

Facing Destruction and Exile: Inner-Biblical Exegesis in Jeremiah and Ezekiel¹

By Dalit Rom-Shiloni

(Hebrew University, Jerusalem)

I. Preface

Inner-biblical exegesis and allusion have increasingly caught the attention of biblical scholarship.² The study of this biblical technique yields diverse points of view on the interrelationship between texts that were written over a vast span, both geographically and chronologically. Furthermore, various fields of research have benefited from this scholarly method, such as: tradition-history, literary criticism, ideological criticism, and redactional criticism.³

Examining the phenomenon of interpretation, scholars have identified constitutive assumptions that guided biblical authors in the practice of inner-biblical interpretation. Three assumptions are considered essential for both allusion and exegesis:⁴

¹ A shorter version of this paper was presented in the Colloquium of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies of the University of Pennsylvania: Jewish Biblical Interpretation in a Comparative Context, April 2002.

² Inner-biblical exegesis was noted sporadically by scholars as early as L. Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden historisch entwickelt*, 1832, 1892 (Hebr. transl. by M. A. Zach, 1947, 7–20). M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 1985, 1988, emphasized its frequency throughout the biblical literature; and recently D. L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14: Methodological Reflections*, in: *Bring Out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion and Zechariah 9–14*, M. Boda/M. H. Floyd (eds.), JSOTS 370, 2003, 210–224.

³ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*; R. Nurmela, *Prophets in Dialogue: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 1–8 and 9–14*, 1996; L. Eslinger, *Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category*, VT 42 (1992), 47–58; Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, 6.

⁴ Z. Ben-Porat, *The Poetics of Literary Allusion*, PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature 1 (1976), 105–128, esp. 107–116; B. D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66*, 1998, 10–15. E. Miner, *Allusion*, in: *The New Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, A. Preminger/V. Brogan (eds.), 1993, 38–40.

First, explicit and commonly implicit verbal and thematic parallels deliberately connect different texts.⁵ The author focuses the audience's or the reader's attention to identify markers of an earlier evoked text behind his later, alluding text. Thus, these parallels stand in diachronic relationship to each other.⁶

Second, a common knowledge of authoritative texts and traditions is assumed.⁷ The author of the alluding text draws on the premise that the older tradition is known to his audience, and they all share the conception that the evoked text is still valid for their present. Hence, either explicit quotation, or merely allusion or echo, serves the author's present purposes.⁸

The third assumption refers to the motivation of the alluding text. Inner-biblical interpretation is often provoked by a crisis event, which creates the need for those involved to evaluate their present disastrous reality in accordance with theological concepts and with the historical heritage.⁹

In what follows, I would like to focus on sources related to the Destruction of Jerusalem and Judah in 586 BCE. The historical events were definitely considered national catastrophes, and it is generally agreed that major parts of the biblical literature (oral and written) were already accepted as authoritative by that time. Thus, I call attention to one social-historical setting that can illuminate the evolution of inner-biblical interpretation as early as the first decades of the sixth century BCE.

⁵ Yet scholars debate over the exact relationship between the texts. Cf. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 10–14; B. D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 6–18; R. Nurmela, *Prophets in Dialogue*, 23–37, 233–235 and throughout; Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, 215–218.

⁶ Cf. R. L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets*, *JSOTS* 180, 1999, 227–239. In this respect the study of allusion and exegesis differs from »intertextuality«, which refers either to the synchronous ahistorical relationship between texts, or to the ongoing process of interpretation through the ages (K. Nielsen, *Intertextuality and Hebrew Bible*, in: *Congress Volume: Oslo 1998*, *VT.S* 80, 2000, 17–31; M. Fishbane, *Types of Biblical Intertextuality*, *ibid.*, 39–44).

⁷ To mark the authoritative or even quasi-canonical status of the evoked text, Fishbane differentiated between the *traditum* and the *tradio* (*Biblical Interpretation*, 6–19, etc.); and cf. J. Kugel's criticism, *The Bible's Earliest Interpreters*, *Prooftexts* 7 (1987), 269–283, esp. 273f. On allusion for the sake of polemics without contradicting the authoritative status of the texts, see Nurmela, *Prophets in Dialogue*, 24f.

⁸ Fishbane showed that »aggadic exegesis do not explicitly clarify, resolve, harmonize, or even reauthorize earlier traditions ... The content of that *traditum* remains unaffected and unchanged by the *tradio* which uses it for its own end in the present« (*Biblical Interpretation*, 415f.). According to Schultz later prophets allude to and interpret previous prophecies for three reasons: continuing validity, authority, and analogy (*Search for Quotation*, 224–228).

⁹ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 408–418; but see 415–418.

II. An Exegetical Discourse

The books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel present numerous allusions to the Pentateuch, which demonstrate the prophets' interests and exemplify their interpretive intentions.¹⁰ Nonetheless, I argue that the phenomenon of allusion and exegesis is not restricted to the prophets. The two prophetic books are unique in their witness to a multifaceted world of thought. Quoting »other voices« in Jerusalem and in Babylon, Jeremiah and Ezekiel introduce a lively (and/or literary) dialogue with their contemporaries.¹¹ Hence, the following observations stem from studying the reuse of earlier sources in the quotations on the one hand, and in the prophets' refutations on the other, as well as evaluating their interrelationships. Differentiating the content of the quotation from its contextual usage by the prophets, I would like to suggest that the quotations shed light on the operation of inner-biblical exegesis. They elucidate an exegetical dispute between the prophets and their audiences.¹²

Two controversies between the prophets and their contemporaries can illustrate the exegetical discourse. The first is set within a debate between Jeremiah and two of King Zedekiah's officials (Jer 21,1–7), and the second is a disputation-speech from the Book of Ezekiel quoting a statement made by the leaders of the Exiles in Babylon (Ez 20). The examples elucidate two of the major issues that occupied the world of

¹⁰ For general studies of the re-use of Pentateuchal traditions and legal materials in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, see Y. Kaufmann, *Toldot HaEmunah HaYisra'elit*, 1952, 1976, 3.432–434; W. Zimmerli, *The Law and the Prophets: A Study of the Meaning of the Old Testament*, R. E. Clements (trans.), 1965. On Jeremiah, cf. E. J. Smith, *The Decalogue in the Preaching of Jeremiah*, *CBQ* 4 (1942), 197–209, and commentaries. On Ezekiel, see M. Burrows, *The Literary Relations of Ezekiel*, 1925, 19–25, 28–36, 47–68; W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, *BKAT* XIII/1, 1969 = *Ezekiel 1*, Hermeneia, J. D. Martin (trans.), 1979, 46–52; as also Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*; R. Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah*, *JSOT.S* 358 (2002).

¹¹ H. W. Wolff, *Das Zitat im Prophetenspruch*, *BhEvTh* 4, 1937; reprinted in *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, 1964, 36–129. Though this seems to be a major literary and rhetorical device in Jeremiah, the phenomenon has not gained thorough investigation in the commentaries. For some examples, see J. L. Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict*, *BZAW* 124, 1971, 23–38; W. J. Hurwitz, *Audience Reaction to Jeremiah*, *CBQ* 32 (1970), 555–564; T. W. Overholt, *Jeremiah 2 and the Problem of Audience Reaction*, *CBQ* 41 (1979), 262–273. For quotations in Ezekiel, see M. Greenberg, *The Citations in the Book of Ezekiel as a Background for the Prophecies*, *BetM* 17 (1972), 273–278; G. Brin, *Studies in the Book of Ezekiel*, 1975, 18–52; quotations were considered valuable already in G. A. Cooke's commentary (*The Book of Ezekiel*, ICC, 1936, 1985, 96).

¹² D. Rom-Shiloni, *God in Times of Destruction and Exiles: Theology and Ideology in the Prophetic Literature and in the Poetry of the First Half of the Sixth Century BCE*, Ph. D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2001, 45–47.

thought in both Judah and the Babylonian Exile. Moreover, they relate to different types of evoked texts. Jer 21,1–7 presents a reuse of historical traditions to interpret the role of God in the destruction of His city.¹³ Ez 20,1–38 reuses covenant traditions to frame an ideological concept of exile.

These two examples share one of the most constructive techniques of exegesis, namely Correlation, consisting of two contrasting phases: Analogy and Polarity.¹⁴ However, each of the following quotations and their prophetic refutations utilizes this mode of Correlation differently.

A. Reuse of Historical Traditions Regarding the Role of God in War (Jer 21,1–7)¹⁵

During the final siege of Jerusalem two of Zedekiah's officials, Pashhur son of Malchiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, approached Jeremiah with a complaint and a request (Jer 21,2):¹⁶

Please inquire of the LORD on our behalf, דרש נא בעדנו את ה'
for King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon is attacking us.

כי נבוכדראצר מלך בבל נלחם עלינו,
אולי יעשה ה' אותנו Perhaps the LORD will act for our sake in accordance
with all His wonders, so that [Nebuchadrezzar] ככל נפלאותיו ויעלה מעלינו.
will withdraw from us.

¹³ The category of »reuse« of different earlier materials was suggested by Kugel (The Bible's Earliest Interpreters, 274–277) as an alternative to Fishbane's categories of »scribal, legal, aggadic and mantological exegesis« (Biblical Interpretation). While Fishbane's point of departure was the alluding text, Kugel emphasized the evoked text as the basis for discussion. Throughout this paper Kugel's method will be followed.

¹⁴ Synonymous terms link evoked-text(s) to present reality. Fishbane wrote of *Correlation* as an »aggadic technique« of interpretation (Biblical Interpretation, 421–423). The rabbinic terminology is *היקש*, *גזרה שווה* (cf. I. Heinemann, *Darchei Ha-'Agada*, 1954, 63–74; as also in the Pesharim literature, cf. S. D. Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary: Torah and Its Interpretation in the Midrash Sifre to Deuteronomy*, 1991, 3–6). Another term is *actualization*, cf. Zakovitch, *An Introduction to Inner-Biblical Interpretation*, 1992, 128–130.

¹⁵ This prophetic debate has been satisfactorily explained as genuine words of the prophet. Cf. J. Bright, *The Date of the Prose Sermons of Jermeiah*, JBL 70 (1951), 15–35; H. Weippert, *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches*, BZAW 132, 1977, 67–86; W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, Hermeneia, 1986, 570. Contra Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation, 531 f. and n. 9), who followed A. Rofe (*Studies in the Composition of the Book of Jeremiah*, Tarb. 44 [1975], 1–29).

¹⁶ The historical background of Jer 21,1–10 is usually seen in connection with Jer 34,1–7.8–22 and chapters 37–38, dated to the beginning or the summer of 588 BCE (cf. Holladay, *ibid*, 570). However, Jer 21,1–10 and 34,1–7 refer to the military confrontation *during* the siege, sometime before (or maybe even after) the Babylonian withdrawal, whereas Jer 37,3–10 and 34,8–22 relate to the period of temporary relief.

Under the threat of war (כי נבוכדראצר מלך בבל נלחם עלינו), the officials do not rely on human forces, but seek divine salvation (דרש נא בעדנו את ה'). The officials' full confidence in God's ability to save is further demonstrated in their plea **אולי יעשה** (»work/perform wonders«) constitutes a historical allusion, since in its occurrences within the Bible it specifically designates God's paradigmatic deeds of salvation,¹⁷ the Exodus, the journey through the desert, and the settlement in Canaan, as for instance Ex 3,19–20:¹⁸

Yet I know that the king of Egypt	ואני ידעתי כי לא יתן אתכם מלך מצרים
will let you go only because of a greater might.	להלך ולא ביד חזקה.
So I will stretch out My hand and smite Egypt	ושלחתי את ידי והכיתי את מצרים
with various wonders which I will work	בכל נפלאותי אשר אעשה בקרבן
upon them; after that he shall let you go.	ואחרי כן ישלח אתכם

In relying on the salvation traditions from the national history of Israel, Zedekiah expects deliverance from the Babylonian foe. Via his officials the king hopes to awaken God to the present needs, and to evoke a saving act analogous to what God had done previously in times of crisis.

Yet Jeremiah disputes the officials. In countering the petition for **נפלאות**, Jeremiah uses the Exodus tradition as well. But in his prophecy, the most distinct phrase of deliverance, **ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה** (e.g. Dtn 5,15), turns out to be an expression for the intensity with which God will act against His own people, Jer 21,5:¹⁹

¹⁷ **עשה נפלאות** alludes to the Exodus and the Settlement in Ex 3,20; 34,10; Jos 3,5; Mic 7,15; Ps 78,4.11.32; 98,1; 105,5; 106,22; 107,24; Neh 9,17; from the Creation to the Settlement, Ps 136. Alluding to the Exodus, **נפלאות** is furthermore the object of verbs of praise, such as **סיפר נפלאות** (i. e. Jud 6,13; Ps 107,8.15.21.31), etc. Without explicit reference to Exodus traditions, **עשה נפלאות** appears in Ps 40,6; 72,18; 86,10; Job 5,9; 9,10; 37,(5).14; and **נפלאות** alone in Ps 119,18; Job 37,14; 42,3. Only once does it appear in the negative with human as subject (Ps 131,1).

¹⁸ Ex 3,19f., a J tradition, is evaluated by most scholars as earlier than the sixth century BCE. Nevertheless, in designating the evoked text I do not exclude the possibility that the allusion is not restricted to that text alone. As has been generally acknowledged, the allusion might refer to multiple texts.

¹⁹ **ביד נטויה ובזרוע חזקה** in Jer 21,5 is unique in three respects: (1) The order of the attributes contrasts with the otherwise common order (as in Dtn 5,15 above, etc.). (2) The association of the outstretched hand with the anger of God appears only in Isa 5,15; 9,11.16.20; 10,4; Ez 20,22.34. (3) The outstretched hand (**יד נטויה**) does not appear in the Exodus traditions, whereas in Isaiah it stands for the war that God wages against the nations (Isa 14,26) or against His people (the v. mentioned in Isa 5; 9; 10). Therefore, the phrase is not deuteronomic, but an idiosyncratic Jeremian phrase. Cf. Bright, *The Prose Sermons*, 15–35; Weippert, *Die Prosareden*, 67–85; and Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, Hermeneia, 1989, 53–64.

and I Myself will battle against you
with an outstretched mighty arm, with anger
and rage and great wrath.

ונלחמתי אני אתכם
ביד נטויה ובזרוע חזקה ובאף
ובהמה ובקצף גדול.

Furthermore, contrary to the complaint **כי נבוכדראצר מלך בבל** («for King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon is attacking us», v. 2), Jeremiah uses verbs from the semantic field of war in the first person to stress that God is the real enemy of Jerusalem **ונלחמתי אני אתכם** («and I Myself will battle against you», v. 5). God Himself will wage war against His city (v. 3–7): ... **ונלחמתי אני ... ואספתי ... והנני מסב** («I am going to turn around ... and I will take ... and I Myself will battle against you ... (6) I will strike ... (7) And then ... I will deliver ... into the hands of King Necuchadrezzar»). Thus, according to Jeremiah's perspective, the Destruction is solely an act of the Divine, while Nebuchadrezzar and other human foes are used by God only for the sake of completing the catastrophe (v. 7).²⁰

Hence, the Exodus tradition functions as the common denominator for both the King's officials and the prophet, and the allusions to it illuminate the focal point of this discourse. However, in polar contrast to the officials' request for hope and salvation, Jeremiah reuses the same historical tradition to crush the long-standing analogy portraying God as Savior. The prophet introduces a completely opposite notion in which God is the main foe of His people.²¹

B. Reuse of Covenant Traditions Regarding an Ideological Concept: The Concept of Exile and the Status of the Exiles (Ez 20,1–38)

According to the chronological setting, on the tenth of Ab, 591 BCE, a delegation of »Elders of Israel« came to inquire of God (לדרוש את ה'), and thus sat before His prophet, Ezekiel (20,1). Once before in chapter 14,1–11 the elders had approached Ezekiel with a similar intention, and were rejected furiously. However unlike the previous prophecy, in chapter 20 Ezekiel quotes the Elders, saying (v. 32):²²

²⁰ R. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, OTL, 1986, 409f., and W. Brueggemann, *To Pluck Up, To Tear Down: Jeremiah 1–25*, ITC, 1988, 183, considered v. 7 to be a secondary addition in light of its stylistic and literary peculiarities in the context. The thematic reason for the augmentation can be realized by comparison with other instances, where human acts of war mark the total both in prophecies (as in Jer 15,5–9) and in historiographical narratives (such as Jud 7,23–25; II Chr 20,25).

²¹ Polar correlation between texts as an exegetical device, cf. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 421–423; and Sommer's »reversal allusion«, in: *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 36–46.

²² The inquiry of God (דרש את ה') brings the inquirer to a prophet serving as a mediator between God and man (so also Ez 14,1–11; Jer 21,2 and see 37,3; cf. Wagner, TDOT 3,

We will be like the nations, like the families of the lands,
 worshipping wood and stone

נהיה כגוים כמשפחות
 הארצות לשרת עץ ואבן

This quotation has accrued various interpretations based on different understandings of the content, the exact extent of the citation, and its place within the context. It is generally agreed that the verbal form *נהיה* and the words *לשרת עץ ואבן* are the keys to understanding this debate between the prophet and his fellow Exiles. However three different interpretations have been suggested by both medieval and modern exegetes:

1. The quotation expresses mutiny.²³ Five arguments are used to establish this suggestion: (a) *נהיה* as a cohortative designates intention or wish. (b) The wish to be like the nations parallels the request for a king in I Sam 8,20.²⁴ (c) God's vehement rejection of the request throughout the chapter and specifically in relation to the quotation (Ez 20,3.31.33) is explained as a reaction to the alleged insurrection. (d) This rejection parallels the answer to the Elders in Ez 14,1–11. (e) Suggested already by Eliezer of Beaugency, the words *לשרת עץ ואבן* illustrate the prophet's immediate reaction of mockery towards the Elders' desire to assimilate.²⁵ However, G. A. Cooke correctly commented that it is hardly conceivable that the elders had approached the prophet in his house to inquire of God with this request in mind.²⁶

2. By contrast, the Elders request the permission to establish Yahwistic rituals in exile. The quotation reflects an active enterprise of the Exiles, hence *נהיה* is still in the cohortative. However, »worshipping wood and stone« is the prophet's reflection on the previous quotation, which is not humoristic ridicule, but rather sharp criticism against what could have been taken as a statement of loyalty to God. Suggested first by M. Freedman (1888) and elaborated by M. Greenberg, the Elders approached Ezekiel to effect a reconciliation with their existence in exile.

302f. The inquiry is always a specific request for a future prediction concerning the fate of the individual (Gen 25,22f.; Ex 18,15f.; I Sam 9,9; Ps 34,5 etc.), or regarding life and death in war (such as I Reg 22,13–18; Jer 10,21; 21,2 etc.). Thus, both motives have been suggested by medieval exegetes and critical commentators concerning Ez 20,32.

²³ So Rashi, Kimḥi and Luzzato; W. Eichrodt (Ezekiel, OTL, 1970, 277), M. Greenberg, Ezekiel 1–20, AncB, 1983, 371, 386; and D. I. Block, Ezekiel 1–24, NICOT, 1997, 648f.

²⁴ Block, Ezekiel 1–24, 649 n. 176.

²⁵ Eliezer of Beaugency, *Perush al Yehezkel u-Tere Asar*, 1968, 32. Sarcasm as to idol worship is typical of Deuteronomy (Dtn 27,15; 28,36.63; 29,16; 31,29), and frequent in the prophets (Hos 4,12; 8,6; 13,2; 14,4; Isa 2,8; Mic 5,12; and Deutero-Isa 41,7; 44,9–20; 46,6); as well as Ps 115,5–7; 135,16f. Cf. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, AncB, 1991, 209.

²⁶ G. A. Cooke, *Ezekiel*, ICC, 1936, 1985, 213.

Influenced by Jeremiah's letter (Jer 29,1–7), the Elders intended to erect an altar, a ritual center, for the God of Israel in Babylon.²⁷ The prophet, according to Greenberg, dismisses this loyal request and presents it as an idolatrous one in accordance with Dtn 28,36 etc. (to be discussed below).²⁸ However, there is no evidence in chapter 20 or in any other literary source of a request by the Exiles to establish an altar or other ritual practices in Babylon.²⁹ Moreover, I will argue below that the ritual perspective is secondary to this disputation speech. In Ezekiel's refutation (v. 5–31.33–38) a much larger issue is at stake.

3. The quotation illustrates the Exiles' despair in the face of their dislocation.³⁰ Thus נהיה is the imperfect indicative form, and the words לשרת עץ ואבן are a genuine component of the Exiles' inquiry. Both the language and the context of the saying indicate that the Elders' inquiry in Ez 20 focuses on their concern regarding their status as the people of God exiled in Babylon.³¹ Four arguments validate this interpretation, and illustrate the authenticity of the quotation.

(a) נהיה (כגוים): In contrast to the above-mentioned understanding of this phrase as an expression of wish and thus as apostasy, another parallel within Ezekiel seems more relevant. Ez 25,8 quotes the supposed mocking taunts of Moab and Seir: הנה ככל הגוים בית יהודה («See, the House of Judah is like all other nations»).³² In their perspective, the

²⁷ M. Freedman (Meir Ish-Shalom), *Hašiyun, hu be 'ur linvu'at Yehezqel siman 20*, 1888, 1; M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 20 and the Spiritual Exile*, *Oz leDavid*, 1964, 433–442; *Ezekiel 1–20*, 386–388; accepted by Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 365. G. Fohrer interpreted לשרת עץ ואבן as a reaction against the wish to make an idol of God, *Ezekiel*, *HAT* 13, 1955, 108.

²⁸ Associating the Elders' request with idolatry rituals relies on the occurrences of שרת in relation to ritual practices. שרת usually describes Yahweh rituals (as in Ex 28,43; 30, 20 etc.), or implies servitude of God (as in I Sam 2,18; 3,1; Ez 40,46; 43,19; 44,15.16), of king (Gen 39,4; Est 1,10), or of a prophet (I Reg 19,21). Exceptionally in Ezekiel, this verb designates ritual practices of other gods as well (Ez 44,11.12). Based on these two functions of שרת in Ezekiel, Ez 20,32 can either be the quoted words of the Elders, or the words of the prophet himself.

²⁹ As also Ps 137. Indeed, Cooke criticized this interpretation as well (Ezekiel, 213). The seventh century sanctuary in Elephantine cannot illuminate this issue raised during the Babylonian exile; cf. B. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony*, 1968, 105–122; K. van der Toorn, *Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine*, *Numen* 39,1 (1992), 80–101.

³⁰ Y. Kaufmann, *Toldot HaEmunah HaYisra'elit*, 3.558f; Zimmerli considered the quotation a reaction to the prophet's historical perspective, not the initial trigger of it (Ezekiel 1, 414, 417f.).

³¹ So already Qara, Kimḥi, and Ibn Caspi, based on bSan 105b. However, they all found a rebellious tone in the quotation, and not despair.

³² A. Graffy, *A Prophet Confronts His People*, *AnBib* 104, 1984, 66f.

similarity of the House of Judah to the nations is cast as a direct result of the destruction and exile (v. 3.6 exemplify further malicious delight). In the counter prophecy, Ezekiel emphasizes that God is still the source of salvation to His people (25,9–11). Thus, the major theme at the background of this prophecy appears to be the hazardous effects of the dislocation on the connections between God and His people. The Elders' inquiry of God in Ez 20 resides in the same concern. Emphasized by the indicative נהיה, the Exiles present an internal Judean perspective on the relationship between God and the Exiles in Babylon.³³

(b) נהיה כגוים כמשפחת הארצות introduces the Elders' paraphrase of a unique Ezekielian phraseology. In prophecies of judgement (or relating to judgement) Ezekiel often presents the exile in the parallel phrasing זרה בארצות / הפיץ בגוים (as in Ez 11,15).³⁴ While commenting on the theological implications of Ezekiel's prophecies for their status, the speakers coin a *hapax*: משפחת הארצות, which differentiates the quotation from Ezekiel's repeated expression.

(c) לשרת עץ ואבן: Wood and stone appear in two contexts in the Bible. First and most frequently, in the comparison of the Omnipotent and the Omniscient God of Israel to »other gods«, human-made idols and thus totally impotent and ignorant (II Reg 19,18; Isa 37,19; and Dtn 29,16). In this framework, Jeremiah ridicules the Judahite practices of syncretism (Jer 2,27; and 3,9). Second, and more relevant to our discussion, exile is described as a place where the people will worship wood and stone, as in Dtn 28,36 (and 64):³⁵

The Lord will drive you, and the king you have	יולך ה' אתך ואת מלכך אשר תקים עליך
set over you, to a nation unknown to you	אל גוי אשר לא ידעת אתה ואבותיך,
or your fathers, where you shall serve	ועבדת שם
other gods, of wood and stone	אלהים אחרים עץ ואבן

The horrific consequences of this are also elaborated in Dtn 4,27f.:³⁶

(27) The Lord will scatter you among the peoples	(27) והפיץ ה' אתכם בעמים,
and only a scant few of you shall be left among	ונשארתם מתי מספר בגוים
the nations to which the Lord will drive you.	אשר ינהג ה' אתכם שמה.
(28) There you will serve man-made gods	(28) ועבדתם שם אלהים מעשה

³³ The concept of exile and the status of the Exiles are also dealt with in Jer 5,18f.; 9,15; 16,10–12; and Ez 11,14–21; 33,23–29.

³⁴ See Ez 12,15; 22,15; 36,19; and the prophecies against Egypt (29,13; 30,23.26). In Prophecies of Consolation the nouns alternate: ארצות / עמים in Ez 11,16; 20,34; גוים / עמים 28,25; מקומות/עמים/ארצות in 34,12f.

³⁵ The threat of exile is repeated in two of the three sections of curses and threats in Dtn 28, 36.64. Cf. J. H. Tigay, Deuteronomy, JPS Torah Commentary, 1996, 489–493.

³⁶ Dtn 4,25–28 suggests a pre-exilic concept of exile, in contrast with v. 29–31, that are of the exilic layer of Deuteronomy (as Dtn 30,1–10), cf. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy 1–11, 209.

of wood and stone, that cannot see
or hear or eat or smell.

יְדֵי אָדָם, עֵץ וָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִרְאוּן
וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּן וְלֹא יֵאָכְלוּן וְלֹא יִרְיַחוּן

Exile will be the place where the people of Israel decrease in number because many will lose their lives on the way.³⁷ Only a scant few (מתי מספר) will remain, and they will end up worshipping wood and stone – the local gods – in their new places of settlement.³⁸ Thus, the remnant of the Exiles will assimilate and lose their religio-national identity.³⁹

These verses (Dtn 4,25–28 and 28,36.64) seem to reflect a pre-exilic perception, that keeps a restricted dichotomy between the Land and its surroundings, corresponding to the dichotomy between the God of Israel and »other gods«.⁴⁰ The dilemma that the Exiled Elders of Israel were facing can be demonstrated by the analogical equation:

God of Israel : The Land of Israel
»other gods« : foreign lands

Now that the Exiles are in foreign lands, do they have to follow this traditional concept and serve other gods? By way of analogy, the Elders apply to themselves the threats of punishment depicted in Deuteronomy against the disobedient people. The quotation presents the Elders' own interpretation of this Deuteronomic concept of exile. In their minds, their present is a fulfillment of those traditional threats of destruction and dislocation. This interpretation leads the Exiles to a tremendous despair, since they face a terminal break in their religio-national identity and in their covenantal bond with God.⁴¹

(d) Ezekiel's retrospective speech in reply serves as an external proof for the authenticity of the quotation and further illuminates its content.

In contrast to other interpreters of this chapter, I suggest that the disputation speech comprises v. 1–38.⁴² As is typical of the *genre*, the

³⁷ In his letter to the Exiles (Jer 29,5–7), Jeremiah alludes in reversal to this danger (v. 6). Thus, it seems that the concept of exile in Dtn 4,25–28 is the thematic context of the letter. Compare to A. Berlin, Jeremiah 29,5–7: A Deuteronomic Allusion, HAR 8 (1984), 3f., who suggests Dtn 20,5f. (with an »echo« of Dtn 28,30–32); and Holladay, who refers to Dtn 26,5 for the increase/decrease theme (Jeremiah 2, 141).

³⁸ Wood and stone are the worship targets of the nations outside the land of Canaan in Dtn 29,16; II Reg 19,18; Isa 37,19.

³⁹ So Tigay, Deuteronomy, 53.

⁴⁰ Other occurrences of this perception are Jos 22; I Sam 26,19; Hos 9,3–5; and the phrases אֲרֵץ אֲחֻזָּה (Hos 9,3); אֲרֵץ אֲחֻזָּה (Jos 22,19); נַחֲלָה (Ps 79,1 etc.). Cf. S. E. Loewenstamm, נַחֲלָה ה', ScrHie 31 (1986), 155–192, especially 172–177.

⁴¹ Despair on the part of the Exiles of 597 in Babylon is further attested in Ez 33,10; 37,11; cf. Graffy, A Prophet Confronts His People, 122f.

⁴² Chapter 20 is commonly divided into two initially independent units: the historical speech (v. 1–31), expanded by the disputation speech (v. 32–44). So Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 276–284; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 404, 413f.; L. C. Allen, Ezekiel 20–48, WBC 29, 1990,

core of the disputation speech is the refutation of the Elders' words quoted in v. 32. However, chapter 20 is unique in its long introduction preceding the quoted words. Still all the literary features of the disputation-speech are present:⁴³ (a) The prophetic formula ויהי דבר ה' אלי לאמר (v. 2; as in Ez 11,14 etc.). (b) The essential features preceding the quotation: the verb אמר, and the identification of its subject, אהם, v. 32; (c) Rejection of the quotation twice in Ez 20, first, in the *inclusio* pattern (v. 31), and second, in the immediate context in v. 32. The *inclusio* contextually marks the whole retrospective speech as the introductory section. Thus a sketch of the disputation speech is in order

The Structure of the Disputation Speech (Ez 20,1–38)

- v. 1–31 *Introduction*
 v. 3 Rejection of the inquiry:
 ה'לדרש אתי אתם באים, חי אני אם אדרש לכם נאם אדני ה'
 v. 4–31 *Retrospective* speech – From the abhorrent deeds of the fathers to the present:
 5–10 First generation: The Servitude in Egypt
 11–17 First generation: The Exodus to the desert
 18–26 Second generation in the desert
 [v. 27–29 Settlement in the land of Israel, and the idolatry trespass there]
 30f. Ezekiel's contemporary generation in Babylon
 v. 31 Repeating the Rejection of the Elders' inquiry:
 ואני אדרש לכם בית ישראל, חי אני נאם אדני ה' אם אדרש לכם
 v. 32 *Quotation*
 והעלה על רוחכם היו לא תהיה, אשר אתם אמרים
 נהיה כגוים כמשפחות הארצות לשרת עץ ואבן
 v. 33–38 *Refutation: Prospective* Prophecy of Deliverance
 חי אני נאם אדני ה', אם לא ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה ובחמה שפוכה
 אמלוך עליכם

Within the *inclusio* repetition of the refusal of the Elders' inquiry (v. 3.31), the prophet proclaims first the abhorrent deeds of »their fathers« (v. 4–26). Getting to his contemporaries (v. 30–32a), Ezekiel then quotes their words (v. 32b), and rebukes them with a unique prophecy of deliverance, describing God as reigning over the people

5; and also Graffy, *ibid*, 65 f. In contrast, Greenberg and Hoffman argued for the unity of the chapter (Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 376–381; Y. Hoffman, *Ezekiel 20 – Its Structure and Meaning*, *BetM 20* (1975), 480–486.

⁴³ A. Graffy, *ibid*, 105–129.

»with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with overflowing fury« (v. 33–38). Hence, Ezekiel's special perspective on the relationship between God and His people is presented in both his *retrospective* account and in his *prospective* articulation of the ongoing relationship during the exile.⁴⁴

The retrospective speech (v. 4–31) depicts four periods (covering three generations) marked by repetitive components in a graduated pattern of three and four:⁴⁵ (a) The servitude in Egypt – the first generation of the fathers (v. 5–10); (b) The Exodus through the desert of this first generation (v. 11–17); (c) The second generation in the desert (v. 18–26); (d) Ezekiel's contemporary generation in Babylon (v. 30f.). Each of the first three periods repeats five features: (a) God establishes a covenantal commitment with His people (v. 5–7, 10–12, 19f.). (b) The people react in disobedience (v. 8, 13, 21). (c) God intends to destroy His people (v. 8b, 13b, 21b). (d) Yet God refrains from carrying out His intention for the sake of His name, His prestige among the nations (v. 9, 14, 22). (e) God implies an alternative and less severe judgement (vv. 9b, 15–16, 23–26). The historical retrospective reaches its climax in the depiction of the fourth generation (v. 30–32), where in order to repeat God's rejection of the inquiry, the prophet reproves his contemporaries in exile straightforwardly: **הַבְּדֵרְךָ אֲבֹתֶיכֶם אֹהֶם נִטְמָאִים** (»you defile yourselves in the manner of your fathers«).⁴⁶

Literary and thematic considerations point to the secondary nature of both v. 27–29 and v. 39–44:⁴⁷ (a) v. 27–29 do not demonstrate even one of the five repetitive elements. (b) The ritual practices in those verses refer to the »Bamot« rituals known from Deuteronomistic sources (Dtn 12,2; I Reg 14,23; etc. as well as Ez 6,13). (c) The explanation for **בְּמָה** in v. 29 suggests that these three verses were initially an independent unit. (d) The two prophetic units (v. 27–29, 39–44) are literally connected in the four-fold repetition of the deictic word **שָׁם** (»there«) in reference to the land of Judah (v. 28 and in v. 40,43). (e) Thematically, the two units share an interest in the (im)proper cult in the land of Israel, al-

⁴⁴ So Block, Ezekiel 1–24, 613. Compare to Hoffman, Ezekiel 20, 473; and Greenberg, Ezekiel 1–20, 387f.

⁴⁵ Y. Zakovitch, For Three ... and for Four: The Pattern of the Numerical Sequence three-four in the Bible, Ph. D. Diss., 1979. Contra to Greenberg, Ezekiel 1–20, 377f., the fourth climatic era is Ezekiel's generation (v. 30–32). Hoffman's division does not coincide with the following clear literary pattern of the speech (Ezekiel 20, 482).

⁴⁶ Thus translated by Greenberg, Ezekiel 1–20, 362.

⁴⁷ So Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 405, 412. Although observing their peculiar characteristics, Greenberg, Ezekiel 20, 437–439; Ezekiel 1–20, 378; Hoffman, Ezekiel 20, 482; and recently Block, Ezekiel 1–24, 641–645, still considered v. 27–29 part of the original words.

beit ritual practices served in the initial prophecy only as a symbol of loyalty to the covenant and not as a separate topic.⁴⁸ The deliverance prophecy in v. 39–44 indeed echoes the repeated demand of the original prophecy to remove idolatry (v. 7.18.30f. and 39,43) on the one hand, and the commandment to keep the Sabbath as a symbol for the covenant (v. 12.20) on the other.⁴⁹ Yet, those resemblances can all be explained as secondary additions to the disputation speech in v. 1–38.⁵⁰ Thus, these two units transform the essential topic of the concept of exile in v. 1–38, and introduce God's desired rituals and sacrifices in the land of Israel into future prospects of deliverance. The literary and thematic connections between vv. 27–29 and 39–44 testify to a common later author, who found the historical retrospective (vv. 5–26.30–32) lacking mention of hundreds of years of apostasy in the promised land (vv. 27–29); and appended his further interest in the cult (vv. 39–44) to the consolation prophecy (vv. 33–38).

In the retrospective speech, Ezekiel selected these four eras from the people's history in order to emphasize two main points to his fellow Exiles.

First, the geographical horizon: The common denominator of the depicted eras (with the exception of the secondary v. 27–29) is the existence outside the Land of Israel. This special geographical point of view in Ez 20,1–32 has been overlooked by scholars. In contradistinction to the traditional perception of the exile as a period of distance and separation from God, Ezekiel points out the fact that God established the relationship with His people outside the land of Israel, in an exilic environment.

Second, the commitment of God to the covenant: Within Ezekiel's accent on the fact that God initiated the covenant relationship with His people in Egypt (v. 5), the prophet suggests the exceptional claim that disobedience to God and to His ritual demands started at this very first stage (v. 7f.), and has persisted ever since (v. 13.21.30).⁵¹ Thus, time and again the people have deserved to be punished with total calamity (v. 8b.13b.21b). However each time, God decided unilaterally not to destroy them, for the sake of His prestige in the face of the foreign peoples

⁴⁸ Greenberg did feel the theme of cult to be alien to the main topic, nevertheless, he presumed that it was the prophet's main interest in this prophecy (Ezekiel 20, 439–441).

⁴⁹ For this Priestly perspective, cf. M. Greenberg, *Parashat Ha-Shabbat be-Yirmeyahu*, in: *Iyyunim be-Sefer Yirmeyahu*, B. Z. Luria (ed.), 1971, 28–37; idem, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 366f.

⁵⁰ Compare to L. C. Allen, *The Structuring of Ezekiel's Revisionist History Lesson (Ezekiel 20: 3–31)*, *CBQ* 54 (1992), 448–462.

⁵¹ Idolatry practiced prior to the Settlement connects Ez 20 to Ps 106 (and Jos 24,14). Cf. G. W. Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness*, 1968, 227f., 233f.; Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 615f.

(v. 9.14.22).⁵² Although the divine oath had changed as a consequence of the people's sins (v. 6.15.23), God did not retract it, and the people's behavior did not abrogate the everlasting existence of His commitments.⁵³

In Ezekiel's prophecy of consolation (v. 33–38) those two central lessons of the retrospective speech bridge across time and connect the present generation of the Exiles in Babylon to the first generations in Egypt and in the desert. Various allusions to the Exodus in v. 33–38 prove this intention: *והוצאתי אתכם מן־* (v. 34), *ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה*, *והבאתי אתכם אל מדבר העמים* (v. 33.34), *מסרת הברית* (v. 37), and the even more explicit allusion *במדבר ארץ מצרים* (v. 36).⁵⁴ Nonetheless, while reflecting on the first covenant, Ezekiel presents the future covenant through his contemporary perspective, as an event of trial.⁵⁵

To sum up this last example, the Exiles' despair as quoted in v. 32 threatens their continued existence as the people of God. The Elders of Israel approach the prophet with an analogical reflection, in which they seek a correlation between the traditional concept of exile and their present existence in Babylon. The prophet vigilantly presents his own perspective. Ezekiel bypasses the inherited concept of exile with a different analogy based on Priestly (especially Ex 6,2–8) and Deuteronomistic Exodus traditions.⁵⁶ Accordingly, he perceives the Exiles as a direct continuation of the first generation in Egypt. Hence, Ezekiel illustrates an opposite picture – the Exiles do have hope. Although in exile, they are still God's people, and He is their King.

⁵² Alluding to Ex 32,9–14, cf. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 366.

⁵³ Therefore, contra to Hoffman, *Ezekiel 20*, 483, I do not find an association of God's role in history with the retribution concept to be in the foreground of this prophecy.

⁵⁴ For allusions in v. 33–38 (as also v. 5 f. and others) to the Priestly tradition in Ex 6,2–8, cf. M. A. Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Reading of Selected Biblical Texts*, 1979, 31–132; *Biblical Interpretation*, 366f. Nevertheless, Ezekiel's words differ considerably from that tradition: (1) He does not mention the fathers as the recipients of the promise to the land (Ex 6,2.8; Cf. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 364). (2) Unparalleled in Ex 6, Ezekiel suggests an immediate requirement to obey God's demands (Ez 20,7); (3) Ezekiel describes the salvation using idioms of wrath aimed at the people. Cf. bRHSh 32b, and Greenberg's discussion of *חמה שפוכה* in Ezekiel (*Ezekiel 1–20*, 371f.).

⁵⁵ For different evaluations of the wilderness traditions in Ezekiel's speech, cf. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel 279f.*; and Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness*, 240f.

⁵⁶ R. Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul*, 98–103.

III. Conclusions

Two conclusions may be drawn from these examples. First, part of the dialogue between the prophets and their contemporaries, as this appears in debates and disputation-speeches, is of an exegetical nature. The opponents each present their own allusive argumentation.

The two quotations demonstrate knowledge of literary traditions as well as theological and ideological concepts. The officials (Jer 21,2) allude to the Exodus tradition, and rest their plea on the concept of God as Savior in times of crisis. The Elders of Israel (Ez 20,32) re-interpret the concept of the land as the land of God, and thus the concept of exile as a place to worship foreign gods; they further demonstrate their knowledge of the catalogue of curses and threats in Deuteronomy 28, and the overall Deuteronomic conception of the covenant with God.

In terms of interpretive techniques, both quotations repeatedly look for analogical correlations between past events, or persistent divine qualities, and the present crisis era. The search for analogies finds its expression in two different perspectives: hope in Jer 21,2 and desperation in Ez 20,32. The adherence to past traditions in the quotations of the officials and the Exiles' leadership shows the speakers' national and religious conservatism. This conservatism construes their difficulties in facing the present.

Thus, the examples demonstrate different stages in the exegetical process. While the officials' request in Jer 21,2 can be marked only as an allusion to the Exodus tradition, in Ezekiel the quotation shows an interpretive process behind the saying, and consequently the speakers attend the prophet with their own exegetical conclusions.

The contexts in which the quotations appear present the prophets as *the* exegetes who are asked to resolve the tension between the scriptures or the traditional concepts and the distressing reality. Nevertheless, the above examples indicate that inner-biblical exegesis is not restricted to the prophets. Although limited to only a few words, the quotations designate an independent exegetical process within non-prophetic circles.⁵⁷

When we proceed to the prophets' refutations, we find that both Jeremiah and Ezekiel make the effort to abolish the analogical correlations made by their contemporaries between the past and their present

⁵⁷ This calls for a reevaluation of Fishbane's emphasis on the prophetic responsibility for »homiletical transformations of authoritative texts« (Revelation and Tradition: Aspects of Inner-Biblical Exegesis, JBL 99 [1980], 343–361). Other disputation-speeches in Ezekiel present an actual practice of interpretation *within* the quotations (Ez 11,14; 18,2; 33,10.23; and Jer 33,23–26). Compare to Y. Frenkel's description of the emergence of Midrash (Midrash and Aggadah, 1996, 26).

or even prospective future. The prophets put forth either the opposite concept (Jer 21,3–7), or an alternative analogical correlation (Ez 20,1–38). By using different evoked texts and alternative concepts in this disputation speech (as well as others), Ezekiel does not directly contradict any of the past traditions. It seems that he consciously picks up an alternative line of thought in order to bypass direct confrontation with the traditional and valued heritage. Thus, Ezekiel (as also Jeremiah, in Jer 21,1–7) presents the opponents' exegesis as a misinterpretation.

Second, this study can somewhat clarify ongoing scholarly discussion about the correct terminology to use for such inner-biblical interpretations: echo, allusion or exegesis;⁵⁸ and can partially answer the question of the function of these methods – whether they served as literary ornaments or had actual interpretive goals. Our discussion suggests the following: The starting point of the exegetical process, as seen in these examples, is the need to *correlate* the present with the past, or with the enduring qualities of God, by way of *analogy* or *polarity*. The formal-literary devices for introducing the correlations are the *echo* or *allusion* to the traditional heritage shared by all participants. But the motive of both the speakers and the prophets is equally *exegetical*. Both parties were coping with key questions of existence in face of the destruction and the exiles. Thus *inner-biblical exegesis* is not an ornamental device, but rather an essential way to reevaluate long-standing concepts. Hence, the study of this process should rightly continue to be considered an important aspect of ideological research on the Bible.

Contributing to the growing interest in inner-biblical interpretation, this paper calls attention to one social-historical setting that can illuminate the evolution of exegesis already by the first decades of the sixth century BCE. An exegetical discourse between the prophets and their opponents is exemplified in two passages from the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jer 21,1–7; Ez 20,1–38). The study shows that independent lines of argumentation are introduced, through the reuse of earlier sources within quotations of »other voices«, on the one hand, and through the prophets' refutations, on the other. The allusions to earlier sources meet the need to correlate the present distress with the past, or with the enduring qualities of God, by way of analogy or polarity. Hence, it is claimed that inner-biblical exegesis is not restricted to the prophets. The quotations illustrate an exegetical process within non-prophetic circles, on the basis of which they approach the prophets. The latter refute their contemporaries in diverse ways. In an effort not to contradict directly cherished heritage or traditional concepts of the divine, the prophets present the opposing exegesis as a deplorable misinterpretation. Thus, inner-biblical exegesis motivates the echoes and allusions in the polemic between the prophets and their audiences.

⁵⁸ T. K. Beal, *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, D. N. Fewell (ed.), 1992, 21–24.

Angesichts des wachsenden Interesses an innerbiblischer Interpretation lenkt dieser Aufsatz die Aufmerksamkeit auf eine sozialhistorische Konstellation, welche die Entwicklung der Exegese schon während der ersten Jahrzehnte des 6. Jh. v. Chr. erhellen kann. Eine exegetische Auseinandersetzung zwischen den Propheten und ihren Gegnern ist beispielhaft in zwei Abschnitten der Bücher Jeremia und Ezechiel (Jer 21,1–7; Ez 20,1–38) gegeben. Die Untersuchung zeigt, dass unabhängige Argumentationslinien auf der einen Seite eingeleitet werden durch die Wiederverwertung früherer Äußerungen anhand von Zitaten »anderer Stimmen« und auf der anderen Seite durch deren prophetische Widerlegung. Die Anspielungen auf frühere Äußerungen machten es notwendig, das gegenwärtige Leid mit dem vergangenen oder mit den bleibenden Eigenschaften Gottes – in Analogie oder Polarität – in Beziehung zu setzen. Von daher legt sich die Annahme nahe, dass innerbiblische Auslegung nicht auf die Propheten beschränkt bleibt. Die Zitate veranschaulichen einen Auslegungsprozess innerhalb nichtprophetischer Kreise, aufgrund dessen die sich an die Propheten wenden. Die letzteren widerlegen ihre Zeitgenossen auf verschiedene Weise. In einem Versuch, dem wertgeschätzten Erbe oder überlieferten theologischen Konzeptionen nicht direkt zu widersprechen, veranschaulichen die Propheten die gegnerische Auslegung als bedauerliche Fehlinterpretation. Somit ist es innerbiblische Auslegung, welche die Rückäußerungen und Anspielungen in der Polemik zwischen den Propheten und ihren Zuhörern anregt.

En référence à l'intérêt croissant pour l'exégèse intra-biblique, cet article vise à attirer l'attention sur un contexte socio-historique susceptible d'éclairer l'évolution de l'exégèse dès les premières décennies du 6^{ème} siècle av. J.-C. Une controverse exététique entre les prophètes et leurs opposants est illustrée par deux passages des livres de Jérémie et d'Ezéchiel (Jer 21,1–7; Ez 20,1–38). Cette étude montre que des axes indépendants d'argumentation sont introduits, d'une part par la réutilisation de sources anciennes à l'intérieur de citations »d'autres voix«, d'autre part par leur réfutation par les prophètes. Les allusions faites à ces sources plus anciennes rendaient nécessaire la corrélation du malheur actuel avec les qualités passées ou permanentes de Dieu, sur le mode de l'analogie ou de la polarité. Il en ressort que l'exégèse intra-biblique ne se limite pas aux prophètes. Les citations illustrent un processus exégétique à l'intérieur de cercles non-prophétiques, sur la base duquel ils s'adressent aux prophètes, ces derniers contredisant leurs contemporains de plusieurs manières. En tentant de ne pas s'opposer directement à un héritage apprécié ou à des concepts traditionnels du divin, les prophètes décrivent l'exégèse opposée comme une lecture fautive. L'exégèse intra-biblique suscite ainsi des échos et des allusions dans la polémique entre les prophètes et leurs auditoires.