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## The Intertextual Relationship between Isaiah 65,25 and Isaiah 11,6-9

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# THE SCRIPTURES AND THE SCROLLS

STUDIES IN HONOUR OF A.S. VAN DER WOUDE  
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 65TH BIRTHDAY

EDITED BY

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THE INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN ISAIAH 65,25 AND ISAIAH 11,6-9

BY

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1. INTRODUCTION: ISAIAH 65,25 IN ITS LITERARY CONTEXT

According to many commentators Isa 65,25 is a *later addition*, placing Isa 65 in its entirety in an apocalyptic perspective<sup>1</sup>. Its purpose is to complete the description of the new cosmos, beginning in v. 17, with a description of harmony ruling also in the animal world. This description of a new cosmos is influenced by Isa 11,6-9.

Others<sup>2</sup> have correctly pointed out that Isa 65,25 is embedded very well in the literary context of Isa 65. In the first place, the harmonious

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<sup>1</sup> According to C. WESTERMANN, *Das Buch Jesaja. Kapitel 40-66* (ATD 19, Göttingen, 1966), 326, a later redactor changed the original oracle of salvation to Jerusalem and Juda into an apocalyptic portrayal. Cf. K. PAURITSCH, *Die neue Gemeinde: Gott sammelt Ausgestossene und Arme (Jesaja 56-66)* (AnBib 47, Rome, 1971), 173; E. SEHMSDORF, "Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte von Is 56-66", ZAW 84 (1972), 517-576 (pp. 522ff.); A. SCHOORS, *Jesaja* (BOT IX, Roermond, 1972), 472; R. N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40-66* (NCB, London, 1975), 266; J. VERMEYLEN, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'Apocalyptique. Isaïe, I-XXXV, miroir d'un demi-millénaire d'expérience religieuse en Israël* (EB, Paris, 1978), 497.

<sup>2</sup> The authenticity of (a part of) v. 25 is defended by J. A. ALEXANDER, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, 1980) [=1846-47; 1875<sup>2</sup>], 455v.; F. DELITZSCH, *Commentar über das Buch Jesaja* (Biblischer Commentar über das Alte Testament III/1, Leipzig, 1889<sup>4</sup>), 633; K. ELLIGER, *Die Einheit des Tritojesaja* (Jesaja 56-66) (BWANT 63, Stuttgart, 1928), 33-36; W.A.M. BEUKEN, *Jesaja, deel IIIB* (POT) (Nijkerk, 1989), 91f. We have discussed elsewhere the view that vv. 24-25 are prosodically, syntactically and also semantically included in the structure of Isa 65,13-25. Besides, these verses show connections, particularly with v. 1 and v. 12, which go beyond the limits of Isa 65,13-25. See: J. VAN RUITEN, "The Role of Syntax in Versification of Is 65:13-25", in: E. TALSTRA (ed.), *The Prophet on the Screen. Computerized Description and Literary Interpretation of Isaianic Texts* (Applicatio, Amsterdam, 1992) [forthcoming].

state of the animal world reflects the perfect relationship between YHWH and his servants, described in v. 24. This relationship results in the disappearance of evil and ruin from the holy mountain. In the second place, a strong connection exists between vv. 24-25 and v. 12a''b: v. 24 is saying, using the same words, the opposite of v. 12a'', whereas v. 25de<sup>3</sup> forms a contrast with v. 12b, as far as content is concerned. In addition, the relation between v. 24 and v. 25de is the opposite of that between v. 12a'' and v. 12b. In v. 12 the refusal the unfaithful to heed God results in their 'evil doing', whereas in v. 25 the willingness of the servants results in the situation that no evil will happen any more on the holy mountain. The modifier 'in all my holy mountain' (v. 25) fits very well in the message of Trito-Isaiah. In Isa 65,9 the prophet speaks about 'inheritors of my mountains', whereas in 65,11 he speaks about leaving the mountain: 'But you, you who forsake YHWH, who forget my *holy mountain*'. Only Isa 65,25a-c seem to be separated from the rest of the chapter. However, these parts of v. 25 are also closely connected with important lines of meaning in the chapter. One of these lines is 'eating'. The author describes in v. 25ab the harmony in the animal realm under the aspect of their peaceful eating together<sup>4</sup>.

As opposed to those 'who eat swine's flesh' (65,4; compare 66,17), 65,13.21-22 depict the meal of the servants of God. The blessings for the servants are described in terms of 'eating'. Isa 65,10 ('Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks') is in line with this view. The word 'pasture' evokes the image of 'grazing', and by that the image of 'eating'. In 65,10 another theme within Isa 65 can be found, namely that of the peaceful animals ('... a pasture for flocks, ... a place for herds'). Isa 65,25c ('and dust shall be the serpent's food') also fits in within the idea of 'eating', although the intention seems to be different, since it expresses not a blessing, but a curse. Many authors who do not consider v. 25ab a later addition do think that v. 25c is an addition<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> The numbering of Isa 11,6-9 and Isa 65,25 is according to their successive cola (e. g. 65,25a, 65,25b, 65,25c etc.) and not according to the massoretic accents. See the scheme in section two of this article.

<sup>4</sup> The root אכל ('to eat') occurs eleven times in Trito-Isaiah as a whole and five times in Isa 65 in particular: Isa 56,9; 58,14; 59,5; 61,6; 62,9; 65,4.13.21.22.25; 66,17.

<sup>5</sup> K. MARTI, *Das Buch Jesaja* (KHC X, Tübingen - Leipzig, 1900), 406; B. DUHM, *Das Buch Jesaja* (HK III/1, Göttingen, 1968<sup>5</sup> = 1922<sup>4</sup>), 481; ELLIGER, *op. cit.*, 33; MARTIN-ACHARD, "L'espérance des croyants face à la mort selon Ésaïe 65,16c-25 et selon Daniel 12,1-4", *RHPPhR* 69 (1979), 439-451 (p. 444); BEUKEN, *op. cit.*, 92.

## 2. THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ISA 65,25 AND ISA 11,6-9

Although Isa 65,25 is embedded very well in the literary context of Isa 65, the connection between Isa 65,25 and Isa 11,6-9 is obvious, as most commentators have pointed out. In this article we would like to explore the intertextual relationship of both texts<sup>6</sup>. This relationship can help the reader to understand the function and intention of Isa 65,25. In order to get a serious insight into the relationship of Isa 11,6-9 and Isa 65,25, it is necessary to look not only at the similarities of both texts, but also at their differences. We give both the translations of Isa 11,6-9 and of 65,25 in the following scheme side by side.

*Isa 11,6-9*

*Isa 65,25*

- |   |   |  |    |   |  |
|---|---|--|----|---|--|
| 6 | a | <i>The wolf shall dwell with the ram,</i>                              | 25 | a | <i>The wolf and the lamb young shall graze together,</i> |
|   | b | <i>and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,</i>                    |    |   |  |
|   | c | <i>and the calf and the lion and the fatling together<sup>7</sup>,</i> |    |   |  |
|   | d | <i>and a little child shall lead them.</i>                             |    |   |  |

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SCHOORS, *op. cit.*, 472, speaks about a second gloss.

<sup>6</sup> This is not the place for a full discussion of the concept of 'intertextuality', but see elsewhere for example: Z. BEN-PORAT, "The Poetics of Literary Allusion", *PTL* 1 (1976), 105-128; P. CLAES, *De mot zit in de mythe. Antieke intertextualiteit in het werk van Hugo Claus* (Leuven, 1981); U. BROICH - M. PFISTER, (eds.), *Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien* (Konzepte der Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft 35, Tübingen, 1985); the journal for Dutch history of literature *Spiegel der Letteren* 29 (1987) devoted a double issue to the theme of 'intertextuality'. Cf.: B. VEDDER, "Kennistheoretische beschouwingen bij een interpretatie van teksten in het perspectief van "wirkungsgeschichtliche" exegese", *Bijdragen* 49 (1988), 238-263.

<sup>7</sup> This is a translation of MT. However, *IQIsa*<sup>a</sup> has *יִמְרֹא יִחַד*, which should probably be read as *יִמְרֹא יִחַד* or *יִמְרֹא יִחַד*. The root *מֵרָא* is not attested in Biblical Hebrew, yet it occurs in later Hebrew, where it means: 'to become fat'. The Septuagint also inserts a verb in the sentence: *βασαθηθησοντα*, which could be a mere insertion from v. 7b, but could also reflect the reading *יִמְרֹא* or *יִמְרֹא*: cf. Peshitta. Combined evidence suggests that a verb is read in the colon. However, it is also possible that these renderings as verbs are changes based on the translator's desire to achieve a more perfect parallelism. See: M. H. GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, *The Book of Isaiah. Sample Edition with Introduction* (HUBP), 51 [Hebrew pagination].

- 7 a The cow and the bear shall graze<sup>8</sup>;  
 b their young shall lie down together;  
 c *and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*      b *and the lion shall eat straw like the ox;*
- 8 a The sucking child shall play  
 b over the hole of the asp,      c and dust shall be the serpent's food.  
 c and the weaned child shall put his hand  
 d to the young<sup>9</sup> of the adder.
- 9 a *They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain;*      d *They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain;*  
 c for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of YHWH  
 d as the waters cover the bottom of the sea.  
 f says YHWH.

Many exegetes have argued for the influence of Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah on Trito-Isaiah<sup>10</sup>. The impact of Isa 11,6-9 on Isa 65,25 fits very well into this general picture<sup>11</sup>. Concerning *vocabulary*, 11,6-9 and 65,25

<sup>8</sup> There is no reason to change חרעיבה, 'they graze', into חרעיבה, 'they are friendly together'.

<sup>9</sup> On the basis of the Septuagint (τρῶγλη, 'cave') many have argued that ארמון of MT should be emended to מערה, 'cave', or מעונה, 'den, dwelling'. See, however, *IQIsa'*, which reads ארמון. The meaning of the word was established by F. PERLES, *Journal of the Society of Oriental Research* 9 (1925), 126f, ['the young one'].

<sup>10</sup> See the commentary of W. A. M. BEUKEN on Trito-Isaiah (*Jesaja*, deel IIIA, deel IIIB (POT, Nijkerk, 1989). Cf. H. ODEBERG, *Trito-Isaiah (Isaiah 56-66). A Literary and Stylistic Analysis* (Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift 1931. Teologi I, Uppsala, 1931); W. ZIMMERLI, "Zur Sprache Tritojesajas", in: W. ZIMMERLI, *Gottes Offenbarung. Gesammelte Aufsätze* (TB 19, München, 1969<sup>2</sup>), 217-233; O. H. STECK, "Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch", in: J. VERMEYLEN (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah. Le Livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures. Unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (BETL LXXXI, Leuven, 1989), 361-406.

<sup>11</sup> We join the majority of commentators, who make the assumption that Isa 65,25 is a summarizing quotation of Isa 11,6-9. In this view Isa 11,6-9 precedes Isa 65,25. See: J. A. ALEXANDER, *op. cit.*, 455; F. DELITZSCH, *op. cit.*, 633; A. CONDAMIN, *Le livre d'Isaïe. Traduction critique avec notes et commentaires* (Paris, 1905), 386; F. FELD-

have three sentences and one word *in common*. These sentences show the *same syntactic structure*, while the common vocabulary is *unique* in the OT. Firstly, 11,7c (וְאֵרִיָּה כִּבְקֵר יֹאכַל תַּבֵּן) 'and the lion shall eat straw like the ox' is similar to 65,25b. Secondly, the first part of 11,9 (לֹא יִרְעוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁחִיתוּ כְּבַל הַר קְדֹשִׁי) 'They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain') corresponds to 65,25de. Finally, the word זָאֵב ('wolf') occurs both in 11,6a and 65,25a.

But in addition there are *thematic* similarities between both texts. In the first place, we can point to 65,25a, זָאֵב וְטֵלֵה יִרְעוּ כְּאַחַד, 'The wolf and the lamb shall graze together'. Thematically, this corresponds to Isa 11,6-7b. Both texts refer to predatory and non-predatory animals, and the activities described in both texts are similar. In the second place we can point to the occurrence of the serpent both in 11,8ab and 65,25c, although the exact terminology differs: 'asp' (פִּתְחָן) and 'adder' (צִפְעוֹנוֹתֵי) in 11,8ab, and 'serpent' (נָחָשׁ) in 65,25c.

### 3. THE DISSIMILARITIES BETWEEN ISA 11,6-9 AND ISA 65,25

#### a) A different literary context

When a text exerts influence on another text, several procedures of transformation operate at the same time. Two texts are never entirely

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MANN, *Das Buch Isaias*, I-II (EHAT 14, Münster in Westf., 1925-26), I, p. 157f.; II, p. 281; O. PROCKSCH, *Jesaja I* (KAT IX, Leipzig, 1930), 156; P. VOLZ, *Jesaja II* (KAT IX/2, Leipzig, 1932), 287; C. WESTERMANN *op. cit.*, 326; J. L. MCKENZIE, *Second Isaiah* (AB 20, New York, 1968), 199; H. WILDBERGER, *Jesaja*, I, p. 444; P. -E. BONNARD, *Le Second Isaïe. Son disciple et leurs éditeurs. Isaïe 40-66* (EB, Paris, 1972), 476; SEHMSDORF, *op. cit.*, 522; W. HOLADAY, *Isaiah. Scroll of a Prophetic Heritage* (Grand Rapids, 1978), 112; VERMEYLEN (1978), *op. cit.*, 276, 497; R. MARTIN-ACHARD, *RHPPhK* 69 (1979), 444, n. 6; BEUKEN, *op. cit.* IIIB, 91f. Some commentators, however, consider on the one hand Isa 65,25a to be a quotation of Isa 11,6-9, but on the other hand Isa 11,9a to be a quotation of Isa 65,25b. See: K. MARTI, *op. cit.*, 112f.; B. DUHM, *op. cit.*, 108, 481; R. N. WHYBRAY (1975), *op. cit.*, 278; R. E. CLEMENTS, *Isaiah 1-39* (NCBC, Grand Rapids), 124; O. KAISER, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja. Kapitel 1-12* (ATD 17, Göttingen, 1981<sup>5</sup>), 245ff. The argument in favor of this view (MARTI, DUHM) is that Isa 65,25b fits better in its literary context than Isa 11,9a does (Cf. subject of the verbs; suffix 1st person singular in הָרִי קְדֹשִׁי). According to one author, G. FOHRER, *Das Buch Jesaja*, I-III (ZBK, Zürich, 1960-64), Isa 11,6-9a in its entirety is dependent of Isa 65,25. A. SCHOORS, *op. cit.*, 472, hesitates to give one of the two texts the priority; he makes no choice.

identical. Therefore, besides the resemblances, there are *differences* between Isa 11,6-9 and 65,25: a different literary context (see 3.a); a shortening of the text of Isa 11,6-7b in 65,25a (see 3.b); and different utterances about the serpent (see 3.c).

First of all, the sentences which Isa 65,25 has taken over from Isa 11,6-9 are removed *from their context*. Therefore, it is necessary to take also the context of Isa 11,6-9 into consideration: Isa 11,1-9<sup>12</sup>. In these verses the theme is the flourishing of a new sprout of David. A future ideal ruler of his house is predicted. His coming will result in a time of peace and justice. In the first part of the text (vv. 1-5) the prophet describes the endowment of the spirit of YHWH to the new ruler (v. 2), and the righteous rule resulting from it (vv. 3-5). In the second part (vv. 6-8) he describes the harmony in the animal world: predatory animals (wolf, leopard, lion, bear, asp, adder) will live in peaceful harmony with the domesticated animals (young ram, kid, calf, cow, ox) and defenceless children (little child, suckling child, weaned child). After the animal intermezzo the text returns in v. 9 to the theme of vv. 1-5. A righteous rule means that no evil will be done on God's holy mountain. The description of a righteous ruler combined with the description of harmony in the animal world is not found elsewhere in the OT<sup>13</sup>.

This connection seems to be absent in Isa 65,25 as well. Trito-Isaiah quotes only from the description of the harmonious animal world (Isa 11,6-9), whereas he omits the mentioning of a future righteous ruler. However, when we look more closely at the text, the thematic connection between Isa 11,3-5 and the *context* of Isa 65,25 is obvious. On the one hand, the prophet speaks about judging the poor and the meek with righteousness in Isa 11,4, and on the other hand, about the killing of the wicked. The main theme in the first part of Isa 65 is similar. In vv. 1-16 the prophet describes a separation of the servants and the wicked. The wicked will perish, whereas the servants will be blessed.

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<sup>12</sup> An extensive discussion of Isa 11,1-9 can be found for example in: H. WILDBERGER, *Jesaja*. I. Teilband. Jesaja 1-12 (BKAT X/1, Neukirchen, 1972), 436-462; O. KAISER, *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja. Kapitel 1-12* (Göttingen, 1981<sup>5</sup>), 239-248; E. JACOB, *Esaië 1-12* (Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament VIIIa) (Genève, 1987), 159-166.

<sup>13</sup> The coming salvation illustrated by the description of peace in the animal world (a covenant with animals) can be found in Hos 2,20 and Ez 34,25ff. Isa 35,9 and Lev 26,6 speak about the extermination of predatory animals.



*b) Isaiah 65,25ab as a recapitulation of Isaiah 11,6-7b*

The text of Isa 65,25a represents a substantial reduction of Isa 11,6-7b, in which there is a much fuller description. It is striking that Isa 65,25a (זאב וטלה ירעו כאחד) is modelled mainly on Isa 11,6a (וגר זאב עם כבש): 'The wolf shall dwell with the young ram'), but at the same time it refers to the whole context. One can point to the following transformations. Firstly, the verb גור (וגר : 'he shall dwell') is changed into a form of the verb רעה (ירעו) : 'they graze'. Secondly, the preposition עם ('with') is changed in כאחד ('as one; together'). Thirdly, כבש ('young ram') is changed in טלה ('lamb'). We should ask what was the basis on which Trito-Isaiah adapted the text of Proto-Isaiah. How are these alterations to be interpreted?

First, we think that *the parties* which Trito-Isaiah mentions in 65,25a ('the wolf and the lamb') are a recapitulation of the parties mentioned in Isa 11,6-7b. The word זאב ('wolf') does occur in 11,6a, and is in line with the other predatory animals: leopard, lion and bear. In 65,25 the wolf serves as an example of all predatory animals mentioned in Isa 11,6-7b. On the other hand, the word טלה ('lamb') represents all the non-predatory animals: young ram, kid, calf, fatling and cow. It is striking, however, that whereas זאב ('wolf') does occur in Isa 11,6-9, the word טלה ('lamb') does not. Moreover, the word טלה ('lamb') is to be found outside Isa 65,25a only in two places in the Hebrew Bible: 1 Sam 7,9 and Isa 40,11. Trito-Isaiah may be alluding to the flock of 'lambs' (טלאים) which YHWH carries back to Zion in Isa 40,11, when he uses the word טלה ('lamb') to represent the weak party in Isa 11,6-9<sup>14</sup>.

Second, *the activity* mentioned in Isa 65,25a is one of 'grazing': רעה (ירעו) : 'they shall graze'. In 11,6-9 several verbs describe the activities of the predatory and domesticated animals: גור ('to dwell'), רכך ('to lie down'), רעה ('to graze'). According to Beuken<sup>15</sup>, Trito-Isaiah has chosen the verb רעה ('to graze') instead of the other verbs, firstly because רעה is a very important theme in Trito-Isaiah<sup>16</sup>. Especially 56,11 is important, in which the wicked shepherds (רעים) neglect the righteous. Secondly, the use of רעה could be prompted by Deutero-Isaiah

<sup>14</sup> Cf. BEUKEN, *op. cit.* III B, 92.

<sup>15</sup> *ibidem.*

<sup>16</sup> See: Isa 56,11; (57,1); 61,5; 63,11.

(40,11 (2x); 44,28; 49,9). We can refer particularly to Isa 40,11, because the word רעה occurs there twice (ירעה ... ברעה: 'as a shepherd feed'), and because another word from 65,25 ('the lambs') also occurs there. YHWH will gently lead, and feed his lambs.

These arguments may have played a part in the use of רעה in Isa 65,25, and the occurrence of רעה and טלה in Isa 40,11 is especially striking. However, the connotation of רעה in Isa 40,11 is rather different from that in Isa 11,7 and 65,25. In 40,11 (and 56,11) the connotation is one of 'leading' or 'tending the flock', whereas in 11,7 and 65,25 the connotation is one of 'grazing'. In our opinion some other arguments are more plausible.

In the first place the verb רעה is found in 11,6a-7b at the end of the passage (v. 7a). Taking a word from the beginning (זאב: 'wolf') and from the end רעה ('graze'), Trito-Isaiah recapitulates the passage. Thus we might speak about 'a framed quotation'. In addition, in 11,7a the word רעה is followed by יחרו ('together'). According to the prosodic structure of the text, and according to the massoretic accents, יחרו belongs to v. 7a', but in a text without accents, one can read רעה together with יחרו in one breath. Of course, יחרו is not identical with באחר, but it comes close to it, as far as content is concerned.

In the second place, רעה is the only verb in Isa 11,6-7a, which has a connotation of 'eating'. The aspect of 'eating' is very important for Trito-Isaiah. Particularly, in Isa 65,25a-c the author is interested in 'eating' as is showed by the words אכל ('to eat') in 65,25b, and לחם ('food') in 65,2-5c<sup>17</sup>.

The text of Isa 65,25b is a literal quotation from 11,7c ('and the lion shall eat straw like the ox'). Omitting so many elements of 11,6-7b, the author does repeat 11,7c. A plausible reason seems to be on the one hand the activity mentioned in 11,7c (אכל תבן, 'to eat straw'), and on the other the mentioning of בקר ('ox'). In the introduction we pointed out that the word אכל ('to eat') is of special importance in Trito-Isaiah, especially in Isa 65, whereas בקר ('ox') also occurs in 65,10 ('a place for oxes to lie down'). Besides, with the word רעה (in the meaning of 'grazing') Isa

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<sup>17</sup> Besides both arguments ('a summarizing reduction', and the connotation of eating), we would like to mention a possible pun in Isa 65,25 as reason for the choice of רעה. There is an (unpunctuated) homonymy of ירע (65,25a: 'they shall graze') and ירעו (65,25d = 11,9a: 'they shall hurt').

65,25 adopts the second verb in 11,6-8 with a connotation of 'eating' as well.

*c) The serpent*

In Isa 11,8 ('The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand to the young of the adder') the author continues the antithesis between the predatory and the domesticated animals with that between the serpent and the defenceless child ('a sucking child', 'a weaned child'). It is striking that the text of 11,8 is lacking in 65,25, in which only the animal world is in view. Nevertheless, there is a connection between 11,8 and 65,25. Although the word שׁוֹחַ ('serpent') in 65,25c differs from אֲשׁוּפָה ('asp') and אֲדִמְיוֹן ('adder'), it does create a thematic connection with 11,8<sup>18</sup>. The preceding (11,7c = 65,25b) and the following sentence (11,9ab = 65,25de), being identical in both texts, emphasize this connection. Therefore we assume that Trito-Isaiah tries to fit in the message of 11,8 through the related expression 'serpent' in 65,25c.

Taking notice of the literary context, we find that the structure of the sentence 65,25c is divergent from the preceding lines: a noun clause instead of a compound noun clause. Moreover, the predatory party only is mentioned (namely the serpent), whereas the weak party is omitted. Nevertheless the semantic connection between 65,25c and 65,25ab is quite strong, in all three sentences a predatory animal (wolf, lion, serpent) is mentioned, and an aspect of 'eating' (to graze, to eat straw, food). An equivalent of the weak animal (lamb, ox) does not occur in 65,25c. Therefore, the point of 65,25c is not 'being together in harmony' of predatory and tame animal, but 'eating' dust.

In spite of the resemblances between 11,8 and 65,25c, the tenor seems to be different. In 11,8 the (once) dangerous serpent is now keeping company with the little child without harming it. The text of 65,25c does not

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<sup>18</sup> The word שׁוֹחַ ('serpent') occurs about 30 times in OT. It seems to be the broader expression, whereas both other expressions are more specific: אֲדִמְיוֹן ('adder') occurs five times in OT, in three cases parallel to שׁוֹחַ (Isa 14,29, Jer 8,17 and Prov 23,32) and once parallel to אֲשׁוּפָה ('asp': Isa 11,8). The word אֲשׁוּפָה occurs six times, once as a parallel of אֲדִמְיוֹן (Isa 11,8), and once as a parallel of שׁוֹחַ (Ps 58,5). Besides, compare also תַּנִּינִי ('sea-monster', 'serpent'), which occurs often in parallelism with one or more of the expressions mentioned.

say that the serpent is now harmless, but it only mentions that dust is the serpent's food.

What is the meaning of *וַנַּחֲשׁ עֹפָר לַחֲמוֹ*, 'and dust shall be the serpent's food'? The collocation of the three words *נַחֲשׁ*, *עֹפָר*, and *לַחֲמוֹ* occurs only in Isa 65,25c, like the collocation of the words *נַחֲשׁ* and *לַחֲמוֹ*, and of *עֹפָר* and *לַחֲמוֹ*<sup>19</sup>. However, the collocation of *נַחֲשׁ* and *עֹפָר* occurs outside Isa 65,25c also in Gen 3,14 (with the verb *אָכַל*: 'to eat'), and in Micah 7,17 (with the verb *לָחַךְ*: 'to lick').

Gen 3,14 may function as the source for the alteration in Isa 65,25c. In Gen 3,14 the collocation of the words *נַחֲשׁ* ('serpent') and *עֹפָר* ('dust') is found. Besides, in Gen 3,14 the verb *אָכַל* ('to eat') occurs, and this is a parallel of *לַחֲמוֹ* ('food'). The words in Gen 3,14 corresponding to Isa 65,25c are, however, in a different syntactic relation. In Gen. 3,14 one can read, after Eve said that the serpent has beguiled her, '... YHWH God said to *the serpent*: 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, *and dust you shall eat* all the days of your life'. The remark that dust is the serpent's food is put in the framework of a curse. Because the serpent beguiled Eve to eat from the tree, therefore the serpent must eat dust.

The aspect of 'eating dust' is elaborated elsewhere in the OT. In the first place we can refer to Micah 7,17a (*יִלְחַכּוּ עֹפָר כַּנַּחֲשׁ כַּזֹּחֲלֵי אֲרֶץ*: 'They shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth'). Micah 7,17 has two words in common with Isa 65,25c: *עֹפָר* ('dust') and *נַחֲשׁ* ('serpent'). However, the words are placed in the inverse order in Micah 7,17, and whereas *נַחֲשׁ* has a particle of comparison *k<sup>e</sup>* ('like a serpent'), in Isa 65,25c the serpent is put in apposition to 'dust' and 'food'. In Micah 7,17a the subject of the sentence is 3rd person masculine plural, which are 'the nations' (*גּוֹיִם*) of v. 16. They will see the exodus of the people, the marvellous things of YHWH and they will be ashamed of all their might, they will not speak any more, they will not hear, they tremble and shall be in dread before YHWH. In this context the utterance 'they shall lick the dust like a serpent' indicates an attitude of humility; they stand in awe of the might of YHWH, and of his people. Their own strength is useless. The serpent that eats dust is explicitly used as expression of comparison for the attitude of humility among nations, which were once violent and hostile.

<sup>19</sup> In one verse, but not in the same sentence, this collocation can be found also in Gen 3,19 and Ps 78,27.

A meaning of 'licking dust' comparable to that in Micah 7,17 is found in Psalm 72,9 (וְאֹיְבָיו עִפְרוּ יַלְחֹכוּ): 'and his enemies lick the dust'. In the context it means awe for the righteous king, and it brings about an attitude of humility and awe (to bow down, to render tribute, to bring gifts, to fall down, to serve). Those who do the 'licking' in Psalm 72,9 are again the enemies (foes, the kings of Tarshish and of isles, the kings of Sheba and Seba, all kings, all nations). In Isa 49,22-23 'licking dust' has a comparable connotation. Here there is a description of how the nations shall carry the exiled people on their shoulder, and shall bring them back to Jerusalem. They shall bow down to Israel and '*lick the dust*' of their feet.

The expression 'lick the dust' refers to an attitude of humility of rulers and nations with regard to YHWH and his people. This expression contains an element of curse with regard to the nations, at the same time being a blessing for Israel. Applied to Isa 65,25 this would mean that the expression 'eating dust' is used to indicate an attitude of humility, and servility of an hostile group. This curse for the party that was once much stronger is at the same time a blessing for the weak party, although the weak party is not mentioned in v. 25c. This aspect is confirmed by the context: 'They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain' (65,25d).

We would like to suggest that the same meaning can be applied to Isa 65,25ab. The grazing of the wolf, the eating straw of the lion can be interpreted as curses for these predatory animals. At the same time these curses are blessings for the domesticated animals, the lamb and the ox. Grazing and eating straw is their sustenance, and moreover they are not endangered by the predatory animals any more. In a metaphorical way Isa 65,25 *continues the blessings* for the servants, described in vv. 17-24. The verse *recapitulates* the whole chapter, as well: the downfall of the wicked people in the judgement (vv. 1-16) entails the blessing for the servants (vv. 17-24).

Summarizing, it may be said that Isa 65,25 contains a framed quotation of Isa 11,6-9. This quotation recapitulates the text. The words of Isa 11,6-9 have been removed from their context, nevertheless they presuppose (indirectly) this context (11,3-5): the judgement of the poor and the meek with righteousness and the destruction of the wicked. Isa 65,25 is particularly interested in the aspect of eating. Only verbs with a connotation of 'eating' are taken up. With regard to the serpent the aspect of 'eating' is

added to the text. The meaning of Isa 11,6-9 is modified. It is not the harmony between the strong and the weak, which is the most important point In Isa 65,25, but the righteous judgement in which the curse for the strong will be a blessing for the weak.

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