ŚRD AS A REMNANT TERM IN THE CONTEXT OF JUDGMENT IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

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Introduction

The root *śrd* appears twenty-nine times in the OT. Twenty-eight of these occurrences are the masculine noun *śārîd*, "survivor." This word is used largely with "definite historical entities"[1] and mostly with a negative emphasis since it belongs to the language of warfare.[2] Nevertheless, there is a semantic bipolarity in the use of the noun that expresses decimation of the masses yet there is survival with clear implication for future existence and renewal.[3]

This noun is used four times in the book of Jeremiah: 31:2; 42:17; 44:14; and 47:4. The first is employed in the context of salvation while the latter three are found in the situation of divine punitive action against the people. In this paper, however, we will restrict our investigation only to those passages that deal with the word in the context of judgment.

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[1]A "definite historical entity" refers to individuals, groups, or families that have survived a catastrophe. See V. Herntrich, "*Leimma Ktl.*," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 4:197; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Origin and Early History of the Remnant Motif in Ancient Israel" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1970), 145, 189, 194, 195.

[2]Louis Jonker, "Śrd," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 3:1271-72; Hasel, 196.

[3]Hasel, 199.

Jer 42:7-22[4]

This extended passage describes a situation of impending judgment, the result of the remnant's stubborn design to flee to Egypt, despite God's express command not to do so.

Translation and Textual Considerations

(7) At the end of ten days the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. (8) Then he called Johanan, son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces who were with him and all the people, from the least to the greatest (9) and said to them,

"Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition before him:[5] (10) '*If* you will certainly stay[6] in this land, *then* I will build you up and not pull you down, and I will plant you and not uproot you; for I repent of the evil which I have done to you. (11) Do not fear the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid. Do not fear him, says the Lord. For I am with you to save you and to deliver you from his hand. (12) I will give you mercy. And he will have mercy and will let you return to your own land.'[7] (13) But *if* you say, 'We will not remain in this land,' disobeying the voice of the

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[4]Many scholars contend that the text should be rearranged. They hold that 42:7-17 presents Jeremiah's initial report of a divine oracle. However, vv. 18-22 in the present order assume the officers' refusal of that initial report, whereas in 43:1-3 they outrightly refuse it. Therefore, to sharpen the force of the dialogue, commentators transpose the passages: 42:7-17; 43:1-3; 42:19-21; 42:18,22. So too William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 275-76; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 3d ed. Handkommentar zum Alten Testament 12 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1968), 256; and John Bright, *Jeremiah*, Anchor Bible, vol. 21 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 251-52. However, J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 644-55; E. W. Nicholson, *Jeremiah 26-52* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 143-44; and Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 715-21, agree that Jer 42:7-22 is a logically coherent unit. It is pointed out that while 42:18-22 anticipate the people's refusal to listen to Jeremiah, and 43:1-3 actually spell that out, the reader is already introduced to the motif of going to Egypt in 41:17. This is expanded in 42:13-17. Hence, "42:18-22 is a further statement about the journey to Egypt which describes Egypt in terms . . . about the fate of Jerusalem." Carroll, 720.

[5]LXX says briefly, *kai eipen autois outōs eipe kurios*, "and he said to them, Thus says the Lord."

[6]The emphatic form *yāšô tēšᵉ û*, "you will certainly stay," is used. MT omits the first *y* but this is restored in the LXX.

[7]LXX reads *kai eleēsō humas*, "and *I* will have mercy on you;" *kai epistrepsō*, "and *I* will restore."

Lord your God (14) and saying, 'No! We will go to the land of Egypt, where we will see no war, or hear the sound of the trumpet, or be hungry for bread, and we will live there.'

(15) Now then, hear the word of the lord, O remnant (*šᵉ'ērît*) of Judah, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, '*If* you surely set your faces to go into Egypt and you go to sojourn there, (16) *then* the sword which you fear will overtake you in the land of Egypt, and the famine which you fear will follow you to Egypt, and there you will die. (17) *And it shall be that all the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to live there will die by the sword, famine and pestilence. There will be no survivor (*śārîd*) or escapee (*pālît*) from the evil which I will bring upon them.*'

(18) For thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, 'Just as my anger and my wrath were poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will my wrath be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You will become an execration, a horror, a curse and a taunt. You will never see this place again.' (19) The Lord has spoken concerning you, O remnant (*šᵉ'ērît*) Judah, 'Do not go into Egypt.'

Surely, you know that *I have warned you today*[8] (20) that you have erred at the costs of your lives;[9] for you yourselves sent me to the Lord your God, saying, 'Pray for us to the Lord our God; tell us all that the Lord our God says and we will do it.' (21) And *I have declared to you today*, but you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God in everything that he has sent me to tell you. (22) Now therefore, *surely you know* that you will die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to live."

Structure

This unit describes Jeremiah's response to the remnant's inquiry for divine guidance. Further, a unitary quality is observed in the use of the verb *šlh*, "to send": in 42:9, Jeremiah presents the word of the Lord, to whom the people had *sent* him; in 43:1, Jeremiah has presented the word of the Lord, who *sent* him back to the people.[10] Therefore, the entire address of 42:9-22 belongs together.

One may schematize the passage into three parts:

[8]LXX lacks the phrase, "that I have warned you today." Holladay, 275, thinks that this omission is due to haplography, given the likeness of *kî-ha'îdôtî,* "that I have warned" in v. 19 to *kî hit'ētēm,* "for you used deceit" in v. 20.

[9]MT *hit'ētem bᵉnapšôtēkem,* "you have erred at the cost of your lives." LXX says *eponēreusasthe en psuchais humōn,* "you have done wickedness in your souls."

[10]The "sending" motif weaves the whole section together: vv. 5,6,9,20,21.

1. The introduction, which names the people in the situation: Jeremiah and the remnant (vv. 7-8).[11]

2. The body, consisting of Jeremiah's report of the oracle from God (vv. 9-19a). This has three distinct sections as indicated by the formulaic express, *kōh 'āmār ᵃdōnāy*, "Thus says the Lord":

      a. vv. 9-15a, Introductory formula, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel." Note the specific pattern:

          (i) v. 10a, Protasis, "*if*"

          (ii) v. 10b, Apodosis, "*then*"

          (iii) v. 13, Protasis, "*If* you say . . ."

          (iv) v. 15a, Apodosis, "*Now then*, hear the word of the Lord, O remnant of Judah."

      b. vv. 15b-17, Introductory formula, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel." Note the specific pattern:

          (i) v. 15b, Protasis, "*If* you surely set . . ."

          (ii) v. 16a, Apodasis, "*Then* it will be . . ." This apodosis extends to the end of v. 17.

      c. vv. 18-19a, Introductory formula, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel." The expression, "The Lord has spoken concerning you, O remnant of Judah" (v. 19a), acts as the concluding statement to this main body.

3. Conclusion (vv. 19b-22), Jeremiah's personal admonition to the people. Note the AB:BA chiastic structure here:

A Surely you know (19b)	**B** I have warned you today (19c)
B' I have declared to you today (21a)	**A'** Surely you know (22a)

Historical Background

Jer 42:7-43:7 describes both the prophet's reply to the remnant's request for a divine oracle and their actions in light of that reply. It is specifically noted that ten days[12] had elapsed before the divine revelation came (42:7). The context conveys the idea that immediately on receipt of the divine word, Jeremiah gathered the

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[11]In v. 7 *wayᵉhî*, "and it happened," is doubled. This is unusual. Cf. Jer 1:4,11,13; 2:1; 16:1; 33:1; 35:12; 43:8 for the usual introductory formula where the verb is used only once. This doubling of the verb is so because the temporal phrase precedes the actual statement of time. This exact statement of time (10 days) is found only here. The closest expression of time compared to this is found in Jer 41:4.

[12]Ten days are seen as the standard calculation for a period of waiting and testing (Dan 1:12-15). See Jacques Doukhan, *Daniel, The Vision of the End* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987), 46. B. F. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 336-37, indicates that this length of time gives an insight into the process by which a prophet seeks the will of the deity.

remnant together, described as "all the people, from the least to the greatest" (42:8; cf. 42:1), to give them the awaited answer.

Interpretation

Upon receiving the divine word, Jeremiah called the entire community together, along with its leaders.[13] They had sent him to the Lord (v. 9) and now he provides the reply which is set out in vv. 10-17 in terms of alternatives. The portases set the condition and the apodoses define the results: *If* they choose to remain in the land, *then* the Lord will deal positively toward the community. He will create conditions for normal life: building, planting, and not pulling down or plucking up.[14] The condition for such rejuvenation was singular: the remnant, those who were left behind following the catastrophe, *must* remain in the land. This would demonstrate faithfulness in the word of the Lord that He is able to save His people and fulfill His promise to restore them to the land (v.12). Also, remaining in the land demonstrated dependence on, and allegiance to, God and not on a foreign government or to another god. Hence, salvation was tied to obedience and faithfulness to God. Destruction was linked to disobedience and unfaithfulness. Salvation and doom were held in tension. God was willing to do His best to ensure that these people could receive the blessings that He was so willing to give. Indeed,

> This remnant, like the one in Babylon, was being offered the same promise of renewal and restoration. There was no unwillingness on Yahweh's part to allow any individual or group of individuals among his people to enjoy the blessings of the day of restoration.[15]

This offer of renewal toward the remnant community was due to the Lord's repentance or change of mind (*nhm*).[16] Robert P. Carroll observes, "It is the language of possibility and renewal, and when used of the deity indicates such changes in his attitude towards the community that its future becomes an open one. A good future is now possible for the people."[17]

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[13]This group is the remnant that is constituted of "the least to the greatest" in 42:1,8 (hence tying together both sections, 42:1-6 and 7-22). They are specifically named the "remnant" in 42:2,15,19.

[14]This language is reminiscent of Jeremiah's call to the prophetic office in 1:10.

[15]Thompson, 665.

[16]Ibid., 666. Thompson thinks that the verb should be translated as "grieve for," instead of "repent." His claim is that the primary sense of the verb is "take a (deep) breath," which is the sense here, and the translation "grieve" (sigh sorrowfully) would better suit the context. For the semantic range of this root, see H. J. Stoebe, "nhm," *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1984), 2:59-66.

[17]Carroll, 718.

The clauses of vv. 11-12 continue to indicate the protasis of v. 10. William L. Holladay indicates that the reassurance formula ("do not be afraid . . ."), the support formula ("for I am with you . . ."), and the statement of divine intervention ("to save you and deliver you"), form an oracle of salvation (*Heilsorakel*).[18] For the remnant community, the factors that mitigate against them, divine wrath and Babylonia reprisal,[19] are set at nought.

The protasis of v. 13 is shaped in a negative form describing the anticipated reply of the determination of the remnant to flee to Egypt. The apodosis of v. 15a repeats the introduction ("the word of the Lord"; cf. v. 7) and specifically names the group as the remnant. The introductory formula is also renewed. This gets the attention that *if* the people give a negative response to God, *then* the word of God also has a negative response. This is strengthened by the negative nature of the extended protasis (v. 15b) and apodosis (vv. 16-17). *If* they are determined[20] to go to Egypt for safety, security, and food, *then* disaster will certainly overtake them. Ironically, the very evils that they would attempt to avoid would be encountered. They would be destroyed by sword, famine, and pestilence.[21] The future is built on the either-or response: either they stay in Judah and live or go to Egypt and perish.

Verse 17 is located in the extended apodosis that denotes the terrible fate of destruction. It is a description of the intent of absolute judgment to be executed against the remnant group that is determined to go to Egypt. This group is clearly a decimated group, constituting "but a few of many" (42:2) after the Babylonians had overrun the country. Fearing Babylonian reprisals in light of the assassination of Gedaliah and the Babylonian garrison, this already small group determines to go to Egypt in an attempt to establish a positive future. Jeremiah's hardline position is that doing this would result only in a disastrous future. The very evils they are attempting to avoid would overtake them. This would be directed by the Lord. The extent of the Lord's judgment would be so complete that of this already small remnant, there will be no survivor (*šārîd*) or escapee (*pālît*). J. A. Thompson's

[18]Holladay, 285. See further John M. Berridge, *Prophet, People and the Word of Yahweh: An Examination of Form and Content in the Proclamation of the Prophet Jeremiah*, Basel Studies of Theology 4 (Zürich: EVZ Verlag, 1970), 202-07; Eugene W. March, "Prophecy," in *Old Testament Form Criticism*, ed. John H. Hayes (San Antonio: Trinity University, 1974), 163; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 11-13.

[19]MT allows for the king of Babylon to show peace toward the remnant. LXX reads the first person throughout and makes the Lord the advocate for peace, "I will let you remain in your land." This may understand the verb forms *riham* and *hēšîb* as infinitive absolutes, which are also possible and make good sense. See Thompson, 666, n. 6.

[20]The expression *šôm tˀ śîmûn pˤnēkem*, "set your faces," denotes determination. The verb is strengthened by the use of the infinitive absolute.

[21]On the occurrence of this series of judgments in Jeremiah and in the OT, see John Bright, "The Date of the Prose Sermons of Jeremiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 70 (1951): 32.

assessment is correct, "As though to contrast their experiences after the fall of Jerusalem and the murderous acts of Ishmael with what could now happen, the threat was that there could be no *survivor (śārîd)* and no *escapee (pālît).*"[22]

The effect of having no survivors or escapees highlights the drama of choice: *either* the people be obedient to the Lord, stay in Judah and live; *or* disobey the Lord, ignore covenant loyalty, go to Egypt, and perish completely. The second option underscores the overwhelming negative value of the judgment. The combination of the nouns *śārîd* and *pālît*, together with the force of the negation, serve the point well. As Carroll so aptly states, "The positive future lies in the land of Judah or nowhere. The Lord's repentance only holds good for life in Judah; elsewhere his intention is evil (v. 17).[23] "Failure to follow the Lord's injunction will bring incorrigible destruction which renders a state of "remnantlessness."

Verse 18 repeats the introductory formula and likens the effect of the wrath of the Lord on Jerusalem to that on the remnant who go to Egypt. The lesson is transparent: as Jerusalem was destroyed by God, so too the remnant that survived will be destroyed by God if they go to Egypt. Devastation and death are inevitable with the wrong choice.

Jeremiah then brings to an end the direct word of the Lord in the vocative address and the forceful imperative: "O remnant of Judah, do not go to Egypt."[24] The expression *šᵉ'ērît yᵉhûdāh*, "remant of Judah," forms an inclusio in vv. 15a and 19a. Therefore, the terrible consequences of going to Egypt are forcefully set to befall the remnant. This remnant will become hopeless and will never see Judah again. Hence, the forceful admonition, "Do not go to Egypt." Carroll is correct in stating, "In going to Egypt the people would appear to be reversing the original divine act of redemption which brought the people out of Egypt."[25] The Lord's word to the remnat is clear—going to Egypt will only be fatal.

The concluding statement of vv. 19b-22 shows Jeremiah's warning. The section is demarcated by the words *yādō'a tēdᵉ'û*, "surely you know" (vv. 19b and 22). Jeremiah issues an emphatic statement that the remnant's own self-deception[26] has led them to conceive a plan of fleeing into Egypt. They were so confident of winning the Lord's approval that they sent Jeremiah to pray for them and pledged themselves to do exactly what the Lord requested, as the prophet himself reiterates in vv. 20b and 21. Carroll comments correctly, "The emphasis by the people on

[22]Thompson, 667.

[23]Carroll, 719.

[24]There is a question regarding the statement, "Do not go to Egypt." Is it to be constructed as the Lord's word or Jeremiah's word? There is general unanimity that this is a citation of the Lord's word. Cf. Bright, *Jeremiah*, 252.

[25]Carroll, 720.

[26]The verb phrase *hitētēm bᵉnapšŝôtēkem* means literally "you have caused yourselves to wander." See Holladay, 301, who proposes that the prophet is addressing the leaders of the group, saying, "You have led astray the whole group at the cost of your lives."

their willingness to obey (vv. 5-6) can now be seen as a literary device whereby the enormity of the people's disobedience is underlined (vv. 13,21)."[27]

The chiastic structure of this last section further emphasizes that, with the certainty of the warning and its rejection, the certainty of judgment is also real. Like the Lord's word, Jeremiah's warning is also clear: going to Egypt would only be fatal. Indeed, "the remnant of Gedaliah's community is presented as tottering on the brink of annihilation. Will they be so foolhardy as to go to Egypt?"[28]

Jer 42:7-22 constitutes Jeremiah's report of the divine word to the survivors who had requested him to inquire of the Lord on their behalf. The passage brings together three distinctive remnant terms, namely, *šeʾērît, pālît,* and *śārîd.* Taken together they function to give a stinging message of judgment against the small Judean remnant that had survived the Babylonian overthrow of Jerusalem. Their stubborn choice to go to Egypt, despite God's warning that such an action can result only in punitive repercussions, leads to a case of remnantlessness. There will be no *šeʾērît, pālît,* and *śārîd.*

Jer 44:11-14

In this pericope, the unmistakable ring of divine punitive action is heard. It is directed against the remnant, those who had remained in the land after the Babylonian onslaught.

Translation and Textual Considerations

(11) Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, "Behold, I have set my face against you for evil and to cut off all Judah. (12) And I will take the remnant (*šeʾērît*) of Judah who have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall be consumed; in the land of Egypt they shall fall; by sword and by famine they shall be consumed; from the least to the greatest, by the sword and the famine they shall die; and they shall become an execration, a horror, a curse and a taunt. (13) I will punish those who live in the land of Egypt just as I punished Jerusalem: with sword, famine, and pestilence. (14) *And there will be no escapee (pālît) or survivor [śārîd] of the remnant of Judah who have come to sojourn there in the land of Egypt (who will) return to the land of Judah to which they desire (lit. "lift up their souls") to return to settle there; for they shall not return, except as fugitives.*"[30]

[27]Carroll, 720.

[28]Ibid., 720-21.

[30]The expression *kî ʾim-pᵉlēṭîm,* "except as fugitives," is suggested as a gloss in light of v. 14a. However, it is found in both the MT and LXX and is likely to be intentional.

Structure

Jer 44:11-14 constitutes a single unit as indicated by two factors: (1) the word *lākēn*, "therefore," introduces the section, just as *wᵉ 'attāh*, "and now," introduced vv. 7-10; and (2) v. 11 starts with, "Thus says the Lord . . ." while v. 15 begins a new section with *wayya ᵃnû*, "and they answered."

The unit is arranged chiastically:

A Remnant of Judah who determine to go to Egypt to live
   B They shall all be consumed
      C Sword and famine shall consume them
         D From the least to the greatest
      C' Sword and famine shall kill them
   B' God will punish them until they are consumed
A' No survivor or escapee of the remnant of Judah who have gone to live
   in Egypt.

Historical Background

Sometime after the remnant had sought refuge in Egypt, the divine oracle was given to Jeremiah (43:8-44:14). In fact, chap. 44 provides the account of the accusations of both God (44:2-14) and the prophet (44:20-30) leveled against the refugees because of their practice and open defense of idolatry (44:15-19).[31] This address concerned all the Jews living in different locations in Egypt: Migdol,[32]

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[31]Such idolatrous practices were not new to the Lord's people. Jeremiah had earlier condemned such in his "Temple Sermon" (7:16-20). Robert Davidson, *Jeremiah*, vol. 2, The Daily Study Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 150, claims that as a tolerated minority in a foreign land, it appeared sensible to adapt as far as possible to local Egyptian customs.

[32]"Migdol" is a NW Semitic word which means "tower" or "fortress." It is known from the Tell el-Amarna letters (14th century B.C.E.) as Ma-ag-da-li. The exact site is unknown. Thomas O. Lambdin, "Migdol," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (IDB)*, ed. George A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 3:377, identifies it as Tell el-Her. A more recent explanation claims a site labeled simply as T. 21, about 24 miles east-northeast of Tahpanhes. See Eliezer D. Oren, "Migdol: A New Fortress on the Edge of the Eastern Nile Delta," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (BASOR)* 256 (1984): 7-44.

Tahpanhes, Memphis,[33] and land of Pathros.[34] This suggests that Jewish settlements were already existing in Egypt before the arrival of these refugees.

Since no indication is given as to how much time had elapsed since the word and action of 43:8-13, we may agree with Holladay that it is difficult to envisage the implications of chap. 44. On the one hand, it suggests a kind of general epistle to all the Jews living in Egypt; but on the other hand, vv. 15,19, and 20 suggest that this is an address to an assemblage, and it appears implausible to imagine that all the Jews living in Egypt would gather for such an occasion.[35]

Interpretation

This pericope (vv. 11-14) is a "Prediction of Disaster"[36] against the remnant and the extent of that punitive action. The wordplay of the divine "setting of the face" (v. 11) against those who "set their faces" to go to Egypt (v. 12), immediately sets the stage for confrontation. This "idiom of determination"[37] (*śîm pānîm*, set the face) highlights the fact that the same behavior is carried out by both the Lord and the remnant, and only one party will eventually stand (cf. v. 28).

The judgment against the entire remnant is described in terms of consummation with the use of the verb *tmm*. Combined with the idea of "falling" (*npl*),[38] this spells absolute destruction and death.[39] The agents of this terrible disaster are the sword and famine.[40] These respect no one, regardless of rank or

[33]Memphis (Heb. *Noph*) was one of the main cities of Lower Egypt. It was located about 13 miles south of modern Cairo.

[34]The expression, "Land of Pathros," suggests a region, perhaps of upper Egypt. Thomas O. Lambdin, "Pathros," *IDB* (1962), 3:676, indicates that the Hebrew Pathros is a rendering of the Egyptian *p '-t '-rsy*, "the Southern Land." It is also known that there was a Jewish community at Elephantine in the fifth century B.C.E. Their Aramaic documents tell much of their society. See A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923)

[35]Holladay, 303.

[36]March, 160, indicates that *lākēn*, together with the formula *kōh 'āmar 'adōnāy*, "Thus says the Lord," is a "Prediction of Disaster." It underlines the future aspect of the announcement and its disastrous effect or nature. Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, reprint, trans. Hugh Clayton White (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 65-67, calls this an "Announcement of Judgment" or an "Announcement of Ill."

[37]Carroll, 730. See also Jer 21:10 for the notion of setting the face against the city as an act of judgment.

[38]*Npl* means more than the common physical act of "falling." It is often associated with something violent or accidental. The root often designates damage, death, and destruction. See M. C. Fisher, "*Nāpal*," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 2:587.

[39]Cf. vv. 18,27 for the consummation (*tmm*) idea.

[40]The alliteration *bahere bārā'ā*, "by sword, by famine," catches the readers' and hearers' attention and alerts one to the gravity of the situation.

status, wreaking havoc "from the least to the greatest," that is, the remnant (who are similarly described in 42:2,8).

The repetition of the agents of disaster emphasizes the fact that the very things that the refugees hoped to escape by going to Egypt are the very things that would bring about their ultimate demise.[41] Escape shall be cut off because the remnant shall degenerate to *le'ālāh*, "execration,"[42] *lešammāh*, "horror," *liklālāh*, "curse," and *leherpāh*, "taunt." The remnant shall deteriorate to an object of derision and ridicule.[43] The reality of being reduced to an object of curse suggests the violation of the covenant, for curse is as much a part of broken covenant as blessing is of the unbroken covenant.

The person behind the agents of the destruction is now identified (v. 13). The remnant shall be consumed because the Lord shall execute judgment. In fact, the Lord will deal with the remnant in Egypt as He has dealt with Jerusalem. The equation is complete: the destruction of Jerusalem equals the destruction of the remnant in Egypt.[44]

The extent of the judgment is described in v. 14: there will be no escapee (*palît*) or survivor (*śārîd*) of the remnant of Judah. This points to a state of absolute devastation. It now becomes clearer that even the "remnant of the remnant" is in jeopardy of annihilation. The remnant who set their faces to live in Egypt shall have no redress. Jutta Hausmann's summary is quite appropriate, "There could now be no hope for revival either in Judah or amongst the community in Egypt."[45]

Further, the emphasis on "land" may be noted. The "remnant of Judah" are disobedient in that they refused the Lord's protection when they refused to remain in the land of promise. Instead, they return to Egypt, the land of former bondage. Hence, the remnant abandoned the Lord who in turn disinherited and displaced them. Their inescapable destiny, therefore, is death and loss of the "Promised

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[41]Cf. Jer. 44:16,22 where death by these same means is threatened for going into Egypt.

[42]Here *'ālāh* has a metonymic use to describe people on whom curse come, having a calamitous effect. The person under consideration is placed in such a deleterious situation that if someone wanted to curse his fellow, he would refer to the fate of that person. See Josef Scharbert, "*'ālāh*," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1974), 1:264-65.

[43]Cf. Jer 42:18 where the same fourfold designation is used of the remnant.

[44]W. Thiel, *Die deuteronomistiche Redaktion von Jeremia 26-52*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten Testament 52 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 73, indicates that this equation between Jerusalem and the remnant in Egypt marks the conclusion of Jeremiah's sermon.

[45]Jutta Hausmann, *Israels Rest: Studien zum Selbstverständnis der nachexilischen Gemeinde*, Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament 7 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1987), 110.

Land."[46] Jer 44:14 highlights this fact in that it underscores the divine punishment that will be executed upon the disobedient remnant. Rank and social standing have no credibility here because the judgment will be all-encompassing, "from the least to the greatest," of those who have determined to go to Egypt to live. Their very attempt to escape the things that will bring destruction is ironic because those same things will bring about their destruction.[47]

The totality of divine retribution is highlighted in the headline: *wᵉlō'yihyᵉh pālît wᵉsārîd liš'ērît yᵉhûdāh,* "and there will be no escapee or survivor of the remnant of Judah." Three remnant terms are combined. The effect of this is that it denotes a state of absolute devastation: even the "remnant of the remnant" is in jeopardy of annihilation. In fact, even their desire to return to Judah will be truncated. Jeremiah is clear that he is not speaking of "permanent Jewish settlers in Egypt (v. 14) but only to the remnant who had sought refuge there with the hope of returning to the land of Judah at the earliest opportunity."[48] Perhaps the point is being made that the future did not lie with those who determined to go to Egypt, even if they intended to return to their homeland later.

The last phrase of v. 14, *kî lō'-yāsûbû kî 'im-pᵉlēṭîm,* "they shall not return, except fugitives," seems to contradict v. 14a where no such allowance is made. For this reason, it is often treated as a gloss by commentators.[49] However, this may be a stylistic device designed to deliberately denote the effect of the judgment. As Thompson affirms, "If a very few return to the homeland it will be so few as merely to emphasize the extent of the judgment on the community in Egypt."[50] The total effect of the picture presented here is one of unrelenting judgment on the remnant. Indeed, "Only *casual fugitives* will survive. For the remnant the picture is one of unrelieved gloom."[51] To be certain, the decimation of the people and their landlessness point to the insignificance of the remnant. A people without roots, destined to destruction, signals their rejection as the people of God.

Here again, a cluster of remnant terms are combined in a message of blistering judgment against the Judeans who survived the Babylonian onslaught in 586 B.C.E.

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[46]For land as a theological theme in the prophets, see H. Wildberger, "Israel und sein Land," *Evangelische Theologische* 16 (1956): 404-22; F. Dreyfus, "Le théme de l'héritage dans l'AT," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques Théologiques* 42 (1958): 3-49.

[47]For the motif of the familiar triad of destruction: sword, famine, pestilence, see Jer 14:12; 21:7,9; 24:10; 27:8,13; 29:17,18; 32:24,36; 34:17; 38:2; 42:22; and 44:13.

[48]Charles L. Feinberg, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 642.

[49]J. P. Hyatt, "Jeremiah: Introduction and Exegesis," *Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 5, ed. George A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 1098; Bright, *Jeremiah*, 264; Holladay, 304.

[50]Thompson, 678.

[51]Feinberg, 642 (emphasis mine).

Jer 47:2-7

In this passage, we find the only use of the *śārîd* in the context of a judgment oracle against a foreign nation in the book of Jeremiah.

Translation and Textual Considerations

(2) Thus says the Lord,
"Behold, waters are rising from the north
    And they will be like an overflowing river;
And they shall overflow the land and all that is in it,
    The city and all who dwell in it.
Men shall cry out.
    And all who dwell in the land shall wail.
(3) At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his stallions,
    at the rushing of his chariots and the rumbling of their wheels.
Fathers do not turn back for their children
    Because their hands are feeble.[52]
(4) *Because that day*[53] *is coming to destroy all the Philistines*
    To cut off for Tyre and Sidon every survivor (*śārîd*), *helper*[54]
For Yahweh will destroy the Philistines[55]
    The remnant (*šᵉʾērît*) *of the island*[56] *of Caphtor*
(5) Baldness has come to Gaza

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[52]MT *mēripyôn yādāyim*, lit. "because of sinking of hands."

[53]Duane L. Christensen, *Transformation of the War Oracle in Old Testament Prophecy: Studies in the Oracles Against the Nations*, Harvard Dissertations in Religion 3 (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1975), 212, reads *'al-hayyôm*, "on that day" at the end of v. 3.

[54]MT *lᵉhakrît lᵉṣōr ûlᵉsîdôn kôl śārîd 'ōzēr*, "to cause to cut off for Tyre and Sidon every survivor, helper" is rendered by LXX as *kai aphanizō tēn Turon kai tēn Sidōna kai pantas tous kataloipous tēs boethēias auton*, "and I will destroy Tyre and Sidon and all the rest of their allies."

Holladay, 334, following the Vulgate, revocalizes from a hiphil infinitive construct, *lᵉhakrît* to niphal infinitive *lᵉhikkᵉrēt*, and construes the preposition *lᵉ* before Tyre and Sidon as introducing the agents. The phrase is then rendered: "(to be cut off) *by* Tyre and Sidon . . . ." (emphasis mine).

[55]LXX lacks "the Philistines." John Gerald Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 6 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 59, sees it as a gloss from v. 4a.

[56]MT *ʾî kaptôr*, "the isle of Caphtor," is translated in LXX as *tōn nēsōn* "the islands," which is equivalent to *hāʾiyyîm* as suggested by *BHS*. Both Holladay, 334, and Janzen, 59, 74, accept the emendation but translate "the coasts."

Ashkelon has been silenced[57]
O Remnant (*šᵉ'ērît*) of their strength[58]
How long will you gash yourselves?
(6) Ah[59] sword of the Lord,
When will you rest (be quiet)?
Return to your scabbard,
Rest and be still.
(7) How can you rest,[60]
When the Lord has given it an order?
Against Ashkelon and seashore he has appointed it.

Structure

It is generally agreed that this oracle divides into two sections: (1) vv. 2-5: a war oracle of doom against Philistia; and (2) vv. 6-7: a song of Yahweh's sword (the agent of Philistia's destruction).[61]

This strophic division is based on the fact that in the first section, pairs of short cola are given while in the second, introduced by the vocative *hōy*, there is an unusual metrical pattern.[62] Both sections are linked by certain key concepts:

[57]MT *nidmᵉtah,* "destroyed" (if the root is *dmm*) or "silenced" (if the root is *dmh*). Commentators favor the latter: Bright, *Jeremiah*, 309; Carroll, 776; Thompson, 695. LXX *aperriphē,* "cast away," seems to point to the first. The ambiguity of the root strengthens the sense of punitive damage: Ashkelon has perished, that is, been rendered silent.

[58]MT *šᵉ'ērît 'imqām,* "the remnant of their valley," seems awkward. Bright, *Jeremiah*, 310, suggests that *'mq* has the force of "strength" as attested in Ugaritic, rendering the translation, "O you last of their strength." So too Christensen, 212. Both follow the lead of G. R. Driver, "Difficult Words in the Hebrew Prophets," in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Presented to Professor Theodore H. Robinson*, ed. H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950), 61.

Albert Condamin, *Le Livre de Jérémie*, 3d ed., Etudes biblique (Paris: Lecoffre, 1936), 309, and Rudolph, 272, say that it is plausible that a city name has dropped out. Since Gaza and Ashkelon have already been mentioned, then Ashdod appears favorable; hence, "Ashdod, the remnant." However, textual evidence is completely lacking.

LXX has *kai hoi kataloipoi Enakim*, "and the remnant of the Anakim," the race of giants who inhabited Canaan before Israel settled there (Num 13:22; Deut 1:28). According to Josh 11:22, remnants of these people were found in the Philistine cites of Gaza and Ashdod.

[59]LXX lacks *hôy*.

[60]MT, *'ēk tišqōṭî,* "how can *you* rest?" Some versions read *tišqōṭî,* "how can *it* rest?"

[61]Christensen, 213.

[62]See conveniently, Holladay, 335, for the division by cola.

"Yahweh" (vv. 4,6,7); "isle" (v. 4) and "shore" (v. 7); the questions *'ad-māṭay*, "how long?" (v. 5) and *'ad- 'ānāh*, "how long?" (v. 6 and *'êk*, "how?" (v. 7).[63]

The entire passage is generally accorded to Jeremiah, without any literary dependence on other oracles against Philistia contained in the prophets (Isa 14:29-32; Ezek 25:15-17; Amos 1:6-8; Zeph 2:4-7).[64]

Historical Background

Jer 47:2 says that this oracle against the Philistines came before Pharaoh attacked Gaza. Several positions have been put forward regarding this occasion: (1) Some connect it with the activity of Pharaoh Neco in Philistia subsequent to his victory over Josiah in 609 B.C.E. This theory is based on the statements of Herodotus, which claim that after the battle of Megiddo, Neco destroyed the city of Kadytis, usually identified with Gaza, in 609 B.C.E.[65] (2) Gaza's defeat points to the Babylonian conquests in Palestine after the defeat of Egypt in 605 B.C.E.[66] (3) In late 601 B.C.E. Pharaoh Neco defeated Nebuchadnezzar, and in an attempt to reassert his authority in Palestine, he destroyed Gaza in 600 B.C.E.[67] (4) H. Tadmor looks at fragments of the poem here in Jer 47 that he thinks point to a rebellion of Ashkelon against the Assyrian emperor Esarhaddon.[68] (5) Perhaps Pharaoh Psamtik I, after his capture of Ashdod, also captured the more southerly cities of Ashkelon and Gaza. This may have happened toward the end of his reign (d. 610 B.C.E.).[69] (6) John Bright thinks that the "most plausible cause" is to connect chap. 47 with the events of the year immediately following 605 B.C.E. when the Babylonians marched into Palestine and destroyed certain Philistine cities.

[63]Note the relation between *dmh* and *dmm*: Ashkelon has been "silenced" (from the effects of war [*dhm* niphal], v. 5) and O sword, be "silent" (that is, " stop killing" [*dmm* qal], v. 6). So *dmm* is intended to be heard in assonance with *dmh*.

[64]Andrew W. Blackwood Jr., *Commentary on Jeremiah* (Waco, TX: Word, 1977), 292.

[65]Herodotus *Hist*. II, 159. Cf. A. Malamat, "The Historical Setting of Two Biblical Prophecies on the Nations," *Israel Exploration Journal* 1 (1950): 154-55, 158; Oded Borowski, "Judah and the Exile," in *Israelite and Judean History*, Old Testament Library, ed. J. H. Hayes and J. M. Miller (London: SCM, 1977), 468.

[66]D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of the Chaldean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), 68-73.

[67]H. J. Katzenstein, " 'Before Pharaoh Conquered Gaza' (Jeremiah 47:1)," *Vetus Testamentum* 33 (1983): 250. He dates the actual giving of the oracle to the fourth year of Jehoiakim (605/604 B.C.E.).

[68]H. Tadmor, "Philistia under Assyrian Rule," *Biblical Archaeologist* 29/3 (1966): 100, n. 52.

[69]Ernst Vogt, "Die neubabylonische Chronik über die Schlacht bei Karkemisch und die Einnahme von Jerusalem," in *Volume de Congréss, Strasbourg, 1956: Vetus Testamentum Supplement 4*, ed. G. W. Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 77. Vogt's deduction is based on the statements of Herodotus, *Hist*. II, 157.

For example, the Babylonian Chronicle shows that Ashkelon was ravaged in December, 604 B.C.E.[70]

Despite all these choices, I have to admit with Bright that with regard to the exactness or the circumstances surrounding the time 'before Pharaoh smote Gaza', "we cannot be sure." [71]

Interpretation

Judgment comes to the fore in this poem against Philistia. The first strophe vividly portrays the terror of battle. The pairs of short cola heighten the emotional content.[72] The overflowing flood of v. 2 is used as a metaphor of destruction by an invading foe. While the foe is unnamed (it comes only from the north),[73] its devastating effect is underscored both in lamentation (*the inhabitants of that land shall howl* v. 2b) and paralysis (*the fathers shall not look back for their children because of enfeebled hands* v. 3b). This is "a paralysis so overwhelming as to inhibit the basic instinct of parent to protect child." [74]

In v. 4 the poem becomes specific for the first time:[75] "the day has come" (*hayyôm habbā'*) for the destruction of the Philistines. This day is synonymous with

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[70]Bright, *Jeremiah*, 312.

[71]Ibid.

[72]Christensen, 213.

[73]That opposition comes from the north has led some exegetes to comment that it could not be the Egyptians (who would come from the south) but the Babylonians. So Bright, *Jeremiah*, 312; Holladay, 337; Thompson, 697. On this basis, it has been forwarded that v. 1 is merely an erroneous interpretation by a later editor. The LXX (which says only, "Concerning the Philistines," in v. 1) is of little help.

Malamat, 155, thinks that the "foe from the north" refers to the Scythians. They were so intrigued to destroy Egypt that while the Babylonian army returned home, they pursued Pharaoh Psamtik I to the border of Egypt. He was able, by means of gifts and entreaties, to persuade them not to invade Egypt. On their retreat, the Scythians invaded the coast of Palestine in the spring of 609 B.C.E., partially devastating Philistia on the way. The echo of their invasion is heard in Jer 47:2-3. After Psamtik I died (610 B.C.E.), Neco assumed the throne, and on his way home after the indecisive siege of Harran in Elul/September 609 B.C.E., he demolished Gaza.

However, this proposal of a Scythian invasion of Palestine has been refuted. See Richard P. Vaggione, "Over All Asia? The Extent of the Scythian Domination in Herodotus," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973): 523-30.

[74]Holladay, 336.

[75]Prior to this, there was a certain ambiguity since neither the speaker nor the audience was named; the king who inflicts the wound was unnamed; even the land to be punished was not mentioned. Ibid., says, "This non-specific tone communicates distance and a kind of cosmic totality."

the "Day of the Lord,"[76] which boils with judgment and defeat. Specificity is advanced by pointing to Tyre and Sidon. Whether or not there was an alliance between these Phoenician cities and the Philistines, "the story of the past showed that the great powers all attacked the persistently rebellious (cf. 27:3) Phoenician seaport towns first of all before descending on Philistia."[77]

Yahweh is identified as the agent of this terrifying disaster. He will destroy the Philistines, "the remnant ($\check{s}^e$'ē rît) of Capthor."[78] The noun $\check{s}^e$'ē rît expresses a

[76]Jeremiah never speaks of the "Day of the Lord," *yôm YHWH*. However, he uses expressions like *yāmîm bā'îm*, "the days come" (7:32; 9:24; 23:5; 31:27,31); *bayyāmîm hāhēm*, "in those days" (3:16,18; 31:29; 50:4,24); *ba 'ēt hāhî*, "at that time" (3:17; 4:11; 8:1; 31:1); *hāy yôm hāhû,* "that day" (46:10; and slight variations in 50:27,30,31); and *hāyyôm habbā'*, "the day has come" (47:4), with essentially the same meaning as *yôm YHWH* in the other prophets. See G. von Rad, " 'Day' in the OT," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 2:946.

See further on the "Day of the Lord" in the OT: M. Weiss, "The Origin of the 'Day of the Lord'–Reconsidered," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 37 (1966): 29-60; F. J. Helewa, "L' origine du concept prophétique du 'Jour de Yahve'," *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 15 (1964): 3-36; F. C. Fensham, " A Possible Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord," *Biblical Essays* (1967): 90-97; Klaus-Dietrich Schunck, "Strukturlinien in der Entwicklung der Vorstellung vom Tag Yahwes," *Vetus Testamentum* 14 (1964): 319-30; C. van Leewen, "The Prophecy of YOM YHWH in Amos 5:18-20," *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 19 (1974): 113-34; J. Gray, "The Day of Yahweh," *Svensk exegetisk årsbok* 39 (1974): 5-37; Y. Hoffman, "The Day of the Lord as a Concept and a Term in the Prophetic Literature," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 93 (1981): 37-50; Ralph W. Klein, "The Day of the Lord," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 39 (1968): 517-25; J. Bourke, "Le Jour de Yahve dans Joel," *Revue Biblique* 66 (1959): 22-28; D. Stuart, "The Sovereign Day of Conquest," *BASOR* 221 (1976): 159-64.

[77]Thompson, 697. Relying on James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2d ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 287-88, Thompson shows how Sennacherib did precisely this in his first campaign.

[78]Cf. Amos 9:7. Capthor is widely identified with Crete (but may be extended to include the Aegean Islands), possibly the original home of the Philistines. While there is still uncertainty regarding the identity and place of origin of these people, it is usually conceded that they were fierce and warlike and were enemies of Israel. Generally described as "Sea Peoples" they assaulted the Mediterranean in the 12th and 11th centuries. They were halted at the frontier of Egypt by Ramses III about 1190 B.C.E., who settled them, mostly as Egyptian mercenaries, in coastal towns of Palestine (which name itself reflects the Philistine presence). There they developed the famed Philistine Pentapolis, a confederation of Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod, together with two towns in the Shephelah, Ekron and Gath.

For more on the Philistines, see Neal Bierling, *Giving Goliath His Due: New Archeological Light on the Philistines* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992); J. C. Greenfield, "Philistines," *IDB* (1962), 3:791-95; W. L. LaSor, "Philistines," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (*ISBE*), ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 3:841-46; Moshe Dothan and Trude Dothan, *People of the Sea: The Search for the Philistines* (New York: Macmillan, 1992); Trude Dothan, *The Philistines and Their*

negative intent here, in that even the "remnant" will be destroyed. This is strengthened by the emphatic *kî* clause introducing Yahweh and repeating the verb *šdd*, "destroy." Hence, the notion of destruction broods in this text. This too is magnified by the parallelism of the text: *Because that day is coming to destroy all Philistines* parallels *For Yahweh will destroy the Philistines*. Further, *to cut off for Tyre and Sidon every survivor, helper* parallels *the remnant of the island of Caphtor*. What is in view here is nothing short of the notion of the wiping out of the group so that not even a remnant is left.[79] This is confirmed in the emphasis placed on destruction, especially as this is expressed in the use of the verb *krt*.

Verse 5 confirms the terror of judgment by pointing out the response of the Philistine citizens to the destruction. Three of the common signs of mourning were the funeral rites of shaving the head, silence, and self-laceration.[80] This designated the ruin of Gaza and Ashkelon, "the last remnant of their strength," that is, of the Philistines. Long known as historic strongholds of Philistine resistance, Gaza[81] and Ashkelon[82]—the remnant of Philistine strength—plummet to destruction.

Material Culture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); H. J. Katzenstein and Trude Dothan, "Philistines," Anchor Bible Dictionary (*ABD*), ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 5:326-33; R. A. S. MacAlister, *Philistines: Their History and Civilization* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1965); Kenneth A. Kitchen, "The Philistines," in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 53-78; W. F. Albright, "Syria, the Philistines, and Phoenicia," in *Cambridge Ancient History*, 3d ed., vol. 2, Part 2: *History of the Middle East and the Aegean Region c. 1380-1000 B. C.*, ed. I. E. S. Edwards, C. J. Gadd, N. G. L. Hammond, and E. Solberger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 507-16.

[79]Julian Morgenstern, "The Rest of the Nations," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 2 (1957): 225-31, argues that this refers to a calamity that removed a considerable portion of the citizenry and rendered the nation numerically but a remnant of its former self. This historic event he traces of Xerxes' fouled foray into Greece in 481 B.C.E. By 479 B.C.E. the remnants of the Persian army were expelled from Greece. Since nations like Philistia and Edom, which assisted Xerxes, were depleted of population, especially of men who died in battle or who refused to return home for one reason or another, they were called *šᵉ'ērît hagôyim* (Ezek 36:3-5).

[80]Carroll, 777; Thompson, 697.

[81]A city of long history, Gaza was the land gateway between Egypt and Asia for caravan and military traffic. It appears that it was not initially conquered by the Israelites (cf. Josh 13:2-3; Judg 3:1-3). Judg 1:18 in LXX says, "Judah did not capture Gaza."

Ancient reliefs show Gaza to be extremely well fortified. See H. J. Katzenstein, "Gaza," *ABD* (1992), 2:912-15; W. F. Stinespring, "Gaza," *IDB* (1962), 2:357-58; A. F. Rainey, "Gaza," *ISBE* (1982), 2:415-18.

[82]Ashkelon, a city with a long eventful history, is first mentioned in the Execration Texts of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt (ca. 1850 B.C.E.) where it is vilified as a rebellious element and enemy of Egypt. Seemingly, it was not conquered by the Israelites. See Douglas L. Esse, "Ashkelon," *ABD* (1992), 1:487-90; W. F. Stinespring, "Ashkelon," *IDB* (1962), 1:252-54; J. F. Prewitt, "Ashkelon," *ISBE* (1979), 1:318-19.

In the second strophe (vv. 6-7), introduced by a vocative, Yahweh's sword is personified as the "destroyer." Duane L. Christensen remarks, "The imagery is that of holy war with the Divine Warrior marching in battle against Philistia."[83] The name "Yahweh" connects this strophe with the first. The question, "How long/Until when will you be silent (rest)?" has the same purpose. As Holladay detected, Ashkelon has been "silenced" (from the effects of war), so now, the sword is asked to be "silent," that is, to stop the killing.[84] But as the further question of v. 7 indicates,[85] any attempt to restrain the sword of Yahweh before its work of destruction is complete will be futile. Hence, the ambiguity of the "foe from the north" is clarified. While the identity of the invading force is not given, Yahweh is the holy warrior who marches from the north wielding His sword to cut off the Philistines. Regardless of the identity of the actual army (that is, the stallions and chariots of v. 3a) it "is but the means he uses to vent his spleen."[86] The fury of the judgment is so great against the Philistine towns and seacost[87] that there is no survivor or remnant.

The fury of the judgment is enunciated in the completeness of its effect in that there will be no survivor (*śārîd*). This word belongs to the language of warfare,[88] and it is precisely Yahweh's war declared against the Philistines that renders havoc to the point that no survivor is left. This is highlighted in that *śārîd* is used in conjunction with *šᵉʼērît*, both in a negative context. The intent is transparent— complete destruction for Philistia so that there will be no survivor (*śārîd*) and no helper (*ōzēr*).[89] The noun *śārîd* points exclusively to destruction. Used in a negative way, it "leads to the inescapable conclusion that the reality of total loss is

[83]Christensen, 215.

[84]Holladay, 335.

[85]Note how the verb *škt*, "to be quiet, to rest," in v. 7 echoes the same verb in v. 6. Hence *ad-ʼānāh lōʼ tiškōṭî*, "Until when will you be quiet?" (v. 6); *ʼēk tiškōṭî*, "How can you be quiet?" (v. 7).

Note also the parallelism between the second and fourth cola: *When the Lord has given it an order* parallels *He has appointed it*.

[86]Carroll, 777.

[87]Thompson, 698, believes that the prophecy against Ashkelon and the coast in v. 7 was fulfilled in 604/3 B.C.E. when Nebuchadnezzar overran it. A clue to this is found in a letter found at Saqqara, written in Aramaic, where Adon, king of Ashkelon, seeks help from Pharaoh Neco because the Babylonian troops had advanced to Aphek. See H. L. Ginsberg, "An Aramaic Contemporary of the Lachish Letters," *BASOR* 111 (1948): 24-27; John Bright, "A New Letter in Aramaic Written to a Pharaoh in Egypt," *Biblical Archaeologist* 12 (1949): 46-52.

[88]Hasel, 196.

[89]The two nouns are juxtaposed, giving the notion of an alliance. While there is no historical evidence of such an alliance, Holladay, 338, makes a case from Amos 1, where an oracle against Tyre (vv. 9-10) parallels an oracle against Philistia (vv. 6-8). He concludes that an alliance is not unlikely. (Cf. Ps 83:3 that pairs Philistia and the inhabitants of Tyre.)

emphasized.[90] This is strengthened by the parallel infinitives: *to destroy all the Philistines* parallels *to cut off for Tyre and Sidon every survivor, helper*.

Again, by combining another remnant word ($š^e$ '$\bar{e}rît$) with $\acute{s}\bar{a}r\hat{\imath}d$, Jer 42:2-7 becomes rife with divine punitive action against a people. This time it is not directed against Judah but against a foreign nation, Philistia, the traditional enemies of God's people. This poem elucidates the effect of Yahweh wielding His bloodthirsty sword against Philistia. He marches from the north and His insatiable sword cuts down Philistia until there is no survivor ($\acute{s}\bar{a}r\hat{\imath}d$).

Conclusion

The noun $\acute{s}\bar{a}r\hat{\imath}d$ functions as a powerful testament of judgment in the book of Jeremiah. In all three passages examined, the clarion call for judgment is unmistakable. Furthermore, the judgment comes from God. He is the One who calls for and executes His divine wrath. The nature of the judgment is such that there will be no remnant remaining. Yahweh's work is total; there is no escape.

[90]Hasel, 198.