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Satire in Isaiah's Tyre Oracle

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Abstract

Most scholars believe that Isaiah's Tyre Oracle is a prophetic lament. This article argues that Isa. 23.1-14 is best understood as a predictive satirical city-lament. In order to make this case, both prophetic satire and the genre of a city-lament are defined. A translation of Isa. 23.1-14 is followed by an investigation of the text's context, verbal markers and perceptible contradictions. Observations on Ezekiel's oracle against Tyre (27.1-11, 26-36) lead to the conclusion that the genre of a city-lament requires treating the downfall as a past event, whereas in terms of history it is still in the future.

The Hebrew prophets were not primarily concerned with writing a record of historical events, charting eschatology for the future or systematically presenting their theology. Fundamentally the prophets were preachers and heralds of Yahweh's word. As such, their sermons are unsurpassed in visionary scope, moral insight, and imaginative impact. This is so because, to a great extent, the prophets used rhetorical strategies in highly effective ways.[1] By means of Isa. 23.1-14 this article will explore the rhetorical strategy of satire[2] in order to propose the idea that Isaiah's Tyre Oracle is a predictive satirical city-lament.

1. J. Barton writes: 'Prophets did not enunciate theological systems or lay down general principles, but spoke rhetorically and with an awareness of the effect their words would be likely to have on their immediate audience' ('Ethics in Isaiah of Jerusalem', in D.J.A. Clines and J.C. Exum [eds.], *This Place is Too Small for Us: The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995], p. 94).
2. Two studies that address prophetic satire in detail are D. Fishelov, 'The Prophet as Satirist', *Prooftexts* 9 (1989), pp. 195-211, and T. Jemielity, *Satire and the Hebrew*

It is generally recognized that 'The greatest satirist among them [Israel's prophets] was undoubtedly the prophet Isaiah, whose orations combine the pungency of satire with the charm of an exquisite poetical style'.[3] Robert Carroll writes, 'There is a strong sense of the ridiculous in many of the sayings in Isaiah. Satire and kaleidoscopic irony remain the dominant thrusts of the book.'[4]

Most scholars read Isa. 23.1-14 as a prophetic lament.[5] Yet both Hans Wildberger[6] and, more recently, Joseph Blenkinsopp[7] propose that Isaiah 23 may be a satirical lament. This investigation will build upon these

Prophets (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992). Jemielity's book deserves close attention, both because it is the most thorough work on the topic to date, and because it makes several points that have a direct relevance for this study. A classic example of prophetic satire is Elijah's taunt against the prophets of Baal because their god may be 'deep in thought, or engaged, or on a journey' (1 Kgs 18.27). '"Engaged" perhaps speaks euphemistically of Baal's attending to his own bodily needs and thus being unavailable for the needs of his priests. In other words, Baal may be in the bathroom' (Theodor Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* [New York: Harper & Row, 1975], p. 377).

3.   A. Preminger and E.L. Greenstein, *The Hebrew Bible in Literary Criticism* (New York: Unger, 1986), p. 79. E. Good discusses Isaiah's use of satire in *Irony in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), pp. 115-67. For further examples see W.F. Stinespring, 'Irony and Satire', in *IDB*, II, pp. 727-28.

4.   R.P. Carroll, 'Is Humour also Among the Prophets?', in A. Brenner and Y.T. Radday (eds.), *On Humour and the Comic in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup, 92; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990), pp. 169-91 (182-83).

5.   See, for example, G. Wright who suggests there is a sense of grief in these announcements because of the failure of the nations to abide by Yahweh's universal laws ('The Nations in Hebrew Prophecy', *Encounter* 26 [1965], pp. 225-37). Likewise, M. Sweeney believes the structure of Isa. 23.1-14 indicates a call for communal complaint (*Isaiah 1–39: With an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* [FOTL, 16; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], p. 304). B.S. Childs writes: 'The *massa* concerning Tyre encompasses a communal lament' (*Isaiah* [Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2001], p. 167).

6.   H. Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27* (BKAT, 2; Neurkirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), p. 861. Wildberger writes: 'Die Aufforderung zur Klage ist voll von Sarkasmus, sie kommt nicht aus innerer Anteilnahme, wo sie sich etwa in den Klageliedern über Moab in Kap. 15 äußert'. J. Watts concurs: 'Wildberger correctly detects a kind of sarcasm in this poem' (*Isaiah 1–33* [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985], p. 304).

7.   He writes: 'the poem is not a lament but rather an ironic injunction to others to lament' (*Isaiah 1–39* [AB, 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000], p. 344). Blenkinsopp also notes: 'The note of *Schadenfreude* is even more in evidence here than in the Moab poem and is colored by the typical Israelite allergy to the sea, seafaring, and international trade' (p. 343).

insights and propose that Isa. 23.1-14 is a satirical inversion of the city-lament genre.

Defining Satire

There are various definitions of the term 'satire' that sometimes contradict each other.[8] At the heart of the problem is that satire is not a genre in and of itself, rather it is a rhetorical technique.[9] Some literary critics are doubtful that a definition of satire can be achieved. According to D.C. Muecke there is 'no brief and simple definition that will include all kinds of satire while excluding all that is not satire'.[10]

However, certain elements do seem basic, and by coming to terms with this something at least resembling a definition can be reached. Muecke notes that all satire (1) is a double-layered or two-storied phenomenon, (2) presents some kind of opposition between the two levels, and (3) contains elements of 'innocence' or unawareness.[11] But what is the relevance of applying the literary term 'satire', whose origin lies in Classical Roman literature,[12] to Hebrew literature, specifically to Isa. 23.1-14?

To begin, if a lexicon of the Hebrew Bible does not include a term for 'satire', it certainly includes countless instances of many words associated

8.   D.C. Muecke writes: 'Getting a grip on satire seems to have something in common with gathering the mist; there's plenty to take hold of if only one could' (*The Compass of Irony* [London: Methuen, 1969], p. 3). In the Preface to *The Satirist's Art*, H.J. Jensen writes: 'Satire's essence is as illusive as the center of Peer Gynt's onion. It is unlike other important kinds of literature because it lacks a definable cathartic effect or at least so far no one has isolated a general effect closely enough for generic definition' (H.J. Jensen and M.R. Zirker, Jr [eds.], *The Satirist's Art* [Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1972], p. xi). Ze'ev Weisman writes: 'An unequivocal definition of satire is in the realm of literary utopia' (*Political Satire in the Bible* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], p. xi).

9.   As a definer and denominator of a specific literary genre the term satire itself is not used in Old Testament studies (Weisman, *Political Satire in the Bible*, pp. 56-57).

10.   Muecke, *The Compass of Irony*, p. 14.

11.   Muecke, *The Compass of Irony*, pp. 19-20.

12.   Weisman writes, 'Thus, it became a literary term to depict the mode initiated by Lucilius in the second century BC. He designed it as a new genre, different from the others that prevailed in classical literature, such as the elegy, tragedy and comedy. Many scholars who deal with the genesis of satire tend to see in Lucilius and his followers Horace (63–8 BC) and Juvenal (60–130 AD) the forerunners of satire, which developed later, mainly in the Renaissance, as an influential literary genre' (*Political Satire in the Bible*, p. 2).

with the idea. The primary lexeme, לעג, not only depicts a kind of attitude towards individuals or people, but also reflects the way this attitude is expressed. It matches 'satire', which in its very nature is a verbal expression of taunt and mockery.[13]

Additionally, the roots בזה and בוז mean 'to despise, disdain, hold contempt for'. In the same semantic field are כלם ('disgrace'), חרפה ('reproach, scorn'), תעב ('to abhor'), קלל ('to curse'), שקץ ('to detest'), בוש ('to shame'), קלס ('derision'), משל ('to mock') and מנגינה ('mocking song'). In Ps. 44.14-16 six of these words are used (קלס, לעג, חרפה, משל, כלמה and בוש). Words with senses that are antithetical include ירא ('to fear, respect'), כבד ('to honor') and הלל ('to praise, be commended'). Thomas Jemielity writes:

> To look, then, in the Hebrew Scriptures for the ridicule that feeds on a sense of shame and enjoys the power of humiliation—for what literary criticism later calls satire—is no anachronism. A thorn by any other name would pierce as sharply.[14]

Additionally, the analysis of the characteristics of satire in each of the Hebrew Bible's main divisions (narrative, historiography, prophecy and wisdom literature), and in most of its literary genres (epigram, fable, anecdote, elegy, etc.) leads to the conclusion that it should be recognized as a widespread literary phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible.[15]

There are two main techniques in satire. Literary critics name them after two Roman satirists who practiced them. Horatian satire (name after Horace) is light, urbane and subtle. Juvenalian satire (named after Juvenal) is biting, bitter and angry. Prophetic satire tends to be Juvenalian with its

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13. See, for example, Jer. 20.7-8 where שחוק and לעג are synonyms in the first bicolon. In the second bicolon the prophet is mocked with the words מגור מסביב. In the third bicolon he says that he has become לחרפה ולקלס. This last pair of synonyms has a close affinity to the pair in the first bicolon and belongs to the same semantic field. It expresses the suffering and distress of an individual or nation (cf. Pss. 44.14; 79.4) experiencing ridicule.

14. Jemielity, *Satire and the Hebrew Prophets*, p. 31.

15. See, e.g., David Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah: Anti-Prophetic Satire in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). In Chapter 1, Marcus identifies 'at least 14 satires in biblical narratives' (p. 6), narratives that target foreigners and Israelites alike. Foreigners are satirized in the stories of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11.1-9) and Ehud (Judg. 3), and in the book of Esther. Examples of satires against Israelites include the story of Jephthah and the Ephraimites (Judg. 12.1-10), the story of Micah and the Danites (Judg. 17–18), and the stories of the Levite and his concubine and the civil war (Judg. 19–21).

serious and angry tone.[16] The presupposition is, therefore, that the features characterizing satire as a literary phenomenon did exist in the Hebrew Bible, hundreds of years before satire was articulated in the Classical world.

Detecting Satire

So how does Isaiah signal to his audience that he is speaking satirically in 23.1-14? Additionally, since satiric messages can be and often are mixed with straightforward ideas, how can both be distinguished within the very same text?

To be sure, the presence of satire in a text is not easily proven.[17] Indeed, it may often seem a 'safer' choice to take a writer's words literally, rather than risk a reading between the lines that is necessary to a satiric interpretation. Signals of satire are often difficult to detect because the essence of satire is to be indirect. A straightforward satirical statement would be a contradiction in terms.

This study will proceed on the assumption that Hebrew authors provide certain signals that indicate satirical intention. Three of the more prominent signals are as follows: textual context,18 verbal markers and, as

16. Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 330.

17. Face-to-face verbal satire is usually not difficult to decipher. The satirical speaker may wink or smile, exaggerate the tone or quite subtly modify his or her manner in countless ways in order to signal that the words do not themselves speak the whole truth. The strictures on writing, however, do not permit such immediate indicators. In 'Irony and Satire', Stinespring states: 'The terrific impact of this satire is often avoided or evaded by readers or exegetes who wish to see the Bible as a book entirely of sweetness and light. In general, the extent of satire in the Bible is probably unknown to many' (p. 727).

18. Robert-Alain de Beaugrande and Wolfgang U. Dressler note that the implication of context is all-important: 'Knowledge and meaning are extremely sensitive to the contexts where they are utilized' (*Introduction to Text Linguistics* [New York: Longman, 1981], p. 94). 'The need to determine the meaning of linguistic forms through contextual considerations is an essential by-product of a polysemous semiotic system' (p. 94). For the importance of interpreting a text in light of its so-called *Partnerkonstellationen*, see Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1985), pp. 69-70. Also note the discussion in *Introduction to Text Linguistics* where discovering styles results from looking 'into the style of a single text; of all texts by one author; of a group of texts by similar authors; of representative texts for an

Muecke states, the presence of 'some form of perceptible contradiction, disparity, incongruity or anomaly'.[19] All three indicators are important due to the fact that no one indicator suffices to prove the presence of satire because an argument for satiric intention is necessarily based on an accumulation of clues.[20] Often these three signals converge in a particular manifestation of satire, especially in the case of live oral discourse. In order to detect satire, the interpreter must attempt to reconstruct these relationships, even if the process is fraught with uncertainties. As such, this study is susceptible to criticism that it indulges in the so-called 'intentional

entire historical period; and even of texts typical of an overall culture and its prevailing language. Obviously, the methodological difficulties increase as we move along toward larger and larger domains' (p. 16).

19.   Muecke, *The Compass of Irony*, p. 365.

20.   Wayne C. Booth defines four steps that a reader/hearer goes through in the process of recognizing satire: '(1) The reader is required to reject the literal meaning. This is something forced upon the reader because of some incongruity among the words or between the words and something else that he knows. (2) Alternative interpretations or explanations are tried out. Various options are available: "it is a slip, or he is crazy, or I missed something earlier, or that word must mean something I don't know about". (3) A decision must therefore be made about the author's knowledge or beliefs. "No matter how firmly I am convinced that a statement is absurd or illogical or just plain false, I must somehow determine whether what I reject is also rejected by the author, and whether he has reason to expect my concurrence". (4) Having made a decision about the knowledge or beliefs of the speaker, we can finally choose a new meaning or cluster of meanings with which we can rest secure. These steps are not necessarily, or even typically, ones of which the audience is conscious. Usually, the awareness of a satiric intention grows from hunch to realization in the mind of the audience, quickly and without much cognitive effort. There is always, however, a moment of transition during which the audience senses the incongruity and passes from confusion to hypothesis to realization. It is common for a speaker to prolong this moment, to tease the audience with a certain amount of misdirection about his intention. At this point, the satire establishes both a 'them' and an 'us'. Adherence to the views of the in-group (as defined by the implications of the speaker's satire) is cemented primarily by the manner in which satire characterizes the views of the out-group as ridiculous and stupid. The members of the audience are drawn into a self-congratulatory frame of mind arising from the delight in having caught the speaker's satire and the affirmation that their opinions and values place them securely among the community' (*A Rhetoric of Irony* [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974], pp. 10-13). Note that the mixing of 'author' and 'speaker' are inherent in Booth's treatment. Although there may be significant differences between written and spoken satire, the process by which both a reader and a hearer come to recognize satire is essentially the same.

fallacy'.[21] Yet, before the discussion turns to using these three signals in order to detect the satire in Isaiah's Tyre Oracle, a translation of the first 14 verses is offered.

Translation of Isaiah 23.1-14

The following translation seeks to convey to the reader not only the Hebrew syntax but also the original number of words in the Massoretic Text (MT). Hence, when a single Hebrew word requires more than one English word, the reader is informed through the use of hyphens that join the English words. For example, the single word ויהי is translated with five connected words, 'and-it-came-to-pass'.

(1)   Massa concerning-Tyre.
         Wail,[22] O-ships of-Tarshish, for it-is-devastated, without-harborage,[23]
            From-the-land of-Cyprus it-is-revealed to-them.
(2)   *Be-silent*, O-inhabitants of-the-island,

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21.   Booth argues, however, that the dangers involved have been overdrawn. He notes: 'There is by now an enormous literature showing that we simply cannot get along without using inferences about intention, try as we will' (*A Rhetoric of Irony*, p. 126 n. 13; cf. pp. 11 and 56).

22.   Italicized words indicate imperative verbs and are called 'sarcastic imperatives'. The term is from James Smith, 'The Destruction of Foreign Nations in Hebrew Prophetic Literature' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, 1969), p. 1.

23.   The problem with מבית is that an absolute noun is expected, which would function as the subject of the verb—as suggested in *BHS*. The LXX has no terms that correspond to מבית; the Vulgate and the Targums paraphrase, as does the LXX (καὶ οὐκέτι ἔρχονται ἐκ γῆς Κιτιαίων). 4QIsaᵃ preserves the מן on מבוא and מבית, while deleting it from ארץ. 1QIsaᵇ preserves the מן only on מבית. Dominique Barthélemy (*Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*. I. *Isaie, Jeremie, Lamentations* [OBO, 50; Fribourg: Editions universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986], p. 160) notes that the MT is 'fermement appuyé' by 1QIsaᵃ. The MT has placed a *zaqeph qaton* on מבוא, thus considering the two expressions מבית מבוא a unit. Barthélemy writes: 'Une interprétation exacte du *M doit tenir compte du fait que le zaqef qaton porte sur le deuxième terme' (p. 161). Jan de Waard notes that the MT is to be understood as '"There has been destruction, which has made disappear every habitation so that no place is left to disembark". If one does not want to respect the *zaqeph*, one could take the second term syntactically with the following, which would yield something like "There has been destruction which has made disappear every habitation. As soon as they had arrived from…" If the *zaqeph* is respected, translators should most probably consider the two expressions as a hendiadys for "harborage"' (Jan de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah: Textual Criticism and the Translator* [Textual Criticism and the Translator, 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997], p. 98).

(you whom)[24] the-merchants[25] of-Sidon,
those-traveling-across (the) sea have-filled.[26]

(3)   And[27]-on-many waters was the-seed of-Shihor,[28]
the-harvest of-the-Nile was her-revenue;[29]
and-she-became a-merchant of-nations.

(4)   *Be-ashamed*, O-Sidon,
for the-sea has-spoken,
the-fortress of-the-sea, saying[30]:
'I-have-not-writhed, I-have-not-given-birth,
And-I-have-not raised choice-men,
I-have (not-) reared virgins'.

(5)   When news (reaches) the-Egyptians,
(Then) they-will-writhe concerning-the-news (about) Tyre.

(6)   *Travel-across* toward-Tarshish.
Wail, O-inhabitants of-the-island.

(7)   Is-this the-exultant(-city) that-belongs-to-you,
whose-origin[31] is from-days of-old,
whose-feet used-to-carry-her, from-afar to-sojourn?

24.   Parentheses are used to signify words that are not in the MT. The relative pronoun אשר is rare in poetry; here it is implied.

25.   The LXX, Targums and Vulgate all employ the plural form of סחר. This is a better parallel to ישבי. However, עבר is also singular, yet followed by a plural verb. The singular form here is probably being used in a collective sense and needs no emendation.

26.   1QIsaᵃ reads סחר צידון עברו ים מלאכיך, and can be translated 'O merchants of Sidon, (you = [Sidon] whose) messengers have crossed the sea'. Here the messengers are the messengers of Sidon, and 'the merchants of Sidon' is a second vocative after 'inhabitants of the coastland'. Barthélemy favors this with a grade 'C' (indicating that it is considered less likely); he states that one person of the committee preferred the MT (*Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, p. 161). On the other hand, 1QIsaᵇ, the Vulgate, Peshiṭta and Targums support the text of the MT. For this use of the verb מלא see Ezek. 27.25, which reads: 'The ships of Tarshish traveled for you [i.e. Tyre] with your merchandise. So you were filled (ותמאי).'

27.   De Waard writes: 'The conjunction *waw* in front of the first word of verse 3 [ובמים] has frequently been seen as causing a syntactical problem, and, for reason of syntactical facilitation, the ancient versions did not respect it. It is nevertheless present in the total Hebrew tradition in which it marks the beginning of a new sentence' (*A Handbook on Isaiah*, p. 99).

28.   This colon division follows the MT *zaqeph qaṭon* over שחר.

29.   This colon division follows the *athnaḥ* under תבואתה.

30.   The infinitive construct לאמר is in 1QIsaᵃ, 4QIsaᵃ, the LXX, Vulgate and Targums. It is omitted in the Peshiṭta.

31.   1QIsaᵃ has a plural of קדמתה like Ezek. 36.11.

(8) Who planned this against Tyre the-bestower-of-crowns,[32]
>   whose merchants[33] are princes,
>   whose traders are honored-ones-of-earth?

(9) Yahweh of-Hosts planned-it
>   to-defile the-pride of-all beauty
>   to-dishonor all the-honored-ones-of-the-earth.[34]

(10) *Travel-across*[35] your-land like-the-Nile,[36]
>   O-daughter Tarshish,
>   there-is-no longer a-restraint.

(11) His-hand he-stretched-out against the-sea,
>   he-shook kingdoms,
> Yahweh commanded with-respect-to Canaan, in-order-to-destroy[37] her-
>   fortresses.[38]

(12) And-he-said,
>   'You-will-never again exult, O-oppressed virgin daughter Sidon,
>   (to) Cyprus *rise*, *travel-across*, even there it-will-not-be-rest for you'.

(13) Look! (As for) the-land-of-the-Chaldeans,[39]

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32. 1QIsa[a] appears to make המטרה a piel, pual or hiphil participle written defectively.

33. *BHS*'s suggestion is reflected in this translation, placing a *qameṣ* under the *he*.

34. 1QIsa[a] places כל before גאון. This would make more symmetrical parallelism. The above division of the cola follows the *zaqeph qaṭon* above צבי, as well as the construct state of גאון.

35. With regard to עברי the MT has the support of 4QIsa[c], the Vulgate and Peshiṭta. 1QIsa[a] reads עבדי which may have been the *Vorlage* of the LXX: ἐργάζου τὴν γῆν σου. This reading may have been caused by a confusion of *resh* and *daleth* (cf. Tov, *Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* [Jerusalem: Simor, 1981], pp. 127, 196-97). Barthélemy attributes the confusion between the *resh* and *daleth*, as well as ἐργάζου to graphical error (*Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, pp. 167-69).

36. 1QIsa[a], 4QIsa[c], the Vulgate, Peshiṭta and Targums support כיאר.

37. 1QIsa[a] exhibits both the *he* and the *yod* in this hiphil infinitive construct.

38. 1QIsa[a] reads מעוזיה. This is either a simplification of an otherwise obscure form or a correction of a corrupt form (see Joseph R. Rosenbloom, *The Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll: A Literary Analysis* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970], p. 34). Barthélemy writes: 'La vocalisation suggère une équivalence avec מָעֻזֶּיהָ et la ferme tradition exégétique confirme cela. On traduira donc: "ses forteresses"' (*Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, p. 171).

39. The LXX has a shorter version that is read together with v. 12: καὶ εἰς γῆν Χαλδαίων καὶ αὕτη ἠρήμωται ἀπὸ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων οὐδὲ ἐκεῖ σοι ἀνάπαυσις ἔσται ὅτι ὁ τοῖχος αὐτῆς πέπτωκεν. From this translation it becomes apparent that the LXX considered Assyria as the devastator in the entire section vv. 1-14. *BHS* proposes to delete ארץ כשדים, but there is no textual basis for this deletion. The phrase is the antecedent of the next clause, זה העם לא היה.

this is the-people (that) became nothing.[40]
Assyria determined-her for-wild-animals,
they [the Assyrians][41]-set-up his (Assyria's)-siege-towers,[42]
they-destroyed her-citadels,
he-made-her into-a-ruin.

(14) *Wail*, O-ships of-Tarshish, for your-fortress is-devastated.

City-Lament Genre

In order to make the case for the idea that Isa. 23.1-14 is a predictive satirical city-lament, a general overview concerning *straightforward* prophetic city-laments needs to be presented. However, any effort to discuss the characteristic features of this genre immediately encounters a fundamental difficulty, namely, the problem of the identity and classification of the prophetic texts that are to be included in the *Gattung*. What constitutes a prophetic city-lament? What are its normative features? Is the genre identifiable by its formal characteristics, by content, or by some combination of content and form?

Answers to these questions are to be found in the work of F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp[43] and Marc Wischonowsky.[44] These scholars, basing their study

40. This delineation follows the MT *zaqeph qaton* over היה.

41. The grammatical shifts are notoriously difficult, making the understanding between the nouns and the verbs challenging. One manuscript, as noted in *BHS*, reads הקים for הקימו. The emendation to הקים does conform the verb to the singular subject of בחיניו and is therefore an easier reading. But the use of the MT's הקימו, with its 3rd com. *plur.* suffix used to refer to a 3rd masc. *sing.* suffix, is not uncommon in Hebrew. Thus, both the plural verb (הקימו) and the singular subject (בחיניו) refer to Assyria with the feminine suffixes in רמנותיה, יסדה and שמה referring to 'the land of the Chaldeans'. Although אשור is singular, shifts like this are common in the prophets. Therefore עררו should not be brought into conformity with הקים as both *BHS* emendations stand on very scant textual foundations.

42. 1QIsaᵃ has בחיניה ('her siege-towers'); the LXX reads ὁ τοῖχος αὐτῆς ('her wall') which normally translates קירך.

43. F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Biblica et orientalia, 44; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblica, 1993). The majority of this study gives attention to an examination of prophetic oracles and their use of the city-lament genre. At the end of his examination, Dobbs-Allsopp concludes that 'The existence of a native city-lament genre in Israel, generically related to the Mesopotamian city-lament genre, best accounts for the nature of the biblical data' (p. 157).

44. Marc Wischonowsky, *Tochter Zion: Aufnahme und Überwindung der Stadtklage in den Prophetenschriften des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener

on Mesopotamian city-laments, believe that the genre of a city-lament in Israel contains certain identifiable ideas. For example, Dobbs-Allsopp writes:

> Concepts like these (divine warrior, expressions of grief, etc.) are key to the genre and indicate that at least at some point prior to the 8th century, the city-lament genre was internalized in the Israelite literature tradition.[45]

In Mesopotamia, the city-lament genre consisted of three distinct but related types of laments: the city-lament, *balag*, and *ersemma*.[46] These describe the destruction of particular cities and their important shrines. Earliest examples date from the Old Babylonian period. They are used continuously down to the Seleucid era.

While Dobbs-Allsopp notes that 'Each of the Mesopotamian laments is a unique composition; no single overarching structure typifies all of them',[47] the themes in a lament over the destruction of Sumer and Ur[48] are similar to those expressed in Isa. 23.1-14. They are as follows:

1. The destruction compared to a flood—l. 2; Isa. 23.10.
2. Houses destroyed—ll. 4, 121, etc.; Isa. 23.1.
3. Weeping—ll. 121, 357-368; Isa. 23.1, 2, 6, 14.
4. Irony—l. 224; Isa. 23.10.
5. Comparing the former glory with the present, or soon-to-be devastation—l. 262; Isa. 23.7.
6. The departure of the city's leader—l. 368; Isa. 23.12.

Additionally, Dobbs-Allsopp discusses nine different characteristics of the city-lament genre, eight of which are incorporated into Isa. 23.1-14. Hence

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Verlag, 2000). Although chiefly concerned with Jeremiah and the second part of Isaiah, Wischonowsky relates the imperatives in Isa. 23.1, 4, 6 and 14 as indicators that 23.1-14 is like a Mesopotamian city-lament (p. 72).

45. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 158. Dobbs-Allsopp connects the Mesopotamian city-laments with the book of Lamentations and prophetic Oracles against the Nations, of which Isa. 23 is a part (p. 1).

46. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 13. Cf. also Wischonowsky, *Tochter Zion*, pp. 34-41.

47. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 32.

48. The introduction to the 'Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur' in *ANET* states: 'The lament consists of over 500 lines, of which about 400 are fairly well preserved. It is divided into five *kirugu*, or stanzas, of unequal length. The first of these, which consists of 115 lines, begins with a detailed account of the tragic fate decreed by the four leading deities of the Sumerian pantheon—An, Enlil, Enki, and Ninhursag' (p. 611).

it falls under his category, 'comprehensive modulation'.[49] These eight categories are:

1. The description of Sidon as a ruin (מפלה) and a place for wild animals (ציים) in v. 13 parallels other laments over cities.
2. The call for the people to lament in vv. 2 and 6 as well as the ships of Tarshish to lament in vv. 1 and 14 parallel personified roads, gates and city walls which cry out in Lamentations and other city laments.
3. Isaiah employs the *qinah* meter in vv. 1b, 2a, 2g-3a, 4d-e, 10, 11a-b, characteristic of city laments.[50]
4. Use of the characteristic contrast motif is in vv. 7, 8 and 12.[51] Each of these verses presents an image of the past that is to be contrasted with the impending desolation of Sidon, Tyre and Phoenicia.
5. The use of questions in vv. 7 and 8 is commonplace of laments in general.[52]
6. The personified city motif is also present in giving Sidon and Tarshish divine epithets (23.12, 10). As for Daughter Zion (Lam. 1.3b), there is no rest for daughter Sidon (23.12b).[53]

49. The discussion here is based, in large part, upon Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, pp. 117-20.

50. The *qinah* meter is by far the most common meter used for satirical mocking. Normally the mocking dirge is directed against an external non-Israelite entity— a people, a city or a king. What the prophet expresses at their downfall is not sympathy and distress, but the opposite, the bitterest scorn and the most joyful satisfaction. As principal examples of this satiric use of the funeral dirge, see Isa. 14.4-21; Ezek. 19.1-14; 27.2-10, 25b-36; 28.12-19; 32.16.

51. Additionally, the reversal motif would be present if one emended דמו in 23.2 to נדמו (as does Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39: A Commentary* [trans. R.A. Wilson; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974], pp. 160, 164-65, and Ronald Clements, *Isaiah 1–39* [NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], p. 193). This deathly silence would contrast with the past bustling of Phoenician trading. However, the translation offered in this study does not follow this emendation.

52. See Hedwig Jahnow, *Das hebräische Leichenlied im Rahmen der Völker-dichtung* (BZAW, 36; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1923), p. 196.

53. Dobbs-Allsopp demonstrates that the Hebrew בת followed by a geographical name (GN) is a designation of the personified city in what he terms 'modulated' city-lament passages in the Old Testament ('The Syntagma of *bat* followed by a Geographical Name in the Hebrew Bible: A Reconsideration of its Meaning and Grammar', *CBQ* 57 [1995], pp. 451-71).

7. The common motif of a divine agent of devastation occurs in vv. 8-9. In v. 11a Yahweh the divine warrior stretches his hand over the sea.

8. The verb בוש is used in 23.4 and is often used in lament contexts (i.e. Isa. 19.9; 29.22; Jer. 14.3-4; 48.1, 20, 39; 49.23; 50.2; Joel 1.11). The idea of shame characterizes the grieving city/country in Jer. 48.20; 49.4 and 50.12.

Ezekiel 27.1-11, 26-36, is worthy of special focus in this discussion of city-laments, as it parallels Isa. 23.1-14 in several ways.[54] First and foremost, just like Isa. 23.1-14, Ezekiel 27 is a city-lament that speaks of a *future* fall of Tyre while placing the prophecy in terms of a *past* event. Ezekiel 26.17a introduces the lament with the words, 'And they will lift up against you a lament and they will say to you…' (ונשאו עליך קינה ואמרו לך).[55] The lament that follows is composed as an event that has already transpired (note, e.g., the perfect verbs in 26.17b, אבדת, היתה and נתנו).

Ezekiel 29.17-20 states that the prophecy of chs. 26–28 did not result in Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Tyre.[56] The date of this prophecy as stated in 29.17 is 'a year or two after the end of the siege of Tyre',[57] that is, 571. Aside from the enigmatic 1.1, 29.17-21 is the latest-dated passage in the book. This means that chs. 26–27 can hardly be understood to be examples of *vaticinium ex eventu*.[58] Block's words confirm that Ezekiel 27 is a future event, couched in past tense terms:

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54. Dobbs-Allsopp writes: 'Although Ezekiel does not use the city-lament mode extensively, there are at least three places in the book which indicate that the prophet knew of the genre' (*Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, p. 128). He notes that Ezek. 27 is one of those places.

55. That Ezek. 26.15-18 is closely connected with ch. 27 is noted by Moshe Greenberg: 'The lament of 26.15-18 is elaborated here [ch. 27] into an imposing, complex oracle' (*Ezekiel 21–37* [AB, 22; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1997], p. 564; see also Daniel Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], p. 51).

56. Greenberg writes: 'Although in the end Tyre surrendered to the Babylonians, it evidently was able to obtain exemption from ravaging and despoiling in exchange for yielding' (*Ezekiel 21–27*, p. 614).

57. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–27*, p. 614.

58. Ronald Hals writes: 'Inasmuch as Ezekiel's latest dated prophecy in 29.17-21 dealing with Nebuchadrezzar's failure to destroy Tyre is not reflected within 26.1–28.19, this material may be assumed largely to predate 571 B.C.' (*Ezekiel* [FOTL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989], p. 185).

> As for the setting of the oracle, it seems to anticipate Tyre's demise as still in the future. There is no indication yet that the city has succumbed either to the Babylonian pressure, nor of the disappointment reflected in 29.17-21. If this lament is indeed an expansion of 26.17-18, then it would probably have been raised shortly after the oracle in the previous chapter, which is dated to the eleventh year of Jehoiachin, that is, some time in late 587 or early 586.[59]

Thomas Renz agrees: 'While it is possible that only the epilogue is a prediction, the literary context should incline readers to take the poem [Ezek. 27] as predictive as well'.[60]

Additional elements of a city-lament that occur in both Isa. 23.1-14 and Ezekiel 27 include the following: (1) the *qinah* meter is employed in Isa. 23.1b, 2a, 2g-3a, 4d-e, 10, 11a-b, paralleled by Ezekiel's use of the title of *qinah* in Ezek. 27.2;[61] (2) the contrast motif is used in Isa. 23.7-9 as well as in Ezek. 27.1-11, where the prophet presents Tyre's glorious past, while in vv. 26-36, he depicts the city's future devastation; (3) mourning and lamentation occur in Isa. 23.1, 6, 14 and in Ezek. 27.28-32; (4) Isa. 23.1-14 appears to be satirical in tone and Ezek. 27.35-36 indicates an outright taunt.[62]

These close connections between Ezekiel 27 and Isa. 23.1-14 lead to the observation that a genre of a city-lament requires treating the downfall as a past event, whereas in terms of history it is still in the future. Hence, the requirements of the genre and its extra-textual historical event are to be distinguished. It follows that Isa. 23.1-14 uses the rhetorical device of lamenting a future disaster as if it had already happened not only because it is patterned after ancient Near Eastern city-laments but also to stress the certainty of its coming (cf. Amos 5.2; Ezek. 28.11-19; Zech. 11.2-3).[63]

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59. Block, *Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48*, p. 53.

60. Thomas Renz, 'Proclaiming the Future: History and Theology in Prophecies Against Tyre', *TynBul* 51.1 (2000), pp. 17-58 (38).

61. City-lament features are not very prevalent because imagery derived from the basic metaphor of Tyre as a great ship dominates the lament. Yet the *qinah* meter predominates throughout the lament (cf. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, II, p. 53, and Georg Fohrer, *Ezechiel* [Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1955], p. 152).

62. Jemielity writes: 'A sizeable chunk of the text of Ezekiel, chapters twenty-five through thirty-two, for instance, prominently features mock lamentations on the demise of some of Israel's pagan neighbors and traditional enemies' (*Satire and the Hebrew Prophets*, p. 94).

63. Examples of this Isaianic convention in which the words of future events are given to the people are: 4.1; 12.1-6; 14.3-20; 20.6; 25.9; 26.1-18.

Satirical Analysis

Building upon the earlier discussions on detecting satire, the city-lament genre and the close connections between Isa. 23.1-14 and Ezekiel 27, this analysis is now in a position specifically to state the case for understanding Isa. 23.1-14 as a predictive satirical inversion of a city-lament. The three signals for detecting satire—textual context, verbal markers and the presence of a perceptible contradiction or anomaly—will inform this section.

Because the interpretation of the text's satire is driven in large part by textual context, the investigation turns to related texts in Isaiah that appear to be similar. The most striking example is in 14.4-21, the satirical lament over the fall of the king of Babylon.[64] The text is one of the Isaianic oracles against the nations (chs. 13–23) and it presents a clear case of satirical lament.[65]

Also important is Isaiah 15–16. These chapters present satiric lament over the devastation of Moab.[66] Isaiah 15–16 and 23 are comparable in that both are oracles against the nations and משׂא texts,[67] both sections are satiric laments, both sections make use of the sarcastic imperative, and both share some common vocabulary:

64. For a poetic analysis of this poem, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), pp. 146-50. He calls it a 'sarcastic-triumphal elegy'.

65. See William Holladay, 'Text, Structure, and Irony in the Poem on the Fall of a Tyrant, Isaiah 14', *CBQ* 61 (1999), pp. 633-43.

66. See Brian Jones, *Howling Over Moab: Irony and Rhetoric in Isaiah 15–16* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996). Jones reads Isa. 15–16 as a prophetic inversion of the lament genre; that is, as satire.

67. Cf. Richard Weis, 'A Definition of the Genre משׂא in the Hebrew Bible', (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1986). Weis offers 'prophetic exposition of Yahweh revelation' as the best translation for משׂא (p. 276). He also suggests that a משׂא was typically given as a response to an inquiry and that it was composed for oral delivery. 'Written composition and oral delivery—as in the reading out in some formal setting of what was written—would be a suitable explanation of the evidence' (pp. 319-20). The limits of the societal range of the genre lie within the Judahite prophetic movement, possibly associated with the Jerusalem temple (p. 344). Outside of Isaiah, משׂא introduces seven prophetic speeches: 2 Kgs 9.26a; Ezek. 12.11a-16; Nah. 1.2–3.19; Hab. 1.2–2.20; Zech. 9.1a–11.3; 12.1b–14.21; Mal. 1.2–3.24. Jeremiah has no speeches designated משׂא, but the term is used in the book to refer to prophetic speech (see Jer. 23.16-40). The distribution suggests that the term is of particular importance in the book of Isaiah, especially in the Isaianic Oracles against the Nations collection. The texts to which it is attached contain a variety of styles, structures and component genres. All of the texts that are both Oracles against the Nations and משׂא are in Isaiah with the exception of Nah. 1.2–3.19.

1.   משא   15.1 and 23.1.
2.   שדד   15.1 (twice), 16.4 and 23.1, 14.
3.   ילל   15.2, 3, 8 (twice), 16.7 (twice) and 23.1, 6, 14.
4.   שמע   15.4, 16.6 and 23.5 (twice).
5.   בת   16.1 and 23.12.
6.   גאון   16.6 (three times) and 23.9.

Another section of Isaiah that informs a satirical reading of Isa. 23.1-14 is ch. 47, a sustained satire over the fall of Babylon.[68] The parallels between Isaiah 23 and 47 are as follows:

1.   The use of בתולת בת־צידון (23.12) and בתולת בת־בבל (47.1).
2.   The use of shame (בושי, 23.4) and the lifting up of skirts (47.2-3).
3.   The theme of losing symbols of power (אין מזח, 23.10; אין־ כסא, 47.1).
4.   The use of the term לא־אוסיפי (23.12; 47.1, 5).
5.   The idea of losing children (23.4; 47.8).
6.   The idea of mighty leaders in 23.8-9 and 47.13.
7.   The use of the word עצה in 23.8 and 47.13.
8.   Throughout both sections the cities are addressed in the 2 fem. sing., in the form either of imperatives or of verbs in the perfect and imperfect.

These three examples indicate that Isaiah primarily used satire when referring to other nations and their leaders.

The discussion now turns to verbal markers in the text itself for signs of satire. Perhaps the most important word is the verb ילל used in vv. 1, 6 and 14. It is defined as 'howl, lament' and is often associated with זעק ('cry out')[69] and ספד ('lament').[70] The verb ילל can denote either a cry of grief or a shout of mocking, somewhat analogous to the English word 'howl', which denotes expressions of both pain and hilarity.

Regarding the imperative use of ילי, the frequent use of imperative verbs (nine times in Isa. 23.1-14) is a main component of the rhetoric of Isa. 23.1-14 as a satirical city-lament. One frequently used technique in the

68.   The insights in this section are taken from Chris Franke, 'The Function of the Satiric Lament over Babylon in Second Isaiah (XLVII)', *VT* 73 (1991), pp. 408-18. Franke writes of Isa. 47: 'Until the very end, the tone of satire prevails' (p. 414).

69.   See Isa. 14.31; 65.14; Jer. 25.34; 47.2; 48.20-31; 49.3; Ezek. 21.17; Hos. 7.14; Zech. 11.2.

70.   Jer. 4.8; Joel 1.13; Mic. 1.8. See *HALAT*, II, p. 413.

oracles against the nations material is this sarcastic imperative, a device found most often in prophetic satire of the foreign nations. By the use of expressions such as 'Flee! Turn Aside! Hide! Go down and mourn! Sit in the dust!' the prophets mock the nations.[71] There is often a 'gloating' quality in passages using sarcastic imperatives; the speaker's real audience is invited to join him in mocking the fate of another nation. These 'crocodile tears' are mock sympathy.[72]

When a prophetic lament is mixed with a kind of glee at the distress of the object of the elegy, it is much like the ancient 'taunt of the bards' over the fall of Moab (Num. 21.27-30). This text apparently served as the core for the prophetic taunt elegies that are intermixed with features of satire and caustic wit in Isa. 23.1-14.

Another verbal marker indicating satire occurs in v. 4 with the use of בוש. The word is often parallel with חפרה ('disgrace')[73] and כלם ('be ashamed').[74] It conveys more than feelings of embarrassment and emotion, but also the more public and objective ideas of 'reaping shame, imminent derision'.[75] Anthropological studies of societies in the ancient Near East shed further light on the significance of shame.[76] One of the major goals of satire is to place shame and disgrace upon the opponent.

This shame is to take place through childlessness. Throughout the ancient world, a woman's value depended directly on how many children she provided for her husband. It was a deep disappointment if he had no

71. Similar examples include Isa. 6.9, 'Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand'; Isa. 29.9, 'Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor, blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not from wine; stagger, but not from strong drink!'

72. On the use of overstatement see Muecke, 'Irony Markers', pp. 368-73. Muecke uses the term 'over-dissimulation' for this satiric technique (p. 27). Satiric overstatement signals its intent by expressing praise or sorrow in excess of what the audience would normally expect from the speaker in the context.

73. Isa. 24.23; Jer. 14.2; 15.9; 51.51; Mic. 3.7; Pss. 35.26; 40.15; 70.3; 71.24; Prov. 19.26.

74. Jer. 20.11; 22.22; 31.18; Ezek. 9.6; 16.52; 36.52; Isa. 41.1; 45.16, 17; Ps. 35.4; Job 19.3.

75. See John Chance, 'The Anthropology of Honor and Shame: Cultures, Values and Practice', *Semeia* 68 (1996), pp. 139-51; Victor Matthews, 'Honor and Shame in Gender-Related Legal Situations in the Hebrew Bible', in Victor Matthews, Bernard Levinson and Tikva Frymer-Kensky (eds.), *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (JSOTSup, 262; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 97-112.

76. See C. Muenchow, 'Dust and Dirt in Job 42.6', *JBL* 108 (1989), pp. 597-611.

children, and that was the greatest shame a wife could suffer (e.g. Sarah, Leah, Rachel, Hannah; cf. Gen. 29.31; 1 Sam. 1.6; Isa. 54.6). In Isa. 23.4 Sidon is commanded to be ashamed at the childlessness of Tyre who will soon be the *persona* of a barren woman and, therefore, a victim of punishment, lack of fulfillment and low social status.[77]

When hearing/reading v. 6 it is already known from v. 1 that Tyre's symbol of strength was the ships of Tarshish. Ironically, going to the source of this strength (תרשישה) will be in vain. The repeated use of הילילו accents the satirical lament. Not only will they wail in Tyre, they will also travel to Tarshish and wail there as well. Let the gloating begin!

Still another verbal marker indicating satire is in v. 12 where Yahweh speaks the command that was given in v. 11. In a lament, one speaks to the oppressed one in the tenderest way possible (בתולת בת־צידון). Using 'daughter Sidon' is itself a sign of affection, placing 'virgin' before it elevates the feeling still more. In the present passage, however, there is a satiric tone. It is also satirical that the people are encouraged to travel to Kittim in v. 12. It will be nothing but an illusion that Tyre will find rest by fleeing to this land. The satire concludes in this verse as Tyre, pictured as a female refugee, will be forced to the margins of society as a beggar with 'no place to lay her head'.

Finally, v. 14 forms an *inclusio*[78] with v. 1. However, in v. 14 there is one significant modification, namely, the addition of מעזכן. The effect of omitting מעזכן in v. 1 and then including it in v. 14 is to focus attention on what Tyre will lose, namely the fortress that protected her vast fleet of ships. Her ships were the symbol of her strength, glory and honor.

To appreciate Isaiah's satire at this point, it is useful to point out that the single most distinctive feature of the ancient city of Tyre was its physical location on a rocky island just off the Phoenician coast.[79] Island Tyre was

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77. Isaiah refers frequently to the theme of childbirth and barrenness (7.14; 8.3; 9.5; 26.16-18; 29.23; 37.3; 44.3-5; 45.10-11; 47.8; 49.21; 54.1-3; 66.9).

78. W. Watson defines *inclusio* as 'the repetition of the same phrase or sentence at the beginning and end of a stanza or poem' (*Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* [JSOTSup, 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986], pp. 282-83). James Muilenburg states that repetition is 'a prominent feature of Hebrew rhetoric and style. It centers thought, gives a sense of totality, provides continuity, signals the structure and limits of units, and so discloses the character of biblical thinking' ('A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric: Repetition and Style', in *Congress Volume, Copenhagen 1953* [VTSup, 1; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1953], pp. 97-111 [97]).

79. The Assyrians called mainland Tyre *U-su-u*. This is ancient Tyre (Παλαι-τυρος), situated on the shore opposite the island of Tyre; see Bustanay Oded, 'The

very much like modern Hong Kong or Manhattan—a city center dependent on her hinterland.[80] In Egyptian, Assyrian, biblical and Classical writings references are repeatedly made to Tyre as the city 'in the midst of the sea'.[81] The island site with its natural and artificial harbors provided Tyre not only with economic advantages but also with an easily defended position.[82]

Just as both the context of Isa. 23.1-14 and its verbal markers encourage a satirical reading of the text, so too does its disparity. The disparity is exactly this: Why would Isaiah encourage his audience to howl and lament at Tyre's downfall? A brief overview of Tyre's depiction in the prophetic literature will demonstrate that there was no love lost between Judah and Tyre.

Phoenician Cities and the Assyrian Empire in the Time of Tiglath-pileser III', *ZDPV* 90 (1974), pp. 38-49 (48). For a sketch of the island with its two original reefs, Hiram's fill between the reefs, Alexander's mole, the sand, which built against the mole by the Roman period, and the present outline of the city, see Martha Joukowsky (ed.), *The Heritage of Tyre: Essays on the History, Archaeology, and Preservation of Tyre* (Dubuque: Kendal & Hunt, 1992), p. 22. For a complete geographical description of the city and its surroundings, see pp. 13-16.

80. Joukowsky (ed.), *The Heritage of Tyre*, p. 46; cf. W.F. Albright, 'The Phoenician Littoral', *BASOR* 150 (1958), pp. 17-26. See also B. Peckham, 'Israel and Phoenicia', in F.M. Cross, W.E. Lemke and P.D. Miller, Jr (eds.), *Magnalia Dei: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 224-38. This article contains the general history of Tyre from David to the exile. Noteworthy in the context of this study, in c. 980 BCE Hiram expanded the surface of the city by constructing two harbors, the Sidonian in the north and the Egyptian in the south. At this time coastal Tyre had 25,000 residents and the city on the island served as a refuge during wartime. Since the time of Alexander the Great, who broke the resistance of the city by pouring huge amounts of dirt into the sea to build a land bridge, the island of Tyre, lying about 600 m from the mainland, has been a peninsula.

81. Jacob Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre* (Jerusalem: Goldberg's Press, 2nd edn, 1997), p. 9. In the Egyptian Papyrus *Anastasi I*, Tyre is described as follows: 'They say another town is in the sea, named Tyre-the-Port. Water is taken to it by the boats, and it is richer in fish than in sand' (*ANET*, p. 477).

82. Nebuchadnezzar's inconclusive siege of Tyre is said by Josephus to have lasted for 13 years (*Ant.* 10.11.1). The island city's defenses were not decisively breached until 332 BCE when Alexander the Great built a dike from the mainland to the island (Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, p. 9). The apparent solidity and security of the island is revealed as an illusion of perspective, not a contradiction of Yahweh's power.

To begin, Tyre is accused in Amos 1.9-10 of delivering an entire community of captives to Edom. The charge echoes the oracle against the Philistines, who are similarly accused of handing over an entire community to Edom (1.6). These two nations located on the Mediterranean coast were guilty of complicity in the same crime—slave trade.[83] From slavery in Egypt to Solomon's corvée, Judah revolted at the very thought of such activity.

Diplomatic representatives from Tyre are mentioned in Jer. 27.1-3.[84] Surprisingly, Jeremiah does not address Tyre in a separate oracle—it is only mentioned in 47.4 in an oracle against the Philistines.[85] But it is not as though the book has nothing negative to say about Tyre. To the contrary, in ch. 27 the prophet includes Tyre as under Yahweh's judgment by means of Nebuchadnezzar and in ch. 47 Jeremiah indicates that Yahweh will cut off all who could help Tyre and Sidon.

As already noted, Ezekiel pays much more attention to Tyre, especially to the city's economic success. In fact, it is Tyre that Ezekiel singles out for one of his longest oracles against the nations. He devotes three chapters to the downfall of the island-city and its king in an A-B-A-B pattern:

A: Announcement of judgment upon Tyre (26.1-21).
B: Lament over the fall of Tyre (27.1-36).
A: Announcement of judgment upon the king of Tyre (28.1-10).
B: Lament over the fall of the king of Tyre (28.11-19).[86]

Unlike other nations in Ezekiel (25.7, 11; 30.26), Tyre alone will not 'know Yahweh' after his judgment.

Joel 4.4-8 (ET 3.4-8) seems to refer to the same context as Ezekiel 25–26, namely, the benefit from the fall of Jerusalem by neighboring countries.[87] 'Tyre and Sidon, and the regions of Philistia' are accused of having

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83.   Cf. Shalom M. Paul, *Amos* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1991), p. 57.

84.   For a summary of these verses and how they relate to Tyre, see Renz, 'Proclaiming the Future', pp. 30-31.

85.   The MT here suggests that the Philistines were the 'surviving helpers' of the Phoenician cities, although the LXX speaks about 'Tyre and Sidon and all the rest of her allies', leaving the relationship between the Phoenicians and the Philistines unclear. In any case, what is announced with regard to Tyre is the break-up of an alliance with the Philistine cities as a result of Yahweh's destruction of the Philistines.

86.   Hals writes: 'The seven prophecies against Tyre constitute a sub collection within the larger collection of prophecies concerning foreign nations in chs. 25–32, similar to the collection concerning Egypt in chs. 29–32' (*Ezekiel*, p. 184).

87.   The evidence for dating the book of Joel is inconclusive. The exile referred to could be that after 701 (see S. Stohlman, 'The Judean Exile after 701', in W.W. Hallo

enriched themselves with Yahweh's gold and silver and having 'sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks' (vv. 5-6). Yahweh announces that he will bring back his people and proclaims a punishment that fits the crime: the slave-traders will themselves be sold to the people of Judah, who will sell them to a distant people, the Sabeans in Arabia. There are parallels with Amos 1 in linking the Philistines and the Phoenicians to slave trade and in the stereotypical description of the judgment. The Israelites, who had no love for the sea, were sold to sea-peoples. On the other hand, the Phoenicians and Philistines, seasoned sea-goers, will be sold to the Sabeans, desert-dwellers.

The last reference to Tyre[88] in prophetic literature is Zech. 9.2b-4. Again, judgment against Tyre and Sidon is imbedded in an oracle that also mentions Philistine cities, but, in contrast to Jeremiah, the destruction of the Phoenician cities seems to be a foreboding of the destruction of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron and Ashdod (with Gath left unmentioned):

> Tyre has built itself a rampart and heaped up silver like dust and gold like the mud of the streets. But now, the Lord will strip it of its possessions and hurl its wealth into the sea, and it shall be devoured by fire. (Zech. 9.3-4 [author's translation])

No specific charge is leveled against Tyre. Yet the introduction to these verses in v. 2 states that 'Tyre and Sidon, though they are wise', belong to Yahweh just like all the other nations. The punishment announced reads like a free adaptation from both Amos ('devoured by fire') and Ezekiel ('hurled into the sea').[89]

This brief overview of how Israel's prophets viewed Tyre creates a tremendous disparity with Isaiah's Tyre Oracle in which he encourages

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et al. [eds.], *Scripture in Context*. II. *More Essays on the Comparative Method* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983], pp. 147-75). But a post-exilic date may be preferable; see, e.g., L.C. Allen, *Joel, Obadiah and Micah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 19-25.

88. There is possibly a reference to Tyre in Hos. 9.13, but most commentators abandon the MT in favor of the LXX (e.g. H.W. Wolff, *Hosea* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974], pp. 160-61). Others interpret לצור differently, for instance, 'by the rival' (Francis Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* [AB, 24; New York: Doubleday, 1980], p. 544).

89. C.L. Meyers and E.M. Meyers believe that in view of the overall thrust of the chapter, 'Rather than reflecting a specific event, Zech. 9.1-8 deals with a catalogue of Israel's archetypal enemies' with the aim in v. 8 of giving a promise of the restoration and security of the land of Israel (*Zechariah 9–14* [AB, 25B; New York: Doubleday, 1993], p. 99).

weeping and howling over the island city's impending doom. Only one word suffices to explain the anomaly—satire.

To summarize, the considerations of context, verbal markers and disparity encourages a satiric reading of Isa. 23.1-14. This understanding is not at the level of grammatical forms but rather at the level of the whole utterance in its context. Far from being a lament with expressions of deep sympathy, it is a bitter, sarcastic taunt. On the surface the text seems to lament the troubles about to be suffered by Tyre; its true intention, however, is to mock the soon-to-be suffering city. As a whole, the most appropriate designation for the text would be a predictive satirical city-lament.

Conclusions

Satire is a powerful means of persuasion.[90] But who was Isaiah trying to persuade, and why? Some cautious speculations can now be offered in an attempt to reconstruct the original audience of Isa. 23.1-14 and the reasons why the prophet would craft a predictive satirical city-lament.[91]

First, late in the eighth century BCE, just as they had done in the past, Tyre and other city-states invited Hezekiah to join their rebellion against Sennacherib.[92] Second, Hezekiah and his court admired Tyre and how the

90.   Booth notes this community-building power of satire. He also points out that satire draws in a wider circle of assenting auditors than a non-satiric statement (*A Rhetoric of Irony*, pp. 3-14, 29). Also note: 'Efficiency and effectiveness tend to work against each other. Plain language and trite content are very easy to produce and receive, but cause boredom and leave little impression behind. In contrast, creative language and bizarre content can elicit a powerful effect, but may become unduly difficult to produce and receive. Hence, appropriateness must mediate between these opposed factors to indicate the proper balance between the conventional and the unconventional in each situation' (de Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, p. 34).

91.   The two most common proposals for the original setting of Isa. 23 are the cult and the royal court. These are held respectively by J.H. Hayes, 'The Oracles against the Nations in the Old Testament: Their Usage and Theological Importance' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1964), and B.B. Margulis, 'Studies in the Oracles against the Nations' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brandeis University, 1967).

92.   In 705 Sennacherib ascended the throne of Assyria. His annals document that the change in rulers brought about widespread mutiny throughout the Assyrian empire. Even Eloulaios, Tyre's king, whose good relations with Sargon are well known (Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, p. 228), rejoiced at the opportunity to free himself

island was resisting the Assyrian juggernaut, for the island fortress withheld the siege for five years. Third, Judah was thus tempted to do the same in resisting Assyria. This resistance could have taken one or more avenues, such as stopping tribute (cf. 2 Kgs 18.14) or joining a coalition (cf. Isa. 14.32; 30.1-5; 31.1-5; 39). Fourth, Isa. 23.1-14 was spoken to the Judean court to dissuade the admiration and emulation of Tyre. Thus, the message of Isa. 23.1-14 is, 'Don't follow Tyre in military and economic strength, for just as there will be no refuge in the sea for Tyre, so there will be no refuge for Judah except in Zion' (cf. Isa. 4.4-6; 14.32).

Doubtlessly, Isaiah satirized Tyre because there were those who counseled Hezekiah and the military to begin or continue in political partnership with the island as a means of overthrowing Assyrian domination.[93] That there was dissent over proper strategy at such a time is plausible given analogous circumstances reported elsewhere in the biblical record (see, e.g., Jer. 28).

Isaiah may have delivered his Tyre Oracle in order to counter-balance the rhetoric of those in Hezekiah's court who may have been urging the king to enter into or remain in alliance with Tyre.[94] In so doing, the

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from the heavy yoke of the tribute that he was obliged to pay to the Assyrian king. As the strongest king on the Phoenician coast, Eloulaios headed the rebellion. He remained free of the Assyrian yoke for four years (705–701). Phoenician resistance collapsed with the approach of Sennacherib in 701 (*ANET*, p. 287; Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, pp. 246-51; Seth Erlandsson, *The Burden of Babylon: A Study of Isaiah 13.2–14.23* (trans. G. Houser; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1970], p. 246). Sennacherib's own account of his siege against Tyre only portrays an economic ruin of the island of Tyre (D.D. Luckenbill [ed.], *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (2 vols.; Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1926–27), II, p. 239). Though the island of Tyre did not surrender to Sennacherib, its king Eloulaios fled from Tyre to Cyprus. Sennacherib then installed Tuba'lu (Ethbaal) as king over Tyre and the other mainland Phoenician cities (p. 309).

93. See Christopher Seitz, *Theology in Conflict: Reactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah* (BZAW, 176; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1989), pp. 14-18, for a treatment of internal political conflict in the pre-exilic period, and especially within the monarchy. The Annals of Sennacherib themselves report that, as a consequence of Sennacherib's assault on Jerusalem, Hezekiah lost through desertion his own 'Regular and elite troops which he had brought into Jerusalem, his royal residence, to strengthen it' (*ANET*, p. 288).

94. James Dodson, 'Was Isaiah's Foreign Policy Realistic?', *Andover Newton Quarterly* 12 (1971), pp. 80-90, calls Isaiah's foreign policy 'theopolitics'. The prophet consistently called for faith in Yahweh, rather than reliance upon political alliances and military coalitions. Some of Dodson's more pertinent points pertaining to Isaiah's

prophet portrays a desperate situation for Judah, one in which Yahweh is about to cause a Phoenician collapse (23.8-9, 11-12), and in which Babylon, Hezekiah's chief eastern ally (ch. 39), had already fallen to Sennacherib's forces (23.13). Consequently, Isaiah presents resistance against Sennacherib as contrary to the will of Yahweh.

Perhaps 2 Kgs 18.7b gives a further insight into this historical reconstruction. It states of Hezekiah, 'He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him'. Therefore, Sennacherib invaded Judah in 701[95] and put Jerusalem under siege, but the country was delivered in a most profound manner (Isa. 37.36 = 2 Kgs 19.35). According to 2 Kgs 18.6a, the final success of Hezekiah's rebellion was not because he trusted in foreign alliances, but rather because 'He held fast to Yahweh and did not cease to follow him'.[96] It could have been that Isaiah's predictive satirical city-lament was one of several speeches that persuaded Hezekiah to reject any anti-Assyrian alliance with Tyre.

foreign policy include: non-intervention in the international conflicts of neighboring states; international quietism even in the face of Assyrian challenges to the security of Judah; a worldview formed by his understanding of the unity of the divine purpose; and isolationism, in the sense that Judah was to refrain from foreign involvements. In short, it was an absolutist policy, not one founded on humanity's highest attainment of statecraft—proximate morality. Additionally, Seitz writes: 'Isaiah reveals that trust in foreign alliances quickly turns into a form of idolatry, a belief that some force in the human realm of activity can be better trusted than the God who sets up nations and brings them down' (*Isaiah 1–39*, p. 125).

95. The archaeological evidence points both to marked depopulation, through either devastation or deportation, and to systematic destruction of many Judahite towns and border fortresses (see M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings* [AB, 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988], pp. 223-51). A. Ofer's surface surveys suggest that Sennacherib killed or exiled most of the inhabitants of the Shephelah and between 50 and 70 per cent of the inland residents ('Judah', in E.M. Meyers *et al.* [eds.],