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# TWO INSTANCES OF LANGUAGE CONTACT IN ISAIAH 45:14

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## Abstract

Scholars have identified two traces of loans originating from Aramaic and Akkadian in Isa. 45:14. In this article, I examine each of the proposed borrowings, offering further support for the first, but arguing for a different path from Aramaic into the Hebrew of Isa. 45:14 for the second. In doing so, I add precision to the loan phonology of the lexeme זק as it relates to the sibilants involved and I call into question comparative evidence cited in Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner's *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*.

## Introduction

Isa. 45:14 contains traces of contact-induced change that, in the first instance, may have led to scribal alteration of the verse. While an interpreter can make some sense of the text as it exists, scholars have suggested a slight emendation in order to bring to the fore the putatively original reading that came from an Aramaic borrowing. The observation that the verse includes a loan phrase is the basis for this emendation, and, once emended, the literary background and rhetoric become clearer. This passage is also instructive because it is an example of how considerations of genre and linguistics can clarify and aid the study of the transmission of literature and language from Mesopotamia to the Hebrew Bible.

In this article, I present the basis for identifying evidence of language contact (or, contact-induced change) in this verse. Second, I provide supporting data for one of the proposals regarding Aramaic influence, namely the reading נשׂאי מדה. Finally, I demonstrate why a suggestion concerning the second proposal of contact-induced change in the loan זקים is not convincing based on typical loan phonologies from Akkadian into West Semitic (such as Aramaic and Hebrew). I provide an alternate thesis regarding this loanword,

a thesis that, in turn, calls into question the comparative linguistic evidence contained in Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner's *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*.

## Isa. 45:14 and the Masoretic Text

The verse is as follows:

> כה אמר יהוה יגיע מצרים וסחר־כוש וסבאים אנשי מדה עליך יעברו ולך יהיו אחריך ילכו בזקים יעברו ואליך ישתחוו אליך יתפללו אך בך אל ואין עוד אפס אלהים׃
>
> Thus says the LORD: the wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush and the Sabeans, *anshe-middah*, will come over to you and be yours. They will follow after you, they will come over in chains and they will bow down to you. They will plead with you 'Surely God is with you, and there is no other beside him!'

While the versions are mostly in agreement with the Masoretic Text (though the Tg. Isa. diverges a little), Naphtali Tur-Sinai and Shalom Paul have argued that the phrase **אנשי מדה** provides evidence of language contact in this verse.[1] Paul in particular has claimed that there are two parts of the verse that show evidence of contact-induced change. I examine his thesis and support it below, though along different lines for the second datum. It is nonetheless the case, however, that the Masoretic Text makes sense in some fashion (though see more below for the peculiarity of the phrasing *anshe-middah*), and a defence for seeking evidence of language contact needs to be provided.

This defence is particularly the case with the phrase **אנשי מדה**, which could be understood well in the Masoretic Text. The *nomen rectum*, **מִדָּה**, *middah*, in Hebrew typically means 'measure' or 'length', and is related to the geminate verb *m-d-d*. In Isa. 45:14, the word could be understood in relation to its *nomen regens* as a genitive of specification, leading to the common translation 'men of measure/stature'. This phrase as it appears in Isa. 45:14 would seem to fit normal usage in Hebrew, as **איש מדה** appears in several verses (1 Chron. 11:23; 20:6; perhaps in 2 Sam. 21:20, spelled **איש מדין**). The singular *nomen regens* with the plural **מִדּוֹת** (*middot*) occurs in

[1] S. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary* (Eerdmans Critical Commentary, Grand Rapids, MI 2012), 265; N.H. Tur-Sinai, *Peshuṭo shel-Miqra: Perush la-Setumot shebe-khitve ha-Qodesh, III* (Jerusalem 1962), 1:121.

Jer. 22:14, בית מדות ('a spacious house'). The only other attested appearance of a plural *nomen regens* with מדה occurs in Num. 13:32, where, because the *nomen regens* is plural, the *nomen rectum* is also plural, resulting in the construction אנשי מדות. On this basis, the editor of Isaiah in Biblia Hebraica Kittel proposed an emendation from *middah* to *middot* also in Isa. 45:14. In fact, the great Isaiah scroll (1QIsa[a]) preserves this very reading, אנשי מדות in Isa. 45:14. There exists, then, evidence of some textual complexities with this phrasing.

Kittel's proposed emendation, however, is not itself sufficient evidence to seek external explanations for understanding this phrase. The verse makes some sense on its own: various people groups from African empires will come and pay homage to Israel, and these people are great in stature. The use of אנשי־מדה may call to mind the conquest of Canaan and reverse the report of the spies in Num. 13:32: 'men of stature' will no longer be a hindrance in Israel's ability to claim Yahweh's promises, but now will come and serve the nation and proclaim Yahweh's glory. It should be noted that Second Isaiah may have some relation to P, and that Num. 13:32 is not only non-P but takes a view of the conquest radically different from that of P and H.[2] Isaiah 45:14 could perhaps be read against this background.[3]

## Isa. 45:14 and נשׂאי מדה

As Paul observes, however, a slight emendation, not to מדה but to אנשי, fits the context better and calls to mind the political world of Second Isaiah, giving a basis for positing the presence of language contact in the original reading, a reading that was later changed to match the normal Hebrew pattern. The emendation involves placing the א of אנשי after the שׁ and repointing the שׁ as a שׂ. Regarding the latter change, the confusion between שׂ and שׁ occurs elsewhere, particularly when a rare word or phrase is changed to a more familiar one.[4] For example, the Masoretic Text of Gen. 26:20 reads:

[2] For the varying perspectives on the conquest in the different Pentateuchal sources, see B.J. Schwartz, 'Reexaming the Fate of the 'Canaanites' in the Torah Traditions', in C. Cohen, A. Hurvitz and S.M. Paul (eds), *Sefer Moshe, The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical Judaism* (Winona Lake, IN 2004), 151–70.

[3] B. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Contraversions, Stanford, CA 1998), 132–51, 168.

[4] Victor Hamilton, for example, lists the difference between the Masoretic Text and Septuagint (LXX) in Gen. 26:20 as an example of when 'the LXX replaced a rare word with a more common one', involving 'the confusion of the graphemes

וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם־הַבְּאֵר עֵשֶׂק כִּי הִתְעַשְּׂקוּ עִמּוֹ׃

> So he called the name of the well Esek, because they contended with him.

The wording in the LXX reflects a different underlying Hebrew phrasing, one that was more familiar and involved changing, in this case, the שׂ to a שׁ:
LXX to Gen. 26:20:

> καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ φρέατος Ἀδικία ἠδίκησαν γὰρ αὐτόν
> And he called the name of the well Adikia (or, Eshek), for they oppressed him.[5]

The Hebrew underlying the LXX to Gen. 26:20 would be something like the following:[6]

ויקרא שׁם־הבאר עשׁק כי עשׁק אתו׃

In a similar fashion, in Isa. 45:14 the original שׁ could have been replaced with a שׂ to arrive at a more familiar reading, since **נשׂאי מדה** was originally an Aramaic idiom that at a later stage was no longer recognized, leading to the alteration that became the wording in the Masoretic Text (see more below). As for the changing position of the *aleph*, metathesis of this letter occurs in a variety of manuscripts, often due to its quiescent nature. The appearance of the *aleph* in manuscript variation occurs frequently enough, both in terms of the quiescence of the letter resulting in metathesis and in terms of its insertion to function as a *mater*, that postulating changing its position in a reading such as Isa. 45:14 presents no difficulties generally. For example, in Isa. 13:19, the Masoretic Text has the word **תפארת** for

*sin* and *shin*' (*The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, [NICOT, Grand Rapids, MI 1990], 74).

[5] The translation 'Eshek' brings out the pun in Hebrew underlying the Greek rendering.

[6] The morphology of the verb in the MT, the tG of **עשׂק**, has been altered in the Hebrew underlying the Greek since the Hebrew verb suggested in the Greek, **עשׁק**, appears as a transitive verb only in the G, with an object complement in the accusative (object suffix or definite direct object marker). Though Hatch and Redpath identify the Hebrew behind the LXX in Gen. 26:20 as **עשׂק** instead of **עשׁק** for the Greek verb ἀδικεῖν, it is the only place where they identify **עשׂק** with this verb. Compare the correlation between ἀδικεῖν and **עשׁק** in Hatch and Redpatch, which are matched fourteen times. See E. Hatch and H.A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books)* (Grand Rapids, MI 2005), 24–5. Hamilton's assessment of the Greek and Hebrew of Gen. 26:20 is, therefore, on solid ground.

'glory', and 1QIsa[a] has תפראת, the latter being a lexeme that does not exist. However, the metathesis in Isa. 45:14, according to Paul, would occur as the result of a different process, namely the intentional rearrangement of the letters to produce a more familiar phrase in Hebrew, and the two readings were pronounced differently (נשׂאי versus אנשׁי).[7]

The trigger for scribal alteration, then, is not necessarily sight error (mistaking the שׂ and שׁ without the diacritics) or phonetics (due to quiescence of the aleph), though these factors may have facilitated the process since ש without a diacritic can be understood as either a *śin* or a *šin* and since words with a quiescent *aleph* resulted in variant orthographies.[8] Rather, the change was prompted by a misunderstanding of the meaning of the word מדה. If one replaces the semantics of Hebrew מדה with Akkadian *maddattu* and rearranges the previous word along the lines examined above, then the phrase reads נשׂאי מדה, meaning 'those bearing tribute'. The Hebrew equivalent would be נשׂאי מנחה, as in 2 Sam. 8:2, and, perhaps because Hebrew scribes did not understand the second word or it simply did not fit the expected pattern in Isa. 45:14, they altered the phrase to make sense of the passage. If, as Paul claims, the change arises due to a mistaken interpretation of מדה, once the scribe understood מדה as 'measure', from the root *m-d-d*, and not 'tribute', the phrase נשׂאי מדה became non-sensical ('those who bear measure', a phrase not attested anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible).

The scribe was able to alter the first word along the lines suggested above by rearranging the letters to render a familiar Hebrew phrase (אנשׁי מדה 'men of stature').[9] Such an alteration would be possible

[7] The variant reading resulting from the addition of an aleph is even evidence of Aramaic influence from a text critical perspective, as in 1QIsa[a]. For example, the phrase in Isa. 1:7, כמהפכת, 'as overthrown', appears in 1QIsa[a] as כמפאכת, where the aleph in the Qumran manuscript was inserted in a supralinear fashion as part of the correction of the first writing of the word, which omitted this letter. Here, the *aleph* appears to undergo metathesis even in the corrected form and, according to Tov, could reflect Aramaic influence from the root אפך instead of the expected Hebrew הפך (*Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* [Minneapolis 2012], 106).

[8] 'Scribes sometimes freely omitted the quiescent *'aleph*' (Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 237).

[9] For changes in the transmission of manuscripts that reflect not sight error (or where sight error is not the initial factor in variation) but rather 'readings' that reflect 'content changes', see Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 240–62. In particular, he includes a heading titled 'Linguistic-Stylistic Changes' that involves copying in which the scribe changes the manuscript given the 'linguistic background of the scribes'. Such examples involve the change of wording to switch out less

given the variant orthographies of words spelled with a quiescent *aleph*, such as בֵּית שְׁאָן, spelled also three times in the Masoretic Text as בֵּית שָׁן.[10] Similarly, the phrase under consideration in Isa. 45:14, originally נְשֹׂאֵי מִדָּה, could have been written נשי מדה (assuming defective orthography due to the quiescence of the *aleph* and assuming the lack of a diacritic on the sibilant in the first word). Indeed, the quiescent *aleph* in the root נשׂא undergoes elision in Qumran manuscripts, such as the form לשׂת in 1QHa 18:25.[11] A scribal misunderstanding of מדה could easily prompt an alteration of the preceding word to אנשׁי especially if it were spelled נשי instead of נשׂאי.

A possible reason for misunderstanding may be due to the only other occurrence of Egypt, Cush, and Seba together in the book in Isa. 43:3.[12]

Isa. 43:3:

כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מוֹשִׁיעֶךָ נָתַתִּי כָפְרְךָ מִצְרַיִם כּוּשׁ וּסְבָא תַּחְתֶּיךָ׃

For I am the LORD your God, the holy one of Israel, your saviour. I give for your ransom Egypt, and Cush and Seba in exchange for you.

In this verse, the three nations function for the benefit of Israel in somewhat the same manner as Isa. 45:14. Some aspect of Egypt, Cush and Seba will act as a boon for the fortunes of Israel. The phrasing, however, differs from that in Isa. 45:14. Egypt will function as a ransom (כפר) and Cush and Seba serve as exchanges (תחת) for

familiar phrases and lexemes, or phrases and lexemes that do not make sense to the scribe, with more common ones.

[10] See Tov for this and other variant orthographic practices related to the quiescent *aleph* (*Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 237). The orthography of the Masoretic Text also shows defective spelling of quiescent *alephs* preceded by vocal *shewas*, as suggested above for נשׂאי. See, for example, 1 Chron. 12:39, where שְׁאֵרִית (as in 1 Chron. 4:43) is spelled שְׂרִית. Eric D. Reymond states that 'in some words where the glottal stop would have come after a muttered vowel, it sometimes quiesces and the *aleph* is subsequently not written (e.g., שרית *šērīt*), but it can also be preserved in the same environment, in which case *aleph* is preserved in the orthography (שארית *šə'ērīt*)' (*Qumran Hebrew: An Overview of Orthography, Phonology, and Morphology* [Resources for Biblical Study 76, Atlanta 2014], 80–1).

[11] Note also that various Qumran manuscripts have the spelling of the word נשׂא as though it were נשׁה, such as the phrase תשׁה עון in 4Q417 instead of תשׂא עון. If the verb was reanalysed as having a *heh* instead of an *aleph*, then the morphology of the masculine plural participle would be נשי (again assuming no diacritic marking on the sibilant).

[12] Egypt and Cush appear together, without Seba, in Isa. 11:11 and 20:3–5. Note that, like Isa. 45:14, Cush and Seba are grouped together in Isa. 43:3.

Israel inasmuch as God will give these nations to Cyrus in return for Israel's freedom and restoration to the land. The idea is somewhat the same as in Isa. 45:14 inasmuch as both Isa. 45:14 and 43:3 envision a future in which these three nations benefit Israel.[13] The mechanism through which that benefit accrues to Israel, however, differs: in Isa. 43:3, the prophet imagines the relationship between Israel and these three nations as one of exchange and ransom in return for Israel's restoration to the land; in Isa. 45:14, the prophet describes a situation of bearing tribute. A tentative suggestion for the reason behind the scribal alteration in Isa. 45:14 would involve scribal anticipation that the operative relationship between these nations and Israel was ransom and exchange. Since Isa. 45:14, in the reading **נשׂאי מדה**, entails tribute, perhaps a scribe, noting the distinction with Isa. 43:3 or simply not understanding the phrase as economic due to its non-Hebrew origins, changed the text of Isa. 45:14 to a more familiar Hebrew term. In the process, the scribe altered the underlying economic expression to, instead, one of stature.

Whatever the motivation for the change, Paul's suggestion to emend is more consistent with the rhetoric of Isaiah generally and the literary context of Isa. 45:14 specifically.[14] Regarding prophetic rhetoric, in both Isa. 43:3 and in Isa. 45:14, Egypt, Cush and Seba function as pawns for the benefit of Israel, whether in achieving restoration or accumulating profit. In neither of these verses do these nations appear intimidating, majestic, or worthy of the ascription that they contain men of stature. Moreover, throughout First and Second Isaiah, Egypt and the pair Egypt and Cush function as signs of false hope for Israel, not as nations of actual power but rather as sources of perceived strength that, in reality, turn out to be weak.[15] Unless the prophet is speaking ironically in Isa. 45:14 in light of Israel's failed hopes on Egypt, then the reading **אנשׁי מדה** as a term of might is out of place in the rhetoric of Isaiah throughout.

Regarding the literary context of Isa. 45:14 specifically, these nations would be bringing their wares as tribute to Israel in similar fashion to reliefs from the Neo-Assyrian to the Persian periods. It

[13] The benefit in Isa. 43:3 is perhaps also indirectly economic. Not only do these nations serve as an exchange for Israel's freedom and restoration to its land, but the role of Cyrus in this exchange also extends material benefit to Israel in the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and Persian support for this project according to 2 Chron. 36:23 and Ezra 1:1–4.

[14] For the importance of context and emendation, see Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 331–4.

[15] See Isa. 20:1–5; 30:1–7; 31:1–9.

should be noted that the victory stele of Esarhaddon includes not only these African nations in its reliefs, but also the phrase 'king of the kings of Egypt, Paturisu and Kush' which became part of his 'standard titulary' according to John Malcom Russell.[16] The phrase נשׂא מדה maps perfectly to the Akkadian phrase *nās maddatte*. Paul suggests, however, that this contact-induced change is not direct from Akkadian, but rather the Akkadian phrase entered into Hebrew through Aramaic.

The sociolinguistic world of Second Isaiah is generally consistent with Paul's thesis of Aramaic influence. The evidence is mixed chronologically, however, as it pertains to royal rhetoric and imperial writings. For the period of First Isaiah and the legacy of this earlier phase of contact on Second Isaiah, Fales argues that Neo-Assyrian inscriptions containing colonial ambitions and depicting subjugated peoples bearing tribute were not translated into Aramaic, or at least that no concrete evidence exists of it yet:

> The problem may thus be rephrased as follows: did the Assyrians, *after* the formation of the empire in the latter half of the 8th century (and the disappearance of independent Aramean polities), also use the Aramaic language and script to vehiculate their political-ideological "message" in West Semitic-speaking regions on stone monuments? Or, in fewer words: did monumental Assyrian royal inscriptions in Aramaic translation exist? Certainly, an in-depth analysis of some Biblical texts, such as First Isaiah, has demonstrated that Assyrian ideological tenets were circulating to some extent in the Levant by the early 7th century. Theoretically at least, then, the propaganda effort of the Assyrians in still unsubmissive regions — an effort of which we are aware through the already quoted speech of the *rab shaqeh* as well as from

[16] J.M. Russell, *The Writing on the Wall: Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 9, Winona Lake, IN 1999), 150–2. For a list of relevant iconographic representations of subjugated peoples, from third millennium reliefs to the Persian period, see K. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (Hermeneia, Minneapolis 2001), 238–40. See particularly I.J. de Hulster for the role of images and the manner in which they elucidate texts from Isaiah (*Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah* [FAT 36, Tübingen 2009]). For a similar study on the Psalms, see J.M. LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form in the Psalms: Exploring Congruent Iconography and Texts* (OBO 241, Fribourg 2010). For the ways in which the study of iconography can illuminate the study of texts generally, see I.J. de Hulster, B.A. Strawn and R.P. Bonfiglio (eds), *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: An Introduction to Its Method and Practice* (Götingen 2015); I.J. de Hulster and J.M. LeMon (eds), *Image, Text, Exegesis: Iconographic Interpretation and the Hebrew Bible* (LHS/OTS 588, New York 2014).

> Neo-Assyrian letters — could well have benefited from the redaction of official inscriptions in local languages and scripts, and especially in Aramaic. In practice, however, no such inscription on durable media has as yet been discovered, i.e., the Assyrians have not left us any explicitly multilingual political utterance, such as the later Achemenian empire; and, on the negative side, it must be recalled that, *e.g.*, the stelae of Tiglath-pileser III found in Iran as well as that of Sargon discovered in Cyprus bear exclusively Akkadian texts.[17]

The role of ritual performed in local vernaculars as a means of solidifying political relationships embodied in treaties such as the Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon (VTE) means that already in the seventh century BCE such ritual could become the vehicle through which the imperial language of Akkadian could come into contact with regional dialects.[18] As Fales argues, however, this interplay between royal inscriptions and local dialects (or Aramaic mediation) is lacking in the Neo-Assyrian period. By the Persian period the translation of the Behistun inscription into Aramaic shows that such a medium of translation via Aramaic could occur.[19] Even earlier, certain types of texts were copied into Aramaic beginning with the Neo-Assyrian period, and economic texts were chief among these documents.[20] It

[17] F.M. Fales, 'Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Review of the Evidence', *SAAB* 16 (2007), 107. Fales acknowledges, of course, that Assyrians, Assyrian governors, and Assyrian allies could use Aramaic to communicate political messages ('Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period', 106). The question is whether or not such communications happened at the royal and officially state-sanctioned level.

[18] So Seth Sanders insightfully argues that 'Both VTE and the curses of Deuteronomy display Aramean elements, demonstrating that the discourse of treaty-curses was not a narrowly textual or literary one but rather a product of the intertwined cultures and political conditions of the late Iron Age' (*From Adapa to Enoch: Scribal Culture and Religious Vision in Judea and Babylon* [TSAJ 167, Tübingen 2017], 157). See also Laura Quick's forthcoming volume on VTE, Old Aramaic curse formulary, and the implications of Mesopotamian and West Semitic traditions on the composition and ritual performance of Deuteronomy 28, *Deuteronomy 28 and the Aramaic Curse Tradition* (Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs, Oxford forthcoming).

[19] P.-Al. Beaulieu, 'Official and Vernacular Languages', in S.L. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* (University of Chicago Oriental Institute Seminars 2, Chicago 2006), 202–3.

[20] See many of the works of F.M. Fales, including *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period* (Materiali per il lessico aramaico 1. Studi semitici nuova 2, Roma 1986); 'Assyro-Aramaica: The Assyrian Lion-Weights', in K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors (eds), *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipiński* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 65, Leuven 1995), 33–55; 'Assyro-Aramaica: Three Notes', *Orientalia* 53 (1984), 66–7; 'Between

is the case, nonetheless, that there is evidence of exiled Judeans in Babylon, through the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods, participating in economic and legal transactions recorded in Akkadian, meaning that the latter language may still be the medium through which this expression could appear in Isa. 45:14.[21] The general historical and cultural data, however, supports Paul's thesis.[22]

Problems remain, however, with Paul's suggestion. For example, while Isa. 45:14 matches perfectly the verb and noun in Akkadian, Aramaic usage attests to different verbs used in coordination with the noun (יהב and נתן) even though נשׂא exists as a native lexeme (Ezra

Archaeology and Linguistics: The Use of Aramaic Writing in Painted Characters on Clay Tablets of the 7th Century BCE' in *XII Incontro Italiano di linguistica camito-semitica (afroasiatica)* (Medioevo romanzo e orientale. Colloqui 9, Soveria Mannelli 2007), 139–60; 'New Light on Assyro-Aramaic Interference: The Assur Ostracon', in F.M. Fales and G.Fr. Grassi (eds), *Camsemud 2007: Proceedings of the 13th Italian Meeting of Afro-Asiatic Linguistics: Held in Udine, May 21st–24th, 2007* (History of the Ancient Near East Monographs 10, Padova 2010), 189–204; 'Reflections on Neo-Assyrian Archives', in M. Brosius (ed.), *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions: Concepts of Record Keeping in the Ancient World* (Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents, New York 2003), 195–229; 'The Use and Function of Aramaic Tablets', in G. Bunnens (ed.), *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (Ancient Near Eastern Studies 7, Sterling 2000), 89–124.

[21] In addition to the Murashu family archive, in which dealings with Jewish families are mediated through the family archive in Nippur, see also the recently published documents from āl-Yahudu in Babylon. Though the āl-Yahudu texts do not offer evidence of Jewish cuneiform literacy, they reveal first-hand evidence of Jewish interactions in Babylon from the sixth century BCE into the fifth century Persian period. See L.E. Pearce and C. Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylon in the Collection of David Sofer* (Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 28, Bethesda 2014). See also many of the publications of Laurie Pearce examining scribalism, West Semites, and texts in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods.

[22] It should be noted that the geographical location of Second Isaiah is a matter of debate. For the view that Second Isaiah originated in Babylon, see, most recently, H.G.M. Williamson, 'The Setting of Deutero-Isaiah: Some Linguistic Considerations', in J. Stökl and C. Waerzeggers (eds), *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 478, Boston 2015), 253–67. For the thesis that Deutero-Isaiah originated in ancient Palestine, see L.-S. Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40–55* (VT Supplement Series 139, Boston 2011). Given the Persian period evidence for Aramaic as an administrative language used for economic texts in both Babylon and Palestine, either geographic location works for the proposal above. For Aramaic in Palestine during the Persian period in the late sixth century BCE, see D. Vanderhooft, ''el-mĕdînâ ûmĕdînâ kiktābāh: Scribes and Scripts in Yehud and in Achaemenid Transeuphratene', in O. Lipschits, G.N. Knoppers and M. Oeming (eds), *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (Winona Lake, IN 2011), 529–44.

4:13; 4:20; 6:8). While not necessarily a problem for Paul's thesis, it should still be noted that the form in Biblical Aramaic is twice מדה (Ezra 4:20 and 6:8) and twice מנדה (Ezra 4:13 and 7:24), the latter showing the spontaneous dissemination of gemination by nasalization, and it is clear that the Hebrew of Isa. 45:14 is, at least, not being influenced by the nasalized form. It is this form, מנדה, that made its way into Tannaitic Hebrew as a loanword from Aramaic, as in the introduction of Esther Rab., Genesis Rab. section 64 and various passages in the Mishnah (Ned. 62b; B.B. 8a).[23] None of these observations are problematic to such a degree, however, that Paul's suggestion to emend loses its basic persuasiveness.

## Isa. 45:14 and זקים

Further support of Aramaic influence exists in this verse, but this influence becomes clear only after disagreement with Paul concerning another word in Isa. 45:14, namely זְקִים. He claims that this word is an Akkadian loanword, though this time he does not appeal to Aramaic as a linguistic intermediary.[24] The word also appears in Jer. 40:1, 4; Nah. 3:10; and Ps. 149:8. One could argue that the lexeme entered into the Hebrew language previously and was simply a word for 'fetter' that Second Isaiah inherited and used. Therefore, the contact with מדה is irrelevant, in this understanding, for how זְקִים entered into the Hebrew lexicon. Both evidences of contact-induced change in this verse, however, reveal the extent to which Hebrew in Second Isaiah's time reflected the exposures of Judeans to broader linguistic and cultural powers.[25]

The case of זְקִים is complex. The Akkadian source of the lexeme is, according to Paul, *iṣ qātī*, meaning 'wood of the hands'. Paul's proposal has two weaknesses. First, this Akkadian phrase evidently fell out of use according to the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (*CAD*) sometime during the Neo-Babylonian period and was replaced by *šāt*

[23] Paul mentions this datum in another piece, but does not fully incorporate it into his proposal mentioned above. See his article 'Signs of Late Biblical Hebrew in Isaiah 40–66', in C. Miller-Naudé and Z. Zevit (eds), *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew* (Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 8, Winona Lake, IN 2012), 295.

[24] Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 265.

[25] Biblical Hebrew during the exile has, therefore, been called 'transitional' due to changes deriving from both internal and external (or, contact-induced) factors. See M.F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel* (JSOT Supplement Series 90, Sheffield 1990).

*qātī*.[26] If this chronology of the replacement is correct, then Second Isaiah and Jeremiah would be writing around the time *iṣ qātī* fell out of use. This problem with Paul's loanword hypothesis is not fatal as even terms that are replaced by others can survive as archaic expressions in a language; nonetheless, it is at least a complicating factor worth noting.

More serious is the second problem with Paul's hypothesis, which involves the phonology of the loan. Connecting זְקִים with *iṣ qātī* has the advantage of being able to explain the existence of the alternate form of זְקִים in Jer. 40 which contains a prothetic aleph (אזקים), matching this *aleph* with the initial [i] in *iṣ qātī*. But this connection creates more problems than it solves. For example, no other Akkadian loanword beginning with a vowel comes into Hebrew with an optional prothetic *aleph*. In fact, this *aleph* on variant forms of זְקִים has good inner-Hebrew explanations. Nouns that begin with a sibilant, such as זְרוֹעַ, often take a prothetic *aleph*, a process that is an attempt to 'reshape the stem'.[27] A different lexeme than *iṣ qātī* could lie behind Hebrew זְקִים and the form with an *aleph* could then be a secondary, inner-Hebrew phenomenon. In this manner, the source of the loan would not have to reflect this initial *aleph* at all.

In addition, it is difficult to explain the loss of the [t] in *qātī* and the gemination of the [q] in זְקִים (which cannot be the [t], partly because [t] does not assimilate to a [q] in Hebrew or Akkadian, and partly because it would involve an unexplained loss of a long [a] vowel in Akkadian). Moreover, there is a spelling of this phrase as one word, *išqāti*, which shows the dissimilation of the emphatic /ṣ/ next to the emphatic /q/ due to Geer's law.[28] Neither spelling, *iṣ qātī* nor *išqāti*, offers an adequate phonetic explanation for the corresponding [z] in Hebrew זְקִים. One would expect a [ṣ] in Akkadian to correspond to a [ṣ] in Hebrew and Aramaic, or, if from the Proto-Semitic lateral emphatic, then it would correspond to [ṣ] in Hebrew, but [ʿ] or [q] in Aramaic.[29]

[26] *CAD I–J*, 206.

[27] B.K. Waltke and M.P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN 1990), §5.6.e.

[28] On the importance of Geer's Law as a feature of Akkadian and East Semitic, see J. Huehnergard, 'Proto-Semitic and Proto-Akkadian', in G. Deutscher and N.J.C. Kouwenberg (eds), *The Akkadian Language in Its Semitic Context: Studies in the Akkadian of the Third and Second Millennium BC* (Leiden 2006), 8.

[29] P.V. Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew* (Harvard Semitic Studies 47, Winona Lake, IN 2000), 156.

The traditional explanation, as found in Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner's *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, is probably correct in essence, but in need of qualification.[30] Koehler and Baumgartner suggest that the Hebrew noun זֵק is an Akkadian loanword from *sinqu*, which they translate as 'fetters'. The problem is that no such Akkadian noun exists. Every combination of alternative spellings due to polyphony of the signs in cuneiform writing (*sí* can be spelled *zi*, and so forth) still yields no results for a noun. Koehler and Baumgartner cite an influential study of the role of Akkadian in various Semitic languages written by Heinrich Zimmern. Zimmern does not list a noun *sinqu*, but he does list the verb *sanāqu*, which Koehler and Baumgartner also list and define as 'to bind'.[31] This verb, meaning more frequently 'to check' in Akkadian, was very well attested, and although one should remain cautious, the frequency of the verb in a variety of Akkadian dialects from Old Assyrian onward would indicate that there very well could have been at some point a noun formed on the basis of this verb.[32]

A problem still remains with this proposal. An Akkadian [s] should come into Hebrew also as [s], but the Hebrew and Aramaic noun (זנקא) begins with a [z].[33] In order to understand how this phonetic change could take place and its implications for language contact, it is helpful to look by analogy to another Akkadian word in Hebrew, *simānu* in Akkadian and זְמַן in Hebrew and Aramaic. This Akkadian loan shows the same mismatch as זֵק and the Akkadian verb *sanāqu*. In the case of Akkadian *simānu*, it was once proposed that this was itself a Persian loanword; however, it is now attested in Old Babylonian texts, which clearly indicates that it has a solid origin in Akkadian.[34] It is likely that the Akkadian *simānu* came into Hebrew twice, once directly from late Babylonian, in which dialect it was pronounced /siwānu/, coming into Aramaic and Hebrew as the month name סִיָן. This form is the expected word if the Akkadian lexeme were borrowed directly into Aramaic and Hebrew. The second entrance involves the sibilant interchange from the voiceless

[30] L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Boston 1994), 1:277–8.

[31] H. Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluss*[2] (Leipzig 1917), 35.

[32] A *siniqtu* of unknown meaning occurs in a lexical list. See, M. Civil, *Ea A = nâqu, Aa A = nâqu, with their Forerunners and Related Texts* (Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon 14, Rome 1979), 228.

[33] Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 156.

[34] Ibid., 54.

[s] to the voiced [z] and the preservation of [m]. This sibilant interchange cannot be explained by regular sound change if the word was simply part of the Proto-Semitic stock inherited into Aramaic and Hebrew, nor is this the expected correspondence if the noun was loaned directly into Aramaic and Hebrew from Akkadian. Rather, it appears that Old Persian borrowed the Akkadian *simānu*, which appeared as *jamāna* (the initial affricate /j/ pronounced more like a [z]), and as Mankowski and Hinz have observed, Old Persian words beginning with [j] are consistently borrowed into Aramaic as [z].[35] In this fashion, the sound change of זִק from the Akkadian root *sanāqu*, though irregular if the loan occurred directly from Akkadian into Aramaic and Hebrew, is regular if Old Persian mediates the loan into Aramaic, which is then borrowed into Hebrew. This Aramaic word appears in a variety of dialects from a variety of regions and time periods, such as Palmyrene, Syriac, Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Jewish Aramaic (showing both the assimilation of the *nun*, ואסר and dissimilation of the *nun*, זנקא). The abundant existence of this root in Aramaic and the few forms in Biblical Hebrew might show the analogous sound transformation above, perhaps via a sound change from Aramaic into Hebrew.

A second, more parsimonious and likely transmission process can also be reconstructed, particularly given the lack of evidence for the word in Old Persian. If one imagines the manacles are leather bonds, then one can trace an Aramaic loan into Akkadian and Hebrew. In this case, the Aramaic attestations above are indicative of a primary Aramaic noun, also attested as *zq* in Official Aramaic and Palmyrene. Zimmern had previously connected this Aramaic noun as loaned from Akkadian into Aramaic, glossing the Akkadian as a 'hose (Schlauch)'.[36] Noting the time periods attested in Akkadian (exclusively in the Neo-Assyrian period), the editors of the *CAD* indicate a reversed relationship, namely that *ziqqu* in Akkadian (meaning 'wineskin', or a leather container of some sort) is likely an Aramaic loan.[37] If the position expressed in the *CAD* is accepted, then the later occurrences of זנקא in Aramaic meaning 'fetter' refer to leather strips, and this word for leather material was loaned into Akkadian for

[35] Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 54–5; W. Hinz, *Altiranisches Sprachgut der Nebenüberlieferungen* (Wiesbaden 1975), 142ff.

[36] Zimmern, *Akkadische Fremdwörter als Beweis für babylonischen Kultureinfluss*, 34.

[37] *CAD Z*, 129.

wineskins made of leather.[38] This noun was also loaned into Hebrew, a hypothesis that aligns the Aramaic, Akkadian and Hebrew data linguistically in a more parsimonious manner than other suggestions. Moreover, it would mean that the comparative evidence cited in *HALOT* mixes lexical data that should instead be kept separate: Köhler and Baumgartner cite Aramaic *zq* with Akkadian *sanāqu*, but Akkadian *sanāqu* would be an unrelated root. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the proposed semantic overlap between *sanāqu* and the Aramaic evidence is far from certain: the meaning 'to be fastened' for this verb in Akkadian (the supposed link between the Akkadian and Northwest Semitic data) is not well attested and the action underneath the verb is unclear.[39]

The evidence from other parts of the Hebrew Bible and from Assyrian royal reliefs, though from an earlier period, adds to the likelihood of this second solution, at least as it pertains to the materials of binding captives. For example, in Ezek. 19:4 and 19:9 the root חח appears, often translated as 'hook'.

Ezek. 19:4:

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֵלָיו גּוֹיִם בְּשַׁחְתָּם נִתְפָּשׂ וַיְבִאֻהוּ בְּחַחִים אֶל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם׃

> The nations heard about him: he was caught in their pit, and they brought him in hooks/bonds[40] to the land of Egypt.

Ezek. 19:9:

וַיִּתְּנֻהוּ בַסּוּגַר בַּחַחִים וַיְבִאֻהוּ אֶל־מֶ֫לֶךְ בָּבֶל יְבִאֻהוּ בַּמְצֻדּוֹת לְמַעַן לֹא־יִשָּׁמַע קוֹלוֹ עוֹד אֶל־הָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

[38] In this manner, though lacking the Akkadian evidence, *BDB* offers comparative lexicography along the lines of *HALOT*, connecting Arabic *ziqqun*, Syriac *zeqo*, and Ethiopic *zeq* meaning '(wine-)skin' (*The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* [Peabody 1996], 279). Leslau notes the difference between the *CAD* and Zimmern as far as directionality of the loan between Akkadian and Aramaic is concerned. Leslau argues that, *pace* Koehler in *HALOT*, the connection with this Akkadian word to Hebrew זקק, 'to filter', is 'unlikely'. Leslau does not provide a reason for the disagreement, and he does not address the lexeme under discussion in Isa. 45:14. See W. Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez (Classical Ethiopic): Ge'ez-English, English-Ge'ez, with an Index of the Semitic Roots* (Wiesbaden 1987), 642.

[39] *CAD S*, 140.

[40] The LXX has ἐν κημῷ, signifying a muzzle, often put on a horse. Note, however, that codex Barberinus reads ἐν πέδαις, 'in fetters', often used for chains of a metallic nature, as in 2 Chron. 33:11 discussed below (Jo. Ziegler [ed.], *Ezechiel* [Septuaginta 16.1, Göttingen 1977], 169). See also Judg. 16:21.

> They put him in a cage with hooks/bonds, and they brought him to the king of Babylon. They brought him into the stronghold in order that his voice would not be heard in the mountains of Israel.

In the latter verse, the word indicates some form of restraint imposed upon the princes of Israel. The prince is placed in a cage, a **סוּגָר**, itself an Akkadian loan from *šigaru*, meaning 'neck-stock'.[41]

The complement **בחחים** in Ezek. 19:9 has been explained in two ways. First, it could refer to additional means of restraint involved in the mechanism of the **סוּגָר**. For example, in 2 Chron. 33:11, two forms of binding are involved in the capture of Manasseh:

> וַיָּבֵא יְהוָה עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַצָּבָא אֲשֶׁר לְמֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר וַיִּלְכְּדוּ אֶת־מְנַשֶּׁה בַּחֹחִים וַיַּאַסְרֻהוּ בַּנְחֻשְׁתַּיִם וַיּוֹלִיכֻהוּ בָּבֶלָה׃

> The LORD brought upon them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria. They captured Manasseh in hooks/bonds. They imprisoned him with copper chains and brought him to Babylon.

The second technology for imprisonment, **נחשׁתים**, derives from the usual root for 'copper, bronze', and refers to fetters of this material.[42] The first item of restraint, **חח** (vocalized **חוֹחַ**, but from the same root as the word in Ezek. 19:4 and 19:9), was translated in the LXX as δεσμοῖς, from δεσμός, meaning 'bond, fetter'. The Greek functions as an equivalent to bonds in the sense of rope or cords in Isa. 28:22 (**מוֹסָר**), a neck-stock in Isa. 52:2 involving bands (also from **מוֹסֵר**), and the prison experience generally in Isa. 42:7 and 49:9. The connection with cords and ropes also appears in other passages, such as Ezek. 3:25 and 4:8, where the δεσμός translates **עבת**. This act of binding could refer to handcuffs of sorts, as the LXX of Isa. 45:14 indicates (χειροπέδαις). Indeed, poetic parallelism in Job 36:8 relates **זקים** (or χειροπέδαις) with cords (**חבל**, or σχοινίοις in the LXX, meaning 'rope, cord'). At least part of the mechanism of restraint, then, in Isa. 45:14 could involve a leather cord, such that attaching the etymology of **זק** to the Aramaic and Akkadian proposed above ('leather') would be reasonable. If this is the case, then Paul's suggestions that the word refers to wooden handcuffs is incorrect.[43]

[41] See Mankowski for this lexeme (*Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 108–9). See also Mankowski for the issue of sibilants, dialects, and determining Akkadian influence (*Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, 155–7).

[42] See also Lam. 3:7; in the dual, see Judg. 16:21; 2 Sam. 3:34; 2 Kgs 25:7; Jer. 39:7; 2 Chron. 36:6.

[43] Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 265.

The second suggestion for בחחים in Ezek. 19:9 understands the phrase to be a scribal insertion, either inserted from Ezek. 19:4 or, as Fishbane argued, as a gloss functioning as a translation using the more familiar בחחים to clarify the more obscure (or foreign) סוּגָר.[44] In either case, the gloss explains something about the neck-stock in Ezek. 19:9. If the materiality of the restraint סוּגָר included cords, then the explanatory gloss בחחים would clarify that such a neck stock also entailed rope of some sort. Indeed, Assyrian royal reliefs often portray neck-stocks with rope or some form of cord-like material attached to the bound prisoner.[45] This imagery indicates that the means of restraint included malleable material like leather cords or rope. As such, the etymology connecting זקים in Isa. 45:14 with leather as a means of restraint, perhaps part of a hand-cuff mechanism, is consistent culturally as attested in the literary evidence from the Hebrew Bible as well as in iconography (albeit from a period prior to Second Isaiah). Moreover, this thesis has the crucial advantage of solving the issue of sibilants and loan phonology between Akkadian and West Semitic (Aramaic and Hebrew).

## Conclusion

The thesis that זֵק is evidence of Aramaic influence in Isa. 45:14 is consistent with Paul's suggestion that נשׂאי מדה is also evidence of Aramaic mediation of Mesopotamian traditions. The analysis above regarding זֵק solves a linguistic issue with the identification of sibilants in the loan phonology of this noun and adds precision to the lexical entry in *HALOT*. The context of the chapter, dealing with Cyrus and Yahweh's appointment of him to do the deity's will, has been already exhaustively compared with the Cyrus Cylinder rhetorically by Fried and others.[46] It was consistent with Achaemenid policy to translate royal inscriptions and decrees into local languages, as is evidenced from the Cyrus Cylinder's exemplar in Akkadian, perhaps written by

[44] The rationale for seeing the phrase as an addition stems from the absence of בחחים in the Targum. For the addition as a harmonization from Ezek. 19:4, see W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1* (Hermeneia, Philadelphia 1979), 390. See also M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York 1985), 45 n. 115.

[45] M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 22, Garden City 1983), 351.

[46] L. Fried, 'Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45:1', *HTR* 95 (2002), 373–93. See already Kittel, 'Cyrus und Deuterojesaja', *ZAW* 18 (1898), 149–64.

the Babylonian priests of Marduk, and the Aramaic translation of the Behistun inscription found in Elephantine. Aramaic portions of Ezra and the later example of Daniel, as well as passages such as Neh. 8:8 and 13:23–4, attest to this language change in post-exilic Yehud around the time after Isa. 45:14 was composed. That this verse would contain two examples of Aramaic influence dealing with the realities of Mesopotamian imperial ambition, then, is consistent with the sociolinguistic context in which Second Isaiah wrote his oracles.

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