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The Relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai

Jieun Kim

Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Edinburgh
2013
Declaration

I declare that the present thesis has been composed by me, that it presents my own research, and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

__________________________

Jieun Kim
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for all the years that I have worked with Professor Hans M Barstad. He guided me towards my research project, the relationship between temple and agriculture, particularly in the Book of Haggai. Through the work, he has given his time, books, and knowledge, all of which made this thesis possible. For his advice and guiding hand I am most grateful. I very much appreciate his teaching and all the support he has given me.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between the Jerusalem temple rebuilding and agriculture in the Book of Haggai. The Hebrew text is replete with agricultural terminology. However, very few have seen that this terminology is central to understanding Haggai’s promulgation that the temple must be rebuilt. In Haggai, agriculture provides crucial insights into Judean agricultural economy within the context of the Achaemenid Empire. This study also throws light upon the importance of agriculture as an economic factor in 6th century BCE Judah.

In chapter 1, I situate my research within current critical work on Haggai. I show how earlier research primarily has concentrated on the “independent” sub-province of Judah without attempting to understand the Book of Haggai within the political and economic context of Achaemenid Judah. I also discuss methodology.

Chapters 2 and 3 give overviews of the pertinent agricultural background for my study. In chapter 2, I survey agricultural developments in ancient Israel and in the ancient Near East. Archaeological excavations and surveys have revealed a considerable agricultural material culture in Judah. The archaeological record shows that olive and vine production was of great economic value in ancient Israel. The olive and the vine belonged among the most important agricultural products, highly sought after all over the ancient Near East.

In chapter 3, I discuss Achaemenid imperial administration and economy under Darius. My claim is that Darius’s imperial policy was the same for all the different parts of the empire. Subsequently, I show how Judah constituted a vital part of the larger economic structure of the Achaemenid Empire.

In chapter 4, I demonstrate how Judah, together with numerous other subordinate provinces, contributed to the economy of the Mesopotamian Empires. From an imperial, military, and economic point of view, Judah functioned as a buffer zone between the Mesopotamian Empires and Egypt. Accordingly, my interest is in the Judean political and economic situation in the early period of Darius, as described in the book of Haggai itself.

Following the introductory chapters, chapters 5 and 6 provide an exegesis of the Book of Haggai. The purpose of my exegetical work is to demonstrate the relevance of agriculture for the Jerusalem temple rebuilding. Attention is particularly paid to terms like “drought” (מָט), or “desolate” (מָט, Hag 1:4, 9, 11), “time” (שָׁעִי, Hag 1:2, 4), “house” (בְּשָׁבוֹת, Hag 1:2, 4, 8, 9; 2:3, 7, 8, 9, 15, 18), and “build” (נָבָא, Hag 1:2, 8; בְּשָׁבוֹת, Hag 2:18).

Chapter 7 contains the conclusion of the dissertation.

Summing up, this thesis shows the importance of a prosperous temple economy in Jerusalem for all of Judah. Darius wanted to maximise the economic contribution of Judah. However, in his second year (520 BCE), the Judean agricultural economy was depressed because of drought (מָט), crop diseases, blight, mildew, and hail (מָט, מִלְּדָה, מְדָע, מְדָר, Hag 1:5–6, 9–11, 2:16–18). For this reason, Haggai encouraged the Judean people strongly to restore the Jerusalem temple. This would be the only possibility to expand the agricultural industry (Hag 1:7–8; 2:3, 8–9). However, the temple still remained in a bad state (מָט, Hag 1:4; 2:3). Instead, the people wanted to rebuild the Davidic dynasty through Zerubbabel (Hag 1:4, 9; 2:4, 5–6). The Judean preference for the Davidic dynasty caused the end of Zerubbabel (Hag 2:20–23).
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<td>Anchor Bible Dictionary</td>
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<td>ABSA</td>
<td>Annual of the British School at Athens</td>
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<td>ABL</td>
<td>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters</td>
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<td>Ael., NA</td>
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<td>AnOr</td>
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<td>AOAT</td>
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<td>Abingdon Old Testament Commentary</td>
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<td>AP</td>
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<td>BA</td>
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<td>Biblia Hebraica Quinta</td>
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Abbreviations

DSab  Darius inscription from Susa (ab)
DSe   Darius inscription from Susa (e)
DSf   Inscription F of Darius I at Susa
DZc   Darius inscription from the Red Sea Canal (c)
EI    Encyclopaedia of Islam
EncJud Encyclopaedia Judaica
FAT   Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FGrH  Felix Jacoby. Die Fragmenten der griechischen Historiker
GCCII Raymond Philip Dougherty. Goucher college cuneiform Inscriptions II: Archives from Erech, Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods
GN    Geographical Name
GSCS  Grammar School Classics Series
HALOT Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jacob Stamm. The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
Hist. Herodotus, Histories
H-E   Historia-Einzelschriften
Her   Hermeneia
H-fS  Historisk-filosofiske Skrifter
HSM   Harvard Semitic Monographs
HUCA  Hebrew Union College Annual
IEJ   Israel Exploration Journal
Int   Interpretation
IR    Iliff Review
ITC   International Theological Commentary
JAOS  Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL   Journal of Biblical Literature
Abbreviations

*JBQ*  
*Jewish Bible Quarterly*

*JHS*  
*Journal of Hebrew Scripture*

*JNES*  
*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

*JPSTC*  
Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary

*JSISup*  
Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism

*JSOT*  
*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*

*JSOTSup*  
Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement

*JSPSup*  
Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement

*Justin*  
Marcus Junianus Justinus, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*

*KAV*  
*Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschieden Inhalt*

*LAPO*  
Littérature Ancienne du Proche-Orient

*LAS*  
*Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*

*LACTOR*  
London Association of Classical Teachers − Original Records

*LHB/OTS*  
Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies

*LSTS*  
Library of Second Temple Studies

*LXX*  
The Septuagint

*MIA*  
Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology

*ML*  
Russel Meiggs and David Malcolm Lewis, eds. *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*

*MMA*  
Monographs in Mediterranean Archaeology

*MT*  
The Masoretic Text

*NBC*  
A New Biblical Commentary

*NC*  
The Numismatic Chronicle

*NCBC*  
The New Century Bible Commentary

*NEA*  
*Near Eastern Archaeology*
<table>
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<td>OLA</td>
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<td>RAI</td>
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<td>Babylonian Tablets in the Collection of the South African Cultural History Museum</td>
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<td>SHCANE</td>
<td>Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East</td>
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<td>SJOT</td>
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<td>Strabo</td>
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<td><em>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</em></td>
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1. Introduction

1.1. Research Question

This study deals with the relationship between the restoration of the Jerusalem temple and agriculture in the Book of Haggai. The problem is twofold. First, I want to look into the nature of agriculture in Judah in general. Second, I intend to relate the agricultural activities to the prophetic exhortations to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. The corpus texts I have chosen are Hag 1:2, 5–6, 7–8, 9–11, 12–14; 2:3, 8–9, 15–19.

Particularly in Hag 1:5–6, 9–11; 2:15–19, Haggai focuses above all on agricultural activities that are related to the Jerusalem temple rebuilding. It is a major issue in the Book of Haggai that the state of Judean economy in general depended on a well functioning temple economy in Jerusalem. For this reason, quite a large portion of Haggai proclaims that the current economic disaster in Judah results from the ruined state of the Jerusalem temple (Hag 1:3–4, 9–11; 2:11–14). Thus, the text itself indicates the importance of the relationship between the temple and a larger agricultural industry.

The book of Haggai is dated to the second year of Darius. It is commonly assumed that the king in question is Darius I (522–486 BCE). From a historical viewpoint, the Book of Haggai should be read as reflecting Darius’s early reign. According to the text, the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple was claimed in the time of Darius. Historians in general assume that this was common Achaemenid imperial policy. Haggai emphasised that the renovated temple and its agricultural dependencies were important for the overall economic and social stability of Judah.

---

1 In this thesis, the term “agriculture” is used to describe the broad array of economic activities on the land whereby human communities exploit plants, animals and metals to produce food and other products useful to sustain life and culture. Thus, the term “agriculture” can primarily be replaced with “land economy,” “agricultural industry,” “agricultural pursuits,” “agricultural activities,” or “agricultural business.” These are not technical terms.

2 The text that I use for Haggai is Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (4th ed. Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1987). Translations into English are on my own. For some biblical passages, however, I use the RSV. I also provide detailed explanations on Hebrew words, considering readers who have no Hebrew.

Jerusalem temple would be crucial to improving Judean economy, enabling the country to fulfil its economic duties toward the empire (Hag 1:4; 2:3, 8–9). Judah had to be able to support the upcoming deployment of a huge imperial army in response to the rebellion in Egypt in 519 BCE. The study of the temple rebuilding project, consequently, gives important information on Jerusalem as one of many administrative centres in the Achaemenid Empire. Darius ruled all conquered territories throughout his reign in the same manner. Judah was but one province in this huge empire.

Haggai’s description of the relationship between temple and agriculture reminds us of a commonly known phenomenon. Deities all over the ancient Near East would provide blessing and prosperity if they were worshipped according to prescribed rules and regulations. However, if gods were disobeyed, they would punish. Behind this “punishment” theology is the wider understanding that the created world is good and created by gods that provide everything humans need. However, occasionally humans experienced drought or famine or defeat in the battle fields. When catastrophes occurred, they were always understood as punishment from the deities. My thesis is not so much a study of the “common theology of the ancient Near East.” Rather, I want to pay attention to the role of temples within the macro economic system of the ancient Near East.

In centralised political entities in the ancient Near East, we find temples as cultural, religious, and economic major institutions. Further, temples were not only engaged in all sorts of agricultural pursuits, including animal husbandry, but also large scale manufacture of goods based on agricultural products, including trade. In particular, in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Empires, temples were controlled by kings, and played a leading role in the

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4 For a detailed exegesis, see chapters 5 and 6 below.


7 For further details, see chapter 2 below, especially 2.3.1.
imperial economy. Furthermore, the state of temple economic prosperity mirrored the economy of the empire. The economic importance of temples consequently cannot be exaggerated.

1.2 Research History

Critical analyses of the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple during the Achaemenid rule over Judah commonly focus on its purpose and role in a political and social context. This relates the temple to the social, economic, and administrative organisation of that time. However, too little attention has been paid to the importance of agriculture, which was fundamental to the economy of Judah. The Book of Haggai is primarily concerned with agriculture and the temple. Therefore an analysis of Haggai should include an examination of the temple’s reconstruction during the Achaemenid period.

It is widely accepted that the Book of Haggai is dated back to the early period of the Achaemenids, but the attempt to detect redactional layers in the text has been examined in various approaches and perspectives. I shall these literary critiques before I proceed with an exegesis of the text of Haggai. In this research survey, I shall give a small sample of those which illustrate my point about the relationship between the temple and economy. In doing so, I shall assert my conviction that a study of Haggai is essential when examining the temple rebuilding project in Achaemenid Judah.

Scholarly debates on the political status of Judah can be traced to the argument that Judah was annexed to the province of Samaria after the fall of the Judean kingdom. In their

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view, Judah existed in sub-province of Samaria until the arrival of Nehemiah in 445 BCE. Yet, Judah enjoyed a brief period of independence as a province during the time of its governor Zerubbabel. This short spell of independence seems to have been in the time of Darius, when the Jerusalem temple rebuilding was demanded of Zerubbabel. This rebuilding project was for Judah’s provincial administration, comparable in this respect to other provinces such as Samaria. For Judah’s national self-definition as a province, the imperial government encouraged the establishment of a dominant elite of proven loyalty within Judah, politically sensitive region in view of its proximity to Egypt. This new political level was made up of the returnees from Babylonia who were considered most likely to be a faithful allies to Darius.

However, the claim that Judah was included in the province of Samaria has not fully understood the role of Judean governor Zerubbabel. Judah evidently existed as a province of the Achaemenids under the rule of an uninterrupted line of Jewish governors from Sheshbazzar to Nehemiah and beyond. Considering all the evidence available—such as


imperial policies, the term ḫḫp, stamp impressions and coins—it appears most likely that Judah in fact constituted a province of the Achaemenids. The political reality of Judah as an independent province is also assumed during the Neo-Babylonian rule.

Social and political life in the province Judah in the early Achaemenid period is marked by social conflict in various accounts. Variants of this paradigm are fundamentally bounded to the Jerusalem temple rebuilding project, wherein two issues are explored: the role of the temple rebuilding and the identity of a cultic community or theocracy in the rebuilt temple. For many debates the conflict is between the returnees from Babylonia and those who had lived in Judah during the exile in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Both texts unquestionably deal with the building of the temple, but very little of this would have any direct bearing on the function of the temple in the political and social context of Achaemenid Judah.

This controversial scheme also involves a monarchical concept of the Jerusalem temple in the Judean kingdom. Its emphasis is placed on prophetic texts wherein Judah’s future is envisaged with the restoration of the Judean kingdom through Zerubbabel of the Davidic lineage at the time of rebuilding the temple. This view of Judean restoration is developed by the notion of the kingship of YHWH in the rebuilt Jerusalem temple and is commonly termed “eschatology.” However, this eschatological view of Judean restoration does not give full understanding to the role of Zerubbabel; likewise, in debates on the political status of Achaemenid Judah.

Paul D. Hanson’s work could be representative of the distinction in the division of Judean society. Hanson has found two groups with competing notions of how the kingship of YHWH should rule within the rebuilt Jerusalem temple. One group, termed “hierocratic


13 Paul D. Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 32–380. See also Paul D. Hanson, A People Called: The Growth of
party” (theocratists), envisaged the rule of YHWH in his rebuilt temple, based on Ezekiel’s vision: YHWH’s sovereignty over his people was manifested through his presence in the cult. Visualising the rule of YHWH himself, this group accordingly encouraged the temple rebuilding, wherein Joshua the high priest of the Zadokite priests who had gained the support of the Achaemenid government was content to collaborate with the Achaemenids, since they believed that this political order had been established by YHWH. In his view, Haggai is considered as belonging to the “hierocratic party” due to his focus on the temple rebuilding.

The competing group, termed “visionaries” (eschatologists), which was excluded from the Jerusalem cult, regarded YHWH’s kingship in Achaemenid Judah to be a miraculous divine undertaking against the temple reconstruction through Isa 40–55, 56–66 and Zech 9–14. YHWH’s existence in Zion (Jerusalem) as his earthly abode was to reassert his kingship over the nations. Zion would then be maintained by Judean kings over all his nations and peoples and serve the ideological and administrative needs of YHWH’s sovereignty. This hope for YHWH’s vindication in the context of their disenfranchisement gave rise to apocalyptic eschatology which embraced a universal vision of YHWH’s sovereignty.

Hanson’s understanding of the social conflict in Achaemenid Judah is based on the various definitions of prophecy and apocalyptic. Hanson surely conceives of Judean kings’ ruling authority in favour of YHWH in the hope of the visionary group but there is little place for the restoration of the monarchy. This may be due to Hanson’s aim of establishing a social context for the rise of apocalyptic eschatology.

An alternative interpretation of the purpose of the temple rebuilding and social context in which it was taken can be found in Peter Ross Bedford. Adapting motifs such as YHWH being king of the earth and nations, the divine warrior, and the cosmic renewal from the Zion psalms (Ps 46, 48, 76) and the יְהֹוָה נְפָרָה psalms (Ps 47, 93, 96–99), Bedford focuses on both the title הַשְׁמוֹרָה (Hag 1:1, 14; 2:2, 21) and the uses of the term הַשְׁמוֹרָה נְפָרָה (Hag 1:2, 5, 7,


Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic, 209–79.

Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic, 240–62.

Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic, 32–208.

On doubt of Hanson’s definitions of prophecy and apocalyptic, see Lester L. Grabbe, “Prophetic and Apocalyptic: Time for New Definitions and New Thinking,” in Knowing the End from the Beginning: The Prophetic, the Apocalyptic and their Relationships (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; JSPSup 46; London: T & T Clark, 2003), 107–33.
Bedford has indisputably developed the intervention of the divine warrior and the cosmic renewal in the exegesis of Haggai as the assault of the nations: YHWH’s portrayals in his kingship and enthronement are given to the occurrence of the motif of the shaking of the earth and nations (Hag 2:6–7). Being king of both of these, YHWH did indeed judge and chastise nations (Hag 2:4–5) then used funds drawn from them to make Judah glorious (Hag 2:3, 8–9). For Haggai the temple rebuilding was for the expression of YHWH’s return to Jerusalem and YHWH’s kingship in Jerusalem, as the temple in the monarchical period.

Bedford then draws attention to the restoration of the Davidic dynasty. In his view of the monarchical temple, the temple project contributed to the restoration of the Davidic dynasty. This is evident in Haggai’s intentional use of יְהוָה instead of בָּשְׁרָה (Hag 1:4 and 9). YHWH thus declared that Zerubbabel was his servant and signet, which would be connected to the future restoration of Judah (Hag 2:20–23). However, Haggai understood “that day” to restore Judean kingship to be coming “very soon” (Hag 2:6, 23). This is the way that Haggai made the eschatological claim on Zerubbabel, acknowledging the realities of Achaemenid authority but also affirming YHWH’s promise of Judah’s future.

This eschatological ideology of the Judean kingdom in YHWH’s supremacy accompanying YHWH’s return to the rebuilt Jerusalem temple legitimised the temple rebuilding among the Judean people. This acknowledgement led to the integration of society which had been in conflict for control over the temple with different groups pursuing their vision of its function. At this point, Bedford holds that rebuilding the temple was initiated by the Judean people due to the monarchical concept of the temple as evidenced in Haggai, although this rebuilding work was later granted by the Achaemenid government (Ezra 5–6). The temple rebuilding in Judah thus never challenged Achaemenid sovereignty. In Bedford’s reading of Haggai it is likely that the figure of Zerubbabel was promoted, such as in a monarchical institution. However, his interpretation of Haggai against the backdrop of Achaemenid Judah, as such, does no more than focus on the ideological role of the temple

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The Relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai

within Judean society.

Attempts to relate the temple rebuilding to an Achaemenid policy to establish imperial administration has been done in various studies. Joel P. Weinberg, for example, has developed “the citizen-temple community” by comparative data drawn from his previous work which is related to “temple communities” in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor.22

Attention in this study has above all been given to the role of the Jerusalem temple as an agrarian institution. Weinberg has studied the agrarian structure and nature of the postexilic Judean community based on social status and authority structures, concentrating on how the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah have become the focus of considerable interest in economic aspects of postexilic Judean society.23 He has propounded the view that the Jerusalem temple was built as a result of Achaemenid administrative policy which had as its goal the formation of a self-determining institution within Judah: the Zion returnees formed a basic social unit in postexilic Judean society, which later developed into a unique social institution that was composed of socio-economic units as recorded in Ezra-Nehemiah. This community definitely established the citizen-temple community.24 The status of the temple members was accordingly dependent on their connection with the existence or nonexistence of temple property.

Weinberg further points out that after the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah, due to the members’ acceptance of the local, non-deported population of Judah into the community, the membership of the citizen-temple community rapidly rose from only 20% to 70% of the population of Judah.25 Among the emergent population, three major centres were situated in the Central Hill country around Jerusalem, in the Coastal Plain and in the Jordan Valley. Here, Haggai helped the citizen-temple community that had already begun to establish itself become more realistic and concrete while supporting the Davidic Zerubbabel and the Zadokite Joshua in his promulgation.

To redefine the postexilic community in Judah, however, Weinberg does not take into consideration the real social context, despite studying socio-economic development in postexilic Judah. Notwithstanding this, his argumentation on the missions of Ezra and

Nehemiah has led to great interest in Judah’s national self-definition as a province, as well as in how the Jerusalem temple generated income for the Achaemenid Empire. There are some views in this area that arouse a great deal of interest in the role of the Jerusalem temple as the economic and administrative centre of Achaemenid Judah.26

One important study of the temple’s role within the social, political, and economic context of Achaemenid Judah has been done by Eric M. Meyers and Carol L. Meyers. Through their commentary on Haggai, Meyers and Meyers stress that the rebuilt Jerusalem temple would function as the mainstay of the economy long enough to establish the independent sub-province within the Achaemenid Empire.27 When rebuilt, the temple in Jerusalem would become a major economic and administrative centre through its control over the annual budget of the province and management of Judah’s agricultural economy.28 Accordingly, Judah could only reap economic benefits once an administrative and economic centre had been built.

On this point, Meyers and Meyers give us an exciting new socio-economic reading of Haggai. However, Haggai’s insistence that the people rebuild the temple is not examined in terms of a true appraisal of the central importance of the temple in any ancient Near Eastern society for the economic health of the community as a whole. They focus on the temple rebuilding programme, but offer very little in relation to the wider socio-economic context of the temple. They devalue the importance of the temple reconstruction with regard to the reality of the people’s dire economic situation (Hag 1:5–6, 9–11; 2:15–19). Accordingly, the need for the exegetical studies on Haggai based on the agricultural activities which are fundamental to the land economy are taken for granted.

A similar emphasis on the political and economic role of the temple lies in the work of John Kessler. In his commentary on Haggai, Kessler points out that the temple reconstruction would encourage the repopulation and economic redevelopment of Jerusalem, promoting a


self-sufficient Judean economy. This was connected to Achaemenid policy of making Judah a semi-autonomous ethnic and political province, and utilising the temple as a fiscal administrative centre for the empire unquestionably increased taxes.

When considering the economic aspect of the temple, Kessler contends that calls to rebuild the temple appear to have been rejected by the largely agricultural community, composed mainly of the non-exiled who owed their land holdings and economic stability to the land redistribution undertaken by Neo-Babylonia. There may have been conflict between this land-owning community and the returnees over land tenure issues or political allegiances. Notwithstanding this, the temple as a financial centre had to be built by both groups while imperial policies were in force. In the Book of Haggai, however, the word “remnant” (רָאשׁ) was never intended to invoke any conflict between the exiled and the non-exiled (Hag 1:12; 2:2). This item simply refers to the community as a collective identity, all unnamed except Zerubbabel and Joshua (see chapters 5 and 6 below).

Meyers and Meyers, and Kessler go on to contend that the governor Zerubbabel, who took charge of relations as the official agent between Judah and the Achaemenids, was responsible to the king for returning tribute and tax payments from the province. They maintain that Haggai justified the building in the current political circumstances by reference to Zerubbabel’s royal lineage, and guaranteed the possibility of change in the political status of Achaemenid Judah. In this view, the vital expression “my signet ring” (םָיְדִידֵךְ) has particular royal significance, and the verb “choose” (נָבְא֫) is crucial within the Davidic election tradition (Hag 2:20–23). In this exaltation of Zerubbabel, Haggai made messianic claims of him. For Haggai, the Davidic line of Zerubbabel was not rejected, and the precise nature of Zerubbabel’s future role with the “signet ring” was kept intentionally open-ended (2:23).

In the exaltation of Zerubbabel, Meyers and Meyers, and Kessler undoubtedly envisage Judah’s future as lying in the restoration of the Judean kingdom under a Davidic king. All of them evidently keep messianic claims for Zerubbabel in Haggai. However, Zerubbabel’s role should be acknowledged both within the political and administrative realities of Achaemenid Judah.

Since Haggai’s text is one of the necessary sources for the study of Achaemenid Judah,

Meyers and Meyers, and Kessler have examined Haggai in terms of the social, political, and economic role of the Jerusalem temple in Achaemenid Judah. However, too little attention has been paid to the economic importance of agricultural produce in Judah. Nor do they offer much direct bearing on the wider socio-economic context of the temple. Haggai focuses clearly on the centrality of the Judean agricultural activities which were fundamental to the land economy in relation to the temple. The topic, the reconstructed Jerusalem temple as an administrative economic centre, has been severely under-estimated.

Therefore, my study on the relationship between the temple and agriculture in the Book of Haggai has evidentiary value for analysis of the role of the rebuilt temple within the social, political, and economic context of Achaemenid Judah. The foremost objective of my research is to examine the Jerusalem temple rebuilding project in terms of its central importance within the economic and administrative organisation of the Achaemenids.

1.3 Method and Organisation of the Present Work

In order to fill the described lacuna in Haggai research, this study will perform an exegesis of the Book of Haggai. I will concentrate on the purpose for rebuilding the Jerusalem temple within the larger land economy of Judah in the Achaemenid period.

My exegetical work will be economically and historically oriented. Archaeological reports will be used for evidence of agricultural activities in Judah. Historical documents on the Achaemenids, as well as secondary literature are my sources for the study of Achaemenid administrative policy.

Chapter 2 will explore how much the ancient Near East had cooperated with each other in their economic structures. The key point for this work is to investigate Judean economic abilities within a larger international context. In chapter 2, I will also look into the role of temples for the economy throughout the ancient Near East. I will conclude that temples played a huge role for the political, economic, administrative, and military realities of the Near East.

In chapter 3, I will undertake a historical survey of Darius’s rule in Judah. The main purpose of this study is to understand the role of the Jerusalem temple within the imperial administrative system. I want to look into how the various provinces were organized. I also want to investigate the role of local leaders. Moreover, I will examine Judah’s wider
obligations within the administrative, economic, and military structure of the Achaemenid Empire. This will throw light upon the claim that the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem was intended to enhance imperial activities.

Building upon chapters 2 and 3, chapter 4 will survey historical and economic circumstances of Judah during the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods. I pay above all attention to the material culture in Judah. I will ask if Judean industries had been sustained throughout the Babylonian exile. I will also ask what sort of economic strategies existed in Judah under Darius. Was Darius’s imperial policy carried out effectively in Judah? Since the Achaemenid Empire had few natural resources of her own, accumulation of wealth totally depended on the economy of the provinces.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide a critical exegesis on the Book of Haggai. My exegesis will demonstrate the need for a new reading of Haggai from a historical point of view. Also, I will view the Book of Haggai as a complete and coherent work. I will particularly look into the role of the Jerusalem temple rebuilding in relation to agriculture. In doing so, I have reached a more fully informed understanding of the relationship between the temple and agriculture in the Book of Haggai. I also have understood much better the role of agriculture in general for the economy of Judah.
2. Agriculture and Economy in the Ancient Near East

2.0 Background

In this chapter, I will survey the agricultural activities of the ancient Near East. My survey will concern archaeological records on the above areas from the Upper Paleolithic period (between 40,000 and 10,000 years ago) to the Achaemenid period (circa 5th century BCE), even though the key concern is agricultural economy during the Achaemenid period. This historical survey will provide the necessary background on the agricultural economy of the ancient Near East, because agricultural economy in one region would not usually be changed and rather further developed throughout the ancient Near Eastern history. Therefore, the foraging Age should be considered part and even the very foundation of the ancient Near Eastern agriculture.

By way of introduction it is worth highlighting that, from the imperial period of the first millennium BCE, the agricultural economies of the Mesopotamian Empires and Israel were closely related. Mesopotamian central powers depended upon their peripheries for the many natural resources required for sustenance and prosperity. Israel demonstrated disproportionately large agricultural production, though she represented a geographically small portion of the Near East. As a result, the agricultural economy of ancient Israel contributed together with numerous other subordinates to that of the Mesopotamian empires.

The imperial administrative system which controlled taxes and trade constitutes the larger economic context for understanding the agricultural activities in the Near East at that time. Turning to the survey itself, it is necessary to take into consideration Judean patronage in the larger economic structure of the Achaemenids. Historical support for the existence of this system is provided by the Book of Haggai. The Book of Haggai is important to give a lot of information about ancient Israelite agriculture. In addition, Haggai describes Darius I (522–486 BCE) reconstructing the imperial administrative system to boost his financial power.
2.1 Agriculture in the Ancient Near East: A Short Survey

2.1.1 Plant husbandry

Around 40,000 years ago, groups of people in the ancient Near East lived as gatherers of wild plants, migrating regularly to pursue sources of food. Einkorn, the wild species of wheat (*Triticum boeoticum*) was their mainstay though they also depended on wild rye.\(^1\) As groups of foragers continued congregating around the limited resources, the increased competition for food resulted in conflict. To ensure abundant harvest, the mobile foragers became sedentary and began domesticating the wild cereals between 14,000 and 10,000 years ago (Epipaleolithic).\(^2\)

Examples of the domestication of wild cereals are available from the area surrounding the Zagros Mountains running south-eastwards from eastern Turkey and north-west Iran to the Persian Gulf and forming the Iraq-Iran border for most of their length. There, groups of foragers deliberately practised the domestication of wild crops in their natural environments, using agricultural equipments such as grinding stones and flint sickle blades for grain produce.\(^3\) Subsequently, complex foraging resulted in the settlement of the region. Remains of the domesticated form of wheat (*Triticum monococcum*) have been found at Syrian locations including Abu Hureyra and Mureybit, which provide archaeological support for these claims.\(^4\)

A long association between wild plants and domesticated cereals informed the foragers understanding of which crops were available, which were able to be stored and which were the most productive. Foragers studied the cycles of crop productivity. This knowledge resulted in an agricultural pattern, which begins with the early rains that soften the ground for ploughing and sowing in November and culminates in the harvest.\(^5\)

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These agricultural practices were applied on increasingly large areas of land, extending into the forest-steppe areas in the Zagros region. Though steppe lands are slightly arid, they were adapted for growing wild cereals through the development of irrigation techniques such as ditches, walls, and terraces. Upon generating an increase in produce, surplus was stored in underground pits and in silos at Abu Hureyra and Mureybit. With a reliable food supply, these early plant-cultivating families multiplied rapidly in their settlements.

Archaeological evidence suggests that people cultivated emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*) from 9400 BCE (pre-pottery Neolithic A). Full-scale farming was first found at Çayönü in Turkey, Ali Kosh in Iran, Magzaliya, Jarmo, and Magzaliya all of which are in Iraq, and Abu Hureyra. Bread wheat husbandry in Aswad and Ghoraifé, both of which are in Syria, and Can Hasan III in Turkey was reported in 8500 BCE (pre-pottery Neolithic B). Barley in a two-row or six-row form was cultivated at Iranian Ali Kosh and Ganj Dareh, and Turkish Can Hasan III. As for legumes, the cultivation of lentils was noted at Syrian locations including Abu Hureyra, Aswad, Mureybit, and Bouqras, and at Jarmo, Magzaliya, Ali Kosh, Ganj Dareh, and Çayönü.

In the Neolithic period from 6500 BCE, the cultivation of einkorn and emmer wheat was thriving at Bouqras and Hacilar, both of which are in Turkey. These regions also featured barley cultivation. Their advances in produce would keep pace with Ali Kosh.

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8 Emmer wheats are hulled wheats with tough husks that tightly enclose grains. Miller, “Origins,” 43–44.


Bread wheat was growing well at Syrian Bouqras, Ramad, and Ras Shamra. As for other crops, flax was cultivated at Mureybit, Ramad, and Ras Shamra throughout the periods.

These agricultural developments influenced profound changes in human society. The surplus of one group of people opened up new pathways to food resources through bartering and sale. Agricultural work created a demand for specialised smiths, potters, weavers, carpenters, and stone toolmakers. These specialised jobs led to a need for regulation and management to ensure better coordination in production and more efficient distribution of products. Agricultural developments were the stimulus for the centralised politics of the time even though this centralised redistribution concomitantly required the payment of tax or tribute to supply food to warriors, officers, and kings.

One well-developed example of a centralised state is the city of Uruk. Between 3500–2800 BCE, the authorities of Uruk developed irrigation systems including reservoirs and canals. They also developed agricultural instruments such as “clay sickles” and threshing sledges, and used animals for ploughing and delivery. As a result of these efforts, Uruk’s agricultural production of barley increased by tenfold, due to improved storage facilities.

Noticeably, agricultural and manufacturing developments enhanced Uruk’s ability to trade with neighbouring regions. According to the sale records of the land in ancient Kudurrus, around 3000 BCE, the purchase price for fields and any other objects was paid in a wide variety of agricultural produce. In addition to agricultural resources, the Uruk

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20 Liverani, “Historical Overview,” 5.
government developed a large scale of manufacturing of goods and a highly advanced textile industry. Through trading these goods, the inhabitants of Uruk secured wine, timber, metals, and precious stones, none of which occurred naturally in their region. These agricultural and manufacturing developments resulted in large-scale trade networks in the Ur III period between 2112–2004 BCE.

To appreciate the agricultural and textile industries, it is worth attending to their composite parts, their pertinent crops. Barley was the leading crop. It was followed by emmer wheat. From emmer wheat and barley, people made bread and beer. Beer was an important part of the diet. Yet, true wheat was a rare luxury because of the lack of precipitation. The next crop, flax was woven into linen, which was fundamental to developing a textile industry.

Fruits such as dates, pomegranates, apples, figs, apricots, and vines were grown. Of these, the fruit of date palms provided the greatest nutritional value and featured the desirable quality of being storable. The date’s position of importance could be compared to the olive in Mediterranean lands. Grapes were grown as a fruit tree. Yet, with low yields, they were usually used for fresh or dried fruits rather than for wine.

Vegetables were probably grown in gardens rather than fields because they required well-developed systems of irrigation. There were beetroot, turnips, leeks, onions, cress, mustard, radishes, lettuce, fennel, coriander, marjoram, rue, mint, rosemary, fenugreek, sesame, cucumbers, and garlic. In addition, lentils, peas, grass peas, small broad beans, and


bitter vetch were cultivated. Legumes not only contributed protein to the diet but were also farmed for animal fodder.33

Concerning nuts, particularly around the steppe zone of the Zagros Mountains, pistachios and almonds were cultivated as a naturalised source of high-energy food. In addition to which, the wood from pines, oaks, willow, poplar, tamarisk, and maple tree were used for furniture.34 Archaeologically retrieved remains of wooden furniture and charcoal support the prevalence and uses of these trees.35

So far this survey of the agricultural development in the ancient Near East has shown that, after a long history of foraging, groups of people were confronted with population expansion and its resulting stress on resources. This stress led to the domestication of cereals around 10,000 years ago. Archaeological evidence of cultivated plants has mainly been found in the Zagros area. This evidence indicates the development of reliable food sources through irrigating increasingly large areas of arable land and developing agricultural tools. Agricultural success required a centralised government for efficient management. From the time of 3500 BCE onwards, political authorities administered over agriculture and the resulting trade business. Barley was grown as a key crop. As for fruits, date palms and pomegranates were produced. Shrubs and trees were also cultivated for food, timber and sculptural materials.

2.1.2 Animal husbandry

In early history, for subsistence, people certainly hunted animals. From the Epipaleolithic period, goats, sheep, gazelles, and asses inhabited the Zagros Mountains.36 Deer, cattle, donkeys, foxes, lions, leopards, and hares were also there. One can see the fossilised remains of them at Ganj Dareh, Qermez Dereh, M’lefaat, and Asiab all of which are in Iran.37 Since then, larger settlements for hunting and slaying animals for their meat began to develop in Syrian locations including Abu Hureyra, Bouqras, and El Kowm, and in Iranian

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32 Zohary and Hopf, Domestication of Plants, 192–207.
36 Barker, Agricultural Revolution, 136.
37 Barker, Agricultural Revolution, 136–37.
locations including Eshkaft-e Gavi, Nemrik, Çayönü, and Maghzaliya. In addition to meats, products of milk, yoghurt, cheese, and butter were in high demand. For wool, hair, and leather, geometric microliths, pointed arrowheads, axes, and tempered steel tools are also used.

As with cereals, the population’s rising demand put pressure on the natural resources, causing animals to be slaughtered in increasing numbers. As a result, animal husbandry was brought into the plant farming areas. Massive stalks of cereals after the harvest were undoubtedly useful for animal fodder. A combination of animal excrement and rotted straw used for livestock bedding then fertilised the soil.

A multitude of evidence for the herding of sheep and goats has been found at the site of the settlement of Ganj Dareh. Flattened horn cores of goats, goat footprints, and deciduous teeth of sheep were preserved in mud bricks. These preserved remnants suggest the domestication of both sheep and goats at the settlements. Widespread similar evidence has been found at Syrian Abu Hureyra, Mureybit, and Jerf el-Ahmar, at Turkish Çayönü, Çatalhöyük, Göbekli Tepe, Gritille, and Hallan Çemi, at Iraqi Maghzaliya, Shanidar, Zawi Chemi Shanidar, Jarmo, Zarzi, and Umm Dabaghiyah, and at Iranian Asiab, Ali Kosh, M’lefaat, Qermez Dereh, and Pa Sangar, suggesting the prevalence of flock herding.

The rush to exploit animal resources was restricted by the need to regulate the slaughter of animals. Not only was the slaughter of animals restricted by the demands of sustainability, but also by the limited storage available for meat. In the mixed farming areas, the crop structure provided further limitations, as it was divided to provide food for humans in addition to the livestock. For these reasons, village based animal husbandry started to be developed in areas nearby but outside of human residences. As with the agricultural developments, the developments in animal husbandry resulted in centralised political and

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41 Barker, *Agricultural Revolution*, 139.


43 Liverani, “Historical Overview,” 5–19.
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Economical control to improve coordination and distribution of animal products.

Between 2112–2004 BCE, in the Ur III dynasty, a specialised animal economy became well developed in the Kur River Basin in southwest highland Iran.\(^\text{44}\) Tal-e Malyan, ancient Anshan played a specialised and centralised administrative role for this animal economy.\(^\text{45}\) Although the process of identifying animal bones is not easy, the faunal remains in Malyan suggest the presence of sheep, goats, cattle, asses, dogs, gazelles, and wild pigs. Among them, sheep and goats were in the highest demand, due to the large demand for milk, wool, and hair products.\(^\text{46}\) Sheep flocks were more numerous than goat flocks, counted together, though during the Uruk period, the ratio of sheep and goats to humans would have been about four to one.\(^\text{47}\)

Meat distribution also took into consideration the animals’ age and sex. For the most part, male sheep and goats between six months and two years would be butchered.\(^\text{48}\) By contrast, in the other age groups, males and females were shepherded equally. In this specialised animal economy, milk was not handled administratively. Instead, milk production and distribution were the direct responsibility of regions themselves.\(^\text{49}\) This was more appropriate, more just, because it supported milk production that met local needs for subsistence.

According to the records in Kudurrus, the purchase price for fields was paid in animals and animal products: sheep, goats, lambs, rams, ewes, cows, bulls, oxen, Lions, lions’ heads, horses, donkeys, mules, asses, pigs, falcons’ heads, birds, chickens, doves, ducks, geese, pigeons, fowls, rodents, fish, dried fish, turtles and cowries, milk, cream, ghee, butter, sheep oil, lard, wool, and leather.\(^\text{50}\) They were also used for the payment of tax and tribute to kings, court officials, the military, temples and professional groups of architects, scribes, and


\(^{45}\) Especially, this period is called Qaleh phase at which highly structured urban system seriously begins to break down. It would be connected to dominant struggles for political power. Chavalas, “The Age of Empires, 3000–900 BCE,” 45–46; Zeder, *Feeding*, 71–73.

\(^{46}\) Zeder, *Feeding*, 75–118.


\(^{50}\) Gelb, Steinkeller, and Whiting, *Earliest Land Tenure Systems*, 281-98.
various craftsmen.51 Ivory from elephants is levied for a craft material.52 Increased use of animals as items of trade, tribute, and tax resulted in the further development of animal husbandry to optimise market value.53

Of other applicable animals for husbandry, the few cattle were tamed as household animals because cattle are much harder to sustain both in terms of food requirements and their water consumption.54 A single cow provided far more meat, manure, and milk than a single goat or sheep. In addition to which, cows were used to pull ploughs and deliver the harvest. For transporting people and heavier goods, though, mules and donkeys were usually employed.55 Horses were seen as a luxury animal for authorities.

Pigs would be specialised for meat production in Near Eastern societies because of the high yield in terms of meat.56 However, pigs failed to play a major role in the Near Eastern subsistence economy. The numerous possible explanations range from ecological to psycho-ideological theories.57 Among them, a noteworthy explanation is that large-scale pig rearing required close supervision to prevent the harm of agricultural areas when the pigs were foraging for food. Thus, only small-scale pig herding was undertaking in some regions, such as in Iraqi locations including Tell ed-Der, al-Hiba, and Sakheri Sughir, where pigs were an important resource.58

A variety of fish were found in coastal and river-line areas, such as at al-Hiba.59 However, fishing practices were not specialised, even though fresh fish was eaten and dried fish provided a year-round resource.

Above, I have surveyed the development of animal husbandry in the ancient Near East.

54 Barker, Agricultural Revolution, 143–46; McMahon, “From Sedentism to States,” 22–23.
56 Zeder, Feeding, 30-32.
showing that people domesticated animals such as sheep and goats for sustainable provisions. Increased demand for animal resources resulted in the regulation of the slaughter of animals by numbers, species, age, and sex. Then, the administrative distribution of one region for specialised animal economy was established at Malyan. Widespread acknowledgement of the market value of animals and animal products inspired continued investment in the development of animal husbandry. Moreover, the use of animals for ploughing, threshing, and transporting led to the domestication of cattle, donkeys, mules, and horses.

2.2 Agriculture in Ancient Israel

2.2.1 Agricultural industries

Ancient Israel shared the economic transition from foraging to food production. As in the ancient Near East, evidence dating back 40,000 years has been found in the Carmel Caves, supporting the prevalence of foraging practices, including the collection of wild barley, wild emmer wheat, wild nuts, oak, almond, and pistachio. Evidence for development in food production, similar to those in the Near East, has been found along Mount Carmel, Mount Hermon, Galilee, the Golan Plains, and in the cave of Shukbah in the Judean Hills. Fish and crustaceans served as staple foods for those inhabiting the region between Lake Hula in east of Galilee and Wadi Judayid in the Jordan Valley. Sparsely populated, the hilly Highlands of the Negev region were relatively favourable for herding animals. Faunal remains from environs near settlements indicate the presence of goats, sheep, cattle, pigs, deer, gazelles, birds, and reptiles. Similar remains at Ein Gev in east of Galilee, Hayonim Cave in west of Galilee and Ein Aqev in the Negev date back 18,000 years ago, and similar remains at Hayonim Cave B, Hayonim Terrace, and Rosh Horesha three of which are in the Negev date back 13,000 years ago.

Evidence has been found demonstrating the emergence of sedentary communities


61 Henry, From Foraging to Agriculture, 21.


63 Henry, From Foraging to Agriculture, 6–7, 16–20.
during the period of transition from foraging to agriculture. Crops were domesticated for a reliable source of food. Agricultural instruments were developed, including sickle blades, microburins, geometric microliths, and grinding stones.\(^64\) Emmer wheat was the first cereal domesticated at Jericho.\(^65\) ’Ain Ghazal and Iraq ed-Dubb both of which are in the Jordan Valley proved suitable for wheat cultivation, and both regions also became associated with barley and legumes farming. Barley farming also took place in Netiv Hagdud in the Jordan Valley and Lagama North in the Negev. Peas, lentils, almonds, figs, and pistachios were naturalised at Jericho and Nahal Hemar, southwest of the Dead Sea.

Similar assemblages of early farming have been found at ’Ain Mallaha in the north of Galilee, Hayonim and Ohalo in southwest of Galilee, Mugharet el Wad in south of Carmel, Nahal Oren in north of Carmel, Shukbah, El Wad, and Erq el Ahmar in the Judean Hills, Azraq, Iraq ed-Dubb, Netiv Hagdud, and Wadi Hammeh in the Jordan Valley, Gezer, and Beidha, Dhra’, Nahal Hamar, Rosh Horesha, Rosh Zin, and Wadi Judayid in the Negev.\(^66\)

The beginning of the 3rd millennium BCE (Bronze Age) coincided with the first attempts to cultivate grapes, olives, dates, and pomegranates in the Levant.\(^67\) The earliest remains of cultivated grapes have been found at Bene-Bereq and Ta’annek in the Judean hills, Babedh-Dhra’ and Numeira in the Jordan Valley, Jericho and Lachish.\(^68\) Remains of olives have been discovered at Megiddo, Afula, Ta’annek, Aphek, and Tell Halif in the Judean Hills, Beth-Yerah and Beth-Shean in south of Galilee, Teleilat Ghassul in the Jordan Valley, Tell Mashosh near Beersheba, Lachish, Gezer, the Arad Valley, and the Cave of Treasure in the Negev.\(^69\) Archaeological remains of dates have been found at Jericho and Teleilat Ghassul in the Jordan Valley, and the Cave of Treasure and ’Elim in the Negev.\(^70\) Archaeological remains of domesticated pomegranate have been found at Tell Halif and Tell Qiri in the


\(^{65}\) Miller, “Origins,” 45.


\(^{67}\) Among these early settlements, Jericho presents a well developed settlement which is enclosed by a substantial wall. Frank S. Frick, “Cities: An Overview,” in Meyers, ed., *OEANE*, Vol. 2, 14–19.


Judean Hills, Gezer, Jericho and Arad.\textsuperscript{71} Due to water irrigation systems, the areas between Arad and Kadesh Barnea also attracted agricultural and pastoral populations.\textsuperscript{72} They domesticated sheep, goats, deer, donkeys, and cattle, and they farmed barley and emmer wheat.\textsuperscript{73} From the 2\textsuperscript{nd} millennium BCE onwards, with the development of desert routes, significant numbers of donkeys and camels appeared in the region. Camels provided the advantage of being able to reach distant water sources during the dry summers, in addition to their usefulness for ploughing. Camels also produced milk and provided meat. In contrast to the prevalence of camel remains found in the region, few remains of cattle have been found due to their impractical pasture and water requirements.\textsuperscript{74} Irrigation systems played a crucial role in enlarging agricultural fields. Using the primary water sources such as streams, springs, and rainfall, ancient Israel developed wells, cisterns, and reservoirs. Wells were ordinarily cut through rock in order to reach the ground water which came from the underground water system. In the 15\textsuperscript{th} or 14\textsuperscript{th} century BCE, Gezer constructed wells which were connected to the springs at Hazor, Megiddo, El-Jib northwest of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{75} Ashkelon included more than a hundred wells dating from the settlement of the Philistines.\textsuperscript{76} Cisterns cut into bedrock collected and conserved runoff water from roofs and courtyards (1 Kgs 22:38). They are very necessary for settlements lacking natural springs or other water sources. Fifty cisterns have been unearthed at Tell en-Nasbeh in the northwest of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{77} The largest and most elaborate underground reservoir

\textsuperscript{71} Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age Israel, 171.

\textsuperscript{72} Grinding stones, mortars, stone basins and sickle blades are found at most excavated sites in Negev. Israel Finkelstein, Living on the Fringe: The Archaeology and History of the Negev, Sinai and Neighbouring Regions in the Bronze and Iron Ages (MMA 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 23–30.

\textsuperscript{73} Barker, Agricultural Revolution, 144-46; Finkelstein, Living on the Fringe, 103–113, 118–126.

\textsuperscript{74} Finkelstein argues that although the dominant species in animal herding of arid areas change significantly, the fauna, wild and domesticated alike, by and large, do not change. Finkelstein, Living on the Fringe, 62-63.


\textsuperscript{77} Dever, “Gezer,” 500. However, Zorn states that there is no need of cistern because the water is well supplied through eight drain channels. Jeffrey Ralph Zorn, “Nasbeh, Tell En-,” in Stern, ed., NEAEHL, Vol. 3, 1101.
uncovered to date is at Beth-Shemesh; while in use, its capacity was about 800 cubic metres (Ezek 31:15).78

In the 10th century BCE, well-developed channels conducted water from the Gihon spring of Jerusalem to the Kidron valley, for irrigation.79 In fact, remains of water-collection and distribution facilities dating to the Iron Age have been found at Buqei’a in northwest of Galilee, Ramat Matred in northeast of Jerusalem, and Arad, Horvat Haluqim, and Mishor ha-Ruah in the Negev.80

In hilly regions, the techniques developed to conserve and control water included terracing and runoff farming strategies.81 Certainly, these helped to achieve a more stable and productive agricultural system, which, in turn, enabled ancient Israel to establish a complete agricultural calendar.82 Engaging this set of strategies, Israel’s agricultural economy began to thrive, as is indicated by the many archaeological remains of granaries (חַטָּלוֹת, Hag 2:16 or כְּפָרַה, 1 Kgs 9:19; 2 Chr 32:27–29) and silos or barns (סְדָקָי, Hag 2:19; Jer 50:26; Joel 1:17, מִשְׁבַּה, Isa 5:2; or פְּרָדָה, Isa 1:8) used for grain, wine, and oil storage. Many remains of storage structures have been found at Tel Hadar in the northeast of Galilee, ‘Ain Mallaha, Tell en-Nasbeh, Megiddo, Tell Jemmeh in south of Gaza, Tell Beit Mirsim in southwest of Hebron,


82 The Gezer Calendar contained a seven-line inscription on a small limestone slab, with three letters. The reverse side shows signs of an earlier inscription which was scraped off. The date of the inscription would be established from 925 B.C.E. roughly. Ian Young, “The Style of the Gezer Calendar and Some ‘Archaic Biblical Hebrew’ Passage,” VT 42 (1992): 362–375.
Beth-Shemesh, Lachish, Jericho and Rosh Zin in the Negev. That granaries or silos at Beth-Yerah and Arad could hold 2,250 cubic meters of grain is an impressive indication of Israel’s agricultural success.

Both the Hebrew Bible and archaeological remains provide evidence that farmers were cultivating barley (דָּחַל, Deut 8:8), wheat (חֵמצָה, Jer 12:13), millet (קָזָה, Ezek 4:9), legumes, including lentils (דִּינָן), vetch (דָּג מ), chick-peas (דִּינָן), and peas (דִּינָן, 2 Sam 23:11-12; Isa 30:24). The Hebrew Bible additionally records that farmers were cultivating cucumbers (רֹסַם), watermelons (אַבֵּר), leeks (רָג מ), onions (לֹא), and garlic (רָז מ) as vegetables (Num 11:5; Isa 37:27; Ps 129:6). Furthermore, farmers had naturalised grapevines (רְבִּי), the fruit (יָאָר), Isa 5:2; 17:10; Hag 2:19), olives (ָוָו, Jer 11:17; Hag 2:19), figs (פָּרָח, Hag 2:19; Deut 8:8), pomegranates (פְּרָח, Hag 2:19; Song 6:11; 7:13), and dates (פורח, Joel 1:12; Judg 4:5; 2 Chr 28:15). Other cultivated plants included flax (תָּמִיר, Exod 16:31; Isa 19:9), sesame (חָסִים, Isa 28:25), cumin (חָסִים, Isa 28:25, 27), and coriander (חָסִים, Exod 16:31; Num 11:7).

This survey has demonstrated that the agricultural developments in ancient Israel unquestionably started with gathering and hunting as foragers. Through a long period of transitional agriculture, the Israelites developed crop farming and animal husbandry. The Israelite further devised a wide-ranging and elaborate irrigation system, and maximised the use of their land with terracing and runoff farming. As a result, Israel obtained agricultural prosperity and agriculture became immensely important to Israel’s economy. Archaeological excavations and surveys have unearthed considerable material culture suggesting that agriculture in Israel extended throughout every cultivatable part of the territory.

2.2.2 Olive and vine

Extending more concentrated attention on a survey of agricultural products, I shall first discuss two exceedingly important products, olive oil and wine (Deut 8:8; Jer 40:10; 41:8; Ezek 16:13, 19). Olive oil and wine were of the greatest economic value in the ancient Near Eastern economy, because they were not cultivated in Mesopotamia in spite of the

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suitability of the Syrian area (Upper Mesopotamia), to the cultivation of both olive trees and grape vines. Consequently, there was a large demand in Mesopotamia for olive oil and wine imported from ancient Israel.86

The production of olive oil thrived in ancient Israel. Olive oil, the main product of the olive tree, had a prominent place in cultic life as a libation (Deut 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 18:4; 28:51). It was used to anoint prophets, kings, priests, and the Tabernacle (Exod 28:41; 29:7; Judg 9:8; 1 Sam 16:1–13; 1 Kgs 19:16; 2 Kgs 9:1–3). Olive oil is also used as a healing ointment (Isa 1:6).87 In the production of perfumes, olive oil was used in lamps to illuminate houses (Exod 25:6; 35:14; 39:37; Num 4:16) and temples (1 Kgs 17:12, 14, 16; 19:6). It was also used in food preparation, such as frying (Ezek 16:13; 2 Kgs 4:1–7).

The cultivation of olives sharply increased throughout the Bronze Age and continued to be in high demand during the Iron Age. Considerable research, spanning 200 archaeological sites, indicates that Israel produced 5,500 tons of olive oil a year during the Late Bronze Age.88 Evidence of its massive quantity of production includes material remains from a great variety of lever presses. In addition to which, beam weights from the late Bronze Age have been found at Jerusalem, Lachish, Megiddo, Gezer, Bene-Beraq in southwest of Carmel, Horvat Rosh Zayit, Beth-Yerah, Beth-Shean, and Afula all of which are in the Judean Hills, and Tell Halif in the Negev.89 More beam weights dated from the Iron Age have been found at Dan and Qala both of which are in north of Golan, 'Avdon in northeast of Carmel, Tell Balata and Tel Beit-Mirsim both of which are in the Judean Hills, and Beth-Shemesh.90

Archaeological evidence suggests that Tell en-Nasbeh produced vast amounts of olive oil. As a result, the great offset-inset wall was built for economic security, which would be destroyed under the Omride dynasty of the 9th century BCE (1 Kgs 15:22).91 At Tell en-


88 Rafael Frankel, Wine and Oil Production in Antiquity in Israel and Other Mediterranean Countries (JSOT/ASOR 10; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 38–39.


91 Jeffrey Ralph Zorn, “A Note on the Date of the ‘Great Wall’ of Tell en-Neṣbeh: A Rejoinder,” TA 26 (1999): 147–48. However, Katz states that the olive presses at best only indicate the existence, not the construction, of
Nasbeh, archaeologists have uncovered many hundreds of jars with the $lml$ seal impressions dated to the period of Hezekiah, and below-ground storage vats, or cellars, dated from the monarchical period. These archaeological findings indicate that olive oil production in Tell en-Nasbeh not only continued to exist but also flourished during the Neo-Babylonian period. To protect the olive industry, the Babylonians commissioned military armies at this site (2 Kgs 25:24–25; Jer 41:3). Supporting modifications to the fortification of Tell en-Nasbeh’s have been archaeologically dated to the 6th century BCE. These reinforcements continued to function as defensive features of the offset-inset wall through the end of the 5th century BCE (Neh 3:7; 7:25; 1 Chr 8:29–40; 9:35–44).

Philistine sites of Tel Miqne and Tel Batash in the Shephela offer considerable evidence for the production of olive oil. Remarkably, in Tel Miqne, 161 installations from the Iron Age have been found with an average capacity for producing at least 1000 tons of olive oil a year. Further evidence of the large-scale olive oil producing at Miqne includes spacious basins, dozens of large-sized loom weights and more than 600 heavier weights.

The other major industry in ancient Israel was the production of wine. Archaeological evidence of several hundred winepresses reflects the massive scale of wine production. Its economic importance may even have been equal to that of olive production. Thus, vineyards were surrounded with stone walls for protection (Ps 62:4; Prov 24:31; Isa 5:5). Interesting calculations suggest that the amount of wine consumed with daily meals, in ancient Israel ranged from 330 to 694 litres per household, per year. If the population of the Judean

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97 Walsh, Fruit of the Vine, 12–21, 210–47.
kingdom in the Iron Age was nearly 110,000, then the estimated total of wine consumed would range from 8,150 tons to 17,350 tons. Ancient Israel’s ability to produce such gargantuan quantities of wine is quite astonishing.

This feat required a multitude of grapes to be grown. Juice (דבש) from grapes was released through the wine press (Hos 2:11), and collected into large jars. Most of this fresh juice was fermented for wine (תלע), and stored in large jars. The average family size per household is normally four. See Lawrence E. Stager, “The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel,” BASOR 260 (1985): 1–35.

Besides תלע and תַּלְעָה, there are different kinds of wine which are designated with other words, usually with the term תלע in the Hebrew Bible: תַּלְעָה (Hos 14:8), תַּלְעָה (Ezek 27:18), תַּלְעָה (Song 8:2) and תַּלְעָה (Deut 32:14; Ps 75:9). Fresh grapes and a variety of wine were also consumed with meals. Dried grapes (raisins) were important for daily food; they were pressed into cakes (גֵּפֵן, 2 Sam 6:19 // 1 Chr 16:3; Isa 16:7; Hos 3:1) and used for provisions on a long journey (גֵּפֵן, 1 Sam 25:18; 30:12). Vinegar (חֲמוֹר, Ruth 2:14) and syrup (קֵסָם, Num 6:3) as a condiment were also made from grapes.

Particular mention should be made of El-Jib in northwest of Jerusalem, which was a region of great wine production. In addition to ten winepresses dated from 1200–1000 BCE, impressive installations have been discovered at El-Jib, indicating that its wine industry continued thriving through the 8th and 7th centuries BCE. Dated to around the 7th century BCE, 63 rock-cut storage cellars have been found, which were able to maintain a constant temperature of 18 degrees for storing wine. These cellars suggest a capacity for storing 95,000 litres of wine. Furthermore, the recovery of 23 jar handles inscribed with the city name demonstrates that El-Jib was indeed a leading wine export centre.

Cellars occurring in association with winepresses have also been discovered at Beth-Shemesh, Khirbet er-Ras in the Jordan Valley, and Deir Daqleh and Qarawat Beni Hasan both

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100 Wineries and oil presses share machinery but, from the Iron Age II onwards, they become clearly distinguishable. In the winery, there is a treading floor with a comparatively large collecting vat, while in the oil press, there was an olive crushing device and a comparatively small collecting vat without a treading floor. Frankel, Wine and Oil Production, 140–59.


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of which are in the Judean Hills. 103 In the area surrounding Jerusalem, installations for pressing wine have been found at Ras Abu Ma’aruf and Mevasseret Yerushalayim. 104 Winepress remnants have also been found at Ramat Rahel, Be’it Safafa, Manahat, and Rogem Gannim all of which are in south of Jerusalem, Tell en-Nasbeh, and Nahal Refa’im in the Judean Hills. 105

In the Samarian region, 300 winepresses have been discovered. A particularly large winepress was excavated at Hirbet Jemin. 106 Most of the pottery found at the site dates from the 8th and the 7th centuries BCE, 107 which relates it to the Assyrian reign. This suggests that, after the conquest in 722 BCE, the region’s population continued to increase and stabilise, in spite of the many people exiled by the Assyrians (2 Kgs 17:5–23). At Kh. Merajjim, Jellamet Wusta, kh. Umm Qatan, the el-Qa’adeh Camp, Kh. Meras ed-Din, Tel Michal, Khirbet Qeiyafa, Tel Be’it Nattif, Hirbet Hamad and Tzur Nathan, press complexes have been dug up. 108 Another 117 winepresses have been uncovered in the area spanning from Jenin to Megiddo, which indicates vigorous economic activities in the Samarian region. 109

Moreover, archaeological evidence suggests that Tel Batash and Ashkelon in the Philistine region were lucrative production centres with numerous winepresses dating from the 8th and the 7th centuries BCE. 110 So, it follows that the wine industry contributed significantly to the Neo-Assyrian economy. 111

103 King and Stager, Life in Biblical Israel, 62.
104 Walsh, Fruit of the Vine, 154–55.
This chapter’s survey of olive and grape farming has demonstrated that ancient Israel consistently produced more olive oil and wine than could be used internally. Many hundreds of installations for olive oil and wine production have been excavated and described in the Biblical record, clearly reflecting the massive scale of production. Israel’s agricultural surpluses had high economic value in Mesopotamia. Due to their economic importance, olive and grape fields were carefully protected by stone walls. Tell en-Nasbeh and Tel Miqne should be particularly mentioned as the production centres of olive oil, whereas El-Jib, the areas surrounding Jerusalem and the Samarian region were known centres for wine production.

2.2.3 Other products

Another important agricultural product for ancient Israel was wheat. Wheat was used to make bread and porridge (בָּשָׂם, Exod 29:2; Ezek 4:9). It was consumed both parched (חָרָם, Lev 23:14) and raw (רָצָה, 2 Kgs 4:42). Together with vines and olives, it also had crucial and competitive economic value because true wheat was a rare luxury in Mesopotamia. Thus, references to wheat often recurs alongside references to vines and olives, as grain-wine-oil (מַיָּד, רִמְמָה וֹאִיל), a combination which functions as a symbol for valuable commodities in ancient Israel (Deut 28:5; Hag 1:11). One instance of this is Solomon’s payment of oil, wine, and wheat to Hiram of Tyre in exchange for cedar wood (1 Kgs 5:25; 2 Chr 2:9, 14).

One wheat silo found at Megiddo, dated to a time when the city was under Assyrian rule, had a capacity for 346 tons of wheat, an amount of wheat which could sustain 1,178 people for a year. Similar granaries used for wheat grains have been also excavated at Hazor, Beth-Shemesh, Beth-Yerah, Tell el-Hesi near Lachish, and Tel Sheva near Beersheba.

Three other mainstays of Israel’s agricultural economy were figs (ברגש), dates (רֹאוֹם), and pomegranates (עָזֶר). Figs were used for juice or wine. They were also dried, to be

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111 In the Late Bronze period, ancient Israel supplies 95,000 litres of wine to Egypt as taxes. Shmuel Aḥituv, “Economic Factors in the Egyptian Conquest of Canaan,” IEJ 28 (1978), 104.

112 Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age Israel, 89–90.

113 Aharoni, “Megiddo,” 1023.

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made into cakes (םִילֶה, 1 Sam 30:12; 1 Chr 12:40). Dried figs (מֵס) are also consumed during the winter time (2 Sam 16:1–2; Isa 16:9; Jer 40:10, 12; 48:32; Amos 8:1–2; Mic 7:1). Fresh juice or wine was extracted from pomegranates (דָּגִית, Song 8:2; Joel 1:5), while pomegranate seeds were eaten fresh, dried, and stored or even made into syrup. Furthermore, due to the beautiful shapes of the flower and fruit, pomegranates served as models for decorating the high priests’ garments, Solomon’s temple and Solomon’s crown.

The date palm was also of great importance for ancient Israel. Jericho was described as the city of palm trees in records dating back to the early period (Deut 34:3). The irrigation system at En Gedi enabled dense date palm growth, gaining Elim its fame for date production (Exod 15:27; Num 33:9). Dates had the benefit of being a storable crop of great nutritional value as such in cakes (סֶבֶך) and their usefulness in healing skin infections (יַזָּה, 2 Kgs 20:7; Isa 25:18). Honey was another valued product of the date palms (סֶבֶך, Exod 3:8). Also, palm branches were used in the celebration of Tabernacles (תּוֹרָה, Lev 23:40; Neh 8:15). Palm leaves were woven into mats and baskets, and their fibrous sheaths were used for making ropes, pillows, and mattresses.

In addition to these agricultural products, animal husbandry created a daily source of milk (אֲלִילֶה), cheese (קִנָּה), curd and butter (סָמִיך) from sheep (נֶשֶׁב) and goats (שַׁעַר), sometimes even from cows (גָּן, Gen 18:8; Deut 32:14; Judg 5:25; 1 Sam 17:18; Isa 55:1). As a sustainable source of meat (בַּשַּׁלֶם), the people of ancient Israel raised rams (גַּרְנֶשׁ, Gen 31:38), lambs (גר), calves (גַּנְבּ-בֶּן, Amos 6:4), cows (גָּן, Gen 41:4), fish (יֹנֶשׁ, Num 11:5), and birds (בֵּית, Deut 14:20) are eaten. In Tell Jemmeh, the ostrich was also served as food.

In agricultural activities, oxen (גָּשָׁה) and cows were identified with ploughing the land and threshing the harvest. Meanwhile, donkeys (שָׁרָה), mules (שָׂרָה), and camels (שָׂרָה) were normally used for the burden of local and regional transport (Gen 12:16; 1 Sam 9:3; 2 Sam 18:9; 1 Kgs 1:38). As in the Near East, camels opened the way for intensive overland

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115 Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age Israel, 114–17.
116 Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age Israel, 117.
117 Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age Israel, 127.
travel, and the trade of inland goods to coastline cities. The camel’s ability to survive on periodic drinking had an especially strong effect on long-distance Arabian trade where the main commodity was incense. Archaeologists have found copious remains of camels at Tell Jemmeh, which date from the 7th century BCE and appear to have been used in the caravan trade.

Agricultural produce was crucial to the textile industry, which relied on wool (רוב), flax (תפוח), and cotton (דבר, Lev 14:47). Sheep were primarily raised for their wool, which was a valuable commodity in commerce. Goat hides were generally valued for tent making and clothing, and goat hair was used in the manufacturing of sacks and tent cloth. Flax was usually grown in the Negev region. Remains of flax from the early period have been found in the Nahal Hemar Cave in the Judean Desert and in Nahal Mishmar near the Dead Sea. Horvat 'Uza in the Negev have found material remains of cotton. Due to the high demand, flax and cotton were usually imported from Egypt. The success of Israel’s wool industry, though, was comparable to Egypt’s flax industry. Also, records indicate that ancient Israel cultivated black mulberry (_PRESS) for feeding silkworms (Ezek 16:10, 13; 2 Sam 5:23–23 // 1 Chr 14:14–15; Ps 84:7).

Agricultural developments also enabled the cultivation of timber for small construction, though for large-scale construction, cedar wood (ץרא) from Lebanon was imported (1 Kgs 5). Cypress (עם, Isa 41:19; 55:13; 60:13) and sycamore trees (_effects, 1 Chr 27:28; 2 Chr 9:27; Ps 78:47; Isa 9:9) were cultivated for use in the Jerusalem temple under Solomon (1 Kgs 5:22; 2 Chr 3:5). Pine (מחט, 1 Kgs 5:22; Isa 41:19; Ezek 31:8; Ps 104:17) too was used in Solomon’s temple, for flooring, doors and ceilings. The fruit trees used in

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121 Finkelstein, Living on the Fringe, 120–23.
123 Finkelstein, Living on the Fringe, 144–49.
125 Zeder, Feeding, 23–25.
The relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai

The temple included olive wood as a building material (דַּשָּׁן-כַּנָּן, 1 Kgs 6:31–33; 10:27; 2 Chr 1:15; Isa 41:19; Neh 8:15), and date palm (בְּנִבּוֹת) in temple ornaments (1 Kgs 6:32). Almond wood (מֶן) was used for constructing the fortress at Gibeah.131

The survey of ancient Israel’s agricultural products has demonstrated that wheat was a crucial and competitive commodity in Israelite economy. Wheat production flourished in Israel, particularly in the regions of Galilee and the Judean Hills. Israel’s other important agricultural produce included figs, dates, and pomegranates. Jericho and the Judean Hills were particularly associated with the farming of these fruit trees. Though, because of its successful irrigation system, the En Gedi is very well known for cultivating the date palm. In addition to which, in the Levant region Israel moderately developed animal husbandry and enjoyed animal products. These products included wool, which was successfully used in textiles. In all of these ways Israel was agriculturally self-sufficient, however, Israel’s timber industry was constrained to cultivating small trees requiring continued dependence on Near Eastern societies for large timber, especially cedar.

2.3. Economy in the Ancient Near East

2.3.1 Imperial administrative system

As I have surveyed above, both Israel and Mesopotamia were agricultural societies. In an agrarian society, land is the most fundamental economic resource. Thus, once a centralised political entity had developed in Mesopotamia, land ownership became linked to political power.132 Kings consistently owned the biggest portion of land and assigned the farming of their land to tenants or local communities via temples.

The priests of temples supported by these kings managed everything from land leases


131 Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age Israel, 132.

Agriculture and Economy in the Ancient Near East

They even oversaw the trade of agricultural produce. Afterwards, the priests extracted taxes through a land tenure system, which contributed to the economic wealth of the palace. From an economic point of view, priests can be understood as having carried out administrative roles. In the period between 2800–2000 BCE, Uruk, Ebla, Eridu, Umma, Lagash, Adab, Fara, Kish Shuruppak, Eshnunna, and Akshak all organised the temple household. As political entities became increasing centralised, polio-economic relations became increasingly strained within the Mesopotamian Empires. This was in part a result of decreased agricultural production in Mesopotamia. Limited local resources caused the Mesopotamian Empires to depend on external sources for food, timber, metals, and stone.

This led to Mesopotamian expansionism. The expansion of the Mesopotamian Empires not only extended their cultivated lands, but also intensified the demands for agricultural contributions for increasing the economic and military power. Political incentives stimulated surplus production and provided the necessary security. With the same methods employed in Israel’s temple administration, an imperial administrative system governed Mesopotamian lands. These were the material foundations of civilisation that endured, and further developed throughout the Mesopotamian Empires.

In Neo-Assyrian times, land ownership was evidently exclusive to the royal class, and cultivation rights were allotted to tenants (ilku) via the temples. Those who were allocated farmland had to fulfil the ilku obligations to pay taxes. In a similar way, the Babylonians

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133 The term household includes social groups covering from a small family household living under one roof to a large socio-economic community. It may consist of owners, managers, labour force, domestic animals and residential houses, storages as well as fields, orchards, pastures and forests. Gelb, “Household and Family,” 1–11.


137 Barstad, History and the Hebrew Bible, 144–45.


governed the land through temples. One fine case can be seen in the time of Nabonidus (555–539 BCE):

Given the need for land lease contracts, Sum-ukin and Kalbaia, descendants of previous tenants, Bel-zeri and Iqisaia who cultivated only 6,000 kurs of arable land, renew them through the Eanna, temple of the goddess Ishtar in Uruk. Also, for the temple household, Nabonidus, from Cilicia, over 900 kg of iron and several hundred kilograms of iron and copper from Yaman are brought in. It is likewise that Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 BCE) conveyed over 2 kg of Ionian blue-purple wool for producing garments to the temple of Eanna. Then, they similarly deliver not only 25,000 kurs of best quality barley and 10,000 kurs of choice dates that their fathers paid as the rental payment. In this lease contraction, the palace gives instructions to the officials of the Eanna temple with respect to rental payment in barley.\(^\text{140}\)

A land tenure system based on family-owned property was applied through contracts with local temples that were usually long-term and remained binding for multiple generations. Some tenants leased large assets and functioned as intermediary tenants by hiring farm-workers of their own.\(^\text{141}\) Tenants, being in control of agricultural affairs, could also engage in commerce with their agricultural products and make great fortunes.\(^\text{142}\)

In the Achaemenid period, the relationship between the palace economy and the temple household became even more intertwined. The temples continued managing the land and continued to raise the imperial economy through taxation. Also, the Achaemenids further developed family-based-businesses, which yielded greater profits for the palace.\(^\text{143}\) In general,


\(^{142}\) Liverani, “Historical Overview,” 16–19.

\(^{143}\) Andreau comments that it is a contrast to the statement of Finley who argues that the vital industry of the ancient Near East is agriculture and there is no need to make a trade but for only luxury goods with the high cost
the prices for agricultural production varied seasonally by 30–50%. This fluctuation in prices corresponded to supply and demand, so prices were highest before the harvest of a given crop and lowest immediately after. For example, barley was regularly harvested in late April, so from May to June, while barley was most abundantly available barley prices were very low. Starting around September, the price of barley gradually increased obtaining its most expensive prices during the three or four months before the next barley harvest.

Of the few powerful business houses, the Egibi house provides a fine case of the interregional trading from the late 8th century BCE onwards. The Egibis gained access to the temple’s land income. During the Neo-Babylonian period, through internal trade, the Egibis purchased large quantities of grain, dates, onions, and wool from temples in the countryside surrounding Babylon, and transported the goods by boat to the markets in the capital. They did this because Nebuchadnezzar needed to feed the many craftsmen, artisans and other state-controlled workers involved in the enormous building projects he sanctioned.

However, the Egibis were not content to be mere middlemen and would not concede to be limited to making profits solely with the purchase of part of the temples’ produce. These entrepreneurs knew that land and its agriculture were the prime source of wealth and investment, yet, small scale arable agriculture was not profitable beyond subsistence purposes. Therefore, granting larger and larger land leases was vitally important for the running of a professional business. They leased large estates of high officials or royal family members. To benefit their business, they maintained good political connections.

These entrepreneurs themselves supervised the cultivation of their subjugators and agricultural management of land. To ensure effective competitiveness in an annually fluctuating grain market, they rather invested in the manufacture by which raw materials were

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converted into market-ready goods for houses. Here, the Egibis could make profits with which, they buy even more of their own arable land.

However, the thing is, in this economic structure, the part apportioned to land personnel from the land income was not enough, for entrepreneurs never want to make a loss. Compared with entrepreneurs who made fortunes, land subjugators had trouble making a living in their subsistence and got relegated merely to the labour force of the land. In these tricky circumstances, the Egibis began to lend money as a long-term loan at a standard rate and proceed to enjoy the financial benefits. Eventually, they firmly established the banking system, accepting deposits, issuing and receiving promissory notes, paying the debts of their clients, and financing or founding commercial businesses interests.

In the Achaemenid period, Marduk-nasir-apli, who belonged to the fourth generation of the Egibis, ran the business. During the reign of King Darius, Marduk-nasir-apli acquired the rights to the temples of the Babylonian god Marduk in the countryside south of Babylon, including temples at Esagil, Nergal, E’igikalamma, and Ehursag. Through taxes, these temples raised between one-third and one-fourth of the total harvest


152 See Abraham, Business and Politics, 17–32.


154 Dar 338, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 406–9; Dar 527, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 443–44; Dar 541, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 445–46; Dar 552, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 450–52; BM 31976, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 318–20; BM 33112, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 331–32; BM 33930, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 341–44. For Abraham’s work of Nergal temple, see Abraham, Business and Politics, 154–59.


156 Dar 405, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 421–22; BM 30965, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 259–61. For Abraham’s work of Ehursag temple, see Abraham, Business and Politics, 160–61.
from their leased land. These taxes supplied the E’igikalamma temple with wool, the Esagil temple with onions and dates, and both the Nergal and the Ehursag temples with dates.\(^{157}\) Excluding the royal treasury, which should have been sent to the kings, these gains were then drafted to the Egibis. In exchange for access to the temples’ harvest, the Egibis would pay the Esagil temple forty-two and a half minas of silver.\(^{158}\)

Another entrepreneurial family, the Murashu of Nippur, was contracted by the palace primarily to ensure the supply of military equipment.\(^{159}\) They were guaranteed by the royal authority and then permitted to cultivate farther farmlands and practice animal husbandry. The cultivation of vast arable land permitted the Murashu to enjoy bountiful agricultural production. Also, the management of canals enabled them to raise money from the tolls paid by users of canals.

As I have shown in studies of the Mesopotamian imperial economic administration, centralised political authorities retained exclusive rights to land ownership. Land ownership provided ongoing access to the resources necessary for maintaining power. Thus, faced with a shortage of natural resources, the Mesopotamian Empires sent out military campaigns for territorial expansion. These expanded lands, and their agricultural produce, were administered by local temples. The palace economy and temple households are undoubtedly connected with each other. The temples sponsored by kings carried out leading role in kings’ economy and were the backborn of the imperial economy entire. The major temples such as Esagila in Babylon and Eanna in Uruk continued to recognise the privileged status of the empires. In addition to which, the empires employed specialised entrepreneurs to engage in trade with other regions. The most celebrated beneficiaries of this great fortune were the Egibi house first mentioned in the late 8th century BCE and the Murashu family of the Achaemenid period.

2.3.2 Trade in the Achaemenid Empire

In order to secure tributes from conquered territories, the Mesopotamian Empires created networks of roads. The roads also played an important role in trade. The major

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\(^{158}\) Dar 315 is referred to from Abraham, *Business and Politics*, 401–3.

interregional transport network was called the Way of the Sea. It originated in the Nile Delta, followed Phoenician and Syrian coastal roads, turned inland at the Carmel Range, crossed the Plain of Jezreel at Megiddo, then headed to and through Hazor and Damascus, and finally terminated in Mesopotamia (Isa 8:23; 23:1–17; 60:9; Ezek 23:1–17; 27:12; Exod 13:17). Another main road, the King’s Highway, originated at the Gulf of Aqab, crossed Edom, Moab, Ammon and Gilead, and finally connected with the road north to Damascus (Num 20:17).

Through their conquest of Greece, the Achaemenids continued consolidating the Assyrian-Babylonian trade system. Trading posts connecting Phoenicia to Greece extended inlands from the Cypriot cities of Phaselis, on the coast of Lycia: Naukratis, on the Canopic branch of the Nile; and Tell el-Kheleifeh, at the head of the Gulf of Aqabah. At these cities, Uluburun ship would exchange Egyptian goods for raw materials including gold, silver and copper. The Scythians, who had a reputation for being strong, nomadic equestrian warriors, were hired to ensure the security of the trade routes.

Through taxation and legislation, the Achaemenids required conquered populations to cultivate produce that could be exported and was in high demand. In general, the goods viewed as luxury commodities were not indigenous to the empire. Given the imperial economic structure, it was quite conceivable that Judah, one of their subordinates, would be required to increase the production of such luxury crops as olive oil, wine, and wheat. A process of repopulation and resettlement, resulting in the abandonment of many regions throughout the Babylonian period reflect the stringent imperial requirements for agricultural production. Special imperial attention was given to Jerusalem and the surrounding areas, with the hope of restoring their capacities for economic contribution. A similar historical

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phenomenon is recorded in the book of Haggai, which deals with the restoration of the Jerusalem temple in the period of Darius I (522–486 BCE).\textsuperscript{166}

Geographically, Israel forms a land bridge between Egypt and Mesopotamia, linking Greece, Anatolia, and Africa via military and trade routes.\textsuperscript{167} During the monarchical times, Israel bartered or sold any surplus from the harvest at Ezion-Geber centred on the northern shore of the Gulf of Aqaba.\textsuperscript{168} This suggested the probability that with luxury goods, Achaemenid Judah would have played a vital role within the imperial economic system through which the Achaemenids obtained important commodities from the Phoenicians, the Philistines, and Arabian traders, as in Neo-Assyria and Neo-Babylonia.\textsuperscript{169} Greek vessels of various types at Tell en-Nasbeh, dating from circa 540 BCE to the second half of the fifth century, give evidence of active trade under Achaemenid control.\textsuperscript{170}

According to Ezek 27, Tyre in Phoenicia traded with Israel for agricultural commodities. Israel primarily traded wheat, millet, honey, oil, and balm, but in Tyre one could also procure fir trees from Senir near mountain Hermon, oaks from Bashan, cypresses from Cyprus, linen from Egypt, blue and purple dye from Elishah in the Phoenician region, and cedars from Lebanon. Cedars were in high demand in Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Aegean,


\textsuperscript{170} Charles E. Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study (JSOTSup 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 126–32. On pottery and seals reflecting Judean trade with areas from the Neo-Babylonian through the Achaemenid periods, see also chapter 4.2 and 4.4 below.
Anatolia and the Athens, and were therefore of particular value.\textsuperscript{171} Using Israelite goods, Tyre was able to trade for silver, iron, tin, and lead from Cyprus; humans (slaves) and bronze vessels of Javan, Tubal and Meshech in the Ionians: the horses, steeds, and mules of Togamah; the ivory tusks and ebony of Dedan in Anatolia; and the emeralds, purple, embroidery, fine linen, corals, and rubies of Syria. Other goods traded through Tyre included: wine from Helbon; white wool from Suhru in Damascus; iron, cassia, and cane from Uzal in Yemen; saddlecloths for riding, lambs, rams and goats from Arabia and Kedar in Arabia; perfumes and all kinds of precious stones and gold from Sheba and Raamah in Arabia; and purple clothes, embroidered garments, multicoloured carpets, and sturdy woven cords from Haran, Canneh, Eden, and Chilmad in northern Syria. So, Tyre provided Israel with the opportunity to export their three main agricultural products and import gold, precious stones, metals, horses, and chariots.\textsuperscript{172}

Concerning the trade of Judean olive produce, special mention should be made of the Philistine site Tel Miqne. The enormous quantities of olives came from Judean Shephelah sites, especially Gezer, Beth-Shemesh, and Tell Beit Mirsim.\textsuperscript{173} This is because Miqne had the double benefit: Miqne itself had the capacity to mass olive oil produce; the site Miqne was located close to the coast. In the imperial economy, thus, this site would have been specialised as a world-wide distribution centre of olives and olive oil from the neo-Assyrian period.\textsuperscript{174} Its silver caches are consistent with the increased use of silver as currency during the Neo-Assyrian period.\textsuperscript{175}


Of the major seaports in the Philistine region, Gaza, Ashdod, and Ashkelon were the hubs for Arabian trade. Gaza facilitated trade between the Assyrians and the Egyptians. Ashdod became a centre for pottery production, providing up to 30 percent of the store jars found at Miqne. Ashkelon prospered as a great administrative centre, probably exporting the wool and wine of Ashkelon, the olive oil and wine of Ashdod, and the wheat and wine of Israel, while importing fish and grains from Egypt and copper from Anatolia or the Aegean. Lachish and Tel Yacoz located near Gezer facilitated trade with the coastal plain and the northern Shephelah.

From late in the 6th and the 5th centuries BCE, the Arabs additionally secured an important position in the caravan trade to supplement the maritime routes. Their main advantage was their use of camels, whose ability to store sufficient water allowed traders to cross much larger tracts of desert than could be crossed by donkey. This in turn opened up safe inland routes through the desert to Egypt, enabling caravan trade between Mesopotamia and the Philistine ports, including Gaza and Ashkelon.

The textile industry and the dyeing business were important to the ancient Near East’s interregional trade. Garment colours and qualities functioned as signs of social status. Wool was one of the most important commodities in textiles, and while white wool was


uncompetitively priced, purple wool was in high demand and very expensive. So, the dyeing industry in Israel was very marketable as is evidenced by the large numbers of dyeing establishments excavated throughout ancient Israel. The relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai 182 Tell Beit Mrooms, also had a competitive dyeing industry in the 8th century BCE. 183 Yet, the dyeing industry was made all the more lucrative with the importing of purple colour from Phoenicia and blue from the Aegean. The Phoenicians were particularly famous for their purple dye industry from 2000 BCE onwards. Large quantities of alum were brought from Egypt to Babylon for bleaching wool, for use in clothing and for medical purposes. Egyptian linen was in high demand because of its high quality.

Metal industry also flourished in Israel, according to the records of numerous craftsmen exiled to Neo-Babylonia (2 Kgs 24:16). In the monarchical period, every three years, gold and silver were imported (1 Kgs 10:22). 184 Afterwards, gold was imported via the Arabian merchants from the Nubian deserts, Havilah and Ophir. 185 The extraordinary quantity of imported gold was reflected in a hoard of gold jewellery found in tombs at Gaza, Beth-Shemesh, Megiddo, Beth-Shean, and Ketef Hinnom in southwest of Jerusalem. 186 Also, silver was brought from Attica and Thrace in the Aegean. 187 Copper was naturalised at Arabah, Khirbet en-Nahas, Arad, Timna’, Fenan, Punon, and Nahal Mishmar all of which are in the Negev. 188 It was usually smelted and used to produce bronze, an alloy of copper, and tin. A well-developed copper industry was then

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established in Dan.\textsuperscript{189} Strong archaeological evidence has been found at Tel Masos in Arabia of both copper production and copper trades with the Philistines.\textsuperscript{190} Cypriot copper ores were primarily exchanged with Mesopotamia and Egypt.\textsuperscript{191}

With regard to iron, major deposits of iron ore were discovered at Mugharat el Wardeh in east of the Jordan Valley and Abu Thawab in west of the Jordan Valley.\textsuperscript{192} Mugharat el Wardeh in particular would have been the administrative centre for the iron industry in Gilead. Iron workshops were also found at Syrian Tell Deir 'alla, Tell Qasile near Tel Aviv and Tell Jemmeh.\textsuperscript{193} Iron was also imported from Cyprus and Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{194}

Perfumes, one of the luxury items, were also successfully traded in Israel.\textsuperscript{195} At Jericho, besides four winepresses for dates, two or three unique installations were discovered which had been used in the production of perfumes and medicines from raw materials (Prov 27:9; Esth 2:12; 2 Sam 12:20; Ps 45:9; 2 Kgs 20:13; Jer 6:20; Exod 30:23–25, 34–35; 37:29).\textsuperscript{196}

In this survey of trades in the Achaemenids, I have demonstrated that the empire developed a highly advanced economic structure by developing the network of roads. Through taxation, the empire secured luxury goods specific to a variety of regions and control over the interregional exchange throughout the conquered territories. Seaports in the Phoenicians, the Philistinians, and Anatolia played significant roles in the imperial maritime economy. The Arabs and the Scythians, with their camels and armies, were crucial to protecting the trade. In this larger economic structure of the Achaemenids, Judah supplied the majority of oil and wine (Ezek 27), and contributed to the wool, metal, and perfume industries. Meanwhile alum for bleaching textiles was uniquely successful in Egypt, purple and blue wool were in high demand in Phoenicia and the Aegean, respectively. Cedar in Phoenicia was undoubtedly in high demand as timber and metals was supplied exclusively by Asia Minor,

\textsuperscript{190} Finkelstein, \textit{Living on the Fringe}, 103–26.
\textsuperscript{193} King and Stager, \textit{Life in Biblical Israel}, 168–69.
\textsuperscript{194} Roebuck, “Trade,” 446–47.
2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that the economy of the ancient Near East was above all agrarian. Though early in history the population of the Near East survived primarily through foraging, they later developed elaborate agricultural practices that generated a great surplus of food. And, trading their agricultural surplus led to prosperity. Meanwhile barley and emmer wheat were the key crops in Mesopotamia, ancient Israel showed a high agricultural competitiveness through their cultivation of olives and the vine. In particular, olive oil and wine of ancient Israel retained considerable economic value as cash crops throughout the period.

The development of agricultural economies in the Near East, and the resulting demands for economic management led to the development of centralised political power. And then, political authorities paid great attention to the cultivation of land which was essential to creating sufficient resources to sustain the structures of power. In particular, the economy of the Mesopotamian Empires, having few natural resources of their own, turned to military expansionism to increase their prosperity. The Mesopotamian authorities forcefully exploited their conquered territories’ most marketable commodities to boost royal revenues.

Certainly, the empires transformed the economic structure of conquered regions through imposing the imperial economic system. This was especially evident through the temple fiscal administration, which managed the agricultural economy within the conquered regions. This temple economy in the Near East goes back to the Uruk reign from 3500 BCE.

The flourishing income of the empires was also reflected in trade. Interregional trade may extend back to the Neo-Assyrian period from the 8th century BCE, but the expanse of these trade routes was unparalleled, extending to Asia Minor, Cyprus, Crete, Anatolia, and even the Aegean. The Achaemenids established this trade network through the conquest of Greece. In the larger economic market, the Achaemenids exclusively employed and advanced the professional entrepreneurs from the Egibi house of Babylon and the Murashu family of Nippur. Well-structured road networks greatly contributed to the Achaemenids’ economic success.

Due to its agricultural success, ancient Israel actively engaged in a broad interregional
trade system. Judah in particular was lauded for having increased the production of olive oil and wine, products which were in great demand as luxury items. Accordingly, these products were used as cash commodities for trading (Ezek 27). They were traded for metals in Asia Minor and Cyprus, for linen in Egypt, for wool and dyeing materials in the Phoenicians. Judean goods were also traded for cedar in Tyre, precious stones in Anatolia and Syria, and animals in Arabia. Likewise, Judah played a vital role in the much bigger economic system.
3. Darius and the Achaemenid Empire

3.0 Background

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the extent to which, in the political, military, and economic aspects, Darius I (522–486 BCE)’s policies developed and were imposed on all his subordinates. The necessity of historical survey on Darius and his empire is that Judah formed a part of Darius’s empire and was obliged to submit to Darius’s administrative policies. Also, the Book of Haggai speaks to the historical reconstruction of political and economic systems during Darius’s reign.

Very soon after Darius ascended the Persian throne, he was faced with a series of revolts by subordinates within his territories. Those revolts which broke out on Darius’s accession seriously threatened the fundamental cohesion of the empire, and the crisis in Darius’s kingship might provide an opportunity for subjugated peoples to make a bid for independence. The numerous revolts against Darius were due to a suspicion at the time of accession to the throne. Accordingly, it is necessary to investigate Darius’s seizure of the Persian throne.

Throughout the unrest, Darius needed ideological legitimacy for his authority in order to put down rebellions and any resistance. In relation to territorial expansion, the imposition of his propaganda needed to be sufficient to ensure the successful pacification of subordinates. This is because the ability to expand the territory rested in secure military power. Thus, I look at how Darius set in motion his propaganda to gain full control over subordinates among the various regional-ethnic grounds within his dominion.

Afterwards, I will examine how Darius executed an imperial administrative reorganisation to ensure the compulsory collaboration from conquered territories, especially in terms of taxation. This is very important because both imperial military power and imperial administrative policy were designed for the sole purpose of a constant exploitation of resources from conquered territories. Accordingly, it is also necessary to look into how, in the administrative, economic, and military system of Darius, Judah was expected to contribute with her forced charges, whether economic or military.
3. Darius and the Achaemenid Empire

3.1 The Rise of the Achaemenids

3.1.1 Darius’s succession

The fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626–539 BCE) to an army alleged to be under the command of Cyrus (559–530 BCE) in 539 BCE opened a new extension of Persian control to the west.¹ The Persian Empire inherited the territorial scope enjoyed by the Babylonian power which spanned the region of Syria-Palestine and the Assyrian heartland. The accession of Cambyses (530–522 BCE) to the throne brought about little change in the imperial western territories. Egypt, which could be capable of being a threat to the Persians, was finally conquered by Cambyses.² The Persians apparently re-asserted and consolidated their control up to, and beyond the Neo-Babylonian territories.

Afterwards, Darius I (522–486 BCE) became the third king of Achaemenid Persia, dealing first with the rebellion of Gaumata (Bardiya/Smerdis). In relation to the rise of Darius, however, some doubts were raised concerning the events of Cambyses’s death, Bardiya’s revolt and Gaumata’s identity. As reported by Babylonian documents, Bardiya, a satrap of the eastern part of the empire was given a Babylonian royal title, “king of Babylon, king of lands” in 522.³ It denotes that Bardiya rebelled against his brother Cambyses; however, he failed and was killed.⁴ Shortly after, Cambyses was again confronted, this time by Gaumata, a Median priest, who pretended to be Bardiya, and was killed by a group of nobles headed by Darius.⁵ Within the confusion surrounding Bardiya, there could be a fairly plausible argument that once Bardiya ascended the throne after Cambyses, Darius rebelled against Bardiya and made

³ Xenophon, The Cyropaedia of Xenophon (GSCS; Noted by George Martyn Gorham from the Text of L. Dinford; London: Whittaker, 1856), 8.7.11.
The Relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai

up the story about Gaumata to cover his tracks. Regarding whether the usurper was the pretender Gaumata or imaginary Gaumata, there was clearly more than a palace coup taking place in Darius’s rule.

Concerning the kingship, Cambyses’s brother Bardiya, the next in line to the throne after Cambyses, was killed without leaving any male heir. Thus, the Persian throne could be contested by any member of the extended royal family, or indeed of the Persian nobility. Then, as the chief conspirator from the nobility, Darius finally seized power. In fact, he was not an immediate member of the royal family but of the Ariaramnes branch of the Achaemenid line. Doubts about his genuine right to succeed to the throne made him claim to be descended from a line of kings. Darius traced his ancestral line back to a Persian called Achaemenes, whom he presented as the father of Teispes. This led to a familial link between his family and that of Cyrus. None of the earliest records, including the Cyrus Cylinder, mentioned Achaemenes.

It is well-attested that Darius added “Cyrus the great king, the Achaemenids” into Cyrus’s inscriptions concerning the Achaemenid line in Old Persian, Elamite and Akkadian at Pasargadae. Herodotus recorded this almost a hundred years later. In order to prevent any future competition for the throne Darius concluded a series of marriage alliances with all surviving royal daughters. He even contracted with the conspirators’ and nobles’ daughters, even though the nobles themselves were married to sisters of Darius.

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6 Hist. III, 70–73; 76–79, 83–84.2.


8 DB I: §11–15, referred to from Brosius, The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I, 23–24; Hist. I, 209–10; III, 68–69; 74–75; 84.3–87; 88.2–3.


10 CMa = DMa; CMb = DMb; CMc = CMc. These texts are cited from Amélie Kuhrt, The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Persian (London: Routledge, 2008), 177.

From the above survey, I have shown that in 539 BCE Cyrus opened up the Persian Empire. The following king, Cambyses expanded the imperial western territory towards Egypt. He was then confronted with the rebellion of Gaumata (Bardiya/Smerdis). Some doubts from the two different stories of DB and Herodotus were raised in Cambyses’s death, Bardiya’s revolt and Gaumata’s identity. Regardless of who the usurper was, after Cambyses was killed, the kingship was handed over to Darius in 522 BCE by a group of nobles headed by Darius. And then, the family line of Achaemenes of Darius soon went back to Cyrus. Eventually, he established the Achaemenid kingship and became the third king of Achaemenid Persia.

### 3.1.2 Darius’s crisis

The confusion surrounding Darius’s power undoubtedly provided the background for widespread rebellion in the first year of Darius’s reign. Elam and Babylon in the eastern part of the empire rebelled first. In Elam, AÇina, son of Upadarma seized power but was quickly subdued by Darius.\(^\text{13}\) Nidintu-bel was recognized as the new king in Babylonia, where the revolt took place, presenting himself as the son of Nabonidus. Darius quickly suppressed it but Nidintu-bel returned with an army against Darius. Darius, leading the army, inflicted a second successive defeat and eventually killed him.\(^\text{14}\) In 521 BCE, Babylon rebelled again under the rule of Arkha who took the title of King of Babylon, but was also overrun.\(^\text{15}\)

Subsequent revolts happened in the eastern part of the empire, especially Media, Assyria, Parthia, Margiana (or Bactria), Sattagya, and Scythia. They likewise claimed the legitimacy to the throne and attempted to revive the former kingdoms.\(^\text{16}\) Fravartiš of Media resisted for five months, the loss of men amounted to 3,827 killed and 4,329 captured.\(^\text{17}\)

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12 Hist. III, 88.2–3.


14 DB I: §§18–II: 20, sourced from Brosius, The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I, 32.


man named Vahyzdata, notably claiming to be Bardiya, son of Cyrus became a king in Persia.\textsuperscript{18} Vahyzdata’s revolt was defeated by the army that Darius sent. Nevertheless, he successfully assembled a second army and rebelled again.

Egypt rose up against Darius. The governor of Egypt, Aryandes, who was appointed by Cambyses, tried to make himself the equal of Darius.\textsuperscript{19} He minted coins for Darius with gold, but also minted some for himself with silver. Darius’s elimination of Aryandes reflected his revolts against Darius’s authority.\textsuperscript{20} Darius held Egypt. This can be reflected by inscriptions of Darius’s statues, wherein he is addressed with the royal titles supported by Egyptian deities.\textsuperscript{21} Although the control of Egypt was of great importance as a practical and tactical region in maintaining the western border, it was not until 519 that Darius launched a military campaign against Egypt.\textsuperscript{22} The reason was that he had to concentrate on recurrence of revolts in the more crucial region of the empire, Babylon. Also, it took a long time for Darius to gain the reliable allegiance of surrounding subordinates in a pervading time of revolts.\textsuperscript{23}

Judah also took advantage of the chaotically rebellious conditions of Darius and rallied around a royal plot, similar to the plots that had arisen elsewhere, especially amid the

\textsuperscript{17} DB II: §25, cited from Brosius, \textit{The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I}, 32–33. For secondary source, see Briant, \textit{From Cyrus to Alexander}, 118; Muhammad A. Dandamaev, \textit{A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire} (trans. W. J. Vogelsang; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 118–20.

\textsuperscript{18} DB I: §§16–II: 23 in Brosius, \textit{The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I}, 31–32. As for secondary source, see Briant, \textit{From Cyrus to Alexander}, 115–16, 120–21.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Hist.} III, 14–15, IV, 166-67, 200, 203; DB II: §20, cited from Brosius, \textit{The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I}, 32; Polyaenus VII.1.7, sourced from Briant, \textit{From Cyrus to Alexander}, 121; Aelianus, \textit{De Natura Animalium} (ed. Manuela García Valdés, Luis Alfonso Liera Fueyo, and Lucía Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén; Berolini; Novi Eboraci: De Gruyter, 2009), 12.21.


\textsuperscript{21} DSab, cited from Brosius, \textit{The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I}, 44–45; “Hieroglyphic inscription on the base of Darius’s statue from Susa,” sourced from Brosius, \textit{The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I}, 45; DSab and “Hieroglyphic text” are also found in Kuhrt, \textit{The Persian Empire}, 477–78; \textit{Hist.} IV, 166.


continuous Egyptian revolts. The people in Judah intrigued to rouse to the throne in Jerusalem a descendant of David, Zerubbabel (Hag 1:4, 9; 2:20–23). Darius had granted permission to Zerubbabel to return to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the temple, and had appointed Zerubbabel to the governor of Judah. Just seventeen or so years after the Judean return from Babylon, however, Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, was enough to contemplate seriously the restoration of the monarchy. The effort to restore the Davidic kingdom through Zerubbabel was in the same manner that most rebels throughout his territories took a regnal name individually that permitted them to connect with the local dynasty. The people in Judah certainly contested Achaemenid authority (Hag 1:4, 9; 2:4, 6–7).

A similar enmity in Judah in the power balance between Egypt and the Mesopotamian empires can be seen in Josiah’s battle in 2 Chr 35:20–24. On the eve of the war between Egypt and Neo-Babylonia, Josiah was in the middle of repairing the temple. He went out to intervene in the war between the Egyptians and the Neo-Babylonians but he was slain by the Egyptian force. Haggai, like a message from YHWH in the time of Josiah, warned that Judah should not interfere with this battle (Hag 2:4, 6–7). Judean contention against Darius could only result in a political catastrophe, as with Josiah.

As I have shown above, the suspicion of Darius’s usurpation of the Persian throne generated revolts from every subordinate ruler in the first and second periods of his reign. Especially, the recurrence of revolts in Babylon and Egypt was crucial as it could disturb the empire, as they could play a great role in the integration of conquered territories into Darius’s dominion. Throughout the time of overall revolts against Darius, troubles arose in Judah. Judah was seized by the conspiracy of Judean independence led by Zerubbabel. This pressing historical backdrop fitted with the critical message of the book of Haggai.

### 3.1.3 Darius’s territorial expansion

Following the successful suppression of the multiple uprisings, Darius turned to further expansion to reinforce his imperial authority. From Asia, such as Punjab (India), he

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25 See exegeses of those passages in chapters 5 and 6 below.

26 Throughout her history, Judah has been dominated by geopolitical strategies of the Egyptian and Neo-Assyrian, and Neo-Babylonian powers. See James M. Trotter, *Reading Hosea in Achaemenid Yehud* (JSOTSup 328; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 52; Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 25–29.

advanced the eastern border established by Cyrus (520–513 BCE). He captured the Ionian islands (517 BCE) and defeated the Scythians (in Iran) who lived a nomadic life moving along the northern coast of the Black Sea. Thrace (by the Balkan Mountains on the north, the Aegean Sea on the south, and by the Black Sea on the east) and most of the northern Aegean were captured in around 513 BCE.

In 499 BCE, peace in the west was disturbed by the Ionian revolt. It was connected to Darius’s unsuccessful expedition against Naxos which was supported by Athens. By 493 BCE, Darius restored the power throughout the Ionian cities and Cyprus. In response to Athenian support for the Ionians, Darius decided to invade Athens in 491 but he only lost the battle at Marathon. He intended to prepare a renewed attack on Athens, but he died in 486 before he could retake Athens.

To sum up, after the suppression of extensive revolts, Darius concentrated his efforts at further expansion to reinforce the imperial authority. His extended imperial dominion covered the mainland to the Aegean Islands, incorporating the conquest of Cyrus and furthermore the taking of Egypt under Cambyses. From then on, there was no further territorial expansion in the Achaemenids. Efforts were only directed towards tightening and adjusting the imperial administration.

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29 *Hist.* I, 83; 85.1; 87; 89; 91–93; 97–98; 102; 120–128; 131–138.1; 140.3; 141; 142.1; 143.1.

30 *Hist.* IV, 1; 83; 85.1; 87; 89; 91–93; 97–98; 102; 120–128; 131–138.1; 140.3; 141; 142.1; 143.1.

31 *Hist.* IV, 43–45; 144; V, 1–2; 11; 14–15; 16; 17.1; 18.1; 21.2–22.1; 23.2; 25.1; 26; 73; 98.1; VI, 46; 47.2; VII, 25.2; 59.1; 105.1; 110–111.1; 112; VI, 59.2–4.


33 *Hist.* VI, 48–49.1; 94–97; 98.1; 99–101; 102; 107.2; 112–113; 115–116; 118; 119.1–2, 4.

3. Darius and the Achaemenid Empire

3.2 Achaemenid Administrative Systems

3.2.1 Administrative principles

In the aftermath of turmoil of his beginning (522–521), Darius needed to tighten and exalt his power so as to stabilise and expand his territory. It forced him to devise a highly sophisticated and efficient system of propaganda that would allow various peoples to function within the confines of the imperial authority. It began with the restoration of the sanctuaries which Gaumata had destroyed. Darius then returned confiscated private property and reestablished the people in their homelands, both in Persia and Media, and in the other provinces. The purpose of this building project in each subordinate was to recognise Darius as the representative that each deity chose for religious and political leadership. Subsequently, every region was required, in the name of each local deity, to build or rebuild his temple.

Above all, this recognition of Darius had political connotations connected to his territorial campaigns. It meant that, although a variety of religions were practised in the Achaemenids, in several of Darius’s inscriptions, Ahura Mazda was the supreme. In fact, Ahura Mazda was an Iranian deity but was by necessity elevated to a royal religious cult on the eve of his eastern campaigns. Then, as Ahura Mazda’s representative on earth, Darius merely accomplished the divine work under the god’s guidance. This led to Darius’s supremacy.

For similar reasons, Darius made great efforts to accept and support the gods of subordinates. He restored the cult of Marduk in Babylon. He also adopted divine

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36 DB I: §14, sourced from Brosius, The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I, 23; DB V: §§ 71–72, sourced from Brosius, The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I, 39.

37 DSf, cited from Brosius, The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I, 40–41; DSe, cited from Brosius, The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I, 41–42; DE, cited from Brosius, The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I, 42; DNa, cited from Brosius, The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I, 42–44.

38 DB I: §§5, 9, referred to from Brosius, The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I, 30. For secondary literature, Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 63, 175–78.

kingship in Egypt, where the pharaoh, by the authority of office, was a god. Thus, he performed the necessary official duties for the burial of the Apis bull that died. Darius was even commemorated as the restorer of the temple of the Egyptian goddess, Neith in the city of Sais, and as the restorer of the temple of Amun-Re at El-Khargeh.

The temple rebuilding project is seen in the Hebrew Bible. Judah was allowed in the name of YHWH to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem which had been destroyed in the Babylonian raid (Ezra 1:1–11; 6:1–8). This decision has usually been regarded as a particularly generous act of the Persian king which confirms the special status of Judah. However, it has nothing to do with a particular concern for the Judean religion. Rather, it is just an example of imperial policy of controlling other peoples and religions (Hag 1:1, 15; 2:8–9). The ruined temple seemed sufficient to Judah (Hag 1:2, 3–4), but was not for Darius in terms of imperial administration (Hag 2:3, 8–9). In accord with Darius’s military strategy of the campaign against Egypt looming, the rebuilt Jerusalem temple would promptly enhance the produce of agriculture and devote supplies for the imperial army as it passes nearby.

Along with restoring temples and their deities in locals, Darius also employed their own laws as administrative principles. This was developed through scribes ūpšar Ebabbar, who were commissioned by the imperial kings. The significance of scribes might go back

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40 According to Gadatas inscription (ML 12), Darius demonstrated his respect for the Greek god Apollo by reprimanding his Magnesian satrap Gadatas for collecting taxes from the temple land. Yet later this inscription has proved a creation of the Hellenistic period. This text is found in Brosius, The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I, 93. For comments of this text, see Grabbe, A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period. Vol. 1, Yehud, 116–17; Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 401–2.

41 Brosius, Persians, 71; Young, “The Consolidation of the Empire and Its Limits of Growth under Darius and Xerxes,” 99-103.


46 For exegeses on those verses, see chapters 5 and 6 below.

47 Berquist, Judaism in Persia’s Shadow, 53, 59–63.
to Cambyses. While in Egypt, he destroyed some temples, and mocked Egyptian laws and custom which had been sacred.\textsuperscript{49} This caused uproar in the entire land of Egypt. It made him name the Egyptian Udjahorresnet as a collaborator in order to quash this unrest. In the reign of Darius, Udjahorresnet continued to codify the laws that were in effect in Egypt and successfully emphasised Darius’s fulfilment of the traditional ideals of Egyptian kingship.\textsuperscript{50} Within Judah, the Kings Law in Ezra 7:26 was probably an indicator of the laws that were in place in Judah as a result of imperial codification.\textsuperscript{51} This law presumably reflected earlier Judean traditions but was rendered into its final form by scribes in the service of imperial policies.

In the religious strategies of the temple rebuilding and the law codification, Darius followed strict protocol in foreign policies. The loyalty of subordinates was best procured if their cultural and religious environments which were linked with political issues were left undisturbed.\textsuperscript{52} Evidence showed that things changed drastically when this loyalty was not given. An instance of revolts against Darius’s rule was not only answered with military force, but its effects rippled into people’s lives as well, such as in Naxos 507 BCE.\textsuperscript{53}

As I have surveyed above, Darius exalted his power effectively to govern every conquered region. As expressed in a number of temple restorations in the names of subordinates’ deities. The temple rebuilding project was capable of demonstrating the religious and political image of Darius as the representative of local deities. By using religion


\textsuperscript{49} Strabo, The Geography of Strabo (Bohn’s Classical Library Series; trans H. C. Hamilton; London: Bell, 1854-57), XVII. 1.27, 46.


\textsuperscript{52} Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “The Quest for an Elusive Empire,” in Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Kuhrt, eds., AH, Vol. 4, Centre and Periphery, 264–266.

\textsuperscript{53} Hist. VI, 94–96.
as a political ruse, Darius even utilised the conceit of religious laws and ordered as controlling principles. Scribes (tupšar Ebabar) who also served as imperial administrative delegates in the temple carried them out.

3.2.2 Temple administration

The temple reconstruction projects among subordinates were also utilised to boost the financial powers of the empire. It was related to the fact that, as I have examined in chapter 2.3.1 concerning the imperial economic structure, newly-constructed temples organised the temple household in their regions respectively by managing land tenants and controlling agricultural affairs. The purpose of temple household was to enhance locals’ riches and improve their welfare. Subsequently, the temples made great fortunes, inclusive of various kinds of taxes. Then, temples’ treasuries were to be handed over to the great king as the local deities’ representative. Through this temple administrative strategy, Darius exercised the governance over the temple finances of locals and administered a huge quantity of imperial economic resources.

Examples of temple administration in the Neo-Babylonian period are available in the Eanna temple of Uruk, which was dedicated to the goddess Inanna-Ištar, the “Lady of Uruk.” At the Eanna temple in the Neo-Babylonian period the šatammu (or šangû) administered the Eanna temple. The temple officer šatammu was in control of vast agricultural areas irrigated by a sophisticated system of canals in a network along the Euphrates. The Eanna dedicated itself primarily to growing barley and dates. The other was the royal administrator, the qīpu who played a role of the imperial king’s eyes and ears. The royal director qīpu had responsibility for the management of the royal treasury in the temple. His particular duty was to deliver the temple treasuries to the imperial kings. Likewise, the top administrators managed agricultural production including the sales of surpluses, and supervised the temple’s

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55 B. W. M.联网, From Cyrus to Alexander, 70–76; Dandamaev, A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire, 103–77; Berquist, Judaism in Persia’s Shadow, 51–58.

possessions and personnel.57

One well-developed example of temple’s administration can be taken in the Neo-
Babylonian Ebabbar temple at Sippar:

Letter of Nabû-balassu-ıqbī, the temple administrator of Sippar, Bēl-iddīna and
Usallissu-Gula, the scribes to Ibnā, who is in charge of the rent of Šamaš, our brother.
May Bēl and Nabû ordain the health and life of our brother! Give 7:4.4.0 kor (=ca. 1448 l.) of barley and 0:2.5.0 kor (=ca. 102 l.) of emmer for the offering of the
bakers of the first month of the 27th year to Ribāta, the performer of Nabû-balassu-
ıqbī.58

The above letter is for the issue of barley for future offerings to be made by the bakers.
For this, the temple administrator of Sippar and two scribes of Ebabbar sent a letter to Ibnā
who was in charge of the rent on temple land. The land tenant then handed over the barley and
emmer.

The qīpu of Ebabbar can also be seen in the texts: the qīpu was involved in the
management of the property of the temple, witnessed the leasing of land, organised tax
delivery, and supervised temple personnel.59 In this manner, the qīpu played a relative role of
governor in the administrative authority. And he received a double portion of food supply per
month:

66 kor (=ca. 11,800 l.) of barley and 66 kor (=ca. 11,800 l.) of dates, food rations for
fifty workmen, two carpenters, one smith, ten guards, two food rations for qīpu and
one for the chief of the oblates for the first and the second month is given to Bēl-ahhē-
iqiša, the qīpu of Ebabbar, and the headmen. In toto 132 kor (=ca. 23,760 l.) of barley
and dates went out of the big storehouse on the Euphrates.60


60 CT 56,633, cited from Bongenaar, The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple at Sippar, 35–38.
The economic affairs of the temples in the Achaemenids continued in much the same way as it had done during the Neo-Babylonian period. In its agriculture, the temple administrator supervised an agricultural calendar and assessed the standing crops for the coming year. Afterwards, the temple administrator calculated and drew the temple’s revenues which were related to the imperial taxation from the land. Two imperial commissioners took charge of temple economy. In the reign of Cyrus, the imperial authorities šatammu and qīpu were commissioned to work exclusively on the reconstruction of the ruined Eanna temple and both delegates worked for the governance of the temple. As the high priest in the religious authority, the duty of the šatammu was to work exclusively on the project of economic restoration at the rebuilt Eanna temple. There is no doubt that the temples took charge of not only financial affairs but also administrative businesses in the Achaemenids (see chapter 3.2.1 above).

As taxes, the temple administrator collected silver, barley, dates, sweet date beer, goats, lambs, and oxen. Then, those treasuries were passed over to the imperial court. Generally, the temples in the season of harvest extracted taxes from both their region and their inhabitants. Also, the temples repeatedly sent labourers to do building work at the royal palaces or to supply raw materials like wood and bricks for royal buildings. They also furnished the royal administration with soldiers, at least providing campaign equipment for...

61 The officials, šatammu and qīpu, are firmly attested from the time of Cyrus and Cambyses. In Cyrus’ years, Gurabu is given the position of governor of “Babylon and Beyond the River” (535 BCE). Oreotes is still in office in Sardis as the governor at the accession of Darius (Hist. III, 120, 126). As for Egypt, Cambyses appoints Aryandes as the governor. See Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 63–64.

62 YBT VII,168, cited from translated in Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 74; TCL XIII.150, cited from Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 74; YOS VII,128, cited from Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 74.

63 Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 63–64, 71–76.

64 Dar. 156, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 377–78; Dar. 206, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 386–87; Dar. 268, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 392–93; Dar. 315, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 401–3; Dar. 342, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 409–10; Dar. 359, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 415–16; Dar. 390, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 418–19; Dar. 437, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 428–29; BM 30233, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 206–8; BM 30591, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 232–33; BM 30629, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 234–35; BM 30639, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 235–36; BM 30747, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 240–41; BM 31347, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 282–84; BM 31393, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 287–89; BM 31572, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 301–3; BM 32891, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 328–29; BM 33112, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 331–32; BM 33928, sourced from Abraham, Business and Politics, 339–41.

65 Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 73–74.
cavalry soldiers.\(^{66}\)

Obviously, the Jerusalem temple was financed by treasuries stocked enough for it to take the role of fiscal centre. When the Babylonian Judeans returned to Jerusalem, thus, Cyrus ordered the treasurer Mithradata, who might be charged with the management of the income and expenditure, by the king’s order, to return the sacred vessels that Nebuchadnezzar took (Ezra 1:7–11; 5:14–15).\(^{67}\) In a similar manner, Darius helped to build the Jerusalem temple with the royal treasury, concurrently charging them with returning his temple treasuries (Ezra 6:3–5).

According to Haggai, for this, Darius commissioned the governor (חָסְם) and the high priest (יָגוֹר כְּרֵסִים, Hag 1:1, 12, 14).\(^{68}\) Both of them were certainly involved in the temple restoration. There might be no doubt that the rebuilt Jerusalem temple was involved in economic affluence for the empire. Storerooms (בְּמִטֹל, Neh 10:4; 13:4) in the Jerusalem temple could be used to stock up with oil, wine, wheat, barley, fruits, sheep, goats and silver (Neh 10:32–39).\(^{69}\) This suggests something of the temple economy of the Jerusalem temple.\(^{70}\)

From the above survey, I have shown that the temple reconstruction project was devoted to the maximisation of imperial income. As a result, the restored temples controlled all agriculture activities from land tenants to trades throughout agricultural productions and made great fortunes consequently. This wealth was then transferred to the great king by various kinds of taxes. For the fiscal management of the temples, two imperial administrators, the šatammu (or šangû) and the qīpu were duly delegated to the temples that served as royal patrons. In relation to the Jerusalem temple rebuilding, roles similar to the šatammu and the qīpu could be seen in the governor (יָגוֹר חָסְם) and the high priest (יָגוֹר כְּרֵסִים).

### 3.2.3 Administrative reorganisation

The administrative reorganisation was exerted for the purpose of taxation. This administration was also used to fund the military exploits from subordinates.\(^{71}\) Darius, by

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\(^{66}\) PF 1797 is referred to from Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire*, 627–28.


\(^{68}\) This will be discussed in chapter 5 below.

\(^{69}\) Schaper, “Jerusalem Temple,” 530–34.

\(^{70}\) See chapters 5 and 6 below.
neighbouring region arrangement, first structured the whole territory into twenty administrative and military satrapies (אֲרַכּוֹת).

Considering different ethnic groups, he further divided satrapies into one hundred and twenty seven regions (ברד אצורי, Esth 3:8, 12). This regional-ethnic group administration clearly continued but further developed the administrative system established by the Neo-Assyrians and the Neo-Babylonians. Already, at an early stage of the empires, conquered territories were subdivided into provincial districts for collecting various imperial taxes and for insuring the conscription of troops.

To boost the royal treasury, Darius again assessed subordinates based on the importance of political and territorial advantages. Then, they were classified into states, city-states or provinces which were obviously applied to different kinds of taxes. In correspondence, a satrap פֶּסֶת was appointed to each satrapy (Ezra 5:3; Esth 3:12) and a semi-autonomous city-state king or a sub-governor פָּסָת to each province. Despite both being called the same term פֶּסֶת, the administrative functions of the satrap and the governor were completely different. In this administrative organisation, it is true that Judah was allotted as a politically small province having sub-governor (פסת) under the satrap (פקס) of “Beyond the River.” Through biblical accounts, Judean governors of Sheshbazzar (during Cyrus reign, Ezra 5:15), Zerubbabel (520 BCE, Hag 1:1, 14; 2:2) and Nehemiah (445 BCE, Neh 5:14; 12:26) are seen.

In terms of administration, the satrap functioned as the king’s eyes and ears. He travelled within his regions and reported directly to the imperial kings. In the event of politically severe unrest in a province, however, its satrap reported it to the king, and he could


76 To fill the gap between Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, Avigad adds Elhanan, Yehoyezer, and אֲלְגָּל based on impressions at Ramath Ra’el. See Avigad, Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive.
order the satraps of the neighbouring satrapies to levy troops and quash the rebellion. A satrap made political decisions at the regional level, but he had to consult with the king on any major issues.

Also, local leaders under the satrap had to report their issues to their satrap, who then reported to the emperor. This was likely the case with Tattenai, the satrap of “Beyond the River.” He dealt with the disputes that broke out between the governors of provinces and reported to the king Darius. Then, Darius issued an order to investigate them (Ezra 5–6).

As local governors, Darius, considering maximum possible effectiveness, appointed an existing local royal lineage to its leader with allowance for the interests of local groups. Among locals who had local royal leaders, states or city-states could enjoy and exercise the power and privileges delegated to them. This was not, however, an indication of provincial independence. The status of city-states depended on allegiance to imperial kings, including collection of taxes and mustering of military forces. On the provincial level the governor was merely responsible for collecting the taxes connected with the land. It meant that, although some could have their own governmental structures in terms of political activities, all subordinates were substantially controlled and repressed by the imperial power.

By looking at administrative organisation in his territories, Darius maximised taxation for subordinates, and conducted military exploits through them. It led to the administration of one hundred and twenty seven regions (בָּנָיִם) of twenty satrapies ( EXEMPLARY) based on regional-ethnic groups. Subsequently, different kinds of taxes were applied to subordinates by the classification of regions. Judah was designated a province. For administrative efficiency, each satrapy was ruled by a satrap (בָּנָיִם) and each local was managed by a governor ( Xperia). Satrap and sub-governor used the same term but their function was entirely different. Notwithstanding this, unfailing loyalty was expected from all representatives. Thus, all of the king’s delegates were usually appointed from among the royal families or among existing locals with royal lineages.

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3.3 Achaemenid Economy

3.3.1 Fiscal taxation

In accord with the administrative and military assessment, every subordinate was required to comply with the taxation of tribute (חֵרֶם), land tax (כָּרָה) and poll tax (בֵּית לֶדֶנֶה, Ezra 4:13, 20; 7:24) which was of utmost importance to imperial treasuries. In Persepolis monthly accounts are made on the basis of individual receipts, and are subsequently checked by a royal accountant. These administrative processes reflect a sophisticated system of record-keeping which ultimately derived from a centuries-old archival tradition of the Near East.

Compulsory tribute (mandatu in Akkadian) was imposed on dependencies that Darius saw as having comparatively less political and military strength. After fixing the tribute which subjects were to pay, Darius sent for the leading men of the provinces and asked them whether the tribute was not too onerous. Sometimes, Darius had the tribute decided by his satraps in order to see who set them at an exorbitant amount and then reduced their dues by half. However, it was nothing but a taxation trick.

As taxes, poll tax (biltu in Akkadian) was of a portioned, fixed amount per individual in accordance with the census as opposed to a percentage of income. Hence, poll taxes were one of the important sources of the royal treasury. There were references to poll tax in Judah (Ezra 4:13; 7:24 and Neh 5:15). This tax was also required for the imperial campaign and ambitious construction project such as palaces and temples. Subjects had to provide military

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80 Hist. III, 89; Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 67–70, 393–94; Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 672–73.


82 DCH, Vol. 5, 176.

83 Plutarch, Moralia 172f; Polyaeus VII, 11.3, both of which are referred to from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 677.

84 DCH, Vol. 2, 143–44.

equipment and travel provisions for royal soldiers when they passed their territories.\textsuperscript{86}

In Judah, there was a well-built road connecting Egypt with the centre of the empire via Jerusalem and Damascus. One route of this road led north toward Asia Minor and another east to Media.\textsuperscript{87} Consequently, Judah had to contribute the essential provision to imperial armies who passing nearby Judah.\textsuperscript{88} To do this well, Judah had to be able to produce a high amount of produce in advance of the army’s arrival. Thus, through the Jerusalem temple reconstruction, Judah was asked to increase the produce of agriculture.

The land tax (\textit{ilku} in Akkadian) comprised plant produce, animal produce and market dues which were applied to the cultivation of the land.\textsuperscript{89} Every land holder had to pay the field tax or land revenue levied on every agricultural activity including manufacturing and commerce. This is because land belonged to the kings and was only allocated for maintenance of subordinates under the approval of their deities.\textsuperscript{90} Subsequently, the assessment of crops became vitally important for the calculation of the fiscal gross in the imperial economy.

Minerals specific to regions were also imposed as the land tax. Silver came from India, Mede and Babylon.\textsuperscript{91} There was gold in Syspiritis in Anatolia, Niriz and Bactria both of which are in Iran, and Lydia in Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{92} Iron deposits existed at Niriz, bitumen deposits, salt, and oil on the Euphrates,\textsuperscript{93} and greywacke quarries in Egypt’s eastern desert.\textsuperscript{94} The copper and silver resources were in Cyprus, particularly in the realm of Kition.\textsuperscript{95} Indeed, Darius’s campaigns related to gold and silver in Asia Minor and Greece.\textsuperscript{96}

\begin{quotation}
\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Hist.} VII, 96; 118–119.

\textsuperscript{87} Wiesehöfer, \textit{Ancient Persia}, 53.

\textsuperscript{88} Berquist, \textit{Judaism in Persia’s Shadow}, 53. However, Grabbe argues that Judah would not be seen in any strategic reason. See Grabbe, \textit{A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period}. Vol. 1, \textit{Yehud}, 275.

\textsuperscript{89} Briant, \textit{From Cyrus to Alexander}, 72–73.

\textsuperscript{90} Brosius, \textit{Persians}, 51.

\textsuperscript{91} PT 85; PF 1342; PF 1357, all of which are sourced from Kuhrt, \textit{The Persian Empire}, 716–19. On metals for tribute, see Briant, \textit{From Cyrus to Alexander}, 406–10.

\textsuperscript{92} Strabo XI, 14.9; FGrH 688 F45 (26), both of which are cited from Kuhrt, \textit{The Persian Empire}, 708.

\textsuperscript{93} \textit{Hist.} VI, 119. 2–3.

\textsuperscript{94} “Hieroglyphic Egyptian Rock Inscription,” sourced from Kuhrt, \textit{The Persian Empire}, 707–8.

\textsuperscript{95} Strabo XV, 2.14.

\textsuperscript{96} Vickers, “Persian, Thracian and Greek Gold and Silver,” 31, 36–37.
\end{quotation}
Also, Darius received gifts in place of fixed tributes. Yet, it was only imposed on cooperative subjects making a great contribution towards political benefits and military campaigns.97 Nonetheless, gifts even from provinces that paid mandatory tribute were generally sent as a gesture of loyalty. Precious and rare items or artefacts were usually sent;98 Ethiopians on the border of Egypt provided gold, logs, five Ethiopian men and twenty elephant tusks every two years and Colchians sent 100 boys and girls every four years.99 The Indian king sent a tiny Indian bird whose excrement made one die painlessly, as if in one’s sleep and a marvellous dye for the famous coloured textiles.100

On top of taxation, regions had to pay another tax to their governors. It was known as the word חרטמ (Neh 10:40; 12:44; 13:5; Mal 3:8). The people in Judah paid this tax with the first fruits of all the fruit of every tree, the first-born cattle, and the first of their coarse meal, wine and oil (Neh 5:17–18). In a depressed economy, Nehemiah emphasised that neither his servants nor he had received the food normally allotted to Judah’s governor. This reveals that the חרטמ could be administrated at local level by the governor.

In the survey of imperial taxation, I have shown that Darius applied a highly sophisticated taxation system for the imperial fiscal power. According to the administrative classes, subordinates had to pay the fixed tribute (חרם), land tax (לחם), poll tax (בלב), and gifts. The mandatory tribute was charged only to provinces like Judah which were politically weak. The poll tax and the land tax were levied on subject peoples who lived on or cultivated the land. Very cooperative subjects only offered arbitrary gifts of luxurious items for the continued patronage. Apparently, these combined taxes played a great part in building up the royal treasury.

3.3.2 Corvée obligation

The demand of man-power as a corvée system belonged to the חלב tax. For transport services, military services, and imperial constructions, it was one of the most ongoing and urgent government requirements. When land tenants were called up as one form of a corvée system, their land was leased out or passed on through inheritance to be worked, for land

97 See Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 68–69, 395–399.
98 Strabo XV, 3.21.
99 Hist. III, 97.
100 Ael., NA 4.41, 46.
taxes were ceaselessly levied on land-workers. However, all the corvée obligations could be discharged with a money payment which could be substituted with the \( \mathbb{W} \) tax.

When the harvest finished, grains, flour, fruits, oil, wine, beer, honey, and perfumes together with livestock of goats and sheep were offered for the royal treasury. Large numbers of seedlings, possibly of fruit trees, and of animals were also issued. They were used for planting for the economy. With regard to the delivery of the products, landholders themselves had to directly carry or supply workers. Alternatively, landholders would employ boat holders that the king grants as tenures.

On top of agricultural products, imperial taxation was normally delivered in coins. They were melted down again and stored in large earthenware jars in the treasuries. They were broken again and made into bullion whenever kings were in need of money. Gold and silver coinages were introduced and minted according to an imperial standard. For a universal currency, Darius introduced the daric.

In order to ensure a productive administration, Darius drew on an already existing road system which connected Asia Minor and Neo-Assyria. He further established the Royal Road to connect the main cities of each satrapy and royal centre across the empire. It stretched about 2,700 km between Susa in southwest Persia and Sardis in western Anatolia.

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101 “Babylonian Tablet” which belongs to Darius II (423–405 BCE) at 421 BCE shows this appropriate duty. This text is found in Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 722–23.


103 Hist. I, 192. Royal revenues from Egypt were recorded in Aramaic papyri which are found in Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 681–703. Royal treasuries in Judah are in Neh 5:15; 10:40; 12:44; 13:5.


106 BE X 97, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 680–1.


108 Diod. XIX, 19.2; Hist. V, 52–54. The Achaemenids maintain road stations at intervals of 24 km, which provided food and shelter for officials carrying messages to and from the king. For the Achaemenid road system, see Farrokh, Shadows in the Desert, 64; Gary H. Oller, “Messengers and Ambassadors in Ancient Western Asia,” in Sasson, ed., CANE, Vol. 3, 1465–74.
The building and maintenance of a road system required considerable work.\textsuperscript{109} For this, subordinates had to repeatedly furnish the required wood and bricks, together with forced labour, for three months at least in turn.\textsuperscript{110}

The Royal Road facilitated an effective postal system within the imperial territories.\textsuperscript{111} It ensured the fast and safe progress of the king’s messengers.\textsuperscript{112} This Road was also useful for transportation and trades.\textsuperscript{113} Thus, it was closely monitored by the king’s watchers on account of protection. Caravans were undoubtedly escorted by armed men (Neh 2:9). Ezra, fearing attack, made the same journey accompanied by many Judeans entrusted with gold and riches for the temple of YHWH (Ezra 8:22, 31). Nehemiah’s travel to Judah was also protected (Neh 2:7).

Darius also exploited the naval route at the government’s expense in order to discover trade routes, particularly off the eastern Mediterranean coast.\textsuperscript{114} Another route went from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Oman and from there via the Indian Ocean to the mouth of the River Indus. He also dug a canal from the Nile River to the Red Sea,\textsuperscript{115} and set up boat-bridges along many rivers that the Royal Road crossed.\textsuperscript{116} Taxes were then levied on these transits. One case was on the Nile, where the Phoenician boats paid 10\% of each product carried (wine, wood, metals such as bronze, iron, tin, wool, clay) from Samos.\textsuperscript{117}

In addition, subject people could at any time be summoned to the imperial army. They

\textsuperscript{109} Ael., NA XV, 26; Diod. XVIII, 32.2; BM 79746, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 710; VS VI, no. 160, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 708–9.

\textsuperscript{110} BM 49718, cited from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 711.


\textsuperscript{112} Cyr. VIII, 6.17–18; Hist. VIII, 98; 239.2–3; PF 1315, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 754; PF 1335, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 755; PF 1672, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 755; BM 74463, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 709.

\textsuperscript{113} Cyr. VI, 2.36; Hist. VII, 131; PFa19; 30, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 746.


\textsuperscript{116} Hist. IV, 87–88, 141; BM 74463, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 709.

\textsuperscript{117} Cowley, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C., # 72. For comments of this text, see Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 385.
were usually stationed in a garrison anywhere in the empire. One of these garrisons was probably the Judean garrison at Elephantine. They manned the frontier on the Nile like a considered regular army. An Aramaic text from Egypt suggests that the task of equipping the garrison soldiers was very expensive: for twelve soldiers, this equipment could amount to 1 mule, 12 blankets, 12 cuirasses, 12 helmets, 12 travel bags, 12 pairs of shoes, 1 pi oil, 2 pi salt and 2 pi cress. There is no doubt that the Judean garrison at Elephantine would likewise be fed by Egypt. In 410, thus, a group of Egyptians defaced the Judean temple in Elephantine.

From the survey of corvée obligations, it is clear that subject peoples were quite frequently summoned through forced labours to work at continuing and compelling tasks undertaken by the imperial administration. They were used for military services, for building fields and even for tax deliveries. Even during farming season, peasants were not exempted in corvée duty. However, they could avoid this service by paying a monetary tax.

3.3.3 Taxation in “Beyond the River”

Darius organised his empire for taxation purposes and levied the taxation of 350 talents on “Beyond the River” separate from “Babylonia” (Ezra 6:8):

The fifth satrapy included contains the whole of Phoenicia and that part of Syria which is called Palestine, and Cyprus, from the town of Posideium, which was founded by Amphilochus, the son of Amphiareus, on the border between the Cilicia and Syria, as far as Egypt — omitting Arabian territory, which was free of tax — came 350 talents.

Notwithstanding this, the title “Babylonia and Beyond the River” appeared in Babylonian legal documents from the years 535–486 BCE. Gubaru (535–525 BCE), Ushtani (521–525 BCE), and Hu-ta-[x-'] son of Pa-ga-ka-an-na (486 BCE) explicitly

119 Dar, 253, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 715–17.
121 Hist. III, 91.
occurred as governors of “Babylonia and Beyond the River.”125 Meanwhile, Tattenai (circa 518–502 BCE), the governor of “Beyond the River” was known from Darius’s reign (Ezra 5:3).126 It looks likely that “Beyond the River” constituted a tributary subunit within the vast satrapy of “Babylonia and Beyond the River.”127 These accounts certainly show how incisive the provinces could find Darius’s reform of the administrative and tributary system.128 “Beyond the River” had its own governor again, probably instated by Xerxes (486–465 BCE) after Shamash-eriba’s revolt in Babylon.129 “Beyond the River” was later known as Coele-Syria which included all the land on the west side of the Euphrates as far as Egypt.130

The peoples being grouped together into “Beyond the River,” according to Herodotus, were Syrians, Phoenicia, “that part of Syria which was called Palestine,” and the Arabs.131 Palestine extended from Phoenicia to the border of Gaza. Palestinian ethnicity applied largely to Judah and Samaria. However, there were also peoples who were designated “Syrians” encompassing northern Sinai and the west of the Euphrates up to the Cyprus border.132 There is an interesting claim about these “Syrians”:133 from the 8th century the Greeks had closely traded with Assyria, which was in immediate proximity to the south east of Syria-Palestine.134

In a cultural similarity, this area and its indigenous population were evidently well known to

124 BM 74554, sourced from Kuhrt, The Persian Empire, 815–16.
125 See Eph’al, “Syria-Palestine under Achaemenid Rule,” 154; Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 393–94.
127 See Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 393–94.
131 Hist. II, 46–47, 104; VII, 89.
132 Grabbe argues that “Beyond the River” included all the land on the west side of the Euphrates as far as Egypt. See Grabbe, A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period. Vol. 1, Yehud, 133–66.
133 On the “Syrians” of northern Sinai, see Hist. III, 5; of the west of the Euphrates, see Hist. I. 72, 76; Hist. II. 104; Hist. III. 90; Hist. VII. 63.
the Greeks, which led to the Greeks calling the Assyrians Syr
tians. Therefore, the term, “Syrians,” in Herodotus should be applied during the Greek period.

According to the sources for the Achaemenid period “the Arabs” inhabited the area between Egypt and the Euphrates.136 This wide expanse of the Arabs in southern Palestine and northern Sinai possessed immense strategic and economic importance in the context of the Achaemenid Empire for the control of Egypt and Arabian trade.137 The Achaemenid authorities preferred to grant control of all the emporia along the coast, from Gaza to Ienysus, to the king of the Arabs and entrusted him with collecting the customs duty for spices.138

However, Gaza had been one of the cities of the Philistinians, since the Judean kingdom period in the Hebrew Bible. Gaza was constantly named a Philistine city throughout the Assyrian and Babylonian records.139 In Darius’s time, the Arabs’ camel caravans crossed the vast desert area to the Palestinian coastal port, Gaza, or up to the Nile Delta.140 The Arabs certainly profited from their role as intermediaries between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean ports, principally Gaza.141 Then, Gaza was largely populated by Arabs, particularly merchants, since this place was the principal outlet for Arabin trade.142 Thus Gaza became a fortified place of great importance that was controlled by the Arabs.143

Within the fifth satrapy the books of Ezra and Nehemiah mention other ethnicities: Ammon in the east (Ezra 9:1) and Moab (Ezra 2:6; 8:4; 10:30) in the southern region. However, regions of Moab and Edom were already annexed to the Arabs, and Ammon to Samaria.144 They are merely ethnic names.

136 *Hist*. III, 5 and 8.
138 *Hist*. III, 4–9; Diod. XV, 2.4; XIII, 46.6.
140 See Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 378.
141 See Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 53–54, 717.
142 See Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 45.
143 See Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 275, 717.
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From epigraphic and material finds on Palestine and Phoenicia, the satrapy of “Beyond the River” included the Phoenicians, the Philistinians, the Arabs, Judah, and Samaria. Particularly, Darius was keenly interested in the areas of the Negev, Sinai, and the former Edomite region, in hope of perpetuating the goodwill of the Arabs. They assisted the imperial army in approaching Egypt by supplying it with water. They also played a great role as intermediaries between Egypt and the Euphrates. The Arabs were in a like manner exempted from the assessed tribute. Instead, they contributed 1,000 talents of incense as “gifts” to the royal treasury for annual trade. In the time of Nehemiah, we can see Geshem the Arabs (Neh 6:1).

The Phoenicians, living in Tyre, Sidon, Bylos, and Adarus, maintained their existence as vassal kingdoms. They offered two warships indispensable to the Persian army, which was ill-equipped for naval warfare. In particular, when Darius invaded Greece, the participation of Phoenician fleets was of paramount importance. With them and their merchantmen, the Phoenicians made full trades loaded with every luxury goods. They also had granaries for the use of imperial armies. With patronages in naval wars and trades, the Phoenician city-states could enjoy a unique political status, involving rule by local dynasties.

Along the Mediterranean coast Gaza, Ashdod, and Ashkelon consistently maintained

147 See Eph’al, “Syria-Palestine under Achaemenid Rule,” 162–63; Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 717.
149 Hist. III, 91.
153 Diod. XV, 41.3.
their political power. They became a port of great importance to the Arabs, and in Judith 3:1 Ashdod is mentioned as an important city for the Phoenicians. Herodotus, however, referred to the Philistine cities Syria or Syrians of Palestine in order to separate the inhabitants of the Phoenicians. Also, Gaza and Ashdod cast coins and engraved city names ג, נ, or נ, or הר, נ or ד, נ, or נ. Accordingly, it may be assumed that the Philistine cities possessed administrative segregation within the Achaemenid ethnic-national administrative policy.

Certainly, Gaza, Ashdod, and Ashkelon, took control of the logistics base for the imperial army with their ships during Achaemenid rule (Neh 4:1; 13:23; Zech 9:5). Subsequently, they received equal benefits to the Phoenician city-states. They co-operated with the incense trade of the Arabs who controlled the desert region between Gaza and the Egyptian border.

Evidence of the existence for the provinces of Judah and Samaria can be found in their stamped coins and seal impressions which have been unearthed in various excavations. However, there is no mention of services or of contributions of logistical bases, army posts, or warship providers by the provinces of Judah and Samaria. Rather, both provinces traditionally thrived on agriculture (see chapter 2.2 above). With their plentiful produce, Judah and Samaria were to supply daily provisions to cavalry soldiers passing near their territories on imperial expeditions. Transit roads within their regions from Sais or Memphis in Egypt to the coastline of Tyro and Damascus, meeting the road from Sardis to Susa, supported their provincial commissions.

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155 Hist. II, 46–47, 104; VII, 89.


162 Wright states that the city wall in Achaemenid Jerusalem creates military space (Neh 2). John W. Wright, “A Tale of Three Cities: Urban Gates, Squares and Power in Iron Age II, Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Judah,”
Concerning the tribute (יוּמַה) of 350 silver talents per annum (Ezra 4:13; 6:8), the Phoenician and the Philistine city states could support their portions of the tribute through trades between Egypt to the west and Mesopotamia to the east. The provinces Judah and Samaria were also obliged to contribute. Both provinces, traditionally agricultural regions, were evidently required to increase their agricultural produce. Accordingly, they had to produce enough to sustain economic stability and enrich treasuries for their taxes.

From the study of imperial administration, it is clear that the satrapy “Beyond the River” was composed of the Phoenician city-states, the Philistinian city-states, the Arabs, Judah, and Samaria. With their warships, logistic ships, or logistic base, the Phoenicians, the Philistinians, and the Arabs were of the utmost strategic importance with regard to the Eastern Mediterranean seaboard and army posts as the focal point in monitoring Egypt. Consequently, the Arabs, the Phoenicians, and the Philistinians were legitimised and prospered, existing in the centres of the larger imperial economic structure. Meanwhile, Judah and Samaria as agrarian societies were nothing but commissary bases.

### 3.4. Conclusion

I have discussed in some detail both Darius and the Achaemenid Empire from a political, military, and economic point of view. Darius’s accession to the Persian throne was in effect a royal coup because through it Darius and his Achaemenid family became the royal family of Persia.

Darius’s lack of any prior right to become ruler of the Persians provoked the uprisings against him throughout the conquered territories. The recurring rebellions, particularly in the crucial regions of Babylon and Egypt, caused Darius tremendous troubles. Darius certainly devised propaganda which was effective enough to put the revolts down. It was founded on the temple rebuilding or restoring concept, using the religion of each subordinate as a political ruse. Darius was identified as the representative of each region’s deity.

This ideological concept also worked very well in ensuring absolute loyalty from

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164 See chapter 4.3, 4.4, and 4.6 below.
subordinates which was essential for the territorial expansion. With this allegiance, Darius added the Aegean Islands and north-west Asia Minor to his dominion.

The magnitude of Darius’s achievement should also be measured by the rebuilding of temples. Throughout a temple rebuilding project, Darius activated the temple economy in which the temples being sanctioned by Darius supervised the economy of their regions and enhanced their income, and then devoted their fund to the royal income. In this temple fiscal administrative system, Darius integrated the economy of subordinates into the Achaemenid Empire. If as a well functioning economic institution the temple was in trouble, the whole economy could suffer.

Darius also set up administrative reorganisation for levying the taxes of tribute, poll tax, and land tax. One hundred and twenty seven provincial governorships within twenty satrapies were assessed each for taxes. The imperial treasury in Babylon was governed by the imperial authorities of šatammu and qīpu from the temples.

There is no doubt that the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple was important for the imperial economic structure, as Judah functioned as a military buffer zone between Mesopotamia and Egypt. Thus, the Jerusalem temple to be rebuilt was to increase domestic income and then greatly boost the income of the royal power. The Jerusalem temple economy was to be incorporated into Darius’s economy. For this purpose, Darius commissioned two imperial delegates, the governor and the high priest to oversee the work of rebuilding the Jerusalem temple (Hag 1:1, 12, 14).

For taxation, in the satrapy of “Beyond the River” the Phoenicians, the Philistinians, Judah, and Samaria were to pay the mandatory tribute of 350 silver talents every year omitting the Arab. From the Bible, the poll tax and the land tax were also applied to Judah (Ezra 4:13, 20; 7:24). In an imperial economic system, Judah was just assigned as a commissary base. Subsequently, politically weak, Judah had to be loyal to be an imperial patron both in the temple rebuilding project and in the imperial taxation system.
4. Judah in the Neo-Babylonian and the Achaemenid periods

4.0 Background

The discussion in this chapter concerns the cultural and economic circumstances of Judah under two empires: The Neo-Babylonian and the Achaemenid. The Achaemenids simply took over the Neo-Babylonian Empire, coordinated it and expanded it. Imperial policies in various regions would not usually be changed as long as they furthered profit and income for the empire. For this reason, I will discuss the history and archaeology of both Neo-Babylonian Judah and Achaemenid Judah.

The Neo-Babylonian Empire developed an advanced political and economic system. Having few natural resources of its own it had to depend upon import of all sorts of food, and luxury and building materials like metals, stone and timber from the conquered territories. Judah was well known for her agricultural products above all the vine and the olive (see chapter 2.2 above). Both of these were always expensive items in the larger international economic context of Mesopotamia.

In relation to Judah, Darius utilised already existing administrative systems to maximise economic growth. Similar administrative strategies existed in all conquered territories (see chapters 2.3.1 and 3.2.1 above). Darius controlled production and trade. For this reason, I will also investigate the administration of Achaemenid Judah. The Book of Haggai is an important historical source for Darius’s administrative policy in Judah.

4.1 Destruction in Judah by Babylonian Campaigns

The Biblical account of the Babylonian campaigns against Judah is in 2 kgs 24–25. In the days of Jehoiakim (608–597 BCE), Neo-Babylonia attacked with a joint army of Arameans, Moabites, and Ammonites. They destroyed Judah and put Jehoiakim’s son Johoiachin (597 BCE) in his place (2 Kgs 24:1–6). Three months later, Nebuchadnezzar of

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1 On conflict in the statements in 2 Kgs 24:6; 2 Chr 36:6–7; Jer 22:18–19, see Lester L. Grabbe, “The Kingdom of Judah from Sennacherib’s Invasion to the Fall of Jerusalem: If We had only the Bible…,” in Good Kings and Bad Kings (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; LHB/OTS 393; London: T & T Clark, 2005), 108–13.
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Babylonia again besieged Judah and crowned Zedekiah (597/6–586 BCE) king of Judah. This time, Nebuchadnezzar carried off all the treasures from the palace and the Jerusalem temple (2 Kgs 24:8–13). The Jerusalem palace and its temple were burned down and its city wall broken down (2 Kgs 25:1–21).² Tell en-Nasbeh then took over Jerusalem’s position (2 Kgs 25:22–24).

Also, in his campaigns, Nebuchadnezzar carried “all of Jerusalem” into exile (2 Kgs 24:14–15; 25:12; Jer 52:16). It has been claimed that Neo-Babylonian Judah was uninhabited or uninhabitable.³ At this point, it is necessary to examine the phrase “all the people” in Biblical passages. One fine case can be found in 2 Kgs 25:26, where “all the people” went to Egypt after Gedaliah is killed. It shows that “all the people” did not mean “all the people” of Judah but just a large number of people. Therefore, it is plausible that the concept that the land remained desolate is hyperbole. The captives were all the princes, officials, soldiers, craftsmen, and smiths of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24:14; 25:11).

From the standpoint of the Biblical traditions, the capital life in Jerusalem sharply declined with several deportations of the population.⁴ Jer 52:28–29 lists the numbers of the people that Nebuchadnezzar carried into exile: the first deportees after the first fall of Jerusalem in the seventh year (597 BCE) amounted to 3,023; in Nebuchadnezzar’s eighteenth year (586 BCE), total 832 people were deported from Jerusalem after the second fall; and in his twenty–third year (582 BCE) in response to the assassination of Gedaliah, 745 Jews were taken into exile. There were 4,600 people in all (Jer 52:30).

On the other hand, 2 Kgs mentions two different figures for the deportation of 10,000 people in 597 BCE and of 8,000 people in 586 BCE (2 Kgs 24:14–16). The third deportation is not mentioned by the writer of 2 Kgs. Thus, the exact total number of deportees is not

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One can only say that this exile was a severe blow to Jerusalem (Jer 24).

According to demographic studies, it has been claimed that an estimate of the built-up area of Jerusalem at the end of Iron Age reached approximately 600–1,000 dunams. Based on this estimation, the calculated population remained from 12,000 to 25,000. It reflects that in Jerusalem occurred the sharpest decline of around 80% from over 760 dunams to 230 dunams.

On the basis of the excavated remains, the Babylonian armies razed other areas near Jerusalem. Ramat Rahel which served as one of the administrative cities to supply the required tribute in the Judean kingdom was apparently broken down while Jerusalem lay in ruins.

The Babylonians further destroyed the main cities of Judah’s western border, including Lachish in the southern part of Jerusalem (Jer 34:7). Yet, Lachish connected the coastline as one of the supply routes. Thus, this place undertook the settlement of the other cities on the west coastline then established the Philistinian city-states.

In a similar manner, most of the Negev fortresses were destroyed in the early 6th century. However, there is some evidence of the settlement beginning to make incursions into the southern part of the Negev and into the Hebron hills. They plainly consisted of

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Arabian tribes.

Owing to the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, the destruction of Jerusalem and its eastern environs was vast. A great number of the Jerusalem population were also deported. Jerusalem lost the function of the political and administrative centre. In addition, some territories in the west and south of Jerusalem were even annexed to the Philistinian city-states and to the Arabs respectively. Relatively, the northern area of Jerusalem was little devastated. Therefore, it is unlikely that the whole land was completely rooted and unpopulated.

4.2 Continuity in Babylonian Judah

Within the Babylonian rule, Judean political status was changed to that of a minor administrative region. Considering the productive ability of Judah, however, the Judean land could not be devoid of people requiring a governing or administrative organization.12 Certainly, Nebuchadnezzar left behind the people of the land to be vine-dressers and ploughmen (2 Kgs 25:12; Jer 39:10; 40:7; 52:16).13 They were certainly peasants. Gedaliah was appointed as a governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar of “the people who were left in the country” (2 Kgs 25:22). These people were not counted amongst the “all of Jerusalem” that were taken into exile. Apparently, the reference to those “who were living in these ruins” of Ezek 33:24 was a reflection of this situation. Also, eighty men from several regions of Judah brought grain offerings, incense even to the Jerusalem temple which might not be in good state (Jer 41:5).

From an economic standpoint, the Babylonians certainly needed to exploit the lands they conquered by way of plunder (see chapter 2.3 above). It was for the same reason that


13 Lipschits argues that “the people who remain in the land of Judah” is called “the poorest people of the land” by the various stages of the text formation. See Lipschits, The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem, 102–9, 113, 289–95.
metal objects such as gold, silver and bronze were taken away from the Jerusalem temple and brought to Babylon together with craftsmen and smiths (2 Kgs 25:13–17). Also, the main reason behind Nebuchadnezzar’s decision to move Judah’s administrative city to Tell en-Nasbeh was that there were olive oil and wine industries that were of great value to the Babylonian economy.

There is little doubt that the Babylonians treated the conquered Judah very much in the same way that they treated other conquered territories. Nebuchadnezzar was interested in maintaining or even increasing the existing practices of production although the destruction of Judah damaged his economy. One good case is Tell en-Nasbeh. Its site history of olive oil production goes back to the early 9th century BCE onwards (1 Kgs 15:22). The economic importance of Tell en-Nasbeh was protected by constructed walls in the 8th century BCE. Further fortifications were later carried out in the 6th century and continued to function as a defensive feature with the offset-inset wall. This suggests that olive oil even flourished during the Neo-Babylonian period.

Accordingly, the settlement in Tell en-Nasbeh continued to exist and even further increased. The estimated population of Tell en-Nasbeh reached between 800 and 1,000 dunams. This figure could be equalised to that of Jerusalem in the Judean kingdom period. However, the settlement of Tell en-Nasbeh demonstrated a rural form, which was in stark contrast to the urban life of Jerusalem. It was related to the outcome of a planned Babylonian policy of setting aside some of the rural highland areas for agricultural purposes. It was no more than a specialised centre for oil production in the Babylonian economic structure.

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16 Katz, “A Note on the Date of the ‘Great Wall’ of Tel en-Nesbeh,” 131–32.


4. Judah in the Neo-Babylonian and the Achaemenid periods

However, there was the opposite argument that the northern region of Jerusalem also underwent a more moderate decrease of approximately 60% from 1,150 dunams to 500 dunams.\(^{21}\) From more balanced archaeological results, the northern Judean hills offered two contrasting examples of research on the continuity or discontinuity in the settlement of rural areas. In each case, one should check the continuity and discontinuity of the rural settlement according to their correspondence to the pattern of the rural settlement from both the Iron Age and the Achaemenid period. Therefore, it might be reasonable to infer that the gradual impoverishment of the settlements in that region took place at the end of the 6\(^{th}\) and the beginning of the 5\(^{th}\) centuries. Since, at that time, Tell en-Nasbeh was withdrawn to the core of the region. This resulted in the renewed status of Jerusalem, due to economic and security concerns, during the Achaemenid period.

A similar archaeological situation in terms of imperial economy to Tell en-Nasbeh was observed in the region of Ammon. Many farms and small villages continued to exist in those areas, characterised by many wine presses and other agricultural installations.\(^{22}\) The results of Tell el-’Umeiri excavations demonstrated that a large area south of the capital Rabbath-Ammon was not destroyed by the Babylonians and even flourished throughout the Babylonian and Achaemenid periods.\(^{23}\) The Babylonian rulers built Tell el ’Umeiri in the Ammon area as the new administrative centre; it was similar to Tell en-Nasbeh in Judah.

Parallels to Tell en-Nasbeh can be made to El-Jib (historical Gibeon), Tell el Ful (historical Gibeah), Bethel, Horvat Zimri in the north of Jerusalem, Kh. er-Ras in the south of Jerusalem, and Kh. et-Tabaqa (historical Beth-Zur).\(^{24}\) El-Jib showed a stratum of settlement of the Babylonian period.\(^{25}\) Tell el Ful had a significant amount of pottery which was dated to the second half of the 6\(^{th}\) century.\(^{26}\) A conical seal portraying worship of a Babylonian deity

\(^{21}\) Lipschits, “Demographic Changes,” 356.


and the pottery group in Bethel belongs to the 6th century. Horvat Zimri exposed ceramic remains which were similar to styles of the late Iron Age. Kh. er-Ras offered sixteen winepresses with a treading part and collecting vat that were used from the late Iron Age to the Achaemenid time. Kh. et-Tabaqa also showed the almost identical pattern of the rural sites throughout the 6th century. Even the west site adjacent to Jerusalem, Ketef Hinnom showed the common potteries of the 6th century BCE although these finds could, at most, only attest to the limited existence of culture during the Babylonian period.

The above evidence supported the continued settlement at those sites in the years following the Babylonian invasion into Judah. Further, the burial pattern which was a distinctive feature of Judean culture was found in all of those sites. Especially, they were well known for wine production throughout their history (see chapter 2.2.2 above). Its production during the Babylonian period should be related to the wine production for imperial bureaucracies and armies. It reflected that organised economic and administrative activities existed in the Babylonian province of Judah.

With regard to administration, forty-two seal impressions with the word הָכִּים or with the vowel-letter omitted חכִּים should be noted. They were apparently used to designate wine or oil production which was dated to the Babylonian rule in the 6th century. More than 70% of

26 The storage capacity in Tell el Ful was 25,000 gallons of wine. See, James B. Pritchard, Winery, Defences, and Soundings at Gibeon (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), 1–27; Valkama, Judah in the Mid-Sixth Century BCE, 75–81.

27 Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 125.

28 Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 132–33; Valkama, Judah in the Mid-Sixth Century BCE, 100–1.

29 Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 134; Valkama, Judah in the Mid-Sixth Century BCE, 123–24.


32 Burial caves of this type are to be found nowhere else in Judah and her immediate environs. Irit Yezerski, “Burial-Cave Distribution and the Borders of the Kingdom of Judah toward the End of the Iron Age,” TA 26 (1999): 253–70.


34 Blenkinsopp, “Bethel in the Neo-Babylonian Period,” 96–97; Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 51; Valkama, Judah in the Mid-Sixth Century BCE, 231–34.

35 Lipschits, The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem, 149–50; Stern, Material Culture, 229, 247–49.
the total number of 42 seal impressions were found in Tell en-Nasbeh. This suggests the central position of the Babylonian province following the destruction of Jerusalem. Four additional seal impressions were also discovered in Jerusalem (10%), four in El-Jib (10%), two in Tell es Sultan (5%), and one in Ramat-Rahel (2%).

From archaeological finds at Babylonian Judah, it has been shown that a culture of the large majority of the population likely remained in Judah. Its continued material culture was considerably shown in the northern region of Jerusalem. To some degree, the west and the south of Jerusalem showed the common culture of Neo-Babylonia. The Babylonian Judean sites were related to the production of olive oil and wine which were of great affluence. Among them, Tell en-Nasbeh, replacing Jerusalem with the administrative and economic centre, led industrial work and contributed to the economy of Neo-Babylonia.

4.3 Settlement of Judean Cities in the Achaemenids

One of the Achaemenid foreign policies was to maximise the effectiveness and benefit that each subordinate could provide, as the Babylonian Empire had done. It promptly incited a process of resettlement in places ruined by the Babylonian raids. Therefore, the Achaemenids allowed Babylonian Judeans to let their locals return to their regions. This is reflected in the lists of returnees in Ezra 2:1–67 and Neh 7:6–68. Ezra stated that the whole accompanying numbers totalled 42,360, in addition to their 7,337 menservants and maid-servants, including 200 men and women singers (Ezra 2:64–65). Meanwhile, in Nehemiah, the whole assembly was 42,360, besides 7,337 menservants and maid-servants as well as 245 men and women singers (Neh 7:66–67).


Ezra 2 is dependent on Neh 7 for two main reasons. The first one is that in the continuation of the narrative the seventh month of Neh 7:72 forms an integral part of its context by the reference to the same month in 8:2. The second is that Ezra 2:68–69 represents a summarizing of Neh 7:69–71 rather than an expansion of Ezra. Williamson, Ezra, Nehemiah, 28–31, 268–69.

However, the actual computing number in all was 29,818 in Ezra 2 and 31,089 in Neh 7. It showed the slight difference in population numbers recorded in the respective lists. Besides, from a structural point of view, Ezra 2 and Neh 7 were mixed with the list counted by families (Ezra 2:3–19//Neh 7:8–24; Ezra 2:32–33//Neh 7:34–35) and the other list counted by towns (Ezra 2:20–29//Neh 7:25–33; Ezra 2:33–35//Neh 7:36–38). So, these lists in Ezra 2 and Neh 7 would be imposed upon diverse materials. It denotes that the resettlement together with the returnees continued to happen although such return was not the kind of large scale operation. This accorded with the imperial purpose to consolidate the economic prosperity in every conquered territory.

Another list in Neh 3:1–32 showed delegations to work on the walls of Jerusalem in Achaemenid Judah. In the list, one important find was the use of the term $lp. It generally represented “a district” or “work duty in the form of conscripted labour” (Neh 3: 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18). In every case, it formed part of the designation of an individual responsible for the repair of part of Jerusalem’s wall with the formula of personal name (PN) followed by geographical name (GN): “the leaders of the half district or the district of GN.” The GNs attached to the half districts included Jerusalem twice, Keilah in northwest of Kh. et-Tabaqa and Kh. et-Tabaqa. The GNs associated with whole districts were Beth Hakkerem in southwest of Jerusalem and Tell en-Nasbeh.

In terms of realm of $lp, it should be said that there were the administrative centres within the Judean territory. Jerusalem should be in charge of Jerusalem and its immediate vicinity. Tell en-Nasbeh commanded the northern region of Jerusalem. Gezer would control the west northern part of Jerusalem. Tell es Sultan would cover the entire plain of Tell es

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Sultan. Keilah might head the plain southwest of Jerusalem. And, Beth Hakkerem could cover the area south of Jerusalem to Tekoa. The rest of the south hilly area might belong to the direction of Kh. et-Tabqa.

Also, the list of cultic officials (Neh 11:25-36) would be a parallel to the returnees in the Jerusalem area and in the Tell en-Nasbeh region.

From the lists, one can unearth some repopulated cities in Achaemenid Judah. Approximately twenty cities were settled in: Bethlehem, Netophap, Tekoa, and Keilah in the southern Judean hills; Kirjath-Jearim, Geba and Bethel in the northern Judean hills; Jericho and Senaah in the eastern Judean hills; Lod and Ono in the north eastern Judean hills near the coastline. Jerusalem and its surrounding environs clearly regained a population. They showed a significant number of Achaemenid period finds such as being densely populated and several similar cisterns and farmsteads.

However, they included cities that were certainly outside Achaemenid Judah, such as Beersheba, Lachish, Dibon in the Jordan, Yekabzeel, Yeshua, and Moladah all of which were in Arabs, Beth-Pelet and Hazar-Shual both of which were near Beersheba, and Ziklag, Meconah, En-Rimmon, and Zorah all of which were in the Negev. So, it has been argued that these cities might be an idealized portrait of Judah rather than the reconstituted community of the Achaemenid period. Also, it has been claimed that the lists were probably compiled in the late Hellenistic, chiefly Hasmonaean period and represented the reality of that

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42 Descendents of former residents from some adjacent settlements are bunched into single units and counted. This applies for: Kiriath Yearim, Kephirah and Beeroth; Ramah and Geba; Bethel and Ai; Lod, Hadid and Ono. The agglomeration may indicate that as a consequence of intermarriage between families from these cities, clans from one area possessed legitimate land claims in another. For this reason, early Persian period administrators treated each unit as a single administrative subunit. Each unit would have consisted of two or more core villages of the pre-exilic period, their outlying hamlets and farmsteads, adjacent agricultural lands and pasturing areas, as well as the unclaimed land between them. Ziony Zevit, “Is there an Archaeological Case for Phantom Settlement in the Persian Period,” PEQ 141 (2009): 125–27.


44 Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 80-81.

time, around the 2nd century BCE. Especially, seven of the places appeared in the Books of Maccabees as important places in the history of the Hasmonaeans such as Beeroth in the northern Judean hills, Michmash in east of Bethel, and Hadid in west central of Jerusalem. However, it could be said that they might be unimportant but truly function in Achaemenid Judah, at least in the 5th century BCE. That was why it incorporates those places under Nehemiah.

The settlement in Achaemenid Judah can also be estimated by Yehud seal impressions. The inscribed seals may be broadly divided into three categories: the word בֵּית or with the vowel-letter omitted בַּית, which was dated from Babylonian rule in the 6th century, primarily from areas associated with the territory of Tell en-Nasbe before Jerusalem regained its place as the seat of the centre of Judah; the Aramaic toponym יְהוּד in the stamp impressions with or without the Aramaic official title מֵמָר; and a personal name which could be dated to sometime after 586 BCE when Judah became a sub-province within a satrapy of Neo-Babylonia in the Achaemenid period (Ezra 5:8).

These variant types can be classified into three chronologically defined groups according to the Paleography: Early (late 6th through 5th centuries BCE), Middle (4th and 3rd centuries BCE) and Late (2nd century BCE). From the viewpoint of the use of seals, they have been discovered in Jerusalem, Bethel, Tell en-Nasbeh, Tell el-Ful, Ramat Rahel, Tell es Sultan, Gezer, Horvat Zimri, El-Jib, Kh. et-Tabaqa, Kedef Hinnom, Mamilla in the City of David, Wadi Salim in the Jordan Valley, Tel Goren, Keilah, Kh. Er-ras, and Har Adar in west of Jerusalem. As under-exploited areas developed, populated cities expanded.

Also, numismatic evidence has given not only some indication of settlement but also of the restoration of economic business. It was not until the 6th and 5th centuries BCE that coinage was first introduced into the economic life of Judah in order to promote and maintain


trade, and to support the administrative taxation, although those coins were minted in Greece in the 6th century. There were Judean coins which were minted with the name of the governor (πρύτανα) or the priest (αρχιερέας). These were found in the City of David, Horvat Zimri, Ramat-Rahel, Tell Jemmeh in south of Gaza and Kh. et-Tabaqa, mainly in the 4th century.

From the archaeological finds of Achaemenid Judah, I have shown that a process of repopulation and resettlement was applied in places ruined by the Babylonians. Judean deportees in Babylon returned to their impoverished regions from which Jerusalem and its environs clearly regained a population. For Achaemenid benefit, the settlement in the Judean territory continued to develop throughout the Achaemenid period with the emergence of the administrative districts Jerusalem, Tell en-Nasbeh, Beth-Haccerem, Kh. et-Tabaqa, and Keilah under Nehemiah.

4.4 Judean Material Culture in the Achaemenids

Along with the demand of the Jerusalem temple reconstruction (the Book of Haggai), the Achaemenids certainly carried out the policy to revive Jerusalem. It is because Jerusalem would have available all the political, economical, and cultural systems necessary to survive as an administrative centre for the empire. Moreover, there was a transit road in Jerusalem from Sais or Memphis in Egypt to the coastline of Tyro and Damascus, encountering the King’s road of Sardis-Susa (see chapter 2.3.2 above).

Nonetheless, the settlement in Jerusalem in the early Achaemenid period was quite small. Some archaeological evidence for its settlement can be found only on the eastern slope of Jerusalem and its immediate environs. Ketef Hinnom continued in use throughout the 6th

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52 Wright states that the city wall in Achaemenid Jerusalem created military space (Neh 2). Wright, “A Tale of Three Cities,” 42–47. However, Grabbe argues that Jerusalem was not in charge of an imperial garrison. Lester L. Grabbe, “Was Jerusalem a Persian Fortress,” in Grabbe and Knoppers, eds., Exile and Restoration Revised, 128–37.

53 Barstad, “Haggai Among the Prophets,” 269–70.
The Relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai

The relationship between temple and agriculture in the Book of Haggai

Kh. er-Ras in the west adjacent to Jerusalem had agricultural installations and ceramic remains. To the north, Wadi Salim showed agricultural units with terraces.

As the Achaemenids intended Jerusalem to re-establish its status as the administrative centre of the province, the population of Jerusalem increased and its settlements were expanded. The settlement formed a rural settlement which grew on the level of agricultural farms. It was quite different to its settlement in the kingdom period. It denoted that Jerusalem ensured the enlarged areas for cultivation and that Jerusalem’s immediate vicinities got densely populated.

At Beth Hakkerkem and Rogem Gannim in the southwest of Jerusalem, vineyards were there. Twenty-two stamped and incised jar handles have been found. In the farmsteads of Nahal Refa’im in south of Jerusalem which was well suited to viticulture, a number of winepresses of the basic treading floor-and-vat type that could be associated with the production of wine have been uncovered. Plastered tanks and storage caves are also seen.

At the north site adjacent to Jerusalem, also, evidence for a repopulation supportive to the agricultural economy of Jerusalem has been unearthed. Nebi Samwil in the north of Jerusalem which was on the main road leading to Jerusalem from the northern region continued to yield fine remains of the Achaemenids. Seventeen stamp impressions are discovered.

From a total of 412 יָדִיעַ seal impressions dated to the Achaemenid period, 170 seal impressions (41.3%) found in Jerusalem and its immediate environs reflect its reviving economic businesses, instead of יָדִיעַ seal impressions.

60 Magen and Har-Even argue that, among 17 stamp impressions, fourteen are marked in the form of the lion which are regarded as the official impression of the provincial administration. Thus, they claim that this site should be identified with Tell en-Nasbeh. See Magen and Har-Even, “Persian Period Stamp Impressions,” 38–58.
In the area surrounding Jerusalem, also, Ramat Rahel was densely populated. Ramat Rahel reveals a significant number of Achaemenid finds.\(^{62}\) It was quite likely that the west site adjacent to Jerusalem was restored for an administrative function in Jerusalem’s agricultural economy. From 412 יְם seal impressions, 194 impressions (47.1%) are unearthed at Ramat Rahel.\(^{63}\) The exploitation of Ramat Rahel definitely correlated to the sponsored measures by which Jerusalem and the Judean economy suddenly grew. Ramat Rahel took for granted the restoration of its administrative role.

Along the Dead Sea, Tel Goren was evidently expanded due to a trade route.\(^{64}\) 38 impressions being dated to the early Achaemenid Judah are discovered.\(^{65}\) Industrial installation such as ovens, large clay containers and pottery vessels verified the incessant economic activities in Tel-Goren.\(^{66}\) It attested to a special industry of manufacturing perfumes, an industry long associated with this locale.

Further settlements were also gradually renewed in the area from Bethlehem to Kh. et-Tabaqa.\(^{67}\) Especially, the numismatic evidence of Kh. et-Tabaqa was of great importance in their economic structure.\(^{68}\) The reservoir for coins at Kh. et-Tabaqa supports the notion that this place served as an economic centre in this district from the late 6th century.

The re-settlement at Tell es Sultan was quite small. Yet, a variety of remains which are found at Jerusalem and its immediate environs have been discovered.\(^{69}\) It indicates that this site was involved in economic activities.\(^{70}\)

Obviously, the gradual increase of Jerusalem and its surroundings affected the gradual decrease of the district of Tell en-Nasbeh. It was a result of the reduced status of Tell en-

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\(^{64}\) Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 157–60.

\(^{65}\) Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 144–45.


\(^{68}\) Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 153–57.


The relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai

Nasbeh as an economic and administrative centre during the Achaemenid period. Indeed, the process of depopulation and settlement decline in the Benjamin region was closely linked to the increase in population of the Jerusalem region.\textsuperscript{71} From the Achaemenid period onwards, the settlement in Tell el-Ful, Bethel, and El-Jib stagnated and decreased, and was ultimately desolate by the 5\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{72}

According to settlements and population during the Achaemenid period, the number of settlements was up to 125 sites and the whole population grew to 826 dunams.\textsuperscript{73} At this time, the population of Jerusalem was estimated at around 110 dunams.\textsuperscript{74} And, the size of Jerusalem and its vicinities may have reached approximately 726 dunams, almost 88\% of the population. A very high population density in Jerusalem and its vicinities would provide evidence for the administrative activity of Jerusalem in the Judean agricultural economy.

From the cultural materials of Achaemenid Judah, it has been demonstrated that Jerusalem and its surroundings were restored from an economic and administrative point of view. In particular, sites of the south, the southwest, and the north of Jerusalem were highly specialised in the agricultural economic structure. Tell es Sultan and Tel-Goren were obviously engaged in the Jerusalem agricultural structure. Also, Kh. et-Tabaqa supported the Jerusalem economic administration in terms of finance. However, the restored economic ability of Jerusalem led to the economic contraction of Tell en-Nasbeh.

4.5 Political Reality of Achaemenid Judah

In the Achaemenid administrative structure, Judah was merely placed as a province in the satrapy of “Beyond the River.” Judah was nothing but a tributary subordinate that should be loyal to imperial taxation. It is related to Judah’s loss of solid barrier against Egypt. From Cambyses’s conquest, Egypt became one of the imperial colonies. Afterwards, Judah was

\textsuperscript{71} Zorn, “Tell en-Naşbeh and the Problem,” 413–50.

\textsuperscript{72} Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 122–32.

\textsuperscript{73} Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 224–33.

\textsuperscript{74} Carter, The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period, 288; Oded Lipschits, “Achaeological Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.,” in Lipschits and Oeming, eds., Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period, 32. Meanwhile, Finkelstein estimates the area to consist of 60 dunams. This is less than half of the size that Carter and Lipschits advocate. See Finkelstein, “Territorial Extent and Demography,” 44–45.
placed as a politically insignificant province in an imperial political structure.

The geopolitical strategy between Egypt and the Mesopotamian Empires in Judean history began with the king Sargon II (721–705 BCE) in Neo-Assyria. From the time when Judah became one of their subject kingdoms, Judah formed a virtually uninterrupted Neo-Assyrian block.75 Following Sargon II’s offensive in southern Palestine, Egypt fomented a revolt in Judah. It led to Sennacherib’s (704–681 BCE) facing an Egyptian army in support of anti-Sennacherib rebels in 701 (704–681 BCE). Egypt’s repeated meddling in Judah provoked Esarhaddon to extend Assyrian activity into Egypt itself (680–669 BCE). And, in 671 BCE, the Assyrian armies captured Memphis. However, the Assyrian control over Egypt, with its basically fragmented political system, was no more than the defeat of Egypt’s Napatan rulers.76

When the Neo-Babylonians defeated the Assyrians, they took control of the territories in a way comparable to the way the Assyrian regime had. The Egyptian border now stood against the Neo-Babylonians. It was very important for Nebuchadnezzar (604–562 BCE) to tighten Babylonian power in the Levant if it was not to lose that region to Egypt.77 Nevertheless, Egypt’s meddling in Judah continued into the Nebuchadnezzar reign. In the course of tension between the two sides, Jerusalem was captured and deported by Nebuchadnezzar’s campaigns (2 Kgs 24–25). Along the desert frontiers, Egyptian supported opposition was driven out. As such, Judean fate had been dominated by the geopolitical tactics between Egypt and the Mesopotamian Empires.

Judean geopolitical tactics of the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians were defeated. During Cambyses’s conquest in the Persian period, Egypt was taken and even placed on the imperial border against Greece. The Egyptian hegemony over Judah was completely broken. When Darius took the throne, Egypt annoyed him with the repeated revolts.78 These revolts undoubtedly affected Judah. Unlike the reality, Judah still took for granted her geopolitical manoeuvre at the symmetry between Egypt and the Achaemenids.

Amid the recurring Egyptian rebellions against Darius, Judah was also ensnared by the fanciful hope that Zerubbabel of the Davidic line would reign (see chapter 3.1.2 above). The

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78 Hist. III, 14–15, IV, 166; Ael., NA 12.21; DB II: §21 in Brosius, *The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I*, 32.
attempt to restore the Davidic monarchy happened for the benefit of Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah. This plot itself undeniably considered the uprising against Darius. This will be evidenced in the exegesis on the Book of Haggai (Hag 1:4, 9; 2:4, 6–7).

Being afraid of any potential uprisings in Egypt or Egypt’s meddling in its surroundings, Darius stationed imperial garrison troops at Beersheba, Kadesh Barnea, Arad, and Tell Kheleifah (in the Phoenicians). Fortified military posts already let the Arabs enjoy an amicable relationship with Darius. Starting from Cambyses’s campaign against Egypt in 525 BCE, the Arabs had proven a very reliable patron to the empire with supplying the necessary reinforcements to the Cambyses’s army. Lachish was evidently established as an administrative centre to respond to the changes in this area.

Nevertheless, when Darius acceded his throne to Xerxes I (486–465 BCE), Egypt certainly revolted again. It was led by Megabyzus who was the leader of an army in an Egyptian army fighting against the Athenians and their allies. This Egyptian uprising again stirred up the atmosphere of revolt in Judah (Ezra 4:13, 19–20) and soured Achaemenid attitudes towards the province Judah. Judah needed to be transformed as a reliable dependant for the policy of the Achaemenid administration intent on tightening control in their western territories. Steps taken by Ezra and Nehemiah would fit this sort of policy.

Returning to the place of the Judean revolt in Darius’s time, we would do well to pay particular attention to the Book of Haggai. It is because the dates described in Haggai all took place in the second year of Darius. At that time, Darius planned the campaign against the Egyptian revolts. From an economic and military point of view, Judah had to provide daily provisions to imperial armies passing nearby or through the Judean territory.

From Judah’s standpoint, this was the ideal time for Judah to show committed loyalty
to Darius.\textsuperscript{88} With this success, Judah could be considered significant to Darius’s security. It is quite likely that small states are even more dependent upon an ally than strong states.\textsuperscript{89} With a keen eye on exploiting this arrangement, Darius commanded the Jerusalem reconstruction business. He certainly applied the temple fiscal administration to the rebuilt Jerusalem temple. Accordingly, Judah was to make the rebuilt Jerusalem temple function as a nucleus for the Judean flourishing agriculture. In Darius’s campaign against Egypt, the sole thing that Judah must do was to produce the required inventory for the imperial armies. Judah could then be assured of an imperial patron as guaranteed.

Irrespective of the imperial demand, during Darius’s march on Egypt, Judah plotted the uprising with Zerubbabel. This allegation in Hag 1:4 and 9 was caused by the imperial policy to allow for the interests of local groups by appointing a local royal lineage to its representative. In the pressing time of the Jerusalem temple rebuilding, the people of Judah had an illusion of Zerubbabel in the Davidic lineage who was appointed as the governor of Judah. The status of Zerubbabel was enough to incite the desire for the restoration of the Davidic kingdom. With Zerubbabel, the people attempted to change the political status of Judah to a self-independent entity or at least as a semi-independent state in the imperial political system.

From the above survey, I have shown that Judah, with lost military tactics of virtually solid barrier against Egypt, became politically insignificant in the Achaemenid political structure. With the agricultural production ability of Judah, however, Judah remained as a vehicle for taxation within the imperial system. For that purpose, Darius deployed the Jerusalem restoration along with the temple rebuilding as a fiscal administrative centre. In accord with this development, Judah had to secure imperial patronage. However, meddling in the recurring Egyptian rebellions against Darius, Judah revolted against Darius with Zerubbabel of the Davidic line, seeking change in Judah’s political status (Hag 1:4 and 9).

\textsuperscript{88} Barstad, “Haggai Among the Prophets,” 267–68.

4.6 Economic Reality of Achaemenid Judah

Agriculture in the Judean economy was of great importance. She always ensured reliable sources of food, sustained economic stability and enriched treasuries with the more agricultural produce. The resettlement of Judah by Darius aimed at the restoration and extension of cultivated areas that Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed in order to improve Judean agriculture. In the wake of the imperial campaigns against Egyptian rebellion and even territorial expansion, Darius sought Judean alliances with an adequate partner.

Thus, it would not be expected that Judah would not face a problem in the general harvest that she produced so much agricultural produce than she could use. In the second year of Darius, however, Judah had a harvest shortfall, where the people of Judah ate their meals but never felt full, nor could their thirst be quenched when they drank, and they put on clothes but nobody could get warm (Hag 1:6, 9–11; 2:15–19). They appeared disappointed as their daily provisions did not even meet their needs.

The Book of Haggai further depicts erratic climates that cause the Judean agricultural breakdown. The heavens withheld the dew (בֵּר, Hag 1:10–11), and the land inevitably withheld all its produce (צֶרֶךְ). In a drought, the produce of grain (דָּשִׁים), wine (ֹּדֶחֶת), and oil (צְארָם), which were the major crops in Judah, completely spoiled (Hag 1:6, 11; 2:19; Joel 2:24; Zech 8:12; 10:1; 14:17). The prolonged lack of rainfall also attacked all tree-fruit such as vines, figs, pomegranates, palms, and apples (Hag 2:16; Joel 1:11–13; Isa 17:10–11; Jer 5:24; 14:7–22; Ezek 34:26–27). People and animals suffered affliction too (Hag 1:11).

Hail (דְּרָב) also severely affected the crop yields (Hag 2:17; Exod 9:18–35; Isa 28:2, 17; Ps 18:13; 78:47, 48). When the hail was heavy and possibly accompanied by strong winds, it could completely ravage the harvest (Hag 2:17; Josh 10:17). At the agricultural harvest time, storms could lead to great loss of meager harvest (Hag 1:9).

In addition, agricultural produce was damaged by crop diseases of “blight” (שָׁפַג) and “mildew” (חֵלֶב, Hag 2:11). Blight meant scorching or burning of leaves by one of the crop diseases, symptoms of which appeared with withering and cessation of growth. It was caused by fungus attacking cereals, mostly barley (Gen 41:6). Mildew always followed the disease

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91 Kessler regards hail (דְּרָב) as a plague in the area of the agricultural economic activities. Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 207–8.
of “blight” when referring to a plant disease (Hag 2:17; Deut 28:22; 1 Kgs 8:37; 2 Chr 6:28; Amos 4:9). Mildew was also a fungal disease that produced spores which appeared as a whitish growth on the host surface. It prevented plants from ripening properly. The common symptom was mould on stems and leaves, the effects of which changed the colour from yellow to red. It could cause a loss of up to 30% of the yield by reducing the number of kernels and shivering the grain, resulting in low weight and protein content.

Haggai’s near contemporary, Joel deals with units of the locust attack that brings out the economic disaster. Several items such as זָגָר, חוֹר, קָלָי, and חוֹזְר appearing in Joel 1:4 and 2:25 were references to different stages in the development of the locust. Locusts destroyed the fields for grains, wine, and oil (Joel 1:10–13).

In all disasters which could happen in an agricultural area, Judah was confronted with a breakdown in the agricultural economy. Lack of food is drastically reviewed in Haggai. There was little doubt that Judah could not create the inventory for Darius’s campaign against Egypt. In the bigger imperial economic system, undoubtedly Judah could not send olive produce to Tel Miqne for olive oil production nor vines to Ashdod and Ashkelon for the wine production. Judean responsibility for supplies could not serve both a military force and the interregional trade market. No benefits could create with shortages of basic products.

The economic breakdown of Judah could be verified by minted coins in Judah. The standard Judean coin weighed relatively less than other coins in the satrapy of “Beyond the River.” This represented the economic difficulties of Judah, for the weight of coin was a marker of the value of coin. In the level of high inflation, the people could not keep up with costs (Hag 1:6). What is worse, any shortage of daily provisions led to increased demand, and subsequently a rise in value. Hence, the people were forced to pay a high price, which, in turn, led to a high cost of living. Imperial taxes that people should pay were already beyond the

92 Blight is affected by the hot east wind that sometimes blows across Palestine from the desert. Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age, 158–59.

93 Mildew is caused by humidity winds. Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age Israel, 159–60.


95 דָּלָי is the first stage; בּוּזָר refers to the second and third stages; and צָעָר refers to the fourth and fifth stages. Other words are בּוּזָר (Exod 10:4, 12–14; Lev 11:22; Nah 3:15; Job 39:20) and בּוּזָר (Deut 28:42). Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age Israel, 154–58.

96 On the capacity to mass-produce olives of the Judean Shephela, see Finkelstein, “The Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh,” 169–87; Gitin, “The Neo-Assyrian Empire,” 77–103. See also chapter 2.3.2 above.

limits of their capacities.

There is one of the resulting complaints in Neh 5:1–5. The first group, who owned no land, was dependent on wages from labour of whatever sort and could no longer support their families. Meanwhile, some of landholders mortgaged their lands, their vineyards and their houses in order to buy grains because of the shortage of the produce. Other landholders needed to borrow silver for the king’s tribute upon their land and vineyards. When worst came to worst, this burden resulted in debt. And then, those who had already mortgaged their lands or had a heap of debts could never afford to get their land back. In some cases, this led to their children being sold into debt-slavery. The heavy debts also let tenant-peasants sell their allotments and then placed themselves as slaves for royal, temple, or private lands.

Above, I have examined that during Darius’s reign, drought in Judah led to famine (Hag 1:11). The concurrent erratic climate of hail (paque) and crop diseases of blight (kâtâ) and mildew (qarâ) led to a breakdown in the Judean agricultural economy (Hag 1:6, 9–11; 2:16–19). It was quite the opposite of what Judah had expected and hoped for the looming campaign against Egypt. Inevitably, the cash commodities of oil (()[') and wine ([') lost their competitiveness (Hag 1:11; 2:19). Also, Judah’s economic status was evidently downgraded in this crisis. As a result, Judah was not only politically insignificant but also economically poor.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed in some detail the cultural and economic conditions in Judah in the Neo-Babylonian and the Achaemenid periods. My study is above all based on archaeological excavation reports of sites from those periods.

In my presentation, I do not deny that Judah was devastated during the Neo-Babylonian military campaigns. Nor do I ignore that several deportations took place (2 Kgs 24–25; Jer 39–40; 52:15–16). My main point is that destruction and deportations occurred mainly in Jerusalem. Many Judeans left behind by the Babylonians took up agricultural industries as their tasks (2 Kgs 25:12; Jer 39:10; 52:16). Losing the south and west borders closest to Egypt, however, converted Judah into a politically less important province.

A large majority of the population still remained in Judah throughout the Babylonian

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period. Archaeological excavations particularly in the north of the Judean hills confirm beyond doubt a continued agricultural activity of considerable size. Tell en-Nasbeh, the new central administration of Neo-Babylonian Judah, supervised the thriving production of olive oil, wine, and other agricultural products. Tell el-Ful, Bethel, El-Jib, and Kh. et-Tabaqa supported the Tell en-Nasbeh agricultural economic administration. Clearly, Judah after the fall of Jerusalem continued to accumulate wealth for their Neo-Babylonian, and later Achaemenid overlords.

In order to maximise booty and taxes from Judah, Darius supported the Jerusalem restoration. Jerusalem was, after all, the administrative and economic centre of the province. Soon, the imperial policy of resettlement and repopulation followed throughout the Judean territory. As Jerusalem recovered, its hinterland was quickly resettled for agricultural purposes. Ramat Rahel, Kh. et-Tabaqa, Tell es Sultan, and Tel-Goren co-operated with Jerusalem’s economic administration.

To judge from the Biblical accounts (Ezra 2 and Neh 3 and 7) as well as from the archaeological records, the size and population of the above regions at the end of the 6th century were small. However, throughout the period, populations steadily increased. Around the 5th century BCE, they would reach a population of as much as 20,000.

In relation to Judean reality in the second year of Darius (520 BCE), from the Book of Haggai we learn that Judah attempted to seek the restoration of the Davidic kingdom with Zerubbabel being granted the title “the governor of Judah” (Hag 1:4, 9; 2:4, 6–7). However, the plan to build this dynasty through Zerubbabel never developed beyond delusive hope.

To make matters worse, Judah continued to encounter an almost complete breakdown of the agricultural systems (Hag 1:6, 11; 2:18) due to the repeated instances of drought and hail (Hag 1:10; 2:17). Crop diseases like blight and mildew (Hag 2:17), and attacks from locusts (Joel 1:4 and 2:25) also led to a breakdown of the Judean agricultural economy. Judah remained economically weak.

5.0 Background

In this chapter, I will do an exegesis of Hag 1:1–15 in which I will examine how the province of Judah was constituted in the imperial economic structure implemented by Darius. In the second year of his reign (520 BCE), Darius charged Judah with rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. Through orders to rebuild the Jerusalem temple, Darius wanted to expand the imperial economy.

A quick reading of Hag 1:1–15 reveals that the text includes several types of prophetic words. In this investigation, I will not discuss the intricate questions of redactional layers on the Book of Haggai. Rather, I shall investigate the historical perspective that Haggai communicates. My exegesis of the text will emphasise the political alliance established by Darius with Judah to expand and consolidate the Achaemenid Empire.

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5.1 An Exegesis of Hag 1:1–15: Crop Failure and Temple Rebuilding

Hag 1:1

בשנה שבעת לדריוו המלך בחדש השמיני בום缺点 את החר
היה בבריהוה בריחהו חמצא אלירבבל מושאלאיאל פחד יהוה
ואליעיהות בריהורפר אליהוה הגנים לא🥣

In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of YHWH came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest saying,

The opening verse, beginning with the regnal year of Darius, gives the month and the day of month. The text is set in the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month. In Haggai, Darius is commonly understood as referring to Darius I (522–486 BCE), therefore, the year described by the opening verse of Haggai can be identified as circa 520 BCE. The importance of this specific date is that it emphasises the historical and social context in which Haggai should be understood: the second year of Darius’s reign.

Widespread uprisings surrounded the rise of Darius and extended into the first and second years after Darius acceded to the throne, characterising the historical and social setting of Haggai. Among the rebellions, Babylon’s and Egypt’s repeated revolts posed the greatest threats to Darius. Babylon was the centre of the Empire, and Egypt occupied the key role position on the western border of the Empire. Accordingly, their uprisings could strongly affect their immediate environs.

During this time of unrest, Darius realised the importance of securing the allegiance of subordinate provinces, however economically and politically small or weak. Darius allied

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2 According to the apparatus of BHS, the LXX adds λέγων εἶπς (saying) after דִּיצָת (cf. Hag 2:1–2). Other Greek versions inserted only δή (also). However, this adjustment is unnecessary because the Hebrew text makes grammatical sense as it is.

3 The date, being both the first of the month and a Sabbath (Amos 8:5; Isa 1:13, 14) may point to a wordplay between Haggai’s name הָגָאי and the Hebrew word festival (נִשָּׂא). Petersen, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 44–45; Verhoef, The Book of Haggai and Malachi, 49–50; Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 114–115.


5 See chapter 2.1.2 and chapter 4.5 above.
with small provinces nearby for the control of Babylon. He also asked Judah to be loyal to the empire when faced with another more dangerous uprising in Egypt, which was to play a crucial role in the western border of the empire. This request from Darius of Judah corresponded with the divine command that Judah rebuild the temple.

Precisely in the second year of Darius (520 BCE), the issue of the Jerusalem temple reconstruction came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel the governor (זְרֻבבֶּאל הָגָאי) and Joshua the high priest (יְשׁוּעַ הַנּוֹטֵל), which is commonly used to introduce the word of YHWH delivered by a prophet to an audience. As one can see, three important elements of this introductory formula are an addresser, an addressee and a commissary (also Mal 1:1).

With regard to the formula, of particular interest are imperial letters, which gave administrative instructions and royal commands to local authorities. It is likely that in the imperial communication system, the great king (addresser) conveyed his orders through his commissioners, the satraps (commissary), to every representative (addressee) of every region in the satrapy (Esth 3:8, 12). This is likely because a regular and trustworthy flow of communication from the royal centres to the local administrative centres would have been done with consideration for the economic and military implications.

Given this application, the introductory formula in the Book of Haggai may demonstrate a connection to that of imperial administrative letters. In a Darius administrative letter, Haggai’s promulgation has a political affiliation, which further functions to convey YHWH’s assurance to Darius’s work.

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These verses demonstrate that YHWH summoned Darius to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. Without giving information regarding the date of their imperial commissary, Darius formally sanctioned Zerubbabel as the governor (הצֶּרְעַבָּךְ) and Joshua as the high priest (כֹּהֵן הָגִּיסָה) for the temple rebuilding work. Likewise, YHWH only revealed the strategy for restoring the temple to his chosen builders, Darius, Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest, by means of a prophet’s promulgation.

Archaeological evidence of royal building inscriptions indicates that generally temple-building or rebuilding was a responsibility assigned to kings by their gods. Once a temple was dedicated, the king’s status as his god’s earthly vice-regent would be reaffirmed, and a long and prosperous reign would be promised to him by his god.

However, with a slight variation, this verse indicates that in the name of YHWH Darius commissioned Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest to accomplish the temple reconstruction that Cyrus had granted to rebuild. In this context, Darius is to be seen as YHWH’s earthly partner and the beneficiary of a prosperous reign. In a similar vein, both Zerubbabel and Joshua become authorised co-operators or assistants of Darius as secondary beneficiaries.

Zerubbabel, a son of Shealtiel is in the Davidic line with monarchic aspirations. In view of his royal heritage, Zerubbabel’s authority to exercise leadership in the Jerusalem temple rebuilding project is sufficient for recognition by his people. As an imperial administrator, Zerubbabel’s task is to seek and secure loyalty from the province by taking advantage of locally royal status.

The function and the status of Zerubbabel may demonstrate a correspondence with

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10 DCH, Vol. 6, 676. Pedaiah is a son of Jekoniah in 1 Chr 3:19, whereas Zerubbabel is a son of Jekoniah in Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2; Ezra 3:2, 8; 5:2 and Neh 12:1. Japhet, “Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel: Against the Background of the Historical and Religious Tendencies of Ezra-Nehemiah,” 71; Avigad, Bullae and Seals, 9–31.

11 DCH, Vol. 2, 364–70. The term צֶּרוּבָבָךְ (הצֶּרְעַבָּךְ) also appears in Lev 21:10; Num 35:25, 28, 32; Josh 20:6; 2 Kgs 12:11; 22:4, 8; 2 Chr 34:9. These passages refer to the pre-exilic period, but the dating of these texts is problematic. Mostly, they would be considered to be a postexilic term that replaces the earlier כֹּהֵן (priest) and הבָּבֶר (the chief priest). Berquist, Judaism in Persia’s Shadow, 64.


13 Zerubbabel appears in Haggai without the title בָּבֶר (Hag 1:12; 2:23), as בָּבֶר of Judah (Hag 2:21) and by his name alone (Hag 2:4). Jeconiah, Judah’s last king has seven sons including Shealtiel and Pedaiah (1 Chr 3:16–19). Pedaiah’s lineage receives further mention in Chronicles, where Zerubbabel is listed as Pedaiah’s son.

that of Nehemiah, the governor appointed by the empire in the following century (Neh 5:14, 15, 18; 12:26). As Nehemiah showed his faithful loyalty to the Jerusalem wall rebuilding (Neh 1–6), so Zerubbabel, in all probability as a representative of Darius, should serve to facilitate the temple rebuilding. When viewed from this parallel with Nehemiah (Neh 5:3–4), it is evident that Zerubbabel should also steward the imperial taxation system.

The other representative is Joshua. All references to Joshua in the Book of Haggai identify him as a son of Jehozadak being sent into exile and as הֵכַל הָתוֹלָה (Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2,4). Among the usages of the term הֵכַל הָתוֹלָה in the Hebrew Bible, one strikingly interesting case can be found in הֵכַל הָתוֹלָה Hilkiah from the time of the reign of Josiah in the monarchical period (2 Kgs 12:11; 22:4, 8; 23:4; 2 Chr 34:9). Hilkiah as the high priest was in charge of financial tasks with regard to the repair of the temple of YHWH. In addition, Hilkiah had a responsibility for teaching the book of Law which was found in the time of restoring the temple (2 Kgs 22). Consequently, the application of the term to Joshua might represent a continuation of this understanding: there is little doubt that the repair and maintenance of the temple were central responsibilities of Joshua as the high priest in the Book of Haggai.

In the temple administration of the financial strategy of the empire, also, it is undeniable that the high priest was appointed as the temple administrator. In the Jerusalem temple, which was to be restored, his duties could include the management of the temple properties and the supervision of temple personnel. In the time of Nehemiah, Eliaship the high priest took charge of properties and people in the Jerusalem temple, although Nehemiah re-sorted out the temple organisation (Neh 13:6–31).

Sometimes, the temple administrator would act in the company of the governor as the

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15 The genealogy in 1 Chr 5:29-41 lists Joshua as a descendant of Aaron and as the grandson of Seraiah, chief priest (ךְָּשֵׁנֶּה) during the fall of Jerusalem. His title in Haggai is the same as in Zech 3:1, 8; 6:11. The title is omitted in Zech 3:3, 6, and 9. Ezra and Nehemiah mention him simply as a priest (Ezra 3:2, 8; 5:2; 10:18; Neh 7:7; 12:26; probably also 12:1).

general manager of the temple. In this capacity, the high priest was the other representative with administrative authority in the temple. This did not mean, though, that the authority of the high priest in the Jerusalem temple would assume a theocratic governing structure in the province Judah. Rather, the status of Joshua the high priest was no more than an imperial delegate to efficiently serve the authority of the imperial political structure.

From Hag 1:1, one should note that, in his second year of Darius the Jerusalem temple reconstruction was assigned in Judah, in the name of YHWH. For this work, Darius employed Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest as the helpers. This task of rebuilding the Jerusalem temple needed to be expedited. For the rebuilt Jerusalem temple would then enable the production and storage of the substantial provisions required by Darius’s campaign against Egyptian revolts. Judah was forcibly committed to display its reliable allegiance. In doing this well, Judah would receive the guarantee from Darius.

Hag 1:2

Thus said YHWH of hosts, “this people say the time has not come yet for the house of YHWH to be rebuilt.”

This verse certainly reflects the response of the people in Judah although there is no description of the prophet proclaiming the word of YHWH to the people. However, it is unquestionable that the people had been called upon to rebuild the temple, though indirectly. The people here mean the rest of the people, all unnamed except Zerubbabel and Joshua. They said that this was not the time to rebuild the temple. Irrespective of the command being supported by the name of YHWH, the people neglected the edict of Darius to rebuild the temple (also Ezra 6:1–12).

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17 See chapter 3.2.2 above. See also Bongenaar, The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple, 6–33.


19 According to the LXX and the Syriac that read the phrase א"מש ת, which means “it has (not yet) come now,” BHS suggests the correction ל"מש ת (a perfect tense) rather than ל"מש ת (a active participle form) to avoid the repetition of “time.” This adjustment would be grammatically right but it is not necessary because similar grammatical usage of ל"מש ת is also found in elsewhere; for example, “at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water” (מש ת, Gen 24:11).
It is informative to reflect back on the charge given by Darius to Zerubbabel and Joshua to rebuild the temple. In light of the genealogies of both leaders their inherited authority was evident to the people, but their responsibility to exercise their leadership over the temple rebuilding was questioned. Hag 1:2 clearly establishes the dramatic conflict that runs through the Book of Haggai: the people neglect to rebuild the temple in disobedience to the word of YHWH.

Concerning the phrase “the time has come” (אֲשֶׁר נָעַר), a recent eschatological viewer has reworked the old concept of the monarchical ideology, adapting motifs from the monarchical period Zion psalms and the יִהְיֶה יִשָׁב Psalms. He argues that, although the Book of Haggai does not make any messianic claims, it certainly advances a theological compromise to acknowledge the realities of the demolition of the Empire and YHWH’s control on Judah (Hag 2: 6–9). In support of this position, he notes one case in the Cylinder inscription of Merodachbaladan in which a date for restoration is already set at the time of destruction (אֲשֶׁר נָעַר). He further argues that at the time when a deity is pacified, some sorts of signs are revealed to instruct the selected king to restore the destroyed temple (Hag 2:20–23).

In this argument, the time to rebuild the Jerusalem temple should be delayed because the dissipation of YHWH’s anger is not yet evident nor is his return to Jerusalem imminent. However, no support for the idea that the reconciliation of YHWH is pertinent to the temple restoration can be found in the Book of Haggai. The item נָעַר in Haggai should be understood within the context of the contemporary events as violent crises prompted the intervention of the prophet.

Focusing on the sixth month of the year should take into consideration the actual agricultural calendar. In relation to the early Israelite calendar, the Gezer Calendar, the

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sixth month appears to have extended from the middle of August to the beginning of September, when grapes, olives, figs and pomegranates were being harvested. Chronologically, the produce of grains, such as wheat and barley, would already have been reaped and the harvest of fruits would be approaching.

It would have been difficult for the people to furnish the temple rebuilding with the required wood and bricks, not to mention forced labour during a harvest time. Yet, from an economic point of view, this intermediary season would not have been the appropriate time to rebuild the temple either. Instead, it would have been the very time to reap the harvest which might be used to pay their mandatory taxes in the newly established imperial administration, not to mention to meet their needs for daily provisions.

In this view, the understanding of the appropriate time or sapiential reasoning for the reconstruction is revealed by the reflection of the phrase אֵה לְָיָן אֵנָא in which the word אֲנָא is followed by a genitival infinitive construct (Hag 1:2, 4), such as: “it was still day, it was not the time to gather in the flocks” (Gen 29:7; see also Eccl 3:2–8). This grammar suggests that the agricultural community, which is mainly composed of the non-exiled, is responsible for rejecting YHWH’s calls to rebuild the temple. The reason for their resistance seems to be that, as landowners, they already take charge of the land’s economy (Hag 2:4). Thus they prioritise economic profits over rebuilding the Jerusalem temple.

The above argument supposes the conflicts over land tenure issues or political allegiances between the exiled and the non-exiled. However, the Book of Haggai is never intended to incite conflict between the two groups. Moreover, Haggai accuses the people of being more obsessed with their desired project than their agricultural harvest.

24 This calendar has been dated as early as around 925 BCE. Young, “The Style of the Gezer Calendar,” 362–75.

25 The agricultural seasons correspond to the solar year and depend on temperature, precipitation, and similar factors, all of which influence the daily life of the Israelite farmer (Gen 45:6; Exod 34:21; Ruth 2:23; Num 13:20; 2 Sam 16:1; Isa 24:13; Jer 40:10). Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age, 33–37.


29 Haggai intentionally underplays divisions within the community in order to present a vision of a community unified in its opposition to the rebuilding of the temple. Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 140–48, 164, 203–6.
According to Hag 1:3–4, the people enjoyed the panelled houses which were provided during the construction of the temple and palace in Jerusalem. At the specific moment of temple rebuilding, their main leader, Zerubbabel, who was fundamentally involved in the political, economical, and cultural systems, called up a dazzling promise for Judah. The people positively expected that YHWH would restore the Davidic dynasty and ensure its political stability and economic prosperity, as had been the case with David. However, the Judean political reality under the Achaemenid power was nothing but a rebellion, which threatened the destruction of Judah.

Opposing the people’s argument, Haggai exhorts them to rebuild the house of YHWH. The use of the Niphal infinitive construct form לָבִיאֵה in Hag 1:2 also appears in Zech 8:9: “the temple might be built” (זָאָבֵה לָבִיאֵה). Both verses highlight the building process in which the people themselves are now engaged. This further supports the view that the people are surely being commissioned to be the work force for the temple project.

It is particularly important to note that there are many cases in which the word לָבִיאֵה is linked with one verb ובש (Jer 35:7) and another verb ובש to describe agricultural activities (e.g., Deut 28:30; Isa 65:21–22; Jer 1:10; 18:9; 24:6; 29:5, 28; 31:28; 35:7; 42:10; 45:4; Ezek 28:6; 36:36; Amos 9:14; Ecc 2:4). Obviously, this formula emphasises that the people should “build” or “restore” (“rebuild”) the temple in order to live well, as grains or vegetables are sown or planted to enjoy food. Thus the temple rebuilding involves the people in a nourishing and fostering process. Some cases among of the numerous texts indicating that the reconstruction of the temple by the words of YHWH would bring posterity include 1 Sam 2:35; 2 Sam 7:5–16 and 1 Kgs 1:37–39. Therefore, to ensure a bountiful harvest, this is the very time to rebuild the temple.

As I have shown above, Hag 1:2 accuses the people of neglecting YHWH’s command to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. The people were definitely being commissioned to rebuild the temple. Nevertheless, those surrounding Zerubbabel had the very different idea of restoring the Davidic dynasty concomitantly with the temple. Their desire was caused by their faulty understanding of the title of Zerubbabel and their misconception of the importance of rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. Thus, this verse includes a warning against the two leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua, for not raising their voices in favour of the temple reconstruction, despite having been authorised by YHWH to manage that project.

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30 *DCH*, Vol. 2, 226–28. People build cities (Gen 4:17; 1 Kgs 9:17), alters (Exod 17:15; 1 Kgs 18.32), walls and gates (2 Kgs 15:35; Neh 2:17), and homes and families (Gen 16:3; Deut 25:9).
Hag 1:3

וַיְהִי הַרְכֵּזָיוֹה בְּיוֹרֵדְתוֹ הַנְּבֵйָי לֵאָמְר

Then the word of YHWH came through Haggai the prophet saying.

The clause רכזֵיוֹה בְּיוֹרֵדְתוֹ (Hag 1:3) is nearly identical to Hag 1:1, differing only in that the perfect verb היה has been converted into the imperfect form due to the consecutive conjunction. The leading item is likewise the word בֶּית which means "by the hand of," "on behalf of," or "for the sake of," indicating an instrument: for example, "YHWH spoke through Moses" (Exod 9:35); "YHWH spoke through Jeremiah" (Jer 37:2).

Subsequently, the use of the word בֶּית gave the authority to the messenger in the sentence of … בֶּית ... בֶּית by denoting the source of the word (Hos 1:1; Jer 1:1–2; Zeph 1:1; Zech 1:1). 31

Also, this verse shows the role of intercession between the recalcitrant people and YHWH’s commandment. Such intercession is one of the most important tasks of prophets during difficult situations. Now, Haggai actively participates in criticising the people’s neglect to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. It is likewise the case that in disputes arising within a region or between regions, a royal commissioner should intervene to settle the contentious issue (Ezra 4–5). 32

Hag 1:4

חָשׁב לָכֶם אַחֲמִד לַשֶּׁם בָּעַרַב 33 סְפוֹנִים וּרְבִית הָוָה הָרָה

“Is it the time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses while this house is in ruins?”

The people certainly did not consider it time to rebuild the house of YHWH and they had not begun the temple rebuilding. In a similar way to that by which the people expressed their disobedience to the word of YHWH, Haggai raised this rhetorical question to the people: “is it the time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses while this house was in ruins?” It is worthwhile to note that Haggai emphasises the discrepancy between


32 See chapter 3.2.3 above.

33 BHS suggests correcting הבכרה ("in your houses") to הבסה ("in houses"), based on the LXX ἐν ἐκκοιτοι οἱ. The LXX is followed by Targum, and the Vulgate. The following two other pronouns is syntactically unusual. The correction is probably right, in light of the word’s relationship with the adjective ספוניה, and as it avoids unnecessary redundancy. Yet הבכרה may be seen as intentional, highlighting the contrast between the people’s houses and YHWH’s house. Therefore, I will not make the emendation.
YHWH and the people with the word “the house” (קדש), a kind of word play. The vital word קֶבֶר obviously has a contrastive effect in that it intensified the sense of inconsistency between YHWH and the people.

One key point of this verse is that people’s houses are panelled (.Split). The word יָכִּים is a Qal passive participle masculine plural absolute form of the verb יָכָה, which means “to make level,” “to roll down to cover,” or “to lay a table.” This form is only used in this verse but the root יָכָה appears six times in the Hebrew Bible. This term is consistently used as a verb except in 1 Kgs 6:15, where it is used as a noun referring to the ceiling: for example, “for there the ruler’s portion was reserved” (Deut 33:21); “he covered the house with beams and planks of cedar” (1 Kgs 6:9); “it was panelled with cedar” (1 Kgs 7:3, 7; Jer 22:14). In each case, it literally signifies “structured” or “constructed” in the context of the luxury construction of the temple and the palace in Jerusalem. With these usages in mind, I would rather interpret the word יָכָה in this verse to be well “governed,” “administered,” or “managed.”

This interpretation makes evident the similarities between 2 Sam 7:2 and Hag 1:4. When David dwelled in a luxurious house of cedar unlike YHWH, he had a strong desire to build the house of YHWH (2 Sam 7:2//1 Chr 17:1). His passion for the Jerusalem temple building brought about the establishment of the Davidic dynasty (2 Sam 7:5–16) although YHWH did not allow him personally to build the temple as a qualified builder (1 Chr 22:6–10). Inasmuch as the Davidic house was panelled with cedar from floor to ceiling (1Kgs 7:7) the people in Judah are making a veiled allusion to what they read about David, which demonstrates their strong focus on restoring the Davidic dynasty through Zerubbabel.

From a historical perspective, the hope of the people for a Davidic dynasty could also be supported by the Jerusalem resettlement. In the Achaemenid period, continuous settlement occurs in Jerusalem although most settlements are confined to the southeastern spur and the temple mount. The settlements accord with the Achaemenid policy to revive Jerusalem as

34 The following Hebrew words designate the temple in the book of Haggai: קֶבֶר (Hag 1:4; 2:3, 7, 9), קֶבֶר (Hag 1:2, 14), קֶבֶר (Hag 1:8), קֶבֶר (Hag 1:9), קֶבֶרños (Hag 2:9), and קֶבֶרños (Hag 2:15, 18). Meanwhile, קֶבֶר in Hag 2:7 represent the Davidic house. I will explain this in the next chapter.


Judah’s provincial nucleus for the empire’s economic and military benefits. Indeed, once erected on its specially prepared site within the capital city, the Jerusalem temple, with its palace, constitutes a crucial part of the economic, political, and administrative life of the people. Notwithstanding this, the people in Haggai regarded the new settlements in Jerusalem as a part of the attempt within Judah to create an independent sub-province (גזרה).

In contrast to the people’s concept of the term “panelled” (כרום), it is informative to ponder Jeremiah’s association between the panelled house and Jehoahaz’s (or Shallum’s) tragic life (Jer 22:11–14). This figure of tragedy is also alluded to by the major re-painting of the signet ring (כרם) given to Zerubbabel in Hag 2:23. Informed by this reading, the people’s efforts are revealed to be a delusory hope that will literally amount to no more than their panelled houses.

The other key is that the house of YHWH is still in ruins (בית יהוה). The word בית here is an adjective and describes “a dry state,” (Lev 7:10; Prov 17:1, Ezek 36:35) “desolate,” or “in ruins” (Hag 1:9; Jer 22:5; 33:10; Ezek 5:14). Notably, where the temple is mentioned, this word occurs only three times (Hag 1:4, 9; Jer 33:10). So, the reader might wonder, what is the point in using the word בית to refer to the temple status?

The Jerusalem temple had to be in use even in the Neo-Babylonian period. Mourning the fall of Jerusalem, the people coming from peripheral parts of Judah performed religious rituals in the desolate Jerusalem temple (Jer 41:5). The record of Haggai supports this description that the temple is not completely destroyed (Hag 1:9; 2:3), but is still the location for sacred rituals (Hag 2:10–14). While the temple is still standing among the people living in Jerusalem, it is at least partly damaged or destroyed (Ezek 11:15).

Resonances with Malachi are apparent, for in both passages the people despise the house of YHWH (Mal 1:7–


38 Barstad, “Haggai Among the Prophets,” 268–69.

39 See the exegesis of Hag 2:23 in chapter 6.

40 The verb בזות in the Hebrew Bible is generally used in relation to devastations resulting from drought, punishment, or war (Isa 44:27; 50:2; 51:10; Jer 25:9; 51:3; Ezek 6:6; 12:20; 25:19; 26:2; 30:7). Also, this word as noun, בז, which occurs 9 times, can be translated “dry land” (2:6; Gen 7:22; Exod 14:21; Ezek 48:21). DCH, Vol. 3, 306–11.


42 See chapter 4.2 and 4.3 above.
Thus, Haggai’s exhortations function as an attack on the performance of sacrifices within the temple, while it remained in such an inappropriate state (Hag 2:12–14).

Supporting the view that the temple is not at all in ruins, an interesting translation proposes that the term בֵּרֵךְ be understood as “desolate” rather than as “in ruins.” This translation is based on the dissimilarity between the inhabited dwellings of the human population and the uninhabitable residence of YHWH. One fine case in which this term is indeed used to mean “desolate” can be seen in Jer 26:9, “this house should be like Shiloh, and this city should be desolate without an inhabitant” (also Jer 33:10, 12).

However, this emendation might not be necessary because of the relationship between “desolate” and “in ruins.” The usage may be understood as hyperbolic, citing Isa 25:2 “for you made the city a heap, the fortified city was in ruins.” Though the word בֵּרֵךְ is not used, yet, the use of similar term כָּסָל certainly never means that the city becomes an actual stone heap that is never rebuilt. Likewise, the use of the term בֵּרֵךְ may be an example of the poetic reservoir found in the prophetic language. What the text conveys is that the temple is not still in a repaired condition.

This exegesis of Hag 1:3–4 has demonstrated that Haggai brought charges against the people who communally neglected any activities at the Jerusalem temple. To emphasise this, Haggai expresses the crucial contrast between YHWH and the people wherein the phrase “the house” (דֶּשֶׁא) reveals the dichotomy between houses being panelled (יָנְפָּס) and the temple being in ruins (בֵּרֵךְ). With the word כָּסָל, which recalls the Davidic dynasty, the people focus on the royal lineage of Zerubbabel in an attempt to restore Judean royal dynasty. Meanwhile, Haggai advocates the restoration of the Jerusalem temple, which is being used in its state of desolation for the benefit of the efficient imperial administration.

Hag 1:5

ונִשָּׂא הַכֹּהֵנִים יְהוָה צְבָאֹת שְׁמוֹ לְעַבְדֵי יְהוָה יִרְדֵּכֻם

Now therefore, thus said the Lord of hosts, “Consider your ways”

This verse strongly urged the people to change their course of action, in the name of YHWH, while repeating the prophetic messenger form כָּאָר יְהוָה צְבָאֹת (also Hag 1:2 and 7)

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with the particle adverb הַת. The expression הַת is very commonly used for rhetorical effect:

“I see him, but not now” (Num 24:17; see also Josh 11:8; Isa 33:10; Ezek 27:34); “and now, lest he stretch out his hand” (Gen 3:22; see also Isa 5:3, 5; Amos 7:16; Ezek 27:34); “but now take courage” (Hag 2:4).\(^{45}\) As one can see from the above passages, the adverb הַת indicates the present moment, explains a new subject or prompts a conclusion drawn from the preceding statement. Focusing on the events concurrent with the discourse, “just now” the prophet Haggai enjoins the people to consider their course of action.

In connection with the word הַת, which concludes the preceding instruction and implies that what follows is consequentially related, the imperative formula using הנָל (Hag 1:5, 7; 2:15) draws immediate attention to the present contrasting situation.\(^{46}\)

The verb הנָל followed by the noun בּוּל (בבל) represents “to have regard for” or “to pay attention to,” which places importance on focusing the people’s hearts towards the issue in question: for example, “give attention to all that I was going to show you” (Ezek 40:4; see also 44:5; Isa 41:22; Hag 1:7; 2:18; Exod 9:21; Judg 19:30; Job 1:8; 23:6). Therefore, this phrase should be interpreted as “consider or concern yourselves with your chosen way,” in the form of an imperative expression that encourages the people towards self-reflection.

As it happens, the people try to establish the Davidic governance for the prosperity of the people through restoring the Davidic kingdom. However, YHWH asks the people to reflect upon the consequences of the way that they have chosen since it is not YHWH’s way. Exhorting the people to reconsider their actions indicates YHWH’s negative response to the choice the people have made. In the rift between the way of YHWH and the way of the people, Haggai plays the prophetic role of intervening to encourage the people to act rightly.


The Relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai

Hag 1:6

“...You have sown much, but bring little. You eat, but there is no satiety. You drink, but there is no quenching. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And one who earns wages puts wages into a bag with holes.”

Once the circulation of agricultural knowledge reached the people of Judah, they sowed grains and fruit trees in abundance.48 However, when it came to the harvest, they reaped little. Considering how much they sowed, the diminutive yield starkly contrasted their expectations. To emphasise this, Haggai employs two contrast words “much” (רֱבָּה) and “little” (מְנוֹל) in this sentence. Due to the crop failure, the people ate their meals but never felt full, and their thirst unquenchable. Further indicating the unsatisfying nature of choosing a course of action contrary to the will of YHWH, the people put on clothes without receiving any warmth.

Naturally, when they have their meals (אֲפֵרָה) the people expect to be satiated (לָכֵי). Along with drinking (לְכָה) and being clothed (לְכָּתָל), they expect to have their thirst quenched (לָכֵּית) and to be warm enough (לָכֵּר). Yet, in reality, they experience disappointment as their daily provisions fail to satisfy their needs. To emphasise this discrepancy, comparable phrases are turned into contrasting phrases with a negative-particle adverb אֵין.

All three phrases become polar structures, in which expectations stand in opposition to reality. What one finds in the text is a description of the real crop failure: the grains have been largely destroyed and the vines render very little produce, leading to the near decimation of Judah’s significant wine industry. Furthermore, the people fail in their wool industry. Thus every component in Judah’s agricultural system is broken.

Much less surplus from the yield diminished provisions for daily life and resulted in a scarcity of trade commodities. So while workers wanted to enjoy the benefits of their work, it was impossible, for it was as if they were putting their wages into a bag with holes in it.49

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47 BHS notes that two Hebrew manuscripts correct the participle מֱשַּׁקְרָה to imperfect מַשָּׁקְרֶה (since the sentence lacks a finite verb). Yet the sentence does not require a finite verb to be grammatically correct. This is particularly true in Hag 1:6, because the second מֱשַּׁקְרָה designates all money or benefits that the people are aiming to earn or create. Therefore, I will keep the text as it is.

48 Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age, 47–84; Hopkins, Highlands, 213–34.

Thus, the last sentence of this verse further accentuates the contrast between expectations and reality.

The word תֶּהַּפָּל, which is the Hithpael participle masculine singular absolute form of the verb תְּפָל, appears once in this verse. The basic meaning of the verb תְּפָל is the granting of payment for labour, services or any type of benefit received from someone. The word תְּפָל in a reflexive mode appears to represent to “hire oneself out” or “take oneself into paid service.” So, the word תֶּהַּפָּל with the particle article ה denotes “one who worked for something” as a relative pronoun phrase. In this interpretation, the noun תֶּהַּפָּל designates all the people who were doing their best to make a living.

With this context, it is interesting to note that Haggai uses the word רוֺכָּר to reference a purse, with holes, containing wages. The noun רוֺכָּר indicates “a pouch that is being wrapped up” in the form of a leather bag, which could be tied up at the top. One very plausible use for such a purse would be to store minted coins used as wages or collected as profits through the agricultural pursuits.50 In which case, the people would imagine big pouches of silver such as in Gen 42:35 and Prov 7:20. However, in this instance, their money simply disappears as if the purse they put it in is full of holes. The people find that the wages they have earned in such a manner are of no avail to their well-being.

Within the context of the larger imperial market, Judah’s role as a commissary should have been jeopardised. What is worse, any shortage of daily provisions leads to increased demand, and subsequently a rise in value. Hence, the people would have been forced to pay a high price, which, in turn, would have led to a high cost of living. No economic benefits would have been created whilst there was a shortage of basic products.51 The agricultural economic system would have been distressingly ruined.

On this point, it is worthwhile to look at the key word in this verse, רוּכָה. This word occurs 245 times in the Hebrew Bible, in 44 different forms (Hag 2:19; Num 20:5; Deut 14:22; 28:38; Isa 5:10; 30:23; 32:20; 55:10; Jer 35:7; 50:16; Ps 10:37; 126:6; Job 4:8). Within the agricultural cycle, all kinds of seeds would have been sown on the fields.52 And, in time,

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51 See chapter 2.3.2 above.

the people would have pruned all the different plants they had sown. Then, they would have expected to gather their harvest. So, the item יָרָד would have been linked to words such as רָצַח (plough), יָרַד (plant, Isa 17:10; Jer 35:7; Ps. 10:37), יָרָד (prune, Lev 25:4), יָרָנ (gather, Exod 23:10; 23:16; Lev 25:4, 22; 26:16; Deut 22:9), יָרַג (bring, Gen 46:6; Hag. 1:6), or יָרָד (reap, Lev 25:11, 20; Jer 12:13) in the context of agricultural activities.

It is noteworthy that the agricultural activities of seeding and harvesting rely entirely on YHWH’s blessing. Demonstrating that dependence is the following verse from Genesis: “Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold because YHWH blessed him” (Gen 26:12).

YHWH apportioned crucial blessings in relationship to how the people responded to YHWH himself, his temple or his commandments, in the forms of successful sowing and a high yield: “if you show reverence for my temple … the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruits. Your threshing will continue until the grape harvest and the grape harvest will continue until the planting, and you will eat all the food you want and live safely in your land” (Lev 25:2–5; see also Gen 26:12; Deut 6:11; 11:13–17; 2 Kgs 19:29; Job 31:8; Ps 107:37–38; Isa 30:23; 37:30; Ezek 23:16). The blessing of YHWH is that his people should reap their harvest lavishly, eat well and be satisfied.

Quite an opposite state of affairs is found in this verse and similar situation texts, for example: “because you forget YHWH your saviour … in the day you will make your plant grow, and in the morning you will see your seed flourish, but the harvest will be a heap of ruins…” (Isa 17:10–11); “if you do not obey YHWH your God … you will sow many seeds in the field but you will harvest little … you will not drink …” (Deut 28:15, 38–39); “if you reject my decrees … when I cut off your supply of bread …” (Lev 26:15, 26; see also Jer 12:13; Hos 8:7; Mic 6:14–15; Eccl 11:6). Correspondingly, YHWH’s curse is that the people eat their meals but never feel full due to the lack of harvest (Isa 23:18; 56:11; Ezek 16: 28; 39:19).

In the agrarian society of the ancient Near East, the deities not only provided prosperity, but, contrariwise, they could also inflict famine. In essence, Judah is an agrarian

53 In other contexts, rhetorical antonyms of יָרָד or יָרַד include: נָצָה, “root up,” “remove” or “drive out,” (Jer 12:14; 31:26–27); כָּז, “break down” or “throw down”; פָּרַד, “take away” (Jer 18:7; 31:28; Ps 9:7; 52:7); יְשַׁד, “destroy” (Jer 9:12); כָּז, “afflict,” “beat” or “smash” (Isa 26:21; Jer 25:6; Ps 105:15); יָרַד, “forcibly remove” or “tear down” (Deut 28:63; Ps 52:7); פָּרַד, “be in ruins” (2 Kgs 19:25; Isa 37:26; Jer 2:15; 4:7; 9:11; 46:19); יָרַד, “be desolate” (Isa 64:10–11; 54:1; Jer 19:8; Ezek 32:38).

54 Barstad, “Haggai Among the Prophets,” 276.
economy. Thus, whenever the people violate YHWH, his punishment is mainly manifested in the agricultural areas of Judean life. Furthermore, YHWH stops prophets from intervening and rejects the people’s offerings (Jer 14:11–12). Then, the punishment culminates in a war or a famine being inflicted on them (Jer 14:15–16).

As I have shown in Hag 1:2 and 4, the people were obviously reluctant to look after the house of YHWH. Their reluctance caused YHWH to duly withdraw his blessing from their agricultural endeavours. As a result, the agricultural yield was unquestionably a failure, with which none of the people could have been pleased. Thus, the adverse agricultural circumstances that were manifested in the Judean agricultural reality should be understood as YHWH’s punishment.

The exegesis of Hag 1: 5–6 that I performed above demonstrates that there should be little doubt of a relationship between the temple and agriculture. Retrospectively questioning the preference of the people, Haggai clearly indicates that their crops failed as a result of the temple remaining in ruins. The people devoted themselves to sowing in plenty, with expectations of a bountiful harvest: yet they reaped no benefits from their efforts. Their provisions were inadequate to meet even the necessities of eating, drinking, and being clothed. Nor could they appropriate any benefits from interregional trade, because they lacked marketable products. As a result of defying YHWH’s command, Judah’s agricultural economic network was destroyed.

Hag 1:7

Thus said the Lord of hosts, “Consider your ways”

Once again, this unit starts with the introductory formula that was used to announce the prophetic messages in Hag 1:5. In Hag 1:5–6, the people were called to reflect upon the agricultural failure that their choice had provoked. Now, the people are invited again to reflect upon the temple restoration. While considering the frustration of their agricultural results, it is important for the people to ponder how they should progress towards

55 BHS suggests that (“consider your way”) is a scribal addition in view of the exact repetition in Hag 1:5. Yet, in a way of letting the people reflect back on the severe crop failure, this verse serves as the confirmation of YHWH for the people to build the temple sooner than later in the following verse. I see no reason to change the text here.
something better. Progress will begin with the people moving from their inactivity to active reconstruction of the temple (Hag 1:8).

By highlighting the relationship between the temple remaining in desolation and the severe agricultural difficulties, the prophet Haggai faithfully acts on behalf of the people and encourages them to restore the Jerusalem temple. As we will see, the people should respond by committing themselves to the establishment of the temple governance for the vast economic affluence, rather than Davidic governance.

Hag 1:8

“Go up to the mountain, bring wood and rebuild the house, that I may be pleased in it and be glorified,” said YHWH.

With the prophetic messenger formula, the prophet Haggai lets the people recall what they are charged to do. That charge consisted of these three imperative phrases: “Go up (יהא) to the mountain, bring (ב) wood and rebuild (ב) the temple.” I will now explore each of these commands, beginning with the first word, יהא, which is a Qal imperative masculine plural form of the verb יהא, which means “to ascend,” “to go up” or “to make one’s way up.”

The word יהא appears many times in the Hebrew Bible and, remarkably, is used in two different patterns. One pattern is used to describe going up to a geographical high place, for example: “So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev” (Gen 13:1; see also 45:25; Num 32:11; Isa 14:14; Amos 3:5; Song 4:2). The other pattern is used to describe going up toward the Jerusalem temple, Zion, as a technical meaning for instance: “come, let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, to the house of the God of Jacob” (Ps 122:4; see also 47:6; 48:3; Exod 34:24; 1 Sam 1:13; 10:3; Isa 2:3; Jer 31:6). Given its two usages, in this verse יהא could not designate a definite location for the people to ascend. Rather, it urges the people to go up into

56 Kessler, Haggai, 133.

57 Qere has a cohortative form יהא for Ketib יהא. If one reads the imperfect form with the Ketib, it would be most logical also to do the same with the preceding verb יהא. As it is, the nuance is one of simple temporal succession, indicating the response promised by YHWH. Adopting the Qere, however, the phrase reads as a final or consecutive clause: “I will let myself be glorified.” So, the adjustment to Qere would be better in Haggai’s messages.

58 DCH, Vol. 6, 400–8.
the mountains (רַּחַב), indicating the hill-country of the Hebrew Bible (Gen 31:21; 1 Sam 31:1, 8). It is worth noting that in general these high places were heavily forested (Josh 17:14–18), and the trees in the mountains could have been readily used for building, which leads to the second of the three commands issued in verse 8.

The second command is to bring wood, which is one of the required building materials. The use of a Hiphil perfect form ~תַּבְּחָנָה suggests that the people have been given absolute responsibility not only to secure wood but also to rebuild the temple. Yet the duty of the people to bring wood, as a building material, seems to contradict this reference to the temple in Hag 2:15: “one stone is laid upon another in YHWH’s temple.” Wood, thus, appears not to literally refer to actual building materials. So, the reference to bringing wood would have been seen as a call to undertake preparatory measures for the stonework required in the temple’s reconstruction. Preparation and erecting scaffolding would have been one such measure, since the woodwork in the first temple had been burned. This kind of argument is supported by the fact that only the cedar (1 Kgs 5) that had to be imported from Lebanon could provide suitable timber for the construction of a temple. Beams of cedar, stretching from floor to ceiling, provided structural support to the temple of Solomon (1 Kgs 6:15).

Though cedar was one material for the temple construction, it does not follow that the temple was built of cedar. The prophet Jeremiah called down judgement on those kings who had panelled their houses with cedar (Jer 22:14), because of the extravagance of their buildings. Even so, unlike the other temple building passages that consistently refer to a range of materials (i.e., wood, stone, and metal) this passage identifies wood alone as a material to be procured. To reconcile this apparent contradiction, one should recall that the temple is still in use (Hag 1:4; 2:10–14), and only needs to be repaired. It seems, thus, that this temple rebuilding has never been intended to produce an extravagant building like Solomon’s temple.

The importance of wood within the temple structure is increasingly evident in view of the Jerusalem temple’s function within the imperial temple administration. For, one major

59 Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 28.
60 When the Jerusalem temple was destroyed in 586 BCE, all the timber had been burned. However, there remained an ample supply of stones for building. See Verhoeft, The Book of Haggai and Malachi, 65–66; Kessler, Haggai, 133–34; Lisbeth S. Fried, “The House of the God Who dwells in Jerusalem,” JAOS 126 (2006): 100.
61 Judah is granted permission by Cyrus to negotiate with Lebanon for a new shipment of cedar to restore the temple (Ezra 3:7). See Liphschitz and Biger, “The Timber Trade,” 121–27.
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The asset of the Jerusalem temple is its large storehouse for grains, wine, oils, and other commodities. The presence of this storehouse is indicated through the use of the word וַיֶּבֶשָּׁה, which is used to describe temple storerooms (Neh 10:4; 13:4). Within the storehouse, columns and pilasters, which are basic and necessary features of granaries and silos would have been built with timber. That is why, in the third and central command, YHWH simply commands to build the house of YHWH, without giving any details regarding what is required and how it has to be done unlike the first temple (1 Kgs 6; 1 Chr 21–29; 2 Chr 2).

As for the process of fulfilling this third command, to rebuild the temple, trees of the Judean forest would have been adequate to re-structure the Jerusalem temple. Indeed trees from the local forest were even used in the first Jerusalem temple building. Among the local trees, cypress ( Isa 41:19; Eccl 24:13) was one kind that Solomon had used to build the temple (1 Kgs 5:22; 2 Chr 3:5). Sycamore (1 Kgs 10:27; 2 Chr 1:15) and pine (1 Kgs 5:22; Isa 41:19; Ezek 31:8; Ps 104:17) were also used in Solomon’s temple, for flooring, doors, and ceilings. Additionally, local palm trees provided a motif for the ornaments adorning King Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 6:29, 32, 35; Ezek 41:18–20). The command to bring wood, therefore, is enough to rebuild the Jerusalem temple.

After commanding that the temple be rebuilt, YHWH proclaims that once it is rebuilt (וַיַּבְנוּ), he will take pleasure (אַלָּרַס) in it and he will be glorified (וַיהִליְהָה). The first verb אַלָּרַס, which means to take pleasure in, appears with YHWH as subject twenty-eight times. Of these instances, occasionally the preposition ב is included, for example: “for YHWH took pleasure in his people” (Ps 49:14); “did YHWH take delight in thousands of rams” (Mic 6:7). In each case, a person or a thing (thousands of rams) is the object of YHWH’s delight and is described within a temple ( Isa 60:7; Jer 14:12; Hos 8:13; Amos 5:22; Mic 6:7).

The other verb, הִליְהָה, which is used in its Niphal form, denotes “to be considered

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62 About agricultural buildings, such as silos and barns (מִסְדֹּרֶה, Hag 2:19; Jer 50:26; Joel 1:17, תֵּבֵרָה, Isa 5:2; or תֵּבֵרָה, Isa 1:8), see Banning, Edward Bruce “Towers,” in Freedman, ed., ABD, 6:622–24.

63 Cypress was also used for manufacturing ships. In the story of Noah’s ark (Gen 6:14); furniture; lances; musical instruments and doors. Jacob and Jacob, “Flora,” 805.

64 Sycamore could not be used for larger buildings, which require longer and stronger beams. Pine would also have been utilised in shipbuilding and musical instruments. Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 27–28; Jacob and Jacob, “Flora,” 806.

65 The verb שָׁרַי with the person (an individual or the people) appears in 2 Sam 24:23; Isa 42:1; Jer 14:10, 12; 42:1; Ezek 20:40, 41 and Hos 8:13. And the verb שָׁרַי accompanied by the thing is used in Deut 33:11 and Prov 16:7. HALOT, Vol. 2, 1280–81.
weighty,” “to be honoured,” “to enjoy honour,” or “to behave with dignity.” The cases in which the glory of YHWH appears in the passive form were quite limited, for example: “YHWH was glorified” (Isa 26:15); “and I would be glorified in the midst of you” (Ezek 28:22); “on the day that I glorified myself” (Ezek 39:13). In every case, the reflexive use of הָנֹּס with YHWH as subject implicitly conveys YHWH’s honouring of himself by means of the very desirable and precious resources that the people offer.

One should here recall the purpose of rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. A built temple would facilitate the management of agriculture, and would result in the blessing of an abundant harvest. Since the rebuilt temple promises significant economic benefits, it would follow that the rebuilding process would be an important investment that should be well financed with numerous resources. Upon reaping the blessings of restoring the temple, the temple’s treasuries would be handed over to the imperial king in the name of taxation. This would improve Judah’s position within the empire. Also, the people of Judah would be able to enjoy the benefits of their affluence. Thus, YHWH should rejoice in the prosperous economic resources of the temple.

This exegesis of Hag 1:7–8 has demonstrated the importance of quickly rebuilding or restoring the Jerusalem temple. In contrast to the people’s indifference, as their intercessor during the economic disaster, Haggai incessantly and determinedly exhorts them to restore the Jerusalem temple. He confidently assures the people of the prosperity that YHWH has promised once the temple is restored. With this affluence, the Jerusalem temple could even obtain the role of imperial fiscal centre. Furthermore, the restored Jerusalem temple would regain its reputation as an economic thriving centre. This is how YHWH would be glorified in his house. Accordingly, Haggai compels the people to pay great attention to restoring the Jerusalem temple restoration.

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67 This glorification is upheld both through the actions of YHWH himself and through the actions of others on YHWH’s behalf. The glory is associated more closely with a tangible sense of the presence of YHWH. For this reason, the glory of YHWH is fulfilled through the act of rebuilding the temple on YHWH’s behalf, rather than by the temple structure itself. Tim. Meadowcroft, “A desolate Land, People and Temple: Haggai and the Environment,” Colloq 40 (2008), 152.
The Relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai

Hag 1:9

“You have looked for much but it turns out to be little. And you bring it into the house. However, I blow it away. Why?” YHWH of hosts declared. “Why is it my house, which is still in ruins while you run quickly to his house.”

This verse reiterates the hope placed on agriculture, and the disappointment of that hope, as depicted in Hag 1:6. The combination of the first verb, הנָה, with the preposition בַּלַּא highlights the definite object. So, I could further interpret this phrase as “you have eagerly looked for much” or “you have undoubtedly expected much,” in order to emphasise their expectant hope for object. Undoubtedly, the people expect much harvest.

However, the result of their harvest turns out to be “little.” To draw attention to the word following הנָה, this verse employs its opposite before הנָה (Gen 15:17; 31:51). The parallel between the two words אֶלְהַנֵּה, meaning “many,” and לְהַנָּה, meaning “only a little,” emphasises the difference between the expected yield and reality. The vital point is conveyed by the second word: it is the small amount of harvest remaining.

There is an analogous syntactical use of a preposition in Jer 8:15, “for a time of healing, but behold, terror.” This passage similarly incorporates contrasting words before and after הנָה, through its use of “healing” or “cure” in opposition to “terror” or “dismay.” These examples syntactically emphasise the contrast between Judean reality and the Judean expectations.

Despite their meagre yield, the people bring their produce home in order to store it. However, YHWH blows even that away (סָפַר). The intensity of this violation against YHWH is emphasised through the verb סָפַר, which refers to YHWH in the first person to communicate: “I blow on you with my fiery wrath” (Ezek 22:21). In this sentence, YHWH sets the implied definite object, that I identified as being the harvest, aflame and melts it away in his anger (Ezek 22:20).

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68 Based on the evidence of the LXX, the Syriac and Targum, BHS suggests correcting הנָה to הַנָּה. Yet, this emendation definitely weakens the emphasis on contrast between the words preceding and following הנָה. Therefore, I will keep the MT as it is.

69 DCH, Vol. 6, 705–7.

70 DCH, Vol. 2, 574–78.

71 DCH, Vol. 5, 714.
In this interpretation, Haggai’s reference to YHWH in the first person should be viewed as communicating that YHWH is the one fiercely breathing the strong wind, in essence a storm. As a result, the modest harvest is completely blown away. This might occur during threshing or transportation. The distinctive lack of YHWH’s blessing over the sowing and reaping certainly demonstrates YHWH’s punishment. Judean agriculture is getting worse.

Concerning the word תֵּבַע, it has been claimed that it refers to the house of YHWH, based on Mal 1:13, where the people disdainfully offer their sacrifices in the temple. They themselves undervalue the cult to YHWH (יְהוָה). Subsequently, rejection and displeasure is present at the house of YHWH. In the same way, in Haggai’s text, the people have brought their little produce as an offering to the temple, but YHWH has blown away their sacrifice. By correspondence we can conclude that this is because he detests and disregards their action.

There is no doubt that the house (הר הבית) in Malachi’s text indicated the temple. However, the house (הר הבית) in Haggai’s text should be recognised as an agricultural storage facility. This is indicated by the question “is the seed still in storage?” in Hag 2:19. Additionally, for Malachi’s use of the verb פָּרַשׁ, YHWH is not the subject while in Haggai YHWH is the subject of the verb פָּרַשׁ. The word פָּרַשׁ certainly represents the force or power in YHWH’s judgement.

YHWH then puts forward the reason why he blew away even the rest of their modest harvest. This further tragedy happened because, in contrast to the fervour for Zerubbabel’s house, the people are still not concerned for the house of YHWH being in ruins (Jer 33:10, 12; Ezek 36:35, 38; Neh 2:3, 17). For the present purpose, to demonstrate its point, one should consider a man (עבד) Zerubbabel of the Davidic lineage in connection to the following word “his house” (ל二十五). In the Hebrew Bible, only the house of David is paralleled by or comparable to the house of YHWH. Therefore, I should translate the phrasesKH אֶזְכָּר שָׂמֵאָהוּ חַיָּה לְעַל חַיָּה תִּמְכֶּם לְעַל חֲלוֹא הָאָרֶץ לְעַל חַיָּה KH וּמִזְרַחְתָּם לְעַל חַיָּה like this: “you run quickly to his house” rather than “each of you runs quickly to his own house.” The use of “his house” (二十五) could be a concrete expression of the panelled house in Hag 1:4.

In contrast to the people’s fervour for Zerubbabel’s house, they remain unconcerned

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72 Petersen, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 29; Redditt, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, 21; Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 29; Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 137.

that the house of YHWH remains in ruins (Jer 33:10, 12; Ezek 36:35, 38; Neh 2:3, 17). The verb יָכַּר gives credence to this interpretation. When this verb is accompanied by an object, it generally means to “be busy with something” (2 Sam 18:21–24, 26; 20:36; 2 Kgs 1:5; Isa 40:31; Jer 12:5; 23:21). The people are preoccupied with Zerubbabel’s house only. There is a similar case in Hab 2:2, where the phrase לֶמֶּשׁ יְהֹוָה יִרְאֶה בָּא means to take the required measures “so that the person could concentrate on reading the record while he was running.” Likewise, the people are described as only being eager to establish the Davidic dynasty through Zerubbabel.

Hag 1:10

םֵלֵךְ הָעָלְמָּה, מִשָּׁלֶחְוֵי רְחָמִּים הָאֵלָה יַבְדִּיל

“Therefore, because of you, heavens have withheld the dew and the earth has also withheld her yield.”

The people continue to attend to their own interests through attempting to establish the Davidic dynasty. YHWH’s reaction to the people’s neglect for his house is truly negative. The particle adverb שָׁבֵל expresses the sort of the punishment that he threatened and which seems to have already been happening.

A threat of punishment is further emphasised through reiterating the word שָׁבֵל. The combination of the preposition שָׁבֵל followed by the word לֶמֶּשׁ only appears 3 times in the Hebrew Bible: “because of the instructions in this letter” (Esth 9:26); “therefore YHWH did not take pleasure in their young men” (Isa 9:16); “therefore I wailed for Moab” (Jer 48:31). These verses each indicate definite objects through the use of the preposition שָׁבֵל. Therefore, the preposition שָׁבֵל of לֶמֶּשׁ should be understood to mean “because,” and it should be understood as clarifying the cause of the judgment. Thus, the people’s failure to reconstruct

75 BHS suggests correcting לֶמֶּשׁ to לֶמֶּשׁוֹ (“their dew”) or לֶמֶּשׁ (“rain”), for לֶמֶּשׁ does not make sense. Similar grammatical usage of לֶמֶּשׁ is found in elsewhere; for example, “many waters shall be stopped” (שָׁבֵל אֲשֶׁר, Ezek 31:15). To assume an implicit object to the verb לֶמֶּשׁ however is not difficult. Therefore, the emendation is unnecessary.
76 BHS suggest the possibility that לֶמֶּשׁ should be emended to לֶמֶּשׁוֹ, following a Kennicott variant. This adjustment would be grammatically right but it does not give any different meaning. So, I will keep the MT.
77 Based on the evidence of the LXX, BHS suggests to take out לֶמֶּשׁ. This might be taken as a clerical error by dittography from the preceding שָׁבֵל. As I have discussed above, however, the suffix of לֶמֶּשׁ is a very important element of the argument. Therefore, I will keep the MT.
the temple can be understood as the cause for YHWH’s verdict (Jer 14:22).

YHWH is described as determinedly sending the agents of the “heavens (שמים) and the earth (ארץ),” which causes the people to be in trouble.\(^{78}\) The heavens are asked to stop (לאל) dew (זרה) and the earth is asked to withdraw (சאם) its produce (תבואת). In this description of YHWH’s judgement, the vital word is the verb אלת which means “to restrain,” “to shut up,” or “to hinder” (Num 11:28; 1 Sam 6:10; Jer 32:3; Ps 59:14).\(^{79}\) This is the only case in which the word השמים is used as the subject of the verb אלת. This irregular use of השמים suggests the interpretation that the heavens are prevented from giving any more dew.

In an agricultural cycle, the quantity and timing of the rains is fundamental to the harvest. So, the main blessings of the Hebrew Bible repeatedly echo a promise of “the dew of the heavens” (Gen 27:28; Deut 33:28). This is because an abundant harvest of grains, wine, and oil could only be secured in land where the heavens are withholding the dew: a situation of severe drought.

As a result, the land is described as having withheld its produce (תבואת). This description is the only case in which the word השמים is used as the subject of the verb אלת, as the word השמים was in the first clause. The word תבואת, meaning “product,” “produce,” or “yield” of the soil, is usually used to describe arable land, vineyards and orchards (Lev 26:4, 20; Deut 11:17; 32:22; Judg 6:4; Ezek 34:27; Zech 8:12). Yet its use in this sentence indicates a severe crop failure. The lack of rain for extended periods has led to a breakdown of the agricultural economy, ultimately resulting in famine, a much worse circumstance.\(^{80}\) The severe punishment meted out by YHWH is agricultural.

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\(^{78}\) For more on YHWH’s agency through natural phenomenon, see John Joseph Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 229–30.


\(^{80}\) Barstad, “Haggai Among the Prophets,” 275.
Hag 1:11

"I summoned a drought on the arable land and the mountains, and on the grain, the fresh wine, the fresh oil, and all things the ground would produce, and on the men and cattle, and all the toil of their hands."

This verse describes how YHWH brought (שָׁאוּר) a drought upon the earth. The verb שׁוּר appears many times to describe a human action and, much more rarely, as (75 times, Gen 27:1; 41:8, 14; Isa 13:3; 41:4). Even among divine actions, this is the only case in which YHWH is the subject of the imperfect first person verb שׁוּר. The use of the first person underlines that YHWH is responsible for the drought בָּרֵךְ (2 Kgs 8:1; Ps 105:16).

Then there is the play on words between בָּרֶךְ ("the ruin") of the temple (Hag 1:4 and 9) and בָּרֵךְ ("the drought") of the land (Hag 1:11). When the people give careful thought to what happened to them, they might consider the relationship between בָּרֶךְ and בָּרֵךְ, which share the same root בָּרֶךְ.

As I have mentioned in Hag 1:5, according to the ruling principle in an agrarian society YHWH addresses judgment to his recalcitrant people. His judgement stands in direct opposition to the blessing he had promised as a reward for obedience. The fields (ָאָוֵר) are described as having become too sterile to yield anything. The mountains (רָהִל) have also become desolate.

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81 Many Hebrew manuscripts inserts בּ לָאָוֵר עָלֵי-הָרֶךְ עָלֵי-הָרֶךְ. This reading makes better sense, emphasising "all" produce from the land. So, I will change the MT and put לָאָוֵר into the Hebrew text.

82 BHS suggests that the phrase (ָאָוֵר) would have been added to the text. The reason for this is that grain, wine, and oil are the main agricultural industries in Judah, and they are quite often referred to together in the Bible (Num 18:12; Deut 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 18:4; 28:51; Jer 31:12; Hos 2:10, 24; Joel 1:10; 2:19; Neh 5:11; 10:40; 13:5, 12; 2 Chr 31:5; 32:28). However, a vat (ָאָוֵר) in Hag 2:16 was commonly used to draw both fresh wine juice and fresh oil. Also, in this verse Haggai firstly put the list of all that was affected by the drought in general terms of the arable lands, the vineyards and orchards, and then identified these effects more specifically. Therefore, מֵעֶרֶךְ cannot be seen as an additional phrase.

83 The word בָּרֵךְ, is used in relation to skin or bone (Job 30:30) but also in relation to climate in order to describe the heat of the desert (Gen 31:40; Isa 4:6; 25:4; 36:30).

84 The word רָהִל implies general land and the earth (Gen 18:2; Exod 34:8; Ps 74:7; 89:40). The word רָהִל is often used to refer to a "mountainous region" (Josh 10:40; 11:16), such as the mountains of Yehud (Josh 21:11), the mountain of Ephraim (Josh 17:15), and a hill-country of the Amorites (Deut 1:7). It can also be employed to designate an individual mountain, though, such as Mount Sinai, Mount Horeb or Mount Hermon. Finally, the term also refers to "the whole land of designated regions" such as in the land of Moriah (Gen 22:2), the mountains around Jerusalem (Ps 125:2). Aharoni, The Land of the Bible, 414–19
The cases of the word רַע followed by רָה appear several times in the Hebrew Bible. For example: “thus Joshua struck all the land, the hill country and the Negev and the lowland and the slopes ...” (Josh 10:40) and “Thus Joshua took all that land, the hill country and all the Negev, all that land of Goshen, the lowlands, the Arabah, the hill country of Israel and its lowlands” (Josh 11:16). Except in Ps 48:3 “beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, was Mount Zion,” where the word רָה means the Jerusalem temple, it indicates areas marked by internal topographical difference. Generally, such high places were heavily forested and needed clearing before they could be inhabited. So, Joshua had told the people to “go up to the forest and clear the ground for yourselves...the hill-country could be yours ...” (Josh 17:14–18).\(^{85}\)

In relation to the produce of the land, the phrase “on the land and on the mountains” is used to describe both the arable land producing cereals and the highly terraced hill-country, which produced fresh fruit and fresh oil. Therefore, the term רַע should be understood as referring to the arable lands which were producing grains, while the term רָה should signify the hill-countries (the vineyards and orchards) which were yielding grapes and olives.\(^{86}\) Even in alluding to these distinctions, the writer of the Book of Haggai emphasised the extent of the areas that had been seriously affected by the drought. Indeed, there seems to have been no Judean soil unaffected by the drought.

The list of all that had been affected by the drought initially proceeds in general terms, mentioning that it was the arable lands, the vineyards and orchards. The list progresses to identify these effects more specifically, naming grains (רַע), wine (רָה), and olives (רָה). These categories would have been understood with further specification. The category of grains would have included wheat and barley. Also, the next word רָה which derives from the verb רָה meaning “to drive out” or “to press out,” would have been understood to denote “an unfermented wine,” meaning new wine or fresh wine. Lastly, the word רָה refers to “olive oil” and is derived from the root רָה, meaning “to press out oil.” Thus the three agricultural products of utmost importance in the Judean economy were described as having come to ruins.

A situation similar to this can be found in the accounts of the drought and the famine in

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85 Judean farmers developed runoff agriculture in the Negev in the tenth century BCE with the help of water catchment systems. This technological development was a response to the lack of land suitably hydrated for cultivation. Faust and Weiss, “Judah, Philistia and the Mediterranean World,” 71–92.

the concurrent Book of Joel. These descriptions include: “the fields were laid waste, the
ground mourned because the grain was destroyed, the wine failed, the oil languished” (Joel
1:10). Here we see the recurring triad of grains, wine, and olives (ךָּבָּז, פֹּתָחְת, וֶרֶד). Indeed this
exact formulation of the triad is found throughout the Hebrew Bible: “grains, wine, and olives
ךָּבָּז, פֹּתָחְת, וֶרֶד” (Deut 11:13–17; Jer 31:12; Hos 2:8–9; Joel 2:24). Further texts referring to
the triad of grains, wine, and olives through slight semantic variations include:
ךָּבָּז, פֹּתָחְת, וֶרֶד (Amos 4:9; Isa 17:10–11; Jer 3:3; 5:24; 12:13; 14:7–22; Ezek 34:26–27; Zech 8:12; 10:1;
14:17). By using this triad, verse 11 thus indicates that the commodities in Judean agricultural
industries—the commodities on which the society depends in order to flourish—have been
undoubtedly destroyed.

Haggai firmly proclaimed that “all things the ground produced” had completely
perished. Nothing had escaped the severe drought. Legume and vegetable farming thus would
have also been undermined. Nor would animal husbandry have been exempted. The Judean
agricultural economic system had broken down.

Indeed, the famine resulting from the drought is described as having been experienced
by “the people” and “the cattle” alike. The word ךָּבָּז describes the whole of mankind as a
collective noun, but indicates a particular emphasis on the people of Judah (Jer 47:2; Job
36:25).87 Similarly, the following word פֹּתָחְת refers to animals in general, but indicates a
particular emphasis on domestic animals such as cattle and sheep (Jer 36:29; Deut 28:26; Isa
18:6). The parallel use of the word פֹּתָחְת together with the word וֶרֶד appears 8 times in the
Hebrew Bible. There are four noteworthy examples of this combination. Firstly, it is used in
creation (Jer 27:5) and once in relation to paying tax (Num 31:47). Secondly, other uses of
this combination are used to convey YHWH’s wrath: “my anger and my wrath would
be poured out on this place, upon man and beast” (Jer 7:20); “I smote the inhabitants of this city,
both man and beast” (Jer 21:6); “the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts was the
same” (Eccl 3:19). In YHWH’s judgement, both the people and the cattle in Judah were
totally struck by the famine.

It is worth briefly exploring the impact of famine on agriculture. One impact would
have been that the cereal stalks, which would have been used as fodder for domesticated
animals, would have been spoiled. The spoiled fodder would inevitably have affected the

87 This reference to creation recalls the dynamics of the relationship between human beings and the soil from
which they are created, so powerfully evoked in Gen 2:7. Tim Meadowcroft, “A desolate Land, People and
quality of animal products such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, wool, and hair. The quantity of such products would have also been impacted, as animals died from malnutrition. Animal death would lead to a decrease in available manure, which was used to fertilize the arable land and fields. The farming of the series became in sequence undermined. Therefore, Haggai depicts all of the people’s agricultural efforts (שָׁעַט) as having been in vain (Hag 2:14; Isa 55:2; Ps 78:39).

The above exegesis on Hag 1:9–11 has shown that the temple’s bad state resulted in agricultural and economic disaster for Judah. Instead of obeying YHWH’s command to rebuild the temple, the record of Haggai reveals that the people insistently attended to their interests in the establishment of the Davidic dynasty. By way of punishment, YHWH sent storms (בְּנָאוֹת) down even upon their meagre harvest (Hag 1:9). Yet, since the temple remained in ruins (בְּבִלּוּ), YHWH brought drought (חֲרָב) to the land (Hag 1:10). The drought then destroyed all possible agricultural activities not only within the arable land but within mountains (Hag 1:11). Grain, wine, and olives (דָּבָק, וּבָרִי, זְרָח), which were the luxury goods of Judah, proved no exception. The Judean agricultural labour was completely futile. Indeed, the Judean economy, which was based on agricultural success, was completely broken down.

**Hag 1:12**

וַיִּשְׁמַע זֵרְעָבָא בֶּן שֶׂאָלַתִי, וַיְשָׁמַע יְהוֹיָדוּד הַצְּרֵפֶה הַבֶּן הַגְּדוֹל הָאָרְלוֹהַת

כִּאָשֶׁר שָׁלַח יְהוָה אֶל הָאָרְלוֹהַת וְיִרְאוּ הָנֵינָא הָה

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all the remnant of the people should obey the voice of YHWH their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as YHWH their God sent him. And the people should fear in the presence of YHWH.

The individuals addressed and referred to in Hag 1:2 are now addressed in combination with Zerubbabel and Joshua; now they are all expected to respond positively to the proclamation of Haggai the prophet. Here Zerubbabel is again mentioned first, yet this time without his official title within the empire. In contrast, Joshua is listed with his official title. As I have already mentioned, the absence or presence of the official title in designating Zerubbabel indicates very careful and intentional alternation. This change indicates the

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88 The Greek version reads πρὸς ἀντιός (= שִׁמְחַי) to avoid dittography. This is reflected also in Peshitta, Targum, and the Vulgate. Yet, the use of repetition in Haggai is frequent (e.g. שָׁעַט יש לַעֲבַב וְתָמִיט). Therefore, this adjustment is unnecessary.
unstable position of Zerubbabel as the governor of Judah, under Darius. The official title of Zerubbabel would be preserved only insofar as he showed unwavering loyalty to Darius. Therefore, the non-appearance of the official title should be read as indicating the prepared intention of the writer of Haggai to suggest the increasingly precarious nature of Zerubbabel’s political position.

Furthermore, the remnant of the people has also been invited to respond positively to the prophet’s promulgation. Due to the problematic word “remnant” (רֵעֵן), scholars have debated whether or not the remnant should be read to mean the non-exiled people or the returning exiles. In the Hebrew Bible, however, the use of the word רֵעֵן indicates a single unity of the genitive noun that follows. So, for example, we see the phrase “remnant of Jerusalem” used in reference to those remaining after the 597 deportation (Jer 24:8//Ezek 5:10; 9:8; 1:13) and “remnant of Judah,” which describes the Judeans who left their country at the fall of the kingdom but who returned under Gedaliah (Jer 40:11, 15). Therefore, the phrase “the remnant of the people” of Judah in Haggai should not be taken only as a single designation for the Babylonian exiles. Also, Haggai never intends to suggest a contrast between the exiled and the non-exiled people of Judah.

Similar usages to that of “remnant” in Haggai can be found in Jeremiah. There we find, for example: “Ishmael took captive all the remnant of the people who were in Mizpah, the king’s daughters” (Jer 41:10), and “all the leaders of the forces with him took all the rest of the people whom Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had carried away captive from Mizpah” (Jer 41:16). These parallel uses support my interpretation that “the remnant of the people” represents the rest of the people, apart from the aforementioned leaders or royal family members. So I have argued that the “remnant” in Haggai represents all the unnamed people, with Zerubbabel and Joshua as the only exception.


The other dominant interpretation of “the remnant of the people” seems less compelling when applied to Haggai. The phrase has been taken to refer to a faithful group: for example, “if it was too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, would it also be too difficult in my sight?” (Zech 8:6), and “I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days” (Zech 8:12; see also Isa 10:20; 28:5; Jer 31:7–9; Mic 7:18). In those cases, “the remnant of the people” describes the population being saved from YHWH’s judgement. In this light, “the remnant of the people” in the Haggai text would be understood as a simple designation of Haggai’s faithful audience. While they have been distinctly called to heed the word of YHWH to rebuild the temple, the people have not been obedient. This claim focuses too much on the people’s obedience, which was expected but had not yet been evident. So this interpretation would seem to misconstrue the text.

Amidst the people’s recalcitrance to rebuilding the Jerusalem temple, the role of Haggai as an intermediary from YHWH is significant. The formula על ה דברי הנביא אֶלֶה אֶתְךָ ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם (“upon the word of Haggai the prophet as YHWH their God has sent him”) clearly provides an implied authority to Haggai (Isa 6:8; Zech 2:12–13). It shows that Haggai as the messenger of YHWH should undertake to exhort the disobedient people of Judah.

In response to the proclamation of Haggai, all individuals are expected to adhere loyally to YHWH’s will. The first verb אֶתְשֹׁמֶט is the Qal imperfect third person masculine singular form of the root שֵׂם. It means “to listen to” carefully or “to hear and accept a request” from YHWH or a person. In particular, the verb שֵׂם which is constructed with the phrase כל … something that the prophet commands (Jer 26:5; 35:18; 38:20).93 The phrase … על … בַּכּל is usually viewed in the Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic traditions. Thus, it has often been claimed that this expression refers to a positive response to the revealed word of YHWH that both traditions share.94 However, Haggai’s text does not show that the people and their leaders eventually obey the messages delivered in the name of YHWH. Instead, they are again asked to heed the words of YHWH.

In the context, the subject of the verb שֵׂם should be Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people. Yet, the verb שֵׂם is a third masculine singular form. This might highlight that they


should all with one mind respond favourably to the central theme of Haggai’s message.

The following verb is ירא, which is the Qal imperfect third person masculine plural form. It means “to fear” or “to be afraid.” Now, the people are being enjoined towards an experience of fear in the presence of YHWH (יהוה). In the Hebrew Bible, the word ירא mainly represents terror and worship.95 Terror and worship are, in one sense, polar opposites for the former is characteristic of utter torment (Neh 6:9, 13, 19) whereas the latter suggests trust (Jer 4:26; 17:8).

Nevertheless, in the Hebrew Bible both senses are associated with each other, for a worshipful fear is manifested by the wrath of YHWH against the people’s guilt. An interesting case demonstrating this is found in Jonah 1:5. Jonah, attempting to flee from YHWH, has set sail for Tarshish and has been caught in the midst of a terrible storm. All the sailors onboard with Jonah have been struck with fear. After having been identified as the cause of this storm, Jonah acknowledges himself as the one who should take the act of fearful obedience to YHWH (Jonah 1:9).

To expand upon this analogy, one should recall the mode of the establishment of Judean independence with Zerubbabel in Hag 1:3–4 and 9. With the phrase ירא ... תשמע, the people were instructed to acknowledge their sinfulness in the midst of YHWH’s wrath. Then, they were instructed to obediently rebuild the temple. The people’s rebellion against the word of YHWH has aroused the wrath of YHWH, evident through the terrible economic catastrophe, and in response YHWH has called for an immediate transformation in them.

A similar emphasis on the phrase ירא ... תשמע is found in Isaiah. Isa 50:10 says, “who is among you that fears YHWH, that obeys the voice of his messenger, and that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of YHWH and rely on his God.”96 This verse commands steadfast obedience to the words of YHWH as proclaimed by the prophet.97 The prophetic intervention should bring about a radical movement by the people towards obediently what the prophet proclaimed.

95 DCH, Vol. 4, 276–83; HALOT, Vol. 1, 432–33.
96 The expression ירא ... תשמע alludes to the commandments of YHWH given through Moses. Kessler further states that this phraseology is used to describe a positive response to the word of YHWH delivered in specific situations by his messengers. Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 143–44.
Hag 1:13

וַיֹּאמֶר הַגָּגָי הַמְּנַשֵּׁשׁ הַיָּהָוֶא נְאֵם יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּית יְהוָה בֵּית יְהוָה לָאָמָר אֲנִי נְאֵם יְהוָה

Then Haggai, the messenger of YHWH, through YHWH’s mandate, said to the people, “I am with you, declares YHWH.”

In this verse, Haggai introduced himself as הַמְּנַשֵּׁשׁ הַיָּהָוֶא (the messenger of YHWH) for YHWH’s work to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. This introductory phrase communicates both the authority of Haggai as an agent of YHWH and the authority of the message he conveys (Isa 44:26; Mal 2:7; 2 Chr 36:15).99

It is worthwhile to note that there are some cases described with similar terms in the Hebrew Bible in which human leaders sent messengers (מְנַשֵּׁשים) on business or diplomatic missions. For example: “the king of the people of Ammon answered the messengers of Jephthah” (Judg 11:13; see also 2 Sam 3:12–14; 1 Kgs 20:2–4).100 Actually, the proclamation of Haggai to rebuild the Jerusalem temple is also associated with Darius’s economic and military decree. This is one case in which the prophetic commission thus reflects the idea of diplomatic protocol. In this respect, Darius’s decree is undeniably intertwined with YHWH’s commandment, which demonstrates YHWH’s full affirmation of Darius’s temple rebuilding project.

The following clarification בֵּית יְהוָה בֵּית יְהוָה (in YHWH’s work) gives credence to Darius’s work. The noun בֵּית יְהוָה can be translated under “business work” or “administrative work,” as seen in these examples: “for YHWH of hosts had work to do in the land of the Chaldeans” (Jer 50:25); “What is your commission?” (Jonah 1:8) and “I rose and went about the king’s business” (Dan 8:27). Important building projects (Neh 4:15) and any work done by the people for a ruler could be referred to as the ruler’s work (1 Kgs 7:51; 2 Chr 16:5). All of the passages quoted above either refer to specific work projects or to the routine of a particular

98 BHS suggests that the terminology מֶנַשֵּׁשׁ הַיָּהָוֶא בֵּית יָהוֶא is a substantial reiteration, since the Greek version has ἀγγέλος κυρίου. The omission of מֶנַשֵּׁשׁ הַיָּהָוֶא is understandable. However, in this particular verse, the preposition ב gives a causal, attributing the idea of charge to מֶנַשֵּׁשׁ הַיָּהָוֶא. It is literally translated as “in the work of YHWH.” Therefore, the adjustment is unneeded.


101 DCH, Vol. 5, 288–90.
business endeavour of any class of labour from menial to royal.

Quite a similar text to Hag 1:13 is Ezra 6:22, which says, “YHWH turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward the Israelites to encourage them in the work of the house of God (כֵּחַ הַמַּלְצָכֶם), the God of Israel.” There is no doubt that the temple work is itself the work of YHWH. The prophet Haggai firmly proclaims that the project of rebuilding the Jerusalem temple is definitely YHWH’s work.

In Hag 1:13, Haggai declared to the people that YHWH was present among them (אַלָּנָכָם). Throughout the Hebrew Bible the clause “I am with you” is the prevailing assurance of YHWH’s supporting presence. The people’s resistance to the temple reconstruction is now no longer a consideration. The only criteria for YHWH’s blessing and presence is that the people, together with Zerubbabel and Joshua, accept their responsibility for doing YHWH’s work.

From this exegesis of Hag 1:12–13, I have demonstrated how the people and their leaders should have responded to the commandment of YHWH to rebuild the temple. Haggai had anticipated the people’s response (עָשְׂרֶה, יִשְׂרָאֵל) to YHWH’s command to rebuild the temple (Hag 1:12). To bring about the transformation within the people that he required, YHWH sent (שָלָה) Haggai as his messenger (הָיָה). Haggai was charged with carrying out the work (כֶּלְמָאֹת) of ensuring that the people accepted Darius’s project of rebuilding the temple as YHWH’s work (Hag 1:13).

Hag 1:14

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶתְרוֹרַת זֶרֶבָּבָל בֶּן שֵׁלָתִיל מָנוּגָר שִׁירוֹת
אָפְרַה רֹעֶה בִּרְיֹהֶגֶר הַכֹּהֵן הָגָרֹל אָפְרַה רֹעֶה כָּל שִׁירוֹת הָעָם
רְבֵּא רְעֵשׁ מִלְאָכָה בֵּנֵי הָיָה מַעֲרַּאֹת אֲלָלוֹתָה

And, YHWH stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadaq, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. Thus, they should come and set to work on the house of YHWH of hosts, their God.

YHWH eventually aroused (עָשְׂרֶה) the הר of Zerubbabel, Joshua and all the people in

102 Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 35. The expression “YHWH is with you” indicates the military power associated with the presence of YHWH.

103 The declaration of the presence of YHWH certifies that YHWH will be actively present with the people to make their work fruitful, no matter whether the temple has been completed or the actual work has not yet begun. Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 149–50.
order to initiate the rebuilding of the temple. The basic meaning of the verb רוש is “to be awakened” or “to stir up.” So, this is one example of its use: “awake, sword, against my shepherd and against the man” (Zech 13:7; see also Isa 51:9; Hab 2:19).\(^{104}\) It asks a self-conscious sense. Meanwhile, the causative sense (רוש) of the verb רוש means “to wake up,” “to be excited,” “to wake someone up,” “to put into motion,” or “to start to work.” This use of רוש is for instance, evident here: “Who arouses one from the east whom he calls in righteousness to his feet?” (Isa 41:2; see also Jer 50:9; Ezek 23:22).

The causative use of this verb, רוש marks the condition of being capable of being influenced. The use of verb רוש in Hag 1:14 should be interpreted causatively since YHWH is enlightening the apathetic people regarding the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. The people and their leaders are not only in a state of being capable of being influenced, but they are expected by YHWH to be moved to obey him. Namely, YHWH intends to prompt the people and their leaders to work on the rebuilding of the temple.

Normally, the word חם is used as the object of the verb רוש to describe the political context for a given activity. So, for example, it is used for descriptions of the following: YHWH stirring up the kings of Medes against Babylon (Jer 51:11); the spirit of a destroyer against Babylon (Jer 51:1); the spirit of the king of Assyria against several Israelite tribes (1 Chr 5:26); the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs against Jehoram and Judah (2 Chr 21:16); and the spirit of Cyrus to make a proclamation regarding the building of the Jerusalem temple (2 Chr 36:22). Therefore, YHWH’s rousing of the people’s spirit is not completely devoid of political significance.

Due to this connotation of the phrase רוש… חם, it has been suggested that the Jerusalem temple reconstruction has a political role in Judah. So, although the Jerusalem temple rebuilding was initiated through Darius’s policy, through managing the agricultural economy of Judah and controlling the provincial annual budget, the rebuilt Jerusalem temple could form a local self-determining institution.\(^{105}\) This interpretation suggests that the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple would eventually lead to the semi-autonomy of Judah. However, this is not how the rebuilding project in fact functioned for Judah.

Rather, the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple functioned to establish a strengthened

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104 DCH, Vol. 6, 314–16.

105 Some critics argue that the reconstruction of the temple would inaugurate a new messianic age. See, for example: Wolff, Haggai, 52–53; Weinberg, Citizen-Temple Community, 115–21; Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 35, 41–43, 220–221.
administrative base for imperial armies. Through the temple work, Darius sought the increased centralisation of power within the territories (see chapter 3.2 above). For that purpose, Zerubbabel and Joshua were deputed to governor and high priest, respectively, in the imperial bureaucratic structure. Their titles required Zerubbabel and Joshua to consider the temple reconstruction to be their own responsibility. Therefore, neglecting the work of rebuilding the temple was an act against the empire. At this point, I would suggest that Haggai was very keen to communicate the political implications of rebuilding the temple.

There are other examples of Judah’s commitment to the empire. In 488 BCE and also in 459 BCE, again while Egypt was revolting against the Achaemenids, the Achaemenids took a more active role in their administration of the western territories, which included the province of Judah. What was worse was that the Achaemenids were also wary of the Greek threat against which they began to build a series of forts and ports along the eastern coast. This crisis within the empire resulted in the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah to Judah, to function as mediating authorities like Zerubbabel. Ezra provided the codification of Judean laws in the service of imperial policies (see chapter 3.2.1 above), and Nehemiah built the walls of Jerusalem which remained in ruins. Jerusalem, and its walls, would later become a battlefield for conflicts between a resurgent Egypt and the Achaemenids (Neh 1–2). Both Ezra and Nehemiah truly show their devoted loyalty towards the empire facilitating an ideal, faithful alliance between the Achaemenids and the province of Judah.

Against this hostile context, YHWH invoked all the people to participate in the Jerusalem temple restoration. The people along with Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the priest were to come (膽) and to begin working (שָׂדָה) on the house of YHWH. Everyone was to be involved in the compulsory task of rebuilding the temple: this was the result towards which YHWH was working. Haggai, as his messenger, was actively encouraging the people to take part in a variety of affairs to rebuild the Jerusalem temple.

The noun הַכַּלְמָה, which is connected with the two verbs (שָׂדָה, אָבִי), describes a variety of domains for work, such as “handiwork” or “craftsmanship.” As, for example, it is used

107 Assis, “To Build or Not to Build,” 522.
109 The verb סְפַר appears 4 times in the Hebrew Bible together with the noun סְפָר (Jer 18:3; 2 Chr 34:13; 1 Kgs 11:28).
here: “you should not bring a load out of your houses on the sabbath day nor do any work” (Jer 17:22; 18:3; see also Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14; Judg 16:11). The word מלאכאת is also used in reference to “services or objects or possessions of all types.” As, for example, it is used here: “who are the singers for the service of the house of YHWH” (Neh 11:22; 2:16; see also Exod 22:7, 10; Ezra 10:13). In Hag 1:14, though, the word מלאכאת refers to various stages of the rebuilding work, even the preparatory work, which would have consisted of removing debris from the construction site and acquiring the necessary building materials. The people should be motivated to begin “work in the house of YHWH” (והות פלאכתות בנייה).

From Hag 1:14, one may conclude that the people and their leaders were enjoined to submit themselves to reconstructing the temple. When left ignored, this command was soon re-emphasised by the activity of YHWH himself. YHWH stirred up the spirits of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people to take responsibility for the Jerusalem temple restoration. Their important transition towards the temple rebuilding was a source for great hope.

Hag 1:15

בומי תשורים וארבמות לוהותadesh ובשנה תשויות לחרות המלך

This was on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.

The closing verse of the first chapter of Haggai is solely composed of the adverbial description of time. The manner of dating occurs with the sequence of year-month-day thereby inverting the sequence of day-month-year from Hag 1:1.\textsuperscript{111} Identifying the regnal year first certainly draws attention to the designated time period, which was in 520 BCE. By emphasising the historical situation of this moment, Judah was reminded of the importance that they be ready to supply all necessary supplies for imperial campaigns attempting to suppress the recurring rebellion in Egypt and to expand the imperial territories. It was to facilitate these imperial acts that Darius empowered the Jerusalem temple restoration, which would secure economic and military support from Judah.

\textsuperscript{110} BHS suggests that should follow in Hag 2:15-19. This suggestion would come from the consensuses: the double dating between Hag 2:15a and Hag 2:15b–2:1; the lack of dating of Hag 2:15-19 as a separate unit. However, one should note that both Hag 1:1 and Hag 1:15 actually happens on the same month. Also, Hag 1:15b does not reiterate Hag 1:15a. Therefore, there is no need to adjust the text.

\textsuperscript{111} The definite date formula at both the beginning and the end of this chapter is exceptional. Normally, such dates are only placed at the end of a textual unit. This suggests that the verse was intended to be read in relation to the following chapter. Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 36; Mason, The Book of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, 44.
However, the Judean reality was just the opposite. What the text demonstrates is that a drought resulted in a terrible economic drain in Judah, so the province was unable to provide the requested support and taxes. This turn of events threatened Judah with political crisis. Facing such a grave predicament caused the people to reflect on what they should do. Haggai’s resounding response was that they should commit themselves to restoring the Jerusalem temple. The immediacy of this demand is indicated in that no time seems to pass between the temporal descriptions in the opening and closing verses of the chapter. Since Judah was such a small province, it depended on political alliances with neighbouring powers. This is why Haggai puts his promulgations within this historical agenda.

Concerning the temple building or rebuilding story, it is true that Biblical accounts of temple building draw on conventional literary patterns which were common to the ancient Near East at that time. Though similarities to these literary patterns pervade the royal building inscriptions, these inscriptions also modified the patterns for functionality.

In regard to Haggai’s account of the temple rebuilding, there is one particularly important reference to a restoration account of the temple of the Ebabbar at Sippar in the second year of Nabonidus (554–553 BCE). This reference shows how signs from Shamash and Adad to the king Sennacherib in Neo-Assyria were vital for the repair of the temple. Nabonidus seemed to have been engaged in a process of religious and political revision, promoting the moon god, Sin, at the expense of Marduk. Then Nabonidus, who had been


114 Hurowitz studies literary accounts of the temple-building and highlights six key elements, although they do not necessarily occur in every account. He also demonstrates some parallels between building stories of the ancient Near East. Drought and crop failure in Haggai (Hag 1:3–10) may be cautiously compared with a letter by Ili-îpsâra. Temples as residences for deities parallel verses Hag 1:4 and 9. In Nabonidus’s inscription, two passages contain commands in synonymous languages of Hag 1:8: “to gather building materials” and “to build a temple.” Furthermore, Nebuchadnezzar’s inscriptions may be compared to the phrase “YHWH stirs up the spirit” in Hag 1:14. Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (JSOTSup 115; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 32–64, 131–62, 209–15, 220.

115 Barstad, “Haggai Among the Prophets,” 274.

commanded to rebuild the temple, sought the aid of master-builders and canny architects, and successfully rebuilt the temple.

It is true that variations in religious policy and in official appointments within the empire serve as clues to the history of the king’s reign, especially those distinctive descriptions of the state of the economy and the deployment of the army.\footnote{Kuhrt, \textit{The Ancient Near East}, 598–603; Briant, \textit{From Cyrus to Alexander}, 70–76; Dandamaev, \textit{Political History}, 103–77.} In the second year of his reign, as with Nabonidus, in the second year of Darius the Jerusalem temple reconstruction happened in the name of YHWH. Particularly, it happened on the eve of both repression of the Egyptian revolt and further territorial expansion to strengthen the political and economic power of Darius, not to mention the reinforcement of his authority. And Darius commissioned the imperial officers Zerubbabel and Joshua as the master-builders to accomplish and administer this imperial temple reconstruction.

This study of Hag 1:15 has confirmed that Haggai’s proclamation of the Jerusalem temple reconstruction should be understood within the historical context of the second year of Darius. It was in 520 BCE that Darius accredited the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem, in order to provide economic support for the empire through the temple fiscal administration. Being a small province, Judah would benefit most through compliance with the Jerusalem temple restoration project.

This exegesis on Hag 1:1–15 has further shown that, in the second year of Darius (520 BCE), Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest were commissioned to rebuild the Jerusalem temple (Hag 1:1). Notwithstanding this commission, both leaders expressed disapproval of Darius’s policy of rebuilding the temple. Along with their leaders, the people strongly resisted that it was the time ( السابע) to rebuild the temple (משכן, Hag 1:2). Instead, the people applied themselves to rebuilding the Davidic dynasty (משכן דוד) with Zerubbabel, who was of a local royal lineage (Hag 1:3–4). Evidently, the temple remained in disrepair (אגטר). The people’s failure to obey YHWH’s word and rebuild YHWH’s temple undoubtedly resulted in their crop failure (Hag 1:5–6). Their obstinate passion for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty caused the drought (ביכורים) as punishment for their refusal to obey YHWH’s command. The high value of crops of grapes and olives was spoiled, which was detrimental to the Judean agricultural economy (Hag 1:9–11).

The current economic catastrophe could be stopped by the work of rebuilding the temple (Hag 1:7–8). Haggai, as YHWH’s messenger, enjoined the people to respond
positively, proclaiming that the work of rebuilding the temple was YHWH’s work (Hag 1:12–13). YHWH then stirred up all the individuals’ spirits to begin working on the house of YHWH (Hag 1:14). In accordance, they were to promptly and subserviently engage in the temple rebuilding work (Hag 1:15). Moreover, Haggai emphasised the strong relationship between the temple reconstruction and Judean agriculture.

5.2 Conclusion

This reading of Hag 1:1–15 has revealed the following: Zerubbabel and Joshua were administrative leaders of Achaemenid Judah (Hag 1:1); the people in Jerusalem responded negatively to the temple rebuilding command (Hag 1:2); YHWH’s temple remained in ruins whereas the Davidic palace was being panelled (Hag 1:3–4); there was catastrophic crop failure (Hag 1:5–6); the people were instructed that rebuilding the temple was absolutely necessary (Hag 1:7–8); drought and famine were caused by the people’s neglect of the temple restoration work (Hag 1:9–11); YHWH anticipated the people’s acknowledgement of the importance of rebuilding the temple (Hag 1:12–13); rebuilding the temple required the people’s obedience to YHWH (Hag 1:14); and the temple rebuilding was of utmost importance for the wider Achaemenid economy (Hag 1:15).

Furthermore, this study also reveals several interesting features of chiastically-rearranged parallelisms in the structure of the chapter. Some of the structural parallels emphasise similarities in content (e.g., Hag 1:1//Hag 1:15, Hag 1:5–6//Hag 1:9–11) while others show differences in content (e.g., Hag 1:2//Hag 1:14, Hag 1:3–4//Hag 1:12–13). Hag 1:7–8 functions as the culmination, or as the centralised symmetrical mark, in the chiasmus construction. In addition to this, the writer of Haggai uses word play including different “root” meanings like “drought” or “desolate” (נָכַר, Hag 1:4, 9, 11). Moreover, the recurrence of key words such as “time” (אֵ Ży, Hag 1:2 and 4), “house” (אֵ Ży, Hag 1:2, 4, 8, 9), and “build” (אֵ Ży, Hag 1:2 and 8) underlines YHWH’s command to rebuild the temple.

Above all, Hag 1:1–15 highlights the command to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. This task was proclaimed in the name of YHWH during the second year of Darius (Hag 1:7–8). For this task, Darius commissioned Zerubbabel as governor and Joshua as high priest both as overseers (Hag 1:1). It was assumed that their authority would motivate the people to rebuild the temple. However, none of the inhabitants of Judah regarded the command to repair the
temple as mandatory (Hag 1:2). Instead, they worked hard to change the political situation in Judah through investing in the rise of Zerubbabel who was of Davidic lineage (Hag 1:3–4). As a result, the temple remained in a state of disrepair.

In an agrarian ancient Near Eastern society like Judah, drought and famine were regarded as punishment from the deity. Expecting a bountiful harvest, the people sowed a lot but they reaped little (Hag 1:5–6): crop failure could neither provide the people’s requisites of their life nor reap the benefits they had expected from their yields. The worse scenario, drought, led to famine (Hag 1:9–11): the yields of grains, wine, and olives were severely depleted. The Judean agricultural economy was completely ruined.

In this economic catastrophe, YHWH led the people to consider the relationship between the agricultural failure and the temple that remained in ruin (Hag 1:5 and 7). This was the very time to rebuild the Jerusalem temple (Hag 1:8). Haggai affirmed that the Jerusalem temple rebuilding project was definitely YHWH’s work (Hag 1:12–13). Also, Haggai ensured that YHWH himself stirred up the spirits of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people in favour of the work of rebuilding the temple (Hag 1:14). Judah was to be faithfully committed to obeying YHWH’s commandment (Hag 1:1 and 15).
6. A Judean Revolt and Its Results: Hag 2:1–23

6.0 Background

Hag 2:1–23 contains the responses of Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the high priest, and the people in Judah to the Jerusalem temple rebuilding claim in the second year of Darius (520 BCE).1

According to Hag 1:1–15, Judah had been ordered to restore the Jerusalem temple’s economy for supporting the empire (Hag 1:1, 7–8, 15). However, along with their two leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua, the people of Judah rejected Darius’s command. Instead, they were engaged with their own hope of re-establishing a Davidic dynasty through Zerubbabel (Hag 1:2, 4, 9). According to Haggai, the messenger of YHWH, Judah’s disobedience to YHWH had been punished (Hag 1:12–14). YHWH caused crop failure (Hag 1:5–6), drought and famine (Hag 1:9–11). Nevertheless, the Jerusalem temple remained derelict (Hag 1:9).

Zerubbabel and Joshua were commissioned by Darius in the name of YHWH specifically for the work of rebuilding the Jerusalem temple (Hag 1:1, 15). Working as imperial administrators, they were to do their best for the Jerusalem temple restoration. However, they never carried out their responsibility. This was a violation against YHWH and a revolt against Darius. As a result, Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the high priest, and the people had to be punished. What follows is an exegesis on Hag 2:1–23. Here, I will touch on some of the problems in relation to the actions against YHWH and Darius.

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6.1 An Exegesis of Hag 2:1–23:
Davidic Rebuilding versus Temple Rebuilding

6.1.1 An uprising to institute the royal authority (Hag 2:1–9)

Hag 2:1

In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the YHWH came through the prophet Haggai, saying,

This unit duly starts with the prophetic language … (the word of YHWH came through the prophet Haggai to …, Hag 2:1–2), as in Hag 1:1 and Hag 1:3. The leading point of this form is the word בָּשָׁבֵית which emphasises Haggai’s role as a representative for both the word of YHWH and the commands of Darius. Generally Darius’s government was facilitated through the satrap, who functioned as an intermediary and managed the satrapal administration. The satrap would preside over the regions within his satrapy, resolving internal conflicts within his provinces and dealing with the disputes that would break out between the provincial governors. 3 Like these imperial satraps, the prophet Haggai continued to function as a prophetic intermediary throughout the disasters both of the failure to rebuild the Jerusalem temple and the breakdown of the agricultural economic system. 4

The word of YHWH came again in the seventh month. 5 Around one month had passed since the prophet Haggai had called Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people to restore the Jerusalem temple. According to the Gezer Calendar, it was towards the end of the festival of Tabernacles in Tishri which begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and continues for seven days. This festival primarily celebrates the gathering of grains, new wine, and oil into storage for the coming year, the ultimate goal of all the preceding agricultural activities

2 BHS marks that the Mur corrects בֶּשָׁבֵית to בָּשָׁבֵית. However, in Haggai’s text, both בָּשָׁבֵית (Hag 1:1, 3) and בֶּשָׁבֵית (Hag 2:10, 20) introduce the intermediary through whom the word comes. Therefore, this adjustment is unnecessary.

3 See chapter 3.2.3 above. See also Harper, ABL, 359, 391, 586, 691; Parpola, Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars, 57, 68, 302, 315.

4 Verhoef, The Book of Haggai and Malachi, 94–95.

5 Meyers and Meyers state that, because of the lack of date, it would be more appropriate for the year to be part of the end of Hag 1 than the beginning of Hag 2. Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 49.
(Exod 23:16–17; Lev 23:34–39; Num 29:12–38; Deut 16:11–15). Then, on the next day of the festival, YHWH would assemble the people. It was generally blessed with an adequate supply of rain for the forthcoming ploughing and sowing season. It seems to follow that those attending the festival must have been extremely keen to receive blessings responding to their needs and desires.

This designated month is also associated with the dedication of the first temple (1 Kgs 8:2, 63; 2 Chr 7:8–10). Solomon, with the people, had held large numbers of sacrifices to celebrate the dedication of the first temple. On the eighth day, then, the people had returned to their homes joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that YHWH had shown to David and his people (1 Kgs 8:64; 2 Chr 710). YHWH’s blessings to Solomon were guaranteed because Solomon and the people remained loyal to him and kept YHWH’s commandments (1 Kgs 6:6, 11–13, 59, 61; 8:57–58; 2 Chr 7:17–33), which demonstrates that Solomon successfully accomplished the Jerusalem temple. Clearly, Solomon’s good fortune is contingent upon obedience to YHWH’s commandment and not to the building of the temple itself. Solomon could expect nothing as a reward merely for the temple construction.

As with this instruction to Solomon, in the case of building the second Jerusalem temple YHWH’s blessing could only be expected through submission to YHWH’s word. So, regarding both the Judean economic and political crises, Haggai highlights the importance of submission to YHWH’s order for rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. It is highly unlikely that dynastic establishment and prosperity were assured as rewards for building the temple or any kind of buildings in the ancient Near East.

The people, as recorded in the book of Haggai, nevertheless, seem to have had some sense that the temple building would facilitate the formation of dynasty as it did David. They recall that David’s desire to build the house of YHWH led to the establishment of the Davidic

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dynasty and the prosperity of the Davidic kingdom (2 Sam 7). This miscalculation never inspires the people to devote themselves to actually restoring the Jerusalem temple. They steadfastly stick to their conspiracy for renewing the Davidic kingdom with the Judean governor Zerubbabel, who is of Davidic lineage.

Hag 2:2

אמרננו אל-רמברל ברשלמלא פחת יורדת
ואל-יהודים בר-_eraseך המן הנוול ע-ל-מניה 9曰 י-ל-אמר

“Speak to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people,” saying,

In spite of the temple’s desolation, it seems quite probable that the people enjoyed gathering there for the feasts of the festival of Tabernacles. Since the royal leader Zerubbabel is clearly of some significance in this celebration, one can imagine that the assembly associated with this festival was a great affair.

In the records from this gathering, in Hag 2:2, Zerubbabel’s name precedes Joshua’s. This denotes that Zerubbabel has retained the primary administrative position. Also, the phrase “the remnant of the people” clearly refers to all the people of Judah except the leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua, as Haggai’s audience, which is likewise the case in Hag 1:12 and 14.

One should be careful to distinguish the people’s response towards rebuilding the Jerusalem temple from their fervour for Zerubbabel which is indicated in Hag 1:12 and 14. Though they had been urged to pledge themselves to the temple restoration with the assurance of YHWH’s blessing the people seemed uncommitted to the task. The people were instead caught up with excitement that Zerubbabel, who was of royal lineage, and charged with the task of the temple reconstruction, was now with them. Thus, they devoted themselves to the building of the Davidic house to demonstrate their support for Zerubbabel.

This course of action was based on the understanding that the establishment of a dynasty would require an accompanying temple building (2 Sam 7). The Davidic lineage of the governor Zerubbabel instilled into the people a false sense of entitlement to him and to an independent dynasty of Judah. At the end of feasts, then, their attention was squarely focused

9 BHS mentions that the LXX has πάντας (π in Hebrew) before πρὶς and this is supported by the Syriac version. This reading would make better sense but I am not sure that this addition is necessary.

on the blessings of YHWH that had been historically associated with the dynastic status Zerubbabel seemed to hold.

The people were clearly seized by the fancy of restoring the Judean kingdom remembered from the time of David. This notion, though, was very different from YHWH’s commandment to rebuild the temple. Therefore, in the seventh month, the month associated with the temple dedication of Solomon’s temple, Haggai invoked the people to obey YHWH and rebuild the temple.

From Hag 1:1–2, it is evident that in the seventh month, against YHWH’s demand for the temple reconstruction, the attention of the people is instead directed to a probable concomitant blessing through Zerubbabel (1 Kgs 8:64; 2 Chr 7:10). That is the restoration of the Davidic kingdom. Meanwhile, in the same month, Haggai puts tremendous emphasis on the importance of obediently fulfilling YHWH’s command to rebuild the Jerusalem temple, as was demonstrated by Solomon (1 Kgs 6:6, 11–13, 59, 61; 8:57–58; 2 Chr 7:17–33). Viewed within this sharp tension, there is cause to doubt the people’s expectation of blessing. Moreover, critical attention from YHWH and Darius to the people and the leaders will become increasingly pronounced.

Hag 2:3

מי себ בָּה הָעֹלָם אֲשֶׁר רֵאָה אֲתֵיהַ בַּהֵמָּה בְּבוֹאֵי הָרָאשֵׁים
רֹמָה אֲשֶׁר רָאָם אַחַר שָׁעָה הָעֹלָם כְּמוֹ אָמָת בָּאֵצֵים

“Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Does it not appear in your sight as nothing?”

Following on from the prophetic introductory form in Hag 2:1–2, this verse develops the dramatic issue which leads the narrative forward, from a rhetorical point of view. In a series of three sentences, YHWH raises questions to the people; “who saw this house in its former glory?” “How do you see it now?” and “Does it not seem, in your sight, nothing?” These queries seem to rhetorically connect what this house did in the past with what it should be doing in the present. In particular, by recapitulating the second question, the third emphatically asks all the people including Zerubbabel and Joshua to assess the temple’s current function with retrospective awareness.

At the start of this passage, YHWH alludes to the great splendour of the first Jerusalem temple that is at the heart of the people inquiring “who has seen this house in its former glory?” From this understanding, some scholars have argued that the focus of the
passage is a comparison between the past and the present states of the same temple.\footnote{11 See Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 162–66; Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 49–50; Assis, “A Disputed Temple,” 583; Verhoef, *The Book of Haggai and Malachi*, 95–97; Meadowcroft, *Haggai*, 148–54; Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 24; Petersen, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 63–64.} In such arguments, the word דְּבָק simply implies the “heaviness,” “glory,” or “splendour” of the appearance of the building itself (Ezek 31:18; Esth 1:4; Isa 4:2; Ps 102:17). Here דְּבָק is exclusively understood to highlight the striking appearance of the temple. Subsequently, Haggai’s proclamation at the temple site would make the people pay tremendous attention on the temple building, because the temple in ruins lets them reflect on the first Jerusalem temple in a time of great prosperity.

However, the term דְּבָק does not modify the temple תֶּבֶנה but the glory דְּבָק of the temple. Therefore, the comparison is not of the difference between the past splendid state and the present shameful state of the temple. Rather, this verse asks the people to reflect upon the first glory of the Jerusalem temple. “What does the first glory of the temple represent?” This interpretation is supported by the use of the word דְּבָק in Hag 1:8. The past glory דְּבָק of the temple denotes that the rebuilt Jerusalem temple will be full of very desirable and precious resources.

From this understanding, it is worthwhile to examine the preposition ב in the phrase “the temple in its former glory” (דְּבָק הַטֶּבֶנה). The preposition leads to an adverbial phrase indicating a condition. This suggests an important shift in focus to what the temple did in the kingdom period, when the glory of the temple was associated with the wealth of Solomon and the breadth of his kingdom. Along with the affluent cash commodities of wheat, wine, and olive oil, Solomon developed commercial trades with Egypt that extended eastward to Arabia (see chapter 2.3.2 above). This shift in focus is intended to invoke the people to consider what role the temple should play in the period of Darius and the Achaemenids.

In the comparison between the monarchical state and the current state, the word דְּבָק has also been identified as the people who have actually seen the Solomonic temple.\footnote{12 See Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 49; Verhoef, *The Book of Haggai and Malachi*, 95–97; Wolff, *Haggai*, 57; Petersen, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 64; Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 164–65.} However, it does not refer to those who have lived longer than seventy years and have memories of the glory of the Jerusalem temple in the kingdom period. It quite simply indicates all the people who are summoned for the Jerusalem temple reconstruction. Keeping the Jerusalem temple of the monarchical time in their minds, they are now called to profoundly consider what this temple should do in the Achaemenid reign, especially in
relation to Darius’s policy.

As a committed builder, Solomon finished the construction of the Jerusalem temple as YHWH had ordered and David had asked from him. For the continuous security and prosperity of the kingdom, Solomon had adhered to all the commandments of YHWH, as the conditions for divine blessing.

In similar manner, Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people should be obedient to the command of YHWH to rebuild the Jerusalem temple for the benefit of his blessings. Towards this end, the prophet Haggai continued to encourage the people, including both leaders, to serve the word of YHWH to rebuild the temple in service to YHWH and as well to Darius. YHWH’s command to rebuild the Jerusalem temple seems to have played a crucial role in assuring the survival of Judah under Achaemenid rule.

Nevertheless, the people and their leaders remained derisive of the temple rebuilding. Without concern for the actual building, they seemed certain that the pretense of rebuilding the temple would be sufficient to restore the Davidic kingdom. They continued to look down upon the temple itself; it was “like nothing” (γαῦ) to them.

The neglect of the temple building by the people received censure in the phrase “is the building not like nothing (γαῦ) at all.” Haggai’s rhetorical question contrasts the current desolate condition of the temple with the monarchical glorious state of the temple. Indeed, when the word γαῦ is accompanied by the particle ζ, it could indicate a comparison referring to the same object. The combination of γαῦζ alongside the comparative particle appears 6 times in the Bible, for example: “is my lifetime as nothing in your sight” (Ps 39:6; 73:2), “all the nations are as nothing before YHWH” (Isa 40:17), or “you will be as nothing” (Isa 41:11–12). Accordingly, this syntax seems intended to prompt the audience to reflect on the function of YHWH’s command to rebuild the Jerusalem temple, such as in Solomon.

This exegesis of Hag 2:3 has demonstrated through a series of three questions that the rejoicing of the people in expecting the restoration of Davidic kingdom is not only premature, but undermined by the temple’s continued state of ruins. For, the people completely fail to reflect on the importance of both YHWH’s word and Darius’s command to rebuild the Jerusalem temple—the importance of which can be seen in Solomon, during the monarchical period. There is no doubt that the people should comply with YHWH’s command to rebuild the Jerusalem temple: this would ensure the economic affluence of Judah.

Hag 2:4

Now, thus, “have courage, Zerubbabel,” said YHWH; “be courageous, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; be courageous, all people of the land,” said YHWH; and “they are, for I am with you,” said YHWH of hosts.

With the adverbial particle הַשָּׁתָּה which accentuates the present moment, Haggai draws attention to exactly what Zerubbabel and Joshua together with the people have set about doing. That is, they decisively persevere in establishing a royal authority through Zerubbabel in the Davidic lineage. After referring to the word of YHWH, they have undertaken the restoration of the Davidic kingdom without attending to the restoration of the temple building.

From the start, the words of YHWH in this verse give credence to the purpose of the people with the use of the verb בָּשָׂח. The verb בָּשָׂח is the masculine single form of a Qal imperative, meaning “to be strong,” “to be confident,” or “to devote oneself to something” depending on the context. Also noteworthy is the expression “I am with you” (~k yna). This phrase might remind the people of the assurance “I am with you,” that YHWH gave to David when he had desired to build the Jerusalem temple. This assurance convinced David that YHWH had cut off his enemies and established high on the earth (2 Sam 7:9). Therefore, בָּשָׂח of this verse is nothing to the interpretation as denoting emotional strength to correspond with the call to fearlessness in the following verse is pointless. Obviously, the word בָּשָׂח with “I am with you” (~k yna) certainly suggests divine blessing in the form of military triumph. In this sense, the restoration of a royal dynasty as a benefit of obeying YHWH is also firmly assured to the people and their leaders, and all individuals that do (~h") so.

The next phrase noteworthy for explication is כָּל עַם (~ק the people). In the

14 BHS suggests that now and are additions. In Haggai, however, each prophetic messenger formula represents the delivery of the word of YHWH. Here, they are used for underlining Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the people actions. The text should not be changed.


17 About the imperative verb דַבֶּר, Kessler notes that it should be seen as an exhortation to continue the work which has been started in Hag 1:12. Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 169. Meanwhile, Meyers and Meyers note the word דַבֶּר is related to its following object מִגָּדְלָה in Hag 1:5. Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 51–52.
kingdom period, the term יְהוּדָה stood for any social class with a small number holding political power. In the Judean kingdom period, however, the expression יְהוּדָה cannot be understood as synonymous with all the people of Judah, instead, יְהוּדָה describes the agrarian social class which had very limited political power. With their political power and economic abilities, יְהוּדָה participate in the restoration of Davidic line in the crisis of the Davidic kingdom.

Certainly, יְהוּדָה played a particular role in determining the succession of the Davidic throne, in events such as these: the overthrow of Athaliah and the enthronement of Joash (2 Kgs 11; 2 Chr 23), the execution of the conspirators against King Amon and the enthronement of Josiah (2 Kgs 21: 23–24; 2 Chr 33:24–25) and the ordination of Jehoahaz after Josiah’s death in battle (2 Kgs 23:30; 2 Chr 36:1). The intervention of יְהוּדָה in political crises secured the succession of David’s dynasty under the name of the whole people of Judah. Reminding his audience of this political history, Haggai intentionally employed the technical term יְהוּדָה instead of the general term “the people.” The use of יְהוּדָה aims to promote the ascendancy of Zerubbabel’s position and to restore the Judean monarchy. This is particularly appropriate to the situation, for the people themselves were self-assured as if they believed themselves responsible for the monarchical restoration.

Haggai’s audience seems to intertwine the terms of כְּעַתָּחָה and יְהוּדָה, confusing Solomon’s temple building with the political purpose of restoring the dynasty. Instead, the phrase כְּעַתָּחָה should be understood as describing the situation when David charged Solomon with building the temple (1 Chr 22:13; 28:20). It was in this context that Solomon quickly applied himself to building the temple. It was with this in mind that, in Hag 1:13, Haggai prompted the people to work on the house of YHWH with the assurance that YHWH is with them. Indeed, it was with this in mind that Haggai expected the people to rebuild the Jerusalem temple with confidence, reminiscent of Solomon.

In light of the people’s swelling aspirations for restoring the Davidic dynasty, Haggai again addressed Zerubbabel first, though this time without his title. This change indicates his diminished position in Achaemenid Judah, as can be seen in Hag 1:12. Meanwhile, the high priest designation can be consistently found alongside Joshua’s name. This evidence has been

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claimed to signify the ascent of the high priest to a place of power over the governor in Judean society. Such claims appear to be unlikely, though, in light of the historical records describing the Judean administration system. At most, Joshua’s consistent designation as high priest indicates the stable position of the high priest in Judean social structure.

The names of at least three governors (πατρά) in Achaemenid Judah can be seen in the Hebrew Bible. In the early Achaemenid period, the governors, Sheshbazzar (Ezra 5:15) and Zerubbabel (Hag 1:1, 14), were of a local royal lineage and appointed to the province of Judah to ensure each region’s administrative efficiency. In 445 BCE, another governor Nehemiah organised task forces to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and to forcibly repopulate the city by resettling a tenth of the inhabitants of other Judean cities (Neh 2:7–9; 7:4; 11:1–2).

Through extra Biblical materials, two more governors can be listed. According to the Elephantine papyri, in 410 BCE, the Judean people that had been stationed as imperial garrisons at Elephantine in Egypt were confronted with a religious problem. The governor of Syene, a city on the shore opposite Elephantine was bribed by the priests of an Egyptian temple adjacent to the temple of the Elephantine Judeans. This governor then ravaged the Judean temple and disrupted their rituals. For three years, starting in 407 BCE, the temple was neither rebuilt nor restored, so the Judean people sought help from the governor of Judah, Bagohi. Additionally, they wrote to Darius II (423–405 BCE), pleading for his intervention.

It is worth noting that there was no longer any development of authorization, nor any investigation into, either Bagohi or Yehizkiyah as local representatives of the Davidic lineage. Only the first two governors, Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel, were clearly shown to be of royal families. Indeed one might deduce that Darius emphasised the royal lineage of Zerubbabel to increase imperial income through the temple’s fiscal administration. Incorporating Zerubbabel’s royal image into the imperial policy seems to have been an attempt by Darius to strengthen Judah’s political allegiance. Hag 2:4 has shown what the people along with Zerubbabel and Joshua did. Three repetitions of the verb “be strong” (נזק) in the imperative form entreat all of Judah to persevere in the restoration of the Davidic house. The phrase נזק נזק is also used to indicate

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20 For Joshua’s ascendency in Zechariah’s visions (Zech 3:1–10; 6:9–15), see Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 50.


divine support of their dream of restoring the Davidic monarchy. The specific expression also indicates the fervour with which the people desired to restore the Davidic kingdom with the royal lineage of Zerubbabel. However, this emphasis on the royal lineage of Zerubbabel is also consistent with imperial policy and financially beneficial to Darius.

Haggai charges the people of Judah to persist in the restoration of Davidic dynasty, which has been impeded by rebuilding the temple. Haggai reminds the people of their obligation to obey the commandments imposed through the Sinai covenant tradition, as is indicated by the phrase, “the word that I made you when you came out of Egypt.” In general, the phrase implies the covenant context between YHWH and his people. The phrase is used to indicate reciprocal agreements between YHWH and his people within the covenantal commandments, and it generally assumes the accompanying word to any Biblical scholars. Haggai is keen to stress these as the covenant terms, and these terms become the backdrop for understanding the repercussions of Judah’s disobedience to YHWH.

Yet the terms remain vague because this verse uses the word not the term. Here, one can see one parallel passage “YHWH made a covenant with the children of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt” (1 Kgs 8:9), which followed the clause “the two tablets of stone that Moses placed in the ark at Horeb.” This passage clearly describes the Mosaic covenant at Sinai and stipulates complete obedience to the commandments of YHWH.

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23 BHS suggests the removal of because the LXX omits this phrase. However, Haggai’s appeal to the Sinai covenant tradition serve the function of obedience to YHWH’s commands. Therefore, the text should be kept.

24 BHS suggests to be read or However, here functions as a preposition. Therefore, should not be seen as a partly deleted form.


27 On the background for the phrase , see Petersen, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 69–70; Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, 47.
Instead of the technical term תרба Haggai alternately uses the term “word” (רבד), which might allude to the word of YHWH that is proclaimed to the people.

As befits Haggai’s intentions, this passage focuses on the word of YHWH to rebuild the Jerusalem temple in the seventh month. As I have argued in Hag 2:1–2 in relation to the temple building, in the seventh month, Solomon finished the construction of the Jerusalem temple in accordance with YHWH’s word and he was assured Davidic royalty and economic prosperity in Judah by YHWH. If the people of Judah expect the same blessings from YHWH in the same month they have to obediently fulfill YHWH’s command to rebuild the Jerusalem temple, as was demonstrated by Solomon.

This paper has argued that the beginning of this verse, in which the particle רָאָה is without its proper verb, should be read as part of previous verse 4. In support of this position, this argument stresses that the distance between verb and object can be seen to emphasise the authority of YHWH’s commandment. Precedence for this interpretation is found in the case of Amos 6:14, “behold, I will raise up against you a nation, the house of Israel, said YHWH, the God of hosts” (׳י...ל...). While the ordinary function of the particle רָאָה is to denote the direct object of the verb, this use of word רָאָה without its accompanying verb requires careful consideration.

This use of the term רָאָה could function as the preposition with or to mark an adverbial accusative, given the context. Without its corresponding verb, the word רָאָה, in this verse, can be interpreted as “according to” or “concerning,” while emphasizing the nominative. As such, this clause “according to the word that I gave to you when you came out of Egypt” strongly implies the requirement of decisive obedience to YHWH’s call to rebuild the temple, as well as confirming YHWH’s protection through the bilateral character of the clause.

This interpretation finds corroboration through examining the following phrase: “my spirit is among you.” Taken literally, “my spirit” (רו) is another reference to YHWH’s manifestation: for example, “come near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there. And now YHWH has sent me.

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29 Wolff, Haggai, 70–71.
and his spirit” (Isa 48:16; see also Isa 32:1–15; 44:3; 59:21; 63:7–14; Zech 4:6; 36:26, 27).\textsuperscript{32} YHWH’s presence invariably provides protection (יהוה) and indeed allows human fear to be removed. Because the phrase “my spirit is among you” implied these provisions, it can be understood as YHWH’s reassurance to his people regarding the temple rebuilding process. This phrase, and the associated provisions, also testifies to the ongoing validity of the covenant.\textsuperscript{33} Therefore, the people and their two leaders need not be afraid of rebuilding the temple, the fiscal administrative centre within the imperial structure. Rather, the people of Judah should be confident, for the presence of YHWH will accompany the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple.

In Hag 2:5, Haggai reminds the people around Zerubbabel of the commandments imposed from the Sinai-covenantal tradition, commandments that run contrary to the desires of the people. These commandments include obedience to the word of YHWH—obedience that Solomon demonstrated in his own building of the temple. Reiterating the covenantal tradition, Haggai appeals to the recalcitrant people to reconsider and fearlessly obey the command of YHWH to build the temple.

Hag 2:6

\textsuperscript{34} BHS notes that the LXX suggests to be read "אֲדֹנֵי בָּטְחָן), which reflects only words אֲדֹנֵי בָּטְחָן. The Syriac version and a Hebrew manuscript read the phrase to אֲדֹנֵי בָּטְחָן. This adjustment might come from difficult translations of the rest words אֲדֹנֵי בָּטְחָן. As I have discussed below, however, Haggai utilise the repetitive sense to emphasise the impending matter. Therefore, אֲדֹנֵי בָּטְחָן should not be omitted.

\textsuperscript{35} BHS suggests the addition of the particle conjunction . Even if this is grammatically possible, it is not necessary to delete because the text itself makes sense.

\textsuperscript{32} Wolff, Haggai, 71.

\textsuperscript{33} Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 170.
presence of YHWH, they implicitly trusted in the concomitant splendour of rebuilding the Davidic lineage at the pretense of the Jerusalem temple rebuilding.

Applying the hope associated with the temple building to the Davidic royalty, the people become increasingly preoccupied with Zerubbabel. By reworking of the monarchical ideology, the people come to believe that Zerubbabel will be the source of their good fortune.\(^{36}\) Focusing on the phrase יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ הָאַ֥דָּם הָאָֽדָם, I will demonstrate that this is indeed their perspective. In this phrase בּוֹדִ֣י הַיָּ֖מִֶשׁ הָאַ֥דָּם הָאָֽדָם, the expression יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ can be identified as commonly occurring in the Bible. Here are some examples: “for in a very little while my indignation will come to an end” (Isa 10:25) and “a little while and the time of her harvest will come” (Jer 51:33; Isa 29:17; Ps 37:10; Exod 17:4). In each case, יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ denotes “soon” or “in a little while.”

Also, the phrase יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ demonstrates some interesting similarities with the repetitive sense of the adverb יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ. Here is one example in which the adverb יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ is used in this repetitive sense: “again I will build you, and you shall be built, again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines … again you shall plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria” (Jer 31:4–5, 23; see also 23:15). Here, one sees the phrase describing an eschatological context, and each use indicates that YHWH will act in favour of his people. The adverbial insertions of יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ and יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ into the phrase יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ can be understood to emphasise the impending future events.\(^{37}\) And then, this phrase becomes translated through the phrase “once again, it will be soon.” With the support of prophetic form יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ אִ֥ישׁ אִ֥ישׁ שְׁמַעְתָּ֖ם, the audience is assured that YHWH will carry out great deeds for his people in the eschaton, even though the time of at which these deeds will take place remains unknown. It seems likely that the people expected their eschatological hopes to be realised upon the completion of the temple.

Within this eschatological perspective, an unspecified date would not have suggested expectation about the very remote future, but rather a belief that very soon YHWH would intercede to rectify the dire condition of his people. This should therefore deter any sustained eschatological interpretations of the verse. The addition of יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ and יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ to the phrase יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ is nothing but repetition of words with the same meaning. Rather, the recurring expression יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ should be interpreted as suggesting a sense of immediacy.

\(^{36}\) Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 52; Verhoef, The Book of Haggai and Malachi, 104; Redditt, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, 25.

\(^{37}\) On grammatical discussion in the phrase יָדִ֣י הַיָּ֔מִ֖שׁ, see Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 173–75; Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 52–53; Wolff, Haggai, 51, 70.
seems evident that the people and their two leaders are confident that their hopes will come to pass soon after their attempt to restore the Davidic dynasty (Hag 2:4).

This perspective emphasises the importance of the word יָדוּ. From a textual understanding of Hag 2:1–9, the use of this conjunction יָדוּ is parallel to the use of יָדוּ in Hag 2:4, wherein the people, together with Zerubbabel and Joshua, confidently expect military victory, based on the example of David (2 Sam 7:9). Reassured by the expression “I am with you,” all individuals develop momentum and perseverance.

Another critically vital word is וּמִשְׁתַּכֵּס, a Hiphil participle form of the root וּמִשְׁתַּכֵּס (also Hag 2:21). The verb וּמִשְׁתַּכֵּס is generally used in two different ways. One of which describes historical battles or destructions undertaken for the sake of YHWH’s judgement; for example “the snorting of their horses was heard from Dan, at the sound of the neighing of their stallions the whole land quakes. They came and devoured the land and all that filled it, the city and those who dwelled in it” (Jer 8:16; 10:10; Ps 77:18–19).

The other use is even more prevalent, wherein the verb וּמִשְׁתַּכֵּס describes the theophanic presence of YHWH, when YHWH roars and the heavens and the earth shake. For example, “the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground (Ezek 38:20) and those who see you will stare at you, and ponder over you. Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms?” (Jer 51:29). This use of the verb emphasises the doomed fate of YHWH’s enemies while conveying comfort to his people.

In Hag 2:6, the subjects of this verb וּמִשְׁתַּכֵּס are cryptically the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land which initially appears to be a description of nature’s cosmic response to YHWH’s eschatological theophanic presence. This eschatological interpretation is quite unlikely, though, considering David’s victories against his historical enemies in the succession of wars that took place during the monarchical period (2 Sam 8–10). So, when relating this verse to the phenomenon of wars, one might consider that charging cavalry,

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38 About connecting יָדוּ to יָדוּ כְּמוֹ הַמַּיִל of Hag 1:5, see Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 173. However, in my reading of Hag 2:1–23, I connect Hag 1:6 to Hag 1:4.


chariots, and wagons also cause the nature to shake. Hence, it could be seen as a sort of euphemism, since the actual enemies cannot be directly mentioned for Judah is under Achaemenid rule and restoring the Davidic dynasty would require a political coup.

Hag 2:7

וְהָרַעְשֵׁרְךָ אֲלֵדֵלוֹתָ Паָאָ חָגֵר
וֹלְעָאתָי אֲרָדְבֵיהֶנְךָ חָוֹז אֶפְרָי יָהוָה עֲבָרָה

“All, I will shake the nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with splendour,” said YHWH of hosts.

The people along with their leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua, assumed that YHWH would first restore the Davidic throne and then defeat all enemies of the Davidic house. This is soon followed by the nations’ coming to Jerusalem. The objects of רָשַׁע are foreign political entities within the atmosphere of war. However, eschatological interpretations of Haggai’s vision have understood this verse to describe not merely Judean enemies, but a transcendent, universalistic dimension over which YHWH rules supreme. This paper, though, interprets the verb רָשַׁע exclusively as a literal description of the response of the nations to YHWH’s acts of judgement. This interpretation is corroborated in the following use of רָשַׁע in Isa 14:16: “those who see you will stare at you, and ponder over you. Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms?” (see also Ezek 26:10–16; 31:15–16). As Isa 14:16 demonstrates, the nuance of רָשַׁע represents the awesomeness of him who causes the shaking of kingdoms and the earth.

The use of euphemism in Hag 2:7 does obscure the identity of the Judean enemies, but this should not throw their existence into question. For political reasons, the actual enemies could not be specified. It seems appreciate to understand the Judean revolt against Darius and his empire in light of concurrent, repeated Egyptian revolts (see chapter 3.1.2

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41 BHS suggests the plural reading of רָשַׁע because the LXX shows the plural form תַּאֹרֶךְ אֲלֵדוֹתָה. This would agree with the following plural verb רָשַׁע. However, a single word which may carry a collective sense would usually lead the plural verb. Therefore this emendation is unnecessary.

42 Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 53.

43 Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 53.


above). During this time of unrest in Darius’s reign, Judah is clearly looking forward to the beneficial consequence of political independence.

In the eschatological view, Judah expected to become at least as an independent sub-province once YHWH had destroyed all the nations postured against Judah. They believed that this independence would in turn be accompanied by economic prosperity since the treasures (המדים) of the nations would eventually be brought (’es) to this house (הכנסת יהודה), that is the house of Judah. The people of Judah hoped for a recurrence of the fortunes from the monarchical period, a connection which is indicated by the word play of “the house” (הבית).

The use of התבית here certainly refers to the Davidic house in the context of the military victory of the previous verse. Likewise, the people of Judah truly believed that YHWH would definitely restore their economic activities through the establishment of her self-governance, as had happened in the Judean kingdom period.

There is also feasible interpretation on Judean wealth in relation to Darius’s building project. Darius gave orders for the continuation of the building of the temple in Jerusalem to the governor Zerubbabel, with the promise of assistance from the district’s revenues (Ezra 6:6–12). Because Zerubbabel is a member of the Davidic line and appointed as a chief political authority within the former kingdom of Judah, this new influx of fiscal support from the imperial government is anticipated as the beginning of the restoration of Judah in the book of Haggai (Hag 2:6–9). However, Haggai, throughout his messages, makes certain the affluent harvest once the Jerusalem temple is rebuilt, not the future restoration of Judah.

The term התבית essentially indicates a “desire” or “precious” object. It was used to describe valuable items whose primary importance was commercial. One parallel use of the term can be seen in Ezek 26:12: “they will steal your riches (התיבות), plunder what you have won by trade, tear down your walls, destroy your luxurious houses, and throw your stones, your timber ….” From Solomon’s time onwards, in addition to the three major agricultural industries of wheat, wine, and olive oil, Judah acquired precious commodities such as oaks, cypresses, and cedars as well as all kinds of precious stones from surrounding nations. This flourishing trade even extended through Neo-Assyria and Neo-Babylonia.

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46 On the imperial campaign led by Darius in 519 in response to rebellion in Egypt, see Berquist, Judaism in Persia’s Shadow, 65–68.


Judah’s desire for the return to this earlier prosperity is evident in the use of Piel form of the verb אָמַר. The noun פּוֹדָה is followed by the verb אָמַר 6 times in the Hebrew Bible, including this phrase; “so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the YHWH filled the house of YHWH” (1 Kgs 8:11; see also 2 Chr 5:14; 7:2; Ezek 43:5; 44:4). Most of these occurrences describe the highly symbolic glory that indicates the presence of YHWH upon the completion of the temple. However, each case that uses the Piel first person form of the root אָמַר with YHWH, as the subject seems to be a reference to material items rather than a reference to a theophanic phenomenon. Take for example, “I will come in after you and confirm your words” (1 Kgs 1:14), “I will fill the valleys with your refuse” (Ezek 32:5), and “I will fill its mountains with its slain” (Ezek 35:8). In these verses, the word פּוֹדָה would be understood to describe the abundance of the desirable and precious things that fortune will bring to the house of David, through their renewed commercial activities.

This exegesis of Hag 2:6–7 has proffered that at the moment of the temple building, the figure Zerubbabel had all the political, economical, and cultural strength necessary to establish Judean self-governance. As a result, the people surrounding Zerubbabel rose up against Darius and tried to restore the Davidic dynasty. The people of Judah anticipated that upon obtaining political independence Judah’s glory would be restored to the levels it had reached in the Davidic kingdom.

Hag 2:8

לֵל הָכִסְפִּי נַל הָהוֹד נַמ הָוֹד עֲמָאָת

“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,” said YHWH of hosts.

In contrast to the actions of the people, YHWH strongly emphasises that the Jerusalem temple’s economic role of increasing the affluence of Judah during the Achaemenids. This verse demonstrates that YHWH is very supportive of the Jerusalem temple rebuilding that Darius has ordered. It also indicates how the restored Jerusalem temple should function in the political and economic context of Achaemenid Judah. It further indicates that between YHWH and all the people, as well as between Darius and the province of Judah, there is a vast difference in opinion concerning the function of the temple building.

Eschatological interpretations of this verse view it as predicting that, like the

aforementioned precious metals of silver and gold, the treasures of the nations will come to the rebuilt temple as booty from war or gifts offered to a suzerain (Hag 2:7).\(^\text{50}\) So for example, “the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria would be carried away before the king of Assyria” (Isa 8:4; 10:13–14; 30:6; Jer 15:13; 17:3; Mic 11:3). This interpretation is quite contrary to the association between the plunder and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. An association demonstrated for example, in this phrase: “it shall strip his treasury of every precious thing” (Hos 13:15; Dan 11:8; 2 Chr 36:10). This eschatological interpretation, though, evinces the belief that YHWH has a right over all that the nations.

However, in the Achaemenid political system, the Jerusalem temple no longer functioned as a shrine which underpinned the royal ideology of the monarchical period. So, this verse should not be understood as a supplementary explanation for the eschatological interpretation of Hag 2:6–7, as a description of the function of the rebuilt temple. Rather, this verse, together with Hag 2:9, demonstrates the practical function for the rebuilt temple. With this in mind, it is important to examine what the silver and the gold symbolise.

The foremost consideration in interpreting this symbolism is an account of the minting of silver and gold as coinages according to an Achaemenid economic standard.\(^\text{51}\) Darius introduced a universal currency known as the daric which resulted in a significant increase of international business (see chapter 3.3 above).\(^\text{52}\) For, expanded interregional networks led to the advancement of commercial trade and a common market economy, which subsequently revolutionised the standard monetary denomination for these interregional trades (see chapter 2.3 above). In addition to which, imperial taxation was normally paid in coins, on top of that which was paid as grain. The coins would then be melted down again and stored as bullion in large jars in the treasury, which would be broken again and made into coins whenever the kings were in need of money.\(^\text{53}\)


\(^{53}\) Coinage was first introduced in ancient Israel during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE through Phoenician merchants trading with Greece. Later on, in the fifth and mainly in the fourth centuries, Judean coins came into circulation. However, Greek coins continue to be in use. Uriel Rappaport, “Numistics,” in Davies and Finkelstein, eds., *CHJ*, Vol. 1, *Introduction: The Persian Period*, 25–26; Haim Gilter, “The Levant,” in *A survey
On this point, the use of the phrase “the silver and the gold” with the particle article, rather than “silver and gold” might be evidence of this standard currency. YHWH can be seen to have promised that Judah will accrue great trade benefits through their international commerciality. This can be seen as the cause of Judah’s increased bounty of agricultural produce. Darius ordered assistance to the Jerusalem temple rebuilding from imperial revenues (Ezra 6:6–12), demonstrating that the rebuilt temple is no longer exclusively a place of ritual. Instead, the Achaemenids are supportive of the temple rebuilding because of its potential for generating wealth.

Hag 2:9

“The splendour of this house will be greater in the latter than in the former” said YHWH of hosts and “in this place I will give peace,” said YHWH of hosts.

The prophet Haggai confirms once again that the splendour of the Jerusalem temple in the Achaemenids will be much greater than that of this temple in the kingdom period. Nevertheless, eschatological interpreters, focusing on the word הָשָׁם, persistently stress that Judah will be elevated and that the house of YHWH will be filled with riches from nations stripped of their treasures. In their view, prophetic messages against the nations are also messages for the kingship of YHWH, indicating that YHWH is returning to Jerusalem to rule over his people and the nations. For this to come to pass, the temple must be restored from which the divine king will rule. Therefore, eschatological interpreters understand this verse to mean that as the house of YHWH (הַר כָּבוֹד) was filled with the splendour of YHWH’s universal sovereignty so the word הָשָׁם also describes the house of YHWH.

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54 BHS notes that the LXX has a long supplemental description after נָבֹא הָשָׁם. It remains καὶ εἰρήνην ψευδής εἰς περιποίησιν παντὶ γίνεται τῶν κτίσματα τῶν ναῶν τῶν. (“and peace of soul as a possession for all who build this temple reconstruction”). However, the people of Judah still disregard building the Jerusalem temple reconstruction. Therefore, the addition is superfluous.


In the Hebrew Bible, however, the word בָּנָן is generally followed by a local nomination, which is understood by a determinative term like KUR in the Akkadian language.⁵⁷ Although this kind of determinative word would not be seen in Hebrew, phrases meaning “the place Topheth” (Jer 19:13) and “the place Shechem” (Gen 12:6) seem to perform the same function. When viewed alongside the parallel passage in Jeremiah, “you shall not see the sword nor shall you have famine because I will give you assured peace in this place” (Jer 14:13), the place in Hag 2:9 does not necessarily represent the Jerusalem temple as the promised place of peace described by the eschatological interpretation.

Rather, “the place” (בָּנָן) indicates the whole land. The Hebrew Bible included three appearances of the noun בָּנָן with the verb בָּנָנ, in the other two of which are: “I shall also grant peace in the land” (Lev 26:6) and “I will give you lasting peace in this place” (Jer 14:13). In each case, the word בָּנָן refers to the real peace within the land. If the people respond with obedience to YHWH’s word to rebuild the Jerusalem temple, he promises peace in the land. This interpretation also accords with the commandment of Darius to rebuild the temple through which YHWH assures the political security of Judah as well. Complete peace will therefore fill all the land of Judah.

In the economic administration of the Achaemenids, the temple project at Jerusalem came to function as the imperial economic and administrative centre, managing the agricultural economy and controlling the annual budget of Judah.⁵⁸ The temple’s responsibilities in fiscal administration were to oversee both land economy and tax collection in the Judean region.⁵⁹

By rebuilding the temple to fulfil these responsibilities that is, enhancing the local economic circumstances and fiscally supporting the Achaemenids, Judah is ensured peace and survival under the Achaemenid rule. In this sense, Haggai’s insistence that the people should rebuild the temple despite the unfavourable conditions is seen not so much as an attempt to vindicate YHWH as a realistic appreciation of the potential economic importance

⁵⁷ Williamson, Ezra, Nehemiah, 112; Myers, Ezra, Nehemiah, 64.

⁵⁸ See chapter 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 above. See also Bongenaar, The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple; Vargyas, “Agrarkrisen und Umfang,” 189–96; Pastor, Land and Economy, 82–86, 115–27.

of the temple.\(^{60}\)

From the advent of centralised government in the ancient Near East, it is evident that the economic affairs of temples have been developed for the financial gain of the central government (see chapter 2.3.1 above). Records of royal inscriptions and temple building inscriptions in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods indicate the pervasive importance of whether the temple is blessed and cursed.\(^{61}\) For example, when the temple has been neglected and lies in ruins, the kings engaged in the rebuilding the temple have been guaranteed military power and have had their territories extended.\(^{62}\) As a result, fields are enlarged, the harvest prospers and abundance ensues.\(^{63}\) Eventually, even the dynastic stability and eternity are guaranteed.

According to the record of Solomon’s temple construction (1 Kgs 6–8), which is literally very similar to that of Haggai, Solomon’s obedience to YHWH’s command to build the Jerusalem temple also preserved the political stability and the economic prosperity of Judah (1 Kgs 6:11–13; 8:57–58). The blessings and curses described in YHWH’s response to Solomon remained contingent on how the kings and their people would respond to YHWH’s words. This is one reason that the Jerusalem temple rebuilding should have been the people’s most pressing concern, and one reason that the temple rebuilding proved pivotal to the imperial economy.

In this exegesis of Hag 2:8–9, I have demonstrated that YHWH was very concerned for reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple. YHWH promised that the rebuilt temple would function economically and politically for the Achaemenids (also Hag 2:3, 5) and that the rebuilt Jerusalem temple would generate the Judean wealth. These two promises were connected, for if the temple successfully supported imperial fiscal gains, then Judah would be assured reliable patronage. The splendour of the Jerusalem temple would be unparalleled. From YHWH’s blessing of the temple reconstruction, it also follows that the enduring poor condition of the temple resulted in subsequent punishments (Hag 2:10–23).

To sum up, this exegetical description of Hag 2:1–9 has shown that Haggai, as the


spokesman of YHWH’s word, called up the people together with Zerubbabel and Joshua to the task of rebuilding the temple (Hag 2:1–2). Yet the people ignored YHWH’s command to rebuild the temple. Rather, they eagerly concerned themselves with rebuilding the Davidic dynasty through Zerubbabel (Hag 2:4). They expected the political independence of Judah and its restored economic splendour to result from rebuilding the Davidic dynasty (Hag 2:6–7). However, their efforts were in violation of YHWH’s command.

Subsequently, YHWH’s messenger, Haggai, clarifies the importance of the temple rebuilding (Hag 2:3). He emphasises that it will create economic prosperity in Judah and then reminds them of the requirement for obedience to YHWH’s commandments given in the Sinai-covenantal tradition (Hag 2:5). He emphasises the blessings associated with rebuilding the temple: it will be the central location of imperial fiscal administration and Judah will finally become a reliable partner (Hag 2:8–9). It follows that, between YHWH and all the people, there is a vast difference in opinion concerning the temple building project, which is emphasised through the play on the word “house” with a different meaning (Hag 2:3, 7, 9).

6.1.2 Upgraded priests’ status (Hag 2:10–14)

Hag 2:10

כְּפַרְדוֹתֵי אֲדֹנָי לְמָשָׁא יִשְׂרָאֵל לְדָרוֹרֵי הָיוֹת נְבֵי הָיָה

On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of YHWH came to Haggai the prophet, saying,

The word of YHWH came to Haggai on the ninth month. It came two months after the festivals of the harvest and Tabernacles, where Zerubbabel and Joshua together with the people keenly expected to celebrate their conniving restoration of the Davidic dynasty. However, this did not happen. The temple reconstruction work that Haggai incessantly pronounced remained of no concern to the people of Judah. So, as a result, their reality unfolded in stark contrast to their desires and expectations. YHWH confronted the people with their derelictions of duty by re-commissioning their charge to rebuild the temple.

The people’s response to Haggai’s invocation of the temple rebuilding causes YHWH’s judgement upon them. His judgement is introduced with the formula אֲדֹנָי רְבִּרְיָה הָיוֹת נְבֵי (the word of YHWH comes to the prophet Haggai). This iteration of the formula demonstrates a small variation from prior uses in Hag 1:1, 3; 2:1 through its use of preposition̲ אֲדֹנָי in place of the term̲ בֶּן. This variation seems to indicate the relatively
restricted audience for this word from YHWH.\textsuperscript{64} However, there is no difference in denoting an intermediary or a recipient in the shift between נָבָא and לֵאמֶר.\textsuperscript{65} This variation is very common in the Hebrew Bible, and can be seen in these examples; “YHWH spoke to Moses …” (Exod 6:10); “… spoke to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt” (Exod 6:11, 28–29; see also Lev 4:1–2; Num 5:5–6).

Now, Haggai is commissioned to deliver YHWH’s judgement regarding the people’s conspiracy for the Davidic dynasty. For, although they created the pretence of obeying Darius’s commandment to rebuild the temple, the people did not attend to the temple rebuilding as their primary concern. Haggai now declares that, as far as YHWH would permit it, Darius could punish Judah for the disobedience to his commands. This clearly indicates that the temple rebuilding project, which is undeniably related to the imperial financial policy, is not merely the work of the Achaemenids but also the work of YHWH.

Hag 2:11

כִּי אָמַר יְהוָה הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשִׁיאֵלָ֣הּ אַחֲרֵי הָעֹלָ֣מִים תֹּאמַר

Thus said YHWH of hosts, “ask the priests a law” saying,

With the authority that כִּי אָמַר יְהוָה הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשִׁיאֵלָ֣הּ (YHWH of hosts says thus), Haggai is commanded to inquire of the priests. Demonstrating the manner of YHWH’s judgement against the general apathy towards rebuilding the Jerusalem temple, YHWH first summons the priests. He wants to interrogate them as if they need to be censured for betraying their duty to teach, in accordance with the word הַקֹּדֶשׁ. The word הַקֹּדֶשׁ is derived from the root קֹדֶשׁ, which in the Hiphil form means “to teach.”\textsuperscript{66} It is used, for instance, in this phrase: “you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes which YHWH has spoken to them by Moses” (Lev 10:11).

In many usages of the word הַקֹּדֶשׁ in the nomination, it indicates the law itself. Here is one such example: “this is the law of the guilt offering. It is most holy” (Lev 7:1; Num 6:21). Especially, in post-exilic texts, the term הַקֹּדֶשׁ describes the Pentateuch, as distinct from the rest of the scriptures; for example, “they built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt

\textsuperscript{64} Petersen, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 72.


\textsuperscript{66} HALOT, Vol. 1, 1710–12.
offerings upon it, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God” (Ezra 3:2; 7:6; 8:1, 8; Mal 3:22). The underlying meaning of “teaching” that the word hrwt itself implies is common to both usages. With this in mind, in Hag 2:11 the term hrwt should be understood as emphasising the teaching role of the priests.

The closest parallel to this use of the term hrwt can be seen in Mal 2:7, “the lips of a priest should keep knowledge and people should seek the law from his mouth.” Malachi’s text includes the word פָּנֵיה instead of the accompanying verb אִשָּׁל alongside the word hrwt. Also, the word דַּעַת is parallel to the word hrwt. These syntactical features clearly emphasise that the priests are destined to instruct the people and that the people should be instructed by their teaching.

It has been considered that Haggai utilises the priestly teaching position as a tool for his prophetic message. He even consults with the priests on the matter of iniquities of the people. This consideration has resulted in claims that the ruling leadership of prophet and the priests alike in the post-exilic Judean society was greatly emphasised.

It is quite true that the priests were clearly qualified for any activities described by YHWH through the term הֵדַע. It was the very matter of teaching, however, on which the priests were judged by YHWH, and questions as to whether they remained deserving to be chosen for teaching the people. For, the association with the verb ברץ demonstrates Haggai’s commitment to ask the priests about the word הֵדַע.

The teaching responsibility of the priests can be understood as being administered by them (Deut 33:10; Ezek 7:26; 22:26; Mal 2:6–9). In relation to the temple fiscal administration for the Achaemenids, on top of their cultic practices, under the leadership of the high priest all priests administered a variety of agricultural activities, supervised the agricultural calendar, and assessed the potential harvest for the next year before fixing taxes. Thus, the priests were obliged to administer the land tenure, to collect and deliver taxes, and to arrange the corvée labourers for both the military and construction work. With this understanding, the priests can be understood to have presided over all sorts of affairs, even the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. Therefore, Haggai does not distinguish between the

67 Meyers and Meyers call הֵדַע “a rabbinic text,” which emerges from the legal texts of the Pentateuch. Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 55.


69 Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 55.
ordinary priests and the high priest in voicing the judgements of YHWH.

From the point of view of the temple administration, similar cases can be seen in the Neo-Babylonian period. Imperial officers, the šatammu (šamtum; סתם חניאל) managed temple finances in a similar way as the priests. Like the priests, the šatammu were associated with the temples and usually took charge of temple economic affairs for political entities (see chapter 3.2.2 above). This relationship between the imperial economy and the temple household continues and consolidates in the Achaemenid period. Judah does not prove an exception in this regard.

Hag 2:12

ךז שאר יח להנ יקול בחק הוה נון בכותפ אל חלוות אל חないように
ואל חפין ואל שמחמד ואל מחמל היקף וпро העכהו ואפורו לא

“If one carries holy flesh in the fold of his garment, and touches with that fold bread, pottage, wine, oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?” The priests answered, “No.”

YHWH once again acknowledges the priests’ authority on matters concerning instruction associated with the word הור. Then, YHWH confronts them with the problems resulting from the current circumstances. The question concerns an instance when sacred meat, that is, the flesh of an animal offered on the altar, is transported outside the sacred enclosure, carried within the fold of a garment.

It has been understood that the holy flesh would have been dedicated to the altar as a sacrificial offering. As a result, it would consecrate anything that it touches— in this case the fold of the garment in which it is carried (Lev 6:20; 1 Sam 21:4; Jer 11:15; Ezek 40:43). The sacrificed meat is carried (שומ) but there is no function of atonement indicated by the text. Therefore, it does not indisputably relate to the effect upon the communication of holiness through indirect contact.

This passage has been interpreted as describing an offering that has been brought as a special sacrifice for well-being (שלום שפתי). This interpretation is based on the consumption of consecrated foodstuffs outside the temple. Such consumption would have been permissible in the case of peace offerings, which involved involuntary and indirect contact between the

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71 See Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 55–56.
consecrated meat and other common foods. So this verse can be seen to describe the securing of YHWH’s blessing on the produce of the land, the flocks and herds, and the people of Judah. By way of eschatological hopes, the verse can be seen to celebrate YHWH’s universal sovereignty.

Also, the query would have been referred to an activity that should not have been undertaken because of the current state of impurity of the existing altar.73

What can be ascertained about the ritual is found in examining the word יָדָרִים (holy flesh). The terminology יָדָרִים is used in its noun form, which designates holy sacrifices being dedicated to YHWH. Every offering that has touched the altar of YHWH is presumably designated as holy, and any kind of cult is thus typified by the nominative (Lev 23). In this context, no matter which explanations are exposit in relation to both the word יָדָרִים and the word יָדָרִים, it is feasible that they would refer to the carrying of an offering by the people or in the ritual ceremony by the priests.74 The term יָדָרִים accordingly denotes the cultic activities that the people have participated in.

It is worth noting that the sacrifice in the ninth month is linked to the forthcoming ploughing and sowing season. It is the time to urgently request the blessing of an adequate supply of rain. With this hope, the people would reflect back on the most recent harvest: though they had sown much but they had harvested little due to the drought (Hag 1:6, 10); YHWH had even blown away their modest harvest (Hag 1:9). The Judean agricultural economic system had broken down (Hag 1:11). All mentioned agricultural products, such as bread, pottage,75 wine, oil, or any kind of food, would have been linked to these agricultural activities (Hag 1:5–6, 9–11). Certainly, YHWH’s blessings had not been manifested in Judah’s agriculture that year.

In this context of disappointment with the previous harvest, the priests answered YHWH’s question without hesitation, and their answer is apodictically negative. This negative answer of the priests has been argued that Haggai’s request for a priestly ruling makes the prophet emerge into clearer focus as a participant in the narrative and explicitly take the priestly ruling, for the priests do not discern between holy and unholy.76 Thus, as the

73 Petersen, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 76–78.
74 Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 55–56.
75 יָדָרִים (“consecrated”) is never used explicitly within a ritual context. It refers to cooked food including vegetables such as lentils and legumes (Gen 25:29, 34; Lev 25:5, 11). HALOT, Vol. 1, 683.
word וּרְאוּ הַיָּמִים it自己 will perish from the priests (Ezek 7:26; 22:26; Mal 2:8–9) the prophet is emerging into clearer focus as a participant in the narrative.

Through the inquiry, however, what YHWH seeks to confirm from the priests is whether they remain qualified to teach the words of YHWH. YHWH never meant that וּרְאוּ הַיָּמִים itself will perish from the priests. Rather, through the correct answer, they demonstrate that, although they have not carried out their duty towards the people, the priests do indeed remain qualified to teach.

This exegesis of Hag 2:10–12 has shown that YHWH reminded the priests of their role of teaching the people to carry out the commands of YHWH. In essence, YHWH has tested whether the priests are still qualified to teach the recalcitrant people to obey YHWH’s commands. They realise that sacrifices that might be connected with an affluent harvest currently provoke no blessing from YHWH. This realisation is supported by the ongoing agricultural disaster in Judah. With this new understanding, the priests can be understood as having renewed their eligibility to exhort the people to be obedient to YHWH’s commandment.

Hag 2:13

יַרְאוּ֛ הַיָּמִים וּרְאוּ הַיָּמִים מְסַרֵּנָה בְּכֶֽלֶדְאֶ֔לֶת הָרְפֵּמָוָ֖ו וּרְפֵּמָו

Then asked Haggai, “if one who is unclean makes a sacrifice with any of these, does it become unclean?” The priests answered “it does become unclean.”

The request for a priestly ruling alerts the priests somewhat to the ongoing reality that urgently needs to be examined. The issued query is related to the sacrificial conduct of one who has become impure, so it is worth commenting on the phrase מְסַרֵּנָה מָשָׁא. The word מְסַרֵּנָה is an adjective in the construct form and confines the nominative מָשָׁא to its meaning “unclean of.” The following noun מָשָׁא initially means to “be breath” in the Bible, further denoting the living being itself (Lev 4:2; Josh 11:14).77 The phrase מָשָׁא מְסַרֵּנָה accordingly could represent a state of being defiled.

However, it has been claimed that the word מָשָׁא is identified with a corpse, as in this verse: “he shall not go in to any dead body (מָשָׁא מָשָׁא), nor defile himself, even for his father or

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76 See Kessler, *The Book of Haggai*, 204–5

for his mother” (Lev 21:11). Yet it has also been understood as describing a case of defilement which results from literally touching a corpse; for example, “I will make my abode among you, and my soul shall not abhor you” (Lev 26:1). A person who touches a corpse is himself unclean (Lev 21:11; 22:4; Num 5:2; 6:6–7; 9:6) and anything that an unclean person touches becomes unclean (Num 19:22). So, the defiled person is ceremonially excluded from celebrating the festival and is sent away from the camp (Num 5:2; 9:6).

This vein of interpretation further suggests that the absolute form of the noun יָם can be interpreted as a corpse. Such an interpretation is seen, for example, in these passages: “they put out of the camp every leper, and every one having a discharge, and every one that is unclean through contact with the dead (יָם)” (Num 5:2); and “here were certain men who were unclean through touching the dead body of a man (יָם)…” (Num 9:6–10). It is very worthwhile that, when describing a dead person, the word ים employs the preposition ב. The noun יָם in Hag 2:12, though, is clearly defined by the construct state of אָפֶן, and it denotes “one who is impure.”

The contrasting application of the noun יָם, is particularly interesting for gauging the sense of the impurity of the defiled person. Haggai is doing very dramatic work here. One interesting verse comes to mind for its similar usage of the noun יָם. Isaiah identifies himself as a man of unclean lips (יָם אֲפֶן) who is not prepared to listen to the word of YHWH to make intercession of behalf of Israel (Isa 6:5). Likewise, the people now refuse to comply with the prophet’s message to rebuild the temple. In this sense, it is quite right that this אָפֶן יָם describes the people of Judah as disobedient to YHWH’s word, for they have only focused on the restoration of the Davidic dynasty. They have violated YHWH’s command to focus on rebuilding the Jerusalem temple, and that is sin.

A person who has become ceremonially unclean offers a sacrifice (יָם) with the same foodstuffs (יִם-יָם) referred to in Hag 2:12, such as grains, vegetables, wine, and oil. This verb יָם primarily means “to touch” or “to reach,” implying some kind of physical contact, depending on the context. In the context of the word אָפֶן, the verb יָם might be intended to


79 Anyone who touches a corpse becomes unclean for a minimum of seven days. Such uncleanness could be overcome by cleansing rituals, using water (for impurity) on the third and seventh days of a person’s impurity. Without such purification, a person defiles the tabernacle of YHWH and that person shall be cut off from Israel (Num 19:13). See Petersen, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 79.
describe a sacrifice. Associated with the previous verse 12, Hag 2:13, the question is: if the recalcitrant people, in response to YHWH’s command, would make a sacrifice with food offerings then would they be blessed?

Clearly, being ritually defiled disqualifies one from taking part in the organised worship, in all its functions and activities. That neither the people nor their offerings are clean, compels Haggai to ask his question.81 The priests subsequently answer in the affirmative: uncleanness in any sacrifice, due to the disobedience of the people, is indeed contagious. This answer quite evidently exemplifies the very situation of the people of Judah.

In this desperate reality, the priests are also faced with deciding what they should do regarding the issue of ritual fitness-defilement.82 This is the very time for the priests to uproot the cause of this vicious cycle. As teaching authorities sanctioned by YHWH, they should do this by leading the people to recognise the priority of rebuilding the temple.

This does not indicate that the high priest Joshua should become the chief ruler of Judean society.83 Though it is likely that the leadership of the community would be left in the hands of the priests (Hag 2:10–14). Indeed, in relation to the imperial temple administration, the priest Joshua should administer a temple economy utilising temples as a means of levying and gathering imperial taxes and tributes.84 Therefore, the temple restoration and maintenance were primary responsibilities of Joshua as the high priest, as they were for Hilkiah the high priest in the time of restoring the temple (Hag 1:1).

From this reading of Hag 2:13, it can be concluded that the people of Judah were defiled by their rebellion against YHWH’s word to rebuild the temple. Their disobedience likewise defiled any sacrifice that they would offer: they had become a ritually defiled people. The onus fell on the priests to redress these terrible circumstances. Haggai clearly entreats the priests to reflect upon the relationship between the current agricultural disaster and the disobedience to YHWH’s command of temple rebuilding. This is the very time to confirm the role of the priestly rule over the people, especially in the temple rebuilding.


81 The binary semantic oppositions are שֵׁן and לֵד or רָזוֹן and אָסִים. Thus the juxtaposition of שֵׁן and אָסִים is somewhat unusual. The fourth term, however, can be understood as constituting the continuous sequence (Deut 14:2–3, 21; Ezek 22:26). See Petersen, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 74.

82 Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 56–57.

83 Grabbe, An Introduction to First Century Judaism, 34–36.

84 Carroll, “So What Do We Know about the Temple?” 41–43; Lipschits, “Achaemenid Imperial Policy,” 32–34.
Hag 2:14

Then Haggai said “so it is with this people, and with this nation before me,” said YHWH, “whatever they do and whatever they offer, there is unclean.”

Disobedience to the command of YHWH to rebuild the temple is the underlying reason for the resulting catastrophe. At the moment when the priests acutely recognised the need to heed YHWH, Haggai provided the application of the priests’ instruction by asserting the importance of the temple project. In this context, it is very valuable to define the following phrases in this verse more closely. To whom does “this people” (יהיה) refer? Who is “this nation” (יהיה)? What does “all the work of their hands” describe (כל-משתתפIDAD)? And what is it that “they offer there” (את-ךירצכם)?

The first phrase יהיה has already been used to designate the people, excluding Zerubbabel and Joshua, in Hag 1:2, where this people would rather build the Davidic dynasty than YHWH’s temple. The preference evidently conflicts with YHWH’s, and as a result YHWH calls this people ritually unclean before his presence.

With regard to the following term יהיה, there have been arguments wherein those who see an allusion to Samaria in the noun יד or in the adverb ב. However, it is quite unnecessary because Haggai at no point credits Samaritan opposition with responsibility. When the term יהיה appears in the Hebrew Bible, at times it carries an overtone of reproach, which accords with this context, in which the people have disobeyed the voice of YHWH. Here are two similar cases: “shall I not punish this nation for these things? says YHWH …” (Jer 5:29); and “this is the nation that does not obey the voice of YHWH their God, and does not accept discipline, truth has perished. This nation is cut off from their lips” (Jer 7:28).

There are also some fine cases where the unclean people are further addressed as a
sinful nation. Here, for example, are two such instances: “sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who deal corruptly…” (Isa 1:4); and “against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets” (Isa 10:6). There remains significant overlap between the use of “people” and “nation” together.

In Haggai’s use of the term הַֽעֲדָה, it also seems to describe the whole community, including the two leaders that had been excluded from the term “this people,” for the word “nation” generally refers to a political or an administrative unit. Unquestionably, the leaders have been as apathetic as the people in heeding the command of YHWH regarding the temple project. So, in spite of a slight expansion of semantic range, it is conceivable that “this nation” merely reiterates “this people,” emphatically affirming the contagious state of impurity described above.

Obviously, this general iniquity affects all the work of their hands (כָּל-הָעָמִד חֲזֵרָה). In the context of Haggai, where agricultural activities are taken for granted, the meaning of this expression should give reference to Hag 1:6, 9–11 or Hag 2:16–17. Among which, the most obvious contextual reference for this phrase is the meaning in Hag 1:11 which designates the comprehensive catastrophe befalling the agricultural produce. All the efforts that the people have made within the realm of agriculture have been in vain, since YHWH has not blessed the land.

This tragedy deservedly has implications for the cultic area. This connection is attested to by the verb בּּֽרְעָּ in the Hiphil form, which is frequently used to describe the presentation of sacrifices, especially at the altar. Here is one such example of this use: “he threw the blood round about against the altar (בּּֽרְעָּ) that was at the door of the tent of meeting” (Lev 1:5; 3:3–9; 9:7; Num 16:9–10).88 The contagious nature of defilement of the people, their economic undertakings and all their sacrifices have become impure, and consequently, unacceptable to YHWH.

The impurity of the people prevents them from reaping benefits and poses a very real threat to whether the presence of YHWH will remain among them. One striking analogy can be found in Jer 14:10–11, “thus said YHWH concerning this people, they loved to wander and they did not restrain their feet. Therefore, YHWH did not accept them, now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins.” And YHWH said to me “do not pray for the

welfare of this people” (also Jer 6:19–21). Similarly, in the context of the people’s failure to restore the temple YHWH rejects them, their offerings and their economic activities. Obedience to YHWH’s command to rebuild the temple is evidently crucial to his blessing.

This study of Hag 2:14 has demonstrated that the people failed to act in accordance with YHWH’s word. Their disobedience ritually defiled them and especially their leaders. Their impurity subsequently defiled all other activities in which they engaged. Faced with impending calamity, prompt obedience to YHWH’s command to rebuild the Jerusalem became crucial.

From the study of Hag 2:10–14, it has been clear that the people continued neglecting the command of YHWH to rebuild the temple. Instead, they preferred to attempt a rebuilding of the Davidic dynasty through Zerubbabel. Their disobedience made the people recalcitrant to YHWH and his word. As a result the people were ritually disqualified and the sacrifices of this ritually defiled people were rejected (Hag 2:10–12). YHWH withheld his blessings from their agriculture. In the ensuing catastrophe, Haggai roused the authority of the priests to enlighten the people (Hag 2:13). The status of priest was infused with authority. Now, elevated, the priests were to promptly instruct the people to obey YHWH’s command to rebuild the temple in order to overcome the current economic disaster (Hag 2:14).

6.1.3 Crop failure (Hag 2:15–19)

Hag 2:15

“Now, consider the time from this day on when one stone is placed on another in the temple of YHWH.”

In this verse, YHWH exhorts the people to reflect upon what they have chosen in which YHWH refers to the people in the second person, as the object of his blame. It is unlikely that they are indirectly designated as the third personal plural by talking to the priests about “this people” in the previous unit (Hag 2:10–14), where the defilement of the people has already been claimed.

With the phrase תָּבָא, this verse focuses on the people’s heart towards the issue in

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89 BHS suggests posting יָפְס at the end of Hag 2:15–19, to connection it to the first half phrase of Hag 1:15. As I have discussed in the exegesis of Hag 1:5 above, יָפְס leads the unit of Hag 2:15–19, and lets the people consider the Jerusalem temple-rebuilding project. Therefore, I will keep the text as it is.
question, as did Hag 1:5 and Hag 1:7. To demonstrate that, it is important to note the phrase מַעֲלָה מַעֲלָה. The word מַעֲלָה usually highlights the immediate context; for example “the spirit of the YHWH comes mightily upon David from that day forwards” (1 Sam 16:13). The term describes moving forward from a particular, defined moment.

Additionally, the term הָתַּן provides a rhetorical marker that distinguishes a new speech with considerable force (Hag 2:15–19). It draws immediate attention to a textual transition, emphasizing the different situation in situation such as in Hag 1:5. So, it can be translated as “now” focusing on time that is concurrent with the perspective of the discourse.

Now (וַיָּתַן), Haggai announces emphatically, “consider the time from this day on” (Hag 2:15a).

In connection with the following phrase, the people are exhorted to pay attention to the day “when one stone is set upon another stone in the temple of YHWH” (Hag 2:15b). The phrase “in the temple of YHWH” (דֶּשֶׁחַ יְהֹוָה) appears 6 times in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 3:3; 2 Kgs 24:13; 2 Chr 29:16; Zech 6:14, 15), each of which designates the spatial sense of the temple of YHWH. The recurring combination of verb יַסְתַּמֵּשׁ with the word בֵּית means to “set up,” “put,” or “establish” in a physical sense of establishing or setting something up. So for example, “Samuel takes a stone and sets it up between Mizpah and Jeshanah, and calls its name Ebenezer” (1 Sam 7:12; also Josh 10:27). Haggai, in contrast, strongly urges the people to note “this day” when one stone is supposed to be set upon another stone in the house of YHWH as a kind of watershed moment.

Therefore, it is unnecessary to extrapolate that the foundation for the temple has already been laid. Nonetheless, this phrase has generally been taken to indicate the time when the foundation stone of the second temple was laid. According to Ezra 3:8, 10–11, Sheshbazzar undertook preliminary work on the clearing of rubble and began reconstructing the foundations of the temple. This interpretation depends on an alternative understanding of the phrase מַעֲלָה מַעֲלָה, though as describing a backwards movement from a defined moment. However, focusing on the concurrency, this verse lets the people picture the

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90 HALOT, Vol. 2, 1483–86.


desirable contradiction to all that they have been experiencing up until this point once the Jerusalem temple is rebuilt.

To put it more directly, this phrase inspires the people to reflect on what they have done in relation to the temple rebuilding and whether they have had the requisite sense of urgency. Therefore, it is quite conceivable that Haggai employs a sort of rhetorical device to intentionally reinforce the link between the state of the people’s mind and the state of the temple. This moment of reflection requires the renewed authority of the priests to guide the people.

When the need to rebuild the temple reaches a pinnacle, though, the people are with Zerubbabel, who is of the royal house of Judah and through whom they have persistently attempted to establish Judean independence (Hag 1:4, 9). The people expect that all Judah’s enemies will be defeated and that Judah will thrive with the plundered treasures, as is indicated in Hag 2:6–7 upon the restoration of the Davidic dynasty. However, the reality could not be in greater contrast: Judah remains under the Achaemenid rule and their agricultural industries are in ruins. This is the circumstance in which Haggai exhorts the people to contemplate their current experience and to compare this with the blessings that will accompany obedient work on the temple.

From the exegesis of Hag 2:15 YHWH summons the people who have been doing as their hearts desire back to obedience. Though they dreamt of the prosperity that the restoration of Davidic dynasty would bring, they were punished with severe agricultural distress. Haggai befittingly entreats the people to imagine the ensuing results of rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. The people are now challenged to turn towards the good way, towards obedience.

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Since they were, “when one has come to a pile of twenty measures, it only amounts to ten. And when one has come to the winepress to draw fifty measures from the vat it only amounts to twenty.”

The beginning word מְהֵימָה is composed of an infinitive construct of the verb היה carrying a third person plural possessive suffix with the particle preposition מ. So, a literal translation would be “since they were.” Haggai now comes back to the Judean reality and continues to push the people to reflect on their disobedience and the ensuing economic catastrophe.

Their attempt to restore the Davidic dynasty obviously has not led to YHWH’s blessing on their agricultural industries, and their agricultural reserves are severely depleted. This reality demonstrates a striking difference from the harvest expected to result from obedience to the word of YHWH. Therefore, the people should carefully consider how these days have been unfolding since they obstinately declined to build the house of David.

Stemming from the imprudent choice of the people, their agricultural production has been ineffective and fruitless. The people come to granaries (חֵמָה) in order to store the harvest despite the paucity of their produce (Hag 1:6).

The word חֵמָה itself is a rare word and the verbal form from which it derives is used only once in quite a different context: “the waters are piled up” (Exod 15:8). Although Haggai does not mention anything about the type of produce, the granary would be used for...
storing cereals such as grains. The verse describes people bringing their crops in twenty measures (שׁתרים) yet it only amounts to ten (שׂתרים) indicating that half of the amount in storage has frustratingly disappeared, as in Hag 1:9.

The people also bring their harvested grapes or olives to stone presses (בַּקָּע) to draw wine or to squeeze olive oil. The term of בַּקָּע describes an installation hewn in a rock near or in the vineyard. Here are two other similar uses, for example: “he hews out a wine press in the vineyard” (Isa 5:2); and “presses (בִּקּוֹפְקָה) shall overflow with wine and oil” (Joel 2:24). The people bring fifty measures (תּוֹם) into the installation (בַּקָּע) yet it only amounts to twenty a vat (וּרְפָא). The pressing installation וּרְפָא is normally used for wine and oil. This indicates that the worst decrease has appeared in both the wine industry and the oil industries. This paper has already shown that these industries were of particularly great significance to the Judean economy. All three crucial and competitive commodities throughout Judean economic history had come to complete ruin demonstrating the complete contrast between the people’s desire and their reality.

One crucial point to this analysis is the difference between the proportions of the yield the people expected and the amount of produce they actually resulted. This difference of proportion also represents the actual decreased amount of consumption by the people. The crop that they yielded fell by 50% and 60%, which was much short of that of their average year.

The reductions of 50% and 60% indicate the sheer scope of the problem, even though it does not represent exact amounts, because even a small decrease in supplies would have greatly endangered the livelihoods of many. Even in an average yield, the price difference of products could rise from previous financial years by 100%. In the shortfall of the harvest, however, the difference in price reached levels of up to 433%. So, it certainly follows that the people were bitterly troubled by the severe economy.

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99 Storage granaries are above ground. Normally they do not belong to individuals but to a large social organization, such as the state. Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age*, 76–78.

100 There are at least three types of winepresses: (1) a press hewn in the rock within or next to the vineyard, (2) a press built of stones and mortar within the confines of a city and (3) a portable stone press. Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age*, 111.

Hag 2:17

“102 אַלּ הָעֵצְמָה יָדֵךְ וְנִיְרֵךְ גַּבֵּרָא אֲחָא בָּרֵכַר אָחְא הֵלִם גְּשָׁפָהוּ אֵימָה

וּוָיָּא חַיָּהוּ אֲלֵי נָא יְהוָה

“I have struck you and every work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail. Because you are not with me,” YHWH declared.

This verse puts forward the explanation for why the people yielded the terribly meagre harvest. As in Hag 1:9, where YHWH had explained the reasons why he blows even the modest harvest away, Haggai proclaims YHWH’s strong judgement from the first person perspective. Certainly, YHWH has taken responsibility for the breakdown of the economy.

This description of this disastrous situation begins with the verb הָקַנּ, which is in the Hiphil form (Num 18:28; Judg 15:16; 2 Kgs 6:27; Jer 33:5; Ezek 22:13). It expresses “to strike” or “to smite” with a causative nuance which attributes a fatal disaster to the punishment of YHWH. So for example, in the case of this phrase: “I killed a thousand men” (Num 18:27). With describing agricultural yields, the word הָקַנּ alludes to “poor harvest” or “malformed crops.” There is an analogous expression with a preposition in Amos 4:9; “I smite you with scorching blight and mildew. And the caterpillar is devouring your many gardens and vineyards, fig trees and olive trees.” In both verses, YHWH has summoned all sorts of diseases as a punishment through the form of agricultural catastrophe.

By this point in the textual record, blight, mildew, and hail have afflicted the crops. The resulting poor harvest and the malformed produce are unsurprising.104 For, blight (םָּסֵחֲ) is a fungal crop disease that attacks mainly cereals on the eve of the harvest, and the effects of which are exacerbated by the hot desert winds. Mildew (מָלְאָ) appears with the damp wind, and is active in the opposite context as blight in terms of the degree of humidity. It too is a fungal disease, which infects grains with paleness. Finally, the presence of mould in leaves intensifies and spreads in both moist and warm conditions.

These two diseases often appear together in the Hebrew Bible, and together they wreak havoc on the agricultural yield. As if that were not bad enough, the crops have also

102 BHS suggests that יָדֵךְ is an addition from Amos 4:9. However, the emphasis here lies on what YHWH has done in the current crop failure. So, the phrase does not seem to be taken from Amos 4:9.

103 BHS notes that the LXX has αὐτὶ όλῳ ἐπιστρέφατε, followed by the Syriac version. BHS, therefore, suggests the correction סָכַת סִלּ ("but you did not turn yourselves"). The Vulgate and Targum are support the LXX. The meaning is much the same either way. So, I will keep the text as it is.

been struck by hail (דב), which is also described as “stones of ice” in Josh 10:11. There was little way to protect crops against hail, and one can imagine the devastating effects of hail on Judah’s ailing crops.

The Hiphil perfect first person of the verb הָנָה with the preposition מִנָּה appears twice in the Hebrew Bible. The other case can be seen in Jer 2:30, “I have struck your sons.” The verb הָנָה with the preposition מִנָּה clearly highlights the definite object.\(^{105}\) The objects that YHWH intends to inflict are the people and all work of their hands (יִרְדָּסְתָּם בְּיָדָם). The meaning of the item יִרְדָּסְתָּם with the word בְּיָדָם indicates every sort of “work,” “labour,” “accomplishment,” or “achievement” that the people have done.\(^{106}\) These are two corroborating examples: “because the sons of Israel have been only provoking me to anger by the work of their hands, declares YHWH” (Jer 32:30); and “they might provoke me to anger with all the work of their hands” (2 Kgs 22:17). Compared with Hag 1:11, Hag 2:17 clearly and concretely indicates which objects will be damaged: on account of the severe disaster caused by YHWH, nothing will grow.

A drought is then combined with hail and the crop diseases of blight and mildew. The addition of another affliction to the time of crisis results in unimaginable famine, even beyond the crop failure. For, drought causes extensive damage to the harvest as well as to animals. It leads to further big losses in the interregional trade. The textile industry becomes unexceptionally stricken. In this whole breakdown of the agricultural economic system, the survival of the people no longer seems possible. Furthermore, the extreme shortage of daily provisions causes the increased demand and a subsequent sharp rise in market prices. As a result the people of Judah have an extremely hard time in surviving no less paying their imperial taxes. Judah’s failure to support imperial financial demands for the Achaemenid Empire could generate a political crisis of Judah.\(^{107}\)

Nonetheless, the people of Judah remain disobedient to YHWH (שָׁבַע). They obstinately reject Haggai’s proclamations that persistently encourage them to rebuild the temple. Haggai beseeches the people to obey YHWH by twice using the phrase “I am with you” (1:13; 2:4) to encourage the people to work on the temple restoration. It is evident that the condition of the land comes to reflect the disobedience of the people to the word of

\(^{105}\) Waltke and O’Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax, 433–36.


YHWH concerning the temple project.

From Hag 2:16–17, it has been shown that YHWH sent judgement upon the people for leaving the temple in ruins by way of hail and crop diseases blight, mildew. This results in the scant harvest from which people suffered so severely. This breakdown emerges at first subtly (Hag 1:6) and then more explicitly (Hag 1:9; 2:16), finally leading to a catastrophe that greatly affects the people’s lives. Agricultural structure is totally broke down as YHWH completely withdraws his blessing from the recalcitrant people and their every work.

Hag 2:18

“Consider the time from this day on, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. From the day when the temple of YHWH was founded, consider.”

The beginning phrase “consider the time from this day on” of this verse is the same as that of Hag 2:15, except for the first word שֶׁ. This retrospective clause in the form of imperative expression indicates that the people’s thoughts are not merely being directed back over all that they have been experiencing up until this point. Rather, they are being so directed with the developmental purpose of stimulating reflection about the contrasting blessings that will be given from the first day that they begin working on the temple project. Promptly, the people should shake off the vain deception and focus on what lies ahead.

Haggai emphatically entreats the people to look towards the newly opened future, in contrast to their forlorn reality. The turning point will be the day that the temple of YHWH begins to be laid, since, in doing so, the people are demonstrating obedience to YHWH. Indeed, the verb דָּסַי used here in a Pual form confirms this as the turning point. The intensive passive form of the verb דָּסַי is used 4 times in the Hebrew Bible, including these verses: “the foundation of the house of YHWH was laid” (1 Kgs 6:37); “the foundation of the temple of YHWH is not yet laid” (Ezra 3:6); and “the day that the foundation of the house of

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108 BHS suggests that שֶׁ is a gloss, claiming that this is an attempt to harmonise the text with Hag 2:10. However, YHWH’s judgement is announced to Joshua (Hag 2:10), the people (Hag 2:18), and Zerubbabel (Hag 2:20), on the same day. Therefore, the text gives very meaning.

109 BHS suggests that the phrase דָּסַי is an addition. However, there is no reason to assume that the temple foundation is laid. This verse just indicates that temple rebuilding should be begun now. Therefore, BHS should not be taken.

YHWH of hosts is laid, that the temple might be built” (Zech 8:9). Each of these verses uses the term הַזֶּ֖רֶךְ to describe the temple construction or reconstruction. The prophet Haggai now highlights the work of building that the people are to engage in through the passive form.

When read alongside Ezra 5:16, which uses the Sumerian loanword ṣu₆₃₃ to describe “foundations or footings on bedrock,”¹¹¹ Sheshbazzar seems to be involved in the actual laying of the foundation stone or in the attendant ceremonies. Moreover, in Ezra 3:6, 10, 11 and Zech 4:9, the root הַזֶּ֖רֶךְ has been used in reference to the temple’s foundation. On this view, this verse has been connected to a foundation-laying ceremony to establish continuity between the old and new temple: it is because of the opposition of Judah’s enemies that the rebuilding of the temple has been frustrated (Ezra 4:1–5);¹¹² it is because of the removal of a brick or stone from a destroyed temple or building and its placement in the foundations of a new structure.¹¹³ However, there is little additional reason to interpret this verse as describing the laying of the foundation of the temple. As in Hag 2:15, the temple project is still the compelling work that the people should be motivated to begin.

Haggai specifically clarifies that in “the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month” the temple rebuilding should be begun. Also, Hag 2:18 is a record from around the time of the season for sowing wheat and barley and then starting to plant legumes and vegetables. Mapping the relationship between the arrangement of the agricultural activities and the commencement of the temple rebuilding actual point demonstrates that, for an affluent harvest over the coming sowing season, an agricultural calendar should be supervised by the rebuilt temple. For the purpose, the Jerusalem temple reconstruction should be urgently begun.

Above all, Judah is compelled to rebuild the Jerusalem temple to govern and develop their agricultural activities, while trying to improve their economic relationships and advantages. With the last word, “consider,” Haggai decisively exhorts the people to look forward to the time when both the sowing will be sown and they will commence the temple reconstruction. This is the time for the people to act in a way that will precipitate blessings, and to live in the promise of the future.

¹¹¹ C. G. Tuland, “‘uššayyã and ‘uššarnã: a Clarification of Terms, Date and Text.” JNES 17 (1958): 269–75.
Hag 2:19

“Is the seed still in the storage? Even the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree, has it not borne fruit? From this day I will bless you.”

Once again, speaking about the commencement of the temple reconstruction implicit in the previous verse, Haggai leads the people to the promise of divine blessing using these rhetorical questions: “is the seed still in the storage?” and “even the vine, the fig, the pomegranate, and the olive tree, has it not borne fruit?” In the queries, the rhetorical interrogative particle ו of the first word, המ is used to emphasise the crop failure, which might suggest persuaded assent in the expression of the interrogator.116 The answer to the question “is the seed still in the storage?” should be categorically no. Ordinarily seeds of grains in an individually-owned grain pit or storage room (חありがとうございました) would be protected from spoilage once next year’s seeds have been put aside, yet at this time the wheat and barley seeds would have been very scarce as a result of the scant harvest.117

The following enquiry is: “even the vine, the fig, the pomegranate, and the olive tree, has it not borne fruit?” alongside the interrogative first sentence, this second sentence renders a negative-declarative sentence linking to the negative answer inspired by the first question. Rhetorically these parallel questions function to emphasise the desperate economic situation of the people. Referring to fruit-bearing trees, the verb קנה designates the yield of their respective fruit. This verse demonstrates the same pattern: “the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield” (Joel 2:22). The answer to the second question in Hag 2:19 is obviously and repeatedly “no.” None of the fruit-bearing plants named in Hag 1:11 has borne fruit. The agricultural reality is certainly deplorable insofar as everything, even into the next wave of production remains uncertain and unstable.

Then, the prophet Haggai abruptly announces YHWH’s blessing: “from this day I will

114 BHS suggests the addition because the following verb is singular. However, a singular replacing a plural or a plural replacing a singular is very common in Hebrew.

115 BHS suggests correction or because of no verb. However, verb-less sentences are very common in Hebrew. Therefore, this adjustment is unnecessary because the phrase itself makes sense as it is.


117 Hopkins, Highlands, 213–34; Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age, 71–73.
bless you.” The word יִרְבָּא is mainly used in the Piel form in the Hebrew Bible, though a first person expression of YHWH (יִרְבָּא) is very rare—such as, “I will abundantly bless her provision” (Ps 132:15). This expression certainly denotes that the change from cursing to blessing is assured by YHWH himself. So, this expectation itself would have seemed very compromising, despite not distributing any immediate bounty of produce to make up for the previous reduction (Hag 2:16).

The inauguration of change is therefore noteworthy though it does not mention the exact day. The day is merely linked to the commencement of the temple rebuilding (Hag 2:18). The verb יִרְבָּא does not even have any associated objects. However, there is little doubt that the object of YHWH’s blessing should be connected with the blessings of the harvest, from the context. The object assured by the blessing could further spread far beyond the agricultural reality, though. The people of Judah can be assured that the conditions of the present and recent past will not continue into the future.

This assurance recalls the leading principle that deities of the ancient Near East provide prosperity or adversity to agrarian areas depending on whether or not their people obey them. In a similar manner, the blessing of YHWH is certainly contingent upon the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. In an agricultural environment the link is especially evident between the reconstruction of the temple and a resulting abundance of produce. At this historical moment, the land of Judah created a military buffer zone between the Achaemenids and Egypt, particularly during the Egyptian revolts against the Achaemenids. This political context placed particular pressure on Judah to produce a huge amount of agricultural goods to provide for the Achaemenid army. This context added to the importance of Judah’s restoration of the temple.

From Hag 2: 18–19, this paper has shown that YHWH assures Judah a bountiful harvest upon the start of temple reconstruction. To illustrate this, Haggai calls the people to reflect once again on what they have experienced while the temple remained in disrepair. Their disobedience resulted in a severe economic disaster in which even seeds for coming planting were not assured. This reflection should have emphasised to the people the vital importance of figuring out how Judah might survive under the reigning power while seeking


a staunch alliance with the most suitable subordinate.

To sum up, this study on Hag 2:15–19 has depicted the people of Judah as accused by YHWH for disobeying his commandment to rebuild the temple (Hag 2:15). Even by the end of Hag 2:19, YHWH’s temple remains in ruins. According to the common ruling principle of an agrarian society in the ancient Near East, YHWH subsequently summoned up adversity to punish the agrarian areas of Judah. In combination with a drought (Hag 1:10), hail, and crop diseases of blight and mildew undoubtedly led to crop failures. The agricultural productions were 50% and 60% lower than the expecting sum of the harvest. The Judean agricultural economy was completely devastated (Hag 2:16–17). Even seeds for the next year’s grains and fruits were scarce in the dreadfully poor harvest. That experience was quite enough to make the people contemplate what they should now do. Indeed, as Haggai had been exhorting them, it was the very time for the people to rebuild the temple. The blessing of YHWH would then be given to the agriculture: rebuilding the temple was vital for agricultural prosperity (Hag 2:18–19)

6.1.4 Deposed Zerubbabel’s status (Hag 2:20–23)

Hag 2:20

The word of YHWH came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying,

Another word of YHWH is announced to Zerubbabel, who is exposed as the object in the following verse. On that same day YHWH’s judgement was also proclaimed to the priests and the people. Hag 2:20 starts with prophetic language that is nearly identical to the clause in Hag 2:1 and 10, יָדָיו דַּבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-יִשְׂרָאֵל (the word of YHWH comes to Haggai). It differs only in that the perfect verb יָדָיו has been converted into the imperfect form due to the ר consecutive conjunction.

In a sequence of YHWH’s judgement following the formula in Hag 2:10, Haggai has already declared that the judgement extends to cover both the priests and the people. It seems unlikely, though, that Zerubbabel would be included in this new introductory formula. It would be reasonable to infer that the judgement of Zerubbabel is applied with a slight distinction from that pertaining to the priests and the people. For, the judgement of YHWH against Zerubbabel will be quite distinct from the previous two objects. However, those interpreters favouring an eschatological view of this verse have
claimed that the new starting form demonstrates the authority of Zerubbabel who is dealt separately from the two previous objects.\textsuperscript{120} Eschatological interpreters have maintained that its own dateless form indicates a hazy future that, despite its lack of clarity, will be actualised in time.\textsuperscript{121} It is because the prophetic discourse with Zerubbabel is to do with questions of the political status of Judah and of his leadership in the changed Judean circumstance. This interpretation is dependent upon the traditions of Zion’s pre-eminence and the perpetuity of the Davidic dynasty. However, this distinct rhetorical form should instead be understood within the context of YHWH’s judgement in response to the periods of inaction in temple rebuilding.

On the “twenty-fourth of the month,” indicated in previous textual units (Hag 2:10–14, 15–19), Haggai persuades the priests and the people to turn towards the temple rebuilding project with the phrase יְזָרַע שֶׁמוּר. When the priests encourage the people to rebuild the temple and the people become involved in the temple work, their agricultural and economic endeavours will be blessed soon after. Blessings for the future have been opened up to them.

Concurrently, on the very same date, Zerubbabel is included in the conviction. This suggests that Zerubbabel might have quite a different story. YHWH provides a great hope for the future, without evoking assumptions or assuring the ultimate destiny of Judah, as an independent political entity. These features distinguish the day when the temple rebuilding should commence as vital to the future of Judah. While it is not the day when the Davidic dynasty is established the very date will change the position of Zerubbabel.

Hag 2:21

“Speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah,” saying, “I will shake the heavens and the earth.”

By the virtue of the title, Zerubbabel of the Davidic line was misunderstood as conveying a more inclusive hope from which the people tried to establish a self-governing

\textsuperscript{120} Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 82; Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 222; Petersen, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 97; Verhoef, The Book of Haggai and Malachi, 141–42; Wolff, Haggai, 80.

\textsuperscript{121} Meyers and Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, 82; Kessler, The Book of Haggai, 222; Verhoef, The Book of Haggai and Malachi, 142.

\textsuperscript{122} BHS notes that the LXX adds αἱ τὰ θέλησιν καὶ τὴν ξυλείαν after ἀκομὴν ἂν, in accordance with Hag 2:6. The text itself is enough to indicate YHWH’s intervention. Therefore, there is no need to harmonise with Hag 2:6.
Davidic dynasty (Hag 1:4, 9; 2:4). They had expected all of Judah’s enemies to be swiftly defeated, allowing Judah to thrive and enjoy her riches (Hag 2:6–7). However, this desire to build the house of David is tantamount to revolting against the empire, and YHWH has responded in judgement against this duplicitous ambition of Judah’s.

Endowed with the title governor of Judah, Zerubbabel fulfils an important role for how Judah should function within the political and the economic structure in the Achaemenids. Darius presumably conferred Zerubbabel’s title as governor of Judah with the intention of maximising the usefulness of the existing Judean authority. It would be very useful to connect the Judean coalition with Darius in the context of his territorial expansion.

However, the restoration of the Judean tradition of Davidic lineage may readily have further exacerbated the political and cultural pressures on the Achaemenid Empire. Particularly during the Egyptian revolts, the empire depended on a strong pledge of support from the existing ruling authority in Judah. Indeed Zerubbabel, as the governor of Judah, was asked to show his loyalty to Darius. In contrast to fostering the intended affiliation, however, the assignment of Zerubbabel, a member of the Davidic line, simultaneously encouraged the autonomy of Judah. By meddling between Egypt and the Achaemenids, Judah defied Darius. Subsequently, Judah faced the very real possibility of extreme hostility from the Achaemenids.

The descriptions of trembling (שָׁכַר) of nature in Hag 2:21 cosmologically convey the violence and seriousness of YHWH’s judgement against Zerubbabel on that actual historical day. The verb שָׁכַר in a Hiphil form clearly indicates YHWH’s judgement on Zerubbabel. The term שָׁכַר describes Zerubbabel as trembling in terror, which signifies his complete submission. This interpretation stands in strong contrast to that of eschatological interpreters who attribute the ultimate and final deliverance of YHWH. In their view, the expression שָׁכַר announces YHWH’s intervention on behalf of his people and the mention of the heavens and the earth symbolises cosmic upheaval, resulting from which all powers will

123 The BHQ apparatus notes that the Greek version adds “son of Shealtiel.” This is done in assimilation to Hag 1:1 and Hag 2: 2. However, this omission would be understood in the context of judgement towards Zerubbabel, so that his status is clarified with an imperial administrative officer. See Eugene Ulrich ed, The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: transcriptions and Textual variants (VTSup 134; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 619; Biblia Hebraica quinta editione cum apparatus critico novis curis elaborato: Introduction and Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets (ed, Anthony Gelston; Fascicule 13; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2010), 117.

124 Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 70–76; Dandamaev, Political History, 103–77.

submit to YHWH.

The terrible judgement of YHWH against Zerubbabel is not the central issue in question. Certainly, the judgement is not for Zerubbabel in a positive way but towards Zerubbabel in a negative way. In this usage, one can see the same play on words that Haggai quite often uses, indicating an unexpected meaning for the words or phrases. YHWH addresses Zerubbabel the Davidic figure with judgement using the same phrase that the soon to be restored Davidic dynasty expects in Hag 2:6–7, albeit applied differently—as judgement. In contrast to both the priests and the people, to whom new possibilities will be opened up, the outlook for Zerubbabel seems bleak.

This exposition of Hag 2:20–21 has shown that the hope based around Zerubbabel resulted in the judgement of YHWH, wherein Zerubbabel was distinguished from the priests and the people. With the revised formula of the prophetic message, Zerubbabel is sentenced to tremble with fear. It seems that both the priests and the people were persuaded and expected to join the temple rebuilding project. Zerubbabel was clearly treated in quite a different way though, which alludes to the closed future for Zerubbabel since the Davidic project is categorically subordinate to the temple project, which YHWH commands and the Achaemenids actively encourage.

Hag 2:22

והقضاء הסע של מלך העולם והсрוגים יוקם עליה הנ美德 והقضاء עליכם ויתבה עון

“I will overthrow the authority of the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations. I will overturn the chariots and their riders then the horses and their riders will go down, each by the sword of his brother.”

YHWH determinedly rejects the expected establishment of the Davidic kingdom and further rebukes the invocation of Judean power against Darius. The Judgement of YHWH eventually bears down upon the people’s conspired hope for Zerubbabel’s royal extractions. Also, his judgement will involve the destruction of any foreign domination that would rise up

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126 BHS suggests to delete ממלכת. However, political and military power of enemies is emphasised in the parallelism. Therefore, I will keep the text as it is.

127 BHS deems בישו כוח מלך העולם to be a gloss because of the parallelism with הבור לפי חג. However, this phrase denotes the means to suppress the enemies, rather than an extended parallelism. Therefore, BHS should not be accepted.
against Darius in his immediate succession to the Achaemenid throne, no matter how benign or minimal.

The phrase “thrones of the nations” (ךְּזָא מִשְׂרָאֵל) and its parallel, “the kingdoms of the nations” (מִשְׂרָאֵל תַּנִּים), are placed as crowns for political and military power. The term ךְּזָא is in general found in conjunction with the royal throne מִשְׂרָאֵל. Its synonym קְדָם in the second clause denotes authority or honour. These words ךְּזָא and קְדָם refer accordingly to the nations’ military power or ability to use force to attain their objectives. Here, for example, are two phrases that use the terms in a similar manner: “have we not by our own strength taken Karnaim for ourselves?” (Amos 6:13); and “I will destroy the fat and the strong” (Ezek 34:16; Exod 13:2; 14:16).

In light of this, the thrones themselves represent the power of authorities in which the former word ךְּזָא might be seen as an emphasising reiteration. This would be as a collective expression of the word מִשְׂרָאֵל, to emphasise there is no exception to this judgement. Thus, it would be understood that this phrase מִשְׂרָאֵל כְּזָא refers to every throne of every nation: any power that stands in opposition to the reign of Darius as YHWH’s agent will be promptly and thoroughly destroyed.

To explain the connection of a plural construct noun to a single nominative it could be claimed that the thrones of kingdoms refer to the single Achaemenid dynasty, since the ruler of an empire represents many political entities. With this interpretation, the verse has been read to mean that any empire strongly opposed to Judah will be brought down, like the conspired hope to restore the Davidic dynasty. YHWH’s war is aimed at promising Judah’s future prosperity exempted from the wrath of YHWH. On that day that YHWH will assuredly re-establish his world sovereignty, any foreign domination will be destroyed.

However, YHWH’s verdict is not against an empire composed of many political entities but against the many insubordinate subjects of an empire. Judah as one of many insurgent entities has not been entirely tolerated by Darius, for even a very small city in rebellion might gain a foothold in the imperial economy that could bring the empire’s political structure into crisis.

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In fact, at the time of Darius’s reign, beginning with the onset of rebellions in Elam and Babylon, subordinate rebellions of varying sizes were widespread, extending throughout Media, Assyria, Parthia, Margiana, Sattagydia, and Scythia (see chapter 3.1.2 above).132 Egypt also rose up against Darius, leading to Judah’s attempt to benefit from the geopolitical tactics between Egyptians and the Achaemenids as she did throughout Neo-Assyrian and the Neo-Babylonian empires.

While the multiple uprisings against Darius posed severe threats to his power, he successfully suppressed them and rapidly regained control of his subordinates. Therefore, it seems quite probable that YHWH’s judgement was not exclusively applied to Judah, which instigated but one of the revolts against Darius.

YHWH declares the commencement of quelling every revolt against Darius. The first verb פָּשַׁת is frequently found with YHWH to be the subject in descriptions of his overthrowing or overturning, including the abasement of all nations which oppose YHWH (Amos 4:11; Jer 20:16).133 Extending the description of this first verb, the second verb, פָּשַׁת guarantees the complete destruction or abolition of political entities hostile to the Achaemenids.134 The repetition of the Hiphil form in verb variations highlights the terrible imagery that portrays what will take place in each situation.

To demonstrate this, Haggai employs the image of a decisive military victory. Armies of rebels represented by chariots and their riders as well as horses and their riders will, without exception, be overthrown and destroyed.135 The means by which this suppression of each nation’s power will be accomplished is the sword of “his brother.” In most cases, the word מֵאָר does not refer to a blood brother but to a brother who is a partner in a treaty or engages in diplomatic relations, whatever equality or inequality.136 In which, the pronoun “his” of the term “his brother” (מֵאָר) reassures the reality that each of insurgent states irrefutably remains subject of Darius.

To judge from the exegesis of Hag 2:22, YHWH ensures that any political and military power that confronts Darius will be completely overthrown and devastated. This is

the result of YHWH’s intervention on behalf of Darius: the strength of rebellious nations will be annihilated and the power of rebellious authorities will be destroyed. YHWH’s volition in judging usurpers against Darius is very much determinate and he will accomplish his conviction on them.

Hag 2:23

On that day, said YHWH of hosts, “I will take you, my servant, Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,” said YHWH, “I will make you like a signet ring,” “for I have chosen you” said YHWH of hosts.

The explicit and ultimate judgement of Zerubbabel is expressed with the prophetic formula (the word of YHWH of hosts). The use of this formula emphasises the determinate volition of YHWH’s judgement. Furthermore, YHWH calls Zerubbabel his servant instead of using the title of governor, which gives a crucial hint of changes in the status of Zerubbabel.

YHWH proclaims that Zerubbabel will now be taken (בב) as YHWH’s servant (בב) and will be given (בב) a signet (בב). In many instances, the verb with YHWH as the subject is used for the appointment to a new position or responsibility in ways both good or bad; for example, “I take you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel” (2 Sam 7:8; Exod 6:7; Lev 8:2; Num 27:18, 22; Ps 78:70) and “YHWH takes me from following the flock … do not prophesy against Israel, and do not preach against the house of Isaac” (Amos 7:15–16).

In this instance, Zerubbabel is qualified as a servant of YHWH, which often expresses the position of a person before YHWH. When the noun בב is accompanied with the word יְָהוֹ it is sometimes associated with leaders or officials of communities or nations (Gen 26:24; Judg 2:8; Josh 1:1, 7; 1:8; 2:3; 2 Sam 7:5, 8; Isa 41:8–9; Jer 25:9; 27:6), and their duty is always to perform tasks that are associated with the commandments of YHWH. Therefore, the implications of this designation likely include that Zerubbabel as a Judean figurehead

137 BHS suggests the addition of because it is a repetition. However, repetitions are not uncommon.


should make sure the Judean people heed YHWH’s call to build the temple. Also, in historical reality, Zerubbabel as an official administrator should support imperial policies as much as possible.

Unfortunately, Zerubbabel had taken the side of hostility against the empire. After having participated in the wrong side, YHWH firmly declares that Zerubbabel is the YHWH’s servant with a signet ring (𐤙𐤃𐤆𐤂𐤈𐤄). This signet ring reminds us of the doom of Coniah (=Jehoiachin, 1 Chr 3:16; Esth 2:6) who was taken to Babylon and died there when Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24:8–17; 2 Chr 36:9–10; Jer 22:24–27). As a result, he did not reign in Jerusalem, but was taken to Babylon and died there (2 Kgs 23:33–35).

It is true that the signet ring that Zerubbabel receives is nothing but the role that Coniah had (Jer 22:24, 28; 24:1; 27:20; 28:4; 29:2; 37:1; 2 Kgs 24:10–16).140 He is demoted by the signet ring. For, the intended portrayal of Zerubbabel’s life in light of the portrayal of Coniah’s tragic life indicates that while new possibilities would be opened to the priests and the people, Zerubbabel is doomed.

It is highly likely that the people represented in the book of Haggai craftily tried to restore the house of David through Zerubbabel, conspiring for the legacy of the Davidic line. Therefore, it could be vital to consider the depiction of Coniah as a way of reviewing the past. The life of Coniah invokes the portrayal of a tragic life now that Zerubbabel is chosen to be the recipient of this signet ring.141 Coniah as a despised and broken idol is cast out into a ruling country to die. His descendant, Zedekiah (Jer 32:4–5), in addition to Zerubbabel on the Davidic line are also completely excluded from any future political leadership.142

As noted above, with the perfect form of the verb רוח which represents an accomplished fact, two verbs נפל andITERAL in the imperfect form indicate that the state of affairs is currently in tentative progress. Subsequently, it cannot be over-emphasised that Zerubbabel may have been toppled and killed by Darius, which would have been common to usurpers who arose against him.143 Indeed, after 520 BCE nothing more was recorded of Zerubbabel.

140 Barstad, “Haggai Among the Prophets,” 281–82.
141 Ishida, History, 93–94.
142 For an anti-Zerubbabel faction in relation to the Judean exile, see Carroll, Jeremiah, 441–43.
143 Barstad, “Haggai Among the Prophets,” 282.
However, eschatological interpretations have strongly argued that this verse rather affirms YHWH’s sovereignty and power over Judah’s future, for the words of הֹדְךָ, מֵלֶךְ, וְעָנָנָה, are frequently used of Davidic monarch (2 Sam 7:5, 8; 1 Kgs 11:13; 14:8; 2 Kgs 19:34; 2 Chr 32:16).\(^{144}\) All terms are associated with important individuals and groups in Biblical traditions (Num 12:7–8; Jer 25:9; 2 Sam 7:8; 1 Kgs 21:8; Jer 22:24). In particular, they root the future activity of YHWH on behalf of Zerubbabel in YHWH’s choice of him הָעָנָנָה, מֵלֶךְ, וְגֹוא. In their sense, Zerubbabel must be highly upheld in the favour of YHWH.

These interpreters recognise that Darius deliberately employed the dynastic model to promote imperial interests with his subordinates, whereby members of former ruling dynasties were placed in positions of authority.\(^{145}\) Furthermore, interpreters with an eschatological orientation argue that the Davidic governor Zerubbabel would have somewhat elevated the political status of Judah through his own role, at least to the level of a vassal king in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, insofar as Judah remained subservient to Darius. The eschatological future will be introduced “at this time” (וֹהֲדָה תִּדְמָה), which would also be the day anticipated by the people when Judah would again achieve political independence and self-rule under the Davidic Zerubbabel.

Even in the eschatological view, the status of Zerubbabel is clearly of complete subordination to the imperial power. This subservient position of Zerubbabel is reaffirmed by the signet ring, which is just a re-painting of Coniah. As signet, Zerubbabel, like Coniah, is merely a tool for the Empire, which is validated by the choice הָעָנָנָה of Zerubbabel to be incorporated with imperial policies (1 Chr 15:2; 28:4; Ezek 20:5).\(^{146}\) Notwithstanding this, the imperial appointment of Zerubbabel as governor very nearly revives the Davidic dynasty. Undeniably, it was wholly viable as a conspiracy. YHWH then comprehensively excludes the Judean kingship from the Davidic genealogy. The hope of the house of David is clearly terminated.

From Hag 2:23, it is evident that the choice of a governor who is a descendant of the

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former ruling elite is a deliberate and conscious political ploy by the policy of Darius. Zerubbabel, for Darius’s benefit, is expected to be a loyal promoter of imperial interests and should be fully consistent with imperial policies. With this understanding, the imposition of the Davidic dynasty on Zerubbabel is clearly adduced as disloyalty and rightly incites the people to rebellion against Darius. As was the fate of other traitors, it is not unlikely that Darius would subsequently remove Zerubbabel.

To sum up the main points of this study on Hag 2:20–23, it has shown that the title of governor of Judah conferred on Zerubbabel by an imperial patron was taken for granted (Hag 2:21). In the second year of Darius, in particular, as a reliable supporter Zerubbabel should have facilitated the temple rebuilding that Darius had commanded. This temple rebuilding work was in essence associated with the commandment of YHWH (Hag 1:12, 14; 2:3, 5, 8–9).

Notwithstanding this, Zerubbabel involved himself in the conspired to rebuild the Davidic dynasty (Hag 2:4, 6–7). Zerubbabel was subsequently accused for this subordinate “rebuilding” (Hag 2:20–21). He not only violated YHWH’s command but also rebelled against Darius’s commandment. These failures result in the fatal judgement against him. Furthermore, YHWH definitely ensures that uprisings against Darius will be thoroughly overthrown and quashed (Hag 2:22). Amidst this judgement, it is no exaggeration to say that Zerubbabel is unequivocally doomed to be excluded from empirical history, as it is true of other usurpers (Hag 2:23)

6.2 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that Hag 2:1–23 provides a well-defined unified message delivered continuously by Haggai through several types of prophetic formulae. Hag 2:1–23 is a follow up of Haggai’s announcement of the temple rebuilding in Hag 1:1–15. At the same time, it is a response to the actions of Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the high priest, and the people of Judah (Hag 2:1–9). The behaviour of all these three groups leads to the judgement of YHWH against Judah (Hag 2:10–23).

The text of Hag 2 should be divided into two parts. The first part deals with causes for YHWH’s judgement (Hag 2:1–9), and the second with consequences of YHWH’s judgement (Hag 2:10–23). Hag 2: 10–23 could be divided further into three sections: Hag 2:10–14, 15–19, and 20–23. In these subsections, Joshua (Hag 2:10–14), the people (Hag 2:15–19), and
Zerubbabel (Hag 2:20–23) respectively are sternly admonished.

Darius bestowed the title of governor of Judah on Zerubbabel. The title, therefore, carried the obligation of allegiance to Darius as a faithful patron (Hag 2:2). Irrespective of the requirement for such an administrative officer, Zerubbabel’s Davidic lineage predisposed him towards the pursuit of an independent Judah, rather than to be loyal towards Achaemenid imperial policy. He did this through taking advantage of repeated Egyptian rebellions (Hag 2:4). The people, together with Zerubbabel and Joshua, never paid any attention to YHWH’s command to rebuild the temple. Instead, focusing on Zerubbabel’s royal Judean lineage, they involved themselves in rebuilding the Davidic dynasty. In their conspiracy to reestablish the Davidic dynasty, they worked for the political independence of Judah, to be followed by an economic boom for Judah (Hag 2:6–7).

However, their preferred building project became impossible to carry through. Moreover, it developed into a violation against YHWH. The inhabitants of Judah were commissioned to rebuild the temple, YHWH now calls out to them (Hag 2:1–2). Then he reminds them of the faithful obedience to YHWH’s commandments required by the Sinai-covenantal tradition (Hag 2:5). The rebuilt temple will definitely create economic affluence in Judah. The temple will be the location of the empire’s central fiscal administration in Jerusalem. In this way, Judah will become a worthy partner in the Achaemenid administrative system (Hag 2:8–9).

From an imperial, economic, and military point of view, Judah’s food supply was crucial for the imperial army rations. To be able to conduct his campaign against Egypt, Darius had to depend upon sufficient food rations from Judah. For this purpose, the temple should be rebuilt promptly. YHWH referred to the teaching authority of the priests (Hag 2:10–14). It was their task to enlighten the people about the temple rebuilding in order to increase agricultural surplus in Judah.

The people neglected the word of YHWH concerning the temple restoration. This led to ritual disqualification (Hag 2:10–12). The sacrifices of defiled people were subsequently rejected. YHWH’s blessing was taken away. Along with drought (Hag 1:11), hail, and crop diseases like blight and mildew afflicted the harvest terribly (Hag 2:16–17). As a consequence, the whole Judean agricultural economic system collapsed. Even seeds for the next season were scarce. From within this spiral of disaster, Haggai insisted that it was the persistent rejection of the temple renovation project that provoked the agricultural catastrophe (Hag 2:17). People were beseeched to contemplate what they should do now (Hag 2:15, 18–
Equally bad was striving of the people for the political independence of Judah through the establishment of a Davidic dynasty. In reality, this was conspiracy and rebellion against Darius. A very important text is found in the story of the Signet Ring of Zerubbabel. Here, the allusion to Coniah reassured the people of the truth that YHWH had rescinded his authorization for the Judean kingship from the Davidic lineage (Hag 2:20–23). However, YHWH’s judgement was Zerubbabel’s downfall; nothing more is recorded of him. Probably suffering the fate also of other traitors, Zerubbabel may have been overthrown and killed by Darius.
7. Conclusion

In my thesis, I discuss in some detail the relationship between temple and economy in ancient Jerusalem. My main approach is an exegetical study of the Book of Haggai. My text corpus consists of Hag 1:2, 5–6, 7–8, 9–11, 12–14; 2:3, 8–9, 15–19. In my reading of the text I put weight on historical and economic perspectives. I also make extensive use of archaeological reports.

In chapter 1, I challenge the current consensus regarding the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. Scholars have, as a rule, disputed that the temple rebuilding project is twofold aims. In my work, I first show how the renovated temple should form a basis for a self-sufficient economy in Judah. Second, as a semi-autonomous political entity, the temple should strengthen ties between Judah and the Achaemenid Empire. Most scholars dealing with Judean economy pay too little attention to the economic implications of agriculture in Judah. Moreover, they also disregard to a large extent the Book of Haggai as an important agricultural text.

In chapter 2, I discuss agriculture in the ancient Near East. My main point is that the ancient Near Eastern economy was, above all, agrarian. From very early on, these ancient societies devised wide-ranging and elaborate irrigation systems, maximising use of land for agricultural purposes. With regional specialization, many of them later demonstrated highly advanced political and economic structures (urbanization). Similarly, throughout the Iron Age, ancient Israel developed agriculture and produced a multitude of agricultural products. Judah, in particular, was renowned for the production of vine and olive. Judah’s rich agricultural produce, as well as other commodities, led to a comprehensive trade through a web of interregional trade routes in the ancient Near East.

In my thesis, I also deal with the management of agricultural economy in the ancient Near East. In this area, ever since the rise of centralised states (around 3500 BCE), temples were vital instruments for economic and administrative power. Temples were used for both collection and distribution of agricultural resources. Furthermore, temples administered tenants, oversaw agricultural affairs, managed provincial agricultural production, and enjoyed trade privileges. The economic importance of temples throughout the regions can hardly be exaggerated. Darius attempted to consolidate temple-based fiscal administrations further by implementing temple rebuilding projects. He also invigorated interregional trade through the
support of professional merchants. Foremost among them were the Egibi family of Babylon and the Murashu family of Nippur. The flourishing business led to economic boom throughout the Achaemenid Empire.

In chapter 3, I discuss Darius’s history, focusing primarily on how the empire was run. I show how Darius already very early in his reign was forced to suppress widespread rebellion against his rule. One important policy of Darius is his recognition of local deities. In this way, he “authorized” his own rule as religious and political leader in each province. This religio-political propaganda was soon followed up by temple-restoration projects. Building or rebuilding temples throughout the imperial territories was done purely for economic and political reasons. The strategy ensured the successful annexation of a province and its population into the empire. Darius also reorganized the provinces. Each province was assessed based on its political and territorial status. Judah, a politically small and weak province, was a tribute city state because of her agricultural capacity.

Roughly at the same time (around 520 BCE), Darius launched a military campaign against the revolt in Egypt. It was for this campaign that Judah had to supply provisions. However, Judah not only produced plenty of agricultural products. As we see, she also functioned as a military buffer zone between the Achaemenid Empire and Egypt.

In chapter 4, I examine how the agricultural importance of Judah continued to contribute to the Achaemenid Empire. Despite the demise in Judah that followed the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, archaeological excavations have demonstrated the continued existence of a considerable material culture in Judah. The expansion took place in the area of Benjamin, but also in the Negev, and probably even in the Judean hills.

The Achaemenids further repopulated and resettled towns ruined by theNeo-Babylonians. This took place in particular between Jerusalem and its immediate environs, extending as far as Jericho and the Shephelah. This region became important for Jerusalem’s agricultural economy. Above all, Judah has a surplus of vine and olive. Throughout the Achaemenid period, the population steadily increased, leading to further administrative districts across the territory.

The Jerusalem temple rebuilding was initiated to increase production and prosperity in Judah, and to promote the temple as an economic and administrative centre (Hag 2:8–9). However, the imperial command to rebuild the Jerusalem temple was disregarded by the people of Judah. Instead, the Judeans attempted to restore the Davidic dynasty through
Zerubbabel (Hag 1:4, 9; 2:5). This could only be understood as a revolt against Darius.

To make matters worse, despite all efforts by the Achaemenids to increase Judah’s agricultural produce, a severe famine occurred. The famine was a result of a series of droughts, storms, and crop diseases (blight and mildew). All disasters were interpreted as divine punishment following failure to rebuild the temple (Hag 1:5–6, 9–11; 2:15–18). As a result, not least when combined with imperial tax obligations on Judah, the province was stretched beyond its capacity. The decline in Judah’s economy was not only detrimental to her agricultural economy, but also to trade.

In chapters 5 (Hag 1:1–15) and 6 (Hag 2:1–23), I present an exegesis of the Book of Haggai. In my exegesis of Hag 1:1–15, I show how the command to rebuild the Jerusalem temple was proclaimed in the name of YHWH during the second year of Darius in 520 BCE (Hag 1:1 and 15). Darius commissioned two imperial administrators for the Jerusalem temple rebuilding project: the governor Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua. Both officials were to work on the Jerusalem restoration, and administer temple economy (Hag 1:12–14, 15).

However, things did not go according to plan. Zerubbabel, who was of the royal house of David, had been appointed for the Jerusalem temple rebuilding task only. He was expected to use his influence as descendent of a local royal lineage. However, instead he engaged in a dynasty building project directly opposed to the imperial agenda (Hag 1:4 and 9).

The preference for rebuilding the Davidic dynasty led to YHWH’s punishment. Expectations of a bountiful harvest were met with crop failure. The people neither enjoyed sufficient yields nor reaped other expected benefits (Hag 1:5–6). Strong winds destroyed the already meagre harvest (Hag 1:9), and drought ultimately resulted in famine (Hag 1:10). The harvests of grain, vine and olive were severely damaged (Hag 1:11). The Judean agricultural system was completely destroyed. All of this happened because the imperial administrators had failed to make the people start the temple rebuilding (Hag 1:7–8, 12–14).

In my exegesis of Hag 2:1–23 (chapter 6), I highlight the nature of the Jerusalem temple rebuilding. The project was purely of an economic kind. It was, very much, similar to what the empire demanded of other subordinates (Hag 2:3, 8–9). Rebuilding the Jerusalem temple as an economic and administrative centre supported Darius’s policy of strengthening local temple economies in order to increase imperial fiscal powers.

Despite Zerubbabel’s position as temple administrator installed by Darius, Judah attempted to confront Darius with a conspiracy to restore the Davidic dynasty through Zerubbabel (Hag 2:4). The conspiracy was fuelled by hopes for economic prosperity and
political independence for Judah (Hag 2:6–7). Instead, it led to the economic breakdown of Judah.

The stubborn desire of the people to restore the Davidic kingdom caused the crisis that led to Haggai’s prophecies. As the temple rebuilding was necessary for restoring agriculture in Judah, YHWH aroused the teaching authority of the priests to enlighten the people (Hag 2:10–14). According to Haggai, speaking on behalf of the deity, it was the people’s persistent rejection of the temple work that had provoked the agricultural catastrophe (Hag 2:17–19). Now was the time for the people to start rebuilding the temple for economic stability, and to ensure reliable patronage. As a prophet of YHWH, Haggai warned and judged Judah for numerous acts of disobedience. Among them we find conspiratorial rebellion, the endeavour to restore the Davidic dynasty through Zerubbabel, and the reference to Coniah through the use of a signet ring. Because of the latter episode, Zerubbabel was doomed to fail completely (Hag 2:20-23).
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