streu- und Schuttfunde offengehalten wurde. Hierzu passt, dass die mittelassyrischen Tafeln aus Ass. 13319 meist zweistellige Indices aufweisen.[43]

Fazit zum Befund in eA7II

Der Befund in eA7II ist folglich unbefriedigend hinsichtlich seiner Dokumentation, aber eindeutig. Ass. 13319 bezeichnete ursprünglich ein spätassyrisches Wohnhausarchiv im Sinne eines explizit gemeinsam deponierten Tontafelkonvoluts mit gut 40 Dokumenten. Da keine nähere Ortsangabe als ca. 1m unter der Hügeloberfläche in eA7II notiert ist, ist keine zuverlässige Haus-Zuordnung möglich, da in eA7II drei spätassyrische Wohnhäuser aneinanderstoßen (d7:1, e7:27 und e7:28; Miglus 1996, Plan 117). Auch ein Gassenkontext ist nicht auszuschließen. Für den ursprünglichen Archiv-Fund ist die Raumflucht d7:1.14/15, unter der sich die Gruft Ass. 19964 befindet, naheliegend, v.a. Raum 14 über der Hauptgrablege. Wie schon von Pedersén herausgestrichen wurde, ist dies ein typischer Aufbewahrungsort für ein Wohnhausarchiv in Assur.[44] Der Fundnummer dieses Tontafelhortfundes wurden während der Grabung weitere Tontafeln zugeordnet. Stratigraphisch hätte Ass. 13319 jedoch zumindest in fünf bis sechs Fundkomplexe getrennt werden sollen.

1. Spätassyrisches Wohnhausarchiv Ass. 13319, möglicherweise aus dem Gruft-Raum 14/15 von Haus d7:1. Dies kann/könnte konzeptuell auch ältere Dokumente enthalten. Hierfür gibt es jedoch keine Hinweise.

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[43] Nach Freydank (1991, 215) Ass. 13319 a/o? (VAT 19827), 13319at (VAT 19829), 13319ax (VAT 19828), 13319az (VAT 19830), 13319cd (VAT 19825), 13319cn (VAT 19826); nach Pedersén (1985, 81) Ass. 13319f* (VAT 18047), 13319ar* (IstM A87), 13319as* (VAT 18010), 13319at* (keine Angabe), 13319ay* (keine Angabe), Ass. 14327cy (VAT 8824).

[44] Vgl. Pedersén 1992, besonders 164; zur möglichen Lokalisierung des Hortfundes Ass. 13319 in Raum 14 über der Hauptgrablege s. bereits Pedersén 1986, 126.

2. [Spätassyrische] Streufunde aus dem Schutt des spätassyrischen Wohnhauskomplexes – idealerweise nach Räumen getrennt zwecks späterer Funktionsbestimmung der Räume und Adaptierbarkeit der Hauszuweisung.

3. [Mittel- bis Neuassyrische] Einschlüsse in den Fundamenten des spätassyrischen Wohnhauskomplexes – auch hier idealerweise nach Raum/Haus getrennt.

4. [Mittel- bis neuassyrische] Schuttfunde aus den beobachteten darunterliegenden bzw. davon geschnittenen älteren (mittel- bis neuassyrischen) Privathäusern.

5. [Alt- bis mittelassyrische, ggf. (früh)neuassyrische] Einschlüsse aus der Fundamentierung des Nabû-Tempels; ob diese auch Tontafeln oder nur andere beschriftete Artefakte wie Prismen oder Inschriften-Ziegel beinhalteten, ist nicht mehr auszumachen.

6. Ggf. Schuttfunde aus dem Tempelbereich.

53

Der Befund zu N31D

Die Tontafeln, die von Pedersén als Archiv N31D (neuassyrisch) bzw. M7 (mittelassyrisch) klassifiziert wurden, wurden in mehreren Schritten zwischen Mitte Januar und Mitte März 1908 in den Planquadraten eE6V und eE7I, sowie möglicherweise in den östlich anschließenden Quadraten fA6V und fA7I gefunden. Je nach (nicht eindeutig markierter) Fundstelle erstreckt sich der Fundkontext nur über eE6V, die beiden westlichen Quadrate eE6V–7I oder alle vier Planquadrate. Das erste Tontafelkonvolut wurde am 29. Januar aufgenommen (Ass. 12979/12980). Ab dem 10. Februar wurden die Tontafelschuttfunde als Ass. 13058/13059 weitergeführt. Derselben Fundnummer wurden auch am 10. März 1908 noch Tontafelfunde zugeordnet, die in eE7I zutage traten (für Details s.u.).

Im Unterschied zum Befund in eA7II (s.o. 'N31A'), bei dem die schriftliche Grabungsdokumentation deutliche Hinweise für ältere und jüngere assyrische Wohnquartierschichten sowie für mittelassyrische und spätassyrische Tontafelfunde aus beiden Schichtbereichen liefert (s.o.), kann die Art des spätassyrischen Baubefundes für eE6V nicht

zweifelsfrei geklärt werden. Die originale (1908) und sekundäre (1996) Befunddokumentation sind zu inkonsistent. Doch auch für N31D bzw. eE6V/7I gibt es gute Indizien dafür, dass die spätassyrischen Texte des Tontafelkonvoluts Ass. 13058 nicht auf Vermischung mit dem später gefundenen Komplex Ass. 13319 in Areal eA7II zurück-gehen (so Pedersén[45] und in Folge Faist[46]), sondern aus spätassyrischen Wohnhauskontexten in eE6V/7I stammen. Zu klären sind entspre-chend folgende Aspekte:

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[45] Pedersén 1986, 125–26: "A substantial part of an archive, viz. 43 unbaked clay tablets (A), were found in eA7II […] According to MDOG 38, 25, the tablets were found in a Neo-Assyrian private house, but no specifications about house and room have been found […] At least 6 unbaked clay tablets (D) were found at the same place probably as an addition to group A." Siehe oben und unten, warum eine entsprechende Deutung grabungsdokumentationswidrig und folglich – mangels gegenteiliger Beweisführung – abzulehnen ist.

[46] Vgl. die irreführenden Referenzen auf die Durchmischung und den implizierten anderen Fundort (mit Verweis auf Pedersén 1986, 129) der neuassyrischen Tafeln des Konvoluts Ass. 13058 mit Ass. 13319 in Faist 2007, 129 [= StAT 3 78, VAT 19653, Ass. 13058 ke], 131 [= StAT 3 79, VAT 19667, Ass. 13058 iv, N31D (55)], 132 [= StAT 3 80, VAT 19686, Ass. 13058 re?, N31 (nicht in Pedersén 1986)], 133 [= StAT 3 82, VAT 19689, Ass. 13058 ke?, N31 (nicht in Pedersén 1986)], 135 [= StAT 3 84, VAT 19734, Ass. 13058 kb, N31D (58)], 137 [= StAT 3 87, VAT 20092, Ass. 13058 iz, N31D (57)], [= StAT 3 114, VAT 19667, Ass. 13058 iv, N31D (58)]. Ebenfalls von Pedersén N31 zugeordnet, aber bislang m.W. nicht ediert, sind die Fundnummern Ass. 13058ix* [= N31D (56)] und Ass. 13058kk* [= N31D (60)], zu denen auch keine Museumsinventarnummer bekannt ist. Ass. 13058kf* [= StAT 2 224, IstM A 3215, N31D (59)] ist publiziert in Donbaz and Parpola 2001, 149, eingereiht zwischen die Dokumente aus der südlichen Fundstelle (N31B, Ass. 14671).

Problematisch bleibt die Zuordnung von vier Texten im Fundkomplex der Assurtafeln im Vorderasiatischen Museum Berlin, die gemäß Museumsdoku-mentation ebenfalls aus den DOG-Grabungen stammen, auf denen jedoch nie eine Fundnummer aufgebracht worden war oder diese nicht mehr erhalten ist, und die dem Konvolut N31 zugeordnet wurden – korrekterweise ohne nähere Archiv-Zuweisung und mit der Angabe "Ass. o. Nr.": StAT 3 81, 83, 85 und 86 (Faist 2007, 132–137). Die Zuordnung von StAT 3 81 [VAT 19687, Ass. o. Nr., N31 (–)] erfolgte aus prosopographischen Gründen (Faist 2007, 132–33), von StAT 3 83 [VAT 19712, Ass. o. Nr., N31 (–)], StAT 3 85 [VAT 19774, Ass. o. Nr., N31 (–)] und von StAT 3 86 [VAT 19795, Ass. o. Nr., N31 (–)] aufgrund des Vermerks "ohne Nr.; evtl. zu 13058" bzw. "Ass. 13058?" im Museumsinventarbuch (Faist 2007, 134, 136).

a. die Wahrscheinlichkeit der Existenz spät- und mittelassyrischer Tontafelkonvolute aus eE6V/7I.

b. die Wahrscheinlichkeit der areal-internen Vermischung spät- und mittelassyrischer Tontafelkonvolute aus eE6V/7I.

c. die Wahrscheinlichkeit der postulierten areal-übergreifenden Vermischung der spätassyrischen Tafelkonvolute aus eA7II und aus eE6V/7I.

d. die Wahrscheinlichkeit der postulierten areal-übergreifenden Vermischung der mittelassyrischen Tafelkonvolute aus eA7II und aus eE6V/7I.

e. der wahrscheinliche stratigraphische Kontext der spätassyrischen Tontafeln aus eE6V/7I.

Die archäologischen Befunde der mittel- bis neuassyrischen Zeit in eE6V/7I

Für eE6V und insbesondere für die jüngeren Schichten auch in eE6V/7I ist festzuhalten, dass der Befund erheblich gestört war und zudem die erhaltenen Bauschichten stark erodiert oder abgetragen waren. Dies zeigt sich deutlich in der zeichnerischen (s. die Aufnahmepläne: Miglus 1996, Plan 21–22; vgl. auch Abb. 2) und in der beschreibenden Befunddokumentation. So vermerkt Andrae in seiner Notiz an die DOG vom 11. Februar 1908:

> Die Arbeiter sind jetzt alle in der neuen Grabung in e D E 6 IV bis 7 I beschäftigt, wo altes und jüngstes in dichter Folge übereinander liegt.

Für das Planquadrat eE6V, aus dem das Gros der Tontafeln stammt, ist die stratigraphische Information äußerst spärlich, für das südlich anschließende Planquadrat, das auch den Suchschnitt beherbergte, werden jedoch zusätzlich zu einer wohl arabischen und zwei parthischen Schichten explizit drei assyrische Wohnhausschichten spezifiziert:

> Januar 1908 | 21. | In eE7I sind 2 parthische unter Resten einer jüngsten (arabischen?) Schicht, darunter 3 assyrische Wohnhausschichten gefunden worden.[47]

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[47] Assur Tagebuch iv: 156.

Abb. 2: Die Befundsituation in eE6V. Überlagerung der Pläne der mittel- und neuassyrischen Befunde (Abbildung: Wasmuth 2021; nach Miglus 1996: Pl. 21, 22, 115, 119, 120). Türkis: mittel-, rot: neuassyrische Befunde.

Unklar bleibt, ob man selbiges auch für das im Norden anschließende Planquadrat eE6V annehmen darf bzw. muss. Die Schichtenzählung geht auf den Suchschnitt unmittelbar südlich in eE7I zurück. Entsprechend muss die mangelnde Angabe zu den Schichtenhorizonten in eE6V nichts bedeuten. Soweit zeichnerisch und beschreibend dokumentiert,

erstrecken sich die Befunde jedoch arealübergreifend über eE6V und eE7I, was die Existenz und Wahrnehmung der Hauptschichten, wie sie in eE7I beobachtet wurden, auch für eE6V wahrscheinlich macht. Die selektive Aufnahme in den Planzeichnungen steht dem nicht entgegen, wie sich bereits für eA7II zeigen ließ. Auch dort fehlen Zeichnungen zu etlichen der beobachteten und beschreibend festgehaltenen mittelassyrischen und frühneuassyrischen Wohnhausbefunden (s.o. 'N31A').

Die Interpretation des fragmentarischen und noch fragmentarischer dokumentierten Befundes wird durch die Uneindeutigkeit der Schichtenzuordnung erschwert. So ist am 31. Januar 1908 im Tagebuch vermerkt:

> Januar 1908 | 31. | Im Hof des assyrischen Privathauses (2. ass. Periode von oben) in eE6V werden altassyrisch geschrieben[e] Tontafeln, ungebrannt u. schlecht erhalten [Anm. Autorin: zu ergänzen *gefunden*]. Dabei Siegelzylinder, Pastegefäße u. ornamentiertes Glasmosaik von großer Feinheit. Die Tontafelschicht hat nur 30 cm Höhe unmittelbar auf dem Ziegelpflaster.[48]

57

Auch unabhängig von der bereits von Pedersén herausgestellten Divergenz in der philologischen Bezeichnung (nach heutiger Zählung mittelassyrisch)[49] stellt sich die Frage, auf welchen Befund der „Hof des assyrischen Privathauses (2. ass. Periode von oben) in eE6V" referenziert: auf das mittelassyrische Verwaltungsgebäude Miglus e7:40, auf seine neuassyrische Umbau- und Nachnutzungsphase Miglus e7:39 oder auf ein jüngeres Gebäude, das Privathauscharakter hatte und über oder neben diesem „großen Gebäude" errichtet worden war. Einiges spricht dafür, dass mit der „2. ass. Periode von oben" in eE6V die neuassyrische Umbau- und Nachnutzungsphase gemeint ist, die nicht als Verwaltungsgebäude, sondern als Privathaus gedeutet wurde. Anscheinend wurde das Gros der Tontafelfunde Ass. 12979/80 und Ass. 13058/59 ursprünglich diesem zugeordnet, bis sich klärte, dass der Tontafelschutt eigentlich zur Verfüllung des darunter liegenden mittelassyrischen

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[48] Assur Tagebuch iv: 155.
[49] Pedersén 1986, 86 Fn. 1.

Verwaltungsgebäudes gehören. Die spätassyrischen Tontafeln im Konvolutfund Ass. 13058 stammen aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach aus den jüngeren Wohnhauskontexten der 1. (assyrisch-parthischen) Bearbeitungsschicht, die abgetragen wurde, um den Tontafelschutt-Hof vollständig freizulegen. Hierbei wurden Tontafeln gefunden, die keine eigene Fundnummer erhielten, darunter vermutlich die spätassyrischen Tontafeln N31D.

Um den stratigraphischen Kontext der Tontafelfunde in eE6V/7I zu eruieren, müssen zunächst einige der Inkonsistenzen in der (originalen und späteren) Grabungsdokumentation geklärt werden. Da die schriftliche Grabungsdokumentation explizit Anpassungen der Befundinterpretation dokumentiert (s.u.), sei hierfür mit dem letzten Schritt angefangen, der zeichnerischen Befundaufnahme der 2./3. Bearbeitungsschicht (s. Miglus 1996, Plan 22; vgl. auch Abb. 2). Der steingenaue Plan verzeichnet zwei grundlegend verschiedene stratigraphische Befunde: das mittelassyrische Verwaltungsgebäude (e7:40) und die (früh)neuassyrischen Über- und Einbauten (e7:39), die im wesentlichen im Hofbereich des älteren Gebäudes zu finden sind. Es ist davon auszugehen, dass diese beiden beobachteten Hauptbefunde den Bearbeitungsschichten 3 bzw. 2 entsprechen. Laut steingenauem Plan der 1. Bearbeitungsschicht (s. Miglus 1996, Plan 21), sollte dieser weitere jüngere assyrische sowie parthische Befunde umfassen. Soweit die Befunddeutung von Miglus korrekt ist, tut er dies aber nicht, sondern er nimmt die bereits weggenommenen Befunde der 2. assyrischen Bearbeitungsschicht auf inklusive der Kanalisation in der Gasse über dem Westtrakt des mittelassyrischen Gebäudes sowie Teile der parthischen Überbauung.

Zumindest ebenso wahrscheinlich – und so wohl auch von den Ausgräbern interpretiert (s.u.) – ist eine notwendige Separierung der von Miglus identifizierten neuassyrischen Weiter- und Nachnutzungsphase (e7:39) des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsgebäudes in zwei distinkte spätere Bauphasen. Hierfür spricht die explizite Differenzierung von drei assyrischen „Wohnhaus-Schichten" in der schriftlichen Grabungsdokumentation (s.u.) und soweit den Plänen korrekt entnehmbar letztlich auch der Baubefund (vgl. Abb. 2, 4–6). So

fügt sich die Lehmziegelkonstruktion (e7:39.2) vollständig in den Hof des darunterliegenden Verwaltungsgebäudes ein (e7:40.1). Die westlich anschließenden Räume liegen hingegen teilweise über den älteren Raumstrukturen im Südwesten des Hofes samt mittel- (bis frühneu-) assyrischem Gassenzugang. Teilweise lehnen sich die Außenmauern von Osten an das ältere Mauerwerk an. Die westlich anschließende (spät)neuassyrische Gasse, an deren Kanalisation diese jüngeren Räumlichkeiten angeschlossen sind, verläuft hingegen vollständig über dem mittelassyrischen Westtrakt. Zumindest an der Nordwestecke von e7:39.2 lässt sich zudem fassen, dass die Steinmauer, die e7:39.7 im Osten begrenzt, explizit an die somit ältere Lehmziegelstruktur angebaut ist. Auch scheint das Steinmauerwerk der Ostbegrenzung der Räume e7–7:39.6 nur Teile der Westmauer von e7:39.2 als Fundament zu nehmen. Dies ist ein weiterer Hinweis auf eine entschieden jüngere, und entsprechend potentiell spätassyrische Datierung des Westtraktes von e7:39.

Der stratigraphische Kontext der Tontafelfunde in eE6V/7I [N31D]

Es ist anzunehmen, dass die spätassyrischen Tontafeln, die sich im mittelassyrischen Schuttfundkonvolut Ass. 13058 befinden, zwischen dem 7. und 11. Februar 1908 gefunden wurden, als laut Tagebuch der sogenannte Tontafelhof durch Wegnahme der jüngeren Wohnhaus-schichten freigelegt wurde.

> Februar 1908 | 7. | Der Tontafelhof in eE6V wird durch Wegnahme der daraufliegenden jüngeren Häuserreste freigelegt. | 8. | Wieder viele Tontafelbruchstücke, zuerst kaum brauchbar, einige Elfenbeinplättchen mit Baumgravierung.[50]

Hierfür spricht u.a. der (zugegeben vage) Hinweis auf Tontafeln unter-schiedlichen Formats und Erhaltungszustands, denen die explizite Einheitlichkeit der (kleinen) Formate der Tontafelfunde vom 12. Februar gegenübersteht.

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[50] Assur Tagebuch iv: 154.

Februar 1908 | 12. | Viele Tontafeln aus eE6V, nur wenige gute, diese nur kleinen Formats. In demselben Tontafelschutt auch O-Grenze der Grabung auf dem Hof und kleine Alabastertablette Salmanassar's I von Ê-Kal [Keilschriftzeichen kopiert] | 13. | gefunden. Der Hof ist ziemlich ausgedehnt, die Fundamente bestehen aus <u>mehreren</u> Schichten ziemlich großer Gipssteinblöcke, die dem Gebäude größeres Alter zusichern.[51]

Angesichts dessen, dass auch am 26. Februar noch im Bereich der parthischen Häuser in eE6V/7I gegraben wurde, ist ein späteres Funddatum jedoch nicht auszuschließen.

Der stratigraphische Befund der spätassyrischen Tontafelfunde im Konvolut Ass. 13058 wären somit spätassyrische Wohnhaus- oder Gassenkontexte in eE6V, sei es aus den zeichnerisch dokumentierten Kontexten der 1. Bearbeitungsschicht (s.o. und Miglus 1996, Plan 21) oder aus nicht zeichnerisch dokumentierten Befunden. Dieser stratigraphischen Kontextualisierung stehen trotz verbleibender Unklarheiten die Fund- und Befundvermerke zum Tontafelschutt im Hof des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsgebäudes, nur scheinbar entgegen. Die zunächst widersprüchliche Befundangaben zur Konvolutnummer Ass. 13058 im Inventarbuch sind für den vorliegenden Beitrag letztlich unproblematisch:

Februar 1908 | 10. | 13058 | [später mit Bleistift ergänzt: 1] vollständige ungebrannte Tontafeln, Fortsetzg. v. 12979 [VAT Nummern, teilweise in Inventarbuch notiert, teilweise auf beigelegtem Sonderblatt] | [diverse Photonummern] | auf Ziegelpflaster d. II. ass. Schicht | eE6V/7I
Februar 1908 | 10. | 13059 | ca. [später mit Bleistift ergänzt: 150] Brr. ungebrannter Tontafeln, Fortsetzg. v. 12980 | [keine Photo-Nr.] | „ [= auf Ziegelpflaster d. II. ass. Schicht] | „ [= eE6V/7I]
s. auch: Februar 1908 | 10. | 13071 | Br. gebrannter Tontafeln | [Photo-Nr.:] 3430 | Stadtgebiet.[52]

Wie Andrae in seiner Notiz an die DOG vom 11. Februar 1908 vermerkt, war die stratigraphische Konstellation zunächst unklar bzw. erwies sich anders als ursprünglich gedacht:

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[51] Assur Tagebuch iv: 154.

[52] Assur Inventar iv: 72.

Assur, 11. Februar 1908. Die Tontafelfunde in e E 6 V haben sich auch diese Woche fortgesetzt. Man erkennt jetzt ihre Lage: Es ist eine 20–40 cm dicke Füllschicht für das Pflaster eines jüngeren assyrischen Privathauses über einem verfallenen älteren, in welcher die Tontafeln, offenbar als Schutt zusammengetragen, hier mehr, dort weniger dicht verstreut gefunden wurden. Die allermeisten sind schon von Haus aus stark verdorben; teils ist ihr Ton schlecht, teils hat sie die Feuchtigkeit zersplittert. Bisher sind davon etwa zwei Dutzend leidlich vollständige und über 200 Fragmente gefunden, ohne daß das Lager erschöpft wäre. Die Formate sind meist klein und sehr klein, doch kommen Stücke großer Tafeln vor, diese leider am wenigsten gut erhalten, alle sind ungebrannt.[53]

Entgegen der Kennzeichnung der Tontafelschuttfunde im Inventarbuch als zugehörig zur 2. ([früh]neu)assyrischen Schicht entpuppten sich diese als Verfüllschicht der 3. (mittel)assyrischen Schicht (e7:40) unter dem Ziegelpflaster der späteren (neuassyrischen) Nachnutzungsphase (e7:39 Ost). Dies wurde nur in der DOG-Notiz klargestellt, nicht jedoch im Nachhinein auch in Inventar- und Tagebuch.

61

Unklar bleibt hingegen der Befund zum ursprünglichen Tonta-felkonvolut Ass. 12979/80, das am 29.1.1908 ergraben und im Nachhinein – korrekter- oder fälschlicherweise – dem Tontafelschutt auf bzw. über dem Ziegelpflaster des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsge-bäudes zugerechnet wurde. Vgl. hierzu im Inventarbuch die folgenden Einträge:

Januar 1908 | 27. | 12974 | kl. Br. gebrannter Tontafel [Inv.-Nr.:] VAT 19535 | [keine Photo-Nr.] | Stadtgebiet
Januar 1908 | 28. | 12978 | kl. ungebrannte Tontafel | [Photo-Nr.:] 3314, 3315 | ca. 2.00^m unter Hügeloberfläche | eE6V
Januar 1908 | 29. | 12979 | 24 ziemlich vollständige ungebrannte Tontafeln s. auch 13058! [Inv.-Nr.:] VAT 19533 | [Photo-Nr.:] 3378, 3379, 3396 | auf Ziegelpflaster unter Hausgrundriß | eE6V
Januar 1908 | 29. | 12980 | ca 30 Brr. ungebrannter Tontafeln | [Photo-Nr.:] 3395, 3396 | „ [= auf Ziegelpflaster unter Hausgrundriß] | „ [= eE6V].[54]

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[53] Andrae in Andrae and Jordan 1908, 22.
[54] Assur Inventar iv: 72.

Grabungstechnisch ist die Fortführung von Ass. 12979/80 als Ass. 13058/59 kein Fehler, sondern ein Positivum. Mit Klärung des stratigraphischen Befundes, der zunächst unklar war und (berechtigt) falsch gedeutet wurde, wurde eine neue Fundnummer vergeben für den Rest des nun klaren Befundes. Von Bedeutung, insbesondere für die hier angezweifelte Vermischung im Grabungshaus der Tontafelfunde aus eA7II und eE6V/7I, ist hier der klare Hinweis darauf, dass die Beschriftung der Tafeln zügig und sorgfältig erfolgte, denn die Zahl der als gefunden vermerkten Tafeln stimmt weitgehend mit den entsprechend beschrifteten überein (24x vollständig: Ass. 12979 / Ass. 12979a-i, k-y; 30x Bruchstücke: Ass. 12980 / Ass. 12980a-i, k-ae*).[55]

Grabungstechnisch problematisch ist jedoch, dass diese Fundnummer – wie später auch Ass. 13319 (N31A) – in Folge nicht ausschließlich für den nun geklärten Befund verwendet wurde, also den Tontafelschutt im Hof des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsgebäudes, sondern für alle Tontafeln im Umfeld des Tontafelschutts. Diese umfassten explizit auch Tontafelfunde aus den Abtragungskontexten der darüberliegenden jüngeren (assyrischen bis parthischen) Wohnüberbauung, aus der vermutlich auch die spätassyrischen Tontafeln N31D stammen.

Exkurs: Die Fundlokalisierung von Ass. 12979/80

Unlösbar – wenn auch für die vorliegende Fragestellung sekundär – bleibt die Inkonsistenz zwischen der schriftlichen Originaldokumentation und der Fundortangabe zu Ass. 12979–80 in Miglus 1996, Plan 120. Wie bereits ausgeführt wird die Fundlage des Konvoluts beschrieben als 1) „auf Ziegelpflaster unter Hausgrundriss" (Inventarbuch: 29.1.1908) und 2) „im Hof des Privathauses der 2. ass. Periode" (Tagebuch: 31.1.1908). Laut Miglus 1996, Plan 120 liegt der Fundort von Ass. 12979–80 jedoch nicht auf dem Ziegelpflaster, sondern im Bereich einer Störung, und bei Übereinanderlegung der Pläne 119 und 120 auch nicht unter einer Ziegel- bzw. Hausmauer, sondern in/unter einer (störungs- oder durchgangsbedingten) Mauerlücke (vgl. Abb. 2–3).

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[55] Vgl. Pedersén 1985, 76.

Hieraus ergibt sich die Frage, ob die zeichnerische Befundlokalisierung oder die Befundbeschreibung ungenau ist. Für beides lassen sich Erklärungen finden, jedoch mit unterschiedlichen Folgen für die Befundinterpretation. Dreh- und Angelpunkt ist hier die Frage, auf was „unter Hausgrundriss" referenziert.

Grundsätzlich anzunehmen ist, dass sich die Referenz auf die später eingebaute Mauer bezieht, die auf dem Plan der 1. Bearbeitungsschicht (Miglus 1996, Plan 21) verzeichnet ist und in/unter deren Mauerlücke der Fundort von Ass. 12979–80 eingetragen ist (Miglus 1996, Plan 120; Abb. 2–3). Theoretisch wäre auch denkbar, dass die schriftliche Dokumentation auf eine nicht eingezeichnete Mauer referenziert, mangels zusätzlicher Hinweise ist diese Lösung jedoch als unwahrscheinlich abzulehnen. Grabungstechnisch plausibel bleiben hingegen die Szenarien, dass a) ein Teil der Mauer mit der Mauerlücke (= Ostmauer von Miglus e7:39.6) abgetragen wurde oder b) im Osten an ihr heruntergegraben wurde.

Im Falle von a) wäre bereits frühzeitig die Mauer als Teil der (spät-) assyrischen Schicht 1 oberhalb der assyrischen Schichten 2 und 3 angesehen worden und wohl die dahinterliegende fragmentarische Steinmauer als Westwand des zu ergrabenden Tontafelschutthofes. Wörtlich genommen ist dies die naheliegende Interpretation der Befundangabe. Gestützt wird diese zudem von der Eintragung des entsprechende Mauerstücks nur auf dem Plan der 1. Bearbeitungsschicht (Miglus 1996, Plan 21). Dagegen spricht jedoch, dass zum entsprechenden Grabungszeitpunkt noch nicht bekannt war, dass sich darunter ein Hof mit Tontafelschutt befindet. Die Auffindung von Ass. 12979/80 war hierfür der erste Hinweis.

Im Falle von b), also der Auffindung des Tontafelkonvoluts beim Abtragen entlang der Mauer, was grabungstechnisch näher liegt, gibt es zwei Interpretationsmöglichkeiten, je nach Lesart des Inventarbuch-Kurzeintrags für Ass. 12979/80. Dieser lässt sowohl die Lesart *Tontafelfund auf Ziegelpflaster, das unter dem Hausgrundriss durchzieht* zu als auch *Tontafelfund unter der Mauer eines Hausgrundrisses, stratigraphisch über einem (älteren) Ziegelpflaster*. Bei ersterer Lesung wäre die Mauer (= Ostmauer von e7:39.6) als Teil der 2. assyrischen Schicht

und als östliche Hofbegrenzung des Tontafelschutts Ass. 12979/80 + Ass. 13058/59 gesehen worden, bei zweiter Lesart als Teil der 1. assyrischen Schicht und wohl die dahinter anstehende Mauer, die im mittelassyrischen Hof den inneren Eingang verstärkt[?] (vgl. Abb. 2) und auf beiden Bearbeitungsplänen (1. + 2./3. Bearbeitungsschicht, Miglus 1996: Pl. 21–22) verzeichnet ist, als westliche Begrenzung des Tontafelschutt-Befundes.

In Anbetracht der Befunddokumentation und insbesondere der Befundklärung im Schreiben an die DOG vom 11.2.1908 erscheint die Interpretation b1 am wahrscheinlichsten, sie ist jedoch auf Basis der derzeitigen Publikationslage (und vermutlich auch zukünftig) weder be- noch widerlegbar.

Fazit zum Befund N31D – eE6V/7I

Für die spätassyrischen Tontafeln im Konvolut Ass. 13058 (N31D) ergibt sich daraus, dass ihr architektonisch-stratigraphischer Kontext nicht rekonstruiert werden kann. Die Grabungsdokumentation gibt jedoch unmittelbar plausible Hinweise auf mögliche Herkunftskontexte: nämlich die Räumlichkeiten der späten Anbauphase (e7:39.5–8) an den (früh)neuassyrischen Einbau e7:39.2 in den Hof des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsgebäudes e7:40.1 oder die westlich anschließende Gasse bzw. Straße, die das (spätassyrische) Wohnviertel vom (inschriftlich weiterhin dokumentierten Ištar- und) Nabû-Tempel-Komplex trennt. Stratigraphisch liegen beide Befundkontexte über den Gebäuderesten des Westtrakts und den westlichen Räumlichkeiten des Südtrakts des mittelassyrischen Gebäudes (e7:40.2–12). Ebenso denkbar sind nicht zeichnerische dokumentierte Wohnhausreste im selben Bereich.

Der Fundzeitpunkt war vermutlich zwischen dem 7. und 11. Februar 1908, als laut Tagebuch zur Freilegung des Tontafelschutt-hofes die jüngeren Wohnhausschichten abgetragen wurden. Diese lieferten explizit fragmentarisch erhaltene Tontafeln, die keine eigene Fundnummer erhielten. Es liegt nahe, dass sich darunter auch die spätassyrischen Tafeln des Konvoluts befanden. Die geringe Anzahl und die Beobachtung des fragmentarischen Zustands deuten hierfür auf Streu- bzw. Schuttfunde.

Die angebliche Durchmischung von Ass. 13058 und Ass. 13319

*Zur Existenz von spät- und mittelassyrischen Architekturbe-
funden und Tontafelkonvoluten in eA7II sowie eE6V/7I*
Als wichtiges Fazit der dem vorliegenden Beitrag zugrunde liegenden
Forschung lässt sich zeigen, dass die originale Grabungsdokumentation
entgegen des tradierten Forschungsstandes sowohl für das Wohnquartier
im Nordosten des Ištar-Nabû-Komplexes (eE6V/7I) mittel-, (früh-)
neuassyrische und spätassyrische Siedlungsschichten bezeugt als auch
für das Wohnquartier südwestlich des Ištar-Nabû-Komplexes (eA7II/
III). Zeichnerisch dokumentiert wurden jedoch nur selektive Befunde
derselben: in eE6V/7I v.a. das mittelassyrische Verwaltungsgebäude
e7:40 und seine späteren Ein- und Überbauten e7:39 und in eA7II/
III die spätassyrische Wohnsiedlung mit den Häusern d7:1, e7:27 und
e7:28.

Die schriftlich notierten Beobachtungen zu neu- bis spätassyrischen
Wohnhäusern in eE6V/7I wurden entweder nicht zeichnerisch fixiert
oder in Miglus 1996 nicht vom frühneuassyrischen Nachnutzungs-
befund e7:39 getrennt (teilweise Einbau in den Hof des mittelassyrischen
Verwaltungsgebäudes e7:40, teilweise späterer Anbau an den Einbau
unter Überbauung des mittelassyrischen Westtraktes mit Anschluss an
die Gassenkanalisation über selbigem Westtrakt). Die unzureichende
Grabungsdokumentation in diesem Bereich geht wohl einerseits auf
den äußerst fragmentarischen Erhaltungszustand der oberen Schichten
zurück, andererseits auf das abweichende Grabungsziel. Es ging nicht
primär um eine möglichst detaillierte Dokumentation der fragmentari-
schen Siedlungsbefunde, sondern um die Freilegung des Tempelareals
sowie sekundär des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsgebäudes.

Vergleichbares gilt für die mittel- bis neuassyrischen Wohnhaus-
schichten in eA7II/III, die nur eklektisch ergraben wurden. Ihre
detailliertere zeichnerische Dokumentation fiel vermutlich der stark
reduzierten Equipe sowie dem damit verbundenen Grabungsleiter-
wechsel zum Opfer. Dies ist umso bedauerlicher, als Jordan dezidiert

65

ältere Wohnhauskontexte sowie daraus und aus den Aufschüttungs- und Fundamentschichten für den spätassyrischen Nabû-Tašmetu-Tempel stammende Tontafelfunde vermerkt.

Zur areal-internen Vermischung spät- und mittelassyrischer Tontafelkonvolute aus eA7II bzw. eE6V/7I

Für das Areal eA7II lässt sich gut belegen, dass areal-intern Tontafelfunde aus mittel- bis frühneuassyrischen Wohnhausschichten, aus spätassyrischen Aufschüttungs- und ggf. Fundamentkontexten und aus spätassyrischen Privathaus- und Gassenkontexten zu einem Fundkonvolut zusammengezogen wurden. Alle diese Tontafelfunde wurden der Fundnummer Ass. 13319 zugeordnet, die ursprünglich einen Hortfund bezeichnete – aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach ein Privathausarchiv im engeren Sinne, das vermutlich im Raum 14, dem Raum über der Grablege des Wohnhauses d7:1, deponiert war.

Für das Areal eE6V/7I ist der Befund weniger eindeutig, aber auch hier blieb die Fundnummer Ass. 13058, die eigentlich den Tontafelschutt im Hof des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsgebäudes e7:40 bezeichnete, offen für weitere Tontafelfunde aus dem Areal. Hierunter fallen nach schriftlicher Dokumentation (v.a. Tagebuch) auch Tontafelfunde aus den jüngeren Wohnhausschichten, die zur Freilegung des Hofes abgetragen wurden. Es ist anzunehmen, dass diese auch die spätassyrischen Tafelfragmente im Konvolut Ass. 13058 beinhalteten. Dies ist jedoch nur plausibilisier-, nicht belegbar.

Zur areal-übergreifenden Vermischung der mittelassyrischen Tafelkonvolute aus eA7II und eE6V/7I

Die angebliche Durchmischung von Ass. 13058 und Ass. 13319 ist nicht plausibel. Die Fundkomplexe stammen aus verschiedenen Grabungsarealen: Ass. 13058 aus eE6V/7I (= östlich des Nabû- bzw. des Ištar-Tempels) und Ass. 13319 aus eA7II (= südwestlich des Nabû bzw. des Ištar-Tempels). Sie sind mit über einem Monat Abstand voneinander gefunden worden und zwar zu einem Zeitpunkt als das jeweils andere Grabungsareal nicht aktiv war.

Die mittelassyrischen Tontafeln mit der Fundnummer Ass. 13319 sind entgegen der datierungsbedingten Zuordnung zum Archiv M7[56] archäologisch nicht dem Archiv und Gebäude zuzuordnen, aus dem die Tontafelfunde Ass. 12979/80 und 13058/9 stammen, da sie nicht im Planquadrat eE6V/7I (nord)östlich des Ištar-Tempels gefunden wurden, sondern im Haus-, Gassen-, Fundamentierungs- oder Aufschüttungskontext (süd)westlich des Tempels in eA7II. Hierfür gibt es explizite Befundangaben in der Originaldokumentation, die nicht zeichnerisch dokumentiert wurden. Für die mittelassyrischen Tontafeln in Ass. 13319 wären dem Tagebuch und Inventar zufolge also noch eine eigene neue Fundkomplexnummer (oder auch mehrere) zuzuordnen, was aus unbekannten Gründen nicht erfolgt ist. Sie gehören sicher nicht zum 'Archiv' M7, den im Hof des Verwaltungsgebäudes e7:40 gefundenen Tontafelschutts. Zu diskutieren wäre eine mögliche Zuordnung zu M3, einer Gruppe von Schüler-Tafeln aus eA7III (Pedersén 1985, 42). Sinnvoller wäre jedoch eine separate M-'Archiv'-Nummer.

Auch wenn die areal-übergreifende Durchmischung der mittelassyrischen Tafeln auf Grabung aufgrund der Befundbeschreibung abzulehnen ist, ist eine antike Zugehörigkeit zum Verwaltungsgebäude im Nordosten der Ištar-Tempel prinzipiell konstruierbar. Denkbar ist, dass im Zuge des Baus des Nabû-Tempels Material aus brachliegenden Siedlungsquartieren östlich des Tempelkomplexes für die Fundamentierung der neuen Tempelanlage verwendet wurde. Falls dies philologisch naheliegt, wäre dies ein wichtiger Befund zur Baugeschichte des Nabû-Tempels.

Zur areal-übergreifenden Vermischung der spätassyrischen Tafelkonvolute aus eA7II und eE6V/7I

Selbiges gilt für die spätassyrischen Tafeln der beiden Planquadrate. Es gibt keine plausible Erklärung, wie die areal-übergreifende Vermischung zustande gekommen wäre. Im Gegenteil, der Befund zu Ass. 12979/80 spricht für eine konsequent rasche Beschriftung der (Tontafel-)Funde im Grabungshaus. Zudem sind für beide Areale explizite Hinweise auf

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[56] Pedersén 1985, 81; Pedersén 1986, 126, 129; Faist 2007, 125–27.

spätassyrische Architekturbefunde und Tontafelfunde vorhanden, auch wenn die Zuordnung (v.a. in eE6V/7I) im Detail nicht mehr rekonstruiert werden kann. Stratigraphisch hätten die spätassyrischen Tafeln in Ass. 13058 folglich in eine separate Fundnummer getrennt werden müssen, kulturhistorisch bräuchten sie zudem eigentlich eine eigene N-Nummer, wenigstens jedoch die weiterhin konsequente Trennung in die Unternummer N31D.

Auch für die spätassyrischen Streufund-Tafeln in Ass. 13058 bleibt eine zeitweilige antike Zugehörigkeit zum Archiv, das ursprünglich mit der Fundnummer Ass. 13319 gekennzeichnet wurde, grundsätzlich denkbar. Ob die Dokumentation von Geschäftsakten innerhalb einer größeren Personengruppe verstreut über die Wohnquartiere aufbewahrt wurde oder ob die Streuung erst erfolgte, als die Dokumentation obsolet war, wäre von großem Interesse für die Rekonstruktion der soziokulturellen Realitäten in Assur in der 2. Hälfte des 7. Jh. v. Chr. Dies bedarf jedoch einer intensiven kulturgeschichtlichen Analyse. Aufgrund des Streufundbefundes von N31D sowie der Zusammenziehung von Archiv- und Streufunden in N31A bleiben beide Interpretationen wohl weder be- noch widerlegbar.
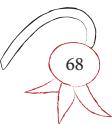
Kulturhistorisches Fazit

Die kulturhistorisch bedeutsamsten Schlussfolgerungen des vorliegenden Beitrags sind folglich 1) der Beleg einer Siedlungskontinuität – oder zumindest höherer Siedlungskomplexität – sowohl südwestlich als auch nordöstlich des Ištar-Nabû-Komplexes und 2) die Existenz von wenigstens sechs spätassyrischen 'Archiven' (7. Jh. v. Chr.) in wenigstens vier unterschiedlichen Wohnquartieren von Assur-Mitte, die Geschäftstätigkeiten von in Assur lebenden Ägypterinnen und Ägyptern dokumentieren.[57]

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[57] Einzelne Hinweise für Ägypterᴵɴɴᴇɴ gibt es zudem aus anderen Archiven, so ein Zeuge eines Grundstück-Verkaufs in Guzana/Tell Halaf im „Archiv" N18 aus dem Wohnquartier auf der mittelassyrischen Palastterrasse in Assur-Nord. Der Grundstückskauf und Aktivitätsort war jedoch nicht Assur, sondern Guzana.

Zusätzlich zu den Befunden der selektiven zeichnerischen Grabungs-dokumentation (vgl. Miglus 1996 sowie weitgehend in Folge Schmitt 2012) wurden laut schriftlicher Dokumentation unter den spätassyri-schen Wohnhausbefunden in eA7II/III auch mittel- bis neuassyrische Wohnhausschichten beobachtet. Ebenso gibt es in eE6V/7I zusätzlich zum mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsgebäude, seiner (früh)neuassyri-schen Nachnutzung und der großflächigen parthischen Überbauung Hinweise für spätassyrische sowie möglicherweise für nachassyrisch-vorparthische Befunde. Auch wenn die exakte Gleichzeitigkeit und die Quartierstruktur nicht beleg- bzw. rekonstruierbar ist, ergibt sich damit für das Umfeld des Ištar-Nabû-Komplexes folgende Siedlungs-stratigraphie (vgl. Abb. 3–6): Spätestens im Laufe der Nutzung des Ištar-Tempels Adad-Niraris I. (vermutlich bereits früher) grenzte ein Wohnviertel im Südwesten an den Ištar-Tempel Tukulti-Ninurtas an. Das Verwaltungsgebäude im Osten des Ištar-Tempels Adad-Niraris I. blieb in Verwendung (Abb. 3). Vermutlich in die Zeit des Verfalls des Ištar-Tempels Tukulti-Ninurtas ist auch die Auflassung zumindest von Teilen des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsgebäudes anzusetzen, in dessen Hof in (früh)neuassyrischer Zeit ein Einbau erfolgte (Abb. 4). Wohl mehr oder weniger parallel zur Überbauung der Freifläche über dem alten Ištar-Tempel Tukulti-Ninurtas mit Wohnhäusern verfiel endgültig auch der Westtrakt des mittelassyrischen Verwaltungsge-bäudes (Abb. 5). Möglicherweise im weiteren zeitlichen Umfeld der Anlage des Nabû-Tempels auf dem einstmaligen Areal der älteren Ištar-Tempel und des Ištar-Tempels Tukulti-Ninurtas entstand oder wurde explizit eine Gasse angelegt. Zudem wurde an den neuassyrischen Hof-Einbau ein jüngerer Westtrakt angebaut, dessen Kanalisation mit der Gasse in Verbindung stand (Abb. 6).

Aus dieser letzten Phase (im Wesentlichen die 2. Hälfte des 7. Jhs.) stammt die hier diskutierte Dokumentation der Transaktionen von in Assur lebenden Ägyptern, die zurzeit als zwei sogenannte „Ägypter-Archive" sowie „Subarchive" geführt werden. Dies verstellt

69

Für eine ausführliche Diskussion des Dokuments (Ass. 8642A/IstM A 1924) und seiner Objektgeschichte vgl. Wasmuth 2016.
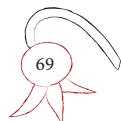
den Blick auf die Befundkomplexität der Tontafelfunde und zementiert die (unhaltbare) Annahme einer ghettoartig zusammenlebenden ägyptischen Expat-Kommune. Zumindest die folgenden sechs Fundkontexte sind der schriftlichen Grabungsdokumentation der frühen DOG-Grabungen und der 1990er Kampagne entnehmbar und sollten dezidiert in verschiedene N-Nummern getrennt werden (vgl. Abb. 1):

- in Assur-West (Grabung 1990: Grabungsabschnitt W-1)[58]
  a. Hortfund/Archiv N52b in Haus W-1/IV, Raum 1A2[59]
  b. Streu- bzw. Schuttfunde N52a in den Häusern W-1/IV (Raum 1D5), W-1/VI (Räume 1B4, 1C1/F2, 1D2, 1D3), W-1/VII (Raum 1E6) und W-1/VIII (Raum 1E1)[60]
- in Assur-Mitte (Grabung 1908: Suchgraben g9)
  c. Suchschnitt-Konvolut N31B (Ass. 14671), vermutlich ein Hortfund im Schutt eines Privathauses (g9:4; s.o. Fußnote 6)
- in Assur-Mitte/Nord südwestlich des Nabû-Tempels (Grabung 1908: eA7II)
  d. Hortfund/Archiv N31A, wohl aus Haus d7:1.14 (= ursprüngliche Fundnummer Ass. 13319)
  e. Streu- und Schuttfunde im Häuser- und Gassenbereich im Umfeld von Haus/Raum d7:1.14 (= auf Grabung nachträglich der Hortfundnummer Ass. 13319 zugeordnet, heute nicht mehr leicht trennbar von N31A)
- in Assur-Mitte/Nord westlich des Ištar-Nabû-Komplexes (Grabung 1908: eE6V/7I)
  f. Streufunde? N31D aus Gassen- oder Wohnhauskontext (= spätassyrische Tafeln, die auf Grabung dem mittelassyrischen Tontafelschutt-Konvolut Ass. 13058 zugeordnet wurden und eine eigenständige Fundkonvolut-Nummer erhalten sollten)

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[58] Vgl. Radner 2016, 79–133; Miglus and Stępniowski 2016, 7–8.

[59] Zur Separierungsnotwendigkeit des 'Archivs' N52 in die beiden Subarchive N52a und N52b s. bereits Radner 2016, 79. Wie oben für N31 diskutiert, reicht dies eigentlich nicht. Es sollten zumindest zwei eigenständige N-Nummern vergeben werden.

[60] Interessant ist, dass sich das sogenannte Archiv des Dūrī-Aššur (N52a) als Schuttfunde verteilt über vier spätassyrische Häuser gefunden hat. Die Implikation dieses Befundes ist nicht Gegenstand des vorliegenden Beitrags.
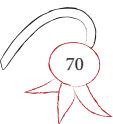
- hinzu kommen Oberflächenstreufunde unbekannter Lokalisation im Stadtgebiet (N31C, N31E).

Statt die Befunde aus den verschiedenen Wohnquartieren zusammen-zuziehen, sollten Versuche unternommen werden, die eigentlichen Archive im Sinne intentionell gemeinsam gelagerter Hortfunde von den Streu- und Schuttfunden zu trennen, mit denen sie auf Grabung vermischt wurden. Zudem gilt es zu konzeptualisieren, welche antiken Realitäten zu der breiten Streuung der Dokumente der in Assur lebenden Ägypterinnen und Ägypter geführt haben könnten und welche Schlussfolgerungen sich daraus für das Siedlungsverhalten ergeben, denn die Nennung einer Person in einem Archiv gibt an sich noch keine Auskunft darüber, wo diese Person gelebt hat.
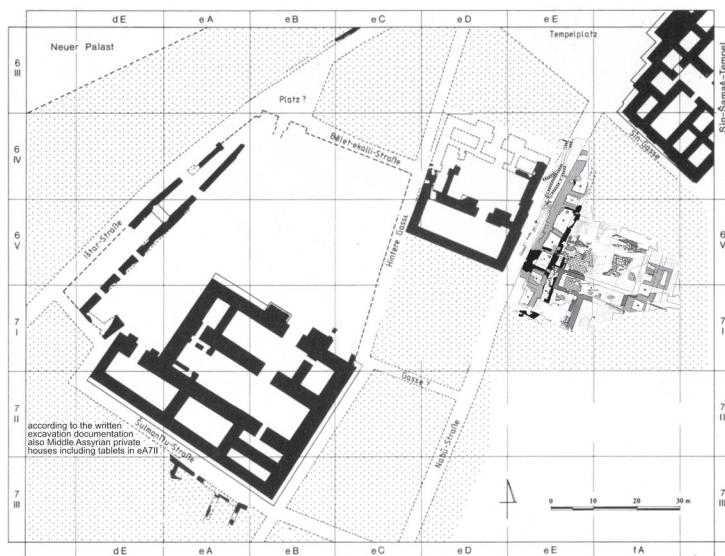
Abb. 3: Die Bebauung im Umfeld des Ištar-Nabû-Komplexes im 13.–10. Jh. v. Chr. (Abbildung: Wasmuth 2021; nach Abb. 2; Schmitt 2012, Tf. 9b; Andrae and Jordan 1908).
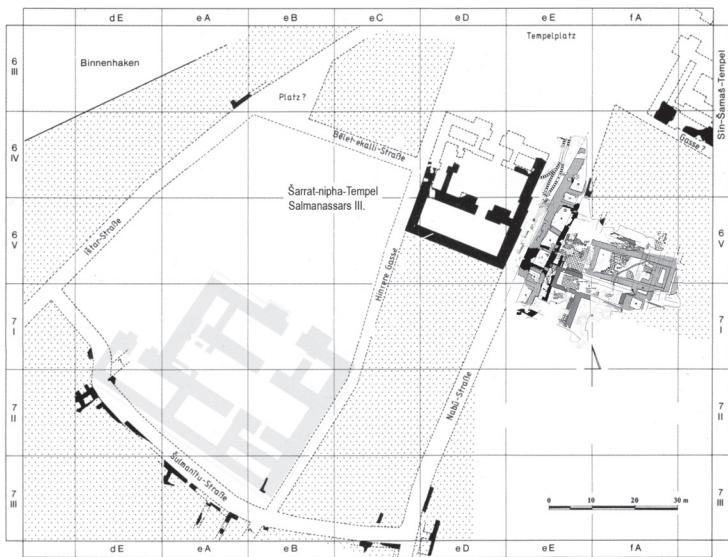
Abb. 4: Die Bebauung im Umfeld des Ištar-Nabû-Komplexes im 10.–9. Jh. v. Chr. (Abbildung: Wasmuth 2021; nach Abb. 2; Schmitt 2012, Tf. 10; Andrae and Jordan 1908).
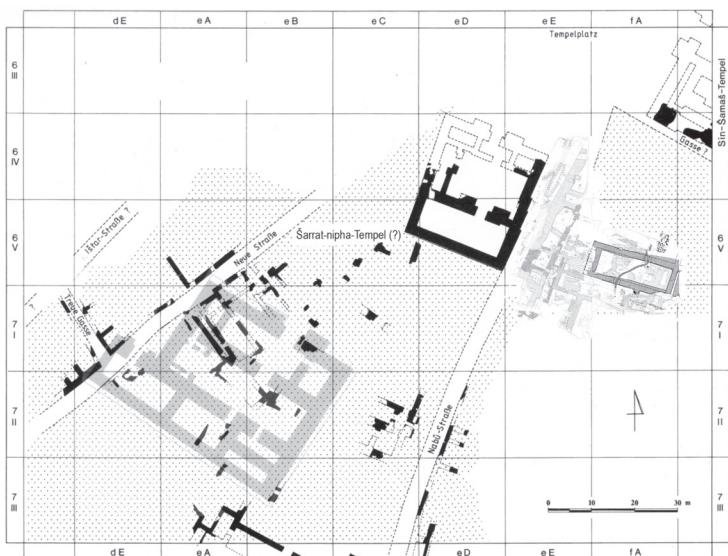
Abb. 5: Die Bebauung im Umfeld des Ištar-Nabû-Komplexes im 9.–8. Jh. v. Chr. (Abbildung: Wasmuth 2021; nach Abb. 2; Schmitt 2012, Tf. 9b; Andrae and Jordan 1908).

Abb. 6: Die Bebauung im Umfeld des Ištar-Nabû-Komplexes im 7. Jh. v. Chr. (Abbildung: Wasmuth 2021; nach Abb. 2; Schmitt 2012, Tf. 10; Miglus 1996: Plan 117; Andrae and Jordan 1908).

Summary

Under the aegis of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (DOG), major excavations took place at the ancient town of Assur (modern Qalʿat Sharqat in northern Iraq) in the early twentieth century. The town was the long-time capital of the Assyrian Empire and still an imperial metropolis in the seventh century BCE. Archaeologically, the Assur excavation is eminent due to the high degree of scientific circumspection, the scope of excavated features that include not only palace and temple buildings, but also living quarters, and the amount of private documents found in these. Unfortunately, the impending World War (WW I) and the subsequent political changes in the Mosul region and the institutions involved in the excavation (disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and abolition of the Ottoman Sultanate) disrupted the excavations and their preparation for final publication. Consequently, major efforts to make the stratigraphic and textual evidence from the living quarters available have only been undertaken since the 1980s.

The contribution at hand is concerned with a number of tablet finds from these early excavations, which were grouped together into one "archive" on philological grounds. Based on the re-occurrence of names, most of which seem to be Egyptian in origin, a collection of tablet hoards and stray finds from several living quarters of Assur have been grouped together as "archive N31" (Pedersén 1986: 125–29). Within this convolute, originally five groups have been separated (A–E) based on their find circumstances, which are reflected in their find numbers. Two of these groups include Middle and Late Assyrian texts. Pedersén suggested separating and regrouping these by including the Late Assyrian texts from N31D into the A convolute, and the Middle Assyrian texts from N31A into the D convolute and in consequence into the Middle Assyrian "archive" M7. This and a subsequent renumbering of the tablets regarding their excavation numbers luckily did not take place. But the inference was taken up in 2007, when N31A+D was published as a joint convolute of Neo-Assyrian texts belonging to a single archive (Faist 2007: 125–49, especially 125–29).

Notwithstanding the immense worth of Pedersén's 1986 publication, the postulated archival attribution of the texts in the so-called archive of the Egyptians (N31) is highly problematic. The nominal grouping of records from at least three different town quarters into one "archive" obliterates ancient living conditions. They suggest an expat community neighbourhood, which is not borne out by the evidence.

The postulated mix-up of the "archives" N31A and N31D has to be refuted altogether based on the original excavation documentation. There is evidence in the primary records that:

- the tablets from N31A and N31D derive from two different late Neo-Assyrian living quarters
- both living quarters were excavated at different times
- both original find convolutes contained tablet depots and stray finds
- in each area at least two separate stratigraphic layers from the Middle to Late Assyrian period were observed during the excavation, each of which yielded tablets. The tablet finds from these strata were not separated into different find numbers and their architectural contexts were only partially drawn.

74

In eA7II (N31A), the written excavation documentation explicitly identifies

a. a Late Assyrian living quarter that produced at least one hoard of tablets (original find no. Ass. 13319) as well as waste and stray finds that were allotted to the same number.

b. an older, Middle to early Neo-Assyrian layer of private houses that produced tablets, which did not receive a separate find number and are therefore likely to have been included in Ass. 13319.

c. fragments of Middle Assyrian inscribed artefacts, maybe including tablets, in the foundations of the Nabû temple; the question is whether Andrae's "Urkunden" refers to inscribed artefacts that are explicitly not clay tablets, or whether "Urkunden" was regularly or occasionally used also as a less-specific genre term to indicate any inscribed artefacts; if the latter is the case (or if no special notice was taken), Middle Assyrian tablet fragments might also have been among the foundation debris; once more, the only available find number to accommodate these older tablets would be Ass. 13319.

75

In eE6V/7I (N31D), the available documentation is not so explicit and much more inconsistent. However, also here there is evidence for private houses and streets from the Late Assyrian period, the excavators' "Assyrian layer 1," and hence likely candidates for the Late Assyrian tablets in Ass. 13058. These were situated partially adjoining (Miglus e7:39 West) and possibly also above the earlier Neo-Assyrian in-built structures ("Assyrian layer 2"; Miglus e7:39 East) in the courtyard of the Middle Assyrian administrative building of "Assyrian layer 3" (Miglus e7:40). The stratigraphy remains slightly uncertain, as the strata clarification is only spelled out in a letter to the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (Andrae and Jordan 1908: 22), but is not explicated or corrected in the excavation journal (*Tage-* & *Inventarbuch*).

Most tablets in Ass. 12979/12080+13058 derived from the debris in the courtyard below those later in-built brick structures of "Assyrian layer 2" (e7:39 East). The Late Assyrian tablets were possibly found between February 7–11, when the upper strata were removed to expose

the courtyard and its tablet debris. These upper strata are recorded to have produced clay tablets – good candidates for the Late Assyrian tablets in Ass. 13058. As typically the case in Assur at the time, these were added to the ongoing tablet convolute number in the relevant grid square(s), i.e. Ass. 13058. Thus, the Late Assyrian tablets in the convolute probably derive either from the rooms that were later added to the Neo-Assyrian in-built structure and that lay above the western wing of the Middle Assyrian building (e7:39 West). Or, they could have been strayfinds from the adjoining street context or from potentially undocumented, exceedingly fragmentarily preserved houses.

In consequence, it is much more plausible that the Middle and Late Assyrian texts within each convolute were found in the respective living quarters and were not mixed across the excavation operations. Hence, efforts should be made to separate archives and other tablet finds from the Late Assyrian living quarters of Assur, instead of obliterating distinct archives by grouping them together. It is of major socio-cultural significance that a group of persons, who predominantly interacted with each other, preserved the documentation of their legal and economic transactions in several living quarters of the town. This is especially important in cases like N31 that mainly records persons with etymologically foreign (in this case Egyptian) names, as such evidence challenges the prevalent assumption of deported and other expat groups living ghetto-like in allotted quarters.

Together with the excavations in 1990 (especially Radner 2016), Egyptians are documented in at least six different contexts in four different seventh-century living quarters throughout the town as well as in surface finds: in Assur-West (N58a, debris context spread over several private houses; N58b, tablet depot in private house), in Assur-Centre/South (N31B; test trench, no details available, probably tablet depot in private house), in Assur-Centre/North southwest of the Ištar and Nabû temples (N31A: explicitly tablet depot in private house; unfortunately also N31A: debris finds from house or street context), and in Assur-Centre/North northeast of the Ištar and Nabû temples (N31D, probably debris finds from house or street context). The social implications of the spread of documents, the analysis of the social network of the persons mentioned in them, and the question

of whether the original find deposits might be partially reconstructed based on their contents, are not discussed in this contribution. They are the focus of a research scholarship of the Gerda Henkel Stiftung granted to the author for the period of July 2021 to June 2023.

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Abstract

Bar 3:24-28 correlates in a most creative way the downfall of the giants with the wisdom thematic: the giants perished because they were refused the gift of divine wisdom. Their depiction echoes both the offspring of the "sons of God" in Gen 6 and the mighty Canaanites, to indicate two erroneous paths towards wisdom. The thorough rewriting of Gen 6 is especially interesting: contrary to the Genesis account, the birth of the giants is located in the "house of God", a place that seems to outreach human understanding. The purpose of the author may be to distance himself from texts that describe the mysteries of the universe, such as the Book of Watchers. On the author hand, the military competence of the giants associates them with the nations and therefore excludes them from election. Since the text was presumably written in the Hellenistic era, it is not unlikely that this gentile wisdom might be identified with Greek culture. In opposition to these counter-models, the true wisdom, also outlined in the rest of the section, is a divine gift to the whole people of Israel.
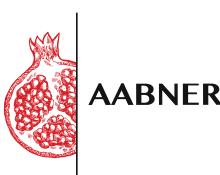
LES TROIS SAGESSES DE BARUCH:
HYPOTHÈSES SUR LA FIGURE DES GÉANTS
EN Ba 3, 24-28

Raphaëlle Berterottière

Le thème de la disparition des géants, peu présent dans les passages de la Torah ou des *Nebi'im* qui mentionnent ces créatures dont la taille et la force surpassent celles des Israélites, semble avoir suscité un grand intérêt dans la littérature ultérieure du Second Temple, qui l'a souvent assimilé au Déluge. Des textes d'origines et de genres très hétérogènes évoquent en particulier les raisons de cet anéantissement : certains textes retrouvés à Qumrân comme le *Livre des Veilleurs*, le *Livre des Jubilés* ou le *Livre des Géants*, qui constituent les récits les plus développés sur les géants, y voient l'origine de la diffusion du mal sur terre (voir par exemple 1 Hén 9, 9) ; d'autres textes évoquent leur insoumission (Si 16, 7 ; 2 Macc 2, 4 ; Sg 14, 6) ou leur impiété (Ps.-Eupolemos).

La section centrale du livre de Baruch est cependant le seul texte qui mobilise l'idée de sagesse pour expliquer la disparition des géants : « Ce n'est pas eux que Dieu a choisis ; il ne leur a pas non plus donné le chemin de la connaissance. Ils périrent parce qu'ils n'avaient pas de jugement ; ils périrent à cause de leur irréflexion » (Ba 3, 27-28).

C'est aussi le texte qui fait référence de manière la plus explicite au seul récit portant sur l'origine de ces êtres dans la Bible hébraïque, Gn 6, 1-4. On a ainsi pu parler d'une « sapientalisation » des traditions de la Torah par ce texte (Sheppard 1980). Une notable variation survient toutefois dans cette reprise : les géants sont désormais engendrés dans la « maison de Dieu » (ὁ οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 24) et non plus « sur la terre ». Il semble donc que la tradition rapportée par Gn 6 ait été intégrée à un texte à la visée théologique différente, que nous nous proposons d'analyser.

Ces versets se trouvent dans une méditation sur la sagesse qui constitue la partie centrale du livre (3, 9–4, 4). Encadrée par une exhortation invitant Israël à cheminer vers la sagesse après l'avoir délaissée (3, 9-14 ; 4, 2-4), cette méditation prend la forme d'un passage en revue de supposés détenteurs de la sagesse (3, 15-23), pour finalement affirmer l'exclusivité divine en cette matière : personne ne connaît la sagesse (v. 29-31), si ce n'est Dieu (v. 32-36), qui l'a donnée à Israël par la Loi (3, 37–4, 1). Entre l'énumération des chercheurs infructueux de la sagesse et l'affirmation que Dieu seul la possède se trouve l'évocation des géants (v. 26-28), introduite par deux phrases célébrant l'infinité du domaine divin (v. 24 et 25) dans lequel ils auraient été engendrés. Les versets 24 à 28 apparaissent ainsi comme un petit isolat au sein de cette section, et c'est ce passage que nous examinerons principalement pour mettre au jour les ressorts de l'association des géants au thème sapiential.

1. Ba 3 et les géants de l'Écriture

Une des caractéristiques de ce texte réside dans la référence explicite qu'il fait au récit de la naissance des géants rapporté en Gn 6, 1-4. Plusieurs expressions de la version grecque de Gn 6 y sont citées : en Ba 3, 26 les géants « furent engendrés » (ἐγεννήθησαν), un verbe qui se retrouve en Gn 6, 4 lorsqu'on lit que les « fils de Dieu allaient vers les femmes des hommes et leur engendrèrent (ἐγεννῶσαν) [des enfants] ». Ces géants sont désignés en Baruch comme « renommés, présents depuis le commencement » (οἱ γίγαντες οἱ ὀνομαστοὶ οἱ ἀπ᾽

ἀρχῆς, v. 26), ce qui est une reprise quasiment identique de la manière dont Gn 6 définit les géants comme « ceux d'autrefois, les hommes de renom » (οἱ ἀπ' αἰῶνος, οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ ὀνομαστοί, v. 4)[1].

L'interprétation de ce récit de Gn 6 a fait l'objet de nombreuses discussions dans la recherche, tant le texte présente de difficultés. La version hébraïque frappe en effet par son caractère heurté : l'action relatée aux versets 1 et 2 est interrompue par le v. 3, et constitue au v. 4 le cadre temporel dans lequel entrent de nouveaux protagonistes, les *nephilim* (נפלים). Les « fils de Dieu » (בני האלהים, v. 1), sont à nouveau mentionnés en 4b, tandis que les *nephilim* apparaissent coupés de la continuité du récit (Westermann 1974, 495). Un même problème se retrouve dans le dernier segment du v. 4, où apparaissent encore de nouveaux personnages, les *gibborim* (גברים) ; le référent du pronom המה n'est alors pas clairement lisible : s'agit-il des enfants des *nephilim*, mentionnés juste avant[2] ? Ou bien des *nephilim* eux-mêmes, ce qui amènerait à identifier *nephilim* et *gibborim*[3] ?

Cette dernière lecture semble être celle de la Septante, qui traduit *nephilim* et *gibborim* par le même terme, γίγαντες[4]. *Nephilim* et *gibborim* sont apparus assez similaires pour pouvoir être désignés de manière identique. Le mot γίγας est emprunté à la mythologie

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[1] La question de la langue originale de rédaction du livre de Baruch n'est pas tranchée, mais ce lien direct entre le grec de Baruch et la version grecque de la Genèse nous autorise à ne pas faire entrer en considération dans cette étude un hypothétique original hébreu. Pour un résumé de la question, voir Assan-Dhôte et Moatti-Fine (2005, 55–56 et 69–72).

[2] Une étymologie possible de ce terme, le verbe נפל, « tomber », accréditerait cette hypothèse.

[3] C'est l'opinion de Day (2014), qui ne voit pas sinon pourquoi les *nephilim* seraient mentionnés (83). Pour Gertz (2018) au contraire, on ne comprendrait alors pas pourquoi il n'est pas dit explicitement que les *nephilim* et les *gibborim* ne sont pas identiques (217).

[4] Il semble peu probable que les traducteurs aient eu sous les yeux un texte hébreu qui n'ait employé qu'une seule des deux désignations (Harl 1986, 126). Pour Rösel (1994), une telle traduction ne doit pas pour autant faire penser que ses auteurs ne considéraient pas que ce texte parlait de deux types différents de géants (151–52).

grecque (il fait ses premières apparitions chez Homère et Hésiode) ; il est présent dans de nombreux livres de la Bible grecque, où il traduit une pluralité de termes hébraïques. En Gn 10, il est appliqué à Nimrod pour rendre le nom גבור qui désigne un homme à la valeur militaire reconnue (par exemple en 2 Sam 23, 8). גבור est le terme hébreu que γίγας traduit le plus souvent (voir par exemple Ps 32, 16 ; És 3, 2 ; Éz 32, 12). Γίγαντες est aussi employé pour rendre רפאים qui semble faire référence aux morts dans le *sheol*, et en particulier aux guerriers morts (voir entre autres Pr 21, 16 ; És 14, 9 ; Éz 3, 21.27)[5]. Enfin, γίγαντες traduit également le terme *nephilim*, qui n'apparaît, hors de Gn 6, qu'en Nb 13, pour désigner les Cananéens indigènes qu'ont rencontrés les éclaireurs israélites lors d'une opération de reconnaissance de la Terre promise (v. 31-33). On remarque qu'un certain nombre de textes assimilent, comme Nb 13, les Cananéens aux géants : on retrouve cette association en Dt 1, 28, en Jos 12, 4 et 13, 12, en 2 Sam 21ʟxx (v. 11 et 22) ainsi que dans son correspondant des Chroniques, 1 Chr 20, 4-6ʟxx. En Dt 2, 10, plusieurs de ces peuples cananéens se trouvent regroupés sous la désignation de *rephaïm* ; parmi eux figurent les Anaqites, assimilés aux *nephilim* en Nb 13. Les traducteurs semblent avoir tiré les conséquences d'un réseau d'équivalences établi entre ces différents termes en les traduisant presque tous par γίγαντες.

Cette équivalence se retrouve dans le passage de Ba 3, qui caractérise les géants par leur « belle taille » (γενόμενοι εὐμεγέθεις, v. 26). Or cette caractéristique est absente de Gn 6, et n'est attribuée qu'aux « géants cananéens » : les éclaireurs de Nb 13 disent avoir vu en Canaan « des hommes de haute taille » (אנשי מדות, ἄνδρες ὑπερμήκεις, v. 33) ; en 1 Chr 20, 6, un Philistin tué par le neveu de David est qualifié « d'homme de haute taille » (איש מדה, ἀνὴρ ὑπερμεγέθης).

L'association des géants de Ba 3 aux indigènes du pays est peut-être aussi présente à travers l'expression ἐπιστάμενοι πόλεμον. Cette qualification ne reprend aucune caractéristique explicitement attribuée aux géants dans les textes scripturaires[6], et peut simplement renvoyer au

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[5] C'est peut-être à ce terme qu'il faut rattacher aussi l'expression ילדי־הרפה en 2 Sam 21, 18, traduite par ἀπόγονος γιγάντων.

[6] Harl *et al.* (1986) note qu'on trouve des hommes « exercés à la guerre » (δεδιδαγμένοι πόλεμον ou διδακτοὶ πόλεμον) en 1 Chr 5, 18ʟxx (certains

sémantisme du terme גבור. Mais elle peut aussi faire allusion à l'un des traits dominants des géants cananéens : leur vaillance au combat. En Nb 13, les espions israélites affirment : « nous ne pourrons monter à l'assaut de ce peuple, car il est plus fort que nous » (לא נוכל לעלות אל־העם כי־חזק הוא ממנו, v. 31b). On lit aussi en 2 Sam 21, 20 que les Philistins emploient des géants en première ligne (Sheppard 1980, 86). Si l'on prend le verbe ἐπίσταμαι au sens d'une connaissance raisonnée, technique, on peut aussi mettre cette attribution en rapport avec un passage de 1 Sam 13 qui indique que les Philistins veulent conserver le monopole du travail des métaux, indispensable à la fabrication des armes, en Canaan (v. 19-20).

L'assimilation des géants aux Cananéens prend sens dans le contexte du passage : l'ensemble de la section est en effet traversé par l'opposition entre Israël et les nations. Le passage en revue des dépositaires malheureux de la fausse sagesse s'ouvre et se clôt sur une allusion aux nations : les « chefs des nations » (οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν, v. 16), mis en parallèle avec « ceux qui maîtrisent les bêtes sauvages de la terre » (οἱ κυριεύοντες τῶν θηρίων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, v. 16), font probablement référence aux représentations traditionnelles de souverains égyptiens ou assyriens à la chasse, figurations de la maîtrise du chaos par le roi (Keel 1993) ; à la fin du texte sont mentionnés Canaan, Téman, Merran ainsi que les « fils d'Agar » (υἱοὶ Ἀγὰρ, v. 23). Cette association est aussi présente en creux au v. 27 : en rappelant que « ce n'est pas eux que Dieu a choisis » (οὐ τούτους ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς), le texte oppose les géants au peuple élu, Israël.

Nous avons donc affaire dans ce passage à une synthèse des deux figures gigantesques présentes dans les textes scripturaires, qui semble se fonder sur une équivalence établie au sein même de la Torah[7]. Cette synthèse renferme une double représentations de l'espace, en écho à la double extension, verticale et horizontale, présente dans les versets

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descendants de Gad), en Ct 3, 8 (la garde de Salomon), et en 1 M 4, 7, où cette expression désigne alors les païens (109) ; il ne paraît pas pour autant possible d'établir un lien entre ces expressions.

[7] Comme l'a montré Goff (2010), on trouve une semblable combinaison en Si 16, 7, qui se fonde quant à elle d'abord sur la figure des géants de la conquête pour y inclure la figure des géants antédiluviens, contrairement à Ba 3.

24 et 25 (Steck, Kratz et Kottspier 1998, 51) : elle conjoint la verti-calité suggérée par les « fils de Dieu » et l'horizontalité évoquée par la dispersion géographique des nations pour manifester l'étendue de la puissance divine. Les géants achèvent donc la série amorcée au verset 16 : même eux, qu'ils soient assimilés à des êtres intermédiaires ou à des figures héroïques pour leur renom à la guerre (οἱ ὀνομαστοί), ne possèdent pas la sagesse.

Pour Sheppard (1980), une telle synthèse témoigne de l'ambition « anthologique » de Baruch (86–87). Si cette caractérisation rend compte du style condensé et allusif de ces versets, elle ne doit pas, selon nous, masquer le travail de réécriture à l'œuvre dans ces versets, qui prennent eux-même place dans un jeu de références extrêmement élaboré[8]. Il nous semble ainsi plus pertinent de mettre l'accent sur le lien privilégié que semble entretenir Ba 3 avec Gn 6, par les références explicites qui renvoient de l'un à l'autre texte. Nous voudrions explorer ce lien en partant de l'interprétation du récit de Gn 6.

La présence de « fils de Dieu », qui semblent associés dans d'autres textes bibliques à des membres de la cour céleste (une représen-tation influencée par les cultures voisines, en particulier Ougarit)[9], la présence de récits plus développés de cet épisode dans le *Livre des Veilleurs* (1 Hén 6–8), ou dans le *Livre des Jubilés* (Jub 5, 1-5 ;

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[8] Henderson (2016, 56) a ainsi montré que la mobilisation de certaines références scripturaires dans la section sapientiale de Baruch, indépendamment de leur contenu, pouvait répondre à une véritable stratégie : les références à Job et au Deutéronome représentent respectivement les corpus des écrits de sagesse et de la Torah ; la combinaison de ces références doit placer les écrits de sagesse dans le prolongement de l'autorité de la Torah.

[9] La célébration de Yhwh exprimée dans le Ps 29 s'inspire ainsi des représentations des dieux cananéens en associant aux caractéristiques du dieu de l'orage Baal les traits royaux du dieu El (voir par exemple Hossfeld et Zenger 1993, 180), notamment la présence d'une cour autour de lui, les « fils d'El » (בני אלים, v. 1) qui doivent se prosterner devant Yhwh (השתחוו ליהוה, v. 2 ; voir aussi Ps 89, 7). En Jb 1 et 2, ils désignent des êtres qui « se tiennent devant le Seigneur » (להתיצב על־יהוה, 1, 6 ; 2, 1), à l'instar d'un conseil royal dont les membres se présentent debout auprès du roi assis. Pour une présentation générale des parallèles entre le conseil divin ougaritique et biblique, voir Loretz (1990, 56–65).

voir aussi 7, 21-23), de même que l'existence de récits relatant les unions entre humains et dieux dans d'autres cultures antiques[10], ont pu laisser penser que cet épisode représentait le vestige d'un mythe ancien. Gunkel (1922) considérait déjà que le narrateur aurait intégré le récit de cette union de manière seulement allusive, pour des raisons théologiques (59). Pour von Rad (1987), le mythe dont serait dérivé ce récit aurait raconté l'origine des figures héroïques de demi-dieux ; en intégrant ce mythe à l'histoire des origines, celui que von Rad appelle le Yahwiste aurait cependant détourné la perspective étiologique initiale pour faire de ce récit « démythologisé » une illustration de la corruption de l'humanité, qui conduit au Déluge (85). Il aurait alors inséré le v. 3 pour assimiler cette union à une transgression nécessitant l'intervention de Yhwh. Cette transformation du texte expliquerait son caractère laconique et isolé.

La recherche actuelle préfère toutefois mettre l'accent sur ce qui inscrit ce récit dans la continuité de l'histoire des origines de Gn 1–11. Gertz (2018) se demande ainsi ce qu'aurait apporté à la rédaction finale de la Genèse l'insertion d'un résumé bancal, destiné à mettre au second plan une tradition dont le récit donne lui-même la trace[11], et souligne le fait que le v. 3 présuppose l'animation de l'homme par le souffle de vie (Gn 2, 7) et peut être rapproché de la volonté exprimée par Dieu de limiter la vie humaine (Gn 3, 22)[12]. Gertz choisit donc de donner

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[10] Si la figure de Gilgamesh ou les héros grecs viennent immédiatement à l'esprit, aucune dépendance directe n'est démontrable avec la mythologie proche-orientale (Witte 1998, 293) ni la mythologie grecque (Wright 2013, 73–74).

[11] « Welches Erzählinteresse besteht an einer folgenlosen Notiz über die sexuelle Verbindung zwischen Göterrsöhnen und Menschentöchtern (V. 1-2) oder an einer bruchstückhaften Ätiologie der Riesen und Helden der Vorzeit (V. 1-2.4*), die im Fortgang der Erzählung keine Rolle spielen ? Warum sollte der 'Jahwist' oder ein später Ergänzer solche Schwierigkeiten provozieren, wenn es ihm nur darum ging, einen 'mythischen Torso' zu relativieren, den er selbst genommen hat ? » (207).

[12] Voir aussi Collins (2008, 260), et Arnold (2009, 90). Nombre d'autres inter-prétations ont été proposées quant à la place qu'occupe ce passage dans l'histoire des origines. Voir par exemple Hendel (1987), qui suppose que l'union pécheresse

toute sa place au v. 3 dans le passage : la limitation de la vie *humaine* serait une manière de considérer ces figures intermédiaires comme des êtres humains plutôt que des dieux. Une telle restriction devrait être comprise en relation avec le mouvement inverse de divinisation de certains êtres humains, présent dans la pratique de l'héroïsation qui se développe dans le monde grec à l'époque hellénistique (Gertz 2018, 213–14)[13]. La détermination des « géants » comme des êtres inter-médiaires à la valeur guerrière reconnue peut en effet être facilement mise en parallèle avec les figures grecques de héros. Plutôt qu'une dévaluation d'un mythe réduit à de grands traits, l'intention du texte de Gn 6 pourrait être définie comme une réaction à une pratique grecque. Comme en Gn 6, il s'agit dans Ba 3 d'une dévaluation de la figure des géants, selon des modalités toutefois différentes, que nous allons mettre au jour dans la suite de cette contribution. On peut aussi relever, à cet égard, que la section centrale de Baruch traite également de la limitation de la vie humaine, aux v. 19 et 20. Pour Grätz (2013), l'argument de la section serait même que si la vie humaine est limitée, alors cela doit aussi valoir pour sa capacité à connaître (192).

Comment désormais caractériser le rapport de Ba 3 à Gn 6 ? Faut-il déduire de cette continuité thématique que Gn 6 et Ba 3 présentent une même attitude par rapport à la pénétration de la culture grecque ? Si cette question était primordiale à l'époque de la rédaction du livre de Baruch, qu'on situe généralement au IIe siècle[14], nous devons pour le moment réserver notre jugement et observer une notable variation :

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des fils de Dieu aurait initialement constitué la cause immédiate du Déluge, avant qu'une motivation plus éthique, impliquant l'être humain, ne soit apportée (16–17).

[13] Voir aussi Pury, Römer et Schmid (2016, 49). Sur les traces archéologiques attestant du développement du culte des héros, voir par exemple Hugues (1999, en particulier 168–70).

[14] Baruch semble avoir connaissance de la collection des *Nebi'im* ou de Dn 1–9 (Steck, Kratz et Kottspier 1998, 22). L'absence de thèmes caractéristiques d'écrits plus tardifs (résurrection, eschatologie, démonologie) incite à ne pas descendre la datation après le IIe siècle (Assan-Dhôte et Moatti-Fine 2005, 51). Voir aussi Nickelsburg (1981, 113), et Nicklas (2010, 81). Le lieu de rédaction et la question de l'unité de composition de ce livre restent néanmoins débattus.

alors que l'engendrement des géants est situé « sur la terre » dans le texte de Gn 6, et que cette indication est répétée aux v. 1 et 4 (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, traduisant על־פני האדמה puis בארץ), il est en Ba 3 situé « là-bas » (ἐκεῖ), c'est-à-dire dans la « maison de Dieu » (ὁ οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 24) célébrée dans les versets précédents[15]. Comment interpréter cet écart ?

2. La localisation de l'engendrement des géants (v. 24-26)

La célébration des v. 24-25 emploie des attributs abstraits ou figurés, mais recourt aussi à des termes imagés : « la maison de Dieu » (ὁ οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ), « le lieu qu'il possède » (ὁ τόπος τῆς κτήσεως αὐτοῦ), dont on ne peut estimer les dimensions. Cette imagerie spatiale est présente dans l'ensemble de la section où elle exprime le caractère inaccessible de la sagesse pour l'humain livré à ses propres ressources. On s'interroge sur « le lieu » de la sagesse (τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς, v. 15), dont les personnages cités n'ont pas connu le « chemin » (ὁδὸν, τρίβους αὐτῆς, v. 20.21.23) et qu'il faudrait aller chercher « au ciel » (εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν, v. 29) ou « au-delà de la mer » (πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης, v. 30).

Jusque-là, la sagesse était peu déterminée ; seul le v. 1 du chapitre mentionne les « commandements de vie » (ἐντολὰς ζωῆς) ; l'emploi du terme auquel recourt DtLXX pour traduire מצוה l'associe aux commandements donnés par Yhwh. Mais les v. 24-25 indiquent clairement sa nature divine en l'associant à la « maison de Dieu » et au « lieu de son héritage »[16]. Le caractère inaccessible de ce domaine de la connaissance est alors encore plus clairement exprimé, toujours à l'aide de représentations spatiales : il « n'a pas de fin » (οὐκ ἔχει τελευτήν), il est « sans mesure » (ἀμέτρητος)[17].

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[15] Notons que l'Alexandrinus a la leçon ἐγενήθησαν, qui neutralise en partie cet écart (voir Adams 2014, 108).

[16] Contrairement à Adams (2014, 107), nous ne pensons pas que le pronom αὐτοῦ réfère à l'οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ, mais à Dieu.

[17] Voir aussi Reiterer (2010, 100).

L'expression « maison de Dieu » est elle-même singulière[18]. Elle est utilisée à de nombreuses reprises dans la Septante (en particulier en 2 Esd) pour désigner le temple (physique) de Jérusalem (Adams 2014, 107)[19]. Mais l'absence de toute évocation imagée, ou même de toute caractérisation positive de ce lieu (en-dehors de sa localisation « élevée », peu précise), nous pousse à écarter l'hypothèse d'une représentation du temple. Il semble plus pertinent de mettre ces versets en rapport avec une invocation au Seigneur que l'on trouve dans la prière pénitentielle (2, 16) : « Seigneur, regarde du haut de ta maison sainte (ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ ἁγίου σου), et prête attention à nous », qui s'inscrit dans la continuité d'autres passages bibliques qui situent la résidence de Dieu dans un lieu élevé ou céleste, comme Dt 26, 15 et És 63, 15 (Assan-Dhôte et Moatti-Fine 2005, 94), où la localisation est encore plus précisément indiquée par l'expression « du haut du ciel » (ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, מן־השמים ou משמים). La « maison de Dieu » se rapporterait donc à la demeure céleste de la divinité, qu'il faut probablement mettre en parallèle avec « le lieu qu'il possède », c'est-à-dire la terre, dont les vastes dimensions viennent d'être implicitement évoquées par le passage en revue des prétendants à la sagesse.

La localisation céleste de l'engendrement des géants viserait ainsi à placer les géants directement sous le pouvoir créateur de Dieu. Dans cette perspective, nous pourrions aller jusqu'à considérer le verbe ἐγεννήθησαν comme une sorte de passif divin. Cette interprétation explique que l'information importante relativement à la naissance des géants ne soit pas le récit de l'union de leurs parents, mais le fait que

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[18] Adams souligne que la localisation de l'engendrement des géants dans la maison de Dieu est peu discutée dans la recherche (2014, 108).

[19] Voir Jg 18, 31 ; És 2, 2 ; Esd 23, 11ʟxx (Néh 13, 11) ; Tob 14, 4-5 ; en hébreu : בית־יהוה ou בית־האלהים. L'expression se retrouve fréquemment chez Philon d'Alexandrie, sans avoir de signification constante : elle désigne tantôt l'univers (*De plantatione*, 50), tantôt le monde sensible (*De somniis* I, 185), tantôt le monde intelligible (*De migratione Abraham*, 5), ou encore l'intelligence du sage (*De praemiis et poenis*, 123). On retrouve aussi cette formule dans certains hymnes isiaques (Mack 1973, 41), sans que cela puisse porter à conséquence pour notre passage.

ces géants aient été engendrés dans le domaine de Dieu. La mention des géants servirait alors la célébration de l'absolue souveraineté de Dieu sur la création en rappelant qu'il est à l'origine même des êtres les plus menaçants ou les plus étranges, dans le prolongement d'autres poèmes sapientaux tels que Jb 40, 15-41, 26, où Yhwh déclare avoir créé Béhémoth et le Léviathan (voir aussi Si 43, 25).

Outre la localisation céleste par opposition à la localisation terrestre de l'engendrement des géants en Gn 6, un autre aspect tout aussi remarquable de ces versets nous semble être la caractérisation délibérément indéterminée de cette demeure, au v. 25. La « maison de Dieu » ou le « lieu de son héritage » ne sont pas à proprement parler décrits. Cette caractéristique nous semble contraster avec les descriptions détaillées des lieux célestes que l'on rencontre en particulier dans la littérature apocalyptique. Un de ces textes nous semble à cet égard particulièrement intéressant : en 1 Hén 14, 8-23, Hénoch reçoit une vision des demeures divines (appelées οἶκος), avant d'entendre le Seigneur annoncer aux Veilleurs leur châtiment et celui des géants. Le *Livre des Veilleurs* était probablement déjà en circulation à l'époque hellénistique et pouvait être connu de l'auteur de la section centrale de Baruch. Ce rapprochement nous invite à mettre ces versets en relation avec l'un des débats sur la nature de la sagesse qui animent certains textes de la littérature sapientiale ou apocalyptique : la question des limites de la connaissance humaine de l'univers.

Un certain nombre de ces textes semblent considérer qu'une partie du cosmos ne peut être connue que de Dieu, et qu'il s'agit là de « mystères », de connaissances cachées à l'être humain ; Mack (1973) fait pour cela référence à la catégorie de la « sagesse cachée » (voir aussi Nihan 2009, 688–89). Cette idée est présente dans le texte de Jb 28 : « [la sagesse] est soustraite aux regards de tout être vivant, elle est cachée aux oiseaux du ciel » (ונעלמה מעיני כל־חי ומעוף השמים נסתרה:, v. 21), ainsi qu'en Jb 38–39, lorsque Yhwh semble poser ces limites en énumérant les éléments de la création dont l'être humain n'a pas la maîtrise, contrairement à lui. On la trouve plus explicitement formulée en Si 3, 21-24 :

93

Ce qui est trop difficile pour toi (χαλεπώτερά σου, héb. פלאות ממך), ne le cherche pas, et ce qui est au-dessus tes forces (פלאות, ἰσχυρότερά), ne l'examine pas,

mais les commandements qui t'ont été donnés, c'est à cela que tu dois appliquer ta pensée ; tu n'as pas besoin de ce qui est caché (τῶν κρυπτῶν, נסתרות).

Ce qui te dépasse, ne t'y acharne pas ; car ce qui t'a été montré surpasse l'intelligence humaine.

Car beaucoup ont été égarés par leur spéculation (ὑπόλημψις), et une mauvaise imagination a causé la chute de leurs pensées.

À l'inverse, certains textes de nature apocalyptique mettent en scène la révélation à un élu de ces parties cachées de l'univers, sous la forme d'un voyage visionnaire ; ainsi du *Livre des Veilleurs*, qui raconte que les anges enlèvent Hénoch pour lui montrer les régions extrêmes du cosmos et le châtiment des Veilleurs (1 Hén 17–19). En cela, le *Livre des Veilleurs*, et plus largement la tradition hénochique, revendique une forme de sagesse nettement différente de la tradition sapientiale la plus largement représentée dans la Bible hébraïque : la véritable sagesse que l'être humain doit rechercher est une sagesse surnaturelle. Une illustration de cette conception se trouve dans le début du récit du premier voyage d'Hénoch tel qu'il est décrit dans le *Livre des Veilleurs* (17, 1–18, 5). Pour Knibb (2003), ce passage peut en effet être interprété comme une réponse au chapitre 38 du livre de Job (209). Ce dernier texte suggère, par le biais de questions rhétoriques, que l'homme ne peut « [aller] jusqu'aux sources de la mer » (ἦλθες […] ἐπὶ πηγὴν θαλάσσης) ni « [se promener] dans les profondeurs de l'abîme » (ἐν δὲ ἴχνεσιν ἀβύσσου περιπάτησας, v. 16). Mais Hénoch voit « la bouche de tous les fleuves de la terre et la bouche de l'abîme » (τὸ στόμα τῆς γῆς πάντων τῶν ποταμῶν καὶ τὸ στόμα τῆς ἀβύσσου, 1 Hén 17, 8)[20]. Ainsi en est-il de plusieurs lieux situés aux confins de l'univers[21].

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[20] Nous suivons la traduction de Dupont-Sommer et Philonenko (1987). Pour le texte grec : Lods (1892).

[21] Pour une autre comparaison entre la littérature apocalyptique et la littérature sapientiale « institutionnelle », voir Wright (2007), sur le rapport entre le Livre d'Hénoch et Ben Sira.

Il semble ainsi qu'un débat ait existé à l'époque du Second Temple sur la possibilité de connaître les secrets de l'univers. On rencontre dans certains textes apocalyptiques l'idée (ici schématiquement résumée) que la sagesse céleste peut être connue de l'être humain ; cette connaissance est cependant réservée à un élu ou un groupe d'élus, à qui elle est directement révélée au moyen de visions ou de voyages célestes. D'autres textes semblent considérer que la sagesse n'est pas pleinement ou directement accessible à l'être humain, qui ne peut la recevoir que sous forme médiée ; cette médiation est par exemple assurée par la « crainte de Yhwh » dans les Proverbes (voir entre autres Pr 1, 7) et dans la version finale, « orthodoxe », de Job 28 (voir Jb 28, 28 ; Blenkinsopp 1995, 155), ou par la Torah dans le Siracide (voir par exemple Si 24, 23) – même s'il semble que Ben Sira ait reconnu l'existence, à côté de la sagesse particulière révélée au seul Israël par la Loi, d'une sagesse générale donnée à l'ensemble des êtres humains par la création[22]. Pour Blenkinsopp (1995), on trouve aussi cette idée d'une double nature de la sagesse dans le Deutéronome (152–53)[23].

Cette dialectique de la révélation sapientiale se retrouve selon nous en Ba 3, 9–4, 4, où elle trouve sa formule propre dans la réécriture du poème sapiential de Jb 28.

La dépendance littéraire de la section centrale de Baruch au texte de Jb 28 a été mainte fois repérée (Harrelson 1992, 158 ; Steck

95

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[22] C'est la thèse défendue par Schmidt Goering (2009), pour qui le rapport entre sagesse et loi dans le Siracide est plus complexe que la simple identification suggérée par Si 24, 23. Schmidt Goering emploie une image végétale pour distinguer ce qu'il appelle la sagesse particulière, réservée à Israël, de la sagesse générale, accessible à tous : la sagesse particulière est cachée, et ne peut être révélée que par une opération spécifique (le don de la Loi), tandis que la sagesse générale est comme la partie externe de la plante, visible par tous. Boccaccini (1991) a aussi proposé une définition plus précise de la relation entre sagesse et Torah, qui serait plutôt conçue comme une forme d'incarnation (« the law is the historical manifestation in Israel of a pretemporal wisdom ») que comme une identification (89).

[23] Il interprète Dt 30, 11-14 à la lumière d'un autre passage dans le discours final de Moïse, Dt 29, 28, pour mettre en relation la connaissance inaccessible avec « ce qui est caché » (הנסתרת).

1994, 157). L'hymne à la sagesse mis dans la bouche de Job oppose également les œuvres humaines à la véritable sagesse, que Dieu seul possède. Comme Ba 3, 15-31, ce texte est construit autour de questions (Ba 3, 15-16.29-30 ; Jb 28, 12.20), dont les réponses affirment l'exclusivité divine de la possession de la sagesse (Ba 3, 32-36 ; Jb 28, 23-27). D'autres similitudes sont identifiables : ces deux textes associent à l'acquisition de la sagesse une image spatiale ; outre le travail des métaux y sont évoqués la richesse (Ba 3, 17 : Jb 28, 15-19 et *passim*) et « les oiseaux du ciel » (Ba 3, 17 ; Jb 28, 21) ; enfin, la sagesse divine est une sagesse créatrice (Ba 3, 32 ; Jb 28, 25-27). Henderson (2016) relève cependant un déplacement notable de la question directrice de chacun de ces deux passages : alors qu'elle portait sur le *lieu* de la sagesse en Jb 28, elle porte en Ba 3 sur *l'identité* des détenteurs de la sagesse ; l'interrogation « Mais la sagesse, où se trouve-t-elle ? Quel est le lieu de l'intelligence ? » (ἡ δὲ σοφία πόθεν εὑρέθη; ποῖος δὲ τόπος ἐστὶν τῆς ἐπιστήμης;, Jb 28, 12) est ainsi devenue : « Qui a découvert son lieu, et qui est entré dans ses trésors ? » (τίς εὗρεν τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς, καὶ τίς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τοὺς θησαυροὺς αὐτῆς, Ba 3, 15). Ce déplacement souligne que le véritable maître de la sagesse ne se trouve pas sur la terre ; la sagesse n'est donc plus considérée en elle-même mais en relation avec son possesseur. Cette idée se retrouve dans un autre procédé analysé par Henderson (2016) : la réécriture de certains éléments empruntés à Jb 28 dans un style deutéronomique pour souligner l'importance du peuple d'Israël comme destinataire de la révélation de la sagesse. Elle rapproche ainsi Ba 3, 29-30 de Dt 30, 12-13, où les expressions ἀναβαίνειν εἰς τὸν οὐρανον suivie du verbe λαμβάνειν (en Dt 30, 12 et Ba 3, 29), et πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης (en Dt 30, 13 et Ba 3, 30), constituent des parallèles flagrants. Même si la référence semble à première vue à contre-emploi, puisqu'il s'agit en Dt 30 de faire de l'écoute de la parole l'acte par excellence qui puisse assurer la proximité avec Yhwh, et d'affirmer en Ba 3 que la sagesse est inaccessible, elle vise selon Henderson à souligner ce caractère inintelligible *pour les nations* tout en préparant l'annonce de la révélation de la sagesse *à Israël* au v. 37[24].

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[24] « The purpose of this allusion […] is to reinforce the sense of the remoteness and inaccessibility of wisdom for the nations […]. At the same time, by means

Le moyen de cette révélation est également indiqué dans la section : c'est la Torah qui constitue la médiation donnant accès à la sagesse (Ba 4, 1). Elle est ainsi descendue sur terre (ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συνανεστράφη, v. 38 ; voir aussi Si 24, 3.7-8), selon un mouvement contraire au schéma ascendant observable dans un texte comme 1 Hén où l'élu, à travers son enlèvement par les anges ou ses visions, est emmené au ciel pour y recevoir des révélations spécifiques. À l'idée de séjour terrestre de la sagesse correspond l'inclusion de l'ensemble du peuple d'Israël dans ses destinataires, contrairement à la nécessaire restriction des destinataires de la révélation céleste (la « génération lointaine » évoquée en 1 Hén 1, 2). La conception de la révélation sapientiale de cette section est résumée aux versets 32 à 38 : Dieu a créé le monde par sa sagesse, et a donné cette dernière à Israël, son élu, sous la forme de la Torah. Dans notre passage, cette importance de l'élection est exprimée au v. 27, en particulier avec le verbe ἐξελέξατο qui joue peut-être avec la forme ἐξελέξαντο de Gn 6, 2[25].

L'ensemble de la section traite donc de la sagesse révélée à Israël par la Torah qui le distingue des nations. La célébration des versets 24 et 25 tranche cependant sur cette orientation générale. La nature insondable et insaisissable qui y est attribuée au domaine divin nous pousse à considérer ces versets comme une forme d'hymne à la sagesse divine, corrélat de la sagesse terrestre. De même que l'affirmation du don de la sagesse à Israël est préparée par plusieurs éléments dans les versets antérieurs de la section, de même peut-on considérer que les versets 24 et 25 annoncent la sagesse divine du verset 32.

Mise en rapport avec cette sagesse inaccessible à l'intelligence humaine, la mention de l'engendrement céleste des géants viserait ainsi à les placer sous le pouvoir créateur de Dieu. Dans cette perspective, nous pourrions aller jusqu'à considérer le verbe ἐγεννήθησαν comme une sorte de passif divin. Cette interprétation explique que l'information

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of its resonance with the context in Deuteronomy, the allusion prepares for the coming declaration that wisdom, in the form of Torah, has been revealed to Israel » (2016, 55).

[25] Pour Reiterer (2010), cette reprise pourrait signifier que le plan de Dieu, l'élection, s'opposerait au choix arbitraire des Veilleurs (101–102).

importante relativement à la naissance des géants ne soit pas le récit de l'union de leurs parents, mais le fait que les géants aient été engendrés dans le domaine de Dieu. Cette localisation servirait alors la célébration de l'absolue souveraineté de Dieu sur la création en rappelant qu'il est à l'origine même des êtres les plus menaçants ou les plus étranges, dans le prolongement d'autres poèmes sapientaux tels que Jb 40, 15–41, 26, où Yhwh déclare avoir créé Béhémoth et le Léviathan (voir aussi Si 43, 25). L'idée d'un engendrement céleste des géants ne serait alors pas à entendre comme une correction du récit de Gn 6, mais comme une poursuite de la dévaluation de ces êtres : à la limitation de leur vie en Gn 6 correspondrait ici l'idée implicite qu'ils ont été créés par Dieu.

Une seconde conséquence qui peut être tirée de notre analyse du passage, c'est que la localisation de l'engendrement des géants est délibérément laissée dans l'indétermination pour manifester l'existence d'une forme de sagesse inaccessible à l'être humain. L'accent sur le peuple d'Israël comme destinataire de la révélation sapientiale aiguise l'opposition entre les deux formes de sagesse : pour Baruch, l'être humain reçoit la sagesse que Dieu a rendue terrestre ; il n'a donc pas à appliquer son intelligence aux secrets célestes qui ne lui ont pas été transmis. Peut-être l'auteur de Ba 3 a-t-il voulu par là se distinguer de la tradition hénochique : le motif de l'engendrement des géants, également présent en 1 Hén, permettrait à l'auteur de la section sapientiale de Baruch de s'opposer à la conception de la sagesse représentée par cette apocalypse.

La méditation sapientiale de Ba 3 ne traite donc pas seulement des géants, mais également de la nature de la sagesse, en désignant en creux ce qu'elle n'est pas : donnée par Dieu à Israël sous la forme de la loi, la sagesse n'est pas une connaissance des secrets du cosmos réservée à un petit nombre d'entre le peuple d'Israël. La figure des géants offre ainsi, de manière originale, l'occasion d'une réflexion sur la définition de la sagesse. Contrairement à d'autres textes de la littérature du Second Temple, leur perdition n'est pas liée au jugement divin ni associée au Déluge.[26]

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[26] Pour un aperçu plus large d'autres interprétations de la figure des géants à cette époque, voir Stuckenbruck (2000).

Cette association est encore différemment poursuivie dans les versets suivants, qui opposent le savoir guerrier des géants (ἐπιστα-μένοι πόλεμον, v. 26) au « chemin de la connaissance » refusé par Dieu aux géants (v. 27) et accordé au contraire à Israël (v. 37).

3. Guerre et sagesse (v. 26-28)

Comme nous l'avons vu, aucune référence directe ne semble sous-tendre l'emploi de la qualification « connaisseurs de guerre » (ἐπιστάμενοι πόλεμον) en Ba 3, 26 (avec Reiterer 2010, 100). Elle doit donc surtout être mise en relation avec le pendant que lui offre le « chemin de la connaissance » (ὁδὸν ἐπιστήμης) au verset suivant. La correspondance entre ces deux expressions nous amène à faire de la guerre, opposée à la connaissance véritable qu'est le don de Dieu, un marqueur de la fausse sagesse. Nous voudrions donc, dans le dernier temps de notre recherche, proposer quelques hypothèses d'interprétation pour interroger cette opposition. Plusieurs hypothèses s'offrent à nous pour interpréter ce contraste entre la sagesse guerrière des géants et la sagesse véritable.

Une première possibilité, directement liée à la précédente étape de notre étude, pourrait être d'inscrire cette référence dans la perspective d'une confrontation avec le *Livre des Veilleurs*, en mettant en relation cette connaissance de la guerre attribuée aux géants avec certains des secrets délivrés par l'un des chefs des Veilleurs aux humains. On lit ainsi en 1 Hén 8, 1, juste après qu'ait été raconté l'engendrement des géants : « Azaël apprit aux hommes à fabriquer des épées, des armes, des boucliers, des cuirasses, choses enseignées par les anges » (Ἐδίδαξεν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους Ἀζαὴλ μαχαίρας ποιεῖν καὶ ὅπλα καὶ ἀσπίδας καὶ θώρακας, διδάγματα ἀγγέλων) ; la leçon du Syncelle ajoute, après les cuirasses : « et tout objet de guerre » (καὶ πᾶν σκεῦος πολεμικόν). Dans l'opposition entre les deux formes de sagesse, cette connaissance de techniques propres à la guerre serait alors à comprendre comme une connaissance malfaisante. Bien que l'on ne puisse être certain que le *Livre des Veilleurs* fût connu de l'auraient inspiré, on peut imaginer que des traditions similaires sur le savoir des géants circulaient à

99

cette époque et auraient inspiré l'auteur de Baruch (Adams 2014, 109). L'association des géants avec ces connaissances n'est cependant qu'indirecte dans le *Livre des Veilleurs* (*via* leurs pères) ; elle devrait supposer une forme de confusion de la part de l'auteur de Ba 3, qui semble hautement improbable dans la mesure où elle ne se trouve dans aucun autre texte[27]. En outre, l'enseignement relatif au travail des métaux ne représente qu'un seul des multiples enseignements délivrés par les Veilleurs ; Drawnel (2012) a par ailleurs montré que ces enseignements formaient un tout cohérent, inspiré des pratiques qui avaient cours dans les temples babyloniens de la fin de l'époque perse et de l'époque hellénistique. Si l'on choisit de ne prendre en compte que les géants eux-mêmes, on peut penser à la violence destructrice dont font état ces récits : d'après Jub 5, 9, les géants se sont entretués à l'épée ; d'après 1 Hén 7, 4, ils ont dévoré les hommes. Mais il ne s'agit pas à proprement parler de guerre, ni de véritable connaissance. Cette hypothèse ne peut être que faiblement étayée.

Une autre interprétation envisageable serait de mettre en rapport cette opposition avec le contexte de la révolte des Maccabées. Le cadre posé au début du livre a été interprété comme une manière chiffrée de référer au contexte de l'insurrection : la destruction du Temple par Nabuchodonosor se rapporterait à sa profanation par Antiochus IV ; à travers son « fils » Baltasar, c'est Antiochus V qui serait désigné ; et le grand-prêtre Joakim représenterait Alkime – dont le nom pourrait être la version hellénisée de Joakim, ou d'Elyaqim[28]. La vision positive de ce grand-prêtre (Ba 1, 3.7) contraste avec le rôle que lui donne la littérature maccabéenne et conduit à considérer le livre de Baruch comme l'expression d'un positionnement antagoniste à celui des Maccabées. Dans cette perspective, la véritable sagesse s'opposerait à la guerre dans

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[27] Dans l'*Écrit de Damas*, par exemple, ce sont aussi bien les Veilleurs que leurs fils qui « tombèrent » (נפלו), mais ces deux générations restent néanmoins distinctes. Notons toutefois que le Pseudo-Eupolemos rapporte une tradition selon laquelle les géants auraient été des vecteurs de culture (transmise par Eusèbe, *Préparation évangélique*, IX, 17 et 18).

[28] Voir par exemple Nickelsburg (1981, 113). D'après Flavius Josèphe, on appelait Alkime Iakim (*Antiquitates Iudaicae* XII, 167).
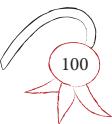
la mesure où la véritable conduite agréable au Seigneur est de suivre la Loi (4, 1-4) et d'attendre la délivrance qui vient de Dieu (Ba 2, 7-15), non de mener une guerre sainte. Kabasele Mukenge (1998) suggère que cette position caractérise les livres de Baruch et de Judith (419). Nous pouvons noter à cet égard que l'éloge de Judas Maccabée s'ouvre sur une acclamation de ses qualités guerrières (1 Macc 3, 3) : « Il étendit le renom glorieux de son peuple, revêtit la cuirasse comme un géant (ἐνεδύσατο θώρακα ὡς γίγας), ceignit ses armes de guerre et engagea des combats (συνεζώσατο τὰ σκεύη τὰ πολεμικὰ αὐτοῦ καὶ πολέμους συνεστήσατο), protégeant le camp de son glaive ». La comparaison avec les géants, cependant, ne sert pas ici l'association de Judas à une figure grecque : elle doit plutôt se comprendre comme la traduction de l'hébreu גבור (Goldstein 1976, 244), souvent associé aux armes (voir par exemple 1 Sam 2, 4 ; 2 Chr 14, 7).

Dans une perspective moins centrée sur la littérature juive, l'association des géants à la guerre ne peut manquer d'évoquer la figure grecque des géants. Déjà chez Hésiode, les fils de Gaïa sont assimilés à de puissants guerriers (*Théogonie*, v. 185-186)[29]. La légende d'un combat entre dieux et géants, la « gigantomachie », a dû exister à l'époque archaïque puisqu'elle est présente dans l'iconographie de la fin du VIᵉ siècle[30]. L'intérêt pour ce mythe s'est maintenu aux époques hellénistique et romaine ; on en a le témoignage littéraire le plus fourni dans le premier livre de la *Bibliothèque* du Pseudo-Apollodore (Iᵉʳ-IIᵉ s.). Pour Adams (2014), même s'il est difficile d'imaginer une connexion directe entre le livre de Baruch et Hésiode, il n'est néanmoins pas improbable que l'auteur de Baruch, qui écrivait un bon grec, ait été en contact avec des sources hellénisées (108–109). L'association entre la nature guerrière des géants et la mythologie grecque est d'ailleurs présente de manière plus explicite dans le livre de Judith, où ce sont non seulement les géants qui sont opposés, comme incarnation de la valeur guerrière, au modèle de piété que

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[29]   Pour Reiterer (2010), la mention des qualités guerrières des géants dans ce poème revêt d'ailleurs le même aspect abrupt, soudain, qu'en Ba 3, 26 (100).

[30]   La gigantomachie est représentée sur le fronton ouest du temple d'Athéna Polias sur l'Acropole et sur la frise ouest du trésor de Siphnos à Delphes.

représente l'héroïne, mais aussi les titans (16, 6) : « Leur champion n'a pas succombé sous de jeunes gens, les fils des titans (υἱοὶ τιτάνων) ne l'ont pas frappé, des géants à la haute taille (ὑψηλοὶ γίγαντες) ne l'ont pas attaqué, mais Judith, la fille de Merari, l'a défait par la beauté de son visage » [31]. La référence à la mythologie grecque au v. 26 pourrait ainsi établir un lien plus général entre le monde grec et la guerre, et dévaluerait par là la sagesse grecque comme fausse sagesse. Cette hypothèse pourrait être mise en relation avec l'importance du domaine militaire dans les sociétés hellénistiques. Comme le rappelle Lévêque (1968), la guerre n'a de manière générale jamais revêtu une si grande importance dans le monde grec qu'à cette époque, où c'est par la force militaire que les royaumes hérités de l'empire d'Alexandre assurent leur sécurité face à leurs voisins rivaux ou aux peuples qu'ils ont assujettis. La militarisation du gouvernement (281) ou l'apparition d'une littérature technique consacrée à la guerre – traités de poliorcétique et de tactique (282–83) amènent au constat d'une « omniprésence de la guerre dans le monde hellénistique » (285). Après sa victoire dans la sixième guerre de Syrie, Antiochos IV reçoit le surnom de *Niképhoros* (Mittag 2006, 119). Il pourrait ainsi être intéressant de voir dans cette mention de la guerre une inclusion des Grecs à la revue des nations, qui s'intègrerait harmonieusement au passage : à l'instar de la chasse pour les rois égyptiens ou des contes pour les marchands arabes, la guerre représenterait l'apanage des Grecs dans ce parcours ; c'est la guerre qui constituerait la version grecque de la fausse sagesse[32].

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[31] S'il semble que le sémantisme du terme τιτάς soit à peu près équivalent à celui de γίγας dans la littérature juive puisqu'il est employé en 2 Sam 5, 18ʟxx pour désigner une localité appelée en hébreu « vallée des Rephaïm » (εἰς τὴν κοιλάδα τῶν τιτάνων ; בעמק רפאים), un terme qui peut aussi être traduit par γίγαντες, comme nous l'avons vu. En 1 Hén 1, 9, les femmes « ont mis au monde des titans » (αἱ γυναῖκες ἐγέννησαν τιτᾶνας). Toutefois, τίτας est bien moins répandu (il n'apparaît que deux fois dans la Bible grecque) ; il est donc plus évocateur de l'origine mythologique de ces noms.

[32] Voir la lecture de Hengel (³1988) : « Man wird kaum fehlgehen, wenn man hier eine Polemik gegen alle jene Versuche sieht, auch bei fremden Völkern – seien es nun Araber oder Griechen – Spuren der 'Weisheit' zu entdecken oder auch von der eigenen Weisheit, dem Gesetz, Nichtjuden etwas mitzuteilen » (308).

Si la première et la troisième interprétation entrent en résonance avec les enjeux que les deux premiers temps de notre recherche ont tâché de dégager, toutes présentent dans l'ensemble peu d'appuis textuels. Aucun élément ne nous autorise donc à trancher entre ces différentes hypothèses, qui ne sont au demeurant pas incompatibles.

Conclusion

Nous avons voulu montrer comment fonctionnait l'association des géants au motif sapiential en Ba 3, 24-28. La synthèse des deux générations de géants en fait une figure qui se prête aux canons du genre de la méditation sapientiale et glorifie la supériorité divine sur ces êtres : bien que géants, ils ne possèdent pas la sagesse dont le Dieu d'Israël est l'unique détenteur. Le renvoi au texte source reste néanmoins particulièrement clair, et l'étude du rapport à Gn 6 a montré que, par le déplacement de la localisation de leur engendrement, les géants devenaient signes de la maîtrise de Dieu sur la création. Mais cette indication fonctionne à double titre : les géants manifestent la puissance de la sagesse créatrice, et signalent en même temps qu'il existe une partie du cosmos inaccessible à la connaissance humaine. Ils demeurent en cela des êtres intermédiaires, dépendants du créateur et néanmoins non réductibles à ce que l'être humain peut connaître sur terre.

Nous avons finalement risqué une dernière partie plus hypothétique, où aucun élément ne permet selon nous d'identifier une interprétation plus pertinente que les autres. Les géants incarnent la sagesse guerrière qui, si elle ne les assimile pas directement aux nations, les met du moins sur un même plan : celui de la fausse sagesse. Les géants sont donc mis en rapport avec les trois formes de sagesse que reconnaît l'auteur de Baruch, et à chacune desquelles il assigne un possesseur déterminé : la sagesse que Dieu seul possède, par laquelle il exerce sa souveraineté sur l'ensemble des créatures, y compris les géants, et que l'être humain doit accepter de ne pas pouvoir acquérir ; la fausse sagesse dont les nations, et les géants qui leur sont associés, sont les représentantes éminentes ; la sagesse que Dieu a révélée à Israël et refusée aux géants, causant ainsi leur disparition.

Cette association entre géants et sagesse ne vise donc pas seulement à poursuivre la neutralisation de ces figures, ni même à expliquer leur perdition, qui ne tient finalement qu'à l'élection divine du seul Israël. À notre sens, elle prétend aussi indiquer, de manière différente, deux contre-modèles de sagesses poursuivies par l'être humain : la connaissance des secrets de l'univers et la connaissance de la guerre. Pour l'auteur de Ba 3, la sagesse n'est pas une connaissance des secrets célestes réservée à des élus parmi les élus, mais un savoir transmis à l'ensemble d'Israël au moyen des formes institutionnelles que sont l'enseignement et la Torah. L'art de la guerre, d'autre part, ne donne à ses possesseurs qu'une puissance illusoire car inférieure à la véritable sagesse. Le rapport à l'hellénisme, que nous avons évoqué à propos de la relecture de Gn 6, n'est donc pas primordial : il se double d'une confrontation à la littérature apocalyptique et à sa conception de la sagesse. Par leur proximité avec la culture grecque et la littérature apocalyptique, ainsi que leur présence dans les légendes relatives aux premiers habitants de la Terre promise, les géants représentent un motif permettant de distinguer les trois sagesses dont traite cette méditation.

Cette mise en relation originale des géants et de la sagesse a peu intéressé la recherche pour elle-même. Elle mobilise des enjeux complexes (le rapport entre sagesse et loi, les relations entre la littérature apocalyptique et d'autres écrits, la représentation des lieux célestes) dont nous n'avons voulu donner qu'un premier aperçu afin d'inciter des recherches plus approfondies à se poursuivre sur la question.

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105

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107

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REINVENTING THE WHEEL?
—OR IMAGINING COLLABORATIVE SPACES
AT THE INTERSECTION OF MASCULINITY
STUDIES AND FEMINIST STUDIES IN BIBLICAL
SCHOLARSHIP

Mikael Larsson

Abstract

This article examines whether masculinity studies carry on the feminist legacy in biblical scholarship. The investigation proceeds through close readings of a selection of works that, in different ways, highlight the interactions between masculinity studies and feminist studies. To begin with, I trace the development of masculinity studies in three major anthologies on masculinity in biblical traditions (Creangă 2010a, 2019b; Creangă and Peter-Ben Smit 2014). The focus here lies on masculinity scholars' explicit positioning in relation to feminist studies, through connection or disengagement, set against actual dialogue with feminist biblical scholarship. Secondly, I address Deryn Guest's queer critique of masculinity studies in *Beyond Feminist Biblical Studies* (2012), along with her proposed theoretical platform, "genderqueer criticism." Thirdly, I consider two examples from the other side of the table, namely feminists exploring masculinity, through the works of Claudia Camp (2013) and Rhiannon Graybill (2016a). Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the challenges in the field and make some suggestions to facilitate cooperation in the future.

Cette contribution se demande si les « masculinity studies » (études sur la masculinité) déploient l'héritage féministe au sein des études bibliques. L'enquête procède à travers une lecture détaillée d'une sélection d'ouvrages qui, de différentes façons, soulignent les interactions entre les études sur la masculinité et les études féministes. Pour commencer, j'étudie le développement des études sur la masculinité dans trois anthologies importantes qui analyse la masculinité dans les traditions bibliques (Creangă 2010a, 2019b; Creangă and Peter-Ben Smit 2014). L'accent porte ici sur la façon dont les chercheurs et chercheuses sur la masculinité se positionnent par rapport aux études féministes, en indiquant une connexion ou un désengagement. Je compare ce positionnement avec le dialogue réel avec les approches féministes dans les études bibliques. Dans un deuxième temps, je prends en compte la critique queer des études sur la masculinité par Deryn Guest dans *Beyond Feminist Biblical Studies* (2012) ainsi que sa proposition d'une plateforme théorique « genderqueer criticism » (la critique genderqueer). Troisièmement, je présente deux exemples de l'autre côté de la table, c'est-à-dire des chercheuses féministes qui explorent la masculinité, à travers les ouvrages de Claudia Camp (2013) et Rhiannon Graybill (2016a). Enfin, je conclus par une discussion des défis à relever dans les sciences bibliques et je fais quelques suggestions pour faciliter la coopération à l'avenir.

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Mikael Larsson

Does masculinity studies[1] carry on the feminist legacy? The purpose of this article is to assess the state of this question for biblical studies. Exploring the interaction between masculinity studies and feminist studies from different vantage points, I delineate how connections as well as disengagement manifest. In conclusion, I reflect on some

[1] No consensus exists on naming of the field. I follow the authors' designations, here including "Critical studies of Men" (Hearn), "Critical studies of Men and Masculinities" (Hearn), "Critical Studies of masculinities" (Guest), "Critical masculinity studies" (Thomas, Marchal), "Critical Men's studies" (Krondorfer), "masculinity studies" (Clines, Moore, Low), "biblical masculinities" (Creangă, Nissinen, Smit), "masculist interpretation" (Haddox). When I speak of masculinity studies, I do not anticipate a specific relation to feminism.

challenges for future research and suggest a few altered practices to counteract the endless reinvention of the wheel, namely, learning from the history of feminist studies rather than wasting effort to rediscover what is already known.[2] The exchange between masculinity studies and feminist studies breaches the broader issue of the direction of research on gender and sexuality, in particular its drive towards greater specialization.[3] I am interested in why each new branch seems to start with a phase of data collection before developing properly critical tools, or why the interaction between subfields is not more intense, when it could advance the accumulation of knowledge.

In the formation of masculinity studies, the key concept "hegemonic masculinity" drew explicitly from feminist theory. Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell and John Lee (1985, 589–91) take Gayle Rubin's "sex/gender system" as a point of departure, in the first systematic proposal of the theory of multiple masculinities (1985). Two years later, Connell (1987, 183–88) considers hegemonic masculinity alongside "emphasized femininity" in her elaboration of the theory in *Gender and Power*. In her seminal work *Masculinities,* furthermore, Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as a "configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of *patriarchy*, which guarantees…*the dominant position of men and the subordination of women*."[4]

Among subsequent masculinity scholars (in biblical studies), however, continuity or discontinuity with feminist studies is not always clear. One may take such a relationship for granted or acknowledge it

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[2] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 175) identifies "kyriarchal power structures" as forcing new generations of feminists to "reinvent the intellectual wheel." Kathleen Gallagher Elkins (2020, 19) calls on scholars in another context, childhood studies, to credit feminist forerunners in order to avoid reinventing the "proverbial wheel."

[3] See, e.g., Deryn Guest 2012 and Schüssler Fiorenza 2017.

[4] Connell 2005, 77 (my emphasis). Connell (2005, 65) elaborates that even though the term "patriarch" was overgeneralized in the 1970s, it captures "the power and intractability of a massive structure of social relations," involving "the state, the economy, culture and communications as well as kinship, child-rearing and sexuality." See also Guest 2012, 135–36.

as part of history, without necessarily engaging further with feminist scholarship. The more general issue of men's participation in feminism sometimes blurs the discussion, but goes beyond the scope of this article.[5] On a personal note, I always found deconstructing masculinity a feminist cause, but was hesitant about the need to create a new field (Sjöberg 2006, 17).

Focusing on the interaction between masculinity studies and feminist studies, this investigation proceeds through a close reading of a selection of works that highlight different aspects of the conversation.[6] I begin by considering three volumes edited by Creangă (2010a, 2019a) and Creangă and Smit (2014), which together constitute an effort to introduce and further masculinity studies in biblical studies.[7] Sketching how these volumes represent masculinity studies and its development provides a context for their engagement with feminist studies. My next step is to take into account Deryn Guest's (2012) queer feminist critique of masculinity studies as well as her proposals for the gender field as a whole.[8] Thirdly, I explore what a feminist study of masculinity may look like, through the works of Claudia Camp (2013) and Rhiannon Graybill (2016a).[9] Based on these analyses, I then assess the state of engagement between masculinity studies and feminist studies. Finally, I reflect on some of the emerging challenges and synthesize a few suggestions for future co-operation in this diverse field.

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[5] The wide range of labels for those men who have attempted to join ("pro-feminist, anti-sexist") serves as evidence for the difficulty of solving this issue. See Marchal 2014, 266–67.

[6] I make no claim for comprehensiveness. Moore (2014), Marchal (2014), Haddox (2016a), Low (2016), and Smit (2017, 24–43) offer surveys on masculinity studies in biblical studies. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (1994) and Jennifer Glancy (1994) initiated the field. Moore and Anderson (2003) and Økland (2015) also contribute to introduce and advance the field, as do Creangă (2010a, 2019b) and Creangă and Smit (2014). Recent monographs include, e.g., Murphy 2019a and Kirova 2020 for the Hebrew Bible, and Asikainen 2018 and Stegmann 2020 for the New Testament.

[7] See Larsson 2015 and 2020.

[8] See Larsson 2014.

[9] See Larsson 2014 and Larsson 2018.

Launching masculinity studies in biblical studies

Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond (2010a), the first volume edited by Creangă, concentrates primarily on the hegemonic masculinity of men in leadership positions in the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic history. I detect two main impulses. The first is to identify recurrent stereotypes of masculinity. A pioneer of this approach, David Clines offers a list of defining criteria for masculinity (taken from Exod 32–34) that includes being a warrior, a persuasive speaker, remaining womanless and embodying physical beauty.[10] Susan Haddox (2010), reading the patriarchal history, adds honor to the list, whereas Maria Haralambakis (2010) traces a masculinity focused on self-control in *Testament* of *Job*.[11] These contributions constitute a form of "image-of-men" criticism, where masculinity features as a rather stable entity.[12] In contrast to feminist predecessors like Phyllis Trible (1978) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1983), however, these masculinity scholars make no attempt to rehabilitate the figures gendered as male, and their critique of gender stereotypes remains largely implicit (except Clines 2010a, 54).

A second impulse is to differentiate between various masculinities and problematize hegemonic ones in particular, either through historicizing or intersectional approaches. Creangă (2010b), for example, identifies different versions of hegemonic masculinity in early and late strands of the conquest narratives, and he can thereby address the complex relationship between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities.[13] Disability is a decisive factor in C. Strimple and O. Creangă

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[10] David Clines contributed to placing masculinity on the agenda of Hebrew Bible studies through a series of publications (e.g. Clines 1995, 1998, 2002 and 2003).

[11] See also Mark George (2010), who finds a multifaceted masculinity involving, e.g., the body and social status.

[12] There are overlaps between George (2010) and Clines (2010) with regard to their criteria of masculinity, although the former's are more complex. Haddox (2010, 15–16) uses a fixed set of criteria, while differentiating between insubordinate and hegemonic masculinities in her conclusions.

[13] Sandra Jacobs (2010) offers another example, exploring the relationship between the rainbow and circumcision as covenantal sign, comparing P with Ugaritic material as well as later rabbinic interpretation.

(2010), who argue that leprosy, in the story of Naaman's healing, functions as a material metaphor for the prize of defying hegemony. Roland Boer (2010) contests biblical scholars' use of the concept of hegemony altogether and exposes privileged priestly masculinity in Chronicles as unstable and contradictive.

The two impulses of this volume, to map and to deconstruct, are somewhat in tension with one another, and the volume's engagement with critical theory is rather uneven. Clines's charge that the field is poorly under-theorized is valid for a few contributions (like his own), but certainly not all.[14] Assessing and refining the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 846–47) reject the practice of setting up trait lists (establishing masculinity as a fixed character type) and see it as a misapplication of the theory of multiple masculinities. Although hardly surprising in a first volume, such trait lists attest to a certain lack of connection not only with feminist theory, but also with theorizing among masculinity scholars.

Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded (Creangă and Smit 2014) testifies to a notable maturing of the field and includes New Testament and apocryphal material. I identify several significant points of development. First, contributors engage in dialogue with a wider range of theoretical counterparts, such as psychoanalysis (Hooker 2014), deconstruction (Măcelaru 2014) and queer theory (Macwilliam 2014). Secondly, contributors more consistently take issue with hegemony. Milena Kirova (2014), for example, challenges what she perceives as a dichotomy between hegemonic and marginalized masculinities and Hilary Lipka (2014) argues that hegemonic masculinity needs to evolve to remain dominant.[15] Thirdly, contributors pay more attention to subordinate and marginalized masculinities, for example by exploring the masculinity of "ordinary" men like Mary's husband Joseph (Glessner 2014), or that of "failed" men like Saul (Măcelaru 2014).[16] Fourthly, the volume includes studies on the (hegemonic) masculinities of women figures, Athalya (Macwilliam 2014) and Thecla (Smit 2014), which

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[14] See Clines 2010a, 55–65 and Clines 2010b, 234.

[15] See also Neutel and Anderson 2014 and Hooker 2014.

[16] On marginalized men, see Asikainen (2014, 160, 181–83) and Haddox (2010, 15–16).

destabilizes the essentialist assumption that masculinity necessarily goes with biological men or femininity with biological women.[17] *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* features a more multilayered view of masculinity, with clearer affinities to intersectional feminist theory in comparison to the earlier volume.

Hebrew Masculinities Anew (Creangă 2019a) displays an even greater developmental leap and covers masculinities in poetry, wisdom literature and the latter prophets more fully. An important new initiative is the thematic studies on aging (Kirova 2019), money (Murphy 2019b), circumcision (Jacobs 2019) or scribal activity (DiPalma 2019) in relationship to masculinity. Kirova (2019) concludes for example that old age features as a blessing as well as a curse, constituting both a threat and an asset to hegemonic masculinity. These essays manifest a change of focus from individual men in leading positions to the anonymous "everyday" man. Another significant feature is that the volume offers systematic reflection on the development of the field. This includes both historiography (Wilson 2019) and looking ahead (Macwilliam 2019), as well as building on previous masculinity studies, for example around the figure of Moses (Kalmanofsky 2019).[18] Furthermore, contributors interact more intensely with queer theory, moving beyond Butler towards Sedgewick (Graybill 2019), Halberstam (Likpka 2019) and Goldie (Haddox 2019).[19] Considering the interdependence between masculinity and femininity is also a new trait. Kelly Murphy's conclusion that the patriarch in Proverbs need the right kind of wife to embody ideal masculinity to some extent rebuts previous claims that "biblical" masculinity presumes a distancing from women.[20] Finally, in continuity with the previous volumes, *Hebrew Masculinities Anew* further addresses the masculinity of the deity (Clines 2019; Purcell and

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[17] Exum (1998, 225 and 2000, 106) argued early on that feminism needs to study both men and women as gendered subjects. More recently, Susanne Scholz (2013, 8) attests that feminist interpretation remains focused on "female characters and imagery."

[18] Similar impulses appear in Creangă 2014 and Rosenberg 2019.

[19] Rosenberg (2019) considers queer masculinities in relation to patriarchy.

[20] Murphy 2019b. Clines (2010a, 57–59) speaks of the "womanless male" as one of four key characteristics of biblical masculinity.

Focht 2019) and of women (Lipka 2019), and offers critique of hege-monic masculinity (Rosenberg 2019).[21]

A complimentary or fraught relationship?

In surveys of masculinity studies in biblical studies, scholars like Joseph Marchal (2014, 261, 269), Susan Haddox (2016a, 177), Katherine Low (2016, 345), and Peter-Ben Smit (2017, 9, 24, 36) all point to the secondary character of masculinity studies, as a complement to, or extension of, feminist studies. Marchal (2014), Koosed (2017) and Moore (2014) also point to tensions, by describing the link as, for example, a "fraught relationship" (Marchal 2014, 261).[22] Such discourse implies the existence of two separate parties, a questionable claim on theoretical as well as historical grounds.[23] A fundamental problem is the (implicit?) assumption of feminist studies as a homogenous entity along with the idea of a linear development of this tradition of scholarship, with one generation of feminists supplanting the other.[24] The common "wave metaphor" for the different stages of feminist studies has been criticized for bolstering a simplified historiography,

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[21] Clines (2019) surveys the language of masculinity; Purcell and Focht (2019) evaluate the contest of masculinities between YHWH, pharaoh and Moses; Lipka (2019) addresses Jezebel's maneuvering between masculinity and femininity; and Rosenberg (2019) problematizes how queer masculinities can also be detrimental to women (in the case of Abraham and Sarah).

[22] Koosed (2017, 231) recognizes a "creative tension" between feminism and masculinity studies. Moore (2014) states that "tensions have not vanished entirely." Note that Low, Marchal and Koosed all appear in volumes on feminist interpretation.

[23] Low (2016, 363) argues that masculinity is a construct just as femininity. Calvin Thomas (2001, 61–62) problematizes that notion, arguing (from feminist theory) that such discourse hides the fact that differently gendered bodies have asymmetrical relations to power. Jeff Hearn (2017) regards attention to power as decisive in research on masculinity, where the epithet "critical" signals alignment with feminism.

[24] Schüssler Fiorenza 2017, 175–77. Esther Fuchs (2008, 207, 219) argues for the need to balance between a "centripetal" approach (seeking coherence) and "centrifugal" one (recognizing pluralism) in feminist biblical studies.

overstating progress and contributing to inter-generational conflict among feminists.[25] Refraining from such language here, I strive to be as specific as possible when I trace and critique the attitudes towards feminist studies in the anthologies. While mainly focusing on theoretical positioning in introductions and final responses, I furthermore sketch the extent of the actual interaction with feminist scholarship in the contributions.[26]

David Clines and Stephen D. Moore represent opposites in their final responses in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond*. Whereas Clines (2010b, 234) diagnoses masculinity studies as lagging far behind feminist studies, Moore (2010, 241–42) blames feminist studies for the difficulties of masculinity studies to "take off" in biblical studies.[27] Clines (2010b, 238) identifies three main problems with the study of masculinity (in biblical studies): lack of "theoretical refinement," lack of "passion" and failure to address the masculinity of the divine. Clines perceives the study of masculinity to be at the stage feminism was in the 1960s and '70s, namely oriented towards data collection, which he finds both necessary and insufficient.[28] He furthermore polemicizes against an alleged "objective" stance in

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[25] Jo Reger (2017) considers the discursive legacy and resilience of the metaphor in providing historical legacy on the one hand, while excluding groups of women (women of color, working class, non-academics) on the other. With Wiegman (2002), Reger (2017, 199–203) cautions for the danger of "presentism." Cf. Linda Nicholson (2010, 34–35) and Yvonne Sherwood (2017, 9). In the historiography of feminist biblical studies, the wave metaphor is less frequent. For example, Pamela Milne (1997) speaks of "phases" (but calls for more dialogue between feminist scholars), whereas Helen Leneman (2013, 12) identifies only two waves in biblical studies. Heather McKay (1997) and Esther Fuchs (2008) argue, from different positions, for the need to harbor pluralism within feminist biblical studies.

[26] I treat the volumes in chronological order for reasons of clarity; it is not suggestive of a linear development.

[27] "It (the study of masculinity) still has a long way to go to match the range and depth of feminist biblical criticism, but it has not been starting from scratch; it has been able to model itself on the progress of feminist criticism of the bible" (Clines 2010b, 234).

[28] Clines postulates somewhat of a paradox in that data collection must precede theorizing, but also that it presupposes rudimentary theory. Cf. Clines 2010a, 62 and Clines 2010b, 238.

relation to the material and suggests that masculinity scholars engage in "consciousness raising" and "apology" (Clines 2010b, 238–39).[29] I understand Clines as calling for more activism and clearer ideological standpoints. The gap in research on YHWH's masculinity is to some extent addressed in following volumes.

Moore bemoans the poor development of masculinity studies in biblical studies for entirely different reasons (in this context).[30] He proposes two explanations for the state of affairs: first, masculinity studies stands in a "symbiotic relationship with feminist studies" and secondly, feminist biblical studies have insufficiently embraced intersectionality (Moore 2010, 241–42). Potentially agreeing with Clines that masculinity studies is stuck in the past, Moore here holds feminist exegetes accountable for the field's alleged shortcomings. While rehearsing some of the womanist and post-colonialist critique of feminist studies of the 1970s and '80s, he fails to do justice to early considerations of, for example, ethnicity or masculinity in feminist biblical scholarship.[31] Neither does he make clear how the alleged enmeshment with feminist studies constrains masculinity studies or what is to gain from a more autonomous relation. I do not see how a call for more intersectionality could be a call for independence from feminist studies; rather, it mirrors a concern to keep up with developments within feminist theory.

119

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[29] Connell (2005, 234–35) identifies "consciousness-raising" as an example of how the Men's Liberation Movement imitated the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1970s, concluding that it led to "marginalization and disintegration" rather than "mobilization and group affirmation."

[30] In other contexts, e.g., Moore 2003, 1–4, Moore recognizes the impact of feminist studies on masculinity studies in terms that are more favorable. In a later survey article (Moore 2014), Moore takes a position similar to Clines (2010b), claiming that masculinity studies suffers from a lack of political passion, and suggesting that this might explain biblical masculinity studies' "modest inroads into feminist studies." Furthermore, an excerpt of Moore's seminal work, *God's Gym*, is republished in the feminist companion series (Moore 2009).

[31] Moore 2010, 242. For example, Claudia Camp (1985) investigated gender and ethnicity, and Cheryl Exum (1992 and 1993) anticipated the interest in men as well as women figures.

Moore makes two important points that somewhat jar with his critique of feminist studies. To begin with, his recognition of feminist suspicion against masculinity studies is highly relevant for the historiography of the field, although not supportive of the notion of symbiosis.[32] Furthermore, I find Moore's suggestion plausible that the anti-feminist stance of conservative men's movements outside the academy has clouded popular perceptions of masculinity studies.[33] To me, it would seem logical to implicate the men in those political initiatives, rather than feminist biblical scholars, for the assumed slow progress of masculinity studies. The rhetoric of symbiosis/independence clouds the fact that Moore's critique of feminist biblical studies is a critique from within the feminist theoretical tradition.[34]

The responses *in Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* are closer to Clines than to Moore. As the voice from outside biblical studies, Björn Krondorfer directly supports the call for more passionate scholarship. He argues that biblical studies could learn from Critical Men's Studies in religion when it comes to its critique of power and its "transformative" (activist) interpretative practice (Krondorfer 2014, 289–95). Martti Nissinen (2014, 272) contests that one should consider masculinity studies as a countermovement to feminist studies, but perceives an imbalance between the two. Whereas feminist studies has a clear agenda in promoting women's rights, he finds masculinity studies more vague and abstract through its connection to theory rather than

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[32] Moore 2010, 242–43. Four years later (Moore 2014), Moore perceives feminist suspicion as having diminished. Cf. Thomas 2001, 61; Hearn 2004, 50; and Low 2016, 351.

[33] Moore 2010, 242 n. 3. Cf. Koosed 2017, 231. In Connell's historiography (Connell 2005, 204–11), the pro-feminist men's movement of the New Left in the 1970s was superseded by increasingly anti-feminist therapeutic ones (e.g. Bly 1990), directed towards individual growth rather than social change.

[34] Cf. feminist sociologist Nancy Chodorow (1989), who problematizes the socialization of men and women into different roles/ideals (such as nurturing, independence). In a later survey (Moore 2014), Moore more clearly frames his critique from within feminist (and queer) theory, suggesting for example a rediscovery of gender as performance, by engaging scholars like Butler, Foucault, Halperin and Winkler.
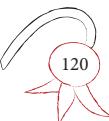
real people.[35] In my view, Nissinen implies a feminist-aligned agenda, when he rhetorically asks if "masculinity, or being a man, really is void of any positive and empowering elements that could be of value when fighting injustice and struggling for a better world."[36]

In the introduction to *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, Creangă identifies as feminist and attests to overlaps and "shared interests" between feminist studies and masculinity studies.[37] He also recognizes a difference in task: feminist studies deals with androcentrism and patriarchy, masculinity studies with hegemony. This distinction leaves me wanting further clarification, since, as noted above, the concept of hegemonic masculinity explicitly elaborates on the concept of patriarchy. What critical difference does the new nomenclature make, and how does it advance analysis? In addressing Clines's charge of lacking passion (and thus pursuing Nissinen's query), Creangă argues that masculinity studies should go beyond critique and deconstruction to "offer viable models of masculinity."[38] Creangă thereby aligns masculinity studies with the reconstructive quest of feminist biblical scholars like Phyllis Trible (1978) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1983).

In their reconsideration of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt open up for the possibility that hegemony could fail, or that one could conceptualize hegemony in non-toxic ways.[39] This option comes with an important qualification, however, that data

121

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[35] Nissinen 2014, 281. Clines (2005, 222, 236, 241–43) attests to the lack of a social base for a pro-feminist men's movement, and explains it as a function of having to work against the interests of a majority of men. Nissinen's claim exclusively situates masculinity studies within the academy, in contrast to the feminist tradition of bridging critique and activism. See, e.g., Schüssler Fiorenza 2014.

[36] Nissinen 2014, 281. Smit (2017, 27–28) claims that masculinity has an agenda, "undoing gender injustice."

[37] Creangă's claim to feminism here (Creangă 2014, 5–6) accords with his stance in Creangă 2007.

[38] "It is also our responsibility to offer viable models of masculinity that promote well-being, healthy relationships/marriages/unions, good parenting, peaceful conflict-resolution, and responsible living among all people and creation." Creangă 2014, 10. Cf. Nissinen 2014, 281.

[39] Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 583) refer to Richard Collier (1998) and his notion of an alternative "positive" masculinity.

points to the difficulty of putting this into practice.[40] Delineating models of "good" masculinity, in my view runs the risk of re-positing an insidiously stable subject as ideal and thereby creating an abject space for deviant masculinity.[41] I find such a vision inconsistent with the central idea in the anthologies, namely that masculinity is multi-faceted and changing. Attempts at reconstruction necessarily need to integrate postcolonial and queer theoretical critique of feminist studies, to avoid an unfortunate step backwards or to prevent coopta-tion for reactionary political agendas.[42] As far as I can see, however, none of the contributors in Creangă's three volumes argues for a specific version of masculinity as legitimate. Refraining from claims to normativity, a few delineate alternative masculinities.[43] In doing so, these studies point to the plurality and instability of masculinities, thereby destabilizing the (homogenous) vision of conservative men's movements.[44]

Hebrew Masculinities Anew offers further pledges of allegiance with feminism, but also elaborations on why the alliance matters. By way of introduction, Creangă (2019a, 11–12) stresses the "partnership" with feminism, and aspires to an intensified dialogue. Outlining the history of the field, Wilson acknowledges the extent to which masculinity

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[40] Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 583.

[41] Valérie Nicolet (2019) exposes this logic in Paul's letter to the Galatians.

[42] Connell (2005, 139) warns of the political risks of reforming (individual) masculinity, in that it ultimately would help modernize patriarchy rather than abolish it. Jordan B. Peterson (2018) constitutes a recent example of how bolstering "good masculinity" may serve a reactionary political agenda. Creangă (2014, 8) calls upon masculinity studies to befriend specifically queer and postcolonial studies. Disregarding intersectionality would accord with Moore's (2010) unfavor-able perception of the field. I have elsewhere argued that activism can come to full expression through critique (Sjöberg 2006, 223–24). Ann Jeffers (2017) provides a recent example that critical and reconstructive efforts may overlap.

[43] Most clearly, Nissinen (2019, 267–69) posits the "ideal lover's agency" (along with the hegemonic and the parental) as one of three male agencies in the Song of Songs, for the audience to dream about, and that can be shared by men and women.

[44] With Marchal (2014, 268) and Hearn (2017, 24), I recognize destabilizing the claims of men's movements as an important task for masculinity studies.

studies are indebted to feminism and, *nota bene*, sharply differentiates between masculinity studies and attempts at "reclaiming manhood" by men's movements.[45] Gil Rosenberg (2019, 43–44) advocates a renewed focus on patriarchy rather than non-normativity for masculinity studies. For him, returning to feminist studies through queer theory could be a way of achieving precisely the "passion" that Clines requests (Rosenberg 2019, 44). In Macwilliam's (2019) final outlook, masculinity studies' relation to feminist studies is a non-issue; focus lies instead on evaluating Connell's multiple masculinities model.

Actual interaction

Actual engagement with previous feminist scholarship provides hard evidence to evaluate more general declarations of allegiance. In *Men and Masculinity,* only Ela Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska (2010, 171) builds directly and more ambitiously on feminist forerunners like Cheryl Exum and Mieke Bal, in her investigation of Samson's masculinity. Brian Charles DiPalma (2010, 36 n. 2) considers the risk of drawing attention away from women figures through his focus on pharaoh's masculinity in Exod 1–4 and credits feminist forerunners in general terms, but displays limited engagement with their work. Creangă (2010b, 83) sets up a contrast with feminist scholarship, in the "homogenous picture of masculinity," as a point of departure for his explorations of Joshua's "gender in/stability."[46]

Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded features more direct interaction with feminist scholarship. For Marcel Măcelaru (2014, 54), Athalya Brenner and Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes' claim (1993) that gender-free texts do not exist is axiomatic. Macwilliam (2014, 69–72) identifies a neglect in feminist scholarship when it comes to the figure of Athalya

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[45] Wilson (2019, 19) argues against a reclaiming effected by "reinforcing male-dominated gender hierarchies." In a different context, Wilson (2020, 35, 41–42) restates the indebtedness of masculinity studies to feminist gender criticism, while also identifying this genealogy as an explanation for the failure of masculinity studies to connect to childhood studies.

[46] Creangă 2010b, 83.

to justify his study of this regent's illicit masculinity (using Butler).[47] Susanna Asikainen (2014, 157 n. 3) goes back to Gayle Rubin's sex-gender distinction (1975) to argue for her definition of masculinity as gender ideology.

Hebrew Masculinities Anew displays yet further exchange with feminist research. Rosenberg (2019, 55) demonstrates why non-normative masculinity (Abraham), just as well as "strong women" (Sarah), can bolster hegemonic masculinity. Graybill (2019) considers the implications of homosociality for women, also in a text without women (Jonah). Nissinen (2019) offers the furthest-reaching dialogue with feminist forerunners like Exum and Brenner, in his exploration of toxic and ideal masculinities in the Song of Songs, whereas others merely point to a lack of feminist research as their point of departure.[48] Kelly Murphy (2019b) and Hilary Lipka (2019) explore the interde-pendence of masculinity and femininity, in the ideal household of Proverbs as well as in the character of Jezebel. Although interaction between masculinity studies and feminist studies certainly is increasing in these three volumes, I find little evidence of the symbiosis that Moore laments (with regard to the first volume), nor of masculinity scholars' alleged attachment to a pre-intersectional feminist theory. The contributors engage with a range of feminist scholars from the 1970s, '80s and '90s. Emphasis lies on critique of masculinities, with differing degrees of explicit activism, including tentative attempts at reconstructing alternatives.

Queer critique of masculinity studies

Guest's recommendations for masculinity studies are part of her ambitious assessment of research on gender and sexuality in *Beyond Feminist Biblical Studies*.[49] Tracing the history of scholarship from

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[47] With regard to Butler, see also Hans-Ulrich Weidemann (2014, 146 n. 203), who juxtaposes performance with performativity, and Glessner 2014, 192 n. 18.

[48] E.g. Clines 2019, 62; and DiPalma 2019, 229.

[49] Guest 2012, 125–35. Note that Guest 2012 succeeded Creangă 2010a, but preceded Creangă 2014.

Women's studies to Gender studies, she weighs the strategic risks and benefits of past developments, and proposes a new theoretical platform for the field, "genderqueer criticism."[50] While recognizing the crucial role of feminist studies, she argues that feminism is not a broad enough theoretical framework to serve as host.[51] Guest's vision for gender-queer criticism is to be a space for far-reaching theoretical interactions between feminist studies, masculinity studies, queer studies, trans studies, intersex studies, and lesbian and gay studies.[52] She considers work on "biblical construction of heterosexuality as an institution" a main contribution of this new approach, for which queer theory plays a central role, and masculinity studies feature as one among many contributors (Guest 2012, 162).

Guest criticizes masculinity studies on different levels. A general request is that masculinity studies take ethical responsibility for its interpretations and state its ideological positions more clearly, particularly in relation to feminist studies (Guest 2012, 137, 141). Such prescription is in line with Clines's call for more passion and Krondorfer's demand for self-reflection and transparency.[53] Guest substantiates her request through a close reading of *Men and Masculinity*, where she for example criticizes some contributors for not considering the implications (of their masculinity readings) for women or for stopping short of interrogating the ideology of the text.[54] More particularly, Guest questions a focus too narrowly limited to the "male" characters and critiques the heavier emphasis on text, compared to history.[55] On a more positive note, Guest sees the strongest potential for masculinity

125

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[50] Guest 2012, 31–41, 150–64.

[51] I find Guest's position somewhat conflicted. Guest (2012, 150–51) charges that feminist biblical studies is "not up to the… task," but envisions genderqueer criticism to operate "in a similar way to feminism"; she avows not to privilege feminism, but calls the subfields into negotiation with feminist theory in particular.

[52] Guest (2012, 42–43, 75–76, 150–51) imagines genderqueer criticism as a bridge in the study of gender and sexuality, not a loose "umbrella."

[53] Guest 2012, 141; Clines 2010b, 238; Krondorfer 2014, 289.

[54] E.g. George 2010; DiPalma 2010; Guest 2012, 137–38.

[55] Guest 2012, 123–25. Creangă (2014, 4) identifies the first point as a misconception.

studies in scrutinizing hegemony, including how it is subject to resistance and contestation.[56]

For me, the challenge of demanding ethical accountability lies in demonstrating what it means in practice.[57] According to Guest (2012, 140–41), responsibility has to do with identifying political implications and stating one's commitments. These are important, if also daunting and difficult, tasks. Stating ideological commitments needs to go beyond merely describing one's social position, a rightfully criticized and fading practice.[58] The fact that full accessibility is not possible (Butler 2005) does not forfeit the effort to be transparent, but could serve as a corrective against postures that present themselves as too certain.

In her reconsideration of the pornoprophetic debate, Guest (2012, 77–117) shows how difficult it can be for scholars to identify the implications of their own work. She argues that Setel's reliance on theorists like Dworkin and Griffin meant injustice to the diversity of feminist views on pornography (such as anti-censorship) and had a disciplining impact on the studies that followed (Guest 2012, 89, 100–103, 116–17). In my view, Guest hereby demonstrates the problem of commitments that are too rigid rather than too vague. The task of deconstructing complex relationships of power is likely to yield ambiguous political implications, which only seem obvious in retrospect. Anticipating future developments (such as queer re-evaluations of violence in the context of S/M) is doubtlessly a challenge. Such difficulties, however, should not keep us from attempting to imagine the new abject spaces that we do create, however unwillingly, or from interrogating how our positions shape our critique.[59] That kind of self-critical reflection invites dialogue, in line with Guest's call to masculinity scholars to look for feminist and queer implications in their work (Guest 2012, 140).

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[56] Guest 2012, 133, 135. Both Creangă and Smit 2014 and Creangă 2019a cater to such demands.

[57] Krister Stendahl (1984) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2000) made similar calls. See Sjöberg (Larsson), 2006, 223–24.

[58] Such practice may hide more than it reveals, despite good intentions, see, e.g., Sjöberg 2006, 15–17. Thomas (2001, 161) problematizes the practice, along with Guest 2012, 161.

[59] I am indebted to Valérie Nicolet for seeing this point.

The need for more profound and committed interactions between these subfields constitutes the rationale for uniting under one banner, as I understand Guest. Her critique of the subfields, furthermore, provides evidence that the practice of guarding each other's turfs is detrimental to scholarship. The challenge is how to organize the alternative. Whoever volunteers as host will be open to accusations of authoritarianism or of seeking to establish a new center. To be successful, one must find ways of cooperation that do not conceal conflict or harmonize difference.[60] At the same time, the need for further exchange is too important to let initiatives falter on issues of christening. Whatever model of coexistence one adopts should be open to renegotiation.

My reservations towards the genderqueer approach specifically concern its potential to improve co-operation between feminists and masculinity scholars. A first problem concerns Guest's definition of the parties and diagnostics of the issue. According to Guest, "feminists have concerns about dilution and loss of political edge," whereas "male scholars have queries about being free to criticize feminist positions."[61] Setting up feminists against "male scholars" rather than masculinity scholars appears like a slippage into an essentialist logic no longer valid for the field.[62] Guest's initial association of masculinity studies (CSM) with extra-academic men's movements is likewise unfortunate, although her concluding consideration of profeminist and queer straight positionality offers clarification.[63] Guest's framing of the problem is strikingly asymmetrical. Fear of dilution relates to compromising a painfully acquired political sharpness, whereas anxiety at

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[60] Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 175, 177) problematizes the use of family relations to conceptualize the transmission of feminism. Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 176) and Guest (2012, 148) both express concern about "appropriation" of feminism by queer and masculinity studies.

[61] Guest 2012, 149. See also Hearn 2004, 50; Low 2016, 51; Connell 2005, 41, 133.

[62] Guest (2012, 148) argues against the notion of masculinity studies as a preserve for men. If women were in minority in Creangă 2010a, and Creangă and Smit 2014 (8 of 25 contributors), this is no longer the case in Creangă 2019a (8 of 15).

[63] Guest (2012, 118, 157–62) thereby blurs their different relationships with feminism. Cf. Moore 2010, 242–43.

voicing critique rather connects to yielding a position of privilege. The scope of these two problems seems very different and it is not obvious to me who these fretful "males" are (certainly not the contributors to Creangă's anthologies).[64]

Feminist studies 4.0

Claudia Camp and Rhiannon Graybill provide evidence of feminist critique of masculinity, thereby refuting the idea of fixed boundaries between feminist studies, masculinity studies and queer theory. In *Ben Sira and the Men Who Handle Books* (2013), Camp investigates the gendering of canon formation. Connecting Sira's anxieties over masculine identity and honor with his infamous misogyny/idealization of abstract femininity, Camp (2013, 54–99) identifies these poles as expressions of a similar logic. Rather than delineating the representations of women or the staging of masculinity *per se*, Camp (2013, 122–56) explores how gender integrates with central theological concepts. One remarkable conclusion is that salvation for Sira consists in shifting desire from women to books, thus securing an exclusively male form of reproduction (Camp 2013, 153–54 nn. 39 and 40). Although homosociality may function to strengthen men's hegemony, taking it so far as to make women redundant in procreation challenges heteronormativity.

Several elements in Camp's work are relevant for our discussion of the relationship between feminist studies and masculinity studies. First, she demonstrates the potential of keeping together the analysis of femininity and masculinity.[65] Considering these aspects of gender jointly reveals interdependence, overlapping and contrast. Secondly, Camp shows the relevance of feminist analysis for allegedly gender-neutral

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[64] Robert Carroll (1993, 276) offers one example of "male" anxiety to criticize feminists. In the discussed anthologies, only Moore (2010, 241) and Creangă (2010b, 83) directly criticize feminist scholars. Advocates of the men's movements rather appear as militantly anti-feminist, see, e.g., Melissa Blais and Francis Dupuis-Deri 2012.

[65] Cf. Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1985; Connell 1987.

phenomena like dogma or tradition. Thirdly, her study counters the standard queer critique of feminists as insensitive to sexuality.[66] Camp incorporates central issues in masculinity studies and queer theory, without explicitly positioning herself in relation to these fields. Her study of Ben Sira merits the label of "amplified feminism," while also making the idea of labels seem irrelevant.[67]

Graybill (2016a, 5) sets out on the double quest of tracing and queering the prophetic body in *Are We Not Men? Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets*. Considering prophecy as an embodied practice, she investigates the masculinity of figures like Moses and Hosea. She demonstrates how these male bodies (or reading practices) can be understood as leaky, wounded or volatile, and thus fall short of expectations of hyper masculinity.[68] For Graybill (2016a, 12), the study of masculinity is a "deeply feminist one"; she argues with Irigaray for the necessity of sexing the masculine and thereby exposing its non-neutrality. While recognizing certain historical tensions between queer theory and feminist studies, Graybill (2016a, 13) identifies her point of departure in both traditions. Graybill's positioning towards masculinity studies is mostly implicit. Connell features briefly, as a counter-figure, but his definition of hegemonic masculinity informs Graybill's interest in the failure and reconfiguration of masculinity.[69] In contrast to Guest and Creangă, Graybill displays no need to discuss the "relationship" between feminist studies and masculinity studies *per se* (neither between feminist theory and queer theory).[70]

Graybill (2016a, 49–69) most clearly criticizes feminist forerunners in her case study of Hosea and horror movies. Revisiting the "pornoprophetic" debate, she contends that the reading strategy of "witnessing" (naming violence) no longer counts as original and charges that simple reiteration runs the risk of blunting the critical edge of feminist critique (Graybill 2016a, 50). For the road ahead,

129

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[66] E.g. by Guest 2012.
[67] Guest (2012, 141) cites Moore (2003, 3), who cites Sedgewick (1985).
[68] Graybill 2016a, 13, *contra* Clines 2002.
[69] Graybill 2016a, 14, 25–26.
[70] See further Graybill 2016b.

Graybill (2016a, 59–67) proposes to articulate "a crisis of masculinity," a call that invites engagement with both feminist studies and masculinity studies. The idea that violence had implication for the male subject was not alien to feminist scholarship in the 1980s and early 1990s.[71] Whereas Setel (and others) anticipated a rather solid male abusive subject, however, Graybill reads the violent acts in terms of fluidity and openness, disturbance and displacement.[72] One way of nuancing the masculinity in crisis trope would be to speak rather, with Connell, of a crisis of the gender order as a whole (with competing masculinities as one aspect).[73] Closer dialogue with the feminist predecessors would be another, clarifying how the (new?) unstable masculinity that Graybill appreciates for its interpretative potential differs from the volatile masculinity that the proponents of the pornoprophetic debate criticized.[74]

Two particularly valuable contributions emerge from Graybill's conclusion on the prophetic body as a queer body (with Jonah and Miriam as "test cases").[75] Whereas Jonah hardly excels in embodiment, Graybill shows how the book stages the "unhappy queer" through Jonah's refusal to pursue someone else's happiness.[76] Like Camp, she thereby demonstrates how a queer and/or feminist perspective contribute(s) to understanding theological concepts like judgment and forgiveness, also when gender and sexuality only remain implied. Through the figure of Miriam, Graybill (2016a, 136) problematizes the extent to which the prophetic body remains connected to masculine bodies. The idea that queerness offers no protection against misogyny

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[71] Drorah Setel (1993, originally 1985) initiated the "pornoprophetic" debate. See further Guest 2012, 86–105; Gravett 2016; Haddox 2016a.

[72] Setel, 1993, 151–54. Graybill 2016a, 124–31.

[73] Connell (2005, 84) argues that we can speak of a crisis of a system (the gender order), but not of a configuration (masculinity) within that system. Koosed (2017, 224–26) relates the crisis of masculinity (as always lost) with the crisis of feminism (as never attained).

[74] Graybill 2016a, 146. E.g. Ruth Törnkvist (1998, 23–34) rejects the recourse to individual pathology for abusive behavior.

[75] Graybill 2016a, 121–41.

[76] Ahmed 2010, 88–120.
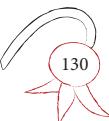
bears repetition.[77] Graybill's call for "feminist vigilance" in the task of queering men's bodies corresponds to the feminist concern that gender somehow will slip out of sight.[78] In sum, Graybill demonstrates the advantages of a multi-perspective approach.

Cooperation or cannibalism?

Concluding these readings, I find that masculinity studies aligns with feminist studies in the task of exposing oppressive power structures. Its biggest potential, in my view, lies in exploring how marginalized, subordinate and complicit masculinities interact with hegemonic ones, or when contesting hegemony, demonstrate its adaptability as well as its fragility.[79] Masculinity studies thereby contributes to breaking the illusion of masculinity as a monolith. It points to the responsibility and vulnerability of those who stage hegemonic as well as non-hegemonic masculinity, opening up the possibility of change. Such a task accords with Connell and Messerschmidt's emphasis of the plurality and hierarchy of masculinities as core elements of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, to be retained.[80] The task also corresponds to their recommendation for future research to more carefully consider the dynamics of masculinities, including conflicts and contradictions.[81]

Mapping toxic "biblical" masculinity (in order to bring it down) or proposing "positive" alternatives (however well intended) may paradoxically end up reifying dominant models and obscuring this dynamic. Whereas a few contributions in Creangă's first volume ventured in this direction, many more point to the variety and evolution of

131

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[77] Graybill 2016a, 128. Cf. Rosenberg, 2019, 55. Connell (2005, 159) attests to hostility to and/or ignorance about feminism in his case study of gay men (Chapter 6).

[78] Graybill 2016a, 128.

[79] Defining hegemonic masculinity as that "which embodies *the currently accepted answer* to the problem of the legitimation of patriarchy" (my emphasis), Connell (2005) points to adaptability as a central feature. See n. 4.

[80] Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 846.

[81] Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 852–53.

masculinities, for example, with regard to ethnicity, class, disability and life cycle, in line with the intersectional turn in feminist theory. To explore further the tensions and clashes between masculinities, namely to focus on the dynamics rather than tracing the individual variants, would be a logical next step. Biblical scholars here stand before a world of opportunities in terms of material, for example by delineating how masculinities from different times and regions interact in the mosaic that (many) biblical texts constitute.[82]

Masculinity studies occasionally manifests disengagement from feminist studies. One problem, in my view, lies in the limited or uneven interaction with feminist theory and feminist scholarship. By not considering earlier findings or developments, masculinity scholars miss valuable resources and potentially run the risk of reinventing the wheel, for example using dated, less refined analytical tools or spending time on old news. The feminist concern that women again will become invisible has some bearing in Creangă's first anthology. In subsequent works, feminists and masculinity scholars show that there are many benefits in uniting analyses of masculinity and femininity, and in addressing implications for both men and women.[83] Such studies also accord with Connell and Messerschmidt's recommendation of a "more holistic understanding of gender hierarchy," rather than keeping the study of femininity and masculinity apart.[84] Furthermore, to investigate the masculinity of women and deities is helpful in deconstructing binaries. With these qualifications, I find masculinity a vital topic for feminist enquiry and that masculinity studies do carry on the feminist legacy. If the gap between theoretical roots and interpretative practice diminishes, the impact of masculinity studies (for feminist studies) would potentially be even greater.

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[82] Creangă 2010a, Lipka 2014, and DiPalma 2019 exemplify such approaches. These in turn accord with Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005, 849–51) recommendation to consider the "geography of masculinities," i.e., how the local, regional and global interact.

[83] For example Camp 2013; Graybill 2016a; Rosenberg 2019; Lipka 2019; Murphy 2019b.

[84] Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 847–48. Cf. Exum 1998, 223–25.

Why then do cooperation and respect seem so difficult to embody? Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 175–77) points to a historical pattern of forgetfulness and trivialization of feminist ideas, which blocks learning, and to the impact of neoliberalism, which threatens a culture of sharing. Connecting these tendencies, she claims that commercialization of the academy fuels inter-generational strife among feminists. Schüssler Fiorenza thereby widens the political and historical contexts for the issue of the relationship between feminist studies and masculinity studies. Her response to this state of affairs is to call on feminist scholars to encourage a culture of communication, which for example challenges the use of dysfunctional family language ("matricide") to conceptualize the transfer of tradition.[85] Guest writes from a different position, while also advocating cooperation (across subfields). I hear both Schüssler Fiorenza and Guest as invitations to reflect self-critically on our practices. In that spirit, I conclude by playfully considering a few behavioral guidelines that have surfaced through my readings and that can make academic co-habitation a more pleasurable space. Imagining collaboration as a form of resistance, I believe in the power of the small alterations.

First, be generous.[86] Feminism is historically speaking the original context, which makes the current scene of overlapping or contesting fields of gender studies intelligible. Masculinity scholars need to credit the feminist pioneers.[87] Correlatively, feminist scholars can benefit from listening to the (no longer so new) "newcomers." Masculinity studies and queer theory offer possibilities of revitalization for feminist enquiry, which already are happening, but could be put into practice more systematically.

133

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[85] Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 176–77) argues (with Faludi 2010) that feminists, after having problematized notions of sisterhood, need to do the same with motherhood. Cf. Reger 2017, 208–209.

[86] See Fuchs 2008, 205.

[87] Several contributors to these volumes already do, e.g., Clines (2010b, 234), Creangă (2014, 5–6; 2019b, 11–12), Wilson (2019, 19), Rosenberg (2019, 43–44) and Nissinen (2019, 251). Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 176) points to a general tendency to not credit feminist scholars.

Second, recognize difference (without defending one's territory).[88] Calls to unite or to display the proper attitude run the risk of erasing differences and may lead to attempts at disciplining the field. Rather, we should encourage efforts to benefit from each other's differences through concrete engagement (about theory, scope, tone etc.). Camp, Graybill and Rosenberg embody such dialogue, while testifying to the irrelevance of upholding boundaries.[89]

Third, tackle conflicts (but do not kill). Recognizing difference exposes diverging interests, which in turn necessitates further dialogue.[90] As Graybill cautions, feminists do well to identify tendencies in academia that push women to the margins. Such suspicion should not deter feminists from interrogating masculinity. Masculinity scholars need to overcome any residual inferiority/superiority complex in relation to feminist studies, whether it manifests as self-effacement or attempted matricide.[91] Maintaining a separate field as a way of avoiding conflict amounts to disengagement from the feminist heritage.[92]

Fourth, work (hard) together. By overstating difference and conflict, we run the risk of learning less from each other. If we instead aim for mutual engagement (also but not always through conflict), we create conditions for the accumulation of knowledge. I perceive Guest's call as an invitation to expand our interpretive communities through viable coalitions without compromising difference.[93] Such an effort is labor intensive and requires us to step out of our professional comfort zones, possibly to the point of embodying Said's figure of the "amateur."[94]

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[88] See Fuchs 2008, 219–21.

[89] Marchal (2014, 273) finds the boundaries "so blurry that policing [them]… seems unnecessary and counterproductive."

[90] See Fuchs (2008, 221–22), who calls for the need to theorize difference.

[91] Connell (2005, 128–34) identifies "renunciation" as a key strategy in relation to feminism, for the pro-feminist environmental activists in his second case study (Chapter 5).

[92] See Guest 2012, 149.

[93] Connell (2005, 238) and Butler (2015) also make calls for alliance politics.

[94] Edward Said (1996, 65–83) contrasts the "amateur" to the isolated, hyper-specialized scholar.

I believe it is a risk worth taking. Lasting change will not happen without far-reaching co-operation, regardless of how we identify as scholars or as gendered beings.

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135

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137

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141

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143

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IMPERIALISM, IDENTITY, AND LANGUAGE CHOICE IN PERSIAN YEHUD: TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE ACHAEMENID EMPIRE

Jason M. Silverman

Abstract

Scholars have long connected the Achaemenid Empire and its use of Imperial Aramaic – spanning the empire's space and duration – with processes of social identity formation. Yet the details and mechanisms of this supposed link for the elites within the empire remains hazily theorized at best. Taking the famous complaint about language loss in Nehemiah as a starting point, this study explores the various social and status implications involved in the local use of scripts and languages. Using sociolinguistic literature around "code-mixing" and "code-switching," Communication Accommodation Theory, and diglossia, this article tries to map some early ways the social implications of languages choices within Persian period marginal regions could be understood, with a specific focus on Yehud. These tools indicate a wider array of variables are relevant than have sometimes been entertained and suggest that language choice in Yehud related more to inter-elite rivalries than reaction to the Persians.

Les chercheurs et chercheuses ont depuis longtemps rapproché l'emploi de l'araméen impérial par l'empire achéménide – recouvrant tout l'espace et la durée de l'empire – avec des processus de formation d'identité sociale. Cependant, les détails et les mécanismes de ce lien supposé pour les élites au sein de l'empire ne sont au mieux théorisés que de manière nébuleuse. À partir de la célèbre complainte concernant la perte du langage dans Néhémie, cette contribution s'intéresse aux diverses implications sociales et ayant trait au statut liées à l'usage local de scripts et de langages. En s'appuyant sur la littérature sociolinguistique autour du « code-mixing » et du « code-switching », sur la théorie de l'accommodation des communications, et sur la diglossie, cette contribution cartographie certaines des façons anciennes dont les implications sociales des choix de langue dans les régions marginales de la période perse peuvent être comprises, en particulier pour Yehud. Ces outils signalent qu'un ensemble plus large de variables est à prendre en compte que ce qui est parfois suggéré, et proposent que le choix de langage à Yehud est d'avantage lié à des rivalités intra-élites qu'à une réaction aux Perses.

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Introduction

The (Achaemenid) Persian Empire was a decidedly multilingual entity. Obviously, neither the imperial overlords nor the average subject were conversant in all or even many of the living languages within the empire. Nevertheless, multilingualism of several kinds was rather common if not the rule, and this is very important for understanding the texts created within this context.[1] The ways various individuals

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[1] See Briant 2002, 507–10; recently, Jonker (2021) has drawn attention to the Achaemenid use of trilingual inscriptions, calling this an ideology of multilingualism

and populations negotiated this complex communicative situation must inform modern reconstruction of *social* history and texts.[2] This is true for the imperial overlords, their administrations, and subject populations – and thus for the Judaean communities, too. This article seeks to understand some of the social reasons for and ramifications of language choice within the Persian Empire, with a focus on Yehud as a provincial example.

When any given group has multiple languages to which it may make recourse, a choice must be made. This choice has pragmatic, social, and/or political implications. For the purposes of this essay, there are three distinct but related contexts around the question of language choice:

1. the Persian Empire itself, with its interface of elite, administrative, and local languages;
2. the Judaean communities, with their interfaces between heritage languages, dialects, *lingua franca*, and intergroup interactions; and
3. the Hebrew Bible, with its mix of languages and dialects.

For the first one, the empire, Old Persian/Old Iranian was the language of the Great King and the Persian elite;[3] Old Persian, Achaemenid Elamite, Babylonian (and sometimes Egyptian) the monumental

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(2021, 185, 202). To this it should be noted that later the empire appears to have shifted to a quadrilingual policy that incorporated Egyptian, at least for the royal titles on some objects (see Wasmuth 2015, 218–24). Sigla for inscriptions follows standard usage (king, location, number). DB = Darius I Behistun; DSf = Darius I Susa f.

[2] The present study is primarily concerned with social, rather than purely linguistic, implications.

[3] It has been suggested that the written version was an archaizing version of the vernacular (Schmitt 2008, 76; Tavernier 2011, 243), as the language shows signs of change not much later (cf. Schmitt 2008, 77; Skjærvø 2009, 47); it is perhaps an exaggeration to call it "invented" à la Jonker 2021, 198. The existence of Old Iranian calques in Achaemenid Elamite shows as much – Henkelman has even called Achaemenid Elamite a "pidgin" (Henkelman 2008, 49). For a number of Persian loans in Elamite, see Tavernier 2007.

inscriptional languages; Imperial Aramaic (and at least for a while in some areas, Achaemenid Elamite) the administrative language; and a wide array of local languages in simultaneous use.[4] For the second, the Judaeans, we have to reckon with (most likely) dialects of Hebrew, Aramaic, and other local languages (such as Akkadian and Egyptian). For the third, the Hebrew Bible, the text is preserved in Aramaic and two forms of Hebrew (typically called Classical/Standard and Late Biblical Hebrew).

This article begins with the most explicit mention of language choice in Judaean literature of the period, in Neh 13. After pointing out the numerous questions that this brief passage raises, consideration turns towards better understanding the communicative, social, and political ramifications of language choices in the three contexts mentioned above – the Persian Empire, the Judaean communities, and the Hebrew Bible. This engages some discussion within sociolinguistics and sociology concerning minority language use. In particular, the essay addresses the concepts of code-switching and code-mixing, a related theory called Communication Accommodation Theory (from now on called CAT), and the work of Fishman on diglossia. Discussion then returns to the socio-linguistic situation of Yehud within its wider historical context. These theories highlight the need for more nuance in considering the social contexts of language change, point to a wider array of relevant social variables, and lead to a suggestion that inter- or intra-elite rivalries may have been more significant than reaction against the empire *per se*.

149

Nehemiah 13

The most famous and explicit mention of language choice in Persian period Judaean texts, is, of course, Nehemiah's language complaint in Neh 13:23–24.[5]

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[4] See Tavernier 2008, 2017, 2018, 2020; Wiesehöfer 2016.
[5] For a look at the use of this text in debates over the death of vernacular Hebrew, see Thon 2009.

גם בימים ההם ראיתי את־היהודים השיבו נשים אשדודיות עמוניות מואביות
ובניהם חצי מדבר אשדודית ואינם מכירים לדבר יהודית וכלשון עם ועם

Also in those days I saw Judeans who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, (and) Moab; and half[6] of their sons spoke Ashdodite, and they could not speak Yehudite but like tongues of people and people.

Within the context of a complaint about intermarriage between Judaeans and women from surrounding areas, three languages are mentioned, Ashdodite, Yehudite, and the "tongues of people and people." This is notable for several reasons. The first is a lack of clarity for us what exact languages these three terms intend to denote. Ashdod was a former Philistine city that in the Persian Empire was under the control of the Phoenician city of Sidon (later Tyre), yet housed a building typically interpreted as belonging to a Persian governor.[7] Was the language called Ashdodite then a form of Phoenician, Aramaic, or another local dialect?

Scholars have suggested Ashdodite might be Philistine,[8] a local Canaanite dialect,[9] Phoenician,[10] Nabatean,[11] or Aramaic.[12] Neither Blenkinsopp (1988, 363), Southwood (2011, 14–15), nor Becking

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[6] Some have preferred to understand "half" as an adjective of sons and some as an adverb for speaking, though it is not overly relevant for the present argument. E.g., Batten 1913, 299; Lemaire 1995, 154–55; Thon 2009, 569.

[7] On coast and Ashdod, see Briant 2002, 490, 952; Tal 2005: 80–81, 88–89; Lemaire 2015, 17–22. On the poor remains of Persian-era Ashdod, see Kogan-Zehavi 2005; two fortresses north of Tel Ashdod from the Persian period have been excavated; see Porath 1974 (Hebrew), discussed in Stern 1982, 54; Alexandre 2006. An Ashdodite coin, from the fourth century, has two Aramaic letters (IAA 153937; Farhi 2016, 22, 37, 45), but as Schniedewind has rightly commented, coins are not necessarily indicative of vernacular (Schniedewind 2007: 146). See now the overview of Hagemeyer 2021, esp. 100–102.

[8] Williamson (1985, 398), following Ullendorff (1968), who argued it was a non-Semitic language. Myers (1965: 216) suggests it is either Philistine or Aramaic, but also thinks the language was similar to Judah's in the fifth century.

[9] Schmitz 1992, 206.

[10] Lemaire 1995, 163, followed by Fried 2021, 388–89.

[11] Batten 1913, 299*.

[12] Kottsieper 2007, 100–101; Hogue 2018, 60.

(2018, 328) decides what the language is; the former offers all the previous suggestions, and Southwood suggests it could either be a pidgin language (half-Ashdodite) or just not Hebrew (already, Lemaire 1995, 154–55). Berlejung (2016, 18, 22) and Hagemeyer (2021, 108) have recently thought the reference was to a multilingual situation rather than a specific dialect. The difficulty in determining what would constitute an "Ashdodite" language has prompted several scholars to see it as a literary conceit aimed at Yehudian identity construction.[13]

Yehudite is itself an unclear term in this context. The usage for a language is quite rare; it only appears here and in three parallel versions of one event, in which it contrasts with Aramaic.[14] The general consensus among commentators is that Yehudite means "Hebrew,"[15] on the basis of this repeated story.[16] Yet, being derived from the term for the province of Yehud, it must indicate whatever the *vernacular* was associated with Yehud at the time of Neh 13 (and we are now speaking, at the earliest Artaxerxes I, possibly rather later, so from the mid-to-late fifth century BCE onwards). Was this a dialect of Hebrew or Aramaic,[17] and is there a contrast meant with the surrounding North Semitic dialects generally or some specific vernacular (in the passage said to be Ashdodite, but perhaps the Samarian vernacular)? Or, with Thon, is the problem an evolution of the Hebrew vernacular away from Biblical Hebrew (Thon 2009, 574)?

A similar problem attends the last item in the list, which may or may not refer to languages spoken in Ammon and Moab, which had had their own languages related to Hebrew in the pre-exilic periods,

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[13] Thon 2009, 574; Frevel and Conczorowski 2011, 23–24; cf. Berlejung 2016.

[14] 2 Kgs 18:26, 28 ‖ Isa 36:11, 13 ‖ 2 Chr 32:18; Neh 13:23.

[15] Batten 1913, 300; Williamson 1985, 397; Myers 1965, 217; Grabbe 1998, 66; Southwood 2011, 16 n. 58; Blenkinsopp 1988, 361; *DCH* 4:122; Thon 2009, 568.

[16] In this context it is worth noting that the Tanak never uses "Hebrew" [עברית] for the language; the earliest usages I can find for it are in Greek texts: the prologue to the Greek of *Sirach*, *4 Maccabees*, and the Gospel of John. Ullendorff 1968, 128.

[17] Though the parallel story contrasts Yehudite with Aramaic, this does not *necessarily* mean that the vernacular of Yehud at the time Neh 13 was written was the same as whenever the Neo-Assyrian story in 2 Kgs ‖ Isaiah was written.

but for which evidence in the Persian era is limited and uncertain.[18] Perhaps relevant to this is the fact that Nehemiah had called Tobiah an "Ammonite," even though he has a Yahwistic name and seems to be interested in Yahwistic temple worship – and whose speech was presumably comprehensible to the Yehud elite – implying that residents of Yehud and Ammon shared at least one language at the time Nehemiah was written.[19] Was this merely because of a shared *lingua franca* or shared vernaculars?

Beyond the specific exegesis of this passage, one needs some sort of understanding of the language situation of Palestine in the Persian period. This is a matter of some uncertainty and much debate. There are three different issues interconnected in this, which should nonetheless be kept separate: medium (vernacular versus written usage), languages (including dialects), and writing technology (script). There is no doubt that Imperial Aramaic was the language of administration in Palestine; all extant inscriptions from this time period of which I am aware are in Aramaic, and mostly in Aramaic script (though some coins use paleo-Hebrew). It is uncertain what language(s) functioned as the vernacular(s), however. Schwartz sees Hebrew remain as a vernacular until 300 BCE (1995, 3; 2005, 54–55), with Aramaic co-existing as a vernacular (1995, 19, 44). Wilson-Wright (2015) also thinks Hebrew survived as a vernacular until the third century BCE. Polak (2006) argues that Hebrew remained as a vernacular throughout the Persian period, largely based on some features of the language in

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[18] See Aufrecht 2019, 10. Fitzpatrick-McKinley (2015, 135–36, 204–207) favors continuity; Lemaire (2017, 304) favors replacement by Aramaic. Schwartz (2005, 58) thought all Levantine languages were mutually intelligible dialects, but this of course says nothing about their perception in terms of code-switching; indeed, the classic study of Blom and Gumberz was between two dialects (see below). Even pronunciation differences have the potential for significance (cf. Judg 12:5–6). A number of scholars see the mention of Ammon and Moab as secondary additions.

[19] Knoppers has also noted that the narrative implies Nehemiah, Sanballat, and Tobiah all share a language (2007, 329). The historical identity or existence of Tobiah or of a province of Ammon is beyond current scope, beyond the question of dialect or language. For a discussion of Tobiah, see, e.g., Fitzpatrick-McKinley 2015, 204–207; Kessler 2016, 137–43.

Ezra-Nehemiah. Schniedewind (2007; 2013, 142), Kottsieper (2007), and Gzella (2017) all argue that Hebrew died and was replaced by Aramaic as a vernacular, but with Hebrew remaining as a religious language. For both of these languages one must also reckon with several dialects or versions: Imperial, eastern, and western Aramaic, and at least Classical and Late Hebrew. The difficulty with assessing the vernacular is that by definition it is the spoken language, and thus written evidence is not particularly pertinent, especially since the majority of individuals were still wholly oral. One can note, however, that it is likely that a large percentage of the users of *written* Hebrew had been deported from Judah by the Babylonians, and that the form of Aramaic used in Yehud was introduced in the sixth century,[20] meaning it was functioning as a written language already before the Achaemenid period. The question is whether the local Judahite dialect had continued as the vernacular until the period of Neh 13 or not, along with the written usage of Aramaic. The same question is pertinent for the Judaeans in Babylonia and the Yahwists in Samerina.

153

This article cannot answer these questions, but instead it seeks clarification concerning the types of language choices that could have had social and political implications in the Persian Empire. With some sociolinguistic tools, what are the implications of a switch from Yehudite to Ashdodite? What are the implications of this complaint from a man one would presume knows and largely administratively functions in Imperial Aramaic? Are there identity issues, administrative issues, power issues, communicative issues? How does this relate to the linguistic situation of the various Judaean and Yahwistic communities and the empire at large at this time and earlier? A very basic question remains why the Tanak was written in three types of language (two dialects of Hebrew and Aramaic), most probably by scribes who were primarily trained in imperial Aramaic, as anyone who received education in literacy probably did so primarily for imperial service.[21]

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[20] Lipschits and Vanderhooft 2011, 73; Schniedewind 2013, 140.

[21] Cf. Silverman forthcoming. Leuchter 2017, 254, also thinks Aramaic was the language in which scribes were primarily trained, though in the context of arguing for the import of the script.

To find some tools for these questions, the present study will describe some aspects of Code-switching, CAT, and studies of diglossia. First, however, one can note several recent studies which have directly addressed the language situation of Persian Yehud.

Persian Yehud and Language Choices

Ehud Ben Zvi (2009) addressed the issue of language choice for the Hebrew collection. He does not make reference to sociolinguistics, but he claims that the choice to use Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) for the "core" texts and Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH) for more "peripheral" ones reflects "canonical" concerns for "authority" (Ben Zvi 2009, 282–83). Ben Zvi might be right to question chronological correlates with these two forms of Hebrew, but the assertion of deliberate canonical concerns or authorial intent to be "authoritative" rely on "canon" and "scriptural authority" already having been theological concepts at the time of the texts' writing.[22] The concern with explaining two dialects of Hebrew, however, is a helpful reminder that we are dealing with a more complex situation than just Hebrew-Aramaic for the biblical text. Similarly, Young (2009) has argued that SBH and LBH are simply different literary styles of Hebrew, perhaps reflecting regional preferences more than anything else.[23]

In a study of the social history of Hebrew, Schniedewind explicitly claims that during the Persian period Aramaic replaced Hebrew as a spoken language, though it still lingered on in "limited demographic continuity" (2013, 160). The result was Hebrew taking on a "new political and religious identity" (2013, 158). In his reading, language change in Yehud was thus very closely tied to imperialism and ethnic identity (2013, 139). This view of language change in Yehud is quite widespread and will be assessed below after the theoretical discussion.

In an article from 2016, Diana Edelman appealed to the concept of code-switching for understanding the mix of Aramaic and Hebrew

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[22] One might consider other sociological factors behind these choices.

[23] The question of diachronic change in Hebrew is hotly debated, and beyond the scope of the present study or this author's competence. For two sides of the debate compare Rezetko and Young 2014 with Notarius 2013, especially 265–79; Sanders 2020.

in the canonical texts. She only discusses the textual collection, and does not consider the mix of languages more broadly, whether in the Judaean communities or in the empire. In this article, Edelman largely uses Code-switching with reference to identity, with Hebrew functioning as a "we" code. She interprets the use of Aramaic in Ezra as presenting an imperial frame of reference and in Daniel as creating an "imperial other." These are issues worth returning to later.

Recently, Mark Leuchter (2017) has pointed to shared scribal training in Imperial Aramaic, and he argues that the key datum is the switch to Aramaic *script* rather than a change in language. For him, later Rabbinic stories concerning the difference between the Jewish and Samaritan writing traditions are evocative of Persian-era dynamics (2017, 254–55). He finds that this explains the collation of not-quite-coherent materials in the Pentateuch and book of the Twelve. However, this is based on a rather adventurous interpretation of the meaning of the last paragraph of column four of the Behistun inscription (Old Persian version, DB §70), taking Darius's boast of writing in *Aryan* and disseminating it on tablets and manuscripts to mean that the making of "written Aramaic copies was part of the imperial myth" (2017, 257).[24]

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[24] Leuchter links the Aramaic version of DB at Elephantine to DB paragraph 70, where Darius boasts of writing the inscription in "Aryan" as well as on tablets and manuscript (*taya adam akunavam patišam ariyā utā pavastāyā utā carmā grftam āha*; *not* Aramaic). Schaeder (1930, 210–12) already anticipated Leuchter in wondering if this related to the use of Aramaic as a medium, but ultimately rejected it. I am not aware of any evidence for Old Persian (OP) being written in Aramaic script (except for later Pahlavi uses of Aramaic ideograms for Middle Persian, and this is a different and later phenomenon). The standard understanding is that OP primarily functioned orally, and that it was translated into Aramaic by the scribes, and disseminated more widely in that form. See Tavernier 2008, 2017, 2018; cf. Samuel 2019. Leuchter is certainly correct that imperial ideology was disseminated in Aramaic, but that does not make Aramaic itself or its script imply imperial ideology necessarily (see the discussion below). His other piece of evidence is Esther (1:11; 3:12; 8:9), but Esther is both later and primarily dependent on Greek characterizations of Persia for its depiction, so not reliable for actual Persian administrative practice. As a minor point, it is worth noting that the exact find spot of Aramaic DB is uncertain, though it was likely in Jedaniah's house rather than directly in the Yaho temple (Lemaire 2014, 304–305; *contra* Leuchter 2017, 261).

The issue of script change does deserve serious social investigation.[25] Nevertheless, script change is a separate albeit related issue from the vernacular, including why it may have been considered in need of saving. We will return to these four studies below, after a survey of some relevant socio-linguistic theory.

Sketch of Elements of Theory

The above scholars pointed to the variables of authority, identity, and imperialism as factors for language choice in Persian Yehud. All of these are key topics for the period, but we can adduce further relevant considerations through exploration of the socio-linguistic theories around code-switching, CAT, and diglossia.

Code-Switching. Strictly speaking, the concept of code-switching is narrower than the subject the present study investigates. Nguyen (2015, 1) defines code-switching as "the alternative use of two languages within the same conversation," thus only a subset of the question of language choice in a given social and political context. While some Hebrew Bible texts do indeed switch language within the same narrative, of interest is why a particular language is chosen at all for communication, whether or not there is a switch between them during the course of the communication, or indeed, whether it happens in speech or written text. This more macro perspective also finds some interest in the sociolinguistic literature.[26]

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[25] See the special journal issue (Unseth 2008b) dealing with script change. It may be instructive that the contributions nearly all deal with situations with competing larger nation-states and deliberate, top-down state policies.

[26] Mahootian 2006 defines Code-switching as "the systematic use of two or more languages or varieties of the same language during oral or written discourse" (p. 511). Although this is often done subconsciously, the current linguistic consensus is that it is nevertheless rule-bound behavior (p. 512). It can also be intentional. There are three kinds within the literature: use of second language tags, such as "you know" in the context of a first language, called "tag switches"; switches at sentence or clause boundaries, called "intersentential"; and switches within clauses, called "intrasentential" (Mahootian 2006: 512; Nguyen 2015: 15). The latter is sometimes also called code mixing. For a discussion in the context

There are several functions for code-switching discussed by socio-linguists. These include "referential switching," due to vocabulary gaps in one language (common with people educated in a separate language from mother tongue, Mahootian 2006, 515) and "expressive switching," essentially as a function of identity (2006, 516). Blom and Gumperz introduced the terminology of transactional/situational and meta-phorical/non-situational switching (Gross 2006, 508; Mahootian 2006, 516). The former is motivated by topic or speaker, the latter due to an extra-linguistic effect desired by the speaker. Several researchers have added a number of functions underneath the umbrella of metaphor-ical use: quotation, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, message qualification, personalization/objectification, marking group identity or solidarity, exclusion, status raising, or authority (Mahootian 2006, 516). While interesting as such, attempts to use it have tended to focus on nation-state polities (e.g., Gal 1988). Further, there remains a question as to the applicability of conversational linguistic research to literature; special care must be taken in considering the latter as evidence.[27]

The landmark study that is frequently referenced is the 1972 study of Blom and Gumperz in Hemnesberget, Norway, in which they studied the use of two dialects of Norwegian, a local variety and a standard variety. In their study, the standard variety was used in official settings, and local variety in local, relational activities. They later termed these to be "we" and "they" codes. This is the sort of distinction which Edelman took up in the article mentioned previously. The rather mono-causal appeal to group identity, however, is too simplistic. Indeed, Gardner-Chloros notes that different languages can function as a "we-code" for multiple reasons, and sometimes multilingualism itself can serve an

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of first-century CE Palestine, see Ong 2015, 342–43. Loanwords are a tricky case, and there is discussion on whether or not it is a separate phenomenon or whether they can always be distinguished clearly (Mahootian 2006: 512–14), but that is not a major issue for the present question. For some recent discussion of loanwords in Yehud, compare Wilson-Wright 2015 and Samuel 2019.

[27] See, e.g., Gardner-Chloros and Weston 2015; Weston and Gardner-Chloros 2015; Mullen 2015.

identity function (2009, 57). Another way of seeing this sort of arrangement is also what some scholars call diglossia, which is a situation in which two or more languages have continuing functions within one society (more below) – sometimes one language is a "high" language and the other a "low" language (Meierkord 2006, 165) – not quite mapping onto a we–them dichotomy. We will return to the distinction below.

Several publications make appeal to a theory called the Marked Model, which focuses on speaker intentions,[28] in something like a communicative version of the rational choice paradigm in economics: as described by Gross, "The central premise of the markedness model is that speakers are rational actors who make code selections in such a way as to minimize costs and maximize rewards; that is, speakers are concerned with optimizing the outcomes of an interaction in their own favor" (Gross 2006, 510). This model no doubt deserves deeper scrutiny, but it might bracket out the social and political layers too much to be overly helpful for the questions the present article asks (cf. Weston and Gardner-Chloros 2015, 205).

Another strain of study around Code-switching uses the theory of CAT,[29] to which the discussion will now turn.

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). The theory developed from a social psychological theory around motivations in dyad conversations into a more comprehensive theory that integrates elements of Social Identity Approach. According to Gallois et al., CAT is based on three assumptions, as they phrase them:

> 1) communicative interactions are embedded in a sociohistorical context;… 2) communication is about both exchanges of referential meaning and negotiation of personal and social identities;… 3) interactants achieve the informational and relational functions of communication by accommodating their communicative behavior through linguistic, paralinguistic, discursive, and nonlinguistic moves, to their interlocutor's perceived individual and group characteristics. (Gallois et al. 2005, 136–37)

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[28] Banks 1988; Gross 2006; Nguyen 2015.
[29] Gross 2006, 509; Mahootian 2006, 515; Nguyen 2015, 35–37.

As one can see, the theory is itself built on Social Identity Approach, but it integrates identity as only one potentially salient factor amongst others. Or, as they phrase it, the theory posits "psychological accommodation" on the basis of a "dialectic" between comprehension and identity maintenance. The use of a *lingua franca* is probably often merely a case of facilitating comprehension (see also Meierkord 2006) – at least from an individual's point of view. Of course, from a sociological perspective, the language that most facilitates comprehension reflects structures of power (cf. Bourdieu 1991).
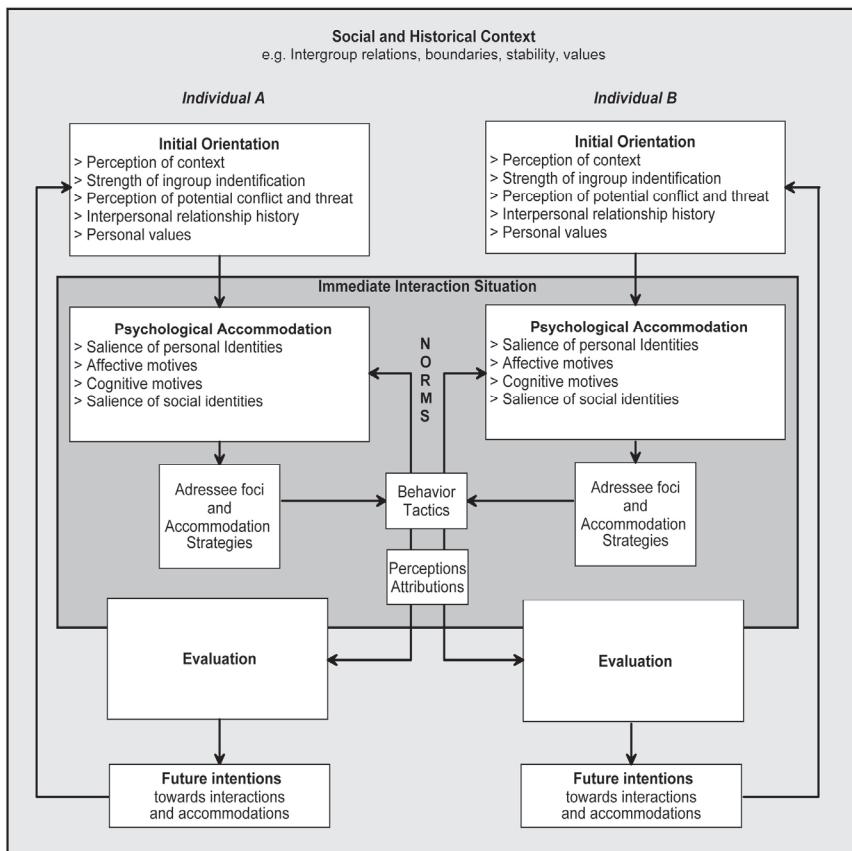

Figure 1. Model of Communication Accommodation Theory (adapted after Gallois et al. 2005, 133)

In CAT, "accommodation" refers to the degree to which a communicator adapts to the relevant audience. The terms used for this are

convergence: the strategy of adapting behavior to the audience; *divergence*: the strategy of accentuating differences from the audience; *maintenance*: maintaining one's original style regardless of the audience (Gallois et al. 2005, 123). These concepts derive from one-to-one, face-to-face speech, but the theory applies to other media as well. For the purposes of the present study, accommodation includes strategies such as language choice, whether that be for using a particular language or dialect in the first instance, or for code-switching or –mixing during the course of the interaction. Moreover, the developed form of the theory is not restricted just to verbal communication, but includes nonverbal communications such as gestures and even potentially choice of media. Gallois et al. emphasize that the theory understands accommodation in terms of perception by the participants, rather than just what might be objectively considered to be accommodation: in other words, what the speakers think is or is not the way the other speaker actually speaks. The example they give for clarifying this is a situation when someone "over-accommodates" by speaking more slowly than is necessary, based on a stereotype of the other person's language ability. The intention was to accommodate, though the result was inappropriate.[30]

As Figure 1 (adapted from Gallois et al. 2005, 133) shows, CAT analyzes the behaviors of convergence, divergence, and maintenance within a broader context, and it is only within this broader context that their significance can be evaluated. They emphasize that the communicators enter the communication with a predisposition towards the other person or group based on previous experience and the saliency or not of group identities. These are also bound-up in predetermined factors such as role, status, and security (2005, 138).

The communicative event itself, termed in the diagram "immediate interaction situation," can then involve "psychological accommodation,"

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[30] In a later review, Gallois et al. (2016, 193) state: "CAT has long moved between a description of what people actually do – that is, how their speech, paralanguage, and nonverbal behavior change toward or away from their interlocutors' – and what they are trying to do – that is, their psychological motives and intentions – as well as related perceptions of their communication."

or whether or not each speaker accommodates to the other one, and to what degree. CAT theorizes this process in terms of two types of motives: cognitive motives, essentially the need to communicate comprehensible information successfully, and affective motives, or the relevant saliency of personal and group identities for the particular interaction. All of these are bound by social norms. Gallois et al. emphasize that CAT can only function for a given instance of communication on the basis of a "well-developed theory of social norms or rules" (2005, 138). They also emphasize that behavior that fits the expected norm is likely to be evaluated relatively positively regardless of whether it is convergent or divergent (2005, 142), and that in a situation in which status is important, accommodation to the dominant system is likely (2005, 140). Overall, the theory stresses that, "all things being equal, accommodative behavior is attributed internally, evaluated positively, and results in positive future intentions toward interactions with the other person" (2005, 141). Further, CAT takes into account the fact that communication is reciprocal, in the sense that strategies of accommodation can be altered in the course of a situation, on the basis of the other person's interactions.

Finally, CAT also posits that the experience of an interaction and its accommodations will affect subsequent interactions. This is labelled "evaluation" in Figure 1.

Though not focused on just the issue of language choice, CAT is potentially useful for the question, by treating language choice as a form of accommodation within a set of societal rules. The theory raises a number of key questions for the present study:

1. How do we know when and what sorts of identities became salient for a communicative interaction in the Persian Empire?
2. Can we know or develop a theory of social rules or norms around language use within the Persian Empire and/or the various Judaean communities, and if so, how?
3. How directly do issues around dyad communication relate to the production of written texts in general, and how might they differ between different textual genres, such as administrative texts and literary texts (cf. Gardner-Chloros and Weston 2015)?

The present study will return to these questions after an overview of another stream of scholarship on minority language use, Fishman's study of diglossia.

Fishman and Minority Language

The sociolinguist Joshua Fishman spent a career studying the inter-relations between ethnic minorities and language maintenance, primarily in the context of twentieth-century United States. For present purposes, his description of "diglossia" and the social prerequisites for it, as well as the general correlates of language loss, are useful, macro-social additions to the more individual-focused CAT for our query concerning language use in the Persian Empire.[31]

Fishman defines diglossia as an "enduring societal arrangement, extending at least beyond a three-generation period, such that two "languages" each have their secure, phenomenologically legitimate and widely implemented functions" (Fishman 1989, 181).[32] He emphasizes that such a situation can only remain stable beyond three generations if each language fulfils separate social functions, otherwise one of the

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[31] Rendsburg (2013) argues for a more restricted use of the term diglossia, whereas Bar-Asher Siegal (2013) has defended Fishman's approach. Since the present study was first presented, Hogue 2018 has also appealed to Fishman. Schwartz (1995, 16) rejects the usefulness of the concept of diglossia since he sees most societies use it. Even if this were true, I fail to see how it would invalidate the usefulness of the concept any more than the fact all societies use language makes discussing the latter useless. Fraade (2012, 5*) rejects diglossia for ancient societies, since it derives from modern societies – but that alone is not proof the phenomenon is also modern. The concept is still used by sociolinguists (e.g., Weston and Gardner-Chloros 2015, 203) and Hasselbach-Andee (2020, 459) argues that multilingualism was probably as pervasive in the past as it is today. Her concern is with the dearth of evidence rather than the concept (idem). For its relevance for first-century CE Palestine, see Ong (2015, 339–40, 343). For more sociolinguistic research in a similar vein as Fishman, see, e.g., Coulmas 2018.

[32] Earlier, "a society that recognized two or more languages for intra-societal communication," though the concept also applies to dialects or registers as well (Fishman 1972, 135, 140).

languages will completely replace the other. He describes two basic sorts of diglossia which he considers likely to be stable:

1. diglossia combined with bilingualism (he cites Swiss German cantons). The most common form of this situation is a "high" and "low" language (Fishman 1972, 136).
2. diglossia without widespread bilingualism, which is a situation with separate groups, one of which has relatively impassable group boundaries. He cites the relations between pre-WWI European aristocracies–peasants as an example (Fishman 1972, 141). He sees this as typical in situations which are economically underdeveloped, have immobile populations, and socially distinct groups (Fishman 1972, 143). This can also create pidgins.

Fishman further argues that wide-spread bilingualism without diglossia can only be a transitional phase, with either pidginization or language death resulting (Fishman 1972, 145, 149).

As mentioned, Fishman claims that language use within a stable multilingual situation will assign particular domains of use for each language (Fishman 1972, 248; 1989, 202–23, 233–63). This aspect of existing domains is a pre-requisite for the "metaphorical code-switching" that Blom and Gumperz saw in Norway (Fishman 1972, 260).[33]

Relevant for a wide-spread empire is Fishman's discussion of post-colonial states and their use of "Languages of Wider Communication" (LWC; 1972, 191–223, see Fig. 2). He develops a typology on the basis of the number of local "Great Traditions," with LWC functioning as compromises. In his view, ancient empires are like his Type C, multiple competing traditions, in which an LWC is used as a compromise language (1972, 204). Later, he compares these empires – including Persia – to his previous category of diglossia without bilingualism

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[33] Similarly, he thinks compartmentalization and institutional support is necessary for ethnic maintenance (which he calls di-ethnia, Fishman 1989, 190–93, 224–32). Just like with language, he thinks separate ethnic identities will not last beyond three generations without clear divisions in social functions.

(1989, 186). He further argues that LWC tend to *displace* rather than *replace* local languages among local elites (1989, 248–49), or in other words, that LWCs will take over certain domains from the local language, but leave other domains untouched.

Factors	Type A	Type B	Type C
Perceived integration	No integrating "Great Tradition"	One "Great Tradition"	Several "Great Traditions"
"National" Language selection	Consideration of political integration: nationism	Consideration of authenticity: nationalism	Compromise between integration and authenticity
Adoption of LWC	as national symbol	Transitionally for "modern functions"	As "working language"
Language learning	"exonormative" standardization of LWC	"Modernization" of traditional language	"Modernization" of several languages
Bilingualism Goals	Local, regional, transitional towards LWC	National, transitional towards indigenous monolingual	Regional and national bilingual
Biculturism goals	Transitional towards integration	Traditional plus modern	Traditional plus modern
Type	A-modal	Uni-modal	Multi-modal

Figure. 2. Fishman's Typology of "Languages of Wider Communication" in Post-colonial societies (after 1972, 192 [1969])

Also pertinent is Fishman's typology of "high" and "low" languages, which he defines as "superposed" learned language and mother tongue: 1) classical and related vernacular; 2) classical, unrelated vernacular; 3) written and formal and unrelated vernacular; 4) written/formal, related vernacular. Moreover, he notes there are cases of multiple high languages co-existing (Fishman 1989, 182–83). Interestingly, he sees success in maintaining vernaculars tied to the success in maintaining a high version of it (Fishman 1989, 229, but in the context of a generally literate society like the US).

Fishman's work and categorizations provide a wider lens for addressing the questions posed by CAT above. One particularly important point is a distinction between language *displacement* and language *replacement*, one that depends on the language *domain* or *function*. Language domains are the wider social context in which one can seek the social rules for language use that CAT insisted on in the previous section. We can now return to the question of language choice in the specific context of Achaemenid Yehud.

Language choice by Judaeans in the Achaemenid context

Using some of Fishman's categories, one can describe the Persian Empire thus: Imperial Aramaic served as the *lingua franca* and administrative language, and thus as an LWC.[34] Imperial Aramaic as a *lingua franca* would be expected to dominate in the domains of administration, trade, and international interactions, and the documentation we have in that language largely conforms to such domains.[35] As a *lingua franca* or LWC, it is unlikely to displace local high languages and vernaculars from their respective domains outside administration *on its own*. It should be remembered that this was *not* the language of the Persian Great Kings themselves. For local elites, one would therefore expect that Aramaic would have had very specific domain associations: administration, trade, and interactions with elites from other localities. It would be unlikely to displace local languages from other domain functions, provided there were separate social domains. However, other processes of language contact could put pressure on local languages independently (such as Greek on Lycian), and as wide-spread *vernaculars*, Aramaic dialects were among these competing vernaculars as well.[36] I am unaware of any signs of Old Persian functioning as a high language or vernacular outside the Persians themselves.[37] One might wonder if the practice of inscribing three or four different languages in royal inscriptions[38] would create multiple high languages in different contexts, or better merely affirm existing statuses. The latter might be

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[34] Hasselbach-Andee (2020, 465–66) also sees Persian use of Imperial Aramaic as resembling a strict understanding of diglossia.

[35] Similar to Jonker's (2021, 202) suggestion of Aramaic's status due to "practical reasons."

[36] Hogue (2018, 59) thinks there was no opposition to Aramaic as a prestige language, but sees resistance to its use as a vernacular. Cf. Gzella 2017, 234.

[37] Cf. Schmitt 1993, 2017; Tavernier 2008, 2017, 2018; cf. Samuel 2019.

[38] Old Persian, Babylonian Akkadian, and Elamite in their respective cuneiform scripts and sometimes Egyptian hieroglyphs. On a southern Levantine fragment from the sort of vessel typically with all four, see Stolper 1996; Meyers and Meyers 2009.

more likely, so that one could expect that the various localities retained their own set of "high" and "low" languages (if they pre-existed), in addition to Aramaic. The use of several different high languages for imperial display alongside a LWC neatly fits Fishman's Type C. Payne's analysis of Achaemenid Lycian inscriptions would seem to bear this out, though in the context of language change (with Lycian and Greek appearing to be high languages, in the context of a shift to Greek; Payne 2007). As rightly noted by Fraade (2012, 3*), one needs to resist the tendency to assume only one vernacular or high language.

For the Judaeans, we need to reckon with different language situations in different regions. Indeed, as several scholars of immigrant communities in the US have noted, language retention is often correlated with language concentration (see Fishman 1966, esp 151, 362). Areas in which Hebrew speakers were concentrated can be expected to have maintained their Hebrew dialects as vernaculars; areas in which they were less concentrated, they can be expected to have adopted a local vernacular within three generations.

Babylonia

Judaeans lived in several locations in Babylonia, in a few large cities and in several rural settlements.[39] The wider language situation in Babylonia itself included both Akkadian and eastern Aramaic dialects (one of which formed the basis of Imperial Aramaic, Gzella 2011, 574). Given the use of Aramaic in Babylonia for administration, the literate Judaeans in Babylonia were probably trained in (imperial) Aramaic.[40] Whether the continued use of Yahwistic names implies a continued vernacular usage of Hebrew, a shift to vernacular Aramaic, or a diglossia is uncertain; the relatively local settlements combined with

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[39] Pearce 2016; Alstola 2019; some unprovenanced documents relating to three settlements have been published by Pearce and Wunsch 2014.

[40] Jursa 2012; Alstola 2019, 252–53, 274. Beaulieu (2007) argues Aramaic was a widespread vernacular already in the Neo-Babylonian Empire, with Akkadian associated primarily with the state and law (though Nabonidus was deliberately "bicultural," 204). That documents concerning the Judaeans in the countryside were written in Akkadian does not indicate the Judaeans themselves knew Akkadian. Cf. the cautionary comments in Waerzeggers 2015, 185–87.

a distribution around the region means each interpretation is possible (cf. Alstola 2019, 273–75). Insufficient data probably survive to assess whether a diglossia was maintained or for which domains.[41] Different communities may have had different linguistic practices.

Egypt

The Judaeans living in Egypt produced texts in Aramaic, and I am unaware of direct evidence for their use of other languages. Given the context, one may wonder if they spoke some Egyptian or Hebrew.[42]

Levant

The languages in both Samerina and Yehud are questionable. In terms of a high language, the very creation and transmission of the Tanak must mean that at least for some Judaeans and Samarians, Hebrew continued to function as a high language, at least for cultural and literary purposes. The existence of two forms of this language (classical and late), raises the question whether there were (at least) two different groups who maintained Hebrew as a high language or if they represent different registers/domains. One could analyze these as stylistic, chronological, class, or regional differences. The Aramaic documents from Samaria and Idumea show that Imperial Aramaic was certainly used for administration and law. Neither of these directly indicate vernaculars or potential other domains. This brings us back to the complaint in Neh 13 and the questions raised by CAT above.

The complaint in Neh 13, written in Hebrew, comes from someone who clearly views (and knows) Hebrew as a high language. But the complaint itself would appear to be the loss of Yehudite as a *vernacular* – something in of itself not necessarily linked to the domain

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[41] Zadok (2015, 143) posits some names as evidence of interchange between Hebrew and Aramaic, but this may say more about the scribe than the community.
[42] Muraoka and Porten (2003) refer to the language of the texts as "Egyptian Aramaic." For the Judaean garrison, Folmer (1995, 745; 2020, 389) argues they spoke Aramaic. Lemaire (2014, 306) finds no trace of Hebrew, despite the use of Hebrew for "priest." Though Aḥatabu daughter of Adiyah has hieroglyphs as well as Aramaic on her stela (Berlin ÄM 7707 [TAD D20.3]), one probably cannot use this to adduce widespread vernacular use of Egyptian by her family.

functioning of a high language (as in Fishman's typology). Further, one wonders if this means the language we know as Hebrew, or a specific dialect of that language that had been spoken in Yehud (as, say, opposed to that which had been spoken in Samerina; cf. Sanders 2020, 280). Moreover, the complaint is not against the use of Aramaic for the official domain, but the switch of vernacular to another local vernacular (Ashdodite, whatever one decides that means).[43] I suspect, therefore, that at issue in Neh 13 is *not* Hebrew as a high language nor Aramaic as a LWC – something presumably shared between elite Yahwists in Yehud, Samerina, and Babylonia – but a local dialect as a vernacular, a distinctly *Yehudian* dialect. As Fitzpatrick-McKinley (2015) has argued, a key issue for local elites was competition with other local elites. Nehemiah 13 would seem to reflect, then, a bid by Yehud (literate) elites to maintain or create a distinctive identity – probably in competition with other Yahwist elites in the other provinces.[44] In either case, what is visible in Neh 13 is not directly relevant to the status of Hebrew as a high language, or to the collation of the Tanak. Rather, it might add a minor piece of corroborating evidence that the Tanak (and its medium of Hebrew as a high language) was a shared, cooperative, and/or compromise project between Yahwists with varying vernacular dialects.

To posit an enduring maintenance of diglossia in Yehud (in this case, Hebrew as a high language, Aramaic as LWC, and Yehudite as a vernacular), one needs specific social functions for each. Imperial Aramaic as an administrative language and LWC is straightforward for the provincial elites. Hebrew as high language for "religion" or "culture" is less obvious. Cults and priesthoods are often conservative; one could compare the retention of Hebrew with temple authors retaining Sumerian and Akkadian in Mesopotamia or Latin in the Roman Catholic Church. The preservation of whatever traditions survived the imperial changes perhaps played a role. A vernacular must have existed

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[43] Leuchter (2017, 254) states it more strongly – Hebrew was "abandoned" to the vernacular.

[44] Contrast this with an understanding of a more Diaspora-centered identity ideology, as in Hogue 2018, 58–59.

and been more widespread than the written languages, since the vast majority of the residents of Yehud were likely oral. What is decidedly unclear is whether this would be a dialect of the high language or LWC or of one of the spreading vernaculars of Aramaic, or indeed the co-existence of multiple vernaculars for different domains. In any case, the need to maintain a distinctive vernacular would require it to hold some significance. This could be an identity in terms of speaking something distinct from one's neighbors or in terms of adopting an identity of multilingualism.

To get at this last issue, it is time to return to the questions raised in the CAT section above.

How do we know when and what sorts of identities became salient for a communicative interaction in the Persian Empire?

The Great Kings defined their subjects as diverse peoples harmoniously cooperating to support the empire – though the delineation of what constituted a "people" was vague at best[45] and there is no guarantee that imperial lines between groups matched subject understandings. One imperial category that is salient for Yehud is Abar Nahara, originally a sub-satrapy of Babylon and later made independent (Stolper 1987, 1989). In one of the palace inscriptions of Darius (DSf) the Akkadian reads *Ebir nari* where the Old Persian reads *Aθuriya* (Scheil 1929, 8, 18). This suggests that Old Persian *Aθurā* denotes not (only?) Northern Mesopotamia but (also?) Syria-Palestine.[46] See also the subject peoples on the Apadana and tomb reliefs.[47] Notable is a lack of distinctiveness in the imperial Levant: the only distinctions are *Aθuriya* and *Arabaya*:

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[45] There remains debate over whether *dahyu-* should be translated "people" or "land." Schmitt (2014, 162–63) argues it means lands that could be personified. Henkelman and Stolper (2009, 290) refer to an "ambivalence" between toponyms and ethnonyms. See also Jacobs 2017.

[46] Henkelman and Stolper 2009, 300–301, see "Assyrians" to denote "Syrians" in the Persepolis tablets, with people from the old Assyrian heartland being called Arbelans. Jacobs (2011, 4.2.1) thinks *Aθurā* comprised both north Mesopotamia and the Levant.

[47] Schmidt 1953, plate 32 a (north) and b (east) Apadana; Schmidt 1970, 108–11, 153–54, 158–63, and plates 25, 30, 67.

no Phoenicians, Ammonites, Samarians, or Yehudians are depicted.[48] Does this mean the (sub)satrapy was seen as homogenous or as characterized by a cosmopolitanism against which the Yehudians might rebel (cf. Berlejung 2016)?

This imperial ideological level of delineation did not work out so neatly on the ground, nor, probably, in terms of language use.

In his recent discussion of the administrative languages, Tavernier (2020) sees three visible layers of hierarchy: that of the highest officials in Old Persian, a middle Aramaic level, and a lower local level. As Tavernier notes, however, it is not entirely clear where, by whom, and in what medium the translations occurred.[49] Tavernier favors a model whereby scribes (*spr*) received written Old Persian orders and rewrote them in Aramaic, since he finds it unlikely that the "chancellor" (*bʿl ṭʿm*) was able to speak but not write in Aramaic.[50] However, there is no need to assume that spoken fluency in a given language equated to literacy in that language, and this is especially true for Old Persian, for which very little evidence exists for its regular written use.[51] A second, local scribe would then typically be responsible for a version in the local language if necessary. Confusingly, analysis of handwriting suggests that few *spr* actually did the manual work of writing.[52] A few cases show individuals serving as both the *bʿl ṭʿm* and *spr*,[53] suggesting some administrators were trilingual. Tavernier sees only one attestation of *spr* functioning as the amanuensis (TAD A6.2, Tavernier 2017, 376).

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[48] Two PFT texts mention the Lebanon as a travel destination (Henkelman and Stolper 2009, n. 8 [NN1609, NN1631]) and Tyrians and Sidonians periodically appear in Akkadian texts. The PFT may also refer to Syrians as "Hittites" (Henkelman and Stolper 2009, 304).

[49] Tavernier 2020, 89. Cf. Folmer 2017, 432.

[50] In 2017, 380, however, he favors an oral process.

[51] In fact, at present, only one single tablet is extant outside the royal inscriptions (Fort. 1208-101, Stolper and Tavernier 2007).

[52] Folmer 2017, 429 n. 67, citing van der Kooi. Cameron (1948, 118) thought that an accounting error in PTT 20, line 14, showed the scribe was merely an amanuensis.

[53] Tavernier 2017, 376; Folmer 2017, 425.

This means that the higher levels were more or less the same, but the lower levels could have used whatever written local language was useful or necessary. It seems unlikely that Abar Nahara required this lower level of translation; Aramaic was likely all the administrators needed.

Discussion of the mechanics of multilingualism and translation in the Persian Empire brings us to Schaeder's argument (1930, 204–10) that Neh 8:7–8 and Ezra 4:18 reflect Persian translational practice.

והלוים מבינים את העם לתורה והעם על עמדם ויקראו בספר בתורת האלהים
מפרש ושום שכל ויבינו במקרא

…and the Levites explained the *torah* to the people while they stood. They read from the book of the *torah* of god, מפרש and giving sense,[54] and they understood the reading. (Neh 8:7b–8 [Hebrew])

נשתונא די שלחתון עלינא מפרש קרי קדמי

The letter you sent me was read מפרש before me. (Ezra 4:18 [Aramaic])

Schaeder understood מפרש in Neh 8:8 to reflect a misunderstood Aramaic term for "erklären, interpretieren" (1930, 204), used correctly in Ezra 4:18. Schaeder pointed to the translation between Old Persian and Aramaic in Achaemenid practice as the background for Ezra 4:18 and thus by extension Nehemiah as well.[55] However, in his argument, Schaeder understands his gloss to mean "*ex tempore* übersetzen"

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[54] Scholars translate מפרש variously. Batten (1913, 356–57) glossed it as "translate" or "with a loud voice"; Myers (1965, 150–51) and Koehler and Baumgartner (2001, 976) appealed to Schaeder 1930 for "translate (*ex tempore*)" in Neh 8:8; Fried (2015, 213) translated the form in Ezra as "translate" but calls it merely a guess. Blenkinsopp (1988, 283, 288) rejected this for "clearly." Clines (2009, 369) gives "explain precisely" for Neh 8:8.

[55] Schaeder (1930) makes a distinction between the Hebrew root as attested in Lev 24:12 and Num 15:34 "deutlich, distinct, genau" and the Aramaic root. In passing it may be worth mentioning that both cases in the Pentateuch deal with divinatory decisions, and a potentially cognate root in Akkadian also refers to divinatory decisions (*parāsu* V, CAD P, 165, 173–75). This meaning of *parāsu* is not included by Tawil (2009, 307).

(1930, 205), rather than "erklären." The latter, however, better fits the use of the term in some contexts in Imperial Aramaic, for example, TAD D7.24 and maybe TAD A6.1.[56] As seen above, it is true that translation between Old Persian, Aramaic, and local languages was part of the administrative system. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that this was hardly a UN simultaneous translation service, but a process whereby multiple people knew the same information and in which the higher levels did not need to resort to the physical labor of writing. Moreover, officials would likely have had assistants and advisors to keep them up-to-date on related matters, making "explain" a fitting understanding for a process that could also include translation. Indeed, in Neh 8:8 it is clear that the primary force of the verse is not linguistic but pedagogic – the people need help to understand (what is, seemingly, an entirely new set of regulations). This is much more comprehensive than the gloss "translate" would imply. Moreover, if one compares the root in other contexts, it is possible this use implies the sort of scholarship and decision-making associated with divination. The Hebrew root also occurs in Lev 24:12 and Num 15:34, in both cases in the context of a divinatory decision, and one might see a cognate in Akkadian *parāsu* V.[57] The force is less in the "clarity" of the language and more in the clarity of the decision, which is appropriate both in divinatory and indeed administrative interpretative contexts. Thus, *contra* Schniedewind (2013, 140), Neh 8:8 is hardly proof of the death of vernacular Hebrew.

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[56] Texts available in Porten and Yardeni 1986–99, 4:174, 1:94. Folmer (1995, 192) understands both texts and Ezra 4:18 as "explain" but later (2011, 591; 2020, 386) suggests מפרש is a technical term for Persian translation. Tavernier (2008, 60) first understood מפרש in D7.24 as "translate" but later (2017, 348) he understood it as "explain" in D7.24 but "translate" in Ezra 4:18. Porten and Lund (2002, 269) list the root in A4.5, A6.1, C1.1, D5.58, and D7.24, but D5.58 is too fragmentary for any sense.

[57] CAD P, 165, 173–75; not included in Tawil 2009, 307. There is a problem here, as there is a difference of Shin and Sin, though not visible when unpointed. Nevertheless, the *HALOT*, 976 translation as "decide clearly" fits the divinatory connotation of *parāsu* V.

It is worth recalling that the majority of humans in history have likely been multilingual rather than monolingual and that the equation of "nation"–"language"–"country" is a nineteenth-century invention. Further, it was noted that languages can have separate domains and social functions, meaning they can coexist with others even if one or more have identity functions. Several scholars have indeed argued that plurality was important for Palestine of later periods.[58] The retention of a local vernacular for family life (i.e. Neh 13) is clearly assuming a norm of in-home language learning – but that on its own has no necessary implications for norms related to other languages having functions in other domains. If Yehudian "elites" operated within Abar Nahara through Imperial Aramaic or other extra-domestic language registers, the domestic sphere need not have conflicted.

Regardless of how one identifies "Ashdodite," if the domestic sphere were deemed to be a space in which a set of vernacular norms was necessary, we need to ask why some families chose to diverge from that norm. As the present context of Neh 13 implies, marital arrangements can indeed be significant for the "mother tongue" of children. One should remember, however, control over proper marriage arrangements involve multiple potential identity markers – not just ethnicity, but also "class," occupation, residence, patronage relations, and family alliances.

In order to make such a decision for Neh 13, one would need to know more about the social structures than what the two verses tell. For example, what if the author objected to trade-related occupations, since occupation was often hereditary? (Cf. concerns over "Tyrians" [Edelman 2006] and "Canaanites" [Stevens 2006, 120].)

Can we know or develop a theory of social rules or norms around language use within the Persian Empire and/or the various Judaean communities, and if so, how?

As noted above, according to CAT, the use of a *lingua franca* or LWC most likely represents practical considerations of comprehension. The use of (Imperial) Aramaic within contexts of administration, taxation,

173

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[58] Ong 2015; Smelik 2007; Fraade 2012. Cf. Koller 2020.

military, and probably trade would not likely be perceived as *divergence*. This is despite the indisputable fact that its adoption by the empire facilitated its ubiquity. Due to the ephemeral nature of vernaculars, however, the uses – and thus the (non-)existence of separate domains much less their subjective evaluations – is lost. One may adduce the linguistic affiliations of names as one piece of evidence for vernacular usage, yet the existence of multiple vernaculars tied to different contexts or even the deliberate maintenance of multilingualism cannot be automatically discounted. Could "class" distinctions in pronunciation or accents have been salient markers between groups – say between children of officials against children of dependents, for instance? Or were such vernacular divides only meaningful between "ethnic" groups? CAT also reminds us that what one interlocutor perceives as divergence ("not speaking Yehudit") may either not have been intended as such by the speakers so accused, or, indeed, be an accurate linguistic assessment.[59] Further, the "rules" whereby one would make a choice to speak in one vernacular or another are not likely re-constructable outside official contexts, or they would require much more extensive social investigation than can be done in the present study.

How directly do issues around dyad communication relate to the production of written texts in general, and how might they differ between different textual genres, such as administrative texts and literary texts?

First one needs to determine the function and register to which the text belongs: administration, culture, education, etc. Assuming separate social domains implies that different rules would have applied for different domains. Communication via Imperial Aramaic for imperial usages below the very top was no doubt *de rigueur*. Local high languages' usage would have depended on local elite power structures and the elite language habitus. For the Hebrew Bible and its texts, the appropriate domain is of course a difficult question, even if it is often assumed to have been "religious." The author(s) and audience of Nehemiah, however, must have been from a small group

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[59] Cf. Alfaraz's (2018) study of the differential assessments of the quality of spoken Spanish based on presumed origin of the speaker.

(advanced literates)[60] who presumably utilized written Hebrew and written Aramaic – indeed the final book (Ezra-Nehemiah) uses two languages.[61] The author(s) were communicating with other advanced literates in one domain concerning what was likely an entirely separate domain (the family). In CAT terms, the choice to write in Hebrew was a behavioral tactic that depended on the author's perception of the context, strength of in-group identification, perception of potential conflict, and personal values. They seem to perceive the context as one with a secure use of Hebrew for a literary domain but a changing vernacular one. The author(s) perceive this as deliberate divergence for the domain of the family, and thus it is assessed negatively. The import of this strongly depends on the social group dynamic that the historian reconstructs. If the children diverging from the vernacular norm are of the same group as the author, then the issues are potentially ones of group cohesion, maintenance, and/or group norms. If they are members of a separate group, this could be perceived as a deliberate slight and indicative of wider tensions. Such groupings may be just as likely in terms of intra-elite rivalry as some sort of proto-nationalist ideology. In either case, as CAT reminds us, the perceived divergence took place against a background of previous engagements, presumably one in which the implied vernacular norm was communicated. Again, as this is a literate complaint about potentially oral individuals with a different educational background, it likely derives from individuals with more power to make local language norms. One might wonder if it represents an attempt to maintain norms (diglossia) or to impose norms from one domain/medium ("literate culture") to another separate domain/medium (daily/domestic life).[62]

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[60] There is also the fundamental problem, outside the present scope, of whether "authors" and scribes/amanuenses were the same for such advanced literature. Cf. Hezser forthcoming.

[61] Ben Zvi (2009, 279) considers three languages to be the consensus, though Schniedewind (2013, 143) rejects it. Ong 2015 argues (for the Roman period) that the region was multilingual and diglossic. Cf. Koller 2020.

[62] A thorough engagement with media theory would be apropos here, but must await another day.

Do the above considerations concerning Code-Switching, CAT, and diglossia provide tools to re-assess some of the recent proposals concerning Yehud?

Ben Zvi (2009), on the choice between two dialects of Hebrew, considers them in relation to emerging canon and to authority – but the underlying idea is the potential of relative prestige between the two. One could relate this to Fishman's type 4 high/low language, written/formal and related vernacular. The question this would raise is the social rules which would have surrounded such a distinction: would the high language have carried connotations of "authority," status, education, and/or class? If this were the situation in Yehud, it is likely that the high idiom would be associated with the ruling class of the province. However, this on its own would only make it a *prerequisite* for "serious" cultural value. Bourdieu discusses the role of education in the maintenance of norms of proper language in modern states, without these norms automatically determining the resulting "position" of any given work of "literature" in the "literary field"; similarly, a high language in Yehud would be the expected idiom of the literary individuals in Yehud without automatically conferring prestige on any given output of such persons. Indeed, the later preservation of some texts in a different idiom suggests that the processes by which the concepts of textual authority and canon appeared were multivalent. A decision on these questions requires decisions on the dating of various texts and attitudes towards them, which is beyond the present scope. As with the discussion of Neh 13 above, Ben Zvi's discussion of SBH and LBH prompts one to consider again more social contexts than just "ethnicity" or "religion," potentially including something like "class."

The above discussion shows some assertions of Schniedewind concerning Yehud to be incorrect. The imperial use of Aramaic would not have required the *community* to become bilingual (2013, 139), as we know local scribes could still translate Aramaic correspondence to the local language. It would have merely required Aramaic for those seeking imperial employment or advancement. It would have also been restricted to domains concerning the empire – taxation, military, administration. This is the difference between language replacement and displacement. Schniedewind is also misleading when he says

scribes were "trained in Persian courts" (2013, 155). The administration certainly did train some scribes at Persepolis,[63] but the majority of local, lower-level scribes would have been trained locally, albeit for imperial purposes.[64] The mechanisms of administrative standardization are unknown.

Aramaic pressure on the vernacular, however, could indeed have been important, but not directly because of the empire's use of the language. Persian deportation of speakers of Aramaic dialects into the region, if such occurred, could have done so. Schniedewind implies that a reason for Aramaic replacing Hebrew as vernacular was new settlers in new settlements in Yehud (2013, 144), but this argument assumes the vernacular of these new residents – which is a complete unknown. The "gap in Hebrew" Schniedewind describes also begs the question. Hebrew texts were being copied, transmitted, and added to in the Persian period. There can have been no total gap in the elite, written use of Hebrew; all that could have changed was the restriction of the domains of its usage.

Edelman (2016) explored code-switching to Aramaic in the Hebrew Bible, largely corresponding to Blom and Gumperz (1992), positing Hebrew as a "we" and Aramaic as "they" code for the "imperial other" (2016, 129–30). CAT and diglossia research, however, suggest that this is only one potential interpretation. Imperial Aramaic certainly had imperial connotations – perhaps positive or negative depending on the situation – but it also potentially carried connotations of diplomacy, trade, neighboring groups, or other classes or occupations, depending on the dialect in use. In a situation of stable diglossia, a switch to or from Aramaic could just as easily mark a switch of domain as of identification. The documents in Ezra certainly would

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[63] PF 871 and 1137 (Hallock 1969, 253, 330) do mention Persian "boys" copying texts, though it is not clear this is in the context of training. Elamite *puhu* can mean "boys" or "subordinates," e.g., Henkelman 2008, 273–74.

[64] And, *contra* Schniedewind's claims, we do not know that Ezra was a real person nor that Nehemiah, as a governor, needed to be able to write, as he would have had scribes and amanuenses in his employ. Neither character can be used as proof of the palatial context of scribal training.

fit an imperial domain, as might the stories in Daniel; one might read Jer 10:11 in line with an "international" domain. So far, this is not so different from Edelman's analysis, though it questions the saliency of "identity" for these choices – if they relate to rules of domain usage within contemporary diglossia, they would likely be classified by CAT as fitting into communicative norms and thus not perceived in terms of social identity *per se*.

Lastly, we can return to Leuchter's argument (2017) concerning the impact of scribal training in Imperial Aramaic. There is no doubt that Leuchter is very right to insist that the participation of Yehudian (and Samarian) scribes in the imperial-wide system of education and scholarship is a significant feature of the empire. But what is the significance of using Aramaic script for writing Hebrew? As we saw above, the inscriptional manifestation of the imperium was not in Aramaic script, though the medium for most "middle management" was. The most likely interpretation of the adoption of the script was pragmatic – scribes needed the script for their employment, but the majority no longer needed paleo-Hebrew.[65] Some advanced scribes may have had the leisure to preserve this script for archaizing or antiquarian purposes (like Sumerian in Mesopotamia), but presumably most did not. Given Aramaic's status as an LWC, it is highly unlikely that it would have carried social connotations of DB (*contra* 2017, 259). The real significance was the access to international scholarship and indeed imperial ideology which mastery of the LWC afforded them (cf. Wiesehöfer 2016, 130). Whether participation in this cosmopolitan context encouraged the transmission of materials in a different domain and language in an analogously "comprehensive" but not "cohesive" (2017, 266) way is something to consider on non-sociolinguistic grounds.

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[65] Schniewind (2013, 159, 161) previously had argued that script and orthography can have identity salience (citing Trudgill 2001, Chapter 7). However, Schniedewind fails to recognize the context of Trudgill's discussion in modern nation-states and their top-down language education policies, something surely inappropriate for the Achaemenid context, despite the standardized Imperial Aramaic (cf. Wiesehöfer 2016).

One could also apply the various linguistic theories to script choice, much as to language choice (e.g., Bender [2008] relates it to code-switching, and Unseth [2008a] uses the term "digraphia"). In terms of understanding the use of script in Yehud, recall that Yehud's use of Aramaic and its script came during the Neo-Babylonian Empire (though both were known by officials long before then). It was thus a previous imperial decision for administrative use. The Persians merely continued this practice. For scribes in Yehud, this was no change within the administrative domain. The question script choice raises, then, are the same raised by CAT for language choice. Do we know what connotations the Aramaic script carried within the Persian Empire, or that of the Hebrew script? Leuchter argues that Aramaic script carried both the numinous character of Akkadian script (2017, 253) and the "imperial myth" due to DB §70 (2017, 258–60). While it is indeed possible that DB circulated in the west in various languages – Aramaic included[66] – only Aramaic would be expected in Aramaic script. Any connotations concerning the script would probably come from its international and imperial uses, a path towards pragmatic advance-ment in the administration, military, or trade. One might wonder if use of Aramaic script also served as a way to participate in wider scholarly conversations (as discussed by Sanders for the language and implied by Leuchter). Given the nature of the education system (cf. Silverman forthcoming), it is likely the older paleo-Hebrew script was only part of the most rarified and advanced levels of scribal education and limited to antiquarian usage. In fact, the early usage of the paleo-Hebrew script might suggest that it held a numinous or runic connotation consonant with such restricted use: for the writing of the name of YHWH at Gerizim (Magen et al. 2004, 22–23, 33–35; Dušek 2017, 143) and in some of the Qumran documents and copies of Leviticus. One might interpret the seals and coins using paleo-Hebrew script as associating with a numinous connotation, antiquarianism, or an educated-class identity.

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[66] Leuchter (2017, 260 n. 46) cites Wilson-Wright 2015 for the evidence of DB's circulation, though Wilson-Wright never writes that; her argument concerns the presence of humans speaking Old Persian.

It would take later, post-Persian crises and conflicts to make the old script significant. In other words, in CAT terms, identity only became salient when differentiation was needed with too similar antagonists (the Samaritans) or too distinct ones (other Seleucid provinces, Romans).[67] If square characters gained sacred value (e.g., in the Rabbinic literature) this would have been a *result* of texts having been written in it becoming sacred, rather the script's sacredness imparting sacrality to the texts.[68]

Conclusions

This article has only scratched the surface of relevant sociolinguistic theories (see Ong 2015 for more in relation to first-century CE Palestine), and it has not had the space to address a wider range of data. The modest goal has been twofold: to point to a need for more nuance in discussions of the relationships between language choice in the Persian Empire and social processes such as identity formation, and to argue that a wider array of social structures beyond ethnicity or reactions to "empire" need to be considered.

Let us recapitulate the material covered in this study so far. To properly analyze the position of language choice in marginal provinces of the Persian Empire in general, and the Judaeans in particular, we can:

Categorize the empire as a "Type C" situation with a Language of Wider Communication (Imperial Aramaic) operating with a stable "diglossia," with several high and low languages in the various provinces. The imperial center itself highlighted three or four different high languages in its official inscriptions. For each province, we need to assess what domains were assigned to which languages – high and low – as well as the longevity of such relations. To further assess how these arrangements worked on the ground, we need to know: 1)

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[67] Vanderhooft (2011) already argued that a shift to Aramaic characters had no ideological basis, but the revival of paleo-Hebrew in the Ptolemaic era did.

[68] Savage (2008, 7) notes Arabic script associated with scripture (Qu'ran), which gives it religious value. For more detailed discussions of ways one could think about the significance of scripts, see Eira 1998; Higgins 2019.

when and what sorts of identities became salient in communication within the empire; 2) the social rules and norms of language use; 3) the relations between dyad communication and production of written communication.

For the situation in Yehud, we need to know more about the vernacular dialects of Hebrew and/or Aramaic, to assess how these related to the mix of languages in their literature – and how these related to the interactions between elites of various provinces, with the non-elites in their own provinces, and with their Persian overlords.

The comparative studies of Fishman discourage a view that Imperial Aramaic would replace Hebrew dialects, merely displacing them from administrative and trade uses. Were Hebrew dialects removed from the vernacular during the Persian period, then the pressure would have more likely derived from competing vernaculars as a result of social processes not necessarily related to the Persian Empire.

In order to determine social rules of language choice, including code-switching, the functions and identities of high and low languages, and identity saliencies as required for the application of CAT, further social data is necessary than Neh 13 supplies or this study could adduce. Nevertheless, domains and rules related to class, occupation, residence, or patronage relations should be considered alongside ethnic or religious considerations.

The one, minimal conclusion this study can make at this point is to claim that the choice (and mix) of languages within Yehud most likely relate more to the interactions and rivalries between Yahwistic elites in differing provinces than with a reaction against or direct relation to the Persian rulers – excepting the usage of Aramaic in administrative texts.

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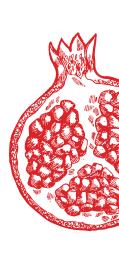
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Aspects of the Sacred Beliefs and Ritual Practices
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Archäologische Bemerkungen zum Komplex N31A+D
Melanie Wasmuth

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Hypothèses sur la figure des géants en Ba 3, 24–28
Raphaëlle Berterottière

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–Or Imagining Collaborative Spaces at the Intersection
of Masculinity Studies and Feminist Studies
in Biblical Scholarship
Mikael Larsson

Imperialism, Identity, and Language Choice
in Persian Yehud:
Towards Understanding the Socio–political Implications
in the Achaemenid Empire
Jason M. Silverman