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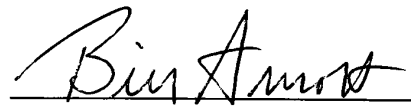
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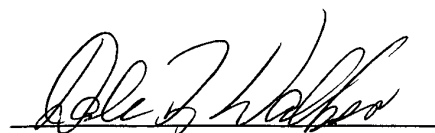
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**The Divine Craftsman:**

*A Comparative Study of Bezael's Divine Endowment and Craftsmanship in the  
Ancient World and its Implications in Isaiah 11:1-9*

by

**Nancy Lynn Erickson**

A Master's Thesis Submitted to

Asbury Theological Seminary

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# Table of Contents

	Page
List of Figures.....	v
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Chapter	
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Craftsman Phrases in Ancient Near Eastern Building Inscriptions.....	5
Royal Monumental Inscriptions.....	6
Animated Ritual Inscriptions.....	22
Conclusions.....	24
3. Craftsman Phrases in Biblical Building Accounts.....	26
The Tabernacle: Exodus 24:15-31:18 and 34:29-40:38.....	26
The Temple: 1 Kings 5:1-9:25 and 2 Chronicles 2:1-7:11.....	35
The Rebuilding of the Temple and the City Walls: Ezra 1:1-6:18 and Nehemiah 2:11-7:5, 12:27-43.....	44
Conclusions.....	47
4. Isaiah 11:1-9.....	53
5. Final Remarks.....	61
Bibliography.....	63

## Figures

Figure	Page
2.1 Overview of Descriptive Phrases in Ancient Near Eastern Building Inscriptions.....	25
3.1 Yahweh's Instruction to Moses in Exodus 31:1-6 and Moses' Retelling to Israel in Exodus 35:30-35.....	27-28
3.2 1 Kings 5:27-32, 6:14 and 2 Chronicles 2:2,6-7,11-13: A Collection of Descriptions of the Builders.....	36-38
3.3 Ezra 1:5, 3:10, 5:11 and Nehemiah 2:20: A Collection of Descriptions of the Builders.....	45
3.4 Overview of Craftsman Phrases in Biblical Building Accounts.....	49
3.5 Overview of Craftsman Phrases in Ancient Near Eastern Building Inscriptions and Biblical Building Accounts.....	52
4.1 Isaiah 11:1-9.....	54-55

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# Chapter 1

## *Introduction*

Isaiah's prophecy in 11:1 signaled hope for Israel and Judah during the Syro-Ephraimite War, 734-732 BCE.<sup>1</sup> The verse states, "Then a shoot will come forth from the stem of Jesse and a branch from its root will bear fruit." This figurative language revealed that Israel would not be entirely destroyed by her oppressor, Assyria. Rather, a salvific figure would rise up from Jesse's old roots, from his descendants. Although Isaiah does not reveal the name of this savior, he describes him in 11:2-9. Isaiah 11:2, in particular, highlights the position that this individual held. This verse describes a collection of skills that Isaiah's figure is empowered with by the spirit of Yahweh.<sup>2</sup>

11:2 וְנָתַתָּה עָלָיו רוּחַ יְהוָה רוּחַ חָכְמָה וּבִינָה רוּחַ עֵצָה וְיָבוּקָה רוּחַ  
 דָּעַת וְיִרְאַת יְהוָה

"And the spirit of Yahweh will rest upon him; a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and strength, a spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh."

Scholarly commentary has disagreed upon the interpretation of the position of Isaiah's figure in 11:1-9. While most interpreters agree that this individual holds a kingly status, there is discrepancy on labeling him. Otto Kaiser, for example, compares Isaiah's figure to King David. He states, "Just as David was chosen in a truly miraculous way from the insignificant family of Jesse...once again a new shoot will spring up from the

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<sup>1</sup> The Syro-Ephraimite War represents the conflict between the kingdom of Judah and a coalition of forces including Damascus and Israel. The intent of the war was to de-throne the king of Judah, Ahaz, in order to force Judah into allying with Damascus and Israel in opposition to the Assyrian empire. Assyria, however, came to King Ahaz's rescue and relieved the pressure by attacking Syria. Eventually, both Damascus (732 BCE) and Israel (722/721 BCE) fell to the Assyrian empire. See Henri Cazelles, "Syro-Ephraimite War," *ABD* 6:282-285.

<sup>2</sup> All Hebrew translations in this paper are my own.



root stump of the family, a second David.”<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Edmond Jacob labels this figure as the “nouveau David” and emphasizes the judicial aspects of his reign.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, John Watts makes no suggestion regarding the title of this figure, but views him simply as a “future king” endowed with skills that are essential to his reign.<sup>5</sup>

Other scholars refer to this figure as the “Messiah.” Edward Young, for example, proposes that the endowment in Isaiah 11:2 was preparation for fulfilling the duties of the Messianic office.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, Brevard Childs suggests that Isaiah 11:2 was an endowment of charismatic skills “suitable to the Messiah’s high office.”<sup>7</sup> John Oswalt also labels this individual as the “Messiah.” He bases his interpretation on a “messianic hope.”<sup>8</sup> For Oswalt, this “messianic hope” begins in Isaiah 7:14, is amplified in Isaiah 8:23-9:5, and comes to full flower in Isaiah 11:1-9.<sup>9</sup>

The intent of this paper is to consider the descriptive phrases used to empower Isaiah’s figure in 11:2 in view of the descriptive phrases used to empower Bezalel, the craftsman of the tabernacle, in Exodus 24:15-31:18 and 34:29-40:38.<sup>10</sup> In the Exodus narratives, Bezalel is divinely endowed by the **אֱלֹהִים רָוַח** with a compilation of skills, namely, **דָּעַת**, **תְּבוּנָה**, **הַכְּמָה**, and **דָּעַת**. Similarly, Isaiah’s salvific figure in 11:2 is endowed by

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<sup>3</sup> Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 157.

<sup>4</sup> Edmond Jacob, *Esaië 1-12* (Commentaire de l’Ancien Testament VIIIa; Genève: Labor et Fides, 1987), 161.

<sup>5</sup> John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (WBC 24; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1985), 169.

<sup>6</sup> Edward D. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 381.

<sup>7</sup> Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 102.

<sup>8</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (2 vols. NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 277.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> In his commentary, Oswalt briefly mentions Bezalel as a figure of great skill along with Samson, a man of great strength. Oswalt refers to these individuals as a means to contrast them with the Isaianic figure described in 11:1-9. He proposes that Isaiah’s figure introduces a man of greatness that far exceeds the skill and strength that Bezalel and Samson were given. Subsequently, Oswalt does not make a linguistic connection between the Exodus narratives and Isaiah’s oracle in 11:2. See Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 279.

the רִיחַ יְהוָה with a compilation of skills, namely, חֲכָמָה, בִּינָה, עֲצָה, גְבוּרָה, דַּעַת and יִרְאַת יְהוָה. The endowments of Exodus 31:3 and 35:31, and Isaiah 11:2 share several phrases in common, notably, רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים/יְהוָה, חֲכָמָה, תְּבוּנָה/בִּינָה, and דַּעַת. This particular combination of phrases, in an endowment pericope, is not found elsewhere in the Old Testament.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the relationship between the Exodus and Isaiah endowments is unique because Bezalel's endowment is for the purpose of building the tabernacle. His endowment for craftsmanship is characteristic of endowed craftsmen throughout the ancient Near Eastern world. Therefore, my objective in this paper is to broaden the understanding of the endowment of Isaiah's figure in 11:2 by means of Bezalel's endowment in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31 and the language of craftsmanship in ancient Near Eastern literature.

In order to accomplish this goal, we will first examine the language of craftsmanship in ancient Near Eastern literature by reviewing several Sumerian, Phoenician, Akkadian, and Ugaritic inscriptions that include phrases comparable to Bezalel's endowment in the tabernacle narratives. Second, this paper will examine the biblical building accounts recorded in Exodus, Kings and Chronicles, and Ezra and Nehemiah. We will pay special attention to the type of vocabulary used to describe the craftsmen in these narratives. Third, based on an understanding of the language of craftsmanship in the ancient Near Eastern world, this paper will examine Isaiah's oracle in 11:1-9. We will focus on the vocabulary used in Isaiah 11:2 and will consider its relationship to the descriptive phrases used to endow Bezalel in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31.

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<sup>11</sup> Several verses in the Old Testament share various combinations of the phrases found in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31, and Isaiah 11:2. Notice, especially, Job 12:13 and Proverbs 21:30. Perhaps the relationship between Job 12:13 and Proverbs 21:30 to the Exodus and Isaiah endowment passages could be reviewed in another study.

And finally, concluding remarks will be made concerning the possible implications of the relationship that the Isaianic figure, described in 11:1-9, has with the craftsman, Bezalel.

## Chapter 2

### *Craftsman Phrases in Ancient Near Eastern Building Inscriptions*

Numerous extant building inscriptions can be found in ancient Near Eastern literature. These inscriptions describe a variety of building projects including the construction of temples, palaces, thrones, and statues. Furthermore, many building inscriptions include descriptions of the craftsmen involved in the construction. These descriptions reveal that the craftsmen were often divinely empowered with various skills and abilities for their work.

This chapter considers several Sumerian, Akkadian, Phoenician, and Ugaritic building inscriptions that include descriptions of the craftsmen involved in the building project. These inscriptions denote two categories of Mesopotamian texts: Royal Monumental Inscriptions and Animated Ritual Inscriptions.<sup>12</sup> The former category represents a large portion of the inscriptions that will be studied in this chapter including several building texts and one votive text. We must keep in mind that we cannot be certain that the descriptive phrases found in these royal texts refer specifically to craftsmanship. It is difficult to distinguish the language of kingship from the language of craftsmanship in royal inscriptions. In contrast, we can be certain that the descriptive phrases found in the animated ritual inscriptions refer specifically to the craftsmen in the text.

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<sup>12</sup> For a discussion on the classification of royal monumental inscriptions, see Sandra Richter, *Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: lešakkēn šemō šām in the Bible*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002), 130-153. The animated ritual inscriptions that will be studied in this chapter refer specifically to the Babylonian *mīš pī* ritual. This type of ritual will be explained later in the chapter. For a discussion on the “animation” of ritual texts, see Irene Winter, “Idols of the King’: Royal Images as Recipients of Ritual Action in Ancient Mesopotamia,” *JRitSt* 6 (1992): 13-42.

Therefore, we will first study the royal monumental inscriptions and make note of the descriptive phrases found in these texts. Next, we will study the animated royal inscriptions and make note of the descriptive phrases found in these texts. And finally, we will compare the descriptive phrases found in both the royal inscriptions and the animated ritual inscriptions. By comparing these two collections, we will be able to conclude that the descriptive phrases found in the animated texts, as well as corresponding descriptive phrases found in the royal texts, refer to the skills for craftsmanship.

### **Royal Monumental Inscriptions: Building**

Sumerian Inscriptions:<sup>13</sup> Ur-Bau 5, Gudea (Statue B, D, F, and Cylinders A and B), Sîn-iddinam 15, Ammī-ditāna 1 and 2

#### *Ur-Bau 5*

This lengthy inscription commemorates the numerous building activities of Ur-Bau, ruler of Lagaš.<sup>14</sup> These building projects include: Eninnu for Ningirsu, the House of Girsu for Ninḫursanga, the House of the Shining City for Bau, the House of U for Ianna, the House of Girsu for Enki, a House for Nin-dara, a House for Nin-agala, a House for Nin-MAR.KI, a House for Ningirsu's [donkey]-herd, the House of Girsu for Geštin-anna and, the House of Girsu for

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<sup>13</sup> For the purpose of this paper and the study of Sumerian inscriptions, I have relied on the Sumerian-Akkadian tradition. Therefore, where it is appropriate I have included the Akkadian terms and their meanings that are related to the Sumerian meanings. This approach allows for a clearer understanding of the Sumerian terms. For a brief discussion on the relationship between the Sumerian and Akkadian languages, see John Huehnergard, "Introduction," *A Grammar of Akkadian* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), xxv.

<sup>14</sup> Ur-Bau was Gudea's predecessor and the father of his wife, Nin-alla. See Ur-Bau, "Introduction" (Dietz Otto Edzard, *Gudea and His Dynasty* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 3/1; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997], 15.

Dumuzi-abzu.<sup>15</sup> These multiple building accounts are prefaced by a few descriptive phrases that depict Ur-Bau's position.<sup>16</sup>

Col. i 4 *ur-dba-ú*<sup>5</sup> *énsi-*<sup>6</sup> *lagaš.KI*<sup>7</sup> *dumu-tu-da-*<sup>8</sup> *nin-á-gal-ka-ke*<sup>9</sup>  
*šà-ge-pà-da-*<sup>d</sup> *nanše-ke*<sup>10</sup> *á-sum-ma-*<sup>[d]</sup> *nin-ġír-su-ka-ke*<sup>11</sup> *[m]u-*  
*du*<sub>10</sub>-*sa*<sup>1</sup> (=NA)-*a-*<sup>[d]</sup> *ba-ú-ke*<sup>12</sup> *[ġéšt]u-sum-ma-*<sup>d</sup> *en-ki-ka-ke*<sub>4</sub>

Col. i 4 I, Ur-Bau<sup>5</sup> ruler of<sup>6</sup> Lagaš,<sup>7</sup> child born of<sup>8</sup> Ningala,<sup>9</sup> chosen in the heart of Nanše,<sup>10</sup> to whom Ningirsu gave strength,<sup>11</sup> whom Bau called by a favorable name,<sup>12</sup> to whom Enki gave wisdom

The inscriptions describes that Ur-Bau is elected into his position by the goddess Nanše. Line 9 reads that he is *šà-ge-pà-da-d nanše-ke*<sub>4</sub>, “chosen in the heart of Nanše.” The Sumerian verb *pàd* is translated into Akkadian as *nabûm* meaning “to summon, call upon, appoint.”<sup>17</sup> Hence, the English translators state that Ur-Bau was “chosen” for his position. Also, Ur-Bau's name is elevated to a superior status. Along with his entitlement as the “ruler of Lagaš” (lines 5-6), the god Bau designates him as one with a “favorable name,” *[m]u-du*<sub>10</sub> (line 12). This form, *du*<sub>10</sub>, is translated into Akkadian as *tābum*.<sup>18</sup> *AHW* defines *tābum* as, “schön, gut, süß.”<sup>19</sup> Finally, Ur-Bau is endowed with *à* (line 10) and *ġéštu* (line 12) from the gods Ningirsu and Enki. The logogram *à* is translated into Akkadian as *idum* meaning “strength.”<sup>20</sup> The Sumerian term *ġéštu* is translated into Akkadian as *uznum* or *ħasīsum*. Both of these terms literally refer to the “ear” but in this

<sup>15</sup> For all of these accounts see Ur-Bau (RIME 3/1:15-26).

<sup>16</sup> For the transliteration and translation of these lines see Ur-Bau (RIME 3/1:18).

<sup>17</sup> Konrad Volk, *A Sumerian Reader*. (Studia Pohl: Series Maior 18; Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1997), 92. Also, see definition 3 and 7 of “*nabû*” in *CAD* 11/1:35-37, 38-39.

<sup>18</sup> Volk, *A Sumerian Reader*, 81. In addition, lines 9-10 and 11-12 reveal a parallel relationship. Hence, “chosen in the heart” parallels “a favorable name” and “strength” parallels “wisdom.”

<sup>19</sup> “*tābu(m)*,” *AHW* 3:1377-1378.

<sup>20</sup> Volk, *A Sumerian Reader*, 78. Also, see “*idu*,” in *CAD* 7:10-16.

context assume a metaphorical sense meaning, “understanding, wisdom.”<sup>21</sup> *CAD* notes that the noun *ḥasīsum* especially takes on this meaning with reference to gods, for example, Enki.<sup>22</sup> This building inscription depicts Ur-Bau as being both divinely elected and divinely empowered for his position. He is “chosen” by the goddess Nanše and he is endowed with “strength” and “wisdom” by the gods Ningirsu and Enki.

### *Gudea: Statues B, D, F, and Cylinders A and B*

Gudea is “the most remarkable ruler of the ‘Second Dynasty of Lagaš.’”<sup>23</sup> Numerous extant inscriptions describing Gudea’s multiple building projects have been found. Two cylinders, A and B, are his longest and best-known writings found on enormous clay cylinders. In addition to these cylinders, over 26 statue inscriptions have been found, all of which Gudea fashioned in his likeness.<sup>24</sup> Statues B, D, and F, along with Cylinder’s A and B reveal that Gudea was both elected and empowered for his position by a deity.

#### *Statue B*

Statue B is dedicated from Gudea to the god Ningirsu.<sup>25</sup>

Col. ii 4 *gù-dé-a* 5 *mu-gil-sa* 6 *énsi-* 7 *lagaš.KI* 8 *sipa-ša-ge-pà-da-* 9  
*d* *nin-ḡír-su-ka-ke* 4 . . . 12 *á-sum-ma-* 13 *d* *nin-dar-a-ke* 4

<sup>21</sup> See definition 3 of “*ḥasīsu*” in *CAD* 6:126-127. Also, see “*uznu(m)*,” in *AhW* 3:1447.

<sup>22</sup> “*ḥasīsu*,” *CAD* 6:127.

<sup>23</sup> Gudea, “Introduction” (Dietz Otto Edzard, *Gudea and His Dynasty* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 3/1; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997], 26.

<sup>24</sup> These inscriptions have been categorized alphabetically by Dietz Otto Edzard beginning with “A.”

<sup>25</sup> In this statue, Gudea is seated in the guise of an architect. The inscription covers the entire statue except for the arms, shoulders, chest, feet, and socle. See Gudea (Dietz Otto Edzard, *Gudea and His Dynasty* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 3/1; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997], 30. For the transliteration and translation of these lines see Gudea (RIME 3/1:31).

Col. ii<sup>4</sup> Gudea,<sup>5</sup> who has a “treasured” name,<sup>6</sup> ruler<sup>7</sup> of Lagaš<sup>8</sup> shepherd chosen in the heart of<sup>9</sup> Ningirsu . . .<sup>12</sup> to whom was given strength<sup>13</sup> from Nin-dara

The text elucidates that Gudea is elected into his position by the god Ningirsu. Lines 8-9 reveal that he was “chosen in the heart of Ningirsu.” Similar to Ur-Bau’s election, Gudea is “appointed” or “chosen” for his position.<sup>26</sup> Also similar to Ur-Bau, Gudea’s name is elevated to a superior status. He is described not only as the “ruler of Lagaš” (lines 6-7) but as one with a “treasured name,” *mu-gil-sa*, (line 5), and a “shepherd,” *sipa* (line 8). The Sumerian term, *gil*, in *mu-gil-sa* (line 5), is an archaic form meaning “treasured.” *Gil* is, however, comparable in meaning to the Sumerian form, *du*<sub>10</sub>, in [*m*]u-*du*<sub>10</sub>-*sa*<sub>4</sub><sup>1</sup> found in Ur-Bau’s account (Ur-Bau 5, line 11). The Sumerian term *sipa* is translated into Akkadian as *rē’û*.<sup>27</sup> *CAD* specifies the definition of this form to indicate a title of a king.<sup>28</sup> Finally, Gudea is endowed with “strength” by the god Nin-dara (line 12). This chain, *á-sum-ma*, is identical to the chain found in Ur-Bau’s inscriptions. Hence, the English translation, “strength,” comes from the Sumerian logogram *á*.

#### *Statue D*

Statue D is also dedicated to Ningirsu.<sup>29</sup> This inscription varies only slightly from the description in Statue B. It lacks an endowment of “strength.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> In addition, Gudea is described as being “selected” by Ningirsu’s hand from among 216,000 people. See Gudea (RIME 3/1:32).

<sup>27</sup> Volf, *A Sumerian Reader*, 94.

<sup>28</sup> Other examples of a king being labeled as a *sipa* include Ḫammu-rāpi and Iddin-Dagan. See definition 2.b of “*rē’û*” in *CAD* 14:303, 309.

<sup>29</sup> This inscription is on the right arm and lower front part of the garment of a diorite statue sitting on a seat. See Gudea (Dietz Otto Edzard, *Gudea and His Dynasty* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 3/1; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997], 40.

<sup>30</sup> For the transliteration and translation of this text, see Gudea (RIME 3/1:41).



Col. i<sup>5</sup> *gù-dé-a* <sup>6</sup> *énsi-* <sup>7</sup> *lagaš.KI* <sup>8</sup> *mu-gil-sa* . . . <sup>11</sup> *sipa šà-ge-pà-da-* <sup>12</sup>  
<sup>d</sup> *nin-ġír-su-ka-ke,*

Col. i<sup>5</sup> Gudea, <sup>6</sup> ruler of <sup>7</sup> Lagaš, <sup>8</sup> who has a “treasured” name . . . <sup>11</sup> the shepherd chosen in the heart of <sup>12</sup> Ningirsu

The inscription describes that Gudea is “chosen” by the god Ningirsu, *šà-ge-pà-da* (line 11). Furthermore, Gudea’s position is elevated to a superior status by the convergence of the titles, *énsi-lagaš.KI* (lines 6-7), meaning “ruler of Lagaš, *sipa* (line 11), meaning “shepherd,” and *mu-gil-sa*, (line 8) meaning “treasured name.”

#### *Statue F*

Statue F is dedicated to the goddess Gatumdu.<sup>31</sup> This inscription introduces three new aspects to Gudea’s position.<sup>32</sup>

Col. i  
<sup>3</sup> *gù-dé-a*  
<sup>4</sup> *énsi-*  
<sup>5</sup> *lagaš.KI*  
<sup>6</sup> *ur-<sup>d</sup>ġá-tùm-<sup>r</sup>du<sub>10</sub>*<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>7</sup> *urdu-ki-áġ-zu*

Col. i  
<sup>3</sup> Gudea,  
<sup>4</sup> ruler of  
<sup>5</sup> Lagaš,  
<sup>6</sup> man of Gatumdu,  
<sup>7</sup> your beloved slave

Col. ii  
<sup>6</sup> *gù-dé-a*  
<sup>7</sup> *énsi-*  
<sup>8</sup> *lagaš.KI*  
<sup>9</sup> *ġèštu-daġal-kam*  
<sup>10</sup> *urdu-ní-tuku-*  
<sup>11</sup> *nin-a-na-kam*

Col. ii  
<sup>6</sup> Gudea  
<sup>7</sup> ruler of  
<sup>8</sup> Lagaš,  
<sup>9</sup> being very intelligent indeed  
<sup>10</sup> and the reverent slave of  
<sup>11</sup> his mistress

<sup>31</sup> This inscription, on a diorite statue, is found on the right upper arm and lower part of the garment. See Gudea (Dietz Otto Edzard, *Gudea and His Dynasty* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 3/1; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997], 46.

<sup>32</sup> For the transliteration and translation of this text, see Gudea (RIME 3/1:47).

First, Gudea describes himself as the “beloved slave” of Gatumdu, *urdu-ki-áĝ*, (column i line 6). *Urdu* + *ki-áĝ* are translated into Akkadian as *wardum* + *narāmum*.<sup>33</sup> *CAD* defines *narāmum* as “beloved one, favorite” and affirms that this is a royal title used in relationships between gods and kings.<sup>34</sup> Second, Gudea describes himself as “very intelligent,” *ĝèštu-daĝal* (column ii line 9). *Ĝèštu-daĝal* is translated into Akkadian as *rapaš uzni* literally “wide of ear,” an idiom meaning “vast wisdom, great insight, broad wisdom, and highly intelligent.” Third, Gudea again describes himself as a “slave,” *urdu-ni-tuku* (column ii line 10). Whereas the adjective used previously means “beloved” (*ki-áĝ*, column i line 7), *ni-tuku* means “venerate.”<sup>35</sup> The convergence of these three attributes, “beloved slave,” “very intelligent,” and “reverent slave” highlights the superior position that Gudea held.

### *Cylinders A and B*

These cylinders describe Gudea’s rebuilding of Ningirsu’s temple complex, Eninnu.<sup>36</sup> Several phrases describing Gudea’s position can be found on both Cylinders A and B.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Volf, *A Sumerian Reader*, 88 (*ki-áĝ*) and 98 (*urdu*).

<sup>34</sup> “*narāmu*,” *CAD* 11/1:343-344.

<sup>35</sup> Volf, *A Sumerian Reader*, 91. Also, see “*palāhu(m)*” in *AHW* 2: 812-813.

<sup>36</sup> It has been suggested that there is evidence of a third cylinder. For a discussion on this conjecture, see Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (JSOT Supplement Series, 115; JSOT/ASOR Monograph Series, 5; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 33-38. These clay cylinders are 61 cm high with a diameter of 32 cm and a thickness of 2.9 cm. See Gudea (RIME 3/1:69).

<sup>37</sup> For the transliteration and translation of Cylinders A and B see Gudea (Dietz Otto Edzard, *Gudea and His Dynasty* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 3/1; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997], 68-101.

Cylinder A Col. i <sup>12</sup> <i>énsi lú-ḡèštu-daḡal-kam</i> <i>ḡèstu</i>	Cylinder A Col. i <sup>12</sup> Wise as he is, the ruler will use his intellect.
Col. vii <sup>9</sup> <i>sipa-zi ḡù-dé-a</i> <sup>10</sup> <i>gal mu-zu</i> <i>gal ì-ga-túm-mu</i>	Col. vii <sup>9</sup> The good shepherd Gudea <sup>10</sup> is wise and able, too, to realize things.
Col. xii <sup>20</sup> <i>gal mu-zu gal ì-ga-túm-mu</i>	Col. xii <sup>20</sup> He is wise and able, too, to realize things
Col. xx <sup>24</sup> <i>ḡù-dé-a lú-é-dù-a-ke<sub>4</sub></i>	Col. xx <sup>24</sup> Gudea the House-builder
Col. xxiii <sup>22</sup> <i>ḡù-dé-a en<sup>d</sup> nin-ḡír-su-ke<sub>4</sub></i> <sup>23</sup> <i>šà-kù-ge bí-pà</i>	Col. xxiii <sup>22</sup> Gudea, yea the lord Ningirsu <sup>23</sup> chose him in (his) heart.
Col. xxv <sup>22</sup> <i>sipa-zi ḡù-dé-a gal mu-zu</i> <sup>23</sup> <i>gal ì-ga-túm-mu</i>	Col. xxv <sup>22</sup> The true shepherd Gudea is wise and <sup>23</sup> able, too, to realize things.
Cylinder B Col. ii <sup>7</sup> <i>sipa-zi ḡù-dé-a</i> <sup>8</sup> <i>gal mu-zu gal</i> <i>ì-ga-túm-mu</i>	Cylinder B Col. ii <sup>7</sup> The true shepherd Gudea <sup>8</sup> is wise and able, too, to realize things.
Col. xiii <sup>12</sup> <i>sipa-[g]ú-tuku-<sup>d</sup>nin-[g]ír-sú-</i> <i>ka-ke<sub>4</sub></i> , <sup>13</sup> <i>gal mu-zu gal ì-ga-túm-</i> <i>mu</i>	Col. xiii <sup>12</sup> the brave shepherd of Ningirsu, <sup>13</sup> is wise and able, too, to realize things.

Similar to Ur-Bau and Gudea Statues B, D, and F, these Cylinders illustrate that Gudea was elected into his position by a god. The inscription states that he was “chosen in (Ningirsu’s) pure heart,” *šà-kù-ge bí-pà* (column xxiii line 23). This chain, unlike those found in the previous inscriptions, includes an

addition, *kùg*. *Kùg* is translated into Akkadian as *ellum* meaning “clean, pure, holy, sacred.”<sup>38</sup> *CAD* proposes that *ellum* typically indicates “holiness” or “sacredness” when referring to kings.<sup>39</sup>

Both Cylinders A and B include a rich use of vocabulary to describe the skills that Gudea held. Gudea is depicted as “wise” several times throughout the texts. The English translation “wise” refers to two different Sumerian forms. The most frequent Sumerian chain denoting Gudea’s “wisdom” is *gal mu-zu* (Cylinder A column vii line 10, column xii line 20, column xxv line 22, Cylinder B column ii line 8, column xii line 13). *Gal + zu* literally mean “big-knower” or a “wise person.” Also, the Sumerian chain *ĝèštu-daĝal* (Cylinder A column i line 12) describes that Gudea was “wise.” The phrase, *ĝèštu-daĝal*, has already been reviewed in Gudea Statue D where it was rendered “intellect.” However, the English translators of this inscription have rendered it “wise.”<sup>40</sup> Gudea is also described as one with “intellect,” *ĝèštu* (Cylinder A column i line 12) and “knowledge,” *KA.zu* (Cylinder B column i line 12).<sup>41</sup> And, he is described as being a “house-builder,” *é-dù* (Cylinder A column xx line 24). This Sumerian form is translated into Akkadian as *bānūm*.<sup>42</sup> And finally, Gudea is designated as a “true shepherd,” *sipa-zi* (Cylinder B column ii line 7). The modifier *zi* is translated into Akkadian as *kīnum* meaning “true, reliable, just, honest.”<sup>43</sup> As discussed earlier in Gudea Statues B and D, *sipa* indicates the title of a king. In

<sup>38</sup> Volf, *A Sumerian Reader*, 88. For the definition of “*ellu*,” see *CAD* 4:102.

<sup>39</sup> “*ellu*,” *CAD* 4:102.

<sup>40</sup> The multiple definitions of this chain testify to the broad semantic domain of the phrase.

<sup>41</sup> Notice that the English translators render the first recurrence of *ĝèštu* (with *daĝal*) as “wise” and the second recurrence of *ĝèštu* as “intellect.”

<sup>42</sup> Volf, *A Sumerian Reader*, 82 (*é*) and 81 (*du*). Also, see “*bānū*,” in *CAD* 2:95.

<sup>43</sup> See definition 2 of “*kīnu*” in *CAD* 8:389.

summary, Cylinders A and B illustrate a collection of skills that Gudea held including: “wisdom,” “knowledge,” and “intelligence.”

### *Sîn-iddinam 15*

Sîn-iddinam reigned seven years as the King of Larsa.<sup>44</sup> This particular inscription tells the story of Sîn-iddinam’s construction of a throne for the storm god Iškur.<sup>45</sup> In the middle of this inscription, Sîn-iddinam is described by a long list of epithets. Among these descriptions is a brief depiction of the divine empowerment that Sîn-iddinam received from the god Nudimmud.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *šul mu-du<sub>10</sub>-sa<sub>4</sub>-<sup>d</sup>nanna-ke<sub>4</sub> . . .* <sup>41</sup> *ḡéštu-daḡal igi-gál-diri sum-ma*  
<sup>42</sup> *<sup>d</sup>nu-dīm-mud-ke<sub>4</sub>*

<sup>37</sup> youth called by a good name by the god Nanna . . . <sup>41</sup> given broad wisdom and surpassing intelligence by <sup>42</sup> the god Nudimmud

Like the building inscriptions that we have already studied, Sîn-iddinam is designated, by the goddess Nanna, as one with a “good name,” *mu-du<sub>10</sub>* (line 37). Also, Sîn-iddinam is endowed with “broad wisdom,” *ḡéštu-daḡal*, and “surpassing intelligence,” *igi-gál-diri*, by the god Nudimmud (line 41). *Ḥéštu-daḡal*, an already familiar Sumerian phrase from the Gudea inscriptions, can mean both “wisdom” and “intellect.” In this instance, the English translators have rendered it as “broad wisdom.”

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<sup>44</sup> Sîn-iddinam (Douglas Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period (2003-1595 BC)* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 4; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990], 157.

<sup>45</sup> “Sîn-iddinam,” translated by Douglas Frayne (*COS 2.100:250*). This text depicts two butting bull figures on either side of the base of the throne. Frayne compares this image with the relief found on Ahiram’s Sarcophagus that depicts two lion figures standing below the armrests of the ruler’s throne. See p. 250 for his discussion of these two images.

<sup>46</sup> For the transliteration and translation of these lines see Sîn-iddinam (RIME 4:178).

*Ammī-ditāna 1 and 2*

Ammī-ditāna, Ḫammu-rāpi's grandson, was the ninth king of the Babylon I dynasty.<sup>47</sup> Text 1 is a short Sumerian inscription found on a cone fragment. This inscription records Ammī-ditāna's construction of the wall of Babylon and describes the king's endowment of "wisdom" by the god Enki. Likewise, Text 2, a bilingual building inscription of Sumerian and Akkadian, indicates that he was given "wisdom" by the gods Enki and Ea.<sup>48</sup>

Text 1

<sup>5</sup> *u<sub>4</sub>-bi-[a]* <sup>6</sup> *nam-kù-zu-[a]* <sup>7</sup> *d<sup>d</sup>en-*  
*[ki-ke<sub>4</sub>]* <sup>8</sup> *š<sup>h</sup>u-a hé(?)*-[...] *-an-*  
*[...-gar-ra-ta]*

Text 1

<sup>5</sup> At that time, <sup>6</sup> by the wisdom <sup>7</sup>  
that the god Enki <sup>8</sup> [verily  
granted] to me

Text 2-Sumerian

<sup>19</sup> *nam-kù-zu-a* <sup>20</sup> *d<sup>d</sup>en-ki-ke<sub>4</sub>*  
<sup>21</sup> *ma-an-sum-ma-ta* . . . <sup>26</sup> *BĀD*  
*am-mi-di-ta-na.KI-a* . . . <sup>30</sup> *dīm*

Text 2-Sumerian

<sup>19</sup> by the wisdom <sup>20</sup> that the god Enki <sup>21</sup>  
gave to me . . . <sup>26</sup> Fort Ammī-ditāna . . .  
<sup>30</sup> I built

Text 2-Akkadian

<sup>19</sup> *in u<sub>4</sub>-m[i-š<sup>h</sup>u]* <sup>20</sup> *in ne-me-qí-*  
*i[m]* <sup>21</sup> *ša<sup>d</sup>é-a i-di-nam* . . .  
<sup>26</sup> *BĀD am-mi-di-ta-na.KI* . . .  
<sup>30</sup> *ab-ni*

Text 2-Akkadian

<sup>19</sup> At that time, <sup>20</sup> by the wisdom  
<sup>21</sup> that the god Ea gave to me <sup>26</sup>  
Fort Ammī-ditāna . . . <sup>30</sup> I built

Ammī-ditāna's endowment of "wisdom" by the gods Enki and Ea is illustrated by the Sumerian phrase *nam-kù-zu-a* (Text 1 line 6 and Text 2 line 19) and the Akkadian phrase *nēmequm* (Text 2 line 20). *CAD* defines *nēmequm* as "knowledge, experience, wisdom, skill" and notes that it is frequently a skill bestowed upon kings.<sup>49</sup> Also, notice that Text 2 indicates that the "wisdom" that Ammī-ditāna received was the instrument with which he built Fort Ammī-ditāna

<sup>47</sup> "Ammī-ditāna," translated by Douglas Frayne (*COS* 2.109:258-259).

<sup>48</sup> For the transliteration and translation of these lines see Ammī-ditāna (Douglas Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period (2003-1595 BC)* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 4; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990], 413).

<sup>49</sup> "*nēmequ*," *CAD* 11/2:160.

(line 26).<sup>50</sup> The English translation states, “by the wisdom...I (Ammī-ditāna) built.” This inscription seems to indicate that the “wisdom” that Ammī-ditāna was endowed with, from the gods Ea and Enki, was for the purpose of building Fort Ammī-ditāna.

Akkadian Inscriptions: The Legend of Etana: the Late Version,  
Iahdun-Līm 2, Esarhaddon 11, Nabonidus Nr. 3

*The Legend of Etana*

The Legend of Etana has been found in both an Old and a Late Version.<sup>51</sup> Its story, in brief, consists of Etana’s election as the first king of Sumer by the god Enlil and his struggle to maintain his position and interpret the will of the gods. Etana’s election by Enlil includes a brief description of the ruler’s position as a craftsman.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>8</sup> [mE-t]a-na lu-u i-tin-ši-na <sup>9</sup> ši-bir [re-é-ú-ti(?)]

<sup>8</sup> Let [Et]ana be their master-builder and <sup>9</sup> the bu[ilder of *Hursang-kalama*], the very ‘staff’ [of shepherding].

Etana is described as a “builder,” indicated by the Akkadian phrase *i-tin-ši-na* (line 8). The English translators of this text render the Akkadian *itinnum* as “master-builder.” However, *CAD* defines *itinnum* simply as “house-builder” and does not suggest that the Akkadian form implies a superior position suggested by the English translation.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ammī-ditāna also states in Text 2 lines 22-25 that the reason he built Fort Ammī-ditāna was “in order to superbly shepherd the widespread people of my land by means of fine pastures and watering places and to make them lie down in (safe) pastures.” See Ammī-ditāna (RIME 4:413).

<sup>51</sup> The Late Version of this tale is a conscious rewriting of the first. For the dating of these versions, see J. V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Legend of Etana: A New Edition*, (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1985), 81.

<sup>52</sup> For the transliteration and translation of this text see Wilson, *The Legend of Etana*, 83.

<sup>53</sup> “*itinnu*,” *CAD* 7:296.

### *Iaḥdun-Līm 2*

Iaḥdun-Līm, son of Iaggid-Līm, was the King of Mari.<sup>54</sup> This particular inscription commemorates Iaḥdun-Līm's construction of the temple of the god Šamaš.<sup>55</sup> The text includes a depiction of the finished temple.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>99-107</sup> *a-na ba-la-ti-šu É<sup>d</sup>UTU be-li-šu É ša i-pi-iš-ta-am šu-uk-lu-lu-ma um-me-nu-ta-am qú-ut-tu-ú sí-ma-at i-lu-ti-šu i-pu-ús-su-um-ma i-na šu-ba-at ra-bu-ti-ša ù-še-ši-ib-šu šum É ša-tu e-gi-ir-za-la-an-ki i-bi É ta-ši-la-at ša-mé-e ù er-še-tim*

<sup>99-107</sup> For his own life he built the temple of the god Šamaš, his lord, a temple whose construction was perfect with finished workmanship, befitting his divinity. He installed him in his majestic dwelling. He named that temple Egirzalanki ('House-rejoicing of heaven and earth').

The above inscription states that Iaḥdun-Līm built the Šamaš temple and describes three notable aspects of the construction. First, the construction is described as "perfect," indicated by the Akkadian term *šuklulum*.<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, *CAD* defines *šuklulum* as "perfect, complete."<sup>58</sup> The construction is also described as being completed with "finished workmanship," *umenutam qatû*.<sup>59</sup> The Akkadian term *ummānum* is defined by *AHW* as "Handwerkskunts, kunstvolle, Gelehrsamkeit."<sup>60</sup> This aspect of the construction suggests that Iaḥdun-Līm's abilities as the builder of the Šamaš temple were "skillful" and "erudite." Finally, the construction is described as "fitting for a deity," *i-lu-ti-šu*.

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<sup>54</sup> Iaḥdun-Līm, "Introduction" (Douglas Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period (2003-1595 BC)* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods 4; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990], 602).

<sup>55</sup> In addition to this inscription, nine large baked bricks inscribed with an account of this building project have been excavated. See Iaḥdun-Līm (RIME 4:602-604).

<sup>56</sup> For the transliteration and translation of this text see Iaḥdun-Līm (RIME 4:604-608).

<sup>57</sup> "*šuklulu*," *CAD* 17/3:220.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> "*qatû*," *CAD* 13:180.

<sup>60</sup> "*ummānu(m)*," *AHW* 3:1414.



### *Esarhaddon 11*

Esarhaddon, the successor of Sennacherib, ascended the throne of Assyria in 681 BCE.<sup>61</sup> Numerous extant inscriptions have provided a wealth of information concerning Esarhaddon's rule as well as his numerous building constructions. Text 11 describes the king's renovation of Ebaradurgara, a temple for the goddess, "Queen-of-Nippur,"<sup>62</sup> This building inscription includes a brief description of Esarhaddon's position.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *i-tu-ut kun lib-bi<sup>d</sup> en-lil . . .* <sup>12</sup> *it-pe-šu ḥa-sis kal šip-ri*

<sup>4</sup> selected by the steadfast heart of the god Enlil . . . <sup>12</sup> expert who knows every craft

Esarhaddon is described as being elected for his position. The Akkadian *itûtu + kūn libbi* literally translated is "choice of steadfastness of heart," hence the English translation "selected by the steadfast heart" (line 4).<sup>64</sup> This type of election, "selected" or "chosen" in the heart of a god, has already been discussed in Ur-Bau 5 and the Gudea inscriptions. Esarhaddon was divinely appointed for his position by the god Enlil. Also, Esarhaddon is described as an "expert who knows every craft," *it-pe-šu ḥa-sis kal šip-ri* (line 12). Note that the Akkadian

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<sup>61</sup> Esarhaddon (Grant Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia: From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157-612 BC)* [The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods 2; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995], 164.

<sup>62</sup> Esarhaddon (RIMB 2:175). Text 12 also includes a description of Esarhaddon's position as craftsman but unfortunately the inscription is fairly corrupt.

<sup>63</sup> For the transliteration and English translation of these texts see Esarhaddon (RIMB 2:176).

<sup>64</sup> CAD translates this phrase, *i-tu-ut kūn libbi*, as "permanently selected by." See "*itûtu*," CAD 7:317. Also, see "*itûtum*," (Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate, eds. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000], 137.

*itpēšum* denotes “expert, competent,” *ħasis* denotes “understanding,” and *kal šipri* denotes “every work.”<sup>65</sup>

### *Nabonidus Nr. 3*

This inscription commemorates the work of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon.<sup>66</sup> The tale describes Nabonidus’ effort to rebuild Ebabbar, the Šamaš temple in Larsa.<sup>67</sup> The storyline of the inscription is as follows: a lengthy history of the temple, preparations for the new temple building, the construction of the new temple, and the dedication of the temple. This inscription includes a brief description of the craftsmen involved in the reconstruction.<sup>68</sup>

Col. ii <sup>56</sup> *um-man-nu mu-du-ú a-šar*

Col. ii <sup>56</sup> Intelligent workers (searched) the place

The workers involved in rebuilding the Šamaš temple are described with one skill, “intelligence.” The Akkadian transliteration, *mudû*, from *um-man-nu mu-du-ú*, refers to a range of meanings including: “knowing, wise, competent, expert, learned.”<sup>69</sup> *CAD* notes that this form can refer to “an expert in a specific craft” implying that the workers who rebuilt the Šamaš temple were “specialized craftsman.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> “*itpēšu*,” *CAD* 7:299. Also, see, “*itpēšu*,” *CDA*:136. Also, see Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, 497 (*ħa-sīsum*) and 524 (*šiprum*).

<sup>66</sup> “Nabonidus,” translated by Paul-Alain Beaulieu (*COS* 2.123A:310-313).

<sup>67</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 84.

<sup>68</sup> For the transliteration of these lines see S. Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912), 240. My English translation is based on Langdon’s German translation.

<sup>69</sup> “*mudû*,” *CAD* 10/2:163.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

## A Phoenician Building Inscription

### *Azatiwada*

This seventh century inscription is the longest extant Phoenician text.<sup>71</sup>

The inscription describes Azatiwada's building projects including the building of the city, Azatiwadaya. This particular inscription includes a brief depiction of Azatiwada's role as a craftsman.<sup>72</sup>

Col. ii 9 *wbn 'nk hqrt z wšt* 10 *'nk šm 'ztdy kb 'l wršp* 11 *šprm šlhñ lbnt*

Col. ii 9 And I built this city. 10 And I gave it the name Azatiwadaya, since Ba'al and Rešeph 11 of the stags commissioned me to build.

Azatiwada is depicted as the craftsman of the city, Azatiwadaya; he is “commissioned” by the gods, Ba'al and Rešeph (line 11). The Phoenician term *šlh*, in the phrase *šlhñ lbnt*, means “to send” and has cognates in Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Aramaic.<sup>73</sup> K. Lawson Younger has interpreted this term to mean “commission.” However, Cyrus Gordon translates it as “sent.”<sup>74</sup> Regardless of the interpretation, Azatiwada is depicted as being “appointed” for his position, an already familiar concept found in the Ur-Bau text and the Gudea inscriptions.

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<sup>71</sup> "The Azatiwada Inscription," translated by K. Lawson Younger (*COS* 2.31:148-150). This text was discovered on orthostats at the fortification of Karatepe, in the ancient region of Cilicia.

<sup>72</sup> Younger states that “Azatiwada was an agent of Awariku, the king of the Danunians.” See Younger (*COS* 2.31:148). For the transliteration and translation of these lines see K. Lawson Younger, Jr., “The Phoenician Inscription of Azatiwada: An Integrated Reading,” *JSS* 43 (1998):11-47.

<sup>73</sup> Richard S. Tomback, *A Comparative Semitic Lexicon of the Phoenician and Punic Languages* (SBL Dissertation Series 32; Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978), 317.

<sup>74</sup> Cyrus H. Gordon, “Azitawadd's Phoenician Inscription,” *JNES* 82 (1949):110-115.

## Royal Monumental Inscriptions: Votive

### An Ugaritic Inscription

#### *The Baal Cycle*

The Baal Cycle is one of the best-known tales of the ancient world. The story includes the rise-fall-rise cycle of the storm god, Baal, and the construction of his palace by the craftsman god, Kothar wa-Hasis. “Kothar wa-Hasis, literally ‘Crafty and Wise,’ is a specialist who serves other deities with his craftsmanship.”<sup>75</sup> His name, Kothar wa-Hasis, is described by Mark Smith as a “double-barreled name” wherein Kothar is the first and main name.<sup>76</sup> Despite his prominence throughout the Baal Cycle, there is only a brief description of Kothar wa-Hasis’ position as craftsman.<sup>77</sup>

Third Tablet  
Col. vi  
<sup>21-23</sup> *wrgm.lktr/wḥss.*  
*tny.lh/yn.dhrš.ydm*

Third Tablet  
Col. vi  
<sup>21-23</sup> And say to Kothar wa-  
Hasis, Recite to the Skilled  
Craftsman

Fourth Tablet  
Col. i  
<sup>23</sup> *hyn. 'ly.lmḫm*

Fourth Tablet  
Col. i  
<sup>23</sup> The Skilled One goes up to  
the bellows.

The inscription emphasizes the “skill” of Kothar wa-Hasis’ position as a craftsman god. The first Ugaritic chain, *lh/yn.dhrš.ydm*, literally “skilled with two

<sup>75</sup> See Simon B. Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (SBL Writings from the Ancient World Series 9; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1997), 83.

<sup>76</sup> Smith notes that “double-barrelled” names are common in Ugaritic. He describes the “double-barrelled” feature as the “fusing of two names into one.” Smith also proposes that the name, Kothar wa-Hasis, maybe be read as a hendiadys, “wise craftsman.” See Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume 1 Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary on KTU 1.1-1.2* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 170-172.

<sup>77</sup> Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 119-121. The numbering of these texts follows the classification of M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín, eds. *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995).

hands,” is rendered by Parker as “skilled craftsman” (column vi lines 21-23).<sup>78</sup>

The Ugaritic *hyn*, found in both of the above descriptions, is considered to be an alternate name for Kothar wa-Hasis.<sup>79</sup> The term itself means “deft one.”<sup>80</sup> In this instance, Parker has appropriately rendered it as “skilled.”

### **Animated Ritual Inscriptions**

Akkadian Inscriptions: Esarhaddon’s Renewal of the Gods,  
TuL No. 27

#### ***Esarhaddon’s Renewal of the Gods***

Esarhaddon’s Renewal of the Gods is explained by Michael Dick as the *mīs pî*, “mouth-washing,” or *pit pî*, “mouth-opening” ritual documented by several Sumerian and Babylonian inscriptions.<sup>81</sup> This type of ritual included procedures for preparing statues of a deity for use. This particular inscription describes the renewal process of divine statues from Babylon and is composed of four parts: an introduction (lines 2-13), Esarhaddon’s prayer to the gods (lines 14-20), Esarhaddon’s consultation with diviners (lines 21-27), and the final installation of the statues (lines 28-38).<sup>82</sup> Descriptions of the craftsmen involved

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<sup>78</sup> Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 172.

<sup>79</sup> Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Analecta Orientalia 38; Roma: Piazza Pilotta, 1965), 390. See page 59 Column V lines 22-25 in the tale of Aqhat for a poetic parallelism identifying Kothar wa-Hasis as *Hyn*. Also, see Stanislav Segert, *A Basic Grammar of the Ugaritic Language* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

<sup>80</sup> Smith equates the Aramaic form *hawnā’* with the Ugaritic *hyn* and notes that the Targum to Proverbs 25:16 renders the Hebrew *têbûnâh* as the Aramaic *hawnā’*. Smith then proposes that “Kothar may have been the divine prototype for Bezalel” since both are West Semitic wise craftsman summoned to build a divine abode. See Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 171-172.

<sup>81</sup> Michael B. Dick, ed., *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 55-121.

<sup>82</sup> In this particular inscription, one of the statues in question is the Babylonian cult statue of Marduk. See Dick, *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth*, 63.

in this renewal process can be found both in Esarhaddon's prayer and his consultation with diviners.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Endow the skilled (*enqūti*) craftsmen (DUMU.MEŠ *ummāni*) whom you ordered to complete this task with as high an understanding as Ea, their creator. <sup>19</sup> Teach them skills by your exalted word . . . <sup>25</sup> They (the gods) indicated to me the names of the artisans (fit) for completing the work . . . <sup>29</sup> I brought carpenters, goldsmiths, metalworkers, stonecutters—skilled artisans knowledgeable . . .

Esarhaddon pleads, in his prayer to the gods, to “endow” the craftsmen in this text. The King requests specifically for the endowment of “understanding.” This type of “understanding” is compared in line 18 to the “understanding” like that of the god Ea. Hence, Esarhaddon beseeches the gods not only for a divine endowment of these craftsmen but for the endowment of a divine skill, “understanding.” Furthermore, notice that the craftsmen are described as being already “skilled,” *enqūti*. *CAD* notes that this word, *enqū*, can also refer to “wisdom.”<sup>84</sup> In this context, the significance of *enqū* is that even though the craftsmen are described as “wise,” Esarhaddon requests that the gods divinely endow them. Also, line 25 suggests that these craftsmen were divinely appointed for their positions. The inscription notes that the gods chose the craftsmen that they deemed were capable of the renewal process. And finally, the craftsmen in this inscription are described as being “knowledgeable.”

*TuL No. 27*<sup>85</sup>

This text also describes the Mesopotamian *mīš pī* ritual and includes a brief description of the craftsmen involved in preparing the statues for use. These

<sup>83</sup> For the translation of the lines in Figure 2.12, see Dick, *Born in Heaven*, 65.

<sup>84</sup> “*enqū*,” *CAD* 4:151.

<sup>85</sup> The numbering of this text as TuL No. 27 is based on Dick, *Born in Heaven*, 103.

workers are described as *ummânî mudûti*, translated by Michael Dick as “skilled craftsman.”<sup>86</sup> The Akkadian *mudûtu* can also refer to “knowledge.”<sup>87</sup>

### **Conclusions to Craftsman Phrases in Ancient Near Eastern Building Inscriptions**

A couple of preliminary conclusions can be made based upon the above study of Sumerian, Akkadian, Phoenician, and Ugaritic building inscriptions.

(1) A prominent feature of these inscriptions is divine election. The Sumerian and Akkadian inscriptions especially emphasize this aspect. For Ur-Bau and the Gudea inscriptions, the concept of being “chosen” or “selected” by a god/the gods is a prominent feature. (2) Figure 2.1 (see page 25) illustrates that the role of builders in ancient Near Eastern literature includes a range of abilities and skills, notably, “knowledge,” “wisdom,” “understanding,” “expertise,” and “skill.” Figure 2.1 also reveals that there are four descriptive phrases found in the animated ritual inscriptions including: “skill,” “wisdom,” “knowledge,” and “understanding.” In the ritual texts, these terms refer specifically to the skills for craftsmanship. Furthermore, three of these phrases (“skill,” “wisdom,” and “knowledge”) are also found throughout the royal monumental inscriptions. Subsequently, it is possible that the recurrences of these phrases in the royal texts also refer to the skills for craftsmanship. Notice that the occurrences of descriptive phrases that seem to indicate skills for craftsmanship are highlighted in gray in Figure 2.1

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<sup>86</sup> For this phrase, see line 18 in Dick, *Born In Heaven*, 106-107.

<sup>87</sup> Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, 507.

Figure 2.1

### Overview of Descriptive Phrases in Ancient Near Eastern Building Inscriptions

Builder	Descriptive Phrases <sup>1</sup>	Classification					
Ur-Bau	“strength” “wisdom” ( <i>ĝéštu</i> ) “a favorable name”	Sumerian	Building	Royal Monumental Inscriptions			
Gudea	“strength” “a treasured name” “a true shepherd” “a beloved slave” “a reverent slave” “very intelligent” “wisdom” ( <i>gal mu-zu, ĝéštu-daĝal</i> ) “knowledge” ( <i>KA.zu</i> ) “a house-builder”						
Sîn-iddinam	“wisdom” ( <i>ĝéštu-daĝal</i> ) “intelligence” “a good name”						
Ammī-ditāna	“wisdom” ( <i>nēmequm</i> )						
Iaḥdun -Līm	“perfect”						
Etana	“a master-builder”				Akkadian		
Esarhaddon	“expertise” “knowledgeable of every craft”						
Nabonidus	“intelligence”						
Baal	“skill” ( <i>hyn</i> )	Ugaritic	Votive				
The craftsmen in Esarhaddon’s Renewal of the Gods	“understanding” “knowledge” “wisdom” ( <i>enqū</i> )	Akkadian		Animated Ritual Inscriptions			
The craftsmen in TuL No. 27	“skill” ( <i>mudūt</i> )						

<sup>1</sup> Descriptive phrases that seem to indicate skills for craftsmanship are highlighted in gray.



## Chapter 3

### *Craftsman Phrases in Biblical Building Accounts*

The study of craftsman phrases in Chapter 2 revealed several aspects of the position of craftsmen in ancient Near Eastern inscriptions. Notably, many of these craftsmen are empowered by a deity with a range of skills and abilities including: “skill,” “wisdom,” “knowledge,” and “understanding.” The intent of this chapter is to compare and contrast the language of craftsmanship in the Bible with the language of craftsmanship in the ancient Near East. Therefore, we will first explore the language of craftsmanship in the biblical texts, and then conclude with a discussion of the language of craftsmanship throughout the ancient Near Eastern world.

#### **The Tabernacle: Exodus 24:15-31:18 and 34:29-40:38**

The building of the tabernacle is described in detail in Exodus 24:15-31:18 and 34:29-40:38.<sup>88</sup> The first account records the commands of Yahweh to Moses, and the second records Moses’ retelling of Yahweh’s instructions to Israel and the execution of the instructions. The latter account is almost a word for word quotation of the first: the order of Moses’ retelling is identical to Yahweh’s original instructions in 24:15-31:18,<sup>89</sup> and both the designations of artisans recorded in 31:1-6 and in 35:30-36:1 are similar. Exodus 31:1-6 and 35:30-36:1 are rich with descriptive phrases revealing that Bezalel was divinely endowed by Yahweh for his work.

A comparison of Exodus 31:1-6 and 35:30-36:1 reveals an undeniable literary relationship between the two pericopes. A four-tiered structure is apparent in each of these

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<sup>88</sup> These two texts are interrupted by the story of the Golden Calf, 32:1-34:28. Hurowitz suggests that these three passages fall into a pattern found in Mesopotamian building stories in which a rebellious act interrupts a building account. Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz, “The Golden Calf and the Tabernacle,” *Shnaton* 7:51-59 (English Abstract: 9-10), 1983-1984.

<sup>89</sup> In addition, the order of Israel’s actual construction recorded in Exodus 36:8-40:33 and Yahweh’s instructions in 24:15-31:18 are analogous.

Figure 3.1

Yahweh's Instruction to Moses in Exodus 31:1-6	Moses' Retelling to Israel in Exodus 35:30-35	
<p>31:1-2 וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר רְאֵה קָרָאתִי בְשֵׁם בְּצַלְאֵל בֶּן-אֹרִי בֶן-חֹר לְמִטָּה יְהוּדָה:</p> <p>And Yahweh said to Moses saying, "See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, from the tribe of Judah.</p>	<p>35:30 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּ קָרָא יְהוָה בְּשֵׁם בְּצַלְאֵל בֶּן-אֹרִי בֶן-חֹר לְמִטָּה יְהוּדָה:</p> <p>Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, "See, Yahweh has called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, from the tribe of Judah.</p>	Yahweh calls Bezalel
<p>31:3 וַאֲמַלְא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּחָכְמָה וּבְתַבּוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל-מְלָאכָה</p> <p>"And I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all craftsmanship.</p>	<p>35:31 וַיִּמְלֵא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּחָכְמָה בְּתַבּוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל-מְלָאכָה</p> <p>"And he has filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all craftsmanship.</p>	Yahweh endows Bezalel
<p>31:4-5 לְחַשֵּׁב מַחְשְׁבֹת לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּזָהָב וּבַכֶּסֶף וּבַנְּחֹשֶׁת: וּבַחֲרֹשֶׁת אֲבָן לְמַלְאֵת וּבַחֲרֹשֶׁת עֵץ בְּכָל-מְלָאכָה:</p> <p>"To devise inventions to work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the skillful working of precious stone for setting, and in the skillful working of wood, to work in every craft.</p>	<p>35:32-33 וְלַחֲשֹׁב מַחְשְׁבֹת לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּזָהָב וּבַכֶּסֶף וּבַנְּחֹשֶׁת: וּבַחֲרֹשֶׁת אֲבָן לְמַלְאֵת וּבַחֲרֹשֶׁת עֵץ לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּכָל-מְלָאכֶת מַחְשְׁבֹת:</p> <p>"And to devise inventions to work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the skillful working of precious stone for setting, and in the skillful working of wood, to work in every inventive craft.</p>	A Description of the Endowment
<p>31:6 וָאֲנִי הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי אֹתוֹ אֶת אֹהֲלִיאֵב בֶּן-אֲחִיסָמָךְ לְמִטָּה דָן וּבְלִבִּי כָל-חֲכָמֵי לֵב נָתַתִּי חֲכָמָה וְעָשׂוּ אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ:</p> <p>"Now I myself have appointed with him Oholiab, son of Ahimsamach, from the tribe of Dan. Even into the hearts of all the skillful, I have given wisdom so that they may do all that I have commanded you."</p>	<p>35:34-36:1 וְלִהְיוֹת נָתַן בְּלִבּוֹ הוּא וְאֹהֲלִיאֵב בֶּן-אֲחִיסָמָךְ לְמִטָּה דָן: מֵלֵא אֲתָם חֲכָמֵי לֵב לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּל-מְלָאכֶת חֲרָשׁ וְחֹשֶׁב וְרָקֵם בְּתַכְלִית וּבְאֲרָגְמָן בְּחֹלְעַת הַשָּׁנִי וּבַשֵּׁשׁ וְאֲרָג עֵשִׂי כָל-מְלָאכָה וְחֹשְׁבֵי מַחְשְׁבֹת: וְעָשָׂה בְּצַלְאֵל וְאֹהֲלִיאֵב וְכָל אִישׁ חֲכָמֵי לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה חֲכָמָה וּתְבִינָה בְּהֵמָה לְדַעַת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-מְלָאכֶת עֲבַדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְכָל אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה:</p> <p>"And he has put in his heart to teach, he and Oholiab, son of Ahimsamach, from the tribe of Dan. He has filled them with skill to do every craft of skillful work, inventive work, and in variegated work, in blue, in purple, in scarlet of scarlet, and in fine linen, and weaving, and doing every kind of craft, and devising inventions. Now Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the skillful that Yahweh has given wisdom and understanding to know how to work in every craft for the work of the sanctuary, will do according to all that Yahweh commanded.</p>	The Appointment of Additional Artisans

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from these two building accounts, the name Bezalel is mentioned only three additional times in the Old Testament, two of which refer to this artisan. Bezalel is listed in a genealogy found in 1 Chronicles 2:20 and in 2 Chronicles 1:5, he is referred to as the one who made the bronze altar for the tabernacle. It has been suggested that the name Bezalel means "in the shadow of El." See Jeffrey A. Fager, "Bezalel," *ABD* 1:717.

<sup>2</sup> The verbal stem of **מָלֵא** is Piel and the form requires two accusatives. The first accusative, **אֹתוֹ**, is a direct-object accusative and a recipient of the verb's action; Yahweh has "filled him." The second object, **רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים**, functions as an adverbial accusative describing the way in which Yahweh filled Bezalel, "with the spirit of God." (See Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 10.2.1.)

<sup>3</sup> Oholiab only appears in these tabernacle accounts. Rather than **אֱהִיָּאב**, the LXX reads *Ελιαβ* = **אֱלִיָּאב**, "God of father." In contrast, Edwin Hostetter suggests that **אֱהִיָּאב** can be translated as "family of father," "tent of father," or as a nominal sentence, "father is a tent." See Edwin C. Hostetter, "Oholiab," *ABD* 5:10.

<sup>4</sup> This particle, **הִנֵּה**, serves to create a nominative absolute by isolating and emphasizing the subject, **אֲנִי**. See Waltke and O'Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 16.3.5.

<sup>5</sup> This *waw* functions emphatically. With the **אֵל** preposition, these prefixes are best translated as, "even into." See Waltke and O'Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 39.2.1b.

accounts: Yahweh calls Bezalel, Yahweh endows Bezalel, the endowment is described, and additional artisans are appointed. Only a few discrepancies can be found between the two accounts. These distinctions can be seen in Figure 3.1. Note, for example, that מְהִשְׁבֵּת, found in 35:33, is an addition that is absent in the first account. The nominal form means "ingenious works" and adds a certain artistic and inventive flare to the skills that were given to Bezalel. Similarly, 35:35 identifies additional skills that the craftsmen are enabled to do. Also, in 35:34 Moses asserts that Bezalel and Oholiab will teach the additional artisans whereas in 31:6, Yahweh appoints these artisans and gives them חֻכְמָה. This nuance of teaching highlights the superior position that Bezalel and Oholiab held. The minimal differences between Exodus 31:1-6 and 35:30-36:1 attest to the close literary relationship that the two pericopes share.

The pericopes of 31:1-6 and 35:30-36:1 include a rich use of vocabulary to describe the craftsmen involved in building the tabernacle. Four of these terms, in particular, recur several times: חֻכְמָה, תְּבוּנָה, דַּעַת, and מְלָאכָה. The following section will discuss these phrases in more detail.

### חֻכְמָה/חָכָם

In the biblical accounts, the fundamental meaning of the root חָכָם is "skill."<sup>90</sup> At times חָכָם describes a physical skill while in other contexts, it refers to the mental aspects of skill normally associated with intellectual wisdom.<sup>91</sup> חָכָם is also attested in most of the Semitic languages. Akkadian, for example, has *ḥakāmum*. *AHW* defines this term as "verstehen,

<sup>90</sup> M. Sæbø, "חָכָם," *TDOT* 1:418-424. This root appears 340 times in the Old Testament.

<sup>91</sup> Gerald Wilson, "חָכָם," *NIDOTTE* 2:130-134. A high concentration of these occurrences is found in wisdom literature.

begreifen."<sup>92</sup> Ugaritic texts know the root, *hkm*, as “wise.”<sup>93</sup> Also, recall that Chapter Two revealed that “wisdom” can refer specifically to a skill for craftsmanship. Similarly, the endowment of “wisdom” in the Exodus building narratives denotes skill for craftsmanship.

In the parallel accounts of Exodus 31:1-6 and 35:30-35, חכם occurs five times. Four times the root appears as the noun חֲכָמָה, twice with a בְּ prefix, בְּחֲכָמָה (31:3 and 35:31), once standing alone (31:6), and once in construct with לֵב (35:35). And once, חכם appears as an adjective in construct with לֵב, חֲכָמֵ-לֵב (31:6).<sup>94</sup> A few of these occurrences require further explanation.

The ambiguous בְּ preposition found in 31:3 and 35:31 also occurs with בְּדַעַת, בְּתַבּוּנָה, and בְּכָל-מְלָאכָה. English translators do not agree upon the function and meaning of this preposition. The NIV and NRS translation "with" suggests that these clauses consist of a compilation of skills Bezalel was given. But, the NAS and NKJ translation "in" suggests that the clauses are descriptions of רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, ways in which the spirit of God could be used by Bezalel. Since the בְּ preposition functions in a variety of ways, either translation could be grammatically accurate. However, based on its surrounding context, בְּ is used here to specify the realm of רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים.<sup>95</sup> Like the NAS and NKJ suggest, this prefix should be translated, “with the Spirit of God *in* wisdom, *in* understanding, *in* knowledge, and *in* all craftsmanship.”

<sup>92</sup> “ḥakāmu(m),” *AHw* 1:309.

<sup>93</sup> Wilson, *NIDOTTE* 2:131. Müller notes that all of the Ugaritic occurrences of *hkm* are associated with the High god El. H. Müller, “חכם,” *TDOT* 4:364-368.

<sup>94</sup> The construct form, חֲכָמֵ, is found only five additional times in the Old Testament, three of which occur in the tabernacle account (Exodus 36:1,2,8). See Abraham Even-Shoshan, ed., *A New Concordance of the Bible: Thesaurus of the Language of the Bible Hebrew & Aramaic Roots, Words, Proper Names, Phrases, & Synonyms* (Jerusalem: “Kiryat Sefer” Publishing House, 1993), 368.

<sup>95</sup> For further discussion on the בְּ of specification see Waltke and O’Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 11.2.5e.

Hence, the infilling of the **רוח אלהים** is manifested in a variety of skills, namely: **תבונה**, **הכמה**, **כל-מלאכה**, and **דעת**.

English translators also disagree upon the translation of **כל-חכם-לב**. This chain, found in 31:6, literally translated is “in the heart of all the wise of heart.” The NIV translates the phrase as “craftsman” and the NRS and JPS translate “skillful.” However, the NAS maintains a literal translation, “and in the hearts of all who are skillful.” Likewise, the NKJ translates “the hearts of all who are gifted artisans.” These latter translations preserve a more literal rendering of the Hebrew text. Accordingly, I have translated, “even into the hearts of all the skillful.”<sup>96</sup>

The meaning of this clause followed by **נתתי חכמה** communicates the specialty of the endowment. Though they are already skilled, **כל-חכם-לב**, Yahweh gives additional **חכמה**.

English translators agree upon the translation of **חכמת-לב**. This chain, found in 35:35, literally translated is “wise of heart.” However, translators render this as “skill/skillful.”<sup>97</sup>

### תבונה

This noun can express a wide range of meaning in the biblical accounts including: aptitude, intelligence, insight, knowledge, and understanding.<sup>98</sup> Cognates of its root, **בין**, are attested in most of the Semitic languages.<sup>99</sup> Ugaritic, for example, has *bn* as “understand.”<sup>100</sup> **תבונה** occurs twice in Figure 3.1. In this context, **תבונה** is best interpreted as “understanding.”

<sup>96</sup> For the translation “even into,” see footnote 5 on Figure 3.1.

<sup>97</sup> Wilson, *NIDOTTE* 2:132. In other contexts, this phrase, **חכמת-לב**, refers to an advanced state of wisdom unrelated to craftsmanship. See Proverbs 10:8 and 16:21 for this meaning.

<sup>98</sup> Terence E. Fretheim, “בין,” *NIDOTTE* 1:652-653. This root occurs 42 times in the Old Testament.

<sup>99</sup> Fretheim, *NIDOTTE* 1:652.

<sup>100</sup> Helmer Ringgren, “בין *bīn*,” *TDOT* 2:99-107. **בין**, much like **חכם**, has a high concentration of occurrences in wisdom literature. Ringgren comments that “the wisdom character of this word [תבונה] is assured by the sapiential context in which it occurs.” Notice, twenty-two recurrences of the substantive **תבונה** are explicitly connected with **חכם**. See Ringgren, *TDOT* 2:105-106.

English translators agree on this rendering. In both of its occurrences **בְּתִבּוּנָה** is prefixed with the **בְּ** preposition, **בְּתִבּוּנָה**. Like **בְּחֻכְמָה**, this prefix should be translated as, “in understanding”.

### דַּעַת

In the biblical accounts, the root, **יָדַע**, can refer to: “knowledge, ability, insight, perception, to find out, or to have sexual relations with.”<sup>101</sup> **יָדַע** has several cognates in other Semitic languages.<sup>102</sup> These occurrences include the Akkadian, *idûm/edûm*, and the Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Aramaic *yd’*.<sup>103</sup> Akkadian also attests the nominal form, **דַּעַת**, as *di’(a)tum*<sup>104</sup> and Ugaritic attests *d’t*, “acquaintance,” and *md’*, “friend.”<sup>105</sup> We have seen in Chapter 2 that several of the ancient Near Eastern inscriptions attest that the descriptive phrase, “knowledge,” can refer specifically to a skill for craftsmanship.

In the parallel accounts presented in Figure 3.1, **דַּעַת** appears twice (31:3 and 35:31). In this context, English translators render the noun as “knowledge.” Both instances of **דַּעַת** include a prefixed **בְּ** preposition, **בְּדַעַת**.<sup>106</sup> Just like **בְּחֻכְמָה** and **בְּתִבּוּנָה**, the **בְּ** prefix on **בְּדַעַת** should be translated as “in knowledge.”

### מְלָאכָה

This noun is translated in several semantic domains including: property, craftsmanship, work, administrations, and deeds/acts.<sup>107</sup> Its proposed root is \**lyk*. Although this verbal form is

<sup>101</sup> Fretheim, *NIDOTTE* 2:409.

<sup>102</sup> G. J. Botterweck, “יָדַע,” *TDOT* 5:448-481.

<sup>103</sup> *AHw* defines this term as “wissen, kennen.” See “*edû(m)*,” *AHw* 1:187.

<sup>104</sup> “*di’(a)tum*,” *AHw* 1:168.

<sup>105</sup> Gordon here.

<sup>106</sup> This form occurs three additional times in the Old Testament: Prov. 11:9, 24:4, and Eccl. 2:21. See Even-Shoshan, *A Concordance of the Bible*, 271.

<sup>107</sup> Stephen T. Hague, “מְלָאכָה,” *NIDOTTE* 2:943-946. This noun appears 167 times in the Old Testament.

not attested in Hebrew, it is found in other Semitic languages meaning "to send."<sup>108</sup> According to H. J. Fabry, Ugaritic attests *l'k* or *l'ak*, "to send," and Arabic attests *la'aka* and *'alaka*, "to send."<sup>109</sup> But, the distribution of מְלָאכָה throughout the biblical texts suggests that it is associated mainly with sanctuary and religious objects.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, "nowhere in the Bible is it used specifically for the idea of physical labor, and, conversely, it always implies a work involving skill."<sup>111</sup>

In Figure 3.1, מְלָאכָה appears five times and refers specifically to "craftsmanship" (31:3,5, 35:31,33,35). English translators agree on this rendering. In each of its occurrences, מְלָאכָה is in construct with כָּל. Four times it is also prefixed with the בְּ preposition. Once again, this בְּ prefix should be translated as "in all craftsmanship."

A few preliminary conclusions can be made based on the above study. (1) The convergence of חָכְמָה, תְּבוּנָה, דַּעַת, and כָּל-מְלָאכָה in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31 is the crux of Bezalel's appointment for craftsmanship. The repetition of each of these terms throughout both pericopes attests to the continuing recognition of these terms as craftsman phrases. Furthermore, the final clause, בְּכָל-מְלָאכָה, in this chain of phrases, בְּחָכְמָה, בְּתְבוּנָה, and בְּדַעַת, suggests that Bezalel's endowment had no limit regarding the tasks related to craftsmanship. (2) Yahweh called Bezalel directly by name (31:1, 35:30). This simple "calling" is significant. Before he was divinely empowered for his work, Yahweh himself specifically appointed Bezalel. (3) The resultative clause in 31:6, identified by the converted Perfect form עָשָׂו, identifies the reason for

<sup>108</sup> H. J. Fabry, "melā'ká," *TDOT* 8:325-331.

<sup>109</sup> Fabry, *TDOT* 8:325.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.



the endowment of the craftsmen in the tabernacle accounts.<sup>112</sup> Yahweh has filled Bezalel with the אֱלֹהִים רָוַח and he has divinely inspired Oholiab and כָּל־הַכֹּהֲנָיִם "so that" they will make all that Yahweh has commanded them. The reason for Yahweh's election to appoint and divinely fill artisans was simply for the completion of the tabernacle. (4) In the tabernacle accounts, Yahweh endowed individuals who were already talented at their work. The craftsmen are described as הַכֹּהֲנָיִם yet Yahweh granted them additional חֵכְמָה. This is testimony to Yahweh's initiation and oversight in the building of the tabernacle. (5) Bezalel is the only craftsman in the tabernacle accounts that is empowered with a collection of skills by the spirit of Yahweh. Hence, Bezalel's position as a craftsman is like none other in the Exodus narratives.

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<sup>112</sup> This converted Perfect, וַיַּעַשׂ, preceded by וַיִּחַתֵּי, functions as a consequential clause, hence the translation "so that." See Waltke and O'Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 32.2.3c.

## B. The Temple: 1 Kings 5:15-9:25 and 2 Chronicles 2:1-7:11

The account of Solomon's temple, recorded in both 1 Kings 5:15-9:25 (Eng. 5:1-9:25)<sup>113</sup> and 2 Chronicles 2:1-7:11, is the premier building event in the Old Testament. Each of these narratives agree on a basic story line: Solomon corresponds with Hiram, the king of Tyre, requesting aid for the temple construction, Hiram replies favorably and sends assistance, numerous workers complete the building construction, and finally, the temple is dedicated. 1 Kings 5:15-9:25 and 2 Chronicles 2:1-7:11 reveal an array of phrases used to describe the workers involved in the building of the temple.

Figure 3.2 illustrates three categories of descriptions of the craftsmen in the temple narratives: descriptions of the workers, descriptions of King Solomon, and descriptions of the craftsman Hiram-abi.<sup>114</sup> Notice that only the second category includes descriptions of a royal figure, King Solomon. Furthermore, Figure 3.2 illustrates that the request from King Solomon in the Chronicle's account and the reply from King Hiram are very similar. Hiram gives to

<sup>113</sup> From this point forward, I will refer only to the Hebrew references.

<sup>114</sup> There is contextual confusion regarding the name of this craftsman as well as the name "Hiram," the King of Tyre. The English translation, "Hiram," refers to two different Hebrew forms, הִירָוֹם and הִירָם, as well as two different individuals in the Old Testament, each of whom are associated in some way with Tyre. One reference is to the "king of Tyre," מֶלֶךְ-צֹרִי, and the other is to a "man of Tyre," אִישׁ-צֹרִי, known as the craftsman of Solomon's temple. In addition to הִירָם and הִירָוֹם, the name of the craftsman from Tyre appears as הוּרָם and הוּרָם אָבִי. English translators render these latter forms as "Hiram" and "Hiram-abi" respectively. These Hebrew forms, הוּרָם and הוּרָם אָבִי, and their respective transcriptions, "Hiram" and "Hiram-abi," are only found in the Chronicles narrative. Notice that when "Hiram" appears in the Chronicles account, the Masoretes indicate that it should be read as "Hiram" by a *Kethib* and *Qere*. For examples, see 1 Chronicles 14:1 and 2 Chronicles 9:10. The addition of אָבִי in הוּרָם אָבִי may be explained as a title for the craftsman and rendered as, "Hiram, my master" but is usually interpreted simply as an addendum to his name. Rudolf Mosis suggests that the addition, אָבִי, is an attempt by the author to parallel the craftsman roles of Hiram-abi with Oholiab giving each name the same ending. See Rudolf Mosis, *Untersuchungen zur Theologie des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes*. (Germany: Herder, 1973), 167. More attention to the parallelism between Oholiab and Hiram-abi will be made later in this chapter.

In Figure 3.2, the "king of Tyre" appears as הִירָוֹם (1 Kings 5:32) and the "man of Tyre," the craftsman, appears as הוּרָם אָבִי (2 Chronicles 2:13). From this point forward, I will refer to the craftsman of Solomon's temple as "Hiram-abi" and the King of Tyre as "Hiram." Also, the name הִירָם is an abbreviation of the Phoenician "Ahiram" meaning, "My brother is exalted." See Keith W. Whitelam, "Hiram," *ABD* 3:203-205. And finally, an inscribed sarcophagus has confirmed that there was a man named Hiram who was king of Tyre during the tenth-century BCE. See Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings* (AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 226. An article by R. Giveon debates whether the icon on this sarcophagus, a lotus flower, should be considered a symbol of the king's rulership or his deification. See R. Giveon, "King or God on the Sarcophagus of Ahiram," *IEJ* 9/1 (1959): 57-59.

Figure 3.2

**1 Kings 4:29, 5:20b, 26-28, 5:32, 7:14 and 2 Chronicles 2:6-7, 11-13:  
A Collection of Descriptions of the Builders**

<p>1 Kings 5:20b וְעַבְדֵי יְהוָה עִם־עַבְדֵיךָ וְשֹׂכְרֵי עַבְדֵיךָ אֲתָן לְךָ כֹּכֵל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר And my servants will be with your servants, and the wages of your servants I will give you, according to all that you say.</p> <p>1 Kings 5:27 וַיַּעַל הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה מִסּוּ מְכֹל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי הַמָּס שְׁלֹשִׁים אֶלֶף אִישׁ: And King Solomon raised forced labor from all of Israel, and the forced labor was 30,000 men.</p> <p>1 Kings 5:28b וְאֲדֹנִירָם<sup>1</sup> עַל־הַמָּס: Now, Adoniram was over the forced labor.</p> <p>1 Kings 5:32 וַיִּפְסְלוּ בְנֵי שְׁלֹמֹה וּבְנֵי חִירוֹם וְהַגְּבָלִים וַיְכִינוּ הָעֵצִים וְהָאֲבָנִים לְבְנוֹת הַבַּיִת And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites cut them, and they prepared the timber and the stones to build the house.</p>	Descriptions of the Workers
<p>1 Kings 4:29 וַיִּתֵּן אֱלֹהִים חֲכָמָה לְשְׁלֹמֹה וְחִבּוּנָה הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד וְרוּחַב לֵב כַּחֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל־שֵׁפֶת הַיָּם: Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great understanding and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore.</p> <p>1 Kings 5:26a וַיְהִי וַיִּתֵּן חֲכָמָה לְשְׁלֹמֹה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־לוֹ And Yahweh gave wisdom to Solomon, just as he had said to him.</p> <p>2 Chronicles 2:11 וַיֹּאמֶר חוּרָם בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְדָוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ בֶּן חָכָם יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁכֶּל וּבִינָה אֲשֶׁר יִבְנֶה־בַּיִת לַיהוָה וּבַיִת לַמַּלְכוּתוֹ: Then Hiram said, "Blessed be Yhwh, the God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given to King David a wise son, knowing insight and understanding, who will build a house for Yhwh and a royal palace for himself."</p>	Descriptions of King Solomon

1 Kings 7:14 בן־אִשָּׁה אֶלְמָנָה הוּא מְמַטֵּה נַפְתָּלִי וְאָבִיו אִישׁ־צָרִי חָרָשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת וַיְמַלֵּא אֶת־הַחֲכָמָה וְאֶת־הַתְּבוּנָה וְאֶת־הַדַּעַת לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּל־מְלָאכָה בְּנְחֹשֶׁת וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־כָּל־מְלָאכָתּוֹ:  
He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in bronze; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill for doing any work in bronze. So he came to King Solomon and performed all his work.

*Request from King Solomon to Hiram, the King of Tyre:*

2 Chronicles 2:6-7 וְעַתָּה שְׁלַח־לִי אִישׁ־חָכָם<sup>2</sup> לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּזָהָב וּבַכֶּסֶף וּבְנְחֹשֶׁת וּבַבְּרָזֶל וּבְאַרְגָּמָן וּבְכַרְמִיל וּתְכֵלֶת וַיֵּדַע לַפְתַּח פְּתוּחִים עִם־הַחֲכָמִים אֲשֶׁר עִמִּי בִיהוּדָה וּבִירוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר הָכִין דָּוִד אָבִי: וְשְׁלַח־לִי עֲצֵי אַרְזִים בְּרוּשִׁים וְאַלְגֻנָּיִם מֵהַלְבָּנוֹן כִּי אָנִי<sup>3</sup> יָדַעְתִּי אֲשֶׁר עֹבְדֵיךָ יוֹדְעִים לַכְרוֹת עֲצֵי לְבָנוֹן וְהִנֵּה<sup>4</sup> עֹבְדֵיךָ עִם־עֹבְדֵיךָ:

"And now send me a skilled man to work in gold, silver, brass, and iron, and in purple, crimson, and violet fabrics, and who knows how to make engraving, to work with the skilled men that I have in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided. Send me also cedar trees, cypress, and algum timber from Lebanon, for I know that your servants know how to cut timber of Lebanon; and indeed, my servants will be with your servants."

*Reply from the King of Tyre to King Solomon:*

2 Chronicles 2:12-13 וְעַתָּה שְׁלַחְתִּי אִישׁ־חָכָם יוֹדֵעַ בִּינָה לְחוּרָם אָבִי<sup>5</sup>: בֶּן־אִשָּׁה מִן־בְּנוֹת דָּן וְאָבִיו אִישׁ־צָרִי יוֹדֵעַ לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּזָהָב־וּבַכֶּסֶף בְּנְחֹשֶׁת בְּבְרָזֶל בְּאַבְנִים וּבְעֲצִים בְּאַרְגָּמָן בְּתְכֵלֶת וּבַבּוּזָן וּבְכַרְמִיל וּלְפַתַּח כָּל־פְּתוּחַ וְלַחֲשֹׁב כָּל־מַחֲשָׁבֶת אֲשֶׁר יִנְחֹן־לוֹ עִם־חֲכָמֶיךָ וְחֲכָמֵי אֶרְצִי דָּוִד אָבִיךָ:  
"And now I am sending a skilled man, knowing understanding, Hiram-abi, the son of a woman from the tribe of Dan and his father, a man from Tyre, who knows how to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood, in purple, violet, linen, and crimson fabrics, and to engrave all engravings and to devise all inventions which are given to him, with your skillful men and the skillful men of my lord David your father."

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<sup>1</sup> This disjunctive *waw* is best translated as “now.” See Waltke and O’Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 39.2.4.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to אִשְׁ-הָחֵם, the LXX includes *καὶ εἰδότα*, “and knowledgeable.” This is a helpful addition because it not only adds to the list of skills that Hiram-abi’s received for his position as a craftsman but it also agrees with Hiram’s response in 2 Chronicles 2:12-13, which describes the craftsman as being “knowledgeable.”

<sup>3</sup> The emphasis of “I” noted by the 1<sup>st</sup> personal pronoun אֲנִי and אֲנִי־אֶהְיֶה is explained by Waltke and O’Connor as “self-assertion.” See Waltke and O’Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 16.3.2e.

<sup>4</sup> This הִנֵּה particle functions as an exclamation, according to Waltke and O’Connor, and serves to “ground and define the material that follows.” Hence, King Solomon assures Hiram, the King of Tyre, that “indeed” their servants will work together. See Waltke and O’Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 40.2.1c.

<sup>5</sup> The LXX renders אָבִי as *τὸν παῖδά μου*. Hence, these translators regard אָבִי as a description of Hiram rather than an addendum to his name, Hiram-abi. This interpretation is, however, absent in the Syriac version. This addition of אָבִי will be discussed later in the chapter.

Solomon not only exactly what he asks for, אִישׁ־חָכָם, but יוֹרֵעַ בִּינָה. Hence, Hiram exceeds King Solomon's request by sending him a "skilled artisan knowing understanding." Also, notice that the position of a supervisor/leader ruling over the workers is found in the Kings account. 1 Kings 5:28b singles out one man, Adoniram, אֲדוֹנִירָם, who was over the forced labor.<sup>115</sup>

The Kings and Chronicles accounts in Figure 3.2 reveal a rich use of vocabulary to describe the workers involved in the building of the temple. These phrases include: עֲבָדִים, מַס, בְּנִים, and חֲכָם/חֲכָמָה.

### מַס

In the Biblical texts, this noun means "tribute, tax, or compulsory labor."<sup>116</sup> Its root is of unknown origin, but Martin Noth suggests that it derives from *ms*, an Egyptian root meaning "to bring."<sup>117</sup> Akkadian attests one of the only related forms, *massu*.<sup>118</sup> *AHW* defines this term as "Dienstverpflichtet".<sup>119</sup> Likewise *CAD* translates *massu* as, "corvée worker."<sup>120</sup>

מַס appears three times in the temple narrative recorded in 1 Kings (5:27 and 5:28) but is absent in the Chronicles account.<sup>121</sup> In this context, מַס refers to "forced labor," rendered correctly by English translators. In addition to this definition, North suggests that מַס denotes the

<sup>115</sup> Adoniram has already been introduced to the Biblical reader in 2 Samuel 20:24 as an official in the King's court. His final appearance in the Biblical accounts is in 1 Kings 12:18 where he is tragically murdered after Solomon's death. See Phillip E. McMillion, "Adoniram," *ABD* 1:76.

<sup>116</sup> Gerald A. Klingbeil, "מַס," *NIDOTTE* 2:992-995. This noun is found an additional 20 times in the Old Testament. See Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible*, 683.

<sup>117</sup> See Footnote 1 on p. 427 of R. North, "מַס mas," *TDOT* 8:427-430 for the reference to Martin Noth's work, *Könige 1-16. BK, IX/1* (<sup>2</sup>1982), 212. North disagrees with Noth's proposal stating that, "although compulsory labor was common in Egypt, it cannot be associated with a particular word" (page 427).

<sup>118</sup> North, *TDOT* 8:427-428.

<sup>119</sup> "massu," *AHW*, 619.

<sup>120</sup> "massu," *CAD* 10/1: 327.

<sup>121</sup> This מַס organization is reproved beforehand in 1 Samuel 8:11.

"work of unskilled laborers."<sup>122</sup> This is a particularly helpful nuance because it provides an important distinction between the work of skilled craftsmen, such as Bezalel and Oholiab in the tabernacle accounts, and the work of unskilled men, such as the נָזֵם in the Kings narrative.<sup>123</sup>

### עֲבָדִים

This root, עֲבָד, is translated in the biblical texts as: “work, perform, serve, and worship.”<sup>124</sup> עֲבָד occurs throughout all of the West Semitic languages. Included among some of these cognates is *ʿbd*, “to serve,” attested in Ugaritic, and <sup>a</sup>*ḥad*, “to make,” attested in Aramaic.<sup>125</sup> Likewise, the nominal form in Hebrew, עֲבָדָה, meaning “slave, servant, or subordinate,” is attested by the Ugaritic and Phoenician noun, *ʿbd*, and the Aramaic form, <sup>a</sup>*ḥēd*.<sup>126</sup>

עֲבָדִים is found two times in the Kings narrative (1 Kings 5:20b) and twice in Chronicles (2 Chronicles 2:7). English translators generally agree on rendering these usages as “servants.” In both 1 Kings 5:20b and 2 Chronicles 2:7, עֲבָדִים is suffixed by personal pronouns, עֲבָדָי and עֲבָדָיךָ. In these occurrences, the 1<sup>st</sup> personal pronoun refers back to “Solomon,” hence the English translation “Solomon’s servants,” and the 2<sup>nd</sup> personal pronoun refers to “Hiram,” “Hiram’s servants.” These examples emphasize the subordinate nature of the “servants” to their kings, Solomon and Hiram.

<sup>122</sup> North, *TDOT* 8:429.

<sup>123</sup> Walsh proposes that these workers have to possess some type of skill in order to transport the sizeable stones described in 1 Kings 5:31. Nonetheless, the “forced labor” in the Kings pericope is not described with divine concepts/phrases. See Jerome T. Walsh, *I Kings* (Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry; Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996), 100.

<sup>124</sup> Eugene Carpenter, “עֲבָד,” *NIDOTTE* :304-309.

<sup>125</sup> Ringgren, “עֲבָד (*āḥad*),” *TDOT* 377-378.

<sup>126</sup> Ringgren, “עֲבָד (*āḥad*),” *TDOT* 377-378. Akkadian also attests the related form, *abdu*, although only as a loanword.

## בָּנִים

In the biblical texts, this root, בָּנָה, means "to build, fortify, rebuild, or work on."<sup>127</sup> בָּנָה is well attested in other Semitic languages. Ugaritic, for example, attests *bny*, Akkadian, *banûm*, Aramaic, *b<sup>e</sup>nah*, Moabite, *bnh*, Arabic, *bn*’, and Phoenician, *bn*.<sup>128</sup> While most of these cognates mean “to build,” Akkadian and Ugaritic occasionally employ the nuanced meaning “to create.”<sup>129</sup> For example, the Ugaritic craftsman god, Kothar wa-Hasis, is ordered to “build,” *bn*, a palace for Yam in the Baal Cycle.<sup>130</sup> Also, one of El’s epithets is *bny bnwt* rendered, “creator of the creation.”<sup>131</sup> In addition, we saw in Chapter Two that Gudea, ruler of Lagaš, is described as a “House-builder” designated by the Sumerian phrase, *é-dù*. As mentioned earlier, *é-dù* translates into Akkadian as *banûm*, a linguistic parallel to the Hebrew form בָּנָה.

Figure 3.2 reveals that the root בָּנָה is found twice in the Kings account (1 Kings 5:32). In each instance, בָּנָה appears in construct in its participial form, בָּנִי.<sup>132</sup> The first occurrence is in construct with שְׁלֹמֹה and the second with הִירָם. English translators generally agree on rendering these phrases as “Solomon’s builders” and “Hiram’s builders.”

## חָכָם/חָכְמָה

This root, חָכָם, has already been discussed in the tabernacle accounts where it was found several times referring to both the “wisdom” and “skill” of craftsmen. Also, recall that Chapter Two examined several building inscriptions that included references to “wise” craftsmen (Ur-

<sup>127</sup> David M. Fouts, “בָּנָה,” *NIDOTTE* 1:677-681.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 677-678.

<sup>129</sup> Wagner, “בָּנָה *bānāh*,” *TDOT* 2:166-181.

<sup>130</sup> For Kothar wa-Hasis’ summon to “build,” see The Baal Cycle, Column I Lines 7-8 of Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 95.

<sup>131</sup> For the example of El’s epithet, see A.R. Hulst, “בָּנָה *bnh*,” *TLOT* 1:245-246.

<sup>132</sup> This root, בָּנָה, is not found in the tabernacle building accounts. Fouts suggests that this indicates that things built, בָּנָה, are meant to be permanent, whereas the tabernacle was built for portability. See David M. Fouts, “בָּנָה,” *NIDOTTE* 1:678.



Bau 5, Gudea Cylinders A and B, Sîn-iddinam 15, Ammī-ditāna 1 and 2, and Esarhaddon's Renewal of the Gods).

In Figure 3.2, חכמה is found several times. The nominal form, חֲכֻמָּה, appears three times in the Kings narrative (1 Kings 4:29, 5:26a, 7:14). In the first two occurrences, “wisdom” is given to King Solomon from Yahweh. Recall that several of the aforementioned ancient Near Eastern building inscriptions describe this same circumstance wherein a god gives “wisdom” to a king.<sup>133</sup> In the second instance, “wisdom” is a skill that describes the craftsman Hiram-abi. Also, the adjectival form, חָכֵם, appears modifying the nouns בֵּן (2 Chronicles 2:11) and אִישׁ (2 Chronicles 2:6,12). חָכֵם בֵּן refers back to King Solomon, the “wise son,” and אִישׁ־חָכֵם describes the craftsman Hiram-abi, the “wise man.” חָכֵם בֵּן also appears in a chain with יוֹדֵעַ, שֵׁכֵל, and בִּינָה. English translators differ on how to render this string of phrases. The NIV translators render, “endowed with intelligence and discernment,” the NAS, NRS, and JPS state, “endowed with discretion and understanding,” and the NKJ translates, “endowed with prudence and understanding.” My translation of “knowing” as opposed to “endowed” is not only a more literal rendering but it also maintains consistency with the other building accounts that utilize this language to describe the position of craftsmanship.<sup>134</sup> Finally, חֲכָמִים appears twice with עַם (2 Chronicles 2:6, 13). In both instances, this substantivized adjective refers to King Solomon's workers, rendered by English translators as “skilled men” (NAS, NRS, NKJ) and “skilled craftsmen” (NIV).

A few preliminary conclusions about the role of the craftsmen in the Kings and Chronicles temple accounts can be made. (1) The majority of the builders in the Kings narrative

<sup>133</sup> See especially Ur-Bau 5, Sîn-iddinam 15, and Ammī-ditāna 1 and 2.

<sup>134</sup> For a discussion on adjectival uses of active participles see Waltke and O'Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 37.4b.

appear to be “unskilled” indicated by the Hebrew terms, מַס, עֲבָדִים, and בְּנִים. These builders are not empowered for their work by a deity. In addition, the recurrences of עֲבָדִים and בְּנִים emphasize the inferior position of the workers to their kings, “Solomon’s servants/builders” and “Hiram’s servants/builders.” (2) Hiram-abi is sent by the King of Tyre to King Solomon as assistance. Hence, the narrative suggests Hiram-abi’s role as craftsman is that of a helper to King Solomon. (3) In Figure 3.2, Hiram-abi and King Solomon are described as being given “wisdom” and “knowledge.” In addition, King Solomon is endowed with “breadth of mind” and “insight,” and Hiram-abi is filled with “skill for every craft.” Furthermore, King Solomon is depicted as being endowed with these skills from Yahweh. In contrast, the narratives do not indicate who filled Hiram-abi with his skills.

### C. The Rebuilding of the Temple and the City Walls: Ezra 1:1-6:18 and Nehemiah 2:11-7:5, 12:27-43

The rebuilding of the temple is recorded in Ezra 1:1-6:18 and the rebuilding of the city walls are recorded in Nehemiah 2:11-7:5, 12:27-43. The storyline of Ezra's narrative includes: the return of the exiles to Judea to rebuild the temple, opposition to the rebuilding of the temple, the eventual completion of the rebuilding, and the dedication of the temple. Similarly, Nehemiah's narrative includes: a decision to restore the city's breached walls and burnt gates, opposition to the restoration by Sanballat,<sup>135</sup> the eventual completion of the rebuilding, and the dedication (Nehemiah 12:27-43). Both of these rebuilding pericopes include brief descriptions of the craftsmen involved in the construction.

Figure 3.3 is a collective chart of descriptions of the workers involved in the rebuilding of the temple and the city walls. This chart highlights a few items regarding these workers. First, there is no endowment pericope in either of these stories, only descriptions depicting the workers involved. Secondly, the Ezra narrative includes three times as many descriptions of the workers as the Nehemiah narrative. In addition, the two descriptive phrases found in Nehemiah's narrative, בָּנִים and עֲבָדִים, are already found in Ezra's account. Finally, Figure 3.3 reveals three descriptive terms used in the Ezra and Nehemiah accounts to describe the workers: הָעִיר, בָּנִים, and עֲבָדִים.

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<sup>135</sup> Sanballat is mentioned only in the book of Nehemiah. "Because of his foreign name, it is generally believed that he was a descendant of one of the settlers whom the Assyrians deported to Samaria after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 BC." See H.G.M. Williamson, "Sanballat," *ABD* 5:973.

Figure 3.3

**Ezra 1:1b-2, 5, 3:10, 5:11 and Nehemiah 2:20:  
A Collection of Descriptions of the Builders**

<p style="text-align: right;">Ezra 1:5 וַיִּקְוּמוּ רָאשֵׁי הָאֲבוֹת לַיהוּדָה וּבְנֵימִן וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם לְכָל הָעִיר הָאֱלֹהִים אֲתֵרוּחוֹ לְעֹלוֹת לְבָנוֹת אֶת־בֵּית יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלַם:</p> <p>Then the heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites arose, even all whose spirit God stirred up to go up in order to rebuild the house of Yahweh which is in Jerusalem.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Ezra 3:10 וַיִּסְדּוּ הַבָּנִים אֶת־הַיִּכָּל יְהוָה וַיַּעֲמִידוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים מִלְבָּשִׁים בַּחֲצֹצְרוֹת וְהַלְוִיִּם בְּנֵי־אָסָף בְּמִצְלִתַּיִם לְהַלֵּל אֶת־יהוָה עַל־יְדֵי הַיּוֹד מִלְדֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל:</p> <p>When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Yahweh, then the priests stood in their vestments with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise Yahweh according to the directions of King David of Israel.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Ezra 5:11 וַכִּנְמָא פַחְנָמָא הִתִּיבּוּנָא לְמַמְרָא אֲנַחְנָא הָמוּ עֲבָדוּהִי דִי־אֱלֹהֵי שְׁמַיָא וְאַרְעָא וּבְנִין בִּיתָא דִי־הוּא בְּנָה מִקְדַּמַּת דְּנָה שְׁנִין שְׁנַיָּאן וּמְלֶךְ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל רַב בְּנָהִי וְשָׁכְלָלָהּ:</p> <p>"And thus they answered us a word, saying, 'We are them, the servants of the God of heaven and earth and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed it.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Nehemiah 2:20 וַאֲשִׁיב אוֹתָם דְּבַר וְאוֹמַר לָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא יַצְלִיחַ לָנוּ וְאֲנַחְנוּ עֲבָדָיו נִקְוִים וּבְנִינוּ וְלָכֶם אֵין־חֶלֶק וְצָדָקָה וְזָכוֹרִין בִּירוּשָׁלַם:</p> <p>And I answered them a word saying, "The God of heaven, he will give us success and we, his servants, will rise up and rebuild; but you have no share, or right, or memorial in Jerusalem."</p>

## הָעִיר

This verb is found once in Figure 3.3 (Ezra 1:5) and comes from the root עור meaning “to excite, stir up.”<sup>136</sup> עור is also attested in other Semitic languages. Akkadian, for example, attests *êrum*, “awake,” and Arabic attests *‘arra*, “restless.”<sup>137</sup> In Figure 3.3, עור appears in the Hiphil stem, הָעִיר. English translators disagree on how to render הָעִיר. The NAS and NRS translate “stirred,” the NKJ and NIV translate “moved,” the JPS translates “roused,” and Blenkinsopp translates “inspired.”<sup>138</sup> Also, notice that the subject of הָעִיר is אֱלֹהִים and the object is the רֵוַח of the returnees. Hence, the decision for the exiles to return and rebuild the temple resulted from God's prompting of their spirits rather than human opportunism.<sup>139</sup> In addition, this root appears in Ezra 1:1 and 2 Chronicles 36:22. In these verses, Yahweh “stirs” the spirit of King Cyrus and appoints him to build him (Yahweh) a house in Jerusalem.<sup>140</sup>

## בָּנִים

The root, בנה, was studied earlier in this chapter where it referred to Solomon and Hiram’s “builders.” In Figure 3.3, the root בנה appears six times, five of which refer to the action of the workers. The single instance that this root appears as a substantive is in Ezra 3:10, הַבָּנִים. This participle is best translated as “builders.”

<sup>136</sup> This is the same verb used in Ezra 1:1 that describes how God “stirred” the heart of Cyrus.

<sup>137</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, “עור,” *NIDOTTE* 3:357-360 and “עור,” *TDOT* 10:569.

<sup>138</sup> Joseph B. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 76.

<sup>139</sup> Schreiner states that “it is usually Yahweh who prompts someone.” See J. Schreiner, “עור,” *TDOT* 10:568-574.

<sup>140</sup> Also, Haggai 1:14 states, “Yahweh stirred up (עור) the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of Yahweh of hosts, their God.”

## עֲבָדִים

This root, עבד, was also already studied earlier in this chapter where it referred to Solomon and Hiram's "servants." In Figure 3.3, עבד appears twice. Once this term appears as the Aramaic form עֲבָרְוּהִי (Ezra 5:11) and once it appears as the Hebrew form עֲבָרְיוֹ (Nehemiah 2:20). In the first instance, עֲבָרְוּהִי appears in a genitive relationship with אֱלֹהֵהּ. Hence, these workers are "God's servants." Similarly, the pronominal suffix on עֲבָרְיוֹ refers back to אֱלֹהִים, again, "God's servants."

A few summary conclusions regarding the craftsmen involved in rebuilding the temple can be made. (1) The concept of God "stirring," הִעִיר, the spirits of the returnees is a striking feature in Ezra's narrative. These workers are prompted to action. Furthermore, the reason אֱלֹהִים prompts the returnees is so that they will rebuild the temple. This is indicated by the לְ prefix preposition + an infinitive construct, לְבָנוֹת, translated as "in order to rebuild."<sup>141</sup> (2) The עֲבָרְיִים in these accounts are described as "God's servants." Hence, the workers in both narratives are subordinate to none other than their god.

### Conclusions to Craftsman Phrases in Biblical Building Accounts

After examining these three major building projects, conclusions can be made regarding the position of craftsmen in biblical building accounts. (1) Descriptions of the workers involved in biblical building stories vary widely. Some artisans are empowered for their work by a deity (i.e. Bezalel, Oholiab, and King Solomon), some seem to possess no skill whatsoever (i.e. the "forced labor" in the Kings account), others are

<sup>141</sup> See Waltke and O'Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 36.2.3d.

subordinate to their kings (“Solomon and Hiram’s servants/builders”), still others are subordinate to their deity, and finally, some are prompted in their spirits by God to build. Likewise, the range of terms used to describe the craftsmen varies widely. This is highlighted in Figure 3.4 (see page 49). Such phrases include: “skill,” “wisdom,” “knowledge,” and “understanding.” Figure 3.4 also illustrates a distinction between the descriptive phrases used to describe King Solomon, a royal figure, and the descriptive phrases used to describe the rest of the workers found in the biblical building narratives. Just as we compared the descriptive phrases in Chapter Two, a comparison of the descriptive phrases in this chapter reveal several terms that we can consider to be interpreted as skills for craftsmanship. The gray highlighted phrases in Figure 3.4 indicate these skills. (2) Bezalel and King Solomon are given assistance in their building projects by other craftsmen namely, Oholiab and Hiram-abi. Therefore, Bezalel and King Solomon hold superior positions to their helpers, Oholiab and Hiram-abi. In addition, recall that while King Solomon requested help from the King of Tyre for a craftsman, Bezalel was given the help of Oholiab from Yahweh.<sup>142</sup> (3) The craftsmen described in the tabernacle accounts remain unique because every worker involved in the construction is described with חֲכָמָה. All of the tabernacle craftsmen are “skilled.” Not only are Bezalel and Oholiab divinely endowed but “all the wise of heart,” כָּל־חֲכָמֵי־לֵב, are given חֲכָמָה by Yahweh.

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<sup>142</sup> In an interesting article, Raymond Dillard proposes that King Solomon and Hiram-abi in the Chronicles temple narrative are the “new Bezalel” and the “new Oholiab.” Some of his arguments include: Solomon and Bezalel both receive “wisdom” from God, Solomon and Bezalel are both from the tribe of Judah, Solomon and Bezalel both have assistants (Hiram-abi and Oholiab), and the addition of אָבִי to Hiram is an attempt by the Chronicles narrative to give Hiram and Oholiab the same name endings. Dillard also suggests that Paul sees himself as the “new Bezalel” in 1 Corinthians 2:5-17. Raymond B. Dillard, “The Chronicler’s Solomon.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 43 (1981): 289-300.

Figure 3.4

### Overview of Craftsman Phrases in Biblical Building Accounts

Builder	Descriptive Phrases <sup>1</sup>	Classification
King Solomon	“wisdom” “very great understanding” “breadth of mind” “insight”	Royal
Bezalel	“wisdom” “understanding” “knowledge” “every craft” “spirit of Yahweh” “skill”	All other phrases describing the workers in the biblical building accounts
Oholiab	“skill” “every craft” “wisdom” “understanding”	
Others	“wisdom” “understanding” “every craft”	
Temple workers	“servants” <sup>2</sup> “forced labor” “builders”	
Hiram-abi	“skill” “understanding” “wisdom”	
Ezra-Nehemiah workers	“builders” “servants”	

<sup>1</sup> Descriptive phrases that seem to indicate skills for craftsmanship are highlighted in gray.

<sup>2</sup> I have not highlighted the descriptive phrases depicting the workers in either the temple account or in Ezra and Nehemiah since our word studies suggested that these terms do not denote skills for craftsmanship.



(4) Bezalel is the premier example of a craftsman in the biblical building accounts. Not only is he a skilled artisan who is “called” by name by Yahweh, but the spirit of Yahweh enhances his craftsman abilities by empowering him with several attributes including: “wisdom,” “understanding,” and “knowledge.” Furthermore, Yahweh gives Bezalel ability to perform all tasks related to craftsmanship (כָּל־מְלָכָה) and gives him and his craftsman helper, Oholiab, the ability to teach other already skilled artisans (חֲכָמִים־לֵב). Bezalel’s position as a craftsman in the tabernacle accounts is like none other in the biblical building narratives.

Additional conclusions regarding craftsmen in the ancient Near Eastern world can be made based on comparing and contrasting the studies of the language of craftsmanship in Chapters Two and Three. (1) A prominent feature of the craftsmen described in these chapters is that many are elected into their position by a god. Ur-Bau, the Gudea inscriptions, Esarhaddon, and the Azatiwada inscription all attest the concept of being “selected” or “chosen” by a god. Likewise, Bezalel and Oholiab in the tabernacle accounts attest this concept. Bezalel, specifically is “called by name” by Yahweh for the building of the tabernacle. In addition, the Ezra narrative describes that the spirits of the returnees were “stirred.” Hence, the decision for the exiles to return and rebuild the temple was based on God’s prompting rather than their own initiative. (2) Many of the craftsmen depicted in Chapters Two and Three are described as being divinely empowered with skills for their work. Recall that Ur-Bau, several of the Gudea inscriptions, Sîn-iddinam, Ammī-ditāna, and Esarhaddon’s Renewal of the Gods all record being endowed with skill/skills from a god. Likewise, the biblical accounts record that Bezalel, Oholiab, all the other skilled artisans from the tabernacle account, and King

Solomon are given skill from a deity. 3) Figure 3.5 (see page 52) illustrates the collection of descriptive phrases found in both Chapters Two and Three that seemed to indicate skills for craftsmanship. The collection of these phrases between the two chapters is strikingly similar. Both chapters attest that the terms “skill,” “wisdom,” “knowledge,” and “understanding” can refer specifically to the skills for craftsmanship. Furthermore, recall that all four of these descriptive phrases are found in the tabernacle narratives recorded in Exodus. And perhaps even more striking is that Bezalel is the only craftsman described with three of these phrases namely, “wisdom,” “knowledge,” and “understanding.” Therefore, the skills for craftsmanship that Bezalel is empowered with by the spirit of Yahweh in the Exodus narratives are characteristic of skills for craftsmanship in the ancient Near Eastern world.

Figure 3.5

**Overview of Craftsman Phrases  
in Ancient Near Eastern Literature and Biblical Building Accounts**

Craftsman Phrases	Classification
“skill” “wisdom” “knowledge” “understanding”	Craftsman Phrases in Ancient Near Eastern Building Inscriptions
“skill” “wisdom” “knowledge” “understanding” “every craft” “spirit of Yahweh”	Craftsman Phrases in Biblical Building Accounts
“skill” “wisdom” “knowledge” “understanding”	Overlap of Craftsman Phrases

## Chapter 4

### *Isaiah 11:1-9*

As introduced in Chapter One, Isaiah's oracle in 11:1-9 revealed the promise of a savior for Israel and Judah during the Syro-Ephraimite War. Although Isaiah does not disclose the name of this savior, he is described throughout the pericope. See Figure 4.1 for the Hebrew and English translations of 11:1-9.<sup>143</sup>

The chart elucidates several significant items in Isaiah's oracle. Notice that there is a four-tiered structure to these verses including: an introduction (11:1), a divine endowment (11:2), the outworking of the endowment (11:3-5), and the results of the endowment (11:6-9). The latter two categories can be seen in a comparative relationship. Hence, 11:3-5 illustrate a ruling that is divinely given and 11:6-9 illustrate a ruling in terms of "an age of universal peace that embraces both the human and animal world."<sup>144</sup>

The endowment in 11:2 is the crux of this entire pericope. Whereas 11:1 serves as an introduction to the endowment, 11:3-9 illustrate its outcome. Hence, 11:2 is the key summary of the gifts underlying 11:3-9. Also, notice that the first gift bestowed to this individual is the *רוּחַ יְהוָה*, the "spirit of Yahweh."<sup>145</sup> The term *רוּחַ* appears three

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<sup>143</sup> Scholarship disagrees on the borders of this oracle. It is possible to include verse 10 in this short pericope. With this addition, 11:10 forms a nice inclusio with 11:1. Notice the repetition in both instances. 11:1 states, "and a shoot will go forth from the stem of Jesse" and 11:10 reads, "the root of Jesse will be standing". It is also possible, however, to view this verse in concert with 11:11-16. Notice that both 11:10 and 11:11 begin with the formula, "And so it will be, in that day". Perhaps these two lines are placed together to act as an introduction to the subsequent verses (12-16). Oswalt agrees with this interpretation and suggests that the introductory formulae function admirably making it "plain that the Messiah will be the banner around whom the remnant will gather in God's grace." See Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 1:287. On the other hand, Childs suggests that 11:10 is part of an editorial process of shaping, an attempt to harmonize the preceding and following oracles. See Childs, *Isaiah*, 105. I agree with Childs' interpretation and see 11:10 acting as a kind of hinge between the two oracles. Therefore, I have not included it into the above translation.

<sup>144</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 103.

<sup>145</sup> This phrase is found 22 times in the Old Testament, five of which occur in Isaiah. Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, 1065.

Figure 4.1

## Isaiah 11:1-9

<p>11:1 וַיֵּצֵא חֹטֶר מִגֹּזַע יֵשׁוּ וַנִּצֵּר מִשְׁרָשָׁיו יִפְרֶה: Then a shoot will come forth from the stem of Jesse and a branch from its roots will bear fruit.</p>	Introduction
<p>11:2 וְנָחָה עָלָיו רוּחַ יְהוָה רוּחַ חָכְמָה וּבִינָה רוּחַ עֵצָה וְגִבּוֹרָה רוּחַ דַּעַת וַיְרֵאֵת יְהוָה: And the spirit of Yhwh will rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and strength, and a spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yhwh.</p>	Divine Endowment
<p>11:3 וְהִרְיָחוּ בִּירְאֵת יְהוָה וְלֹא-לְמַרְאֵה עֵינָיו יִשְׁפֹּט וְלֹא-לְמִשְׁמַע אָזְנוֹ יוֹכִיחַ: And he will not judge according to what his eyes see, and he will not make a decision according to what his hears hear.</p> <p>11:4 וְשָׁפֵט בְּצֶדֶק<sup>3</sup> הַלִּים וְהוֹכִיחַ בְּמִישׁוֹר לְעִגְוֵי-אָרֶץ<sup>2</sup> וְהִפֶּה-אָרֶץ בְּשִׁבְט פִּי וּבְרוּחַ שְׁפָתָיו יָמִית רָשָׁע: But he will judge the poor with righteousness, he will make a decision with uprightness concerning the afflicted of the land, he will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.</p> <p>11:5 וְהָיָה צֶדֶק אָזוֹר מִתְּנָיו וְהֵאֱמֹנָה אָזוֹר חֻלְצָיו: Righteousness will be the waistcloth of his loins, and faithfulness the waistcloth of his hips.</p>	The Outworking of the Endowment
<p>11:6 וְגַר זֵאֵב עִם-כֶּבֶשׂ וְנֹמֵר עִם-גֹּדִי יִרְבֹּץ וְעֵגֶל וְכִפִּיר וּמְרִיא יַחְדָּו<sup>4</sup> וְנֹעַר קָטָן נָהַג בָּם: And a wolf will dwell with a lamb, and a leopard will lie down with a kid, and a calf, a young lion, and a fatling together, and a small young child will lead them.</p> <p>11:7 וּפָרָה וְרֵב תִּרְעִינָה יַחְדָּו יִרְבְּצוּ יַלְדֵיהֶן וְאַרְיֵה כִּבְקָר יֹאכַל-חִבָּן: And a cow and a bear will graze, their children will lie down together, and a lion will eat straw like an ox.</p> <p>11:8 וְשֹׁשֶׁע יוֹנֵק עַל-חֹר פֶּחָן וְעַל מְאוּרַת צִפְעוֹנִי גְמוּל יָדוֹ הָרָה: And a suckling will play over the hole of a poisonous serpent, and the weaned child will reach out his hand over the den of a viper.</p> <p>11:9 לֹא-יַרְעוּ וְלֹא-יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל-הָר קָדְשִׁי כִּי-מִלְאָה הָאָרֶץ דַּעַת אֶת-יְהוָה כַּמַּיִם לַיָּם מְכֹסִים: They will not do evil and they will not destroy on my holy mountain. For the earth will be full of the knowledge of Yhwh as the waters cover the sea.</p>	Results of the Endowment

<sup>1</sup> The text critical apparatus of BHS suggests that this phrase, **וַתְּרִיחוּ בְּיָרְאֵת יְהוָה**, is a dittography. Probably, the mistake was made from the end of verse 2, **וַיִּרְאֵת יְהוָה**. Subsequently, it is argued that **רוּחַ** became altered to **וַתְּרִיחוּ**. I have kept this cluster out of my translation.

<sup>2</sup> The text critical apparatus of BHS recommends an emendation for this noun. The comment suggests that **אָרֶץ** should be read as **עָרִיצ**, “violent.” This alteration makes sense in light of the parallel structure in the second half of verse four. Hence, “the violent” in the first clause would parallel “the wicked” in the second clause. However, the recommendation does not seem necessary for interpretation.

<sup>3</sup> The **בְּ** preposition prefixed to **צָרָק** functions instrumentally in this verse. Hence, **צָרָק** is an instrument with which Isaiah’s salvific figure will judge. This interpretation occurs throughout the verse. See **בְּמִישׁוֹר**, **בְּשִׁבְט**, and **וּבְרוּחַ**. For a discussion on this particular use of the **בְּ** preposition see Watlke and O’Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 11.2.5d.

<sup>4</sup> Since there is no verb in this clause, the text critical apparatus of BHS suggests that **וַיִּמְרֵא יַחֲדָיו** should be emended to “they will fatten”, *yimrə’û*. The Septuagint and Syriac employ this form. Nevertheless, I agree with Oswald that “the MT is not impossible and in the absence of a more compelling reading need not be emended”. Oswald, *The Book of Isaiah*, 1:277.

additional times in Isaiah 11:2.<sup>146</sup> Each of these occurrences precedes a couplet. These phrases are as follows: רוּחַ חֵכְמָה וּבִינָה, רוּחַ עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה, and רוּחַ דַּעַת וְיִרְאַת יְהוָה. The relationship between רוּחַ and the endowed gifts in these occurrences is best understood as causal.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, the text implies that the “spirit of wisdom and understanding” is the “spirit that causes wisdom and understanding”. Likewise, Young suggests that the endowed gifts do not refer to attributes or qualities of the spirit but that the spirit is the source or cause of the gifts.<sup>148</sup> This is also the concept attributed to the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים in Bezalel’s endowment in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31. In Exodus 31:3 and 35:31, the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים is manifested in three significant skills: חֵכְמָה, דַּעַת, תְּבוּנָה. Likewise, the infilling of the רוּחַ יְהוָה in Isaiah 11:2 is manifested in a variety of skills: חֵכְמָה וּבִינָה, עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה, and דַּעַת וְיִרְאַת יְהוָה.

The couplets in Isaiah 11:2 play an important role in the endowment of Isaiah’s figure. Each pair is distinctly marked by both the preceding noun, רוּחַ, and the *waw* conjunction linking each second noun to its pair. These features draw attention to the parallel relationship between the nouns in each couplet. See below for a brief discussion of these pairs.

### עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה

The first form in this phrase, עֲצָה, means “plan, counsel, advice”.<sup>149</sup> Rupert notes that in this context, Isaiah’s use of עֲצָה refers to the “God-given ability that enables the

<sup>146</sup> רוּחַ is found one other time in this oracle. In 11:4, רוּחַ refers to “breath.”

<sup>147</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*, 9.5.2c.

<sup>148</sup> Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 381-382.

<sup>149</sup> Al Wolters, “יעץ,” *NIDOTTE* 2:490. This term is not found in East Semitic.

king to find ways and means to carry out his purposes, not the ability to advise others.”<sup>150</sup> The second word in this phrase, גְּבוּרָה, means “strength, power”.<sup>151</sup> Kühlewein proposes that this noun often refers to “military might”.<sup>152</sup> Notice, for instance, that the only other occurrences of this pair in the Old Testament refer specifically to military “counsel and strength.”<sup>153</sup> However, Gray and Wildberger state that Isaiah’s figure should not be interpreted as a military figure or as a “great soldier.”<sup>154</sup> Also, Blenkinsopp proposes that this couplet, עֲצָה וְגְבוּרָה, denotes both the “skill to elaborate sensible plans and the ability to carry them through.”<sup>155</sup> Likewise, Kaiser and Young agree that עֲצָה refers to the making of right decisions and גְּבוּרָה refers to the carrying out of the decisions.<sup>156</sup> Keeping in mind the occurrences of this second couplet, עֲצָה וְגְבוּרָה, throughout the Old Testament, it seems as though “counsel and strength” refer to military language.

דַּעַת וְיִרְאַת יְהוָה

Regarding this first term, דַּעַת, Fuhs states that “No one can be expert in the complexities of life who does not begin with the knowledge of Yahweh and dependence on him.”<sup>157</sup> Childs notes that דַּעַת, in 11:2, refers to the right relationship of a creature to

<sup>150</sup> Ruppert, “יעץ,” *TDOT* 6:172.

<sup>151</sup> Kosmala, “גבר,” *TDOT* 2:369.

<sup>152</sup> J. Kühlewein, “גבר,” *TLOT* vol:299.

<sup>153</sup> See 2 Kings 18:20 and Isaiah 36:5 for the recurrences of this pair.

<sup>154</sup> Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*, 216. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 472.

<sup>155</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 264.

<sup>156</sup> Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 158 and Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 382.

<sup>157</sup> Fuhs, “ירא,” *TDOT* 6:311.



its creator.<sup>158</sup> Similarly, Kaiser suggests that דַעַת denotes the “right attitude” of man to God.<sup>159</sup> And likewise, Watts proposes that דַעַת refers to a “true understanding and relation to God.”<sup>160</sup> Gray, on the other hand, specifically states that דַעַת refers to the “knowledge which shows itself in care for the poor and weak.”<sup>161</sup> Interestingly, commentators have little to say about this second phrase, וַיִּרְאַת יְהוָה. Stähli, however, proposes that וַיִּרְאַת יְהוָה can be used as a synonym for דַעַת.<sup>162</sup> The use of וַיִּרְאַת יְהוָה in Psalms and Proverbs may be instructive here. Psalm 111:10 states that “the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom,” רֵאשִׁית חִכְמָה יִרְאַת יְהוָה. Proverbs 9:10 echoes this phrase, תְּחִלַּת חִכְמָה יִרְאַת יְהוָה. Likewise, Proverbs 1:7 states that “the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge,” יִרְאַת יְהוָה רֵאשִׁית דַעַת. These recurrences of וַיִּרְאַת יְהוָה as the “key” to חִכְמָה and דַעַת seems to suggest that this third couplet, דַעַת וַיִּרְאַת יְהוָה, in the endowment of Isaiah’s figure denotes skills associated with wisdom literature.

חִכְמָה וּבִינָה

Scholarship reveals a range of interpretation and emphases regarding this couplet. Kaiser proposes that this pair refers specifically to the judicial capacity of the king.<sup>163</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, on the other hand, suggests that these terms together express an

<sup>158</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 103.

<sup>159</sup> Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 158.

<sup>160</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 172.

<sup>161</sup> Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*, 217.

<sup>162</sup> H.-P. Stähli, “ירא,” *TLOT* 2:576.

<sup>163</sup> Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 158.

attribute essential for “successful living.”<sup>164</sup> Hans Wildberger agrees and suggests that חֲכָמָה refers to the capacity of handling problems in “daily living” while בִּינָה is the ability to assess situations appropriately.<sup>165</sup> This type of discernment that Wildberger attributes to בִּינָה is attributed to חֲכָמָה by Watts.<sup>166</sup> George Gray, on the other hand, attributes this capacity of discernment to both חֲכָמָה and בִּינָה.<sup>167</sup>

Chapters Two and Three revealed that the terms “wisdom” and “understanding” can refer specifically to the skills for craftsmanship. Figure 3.5 illustrated that both of these terms, in particular, denote the abilities of craftsmen in ancient Near Eastern inscriptions and in the biblical building accounts. Furthermore, Chapter One introduced that the endowment of Isaiah’s figure in 11:2 and the endowment of Bezalel in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31 share several descriptive phrases. These shared phrases include the terms “wisdom” and “understanding.” With the Isaiah-Bezalel relationship in mind and the interpretation of the terms “wisdom” and “understanding” as skills for craftsmanship in the ancient Near Eastern world, the first couplet, חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה, in the endowment of Isaiah’s figure in 11:2 may refer to the language of building.

Each of the three couplets found in Isaiah 11:2 emphasizes a different aspect that Isaiah’s figure is empowered with by the spirit of God. “Counsel and strength” seem to denote skills associated with military language and “knowledge and the fear of Yahweh” seem to denote skills associated with wisdom literature. Furthermore, “wisdom and

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<sup>164</sup> Joseph B. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 264. For Blenkinsopp, the interpretation of “successful living” is based on a recurrence of this word pair, חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה, in Deuteronomy 4:6.

<sup>165</sup> Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12* (A Continental Commentary; Translated by Thomas H. Trapp. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 472.

<sup>166</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 171-172.

<sup>167</sup> George Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1962), 216.

understanding” seem to denote skills for craftsmanship.<sup>168</sup> An additional conclusion regarding the position of Isaiah’s salvific figure described in 11:1-9 can be made. Isaiah 11:3-9 indicate that this figure possesses leadership qualities. 11:3-5 attest that this figure will rule in a divine manner and 11:6-9 emphasize the safety of his reign wherein even animals will be content with one another. This individual seems to hold a kingly status, especially with respect to how he rules.

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<sup>168</sup> It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider whether or not the writers of either Exodus or Isaiah were aware of the shared phrases between them. Perhaps one recurrence is simply a literary echo of the other. Much more study could be done in order to address these questions.

## Chapter 5

### *Final Remarks*

Chapter Two provided the groundwork for understanding the language of craftsmanship in ancient Near Eastern building inscriptions. Several texts highlighted that these craftsmen were described with a range of skills and abilities. Figure 2.1 illustrated that four descriptive phrases, in particular, seem to refer specifically to the skills for craftsmanship. These phrases include: “skill,” “wisdom,” “knowledge,” and “understanding.” Likewise, Chapter Three revealed a range of descriptive phrases that depicted the craftsmen in the biblical building accounts. Figure 3.4 illustrated that six of these phrases, in particular, seem to refer specifically to the skills for craftsmanship. These phrases include: “skill,” “wisdom,” “knowledge,” “understanding,” “every craft,” and “spirit of Yahweh.” Furthermore, Figure 3.5 revealed that the overlap of craftsmen terms between Chapters Two and Three includes “skill,” “wisdom,” “knowledge,” and “understanding.” Chapters Two and Three also revealed that the descriptive phrases found in Bezalel’s divine endowment in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31 are characteristic of craftsman phrases found throughout the ancient Near Eastern world. And finally, Chapter Four recalled that Bezalel’s endowment in the Exodus narratives share several descriptive phrases with the endowment of Isaiah’s figure in 11:2. The relationship between these two endowments as well as the study of the language of craftsmanship in Chapters Two and Three suggested that the first couplet described in Isaiah 11:2 may indicate skills for craftsmanship. Hence, the “wisdom” and “understanding” that Isaiah’s figure is empowered with in 11:2 suggests that this individual was endowed with skills for craftsmanship. The possibility of this interpretation opens up several venues that

would require further study. Perhaps, however, I can conclude with one final suggestion. If we can view the terms “wisdom” and “understanding” in Isaiah 11:2 as skills for craftsmanship then perhaps this couplet confirms the interpretation that Isaiah’s figure held a kingly status. Just as the kings described in the ancient Near Eastern inscriptions from Chapter Two (i.e. Ur-Bau, Gudea, Sîn-iddinam, Etana, Ammī-ditāna, and Esarhaddon) are designated as craftsmen and just as King Solomon is described as a craftsman, so might this kingly figure be described as a craftsman in Isaiah’s oracle of 11:1-9.<sup>169</sup> This man was a king, identified not only by the way he rules, described in 11:3-9, but by his skills for craftsmanship in 11:2.

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<sup>169</sup> For further reading on the relationship of kings as builders see Mario Liverani, “The Deeds of Ancient Mesopotamian Kings.” *Civilizations of the ancient Near East 4* (1995): 2353-2366.

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