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NEO-ASSYRIAN ELEMENTS IN THE FIRST SPEECH OF THE BIBLICAL RAB-ŠĀQĒ*

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Recently, H. Tadmor¹ proposed a somewhat revolutionary theory concerning the ethnic origin of the Biblical רבשקה, the high Assyrian official whose mission was to persuade Hezekiah to surrender to Sennacherib during the latter's campaign against Judah in 701 B.C.E. Tadmor claimed that the major role played by the Biblical רבשקה in the Assyrian delegation sent to Hezekiah was not allotted to him by virtue of his prominent administrative status. For, according to the Book of Kings,² both the חרותן³ and the סריס⁴ were members of the same Assyrian delegation, and both of them outranked the *rab-šāqē* despite his high administrative status.⁵ Furthermore, according to Tadmor, while the *turtānu* and the *rab ša rēši* were chief military officials of the Assyrian army and hence were often sent abroad, most of the duties of the *rab-šāqē* fell within the domestic sphere of the Assyrian court. Thus, asserts Tadmor, it is rather surprising that the

Biblical רבשקה should know יהודית⁶ and even have a somewhat intimate knowledge of Judaeon customs.⁷ One might even assume on the basis of such evidence that the speeches of the biblical רבשקה must be considered a late literary creation based on Biblical parallels alone.⁸ While not completely discounting this possibility, Tadmor suggests that the possession of this special knowledge and linguistic fluency by the Biblical רבשקה may have been the very reason why he was chosen for this mission, and may have been due to his ultimate Aramean or even perhaps Israelite ethnic origin.⁹ To support this theory, Tadmor cites, among other evidence, the precedent of the Aramean Aḥiqar now known to have been the *ummānu* "wise sage

* II Kings XVIII 26-28 = Isa. XXXVI 11-13. For this entire episode and its linguistic significance, see E. Ullendorff, "The Knowledge of Languages in the Old Testament," *BJRL* 44 (1962), 455-65.

¹ II Kings XVIII 22 = Isa. XXXVI 7. Many scholars doubt that any Assyrian official could have been so well informed so as to be able to make use of such argumentation (see the next note for a list of those scholars who display such doubts and see n. 65 for the present author's opinion).

² Such is the opinion of a large number of biblical scholars who claim alternatively that the speeches were based on Isaiah's prophecies, that they reflect the marked influence of Deuteronomistic theology or that both of these factors were influential to differing degrees. See, e.g., O. Procksch, *Jesaja I* (Leipzig 1930), 443-446; E.J. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah I* (Dublin 1960), 394-396; B.S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (Illinois 1967), 83-85; J. Gray, *I and II Kings* (Philadelphia 1970), 665; O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39* (Philadelphia 1974), 380; M. Weinfeld, "Cult Centralization in Israel in the Light of a Neo-Babylonian Analogy," *JNES* 23 (1964), 208. The last author adds (pp. 207 ff.) that like the later Babylonian priests who did not approve of Nabonidus' actions and therefore wrote the Cyrus Cylinder, "the [Israelite] prophets did not approve of the cultic reform [of Hezekiah] and . . . the remarks of Rab-shakeh contain their veiled protests against it." (p. 209). Furthermore, contends Weinfeld, the speech itself is written in a rhetorical style which "is alien to Mesopotamian civilization" (p. 206 n. 27). The latter claim is made on the authority of a statement by B. Landsberger, "Die Eigenbegrifflichkeit der Babylonischen Welt," *Islamica* 2 (1926), 371: "Alle Rhetorik ist dem Akkader fremd." However, as a perusal of the recent English translation of this difficult German article will show, Landsberger's use of the term "Rhetorik" here does not imply the use of argumentative language as a means of persuasion, but rather simply "superfluous, thoughtless, repetitious, elevated speech." See B. Landsberger, *The Conceptual Autonomy of the Babylonian World*, trans. by T. Jacobsen et al. (Malibu 1976), 14. Here it might be added that the use of argumentative language as a means of persuasion is by no means alien to Mesopotamian literature. In fact, there are several Akkadian texts in which such argumentative discourse is a primary feature. One need think only of such texts as "The Dialogue of Pessimism" (= W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* [Oxford 1960], 139-149); "the Fables or Contest Literature" (= *ibid.*, 150-212); the dialogue between friend and sufferer in "the Babylonian Theodicy" (= *ibid.*, 63-91); and the monologue of the righteous sufferer in "Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi" (= *ibid.*, 21-62).

³ EM VII, 324.

* This study was first presented in a much abbreviated form as a student paper to visiting Professor H. Tadmor at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1971. In 1972, it was accepted by Professor H.L. Ginsberg in a much expanded form as the author's M.A. essay at the same institution. It was read in its more or less final form by the author at the World Congress of Jewish Studies in the summer of 1977. Since then, only minor changes have been incorporated (mainly in the notes). The author would here like to thank Professors Ginsberg, Hallo, Held, Marcus, Tadmor and Weinfeld for reading this work and making many valuable suggestions.

¹ EM VII, 323-25.

² II Kings XVIII 17 (in Isa. XXXVI 2 only the רבשקה is mentioned). For the differences between these two accounts in general, see H.M. Orlinsky, "The Kings-Isaiah Recensions of the Hezekiah Story," *JQR* 30 (1939-40), 33-49; O. Kaiser, "Die Verkündigung des Propheten Jesaja im Jahre 701," *ZAW* 81 (1969), 304-314 and the literature cited there. Here it should be emphasized that in any case the רבשקה is the only Assyrian *speaker* referred to in either account.

³ Akkadian *turtānūtānu*. See FJ 15, 827; *AHW*, 1332; J.V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Nimrud Hoard Lists* (London 1972), 14, 35-36.

⁴ Akkadian *rab ša rēši*. See T.L. Fenton, "סריס, רב סריס," EM V, 1126-27 and the literature cited there.

⁵ EM VII, 323-24.

and advisor" of Esarhaddon.¹⁰ One crucial link in this theory, however, is still in need of investigation. For such a theory is necessary only if it can be shown that the extant words of the Biblical רבשקה are indeed not a late literary creation based wholly on Biblical parallels, but rather contain Neo-Assyrian reflexes which demonstrate that they are based on an authentic oral or written tradition which was at least partially influenced by the actual words of the Biblical רבשקה. Tadmor, himself, has elsewhere generally stated that the extant words of the Biblical רבשקה stylistically reflect "the best of the tradition of self-adoration phraseology which typifies the Assyrian annals."¹¹ It is the purpose of this study to isolate all major elements in the first speech¹² of the Biblical רבשקה (II Kings XVIII 19-25, 27-35 = Isa. XXXVI 4-10, 12-20) which have parallels in the Neo-Assyrian annals,¹³ and to present these elements together with their parallels. These comparisons are divided up into three groups: (1) the setting, (2) specific

¹⁰ Ibid. See also J.C. Greenfield, "The Background and Parallel to a Proverb of Ahikar", *Hommages à André Dupont-Sommer* (Paris 1971), 49-50 and the literature cited there.

¹¹ A. Malamat, H. Tadmor et al., *חולדות עם ישראל בימי מלך* (Tel-Aviv 1969), 144:

"נאום מסונן במיטב ומסורת של דברי ההסתארות האוסיניים לכתובת מלכי אשור."

¹² Only the first speech of the רבשקה is being dealt with here, since it has long been established that the second speech is simply a shortened version of the first. The first speech is part of the B, account (II Kings XVIII 17-XIX 9a, 36-37 = Isa. XXXVI 1-XXXVII 9a, 37-38), while the second makes up a section of the parallel B, account (II Kings XIX 9b-35 = Isa. XXXVII 9b-36). This source division was first proposed by B. Stade, *ZAW* 4 (1884), 173ff., and has now been accepted by the great majority of biblical scholars with only minor variations. See Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 73-76; L.L. Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine* (New York 1926), 45-48. It should also be noted that where the second speech differs from the first, it is precisely at these points of difference where there are Assyrian parallels to the first account and no Assyrian parallels to the second. Moreover, the usage of the חרם concept (II Kings XIX 11 = Isa. XXXVII 11), which is attested so far only in the Hebrew Bible and the Mesha Inscription, is completely alien to Neo-Assyrian documents. On the other hand, according to the recent work of R. Zadok, it seems plausible that the ten place names in the second address (II Kings XIX 12-13) may indeed represent the original complete set of place names in the address of the רבשקה, while the five place names in the first address (II Kings XVIII 34) represent only an abbreviated form of that list (for the textual problems of Isa. XX-XVI 19, see n. 21 below). Zadok does not draw the above conclusion because of some other assumptions that he makes, but this is the correct conclusion to draw in the light of his work in the opinion of the present author. See R. Zadok, "Geographical and Onomastic Notes," *JANES* 8 (1976), 113-126.

¹³ While parallels from any Neo-Assyrian document would be valid for the purposes of this study, the present author was able to find virtually all the real parallels to the first speech of the Biblical רבשקה only in the Neo-Assyrian annals.

reflexes of Neo-Assyrian annalistic style, and (3) general parallels to the argumentation of the Biblical רבשקה.

I. The Setting^{13a}

(a) The Assyrian King's Use of Political Messages

II Kings XVIII:17 = Isa. XXXVI:2¹⁴

Streck *Asb.*, 142:53-144:71:

ina qāiī mār šiprišu ana Indabigaš ki'am ašpuršumma aššu niše šātunu lā tušēbila umma allakamma ālānika anaqqar [niš]ē Šušan Madaktu ḥīdalu ašallal ultu kussē šarrūtikā aḏakkikāma [ša]namma ina kussēka u[š]eššib [ep]šet ina pān Te'umman ušaprikū ušamharka(!)¹⁵ kāta [š]ū mār šiprišu maḥaršu lā ikaššad'u... [alāk]¹⁶ mār šipriya ša ana Dēri ašpuru [i]šmū... [massu šēr]¹⁷ Indabigaš ibbalkitū...

I sent the following message to Indabigaš (king of Elam) through his messenger: "Because you have not sent to me these men, I will come and tear down your cities; I will take the people of Susa, Madaktu, and ḥīdalu as spoil; I will make you rise and depart from your royal throne and install another in your seat. The disaster¹⁸ which (the gods) caused to befall Te'umman (previous king of Elam),¹⁹ I will bring upon you." His own messenger had not (yet) reached him (when)... they (the Elamites) heard of the coming of my messenger whom I had sent to Der... the land of Indabigaš revolted against him...

^{13a} While the major purpose of this study is to deal with the Neo-Assyrian literary parallels to the first speech of the Biblical רבשקה, the iconographic evidence presented first by Y. Yadin and most recently by H. Tadmor can not be ignored. According to Yadin, "There has been preserved a unique relief from the reign of Sargon... which, in my opinion, depicts an Assyrian officer taking cover behind the turret of a battering-ram... and apparently reading from something that looks like a scroll. It may be, perhaps, that he is reading a surrender order to the defending inhabitants on the walls". See Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands II* (New York 1963), 320, 424-425; Tadmor, *EM VII*, 324.

¹⁴ For the major difference in the two versions as regards this verse, see n. 2 above and the literature cited there.

¹⁵ III/I present for text's *ušamharka* — III/I pret., which does not fit here (see *AHW*, 579). Contrast *CAD*, *MA*, 69.

¹⁶ This restoration is based on such passages as Streck *Asb.*, 60:29-30.

¹⁷ For *nabalkutu* + *šēr*, see *AHW*, 695.

¹⁸ *epšet* is probably elliptical here for *epšet lemutti* — "disaster". For the latter, see Streck *Ash*, 22:121-122, and for additional examples see *CAD*, *E*, 243. For *šupruku* used in this way, see *AHW*, 829.

¹⁹ There is a general parallel here to II Kings XVIII 34 = Isa. XXXVI 19. In both cases, the speakers cite past threats of annihilation which were carried out, and which had great consequence for the countries presently being addressed (Elam and Samaria for Judah).

(b) Historical Allusions to the Events of c. 720²⁰II Kings XVIII: 34 = Isa. XXXVI:19²¹Winckler *Sar.*, I, 102:33-35:²²

*Ya'ubidi Amatā sāb ḥubšī lā bēl kussē Ḥattū lemnu ana šarrūt Amatti libbašū
ikpuḍma Arpadda Šimirra Dimašqa Samerina itiya ušbalkitma pā ēda
ušaškinma iksura tāhāza ummānāt Aššur gaṣšāti adkima ina Qarqari āl
narāmišū šāšū adi mundahšēšu alme. . .*

²⁰ Upon the death of Šalmaneser V, shortly after his conquest of Samaria in 722, Sargon, his successor, was met with a revolt by several of Assyria's newly conquered cities including Samaria. This coalition was led by Ya'ubidi of Ḥamat. Sargon did not move against this coalition until 720, at which time he soundly defeated them. This was the last effort by the Israelites to regain their freedom, for immediately after his campaign of 720, Sargon effected the exile of the ten tribes. That this last revolt made an impression on Judah, which lived on in its historical tradition, is demonstrated by Zech. IX 1-5, whose topographical allusions have been linked to these events by A. Malamat, *IEJ* 1 (1950-1951), 150-152. For the dating of these events to 720 B.C.E. and the history of Samaria between 722-720, see H. Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Aššur," *JCS* 12 (1958), 22-40, 77-100 and W.W. Hallo, "From Qarqar to Carchemish," *BA* 23 (1960), 33-61 [See now also W.W. Hallo and W.K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East — A History* (New York 1971), 137-139; Tadmor, *תולדות עם ישראל בימי קדם*, 135-137].

²¹ In the light of the recent work of R. Zadok (see n. 12 below), it seems probable that the text of II Kings XVIII 34 is more original than that of Isa. XXXVI 19. Contrast Orłinsky, "The Kings-Isaiah Recensions," 45-46; Gray, *I and II Kings*, 677, n. g. For the Avvites (Biblical עוה included in II Kings XVIII 34 but missing in Isa. XXXVI 19), Zadok has assembled an impressive mass of evidence, geographical and otherwise, indicating that this toponym is completely compatible with the context both historically and geographically and certainly should not be deleted. See Zadok, "Geographical and Onomastic Notes," 120-123. הנוע (also included in II Kings XVIII 34 but missing in Isa. XXXVI 19) on the other hand, has not yet been satisfactorily identified. According to Zadok (p. 123), "as it is mentioned between Sepharvaim and Avva, there is good reason for thinking that it was located in Eastern Babylonia." While this assumption is not yet substantiated, it would seem that the occurrence of הנוע in II Kings XIX 13 = Isa. XXXVII 13 (despite the obvious textual corruption in IQIsa; הנוע) together with the successful identification of עוה as discussed above should serve as a deterrent to all those who would uncritically delete הנוע from the verse in question. The only other place name on this list which remains somewhat problematic is ספרויים, for which see Zadok, "Geographical and Onomastic Notes," 115-117 and all the literature cited there.

²² The text may be found in Winckler *Sar.* II, No. 31. For the latest translation, see A.L. Oppenheim in *ANI* I, 285. Compare also the text in Winckler *Sammlung* II, No. 1:20-25 and *Lit. Sar.*, 6:23-25 (restored). Note that these are the only two passages (not counting the restored passage) where Ḥamat, Arpad and Samerina occur together in Neo-Assyrian records according to the concordance of S. Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1970). The Akkadian passage cited in the text of this study was already noted as the background to II Kings XVIII 34 = Isa. XXXVI 19 by E. Schrader, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament* II (London 1888), 7 R and C.F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Book of Kings* (Oxford 1901), 342. Of modern commentators to the books of Isaiah and II Kings referred to in

Ya'ubidi from Ḥamat, a commoner²³ without any claim to the throne, an evil Hittite, schemed to become king of Ḥamat, incited the cities Arpad, Šimirra, Damascus and Samaria to rebel against me, set them up as a united front,²⁴ and planned for war. I mobilized the massive armies of Assyria and besieged him together with his warriors in Qarqar, his beloved city. . .

From these parallels, it is clear that the king of Assyria could have sent a devastating message to Hezekiah in order to demoralize the city and incite rebellion.²⁵ The message might very well have included a reference to what happened in the past when countries tried to free themselves from the Assyrian yoke. Finally, this historical reference would certainly have been

this study, only Gray, *I and II Kings*, 684 saw fit to mention it. On the other hand, the attempt of H. Gevanyahu, "עו לודו, מלחמת סנחרב בחוקה ושועה ירושלים" (Jerusalem 1964), 371-374, to interpret this verse can not possibly stand in the light of the Akkadian passages cited here. Note also W.F. Albright, "חמת", *EM* III, 200 and Y. Gutman, "אררוד", *EM* I, 601, both of whom correctly connected II Kings XVIII 34 = Isa. XXXVI 19 with the events of 720. Finally, Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine*, 54, thought that this verse could not possibly reflect the actual words of the Assyrian for "... if the speech has not been reconstructed by a later writer, if it is a reproduction of the actual speech given by Rabshakeh, the references to cities conquered as far back as 740 appear strange. A reference to Sargon's conquests would have been much more natural — or else, the argument might have centered around the two important kingdoms of Damascus and Samaria. The most effective argument for the Assyrian to have used would have been the destruction of Samaria. . .". Here it should be noted that of the six toponyms in the apparent original form of this verse (see the previous note), three of them have been found together with references both to Sargon's conquests and the destruction of Samaria in 720. The others may have been somehow connected with these events as well.

²³ For the *ḥubšū* class in Akkadian and in Ugaritic, note the literature cited by Oppenheim in *ANET*³, 285, n. 8 and add *CAD*, U, 241-242. See now especially A.F. Rainey, "Institutions: Family, Civil, and Military," *Ras Shamra Parallels* II (Rome 1975), 92(No. 19), 103-104 (No. 29) and the additional literature cited there.

²⁴ For *pū ēdu* = *pū ištēn* — "united command", see *AKA* 184:5-6, and for other examples, see *Allw.* 873a. This expression is equivalent to BH אחר עוה — e.g. Josh. IX 2; I Kings XXII 13.

²⁵ Although there are presently no extant parallels in the Neo-Assyrian annals of Assyrian officials being sent to persuade and threaten Assyrian vassals to get them back into line, where the text specifically states that the officials improvised their own arguments at the time of delivery, such is the case in a Neo-Assyrian letter cited by Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 80-81, from H.W.F. Saggs, "The Nimrud Letters," *Iraq* 17 (1955), 133: No. 1. Furthermore, this letter informs us to whom these officials are speaking. Clearly, the king and his entourage are being addressed and while the context is not entirely certain, it appears that the disputation may be taking place at the city gate with the general populace listening in. In any case, it is clear that this is not a private audience with the king. This parallel has recently been discussed by several scholars. See H.W.F. Saggs, *Assyriology and the Study of the Old Testament* (Cardiff 1969), 17-18; J.S. Holladay Jr., "Assyrian Statecraft and the Prophets of Israel", *Harvard Theological Review* 63 (1970), 43-45; W. von Soden, "Sanherib vor Jerusalem 701 v. Chr.," *Antike und Universalgeschichte — Festschrift H.E. Stier* (Münster 1972), 46-48.

chosen to have the greatest possible impact on the minds of the people; the recalling of the events of 720 B.C.E., the final destruction of Samaria by Sargon II, could have been expected to do just that.

II. Specific Reflexes of Neo-Assyrian Annalistic Style

(a) The Title of the Assyrian King²⁶

הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגְּדוֹל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר²⁷

šarru rabû šar Aššur

'The great king, king of Assyria'

While the exact phrase *šarru rabû šar Aššur* does not seem to be attested as the title of any Neo-Assyrian king, this may simply be accidental since, in the following formula, all the other combinations made up of one or more of the elements in parenthesis + *šar Aššur* 'king of Assyria' do occur as Neo-Assyrian royal titles:²⁸

(šarru rabû) (šarru dannu) (šar kiššati) šar Aššur

According to M.-J. Seux,²⁹ the attested combinations including *šarru rabû* are as follows:

1. *šarru rabû šarru dannu šar kiššati šar Aššur*³⁰
The great king, the strong/legitimate king, the king of the inhabited world, king of Assyria.
2. *šarru rabû šarru dannu šar Aššur*³¹
The great king, the strong/legitimate king, king of Assyria.
3. *šarru rabû šar kiššati šar Aššur*³²

²⁶ Among scholars who previously noted this parallel are Schrader, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the OT II*, 4; Gray, *I and II Kings*, 682; Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah I*, 394; J.A. Montgomery, *The Book of Kings* (Edinburgh 1951), 487; Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine*, 52; S.M. Paul, "משא מלך שרים", *Studies in Bible and the Ancient Near East — S.E. Lievenstamm Festschrift* (Jerusalem 1978), 314-315.

²⁷ II Kings XVIII 19 = Isa. XXXVI 4; II Kings XVIII 28 = Isa. XXXVI 13. Note the two cases of הַמֶּלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר in Isa. XXXVI 8, 16 (not in II Kings which reads אַשּׁוּר מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר in both cases), and compare II Kings XXV 11 (הַמֶּלֶךְ בָּבֶל) = Jer. LII 15 (מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל). Both הַמֶּלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר and הַמֶּלֶךְ בָּבֶל are ungrammatical orthographic errors. See A. Sperber, "Hebrew Based upon Biblical Passages in Parallel Transmission", *HUCA* 14 (1939), 209-210 for these verses and several other cases of this error.

²⁸ According to M.-J. Seux, *Épithètes Royales* (Paris 1967), 13, n. 2, all of the other six possible combinations are attested. Also attested is the inverted formula — *šar kiššati šarru dannu šar Aššur*, and the shortened formula *šarru dannu šar kiššati*.

²⁹ Seux, *Épithètes*, 13, n. 2.

³⁰ E.g. AKA, 343-125-126.

³¹ E.g. AKA, 380-113.

³² E.g. OIP II, 127 f-2-3.

The great king, the king of the inhabited world, king of Assyria. The formula *šarru rabû šar X* (where X is the name of a country) does occur however in peripheral Akkadian, especially in Boghaz-Köy:³³

E.F. Weidner, *Politische Dokumente aus Kleinasien* (Leipzig 1923), 42:25:

Šuppiluliuma šarru rabû šar Ḫatti

Šuppiluliumas, the great king, king of Ḫatti.

Weidner, *Dokumente*, 112:6:

ana Ḫattušili šarri rabî šar Ḫatti

To Ḫattušilis, the great king, king of Ḫatti.

Weidner, *Dokumente*, 112:5:

mār Min-mua-reā šarri rabî šar Mišri

(Ramses II) son of Seti I, the great king, king of Egypt.

Thus, הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגְּדוֹל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר which occurs only in the first speech of the Biblical רַב־שָׂקָה and nowhere else in Biblical Hebrew, is the most authentic royal title of an Assyrian king in the entire Bible.

(b) Usage of the Verb "to Trust"³⁴

Hebrew בָּטַח³⁵; Akkadian *takālu*

In the Neo-Assyrian annals, where the king himself is usually the focal point, very little attention is paid to the personalities and deeds of each of his enemies, except for such arch-enemies as Šamaš-šum-ukin and Tirhakah. The concise stereotypic phraseology describing the behaviour of Assyria's enemies and rebellious vassals almost invariably involves the usage of the verb *takālu* "to trust". The following representative passages from the annals of seven Neo-Assyrian kings illustrate this point:

³³ For many other examples, see R. Labat, *L'Akkadien de Boghaz-Köi* (Bordeaux 1932), 207-208.

³⁴ To my knowledge, this reflex of Neo-Assyrian annalistic style has never before been observed. In the sixteen verses which comprise this speech, the root בָּטַח occurs eight times, each time referring to the trust Judah has placed in some power (Egypt, her God, her own strength) other than Assyria. The relationship between Hebrew בָּטַח and Akkadian *takālu* is one of semantic identity. Both are the regular words in their respective languages for "to trust". This identity is further cemented by the fact that תָּכַל occurs in Aramaic with the same meaning as Akkadian *takālu*, and is occasionally used to translate בָּטַח in the Targum (Prov. XXVIII 26; XXXI 11; cf. Ps. IX 11). The usage of *takālu* in the Neo-Assyrian annals is precisely the same as the use of בָּטַח in the first speech of the רַב־שָׂקָה, and the latter is therefore quite clearly a reflex of annalistic style. On the other hand, the recent attempt by Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 85, to understand this usage of בָּטַח as the work of the Deuteronomistic historian, and "another sign of the younger elements" must now be rejected.

³⁵ Isa. XXXVI:4, 4, 5, 6, 6, 7, 9, 15 = II Kings XVIII: 19, 19, 20, 21, 21, 22, 24, 30.

1. Tiglat Pileser I (1115-1077) — AKA, 35-36:62-77:
ina šarru šarrūtiya 20,000 LÚMEŠ Muškayā u 5 šarrānišunu... ana danānišunu itkalīma urdūni Kadtmuḫi iṣbatū ina tukulti Aššur bēliya... ahiktašunu lū aškun
In the beginning of my reign (i.e. my accession year)³⁶ 20,000 men,³⁷ Muškians, and their five kings... *trusted in their own strength* and came down and captured Kadtmuḫi.³⁸ *With the trust of Aššur my lord...* I defeated them.
2. Aššurnaširpal II³⁹ (883-859) — AKA, 293-294:114-115:
sābu ana dūrānišunu dannūti u ummānātišunu ma'adāti ittaklīma lā urdūni šēpēya lā iṣbutū
The people (of Nirbu) *trusted in their mighty walls and their numerous armies* and they didn't come down to be subservient to me.
3. Šalmaneser III⁴⁰ (858-824) — IIR #7, II:15 = KB I, 160:15:
Aḫuni mār Adini ana gipiš ummānātišu ittakilma ana irtiya itbā
Aḫuni, citizen of Adini, *trusted in the massiveness of his armies* and rose up against me.
4. Sargon II⁴¹ (721-705) — Lie Sar., 8:58-62:
[ina III] palēya Šuandaḫul Dūrdu[k]ka ālāni dannūti... [a]na Mitatti Zikirtā ittaklū Mitatti Zikirtā šabē tidukišu adi pethallīšu(nu) iddiššunūtima iṣṣakin [re]šussun
In the third year of my reign, Šuandaḫul and Dūrduḫka, the fortified cities, ... *trusted in Mitatti of Zikirtu*. Mitatti of Zikirtu gave to them his warriors together with his cavalry and (thus) aid was provided for them.
5. Sennacherib⁴² (704-681) — OIP II, 42:31-37:
hīt niṣirti ša Esagila iptūma ḫurāša kaspa... ušēšūni ana Ummannenanu šar Elānti ša lā iṣū tēmu u milku ušēbilūš ta'tu puḫḫir ummānka dekā karāška ana Bābili ḫīšamma idāni izizma tukultani lū attā

³⁶ For this expression, see A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions II* (Wiesbaden 1976), 6, n. 30 and the literature referred to there (especially the articles of H. Tadmor). Add H. Tadmor, "ראשית מלכותו," FM VII, 312-314.

³⁷ For the difficulty in rendering the logogram LÚMEŠ into Akkadian when it occurs before gentiles, see CAD, A/2, 62.

³⁸ For the reading KAI-mu-ḫi, see W. von Soden, *Das Akkadische Syllabar* (Rome 1967), 13 (no. 67). For the reading Kadmuḫi, see Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions II*, 7. Note that the regular form of this toponym is Kumuḫi. See Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, 215-216 to which the present reference should be added.

³⁹ See also AKA, 300:16-17; 304:27; 351:17-18; 355-356:34-35; 361:52.

⁴⁰ See also IIR, 8-II:72 = KB I, 168:72.

⁴¹ See also Lie Sar., 15:83-85; 43:262-265; 71:467-2.

⁴² See also OIP II, 91:2-4.

They (the Babylonians) opened the treasury of Esagila, brought out gold and silver... and sent it as a bribe to Ummannenanu, king of Elam, who lacked intelligence, (saying): 'Gather your army, mobilize your camp, hasten here to Babylon and come to our aid, *for you are our trust*.'

6. Esarhaddon⁴³ (680-669) — Borger *Esar.*, 49, episode 6:20-23:
u Sanduarri šar Kundi u Sissū nakru akšu lā pāliḫ bēlūtiya ša ilāni umašširūma ana šadī maršūti ittakil...
As for Sanduarri, king of Kundi and Sissū, a dangerous enemy, who had not respected my rule and who had abandoned the gods and *trusted in the inaccessible mountains...*
7. Aššurbanipal⁴⁴ (668-627) — Streck *Asb.*, 178:12-13:
Kudurnanḫundi Elamū ša niš ilāni rabūti lā [iplaḫūma] ša ina šanē tēmi ana emūq ramānišu [ittaklu]...
Kudurnanḫundi, the Elamite, who did not respect (his) oath taken by the gods, who in (his) madness *trusted in his own strength...*

Thus, Assyria's enemies trust in their own strength, their mighty walls, their numerous armies, their allies and their inaccessible mountains. Very little else is said about most of them in the Neo-Assyrian annals. For the Biblical רבשקה to utilize Hebrew נטח to indicate in what Judah trusted instead of Assyria is precisely what is expected, and certainly may represent a reflex of Neo-Assyrian annalistic style.

(c) The Broken Reed⁴⁵

Hebrew קנה הרצון⁴⁶

⁴³ See also Borger *Esarh.*, 49-50, episode 6:24-27; 112:12-14.

⁴⁴ See also Streck *Asb.*, 6:55-57; 26:52-53.

⁴⁵ Because the phrase קנה רצון occurs elsewhere (see the next note) in the Bible, many scholars assume that its occurrence here must be based on its other attestations and therefore it cannot be an original part of the speech. See, e.g., Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine*, 52; Montgomery, *The Book of Kings*, 502; Weinfeld, "Cult Centralization," 208. The fact is, however, that this phrase makes eminently good sense in the mouth of the Assyrian official as the parallels here show, and thus, the other two occurrences, which are both later than the present text, may well be based on our text.

⁴⁶ II Kings XVIII 21 = Isa. XXXVI 6. This phrase occurs elsewhere only in Isa. XLII 3 and Ezek. XXIX 5-7 (which appears to be based on our verse). I hope to deal elsewhere with the implications of this understanding of קנה רצון for Isa. XLII 3 and the identity of עבד ה' "the servant of God" in Isa. XLII 1-9. For the present, note that Isa. XLII 3ab should now be translated "He shall not have to break even a broken reed, or snuff out even a dim wick" (i.e. he will encounter no military resistance whatsoever). This translation [see already H.L. Ginsberg, *The Book of Isaiah* (Philadelphia 1973), 82] and understanding of this verse is based on the original meaning of קנה רצון as presented in this study, the parallel military usage of the

Akkadian *qanû huḷaššusu*⁴⁷

Borger *Esarh.*, 97:26-33:

šarru ša ina tukulti Aššur Šamaš Nabû u Marduk... kullat lâ ma <gi> rešû⁴⁸
malki lâ kanšûtišu kîma qân api⁴⁹ uḥaššîma ušakbîsa šēpuššû

(Esarhaddon) the king, who with the support of Aššur, Šamaš, Nabû and Marduk... has broken like reeds of the canebrake all those who were not obedient to him, the kings who were not submissive to him, and made them subservient to him.

AKA, 261-262:22-23:

šarru ša ina tukulti Aššur u Šamaš... malkē nakirēšu kîma qân api uḥaššîšu
kullat mâtatišunu ana šēpēšu ušekniša... .

(Aššurnasirpal) the king, who with the support of Aššur and Šamaš... has broken the kings, his enemies, like reeds of the canebrake, and has made all of their lands subservient to him.

Thus, a typical expression for defeating Assyria's enemies in the Neo-Assyrian annals is *kîma qanê huššusu* "to break (the enemy) like a reed".⁵⁰

snuffed-out-wick metaphor in Isa. XLIII 17, and the historical fact that Cyrus indeed encountered no military resistance when he entered Babylon in 539 B.C.E. [see H. Tadmor, "הרקע ההיסטורי להצרת כוש", *Jerusalem* 1964), 466 and especially the Cyrus Cylinder translated there on p. 470]. Such an understanding of this verse clearly leads to the conclusion (for which there is much other evidence as well) that the עבר ה' in Isa. XLII 1-9 is none other than Cyrus himself.

⁴⁷ *qanû huḷaššusu*, the exact semantic equivalent of קנה רצון is attested twice according to *AHW*, 361 (see also *CAD*, H, 133). The two occurrences are in a Neo-Assyrian plant list (Uruanna) — Kochev *Pflanzenkunde*, No. 11:II:69 (*qanû haššasûti* — "broken reeds") and No. 12 I 13 (*qanû haššasûti* — "broken reeds"). The adjective *huššusu* alone is attested in two lexical lists — *MSL* 7, 23:256-257 and V. Scheil, "Fragments de syllabaires assyriens", *ZA* 10 (1895-1896), 200:1. The close semantic relationship between Hebrew רצץ and Akkadian *haššasu* may be seen in the fact that *haššasu* means "to break" and is applied almost exclusively to reeds (see the examples cited in this study and other examples in *AHW*, 531 and *CAD*, H, 131), while the basic meaning of רצץ is "to crush, break" (note the parallelism to שבר in Ps. LXXIV 13-14 and Eccles. XII 6), and it is the verb most commonly used with קנה in this meaning (II Kings XVIII 21 = Isa. XXXVI 6; Isa. XLII 3; Ezek. XXIX 7). Only in Isa. XLII 3 do we find both רצץ and שבר together with קנה (for Job XXXI 22, where the subject of חסבר is אורעי and not קנה, see N.H. Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job* [Jerusalem 1967], 443). Note finally that the regular Akkadian usage of *qanû* "reed" with *huššusu* "to break" was already commented on by B. Landsberger in 1950. See B. Landsberger and K. Balkan, "Die Inschrift des assyrischen Königs inum gefunden in Kültepe 1948", *Bulleten* 14 (1950), 265.

⁴⁸ This reading is according to Borger *Esarh.* 97. For other occurrences of the phrase *kullat lâ māgirētū*, see *AHW*, 576; *CAD*, M1, 45.

⁴⁹ For other occurrences of *qân api* in comparisons, see *CAD*, A/2, 200-201.

⁵⁰ For other occurrences throughout Akkadian literature of *kîma qanê haššasûhuššusa*, see *CAD*, H, 131; *AHW*, 331; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford 1972), 133, n. 2. Note especially L. Cagni, *L'Épopée di Erra* (Rome 1969), 112:67: *nišē ša ina libbišu kî*

קנה רצון (= *qanû huḷaššusu*⁵¹) would then mean "a broken reed" or an enemy defeated in the past by Assyria. There would hardly be a more appropriate way for a Neo-Assyrian official to denounce the worthlessness of trusting in an ally whom Assyria had defeated many times in the past.⁵² The "broken reed" is clearly a reflex of Neo-Assyrian annalistic style.

III General Parallels to the Rab-šaqē's Argumentation

(a) Misplaced Trust in Egypt⁵³

II Kings XVIII 21 = Isa. XXXVI 6

Winckler *Sar.*, 188:33-36:⁵⁴

ana Pir'u šar Mušri malku lâ mušēzibišunu
šulmānašunu iššūma ēterrišūš kitra

To Pir'u, king of Egypt, a potentate who could not save them, they (the Hittites) brought their gifts and repeatedly asked him to be (their) ally.

anē tuḥaššis. "You break the people who are in its (Babylon's) midst like reeds". For the many other metaphors and similes involving the reed (GI) in Sumerian literature, see S.N. Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite* (Bloomington 1969), 44; idem, "Sumerian Similes: A Panoramic View of Some of Man's Oldest Literary Images", *JAO* 89 (1969), 5. For the reed (*anû*) in Akkadian literature, see in general, Borger *Esarh.*, 57:80-81; Bauer *Asb.*, 82:8 (broken): KB VI/2, 78:122; OECT, VI, 38:14; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 133. Note especially Wiseman *Treaties*, 77:630: *kî qân appari ina mé lunišūkunu* "May they make you sway a reed of the marsh in water" (Reading and translation according to *CAD*, A/2, 181 and ANET³, 540). To this passage, Weinfeld rightly compares I Kings XIV 15 where precisely the same imagery is used. See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 133. Finally, note A.K. Grayson's translation of *Bell*, 14, 226, 43 (which is based on B. Landsberger's comments to that line on page 265): "He will fall like a broken reed." See A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions I* (Wiesbaden 1972), 13 (§75). Were this translation correct, it would no doubt represent the earliest attestation of the "broken reed" simile in Akkadian since the text involved dates from the Old Assyrian period. However, Grayson's uncertainty concerning his translation is asserted even more strongly by W. von Soden, who reads the Akkadian term translated "broken" as *KI-li* and states: "GI (*aná* 'Rohr?') *KI-li* lässt sich noch nicht sicher deuten." See W. von Soden, "Kleine Beiträge zum Ugaritischen und Hebräischen", *VTS* 16 (1967), 295, n. 1 and see also *AHW*, 918.

⁵¹ See n. 47.

⁵² For a specific reference in the Neo-Assyrian annals to Pir'u of Egypt, "a potentate who could not save them", see section IIIa.

⁵³ This general parallel was already noted by Y. Kaufman, *חלרות האמתה הישראלית* VI (Jerusalem 1947), n. 7. Nevertheless, Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 84, still maintains "that the reference to the worthlessness of the Egyptians as allies" may be one of the "quite audible echoes of the oracles of the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 30:2f.)." This same view is held by Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, 379.

⁵⁴ For the latest translation, see ANET³, 287.

(b) Counting on Egypt for Chariotry⁵⁵

II Kings XVIII 24 = Isa. XXXVI 9

OIP II, 31:73-81:⁵⁶

šakkanakkē ruhē u nišē Amqarrūna. . . iplah libbašun šarrāni Mušri šābē qašti narkabāte sīsē ša šar Meluḫhi emūqi lā nībi ikterūnimma illikū rēšussun

The officials, the nobles and the people of Ekron. . . became afraid: (so) they allied themselves with the kings of Egypt, the archers, the chariots and horses of the king of Ethiopia, an army beyond number, and they came to their aid.

(c) Enemy's God Calls upon the Assyrian King

II Kings XVIII 25 = Isa. XXXVI 10

Virtually all biblical scholars⁵⁷ who have commented on this speech see here the marked influence of Isaiah (e.g. Isa. 8:5-8; 10:5-11). However, if in the Neo-Assyrian annals it can be claimed that Marduk chose both Sargon and Esarhaddon to come and conquer Babylon, there is no reason why the Biblical רבשקה could not contend that he (or the king of Assyria) had been chosen by the God of Israel to come and conquer Judah. *Lie Sar.*, 42:269-273:⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Weinfeld, "Cult Centralization," 207-208, maintains that even this verse is under the influence of Isaiah (31:1). See also Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, 379. The Neo-Assyrian parallel, on the other hand, which involves Judah's ally Ekron at the time of Sennacherib's campaign against Judah, is very instructive in showing that the words of the Biblical רבשקה in this verse are again just what would be expected from the Assyrian official.

⁵⁶ See also OIP II, 69:22-24.

⁵⁷ E.g. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 84; Gray, *I and II Kings*, 682; Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine*, 53; Weinfeld, "Cult Centralization," 208; Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah I*, 395; Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, 380. Only Kaufman, *חולדות האמונה הישראלית*, VI, 155, n. 7, disputed this without presenting a satisfactory Neo-Assyrian parallel, while H.M. Gevaryahu, "דברי רבשקה באוני העם על חומת ירושלים," *ספר סגל* (Jerusalem 1965), 96, n. 11 apparently intended to cite the Esarhaddon passage referred to in this study, but gave the wrong reference. Note in this connexion the words of Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 84: "The theology [of II Kings 18-25 = Isa. 36-10] is so peculiar to Isaiah (10:5ff.), and so foreign to any Near Eastern pattern that the issue of dependency upon Isaianic tradition cannot be avoided." For a discussion of the relevant Akkadian "pattern" (which in later times also included Marduk's call of Cyrus to conquer Babylon), see H. Tadmor, "חטאו של סרגון", *EI* 5 (1959), 153; idem, "הרקע ההיסטורי של הצהרת כורש", 468-472; M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion* (Missoula 1974), 111, n. 1 and passim. Note finally that Kaufman's citing of the Mesha Inscription as a parallel in this context is incorrect. At no point does עמרי call upon to conquer Moab (see KAI, 181.4-5). Contra Kaufman, *חולדות האמונה הישראלית*, VI, 155, n. 7.

⁵⁸ See also Winckler *Sar.*, 120-124-125. For Sargon's entrance into Babylon as the chosen one of Marduk, see *Lie Sar.*, 54-56:371-375; Winckler *Sar.*, 124:140-141. For Sargon's participation in the 45th Festival, see *Lie Sar.*, 57:384-386; Winckler *Sar.*, 124-141.

yāti Šarru-kīn. . . ina napḫar malikī kēniš uttānīma ullā rēšīya. . . ina qibī bēli rabī Marduk šindīya ušēšera akšu[ra uš]mannī ana K[oldī nakirī] lemnēti alāku aqhi

As for me, Sargon, . . . he (Marduk) chose me from among all the kings in the correct way and made me exalted. . . . At the command of the great lord Marduk, I prepared my (chariot) teams, I mobilized my camp, and I gave the order to march against the Chaldeans, the evil enemies.

Borger *Esarh.*, 16, episode 11:9-16:

yāti Aššur-aḫū-iddina . . . ina pūhur aḫḫēya rabūti kēniš tuttānīma šulūlka/andullaka ṭāba taškunūma eliya

As for me, Esarhaddon . . . you (Marduk) chose me in the correct way from the assembly of my older brothers, and you extended your sweet protection over me.

(d) The 'Order of the King'

Hebrew דבר המלך⁵⁹Akkadian awāt/amāt/abāt šarri(m)⁶⁰

While the Hebrew phrase דבר המלך occurs several times in the Bible with this meaning⁶¹ and its Akkadian counterpart is very common in Neo-

⁵⁹ II Kings XVIII 28. On the basis of this parallel, it is clear that the text in II Kings XVIII 28 (דבר המלך "the order of the king") is preferable to that of Isa. XXXVI 13 (דברי המלך "the words of the king").

⁶⁰ For many examples of this phrase in almost all periods of Akkadian, see *CAD*, A/2, 37; *Allw.*, 89. This phrase is discussed with full citation of relevant literature by Holladay, "Assyrian Statecraft and the Prophets of Israel," 42-45, where the parallel to II Kings XVIII 28 is also first suggested. Holladay's contention, however, that "Functionally, no distinction can be made between the Rabshakeh's proclamation of the 'word of the king' at the great gate of the city and the seventh and eighth-century prophets' proclamations of 'the word of Yahweh' to a stubborn and rebellious people" seems quite exaggerated. The "word of Yahweh" always refers to a religious message which sometimes threatens and sometimes soothes, often deals with moral issues and only sometimes with life and death political issues. On the other hand, the Akkadian phrase refers to the royal edict of the King which by definition is a political statement of an authorized sovereign. The only real functional similarity between the two phrases is that both are used in an introductory way by the speaker in order to notify his audience that the speaker is not relaying his own statement, but that of a supreme authority, religious or political as the case may be. The effect then is to elevate the message in each case to a level befitting a Divine or royal statement. This has nothing to do, however, with the possible content of the two respective statements which need not be at all parallel.

⁶¹ E.g. II Kings XVIII 28; Eccles. VIII 4; Est. I 12, 13; II 8; III 15; IV 3; V 8; VIII 14, 17; IX 1; I Chron. XXI 4, 6. Note that H.L. Ginsberg rightly compares the phrase מלך מלך in the Ahiquar papyri VII:100, 104. See H.L. Ginsberg, *קהלת* (Tel Aviv 1961), 106.

Assyrian letters as well,⁶² the latter also occurs in Neo-Assyrian annalistic style and therefore has been included here as a general parallel.

Borger *Esarh.*, 103:21.⁶³

hittu dannu ana Aššur aḥīma! amāt šarri bēliya ul ašme. . .

I (ruler of Šubria) committed a grievous sin against Aššur when I did not heed the order of the king, my lord. . .

Streck *Ash.*, 16:49-51:

. . . Ba'li šar Šurri. . . ša amāt šarrūtiya lā iṣšuru lā išmū zikir šaptēya

. . . Ba'li, king of Tyre. . ., who did not observe my royal order⁶⁴ (and) did not heed my command. . .

(e) Escape from the Hand(s) of Assyria

II Kings XVIII 33 = Isa. XXXVI 18

Streck *Ash.*, 144:37-40:

Nat[nu] ana Yauta' kī a[ḥm] iqbīšumma umma anāku ina qātī Aššur ultēzibī u attā ta'kunanni ana dannūika

Natnu spoke to Yauta' as follows: "Will I be saved from the hand(s) of Assyria when you make me your strength?"

Thus, Judah's appeal to Egypt for aid, her specific reliance upon Egyptian chariotry, the Assyrian official's contention that the God of Israel had called upon him (or his king), the reference to the "order of the King" and the impossibility of escape from the hand(s) of Assyria are all notions included in the first speech of the Biblical רבשקה which have good general parallels in the Neo-Assyrian annals.

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that many of the major elements⁶⁵ in the first speech of the Biblical רבשקה have parallels in the Neo-

⁶² See Holladay, "Assyrian Statecraft," 42-43 and nn. 54-57, and the literature cited there.

⁶³ See also Borger *Esarh.*, 103:18-19, 23. This text (Borger *Esarh.*, §68) is the so-called "Gottesbrief" from Esarhaddon to the god Aššur. It is clearly written in annalistic style. For this literary genre in Mesopotamian literature, see R. Borger, "Gottesbrief," *RLA* III/8, 575-576 and the literature cited there.

⁶⁴ *amāt šarri* is a clear by-form of *amāt šarri* in the same way that דבר מלכות (Est. I 19) is a by-form of דבר המלך.

⁶⁵ Only the Deuteronomistic phrase הסיר את הבמות in II Kings XVIII 22 = Isa. XXXVI 7 would appear to be most certainly unauthentic. This phrase occurs elsewhere in the Bible only in Kings and Chronicles. That the Biblical רבשקה may have used this argument in his own way is certainly plausible (for the historical problem of the reforms, see Rowley, "Hezekiah's Reform and Rebellion," 395-431), but he most probably did not utilize the above expression. See Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 83-84; Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine*, 52-53.

Assyrian annals.⁶⁶ It is therefore quite likely that a substantial part of the extant first speech may well have been ultimately based on the actual words of the Assyrian official. Tadmor's theory concerning the possible Aramean or perhaps even Israelite ultimate ethnic origin of this particular *rab-šaqē* thus becomes even more credible and the assertion of the Rabbis in Sanhedrin 60A — רבשקה ישראל מומר היה "Rabshakeh was an apostate Israelite" may now be seen to have been based on more than fanciful midrash.⁶⁷

ABBREVIATIONS**

BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
EI	<i>Eretz Israel</i>
EJ	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> I-XVI (Jerusalem 1971)
EM	אנציקלופדיה מקראית I-VII (Jerusalem 1949-.)
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>

⁶⁶ Note two final parallels which have been recently noted by some scholars. The first involves II Kings XVIII 32 (= Isa. XXXVI 17-18), according to which the Biblical רבשקה attempted to entice the Judaeans to surrender by offering them relatively attractive terms with regard to their future resettlement by Assyria. They would be resettled in a land like their own with all possible advantages. In the same way, in three Neo-Assyrian letters from Nimrud, which somewhat parallel the offer of the Biblical רבשקה, at least by implication, it appears that the central Assyrian government was quite interested in seeing that the resettlement of peoples be carried out as smoothly and efficiently as possible. For the text of the three letters involved and for the original suggested comparison, see H.W.F. Saggs, "The Nimrud Letters, 1952 — Part III," *Iraq* 18 (1956), 40-43, 55. Other scholars who have since accepted this comparison include Hallo, "From Qarqar to Carchemish," 59 and n. 144; Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 86; Gray, *I and II Kings*, 684. The second parallel, suggested by M. Weinfeld, involves the comparison of the phraseology in II Kings XVIII 20a (= Isa. XXXVI 5a) with the Akkadian hendiadys *tēmu u milku* when the latter expression has the meaning "judgement and (considered) decision." See M. Weinfeld, "עצת הוקרים לרחבעם (מלי"א י"ב, ז)," *Léonénu* 36 (1972), 9 n. 40 (I would here like to thank Professor Weinfeld for calling my attention to this last parallel).

⁶⁷ See EM VII, 324.

Chaim Cohen

JCS *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*

JNES *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

JQR *Jewish Quarterly Review*

KAI H. Donner — W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften I-III* (Wiesbaden 1966-1969)

VT *Vetus Testamentum Supplements*

ZAW *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

** All Akkadian texts and secondary literature relating to these texts are cited according to the abbreviations listed in *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Vol. 10/1 (M/1) [Glückstadt 1977], IX-XXII.

SOME REMARKS ON THE PREHISTORY OF STRESS IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

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1 The cardinal point upon which the reconstruction of stress in Old Hebrew (and perhaps the understanding of Biblical phonology itself) pivots is the recognition that at a certain period of the history of Biblical Hebrew general penultimate stress prevailed. Since most of the words stressed on their last syllables have lost their final short vowels, whereas words that have not lost final vowels are, as a rule, stressed on their penult, the assumption of a period with general penultimate stress at one blow accounts for the stress in the majority of Biblical words. Moreover, it provides an excellent vantage point from which the exceptions, mainly words stressed on their last syllables, although they have not lost their final vowels, can be treated. I have dealt with this problem several times, v. e.g. *Schirmann*, pp. 27-38; Blau, *Grammar*, pp. 30-34; *idem*, *IOS* 1 (1971) 15-24.

2 In the following, I would like to treat some marginal issues connected with the history of Biblical stress, i.e. two periods preceding and following respectively the period which, in our opinion, was of decisive importance, viz. that of general penult stress. First (par. 3) we shall deal with the earliest Proto-Hebrew period which can be reconstructed (Blau, *Grammar*, p. 30, §9.1.1). We have already treated the problems connected with that period in a Hebrew paper (*Kurzweil*, pp. 62-70) and shall summarize the view expressed there. Later (par. 4), we shall deal with the last (fifth) period that has been posited for the development of the Hebrew stress in which, allegedly, final consonant clusters were opened by auxiliary unstressed vowels, thus giving rise to new words with penult stress, so that the Hebrew stress system arrived at the stage transmitted by the Masoretes (Blau, *Grammar*, p. 34, §9.1.5).

3 The earliest Proto-Hebrew period to be reconstructed is dependent on the shift $\bar{a} > \bar{o}$. It stands to reason that this shift was limited to stressed syllables.¹ Accordingly, a stress period can be reconstructed in which the syllables in which now \bar{o} arising from \bar{a} are attested, were stressed and those in which \bar{a} subsisted were unstressed (if one disregards cases of analogy).

¹ Cf. the detailed reasoning *Alon*, pp. 9-14.