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Short Paper

The Portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon in Jer 27 MT and 34 LXX

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The present paper on the portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon in Jer 27 MT and 34 LXX has three parts: In the first part, the doctoral project which forms the background of this paper will be presented in general (cf. 1.). The second part is the main section of this paper and contains the analysis of Jer 27 MT and 34 LXX respectively (cf. 2.). Finally, the paper ends with a short summary (cf. 3.).[1]

Besides comments on my analysis of the literary development of Jer 27 MT with regard to reflecting on Babylon I would especially welcome discussion of my dealing with the two text forms of the book of Jeremiah (combination of textual and literary history).

1. Introduction to the Doctoral Project

The beginning of the Jeremiah tradition is marked by a historical crisis: the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (598/7 and 587/6 BCE) followed by deportations of Judeans to Babylonia. The book of Jeremiah reflects on those events and attempts to interpret them theologically. This includes a reflection on the historical figure of Babylon. Consequently, thinking about Babylon became an integral part of the book of Jeremiah.[2] This is valid both diachronically and synchronically: On the one hand, phrases mentioning Babylon are already found among the oldest parts of the book of Jeremiah, namely in the texts warning about a

[1] The bibliographic references in the footnotes of this paper follow the scheme "author's surname: short title, page number". A full bibliography is given at the end of this paper.

[2] For an overview on Babylon in the book of Jeremiah cf. KRATZ: Babylon, 30-35, and THELLE: Babylon, 187-232.

nameless enemy from the north (Jer 4:5-6:26). On the other hand, the figure of Babylon is also a recurrent theme in the final form of the book of Jeremiah.[3] Unlike in other biblical books,[4] however, the portrayal of Babylon and its king Nebuchadnezzar II. (605-562 BCE) is ambiguous in the book of Jeremiah. On the one hand, the historical figure of Babylon is presented as an evil and aggressive power (especially in Jer 37-44 and 52), whose king is characterized as an insatiable monster (Jer 51:34). In addition, the country of Babylonia is said to be a place of no-return for the Judean deportees, the *golah* (Jer 20:4-6; 22:24-30 [especially v. 26). On the other hand, Babylon and especially her king are held in high esteem. Nebuchadnezzar is called "servant of Yahweh" thrice (Jer 25:9; 27:6; 43:10) and functions as his earthly representative.[5] Moreover, Babylonia becomes a place of new life for the *golah* (Jer 29:4-6), whereas Judah appears as a place of doom (Jer 29:13-19; cf. also Jer 24).

Starting from these observations, my own research focuses on the questions of how the reflections on Babylon and the *golah* developed and what functions they fulfilled within the book of Jeremiah. The core texts of my project are the passages on Babylon and the *golah* in Jer 20-29 MT as well as their Greek translation.[6] For, at least in my opinion, these chapters exemplarily contain all important aspects of the Jeremianic portrayal of Babylon and the Babylonian *golah*. Moreover, they are an important part of the book of Jeremiah in terms of textual history, literary development, structure and content.[7] The analysis of the texts on Babylon and the *golah* in Jer 20-29 MT is guided by three questions: First, how is their literary development to be reconstructed? Second, what can be said about the theological function and the historical setting of the Jeremianic portrayal of Babylon and the *golah*?

[3] The atmosphere of almost the whole first part of the book is dominated by the threat of an anonymous enemy from the North (cf. Jer 1-19). The narratives of the second part of the book, which are mostly set in the last decade of the kingdom of Judah (about 598/7 and 587/6 BCE), deal several times with the Babylonians and their king Nebuchadnezzar II. (605-562 BCE). At the end of the book – before the description of the second and final Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem (587/6 BCE; cf. Jer 52) – the destruction of the great enemy Babylon is announced (cf. Jer 50f.).

[4] For on overview on Babylon within the Hebrew Bible cf. BELLIS: Face, 65-73, as well as KRATZ: Babylon, 28-39, and KRATZ: Babylonbilder, 553-556.

[5] In a similar way, the Persian king Cyrus II (559-529 BCE) was honoured by Second Isaiah (cf. Isa 44:28: רֹעִי; 45:1: מְשִׁיחוֹ).

[6] In detail these are the following texts: Jer 20,1-6 MT / LXX; Jer 21,1-10 MT / LXX; Jer 22,24-30 MT / LXX; Jer 23,1-8 MT / 23,1-6 LXX (vv. 7f. lacks in JerLXX); Jer 24 MT / LXX; Jer 25,1-14(.26) / 25,1-13 LXX (v. 14 lacks in JerLXX); Jer 27,1-15; 28,1-17 MT / 34,1-12; 35,1-17 LXX; Jer 27,16-22 MT / 34,13-18 LXX; Jer 29 MT / 36 LXX.

[7] Concerning the text of the book of Jeremiah it should be noted that JerMT and JerLXX share the same structure until Jer 25,13; from this verse onwards, the structure differs due to the different position of the so-called Oracles against the Nations (Jer 46-51 MT / 25,14-31,44 LXX). Moreover, Jer 20-29 MT contains several units which possibly were originally independent (cf. Jer 27f.; 29 MT) and whose analysis may offer insights into the formation of the book of Jeremiah as whole. Finally, Jer 20-29 MT is the transition between the first half of the book (Jer 1-25 MT) and its second half (Jer 26-45 MT). In these chapters, the anonymous enemy from the North (cf. Jer 1:13-16; 4:1-6:30 MT) is identified with the Babylonians for the first time (cf. Jer 20:4 MT); at the same time, a new perspective of hope is foreshadowed (cf. especially Jer 29 MT).

Finally, how does the development of the reflections on Babylon fit into the formation of the book of Jeremiah as whole?

The methods applied in this investigation are those of the historical-critical exegesis.
In this regard, the question of how to correlate textual criticism as well as *Literar*- and *Redaktionskritik* represents a special problem.[8] This is due to the fact that the book of Jeremiah has come down to us in two different editions, namely the Masoretic text (JerMT) and the Septuagint version of the book of Jeremiah (JerLXX) which is about one seventh shorter than JerMT and shows a different structure.[9] Among scholars the differences between JerMT and JerLXX are explained in two contrary ways: First, JerMT is taken as the Hebrew *Vorlage* of JerLXX which is supposed to have been shortened or changed by the translator(s). In other words: JerMT is seen as the older text and JerLXX is to be derived from it.[10] Second, JerMT is *not* taken as the Hebrew *Vorlage* of JerLXX. Instead, JerMT and JerLXX are said to represent different local texts or different developmental stages of the book of Jeremiah.[11] As a consequence, textual differences between JerMT and JerLXX may be relevant for reconstructing the literary development of the book of Jeremiah.
In my research I follow the second option – as the majority of present scholars does – and take JerMT and JerLXX as two different developmental stages of the book of Jeremiah. As a preliminary rule, I assume that in many – if not most – instances JerLXX represents an older Hebrew text than JerMT.

[8] On the problem of connecting textual criticism as well as *Literar*- and *Redaktionskritik* cf. exemplarily STIPP: Textkritik, 143-159.

[9] In JerMT the so-called Oracles against the Nations are found at the end of the book (Jer 46-51 MT) whereas they are in the middle of the book in JerLXX (Jer 25:14-33:44 LXX). In addition, their structure is different. Finally, the pericope in which Yahweh makes the nations drinking a cup forms the end of the first part of JerMT (Jer 25:15-38). In JerLXX, however, it stands at the end of the oracles against the nations (Jer 32:1-24 LXX).

[10] This hypothesis was brought forward first by M.G.L. SPOHN (1824) und K.H. GRAF (1862) (cf. HUWYLER: Jeremia, 44f.). This position is held today by scholars such as S. SODERLUND and especially G. FISCHER, who wrote the latest German commentary on the book of Jeremiah.

[11] Though disputed among scholars, this hypothesis may be confirmed by the Jeremiah-fragments of Qumran (as an overview cf. LANGE: Handbuch, 297-324). Brought forward first by F.C. MOVERS (1837), A. SCHOLZ (1875) und A.W. STREANE (1896) (cf. HUWYLER: Völker, 45f.), this position is held today by scholars such as J.G. JANZEN, E. TOV, P.-M. BOGAERT, Y. GOLDMAN, W. MCKANE and H.-J. STIPP.

2. The Portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon in Jer 27 MT and Jer 34 LXX

The main part of this paper starts with some general remarks on Jer 27 MT dealing with its historical background as well as its structure and content (cf. 2.1). It is followed by a brief sketch of the portrayal of Babylon given in Jer 27 MT, which resulted from a synchronic reading of this text (cf. 2.2). Then, turning to a diachronic perspective, the literary development of this chapter and its Greek counterpart shall be analysed (cf. 2.3).

2.1 Historical Background, Structure and Content of Jer 27 MT

Despite the dating in v. 1, the reign of Zedekiah (598/7-587/6 BCE), the last king of Judah, provides the background for the events described in Jer 27 MT.[12] Zedekiah was made king by the Babylonians after their first conquest of Jerusalem in 598/7 BCE. A few years later, however, he failed to attend to his duties as a vassal of the Babylonians, because he may have hoped for a coalition with Egypt. Thus, the Babylonians came back to Judah in order to punish their renegade vassal. In 587/6 BCE they conquered Jerusalem for a second time and turned the kingdom of Judah into a Babylonian province.[13]

Jer 27 MT can be divided into three sections:[14] In the *first section* (vv. 1-11), there is the description of a symbolic act. Yahweh orders Jeremiah to make a yoke for himself and to send yokes to several foreign kings respectively (vv. 2f.). By this, the prophet shall order those kings to submit themselves to the Babylonians and warn against other prophets and their advice not to surrender (vv. 4-11).[15] The *second section* (vv. 12-15) contains a short message

[12] In Jer 27:1 MT the events of this chapter are dated to the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim (609/8-598/7 BCE), which is in contrast to the fact that in the following verses only Zedekiah is mentioned (Jer 27:3.12 MT). I will come back to this problem later on (cf. 2.3.1).

[13] Cf. ALBERTZ: Exilszeit, 52f., and BERLEJUNG: Geschichte, 120f.

[14] Jer 34 LXX has the same structure as Jer 27 MT. However, due to the fact that the Greek text of this chapter is shorter than the Hebrew text, the numbering of the verses is a bit different. Thus, the numbering in Jer 34 LXX is as follows: (1) vv. 1-9: symbolic act; (2) vv. 10-12: message to Zedekiah; (3) vv. 12-18: temple vessels.

[15] Accounts of symbolic acts are a genre in its own right within the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible. In general, such accounts have three parts: 1. Yahweh orders a prophet to perform a certain act. 2. The

of Jeremiah for Zedekiah. The Judean king is also ordered to submit himself to the Babylonians and not to listen to other prophets. Finally, the *third section* (vv. 16-22) deals with the vessels of the temple in Jerusalem. After the first conquest of Jerusalem parts of them were taken as booty to Babylonia, whereas the rest of them still remained in the city. The debated question is whether and, if so, when those temple vessels in Babylonia will be returned to Jerusalem.

Jer 27 MT and the following two chapters are closely connected and form a sort of unit.[16] Jer 28 MT, to which Jer 27 MT acts as a prelude, deals with a conflict between Jeremiah and another prophet named Hananiah, who is opposed to surrendering to the Babylonians. In Jer 29 MT one finds a letter of Jeremiah to those Judeans, who were deported to Babylonia after the first conquest of Jerusalem in 598/7 BCE.

2.2 The Portrayal of Babylon in Jer 27 MT

In Jer 27 MT, three points are considered concerning Babylon, namely the relationship between Yahweh and the Babylonians, the duration of the Babylonian reign, and the options of behaving towards the Babylonians.

The following presentation of these points is based on a synchronic reading of Jer 27 MT.

a) The Relationship between Yahweh and the Babylonians

In various texts of the Hebrew Bible Yahweh is said to use certain foreign nations such as the Assyrians (e.g. Isa 10:5) in order to punish Israel or Judah.[17] However, in the text under discussion the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar seem to be more than a simple instrument of punishment for Yahweh.[18] For there is obviously a special relationship between him and the Babylonians and their king respectively. This relationship is firstly marked by the fact, that Yahweh, the creator and sovereign over the world, appoints Nebuchadnezzar (and his

prophet performs the ordered act. 3. An explanation of the act is given. Sign acts are meant to illustrate the prophet's preaching; in addition, they hint at future events or shall bring them about (cf. KAISER: Grundriß, 23, as well as UTZSCHNEIDER / NITSCHE: Arbeitsbuch, 145-147). Next to Jer 27 MT, there are further accounts of sign acts in the book of Jeremiah, namely Jer 13:11; 16:1-9; 18:1-12; 19:1-11 and, finally, 32:6-15.

[16] For a list of linguistic or thematic links, e.g. the spelling of Nebuchadnezzar (נבוּבת‌אצר instead of the form נבוכד אצר which is more common in Jer [and Ez]) or the problem of false prophecy, cf. WANKE: Jeremia II, 244, and – more detailed – PLANT: Figs, 96-98. WANKE: Jeremia II, 247, lists also some differences between those texts.

[17] Cf. CARROLL: Jeremia, 532.

[18] Against LEMKE: "Nebuchadnezzar", 46f., and FENSHAM: Nebukadrezzar, 60f.

successors) his earthly representative and ruler of the created world (vv. 5-7).[19] Even more remarkable is the fact, that Yahweh calls Nebuchadnezzar his servant (עבד ; v. 6: נבוכדנאצר מלך בבל עבדי), which usually is an honorary title for great figures of Israelite history like Moses, Abraham or David.[20] Thus, it does not apply quite well to the conqueror and destructor of Jerusalem. Anyway, the intension of using this title here is to portray Nebuchadnezzar not as a follower but as a vassal of Yahweh.[21] Among the foreign kings mentioned in the Hebrew Bible only the Persian ruler Cyrus II (559-529 BCE) who conquered Babylon in 539 BCE is honoured in a similar way (cf. Isa 44:28; 45:1).

b) The Temporal Limitation of the Babylonian Reign

Yahweh limits the duration of the Babylonian reign to three generations ("Nebuchadnezzar – son – grandson") and decrees, that after this period the Babylonians themselves will have to serve other nations (v. 7; cf. also v. 22). Historically speaking, this is not entirely correct. For three kings were ruling between Nebuchadnezzar and the end of the Babylonian empire in 539 BCE, and only one of them belonged to Nebuchadnezzar's family.[22] However, the correct representation of historical developments may not have been the main interest of the text under discussion. More important are two other points: The text obviously aims at presenting Yahweh as the ruler over history. Similarly, the period of the Babylonian reign shall be integrated into a divine history, which is governed by Yahweh.[23] Comparable attempts may be found in Jer 25:11f.; 29:10 according to which the Babylonian reign will last for 70 years.[24]

[19] The presentation of Yahweh (creator and ruler) and Nebuchadrezzar (subordinate) is based upon several traditions, namely creation traditions from Gen 1f. where a human being is set over the whole creation (cf. HILL: Babylon, 134f., and SCHENKER: Metamorphose, 500-504) as well as Babylonian and Persian kingship ideology which claim that the respective king was endowed with power over the world by the head of the respective pantheon (for Babylon cf. LANG: Motiv, 236f., and VANDERHOOFT: Empire, 34-45; for Persia cf. SCHMID: Buchgestalten, 240).

[20] Cf. ThWAT V, 1001, as well as THAT II, 192f. (both articles list a lot of Biblical references). In the book of Jeremiah, not only Nebuchadnezzar but also David (Jer 33:21f.26 [only MT]) and Jacob (Jer 30:10 [only MT]; 46:27f.) are designated as servants of Yahweh

[21] Cf. ZEVIT: Use, 74-77, as well as SCHENKER: Metamorphose, 523-525, who argues similarly. Cf. also MCKANE: 'Nebuchadnezzar', 108. MCKANE hints at the portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel where Nebukadnezzar will be shown as a follower of Yahweh (cf. Dan 2:47; 3:28-4,3.34-37) and states then that "עבדי [in Jer 27:6 MT; C.H.] signals an attempt to portray Nebuchadnezzar as consciously subserving Yahweh's purposes" (108). In contrast, LEMKE: "Nebuchadnezzar", 46f., and FENSHAM: Nebukadrezzar, 60f., argue that there is no special relationship between Yahweh and Nebuchadnezzar but the latter is only an instrument in the hand of the former.

[22] Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BCE) was followed by his son Amel-Marduk (562-560 BCE). The line of Nebuchadnezzar broke up when Amel-Marduk was murdered by Neriglissar (560-556 BCE; probably his brother-in-law). After him Nabonidus (560-539 BCE) was the last Babylonian ruler. Cf. FISCHER: Jeremia II, 53f., as well as CARROLL: Jeremiah, 527f.

[23] Cf. WANKE: Jeremia II, 254.

[24] For the meaning of the 70 years cf. FISCHER: Jeremia I, 741f., und WANKE: Jeremia I, 226f.

c) Possible Modes of Conduct towards Babylon

The text in question presents two options of how to behave towards the Babylonians and their claim to power: Either the Judeans submit themselves voluntarily or they are subjugated forcibly by the Babylonians. In the former case, they will survive and remain in their own country as Babylonian subjects (vv. 11f.17). In the latter case, they will lose their lives (vv. 8.13) or will be deported and finally die in a foreign country (vv. 10.15). At the end of this passage, however, in the section on the temple vessels (vv. 16-22) one may get the impression that the clear-cut alternative of surviving in the own country or dying in a foreign country has been given up. For Yahweh announces there that he will return the temple vessels to Jerusalem one day (v. 22). This promise may hint at the opportunity for people to survive even in a foreign country and to return to Judah later.[25]

2.3 A Diachronic Analysis of Jer 27 MT and 34 LXX

As noted above, Jer 27 MT consists of three sections, namely vv. 1-11, vv. 12-15 and vv. 16-22. The major topics developed in these verses are the submission to the Babylonians, the warning against false prophets and the fate of the temple vessels (cf. 2.1). After the synchronic overview of Jer 27 MT (cf. 2.2) it shall now be investigated how these different topics were brought together and whether it is possible to reconstruct a literary development. In this respect, Jer 27 MT and Jer 34 LXX are treated separately first. Then the respective findings will be correlated.

2.3.1 Analysis of Jer 27 MT

I shall start my diachronic analysis with three observations on the coherence of Jer 27 MT, which can already be made during a first reading of this text and may hint at a literary growth of these verses. First, it is to be noted that the reference to Jehoiakim (v. 1) in the superscription contrasts the following verses mentioning Zedekiah twice (vv. 3.12). Second, the passage on the temple vessels (vv. 16-22) uses several phrases from the preceding verses, yet in terms of content it is only loosely connected to the preceding verses and rather opens a new section.

[25] For the temple vessels as a symbol of continuity with the past and for the combination of exile and restoration cf. ACKROYD: Temple, 176f.

Third, Jer 27 MT as a whole is marked by several stereotypical formulations.[26] In addition, some verses seem to quote each other.[27]

Starting from these observations, all the material, which in my view may not belong to the original core of Jer 27 MT, is to be sorted out. First, there is the superscription (v. 1). Among scholars it has been debated to replace simply Jehoiakim by Zedekiah. However, as there is no superscription in Jer 34 LXX it is more probable that v. 1 was added later, using the almost identical superscription in Jer 26:1 MT as a paradigm.[28] Second, due to their content vv. 16-22 are closer to Jer 28 MT than to Jer 27 MT. For Jer 28 MT deals with a prophet called Hananiah who announces an early return of the temple vessels from Babylon and attacks Jeremiah because of his differing prophecies (cf. especially Jer 28:1-4 MT). In this respect vv. 16-22 function as an anticipation of the following chapter or as a transition that may be younger than the context.[29] After singling out v. 1 and vv. 16-22, vv. 2-15 remain as an object for further analysis.

In Jer 27:2-15 MT three topics are developed, namely the urgent call to submit to the Babylonians in order to survive (vv. 8.11.12.13), the theological reflection on this submission and on the Babylonians (vv. 5-7[.11?[30]] and, finally, the warning to beware of false prophets (vv. 9f.14f.).

In terms of theology, vv. 5-7 are probably the most thoughtful verses of this chapter, as they deal with Yahweh's relation to the Babylonians. In addition, they draw heavily on other traditions such as the creation theology in Gen 2, Babylonian-Persian kingship ideology and also presumably Second Isaiah's view on Cyrus II.[31] Thus, vv. 5-7 are not likely to have been composed close to the nineties of the 6th century BCE. In contrast to these verses, at least the call to submit to the Babylonians – and perhaps also the warning against other prophets – is

[26] A sort of leitmotif of theses verses is the phrase עבד את־מלך־בבל which is variegated several times (vv. 6.7.8.9.11.12.13.14.17). In addition, there are three stereotyped formulations: 1. the triad of דבר, רעב and חרב (vv. 8.13); 2. the warning against other prophets, namely the prohibitive אל־תשמעו אל (vv. 9.14.16.17); 3. the phrase כי נבאים לכם [v. 16: המה] שקר הם (vv. 10.14.16).

[27] Cf. vv. 8 and 13, vv. 9 and 14f., vv. 12b and 17a as well as vv. 13a and 17b. Cf. also THIEL: Redaktion II, 6, as well as HUWYLER: Völker, 310.

[28] So, among others, MCKANE: Jeremiah II, 685, THIEL: Redaktion II, 6, as well as TOV: Notes, 321.

[29] So MCKANE: Jeremiah II, 696, and THIEL: Redaktion II, 8f. Furthermore, it is to be noted that vv. 16-22 are not a coherent text as vv. 19f. are probably a later expansion of these verses (cf. also TOV: Notes, 329f.).

[30] According to SCHMID: Buchgestalten, 240, this verse draws on the ideology of the Persian empire. In addition, he assumes that the verse contains the original explanatory word of the symbolic act but in his opinion it is impossible to reconstruct the original wording of this verse.

[31] For the relations to Gen 2 cf. HILL: Friend, 134f., and SCHENKER: Metamorphose, 500-504. Concerning the Babylonian and Persian kingship ideology for Babylon cf. LANG: Motiv, 236f., and VANDERHOOFT: Empire, 34-45; for Persia cf. SCHMID: Buchgestalten, 240.

more pragmatic and interlinked with a situation of threat. Therefore, I would like to argue that vv. 5-7 are younger than vv. 2-4.8-15 and presuppose the end of the exile.

Concerning vv. 2-4.8-15, one has to ask how the message to the foreign kings (vv. [2-4.]8-11) and the address to the Judean king Zedekiah (vv. 12-15) are connected. This also includes the question of whether the submission to the Babylonians (vv. [2-4.]8.11.12.13) and the warning against false prophets (vv. 9f.14f.) are separable or to be taken as a unit. Regarding the latter question, it is to be noted that the call to submit to the Babylonians can exist without the warning against false prophets but not vice versa.[32] In addition, the warning against false prophets is influenced by Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic phraseology. For example, the list of diviners in v. 9 may be based on similar material in Deut 18:10f. and the prohibitive אל־תשמעו אל in vv. 9.14 may recall the respective prohibitive in Deut 13:4.9; 18:15 (yet in Deuteronomy the prohibitives are in the singular).[33] For these reasons I tend towards the assumption that the warning against false prophets was added to the call to submit to Babylon.[34]

The former question on the relation between the message to the foreign kings (vv. [2-4.]8-11) and the address to Zedekiah (vv. 12-15) is more difficult.[35] The majority of scholars separates the message to the foreign kings from the address to Zedekiah, which they take as a later addition. According to them, the basis of Jer 27 MT is an account of a symbolic act followed by a message for the foreign kings, namely either vv. 2-4.11 or vv. 2-4.12b.[36] However, in my opinion none of these options is convincing so far. I think in the case of vv. 2-4.11 it is not possible to separate v. 11 from v. 8*, as they are counterparts, which complement each other. Thus, I would favour the second option (vv. 2-4.12). But if vv. 12-15* were a *Fortschreibung*

[32] In a similar way argues MCKANE: Jeremiah II, 701f.

[33] The classification of the triad of דבר, רעב and חרב (vv. 8.13), which in this form occurs mainly in the book of Jeremiah (Jer 14:12; 21:7.9; 24:10; 27:8.13; 32:24.36; 34:17; 38:2; 42:17.22; 44:13; Ez 6:11; 12:19), is controversial among scholars. For example, THIEL: Redaktion I, 18, takes it as a feature of D because of its frequent and nearly exclusive occurrence in the book of Jeremiah. In contrast to him, WEIPPERT: Reden, 191, concludes after a long analysis of the history of this motif (cf. 148-191) that the respective formulation is not Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic but Jeremianic in origin.
Furthermore, the phrase כי שקר הם [המה v. 16:] נבאים לכם, which occurs in Jer 27:10.14.16, is also to be found especially in the book of Jeremiah (20 times; cf. also 1Kgs 22:22f.; Isa 9:14; Zech 13:3) and may not of Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic origin.

[34] Cf. AEJMELAEUS: "Nebuchadnezzar", 7, MCKANE: Jeremiah II, 702, as well as SCHMID: Buchgestalten, 239f. One may also argue that after 587/6 BCE the political problem of choosing the right protecting power (Egypt or Babylon), which was of eminent importance during the last decades of the kingdom of Judah, has been transformed into the theological problem of false prophecy (cf. KRATZ: Propheten, 79f.).

[35] In my opinion, there are two main problems: The first concerns the historical context, in which one can imagine such a positive view on foreign kings; as far as I can see at the moment such notion would not have been possible in pre-exilic times. The second problem pertains to the observation that certain parts of these verses seem to quote each other and to the subsequent question of who is quoting whom here (cf. especially vv. 8 and 13 as well as vv. 9f. and 14f.).

[36] For vv. 2-4.11 cf. SCHMID: Buchgestalten, 239f., and THIEL: Redaktion II, 6f. and 10. Concerning vv. 2-4.12b cf. MCKANE: Jeremiah II, 696-699, as well as WANKE: Jeremia II, 247f.

of vv. 2-11*, I would not expect them to contain older material. Anyway, I will have to do more research on that. Yet, because of these doubts, I would like to suggest as a temporary compromise that the message for the foreign kings and the word to Zedekiah should be taken as a unit, which is also the basis of Jer 27 MT (vv. 2-4.8*.11-13).[37] In addition, if one is looking for an old ("authentic") core of this chapter, the best candidate – in my opinion – is not v. 11 but it would be v. 12b. Its pragmatic call to submit to the Babylonians could fit into the historical context of the nineties of the 6th century, which is also mirrored in the Lachish Ostraca.[38] However, up to now this is only a hypothesis.

In sum, according to the diachronic analysis presented above, there are four different literary layers in Jer 27 MT, which shall be given here in a relative chronology (for dating cf. 3.). The basis of Jer 27 MT is the account of a symbolic act of Jeremiah followed by the call to several foreign kings and Zedekiah to submit to the Babylonians in order to survive (vv. 2-4.8*.11-13). First, this basis was expanded by warnings against false prophets (vv. 9f.14f.). Then the passage on the temple vessels (vv. 16-22*) as well as the reflections on Yahweh and the Babylonians (vv. 5-7) were added. Furthermore, the chapter got a superscription.

2.3.2 Analysis of Jer 34 LXX

Jer 34 LXX and its Hebrew counterpart Jer 27 MT are among those texts, which show most differences between JerMT and JerLXX.[39] Nevertheless, both texts have the same tripartite structure and agree in the essential statements. Like in Jer 27 MT Yahweh endows Nebuchadnezzar with power over the created world (vv. 4f. LXX). Equally important is the alternative of submission to the Babylonians, which leads to survival in the own country (v. 9 LXX), and resistance against them, which causes destruction and death (v. 6.8[.12] LXX). Finally, the main parts of the passage on the temple vessels are also to be found in the Septuagint (v. 13-18 LXX).

Turning to the differences between Jer 27 MT and Jer 34 LXX, it has to be noted above all that Jer 34 LXX is significantly shorter than its Hebrew counterpart. The minus consists in single words, parts of verses or even whole verses.[40] For example, Jer 34 LXX does not have a superscription. Moreover, it lacks v. 7 MT, vv. 12bβ*.13.14a MT – probably due to homoio-

[37] Cf. also AEJMELAEUS: "Nebuchadnezzar", 2-5, who takes vv. 2-4.6*.8*.11-13 as the core of Jer 27 MT.

[38] For the Lachish ostraca cf. RENZ: Handbuch, 405-440.

[39] A comprehensive list of the differences between Jer 27 MT and 34 LXX is presented by TOV: Notes, as well as VAN DER KOOIJ: Jeremiah. Cf. also PLANT: Figs, 103-105.

[40] Cf. the overview given by PLANT: Figs, 103-105. Cf. also TOV: Notes.

teleuton[41] – and parts of vv. 16-22 MT. In the case of Babylon, there are three major differences: First, in the Septuagint Yahweh does not call Nebuchadnezzar his servant (עבד / δοῦλος; cf. v. 5 LXX and v. 6 MT). In v. 5 LXX, however, the phrase δουλεύειν αὐτῷ occurs instead or there is no equivalent at all. Second, as v. 7 MT is lacking a Greek equivalent, there is no temporal limitation of the Babylonian reign and no hint that the Babylonians themselves will experience servitude one day. Finally, the passage on the temple vessels (vv. 13-18 LXX) is less detailed than its Masoretic counterpart (cf. vv. 16-22 MT). In addition, it is only announced that the rest of the temple vessels left in Jerusalem will be brought to Babylon as booty (vv. 16-18 LXX), whereas the promise of their return (cf. v. 22 MT) is missing.

What is the significance of the three Babylon-related differences between JerMT and JerLXX and how may they be explained? To begin with the missing honorary title עבד / δοῦλος, the situation is somewhat complicated, because the most important textual witnesses of JerLXX differ from each other at this point. LXX^{BA} read δουλεύειν αὐτῷ (לעבדו) whereas LXX^{S}, which is followed by the Bohairic and Ethiopian versions, has no equivalent at all. In contrast, Origen's Hexapla reads τῷ δούλῳ μου and the Lucianic recension has τοῦ δουλοῦ μου.[42] As a consequence of this variety, scholars reach quite different conclusions when it comes to explain why Nebuchadnezzar was called servant of Yahweh. Some argue that the servant-title was already part of the *Vorlage* of JerLXX but may be deleted or changed in the course of the translation process.[43] According to others, the title is a later extension of JerMT or resulted from scribal errors (loss of the preposition ל because of haplography, confusion of ו / י).[44] At the moment, I tend towards the assumption that the title עבד is a later development within JerMT being an intentional addition rather than a mistake in the textual transmission. For I think that – in terms of its theological significance – this title is too deliberate for having originated by chance. In a similar way I would like to argue that the other Babylon-related differences between JerMT and JerLXX – namely the temporal limitation of the Babylonian reign in v. 7 MT and the plusses in vv. 16-22 MT – cannot be attributed to deletions by translators, but they are later additions to JerMT. For without this material Jer 34 LXX

[41] Cf. AEJMELAEUS: "Nebuchadnezzar", 10. In contrast, STIPP: Sondergut, 43f. and especially 63, argues that v. 13 MT is a later addition in JerMT, whereas v. 12.14 MT got lost in the course of the transmission of the text.

[42] Besides the apparatus of the *Göttinger Septuaginta* cf. also the overviews on the textual tradition given by MCKANE: Nebuchadnezzar, 99 and 100, as well as AEJMELAEUS: "Nebuchadnezzar", 14, and LEMKE: Nebuchadnezzar, 47f.

[43] Cf. SCHMID: Buchgestalten, 232f., VAN DER KOOIJ: Jeremiah, 64 (referring to Y. GOLDMAN), and ZEVIT: Use, 77.

[44] For the servant-title being a later extension of Jer 27 MT cf. SCHENKER: Metamorphose, 518f., and MCKANE: Jeremiah II, 700f., as well as MCKANE: Nebuchadnezzar, 99-101. For taking it as a mistake in the course of textual transmission cf. AEJMELAEUS,: "Nebuchadnezzar", 12-19, LEMKE: Nebuchadrezzar, 47f.50, and TOV: Notes, 323-325.

presents a situation which is marked solely by the fear of the overpowering Babylonians. The addition of v. 7 MT and of the hope for a return of the temple vessels (v. 22 MT) opens new perspectives: Even the reign of the mighty Babylonian kings such as Nebuchadnezzar is volatile and subject to Yahweh and his plans.[45]

2.3.3 Comparison of the Analyses of JerMT and JerLXX

As noted above, the longer text of Jer 27 MT and the shorter text of Jer 34 LXX have the same outline and agree in their basic statements (cf. 2.3.2). Acting on the assumption that by and large Jer 34 LXX represents an earlier stage of the book of Jeremiah (cf. 1.), this observation implies that the essential literary developments within the text under discussion were already finished by the time when the book of Jeremiah was translated into Greek. Besides the agreement in outline and basic statements Jer 27 MT shows several plusses in comparison with its Greek counterpart. The plusses of major relevance are found primarily in those verses, which have been attributed to the probably youngest parts of the chapter at hand (cf. 2.3.1), namely the superscription in v. 1, the verses dealing with the role of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors (vv. 5-7 MT), and the passage on the temple vessels (vv. 16-22 MT). This may confirm the diachronic analysis of Jer 27 MT presented above, which argued that the superscription (v. 1 MT) as well as the title עבד for Nebuchadnezzar (v. 6 MT) and the limitation of the Babylonian reign (v. 7 MT; cf. also v. 20-22* MT) belong to the latest additions of this text (cf. 2.3.1).

In terms of content, it is to be noted that Jer 34 LXX focuses primarily on the Babylonians as an actual threat, which Yahweh brings upon Judah and other nations. The reflection on Babylon and its king does not go beyond this point. In Jer 27 MT, however, the threat by the Babylonians was explained and put within a wider context. The decades of the Babylonian reign are now presented as part of a history guided by Yahweh. This theological view of history may be interpreted as a step towards the idea of succeeding superpowers that can be found later in apocalypticism.[46]

[45] Similarly argue MCKANE: Nebuchadnezzar, 102-104, AEJMELAEUS: "Nebuchadnezzar", 12f., and TOV: Notes, 325f. For a critical position cf. VAN DER KOOIJ: Jeremiah, 65f.

[46] Cf. also AEJMELAEUS: "Nebuchadnezzar", 12f.

3. Conclusions

The basis of Jer 27 MT is an account of a symbolic act by which several foreign kings and the Judean king Zedekiah were advised to submit themselves to the Babylonians in order to survive (vv. 2-4.8*11-13). This basic text does not belong to the oldest parts of the book of Jeremiah. Like the other accounts of symbolic acts (cf. Jer 13; 16; 18; 32 MT), it already presupposes the combination of laments (cf. especially Jer 4-10*) and accusations against a feminine figure (2.f.sg.).[47] In contrast to these earliest texts within the book of Jeremiah the accounts of symbolic acts understand the upcoming disaster as a work of Yahweh.[48] Therefore – and due to the fact that at least several nations are mentioned positively – the basis of Jer 27 MT should be dated into exilic times.[49] Although Jer 27 may look like an autobiographical account (cf. especially 1.c.sg.), it is to be doubted that the chapter mirrors a scene of the life of the historical Jeremiah. At most the pragmatic call to submit to the Babylonians in order to survive (cf. v. 12b MT) may be a sort of authentic core of this passage.

Starting from vv. 2-4.8*.11-13 with the pragmatic call to surrender the chapter was further developed by adding verses on the problem of false prophecy (cf. vv. 9f.14f. MT) as well as reflections on the role of the Babylonians (cf. vv. 7-5 MT) and the fate of the temple vessels (cf. vv. 16-22). It was not before the end of the exile that the two latter additions were brought into the text. The literary development of the chapter as a whole may be described as a process of turning a pragmatic warning against an overpowering enemy into a theological interpretation of history. The Greek and the Hebrew version of this chapter mark stepping stones of this process.

Struggling with the end of the kingdom of Judah and its consequences, one of the major theological concerns of Jer 27 MT is to define the relationship between Yahweh and the Babylonians. This leads to the portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar as a vassal of Yahweh and to the characterization of the Babylonian reign as a sort of interlude of three generations within history controlled by Yahweh.

[47] Cf. KRATZ: Propheten, 78f., as well as SCHMID: Literaturgeschichte, 128-130.
[48] Cf. KRATZ: Propheten, 79. Similarly argues SCHMID: Literaturgeschichte, 130.
[49] Among others, cf. WANKE: Jeremia II, 247f.

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