

6) 8ab et 8c—9d:

Puisque 9cd, nous l'avons vu, est construit de manière inverse par rapport à 8cd (soit yxX contre xyY), il se trouve du même coup présenter un agencement inverse par rapport à 8ab, soit y.x.X contre x'.y'.Y'. Alors que 8cd était de construction parallèle, mais de sens opposé à 8ab (xyY contre x'y'Y'), 9cd est de sens *et* de construction opposés à 8ab (yxX contre x'y'Y'). Ainsi l'ensemble 8c—9d se présente-t-il comme la contre-partie de 8ab, ses deux versets extrêmes présentant, dans leur complémentarité, deux contrastes complémentaires avec le verset 8ab.

ALLAN K. JENKINS

ISAIAH 14: 28-32 — AN ISSUE OF LIFE AND DEATH

The Philistines, ancient enemies of Saul and David, continued to create trouble for their successors throughout the period of Isaiah's ministry. Despite Tiglath-pileser III's subjugation of Gaza and Ashkelon in 734/3 B.C., revolt broke out again at the time of Sargon II's accession in 720 B.C. In 713/2 B.C. and again in 705 B.C. the Philistines sought to involve Judah in their resistance to Assyrian domination. Each time the revolt was unsuccessful, but the lesson was not learnt, and finally the rulers of Philistia were to be found in exile in Babylon after a similar futile attempt to resist Nebuchadrezzar's advance in 604 B.C.¹

It is therefore not surprising that a prophecy concerning Philistia should be found in the Isaiah collection. Yet despite what is known from Assyrian sources Is. 14: 28—32 proves to be a passage which illustrates in a particularly striking way the difficulties engendered by that approach to interpretation which seeks to establish precise historical settings for the words of the prophets. Although the oracle against the Philistines is introduced by what is apparently a precise chronological note, „in the year of the death of King Ahaz”, dates have been proposed which range from 727 to 715/4 B.C. and from 705 B.C. to 333 B.C.² The variation is due

¹ Cf. K. A. Kitchen, *The Philistines* in D. J. Wiseman (ed.), *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, Oxford 1973. To the bibliography there given add: Z. J. Kapera, *Was Ya-ma-ni a Cypriot?*, *Folia Orientalia*, XIV (1972—3) 207—218, *The Ashdod Stele of Sargon II*, *ibid.*, XVII (1976) 87—99.

² Cf. in addition to the commentaries the following (hereafter cited by writer's name only): K. Fullerton, *AJSL* 42 (1925—6) 86—109, W. A. Irwin, *AJSL* 44 (1928) 73—87, J. Begrich, *ZDMG* 86 (1933)

in part to the uncertainty concerning the date of Ahaz's death, and the difficulty is compounded by the fact that the 'rod' which smote the Philistines (v. 29) was not Ahaz but an enemy from the north (v. 31), apparently Assyria, so that a synchronism has to be sought between the death of Ahaz and that of an Assyrian king. Tiglathpileser III who died ca. 727 B.C. is the most popular candidate; the fact that his son and successor Shalmaneser V is not known to have campaigned in Philistia is argued not to be a strong objection since Isaiah was making a prediction³ and may in any case have averted revolt by this very warning⁴. Those on the other hand who look for a more exact fulfilment take the 'flying serpent' to be Sargon II, or his son Sennacherib, or even Alexander the Great⁵. In these cases the heading in v. 28 must be assumed to be secondary and inaccurate — though no satisfactory explanation is offered of why such a mistake should be made — or the reference to Ahaz removed by emending the text⁶.

Once it is conceded however that v. 28 may be historically inaccurate the allusiveness of the imagery in vv. 29—31 opens the door to an almost endless variety of possible historical settings. The historical approach does not therefore seem the most profitable one to adopt. The paths have been thoroughly trampled by the

66—79 [= Ges. Stud. (Th. B. 21) 1964 121—131], H. Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern* (SVT XI), Leiden 1964, 110—113, B. S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (SBT2 3), London 1967, 59—61, I. Müller, *Die Wertung der Nachbarvölker Israels Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia und Tyrus/Sidon nach den gegen sie gerichteten Drohsprüchen der Propheten*, Diss. Erlangen, 1968, 35 ff, 77 f, 137 f, H. W. Hoffmann, *Die Intention der Verkündigung Jesajas* (BZAW 136), Berlin 1974, 64—6, F. Huber, *Jahwe, Juda und die anderen Völker beim Propheten Jesaja* (BZAW 137), Berlin 1976, 102—106, H. Barth, *Israel und das Assyrienreich in den nicht-jesajanischen Texten des Protojesajabuches*, Diss. Hamburg, 1974, 10—11.

³ So for example H. Wildberger, *Jesaja* (BKAT X), Neukirchen 1974—5 582.

⁴ Begriff 130 f, Wildberger 586.

⁵ The late date is supported by O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 13—39*, ET: London 1974; cf. B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 3 Auflage, Göttingen 1914. For a discussion of the earlier dates see Wildberger 577 ff who prefers ca. 727 B.C.

⁶ Cf. BHS

commentators and the divergences are as great as ever. It would seem more fruitful to approach the prophecy by way of its language and imagery, to compare it with other passages which display Israel's attitude to the Philistines, and thereby to establish the contours of the attitude to the Philistines in the Isaiah tradition.

The first question must inevitably be that of the extent of the basic unit, and in particular whether v. 28 and v. 30 originally belonged to it. The reference to *masd'* in v. 28 b is usually assumed to have come in when the prophecy was included in the collection of oracles against the nations (Is. 13—23)⁷. About the originality or otherwise of v. 28 a opinion is divided and it would therefore seem prudent first to seek an understanding of the prophecy itself and then to attempt to relate this to the introductory note.

The prophecy is built up around two commands to Philistia, both in the second person singular and both followed by a reason introduced by *kk'* (vv. 29, 31). Verse 30 consists of two statements spelling out the consequences, negatively for the Philistines and positively for the poor and needy, while v. 32 contains an oracular statement concerning Zion introduced as an answer to foreign ambassadors. Both the form and language of v. 30 have suggested to most commentators that at least the word of salvation in v. 30 a does not belong to the primary tradition. Two points call for attention.

First, there is the abruptness of the first person address „and I will kill” in v. 30 b when the parallel verb is in the third person, „he will slay”. Consistency has been sought by reading the third person throughout following the Septuagint, or the first person following the Dead Sea Scroll text. As the text stands a distinction seems intended between the famine which is to be the work of Yahweh and the slaughter of the remnant by the invading power⁸. At this point due heed should be given to Irwin's warning against imposing western logic on the text. While it is true that Yahweh is not mentioned directly elsewhere in vv. 29—31, this is not a conclusive argument for emendation. The prophet is speaking

⁷ According to Barth this was at the time of the „Assyrian Redaction” during the reign of Josiah.

⁸ Cf. Kaiser. For details of the various proposed emendations see Wildberger.

in the name of Yahweh so that a lapse into direct speech is not entirely inconsistent, and similar alternations in person are not uncommon (e.g. Is. 13: 9f 3rd. person, vv. 11f 1st. person; cf. Ps. 2: 8—9 I ... you, Ps. 21: 9 you ... Yahweh).

A second point at issue is the use of 'poor' *ddal* and 'needy' 'ebeyôn of God's people as a whole rather than of an oppressed social class within the nation which is the sense in which the terms are generally used in the eighth century prophets and elsewhere in 1-Isaiah ('poor' only 10:2 and 11:4; 'needy' only 32:7). The wider sense of 'needy' is found in the picture of salvation in 29:19 of which the Isaianic origin is contested⁹, and elsewhere in the book the terms are used of the returning exiles (41:17 'needy'), and in relation to the refuge found in Yahweh (25:4 'needy' // 'poor') or in his city (26:6 'poor'). In what sense then are the terms used in v. 30?

It has been argued that they refer to a poor class within Israel and are used in order to heighten the contrast with the Philistines¹⁰. Such a contrast has a firm basis in judgments pronounced by Isaiah on the leaders of his own people (e.g. 3:14—15, cf. 5:8ff, 10:1ff), but it is not the most obvious interpretation here. To understand the terms to refer to Israel as a whole would be equally consistent with the wording and more natural. It would be hazardous to excise the verse solely on the grounds that Isaiah would not have referred to the whole nation as poor and needy, both because of the paucity of the evidence and because such a wider sense could have been taken over from psalms of lamentation¹¹. Nevertheless the rarity of the terms in primary Isaiah tradition is in itself a fact to be given due weight. Other terms in v. 30 are correspondingly rare in Isaiah: *bb^ekôr* only here, the word pair *HRG*, *MWT* only here and 22:13 (of animals), the Hiph'il of *MWT* only elsewhere in 11:4 and *HRG* only elsewhere in 14:20 (with the participle 'slain' in 10:4 and 14:19). 'BYWN and *DL* occur together only elsewhere in 25:4, and *RWS* and *R'H* only in 11:6,7 = 65:25 and in the later passages 13:20 and 27:10.

⁹ See Kaiser, *ad. loc.*

¹⁰ Irwin, Begrich.

¹¹ For the use of 'BYWN see G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. I ET: Grand Rapids, Michigan rev. ed. 1977.

The language of v. 30 has close affinities with that of Zephaniah 2:7, 3:12—13, cf. Is. 25:4, 26:6 and the later origin of the verse is further suggested by *bbetah* which is prominent in association with the exiles' hope of renewed fertility in their own land (Lev. 25:18, 19, 26:5, cf. Jer. 32:37, Ez. 34) and by *R'B* which occurs in Isaiah only here, 5:13 and 51:19 but is frequent in Jeremiah and Ezekiel where it is often associated with death by the sword implied here also according to Wildberger by *HRG*.

While none of these indications is conclusive in itself the cumulative effect of them is to suggest very strongly that v. 30 is an expansion of the original prophecy drawing out its consequences for Israel¹². The removal of v. 30 leaves vv. 29, 31 as a well constructed prophecy directed to the Philistines. Verse 31 has the form of a „summons to communal lamentation”¹³ and contains motifs common in the oracles against the nations¹⁴. Verse 29 is a nicely balanced parallel construction, perhaps in the form of a reversal of a victory song¹⁵, and it shows greater originality than v. 31 both in construction and imagery.

The image of the 'rod' (*šebet*) derives from the sceptre held by rulers as a symbol of their power (e.g. Am. 1:5, 8). It could be used also of the instrument by which the power of other nations could be broken (e.g. Nu. 24: 17, Ps. 2: 9). In Isaiah 'rod' is always used elsewhere in connection with Assyria. Assyria is the rod by which Yahweh will beat his people (10:5, 15, 24) and Assyria will in turn be struck down by Yahweh's rod (10:26, 30:31). The opening of the taunt of Chap. 14, probably originally directed against a king of Assyria, may be compared to 14:29:

„Yahweh has broken the staff of the wicked,
the sceptre of rulers,
that smote the peoples with unceasing blows...” (14:5—6a).

¹² Huber, Barth, cf. Hoffmann who following G. Fohrer treats v. 30a as a misplaced gloss; so also Wildberger who takes it as originally a marginal gloss on the „afflicted” of v. 32.

¹³ H. W. Wolff, ZAW 76 (1964) 48—56.

¹⁴ Cf. B. B. Margulis, *Studies in the Oracles against the Nations*, Diss. Brandeis Univ., 1966, 173 ff (wailing motif), G. H. Jones, *An Examination of Some Leading Motifs in the Prophetic Oracles against Foreign Nations*, Diss. Bangor, N. Wales 1970, 103 (MWG).

¹⁵ Huber.

In conformity to the use elsewhere in Isaiah it seems most probable that in 14:29 the 'rod' was originally intended as a reference to an Assyrian king, and the fact that the enemy was to come into Philistia from the north (v. 31) lends support to this. Thus v. 29 was a warning against rebellion against the ruling Assyrian power on the occasion of the king's death. However just as the rod could be used of the instrument of Yahweh in defeating Assyria so in v. 29 the rod could later have been seen as an allusion to a Judean king, particularly when the prophecy was associated with those against Assyria in 14:4ff (in its present form re-applied to the king of Babylon) and 14:24—5 in which it is stated that Yahweh's purpose was to break (*ŠBR* v. 25) the power of Assyria.

The development of the thought of v. 29a uses the imagery of snakes and of the growth of plants. The snake imagery here (*NHŠ*) is comparable to that of Jer. 8:17 (*ŠP'NN NHŠ* cf. *ŠP'* Is. 14:29) where an invader is pictured as sweeping down from Dan in the north. (Similar imagery is used of Dan in Gen. 49:17). Snakes were regarded as very dangerous and hostile to man (e.g. Gen. 3:15, Nu. 21: 6, Ps. 140: 4, cf. Is. 11:8, Ps. 91:13); they were thought to be cursed by God (Gen. 3:14) and hostility to God came to be epitomized under the figure of the serpent Leviathan (cf. *NHŠ* Is. 27:1). It is doubtful therefore that such imagery would originally have been used here of the Judean king. On the other hand its use of Assyria accords with images like those of the bee (7:18, cf. the fly as an image for Egypt). The origin of this snake imagery is probably to be sought in Isaiah's call vision (Is. 6) in which the flying seraphim played such a vital part as agents of the heavenly king. The sight of the bronze serpent Nehushtan in the temple (from which it was removed by Hezekiah, 2 K. 14:4) may have played some part in this. *NHŠ* and *ŠRP* occur together in Nu. 21:6-9 which deal with the origin of the bronze serpent and in Is. 30:6 (perhaps inspired by Nu. 21:6ff)¹⁶ which has the phrase *ŠRP M'WPP*, and apart from Dt. 8:15 these are the only uses of *ŠRP* outside Is. 6.

The metaphor of the 'serpent's root' (*ŠRŠ NHŠ*) is unusual, but it may reflect a visual association comparable to the verbal associations suggested to other prophets by, for example, a basket

¹⁶ Kaiser.

of fruit (Am. 8:1—3) or an almond tree (Jer. 1:11f). In the Isaiah tradition a shoot from the root of Jesse is one of the images used of the Davidic monarchy (11:1 *wyāšd'... mššārāyw*, cf. the later elaboration in 11:10), and a closely related image is that of the branch, also used of David's descendants (Jer. 23:5, 33:15, Zc. 3:8, 6:12, Is. 4:2). One may compare also the horn that sprouts for David in Ps. 132:17.

'Root' and 'fruit' seem to form a conventional expression for indicating completeness of destruction (Am. 2: 9, cf. Ho. 9:16) or of restoration (Is. 37:31 = 2 K. 19:30, Jer. 17:8, Ps. 1:3, cf. Ps. 92:14)¹⁷, while fruit is also a very common metaphor for children. Particular attention may however be drawn to Ps. 132:11 where Yahweh swears to set one of David's offspring or 'fruit' on his throne. Ps. 132 contains a number of other ideas reflected also in Is. 14:28—32, in particular that of Yahweh's choice of Zion (v. 13) and of the satisfaction of the poor (*BYWN* v. 15).

Ps. 132 belongs in the context of the New Year Festival which centred around the enthronement of the Davidic king¹⁸. Isaiah's call vision also draws its imagery from a royal enthronement in the temple. It has already been suggested that the imagery of the flying serpent may have been derived from this vision and the use of *ŠBT* would also be appropriate for the occasion of an enthronement in which it may also figured in the enactment of the king's victory over his enemies (cf. Ps. 2, especially vv. 8—9)¹⁹. So too the term used here for Philistia (*pēlešet* only elsewhere in the prophets in Joel 4:4) is that used in three psalms which belong in such a cultic context (Ps. 60:10 = 108:10, 83:8, 87:4); its only other use is in Ex. 15:14, a victory song which ends with a comment on the founding of Zion and which was probably used also in temple worship²⁰.

Thus the imagery of Is. 14:29 can be seen to be built up from

¹⁷ Cf. H. W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Hermeneia), Philadelphia 1977, on Am. 2: 9.

¹⁸ A. Weiser, *The Psalms*, ET: London, 1962.

¹⁹ A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff 1955 102 ff, cf. S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, Oxford 1962, Vol. II 253—5.

²⁰ S. Mowinckel, *op. cit.*, Vol. I 155, II 247.

motifs associated with the enthronement of the Davidic king, and its particular colouring probably derives from Isaiah's call vision in the temple (Is. 6). There are close verbal associations also with Is. 11:1—9 (a shoot from the root of Jesse, concern for the poor, smiting with a rod, snakes, and security of Yahweh's mountain) which has been ascribed to a similar background and is concerned with the ideal Davidic ruler²¹. This does not mean that we are dealing with an oracle delivered on a cultic occasion, but rather that cultic imagery is drawn upon to fashion a prophecy delivered to the Philistines, as v. 32a shows, at a particular moment of historical crisis; it seeks to fashion a theological perspective on the political situation out of language derived from Israel's own experience of Yahweh and of his purpose for his people.

The derivation of the imagery of Is. 14:29 from the enthronement festival with its twin emphasis on the choice of Zion and Yahweh's covenant with the Davidic king explains why the prophecy against the Philistines should be linked to an oracular statement concerning Yahweh's founding of Zion (v. 32). Verse 32b can be seen as an answering oracle of the type frequent in lamentations²², but the intrusion of the prosaic note in v. 32a is an indication that the language and forms are being wrested free of their cultic background. The note „what will he answer the messengers of the nations” reads like an editorial aside and shows that the prophecy is the response to a political situation which Isaiah interprets in terms of Yahweh's purpose. Parallels can be drawn with other passages which reflect similar recurring situations in which Judah is invited to action in relation to a foreign nation: in 16:1ff messengers have been sent by Moab, in 18:2 they are sent back to Egypt, in 37:6ff, 37:21ff Isaiah counters the message sent by the king of Assyria and in 29:1ff Isaiah is presented as acting unfavourably to Hezekiah's welcome of envoys from Babylon. On each occasion except the last a double response of the prophet is presented; there is a pronouncement of disaster for those who send the message, and a positive word concerning Jerusalem and its king (16:5, 18:7, 37:33). In Is. 39 the disaster

²¹ Cf. O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 1—12*, ET: London 1972, 155.

²² Wildberger 580.

is to fall upon Jerusalem because of the king's welcome of the envoys. All of this is consistent with the basic message of Isaiah to trust in Yahweh alone and avoid political alliances (7:9, 28:16ff, 30:15ff, etc.).

The positive word to Yahweh's people in v. 32b has firm anchorage in primary Isaiah tradition in terms both of its language and motifs *ʾānāyyēy ʾammî* 10:2, cf. 3:14-15; YSD 28:16-note the sweeping away of the refuge (*MḤSH*) of lies in v. 17)²³. In relation to vv. 29, 31 however it seems to have served originally not primarily as a promise to Judah but as a warning not to become involved in a clash with Assyria. F. Huber takes vv. 29, 31 to be preparatory for the climax of v. 32. The Philistines appear here not as enemies of Judah but as supposed helpers, and Isaiah argues in two ways against placing any trust in them. In empirical terms the Philistines could be of no help because they were on the verge of destruction, and in theological terms coalition with them was incompatible with reliance on Yahweh. Thus the threat to the Philistines has the function of an indirect address to Judah and makes the same point as 7:9 and 28:16, namely that true security could come only from exclusive reliance on Yahweh²⁴.

If however such a message to Judah were the sole purpose of this prophecy it is difficult to see why this should not have been put more directly, as for example in 7:1—9, 30:1—5 or 31:1—3. B. S. Childs is therefore justified in seeing v. 32 as embodying „a confession of faith proclaimed by Israel to the nations... Within the form of an oracle to the nations the Zion tradition is employed both as a testimony to Yahweh's absolute sovereignty over the nations, and as a reminder to Israel of her true existence”²⁵.

This idea of Yahweh's sovereignty over the nations is reflected also in the earlier oracles against the nations of Amos (Am. 1—2) and it is made explicit in Am. 9:7 „Did I not bring up... the Philistines from Caphtor?”. Unlike Is. 14:28—32 however the prophecy against the Philistines in Am. 1:6—8 gives a specific reason for their punishment, namely their „sheer inhumanity”

²³ Cf. Huber 236 ff.

²⁴ Huber 104 ff.

²⁵ Childs 61.

in selling a whole people, probably the population of a Judean border town, into slavery²⁶. In Amos the horizon is limited to the neighbouring states which once were subject to David, but in Isaiah a decisively new feature comes into the oracles against the nations — the extension of the horizon to include the great powers outside Syria and Palestine²⁷. This change can be traced in Is. 14:28—32. Whereas in Am. 1:6—8 Yahweh himself punishes the Philistines, here the agent of disaster is another nation, evidently Assyria though it is not named as such.

Iris Müller understands Is. 14:28—32 in the context of Yahweh's plan. By bringing disaster upon the Philistines in the same way as upon Israel Yahweh is bringing them into his plan. The sin which brings this disaster upon them is their opposition to Yahweh by resisting his 'rod' (cf. 10:2) and by seeking to lead Judah also into self-sufficiency and pride²⁸. While it is clear that there is implicit reproach against the Philistines for their opposition to Assyria, there is no explicit note of pride as there is for example in Is. 14:4—21 or 16:6, nor is it necessarily implied. Again, there is no hint of blasphemy against Yahweh of the sort epitomized by the Philistine Goliath in the Deuteronomic History (1 Sam. 17)²⁹. On the other hand there is no suggestion either that the Philistines might one day come to acknowledge the glory of the God of Israel as in 1 Sam. 6:5, or as envisaged in the Isaiah tradition for Egypt (18:7), perhaps also Moab (16:3—5) and the nations in general (2:2—4).

The attitude to the Philistines in Is. 14:29, 31, 32 can thus be seen to be a neutral one. The prophecy arose from a political crisis and struck a note of warning. In this respect it stands out from the prophecy against the Philistines in Jer. 47 where the disaster has become a reality. In Jer. 47 there is a similar reference to an invader from the north, now Babylon, no reason is given

²⁶ H. W. Wolff, *ad. loc.* (see n. 17).

²⁷ D. L. Petersen, *The Oracles against the Nations. A Form-critical Analysis*, [in:], *SBL Seminar Papers*, Vol. I, 1975 (ed. G. MacRae), Montana 1975, 47 f; cf. D. L. Christensen, *Transformations of the War Oracle in Old Testament Prophecy*, Montana 1975.

²⁸ I. Müller, 78.

²⁹ Cf. Childs 88 f.

for the disaster, but the invading force is identified with the 'sword of Yahweh' acting in accordance with his charge (Jer. 47:6). Is. 14:30 also links the disaster to come on the Philistines with the direct action of Yahweh (retaining *wehēmatti*) and it is to this elaboration of the earlier prophecy that we must now turn.

It has already been argued that the language of v. 30 is not that of the primary Isaiah tradition. Formally too the verse interrupts the sequence of woe in vv. 29, 31. Most commentators maintain the sequence by removing v. 30a to either before or after v. 32b³⁰. Irwin however noted that it is not possible to separate v. 30a and v. 30b. Because of their similar chiasmic structure and the balanced contrast between 'first-born' (v. 30a) and 'remnant' (v. 30b) the verse must be treated as a unity. Just as 'your root' (v. 30a) picks up the image of the root in v. 29b, so the reference to the 'first-born' echoes the motif of the 'fruit'.

In v. 30 however the metaphor of the root is used in a different sense to v. 29. In v. 29 the offspring of the serpent comes from its root, whereas in v. 30 it is the root of the Philistines that is to be destroyed. The usual poetic picture of complete destruction was drawn in terms of a parallelism of root with branch (Mal. 3:19), blossom (Is. 5:24) or fruit (Am. 2:9, cf. Ho. 9:16). Here the vegetal imagery is not carried through, but the concept of the remnant is introduced; this is frequent in prophecies of disaster and is perhaps used here for the sake of alliteration³¹ (cf. e.g. Jer. 47:4, 5, Ez. 25:16). The imagery of v. 30 is thus not as harmonious as that of v. 29, and the way the poor and needy are compared favourably with the serpent and the Philistines unfavourably in terms of descendants suggests that the serpent is now being understood as an allusion to the Davidic king, Yahweh's 'first-born' (Ps. 89:28 *BKWR*) for whom offspring ('fruit' *PRY*) were assured (Ps. 132:11).

It has already been noted that v. 30 has much in common with Zephaniah, especially Zp. 3:12—13. In the prophecy against the

³⁰ For example G. B. Gray, *The Book of Isaiah I—XXXIX* (ICC), Edinburgh 1912, suggests reading v. 30a after v. 32b, while Begrich, Kaiser transpose it to before v. 32b to provide a reason and translate *kki* as „because”.

³¹ Wildberger 374.

Philistines in Zp. 2:4—7 they are contrasted to the humble who seek Yahweh and who will pasture in Philistine land when their fortunes are restored, but no reason is given for the disaster experienced by the Philistines. It is with Ez. 25:15—17 that the Philistines are first indicted and the reason for their punishment is given as their hostility to Israel which is characterized as never-ending. Zech. 9:5—8 finds further cause for indictment in the Philistines' pride and abominations, while Joel 4:4—8 condemns them for selling Judeans to the Greeks. Thus the prophecies against the Philistines from the exilic period and later provide evidence of a growing hostility towards them, and this continued well into the post-exilic period when the Philistines opposed the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (Ne. 4: 1ff, EVV 7ff).

Whereas Is. 14:29, 31, 32 arose from a situation in which the Philistines were apparently seeking the help of Judah, v. 30 is best understood against a background of growing hostility to the Philistines. It represents an elaboration of the original prophecy which by contrasting the fates of the Philistines and of those who seek refuge in Yahweh fashions it into a word of assurance to Israel. The terms 'poor' and 'needy' would speak particularly to the weak community of the period of the exile and afterwards, emphasizing that even the remnant of the Philistines who had managed to survive the disaster would be destroyed while Yahweh's people despite their weakness would find refuge in Zion by trusting in Yahweh. In a similar way the use of 'first-born' can be understood as an allusion to the Passover — prominent among the reforms of Josiah (2 K. 23) — and may be linked to the understanding of the return from exile as a new exodus (Jer. 31:9, cf. Is. 51:9ff). Verse 32 would also have taken on new significance after the re-founding of the temple (Ezra 3:10ff). At the same time the understanding of the 'rod' as the Davidic monarchy, apparently broken in power by the exile, meant that there would be a development towards understanding shoot from the serpent's root as an allusion to the Messiah to come³², and this development can in fact be

³² The verse is interpreted in this sense by E. J. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah*, Dublin, Vol. I 1941.

traced in the Septuagint which has „the serpent's seed will feed the poor" and in the Targum³³.

Thus v. 30 enabled continuing significance to be found in Isaiah's prophecy against the Philistines even after the collapse of Assyria. Yet one may note that the elaboration represents a development of ideas inherent in the primary Isaiah tradition. This can be seen in relation to Isaiah's contrast between the ruling classes and those they oppress. In v. 30 it is Israel as a whole that is poor and needy, a reflection of the effects of the exile and long years of oppression by foreign rulers (cf. 14:4ff). So too 'safety' (*bbetah*) provides a link with Isaiah's advocacy of quietness and trust in Yahweh (30:15)³⁴.

At some stage in the development of the book of Isaiah the prophecy against Philistia came to be ascribed to the year of Ahaz's death (14:28). It has already been argued that when the prophecy was re-interpreted by the addition of v. 30, the 'rod' came to be identified with the Davidic king. In the Deuteronomic History Hezekiah is the only king after David who is said to have defeated the Philistines (2 K. 18:8), and it is thus possible to see why the (serpent's root) should have been seen as an allusion to Hezekiah. Consequently the 'serpent' would have been identified with Ahaz and the breaking of the rod taken as a reference to his death.

The reason for the introduction of a chronological note at this point is probably to be sought in relation to the ordering of the Isaiah material as a whole. Is. 6:1 which is similar in form („In the year of the death of King Uzziah ...") introduces a section dealing with Isaiah's call and his ministry during the period of the war with Syria and Ephraim, while 14:28 implicitly links oracles against various nations with the accession of Hezekiah, beginning with the nation he was known to have defeated. A third chronological note in 20:1 refers to the Ashdod revolt of 713/2 B.C. and introduces a collection of material concerned with the deliverance of Jerusalem (basically 22, 28—33 but greatly elaborated by later material),

³³ Cf. Kaiser who however rules out the messianic interpretation on the grounds that the invader comes from the north (v. 31).

³⁴ Cf. W. Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik*, München 1976, 208—9.

while the note in 36:1 introduces material concerned with Sennacherib's threat to Jerusalem in 701 B.C. (36—39). Thus there is a basic chronological progression: the year of Uzziah's death prefacing material from Ahaz's reign, Ahaz's death heading a prophecy which focusses on his successor, that is Hezekiah, and two dates in the reign of Hezekiah introducing material from the Ashdod revolt of 713/2 B.C. and from the later revolt against Sennacherib.

Hezekiah reigned 29 years (2 K. 18:2) so that on the basis of 36:1 the threat to Jerusalem in his fourteenth year would have taken place in the same year that Isaiah announced Hezekiah's death (38:1—3). The sparing of Hezekiah from death and the addition of fifteen years to his life was linked with the sparing of Jerusalem from the king of Assyria (38:4—6), and both resulted from Yahweh's response to Hezekiah's prayer in which he recalled his faithfulness (*'emet* 38:2-3) to Yahweh. In Is. 36-39 a certain idealization of the figure of Hezekiah is evident, and it has been shown that this was associated with the use of the experience of his reign to come to terms with the exile and to provide both explanation and hope³⁵.

In a similar way it is possible to see Is. 14:28 with its implicit identification of the offspring of the serpent with Hezekiah as setting the prophecy against the Philistines (and those which follow it) in relation to the hopes associated with Hezekiah's accession. The prophecy could suggest to an apparently weak Israel which felt itself increasingly threatened by Philistine hostility that as in the days of Hezekiah seeking refuge in Yahweh would result in the breaking of the power of the aggressor.

That Is. 14:28 is intended not simply as an historical note, but to point to the theological implications of the prophecy it introduces for a later generation is also suggested by the framing of the chronology in terms of the death of a king. The usual form of chronological notes is „in the xth. year of King N. ...". Only Is. 6:1, 14:28 and 20:1 depart from this form and use 'year' (*šNH*)

³⁵ P. R. Ackroyd, *Isaiah 36—39: Structure and Function*. A paper read to the Society for O. T. Studies, Winter 1978; P. R. Ackroyd, *SJT* 27 (1974) 329—52; cf. Childs.

as „in the year of (an event)”, and only in 6:1 and 14:28 are dates given in terms of a king's death. Since 14:28 introduces a prophecy which in its reinterpreted form is primarily concerned with Hezekiah's action against the Philistines it is particularly significant that the chronology is given with reference to Ahaz and to his death. This is borne out by an examination of the use of 'death' or 'die' (*môt mawet*) in Isaiah. Although the words are very common, their use in Isaiah is surprisingly rare. Apart from occurrences of the participle in 8:19, 26:14, 37:36, the *qal* of the verb is found only in announcements of death by Isaiah: that of Hezekiah (38:1), of Shebna (22:18) and of the exultant populace (22:13, 14). The noun, apart from 6:1 and 14:28, is found only in connection with the 'covenant with death' (28:15, 18, cf. 8:19) and in Hezekiah's psalm in the words „death cannot praise thee” (38:18). In 28:14—18 covenanting with death represents an evaluation of the true significance of entering into foreign alliances; they were a false refuge standing in feeble contrast to Yahweh's foundation stone in Zion and to the demand for reliance on him. In Is. 38 the psalm found on the lips of Hezekiah after his recovery from illness (38:9—20) does not occur in the parallel passage in Kings (2 K. 20) and it gives added force to the point that Hezekiah's renewed life comes as God's response to his faithfulness. Hezekiah's penitence is thus held up as an ideal to show that those who are faithful to Yahweh will always be treated by him with matching faithfulness (38:18, 19 *MT*). The psalm bring to a climax the theme that 'life' cannot be achieved by human covenants with death, but only by complete reliance on Yahweh (7:9, 28:16):

„death cannot praise thee;
those who go down to the pit cannot hope for thy faithfulness.
The living, the living, he thanks thee...” (38:18—19).

This suggests that in 14:28 reference to the death of Ahaz is intended, in contrast to Hezekiah, to point to his failure as a king (cf. 2 K. 16:2ff). The Chronicler develops this emphasis on the failure of Ahaz, by underlining his faithlessness (2 Ch. 28:19 and stressed in v. 22), and by noting that it was in his reign that the Philistines were able to invade Judah (2 Ch. 28:18). In the Isaiah tradition such a theological evaluation of Ahaz was probably

suggested by 7:9 understood in relation to Ahaz's appeal for help to Assyria. In a similar way in Is. 22 death is to the people of Jerusalem for failing to pay due regard to Yahweh and his plan (22:12—14), while in Is. 38 the possibility of the avoidance of such death is held out through the model of Hezekiah. Such a theological purpose in the framing of Is. 14:28 would explain also why the fact that he did not defeat the Philistines should not have prevented his apparent identification with the 'rod' (v. 29).

Thus at one level the chronological notes of Is. 6:1, 14:28, 20:1 and 36:1 provide an ordered sequence for the material that follows them. At another level however 14:28, like 36:1 and perhaps 20:1³⁶, provides a theological understanding of the material that follows in relation to Isaiah's call for faith in Yahweh alone during the political crises of his day. It is intended to suggest to a later generation that faithfulness to Yahweh will bring 'life' because for his part God will remain faithful to his promises concerning his city and his people.

To summarize: the heart of the prophecy against Philistia (Is. 14:28—32) is found in v. 29 where the divine imperative is brought to bear on a recurrent political situation of the prophet's day, namely the invitation of Judah to join in rebellion against the ruling power (in this case Assyria) when its king died. Isaiah presents a theological perspective on such a situation by constructing a highly original pronouncement which draws on the language of the Jerusalem cult associated with the enthronement of the Davidic king and is distinctively coloured by the prophet's call vision experience. The prophecy accords with the new insight which came into prophecy in general with Isaiah, that not only nations once subject to David were subject to God's will, but that Yahweh's sovereignty is such that powers like Assyria can also be used as his agents. It reflects too the constant rejection by Isaiah of political alliances and his call for faith in Yahweh alone. His words were elaborated in two ways, internally by v. 30 which tends

³⁶ For the suggestion that the material concerning the deliverance of Jerusalem originated from a threat by Sargon on the occasion of the Ashdod revolt and was reapplied to the situation in 701 B.C. see A. K. Jenkins, VT 26 (1976) 284—297.

towards the pietism of the poor and humble who eschew political action and seek shelter in Yahweh alone, and which is to be understood against a background of growing hostility between the Philistines and Israel, and externally by v. 28 which associates it with the death of Ahaz and thus with the life of Hezekiah, the renewal of which was consequent upon his faithfulness to Yahweh.

ADDENDA

- n. 2 H. Barth's dissertation is now published as *Die Jesaja-Worte in der Josiazeit* (WMANT 48), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1977.
- n. 35 P. R. Ackroyd's paper is forthcoming in *Festschrift* for J. van der Ploeg.