GARRETT GALVIN

Egypt as a Place of Refuge

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In Memoriam
Attracta Joan Galvin (1942–2009)

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Sigla

In addition to the sigla found in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* style sheet, I will use these sigla as well:

ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
ANE	Ancient Near East
BRS	The Biblical Resource Series
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
EDB	*Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Ed. by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.
OAN	Oracles Against the Nations
TLOT	*Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Trans. Mark E. Biddle. Ed. by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.

Chapter 1

Introduction

I. Introduction

Egypt has fascinated both scholars and lay audiences from ancient times to the present. Although Scripture usually refers to Egypt as a place of bondage, Egypt also plays a role as a place of refuge for a number of prominent biblical individuals. Because Egypt's role as a place of refuge has been largely overlooked, the scholarly literature, especially the many published histories of biblical Israel, frequently misconstrues Egypt's role within Israelite history. This chapter will survey the history of refuge in the ANE and the relationship between Israel and Egypt with reference to prior scholarship. Since refuge can give the political refugee some leverage and possibly an alternative route back to power, the idea of refuge as a state of liminality with the possibility of status elevation will be examined. This chapter concludes with a statement concerning the purpose and method of this dissertation.

This topic covers the time period from the Late Bronze Age to the Greco-Roman period. The Late Bronze Age has evidence for only a trickle of refugees who manage to cross boundaries successfully. Evidence exists only of high-status individuals finding refuge in foreign countries. The Iron Age begins with a similar reality, as we only hear of high-status individuals in the Old Testament finding refuge in foreign countries. A new situation presents itself towards the end of the Iron Age in the Book of Jeremiah. Rather than only royal figures seeking refuge, a prophet (Uriah) now emerges who wants refuge in Egypt (Jer 26:21). The Book of Jeremiah ends with a large band of individuals successfully seeking refuge in Egypt. Migration becomes commonplace in the Greco-Roman period. The period can even be seen as a time of mass migration. More Jews now live outside the Holy Land than in Israel.

II. Selective Review of Literature

A. Refuge and Refugees in the Ancient World

The earliest major figure of ANE literature associated with refuge and flight is Sinuhe (ca. 1956–1911 BCE). His story has a number of elements that will continually surface throughout this dissertation. "The tale of Sinuhe reaches beyond the frame of ancient Egypt: the hero finds himself in a kind of 'exile' in foreign territories, although he left Egypt of his own accord."[1] Sinuhe becomes a high-status refugee who settled in Syria after events in Egypt led him to fear for his own safety. Flight allows high-status refugees like Sinuhe to preserve their honor in the competitive world of ANE honor-shame society. The fact that flight ultimately appears to involve a round-trip journey in many of these instances, as the refugee uses flight as a way to preserve his status in a time of crisis, needs further investigation.

The issue of refuge and refugees remained important throughout ANE history and continues to be an area of controversy today. The clearest evidence of its importance can be seen in the legislation dealing with the issue. First, the Code of Hammurabi legislates the return of low-status refugees.[2] Class appears to have played the greatest role in determining the success of a fugitive's search for refuge, according to Mario Liverani.[3] Second, the Hittite and Egyptian empires use treaty provisions to ensure control over both low and high-status refugees.[4] Raymond Westbrook has

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[1] Miroslav Bárta, *Sinuhe, the Bible, and the Patriarchs* (Prague: Set out, 2003) 273.

[2] J. J. Stamm, "Fremde, Flüchtlinge und ihr Schutz im Alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt," in *Der Flüchtling in der Weltgeschichte: Ein ungelöstes Problem der Menschheit* (ed. André Mercier; Bern: Herbert Lang, 1974) 46: "Der Kodex Hammurabi enthält außerdem zwei Bestimmungen (§§ 30 und 31) über die Flucht eines Lehenspflichtigen."

[3] Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1660–1100 B.C.* (Studies in Diplomacy; New York: Palgrave, 2001) 69: "In a hierarchical society in which everyone 'belongs' to somebody else, the fate of refugees is generally dictated by the interests of their owners. This is especially true for runaway slaves: not only are the procedures for delivery formalized but the amount of the reward to be paid is specified as well. This is a long way from any concern for moral judgment or rules of hospitality. As for 'political' refugees, they are used as an item of exchange between two kings, both concerned with their own strategy. The refugee is not protected by his present circumstances but by past events or future possibilities."

[4] Stamm, "Flüchtlinge," 46: "Für die Flucht von Freien und von Sklaven ließen sich auch aus der damaligen Briefliteratur Belege beibringen, die wir aber übergehen. Dafür können wir eine andere Literaturform nicht unberücksichtigt lassen. Das sind die altorientalischen und besonders die hethitischen Staatsverträge, die regelmäßig Bestimmungen über Flüchtlinge enthalten. Bei einem Vertrag zwischen gleichgestellten Herrschern, wie es der berühmte Staatsvertrag zwischen dem Hethiterkönig Chattušili III und dem Pharao Ramses II vom Jahre 1270 v. Chr ist, verpflichten sich die Partner, die ge-

further explored the Hittite empire's policy regarding refuge in "Personal Exile in the Ancient near East."[5] Westbrook makes many connections between Hittite and Mittani history and some of the stories of refuge in the OT. These examples demonstrate the ongoing importance of the refugee issue in the ANE. Daniel Snell's *Flight and Freedom in the Ancient Near East* offers the fullest treatment of this topic. Snell's emphasis is on freedom as seen in his interest in runaway slaves[6] and mass flight,[7] whereas in my project I focus on individual flight and successful refugees who are almost always high-status individuals. At the same time, Snell's project has a much wider ANE scope than mine, as can be inferred from his title. Although both Westbrook and Snell examine the OT, they do not treat it nearly as comprehensively as I do. The OT stories of flight need further focused study.

The (non) historical nature of ANE flight stories has sparked much debate in the literature. Although most have recognized Sinuhe as fictitious, the story of Idrimi has occasioned more controversy. Van de Mieroop's description of Idrimi as a "fairy tale" marks one extreme,[8] while Greenstein's contention that there "was an Idrimi, king of Alalakh, and we have a contemporary treaty between him and Pilliya, king probably of Kizzuwatna"[9] another. Van de Mieroop's work is also significant as it highlights the importance of genre questions for understanding these flight narratives, a point made for Idrimi by scholars such as Sasson[10] and Snell.[11]

A further development of the nature of ANE flight concerns the imperial ambitions of Egypt and the role that offering refuge played in those am-

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genseitigen Flüchtlinge festzunehmen und an den Heimatstaat auszuliefern. Im weiteren setzen die beiden Parteien fest, daß dem in seine Heimat Ausgelieferten für seine bisherigen Delikte Straffreiheit gewährt werde."

[5] Raymond Westbrook, "Personal Exile in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 128 (2008), 317.

[6] Daniel C. Snell, *Flight and Freedom in the Ancient Near East* (CHANE 8; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 33.

[7] Ibid., 58.

[8] Marc van de Mieroop, *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II* (Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2007) 17.

[9] Edward Greenstein, "Autobiographies in Ancient Western Asia," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; New York: Scribner, 1995) 2424. He later goes on to say (ibid.): "It would be no accident, then, that the last of Idrimi's achievements that the inscription commemorates is his restoration of the cultic rites of Alalakh . . . ."

[10] Jack M. Sasson, "On Idrimi and Sarruwa, the Scribe," in *Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians: In Honor of Ernest R. Lacheman on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday April 29, 1981* (ed. M. A. Morrison and D. I. Owen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 315.

[11] Snell, *Flight and Freedom*, 108–10.

bitions. This is a very difficult question because of the impossibility of establishing a coherent state policy for Egypt. The very question of state confounds as Egypt often refers to itself as the two lands of Upper and Lower Egypt, also further underscored in the development of the Egyptian language.[12] Two recent books show the difficulties in trying to understand a policy toward refugees. As mentioned earlier, the default position seems to be represented in the Code of Hammurabi where low-status refugees are returned to their homeland. From an internal perspective, no tolerance existed for those running away from forced labor within Egypt.[13] Political refugees appear to be a rare category as Egyptian law generally categorized those fleeing as slaves, serfs, and dependents.[14] Finally, a category does exist for those fleeing debt.[15] We see a concern and leniency within Egyptian law for flight from debt, but no leniency for flight from hard labor and no category for political flight.

Another important factor concerning Egyptian imperial ambitions involves the attitude of Egyptians towards foreigners. As my study is limited to the first millennium, it is to be noted that the presence of foreigners in Egypt at this time was generally negative since the foreign presence was generally limited to foreign military.[16] The general attitude towards foreigners was negative.[17] Throughout Egyptian history, we sense a strong element of superiority over the other nations. The kings of Egypt married foreign princesses, but they did not allow their daughters to be married to

[12] Robert K. Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period* (SBL Writings from the Ancient World 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009) 4: "The political division of the country under Libyan rule did allow the chancellery styles of north and south to develop in divergent ways, leading to the Demotic language and script in the former and 'abnormal hieratic' in the latter."

[13] Sandra Lippert, *Einführung in die Altägyptische Rechtsgeschichte* (Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie 5; Münster: LIT, 2008) 35: "Die Flucht aus dem Frondienst wurde bestraft, möglicherweise mit lebenslanger Zwangsarbeit."

[14] Ibid., 55.

[15] Ibid., 110: "Vor Schuldhaft konnte man sich durch Flucht an eine Asylstätte (meist Heiligtümer) schützen, weshalb sich Gestellungsbürgen verpflichten mussten, dies zu verhindern."

[16] Günther Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden im ersten vorchristlichen Jahrtausend* (Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt 97; Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 2003) 239: "Daß die Präsenz der Fremden im Ägypten des 1. Jahrtausends zum überwiegenden Teil militärische Hintergründe hat – sei es daß die Fremden als herrschende Klasse auftraten (Libyer, Perser), sei es, daß sie als Kriegsgefangene oder von den Assyrern Deportierte ins Land kamen, und sei es schließlich, daß sie als Söldner, Waffenschmiede oder Händler zur Versorgung der Söldner etc. tätig waren –, ist zunächst als Faktum zu konstatieren."

[17] Ibid., 244: "Man war von der eigenen kulturellen Überlegenheit überzeugt und liebte die Fremden nicht sonderlich, aber man verfolgte sie normalerweise auch nicht."

foreigners.[18] Consequently, in the case of Solomon marrying the daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kgs 3:1; 11:1), this may reflect a different view. Not surprisingly, biblical sources portray Egypt quite differently than the Egyptians portray themselves.

The OT further contributes to an understanding of ANE refugees and their stories. I suggest that the best way to understand refuge and refugees in the OT is through an examination of its vocabulary of flight. The OT uses verbs like נוס, ברח, and מלט in its stories of flight, verbs that do not appear as frequently in stories of diaspora and criminal asylum. Although philological studies of these words exist, the theme of flight has only rarely been treated.[19] Accordingly, I will engage in a comprehensive philological treatment of this terminology throughout the OT. Among others, the stories about David, Absalom, and Adonijah use this language of flight, and an understanding of this language's usage adds to our appreciation of their stories. A comprehensive philological examination of the vocabulary of flight will highlight the importance of the literary aspects of the OT's flight stories.

B. The Egypt-Israel Relationship

This study differs considerably from many other treatments of the relationship between Egypt and Israel. Rather than try to deal with every aspect of the relationship between Egypt and Israel,[20] I focus on one element of this much broader picture, as do a number of other important recent studies.[21]

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[18] Trevor Bryce, *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age* (London: Routledge, 2003) 108–9: "Traffic in brides when Egypt was involved was very much a one-way process The pharaoh was always willing to receive foreign brides of suitable status into his own household, but never countenanced the export of Egyptian princesses to the households of his royal brothers. It was an established tradition to which there could be no exception. . . . it was a case of pharaonic hubris, of maintaining the pharaoh's self-assumed image as the senior member of the club of royal brothers. For a foreign ruler to send one of his daughters to the Egyptian court as a bride for the pharaoh with no prospect of receiving an Egyptian princess in return was an implicit acknowledgement of the pharaoh's superior status, at least to the Egyptian way of thinking."

[19] Ernst Jenni, "'Fliehen' im Akkadischen und im Hebräischen Sprachgebrauch," *Orientalia* 47 (1978) 351–59.

[20] For a comprehensive discussion of the Israel-Egypt relationship, see Manfred Görg, *Die Beziehungen zwischen dem alten Israel und Ägypten: Von den Anfängen bis zum Exil* (ErFor 290; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997).

[21] See, e.g., John Huddlestun, "Who Is This That Rises Like the Nile? A Comparative Study of the River Nile in Ancient Egypt and the Hebrew Bible" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1995); Paul Ash, *David, Solomon and Egypt: A Reassessment* (JSOTSup 297; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); F. V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map: Constructing Biblical Israel's Identity* (JSOTSup 361; Lon-

My focus will be Egypt as a place of refuge. Numerous scholars have addressed this role; some have focused on the positive aspects of their relationship[22], but most accentuate the dominant and negative motif.[23] At the same time, this limited approach will allow me to develop some important themes for coming to a better understanding of that broader picture. Without further major discoveries, we may have reached the limits of what a strictly historical approach can tell us about the relationship between Egypt and Israel.[24] Whereas most previous studies have used a historical framework to understand their relationship, I will pay more explicit attention to the question of genre. I believe much work remains to be done on incorporating insights from literary criticism into the overall picture of Israel's relationship with Egypt.

Studies about the relationship between Egypt and Israel have traditionally attempted to examine the relationship comprehensively. One of the pivotal books addressing this relationship is Donald Redford's *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*.[25] Redford offers an almost biblically literal representation of the Israelite monarchic period, even though he acknowledges that "the author of 1–2 Kings has produced his work from the

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don: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Kevin Wilson, *The Campaign of Pharaoh Shosheng I into Palestine* (FAT II 9; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

[22] M. Cogan, "The Other Egypt: A Welcome Asylum," in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran* (ed. M. Fox, V. Hurowitz, et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996) 66; P. de Boer, "Egypt in the Old Testament: Some Aspects of an Ambivalent Assessment," in *Selected Studies in Old Testament Exegesis* (OTS 27; ed. C. van Duin; Leiden: Brill, 1991) 158; R. Kessler, "The Threefold Image of Egypt in the Hebrew Bible," *Scriptura* 90 (2005) 883; R. E. Friedman, "From Egypt to Egypt: Dtr^1 and Dtr^2," in *Traditions in Transformation: Festschrift Honoring Frank Moore Cross* (ed. B. Halpern and D. Levenson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981) 189.

[23] I list just a few examples as this motif is pretty dominant in many commentaries. George W. Coats, *From Canaan to Egypt: Structural and Theological Context for the Joseph Story* (CBQ Monograph Series 4; Washington: CBA, 1976) 90; J. Jackson, "Jeremiah 46: Two Oracles on Egypt," *HBT* 15 (1993) 136; G. Keown, *Jeremiah 26–52* (WBC 27; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1995) 283; M. Maier, *Ägypten – Israels Herkunft und Geschick: Studie über einen theo-politischen Zentralbegriff im hebräischen Jeremiabuch* (ÖBS 21; Bern: Peter Lang, 2002) 28.

[24] Marc Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (London: Routledge, 1995) 3: "More than fifty pages of review articles on Miller and Hayes [*A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006)] were published in a leading journal [concerning the 1st ed. in *JSOT* 39 (1987) 3–63], most of which questioned the working assumptions of the authors in their attempt to recreate the ancient Israelite past. Many reviewers wondered if a history of Israel could be written or is worth writing. . . . This is the first time that the publication of such a volume evoked such questions."

[25] Donald Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

vantage point of a much later age. . . ."[26] Redford demonstrates keen awareness of the importance of genre at some points of his study,[27] but elsewhere seems to disregard genre issues as he develops the conventional understanding of Israel's history also seen in earlier articles by Abraham Spalinger[28] and Abraham Malamat.[29] More recent studies of the Israelite monarchic period by Bernd Schipper[30] as well as Anson Rainey and R. Notley[31] also embrace the conventional understanding.

Certain contemporary scholars have come to appreciate a more variegated picture of Egypt in the OT. Some recent German scholarship has emphasized the need to view Egypt in the OT in a more positive light than simply a "house of bondage," by noting the many times that Egypt in the OT serves as a refuge for Israel.[32] Spanish scholarship also helps us to understand Egypt as a place of refuge through its studies of 1 Kings and Jeremiah.[33] Accordingly, I shall now focus on important previous discussions of these two biblical books (along with 2 Maccabees) in reference to Egypt as a place of refuge.

1 Kings' image of Egypt conflicts with the dominant biblical image of Egypt as a "house of slavery." When trying to understand Hadad and Jero-

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[26] Ibid., 320.

[27] Ibid., 423: "the nine or so chapters that comprise the Joseph story show all the earmarks of a *composition*, rather than a *record*. . . . It shares with other Egyptian and Near Eastern stories of the same genre a number of specific characteristics. As in folktales and wisdom there is a preference for the generic 'god' as opposed to the name of the deity, and proper nouns are likewise avoided."

[28] Anthony Spalinger, "Egypt and Babylonia: A Survey (c. 620 B.C.–550 B.C.)," *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 5 (1977) 228–44.

[29] Abraham Malamat, "The Twilight of Judah: In the Egyptian-Babylonian Maelstrom," in *Congress Volume Edinburgh 1974* (ed. G. Anderson et al.; VTSup 28; Leiden: Brill, 1975) 123–45.

[30] Bernd Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten in der Königszeit: Die kulturellen Kontakte von Salomo bis zum Fall Jerusalems* (OBO 170; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999) 236. Schipper does offer a more careful and nuanced view of the conventional history than do other scholars in the above group.

[31] Anson Rainey and R. S. Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006) 259.

[32] Rainer Kessler, "The Threefold Image of Egypt in the Hebrew Bible," *Scriptura* 90 (2005) 883.

[33] Julio Trebolle Barrera, *Salomon y Jeroboan: Historia de la Recension de 1 Reyes 2–12, 14* (Bibliotheca Salmanticensis Dissertationes 3; Salamanca: Universidad Pontifica, 1980); L. Alonso Schökel, "Jeremías Como Anti-Moisés," in *De la Tôrah au Messie: Études d'exégèse et d'herméneutique bibliques offertes à Henri Cazelles pour ses 25 années d'enseignement à L'institut Catholique de Paris (Octobre 1979)* (eds. J. Doré, M. Carrez, and P. Grelot; Paris: Desclée, 1981) 245–54; J. Abrego, *Jeremías y el Final del Reino: Lectura sincrónica de Jer 36–45* (Estudios del Antiguo Testamento 3; Valencia: Institución San Jerónimo, 1983).

boam's success in finding refuge in Egypt, scholars point to the similar success attributed to Abraham and Joseph in Genesis.[34] We meet the limits of a purely historical approach when we try to understand the story of Jeroboam's taking refuge in Egypt. Edelman convincingly argues that we can better understand this story when we see Jeroboam's fellow refugee Hadad the Edomite as a fictional "bad guy" rather than an historical figure.[35] Close examination of the various LXX text-forms of 1 Kgs 11:14–12:24 reveals discrepancies about lesser characters and toponyms that suggest the literary nature of the story as opposed to a reproduction of concrete, historical facts.[36] Most of the commentaries dealing with this material are not sufficiently sensitive to its literary nature, which leaves room for a fresh examination of 1 Kgs 11:14–12:24.

The Book of Jeremiah's use of Egypt as a place of refuge involves a number of different levels. Like 1 Kgs 11:14–12:24, the Book of Jeremiah features differences between the MT and the LXX, attention to which will help illuminate Egypt as a place of refuge in the book. At the literary level, we find strong indications of Jeremiah as an anti-Moses who must make the Exodus journey in reverse.[37] Both the Baruch Narrative (Jeremiah 36–45)[38] and the two poems of Jeremiah 46 feature a sustained focus on Egypt as a place of refuge. Their literary allusions to Egypt, usually using Exodus motifs, offer a constant attack on Egypt as a bad place for refuge. These literary allusions contrast with the reality of Jews going to Egypt for refuge elsewhere in the book. The dominant literary framework found within the

[34] Rainer Kessler, *Die Ägyptenbilder der hebräischen Bibel: Ein Beitrag zur neueren Monotheismusdebatte* (SBS 197; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002) 141: "Das kann aber nur so interpretiert werden, dass unabhängig von aller Erinnerung an Sklaverei und Exodus auch danach Ägypten noch ungefragt als das Land der Zuflucht in Frage kommt, das es auch schon für Abraham sowie Josef und seine Sippe war."

[35] Diana Edelman, "Solomon's Adversaries Hadad, Rezon, and Jeroboam: A Trio of 'Bad Guy' Characters Illustrating the Theology of Immediate Retribution," in *The Pitcher Is Broken: Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström* (JSOTSup 197; ed. S.W. Holloway and L. K. Handy; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 190: "It does not appear that the writer derived his knowledge of either Hadad or Rezon from sources dating to Solomon's reign; both rulers seem to be fictional 'bad guys' created so that Solomon would suffer for his apostasy. . . . The fictitious nature of the Hadad tradition is further reinforced by the lack of archaeological evidence for the existence of the state of Edom in the late tenth century BCE."

[36] Marvin A. Sweeney, "A Reassessment of the Masoretic and Septuagint Versions of the Jeroboam Narratives in 1 Kings/3 Kingdoms 11–14," *JSJ* 38 (2007) 189; T. Willis, "The Text of 1 Kings 11:43–12:3," *CBQ* 53 (1991) 43.

[37] Alonso Schökel, "Jeremías Como Anti-Moisés," 247: "Volver a Egipto es desandar el camino del éxodo, es repetir una de las viejas *rebeliones en el desierto* [his italics]."

[38] Abrego, *Jeremías y el Final del Reino,* 12: "Pero existe, a juicio de los comentaristas, una unidad especial que nosotros fijamos entre los *capítulos 36–45*, aun conscientes de que el límite inferior varía en las posturas de los diferentes exegetas."