The History of Isaiah

Edited by
JACOB STROMBERG
and J. TODD HIBBARD

Forschungen
zum Alten Testament

Mohr Siebeck

Forschungen zum Alten Testament

Edited by

Konrad Schmid (Zürich) · Mark S. Smith (Princeton)
Hermann Spieckermann (Göttingen) · Andrew Teeter (Harvard)

150

The History of Isaiah

The Formation of the Book and its Presentation of the Past

Edited by

Jacob Stromberg and J. Todd Hibbard

Mohr Siebeck

Jacob Stromberg, born 1974; D. Phil. Oxford; since 2011 Lecturer in Old Testament at Duke University.
orcid.org/0000-0002-4002-4918

J. Todd Hibbard, born 1968; PhD University of Notre Dame; since 2011 Associate Professor of Religious Studies, University of Detroit Mercy.
orcid.org/0000-0003-1010-9184

ISBN 978-3-16-156097-2 / eISBN 978-3-16-160805-6
DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-160805-6

ISSN 0940-4155 / eISSN 2568-8359 (Forschungen zum Alten Testament)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available at *http://dnb.dnb.de*.

The book was typeset by epline in Böblingen using Minion typeface, printed on non-aging paper by Gulde Druck in Tübingen, and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

Preface

The book of Isaiah is a product of history. The nature of that history and what it means that Isaiah is a product of it are hardly matters of consensus in the field. This should be expected. History is complex. And it probably confounds, more often than it confirms attempts to understand it completely. Even so, Isaianic scholarship has put its collective finger on the crux of the methodological problem. At the heart of an historical understanding of this prophetic book lies a consideration of the word "history" in two distinct but related applications. First, what historical processes led to the book's final form? And second, what kind of historical representation does the book offer to the reader? The former question examines how Isaiah became a book. The latter inspects its presentation of history, a complex presentation involving diverse modes of exposition (prophetic forecasting, poetic reflection on the present, and prose accounts of the past). This history engages the Biblical traditions and it involves Israel's dealings with the great empires of the Ancient Near East, much of which lay in the past from the point of view of the book's final form. For most scholars, answering either question involves asking the other, the diachrony of the book being related to the presentation of history found therein and vice versa. To understand better the history of Isaiah, this volume of essays devotes itself to these two lines of inquiry and their relationship.

To this end, the volume is divided into three parts. The first provides a set of essays devoted to the methodological issues involved in examining the diachrony of the book of Isaiah and its presentation of history. In this section, the aim is to enable reflection upon the analytical procedures presupposed in the diachronic and synchronic studies presented by the second and third parts of the volume. The second part offers a consideration of the history of Isaiah in the light of the Biblical traditions. From an historical perspective, these traditions remain indispensable, even foundational for understanding the history of Isaiah. This is true regarding Isaiah's textual diachrony as well as its historical representation. Here this relationship is examined in relation to differing stages in the textual formation of Isaiah and the Hebrew Bible. The third part of this volume investigates the history of Isaiah by means of a focus on those empires explicitly mentioned in the book. The rationale guiding the selection of those foreign empires here investigated (Assyria, Babylon, and Persia) derives from the pivotal role played by Israel's interaction with these nations in the formation of the book in each of its major stages.

In structuring the volume this way, we hope the reader will perceive the whole and not just the parts. Theory and practice are bound together every bit as much as are the histories of the Bible and the Ancient Near East. Thus, our aim in putting this volume together is to provide the reader with a methodologically informed treatment of this central topic – the history of Isaiah – as it spans the whole book, relates to the traditions of the Bible, and emerges out of the complexities of life in the Ancient Near East. Moreover, our goal in selecting contributors was to provide a representative handling of this complicated topic, one reflecting the differing perspectives at play in the field today. In an undertaking of this scope, it is perhaps inevitable that gaps in coverage will, nonetheless, remain.

Durham/Detroit, May 2021 Jacob Stromberg and J. Todd Hibbard

Table of Contents

Part 2
The Biblical Traditions and the History of Isaiah

Part 3
The Ancient Near East and the History of Isaiah

Part 1

Perspectives on Studying the History of Isaiah

The Contribution of Assyriology to the Study of Isaiah

Shawn Zelig Aster

1. Literary Criticism of Isaiah 1–39 and Historical Questions

That Isa 1–39 address Assyria is hardly a new concept. It is obvious to every reader of the book that the Assyrian threat figures prominently both in the narrative sections in chapters 7, 20, 36–39, and in the prophetic oracles such as those contained in those narrative sections, as well as in 10:5–15, 31:1–9, and many others. Many other polities of the ancient world are mentioned in Isaiah, such as Egypt in chapters 18–19 and 30–31, Babylon in chapters 13–14, and the smaller kingdoms of Syro-Palestine in chapters 15–17 and 23. But the primary opponent of Judah portrayed in Isa 1–39 was Assyria, and the mentions of this empire are prominent reminders that Isaiah is a book situated in history.

Nevertheless, a profoundly ahistorical approach to Isaiah permeates some strands of scholarship. Thus, in the initial stages of scholarship, Duhm and Marti focused their historical interest solely on identifying the original components of the book, without closely correlating the stages of literary composition to political or historical events known to us from the cuneiform material.[1] Duhm, followed by Marti and by nearly all subsequent scholars, posited a complex and protracted redactional process for the book of Isaiah. He argued that many "collectors" added to a "first kernel" of the book created by Isaiah of Jerusalem.[2] Marti assigned somewhat later dates than Duhm to parts of chapters 1–35, placing much of the material in the post-exilic period.[3] Written in the late 19th century, their work makes scant use of our knowledge of Assyria, derived from cuneiform materials. Although many of these had been discovered and deciphered by this period,[4] the accuracy of the decipherment was still open to question, and the

[1] Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja übersetzt und erklärt*, HKAT 3/1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892; 4th edition 1922); Karl Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja*, KHAT 10 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1900).

[2] Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 7–12.

[3] See especially the chart on p. 18 of the introduction in Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja.*

[4] For example, Samuel Birch, *Records of the Past: Being English Translations of Assyrian and Egyptian Monuments* (London: Bagster, 1873–1881), 12 volumes.

data they contained was not yet ripe for the use of biblical scholars. Partly for this reason, their assignment of passages in Isaiah to particular literary strata was grounded neither in the historical details of which scholars became aware from the Assyrian texts, nor in linguistic comparisons between the language of Isa 1–39 and those of these texts.

A more historically-grounded approach was taken by Barth, who profoundly influenced subsequent scholarship.[5] Advancing in 1977 the idea of an "Assur-redaktion," Barth tied the posited literary strata of Isa 1–39 to historical events, the details of which were well-known to scholars by Barth's time, partly due to the many Assyrian royal inscriptions published by that time.[6] As is well-known, the primary impetus behind Barth's theory was the divergent views of Assyria in Isa 1–39: it is difficult to see how the view that YHWH sent Assyria to punish Israel in 7:17 could be uttered by the same author and in the same period as the expectation found in 10:5–19 that Assyria will suffer a divine judgment. Barth proposed assigning different passages to different periods, based on the political realities at different points in history. He assigned the passages viewing Assyria as a divine emissary to the late eighth-century, when Assyrian power was at its height, and assigned those envisioning an Assyrian downfall to the late seventh century. At this period, in the reign of Josiah, passages were re-edited to include predictions of Assyria's demise. While Barth's thesis of a large-scale re-editing of Isaiah passages in the reign of Josiah owes a great deal to our understanding of the history of Assyrian power (an understanding reached partly based on the Assyrian texts), Barth does not engage in textual comparisons between Assyrian texts and the language of passages in Isa 1–39.

The methodological transition from the redactional criticism of Duhm and Marti to that of Barth, therefore, rests primarily in the latter's use of historical transitions as a means of dating concepts in Isa 1–39. But although Barth's work integrates a clearer historical awareness than that of earlier scholars, he does not consider the possibility of a more direct connection between passages in Isa 1–39 and Assyrian materials. His use of Assyrian materials takes an approach similar in some ways to that used by proponents of the theory of structuration, who argue that agents (in this case the authors of Isa 1–39) and social structures, including resources (in this case the Assyrian empire's political fortunes), inter-

[5] Hermann Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte in der Josiazeit*, WMANT 48 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1977).

[6] Publications of primary texts directly relevant to Isaiah include: Daniel David Luckenbill, *Annals of Sennacherib*, Oriental Institute Publications 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924); idem., *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1927); Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, Texts from Cuneiform Sources 5 (Locust Valley: Augustin, 1970). This material was popularized by the monumental collection edited by James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950; 2nd edition, 1955; 3rd edition with supplement, 1969).

act.[7] Agents are bounded by structure and therefore, the authors of Isa 1–39 formulated prophecies of Assyrian downfall when said downfall was relevant to the structures they experienced in history.

The weakness of this approach was exposed by many, most prominently in Williamson's recently-published critique of Barth's dating. The passages that Barth assigned to the late seventh century, argued Williamson, could more properly be dated to the post-exilic period, when Assyria was but a memory.[8] This critique demonstrates the problematic nature of tying texts to historical periods based primarily on general similarities between the historical circumstances envisioned in the texts and the political and social structures of particular periods. A more specific and unique connection between the historical period and the text whose dating is under consideration is required, in order to more confidently tie the text to a particular period.

Such a unique connection can be found in specific linguistic similarities between passages in Isa 1–39 and specific Assyrian texts. The clear advantage of linguistic similarities over thematic ones is that the former more convincingly demonstrate that the texts they contain have been composed such that one text influenced another. A brief discussion of this premise is needed before returning to discuss Isaiah, for the advantage of linguistic similarities over theoretical ones will prove important to our consideration of the importance of Assyriology for the study of Isaiah. This advantage can be illustrated by considering two groups of texts, such that group A contains texts in different languages expressing similar themes, while group B contains texts in different languages using similar expressions and linguistic structures. Similarities in themes *might* result from these themes being prevalent in a particular time and place, but because themes are by their nature the product of shared human experience, it is equally probable that the author of one of these texts could have independently come up with the theme found in the other texts. In contrast to themes, expressions and linguistic structures are specific to languages and cultures. Therefore, where a text uses specific linguistic formulations, or specific expressions, which are unusual in the language of the text, but are common in a different language, one can safely deduce a process of borrowing and/or influence on the text under consideration. In a nutshell, if a man is asked his age and replies "I have 40 years," one can safely assume that the expression derives from French (or another language using this form to express age), just as one can assume that a French text offering to explain the universe

[7] Of which the salient work is Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984).

[8] Hugh G. M. Williamson, "The Theory of a Josianic Edition of the First Part of the Book of Isaiah: A Critical Examination," in *Studies in Isaiah: History, Theology, and Reception,* ed. Tommy Wasserman, Greger Andersson, and David Willgren, LHBOTS 654 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 3–21.

"dans une coquille de noix" is a literal translation of the English expression with which this sentence began.[9]

Of course, identifying influence on texts is not easily reducible to nutshells (any more than the universe is). The discussion above owes much to the work of my teacher Jeffrey Tigay and his student Meir Malul.[10] Both argued that to demonstrate literary dependence, motifs in biblical texts and in cuneiform ones must have unusual elements that are unlikely to have been independently generated in the biblical passage under question. Expressions that are expected or fit well in Akkadian or Sumerian, but which betray linguistic irregularities in the biblical text cannot reasonably be considered to have been developed in the biblical text without regard for the cuneiform one; they show that the biblical text was influenced by an Akkadian or Sumerian text. Carly Crouch, in her work on Deuteronomy, has attacked the question of identifying influence from a different angle.[11] Drawing on Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation*, she argues that if we are to demonstrate that a biblical text intentionally references a cuneiform text, we must show that the Biblical text overtly signals its references to the older work in such a way as to make the reference clearly perceptible to the intended audience. Crouch introduces into the discussion issues of specificity of reference, and authorial intent, which did not figure prominently in the writings of earlier proponents of comparative study of biblical and Assyrian texts. She notes that "The more complex the relationship between the source and other potential sources, and the more specific the author intends to be in identifying the source, the more specific the signal needs to be …"[12] Questions of specificity of source are important in discussing the Assyrian texts on which Isaiah draws, and we will return to these below.

But for now, it suffices to note that if we can follow the comparative methodology articulated by Tigay and by Malul, and if we can identify the types of Assyrian texts to which passages in Isaiah refer, we can move a long way past the approaches of Duhm, Marti, and Barth. More specifically, we can move towards better answers to the question which motivated the work of Duhm, Marti, and Barth (and many more): What can we know about the process which produced the current text of Isaiah?

---

[9] Stephen Hawking, *L'univers dans une coquille de noix*, transl. Christian Cler (Paris: Odille Jacob, 2001).

[10] Jeffrey H. Tigay, "On Evaluating Claims of Literary Borrowing," in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo*, ed. Mark E. Cohen, Daniel C. Snell, and David B. Weisberg (Bethesda: CDL, 1993), 250–55; Meir Malul, *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1990).

[11] Carly Crouch, *Israel and the Assyrians: Deuteronomy, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon and the Nature of Subversion*, ANEM 8 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

[12] Crouch, *Israel and the Assyrians*, 24.

The literary and redactional questions about the text of Isaiah are essentially historical questions, because the processes described take place within a historical context. They can therefore be answered by adducing literary comparisons to texts with firm historical anchors. If we can show clear evidence that Assyrian expressions and motifs, current only during certain historical periods, suffuse certain passages in Isaiah, then we will have gone a long way towards identifying the date of composition of these passages.

Certain caveats must first be addressed. The first of these is the possibility that the expressions and motifs which we know from Assyrian texts entered the spoken languages of the Levant, notably Hebrew and Aramaic, during the period in question (the late eighth and early seventh centuries BCE). If these expressions and motifs became commonly-used, then the possibility of tying the date of composition to such expressions vanishes. Next is the possibility that very brief citations in Isaiah might contain these expressions, and these very brief citations were then expanded into longer passages by editors who worked long after the connection between the Akkadian sources and the Hebrew expressions was known.[13] Both of these caveats can be addressed by noting that the passages in question, in Isa 1–39, do not simply cite these expressions or motifs. Rather, these passages re-work these motifs in subverting Assyrian ideology. They demonstrate an acute awareness of how these expressions and motifs functioned in Assyrian texts and of the connections between these and Assyrian ideology. They then attempt to subvert Assyrian ideology by using expressions found in Assyrian ideology.

These points can best be demonstrated by examining a few of the relevant passages in Isaiah. We begin with a brief survey of the comparative study of Isa 1–39 and Assyrian royal inscriptions. We then move to discuss two specific passages in which the use of Assyrian motifs and their subversion demonstrate that passages from Isa 1–39 date to the Assyrian period (corresponding roughly to the century following the rise to power of Tiglath-pileser III in 744 BCE).

2. The Use of the Comparative Method in Studying Isaiah 1–39

The years 1979–1983 saw the publication of two important studies comparing the language of Assyrian royal inscriptions of the eighth and seventh centuries to the language of Isa 1–39. Chaim Cohen's 1979 paper on the Rabshakeh's speech in Isa 36:4–10 (parallel to II Kings 18:19–25) demonstrated that the language of this passage "contain(s) Neo-Assyrian reflexes," and could not have been written

[13] I consider these caveats and note sources for them in Shawn Zelig Aster, *Reflections of Empire in Isaiah 1–39: Responses to Assyrian Ideology*, ANEM 19 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 30–35.

without authentic knowledge, oral or written, of Neo-Assyrian formulations.[14] In particular, he focusses on three expressions in Isa 36:4–6 (cf. II Kings 18:19–21). The first is המלך הגדול מלך אשור. The second is מה הבטחון הזה אשר בטחת. And the third is משענת הקנה הרצוץ הזה. He shows that these formulations were used in their Assyrian context in reference to the specific issues discussed in the speech. Therefore, it is clear that the biblical author(s) of this text knew the Assyrian material, and that the speech cannot be a "late literary creation based wholly on Biblical parallels."[15] A more comprehensive paper by Peter Machinist appeared four years later.[16] Although Machinist sets out to examine what the Assyrian empire looked like to others, especially its contemporaries, most of the article is devoted to examining close parallels between passages in Isaiah and those in Assyrian royal inscriptions.[17] These include passages in which Isaiah purports to cite Assyrian diction, as in Isa 37:24 (cf. II Kings 19:23). This passage cites the Assyrian king engaging in a heroic journey to acquire juniper and cedar, tropes well-known from the Assyrian royal inscriptions of the ninth and eighth centuries BCE.[18] Using the methodology discussed above for comparative textual study, Machinist shows that "it is reasonable to conclude that he (Isaiah) learned of it (i. e. of the motif of the heroic journey for wood) from Neo-Assyrian channels."[19] Moving beyond passages which purport to cite the words of Assyrian kings, Machinist discusses Isa 1:7–8, which describe the destruction of Judah using expressions that parallel those of Assyrian formulae used in Assyrian texts to describe the destruction and pillaging of conquered territory. While it may be argued that the language of Isa 1:7–8 simply reflects the standard method used by conquerors of enemy territory in ancient times, and is in no way reflective of particular Assyrian formulations, Machinist notes that "the particular con-

[14] Chaim Cohen, "Neo-Assyrian Elements in the First Speech of the Biblical Rab-Shaqe," *IOS* 9 (1979): 32–48, here 34.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Peter Machinist, "Assyria and its Image in the First Isaiah," *JAOS* (1983): 719–37.

[17] The statement of intent appears at p. 719, and the parallels begin at p. 723. For background on Assyrian royal inscriptions, see now Hayim Tadmor, "Propaganda, Literature, Historiography: Cracking the Code of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the Tenth Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project* (ed., Simo Parpola and Robert McCray Whiting, Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 325–39.

[18] Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image," 723. In *Reflections of Empire*, 263–72, I discuss this passage at some length, and show that additional motifs, which concatenate in several of Sennacherib's royal inscriptions, all appear together in this passage.

[19] Machinist, "Assyria and its Image," 724. Material in parentheses are my additions. For a discussion of how Judahites may have learned about these motfs, see my "Transmission of Neo-Assyrian Claims of Empire to Judah in the Late Eighth Century BCE," *HUCA* 78 (2007): 1–44 and William Morrow, "Tribute from Judah and the Transmission of Assyrian Propaganda," in *"My Spirit at Rest in the North Country" (Zechariah 6.8): Collected Communications to the XXth IOSOT Congress, Helsinki 2010* (ed., Hermann Michael Niemann and Matthias Augustin; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2011), 183–92.

secution of expressions here … is unique in the biblical corpus."[20] He notes that the following series of phrases (**ארצכם שממה, עריכם שרפות אש, אדמתכם לנגדכם זרים אכלים אותה**) is unique to this passage and to the standard formulation found in Assyrian royal inscriptions. This commonality strongly suggests that the author of Isa 1:7–8 was familiar with the language of Assyrian royal inscriptions.

These examples (and there are several more in Machinist's article, some of which I discuss below) raise two important questions. First: what is meant by "the standard formulation found in Assyrian royal inscriptions?" The topic of how Assyrian royal inscriptions were composed has been amply addressed elsewhere.[21] Here, it suffices to note that the inscriptions, composed to glorify the king in accordance with the ideological diktat that the king was an invincible universal sovereign, contain many stock phrases, which recur in narrating historical events.[22] There are standard ways to describe the conquest of a city (as noted above), standard expressions that exonerate the king from blame for failure to conquer a city, and many more.[23] This makes it much easier to understand how Judahite authors might have become aware of the phrases used in such inscriptions. They are not necessarily referencing a specific inscription, or even a specific incident described using certain expressions. Rather, they are referencing the ideological construct which is expressed by repeated use of those expressions. This repeated use makes it challenging to date specific passages in Isaiah to the period of specific Assyrian kings based on these expressions, since

[20] Machinist, "Assyria and its Image," 724.

[21] Tadmor, "Propaganda, Literature, Historiography," see n. 17 above; Bustenay Oded, *War, Peace and Empire: Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1992); F. Mario Fales, "The Enemy in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: The Moral Judgement," in *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn* (ed. Hans-J. Nissen and Johannes Renger; Berlin: Reimber, 1987), 425–35; and Mario Liverani, "Thoughts on the Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Kingship," in *A Companion to Assyria*, ed. Eckhart Frahm (London: Wiley and Sons, 2017), 534–46.

[22] The standard reference work on the ideology of Neo-Assyrian kingship remains Mario Liverani, "The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires (*ed. Mogens Trolle Larsen; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), 297–317.

[23] One technique to describe failure to conquer a city is to claim that the Assyrian king cooped up the king of the unconquered city in it "like a bird in a cage." This phrase is well-known from Sennacherib's inscription regarding Jerusalem, but also occurs in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III regarding Damascus. For citation and discussion, see Hayim Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2nd corrected ed., 2004), annal 13, line 11′, p. 79 note 11. Further discussion appears in Davide Nadali, "Sieges and Similes of Sieges in the Royal Annals: The Conquest of Damascus by Tiglath-pileser III," *Kaskal* 6 (2009): 137–50. Another technique used to mask failure to conquer a city is describing the destruction of trees of the besieged city. Such a technique appears in the inscription of Tiglath-pileser III cited above (discussed p. 79 note 12 by Tadmor) and is discussed by Nili Wazana, "Are Trees of the Field Human?: A Biblical War Law (Deuteronomy 20:19–20) and Neo-Assyrian Propaganda," *Treasures on Camels' Humps: Historical and Literary Studies from the Ancient Near East Presented to Israel Eph'al* (ed., Mordechai Cogan and Dan'el Kahn; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2008), 274–95.

identical expressions often occur in the inscriptions of Assyrian kings of the ninth through seventh centuries.[24]

The second question raised by these comparisons relates to the channel through which Judahite writers, such as the author(s) of Isaiah, might have known these Assyrian expressions. This question is central to any consideration of how Assyriological materials can illuminate the text of Isaiah, for without such a channel of transmission, the comparisons remain an unsolved enigma. It must be admitted that any attempt to demonstrate such a channel of transmission will necessarily rely on circumstantial evidence. But circumstantial evidence, as Sherlock Holmes is said to have remarked, can at times be very convincing.[25] We know very clearly that Judahite ambassadors brought tribute to Assyria on a yearly basis from as early as 734 BCE until Judah ceased to be tributary to Assyria, sometime in the third quarter of the seventh century. This knowledge is based on the standard Assyrian practice to require all vassal states to remit such tribute.[26] The visits of these ambassadors are portrayed in many reliefs in Assyrian palaces.[27] We know that the foreign dignitaries were honoured at banquets held on the occasion of these visits, and Winter has argued that the design of the palace was partly influenced by its function as a place to receive these dignitaries.[28] But to view these visits as purely formal acts of politeness would be unreasonably naïve. The purpose of these visits was to inculcate the dignitaries in Assyrian ideology, to convince them that the Assyrian king was indeed invincible (or functionally so) and that Assyria was, at least for the time being, a universal empire. There is no other reasonable explanation for the care and effort invested by the Assyrian empire in these visits. We know that palace officials guided the emissaries through the palace, explaining the reliefs that were

[24] I address this challenge in *Reflections of Empire* and attempt to date certain expressions based on their tendency to appear only in the reign of certain kings. But such expressions are the exception rather than the rule.

[25] "Circumstantial evidence is occasionally very convincing, as when you find a trout in the milk, to quote Thoreau's example." Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor," 1892.

[26] For discussion, see my "Transmission of Assyrian Claims of Empire," 15–20; Morrow, "Tribute from Judah"; and J. Nicholas Postgate, *Taxation and Conscription in the Assyrian Empire* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1974, 121–30.

[27] For examples from the palaces of Assurnasirpal II, Sargon II, and Sennacherib, see respectively Barbara Nevling Porter, "Intimidation and Friendly Persuasion: Re-evaluating the Propaganda of Assurnasirpal II," *Eretz-Israel 27* (Tadmor Volume; 2003), *180–91 (Hebrew); Pauline Albenda, *The Palace of Sargon, King of Assyria: Monumental Wall Reliefs at Dur-Sharrukin, from Original Drawings Made at the Time of their Discovery in 1843–1844 by Botta and Flandin*, Synthese Series 22 (Paris: Recherche sur les civilisations, 1986), 44–48; John Malcolm Russell, *Sennacherib's "Palace Without Rival" at Nineveh* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991), 224.

[28] For evidence of banquets, see Postgate, loc. cit., and for Irene Winter's discussion, see her "'Seat of Kingship'/'A Wonder to Behold': The Palace as Construct in the Ancient Near East," *ArsOr* 23 (1993): 27–55.

Index of Ancient Sources

Hebrew Bible

Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Qumran Material

Assyrian and Babylonian Texts

Ugaritic Texts

Philo and Josephus

New Testament

Inscriptions

Rabbinic Texts

Index of Modern Authors