Topographical Considerations and Redaction Criticism in 2 Kings 3

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The story in 2 Kings 3 displays several problems in its content and syntax that cannot be solved on a synchronic level alone. However, the narrative displays a certain consistency so that a diachronic approach is tentative at best and cannot really rest upon separate redactional strata established on the basis of syntactical or lexical features alone.

Thus, together with a discussion of content-related problems (section I) and of the syntactical structure (section III), a fresh analysis of the topographical data (section II) may provide additional insight into the development of this narrative. Redaction criticism, therefore, should not dismiss a topographical approach. At least two levels of composition are to be found in 2 Kings 3. The more original story recounts a northern attack on Moab by Israel alone. The topographical setting is shifted to the south only in a secondary expansion. Thus, a careful topographical examination corroborates the existence of certain redactional strata in 2 Kings 3. Content-related problems, however, should not be neglected and will therefore be discussed first (section I).

I. Content-Related Problems with 2 Kings 3

Concerning the content of this narrative, there are many implausibilities that can hardly be explained on a synchronic level alone and thus betray some well-done redactional reworking:[1]

[1] See Herbert C. Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 204–8; Joe M. Sprinkle, "2 Kings 3: History or Historical Fic-

a. The use of the southern route to attack northern Moab was impractical and a ridiculous detour.[2] It can be explained only by the involvement of the king of Edom or by the alliance with Judah.

b. The mustering of such a great army consisting of allies from three kingdoms was unnecessary against a rather irrelevant opponent like Moab. Thus, the enlargement of the army must be secondary.

c. The lack of water can be explained by inadequate planning and failure to consult a prophet. However, one wonders why a nomadic people like the Edomites did not know of sufficient water holes in their own territory. This inconsistency might be due to the insertion of Elisha's oracle into an already existing context. However, the original tradition cannot be separated from the current version of the narrative, as there are many connections between oracle and surrounding context. The double thrust of the oracle also seems to indicate some reworking that cannot be defined exactly.

d. In v. 11 Jehoshaphat asks for a prophet of the Lord, in hopes of receiving a favorable oracle.[3] It is striking that the king of Judah, and not the Israelite commander, is seeking a prophet in this disastrous situation. Even the answer is given only by a servant of the king of Israel and not by the king himself. Thus, it seems that the king of Israel is, to some extent, dispensable.[4]

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tion?" *BBR* 9 (1999): 247–70; Jesus M. Asurmendi, "Elisée et la Guerre: 2 R 3:4–27," *BibInt* 13 (2005): 1–12, here 8.

[2] See Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, "Der Feldzug der drei Könige," in *Schalom: Studien zu Glaube und Geschichte Israels* (ed. Karl-Heinz Bernhardt; AzTh 1/46; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1971), 11–22, here 12–13; Wesley J. Bergen, *Elisha and the End of Prophetism* (JSOTSup 286; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 73. Harald Schweizer (*Elischa in den Kriegen: Literaturwissenschaftliche Untersuchung von 2 Kön 3, 6,8–23; 6,24–7,20* [SANT 37; Munich: Kösel, 1974], 105 n.175) regards this route as important for the coalition of Israel, Judah, and Edom: "Durch diesen Weg könnte die—historisch gesehen—nahezu unwahrscheinliche Koalition Israel/Juda/Edom plausibel gemacht werden." Contra Gary Rendsburg, "A Reconstruction of Moabite-Israelite History," *JANESCU* 13 (1981): 67–73, here 71, for whom this detour serves three purposes: to involve the Edomites, to circumnavigate the highly fortified northern border and also avoid a possible struggle with the Ammonites, and finally to pursue the Moabite and Ammonite army, which, according to 2 Chronicles 20, had raided Judah. For further reasons, see John G. Butler, *Elisha: The Miracle Prophet* (Bible Biography Series 4; Clinton, IA: LBC, 1994), 90.

[3] Nadav Naʾaman thinks that in the original account Jehoram insisted on consulting Elisha ("Prophetic Stories as Sources for the Histories of Jehoshaphat and the Omrides," *Bib* 78 [1997]: 161).

[4] Burke O. Long points out that this detail of the narrative aims further to diminish Jehoram (*2 Kings* [FOTL 10; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 41). According to Iain W. Provan, the use of a politically powerless servant is a significant feature of the Elisha stories (*1 and 2 Kings* [NIBC 7: Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995], 185).

e. How is it that Elisha was around just when the allied kings were looking for a prophet of Yнwн? He simply appears in the story without any clear-cut motivation. Furthermore, his actions are only subsidiary to the main plot.[5] Clearly, the account with Elisha is secondary. The abrupt appearance and departure of Elisha are similar to those of Elijah. This feature could be a peculiarity of the Elijah-Elisha narratives, suggesting redactional reworking.

f. The origin of the water supply is given different explanations.[6] On the one hand, the soldiers are supposed to dig trenches for water;[7] on the other hand, the valley is filled unexpectedly with water, although there are no signs of wind or rain. Furthermore, the infinitive absolute in v. 16 is not a forecast and need not be given by a prophet; it is an ordinary instruction of a commander to his soldiers in need of water. Redactional reworking of these sayings is possible but hardly verifiable. As a whole, Elisha's oracle comprises three things: the digging of ditches, the flooding of the valley, and the handing over of Moab.[8] The first two sayings promise a remedy for the immediate misery of the army and animals, whereas the last one is a promise of divine help against Moab.[9] However, the provision of the allies with water will also decoy the Moabites, which will be made plain as the story continues.

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[5] T. Raymond Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC 13; Waco: Word Books, 1985), 31.

[6] However, Jürgen Werlitz thinks that the ditches dug by the soldiers were to be filled with water, but this is not stated by the text (*Die Bücher der Könige* [Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar Altes Testament 8; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002], 212).

[7] These trenches are supposed to capture the *sēl,* a flash flood resulting from rain falling unseen in the Moabite hills; see Donald John Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary* (TynOTC; Leicester: InterVarsity, 1993), 201; Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings* (NAC 8; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 263–64. Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor think that the prophet did not intend the soldiers to dig trenches, which would diminish the miracle (*II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988], 45).

[8] Hobbs (*2 Kings*, 31) considers the oracle to have a double thrust: "It satisfies the thirst of the army and also signals the defeat of the Moabites." Similarly Hans-Christoph Schmitt, *Elisa: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur vorklassischen nordisraelitischen Prophetie* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1972), 32; Ernst Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige: 1. Kön. 17– 2. Kön. 25* (ATD 11/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 281; Long, *2 Kings*, 40. The double function of Elisha's oracle might be an indication of secondary reworking; see Hermann Josef Stipp, "Traditionsgeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu den Kriegserzählungen der Königsbücher," *RB* 104 (1997): 481–511, here 498.

[9] According to Jesse C. Long and Mark Sneed ("'Yahweh Has Given These Three Kings into the Hand of Moab': A Socio-Literary Reading of 2 Kings 3," in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honor of Herbert B. Huffmon* [ed. John Kaltner and Louis Stulman; JSOTSup 378; London: T&T Clark, 2004], 259–60), this word of the Lord is a word of deception by which Elisha lures the kings into an unsuccessful campaign. Similarly Provan, *Kings*, 184; Philip E. Satterthwaite, "The Elisha Narratives and the Coherence of 2 Kings 2–8," *TynBul* 49 (1998): 1–28, here 11.

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g. In the first part of the narrative the focus is on individuals and dialogues, whereas with v. 21 attention shifts to groups without dramatic dialogues.[10] However, this corresponds to a change in agency within the story. Beginning in v. 21, the battle between the armies is the main concern of the narrator. Thus, this observation is not sufficient for separating the narrative into discrete parts.

h. According to vv. 24–25, Israel totally defeated the Moabite army,[11] whereas in v. 26 the king of Moab selected seven hundred trained soldiers for a breakout through the lines of the Edomite king,[12] who, in a synchronic reading, was on the side of the allied army. According to a diachronic reading—that is, without the Israel/Judah/Edom alliance—reaching the king of Edom could have been the goal of the Moabite king. This would fit even better the syntactical and lexical form of v. 26, since the preposition אל is usually directive, not adversative like על. The Edomite army could have come to the relief of their Transjordanian neighbor, helping them against the Israelite invaders.

i. The prophecy of handing Moab over to Israel in v. 18 is not fulfilled in v. 27, since the allied army withdrew.[13] Nevertheless, the prophecy of v. 19 has been literally fulfilled. However, most predictions in v. 19 are standard tactics in warfare used to force the enemy to retreat to fortified cities. These should, of course, be

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[10] See Burke O. Long, "2 Kings iii and Genres of Prophetic Narrative," *VT* 23 (1973): 337–48, here 339.

[11] According to Wesley J. Bergen, the battle was already over after v. 25, whereas it is still in progress in v. 26 and was ultimately lost ("The Prophetic Alternative: Elisha and the Israelite Monarchy," in *Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective* [ed. Robert B. Coote; SBLSS 22; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992], 127–37, here 130).

[12] See Asurmendi, "Elisée," 8.

[13] See Hermann Josef Stipp, *Elischa – Propheten – Gottesmänner: Die Kompositionsgeschichte des Elischazyklus und verwandter Texte, rekonstruiert auf der Basis von Text- und Literarkritik zu 1 Kön 20.22 und 2 Kön 2–7* (Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament 24; St. Ottilien: Eos, 1987), 132–34. Volkmar Fritz solves the problem diachronically by seeing vv. 18–19 as a later Dtr expansion (*Das zweite Buch der Könige* [ZB 10/2; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1998], 21). Walter Brueggemann thinks that Elisha was caught up in the fever of war when uttering his oracle of victory (*1 & 2 Kings* [Smith & Helwys Bible Commentary 8; Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys, 2000], 317). In that respect he could have missed Yʜwʜ's point. Paul J. Kissling considers vv. 18–19 to be Elisha's directive but not a quotation of Yʜwʜ's words (*Reliable Characters in the Primary History: Profiles of Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha* [JSOTSup 224; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 175).

Joe M. Sprinkle, however, maintains that this was no failure of prophecy since, as predicted, the Israelite army was successful in all battles against Moab and was thwarted only by an act of God ("Deuteronomic 'Just War' (Deut 20,10–20) and 2 Kings 3,27," *ZABR* 6 [2000]: 285–301, here 300). Bergen also considers Elisha a true prophet (*Elisha,* 82–83). According to him, the reversal of the battle is due to the actions of the kings and reduces the reader's estimation of monarchic power ("Prophetic Alternative," 130–31). Philip D. Stern maintains that Elisha stressed only Yʜwʜ's saving power but not the forthcoming victory over Moab because it would have been an

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carried out prior to attacking the cities, not following as described in v. 19.[14] This complicates an exact execution of Elisha's oracle by the allied army. Therefore, this arrangement might be a hint that the end of the campaign would be other than expected, particularly as the chronological order of the execution is reversed. Thus, Elisha's prophecy could be a deceptively worded prediction to lure the unwary.[15]

In view of these inconsistencies and implausibilities, it is obvious that the account cannot be explained on a synchronic level alone. Furthermore, in addition to the problems within 2 Kings 3, there are tensions with the broader context. The reference to a king of Edom in 2 Kgs 3:9, 12, 26 stands in sharp contrast to 1 Kgs 22:48 and 2 Kgs 8:20.[16] Thus, on the synchronic level, there was only a governor (נצב) in Edom at the time of Mesha. Only later did Edom throw off the domination of Judah and establish its own king. Therefore, the title מלך must either be anachronistic or refer to a ruler with limited local power. At most, there was a royal commissioner ruling in Edom as a vassal of Judah.[17] The mention of Jehoshaphat in vv. 7, 11, 12, 14[18] is also conspicuous since, according to 1 Kgs 22:51, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, had already passed away. His subsequent appearance in 2 Kings 3 might be due to the same redactional reworking that was responsible for the other parallels between 1 Kings 22 and 2 Kings 3.

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easy thing for Yʜwʜ to subdue Moab ("Of Kings and Moabites: History and Theology in 2 Kings 3 and the Mesha Inscription," *HUCA* 64 [1993]: 1–14, here 7).

[14] See Raymond Westbrook, "Elisha's True Prophecy in 2 Kings 3," *JBL* 124 (2005): 530–32, here 531. Stipp, however, claims that the lack of an exact parallel between prediction and outcome might be an indication of inconsistency (*Elischa,* 138).

[15] Westbrook, "Prophecy," 532.

[16] Nadav Naʾaman considers 1 Kgs 22:48 not a historical source but a harmonizing statement combining the different sources in 2 Kings 3 and 2 Kings 8 ("Sources and Composition in the Biblical History of Edom," in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume* [ed. Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, and Shalom M. Paul; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 313–20, here 313–15).

[17] The problem of the Edomite king is solved with different proposals: Werlitz (*Könige*, 211) considers a king of Edom possible, at least on a literary level. Cogan and Tadmor (*II Kings*, 44) think that the alternation of titles (king, governor) was an ordinary custom and need not be taken literally. Sprinkle ("2 Kings 3," 257) refers to the inferior status of the king of Edom in the story, as he has neither dialogue nor actions nor even a name. Bernhardt ("Feldzug," 14) suggests a later date for the allied campaign to solve the problem of the Edomite king. Würthwein (*Könige*, 279) considers the king of Edom to be secondary.

[18] According to Anson F. Rainey, the attempted Moabite invasion recounted in 2 Chronicles 20 motivated Jehoshaphat to take part in the allied campaign ("Mesha's Attempt to Invade Judah [2 Chron 20]," in *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography Presented to Zechariah Kallai* [ed. Gershon Galil and Moshe Weinfeld; VTSup 81; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2000], 174–76, here 176). Similarly Rendsburg, "Reconstruction," 70; Butler, *Elisha*, 88. However, the historicity of 2 Chronicles 20 is far from certain; see Stefan Timm, *Die Dynastie Omri: Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Israels im 9. Jahrhundert vor Christus* (FRLANT 124; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 176.

II. The Topographical Data in 2 Kings 3

As will be shown in the final synthesis (section IV), the topographical data in 2 Kings 3 could yield insights into the redactional history of the text. The topographical data point to two distinct layers in 2 Kings 3: the original tradition of an Israelite war against Moab from the north and a later expansion describing an attack on Moab from the south.

### *Moab, the Target of the Campaign*

According to 2 Kings 3, the Israelite king Jehoram assembled the kings of Judah and Edom after the rebellion of the renegade Moabite king Mesha in order to fight him. The topographical description in the biblical account is rather sparse, so that any proposed location of the reported events is only tentative.

The target of the campaign was Moab, which is usually sought between the biblical rivers Arnon and Zered, the so-called Arḍ el-Kerak and the neighboring regions. At the time of Mesha, however, the Moabite kingdom most probably did not extend to the region south of the Arnon. The fragmentary lines in the Mesha inscription cannot prove that King Mesha undertook a southerly foray already in the ninth century, since the location of Ḥawronēn is hard to establish. Thus, it is far from certain whether this toponym is to be sought in southern Moab.[19] Moreover, it is orthographically questionable whether Ḥawronēn can be identified with the biblical Horonaim, which lies in the western part of the Arḍ el-Kerak. Furthermore, only in the late eighth to seventh century B.C.E. is there a remarkable increase in settlement in southern Moab. All in all, at the time of Mesha, the toponym Moab most probably extended only over the region north of Wādī el-Mūǧib (210.089). In that respect, the southern detour of the three kings is quite remarkable.

The Desert of Edom

In v. 8 another location is introduced: the desert of Edom (מדבר אדום). The toponym Edom is usually situated south of the biblical river Zered, Wādī el-Ḥesā (210.040). The existence of an early political entity called Edom is hard to establish. Although sparse settlement began in the best agricultural land in northern Edom already in Iron Age I, it was only in the eighth–seventh century B.C.E. that settle-

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[19] Ḥawronēn could be located north of the Arnon where the modern toponym Ḥaurān—located south of el-Mukāwir (2102.1084)—may preserve the ancient name. Unfortunately, archaeological surveys are lacking for that region.
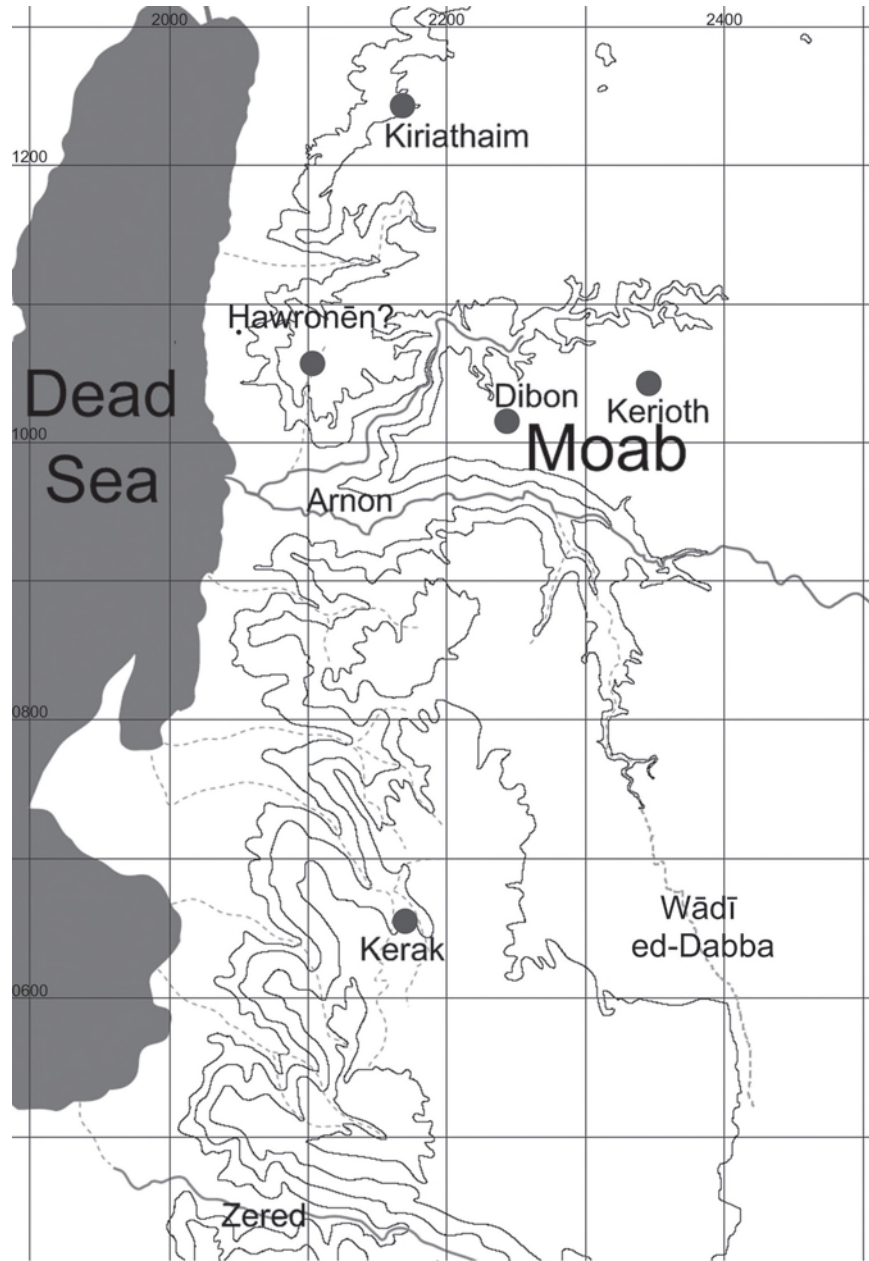
ment in Edom expanded considerably as a result of the *pax Assyriaca,* copper mining, and Arabian trade.[20] Thus, the mention of the king of Edom probably reflects a later period. Furthermore, it is striking that the army followed the route through the desert of Edom, since the easiest and fastest approach toward the southern part of Moab would have been along the shore of the Dead Sea. Since the desert of Zin is located to the west of Edom (see Num 34:3; Josh 15:1), the desert of Edom can only mean the region to the east of Edom, so that the kings had to pass through the Arabah, then climb and cross the Edomite highland, and finally move northward through the desert of Edom.[21] They implement a flanking maneuver,[22] probably to attack Moab from the east. Furthermore, they run out of water for the camp and the cattle, which could pinpoint their sojourn in the eastern steppe, where the water supplies are minimal. Thus, they reached a position to attack Moab from the east. This location of the allied army camp also accords with v. 22, since the optical illusion seems to imply that the Moabites looked east toward the rising sun and that the water was between the opposing armies. The eastern desert is mentioned also in Judg 11:18, where it refers to the eastern detour of the Israelites skirting Edom and Moab. The desert of Edom, then, seems to be definitely in the east of Edom. However, one wonders why the allied army undertook this rather unnecessary detour. The motivation behind this plan was probably the integration of the Edomite king into the allied army. Without the king of Edom it would have been easier to attack Moab from the north.

The Torrent-valley on the Border of Moab

On the way to Moab, the allied army came to a torrent-valley (נחל) after traveling seven days (see 2 Kgs 3:16–17). After a journey of this length they could have

[20] See Piotr Bienkowski, "Iron Age Settlement in Edom: A Revised Framework," in *The World of the Aramaeans,* vol. 2, *Studies in History and Archaeology in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (ed. P. M. M. Daviau, John W. Wevers, and Michael Weigl; JSOTSup 325; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 257–69, here 257. Even the extension of Edom west of the Arabah into the Negeb already in the ninth century B.C.E. is hardly backed by the archaeological evidence.

[21] To be sure, the meaning of מדבר is not restricted to "desert" in the strict sense of the word, but designates land that is not used agriculturally. In that respect the army of the three kings could have moved forward along the frontier to the cultivated land over a route that traversed Edom to some extent in the east. On the noun מדבר, see already Armin W. Schwarzenbach, *Die geographische Terminologie im Hebräischen des Alten Testamentes* (Leiden: Brill, 1954), 93–96. Detlef Jericke understands מדבר as "Weideflächen am Rande von Ortschaften" ("Wüste," in *Neues Bibellexikon* III [ed. M. Görg; Zurich: Benziger, 2001], 1129–30, here 1129). Stipp (*Elischa*, 107) suggests a route to the east of Edom on the frontier between desert and cultivated land.

[22] According to Hobbs (*2 Kings*, 35), the expression סבב דרך does not indicate that the army wandered around and got lost in the desert. This idiom is also used in Exod 13:18; 2 Kgs 3:9; Ezek 47:2.

reached one of the waterless tributaries of the Arnon, like the Wādī ed-Dabba. The Zered (Wādī el-Ḥesā), however, lies too close to the starting point to be considered a valid candidate. Moreover, the Zered is a rather unsatisfactory option for this torrent-valley, since water runs through this wādī all year long.[23] Another topographical remark indicates that the army has already entered Moabite territory (southern or northern Moab). The allied army was most probably outside of Edom,[24] since the country was flooded by water "from the direction of Edom" (v. 20). Moreover, the phrase "from the direction of Edom" makes sense only if the camp was situated not too far from the territory of Edom.[25] Thus, at least two problems arise with the location of the battlefield: (1) The duration of the journey when interpreted literally conflicts sharply with the other topographical data and might assume a northern location reached by a southern detour. However, the Arnon could not be the torrent-valley mentioned, since one would have to postulate a stretch of Edom north of the Zered, not to mention that the Arnon is a poor candidate for a "torrent-valley." (2) Furthermore, this expansion of Edom is unattested in the sources at hand. Thus, the mention of Edom seems to be a literary invention that cannot be understood on the basis of the topographical conditions in Transjordan.

Kir-Hareseth

A final toponym that is difficult to locate is mentioned in v. 25: Kir-Hareseth. There are several place-names with the nomen regens קיר, such as Kir-Hareseth, Kir-Heres, and Kir-Moab, all of them located in Moab.[26] Perhaps these toponyms are all to be identified with the same place, though they do stand side by side in the same narrative. This, however, might be due to purely onomastic variation.

Apart from Kir-Hareseth, Kir-Heres, and Kir-Moab, the places Kiriathaim[27]

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[23] Stipp, *Elischa*, 110–11. However, part of the Arnon could well have shaped the scenery of the natural spectacle since this valley was the southern border of the territory of Moab at least in the ninth century B.C.E. But the southern detour probably does not reflect an original tradition of a punitive campaign against Moab.

[24] Contra Fritz (*2 Könige*, 20), who assumes that the decisive battle took place on Edomite territory and involved an ambush. However, neither of these assertions is made in the text itself.

[25] Stipp (*Elischa*, 114) regards this indication of direction as narrative ornamentation.

[26] Kir-Hareseth in 2 Kgs 3:25; Isa 16:7; Kir-Heres in Isa 16:11; Jer 48:31, 36; and Kir-Moab in Isa 15:1. The translation of the Septuagint does not prove the interpretation Kir-Ḥadaš ("new town") to be correct; see also Würthwein, *Könige*, 283. Even the pejorative meaning of the biblical toponym Kir-Hareseth or Kir-Heres does not provide a sustainable reason for changing it to something more positive. Contra Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 205.

[27] See Gen 14:5; Num 32:37; Josh 13:19; Jer 48:1, 23; Ezek 25:9 and possibly 1 Chr 6:61.

(with a dual ending) and Kerioth[28] (with a plural ending) are attested in the Bible and in the Mesha Inscription. Morphologically they differ from the other three, since they are not formed in the construct state. Kiriathaim might be identified with Ḥirbet el-Qurēye (2160.1242) and Kerioth with Ḥirbet Qurēyāt ʿAlēyān (2338.1045).[29] Usually Kir-Hareseth of 2 Kgs 3:25 is located south of the Arnon at el-Kerak (2170.0660).[30] This identification is mainly based on the targumic interpretation of Kir-Moab in Isa 15:1 as כרכא דמואב. In view of the first element of כרכא דמואב, the biblical place is identified with el-Kerak. Thus, the main argument is the assumed preservation of the biblical name via the targumic rendition.

However, the targumic interpretation betrays the problem of later translators with this enigmatic place-name. Furhermore, the noun כרכא in the emphatic state is nothing more than the literal translation of the Hebrew קיר. Therefore, the argument for the preservation of the biblical name within the Arabic toponym via the Aramaic form does not really stand up—it is merely a translation. In the context of Isaiah 16 it is made clear that the location of Kir-Hareseth should be sought north of the Arnon for the following reasons:

1. Isaiah 16:7 mentions the raisin cakes of Kir-Hareseth, which makes sense only if this site is located in an area known to have had vineyards. South of the Arnon there is no evidence for viticulture, in contrast to the region around Heshbon, which was famous for its vineyards.
2. Isaiah 16:8 laments the deterioration of the vineyards of Heshbon and Sibma. Thus, it is obvious that Kir-Hareseth should be located in the same area.
3. The alternative name Kir-Heres forms an *inclusio* with Kir-Hareseth, framing the section about the lost splendor of the Moabite vineyards in Isa 16:7–11. Thus, it is tempting to regard Kir-Hareseth and Kir-Heres as the same place.

The data preserved in Jer 48:6–11 likewise point to a northern location for Kir-Hareseth. This place must be located in the region of Heshbon, Sibmah, Jazer, and Elealeh. Otherwise the geographical pattern and the chiastic coherence of this section are thoroughly destroyed.[31] It seems, therefore, that Kir-Hareseth of 2 Kings 3

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[28] See Jer 48:24, 41; Amos 2:2.

[29] For these identifications, see Erasmus Gass, "Die Moabiter: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Kultur eines ostjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr." (Habilitationsschrift, Universität Tübingen, 2007), 44 and 53.

[30] Timm (*Dynastie*, 168–69) presumes a southern location for Kir-Moab and its variant forms. Thus, he must exclude this town as a possible candidate for the Moabite capital at the time of Mesha. This view holds true only for the southern location; the northern one favors equating the towns that use the element Kir with Qeriḥō.

[31] See Brian C. Jones, "In Search of Kir Hareseth: A Case Study in Site Identification," *JSOT* 52 (1991): 3–24, here 16.

must be located north of the Arnon. Neither the southern route of the allied army nor the targumic rendition is proof enough to indicate a southern identification of this site.[32]

The toponyms Kir-Hareseth and Kir-Heres are most probably pejorative names meaning "city of sherds."[33] The name either reflects a later description of the ruined state of this site or announces a desired curse on a prospering capital city. Thus, the biblical place-name need not be a correct rendition of the Moabite one, but could be a shameful nickname used to mock the Moabites. Therefore it is appropriate to identify all three names: Kir-Heres, Kir-Hareseth, and Kir-Moab.[34] The first two are biblical alternatives for the Moabite capital city correctly named Kir-Moab, "city of Moab." If this holds true, the site Kir-Hareseth might be identified with Mesha's new capital Qeriḥō, probably a part of Dibon (Ḏībān; 2240.1010).[35]

Thus, the topographical data in 2 Kings 3—inconsistent as they are—present two mutually exclusive options: The first is that the final battle at Kir-Hareseth took place in southern Moab, south of the Arnon river. This option is supported by the versions and by the mention of the Edomite king as one of the participants in the allied army. The other option is that Kir-Hareseth is a denigrating invective toward the Moabite capital city, in keeping with the fact that Moabite cities are often called קיר.

Bearing in mind the settlement history of Transjordan, the question of a Moabite royal city named Kir-Hareseth south of the Arnon river in the ninth century B.C.E. is a dead issue—there were most likely no large, prospering cities in the Arḍ el-Kerak at that time. Therefore, we should look for the Moabite capital in northern Moab, which also accords with the biblical evidence. It seems that a redactional reworking of the story of the Moabite campaign shifted the topographical setting to the south. Until the present the redactors had fooled biblical commentators,

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[32] For a northern location, see also the arguments of Jones, "Search," 3–24; Klaas A. D. Smelik, *Converting the Past: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Moabite Historiography* (OTS 28; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 85–89; Brian C. Jones, *Howling over Moab: Irony and Rhetoric in Isaiah 15–16* (SBLDS 157; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 244; Sprinkle, "2 Kings 3," 260. Moreover, the seven-day march might suggest a northern location for Kir-Hareseth. However, this temporal indication may simply be a classical idiom for the burdensome trip of the allies. Thus, even a synchronic reading of 2 Kings 3 does not support a southern location.

[33] See Wolfgang Richter, *Materialien einer althebräischen Datenbank: Die bibelhebräischen und -aramäischen Eigennamen morphologisch und syntaktisch analysiert* (Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament 47; St. Ottilien: Eos, 1996), 143. For the name Kir-Hareseth as a mockery, see Jones, "Search," 17. It might also be a pun on חרס, "sun." This delightful town fell into a town of sherds.

[34] For a diachronic explanation of the different names, see Jones, "Search," 17 n. 1.

[35] On the identification of these places with each other, see esp. Smelik, *Converting the Past*, 88; John Andrew Dearman, "Roads and Settlements in Moab," *BA* 60 (1997): 205–13, here 212. For Qeriḥō in the Mesha Inscription, see *KAI* 181:3, 21, 24, 25.

who commonly hold the popular southern identification of Kir-Hareseth with modern el-Kerak (2170.0660) in high esteem.[36]

III. Syntactical and Lexical Considerations Regarding 2 Kings 3

Diachronic strata are best explained by syntactical and lexical fractures, without which they remain tentative at best. There are many indications in the syntax and vocabulary of 2 Kings 3 that betray redactional reworking of a more original story. These indications will now be considered.

In 2 Kgs 3:4 a new story is started with a typical *w=x-qatal* introduction.[37] The *w=qatal* formation of the next clause is to be interpreted as frequentative:[38] Mesha was paying tribute again and again. Verse 5 marks the termination of this usual custom: After the death of Ahab, the Moabite king rebelled against the king of Israel.[39] The next chapter starts with a *w=x-qatal,* indicating the beginning of a new story, which is shown also by the choice of a new topic. Thus, 2 Kgs 3:4–27 is a self-sufficient unit.

Neither king is named in v. 5; they are assignable only by the context. The two antagonists are named in v. 4 (Mesha) and v. 6 (Jehoram).[40] It is remarkable that the running narrative is mostly devoid of names, so that the tradition of the Moabite campaign need not be attributed to Mesha and Jehoram. The name Jehoram in v. 6 is often considered to be a gloss since the personal name follows the determined

[36] However, owing to its elevated position on a mountain ridge, el-Kerak is a mighty stronghold especially suited for withdrawal and therefore would be an appropriate place for the events described in 2 Kings 3.

[37] According to Long (*2 Kings*, 40), this syntactic construction, which signals a background statement, here suggests an enduring state of affairs. Regarding the notation, *w* = conjunction *waw; x* = any element except the conjunction *waw* and the negation *ʾal; qatal* = perfect; *yiqtol* = imperfect.

[38] See Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 43.

[39] This seems to be a repetition similar to 2 Kgs 1:1. For the relationship between the verses, see Stipp, *Elischa*, 94–96. Stern ("Of Kings," 9) stresses the fact that the rebellion was against the king but not against Israel as such. Satterthwaite (*Elisha*, 11) argues that the revolt of Moab is a manifestation of divine judgment on the house of Ahab since, according to 2 Kgs 1:1 and 3:4–5, it is a consequence of Ahab's death.

[40] See also Jean P. Sternberger, who thinks that "le récit ancien ne concernerait que les seuls rois dont les noms sont donnés: Mesha de Moab et Yéoram d'Israël" ("L'Holocauste à la Frontière: Une Lecture de 2 Rois 3," *FoiVie* 95 [1996]: 19–32, here 26). The other two kings are probably redactional additions. Hans-Peter Müller wonders whether all three kings were not anonymous in the original account ("König Mêšaʿ von Moab und der Gott der Geschichte," *UF* 26 [1994]: 373–95, here 389).

noun המלך.[41] If this is so, only the Moabite king is named in the introduction to the campaign, whereas the Israelite antagonist is ignored. However, the construction המלך followed by a personal name can be found in other texts as well,[42] so the peculiar word order is not a sufficient argument to dismiss the name Jehoram from the narrative.[43]

In what follows, the narrative advances mostly by *wayyiqtol* forms, between which appears direct speech. In v. 6, the temporal expression "at that time" (ביום ההוא) is conspicuous.[44] It cannot refer to the immediate time after Ahab's death, since in that case one would expect Ahaziah to be king of Israel. The spokesmen of v. 8 are difficult to establish, as both direct speeches are introduced by a simple ויאמר. As a structuring device this expression could denote a change of the actual speaker. Thus, the king of Israel asked for the best route using the verb עלה, mentioned before by the king of Judah, whereas the king of Judah suggested the southern way via the desert of Edom.[45] In that case it would have been the Judean king's idea to take this southern detour. In v. 9 the king of Edom is added as a participant in the campaign, though without a formal invitation.[46] However, the land of Edom is important for the plot of the story only on account of the pun between אדום and דם. Thus, the reference to the king of Edom might have been inspired by the toponym.

[41] See Schweizer, *Elischa*, 21–22; Simon J. de Vries, "The Three Comparisons in 1 Kings XXII 4b and Its Parallel and 2 Kings III 7b," *VT* 39 (1989): 283–306, here 305. Bernhardt ("Feldzug," 12) thinks that perhaps all three kings were originally unnamed.

[42] See, e.g., 2 Sam 5:3; 6:16; 7:18; 8:8, 10, 11; 9:5; 16:5, 6; 19:17; 1 Kgs 1:13, 28, 31, 32, 34, 37, 38, 39, 43, 47, 51(*bis*), 53; 2:19, 22, 23, 25; 4:1; 5:7(*bis*), 27; 6:2; 7:13, 14, 51; 8:1, 2; 9:11, 15, 26, 28; 10:13, 16, 21, 23; 12:2; 2 Kgs 12:8; 23:29; 2 Chr 7:5; 8:18; 9:15, 20, 22; 19:2; 35:16; Jer 26:21, 22, 23; 52:20; Ezek 1:2; Cant 3:9.

[43] The problems with the chronology and the different names are solved in various, sometimes highly speculative ways: Giovanni Garbini eliminates the two Israelite kings Ahaziah and Jehoram because the biblical text gives no supporting evidence for either king—according to 2 Kgs 9–10 Jehu's revolution is directed against Ahab and his family (*History and Ideology in Ancient Israel* [London: SCM, 1988], 37). Edward Lipiński considers Jehoram of Israel and Jehoram of Judah to be the same person. Thus, 2 Kings 3 is the Israelite version of the same war that is recounted in the Judean version of 2 Kings 8 (*On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age: Historical and Topographical Researches* [OLA 153; Leuven: Peters, 2006], 350–51). Rendsburg ("Reconstruction," 70) argues that the omission of Ahaziah might be an indication that the campaign of the three kings occurred later than the revolt of Moab. However, the exact chronology of the Israelite kings is far from certain and ought not be a linchpin for further arguments.

[44] The enigmatic temporal expression ביום ההוא might be a later gloss; see Simon J. de Vries, *Prophet against Prophet: The Role of the Micaiah Narrative (I Kings 22) in the Development of Early Prophetic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 88 n. 47.

[45] Contra Brueggemann (*Kings*, 308), who thinks that Jehoram chose the route.

[46] John R. Bartlett, "The 'United' Campaign against Moab in 2 Kings 3:4–27," in *Midian, Moab and Edom: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia* (ed. J. F. A. Sawyer and D. J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 24; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 135–46,

The formation *w=x-qatal* in v. 9 is not necessarily a sign of redactional work; it marks a new element in the story, indicating that the people had used up all their water after a seven-day march.[47] In v. 10, the king of Israel—apparently the commander of the allies—bewails the desperate situation of the army with a typical Dtr formula (נתן ביד). His use of the third person indicates a certain distance. Thus, the Dtr idiom and the change to the third person might be signs of redactional work.

In v. 13 Elisha refuses to help the king of Israel and suggests that he seek help from the ordinary court prophets.[48] The king of Israel answers with a simple "No" (אל), indicating that the solution to the problem lies only with Yʜᴡʜ and not with Baal, since Yʜᴡʜ led the three kings into this trap. Here he repeats the same phrase as in v. 10, which has the above-mentioned Dtr flavoring. The resumption of this lament might be an indication of the secondary character of v. 13.[49]

The perplexing *w=qatal* in v. 15 can be interpreted as frequentative, referring to the usual *ekstasis* of the prophet when music was playing.[50] When the music started, the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha so that he could deliver the word of the Lord. Thus, this syntactic construction does not necessarily indicate incon-

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here 143. Müller ("König Mêšaʿ," 389 n. 63) regards the mention of the king of Edom in vv. 9, 26 as a secondary addition.

[47] Würthwein (*Könige*, 283) regards *seven* as a round number. Similarly Bernhardt, "Feldzug," 21 n. 6; Stipp, *Elischa*, 104.

[48] Bernhard Lehnart thinks that "the prophets of your father and your mother" in v. 13 is a reference to 1 Kings 18 (*Prophet und König im Nordreich Israel: Studien zur sogenannten vorklassischen Prophetie im Nordreich Israel anhand der Samuel-, Elija- und Elischa-Überlieferungen* [VTSup 96; Leiden: Brill, 2003], 381). However, נביאי אמך might be secondary.

[49] This verse emphasizes the negative estimation of the Israelite king by stressing the relatedness of Jehoram to Ahab and their bad experience with prophets, see Susanne Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa: Die Erzählung von der Jehu-Revolution und die Komposition der Elia-Elisa-Erzählungen* (BWANT 152; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 210. See already Georg Hentschel, *2 Könige* (NEchtB 11; Würzburg: Echter, 1985), 15.

The vow and the expression "to stand before" (עמד לפני) in v. 14 are familiar from the narratives of Elijah and Elisha, so this combination could reflect traditional linguistic usage. This formula is not mentioned before Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and later texts, and only here are both idioms combined. See Winfried Thiel, "Sprachliche und thematische Gemeinsamkeiten nordisraelitischer Propheten-Überlieferungen," in *Die alttestamentliche Botschaft als Wegweisung: Festschrift für Heinz Reinelt* (ed. J. Zmijewski; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990), 359–76, here 368–69. According to Long (*2 Kings*, 45–46), the oath is just an exclamation whose link with the standing formula adds solemnity to the speech and indicates continuity within the Elijah-Elisha narratives.

[50] See Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 45; Long, *2 Kings*, 42. Lehnart (*Prophet*, 382) thinks that Elisha was placed in a visionary trance by music, while still maintaining his self-control. Butler (*Elisha*, 100) interprets the playing of music as a tool to calm Elisha's spirit. According to Thiel ("Gemeinsamkeiten," 367–68), the formula היה יד יהוה על is not dependent on Ezekiel but betrays linguistic usage of north Israelite prophets.

sistency. In vv. 16–17, Elisha announces two words of the Lord, each opening with כה אמר יהוה, and the second explaining the first. Both oracles require their context and so could not have been handed down separately.[51] Furthermore, the doubling of the so-called *Botenformel* need not indicate literary-critical manipulation because the text is written in poetic form.[52] The phrasing of v. 17 (ומקניכם ובהמתכם) is significantly different from that of v. 9 (למחנה ולבהמה), although the reason for this change is not clear.

The deictic change in v. 18 from Yʜwʜ's speech to a speech about Yʜwʜ might be an indication of inconsistency, like the shift from poetic diction to prose.[53] Moreover, the help of Yʜwʜ on behalf of the allies is expressed in Dtr terms (נתן ביד), like the claim of the Israelite king, only reversed.

The assurance of water and final victory over Moab is expressed by four *w=qatal* forms in vv. 17–19, after an introductory *w=x-yiqtol.* All of these indicate individual future events with a progressive nuance. In v. 19 the narrator again uses three *w=x-yiqtol* forms, which set this portion of the total destruction apart. Thus, the scorched-earth tactics might be a later addition to the storming of the fortified and choice towns. It is conspicuous that in v. 24 only Israel is mentioned as fighting. This might be a simplification, the author restricting himself from narrating the thriving force of the allies.[54] Verses 24–27, however, seem to indicate that the original campaign was undertaken by Israel alone. Judah is not mentioned, and in v. 26 the king of Edom might be on friendly terms with the neighboring king of Moab. Thus, the breakout would have served as an escape to Edom, perhaps even to unite the two Transjordanian forces there.

In v. 25 the Israelites fulfilled the prophecy of v. 19; however, there are some differences and augmentations. The towns are not only conquered but cast down (הרס instead of נכה). The throwing of stones not only brought about the ruin of the best fields but completely filled them with stones. Thus, the army did even more than commanded by Yʜwʜ. The "over-fulfillment" of these two prophecies is effectively placed at the front of the list in v. 25.

[51] See Schmitt, *Elisa*, 36 n. 17; Stipp, *Elischa*, 119–20. According to Kissling (*Characters*, 185), Yʜwʜ over-fulfilled Elisha's prediction in that he filled not only the dry torrent but also the entire land. Contra Werner Reiser, who considers both oracles independent and sources for the legendary expansion ("Eschatologische Gottessprüche in den Elisa-Legenden," *TZ* 5 [1953] 321–38, here 323–25, 331). However, the surrounding narrative does not really pick up topics and linguistic expressions from the oracle, making his argument unconvincing.

[52] See Stipp, *Elischa*, 119–20.

[53] Stipp, *Elischa*, 130. Reiser ("Gottessprüche," 323) also separates v. 18 from the original oracle.

[54] Thus, the singling out of Israel need not be interpreted to mean that only Israel has carried off the victory. André Wénin also explains the absence of Jehoram in the victorious battle of vv. 24–25 in that the narrator "voulait insinuer que la victoire est à attribuer à YHWH plus qu'au roi" ("La cohérence narrative de 2 Rois 3: Une réponse à Jesús Asurmendi," *BibInt* 14 [2006]: 444–55, here 451).

The campaign of destruction[55] is expressed by *w=x-yiqtol* forms, perhaps indicating consecutive actions after the victorious battle in the valley. However, the destructive mob came to a dead stop at Kir-Hareseth,[56] which is indicated by an *x-qatal.* Nevertheless, the slingers surrounded and bombarded the town. Since the verb נכה is used in reference to Kir-Hareseth, the prophecy that all Moabite towns would be "struck" by the Israelite army was literally fulfilled.[57]

In this desperate situation, the king of Moab took his firstborn son,[58] the heir to his throne, and sacrificed him as a burnt offering on the city wall (v. 27).[59] Afterwards a great fury overcame Israel so that they withdrew and retired to their respective territory. What is meant by "great fury" (קצף גדול) and whether this was prompted by Yʜwʜ or Chemosh remain highly controversial.[60] It seems that the

[55] Sprinkle ("2 Kings 3," 257) considers this biblical narrative an explanation for the insignificance of Moab at the time of Shalmaneser III. According to Michael G. Hasel, the actions undertaken by the allied army are not in conflict with the siege prohibitions in Deut 20:19–20 ("The Destruction of Trees in the Moabite Campaign of 2 Kings 3:4–27: A Study in the Laws of Warfare," *AUSS* 40 [2002]: 197–206, here 201–6). Contra Stipp, *Elischa*, 365; Brichto, *Grammar*, 207–8; Kissling, *Characters*, 175; Sprinkle, "War," 295–98; Lehnart, *Prophet*, 382.

[56] Perhaps the place-name is a pun on the verb הרס in v. 25; see Jones, "Search," 18. However, this pun assumes a change in the first consonant from ח to ה.

[57] See Long and Sneed, "Yahweh," 265. Similarly Provan, *Kings*, 183: "Elisha did not lie. There is in his prophecy, nevertheless, a certain economy with the truth."

[58] Sometimes it is argued that Mesha offered the son of the king of Edom. See Sternberger, "L'Holocauste," 24–25; Anson F. Rainey, "Syntax, Hermeneutics and History," *IEJ* 48 (1998): 239–51, here 250; Werlitz, *Könige*, 212; Rainey and Notley, *Bridge*, 205. For this rabbinic exegesis, see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 48.

[59] Fritz (*2 Könige*, 20) considers the sacrifice anti-Moabite propaganda that is not rooted in a specific historical event. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer compares the reaction of the Moabite king with the Mesopotamian *namburbi* ritual: a prediction is nullified by a magical ritual ("Prophecy as a Way of Cancelling Prophecy: The Strategic Uses of Foreknowledge," *ZAW* 117 [2005]: 329–50, here 345–46).

[60] Stipp (*Elischa*, 134–37) points out that, for syntactic reasons, the lexeme קצף cannot refer to a human emotion. According to Stipp ("Beobachtungen," 497–98), in the archaic source it was the wrath of Chemosh that caused the withdrawal of the Israelite forces. The orthodox correction omitted only the divine name. Similarly Andreas Scherer, *Überlieferungen von Religion und Krieg: Exegetische und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Richter 3–8 und verwandten Texten* (WMANT 105; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2005), 71. Contra Sprinkle ("War," 286–98), who claims that it was Yʜwʜ's wrath. Sometimes this expression is even interpreted psychologically, insofar as it inspired Moab to fight more valiantly or Israel to lift the siege owing to such indignation; see House, *Kings*, 264. Würthwein (*Könige*, 284) and Fritz (*2 Könige*, 20) opt for the second alternative. Perhaps the author did not want the apostate king of Israel to have an undiluted victory. That is why he had to retreat precipitately. A breakup of the coalition must be excluded, since the anger is attributed to Israel alone and not to the allies; see Kissling, *Characters*, 183. The mention of Israel alone is to be explained by the shift to Israel in the final verses of 2 Kings 3. By using the multilayered noun קצף the author could leave many options open to the readers. For different proposals, see Satterthwaite, *Elisha*, 11 n. 28.

author was trying to denigrate the Moabites, who resorted to human sacrifices in times of danger. Thus, Israel could explain the loss of Moab without losing face.

The syntax of 2 Kings 3 is rather coherent; there are virtually no indications of redactional work, at least on a syntactic level. Only in v. 19 does the narrator set the scorched-earth tactics apart from the context by using *w=x-yiqtol,* which might suggest that this is a later addition. Apart from that, the text of 2 Kings 3 poses content-related, topographical, and lexical problems that do give some hints of redactional reworking.

IV. Redactional Criticism of 2 Kings 3

There are different proposals for coping with the tensions discussed above.[61] In the following, a new model based on topographical considerations will be worked out.[62]

The mention of the desert of Edom is connected to the prophetic tale by several devices.[63] The lack of water is understandable only in a desert. Moreover, the bloody color of the water in the wordplay between דם and אדום reflects natural conditions in the Wādī el-Ḥesā. In that respect, v. 8 (מדבר אדום) is related to vv. 9–17 and vv. 20–23. Thus, the southern location of the campaign is bound both to Elisha's first prophecy (vv. 9–17) and to the Moabites' misinterpretation of the red water (vv. 20–23). Thus, the section consisting of vv. 8–23 seems to be a later enlargement of the original story. However, this part too has probably undergone redactional reworking. But this is another issue that cannot be dealt with here.

The question remains whether the alliance between the kings of Israel and Judah is a secondary expansion related to the parallel account of 1 Kings 22. The parallels between the two accounts indicate that there was a redactor at work who gave the Judean king Jehoshaphat a prominent position within the unfolding of the narrative. Without the king of Judah, however, the northern Israelite advance is

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[61] In most cases two literary sources have been detected, augmented by glosses and further redactional layers. See Würthwein, *Könige,* 281; similarly Fritz, *2 Könige,* 18–19; contra Schweizer (*Elischa,* 41–47), who argues for the literary unity of the narrative in 2 Kings 3, augmented by short redactional interpolations. Wénin ("Cohérence," 454–55), too, considers 2 Kings 3 to be a coherent narrative.

[62] The oldest source deals with the campaign against Moab, which resulted in a preliminary success but a final desperate retreat. Another layer describes being supplied with water by prophetic intervention. This layer needs the original source as its setting. It can be labeled a prophetic redaction in that it relates all events to Yhwh, and it betrays a Judean viewpoint, since the king of Judah is depicted positively over against the king of Israel. Contra de Vries (*Prophet,* 89 n. 52), who argues for a Jehuite provenance, as the story polemizes against the Omrides.

[63] See also Stipp, *Elischa,* 114–15.

even more probable. The mention of Jehoshaphat[64] is all the more conspicuous since, according to 1 Kgs 22:51, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, had already died.[65] Since Jehoshaphat and Judah disappear from the final episode of the narrative, only Israel is defeated.[66]

Therefore, v. 7, which tells about the forging of the alliance between Israel and Judah, must also be secondary. In light of this, vv. 7–23 should be regarded as a redactional layer that favors the southern advance of the campaign. The redaction apparently displays a pro-Judean and anti-Israelite bias, picking up on the negative experiences the Judean kings faced in their alliances with Israel.

It is remarkable that in vv. 24–27 only Israelites attack Moab.[67] The allied forces are not mentioned here, whereas in vv. 20–23 the three kings are all regarded as enemies by the Moabites.[68] Thus, the end of this chapter might preserve a fragment of an original narrative about an Israelite campaign against Moab that was later expanded into a campaign of three kings.[69] In that respect, ויבאו אל־מחנה

[64] See esp. Schweizer, *Elischa*, 22–24, 176. According to Rainey ("Attempt," 176), the attempted Moabite invasion recounted in 2 Chronicles 20 motivated Jehoshaphat to take part in the allied campaign. Similarly Rendsburg, "Reconstruction," 70; Butler, *Elisha*, 88. However, the historicity of 2 Chronicles 20 is far from certain; see Timm, *Dynastie*, 176. Therefore, this cannot serve as a historical basis on which to reconstruct relations between Judah and Moab.

[65] His later appearance in 2 Kings 3 might be due to the redaction that is responsible for other parallels between 1 Kings 22 and 2 Kings 3.

[66] This may indicate that any alliance with Israel is not good for Judah; see Bartlett, "Campaign," 137. According to Stern ("Of Kings," 8), "King Jehoshaphat the Good is saved by the expedient of having him drop out of the story." Thus, this narrative could not have been compiled in the northern kingdom of Israel but is perhaps the product of priestly redactors, which may be suggested by the reference to the *minḥâ* sacrifice in v. 20; see Lehnart, *Prophet*, 383. For priestly redactors, see already Schweizer, *Elischa*, 169–72. However, the narrator displays a certain degree of dramatic objectivity, since he himself gives no hint of approval or disapproval of any of the four kings; see Brichto, *Grammar*, 209.

[67] According to de Vries (*Prophet*, 88 n. 48), the desperate end of the allied campaign in 2 Kgs 3:25b–27 might be an independent text because Elisha's prophecy in v. 19 was already fulfilled in 2 Kgs 3:25a. However, the historical memory preserved in 2 Kings 3 describes the definitive end of Israel's sovereignty over Moab, so the last verses could hardly be secondary.

[68] Stipp (*Elischa*, 139) points out that in v. 26 the allied coalition is the opponent of the Moabites. The mention of the king of Edom, however, does not really require this conclusion because reaching the king of Edom might also have been the desired objective of the king of Moab. See Hentschel, *2 Könige*, 13; Stipp, *Elischa*, 150. Long ("2 Kings iii," 340) refers to the pun on Edom and blood that might hold vv. 20–27 together. But even a redactor could have established literary unity between originally separate accounts. Without further argument, Long even assumes that the king of Edom is a secondary element in the narrative, whereas the land of Edom belongs to the original tradition (ibid., 341).

[69] See Otto, *Jehu*, 216, who holds that the secondary insertion is consistent though composed of some conflicting stories and traditions. The verbal form וילך in v. 7 might also indicate that in the original account the campaign against Moab was an Israelite enterprise; see Hentschel, *2 Könige*, 13. However, the construction וילך + *wayyiqtol* is widespread: Gen 25:34; 27:14; 32:1;

ישראל in v. 24 must be interpreted as the assembling of the militia of Israel mentioned in v. 6 within the army camp of Israel. It would thus read:

> (6) At once the King Jehoram left Samaria and mustered all Israel[70] . . .
> (24) And they [i.e., the militia of Israel] reached the camp of Israel [i.e., the location of the regular army].

The mention of the Edomite king in v. 26b could be explained either as indicating that King Mesha was trying to reach him to unite both Transjordanian forces, or it could be a later redactional addition to increase further the hopeless distress of the Moabite king. The story line flows nicely with or without v. 26b, so both options are equally valid. On the one hand, the beginning of the narrative in vv. 4–5 is an awkward introduction, since the quaint description of Mesha has no function in the subsequent story.[71] On the other hand, these verses correctly preserve the historical revolution of Moab under the aegis of Mesha. It seems that vv. 4–6 might be the original beginning of a story describing an Israelite campaign against Moab, to which the prophetic tale integrating Jehoshaphat, Elisha, and the unnamed Edomite king in vv. 7–23 is a secondary expansion.[72]

Since the narrative of 2 Kings 3 has thematic and lexical parallels to other passages in the Bible, such as 1 Kings 22 or Numbers 20, a decision regarding the interdependence of these texts—though controversial—is especially relevant for the redaction criticism of the biblical books of Kings.[73] When considering the redac-

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Exod 4:27; Num 24:25; Deut 17:3; Judg 1:16; 3:13; 9:7; 19:10; 1 Sam 3:5; 17:48; 19:12; 21:1; 1 Kgs 1:50; 13:24, 28; 16:31; 17:5; 2 Kgs 3:7; 5:5, 11; 13:21; 19:36; Job 27:21; Isa 37:37; Hos 1:3.

[70] The reference to "all Israel" might reflect the way that Jehoram called up both the regular army and the local militia; see Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 35.

[71] These verses only heighten the profile of Mesha; see Stipp, *Elischa*, 102. According to Ernst Axel Knauf, the section consisting of 2 Kgs 3:4–5 is an annalistic excerpt that refers to the independence of Moab ("Jordanien in der Bibel," in *Per Aspera ad Astra: Durch Philologie zur Theologie: Prof. Dr. Manfred Weippert zum 60. Geburtstag* [ed. Manfred Oeming and A. Berlejung; Heidelberg, 1997], 140–46, here 144). Verse 5 is reminiscent of 2 Kgs 1:1, but it is impossible to relate the two.

[72] See also Bartlett, "Campaign," 145; similarly Hentschel, *2 Könige*, 13–14.

[73] For 1 Kings 22, see Bartlett, "Campaign," 135–36; Kissling, *Characters,* 182; Naᵓaman, "Prophetic Stories," 166; Lehnart, *Prophet,* 381. Provan (*Kings,* 182), however, notes the difference between the two narratives. In 1 Kings 22 the Judean king received the word of Yʜwʜ before going to war. Brueggemann (*Kings,* 308) adds that the motivation in 2 Kgs 3 is "no longer piety but practical emergency."

According to Schweizer (*Elischa,* 32–38), the narrative in 1 Kings 22 is dependent on 2 Kings 3. Similarly, Otto (*Jehu,* 216–17) considers 1 Kgs 22:4, 7 secondary expansions drawing on 2 Kings 3. However, for dependence of 2 Kings 3 on 1 Kings 22, see de Vries, "Comparisons," 299–300. Thus, the dependence of one text on the other has been discussed from various perspectives.

With regard to Numbers 20, see, for topics shared by both accounts, Bartlett, "Campaign," 138. The basis of the Moabite campaign might be more theological and prophetic than historical; see Sprinkle, "2 Kings 3," 253; Long and Sneed, "'Yahweh," 258. Similarly, Fritz (*Könige,* 20) thinks

tion criticism of 2 Kings 3 alone, however, this aspect is of minor importance and can be readily dismissed here.[74]

In sum, seen in the light of topographical considerations and thematic inconsistencies, the narrative in 2 Kings 3 has at least two layers: the original tradition, devoid of the problems discussed here, is preserved in vv. 4–6, 24–27. This narrative describes the punitive war of Israel against Moab some time after the rebellion of Mesha.[75] The Israelite army invaded from the north and stopped at the capital, Kir-Hareseth (Mesha's Qeriḥō), at which point they had to withdraw. This picture is in accord with the extrabiblical evidence and the settlement history of Transjordan in the ninth century B.C.E. This basic layer, which could preserve Israelite traditions, was augmented by vv. 7–23, introducing the formation of an alliance between Israel, Judah, and Edom; the oracle of Elisha; and an attack on Moab from the south. Although this expansion of the story also has some inconsistencies, the pro-Judean redactor did a good job joining the disparate information.

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that the narrative tries to discredit the Moabites though they could not be subdued. Thus, the story is a tendentious construct without historical value.

[74] Moreover, the topographical picture in the two parallel accounts is completely different (one is set in Gilead, the other in Edom); topographical alteration was therefore probably not employed as a redactional device in these stories.

[75] The campaign of the three kings could not have taken place in the time of Mesha. The absence of the Moabite victory at Kir-Hareseth on the Mesha Inscription might be a further hint that the events of 2 Kings 3 occurred after Mesha's reign; see Bernhardt, "Feldzug," 20. The absence of the victory at Kir-Hareseth on the Mesha Inscription is a problem also for Rendsburg ("Reconstruction," 72 n. 22) and Timm (*Dynastie*, 173).