'Good Figs, Bad Figs'
Theologies of Differentiation in Jeremiah 21 – 45

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Abstract

This thesis explores the concept of inner-Judean differentiation in the judgement and salvation oracles of Jer. 21–45. Specifically, it aims to identify the various ‘polarities’ of who will and will not be saved and to explore their underlying rationale. In order to show how these concepts interact, a synchronic approach is preferred, in which the relevant texts are analysed within their literary units.

Chapter 1 places the differentiation texts of Jer. 21–45 against the background of indiscriminate judgement preaching in Jer. 1–20. The works of K.-F. Pohlmann, C.R. Seitz and N. Kilpp on Jeremiah are then reviewed and assessed. It is argued that Pohlmann and Seitz, in particular, overlook important modes of differentiation within Jer. 21–45.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 form the bulk of the thesis. Chapter 2 identifies three polarities in Jer. 21–24: those who stay in Jerusalem v. those who surrender (21.1-10), Israel’s leaders v. its people (23.1-8), and the exiles in Babylon v. the non-exiles in Jerusalem (24.1-10). The hermeneutical relationship between these passages is then discussed. Chapter 3 focuses on Jer. 27–29, which presents two intersecting polarities; that of the exiles v. non-exiles, and that of prophets v. people. This configuration is complicated by the additional material in MT 29.16-20. Chapter 4 examines Jer. 37–45, where the mode of differentiation in the oracles to Ebed-Melech and Baruch reshape the mode of differentiation in Jeremiah’s message to the people of Jerusalem and the remnant of Judah. Chapter 5 briefly describes the message of undifferentiated salvation in Jer. 30–31.

In chapter 6, it is concluded that although inner-Judean differentiation forms a prominent motif in Jer. 21–45, no one expression of this has the final word. Rather, the juxtaposition of different or partly similar polarities results in a kaleidoscopic picture, consistent with the book as a whole and the period in which it was formed. It is also concluded that there is no single rationale for judgement or salvation; however, the actual experience of judgement seems to facilitate the promise of salvation. The thesis concludes by considering the relevance of the research to the works of Pohlmann and Seitz.

Declaration

I, Robin John Ruskin Plant, hereby declare that I have written this thesis and that the work done here is entirely my own.

Signature:                                      Date: 27/07/03
Acknowledgements

Like most doctoral theses, I imagine, this is submitted bearing an invisible ‘work in progress’ label. Nevertheless, it represents a provisional stopping-point on a line of enquiry that began seven years ago with a sermon preached to my home church on Jeremiah’s ‘letter to the exiles’. The ways in which the Christian scriptures conceptualise entire nations, and indeed all humanity, are an ongoing interest for me; this dissertation attempts to explore how this is done in the book of Jeremiah.

Sincere thanks are due to my supervisors, Dr. David Reimer and Prof. A.G. Auld, for their constant encouragement and accessibility, throughout the writing of this thesis. Their comments have been prompt and detailed, and have helped me avoid (or rectify) a number of blunders. I am also extremely grateful to Prof. M. Smallwood, for her time and wisdom in reading sections of the Greek text of Jeremiah with me.

Special thanks go to the computing support officers at New College, Dr. Jessie Paterson, Bronwen Currie and Crystal Webster, for their frequent and cheerful assistance with technical issues that are far beyond my comprehension. Much appreciated too has been the help given by my father, Peter Plant, in translating a number of French articles. It is a particularly happy duty to thank my post-graduate colleagues in Semple’s Lab. for their personal friendship and support, which has made the ‘Ph.D experience’ much more pleasurable than it might otherwise have been.

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<tr>
<td>ATSAT</td>
<td>Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament</td>
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<td>ATANT</td>
<td>Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments</td>
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<td>BETL</td>
<td>Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium</td>
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<tr>
<td>BHS</td>
<td>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</td>
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<tr>
<td>BHT</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie</td>
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<tr>
<td>BKAT</td>
<td>Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>BO</td>
<td>Biblica et Orientalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>The Biblical Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTS</td>
<td>Biblisch-Theologische Studien</td>
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<tr>
<td>BWANT</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBET</td>
<td>Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology</td>
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<td>ETL</td>
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<td>Ev. T.</td>
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<td>FRLANT</td>
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<td>GKC</td>
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<tr>
<td>GTA</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAR</td>
<td><em>Hebrew Annual Review</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>HKAT</td>
<td><em>Handkommentar zum Alten Testament</em></td>
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<td>HAT</td>
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<td>HSM</td>
<td><em>Hebrew Semitic Monographs</em></td>
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<td>ICC</td>
<td><em>International Critical Commentary</em></td>
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<td>JB</td>
<td><em>Jerusalem Bible</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td><em>Journal of Biblical Literature</em></td>
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<td>JNES</td>
<td><em>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</em></td>
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<td>JSS</td>
<td><em>Journal of Semitic Studies</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JSJ Sup.</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSOT</td>
<td><em>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</em></td>
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<td>JSOT Sup.</td>
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<td>JTS</td>
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<td>JQR</td>
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<tr>
<td>KAT</td>
<td><em>Kommentar zum Alten Testament</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>KD</td>
<td><em>Kerygma und Dogma</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>KHAT</td>
<td>Kurzer Hand-Kommentar zum Alten Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAI</td>
<td>Library of Ancient Israel</td>
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<td>Library of Biblical Interpretation</td>
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<td>Lust, Lexicon</td>
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<td>NBC</td>
<td>D.A. Carson, R.T. France, J.A. Motyer &amp; G.W. Wenham (eds.), <em>New Bible Commentary</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>NCB</td>
<td>New Century Bible</td>
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<td>NEB</td>
<td>New English Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>New ICC</td>
<td>International Critical Commentary (New Series)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGB</td>
<td>Das Alte Testament Deutsch: Neues Göttinger Bibelwerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICOT</td>
<td>New International Commentary on the Old Testament</td>
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<td>NIDOTTE</td>
<td>W.A. VanGemeren (ed.), <em>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, Vols. 1 – 5</em></td>
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Ancient Versions

LXX  Septuagint
LXX\(^A\)  Codex Alexandrinus
LXX\(^B\)  Codex Vaticanus
LXX\(^S\)  Codex Sinaiticus
LXX\(^{Luc}\)  Septuagint (Lucianic recension)
LXX\(^\theta\)  Septuagint (Theodotion’s revision)
LXX\(^\omega\)  Codex Marchalianus
LXX\(^V\)  Codex Venetus
V\(^p\)  Petersburg Codex to the Prophets
Vulg.  Vulgate
Targ.  Targum Jonathan to the Prophets
EN  Aristotle. The Nicomachean Ethics
Hdt.  Herodotus
Memorabilia  Xenophon. Memorabilia & Oeconomicus
Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Differentiation in the Old Testament Prophets


So begins Klaus Koenen in his study of the theology of the OT prophetic books. As he immediately points out, this undifferentiating perspective, in which salvation or judgement is announced in respect to 'the people as a whole', is peculiar to the prophets. In the legal, cultic and wisdom traditions of Israel, one sees far more interest in the conduct of the individual, and its consequences for that individual. However, Koenen concedes that even in the prophets, "es gibt Texte, die nicht vom Heil oder Unheil des ganzen Volkes sprechen, sondern im Blick auf die Zukunft zwischen Gerechten und Sündern – wie immer diese im einzelnen beschrieben sein mögen – unterscheiden. Den Gerechten wird es gut gehen, den Sündern dagegen schlecht."

In the rest of his study, Koenen examines how this pattern of differentiation is reflected in specific prophetic passages, distinguishing between those in which YHWH's salvation for the righteous follows his judgement on the wicked, and those in which salvation and judgement occur simultaneously. With regard to the latter category, he finds the book of Habakkuk to form a watershed: "Mit der differenzierten Ankündigung von Heil und Unheil für die in einem Konflikt gegenüberstehenden Gruppen unterscheidet sich Habakkuk von den klassischen Propheten, die bei ihrer Ankündigung immer das ganze Volk im Blick haben. Habakkuk macht den verschiedenen Gruppen des Volkes erstmalss unterschiedliche Ankündigung."

2 Koenen, Heil den Gerechten, 3.
3 Koenen, Heil den Gerechten, 164. He traces this outlook to the earliest stratum of Habakkuk, which he places at the start of the sixth century (146). Most scholars date the book to sometime between the late seventh and early sixth century; see E. Nielsen, 'The Righteous and the Wicked in Habaqquq' ST 6 (1953) 54-78; E. Otto, 'Die Theologie des Buches Habakkuk', VT 35 (1985) 274-295; R.D. Haak, Habakkuk (VT Sup. 44; Leiden: Brill, 1992) 133; R. Mason, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Joel (OTG; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994) 84.
It is fair to say that the concept of inner-Israelite differentiation emerges most clearly in the post-exilic prophets. G.I. Emmerson, for example, notes how conflict within the Judean community is reflected in the combined judgement and salvation oracle of Isa. 65.8-16 (cf. 66.5): "In this dual orientation it differs in a remarkable fashion from the traditional forms of pre-exilic prophecy in which the nation is treated as a corporate entity whether for judgment or salvation." Meanwhile, S.L. McKenzie and H.N. Wallace see in Mal. 3.13-21 a redactional reinterpretation of the original message of the book: "The covenant people are narrowed to include only a segment of the postexilic community... No longer is the entire community indicted but only a part of it."

Working from a different angle, however, Iain Duguid explores the stance taken by the exilic prophet Ezekiel towards the leaders of Israel—kings and princes, priests and levites, prophets, and ‘lay leadership’—and finds a striking corollary between what is promised, and the past conduct of each group. There is, he concludes, “a coherent and connected attitude taken toward these leadership groups throughout the book: those singled out for the most reproach in Ezekiel’s critique of the past are marginalized in his plan for the future, while those who escape blame are assigned positions of honour.” Duguid’s study demonstrates that the prophetic books are capable of differentiating among the people in ways that are not immediately obvious.

2. Differentiation in the Book of Jeremiah

Given the observations of Koenen and Duguid concerning Habakkuk and Ezekiel, the question arises as to whether, and to what extent, the concept of salvation for one Judean group and judgement for another is reflected in the book of their close contemporary, Jeremiah of Anathoth. Prima facie, there would seem to be good reason for thinking that Jeremiah himself may have held (or developed) such a perspective. For one thing, irrespective of when his

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7 Duguid, *Leaders of Israel*, I.
8 Henceforth in this study, ‘Jeremiah’ will denote the figure of the prophet, and ‘Jer.’, the book that bears his name.
ministry began, it spanned a period in which Judah twice suffered invasion and deportation (597 and 587). The fact that certain groups of citizens were taken away while others were left would lend itself to being interpreted in terms of salvation for some and judgement for others. For another, Jer. more than any other prophetic book witnesses to the plurality of political factions within Judah prior to 587. Not only so, it strongly suggests that Jeremiah himself was not merely an ‘outsider’ in Jerusalem (like Amos? cf. Am. 7.14-15), but rather was associated with certain prominent individuals, especially the scribal family of Shaphan (Jer. 26.24; 29.3; 36.10-19; 39.14). To the extent that theology is shaped by socio-political factors, we might expect Jeremiah to have entertained a hope for some to be spared YHWH’s judgement, and maybe even rewarded for their faithfulness. Indeed, G.H. Parke-Taylor connects the relative frequency of the term ‘remnant’ (רָאָם) in Jer. with the existence of Jeremiah’s loyal supporters.

2.1. Undifferentiated Judgement: Jer. 1 – 20

These observations notwithstanding, Koenen’s claim regarding the undifferentiating perspective of the prophets finds considerable support in the first twenty chapters of Jer., which adopt what we might call a ‘broad-brush’ approach to the evils of Judean society. In keeping

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11 On this point, see R.R. Wilson, Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) 241-251, and B.O. Long, ‘Social Dimensions of Prophetic Conflict’, Semeia 21 (1981) 31-53; the latter writes of “a network of family relationships supportive of Jeremiah, and extending into the highest levels of royal and cultic service...Jeremiah may have been born a rural non-Jerusalemite, but his blood and social relationships are anything but lower class” (46-47). See too Gottwald, Introduction, 402-404.

with the general tenor of these twenty chapters, specificity is rare, a point reflected in the terms used for the prophet’s audience: ‘Judah’ (2.28); ‘Jerusalem’ (4.14; 6.8; 15.5); ‘men of Judah and Jerusalem’ (4.3; 11.2; 18.11); ‘this people’ (7.16; 11.14; 15.1); ‘the house of Israel’ (9.26; 10.1; 18.6), etc. When particular groups (e.g., kings, prophets and priests) are identified, they are piled up without distinction (1.18; 2.26; 4.9; 8.1; 13.13). Only with the ‘men of Anathoth’ (11.21-23) and Pashhur ben Immer (20.1-6) are the targets of criticism made specific.

Likewise, Judah’s guilt is universal. From the least to the greatest (קָצַר הַרְפָּאָה), all (ךָל) are greedy for gain and practice deceit (6.13 = 8.10). All of them (ךָל) are rebels (6.28) and adulterers (9.1), and all of Jerusalem (יִשְׂרָאֵל) is oppression (6.6). No one (ךָל) repents of his wickedness (8.6) or takes YHWH’s judgement to heart (12.11). Indeed, in 9.25-26 YHWH refuses even to differentiate Judah from the other nations, since ‘the whole house of Israel’ (ךָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) is uncircumcised in heart.13

Consequently, YHWH’s judgement is against the entire land. When it falls, no one will be safe (12.12), for his wrath will be poured out on man and beast (לְעֵל הָגוֹיִם וּלְעֵל הַבָּשָׂט, 7.20). YHWH has rejected ‘the generation of his wrath’ (יָדֶר עֵרֶב, 7.29). Especially comprehensive is the language of 6.10-15, where, having described himself as ‘full of the wrath of YHWH’ (6.9), Jeremiah cries:

Pour it out on the children in the street and on the young men gathered together; both husband and wife will be caught in it, and the old, those weighed down with years. Their houses will be turned over to others, together with their fields and their wives . . . They will fall with the fallen; they will be brought down when I punish them.14

Granted, there is some variation regarding the nature of judgement, since alongside the prophecy that Judah will be carried into exile (יִרְדְּעָה יֶרְדָּעָה כָּל, 13.19) is the claim that both great and small (נְוֵי נְבֵלָיָה, 16.6) will die in the land. The scope of the disaster, however, is not in doubt, and hints that any might survive are few. 6.9 speaks of the ‘remnant of Israel’ (שֵׁם אֲדֻנָּא), but their fate seems to be annihilation rather than salvation.15 An ominous future for

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14 W. Brueggemann, A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 72, remarks: “The failure occasions the full, powerful release of YHWH’s wrath against every part of the city. This passage, unlike others that indict the leadership, includes all in the scope of disobedience.”
15 So W. McKane, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Volume I. Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I – XXV (New ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986) 144-145; R.P. Carroll,
is also anticipated in 8.3 and 15.9. In 4.27, an announcement of devastation on the land is followed by the words, הלא אל אמטות (‘but I will not make an end of her’), and a similar qualification occurs in 5.10. The meaning of the phrase הלא אל אמטה, however, becomes clear after its third occurrence in 5.18; those who are spared will be taken to a foreign land (5.19). The only real note of hope in Jer. 1 – 20 comes in prophecies of restoration, which necessarily assume the disaster of exile (12.14-16; 16.14-15).

This picture of unqualified guilt and judgement is encapsulated in Jer. 5. The chapter opens with YHWH challenging Jeremiah to ‘find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth’ (v. 1). Although the prophet concedes that ‘the poor’ (רעהים) are ignorant of YHWH’s ways (v. 4a), he has higher expectations of the leaders (חפרים, v. 5a). But he is disappointed; they have as one (הימים, v. 5b) rejected YHWH’s yoke. Later on, the chapter hints at a more nuanced view (vv. 26-31). Here, YHWH singles out for rebuke ‘wicked men’ (רעים, v. 26), who have failed to defend ‘the poor’ (רעים) and ‘the orphan’ (יהודה) (v. 28). This is a familiar social polarity in the OT, in which YHWH often sides with the poor (Ex. 22.22-24; Ps. 107.42; Job. 5.14; Isa. 14.30); indeed, ערים sometimes stands in parallelism with ‘the righteous’ (Am. 2.6; 5.12). Thus, we would most naturally take YHWH’s question ‘Shall I not punish these people?’ (הימים אלה אל אמטה, v. 29) as referring to the poor of יושבים of vv. 26-28. However, the


16 Some commentators (e.g., Rudolph, Jeremia, 30; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 109) avoid the problem by emending to יושב (‘and I will make an end of her’), but against this see Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 60-61. J. Calvin, Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations. Volume 1 (ET: J. Owen; Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1852) 241, takes the words to mean that God “would observe no moderation in executing his vengeance”, while Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 80, translates them ‘I will not yet have brought the end’.

17 Ex is deleted by Duhm, Jeremia, 59; Rudolph, Jeremia, 33; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 120; Carroll, Jeremiah, 181; contra Thompson, Jeremiah, 243; Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 90. According to the latter, “the notion of pruning (v. 10b) and the notion of exile (v. 19) seem to support the notion that ‘not a final end’ is in the prophet’s mind, but only a terrible act of judgment that will seem like the end.”
following clause, ‘In such a nation (נֵבָא אֱלֹהִים) shall I not vindicate myself?’, makes the divine wrath sound less discriminating, and the shift back towards a unitary view of the people is completed in v. 31: ‘The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way’.  

Granted, the idea of undifferentiated judgement in Jer. 1 – 20 may have been heightened redactionally. In his study of chs. 11 – 20, Mark Smith argues that Jeremiah’s ‘laments’ have been placed in carefully constructed literary units (chs. 11 – 12, 13 – 15, 16 – 17 and 19 – 20), each of which also contains a prose story about the prophet.  

As a result, Smith remarks, there is a shift from the laments’ original purpose to their main function in context. In their original usage, they serve to defend Jeremiah’s prophetic mission against unnamed enemies. In context, however, the laments stress the guilt of the prophet’s foes and extend their identity to include Judah and Jerusalem, in short all the people and its leadership.  

Again, this is not to say that in literary terms ‘Jerusalem’ is a uniform entity. As Mark Biddle has shown, Jer. 1 – 20 contains “a virtual chorus of voices in dialogue”, in which the persona of ‘Lady Jerusalem’, for example, is quite distinct from that of ‘the people of Judah’. While the former voices a spontaneous emotional response to disaster (e.g., 4.19-21; 10.19-22), the latter express confusion and despair at YHWH’s unwillingness to forgive (e.g., 14.7-9; 19-22). Nevertheless, while we encounter a variety of responses to the coming disaster, there is no indication that any of these personae are less culpable or less liable to judgement than another.  

There is, though, one highly significant differentiation in Jer. 1 – 20, which we alluded to in connection with the laments; namely, that between the nations and the prophet himself. This is established in the very first chapter: Jeremiah has been ‘set apart’ (שָׁפֵר Hiph.) as ‘a prophet to the nations’ (v. 5). Indeed, he is given authority over them, expressed in language

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18 While McKane, Jeremiah 1, 136, and Rudolph, Jeremia, 35, see vv. 30-31 as originally independent, J.R. Lundbom, Jeremiah 1 – 20. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB 21a; New York: Doubleday, 1999) 406, sees v. 29 as the intrusive element: “Without vv. 30-31 the indictment in vv. 26-28 remains flat, which may account for the need to bring in the stereotyped v. 29; with these verses, the false prophets are blamed, the puppet priests are blamed, but the real culprit turns out to be the people.”  


20 Smith, Laments, 39.  

that will be paradigmatic in Jer.: לְחַזָּק לְהֵרְמָה הַלֹּאֵדָרָה לְהֵרְמָה לְבַנָּה לְבַנָּה (v. 10).

Accompanying this commission is a personal salvation oracle: אָל תְּהִי מַסְכֵּינָה יְהוָה יָעַר יָי לְבַנָּה (v. 8). Rhetorically, therefore, YHWH’s address creates just two parties: Jeremiah (‘you’) and the nations (‘them’). The prophet is set over against the world. Later in the chapter, the scope of this differentiation is narrowed: YHWH has made Jeremiah ‘a fortified city’ against the whole land (ךֶל חַיָּרָה), i.e., the land of Judah (1.18). ‘All the land’, of course, comprises a plurality of social groups – “the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land” (v. 18c) – but they are all bracketed together in opposition to Jeremiah. It may be, of course, that ‘Jeremiah’ is representative of a wider group of readers, as Brueggemann believes.

Nevertheless, according to the text, there are only two ‘people-categories’: Jeremiah of Anathoth, and everyone else. The sense of conflict between them will become pronounced from ch. 11 onwards.

2.2. Differentiated Judgement and Salvation: Jer. 21 – 45

The situation is quite different, however, when we turn to the central section of the book, chs. 21 – 45.24 Here, despite the prevailing mood of doom, we encounter a series of oracles announcing judgement for some and salvation for others. Polarities are thereby set up, in which one group (or individual) is differentiated from another. At the same time, the form of these polarities is remarkably fluid. Those exiled to Babylon in 597 are contrasted with those left behind under Zedekiah (chs. 24 and 29); the people with their leaders (23.1-8); the nation that submits to Nebuchadrezzar with the nation that does not (ch. 27); the Rechabites with the Judeans under Jehoiakim (ch. 35); those who flee the city with those who remain in it (21.8-10;

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22 The Septuagint does not reflect כֶל חַיָּרָה.

23 Brueggemann writes: “The God of this oracle is not indiscriminate... An important distinction is made between the majority, who are unresponsive and so under threat, and this minority voice (Jeremiah), who holds faithfully to the purpose of Yahweh” (Exile and Homecoming, 30). Noting the emphatic יִנַּת in 1.17 and 45.5, Brueggemann adds: “These two ‘but you’ speeches in 1.17-19 and 45.5 may at one time have formed an envelope for the entire text. These two promises may provide a clue to the editorial history of the book of Jeremiah. That editorial work was done by those who came after Jeremiah, who lived in the Exile and who took the text seriously. These faithful people understood themselves to be recipients of the same ‘but you’ assurances.” (30).

24 Excluding chs. 30 – 33, to which we will return briefly in chapter five.
38.1-3); Ebed-Melech with ‘this city’ (38.15-18) and Baruch with ‘all flesh’ (45.1-5). All such texts we will call ‘differentiation passages’.

None of these passages is discussed by Koenen; in fact, the only Jeremianic texts he examines are 17.5-8 and 30.23-24, to which we will return later. At first sight, their exclusion would seem quite legitimate, given the terms of his own enquiry; namely, the allocation of salvation and judgement to different groups on the basis of their ethical profile. As Koenen himself explains, this means excluding from his investigation promises of salvation for a ‘remnant’ (e.g., Jer. 24.4-7), since these rest on YHWH’s sovereign decision rather than the conduct of that particular group; ‘Deuteronomistic’ texts which set out two alternatives (e.g., Jer. 42.7-18), since these still view the people as a single entity; passages in which salvation depends on specific ‘here and now’ actions (e.g., Jer. 21.8); and passages in which a single individual is exempt from judgement on a wider group (e.g., Jer. 45).

Even within his own terms of reference, however, Koenen’s exclusion of some of the differentiation passages in Jer. remains questionable. Especially this is true of the oracle to Ebed-Melech, which is explicitly grounded in the Cushite’s ‘trust’ in YHWH (38.15-18). But other passages would also seem to be relevant. For example, Koenen does not address Jer. 23.1-8, presumably because this is a ‘remnant’ prophecy; yet it begins by announcing judgement on ‘the shepherds’ (i.e., Judah’s leaders) precisely because of their past misconduct. Likewise, although the promise of restoration for the exiles (29.10-14) is grounded in divine initiative, it expressly anticipates their ‘seeking’ and ‘praying to’ YHWH, and is followed by judgement oracles against three individuals for ‘prophesying lies’ (29.23, 31). In both cases, the promise of salvation for some and not others has an ethical aspect, although it is not the only aspect.

From another angle too, Koenen’s approach is problematic. Although he sets out to explore oracles in which salvation is allocated to some and judgement to others according to

25 Koenen, Heiland Gerechten, 5.
26 Koenen concedes this point in a footnote (Heiland Gerechten, 5 n.11) but otherwise makes no mention of it.
27 A similar point could be made regarding Ezek. 34.1-16, also largely ignored by Koenen. His claim, Heiland Gerechten, 74, that “nach [Ezek. 34] vv. 1-16 gehört das ganze Volk Israel zur Herde Jahwes”, leaves the identity of the ‘shepherds’ a mystery.
28 Indeed, in the Greek text these verbs are imperatives. As we will see later, the degree of conditionality in 29.13 depends on how we interpret ɔ.
their ‘right conduct’ (recht Verhalten), this notion is left undefined. Indeed, his qualifying remark concerning the terms ‘the righteous’ and ‘the sinners’ – ‘wie immer diese im einzelnen beschrieben sein mögen’ – itself indicates that these are somewhat slippery concepts. *Prima facie*, one could argue that certain ‘here and now’ actions involving obedience to YHWH (such as surrender to the Babylonians) are in some sense ‘ethical’ actions. At the very least, they are not wholly unrelated. Without (for the moment) developing either of these points any further, taken together they suggest that when we are dealing with ‘differentiation passages’, the underlying logic – that is, the rationale for salvation and judgement – may be more complex than Koenen implies, at least as far as Jer. is concerned.

In any case, whatever the merits of a study (like Koenen’s) which focusses on one specific mode of differentiation across a range of books, so far as Jer. 21 – 45 is concerned, it is precisely the plurality of inner-Judean distinctions that invites further study. Communities are distinguished from communities, individuals from communities, and individuals from nations. Salvation means personal survival, communal existence, and future restoration to YHWH and the land. The differentiations are, so to speak, different.

At the same time, there are signs of some sort of hermeneutical interaction between them. The offer of ‘life as booty’, for example, occurs in four contexts; in two of these (21.9; 38.2), it is made to any who will surrender to the Babylonians, while in the other two (39.15; 45.5) it is addressed unconditionally to two individuals. Similarly, YHWH’s promise ‘I will build up and not tear down; I will plant and not uproot’ is applied unconditionally to the Babylonian Golah (24.6), but also conditionally to the post-587 Judean remnant (42.10). Moreover, as we will seek to demonstrate, the differentiation passages do not appear to be randomly scattered, but rather to counter-balance each other within well-defined literary units. To give one example, the three polarities of (a) those who leave the city and those who stay (b) the shepherds and the sheep, and (c) the exiled and non-exiled communities, stand at the opening, centre and conclusion of a widely recognised sub-section, Jer. 21 – 24. Consequently, the text itself invites us to explore the relationship between these differentiation passages.

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3. Differentiation in Jer. 21 – 45: Review of Scholarship

3.1. The Work of K.-F. Pohlmann

A significant milestone in Jeremiah studies was set down with the 1978 monograph of K.-F. Pohlmann. Pohlmann sees the final form of Jer. as witnessing to the rivalry between the descendants of those exiled to Babylon in 597, and those who were left in Judah. The dominant voice in the book now is that of the former group. They alone constitute ‘Israel’ and they alone will enjoy YHWH’s future blessings. In order to promote this ideology, the editors have sought to depict Jeremiah as prophesying only disaster for those who remained in the land after 597 (as in 21.1-10, 38.23, and 42.17-21). Indeed, this ideological viewpoint is reflected in the literary structure of Jer. Ch. 24 concludes the first part by announcing YHWH’s rejection of Zedekiah and his countrymen, but his favour toward the Golah community in Babylon. This message is then developed at length; chs. 26 – 34 describe the hopeful future of the exiles (cf. 24.3-7), while chs. 37 – 44 emphasise the fate of those who remained behind (cf. 24.8-10).

Indeed, Pohlmann describes the rationale behind the present arrangement of Jer. 21 – 45 as one of ‘prophecy and fulfilment’. This editorial reworking of Jer. he terms ‘die golahorientierte Redaktion’ (GR), and traces it to the fourth century BC (probably in Judah).

Alongside this exclusivist claim for the Babylonian Golah, however, Pohlmann discerns in chs. 37 – 44 traces of an older ‘base narrative’ (Grundtext), which reflects a very different outlook. According to its author, those who had not been deported in 597 could still live peacefully in their land if Zedekiah would submit to the Babylonians (38.17, 19-22). His refusal to do so, and the fall of Jerusalem, naturally prompted a crisis of self-understanding among those left after 587: Had YHWH now abandoned them? The answer, according to the author of the

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31 Pohlmann, Studien, 191. As evidence for the emergence in Judah of this pro-Golah viewpoint, Pohlmann points to the pre-eminence of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah (191 n.21).
32 Pohlmann, Studien, 183. Pohlmann describes this claim to be the exclusive representatives of Israel as an Alleinvertretungsanspruch (144).
33 Pohlmann, Studien, 185.
34 Pohlmann, Studien, 190-191.
35 Pohlmann, Studien, 186-187, 198-200. See his appendix, Studien, 208-223, for a synopsis of the original and the redactional material.
Grundtext, was no. Since the overthrow of Jerusalem was the fault of the leadership (“auf das Konto derer, die sich weigerten, auf Jahwe zu hören, die Stadt der Oberherrschaft der Babylonier auszuliefern”), and since the land itself belonged to YHWH, an ongoing relationship between YHWH and the Judean remnant was still possible. It was, however, dependent upon their remaining in the land, and not (as some were already doing) fleeing to Egypt (42.9-11, 13-14). Pohlmann concludes:

Es ist deutlich, daß die in diesen Texten enthaltene Darstellung der situation im Lande nach der Einnahme Jerusalems späteren Vorstellungen widerspricht. Es genügt vorerst, die wesentlichsten Punkte hervorzuheben: Das Land ist nicht nur weiterhin bewohnt, die nach der Einnahme Jerusalems im Lande Verbliebenen erhalten sogar die Zusage, daß gerade im Lande mit Jahwes künftigem Heilshandeln zu rechnen ist.38

Consequently, in Pohlmann’s analysis the Grundtext differentiates (a) between Judah’s leaders and her people in regard to responsibility for the past, and (b) between those who stayed in Judah and those who migrated to Egypt in regard to maintaining their identity as YHWH’s people. In GR, on the other hand, there is only one mode of differentiation, namely, that between the 597 exiles and everyone else.

Pohlmann’s thesis amplified and developed certain ideas that had been mooted by earlier scholars,39 and has subsequently had considerable influence. In particular, his belief that the pro-Golah message of Jer. reflects a political power claim within fourth century Judah, rather than the outlook of the sixth century prophet, anticipated a more general trend in the following two decades towards ‘ideological’ readings of Jer.40 His description of ch. 24 as ‘programmatic’ for

37 Pohlmann, Studien, 198.
38 Pohlmann, Studien, 188-189.
Jer. as a whole is also echoed by others.41 Methodologically, Pohlmann’s argument is the stronger for its attention to conceptual (rather than simply lexical) aspects of a given text; in this respect, it marks an important advance on the work of W. Thiel.42 He notes, for instance, the verbal similarities between 42.10 and 24.6, but adds:


We will, of course, discuss specific aspects of Pohlmann’s argument in later chapters, but a few general criticisms may be offered at this stage. Firstly, whilst his focus on conceptual distinctions within texts is welcome, it sometimes lapses into hyper-criticism. Too often, perspectives that are complementary are assumed (rather than shown) to be incompatible, and thus allocated to different editorial hands. His identification of no less than four redactional strata in ch. 42, for example, is both implausible and unnecessary. Moreover, his readiness to designate material as ‘redactional’ means that, in his analysis, very little is left of the Grundtext; as Seitz remarks, “Pohlmann’s Vorlage is barely a torso.”44 Pohlmann himself admits that its introduction has been lost altogether.45

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43 Pohlmann, Studien, 130-131 (italics his).


45 Pohlmann, Studien, 208.
Secondly, Pohlmann’s fourth century dating of GR is problematic. For, as several commentators have pointed out, if the redaction is as late as this, it is far from clear why it exclusively champions the 597 exiles. As McKane remarks, “all that is needed . . . is a simple antithesis between those who went into exile, whether in 597 or 586, and those who did not go into exile. What interest could he possibly have had in the middle of the fifth century or later in asserting that the only bearers of Judaism were those who had been deported with Jehoiachin in 597?” Indeed, Pohlmann himself acknowledges the problem: “Wie die Redaktion dazu kommt, von einer der Gola von Jahwe gewährten Vorrangstellung auszugehen, bleibt allerdings unklar.”

Thirdly, and more relevant to our own concerns, Pohlmann’s insistence that the voice of GR has final, ‘dominant’ status in Jer. fails to take adequate account of material which clearly does not promote an exclusive claim for the 597 Golah. This is most obviously the case with the salvation promises in chs. 30 – 33. Pohlmann (tellingly) gives little attention to this section, but claims that its present placement serves to narrow its original pan-Israel scope: “Da in Jer. 29 im wesentlichen die gleiche Auffassung wie in Jer. 24 und Jer. 44 zu Grunde liegt, können die folgenden Heilsweissagungen in Jer. 30ff jetzt nur noch mit der babylonischen Gola in Verbindung gebracht werden.” He seeks to buttress this claim by arguing that 32.16-44 repeats the pro-Golah outlook of 24.1-10. This, however, will not do; as Schmid points out, there is no evidence anywhere in chs. 30 – 33 of a 597-exclusive voice. But similar questions are raised by 23.1-8, where, as we noted earlier, YHWH promises to scatter the ‘shepherds’ but bring back his ‘flock’ “from all the lands where I scattered them” (23.3). It is hard to see how this can be subsumed within the GR perspective, and in fact, Pohlmann completely overlooks this passage (as he does all the material between 21.10 and 24.1). Nor does he explore the significance of the individual salvation oracles to Ebed-Melech and Baruch.

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48 Pohlmann, *Studien*, 30-31 n.61; see too 46.


50 Schmid, *Buchgestalten*, 177 n.607; he specifically criticises Pohlmann on this point.
Even in those passages Pohlmann assigns to GR, it is not certain that the pattern of differentiation is as uniform as he suggests. Although, for instance, 21.1-10 and 24.1-10 are similar in many respects, the former passage allows for the possibility of survivors among the people of Jerusalem in a way that the latter passage does not. Then again, while ch. 24 configures the 597 exiles as a unity, ch. 29 highlights internal distinctions among them. In fact, it is noticeable that despite Pohlmann’s claim (above) that ch. 29 endorses the pro-Golah viewpoint of ch. 24, he actually says little about ch. 29, and even less about its relationship to chs. 27–28.

3.2. The Work of C.R. Seitz

Whilst accepting the main lines of Pohlmann’s argument, the 1989 study of C.R. Seitz adopts both a wider perspective and a different starting point.\(^{51}\) Seitz begins by noting that prior to 597, Jeremiah’s preaching (as reflected in chs.1–20) was one of wholesale judgement: “Up to this point in time, the powerful imagery of military destruction and deportation had dominated the prophet’s description of impending judgment.”\(^{52}\) The deportation of Jehoiachin and others to Babylon, however, brought about a significant change in the prophet’s thinking:

The concrete circumstances of 597 gave the prophet Jeremiah and his message a startling and forceful validation; at the same time, those circumstances gave rise to a distinct transformation of that message . . . This transformation included a new focus directed toward the necessity of Judah’s submission to Babylon . . . Because Jeremiah was not deported, his message to the post-597 community had to address the altered circumstances of this ‘remnant’ community.\(^{53}\)

It is against this backdrop that Seitz explores subsequent responses to exile in the central chapters of Jer. Here, like Pohlmann, he finds two very different viewpoints. The first, which is also that of the post-597 Jeremiah, Seitz characterises as ‘submit and live’.\(^{54}\) If Zedekiah and his people accept the suzerainty of Babylon, YHWH will allow them to live peacefully in their own land, and would show them favour. This message was promulgated in a document Seitz calls the ‘Scribal Chronicle’ (SC). Whilst sections of it are found in chs. 27–29 and 32–34, SC is most

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\(^{52}\) Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 207.

\(^{53}\) Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 207.

\(^{54}\) Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 205-207.
evident between chs. 37 - 43. Noting the repeated references in these chapters to scribes and other individuals from the family of Shaphan, Seitz suggests that the author of SC himself belonged to this circle.55

At the same time, Seitz argues that SC was reworked and supplemented by what he calls the ‘Exilic Redaction’ (ER). In many respects, ER is similar to Pohlmann’s golaorientierte Redaktion, and has strong affinities with theological traditions in Ezekiel.56 From the standpoint of its editors, the disobedience and destruction of the Judean remnant was inevitable from the outset and, indeed, in line with Jeremiah’s earlier preaching. According to Seitz,

It is to be emphasized that those deported in 597 were familiar in a direct way only with the pre-597 message of Jeremiah ... A different line was adopted in the post-597 Jeremiah traditions, with an emphasis upon submission of king and community in the land. However, for the post-597 exilic community, the ongoing Jeremiah traditions were either unavailable ... irrelevant ... eclipsed ... or, most likely, open to gross misinterpretation.57

ER expresses its ideological stance by supplementing SC with material pronouncing YHWH’s wrath against Zedekiah and his people (24.1-10; 29.16-19) and against the post-587 Judean remnant (42.13-22; 44.1-28). A key manoeuvre in this editorial process is what Seitz calls ‘foreclosing’; that is, placing a conditional promise of hope in a new context so that a negative response appears certain from the start. In this way, Seitz concludes,

... the sense of continuity the Exilic Redaction seeks to establish between all levels of Jeremiah tradition, regardless of provenance or temporal circumstances (pre-597, post-597, post-587) is underscored ... Put another way, though it may appear in the Scribal Chronicle that Yahweh can ‘build and plant’ when the post-597 (27.1-11) and post-587 remnant (40.9-12; 42.10-12) submits to Babylonian rule ... the Exilic Redaction anticipates a greater judgment awaiting both Judah and ‘the whole land’ (45.4-5). Only after this judgment is accomplished can restoration be considered (Jer. 52.31-34). Throughout the book of Jeremiah, the Exilic Redaction makes clear that the restoration of Israel involves Yahweh’s returning of a deported people.58

Despite the obvious similarities between Seitz’s analysis and that of Pohlmann, there are also important differences. As we have seen, Seitz finds SC much more extensively preserved in chs. 37 – 44 than Pohlmann does with his Grundtext. He traces ER to sixth century Babylon,

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56 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 213-214.
57 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 227-228.
58 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 291.
rather than fourth century Judah, and is much more sympathetic to its perspective: “Since they knew of the ultimate fate of Zedekiah (see xxxix 7ff. and the city (xxxix 8-10), theirs was a thoroughly justifiable and accurate interpretation.” More significantly, it is unclear whether Seitz considers ER to be quite as exclusive as Pohlmann considers GR; that is, whether he sees its message of hope as restricted to the 597 exiles alone. An affirmative answer in this respect seems to be implied by his claim that ER “presses for . . . a judgment which will bring about the final elimination of the post-597 remnant”. On the same page, however, he ascribes 23.1-8 (which envisages the return of a wider Diaspora) to ER as well, and elsewhere he credits ER with the prophecy of 29.10-14, which appears to address an exilic audience broader than that deported to Babylon in 597. In other words, Seitz may be guilty of blurring some important distinctions between different salvation oracles; or, we might say, of failing to differentiate between non-identical forms of differentiation.

Further evidence of blurred distinctions emerges in Seitz’s interpretation of SC. Its characteristic ‘submit and live’ message, he believes, comes to expression in 27.12-17 and 42.10-12, where Jeremiah assures the people that if they serve the king of Babylon, they can continue to live peacefully in their land. However, Seitz also ascribes 21.8-10 and 38.1-3 to SC, where (as we shall see) the promise is one of mere survival, and YHWH’s tone significantly more severe. Irrespective of whether we accept Seitz’s hypothesis of a ‘Scribal Chronicle’, therefore, or his analysis of its contents, we need to define more carefully what the call to ‘submit and live’ means in different contexts.

As will be evident, common to both Pohlmann and Seitz is a redaction-critical, diachronic approach to the text. Underlying Jer. 21 – 44, they believe, are two (or more) literary strata, each with its own ideological outlook, to which they then seek to allocate different passages. It is precisely this methodology, we suggest, that leads to the kind of ‘blurring’ of issues that we have observed in the work of both scholars. Whether or not they are right in their

59 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 212-214.
60 Seitz, ‘Crisis of Interpretation’, 92 (italics mine).
61 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 224.
62 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 210 n.8; see too 283. The ambiguity in his position resurfaces in his more recent article, ‘The Prophet Moses and the Canonical Shape of Jeremiah’, ZAW 101 (1989) 3-27, where he remarks: “There are no sub-groups within Jeremiah’s generation to be given special treatment – at least until they are exiled” (13).
theories concerning the composition of these chapters, it would seem to be the case that the *mode* of differentiation in oracles of salvation and judgement is not as uniform or consistent as they have assumed. Neither Pohlmann or Seitz explores the synchronic issue, which we touched on earlier, of how within clearly defined literary units the various differentiation passages are related to each other.

### 3.3. The Work of N. Kilpp

A very different approach to judgement and salvation prophecy in Jer. is reflected in the 1990 monograph of Nelson Kilpp. In the second part of this book, Kilpp discusses the salvation oracles in chs. 3 and 30-31, and concludes that the historical Jeremiah probably did preach a message of hope to the inhabitants of the former northern kingdom. More relevant to our interests, however, is the first part of Kilpp’s book, where he looks at salvation oracles addressed to a Judean audience. Specifically, he considers ch. 24, where salvation for the exiles and judgement for the remnant are juxtaposed; ch. 29, with its ‘letter to the exiles’; and ch. 32, where Jeremiah enacts and announces hope for the inhabitants of Judah. Unlike Pohlmann and Seitz, he also discusses oracles of salvation addressed to individuals and small groups; i.e., Zedekiah (34.1-5), Ebed-Melech (39.15-18), Baruch (45.1-5) and the Rechabites (ch. 35). Throughout, Kilpp seeks to distinguish between authentic and redactional elements.

Two features of Kilpp’s analysis are of particular interest. Firstly, in each of the relevant passages he carefully considers the *meaning* of ‘salvation’. In the oracles addressed to entire communities, he argues, salvation does not entail a return to how things were, but rather the creation of a new community under YHWH’s blessing: “Jahwe handelt nun nicht mehr an dem Volk, sondern an den Volksteilen”. In this new situation, the people’s geographical location, and the loss of their former religious and political institutions, become irrelevant. This being so, physical return to Judah is unnecessary. Only in the redactional material (e.g., 24.6; 29.10-

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67 Kilpp, *Niederreißen*, 38, 60.
14) is restoration to the land seen as a prerequisite of salvation. On the other hand, in the oracles addressed to individuals and small groups, salvation consists merely of survival:

Einzelpersonen wird Heil verheißt. Es besteht im Überleben im kommenden oder schon eingetretenen Gericht . . . Die Lebenszusage schränkt die äußerst Auswirkung des Unheils für einzelne ein: eine karge Heilsverheißung, die noch zurückhaltender als Jer. 29.5-7 und Jer. 32.15 ist.68

Here too, variant perspectives are evident in the redactional elements. Regarding the prophecy against Shemaiah, that “he will not see the good which I will do for my people” (29.32), Kilpp writes:

Jeremia kennt die Aussonderung einzelner oder kleinerer Gruppen vom künftigen Unheil (Baruch, Ebed-Melech, Rechabiten); eine Aussonderung einzelner aus dem zukünftigen Heil ist sonst bei Jeremia nicht bekannt. Die Perspektive von Jer. 29.32 ist anders als die Jeremias: Das Heil geschieht prinzipli dem Volk, doch gibt es Ausnahmen.69

The second point of interest in Kilpp’s study, which flows out of the first, is his attempt to identify the theological rationale underlying Jeremiah’s preaching of salvation. He concludes that while the prophet announced judgement on all the people, his message of hope was reserved for a particular group; namely, to those who had in some way experienced YHWH’s wrath. This explains why he can preach salvation to the exiles (but not the Judean remnant) in ch. 24, and to the inhabitants of the land (but not those in the city) in ch. 32. Upon both groups, judgement had now fallen. With regard to Jer. 24, Kilpp writes:

Das einzig sichtbare Merkmal, das die beiden Gruppen im ursprünglichen Visionsbericht Jer. 24 unterscheidet, ist ihre Situation. Dabei geht es nicht an erster Stelle um den Wohnort, sondern um das eingetroffene bzw. nicht eingetroffene Gericht.70

In ch. 32, meanwhile, the historical context is that of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in 587. Whilst Zedekiah and his people in the city continued to hold out, the inhabitants of the rest of Judah (die Landbewohner) were already suffering the effects of invasion and occupation.71 Kilpp sums up the matter thus:

Wurde von Jeremia dem ganzen Volk und dem ganzen Land das Gericht angekündigt, geschieht in den Heilsweissagungen das Gegenteil: Nicht mehr das Volksganze,

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68 Kilpp, Niederreißen, 93.
69 Kilpp, Niederreißen, 61.
70 Kilpp, Niederreißen, 38.
71 On ch. 32, Kilpp remarks: “Ein gewisser Gegensatz zwischen Jerusalem und Land Juda macht sich bemerkbar . . . Damit träfe das verheißene Heil nicht allgemein all diejenigen, die irgendwann in der Zukunft im Lande Juda leben werden, sondern die in der Gegenwart lebende Landbevölkerung Judas, die dem Gericht schon ausgesetzt ist” (Niederreißen, 79).
sondern nur Teile davon werden betroffen. Dem Volksteil, der das Unheil erfahren hat und noch erlebt, wird Heil zugesagt. Sind es Jer. 24; 29 die 597 Deportierten im Gegensatz zu den Zurückgebliebenen, so in Jer. 32.15 die Landbewohner im Gegensatz zu dem Jerusalemern.72

Kilpp's study is significant in a number of respects. By paying close attention to the meaning of 'salvation' in different contexts, he achieves a more sophisticated analysis than those of Pohlmann and Seitz. Moreover, his description of the theological rationale underlying the salvation oracles enables him to account for the proclamation of hope to certain audiences, and judgement to others, in terms of Jeremiah's own understanding, rather than that of later editors; indeed, his primary interest seems to be in the authentic material, rather than the redactional. Particularly welcome, from the point of view of the present study, is Kilpp's interest in 'exemptions' (Aussonderungen) from more generalised statements. At the same time, however, his study is somewhat selective; notably, he takes no account of certain texts which we have already identified as important, i.e., 21.1-10; 23.1-8; chs. 27 – 28; ch. 42. Nor does he consider the hermeneutical relationship of different passages within their present literary units.

4. Scope and Procedure for the Following Study

We began this chapter by referring to Koenen's investigation of judgement and salvation preaching in the OT prophets. We noted his argument that, while the prophets mostly viewed the people 'as a whole', there are certain texts which differentiate between 'the righteous' and 'the wicked'. Turning our attention to Jer., we saw that, while Koenen's claim is valid for much the book, chs. 21 – 45 include a striking number of passages in which salvation (of some sort) is announced to one group, and judgement to another. The nature of the polarities in these 'differentiation passages' varies; however, there are signs of a 'hermeneutical dialogue' between them.

We then looked at how the issue of differentiation in Jer. 21 – 45 is analysed in three major studies. Pohlmann and Seitz both employ a redaction-critical approach to isolate two distinct literary strata; in one of these, there is still hope for the post-597 Judean remnant, while in the other, it is restricted to the 597 exiles. Both scholars, however, tend to blur key

72 Kilpp, Niederreifen, 80.
distinctions within these strata, and also to overlook relevant texts. The work of Kilpp is more nuanced, but it too is somewhat selective in the material it covers.

In the study that follows, therefore, we propose to explore the issue of differentiation in Jer. 21 – 45 using an alternative methodology. Rather than grouping together all the material that displays a particular polarity (e.g., salvation for exiles and judgement for non-exiles), we will instead take a synchronic approach, focussing on concepts of group differentiation in oracles of salvation and judgement in three specific literary units; chs. 21 – 24, 27 – 29, and 37 – 45. In each, we will seek to identify and describe the different polarities, and how they relate to each other.

Our procedure can be outlined as follows. Chapters 2 – 4 form the heart of the dissertation. In each, we will place the relevant section in its Sitz im Buch, and explain the reasons for viewing it as a distinct literary unit. We will then proceed to a detailed study of the differentiation passages. For each one, I will set out in parallel columns the relevant Hebrew and Greek texts, i.e., the consonantal base of the Masoretic Text (MT), and the Old Greek Text (OG). For the former, I have followed the text of Codex Leningradensis (B19A), as provided in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS); in the passages we shall be discussing, this is identical with the text of the Aleppo Codex. For OG, we have followed J. Ziegler’s eclectic ‘Göttingen’ text. Quantitative and content variants (though not word order variants) are underlined.

The ensuing sections, ‘Textual Notes’ and ‘Exegetical Notes’, are not intended to provide exhaustive commentary, but rather to highlight points that will have a bearing on subsequent discussion. In the former, our focus will be upon the MT and OG, although the other

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73 As E. Tov, Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) 22, points out, strictly speaking MT is a family of texts, which may or may not have a single archetype; what most scholars refer to as MT is in fact the Tiberian tradition of Ben Asher. For our purposes, however, the distinction has little significance.

74 By OG, we mean the text of the original Greek translation of the Hebrew Vorlage, as distinct from that found in any particular later manuscript (e.g., LXXB, A, S); see A. Pietersma, ‘Septuagint Research: A Plea for a Return to Basic Issues’, VT 35 (1985) 296-298; Tov, Textual Criticism, 135.


76 This provides the base text in C. Rabin, S. Talmon & E. Tov (eds.), The Hebrew University Bible: The Book of Jeremiah (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997).

ancient versions, and the relevant Hebrew fragments from Qumran, will also be noted. A quantitative variant, i.e., a reading in one text that is absent from another, is indicated by the symbol >. If (as is usually the case) OG contains the shorter reading, the question is whether this is due to the translator having a shorter text in his Vorlage or to (deliberate or accidental) omission. If the former is judged more likely, the reading will be designated ‘MT plus’. Where we are dealing with a content variant, the Greek reading is followed by a Hebrew equivalent (see, e.g., our note on 21.1: MT תַּחַלָּת הָאָדָם יְהֹוָה; OG παρακολουθεῖν πρὸς Ἰσραήλ = כַּחַלָּת הָאָדָם אל יְהֹוָה). It should be stressed that such retroversions of OG are not necessarily being equated with the translator’s Vorlage; a decision on that point will be indicated in the subsequent discussion.

In ‘Coherence and Redaction’, our focus will be on the literary and conceptual unity of the passage under review, rather than on its authorship. At the very least, this discussion will serve to highlight some of the key issues for interpretation. As will become apparent, I am frequently unpersuaded by claims for multiple redactional layers within a given text. Such hypotheses, it seems to me, tend to underestimate the capacity of the biblical writer (or prophet) for subtlety of thinking, paradox and irony. Even if a text can be shown to display internal ‘dissonance’, this does not of itself indicate a plurality of speakers; an individual is perfectly capable of being inconsistent. It may, therefore, be better to speak of different voices in a text, without necessarily implying different authors.

With this textual and exegetical foundation in place, we will be able to explore the issue of ‘differentiation’ in the passage in question. The crucial questions we will need to ask here are: (1) Who exactly is being differentiated from whom in this text, and how? (2) What does ‘salvation’ and ‘judgement’ mean for each party? (3) What is the underlying rationale for this polarity?

At the end of each chapter, we will discuss the issues arising from the juxtaposition of different polarities within the literary unit. Key questions that we will want to ask here include: (1) How do these polarities interact with each other? Are they complementary, or in tension?

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Do they reinforce, qualify or question modes of differentiation in other parts of Jer.? (2) Does any one mode of differentiation have the dominant voice?

Earlier in this chapter, we showed how Jer. 1 – 20 conveys a message of undifferentiated judgement. With this in mind, in chapter 5 we will sketch out the ways in which Jer. 30 – 31, with its oracles of undifferentiated salvation, forms the opposite pole within the book. Finally, in chapter 6 we will summarise and reflect on the results of our enquiry, and consider their implications for the work of Pohlmann and Seitz.

Excursus: The Hebrew and Greek Texts of Jer.

As is well documented, the Hebrew and Greek texts of Jer. diverge significantly. The estimate of F. Giesebrrecht that Jer. MT contains some 2,700 extra words79 has now been superseded by Y.–J. Min’s calculation of 3,097 words,80 making Jer. OG one seventh shorter than Jer. MT. The additional material comprises numerous single words and short phrases, as well as lengthier passages such as 10.6-8, 10; 29.16-19; 33.14-26; 39.4-13; 51.44b-49a and 52.27b-30.81 MT and OG also differ regarding the arrangement of Jer. Most obviously, the ‘Oracles against the Nations’ (OAN), which MT places at the end of the book (chs. 46 – 51) occur in OG immediately after 25.13. Within the OAN anthology, the sequence of the individual oracles is also different. Similar divergence, though on a much smaller scale, occurs in the ‘polemic against idolatry’ (10.1-16), where OG locates MT v. 5 after v. 9. Further, there are an important number of content variants.

As against the older ‘abbreviation’ hypothesis (i.e., that the Greek translator deliberately omitted material in his Vorlage that he considered superfluous),82 most scholars now believe that OG is based on an earlier, shorter textual tradition, which was later expanded in the proto-MT;

79 F. Giesebrrecht, Das Buch Jeremia, übersetzt und erklärt (HKAT 3.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1894) xix.
indeed, these two traditions are sometimes referred to as ‘edition 1’ and ‘edition 2’ of Jer.83

Exactly how and when the two editions diverged is much debated, and probably unanswerable.84

The fragments of Jer. discovered at Qumran have clearly shown, however, that both traditions sat side by side in the library of the Covenanters. To date, six Jeremiah scrolls have been found there,85 their estimated dates of composition range from the start of the second century BC (or earlier) for 4QJern, to the end of the first century BC for 4QJer.86 Of these six scrolls, four – 2QJer, 4QJer a, 4QJer b, and 4QJer c – are considered generally proto-Masoretic in character, while the two – 4QJer d (9.22 – 10.18)87 and 4QJer e (43.3 - 9) – for the most part agree with OG. The qualifiers ‘generally’, ‘for the most part’, should be taken seriously. With reference to 4QJer b, for instance, Schmid concludes that the Qumran evidence points to a more fluid textual situation than is sometimes supposed:

4QJer d bezeugt zwar nicht exakt die hebräischen Vorlage von Jer. LXX, aber eine Textform, die der anzunehmenden hebräischen Vorlage von Jer. LXX deutlich nähersteht als Jer. MT. Diese Differenzierung ist insofern von Belang, als die zeigt, daß


85 For transcriptions of 4QJer d and 4QJer e see Janzen, Studies, 173-184. For a reconstruction of the available Qumran Jer. texts in English, see M. Abegg, P. Flint, & E. Ulrich (eds.) The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible. Translated and with Commentary (Edinburgh: T &T Clark, 1999) 382-406.

86 Their witness to Jer. is precious but limited; as Abegg et al. point out, “although these manuscripts between them preserve much of the book’s fifty-two chapters, they are all so badly damaged and fragmentary that not even a trace of twenty-one chapters is preserved” (Dead Sea Scrolls Bible, 382).

87 4QJer b was previously seen as also containing the fragments now categorised separately as 4QJer d and 4QJer e.
Für das Jeremiabuch auch ein mit zwei präzise identifizierbaren Endgestalten rechnendes Modell nicht ausreicht: Man hat mit zwei Haupttypen und Mischformen zu rechnen.98

To chart the history of the texts of Jer. further back than the second century B.C.E. is probably impossible; at best, it would be a matter of inference based on theories of composition. Precisely this fact, however, means we should not automatically assume that a reading peculiar to MT is ‘late’ (still less, ‘inferior’).89 Difference is one thing; antiquity is another, and authenticity something else.90 As Craigie et al. observe, “having recognised the difference (between the Hebrew and Greek texts), it is much more difficult to provide a coherent account of the reasons for it, or to know with certainty whether the MT or the Vorlage of G represents the most ancient and original textual tradition.”91 In any case, we should not assume that the OG Vorlage was itself a perfect, pristine text; to the contrary, there is good reason to think it is in a number of places haplographic.92 Consequently, where in our textual notes we have marked a given reading as ‘MT plus’, this means no more than that the reading was probably absent from the OG Vorlage.

What then is the goal of text criticism as it relates to the book of Jer.?93 Reimer remarks, For text critical endeavours, especially as regards the Hebrew text, one must be clear about what stage in textual (literary?) history is being established. Any one of a number


89 Cf. Carroll’s remark, Jeremiah, 51: “The developing consensus of scholarship now is that the shorter text on which G is based represents the more original and superior textual tradition of the book of Jeremiah.”

90 See Tov, ‘Some Aspects’, 150, on this point.

91 Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, xlii.

92 A point which Janzen, Studies, 117-120, readily concedes. See, too, now Lundbom, Jeremiah 1 – 20, 61-62, 885-887.

of ‘stopping points’ could reasonably be sought, ranging from the holiest Utext through the Vorlagen of the LXX translators to the text of the ‘Jamnia council’ up to the fully annotated text of the Masoretes.94

Traditionally, the goal of text criticism has been defined as the recovery of ‘the original text’.95 The very notion of an ‘original text’, however, is open to question,96 and not least in the case of Jer. The situation might seem to be relatively straightforward in regard to the Greek text, where, according to Reimer, “the goal of the text critic is to establish the text as closely as possible to the one that left the pen of the translator”.97 Even here, however, if Tov’s theory is correct that Jer. OG has undergone a revision, which is preserved in only part of the book,98 then (unless we are to try to ‘unrevise’ the revision) ‘OG’ has to be defined at two levels. In respect to the Hebrew text, defining the goal of text criticism is clouded by disagreement over how far we can speak of a ‘fixed’ or ‘canonical’ text. For the purpose of the present study, however, the Hebrew text upon which exegesis and discussion will be based is that of the (unpointed) MT, except in those few places where textual error (as opposed to a modification or expansion) has clearly occurred (e.g., the reading יְשֹׁעַ in 27.1).99

94 Reimer, Horror Among the Nations, 112.


96 A.P. Hayman, ‘The “Original Text”: A Scholarly Illusion’, in Words Remembered, Texts Renewed. Essays in Honour of John F.A. Sawyer (JSOT Sup. 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 434-449, allows for the use of textual criticism “at least to reconstruct earlier forms of texts than are attested in the manuscripts we have” (436) but concludes that “the search for an ‘original text’ in the kind of literature with which we are dealing is likely to be fruitless.” (442).

97 Reimer, Horror Among the Nations, 113.


99 See Tov, Textual Criticism, 11; cf. Reimer’s reference to “the fullest ‘error-free’ Hebrew text” (Horror Among the Nations, 113).
Chapter 2: Differentiation in Jeremiah 21 – 24

1. Introduction to Jer. 21 – 24

1.1. The Literary Setting of Jer. 21 – 24

Jer. 21 – 24 forms the final major unit in what is generally seen as ‘part one’ of the book, chs. 1 – 25.1 Comprising a mixture of prose sermons, poetic oracles and laments, this macro-section is dominated by the threat of YHWH’s impending judgement against Judah. Its precise terminus varies, however, between MT and OG. In the former, the image of Jeremiah giving the ‘cup of wrath’ to the foreign kings and announcing YHWH’s judgement against the whole earth (25.15-38) seems to provide the fulfilment of (and an inclusio with) Jeremiah’s commission as ‘a prophet to the nations’ (1.5-10).2 Thus, the first part of Jer. MT comprises 1.1 – 25.38, a demarcation often reflected in the secondary literature.3 However, the first section of Jer. OG (and, we may assume, its Vorlage) ends with Jeremiah’s sermon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (cf. the retrospective ἐν τρισκαθέκατῳ ἔτει τοῦ Ἰωσία... καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἡμέρας ταυτής, 25.3), with the Oracles against the Nations (OAN) forming the second major section (25.14 –

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2 So Bright, *Jeremiah*, lvii.


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32.24). This structural division is highlighted in v. 13, where the clearly editorial phrase παντοκρατορ και γεγονεί το βιβλίον του θεού (#endif) indicates the conclusion of a major literary unit.5

Some scholars believe that this ‘literary unit’ was in fact an early edition of the book of Jer. “Cap. 1 – 25 bildet, wenn auch vielleicht in etwas kürzerer Form als der jetzigen, sozusagen die Urgestalt des Jeremiabuches . . . und scheint eine gewisse Zeit fü r sich existiert zu haben”, wrote Duhm.6 More recently, Clements has stated that the phrase nm naD2 mron, “clearly betrays its role as a formal ending to a literary collection.”7 Many have identified this ISO with Baruch’s second (and enlarged) scroll of 605 BC (36.32). Even if the notion of an Urgestalt or an Urrolle is correct, however, it is far from certain how much of chs. 1 – 25 it included (note Duhm’s ‘in etwas kürzerer Form’), and in particular, whether chs. 21 – 24 formed part of it.

1.2. Distinctiveness and Coherence: Jer. 21 – 24 as a Unit

That Jer. 21 – 24 constitutes a self-contained literary unit within the wider book is widely acknowledged. Stulman describes it as “the final macro-unit of the first scroll”,8 while Carroll and O’Connor both designate it an ‘appendix’ to chs. 1 – 20.9 Indirectly, this view is supported by the literary cohesion of the preceding chapters. Several scholars have shown, for

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4 See A. Weiser, Introduction to the Old Testament (ET: D.M. Barton; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961) 213, and Schmid, Buchgestalten, 7. This arrangement is also reflected in Rudolph, Jeremia, 139.

5 Lundbom, Jeremiah 1 – 20, 93, believes that “these words make better sense when taken as a pointer to what originally lay ahead – and what in LXX still does lie ahead – viz., the oracles against Babylon.” However, the preceding phrase, raxvra tot Y£YPaM-M*£VCX £V TCP pt-PZtcp xouxcp (nin PSD3 mron), strongly suggests that in the Vorlage, ἡ βιβλιοθήκη θεού, was retrospective (so Bright, Jeremiah, 163) and the same is probably true of τον βιβλίαρ τούτον in OG. See further our discussion of 25.11-14 in ch. 4.

6 Duhm, Jeremia, xxi; similarly Bright, Jeremiah, lvii-lviii.


8 Stulman, Order Amid Chaos, 49.

9 Carroll, Jeremiah, 404; see too Rudolph, Jeremia, 115; Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 283; McConville, Judgment and Promise, 54. Among the few dissenters, Thompson, Jeremiah, 127-128, detaches chs. 21 – 23 (‘Kings and false prophets denounced’) from chs. 24 – 25 (‘Two visions and a summary’), though note his disclaimer (125). Lundbom, Jeremiah 1 – 20, 95-97, designates chs. 21 – 23 ‘The king and prophet appendix’, and sees ch. 24 as introducing chs. 24 – 45. Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 188, brackets chs. 21 – 25 together, adding the caveat that “it is difficult to detect an intentional ordering.”
example, how chs. 11 – 20 form a sub-section structured around the ‘confessions’, while Lundbom notes that Jeremiah’s anguished cry, ולֶהָ בָּדָא מְרַגְּעֲתִים לָא מִשָּׁם (20.18), creates an inclusio with YHWH’s words of commission in 1.5. We do not have to accept his conclusion that “chs. 1 – 20 can be designated the First Edition of the book of Jeremiah”, therefore, to see that 20.18 marks a definite pause in the flow of the text.

Ch. 25, meanwhile, has its own character as a review of the first part of the book.

Within chs. 21 – 24 themselves, the first indication that we are dealing with a new literary unit lies in the opening formula, וּרְדוּ הָאָשֶׁר הוֹיָל אֲלֵיךָ מַעַּה יְהוָה (21.1). Previously (7.1; 11.1; 18.1; also 30.1), this expression, in conjunction with מִלְּאָבָר, has served to introduce a specific command from YHWH to Jeremiah (‘Stand’! ‘Go’! ‘Rise!’). Here, no such instruction follows, and precisely what וּרְדוּ refers to is left unclear (see below, ‘Exegetical Notes’).

Two internal features of chs. 21 – 24 confirm their distinctiveness in relation to chs. 1 – 20. Firstly, they display far more interest in matters of historical detail. Here again, the opening formula of 21.1 is significant, since for the first time in the book it is linked to a particular context וּרְדוּ הָאָשֶׁר הוֹיָל אֲלֵיךָ מַעַּה יְהוָה (21.1), thereby setting the subsequent pattern for this formula (cf. 32.1; 34.1.8; 35.1; 40.1). Moreover, chs. 21 – 24 regularly refer to specific kings and dates. Oracles addressed to Shallum, Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin (22.10-30) are framed by material set in the reign of Zedekiah (21.1-10 and 24.1-10); by contrast, apart from briefly mentioning Josiah in 3.6, chs. 1 – 20 conspicuously lack such historical notation.

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10 See A.R. Diamond, The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context. Scenes of Prophetic Drama (JSOT Sup. 45; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987) 177-188; K.M. O’Connor, The Confessions of Jeremiah. Their Interpretation and Role in Chapters 1 – 25 (SBLDS 94; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 130-146; Smith, Laments, 43-60. Lundbom, Jeremiah 1 – 20, 869, notes that the end of ch. 20 repeats terms from the end of ch. 10 (וּרְדוּ הָאָשֶׁר הוֹיָל) 11.3; 20.15) and the beginning of ch. 11 (וּרְדוּ הָאָשֶׁר הוֹיָל) 10.25; 20.18).

11 Lundbom, Jeremiah 1 – 20, 93.

12 Lundbom, Jeremiah 1 – 20, 94. Lundbom is here following Reitzschel’s thesis, Urrolle, 128-129, that Jer. 1 – 20 formed a ‘traditions block’ which originally concluded in what is now ch. 45. Thus, Jeremiah’s final lament led straight into Baruch’s, linked by the catchword וּרְדוּ, ‘sorrow’ (20.18; 45.3). This verbal echo may well be intentional, although 45.1b clearly presupposes the narrative of ch. 36.

13 Strictly speaking, this formula marks a new episode, rather than a new unit; hence, it occurs three times between 34.1 and 35.1, whilst 26.1 and 36.1 – generally seen as inaugurating new macro-sections – begin with the somewhat different וּרְדוּ הָאָשֶׁר הוֹיָל (לָא מִשָּׁם) מַעַּה יְהוָה (לָא מִשָּׁם).

14 See further Pohlmann, Studien, 32 n.63.

15 Especially striking in this regard is the unspecified date of Jeremiah’s temple sermon in ch. 7 (cf. 26.11) and the plural vocative in 19.3, ‘Hear the word of YHWH, O kings of Judah’.

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with this is the observation (which will form the heart of this chapter) that chs. 21 – 24 contain the first messages of hope for particular groups of people (21.8-9; 23.1-8; 24.5-7). Whilst there have been promises of restoration before now (3.14-18; 12.14-17; 16.14-16), these have been of a pan-Israel, and even international, character.

Secondly, chs. 21 – 24 are defined by their internal literary structure, which can be outlined as follows:

**Fig. 1: The Literary Structure of Jer. 21 – 24**

a. Judgement on Zedekiah and Jerusalem; hope for those who go out to Babylon (21.1-10)

b. Oracles against the kings (21.11 – 22.30)

c. Promises of restoration and of a new king (23.1-8)

b’. Oracles against the prophets (23.9-40)

a’. Judgement on Zedekiah and Jerusalem; hope for those in Babylon (24.1-10)

21.1-10 and 24.1-10 form an *inclusio*. Both warn of judgement on Jerusalem and its king, but offer hope to those who identify with Babylon.16 Verbally, this theology is expressed in similar terms; compare (21.10) and (24.6). Another link lies in the trilogy (21.7, 9; 24.9). Pohlmann terms 21.1-10 and 24.1-10 a ‘frame composition’ (*Rahmenkomposition*),17 while Schmid refers to “die Klammerstellung um den Komplex 21 – 24”.18 Within this frame are two anthologies, castigating the kings (21.11 – 22.30), and the prophets (23.9-39), highlighted by their superscriptions, and. Sandwiched between them is the literary and theological heart of the unit, 23.1-8. Here, YHWH promises to raise up a new king (23.9), so echoing the name of Zedekiah (23.10) with whom chs. 21 – 24 begin and end. Without

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16 “The prose discourse (of 21.1-10) declares that the destiny of Judah as a reimaged community depends in large measure on its response to Babylonian subjugation” (Stulman, *Order Amid Chaos*, 51).


19 OG ḫεξος ἠφοτάξος Ἰωάννης suggests that the *Vorlage* contained vocative address rather than a superscription. Possibly MT added the preposition ה to counterbalance לְכַלָּה in 23.9; pace Duhm, *Jeremia*, 171; Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 116; McKane, *Jeremiah 1*, 506, who all take י as MT plus but retain the preposition.
claiming that the second half of the unit is a perfect mirror image of the first, the overall pattern is too clear to be fortuitous.

What exactly is meant by describing chs. 21–24 as ‘a unit’ is a moot point. Arguably, this section is a compositional unity; that is, it existed independently before being added en bloc to the developing book. Rudolph saw these four chapters as a separate literary cycle that was then inserted between chs. 20 and 25, while Reitzschel saw them as an oral ‘tradition complex’ (Überlieferungskomplex) that evolved in the exilic synagogues, before being added to the ‘tradition block’ of chs. 1–20. Both views are attractive, but inevitably speculative. It is possible, for example, that 21.1–23.8 (‘oracles about kings’) was added first, and supplemented later by 23.9-39 and 24.1-10. All we can say with certainty is that chs. 21–24 constitute a literary unity within the present book.

This is not to deny the diversity of chs. 21–24. The anthological nature of the oracles against the kings and the prophets is shown not only by their headings, but also by the admixture of poetry (e.g., 22.20-23; 23.9-14) and prose (e.g., 22.1-5; 23.33-39) – and, in the case of the first collection, by the fact that three different kings are addressed. Literary and historical differences are also evident in the two passages set in the reign of Zedekiah; 21.1-10 records Jeremiah’s message to king and city during the siege of 588-587, while ch. 24 describes a private vision-experience of the prophet shortly after 597.

More important is the conceptual diversity. Granted, the critique of Judah’s leadership is a prominent theme; Thiel summarises their contents as “hauptsächlich Worte über die politischen und geistigen Führer des Volkes, Könige und Propheten”, while Stulman entitles 21–24 “the dismantling of royal ideology”. But can all of chs. 21–24 be subsumed under this

20 Rudolph, Jeremia, xviii.


rubric (note Thiel’s qualifying ‘hauptsächlich’)? As we will see, 21.1-10 contains an indictment of the entire city plus a message (qualified) hope to the people. Moreover, in ch. 24 judgement and hope appear totally unrelated to the issue of leadership. Thiel attempts to link YHWH’s condemnation of Jerusalem here to the preceding critique: “das Gericht mit dem Versagen der Führer des Volkes und wohl auch mit dem blinden Vertrauen des Volkes auf seine Leiter (vgl. 14.14-16) begründet”, but this is unconvincing. As Carroll observes, ch. 24 “belongs to a rather different strand in that it distinguishes between two groups, those deported in 597 and those who remained behind in the city.”

1.3. Function: Jer. 21 – 24 in its Literary Context

If chs. 21 – 24 do form a distinct unit (and possibly a late addition), the question arises as to why they have been placed at this point in the text. Holladay’s explanation –“because הָסָס Hiph., ‘turn around’, in v. 4 shares the same semantic field as הָסָס in 20.16” — is hardly convincing. Nor is it clear, as Clines and Gunn believe, that “the self-curse and the ‘why’ question (20.18) are naturally understood as representing the prophet’s personal reaction to the impending destruction which he will share with his people”. Possibly the name ‘Pashhur’ (20.1-6; 21.1) functioned as a catchword, though we might have expected a more substantial connection. Rudolph offers some help here by contrasting the rough treatment meted out to Jeremiah by Pashhur in ch. 20 and the humble demeanour of his namesake in ch. 21. For his part, Pohlmann simply notes that “eine Anknüpfung an den vorausgehenden Kontext ist nicht erkennbar”.

24 Thiel, Redaktion I – 25, 260.
25 See Pohlmann’s criticisms of Thiel on this point, Studien, 184.
26 Carroll, Jeremiah, 404.
27 Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 569.
30 Rudolph, Jeremia, 116.
31 Pohlmann, Studien, 32.
We suggest, however, that there are several lines of continuity between chs. 21 - 24 and what precedes, which seem to have been strangely overlooked. Firstly, the military crisis facing Jerusalem in 21.1-10 is in two respects clearly anticipated in chs. 19 - 20, which explicitly state that the city will be placed under siege (יָטָשָׁה, 19.9; cf. 21.4, 9), and that the enemy will be Babylon (20.4-6; cf. 21.1ff.) – the first time this identification has been made in the book. We might also note how the warning in 20.4 that the king of Babylon will 'strike them with the sword' (הֶבֶנֶת הָנָּרִים) finds an echo in 21.7, כָּז הָנָּרִים.

Secondly, the double prediction in ch. 20 that Judah will be exiled (יָנָּה, v. 4) to Babylon,32 and that Pashhur and his family will go into captivity there (יָנָּה נְבָשָׁה, v. 6), heralds a marked emphasis in chs. 21 - 24 on deportation. Though only hinted at in 21.1-10, it emerges clearly in the oracles against the kings: Shallum has already been exiled (יָנָּה, 22.12), Jehoiakim’s allies will go into captivity (יָנָּה נְבָשָׁה, 22.22) and Jehoiachin will be ‘cast’ (יָפָה) into another land (יָפָה, 22.26).33 The promise of restoration in 23.1-8 presupposes a general Diaspora, while 24.1-7 offers hope to those exiled (יָנָּה) to Babylon in 587.

A third point relates to what we said earlier about the focus in chs. 21 - 24 on specific kings and groups of people. As we saw in our previous chapter, in chs. 1 - 19 the targets of Jeremiah’s denunciations are of a very general nature. Ch. 20 breaks the pattern, however, by singling out for criticism a particular individual, Pashhur ben Immer. In this way, it provides a transition between the generality of chs. 1 - 19 and specificity of chs. 21 - 24. The rhetorical impact of this movement has been noted by M.S. Smith:

Chapters 11-20 dramatize the guilt of the enemies in great detail, but leave them largely nameless. Through this mode of presentation, the audience is predisposed to accept the guilt of the enemies before their identity is unveiled, which takes place beginning in chapter 20 and is advanced in great detail in chapters 21 - 25.34

Smith’s comments about ‘the guilt of the enemies’ are particularly significant for our own concerns, and we will return to them at the end of this chapter.

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32 This is “the first explicit reference to the place of exile in the book” (Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1, 268), and (after 13.19, יָנָּה יִדְרֶה נְבָשָׁה נְבָשָׁה) only the second reference to exile at all.
33 Or, as OG presupposes, לע אל זהרה.
34 Smith, Laments, 66.
Granted, the juxtaposition of chs. 21 – 24 with ch. 20 raises a problem. Since Jeremiah’s confrontation with Pashhur almost certainly took place before 597, one would assume Pashhur was among those exiled with Jehoiachin in that year. Consequently, the negative tone of 20.1-6 is in tension with ch. 24, which (if we take the passage at face value) assures the 597 exiles without exception of YHWH’s favour. But as we will see, the same tension applies to chs. 21 – 24 internally as well.

2. Jer. 21.1-10

2.1. Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tr>
<td>ὁ λόγος ὁ γενομένος παρὰ κυρίου πρὸς Ιερεμίαν συν ἀπεστείλε πρὸς άποινον ὁ βασιλεὺς Σεδεκίας τὸν Πασχάρ υἱὸν Μελιχια υἱὸν Σοθονίαν υἱὸν Μαασανίου τὸν ἱερακ λεγὼν</td>
<td>יִרְעה אֲשֶׁר הִיָּה אל רִמְוַהָ מֵאַהַז חוֹזָה בַּשָּׁלֶה אֵל</td>
<td>the order which he spoke to Jeremiah, the king of the king, who sent a letter to Zedekiah, son of Melchizadek, son of Sennacherib, son of Maaseiah, saying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐπερωτησάνην περὶ ἡμῶν τοῦ κυρίου ὅτι βασιλεὺς Βασσάλων ἐφεστηκέν ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς εἶ ποιησεν κύριος κατὰ πάντα τα βασιλεία κατὰ αὐτού καὶ ἀπελευσεται αὐ’ ἡμῶν</td>
<td>דִּרְשׁוּ אֲשֶׁר חָפְצוּ אֲשֶׁר חָפְצוּ אֲשֶׁר חָפְצוּ אֲשֶׁר חָפְצוּ אֲשֶׁר חָפְצוּ אֲשֶׁר חָפְצוּ</td>
<td>inquired of us concerning the Lord, who had done to us all these things since we had rebelled against him by all the kings who were over us, and had exiled us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς Ιερεμίασ σύνιις ἐρείτε πρὸς Σεδεκίαν βασιλέα Ιουδα</td>
<td>יִארְמֵה יִרְמֵהוּ אֲלֹהָם בַּתַּמְצֹר הָא שְׂרֵיָה</td>
<td>he said to them, “ Jeremiah, sons of Israel, say to Zedekiah, king of Judah,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τάδε λέγει κυρίος ἵδου ἐγὼ μεταστρέφω τα ὁπλα τα πολεμίκα ἐν εἰς ὑμεις πολεμίεστε εν αὐτοις προς τους Χαλδαίους τους συγκεκλεικτος ὑμας ἔξωθεν του</td>
<td>καὶ ὀρέξαντης πρὸς βασιλέα Ιουδα</td>
<td>and saith to you, “Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will make you change your army from fighting against them; fight for yourselves against the Chaldeans who have surrounded you,</td>
</tr>
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</table>

35 The incident is undated, but since Pashhur is described as הָיֶה בְּבִימָה (20.1), and since by the time of Jeremiah’s letter to the exiles this position was held by Zephaniah (29.26), a date before 597 is likely. Thompson, Jeremiah, 445-446, and Lundbom, Jeremiah 1 – 20, 850, suggest a date between 609-605.

36 It might be argued that 21.1-10 has been juxtaposed with ch. 20 to make it appear that Pashhur was one of the 587 exiles. In this way, the message of 20.1-6 is made to conform to the outlook of ch. 24, with its bias towards the 597 exiles (cf. Carroll’s remark, Jeremiah, 483, about reading “the poems in 2 – 20 against a backdrop of the events of 597, a feature the narratives know nothing about . . . they may be as easily read in terms of 587.”). Against this, however, 21.1-10 speaks of Zedekiah’s people facing death in Jerusalem, rather than being exiled. Also, the proposed redactional manoeuvre does nothing to mitigate 22.24-30, which forcefully expresses YHWH’s judgement on Jehoiachin.
| Τείχος | Είς το μεσον της πολεον ταύτης | Μετάφραση Αρ. Χατσος Βις Νεμνήθη Κεράρη | (5) Ρήχως πετάγματα νόμις
<table>
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<td>και πολεμησόμενο εγώ άμας εν χειρι</td>
<td>Εκτεντομή μεν και ανανταυριωνε μετα</td>
<td>Εφίτως ἀποκατάσταται μνήμης και μέγαν</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| και παταξά πατώς τους καταικουντας | τη πολεις ταυτη τους ἀνθρώπους και τα | τήν επικράτησιν και μεγαλη και | (6) Η τετελεσμένη δικαιότητα των άνθρωπων των
| και μετα ταυτα λεγει κυριος δωσον | τον Σεδεικίαν βασιλεα Ιουδα και τους παίδας | δημοσιος προσφέρει τον τρωκτικον |
| και τον λαον του καταλέγοντα εν | εις χειρας ἐχθρον αυτων των ζητουσαν | τον τρώκτιστον και μήν άνθρωπος και | (7) Αναφέρει δε το το δεδομενον μετα τον
| και προς τον λαον τουν ξερης ταδε | λεγεις κυριος ίδου εγω δεδοκα προ προσωπον | τον τρώκτιστον και μήν άνθρωπος και |
| ο καθημενος εν τη πολεις ταυτη | ιμάμας ίπτις και ο αιρετομενος επισωπησε | ό δε δημοσιος προσφερει τον τρωκτιστον | (8) Λατασης εις το καρα λεγε σημερη εις το
| δισπ ουτας την πολιν ταυτης εις κακα | ρωμης τον τρωκτιστον και μην άνθρωπος και | τον τρωκτιστον και μην άνθρωπος και |
| 2.2. Textual Notes

v. 1. MT Τον λαον ιαπω άπο του τρωκτιστον 
OG παρα κυριος προς Ιερεμιαν =

The first of two word order variants in the passage (cf. v. 7). MT is consistent with this
sequence; OG follows the same order as here in 11.1; 18.1 and 40[47].1, but agrees with MT in
30[37].1; 34[41].1; 35[42].1.

45
v. 2. MT נבוכדנאצר >OG. The name of the Babylonian king is one of the most common MT plusses. This is its first occurrence in the book (cf. the variant spelling נבוכדנאצר in chs. 27 – 29); in Jer. OG, it does not occur till 24.1.

v. 3. OG βασιλεύς Ιουδα >MT: This is unlikely to be an explanatory gloss by the translator, since he has already (v. 1) referred simply to βασιλεύς Σεζεκίας. It thus points to a longer reading in the Vorlage. The wider significance of this is that it tells against the theory that the translator abbreviated such details; see further vv. 4 and 7.

v. 4. MT ואספתי אתו; את מלך בבל; באשר בירך; אלהים שזרא >OG: The first of these is a typical MT plus. תבככ אל תככ could be absent from OG or its Vorlage by haplography (repetition of של). The same may apply to את מלך בבל (repetition of את); however, MT also gives extra prominence to the Babylonian king in v. 7, and though haplography is possible there too, its occurrence in two verses on the same point would be rather coincidental. ואספתי אתו also appears expansionary; leaving aside the lengthy subordinate clause (לדוומד), the Vorlage would have read מכס את כל מלךемые לדוומד; לא תורה כדי הואה אל בְּכֵך, see 2 Kgs. 20.2). Some have argued that OG has in this verse shortened its Vorlage in order to produce a clearer text, but as Janzen remarks, MT is if anything clearer than OG.

v. 5. MT הָיָה >OG: The term may have been overlooked in OG or the Vorlage due to homoioarchton (repetition of ב in הבתמה), but it is more likely that (as in vv. 7 and 9) MT has added a term to create a verbal trilogy.

v. 6. MT וּ; OG καὶ ἀποθανονται: The conjunction affects the syntax of the whole verse: MT, 'and I will strike down the inhabitants of this city ... by a great plague they will die'; OG, 'and I will strike down those who live in this city ... with a great death, and they will die'.

37 So Janzen, Studies, 43.
38 So Janzen, Studies, 43; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 567; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 497; contra Thiel, Redaktion 1 – 25, 233.
39 So Rudolph, Jeremia, 114; H. Weippert, 'Jahwekrieg und Bundesfluch in Jer. 21.1-7', ZAW 82 (1970) 398 n.11; Pohlmann, Studien, 34 n.82, considers this possible.
40 Janzen, Studies, 43.
The use of δολογία (‘death’) to render רדך (‘plague’) is standard not only in Jer. (cf. v. 7; 14.12; 24.10, etc.) but also elsewhere in the OT (Ex. 5.3; 9.3, 15; Lev. 26.25; Num. 14.12; Deut. 28.21; 2 Sam. 24.13; 1 Kgs. 8.37).

v. 7. Again, it has been argued that the translator has here abbreviated a cumbersome Vorlage. However, each variant must be considered individually.

MT > OG: Probable MT plus; this distinction between הָלְשָׁנָה and בַּעַשַׁר is unparalleled in Jer., whilst בַּעַשַׁר occurs five times (39.9 x 2; 40.6; 41.10; 52.15). MT may have added בַּעַשַׁר in order to emphasise the totality of YHWH’s judgement.

MT > OG: Haplography (either in OG or its Vorlage) is possible (repetition of בַּעַשַׁר). However, since MT also contains a reference to Nebuchadrezzar in v. 4 that is lacking in OG, the probability is that both are MT plusses. The crucial point is that MT requires this reference to Nebuchadrezzar to facilitate its variant readings in the rest of the verse; without it, we are obliged to follow OG.

MT / OG: The point here is not simply that OG does not represent בַּעַשַׁר, but rather suggests an underlying הָלְשָׁנָה (מָכָה); for a similar construction, see Ex. 4.19; Jer. 11.21. However, it is unlikely that MT intends to imply a second group of people (who would they be?); rather, this is a case of hendiadys, ‘their enemies seeking their lives’ (a form of waw explicativum).

MT / OG: MT focuses on Nebuchadrezzar as the agent of judgement, while the plural form of the verb in OG connects it to ‘their enemies seeking

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41 So Rudolph, Jeremia, 114; Weippert, ‘Jahwekrieg’, 398 n.11; contra Janzen, Studies, 41; Pohlmann, Studien, 36; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 568.
42 Pace C.F. Keil, Biblischer Kommentar über den Propheten Jeremia und die Klagelieder (BKAT 3.2; Leipzig: 1872) 243, who saw here a further example of waw explicativum.
43 So Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 28.
44 Though not addressing this point directly, McKane, Jeremiah 1, 491, retains this phrase in his translation.
45 So Janzen, Studies, 4; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 568 (though both concede haplography is possible).
46 On waw explicativum, see GKC §154 n.1b; D.W. Baker, ‘Further Examples of the Waw Explicativum’, VT 30 (1980) 129-136. Rudolph, Jeremia, 234, renders Jer. 46.26, רֶדֶךָ מָכָה נָא עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׂמְךָ מִמְּשָׁךְ (italics mine). Note that wherever MT Jer. mentions רֶדֶךָ and מָכָה together, it connects them with הָלְשָׁנָה (19.7; 9; 34.20, 21; 44.30 x 2; 49.37), while OG alternates between inserting כָּל (19.7; 51.30 x2) and omitting it (21.7; 25.17).
their lives'. The subject of life in 20.4 is (in both texts) the king of Babylon, but if we are right to view Nebuchadrezzar as an MT plus, OG’s κατακαύσωσιν accurately interprets its Vorlage.47

MT ἀλὰ Ἰάκωβος σὺν Θεῷ τῇ ζωῇ; OG σὺν Θεῷ τῇ ζωῇ (καὶ αὐτὸν τούτον καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦ λαίμου καὶ αὐτὸ τῆς μακάριοτος = Θεῷ τῆς ζωῆς Ἐρυθρών, ὑψίστη, ὑψίστη) that is otherwise consistent in Jer. (14.12; 24.10; 27.8, 13; 29.17, 18; 32.24, 36; 38.2; 42.17, 22; 44.13).

v. 9. ὑπὲρ Ἰακώβ >OG: MT plus; the term is also unrepresented by OG in the parallel passage 38[45].2. For the two-member form Ἰακώβ ὑπέρ Ἰακώβ, see 5.12; 14.15; 16.4; 44.12, 18, 27. As in v. 5 (Ῥωμαίοι) and v. 7 (Ἰησοῦς Χριστός), an MT plus has resulted in a verbal trilogy.

MT Ketiv ἀλὰ Ἰάκωβ (‘will live’) is preferable to Qere ἀλὰ Ἰάκωβος (‘and he will live’) and is supported by OG.

OG καὶ ἐλευθέρως >MT: The additional wording may reflect a longer Vorlage, or conflation by a later Greek copyist; cf. the parallel 38[45].2, where MT also supplies a final Ἰακώβ.

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47 So Duhm, Jeremia, 170; Pohlmann, Studien, 36-37; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 568; contra Weippert, ‘Jahwekrieg’, 398 n.14; Thiel, Redaktion 1 – 25, 234; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 501.
48 Favouring OG are Duhm, Jeremia, 170; Pohlmann, Studien, 37; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 568; favouring MT are Thiel, Redaktion 1 – 25, 234; Weippert, ‘Jahwekrieg’, 398 n.14; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 501.
49 A somewhat similar divergence appears in 42[49].12, where in place of MT Ἰακώβ ἐν θυσία (referring to Nebuchadrezzar), OG reads καὶ ἐλευθέρως Ἰακώβ (referring to God).
2.3. Exegetical Notes

v. 1. This is ambiguous; might denote the word which Jeremiah subsequently sent to the king, or the entire incident.

Pashhur ben Malchiah reappears later as one of a group who complain that Jeremiah’s preaching is demoralising the people, and who attempt to kill him (38.1-6). The relationship of Zephaniah ben Maaseiah to Jeremiah is more ambiguous. In ch. 29, where he is a (‘temple overseer’), he is urged by Shemaiah to rebuke Jeremiah for his subversive letter to the exiles in Babylon. Instead he reads Shemaiah’s letter to Jeremiah, though his intention in doing so is not entirely clear. He also appears in the similar account of a delegation in 37.3.

v. 2. (like ) is a phrase denoting prophetic intercession. Whether the subject is the king or the people, ‘consulting YHWH’ requires the mediation of a prophet (see Ezek. 14.10; 20.1). The desired response may simply be information or direction (8.2; 10.21), but often the underlying hope is for some divine act of salvation, preceded perhaps by a oracle (29.7; 38.4). Here, the ensuing makes this hope explicit. Zedekiah (and / or the writer) may be thinking of YHWH’s deliverance of Judah during the Assyrian crisis (Isa. 37); both Zedekiah and Hezekiah send a delegation to the prophet (v. 1; Isa. 37.2), emphasise the gravity of the situation (v. 2a; Isa. 37.3), refer hopefully to the prospect of YHWH’s assistance (v. 2b; Isa. 37.4a; note the use of in both), and request intercession (v. 2a; Isa. 37.4b).

v. 3. : Pohlmann finds the form remarkable, but is in fact more common than . We cannot therefore be sure whether this is a deliberate allusion to Isaiah’s use of to Hezekiah’s delegation (Isa. 37.6).

50 See W. McKane, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Volume II. Commentary on Jeremiah XXVI – LII (New ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996) 743 for a summary of how Zephaniah’s actions have been interpreted.
51 and can be used synonymously; see 29.11, and also 37.3-7, where following the request Jeremiah refers to (v. 3), Zedekiah refers to (v. 7).
54 Pohlmann, Studien, 33.
55 The former occurs in Gen. 32.5; 1 Sam. 11.9; 2 Kgs. 19.6, 10; 37.6, 10; Isa. 37.6, 10; the latter in Gen. 50.17; 1 Sam. 18.25; 2 Kgs. 22.18; Jer. 23.35; 27.4; 37.7; 2 Chron. 34.26. For see 2 Kgs. 18.22; Isa. 8.12; Jer. 10.11.
v. 4. Knowing exactly what is envisaged here is complicated by the textual difficulties and the ambiguity of the wording and syntax. In OG it is the Judean (rather than the Babylonians) which YHWH will ‘turn back’ (שׁבץ) towards the city; this may also be the sense of MT, if יָאָמָן (‘אָמָן) relates to יִנְמוּ חַּלְמַת (rather than the Babylonians) which YHWH will ‘turn back’ (שׁבץ) towards the city; this may also be the sense of MT, if יָאָמָן (‘אָמָן) might also denote יִנְמוּ חַּלְמַת themselves could be either the Judean troops or their weapons, while מֹבֵּל might mean either ‘turn back’ (in defeat or victory?) or ‘surround’ (to protect or to blunt?). Thus, it is not immediately obvious whether YHWH is promising salvation or doom. Weippert has interpreted v. 4 as predicting that YHWH will cause the Judean troops to turn on one another in confusion and destroy one another (cf. Jdg. 7.22; 1 Sam. 14.20; Zech. 14.13), thereby leaving the city open to the Babylonians.

v. 5. החולמת יא אמה again leaves some doubt as to who YHWH is fighting for. The expression обычно describes YHWH’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Deut. 4.34, 5.15; 2 Kgs. 17.36, etc.). Here, however, the adjectives are transposed, perhaps as a further hint that YHWH has switched sides.

v. 6. In the context of a prolonged siege, with diminishing food supplies, the prediction that the people will die ‘by a great plague’, is historically realistic. By contrast, the mention in v. 7 of survivors is more stylised, and formally in tension with v. 6. Similarly, in 42.16-17, Jeremiah’s warning against fleeing to Egypt initially has a

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56 So Rudolph, Jeremia, 114; Pohlmann, Studien, 34.
57 Volz, Jeremia, 216. According to Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 571, “there is no way to decide.”
58 יִנְמוּ חַּלְמַת usually means ‘weapons’ (Deut. 1.41; Jdg. 18.11; 1 Sam. 8.12), but in 2 Sam. 1.27 is synonymous with יָאָמָן; cf. also Jer. 51.20. The addition of יִנְמוּ חַּלְמַת in MT might seem to settle the matter in favour of ‘weapons’, but cf. Num. 31.49, ’ספַּה חַלְמַת אָמָן מַר שְׁעֹר, ‘the men of war at our disposal’.
59 See Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 286, for further interpretative options.
60 “The preponderance of evidence would suggest an oracle of judgement, for which Jeremiah was well known. But for a king seeking any possible hope in extremis, perhaps the ambiguity of the words could be grasped momentarily as the desired deliverance oracle” (Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 286-287).
62 “The ambiguity would be precisely that of the English, ‘I am going to fight with you’ ” (Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 287).
63 See Pohlmann, Studien, 35 n.92, for a full listing.
64 So Weippert, ‘Jahwekrieg’, 399 n.20; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 571-572.
rather ‘matter of fact’ explanation, but is followed by the more generalised claim, 

v. 7. The implications of the different readings in MT and OG have already been noted. The identity of מַעַשְׁתַּן is unclear. The phrase מַעַשְׁתַּן is distinctive of the Jeremiah prose tradition, occurring in 11.21; 19.7; 21.7; 22.25; 34.20, 21; 38.16; 44.30 (twice); 46.26; 49.37. Those whose life is sought vary, but the identity of מַעַשְׁתַּן is stated only in 11.21 (the men of Anathoth). That the phrase here refers to the Babylonians is a reasonable inference, but internal enemies (deserters?) may also be in mind; see Zedekiah’s admission, "... (38.19).68

v. 8. Occasionally in Jer. מַעַשְׁתַּן connotes ‘go into exile’, though this is made explicit by the addition of מִלְחָמָה (29.16; 48.7; also Zech. 14.2). Here, however, it means ‘surrender’ (1 Sam. 11.3; 2 Kgs. 18.31 = Isa. 36.16; 24.12; Jer. 38.2, 17, 18, 21). It is thus related to, but not identical with, מִלְחָמָה, which has here the sense ‘go over to another side, defect’

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65 Elsewhere it occurs only in the books of Samuel (1 Sam. 20.1; 2 Sam. 16.11) and Psalms (35.4; 38.13; 40.15; 70.3).
66 In 19.9; 34.20, 21; 38.16; 46.26, the expression is absent from OG.
67 Jeremiah (11.21; 38.16), Jehoiachin (22.25), Zedekiah and his officials (21.7; 34.21; 44.30), the people of Judah and Jerusalem (19.7; 9; 21.7; 34.20), Pharaoh Hophra (44.30) and Elam (49.37).
68 Pohlmann, Studien, 36, argues that since Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned before ‘the enemies’, he cannot be identified with them, and concludes that “Jahwe's Gerichtshandeln mit der Eroberung Jerusalems durch den König von Babel für die im Lande Übriggebliebenen noch nicht abgeschlossen ist, sondern weitergeht.” Obviously, this can only apply to MT, since OG makes no reference to the Babylonian king.
69 The use of מַעַשְׁתַּן in conjunction with מַלְכָּה and מִלְחָמָה is more characteristic of the wisdom literature; see Prov. 6.23; 12.28; 14.12; 16.25. In Jer. 21.8, however, מַעַשְׁתַּן seems to have a more literal meaning; the way of life is the road out of the city.
70 In 22.11 and 29.2, however, מַעַשְׁתַּן appears in an exilic sense without מִלְחָמָה.
Interestingly, while this is how NIV translates 'submit' in almost all these references, in Jer. 21.9 (and 2 Kgs. 7.4) it reads ‘surrender’ – thereby glossing the subversive aspect of the word. Such a translational decision is unwarranted, but it highlights how, in the crisis of 587, Jeremiah’s message could be framed in different ways; as ‘cowardly desertion’ (cf. 37.13-14), as ‘pragmatic realism’ (cf. 2 Kgs. 7.3-4) or as ‘courageous obedience to YHWH’.71

Whilst the individual terms are clear enough (םָּשֳִׁ֯חַל denotes plunder in battle) the meaning of the expression, which is limited to Jer. (cf. 38.2; 39.18; 45.5)72 is disputed. Most scholars interpret it as an ironic promise of survival and no more, and follow Volz’s conjecture that the expression was ‘vielleicht ein altes, gutmutig spottendes Sprichwort; wenn ein Besiegt er entronnen war und sein nackt es Leben gerettet hatte, so hatte er wenigstens das als ‘Beute’”.73 Parke-Taylor, however, argues that the contrast of מָּשֳִׁ֯חַל and מָּשֳִׁ֯חַל implies “more than bare survival, and points to the blessing of Yahweh as promised in Deut. 30.15-20.”74 A review of the contexts in which thesepromise occur, however, counts against such a positive interpretation. In the analogous passage 38.2, מָּשֳִׁ֯חַל is explained epexegetically by the ensuing מָּשֳִׁ֯חַל, (“and he will live”), whilst the meaning of the promise to Ebed-Melech is supplied by what precedes, ולָּא תִּתְּנָא בִּרְכָּא אָם אָבוֹת אֶת מֵמִי מִשַּׁלְתָּא (39.17-18). The austerity of YHWH’s word to Baruch is clear from its logical underpinning: וְאַחַּד אֶתְּמָא וְאֶת מֵרֵד (45.4-5; note the emphatic pronouns). If YHWH must suffer the destruction of his own work, Baruch’s ambitions should be modest indeed; all he may hope for is to avoid the disaster that is coming ‘on all flesh’.

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71 Cf. Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 191: “The announcement is ideologically pure, offers no reservations, and is experientially probable. An occupied city is likely to foster famine and pestilence after the sword.” He adds, however, that “because this convergence [between Babylonian policy and the will of YHWH] is now established in the canon, it cannot be explained simply on grounds of political conviction.”

72 This strongly suggests its authenticity; so Parke-Taylor, Formation, 202.

73 Volz, Jeremia, 219; so too Rudolph, Jeremia, 117; Bright, Jeremiah, 185; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 574; Thompson, Jeremiah, 469; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 502.

74 Parke-Taylor, Formation, 203.

75 According to Parke-Taylor, Formation, 202, this “is surely more than a promise of survival, and the additional phrase ‘in all places to which you may go’ carries with it the assurance of protection.” The latter is undoubtedly true, but it is hard to see how this amounts to ‘more than a promise of survival’.
Weippert and Pohlmann have argued convincingly that Jer. 21.1-10 depicts YHWH’s judgement upon Israel as ‘holy war in reverse’.76 Indicative of this change in his stance towards them are the phrases הלָּכָה לְכָל תָּבוּךְ (v. 5), בּ... וְאֵֽת (v. 7), which are paralleled elsewhere in relation to Israel’s conquest of the land, and especially the herem; see, for instance, Deut. 20.13 (also Josh. 6.2, 21; 10.28). Less convincing is Pohlmann’s claim that דברי (v. 9) and דברי (v. 10) also belong to this herem language. As we have seen, the former is part of a characteristically Jeremianic expression (which concerns the actions of the Judeans, not the Babylonians!), while the warning that Nebuchadrezzar would burn the city is also well established in Jer. (32.29; 34.2; 37.8, 10; 38.18; cf. 39.8).

2.4. Coherence and Redaction

Since 21.1-10 share the same historical setting, and since the stance taken by YHWH towards Jerusalem is consistently negative, it may seem natural to read these verses as a coherent whole.77 At the same time, there is some tension between the two messages spoken by Jeremiah; whilst vv. 4-7 announce unqualified destruction on the city and those in it, vv. 8-10 introduce an exceptive element; those who surrender to the Babylonians will live. Given that the issue of differentiation and non-differentiation is central to our study, we need to explore the relationship between these two messages in Jer. 21.

The simplest solution might be to explain the disaster / hope distinction in audience-critical terms. Since the rhetorical markers דברי (v. 3) and דברי (v. 8) clearly distinguish between the king and the people, we might conclude that judgement is now inevitable for Zedekiah (and his royal court?), but may yet be averted by the ordinary people of Jerusalem. Brueggemann writes:

77 So, for example, Rudolph, Jeremia, 115-117. Volz, Jeremia, 218, and Bright, Jeremiah, 217 see vv. 8-10 as originally separate from vv. 1-7, though equally authentic and from the same historical context.
78 Since דברי is singular, it is possible that YHWH is here speaking to Jeremiah.
The judgement is against the arrogant temple and the self-serving monarchy. It is as though a distinction is made between ‘people’ and ‘government’, as we often do with reference to ‘the Russian people’ or ‘the Cuban people’… That is why vv. 8-10 are addressed to people, unlike vv. 3-7, which are addressed to the king.79

The problem with this analysis, however, is that the message sent to Zedekiah (vv. 4-7) makes no distinction at all between ‘people’ and ‘government’. YHWH will strike down ‘the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast’ (v. 6), and those who survive (חדות תֹּנֶשׁאֵי יְהֹוָה) will die at the hands of the king of Babylon (v. 7). Only when Jeremiah speaks to the people (vv. 8-10) does he suggest that some of them may live. Consequently, the audience/message correlation is not as neat as Brueggemann implies.80 Putting the matter in somewhat formulaic terms, what we see is not audience ‘A’ being told that ‘A’ will be destroyed, and audience ‘B’ being told that ‘B’ has a choice; but rather, audience ‘A’ being told that ‘A’ and ‘B’ will be destroyed, and audience ‘B’ being told that ‘B’ has a choice.

Others seek to explain the tension between vv. 4-7 and 8-10 by ascribing them to different redactional layers. Seitz, for example, argues that in its present form, 21.1-10 is “a redactional piece meant to foreclose on the possibility of ongoing life in the land”.81 It has thus been shaped by the ‘Exilic Redaction’ (ER), which sought to portray Judah’s disobedience and destruction as inevitable (see chapter 1). However, while Seitz attributes vv. 1-7 to ER, he believes that vv. 8-10 reflect the authentic ‘submit and live’ preaching of Jeremiah, preserved in the ‘Scribal Chronicle’ (SC). What we see in 21.1-10, therefore, is a classic example of ER’s practice of ‘foreclosing’ an offer of hope to Zedekiah and his people: “Within 21.1-7, v. 7 eliminates the possibility of survival after 587 B.C., even as 21.8-10 counsels surrender that ‘you might live and have your life as prize of war’.82

Clearly, such redaction-critical hypotheses satisfy only if they convincingly account for the present form of the text; that is to say, if the reshaped text actually conveys the viewpoint

79 Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 191; Stulman, Order Amid Chaos, 50, agrees.
80 One might argue that Jeremiah’s audience influenced the rhetoric, as much as the content, of his preaching. Consequently, a message of total disaster addressed to one party is more nuanced when addressed to another. This might not make for formal consistency, but is historically plausible; thus, J. Rosenberg, ‘Jeremiah and Ezekiel’, in R. Alter & F. Kermode (eds.), The Literary Guide to the Bible (London: Fontana, 1987) 194, refers to “the alteration of preachment to context and circumstance” in Jer. But as we will argue below, vv. 8-10 do not so much ‘nuance’ the indiscriminate nature of vv. 4-7 as introduce a different scenario.
81 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 253.
82 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 161 n.130.
that has supposedly led the editor to reshape it. Whether 21.1-10 does in fact support a
‘foreclosing’ ideology is a question we will return to shortly. For now, we should note that, as a
solution to the tension between vv. 1-7 and 8-10, Seitz’s attractively simple, two-part division of
the text is something of a chimera. McKane agrees that the contents of v. 7 “do not allow for
any survivors to whom the prophet could have spoken in the terms of vv. 8-10”, but also
recognises that - if taken literally - v. 6 allows no survivors to whom the prophet could speak as
he does in v. 7: “The contents of vv. 5-6 will not allow the continuation in v. 7 indicated by
יִשְׂרָאֵל, and the contents of v. 7 will not allow the continuation in vv. 8-10.” Consequently,
McKane has to posit three redactional strata in this passage. His explanation for this awkward
amalgam of material - “the editor of 21.1-10 has attempted to portray a sequence of events
corresponding imperfectly with the sequence in Jer. 52.4-16” - fails to convince, however. At
this point, the redaction-critical approach to the problem of 21.1-10 begins to look suspect.

In fact, the formal contradiction noted by McKane between vv. 6 and 7 is easily
explicable by allowing for an element of hyperbole. As the following examples show, logically
inconsistent statements are not uncommon in prophetic judgement oracles:

If ten men are left in one house, they too will die. And if a relative who is to burn the
bodies comes to carry them out of the house and asks anyone still hiding there, ‘Is
anyone still with you?’, and he says ‘No’, then he will say, ‘Hush! We must not mention
the name of the LORD. (Am. 6:9-10)

Outside is the sword, inside are plague and famine; those in the country will die by the
sword, and those in the city will be devoured by famine and plague. All who survive and
escape will be in the mountains . . . (Ezek. 7:15-16)

83 McKane, Jeremiah I, 494.
84 McKane, Jeremiah I, 494; similarly Carroll, Jeremiah, 409-410.
85 McKane, Jeremiah I, 494.
86 Craigie et al., Jeremiah I - 25, 287, rightly remark that to dismiss v. 7 as redundant “places too much
rigidity on the oracular form.” See too J. Applegate, ‘The Fate of Zedekiah. Redactional Debate in the
reading of 21.1-10.
87 Cf. H.M. Barstad, The Myth of the Empty Land. A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah
during the ‘Exile’ Period (SOF Sup. 28; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996) 31, on the repeated
references to the deportation of ‘all the people’ in 2 Kgs. 24: “We might wonder: who are all these people
who seem to surface all the time, when, allegedy, there is no one left in the country? The answer to this
question is simple enough. When the ancient writer says “all the people” he does not mean “all the
people,” but a large number. And when he refers to a large number, this may simply be because he wants
to make a point with regard to the importance of what had happened.”
88 Both translations from NIV; italics mine.
Perhaps, then, the assumption of hyperbole can also resolve the tension between vv. 4-7 and vv. 8-10; what is meant by the former is that great numbers will die during the siege (through disease and hunger) and afterwards (at the hand of the Babylonians), rather than the death of every single individual. Yet whilst there may indeed be an element of exaggeration in vv. 4-7, it is important to observe that the potential survivors in vv. 8-10 are not people who somehow live through the coming disaster (as in the Amos and Ezekiel passages above); rather, they are people who leave the city before the disaster falls.

We suggest, however, that the key to the coherence of 21.1-10 lies in understanding the basic principle underlying it. This is stated clearly in v. 10: ‘For (יִרְדָּה) I have set my face against this city for evil and not for good’. That is to say, YHWH’s wrath is fundamentally against Jerusalem, rather than any particular group or individual. Accordingly, the fate of the people turns on their relationship to the city, a point highlighted by the term יָשָׁר. It is יָשָׁר whom YHWH will strike down (v. 6), and it is יָשָׁר who will die by the sword, famine, and plague (v. 9). יָשָׁר thus seems to denote affinity, or even commitment, to Jerusalem,

99 a stance which both vv. 4-7 and 8-10 dismiss as futile. What vv. 8-9 offer ‘this people’ (יָשָׁר, יָשָׁר, v. 8), however, is the chance to redefine their relationship to the doomed city by ‘going out’ (אָשְׁר, v. 9) from it, and so to live. In more concrete terms, this suggests that ‘the way of life’ is only a temporary option (note the brief pause implied by אָשְׁר, v. 4),

90 and that once YHWH has begun to ‘fight against’ Jerusalem, it will be too late.91

If this is the underlying rationale of the passage, one might ask whether even Zedekiah’s fate is utterly inevitable. The judgement oracle of vv. 4-7, unqualified though it is, must be understood in relation to its purpose. The situation presupposed is that of Judean resistance to the Babylonians (cf. ‘the weapons of war with which you are fighting’, v. 4) and at the same time hope for YHWH’s assistance (v. 2). Jeremiah’s reply is intended to destroy both strategies: So far from fighting for the city, YHWH is fighting against them (v. 5); consequently, military resistance and prophetic intercession are futile. The idea that Zedekiah might live if he too ‘goes

99 This emerges more clearly if יָשָׁר is understood to mean, ‘remain, stay, continue’ (cf. Gen. 24.55; Lev. 12.4; 1 Sam. 7.2; Mic. 5.3, etc.); this is implied in v. 9 by the contrast with אָשְׁר.

90 On אָשְׁר + participle to signify “the event as imminent, or at least near at hand”, see GKC §116p.

91 For the motif of coming out (אָשְׁר) from the doomed city, see Josh. 6.23; Jer. 50.8; 51.6-10; Isa. 52.11.
out’ to the Babylonians (see 38.17) is not so much precluded as ignored, since it lies beyond the intention of the oracle.92

2.5. Differentiation in 21.1-10: דִּיפְקָר / הַדְּבֵּרַן

Our study of 21.1-10 has revealed that, whilst the different audience markers in vv. 3 and 8 initially imply that the key distinction is between the royal court and the ordinary people, a closer analysis of both messages (vv. 4-7 and 9-10) reveals that in terms of judgement and hope, the fundamental distinction is between the ‘inhabitants’ and ‘non-inhabitants’ of Jerusalem; those who stay, and those who go out. Whilst the city is doomed, there is still the opportunity for its people to surrender (to ‘disaffiliate’ from it, so to speak) and thereby live.

In the light of our discussion, we can now consider the arguments of Pohlmann and Seitz regarding this passage. Unlike Seitz (and McKane), Pohlmann accepts that the entire pericope derives from a single author, pointing to its pervasive ‘holy war’ imagery: “Daß der ganze Abschnitt die einheitliche Komposition eines Verfassers ist, belegen die zahlreichen und durchgehend verwendeten formelhaften Wendungen aus dem Vorstellungsbereich eines Jahwekrieges oder Bannvollzuges und die konsequente Umkehrung dieser Aussagen gegen Jerusalem.”93 Since the predominant message is clearly one of judgement on Jerusalem, Pohlmann allocates the pericope to his ‘golaorientiere Redaktion’ (GR; see our discussion of this in chapter 1).

It is at just this point, however, that Pohlmann’s argument runs into trouble, since as we have seen, vv. 8-10 do hold out a limited hope to people who had not been deported with Jehoiachin. These verses would in fact seem to have more in common with the older redactional layer which Pohlmann identifies, which allowed for the people’s continued existence if they surrendered to the Babylonians. Pohlmann seeks to counter this by minimising the scope of the offer in vv. 9-10; the author, he argues, has deliberately used indirect language in v. 9 (ודִּיפְקָר...)

92 Oracles of doom did not necessarily preclude repentance and hope. See W. Houston, ‘What did the Prophets Think They Were Doing? Speech Acts and Prophetic Discourse in the Old Testament’, Biblical Interpretation 1, 2 (1993) 167-188, who emphasises the ambiguity of many of the responses to such pronouncements (e.g., mourning, prayer and fasting): “On the one hand... the hearers react to the word of doom in the same way as to a death; on the other, they do not assume that their doom is inexorable, but that there is a possibility of mercy.” (183).

93 Pohlmann, Studien, 39.
partly to avoid having Jeremiah address all the people,\(^94\) and partly to imply that only a few would escape the destruction.\(^95\) But this will not do; v. 8 clearly indicates that Jeremiah’s announcement was public (דֶּרֶךְ הֶבְלֶד הָדוֹרְךָ), while v. 9 leaves open the question of how many would ‘go out’ and so live; the terms הָדוֹרְךָ express precisely this uncertainty.

Seitz, on the other hand, is fully aware of the significant shift that occurs after v. 7. Consequently, as we have seen, he attributes vv. 1-7 to SC and vv. 8-10 to ER. Such a conclusion is, however, questionable at two points. Firstly, whether vv. 8-10 refer to life in the land or in exile, it is far from clear how vv. 1-7 ‘foreclose’ on the possibility of survival, as he claims. Rather, vv. 8-10 assume precisely the destruction of the city that is prophesied in vv. 1-7 and offer the only way of escape. Had it been the editor’s intention to blunt the force of vv. 8-10, the most obvious solution would have been to omit them altogether.\(^96\)

Secondly, Seitz understands Jeremiah’s message in 21.9-10 as akin to his ‘submit and live’ preaching as found in 27.12-18 and 42.10-12 (both SC).\(^97\) In so doing, however, he blurs some important differences between these three passages. Whereas in 27.11 and 42.10-12 the promise for those who submit to the Babylonians is, specifically, life in the land, the offer in 21.9 is ambiguous on this point; deportation is now at least a real danger. Then again, in contrast to the hopeful tone of 27.17, ‘Why should this city become a ruin?’, 21.9-10 accepts Jerusalem’s destruction as utterly inevitable. In other words, we can characterise the message of these three passages as ‘submit and live’ only if we recognise that they define these terms quite differently. That being so, 21.8-10 turns out not to be in such tension with 21.1-7 as Seitz

\(^94\) "Die Formulierung... הָדוֹרְךָ (vgl. Jer. 38.2) scheint bewuβt gewählt, um die direkte Anrede des ganzen Volkes zu vermeiden" (Pohlmann, Studien, 38). His explanation – "weil sonst eine Spannung zu den vorausgegangenen allgemeinen und uneingeschränkten Unheilsankündigungen entstanden wäre" (Studien, 38; see too n.113) – shows that he is uncomfortably aware of the tension between vv. 4-7 and 8-10.

\(^95\) "Nur wenige werden der umfassenden Vernichtung entgehen" (Pohlmann, Studien, 38).

\(^96\) Seitz makes precisely this point in criticising Pohlmann’s methodology: “If such priority is given to the freedom of secondary redactors, one begins to wonder why seams, narrative tensions, and the like are obvious in the present form of the text at all. Put bluntly, if the Vorlage was such a torso, and at such odds with the redactional position secondarily supplied, why did secondary redactors not drop it altogether?” (Theology in Conflict, 240).

\(^97\) “In the post-597 years in Judah... Jeremiah consistently counsels those who remain in the land to go out and submit to Nebuchadnezzar” (Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 206).
assumes. In short, the conditional offer of life held out to the people of Jerusalem in 21.8-10 is more sincere than Pohlmann admits, but less optimistic than Seitz imagines.

This brings us to one final remark in connection with 21.1-10. As we have seen, the offer of ‘life as booty’ for those who leave the city is limited and undefined. In particular, it is unclear whether it will involve deportation or not. If one assumes the authenticity of this declaration, the most likely explanation is that Jeremiah himself did not know what the outcome of surrender to the Babylonians would be.

3. Jer. 23.1-8
3.1. Text

To be sure, 21.8-10 can be understood as a re-application of earlier principles to address a changed historical situation. In fact, the notion that Jeremiah’s outlook was not static is central to Seitz’s argument that the prophet’s message changed significantly after the deportation of Jehoiachin in 597; see especially Theology in Conflict, 207.

Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 206. n.1, cautiously remarks that “it does not sound as though such action necessitates deportation.”
3.2. Textual Notes

v. 1. MT רמש, ‘my pasture’; OG της υσις αυτου = מְרֶשֶׁת, ‘their pasture’. Both readings make good sense contextually: MT provides the rationale for YHWH’s action in vv. 2-3, while OG highlights the shepherds’ abdication of responsibility. Consequently, it is hard to know which is the more original, though ‘the sheep of YHWH’s pasture’ is an established idiom in the Psalms (74.1; 79.13; 100.3; cf. Ezek. 34.1-16).

v. 2. MT הנר התעם הדרש; OG їם 토ус 휘مشاׁנׁתא: OG may be paraphrasing the Hebrew idiom for stylistic reasons, though Janzen considers OG / Vorlage haplography more likely, in v. 25, OG renders בהבאה ההבאה והבאה with չי פרفشل չי פרفشلטש. 

v. 3. MT עטה; OG του λαοου μου may be paraphrasing, or reflecting a variant רצ.

MT תַּהֲנָה; OG της γης: Possibly OG reflects יְרוּם, but it is unlikely that this would refer to a specific land (i.e., Babylon). In 50[27].23; 51[28].25, 41, 49,护照 ʰ γη renders כל יְרוּם, but in context both clearly mean ‘the whole earth’. Similarly, in 27.6[34.5], OG την γην

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100 Following (with Ziegler) LXXB, S; LXXA (followed by Rahlfs) reads της υσις μου.
101 Preferring OG are Rudolph, Jeremia, 124; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 554. Duhm, Jeremia, 181, and Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 613, are undecided.
102 Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 614; accepted as possible by McKane, Jeremiah 1, 554.
103 Janzen, Studies, 117.
might reflect \(^{104}\) (cf. MT יִבְלָהּ הָאֲמוֹרָתָהּ וְאָמֵלָהּ רֶוֲרָא, but v. 4 shows that רָוָר has international scope. In any case, it is doubtful whether the Vorlage here read differently to MT.\(^{105}\) Decisive in this respect are the terms דָּרָא and נָבָא, which in Jer. always imply a universal Diaspora and are collocated with the plurals רֹאָהָה, רָאָה andDEM (16.15; 23.8; 29.14; 32.37; cf. 40.11-12).

**v. 4.** MT נִרְאֶה > OG. For the meaning ‘be lacking’ for רָאָה Niph., see Num. 31.49; 1 Sam. 20.18; 25.7; 1 Kgs. 20.39; 2 Kgs. 10.19. After מַדָּר and מַרְאֶה, therefore, רָאָה introduces a somewhat new idea, which may suggest it was lacking from the Vorlage. Equally, however, it may have been sufficiently unclear for the translator to have omitted it.\(^{106}\) Once again (cf. 21.1-10), MT shows a preference for a trilogy of terms while OG contains only two.

**v. 5.** MT נַשְׂנָה, ‘a shoot’; OG ἀναστόλη, ‘a rising’: This rendition of נַשְׂנָה, which is standard in the OT (Ezek. 16.7; 17.10; Zech. 3.8; 6.12; cf. Gen.19.25; Isa. 61.11) is sometimes thought to involve a change of imagery to that of sunrise;\(^{107}\) however, ἀναστόλη can also carry a botanical sense in classical Greek.\(^{108}\)

**v. 6.** LXX Ἀμαρώθι; LXX Ἀμαρώθιον.

MT ἀμαρώθι (‘he will call him’) probably combines ἀμαρώθι and ἀμαρώθι.\(^{109}\) OG κολεσθεὶ ἄτονον reads the term as third person singular (cf. Targ., Vulg., which presuppose ἀμαρώθι). MT leaves the subject of the verb ambiguous; either ‘one’ (i.e., people in general) or YHWH himself. The latter is explicit in OG, if κολεσθεὶ ἄτονον κυριος ἱωσεδεκ means ‘the Lord will

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\(^{104}\) So Janzen, *Studies*, 66; McKane, *Jeremiah* 2, 687. In 40[47].11, OG ἐν παρῃ ὅ ἦν (MT יִבְלָהּ הָאֲמוֹרָתָהּ וְאָמֵלָהּ רֶוֲרָא) may reflect רָוָר לְבָבָב, in which case רָוָר may mean ‘the land of Judah’ (in contrast to the foreign lands also mentioned).

\(^{105}\) So Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 124; McKane, *Jeremiah* 1, 558.


\(^{107}\) So M.G. Abegg, Jr., s.v. מַסָּה, *NIDOTTE* 4, 816; E.M. Embry, s.v., ‘Tree, Plant, Root, Branch’, *NIDNTT* 3, 867.


\(^{109}\) For this “doubly odd” form, see GKC §60c, 74e; Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 124.
call him, “Josedek” (thereby duplicating the divine name), but κυριος may also be a doublet of Ἰωσηδεκ.110

MT יָרֵךְ (cf. Vulg., iustus noster); OG Ιωσηδεκ: The Greek text probably reflects a variant reading in the Vorlage (ןַעְרֹס or נַעְרֹס), although may just have been sufficiently enigmatic to prompt the translator to make the change.112

vv. 7-8. In OG these verses occur at the end of the chapter, after v. 40. This, plus the fact that the translator has mistakenly related דַּתָּא (v. 9) to נַעְרֹס (v. 6), clearly points to his having a Vorlage in which v. 6 was followed by v. 9.113

v. 7. MT יָבַנ הוּא יְשֵׁר. OG בְּנֵי יְשֵׁר. MT is supported by the corresponding use of בְּנֵי (reflected by OG σπέρμα) in v. 8.114 On the other hand, OG is here almost certainly following its Vorlage. We may be dealing with equally ancient textual variants.115

v. 8. MT יָאַשֶׁר יְשֵׁרָה: Probably MT conflation from the parallel passage in 16.15.116 The conjunction at the start of יָאַשֶׁר יְשֵׁרָה makes haplography (repetition of יָאַשֶׁר יְשֵׁרָה) unlikely.

MT יָבַנ הוּא יְשֵׁר: OG אֲלֵהוֹן כִּי יְשֵׁרָה. MT יָבַנ is not reflected in the versions, while OG אֲלֵהוֹן is lacking in MT. Holladay posits a simple אֲלֵהוֹן as the original text.117

110 So Duhm, Jeremia, 181; Carroll, Jeremiah, 446; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 564. Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 330, takes this as the likely meaning of MT as well.
112 Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 619, prefers MT on grounds of it being lectio difficilior.
113 So McKane, Jeremiah 1, 566.
114 “It is unlikely where there is such a deliberate juxtaposing of two oaths that the differences of vocabulary between the one and the other are original” (McKane, Jeremiah 1, 374).
115 See McKane, Jeremiah 1, 374.
116 Bright, Jeremiah, 140; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 621. However, McKane, Jeremiah 1, 375, is undecided as to whether אֲלֵהוֹן כִּי יְשֵׁרָה is the secondary reading.
117 Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 621.
MT, 'I have driven them'; OG ἔκκοψεν αὐτὸν ὑμᾶς = רדהו, 'he has driven them'.

By maintaining the third person language, OG gives a more consistent reading (which also corresponds to 16.15), but since we are dealing with human speech contained with divine speech, some formal inconsistency is not surprising and need not be secondary.

3.3. Exegetical Notes

v. 1. The image of Israel as YHWH’s ‘flock’ (ֶשֶׁחַ) occurs frequently in the OT (Num. 27.17; 1 Kgs. 22.17; Ps. 95.7; Jer. 31.10), as does the description of her rulers as ‘shepherds’ (דייק) of the people (Jer. 3.15; Mic. 5.4; cf. 2 Sam. 5.2; 7.7; Ps. 78.71, where David ‘shepherds’ the nation). However, the use of דְּרָשְׁרָה דִּין together as a metaphor for Israel’s leaders and people is confined to the exilic and post-exilic prophetic corpus (Jer. 10.21; 50.6; Ezek. 34.1-10; Isa. 63.11; Zech. 10.2-3). For the most part, such דָּרַשׁ דִּין are political leaders. That this is the case in these verses is clear from their context, following the oracles against the kings of Judah (who are also described as דָּרַשׁ דִּין in 22.22) and preceding the prophecy of a ‘rightful king’ (vv. 5-6). Nevertheless, the term can also signify spiritual leaders. In Isa. 63.11, Moses is the shepherd of Israel, while in Zech. 11.4-9, 15-16, the prophet himself is given this role. It is arguable that in Jer. 2.8, דָּרַשׁ דִּין stands in synonymous parallelism with הדניאא, while in 10.21, the דָּרַשׁ who do not enquire (דָּרַשׁ הָדוּר) of YHWH might also include prophets. Since 23.1-8 is followed by

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118 Although in 16.15, Vulg. and some editions of Targ. presuppose רדהו.
119 Pace Bright, Jeremiah, 140, who emends MT on the basis of OG.
120 So Volz, Jeremiah, 232; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 555; Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 326; Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 205. However, Rudolph, Jeremiah, 125 and Bright, Jeremiah, 143, believe that royal officials generally are in view.
121 See M. Butterworth, Structure and the Book of Zechariah (JSOT Sup. 130; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) 204-205.
122 Especially if דָּרַשׁ is here synonymous with מָשַׂח וְהוֹדָרָה; so J.M. Berridge, Prophet, People and the Word of Yahweh. An Examination of Form and Content in the Proclamation of the Prophet Jeremiah (BST 4; Zurich: EVZ Verlag, 1970) 140. On the other hand, the terminology may signify four different groups; so Bright, Jeremiah, 10; Thompson, Jeremiah, 168; Holladay, Jeremiah I, 88. Rudolph, Jeremiah, 12, equates דָּרַשׁ דִּין with מָשַׂח וְהוֹדָרָה, but distinguishes between מָשַׂח וְהוֹדָרָה and דָּרַשׁ דִּין.
123 So Holladay, Jeremiah: Spokesman Out of Time (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974) 57; more recently, however, he takes it to mean “civil leaders” (Jeremiah I, 342). Thompson, Jeremiah, 335, thinks it may be a secondary meaning.
the extended section (23.9-40), the might therefore include the prophets, at least in the ‘afterlife’ of the text.  

□, אבר (Pi.) is most naturally rendered ‘destroying’. Since this disrupts the general emphasis on ‘scattering’ (נִשְׁמָךְ, נבך) in vv. 1-4, some take the term to mean ‘lose, cause to go astray’; note the antithesis of אבר (Pi.) and שַׁכָּח (Pi.) in Ecc. 3.6. Conversely, this may weaken an intentionally forceful word; abusive rule by the leaders could explain why YHWH’s promise of new shepherds (v. 4) is followed by the statement that his people ‘will not be afraid again’ (compare the accusation against the shepherds in Ezek. 34.3, ‘you have ruled them with violence’). But in what sense are the leaders ‘destroying’ the people? One answer would be that by leading them away from YHWH, they have brought the disaster of exile upon the nation (cf. 50.6-7). However, given the emphasis on social injustice in the previous chapter (22.3, 13-17), might denote oppressive rule in Israel, and the same could even be true of גַּלְגֹּל (Maaseh) and מַלָּל (Maaseh) in v. 2. On this view, the idea of exile is not introduced until v. 3, where, however, YHWH is the subject of וְיָמַן. Clearly, though, the language of v. 1 is flexible enough to allow both meanings.

v. 2. אָבוּת: This emphatic assertion that it is the leaders of Israel who are responsible for the nation’s demise is almost unparalleled in Jer. We may compare YHWH’s statement in 50.6, אָבוּת אַמַּיִם אֶלֶף יָרְדָן (v. 7) hints at a more general culpability.

Most commentators see here an ironic word play, with meaning ‘attend to’, initially in a positive sense (‘care for’) and then in a negative sense

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124 Cf. J.G. Baldwin, ‘Semah as a Technical Term in the Prophets’, VT 16 (1964) 94: “The message of ch. 23 suggests that by ‘shepherds’ the prophet means rulers in general; prophets and priests (v. 11) as well as kings.”

125 A.B. Ehrlich, Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel: textkritisches, sprachliches und sachliches. 4. Jesia, Jeremia (J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1912) 302; Rudolph, Jeremia, 125; Bright, Jeremiah, 139; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 554.

126 “The implication here is that neglect leaves the sheep as dead as if they have been deliberately killed.” (Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 614); similarly Carroll, Jeremiah, 444.

127 According to Rudolph, Jeremia, 125, the three verbs in vv. 1-2 “malen also nur die mangelnde Fürsorge der Hirten . . . und sind nicht auf Gefangenschaft und Zersprengung unter die Völker auszudeuten.”

128 Since these are the words of Israel’s enemies, it is hard to know how far they represent the perspective of the author.
Recently, however, A.G. Auld has argued that both here and in v. 4, פֶּסַח should be given the meaning ‘count’, there being a conscious allusion to the story of David’s ‘counting’ the Israelites (2 Sam. 24.1-10).\(^{130}\) Certainly, the meaning ‘(not) counted’ fits the context well in v. 4 (cf. אֶלְעָלֹה וּמָרָב, v. 3), but whether פֶּסַח means ‘count’ in v. 2 is unlikely; even if the author doubted that David’s census really amounted to a ‘sin’, it is hard to see why he would have fastened on the kings’ failure to count the people as particularly worthy of censure.\(^{131}\)

v. 3. ‘they will be fruitful and multiply’ echoes 3.16, יִשְׂרָאֵל (the only other occurrence of יִשְׂרָאֵל in Jer.). In both passages, this re-enactment of the creation mandate follows YHWH’s restoration of the people to their land; by contrast, 29.6 (יהי נַפְלֵיהֶם, commands the exiles to multiply in Babylon.

v. 4. The parallels with the prophecy of 3.14-18 become still clearer in this verse. With the promise יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל (v. 3), compare 3.15, יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל. Given the frequency of the ‘shepherd’ motif in Jer., it is striking that only in these two verses does YHWH promise to provide the people with new shepherds. Also common to both passages are the expressions ... אֶלָּא and אֶלָּא פֶּסַח (3.16), though the latter is pointed differently. But there are also connections to the thought-world of chs. 30 – 33; the use of לֹא אָדָם to describe Israel’s transformation is prominent there too (30.8; 31.12, 29, 34, 40, 33.24), whilst the combination יִשְׂרָאֵל / אָדָם occurs elsewhere in Jer. only in 30.10 (= 46.27).

vv. 5-6 occur in a very similar form in 33.15-16: the main differences are the use of יִשְׂרָאֵל / אָדָם instead of יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל (33.15αα) and אָדָם instead of יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל (33.15αα) instead of יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשֹּׁעֵר (23.5aα), instead of יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשֹּׁעֵר (23.5aα) for יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשֹּׁעֵר (23.5bα), for הַשֹּׁעֵר instead of הַשֹּׁעֵר (33.16bα) for הַשֹּׁעֵר (33.16bα) for הַשֹּׁעֵר. As a result, the later passage is more focussed on the city of Jerusalem.

\(^{129}\) So Bright, Jeremiah, 143; Carroll, Jeremiah, 443; McKane, Jeremiah I, 553; Thompson, Jeremiah, 487; Craigie et al., Jeremiah I – 25, 326.


\(^{131}\) Auld points to the prophecy in Jer. 33.13 that in the restored Judah, the sheep will again be ‘counted’, but here פֶּסַח rather than פֶּסַח is used.
v. 5. **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ** : Both terms must be considered together. Elsewhere in the OT (e.g., Zech. 3:8; 6:12), **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ** denotes a messianic figure, and some believe that this is the sense here too.\(^{132}\) If **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ** is then interpreted to mean ‘righteous’ (*JB*, ‘virtuous’),\(^{133}\) the prophesied king stands in contrast to the unrighteous kings of ch. 22. However, the use of **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ** in third century BC Phoenician inscriptions to mean ‘rightful scion’ has led scholars to see the same meaning here.\(^{134}\) According to Holladay, “there is no plausible way in which one can assume that the Phoenician phrase somehow stems from a Hebrew phrase having a specific messianic nuance; one must conclude that Jeremiah is here using a general Northwest Semitic term for the legitimate king.”\(^{135}\) This, however, is to create a false dichotomy; v. 5b, **שָׁמָּה מִשְׁמַשׁ וּמִשְׁמַשׁ בְּאֻמָּה**, makes it clear that righteousness is the basis of rightfulness. Moreover, whilst the Phoenician inscriptions shed light on the origin of the expression, they do not exhaust its meaning in its present context. Whether **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ** is thought to be ‘messianic’ depends partly on how we define the latter term.

v. 6. **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ** : Most commentators see this as a deliberate word-play on **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ**.\(^{136}\) Less clear is its significance. Some see the allusion as positive; according to Clements, “there is no clear indication that it is intended to be an ironic dismissal of Zedekiah.”\(^{137}\) Others see it as a contrast to the evil king: “das Programm, das im Namen des letzten Königs lag und dem dieser so wenig nachkam, wird unter dem neuen König erfüllt werden.”\(^{138}\) Some go further and see

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132 E.g., Baldwin, ‘*Semah* as a Technical Term’, 93–97; Bright, *Jeremiah*, 143; Abegg, ‘בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ’, 816 (“there can be no doubt that **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ** denotes the Messiah, the branch of David, in Jer. 23.5 and 33.15”).

133 Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 125–126, allows that **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ** in v. 5b may be translated ‘echter’ (true) or ‘gerecht’ (righteous), but leans toward the latter.

134 See J. Swetnam, ‘Some Observations on the Background of **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ** in Jeremias 23.5a’, *Biblica* 46 (1965) 38–40, who sets this promise against a background of tension regarding Zedekiah’s instatement as king. Similarly, Bright, *Jeremiah*, 144; McKane, *Jeremiah 1*, 561; D.J. Reimer, s.v. **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ**, *NIDOTTE III*, 764.

135 Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 618. In fact, Abegg, **בַּלַּתְתֵּךְ**, 816, concedes that the Phoenician inscriptions provide a parallel to Jer. 23.5.

136 In addition to those cited below, see Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 491. Exceptions are McKane, *Jeremiah 1*, 564, and A. Malamat, ‘Jeremiah and the Last Two Kings of Judah’, *PEQ* 83, 84, who argues that “the change of the name Mattaniah to Zedekiah upon his ascent to the throne was a subsequent result of Jeremiah’s prophecy on King Messiah”.


here an implicit critique of Zedekiah, thus supplying the oracle on his kingship that is otherwise lacking in this section. The oracle may well have undergone a semantic shift during its transition from Sitz im Leben to Sitz im Buch.

v. 8. Whether דְּתֻנַּת יָשָׁר אֶלֶּמֶץ denotes the people of the former northern kingdom,139 or Judeans exiled in the sixth century,140 is uncertain, since the phrase ‘the land of the north’ (ארממ_ אָמֵד) might be either Assyria or Babylon. Either way, the subsequent מֵכָּל הָאֱלֹהִים אֶלֶּמֶץ (cf. v. 3) universalises the promise.

3.4. Coherence & Redaction

Although we have identified 23.1-8 as a literary unit, it comprises three clearly distinct oracles; vv. 1-4, 5-6 and 7-8. Formally, these are demarcated by their respective introductions; the first by the ‘Woe!’ formula (cf. 22.13), and the second and the third by the declaration ‘Behold, the days are coming’, otherwise restricted to the Book of Consolation (30.3; 31.27, 38; 33.14).141 Each oracle, moreover, has its own dominant imagery; i.e., ‘shepherd / flock’ (vv. 1-4), ‘the righteous king’ (vv. 5-6), and ‘new exodus’ (vv. 7-8; note the twofold use of השָׁלֹם). The fact that the second and third oracles occur almost verbatim in other contexts (vv. 5-6 = 33.15-16; vv. 7-8 = 16.14-15) also demonstrates their original independence; this is underlined in respect to vv. 7-8 by its different placement in MT and OG.142

In addition, several scholars have questioned the original integrity of vv. 1-4. Rudolph saw v. 3 as a post-exilic gloss because (unlike vv. 1-2, 4) it explicitly assumes a worldwide Diaspora.143 McKane, however, argues that we should detach vv. 1-2 from vv. 3-4: “There are two separate worlds of ideas: on the one hand the community disintegrated because its leaders were negligent, and, on the other, the community exiled by Yahweh as a judgement for its

139 So Thompson, Jeremiah, 491.
140 So McKane, Jeremiah 1, 565.
141 Note too the shift to poetic parallelism in the middle of the second oracle (vv. 5b; 6a).
142 So Thompson, Jeremiah, 491; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 566-567.
143 Rudolph, Jeremia, 125. A similar conclusion is reached by J. Lust, ‘ “Gathering and Return” in Jeremiah and Ezekiel’, in Bogaert, Le Livre de Jeremie, 134-135, partly because v. 3 states that YHWH (rather than the shepherds) scattered the sheep, and partly because the language of multiplying “betrays a redaction influenced by a priestly style, unusual for Jeremiah” (135).
Certainly there is a progression of thought from v. 2 to v. 3, but it is hard to see why the same person should not be author of both.

Whatever their literary history, these oracles have been intelligently combined. Despite the unifying ‘shepherd / flock’ imagery, vv. 1-4 actually contain two separate promises for YHWH’s people; that of restoration to their homeland (v. 3), and of new shepherds for their protection (v. 4). The function of the second and third oracles is to develop each of these promises. Thus, vv. 5-6 interpret the promise of new shepherds by prophesying a particular king who will reign for the benefit of Judah and Israel; note the use of the כָּרָה as the connecting word (vv. 4, 5). Then, vv. 6-7 take up the promise of homecoming by anticipating a return that will replace the exodus as the definitive act of YHWH’s salvation; note how v. 8 repeats מַעַלְתָּו from v. 3.

3.5. Differentiation in 23.1-8: הדיעות / הָעֲלָה

Within 23.1-8, the crucial section for our purposes is the opening oracle in vv. 1-4. Here, the metaphor of ‘shepherds’ (דָּרְעָה) and ‘flock’ (מַעַלְתָּו) creates a sharp inner-Judean distinction upon which the following judgement and salvation oracles are based. The ‘shepherds’ are singled out for criticism. Instead of tending and overseeing (כָּרָה and רֹעַ הָעֲלָה) the flock, they have destroyed (אנַיֵּא, v. 1) and scattered them (מַעַלְתָּו, vv. 1, 2; cf. Hiph v. 2). Consequently, YHWH will repay them in kind: מַעַלְתָּו תָּלֶלֶתָה אָחְרֵי אַרְעָא מֹשֶׁל (v. 2; cf. 21.14). By contrast, in vv. 3-4 he promises to intervene on the flock’s behalf, restoring them מָשָׁלֶתָה אָחְרֵי אַרְעָא מֹשֶׁל to security in their own land, and raising up (כָּרָה) new shepherds to care for them. Equally striking is the affirmation of YHWH’s relationship with the people; they are ‘my people’ (מִשָּׁם, v. 2), ‘my flock’ (מַעַלְתָּו, v. 2), ‘the flock of my pasture’ (מַעַלְתָּו, v. 1).

At the same time, the language throughout is historically and geographically non-specific; as we have seen, in vv. 5-8 even the Judah / Israel distinction is obliterated.

Within this oracle, judgement and salvation are closely linked to the question of culpability. In this respect, the adoption of ‘shepherds and sheep’ as the controlling metaphor is crucial. For by viewing the kings as ‘shepherds’, the text automatically presents them as morally responsible agents, deserving of YHWH’s punishment (כָּרָה); scattering sheep is as reprehensible

144 McKane, Jeremiah i, 557; similarly, Carroll, Jeremiah, 445.
for a shepherd as it is for a king. What the metaphor does not permit is for blame to be attached to the people, because the people are simply 'sheep'; indeed, throughout vv. 1-4 the flock remain entirely passive. In other words, framing the issue in terms of shepherds and sheep inevitably places the moral burden on the shepherds.

Naturally, the metaphor has its limits, and should not be seen as implying that 'the people' are guiltless. On the contrary, the wording of YHWH’s pledge in vv. 3 and 8 to gather them ‘from all the places where I scattered them’ (אש לשתה תם ל), with its overtones of his personal wrath, hints at the opposite. We can say, however, that Jer. 23.1-8 attaches greater culpability to the Israel’s leaders. Not only does this explain why the promise of restoration is limited to the people, it also accounts for the content of vv. 5-6. What YHWH promises here is not (as in ch. 24) the gift of a new heart and a new relationship; the terms גס ערה and ר飾 (v. 2) suggest this relationship is already established. Instead, since the chief problem has been their former leaders, what they are promised is a new leader, who will rule wisely and in righteousness.

This distinction between ‘leaders’ and ‘people’ in a combined judgement and salvation oracle is unique within Jer. It is important to bear this in mind, since 23.1-8 is sometimes bracketed along with other promises of return for the Diaspora, such as 16.14-15, 29.14 and 32.37. Crucially, though, none of these other promises distinguish between different Judean or Israelite groups; all, without exception, will be saved. As we have seen, the closest parallel to 23.1-8 is in 3.14-18; there, however, while YHWH promises to provide the people with new shepherds (וְלָהוּ מִשְׁפּוּט הָרְשָׁע הָרְשָׁע לָבֵן) (v. 14), there is no message of blame or judgement on their former shepherds. Indeed, 3.14-18 explicitly refers to the nation as a whole as Іבש שפוך (v. 14), and contains the pointed prophecy, נִבְגַּל לְךָ תָּלָם (v. 17). For a genuine parallel to the shepherd and flock polarity in Jer. 23.1-8, we have to look to Ezek. 34.

145 See for example Schmid, Buchgestalten, 269-274.
4. Jer. 24.1-10

4.1. Text

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ἑδειξε μοι κυρίος δυο καλαθοὺς σκυών κειμένους κατὰ προσωπὸν ναυ λυρίου μετα τὸ ἄποικες σαβακοκοδομοσβ βασιλεὰς Βαβυλῶνος τὸν Ἰερούσαλημ ὑπὸ Ἰουκαμί βασιλεὰς Ιουδα καὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ τοὺς σχημάτας καὶ τοὺς δημοτικὰς καὶ τοὺς πλυσίους εξ Ἰερούσαλημ καὶ ἴησαν αὐτοὺς εἰς Βαβυλῶνα</td>
<td>Revealed to me two baskets, containers, with writing on them, each one of the Babylonian kings and the cities, and the priests of Jerusalem and presented them to the Babylonian kings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ὅ τι καλαθός ο ὡς σκων χρήστων σφόδρα ώς τὰ συκα τὰ πραμμα τὸ καλαθὸς ο ἐκτὲρος σκων πονηρῶν σφόδρα ὡς ὁ βραχύσηται ἀπό πονηρίας αὐτῶν</td>
<td>Each basket is one of the fruits of them, the second one is of the wicked fruit, because he becomes weak from the perversity of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καὶ ἐπὶ κυρίος προς με τι σὺ ὁραὶ Ἰερείμα καὶ εἶπα συκα τὰ χρήστα χρήστα λιαν καὶ τὰ πονηρὰ πονηρὰ λιαν ὡς ὁ βραχύσηται ἀπὸ πονηρίας αὐτῶν</td>
<td>And to me, as you see Jeremiah, and I said to you the fruits of the good fruits, and the wicked fruits of them, because he becomes weak from the perversity of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καὶ ἐγενετο λόγος κυρίον προς με λεγὼς</td>
<td>And he delivered to me, saying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ταδε λεγει κυρίος δ θεος Ἰσραηλ ὡς τὰ συκα τὰ χρήστα ταύτα ὁπτίτις ἐπιγνωσμος τοὺς ἀποκειοθετησας Ιουδα σὺς ἥξισαντοστάλκα ἐκ τοῦ τοποῦ τουτου εἰς τὴν Χαλδαιον εἰς ἁγαθα</td>
<td>Thus said the Lord, as you see the fruits of these, they have eaten from this place to the Chaldeans to good things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καὶ στηριξας τους φθαλασις μου ἐπ αὐτοὺς εἰς ἁγάθα καὶ ἀποκαταστησας αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν γην ταυτην καὶ ἀνακοιδομήσας αὐτοὺς καὶ εὰς μη καθέλω καὶ καταφυτευομεν αὐτοὺς καὶ εὰς μη ἐκταλὼ</td>
<td>And he has leaned me on my staffs to them, and he has restored them to their own land, and he has not kept them, and he has planted them to them, and he has not cut them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καὶ δοσον αὐτοῖς καρδίαν τοι ἐδειναι αὐτοὺς ἐμε ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐμί κυρίος καὶ ἓσονται μοι εἰς λαον καὶ ἐγὼ ἑσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεον ὅτι ἐπιστραφήσυται ἐπί ἐμε διὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν</td>
<td>And he has given them a heart to them, I said to them, I am your Lord, and I will be to them, as a God, because they will return to me by the heart of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καὶ ἢς τα συκα τα πονηρὰ ὡς ὁ βραχύσηται ἀπὸ πονηρίας αὐτῶν ταδε λεγει κυρίος αὐτοὺς παράδοτον τον Σεδεκιαν βασιλεα Ιουδα καὶ τοὺς μεγιστανας αὐτοῦ καὶ το καταλοπτον</td>
<td>And as the fruits of them, because he becomes weak from the perversity of them, thus said the Lord, this man of Sedeckiam, king of Jerusalem, and the most important of his, and the end of it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) ὑπὲρ ἔρχεται Τοῦ Ἰσραήλ ἵνα δοθήτως πρὸς Ἰουδαὶ τὸ ἀφετέρου τοῦ εἰς τὸν Βαβυλώνα πρὸς Ἰουδαὶ τὸ ἀφετέρου τοῦ εἰς τὸν Ἰερούσαλημ τὸ ἀφετέρου τοῦ εἰς τὸν Βαβυλώνα
(2) ὑπὸ καταστροφὴν τὰς πόλεις τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ
(3) ὑπὲρ ἐκκένωσεν τὰς πόλεις τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ
(4) ὑπὸ ἐκκένωσεν τὰς πόλεις τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ
(5) ὑπὲρ ἐκκένωσεν τὰς πόλεις τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ
(6) ὑπὲρ ἐκκένωσεν τὰς πόλεις τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ
(7) ὑπὲρ ἐκκένωσεν τὰς πόλεις τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ
(8) ὑπὲρ ἐκκένωσεν τὰς πόλεις τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ τοῦ Ἰουδαὶ τοῦ Ἰερούσαλημ
4.2. Textual Notes

v. 1. הָבָה > OG (making כָּלַע the object of קִדְמֵנָה). OG may reflect a shorter Vorlage (cf. Jer. 38:[45].22; Am. 7.1, 4, 5; 8.1, where it renders הָבָה with כָּלַע) but may also be haplographic, due to the juxtaposition of בַּה and תַּבָּה.\textsuperscript{146}

דַּוָּרָה.\textsuperscript{147} Though often translated ‘baskets’ (so OG, כָּלַע; Targ., הל), the normal function of a דַּוָּר was cooking (1 Sam. 2.14; 2 Chron. 35.13; Job. 41.12), so that ‘urns’ may be a better translation.\textsuperscript{148}

דַּוָּר. MT points as מקדשים, Hoph. ptc. pl. דַּוָּר. Elsewhere in the OT, דַּוָּר Hoph. occurs only in Ezek. 21.21, where it means ‘appointed or ‘directed’.\textsuperscript{149} Neither sense seems appropriate here. The commentaries usually read ‘placed, set’;\textsuperscript{150} whether דַּוָּר Hoph. can bear this meaning

\textsuperscript{146} See GKC §93x for this spelling.

\textsuperscript{147} Cf. 3QTr. 4.8, מַעְלָה מִלְאַנְיָם, ‘there are two pots of silver there’ (DJD 3, 288).


\textsuperscript{150} E.g., Bright, Jeremiah, 193; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 657; Thompson, Jeremiah, 506 n.1; Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 356; S. Niditch, The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition (HSM 30; Chico: Scholars Press, 1980) 55. Niditch believes the same translation can be adopted in Ezek. 21.21.
is questionable, but it can also be obtained by emending to (Hoph. ptc.), or to , Hoph. ptc. of a proposed , 'place, deposit'. The latter is the simpler, though we lack OT evidence for = 'place'. 'Placed' is clearly understood by Targ., and Vulg., ., though whether they assumed or is uncertain. On the other hand, (literally, 'laid out') can mean both 'placed, deposited' (including objects placed in a temple), and 'appointed, ordained'. Emendation to (Qal. ptc.), 'standing' posits the transposition of non-adjacent characters, and scribal confusion over an extremely common word. The options seem to be either to retain MT and read 'appointed', despite the interpretative difficulties; or to emend and translate as 'placed'. Either could claim possible support from OG.

MT ידו; OG תושב תוח 다, probably reflecting רא.

OG תושב תוח 다 > MT: That this is not OG conflation is indicated by the presence of four-fold lists in 2 Kgs. 24.14, 15, 16; Bar. 1.9. The Vorlage may have read () or .

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151 BDB, s.v. ים, translates it here as 'set, placed before', while DCH 4, s.v. ים, lists 'placed' as among possible meanings. This is rejected by Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 133, and D. Winton Thomas, 'A Note on in Jeremiah 24.1', JTS 3 (1952) 55. HALAT 2, s.v. ים, gives the sole meaning of ים Hoph. as 'ordered'.

152 Duhm, Jeremia, 197; Volz, Jeremia, 247; Pohlmann, Studien, 21 n.8.

153 So Winton Thomas, 'Note on ים in Jeremiah', 55, postulating an Arabic root, יד'; see further D. Winton Thomas, 'The Root יד in Hebrew', JTS 35 (1934) 298-306. This proposal is accepted by McKane, Jeremiah 1, 606, Thompson, Jeremiah, 506 n.1, finds it plausible.

154 E.g., Sir. 22.18, χαράκες ἐπὶ μεταφράσεως κειμένοι, 2 Esd. 6.1, ἐν τοῖς βιβλιοθηκαῖς, ὥσπερ ἡ γοα κειται ἐν βασιλείᾳ. According to McKane, Jeremiah 1, 606, 'it is unlikely that the Greek translator read a Hebrew text different from MT. Rather it was assumed ... that ים, derived from ים, could bear the sense 'placed', "

155 See Hdt., 1.51, 52.

156 Cf. Memorabilia, 4.4.21: οἱ παραβατικοὶ τοὺς πρὸ τῶν Θεῶν κειμένους νομοὺς. See further L & S 1, s.v. κειμα. In LXX Josh. 4.6, ἐκς στημέων κειμένου διὰ παντὸς may mean 'as an appointed sign forever' (so Lust, Lexicon, s.v. κειμα) or 'a sign remaining forever.'

157 So Giesebrecht, Jeremiah, 133; Rudolph, Jeremia, 134; HALAT 2, s.v. ים;

158 Janzen, Studies, 32.

159 Niditch, Symbolic Vision, 57; McKane, Jeremiah 1, xxvi. McKane notes, however, that in 2 Kgs. 24.14 and 16 these phrases are rendered תושב תוח 다 and תושב תוח 다 respectively.
resists translation, though most agree that the root is הָרִים, ‘to close’ (cf. Vulg., inclusorem). Its association with הָרִים (29.2; 2 Kgs. 24.14, 16) suggests that is a craftsman of some sort, though as McKane remarks, “the form remains a problem, since we might have expected a formation of the same type as הָרִים (סר).” OG δεσμωτα (‘prisoners’) takes to mean ‘the enclosed ones’, an interpretation Bright considers “not impossible.” Alternatively, might mean ‘those who enclose’, i.e., ‘guards’ (cf. Targ., cf. Ezra 7.24); leaning towards this view, McKane notes that in 2 Kgs. 24.16, OG renders with an active participle, τον συγκλειοντα. If so, Jer. OG has misunderstood the term; conversely, Niditch argues that it is OG’s translation in 2 Kgs. 24.16 that is faulty.

v. 2. MT רָאָה . . . רָאָה; similarly Targ., Velala רָאָה, and Vulg., calathus unus . . . et calathus unus. OG רָאָה , . . . רָאָה might reflect רָאָה , but the MT construction is found elsewhere (1 Sam. 13.17-18 and Ezek. 10.9).

MT רָאָה . . . רָאָה, ‘the first jar was (i.e., consisted of) good figs’; OG rephrases with a genitive, συκών χρηστών. Similarly, for תָּנִיא המבדה, ‘figs (consisting) of early figs’, OG rephrases with ως το συκα τα προτμα.

v. 3. רָאָה . . . רָאָה; OG συκα τα χρηστα (LXXB.8) is more succinct, perhaps reflecting ‘closed (i.e., fine) gold’ (1 Kgs. 6.20, 21, etc). However,

160 As is freely acknowledged by Duhm, Jeremia, 197, and Rudolph, Jeremia, 134.
162 McKane, Jeremiah 1, 608.
163 Bright, Jeremiah, 193; cf., Ps. 142. 8; Isa. 24.22; 42.7, where כַּמָּה = ‘prison, dungeon’.
164 McKane, Jeremiah 1, 607. He thus points in Jer. 24.1 as a Pl. ptc., .
165 Niditch, Symbolic Vision, 56.
166 Cf. Ezr. 10.31, וַיַּחְנוּ עַל הַמִּשְׁטָּה, ‘and the season was rains’; Ezek. 41.22, וַיִּתְמֶסֶת הַמִּשְׁטָּה, ‘the altar was timber’. For the apposition of a noun to denote contents (as distinct from material) cf. Ex. 28.17, וַיִּתְמֶסֶת הַמִּשְׁטָּה, ‘silver of (i.e., made of) earth’; 1 Kgs. 19.6, וַיִּתְמֶסֶת הַמִּשְׁטָּה, ‘bread of (i.e., baked on) burning stones’.
167 So GKC §128m; GBH 2, §129f-g. For this ‘genitive of species’, see too Ex. 20.24, וַיִּתְמֶסֶת מִשְּטַה, ‘altar of (i.e., made of) earth’; 1 Kgs. 19.6, וַיִּתְמֶסֶת מִשְּטַה, ‘bread of (i.e., baked on) burning stones’.
168 So Niditch, Symbolic Vision, 57.
OG omission due to haplography or stylistic preference is equally possible. Targ. (אטרן) and Vulg. (ficus ficus bonas bonas valde) follow MT.

v. 5. עליות, "exiles"; OG ἄποικοις, 'colony' (cf. ἄποικας in 29[36].1).

v. 6. MT points with as singular; OG τους δοθαλμους understands it as dual. The same variation occurs in Jer. 40[47].4; Am. 9.4.

v. 8. מ is >OG: Even if מ carries an emphatic sense ('ah'), it is almost certainly MT plus; elsewhere Jer. OG consistently represents מ with מ with מ (29[36].10, etc.) or מ מ (22.6, 11, etc.).

v. 9. מ is >OG: Quite apart from the lack of a conjunction, MT is obscure. Relocating מ to the end of v. 8, so that it balances מ at the end of v. 5, is attractive, but doesn’t

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169 So Janzen, Studies, 117.

170 For the pointing, see GKC §95t.

171 The use of ἄποικες / ἄποικας, rather than φυγή, may be significant. A similar preference for ἄποικες / ἄποικας is found in Josephus; Feldman argues that this is deliberate, to enable Josephus to avoid the idea of 'punishment' contained in φυγή. See Louis H. Feldman, 'The Concept of Exile in Josephus', in J.M. Scott (ed.), Exile: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Conceptions (JSJ Sup. 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997)145-148.

172 So Bright, Jeremiah, 193; Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 360. However, A. Aejmelaeus, 'The Function and Interpretation of מ in Biblical Hebrew' in A. Aejmelaeus, On the Trail of the Septuagint Translators. Collected Essays (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993) 184, concludes her study of מ by noting that as it had progressed, "ever less and less room was left for the emphatic interpretation."


174 As Tov, 'Did the Septuagint Translators Always Understand Their Hebrew Text?', in E. Tov (ed.), The Greek and Hebrew Bible. Collected Essays on the Septuagint (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 208, suggests. Tov points out that elsewhere in Jer. this term is rendered variously as ἔφαγες, 'punishment' (15.4) and δοκτορας, 'scattering' (34 [41].17), while in 2 Chron. 29.8, ἔφαγες, 'astonishment' is used.

175 Volz, Jeremiah, 247; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 655; tentatively, Rudolph, Jeremiah, 134; Bright, Jeremiah, 192, note 'a'.

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explain its omission in OG. It is lacking in the similar 15.4 and 29.18, and is probably the result of conflation after one faulty manuscript read only הוהי.\(^{177}\)

v. 10. \(\text{ואמתתיה} \geq \text{OG}\). Probably MT plus,\(^{178}\) since similar phrases in 7.14, 23.39 and 25.5 are represented by OG. If it is a minus in OG, the only explanation would be haplography due to homoioteleuton (cf. the ending \(\text{דהי} \geq \text{of the last two words}).

4.3. Exegetical Notes

v. 1. \(\text{הראה} \geq \text{יוהי} \geq \text{יוהי}\). The use of \(\text{יאמר} + \text{יוהי} \geq \text{יוהי}\) is typical of the ‘vision report’, found elsewhere in the OT; see especially Am. 7.1, 4, 7, where both the above elements are present.\(^{179}\) However, the lack of an initial \(\text{הוהי}\), otherwise typical of this genre, is striking.

\(\text{הכלה} \geq \text{יוהי}\). This expression occurs elsewhere in Jer. only in 7.4, the preferred term being \(\text{כלה} \geq \text{יוהי}\). Commentators generally see \(\text{כלה} \geq \text{יוהי}\) as a reference to the temple in Jerusalem, and possibly, as in 1 Kgs. 6 and Ezek. 41, the inner sanctuary in particular (cf. the possible cultic associations of the \(\text{כרם}\)). Calvin, however, argued that “the temple ... is to be taken here for the tribunal of God”,\(^{180}\) citing Isa. 26.21 and Mic. 1.2-3 for the same idea.\(^{181}\) In 7.3-15, although the people come to worship (\(\text{נאם} \geq \text{יוהי}\), \(\text{דנתם} \geq \text{יוהי}\), v. 10), they are rejected because of their evil deeds, which YHWH has seen (\(\text{נאם} \geq \text{יוהי} \geq \text{ראות}\), v. 11).\(^{182}\) In other words, the point is less that the figs are being ‘presented’ as an offering before God, than that they have been summoned for judgement.

\(^{177}\) So Duhm, \textit{Jeremia}, 199; Ziegler, \textit{Beiträge}, 87; Janzen, \textit{Studies}, 12-13; McKane, \textit{Jeremiah 1}, 617.


\(^{179}\) Also similar are Zech. 1.8; 2.1,5; 5.1, where we have \(\text{יאמר} \geq \text{יוהי} \geq \text{יוהי}\). In 2 Kgs. 8.13 and Zech. 2.3; 3.1, we have \(\text{יאמר} \geq \text{יוהי} \geq \text{יוהי}\) Hiph. without \(\text{יוהי}\).


\(^{181}\) Although Isa. 26.21 refers not to the \(\text{כלה} \geq \text{יוהי}\) but to the \(\text{כלה} \geq \text{יוהי}\).

\(^{182}\) A different understanding of the significance of the temple is offered by A.C. Welch, \textit{Jeremiah. His Time and His Work} (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1951) 161: “The temple was introduced into the allegory because ... the question in debate turned round religion.”
v. 2. הבכורה: As the root suggests, the הבכורה (Isa. 28.4; Mic. 7.1; Hos. 9.10) is a fruit that ripens early in the season. Commentators differ as to whether we have here an allusion to 'firstfruits.' Noting that the backdrop is related to הבכורה, 'firstfruits', Craigie et al. suggest that, "perhaps the very choice of words by Jeremiah is intended to suggest the figs were an

183 "Er citerit die Stelle II Reg. 24. 12-16 nur flüchtig, weil er sie als bekannt voraussetzt" (Duhm, Jeremia, 197); so too Rudolph, Jeremia, 134; Pohlmann, Studien, 21; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 607; Jones, Jeremiah, 320. But Bright, Jeremiah, 193, merely describes this as 'probable' and Niditch, Symbolic Vision, 56, as 'possible'. A common origin for all three passages cannot be ruled out.


185 In 40.1 we have at least two subordinate clauses: הבכורה אסתר היה אל הדת אשת יהודה אשת יהודה. Here, הבכורה אסתר יהודית אשת יהודה creates an additional subsidiary clause; however, these words probably are secondary (see further our discussion of this verse in ch. 4).

186 "Had not this been added, the vision would have been obscure." (Calvin, Jeremiah and Lamentations 3, 221). Pohlmann, Studien, 21, agrees that the v. 1b appears to interrupt the report, but adds: "Trotzdem handelt es sich hier kaum um eine nachträgliche Einschaltung; die Zeitbestimmung charakterisiert nämlich das ganze Kapitel dem Inhalt entsprechend als einen Bericht über eine 'neue' bzw. jüngere Offenbarung, die dem Propheten zu Teil wurde, nachdem sich die 'früheren' mit der Exilierung Jojakins erfüllt hatten."

187 According to Niditch, "had the date segment begun Jeremiah 24, we might have considered it an original part of the vision . . . (however) we must assume that a redactor placed the indication of date within the initial description of the vision in order to make it seem more a part of the whole." (Symbolic Vision, 60-61; italics mine). This rather gives the game away; a simpler explanation is that it was part of the whole.

188 In favour of this view are Duhm, Jeremia, 197 ("Es scheint Abstraktum 'Früchte' zu sein."); Thompson, Jeremiah, 507-8; Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 358.
offering.” However, the versions appear to understand מָדִּין to mean ‘early fruit’ (LXX normally uses for ‘firstfruit’, πρωτογενήματον). Moreover, if the presentation of firstfruits was in mind we might have expected the cultic term רַבִּים (יַעֲנֵה) (Lev. 1.4, 22.25; Jer. 14.10, 12; Mal. 1.10, 13) to be employed, rather than וֹנֵב.

v. 5: The use of the ‘messenger formula’ here and in v. 8 is often seen as incongruous in a private vision report, and thus redactional. Craigie et al. argue for its retention on the ground that the vision was for the benefit of the king and people, but the text is silent regarding any third-party audience. More significantly, however, Samuel A. Meier has shown that אֵלָי + personal name typically functions in the OT as a citation formula, without implying any ‘messenger’ activity.

Since אֵלָי is often translated ‘regard as, consider as’, it is often assumed that the simile, תָּהֳמִים הַוָּאָרוֹת אֶלְּכַּה אֲבוֹדָא אֲבוֹדוֹת, is likening the people to the figs. However, while מָדִּין Hiph. (like its LXX counterpart, ἐπιγενήματα) is semantically quite flexible, the meaning ‘to regard as’ (for which מָדִּין would be a more likely word-choice) is unattested for it. Rather, the analogy is between how people view ripe figs and how YHWH views the exiles. Thus, a better translation of אֵלָי would be ‘I will take note of, observe’. Alternatively, given the emphasis in v. 6 on the positive things YHWH will do for the exiles, אֵלָי may even carry the

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189 Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 358. In Deut. 26.1-11, the worshipper is told to place the firstfruits in a basket, and set it before the Lord. But the terminology is different: אֲבָדָא (basket, vv. 2, 4) תָּהֳמִים Hiph. (set down, vv. 4, 10) and רַבִּים (firstfruit, vv. 2, 10). Moreover, the offering is set תָּהֳמִים (v. 4) rather than תָּהֳמִים. אֲבָדָא.

190 E.g., Volz, Jeremia, 247; Rudolph, Jeremia, 134; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 658; Carroll, Jeremiah, 481; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 608.

191 Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 358.


193 So R.K. Harrison, Jeremiah and Lamentations. An Introduction and Commentary (TOTC; Leicester: IVP, 1979) 124; also RSV, NIV, REB.

194 NB especially לָא, ‘to count one thing as another’ (Gen. 38.15). Nor is מָדִּין ever used in parallel with לָא.

195 I.e., seeing here an example of ‘gapping’ (ellipsis), in which the verb in the second part of the simile is implied in the first part. Cf. Hos. 9.10, 10, מְפַסְּדָם מְפַסְּדָם אֲבֹדָא אֲבֹדוֹת יַעֲנֵה אֲבֹדוֹת וֹנֵב יַעֲנֵה, ‘I found Israel like [one finding] grapes in the desert, I saw your fathers like [one seeing] early fruit on the fig tree.’
sense ‘I will show preference for’ (a nuance that usually has a negative connotation, Deut. 1.17). This then brings us to the meaning of לָשׁוּבָה.) However, our interpretation of לָשׁוּבָה renders an adjectival understanding of problematic. In fact, it is better seen as a noun, with לָשׁוּבָה meaning ‘for good, for a good purpose’. Not only is this nominal sense for לָשׁוּבָה characteristic of Jer. (15.11; 21.10; 39.16; 44.27), it is precisely what we find in the following verse.

v. 6. Those who translate לָשׁוּבָה as a feminine adjective; Tike the good figs, so YHWH regards the exiles as good’.

However, our interpretation of לָשׁוּבָה renders an adjectival understanding of problematic. In fact, it is better seen as a noun, with לָשׁוּבָה meaning ‘for good, for a good purpose’. Not only is this nominal sense for לָשׁוּבָה characteristic of Jer. (15.11; 21.10; 39.16; 44.27), it is precisely what we find in the following verse.

v. 6. The expression לָשׁוּבָה (lit., ‘I will set my eye’) means, ‘adopt a fixed attitude or disposition’. It is infrequent in the OT, but note Jer. 40.4, אֲשֶׁר אָדַע אֶל צִיּוֹנִי, and especially Am. 9.4, אֲשֶׁר אָדַע אֶל צִיּוֹנִי. It is similar in meaning to 21.10, מַעַן עַשָּׂר יִשָּׂרָאֵל. 

The different ways in which it is used, however, raise complex hermeneutical questions. In 18.7-9, YHWH declares that his threats of destruction (לָשׁוּבָה) and promises of blessing (לָשׁוּבָה) are all reversible, being contingent on the response of those addressed. Does this contradict or merely qualify the (apparently) absolute promise of 24.6? The closest parallel, however, is in 42.10: אֲשֶׁר אָדַע אֶל צִיּוֹנִי אֲשֶׁר אָדַע אֶל צִיּוֹנִי. Here, though, the

196 T.E. Fretheim, s.v. כָּל, NIDOTTE 3, 108, takes the phrase to signify “God’s special regard for the exiles”.

197 Most scholars take לָשׁוּבָה as the complement of לָשׁוּבָה, with לָשׁוּבָה being parenthetical: ‘Like these good figs, so I will look with favour on the exiles of Judah (whom I sent from this place to the land of the Babylonians) for good.’ Alternatively, לָשׁוּבָה may relate syntactically to לָשׁוּבָה: ‘Like these good figs, so I will look with favour on the exiles (whom I sent from this place to the land of the Babylonians) for good.” (so Welch, Jeremiah, 165; Pohlmann, Studien, 22).

198 E.g., Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 218.


200 “He confirms what he said in the last verse, but in other words . . .” (Calvin, Jeremiah and Lamentations 3, 225). So too Pohlmann, Studien, 22: “erläutert, was damit [v. 5] gemeint ist.”

201 McKane, Jeremiah 1, 605, paraphrases as ‘I will mark them out for favour’.

202 As Carroll, Jeremiah, 481, puts it, these words “belong to the inner exegesis of the tradition.” For a full listing and discussion, see M.A. Taylor, ‘Jeremiah 45: The Problem of Placement’, JSOT 37 (1987) 79-98.
promise is held out to those who had remained in Judah after 587 – that is, to precisely those people who in ch. 24 are excluded from any such hope. Granted, the offer in 42.10 is rendered hypothetical by the decision of the Judeans to flee to Egypt (41.17; 42.19-21). Nevertheless, the extension of the promise to the Judean remnant is startling.

v. 7. Tirui occurs only here in Jer., though elements occur elsewhere; see 22.16, (like OG, וּתְרוּ, Targ., רְאוֹ, and Vulg., quis) can be taken as causal (‘because I am YHWH’) or resultative (‘that I am YHWH’). The latter seems more likely; the words just cited in Deut. 29.3, that YHWH had not given Israel ‘a heart to know’, is followed by the statement that he had miraculously provided for them, אֲנַהֲנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִתְנֶנֶנָּה (v. 5). It is not unusual for יְהוָה to introduce a second object; for examples with יְהוָה, see Ex. 32.22, 43, 44; 1 Sam. 15.6.17.8, 20; 1 Kgs. 5.17, 20; and 2 Sam. 17.8, 20; 1 Kgs. 5.17, 20. The same options are available for 9.23, 24.7, 11.4; 30.22; 31.1, 33; 32.38.

203 See Pohlmann, Studien, 23: “Eigenartig ist nicht nur, daß die Erkenntnis Jahwes von der Verleihung eines (neuen?) Herzens abhängig gemacht wird, was sonst nirgends im AT der Fall ist; merkwürdig ist ebenso die Kombination der zwei hauptsächlichen alttestamentlichen Redeweisen von der Erkenntnis Jahwes, die in ihrem Streuungsbereich sonst reinlich geschieden sind.”

204 McKane, Jeremiah 1, 605; Unterman, Repentance to Redemption, 76-80; Craigie et al., Jeremiah 1 – 25, 359. The same options are available for 9.23, 24.7, 11.4; 30.22; 31.1, 33; 32.38.

205 Giesen, Jeremia, 134; Condamin, Jérémie, 189; Volz, Jeremia, 247; Bright, Jeremiah, 192; Thompson, Jeremia, 506; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 658.

206 See further GKC §117h; B.K. Waltke & M. O’Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 644. The declaration יִדְרַשְׁנָה נִתְנֶנָּה meaning ‘you (they) will know that I am YHWH’ is very common in Ezek. (6.7, 10, etc.), though here it does not involve a double accusative.
Craige et al. note that in the first two of these, the promise is conditional on human response, while in the latter four YHWH’s initiative is to the fore. They conclude that “this passage bridges both contexts; it is a restoration oracle, but it is also conditional as the next phrase indicates.”207 This, however, depends on how we take v. 7b.

... Here again it is possible to read יָבֹא as conditional (‘if they return’)208 or causal (‘for they will return’); most commentators accept the latter option.209

Whether this reading of vv. 6-7 precludes any element of conditionality is another matter; as Unterman points out, the statement ‘for they shall return to me with all their heart’ leaves open the question whether this is a free act of the people, or the result of YHWH’s initiative.210 In his view, the sequence of events promised in vv. 6-7 is: the exiles seek YHWH ‘with their whole heart’; YHWH gives them ‘a heart to know him’; the relationship is restored. Conversely, Nicholson argues that, while in Deut. 4.29-31; 30.1-6, and 1 Kgs. 8.46-50 repentance is indeed prerequisite for salvation, in Jer. 24.5-7 it is subordinated to YHWH’s prior action:

Whilst it is still Israel’s ‘turning again’ which will secure forgiveness and restoration, such a ‘turning again’ is now assured by Yahweh himself who now takes the initiative so that Israel will ‘turn again’ . . . That is to say, the conditional ‘if’ has now receded and the element of promise has come to the forefront of the kerygma.211

The fact that the reference to the exiles’ wholehearted return to YHWH comes after his promise of ‘a heart to know me’ (to say nothing of the promise to set his eyes upon them for

207 Craige et al., *Jeremiah 1*, 359-360. R. Rendtorff, *The Covenant Formula. An Exegetical and Theological Investigation* (ET: Margaret Kohl; OTS; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998) 35, sees 24.7 as marking a turning point in the use of the covenant formula in Jer; whereas in 7.23 and 11.24 it refers to Israel’s rescue from Egypt and is the basis for his present judgement, in 24.7 it is oriented to the future and related to YHWH’s salvific plan for the exiles.

208 So Craige et al., *Jeremiah 1*, 360; Giesebrecht, *Jeremia*, 134 (“wenn”).


210 Unterman, *Repentance to Redemption*, 81. He adds that repentance is “an act of the exiles’ will which becomes the rationale for all the promises of restoration in vv. 6-7.”

good in v. 6) suggests that Nicholson’s emphasis on divine initiative is correct. However, to say that Israel’s turning is here ‘assured’ may be an overstatement; McKane is probably nearer the truth in describing YHWH’s role in the people’s response as ‘enabling.’ Thus, the promise of restoration in this verse may not be as unconditional as it seems.

v. 8. Partly for the same reasons as in v. 5, but also because it interrupts the word-flow, this phrase is probably secondary. Without it, the balance between YHWH’s role in the people’s response as ‘enabling.’

Duhm suggested that OG ποροδόσσω reflects ἐναέριον (Hiph. ἐναέριον, ‘hand over’), so forming a neat paronomasia with το τού τού (v. 5). This is unlikely, since in LXX ποροδόσσω routinely represents τον. Part of the reason for Duhm’s proposal, however, was the fact that καὶ ἐναέριον appears to make YHWH exclusively responsible for Zedekiah’s fate. This is so, however, only if καὶ ἐναέριον here means ‘make, turn into.’ An alternative would be to interpret καὶ ἐναέριον as ‘I will deal with, treat’ for this meaning of καὶ ἐναέριον, see Gen. 42.30, Ezek. 15.6, ἡ ἀληθινὴ περί ὑμῶν μὴ ἄρα ἡ δόξα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λέγεται ὅτι τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἐρήμου is ambiguous; it might mean (a) that just as the wood of the vine is given over to fire, so YHWH will give the people over (to their enemies), or (b) that YHWH will treat the people like the wood of the vine (which is then given over to fire).

Many scholars see here an allusion to the Judean remnant which fled to Egypt after 586 (43.4-7), while others take the words to refer to an earlier migration – either when Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt in 609 (2 Kgs. 23.34), or when Judah became a vassal

212 McKane, Jeremiah 1, 609.
213 Unterma, Repentance to Redemption, 81, characterises (or caricatures) Nicholson’s argument as meaning that YHWH will “forcibly bring about the return of the people,” which he then describes as “a deterministic conception.” But to say that A is a result of B is not to say that is a forced result.
214 E.g., Duhm, Jeremia, 199; Rudolph, Jeremia, 134; Carroll, Jeremia, 481; McKane, Jeremia 1, 609.
215 Duhm, Jeremia, 199. In fact, καὶ can itself mean ‘hand over’ (Num. 21.3; Hos. 11.8; cf. Jer. 18.21 where it parallels).
216 So McKane, Jeremia 1, 605; Craigie et al., Jeremia 1 – 25, 356.
217 So Rudolph, Jeremia, 134 (‘behandle’); Thompson, Jeremia, 506. Cf. Volz, Jeremia, 247 (‘sich erweisen’, i.e., ‘demonstrate’) and Holladay, Jeremia 1, 659 (‘designate’).
218 E.g., Duhm, Jeremia, 199; Nicholson, Preaching, 110; Thiel, Redaktion 1 – 25, 257; Niditch, Symbolic Vision, 61; Pohlmann, Studien, 26; Holladay, Jeremia 1, 659; Carroll, Jeremia, 486; McKane, Jeremia 1, 610.
state to Nebuchadnezzar (603), or shortly after the deportation of 597. The first interpretation seems the more probable, since the only Jewish community in Egypt known to Jer. is that described in chs. 43 and 44. Those who take this view, but accept the authenticity of the vision as a whole, see 603 as redactional. Syntactically, however, it is well integrated in the sentence, balancing and both being sub-divisions of . The ‘remnant of Jerusalem’ will comprise those who remain in Judah and those who flee to Egypt. Consequently, some commentators see the phrase as evidence that the entire chapter is inauthentic. However, it is not unlikely that Jeremiah should have foreseen that some of his compatriots would flee to Egypt in the crisis to come, especially if some had already done so.

v. 9. clearly means ‘I will make them’ (for this meaning of נזר, see 9.10; Deut. 28.13; Ezek. 7.20, etc.). Thus, just as v. 6 is epexegetical of v. 5, so is v. 9 of v. 8: YHWH will ‘deal with’ the people by ‘making them’ a curse.

The idea of YHWH pursuing the Judaeans to other lands is often thought to conflict with the point being made otherwise in vv. 9-10, that the people will die in their own land. Thus it is argued that this phrase is secondary, influenced by Deut. 28.37, and 1 Kgs. 9.7, and 1 Kgs. 9.7, and 1 Kgs. 9.7, and 1 Kgs. 9.7. Such a verdict rests on a false antithesis; ‘perishing from the land’ is hardly incompatible with being banished from it, and indeed, neatly counter-balances (v. 9a).

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219 E.g., Condamin, Jérémie, 189; Bright, Jeremiah, 193; Thompson, Jeremiah, 508-509; Jones, Jeremiah, 320. However, Thiel, Redaktion 1 – 25, 256-257, and Pohlmann, Studien, 25-26 n.40, argue that the evidence for such a colony before 587 is very slight.

220 So Volz, Jeremia, 247; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 659; so too McKane, Jeremiah 1, 611, though he rejects the authenticity of the whole chapter.

221 “The author of chapter 24 . . . represents that only two groups need be distinguished in the aftermath of 586: those who remained in Jerusalem and those who went to Egypt.” (McKane, Jeremiah 1, 610-611). As Pohlmann notes, Studien, 25 n.38, the expression נזר וארוסה וארוסה occurs nowhere else. A fragment from the Cairo Geniza reads נזר וארוסה וארוסה.

222 E.g., Volz, Jeremia, 241 n.1; Rudolph, Jeremia, 134; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 659; McKane, Jeremiah 1, 611; Carroll, Jeremiah, 482.
4.4. Coherence & Redaction

As the preceding discussion has indicated, Jer. 24 is widely thought to contain secondary material. Suspicion has fallen on the historical note (v. 1) and the messenger formula (vv. 5, 8), while much of the vocabulary of vv. 7-10 is seen as characteristically Deuteronomistic. The relevant phrases have been noted in our previous section, but can be tabulated as follows:224

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>תורסבכע בכרן ממרה (v. 7)</td>
<td>cf. Deut. 28.11; 30.9;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>הבולה (v. 7)</td>
<td>cf. Deut. 30.2, 10; 1 Sam. 7.3;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.20, 24; 1 Kgs. 8.23, 48; 14.8; 2 Kgs. 10.31; 23.25;</td>
<td>v. 7; cf. Deut. 4.20; 7.6; 14.2; 26.18; 27.9;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>הבולה (v. 7)</td>
<td>cf. Deut. 28.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>הבולה (v. 9)</td>
<td>cf. Deut. 28.37; 2 Kgs. 22.19;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>הבולה (v. 9)</td>
<td>cf. Deut. 28.37;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>הבולה (v. 9)</td>
<td>cf. Deut. 30.1;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>הבולה (v. 10)</td>
<td>cf. 1 Kgs. 9.7; 2 Kgs. 21.8; also Deut. 3.20; 9.23.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consequently, many scholars believe that Jer. 24 contains a Deuteronomistic redaction of an authentic vision report. According to Nicholson,

In its present form this passage clearly belongs to the Jeremianic prose tradition the language and style of which are well in evidence throughout. At the same time the striking imagery which it employs indicates that it is based upon an authentic saying of the prophet himself.226

Naturally, there is disagreement as to the extent of the secondary material. For some, it is a matter of only a few phrases. Volz deleted the historical note (v. 1), the messenger formulae (vv. 5 and 8), and the phrases לחרפה למשנה למקלות (v. 8), and לחרפה למשנה למקלות (v. 9).227 Holladay differs only in retaining the obloquies of v. 9,228 while Rudolph restricts the secondary elements to the historical note, the messenger formulae and הבולה (v. 9).229 More recently, Kilpp has

224 Nicholson, Preaching, 110 n.1.
225 Apart from the specific lexical items here, ‘word chains’ in general are often seen as a feature of Deuteronomistic literary style; see May, ‘Objective Approach’, 144, and Hyatt, ‘Deuteronomic Edition’, 252.
227 Volz, Jeremia, 246-247.
228 Holladay, Jeremiah I, 654-655.
229 Rudolph, Jeremia, 134.
argued that vv. 6-7 comprise the redactional material, obscuring the message of judgement that was the real point of the original vision report.230

Others have argued that the redaction covers all or most of vv. 6-10.231 What is held to be decisive is not merely the language and literary style of these verses,232 but their theology. Thus Herrmann sees here the setting out of alternatives typical of the deuteronomists, while according to S. Böhmer, the author of vv. 6-10 “entwickelt ein umfassendes theologisches Programm für die Zukunft”.233 Meanwhile, Zimmerli detects a tension between the unconditional verdict on the two communities in the original vision, and its Deuteronomistic interpretation, “in that the announcement of salvation to the exiles is linked to the condition of their conversion.”234

One immediate problem with this argument, however, is knowing what a vision of two baskets of figs (one good and one rotten) might have meant, other than the meaning set out in vv. 5-10.235 Nicholson insists there is an authentic core in the chapter, but does not specify what it is. If we grant that “a simple word picture”236 (Zimmerli) was given to the prophet, what message did this ‘word picture’ express? According to Clements, “the original message delivered by Jeremiah . . . was to challenge the self-congratulation and mistaken self-esteem displayed by those who had been left as survivors in Judah”;237 but challenging self-esteem is a purpose, not a message. Hardly convincing is the interpretation proposed by Gottwald: “The Jeremianic core of the passage was probably a severe warning to the Zedekiah faction that their hopes of rebellion, undeterred by the failure of the first rebellion, were as untimely as spoiled

230 Kilpp, Niederreißen, 37-41.
232 For Long, ‘Reports of Visions’, 359, “the expansive prose, detailed date and long two-fold divine speech in a style characteristic of Deuteronomistic prose (vv. 6, 7, 9, 10) are major modifications.”
235 So Unterman, Repentance to Redemption, 58.
237 Clements, Jeremiah, 146.
fruit. By contrast, those already in captivity stood to learn obedience to Yahweh and could rightfully expect to one day return to Palestine.\textsuperscript{238}

We have already argued that there is no compelling reason for deleting the historical note (v. 1), the messenger formula (vv. 5, 8), the reference to those living in Egypt (v. 8), or the phrase ‘in all the places where I scatter you’ (v. 9). Regarding the Deuteronomic language in vv. 6-10, it should be said that while a linguistic / stylistic ‘family likeness’ clearly exists, knowing what inferences to draw from this is extremely difficult. It should also be noted that two supposedly ‘Deuteronomistic’ expressions – the ‘building and planting’ motif (v. 6), and the ‘sword, famine and plague’ trilogy (v. 10) – are in fact examples of what one might call ‘Jer. D’ language; that is, language which is characteristic of the prose passages in Jer. but which does not actually occur in Deut. or Dtr.H. Thus, while Hyatt and Nicholson assign these phrases to the Deuteronomic editors of Jer.,\textsuperscript{239} others attribute them to his disciples,\textsuperscript{240} and still others see them as authentic to Jeremiah.\textsuperscript{241} Certainly, it is striking that almost all the expressions in vv. 5-10 listed above find parallels in Deut. 28 and 30.\textsuperscript{242} But again, this is inconclusive as far as their authenticity is concerned. If Deut. 28 is a late addition to the book, it may have been influenced either by the authors of the Jer. prose material,\textsuperscript{243} or by Jeremiah himself. If it is not, either Jeremiah or his editors could have drawn on it. The methodological impasse remains.

What should be noted, however, is that in its theology, Jer. 24 diverges markedly from the Deuteronomic literature.\textsuperscript{244} Against Herrmann, Pohlmann points out that this chapter does

\textsuperscript{238} Gottwald, \textit{Introduction}, 400.

\textsuperscript{239} Hyatt, ‘Deuteronomic Edition’, 253; Nicholson, \textit{Preaching}, 110 n.1; cf. 115. Hyatt, unlike Nicholson, views the entire chapter as Deuteronomic. But see McKane, \textit{Jeremiah} 2, 615-616


\textsuperscript{241} Jones, \textit{Jeremiah}, 327-328; Unterman, \textit{Repentance to Redemption}, 66.

\textsuperscript{242} Even Jones, \textit{Jeremiah}, 318 refers to “some unexplained connection with Dt 28 in v. 9”.


\textsuperscript{244} See for example H. Weippert’s analysis of the רָאֵי / בֵּית polarity, \textit{Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches} (BZAW 132; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973) 206-208. Pohlmann, \textit{Studien}, 130, notes that despite the verbal affinities between 24.6 and 42.10, there are fundamental differences in outlook: “Kann umgekehrt ein und
not in fact provide alternatives at all, while Raitt notes that in vv. 5-6, the use of "to designate the content of God’s decision as regards an action of deliverance instead of an action of judgment needs to be carefully distinguished from the uses of indicating God’s blessing in the Deuteronomistic historian". Indeed, even Nicholson concedes that in vv. 6-7, “a considerable advance has been made upon xviii. 7-10, for whilst it is still Israel’s ‘turning again’ which will secure forgiveness and restoration, such a ‘turning again’ is now assured by Yahweh himself who now takes the initiative so that Israel will ‘turn again’”. For this reason, Unterman argues that vv. 6-7 reflect an anti-Deuteronomistic theology, since they negate the view of Deut. 30.1-10 and 1 Kgs. 8 that repentance is prerequisite for restoration.

Consequently, there is more to be said for the view that Jer. 24 is a unity, whether entirely authentic or entirely inauthentic. Significantly, those who take the latter view do so less because of its ‘Deuteronomistic’ character as its ideological stance. Given such ferocious prophecies of doom as we find in 8.1-3 and 9.15-16, some find it incredible that Jeremiah could have entertained any offer of hope at all, least of all to Jehoiachin (cf. 22.24-30). But equally, the restriction of salvation to the 597 exiles in ch. 24 is hard to reconcile with passages in which Jeremiah speaks of a hopeful future for others (27.12, 17; 42.9-11). Instead, the privileged position of the 597 exiles in ch. 24 is though to reflect a later, sectarian viewpoint.
Finding a convincing post-exilic Sitz im Leben for this chapter, however, is not easy. One option would be to attribute it to Jews returning from Babylon late in the sixth century, seeking to advance their position in Jerusalem over and against those who had stayed there. But as Stipp points out:

The text... does not really discredit those who were not in exile; it flatly gainsays their existence... Of those remaining in Judah in 597, none can possibly have survived. There simply can be no competing 'illegitimate' group associated with Zedekiah. One wonders of what benefit a piece of literature like Jeremiah 24 might have been in the factional feuds of early postexilic Judah.252

Others see the fifth-century conflicts depicted in Ezra as a possible setting.253 But although Ezra insists that only the exiles were qualified to rebuild the temple, it makes no distinction between those deported in 597 and 587, and indeed, it is difficult to imagine what relevance such a distinction would have had by that time.254 Pohlmann, noting a similar rivalry between exiles and non-exiles in the work of the Chronicler, places Jer. 24 in the fourth century.255 But again, why is it so particular in privileging only the 597 exiles? This, says Pohlmann, "remains unclear."256 "I would read the vision of Jeremiah 24", wrote Carroll in 1997, "as reflecting pro-deportation values entertained in Jerusalem by whomever in that community (unknown to us now) would have had reasons for supporting Babylonian or Persian parties."257 Two years later, however, Carroll argued that Jer. 24 "must reflect some ideological

252 Stipp, 'Zedekiah', 642-643 (italics mine). Similarly, Pohlmann, Studien, 190, notes that Jer. 24 implies the complete evacuation of Judah after 587. But since in reality Judah remained inhabited after 587, such a mythology could not (in his opinion) have developed until much later.

253 Duhm, Jeremia, 196-197; May, 'Objective Approach', 149; Carroll, Jeremiah, 483, 487; Stipp, 'Zedekiah', 643.

254 As McKane, Jeremiah 1, 614, rightly observes. The same point was made by Condamin, Jérémie, 209, regarding 29.16-20: "Il est difficile de comprendre le motif d'une pareille insertion après l'exil. La distinction entre les Juifs en exil à Babylone avec Jéchonias et ceux restés à Jérusalem avec Sédécias, n'avait plus de sens à cette époque."

255 Pohlmann, Studien, 190.

256 Pohlmann, Studien, 189.

257 R.P. Carroll, 'Deportation and Diasporic Discourses in the Prophetic Literature', in Scott, Exile, 79. Here, Carroll suggests that such parties need not have been exiles themselves, but a group 'imagining' an exilic viewpoint.
elements in the Persian-Greek periods.” The phrase ‘hedging one’s bets’ does come to mind.

In the nature of the case, it is impossible to prove the authenticity of Jer. 24. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that this enigma of why it is so particular about the first wave of exiles to the exclusion of the second, is solved if we accept its authenticity; the reason it takes no account of the 587 exiles is because 587 hadn’t happened yet.

4.5. Differentiation in Jer. 24.1-10: מנהלcoli ימייה /

Our exegetical study of 24.1-10 has shown that, whilst it makes no claims about the merits of the exilic and non-exilic communities, it presents a stark contrast concerning YHWH’s plans for these communities. For those exiled with Jehoiachin and now in Babylon, YHWH promises inward renewal and restoration to their homeland. For Zedekiah and his people still in Jerusalem, nothing but disaster awaits.

Within these two communities, no further distinctions are drawn. The text says nothing of any inner-group among the Golah who will not be restored, or of any in Jerusalem who will be spared. Less certain however is how we should read this black and white, undifferentiated language. Particularly in view of the explicit reference to the deportation of Jehoiachin and his compatriots in v. 1, some argue that it should be taken at face value, believing that the chapter reflects a conflict between ‘the Jehoiachin group’ and ‘the Zedekiah group.’ According to Carroll, “everybody outside a small group in Babylon is to be hounded until wiped out as a sign


259 Similar assertions of a late date, with similar uncertainty as to details, is not uncommon. According to Stipp, ‘Zedekiah’, 643, “there is no convincing alternative to dating Jeremiah 24 in a period fairly distant from the exile, even though we lack evidence to ascertain its time of origin more precisely”. Likewise, Duhm, Jeremiah, 196, confessed that “das Ganze giebt uns ein geschichtliches Rätsel auf, das wir schwerlich vollkommen lösen werden.” By contrast, Thiel, Redaktion I – 25, 261, sees ch. 24 as an exilic text, reflecting disappointment with Zedekiah; so too Applegate, ‘Fate of Zedekiah, Part 1’, 146.


of YHWH’s rejection of those left behind when Nebuchadrezzar took away Jeconiah and his companions.”

Other scholars have argued, however, that the text is not so undiscriminating in regard to the two communities as it at first appears. Since YHWH does not say when he will fulfil his word, it is a moot point as to whether any of the exiles currently in Babylon will benefit. Thus Rudolph insists that, “braucht Kap. 24 nicht so verstanden zu werden, als ob dieselben Leute, die 598 fort mußten, wiederkehren werden (es ist von der Gola als Gesamtbegriff die Rede).”

And for Applegate, “it is significant . . . that no mention is made of Jehoiachin or his successors.” Meanwhile, as we have seen, YHWH’s promise to restore the exiles in v. 7 may contain at least an element of conditionality, in which case the potential for future differentiation among the Golah is set up.

Insofar as YHWH’s contrasting plans for the two communities is concerned, however, no explanation is given. With most scholars, we have interpreted מָעָשָׂה (v. 5) as referring to the divine purpose for the exiles, rather than their own character. This point is to be emphasised, since several commentators have sought to introduce a moral element into the rationale of this chapter. According to Volz,

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Doubtless there were innocent and upright people among the exiles of 597, but there is no exegetical warrant for seeing this as the logic for the pro-Golah outlook of ch. 24. More recently, McKane has written that,
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262 Carroll, Jeremiah, 486.
263 Even Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 214, concedes that ER was not able to rehabilitate Jehoiachin personally. And Carroll, ‘Empty Land, 86, concedes: “Of course, Jeconiah’s fate . . . is not necessarily any indicator of the future fate of the descendants of those who were deported along with him.”
264 Rudolph, Jeremia, 135.
265 Applegate, ‘Fate of Zedekiah, Part 1’, 146.
266 Volz, Jeremia, 248-249. Similar ideas are expressed by Rudolph, Jeremia, 137.
A concern to emphasize the aspect of ‘grace’ . . . is not beside the point, but it should
not be carried so far as to deny that the likening of Jehoiachin and his group to good figs
is a statement about their worth (cf. Jerome) and the likening of Zedekiah and his group
to bad figs is a statement about their worthlessness. The assigning of different destinies
has a relation to desert and is not an exercise of bare sovereignty.\(^{267}\)

Again, though, the final sentence seems to ignore the plain testimony of the text, which
has nothing to say about ‘desert’ at all. Kilpp may be nearer the truth in seeing the experience or
non-experience of exile as the key to the logic of the text: “geht es nicht an erster Stelle um den
Wohnort, sondern um das eingetroffene bzw. nicht eingetroffene Gericht”.\(^{268}\) As we will see,
this thought will come to expression later in Jer. 29.16. For now, however, the differentiation of
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in Jer. 24 seems to rest entirely on YHWH’s initiative.

5. Conclusions: Differentiation in Jer. 21 – 24

In this chapter, we have examined three messages of salvation and judgement in the unit
Jer. 21 – 24. In the first (21.1-10), Jeremiah announces that YHWH has handed Jerusalem over
to the Babylonians, but promises that any who abandon the city before it falls will live. The
second (23.1-8) states that YHWH will punish Israel’s leaders for their misrule of the now-
dispersed people, whom he will bring back to the land under a new king. In the third (24.1-10),
YHWH promises the exiles in Babylon ‘a new heart’ and homecoming, but total destruction for
Zedekiah and those remaining in post-597 Jerusalem.

Each passage, in other words, sets out its salvation / judgement message according to a
particular ‘polarity’ of inner-Israelite / Judean groups. The question we can now ask is how they
are related. The fact that they are so closely positioned in a specific literary unit strongly
suggests some sort of hermeneutical dialogue between them, but it is hard to see what this is,
since the three passages are not in chronological order, and address different situations.

One notable attempt to answer this question has come from Pohlmann. He argues that
21.1-10 and 24.1-10 – both created by the editor of GR – stand in a ‘question and answer’
relationship, the latter passage categorically destroying the glimmer of hope that was
(artificially) raised in the former. Pohlmann writes:

\(^{267}\) McKane, Jeremiah 1, 609.
\(^{268}\) Kilpp, Niederreißen, 38.
Jer. 21.1-10 versetzt den Leser gleichsam in eine Erwartungshaltung, indem hier implizit die Frage nach der Möglichkeit eines weiteren künftigen Heilshandelns aufgeworfen wird. Jer. 24 gibt darauf die Antwort und stellt fest, daß die Heilsgeschichte allein die Gola zum Ziel haben wird.269

Our reading of these two passages, however, does not support this. Whilst ch. 21 affirms (as emphatically as ch. 24) the disaster about to befall Jerusalem, vv. 8-9 explicitly promise ‘life’ for those who surrender to the Babylonians. Whilst we have emphasised the restrained nature of this promise, it still provides a clear alternative to the prospect of death (‘sword, famine and plague’) that dominates 24.8-10. Thus, for ch. 24 to serve the purpose Pohlmann attributes to it, it would need to show how the offer made in 21.8-9 was not actually taken up. In fact, it does not address the issue – unsurprisingly, given that it appears to be set several years before the siege of 588-587.

A quite different reading of 21.1-10 and 24.1-10 is offered by Applegate, who argues that the latter passage actually serves to ameliorate the severity of the former: “Although Jer. xxiv.8-10 threatens to drive the Judahites into exile by sword, famine and pestilence, it does not threaten total extermination, and so attenuates the extreme predictions of xxi.5-7. Annihilation is replaced by exile.”270 This too, though, is unconvincing; there is in fact no mention of exile in 24.8-10, and the words ‘till they perish from the land’ look very much like a prophecy of total extermination.

In fact, the hermeneutical relationship between these two ‘frame passages’ may be simpler than either Pohlmann or Applegate imply. Especially when due allowance is made for their differences in historical context (587 / sometime post-597), genre (prophetic oracle / vision report) and audience (Jerusalem / Jeremiah), it is arguable that ch. 24 functions as a general summary of YHWH’s stance towards Jerusalem, which is stated more precisely in 21.1-10. Admittedly, it is curious that the more specific (and chronologically later) passage is placed first in the unit. This arrangement may, however, have been influenced by the shape of the book at the point when both passages were added. As we noted at the start of this chapter, 21.1-10 picks up key motifs from chs. 19-20 (siege, Babylon, ‘strike with the sword’), making its present setting highly appropriate. Meanwhile, the vision report of ch. 24, set as it is in the

269 Pohlmann, *Studien*, 42.
270 Applegate, ‘Fate of Zedekiah, Part 1’, 150.
continues the theme of private divine revelation that figures prominently in 23.16-40; see, for instance, the references to ‘standing in the council of YHWH’ (עַמֶּה בְּמַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה, 23.18, 22), and the rebuke of prophets who ‘dream’ (יָרָא, 23.25-32).

If, however, 21.1-10 can be synthesised satisfactorily with 24.1-10, the hermeneutical relationship between 23.1-8 and 24.1-10 is more problematic. For whereas 21.1-10 defines salvation merely in terms of personal survival, 23.1-8 and 24.1-10 both hold out the prospect of restoration to the land and spiritual renewal. Yet while the latter restricts this promise to the exiles in Babylon, the former sees geographical and historical details as immaterial; the two-fold דִּכְרָית (23.3, 8) is emphatically comprehensive. We thus have two texts defining salvation in similar terms, but seemingly in conflict regarding its recipients.

Now it is an interesting feature of Pohlmann’s study that, despite his description of Jer. 21 – 24 as a ‘frame composition’, he completely ignores everything between 21.10 and 24.1, including the salvation oracle of 23.1-8. It is the opening and concluding sections alone that are ‘programmatic’ for the rest of the book. Since we do not read chs. 21 and 24 without also reading ch. 23, this oversight is clearly a serious methodological weakness. Seitz also says little about the prophecy of 23.1-8, but in a brief parenthetical comment he ascribes it – along with 24.4-7 and other passages – to the Exilic Redaction, since it “focuses on a future involving the return of the exiles”. In so doing, however, he blurs the distinction between the universality of 23.1-8 and the particularity of 24.1-10.

Is a combined reading of these two prophecies possible which recognises this difference between them? As an alternative to Pohlmann’s approach, let us consider the hermeneutical effects of giving 23.1-8 the ‘final word’ in this unit. There are, indeed, two good reasons for doing so. For one thing, the fact that 23.1-8 stands at the literary heart of the unit suggests also its conceptual centrality. For another, of all the three passages which we have examined, 23.1-8 has the broadest historical horizon. Since it is stated that YHWH has already scattered the people 23.3), the text’s perspective is clearly from sometime after the disaster predicted in chs.

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271 See our earlier discussion on the possible significance of the term מֵכֶר הָאֱלֹהִים rather than מַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה.
272 As we will see in the next chapter, a similar tension arises in the MT plusses of 29.14, 16-20.
273 Pohlmann, Studien, 30.
274 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 224; see too his brief comments concerning chs. 22 – 23 in general (226-227).
21 and 24; that is to say, it accommodates the judgement of 587 within its own prophecy, recognising the reality of disaster but asking 'what then?'

When 23.1-8 is read in this way, the message of ch. 24 is significantly reformulated. Firstly, the 'leader / people' polarity of 23.1-4 removes the ambiguity (noted earlier) as to whether the promises of 24.5-7 are for all the exiles in Babylon. It now appears that they do not apply to Jehoiachin, nor perhaps to others of the ruling elite. Secondly, YHWH's promise to restore the people מִבֵּל הָעָרֹם אֲשֶׁר הָרָדְדוּ אֲשֶׁר שָׁם (v. 3) anticipates his warning in 24.9 that the people of Jerusalem will be a byword and a curse בֵּל הָעָרֹם אֲשֶׁר אֲרָיוֹת. By means of this verbal parallel, those whom YHWH will scatter in ch. 24 are effectively subsumed amongst those whom he will restore in ch. 23. Consequently, 23.1-8 can be seen as relativising ch. 24. Conceding that YHWH has indeed scattered his people, it looks ahead to a restoration that takes in the people of former Israel, the Judean deportees of 597 and 587, and even those who 'dwell in the land of Egypt' (24.8).

Summing up, then, we can say that despite the differences between the three salvation and judgement oracles in chs. 21 – 24, a synthesised reading of them in the final form of the unit is possible. Hermeneutically, such a synthesis is facilitated by what we may call the 'silences' of the two 'frame units'. 21.1-10 does not say what will happen to those who leave the city (other than that they will 'live'), thereby allowing them to be accommodated within the salvation oracle of 23.3-8. 24.1-7 does not say whether Jehoiachin is among those whom YHWH will restore, thereby leaving room for his inclusion among the judgement on the leaders in 23.1-2 (cf. 22.24-30). 24.8-10 does not say what will happen to the people of Judah after they are 'scattered', thereby enabling them to be subsumed within the 'scattered' people whom YHWH promises to restore in 23.3-4. In other words, 23.1-8 takes as its starting point a scenario not addressed by the other two passages. This may (or may not) violate their original intention, but allows us to read the literary unit chs. 21 – 24 not as privileging the 597 exiles to the exclusion of all others (so Pohlmann), but rather the entire Diaspora, minus their leaders.

At the same time, it may be argued that giving 23.1-8 the controlling voice in chs. 21 – 24 inevitably results in a rather flat, one-sided interpretation of the unit, rather than the 'hermeneutical dialogue' to which we referred in chapter 1. Is it possible instead to bring these three passages into a more open interpretative relationship, in which they are heard as equal voices in debate (or even argument)? We suggest that it is, if they are seen as contributing to a
discussion concerning divine judgement and human culpability, and we will conclude this chapter by outlining the basis for such an interpretation.

As we have seen, although 21.1-10 and 24.1-10 are not completely univocal, they share the view that YHWH's wrath is against all Jerusalem; its king, officials, people and even animals. Precisely because of the totality of the disaster coming upon the city, only those who flee its walls may hope to live. By contrast, 23.1-8 focuses entirely upon the nation's leaders as deserving of YHWH's punishment, in contrast to the ordinary people. We thus have two perspectives in tension with one another. However, as we noted earlier in this chapter (§1.2), standing between 21.1-10, 23.1-8 and 24.1-10 we have two further blocks of material, each containing an collection of oracles (21.11 – 22.30 and 23.9-40). We can now seek to show how these two anthologies function as a bridge between these three passages, thereby bringing them into dialogue.

As its superscription, לְבָּכַת מַלֶּךָ אֲדֹנָיהָ (21.11) suggests, the first section contains warnings and criticisms of several kings and their officials, culminating in a scathing attack on Jehoiakim. Here too, therefore, the text places the burden of guilt on Judah's leaders. This specificity is sharpened by references to socially vulnerable groups whom the kings are to defend: 'the victim of robbery' (ענוטא), 'the alien' (נַפֵּל), 'the orphan' (יוֹסֵד) and 'the widow' (לְגָנָה) (21.12; 22.3) – groups whom, elsewhere in the OT, YHWH pledges to rescue and vindicate. Consequently, in its allocation of moral responsibility the text implicitly distinguishes between Judah's leaders, and her people.

Elsewhere in this section, however, the identity of the addressee is more ambiguous. In contrast to the message to the royal house in 21.12, the feminine participle נִשְׁבַּת in vv. 13-14 suggests that here it is 'lady Jerusalem' – i.e., the whole city – who is in mind.275 Consistent with this is the fact that the charge is now one of complacency, rather than social injustice.

Similarly, whilst 22.6 is initially directed נִלְבָּת מַלֶּךָ אֲדֹנָיהָ, the oracle that follows (22.6b-7) envisages the destruction of the whole city, which it explains in terms that strongly suggest the entire nation is in mind: "Because of the Lord's power over the nations and their kings, the kings of the earth are terrified." Again, after

275 Cf. McKane, Jeremiah 1, 512-513: “There is an allusion to the strong, defensive position of Jerusalem and to the defiant confidence which this awakens in its inhabitants who feel secure against every threat of military attack and penetration.” (513).
the oracle against Jehoiakim (22.13-19), 22.20-23 reverts to feminine singular language, thus addressing all Jerusalem. In other words, 21.10 – 22.30 oscillates between singling out Judah’s leaders for criticism, and indicting the whole city.

A similar ambiguity can be observed in the section headed לֹא-אֵל (23.9-32). Here, the moral focus is on the religious leaders of Israel; chiefly its prophets, although priests are also mentioned in v. 11. By their immoral conduct and false messages of hope, they mislead (השע, Hiph., vv. 13, 32) the people, who are (as in 23.1-8) described as ‘my people’ (אני, vv. 13, 22, 27, 32). Nevertheless, throughout it is made clear that the rest of the people are also guilty; they ‘despise’ (נשא) YHWH (v. 17) and ‘walk in the stubbornness of their hearts’ (долך בمقارنة נב, v. 17). Their ways and deeds are evil (עד, v. 22b). This shifting focus from prophets to people is particularly evident in vv. 13-14, which begins by castigating ‘the prophets of Jerusalem’. Not only do they commit adultery and falsehood (מָאָאוּ, נַמה וּסָפֹר, v. 14b) but they also fail to turn ‘a man from his wickedness’ (אני מטיב, v. 14c). There is thus some ambiguity in YHWH’s comment, דעל על מלחם (v. 14d). Are ‘they’ the prophets or the people? The uncertainty is only removed in the following clause: יהושע כנידדה. Jerusalem as a whole is like Gomorrah. Indeed, in the final section (vv. 33-39), the people appear to be positively colluding with the prophets. Overall, the perspective of the entire passage seems to be well summed up in v. 15: כי марш נביא ירושלים י亚马 חמה לָלֵי הַאָדָם.

Consequently, these two sections – b and b’ in the earlier outline – create a degree of continuity between the frame units and the centre. On the one hand, by focussing on the evils of the kings and the prophets and acknowledging the existence of the poor and the weak, they modify the indiscriminate condemnation of Zedekiah and his people in chs. 21 and 24. On the other hand, they retain, more clearly than 23.1-8, the awareness that the entire land is guilty, as well as its leaders.

276 Cf. the imperatives והשע, וְהַשָּׁמַר (v. 20); the verbs מָאָאָו, מָאָא, מָאָא, מָאָא (v. 22); and the nouns מָאָא וּסָפֹר, מָאָא (v. 14b) מָאָא וּסָפֹר, מָאָא וּסָפֹר, מָאָא (v. 21; cf. 2.1!), מָאָא וּסָפֹר, מָאָא וּסָפֹר (v. 22).

277 ‘Your neighbours’ are then either other Judean princes and their cities (Rudolph, Jeremia, 123) or more likely, foreign nations with whom Judah had formed alliances (Schmid, Buchgestalten, 338).

278 This is a notoriously complex passage, as even Thompson admits (Jeremiah, 506). But see McKane, Jeremiah 1, 603: “The supposition that there is nothing in vv. 34-40 but terminological fussiness or tedious word-chopping or incredible representation is mistaken. There is an attempt to recapture the significance of the conflict between טָמַם and doom prophecy in the time of Jeremiah.”
We have thus seen in chs. 21 – 24 three salvation / judgement oracles, each with its own group polarity. Those who stay in Jerusalem, and those who go out to Babylon; the shepherds and the flock; and the 597 exiles and the remnant of Jerusalem. What is clear, however, is that nowhere are these groups sub-divided further. No distinctions are made (although they may not be forbidden) among those who do not ‘go out’ from Jerusalem, or among those who are currently exiled in Babylon. As we will see, subsequent sections of Jer. introduce precisely such inner-differentiations.
Chapter 3: Differentiation in Jeremiah 27 – 29

1. Introduction to Jer. 27 – 29

1.1. The Literary Setting of Jer. 27 – 29

The Macro-Unit Jer. 26 – 45

Both in MT and OG, Jer. 27 – 29[34 – 36] constitutes the first sub-section of the macro-unit 26 – 45[33 – 51]. This is a unit which, despite the diversity of its sources and lack of chronological order, has been organised according to a particular pattern. The primary indication of this lies in the dating of its contents. With the exception of chs. 30 – 31 (widely seen as a late addition to Jer.), all the material in this section is explicitly set in the reign of either Jehoiakim or Zedekiah (or, in the case of chs. 40 – 44, in the post-Zedekiah period). Although the narratives set in Jehoiakim’s reign (chs. 26, 35, 36, 45) comprise only four of the twenty chapters, they form the structural pillars around which the rest of the material has been placed. Before we focus on chs. 27 – 29 themselves, therefore, it is worth giving some attention to this broader literary framework.

The four ‘pillar’ chapters form two corresponding pairs; 26 / 35 and 36 / 45. Both pairs, we suggest, depict YHWH’s judgement on Judah in transition, as it moves from being conditional to certain. Hence, the initial chapters in each pair (26 and 36) begin by summarising YHWH’s word to the people: YHWH is planning disaster (26.6; 36.3) and his

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1 This is true even of chs. 32 – 33, which begin with the story of Jeremiah’s purchase of the field in the tenth year of Zedekiah’s reign (32.1) and are set against the backdrop of the Babylonian siege (32.24-29; 33.1-5).


3 According to M. Kessler, ‘Jeremiah Chapters 26 – 45 Reconsidered’, *JNES* 27 (1968) 84, “the profound difference between (chs. 26 and 36) is that the *nsw* mentioned in 26.3 is represented as contingent there, but in 36.3 as inevitable, as a result of the people’s failure to hear Yahweh’s prophet.” But this overlooks the fact that judgement is still contingent at the start of ch. 36, and underestimates the significance of the *king’s* failure to listen.
wrath is great (36.7). Nevertheless, there is still hope, as indicated by the term יַעֲשָׂר (26.3; 36.3, 7); perhaps the people will listen and repent, in which case YHWH will turn from bringing disaster (26.3) and forgive them (36.3). Both chapters then highlight the divided response of those who hear this message (26.16; 36.24-25) before focussing on the figure of Jehoiakim, whose relentless pursuit of the prophet Uriah (26.20-23) anticipates his contemptuous burning of Baruch’s scroll (36.21-26).

By contrast, chs. 35 and 45 portray a situation in which the time for repentance has passed and judgement is certain. YHWH’s promise of blessing on the Rechabites (35.18-19) contrasts with his declaration, “I am bringing on Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil I spoke against them” (35.17), a warning repeated after Jehoiakim’s burning of the scroll (36.31). The reference back to this event in 45.1 also interprets YHWH’s threat to “overthrow what I have planted and uproot what I have planted” (45.4) as referring to his judgement on Judah in the time of Jehoiakim.7 We conclude, therefore, that in its present form, Jer. 26 – 45 is best viewed as comprising two sub-sections, chs. 26 – 35 and 36 – 45.8 Both are made up mostly of material from the time of Zedekiah, but are framed by narratives which identify the actions of Jehoiakim as decisive in Judah’s downfall.

4 Compare YHWH’s rejection of Zedekiah’s hopeful יַעֲשָׂר in 21.2.
5 Noted by J. Applegate, ‘“Peace, Peace, When There is no Peace”: Redactional Integration of Prophecy of Peace into the Judgement of Jeremiah’, in Curtis & Römer, Book of Jeremiah, 73.
6 According to Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 101, Jehoiakim’s response is “paradigmatisch für die des Volkes”. Yet while his action is decisive for the fate of the nation, the narrator makes it clear that there were other voices urging a different response.
7 As we will see later, in its present location ch. 45 serves a number of functions; it rounds off the narrative of the flight to Egypt (chs. 40 – 44), recalls the salvation oracle to Ebed-Melech (39.15-18), and (in MT) introduces the oracles against the nations (chs. 46 – 51).
8 A similar analysis is advanced in detail by Rietzschel, Urrolle, 95-122, though he limits the second of his ‘traditions blocks’ to chs. 36 – 44. Also seeing ch. 36 as introducing what follows are Rudolph, Jeremia, xvi, and Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 102. Most scholars see ch. 36 as concluding its section; e.g., Volz, Jeremia, 133-xlvi; Kessler, ‘Jeremiah Chapters 26 – 45 Reconsidered’, 83; Hobbs, ‘Some Remarks’, 193; Nicholson, Preaching, 106-107; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 254; Thompson, Jeremiah, 30; Carroll, Jeremiah, 510; McConvill, Judgment and Promise, 111; Applegate, ‘Peace, Peace’, 73. Other commentators are ambivalent on this point. Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 338, entitles chs. 36 – 45 ‘the Baruch Document’, but admits, “it may well be that ch. 36 should not be grouped with the following materials.” (n.1). According to Jones, Jeremiah, 337, “chapter 36 remains an enigma. From some points of view it might be regarded as a prelude to chapters 37 – 45. From others (which seem more cogent) it appears to be the concluding narrative of chapters 1 – 35.”.
Characterising these four framing chapters is a pronounced interest in questions of judgement and culpability. On the first point, we find here the same emphasis on the totality of judgement that we saw in chs. 1 – 20. Jeremiah addresses his call for repentance to the nation (‘all the cities of Judah’, 26.2; ‘the house of Judah’, 36.3), and it is the nation that stands under YHWH’s wrath (35.17; 36.31b; 45.4-5). Granted, YHWH promises the Rechabites that they will always have a man to ‘stand before’ him (35.19), but they appear to be an external foil for Judah, rather than a genuinely exceptive element within it; hence, their commendation is for loyalty to their forefather, rather than to YHWH and his prophets.

On the question of culpability, however, the four frame chapters are more ambiguous. Ch. 35 concludes with the unqualified statement, ‘this people has not listened to me’ (35.17), a charge repeated in 36.31. A more nuanced picture emerges, however, in chs. 26 and 36, which are careful to note the varied responses to Jeremiah’s message, and to lay chief blame at the feet (or hands) of Jehoiakim. When Jeremiah is arrested for prophesying against Jerusalem (26.10-11), ‘some of the elders of the land’ (יִשְׂרָאֵל חוֹּלָה) recall how Hezekiah had responded to Micah’s warning of disaster by seeking YHWH’s favour (26.17-19), while Ahikam son of Shaphan also comes to Jeremiah’s defence (26.24). In 36.25, Jehoiakim’s officials (יהויאָלַי) Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah, ‘urge’ (וַיֹּאָשׁ Hiph.) the king not to burn Baruch’s scroll. Taken together, therefore, these four chapters affirm that Judah has not listened to YHWH, but certain individuals have.

This depiction of YHWH’s word creating an inner-Judean division marks a significant development within the book. Stulman comments on ch. 26:

For the first time in the book, the message of Jeremiah receives an ambivalent reception... Such conflict and ambivalence foreshadow the texture and ethos of the second scroll as a whole. A faithful few will hear and be receptive to the words of the prophet, while the multitudes remain defiant and recalcitrant.10

Hobbs makes a similar observation in regard to chs. 26 – 36:

In these chapters, the focus of attention seems to be the personnel of the city of Jerusalem, who had been generally attacked in the first section. Now the accusations become more specific, and the reaction of various groups within the capital city to the prophet and his word become clear as the section progresses.11

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9 The precise identity of the Rechabites is shrouded in uncertainty: 1 Chron. 2.55 identifies them as a Kenite clan. See the discussion in Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 195-196.

10 Stulman, Order Amid Chaos, 65.

In fact, it is doubtful whether ‘the second scroll as a whole’ does portray the divergent reactions that Stulman and Hobbs believe. Although this section is more specific in naming particular individuals and groups, a closer reading reveals that chs. 26 and 36 are unique in depicting one group responding positively to YHWH’s word while another responds negatively. Nevertheless, the generalising / differentiating perspectives in these frame chapters supplies a significant hermeneutical context for what lies in between, including chs. 27 – 29.

The Different Settings of MT 27 – 29 and OG 34 – 36

Whilst MT and OG agree in placing 27 – 29 at the start of the macro-unit 26 – 45, they diverge sharply in their placement of the latter as a whole. In MT, chs. 26 – 45 constitute the second macro-unit of the book, following chs. 1 – 25. In OG, however, they form the third and final major division of the book, being preceded by the Oracles against the Nations (OAN).

How do these different macro-structures affect our reading of chs. 27 – 29[34 – 36]? Undergirding the outlook of these three chapters is the belief in YHWH’s worldwide sovereignty. By his power he has made the whole earth, and may thus subjugate its nations to whomever he pleases (27.5). On this basis, he instructs both Judah and her neighbours to serve the king of Babylon (27.6-11), while also indicating that the duration of Babylonian rule is limited (29.10; cf. MT 27.7, 22). By preceding this section with the oracles against the nations (including, of course, the oracle against Babylon), OG connects YHWH’s ultimate judgement with his ordering of present affairs. Both are international in their scope. The sequence may seem odd, but in this way the provisionality of the need to submit to Babylon (27.8-15) and to pray for the welfare of Babylon (29.7) is emphasised.

The placement in OG may also explain the wording of 29.1, ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ Ἰςμαήλ; OG 36.1, καὶ σύντοι ὀἱ λόγοι τῆς βιβλιωθ. The use of the article here is striking, since this is the first mention of the letter (cf. 51.60, דספָר). True, Barr has shown that the Hebrew article may be used with a previously unmentioned noun;12 in particular, “when someone writes something down, and though there has been no previous mention of a book or document which ‘determine’ the noun, we nevertheless find that it is written with article, and never as b˚-seper without

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We should, however, at least consider the possibility that in 29[36].1, the article is being used to distinguish this וַיַּעֲשֶׂה from another. Such a distinction is quite explicable if, as OG implies, its Vorlage contained an earlier reference to a וַיַּעֲשֶׂה (בֵּיתֵל) sent by Jeremiah to Babylon, namely, that which contained the prophecy of her destruction (OG 28.59-64 = MT 51.60). The וַיַּעֲשֶׂה to the exiles is then being contrasted with the וַיַּעֲשֶׂה to Babylon, both being sent via a delegation from Zedekiah. An even more intriguing situation arises if, as Rietzschel has argued, OG reflects the original placement of the OAN but MT reflects their original sequence. Since MT places the oracle against Babylon last, this would mean that the report of the וַיַּעֲשֶׂה given to Seraiah immediately prefaces chs. 27 – 29.

1.2. Distinctiveness and Coherence: Jer. 27 – 29 as a Unit

Within this macro-section, the delineation of chs. 27 – 29 as a self-contained literary unit is widely accepted. Indeed, some scholars believe that it circulated as an independent ‘booklet’ before being combined with other Jeremiah traditions. A number of features give these three

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13 Barr, ‘Determination’, 313, citing Ex. 17.14; Num. 5.23; 1 Sam. 10.25; Isa. 34.4. But this seems to be the exception rather than the rule; see, e.g., 2 Sam. 11.14; 1 Kgs. 21.8; 2 Kgs. 5.5; 10.1, 6; 20.12; 2 Chron. 32.17; Est. 1.22; 3.13.

14 Rietzschel, Urrolle, 45; similarly, Rudolph, Jeremiah, 228; tentatively, McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1110.

15 In fact, the prominence of וַיַּעֲשֶׂה in the second half of the OG Vorlage is striking. Here we have the וַיַּעֲשֶׂה containing the OAN (25.14 – 32.24; cf. 25.13), including the וַיַּעֲשֶׂה Seraiah takes to Babylon; the וַיַּעֲשֶׂה Jeremiah sends to the exiles (36.1-32); a וַיַּעֲשֶׂה containing prophecies of salvation (37.1 – 40.13), including the field-purchase narrative of ch. 39 with its references to מַעֲשֶׂה יָדָיו; the story of Baruch’s two מַעֲשֶׂה (43.1-32); and a final reference to Baruch’s first מַעֲשֶׂה (51.31-35). This also makes the LXX location of Bar. immediately after Jer. thoroughly appropriate, and its opening words underline the connection: καὶ ἀλλοὶ λόγοι του βυζίλου ὡς ἐνεχειρησαν Βαρούχ (1.1).

16 In addition to those cited below, see Volz, Jeremiah, 255; T.W. Overholt, The Threat of Falseness: A Study in the Theology of the Book of Jeremiah (SBT 16; London: SCM, 1970) esp. 27-30; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 114; Thompson, Jeremiah, 528.

chapters internal coherence, while also setting them apart from the rest of the book. These are well-documented and can be summarised as follows.

i) Orthography: The spelling נבכארמאמר (27.6, 8, 20; 28.3; 29.1, 3) is here preferred to the form נבכארמאמר found elsewhere in Jer.\(^1\) (and Ezek.). Other proper names, which elsewhere consistently have the long ending ד, take here the short ending פ; e.g., דירא (27.1; 28.5, etc.; 29.1), Данיא (28.4, 20; 29.2), וארקר (27.12; 28.1, 29.3). However, this pattern breaks down in 29.21-32,\(^1\) where long and short forms appear.

ii) Vocabulary: Although the designation of Jeremiah as נבכאר is a feature of the MT rather than OG, it is clear that both MT and the OG Vorlage in these three chapters repeatedly employ the title נבכאר for Jeremiah’s opponents (OG itself paraphrases with נבכאר). Also prominent is the verb שלח (ל), which seems to function like a catchword; it predicates YHWH’s word (29.19), the prophets (27.15; 28.15; 29.9, 31), people (29.3, 20) and various ‘messages’ (27.3; 29.1, 25, 28, 31); cf. also the threat שלח תמים משל (28.16; 28.17). D.L. Smith has noted how the motif of prison, yokes and restraint also pervades these chapters.\(^2\)

iii) Historical context: Despite textual problems in MT 27.1 and 28.1 (see below, §2.2), the events of chs. 27 – 28 appear to be set in the fourth year (בשנת הרביעון) of Zedekiah, i.e., 594/3. The date of the correspondence in ch. 29 is less specific (בשנת הגר משל), but it is evidently some time between 597 and 587.\(^3\) No other material in Jer. is dated to this period. This historical setting may account for the undercurrent of speculation about the early return of the exiles and the possibility of revolt.\(^4\) The Babylonian

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\(^1\) The only instance of the ש spelling in this section is in 29.21. 28.11, 14 read מבקארמאמר, with qalbs is replacing s req.

\(^2\) Note however the long forms, 27.3, and נבכאר, 27.1.


\(^3\) Overholt, Threat of Falsehood, 29-30, believes all three chapters are in accurate chronological sequence.

\(^4\) See Volz, Jeremia, 255-256; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 118; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 36. But cf. Carroll, Jeremiah, 530: “the difficulties of demonstrating a specific set of events which would account for a coalition against Babylon after 597 . . . must raise questions about the historicity of 27 – 28”.

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Chronicle records a domestic revolt against Nebuchadnezzar in late 595/early 594, which may have been seen by Judah and her neighbours as an opportunity to rebel.

iv) Theme: The conflict between true and false prophecy is widely seen as the theme of Jer. 27 – 29. In ch. 27, Jeremiah urges the foreign envoys, Zedekiah, and the people to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, and to reject the message of their own prophets (vv. 9-10; 14-15; 16). Ch. 28 describes the confrontation between Jeremiah and Hananiah (both of whom are described as ‘prophets’) regarding who has the word of YHWH. Without pre-empting our study of ch. 29, it is clear that Jeremiah is here in conflict with the Judean prophets in Babylon (vv. 8-9, 15, 21-24, 31-32). There is a corresponding stock of expressions: YHWH has ‘not sent’ the prophets (יהוה לא SENT, 27.15; 28.15; 29.9, 32; cf. 28.9); the people are told ‘not to listen’ (יהוה לא LISTEN, 27.9, 14, 16, 17; 29.8) to them, because they are ‘prophesying falsehood’ (.Feed the Prophet, 27.10; 15, 16; 29.9, 21; cf. 29.23). Though found elsewhere in Jer., these terms are especially concentrated in chs. 27 – 29.

v) Depiction of Jeremiah: After the dominant impression of him as broken, marginalised and ignored in the first scroll of the book, Jeremiah appears in these three chapters as a more powerful, authoritative figure. Carroll writes:

In this cycle he is clearly the leader of both communities, advising, condemning and encouraging the social leaders of the people in Jerusalem and Babylon... His role, therefore, in the cycle is that of an authoritative figure moving about Jerusalem, advising foreign nations of foreign policy (27), confronting an anti-Babylonian prophet (28), and proclaiming a policy of co-operation with the Babylonians to the Judaeans now living in Babylon.

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\[23\] Attempts to correlate Jer. 27 – 28 with the Babylonian Chronicle are complicated, however, by the textual corruption of 27.1 and 28.1. See further Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 47-48.

\[24\] E.g., Volz, Jeremia, 255; Rudolph, Jeremia, 147; Nicholson, Preaching, 94-95; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 5; and especially Overholt, Threat of Falsehood, 24-48. Cf. however McKane, Jeremiah 2, cxxxviii-cxxxix. According to Kessler, 'Jeremiah 26 – 45 Reconsidered', 83, chs. 27 – 29 are unified by the theme of 'peace': “We might almost say that chap. 28 is the catalyst for Jeremiah’s shalom oracles; while Hananiah’s brand of imminent shalom is opposed, in Yahweh’s plan as represented by his true prophet there is also shalom – beyond Judah’s inevitable calamities which Yahweh has ordained as necessary punishment for their disobedience.”

\[25\] Carroll, Jeremiah, 555. This view of Jeremiah as an authoritative figure is perhaps less obvious in ch. 28, where Hananiah appears to win the dual (cf. v. 11); but even here, Jeremiah is subsequently vindicated (vv. 12-17).
Consequently, Overholt’s conclusion that “in both style and content these chapters form a coherent, self-contained unit of narrative material” seems well-founded.

This is not to say that they were composed as a unity. Chs. 27 and 28 both describe Jeremiah’s confrontation with the prophets in Jerusalem, but 27.2 – 28.1 is written in the first person (cf. 27.11) while 28.2-17 is in the second person. Ch. 29 stands apart from both, by virtue of its audience (the exiles in Babylon) and genre (written, rather than oral, prophecy). We should probably assume, therefore, that this unit has been compiled from different sources. Jones sums up the matter well: “The differences are just sufficient to demand some such variety of origin; but the homogeneity of them equally points to a single redactor who has stamped the whole with the singleness of his own purpose.” We will discuss questions of composition and redaction for chs. 27 – 28 and 29 in more detail when we look at these respective sections.

It might be argued that ch. 26 belongs within this sub-section. According to Jones, “the editorial unity of chapters 26 – 29 in general and chapter 29 in particular is shown . . . by the pervasive theme of false prophecy and the prose of the familiar prose tradition”, while Carroll affirms that “the triple strata of 26, priests, prophets and people . . . allow 26 to be considered as a preface to 27 – 29.” Certainly, the picture of the Judean community divided over Jeremiah’s words (see above) foreshadows the question underlying chs. 27 – 28: Whom will the people believe? However, whilst these links with ch. 26 are certainly significant, chs. 27 – 29 are clearly demarcated by being set in the reign of Zedekiah, rather than of Jehoiakim.

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26 Overholt, Threat of Falsehood, 27.
27 For surveys of opinion, see Keown et al., Jeremiah 26-52, 36-37; T. Seidl, Texte und Einheiten in Jeremia 27 – 29 (ATSA 2; Munich: Eos St Otilien, 1977) 21-22, n.5; and Tov, ‘Some Aspects’, 161 n.30. However, Carroll, Jeremiah, 523, sees the cycle as “a literary creation rather than historical records or reflections” and dates it no earlier than the fifth century.
28 Jones, Jeremiah, 346.
29 So Clements, Jeremiah, 153. J.G. McConville, s.v. ‘Jeremiah’, NBC, 692, brackets all four chapters together under the heading ‘Jeremiah becomes a prophet of salvation’, though it is hard to see how this thought plays a prominent role in ch. 26. Meier, Speaking of Speaking, 89, notes that מדר אחר in Jer. is particularly concentrated within 26.11 – 30. 2 (thirteen out of eighteen instances).
30 Jones, Jeremiah, 360.
31 Carroll, Jeremiah, 529. Duhm, Jeremia, 217 (cf. xxii-xxii) saw chs. 26 – 29 (minus interpolations) as having been added en bloc from Baruch’s scroll into Jer., but doubted whether ch. 26 originally introduced chs. 27 – 29: “der zeitliche Abstand zwischen den in Cap. 26 und in Cap. 27f. erzählten Begebenheiten zu gross ist und andere Erzählungen vorhanden sind, die vor Cap. 27f. zu stehen beanspruchen".
Additional evidence for regarding chs. 27 – 29 as a redactional unit lies in its literary structure, to which we now turn.

1.3. The Structure of Jer. 27 – 29

Whatever the origins of the material in Jer. 27 – 29, the editor has carefully structured it in such a way that ch. 29 parallels chs. 27 – 28. Initial evidence for this lies in certain verbal and conceptual echoes. Both chs. 27 and 29 begin with Jeremiah sending a message (~P3 . . . nbtti)\textsuperscript{32} to the foreign kings and the Jewish exiles respectively, thereby acting as a 'prophet to the nations' (1.10). Moreover, while the term נבאים ('prophets') is ubiquitous in this unit, the reference in 27.9 to חליפות and קפיטה ('diviners and dreamers') recurs only in 29.8, קפיטה ואלה תקיפה אל חליפות. Meanwhile, chs. 28 and 29 conclude with pronouncements of judgement on specific prophets, Hananiah and Shemaiah.\textsuperscript{33} The charges against them are almost identical; "לא שלאchers יהוה וחברו הפורעים ואלה נבואה את יהוה משכין (28.15) and לא שלאchers מעביד את יהוה שלחמה על שכין (29.31). MT heightens this parallel with the comment that both prophets have ‘spoken rebellion against YHWH’, סרה שכר אל יהוה (28.16; 29.32). Finally, Overholt notes that chs. 27 – 28 and 29 show the same pattern of conflict: Jeremiah’s message about Babylon / A negative response from the prophets / Resolution: a curse on the prophets.\textsuperscript{34} Consequently, he entitles these two sections ‘confronting the problem of false prophecy at home’ and ‘confronting the problem of false prophecy in Babylon’.\textsuperscript{35}

In fact, the structure of chs. 27 – 29 is more nuanced than this, as will become clear if we consider the rhetorical interaction of Jeremiah, prophets and people. In ch. 27, Jeremiah warns the foreign envoys, Zedekiah, and ‘the priests and the people’ against listening to ‘the prophets’, a group consistently referred to only in the third person (vv. 9, 14-15, 16-18). In ch. 28, however, this situation is reversed; Jeremiah confronts Hananiah, while ‘the priests and the people’ observe (vv. 1, 5, 7, 11). This pattern is repeated in ch. 29. Though Jeremiah’s letter is

\textsuperscript{32} 27.3 reads בהלטת ('and send them'), the object being presumed replicas of the yoke bars Jeremiah has made. However, the text is says nothing about additional yokes, and some scholars emend to שלחת ('send') implying a message as object. Either way, however, it is clear from the context that Jeremiah does send a message to the foreign kings, whether or not model yokes were also part of the delivery.

\textsuperscript{33} Shemaiah is not formally designated ‘a prophet’ (נהב), but cf. 29.31, יונא אלא נבאה לכלים משכין.

\textsuperscript{34} Overholt, Threat of Falsehood, 29.30.

\textsuperscript{35} Overholt, Threat of Falsehood, 30.
addressed to נָבְעָן בּוֹ (v. 4), vv. 8-9 clearly distinguish between its intended audience and ‘the prophets’. Even when Ahab and Zedekiah appear in vv. 21-23, they are differentiated from those to whom Jeremiah is speaking: נָבְעָן בּוֹ מֵמֵלֵךְ יְהוּדָה (v. 21). The rhetorical shift occurs in vv. 24ff. Although the text is confused (see §3.2), in its present form MT represents Jeremiah as confronting another prophet, just as it does in ch. 28. Moreover, in MT v. 25 Shemaiah’s audience includes ‘all the people in Jerusalem’ and ‘all the priests’, the same groups mentioned in chs. 27 – 28. We suggest, therefore, that chs. 27 – 29 are structured according to the following pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Jeremiah’s message to the non-exiles about the prophets (27.1-22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Jeremiah’s confrontation with the prophet Hananiah (28.1-17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’</td>
<td>Jeremiah’s message to the exiles about the prophets (29.1-23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b’</td>
<td>Jeremiah’s confrontation with the prophet Shemaiah (29.24-32).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consequently, the structure of chs. 27 – 29 serves to establish two audience-critical distinctions. On the one hand, Zedekiah’s people in Judea are distinguished from the exilic community in Babylon. In both places, however, there is an inner-Judean distinction between prophets and people. This is shown not only by the alternation of address, but also by the public nature of Jeremiah’s confrontation with Hananiah, which is described as taking place ‘in the eyes’ (בְּעֵין, 28.1, 5) and ‘in the ears’ (בְּאֵד, 28.7) of all the people. Indeed, the interaction between Jeremiah, prophets and people in these three chapters suggests that their theme is not simply ‘true and false prophecy’ but rather the interplay between prophets and people, prophecy and response, in the fate of the entire community.

2. Jer. 27 – 28[34 – 35]

2.1. Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek Text</th>
<th>Hebrew Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>οὕτως εἶπεν Κύριος διδάχαινς καὶ διδακτοὺς καὶ περὶ θύσιν τοῦ προφήτην</td>
<td>התו רָכְבָהָו הַלָּא דָּשָּׁהָו מָשָּׁה לָא לְאָדָם</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. σύνπρος οὖς τοῦ προφήτην διδάσκαλον καὶ διδασκαλία καὶ περὶ θύσιν τοῦ προφήτην</td>
<td>2. כְּשָׁמַר לָא מָשָּׁה לָא מָשָּׁה לָא מָשָּׁה לָא מָשָּׁה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36 Admittedly, this section concludes by foregrounding the exiles once more, with Jeremiah writing to them concerning Shemaiah (vv. 30-32).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Greek Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>καὶ ἀποστειλεὶς αὐτοὺς πρὸς βασίλεα Ἰδομενίας καὶ πρὸς βασίλεα Μαξιμίλιαν καὶ πρὸς βασίλεα Ὁμήρου καὶ πρὸς βασίλεα Τιρσοῦ καὶ πρὸς βασίλεα Σιδόνιος ἐν χερσὶ ἄγγελον αὐτῶν τῶν ἐργομενῶν εἰς ἀπαντήσεων αὐτῶν εἰς ἱεροσυλήμην πρὸς Σεδεκίαν βασίλεα Ἰουδαίας</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>καὶ συντάξεις αὐτοὺς πρὸς τοὺς κυρίους αὐτῶν εἰτέν πρὸς τοὺς κυρίους της Ἱερουσαλήμ πρὸς τοὺς κυρίους Ἰουδαίας</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐποίησα τὴν γῆν ἐν ἐσχύνι μου τῇ μεγαλῇ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐπίσημῷ μου τῷ υψηλῷ καὶ δικαίῳ αὐτῶν ὡς ἔαν δοξῇ ἐν δολῳμίοις μου</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>ἔδωκα τὴν γῆν τοῦ Ναβουχοδώνοσαρ βασίλεα Βαβυλώνος δοῦλευςιν αὐτῶν καὶ τα θεὰ τοῦ ἄγνου ἐργαζέσθαι αὐτῶρ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>καὶ τὸ ἔθνος καὶ ἐτὸς βασίλειας διότι εἰς μὴ ἐμβαλὼν τοῦ τραχύλου αὐτῶν ὡς ἐν τον βασίλεα Βαβυλώνος ἐν μακραίᾳ καὶ ἐν ὅλῳ ἐπισκεψόμαι αὐτοὺς εἰτέν κυρίους τῆς ἐκκλησίας εἰς ἐργασίᾳ αὐτῶν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>καὶ ἱματὶ μὴ αἴκουσεν τῶν ἑπιστρέφοντῶν ἱματι καὶ τῶν μακαρουμένων ἱματι καὶ τῶν ἐπιστρέφοντῶν ἱματι καὶ τῶν ἱματισματῶν ἱματι καὶ τῶν ἵματισματῶν ἱματι ἑφθασθαι τῷ βασίλεια Βαβυλώνος</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>ὅτι ἐσένδῃ αὐτοὶ ἐπιστρέψασθαι ἱματι πρὸς τὸ μᾶρκρινα ἱματ ἀπὸ τῆς ἱματι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>καὶ τὸ ἔθνος δ ἐκαὶ ἐπεισάγαγε τὸν τραχύλον αὐτοῦ ἐν τον βασίλεα Βαβυλώνος καὶ ἐργάσεται αὐτοὶ καὶ καταλείψει αὐτοῦ ἐπι τῆς ἱματι καὶ ἐργάσεται ἐν αὐτὴ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>καὶ πρὸς Σεδεκίαν βασίλεα Ἰουδαίας ἐπαληθεύει κατὰ πνεύτος τῶν λογιῶν τούτων λογιῶν ἐποίησεν τὸν τραχύλον</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ίμων και έργασασθε τω βασιλεί τω Βαβυλώνος</td>
<td>Λέγεται τούτο εάν ο θεός νομίζει πως δεν είναι προφητευτικάς σημασίας. Ο προφήτης μπορεί να μην παραδείγμαται με τον λογισμό του, αλλά να είναι άλλο. Αλλά σχετικά με τα προφητεύματα του Βαβυλώνος, η σημασία του είναι άγνωστη. (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. ότι άδικα αύτων προφητεύουσιν ήμιν</td>
<td>Αλλά το σημάδι τούτο των προφητών ίμων είναι άλλο, αλλά σχετικά με τα προφητεύματα του Βαβυλώνος, η σημασία του είναι άγνωστη. (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. ότι σύν άπεστείλα αύτους φησί κυρίος και προφητεύεται τον διοιστή μου ἐπ’ άδικο προς το άπολεσθαι ώμος καὶ ἀπολείπεται ήμεις καὶ οἱ προφητεῖς ήμῶν οἱ προφητεύοντες ήμῖν ἐπ’ άδικο πενθῆ ήμῖν</td>
<td>Λέγεται τούτο εάν ο θεός νομίζει πως δεν είναι προφητευτικάς σημασίας. Ο προφήτης μπορεί να μην παραδείγμαται με τον λογισμό του, αλλά να είναι άλλο. Αλλά σχετικά με τα προφητεύματα του Βαβυλώνος, η σημασία του είναι άγνωστη. (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. καὶ πάντα τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ καὶ τούς ἱερεὺς ἐλάλησα λεγών οὔτως εἶπε κυρίος μη ἄκουντε τῶν λόγων τῶν προφητῶν τῶν προφητεύοντων ήμιν λεγώντων ἰδίου σκεπή οὗκ κυρίου ἐπιστρέφει ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος οτι άδικα αύτων προφητεύουσιν ήμῖν</td>
<td>Λέγεται τούτο εάν ο θεός νομίζει πως δεν είναι προφητευτικάς σημασίας. Ο προφήτης μπορεί να μην παραδείγμαται με τον λογισμό του, αλλά να είναι άλλο. Αλλά σχετικά με τα προφητεύματα του Βαβυλώνος, η σημασία του είναι άγνωστη. (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. σύν άπεστείλα αύτους</td>
<td>Ἡ θεία ουσία οὐ βρέθη λέγεται εάν ο θεός νομίζει πως δεν είναι προφητευτικάς σημασίας. Ο προφήτης μπορεί να μην παραδείγμαται με τον λογισμό του, αλλά να είναι άλλο. Αλλά σχετικά με τα προφητεύματα του Βαβυλώνος, η σημασία του είναι άγνωστη. (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. εἶ προφητεύα εἰσι καὶ εἶ ἔστι λόγος κυρίου ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀπαντησάτωσιν μοι</td>
<td>Λέγεται τούτο εάν ο θεός νομίζει πως δεν είναι προφητευτικάς σημασίας. Ο προφήτης μπορεί να μην παραδείγμαται με τον λογισμό του, αλλά να είναι άλλο. Αλλά σχετικά με τα προφητεύματα του Βαβυλώνος, η σημασία του είναι άγνωστη. (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. ὅτι οὕτως εἶπε κυρίος καὶ τῶν ἐπίλουσιν σκευών</td>
<td>Λέγεται τούτο εάν ο θεός νομίζει πως δεν είναι προφητευτικάς σημασίας. Ο προφήτης μπορεί να μην παραδείγμαται με τον λογισμό του, αλλά να είναι άλλο. Αλλά σχετικά με τα προφητεύματα του Βαβυλώνος, η σημασία του είναι άγνωστη. (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. ὅπως ἠλάβει βασιλεὺς Βαβυλώνος ὁ θεός ἀπό τον Ἰερουσαλήμ</td>
<td>Λέγεται τούτο εάν ο θεός νομίζει πως δεν είναι προφητευτικάς σημασίας. Ο προφήτης μπορεί να μην παραδείγμαται με τον λογισμό του, αλλά να είναι άλλο. Αλλά σχετικά με τα προφητεύματα του Βαβυλώνος, η σημασία του είναι άγνωστη. (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. εἰς Βαβυλώνα εἰσελεύσεται λεγεῖ κυρίος</td>
<td>Λέγεται τούτο εάν ο θεός νομίζει πως δεν είναι προφητευτικάς σημασίας. Ο προφήτης μπορεί να μην παραδείγμαται με τον λογισμό του, αλλά να είναι άλλο. Αλλά σχετικά με τα προφητεύματα του Βαβυλώνος, η σημασία του είναι άγνωστη. (25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| οστας ειπε κυριος συνετριψα τον ζυγον βασιλειας Βαβυλωνος | ημερον κυριος συνετριψα τον ζυγον βασιλειας Βαβυλωνος
| και Ιερουσαλημ και την άποκαλια Ιερουσαλημ και την συνετριψα τον ζυγον βασιλειας Βαβυλωνος |
| και ειπεν Ιερεμιας προς Ανανια κατ' οφθαλμους παντος του λαου και κατ' οφθαλμους των Ιερεων των εστηκοτων εν σικω κυριου |
| και ειπεν Ιερεμιας ηληθως οστας ποιησα κυριος σπυρισα τον λογον σου εν συ προφητευσι του επιστρεψα το σκευη οικου κυριου και πασαν την άποκαλια εκ Βαβυλωνος εις του τοπον τουτον |
| πλη άκουσατε λογον κυριου εν έγω λεγο εις τα ουτα ιμων και εις τα ουτα παντος του λαου |
| οι προφητες οι γεγονοτες προτεροι μου και προτεροι ιμων απο του αιωνος και οπροφητευσαν επι της πολλης και επι βασιλειας μεγαλας εις πολεμον |
| ο προφητης ο προφητευσας είς ειρηνη έλθωντος του λογου γνωσανται τον προφητην εν απεστειλεν αυτων κυριος εν πιστει |
| και ελαβεν Ανανιας εν οφθαλμαις παντος του λαου τους κλοιους απο του τραχηλου Ιερεμιου και συνετριψεν αυτως |
| και ειπεν Ανανιας κατ' οφθαλμους του λαου λεγον ουσας ειπε κυριος ουσας συνετριψα τον ζυγον βασιλειας Βαβυλωνος απο τραχηλου παντος των θησου και ξυγενετο Ιερεμιας εις την ήδου αυτου |
| και εγενετο λογος κυριου προς Ιερεμιαν μετα το συνετριψα Ανανιας τους κλοιους απο του τραχηλου αυτου λεγον |
| βαδις και ειπεν προς Ανανιαν λεγον |
2.2. Textual Notes

Chapter 27

v. 1. >OG. MT יקרא והכי ממלת ה니까 is clearly erroneous (cf. the subsequent references to Zedekiah), probably under the influence of 26.1.37 Possibly יקרא is itself a late gloss, with MT previously reading יקרא והכי ממלת ה니까, as in 28.1. The whole verse is almost certainly MT plus. One could argue that OG has omitted it in order to avoid the historical problem, but this fails to explain the absence of רבדת הוא אל ייראה אלא רבדת. The lateness of the verse is also suggested by the fact that, unlike the rest of the chapter, it refers to Jeremiah in the third person.

v. 2. MT בנה, OG περιθαυ = בנה; ellipsis of the verbal suffix is not uncommon where the context makes the meaning clear.38 יא is probably MT plus,39 but ל could have been omitted by OG for stylistic reasons.40

37 So Wanke, Untersuchungen, 21; Janzen, Studies, 14.
38 See DIHGS §3 rem.3. However, E. Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX of Jeremiah 27 (34)’, ZAW 91 (1979) 81, believes the Vorlage was identical to MT here.
40 Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 81.
v. 3. MT שָלָהֵם and OG םָפְרָסְעֵלִים אֵצְמָהוּ, ‘and send them’ (i.e., the yoke bars) is possibly surprising, since v. 2 need mean no more than one set of yokes. Emendation to שָלָהֵם, ‘send’ (i.e., a message; cf. LXX λαμά, סָפְרָסְעֵלִים) is attractive, but OG clearly read שָלָהֵם. MT also has the advantage of balancing the preceding verb, יָדַע.

MT שָלָהֵם; OG שְׂפָרָסְעֵלִים אֵצְמָהוּ. The Vorlage may have read שָלָהֵם, but a stylistic change by the translator is possible.

OG שְׂפָרָסְעֵלִים אֵצְמָהוּ > MT: OG suggests שָלָהֵם, but the resultant יָדַע is extremely problematic. If שָלָהֵם is objective (‘to meet them’), who are ‘they’? If it is subjective (‘for them to meet’), it is awkwardly separated from ‘Zedekiah’ by יָדַע. MT seems to preserve an older reading, while the translator’s Vorlage may have contained a conflate text (cf. v. 15).

v. 5. MT פֵּרָנָה > OG: Either MT plus or OG omission due to homoioteleuton (repetition of הַדּאָר). OG omission due to homoioteleuton (repetition of הַדּאָר). Is abrupt, and MT omission may have been lost through homoioteleuton (cf. the endings of בֵּן אֲבָרָה and בֵּן עֵשָׁו).

41 Duhm, Jeremia, 217-218; Rudolph, Jeremia, 146; E.W. Nicholson, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah 26 – 52 (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) 31; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 686; A. Graupner, Auftrag und Geschick des Propheten Jeremia. literarische Eigenart, Herkunft und Intention vordeuteronomistischer Prosa im Jeremiabuch (BTS 15; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991) 63 n.8. According to Bright, Jeremiah, 199, “the suffix . . . has probably carried over from v. 2” — but as we have said, the Vorlage of v. 2 probably read פֵּרָנָה, with no suffix.

42 Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 79; Stulman, Other Text, 58; cf. Volz, Jeremia, 259; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 120; Carroll, Jeremiah, 526.

43 Duhm, Jeremia, 218; Rudolph, Jeremia, 146; Graupner, Auftrag, 63 n.8.

44 Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 81; Stulman, Other Text, 58. The lack of the article on בֵּן אֲבָרָה (before מָלָאֲכָה) is odd, but not impossible; see GKC §138i, k.

45 Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 82, 83; Stulman, Other Text, 58.

46 Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 82.

47 For the former, see Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 82; Stulman, Other Text, 58; for the latter, see Janzen, Studies, 118; Graupner, Auftrag, 63 n.10; Lundbom, Jeremiah 1 – 20, 61.

48 Tov accepts that הָדֵע is usually “denotes that the speaker or author reached an important point in a speech or discourse. A priori, it is therefore unlikely that הָדֵע would have been missing from the translator’s Vorlage.” (‘Exegetical Notes’, 82). However, he points to the absence of הָדֵע from the Vorlage in 40.4 and 42.15. Both Tov and Stulman, Other Text, 58, allow that הָדֵע may have been in the Vorlage.
MT T3 nbxn mmxn b3; OG ḫxr vpv = f'1X1 nx:

Janzen points out that the global sense represented by OG follows on neatly from the previous verse; moreover, “had the reference in v. 6 originally been to nations, we might have expected ḫmr nx”.\(^{49}\) (cf. vv. 8, 11). But the reading in MT also provides a satisfying development from v. 5 (‘I made the whole earth . . . so I am giving these lands . . .’).\(^{50}\)

MT "l13P; OG σουλευειν αὐτόν.\(^{51}\) Lemke argued that ḫmr arose here as a scribal error, leading to its addition in 25.9 and 43.10.\(^{52}\) However, while ḫmr in 25.9 is certainly MT plus, here and in 43.10 ḫmr is likely to be the more original reading; ḫmr would entail an awkward repetition of ḫmr at the end of the verse. The translator (or a copyist of his Vorlage) may have misread ḫmr, and read the final ḫmr twice.\(^{53}\) Unease at this description of a foreign king may have contributed to an alternative reading.\(^{54}\)

v. 7 >OG: MT plus,\(^{55}\) cf. the very similar MT plus in 25.14. The idea of Babylon’s rule being limited in duration is not confined to MT (see 29.10) but it is heightened there; see too the prophecy of the return of the temple vessels in 27.22, also MT plus.

v. 8. >OG: Either MT plus or OG haplography (repetition of ḫmr).\(^{56}\) MT adds ḫmr to conform to the ‘sword, famine and plague’ trilogy elsewhere. έµβολωσι τον τραχηλον αὐτον ‘corrects’ the singular forms of

\(^{49}\) Janzen, Studies, 66; also preferring OG are Bright, Jeremiah, 199-200; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 112.

\(^{50}\) “The relation between the texts of MT and Sept. cannot be elucidated with a high degree of confidence” (McKane, Jeremiah 2, 688).

\(^{51}\) Following LXX\(^{8,9}\); LXX\(^{5}\) omits.


\(^{53}\) So Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 83-84.

\(^{54}\) So Duhm, Jeremia, 201; Volz, Jeremia, 259; Rudolph, Jeremia, 146; Thompson, Jeremia, 512.

\(^{55}\) Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 84-85; Stulman, Other Text, 58; Duhm, Jeremia, 220.

\(^{56}\) Rudolph, Jeremia, 146. Thompson, Jeremia, 529, renders, ‘then many nations and great kings shall reduce him to servitude’, evidently interpreting as instrumental (see BDB s.v. ḫmr, Qal. 1).

\(^{57}\) For the former view, see Duhm, Jeremia, 220; Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 85-86; for the latter, see Stulman, Other Text, 58; Graupner, Auftrag, 63 n.10; cf. BHS footnote.
αὐτοῦ may reflect rather than MT ἔλειμα, or may be a further attempt to conform to הָלַם הָמוּלפָּה.

MT תֹּםַם (‘until I have finished them by his hand’) is awkward, since Qal is nowhere else transitive;⁵⁹ κύος ζεκαλυπτόταν ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ = ‘(until they die by his hand)’, but Targ. implies דָּמַם אָמֶה (‘until I have given them’), which collocates well with בַּדִּים; MT תומם is easily understood as scribal error.⁶⁰

v. 9. MT דָּמַם (‘your dreams’); OG ἐκπονοοῦσαι σοι (‘your dreamers’) = הָלַם הָמוּלפָּה. The context clearly points to a further group of people. Several scholars have adopted Ehrlich’s revocalisation of MT as נָלַם חָלָמִים, assuming a term נָלַם, ‘dreamer’.⁶² Alternatively, we could repoint as a feminine participle, נָלַם חָלָמִים, ‘dreaming women’.⁶³ Cf. 29.8.

v. 10. MT דָּמַם נָלַם חָלָמִים > OG: MT plus, influenced by v. 15.⁶⁴

v. 11. OG ἐργάσεται αὐτῷ (‘and it will serve him’) misreads τὸ ἄπτειν.⁶⁵

v. 12. MT slightly rearranges the text.⁶⁶ On דָּמַם, see below on vv. 13-14. For the phrase νῦν ἡμῶν, cf. Neh. 3.5.

vv. 13-14. OG lacks all of v. 13 and most of v. 14, yielding the nonsensical ‘serve the king of Babylon, for they are prophesying a lie to you’. At least all of v. 14, therefore, must be original, the translator’s eye skipping from הביאו אֶת מִלָּה בָּבֶל (v. 12) to הביאו אֶת מִלָּה אֲלֵה (v. 14).

⁵⁸ Stulman, Other Text, 58; Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 86.
⁵⁹ Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 86, accepts MT, but suggests צבָּצַם (Hiph. inf. estr.) is also possible.
⁶⁰ Rudolph, Jeremia, 148; Thompson, Jeremiah, 534; but cf. Volz, Jeremita, 259: “das vorgeschlagene דָּמַם ist zu schwach, und die Verderbnis wäre nicht erklärt.”
⁶² Ehrlich, Randglossen, 312-313; Volz, Studien, 213; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 22; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 113.
⁶³ So NEB; cf. Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 113.
⁶⁴ Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 87; Stulman, Other Text, 59.
⁶⁶ Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 87; Stulman, Other Text, 59.
(v. 14). This might also explain the absence of בָּנָכָל . . . (v. 13) בְּנִי (v. 12); however, the fact that the very similar material in v. 17 is MT plus (see below) suggests the same is true here.67

v. 15. MT וְוַעֲדָה; OG προς το ἀπόλεσσαι = וְוַעֲדָה. Which is the more original we cannot say; cf. 16.15, where OG reads διακρίσθην rather than MT וְוַעֲדָה. OG ὡμων ἐκ το ἀδίκῳ προσφέρῃ ὡμων probably reflects a doublet, ὡμων. 68 OG adds ὡμων.

v. 16. שַׁעַת מְקוֹם >OG: Either MT plus (cf. 28.3, 11) or OG haplography (confusion of final θ in preserved MT).69

 OG ὡμικ ἀπεστειλακα τοῦ του (34.14) = שַׁעַת מַגָּז. This may have been added by the translator to conform to v. 15, but was probably already in his Vorlage.

v. 17. OG ὡμικ ἀπεστειλακα τοῦ του = שַׁעַת מַגָּז: The shorter and completely different reading of OG probably reflects its Vorlage accurately; we would then have a smooth flow of text concerning the prophets, יִפְּקָד, similar to v. 15.70 The reading in MT may have been prompted by the similar question in v. 13.

v. 18. The longer MT is usually seen as a plus.71 On the other hand, an invitation to 'entreat' YHWH with no suggestion as to the content of that petition is abrupt.

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67 So Rudolph, Jeremia, 148; Tov, 'Exegetical Notes', 87; pace Carroll, Jeremiah, 528; Graupner, Auftrag, 64 n.14.

68 Tov, 'Exegetical Notes', 88; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 692. Alternatively, the second ὡμων may form the start of the following verse, i.e., ὡμων καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ; so Ziegler, Beiträge, 96; H. Seebass, 'Jeremias Konflikt mit Chananja', ZAW 82 (1970) 449-452. Seebass argues that in the Vorlage מִשָּׁמְא רַעָב מֵאָשׁ מִשָּׁמְא רַעָב מְלֹא מַגָּז שְׁעַר מַגָּז (v. 16) introduces a citation of an earlier oracle concerning the temple vessels; this he sees as preferable to MT, which delays supplying the basis for the warning of vv.14-15 until v.16, and shifts the theme from that of the yoke to that of the temple vessels ('Konflikt', 450). Whether these features of MT really constitute such a serious problem is questionable; see below (§2.4) for criticism of the view that Jeremiah's message could have had only one focal point.

69 For the former view, see Duhm, Jeremia, 222; Tov, 'Exegetical Notes', 88; for the latter, see Rudolph, Jeremia, 148, and Wanke, Untersuchungen, 22, who suggest the phrase was deliberately omitted to avoid lending support to the legend of Bar. 1.8.

70 Tov, 'Exegetical Notes', 88; Stulman, Other Text, 59.

71 Tov, 'Exegetical Notes', 88-89; Stulman, Other Text, 59; Thompson, Jeremiah, 530 n.11.
v. 19. OG is usually seen as reflecting a much shorter Vorlage: יכ הכ אפריו של ירח 핸לך. However, OG כתי [サン 마 유리오우] appears to represent ויל, implying additional preceding wording. The Greek could be understood as starting a new sentence if כתי is translated, ‘even [the rest . . .]’; but why not then the nominative, סקָּנָה [סָקָנָה]? One must also ask why a generally literal translator would have introduced this nuance. On balance, OG haplography is more likely than MT expansion. Alternatively, the mistake may be due to a later copyist; if OG originally read, peri tov στυλων κατι peri της θολοσθής και peri tov μεσων κατι peri tov επιλοιπον σκευον (cf. LXX, אינון), one could easily account for the present text.

v. 20. and and and and are typical MT additions. Possibly halad was lost through haplography (halad [v. 22], מַרְחֲשֵׁל), but since it is also absent from OG in 29[36],4 it is most likely an MT plus in both places.

v. 21 >OG: Possibly omitted with halad at the end of v. 20, but probably MT plus.

Chapter 28

v. 1. MT gives two mutually exclusive dates, הלַדוּת מָרֲאָשָׁה מֶפָּלָה וְדֶרְכֶּה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה. OG וַיִּמְרֶץ מְצַד הַזֶּבֶכֶת מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה reflects וַיִּמְרֶץ מְצַד הַזֶּבֶכֶת מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה. Most scholars believe וַיִּמְרֶץ מְצַד הַזֶּבֶכֶת was added under the influence of 27.1.

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72 Duhm, Jeremia, 222; Rudolph, Jeremia, 148; Seebass, ‘Konflikt’, 450-451; Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 89; Stulman, Other Text, 59-60.
73 Graupner, Auftrag, 65 n.19, is almost alone in calling attention to this; Rudolph, Jeremia, 148, mentions it in passing.
74 E.g., Bright, Jeremiah, 197; Thompson, Jeremiah, 530 n.11.
75 A point recognised by Duhm, who believed that OG was translating מֵרוֹצֶה מִימַה (Jeremia, 222).
77 Stulman, Other Text, 60.
78 Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 90.
79 Rudolph, Jeremia, 148; Tov, ‘Exegetical Notes’, 90; Stulman, Other Text, 60.

115
MT > OG: MT represents a conflation of two variants: A] commissioned by A] and B]; 80 As Janzen points out, A (which matches OG) is easily the superior reading; B arose after the addition of 27.1.

vv. 3-4. MT but OG: All MT plus. 81

v. 5. MT but OG: As in 27.16, OG lists these groups in reverse order to MT.

v. 6. MT apparently read the infinitive לָּקְחָה, which would then parallel לָּקְחָה.

MT 'your words'; OG תָּנָן רֹאָה, 'your word'.

v. 7. MT שִׁמְשָׁה; OG שִׁמְשָׁה. Possibly OG read שִׁמְשָׁה, but the ensuing reference to 'the ears of all the people' may have prompted the translator to make the change.

v. 8. MT > OG: MT plus, prompted by the frequent Jeremianic trilogy, יָדָּרְךָ (many Hebrew mss. read יָדָּרְךָ rather than יָדָּרְךָ). 82 Without these words, the Vorlage neatly counterbalances לָּקְחָה with לָּקְחָה (v. 9).

v. 10. OG וְלָּקְחָה כֹּצְצִיָּהּ > MT.

MT בּוֹטְטָה; OG בּוֹטְטָה... נַחֲשָׁה; נַחֲשָׁה: Note that in v. 13, MT also the plural נַחֲשָׁה. The masculine suffix נַ in MT is strange, given that מֵנֵה is feminine; Holladay proposes an earlier וְלָּקְחָה, in which the final מֵנֵה was later read as a waw. 83

v. 11. MT > OG: MT plus, 84 conforming Hananiah's prophecy to v. 3.

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80 Janzen, Studies, 15.
81 Duhm, Jeremia, 224; Janzen, Untersuchungen, 23; Janzen, Studies, 48; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 125.
82 Duhm, Jeremia, 225; Bright, Jeremia, 198; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 125; contra Janzen, Untersuchungen, 23.
83 Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 125. Rudolph, Jeremia, 150, proposes dittography of (cf. the following יָדָּרְךָ).
84 Duhm, Jeremia, 225; Janzen, Studies, 48; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 125.
v. 13. MT תפלות, OG παντοτικόν: The second person reading in MT is (at least initially) surprising; precisely for this reason, however, the first person παντοτικόν is more likely to be due to the translator than to a variant in the Vorlage.85

v. 14. MT יִתְבָּרֵךְ חַוָּה אֶת יְהוָה מִעְנֵיהֶם לֹא יֵלֶדֶךּ—OG: MT plus, influenced by 27.6.86

v. 15. MT שְׁמִית בַּיָּמִים >OG: MT plus.87


v. 17. MT חַיִּים מִשָּׁם—OG: Probable MT plus.89

2.3. Exegetical Notes

Chapter 27

v. 2. מָשָׁה לֵין מָפָדָה: The narrative begins with a ‘sign act’, comparable to those in 13.1-11 (the linen belt) and 19.1-13 (the clay jar), the first of which is also recounted in the first person.

מָשָׁה: In the OT, מָשָׁה (‘yoke bar’) is almost always a metaphor of oppression (foreign or social), and occurs either by itself (Isa. 58.6, 9; Ezek. 30.18) or in the phrase מָשָׁה עִלָּה (Lev. 26.13; Ezek. 34.27). Each time, it is something that YHWH breaks (שָׁבָר) or urges his people to remove (ריָבָה, יֲמָה, מָסָף). Likewise, מָסָף (‘strap’) occurs in 30.8 (לְעֵין; Nah. 1.13 (לְעֵין) and Ps. 107.14, to symbolise foreign rule from which YHWH releases Israel. Only in Jer. 27 – 28 do we read of YHWH imposing a yoke. Though similar in meaning, the ensuing narrative uses מָשָׁה to

85 Volz, Jeremia, 263; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 23; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 713 (“The sense of v. 13 is ‘You have made a rebellious gesture (by breaking the wooden yoke) but you have thereby made for yourself an unyielding and unbreakable tyranny’. ”); contra Duhm, Jeremia, 226.
86 Duhm, Jeremia, 226; Rudolph, Jeremia, 150; Bright, Jeremiah, 201; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 23; Janzen, Studies, 48.
87 Even Duhm, Jeremia, 227, notes that this clause “ist nicht gut zu entbehren.”
88 Duhm, Jeremia, 227; Rudolph, Jeremia, 150; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 23; Janzen, Studies, 48; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 714; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 126. A contrary view is implied by Volz’s question, “von Jer. oder erst von Baruch stammt?”, Jeremia, 263.
89 Janzen, Studies, 48; contra Graupner, Auftrag, 69 n.33 (“Die LXX übergehen den Rückbezug als überflüssig.”).
denote the object worn by Jeremiah (28.10, 12, 13) and יְהֹוָה to denote the power of Babylon (27.8, 11, 12; 28.2, 4, 11, 14).

v. 5. הָאֶבֶדֶן: The phrase בְּעֵיֲדִיתָה יְהֹוָה is commonly used in parallel with יִשָּׂרֵאֵל יְהֹוָה (Deut. 4.34; 5.15; Ps. 136.12; Jer. 21.5), especially in contexts describing YHWH's acts of redemption and judgement. Only in three other places, however, is it used with בְּעֵיֲדִיתָה (Deut. 9.29; 2 Kgs. 17.36; Jer. 32.17), and only in the latter instance, as here, in relation to creation.

v. 6. יִשָּׂרֵאֵל: The phrase יִשָּׂרֵאֵל יְהֹוָה is also common in the Deuteronomistic literature (e.g., Deut. 12.25; 21.9; 1 Kgs. 11.33; 2 Kgs. 10.30). There, however, as its collocation with יְהֹוָה indicates, the emphasis is firmly on human conduct; here such considerations are absent, and the sense is rather 'to whom I see fit' (cf. 18.4).90

v. 10. יִשָּׂרֵאֵל יְהֹוָה: Although the term יִשָּׂרֵאֵל usually has a final sense, 'in order to' (Jer. 32.14; 42.6; 43.3; 50.34; 51.39), it can also be resultative, 'so that' (Lev. 20.3; 2 Kgs. 22.17; Am. 2.7; Jer. 25.7; 32.35; Mic. 6.16).93 Since the subjects of the verb are the prophets, a resultative sense seems certain here.

90 Thompson, Jeremiah, 529; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 684.
91 See Z. Zevit, 'The Use of 'ebed as a Diplomatic Term in Jeremiah', JBL 88 (1969) 74-77; Thompson, Jeremiah, 512-513.
92 So Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 119.
93 See GBH 2, §169g. Cf. BDB, s.v. יִשָּׂרֵאֵל; "sometimes, in rhetorical passages, the issue of a line of action, though really undesigned, is represented by it [לִמְדָה] ironically as if it were designed.". BDB cites Jer.
v. 11. The content of YHWH’s promise for the nation that serves the king of Babylon is here spelled out. In Jdg. 2.23, YHWH allows the nations to remain (ךנ היפ) in Canaan, but the most striking parallel to this phrase occurs in Gen. 2.15, יִישָׁבֶת בְּאֶרֶץ לִבְרָדוֹת. This is the only other place in the OT whereךנ Hiph. is used in conjunction with נָשָׁב; the possibility that we have here a deliberate echo of the Genesis passage is strengthened by the explicit reference to creation in v. 5.

v. 15. Jeremiah concludes his message to Zedekiah with a second clause (cf. v. 10). In the OG Vorlage, the subject is again the prophets, justifying a resultative interpretation. Conceivably, since MT attributes the scattering to YHWH (חרד), could here have a final sense; this would, however, go against the general tenor of Jeremiah’s message.

v. 16. 2 Kgs. 24.13 records that in 597 Nebuchadrezzar had broken up the gold vessels made by Solomon; the implication here is that some of the other temple utensils had been taken to Babylon, while others (v. 20) were left in Jerusalem. The emphasis on the return of these vessels may seem surprising, but as Ackroyd remarks, “restoration of the vessels implies re-establishment of that continuity of the cultus which was in some measure interrupted by the disaster of 597.”

v. 18. For similar expressions in relation to prophetic inspiration, see 5.13 (אֵלֵי וַעֲלָיָה) and 23.28 (הָעִדָּה וַעֲלָיָה). Some commentators believe that Jeremiah was being perfectly sincere at this point; however, the tone of scepticism should not be missed. The fact that ‘intercession’ was recognised as a distinctively prophetic activity makes

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94 The notion of YHWH sending false prophets in order to bring about disaster is not wholly alien to the OT (1 Kgs. 22.19–23).


96 “He invites the other prophets to believe the word of God given through him and to intercede for that which he has been forbidden to pray. The possibility that the LORD might relent is implicit in this challenge.” (Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 53).
Jeremiah’s instruction to the exiles in 29.7 to ‘pray on behalf’ (תחתיו בנים) of Babylon the more striking.

v. 22. The significance of this MT plus should not be overlooked. The hitherto almost wholly negative meaning of פך (see 29.10) is reversed, as a favourable visitation from YHWH is predicted. Compare the very similar prophecy concerning Zedekiah in Babylon (32.5, also MT plus).

Chapter 28

v. 4. נאשא יבשיה יהוה יחיה והתבלת: Hananiah’s prophecy of the return of the 597 exiles exceeds that of ch. 24 in two crucial respects; it supplies a time-frame (בשיה, v. 3), and specifically lists Jehoiachin as among the returnees. As commentators have observed,97 the latter point would have presented an implicit challenge to Zedekiah.

v. 6. נאשא יבשיה יהוה יחיהredux התבלת: Jeremiah’s reply to Hananiah has long puzzled commentators, given his insistence in ch. 27 and elsewhere in ch. 28 that there would be no early return from Babylon. Explanations include irony98 or (more commonly), that Jeremiah was simply expressing his own desire as distinct from what he knew YHWH had decreed.99 Either is plausible, and not necessarily mutually exclusive. Carroll notes that similar instances of a soft answer followed by את (cf. v. 7) occur in v. 12 and 26.15: “General agreement with a situation or belief is expressed, but a few dissenting points may yet be made . . . These points usually constitute the heart of the matter and have a tendency to reverse the agreement expressed with the sentiments just enunciated.”100 For an unambiguous example of irony (also directed at the false prophets) in Jer., see 23.28: נאשא יבשיה יהוה יחיה redux התבלת.

It may, however, be significant that Jeremiah makes no reference to Jehoiachin, whom Hananiah explicitly included among those whom YHWH would bring back in v. 4: “While the false prophet is hostile to the rule of Zedekiah and categorically demands the return of

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97 Carroll, Jeremiah, 543; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 54.
98 Nicholson, Jeremiah 26 – 52, 37.
99 Volz, Jeremia, 265; Rudolph, Jeremia, 152; Bright, Jeremia, 201; Thompson, Jeremia, 539.
100 Carroll, Jeremia, 544.
Jehoiachin to the throne, as an integral part of his party’s political platform, Jeremiah intentionally skips over this problem.”

v. 9. The implication of Jeremiah’s words seems to be that since prophetic oracles are in the main of disaster (v. 8), the burden of proof is on the prophet of peace. The final echoes 26.15.

v. 15. The same accusation is made against Shemaiah in 29.31; elsewhere, Hiph. occurs only in 2 Kgs. 18.30 = Isa. 36.15. is most naturally taken to mean ‘You have caused (this people) to trust (a lie)’, an interpretation reflected in all the commentaries and EVV. Yet whilst ch. 28 has carefully noted the presence of the people during Jeremiah’s confrontation with Hananiah, nowhere has it reported their reaction. Equally, while in ch. 27 Jeremiah urges the people ‘not to listen’ to the prophets, their response is left open. It is more probable that here has the sense ‘you have tried to persuade’. In the OT, ‘try to’ is usually expressed by + inf. (Ex. 2.15; Deut. 13.11; 1 Sam. 19.10) or simply + inf. (Jer. 26.21). Key to our passage, however, is Deut. 13.2-6. Here, Moses warns the people that if a ‘prophet or dreamer’ urges them to follow other gods, they are not to listen (v. 4); rather, that prophet or dreamer must die, because he has spoken rebellion against YHWH, “[Ylbx mrr -ps “Ityx -pin]» piTHnb” (v. 6). Here, although is not used, must mean, ‘to try to seduce you’; the context makes it clear that the people resist the prophet’s enticements (in MT v. 6). indicates that they themselves remove him).

v. 16. In this situation, however, YHWH will himself effect the death sentence. This phrase has no exact parallel in the OT, although YHWH also ‘expels’ (Pi.) the man from the garden (Gen. 3.23), and the nations ‘from before’ (nbn) Israel (Lev. 18.24; 20.23).

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102 “Hananiah is suspect because he does not say what prophets characteristically say. He is soft on the dangers of covenant disobedience.” (Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 252; similarly Thomson, Jeremiah, 540; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 128).
103 Most use some such expression as ‘led / persuaded / made to believe’. See especially Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 58: “Hananiah (and Shemaiah) had gone one step further and succeeded in making the people put their trust in a lie”.
104 This construction often means ‘intend to’; however, in the instances cited above, it is clear that an attempt is made to do something.
2.4. Coherence and Redaction

The most obvious indication of editorial activity in these two chapters lies in the shift from first person to third person speech in 28.2. Nevertheless, there is little scholarly consensus as to the nature and extent of this redaction. Perhaps the simplest hypothesis is that an editor has utilised two different, but historically reliable, sources. Thus Rudolph assigned ch. 27 to ‘A’ (authentic sayings), with ch. 28 added later from ‘B’ (Baruch’s biography).105 Without naming particular sources, Jones also sees ch. 27 as the nucleus, to which the editor added ch. 28:

“Without chapter 27, chapter 28 would lack its essential presupposition and clue. In particular, 28.10 presupposes 27.2.”106

More commonly, it is held that the oldest kernel (whether or not from ‘B’) is found in ch. 28, plus a few elements of ch. 27, with most of the latter being redactional.107 Those who take this view often describe the editor as ‘Deuteronomistic’, though the evidence is inconclusive. Nicholson calls attention to the expressions חנפ יתא ת.Note (27.5; Deut. 9.29; 2 Kgs. 17.36),้าย (28.6; Deut. 9.5; 1 Sam. 1.23; 1 Kgs. 2.4; 6.12; 8.20) and מַּ יתא ת.ל (28.16; Deut. 13.6).108 As he acknowledges, however, the language is for the most part that of the Jeremiah prose tradition, rather than of Dtr.H.109 Nicholson also notes that the concern with true and false prophecy which dominates chs. 27–28 is characteristic of Dtr.H., and that the criterion implied in 28.8-9 for distinguishing between them echoes Deut. 13.5.110

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106 Jones, Jeremiah, 346.

107 Duhm, Jeremia, 216-217; Hyatt, ‘Jeremiah’, 788-789 (though ascribing more of ch. 27 to ‘B’ than did Duhm); Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 5-10. Nicholson, Preaching, 93-97, is less interested in identifying the original material (though he thinks 27.2-4, 8, 12 may be original), emphasising instead that the section “assumed its present form at the hands of the Deuteronomistic traditionists.” (96). Mowinckel, Komposition, 42, assigned ch. 27 to the ‘C’ source.


109 Nicholson, Preaching, 95-96, a point emphasised by Jones, Jeremiah, 22. L. Stulman, The Prose Sermons of Jeremiah: A Redescription of the Correspondences with the Deuteronomistic Literature in the Light of Recent Text-Critical Research (SBLDS 83; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 89, draws the same conclusion in respect to ch. 27 (though he overlooks חנפ יתא ת.Note), pointing out that most of this Jeremiah prose language is in any case restricted to the MT plusses.

110 Nicholson, Preaching, 97. Caution is needed here, since an interest in prophecy would probably have been widespread among Jews during and after the sixth century.
Others have offered more complex analyses. Noting the shift from third person to second person address in 27.9, Wanke identifies all of 27.9-22 as a late addition to the narrative. In any case, he argues, their polemic against the false prophets is alien to the original meaning of the sign of the yoke. Excising them reveals an older stratum comprising 27.2-8, 12b; 28.1-17. This has a coherent structure: Action of Jeremiah (27.2-3, 12b); counter-action of Hananiah (28.1-4, 10-11); vindication of Jeremiah and sentence on Hananiah (28.12-17). Even here, however, Wanke finds redactional elements. 27.4-8 are verbose, overtly theological, and unconnected to the symbolic action. Also secondary are 28.1-9, 15-17, as shown by their heightened interest in the Babylonian exiles and by the fact that they presuppose the symbolic action of Hananiah. Consequently, the oldest core comprises 27.2-3, 12b; 28.10-14.

Although he criticises Wanke’s argument at points, McKane takes essentially the same approach. The warnings against false prophets are “only indirectly related to the message of the symbolic action.” 27.5-8 are clearly secondary, since “it was not a time to survey a grand theological structure which embraced the world.” The redactional nature of 27.12b-15 is shown by the fact that whereas v. 12a addresses Zedekiah, the subsequent verbs are plural. Like Wanke, McKane believes we should look for “a smaller core in which Jeremiah’s action is explicated by a single meaning . . . a verse in which the tools of the symbolic action are preserved and in which the explanation sticks close to the concreteness of the metaphor.” Despite a painstaking analysis, however, McKane cannot decide whether this elusive verse is v. 11 or 12b. Meanwhile, ch. 28 contains two contrary views of prophecy; that in vv. 6-9,

111 Wanke, Untersuchungen, 26-27.
112 Wanke, Untersuchungen, 26.
113 Wanke, Untersuchungen, 35. His analysis is partly shared by Graupner, Auftrag, 71-76, who identifies four redactional layers; an autobiographical kernel (27.2-4, 11), a secondary expansion (28.10-13), a further expansion (28.1-9, 15-17), and a final Deuteronomistic redaction (27.5-10, 12-22; 28.14).
114 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 695-704.
115 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 702.
116 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 700.
117 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 698.
where Jeremiah is content to let Hananiah’s words be proved right or wrong by subsequent events, and that in v. 15, where he pronounces Hananiah a false prophet without further ado.118

Wanke and McKane have rightly highlighted the fact that chs. 27 – 28 deal with two distinct (though related) issues; namely, ‘serving the king of Babylon’, and ‘not listening to the prophets’. Unfortunately, their conclusions illustrate all too well the dangers of operating with fixed notions of what is ‘relevant or ‘superfluous’ in a text.119 On what basis is it assumed that ‘this was not the time’ for an affirmation of YHWH’s worldwide sovereignty, when in fact it supplies the underpinning for a message that would otherwise be extremely abrupt? On what basis is it assumed that the warnings against the prophets are a distraction, when their message, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon’ (27.9, 14), directly contradicts what Jeremiah is urging his own audience to believe? On what basis is it assumed that Jeremiah’s message must be ‘tightly’ connected to the metaphor of the yoke? In any case, the claim that vv. 4-12 are unconnected with the yoke symbol is seriously undermined by their triple use of the expression בְּאִימַלְמַלְמָלִים (vv. 8, 11, 12b). To argue, as Wanke does, that these have been inserted to create a link is little short of desperation.120

Nor are the arguments for multiple redactional layers in ch. 28 compelling.121 The fact that Jeremiah accuses Hananiah of promoting ‘falsehood’ (~!pt!i, v. 15) in no way negates the ‘test of time’ set out in vv. 7-8. Precisely because this criterion stands, Jeremiah makes no attempt to have Hananiah put to death by the community (as prescribed in Deut. 13.5). Instead, he predicts that YHWH himself will remove Hananiah ‘from the face of the earth’ that same year (v. 16). In so doing, Jeremiah sets his own word against that of Hananiah. Both must now wait the test of time. As for Wanke’s view that vv. 10-14 and vv. 1-9, 15-17 are from different authors, he himself supplies the best counter-argument: “Daß diese Einfügungen äußerst

118 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 719-720.
119 See too Wanke’s treatment of 27.4. Despite conceding (Untersuchungen, 24) that this verse is syntactically well-integrated with vv. 2-3, he insists: “Eine solche umständliche Ausdrucksweise ist den Berichten über symbolische Handlungen im Jeremiabuch nicht eigen; mit v. 3 wäre schon alles gesagt, was zur Einführung der Deutung der Handlung nötig ist, und v. 4 ist damit praktisch überflüssig. Alles das weist darauf hin, daß man damit zu rechnen hat, daß in v. 4 eine Naht vorliegt, die zwei ursprünglich nicht zusammengehörige Stücke miteinander verbindet.” (Untersuchungen, 25; italics mine).
120 Wanke, Untersuchungen, 27.
121 Cf. Carroll, Jeremiah, 547: “Chapter 28 has been analysed without remainder and its interpretation appears to be unproblematical.”
geschickt und dem vorliegenden Material entsprechend vorgenommen wurden, macht ihr Erkennen um so schwieriger.”

Granted, chs. 27–28 are not completely straightforward. Jeremiah’s message in vv. 12-18 clearly implies the possibility of a peaceful existence for Judah, even under Babylonian rule (לִמְדָה הָדוֹה הָוָה הָוָה דָּרוֹבוּה; v. 17). Indeed, prophetic intercession may prevent still more of the temple vessels being ransacked (v. 18). In vv. 19-22 (excluding the MT plus in v. 22), however, the mood changes. The temple vessels will, after all, be taken to Babylon. Consequently, many scholars see vv. 19-22 as reflecting a viewpoint quite different to that expressed in vv. 12-18. According to Seitz, the prophecy concerning the temple vessels “forms a redactional supplement to an otherwise coherent prophetic narrative.”

The apparent tension between the prophecy of vv. 19-22 and Jeremiah’s invitation to the prophets in v. 18 to ‘entreat’ (יִּֽאָה) YHWH vanishes, however, if we understand v. 18 (like 28.6) as either ironic, or as expressing a wish rather than an expectation. Nor is it necessary to see vv. 19-22 as conflicting with the conditional promise of ‘life’ in vv. 13 and 17. The prediction that the temple vessels will be taken to Babylon is sobering, and serves to refute the optimism of the other prophets (v. 16), but it scarcely constitutes “an unqualified and unrelieved prophecy of

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122 Wanke, Untersuchungen, 35. More convincing is the view of E. Jenni, Die politischen Voraussagen der Propheten (ATANT 29; Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1956) 59, which Wanke cites (Untersuchungen, 35 n.36): “Nur übertriebene rationalistische Kritik könnte die vv. 15-17 oder v. 17 allein als unechten Zusatz ablehnen.”

123 Duhm, Jeremia, 222; Volz, Jeremia, 258; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 703-704. Even Jones, Jeremiah, 359, concedes that 27.16-22 “may or may not be original to the episode.” But see Rudolph, Jeremia, 151: “Ein Widerspruch zu v. 18 ist nicht vorhanden: wenn die Propheten die Zukunft richtig wüßten wie Jer. selbst, täten sie Fürbitte, daß das von Jahwe Angedrohte nicht eintritt. Denn das prophetische Drohwort gilt ja nie unbedingt, Jahwe kann seinen Plan immer noch ändern”; also Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 123.

124 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 186. Seitz believes (207-214, 241) that chs. 27–29 contain the beginning of the Scribal Chronicle.

125 “The prophet refutes his own playful invitation to the adversaries” (Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 248).
Nor is it obvious how these three verses serve the function Seitz ascribes to them of "foreclosing" what has gone before. The option of ongoing life in a viable city still stands.

2.5. Differentiation in Jer. 27 – 28:

In our previous chapter, we noted how at first sight, Jer. 21.1-10 appears to differentiate salvation and judgement along audience-critical lines ('the king' and 'the people'). We argued, however, that despite those audience-markers, the issues of salvation and judgement were in fact correlated to the more basic issue of staying in the city and surrendering to the Babylonians. When we come to chs. 27 – 28 the matter is rather different. Here too, we find very clear audience-critical notes in the text; as we saw earlier when discussing the structure of the passage, Jeremiah's rhetoric divides the post-597 Judah community into 'prophets' (הנבאים) and everyone else (המלך והבונים ליל תמס). This time, however, there is a striking difference in what he says to each group.

We can consider first his message to the king, the priests and the people. This can be designated as one of modest hope; what is on offer, for Judah as for the other nations, is the chance to 'remain in the land and work it' (27.11). This, as we have seen, echoes the creation narrative, and certainly entails more than the promise of 'survival' in 21.9. It is emphasised in MT by a double invitation to serve the king of Babylon and 'live' (יִתְדָּרֵד, 27.12, 17), so that Jerusalem may not become a ruin (27.17). We have argued that the prophecy concerning the temple vessels is not intended to 'foreclose' the possibility of life, but rather to refute the claims of the other prophets. Moreover, the choice presented in ch. 27 is still in the balance at the end of ch. 28; as we have seen, the words אֲמַהְמוֹת הַמִּדְחָא אֵין חַד וּשְׁפַק (28.15) do not imply that the people have in fact accepted Hananiah's message.

At the same time, this message of hope is highly restrained. In the first place, it is contingent upon the people accepting the sovereignty of the king of Babylon and 'serving' him, which also means 'not listening' to the prophets. Secondly, all that they are promised in return

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126 As McKane, Jeremiah 2, 704, claims. Indeed, Seebass, 'Konflikt', 450, agrees that in OG, "eine erneute Demütigung des falschen Vertrauens auf den Tempel, nicht aber die Plünderung der Stadt ankündigte", but argues that in MT they have become "(eine) unbedingte Unheilswort" (italics his). But it is hard to see how MT’s more detailed description of the temple vessels creates such a radically different message.

127 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 187.
is the prospect of life in their own land; this is not elaborated, nor is there any word of personal blessing or assurance from YHWH (as there is, for example, in 42.9-12). In fact, there is greater emphasis on the results of disobedience, i.e., removal from the land, scattering and perishing (vv. 10 and 15). Thirdly, Jeremiah anticipates a further ransacking of the temple (27.19-22); the remaining temple vessels, national symbols of status and security, will be removed. The MT plus concerning the return of the temple vessels (v. 22b) looks beyond this, but does not negate it. Consequently, it is hardly surprising that in 28.9 Jeremiah distances himself from those who prophesy שלאשׁ.

Now it is clear that this message of restrained hope is presented to Judah as a single entity. Although vv. 8 and 11 establish a polarity at an international level, as far as Judah is concerned Jeremiah’s words imply that they will respond as one. Nowhere does he raise the prospect of some serving the Babylonians and others refusing to do so; still less of what would happen if such a division occurred. To this extent, therefore, chs. 27 – 28 fall into the category of ‘Deuteronomistic alternatives’ to which Koenen referred. At the same time, however, the rhetorical differentiation of ‘the prophets’ in these chapters is matched by the dramatic pronouncement of judgement upon Hananiah in ch. 28. Precisely because his counter-prophecy is inimical to the welfare of the community (מִזֶּה הָעָם, 28.15), YHWH will ‘expel’ him (לְשׁוֹא, פֶּת. ptc.) ‘from the face of the earth’ (מְטֲלִיל בִּנְשֹׁמַי, 28.16); that is, he will implement the sentence prescribed in Deut. 13 for a member of the Israelite community who attempts to mislead his brothers. This specific and rapidly-executed penalty is the more striking, since in ch. 27 the results of failing to serve the king of Babylon are that the prophets will be banished along with everyone else (27.15).

Consequently, chs. 27 – 28 witness to an inner-Judean polarity of ‘people’ and ‘prophets’. A message of conditional hope is announced to the nation at large, from which Hananiah is decisively excluded. Stulman’s remark, that in Jer. “bad insiders – indigenous outsiders – pose a profound threat to those who adhere to social and cosmic restraints”, finds in the prophet from Gibeon its prime exemplar. At the same time, this is not a rigid dichotomy.

128 Compare 1 Sam. 12.25, where Samuel concludes his appeal to the people to serve YHWH with the words, יִהְיֶה רֹדְהַ יָּדָו נַעֲשֶׂה מִמֶּנָּה מִלָּכֶּסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל. Though conditional, the final position of this clause ensures an ominous tone.


130 Stulman, Order Amid Chaos, 128 (italics his).
Undergirding Jeremiah’s message in ch. 27 is what we might call a democratisation of responsibility; i.e., the assumption that it is the king, priests and people, rather than the prophets, who carry ultimate responsibility for the fate of the nation. It is *their* decision to listen or not to listen to the prophets which will determine their future. Hence, while Hananiah is singled out for judgement, accepting his message will result in all being scattered (27.15) and the city destroyed (27.17). Indeed, a hint of some blurring in the ‘prophet/people’ polarity lies in the term בְּנֵי אָבִים, ‘your prophets’ (27.9, 16), where the suffix suggests a degree of affinity between the two groups.131

This way of configuring the nation is quite distinctive. The hostile stance towards the prophets is mirrored in the judgement oracles of 23.33-32, but there is no suggestion there that other groups (or individuals) might be saved; in fact, that passage is followed by a warning of judgement on the entire nation (23.33-39). The salvation promise of 21.8-10, like that of chs. 27 – 28, includes an invitation to ‘live’ (יִהְיוּ, 21.9; 27.12, 17) dependent on submission to the Babylonians (יִהְיוּ בְּנֵי אָבִים, 21.9; בָּשָׂר, 27.11, 12, 17),132 but this is for any who will hear it. 23.1-8 prophesies disaster for Israel’s ‘shepherds’ (who might include prophets) and restoration for the ‘flock’; what is striking in that passage, however, is that even in the post-dispersal context that is assumed, the people are still viewed essentially as the victims of misrule. Meanwhile in ch. 24, salvation and judgement are allocated (without explanation) to the exiled and non-exiled communities respectively. As we will see, however, the differentiation between people and prophets will be repeated in ch. 29.

3. Jer. 29.1-32

3.1. Text

3.1.1

131 In 27.16, OG (34.13) reads simply לָמְרוֹס הָעֵדָן אֶפְסָר שֶׁלֶחְתָּם חֵינָם, ‘of the prophets’, with no suffix. In the previous verse, on the other hand, OG reads לָמְרוֹס אְדֹנָי נַחֲלָל אֶפְסָר חֵינָם אֶפְסָר, while MT reads simply מִרְעַשְׁלוֹ וַאֲלָלָיו כָּל הַשָּׁמָע אֶפְסָר חֵינָם. See too 29.8.

132 It will be remembered that Seitz sees both passages (prior to redaction) as reflecting the ‘submit and live’ outlook of the Scribal Chronicle.
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<td>καὶ ἑκζητησεῖε με καὶ εὑρησεῖε με ότι ζητησεῖε με ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν</td>
<td>βεβηκότοι ἂν τῇ αὐτῇ ἑορτῇ καὶ ἑορτᾷ ἑορτά</td>
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<td>καὶ ἐπηφανεύσεται ὑμῖν</td>
<td>τὸ γέμισαι ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ ἑορτής ἑορτάκες καὶ θαυμάζεις</td>
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<td>ότι εὑρήσετε ᾿Ημῖν προφήτας ἐν βαβυλῶνι</td>
<td>οἱ μάρτυρες ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ ἑορτά ἑορτάκες καὶ ἑορτᾷς ἑορτά</td>
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<td>οὗτος εἶπεν κυρίος ἐπὶ Ἀχιαβ Καὶ ἐπὶ Σεδεκίαν ἱδοὺ ἐγὼ δεῖξω αὐτοῖς ἀγέλος αὐτοῦς ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις βαβυλῶνος καὶ παταζέι αὐτοὺς κατʼ ὁσπάλμους ὑμῶν</td>
<td>οὐλοθρεύεται τὴν χωρίζεται ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλείου ἑορτής</td>
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<td>καὶ λημψάναι ὁ ἀπὸ αὐτῶν καταραν ἐν παρεξῆς τῇ ἁπάτης Ιουδαίῳ ἐν βαβυλῶνι</td>
<td>οὐλοθρεύεται ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλείου ἑορτής</td>
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<td>δὴ ἔπεισεν ἀνάμοιραν ἐν Ἰσραήλ καὶ ἐμπεριστότας γενεαίς τῶν πολιτῶν αὐτῶν καὶ λογοὺ ἐχρηματισάσων ἐν τῷ ὅνυματί μου ὑν ἐν συνενταξά αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐγὼ μορφής</td>
<td>ἡ λήχηται ἐν τῷ βασιλείῳ ἑορτής ἑορτάκες καὶ ἑορτᾷς ἑορτά</td>
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<td>καὶ πρὸς Σαμωών τοῦ Νελαμίτην ἔρεις</td>
<td>πρὸς ἔφη οὗτος κυρίος ἑορτάκες καὶ ἑορτᾷς ἑορτάκες</td>
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<td>οὐκ ἀπεστείλα ἐν τῷ ὅνυματί μου καὶ</td>
<td>ἡ λήχηται ἐν τῷ βασιλείῳ ἑορτάκες καὶ ἑορτᾷς ἑορτά</td>
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130
3.2. Textual Notes

v. 1. MT יִסָּכ; OG βιβλος: Unlike βιβλος, the term βιβλος does not appear to have been used in Classical Greek or in LXX to signify ‘letter’.133 This might suggest that the

133 L & S 1, s.v. βιβλος, lists its meanings as ‘a roll (of papyrus), book, writings, a division of a book’; and s.v. βιβλιον, ‘a paper, document, book, letter’. The wider semantic range of βιβλιον means that it can represent יסכנ where the latter means ‘book, scroll’ (e.g., Ex. 17.14; Jer. 30[37].2; 32[39].10; 36[43].2; Nah. 1.1; Mal. 3.16) as well as where it means ‘letter’ (e.g., 2 Sam. 11.14; 1 Kgs. 21[20].8; 2 Kgs. 5.5;
translator has initially taken to mean ‘book’ rather than ‘letter’. However, in Bar. 1, a double reference to Baruch’s βιβλίον (καὶ οὕτω σι λογοι του βιβλίου, v. 1; καὶ ἀνεγνω Βαρουχ τος λογους του βιβλίου, v. 3a) is followed by a note of the people των ἐρχομενων προς την βιβλίου (v. 3b).

OG ἐπιστολήν, η ἁποικία >MT: McKane remarks that this “looks like an inner-Greek gloss on βιβλίος which is more exactly specified as a letter (ἐπιστολήν).”

MT πέλεν; OG ἁποικία: As we noted on 24.5, φυγας is the normal Classical Greek term for ‘exile’, while φυγαδες denotes an exiled group. By contrast, ἁποικία usually signifies a colony or settlement. Whether Jer. OG is deliberately seeking to avoid the negative connotations of φυγας / φυγαδες, however, seems unlikely, since it uses ἁποικία and ἀχμαλωσία (‘captives, captivity’) interchangeably (see on v. 14 regarding the LXX translation of ἔσχε σέ).

MT περί >OG: Cf. 27.19, where OG [34.16] renders with ἐπιπλοῦσης. ἔτη χρι 39.9; 52.15; 2 Kgs. 25.11. The enigmatic meaning of the term in association with ἔτη may account for OG omission, but MT plus seems more likely.

אשש התחלה בּוֹכַר נְאָר מִירְוֹשָׁל >OG: Probable MT plus, influenced by 24.1 and 52.28-30.

MT בּוֹכַר נְאָר; OG ψευδοπροφητίας is obviously an interpretative gloss (also in v. 8).

19.14 = Isa. 37.14; Jer. 51[28].60; 2 Chron. 32.17). In Isa. 39.1, however, Merodach’s περί (letter) is an ἐπιστολή.

134 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 728.

135 Hyperides’ Fragmenta, 133 (4th century BC) speaks of the property of exiles, φυγαδεων χρηματα. η φυγαδεω, ‘exile, banishment’, is used of a group of fugitives in some mss. of LXX Ezek. 17.21.

136 Favouring OG are Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 154; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 38 (cautiously); Y. Goldman, Prophètètte et royauté au retour de l’exil. Les origines littéraires de la forme massoretique du livre de Jéremie (OBO 118; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1992) 76-78; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 728 (cautiously); Graupner, Auftrag, 77-78 n.49. Favouring MT are Duhm, Jeremia, 228; Condamin, Jérémie, 207; Bright, Jeremiah, 204; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 131; Kilpp, Niederreißen, 44 n.11. Volz, Jeremia, 270, argues that it originally stood before מְרִי, was omitted, and then replaced in the wrong position.

137 So Janzen, Studies, 48 n.81.
v. 2. MT דְּבַלְתִּי, וַיִּרְבָּה הָדוֹרָה וְהָרְשָׁלְם; OG καὶ παντὸς ἐλευθερος. MT plus, especially given the awkwardly anarthrous form of ἐλευθερος (cf. יָרְבָּה הָדוֹרָה in 24.1) and the fact that Jer. OG consistently renders רַב not by ἐλευθερος but ἀρχον (1.18; 2.26; 17.25; 24.1; 26[33].10; 36[43].12, etc.). OG probably reflects in bm (cf. 27.20, □בףך δι' ἀρχον *23);139 for εὐθυγραμμία; to translate ~in, see 1 Kgs. 21 [3 Reg. 20].8, 11; Neh. 13 [2 Esd. 23].17.

MT דְּבַלְתִּי, OG δεσμωτος καὶ τεχνιτος: The sequence in OG is the reverse of that in MT (see too 24.1, τοις τεχνιτος και τοις δεσμωτος), suggesting that the Vorlage here read וַיִּרְבָּה הָדוֹרָה. Or did the translator make the change, transposing δεσμωτος so that it balanced ἐλευθερος? On the meaning of מִשְׁמֶט, see our discussion of 24.1 in the previous chapter.

v. 6. תְּחִלְתָּה בְּמַס בְּנֵיהוֹן >OG: This breaks the pattern of two-verb clauses elsewhere in vv. 5-6. It may be MT plus, making explicit the three-generational duration of the exile.140 However, Janzen suggests inner-Greek haplography; if OG read δοτε χρηστος καὶ τεχνοποιησιστοσ και θυγατερος και πληθυνεσθε, the repetition of ρασ(ι) και could have caused a copyist’s mistake.141

v. 7. MT מְעֹר; OG της γης: Commentators differ on which is the more original reading.142 OG is often preferred on the grounds of being more realistic (the exiles were not restricted to one city), but Jeremiah’s letter was probably intended specifically for the community in Babylon.143 A. Berlin finds support for מְעֹר in the correspondence between vv. 6-

138 Vulg. and several Hebrew mss. recognise the awkwardness and supply the article.
139 So Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 154; Duhm, Jeremia, 228.
140 Duhm, Jeremia, 229; Graupner, Auftrag, 80; Kilpp, Niederreißen, 48; Steiner, ‘Two Sons of Neriah’, 80; cautiously, Wanke, Untersuchungen, 42.
141 Janzen, Studies, 103; accepted as possible by McKane, Jeremiah 2, 728, and Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 132. This is more likely than OG abbreviation of the Vorlage; so P. Volz, Studien zum Text des Jeremia (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1920) 217. Also favouring MT is Seidl, Texte und Einheiten, 92 n.146.
142 Following MT are Seidl, Texte und Einheiten, 90-91 n.143; Kilpp, Niederreißen, 48; Graupner, Auftrag, 80 n.62; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 62 (who note that OG translates מְעֹר as χρηστος seven times in Jer., even where the meaning ‘city’ is clear from the context); and apparently McKane, Jeremiah 2, 726. Following OG are Duhm, Jeremia, 229; Volz, Jeremia, 270; Rudolph, Jeremia, 154; Welch, Jeremia, 170 n.1; Carroll, Jeremia, 552.
143 By contrast, some have argued for MT by reading מְעֹר in a general sense, ‘any city’; so Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 155; K.A.D. Smelik, ‘Letters to the Exiles: Jeremiah 29 in Context’, SJOT 10.2 (1996) 291; tentatively Bright, Jeremia, 208. This interpretation was rejected by Rudolph, Jeremia, 154.
7 and Deut. 20.5-10;\textsuperscript{144} both contain the sequence, נָבַע הָבִים (build houses), יְבִיר (plant vineyards / gardens), לְחָה נְאָת (marry wives) and לְחַיָּה הָעֲרָי (the peace of the city). However, while this is unlikely to be coincidental, it is text-critically inconclusive.


This has the virtue of greater parallelism. With its possessive suffix, MT strengthens the association between the people and the prophets.

\textsuperscript{145} So Stulman, \textit{Other Text}, 70. Janzen, \textit{Studies}, 64, treats this as an addition in OG but it is not clear whether he thinks it was already present in the \textit{Vorlage} or stems from a Greek scribe (see \textit{Studies}, 67).

\textsuperscript{146} LXX\textsuperscript{26} reads τα ἐνυπνία αὐτῶν καὶ ἐνυπνιαξέσθει = ἀντὶ τοῦ άκροτευτερουμένου; this is adopted by Duhm, \textit{Jeremia}, 230; Rudolph, \textit{Jeremia}, 154; A. Weiser, \textit{Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia} (NGB 20/21; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 258; Bright, \textit{Jeremiah}, 205. But as Soggin, ‘Jeremiah 29,8b’ in J. Alberto Soggin (ed.), \textit{Old Testament and Oriental Studies} (BO 29; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1975) 239, points out, “only one LXX manuscript is a very flimsy critical justification.” In any case, our primary concern is with the readings given in MT and OG.

\textsuperscript{147} So GKC §530; Giesenbrecht, \textit{Jeremia}, 155; S.R. Driver, \textit{The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah. A Revised Translation with Introductions and Short Explanations} (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908) 170; Keown et al., \textit{Jeremiah} 26 – 22, 62.

\textsuperscript{148} Soggin, ‘Jeremiah 29,8b’, 239.


\textsuperscript{150} So Mckane, \textit{Jeremiah} 2, 278; Holladay, \textit{Jeremiah} 2, 228, who suggests that נָבַע was added when 33.14-26 (which also begins לְחַיָּה הָעֲרָי) was written. But נָבַע may be a legal expression
OG ζυγούν υπογίεον = OG (and perhaps its Vorlage) makes it clear that it is not the addressees themselves who would return. Whether such a meaning was intended by MT, however, is doubtful; since in v. 6 MT emphasises the three-generational duration of the exile, OG should probably be read representatively.\(^ {151}\)

v. 11. MT > OG: Probably lost due to haplography (repetition of Vorlage).\(^ {152}\)

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v. 11. MT "ittfx rafft non nx "TOT1 > OG: Probably lost due to haplography (repetition of Vorlage).\(^ {152}\)

OG makes little sense.\(^ {154}\) If it is defective for τα μετα ταντα (so LXX\(^ {155}\)) it may reflect a Vorlage that read simply τα μετα ταντα. There is evidence, though, that τεκτα posed a problem for the LXX translators. Outside Job and Proverbs (where it is rendered λαπτες), LXX often interprets τεκτα as ‘firmness’ (ὑποστασες, Ru. 1.12; Ezek. 19.5; ὑμεταμη, Ps. 9.19; 62.6; μουσου, Jer. 31.17), evidently focussing on the root τεκ, ‘to wait for’.\(^ {156}\) Conversely, Zech. 9.12 (στενογνωμ) and Hos. 2.17 (στρεφεται) appear to interpret τεκτα as from τεκ, ‘to gather’.\(^ {157}\) This may suggest that the meaning ‘prospect, hope’ was unknown to some of the translators. In favour of τα μετα ταντα is that it maintains the parallelism in the rest of the verse (δαιμον οετερα τοιν τεκτα; δαιμονιν; τοιν τεκτα). See too 31.17, [τεκτα] τοιν οετερα τοιν τεκτα (אמנ תופ שופא; חמשפת שעולא לארעה).

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\(^ {151}\) Pace Duhm, Jeremia, 230.

\(^ {152}\) So Rudolph, Jeremia, 154; Janzen, Studies, 118; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 39; Carroll, Jeremia, 553; contra McKane, Jeremia 2, 728-729.

\(^ {153}\) Bright, Jeremia, 209; McKane, Jeremia 2, 728; or, ‘the future you hope for’ (Thompson, Jeremia, 542).

\(^ {154}\) Duhm’s defence of OG at this point smacks of desperation (Jeremia, 230).

\(^ {155}\) Keown et al., Jeremia 26 – 52, 62; Holladay, Jeremia 2, 133.


\(^ {157}\) For a discussion of the (“sehr auffallend”) Greek rendition of Hos. 2.17, see W. Rudolph, Hosea (KAT; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gerd Mohn, 1966) 74.
vv. 12-13. MT תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמוֹת >OG: OG might be haplographic, having confused הָעַלְמֹות (v. 11) and תָּבְרָאָה. The similarity is not that great, however, and OG probably reflects a Vorlage shorter than MT.159

MT תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות ... בְּקָשְׁתָה: The imperatives in OG point to a Vorlage reading תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות ... בְּקָשְׁתָה (as in v. 7).

v. 14. MT תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות; OG תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות = (‘I will be seen by you’)160 or possibly תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות (‘I will reveal myself to you’).161

MT תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות ... >OG: The textual evidence, and the broadening of the scope to include the entire Diaspora, indicates an extended MT plus.162

vv. 16-20 >OG: The absence of these verses from OG, plus the fact that they interrupt an otherwise smooth progression from v. 15 to v. 21, leads most commentators to view them as MT plus.163 This is probably correct, though the case is less certain than is often assumed. Omission due to homoioteleuton (repetition of בְּקָשְׁתָה, vv. 15 and 20) is possible;164 those who object that the length of the passage makes this impossible165 overlook the even longer omission

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158 So Kilpp, Niederreifen, 64, esp. n.103. He argues that תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות is to be read in conjunction with תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות, rather than with תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות; this may be a valid reading of MT, but does not have the text-critical significance he attaches to it. Ehrlich, Randglossen, 315, believed OG omitted תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות due to a misunderstanding of it as an independent verb.

159 So Duhm, Jeremiah, 230-231; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 133. Volz, Jeremiah, 270, and Rudolph, Jeremiah, 154, delete תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות only.

160 Duhm, Jeremiah, 231; Volz, Jeremiah, 270; Rudolph, Jeremiah, 154; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 39; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 133.

161 So Jones, Jeremiah, 366. OG also uses תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות for בְּקָשָׁתָה Niph. in Gen. 35.7.

162 So Giesebrecht, Jeremiah, 156; Volz, Jeremiah, 269; Rudolph, Jeremiah, 154; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 39; Janzen, Studies, 48; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 729; Carroll, Jeremiah, 553; Goldman, Prophétie, 65-68. But Thiel, Redaktion 2, 16, argues for deliberate omission by OG, while Welch, Jeremiah, 174, and Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 133, believe the Vorlage included תָּבְרָאָה אֶת הָעַלְמֹות.

163 So Duhm, Jeremiah, 231; Volz, Jeremiah, 269; Rudolph, Jeremiah, 156; Bright, Jeremiah, 290; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 39; Seidl, Texte und Einheiten, 116-117; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 736-737; Carroll, Jeremiah, 554; Stulman, Prose Sermons, 90; Kilpp, Niederreifen, 67; Jones, Jeremiah, 359; Graupner, Auftrag, 84; Goldman, Prophétie, 80-98.


165 So Carroll, Jeremiah, 554; Graupner, Auftrag, 84; Goldman, Prophétie, 96.
in OG of 39.4-13. The fact that vv. 16-20 would have had no relevance to the exiles in Babylon is itself irrelevant if they are not assumed to be part of the original letter. The problem of their placement can be solved on the hypothesis that v. 15 has been displaced from its original setting – either between vv. 16-20 and 21-22 (as reflected in LXX)\(^{166}\) or before vv. 8-9.\(^ {167}\)

On balance, however, the evidence suggests vv. 16-20 are MT plus. The argument that they originally stood in a different position assumes a process of ‘omission, marginal retention, replacement’ for which we have no textual evidence, and, whilst enough sense of v. 15 can be made in its present position to account for the present form of the text, it is most naturally read as an introduction to vv. 21-22.

v. 19. MT אֶתְנוּעָהַךְ: The switch from third to second person is abrupt, and some scholars emend to אֶתְנוּעֶהְךָ.\(^ {168}\) The second person form may be deliberate, however, especially given the following verse.\(^ {169}\)

v. 21. MT כִּי בֵּין מַשֵּׁחיםַךְ, אֲנָמָר יִשָּׁרֵי: Probable MT plus.\(^ {170}\) A clear motive either for the addition or deletion of these names is elusive,\(^ {171}\) but in general MT tends to add patronymics.\(^ {172}\)

MT כִּי בֵּין מַשֵּׁחיםַךְ: MT plus, especially since the reason given for their condemnation in v. 22 is quite different (though not incompatible; cf. 23.14).\(^ {173}\)

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\(^{166}\) So Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 157; Janzen, Studies, 118; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 135.

\(^{167}\) So Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 17.

\(^{168}\) So Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 157-158; Holladay, Jeremiah, 134. Bright, Jeremiah, 206, transposes all of v. 19 into the second person, but notes that this still leaves a “scarcely grammatical” switch from v. 18.

\(^{169}\) So Graupner, Auftrag, 85.

\(^{170}\) So Duhm, Jeremia, 232; Stulman, Other Text, 72; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 730-731; contra Rudolph, Jeremia, 156; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 39; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 134; Graupner, Auftrag, 86 n.91. Janzen, Studies, 71-72, is undecided.

\(^{171}\) McKane, Jeremiah 2, 730-731, attributes these names to “an urge to supply more genealogical information” – a distinctly vague explanation. Conversely, Rudolph’s theory, Jeremia, 156 – “OG unterdrückt bei beiden Verbrechern die Bezeichung ‘Sohn des . . . ’ um sie als ‘Söhne eines Neimand’ verächtlich zu machen” – seems too subtle. No more convincing is Holladay’s suggestion, Jeremiah 2, 134 (“out of an urge for symmetry with v. 22?”).

\(^{172}\) See Janzen, Studies, 143-153. Naturally, the text-critical status of these patronymics has no bearing on their authenticity; see Steiner, ‘Two Sons of Neriah’, 77.

\(^{173}\) Duhm, Jeremia, 232; Janzen, Studies, 49; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 731; but cf. Graupner, Auftrag, 86 n.91.
v. 23. MT (K) > OG: The Ktiv may be defective for the Qere הוליד (‘I am the one who knows’) or for the Qere לידעתי (‘I myself know’). 174 M. Dahood proposes a corruption of הידעתי (רשק), with הידע being cognate with the Ugaritic הדע, ‘word’; 175 however, the meaning that results, ‘I know the word and the witness’, seems strained. Probable MT plus, 176 possibly due to conflation of לשון הנביא ושמו מタイ and and addressing. OG তোমকে ঠিক না করেন implies no plausible reason for its omission by OG.

vv. 24-28: All the textual witnesses diverge here, and none is satisfactory. 178 The chief problem lies in vv. 24-25. MT שמע (v. 25) lacks apodosis, unless we relate it to the ולך of v. 32, where, however, it is the exiles rather than Shemaiah who are addressed. The picture is still more confused in OG, where we have two oracles (যাহ্যে আমি জানি se των άνω άνω μου, v. 24; καὶ πρὸς Σοφονίαν γιὰν Μασσαια τοῦ ιερέα εἶπεν, v. 25), neither of which prepares us for the reference to το βιβλίον in v. 29. 179 Moreover, if in v. 27 we read φύλοιδόροσατε

174 For the former, see Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 158; Volz, Jeremia, 270; for the latter, Duhm, Jeremia, 233. Both are allowed by Rudolph, Jeremia, 156; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 134; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 731. But Ehrlich, Randglossen, 316, sees only as grammatically unacceptable.

175 M. Dahood, ‘Word and Witness: A Note on Jeremiah XXIX 23’, VT 27 (1977) 483: “Yahweh knows only too well the content of the message being spoken and the character of the witness uttering it”.

176 Dahood attributes the unusual word order to the poetic nature of the text.

177 Stulman, Other Text, 72; Janzen, Studies, 22; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 134.

178 Duhm, Jeremia, 234; Volz, Jeremia, 270; Stulman, Other Text, 72; contra Dahood, ‘Word and Witness’, 483, who sees as an example of a ‘broken construct chain’.

179 Duhm, Jeremia, 234, described this section as “eine geradezu unüberbietbare Konfusion”. The Syriac Peshitta diverges from both MT and OG: (24) And Shemaiah the Nehelamite said (25) “Thus has said YHWH the God of Israel”; and he sent in his name a letter to all the people who are in Jerusalem and to Zephaniah son of Maaseiah the priest and to the priests’ (Holladay’s translation, Jeremiah 2, 136). The problem here is the lack of an oracle in v. 25. Either we could shorten the text to, “Shemaiah the Nehelamite sent to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah” (so McKane, Jeremiah 2, 727) or assume that Shemaiah’s oracle has been lost (so Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 136-137). See also C. Hardmeier, ‘Jer. 29, 24-32 – “eine geradezu unüberbietbare Konfusion”? Vorurteil und Methode in der exegetischen Forschung’, in E. Blum, C. Macholz and E.W. Stegemann (eds.), Die hebräische Bibel und ihre zweistische Nachgeschichte. Festschrift für Rolf Reudorff zum 65. Geburtstag (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990) 301-317, for a fresh attempt to make sense of these verses.

179 “Den Inhalt dieses Stückes haben LXX total entstellt wiedergegeben.” (Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 158); it is hard to see the justification for Duhm’s claim, Jeremia, 234, that the Greek text “ist . . . viel besser als der hebräische.”

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we have the absurdity of YHWH rebuking Sophonias for not rebuking Jeremiah. It may be that vv. 24-25 were originally cast as a narrative (‘But Shemaiah the Nehelamite sent in his own name a letter to Zephaniah the priest . . .’), rather than an oracle, the confusion arising when ‘concerning Shemaiah’ was misinterpreted as ‘to Shemaiah’ (cf. v. 31).181

v. 25. MT לָאַלָּא מִלֵּא מְלֻא מַשַמַח אֶלָּאַלָּא מְלֻא מַשַמַח מַשַמַח מַשַמַח מַשַמַח מַשַמַח > OG: The extended messenger formula is typical of MT expansion. OG συκ ἀπεστειλα σε το θαυματο του makes little sense, but may stem from an earlier συσ στειλας έν το θαυματο του.182

MT לָאַלָּא מִלֵּא מְלֻא מַשַמַח אֶלָּאַלָּא מְלֻא מַשַמַח מַשַמַח מַשַמַח מַשַמַח > OG: Both MT plusses, since the ensuing message is addressed only to Zechariah.183 Given these additional audience groups, MT פס라도 should be interpreted as a genuine plural (cf. 2 Kgs.10.1; 19.14).

v. 26. MT ἐπιστράτευσεν: Again, the singular form in OG is probably the more original (cf. Targ., לָאַלָּא מְלֻא מַשַמַח אֶלָּאַלָּא מְלֻא מַשַמַח מַשַמַח מַשַמַח מַשַמַח מַשַמַח; “to be an appointer of chief priests.”).

v. 32. MT ᾿ολὴ ἡ ἰέρας: OG ἐπιστράτευσεν ἕτερα:184 MT retains the focus on Shemaiah, while OG makes ‘his seed’ the subject of the last part of the sentence.

180 The problem is avoided if we follow LXX B, A, διὰ τα συνελαξοργιστε (so Rahlfs); but this indictment of Sophonias for opposing Jeremiah makes his willingness to read ‘the letter’ to him (v. 29) very odd.

181 So Duhm, Jeremia, 234-235; Rudolph, Jeremia, 158; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 39; Kilpp, Niederreißen, 43 n.9; Thiel, Redaktion 26–45, 12; Graupner, Auftrag, 89. MT thus reflects "an attempt to transform a third-person account into a prophetic oracle which was not carried through" (McKane, Jeremiah 2, 731). This is preferable to M. Dijkstra’s view, ‘Prophecy by Letter (Jeremiah XXIX 24-32)’, VT 33 (1983), that vv. 24-31 are “the copy of a letter written on behalf of Jeremiah” (319); on this view, v. 24 is Jeremiah’s instruction to his secretary, while תָבֹא אֵלָּאַלָּא introduce a quotation from Shemaiah’s letter. This hypothesis fails to account for the narrative verse, v. 29.

182 So Ziegler, Beiträge, 50-51. According to Stulman, Other Text, 77, it is "virtually impossible to reconstruct the LXX Vorlage of this verse with any degree of certainty."

183 Bright, Jeremia, 206; Thiel, Redaktion 26–45, 12; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 732; Carroll, Jeremia, 564.

184 So Janzen, Studies, 202, n.78; Rudolph, Jeremia, 158; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 39-40; contra McKane, Jeremiah 2, 734 (“τοῦ ἱεροῦ is probably the result of a quest for neatness of the part of the Greek translator”); Graupner, Auftrag, 92 n.112.
MT, the recipients of YHWH’s promise are addressed less directly in third person terms, the emphasis being on their relationship to YHWH. MT is a plus.

\[\text{OG: } \text{MT plus, influenced by Deut. 13.6.}^{186}\]

3.3. Exegetical Notes

v. 1. This includes the same three groups – priests, prophets and people – which have appeared in chs. 27 – 28 (27:16; 28:1, 5). The phrase \(\text{nbttn ppr}^{19.1}\) is otherwise unattested (cf. earlier references to \(\text{npp}^{19.1}\), 26.17); however, Ezek. 8.1 speaks of the ‘elders of Judah’ (\(\text{bpiv TpT}\)) sitting before Ezekiel in Babylon, while Ezek. 14.1 mentions ‘some of the elders of Israel’ (\(\text{bpiv TpT}\)) coming to him.

The term usually means ‘remainder’, which ‘provokes the question why they should have been so reduced.”^{187} Possibly the term reflects unrest in Babylon, leading to arrest or execution (cf. vv. 21-22).^{188} Streane’s proposal, that these were the elders who had survived the journey to Babylon, also has merit.^{189} Alternatively, on the basis of Gen. 49.3, some scholars translate as

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185 So Janzen, Studies, 202, n.78; Stulman, Other Text, 73; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 145; contra Graupner, Auftrag, 92 n.112.

186 So Rudolph, Jeremia, 158; Janzen, Studies, 49; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 13.

187 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 727.

188 See Duhm, Jeremia, 228; Bright, Jeremiah, 208; Thompson, Jeremiah, 545. McKane’s objection, Jeremiah 2, 727, that “there is a lack of evidence that Jewish communities in Babylon were subject to persecution or suppression”, is unfounded; see D.L. Smith Christopher, ‘Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587 – 539 BCE)’, in Scott, Exile, 7-36.

189 Streane, Jeremiah, 192.
‘pre-eminent’;\textsuperscript{190} this would be consistent with the emphasis in this verse that it was the cream of society that had been deported.\textsuperscript{191}

v. 2. Like the historical note in 24.1, the parenthetical nature of this verse regularly results in its being seen as redactional.\textsuperscript{192} As we argued there, however, this does not follow. We may also compare 27.19-21, which, like 29.1-3, contains (1) an introduction to a prophetic message, with a four-fold list of referents (2) a subordinate clause referring to Nebuchadnezzar’s exiling of Jehoiachin (3) the resumption of the prophetic message, using the messenger formula.

v. 4. Elsewhere in Jer. the subject of לְיָלוֹת is consistently human (20.4; 22.12; 27.20; 39.9; 43.3; 52.15, 28, 30), as is the pattern generally in the OT. Three times in ch. 29, however (vv. 4, 7, 14), לְיָלוֹת is predicated of YHWH. The use of this verb (rather than לְשָׁלַי, לְטָמֵא or לְכָל), emphasises YHWH’s sovereignty over the political dimensions of deportation.

vv. 5-6: ...יִשָׂרָאֵל יֵזֵכֵת...: The language echoes the refrain of building and planting found throughout Jer., but is also redolent of other OT passages. The paired imperatives, including the command יִרְבּוּ, ‘increase’, echo the creation mandate of Gen. 1.28; 9.1.\textsuperscript{193} Similar language also occurs in Ps. 107.36-38, Isa. 65.21-23,\textsuperscript{194} and especially Deut. 28.30-32, where Moses warns Israel of the curses that will result from disobedience:

You will betroth a wife and another man will lie with her. You will build a house but you will not live in it. You will plant a vineyard but you will not enjoy its use... Your sons and daughters will be given to another people.

Read against this backdrop, 29.5-7 is announcing that the curses are rescinded; the exiles may once again enjoy YHWH’s blessing on their day to day activities.\textsuperscript{195} This message is

\textsuperscript{190} E.g., Holladay, \textit{Jeremiah} 2, 140.

\textsuperscript{191} Ehrlich, \textit{Randglossen}, 314, and Volz, \textit{Jeremia}, 270, relocate לְיָלוֹת to refer to לִשָּׁלֵם, but without textual support.

\textsuperscript{192} So Thiel, \textit{Redaktion} 26 – 45, 11; Thompson, \textit{Jeremiah}, 545.

\textsuperscript{193} Holladay, \textit{Jeremiah} 2, 138.

\textsuperscript{194} Benjamin D. Sommer, ‘New Light on the Composition of Jeremiah’, \textit{CBQ} 61 (1999) 646-666, argues that the author of Isa. 65 is drawing on Jer. 29.5-7. N.C. Habel, \textit{The Land is Mine. Six Biblical Land Ideologies} (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) draws parallels between Jeremiah’s instructions to the exiles and Abraham’s peaceable conduct in a foreign land (Gen. 20 and 23).

\textsuperscript{195} So Kilpp, \textit{Niederreißen}, 57. “The uprooted and orphaned exiles are invited to invest their lives in this new realm of blessing.” (Keown et al., \textit{Jeremiah} 26 – 52, 72). This ‘rescinding’ theology will dominate chs. 30 – 33.
emphasised by the use of paired imperatives, which imply a conditional promise.\textsuperscript{196} The increasing length of the first four lines may also be intended to emphasise the idea of growth. However, Berlin and Smith see here an even closer parallel with Deut. 20.5-10.\textsuperscript{197} As Berlin notes, while the combination ‘build / plant’ occurs frequently in the OT, the series ‘build / plant / wives / children’ is much less common. In addition, Deut. 20.10 shares with Jer. 29.7 the terms שלום and חכמה. Consequently, “in addition to encouraging settlement, Jeremiah is also subtly counselling against revolt. Do those things, he tells the exiles, for which Deuteronomy permits a man to refrain from going to war.”\textsuperscript{198}

v. 7. מזרע is common in Jer. (7.16; 11.14; 14.11; 37.3 and 42.2), referring to prayer by the prophet on behalf of the people. As we have seen, מזרע occurs in 21.1, when Zedekiah requests Jeremiah to enquire of YHWH on behalf of the city, while in 38.4 the officials complain of Jeremiah, אני מזרע לעלם לעם זה מצדיע. What is remarkable about this injunction, however, is that up till now in Jer., the prophet has been expressly forbidden to pray for his people by YHWH (7.16; 11.14; cf.15.1).

The promise of שלום marks a turning point in Jer. Hitherto, Jeremiah has emphasised the absence of שלום from Judah (14.19; 15.5; 16.5), in contrast to other prophets whom YHWH has not sent (6.14; 8.11; 14.13; 23.17; 28.9). Now, for the first time in the book, YHWH promises שלום (albeit conditionally and indirectly) to his people;\textsuperscript{199} this theme will be developed in v. 11, and again in 33.6, 9.

v. 10. The construction לא + infinitive probably has the implication of ‘only when’.\textsuperscript{200} It thereby serves to qualify the salvation oracle that follows.

\textsuperscript{196}See GKC §110c.
\textsuperscript{199}“Having called upon the exiles to seek a שלום oracle on behalf of the city of Babylon, Jeremiah then indicated that the divine response to that plea would be favorable.” (Sisson, ‘Conception of Peace’, 440).
\textsuperscript{200}Rudolph,Jeremia, 156; Bright, Jeremiah, 205; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 141; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 60. Kilpp, Niederreißen, 62 argues that לא relates to יד (cf. Num. 9.17).
The much-debated phrase שָׁנָה 303 occurs here for the second time in Jer.; in 25.11-12 YHWH announces that Judah and the surrounding nations will be subjugated to another nation for seventy years. 202 There, however, the fulfillment of that period will be followed by YHWH’s punishment of their oppressor; here, it will herald his salvation of the exiles in Babylon.

Although it can be argued that שָׁנָה refers to the actual duration of Judah’s exile, 203 most scholars interpret it as metaphorical and / or symbolic. 204 It may be a round number for ‘a lifetime’ (cf. Ps. 90.10), 205 i.e., a long time; cf. Shemaiah’s interpretation of Jeremiah’s message in v. 28, אָזֶה הָדָרְךָ. More likely, it represents three generations; 206 this would conform to the prophecy in 27.7 that Nebuchadnezzar’s domination would end with his grandson, and also to the three generation perspective of 29.6. However, an inscription of Esarhaddon in which Marduk decrees seventy years of punishment for Babylon has led some to conclude that ‘seventy

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201 For surveys of the debate and bibliographies, see Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, 240 n.27; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 74-75, and J. Applegate, ‘Jeremiah and the Seventy Years in the Hebrew Bible. Inner-Biblical Reflections on the Prophet and his Prophecy’, in Curtis and Römer, Book of Jeremiah, 92-93.

202 There are significant variations between MT and OG in 25.9-12. In OG, the Lord will bring ‘the family from the north’ (πατρίδαν ἄκω μορρακ) upon ‘this land’ (τὴν γῆν ταυτῆν) and ‘all her surrounding nations’ (πατρίδα τα ἐκθέη τα πεπληκά αὐτής). ‘All the land’ (πατρίδα η γῆ) will be desolate (v. 11), and ‘they will serve among the nations’ (δουλεύσοσθεν εν τοῖς ἐκθένσι) for seventy years. Afterwards (v. 12), the Lord will punish ‘that nation’ (ἐκ ἐκκλείος). MT identifies and highlights the role of Babylon. YHWH will bring not only מַכָּה אֵלֶּה מִלָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל and מַכָּה אֵלֶּה מִלָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל but also מַכָּה אֵלֶּה מִלָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל upon Judah and her neighbours (v. 9). After the statement that ‘all this land will be desolate’, MT reads מַכָּה אֵלֶּה מִלָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל, ‘and all these nations will serve the king of Babylon’ (v. 11). When the seventy years have been completed, YHWH will ‘visit the guilt’ of the Babylonians upon them: מַכָּה אֵלֶּה מִלָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל . . . מַכָּה אֵלֶּה מִלָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל. . .

203 Duhm, Jeremia, 230, related the figure to the period of Babylonian supremacy, i.e., from the defeat of Nineveh (612 B.C) to the overthrow by Cyrus (539 BC). See too C.F. Whitley, ‘The Term Seventy Years Captivity’, VT 4 (1954) 60-72, and ‘The Term Seventy Years – A Rejoinder’, VT 7 (1957) 416-418.

204 For Volz, Jeremia, 269, “es ist die Vorstellung der geschichtlichen Epochen”; for Hyatt, ‘Deuteronomic Edition’, 263, “it is a vague number – probably two generations or ‘the days of one king’ as in Isa. 23.15”.


206 So Rudolph, Jeremia, 157; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 17; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 689; Thompson, Jeremiah, 547 n.21. Assuming a date of around 550 for the D edition of Jer., Thiel argues that the figure of seventy years indicates that the end of Babylonian domination was becoming clear, though the exact date of its demise was still unknown (17).
years’ was a conventional description in the ancient near east for a deity’s judgement on a nation (cf. Isa. 23.15-17).207

Up until this point in Jer., the meaning of הפָּרָה has been almost entirely ominous, i.e., ‘to punish’.208 Here, however, the connotation is clearly favourable. Leaving aside the MT plus of 27.22, only once previously has הפָּרָה signified YHWH’s benevolent care, namely, in 15.15, where Jeremiah asks YHWH והיהו הפך and henceforth, it will mostly signify the punishment of Israel’s enemies (30.2; 46.25; 49.8; 50.18, 31; 51.44, 47, 52).209 As with the term שלום, therefore, the use of הפָּרָה in ch. 29 seems to mark a turning point in the book.

Within the present book, YHWH’s ‘good promise’ (דברי התשובה, MT) probably refers to that contained in ch. 24.210

v. 11. המושבות אשר אוכי תשמישי: The benevolence of these plans is made explicit in what follows, המושבות שלום ולאחלות. Here again, we have a striking re-use of language that is otherwise consistently negative. By itself, the noun המושבות signifies man’s evil inclinations (4.14; 6.19; 18.12), while השלש is used in conjunction with YHWH’s plan for judgement (18.8; 26.3; 36.3) or human plans for evil (23.27; 48.2). Likewise, the expression (מושבות) is consistently ominous, whether the subject is human (11.19; 18.18) or divine (18.11; 49.20, 30; 50.45; 51.29). Within Jer., only here is this expression used positively.

vv. 12-13. As noted earlier, MT expands the text reflected in OG, thereby achieving a very close parallel to Deut. 4.29, המושחות מסי את יהוה אלהינו ומשאת כל הראשה ונברך. Moreover, in contrast to the imperatives in OG, MT uses indicatives. This does not necessarily mean that MT is eliminating the contingent aspect of the promise; the verses can still be translated, ‘If you call ... I will listen / If you seek ... you will find’.211 Similarly (תרומת) is used in 1.10; 5.9, 29; 6.6, 15; 9.8, 24; 11.22; 13.21; 14.10; 15.3; 21.14; 23.2, 34; 25.12; 27.8; also 36.31; 44.13, 29. הפָּרָה does have a benevolent sense in its first occurrence in 23.2, but here the subject is human (‘the shepherds’) and the reference is to the care which they have failed to provide.


208 Jer. 1.10; 5.9, 29; 6.6, 15; 9.8, 24; 11.22; 13.21; 14.10; 15.3; 21.14; 23.2, 34; 25.12; 27.8; also 36.31; 44.13, 29. הפָּרָה does have a benevolent sense in its first occurrence in 23.2, but here the subject is human (‘the shepherds’) and the reference is to the care which they have failed to provide.

209 It is also used of the political appointment of Gedaliah (40.5, 7, 11; 41.2, 10, 18).

210 So Unterman, Repentance to Redemption, 85.

211 For this use of the perfect consecutive in the protasis and apodosis of a conditional clause, see GKC §112 ff, kk.
probably conditional / temporal rather than causal. The crucial difference is that OG retains the focus on the present, while MT is oriented towards the future. The phrase recalls 24.7, 

YHWH's affirmation marks a further dramatic reversal within the book; hitherto, he has repeatedly avowed not to listen to them, or even to the intercession of Jeremiah or another prophet on their behalf (7.16; 11.11, 14; 15.1).

v. 14. YHWH's promise, echoes Deut. 30.3, reflects 24.7,DNb,133,13. YHWH's affirmation marks a further dramatic reversal within the book; hitherto, he has repeatedly avowed not to listen to them, or even to the intercession of Jeremiah or another prophet on their behalf (7.16; 11.11, 14; 15.1).

The expression occurs here for the first time in Jer., and is repeated a further seven times in chs. 30 – 33. The Ketib שׁבָה was for a long time seen as derived from שׁבעה ('take captive'). This has the nominal forms שׁבעה and שׁשות ('captivity, captives'), but there is also the hap.leg. ינֹשְׁר in Num. 21.29. Accordingly, שׁבָה was translated 'restore the captivity' or 'restore the captives', cf. the OG renditions, ἀποκαταστάσεως τῷ ἀποκατιστάτῳ (37.3, 18; τὸ τοπικόν, 39.44) and ἀποκαταστάσεως τῷ αἰχμαλωτώσιμῳ (25.19; 38.23). This translation was always difficult in certain contexts (Job. 42.10; Ezek. 15.63) however, and E.L. Dietrich argued that the expression was a cognate accusative of שׁבָה, lit., 'turn a turning', or more idiomatically 'render a restoration, restore the fortunes'. This is now generally accepted for

212 So Kilpp, Niederreißen, 65; also Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 133; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 60 ('if'); Bright, Jeremiah, 205; Thompson, Jeremiah, 547; Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 259 ('when'); Duhm, Jeremiah, 231; Volz, Jeremia, 269; Rudolph, Jeremia, 154 ('wenn'). McKane, Jeremiah 2, 726, translates 'for'. 'if' is also translated 'if' in the parallel clause in Deut. 4.29 by S.R. Driver, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895) 73; G. von Rad, Deuteronomy. A Commentary (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1966) 47; P.C. Craigie, The Book of Deuteronomy (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 138.

213 Carroll, Jeremiah, 553, suggests that reflects the practice of prayer in the second temple period.

214 As John M. Bracke, 'עָבָה בֵּית: A Reappraisal', ZAW 97 (1985) 236, notes, this is by far the greatest concentration of occurrences of the expression to be found in the OT.

most cases of יְהֹוָה שָׁלוֹם, including those in Jer. 29 and 30. Consequently, its scope is wider than ‘restoring the captives’, although in certain contexts (such as Jer. 29.14), this might be its implication.

v. 15. The purpose of the initial יְהֹוָה יָשָׁב might be to connect what the exiles are saying with what has been said in vv. 10-14. It would then have an explicative sense, i.e., ‘(I say this) because you have said, “YHWH has raised up prophets for us in Babylon”’. In this case, the literary unit comprises vv. 10-15, with the repetition of יְהֹוָה יָשָׁב to form an inclusio with יְהֹוָה יָשָׁב (v. 10). More probably, however, יְהֹוָה יָשָׁב indicates that the exiles’ claim is the premise for an oracle still to come; see Isa. 28.15-16, which also begins with יְהֹוָה יָשָׁב. Since vv. 16-20 (MT plus) address Jerusalem rather than Babylon, it is likely that v. 15 originally introduced the oracle against Ahab and Zedekiah (vv. 21-23).

וַנַּפְשֵׁנוּ מַסְפֹּרֵם מַאֲדֻרֵנוּ חָמוּר יְהֹוָה לְךָ לְזָדוֹן אֲדֻרִים (cf. v. 18).

v. 16. The exiles’ compatriots are described as יְהֹוָה יָשָׁב. Elsewhere, this phrase generally expresses the Israelites’ solidarity with one another (Lev. 25.46; Deut. 3.18; Josh. 1.14; 1 Kgs. 12.24; Neh. 5.8; 2 Chron. 19.10). In Isa. 66.5, by contrast, יְהֹוָה יָשָׁב are a group of Israelites hostile to those addressed. But the clearest parallel is in Ezek. 11.15, where YHWH addresses the

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217 E.g., Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 142; Thompson, Jeremiah, 548 n.22; Bracke, ‘Reappraisal’, 244; J.A. Thompson and E.A. Martens, s.v. בְּשָׁם, NIDOTTE 4, 55-59. McKane, Jeremiah 2, 726, renders as ‘I shall turn my misfortune to good fortune’. According to Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 62, “The K represents a variant shaped by the later application of the formula primarily to the return from exile” – so reversing Preuschen’s argument, in which the more general meaning was seen as a post-exilic exception to the rule.

218 As Driver, Deuteronomy, 329, pointed out on Deut. 30.3, “Whether תֵּן שָׁם or יָשָׁב, the expression does not mean ‘bring back thy captives’; it is used commonly with reference to a decisive turn, or change, in a people’s fortune. Here, as also Jer. 29.14, 30.3, Ezr. 29.14, the return from captivity is mentioned separately afterwards.” (italics his).

219 Calvin, Jeremiah 3, 439, described this interpretation of יְהֹוָה כִּי as “not unsuitable”.

220 “It is characteristic of the indirect causal expressions that they do not state the cause for what is actually said in the main clause but rather the reason for saying it” (Aeijmelaeus, ‘Function and Interpretation of יְהֹוָה כִּי’ 178-179). See, for example, Gen. 32.21; וְאָכַף מִנִּי נַעֲרֵי יְהֹוָה יִכְרֹא אֶפְבִּרֵה פִּים נַעֲרֵיהּ; 1 Sam. 26.15; יְהֹוָה יָשָׁב יִכְרֹא אֶפְבִּרֵה פִּים נַעֲרֵיהּ; 1 Kgs. 1.24-25; יְהֹוָה יָשָׁב יִכְרֹא אֶפְבִּרֵה פִּים נַעֲרֵיהּ; יַעֲרֵי אֶפְבִּרֵה פִּים נַעֲרֵיהּ; 1 Sam. 26.15, יְהֹוָה יָשָׁב יִכְרֹא אֶפְבִּרֵה פִּים נַעֲרֵיהּ; 1 Kgs. 1.24-25, יַעֲרֵי אֶפְבִּרֵה פִּים נַעֲרֵיהּ; יַעֲרֵי אֶפְבִּרֵה פִּים נַעֲרֵיהּ; This may also be the significance of Zipporah’s words, יְהֹוָה כִּיּוֹדֵעַ אֶפְבִּרֵה פִּים נַעֲרֵיהּ (Ex. 4.25); see W.H. Propp, ‘That Bloody Bridegroom (Exodus iv 24-6)’, VT 43 (1993) 496 n.8.

221 For a discussion of the social divisions reflected in these verses, see Emmerson, Isaiah 56 – 66, 81-94.
prophet concerning אָחָרִיךָ אַחֲרֵיכָם אֵשֶׁת נַעֲלֵיהֶם וְאֵלָי שָלֵאָל. Here, אָחָרִיךָ might signify Ezekiel’s siblings, as distinct from his kinsmen and ‘the whole house of Israel’,\(^{222}\) or it may be a general term comprising אֵשֶׁת נַעֲלֵיהֶם וְאֵלָי שָלֵאָל. Either way, ‘your brothers’ are exiles in Babylon,\(^{223}\) despised by the יִשָּׂרָאֵל (v. 15b) who will be punished by YHWH (vv. 7-12). Ezek. 11 thus reflects the same polarisation that we see in Jer. 29.16-19.

v. 17. The language here repeats that of 24.8, except that שֵׁשֶׂה is even stronger than רָעָה.

v. 19. שלָּא שָׁמַעְתָּו. If, as we suggested above, we retain this reading rather than emending to שלָּא שָׁמַעְתָּו, the primary purpose of this pericope becomes clear; to rebuke the exiles for their failure to listen to YHWH’s prophets. In this way, it complements their willingness to listen to their own prophets and dreamers (vv. 8-9). This reading also makes sense of the ensuing call, והנה שמעו ירה (v. 20).

v. 23. יִנָּה נֶשֶׂה שָׁמַעְתָּו. To ‘commit folly in Israel’ is a technical term denoting “a class of acts which bring appalling suffering in their wake because they disrupt the sexual harmony of the community.”\(^{224}\) Rape (Gen. 37.7), pre-marital intercourse (Deut. 22.21) and breach of rules regarding sacred property in holy war (Josh. 7.15) all constitute ‘folly in Israel’.

The charge of adultery (רָמָא אֶל נְשֵׁי רִשְׁדָּמָה) against Ahab and Zedekiah\(^{225}\) is not part of the standard rhetoric against false prophets in these chapters, but echoes the accusation against the prophets of Jerusalem in 23.14, לִאֹתְךָ תְּהַל יִשָּׂרָאֵל.

YHWH’s self-description as ‘witness’ (יָהַשְׂ) may gain additional significance from the custom in other ANE letters to finish with a reference to ‘witnesses’.\(^{226}\)


\(^{223}\) This is clear, whether or not we emend MT יִנָּה נֶשֶׂה to יִנָּה נֶשֶׂה, following OG תִּנָּה אֲלִשְׁמִיאוֹתָא כִּסֵּנ.

\(^{224}\) Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 560

\(^{225}\) “Foul livers and false teachers”, as Welch, *Jeremiah*, 172, memorably terms them.

\(^{226}\) See D. Pardee et al., *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982) 177, who notes parallels with *papMur* 42 (signatories of witnesses) and with *papMur* 43 (oath formula with m’yd).
v. 24. "O^mn may be a word-play, being the Niph. of הָלַל 'to dream' (hence ‘the dreamer’); cf. the earlier references to ‘dreamers’ (v. 8).\(^{227}\)

v. 28. MT כְּכִי חלָּה כָּל בָּנָי may mean ‘For in the following manner he has written to us’, or ‘Is it not for this reason (i.e., because you have not controlled Jeremiah) that he has written to us?’\(^{228}\)

3.4. Coherence and Redaction

Our observations so far regarding the textual and literary shape of ch. 29 indicate at least three stages in its compositional history: (1) the writing of the original letter\(^{229}\) (2) the setting of that letter in a narrative framework (3) expansion in MT. Deciding the precise contents of each stage is more difficult, however, and some would argue that we should posit further redactional layers between (2) and (3).

The letter is widely agreed to comprise, as a minimum, vv. 5-7, with the possible exception of הָלַל הַצְּבָּא הָבֵית הַנַּחַל (>OG). These verses possess a unity of theme (the call to peaceful life under YHWH’s blessing in Babylon) and style (semi-poetic parallelism). Some would also include vv. 8-9, parts of 10-14, and 21-23 in the letter; we will return to this below.

The narrative framework of the letter must have comprised at least the prologue (vv. 1-3) and the story of Shemaiah’s response (vv. 24-32).\(^{230}\) With regard to the former, we argued earlier that there is no valid reason for regarding v. 2 as secondary. However, the inclusion of ‘the prophets, priests and people’ among the addressees in v. 1 may have been secondarily influenced by their presence in chs. 27 – 28; in this case, the introduction originally mentioned only ‘the elders of the exile’.\(^{231}\) The confused flow of the text in vv. 24-32 strongly suggests that this narrative was later (partly) reworked into an oracle. This would explain the variations in orthography: Jeremiah’s name reverts to its normal יְהֹוָה (vv. 27, 29, 30), but both references


\(^{228}\) So McKane, \textit{Jeremiah} 2, 735.

\(^{229}\) That there was an original letter from Jeremiah to the exiles is seldom disputed, though Carroll, \textit{Jeremiah}, 552, and Smelik, ‘Letters to the Exiles’, 284-285, are ambivalent on the question.

\(^{230}\) Although Weiser’s rendition of רֹקִי הַנַּחַל in v. 1 as ‘die Geschichte des Briefes’ (\textit{Jeremia}, 260) is unwarranted, it accurately captures the theme of the narrative: Jeremiah’s letter and its consequences.

\(^{231}\) So too Duhm, \textit{Jeremia}, 228; Kilpp, \textit{Niederreißen}; 44-45; contra Graupner, \textit{Auftrag}, 77-78.
to Zephaniah (vv. 25, 29) use the short form שֶׁמֶיהַ. Shemaiah’s name is long (שְׁמֵיהַ) in v. 24, but short (שֶׁמֶיהַ) in vv. 31-32.\(^{232}\)

The chief questions surround vv. 8-9, 10-14, and 21-23, seen by many as secondary not only to vv. 5-7 but also to its narrative framework.\(^{233}\) It is argued that the warnings against false prophets (vv. 8-9 and 21-23) are extraneous to the purpose of the original letter. Graupner refers to vv. 8-9 as “die nach vv. 5-7 überraschende Prophetenpolemik”,\(^{234}\) while McKane writes of the need to “disengage a theme which is extensively represented in chapter 29, namely, false prophecy.”\(^{235}\) Again, the promise of return in vv. 10-14 is thought to undermine the practical, present-oriented focus of vv. 5-7: “A prophet who is endeavouring to destroy expectations of a swift return to Jerusalem by urging exiles to cast away feverish excitement and to cultivate composure does not undo his single-mindedness by inviting those whom he addresses to engage in a more distant kind of expectation”, writes McKane.\(^{236}\) Attention is also called to the presence of Deuteronomistic terminology in vv. 8-9 and 10-14; the former share with Deut. 13.2-4 the terms פַּה הָֽמָּדָּמֶשׁ and פַּה פֵּֽרַקְרֶֽךְ, who are described as being פְּרַקְרֶֽךְ נָבֹע / פְּרַקְרֶֽךְ פַּקְדְנֵֽנוּ, while vv. 10-14 employ the expressions פֶּתֶם רֵֽבְרֹד הָֽיַֽד (v. 10; cf. Deut. 9.5; 1 Kgs. 2.4; 6.12; 12.15) and פֶּתֶם לֹא נָפָק (v. 13; cf. 1 Sam. 12.20; 1 Kgs. 8.23; 14.8; 2 Kgs. 10.31).

If these arguments are valid, the question is when and by whom vv. 8-9, 10-14 and 21-23 were incorporated. Some believe that they were added en bloc to the letter and its narrative

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\(^{232}\) Orthographic evidence of this reworking of the text also appears in v. 21, where we find both פִּילִי and פֶּתֵּל, and Nebuchadnezzar’s name reverts to its normal ב spelling.

\(^{233}\) Assessments of what is secondary include: vv. 8-9, 10-14, and 21-23 (Duhm, Jeremia, 228-233, though allowing for authentic elements in vv. 21-23; Nicholson, Preaching, 98-100; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 57-59; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 14-19; Carroll, Jeremia, 556-560; Kilpp, Niederreißen, 61-67; Graupner, Auftrag, 82-87); vv. 10-14 and 21-23 (Hyatt, ‘Jeremiah’, 1017); vv. 8-9 only (Welch, Jeremia, 171-174); vv. 10-14 only (Volz, Jeremia, 267-275; Böhmer, Heimkehr, 33-34).

\(^{234}\) Graupner, Auftrag, 83.

\(^{235}\) McKane, Jeremia 2, 738; similarly Nicholson, Preaching, 98; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 14.

\(^{236}\) McKane, Jeremia 2, 737; similarly, Duhm, Jeremia, 230; Volz, Jeremia, 268; Welch, Jeremia, 173; Carroll, Jeremia, 557; Smith, ‘Jeremiah as Prophet’, 96; Kilpp, Niederreißen, 63. Y. Hoffman, ‘The Deuteronomist and the Exile’ in D.P. Wright, D.N. Freedman & A. Hurvitz (eds.), Pomegranates and Golden Bells. Studies in Biblical, Jewish and Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995) 659-675, posits two editions of Dtr.H., the first of which viewed exile as final (though not hopeless), and the second of which saw exile as merely temporary; Jer. 29.10-14 thus belongs to the latter (672).
framework by a single editor. Others propose a more complex literary history. According to Wanke, the original letter and its introduction comprised vv. 1, 3-7, to which was added later the report of the exchange between Jeremiah and Shemaiah in vv. 24-32. At this stage, the text conformed to the three-part schema found in chs. 27 – 28 (action of Jeremiah; counter action; message of judgement). The remaining material was added in successive stages; first vv. 15, 21-23, then vv. 10-14, and then vv. 8-9.

It should not, however, be too quickly concluded that vv. 8-9, 10-14 and 21-23 are incoherent either with vv. 5-7 or its framework. The claim that the warnings against false prophets are not ‘belong’ to the letter is valid only if one assumes an extraordinarily one-dimensional author. Dogmatic statements as to what a prophet in sixth-century Judah would or would not do are best avoided, but it is hard to see why the dampening of false hopes (implied in vv. 5-7) is incompatible with the affirmation of a more realistic hope in vv. 10-14. More significant is the Deuteronomistic nature of the terminology in vv. 8-9 and 10-14, though (as ever) it is hard to know how this should be interpreted. It may indicate that these verses are secondary, though the fact that vv. 5-7 themselves echo Deut. 20.5-10 and 28.30-32 gives us pause. It should also be noted that the injunction אַל יִשָּׁא לְבַשׁ is absent from Deut., and

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237 So Rietzschel, Urrolle, 117-119; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 19 (who also attributes vv. 2 and 16-20 to D).
238 Wanke, Untersuchungen, 57-59.
239 The integrity of vv. 8-9, 10-14 and 21-23 with vv. 5-7 is accepted by Rudolph, Jeremia, 154-157; Weiser, Jeremia, 261-264; Bright, Jeremia, 208-209; Holladay, Jeremia 2, 139-140; Thompson, Jeremia, 544; Untermaier, Repentance to Redemption, 84; Jones, Jeremia, 362-367 (though allowing that vv. 8-9 may have been reworded). Even Wanke, Untersuchungen, 59, refers to “der trotz dieser verschiedenen Erweiterungen immer noch einigermaßen gute Textzusammenhang”.
240 So Rudolph, Jeremia, 156-157; Applegate, ‘Jeremiah and the Seventy Years’, 97. Indeed, the coherence of vv. 10-14 with vv. 5-7 is tacitly conceded by Hoffman, ‘Deuteronomist and the Exile’, 672: “It is not even improbable that the one who appended the words really believed that he interpreted his Vorlage correctly.”
241 Berlin notes that “the deuteronomistic echo in our verses is different, in a way that I am not sure I can adequately express, from the kinds of deuteronomistic editorial additions usually pointed out. It is somehow more organic to the passage, more a part of the fabric of the text.” (‘Jeremiah 29:5-7’, 8). However, as she herself points out (7), if the allusion is intentional it demonstrates Jeremiah’s familiarity with the contents of Deuteronomy.
occurs only twice in Dtr.H (2 Kgs. 18.29; 19.10); it is more frequent in Jer. (4.10; 37.9; 49.16).242

The final stage in the redactional history of Jer. 29, that of MT expansion, covers the greater part of v. 14 and all of vv. 16-20. This material has the appearance of commentary on the preceding text, prompted by passages elsewhere in the book (e.g., 24.8-10). Since these MT plusses belong not merely to a further stage in the literary growth of the book, but rather to what we may call a later edition of it, we are justified in considering ch. 29 apart from them as well as with them.

However we reconstruct the literary history of the text, interpretation must take seriously its present shape. Both in OG and MT, the letter is represented as covering all of vv. 4-23.243 This is emphasised by YHWH’s statement האָבֶל נַע (v. 23), which, as we noted earlier, echoes the conventional ending in ANE letters. Even the MT plus of vv. 16-20, with its prophecy concerning those still in Jerusalem, is depicted as part of ‘God’s letter’; hence the second-person address in דַּעַת שְׁמַעְתָּם אל נַע אֲבֶל (v. 16), the rebuke דַּעַת שְׁמַעְתָּם (v. 19) and the concluding call, יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבֹטֶל שְׁמַעְתָּם (v. 20).

3.5. Differentiation in Jer. 29: קְלֵל הֶנָּאוֹת בֵּבֵל / חֲנַנְאֵי

We can now explore the issue of differentiation as it appears in Jer. 29, before moving on in the following section to consider chs. 27 – 29 as a whole. Since in ch. 29 MT presents a significantly longer text than OG, in this and the following section we will focus on the text common to OG and MT, before looking at the impact of the MT plusses separately in section 5.

Without pre-empting our discussion of the nature of the salvation promised in ch. 29 (see section 4), it is clear that Jeremiah here assures the exiles of YHWH’s blessing upon them in Babylon, and his benevolent plans for their descendants. In contrast to 24.4-7, however, these

242 Nicholson’s claim, *Preaching*, 98, that the “warning against being deceived by (false) prophets and diviners... reflects strongly that set forth in Deut. xviii. 10-14” is thus quite inaccurate. In addition, Lust, ’Gathering and Return’, 123-126, shows that the promise of return in v. 14, though similar to Deut. 30.3, is hardly Deuteronomistic.

243 Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 256 n.32, writes that “it is difficult to determine where the letter ends in this chapter”, but he accepts v. 23 as a possibility, in which case “the letter is a witness against the false teaching”. See too Pardee, *Handbook*, 177.
promises are not indiscriminate. Granted, Jeremiah initially addresses the exiles as one (אלהי הנבואה יראת הסדים, v. 4), and this broad designation is repeated in v. 20. Yet as we noted earlier, the nature of Jeremiah’s rhetoric in this chapter is such as to render ‘the prophets’ as ‘others’. Although they are described as ‘among you’ (ייחוד כהנים, v. 8), and even as ‘your prophets’ (ייחוד פרשנים, v. 8), they are spoken of in the third person (vv. 8-9, 21-23, 32) or addressed separately (vv. 24ff.). Moreover, like Hananiah, they are specifically excluded from YHWH’s salvation. Ahab and Zedekiah will be given over to Nebuchadrezzar to be burnt alive, and their names will become a curse (לכל הנבואה יחרים בבל, vv. 21-22). The exact nature of Shemaiah’s fate is not stated, but it is made clear (v. 32) that he will be excluded from the community (הכשים) that will see YHWH’s salvation (note that פך here reverts to its customary negative meaning). Consequently, we find in ch. 29 the same polarity of ‘prophets and hearers’ that we saw in chs. 27 – 28.

What is striking about this, however, is that in terms of blame the distinction is much more blurred in ch. 29 than it was in the two previous chapters. Granted, the statement about Shemaiah, ייחוד כהנים על שקר (v. 31), need mean only that he had attempted to make the exiles believe a lie, as in 27.15. It is clear however, that in v. 8, whether we follow OG or MT, the ‘hearers’ themselves are being rebuked. Likewise, the exiles’ claim, הכניעת לע נאווה בבל (v. 15), revealing their enthusiastic endorsement of the prophets, is quickly refuted (vv. 21-23); the fact that in future the exiles will see Ahab and Zedekiah as cursed only shows how misguided is their current opinion. The prophets, it seems, are having more success among the exiles in Babylon than they were among the community in Judah. 244

4. Differentiation in Jer. 27 – 29: הנבואה פלשת / יהושע ברורששלו

We have seen, therefore, that in regard both to the exiled and non-exiled communities, chs. 27 – 28 and 29 present an internal differentiation between ‘prophets’ and ‘people’. The question we now need to consider, however, is whether, and how, these two communities are differentiated from one another. Whilst it is self-evident that the shorter text of ch. 29 proclaims a message of hope to the exile community in Babylon, some uncertainty attaches to how this

244 It may be significant that the charge of adultery against Ahab and Zedekiah (v. 23) echoes 23.10, 14, a passage which views prophets and people alike as guilty.
compares with that offered to the Judeans in ch. 27. Some commentators see here a reflection of the same pro-Golah outlook that we find in ch. 24: "The exiles in Babylon", writes Carroll, "are presented as Yahweh’s special concern in 24.4-7; 29.4-7, 10-14". Similarly, N.J. Rubinger believes that ch. 29 reflects "Jeremiah’s profound conviction about the inherent superiority of the Judean center in Babylon."

This interpretation of ch. 29 is disputed, however. Notably, Seitz argues that if we set aside the MT plusses, what we find here is the same principle of ‘submit and live’ that is held out to the Judeans in ch. 27, and that Jeremiah’s message is in fact decidedly cool. The long term perspective of vv. 4-7 “was doubtless unpopular”, while vv. 15 and 21-32 contain “strong words to the exilic community and its prophets”. Indeed, Seitz concludes that “in the broader literary context of ch. 29, the ‘good’ which Yahweh promises to do for his people arguably includes the ‘good’ he does for those in Judah as much as the ‘good’ he has in store for the exiles.”

Similarly, Keown et al. claim that “the LORD’s word through Jeremiah to the Judean exiles was the same as the divine message to Zedekiah and the others remaining in Jerusalem after 597, ‘Serve the king of Babylon and you will live’.” Benjamin Sommer goes even further in describing the message of ch. 29 as “unremittingly bleak from the viewpoint of the individuals who received it”, and emphasising that the promises of vv. 10-14 are for the distant future.

These scholars are certainly right to call attention to the less than glowing comments to the exiles in this chapter, and to its purpose of quelling unrest. However, our exegesis has shown that even in the shorter text represented by OG, the scope of YHWH’s salvation in ch. 29 considerably exceeds that found in chs. 27 – 28. While the prospect of ‘remaining in and

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245 Carroll, Jeremiah, 532 (italics mine).
248 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 212.
249 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 211. Seitz believes the original letter + introduction comprises vv. 1-9, 15, 20-32. Kilpp, Niederreißen, 61, also interprets שוה בעד in v. 32 as referring to the Jerusalem community, but assigns this latter part of the chapter to later redaction.
250 Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 72.
251 Sommer, ‘New Light’, 662. Cf. Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 144: “The words are words of judgment on the exiles for now, but words of salvation after a lapse of seventy years.”
working the land’ in 27.11 may allude to the creation account of Gen. 2.15, the injunctions of 29.5-6 go much further in both commanding and promising prosperity. If they subtly counsel against revolt, they also rescind the curses of Deut. 28; we thus have a picture of fruitfulness under divine blessing that is absent in ch. 27. Moreover, the invitation to ‘seek YHWH’ on behalf of Babylon (29.7) gives the exiles a role previously forbidden even to Jeremiah and opens up the possibility of a personal relationship with YHWH, something conspicuously lacking in ch. 27. Above all, the promise of דǜב (29.7) indirect and conditional as it is, appears here for the first time in the book, and is in striking contrast to the way Jeremiah distances himself from prophecy in 28.9.

These affirmations of YHWH’s favour intensify in the shorter text of vv. 10-14. The promises of return to the land, and of דǜב rather than רמש, are inherently hopeful, but this is underlined by the positive use of למשה and חמשה פקק, reversing their threatening connotations elsewhere in Jer. The personal nature of YHWH’s promise culminates with למשה (or ננלה) וראוי (v. 14). This may be contingent upon the exiles praying and seeking (v. 13), but it also appears to be part of his ‘plan’ mentioned in v. 11. Seitz appears to attribute this material, like the rest of vv. 10-14, 16-20, to the Exilic Redaction, but in so doing blurs the distinction between ER and MT plus. A final contrast with the nature of the salvation promised in chs. 27 – 28 comes in 29.32, where YHWH refers to (ד) אסר אשר לא תשא למשה (v. 14). This bias towards the exiles is also reflected in the fact that in ch. 29, the underlying rationale for the salvation promise is predominantly on YHWH’s initiative. To be sure, the exiles’ prosperity in Babylon depends on their accepting the realities of life in a foreign land rather than nurturing hopes of a swift return. Equally, their future restoration will require sincere, wholehearted prayer. Nevertheless, the very fact that these options are open implies a prior act of grace on YHWH’s part. As we have seen, the biblical allusions in 29.5-7 suggest that the Deuteronomic curses have been rescinded, while YHWH’s invitation to pray overturns his earlier refusal even to listen to Jeremiah. This understanding of salvation for the exiles as part of a divine plan is made explicit in 29.10-14. The notion of YHWH’s gratuitous favour towards the exiles is reinforced by the fact that, whereas the Judean remnant are warned that

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252 "Jer. 29.10-14 appears to have entered the text together with the clearly supplemental 29.16-19... vvs. 11-14 are remarkably similar to the language and overall thrust of Deut. 30.1-10 and 1 Kgs. 8.33-34, passages which clearly presuppose the exile and point to the likelihood of an exilic author, working from the same perspective as the exilic redaction of Jeremiah." (Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 210 n.8).
listening to the prophets will inevitably mean disaster for the whole nation, the promises to the exiles appear to stand despite the charge that they are colluding with their prophets (29.8) and claiming that YHWH has sent them (29.15).

We can sum up, then, by saying that Jeremiah’s message to the exiles in the shorter text of ch. 29 differs significantly from that to Zedekiah’s people in chs. 27 – 28. A rather austere exhortation to ‘serve’ the king of Babylon is replaced by an encouragement to build, plant and marry. Pure conditionality gives way to an emphasis on divine initiative. And the focus on serving the king of Babylon moves to seeking YHWH for Babylon, with an underlying promise of YHWH’s accessibility and responsiveness.

5. Differentiation in the MT Plusses of Jer. 29

Throughout chs. 27 – 29, we have noticed a striking number of differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts, mostly in the form of MT plusses. Often, these are of relatively minor hermeneutical significance, clarifying or emphasising an idea present in the Vorlage of OG. We have seen, for example, that in MT 27.12, 17 the invitation to ‘serve the king of Babylon and live’ applies to the Judeans what is said in 27.11. At this point, however, we have to give special attention to the MT plusses in 29.14 and 16-20. This is due not simply to their length, but also to their relevance to the question of group differentiation in chs. 27 – 29.

We can look first at v. 14, and YHWH’s promise, ְּפָאַת צְרוּ יִהוֹו תֵּבַע דִּמְעָל יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמַלֵּךְ בָּבֹל. The language is similar to that of 23.3; note especially the repetition of רָדֵם (otherwise used with YHWH as subject only in 31.8, 10; 32.37) and יָד הָדָם Hiph. Unlike the earlier passage, though, 29.14 does not even exclude Israel’s leaders from the anticipated restoration; its scope appears to be all-encompassing, as will be the case in chs. 30 – 33. Consequently, scholars without exception conclude that MT is here broadening the horizon of the text to address a general Diaspora, rather than just the exile community in Babylon.

253 This indictment of the exiles is strengthened in MT 29.19, ‘and you (exiles) have not listened’.
254 See for example Duhm, Jeremia, 231; Condamin, Jérémie, 210; Rudolph, Jeremia, 154; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 15; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 39; Lust, ‘Gathering and Return’, 129; Carroll, Jeremiah, 559; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 729; Graupner, Auftrag, 83; and especially Goldman, Prophétes, 74-75.
We suggest, however, that this interpretation needs to be reconsidered. If the author of the MT plus in v. 14 did intend to broaden the scope to the entire Diaspora, he has created an anachronism of which he could hardly have been unaware, given what follows: יִהְיֶהָ הָעָם (v. 15). Indeed, with its reference to יִהְיֶהָ הָעָם, even the MT plus of vv. 16-20 retains a focus on the Babylonian exiles. In fact, if we look again at v. 14, there is a hint that here too the author has in mind the 597 exiles. Not only does YHWH’s promise be directed to a particular exilic group. In other words, while the language of v. 14 is formally plural, its intended referent is most likely the Golah community in Babylon.

We find a parallel to this in Ezek. 11, where YHWH promises "עָבְרֵם אֲחָתוֹת מִיָּדָיו יִגְדַּה בְּבֵית YHWH (v. 17), before taking Ezekiel to deliver this message to the exiles in Babylon (vv. 24-25). Given the similarity of 29.14 to Deut. 30.3, it is even possible that the author is deliberately alluding to the latter passage as known scripture, and applying it to the exiles. If this reasoning is correct, the MT plus of 29.14 maintains the focus on the 597 exiles in Babylon found in the shorter text.

29.16-20 is a judgement oracle in which YHWH announces his wrath on all those in post-597 Jerusalem: יִהְיֶהָ הָעָם (v. 16). The language of vv. 17-18, and especially the ‘fig’ imagery, closely parallels that of 24.8-10, though the tone is still more ferocious; Zedekiah is not even mentioned by name, while the expression

255 Cf. Westermann & Albertz, 'Deuteronomismus', 316: "The whole weight of a concrete political event, which resists thorough theologization, characterizes the process described by glh."

256 We will suggest later (chapter 5) that something similar occurs in 46.27-28; there, the context suggests that YHWH’s promise not to destroy Israel in ‘all the nations among which I scatter you’ has particular application to the Jews in Egypt.

257 Most scholars argue that Deut. 30 is a late addition to the Dtr.H., influenced by Jer. and Ezek; e.g., H.W. Wolff, ‘Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks’, ZAW 73 (1961) 180-183; Lust, ‘Gathering and Return’ 125; A.D.H. Mayes, Deuteronomy (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 367-368; M.Z. Brettler, ‘Predestination in Deuteronomy 30.1-10’, in L.S. Schearing & S.L. McKenzie, Those Elusive Deuteronomists, 187 (“Deuteronomy influenced Jeremiah, but once this happened, the ‘new’ book of Jeremiah had in some sense become Deuteronomic, and influenced Deuteronomy”, 187-188). According to C. Begg, ‘The Literary Criticism of Deut. 4.1-40. Contributions to a Continuing Discussion’, ETI 56 (1980) 44-45, Jer. 29.13 probably draws on Deut. 4.29; however, Deut. 30.1ff. “elaborates and specifies the promise of 4.29ff. in such a way as to suggest that the former derives from a still later author who took the wording of the latter as his point of departure.” (49). However, Untermaier, Repentance to Redemption, 67-74, and McConville, Judgment and Promise, 162-163, argue that Jer. draws on Deut. 30.
(v. 17) is stronger than (24.8). Consequently, vv. 16-20 seem to be reaffirming the geographical polarity that we saw in ch. 24. Indeed, some argue that this was precisely the reason for the addition: “Versetzt man 15 vor 8f., schließen 16-19 direkt an 10-14 an, so daß eine durchgehende Parallelität zu 24.4-10 entsteht . . . D stellt hier wie in K. 24 Heil für die Exilierten und Gericht für die Zurückgebliebenen einander gegenüber”, writes Thiel.\(^{258}\) Again we have a parallel to Ezek. 11, which also posits a fundamental distinction between the 597 exiles and those still in Jerusalem.

On the other hand, whereas ch. 24 gives no explanation for YHWH’s wrath against the Judeans, 29.16-20 supplies a two-fold rationale. The first point lies in v. 16: ... the language here echoes (perhaps deliberately) the polarity in 21.1-10. There too, those who ‘dwelt’ in Jerusalem would die, while those who ‘went out’ would live. However, the logic underlying the \(\text{בש} \text{ב} \text{ש} \text{בש} / \text{כ} \text{כ} \text{כ}\) polarity in 29.16 is quite different. In ch. 21, the fate of the people of Jerusalem turns on their relationship to the city during the siege of 587, and is thus still in the balance. In 29.16, their fate relates to their actions during the deportation of 597, and is thus already determined. Salvation thus entails acceptance of exile (רўן בֵּנֵי). The Judeans’ culpability is emphasised by the term \(אֲדֹנָהָם\). As we noted earlier, this term frequently has connotations of loyalty, especially in battle (Deut. 3.18, 20; Josh. 1.14; 2 Sam. 18.2).\(^{259}\) Consequently, \(אֲדֹנָהָם \text{אֲדֹנָהָם} \text{אֲדֹנָהָם} \text{אֲדֹנָהָם} \text{אֲדֹנָהָם} \text{אֲדֹנָהָם}\) (v. 16) implicitly criticises those in Jerusalem for failing to show solidarity in accepting YHWH’s judgement of exile.\(^{260}\)

The second reason for YHWH’s wrath is given in v. 19: ... This, of course, is a standard (Deuteronomistic) indictment of the people of Israel and Judah. Yet intriguingly, the final words of this verse, ... restore the focus to the exiles in Babylon, followed by the call, ... The effect

\(^{258}\) Thiel, \(\text{Reaktion 26} - 45\), 17-18. Similarly, Unterman, \(\text{Repentance to Redemption}\), 84: “With the exception of the statements concerning the false prophets, the chapter parallels ch. 24.” Indeed, as we saw in chapter 1 of our study, Pohlmann (quite implausibly) believes that the bias towards the 597 exiles in ch. 29 is so strong that it serves to narrow the originally universal scope of chs. 30 – 31.

\(^{259}\) Although the term \(רְעָה\) is not used, the account in 1 Sam. 30.21-22 of resentment among David’s men against those who did not go with them (עלים תַּכְבִּים) reflects a similar sense of obligation to fight with one’s compatriots.

\(^{260}\) Note that the use of \(יָשָׂר \text{and} \text{שָׂרָה} \text{שָׂרָה}\) means that the present situation of the two communities is interpreted with reference to their own actions, rather than to YHWH’s action (as is expressed elsewhere in ch. 29 by the term \(יָשָׂר\) Hiph.). Of course, we have no knowledge of whether those deported in 597 (or 587) had any choice in the matter.
of this is to underline the spiritual obduracy of the exiles themselves. Though they themselves have ‘gone out’ into exile, they are no better at listening to YHWH’s word than ‘their brothers’ in Jerusalem. Consequently, the MT plus of 29.16-20, as much as the shorter text represented by OG, emphasises that whilst the Golah community in Babylon are indeed privileged as far as YHWH’s plans are concerned, they are in no position to congratulate themselves on their own goodness. In this way, the verdict upon the exiles in ch. 29 echoes that in ch. 24, suggesting that claims that Jer. is ‘pro-Golah’ probably require more careful definition.

Clearly, there is a marked difference between the perspective of 29.16-20 and that of 27.12-22. Not only does the earlier passage see ongoing life for the non-exiles as a possibility, it also makes future disaster the result of failing to submit to Babylon, rather than of failing to ‘go into exile’. Nevertheless, the outlook of both passages may not diverge as much as we might think. Firstly, we have seen that the message of ch. 27 is itself much more subdued than is often thought, especially in the shorter text of OG; moreover, it clearly envisages a further sacking of Jerusalem. Secondly, it is uncertain how optimistic Jeremiah himself was in ch.27 that his audience would listen to his message rather than that of the other prophets. Thirdly, there is no difficulty in a biblical author attributing YHWH’s anger to more than one factor; 29.16-20 itself cites two distinct reasons, i.e, failure to go into exile (v. 16) and failure to listen to the prophets (v. 19). Consequently, whilst the vision of disaster as expressed in 29.16-20 may not have been apparent to Jeremiah when he delivered his ‘submit and live’ message, it could represent a natural development of his thinking.

6. Conclusions

We can now sum up our investigation of chs. 27 – 29. As we have seen, in the text common to MT and OG, these three chapters have been structured in such a way that ch. 29 counterbalances chs. 27 – 28. In so doing, they configure issues of salvation and judgement around two intersecting polarities – what we might call a ‘double differentiation’.

The first is that of the two post-597 Judean communities; the remnant under Zedekiah and the exiles in Babylon. Although Jeremiah delivers a message of hope to both, the nature of this hope is by no means identical. To the people in Judah, he offers simply the option of ongoing life in their own land, under the suzerainty of Babylon. The exiles, by contrast, are called to a life marked by קדושה; even now they may prosper and pray to YHWH, whilst also
anticipating spiritual renewal and restoration to the land. Reading these words in the wider context of Jer. underlines their positive nature.

Matching this disparity between the contents of the two messages is a significant difference in theological rationale. The entirely contingent nature of YHWH’s offer to Judah is clear from the polarity, ‘Whoever serves / Whoever does not serve the king of Babylon’ (27.8, 11). Since this is bound up with the issue of prophecy, it could be reformulated as ‘Whoever listens to their prophets / Whoever listens to Jeremiah’. ‘Salvation’ depends upon obedience to YHWH and submission to Babylon. By contrast, ch. 29 lays far more stress on divine initiative, without dispensing with the need for the exiles to ‘seek YHWH’.

The MT plus of 29.16-20 radicalises this contrast between the two communities, so that it is now seen in the absolute terms of 24.1-10. Far from envisaging the possibility of the non-exiles submitting to Babylon and so remaining in their land, YHWH declares his wrath against them for remaining in their land, and the certainty of judgement. Clearly, this stands in considerable tension with Jeremiah’s message in ch. 27. All distinctions between the Judean people and their prophets here vanish; indeed, the only prophets mentioned are those whom YHWH has sent and to whom they have not listened. In context, however, the primary function of these verses is to insist on the necessity of exile, and to rebuke the 597 exiles themselves for failing to hear the word of YHWH (v. 19b, 20).

The other polarity in chs. 27 – 29 is one of ‘people / prophets’. In part, this involves an audience-critical differentiation; the prophets are consistently addressed separately from everyone else. At the same time, those prophets who are mentioned by name – Hananiah, Ahab and Zedekiah, and Shemaiah – receive notice of specific and final punishment from YHWH. Just as elsewhere in Jer. certain individuals are exempted from disaster (see the following chapter), so here certain individuals are exempted from a message of hope.261

Bearing in mind the comments of Koenen with which we began this study, it is important to note that this polarity of ‘salvation for the people / judgement on the prophets’ is at least in part ethically grounded. For whilst at no point does Jeremiah affirm the goodness of ‘the

261 We noted earlier Kilpp’s observations on this point (Niederreißen, 61). Kilpp sees the exclusion (die Aussonderung) of Shemaiah from salvation in ch. 29 as a unique case in Jer.; however, Ahab, Zedekiah and Hananiah seems to offer some sort of parallel, even though the nature of ‘salvation’ in ch. 27 is different from that in ch. 29.
people’ (quite the opposite in ch. 29), his verdict upon the prophets is explicitly based on their words and conduct. Hananiah and Shemaiah have attempted to ‘make the people believe a lie’ (28.15; 29.31) and have ‘preached rebellion against YHWH’ (28.16; 29.32 MT). Ahab and Zedekiah have ‘preached lies in my name’ (29.21) and have ‘committed folly in Israel’ (29.23). It may be the case (especially in ch. 29) that the people are encouraging them, but the text clearly implies that these prophets carry a singular degree of guilt.
Chapter 4: Differentiation in Jer. 37 – 45

1. Introduction to Jeremiah 37 – 45

As we noted at the start of our previous chapter, Jer. 26 – 45 is unanimously recognised as the second macro-unit of the entire book, consisting of two major sub-sections; chs. 26 – 35(36) and 36(37) – 45. In this chapter, we will consider how the issue of inner-Judean differentiation is presented within the second of these sub-sections. Since this is a much longer section of text than those which we have looked at so far, discussion of every verse or even every pericope will be impossible. As we will seek to show, however, its contents and structure are such that the issue of differentiation can be studied with reference to four particular passages; 38.1-3, 14-23; 39.15-18; 42.1 – 43.7; 45.1-5. At the same time, of course, we will take account of, and frequently refer to, the remaining material. As in previous chapters, we will begin by setting out the basis for viewing chs. 37 – 45 as a distinct unit, and this itself will provide a broad framework for the subsequent analysis of specific passages.

1.1. Jer. 37 – 45 as a Unit

In our previous chapter, we argued that the story of Jehoiakim’s burning of the scroll in Jer. 36 marks the start, rather than the conclusion, of a literary unit. In narrative terms, however, it is clear that a new section begins in ch. 37. Here, for the second time in the book, we move from the reign of Jehoiakim to that of Zedekiah (v. 1; cf. 27.1), with v. 2 giving an advance verdict upon both him and the nation:

 relocated תמר by תמר אל דוד התייה עשתהינשלה רוחב מ in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. 2 Less certain, however, is where this unit concludes. Since ch. 45 begins by referring back to Baruch’s writing of the scroll in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and since it has no necessary connection with the story of the Jews’ flight to Egypt (chs. 43 – 44), it is seen

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by some as distinct from chs. 37 – 44.3 Others, however, argue that ch. 45 must be read in conjunction with what precedes. This is true not only of those who view it as the final episode of Baruch’s ‘passion narrative’ (Leidensgeschichte),4 but also of others who see it as an appropriate conclusion (if not continuation) of the story.5 Scholarly ambivalence on this point is reflected in descriptions of the unit as chs. 37 – 44(45).6

Let us consider first the case for the unity of chs. 37 – 44. On the one hand, these eight chapters present an extended, chronologically-arranged story, in two parts. Chs. 37 – 39 describe events leading up to the fall of Jerusalem in 587, while chs. 40 – 44 depict its aftermath, including Gedaliah’s governorship of Judah, his assassination by the Ammonite-backed Ishmael, and finally the ‘flight of the Jews’ to Egypt. Bearing in mind how earlier sections of Jer. have oscillated between the reigns of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, the sustained historical sequence of chs. 37 – 44 is indeed striking. “Here,” writes Jones, “the reader is conscious of moving into a different and unique section of the book . . . They need to be read as a whole.”7

At the same time, chs. 37 – 44 are more than a historical chronicle. Although within them one may detect different perspectives and emphases, when read as a whole they convey a particular theological message; namely, the disobedience of the entire nation of Judah to YHWH and the disaster that thus befalls them. As we saw in chapter one of our study, this point has been emphasised in particular by Pohlmann, who sees in this narrative the fulfilment of the prophecy of 24.8-10:


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3 So McEvenue, ‘Jeremiah 37.1 to 44.30’, 65; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 282; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 209-211.
6 E.g., Pohlmann, Studien, 48; Jones, Jeremiah, 36.
7 Jones, Jeremiah, 36; similarly, Nicholson, Preaching, 18.

It will be noted that Pohlmann does not try to incorporate ch. 45 within this theological schema, and indeed, he has very little to say about this chapter. Two other scholars, who do in fact include ch. 45 in the literary unit, nonetheless accept Pohlmann’s interpretation of chs. 37 – 44. Nicholson sees their unifying theme as the rejection of YHWH’s word, the consequences of which for Jerusalem are set out in 37.1 – 40.6, and for the Judean remnant in 40.7 – 44,9 while McConville describes these chapters as “essentially an application of the theology of chapters 21 and 24 to the events that lead up to and into the exile.”10

Thus, considerations of narrative and theme appear to demarcate chs. 37 – 44 as a literary unit. This analysis would seem to be confirmed by ch. 45 itself. As we have said, 45.1 explicitly locates the oracle to Baruch in the time of Jehoiakim, and refers us back to ch. 36. Moreover, its character as a personal salvation oracle stands in contrast to the preceding chapters, which focus on YHWH’s judgement on Judah as a whole. Consequently, a good case can be made for treating chs. 37 – 44 as a self-contained unit, and regarding chs. 36 and 45 as “the brackets and boundaries which contain the entire narrative”.11 Indeed, this point was tacitly conceded by Kremers; on the one hand, he terms chs. 37 – 45 an Erzählungszyklus,12 to which the oracle to Baruch is the conclusion, but then, noting that 45.1 refers back to 36, adds, “dadurch ist sein Erzählungszyklus von Kap. 36 und Kap. 45 wie von einer Klammer umgeben.”13

There is, however, one very strong argument for treating ch. 45 as an integral part of chs. 37 – 44. As has often been noted, it forms a striking parallel with another individual salvation oracle, namely, that to Ebed-Melech in 39.15-18. Apart from their similarity of genre, both conclude with the promise of ‘life as booty’ (39.18; 45.5) for their respective recipients.

8 Pohlmann, Studien, 185.
9 Nicholson, Preaching, 104-113; see too Clements, Jeremiah, 203, 228.
10 McConville, Judgment and Promise, 112. He adds that ch. 45 “stands somewhat aside from the main argument of the preceding discussion” (121).
11 Brueggemann, Jeremiah 26 – 52, 121. Similarly, Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 102, notes that “Anfang und Ende dieser großen Einheit verweisen durch Datierung und inhaltlichen Kontrast aufeinander.”. See too Stulman, Order Amid Chaos, 89.
Indeed, these two brief oracles seem to be counter-balanced, so that 39.15-18 concludes the account of the fall of Jerusalem, and 45.1-5 the story of the flight to Egypt. This suggests that both are crucial for the interpretation of chs. 37ff. in its final form. Consequently, in this chapter we will take chs. 37 - 45 as a meaningful literary entity within the final form of the book.14

It is, of course, accepted that this unity of narrative and theology relates to chs. 37 – 45 in its present form. Few would deny that the editor has utilised and adapted earlier material. As we will see later, chs. 37 and 38 are seen by many as doublets, as are the two accounts of the release of Jeremiah. In the first (39.11-14), he is released from ‘the courtyard of the guard’ directly into the care of Gedaliah; in the second (40.1-6), he is set free at Ramah after being rounded up with the other Judean captives.15 Immediately after this second release account, we have an extended narrative (40.7 – 41.18) describing Gedaliah’s fledgling community, and the turmoil that follows his assassination; oddly, this makes no mention at all of Jeremiah.16 “The simplest explanation,” write Keown et al., “is to suggest the incorporation into the larger narrative of historical information that originally had no connection with Jeremiah.”17 Ch. 44, containing Jeremiah’s speech to the Jews in Egypt, is somewhat disconnected from the preceding narrative (note the introductory formula, Ḥedor, الر באלא ד三個, v. 1a) and reads as a postscript.18 And, as we shall see, even within smaller sections, scholars detect different voices.

14 One must, therefore, question Pohlmann’s exclusion of ch. 45 from his analysis of chs. 37 – 44. It is also noticeable that he has little to say about 39.15-18, describing it simply as a late interpolation (Studien, 99).
15 “It is thus clear that the editor had two stories before him both of which were included in the book.” (Thompson, Jeremiah, 648).
16 Nor is Jeremiah mentioned in the account of the fall of Jerusalem (39.1-10), but as he is imprisoned during this time, this is less surprising.
17 Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 242. According to Carroll, Jeremiah, 701, Jeremiah’s absence “is inexplicable except on the grounds that 2 Kgs. 25.22-26 has no place for him either.” But see Wanke, Untersuchungen, 113.
18 Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 262, describe it as “a self-standing oracle.”
2. Jer. 38[45].1-3; 14-23

2.1. Text

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και εἴπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς των Ιερεμία ἐγὼ λογον ἔχω τοις Ιουδαίοις των περιεγγοις προς τοὺς Χαλδαίους μὴ δώσῃ με εἰς χειρας αὐτῶν καὶ καταμάκησουν μιον
και εἴπεν Ιερεμίας οὐ μὴ παραδώσῃσε ἀπὸ κοινοῦν λογον κυρίου ἐν ἐγὼ λέγο προς σε και βελτίων ἐστί σοι και ξηστεί ή ψυχή σου
και εἰ μὴ θελείς σον ἐξελθείνιν οὕτως ὁ λογος ὑν ἐδείζη μοι κυρίου
και ἰδιον πασοι αἱ γυναικεῖς οἱ καταλείπθεσιν ἐν σίκια βασιλεὺς Ιουδα ἐξήγησον προς ἄρχοντας βασιλεὺς Βαβυλώνας και αὐταί ἐλεγον ἤπατσαν σε και διυπεσθοῦν σαι ὑμῖν εἰρηνικοι σου και καταδύσουσιν ἐν ἄλλωσι σας σου ἀπετρεψαν ἀπο σου
και τας γυναικας σου και τα τεκνα σου ἐξαβρουν προς τοὺς Χαλδαίους και συ οὐ μὴ σωθῆς ὑπαὶ εἰ ἐν χειρι βασιλεὺς Βαβυλώνας συλλημβηση και ἡ πολις αὕτη κατακαυνθεται

2.2. Textual Notes

v. 1. MT מַפְתָּחָה בַּנַּיִל הָעָלִים >OG: Probable MT plus. Since מַפְתָּחָה lacks the final waw of הָעָלִים, omission by homoioteleuton is unlikely, unless the OG Vorlage contained a variant orthography, מֶלְבִיר.19

MT מַלְבִּיר >OG: Characteristic MT plus (also v. 23).

LXXΒ,8 ἔλαλεὶ = MT ἄραβα; LXXΑ,Υ ἔλαλησεν:

MT מַלְבִּיר: LXXΒ,Α τον λαον; LXX8 τον χάλον: Ziegler maintains that the reading in S is to be preferred here, an alteration of λαος to the less common χάλος being unlikely.20

19 So McKane, Jeremiah 2, 948; contra Giesebracht, Jeremia, 204; Bright, Jeremiah, 230; Thompson, Jeremiah, 635; Janzen, Studies, 119.
20 Ziegler, Beiträge, 50.
v. 2. MT תרירא >OG: MT plus (as in 21.9). Janzen notes that in the fifteen instances of the sequence מַעַר in MT, OG lacks מַעַר seven times. 21

21 Janzen, Studies, 43-44; 205 n.19.

v. 3. OG מַת >MT: The expected בּ appears to have been accidentally lost from MT (cf. 45.3). 23

23 So Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 204; Duhm, Jeremia, 302; Bright, Jeremiah, 230; Thompson, Jeremiah, 635; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 266.

v. 14. MT מַת >OG: The addition of a proper name is characteristic of MT; see too vv. 15, 16, 17, 19. 24

MT יִךְּוָהֵחַ הוא דְּמֵי הָעָבָר: The proper name and title are typical MT plusses. OG probably read יִךְּוָהֵחַ (as in 37.17), rather than יִךְּוָהֵחַ. Pohlmann points out that the sequence מַעַר... (Gen. 20.2; 2 Sam. 9.5; 1 Kgs. 7.13) is just as possible as מַעַר... (Gen. 31.4; Ex. 9.27; Num. 16.12, etc.) 25

MT מָעַר, ‘to the third entrance’; OG עָקִמן עָשְׁלוּץ, 26 ‘the house of Aselisel’. MT lacks the grammatically necessary article for the noun, but Giesebrecht’s emendation to מָעַר הָעָבָר, ‘the entrance of the bodyguard’, 27 has not been widely accepted. Ziegler allows that OG may have had a variant Vorlage that read either מָעַר הָעָבָר or מָעַר הָעָבָר. 28

v. 16. MT תַּהֲרָר >OG: MT plus, influenced by 37.17 (where OG reads קְרִיפָאָנָא). 29

25 Pohlmann, Studien, 85 n.167.

26 LXXח, עָשְׁלוּץ; LXXא, עָשְׁלוּץ; LXXא, עָשְׁלוּץ. See Ziegler, Beiträge, 79-80.

27 Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 206-207; so too Duhm, Jeremia, 305 (but note his admission that “letzteres Wort ist allerdings für uns nicht klar”).

28 Zeigler, Beiträge, 80.

29 So Duhm, Jeremia, 305; Janzen, Studies, 53; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 267; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 956.
MT *Ketiv* רָאֵשׁ > *Qere*, omit the object marker as “grammatically intolerable”.30

MT אָשֶׁר מְבַסֵּס אֵת בָּשָׁם > *Qere*: MT plus;31 cf. 19.9; 34[41].21.

v. 17. MT אַלּוֹ הַגְּבָּהָה אֵלָה שֶׁיֶרֶא > *Qere*: Characteristic MT plus.

v. 18. MT אֶל אַשְׁרָי מַלְּךָ בָּלָה > *Qere*: Probable MT plus;32 it is unnecessary after v. 17.

MT יְדֵי > *Qere*: MT plus (also in v. 23).

v. 19. MT אַשְׁרָי; *Qere* εὕρω λογον εὑρω: This use of ἐξευθεν λόγον (‘to take account of, have regard for’)33 to render אַשְׁרָי recurs in 42[49].16. The fact that אַשְׁרָי is translated ϕοβεω in 17.8 is consistent with Tov’s hypothesis that Jer. 29 – 52 represents a revision of the original Greek translation.

MT ὑπηρέτευσαν; *Qere* καταμικτικοῦσαν μου: In contrast to καταμικτικοῦσα μου (‘to mock’), תַּלִיל Hith. usually implies a more violent form of abuse (1 Sam. 31.4 = 1 Chron. 10.4; Jdg. 19.25). However, the idea of mockery is present in Num. 22.29 (the only instance of תַּלִיל Hith. in the Pentateuch), where LXX translates with παίζω, ‘to play, to jest’.

MT μάλ; *Qere* τεθερισμός: For the use of θερισμός to translate μάλ, see 37.13-14.

v. 20. MT אָשֶׁר יָדַע יָדָיו לְאֶלֶף; *Qere* λογον καταπελτάτοι βοσκόν ἐνθοῦς = אָשֶׁר יָדַע יָדָיו לְאֶלֶף: In contrast to MT, (‘hear the voice of YHWH in respect to what I am telling you’),34 *Qere* offers a simpler reading (‘hear the word of the Lord which I am telling you’); it may reflect a variant Vorlage, or may simply be paraphrasing.35

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33 For this meaning of ἐξευθεν λόγον, see EN 1102b 32, καὶ τὸν πατρός καὶ τῶν φίλων φασμεν ἐξευθεν λόγον; also Hdt. 1.62, 115.

34 So Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 206, who cites Jer. 35.8 (Ἄνεμεν πολὺ Ἰωνᾶδε καὶ ἠρέμων λέσχης εἶναι ἔμνημον) and Gen. 27.8 (Ἰερουσαλήμ οὖν ἐρείπητο καὶ Λαοὺς ἀλλᾶς οὐκ ἔμνησεν ἔμνημον); also McKane, *Jeremiah* 2, 958.

35 For the latter view, see McKane, *Jeremiah* 2, 958.
v. 22. MT יָשָׁל, 'your foot'; many Heb. mss. יָשָׁל, and OG פָּדֹא, 'your feet'.

v. 23: MT יִבְרֹא, 'you will burn (this city)'; OG קַּצֵּר בָּא, '(this city) will be burnt': MT yields an interesting reading, but we should probably re-point to מִבְּרֹא.38

2.3. Exegetical Notes

v. 14. מִשֶּׁל̣ לָא אֲרָכָה דָּבָר: Like הבק and הדר, the term יֵשֶׁל can denote seeking an oracle through a prophet (1 Sam. 28.16) and some believe this is the case here.39 However, the combination יֵשֶׁל הבָּר suggests simply 'ask you something';40 cf. the very similar 2 Sam. 14.18 (וַיֶּשֶׁל לָא אֱלֹהִים חַסְלֵי בָּא מָאתָא אֲרָכָה אֲרָכָה). Even in 37.17 (וַיֶּשֶׁל לָא אֱלֹהִים מָאתָא יָשְׁרוּ אֲרָכָה), Zedekiah is asking Jeremiah whether he has received an oracle, rather than asking him to consult YHWH for one.

לָא: This too implies that Zedekiah believes Jeremiah already knows what YHWH's word is. Pohlmann notes that the phrase is used when unpleasant news is expected (Josh. 7.19; 1 Sam. 3.17, 18; 2 Sam. 14.18).41

38 As it is by Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 209; Duhm, Jeremia, 306; Volz, Jeremia, 344; Pohlmann, Studien, 89 n.193; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 268; McKane, Jeremia, 960; contra Rudolph, Jeremia, 206; Bright, Jeremiah, 228; Thompson, Jeremiah, 641. The absence of the object marker with יֵשָׁל is not significant, this often being the case when the direct object is a part of the body (IBH §85).

37 So Rudolph, Jeremia, 206; McKane, Jeremia 2, 947; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 220.

38 So Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 207; Rudolph, Jeremia, 228; Bright, Jeremia, 228; Thompson, Jeremiah, 641 n.4; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 268; McKane, Jeremia 2, 961; contra Streane, Jeremiah & Lamentations, 255.

39 Bright, Jeremia, 231; Thompson, Jeremia, 642; cautiously, Carroll, Jeremia, 684.

40 So Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 290 ('I have something to ask you').

41 Pohlmann, Studien, 85 n.170.
v. 15. Some commentators see Jeremiah’s hesitation as surprising (and perhaps indicative of redactional activity), since his rough treatment so far has been at the hands of the DTR (37.14-16; 38.4-6), from whom Zedekiah has twice acted to protect him (37.21; 38.10).42

v. 16. This oath formula is otherwise unattested in the OT. According to Rudolph, its significance is that “wer in Gott den Schöpfer des Lebens ehrt, kann nicht eines seiner Geschöpfe ums Leben bringen.”43 From the narrator’s point of view, however, it may be significant that Zedekiah does not respond to the second part of Jeremiah’s prediction, only to the first part.

v. 17. The use of the infinitive absolute emphasises the requirement, and provides a point of variation from Jeremiah’s similar declarations to the people (21.9; 38.2). Cf. Jeremiah’s ultimatum to the remnant in 42.10, ἀς ἔριζε τὴν ὁδόν (OG καθιστατεί καθιστήτε = ἀς ἔσθω υἱὸς).

v. 19. The term ἀναλίθη can only be the DTR who placed Jeremiah in the cistern (v. 6). A clear antecedent is provided by Ebed-Melech’s protest to Zedekiah in v. 9, διδάχθη λέγεται, though at this point OG reads quite differently (ἐπιστημονεοποιεῖται = διδάχθη λέγεται).

v. 20. Here too, Jeremiah’s promise to Zedekiah exceeds what was said to the people of Jerusalem. What ‘it will go well with you’ means in practical terms is unspecified. In 40.9, the phrase seems to signify ‘a peaceful life under Babylonian rule’, but it also occurs on the lips of the military officers in 42.6: ἀς ἔριζε τὴν ὁδόν... ἐσεῖμι λέγεται ὁ τύχῃ λέγεται...
Interestingly, ‘it will go well with us’ is there seen as compatible with receiving a ‘bad’ word from YHWH, which accords perfectly with Jeremiah’s message in 38.20.

v. 21. As Pohlmann notes, הָדוּריָה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה H to the future as object occurs also in Num. 23.3 and Ezek. 11.25.45 However, especially when seen in its wider context, the phrase also recalls Micaiah’s words to Ahab and Jehoshaphat, although not qualified by an ‘if’ clause, a conditional aspect seems to be implied by the kings’ question,םלכּל אֵלֶּה נְשִׁיֵּים לְמָלְאָכָיו אֵלֶּה נְשִׁיֵּים לְמָלְאָכָיו אֵלֶּה נְשִׁיֵּים L (v. 15a). Only in vv. 19-23 does it emerge that their decision to go to war, and so to suffer ‘disaster’ (עש), is certain; and with this latter point, we may compare how the ‘hypothetical’ scenario of Jer. 38.21-22 becomes more certain in v. 23.46

v. 22. הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה הָדוֹרִיָּה H: The identity of these people is unclear, though Pohlmann detects an allusion to the deportation of Jehoiachin’s wives in 2 Kgs. 24.15.47

... The tone of the women’s song is debated.48 Rudolph resists the idea that it forms a taunt: “Warum sollten die Frauen über das Unglück ihres geliebten Herrn oder ihres Gebieters spotten, das doch ihr eigenes war?”49 Granted, can be read as mockery;50 cf. in Ob. 7, which is certainly part of a taunt. On the other hand, Jeremiah applies similar language to himself in his final lament:

בְּכִלְּכָּל נְשִׁיֵּים לְמָלְאָכָיו בְּכִלְּכָּל נְשִׁיֵּים לְמָלְאָכָיו בְּכִלְּכָּל נְשִׁיֵּים לְמָלְאָכָיו בְּכִלְּכָּל נְשִׁיֵּים L (20.10). Ultimately, what settles the matter in favour of the ‘taunt-interpretation’ is the wider context of the verse; since the advice of the ‘trusted friends’ stands in opposition to that of YHWH’s prophet Jeremiah, Zedekiah’s downfall is due to culpable folly,

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45 Pohlmann, Studien, 89 n.190.
46 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 958, claims that “a ‘hypothetical vision’ seems to teeter on the edge of nonsense”, adding that “Cornill’s justification of the ‘hypothetical vision’, that the setting out of alternatives is a formality, and that the vision contains Jeremiah’s foreknowledge of the outcome, is a move out of the frying pan into the fire.” (959). Reflection on the Micaiah story might have led to a different conclusion. In fact, it is surprising that few commentators connect the two passages.
47 Pohlmann, Studien, 89 n.192.
48 “Outwardly a lament, inwardly it is a taunt-song” (Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 290).
49 Rudolph, Jeremia, 207; similarly, A.S. Peake, Jeremiah and Lamentations Vol. II. Jeremiah XXV to LII, Lamentations (CB; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911) 173.
50 Cf. NIV’s rendition of this phrase, ‘they overcame you, those trusted friends of yours’.
rather than misfortune. This is emphasised if the writer intends us to see in an allusion to the prophets of (chs. 27 – 28; 37.19).  

The fate envisaged for Zedekiah mirrors that suffered by Jeremiah in 38.6.  

2.4. Coherence and Redaction  

38.14-23 presents Zedekiah’s ‘second interview’ with Jeremiah, the first having been reported in 37.17-21. The relationship between these two interviews, and indeed between both chapters, is open to different interpretations. Some scholars see in chs. 37 – 38 a continuous sequence of events, and find it quite plausible that Zedekiah held two separate audiences with the prophet. There is a problem in that the second interview begins with Jeremiah being brought from the courtyard of the guard (38.13) but ends with him pleading not to be sent back (38.21 Hiph.) to the house of Jonathan (38.26-27); Volz attempts to solve this by relocating 38.24-28 to immediately after 37.17-21.  

On the other hand, Skinner’s proposal that chs. 37 and 38 contain duplicate accounts of the same sequence of events has more recently gained wider acceptance (though with varying descriptions of these chapters as ‘contradictory’ or ‘complementary’). As Bright observes, “everything seems to happen to Jeremiah twice!” On this view, 38.14-23 offers an alternative (and considerably longer) version of Jeremiah’s advice to Zedekiah to that given in 37.17. Even if this is correct, however, the interpreter’s task must be to explore the message arising from its present arrangement.  

51 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 960.  
52 Volz, Jeremia, 335-345; Rudolph, Jeremia, 201-209, esp. 204; Hyatt, ‘Jeremiah’, 1076; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 282.  
53 “It is not at all improbable that the king, in his nervous state, did summon the prophet twice.” (Hyatt, ‘Jeremiah’, 1076)  
55 So Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, 258-259 n.1; Bright, Jeremiah, 233-234; Thompson, Jeremiah, 636-637; Carroll, Jeremiah, 679; McKane, Jeremiah, 968-971; Jones, Jeremiah, 455; Clements, Jeremiah, 220; cautiously, Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 222.  
56 Bright, Jeremiah, 233.  
57 As is emphasised by Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 222-223.
We can now consider more closely the verses with which we are here concerned. Whilst the cohesion and integrity of 38.1-3 is unquestioned, considerable debate surrounds vv. 14-23. According to Pohlmann, the original text consisted of vv. 14, 17, 19-22, the purpose of which was to show “daß Jahwe bis zuletzt durch seinen Propheten die Möglichkeit angeboten hatte, der drohenden Katastrophe zu entgehen.” However, while the emphasis is on Zedekiah’s personal salvation, Pohlmann notes that his response to Jeremiah’s message is depicted as having wider significance. Regarding v. 17 he writes:


Indeed, there is a further reference to the king’s ‘house’ in v. 22. Pohlmann is uncertain, however, whether the reference to ‘this city’ in v. 17b should be retained as original, since the fate of Jerusalem is otherwise mentioned only in the redactional vv. 18, 23. We will return to this point shortly.

As for secondary elements, Pohlmann judges the depiction of Jeremiah as fearful of the king (vv. 15-16) to be inconsistent with vv. 7-13 (where Zedekiah acts on his behalf), and at odds with the character portrayal in vv. 19-22. Also problematic is the change in Jeremiah’s demeanour, from being hesitant (v. 15) to insistent (vv. 17-18). Pohlmann concludes that vv. 15-16 have been added in the light of 38.1-6. At first sight, v. 18 appears to be an integral part of Jeremiah’s reply to Zedekiah, but is in fact redundant in the light of vv. 20-21: “Diese zweifache Erörterung der Folgen einer möglichen Weigerung Zedekias kann nicht ursprünglich sein.” Finally, like many scholars Pohlmann deems v. 23 a redactional comment on v. 22: “Ein späterer Bearbeiter vermißte hier die Erwähnung der Söhne des Königs, ferner eine noch

58 See Pohlmann, Studien, 84-89, 92.
59 Pohlmann, Studien, 92. He notes that v. 19 “hat kompositions- und erzähltechnisch eine retardierende Aufgabe und ist für die folgenden Ausführungen des Propheten wichtig” (88), while vv. 20-22 “unbedingt erforderlich sind” after v. 19 (89).
60 Pohlmann, Studien, 87; see too 88 n.189.
61 Pohlmann, Studien, 88. Pohlmann seeks to strengthen his case (87-88) by contrasting the ‘purely theoretical’ anticipation of Zedekiah’s refusal to surrender in v. 18, with that in vv. 19-21, where it has a more ‘concrete’ basis in his fear of the Jews. The argument is weak; the shift to greater specificity enables the dialogue to unfold in artistic fashion (see further below).
einmal verdeutlichende Feststellung, daß Zedekia sich nicht retten werde, besonders aber die ausdrückliche Einbeziehung der vollkommenen Zerstörung Jerusalems.”

A somewhat similar approach is taken by Seitz, who sees in ch. 38 material from the Scribal Chronicle and the Exilic Redaction. Belonging to the former are vv. 1-3, the outlook of which is “perfectly consistent with [Jeremiah’s] post-597 counsel”, and vv. 16-22; here too, Jeremiah’s words are “consistent with his earlier statements, though the alternatives are now more pronounced (38.17-18 / 19-22).” Supplementation by ER occurs only in v. 15 (which depicts Zedekiah, rather than the princes, as hostile to Jeremiah), and v. 23, which “does away with the question of alternatives and the possibility of submission.” Thus, while Seitz accepts more of 38.15-23 as original than does Pohlmann, both take vv. 15 and 23 as secondary.

In response, we suggest that the entire passage is best read as a coherent whole. This is not to deny elements of surprise and ambiguity in the text, but rather to see them as contributing to a skilfully narrated story. Thus, Jeremiah’s initial hesitation, and the response which this elicits (vv. 15-16), serve to delay what will in fact be YHWH’s final word to the king, thereby heightening the suspense. Moreover, Zedekiah’s oath, though solemn, is flawed by what it omits; Jeremiah will be protected, but not necessarily heeded. The reader is thereby given a hint

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62 Pohlmann, Studien, 89; so too Duhm, Jeremia, 307; Volz, Jeremia, 343; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 54; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 94 n.9. However, Rudolph, Jeremia, 207, is undecided on this point.
63 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 238-239; 261-263. Unlike Pohlmann, Seitz retains v. 16 in the original text (262 n.150).
64 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 260.
65 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 262.
66 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 262. Earlier, however (224), Seitz lists vv. 21-22 among ER material, pressing for “the inevitability of further disobedience and the necessity of a judgment which will bring about the final elimination of the post-597 remnant”. In fact, he acknowledges (257 n.137) that he has ‘modified’ his view on 38.22. However, his conclusion regarding vv. 21-22 has important implications for his overall approach; for it implies that the distinction between SC and ER is not so clear-cut as elsewhere he maintains. SC, it turns out, can sound as ominous a note concerning Zedekiah as ER.
67 For his part, McKane, Jeremiah 2, 966, regards v. 22 as “a message of unconditional doom” and therefore incompatible with vv. 17-18.
68 Carroll, Jeremiah, 685-686, notes a number of distinctive features in this unit, such as the setting of the dialogue, the oath and the poetic fragment, adding that they “make for a more interesting exchange of opinions between king and prophet and indicate some of the story-teller’s skills” (686). See too Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 364-365.
69 Pohlmann makes a similar point in regard to v. 19: “v. 19 hat kompositions- und erzähletechnisch eine retardierende Aufgabe” (Studien, 88).
of the outcome (v. 24), as well as an echo of the opening statement in 37.2. What, then, of v. 23? Whilst this does indeed ‘foreclose’ on the conditional hope set out in vv. 17-22, we dispute that this necessarily marks it out as redactional. Two other OT passages may be relevant here.

The first is the story of Micaiah in 1 Kgs. 22, to which reference was made earlier. Here, his initial oracle to Ahab and Jehoshaphat is wholly positive: ‘Attack and be victorious, for YHWH will give [Ramoth Gilead] into the king’s hand’ (v. 15). Reminded to speak only what YHWH tells him, however, Micaiah abruptly changes his message: ‘I saw all Israel scattered on the hills, like sheep without a shepherd’ (v. 17). At this stage, it is still possible to construe his vision as hypothetical, contingent upon whether the kings go to war or not. Only then does Micaiah announce what YHWH has shown him in a vision; that YHWH has sent a lying spirit to speak through the other prophets, and so lead Israel and Judah to disaster (vv. 19-23).

The second is the account of Samuel’s speech to Israel in 1 Sam. 12.1-25. Here, Samuel openly denounces their demand for a king as ‘evil’ (vv. 12, 17, 20). Now that they have got their wish, however, what of their future? The prophet’s message seems to offer hope. If the people and their king serve YHWH, all will be well (vv. 14, 22-24); if they ‘rebel against his commands’ his hand will be against them (v. 15). Ostensibly, their future is open and conditional upon their obedience. But, as several commentators have noted, the tone of the entire speech is heavily coloured by its closing words: אַםּ רִוי מְרֵעַ נֶדֶבָּties מֶלּכָּties יִמָּנֶה (v. 25). Whilst formally this does no more than set out a possible future scenario, its placement right at the end of the speech, with no further comment, serves as a broad hint to the reader as to what will happen.

There are of course major differences between these two passages and Jer. 38.14-23. Yet what they all have in common is the use of irony and ambiguity in prophetic speeches which purport to offer their hearers genuinely ‘live’ options. Micaiah presents two contradictory messages, before revealing that the issue is ‘foreclosed’. Samuel depicts obedience and blessing as a viable option, but leaves us in little doubt that it will not happen. It may be, then, that to

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regard Jer. 38.23 as redactional on the grounds that it ‘forecloses’ what Jeremiah has previously said is to miss the point.

2.5. Differentiation in 38.1-3; 14-23:

However we explain the idea of Jeremiah ‘speaking to all the people’ (38.1) after having been placed in the courtyard of the guard (37.21), his proclamation in 38.1-3 clearly reiterates the simple differentiation we have already encountered in 21.1-10; namely, salvation for מִתְאָבָם and judgement for מִתְשָׁבָם. Jeremiah’s ultimatum in v. 2, יִהַעֲשֶׂה קִרְאָה יָהּ יֹהֶמֶר בְּרֵעְשֶׂה לְבַשְׁלֵךְ, repeats 21.9 almost verbatim, while his declaration in v. 3 that YHWH was giving the city over to the Babylonians summarises 21.4-7.

At first sight, Jeremiah’s message to Zedekiah in vv. 14-23 seems completely consistent with this. He too must choose whether or not to ‘go out’ to the Babylonians (אֶת הָעָם אֵלָה הָעָם, vv. 17-18). If he takes the former option, he will ‘have his life’ (וְיִהְיֶה לְךָ נְפֶשׁ, v. 17); if he refuses, he will ‘not escape’ (לֹא תֵרָאו, v. 18). Consequently, according to Keown et al., “it is not a new word, only a reemphasis of the consistent message delivered by the prophet to the king and the people.” In similar vein, Jones writes that “the message (vv. 17-25) is only an amplification of the divine message in its basic form, such as had been proclaimed openly both to the people and to the king.”

In fact, however, the situation is more complicated than this. For one thing, only now is the option of ‘remaining / going out’ presented directly to Zedekiah. Hitherto, Jeremiah has reserved this message for a group identified simply as ‘the people’ (21.8; 38.1), while his word to the king has been purely one of judgement (21.3-7; 32.3-5; 34.2-3; 37.6-10, 17b). As we saw in ch. 2 of our study, this audience-critical distinction emerges most clearly in 21.1-10. Discussing that passage, we noted Brueggemann’s view that the respective messages of judgement and hope were correlated to those two audiences. In response, we argued that YHWH’s wrath is against ‘the city’ rather than any particular group, and that Zedekiah himself is ignored rather than explicitly precluded from the offer of surrender. Nevertheless, the fact remains that he is ignored, and this point has remained a constant in Jer. – that is, up until now.

71 Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 224-225.
72 Jones, Jeremiah, 462; similarly, Thompson, Jeremiah, 642; Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 366.
This diversity of opinion regarding the fate of Zedekiah may, at one level, reflect competing traditions; within the final form of the book, however, the postponement of the offer of surrender until the final interview is unlikely to be coincidental.74

Before considering the significance of this, however, we should make a second observation, which is that Jeremiah’s message to Zedekiah is not identical with his message to the people. An initial indication of this is the way יִהְיֶהוָה והָעָם varies slightly from the wording in 21.9 and 38.2. Moreover, a close reading of the text shows that Zedekiah is offered rather more than ‘bare survival’. The term לְשׁוֹנוֹ, which emphasises the minimalistic nature of the ‘life’ offered to the citizens of Jerusalem, is omitted; instead, the king is assured that ‘it will go well with you’ (יִהְיֶהוָה לְךָ, v. 20). Again, whereas the scope of the promise in 21.9 and 38.2 is wholly individualistic (יִהְיֶהוָה לְךָ לְשׁוֹנוֹ), for Zedekiah it has a corporate dimension. As Pohlmann noted, his actions will determine the welfare of his entire household (יִהְיֶהוָה וַיִּשָּׁתֶה, v. 17), namely his wives and sons (יִהְיֶהוָה וַיִּשָּׁתֶה, vv. 22-23). Especially striking is the assurance that the city itself may be saved (יִהְיֶהוָה וַיִּשָּׁתֶה, v. 17), reversing earlier statements (21.10; 34.2; 37.10).75

The most distinctive aspect of Jeremiah’s message to Zedekiah, however, is the way it is subverted in v. 23. The revelation that the king’s decision and its consequences are already known to YHWH and his prophet casts an ironic light over all that has gone before. Against Pohlmann and Seitz, we have argued that it is unnecessary to see this verse as redactional; similar ambiguity and subtlety can also be seen on the lips of Samuel and Micaiah. It might, of course, be argued that this ironic interpretation has only been achieved secondarily by the addition of v. 23. This cannot be excluded as a possibility, although the king’s failure to promise that he will listen to Jeremiah (v. 16), and the questioning tone of יִהְיֶהוָה והָעָם (v. 17), seem to provide advance clues as to the outcome. Given that we have noticed several verbal and


74 So McConville, *Judgment and Promise*, 114. He adds: “The paradoxical effect of the ‘last offer’, as it were, with its surface implication that the king’s demise is not after all inevitable, is to seal its inevitability. It does so by revealing the real resistance of Zedekiah to the word . . . For all his craven toying with the word of YHWH, he will never hear it.”

75 It might be argued, of course, that these variations in message are readily explained by the fact that it is the king who is being addressed. His surrender might well achieve for others and for the city what the surrender of ordinary citizens could not; he might even hope to receive slightly preferential treatment.
conceptual links between 38.14-23 and Jeremiah’s speech to the remnant in ch. 42, we will want to return to this question after we have looked at the latter passage.

Either way, as it stands, ch. 38 presents what we might call a ‘double-differentiation’. To ‘the people’, Jeremiah reiterates the basic polarity of דִּבְּרָיָה וְדִבְּרָיָה (vv. 1-3). Those who remain in the city will die; but to those who go out, the promise of ‘life as booty’ – meagre as it is – still stands. Conversely, to Zedekiah the prophet presents what seems to be a rather more hopeful message; but not without revealing that its rejection by the king is already known.


3.1. Text

| καὶ πρὸς Ἰερεμίαν ἐγενετο λόγος κυρίου ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ τῆς φυλακῆς λεγον | Αὐλός δέχεται ἡ γῆ τοῦ Βαβυλῶνος σήμερον. 15
| πορευομένου καὶ εἴπον πρὸς Ἀβδεμελέχ τον Αἰθίοπα σύστας εἶπε κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραήλ ἵδου εἴσαι φερῷ τοὺς λόγους μου ἐπὶ τὴν πολιν ταύτην εἰς κακὰ καὶ σῶκ εἰς ἄγαθα | τὸν μὴ δέχεται διδάσκειν τοὺς λόγους Ἰσραήλ ἐν τῇ πόλει τούτῃ. 16
| καὶ σοσώσε σε ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ καὶ σὺ μὴ δώσω σε ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν τῇ φοβίᾳ ἀπὸ προσώπου σίτην | ἔλθεις μὴ δόον, ἵνα μὴ ἀφεθῇ ἡ ψυχή σου. 17
| ὅτι συζωσάτω σε καὶ ἐν ἀνθρακίας πᾶν οὐ μὴ πεσῆς καὶ ἔσται ἡ ψυχή σου οὕτως ἐκεῖμον ὅτι ἐκποιήθη οὐ' ἐμοί ὅτι κύριος | λέγεται. 18.18 πεσεις ἐκεῖ πάντα καὶ δοσιμένος γι' ἐμοί οὗτος κύριος

3.2. Textual Notes

v. 15. The word order of the formula ἀυλός δέχεται ἡ γῆ τοῦ Βαβυλῶνος σήμερον is unparalleled in Jer., and seems to be emphatic; ‘and (but) to Jeremiah the word of YHWH came’. 76

MT >OG; MT plus, possible based on 33.1.

76 So Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 268.
v. 16. MT Ketiv, read Qere, מִמְסָב; the א has dropped out through haplography, due to the following ה.

MT ידועה ותומך白糖 at the start of v. 17. The implied sense is, ‘they will be fulfilled before your eyes’.

v. 17. MT הָאָלָה מִיתָר; OG וַיְהָא מִיתָר: OG may reflect a content variant in its Vorlage. Other instances of the expression ‘(not) give into the hand of’ in Jer. show a striking correspondence between תֵּבְרֵים נִפְרֵים and (יָסְדֵו)ְיָסְדֶּמֶּח passive (21.10; 32[39].4, 24, 25, 36, 43; 34[41].3; 37[44].17; 38[45].3, 18; 46[26].24), and הַיָּבֵרָה Qal and (יָסְדֵו)ְיָסְדֶּמֶּח active (22.25; 32[39].3; 38[45].16).

v. 18. MT לְשׁוֹלַל; OG לְאֵת אֵיתֶמֶךְ (‘for a prize, a godsend’) is a rather loose translation; cf. OG לֵאֵת סָקרַל (‘for spoil’) in the parallel expression in 21.9.

3.3. Exegetical Notes

v. 15. References to Jeremiah ‘in the courtyard of the guard’ occur also in 32.2, 8; 33.1; 37.21; 38.13, 28; 39.14. The exact nature of Jeremiah’s confinement here is unclear; it was evidently preferable to the בֵית הַחֲלֹם (‘prison house’) into which he is thrown by the city in 37.15, 18, and may even have entailed some degree of protection. On the other hand, chs. 32 and 33 portray the city’s behaviour negatively, emphasising the aspect of ‘confinement’ (בֵית, 32.2, 3; בֵיה, 33.1), and attributing Jeremiah’s presence there to Zedekiah’s irritation at his message (32.3).

v. 16. מְשָׁב מַלְךְ מִיתָר has previously appeared in 38.7-13, where he takes the initiative in rescuing Jeremiah from the cistern. מְשָׁב מַלְךְ is probably a proper name (as in OG, Παραδεμελεξ;
contrast Targ., פַּלְכָּא כָּרָה (ירמיהו) and מְבֻדָּרָה

Nevertheless, it underlines his role as a palace official, so that his story stands in contrast with the statement that opens the entire narrative:.JOptionPane תַּשְׁמִית (פורקר) וֵשָּׁמֵר

For the foreigner-eunuch motif, see Isa. 56.3-8.

Elsewhere in Jer., בָּא (Hiph.) with בָּרָה as object occurs only in 11.8 (זָכַר עַל הָעָרֶם הָאוֹרֵא אֶל בָּרָה) and 25.13 (וזכיות על הערעם_AES על בָּרָה) (םדרים); cf. the much more common בָּא + בָּרָה (Hiph.). The sense would seem to be ‘to fulfil one’s word’, as is occasionally expressed by בָּא + בָּרָה (Qal); Jdg. 13.12, 17; Ps. 105.19.

In each case, the beneficiary of the promise is Jeremiah, his adversaries being the people of Judah who will oppose him (בָּא הָאָרֶם, 1.18; נִשָּׁמָה, 15.20). Subsequently, it will occur only in 42.11, as part of YHWH’s conditional promise to the Judean remnant.

The phrase בָּא + בָּרָה is characteristic of judgement oracles in Jer. The central chapters state that YHWH will give into the hands of the Babylonians ‘all Judah’ (20.4), Jehoiakim (22.25), Zedekiah (32.4; 34.21), the prophets Ahab and Zedekiah (29.21), Jerusalem (32.3, 24-25; 38.3, 18) and its wealth (20.5). Similar warnings will be made later against Egypt (44.30; 46.24, 26). Only here, however, do we have the negative בָּא + בָּרָה.

The identity of these people is uncertain. Possibly the Judean צְבָא חֹלֶלֶת שֵׁלֶשֶׁת are in mind; cf. Zedekiah’s oath in 38.16 not to give Jeremiah בָּא הָאָרֶם הָאָרֶם שֵׁלֶשֶׁת.
Ebed-Melech’s support for Jeremiah, plus the fact that he was a foreigner (and a suspected quisling?), could well make him a target for reprisals. Others believe he feared those Judeans who had deserted to the Babylonians;\(^8^6\) cf. Zedekiah’s confession in 38.19. Probably, however, the reference is to the Babylonians themselves.\(^8^7\) For one thing, 39.17 has a striking counterpart in 22.25, (the only other instance of יִשָּׂרָאֵל in the OT), and here, those whom Jehoiachin fears are explicitly identified as יִשָּׂרָאֵל, לְךָ נֶפֶשׁ (cf. Zedekiah’s confession in 38.19, נִבְּטַח לְאֵל תַּחַת הַזְּדֵקִיָּה).\(^8^8\) In any case, whatever its original literary context, 39.15-18 must now be read in conjunction with 39.4-14 (note the repetition of הבש:וות, vv. 10, 17) and 40.1-6, both of which emphasise how Nebuzaradan protected Jeremiah while the Babylonians razed the city and deported its citizens.

v. 18. Although מָלַךְ פִּי occurs frequently with a human subject, especially in the idiom מָלַךְ פִּי (e.g., 1 Sam. 19.11; 1Kgs. 1.12; Jer. 48.6; Am. 2.14; Ps. 89.49), it is less often predicated of God (Isa. 46.4; Ps. 41.2; 107.20; 116.4; Job 22.30). Especially noteworthy are the parallels with Ps. 41.2, בַּכִּי רָעָה יְהוָה יָהוָה, which continues with the assurance הָרָעָה יִשָּׂרָאֵל אֲבֹדוּ (v. 3). The promise מָלַךְ פִּי forms a striking double contrast between Ebed-Melech and Zedekiah; while the king is repeatedly warned that he will not escape (לְאֵל תַּחַת הַזְּדֵקִיָּה; 32.4; 34.3; 38.18, 23) from the Babylonians, his servant will ‘be escaped’ (לְאֵל פִּי) by YHWH.

As with יִלֶל תַּחַת בִּרְד in v. 17, here too we have the sole instance of the negating of a formulaic expression of judgement; מָלַךְ פִּי (note the reverse order) occurs in oracles against the people of Judah (19.7; 20.4) and the remnant in Egypt (44.12).

Nowhere else in Jer. is someone said to ‘trust in’ (בִּמְסַבָּת) YHWH. In the first part of the book, the people of Judah are denounced for trusting in fortified cities (שַׁעַר מְסַבָּת, 5.17), deceptive words (סָפֵק מְסַבָּת, 7.8), the temple (רֹבֶרֶת הַשְּׂדֵק, 7.14).

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86 So Jones, Jeremiah, 466. Carroll’s remark, Jeremiah, 696 – “as an official of the king Ebed-meleg may have had the same enemies as Zedekiah, and his escape after the breaching of city wall may be the point of vv. 17-18” – seems to lean in this direction; but he then dismisses an allusion to 38.19 due to the difference in terminology.

87 So, cautiously, McKane, Jeremiah 2, 982. Carroll, Jeremiah, 696, is unpersuaded by either view, arguing that the princes could have killed Ebed-Melech already, and that the Babylonians would have had no reason to harm him. The second point somewhat overviews the treatment of Zedekiah and his sons by the Babylonians in 39.5-7.

88 So McKane, Jeremiah 2, 982.
falsehood (טָעָה, 13.25) and human kind (אָדָם, 17.5), a list that leads up to YHWH's declaration, מֵעָלָה אֶל הָאָדָם (17.7). Later chapters will indict Egypt, Moab and Ammon for trusting in Pharaoh (46.25) and in riches (48.7; 49.4). Within the final form of the book, therefore, Ebed-Melech is presented as the only figure who answers to the requirement of 17.7, a textual claim all the more remarkable given his non-Israelite status. Since the use of הבאת with reference to YHWH is most prominent in the Psalms, it is not surprising to find it in the psalm-like Jer. 17.5-8.

### 3.4. Coherence and Redaction

In view of its brevity, it is not surprising that the majority of commentators regard 39.15-18 as a unity; either an authentic salvation oracle of Jeremiah, or a late and wholly fictional interpolation. A few, however, have attempted to separate out an authentic kernel from later redaction. Thiel identifies as original the introductory material in vv. 15a, 16ac, and the promise מַלְשֶׁנָתָם תָּבוּרָה לא תְרַס (v. 18a); the remainder he assigns to the Deuteronomistic editor (D). This analysis is accepted by Kilpp and Graupner. Underlying their approach, however, is the same flawed methodology that we have discussed in earlier chapters; that is, language is cited as Deuteronomistic which has its roots in Jer. rather than in Dtr. Indeed, Graupner designates also תָּבוּרָה as Deuteronomistic despite conceding that "die Wendung הבאת ist zwar für die dt. Bearbeiter nicht typisch." The argument becomes still more precarious when it is claimed that

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89 Of the forty five OT instances where בּאֵת / אֵל / בָּשָׂף is used in conjunction with YHWH, God, or some aspect of his character, thirty two occur in the Psalms (4.6; 9.11; 13.6; 21.8; 22.5 [x2]; 6: 25.2; 26.1; 28.7; 31.7; 15; 32.10; 33.21; 37.3; 5; 40.4; 52.10; 55.24; 56.4, 5, 12; 62.9; 78.22; 84.13; 86.2; 91.2; 112.7; 115.9, 10, 11; 119.42) and only thirteen elsewhere (2 Kgs. 18.5, 22 [= Isa. 36.7], 30 [= Isa. 36.15]; 19.10 [= Isa. 37.10]; Isa. 26.3, 4, 50.10; Jer. 17.7; 39.18; Zeph. 3.2), see too Isa. 12.2, 12.5.

90 So Volz, Jeremia, 348; Rudolph, Jeremia, 212-213; Weiser, Jeremia, 357; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 290-291; Thompson, Jeremiah, 649.

91 So Duhm, Jeremia, 312-313; Mowinckel, Komposition, 44 (who assigned it to the C source); Hyatt, 'Jeremiah', 1081-1082; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 110-112; Pohlmann, Studien, 99; Carroll, Jeremiah, 696; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 991-992.

92 Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 56-57.

93 Kilpp, Niederreichen, 88-90; Graupner, Auftrag, 126-128.

94 E.g., אֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר תָּמוּר (11.8; 25.13; cf. Jos. 23.15); אָדָם אֲשֶׁר תֹּמֶךְ (21.9; 38.2); אֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר תָּמוּר (22.25; cf. Deut. 28.60); הַרְעָעָה אֲשֶׁר תֹּמֶךְ (21.10; 44.27).

95 Graupner, Auftrag, 127 n.61.
since v. 17a, the oracle of Deut 28, refers back to the ‘redactional’ v. 16a, it too must be secondary—despite the use of "in the (poetic) 15.21." Stulman points out that the only clearly Deuteronomistic phrase in 39.15-18 is the MT plus in v. 16.\footnote{Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 56; Graupner, Auftrag, 127. Ironically, Thiel’s ascription of the oracle to D undermines his attempt to ground the authenticity of v. 18a in its first-person speech (cf. 48.25), as he then admits (57).}

A variant of Thiel’s argument has been put forward by Schulte.\footnote{Stulman, Prose Sermons, 111-112. Stulman concludes (112) that “the passage may be secondary from a literary point of view, but there is little basis for associating it with the C corpus.”} He agrees that with five separate promises the oracle is overladen, and that some of the language ("in the (poetic) 15.21") is indeed Deuteronomistic. More particularly, however, Schulte argues that the promises relating to the destruction of Jerusalem (v. 16) are shown to be secondary by their irrelevance: “Für Ebed-Melech ist... im Augenblick seine persönliche Bedrohung durch die Heerführer das eigentliche Problem.”\footnote{Schulte, ‘Persönliche Heilsorakel’, 258-260.} This focus on what he perceives as ‘the real problem’ is for Schulte the decisive criterion. Consequently, he accepts as original not only מַלְאָךְ אֲמָרָה (v. 18) but also the promise לֹא תֵּבִיא בָּדַד אָנָנוּ אָסָר אַחַת יָד מִפְּסֵיתָה (v. 17b), which Thiel, Kilpp and Graupner reject. He also retains the final words וַיהוּּֽה יְֽהִי מְשֶּׁרֶת לַשלָּלֵךְ בַּמְּשָׁתָה (v. 18b). Schulte’s refusal to automatically delete ‘Deuteronomistic’ language is welcome, but it is by no means certain that Ebed-Melech’s fate was unconnected with that of Jerusalem. Even if it was the Babylonians who posed the threat to him, the chaos (and loss of royal protection?) attending the fall of the city would offer a clear opportunity for settling old scores.

The fact is, however, that all attempts to delineate ‘kernel’ from ‘redaction’ in 39.15-18 on the basis of terminology founder on the sheer profusion of verbal inter-connections with other parts of Jer. that are evident here.\footnote{Schulte, ‘Persönliche Heilsorakel’, 259.} We have already noted these separately, but can now list them together: האֶנְפֶּשׁ אָסָר (cf. 1.18; 25.13); הוֹדֶלִיתֶךְ (cf. 1.8, 19; 15.20, 21); הָעֹזֵב מִכָּאָת אֶת־רֹבֶרֶת (cf. 11.8; 22.25); מַלְאָךְ אֲמָרָה (cf. 32.4; 34.3; 38.18, 23); מַלְאָךְ (cf. 9.7; 20.4; 44.12); וַיְֽהִי הַלַּעֲשָׁר לַשָּׁלָלֵךְ (cf. 5.17; 7.8; 7.14; 13.25; 17.5; 46.25; 48.7; 49.4; 51.18).
21.9; 38.3; 45.5). Schulte’s remark about ‘die Überfüllung’ of the unit is thus in one sense quite correct, but it proves too much. 39.15-18 blends words and phrases from a variety of other passages, which cannot all meaningfully be termed ‘Deuteronomistic’. This suggests that we are dealing not with a single redaction of an authentic saying, but rather with a compositional unity — either by Jeremiah, utilising his own prophetic utterances, or by a later author creating a literary pastiche.

3.5. Differentiation in Jer. 39[46].15-18: מֶלֶךְ הָאָרֶץ / הָעֵדוּר הָיוָה

For all its brevity, 39.15-18 provides arguably the most remarkable salvation oracle to be found in Jer. Against the backdrop of the fall of Jerusalem, anticipated and described in chs. 37 – 39, one person — “a virtually anonymous foreigner” — is promised YHWH’s protection and rescue. Brueggemann remarks,

The destruction of Jerusalem is sweeping and comprehensive (vv. 1-10). A critical exception is nonetheless made. Ebed-Melech constitutes an important remnant. The destruction wrought by God through Nebuchadnezzar is not morally indifferent or undifferentiated.

In certain respects, the mode of differentiation in 39.15-18 resembles that which we encountered in 21.1-10 and 38.1-3, namely, that of the ‘doomed city / saved individual’. The announcement with which the oracle begins (מִפְרָשׁ אֶל הָעֵדוּר הָיוָה לְצָרֶה לֻלֶּה, v. 16), and the promise with which it concludes (וְהָיוֹתָה לְךָ לְפֵשׁ לְשֵׁלֶל, v. 18) unmistakably echo the language of those two earlier passages. The shared historical context, and the absence of any promise of future restoration, might also suggest that the same philosophy of differentiation underlies these three passages.

At the same time, however, in several respects the nature of the polarity in 39.15-18 differs markedly from that in chs. 21 and 38. For one thing, whilst in those two passages ‘life as

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101 The idiom בֵּין יְהֹוָה בָּנָי is so common in Jer. and the OT generally that it can hardly be seen as alluding to any particular passage.

102 Carroll, Jeremiah, 696, describes 39.15-18 as “a midrash built out of phrases and motifs from the whole tradition”; cf. Duhm’s description of the author as “der Midraschist” (Jeremia, 313).

103 As Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 289, describes Ebed-Melech. Stulman, Order Amid Chaos, 112, describes Ebed-Melech as “this faithful outsider”.

104 Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 374.
booty’ is contingent upon ‘going out’ (נָאֵף) to the Babylonians, ch. 39 makes no such demand of Ebed-Melech. Indeed, since the story of his rescue of Jeremiah (38.7-13) follows the prophet’s appeal for people to leave the city, the impression given is that he, like Jeremiah, remained (שָׂרָא) in Jerusalem. Instead, according to 39.18 the salvation of this Cushite official is due simply to his trust in YHWH.

Moreover, what he is promised bears only slight resemblance to what was offered to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The assurances, ‘I will save you on that day . . . you will not be given into the hands of the men you fear . . . I will surely deliver you . . . you will not fall by the sword’, whilst limited to the immediate crisis, are unparalleled in chs. 21 and 38, and render YHWH’s promise to Ebed-Melech qualitatively different from that to the people. Salvation is not simply a function of escaping the doomed city – avoiding the disaster scene, so to speak – but of YHWH’s personal protection in the midst of it. Putting this another way, Ebed-Melech’s welfare is presented as YHWH’s personal pledge (יִבְרָא הַלְּבָנָה . . . מִמְּלֵךְ מָלֵא לָבָנָה) rather than as a somewhat detached prediction (cf. דאש אֲלָה תְּפֵלָת וַדֹּא, 21.9; 38.2). Together with the commendation בָּנָת יְהוָה, these promises give to 38.15-18 a note of divine favour that is wholly absent from 21.8-10 and 38.1-3.105

If, then, we are in a different type of configuration to that found in 21.1-10 and 38.1-3, who provides the foil for Ebed-Melech in this judgement / salvation oracle? An obvious reply would be ‘this city’ (הַעֲרֵב הָיָה, v. 16). With no reference to any who might ‘go out’ to the Babylonians, Ebed-Melech appears as the one figure who will survive YHWH’s wrath coming on Jerusalem. The wording of vv. 17-18, however, suggests a more textured answer. As we have seen, two of the promises – מִמְּלֵךְ מָלֵא לָבָנָה and וַאֲלָה תְּפֵלָת וַדֹּא – are negations of earlier warnings against Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. Meanwhile, הבוחר לא חכם exempts Ebed-Melech from YHWH’s threat to the people of Judah (19.7; 20.4). This cluster of promises allows the figure of Ebed-Melech to take on new significance; the foreign official stands over and against not only his master Zedekiah,106 but also Jehoiakim and indeed the whole land.

105 Ebed-Melech’s relationship to those who ‘go out’ to the Babylonians in chs. 37 – 39 could be compared to that of the exiles to their counterparts in Judah in chs. 27 – 28; the promises held out offered to each of the latter parties being more impersonal and modest than those held out to the former.

106 A point of contrast noted by Rudolph, Jeremia, 213.
Especially significant in this regard are the words יב כז, emphasised by their final position within the oracle. As we have seen, when read within the wider book this affirmation serves to demarcate Ebed-Melech both from Judeans and foreigners who ‘trust in’ other things (5.17; 7.8, 14; 13.25; 17.5; 46.25; 48.7; 49.4). In particular, 39.18 recalls the promise of 17.7, מרה בהר הצופים יב כז. At the start of this dissertation, we referred to the study by Koenen, in which he examines the differentiation of ‘the righteous’ and ‘the wicked’ in salvation and judgement oracles. One passage to which he attends is Jer. 17.5-8.107 Koenen argues that this was added so as to modify Jeremiah’s prophecy against all Judah in 17.1-4: “Sie gilt allen Gottlosen, nicht jedoch den frommen Jahwe-Verehrern.”108 He then considers the function of Jeremiah’s confession in 17.14-18:

Die psalmistisch geprägte Konfession vv. 14-18 erscheint im Licht von vv. 5-8 als Explikation der weisheitlichen Lehre dieser Verse. Jeremia wird damit auf einer sekundären Ebene als prototypischer Frommer verstanden und als solcher gerettet, während seine Gegner als Gottlose untergehen.109

While this understanding of 17.14-18 may well be valid, however, the fact that within the entire book only Ebed-Melech is actually said to ‘trust in YHWH’ strongly suggests that he too is being presented as a ‘prototypical pious man’.110 Indeed, this would not be the only way in which 39.15-18 forges parallels between Ebed-Melech and Jeremiah. Some sort of analogy between the two figures is implied by the setting of 39.15-18, sandwiched as it is between the two accounts of Jeremiah’s release (39.11-14; 40.1-6).111 Moreover, as we noticed earlier, YHWH’s promise יב כז (v. 17) is otherwise applied only to the prophet himself (1.8, 19; 15.20, 21). This in turn strengthens the argument for seeing the underlying differentiation in 39.15-18 as between Ebed-Melech and the nation; for this is precisely how 1.17-19 and 15.19-20

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110 Note too the affinities between the portrait of Ebed-Melech and that of the ‘blessed’ man of the psalms. As well as the language of ‘trust in YHWH’, the promise of rescue (בשם יְהוָה) when YHWH brings evil (דֶּשֶׁא יִהוָה יִדְעָה) on Jerusalem echoes Ps. 41.2, צָאַה יִהוָה בּוֹשֵׁעַ. Also, just as Ebed-Melech’s salvation follows his rescue of Jeremiah (38.8-13), the promise of deliverance in Ps. 41 is for ‘the one who has regard for the poor’ (אֲלֵי דָּוִד יִנָּשֵׂל, v. 1).
111 One should not overlook the parallels between 39.15-18 and Nebuzaradan’s speech in 40.2-4. Both are introduced as divine oracles to Jeremiah, and offer hope to individuals in the context of national judgement; cf., the balancing terms, צָאַה (39.16) and חָוָה (40.3); צָאַה (39.17) and חָוָה (40.4); יב כז (39.16) and חָוָה (40.4).
configure the relationship between Jeremiah and the people of Judah (יהוה, 1.18; לֵילָהּ, 15.20).

We might ask, however, what justification there is for reading 39.15-18 within ‘the wider context of the book.’ Or, putting the question another way, if the language of this unit does indeed dialogue with other parts of Jer., what does this imply about its literary origins? To ask the question is of course to suggest one answer; that the oracle to Ebed-Melech was incorporated into the book relatively late. We noted earlier that this view is held by a number of scholars. Evidence for this may lie in the fact that it appears to be ‘out of place’ (cf. the reference to Jeremiah’s confinement, v. 15a). Some have suggested that it has simply been displaced from its original context (either after 38.13112 or 38.28113), but even there it would have a slightly intrusive quality. As Jones remarks, "the fact is that it cannot be closely welded into the main theme of chapters 37 – 45."114 Without prejudging the quite separate matter of its authenticity, therefore, there is reason to think that this oracle was added at a time when much of Jer. was already complete, so that allusions to earlier passages may well be intentional.

4. Summary: Differentiation in Jer. 38 – 39

We can now sum up our findings with regard to the issue of differentiation within the first part of the macro-section Jer. 37 – 45. As we have seen, the unit begins with a restatement of the polarity that we encountered in 21.1-10. The report of Jeremiah’s interview with Zedekiah nuances this, however. Whilst the prophet’s message appears to repeat 38.1-3, it turns out on closer inspection to diverge somewhat. Zedekiah may save not only himself, but also his family and indeed the whole city; in addition, the promise ‘it will go well with you’ sounds a note of optimism that is singularly absent in 21.9 or 38.2. At the same time, the invitation begins with a note of doubt (אַלֹם, v. 17) and ends by making it clear that the option for Zedekiah is foreclosed.

This being so, we might ask how 38.1-3; 14-23 relates to ch. 21. There, we argued, the question of ‘salvation’ turned on the issue of affiliation to Jerusalem; life and death were

112 Rudolph, Jeremia, 212-213.
113 Bright, Jeremiah, 229.
114 Jones, Jeremiah, 465.
assigned according to a □“Xnm /ד"נ polarity. Since, however, only ‘the people’ were told of this offer, it was ambiguous as to whether Zedekiah could himself be one of the □“Xnm /ד"נ polarity. In ch. 38, we find a different but equally ambiguous picture. The □“Xnm /ד"נ polarity is reiterated, and this time Zedekiah is himself invited to ‘go out’; but even before he makes his response, we learn that he will follow the counter-advice of his friends. In both chapters, Zedekiah is differentiated from the rest of ‘the people’

The oracle to Ebed-Melech (39.15-18) echoes the promise of 38.2, but it also exceeds it, and does so towards an individual who has not fulfilled its requirements. Especially when read within the wider context of the book, it suggests that the critical distinction vis-à-vis YHWH’s salvation is in fact □“Xnm /ד"נ. To be sure, the □“Xnm /ד"נ and □nan /ד"נ polarities are not mutually exclusive. On the one hand, the issue of trust may be said to undergird the □“Xnm /ד"נ distinction since, as we have argued, the issue at stake in ch. 21 is one of affiliation to Jerusalem. On the other hand, two of the objects for which the Judeans are rebuked for ‘trusting in’ (a □nan) in the earlier chapters of Jer. are their ‘fortified cities’ (5.17) and ‘the house of YHWH’ (7.14). Nevertheless, it is clear that the oracle to Ebed-Melech ‘frames the issue’ in a distinctive way. Consequently, it may be read as a claim that even those who were not exiles in 597 (ch. 24) and who did not ‘go out’ in 587 (21.8-10; 38.1-3) might receive divine favour.

5. Jer. 42[49].1 – 43.7

5.1. Text

| καὶ προσήλθον παντες οἱ ηγεμόνες τὴς δυναστείας καὶ Ιωακαὶ καὶ Ζακερίας υἱὸς Μακασσιοῦ καὶ πας ὁ λαὸς ἀπὸ μικρὸν καὶ ἐκώς μεγάλου | ויהי לך שלים שליחים ח испыта הנ содержит ב Poke בצוח נורל

| τῷ Ἰερεμίᾳ τὸν προφήτην καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσσιν αὐτῷ πεσέτα τὸ ἐλεύθο ἡμῶν κατὰ προσώπον σου καὶ προσέβηκε πρὸς κυρίον θεοῦ σου περὶ τῶν καταλαίπων τουτῶν ὑπὸ κατελείφθησαν ὄλγοι ἀπὸ πολλῶν καθὼς ἦς ἐθαλάμη σοι βλέπωσιν | ἠμαρτός οὖν δὲ ὑπερεάζει τὸν θεὸν καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τὸν καταλαίπησαν ταύτῃ ὑπὸ κατελείφθησαν ὄλγοι ἀπὸ πολλῶν καθὼς ἦς ἐθαλάμη σοι βλέπωσιν

| καὶ ἀναγγέλατο ἡμῖν κυρίος ὁ θεὸς σου τὴν ὁδὸν ἡ περενεμεθῇ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ λογον ὑπὸ ποιησίουν | τρέξαντες λέγουσιν αἱ ἀλαλάκδος ἀλαλάκδος ἀλαλάκδος ἀλαλάκδος

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δια τούτο ἀκουστάτε λόγου κυρίου οὕτως ἐπεὶ κυρίος ἦν ἤμεις δώτε τὸ προσώπον ἤμων εἰς Αἰγυπτού καὶ ἐστῆθη ἐκεί κατοίκειν
καὶ ἔστη τῇ ρομφαῖᾳ ἢν ἤμεις ἔσβεσθε ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτῆς εὑρῆσε ἤμας ἐν Αἰγυπτῷ καὶ ὁ λιμὸς ὥστε ἤμεις λόγου ἐχῆτε ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ καταλημάτισε ἤμας ἐν Αἰγυπτῷ καὶ ἐκεῖ ἀποδεικνύετε
καὶ ἔστη τὶ παντὶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ παντὶς ὁ ἀλλογείς ἢν θέντες τὸ προσώπον αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν Αἰγυπτοῦ ἐνοικεῖν ἐκεί εξελισσόμεν ἐν ρομφαίᾳ καὶ εἰ ὁ λιμὸς καὶ ὅποι ἔστητον αὐτῶν οὕτως σωζόμενος ἀπὸ τῶν κακῶν ὃν ἦσαν ἐπάχους ἐν αὐτοῖς
ὅτι οὕτως ἐπεὶ κυρίος καθὼς ἐστάθην ὁ θύμος μου ἐπὶ τοὺς κατοίκους Ιερουσαλήμ οὕτως σταθεὶ ὁ θύμος μου ἐφ' ἤμας εἰσῆλθον ἤμων εἰς Αἰγυπτού καὶ κατασθεὶ ἐν ἄβατον καὶ ἰσχεὶς καὶ εἰς ἀραὶ καὶ εἰς δυναίτον καὶ καὶ μὴ ἦσαν ὅπως τοῦ τοποῦ τοῦτον
ὁ ἐκαλέσα τοὺς κυρίος ἐφ' ἤμας τὸς καταλοίπος Ιουδαὶ μὴ ἐστῆθης εἰς Αἰγυπτοὺ καὶ νῦν γνῶσετε γνώσεσθε
ὅτι ἐπονημέρωσας ἐν ψυχής ἤμων ἄποστειλας με λεγόμενος προσεύχας περὶ ἤμων πρὸς κυρίον καὶ κατὰ παντὰ ὃ ἔστην λαλήσῃ σοι κυρίος ποιησομεν
καὶ συν ήκονομάτε τῇ φωνῇ κυρίου ἢς ἀπεστειλε με πρὸς ἤμας
καὶ νῦν ἐν ρομφαίᾳ καὶ εἰ ὁ λιμὸς ἐκλεισθεὶ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ οὐ ἤμεις θεωρήσετε οὕτως κατοίκειν ἐκεῖ
καὶ ἐγενήθη ὡς ἐπανειστερο Ἰερεμίας λέγων πρὸς τὸν λαὸν τοὺς παντας λόγοὺς κυρίου σὺς ἀπεστειλὲν αὐτοῦ κυρίος πρὸς αὐτοὺς παντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους
καὶ ἔπειν Ἀζαρίους υἱὸς Μασασατοῦ καὶ Ἰουσαν υἱὸς Καρνη καὶ παντες οἱ ἄνδρες

15. ὅσον λέγουσιν ὅτι κύριος μαθήματα ἔχει τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·
καὶ ἔστη τῇ αὐτῇ μετὰ ἀλήθειας ἔδωκεν τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·

16. ὅσον λέγουσιν ὅτι κύριος μαθήματα ἔχει τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·
καὶ ἔστητον τῷ στρατεύματι κύριος μαθήματα ἔχει τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·

17. ὅσον λέγουσιν ὅτι κύριος μαθήματα ἔχει τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·
καὶ ἔστησε τῇ αὐτῇ μετὰ ἀλήθειας ἔδωκεν τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·

18. ὅσον λέγουσιν ὅτι κύριος μαθήματα ἔχει τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·
καὶ ἔστησε τῇ αὐτῇ μετὰ ἀλήθειας ἔδωκεν τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·

19. ὅσον λέγουσιν ὅτι κύριος μαθήματα ἔχει τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·
καὶ ἔστησε τῇ αὐτῇ μετὰ ἀλήθειας ἔδωκεν τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·

20. ὅσον λέγουσιν ὅτι κύριος μαθήματα ἔχει τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·
καὶ ἔστησε τῇ αὐτῇ μετὰ ἀλήθειας ἔδωκεν τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·

21. ὅσον λέγουσιν ὅτι κύριος μαθήματα ἔχει τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·
καὶ ἔστησε τῇ αὐτῇ μετὰ ἀλήθειας ἔδωκεν τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·

22. ὅσον λέγουσιν ὅτι κύριος μαθήματα ἔχει τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·
καὶ ἔστησε τῇ αὐτῇ μετὰ ἀλήθειας ἔδωκεν τὸν ἱερόν κύριον τῆς ἡδονής ἔχει·

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5.2. Textual Notes

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v. 1. MT διέθεσε η εικονιζήσει: LXX8, A Άξορίας υπός Μασσαίου; LXX9 Άξορίας υπός Ωσαίου; LXX5 Ιεζύνιας υπός Ωσαίου. Cf. the variants in 43.1: “LXX setzt an beiden Stellen als Vorlage voraus.” With most commentators, we follow OG as pointing to an original עברית 본 משלי.

v. 2. MT הביא את מפרים יד וLEM בקולה חיה וברא יד: MT probably represents a conflate text.116

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115 Ziegler, Beiträge, 83; similarly Stulman, Other Text, 151. But as far as the patronymic is concerned, Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 273, comments that “there is no way to decide between the readings.”

116 Janzen, Studies, 17.
v. 6. MT Ketiv אֲנָה (cf. Qere אֲנָה) is generally seen as a late form.\textsuperscript{117}

v. 9. MT >OG: MT plus; probably a composite of elements from vv. 2, 6 and 20.\textsuperscript{118}

v. 10. IDE in Die; DX ('if returning you will dwell'); OG ꝏ באינטרנט ('if indeed you will remain') = אַל שִׁבֵּךְ תַּחְפִּר. OG is supported by the versions and accepted by most scholars.\textsuperscript{119} Holladay prefers MT, arguing that "it is possible to have an infinitive absolute of one verb and a finite form of a second verb related by word-play";\textsuperscript{120} he thus translates, 'If you change your mind and stay . . ." This is an attractive reading, but it may have been secondarily influenced by the statement in 41.17 that the Jews already intended to go to Egypt. Cautiously, we acceptירה as the more original reading.

MT 'דְּמַה תָּקַב. OG &גשנפִּאוד: If 'רַה Niph. is understood to mean 'grieve, be sorry for' (Gen. 6.7; 1 Sam. 15.11), then OG ('I have ceased from') yields a significantly different sense. Tov notes that the use of (גשנפִּא) for 'רַה is characteristic for the reviser of OG Jer., who "probably rendered forms of 'רַה as if they were derived from יָדוּ . . . If so, he made an erroneous revision."\textsuperscript{121} Possibly the translator wanted to avoid the idea of God 'repenting'. Others argue that יָדוּ (lit., 'take a deep breath') here means 'relent, change course' (Isa. 57.6; Jer. 4.28; 18.8; 26.3; Ezek. 24.14; Zech. 8.14) thus reducing the difference with OG.\textsuperscript{122} In almost all these latter references, however, a future scenario is in mind, whereas in Jer. 42.10 (as in Gen. 6.7; 1 Sam.

\textsuperscript{117} Duhm, Jeremia, 320; according to Holladay, Jeremia 2, 274, it is the only example in biblical Hebrew.

\textsuperscript{118} Janzen, Studies, 54.

\textsuperscript{119} Duhm, Jeremia, 321; Rudolph, Jeremia, 218; Bright, Jeremia, 251; Thompson, Jeremia, 664; McKane, Jeremia 2, 1032; Carroll, Jeremia, 716; see too GKC §19i.

\textsuperscript{120} Holladay, Jeremia 2, 274, 300; similarly, DIHGS §101. rem.1. However, some of the examples they cite are disputable. Thus, נשכת אֶמָּס (Jer. 8.13; cf. נשכת אֶמָּס, Zeph. 1.2) may be a word-play involving נשחת and נשחת (so too McKane, Jeremia 1, 189), but see to the contrary GKC §113w, n.3.

\textsuperscript{121} Tov, Septuagint Translation, 51.

\textsuperscript{122} So Duhm, Jeremia, 321: "handelt es sich um den psychologischen Übergang vom Gefühl des Zorns zu dem des Mitleids und der Abneigung gegen ferneres Dareinschlagen"; similarly Bright, Jeremia, 255 ('I relent with regard to'); McKane, Jeremia 2, 1030 ('I am no longer minded'); Holladay, Jeremia 2, 300 ('retract'); Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 390 ('change course').
15.11) YHWH is reviewing some past action. Arguably, therefore, here has an emotive sense – ‘sorry about’, if not ‘sorry for’.123

v. 11. MT 'anx b'anjib 'anx j'ren; OG ton bpag kcu ac'ev bpq; Targ. 'anx b'anjib... 'anx b'anjib...: If 'anx ('pull out', 'rescue') here renders nna Hiph., it is the only time in the entire OT that it does so. It is frequently used, however, for nna Hiph. ('tear away', 'rescue'). Thus, OG appears to witness to the same wording as MT, but in a different order.

v. 12. MT 'anx v... 'anx...; OG doqo... doqo... doqo... doqo...: After the initial 'anx, MT uses third-person verb forms; the versions all consistently use the first-person. A provisional judgement in favour of MT might be made on the basis that it is easier to account for the versions modifying the Vorlage than for MT doing so; either they read the verbs as infinitive absolutes, i.e., nna and nna,124 or / and they resisted the notion of Nebuchadnezzar showing mercy.125 The MT reading is also supported, however, by the use of nna elsewhere in the OT (Gen. 43.14; Deut. 13.18; 1 Kgs. 8.50; Neh. 1.11; Ps. 106.46; Dan. 1.9). In each case, the subject of nna is YHWH, and in each case except Deut. 13.18, his compassion involves moving other people (often captors of some sort) to show benevolence. Twice, the nature of this human benevolence is described more precisely: Gen. 43.14, Dab nna, and 1 Kgs. 8.50, Dab nna. These verses correspond to MT Jer. 42.12, where nna is defined by Dm nna (subject: YHWH) and by Dm nna (subject: Nebuchadrezzar).

MT 'anx; OG ḳerṭeptw: Both texts read the verb as ḳerṭ ('restore, return'). An alternative pointing ḳerṭ (Hiph. ḳerṭ) is supported by Targ. (חֶבֶר) and Vulg. (et habitare vos faciam), and is preferred by some scholars.126 But there seem no compelling reason to ignore the

123 Cf. Bright, Jeremiah, 256; Thompson, Jeremiah, 666.
124 Duhm, Jeremiah, 322; D. Barthélemy, Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament. 2. Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations (OBO 50.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1986) 748; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1034. Bright, Jeremiah, 256, Pohlmann, Studien, 132, and Thompson, Jeremiah, 666 n.6, believe that OG may have been right to read the Vorlage this way. The fact that ḳerṭ has a yodh, however, might argue against this as an explanation for the confusion, and suggest instead that the Vorlage was in fact ḳerṭ. On the other hand, if nna is to be seen as an adverbial complement to ḳerṭ, the use of the conjunction before nna and nna would argue against their being infinitive absolutes. See DIHGS §102-103.
125 Volz, Studien, 283.
126 E.g., Duhm, Jeremiah, 322; Volz, Studien, 283; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 118; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1035.
agreed reading of MT and OG,\textsuperscript{127} which – given the location of the remnant on the border of Judah (41.17) – makes good sense. The Hiph. is best taken as permissive, i.e., ‘he will allow you to return’.\textsuperscript{128}

vv. 13-14. MT אֶלְמַהְמָה לַהֹגֶר / אֲמַרְךָ לַֽאֲמַרְךָ, >OG: MT is awkward, and the shorter text preferable.

v. 15. MT אֲמַרְךָ לַֽאֲמַרְךָ, >OG: While in other respects this verse shows MT expansion (i.e., the addition of הָלָֽכְךָ), on this point OG has probably confused the final letters of בֵּיתָ and בַּשָּׁם.\textsuperscript{129}

v. 16a. MT אֲמַרְךָ >OG: MT plus (cf. v. 16b).

v. 17. OG παντες ᵉς ἀλλογενεις (= άλλοι τιμίοι) >MT: The reading is odd, though several scholars have connected it with the MT plus κάλος ἡ δύναμις ἡρώω in 43.2. Janzen proposes that άλλοι was an early marginal note on 42.17; this was incorporated into the Hebrew text tradition at 43.2, whilst in the OG Vorlage it was corrupted to καλός ἡρώω and added at 42.17.\textsuperscript{130}

MT בֵּיתָ >OG (also in v. 22): MT plus; see notes on 21.9 and 38.2.

MT שֶׁרְיָה >OG: MT plus.\textsuperscript{131} OG also uses a participial form of (και)σωκω for Μηλίς in 44.14, 28; 50.28, and 51.50.

MT לָבוֹא and OG מָלַל are both probably plusses.\textsuperscript{132}

v. 18. MT אֶלְמַהְמָה אֲמַרְךָ; OG ᾃ δ θυμων μου: Since θυμων can represent either άκ or ἡ μη, either might be secondary here. Most commentators take ἡ μη as the later term,\textsuperscript{133} but ἡ μη (fem.) would seem to require the fem. מַהְמָה rather than the masc. מַהְמָה.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{127} So Rudolph, Jeremia, 218; Bright, Jeremiah, 251; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 65 n.8; Thompson, Jeremiah, 666; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 274; Carroll, Jeremiah, 716. Pohlmann, Studien, 132 n.404, leaves the question open.

\textsuperscript{128} On the permissive use of the Hiphil, see IBH §157.

\textsuperscript{129} Stulman, Other Text, 152, is undecided what lay in the Vorlage here.

\textsuperscript{130} Janzen, Studies, 65; but see the response of McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1036-1037.

\textsuperscript{131} See too Tov, Septuagint Translation, 100; Stulman, Other Text, 152.

\textsuperscript{132} Janzen, Studies, 54.

\textsuperscript{133} So Janzen, Studies, 54; Stulman, Other Text, 153; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1037; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 276.

\textsuperscript{134} Unless this is simply a case of a feminine noun taking an uninflected verb. For examples, see GBH 2, §150k.
OG eἰς ἀβατοῦ καὶ ὑποχειροῦ: Since ἀβατοῦ (‘a remote place’) normally translates ἀλήθεια, it probably does so here, rather than rendering ὀθονία (‘oath, curse’). We then have to consider ὑποχειροῦ, ‘minions, subjects’; hap. leg. in LXX Jer., but cf. Bar. 2.4, καὶ ἐδώκες σῶτοις ὑποχειροὺς πασασίς ταῖς βασιλείαις. Tov believes that in both places the term underlying ὑποχειροῦ was probably ἡμῖν, pointing out that this was a constant problem to the translators (each of its six occurrences is rendered differently). He suggests as the Vorlage of Jer. 42(40).18, νυνὶδής λέγεται καὶ πλεσθείς ἡ εὐρασία.

v. 19. MT הָרָקִים; OΓ & ἐκλάλησε κυρίος: Both MT and OG read awkwardly. The use of הָרָקִים to introduce or sum up a prophetic oracle is well attested in the OT, but a bare הָרָקִים is unparalleled. Moreover, the qatal form of the verb to start the sentence is highly abrupt. One solution is to read ἡμῖν ὁ βασιλεὺς κῦρος (as in Zech. 4.6), cf. Targ. (ἢ λαβέτε ἀνθρώπον) and Vulg. (verbum domini super vos). The loss of κῦρος by haplography is easily explicable, given the ending of v. 18, τοῖς πιστοῖς. However, OΓ & ἐκλάλησε implies ὁ ἀρχής ἡμῶν ἐκλάλησε ἡμῖν ἀλήθεια (14.1, 46.1, 47.1, 49.34), where OΓ assumes an absolute sense, ‘this is that which’. GKC notes the Jeremianic expression ἡμῖν ἀλήθεια ἡμῖν ἑωθόν ἐστι (14.1; 46.1; 47.1; 49.34), where αὐτῷ assumes an absolute sense, ‘this is that which’.

MT νυνὶδής λέγεται καὶ πλεσθείς ἡ εὐρασία > OΓ: Cf. Deut. 4.26. Duhm believed that this was MT plus, however, scribal error through homoiarchton (נ ו) seems more probable.

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135 The term ἀβατοῦ is mostly limited in the LXX to Jer., where it almost always translates ἀλήθεια/στήρα. Tov, Septuagint Translation, 46-47, notes twelve instances of this equivalence in Jer. b.
136 On the absolute use of this term, see Tov, Septuagint Translation, 132 n.15.
137 Tov, Septuagint Translation, 132 n.16.
138 E.g., ἀλήθεια ἡμῶν ἐστι (1 Kgs. 14.11; Isa. 1.2; Joel 4.8), ἡμῖν ἀλήθεια ἐστι (Ex. 16.23; Lev. 10.3). See too too στήρα καὶ ἡμῖν ἐστι (14.1; 46.1; 47.1; 49.34), where ἡμῖν assumes an absolute sense, ‘this is that which’.
139 So Duhm, Jerusalem, 323; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 118.
140 See Stulman, Other Text, 153.
141 GKC §138b n.2.
142 “In der OG spricht Jer sachlich als Berater des Volkes, im MT theologisch nach der Theorie, die sich das spätere Judentum über den Untergang des alten Volkes zurechtgemacht hat.” (Duhm, Jerusalem, 324).
143 So Janzen, Studies, 118; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 275. Stulman, Other Text, 153, is undecided.
v. 20. MT *Ketiv* is impossible, and most follow *Qere*, (Hiph. *תָּשְׁרָה*, ‘to err’). The *Ketiv* is probably one of several “*inwardly transitive or intensive* Hiphils”, all of which have a moral quality, e.g., (see Prov. 10.17 for an intransitive use of *תָּשְׁרָה* Hiph). By understanding the preposition as ‘ב of price’ (as in Jer. 17.21), most scholars render the phrase in some such way as ‘you have wandered at the cost of your lives’. OG, however, suggests *דִּבְרֶה*, ‘you did evil (in yourselves)’. Duhm considered this the original text, though his reasoning shows a strongly anti-theological bias. More probably, OG has substituted a term for one that was obscure.

MT לֹא הָעִיר אֶנֶּפֶר; OG *אֵל אֵּנוֹפֶּר* (see Gen. 34.7; 1 Sam. 14.33; Jer. 12.17) or a participle לֹא הָעִיר. But it is not unusual for OG to translate a finite verb with a participle (Ex. 12.37; 15.18; Jdg. 4.16).

MT כֹּן הָעִיר לְךָ: > OG: Probable MT plus, influenced by (v. 3) and כֹּן הָעִיר לְךָ (v. 5).

v. 21. MT *אָלַחַד הָעִיר וְלֹא* and בֶּן הָעִיר: > OG: MT plus, influenced by v. 20.

v. 22. MT יַד ה הָעִיר וְלֹא: > OG: MT plus; secondary expansion from v. 19.

144 Not (Duhm, Jeremia, 324, and some editions of BHS) רָשָׁתָה. See the corrigenda in R. Wonneberger, Understanding BHS: A Manual for the Users of the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (SB 8; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1990) 75. *הֶשְׁרִיתָה* is the *Qere* reading in V, which gives as the *Ketiv* רָשָׁתָה. GKC §53d (italics theirs).

145 GKC §53d (italics theirs).

146 E.g., Rudolph, Jeremia, 220 (“ihr habt fehlerhaft gehandelt um den Preis eures Lebens.”); Thompson, Jeremiah, 665; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 246. However, Ehrlich, Randglossen, 348, and McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1038, see YHWH as its object. Volz, Jeremia, 358, follows Vulg. (decepistis animas vestras) by translating *you have deceived your own souls,* but this requires a highly unusual use of ב.

147 Duhm, Jeremia, 324; OG is also preferred by Condamin, Jérémie, 281.

148 So Volz, Jeremia, 359; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 301.

149 So Duhm, Jeremia, 324, and apparently Volz, Jeremia, 385 (“santet und sagtet”).

150 Stulman, Other Text, 153, reads לֹא הָעִיר for the Vorlage, translating (156) ‘[when] you sent me’

151 Janzen, Studies, 54; also Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 276. McKane (Jeremiah 2, 1039) remarks that לֹא הָעִיר (v. 20) reads “disturb an original continuity between יָשְׁרָה אֶל אֵּנוֹפֶּר וְלֹא and לֹא הָעִיר”.

152 Janzen, Studies, 54; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 276; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1039; Stulman, Other Text, 153.

153 Janzen, Studies, 54; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 276.
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In addition to the witness of MT and OG, we also have a fragmentary text of 43.2-10 in 4QJer4. Although reconstructions of this text are uncertain at various points,154 it is clear that it mostly agrees with the text reflected by OG (e.g., the short forms of the names; תֹוֹרֶס [MT + ניִר], lines 2 and 3; [MT + יִהְיֶה], line 5), but at some points agrees with MT (e.g., כֶּל [> OG], line 6;155 לא [> OG], line 6; [OG הָוָה אֶבְּנַי], line 7).

v. 2. MT □nox D-im CTODXH; OG or dvSpeg or emavxeg . . . □vovxet; Concerning □, not only is the use of a participle to introduce direct speech unusual, but the plural form is inconsistent with the opening □ (though it agrees with the number of people specified in the verse).156 OG □vovxet points to □, but this still conflicts with the opening □, whereas OG □vovxet implies an original □,157 we would then have the syntactically awkward □ כֹּל □ כֹּל □ כֹּל. McKane concludes that both MT and OG are expansionary,158 and posits □ that □ כֹּל □ כֹּל for the Vorlage. A clue to a possible alternative lies in MT □, ‘insolent’ (>OG). We noted above Janzen’s suggestion that OG □ktaَّعسَت in 42.17 and MT □ here are both misreadings of a single marginal gloss, □, ‘foreign’.159 Building on this, we could follow the suggestion that

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154 Tov is more ready than Janzen to identify points of agreement between 4QJer4 and MT; but even Janzen, whilst affirming the “familial allegiance” (Studies, 183) of the Greek Vorlage and 4QJer4, surmises that “it represents a slightly different branch of the Egyptian family.” (Studies, 184). See also G.J. Brooke, ‘The Book of Jeremiah and its Reception in the Qumran Scrolls’, in Curtis & Römer, Book of Jeremiah, 187.

155 Tov, ‘Three Fragments’, 539, includes this in his reconstruction, “based on calculations of space”; for the same reason, Janzen, Studies, 183, prefers to omit it.

156 In any case, we should probably not expect ancient Hebrew writers to be any more consistent in their grammar than present-day English writers; see DIHGS §26 rem.5.

157 Rudolph, Jeremia, 218; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 275; pace Stulman, Other Text, 157.

158 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1050-1051.

159 Janzen, Studies, 65; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 275. Janzen adds that 43.2 “may well have stood opposite 42.17, in the next column of the manuscript.”
where MT now reads דב, the Vorlage read דמר ‘obstinate’;\(^{160}\) we would then have a natural word-pair, ויהי והימר דמר.

v. 3. MT מַעְרָץ; OG סְמוּבָאָלָלֶה סֹء: Elsewhere, LXX translates כז הָיִשׁ. ‘entice, incite’) with אֲפֹטֵא (‘trick') or עָפְסֶא (‘shake at, threaten'). However, סְמוּבָאָלָלֶה has a wide semantic range, including ‘to set / pit one person against another.’\(^{162}\)

vv. 4, 5. MT יִתְנָן; OG מֵאָכָא; 4Jer\(^{d}\) הַנֶּבֶר: In both places, the Qumran text supports reading the name without יִתְנָן; its spelling also differs slightly from MT.

v. 5. It will be helpful here to compare the readings of MT, OG and 4Jer\(^{d}\) (line 4); the latter, which is poorly preserved, has been reconstructed in two quite different ways.\(^{163}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MT:</th>
<th>אחר השם מֶלֶךְ נוהים נָרות תֵּשֶׁם לְמֵר בֵּית יָדָה</th>
<th>(^{164})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OG:</td>
<td>תִּשָּׁם אָפֹסֶא בֵּית עָפֹסֶא כְּאוּרִיָּה בְּּזֶה מִזְּרוּ</td>
<td>(^{164})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vorlage:</td>
<td>אחר השם לָחוֹר בָּאָרֶךְ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4Jer(^{d}) (Janzen):</td>
<td>אחר השם לָחוֹר בֵּית עָפֹסֶא</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4Jer(^{d}) (Tov):</td>
<td>אחר השם מֶלֶךְ נוהים נָרות תֵּשֶׁם לְמֵר בֵּית יָדָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OG non-representation of מֶלֶךְ נוהים נָרות תֵּשֶׁם לְמֵר בֵּית יָדָה strongly suggests its absence from the Vorlage, especially since it also lacks the near-identical phrase in 40.12.\(^{167}\) There is no clear

\(^{160}\) Volz, Jeremia, 358; Rudolph, Jeremia, 218; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 275.


\(^{162}\) Cf. Hdt. 3.32, σ. σκαμανν λεγους σκαλακι κυνος.

\(^{163}\) These reconstructions are inevitably conjectural, with only the final mem being certain. Preceding that is the bare top of a downward stroke, which could be a yodh (Janzen) or shin (Tov). At the end of the previous word, or the word before that, is what might be the tail of a tsadeh (Janzen) or resh (Tov).

\(^{164}\) LXX\(^{B,S}\). LXX\(^{A}\) adds אֶלֶף, agreeing with MT.

\(^{165}\) Janzen, Studies, 182-183; similarly, McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1053; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 276.

\(^{166}\) Tov, ‘Three Fragments’, 538-540, and DJD 15, 203. Tov’s annotation in DJD 15, 203, indicates that he views the י (in מַעְרָץ) and the ר (in מַעְרָץ) as ‘possible’. So too Brooke, ‘Book of Jeremiah’, 187: “It seems that in Jer. 43.5 4Jer\(^{d}\) was closer to the MT than to the LXX which lacks a phrase at this point.”

\(^{167}\) Janzen, Studies, 53; also Duhm, Jeremiah, 325; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 276; Stulman, Other Text, 157.
motive for deliberate omission,\(^\text{168}\) and no obvious cause of haplography. τοὺς ἀποκτησματάς is not a literal rendition of ἁπλά (ὁ ἀποκτησματα) but is unlikely to reflect a content variant in the Vorlage. MT הדוד is a typical plus over OG.

Determining the text of 4QJer\(^d\) is less straightforward. Both Janzen’s and Tov’s reconstructions have their merits, but the former (= OG Vorlage + מזרע) seems more probable, since it is doubtful whether the lacuna can contain all the wording that Tov proposes.\(^\text{169}\) In fact, Tov concedes that לזרע בaram מזרע is possible, but objects that it “would create a contextually difficult text.”\(^\text{170}\) The problem is that כל שאראת יהודא אשת שברק בaram מזרע (Janzen) is most naturally rendered as ‘the remnant of the Jews, who had returned (in order) to go to Egypt’, an obviously implausible statement. However, perhaps we should see אשת שברק as parenthetical, and take הבש ידך לזרע to complement הבש ידך.

v. 6. MT תּוֹרָה (‘men’); OG τοὺς δινοστοὺς ἄνδρας (‘strong men’): OG appears to have read הנבויים as הנבון ‘strong’.\(^\text{171}\)

MT בת מלך (‘daughters of the king’): de Boer argues\(^\text{172}\) that this is a corruption of בת תּוֹר (‘the court / household of the king’); the yodh could easily have been mistaken for a nun, so producing בת, the short (non-plene) form of ‘daughters’.

v. 7. MT יפיא >OG: MT is supported by 4QJer\(^d\) and is to be preferred.\(^\text{173}\) MT יפיא is more likely to be secondary; normally OG renders it with עוז.

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\(^\text{168}\) So Volz, Jeremia, 359; Rudolph, Jeremia, 220. Pohlmann, Studien, 154 n.522, leaves the question open.

\(^\text{169}\) ‘Q has a lacuna here, which cannot contain the MT plus, but which fills out nicely with G text.’ (Janzen, Studies, 183).

\(^\text{170}\) Tov, DJD 15, 204; ‘Three Fragments’, 539.

\(^\text{171}\) See Ziegler, Beiträge, 101.

\(^\text{172}\) de Boer, ‘Some Remarks’, 119.

\(^\text{173}\) So McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1054; Tov, DJD 15, 205; contra Janzen, Studies, 183.
5.3. Exegetical Notes

42.2. Exegetical Notes: Carroll sees here a striking contrast with earlier passages (7.16; 11.14; 14.11) where Jeremiah is forbidden to intercede.\(^{174}\) However, McKane notes that ‘intercession’ is here for direction, rather than for well-being.\(^{175}\) See also 1 Sam. 12.23, where Samuel pledges to ‘intercede’ (חרץ) for the people and to teach them ‘the way’ (דעם).

v. 3.驷: Either ‘the thing, that which’; or ‘the word’, if it is the oracular message as such, rather than the directions contained in it, that is in mind. 햍ך ארא נלה ב. "the way in which we should go", is probably intended literally, in the light of 41.17. Elsewhere in the OT, the phrase ארא נלה ידהו occurs sixteen times (Gen. 35.3; 42.38; Deut. 1.31, 33; 8.2; Josh. 3.4; 24.17; Jdg. 2.17; 18.6; 1 Sam. 9.6; 1 Kgs. 13.9, 12, 17; 2 Kgs. 21.21; Neh. 9.12, 19), and only in Jdg. 2.17 and 2 Kgs. 21.21 does it have a metaphorical use.

v. 5. רב: The phrase ארא נלה ב, ‘faithful and true witness’, occurs only here in the OT; ובו אל א.ViewHolder occurs otherwise only in Prov. 14.25 (cf. כי א Warrior, Prov. 14.5). For ובו אל to have the sense ‘a witness against (us)’, see Num. 5.13; Deut. 31.19, 26; Josh. 24.27; Mic. 1.2. However, we also have here a further echo of the 1 Sam. 12 passage, where in response to Samuel’s challenge ובו אל יעבד, the people affirm simply ובו אל (1 Sam. 12.5).

Formally impressive, the people’s promise has the unmistakable nature of “rhetorical overkill”.\(^{176}\) As Nicholson notes, “the people’s solemn undertaking . . . already alerts the reader to expect the subsequent conflict between the community and the prophet”.\(^{177}\) The overtones of 1 Sam. 12 may point in the same direction.

v. 10. ארא נלה: This language is paradigmatic in Jer. (cf. 1.10; 12.14-17; 18.7-9; 24.6; 31.28; 45.4), but the form in which it occurs here is particularly close to 24.6, which uses the same verbs in the same order: ובו אל ארא נלה: See our discussion in ‘Textual Notes’.

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174 Carroll, Jeremiah, 715.
175 McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1041.
176 Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 299.
177 Nicholson, Jeremiah 26 – 52, 142. Duhm, Jeremiah, 323, also sees in v. 5 a hint that the people had already decided to go to Egypt.
The language of this salvation oracle is otherwise restricted in Jer. to two distinct audiences; to Jeremiah himself (Jer. 1, 18; 15, 20) and to the Diaspora (Jer. 30, 10-11 = 46, 27; cf. Jer. 3, 6; 23, 6; Jer. 30, 7). The only other recipient of an oracle involving לְגַלּ הָיוֹם Hiph. is Ebed-Melech (39, 17).

Elsewhere, the expression usually denotes an act of deliverance involving military victory or escape. Here, however, resistance is out of the question, and escape to another land forbidden. Instead, as v. 12 explains, YHWH will ‘rescue’ his people precisely by causing Nebuchadrezzar to be compassionate.179 Compare Josh. 24, 10, where YHWH reminds Israel of how Balaam had intended to curse them, before adding, ‘וְאָבָאֲנֵי לְשׁוֹם לְבֵלָם רַעְדָּרָכּ, מִרְנַחְרוֹ לְאָבָאֲנֵי אֲבָאֲנֵי הָאָבָאֲנֵי.’ YHWH thus ‘rescues’ Israel from a curse by forestalling it. Also significant is Gen. 32, where, anticipating Esau’s wrath (v. 6), Jacob prays for help: תִּטְעֵלוּנָא אֲאָחֵי מְרִיד. His hopes seem to lie either in a quick escape (vv. 7-8), or in placating Esau with a gift (v. 21). In the event, however, Esau receives his brother warmly (33, 10), and in this we are probably meant to see God’s answer to Jacob’s prayer.

v. 12. אָבָאֲנֵי לְשׁוֹם רַעְדָּרָכּ: See our discussion in ‘Textual Notes’.

Following the reading reflected in MT and OG here, some commentators have suggested that the wording betrays a later exilic perspective.180 This is unnecessary, but there does seem to be a further echo of 24, 6, with מְרִיד here.

v. 15. נַפְשֵׁה הַיָּוְדֵד: This is the regular designation of the Judean community in this section of the narrative (40, 11, 15; 42, 19; 43, 5; 44, 12, 28); it occurs nowhere else in the OT. Until now, it has been used quite objectively to describe the ‘poor people’ (הַמָּמָוּם הָיוֹם) whom Nebuzaradan left (בְּרֵדְבָּא, Hiph.) with Gedaliah (39, 10), supplemented by Ishmael and his men (40, 7-8) and those who returned from other lands (40, 11-12). From now on, however, it will carry heavily pejorative overtones. In this passage, it seems to counter-balance יִשָּׁבֶר הָיוֹם (v. 18).

179 As Thiel remarks, Redaktion 26 – 45, 64, “v. 12 präzisiert die Zusage.”
180 Bright, Jeremiah, 256; Jones, Jeremiah, 477.
v. 19. Jeremiah’s words echo those of Moses to the Israelites in Deut. 4.26, assuring the people of the dire consequences of idolatry.

v. 20. See our discussion in ‘Textual Notes’.

Chapter 43

v. 3. Baruch’s appearance here is wholly unexpected, as is the charge that he is behind Jeremiah’s counsel; previously (32.12-14; 36.4-19) he has been presented in a subservient role to the prophet. Arguments that he is introduced here as a literary device, possibly representative of a particular readership, are less convincing than that the allegation was actually made for reasons that are now unclear.

v. 5. The reference is clearly to those who had returned to Judah from other nations (40.12); this is made explicit in the MT plus, but is also implied in OG. The identification of the returnees from other lands is puzzling; we would expect it also to include the original Mizpah community (cf. v. 6b). Strictly speaking, however, this would require אֲבָרָךְ אֲשֶׁר יָבוּב.

v. 6. Standing in apposition to the preceding אֲבָרָךְ אֲשֶׁר יָבוּב, the syntax equates the first four groups with the returnees from other lands in v. 5. However, אֲבָרָךְ אֲשֶׁר יָבוּב clearly establishes the members of the Mizpah community as a separate group. Clearly (as the textual variants show), the wording and syntax of vv. 5-6 have become somewhat muddled in the course of transmission; nevertheless, the overall picture is clear enough.

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182 This is worth emphasising, since McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1053, attaches great significance to the MT plus: “The group around Jonathan (sic!) is made to consist not only of those taken from Mizpah by Ishmael and rescued by Jonathan (sic!), but also of those whose return from neighbouring countries is reported at 40.11f.” To support his argument, however, McKane also has to delete אֲבָרָךְ אֲשֶׁר יָבוּב.

183 This is indeed how Pohlmann, Studien, 154, interprets MT. See too Bright’s translation, Jeremiah, 252: “Johanan . . . took the whole remnant of Judah: those who had returned to settle in the land of Judah from the various countries to which they had been scattered; the men, the women, and the children . . .”

184 Duhm, Jeremia, 325; see too McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1050, and RSV.
5.4. Coherence and Redaction

That 42.1 marks the start of a new episode is clear from a number of factors. As fast-moving drama gives way to speech-dominated material, Jeremiah mysteriously reappears (42.1). As we will see, exactly where the section ends is less certain. From a narrative point of view, however, the obvious conclusion is v. 7, where having rejected YHWH’s final word, the Jews are found once more in Egypt, their former land of slavery.

The setting (vv. 1-9) describes how the people ask Jeremiah to ‘intercede’ (ךלメל, vv. 2, 4) for them, in order to obtain YHWH’s direction. When he assents to their request, they swear to obey unreservedly whatever YHWH says. Although this interchange is recounted at some length (cf., the much briefer accounts in 21.2; 37.3), we need not suspect secondary expansion; in the light of their subsequent rejection of the oracle (43.2-3), it is more likely that the narrator wants to cast their request in an ironic light.186

The oracle (vv. 10-16) falls into two parts, each comprising a conditional clause (ךלメל, v. 10 and אב, v. 13) with a corresponding promise or warning. The first part (vv. 10-12) centres on the theme of living (ךט), which forms an inclusio (ךל, v. 10a; נ MASS, v. 12). Nevertheless, these verses are not one-dimensional. First, YHWH assures the people of his own favour, underlining this with the startling remark that he has ‘repented’ (ךל, v. 11) from his anger. Secondly, he promises to save the people from the king of Babylon (v. 11) and cause him to show them mercy (v. 12).188

185 Kremers, ‘Leidensgemeinschaft’, 127, and Wanke, Untersuchungen, 119, see the previous section as ending at 41.15; however, the story of Johanan’s rescue of the hostages clearly ends in v. 18.

186 As Nicholson, Jeremiah 26 – 52, 142, notes, “the people’s solemn undertaking... already alerts the reader to expect the subsequent conflict between the community and the prophet.” Duhm also sees in v. 5 a hint that the people had already decide to go to Egypt (Jeremia, 323).

187 This holds true irrespective of whether we emend למש in v. 10. On the pointing למש (v. 12) presupposed here, see our discussion in ‘Textual Notes’.

188 How useful it is to describe the בנה / הלמה, מוש / תמש refrain (v. 10; cf. 1.10; 18.7-9; 24.6; 31.28; 45.4) and the expression רק בנים / לממש (v. 12) as ‘Deuteronomistic’ (so Wanke, Untersuchungen, 125-127; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 64-65) is questionable. On the first point, Weippert, Prosäreden, 197-198, shows that outside Jer., the pairs בנה / הלמה and למש / תמש occur (individually) only in post-Jeremianic and non-Deuteronomistic contexts. The expression רק בנים / לממש occurs also in Gen. 43.14, Neh. 1.11, and Dan. 1.9.
In the second half of the oracle (vv. 13-16), קֶשֶׁת is again the *leitmotiv*. The remnant might decide not to ‘live in this land’ (אֲלֵהֶנָּה, v. 13), but to flee to Egypt to escape war and famine, and ‘live there’ (הָנָּה, v. 14). Such hopes are refuted in v. 16; especially striking is the final, counterbalancing oracle (v. 14). Granted, v. 15 is repetitive, and interrupts an otherwise smooth flow from v. 14 to v. 16. Without it, vv. 10-14, 16 form an oracle comprising two parts of almost equal length, with ‘living / remaining’ its consistent theme.\(^{190}\)

Some scholars have questioned the place of vv. 11-12 in this section. Wanke sees them (along with vv. 15, 17-18) as part of a redactional strand in which salvation is unconditional.\(^{191}\) By contrast, in vv. 10, 13-14, 16 salvation is contingent upon remaining in the land. But this is unconvincing; the function of vv. 11-12 is to elucidate and reinforce the message of v. 10. It is a bizarre hermeneutic that detaches vv. 11-12 from this mooring and then claims that they lack a conditional clause.\(^{192}\) Pohlmann argues that vv. 11-12 disrupt the two בּ clauses of vv. 10 and 13.\(^{193}\) Indeed, vv. 11-12 themselves conflict, for why should YHWH need to ‘rescue’ the people from Nebuchadrezzar, if the latter is well-disposed towards them?\(^{194}\) But, as we argued earlier, without v. 12 the promise of v. 11 would be meaningless. As it is, these verses affirm that YHWH will ‘rescue’ his people by causing Nebuchadrezzar to be compassionate.

A significant shift occurs in vv. 17-18. Whereas v. 16 predicts ‘war and famine’ in a somewhat matter of fact fashion, vv. 17-18 refer to ‘war, famine and plague’ which they interpret in explicitly theological terms, i.e., as aspects of YHWH’s wrath.\(^{195}\) The language

\(^{189}\) Wanke, *Untersuchungen*, 121-122, also notes how v. 16 counterbalances v. 14.

\(^{190}\) According to Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 277, “the basic response of Jeremiah to the delegation can be isolated in vv. 9-12”, since these verses deal with the point at issue, the people’s fear of the Babylonians. By contrast, vv. 13-22 derive from ER. But the בּ of v. 10 virtually demands the וְלֹא בּ of v. 13. Duhm, *Jeremia*, 322, saw vv. 13-14, 19-21 as containing the only authentic material in this chapter.


\(^{192}\) We should also note that the promise of v. 10, though contingent on the people’s response, is also grounded in YHWH’s independent volition: יִהְיֶה ה’ מִלְתֵּיָהוָה אֶל הָאָדָם אֶל הָאֲדָמָה לֵךְ.

\(^{193}\) Pohlmann, *Studien*, 132.

\(^{194}\) Pohlmann, *Studien*, 132; likewise, Duhm, *Jeremia*, 322, and McKane, *Jeremiah 2*, 1034. In any case, v. 12 does not assert that the king is well-disposed towards the remnant, but that he *will be* so; we could paraphrase, ‘I will show you compassion in *that* he will show you compassion’.

\(^{195}\) As Pohlmann, *Studien*, 144, correctly observes.
strongly resembles that found in ch. 44; the warning (v. 17) is repeated almost verbatim in 44.14, while the analogy between YHWH’s wrath on Jerusalem and on the remnant (v. 18) finds a parallel in 44.13. Notable too is the switch to third person speech in v. 17 (םל השראה). All this may suggest that vv. 17-18 are redactional comment, possibly from a Deuteronomistic source. At the same time, since the rest of the sermon clearly presents going to Egypt as disobedience to YHWH (vv. 13, 19), a declaration that doing so would issue in his wrath is hardly incongruous. We may conclude that in vv. 17-18 we have a different voice to that in vv. 10-16, but not necessarily a different speaker.

In vv. 19-22, we have a problem in that Jeremiah rebukes the people for rejecting YHWH’s word before they have actually replied. Some scholars have transposed these verses with 43.1-3, but clearly presupposes (43.2) (42.19). Duhm took v. 22 as redactional, and for vv. 19-21 followed the shorter text of OG, but even OG presupposes שמה בקהל היה (vv. 19b; 22a) as redactional, precisely because they anticipate the flight to Egypt; however, even the material he retains includes the description of Egypt as a place גרה. Duhm regarded v. 19-21 as a distinct redactional layer, added to prepare us for “die unerwartet ablehnende Reaktion gegenüber Jeremia” in 43.1ff. But again, the people’s protest, makes little sense without Jeremiah’s explicit command (43.2), to read 42.19-21, 18 and 22 (in that order) after 43.3. In fact, in historical terms it is quite plausible that Jeremiah correctly anticipated the reaction of his audience. Certainly, this is how the text as it stands represents him. More importantly, however, Jeremiah’s declaration in

196 So Duhm, Jeremia, 322-323; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1045 (though by ascribing v. 16 to the same redactor, both scholars obviate the distinction between vv. 16 and 17-18); Wanke, Untersuchungen, 120-122 (who sees vv. 17-18 as from the same hand as vv. 11-12, 15); contra Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 63, who sees v. 17 as the sole authentic kernel in the entire sermon.
197 Though this is disputed by Jones, Jeremias, 474-475.
198 Volz, Jeremia, 357-358, 361; Rudolph, Jeremia, 218-220; Bright, Jeremiah, 252, 256. Less plausible still is Holladay’s proposal, Jeremiah 2, 275, to read 42.19-21, 18 and 22 (in that order) after 43.3.
199 Duhm, Jeremia, 323-324.
200 Wanke, Untersuchungen, 123.
201 Pohlmann, Studien, 143.
202 As Wanke, Untersuchungen, 124, notes.
203 Thompson, Jeremiah, 667; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 252-253; see too Bright, Jeremiah, 256.
vv. 19-22, so far from being a surprise, actually fulfils the reader’s expectations. As we have seen, the ‘rhetorical overkill’ of the people’s words in vv. 2-6 prepares us for a negative response to his message, while even within the body of the sermon, the tone has from v. 13 become progressively more ominous.\textsuperscript{204} As was the case in 38.17-23, therefore, in 42.10-22 we see Jeremiah subverting his own message of conditional salvation.

43.1-7 reports the hostile reaction of the people to Jeremiah’s message, and their decision to go to Egypt. In narrative terms, 43.7 clearly brings the entire story to an end, with their arrival in Tahpanhes. At the same time, in several respects 43.5-7 stand apart from 42.1-43.4, showing more in common with 40.7-41.18. The focus reverts from speech to action, and Jeremiah recedes once more into the background (in v. 6 he seems almost to be an afterthought). Moreover, after the explicitly theological tenor of 42.1-43.4,\textsuperscript{205} 43.5-7 assumes a more restrained tone; in 43.6, \textit{אֶפֶר הַנָּהָרִים} recalls the subtle criticism of Ishmael’s actions in ch. 41. The wording of 43.5, \textit{הַשׁקָּה בָּנָיִם וּלְעָלָה שְׁהֵיהֶם אֵלָה שֵׁם הָיְמִים}, closely resembles 41.16a, and in both verses the ‘remnant’ is then defined in more detail (41.16b; 43.6). Most significant of all, in 41.16 and 43.5 the remnant appear to be subject to the actions of Johanan’s men.\textsuperscript{206} By contrast, 42.1, 8; 43.2, 4 depict the two groups as equal partners in seeking and then rejecting Jeremiah’s advice.\textsuperscript{207}

Whilst certainty is impossible, these stylistic and conceptual variations between 40.7-41.18; 43.5-7 on the one hand, and 42.1-43.4 on the other, probably reflect different literary sources. Thus Seitz sees in 43.1-3 the conclusion of the Scribal Chronicle, while vv. 4-6 stem from the Exilic Redaction: “At the literary level, Jer. 43.5-7 goes to great pains to portray the comprehensiveness of the contingent fleeing to Egypt . . . All Judah is there, and all are

\textsuperscript{204}Cf. Seitz, \textit{Theology in Conflict}, 277: “Developing the redactional motif at work in 21.7 and especially 24.8-10, Jer. 42.13-22 reverses Jeremiah’s words of promise as it anticipates a disobedient decision . . . to flee to Egypt.”

\textsuperscript{205}Cf. Wanke’s comment on 43.4: “Solcher Kommentar ist innerhalb der übrigen Erzählungen nirgends zu beobachten. Ihrem Stil entspricht es viel eher, sich auf die Mitteilung der Gespräche . . . und die Beurteilung des Verhaltens der handelnden Personen dem Leser zu überlassen.” (\textit{Untersuchungen}, 126).

\textsuperscript{206}Pace de Boer, who claims that “the verb נָשְׁבַּה indicates that those who are taken with them are carried away; not, however, that the carrying away takes place against their will” (‘Some Remarks’, 118).

\textsuperscript{207}See Wanke, \textit{Untersuchungen}, 126 n.26: “Der deuteronomistischen Bearbeitung entspricht auch gut die Ausdehnung des aktiven Personenkreises auf das ganze Volk (v. 4). Demgegenüber nennen 43.2, 5 nur die Heerführer. Die Verantwortung nur einzelnen Personen aufzubürden, liegt nicht im Sinne der deuteronomistischen Theologie, der es um das Volksganze geht.”
disobedient.”

Similarly, Pohlmann argues that the editor has combined a story of how Johanan’s group fled to Egypt (40.7 – 41.18) with one that told how ‘all the people from the smallest to the greatest’ came to Jeremiah to seek direction. This, he believes, also solves the puzzle of why in 42.1 the people ask Jeremiah to intercede for them, after the remark in 41.17 that they had already decided to go to Egypt. In fact, Pohlmann’s view that 42.1ff. originally made no mention of Johanan’s contingent is questionable, requiring him to delete the references to the military officers in 42.1, 8 as glosses. A more probable conclusion is that 40.7 – 41.18 is historically continuous but not literally continuous with 42.1ff. That is to say, the accounts are drawn from different sources, and use different terminology for the parties involved, but the parties are in reality the same and the events sequential.

Finally, we should note that 42.1 – 43.7 displays a number of parallels, verbal and conceptual, with 38.15-23. The remnant, like Zedekiah, invoke YHWH in an oath in seeking his direction (Jer 42.2, 38.16), while Jeremiah’s promise, (42.4), echoes the king’s solemn oath (38.14). The remnant, like Zedekiah, seem braced for bad news (42.6; cf. again 38.15), but vow to obey ‘so that it may go well with us’ (42.6), thereby echoing Jeremiah’s (38.20). Jeremiah’s message to each party is to submit to the Babylonians, with א ככ (42.10, following OG) corresponding structurally to א ככ (38.17). Fear of the consequences of doing so is anticipated, in both cases with the unusual term א ככ (38.19; 42.16). At the same time, it is the counter-balancing negative clause, א ככ (38.18,

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208 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 278. See too de Boer, ‘Some Remarks’, 120. By contrast, Wanke, Untersuchungen, 119-131, treats 43.10-7 as part of the literary unit 41.16 to 43.7, but concedes that there is redactional supplementation in 43.4, 5b and 6a.


210 Key to Pohlmann’s argument is v. 8: יְֽהוָֽה means ‘summon, assemble’, he argues, יְֽהוָֽה means ‘call to’, ‘wenn man sich in Rufnähe oder Sichtweite aufläßt und direkten Kontakt möglich ist.’ (Studien, 128). Since ten days passed before YHWH’s word came to Jeremiah (v. 7), he probably had to summon the people to hear it; thus, יְֽהוָֽה is more appropriate than יְֽהוָֽה. But this semantic distinction is questionable, since יְֽהוָֽה can also mean ‘summon, gather together’ (2 Sam. 9.2; 14.33; 2 Kgs. 4.22, 36; 6.11; 7.10; 10.19).

211 Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, 282, refers to “an overlapping of two documents, of which the first (closing with ch. 41) gives a condensed account of the migration to Egypt, while the second (ch. 42) relates in amplified detail Jeremiah’s unavailing opposition to the resolve of the military leaders.”
(38.21-23; 42.19-22).

5.5. Differentiation in 42.1 – 43.7:

Both in OG and MT, the literary arrangement of Jer. is such that Jeremiah’s message to the Judean remnant contains the final salvation oracle to be addressed to a group within the borders of Judah (just! – cf. 41.17); those that follow in MT (46.27-28; 50.4-5; 20) will address an exiled audience. As we have seen, in 42.10-22 the alternatives of salvation and judgement are configured around the issue of where the people will live (יִשְׂרָאֵל). If they remain in their own land, they are assured of YHWH’s mercy (דּוֹמ, v. 12). If, however, they go to live in Egypt, the hardships they hope to avoid will follow them, and they will suffer YHWH’s judgement.212

In terms of the options presented to this group, we thus have a straightforward distinction between דּוֹמ הַמַּעֲרָבִים מַעְרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָו

This by itself, however, does not actually differentiate one Judean group from another. Rather, it simply provides a set of what Koenen referred to as ‘Deuteronomistic alternatives’, where a group or nation has to choose between two courses of actions. In this sense, the polarity of ch. 42 is similar to the polarity of ch. 27. As was the case there, Jeremiah here envisages his audience responding as one. This is clear from the fact that they are consistently described in plural terms, either second person (אֲנִי אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲמַר אֲm

The language of Jeremiah’s address does, however, point to a highly significant form of inner-Judean differentiation. We noted earlier that throughout this narrative, the group are

212 It may be significant that Jeremiah uses the term יִשְׂרָאֵל in relation to Egypt when he is voicing the thoughts of the remnant (vv. 13, 14), but מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָבִים מַעֲרָו

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regularly referred to as ג俇איה הדדה, ‘the remnant of Judah’. Now this designation recalls, but does not repeat, the phrase used in 24.8 for those upon whom YHWH will bring disaster, i.e., ג俇איה ירושלם, ‘the remnant of Jerusalem’. This hint of a distinction between the two groups suddenly becomes explicit with YHWH’s warning in 42.18: ג俇איה ירושלם עלromatic ירושלם. The polarity being created as Jeremiah addresses this group, therefore, is between the ג俇איה ירושלם / ג俇איה ירושלם of chs. 21 and 24, and the present ג俇איה ירושלם.

This distinction is reflected in several ways. Firstly, we saw in chapter two how, in 24.8, the ג俇איה ירושלם is defined more precisely as ג俇איה ירושלם. That is to say, for the remnant of Jerusalem the two locations (‘this land’ and ‘Egypt’) stand in parallel; those living in either place will suffer YHWH’s wrath. For the remnant of Judah, on the other hand, ‘this land’ and ‘Egypt’ are alternatives; to flee to Egypt will indeed incur judgement, but to remain in Judah will result in salvation. Consequently, the ‘Deuteronomistic alternatives’ in 42.10-22 polarise what was in ch. 24 a single entity.

Secondly, the manner in which YHWH’s judgement and salvation are here described indicates that the remnant of Judah are – for the moment – distinct from both groups in ch. 24. As noted above, the promises ג俇איה ירושלם ולארץ ירושלם ולארץ יהודה (v. 10) and ג俇איה ירושלם ולארץ ירושלם (v. 12) form a double echo of YHWH’s words to the exiles in 24.6. The remnant of Judah have the opportunity to participate in the blessings promised to the Golah community in Babylon. At the same time, they are warned that those who go to Egypt will die ג俇איה ירושלם ולארץ ירושלם (v. 17; cf. 24.10) and will be ג俇איה ירושלם ולארץ ירושלם (v. 18; cf. 24.9). These formulae do of course occur elsewhere in Jer., but the probability of an allusion to 21.4-7 and 24.8-10 is strengthened by the way in which YHWH explicitly compares the way he will deal with these Judeans with the way he dealt with the people of Jerusalem: ג俇איה ירושלם עלromatic ירושלם (42.18). Consequently, the text represents the ג俇איה ירושלם as distinct from, but capable of identifying with, the ג俇איה ירושלם and the ג俇איה ירושלם.

The links with 24.6 do not exhaust the richness of the salvation promise in 42.10-12. As noted earlier, the exhortation ג俇איה ירושלם (v. 11) is applied otherwise in Jer. only to the prophet and the Diaspora. The assurance ג俇איה ירושלם (v. 12) is unparalleled in Jer. Both in their tone and content, therefore, these verses far exceed earlier promises of mere survival (21.9; 38.20), or even the hope of a viable community (27.12-18), that are offered to those who submit to the Babylonian yoke. The point
is worth noting, not least because Seitz is content to allocate all this material without further distinction to the Scribal Chronicle. It is, indeed, arguable that they all stem from a common source, but it should not be assumed that they present a uniform message. The voice that we hear in 42.10-12 sounds a note of hope for the remnant that is much more akin to that sounded for the exiles in ch. 24 and for the prophet himself earlier in the book.

The polarity of יאריא תודד / לטב לודשא becomes more ambiguous, however, when we explore the rationale underlying YHWH’s offer of salvation. On the one hand, the fact that the ‘remnant of Judah’ is distinct from the ‘remnant of Jerusalem’ suggests that YHWH is willing to show compassion to the former precisely because they are a separate group. On the other hand, YHWH himself presents a startlingly different explanation: יכ תורמאי ולא ודעת אשר שמשי לשב (42.10). Hope is possible because YHWH has relented from further disaster. There may, indeed, be a hint here of a theology that comes to expression in Isa. 40.1-2; salvation is open to those who have experienced judgement. Whether or not this thought is present in Jer. 42.10, however, it is clear that YHWH’s offer of salvation is grounded in how he himself views the disaster he has brought. But, of course, the reference to ידעת אשר שמשי לשב has the effect of blurring the distinction between ‘the remnant of Judah’ and ‘the remnant of Jerusalem’; both alike, apparently, have experienced judgement. Consequently, the textual construal of the ‘remnant of Judah’ in 42.10-22 fluctuates between differentiating them from their counterparts in Jerusalem and Babylon, and seeing them as representative of Judah as a whole.

6. Jer. 45.1-5 [51.31-35]

6.1. Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>שילוש שנף שעון ירמיה וונ בכרע ויתנ נוית ותא</th>
<th>ידבעש ארכים ודמעה ולא גורר בו מהר</th>
<th>מחבבי את הדרים ולא סוס תפ餐具ית במשנה</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>הגרפף והמנה הדק ות תפקיד ראו ביבליואupo</td>
<td>השירית וה問いים של אסף אולר רוגע</td>
<td>המסר ילימהן של אסף אולר רוגע</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>השירית והלמנים של אסף אולר רוגע</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

213 On 42.10-12 Seitz writes: “Consistent with the prophet’s counsel in the post-597 years (Jeremiah 27-29), especially as recorded prior to the events of 587 (Jeremiah 37-38), the leaders of the remnant are exhorted not to fear the Babylonians.” (Theology in Conflict, 277; see too 291).

214 This point is noted by Thompson, Jeremiah, 665-666: “This remnant, like the one in Babylon, was being offered the same promise of renewal and restoration . . . But in a negative way it became clear, as it was declared positively elsewhere, that the future lay with the exiles in Babylon (chs. 24, 29) and not with those who fled to Egypt or those who remained in the land.”
### 6.2. Textual Notes

v. 2. MT אֲלֵיָּה יֵשָׁכִיא > OG: MT plus.

v. 3. OG בְּיָד > MT: Probably lost through haplography (repetition of ב from ביכר). \(^{215}\) An initial ב would be normal in this type of clause; cf. יָד אֲלֵיָּה יֵשָׁכִיא in 29.15, 21.

MT תָּשָׁעַי, ‘I have grown weary’; OG אֶקְוּמַתְבָּה (Aor. Pass. כָּמוּם), ‘I have gone to sleep’. BHS suggests that OG is a corruption of אֶקְוּמַת (Aor. Pass. כָּמוּם, ‘grow weary’), but Ziegler points out that כָּמוּם occurs only twice in LXX, both times in very late texts (Ecc. 10.15; Jud. 13.1). \(^{216}\) Ziegler also notes that while the alternative form כָּמוּם is used for ב in Jer. 51[28].58; Lam. 5.5, and Ps. 6.7 (אֶקְוְּפָּאָה אֶנֶּ תּוֹרָאָהוֹיָהוֹיָהוֹי), אֶקְוְּפָּאָה could hardly have been confused with אֶקְוּמַת; we should thus either posit ב (spread out, lay [down]) in the Vorlage or assume a rather free translation. \(^{217}\) The latter seems more probable.

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\(^{215}\) So Duhm, Jeremia, 335; Volz, Jeremia, 371; Rudolph, Jeremia, 226; Bright, Jeremiah, 184; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 133; Carroll, Jeremiah, 744; Thompson, Jeremiah, 683 n.1.

\(^{216}\) Ziegler, Beiträge, 35.

\(^{217}\) Ziegler, Beiträge, 35; the latter option is favoured by McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1098.
v. 4. MT TlSJM, TlTl33; OG eyeKo cpKoSoppaa. Since OG renders the Hebrew participles with finite verbs, the personal pronouns are grammatically unnecessary, and thus emphatic. However, this is probably the implied sense of nmm in MT also.221

6.3. Exegetical Notes

v. 1. The structure of this introductory formula occurs elsewhere in Jer. only in 51.59: ν. τιον τιον τιον τοιοτοι τοιοτοι τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τοιος τو

The question of what ‘these words’ denote is a crux interpretum. Clearly, the ensuing relates them to...

218 So Bright, Jeremiah, 184; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 307; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1096; Carroll, Jeremiah, 744; however, Wanke, Untersuchungen, 133, argues that OG omitted the phrase because of its obscurity.

219 See further DIHGS 894, and rem. 6-7: “It seems more sensible to regard as accompanying subjects as (mildly) focussing or emphatic.”


221 So Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 310.

222 Wanke, Untersuchungen, 134, 140-142; his proposal is viewed sympathetically by Schulte, ‘Persönliche Heilsorakel’, 259. But see Graupner’s reply, Auftrag, 166-171.
Baruch’s scroll (ch. 36), and many scholars accept this as the original meaning.223 One difficulty with this is that since ch. 36 does not actually cite the contents of the scroll, a logical antecedent for תוביריה תאלת is lacking.224 This problem is solved if we accept Rietzschel’s thesis that ch. 45 originally stood at the end of ch. 20 (note the repetition of יִבְנָי in 20.18 and 45.3), so that תוביריה תאלת referred to the scroll as contained in chs. 1 – 20.225 In its present context, however, תוביריה תאלת seems to require a more immediate referent. Consequently, many view תוביריה תאלת as redactional and relate יִבְנָי to the preceding narrative of chs. 37 – 44.226 It has even been argued that the phrase denotes the oracles against the nations that immediately follow,227 though of course this can apply only to Jer. MT. We will return to this question below (§5.4).

v. 3. נּּוּכְתֵה: The prefacing of a prophetic message with the citation formula ‘(because) you said . . . ’ often indicates that the cited words are in some way reprehensible; whether because they are arrogant (Isa. 14.13; 28.15; 37.24; Ezek. 27.3; 35.10), cynical (Mal. 3.14), despairing (Ezek. 33.10; cf. 37.11), or because they misconstrue reality (Jer. 29.15; Ezek. 11.5). Baruch’s complaint will also earn a degree of censure.

יא אא: The cry יא is usually a response to national calamity, interpreted as divine judgement (Num. 21.29; 1 Sam. 4.7; Isa. 3.9; Jer. 4.13; 13.27; Hos. 7.13; Lam. 5.16).228 Conversely, in 15.10 Jeremiah’s יא arises from the opposition of his compatriots. Indirectly, he also implicates YHWH (cf. 15.18b), since it is his preaching of YHWH’s word that has caused this opposition. Here, however, Baruch directly attributes his suffering to YHWH (יהוה יא).

223 E.g., Volz, Jeremia, 371; Rudolph, Jeremia, 227; Weiser, Jeremia, 383-384; Bright, Jeremiah, 185; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 84-85; Thompson, Jeremiah, 683; Lundbom, ‘Expanded Colophons’, 100-101 (but see now his commentary, below); Jones, Jeremiah, 482.
224 Noted by Graupner, Auftrag, 164.
225 Rietzschel, Urrolle, 127-131; so too Lundbom, Jeremia, 94 (cf. Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 308-309).
226 So Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 226; Duhm, Jeremia, 334-335; Graupner, Auftrag, 165 (though seeing תוביריה תאלת as itself secondary). S. Mowinckel, Prophecy and Tradition: The Prophetic Books in the Light of the Study of the Growth and History of the Tradition (ANV AO II, Hist. – Filos. Klasse, 1946 No. 3; Oslo: 1946) 45, suggested that the reference was to the entire book.
227 So Ehrlich, Randglossen, 153; Seitz, ‘Canonical Shape’, 21-23. Neither find it necessary to delete the historical note in v. 1b; Seitz argues that a retrospective reference to Baruch’s scroll is perfectly appropriate, since (according to 36.2) it included YHWH’s words to the nations.
228 Isa. 6.5 is the only exception. In Jer. 4.31, יא is uttered by Jerusalem.
Found mostly in exilic and post-exilic poetic texts, these terms are especially characteristic of individual laments; for עזז (‘sighing’), see Pss. 6.7; 31.11; 38.10; 102.6; Lam. 1.22; Job. 3.4, 24; for צער (‘sorrow, grief’), see Pss. 13.2; 31.11; for משבר (‘pain’), see Pss. 38.17; 69.26; Lam. 1.12, 18. In addition, צער occurs twice in the laments of Jeremiah (8.18; 20.18). The language is too general to permit conclusions as to the cause of Baruch’s suffering (see further §5.4 below). Duhm attributed Baruch’s ‘pain’ to the fate of his people, and his ‘sorrow’ to his own circumstances, but whether such a clear distinction between these terms can be supported is doubtful. Graupner argues that the terminology signifies “ein bestimmtes Geschehen, das Gerichtshandeln Jahwes, oder die Reaktion derer, die das Gericht erlebt haben”; however, this overlooks Pss. 13 and 31, where there is no obvious sense of divine judgement.

This is normally translated ‘rest’ (as in Ru. 1.9; 2 Sam. 14.17; 1 Kgs. 8.56; Isa. 28.12), i.e., relief from the turmoil just described. But נמב often means ‘resting place’ (e.g., Gen. 49.15; Num. 10.33; Deut. 12.9; Ps. 132.14; Isa. 11.10; 32.18), and when Baruch’s complaint is read in the light of his forced migration to Egypt (43.4-7) and YHWH’s promise to give him his life (v. 5), this overtone may also be intentional.


231 See Giesebrecht, Jeremiah, 226 (“ein Unglück nach dem andern kommt über mich”); McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1097.

232 Graupner, Auftrag, 174.

233 E.g., Duhm, Jeremiah, 335 (‘Ruhe’); Rudolph, Jeremiah, 226 (‘Ruhe’); Bright, Jeremiah, 184; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 307; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1096; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 270.
v. 4. (~�ח') (ב) The command for Jeremiah to speak to Baruch disrupts the discourse structure of vv. 2-3, in which Jeremiah is addressing Baruch directly; it is probably secondary.234

This is the final instance of the 'build, plant' refrain in Jer. (cf. 1.10; 12.14-17; 18.7-9; 24.6; 31.28; 31.38-40; 42.10).235 Since in OG the oracle stands near the end of Jer., the use of these verbs in 1.10 and 51.34 creates a neat inclusio for the entire book.

The clause is doubly ambiguous. Firstly, what has YHWH built and planted? Many scholars assume that the allusion is to Israel / Judah;236 cf. YHWH's declaration to Israel in 2.21, 'I planted you' (~וֹתֵר תְּמַם), and his description of Judah as 'my house' (~כָּל־יִשָּׂרָאֵל) and 'my vineyard' (~כָּל־יִשָּׂרָאֵל). On the other hand, in 1.10 and 18.9 the language of building and planting is applied to other nations; and in 25.31 YHWH's 'fold / habitation' (~כָּל־יִשָּׂרָאֵל) includes the whole earth (cf. v. 31).

Secondly, how should we understand the participles (cf. the finite and infinite verbs in previous instances of this refrain)? Do they refer to what YHWH is / has been doing, or anticipate a judgement still to come?237 In OG, the setting of this oracle at the end of the book suggests the former; v. 4 interprets all that we have witnessed thus far, especially the overthrow of Judah and dispersal of its people as narrated in chs. 44 – 51. In MT, however, the ensuing OAN allow the participles to have a forward-looking aspect, and thereby also support an international interpretation of תֹּרְעָה אֶרֶץ אֲרֻגָּא תָּמָא

234 So Giesebrecht, Jeremiah, 226; Volz, Jeremiah, 371; Rudolph, Jeremiah, 226; Bright, Jeremiah, 184; Wanke, Untersuchungen, 133; Janzen, Studies, 134; Carroll, Jeremiah, 744; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1096; Graupner, Auftrag, 161; contra A. Van Selms, 'Telescoped Discussion as a Literary Device in Jeremiah', VT 26 (1976) 99-103; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 309. Having emended v. 3a to ~כָּל־אֲרֵץ בָּאָרְכָּא, Duhm, Jeremiah, 335, is able to retain את הָאָרֶץ תָּמָא in v. 4.

235 For analysis of the different occurrences of this refrain, see Taylor, 'Problem of Placement', 89-92.

236 Duhm, Jeremiah, 336; Bright, Jeremiah, 186; Thompson, Jeremiah, 684; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1097; Schulte, 'Persönliche Heilsorakel', 262; Carolyn J. Sharp, 'The Call of Jeremiah and Diaspora Politics', JBL 119 (2000) 426-427.

237 Scholars generally take the latter view; indeed, such a reading is often used to support a pre-587 date for the oracle (see too McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1100, and Graupner, Auftrag, 173). But note Thiel's response: "doch beachte die Partizipialformulierungen!" (Redaktion 26 – 45, 87). Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 416, interprets these verbs as embracing "the present and immediate future".
This can be understood either as ‘the whole earth’, or ‘all the land’. The latter is more usual in Jer. (1.18; 4.20; 8.16; 12.11; 15.10; 23.15; 25.11; 40.4), but in several places the context shows the whole world to be in view; e.g., 4.27 (note the contrast in v. 23); 50.23; 51.25, 41, 49. On balance, a global sense seems likely here; if the glossator wanted to identify Judah as the referent, we might have expected לא מדינה置いて. This may therefore represent a reinterpretation of v. 4a, but we have seen that . . . אishops is a semantically flexible phrase in the Jer. tradition.

v. 5. בקשת לפני נילוח: Various interpretations have been offered of the ‘great things’ Baruch was seeking. Plausible suggestions include his social / political advancement, or simply his personal security amidst YHWH’s judgement. The text (intentionally perhaps) scarcely permits a specific answer, though the collocation of בקשת לפני נילוח (v. 3) suggests we relate 네לוח to מני. P.A.H. de Boer has argued that since 네לוח elsewhere signifies YHWH’s ‘wonderful deeds’ (e.g., Deut. 10.21; Job. 5.9; Ps. 106.21), what Baruch was ‘seeking’ was an act of deliverance for Judah (cf. 21.2). There is no reason to think that בקשת here has intercessory significance, but in any case de Boer’s proposal comes to grief on the particle

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238 For the former, see Keil, Jeremiah, 172; Duhm, Jeremiah, 336; Peake, Jeremiah & Lamentations 2, 211; Rudolph, Jeremiah, 226; Weiser, Jeremiah, 383; Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 43, 85; Thompson, Jeremiah, 683; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 1097. For the latter, see Volz, Jeremiah, 371; Hyatt, ‘Jeremiah’, 1103; Bright, Jeremiah, 184; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 307; Carroll, Jeremiah, 744; Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 270; DCH 1, s.v. מני, 389. Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 416, is unsure.

239 “It would seem that here are clear traces of a redactional struggle over the scope of the destruction prophesied in this oracle.” (Sharp, ‘Call of Jeremiah’, 427).

240 So Carroll, Jeremiah, 745; Lundbom, ‘Expanded Colophons’, 101; cautiously, Streane, Jeremiah 282; Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, 347; Muenlenburg, ‘Baruch the Scribe’, 237; Thompson, Jeremiah, 684; Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 415 n.103. Cf. Duhm, Jeremiah, 335: “Es war für ihn . . . der als מני in Ägypten wohl nicht leicht Verdienst fand, die Zukunft dunkel genug, dass überhaupt Menschen im einzelnen die jüdische Kolonie ihre Abneigung deutlich ausgesprochen.”

241 So Rudolph, Jeremiah, 227: “Immer war der vor der Vernichtung und Tod, von Krieg und Gefangenschaft zu schreiben; war es da verwunderlich, wenn ihm die Sorge um seine eigene Schicksal umtrieb?” Similarly, Peake, Jeremiah & Lamentations 2, 211; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 310; Jones, Jeremiah, 483; Graupner, Auftrag, 177.

242 So P.A.H. de Boer, ‘Jeremiah 45, verse 5’, in Selected Studies, 124-126; Schulte, ‘Persönliche Heilsorakel’, 261. But as de Boer acknowledges (125), המני can have other meanings, as in Ps. 12.4 (‘proud boasts’) and Jer. 33.3 (‘inscrutable facts’).

243 An assumption made by de Boer, ‘Jeremiah 45 Verse 5’, 126; Schulte, ‘Persönliche Heilsorakel’, 261, and also Rudolph, Jeremiah, 227. It is ironic that after criticising others for their eisegesis of v. 4, de Boer (126) interprets it as “a reaction to a prayer of Baruch which has not been preserved.” (italics mine).
that this denotes some form of self-concern is clearly implied by the 'I – you' logic of vv. 4-5, de Boer’s claim, ‘Jeremiah 45 Verse 5’, 126, that this is an ‘ethical dative’ is clutching at straws.

245 GKC §116p; GBH 2, §121e.

246 So Giesebrecht, Jeremiah, 226-227; Rudolph, Jeremiah, 227; Thiel, Redaktion 26 - 45, 85; Carroll, Jeremiah, 748; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 310; Schulte, ‘Persönliche Heilsorakel’, 261; Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 416; Sharp, ‘Call of Jeremiah’, 427; contra Duhm, Jeremiah, 336 (whose citation of Isa. 66.23 is hardly decisive); B. Gosse, ‘Jérémie XLV et la Place du Recueil d’Oracles Contre les Nations dans le Livre de Jérémie’, VT 40 (1990) 148.

247 So Thiel, Redaktion 26 - 45, 86; Schulte, ‘Persönliche Heilsorakel’, 261-262; Graupner, Auftrag, 163 n.12.

248 The essential authenticity of the oracle is also widely accepted; see Giesebrecht, Jeremiah, 226; Duhm, Jeremiah, 336; Volz, Jeremiah, 371; Rudolph, Jeremiah, 227; Condamin, Jérémie, 294; Hyatt, ‘Jeremiah’, 1102; Bright, Jeremiah, 185; Kremers, ‘Leidengemeinschaft’, 138; van Selms, ‘Telescoped Discussion’, 100; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 308; Schulte, ‘Persönliche Heilsorakel’, 260-261; Kilpp, Niederreißen, 86-87.
in v. 4a, and the MT plus in v. 4b, KYI
>~(nxi.

In particular, the internal coherence of vv. 3-5 is rarely questioned. Wanke has shown that these verses possess a formal unity (both in literary structure and metrical balance) and also a unity of contents (YHWH’s declaration answering to Baruch’s lament).249

Admittedly, a greater degree of redaction is detected by Thiel,250 who sees the original core as comprising Baruch’s lament (v. 3), the messenger formula in v. 4, and the two clauses in v. 5 which are directly relevant to Baruch: 

\[ נוֹתֵתִי לְךָ אֶל מַשָּׁם אֵלַ֣י מַעְלֵיָּ֥ה נַעֲרֵ֣י אֶלֹֽהִים \]

D has added all of vv. 1, 2 (where the messenger formula is ‘out of place’), 4 (where the terms בָּנָה, רָדְת, מַעְלָה, נַעֲרֵי אֶלֹֽהִים are typical of D) and the internationalising יָנוּרְדָה נַעֲרֵ֥י אֶלֹֽהִים נַעֲרֵ֥י אֶלֹֽהִים in v. 5. Schulte also sees this last phrase as secondary, since it broadens the scope of the (original) v. 4,251 while Sharp argues that v. 4 is secondary since it narrows the scope of the (original) v. 5.252

There is no need here to rehearse the debate about the ‘Deuteronomistic’ nature of the language in v. 4, but we should note Thiel’s admission concerning the way that salvation for Baruch is ‘editorially’ contrasted with judgement for the world: “Diese wirkungsvolle Kontrastierung erscheint an dieser Stelle als sachgemäß und als geschickt und organisch in den Kontext eingefügt, so daß wie selten sonst der Eindruck der Einheitlichkeit entsteht.”253 So organic, indeed, that one suspects the contrast was there from the beginning.254

249 Wanke, Untersuchungen, 134-135. Volz, Jeremia, 371, also calls attention to the poetic metre of vv. 3-5.
252 Sharp, ‘Call of Jeremiah’ 427; she also accepts Thiel’s view that v. 4 interrupts the focus on Baruch.
253 Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 88.
254 Moreover, as McKane points out, Jeremiah 2, 1106, Thiel’s argument suffers from inconsistency: “It is difficult to discern why the word-string נוֹתֵתִי לְךָ אֶל מַשָּׁם נוֹתֵתִי לְךָ אֶל מַשָּׁם should be accepted as a Jeremianic prototype for D passages with נוֹתֵתִי לְךָ אֶל מַשָּׁם or the like, whereas the series build / demolish, plant / uproot (v. 4) should be denied the status of a Jeremianic prototype in what is the most poetic part of the oracle.” For further criticisms of Thiel’s argument, see Graupner, Auftrag, 161-163.
The main problem, of course, relates to the placement of the oracle, and thus to the historical note in v. 1b which links it to Baruch’s writing of the scroll in the year 604. As we saw earlier, many scholars accept the accuracy of this dating. It is argued that the very incongruity of v. 1b speaks in its favour, for why would such a reference be added to a passage that otherwise has no obvious connection with ch. 36? Moreover, vv. 4-5 imply that judgement is still to come. Naturally, the question then is why the oracle has been placed where it has. This is explained, variously, as due to Baruch’s modesty, as his personal testimony (Denkmal) to God’s grace, or to the truth of the prophetic word, as a mark of honour to Baruch by his editors, or as an appropriate conclusion to Baruch’s Leidensgeschichte of Jeremiah. According to Muilenburg, “it belonged with ch. 36, certainly, but it belonged even more profoundly at the point where he had completed the record of Jeremiah’s trials and rejections, the end of the via dolorosa he had been fated to walk with the prophet.”

Others, however, reject an original connection between ch. 45 and the writing of the scroll. Apart from the difficulty v. 1b creates for the words הובירך אלהים, Baruch’s despair (v. 3) is thought to be unlikely as early as 604, when Judah’s repentance was still hoped for: “Diese Klage bereits ein gerütteltes Maß leidvoller Erfahrungen voraussetzt und so auf einen viel

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255 E.g., Volz, Jeremia, 371; Peake, Jeremiah & Lamentations 2, 209-210; Rudolph, Jeremia, 227; Weiser, ‘Gotteswort’, 322-323; Bright, Jeremiah, 185; van Selms, ‘Telescopied Discussion’, 100-101; Thompson, Jeremiah, 683; Jones, Jeremiah, 482.

256 So Weiser, ‘Gotteswort’, 322; Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 308; Jones, Jeremiah, 482. The same point is made by Seitz, ‘Canonical Shape’, 20, who, however, views the whole chapter as redactional.

257 Volz, Jeremia, 372; Rudolph, Jeremia, 227; Weiser, ‘Gotteswort’, 322.

258 Of those who accept the integrity of v. 1b, only Bright, Jeremiah, lxxvii, believes that ch. 45 originally stood next to ch. 36. Most accept that its present position is original.

259 Peake, Jeremiah & Lamentations 2, 209.

260 "Und so setzt er mit der Mitteilung dieses an ihn gerichteten Gottesspruchs nicht so sehr seiner eigenen Schwachheit als der göttlichen Gnade ein Denkmal, die ihn durch Not und Tod hindurchretette." (Rudolph, Jeremia, 228).

261 So Weiser, ‘Gotteswort’, 329: “seine eigenhandige Unterschrift . . . mit dem er noch einmal an die Seite seines Meisters tritt als Zeuge für die Wahreheit und den Bestand der Gottesworte”.


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späteren Zeitpunkt als 605 verweist”, writes Thiel. Consequently, some argue that the period immediately before or after the fall of Jerusalem is a more plausible setting. Thiel himself suggests that Baruch uttered this lament when he was taken off to Egypt (43.4-7), and that this was in fact its original setting in the book. Duhm and Skinner situate it after his arrival in Egypt; according to Skinner, “it reads . . . like a farewell oracle, perhaps even a death-bed charge.”

In response, it must again be said that the language of v. 3 is too general to allow us to assign it with confidence to any particular event in Baruch’s life. By the same token, however, there is no reason to judge it inappropriate to the setting given in v. 1b. On balance, it would seem that the ‘mainstream’ explanation is to be preferred; namely, that v. 1b accurately witnesses to the original setting of the oracle, which has achieved its present position secondarily. For interpretative purposes, however, the question is somewhat sterile. If Baruch’s lament was originally prompted by his forced migration to Egypt, it has been secondarily connected with the writing of the scroll; and if it was originally connected with the writing of the scroll, it has secondarily been connected with the flight to Egypt. Ultimately, Taylor’s verdict must be accepted as correct: “Whereas the superscription functions as one hermeneutic guide, the reader is given many other hermeneutic clues which suggest that the

264 Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 87.
265 For the former view, see Schulte, ‘Persönliche Heilsorakel’, 260-261; Graupner, Auftrag, 172-173. For the latter, see Giesebrecht, Jeremia, 226; Hyatt, ‘Jeremiah’, 1102.
266 Thiel, Redaktion 26 – 45, 87-88. A similar view is adopted by Graupner, Auftrag, 172-173, 181-182, who, however, argues that historically the oracle belongs shortly before 587.
267 Duhm, Jeremia, 334-335; Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, 346.
268 According to Bright, Jeremiah, 185, “it is quite possible that as (Baruch) heard the awful words of judgment which Jeremiah dictated to him . . . he became so oppressed by the horrors that the future had in store that all hope and joy died within him.” (similarly Holladay, Jeremiah 2, 309). Such a comment should certainly be recognised as speculative, but is not to be simply dismissed as ‘psychologising’ (as it is by Taylor, ‘Problem of Placement’, 80; Seitz, ‘Canonical Shape’, 20) — as if Baruch had no psychology. In fact, as Seitz also points out (20), redactional theories such as those which delete the historical note in v. 1b are no less ‘psychologising’.
269 There is little to be said for retaining but deleting but data and applying the rule to 36.1,4 as Thiel remarks, Redaktion 26 – 45, 84, “die starke Entsprechung zu 36.1,4 macht es notwendig, 1b als Ganzes zu beurteilen.”
historical referentiality is coded or symbolic in this chapter, so that a solely historical reading is inadequate.  

6.5. Differentiation in Jer. 45.1-5: בורוכו בן מרדכי / כל נשיא

Our final example of inner-Judean differentiation within Jer. has striking parallels (though also important differences) with that found in 39.15-18. Just as Ebed-Melech will be saved when YHWH brings disaster upon ‘this city’, so Baruch is singled out from divine judgement on Judah and indeed all humanity. He too is promised his life ‘as booty’. At the same time, however, the tone and content of the promise is more restrained than that given to the Ethiopian. Notably absent are any assurances that YHWH will ‘rescue’ and ‘save’ him (cf. 39.17-18). Indeed, according to Gunneweg, “Kap. 45 kein Heilswort für Baruch enthält, sondern die Abweisung seiner Klage.”

For Baruch, as for Jeremiah, “bleibt nur noch die eine Hoffnung, die eigentlich keine Hoffnung ist, mit dem Leben davon zu kommen, Leben unter dem Zorn des Deus absconditus, den diese Gerechten dennoch nicht verdient haben.” Only slightly more positive is the verdict of Carroll: “a moment of hope (strictly delimited) is allowed to penetrate the utter gloom. Communal devastation cannot be avoided, but in all the great slaughter named individuals survive as the booty of war.”

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to miss the salvific elements in YHWH’s address to Baruch. As the first-person form of the promise התמי יתי לברוך ואשתך לארץ (v. 5) implies, Baruch will keep his life due to YHWH’s personal attention; the fact that this promise is valid על כל נשיא ומשם אשתך לארץ (v. 5b) emphasises this fact. For Baruch as for Ebed-Melech, what is at stake is not simply escape but the ongoing watchful protection of YHWH.

From whom is Baruch differentiated? The semantic fluidity of ch. 45 means that several answers are possible. Read in its immediate literary context, the announcement of judgement in

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270 Taylor, ‘Problem of Placement’, 94.
271 Gunneweg, ‘Konfession oder Interpretation’, 415 n.64.
272 Gunneweg, ‘Konfession oder Interpretation’, 415.
273 Carroll, Jeremiah, 749. Contrast the optimism of Clements, Jeremiah, 243: “This positive and reassuring message at first glance appears to be little enough. On reflection, however, we can see it has a wealth of meaning . . . Life itself is a precious gift and always provides a fundamental opportunity for the knowledge and service of God.”
v. 4 has application to the Judean remnant now in Egypt. It is from this group, therefore, that Baruch is singled out. Consequently, when read as a whole chs. 42 – 45 present a form of ‘double differentiation’ comparable to that in chs. 38 – 39. There, a choice is given to the people of Jerusalem; those who leave the city will live, but those who stay will die (38.1-3). The subsection concludes, however (39.151-8) with a salvation oracle for Ebed-Melech, for whom such issues are immaterial. Likewise, 42.9-18 sets two alternatives before the Judean remnant; to stay in the land will result in YHWH’s blessing, but to go to Egypt will ensure his wrath. This latter scenario is confirmed in ch. 44. In ch. 45, however, we find that even among the fugitives to Egypt, an exemption will be made. Not only so, but by concluding with the assurance that Baruch will have his life as booty Dt£i ($^n$), ch. 45 expressly sets aside the issues of staying (ט"ט) and going (את) which were so central to ch. 42. In contrast to the Judean remnant, where Baruch goes is utterly irrelevant.

When read within the wider book, the differentiation of Baruch from the Judean remnant in Egypt brings to an end a series of exemptive moves by YHWH. After the indiscriminate judgement of chs. 1 – 20, it suddenly emerges that there is, after all, a future for the 597 exiles (ch. 24). Although that particular configuration leaves no hope for any of Zedekiah’s people, during the siege of Jerusalem Jeremiah announces that those who ‘go out’ to the Babylonians will save their lives. In turn, that analysis seems to preclude hope for anyone else, but after the deportations of 587, the poor of the land and the returnees from the surrounding nations form a community. To this group, Jeremiah holds out the prospect of hope if they stay in the land. Now that community too has disobeyed by going to Egypt, but Baruch is singled out from among them.274

At the same time, the language of 45.3-5 implies that Baruch (like Ebed-Melech) is being aligned with the figure of Jeremiah – who, of course, also stands over against the whole nation. Their solidarity in opposition to the Judean remnant has, of course, already been signalled in the preceding narrative, when the people accuse Baruch of ‘inciting’ Jeremiah against them (43.3). Moreover, the verbal and conceptual links we have observed between

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274 The relationship of the promise to Baruch to the wider picture of the book is noted by Taylor: “The promise is here given to one who is no longer a member of a group for which hope is still held out, that is, the group that remained in the land after the first exile (cf. 42.10), and those who are a part of the Babylonian exile (cf. 24.6). For the reader of ch. 45, the more comprehensive promises of future hope and salvation (cf. 31.4ff.) echo but faintly at this point.” (‘Problem of Placement’, 93).
Baruch’s lament in 43.3 and those of Jeremiah can scarcely be coincidental. As O’Connor notes, both individuals express ‘woe’ ( зло וו; cf. 15.10), and complain of sorrow (לע, 8.18; 20.18), pain (הكورونا, 15.18) and weariness (לע, cf. 15.9, 20.9). Both attribute their suffering to YHWH (לע וו; cf. 15.18; 20.7-8). To both individuals, YHWH replies with a rebuke (45.4; 12.5; 15.19) and uses language similar to that of the call narrative (45.4; 1.10; 15.20).\(^{275}\)

This being so, we might conclude that Baruch, like Jeremiah, is paradigmatic of the righteous sufferer. According to Brueggemann, “that Baruch finds ‘no rest’ means that he has gotten the consequence appropriate to the wicked, but he himself is a righteous, obedient man. Thus, the complaint of Baruch voices a question of theodicy”.\(^{276}\) Taking up this last point, Clements suggests that, historically speaking, the persona of Jeremiah and Baruch articulate the outlook of a pious ‘inner-community’ among the Diaspora Jews:

If there was no hope at all for those who had fled to Egypt (42.22) then it would follow that even these two loyal worshippers taken there unwillingly could have no individual hope. Would this not then have been deeply unfair of God to deal with such loyal and righteous individuals wholly in terms of the two communities to which they now belonged? . . . The prophecy addressed to Baruch by Jeremiah in 45.4-5 deals with this issue . . . Baruch is presented here as representative of all the loyal Jewish citizens carried unwillingly into an alien and hostile world.\(^{277}\)

At the same time, the fact that Baruch, unlike Ebed-Melech, is given no word of commendation should be taken seriously. Taylor may therefore be correct to see Baruch as typifying the ‘disobedient righteous sufferer’:

Even though the reader is not told why Baruch merited divine favour, the structure of the narrative may suggest that Baruch, like Ebed-melech, is rewarded because of his faith and obedience to the divine word. On the contrary, it could be argued that the lack of a merit clause in Baruch’s oracle suggests that Baruch was given the promise despite the absence of the ‘truth’ that Ebed-melech had. In any case, these men representing the faithful (or perhaps in the case of Baruch, the faithful servant who is presently so locked up in his own pain that he is not acting in faith) provide a telling foil to the flagrantly disobedient multitudes who will necessarily come under judgment.\(^{278}\)

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\(^{275}\) O’Connor, Confessions, 96.

\(^{276}\) Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 415; cf. Taylor, ‘Problem of Placement’, 89.

\(^{277}\) Clements, Jeremiah, 242-243. Alternatively, Seitz, ‘Canonical Shape’, 16-18, concludes that “Ebed-Melech and Baruch are types modelled on Caleb and Joshua in the canonical movement of the Book of Jeremiah. All four figures are contrasted with the generations of which they were a part” (17-18). For Seitz, the textual emphasis on Baruch as ‘scribe’ (scribe) indicates that he (like Caleb and Joshua) represents a new form of leadership among the scattered people, in which prophecy gives way to Torah.

\(^{278}\) Taylor, ‘Problem of Placement’, 93.
7. Summary: Differentiation in Jer. 42 – 45

Jer. 42 – 45, like chs. 38 – 39, presents a complex and shifting picture of inner-Judean differentiation. 42.10-22 utilises the ‘exiles in Babylon / remnant of Jerusalem’ polarity of 24.1-10, but configures the ‘remnant of Judah’ as a distinct entity who, by their actions, can align themselves with either group. At the same time, YHWH’s reference to ‘the disaster I have brought upon you’ (42.10) places them in continuity with their compatriots, and their predetermined rejection of Jeremiah’s message renders the offer hypothetical. The placement of the oracle to Baruch (45.1-5), promising him YHWH’s protection wherever he goes, serves to differentiate him from the remnant of Judah with whom he has come to Egypt, but v. 5 also distinguishes him from ‘all flesh’ upon whom YHWH is bringing disaster. In this way, Baruch, like Ebed-Melech, is configured alongside Jeremiah, standing over against an evil nation.
Chapter 5. Undifferentiated Salvation: Jer. 30 – 31

1. Introduction

We have now examined how the concept of inner-Judean differentiation is interpreted by three distinct units in Jer. 21 – 45. Before turning to draw conclusions from this study, however, some brief comments are in order concerning two chapters in Jer. 21 – 45 which we have so far overlooked. We noted in our first chapter that Jer. 1 – 20 presents a message of undifferentiated judgement; as we will now show, Jer. 30 – 31 provides a counter-balancing pole, with prophecies of undifferentiated salvation. It should be emphasised that what is said here is intended as no more than a sketch of these two chapters.

2. Jer. 30 – 31 as a Literary Unit

With their forward-looking perspective and dramatic message of salvation, including what for many is the high point of OT theology (the new covenant prophecy in 31.31-34), the so-called ‘Book of Consolation’ has been described as “the pivotal centre” and “the functional centre” of Jer.1 Granted, scholars differ as to its scope; some restrict the title to chs. 30 – 31,2 while others apply it to all of chs. 30 – 33.3 There are, certainly, marked differences between the first two chapters (mostly poetic, and with a strongly ahistorical quality; Jeremiah is wholly absent) and the latter two (almost entirely prose, and set in the context of the Babylonian siege; Jeremiah is central throughout). On the other hand, chs. 30 – 31 and 32 – 33 can be seen as counterbalancing each other; both include YHWH’s promise of a ‘covenant’ (יהוה ונ私は, 31.31;

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1 Clements, Jeremiah, 8, and Stulman, Order Amid Chaos, 78, respectively.
3. Undifferentiated Salvation in Jer. 30 – 31

3.1. The Inclusion of Israel and Judah

Given the predominant Judean focus of Jer., one of the most striking features of the Book of Consolation is its affirmation that both Israel and Judah will share in YHWH’s restoration. True, only the introduction (30.3-4) and the new covenant prophecy (31.27-34) mention both kingdoms together. Elsewhere, we have two oracles addressed to ‘Israel’ (31.3-6, 21-22), four to ‘Israel / Jacob’ (30.5-7, 10-11; 31.7-9, 10-14), two to Judah (31.23-24, 38-40) and one to Zion (30.12-17). This audience variation has often been explained by the hypothesis that 30.5 – 31.22 contains authentic oracles addressed to the former northern kingdom, supplemented with (post-) exilic material incorporating Judah into YHWH’s promises (cf. the

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4 Other terms common to both sections are הָשֵׁם, ‘forgive’ (31.34; 33.8; elsewhere only in 5.1, 7; 36.3; 51.20); הָשֵׁש, ‘bring healing’ (30.17; 33.6; elsewhere only in 8.22), מְצָר, ‘heal’ (30.17; 33.6) and הלִּי, ‘discipline’ (30.11; 31.18; 32.33). MT heightens the counterbalancing of chs. 30 – 31 and 32 – 33 with its second ‘creation guarantee’ passage (33.19-26 >OG; cf. 31.35-37).


6 Bracke, ‘Reappraisal’, 236. We might also note that the phrase דַּעַת (םי) (‘once more; no longer’) finds one third of its fifty-four Jeremianic instances in chs. 30 – 33.


8 There may also be a reference to Judah in 30.18, if the ‘city’ (םי) is Jerusalem, and the royal palace. However, these identifications are uncertain (see Thompson, Jeremiah, 561).
suggestion in *BHS* that הַיּוֹרָד נָחַל in 30.4 is secondary). The theory is not without its merits, although its proponents differ in their assessments of how much is authentic; in any case, ‘Israel’ (30.10; 31.2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 21) and ‘Jacob’ (30.7, 10, 18; 31.7, 11) may actually signify the entire Diaspora, as they do frequently in later biblical literature (Isa. 40.27; 41.8; 43.1; 49.5; cf. Ps. 79.7; 147.19). Two points, however, should be noted. Firstly, even if we isolate the ‘Israel / Jacob’ material from the ‘Judah / Zion’ material, there is no hint of mutual polemising. Secondly, within the final form of the text, there is the unambiguous expectation of both kingdoms reunited under YHWH’s blessing (as in 3.18; 50.4, 33).

### 3.2. The Non-specific Nature of the Diaspora

Whereas ch. 29 is (at least initially) addressed to the community exiled to Babylon in 597, chs. 30 – 31 are consistently ambiguous regarding the identity and location of their audience. In 30.10, YHWH pledges to rescue his people from ‘a distant place’ (יִדְרָע) and from ‘the land of their captivity’ (ארץ שביסס), even though he has scattered them ‘among all the nations’ (בְּכֶלֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל, v. 11). 31.8 anticipates their return from ‘a land of the north’ (ארץ מסת) and ‘the ends of the earth’ (רֶכֶב עַד אֵין הָאָדָם), while in 31.16, YHWH assures Rachel that her children will return from ‘an enemy land’ (אָרֵי אָבִי). We might note that 30.10-11 and 31.8 describe the place of Diaspora both as a singular (כְּבוֹל הָוָיְם, אָרָץ מָסָט, אָרָץ שביסס, רֶכֶב), and as a plural (כְּבוֹל הָוָיְם).

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11 Note Rudolph’s remark, *Jeremia*, 165, on the application of the term ‘Ephraim’ to Israel in 31.9: ‘dieses Vorrecht Efraims wird hier nicht (wie 2 Sam. 19.44; LXX 1 Chr. 5.11f.) gegen Juda ausgespielt, da außerhalb des Blickfelds bleibt, sondern den anderen Völkern gegenüber betont (vgl. 7a.; 2.3; 3.19)’. Schmid, *Buchgestalten*, 110-187, argues that while the Jacob, Rachel and Ephraim texts (30.5-7, 18-21; 31.15-22) anticipate the resettlement of Samaria and Judah, the Zion texts (31.6, 10-14) interpret the repopulation of Samaria merely as a prelude to its people coming to worship in Jerusalem. If this is correct, we would have to reckon with some tension between the different redactional layers over the centrality of Jerusalem, but the pan-Israel nature of YHWH’s salvation would not be in dispute.
3.3. The Personification of Israel

As noted above, the significance of the names ‘Jacob’, ‘Ephraim’ and ‘Rachel’ in chs. 30. – 31 has often been sought in terms of their historical referents, i.e., as cyphers for the former northern kingdom. At least as significant, however, is how these personifications function at a poetic level. For one of the most striking features of the Book of Consolation is its use of individual metaphors for its addressees.

Dominant among these is ‘Jacob’. The name first occurs in 30.5-7, where קָלָל יַעֲקֹב יָדוּעַ לְעַזַּג יִשְׂרָאֵל (v. 6) gives way to the corporate צֹאֵב מִשְׂרֹאֵל לְשֵׁם יְהוָה (v. 7b). Similarly, whilst the promise כִּי יִזְכּוֹר מְצָאֵב מִשְׁאַרְּךָ יָדוֹעַ לְעַזַּג יִשְׂרָאֵל (30.10b) differentiates between the exiles

12 “The dispersion, therefore, is broader than Babylon.” (Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 94). Rudolph, Jeremia, 161, explains the plural by noting that, according to 2 Kgs. 17.6, the Israelites were dispersed to various Mesopotamian lands.

13 Thus, Volz, Jeremia, 288, 290, and Rudolph, Jeremia, 161, take 30.10-11 to refer to the Israelite exiles in Assyria, while Bright, Jeremiah, 284-285, sees it as addressed to Judean exiles in Babylon.
and their children, these same people are in the same verse addressed as ‘Jacob’ (v. 10a, c).\(^{14}\) In 31.7, Jacob is equated with the שארית ישראל, whom YHWH will save; while in 31.11, the statement פֶּתַח והוּה אֶת עַמּוֹ נָאֶל מִדָּה מִמָּזִּיך is followed in vv. 12-14 by third person plural forms (במִמָּזִּיך).\(^{15}\) In addition, the people are depicted as ‘Ephraim’. In 31.9, the parallelism with ‘Israel’ (31.7, 8) shows the entire nation to be in view, while in 31.18-19, Ephraim’s confession (... אֱפְרָאִים מִטּוֹרֵד, v. 18) prompts YHWH’s affirmation, כַּלַּעֲבֵר (v. 20).

There are also two contrasting female metaphors for the scattered people. Twice, they are described as a נינה, an image that is itself semantically fluid; this נינה is YHWH’s virgin bride,\(^{16}\) dancing with tambourines (31.4), and also his wayward daughter (31.21-22). Conversely, in 30.17 the speaker of the preceding lament is described by her foes as a יַעֲרָה. The participle of מ (Niph.) usually denotes ‘exile, fugitive’,\(^{17}\) but as the following נַעֲרָה implies, the picture here is more personal; this one whom YHWH has severely chastised resembles an unloved, rejected woman.

In short, the trope of a single human figure is one of the primary means by which Israel / Judah is conceptualised in chs. 30 – 31.\(^{18}\) Although these personifications allow the people to be ‘seen’ variously (as humiliated, wayward, pure, etc.), they also serve to emphasise their unity, and undermine internal differentiations among them.

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\(^{14}\) Alternatively, in 30.10 ‘Jacob’ may be the patriarch himself, with ‘your seed’ the present exiles (cf. 31.15-17, which addresses ‘Rachel’ concerning her ‘children’). In this case, the thought is that God’s promise to Jacob is applicable to his descendants.

\(^{15}\) In MT 30.18 the equation of patriarch and people is weakened by the phrase בַּנֵי הָאָדָמָה (cf. Num. 24.5; Mal. 2.12); however OG וַיֶּקֶטֶר אִישׁ וַיִּשְׁלָחָה (Isa. 2.12; possibly וַיִּשְׁלָח אִישׁ) may reflect a Vorlage that read וַיֶּהֶר אִישׁ (Isa. 2.12), thus retaining the ‘Jacob’ metaphor.

\(^{16}\) Cf. Jer. 2.2, though here the term נינה is used. See further J. Schmitt, ‘The Virgin of Israel: Referent and Use of the Phrase in Amos and Jeremiah’, \textit{CBQ} 53 (1991) 365-387, who argues that in Jer. 31 ‘virgin’ denotes the capital city (Samaria) – which in turn, however, ‘may stand for that whole kingdom, indeed for the whole exiled people of Israel.’\(^{19}\)

\(^{17}\) E.g., בַּנֵי הָאָדָמָה (Isa. 11.12; 56.8; Ps. 147.2), מַכָּהוּ מַרְכַּז מִצְוֹר (Isa. 16.4), מַכָּהוּ מִתְּרָדָה (Isa. 16.3). The singular נוּנֵר is used as a collective for ‘exiles’ in Mic. 4.6 and Zeph. 3.19.

\(^{18}\) Schmid, \textit{Buchgestalten}, 150, sees the Grundtext of chs. 30 – 31 as alternating between poems using the names of the patriarchs, and poems employing second fem. sing. address. Whatever the merits of this analysis, it illustrates the prominence of \textit{singular} address.
3.4. The Listing of Groups

In contrast to the point just made concerning personification, several oracles in chs. 30–31 emphasise the undiscriminating nature of YHWH’s salvation by highlighting the social diversity of the restored community. In 31.8, for example, the ‘great company’ (םְתָּל נוֹרְלָה) whom YHWH will bring back expressly includes vulnerable members of society; ‘the blind and the lame’ (יֵדְיָו יִלְּדָה, נוֹרְלָה),19 ‘the pregnant and the one giving birth (יֵדְיָו יִלְּדָה, נוֹרְלָה). In 31.13, despite the differences between MT and OG,20 the picture is clearly one of young women, young men and old men rejoicing together. Again, 31.24 anticipates YHWH’s renewed blessing of both urban and rural communities, even though here too we have some divergence between MT and OG.21

Whilst these are all conventional social categories,22 the listing of them, along with the term ירדה (31.8, 24; MT 31.13) clearly indicates the broad scope of YHWH’s salvation.23 This significance of this listing of groups increases when we recall that earlier in Jer., the same rhetorical technique expresses the comprehensiveness of Judah’s sin and YHWH’s judgement.

In fact, the only possible instance of an inner-Israelite distinction within the Book of Consolation comes in 30.23-24. Following an oracle of salvation for Jacob (30.18-22), 30.23 declares that YHWH’s wrath will break upon ‘the wicked’ (יִרְדָּה). But who exactly are these

19 MT is preferable to OG דַּיָּה מַעֲשֵׂה. McKane, Jeremiah 2, 790, describes the Greek translation as “eccentric”, but the mistake may have arisen in the transmission of the Vorlage (so Volz, Jeremiah, 286).
20 MT יֵדְיָו יִלְּדָה, נוֹרְלָה; OG יֵדְיָו יִלְּדָה, נוֹרְלָה. Preferring OG are Duhm, Jeremiah, 247; Rudolph, Jeremiah, 164; McKane, Jeremiah 2, 788; preferring MT are Volz, Jeremiah, 280; Becking, ‘Book of Consolation’, 157. Thompson, Jeremiah, 571, maintains that both texts read equally well.
21 MT יִרְדָּה נוֹרְלָה; OG יִרְדָּה נוֹרְלָה. Since MT makes יִרְדָּה the subject of יֵדְיָו, the lack of a verb for the ensuing statement is awkward, though not impossible (Volz, Jeremiah, 282; Rudolph, Jeremiah, 168). Also difficult is MT יִרְדָּה נוֹרְלָה; LXXאֲשֶׁר יִרְדָּה נוֹרְלָה, Targ., Vulg., support an emendation to יִרְדָּה, ‘those who set out with’ (for a construct followed by ב, see GKC §130a), but a finite verb is supported by OG, נוֹרְלָה יֵדְיָו יִלְּדָה, it could mean ‘he will set out’ (= יֵדְיָו) or ‘he shall be lifted up’ (= נוֹרְלָה); for the latter, see Volz, Studien, 237, who attributes the translator’s misunderstanding “auf Hörfehler beim Diktat”.
22 See especially the paralleling of יֵדְיָו יִלְּדָה (2 Sam. 5.6, 8; Job. 29.15; Isa. 35.5-6).
23 Not wholly persuasive is the argument of B. Bozak, Life ‘Anew’: A Literary-Theological Study of Jer. 30 – 31 (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1991) 169, that “by the explicit mention of women as included in the assembly (31.8) and as responsible for the return (31.31-22), as well as by the repeated use of feminine address, Israel was reminded of the fact that she was composed not only of males but of females).”
people? Elsewhere in Jer., חֲרָשִׁים signifies the arrogant in Judean society who oppress the poor (e.g., 5.26; 12.1), while in the almost identical 23.19-20, it is clearly ‘the prophets’ who are in view. Consequently, several scholars have concluded that an inner-Judean group is also in view here.25 However, חֲרָשִׁים can also denote other nations (Jer. 12.14; Ezek. 21.34; Ps. 9.18 // מִּיתִין), and the context suggests that this is the sense here also;26 the previous salvation oracle announced YHWH’s punishment on Israel’s ‘oppressors’ (לְאָשֶׁר, 30.20; cf. v. 16), while the promise that ‘their leader will be from among them’ (מִמֶּנָּם, 30.21) implies that their present leaders are foreigners.

Consequently, Jer. 30 – 31 present a message of undifferentiated salvation that stands in complete contrast to the proclamation of indiscriminate judgement in Jer. 1 – 20. The people of Judah and Israel are now a single entity, differentiated only externally from the other nations. Keown et al. observe:

Whatever the details of the history of redaction of these chapters . . . in their final form the contents have been ‘loosened from their original historical moorings’. All of Israel and Judah, whether exiled in the eighth century B.C., the sixth century B.C., or not at all, and all of their descendants, hope in God through these promises. The distinctions present in chs. 2, 24 and 29 will have no significance in their future.27

This interpretation need be qualified in just one respect. Whatever else may be said about the prophecy of the new covenant (31.29-34), its most notable aspect from the standpoint of the present study is the way it combines theologies of differentiation and undifferentiation. The reference to the exodus (v. 32) establishes the basic perspective: Like their ancestors under Moses, all the people (Israel and Judah, v. 31) have been brought out of captivity, and now stand on the edge of a covenant relationship with YHWH. In this sense, the entire nation is ‘saved’. Just here, however, is the point of discontinuity. The covenant that YHWH will make with them

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24 In 30.23 MT reads מְאֹדָי, 23.19 and adds עֲדֵה.


26 So Rudolph, Jeremiah, 163; Bright, Jeremiah, 280; Thompson, Jeremiah, 563; Odashima, Heilsgrößer, 53; Brueggemann, Exile and Homecoming, 279; Schmid, Buchgestalten, 181-182; with less certainty, Carroll, Jeremiah, 585.

27 Keown et al., Jeremiah 26 – 52, 85; the quotation is from Childs, Introduction, 351.
will be unlike that which he made with their forefathers, precisely because of its individualism. Hence, this passage brings together the totalising 'they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest' (v. 34) and the differentiating 'everyone will die for his own sin' (v. 29).28

28 M. Weinfeld, 'Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel', *ZAW* 88 (1976) 35-39, sees a reformulation of the deuteronomistic 'principle of retribution' as one of the characteristics of the new covenant as formulated by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. "The generation of the destruction bore in its consciousness the fact that whereas its forefathers, who had sinned, lived happily (see Jer. 44.17-18), itself was suffering for their transgressions" (35).
Chapter 6. Conclusions

1. Summary of Findings

Having now completed our analysis of the three textual units, chs. 21–24, 27–29, and 37–45, we can summarise our findings regarding the issue of differentiation in regard to salvation and judgement.

Chs. 21–24 configure the people by viewing them through three separate ‘lenses’. In the last of these (24.1-10), YHWH promises spiritual and physical restoration for the exiles in Babylon, but annihilation and dispersal for Zedekiah’s people in Jerusalem. The latter statement, however, has already been qualified in 21.1-10, where Jeremiah announces disaster for the inhabitants of Jerusalem but survival for any who go out to the Babylonians. At the same time, the entire vision of 24.1-10 is modified and relativised by the broader perspective of 23.1-8; here, YHWH pledges to restore his scattered people to their land but to punish their leaders.

In chs. 27–29, the text common to MT and OG provides a more complex analysis, with two intersecting polarities. On the one hand, the contrast between Jeremiah’s modest offer of life to the non-exiles (ch. 27) and his assurance of YHWH’s blessing and future restoration of the exiles (ch. 29) serves to differentiate these two communities. On the other hand, both audiences are differentiated internally between the prophets and the rest of the people; the prophets are rhetorically marginalised, and singled out for death or some other form of punishment. The MT plus of 29.16-20, however, disturbs this integrated analysis by repeating the message of disaster for Zedekiah and his people from 24.7-10, thereby radicalising the contrast between the two communities.

The first part of the narrative Jer. 37–45 begins by restating the polarity between those who stay in the city and those who surrender (cf. 21.8-10). This, however, is then qualified twice. Jeremiah’s message to Zedekiah (38.14-23) extends the promise of personal survival to cover the entire city, thereby undermining the basic principle of 21.1-10. Meanwhile, Ebed-Melech is assured not only of survival, but also of YHWH’s personal protection (39.15-18), despite remaining in the city. In the second part of the narrative, Jeremiah promises the ‘remnant of Judah’ YHWH’s blessing if they stay in the land, but disaster if they flee to Egypt (42.10-22); in this way, they are differentiated from ‘the remnant of Jerusalem’ in ch. 24. The narrative ends, however (45.1-5), with Baruch in Egypt being assured of YHWH’s gift of life.
It will be noticed from this overview that 'differentiation' can take one of two forms. On the one hand, there are passages in which certain individuals are (for one reason or another) exempt from YHWH's plan of salvation or judgement on the community in general. Thus, those who surrender to the Babylonians, as well as Ebed-Melech and Baruch, will survive in a context of national disaster, while in chs. 27 – 29, the prophets Hananiah, Ahab, Zedekiah and Shemaiah are specifically excluded from YHWH's saving actions. On the other hand, there are passages where differentiation involves what we might call 'dual action'; that is, YHWH announces his intention to save one group and to punish another. This is the case in 23.1-8 (salvation for the people but judgement for the leaders) and in 24.1-10 (salvation for the exiles but judgement for those in Jerusalem).

2. Conclusions

2.1. The Prominence of the Concept of 'Differentiation'

As if to bridge the twin poles of undifferentiated judgement in chs. 1 – 20, and undifferentiated salvation in chs. 30 – 31, the three literary units that we have investigated in this dissertation present a veritable kaleidoscope of inner-Judean distinctions. As we noted earlier, two of the 'Jehoiakim' passages (chs. 26 and 36) that help to structure this macro-section serve a transitional role in this respect, since they emphasise how certain groups and individuals respond positively to the prophetic word. Nevertheless, the announcement of judgement within them remains unqualified. When we come to chs. 21 – 24, 27 – 29, and 37 – 45, however, the picture changes dramatically, as one group or individual is distinguished from another in respect to YHWH's plans of judgement and salvation. Indeed, we have argued that the very literary structure of each of these units serves to foreground the concept of differentiation. The prominence of the basic concept of 'differentiation' is, of course, in line with our expectation at the start of our study.

2.2. The Diversity of Differentiation

At the same time, our study has revealed remarkable variety and flexibility in the forms of inner-Judean differentiation. The point here is not merely the number of different polarities that are represented; rather, it has to do with how they interact hermeneutically with each other.
This interaction takes different forms. In part, it involves what may be called ‘nuancing’. The unqualified promise of restoration for the 597 exiles in 24.4-7, for example, is reiterated in ch. 29, but made more precise by the exclusion of the prophets from YHWH's salvific plans. Similarly, the unmitigated warning of disaster for Zedekiah and his people in 24.8-10 is nuanced slightly by the option of surrender and life in 21.8-10; 38.1-3. In both cases, the second passage affirms what has been said about the group in general, but introduces certain exceptions – the lens, so to speak, is more close-up.

When chs. 27–29 are viewed as a whole, however, we find an interaction of two polarities more aptly described as ‘intersecting’. On the one hand, the differentiation is between the exiled and non-exiled Judeans; on the other hand, within both communities we see a dichotomy between ‘prophets’ and ‘people’. To use our previous metaphor, it is as if one lens has been superimposed over another.

The most complex form of interaction between different modes of differentiation might be termed ‘reconfiguration’. That is to say, one polarity partially overlaps with another. The verbal similarity between YHWH's promise to restore his people מִכְּלֵי הָאָרֶץ הַאֲרָבָּה אֲרָבָה אֲכָלָה (23.3), and his threat to make the people of Jerusalem a horror בְּכָלָה הָמָּקְדָּשָּׁה אֲרָבָּה אֲכָלָה (24.9) suggests there is also some conceptual overlap – i.e., judgement followed by restoration – yet as we have seen, these two passages configure the nation in fundamentally different ways (‘leaders and people; ‘exiles and non-exiles’), and operate with different presuppositions, making any attempt to synthesise them problematic, if not impossible. Likewise, the ‘prophet/people’ dichotomy in chs. 27–29 echoes that of ‘leaders/people’ in 23.1-4, but strikes a different note in depicting the people as active partners with the prophets.

Perhaps the most striking instance of ‘reconfiguration’ occurs in the two personal oracles of 39.15-18 and 45.1-5. As we have seen, the historical setting of the former, and the wording of YHWH’s promise, מִכְלָה אֲרָבָּה אֲכָלָה, suggests that Ebed-Melech is being differentiated from ‘this city’ like others who are given this promise (38.1-3). At the same time, however, the promise and the affirmation יִרְאוּ כְּפָנֵי יְהוָה סֵפֶּר לְבַד יִנְפַּד, forge links with earlier material in Jer., and place Ebed-Melech in a new conceptual category, that of the faithful man aligned against the nation. Likewise, in its immediate context the oracle to Baruch exempts him from the rest of the Judean remnant with whom he has come to Judah; yet his lament, יָרָא נָא בְּפָנָי יְהוָה יִנְפַּד לְבוֹא הַשָּׁלוֹשׁ, presents him as a Jeremiah-type figure, also standing against the whole land of Judah. In
both cases, one mode of differentiation gives way to another. To describe the book of Jeremiah as ‘complex’ and ‘kaleidoscopic’ is no new insight; our study of concepts of differentiation in chs. 21 – 45 simply gives fresh evidence of the truth of such descriptions.

However we account for this range and interplay of distinctions (a point we will return to below), it is clear that Jer. 21 – 45 as a whole witnesses to the inadequacy of any one of them. Here again, the metaphor of the lens may be helpful. Each mode of differentiation provides a way of seeing the Judean community of the early sixth century in theological terms; yet the complexity of that community, like any other, resists definition by a single lens. In this respect, the ‘differentiations’ of Jer. 21 – 45 (like the ‘undifferentiations’ of Jer. 1 – 20 and 30 – 31, for that matter) function like other theological categories; there is always a degree of ‘slippage’ between category and reality. Particularly clear evidence of this emerges in chs. 42 – 43; here, Jeremiah configures ‘the remnant of Judah’ as a wilful, disobedient mass (43.4), yet the following verses indicate that they were a disparate group (including children, as well as Baruch and Jeremiah) under the control of Johanan’s men. Whilst this does not invalidate Jeremiah’s configuration of them, it does indicate its limits.¹

2.3. The Diversity of Rationales

Throughout our dissertation, we have sought not only to show how different groups and individuals are distinguished from another, but also to explore the rationale underlying each differentiation. As our point of departure, we referred to Koenen’s study, in which he focuses on oracles of salvation and judgement that are ethically grounded, rather than (for example) those where the people’s future rests on their action in a specific situation, or simply on YHWH’s sovereign decision. These latter two categories could be termed, respectively, ‘conditional’ and ‘unconditional’.² Our own research has shown that in Jer. 21 – 45, the rationale for the allocation of salvation or judgement is more complex than this.

In the first place, rarely is the rationale for judgement the inverse of the rationale for salvation. We have seen that censure is passed on Israel’s ‘shepherds’ for abusing the ‘flock’

¹ N.K. Gottwald, The Politics of Ancient Israel (LAI; Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, 2001) 5, refers to “the realization that every telling of history is a fresh construal and that the political past embraces more than any single telling is capable of grasping.”.

² These are my terms rather than Koenen’s, but they seem to express the distinctions he is making.
(23.1-2), on Hananiah and Shemaiah for threatening the community with falsehood (28.15-16; 29.31-32), and on Ahab and Zedekiah for committing ‘folly in Israel’ (29.23). In each case, the basis for judgement is clearly ‘ethical’. Although the reason for YHWH’s wrath against Jerusalem is rarely stated in the texts we have examined, these have to be read in the light of chs. 1–20, which repeatedly indict the people for their unfaithfulness. On the other hand, only in the case of Ebed-Melech is salvation unambiguously grounded in someone’s ‘ethical’ profile. Usually, it rests either upon obedience to YHWH in a specific situation, or upon his free initiative. In the latter case, there may be different reasons for that initiative: YHWH’s promise of restoration in 23.1-4 is linked to his prior relationship with the people, while his favour to the exiles in 24.4-7 appears wholly gratuitous.

At the same time, we have seen that ‘ethical’, ‘conditional’ and ‘unconditional’ are not watertight categories. The oracles of restoration (24.4-7; 29.10-14) contain elements of contingency, since they require the people to seek YHWH; and even if this is facilitated by his gift of a new heart, it is not enforced. The primary logic of the promise of restoration in 23.1-4 is also unconditional; YHWH will save his flock because it is his flock. But, we may ask, are not their shepherds also YHWH’s flock? Implicitly, there does seem to be an ethical dimension to the rationale for the people’s salvation, even if only to the extent that they are not guilty of the sins of their leaders.

The line between ‘conditional’ and ‘ethical’ is also blurred. The option of life for those who go out to the Babylonians (21.8-10; 38.1-3) rests on an acceptance of YHWH’s judgement on Jerusalem. In its own way, this could be interpreted as an ‘ethical’ act, even an act of ‘trust’, especially since the Judeans were previously denounced for ‘trusting in’ their cities (5.17) and the temple (7.14). Similarly, the requirement that the Judeans ‘serve’ the king of Babylon (27.1-18) and that the exiles ‘build, plant and multiply’ (29.5-7) is simultaneously a requirement for submission and obedience to YHWH; indeed, to oppose such a message constitutes ‘rebellion against YHWH’. In short, the ‘unconditional’ is partly conditional, and the ‘conditional’ partly ethical.

Not only in the forms of differentiation, then, but also in their underlying logic, we find in Jer. 21–45 a diversity that defies systematisation; and here too, one may argue that this is necessary to convey the complexities of Judah’s experience. Indeed, according to Biddle, “the case could be made that the argument of the book lies in the contention that God’s relationship
with God’s people defies resolution and systematization.”

3 Guilt is universal, but not equal. People need a new relationship with YHWH, but they also need new leaders. Restoration is an act of grace from which some may still be excluded because of their conduct. Ebed-Melech will be protected because of his trust, while Baruch will be protected in spite of his self-concern. Placing such diverse perspectives in a wider OT context, Duguid comments:

Many people . . . looked to the past and sought to identify the sins (and the sinners) that had brought them into exile . . . Similar thoughts are also at work in other biblical documents of the exilic and post-exilic period, such as the Deuteronomistic History. That each comes to different conclusions as to the causes and future remedies of the exile shows that history and its analysis is a complex and multi-faceted affair, especially when it comes to the apportionment of blame.4

2.4. Implications for the Work of Pohlmann and Seitz

At the start of our study, we saw how Pohlmann and Seitz have interpreted the concept of differentiation in Jer. 21 – 45 as evidence for theories of the book’s composition. We believe that our research has important implications for the arguments of both scholars.

Implications for the Work of Pohlmann: It will be remembered that according to Pohlmann, the dominant voice in the final form of Jer. is that of the *golauorientierte Redaktion*, represented most clearly by 21.10 and 24.1-10. The purpose of this redaction, Pohlmann argued, was to show that only those who could trace their lineage to the exiles of 597 were entitled to be considered YHWH’s people in post-exilic Judah. Our observations, however, put a serious question mark against this reading of the book. For one thing, in between Pohlmann’s two ‘programmatic’ passages we hear another voice expressing hope for a general *Diaspora* (minus their leaders). By its very nature, this has the conceptual capacity to accommodate the ‘remnant of Jerusalem’ who in ch. 24 still await YHWH’s judgement, and the ‘remnant of Judah’ who choose to flee to Egypt. Furthermore, the oracles to Ebed-Melech and Baruch articulate YHWH’s blessing upon two individuals who were not among the 597 exiles. Any reading of Jer. in its present form must allow these passages (to say nothing of chs. 30 – 31) to relativise the perspective of ch. 24.

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3 Biddle, *Polyphony and Symphony*, 40. In similar vein, Stulman, *Order Amid Chaos*, 187, argues that the absence of conceptual uniformity in Jer. “attests in the first place to the wild and undomesticated God who refuses to be imprisoned by any closed system . . . And so, there is no cover-up in Jeremiah”.

This being so, Pohlmann’s claim that Jer. 24 was designed as a piece of propaganda by a post-exilic Judean faction also needs to be reconsidered. If this were its intent, one would have to argue either that its editors overlooked the way it is relativised by 23.1-8, 39.15-18 and 45.1-5 (and all of chs. 30-31), or that all these other passages were added even later. There is also the problem, which we noted earlier, of explaining why fourth century Jews were so particular about tracing their lineage to the 597 exile. We suggest, however, that to read ch. 24 in absolute terms is to violate its intent, which is to predict YHWH’s judgement on Jerusalem, but not to write off these people and their descendants forever. The fact that even its supposed counterpart in 21.1-10 modifies its extreme language suggests as much.

Implications for the Work of Seitz: As we discussed in our opening chapter, Seitz has put forward a modified account of Pohlmann’s thesis, in which he argues that Jer. 21-44 contains two different redactional layers; that of the ‘Scribal Chronicle’, and that of the ‘Exilic Redaction’. According to the former (which Seitz believes reflects the viewpoint of Jeremiah himself), the Judean exiles held no special privilege over their compatriots at home. Both could hope for YHWH’s favour, provided they submitted to the Babylonians. The Exilic Redaction, however, has supplemented and edited this material in order to show that the disobedience and downfall of Zedekiah and his people was inevitable from the outset.

Our study suggests that Seitz’s argument is flawed in two respects. Firstly, at certain points it fails to take account of important textual evidence. Seitz identifies Jeremiah’s question in 27.17, יָדְעָה אֶת מָלֵךְ בְּעָזְי לָמָּה שֵׁרֵד הָיוֹתָה הָיוֹתָה הָרוּפּ, as encapsulating the outlook of SC, despite the fact that this is MT plus. At the same time, he attributes all of 29.10-14, 16-19 to ER, despite the fact that some of this material is also MT plus. In this way, Seitz seems to be blurring important distinctions in the history of the development of the text. Secondly, Seitz tends to ‘flatten’ the variety of perspectives that we have seen represented in these chapters. We have argued, for example, that whilst at one level 21.8-10, 27.12-18 and 42.10-12 all convey a ‘submit and live’ message, the concepts underlying them are actually quite different. Similarly, we have shown that, even setting aside the MT plusses, Jeremiah’s message to the exiles in ch. 29 has a significantly more positive tone than that to the Judean community in ch. 27.

All this is not necessarily to dismiss the notion of a ‘Scribal Chronicle’ (or something like it). It does mean, however, that the outlook of such a document (and prophet) would have been more nuanced than Seitz implies. If, for the sake of argument, we accept the contours of
SC that Seitz proposes, the Jeremiah depicted in it proclaimed a restrained message of hope for the Judean community (ch. 27), but a much richer promise to the exiles (ch. 29); bare survival for the inhabitants of Jerusalem in 587 (21.8-10), but the possibility of divine restoration for those left in the land after 587 (42.10-12). There is, indeed, no reason in principle why the same individual could not have adopted each of these positions, but it is important to identify the conceptual thread that unifies them; not simply ‘submitting to the Babylonians’, but rather experiencing the reality of YHWH’s judgement. This would explain why the promises to the exile community in ch. 29 and to the ‘remnant of Judah’ in ch. 42 are so much fuller and richer than those to the Judeans in ch. 27 and 21.8-10.

This notion of the necessity of experienced judgement is not new. Earlier in our study, we noted how Kilpp accounted for the pro-Golah outlook of ch. 24: “geht es nicht an erster Stelle um den Wohnort, sondern um das eingetroffene bzw. nicht eingetroffene Gericht”.5 Concerning YHWH’s statement יתבשנה ב in 42.10, Thompson remarks that “the judgment that had already fallen had satisfied the divine demands resulting from the broken covenant. Nothing further was required, and the future held hope of better things.”6 It also comes to expression in the MT plus of 29.16, where YHWH announces his wrath against the community in Jerusalem, נכי נא תמאו בדנין. The importance of this concept in the OT prophets more generally has been explored by T.M. Raitt, who concludes that “the people’s accountability for their sin together with God’s attitude and intention toward them are radically shifted when the exile becomes a fact. The punishment itself creates an entirely new situation”.7 Turning to Jer., Raitt continues:

In [the] Jeremianic deliverance passages בדנין refers to the quality within an episode of the divine plan . . . Although it is not yet said as in Isa. 40:2 that ‘her time of service is ended’ or ‘her punishment accepted’ so that the moment of deliverance is in the present, a time of salvation for the future is assured.8

We are not, of course, suggesting that every polarity in Jer. 21 – 45 turns on the concept of ‘experienced judgement’; it clearly plays no part in the prophecy of 23.1-8, concerning the

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5 Kilpp, Niederreißen, 38.
6 Thompson, Jeremiah, 666.
shepherds and the flock, nor in the individual oracles to Ebed-Melech and Baruch. The results of our investigation do suggest, however, that this concept more than any other in Jer. 21 – 45 influences the assigning of salvation or judgement to different groups, before culminating in the announcement of undifferentiated salvation to the entire Diaspora in chs. 30 – 31.
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