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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?