

Copyright Notice

Staff and students of this University are reminded that copyright subsists in this extract and the work from which it was taken. This Digital Copy has been made under the terms of a CLA Licence which allows you to:

- Access and download a copy
- Print out a copy

This Digital Copy and any digital or printed copy supplied to or made by you under the terms of this Licence are for use in connection with this module or course of study. You may retain such copies after the end of the course, but strictly for your own personal use.

All copies (including electronic copies) shall include this Copyright Notice and shall be destroyed and/or deleted if and when required by the University.

Except as provided for by copyright law, no further copying, storage or distribution (including by e-mail) is permitted without the consent of the copyright holder.

The author (which term includes artists and other visual creators) has moral rights in the work and neither staff nor students may cause, or permit, the distortion, mutilation or other modification of the work, or any other derogatory treatment of it, which would be prejudicial to the honour or reputation of the author.

Title of extract: **The Nature of the Prophetic Books (continued)**

Name of Author: **Rofe, A.**

Title/Author of book/edition (if applicable): **Introduction to the Prophetic Literature. Rofe, A.**

Name of Visual Creator or other acknowledgement (if applicable):

Journal details –title/Vol/Year (if applicable):

Publisher: **Sheffield Academic Press**

Pages scanned: **26 - 40**

Course of Study (Module name and number): **The Book of Isaiah TRDL7050**

Name of Designated Person
authorising scanning:

E. L. Ham

Date authorised: 18.07.13

Moodle/Powerpoint

Chapter 2

THE NATURE OF THE PROPHETIC BOOKS (CONTINUED)

1. *Secondary Expansion of Prophetic Speeches*

The wish to 'update' the prophecies, that is to say, to find in them an answer to the problems current in later generations, led not only to a reworking of existing prophecies, but also to their expansion. The distinct character of these additions makes them stand out against the original prophecies; they are thus easily discernible, especially so in those cases in which the original prophecies themselves were committed to writing without being edited. Secondary expansion obtains in most of the prophetic books. In order to study it and understand the degree of its extension I shall adduce samples from four different books.

Jer. 22.6-9 is a prophecy which contains both original and interpolated elements:

⁶For thus said the Lord concerning the royal house of Judah: [title]

'You are as Gilead to Me,

As the summit of Lebanon

I swear, I will make you a desert,

Uninhabited towns,

⁷I will appoint destroyers against you,

Each with his tools;

They shall cut down your choicest cedars

And fell them into the fire.

⁸And when many nations pass by this city and one man asks another, "Why did the Lord do thus to that great city?" ⁹the reply will be, "Because they forsook the covenant with the Lord their God and worshipped other gods and served them".

Several arguments point to vv. 6-7 as the original prophecy, to which vv. 8-9 were appended. First, the transition from poetry into prose. The poetry, vv. 6-7, is rhythmical with 3||2 beats, the first dactyl has

three stresses, the second, two. This is fairly common in biblical poetry, known as the 'dirge rhythm', though it is not reserved for that genre only. With all the good will in the world vv. 8-9 cannot be forced into this rhythm. They read as prose. Another feature characteristic of poetry is its figurative language: the king's house is likened to a cedar forest at the summit of the Lebanon—the forest is invaded by destroyers who by means of axes cut down the cedars and throw them into the fire. This image may resound as an echo of the appellation 'Lebanon Forest House' applied to the royal palace which was constructed of rows of cedar columns (1 Kgs 7.1-6). In vv. 8-9 there are no more images, no Lebanon nor cedars, no demolishers nor fire.

Moreover, vv. 6-7 depict the king's household; his sons, the royal princes, are likened to cedars. However, in vv. 8-9 the royal family is forgotten, the nations refer to 'this city', 'this large city' (v. 8). Finally: this pattern of question and answer, the nations' astonishment on seeing the horrible destruction, the reply stating the city's idolatry as cause thereof, all these are not in Jeremiah's vein. This is a Deuteronomistic style which we find, with minor changes, in two additional passages originating in the Deuteronomistic school.¹

All nations will ask, 'Why did the Lord do this to this land? Wherefore that awful wrath?' They will be told: 'Because they forsook the Covenant that the Lord, God of their fathers, made with them when He freed them from the Land of Egypt; they turned to the service of other gods and worshipped them, gods whom they had not experienced and whom He had not allotted to them' (Deut. 29.23-25).

And as for this House, it will become ruins, everyone passing by it shall be appalled and shall hiss. And when they ask, 'why did the Lord do thus to the land and to this House?' they shall be told: 'It is because they forsook the Lord their God who freed them from the land of Egypt, and they embraced other gods and worshipped them and served them; therefore the Lord has brought all this calamity upon them' (1 Kgs 9.8-9).

Again we see that the interpolator supplied a justification for the final destruction, this time adducing idolatry as the cause. We have already seen that he too, like the one in 21.1-7, wrote in the Deuteronomistic style. We can thus infer that at a certain point in their transmission Jeremiah's words passed through the hands—or the mouths—of

1. Cf. B.O. Long, 'Two Questions and Answer Schemata in the Prophets', *JBL* 90 (1971), pp. 129-39

Deuteronomistic authors or transmitters.²

I now turn to the book of Ezekiel. In Ezek. 34.1-16 there is a prophecy against the shepherds. These shepherds are the kings of Israel; their flock, the people. Now, the shepherds looked only after their own interests, exploited the flock, tended themselves, and neglected their duties as shepherds; as a result the sheep scattered all over and fell prey to wild beasts. The meaning of the parable, not spelled out, but implied, is that the kings neglected their people. The kings did not function as judges and leaders. The nation suffered from anarchy and oppressing enemies. Verse 13 stands out in introducing a distinct theme, exile. The Lord decides to interfere. He will dismiss the shepherds from tending the flock (v. 10), that is to say, he will discontinue human kingship. From now on he himself will tend the flock (v. 15). He shall be the sole king of Israel, and the nation will revive (v. 16a). The prophet, here, very clearly expresses the anticipation of the Kingdom of God that is to replace the human; there is no doubt that Ezekiel condemns the kings of Israel of his time, the Davidic kings.

In 34.17-24, the tables are turned. The subject is still the flock, but there is no mention of the shepherds' sin of neglect. Strong sheep, rams and bucks push and butt the feeble ones, 'until you scattered them abroad' (v. 21). But the Lord will interfere, he will arbitrate between the animals (v. 22) and appoint them a single shepherd to tend them: his servant David (v. 23). In other words, the Lord will be their God, and David shall be a *našî'* among them (v. 24). Since *našî'* in the book of Ezekiel is an appellation of the king—though limited in his authority—there is no doubt that the author anticipates a renewal of kingship. The picture here is an altogether different one: the sinners are no longer the shepherds (the kings), but the mighty ones from among the flock (the aristocracy); their sin is not neglect of the flock, but violence and oppression which cause the destitute to flee the country (v. 21). The major difference, however, is in the solution: the Lord will not be the shepherd, but David. The ideal is not the Kingdom of God, but the return of an ideal king. We may conclude that the author of 34.17-24, who in any case ascribed the nation's affliction to a different cause, altogether contradicts the anti-monarchical stand of the author of 34.1-16.

2. In this argumentation I followed my teacher, the late I.L. Seeligmann; cf. also, R.P. Carroll, *Jeremiah, a Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1986), pp. 420-22.

If it is assumed that the shepherds' parable in Ezek. 34.1-16 is in the main by the prophet himself, we shall have to infer that vv. 17-24, which follow it, are not. They seem to be from the pen of one of his pupils. His very expectation of the return of David teaches us about the milieu of this pupil. The following texts should be compared:

Ezek. 34.23-24: Then I will appoint a single shepherd over them to tend them, My servant David. He shall tend them, he shall be a shepherd to them. I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David shall be a prince among them—I the Lord have spoken.

Ezek. 37.24-25: My servant David shall be king over them; there shall be one shepherd for all of them... thus they shall remain in the land... with My servant David as their *prince* for all time.

Hos. 3.5: Afterwards, the Israelites will turn back and will seek the Lord their God and David their king...

Jer. 30.8-9: In that day declares the Lord of Hosts—I will break his yoke from off your neck and I will rip off your bonds. Strangers shall no longer put him to labour instead they shall serve the Lord their God and David the king whom I will raise up for them.

The comparison teaches us, that the author who expects the revival of David does not belong to the first generation of the prophet's pupils—who merely transmitted the words of one master—but to the circle of scribes who edited several of the prophetic books. That is to say, this redactor was active during the Second Commonwealth. He updated the prophetic words which he was editing according to the realities of his days. Ezekiel had spoken about the affliction caused by the kings; the redactor supplemented it with the hardship of his own generation, the injuries done by the aristocracy which impoverished the people, causing them to leave their fields and homes for foreign lands. This situation recalls Nehemiah's severe reprimand of the nobles and the prefects for laying heavy burdens on the common folk (Neh. 5). This was the reality in the mid-fifth century BCE, one hundred and twenty years after the end of Ezekiel's activity. Against this background, we understand the yearning of the editor, in the days of the Persian Empire, for David to come back and rule Israel. David will put an end to the oppression in the land of Judah (Ezek. 34.23-24), David will unite Judah and Israel (Ezek. 37.24-25); David will break the yoke of strangers who enslave the nation imposing heavy

taxes and hard labour (Jer. 30.8-9).³

That being so, Ezekiel 34 may serve as a guideline in separating the words of Ezekiel son of Buzi from the expansions made by the scribes who reworked his book, sometimes as long as several generations later.⁴

Hos. 2.18-22 is another example of an edition which expands and supplements the words of the prophet. In this case, as we shall see, the addition was not appended at the end of the original pericope, but was interpolated into its text:

¹⁸And in that day—declares the Lord—

You will call [Me] Ishi,

And no more will you call Me Baali.

¹⁹For I will remove the names of the Baalim from her mouth

And they shall nevermore be mentioned by name.

²⁰In that day, I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, the birds of the skies, and the creeping things of the ground; I will also banish bow, sword and war from the land. Thus I will let them lie down in safety.

²¹And I will espouse you forever:

I will espouse you with righteousness and justice,

And with goodness and mercy,

And I will espouse you with faithfulness;

Then you shall be devoted to the Lord.

Verses 19-20 are secondary. In the first place, note the change of pronouns. In vv. 18, 21, 22 the speaker is the Lord who turns to Israel in the second person feminine: 'You will call...will you call...I will espouse you... I will espouse you... I will espouse you...and you shall be devoted...' As against this v. 19 starts with the third person feminine: 'from her mouth' which gives way to the third plural masculine: 'they shall not mention⁵ their names' and then 'a covenant for them... I will let them lie'. Yet, the change in grammatical person is not enough of a guideline in historico-literary criticism. Much more decisive is the analysis of the imagery. In vv. 18, 21-22 the relations between the Lord and Israel are likened to the bond between husband and wife, the

3. This reality is reflected in Neh. 9.36-37 and probably in Lam. 5.13 as well.

4. The secondary origin of Ezek. 34.17-31 has been upheld by G.A. Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1960 [1936]), pp. 373, 376-77, in the wake of former scholars.

5. Meaning 'take an oath'; cf. e.g. 2 Sam. 14.11, 'Let the king mention the Lord your God...' And he said: 'As the Lord lives...'

husband taking back his wife. From now on she will not call him 'Baali' but 'Ishi', he will once more make her his own, this time, however, not by paying money or goods, but 'by means of righteousness and justice ... faithfulness'.⁶ This will be the brideprice the Lord pays his bride Israel. No need to say that vv. 19-20 break up the continuity of this image.

In the simile, Hosea says 'You will call Me "Ishi", and no more will you call me "Baali"'. The words carry a double meaning: figuratively, we have the implication of a new, closer, relationship between husband and wife; and literally, from now on the Lord will no longer be equated with Baal. It appears that this equation was well-established for generations, and lies at the root of names such as Eshbaal, Meribbaal and Beeliada in the houses of Saul and David (1 Chron. 8.33-34; 14.7). This is an example *par excellence* of the phenomenon called syncretism: the fusion of several deities with each other, while transferring characteristics from one to the other. On the face of it, v. 19 seems to continue v. 18: the vocabulary of naming persists ('you will call me...from her mouth...by name')—but not so. A radically different idea is introduced here: not syncretism of the Lord and Baal, but the worship of 'Baalim' (in the plural) which means the veneration of idols separate and antithetical to the Lord God of Israel. The tendency of the addition is quite clear: the author of v. 19 missed in the primary text an explicit pronouncement against idolatry and therefore interpolated it into a passage which had heralded the termination of syncretism.

It is harder to understand how v. 20 found its way into this pericope. In my opinion the clue is in the fact that matrimonial relations were, on occasion, regarded as a covenant—Ezek. 16.8, 59-62; Mal. 2.14. This is what the author of v. 20 meant to say: the renewal of the covenant between the Lord and Israel would entail yet another covenant, namely between Israel and the beasts of the field and birds of the skies. This verse shows a striking similarity with Ezek. 34.25:

And I will grant them a covenant of friendship. I will banish vicious beasts from their land, and they shall lie secure in the wasteland, they shall even sleep in the woodland.

6. For this interpretation, cf. W.R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905), *ad loc.*; H.L. Ginsberg, 'Studies in Hosea 1-3', *Y. Kaufmann Jubilee Volume* (ed. M. Haran; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1960), pp. 50-69, esp. pp. 56-57, n. 21.

It may well be that the same disciple of Ezekiel who made the marginal additions to the prophecy of the shepherds (it is hardly conceivable that the words following the addition in 34.17-24 are again Ezekiel's own) also reworked the beginning of the book of Hosea; specially if we bear in mind the common expectation of David's future return, which we found in Hos. 3.5, Ezek. 34.23-24, and in Jer. 30.8-9.

The example seen in Hos. 2.18-22 comes to show that the additions—such as the one of v. 19—were not necessarily introduced in contrast to the primary text, but rather linked to the original prophecy while carrying on its ideas, style and imagery. This realization will avail us in identifying the addition in the next passage, Amos 9.1-4:

¹I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said: 'strike the capitals so that the thresholds quake and break them on the head of them all. And I will slay their remains with the sword. Not one of them shall escape, and not one of them shall survive.

²If they burrow down to Sheol,
From there My hand shall take them;
And if they ascend to heaven,
From there I will bring them down.

³If they hide on the top of Carmel,
There I will search them out and seize them;
And if they conceal themselves from My sight, at the bottom of the sea,
There I will command the serpent to bite them.

⁴And if they go into captivity before their enemies,
There I will command the sword to slay them.
I will set My eye on them for evil and not for good.

The image is, apparently, connected with the earthquake, before and after which Amos prophesied (cf. 1.1; 4.11). The people were assembled for some cultic celebration and Amos had a vision in which the Lord was to destroy the Temple over the heads of the pilgrims in the ongoing earthquake. In the same spirit, the evacuees who fled the tumbling sanctuary during the earthquake, are followed in a cosmic pursuit. Sheol and Heaven, the summit of the Carmel and the bottom of the sea—in none of these is there safety, the Lord searches all. In biblical Hebrew mentioning extreme opposites is an established figure of speech to designate a whole: 'boy and greybeard' stands for an entire population; 'Sheol and Heaven' spans the cosmos. By another device, frequently employed in biblical writing, the pictures follow each other in chiasmic order: from Sheol down below we ascend to Heaven, this height leads on to the summit of Mt Carmel, in whose

evergreen forests one can easily hide (Amos 1.2; Cant. 7.6), and from the top of Mt Carmel, which overlooks the sea, back to the depth of the all-concealing abyss. Now, the last picture deviates from the preceding three: here the Lord commands the serpent to bite the hideaways. This is a mythical residue of the belief in the powerful sea-monsters.⁷ In former times the seas were an independent dominion over which the Lord had no power; therefore even now he does not act directly but through the intermediary power of the sea-monsters; though at this stage these too have been subordinated into carrying out his command.

This cosmic chase after the refugees of the earthquake comes to an end in v. 4: 'And if they go into captivity before their enemies' breaks the continuity; the situation described is no longer earthquake but war and captivity, perhaps even exile. The continuation reads: 'There I will command the sword to slay them'—what would be the rationale of the Lord commanding the sword? In the seas he does not rule directly, but acts through the *primaeval* monsters; but in war why should the Lord command the sword when he can wield it himself?⁸ I consider v. 4 an addition to the original vision in vv. 1-3. It is appended to the end of the previous verse, imitating its wording;⁹ but more than anything v. 4 'updates' the ancient prophecy. The earthquake occurred in the middle of the eighth century; it was followed by other disasters which befell Israel: defeat and exile. One of the transmitters of Amos's prophecies wanted to find in the words of the ancient prophet, hints to the disasters he had experienced in his own times.¹⁰ His style teaches us something about his background and origin.

Amos 9.4b: I will set my eye on them, for evil and not for good.

Jer. 21.10a: For I have set my face against this city, for evil and not for good.

Jer. 24.6a: I will set my eye on them favourably.

Jer. 44.27a: I will watch over them for evil, not for good.

7. Cf. M.S. Smith, *The Early History of God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), pp. 52-53, and references to former literature on pp. 71-72.

8. Perhaps the diction of Amos 9.4 has been influenced by the 'sword songs' of later prophets; cf. Jer. 47.6-7; Ezek. 21.13-22, 33-37. In Amos the Lord himself smites with his sword; cf. Amos 4.10; 7.9. Amos 9.10 is ambiguous.

9. The same kind of imitation appears in the prophecy to Judah (Amos 2.4-5); cf. the critical commentaries.

10. If my arguments concerning v. 4 are right, then the words 'and I will slay the last of them with the sword' in v. 1 are secondary too.

From the stylistic parallels it appears that the interpolator of Amos 9.4 belongs to the school of scribes who edited the prophecies of Jeremiah. During, and after, the Persian era—that is to say as long as two hundred years and more after Amos—his prophecies were reworked in the light of current history.

Regarding Amos and other prophets, scholars have pointed out that, but for a few obvious exceptions, the books of the prophets do not contain explicit references to historical events post-dating their days.¹¹ In the book of Amos no reference is made to Assyria by name, let alone Babylon, Media, Persia or Yavan; nor are the fall of Jerusalem, the captivity of Judah or the restoration ever alluded to. This assertion is from an *argumentum e silentio*, and its validity is limited. Besides, the interpolators and editors were not, in the main, void of historical awareness; thus they took care not to betray their time or place.

2. Redaction in Prophetic Books

In addition to the compilation, reworking and expansion which the prophets' words underwent in the course of their transmission, we must also take into account the work of the final editors who gave the books their present structure. Even if their activity was in part literary, in the main it was theological. Let us go into a few examples.

1. *Maśša'* -pronouncements:

Zech. 9.1: A pronouncement: the word of the Lord in the land of Hadrach... and all the tribes of Israel.

Zech. 12.1: A pronouncement: the word of the Lord to Israel.

Mal. 1.1: A pronouncement: the word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi.

The similarity of these titles is obvious. How did it come about? It is hardly due to a literary interdependence of these two prophets, Deutero-Zechariah and Malachi, as they do not seem to have anything in common. More probably, this similarity is the work of an editor of the Twelve Minor Prophets who wanted to distinguish between the various prophecies by inserting subtitles. In the three cases the phrasing is 'a pronouncement: the word of the Lord'.

11. Cf. Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel* (trans. and abr. M. Greenberg; London: Allen & Unwin, 1961), pp. 349-54.

This leads us, almost *perforce*, to note a counter position: in Jer. 23.33-40 there is a long prose passage, most likely by a late author, expressing a downright protest against the use of the expression 'a pronouncement of the Lord' as designating any prophecy. It seems that the people mocked this term, either because they understood it as deriving from *maśša'* (= weight, burden) or from *maśša'on* (= forgetfulness). Against this prevailing gibe the author states unequivocally: 'Do not mention the pronouncement (*maśša'*) of the Lord anymore' (v. 36). In the light of this pericope it is easy to understand why the title *maśša'*, which obtains no less than twenty odd times in the prophetic books designating an oracle,¹² is absent from the book of Jeremiah. This avoidance should not be traced back to Jeremiah himself, but to those late pupils who are responsible for the arrangement of his book.

2. Another editorial act, namely the effacing of the epithet צבאות 'of the Hosts' from the name of the Lord, no doubt stems also from theological motivation. The Sages have already pointed out that Hannah, in her prayer at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1.11; cf. v. 3), was the first to use the appellation 'the Lord of Hosts'.¹³ In other words, they realized that in the MT of the books Genesis-Judges the name 'Lord of Hosts' does not obtain. To this we can add, that this name is totally absent from the book of Ezekiel, and shows once only in Trito-Isaiah (54-66; cf. 54.5). How can this absence be explained? Since the books Genesis-Judges are not contemporary with the events they recount, but are later works originating in the days of those prophets in whose books the name 'the Lord of Hosts' was widespread (Isaiah 1-39; Haggai; Zechariah 1-8; and Malachi, for example), we may deduce that the editors of several biblical books were bent on obliterating the epithet צבאות. The reason, I assume, was that this name admitted to the existence of a heavenly host, which accompanied the Lord on his expeditions. This controversy explains the situation which obtains in the book of Jeremiah. In the MT the name 'the Lord of Hosts' appears 82 times, of which the LXX renders only 16, prevalent mainly in two distinct collections, the restoration book in Jeremiah 30-33 and the prophecies concerning the nations—Jeremiah 46-51. It seems that a late editor

12. Eleven of them in Isaiah 1-39 alone. For the meaning of 'מַשָּׂא' see: S. Erlandsson, *The Burden of Babylon* (Lund: Gleerup, 1970), pp. 64-65, and literature there mentioned.

13. *b. Ber.* 31b: Rabbi Eliezer said: 'Since the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He created his world nobody called him *šēba'ôl*, until Hanna came and called him *šēba'ôl*.

endeavored to expunge from his copy of the book of Jeremiah, the name צבאות due to his antagonism to the belief in a 'heavenly host'. From this scroll derived the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX to the book of Jeremiah.¹⁴

3. Another example of an editorial hand in the book of Jeremiah is the following.¹⁵ In Jeremiah 52 three mentions are made—in three different contexts—of the exile of the people of Zedekiah, proclaiming thus: 'The remnant of the people left in the city, the defectors who had gone over to the king of Babylon, and what remained of the craftsmen were taken into exile by Nebuzaradan, the chief of the guards' (v. 15); 'Thus Judah was exiled from his land' (v. 27b); 'This is the number of those whom Nebuchadnezzar exiled: in the seventh year...in the eighteenth year...in the twenty third year...' (vv. 28-30). This information has been compiled from three different documents. Verse 15 belongs to a description of the acts of Nebuzaradan in Jerusalem (vv. 12-16); v. 27b concludes the list of atrocities committed in Riblah, in the province of Hamath (vv. 24-27); vv. 28-30 are part of a chronicle of the exile dated according to the years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. These three sources were woven into the narration of the fall of Jerusalem, in order to fully depict its magnitude.

All mention of exile is absent from the Septuagint of Jeremiah 52. It is hardly feasible that this did not originally obtain in the story and was later added in the MT. Not only does there not seem any reason for such an addition, but besides why would it be introduced into three different contexts? A more plausible explanation would be that the three mentions of the exile were omitted from the LXX or from its Hebrew *Vorlage*. Now, what rationale could stand behind such elimination?

The answer can be found in the book of Jeremiah itself. Again and again we read oracles predicting a total destruction of Zedekiah and his people, and a promise of hope for those who went into exile with

14. For a more detailed discussion cf. A. Rofé, 'The Name *Yhwh š'ba'ôṭ* and the Shorter Recension of Jeremiah', in *Prophetie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel* (Festschrift S. Herrmann, ed. R. Liwak and S. Wagner; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991), pp. 307-16.

15. Here too I refer the reader to the more detailed discussion offered in my paper: 'Not Exile but Annihilation for Zedekiah's People: the Purport of Jeremiah 52 in the Septuagint', in *Eighth Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Paris, 1992* (ed. L. Greenspoon and O. Munnich; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), pp. 165-70.

King Jeconiah (21.1-7; 24; 29; see especially vv. 10-19; 34.12-22). These, however, are not Jeremiah's original words. The prophet himself regarded Jeconiah with contempt (22.24-30), while promising Zedekiah, until the very last moment, that he could save himself by surrendering to the Chaldeans (38.17-18). Yet, the circles of Jeremiah's pupils, the custodians of his book, developed the ideology that the remnant of Israel would consist solely of those who went into exile with King Jeconiah. It is in these circles that passages such as the *Vorlage* of the LXX to Jeremiah originated. It is there that we should look for the editor who obliterated all mention of an exile in the days of Zedekiah, by describing the total annihilation of Jerusalem, thus leaving all hope of a return with those who went with Jeconiah:

In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of King Jehoiachin of Judah, on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month, King Evil-merodach of Babylon, in the year he became king, took note of King Jehoiachin of Judah and released him from prison. He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a throne above those of other kings who were with him in Babylon. He removed his prison garments and [Jehoiachin] ate regularly in his presence the rest of his life. A regular allotment of food was given him by order of the King of Babylon, an allotment for each day, to the day of his death—all the days of his life (Jer. 52.31-34).

These last redactorial interventions in the prophetic books become evident by highlighting the distinct features characterizing each book, as well as by comparing its various versions, such as the MT as against the LXX. The traces left by the final editors enable the detection of significant information concerning the closing period of biblical writing, a period in Israel's history about which our knowledge is scant. Here we get a glimpse at the dissensions between different theological schools and the struggle between discordant groups within the Jewish people during the exilic and post-exilic eras.

3. Profile of a Prophetic Book: Isaiah 1-39

From the above, we may conclude that readers of a prophetic book cannot start with the assumption that they are reading the *ipsissima verba* of the prophet to whose name the book stands. As we have seen, there are books that contain the words of a number of prophets (*supra* 1.2); there are original oracles that were elaborated by those who transmitted the prophet's words (1.3), or prophecies that were expanded upon by disciples who edited their master's writing (2.1-2). The

differentiation between original and secondary in the prophetic books is an intricate matter and careful study is required. This is not the kind of analysis I shall undertake here, its proper place being the individual commentaries on each of the prophetic books. Nor will it be in order to try and summarize the conclusions by producing detailed lists of original and secondary passages. In scientific study the right method comes before the right conclusion.

What I shall try here is to sketch a general profile of one of the prophetic books in order to illustrate the various aspects I have touched upon in the previous paragraphs. I have chosen Isaiah 1–39 for this purpose; a book commonly considered the work of Isaiah son of Amoz, the prophet active in Jerusalem in the eighth century BCE.¹⁶ In this work, one can easily discern the following collections (1) 1–12; (2) 13–23; (3) 24–27; (4) 28–33; (5) 34–35; (6) 36–39.

The first portion, chs. 1–12, is mainly by Isaiah. Some secondary material is certainly extant towards its end: 11.10–16 lists the diaspora in Persian times that will be gathered back by the Lord, while the psalm in ch. 12 was probably added to the first prophetic scroll as a liturgical appendix recited when the scroll was presumably read in proto-synagogal services.

The second collection, chs. 13–23, is the ‘pronouncement’ unit, *maśśa’* being the word opening most of the prophecies; the majority of the oracles against the nations is concentrated in this section. As to its sources this portion shows great diversity. In chs. 13–14, for example, 13.1–14.2 are most certainly not Isaiah’s (in spite of the title in 13.1). 14.24–32 were definitely spoken by Isaiah. Regarding the originality of the taunt song against the Babylonian (Assyrian) king in 14.3–23 opinions are divided.¹⁷

The third section, chs. 24–27 contains some of the most obscure

16. A very detailed, still valid analysis of the whole book of Isaiah, has been offered by T.K. Cheyne, *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah* (London and New York: A. & C. Black, 1895).

17. According to a plausible conjecture, the core of the taunt dirge, vv. 4b–20 was composed in 705 BCE when Sargon II, king of Assyria, fell in battle; the attribution to Isaiah ben Amoz is thus possible; cf. A. Orr, ‘Who Wrote the “Dirge” in Isaiah 14?’ (Hebrew), in *Festschrift A. Biram* (ed. H.Y.M. Gevariahu *et al.*; Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1955–56), pp. 84–87. For the Assyrian records cf. H. Tadmor, ‘The “Sin” of Sargon’ (Hebrew), *Eretz-Israel* 5 (dedicated to B. Mazar) (1958), pp. 150–63.

chapters in the book. It has been called the apocalypse of Isaiah, because of its resemblance to late apocalyptic literature. Late words such as חמה and לבנה (words obtaining mainly in rabbinic Hebrew) in 24.23 bear witness to the unit’s late date of composition. There is no doubt that this portion is not by Isaiah son of Amoz.

The fourth section, chs. 28–33 is again a mixed bag. Its beginning, 28–31, contains original prophecies, stamped with the style and ideas of Isaiah son of Amoz and pertaining to events which took place in his days. Chapters 32–33 are hard to understand. It may well be that they contain an amalgam of original words of Isaiah son of Amoz with prophecies by his disciples/reworkers.

The fifth collection, chs. 34–35, shows conceptual affinity to Trito-Isaiah, judging by the criteria set when attributing a realistic historical redemption to the message of Deutero-Isaiah and an eschatological, supernatural redemption to the vision of Trito-Isaiah. The style and imagery of the great oracle depicting the destruction of Edom in ch. 34, are reminiscent of the Lord’s song of victory on returning from Bozrah in 63.1–6.

The sixth and concluding portion, chs. 36–39, is a collection of historical and legendary tales taken from the book of Kings. The case is similar to that of the story of the fall of Jerusalem copied from the end of the book of Kings (2 Kgs 24.18–25.30), in order to conclude the book of Jeremiah (ch. 52). The reason behind both instances is one and the same: to show that the prophecies of the major prophets were fulfilled in their own days. It seems that the unit was incorporated into the book of Isaiah at a late date, since its textual shape was finalized after that in the book of Kings. The prayer (38.9–20) is a later addition, and the expression וימרחו (38.21) which replaces וישמו of the original story (2 Kgs 20.7) is prevalent in rabbinic Hebrew. Generally speaking, the collection contains reliable information, though the date, placed at the opening of the section (36.1), is inaccurate. Much of the material which the unit attributes to Isaiah does indeed conform with his ideas. However, there is here a different transmission of the prophet’s utterances: not his words as such, but as components in stories about his time.

Should we, from what has been noted so far, draw the conclusion that the prophetic books are a fabrication? Certainly not. First it should be taken into account that at the beginning of the transmission process the prophet’s words were passed on orally, and in such transmission

the output of several authors could easily be fused together. Secondly, as pointed out before, transmitters looked in their masters' words for answers to the predicaments of their own days. These answers they added in the margins of the material at their disposal, not presumptively but rather naively. Thirdly, one should bear in mind that the scrolls were primarily private copies belonging to individuals or groups. The placing of commentaries, or corrections, in the margin, as well as additions from other sources into these private copies was no more than a natural procedure; it certainly did not point towards any conscious intention of falsifying the original message of the prophets.