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Summary

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

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Short Paper

In my paper, I investigate the portrayal of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BCE) and the Babylonians in Jer 27 MT / 34 LXX, whose background is the last decade of the kingdom of Judah (598/7-587/6 BCE).

Nebuchadnezzar is portrayed as Yahweh's vassal who is made the ruler of the world by the God of Israel. However, the Babylonian reign is said to be only a limited period within history controlled by Yahweh.

According to my analysis, the basis of this chapter is the account of a symbolic act (vv. 2-4. 8*11-13), by which the prophet Jeremiah orders several foreign kings and the Judean king Zedekiah to submit to the Babylonians. Later additions are the warnings against false prophets (vv. 9f.14f. MT) and reflections on the relation between Yahweh and the Babylonians (vv. 5-7 MT) as well as on the fate of the temple vessels (vv. 16-22 MT). Thus, the literary growth of this chapter, which began in exilic times, may be described as a process of turning a pragmatic warning against an overpowering enemy into a theological interpretation of history.

Doctoral Project

My doctoral project investigates the portrayal of Babylon and the Babylonian *golah* in the book of Jeremiah (both JerMT and JerLXX).

Reflecting on Babylon as the power that subjected the kingdom of Judah is an integral part of the Jeremiah tradition. Unlike in other biblical books, however, the portrayal of Babylon is ambiguous in the book of Jeremiah, i.e. Babylon is both a negative and a positive figure.

My 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 investigation are Jer 20-29 MT and their Greek translation. The analysis of the respective texts will be guided by three questions: First, how is their literary development to be reconstructed? Second, what may have been the theological function and the historical setting of those texts? Finally, which conclusions can be drawn from these analyses concerning the formation of the book of Jeremiah as a whole?

Texts of Jer 27 MT and Jer 34 LXX

N.N.: Differences between JerMT and JerLXX (plusses in JerMT; different formulations)
<u>N.N.</u>: Plusses in JerLXX
The verse number in brackets refers to the respective verse in JerLXX or JerMT.
"---" and "(---)" respectively means that the respective verse is lacking in JerLXX.

Jer 27 MT (BHS)	
1 (---)	***בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלֶכֶת יְהוֹיָקִם בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה*** ***הָיָה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה אֶל־יִרְמְיָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה לֵאמֹר:***
2 (1)	כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה **אֵלַי** עֲשֵׂה לְךָ מוֹסֵרוֹת וּמֹטוֹת וְנָתַתָּם עַל־צַוָּארֶךָ:
3 (2)	וְשִׁלַּחְתָּם אֶל־מֶלֶךְ אֱדוֹם וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ צֹר וְאֶל־מֶלֶךְ צִידוֹן בְּיַד מַלְאָכִים הַבָּאִים יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם אֶל־צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה:
4 (3)	וְצִוִּיתָ אֹתָם אֶל־אֲדֹנֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה **צְבָאוֹת** אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּה תֹאמְרוּ אֶל־אֲדֹנֵיכֶם:
5 (4)	אָנֹכִי עָשִׂיתִי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ **אֶת־הָאָדָם וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ** בְּכֹחִי הַגָּדוֹל וּבִזְרוֹעִי הַנְּטוּיָה וְנֹתַתִּיהָ לַאֲשֶׁר יָשַׁר בְּעֵינָי:
6 (5)	**וְעַתָּה** אֲנִכִי נָתַתִּי אֶת־**כָּל־הָאֲרָצוֹת הָאֵלֶּה** בְּיַד נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל **עַבְדִּי** וְגַם אֶת־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה **נָתַתִּי לוֹ** לְעָבְדוֹ:
7 (---)	***וְעָבְדוּ אֹתוֹ כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וְאֶת־בְּנוֹ וְאֶת־בֶּן־בְּנוֹ*** ***עַד בֹּא־עֵת אַרְצוֹ גַּם־הוּא וְעָבְדוּ בוֹ גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וּמְלָכִים גְּדֹלִים:***
8 (6)	**וְהָיָה** הַגּוֹי וְהַמַּמְלָכָה אֲשֶׁר **לֹא־יַעַבְדוּ אֹתוֹ אֶת־נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל** **וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר** לֹא־יִתֵּן אֶת־צַוָּארוֹ בְּעֹל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בַּחֶרֶב וּבָרָעָב **וּבַדֶּבֶר** אֶפְקֹד **עַל־הַגּוֹי הַהוּא** נְאֻם־יְהוָה עַד־**תַּמִּי אֹתָם** בְּיָדוֹ:
9 (7)	וְאַתֶּם אַל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־נְבִיאֵיכֶם וְאֶל־קֹסְמֵיכֶם וְאֶל־חֲלֹמֹתֵיכֶם וְאֶל־עֹנְנֵיכֶם וְאֶל־כַּשָּׁפֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־הֵם אֹמְרִים **אֲלֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר** לֹא תַעַבְדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל:
10 (8)	כִּי שֶׁקֶר הֵם נִבְּאִים לָכֶם לְמַעַן הַרְחִיק אֶתְכֶם מֵעַל אַדְמַתְכֶם **וְהִדַּחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם וַאֲבַדְתֶּם:**
11 (9)	וְהַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יָבִיא אֶת־צַוָּארוֹ בְּעֹל מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וַעֲבָדוֹ וְהִנַּחְתִּיו עַל־אַדְמָתוֹ **נְאֻם־יְהוָה** וְעִבְדָהּ וְיָשַׁב בָּהּ:
12 (10)	וְאֶל־צִדְקִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה דִּבַּרְתִּי כְּכָל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֵאמֹר הָבִיאוּ אֶת־צַוְּארֵיכֶם **בְּעֹל מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל** וְעִבְדוּ **אֹתוֹ וְעַמּוֹ וִחְיוּ:**
13 (---)	***לָמָּה תָמוּתוּ אַתָּה וְעַמְּךָ בַּחֶרֶב בָּרָעָב וּבַדָּבֶר*** ***כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲבֹד אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל:***
14 (11)	***וְאֶל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־דִּבְרֵי הַנְּבִיאִים הָאֹמְרִים אֲלֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר לֹא תַעַבְדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל*** כִּי שֶׁקֶר הֵם נִבְּאִים לָכֶם:
15 (12)	כִּי לֹא שְׁלַחְתִּים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְהֵם נִבְּאִים בִּשְׁמִי לַשָּׁקֶר לְמַעַן **הַדִּיחִי** אֶתְכֶם וַאֲבַדְתֶּם אַתֶּם וְהַנְּבִאִים הַנִּבְּאִים לָכֶם:
16 (13)	וְאֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה דִּבַּרְתִּי לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אַל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־דִּבְרֵי נְבִיאֵיכֶם הַנִּבְּאִים לָכֶם לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה כְלֵי בֵית־יְהוָה מוּשָׁבִים מִבָּבֶלָה **עַתָּה מְהֵרָה** כִּי שֶׁקֶר הֵמָּה נִבְּאִים לָכֶם:
17 (14)	***אַל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֲלֵיהֶם עִבְדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל וִחְיוּ*** ***לָמָּה תִּהְיֶה הָעִיר הַזֹּאת חָרְבָּה:***
18 (15)	וְאִם־נְבִאִים הֵם וְאִם־יֵשׁ דְּבַר־יְהוָה אִתָּם יִפְגְּעוּ־נָא **בַּיהוָה צְבָאוֹת לְבִלְתִּי־בֹאוּ הַכֵּלִים/ הַנּוֹתָרִים בְּבֵית־יְהוָה וּבֵית מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וּבִירוּשָׁלַ͏ִם בָּבֶלָה:** פ
19 (16)	כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה **צְבָאוֹת אֶל־הָעַמּוּדִים וְעַל־הַיָּם וְעַל־הַמְּכֹנוֹת** **וְעַל יֶתֶר הַכֵּלִים הַנּוֹתָרִים בָּעִיר הַזֹּאת:**
20 (17)	אֲשֶׁר לֹא־לָקַח **נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר** מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בְּגֹלוֹתוֹ אֶת־(יכוניה) [יְכָנְיָה] **בֶּן־יְהוֹיָקִים מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה** מִירוּשָׁלַ͏ִם **בָּבֶלָה** **וְאֶת כָּל־חֹרֵי יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלָ͏ִם:** ס
21 (---)	***כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*** ***עַל־הַכֵּלִים הַנּוֹתָרִים בֵּית יְהוָה וּבֵית מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלָ͏ִם:***
22 (18)	***בָּבֶלָה*** יוּבְאוּ **וְשָׁמָּה יִהְיוּ** ***עַד יוֹם פָּקְדִי אֹתָם*** נְאֻם־יְהוָה **וְהַעֲלִיתִים וַהֲשִׁיבֹתִים אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה:** פ

Jer 34 LXX (Göttinger Septuaginta)	
--- (1)	
1 (2)	οὕτως εἶπε κύριος ποίησον δεσμοὺς καὶ κλοιοὺς καὶ περίθου περὶ τὸν τράχηλόν σου
2 (3)	καὶ ἀποστελεῖς αὐτοὺς πρὸς βασιλέα Ιδουμαίας καὶ πρὸς βασιλέα Μωαβ καὶ πρὸς βασιλέα υἱῶν Αμμων καὶ πρὸς βασιλέα Τύρου καὶ πρὸς βασιλέα Σιδῶνος ἐν χερσὶν ἀγγέλων ***αὐτῶν*** τῶν ἐρχομένων ***εἰς ἀπάντησιν αὐτῶν*** εἰς Ιερουσαλημ πρὸς Σεδεκιαν βασιλέα Ιουδα
3 (4)	καὶ συντάξεις αὐτοῖς πρὸς τοὺς κυρίους αὐτῶν εἰπεῖν οὕτως εἶπεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ισραηλ οὕτως ἐρεῖτε πρὸς τοὺς κυρίους ὑμῶν
4 (5)	***ὅτι*** ἐγὼ ἐποίησα τὴν γῆν ἐν τῇ ἰσχύι μου τῇ μεγάλῃ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐπιχείρῳ μου τῷ ὑψηλῷ καὶ δώσω αὐτὴν ᾧ ἐὰν δόξῃ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς μου
5 (6)	ἔδωκα ***τὴν γῆν*** τῷ Ναβουχοδονοσορ βασιλεῖ Βαβυλῶνος ***δουλεύειν αὐτῷ*** καὶ τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτω
--- (7)	
6 (8)	καὶ τὸ ἔθνος καὶ ἡ βασιλεία ὅσοι ἐὰν μὴ ἐμβάλωσιν τὸν τράχηλον αὐτῶν ὑπὸ τὸν ζυγὸν βασιλέως Βαβυλῶνος ἐν μαχαίρᾳ καὶ ἐν λιμῷ ἐπισκέψομαι ***αὐτούς*** εἶπεν κύριος ἕως ***ἐκλίπωσιν*** ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ
7 (9)	καὶ ὑμεῖς μὴ ἀκούετε τῶν ψευδοπροφητῶν ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν μαντευομένων ὑμῖν καὶ τῶν ἐνυπνιαζομένων ὑμῖν καὶ τῶν οἰωνισμάτων ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν φαρμακῶν ὑμῶν τῶν λεγόντων οὐ μὴ ἐργάσησθε τῷ βασιλεῖ Βαβυλῶνος
8 (10)	ὅτι ψευδῆ αὐτοὶ προφητεύουσιν ὑμῖν πρὸς τὸ μακρῦναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ὑμῶν
9 (11)	καὶ τὸ ἔθνος ὃ ἐὰν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ τὸν ζυγὸν βασιλέως Βαβυλῶνος καὶ ἐργάσηται αὐτῷ καὶ καταλείψω αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐργᾶται αὐτῷ καὶ ἐνοικήσει ἐν αὐτῇ
10 (12)	καὶ πρὸς Σεδεκιαν βασιλέα Ιουδα ἐλάλησα κατὰ πάντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους λέγων εἰσαγάγετε τὸν τράχηλον ὑμῶν καὶ ἐργάσασθε ***τῷ βασιλεῖ Βαβυλῶνος***
--- (13)	
11 (14)	ὅτι ἄδικα αὐτοὶ προφητεύουσιν ὑμῖν
12 (15)	ὅτι οὐκ ἀπέστειλα αὐτούς φησὶ κύριος καὶ προφητεύουσιν τῷ ὀνόματί μου ἐπ᾽ ἀδίκῳ πρὸς ***τὸ ἀπολέσαι*** ὑμᾶς καὶ ἀπολεῖσθε ὑμεῖς καὶ οἱ προφῆται ***ὑμῶν*** οἱ προφητεύοντες ὑμῖν ***[ἐπ᾽ ἀδίκῳ] ψευδῆ***
13 (16)	ὑμῖν καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν ἐλάλησα λέγων οὕτως εἶπε κύριος μὴ ἀκούετε τῶν λόγων τῶν προφητῶν τῶν προφητευόντων ὑμῖν λεγόντων ἰδοὺ σκεύη οἴκου κυρίου ἐπιστρέφει ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος ὅτι ἄδικα αὐτοὶ προφητεύουσιν ὑμῖν
14 (17)	***οὐκ ἀπέστειλα αὐτούς***
15 (18)	εἰ προφῆταί εἰσι καὶ εἰ ἔστιν λόγος κυρίου ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀπαντησάτωσάν μοι
16 (19)	ὅτι οὕτως εἶπε κύριος καὶ τῶν ἐπιλοίπων σκευῶν
17 (20)	ὧν οὐκ ἔλαβεν βασιλεὺς Βαβυλῶνος ὅτε ἀπῴκισε τὸν Ιεχονιαν ἐξ Ιερουσαλημ
--- (21)	
18 (22)	εἰς Βαβυλῶνα εἰσελεύσεται λέγει κύριος

Translation of Jer 27 MT and Jer 34 LXX

Jer 27 MT (according to NRSV [1995])		Jer 34 LXX (according to NETS [2007])	
Symbolic Act			
1	*In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh:*		---
2	Thus Yahweh said *to me*: Make yourself a yoke of straps and bars, and put them on your neck.	Thus did the LORD say: Make bonds and collars, and put them around your neck	1
3	Send to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon by the hand of the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to King Zedekiah of Judah.	And you will send them to the king of Idumea and to the king of Moab and to the king of the sons of Ammon and to the king of Tyre and to the king of Sidon by the hands of *their* envoys who are coming *to meet them* in Ierousalem, to King Sedekias of Iouda.	2
4	Give them this charge for their masters: Thus says Yahweh *Zebaot*, the God of Israel: This is what you shall say to your masters:	And you will instruct them to say to their masters: Thus did the LORD, the God of Israel say: Thus you shall say to your masters:	3
5	It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, *with the people and animals that are on the earth*, and I give it to whomsoever I please.	Because it is I who by my great strength and my loft effort have made the earth, I will also give it to whom it may seem good in my eyes,	4
6	*Now* I have given *all these* lands into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, *my servant*, and *I have given* him even the wild animals of the field to serve him.	I have given the *earth* to King Nabouchodonosor of Babylon *to be subject to him*, and the wild animals of the field to *work* for him.	5
7	*All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson, until the time of his own land comes; then many nations and great kings shall make him their slave.*		---
8	But if any nation or kingdom will not *serve this king, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and* put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, then I will punish *that nation* with the sword, with famine, *and with pestilence*, says Yahweh, until I have completed their destruction by his hand.	And the nation and the kingdom, as many as do not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will visit them with dagger and with famine, *said the LORD*, until *they fail* in his hand.	6
9	You, therefore, must not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreams, your soothsayers, or your sorcerers, who are saying *to you*, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon.'	And you, do not keep heeding your *pseudo*-prophets and your diviners and your dreamers and your soothsayers and your sorcerers, when they say, "You shall not work for the king of Babylon,"	7
10	For they are prophesying a lie to you, with the result that you will be removed far from your *land*; *I will drive you out, and you will perish.*	because they are prophesying lies to you so as to distance you far from your *land*.	8
11	But any nation that will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will leave on its own *land*, *says Yahweh*, to till it and to live there.	And the nation that brings its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and works *for him*, I will also leave him on his own *land*, and it will work *for him* and will live in it.	9

Address to King Zedekiah			
12	I spoke to King Zedekiah of Judah in the same way: Bring your necks *under the yoke of the king of Babylon*, and serve *him and his people, and live*.	And I spoke to King Sedekias of Iouda according to all these words, saying: Bring your neck, and *work for the king of Babylon*,	10
13	*Why should you and your people die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, as Yahweh has spoken concerning any nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?*		---
14	*Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are telling you not to serve the king of Babylon*, for they are prophesying *a lie* to you.	because they are prophesying *wrong things* to you,	11
15	I have not sent them, says Yahweh, but they are prophesying falsely in my name with the result that I will drive you out and you will perish, you and the prophets who are prophesying to you.	because I did not send them, *quoth* the LORD, and they are prophesying *wrongly* in my name so as to destroy you, and you *will* perish, you and *your* prophets, who are *[wrongly]* prophesying lies to you.	12
On the Temple Vessels			
16	Then I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, Thus says Yahweh: Do not listen to the words of your prophets who are prophesying to you, saying, 'The vessels of Yahweh's house will *soon* be brought back from Babylon', for they are prophesying a lie to you.	I spoke *to you* and all this people and the priests, saying, Thus did the LORD say: Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you, saying, "Behold, the vessels of the LORD's house *are returning* from Babylon," because they are prophesying *wrong things* to you;	13
17	*Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city become a desolation?*	*I did not send them.*	14
18	If indeed they are prophets, and if the word of Yahweh is with them, then let them intercede with *Yahweh Zebaot, that the vessels left in the house of Yahweh, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem may not go to Babylon.*	If they are prophets and if there is a word of the LORD in them, let them counter *me*,	15
19	For thus says Yahweh *Zebaot* concerning *the pillars, the sea, the stands, and* the rest of the vessels *that are left in this city*,	because thus did the LORD say: *Even some* of the remaining vessels,	16
20	which King *Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon did not take away, when he took into exile from Jerusalem *to Babylon King* Jeconiah *son of Jehoiakim of Juda, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem.*	which the king of Babylon did not take when he *exiled* Iechonias from Jerusalem,	17
21	*Thus says Yahweh Zebaot, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels left in the house of Yahweh, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem:*		---
22	They shall be carried to Babylon, *and there they shall stay, until the day when I give attention to them, says* Yahweh. *Then I will bring them up and restore them to this place.*	Shall enter into Babylon, *says* the LORD.	18

Italics: Differences between JerMT and JerLXX (plusses in JerMT; different formulations).