

TIMOTHY M. RUCKER

The Temple Keys of
Isaiah 22:22,
Revelation 3:7, and
Matthew 16:19

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

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Isaiah 22:22,
Revelation 3:7,
and Matthew 16:19

The Isaianic Temple Background and Its Spatial Significance
for the Mission of Early Christ Followers

Mohr Siebeck

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To
My Parents
Gary and Nancy Rucker
For introducing me to Christ Jesus and scripture.

Preface

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Bloomer, who have loved my wife, Meagan, and our children so well during the periods of time when I had to write. Thank you, Grandma and Papa! Also, if it were not for the faithful parenting of my parents, then this book would never have existed. It is a joy to watch you both as a grandparent, and this book is dedicated to you. There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, but I have two sisters who love me dearly. Thank you, Emily and Sara Grace!

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations of primary sources (ancient texts) and secondary sources follow *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

Chapter 1

The Recalibration of Eliakim's Key

Keys unlock space. Keys sequester space. Keys are key. In Matt 16:19, Jesus says that he will give Peter “the keys of the kingdom of the heavens.”¹ Then, in Rev 3:7, Jesus is holding “the key of David.” But what are the purposes of these keys? What spaces do they unlock? What spaces do they limit? How would such language be spatially understood by the recipients of the Gospel of Matthew and the book of Revelation? In other words, what metaphorically lies behind the soon-to-be-unlocked doors? In order to answer these questions, a passage from Israel's scriptures will prove to be key: Isa 22:22.² In 22:22, “the key of the house of David” will be placed upon Eliakim's shoulder. But what is the purpose of this key? As will be shown in this chapter and in Chapter 3, the opinion of the majority of scholars on 22:15–25 stands to be recalibrated in reference to the temple. Based on this temple “re-keying” of Isa 22:15–25, this study will reconsider the spatial nature of the keys in Matt 16:19 and Rev 3:7 – especially, in regard to sacred space.³

The Lord castigates Shebna and promotes Eliakim in Isa 22:15–25, but the specifics of Shebna's occupation and offense have proved elusive.⁴ Scholars

¹ All translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

² Many Matthean scholars argue for an allusion to Isa 22:22 in Matt 16:19; for example, see R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 625. Also, virtually all scholars see an allusion to Isa 22:22 in Rev 3:7; for example, see Jan Fekkes III, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and their Development*, JSNTSup 93 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 130. In theory, many scholars would debate the legitimacy of allowing the exegetical conclusions of a passage from the Hebrew Bible – as derived from its context – to control the interpretive meaning for a NT allusion. In practice, however, interpreters of Rev 3:7 and Matt 16:19 often default to the standard exegetical interpretation of Isa 22:22; for example, see Robert Martin-Achard, “L'oracle contre Shebna et le pouvoir des clefs,” *TZ* 24 (1968): 241–54, 253–54. In light of this persistent practice, this study will first interpret 22:15–25 within its context before transitioning to the interpretation of Rev 3:7–13 and Matt 16:18–19.

³ The term “re-keying” refers to the process of evaluating existing interpretations and proposing a different interpretation.

⁴ Nili Fox states, “The enigmatic nature of the passage is borne out by the scope of scholarly interpretation. There is disagreement on who is condemned, why they are condemned, and what the metaphors really mean” (Nili Sacher Fox, *In the Service of the King: Officialdom in Ancient Israel and Judah*, MHUC 23 [Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2000], 86, n. 17).

often propose that Shebna oversaw the administration of the palace but that he became conceited and dug his own grave.⁵ Along these grooves, interpreters consider “the key of the house of David” (Isa 22:22) as referring to Shebna’s authority to discern who could enter the king’s presence.⁶ This responsibility may have been part of Shebna’s occupation, but exegetes continue to seek a more specific offense.⁷ Despite a few recent exceptions, interpreters rarely recognize – or bother to explicate – the temple echoes that reverberate throughout Isa 22:15–25 and its ancient versions.⁸ When these echoes are heard alongside an intertextual reading of Shebna’s lack of Isaianic social justice, a new door can be opened for the occasion of this oracle: Shebna failed to enact social justice, and he failed to enable priests to care for the temple.

Apart from Barber, the current temple implications of Isa 22:15–25 have not influenced NT scholarship in a significant way.⁹ Robust studies have contributed to the importance of intertextuality for biblical interpretation, but often only a myopic interpretation of Shebna – that he controls access to the king – continues to be proposed for interpreting the allusion to Isa 22:22 in Rev 3:7 and Matt 16:18–19.¹⁰ Jesus becomes the eternal gatekeeper to God in Rev 3:7,

⁵ For example, see Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 179.

⁶ For example, see Graham S. Ogden and Jan Sterk, *A Handbook on Isaiah: Volume One: Isaiah 1–39*, UBS Handbook Series (Reading, UK: 2011), 604.

⁷ For example, see Nadav Na’aman, “A Violation of Royal Prerogative: The Shebna Prophecy (Isaiah 22.15–19) in Context,” *JSOT* 40 (2016): 451–65.

⁸ For a few recent exceptions in the past 20 years, see the following (in chronological order): Gregory K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 188; Michael Patrick Barber, “Jesus and the Davidic Temple Builder and Peter’s Priestly Role in Matthew 16:16–19,” *JBL* 132 (2013): 935–53, 944–47; Tova Ganzel, “Isaiah’s Critique of Shebna’s Trespass: A Reconsideration of Isaiah 22.15–25,” *JSOT* 39 (2015): 469–87, 483–84; and Antony Dhas Prakasam, “Pride of Babylon and Zion in Isaiah in Light of the Theory of Self-Conscious Emotions” (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2018), 202. Trevor Tibbertsma also notes the possibility of a temple role for Shebna (Trevor Tibbertsma, “‘O Happy Fall’? What Happened to Eliakim in Isaiah 22:15–25?” *ABR* 68 [2020]: 16–27, 19, n. 9).

⁹ Barber, “Jesus and the Davidic Temple Builder.”

¹⁰ The following are some of the more influential studies on intertextuality for this study: Ziva Ben-Porat, “The Poetics of Literary Allusion,” *PTL* 1 (1976): 105–28; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985); Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions*; Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66*, Contraversions (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Kelli S. O’Brien, *The Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative*, LNTS 384 (London: T&T Clark, 2010); Will Kynes, *My Psalm Has Turned into Weeping: Job’s Dialogue with the Psalms*, BZAW 437 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012); Michael Sommer, *Der Tag der Plagen: Studien zur Verbindung der Rezeption von Ex 7–11 in den Posaunen- und*

and the teaching of Peter allows entrance into the kingdom of the heavens in Matt 16:18–19.¹¹ This overemphasis in scholarship on the “eternal” and “heavenly” senses of these passages has inadvertently detracted from a key NT belief: the present reality of God’s kingdom and temple on earth.¹²

As scholars continue to recognize the present claims of the kingdom of God in the NT, some are beginning to employ the method of critical spatiality to ground conceptions of space for early Christ followers.¹³ Scholars have begun to break this ground in the book of Revelation and the Gospel of Matthew, but much work remains to be done.¹⁴ Especially, work remains on how early followers of Christ Jesus viewed themselves as a sacred space for God and how early followers of Christ viewed others as a potential sacred space for God. The purpose of this study is to investigate the significance of the temple for the interpretation of Isa 22:15–25 and to evaluate how the temple imagery of Isa

Schalenvisionen der Johannesoffenbarung und der Tag des Herrn-Tradition, WUNT 2.387 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015); Stefan Alkier, Thomas Hieke, and Tobias Nicklas (eds.), *Poetik und Intertextualität der Johannesapokalypse* WUNT 346 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015); Stanley E. Porter, *Sacred Tradition in the New Testament: Tracing Old Testament Themes in the Gospels and Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016); and B. J. Oropeza and Steve Moyise (eds.), *Exploring Intertextuality: Diverse Strategies for New Testament Interpretation of Texts* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016).

¹¹ For example, see Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, trans. R. A. Wilson, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 158. Roland de Vaux calls Peter “the Vizier of the Kingdom of Heaven” (Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961], 130). Note, however, that the inbreaking of the kingdom of the heavens on earth has been increasingly emphasized in more recent Matthean scholarship.

¹² For example, see Rev 1:6 and 2 Cor 6:16.

¹³ The two most influential theoretical works on critical spatiality for subsequent biblical scholarship are Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); and Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996). Along with the above two studies, the following are some of the more influential works for this study: Karen J. Wenell, *Jesus and Land: Sacred and Social Space in Second Temple Judaism*, LNTS 334 (London: T&T Clark, 2007); Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, SNTSMS 146 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Patrick Schreiner, “Space, Place and Biblical Studies: A Survey of Recent Research in Light of Developing Trends,” *CurBR* 14 (2016): 340–71; and Jorunn Økland, J. Cornelis de Vos, and Karen Wenell (eds.), *Constructions of Space III: Biblical Spatiality and the Sacred*, LHBOTS 540 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

¹⁴ For an example in the book of Revelation, see Jorunn Økland, “Carnelian and Caryatids: Stone and Statuary in the Heavenly Sanctuary,” in *Constructions of Space III: Biblical Spatiality and the Sacred*, LHBOTS 540, ed. Jorunn Økland, J. Cornelis de Vos, and Karen Wenell (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 184–214; for an example in the Gospel of Matthew, see Patrick Schreiner, *The Body of Christ: A Spatial Analysis of the Kingdom in Matthew*, LNTS 555 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

22:15–25 contributes to the worldview of current sacred space for the faithful followers of Christ Jesus in Rev 3:7–13 and Matt 16:18–19.

A. The Blueprint for Recalibration

The remainder of this chapter will briefly overview the history of post-Duhm (1892) research on Isa 22:15–25.¹⁵ Chapter 2 will then lay out the methodology for the undergirding methods of intertextuality and critical spatiality employed in this study. Chapter 3 will propose a new interpretation for Isa 22:15–25. This interpretation will analyze an intratextual link with Isa 33:14–24, and it will evaluate the temple echoes found within Isa 22:15–25 in the Hebrew text, the Old Greek (OG), the Vulgate, the Isaiah Targum, and its possible reception in the Pseudepigrapha and rabbinic literature.¹⁶ Chapter 4 will explore two questions: (1) does Rev 3:7–13 allude to Isa 22:15–25 and how could the allusion be interpreted, and (2) how does the temple imagery of Isa 22:15–25 potentially contribute to the worldview of sacred space for the Philadelphian assembly in Rev 3:7–13? Chapter 5 will examine a similar set of questions: (1) does Matt 16:19 allude to Isa 22:15–25, and (2) how does the temple imagery of Isa 22:15–25 potentially contribute to the worldview of sacred space for the role of Peter in Matt 16:18–19? Chapter 6 will summarize the conclusions of this study, and will propose some implications of this study for future research. In conclusion, this study will contribute to biblical scholarship in the following ways: (1) it will further develop the methods of intertextuality and critical spatiality in the field of Biblical Studies; (2) it will demonstrate that Shebna's crime in Isa 22:15–25 was social injustice and a lack of care for the temple; (3) it will show that OG Isa 22:15–25 is not an actualizing translation; (4) it will incisively argue that the open door of Rev 3:8 is a metaphor for a missionary opportunity; and (5) it will emphasize Peter's door-opening mission to the Jews in Matt 16:19.

¹⁵ Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia übersetzt und erklärt*, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968 [1st ed., 1892]).

¹⁶ "Intratextuality" is a textual connection within the same work. The OG has Isaiah delivering YHWH's oracle in the *παστοφόριον* ("priest's chamber," 22:15), and the Isaiah Targum reads *מפתח בית מקדשא ושלטן בית דוד* ("the key of the house of holiness and the rule of the house of David," 22:22). Furthermore, the Vulgate reads *qui habitat in tabernaculo* ("he who dwells in the tabernacle," Isa 22:15). These ancient versions will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Harry Sysling's statement that Isa 22:22 "describes how Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, is given divine authority over the temple" seems to be primarily based on the interpretation of the Isaiah Targum (Harry Sysling, *Tehiyat Ha-Metim: The Resurrection of the Dead in the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Parallel Traditions in Classical Rabbinic Literature*, TSAJ 57 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996], 136).

B. Modern Research on Isaiah 22:15–25

Bernhard Duhm has greatly shaped the past 125 years of Isaianic scholarship.¹⁷ Therefore, this chapter will survey Duhm's interpretations of Isa 22:15–25 before charting the divergent grooves that interpreters have cut in seeking to unlock this enigmatic oracle. The following interpretations will be highlighted: (1) Shebna's position; (2) Shebna's crime; and (3) the function of Eliakim's key. In conjunction with these interpretations – and in anticipation of findings that will be detailed in Chapter 3 below – special attention will also be given to the following specific details: (1) Shebna's priestly clothing in 22:21 and other potential temple echoes; (2) connections between Isaiah 22 and 33; and (3) the odd imagery of the יתד ("peg") in 22:23–25.¹⁸

I. Bernhard Duhm

Bernhard Duhm was the first to divide Isa 22:15–25 into three separate oracles by three distinct individuals.¹⁹ Duhm argues for the following three divisions: (1) 22:15–18 comes from the prophet Isaiah; (2) 22:19–23 comes from a later hand, who was possibly sympathetic to Eliakim; and (3) 22:24–25 comes from a much later hand – who was hostile towards Eliakim or his family – and this section may have been added after the exile.²⁰ Many interpreters have followed Duhm, with slight variations, in embracing these three general divisions.²¹ One

¹⁷ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia*. In 1960, Edward Kissane writes the following about Duhm's influence: "For half a century the criticism of Isaiah has been following the lines laid down by Duhm in his commentary" (Edward J. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah, Vol. 1 [I–XXXIX]*, rev. ed., [Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1960], v).

¹⁸ The wider context of 22:15–25 will also be treated in Chapter 3.

¹⁹ Note that Ferdinand Hitzig asserted that 22:24–25 was a later addition 60 years before the publication of Duhm's commentary (Ferdinand Hitzig, *Der Prophet Jesaja* [Heidelberg: C. F. Winter, 1833], 269).

²⁰ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 163. The phrase "the prophet Isaiah" will be conveniently utilized throughout this study to denote "the historical figure named Isaiah son of Amoz in the 8th century BC, who is the namesake of the book of Isaiah."

²¹ Thomas K. Cheyne, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, The Sacred Books of the Old and New Testaments 10: A New English Translation with Explanatory Notes and Pictorial Illustrations, ed. Paul Haupt (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1898), 41; Karl D. Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja*, KHC 10, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1900), 174; Otto Procksch, *Jesaia I: Übersetzt und erklärt*, KAT 9.1 (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1930), 288; Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology, Volume II: The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 47–48; Joseph Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique: Isaïe, I–XXXV, miroir d'un demi-millénaire d'expérience religieuse en Israël* (Paris: Gabalda, 1977–78), 1:339–42; Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 13–27: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 393; Antoon Schoors, "Historical Information in Isaiah 1–39," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A. M. Beuken*, ed. J. van Ruiten and M. Vervenne, BETL 132 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 75–

common variation believes that the prophet Isaiah wrote 22:19–23 as well.²² Some exegetes have rejected Duhm (and Hitzig), however, and they continue to maintain that the prophet Isaiah has authored the entire passage (22:15–25).²³ Additionally, Duhm holds that the title to this passage – “against Shebna, who is over the house” (22:15b) – is misplaced and represents a later supplement to the original Isaianic oracle by the later hand that added 22:19–23.²⁴

Duhm accuses Shebna of being a foreign parvenu, and he speculates that such general behavior offended the social mores of the prophet Isaiah.²⁵ He argues that the grave occasioned Isaiah's oracle, and that Isaiah viewed the grave as Shebna's attempt to build a house (Isa 14:18) within Jerusalem.²⁶ Duhm interprets Shebna as the steward of the royal household, and he postulates that the holder of this high position became a prime minister in the civil

93, 89; and Gene M. Tucker, “Isaiah 1–39,” in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 6:25–305, 196–97.

²² Owen C. Whitehouse, *Isaiah I–XXXIX*, The New-Century Bible (New York: Frowde, 1905), 256; George Herbert Box, *The Book of Isaiah* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), 103; George Wöösung Wade, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen, 1911), 146; George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah I–XXXIX*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 376; Ernst Jenni, *Die politischen Voraussagen der Propheten* (Zürich: Zwingli, 1956), 44–45; R. B. Y. Scott, “The Book of Isaiah,” in *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George A. Buttrick et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 5:149–381, 292; Martin-Achard, “L'oracle,” 244; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 337; and Na'aman, “A Violation,” 453–54. Some of the above believe that the prophet Isaiah added 22:19–23 at a later time, and it should be noted that variations abound throughout the secondary literature on two points of division: (1) as to whether 22:19 goes with 22:16–18 or 22:20–23; and (2) as to whether 22:24 goes with 22:20–23 or 22:25.

²³ Adolf Kamphausen, “Isaiah's Prophecy concerning the Major-Domo of King Hezekiah,” *AJT* 5 (1901): 43–74, 45; Franz Feldmann, *Das Buch Isaias, Erster Teil (Kap. 1–39)*, EHAT 14 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1925), 273; H. Louis Ginsberg, “Gleanings in First Isaiah” in *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York: JTS, 1953), 245–62, 255; Kissane, *Isaiah Vol. 1*, 241–42; Paul Auvray, *Isaïe 1–39*, SB (Paris: Gabalda, 1972), 213; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 417; Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39, with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature*, FOTL 16 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 295; Ganzel, “Isaiah's Critique,” 484–86; and Paul R. House, *Isaiah, Volume I* (Fearn, UK: Mentor, 2019), 584–89.

²⁴ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 163–64. Many continue to follow Duhm in holding 22:15b to be a later addition; for example, see Joseph Jensen, *Isaiah 1–39*, OTM 8 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), 183. John T. Willis provides the most extensive and compelling rebuttal of this view (John T. Willis, “Textual and Linguistic Issues in Isaiah 22,15–25,” *ZAW* 105 [1993]: 377–99, 378–81).

²⁵ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 163.

²⁶ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 163–64.

matters of the land.²⁷ He prefers the reading of a single chariot (OG 22:18) in Shebna's possession, and he comments that this chariot was a sign of Shebna's presumption.²⁸ Furthermore, Duhm conjectures that Shebna dipped into the public taxes for his personal use.²⁹ Duhm interprets Shebna's odd clothing as the uniform of the high official, and he does not remark on the possible priestly implications.³⁰ He sees "the key of the house of David" (22:22) as "a badge of his authority," and it refers to Eliakim's power as the steward of the king's household.³¹ Finally, in reference to the "peg" imagery in 22:23–25, Duhm scorns interpreters who take 22:24–25 in reference to Shebna: an interpretation that is "only a result of desperate exegesis."³² A sizable section of scholarship may have understood 22:25 to refer to Shebna in 1892, but this position is now represented by only a minute minority.³³

²⁷ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 164–65.

²⁸ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 164. The מרכבות ("chariots") have been an occasion for comment since Duhm and especially since P. Albert Condamin, *Le Livre d'Isaïe* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1905). The latter (Condamin, *Le Livre*, 152) suggests emending מרכבות ("chariots") to קבר ("grave").

²⁹ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 165.

³⁰ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 164–65.

³¹ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 165; German reads, "als Abzeichen seiner Befugnis."

³² Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 163; German reads, "nur eine Lösung verzweifelter Exegese."

³³ The most recent advocate of this position is Ganzel, "Isaiah's Critique," 485–86. In the last 75 years, at least five other scholars (besides Ganzel) argue for this position: I. W. Slotki, *Isaiah* (London: Soncino, 1949), 105; Ginsberg, "Gleanings," 254; Elmer A. Leslie, *Isaiah, Chronologically Arranged, Translated and Interpreted* (New York: Abingdon, 1963), 73; A. Auret, "A Different Background for Isaiah 22:15–25 Presents an Alternative Paradigm: Disposing of Political and Religious Opposition," *OTE* 6 (1993): 46–56, 52; and Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 297. Many traditional Jewish exegetes have argued that 22:25 refers to Shebna, including David Kimchi (*The Commentary of David Kimchi on Isaiah* [in Hebrew with introduction in English], ed. L. Finkelstein, Columbia University Oriental Studies 19 [New York: AMS Press, 1966], 130) and Ibn Ezra (Ibn Ezra [Abraham ben Meir], *Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah*, trans. M. Friedlander [London: N. Trübner & Co., 1873], 1:103). Ganzel further notes that Radak, Joseph Kara, Isaiah of Trani, and Joseph Caspi also understood Isa 22:25 to refer to Shebna (Ganzel, "Isaiah's Critique," 485, n. 78). Some other influential exegetes have also argued that 22:25 refers to Shebna, including Eusebius of Caesarea (*Eusebius Caesariensis: Werke, Band 9: Der Jesajakommentar*, GCS, ed. Joseph Ziegler [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975], 148–49); Cyril of Alexandria (*Commentary on Isaiah: Vol. II: Chapters 15–39*, trans. Robert Charles Hill [Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2008], 94); Theodoret of Cyrus (*Commentaire sur Isaïe, Tome II: Sections 4–13*, SC 295, ed. Jean-Noël Guinot [Paris: Cerf, 1982], 168); Nicholas of Lyra (*Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria*, ed. Sebastian Brant [Basel: Froben and de Langendorff, 1498]); John Calvin (*Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: Volume I*, trans. William Pringle [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 141); Matthew Henry (*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* [McLean, VA: MacDonald, 1985], 4:121); Campegius Vitringa (*Commentarius in librum prophetiarum Jesaiae, Pars I* [Herborn: Andreae, 1715], 882–83); Robert Lowth (*Isaiah, A New Translation; with a Preliminary Dissertation, and Notes: Critical*,

II. Shebna's Position Post-Duhm

Scholars primarily focus on the two titles ascribed to Shebna in 22:15 – הסבן הזה (“this steward”) and אשר על הבית (“the one who is over the house”) – when they investigate the nature of his position. Interpreters often comment on Shebna's clothing (22:21), but these conclusions are frequently colored by their interpretation of 22:15. Therefore, these two titles will be surveyed briefly below, in turn, before interpretations of Shebna's clothing are considered.³⁴

I. “This Steward”

In 22:15, YHWH commands the prophet Isaiah to go to הסבן הזה (“this steward”).³⁵ The noun סבן (“steward”) occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible, so virtually all commentators hypothesize about Shebna's exact responsibilities.³⁶ Many interpreters conclude that Shebna is the highest official in the land because of the other appellation ascribed to him (22:15b): אשר על הבית (“the one who is over the house”).³⁷ Duhm assigns this latter designation to a later hand,

Philological, and Explanatory [London: J. Nichols 1778], 2:130); Wilhelm Gesenius (*Der Prophet Jesaia* [Leipzig: Vogel, 1821], 707); and Joseph Addison Alexander (*Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953], 391). In the mid-19th century, Alexander writes, “Most writers, therefore, seem to be agreed that the twenty-fifth verse relates to Shebna” (Alexander, *Prophecies of Isaiah*, 391). Additionally, in 1880, Andrew Fausset interprets 22:25 in reference to Shebna with no further argument (Andrew R. Fausset, “The Book of the Prophet Isaiah,” in *A Commentary Critical, Practical and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments, Old Testament Volume II: Proverbs–Malachi*, ed. Robert Jamieson, Andrew R. Fausset, and David Brown [New York: Revell, 1880], 96–294, 164–65).

³⁴ Note that the “key” (22:22) frequently plays an important role in evaluating the position of Shebna and Eliakim, but these findings will receive their own subsection below: “The Function of Eliakim's Key Post-Duhm.”

³⁵ Many scholars propose that the “this” is intentionally derogatory. For example, see John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, rev. ed., WBC 24 (Nashville: Nelson, 2005), 347.

³⁶ For example, Leslie Hoppe calls Shebna “King Hezekiah's chief of staff” (Leslie J. Hoppe, *Isaiah*, New Collegeville Bible Commentary 13 [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012], 61). Also, the feminine noun סכנת (“attendant”) is utilized for the role that Abishag played for David (1 Kgs 1:2, 4). Additionally, Whitehouse (*Isaiah 1–XXXIX*, 257) notices that the noun סבן (“steward”) may be etymologically related to the noun סגן (“official”); the latter term occurs in reference to Mesopotamian officials in the Latter Prophets (Isa 41:25; Jer 51:23, 28, 57; Ezek 23:6, 12, 23) but in reference to Jewish officials in Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 9:2; Neh 2:16 [twice]; 4:14 [8], 19 [13]; 5:7, 17; 7:5; 12:40; 13:11).

³⁷ Scholars often point to Gen 41:40 as a parallel; for example, see Kamphausen, “Isaiah's Prophecy,” 51. In Gen 41:40, Pharaoh bestows the following role on Joseph in Egypt: אתה אתה יהיה על ביתי (“You will be over my house”). This parallel, along with the corresponding language of “chariot(s)” (Isa 22:18; Gen 41:43) and “father” (Isa 22:21; Gen 45:8), leads Wildberger to the following conclusion: “One can imagine that the author of the message about Eliakim had Gen. 45:8 in mind (indeed, the entire role that Joseph had played in

so thorough commentators often explore potential ANE parallels to the Hebrew word סֹכֵן (“steward”) before discussing אִשֶּׁר עַל הַבַּיִת (“the one who is over the house”).³⁸ The Semitic root S-K-N, which the Hebrew verb סֹכֵן (“to be of use/benefit/profit”) derives from, is utilized in other Semitic languages for the title of an official.³⁹ In Akkadian, the title *šaknu* (“governor/appointed official”) – from the Semitic root Š-K-N (*šakānum*, “to place/establish” in Akkadian) – occurs as an equivalent title for officials of various ranks and roles.⁴⁰

Egypt), and viewed Eliakim as a second Joseph, though this one now fulfilled the same function in Israel” (Wildberger, *Isaiah 13–27*, 398). Blenkinsopp also comments on a possible connection with Ahiqar (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 338). Additionally, some scholars point to the parallel of Jotham as co-regent under Uzziah (for example, see Ronald F. Youngblood, *The Book of Isaiah: An Introductory Commentary*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993], 69) because Jotham is described in 2 Kgs 15:5 as עַל הַבַּיִת (“over the house”). Furthermore, Scott Layton points out an interesting parallel in Ugaritic literature (RS 15.177, lines 4–7), where an official has the title *skn bt mlk* (“steward of the house of the king”), and then he is also referred to as *igr [m]lk* (“doorkeeper of the [k]ing”) (Scott C. Layton, “The Steward in Ancient Israel: A Study of Hebrew [‘ašer] ‘al-habbayit in its Near Eastern Setting,” *JBL* 109 [1990]: 633–49, 644; Layton provides the above translations). In contrast, Fox considers all of the above argumentation as unpersuasive (Fox, *In the Service*, 81–88), but she still concludes that אִשֶּׁר עַל הַבַּיִת (“the one who is over the house”) is probably the “highest ranked court official” because of 2 Kgs 10:1–5 (Fox, *In the Service*, 88).

³⁸ Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 163–64. For an example of a thorough commentary on this point, see Willem A. M. Beuken, *Jesaja 13–27*, HThKaT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2010), 273–74. For the most extensive discussion of the evidence – outside of Ugarit – see the following two monographs on Israelite officials: Udo Rüterwörden, *Die Beamten der israelitischen Königszeit: Eine Studie zu šr und vergleichbaren Begriffen*, BWANT 17 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1985), 80–84; and Fox, *In the Service*, 178–82.

³⁹ In two bronze 8th century BC Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus, a *skn* may be “a local governor” (Fox, *In the Service*, 181): סֹכֵן קִרְת־חַדְשֵׁת עֲבַד הַמֶּלֶךְ צִדְנָם (“...U, *skn* of Qarth-ḥadašt, servant of Hiram, king of the Sidonians”; G. A. Cooke, *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions: Moabite, Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Jewish* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1903, 52]); and טֹב סֹכֵן קִרְת־חַדְשֵׁת (“...ṬB, *skn* of Qarth-ḥadašt”; Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, 52). In an Aramaic inscription from Hamath, the title “*skn* of the house of the king” may be extant: אֲדַנְלִרְמ סֹכֵן [ב]יַת מַלְכָּה (“ADNLRM, *skn* of the [ho]use of the king”; KAI 203; Fox, *In His Service*, 181). For evidence of *skn* (“governor”) in Ugaritic, see below.

⁴⁰ Richard Henshaw shows from its widespread use in Akkadian literature that the basic meaning of *šaknu* is “someone who is appointed to do something,” typically by the king (Richard A. Henshaw, “The Office of Šaknu in Neo-Assyrian Times. II,” *JAOS* 88 [1968]: 461–83, 462). The *šaknu* could be the person who manages the horses of the cavalry (J. N. Postgate, “The Place of the Šaknu in Assyrian Government,” *Anatolian Studies* 30 [1980]: 67–76, 70) or the prime minister of a country (Richard A. Henshaw, “The Office of Šaknu in Neo-Assyrian Times. I,” *JAOS* 87 [1967]: 517–525, 525). In the Amarna Letters, Abdi-Hepa, who is writing from Jerusalem, uses the verb *sakānu* (apparently as a West Semitic loanword) with the meaning “to supply/care for” (*EA* 285–288, 290; *CAD* 15, s.v. “sakānu”). Additionally, in the Amarna Letters, the word *sūkinu* is used as West Semitic gloss for *rābišu* (“commissioner”); this gloss occurs in *EA* 256:9 and 362:69 (*CAD* 15, s.v. “sūkinu”;

The root S-K-N is also employed for officials in Ugaritic; moreover, Akkadian documents appear to use *rābiš/šakin/sākin* of X (“official of X”) in foreign correspondence with Ugarit for the Ugaritic “*skn* of X” (“governor/official of X”).⁴¹ Some interpreters have concluded that the title סִכְן (“steward”) in Isa 22:15 refers to “a relatively junior court official.”⁴² But most scholars interpret the appellation סִכְן (“steward”) as synonymous with the “master of the palace” and as an equivalent for the highest official under the king.⁴³

Whitehouse, *Isaiah I–XXXIX*, 257, n. 1). For an English translation of the Amarna letters and the above translation of “commissioner,” see William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

⁴¹ See Anson Rainey, “The Social Stratification of Ugarit” (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1962), 90–96; and Michael Heltzer, *The Internal Organization of the Kingdom of Ugarit* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 1982), 141–52. Based on the Akkadian and Ugaritic evidence at Ugarit, Heltzer delineates three general levels of descending importance for the “*skn* of X” (“governor of X”) in Ugaritic governance: (1) the “*skn* of the country”; (2) the “*skn* of the house of the king”; and (3) the “*skn* of a town/district” (Heltzer, *Internal Organization*, 142–52, where Heltzer provides transliterations and translations of the relevant documents). In light of the above evidence associated with Ugarit – and assuming that the *skn* (“governor”) at Ugarit is valued as a potential parallel – the following question arises: is it a more fitting parallel to view Shebna as a *skn* (“governor”) of the country or as a *skn* (“governor”) of lower status? Since this title is linked with “the one who is over the house” in the book of Isaiah (Isa 22:15) and “the one who is over the house” plays a prominent role elsewhere in the book of Isaiah (36:3, 22; 37:2), then it seems that the most prominent *skn* (“governor”) of Ugarit would provide the best Ugaritic parallel: the *skn* (“governor”) of the country. Heltzer also provides evidence of how the *skn* (“governor”) of the country handled diplomatic relations for the king of Ugarit (Heltzer, *Internal Organization*, 142–46) and how the *skn* (“governor”) of the country may have had some cultic responsibilities (Heltzer, *Internal Organization*, 147–48). Additionally, Heltzer mentions a letter from a Ugaritic chief priest that calls the *skn* (“governor”) of the country “his brother” (Heltzer, *Internal Organization*, 143).

⁴² Ronald E. Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 188.

⁴³ For example, see Joseph Jensen and William H. Irwin, “Isaiah 1–39,” *The New Jerome Bible Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 229–48, 243. One scholarly outlier on the Hebrew term סִכְן (“steward”) is Christopher B. Hays, “Re-Excavating Shebna’s Tomb: A New Reading of Isa 22,15–19 in its Ancient Near Eastern Context,” *ZAW* 122 (2010): 558–75. Hays argues that the word סִכְן should be translated as a “mortuary stela” (Hays, “Re-Excavating,” 565). Na’aman contends that Hays suggestion should “be abandoned” because the Akkadian *sikkanum* is “alien to the reality of Judahite hewn tombs” and because “the term *sikkanum/skn* is known from the second millennium Amorite world ... then disappears, and is never mentioned in texts dated to the first millennium” (Na’aman, “A Violation,” 454, n. 6).

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