THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH MT AND EARLY SECOND TEMPLE CONFLICTS ABOUT PROPHETS AND PROPHECY

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In memory of the late Robert Carroll, in recognition of his enormous contribution to Jeremiah scholarship, and in thanks for his generous encouragement.

Among the various conflicts in the second temple period were those about the place of prophets and prophecy in the life of the community. In explaining the nature of these conflicts, scholars have given consideration mostly to texts drawn from collections such as Isaiah 56–66, Ezekiel 40–48, and Zechariah 9–14.[1] There is little or no mention of texts from the book of Jeremiah. In this article I want to propose that the Jeremiah tradition in its MT recension (MTJer) should also be counted among those biblical texts which reflect late Persian or early Greek period conflicts about prophecy and prophets.

The product of a redactional process which extended into the early second temple period, MTJer reflects the viewpoint of its redactors about, among other things, the place of prophets and prophecy in this period. A dominant feature of MTJer is an especially intense interest in the figure of the prophet. The book is as much about Jeremiah as it is about the message he announced. Now while the Jeremiah tradition in both its recensions shows a particular interest in the figure of the prophet, this is more so the case with MTJer. Where a passage such as Zech 13:2-6 reflects an attitude of hostility towards prophets and prophetic activity,

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[1] See e.g., J. L. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 73-79; J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (revised and enlarged ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996) 216-22; P. D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); D. L. Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy: Studies in Deutero-Prophetic Literature and in Chronicles* (SBLMS 23; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977); H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 13–27: A Commentary* (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) 502; O. Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (Richmond: John Knox, 1968) 76; B. Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah: Reconstructing the Cultic History of the Restoration* (JSOTSup 193; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) esp. 112-82; R. R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 287-91, 306-8.

MTJer represents a viewpoint that is clearly different and much more positive. While there is a lack of agreement among scholars about the precise identity of the parties involved, there is a wide recognition that conflict over prophecy and prophets was a feature of the early second temple period.[2] My aim then is to propose that MTJer is another voice in the conflicts, and that it represents a viewpoint quite different from those which look with suspicion on prophets and prophetic activity in the late Persian or early Greek periods. In doing so, I am trying to address a relatively neglected area in Jeremiah research, i.e., the relationship between issues in second temple Judaism and the growth and development of the book in its MT form.

In the first part of the essay I will examine the MT's representation of the figure of the prophet. In the second part I take up Zech 13:2-6, a text which has clearly recognizable links with MTJer, and reflects another view about the place of prophets and prophecy in the life of the community.[3] In the third part of the essay I will compare the different perspectives of the two traditions in order to identify more clearly the distinctive viewpoint of MTJer.

MTJer AND THE FIGURE OF THE PROPHET

Before examining MTJer's viewpoint about prophets and prophecy, it is first necessary to explain my approach to two issues in Jeremiah research, which provide a partial foundation for this essay. The first is the relationship between the historical Jeremiah ben Hilkiah and the book named after him. The second is the compositional history of MTJer. As with many issues in Jeremiah research, there is no scholarly consensus about these issues and a full discussion of them is not possible within the confines of this essay. I am therefore adopting the following positions as presuppositions for the purposes of this essay and my aim of exploring the relationship between MTJer and the early second temple period.

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[2]For some of the divergent views on this question, see n. 1 above. Within the confines of this essay it is possible only to refer to these views in passing. Any further discussion of them would require a far more substantial treatment of the issues than is possible here.

[3]The links between Zech 13:2-6 and the Jeremiah tradition have been previously explored by Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy*, 27-38. While he concentrated only on certain individual passages from the book of Jeremiah (23:33-40; chs. 27–28), I intend to broaden the discussion by looking at MTJer as a whole. In this regard my work also differs from that of R. F. Person, *Second Zechariah and the Deuteronomic School* (JSOTSup 167; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 191-201. The links between Jer 23:9-40 have been noted in passing by other scholars such as Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow*, 178-79; R. P. Carroll, *Jeremiah* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 480.

In reading MTJer what we encounter is a literary construct, i.e., the figure of Jeremiah, which is founded on the life and deeds of Jeremiah ben Hilkiah in the years leading up to the events of 587 and their aftermath. The literary construct Jeremiah is not identical with the historical Jeremiah ben Hilkiah, but is a larger-than-life paradigmatic figure or persona, who expresses the theological concerns of a particular group about such things as prophecy and the significance of the events of 587.[4] When I refer to the figure of Jeremiah then, I mean the literary figure that we encounter in the text, and do not intend any reference or implication about the historical Jeremiah ben Hilkiah.

MTJer is in its final form a product of the post-exilic period. It has a long compositional history, as studies of the MT and the Alexandrian LXX (LXXJer) versions of the book indicate. The two textual traditions contain important differences between both individual units of text and the overall organization of the book. Following the lead of Janzen, recent studies have proposed that our present LXXJer is the translation of a Hebrew *Vorlage*, which differs from and predates our present MT.[5] The process by which the latter reached its final form extended over several centuries in the second temple era.[6] While the genesis of many of its

[4] As Blenkinsopp writes, "those who edited and transmitted the book of Jeremiah, over a period of several centuries, have been at pains to present him as fulfilling the paradigm of the prophetic role in Israel" (*History*, 135). Carroll describes the textual Jeremiah as "a protean figure" (Jeremiah, 64). For other approaches to the figure of Jeremiah as a paradigm, see e.g., T. Polk, *The Prophetic Persona: Jeremiah and the Language of the Self* (JSOTSup Series 32; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984); H. G. Reventlow, *Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1963) esp. 258-60. For the term "persona", see Polk, *The Prophetic Persona*, 10.

[5] J. G. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (HSS 6; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) esp. 127-35. He is followed by P.-M. Bogaert, "De Baruch à Jérémie: les deux rédactions conservées du livre de Jérémie," pp. 168-73 in *Le Livre de Jérémie: le prophète et son mileu les oracles et leur transmission* (BETL 54; ed. P.-M. Bogaert; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1981); Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 50-55; J. Cook, "The difference in the order of the books of the Hebrew and Greek versions of Jeremiah—Jeremiah 43 (50): a case study," *Old Testament Essays* 7 (1994) 175-92; W. McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986) esp. 1.1-liii; Y. Goldman, *Prophétie et royauté au retour de l'exil: les origines littéraires de la forme massorétique de livre de Jérémie* (OBO 118; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992); H.-J. Stipp, *Das masoretische und alexandrinische Sondergut des Jeremiabuches: textgeschichtlicher Rang, Eigenarten, Triebkräfte* (OBO 136; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994); E. Tov, "The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in the Light of Its Textual History," pp. 211-37 in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (ed. J. Tigay; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

[6] According to Goldman, the final redaction of the MT was completed sometime between 515 and 445, i.e. between the consecration of the temple and the era of Nehemiah and Ezra (*Prophétie*, 143-47). The third and fourth centuries are the

oracular, homiletic and narrative material is in the immediate pre-exilic period, the expansion of individual units and the shaping of the book's final form take place in the post-exilic period. In trying to further understand the process of the book's composition, it is necessary to look at important issues from the early second temple period and to determine which may have contributed to the development of MTJer. One such factor which influenced the content and order of MTJer concerned the place of prophets and prophecy in the late Persian and early Greek periods.

MTJer—THE BOOK OF THE נביא ("PROPHET")

MTJer is held together by the figure of the נביא ("prophet"). While the figure of Jeremiah is central in the LXXJer, it is even more so in the MT. The latter's special emphasis can be seen by a comparison of the superscriptions in MTJer and LXXJer, by an analysis of the differences in the their representations of the figures of Jeremiah and Baruch, and by the MT's use of the designation נביא.[7]

The very first words of the MT text place the figure of Jeremiah squarely in the foreground. According to 1:1 the book contains "The words of Jeremiah ... to whom the word of the LORD came". In Jer 1:1 MT then, the contents are described firstly as the words of Jeremiah, and secondly as originating from YHWH. In the superscriptions of other prophetic books in their MT forms their contents are usually represented as firstly the words of YHWH, and secondly as revelation to a particular prophet. Hos 1:1 begins "The word of the LORD that came to Hosea", and similar forms of introduction are found in Joel 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1. Only in Amos 1:1 do we find a superscription which begins in the same way as that in Jer 1:1. The book of Amos begins: "The words of Amos ... which he saw concerning Israel".[8]

MTJer's emphasis on the figure of Jeremiah becomes clearer when its superscription is compared with that of the LXX. The latter begins: "The

time frame proposed by Stipp, *Das Sondergut*, 142-43; R. L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets* (JSOTSup 180; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 223-25.

[7] On the MT and LXX's different representations of Jeremiah and Baruch and their relationship, see Bogaert, "Baruch", 168-73. He does not however explore their significance for understanding the book of Jeremiah as a post-exilic construction.

[8] On the composition of superscriptions and their incorporation into prophetic texts as acts of classification and interpretation, see G. M. Tucker, "Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of a Canon," in *Canon and Authority* (ed. G. W. Coats; B. O. Long; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) 65-70. See also B. Peckham, *History and Prophecy: The Development of Late Judean Literary Traditions* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1993) 307.

word of God which came to Jeremiah" (1:1 LXX). Unlike the MT, LXXJer identifies the contents of the book as firstly the word of God (τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ), and secondly as a revelation to Jeremiah. The difference here is more than an issue of translation, as a comparison with Amos 1:1 shows. Amos 1:1 LXX begins the words of Amos (λόγοι Αμως), and is simply a literal translation of the MT at this point. The differences between the beginning of the MTJer and LXXJer indicate that we might find some special emphasis on the figure of Jeremiah in the book which is either absent from or not as pronounced in LXXJer.[9]

Differences in the representation of the figures of Jeremiah and Baruch in the MT and LXX also reflect MTJer's heightened interest in the figure of the נביא.[10] For example, according to 36:6 MT the words which Baruch writes on the scroll are said to have come from the mouth of Jeremiah: "Read from the scroll that which you have written at my dictation". At the corresponding place in the LXX, 43:6, however, there is no reference to Jeremiah as the intermediary of the prophetic message. The LXX simply has "Read from this scroll in the hearing of the people". After Jehoiakim burns the scroll, a second is commissioned by YHWH, and according to 43:22 LXX it is written at the initiative of Baruch: "And Baruch took another scroll and wrote on it at Jeremiah's dictation all the words of the book which Jehoiakim had burnt up". The MT however clearly emphasizes that the initiative comes from Jeremiah: "Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the secretary Baruch son of Neriah, who wrote on it at Jeremiah's dictation all the words of the scroll" (36:32 MT—וירמיהו לקח מגלה אחרת ...).

Similarly, the two recensions give a different emphasis to the commissioning of Baruch. In the LXX it comes near the end of the book in 51:31-35, where it is followed by the accounts of the capture of Jerusalem in 597 and 587 BCE. LXXJer concludes then with the figure of Baruch as the bearer of the prophetic word. The shift from the figure of Jeremiah to Baruch as the bearer of the prophetic word continues a line of thought first found in ch. 43 LXX (36 MT). Here the words of Jeremiah are put into writing, so that it is now the scroll, rather than the figure of Jeremiah, which becomes the medium through which the prophetic word is announced to Zedekiah. In 51:31-35 LXX it is Baruch the scribe who becomes the medium by which the prophetic word is to be transmitted.[11]

The MT's different order then gives the figure of Baruch less emphasis than does the LXX. His commissioning is in ch. 45 MT, and is followed by the oracles against the nations (chs. 46–51) and the accounts of Jerusalem's capture (ch. 52). Ch. 51 finishes with an account of the

[9] So, Bogaert, "Baruch", 171-72.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

writing in a book of the oracles which had been pronounced against Babylon. According to 51:59-64 the book is then to be taken by Seraiah to Babylon, where he is to throw it into the Euphrates. Ch. 51 concludes: "Thus far are the words of Jeremiah" (v. 54). Here Jeremiah is the central figure. It is he who writes down the words in the book, and it is he who gives directions to Seraiah. In this way the writing down of the message in 51:59-64 differs from that in ch. 36 MT, where Jeremiah dictates and Baruch writes. The difference between the MT and the LXX is quite clear. Where the second last chapter of LXXJer focuses clearly on the figure of Baruch, it is Jeremiah who is the central figure at the corresponding place in the MT.

The figure of Jeremiah also receives a further emphasis through 39:11-13 MT, which together with vv. 4-11 are not found in LXXJer. Ch. 39 MT relates the fall of Jerusalem and its aftermath, including the release of Jeremiah from confinement. In the LXX it is the Babylonian commanders of the siege who give the order to release Jeremiah (46:14 LXX), but according to the MT it is Nebuchadnezzar who orders Jeremiah's release (39:11 MT). Not only freed at the direct order of the Babylonian king, he is even to be given treatment of an extremely favourable kind. Nebuchadnezzar orders Nebuzaradan: "Deal with him as he may ask you" (v. 12). The Jeremiah of the MT is obviously a figure of much greater standing than the Jeremiah of the LXX.

A further significant difference between the LXX and the MT is the latter's frequent use of the designation נביא. Unlike in LXXJer, both Jeremiah and his opponents are designated in the MT as נביאם ("prophets).[12] The MT uses the expression ירמיה הנביא ("Jeremiah the prophet") whereas in the corresponding verses in LXXJer he is usually referred simply as Ιερεμίας ("Jeremiah").[13] What is especially significant is that in a text such as ch. 28, in which the principal protagonists are Jeremiah and Hananiah, both are called הנביא ("the prophet"—28:1, 5 MT). The designation is used in a quite even-handed way, where both the "authentic" and the "false" prophet are similarly designated. The use of the designation then does not reflect the chapter's obvious ideology about

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[12]The question I am addressing here is how the figure of Jeremiah is represented in the text. I am not entering the discussion about whether the historical Jeremiah saw himself as a נביא. The various views in this debate are presented in (ed.) P. R. Davies, *The Prophets: A Sheffield Reader* (The Biblical Seminar 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 22-106. See also B. Vawter, "Were the Prophets *nabîs?*" *Bib* 66 (1985) 206-20.

[13]This MT plus is found in: 20:2; 25:2; 28:5, 6, 10, 12, 15; 29:1, 29; 32:2; 34:6; 36:8, 26; 37:2, 3, 6, 13; 38:9, 10; 46:13; 47:1; 49:34; 50:1. This compares with the four instances in which both textual traditions refer to Jeremiah as "the prophet": 42:2 MT (= 49:1 LXX); 43:6 MT (= 50:6 LXX); 45:1 MT (= 51:31 LXX) 51:59 MT (=29:59 LXX).

who is the authentic prophet. If both the hero and the villain are נביאם ("prophets"), it would suggest that in JerMT the issue is not the office of prophecy itself, but rather the question of a conflict between people who both are exercising a ministry that was regarded as a normal part of the community's life.[14]

Similarly in 23:9-32, a polemic against Jeremiah's opponents, they are also simply designated as נביאם. Portrayed as adulterers, excluded from the divine council and prophesying as a result of delusion, their fundamental failure is not that they claim to be prophets, but that that they are prophets who misrepresent YHWH's intentions and so lead the people to believe in lies. They offer a message about a peaceful future (23:17), whereas the truth is that disaster is what YHWH intends and Jeremiah proclaims.[15] Yet, despite of the ferocity of the attack on them in vv. 9-32, their status as prophets is never questioned.

A feature of MTJer, signalled immediately in its superscription, is a more highly developed emphasis on the figure of the נביא than found in LXXJer. In comparison to the LXX, the MT also downplays the role of Baruch so that the figure of the נביא is emphasized at the expense of that of the ספר ("scribe", "secretary"). Evidence for this is reflected in the different placement of the commissioning of Baruch in the two recensions (ch. 45 MT; ch. 51 LXX), and in their differing representations of the roles of Jeremiah and Baruch in the writing and rewriting of the scroll (ch. 36 MT; ch. 43 LXX). MTJer's emphasis on the figure of the נביא is also evident in the story of Jeremiah's release from prison, which is ordered by none other than the Babylonian emperor himself (39:11-13 MT). LXXJer's briefer and more modest account portrays the release as commanded by the local Babylonian military commanders (46:14 LXX). Finally, MTJer uses the term נביא to designate both Jeremiah and also his prophetic opponents, whereas LXXJer is often content to refer simply to Ιερεμίας and to his prophetic opponents as ψευδοπροφῆται ("false prophets").

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[14]The LXX's use of the term of προφήτης appears not to be consistent. In chs. 2-10, where the MT uses נביא to designate Jeremiah's prophetic opponents, the LXX uses προφήτης in all instances except one (2:8, 26, 30; 4:9; 5:13, 31; 8:1. The exception is in 6:13, where the LXX has ψευδοπροφήτης). In chs. 11-20 the LXX, when referring to Jeremiah's prophetic opponents, always has προφήτης for the MT's נביא (13:13; 14:13, 14, 15, 18; 18:18). In 23:9-40, a sustained attack on the prophetic opposition, the MT's נביא is always represented in the LXX by προφήτης. However this is not so in chs. 26, 28, 29 MT (= chs. 33, 35, 36 LXX), where Jeremiah's prophetic opponents (still designated by the term נביא in the MT) are now called ψευδοπροφήτης (26:7, 8, 11, 16; 35:1; 36:8 MT [= 33:7, 8, 11, 16; 35:1; 36:8 LXX]). However in 34:15, 15, 18 LXX, προφήτης is used for the MT's נביא.

[15]For further on this, see T. W. Overholt, *The Threat of Falsehood* (SBT Second Series 16; London: SCM, 1970) 49-71.

The MT's particular emphasis on the figure of Jeremiah seems to be more than a chance happening. It is reflected in a superscription which is quite different to that of the LXX, in the frequent use of the term נביא at places where it is lacking in the LXX, in the backgrounding of the figure of Baruch, and the foregrounding of the figure of Jeremiah. The question then arises as to how this shift might be explained. The MT's intensification of the Jeremiah tradition's already strong focus on its central figure together with the backgrounding of the scribal figure Baruch, and the repeated designation of Jeremiah as a נביא suggests that there is some difficulty or conflict about prophecy. Why engage in this process of giving an even more intense emphasis on the figure of Jeremiah as a נביא except to address some issue about the place of prophets and prophecy in the life of the community? The beginnings of an answer to this question can be found in Zech 13:2-6, a passage from the late Persian or early Greek period, which has clear links with Jeremiah MT and which portrays a particular viewpoint about prophets and prophecy.

ZECH 13:2-6 AND CONFLICTS OVER PROPHETS AND PROPHECY

There are two steps in my treatment of Zech 13:2-6. The first is to outline the links between it and the Jeremiah tradition, and the second is to propose an interpretation of the passage.

The Links between Zech 13:2-6 and MTJer

The links between Jeremiah MT and Zech 13:2-6 come about in two ways. The first is established by the term משא ("oracle", "burden") which is in both Jer 23:9-40 and Zech 13:2-6. The other link is established by the presence in both of the word שקר ("lie", "falsehood") in the context of prophetic conflict. The relevant places where it occurs in MTJer are 14:14; 23:9-40; 27:10, 14, 15, 16; 28:15.[16]

The word משא occurs in Jer 23:9-40, a passage which belongs to a larger unit containing an attack on Jeremiah's prophetic opponents. 23:9-40 contain the only occurrences in MTJer of משא with the meaning "oracle". In the book of Zechariah משא occurs twice (9:1; 12:1). In both cases it is part of a superscription which introduces a new section of the book. Further evidence for proposing a link comes from the LXX. In both texts the LXX uses λῆμμα ("something received", "gain") to represent the Hebrew word משא (Jer 23:33-40; Zech 12:1). This is not always the case with the LXX. For example, in the book of Isaiah משא is frequently used to introduce new sections of the book or new oracles (13:1; 14:28; 15:1;

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[16]Other references in Jeremiah MT are: 5:31; 6:13; 8:10; 20:6; 29:9, 21, 23, 31.

17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 30:6), but in none of these is it translated by the word λῆμμα.[17]

Chapters 27–29 MT are linked to Zech 13:2-6 by the word strings שקר with either נביא or the verbal root נבא (Jer 27:10, 14, 16; 28:15; Zech 13:3), and the expression "to speak/ prophesy a lie in my/his name" (Jer 27:15; 29:9, 21, 23; Zech 13:3). Again the LXX provides another link. In Jer 35:1 LXX (28:1 MT) Jeremiah's opponent Hananiah is referred to as a ψευδοπροφήτης ("false prophet"), as are his prophetic opponents in 36:1, 8 LXX (29:1, 8 MT). In Zech 13:2 LXX the same term is used for those it wants to discredit.

Prophets and Prophecy in Zech 13:2-6

Zech 13:2-6 are part of a large section of the book, chs. 12–14, which originate in the late Persian or early Hellenistic periods.[18] Zech 13:2-6 are part of a large major section of the book, chs. 12–14, which together with the previous section (chs. 9–11) is introduced by משא: "An oracle (משא), the word of the Lord". Within chs. 12–14 scholars have divided the material in various ways, but 13:2-6 can be considered as constituting a unit in itself.[19] Vv. 2-6 further divide into vv. 2-3 and 4-6, both of which begin with "on that day" and deal with similar topics, but from different perspectives.[20]

Vv. 2-3 begin with "on that day", an introduction frequent in Zechariah, and refer to the removal from the land of three things: "the names of the idols", "the prophets" and "the unclean spirit". The words "idols" (עצבים) and "unclean" (טמאה) have a cultic background, so that v. 2 links the removal from the land of the prophets to a cultic context. It also refers back to Hos 2:18-19, according to which YHWH will remove "the names of the Baals". Both Zech 13:2 and Hos 2:19 also have the expression "so that they shall be remembered no more". The theme of the removal of the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land links back to

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[17]משא is translated as ὅρασις ("vision") in Isa 13:1; 19:1; 30:6; as ῥῆμα ("word") in 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; as τὸ ὅραμα ("vision") in 21:1, 11; 23:1. In Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1 and Mal 1:1, the LXX has λῆμμα for the MT's משא (also in Lam 2:14).

[18]So, K. J. A. Larkin, *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah: A Study of a Mantological Wisdom Anthology* (CBET 6; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994) 45. For the fifth century BCE as the background for Zechariah 9–14, see Hanson, *Dawn*, 280-401; C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14* (AB 25C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1993) 22-29; P. L. Redditt, "Nehemiah's First Mission and the Date of Zechariah 9–14," *CBQ* 56 (1994) 664-78; D. L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995) 3-6.

[19]So, ibid., 125-27.

[20]Ibid., 125.

Ezekiel 14.[21] According to Zech 13:2 then, the prophets are associated with uncleanness related to the worship of idols.[22]

V. 3 describes the fate of someone who acts as a נביא . He is to be disowned and killed by his parents. Here we have an allusion to two texts in the book of Deuteronomy: the fate of the נביא who leads the people astray (Deut 13:9-13), and that of the rebellious son (Deut 21:18-21).[23] Both are to be executed by stoning for their wrongdoings. In Deut 13:9-13 death is the fate only of a נביא who leads others astray, but in Zech 13:2 it becomes the fate of anyone at all who prophesies. Even the claim to be a נביא is now equated with lying in the name of YHWH. Unlike the situation envisaged in Deut 21:18-21, there is no suggestion in Zech 13:2-3 of a trial or any judicial process.[24] According to vv. 2-3 anyone who claims to be a נביא is regarded as guilty of uncleanness, worshipping idols, and lying.

The polemic is developed further in vv. 4-6, but from a different perspective. Where death is the fate of the נביא in vv. 2-3, a less drastic outcome is contained in vv. 4-6. Where vv. 2-3 speak about the possible appearance of people claiming to be prophets, vv. 4-6 presume that this has already happened.[25] According to v. 4 at some undefined point in the future ("and on that day"), these prophets will be ashamed of their activity, and will accordingly lay aside the "hairy mantle", symbol both of prophetic office and of its inherently deceitful nature. The reference to the shaming of the prophets goes back to the denunciation of the prophets in Mic 3:5-7 for accepting bribes, and tailoring their message to suit their hearers.[26] As punishment YHWH will not privilege them with any further prophetic revelations.[27]

The reference in Zech 13:4 to the "hairy mantle" has two aspects to it. The first is the mantle which was worn by Elijah and passed on to Elisha,

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[21]Larkin, *Eschatology*, 170-71.

[22]N. H. F. Tai, *Prophetie als Schriftauslegung in Sacharja 9–14: traditions- und kompositionsgeschichtliche Studien* (Calwer Theologische Monographien 17; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1996) 209, 212.

[23]Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, 126; Larkin, *Eschatology*, 171.

[24]For further on the denigration of anyone claiming to be a prophet, see Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, 126. An interesting observation about the manner of death prescribed in Zech 13:3 is made by J. G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (TOTC; London: Tyndale, 1972) 196. She notes how the form of death in Zech 13:3 differs from that prescribed in Deuteronomy both for the rebellious son and the prophet who leads the people astray. Deut 13:9-13 and 21:18-21 both prescribe stoning, whereas Zech 13:3 calls for the parents to stab their prophet-son (דקר). The use of the same verb in 12:10 and the mourning that accompanies the death of the one who is pierced leads Baldwin to ask "whether the 'witch hunt' has overstepped the mark, and wiped out the true with the false" (ibid.).

[25]Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, 124-25.

[26]Ibid., 127; Tai, *Prophetie*, 213-14.

[27]H. W. Wolff, *Micah: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990) 102-4.

and which represents the office of the נביא.[28] The second aspect concerns the use elsewhere in the OT of the expression. It occurs only in Gen 25:25, which refers to the birth of Esau, and the description of his body as being like "a hairy mantle". The presence of the expression in Zech 13:4 refers back to the figure of Esau and Jacob's deception of Jacob: "He did not recognize him because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands" (Gen 27:23).[29] As in Zech 13:2-3 then, the mantle and therefore prophecy itself is linked to an act of deception.

Zech 13:5 is about the repudiation by the נביא of his calling: "I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the soil". The allusion here is to Amos 7:14: "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I am a herdsman".[30] According to 7:14 Amos distances himself from membership of an official prophetic group at the Bethel temple. He is thereby free from any royal pressure to deliver acceptable oracles.[31] On the one hand, according to the book of Amos, he repudiates the designation "prophet" (נביא); on the other hand he still prophesies (נבא—3:8; 7:15). However in Zech 13:2-6, both the prophet (נביא) and the act of prophesying (נבא) are denounced. In Zech 13:5 the speaker, someone who once acted as a prophet, now repudiates that role and calls himself simply a worker of the soil.[32] The figure of Amos now becomes an exemplar who repudiates not just the designation נביא but prophecy itself.

The final part of the polemic is in v. 6. Here the sometime prophet is said to have wounds on his back.[33] When asked about their origin, he explains that they are "the wounds I received in the house of my friends". The expression links Zech 13:2-6 back to Jer 30:14, where it refers to the punishment inflicted by YHWH for Baal worship.[34] According to Zech 13:6 the one-time נביא bears the marks of YHWH's punishment for his involvement with other deities. Allusions to the cult, with which the unit began, now reappear at its end.

In Zech 13:2-6 the activity of prophecy is identified with the worship of idols, the pollution of the land, and deceit. The fate of the נביא is represented in two ways. According to vv. 2-3 he must die. In vv. 4-6 he must

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[28]Tai, *Prophetie*, 214-15.

[29]Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, 127.

[30]Ibid.

[31]For this opinion, see F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Amos* (AB 24A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1989) 789-90. For a similar view, and for a review of the various interpretations of this verse, see S. M. Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991) 243-48.

[32]Perhaps this is an allusion to the Genesis creation account in which the first human being is described in this way (Gen 2:5; 3:23).

[33]For the translation of בין ידיך as "between your shoulders" or "on your back", see Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14*, 382-83.

[34]Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14*, 127.

repudiate any claim to be a נביא and accept YHWH's punishment. The assault seems to be more than just a denunciation of unnamed prophetic opponents, but rather a polemic against the institution of prophecy itself as it existed at that time. There is an attack against both the activity of prophecy (designated by the verb נבא), and the practitioners of prophecy (designated by the noun נביא). So, in v. 2 the emphasis is on the practitioners (נביאם—"the prophets"); in v. 3 on someone who engages in the activity (נבא); in v.4 both the practitioners (נביאם) and the activity (נבא). In v.4 the garment of the prophetic office, the mantle, is equated with the act of deception, while in v. 5 the prophet repudiates the office.

Zech 13:2-6 represents one voice in a second temple period debate about prophecy. As an intertextual collage, which draws on the prophetic books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and Hosea, it is an attack on certain figures who proclaim themselves to be prophets and who act within the setting of the official cult. The incorporation of Zech 13:2-6 into the larger context of the book means it now belongs to a tradition which sees valid prophets and prophecy as belonging only to the past. Contemporary practices related to prophecy in 10:1-3 are condemned, while the pronouncements and activity of "the former prophets" are regarded with approval (1:4, 6; 7:7, 12; 8:9). Furthermore it is also possible that Zechariah ben Iddo himself, the figure around whom the book is constructed, may not have been a נביא.[35] Any prophetic activity in the present cannot be trusted, but must be rejected out of hand.

MTJer IN THE LIGHT OF ZECH 13:2-6

In light of the above interpretation of Zech 13:2-6 it is time to return to MTJer and reflect further about the factors which may have influenced its final form. Is it possible to propose any hypothesis which would explain the MT's intensified emphasis on the figure of Jeremiah precisely as a נביא? To answer this we first need to examine the points of intersection between Zech 13:2-6 and MTJer and their significance.

The first point of intersection is the presence of the word משא. Zech 13:2-6 belongs to a larger context whose major sections begin with the expression משא (9:1; 12:1; also Mal 1:1). However, this perfectly acceptable and legitimate term for divine revelation in Zechariah is not to be countenanced according to Jer 23:33-40, where it is associated with those

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[35]It is significant to note that the only uses of the verb נבא in the whole book are found in 13:2-6. For the suggestion that Zechariah himself is not represented in the book as a prophet, but that the word נביא in 1:1 and 1:7 refers to his ancestor Iddo, see E. W. Conrad, *Zechariah* (Readings: A New Biblical Commentary; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 46.

who want to mock the prophetic message. The passage begins with a play on the meaning of מַשָּׂא ("oracle", "burden"):[36]

> When this people, or a prophet, or a priest asks you,
> "What is the burden (מַשָּׂא) of the Lord?"
> you shall say to them, "You are the burden (מַשָּׂא),
> and I will cast you off, says the Lord" (23:33)

The context of vv. 33-40 is the conflict between Jeremiah and his opponents who prophesy a future of peace and security (esp. vv. 16-17). The word מַשָּׂא, around which the passage is constructed, refers to prophecies of doom which Jeremiah had uttered. Wanting rather to hear predictions about a peaceful secure future, Jeremiah's opponents taunt him. They ask for a מַשָּׂא but in a satirical way. As McKane phrases their question, "What is your latest doom-laden word-play from Yahweh?"[37] Vv. 33-40 condemns those who want to mock the prophetic word in this way. The function of 23:33-40 in the book then is to vindicate Jeremiah and his prophecies of doom against the optimistic predictions of his opponents.[38] What is an unexceptional and quite acceptable term in Zechariah 9–14 is viewed in MTJer as an expression of contempt for the prophet and his oracles.

The Jeremian attitude reflected here is quite distinctive, because מַשָּׂא is commonly found in superscriptions in post-exilic prophetic literature, and has become almost synonymous with the formulaic expression "the word of the Lord".[39] If one accepts that Jer 23:33-40 is a post-exilic composition, as Petersen and others do, then the differences between the Jeremian tradition and that found in Zechariah 9–14 are even sharper.[40] At a time when מַשָּׂא was used to describe the contents of a number of second temple prophetic books, the Jeremiah tradition regards it as a completely unacceptable term.

[36]Reading המשא אתם with BHS for the MT's את־מה־משא, following Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 475; W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1. A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1–25* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 647; McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1.597, 599; Overholt, *Falsehood*, 69; W. Rudolph, *Jeremia* (HAT 12; Tübingen: Mohr [3rd ed.], 1968) 154.

[37]McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1.599 The frequent use of משא in Isaiah's oracles against the nations (e.g., 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 19:1; 21:11, 13; 23:1) also suggests that the word often refers to prophetic pronouncements which have a positive outcome for Israel. See also Overholt, *Falsehood*, 70.

[38]As proposed by McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1:603-4.

[39]Wildberger, *Isaiah 13–27*, 12. See also Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14*, 467.

[40]On vv. 33-40 as a post-exilic composition, see McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1.603-4; W. Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1–25* (WMANT 41; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973) 253. Holladay accepts v. 33 as coming from Jeremiah, and vv. 34-40 from the late sixth or early fifth century (*Jeremiah 1*, 649).

The second point of intersection between Zech 13:2-6 and MTJer is the word נביא. In the light of the polemic against prophets and prophecy in Zech 13:2-6, what are we to make of MTJer's intensified emphasis on the figure of Jeremiah and his role as a נביא? As with the different understandings of משא, we find that both traditions have a different understanding of the place of prophets and prophecy. According to Petersen Zech 13:2-6 is "a devastating polemic against everything prophetic".[41] It is the work of a group of "prophetic traditionists" who were "confronted with some other group who claimed to be prophets".[42] For Blenkinsopp, Zech 13:2-6 reflects a situation in which prophecy has become perverted and the נביא himself "a purveyor of falsity".[43] In MTJer however, the accusations of speaking lies are levelled only at Jeremiah's opponents, and prophecy itself is never *ipso facto* equated with lying or deceit.

Where the traditionists in Zech 13:2-6 launch an attack on anyone who prophesies or claims to be a נביא, the redactors of MTJer have taken quite a different stance. They have put a heightened emphasis on the figure of Jeremiah and also more sharply identified him as a נביא. In the face of such an attack on the figure of the נביא, how better to counter it than to represent a figure such as Jeremiah as a נביא, and to present prophecy and prophets (including Jeremiah's opponents) as a normal part of the life of the community. Jeremiah is obviously the authentic נביא, but even his opponents are also similarly designated.

It is also interesting to note that the hero of the Jeremiah tradition is put on trial and his life is under threat because he engages in prophetic behaviour (ch. 26 MT; 38:1-6). Furthermore, the so-called confessions (chs. 11–20) show that rejection and the threat of death are part of the fate of the נביא (e.g., 11:18-23; 18:19-23; 20:1-13). In the Jeremiah tradition we see the realization of the threat found in Zech 13:2-3, where rejection and death can be the fate of anyone who claims to be a נביא or engages in prophetic activity (נבא). The redactors of MTJer in their conflict with other groups about the place of prophets and prophecy in the life of the community, have produced a response quite different from that found in Zech 13:2-6.

Another aspect of MTJer's different view on the place of prophets and prophecy can be seen in how it portrays the figure of Baruch. In LXXJer Baruch has a special prominence as the carrier of the tradition, but in MTJer this is not the case. MTJer's different placement of the commissioning of Baruch (ch. 45; LXX 51:31-35) and its description of the role of Jeremiah in ch. 36 (LXX 43) serve to emphasize the figure of the נביא at the expense of the figure of the ספר ("scribe"). If we accept that in

[41]Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy*, 36.
[42]Ibid., 38.
[43]Blenkinsopp, *History*, 234-35.

second temple Judaism there was a shift away from prophecy as oral communication to prophecy as something written and preserved from the past, then MTJer presents us with an intriguing twist.[44] Itself a written text, MTJer is the product of redactors who downplay the role of Baruch the writer and elevate that of Jeremiah the proclaimer! If the polemic against prophets in Zech 13:2-6 reflects a respect for prophecy as something which is valid in written form only, then we have another significant difference between the two traditions. In its elevation of the place of the נביא and its downplaying of the role of the ספר, MTJer appears as something of a loose cannon as it defends the place of the נביא which it perceives to be under threat.[45]

So, MTJer makes its own distinctive contribution in the conflicts over prophets and prophecy in second temple Judaism. As the product of the late Persian or early Greek period, it displays a more tolerant view of the place of prophets in the life of the community. Unlike the view put forward in Zech 13:2-6, it sees prophets as part of the community's landscape to such a degree that MTJer uses the same term, נביא, to designate both its hero and its villains. In comparison to LXXJer it has a heightened emphasis on the role of Jeremiah at the expense of Baruch, and clearly (and repetitively) identifies the former as a נביא. It has a particular view about the significance of the term משא, an acceptable expression in other post-exilic prophetic circles, but for MTJer a word which connotes contempt and derision for the נביא and his message.

What I have suggested in this article is a further indication that early second temple Judaism was no monolithic reality. In regard to the place of prophets and prophecy, it is clear that there were differing and conflicting points of view. As these issues are further studied, I suggest that it is necessary to include MTJer in such research, and to give fuller recognition to the influence of the early second temple period in the book's composition and development.

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[44]On the shift from oral to written prophecy, see e.g., J. Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel After the Exile* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986) 110-16; E. F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy* (JSOTSup 78; Sheffield: Almond, 1989) 133-40; R. A. Mason, "The Prophets of the Restoration," *Israel's Prophetic Tradition* (eds. R. J. Coggins, A. C. Phillips and M. A. Knibb; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 142; Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14*, 28-29.

[45]In regard to Zech 13:2-6, Meyers and Meyers suggest that the passage may point to a change in the role of intermediaries, and which is also reflected in the designation of Malachi as a messenger rather than a prophet. In this new environment written prophetic material "provided an alternative way to sustain prophecy without sustaining prophets" (Ibid., 403).