The Book of the Twelve – One Book or Many?

Edited by
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Forschungen
zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe
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2. Reihe

Edited by

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Metz Conference Proceedings
5–7 November 2015

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e-ISBN PDF 978-3-16-154942-7
ISBN 978-3-16-154553-5
ISSN 1611-4914 (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at *http://dnb.dnb.de*.

The book was typeset by Martin Fischer in Tübingen, printed by Laupp & Göbel in Gomaringen on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Nädele in Nehren.

Printed in Germany.

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Introduction

Donatella Scaiola / Elena Di Pede

The Minor Prophets, generally referred to as the Twelve, can be considered an interesting field of study both from an exegetical and a theological perspective. They also offer a methodological challenge because they can be studied through different approaches that either complement or oppose one another. Biblical commentators generally select one particular methodology and use hermeneutical presuppositions as a starting point, but without specifying which; the problem is that their choice affects their interpretation of the texts. That is the reason why the conference focused on the two following questions: first, should the Book of the Twelve be read as one book, or an anthology, or rather as twelve separate texts, or again, as something else? And second, how should the individual texts of the Minor Prophets be interpreted? More specifically, how should certain texts – particularly those discussed in the biblical bibliography that exists[1] on the issue – be analyzed? What about Joel, for example, its role and the way it stands in relation with Amos, Jonah, and others? Since the exegetical study of the texts and the theoretical framework are closely linked, the different theories about the interpretation of the Book of the Twelve should be verified by the exegetical study of each of the texts that compose it.

The principal goal of the conference was to explore the link(s) between theory, unstated presuppositions, and exegetical analysis. This allowed for further investigation into the theology or theological themes of the Book of the Twelve, as well as for comparison(s) between all the participants exegetical presuppositions.

Ehud Ben Zvi ("Remembering Twelve Prophetic Characters from the Past") begins his article by stating that for a number of years now, he has been invited to conferences because of his specific approach to prophetic literature, which is epitomized by the expressions he uses, such as the "Prophetic Books Collection", "The Twelve Prophetic Books", and in more recent years, "The Twelve Prophetic Characters of Memory." He then proceeds to explain what his approach consists in. Although he considers what he calls the Hypothesis of the Book of the Twelve

[1] For example, see *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* (ed. J. D. Nogalski and M. A. Sweeney; SBLSym 15; Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2000); *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* (ed. P. L. Redditt and A. Schart; BZAW 325; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 2003); *Two Sides of a Coin: Juxtaposing Views on Interpreting the Book of the Twelve / the Twelve Prophetic Books* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and J. D. Nogalski [with an introduction by T. C. Römer]; Analecta Gorgiana 201; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009.

to be thought-provoking, he believes that it is more likely to be wrong than right. Within the repertoire of the literati of the early "Second Temple" period, twelve independent prophetic books were organized as (a) collection(s) or rather, (a) sub-collection(s). The literati read each of them and the book (sub)collection(s) in a way that was informed by the general discourse of the period, in particular by the Jerusalem-centered world they belonged to. In his contribution, Ben Zvi expands on these questions and argues for the necessity of additional and, to a large extent, complementary research paths influenced by methodological approaches that differ from the dominant ones. He also underlines the necessity of acknowledging the shortcomings of the existing methodological approaches, as well as the potential of other approaches to shed light on the matters under study.

James D. Nogalski ("The Book of the Twelve Is Not a Hypothesis") explores the extent to which the shape and shaping of the Book of the Twelve contributes to our understanding of canon development and the reading of prophetic literature. The synchronic and diachronic studies that have been written in recent decades consider the Twelve as a redacted entity that can be read meaningfully as such, an approach that has given rise to criticism and triggered the author's present endeavor. Nogalski explains that ancient sources identify a collection of twelve prophetic writings that were written on a single scroll and counted as one book. Moreover, several of these ancient sources attest to a hermeneutical approach suggesting that the Twelve should be read together as well. In this sense, the Twelve is not a hypothesis, but a historical fact that begs for explanation(s).

Yair Zakovitch ("Do the Last Verses of Malachi [Mal 3:22–24] Have a Canonical Function? A Biblical Puzzle") argues that the language of the last verses of Malachi (3:22–24) shows a purposeful relation to other verses inside that book (see e. g. Mal 3:1–10). Moreover, the verses seem to have been written in order to close a larger literary unit and not just the book of Malachi. Is this unit the Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets? Or the whole corpus of the prophet books? Or even, perhaps, the whole canon? If the last option is preferred, then it is necessary to examine what compositions were included in that canon, and what their order was.

Malachi is also at the core of Innocent Himbaza's contribution ("Les thèmes théologiques de Malachie et le concept du livre des XII Prophètes"). The author argues that the location of the book of Malachi is a strategic one, for it closes both the corpus of the Twelve Prophets and that of *Nebiim*. Its position makes it a target for all kinds of editorial interventions, either putative or real, on the two corpuses. Moreover, the book of Malachi has its own theological themes, and a way of dealing with them that challenges the reading of this booklet in the context of the Twelve Prophets. Himbaza offers a study of the dual redactional project of Malachi that explores both the singularity of the booklet and the place it occupies at the end of the Twelve Prophets and of the corpus of *Nebiim*.

Guido Benzi ("Rhetorical Analysis, Interpretation, and Location of Hosea 1–3 in its Relation to the Twelve Prophets Scroll") carries out a detailed rhetorical analysis and interpretation of the first three chapters of Hosea. He demonstrates that the structure of this section is meant to highlight the central *rîb* (Hos 2:4–25), which is framed by two sequences (1:2–2:3 and 3:1–5) that echo each other and describe the special prophetic action ordered by God to Hosea. Hos 4:1 is clearly the beginning of a new section. The redaction and the development of the themes of the lost and found covenant between God and the people of Israel show that the first three chapters of Hosea may be envisaged not only as the beginning of the booklet, but also as the beginning of the whole Scroll. Furthermore, the textual relation between Hos 1–3 and the central and final sections of the Twelve is highlighted.

Another prophetic figure of the eighth century, Amos, is studied by Hervé Tremblay ("*Vox clamantis in deserto*? L'enseignement d'Amos sur la justice sociale dans le contexte de la théorie de l'unité des douze"). In his analysis of Amos's involvement in social justice, Tremblay tries to answer the central question of the conference. Taking up the dossier of the Twelve and their exegesis, he begins with a critical assessment of the different hypotheses and then turns to the central theme of the book of Amos which, more often than not, is often absent in the "minor" prophets. The author endeavors to understand whether the editors intended to make Amos "the firstborn of many brethren" (Rom 8:29) within the Twelve, or whether he should be considered a "lone wolf."

At the center of the Twelve, following the Masoretic order, the book of Jonah seems to be an intruder because of its style and its particular literary genre. Although it does recall the themes present in the other books of the corpus, it also overturns them, thus playing a specific role that should not be overlooked. To demonstrate this thesis, Claude Lichtert ("Entre rappels et renversements: les particularités littéraires et théologiques du récit de Jonas") explores three aspects. The first is theological: the Twelve indict mainly Israel for its faults and admonishes it to convert, but this does not mean that the Nations are not targeted as well. Jonah's message is that everyone is concerned by the issue of conversion. Thus the example of Nineveh becomes a *mise en abyme* of what is expected of Israel. The second aspect Lichtert focuses on is the literary genre: Jonah is the only book of the Twelve which is a narrative; even Jonah's prayer in chapter 2 fits perfectly in its dynamic. The third aspect is devoted to the literary structure of the text: Jonah is composed of two corresponding sequences which highlight the tension between God's unexpected behavior and that expected of the prophet.

In his contribution, Christophe Nihan ("Remarques sur la question de l'"unité" des XII") examines the numerous intertextual links that characterize the Twelve and raises the question of their interpretation, thus bringing to the fore the main methodological issues at stake in the current debate. By placing a few selected examples in relation with recent studies on the subject, he shows that intertextu-

ality contradicts the hypothesis of a simple juxtaposition of the books that make up the whole of the Twelve, and at the same time that intertextuality cannot be explained through the hypothesis – dominant today – of linear redactions within the collection. Nihan argues for a new approach that would take into account all aspects of the question, including the meaning of the terms used to describe the Twelve: (for example, "book", "collection" or "anthology"), the principles of organization and arrangement that can be highlighted in the Twelve, and the socio-historical context of the whole production.

Intertextuality is not limited to the numerous internal references that can be found in the Twelve; it also exists between the Twelve and other prophetic books such as Isaiah. Jean-Daniel Macchi ("Ésaïe dans les XII: Ésaïe 2,2–5 et son parallèle en Michée 4,1–5") studies this aspect, dealing with two parallel texts, Isa 2:2–5 and Mic 4:1–5. He analyzes each of the two pericopes in their own contexts in order to understand their specific function and attempts to understand the reasons which prompted the authors of Micah or Isaiah to rework a theme based on another prophetic setting.

Donatella Scaiola ("The Twelve, one or many Books? A Theological Proposal") aims at demonstrating that the Book of the Twelve is one book and not an anthology. The first part of her article is devoted to a *status quaestionis*, in which she states the hermeneutical assumptions and the methodology underlying her investigation and then takes the frame of the book into account. In the third part, she explores one of the most important, evident and frequently studied examples of intertextuality in the Book of the Twelve, Exodus 34:6–7, to support the thesis that this could be the main theological aspect of the Book and the core of its unity.

The issue examined during the conference is a complex one, and that is the only point on which all the participants agreed. The authors' presuppositions led them to read the text(s) differently, and their approaches were sometimes irreconcilable, even discordant; it is therefore no surprise that contrasting answers emerged from their contributions and the various questions they addressed. Notwithstanding, putting together in a single scroll twelve texts that differ in style and language and even, sometimes, express conflicting messages actually creates logical bonds between these writings, whether an initial or editorial desire for unity existed or not. Each of the booklets has its own coherence, of course, but we are convinced that reading them all together produces more meaning, if only because such an approach is a way of keeping in mind the (sometimes paradoxical) tension between them, as well as the complex history of how the Book of the Twelve came into being. As this collection indicates, today's readers are probably more concerned about understanding how this paradoxical tension works, whatever the original redactional project (canonical, liturgical, intertextual, theological, anthropological, social, identity-related – even all of the above). Indeed, the authors in this volume may have used or coined different terms or

expressions – polyphony (Ben Zvi), paradigmatic resumption / illustration of history (Nogalski), canonical links between the Twelve and the entire *Nebiim* and the Torah (Zakovitch) – but in the end, each of them insists, in its own way, on the huge benefit that can be gained by reading the Twelve both together and separately, as one would read a fragmentary work. As Roland Barthes once said about his own production: "Then if you put the fragments one after the next, is no organization possible? Yes: the fragment is like the musical idea of a song cycle (*La Bonne Chanson*, *Dichterliebe*): each piece is self-sufficient, and yet it is never anything but the interstice of its neighbors: the work consists of no more than an inset, an *hors-texte*."[2]

Much work remains to be done from the methodological and theological points of view, starting with the terminology used to analyze the Book of the Twelve. Scholars speak about the unity of the Book, about intertextuality, inner-biblical exegesis, *midrash*, *Fortschreibung*, but all these terms need to be defined clearly and their nuances brought out. Moreover, the perspective(s) from which author(s), editor(s), redactor(s) view the Book of the Twelve (either as an entity or as individual booklets) must be investigated further. We hope that this book has offered a contribution to the exegetical and theological discussion.

We wish to thank all the contributors to this volume, as well as "Écritures" (EA 3943), the research center located at the University of Lorraine, Metz, France, for making both the conference and this collection possible.

[2] "Quoi, lorsqu'on met des fragments à la suite, nulle organisation possible? Si: le fragment est comme l'idée musicale d'un cycle (*Bonne Chanson, Dichterliebe*): chaque pièce se suffit, et cependant elle n'est jamais que l'interstice de ses voisines: l'œuvre n'est faite que de hors-texte.", R. Barthes, *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (Écrivains de toujours), Paris, 1975, 89–90, quoted according to *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, translated by Richard Howard, Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994, 97.

Remembering Twelve Prophetic Characters from the Past

Ehud Ben Zvi

I. Introduction

For a number of years, I have been invited to discuss an approach to the field of prophetic literature that may be epitomized by my very intentional use of terms such as the "Prophetic Books Collection," "The Twelve Prophetic Books" and in more recent years, and increasingly so, "The Twelve Prophetic Characters of Memory."[1] According to this approach (a) what I call the Hypothesis of the Book of the Twelve (hereafter, HBT) is thought provoking; but still more likely to be incorrect than correct, and (b) within the repertoire of the literati of the early "Second Temple" period, there were twelve independent prophetic books that were organized as a *collection(/s)* or better, *sub-collection(/s)* of prophetic books. Each of these prophetic books independently and the books' (sub-)collection/s as such communicated meanings to the literati who read them in a way which had been informed by the general discourse and world of knowledge of the Jerusalem-centered literati of the period.[2]

In this contribution, I will expand on these matters, and in particular I will argue for the *necessity* of additional and, to a large extent, complementary research paths informed by methodological approaches other than those dominant among my colleagues who work within the general frame of the HBT, at least, for the purpose of elucidating aspects of the intellectual history of these literati. To argue for the necessity of complementary approaches one has to argue for both (a) the existence of clear and *categorical* (rather than contingent) shortcomings to existing methodological approaches; and (b) the potential of other approaches

[1] I wish to acknowledge my delight and my thanks to Jim Nogalski with whom I have participated in many of these forums over a considerable period of time. I could not have found a better debating partner.

[2] See E. Ben Zvi, "Is the Twelve Hypothesis Likely from an Ancient Readers' Perspective?," in *Two Sides of a Coin: Juxtaposing Views on Interpreting the Book of the Twelve/the Twelve Prophetic Books* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and J.D. Nogalski [with an introduction by T.C. Römer]; Analecta Gorgiana 201; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 47–96, and read the critiques, and the alternative/complementary approaches to these issues advanced by Nogalski and Römer in the same volume.

to shed light on the matters being studied. In what follows, I will attempt to make the case for both.

I will deal first with (a) and then I will turn to (b). As I do so with the latter, I will focus on the potential contributions of an approach that is informed by (new) form-criticism considerations and memory studies.

Before turning to these matters, I wish to stress that the aforementioned approach represents just one of several potential additional and complementary research paths that may be advanced to complement those usually explored by the majority of scholars who work in the field of ancient Israel's history and who strongly advocate for the HBT. Moreover, a number of scholars have taken into account what each considered to be the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of various approaches to the HBT, and each in their own way have advanced proposals for the textual and social history of the prophetic books / Book of the Twelve in manners that are congruent with their evaluation and general reconstructions of the period.[3]

II. Methodological Divides

Most of the differences between myself and those with whom I share common ground on these issues and the proponents of the HBT are not grounded in any set of minutia of textual interpretations here or there or, more appropriately and precisely, on any form of "narcissism of small differences." Instead they boil down to substantial methodological issues / preferences.[4]

Methodological approaches allow us to see certain things while blurring others. Each of these approaches reveals data by "allowing" us to see certain things and not others. In fact, not only do they generate different data, but also different sets of data. These different sets of data then become building blocks for recognizing patterns, and on the basis of the latter we build our hypotheses.[5]

The HBT, in most of its variations, involves two closely related historical claims. One concerns the principal mode of reading the text, namely that the Twelve and its precursors were understood in the Persian or Hellenistic period as self-contained literary and ideological units. These were to be read mainly sequentially or in other words, that books such as Amos, Micah, Hosea, Obadiah, and Jonah drew their meanings from the whole, namely the Book of the Twelve

[3] For an excellent example, see, e. g., M. Leuchter, "Another Look at the Hosea / Malachi Framework in The Twelve," *VT* 64 (2014): 1–17.

[4] It is precisely because the mentioned differences are *not* grounded on a kind of "narcissism of small differences" that debates on these matters in workshops like this one can be so helpful.

[5] For these reasons, one of the most promising moments in academic conversations occurs precisely when scholars coming from various methodological paths begin to notice some potential overlap in their historical reconstructions, even if their "academic sociolect" and methodological approaches are different.

and were understood as "parts" of a "whole" whose meaning emerges in particular through sequential reading. This claim carries important implications in terms of how to reconstruct ancient readings of the relevant books / book, what "data" we tend to look or overlook, and even what this "data" constitutes. Associated with this is the focus on individual authors / redactors and their intentions and the history that eventually led to the text rather than on how the text itself was communally read within a certain historical context.

The second claim, though strongly related to the former, is that one can reconstruct the historical, redactional processes that led to the formation of the present book of the Twelve and thus follow up, as it were, on how these redactors or "authors" of the various, temporally successive versions understood and reshaped the texts that they had available, and most importantly, the redactional processes which demonstrated the case for the first claim.

Regarding this, I have very serious concerns about the first set of issues – as I tend to emphasize community over individuals, readers over authors[6] – but obviously, if the redactional critical claim is rejected, then any concerns about the first issues would be moot. Thus, I will focus here on categorical (not contingent) concerns about potential shortcomings in terms of general capabilities of redactional critical approaches to provide what is necessary for the HBT.

Rather than revisiting these matters in general, I will exemplify them by looking at some of the arguments advanced in a very thoughtful, well-argued, highly interesting, and explicitly methodologically self-conscious essay that exemplifies both the potential and the limitations of the redactional critical approaches commonly used for the study of "The Twelve" extremely well. I am referring here to the methodological essay by Jakob Wöhrle entitled "So Many Cross-References! Methodological Reflections on the Problem of Intertextual Relationships and their Significance for Redaction Critical Analysis" which opens the methodological section of a recent important collected essays volume on "the Book of the Twelve."[7]

Let me begin with the conclusion of this essay, Wöhrle states:

First, the starting point for reconstructing the formation of the Book of the Twelve should be a complete redaction critical analysis of every individual book. Second, redaction critical observations have to be combined with composition critical considerations. In

[6] I have written on these matters extensively and they informed, for instance, my commentaries on Micah and Hosea as well as most of my work on prophetic literature. See, e. g., E. Ben Zvi, *Hosea* (FOTL 21A/1; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005); id., *Micah* (FOTL 21B; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).

[7] J. Wöhrle, "So Many Cross-References! Methodological Reflections on the Problem of Intertextual Relationships and their Significance for Redaction Critical Analysis," in *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve. Methodological Foundations, Redactional Processes, Historical Insights* (ed. R. Albertz, J. D. Nogalski and J. Wöhrle; BZAW 433; Berlin / Boston: de Gruyter, 2012), 3–20. Jakob Wöhrle is a prominent scholar within this approach to "the Book of the Twelve" a careful, methodologically conscious thinker.

this way it is possible to prove whether two interrelated passages from two different books trace back to the same hand and are thus the product of redactional work on the growing Book of the Twelve as a whole. Additionally, the intention of such redactional work can be described in more detail.[8]

Wöhrle is certainly correct when he states that "the starting point for reconstructing the formation of the Book of the Twelve should be a complete redaction critical analysis of every individual book." But the question is can such a "complete redaction critical analysis of every individual book" be carried out with any historical confidence? Do we have the appropriate tools for that task?

To address this question, I will discuss in brief a few illustrative examples all taken from Wöhrle's chosen "test case." The latter concerns the formula אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם … וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְנִחָם עַל־הָרָעָה (the so-called "grace formula") in "the Book of the Twelve," either in precise (just mentioned) form[9] or in versions showing, according to Wöhrle, a "striking terminological correspondences" (p. 9). There are several (and prominent) occurrences of the formula – defined in this way – in the relevant textual corpus, namely Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:10; 4:2; Mic 7:18–20, Nah 1:2b, 3a, and Mal 1:9a.

Concerning Joel 2:13, Wöhrle maintains:

> Joel 2:12–14 and Joel 2:15–17 are doublets. Both passages put forward a call to repent, and they explain the concrete behavior requested from the people. Additionally, the first passage in Joel 2:12–14 is directed to the people as a whole, but the second passage Joel 2:15–17 begins with a summons to gather the people. These observations strongly speak for the assumption that Joel 2:12–14 is a secondary addition to the growing book of Joel (p. 10; here and elsewhere, footnotes omitted).

Leaving aside whether these passages are indeed doublets or not, do doublets necessarily require that one of them be a secondary addition? If doublets have rhetorical and didactic functions and allow for the revisiting of similar matters from more than one perspective, would the literati who were well aware of these functions and used to exploring them when reading and rereading various books (and sections thereof) be unable to introduce doublets into their own writing?

In addition, why should we *necessarily* assume that it would be problematic, at least in the mind of a single author / redactor, that within the literary world shaped by the book, a prophetic reading in which the literary character of the prophet addresses the people as a whole be followed by another one in which the same character summons the people to gather? Such an approach would have to rest on premises about (a) the *absolute* dominance of a sequential mode of reading of prophetic books, to the *exclusion* of any other mode, and (b) *absolute* temporal and logical consistency within the narrative. But both premises are highly problematic, since none of the two seem to have been at work among any

[8] Wöhrle, "So Many Cross-References!," 17.
[9] See Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2.

of the implied authors of prophetic, or for that matter, of many (if not all) other books within the repertoire of the literati.

The importance of these observations cannot be overstated, because one has to keep in mind that the "implied authors" that a community shaped when reading texts provide the very educational matrix for the development of actual writers in a community that identifies and sees itself in strong continuity with these "implied authors."

Similar and additional concerns may be raised concerning the other examples brought in this essay. For instance, why must we imagine that different writers must always use the same terminology, or that that there is something odd when they use the same term in two different ways within the same text? Why must we imagine that ancient writers could not disrupt our own expectations for logical or stylistic consistency? Are there not plenty of examples that may suggest the opposite? From a more general perspective, might it be the case that we tend to create redactional layers so as to shape implied authors that fit *our* own expectations for logical consistency, even if, and perhaps even because, these expectations often contradict those held by the literati about the implied authors of the texts that existed within their core textual repertoire and those of the prophetic characters encoded in and whose memory was evoked by these texts?[10]

A few examples from the same essay suffice to make the point that these questions directly relate to arguments advanced in the essay:

> Jonah 3:6–4:2 narrates a sequence of actions: the king of Nineveh calls his people to repent; God forgives the people of Nineveh; and the prophet Jonah gets angry about that forgiveness. This passage quotes the grace formula twice. Jonah 3:10 cites the phrase "God relented from doing the evil …" …, and Jonah 4:2 cites the whole formula using exactly the same phraseology as Joel 2:13 … the previous verse (3:5) already mentions that the people of Nineveh believed in God, and that they fasted and put on sackcloth. Thus, the king's call to repent in Joel 3:6–9 lags behind this description. Additionally, Jonah 3:5 and 3:6–9 show interesting terminological differences. For example, in 3:5 the term גדול characterizes the older people, but in 3:7, it refers to the officials of the king. Jonah 3:5 uses the verb לבש to describe the dressing of the people with sackcloth, while 3:6, 8 use the verb כסה. Finally, Jonah 3:5 describes the fasting of the people with the term צום, while 3:7 uses the formulation טעם מאומה. These observations suggest that Jonah 3:6–4:2 is a secondary addition (pp. 11–12).

> While the preceding passage Mic 7:8–17 predicts judgment against foreign nations, this perspective is absent in Mic 7:18–20. These verses are formulated as a prayer to God and they deal with the iniquities of the people and God's willingness to show mercy against them. Thus, Mic 7:18–20 is a secondary addition to this book (p. 12).

[10] I will return to this point later, and will address it, *inter alia*, from the perspective of *imago dei* and social memory. The YHWH that existed within the mnemonic landscape of the literati was obviously imagined as a deity holding multiple viewpoints, speaking in multiple dictions, and whose words might seem to be, from a formal logical perspective, often at odds with each other. If the literati were supposed to aim at some limited form of *imago dei*, would they not be expected, at least from time to time, to attempt to follow their YHWH in this aspect too?

Mal 1:9a calls a group to repent to Yhwh and motivates this call with the promise that Yhwh will be gracious. Thus, Mal 1:9a refers to Yhwh's gracious character using the term חנן known from the grace formula. Remarkably enough, Mal 1:9a is formulated in the 1st person plural, while its direct context in Mal 1:8, 9b–14 is written as divine speech. Additionally, according to Mal 1:9a, the invocation of God is the condition for his forgiveness, while the rest of Mal 1:6–14 is concerned with accurate offerings. This change of perspective suggests that Mal 1:9a is also a secondary addition (p. 13).

In concluding, Wöhrle states:

The redaction critical considerations show that all the passages within the Book of the Twelve citing the grace formula (Joel 2:12–14; Jonah 3:6–4:2; Mic 7:18–20; Nah 1:2b, 3a; Mal 1:9a) are later additions (p. 13).

Being a thoughtful and sophisticated scholar, as Wöhrle certainly is, he is very careful to move with much caution beyond this conclusion. Thus he writes:

This secondary character could suggest that these passages trace back to one and the same hand working on the whole Book of the Twelve. However, the methodological reflections presented previously caution us that the intertextual relationships between these passages could also be unintentional. For example, it is possible that different redactors working independently of one another, referred to the same source text. Important to this discussion, several other passages outside the Book of the Twelve also cite the grace formula (Num 14:18; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Neh 9:17). Thus, the redaction critical results have to be connected with composition critical observations (p. 13).

To the latter, he adds:

Regarding the compositional relationship of the passages citing the grace formula, at first on a general level, the distribution of these passages over the Book of the Twelve is remarkable … These passages were incorporated into the books of Joel, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, and Malachi at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the corpus. Additionally, it is remarkable that only the additions in Joel 2:12–14 and Mal 1:9a, and thus only the first and the last addition, include an imperative directed to the addressees of the book (Joel 2:13; Mal 1:9a). With Joel 2:12–14 and Mal 1:9a the appeal to turn to Yhwh, decisive in these two passages, now frames the whole corpus (p. 14).

Of course, the preceding observation "… presuppose(s) that the book of Hosea has not been part of the Grace-Corpus" (p. 14), which is fully consistent with Wöhrle's position that "the book of Hosea was part of the exilic Book of the Four, but was taken out of this collection and was not re-integrated into the Book of the Twelve until a very late stage" (p. 14, n. 38).[11]

To be sure, there is nothing wrong in principle with any of Wöhrle's observations or assumptions. The latter are indeed very common in the guild. Some,

[11] Wöhrle refers the reader to his previous work on these matters, namely to his *Die frühen Sammlungen des Zwölfprophetenbuches: Entstehung und Komposition* (BZAW 360; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 2006) and, id., *Der Abschluss des Zwölfprophetenbuches: Buchübergreifende Redaktionsprozesse in den späten Sammlungen* (BZAW 389; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 2008).

perhaps even many, of his redactional critical proposals might be historically correct, but because of the reasons I mentioned above, none of them are necessarily historically correct. I assume of the fact that he often, though not always consistently, uses the language of "this suggests …" rather than "this is" suggests that, at least to some degree, he may agree with my supposition.

The point I want to make here, however, is that for his overall reconstruction to be correct, all his conclusions and reconstructions must be correct. Even if, *for the sake of argument*, one were still to grant Wöhrle that (a) he is in each single case twice as likely to be correct than the aggregate of all alternative options – whether already explored or still awaiting exploration and certainly including all those reflecting on the very concerns I have advanced above, and (b) there are no additional conditions whatsoever governing the likelihood that his general reconstruction is correct to his six basic conditions / claims (i. e., his position concerning [i] Joel 2:12–14; [ii] Jonah 3:6–4:2; [iii] Mic 7:18–20; [iv] Nah 1:2b, 3a; [v] Mal 1:9a and [vi] the inclusion of the book of Hosea in "the Book of Four," its later exclusion, and even much later reintegration into "the Book of the Twelve,"[12]) the odds for his historical reconstruction are very low. In fact, the chances would be 2/3 at the power of six, i. e., 64/729 or slightly less than 8.78 %. In other words, there is more than a 90 % chance that his reconstruction is wrong even under the extreme, unrealistically favorable odds and conditions granted above for the sake of the argument.[13]

Leaving aside for a moment any other concerns I may have about the HBT, the question I am raising here is: can the HBT be unmoored from its anchor in redactional criticism and if not, what are the other paths for studying "the book of the Twelve" of "the Twelve Prophetic Books" from a historical perspective?

III. Starting Points and Grounds for a Different Approach

The main starting points of the approach for which I would argue are: (a) doubt about our abilities to reconstruct the textual redactional process, (b) a sense that history is more about societies than "great individuals" and what they intended to do or write, (c) a stand that history – as it is usually understood – should address, in the main, the history of *societies* rather than textual history, (d) texts impact, shape, and shed light on societies but only in the ways in which they

[12] To be sure, for this condition to be true, a substantial number of additional conditions must hold true, but the point here is to show that even in a theoretical environment that is so unrealistically favorable to Wöhrle's hypothesis (and so unkind to any of the concerns I mentioned above and, for that matter, to any alternative redactional critical reconstruction), his hypothesis is more likely to be wrong than correct.

[13] This assumes each of the conditions / claims approaches are to be treated (at least at first) as independent, as Wöhrle himself would suggest.

were understood by these societies, which means, inter alia, as texts informed by the world of knowledge, other texts, and the general social mindscape of the relevant readers – in fact, may say that from a socio-historical perspective *texts do exist only as contingently read texts,* that is as read and understood by particular group/s a society, (e) the world of "read texts" that exists in a community is one of the most important resources available to historians for reconstructing the world of ideas and memory of the relevant community, and (f) emphasis should be, for very pragmatic reasons, on "broad stroke" images emerging out of cumulative weight of multiple observations supported by comparative trans-cultural data rather than on precise details, then (g) one would end up with an emphasis on synchronic, historically contextual readings of texts within a particular eco-cultural system, which sometimes I have referred to as *Sitz im Discurs*.[14]

Before continuing, it is appropriate to stress that all historians make assumptions and the most that historians of ancient Israel can do is to construct reconstructions of the past, some more and some less probable. The methods I have discussed above still have a role to play and what they have allowed us to "see" is not to be disregarded.

To be sure, observations made on the foundation of these methods may lead to different conclusions when complementary approaches are advanced. For instance, when these are the main starting points, the multiple, logically, and often stylistically consistent layers found by redactional critics become different voices within a polyphonic text read as such within the context of a very polyphonic authoritative repertoire.[15] In addition, similar phrases or terms among several texts within the mentioned repertoire become potentially evocative signposts, among a readership well acquainted with the entire repertoire. Whether the relevant phrases were intended or not as allusions by the original authors of the texts or just an expression of their universe of ideas and ready phraseology, becomes far less relevant. In other words, a different system of observations out of which one may begin to construe "data" emerges, and some preference for social-anthropological approaches accompany it.

The particular approach whose potential I am exploring below is chiefly informed by contemporary form criticism (see esp. references and discussions on

[14] See, e.g., E. Ben Zvi, "Chronicles and its Reshaping of Memories of Monarchic Period Prophets: Some Observations," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Ancient Israelite Historiography* (ed. M. J. Boda and L. M. Wray Beal; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 167–88; id., "Toward a Sense of Balance: Remembering the Catastrophe of Monarchic Judah / (Ideological) Israel and Exile through Reading Chronicles in Late Yehud," in *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography* (ed. P. S. Evans and T. F. Williams; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 247–65; id., "Remembering the Prophets through the Reading and Rereading of a Collection of Prophetic Books in Yehud: Methodological Considerations and Explorations," in *Remembering and Forgetting in Early Second Temple Judah* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin; FAT 85; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 17–44.

[15] Though, as in all polyphonic systems, within the limits particular to that polyphony.

"collections of books" and "books") and memory studies. As with all approaches, it provides only one window into the subject to which this workshop is devoted. Other windows are necessary, and the same holds true for other viewpoints even within the very sightline of this window.

This said, as the rest of this essays shows, this "sightline" makes a substantial contribution to a better understanding of, inter alia, (a) the social roles of reading and rereading these twelve books among the literati of the late Persian / early Hellenistic Yehud / Judah; and (b) the basic social and mnemonic grammars of preferences and dis-preferences reflected by and governing the construction of how these twelve prophets were remembered.[16] The latter, in turn, open a window into the social mindscape of these literati. Since the social mindscape of the group was involved not only in processes dealing with the production and social use of these twelve prophetic books and the related memories of the twelve prophets, but also on the other books held as authoritative, and characters of the past, observations made here may help us to better construct a plausible reconstruction of the general intellectual world and social mindscape of the literati of the late Persian / early Hellenistic period, and as such set the study of these twelve prophetic characters of memory within a more comprehensive mnemonic system and a textual repertoire of books and collections substantially larger than the "The Twelve Prophetic Books."[17]

IV. Of Collections and Sub-Collections

Two uncontroversial premises provide the basic foundation for the present exploration: (a) prophetic books, and the genre of prophetic book existed in the late Persian / early Hellenistic period;[18] (b) the vast majority of the books that eventually become part of the Hebrew Bible (with some notable exceptions such

[16] To be sure, (a) and (b) are directly related and in fact, closely interwoven. The core role and one of the main reasons for reading and rereading the prophetic books was that doing so evoked, shaped and even allowed the literati to "vocalize" and thus partially embody, twelve prophetic characters of memory – hence the title of this chapter. I argued these matters elsewhere, e. g., "Remembering the Prophets through the Reading and Rereading of a Collection of Prophetic Books in Yehud": Methodological Considerations and Explorations," in *Remembering and Forgetting in Early Second Temple Judah* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin; FAT 85; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 17–44.

[17] Cf. the previous reference to *Sitz im Diskurs*.

[18] See the many recent contributions to the matter in *The New Form Criticism and the Book of the Twelve* (ed. M. J. Boda, M. H. Floyd and C. M. Toffelmire; ANEM 10; Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015) and, for my own position on these matters, E. Ben Zvi, "The Concept of Prophetic Books and Its Historical Setting," in *The Production of Prophecy. Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud* (ed. D. V. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi; London: Equinox, 2009), 73–95; id., "The Prophetic Book: A Key Form of Prophetic Literature," in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (ed. M. A. Sweeney and E. Ben Zvi; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 276–97.

as Daniel and Esther) as a whole is, at least to a significant degree and in broad strikes, representative of the core repertoire of authoritative texts of the (at least, ideologically) Jerusalem-centered literati of the late Persian / early Hellenistic period.[19]

The acceptance of these two premises leads to a significant observation: among these literati there was a strong tendency towards (a) the inclusion of books about particular prophetic characters in their authoritative repertoire; and (b) the organization of their core repertoire of authoritative texts into not necessarily mutually exclusive collections of books, such as the Pentateuch, the Hexateuch, the Deuteronomistic Historical Collection (hereafter, DHC), the Primary History, Samuel–Kings, and the Prophetic Book Collection (hereafter, PBC).

The literati's tendency towards weaving collections was at work not only at the level of book collections, but also at that of individual volumes. There is far more than a trace of anthological collection within the prophetic books, as they include multiple and substantially different sets of prophetic readings, and obviously books such as Proverbs and Psalms are anthological collections. I will come back to this grammar of preferences for collection making, but at this stage, it is also worth noting some common rules at work within this grammar that apply to clear-cut, explicit cases of anthological books (such as Proverbs, Psalms, Lamentations and Song of Songs).

There seems to have been a tendency within the literati of the late Persian / early Hellenistic period to shape a single rather than multiple anthologies for each (widely understood literary) genre. Although these anthologies may show clearly marked subdivisions (e. g., Proverbs, Psalms), they remain – even to a substantial extent – textually fluid within the community (e. g., Psalms) and even co-exist in several instantiations within the community; there seems that *conceptually* there was one "Book of Proverbs," one of Song of Songs, one of Lamentations, and likely one "Book of Psalms."[20]

[19] As I have written elsewhere, "there may have been other authoritative books in the discourse of the community, but there is no reason to assume that, as a whole, the repertoire of books from the period to which we have access (i. e., those that eventually became part of the Hebrew Bible) was non-representative of the actual repertoire of the community to the extent that we could not even approximate or tentatively approach the main systemic features of the Persian-period repertoire in Yehud by analysing the texts to which we have access …. [t]he conditions in the poor society of late Persian Yehud and the existence of a particularly very small circle of literati (likely around the Jerusalemite temple) was a far cry from anything in the late Second Temple, so inferences from the library situation at Qumran are not particularly germane for reconstructing the situation in Yehud" (E. Ben Zvi, "Exploring the Memory of Moses 'The Prophet' in Late Persian / Early Hellenistic Yehud / Judah," in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (ed. D. V. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 335–64, 338, n. 6.

[20] It is important to draw attention to the distinction between the "abstract" concept of book and the way in which such a concept is instantiated in a particular material object. For a recent study on these matters and their relevance to biblical books, see R. Hendel, "What is a Biblical Book?," in *From Author to Copyist: Essays on the Composition, Redaction and Transmission of*