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Second Kings 24–25 and Jeremiah 52 as Diverging and Converging Memories of the Babylonian Conquest

The accounts of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in Jeremiah 52 and 2 Kings 24:18–25:30 are virtually identical and seem to convey a unified memory of this historical event. However, a closer examination of the Hebrew and Greek texts reveals that these nearly identical accounts are the result of a longer process of textual changes. The unified memory on the surface conceals an underlying pluriformity of memories. A comparison between the account in 2 Kings 24:18–25:30 and the parallels in Jeremiah can thus serve as a case study on how the Babylonian conquest was construed as a cultural trauma in ancient Israel's collective memory.

Keywords: Jeremiah 52; 2 Kings 24–25; Cultural Trauma; Textual History

1. Introduction

The books of Kings are largely regarded as the most authoritative and reliable historical tradition in the Hebrew Bible. As is well known, this narrative of the past ends with the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem. Modern reconstructions of the history of ancient Judah generally follow the account in 2 Kings 24 and 25. These chapters narrate a first conquest of Jerusalem in the reign of Jehoiachin, resulting in the deportation of this king and parts of the population, and a second, more devastating conquest in the eleventh year of his successor Zedekiah, which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and to a severe decimation and deportation of the remaining population.

The sober style of this account, which in 2 Kings 25 is almost devoid of explicit theological commentary, should not hide the fact that we are dealing with a literary text which is the result of a process of memory creation. It is not the only possible way to narrate the dramatic events which took place at the beginning of the sixth century B.C.E., nor is it the most immediate reaction to the events. Rather, it is a carefully crafted, literary text that developed in multiple stages, as I will discuss in what follows.

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In the present article, I will read this narrative of the Babylonian conquest through the lens of cultural trauma.[1] Cultural trauma theory understands trauma as a cultural process through which an event that threatens a group's identity or its very existence is construed in the collective memory in such a way that it becomes foundational to the group's (revised) identity.[2] In this perspective, the focus does not lie on the event itself, but on the socially mediated attribution investing the event with traumatic significance within a group's collective memory.[3] In the words of Jeffrey Alexander, "[t]rauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity."[4]

Cultural trauma refers to the socio-cultural process which takes place between an event and its (socially accepted) representation. This process starts with individuals or groups promulgating claims about the character and shape of the past event.[5] According to Alexander, in order to establish a cultural trauma in a group's shared representation of the past, the claims have to address issues such as:

A. The nature of the pain. What actually happened to the particular group and to the wider collectivity of which it is a part? […]
B. The nature of the victim. What group of persons was affected by this traumatizing pain? Were they particular individuals or groups, or "the people" in general? […]

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1 See R. Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); J.C. Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (ed. J.C. Alexander *et al.*; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). This approach is rooted in social constructivism and should be distinguished from trauma theories regarding trauma as it affects individuals, such as psychological trauma. On the differences between individual trauma and the use of trauma concepts to describe a collective phenomenon, see A. Kühner, *Trauma und kollektives Gedächtnis* (Psyche und Gesellschaft; Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2008), 87–94. For a critique of the social constructivist approach to cultural trauma theory, advocating for a more psychological approach, cf. H. Joas, "Cultural Trauma? On the Most Recent Turn in Jeffrey Alexander's Cultural Sociology," *European Journal of Social Theory* 8 (2005): 365–374; W. Kansteiner and H. Weilnböck, "Against the Concept of Cultural Trauma (or How I Learned to Love the Suffering of Others without the Help of Psychotherapy)," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (ed. A. Erll and A. Nünning; Media and Cultural Memory 8; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 235–236.

2 Cf. Alexander, "Cultural Trauma," 1.

3 Cf. Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma*, 1: "As cultural process, trauma is mediated through various forms of representation and linked to the reformation of collective identity and the reworking of collective memory."

4 Alexander, "Cultural Trauma," 10.

5 Cf. ibid., 11.

C. Relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience. […] To what extent do the members of the audience for trauma representations experience an identity with the immediately victimized group? […]
D. Attribution of responsibility. […] Who actually injured the victim? Who caused the trauma?[6]

The social construction of a cultural trauma, which leads to the creation of a new master narrative of suffering, can take place only if the carrier group of the claim succeeds in including a wider audience in the traumatizing events.[7]

Although cultural trauma theory has been developed with modern phenomena in view, this approach seems fruitful for the study of biblical narratives.[8] The Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem is generally considered a major breakdown of meaning and identity in Judah's cultural history. It can be regarded as a cultural trauma in ancient Israel's collective memory[9] insofar as the reflection on this event and its aftermath led to a major reformulation of the group's identity and the shared representation of its past.[10] Moreover, the process-oriented approach of cultural trauma theory is well suited to studying biblical narratives as an evolving repository of Israel's cultural memory. The literary history of the account of the Babylonian conquest in 2 Kings 24–25 can serve as an example of such a process of memory construction. In the present article, I will focus on the narration of the events under king Zedekiah, for which we have parallel accounts in the book of Jeremiah. The accounts of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in Jeremiah 52 and 2 Kings 25 are virtually identical and seem to convey a unified memory of this historical event. However, as I will argue in what follows, these nearly identical texts are the result of a longer process of textual changes. The unified memory on the surface conceals an underlying pluriformity of memories. A comparison between the account in 2 Kings 25 and the parallels in Jeremiah can thus serve as a case study on how the Babylonian conquest was construed as a cultural trauma in ancient Israel's collective memory.

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6 Quoted from ibid., 13–15.

7 Cf. ibid., 12.

8 For an application of the cultural trauma approach to ancient Near Eastern texts, see J. Dietrich, "Cultural Traumata in the Ancient Near East," in *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions: Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond* (ed. E.-M. Becker *et al.*; Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 145–161. For biblical narratives of the Babylonian conquest, see also S. Ammann, "Oszillationen eines Traumas. Biblische Erzählungen der Eroberung Jerusalems," *ThZ* 74 (2018): 319–337.

9 I use the term "ancient Israel" to designate the groups who produced and transmitted the texts of the Hebrew Bible in antiquity.

10 Cf. R. Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (Studies in Biblical Literature 3; Leiden: Brill, 2004).

2. Redactional Approaches to 2 Kings 24–25

2.1. 2 Kings 24–25 as a Grown Text

The account of the second Babylonian conquest in 2 Kgs 24:18–25:30 is not a unified text but consists of several smaller sections with a distinct literary character.

2 Kgs 24:18–20	Annalistic framework and theological evaluation
2 Kgs 25:1–7	Capture of Jerusalem, Zedekiah's flight and punishment
2 Kgs 25: 8–12	Destruction of Jerusalem and deportations
2 Kgs 25:13–17	Pillage of the temple vessels
2 Kgs 25:18–21a	Execution of Judean officials
2 Kgs 25:21b	Concluding statement on the deportation
2 Kgs 25:22–26	Appointment of Gedaliah and his assassination
2 Kgs 25:27–30	Amnesty of Jehoiachin

Table 1: Literary units in 2 Kgs 24:18–25:30

While it is possible that the chapter is composed of various sources,[11] in its final form it is likely to be the result of a longer process of *Fortschreibung*.[12] For instance, it can be questioned whether the verses concerned with the plundering of the temple were originally part of the account. The temple vessels are dealt with in vv. 13–17, whereby vv. 16–17 might constitute a gloss adding further detail on the columns, since they have already been mentioned at the beginning of v. 13.[13] As for vv. 13–15, their account of the plundering of the temple seems out of place, since already v. 9 refers to the temple being burned.[14]

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11 Cf., for instance, the reconstructions proposed by J. Wöhrle, "Die Rehabilitierung Jojachins: Zur Entstehung und Intention von 2 Kön 24,17–25,30," in *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt* (ed. I. Kottsieper *et al.*; AOAT 350; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 213–238, here 228; M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien: I. Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963 [= 1943]), 86–87.

12 In addition to the verses discussed in the following, 2 Kgs 24:20a is often considered a secondary addition; see, e. g., W. Dietrich, Prophetie und Geschichte. Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk (FRLANT 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 29–30, 139–140; E. Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige, 1. Kön. 17–2. Kön. 25* (ATD 11,2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 474.

13 These verses are considered a secondary addition inspired by 1 Kgs 7:15–22 by Würthwein, *Bücher der Könige*, 478; V. Fritz, *Das zweite Buch der Könige* (ZBK.AT 10,2; Zürich: TVZ, 1998), 151.

14 Cf. Würthwein, *Bücher der Könige*, 478; on the temple vessels as a secondary addition, see also P. R. Ackroyd, "The Temple Vessels: A Continuity Theme [1972]," in idem,

In particular, there has been some debate on the original ending of the book of Kings. Many scholars consider the Gedaliah episode in 2 Kgs 25:22–26 and the account of the release of Jehoiachin in 2 Kgs 25:27–30 as secondary additions.[15] In its earlier form, the chapter would have ended with 2 Kgs 25:21: "And Judah went into exile from its land" (ויגל יהודה מעל אדמתו).[16] This sentence sets the events in parallel to the end of the northern kingdom in 2 Kgs 17:23: "And Israel went into exile from its land" (ויגל ישׂראל מעל אדמתו).[17] It is conspicuous that 2 Kgs 25:21b does not connect well with the preceding verses on the execution of Judean officials. The verse may well be a secondary addition that widens the scope of the narrative from Jerusalem to Judah as a whole,[18] with its placement after vv. 18–21a, rather than after the deportation notice in vv. 11–12, underlining its concluding function. These debates on the ending of the book of Kings have a bearing on the issue of its relationship to the book of Jeremiah in particular, since the Gedaliah episode in 2 Kgs 25:22–26 is generally considered a secondary addition based on Jeremiah 40–41.

2.2. Redaction Criticism of 2 Kings 25 in Light of the Parallels in Jeremiah

The close ties between Kings and Jeremiah have long been observed.[19] With regard to the account of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, there are several verbal parallels. The account of the second Babylonian conquest of

Studies in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament (London: SCM Press, 1987), 46–60, here 53; C. Levin, "The Empty Land in Kings," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 61–89, here 77–78.

15 Cf. K.-F. Pohlmann, "Erwägungen zum Schlusskapitel des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks: Oder: Warum wird der Prophet Jeremia in 2. Kön 22–25 nicht erwähnt?," in *Textgemäß* (ed. A. H. J Gunneweg and O. Kaiser; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 94–109, here 99–100 (on 2 Kgs 25:22–26); Dietrich, *Prophetie*, 140–141; O. Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah Under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 295–299; among others.

16 Some scholars go even further. Würthwein, *Bücher der Könige*, 475–476 sees the conclusion of the book of Kings in 2 Kgs 25:1–7 (with the deportation of the last king of Judah), arguing that the Neo-Babylonian dating in v. 8 indicates the beginning of a separate literary entity.

17 Cf. Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 9; Levin, "Empty Land," 81, among others.

18 On 2 Kgs 25:21b as a secondary addition, see Würthwein, *Bücher der Könige*, 478.

19 This is pointed out by F. M. Cross, "The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," in idem, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 274–291, here 286 n. 45: "The close ties between Jeremiah and the Deuteronomistic school, early and late, are well known, of course, as is the traditional attribution of the Books of Kings to Jeremiah himself (Talmud Babli, Baba Batra 15a)"; see also C. R. Seitz,

Jerusalem under Zedekiah in 2 Kgs 25:18–25:21, 27–30, including the subsequent destruction, pillage and deportations, has an almost word-for-word parallel in Jer 52:1–27, 31–34. Moreover, part of this same account has a further parallel in Jer 39:1–2, 4–10 (// 2 Kgs 25:1–12 // Jer 52:4–16). Finally, the account of the governor Gedaliah and his assassination in 2 Kgs 25:22–26 closely parallels several verses from the larger account in Jeremiah 40–41 (Jer 40:7–9 + Jer 41:1–3, cf., also, Jer 41:18; 42:7). The shorter account in 2 Kgs 25:22–26 most likely is an excerpt from Jeremiah, since it draws on passages which seem to belong to various redactional stages of Jeremiah and which are closely tied to their respective literary contexts there.[20]

The insertion of the Gedaliah episode shows that some stages of the redactional development in Kings may have been influenced by the book of Jeremiah. Christopher Seitz and more recently Jakob Wöhrle have argued that the entire chapter of 2 Kings 25 constitutes a secondary addition to the book of Kings, written on the basis of material from Jeremiah.[21] In their view, the book of Kings originally ended with chapter 24. Seitz points out that while the account of the second Babylonian conquest in 2 Kings 25 has close parallels in the Jeremiah traditions, there is much less correspondence between 2 Kings 24, which deals with the events under Jehoiachin, and the

Theology in Conflict: Reactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah (BZAW 176; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 164.

20 On the redaction history of the corresponding account in Jeremiah, see H.-J. Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit: Studien zur Textentwicklung von Jer 26, 36–43 und 45 als Beitrag zur Geschichte Jeremias, seines Buches und judäischer Parteien im 6. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a. M.: Hain, 1992), 182–188. K.-F. Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung des Jeremiabuches* (FRLANT 118; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 109–122, 134 argues that Jer 40:7–9 is based on its context in Jeremiah, correcting an older account in Jer 40:11 ff. His observations support the thesis that the account in Kings depends on Jeremiah (cf. also Pohlmann, "Erwägungen," 97). The majority of scholars assumes this direction of dependence; cf. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 87; W. Rudolph, *Jeremia* (3rd ed.; HAT 12; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1968), 249; Dietrich, *Prophetie*, 140–141; Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit*, 276; Seitz, *Theology*, 199; A. Jepsen, *Die Quellen des Königsbuches* (2nd ed.; Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1956), 26, among others. Some scholars assume a common source behind both texts, cf. S. Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia* (Kristiania: Dybwad, 1914), 29–30; Lipschits, *Fall*, 339–340. A minority defends the priority of the account in Jeremiah 40–41, cf. R. P. Carroll, *The Book of Jeremiah* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1986), 708; M. E. Biddle, "The Redaction of Jeremiah 39–41 [46–48 LXX]: A Prophetic Endorsement of Nehemiah?," *ZAW* 126 (2014): 228–242, here 229–230.

21 Cf. Seitz, *Theology,* 164–166; Wöhrle, "Rehabilitierung," 215–228. The idea of 2 Kings 25 being dependent on Jeremiah was put forward already by Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 87, who assumed that the Deuteronomistic Historian based large parts of his account of the Babylonian conquest in 2 Kings 25 on Jeremiah 39–41.

Jeremiah material.[22] Seitz and Wöhrle argue that 2 Kings 25 is a composite entity drawing on various sources, and that the direction of dependence from Jeremiah to Kings, which is generally assumed for 2 Kgs 25:22–26, should be assumed throughout the chapter. Thus, they argue that an earlier account consisting of 2 Kgs 24:1–(16)17, 20a has been supplemented by 2 Kgs 25:1–12 (based on Jer 39:[1–2,] 3–10) and 2 Kgs 25:22–26 (based on Jer 40:7–41:18).

Their redactional separation of 2 Kings 25 from 2 Kings 24 adds plausibility to the thesis that only chapter 25 draws on the book of Jeremiah and provides a basis for methodological control, since it allows for a comparison of the respective terminology of 2 Kings 24 and 2 Kings 25 with Jeremiah. In this respect, Wöhrle makes some interesting observations. For instance, he points out that the terminology used in chapter 25 for the Babylonians and the Judean soldiers, namely "Chaldeans" (כשׂדים) and "men of war" (אנשׁי המלחמה), differs from the terminology used in chapter 24, but corresponds to the terminology used in Jeremiah.[23] He further claims that while dates including the year *and month* of a particular event are very rare in the book of Kings outside chapter 25, they frequently occur in the book of Jeremiah.[24] Based on such observations, Wöhrle argues that it is more plausible that the text of 2 Kings 25 originated in the book of Jeremiah and was copied from there into the book of Kings. In order to assess these propositions, we have to turn now from the redaction history of Kings to the textual history of Jeremiah.

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22 Cf. Seitz, *Theology*, 164–166. He points out that parallel material is found only in Jer 27:20; 29:1–3; 37:1 (cf. 2 Kgs 24:10–17), which most commentators consider secondary additions based on Kings.

23 Cf. Wöhrle, "Rehabilitierung," 218–219, 225. The term כשׂדים is used in 2 Kgs 25:4, 5, 10, 13, 24, 25, 26. Outside of chapter 25, it occurs only once in the books of Kings (2 Kgs 24:2), where it does not clearly refer to the Babylonian army. The term is frequently used throughout the book of Jeremiah. The expression אנשׁי המלחמה is used in 2 Kgs 25:4, 19. In the book of Kings, it occurs only once more in 1 Kgs 9:22. In the book of Jeremiah, it is frequently attested (Jer 38:4; 39:4; 41:3 MT, 16; 49:26 MT; 50:30; 51:32; 52:7, 25). However, it should be noted that the Babylonian army is referred to in 2 Kings 24 only in vv. 10–11 (עבדי נבכדנאצר) and that the distribution of the terms כשׂדים and אנשׁי המלחמה could also indicate that they are used more frequently in later texts.

24 Cf. Wöhrle, "Rehabilitierung," 225–226. However, within the passage that Wöhrle considers to be a copy from Jeremiah, there is only one such dating (2 Kgs 25:1). Moreover, there is a greater variety of dating formulas both in Kings and in Jeremiah than what Wöhrle's interpretation of the data suggests (for an overview, see Seitz, *Theology*, 12–13).

2.3. The Textual Witness of the Greek Text of Jeremiah

As is well known, the Old Greek version of the book of Jeremiah attests a significantly shorter text as compared to the Masoretic text. While commentators until the mid-twentieth century commonly regarded the Greek text as being abbreviated by the Greek translators,[25] this has significantly changed in current research. Nowadays, there is broad agreement among scholars that the shorter Greek version generally represents an earlier Hebrew form of the text.[26] This has been shown, in particular, by the meticulous work of Hermann-Josef Stipp, who was able to demonstrate that the Masoretic pluses throughout the book of Jeremiah share linguistic peculiarities.[27] Moreover, these pluses are not related to any particular theological profile and therefore unlikely to have been omitted on purpose by a redactor or translator. The shorter Greek version of the book of Jeremiah is most likely based on an earlier Hebrew text, which I will call (with Stipp) the Alexandrian text.

With regard to Jeremiah 39 and 52, detailed analyses of the differences between the Greek and Hebrew texts and of the translation technique confirm the view that the shorter text attested in Greek reflects an earlier Hebrew *Vorlage* and that the Masoretic text of these chapters represents a later stage of their textual development.[28] This insight has implications for

25 E. g., Rudolph, *Jeremia*.

26 A reversal of the common view was brought about esp. by J. G. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (HSM 6; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), who analyzed the translation technique of the Greek translator, the character of the Masoretic pluses, and published evidence of a shorter Hebrew text of Jeremiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

27 Cf. H.-J. Stipp, *Das masoretische und alexandrinische Sondergut des Jeremiabuches. Textgeschichtlicher Rang, Eigenarten, Triebkräfte* (OBO 136; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1994).

28 Cf. P.-M. Bogaert, "Les trois formes de Jérémie 52 (TM, LXX, et VL)," in *Tradition of the Text* (ed. G. J. Norton and S. Pisano; OBO 109; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1991), 1–17; P.-M. Bogaert, "La *vetus latina* de Jérémie: texte très court, témoin de la plus ancienne Septante et d'une forme plus ancienne de l'hébreu (Jer 39 et 52)," in *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible: The Relationship Between the Masoretic Text and the Hebrew Base of the Septuagint Reconsidered* (ed. A. Schenker; SBLSCS 52; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 51–82; R. F. Person, "II Kings 24,18–25,30 and Jeremiah 52: A Text-Critical Case Study in the Redaction History of the Deuteronomistic History," *ZAW* 105 (1993): 174–205; R. F. Person, *The Kings – Isaiah and Kings – Jeremiah Recensions* (BZAW 252; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997); J. Smith, "Jeremiah 52: Thackeray and Beyond," *BIOSCS* 35 (2002): 55–96; H. de Waard, "Jeremiah 52 in the Context of the Book of Jeremiah" (VTSup 183; Leiden: Brill, 2020); Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit;* H.-J. Stipp, *Jeremia 25–52* (HAT I/12,2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019). The opposite view defended by G. Fischer, "Jeremia 52 – ein Schlüssel zum Jeremiabuch," *Bib* 79 (1998): 333–359 has been convincingly refuted by H. Engel, "Erfahrungen mit der Septuaginta-Fassung des Jeremiabuches im Rahmen des Projektes 'Septuaginta

the theses of Seitz and Wöhrle. As mentioned above, they argue that 2 Kgs 25:1–12 is based on the parallel text in Jer 39:1–10. However, this parallel text in Jeremiah 39 is likely a secondary addition in its present context.

[vv. 1–2 absent in Jer 39 OG]	Jer 39:3 OG	[vv. 4–13 absent in Jer 39 OG]	
Jer 39:1–2 MT	Jer 39:3 MT	Jer 39:4–10 MT	Jer 39:11–13 MT
// 2 Kgs 25:1–3	[no parallel in Kgs]	// 2 Kgs 25:4–12	[no parallel in Kgs]

Table 2: The Masoretic text of Jer 39:1–13 as compared to the Old Greek and the parallel text in Kings

Only v. 3, which does not have a parallel in Kings, seems to belong to the older stratum of the text in Jer 39:1–13:

(*38:28b And it happened when Jerusalem was taken*:) 39:3 All the officials of the king of Babylon entered and settled in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sarezer the *simmagir*,[29] Nebu-Sar-Sechim the *rab-saris*, Nergal-Sarezer, the *rab-mag*, and all the rest of the officials of the king of Babylon.

This verse names the Babylonian officials who have taken over the city. It connects directly to 38:28, which refers to the conquest of Jerusalem, and to the subsequent liberation of Jeremiah by the Babylonian officials in 39:14.[30] Verses 1–2 interrupt the chronological sequence, since they deal with the siege of Jerusalem prior to its fall. The *Wiederaufnahme* of v. 3 in v. 13, adding Nebuzaradan to the officials present at the capture of Jerusalem, suggests that the preceding verses have been incorporated from the parallel account in Jeremiah 52 (// 2 Kings 25):[31]

Jer 39:13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard and Nebushazban the *rab-saris* and Nergal-Sarezer the *rab-mag* and all the chief officers of the king of Babylon sent (*39:14aα and they sent and took Jeremiah out of the court of the guard*).

Deutsch,'" in *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta: Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der Griechischen Bibel,* Vol. 3 (ed. H.-J. Fabry and D. Böhler; BWANT 174; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007), 80–96.

29 Reconstructed text following W. von Soden, "Der neubabylonische Funktionär *simmagir* und der Feuertod des Šamaš-šum-ukīn," *ZA* 62 (1972): 84–90; M. Jursa, "Nabû-šarrussu-ukīn, *rab ša rēšti*, und 'Nebusarsekim' (Jer. 39:3)," *NABU* (2008): 9–10.

30 Cf. Pohlmann, *Studien*, 95; Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit*, 176–177; W. McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah: Vol. II: Commentary on Jeremiah XXVI–LII* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 982–983.

31 Cf. G. Wanke, *Untersuchungen zur sogenannten Baruchschrift* (BZAW 122; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971), 107; Pohlmann, *Studien*, 96. Distinctive parallels between Jeremiah 52 and Jeremiah 39 indicate that Jeremiah 39 is based on Jeremiah 52 rather than 2 Kings 25; cf. Lipschits, *Fall*, 336–337.

The evidence of the Greek text corroborates this reconstruction, since Jer 39:1–2 and 4–13 are absent in the Old Greek text of Jeremiah.[32] An accidental omission is highly unlikely given the literary-critical arguments for a secondary addition of these verses.[33]

In light of the evidence of the Greek text, it is therefore highly unlikely that 2 Kings 25 draws on Jeremiah 39, as argued by Noth, Seitz, and Wöhrle. This does not necessarily invalidate their observations regarding the close relationship between 2 Kings 25 and Jeremiah traditions. But instead of linking 2 Kings 25 with Jeremiah 39, we should take a closer look at Jeremiah 52.

There is a virtual consensus that Jeremiah 52 is based on 2 Kings 25 (and not the other way round).[34] In other words, the account originated and developed in the book of Kings and was copied into the book of Jeremiah at a later stage. In Jeremiah 52, the section that parallels 2 Kings 25 is already present in the shorter Greek text. Most likely, it was added to the book of Jeremiah before the insertion of Jer 39:1–2, 4–13.[35] The comparison between the Greek and the Hebrew texts of Jeremiah 52 shows that the Greek text attests a version of this chapter that is shorter than the Masoretic text by several verses, indicating that the chapter circulated in multiple versions and has undergone literary development.

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32 This is not generally acknowledged for vv. 1–2, but a convincing case for these verses lacking in the earlier manuscript tradition is made by Bogaert, "La Vetus Latina," 59–60.

33 An omission due to *homoioteleuton* is argued by Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 243; C. Hardmeier, *Prophetie im Streit vor dem Untergang Judas: Erzählkommunikative Studien zur Entstehungssituation der Jesaja- und Jeremiaerzählungen in II Reg 18–20 und Jer 37–40* (BZAW 187; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 187; Wöhrle, "Rehabilitierung," 224; but cf. Stipp, *Jeremia 25–52*, 514.

34 Cf. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 87 n. 1; Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 319; Dietrich, *Prophetie*, 140 n. 119; McKane, *Jeremiah II*, 171–172. The main reasons for this view are summarized by de Waard, "Jeremiah 52," 35: a) the regnal formula in Jer 52:1 // 2 Kgs 24:18 is typical of the book of Kings; b) while the account in Jeremiah 52 has a different literary character from the foregoing and appears as a separate entity, 2 Kings 25 seems more organically anchored within the structure of the book, as it can be read as a climactic continuation of 2 Kings 24; c) the list of temple vessels in 2 Kgs 25:13–17 // Jer 52:17–23 is based on 1 Kings 7 (and further supplemented in Jeremiah 52); d) the spelling of the name "Jehoiachin" in 2 Kgs 25:27–30 // Jer 52:31–34 is characteristic of the book of Kings. See also Stipp, *Jeremia 25–52*, 817; S. Timm, "Wird Nebukadnezar entlastet? Zu 2 Kön 24,18–25,21," in *"Sieben Augen auf einem Stein" (Sach 3,9): Studien zur Literatur des Zweiten Tempels* (ed. F. Hartenstein; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007), 360–362; Fischer, "Jeremia 52," 340.

35 Cf. also Lipschits, *Fall*, 336–337.

Jer OG	*Jer MT*	*// Kgs*	
Jer 52:1	Jer 52:1	2 Kgs 24:18	Regnal formula
—	Jer 52:2–3	2 Kgs 24:19–20	Negative evaluation of Zedekiah; theological commentary
Jer 52:4–9	Jer 52:4–9	2 Kgs 25:1–6	Capture of Jerusalem and Zedekiah's flight
Jer 52:10–11	Jer 52:10–11	[shorter text in 2 Kgs 25:7]	Execution of Judean officials and imprisonment of Zedekiah
Jer 52:12–14	Jer 52:12–14	2 Kgs 25:8–10	Destruction of Jerusalem
—	Jer 52:15	2 Kgs 25:11	Deportation of the rest of the people
Jer 52:16	Jer 52:16	2 Kgs 25:12	Some left to cultivate the land
Jer 52:17–23	Jer 52:17–23	2 Kgs 25:13–17 [shorter text]	Pillaging of the temple vessels
Jer 52:24–27a	Jer 52:24–27a	2 Kgs 25:18–21a	Execution of Judean officials
—	Jer 52:27b	2 Kgs 25:21b	Concluding statement on the deportation
—	—	2 Kgs 25:22–26	Gedaliah episode
—	Jer 52:28–30	—	List of deportations
Jer 52:31–34	Jer 52:31–34	2 Kgs 25:27–30	Jehoiachin's amnesty

Table 3: Major differences between the Old Greek text of Jer 52, the Masoretic text of Jer 52, and its parallel text in 2 Kgs 24–25

Based on the observation of these differences, Raymond Person has proposed to use the textual criticism of Jeremiah 52 as a tool for redaction criticism in the book of Kings.[36] He argues that the shorter Alexandrian text of Jeremiah 52 represents the earliest form of the text in 2 Kings 25, from which it was copied. In Person's view, the additional verses attested only in the Masoretic text point to a later redaction of the book of Kings (which he characterizes as Deuteronomistic and dates to the 5th–4th century B.C.E.).[37] While the idea of redaction criticism based on manuscript evidence is certainly appealing, Person's reconstruction remains problematic. In particular, it is difficult to explain why the negative evaluation of king Zedekiah in 2 Kgs 24:19, which does not have a parallel in the Greek text of Jeremiah 52, should be a secondary addition in the book of Kings. The assessment "He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh" (ויעשׂ הרע בעיני יהוה) is part of the usual opening formula in the book of Kings, together with

36 Person, "II Kings 24," 174–205.
37 Cf. ibid., 185–191.

the preceding verse introducing Zedekiah's reign, which is attested both in Kings and Jeremiah. It is difficult to see why only in the case of Zedekiah such an evaluation would have been originally lacking, and why it would have been added by a later redaction. On the other hand, the omission of a negative evaluation of Zedekiah fits well with the perspective of the Jeremiah narratives, where Zedekiah is portrayed as a weak but not an evil king, and the Judean officials rather than the king are to be blamed for the disaster.[38] With Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, Henk de Waard, and others, it seems more likely to assume that the shorter Alexandrian text of Jeremiah 52 was not an exact copy of 2 Kings 25, but instead a slightly modified version adapted to fit the context of the Jeremiah narratives. In addition to the lack of a negative judgment on Zedekiah, it is notable that the Alexandrian text of Jeremiah 52 contains no mention of the exile of the people at all.[39] In the Jeremiah narratives, only king Zedekiah and his court are taken into exile. The bulk of the people stays in the land and flees to Egypt. It seems most likely that the verses referring to the deportation of the people in 2 Kgs 25 were left out in the Alexandrian text of Jeremiah in order to align the chapter with the conception of the book of Jeremiah.[40]

In short, the Greek text of Jeremiah 52 represents a shorter and earlier text form of this chapter. This text is based on 2 Kings 25, but it was adapted to its present context and differs significantly from its *Vorlage* in 2 Kings 25. Second Kings 25 and the Alexandrian text of Jeremiah 52 thus construct and transmit diverging memories of the Babylonian conquest. In their respective representations of the event, the claims regarding the nature of the victim and the attribution of responsibility differ. The Alexandrian text of Jeremiah 52 does not specifically blame Zedekiah in theological terms and foregrounds the role of the Judean officials (cf. Jer 52:10). While 2 Kings 25 portrays the event as having a bearing on the land of Judah and attaches importance to the deportation of the people, the Alexandrian text of Jeremiah 52 focuses

38 On the portrayal of Zedekiah, cf. H.-J. Stipp, "Zedekiah in the Book of Jeremiah: On the Formation of a Biblical Character," *CBQ* 58 (1996): 627–648.

39 Cf. Bogaert, "La vetus latina," 79. The only other verse that mentions the deportation of the people, Jer 52:15 // 2 Kgs 25:11, is absent from the Greek text, too. Some scholars have argued that this could be due to haplography (cf. Janzen, *Studies*, 21; a simpler solution is advanced by Smith, "Jeremiah 52," 75).

40 Cf. Bogaert, "La vetus latina," 79; de Waard, "Jeremiah 52," 84. A. Rofé, "Not Exile but Annihilation for Zedekiah's People: The Purport of Jeremiah 52 in the Septuagint," in *VIII. Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Paris 1992* (ed. L. Greenspoon and O. Munnich; SCS 41; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 165–170 argues that a later recension, emphasizing the annihilation of Zedekiah's people, cut out the references to the exile in the Alexandrian Text of Jeremiah 52.

on the fate of the city of Jerusalem and expands the section on the pillaging of the temple. The Masoretic text of Jeremiah 52 corresponds more closely to 2 Kings 25. This text represents a later stage of the development of this chapter. Therefore, the nearly identical texts of Jeremiah 52 and 2 Kings 25 in the Masoretic text cannot be explained simply as the result of copying the text from 2 Kings 25 to the book of Jeremiah, preserving a unified memory of the event. Rather, their similarity is the result of a more complex process. Reconstructing this process can tell us something about how the memory of the Babylonian conquest was construed as a cultural trauma.

3. Harmonization in Textual and Redactional History

An obvious reason for the correspondence between Kings and the Masoretic text of Jeremiah, in contrast to the shorter Alexandrian text, is the phenomenon of secondary harmonization. Processes of secondary harmonization are well attested in the redaction- and transmission history of texts. They can be due to memory variants, or to a conscious effort to create a more complete and unified tradition.[41]

3.1. Secondary Harmonization of Jeremiah 52 MT with Kings

Secondary harmonization of the proto-Masoretic text of Jeremiah 52 with Kings seems to be the main reason why these forms of the text are nearly identical, in contrast to the shorter Alexandrian text of Jeremiah 52. Traces of this process of harmonization can be seen in the many instances of conflate readings in the Masoretic text of Jeremiah, that is, readings which combine the reading of the Alexandrian text of Jeremiah with the reading in 2 Kings.[42] Apparently, such harmonizations also took place at a larger scale. An example of this process would be Jer 52:27b. In the Masoretic text, this verse is identical in Jeremiah and in Kings. Following the account of the con-

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41 On memory variants, cf. R. F. Person, "The Ancient Israelite Scribe as Performer," *JBL* 117 (1998): 601–609; J. Vroom, "The Role of Memory in *Vorlage*-based Transmission: Evidence from Erasures and Corrections," *Textus* 27 (2018): 258–273.

42 De Waard, "Jeremiah 52," 71–72, 76–77, 88 discusses JerMT 52:18, 20, 34 as examples of conflate texts. On conflate readings in JerMT more generally, see J. G. Janzen, "Double Readings in the Text of Jeremiah," *HTR* 60 (1967): 433–447. The phenomenon of conflate readings has been described by S. Talmon, "Double Readings in the Massoretic Text," *Textus* 1 (1960): 144–184, here 150, who uses the term "conflate reading" following S. R. Driver.

quest of Jerusalem and the execution of Judean officials in Riblah, Jer 52:27b (// 2 Kgs 25:21b) concludes as follows

… and Judah went into exile from its land.

This phrase is one of the references to the exile of the people which are absent from the Alexandrian text of Jeremiah 52. As argued above, it seems most likely that these verses were left out by the redactor of Jeremiah 52 in order to align the chapter with the perspective of the book of Jeremiah.[43] This means that the earlier text of 2 Kings 25 already included the phrase relating to the exile of the people. But the redactor who adopted this text for Jeremiah 52 left out the reference to the exile, as attested by the Alexandrian text. At a later stage, a redactor harmonizing the text of Jeremiah with the text of Kings reinserted the verse in Jeremiah 52, as attested in the Masoretic text.

3.2. Secondary Harmonization of Kings with Jeremiah 52

However, not all variant readings where Kings and the Masoretic text of Jeremiah agree against the Alexandrian text of Jeremiah can be explained this way. Some Masoretic pluses are better explained as originating in Jeremiah rather than in the book of Kings. This suggests that we have to reckon with mutual influence: the textual evidence also indicates harmonizations from Jeremiah to Kings. One such example is found in 2 Kgs 25:18 and its parallel Jer 52:24. In this verse, the Greek and Hebrew text of Kings and the Hebrew text of Jeremiah read as follows:

The captain of the guard took Seraiah, the chief priest, and Zephaniah, the second priest, and the three guardians of the threshold.

The Alexandrian text of Jeremiah is shorter, without the names of the priests:

The captain of the guard took the chief priest, and the second priest, and the three guardians of the way.[44]

Since there is no reason why the names should have been suppressed, and since the addition of names is a common feature of the Masoretic text of

43 Cf. de Waard, "Jeremiah 52," 84.

44 As argued by Smith, "Jeremiah 52," 83; and K. Finsterbusch and N. Jacoby, *MT-Jeremia und LXX-Jeremia 25–52: Synoptische Übersetzung und Analyse der Kommunikationsstruktur* (WMANT 146; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2017), 278 n. 777, the reading "of the way" (τὴν ὁδὸν) is most likely an inner-Greek variant to "of the threshold" (τὸν οὐδόν, as read by α and σ).

Jeremiah,[45] it seems most likely that the names of the priests were added secondarily.[46] Such an addition is better explained as an expansion of the text in Jeremiah than in Kings. A glossator of Jeremiah could have taken the name of the priest Zephaniah from Jer 21:1; 29:25, 29;[47] 37:3, where a priest of this name is mentioned. Although there is no mention of a *priest* named Seraiah in Jeremiah, the name Seraiah is otherwise attested several times in the book.[48] No other Zephaniah or Seraiah is attested in the book of Kings. It seems more likely that the addition of the names took place in Jeremiah first and subsequently ended up in Kings. A similar case could be made for 2 Kgs 25:8 and its parallel in Jer 52:12, where the Greek and Hebrew text of Kings and the Hebrew text of Jeremiah share the gloss "that is, the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar,"[49] which is not attested in the Alexandrian text of Jeremiah. Since similar glosses are found in Jer 25:1 MT and Jer 32:1, it seems more likely that the gloss in Jeremiah 52 originated in the book of Jeremiah.[50]

This means that a secondary harmonization took place not only in the sense of harmonizing the text of Jeremiah with the text of Kings as seen in the first example, but also in the sense of harmonizing the text of Kings with the text of Jeremiah.

3.3. Mutual Influence between Jeremiah and Kings beyond the Textual Evidence?

The harmonizations between 2 Kings 25 and Jeremiah 52 that can be traced through the textual evidence show that these texts were transmitted in the same circles and developed in dialogue with each other.[51] This is not only the case for the proto-Masoretic text of Jeremiah 52. The process of mutual influence must have started earlier in the history of the redaction of these chapters. The influence of 2 Kings 25 on Jeremiah is evident from the mere observation that Jeremiah 52 has been copied from the book of Kings into

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45 E. g., names are added in Jer 39:5 MT; 40:8 MT; 52:8 MT; 52:16 MT; cf. Janzen, *Studies*, 69–75; Stipp, *Sondergut*, 89–90.

46 Cf. also Smith, "Jeremiah 52," 82 and de Waard, "Jeremiah 52," 80–81, 212.

47 In Jer 29:29, only the MT reads "the priest."

48 Jer 40:8; 51:59, 61. A deported priest Seraiah is mentioned in Ezra 2:2; 7:1; Neh 10:3; 11:11; 12:1, 12.

49 As is common in the book of Jeremiah, Jer 52:12 reads "Nebuchadrezzar" (נבוכדראצר).

50 A further example of secondary harmonization of Kings with Jeremiah might be found in 2 Kgs 25:21 // Jer 52:27, where the addition of וימחם (> JerG) most likely originated in Jeremiah, as in Jer 41:2; cf. de Waard, "Jeremiah 52," 83.

51 "The textual evidence suggests that KH, KG, and JH circulated within the same community and corrected each other." Person, "II Kings 24," 187.

the book of Jeremiah. The influence of the book of Jeremiah on Kings, on the other hand, follows from the observation that the Gedaliah episode in 2 Kgs 25:22–26 is based on Jeremiah.[52] It is therefore reasonable to assume that in this parallel account, other elements for which we do not have attested variant readings might also result from mutual influence between Jeremiah and Kings. The mention of a lack of bread / food (לחם) in 2 Kgs 25:3 // Jer 52:6 or the use of the term ארחה "allowance" in 2 Kgs 25:30 // Jer 52:34 might be examples of such early influence. While hunger (רעב) is mentioned elsewhere in the books of Kings,[53] the phrase ולא היה לחם seems more integrated in the narrative in Jeremiah, where this topic is raised in Jer 37:21; 38:9; 42:14. The rare term ארחה "allowance" is used in the book of Kings only in 2 Kgs 25:30 (// Jer 52:34), where the phrase ארחתו ארחת תמיד might have entered the text as an alternative reading to ואכל לחם תמיד לפניו.[54] In Jeremiah, the term occurs in a similar context in Jer 40:5 MT. Therefore, it seems possible that both phrases have their original place in Jeremiah rather than in Kings. Even without attested variants in the manuscript tradition, elements with such a profile may well be readings that originated in Jeremiah and were secondarily harmonized in Kings. A striking example is that of the "deserters" (נפלים) mentioned in Jer 52:15 MT and its parallel in 2 Kgs 25:11:

> And the rest of the people, who were left in the city, the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried into exile.[55]

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52 In a similar vein, J. Werlitz, *Die Bücher der Könige* (NSKAT; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002), 320 describes the relationship between 2 Kings 24–25 and Jeremiah as one of "wechselseitige Rezeptionsprozesse" (mutual processes of reception).

53 Hunger is mentioned in 2 Kgs 6:15 in the context of a siege of Samaria. In the account of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem under Jehoiachin in 2 Kings 24, hunger is not mentioned as a reason for the capitulation.

54 The Hebrew term ארחה occurs only in 2 Kgs 25:30 // Jer 52:34; Jer 40:5 MT; Prov 15:17 and is probably a loanword from Akkadian *rēḫtu*, meaning "(cultic or royal) leftovers," and, by extension, a special gift or allowance from the king, as suggested by R. Goldstein, "NB Administrative Terminology and Its Influence in Biblical Literature: Hebrew ארחה," in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature* (ed. D. S. Vanderhooft and A. Winitzer; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 137–149. Goldstein also points out that the phrases ארחתו ארחת תמיד and ואכל לחם תמיד לפניו in 2 Kgs 25:29, 30 could be considered as alternative versions or explanatory doublets (cf. Goldstein, "Administrative Terminology," 142–143 n. 22).

55 The verse is missing in Jeremiah 52 OG and was probably omitted by the redactor copying the chapter from Kings to Jeremiah, together with other references to the deportation of the people, as discussed above. Jer 52:15 MT reads a slightly different text, adding "And some of the poor of the people" at the beginning of the verse and

This verse specifies that among the "rest of the people" deported by the Babylonians were "the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon" (הנפלים אשר נפלו אל מלך בבל). While no such deserters are mentioned in Kings prior to this verse, desertion is a major issue in the Jeremiah narratives, and the corresponding term נפל אל/על is used several times in the book.[56] Jeremiah is reported to recommend desertion to the Babylonians (Jer 21:9 // 38:2) and is accused of an attempt to desert (37:13–14). According to the Jeremiah narratives, this is the main reason why Judean officials seek to arrest and kill the prophet. It seems much more likely, therefore, to assume that this theme originated in Jeremiah and migrated from there to the book of Kings.

In sum, we have to reckon with a process of dialogue between Jeremiah and Kings that reaches more deeply into the history of redaction of these chapters than what can be seen from the attested textual variants. The mechanism of mutual harmonizations can serve not only as a text-critical explanation of variant readings in the Greek and Masoretic text. Rather, we can assume that this mechanism was also at work in the redactional development of these chapters. Second Kings 25 and Jeremiah 52 have developed in dialogue with each other, and already the earlier layer that underlies the various textual traditions is a hybrid text between Kings and Jeremiah.

4. Pluriform and Converging Memories

The variants and harmonizations discussed in this article may seem very minor and technical in nature. They illustrate, however, a larger process at work since they show both the circulation of varying narratives (or claims) relating to the Babylonian conquest and document efforts to combine the various accounts into a unified representation of the event.

One example of the promulgation of diverging claims concerns the pillaging of the temple. As discussed above, this theme was probably absent in the earliest version of 2 Kings 25 and introduced in the account as a later addition. In terms of the cultural trauma process, it can be considered a new claim raised about the representation of the event. This claim proved quite successful, as it was expanded in a further addition in 2 Kings 25 and devel-

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reading אמון (probably = אָמָּן "artisan"; cf. Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 320; W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* [ed. R. Meyer and H. Donner; 18th ed.; Heidelberg: Springer, 2013] s. v.) instead of המון ("multitude").

56 Cf. Jer 21:9 // 38:2; 37:13–14; 38:19; 39:9 MT. In the book of Kings, it is attested only once prior to 25:11 // Jer 52:15 MT, namely in 2 Kgs 7:4.

oped further in Jeremiah 52, and the pillage of the temple vessels became an established feature of the representation of the conquest of Jerusalem. The growing interest in the temple vessels and the importance of this theme for the construction of ancient Israel's cultural memory is further confirmed by texts like Jer 27:16–22 MT, where the list of temple vessels and the perspective of their eventual return is absent in the Alexandrian text and has been added only in the proto-Masoretic version.[57]

Not every claim is immediately adopted in a shared representation of the Babylonian conquest. Diverging memories were construed and transmitted in ancient Israel's literary traditions, as the comparison of 2 Kings 25 and Jeremiah 52 has shown. Both accounts of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem respond to and are shaped by their respective book contexts. I would like to recall only one example: The most salient feature of the account in the Alexandrian text of Jeremiah is the absence of a deportation of the people. This account fits well with the description of the people's fate in the narratives in Jeremiah 40–44 and the prophecy in Jeremiah 24, which does not assume a deportation of the people following the conquest of Jerusalem under Zedekiah.[58] In 2 Kings 24–25, in contrast, the deportation of the people is a major theme. The verse 2 Kgs 25:21b "And Judah went into exile from its land" frames the account of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem under Zedekiah as a structural parallel to the fall of the northern kingdom. The conquest of Jerusalem under Zedekiah appears as the climactic repetition of the events under Jehoiachin narrated in 2 Kings 24, and the depredation of Jerusalem and the deportation of the people as the terminal cataclysm of the history of Judah.

The adaptation to the context and respective theology of each book thus leads to diverging memories of the conquest. This process is further illustrated by the parallel account in the Masoretic text of Jeremiah 39, which is even more integrated into its narrative context. In line with the Jeremiah narratives in chapters 37–43, the Babylonians are portrayed in a rather positive light and are not even charged with destroying the temple, in contrast to the account in Kings.

The transmission of parallel accounts in different book contexts thus preserved diverging memories and forged accounts with distinctive profiles. At the same time, the opposite movement can also be observed. The transmission and use of these books as a collection led to harmonization and a con-

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57 Cf. de Waard, "Jeremiah 52," 216. On the theological significance of the temple vessels in the construction of Israel's past, see Ackroyd, "Temple Vessels," 46–60.

58 Cf. de Waard, "Jeremiah 52," 140. In the earlier arrangement of the book (as preserved in the Greek), Jeremiah 52 immediately follows the narratives in Jeremiah 40–45.

vergence of the accounts. The textual and redactional history shows that the proto-Masoretic texts of Kings and Jeremiah in particular were read together and shared among a group, such as what Ehud Ben Zvi calls Judean *literati*, who integrated diverse strands of memory into a new master narrative of suffering.[59] Returning to the theoretical framework and terminology introduced at the beginning, this process of the creation of a cultural trauma can be illustrated by the verse 2 Kgs 25:21b (// Jer 52:27b): "And Judah went into exile from its land" (ויגל יהודה מעל אדמתו). As discussed above, this verse was probably not part of the earlier account in 2 Kings 25, which focuses on events within Jerusalem. Its addition includes a wider audience in the traumatizing event: Judah as a whole, the land and the people, was affected by the Babylonian deportation, with the "national" significance of the event being further strengthened by the parallelism with the end of the northern kingdom in 2 Kings 17. The Alexandrian text of Jeremiah 52 (omitting v. 27b) shows that this representation of the event was contested and preserved a diverging memory. Nonetheless, the claim raised in 2 Kings 25:21b proved very successful, as can be seen from the harmonization in Jer 52:27b MT (and the expansion of the deportation motif in Jer 52:28–30) and its wider history of reception, such as in the strong emphasis on Judah's exile in 2 Chr 36:20–21.

The account that results from the dialogue between Kings and Jeremiah traced in this article is the well-known narrative of the Babylonian conquest and exile. The agreement in the Masoretic text could lead us to think that 2 Kings 25 and its parallel in Jeremiah 52 report the unquestioned memory of the historical events. Thanks to the preservation of the Alexandrian text of Jeremiah 52 in Greek, however, we can recognize the correspondence between 2 Kings 25 and Jeremiah 52 as reflecting converging rather than uniform memories.

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59 Cf. E. Ben Zvi, "Total Exile, Empty Land and the General Intellectual Discourse in Yehud," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 155–168. The preservation of the Alexandrian text may point to the fact that differing memories were produced and preserved in different groups; cf. Person, "II Kings 24," 183.