

**“Group Identities in Jeremiah:  
Is It the Persian Period Conflict?”**

**Dalit Rom-Shiloni**

OFFPRINT FROM

**A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics,  
and Language Relating to Persian Israel**

Edited by

**Ehud Ben Zvi, Diana Edelman, and Frank Polak**

(Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Contexts, 5)

Gorgias Press

2009

# GROUP IDENTITIES IN JEREMIAH: IS IT THE PERSIAN PERIOD CONFLICT?<sup>1</sup>

DALIT ROM-SHILONI

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Book of Jeremiah challenges scholars in two very different areas of analysis, raising questions of communal-national identity and issues concerning the literary evolution of the book.<sup>2</sup> In reference to definitions of communal-national identity, contradictory positions are proclaimed in Jeremiah, reflecting a conflict between pro-Judean and pro-*golab* voices (as for instance in Jer 42:10–12 versus Jer 24:5–7).<sup>3</sup> Both perspectives appear as the words of the prophet, spoken by YHWH to Jeremiah, and yet contemporaneous biblical compositions show that these perspectives represent antagonistic positions current among Judeans in the early sixth century and following (as in Ezek 11:14–21; 33:23–29). While it is possible to harmonize these two positions by reconstructing ideological developments or even transformations within the prophet's

---

<sup>1</sup> I am greatly indebted to Dr. Ruth Clements for being an inspiring reader, for her insightful comments and improvements put into this paper.

<sup>2</sup> On the tight connection between community and tradition, see Robert P. Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant: Uses of Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah* (London: SCM Press, 1981), 249–68, especially 256–58.

<sup>3</sup> This dichotomy was suggested by Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict: Reactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah* (BZAW, 176; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1989, 201–2, and *passim*; and elaborated by Carolyn J. Sharp (*Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in Deutero-Jeremianic Prose* [Old Testament Studies; London: T&T Clark, 2003], 157–69) who used those terms to identify two antagonistic authorial and redactional circles of Jeremian traditionists. While I differ from Sharp in how I would assign specific passages to the two groups, I accept the “two-circle” redactional theory as very helpful in understanding Jeremiah.

own thought,<sup>4</sup> more prominent critical approaches find these contradictions to be a significant key to the literary history of the Book of Jeremiah. In this view, there is a (primary) Jeremian-Judean voice in Jeremiah, along with (secondary) redactional strands expressing the outlook of the Exiles in Babylon, who are responsible for the editorial process that gave the book its final shape.<sup>5</sup>

The present study focuses on these secondary redactional strands. Accepting the basic distinction between the Jeremian-Judean perspective and the redactors' Babylonian outlook as a point of departure, I want to challenge Robert P. Carroll's argument that:

It makes a good deal of sense to see such a dismissal [of the Judean group who had fled to Egypt and of Judean claims in general, D. R-S] as part of the counter-claim of the Babylonian exiles *who returned to Palestine at various periods in the Persian era* [my emphasis, D. R-S]. . . . The presence in the Jeremiah tradition of pericopes siding with the Babylonian exiles suggests *an element in that community struggle after the ending of the Babylonian period*

---

<sup>4</sup> This approach characterizes traditional medieval Jewish exegesis and is also utilized by modern scholars, such as Jeremiah Unterman, *From Repentance to Redemption: Jeremiah's Thought in Transition* (JSOTSupp, 54; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987); and more recently Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36* (AB, 21B; New York: Doubleday, 2004); as also by Mark Leuchter, *Josiah's Reform and Jeremiah's Scroll: Historical Calamity and Prophetic Response* (Hebrew Bible Monographs, 6), Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006. In his recent monograph, *The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26–45* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Leuchter perceived chapters 26–52 to be an exilic supplement compiled in Babylon by 570 BCE out of various materials, which in parts were edited by Jeremiah himself (as for instance chapters 27–29, 30–31), and in which the prophet was the one who addressed the 597 Exiles in Babylon.

<sup>5</sup> There has been a broad consensus among scholars that the exilic redaction of Jeremiah may be characterized very clearly as deuteronomistic in nature; see for instance Ernest W. Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970). Carroll (*From Chaos to Covenant*, 249–68) mentioned three basic communities in Judah, Egypt, and Babylon interested in Jeremiah's prophecies, but recognized the dominant power of the Babylonian Exiles. Sharp (*Prophecy and Ideology*, 157–69) further elaborated this redactional theory to include editorial centers in Judah and in Babylon, arguing for diverse deuteronomistic activity in both centers.

[my emphasis, D. R-S]. It may also contribute to the view that one of the strongest reasons for the production of the Jeremiah tradition along the lines it now takes is as a contribution to one of the parties in the struggle within the community.<sup>6</sup>

Should these secondary strands in Jeremiah be related only to the postexilic, Persian era conflict? Or, appreciating Carroll's emphasis on the significant connections between community and tradition, might we refine our examination to find several *diverse* Babylonian-exilic perspectives in the book of Jeremiah, parallel to or different from those we know of in other exilic and postexilic compositions of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE?

In an earlier study of internal Judean conflicts over group identities during this time span, I pointed out marked differences and transformations within Babylonian-exilic ideology.<sup>7</sup> Here, I will use this same method to discern different voices and even subsequent levels of literary evolution within the redactional strands of Jeremiah, and to place those levels of evolution at relative dates during the Neo-Babylonian and the Persian periods.

## II. STAGES IN BABYLONIAN EXILIC IDEOLOGY

Babylonian exilic ideology comprises those diverse outlooks reflected in the literature written, compiled, and edited *both* by Exiles in Babylon *and* by Babylonian-Repatriates in Achaemenid Yehud. This definition is indeed comprehensive, as it is quite clear that Babylon-oriented exilic communities were responsible for much of the compilation and editorial work done within the sixth and the fifth centuries BCE. Hence deuteronomistic literature, priestly compositions, and prophetic literature all show Babylonian-exilic perspectives in their final redactional stages. The chronological range for this literature starts as early as the first wave of Judean Exiles to Babylon in the Neo-Babylonian era (i.e., the Jehoiachin Exile, 597 BCE), and concludes with the later waves of return,

---

<sup>6</sup> Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant*, 259.

<sup>7</sup> Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah: Shifts of Group-Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology," G. Knoppers, O. Lipschitz, and M. Oeming (eds), *Judeans in the Achaemenid Age: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, [in press]).

those of Ezra and Nehemiah (458–432 BCE) deep in the Persian period. Accordingly, the geographical spectrum encompasses both literature produced in Babylon (Ezekiel; Isaiah 40–48; the editorial strands of Jeremiah; Kings, etc.), and Repatriate literature written in Yehud (Isaiah 49–66; Haggai and Zechariah 1–8; Ezra-Nehemiah).<sup>8</sup> The present study adds observations concerning the book of Jeremiah, and examines the strands of Babylonian exilic ideology found within it from the perspective of what those strands say about group identity.

It has long been recognized that questions of identity were at the core of the internal polemic within Judean communities of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. In my earlier paper I suggested an overview of the oppositional relationships between the Exiles and Those who Remained in Judah (then, Yehud), by moving backwards from Ezra-Nehemiah and Zechariah 1–8 to Ezekiel. The oppositions between the communities were established by using distinctive criteria of “otherness”; the two communities articulated their antagonistic positions through specific designations and counterdesignations, by mounting three arguments and counterarguments (those of continuity, entirety, and annexation of national-historical traditions), and by utilizing excluding strategies and counterstrategies by which each community legitimized its status and delegitimized its counter-community.<sup>9</sup>

Using quite a rough chronological separation I divided the sixth–fifth centuries into three main periods: the early exilic (597–586 BCE and on), exilic (circa 570/mid-sixth century to 538 BCE), and Persian periods (538–430 BCE). Within these periods several developments in attitudes towards self (in-group) and other (out-group) may be discerned:

1) In-group definitions:

A. Within the early exilic period (597–586 BCE and on),

Ezekiel considers the Jehoiachin Exiles to be the exclusive

---

<sup>8</sup> For this division of Deutero-Isaiah see recently Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40–48, 49–66* (Mikra LeIsrael; Jerusalem/Tel Aviv: Magnes and Am Oved, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of these arguments of *differentiation* within Babylonian exilic ideology see, Rom-Shiloni, *ibid.*, 6–28; for its sociological theoretical background see, Rom-Shiloni, “Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles and Constructor of Exilic Ideology” *HUCA* 76 (2005), 1–45, especially 5–8.

people of God (Ezek 11:14–21, etc.). In this extreme position, he excludes even the 586 Exiles from forming a united community with the earlier Exiles (14:21–23), whom he designates as “the seed of Jacob” (20:5).<sup>10</sup>

B. Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40–48) designates a shift within Babylonian exilic ideology as he addresses all the Exiles using the most general designations, not giving any special prominence to the Jehoiachin Exiles. This inclusive attitude within Babylonian exilic ideology, which might have started earlier, persisted during the first decades of the Exile, circa 570/mid-sixth century to 538 BCE, and was retained in the Persian period (538–430 BCE, in Zechariah 1–8 and Ezra-Nehemiah).<sup>11</sup>

C. Another inclusive tendency among the Exiles envisions a reunification between Exiles of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Judean Exiles in Babylon (Ezekiel 37:15–24).<sup>12</sup>

## 2) Out-group definitions:

Within the above writings and throughout these three periods, the “others” are always the inhabitants of Judah (Yehud), designated as foreigners, as not-Israel. Ezekiel labels Jerusalem as descending from the “land of the Canaanites—your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite” (Ezek 16:3). Ezra-Nehemiah repeatedly uses the phrase “the people(s) of the land(s)” **עמי הארצות**, as in Ezra 3:3), or “all foreigners” (**בני נכר**, Neh 9:2), to describe the Persian period inhabitants of Yehud (encompassing the people of Judah who were *not* deported) as an amalgamation of foreign peoples which manifests itself in several subdesignations:<sup>13</sup> (1) deportees fairly recently brought to the land by

<sup>10</sup> Rom-Shiloni, *ibid*, especially 39–40.

<sup>11</sup> Yet the Jehoiachin Exiles continue to be highly regarded through the Persian period, as the genealogy of Mordechai in Esth 2:1 suggests.

<sup>12</sup> The vision of reunification between Israel and Judah is by no means a new or exilic notion, and is assumed to have arisen in Judah after the destruction of Samaria. In what follows I will point out its occurrences in pre-exilic prophecies of Jeremiah (see below pp. 25–26).

<sup>13</sup> Other quite independent occurrences of **בני נכר** in Deutero-Isaiah portray these people as “foreigners who attach themselves to the Lord” (Isa 56:7; 60:10; 61:5), individuals who were accepted into the community,

the Assyrians from northern areas under their control (Ezra 4:1–4); (2) descendants of the ancient peoples of Canaan, of Canaanite, Trans-Jordanian, or even Egyptian ancestry (as in Ezra 9:2, 11); and (3) individuals in Nehemiah’s memoir who are defined by personal names and (non-Yehud) national identities: Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab (Neh 2:10, 19; 6:1–9, 11–19; 13:1–13; and see 4:1–2; 13:23). These designations share the clear tendency to exclude any group except the Babylonian Exiles (and the later Repatriates) from membership in the community of “Judeans.”

### 3) The Rhetoric of Desolation:

Another rhetorical strategy reinforces the exclusiveness of the community of Babylonian Exiles by portraying the land of Judah after the deportations as completely empty and desolate, awaiting the Repatriates’ return. The land has no residents at all, neither former Judeans (Israelites) nor any other designated population (as in 2 Kings 25). This theme goes throughout sixth-century sources, beginning with Ezekiel (as in Ezek 36:6–15), Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 49:14–21; 54:1–10; 60:14–21, etc.), and Zechariah 1–8 (Zech 1:7–17; 7:14; 8:1–15).

In Ezekiel, #2 and #3 form two parts of a unified argument “defining out” those left behind in Judah. The major shift in the Babylonian exilic ideology concerning the “other” was the evolution of an independent status for each of these two parts. Ezra-Nehemiah utilized the analogy in which the “others” become the foreign peoples of the land (#2), echoing Ezekiel’s designation of Jerusalem and its inhabitants as the “Canaanite” or foreign “peoples of the land.” Deutero-Isaiah, on the other hand, used the imagery of Zion as the empty land and the Exiles as the people of God who would fill it (#3), the path which Zechariah son of Iddo (and implicitly Haggai) would follow (this may be seen, for instance, in the similarities between Isa 49:15–21 and Zech 8:1–15).

Babylonian exilic ideology thus presents lines of continuity between its three chronological subdivisions. In addition, a “land orientation” seems to be a shared focus of Babylonian exilic ideology both in Babylon and back in Yehud. The Exiles in Babylon contin-

---

even allowed to participate in the Temple’s worship.

ued to negotiate their status in relation to those Judeans who remained in the land of Israel, rather than in relation to “proximate others” of the diverse national groups of exiles in Babylon.

The present study advances the questions of whether perspectives in the Book of Jeremiah accord with these polarized viewpoints developed in Babylon concerning Judean identities throughout the sixth-fifth centuries BCE; and more specifically, whether this paradigm might serve to construct a relative chronology by distinguishing the different perspectives apparent in the Book of Jeremiah; Would such an approach enable us to ascertain Persian period strands within the book?

### III. BABYLONIAN EXILIC IDEOLOGY IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

To narrow somewhat the search for traces of Babylonian exilic ideology in Jeremiah, I have focused this paper on prophecies of consolation: Jer 3:14–17, 18; 16:14–15; 23:7–8; chapter 24; chapters 30–33; and passages within chapters 50–51.

These prophecies have attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. Textual, linguistic, literary, thematic, historical, redactional, and comparative criteria have been employed to distinguish the early prophecies, which are said to be among the earliest in Jeremiah’s career, and which are placed side by side with (later) prophetic passages that resemble Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah, even Nehemiah, in style and themes. In addition to the standard methods, I suggest that we now examine these prophecies utilizing sociological distinctions between in-group and out-group.

#### A. In-group and Out-group Definitions: The Jehoiachin Exiles’ Exclusive Positions in Jeremiah (24, 29:16–20, chapters 40–44)

Jeremiah 24 presents the clearest example of boundary setting between “us” and “them.” This prophecy has long been considered non-Jeremian; it has been suggested that the passage reflects the Babylonian exilic perspective of the editorial strata of the book.<sup>14</sup> I

---

<sup>14</sup> Philip Hyatt considers chapter 24 to be deuteronomistic, presumably written around 550 BCE in Egypt (“Introduction and Exegesis, Jeremiah,” *Interpreter’s Bible*, 5:788–89, but cf. 996–98); while Nicholson correctly moves the deuteronomistic authorship of this oracle to Babylon

would be much more specific and say that, based on its labelling of self and other, its arguments, and strategy, this chapter illustrates the Jehoiachin Exiles' exclusivist ideology.<sup>15</sup>

The vision of the two baskets of figs, good and bad, brought before God symbolizes two groups, according to the divine explanation. The "good" basket is designated as גלות יהודה (NJPS: "the Judean exiles," v 5), and refers specifically to the Jehoiachin Exiles (v 1).<sup>16</sup> The "bad" basket denotes a long list of components:

את צדקיהו מלך יהודה ואת שריו ואת שארית ירושלים  
הנשארים בארץ הזאת והישבים בארץ מצרים

---

(*Preaching to the Exiles*, 81–83). Robert P. Carroll (*Jeremiah* [OTL; London: SCM Press, 1986], 482–88) argues that it was an exilic or even postexilic passage, reflecting the conflict of Ezra's era; William L. Holladay (*Jeremiah 1* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986], 655) admits that the chapter contains deuteronomistic redaction phraseology and a message that diverges from Jeremiah's point of view, but he limits such instances to expansions of specific phrases within vv 5–7, 8–10, in which he finds the expression of the exilic and the postexilic communities' own important message. These expansions were added to an authentic prophecy dated to the reign of Zedekiah, 594 BCE (*ibid.*, 657). On this last dating, see Unterman (*From Repentance to Redemption*, 55–87), Lundbom (*Jeremiah 21–36*, 222–36), and Leuchter (*Josiah's Reform*, 179–82) who argue for the Jeremianic authorship of this chapter.

<sup>15</sup> Contra Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 483) who indeed argued that this strand in the Jeremiah tradition functions as "propaganda for a particular group of deportees," yet he found it to echo the Ezra-Nehemiah traditions that evolved during the reconstruction of Jerusalem. I find it unnecessary to project this strand into the later period.

<sup>16</sup> גלות יהודה appears only in Jer 24:4, 5; 29:22; otherwise הגולה is used in reference to the Jehoiachin Exiles (29:1, 4, 20, 31; as in Ezek 3:11, etc.). Indeed, William McKane (*Jeremiah 1–25* [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986], 608–9) considered גלות יהודה to refer to the earliest group, to the Jehoiachin Exiles, *excluding* the 586 deportees and thereby delimiting "the entire, Babylonian, exilic community" (609). Cf. כל גלות ירושלים ויהודה (609). Cf. כל גלות ירושלים ויהודה (Jer 40:1), which refers to the 586 Exiles. The phrase שארית יהודה is restricted to chapters 40–44 in Jeremiah (where it occurs nine times) and refers to the Remnant that remained in Judah after the Destruction (Jer 40:15; 42:15, 19; 43:5; 44:12, 14, 28; 40:11, שארית ליהודה; and see 44:7).

King Zedekiah of Judah and his officials and the remnant of Jerusalem that is left in the land, and those who are living in the land of Egypt (v 8).

The list distinguishes between the royal and the lay people; then שארית ירושלים (“the remnant of Jerusalem”) is said to encompass two communities:<sup>17</sup> those who remained in the land, and those who were resettled in Egypt. All groups date back to the period immediately prior to the Destruction (597–586 BCE), or shortly after it.

The crucial dichotomy established in Jeremiah 24 between גלות יהודה and שארית ירושלים is constructed upon the three arguments of exclusivity.

(1) *Continuity*. *Galut Yebudah* is said to have gained the blessing (ושמתי עיני עליהם לטובה, v 6a); the prospect of regathering in the land (והשבתיים על הארץ הזאת, v 6a); and a transformation, led by God, through which they will reinstitute the covenant relationship (ונתתי להם לב לדעת אתי כי אני ה' והיו לי לעם) (v 7a) in continuity with Israel's past history.<sup>18</sup> This transformation is, however, mentioned as a reaction

<sup>17</sup> שארית ירושלים is a *hapax*, otherwise this community is called שארית יהודה (see above).

<sup>18</sup> Verses 5–6 transform the Jeremian phraseology of judgment into one of consolation, directed to this community of Exiles. The *hapax* phrases, לטובה הכיר את . . . (v 5), and שם עינו על . . . לטובה (v 6, together with 32:42; 39:9) suggest a transformation in God's attitude towards this community of Exiles, and cf. the otherwise judgmental contexts in which the antonyms לרעה ולא לטובה occur (21:10; 39:16; 44:27; and 14:11). This same transformation also appears in the two pairs בנה / לא הרס, נטע / לא (Jer 1:10; 18:7–9; and in part, 12:17). Such a transformation occurs also in prophecies of consolation to the Exiles (31:28), to the Repatriates (31:38–40), and in Jeremiah's call to the Remnant of Jerusalem (42:10), which is then dramatically transformed back into judgment in 45:4. Thus, I would not consider these phrases deuteronomistic (concurring with Helga Weippert, *Die Prosreden des Jeremiabuches* [BZAW, 132; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973], 193–202; and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 36–37, 658; *Jeremiah 2*, 308); but on the other hand, I would not exclude the option that their occurrence in 24:6 is a secondary adaptation of Jeremiah's own phraseology, used now to support the Jehoiachin Exiles in Babylon (and see the notes below discussing other phrases).

towards the people's return to God with all their hearts (כי ישבו אלי) בכל לבם (v 7b).<sup>19</sup> On the other extreme, those bad figs, King Zedekiah and the Remnant of Jerusalem, are doomed to total annihilation.<sup>20</sup> The phraseology used in vv 9–10 seems to bring together several otherwise independent phrases of curses for the sake of denigrating this “other” community as doomed both in the land and in Egypt.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> כי ישבו אלי בכל לבם (v 7b; see Jer 3:10, and Deut 30:10; 1 Kgs 8:48), together with כי אני ה' (according to its parallels in P [Exod 6:2–8], H, and Ezekiel, as in Ezek 20:5–6), are counted by Holladay as later additions (*Jeremiah* 1, 658–59). Holladay adds an *ex silentio* argument concerning both these phrases, which do not appear in Jer 31:31–34 (a passage he rightfully considers authentic/Judean). Indeed, כי אני ה' expands the object of knowing YHWH, which occurs in Jer 22:16; and 9:23, and adds another non-deuteronomistic phrase used in this prophecy. Unterman recognizes that the mention of the people's repentance occurs in Jer 24:7 “almost as an afterthought” (*From Repentance to Redemption*, 64–67, quotation from p. 66). Nevertheless, he finds this phrase to be a major example of Jeremiah 24's deviance from deuteronomistic phraseology and perceptions, and thus Jeremian in its authorship. Based on the exceptional phraseology mentioned in notes 15–20 here, I would add Jeremiah 24 to Jer 32:36–41 and count them as non-Jeremian (and non-deuteronomistic), early exilic Babylonian passages, see Rom-Shiloni, “The Prophecy for ‘Everlasting Covenant’ (Jeremiah 32:36–41): An Exilic Addition or a Deuteronomistic Redaction?” *V/T* 53 (2003), 201–23.

<sup>20</sup> Among the later additions, Holladay (*Jeremiah* 1, 659) counts the reference to “those dwelling in Egypt” (v 8, influenced by 44:27). But here is one example of the vicious circle Holladay has trapped himself in, by insisting on the authenticity of this prophecy. I would, however, accept his observation as to the late, or rather another exilic addition of בכל המקומות אשר אדיחם שם (v 9; *ibid*, 659), since it refers to exile as this community's divine judgment, in contradistinction to the calamitous fate envisioned for the Remnant of Jerusalem (including those who voluntarily migrated to Egypt) within the land. (v 10).

<sup>21</sup> To add to this list of exceptional exilic phraseology: משל ושנינה is a *hapax* in Jeremiah (otherwise appearing only in late deuteronomistic passages, Deut 28:37; 1 Kgs 9:7). It may be added to the other Jeremianic pairings: שמה ושקקה (as in Jer 19:8; 25:9); לקללה ולחרפה (other references to the Land of Judah, as in 44:8); לחרבה לשמה (25:11; 44:6); שמה (2:15; 4:17); or strings of four of these terms brought together: והייתם לאלה (25:18); ולשמה ולקללה ולחרפה (42:18; 44:12). The opening phrase ונתתים לזועה (read: לזועה) occurs in 24:9; in 29:18 in

(2) More so, this denigration and predicted judgment constructs an argument of *entirety*: since the land of Judah will be completely empty once those afflictions are implemented against the Remnant of Jerusalem in all of their places of residence (v 10), *Galut Yehudab* in Babylon represents the *entire* people of God; it is the only community that God will return to the land, the only community with whom God will reinstitute the covenant relationship.

(3) *Annexation*. *Galut Yehudab* thus annexes to itself several national traditions as referring exclusively to its own future; that is, the conceptions of covenant, land, and the trajectory of exile-redemption.

However, this prophecy does not give an indication of counterarguments against the Jerusalemite position.<sup>22</sup> Jer 24:8–10 does not explain, why the Remnant of Jerusalem (including those settled in Egypt) is cursed.

These stylistic and ideological characteristics construct a divisive rhetoric that is close to Ezekiel's ideology and exclusive preference for the Jehoiachin Exiles.<sup>23</sup> As in Ezek 11:1–13, 14–21; 33:23–29, the argument of exclusivity entails a dichotomy of self and other, which is portrayed as a matter of life and death (Jer 24:5–7 versus vv 8–10).<sup>24</sup>

While chapter 24 illustrates most clearly the antagonism between Judean groups of the first decades of the sixth century, one fragmentary prophetic passage, 29:16–20, should also be adduced here, as it builds on the same imagery and dichotomy. It establishes the

---

reference to the Remnant; and once in a judgment prophecy it refers to total destruction within the land (15:4; following Deut 28:25).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Jer 29:17–19, where quite a similar list of curses occurs, but which makes elaborate reference to the people's sin of disobedience against the words of God delivered by His prophets.

<sup>23</sup> See above, pp. 14–16. For *division* as a strategy of exclusiveness, see Donald L. Horowitz, "Ethnic Identity," N. Glazer and D. P. Moynihan (eds), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 111–40.

<sup>24</sup> Contra Holladay, who argues that this prophecy's main issue is "that those who stay at home should not feel superior" (repeated twice in *Jeremiah 1*, 656). This is much too mild a description of the antagonism suggested in this chapter, and certainly in vv 8–10.

king and the people of Jerusalem, “your brothers who did not go out with you into exile” as the bad figs, doomed to annihilation

כי כה אמר יהוה אל המלך היושב אל כסא דוד ואל כל העם  
היושב בעיר הזאת, אחיכם אשר לא יצאו אתכם בגולה

Thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and concerning all the people who live in this city, your brothers who did not go out with you into exile: v 16, cf. 24:8–10).

But the prophecy is cut off just as it moves to address “the whole exile community which I banished from Jerusalem to Babylon” (כל הגולה אשר שלחתי מירושלים בבלה), v 20). In the current editorial sequence, v 20 functions as the superscript for the coming judgment upon the prophets serving in Babylon, Ahab son of Koliah and Zedekiah son of Ma’aseiah (vv 21–23), and upon Shema’iah son of the Nehelamite (vv 24–32). But, based on the parallel dichotomy established in Jeremiah 24, it is much more reasonable to think that vv 16–20 were secondarily interpolated into their present context (note the natural flow between v 15 and 21), and originally contained a different, favourable prophecy addressed to the Jehoiachin Exiles.<sup>25</sup>

As shown by Gunther Wanke, Karl F. Pohlmann, and recently Mark Leuchter (each in his own way), chapters 40–44 (together with 45:1–5) present a thoroughly edited story of the Remnant of Judah, told in its present form by Babylonian exilic authors.<sup>26</sup> This masterful editorial work highlights the transition in the Remnant’s fortunes from restoration (40:7–12) to annihilation (40:13–45:5),<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> On the interpolative nature of 29:16–20, see Holladay, *Jeremiah* 2, 135; Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 559) who holds that these verses support the 597 Exiles; and C. S. Sharp (*Prophecy and Ideology*, 108–11) who argues for competing editorial voices in this chapter.

<sup>26</sup> Gunther Wanke, *Untersuchungen zur sogenannten Baruchsschrift* (BZAW, 122; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971), 91–133; Karl F. Pohlmann, *Studein zum Jeremiabuches* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978); Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile*, 120–41.

<sup>27</sup> Note the contradiction between the promise, 42:10 and the final threat, 45:4. Hence, while this passage is mostly treated as a colophon (to either 26–36, 26–44, or even to chapters 1–44), and a piece of personal guidance (Holladay, *Jeremiah* 2, 307–11), it seems to make an important

and advances several counterarguments denigrating the Remnant community.<sup>28</sup>

*Continuity.* The main problematic characteristic of the Remnant of Judah now living in the land of Egypt is disobedience. Disobedience is directed against Jeremiah the prophet (see 42–43:7, especially 43:2–3); more importantly, though, disobedience is aimed at YHWH himself (43:4, 7). With their settlement in the land of Egypt, the Remnant adds yet another dimension to their disobedience (ch. 44). In continuity with their ancestors they worship other gods (44:2–6, 7–10), bringing the inevitable divine judgment of total calamity upon themselves (vv 11–14). Their response to Jeremiah further substantiates and justifies their destiny (vv 15–19), and elicits a second threat of total annihilation (vv 27–30). Closing with what is definitely a salvation prophecy, pronounced to Baruch (45:1–5), this last passage portrays Baruch as the sole survivor of YHWH's total judgment (כי הנני מביא רעה על כל בשר נאם ה' 45:4–5).<sup>29</sup> Thus this Babylonian exilic perspective uses a negative construction of *continuity* as a counterargument against the Judean community now in Egypt.

*Entirety.* Through these prophecies of total calamity to the Remnant of Judah the editorial presentation accentuates the exclusive status of the Babylonian exilic community. Due to the Remnant's disobedient and idolatrous behavior, the Babylonian Exiles have become established as the sole and entire people of God. The "other" Judean community(ies), that is, the people who had remained in Judah post-586, had all escaped to Egypt, leaving Judah empty and desolate.<sup>30</sup>

Strategically, these chapters do not point towards an explicit confrontation between the two groups; they rather focus on the "other" community relating its story coupled with prophecies of

---

thematic statement on the issue of identity at the close of chapters 40–44 (see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 747–50).

<sup>28</sup> These counterarguments indeed start already within chapters 37–39, in reference to the reign of Zedekiah.

<sup>29</sup> כי הנני מביא רעה על כל בשר alludes to the Deluge story, with Noah as its sole survivor (Gen 6:13). כל בשר occurs also in Jer 12:12; 25:31, as a sign of total calamity; thus I would suggest all these passages allude to the totality of the Deluge, emphasizing the magnitude of the coming destruction. In a different context, note the divine epithet, אלהי כל בשר (32:27).

<sup>30</sup> This same perspective appears in 2 Kings 25; see vv 21 and 26.

judgment. These denigrating tendencies clear the way to confirm the Jehoiachin Exiles as the one and only community of the people of God.

To sum up, these passages in Jeremiah may be classed with similar passages known from Ezekiel, which reflect the initial stages of polemic prior to the Destruction and in the early years after it, i.e., the early exilic period (597–586 BCE and following).

The author of Jeremiah 24 (as also Ezekiel) had to emphasize that while the Jehoiachin Exiles had indeed been removed from the land (Ezek 11:16; cf. Jer 24:5), they (and only they) are the recipients of promises of future return and restoration in their land; they (and they alone) are the entire people of God, those with whom God will reinstitute the covenant relationship. The Babylonian Exiles lay exclusive claim to arguments of *continuity*, and *entirety*, and they *annex* national covenant traditions in the service of this claim. Chapters 40–44 argue the delegitimization of the Remnant of Judah through counterclaims of *continuity* in their disobedience, and bring their story to an end with Judah desolate and empty of all Judeans, and the people in Egypt doomed to annihilation. With these arguments and counterarguments those passages represent the first seeds sown towards a shift in center–periphery relations among the Judean communities by the early sixth century BCE.

This explicit (and at times only implicit) polemic between Babylonian Exiles and the people who remained in Judah is fairly limited in Jeremiah. Much more prominent are emphases on in-group definitions within each community.

## **B. Ingroup Definitions in the Book of Jeremiah**

Consolation prophecies in Jeremiah comprise several layers of prophetic pronouncements. Some may be assumed to be Jeremian in origin, or at least Judean in their geographical location and Neo-Babylonian in their dating; the others must have been the product of the prophet's Babylonian followers and editors of the book, thus reflecting Babylonian exilic ideology, and dating into the Persian period. Observing the sociological strategies employed within prophecies of consolation, inclusivity seems to be guiding the in-group approach. Yet the inclusive strategies used by Judean communities within Judah differ from those employed by Babylonian exilic communities. Teasing out the Jeremian-Judean layers in the consolation prophecies, will allow us to understand how Babylonian exilic authors, and in a different way the Repatriate-

Babylonian counterparts, redefined their in-group identities based on definitions established already by Jeremiah in Judah early in the prophet's career and within the early exilic period (597–586 BCE).

### ***1. Inclusive Judean Perspectives:***

#### ***(a) Incorporating the Northern Kingdom within Zion***

The Book of Consolation (Jeremiah 30–31) contains several prophetic passages that address the former Northern Kingdom of Israel: Jer 30:5–9, 10–11; 31:2–6, 7–9, 10–14, 15–22.

Jer 30:5–9 aims at the remnant left in the land in the aftermath of the Assyrian conquest of Samaria, and with 31:2–6 uses the designations “Jacob”/“Israel” (30:7; 31:2). These passages do not mention a change in the geographical residence of those so designated, but rather describe an agricultural restoration of the land (31:4–5). The passages furthermore call *betulat Israel* “to go up to Zion” (31:6), where the people shall serve “David their King,” now restored to his kingdom (30:9). The other prophecies (30:10–11; 31:7–9, 10–14, 15–22) refer to Jacob/Israel, Ephraim, or *betulat Israel*, as living in exile. They are joyfully called to return “here” (הנה, 31:7–8), back to the land (30:10–11; 31:7–9, 10–14, 15–22), or specifically to Zion (31:10–14), where God will reinstitute the close relationship of fatherhood with Ephraim, His firstborn (31:9), transform their grief into joy (31:12–13), and resettle them in their land (30:10, even their cities, 31:21). The people, on their part, will acknowledge their sins (31:18–19), and enjoy God's “full bounty” (31:14).<sup>31</sup>

One remarkable characteristic of these prophecies is their social/national viewpoint. The prophecies envision the return of Jacob of the North, Ephraim, to Zion; to David as King; to Yahweh as God. It is significant that this vision of unity is presented without using the national name of the Southern Kingdom, “Judah.”<sup>32</sup> These passages portray a restoration limited to agricul-

<sup>31</sup> This difference between location in Judah and location in exile in the prophecies directed to Northern Israel seems to be a dividing criterion in the passage 30:5–9, 10–11. Cf. Bob Becking, *Between Fear and Freedom: Essays on the Interpretation of Jeremiah 30–31* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 135–64.

<sup>32</sup> “Judah” occurs throughout the book of Jeremiah to designate the kings of Judah (54 times in the singular, and 10 in the plural); the people (called simply יהודה [2:28]; or by the phrase איש יהודה, which occurs 11

tural rural life, evidently not as a political revival of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, nor as a confederation of the two Kingdoms. Rather this former Northern community, as referred to by its ancient premonarchic ancestors (Jacob, Ephraim, Rachel), is to incorporate back into the community that presently *is* the people of God, and thus once again be considered “my people” (עמי, 31:14).

*Incorporation* (A + B = A) is a sociological strategy suggested by a community which considers itself dominant. While it is certainly an inclusive strategy, it maintains a clear hierarchal relationship between itself and its subordinate communities, and demands full acceptance of its own theology, worship, and political institutions—in this case, those of the dominant community of Judah.<sup>33</sup> Hence, these prophecies seem indeed to reflect a preexilic viewpoint, when Judah was at its full political strength, possibly during Josiah’s reign.<sup>34</sup>

### (b) שארית יהודה “*The Remnant of Judah*”

Pro-Judean (pro-land) prophecies of consolation are found in several contexts within the book of Jeremiah, originating both prior to the Destruction (Jer 32:6–15) and in its aftermath (42:7–17).<sup>35</sup> The more challenging question is whether other pro-land prophecies of consolation are embedded within chapters 30–33, and this will be discussed below.<sup>36</sup>

times, as in 3:3–4; as also בית יהודה, in 11:10 etc.); the cities of Judah (22 times, as in 1:15; 9:10), all referring to the kingdom and/or its people. It is then remarkable that Judah does not appear as the incorporating community within the above mentioned passages.

<sup>33</sup> On *incorporation* as an inclusive assimilatory strategy, see Horowitz, “Ethnic Identity,” 110–40.

<sup>34</sup> Marvin Sweeney, “Jeremiah 30–31 and King Josiah’s Program of National Restoration and Religious Reform,” *ZAW* 108 (1996), 569–83. These annotations bring me to accept only partly Sweeney’s observations on this earlier strand of Jeremiah 30–31, yet I do agree with his suggestion that the Judean initiative should be linked to Josiah (*ibid.*, 580–83).

<sup>35</sup> Jer 42:7–17 illustrates Jeremiah’s adaptation of the Deuteronomical admonishing pattern, as it is comprised first by a pronouncement of consolation (vv 7–12), and then by a threat against disobedience to the divine demand (vv 13–17).

<sup>36</sup> See pp. 34–35 below.

Purchasing the land of his cousin Hanam'el on the eve of the Destruction (32:1–5, 24–25), Jeremiah performs a symbolic act which starts with a personal-family transaction, but then appears to demonstrate the national sphere (Jer 32:6–15): “For thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God Israel: ‘Houses, fields, and vineyards shall again be purchased in this land’” (v 15). Three terms are cardinal in this prophecy: the verb **קנה** (vv 7, 8, 9, 15; with the noun **ספר המקנה** ‘deed of purchase,’ vv 11–14); **משפט הגאלה** (v 8); and **משפט הירשה** (v 9).

Hanam'el approaches Jeremiah with the request to buy his land according to **משפט הגאלה**, a presumably well-known legal proceeding.<sup>37</sup> While the story leaves vague the familial-historical, economic, etc., circumstances leading to the transaction, Hanam'el and Jeremiah both share the understanding that Jeremiah is the *go'el* (vv 7–8, 9).<sup>38</sup> Yet, whereas the story relies on the known procedure and legal rights of **גאלה**, i.e., redemption of lands, the legal context of which is known from Lev 25:25–34 and the practical customs described in Ruth (chapters 3–4), it is important to note two major differences between these three texts. First, Lev 25:25–34 discusses six different legal cases of redemption, yet none of them parallels the case of Hanam'el and Jeremiah. The law opens with the situation: “If your kinsman is in straits and has to sell part of his holding, his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his kinsman has sold” (Lev 25:25). But in the case of Hanam'el and Jeremiah there was no sale to a third party outside of the family. Hanam'el suggests to Jeremiah a preventative action in order to *guarantee* that the land not be sold to an outside owner, i.e., a preemptive case not mentioned in Lev 25:25–34.<sup>39</sup> With this initiative Hanam'el has

---

<sup>37</sup> **משפט הגאלה**, **משפט הכהנים** (Deut 18:3–5; 1 Sam 2:12–17), and **משפט המלך** (1 Sam 8:11–18) are three contexts in which the legal claim and the procedure for each are elaborated. In other contexts we find this terminology applied to presumably known legal claims without specified procedural components, see **משפט הבנות** (Exod 21:9), **משפט הבכרה** (Deut 21:15–17).

<sup>38</sup> On the *go'el* as a theological term, see Robert L. Hubbard, “The *go'el* in Ancient Israel: Theological Reflections on an Israelite Institution,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1 (1991), 3–19. For the historical background see John Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB, 21; Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1965), 238–39; and for a typically ahistorical explanation, see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 621–22.

<sup>39</sup> See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27* (AB, 3B; Garden City, NY:

succeeded in keeping the land within the family with no interruption.<sup>40</sup> Second, in reference to Jeremiah's purchase, Jacob Milgrom has pointed out an important difference between the passages in the usage of קנה, stating that the lack of the verb in the Leviticus context and the emphasis on it in Jeremiah 32 (and in Ruth 4:1–10) implies that in the case of Hanam'el and Jeremiah "the redeemer possesses the land for himself. And unless the original owner or his heirs exercise their rights of redemption and repurchase the property, it remains with the redeemer for perpetuity" (p. 2195). Furthermore, Milgrom adds, "Since Jeremiah is the redeemer, Hanam'el or his heirs have lost their rights of redemption" (p. 2196). Hence the purchase is a permanent one, indeed for "long time" (ימים רבים, Jer 32:14).

The crucial theme which indeed joins these three passages on redemption is the importance given to the continuous possession of the family land. Jeremiah's purchase of the land is the only passage in which the family's legal rights are transferred to the national sphere. This transferral not only appears in the explicit prophecy of v 15, but is already embedded in the term משפט הירשה, v 9: "for the right of possession [cf. NJPS: 'succession'] is yours." In contradistinction to קנה and גאל, ירש has the meaning of "take possession of a land which is not legally permitted." Norbert Lohfink explains the *gal* form of ירש as "juridical seizure of enemy territory after battle";<sup>41</sup> ירש with this sense serves as a major component of the deuteronomic/deuteronomistic conception of the land as given to the forefathers and to the people to possess (cf. Jer 32:23). This meaning is indeed drawn upon in Jeremiah in reference to both judgment (8:10) and consolation (30:3; 49:1–2). I suggest that by adapting this national term to the symbolic act described in Jer 32:6–15, the prophet states the legitimacy before God of this legal procedure through which Jeremiah takes possession of Hanam'el's field.<sup>42</sup>

---

Doubleday, 2001), 2193–204.

<sup>40</sup> On this basis, I believe Lisbeth S. Fried and David N. Freedman's hypothetical reconstruction should be rejected; see Jacob Milgrom, *ibid.*, 2257–62. Milgrom himself expresses a different position (*ibid.*, 2195–96).

<sup>41</sup> Norbert Lohfink, *yarash*, *TDOT* 6.368–96 (378).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Lohfink (*ibid.*, 376) who emphasized the difference between *ge'ullah* and *yerushah* as the difference between "rights and obligations"; and cf. Holladay (*Jeremiah* 2, 213–14) who considers the two terms synony-

These three unique components—ספר המקנה, משפט הגאלה, משפט הירשה—of Jeremiah's symbolic act function together to legitimize the *continuity* of the settlement of those who had remained in Judah, through *annexation* of pentateuchal conceptions of the land. Implicitly this strategy also utilizes the argument of *entirety*, promising permanent ownership to the new buyer, and excluding the seller's right of redemption.

The fairly short final prophecy in Jer 32:15 uses the phrase עוד יקנו ('*od + yiqtol* [*Nifal* form]), which is a unique sixth century construction, found mostly in consolation prophecies. This construction appears to designate both short-term prospects (Zech 1:16, 17; including threats of immediate judgment, as in Ezek 8:6, 13, 14; Jer 2:9) and long-term forecasts which include exile (Isa 49:20; 56:8; Zech 8:20–23). Hence, linguistic criteria fall short of defining the future outlook of Jer 32:15. Thematically, however, the emphasis on the continuing possession of the land through both the legal status of the redeemer (משפט הגאלה) and the divine permission to possess the land (משפט הירשה), with no interruption that might symbolize exile, leads me to infer that the promise of possession in v 15 has an immediate significance, that is, it applies to those who remained in Judah. Two points defend this reasoning.

First, the conception of uninterrupted, divinely sanctioned, possession of the land, as put forth in this symbolic act, is well situated in the Jeremian message prior to the Destruction and in its aftermath. Jeremiah's commitment to the uninterrupted settlement of the land predominates in his prophecies to Zedekiah during the last decade of Jerusalem and Judah.<sup>43</sup> This commitment was the driving force behind the prophet's repeated urging of Zedekiah to accept Babylonian rule and live (see Jer 27:8–11 and vv 12–13, as well as 38:14–23), and exemplified in

---

mous.

<sup>43</sup> Jeremiah's concept of the land may further be elucidated by a look at his conception of exile, see Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomic Concepts of Exile Interpreted in Jeremiah and Ezekiel," H. Cohen, V. A. Hurwitz, B. J. Schwartz, J. H. Tigay, and Y. Muffs (eds), *Birkat Shalom: Studies In the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature and Post-biblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 101–23.

והגוי אשר יביא את צוארו בעל מלך בבל ועבדו  
ההנחתיו על אדמתו נאם ה' ועבדה וישב בה

But the nation that puts its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serves him, will be left by Me on its own soil—declares the Lord—to till it and dwell on it (Jer 27:11).

This same commitment to the land stands behind his personal choice to remain in Judah with Gedaliah (40:1–6), and it governs his prophecies to the Remnant of Judah ready to flee to Egypt in the aftermath of Gedaliah's assassination (42:7–12).<sup>44</sup> In Jeremiah's prophecy God calls the Remnant of Judah to remain settled in the land, promising them restoration within its borders. According to the divine explanation, **כי נחמתי אל הרעה אשר עשיתי לכם** (v 10), God had reversed His plan to totally destroy Judah, and He now calls for a period of grace, of reconciliation, to be granted to the Remnant.<sup>45</sup> The prophecy thus envisions salvation and rescue by God from the king of Babylon, even projecting the merciful attitude with which he (God and/or the Babylonian King) will treat the Remnant and restore them to their properties (v 11).<sup>46</sup> The one thing the Remnant must not do is leave the land of Judah; such a

---

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 717–19) who argues for a change in the prophet's attitude towards the community in the land, and mentions 42:7–17 as in contradistinction to 21:8–10. He furthermore finds vv 10–17 to parallel the conditionality in Jer 7:3–7; 11:3–5; 18:7–10; 22:3–5, but he accepts all these passages as non-Jeremian “sermons.” I would, however, understand those similarities to reflect genuine Jeremian pronouncements.

<sup>45</sup> This meaning and usage of **נחם** occurs also in Jer 18:8, 10; 26:3, 13, 19; (and in the negative, 15:6; 20:16); see David N. Freedman, “When God Repents,” J. R. Huddleston (ed.), *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: Selected Writings of David Noel Freedman* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 1:409–46. Amos 7:3, and 6 demonstrate prophetic intercession which delays such a threat, but only the people's repentance/obedience may insure that the respite is permanent (*ibid.*, 410; see 415–16, and the discussion of the Jeremian passages, 428–32).

<sup>46</sup> On the sequence of divine action and its counterpart in the activity of the human-Babylonian king: **ואתן לכם רחמים ורחם אתכם** (v 12), see 43:10, 12 (Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52*, 133). The Septuagint first person for both **ורחם** (as also the Peshitta and the Volgate) and **והשיב** seem harmonistic. **והשיב אתכם אל אדמתכם** refers to resettlement within the land, and does not need to refer to exile and return, see McKane, *Jeremiah 26–52*, 1034–35.

step is taken as clear disobedience on the part of the people, which guarantees that God will reinitiate punishment against the people in Egypt (vv 13–17).<sup>47</sup>

Second, Jeremiah's position stands in clear contradistinction to Ezekiel's Babylonian exilic perspective. Ezekiel refutes this exact argument, characterizing it as prevalent in the land of Israel. In two disputation speeches the prophet quotes the "inhabitants of Jerusalem" prior to the Destruction as saying first: רחוקו מעל ה' לנו היא ("Keep far from the Lord; the land has been given as a possession [cf. NJPS: heritage] to us," Ezek 11: 15); later, as residents of "the ruins in the land of Israel" they argue: אחד היה אברהם ויירש את הארץ, ואנחנו רבים לנו נתנה הארץ למורשה ("Abraham was but one man, yet he was granted possession of the land. We are many; surely, the land has been given as a possession to us," Ezek 33:24). The repeated phrase, לנו (היא) נתנה הארץ למורשה, which expresses the Remnant of Jerusalem's right of possession alludes to the concept of the land either in its Priestly phraseology (Exod 6:2–8) or in its deuteronomic parallel (ירש, נתן את (הארץ לרשתה)).<sup>48</sup>

Utilizing the conceptually contradictory terms משפט הגאלה and משפט הירשה in the description of his symbolic purchase of the land (Jer 32:6–15), Jeremiah's counter-prophecy demonstrates the existence of counter-polemic which advocated the exclusive status of the Judean Remnant as redeemers and possessors of the land, first after 597 and then after 586 BCE, in contradistinction to any claims of the community of Jehoiachin Exiles in Babylon. This line of consolation in Jeremiah is therefore to be considered an expression of the exclusivist in-group ideology of the Judean Remnant during the early exilic period (597–586 BCE and on). Like Ezekiel in Babylon, Jeremiah plays a major role as mediator between God and the people, as he establishes from the Judean perspective the

---

<sup>47</sup> I follow here Freedman ("When God Repents," 428–29) who emphasizes that the reversal in the divine plan is temporary and conditional; in Jer 42:10–17 God's intention moves from bad to good (vv 10–12; for a movement in both directions, see Jer 18:7–10). Gary E. Yates (in "New Exodus and No Exodus in Jeremiah 26–45: Promise and Warning to the Exiles in Babylon," *TynBul* 57 [2006], 1–22) suggests that the migration to Egypt symbolizes an opposing future of 'No Exodus' for this community.

<sup>48</sup> For discussion of Ezekiel's position in these disputation speeches, see Rom-Shiloni, "Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles," 11–20.

ideological arguments of *continuity* and *entirety*, together with *annexation* of traditional (and legal) conceptions of possession of the land.

Before discussing other prophecies of consolation to the Remnant of Judah, a glance should be given to prophecies of consolation addressing the Babylonian Exiles.

## **2. Inclusive Babylonian-Exilic Perspectives**

A different strand among the prophecies of consolation in the book of Jeremiah may be understood in the framework of the Babylonian exilic situation. Without mounting an explicit polemic against other Judean communities (as in some texts mentioned in pp. 17–24 above), the following prophecies address the Exiles in Babylon: Jer 3:18; 16:14–15; 23:7–8; 29:10–14; 30:12–17; 32:36–41; 50:17–20, 33–34; 51:20–24. A special group of consolation prophecies are those embedded within the prophecies against Babylon, where salvation is engaged with a call of revenge and a description of its future fall (50:28; 51:1–6, 7–10, 11–14, 34–44, 45–53). All of these prophecies share the following characteristics:

(a) A promise of ingathering, from the land in the north and from Babylon, and a prospect of resettlement of the Exiles back in the land of their fathers (3:18; 16:14–15; 23:7–8; 29:10–14; 50:17–20; 50:28; 51: 1–6, 7–10, 45–53).

(b) The land to which the Exiles shall return is described as empty and desolate. The people of God are far away from the land (51:50–51); restoration thus consists in reinstating Zion after a period of forsaken neglect (*גדחה קראו לך ציון היא דרש אין לה*, Jer 30:17; and implicitly in 32:36).<sup>49</sup> Throughout those prophetic passages there is no mention of any Judean population within the land of Judah which those returnees will join.

(c) Very prominent among these prophecies are their phraseological and thematic resemblances on the one hand to Ezekiel and

---

<sup>49</sup> Jer 30:12–17 shows close parallels to Deutero-Isaiah's metaphoric treatment of Zion as a woman (see Isa 49:14–21, 22–26). This adds to the element of reversal within Jeremiah (cf. Jer 22:20–22); yet in contrast to the feminine metaphor deployed in Jer 30:12–17, Jeremiah usually designates the people as *עמי בתולה* (as in Jer 2:17–37; 14:17). Another similarity is the renaming of Zion, which in Deutero-Isaiah gains the names: *עיר יהוה* “the city of YHWH,” *חפציבה* “I delight in her,” *דרושה* “Sought out,” all in opposition to her previous name *עזובה* “Forsaken” (see Isa 60:14; 62:4, 12); see also Jer 30:16 and Isa 42:24.

to Deutero-Isaiah (Jer 16:14–15; 30:12–17; 32:36–41),<sup>50</sup> and on the other hand, to deuteronomistic (exilic) phraseology (29:10–14; 32:36–41).<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, once these prophecies are observed as a group, their diverse rhetoric style and themes are apparent.<sup>52</sup> This diversity may be the result of a relatively long period of literary evolution involving a number of exilic authors.<sup>53</sup> Their time span may extend from the first decades of the sixth century down to its second half, i.e., the early exilic or the exilic eras (597–586 BCE and following; 570–538 BCE), still within the Neo-Babylonian period. The authors may stem from different exilic groups/literary circles, within which the Deuteronomists were only one such group.

Looking at the sociological categorizations which build a community's identity, each of these prophecies utilizes the three arguments of exclusivity in relation to the Babylonian Exiles: *continuity*, *entirety*, and the *annexation* of national traditions.

I will restrict myself here to but one example. Jer 16:14–15 (and with slight yet significant differences, 23:7–8), seems to be a

<sup>50</sup> The pairing of *קבץ נדח*, *hiphil*, and *הושיב לבטח* illustrates the phraseological and thematic resemblances between this strand in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Deutero-Isaiah, while highlighting the unique position of the Jeremian exilic idioms; see Rom-Shiloni, “The Prophecy for ‘Everlasting Covenant,’” 201–23.

<sup>51</sup> Allusions to deuteronomistic/deuteronomistic phrases may be found in Jer 29:10–14 in reference to Deut 30:1–10, and see also the application of the deuteronomistic phrase *לבלתי סור מעל* to designate disobedience (Jer 32:40; see 2 Kgs 10:31; 15:15, 18; cf. the Deuteronomistic phrase: *סור מן הדרך*, as in Deut 9:12, 16; Judg 2:17), etc.

<sup>52</sup> Compare, for instance, the different phraseology concerning the return to the land, which appears as the land given to the forefathers: *הארץ* *אשר הנחלתי את אבותיכם* (Jer 3:18, alluding to Deut 3:28; 19:3; 31:7; Josh 1:6; and see Isa 49:8; Zech 8:12; and cf. Jer 12:14); *והשבתי אתכם אל האדמה אשר נתת* (Jer 16:15, see 1 Kgs 8:34: *אשר נתתי לאבותם* and only partially in 23:8: *אשר נתתי לאבותם*); the land from which the people was expelled: *ממקום אשר הגליתי אתכם משם* (29:14); or simply “this place,” *והשבתי אתכם אל המקום הזה* (32:40).

<sup>53</sup> In Rom-Shiloni, “The Prophecy for Everlasting Covenant,” 211–15, I presented ten *hapaxes* that occur in Jer 32:36–41, which I found to demonstrate the independent position of the author of this passage.

prophetic passage interpolated into two different contexts.<sup>54</sup> The prophecy promises the ingathering of the people from the land in the north (מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן) and from “all the lands to which He had banished them” (וּמְכֹל הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדְיָחָם שָׁמָּה, v 15), and utilizes the three major in-group arguments. *Continuity* is seen in the designation of the present Exiles, the addressees, as *bnei Israel*, the national name of the people saved previously from Egypt. *Continuity* with and *annexation* of ancient national traditions is further emphasized by the analogy drawn between the first Exodus and the second projected one, in a framework which holds this future salvation to even outshine the first.<sup>55</sup> Jer 16:15: וְהַשְׁבֵּתִים עַל הַשְּׁבִיטִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם not only closes this new-Exodus with resettling the people in the land, but explicitly alludes to the return as bringing “the people back to their land, which I gave to their fathers” (16:15, cf. the more brief וַיֵּשְׁבוּ עַל אֲדָמָתָם, in Jer 23:8).<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> For the interpolation of this passage in Jer 16:14–15 and its role as a corrective of Jer 16:10–13, see Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 474, 621–23), who thinks the verses fit better in chapter 23, in a context of consolation prophecies, and who dates them to the fifth century, based on the occurrence of זֶרַע בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (23:8).

<sup>55</sup> This second Exodus has been recognized as a major theme of consolation in Ezekiel (20:32–38) and especially in Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 48:20–21; 52:11–12). Yates has indeed emphasized the place of the Exodus within Jeremiah 30–33 (“New Exodus and No Exodus in Jeremiah 26–45,” 1–22). However, he did not make a delicate enough distinction between different elements within the Exodus traditions. I here suggest that we need to maintain a distinction between the Exodus–Desert traditions which refer to salvation from bondage and the journey in the desert (as invoked in Jer 16:14–15), and the Exodus–Desert traditions concerning the covenant which are invoked in Jeremiah as “on the day that I freed them [i.e. your fathers] from the land of Egypt,” and which serve in prophecies of judgment (e.g., Jer 7:22; 11:4; 34:13).

<sup>56</sup> The phrase ה' הַשִּׁיב (אֶת הָעָם) אֶל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְאֲבוֹתָם occurs in deuteronomic segments within Kings (1 Kgs 8:34; 2 Kgs 21:8), and in Jer 24:10, which is closer to 2 Chr 6:25. This slight yet significant difference between Jer 16:14–15 and 23:7–8 joins another difference in the phrase זֶרַע בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (23:8), in contradistinction to בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל in 16:14–15 and in 23:7. While the phrase זֶרַע אֲפָרַיִם (Jer 2:21; 7:15) occurs in Jeremiah, it is nevertheless much more common in exilic and postexilic literature, and thus in late passages within Jeremiah, such as זֶרַע בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל in Jer 31:36–37 and Ezek 44:22; זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל in Isa 45:25; 2Kgs 17:20; Ps

The two implicit arguments of *continuity* and *annexation* lead also to the third, *entirety*. These general references to the people (in Babylon) as the entire people of God, in its past and in its present/future, with no mention of any other national component residing elsewhere, points to the self-perception of this exilic community as the entire people of God.

These prophecies share Deutero-Isaiah's basic group-identity perception—they treat all the Babylonian Exiles as a single inclusive group and do not attribute any special status to the 597 Jehoiachin Exiles; these Exiles (and only they) are *the* people of God. This is therefore an exilic strand, different from that of Ezekiel and from Jeremiah 24 (with 29:16–20, and the editorial layer of 40–44). We may locate this strand in the exilic era (circa 570/mid-sixth century to 538 BCE), the period when the redaction of the deuteronomistic literature is thought to have taken place, including the book of Kings as well as the Babylonian chapters of Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40–48).<sup>57</sup>

### 3. Repatriate Ideology in Jeremiah?

The most intriguing group of prophetic passages of consolation within Jeremiah 30–33 are several prophecies which resemble in phraseology and even more in theme the inclusive Judean perspectives of the Remnant of Judah (see above). The main characteristic these prophecies share is their omission of any mention of exile, of any period of separation from the land—and in consequence, of any mention of gathering the dispersed and return to Zion. They are very clearly Judean in their geographic outlook.

The prophetic passages in this category are Jer 30:18–22; 31:23–26, 27–30, 31–34, 38–40; 32:42–44; 33:1–9, 10–11, 12–13, 14–22. These prophecies are commonly held to apply to one of two sets of circumstances: either to the period following 586 BCE, the era Jack R. Lundbom terms “Jeremiah’s Mizpah sojourn (586–582 BCE),”<sup>58</sup> or to a much later timeframe, i.e., the first generation

---

22:24; Neh 9:2; 1Chr 16:13; in the concatenation of the phrases: זרע יעקוב וידוד עבדי . . . זרע אברהם ישחק ויעקב (Jer 33:26, and see v 22). For other similar phrases, note זרע יעקב (Isa 45:19; Ps 22:24); זרע בית יעקב (Ezek 20:5); זרע אברהם (Isa 41:8; Ps 105:6; 2Chr 20:7); זרע הקדוש (Isa 6:13; Ezra 9:2).

<sup>57</sup> For this division of Deutero-Isaiah see note 8 above.

<sup>58</sup> Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, 494.

of the Repatriates' transplantation back to Yehud during the early Persian period.<sup>59</sup> Hence, these prophecies are certainly at the core of our present discussion of Persian period ideology in Jeremiah.

I want to suggest a third option, that is, that these passages represent original prophecies of Jeremiah directed to the Remnant of Judah that were adapted, expanded, and re-read through the lens of the returnees from Babylon. These secondary re-reading(s) added dimensions which may be compared to early Persian period prophetic (and historiographic literature). The interesting point is that while this adaptation retained the Judean geographical perspective of the earlier Jeremian prophecies, it fused with them perspectives otherwise known from Babylonian-Exilic ideology.<sup>60</sup>

In studying these prophetic passages, the following characteristics emerge as common denominators:

(a) *The people addressed.* While several of these prophecies focus on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah (31:23–26; 32:42–44; 33:10–11, 12–13) and envision the revival of pastoral life in this area (31:24; 33:13), other passages invoke a vast national united audience: עמי ישראל ויהודה (30:3);<sup>61</sup> יהודה וישראל (as in Jer 33:7), or בני ישראל ובני יהודה (33:14, 31; 27:31), as also בני ישראל ובני יהודה (50:4–5); זרע ישראל (31:36, 37).

---

<sup>59</sup> This latter viewpoint governs most of the commentaries on Jeremiah. To give but one example, Holladay considers Jer 31:23–25, 26, 38–40; 33:12–13, 14–26 as Persian (*Jeremiah* 2, 165–67, 224, 228–31), but he does not suggest late contexts for 30:18–22; 33:1–11 (*ibid.*, 157, 222–24).

<sup>60</sup> The suggestion that earlier prophecies have been readapted to new conditions through secondary redactional processes has of course been raised by scholars of Jeremiah, and most profoundly by William McKane in his commentary. In reference to the consolation prophecies, see Barnabas Lindars (“‘Rachel Weeping for Her Children’—Jeremiah 31:15–22,” *JOT* 12 [1979], 47–62). Lindars suggested that in this passage, Jeremiah (himself) turned to Hosea’s prophecies that had been addressed to Northern Israel, which he then readdressed and adapted to Judah following the Destruction (56–57). Similarly, Lindars furthermore recognized later additions to those Jeremianic prophecies, which he characterized as having affinities to other poetic passages of Jeremiah and to Deutero-Isaiah, with “little sign of the work of the Deuteronomic editor” (55). See also Sweeney, “Jeremiah 30–31,” 582–83.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Jer 3:18: בני ישראל ויהודה על בית ישראל ויהודה, which does envision reunification and return from exile.

(b) *The situation of the land.* Both within the city and in the periphery, restoration takes place after a period whence the land had been empty of man and beast (32:42–44; 33:10–11, 12–13). As presented in #3 (p. 16 above), the empty desolate land is a Babylonian exilic feature (for instance 30:17; 32:36).

(c) *The general perspective on restoration.* The repeated phrase in these passages, (כבראשונה) שבות (השיב/ש) refers to the people's restoration within the land designated as Judah and Israel (33:7–9), “the tents of Jacob” (30:18), or simply “the land” (33:11).<sup>62</sup> These passages, use the phrase שבות ש, and do not mention exile as the point of departure, nor do they describe the journey back to the land.<sup>63</sup> It is interesting, though, that these prophecies give substance to restoration by mentioning the destruction of material components (e.g., the houses of the city, including the royal buildings, 33:4), but the portrait of reversal and restoration focuses on changes in the activity of human-beings—the empty and desolate land becomes a place of lively voices of joy, of marriage, and renewal of worship within the House of YHWH (33:11; and see Isa 65:19).

(d) *The pattern of the prophecies.* These prophecies follow the pattern governed by the construction 'od + *yiqtol* discussed above,

---

<sup>62</sup> Jer 30:1–3, as introductory verses to the Book of Consolation, establish the semantic and contextual distinction between two phrases: והשבתי אל הארץ אשר נתתי ושבתי את שבות עמי ישראל ויהודה והשבתי אל הארץ אשר נתתי and ושבתי את שבות עמי ישראל ויהודה, and join them together. The first phrase signifies restoration within the land, the second refers to re-gathering the people from exile. On the cumulative nature of these introductory verses, see Sweeney, “Jeremiah 30–31,” 571, 577–78. Contra Sweeney (*ibid*, 577–82), the addition of chapters 32–33 establishes yet another “Jeremian” strand, that of the restoration of Judah alone.

<sup>63</sup> שבות ש in its basic meaning “restore to its previous condition (referring mostly to the agricultural life in the land)” occurs in Hosea 6:11; Amos 9:14; Zeph 2:7, and in the above mentioned passages in Jeremiah (for a detailed discussion of this phrase see Meir Weiss, *Amos* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992], 1.299–300, 2.553–54). Exilic (and post-exilic) readings are responsible for the slight yet significant change in the *Ketib* (and/or *Qere*) to שביית “captivity, exile” in Jer 29:14 (as also Ezek 16:53; 39:25; Ps 85:2; 126:4; and Lam 2:14 where the *Qere* suggests a correction); Deut 30:3 designates a third stage, where שבות ש becomes part of the “languages of return” as it opens the chain of deliverance actions from exile (as also Joel 4:1; Zeph 3:20).

which I suggested implies restoration within the land in the near future.<sup>64</sup> This pattern characterizes prophecies in chapter 30–31 (30:8–9; 31:2–6), and 32–33 (32:15; 33:10, 12).

(e) *The process of restoration.* The actual restoration is described as rebuilding the city (30:18–22; 31:38–40) and as restoring agriculture in the rural periphery (31:23–26; 33:12–13).<sup>65</sup> Medical remedy languages serve as imagery for restoration in the land (33:1–9; and already in 30:12–17).<sup>66</sup>

(f) *Renaming.* Restored Zion gains new names: **יברכך ה' נוה** (31:23); **זוה אשר יקרא לה ה' צדקנו** (33:16); (cf. Jer 30:17; **כי נדחה קראו לך ציון היא דרש אין לה**, see also Isa 60:14; 62:4, 12).

(g) *Special thematic components of restoration:* (1) A central topic within these prophecies is the covenant between God and His people, which appears from two different (perhaps even contradictory) perspectives. First, the covenant formula: **והייתם לי לעם ואנכי והייתם לי לעם ואנכי** sets the goal for the future reinstatement of the covenant relationship (30:22; 30:25; 31:1; 31:31–34). But second, the ongoing (present) existence of Israel/Judah as God's people is guaranteed through the analogy established between the universal covenant, which ensures cosmic order, and the covenants God had established with His people, His Davidic king, and the levitical priests (31:35–37; 33:14–22).

(2) The prophecies emphasize divine justice by focusing on the qualities of benevolence and mercy (33:6, 8; 33:11), and point to the people's penitence (33:1–9; 50:17–20).<sup>67</sup>

(3) The prophecies give a special importance to publicizing God's name among the nations (33:9). This feature is otherwise

<sup>64</sup> See p. 29 above.

<sup>65</sup> According to Holladay (*Jeremiah* 2, 199) the setting of Jer 31:38–40 “is doubtless in the time of Nehemiah.”

<sup>66</sup> The imagery of medical remedies is well-attested within communal laments found in Jeremiah, Jer 8:15, 22; 10:19; 14:19; once in a personal lament, 15:18; as well as these two consolation prophecies (33:1–9 and 30:12–17).

<sup>67</sup> Mercy and benevolence do not characterize God's behavior towards his people during the crisis era (see Jer 13:14; 16:5). This is another example of the reversal of judgment and consolation. **רחם** in a positive context occurs in Jer 12:15 as well.

unknown among the prophecies of Jeremiah,<sup>68</sup> but is well recognized in Ezekiel (Ezek 36:16–32) and in Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 48:9).

It is almost impossible to differentiate early and late themes in this list of characteristics. The decisive argument in favour of a notion of secondary adaptations of Jeremian prophecies by Babylonian Repatriates is this mixture of (at least) two layers within prophetic passages of consolation. The above-mentioned passages contain expansions of prophetic pronouncements, or even two diverse (at times contradictory) outlooks described above as separate perspectives, the one referring to the Remnant of Judah, while the other invokes Babylonian exilic perceptions of group identity and restoration.<sup>69</sup> I will again restrict the discussion here to but two of these prophetic passages.

Jer 33:10–11, 12–13 describe the change within “this place,” bringing together a prophetic pronouncement and several expansions:

---

<sup>68</sup> The one exception in Jer 14:7–9 is a fragment of a communal lament which Jeremiah quotes and incorporates into his prophecy.

<sup>69</sup> An example of such a contradiction may be found by comparing Jer 32:5–16 with vv 42–44. The latter passage functions as an inclusio to vv 5–16 and is patterned as an adaptation of that earlier prophecy said to the Remnant of Judah under Zedekiah prior to the Destruction. Like Jer 33:10–11 and 12–13 (to be discussed below), this passage transforms restoration to the empty land utilizing the **שב שבות** formula to this new context.

10 כה אמר ה' עוד ישמע במקום הזה <u>מאין אדם ומאין בהמה</u>	אשר אתם אמרים חרב הוא מאין אדם ומאין בהמה
בערי יהודה ובחצות ירושלים	הנשמות <u>מאין אדם ומאין יושב</u> <u>ומאין בהמה</u>
11 קול ששון וקול שמחה קול חתן וקול כלה	קול אמרים הודו את ה' צבאות כי טוב ה' כי לעולם חסדו מבאים תודה בית ה'
כי אשיב את שבות הארץ כבראשנה אמר ה'.	
12 כה אמר ה' צבאות עוד יהיה במקום הזה החרב <u>מאין אדם ועד</u> <u>בהמה</u> ובכל עריו, נוה רעים מרבצים צאן. 13 בערי ההר בערי השפלה ובערי הנגב ובארץ בנימן ובסביבי ירושלים <u>ובערי יהודה</u> , עד תעברנה הצאן על ידי מונה אמר ה'.	

This consolation prophecy (vv 10–11), which promises the return of joyful sounds to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, the sounds of bride and groom, reverses well-known Jeremian prophecies of judgment (7:34; 16:9; and 25:10).<sup>70</sup> The syntactical pattern of *'od + yiqtol* together with **שב שבות**, the promise to restore the land “as of old” with no mention of exile and return, identify this prophecy as originating among Jeremiah’s prophecies of consolation to the Remnant of Judah (as in 32:15).

However, this promise was expanded by four different statements: (1) A description of “that place” brought in a quotation; (2) a second parallel description referring to “the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem”; (3) an addition of sounds of rejoicing, which unite with the sounds of worship and thanksgiving in the House of YHWH. (4) Moreover, vv 12–13 which indeed are constructed on the same pattern as vv 10–11,<sup>71</sup> expand this prophecy further, adding a third (and a fourth) description of “that place,” which this time highlights the transformation of the rural areas of Judah (“In the towns of the hill country, in the towns of the

<sup>70</sup> The reversal nature of this prophecy was pointed out by Holladay, *Jeremiah* 2, 224; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 634–36;

<sup>71</sup> See Lundbom, *Jeremiah* 21–36, 534–35.

Shephelah, and in the towns of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin and in the environs of Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah,” in similarity to 32:44). The arguments for considering these pronouncements as secondary expansions are founded on stylistic grounds:

(1) אשר אתם אמרים חרב הוא מאין אדם ומאין בהמה (1) [of] which you say: “It is ruined!, without man or beast” follows the pattern of 32:36, 43:<sup>72</sup>

32:36: But now, assuredly, thus said the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the city of which you say, “It is being delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon through the sword, through famine, and through pestilence.”

ועתה לכן כה אמר ה' אלהי ישראל אל העיר הזאת אשר אתם אמרים נתנה ביד מלך בבל בחרב וברעב ובדבר

32:43: And fields shall again be purchased in this land of which you say, “It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans.”

ונקנה השדה בארץ הזאת, אשר אתם אמרים שממה היא מאין אדם ובהמה נתנה ביד הכשדים

These three anonymous quotations invoke descriptions of Jerusalem and its surroundings as destroyed and desolate, by utilizing prophecies of judgment spoken earlier by Jeremiah.<sup>73</sup> However, the syntactical construction **חרב הוא** (similar to **שממה היא** [32:43]) is exceptional in Jeremiah. Furthermore, the use of the adjective **חרב** “ruined” in this context is itself a *hapax* (33:10, 12); the normally occurring form of the word in Jeremiah is the noun **חרבה**, “ruin.” The latter term is used to describe the fates of the Temple (22:5), the city (27:17), Jerusalem and the cities of Judah (25:18; 44:2, 6), and the land (7:34; 25:11; 44:22).<sup>74</sup> In addition, the common

<sup>72</sup> Note that the NJPS takes this as indirect rather than direct speech, and therefore misses the parallel between these two verses.

<sup>73</sup> For a discussion of these special quotations in Jeremiah 32, see Rom-Shiloni, “Everlasting Covenant,” 208–10.

<sup>74</sup> **חרבה** occurs eight times in Jeremiah in the singular (noted above), and twice in the plural (**חרבות**; 25:9, 49:13). See also its similar usage in Ezekiel in reference to Jerusalem (5:14), the mountains of Israel (38:8), the land of Egypt (29:9), Edom (25:13), cities in the Se'ir mountain (35:4); note also its use in the plural referring to cities (33:24, 27; 13:4; 36:10, 33;

phrases used in prophecies of judgment in Jeremiah are the verbal phrases: *היה שממה* (4:27; 50:13), *שים שממה* (6:8; 10:22), *נתן שממה* (15:10; 34:22); these, then, are a bit closer to Jer 32:43: *שממה היא*, but the syntactical uniqueness remains.

(2) The impression of extraordinary phraseology is reinforced by this phrase in v 10a: *מאין אדם ומאין בהמה*, along with the expanded repetition in v 10b: *מאין אדם ומאין יושב ומאין בהמה* and the further repeat in v 12: *מאין אדם ועד בהמה*. The standard phrase in prophecies of judgment in Jeremiah is the single construction, *מאין יושב* (4:7; 26:9; 34:22; 44:22), which also appears in prophecies to the nations (46:19; 48:9; 51:29, 37). Hence, the doubled and even tripled constructions of 33:10–12 intensify the impression of that desolation; the construction itself may have been influenced by the phrase *אדם ובהמה* “man and beast” which is used frequently in Ezekiel in prophecies of judgment (Ezek 14:12, 17, 19, 21; 25:13; 29:8; 36:11), but only once in Jeremiah (Jer 36:29).

(3) The third expansion adds to the rejoicing sounds of the bride and groom—the private-familial joy in restoring daily life—the sounds of the communal thanksgiving offering and liturgy in the House of YHWH. This expansion finds its equivalent in the liturgy (Ps 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 136:1–26), and while the offering of thanksgiving is recalled in another expansion in Jeremiah (17:26),<sup>75</sup> it otherwise appears only in Second Temple biblical sources (Ezra 3:11; 1Chr 16:34, 41; 2Chr 5:13; 7:3, 6; 22:21).<sup>76</sup>

Two major themes were added through those expansions: the emphasis on the land as empty prior to the restoration (vv 12–13); and, the restoration as not restricted to private fortunes but which has its major impact on the worship in the Jerusalem Temple (v 11; see Ezra 3:11).

Jer 33:10–11, 12–13 seem, therefore, to merge different prophetic pronouncements. The Repatriates’ early Persian-period ex-

38:12) and land (26:20).

<sup>75</sup> Jer 17:26 is to be counted as an editorial expansion of the otherwise authentically Jeremian covenant speech in Jer 17:19–27 (see Rom-Shiloni, “Law Interpretation in Jeremiah: Exegetical Techniques and Ideological Intentions,” *Shnaton* 17 [2008], 59–79 [Hebrew]). The other argument to substantiate its secondary and late character is its list of the geographic districts, which is similar to 32:44 and 33:13.

<sup>76</sup> Lundbom (*Jeremiah* 21–36, 536) recognizes this late context, but nevertheless counts it as a possibly ancient institution.

pansion is built upon the prophet's earlier proclamation to the Remnant of Judah, which is then adapted to the Repatriates' reality of restoration within the land. The time span that has passed from the early exilic period to the last decades of the sixth century and the prophecy's concentration on in-group perspectives allowed this transitional adaptation.

In sum, the features which call attention to such secondary readings are: the reversal of Jeremiah's prophecies of judgment;<sup>77</sup> *hapax* words and syntactical patterns in Jeremiah; and resemblances to Babylonian exilic and postexilic literary compositions, mainly Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah, Zechariah 1–8, and even Ezra-Nehemiah (see for instance, Jer 31:38–40).<sup>78</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS: IS IT THE PERSIAN PERIOD CONFLICT?

In bringing this study to a close, I want to return to Robert Carroll's observations (above pp. 12–13) in which he argued for a mid-Persian period context for the polemical perceptions in Jeremiah. Evaluating the in-group and the out-group positions in Jeremiah in

---

<sup>77</sup> While reversal in itself is found in passages in which there is no reason to question the prophet's authorship, the accumulation of these features together suggest a non-Jeremian, and even Babylonian–Repatriate authorship.

<sup>78</sup> To mention another example, Jer 50:4–5 has several components which reveal its exilic provenance and some which reflect a Judean perspective. Among the Babylonian–Exilic characteristics are the formula **בני יחדו** (v 4) **ישראל המה ובני יהודה יחדו** (v 4) **ואת ה' אלהיהם יבקשו** (v 4) which alludes in this context to an exilic situation, where inquiry of YHWH represents the people's initiative towards repentance (see Deut 4:29; and Jer 29:13); and so also the use of **ברית עולם** (Jer 50:5; and see the exilic perspective of Jer 32:36–41). For the Babylonian–Exilic orientation of this **ברית עולם**, see Rom-Shiloni, “Everlasting Covenant,” 215. For a Judean perspective, note **דרך הנה פניהם** (Jer 50:5; crying as part of the journey of return draws on Jer 31:9, from the Northern preexilic prophecies, see 1a above). The phrase **נלוה אל יהוה** (v 5b) is a *hapax* in Jeremiah, and it invites the people in this context to establish an eternal covenant with YHWH. In this usage the phrase differs from other occurrences of **אל יהוה נלוה** which appear in cultic contexts (Num 18:2; Isa 56:3, 6), or apply to strangers joining Israel (Isa 14:1). The closest similarity to Jeremiah would be Zech 2:15, where nations attach themselves to YHWH and become His people. But cf. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52*, 374–76.

comparison to perceptions held within Judean communities of the sixth-fifth centuries, the following conclusions may be reached.

First, group-identity issues are a major component in the prophecies of consolation within Jeremiah. Each of the prophetic passages of consolation independently utilizes elements which contribute to building self-identities and/or counter-identities, i.e., designations, arguments, and strategies which create a framework of exclusivity. Hence, the complicated picture within the book of Jeremiah proves that making claims about identity was not an innovation of the exilic or the post-exilic (Persian) periods. On the contrary, the book of Jeremiah is unique within biblical literature in its attestation to two antagonistic positions, that is, the claims of those who remained in the land after the Jehoiachin Exile and following the destruction, and claims of those who were exiled to Babylon (in the different waves) and later returned. The only period for which we have evidence of explicit confrontation between the two groups is the early exilic period (597–586 BCE, and on). Much more prevalent in Jeremiah are reidentifications of the in-group within each of the communities. In the consolation prophecies, the pro-Judean passages seem to be genuine Jeremian, whereas the Babylonian exilic passages parallel Ezekiel and then Deutero-Isaiah.

Pro-Judean prophecies of consolation stem from two different periods within the prophet's activity. First, early in his career Jeremiah prophesied to Northern Israel, encouraging them to join Judah (incorporate into Zion). To the later period belong his prophecies to the Remnant of Jerusalem/Judah, made initially after the Jehoiachin Exile (597 BCE), and then again and with even greater force after the Destruction (586 BCE).

Yet, as part of the editorial process, prophecies to the Remnant of Judah have been situated side by side with prophecies directed to the Babylonian Exiles (Jer 32:6–15, and 36–41, 42–44; Jeremiah 30–31, and 33); and the exilic editorial context governs the structure of entire units (as in chapters 40–44). The editorial pro-*golab* passages reveal the Babylonian exilic ideology apparent in Jeremiah. In fact, in reference to in-group and out-group definitions, three different Babylonian exilic strands may be discerned.

\* In-group definitions:

(a) Exclusive designations of the Jehoiachin Exiles appear in but a few prophecies in Jeremiah (24; 29:16–20; and the editorial work of 40–44). These prophecies show important resemblances to

Ezekiel, and thus may be dated as early exilic Babylonian positions (597–586 BCE and on).

(b) A second Babylonian exilic strand in Jeremiah is manifested in prophecies of consolation to the Babylonian Exiles which do not retain the Jehoiachin Exiles' exclusivity, but include all future communities of Exiles in Babylon (the land in the north, as in 16:14–15; 30:12–17; 32:36–41) as the people of God. This inclusive exilic position parallels exilic literature (570–538 BCE), generally configured within later passages in Ezekiel and in Deutero-Isaiah, still within the Neo-Babylonian period. These prophecies in the book of Jeremiah show phraseological resemblances to both Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah, and in accordance with the latter, portray the land as empty and desolate awaiting the return of the people.

(c) This paper has suggested that a third Babylonian exilic strand is recognizable within a subgroup of the consolation prophecies. This third strand seems indeed to belong to Repatriate voices in Jeremiah thus dating from the early Persian period, after the Edict of Cyrus at the close of the sixth century. While this late strand adds its own contribution to in-group designations and arguments, it does not show any interest in out-group (Judean) communities of the mid-Persian period (mid-late fifth century).

\* Out-group definitions:

The book of Jeremiah does not accord with Babylonian exilic ideology in the presentation of the “others” as foreigners, as non-Judahite. It has no attestation of such denigrating, exclusive positions (# 2 above, pp. 15–16).

The image of the empty and desolate land of Judah (# 3 above, p. 16) does play a role in consolation prophecies in Jeremiah, which seem to be addressing Babylonian Exiles (e.g., 32:36–41) and Repatriates in Persian Yehud (e.g., 33:10–11, 12–13). The imagery functions to augment the argument of *entirety* advocated by Babylonian Exiles and Returnees.

Is it then the Persian period conflict? The book of Jeremiah does not explicitly describe the conflicts between Repatriates and “other” Judean (or foreign) communities, in a fashion similar to Ezra-Nehemiah. Yet it does bring to the fore Babylonian exilic positions which had developed in Babylon over the Neo-Babylonian exilic period, and which may be assumed to have been brought by the Babylonian Repatriates to Persian Yehud during the early Persian period. These Repatriate-oriented passages seem to resemble most closely the exilic prophetic literature: Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah,

and Zechariah 1–8.<sup>79</sup> However, the Repatriates introduced a new element into the mix of “exilic” ideology by appropriating for their own group Jeremiah’s prophecies of consolation, which were first directed to those who had remained in Judah from the time of the Jehoiachin Exile. Hence, while the overall picture illustrates the multiple hands involved in the final shaping of the book of Jeremiah, mid-Persian period (i.e., mid-late fifth century BCE) tracks within the book still remain a mystery to be deciphered.

---

<sup>79</sup> To this Neo-Babylonian period within exilic literature belongs also the deuteronomistic literature, and particularly the editorial work in Kings.