ON JONAH'S TWO MISSIONS *

Jack M. Sasson,
The University of North Carolina

Jonah 1:2 reads:

קָוָה לָרָאָל-כְּנָנָה הַעֲרָי הַגְּדוֹלוֹת הַקְּרוֹא עַל-יִשְׁרָאֵל יָעֲשָׂה רָעָה לְפְנֵי

In III:2, however, it is stated:

כְּנָנָה הַעֲרָי הַגְּדוֹלוֹת הַקְּרוֹא עַל-יִשְׁרָאֵל יָעֲשָׂה רָעָה לְפְנֵי

Nearly all exegetes have noted that the Hebrew text, in all manuscripts, consistently distinguishes between the לָרָא in I:2 and לָא in III:2. Most scholars, however, opt to follow the LXX which carries little perceptible distinctions, in the meaning and consequences, between the sentences in which קרוא is לָא and לָא are basically interchangeable, especially in "late" Hebrew (see, lastly, Brenner, 1979:400). A few scholars, however, do offer differing translations but, as far as I can judge, do not draw any conclusions from the different renderings. Thus, Keil, 1888:283, objects strenuously to the oft-attested harmonization in meaning, but concludes only that in chapter I, Jonah is to warn of the need to do penance whereas in chapter III, he is to carry a more detailed program to the Ninevites. Magonet, 1976:25-6, suggests that a change in Jonah's prophetic status may be at stake: in the first mission, Jonah is given a free hand to preach (a rather surprising condition given the nature of the prophetic task, I should think), whereas in his second attempt, he is to carry a specific message. Other notions, yet similar in their range of suggestions, are offered by Levine, 1976:56, who relies on the Targum. In der Smitten, 1972:94 bases himself on a faulty understanding of God's objection in I:2 when he offers

* I would like to acknowledge N. Sarna's helpful critique of this note.
"und schreie zu ihr hin." This position has been rightly criticized by Wolff, 1977:73. Most often those who object to harmonized renderings in 1:2 and III:2 write in a vein that is decidedly equivocal. Note how Landes has recently put it (1982: *158):

"The fact that in 3:2 the author of Jonah employs נא in a verse that is consciously molded after 1:2 possibly suggests that no difference in meanings was intended between the two phrases, and בעבר is,..., simply a stylistic variant of נא... On the other hand, the possibility should perhaps not be ruled out that the author intended a somewhat stronger expression with בעבר in 1:2 than with נא in 3:2, because of the different content that follows each of these constructions. Thus, in 1:2, נא may have the sense of 'denounce' which選び in 3:2 clearly does not have."

However, while the interchange between נא and בעבר may indeed be available to biblical Hebrew, it needs to be shown that, firstly, such a promiscuity is available to Jonah. Here I can note that the verb選び which is elsewhere construed with בעבר when conveying the sense of "casting (out) upon something," in Jonah it is consistently used with נא with meanings which are not only subtly shaded, but able to carry, in one instance, at I:5, a hint of polemic against those who regard the Sea as a power in its own right. It also needs to be shown that, secondly, this interchange between נא and בעבר is independent of the verb which the proposition is guiding. Such an enterprise is beyond the purview of this note, but it is within its interest to assess its validity when the verb選び is at stake. For convenience's sake, such an inquiry will divide the material into two categories:

A.選び + pronominal suffix (without accusative complement).

1. I Kings XIII:2 (A prophet comes and)選び המlarından 'He 'condemned' the altar (at Bethel) on God's order as follows:..."

Note the consequences as given in v. 3: "This altar shall be broken up and the ashes upon it spilt" (Cf. also I Kings XIII:4,32.).

2. Deut. XV:9 (A rejected kinsman in need will be so dis
tressed) והרה עליך אלה-יוה "so that he condemns you before God." Note the con-
sequence: "and you will incur guilt"
(similarly Deut. XXIV:15.). See, fur-
ther, Exod. XXII:22-3 where God's re-
response to a similar appeal is regis-
tered: "I will put you to the sword,
etc..."

This usage of קריא על + pron. suffix + אלי + Divine name,
does have a parallel in an Aramaic text from Elephantine,
one which moreover does seem to register a substitution
על/על. In Cowley 7 (see, conveniently, Porten 1974: 124-5;
ibid., 1968:314-7; 156), a man protests his own innocence re-
garding a charge of burglary and invokes the god: אלמלכתי
אברה לשלו ותקאתל, "I, Milkiyah, do inform you(??) before
Herembethel" (Porten: "I Malchiyah shall call for you to He-
rembethel..."). This particular flexibility in the use of
preposition can certainly be attributed to Aramaic construc-
tions; it may also be that the construction is to be parsed
according to example A:2, discussed above, in which קריא על
+ pronominal suffix + verbum dicendi invokes the introduction
of an appeal.

B. קריא על with the meaning modified by nouns.

1. מגדור: Jer. XLIX:29. "and they
shall subject them (Kedar and Hasor) to an all-
embracing terror" (cf. also Lam. II:22).

2. מערד: Lam. I:15 קריא על
"(God) has called a con-
vocation/set a time against me, in which to crush
my elite."

3. ההוב: Jer. XXV:29. "For
I have set the sword against the earth's popula-
tion" (note the play on the same construction,
but in a different stem of the verb, in the same

4.独角兽: Ps. CV:16. רכזים על-עד
"He imposes famine
on the land, (destroying every staff of life)."

5. כות: II Chr. XX:3. (Jehosaphat feared the Arameans)
וכזו על-כ餅- çıkarוה "and he imposed a fast upon
the whole of Judah."

Lest it be thought that in the second category it is mere-
ly the noun in the accusative complement which is imposing
a meaning on the phrase at stake, it should be noted that a
few of these nouns (מָצַר,ְ, מָצֵר, וּמָצוֹר) can, on rare occasions, be attached directly to the verb קָרָא, but none ever does so when the idiom לְאֹתָהּ is involved. What these examples, therefore, show is that קָרָא can best be translated through the basic notion of "to impose an (unpleasant) fate upon something," albeit in a variety of nuances. In none of the citations offered above, moreover, could an approximate meaning obtain were one to substitute a לְאֹתָה קָרָא for קָרָא לְאֹתָהּ for.

The verb קָרָא, in its most basic of meanings, conveys the notion of "to voice a sound." But careful attention has to be paid to the way it is used in Jonah, for it regulates different substantives even as it uses different prepositions. We have the following attestations:

1. קָרָא לְאֹתָהּ (I:2) קָרָא לְאֹתָהּ
2. קָרָא לְאֹתָה (I:6) קָרָא לְאֹתָה
3. קָרָא על (III:2) קָרָא על
4. קָרָא על (III:3) קָרָא על
5. קָרָא (I:14) קָרָא (I:14)
6. קָרָא (III:8) קָרָא (III:8)

A surface analysis allows one to note that the examples with קָרָא in the imperative are addressed to Jonah, with a more immediate need to attend to the act when it comes from the רָבָּה (2b) than when it comes from God (1a, c; with מֵּאָה inserted between the imperatives). קָרָא is in the perfect when the subject is also Jonah (2d), in the imperfect when its subject is the sailors (2c) and the jussive when it is the Ninevites (2f). לְאֹתָה קָרָא is well known, of course, as a construction which expresses "praying, appealing" to a superior. In most cases, the appeal is directed to deities, in particular to God. In Jonah the examples in which such an appeal is made include one in which Jonah is urged to pray to his god by the רָבָּה (2b), one in which Jonah in fact does so, but when in the fish's belly (2d—I will not enter here on the integrity of the psalm within the prose sections), and finally, one in which the sailors and the Ninevites appeal to God (2e, f). Thus all of these particular usage of קָרָא are addressed to the Hebrew God. But these citations do not include the passages which initiated our study, and for this to be clarified, we need to inspect the compliment or the object which follows our idioms.

In III:2, a cognate accusative depends on קָרָא לְאֹתָה. The word is a hapax (latest discussion in Landes, 1982: 152*-153*), and its precise import can only be guessed at: from the context, from the clause that succeeds, as well as from
Jonah's speech to the Ninevites given a few verses later. The context allows us to think that God has a precise message, this time around, and this is made plausible by the following clause: "which I am about to tell you," where the *qal* participle of *דָּרֹן* indicates that information is about to be communicated (on this cf. *TWAT*, II, 103-4 - best parallel example in *Ex*. VI: 29; *Jer*. XXVIII:7; XXXVIII:20; *Dan*. X:11). Jonah's response to God's request is to go toward Nineveh and to proclaim "עָרֹת תָּיוּר יַעֲפָרָה" (III:4). Much ambiguity is met in this sentence, not so much because of the construction (which has a nice parallel in *Hag*. II:6), but because the *Niphal* of *קִסָּה* (BOB, q. v.) can be understood as either partaking of a passive sense (hence: "In forty more days, Nineveh will be overturned") or suggesting a reflexive meaning (hence: "In forty more days, Nineveh will change [inwardly] "). No doubt Jonah was sure that the first sense was at stake. Whatever interpretation is favoured, both by past as well as present audiences, it is nevertheless clear that the idiom לָא יַכְּרֵא עָרֹת (better perhaps the verb אֱרָת with the בְּ here used merely to introduce the indirect object) controls the delivery of some message which Jonah is to convey to the Ninevites. This is not the case within I:2 where אֱרָת יִדְּעַה is abruptly stopped by use of an *iynah*, leaving the following clause only to express God's reason for arriving at such a decision (and hardly one which Jonah was expected to communicate):

כִּי עָלָה אֲדֹנָה לְפָנֵי.

It is not always possible to distinguish on purely syntactical grounds between the various functions of *כ* whether it acts as an asseverative particle or as a subordinating conjunction. I have a slight preference for understanding it, in this context, as an emphatic. Avoiding now a decision on whether to treat the ב- suffixed to *לָא יַכְּרֵא* metonymically, or (a more cavalier approach) enclitically, I would translate: "Indeed, its/their wickedness has reached me." But an equally acceptable rendering would be "Because its/their wickedness has reached me." Totally unacceptable, however, would be a rendering where *כ* is made to introduce a direct speech (i.e. "... that its/their wickedness has reached me."). For, as was shown long ago by Zorell, 1933, and was recently concluded by Schoors, 1981:258-9 "the *כ* *recitativum*, as a specific syntactical category, should be deleted from grammars and dictionaries.

By virtue of this philological analysis, the Jonah of I:2, as contrasted from the one of III:2, can be regarded neither as a "forth" nor a "fore" teller, charged with a mission to warn or to elicit repentance. Rather, he was sent merely
to announce an impending disaster. In a way, the role that he fills in Jonah I cannot be differentiated from those of the angels sent to Sodom. The LXX, it is interesting to note, must have had this connection in mind since its account of the clause following וַיִּלְכֶּרֶב אֵלָי is obviously influenced by Gen. XVIII:20. But the Jonah of Chapter I is not to save anyone from among the wicked Ninevites; rather, he is to arrive at the scene, declare Nineveh's doom, and hope to escape scott free from the cataclysm, if not from the Ninevites' anger. We have Josephus's testimony that this reading of Jonah I:2 was available to Hellenistic Jewry, for he paraphrases our passage in Ant. IX, X, 208 as follows: "Having received an order to proceed to the kingdom of Ninos and to proclaim, upon his arrival to the city, that it would lose its hegemony [over Asia; cf. 214], (Jonah) got scared and instead of going there, he escaped God's presence into Jaffa..." Josephus's impression is shared by Tobit XIV:3-4, for there the protagonist's son escapes from Nineveh because Jonah (other mss: read Nahum) had announced its destruction. This understanding could hardly have arisen from reading the account in Chapter III and IV since that particular portion of the narrative deliberated upon God's mercy towards the Ninevites. Jerome, it seems, also shared that perspective, as Duval, 1973: 84 n. 75, points out.

With the above annotations in mind, I can now offer the following renderings for the passages in question:

I:1-3 (And) when God's word to Jonah, Amittay's son, was: "Set out for Nineveh, that big city, and declare doom upon it; indeed, its wickedness has reached me," Jonah, instead, decided to escape toward Tarshish...

III:1-3 When, once more, God's word to Jonah was: "Set out for Nineveh, that big city, and deliver to it the proclamation I am about to tell you," Jonah did set out for Nineveh in accordance with God's order...

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Presentato da J.A. Soggin

Résumé établi par la Rédaction

L'Auteur constate qu'on n'a pas encore trouvé une explication satisfaisante de la différente construction du verbe נرضى dans Jon. 1,2 (+ יִבְיָה) et 3,2 (+ יהו). Il ne s'agit pas d'une construction équivalente et une analyse des différents textes bibliques dans lesquels se trouve la construction נرضى יִבְיָה permet d'autre part d'isoler la notion fondamentale exprimée dans cet idiotisme: "imposer à quelque chose une desti-
née (négative)" tans que אלהי indique: "adresser une prière (un appel)" à quelqu'un qui est supérieur (tout parti-
culièrement à Dieu).

Dans Jon. 3,2 l'expression אלהי (disons mieux, le verbe אלהי suivi par אלה, introduisant le complément indirect) accom-
pagne simplement la consigne à Jonas d'un message pour les habitants de Ninive. Jon. 3,1-3 doit par conséquent être tra-
duit comme suit: "Lorsque de nouveau la parole de Dieu (a-
dressée) à Jonas fut: Pars pour Ninive, cette ville grande,
et annonce lui le proclame que je vais te communiquer, Jonas
partit pour Ninive; selon l'ordre de Dieu".

Par contre, à la lumière de l'examen précédent, compte te-
nu de l'absence sûre du מ recitativum dans la grammaire hébraïque, Jon. 1,1-3 doit être traduit comme suit: "(Et)
lorsque la parole de Dieu fut (adressée) à Jonas, fils d' Amittay, (en ces termes): Pars pour Ninive, cette ville gran-
de, et annonce lui la ruine; en vérité sa dépravation est ar-
rivée jusqu'à moi, Jonas au contraire décidait de s'échapper
vers Tarchish".