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Last year Gorgias Press published a slim book by Ehud Ben Zvi and James Nogalski, entitled *Two Sides of a Coin: Juxtaposing Views on Interpreting The Book of the Twelve/The Twelve Prophetic Books* (Analecta Gorgiana, 201; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), one of the products of a symposium in Geneva in December, 2008, to which both authors contributed a paper.[1] Gorgias Press has created something of a niche for itself in publishing short books that focus on issues and controversies in the field; this slender, beautifully produced volume is no exception. The authors represent two positions on the question of the Twelve, resulting from their different methodological approaches. By seeing them side by side, the reader is invited to participate in the debate, and perhaps reach his or her own conclusions. In this essay, I intend to discuss both papers, before introducing my own perspective as a literary critic, who is thus rather far from the theoretical interests of both contributors.[2]

I will begin with James D. Nogalski's contribution, "One Book and Twelve Books: The Nature of the Redactional Work and the Implications of Cultic Source Material in the Book of the Twelve" (11–46). Nogalski is a strong proponent of the thesis that the Book of the Twelve was an intentional redactional unit, which he has advocated in several important

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[1] The book is introduced by T. Römer, who organized the symposium as part of a doctoral program on the origin and formation of the prophetic books for students of the four French-speaking Swiss universities. The proceedings are to be published in French. In his introduction (1-10), Römer provides a summary of the main issues between Nogalski and Ben Zvi.

A version of this essay was originally delivered at a special session devoted to the book at the Pacific Northwest regional meeting of the AAR/SBL in Victoria, British Columbia, in May 2010. Both authors were present, spoke about their work and methodological approaches and responded to questions.

[2] P. R. House, *The Unity of the Twelve* (JSOTSup, 76; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) argues from a literary, synchronic point of view. As Ben Zvi says, the boundaries between literary and historical approaches are porous (48), but nonetheless the difference in theoretical interests between Nogalski and House is immense. Needless to say, House is a very different literary critic, with different methodological presuppositions, from myself.

works.[3] He is indeed largely responsible for what he calls the consensus (12) in favour of the thesis, as exemplified by the Formation of the Book of the Twelve Seminar of the SBL and literature emanating from it.[4] He argues for it on three principal grounds:

(a) Chronological sequence, from the eighth century to the fifth, as evidenced by superscriptions. In other words, the Book of the Twelve was intended to provide a history of prophecy from Hosea to Malachi, from the fall of the northern Israel to the Persian period.

(b) The priority of the MT order, suggestive of intentional composition, in contrast to the LXX, in which Micah immediately follows Hosea and Amos, and Joel is in fourth position.[5]

(c) Common themes, catchwords, and citations, through which the books are consciously related to each other, especially at the later stages of redaction. For instance, he points to citations of Amos in the previous book, Joel, as well as in the following one, Obadiah (12).

In the next part of the essay (14–16), Nogalski elaborates his hypothesis, which he says has met with wide acceptance, that the Book of the Twelve developed around two pre-existing corpora, one consisting of Hosea, Amos, Micah and Zephaniah, the other of Haggai and Zech 1–8. The former can be recognized through its superscriptions, and through a general Deuteronomistic conception of history; the latter is generally acknowledged.[6]

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[3] J. D. Nogalski *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW, 217; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1993), and *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW, 218; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1993), as well as many articles.

[4] In particular, J. D. Nogalski and M. A. Sweeney (eds), *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* ed. (SBLSymS, 15; Atlanta: SBL, 2000). See also J. W. Watts and P. R. House (eds), *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D.W.Watts* (JSOTSup, 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); T. Collins *The Mantle of Elijah: The Redaction Criticism of the Prophetical Books* (The Biblical Seminar, 20; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 59-87; and P. L. Redditt and A. Schart (eds) *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW, 325; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2003).

[5] See M. A. Sweeney, "Sequence and Interpretation in the Book of the Twelve" in *Reading and Hearing*, 49-64, who suggests that the MT represents a Jerusalem-centered focus from Persian or Hellenistic period Yehud. Sweeney compares the MT and LXX sequences and their effect on the interpretation of the Twelve in detail in Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets Vol. 1* (Berit Olam Commentary, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), xxvii-xxxix, and indeed throughout the commentary. Ben Zvi (69, n. 47) notes that five different sequences are clearly attested.

[6] *Literary Precursors*, 277. Nogalski ("One Book and Twelve

After a discussion of critiques of the thesis, to which I will return, Nogalski continues with the growth of these preexisting corpora into the Book of the Twelve, through the addition of the extra six books (22–30).[7] For instance, he proposes that Joel was inserted between Hosea and Amos so as to shift the focus of the first part of the collection from Northern Israel to Jerusalem, corresponding to Sweeney's emphasis on the centrality of Jerusalem to the MT sequence (25–26).[8] Similarly, the inclusion of Nahum and Habakkuk filled in an important historical gap, namely the fall of Assyria (34). He admits that the reasons for and the processes by which the other books were incorporated are not always clear, particularly in the cases of Jonah and Malachi (28, 30).[9]

Books," 15) notes that his designation of the former group as the Deuteronomistic corpus has been critiqued by Aaron Schart, because of its lack of typical Deuteronomistic vocabulary. Cf. Schart, "Reconstructing the Redaction History of the Twelve Prophets: Problems and Models" in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 34-48 (43) and idem, *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs: Neuarbeitungen von Amos im Rahmen scriftübergreifender Redaktionsprozesse* (BZAW, 260; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1998), 218-33. See also, Rainer Albertz, "Exile as Purification: Reconstructing the 'Book of the Four'" in *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, 232-51, who points out that Hosea has almost no Deuteronomistic language, and that Deuteronomistic diction often occurs in post-exilic redactional layers. A detailed discussion of the contribution of the exilic redactors of the Book of the Four is to be found in R. Albertz *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (tr. D. Green; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 204-37. Albertz remarks, "the linking texts do not speak with a distinctly Deuteronomistic voice" (208).

[7] This is the subject of his second book, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve*.

[8] See also Nogalski's more detailed study, "Joel as 'Literary Anchor' for the Book of the Twelve" in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 91-109 (100).

[9] R. Fuller proposed in 1988 that in 4QXII[a] Jonah follows Malachi. Barry Jones, "The Book of the Twelve as a Witness to Ancient Biblical Interpretation" in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 65-74 (68), holds that this was the original sequence. O. Steck, "Zur Abfolge Maleachi-Jona in 4Q76 (4QXII[a])" *ZAW* 108 (1996), 249-253, proposes that it was a secondary development from the original order, which ended with Malachi, as attested by Sirach. He thinks that it was motivated by a desire to end the *Nebi'im* with an intimation of salvation of the nations, in accordance with the irenic atmosphere of the early Seleucid period. P. Guillaume, "The Unlikely Malachi-Jonah Sequence (4QXII[a])" *JHS* 7 (2007), Article 15, available online at http://www.jhsonline.org (and published also in print in E. Ben Zvi (ed.), *Perspectives in Hebrew Scriptures IV: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures, vol. 7* [Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008], 445–58) expresses doubts about the reconstruction of the scroll. See further, R. E. Fuller, "The Form and Formation of the Book of the Twelve: The Evidence from the Judean Desert," *Forming Prophetic Literature*, 86-101, which is likewise rather inconclusive.

Much of this section of Nogalski's essay, and clearly his prime interest, is in how the different books were expanded to strengthen the intertextual and thematic links between the books. Examples are the theophanic hymns in Habakkuk 3 and Nahum 1, and the psalm of thanksgiving in Jonah 2 (27, 32–34).[10] He is both concerned with how the pre-existing materials were adapted and co-opted to conform to the growing sense of the book, and with the reasons for the shift from prophetic to cultic texts. Why were so many hymns introduced at a late stage in composition (33, 39)? This leads to his attribution of the editing and final composition of the Book of the Twelve to Levites in fifth century Jerusalem, on the grounds of their cultic expertise, their literacy, and their interest in what he regards as the major themes of the book (the Day of the Lord; fertility; theodicy; and the fate of Israel).

Ehud Ben Zvi is one of the most thoroughgoing critics of what he calls the Twelve Hypothesis, or TH for short.[11] He argues, in his contribution to the volume, "Is the Twelve Hypothesis Likely from an Ancient Reader's Perspective?" (41–96), that, like all general or grand hypotheses, the TH is attractive because of its explanatory power, and takes a plethora of forms.[12] At the same time, because of its generality it inevitably has points of tension or weakness, which have to be explained away, but which may generate new versions of the hypothesis (51). Its contribution to the field of biblical studies is precisely the number of questions it renders possible, and the opportunity it affords for methodological reflection.[13] It

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[10] See also Nogalski, "Recurring Themes in the Book of the Twelve: Creating Points of Contact for a Theological Reading" *Int* 61 (2007), 125-37.

[11] Particularly in his essay, "'Twelve Prophetic Books' or 'The Twelve'? A Few Preliminary Considerations" in *Forming Prophetic Literature*, 125-56. Other sceptics include D. L. Petersen and M. Beck, but they are much less far-reaching in their criticisms. David Petersen, "A Book of the Twelve?" *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 3-10, questions the pertinence of the concept of the "book," and suggests that the Book of the Twelve is more of an anthology with thematic links, such as "the Day of the Lord?," Beck, "Das Dodekapropheton als Anthologie" *ZAW* 118 (2006), 558-81, provides a survey of the meaning of the anthology in the ancient world, concluding that the Twelve are an anthology, collected rather late in the process of transmission. See also idem, *Der 'Tag YHWHs' im Dodekapropheton. Studien im Spannungsfeld von Traditions- und Redaktionsgeschichte* (BZAW, 356; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2005). Nogalski discusses these critics in a section entitled "Doubts about the Task" (16-22).

[12] At the beginning of his essay (47-48), Ben Zvi notes the multiplicity of versions of the TH. In this, he says, it is like other grand hypotheses, such as that of the Deuteronomistic history.

[13] Ben Zvi comments that it provides "a new lens to look at the texts" (51) and "an important impetus for new research" (52).

corresponds, too, to a modernist desire for an inclusive metanarrative:

> It (the TH) shaped a grand narrative that binds together monarchic, exilic, and Persian period Israel and their intellectual and literary worlds through a thread of continuous re-writing of an ongoing, shared text, and a chain of ongoing theological thinking in which generations build on the work of past generations, across and despite the chasm created by historical disasters. (51)

The difference between Nogalski and Ben Zvi is largely a methodological one. Nogalski's is a redaction-critical approach, while Ben Zvi's focus, as his title suggests, is on the readerships (or, in his parlance, *rereaderships*) of the texts (53).[14] He argues that it would have been much more probable that ancient rereaders would have regarded the Twelve as discrete entities, and thus conceived of fifteen prophetic books instead of four. He grants that one's results are partially determined by one's methodology; nonetheless, he devotes the first major section of his essay to arguing that his approach is to be preferred over a redaction-critical one in reconstructing the discourse of ancient Yehud (ibid).

Ben Zvi's main point in his methodological section (54–63), one to which I will return, is that what was authoritative in ancient Yehud was not books but readings of them (54). Communities developed authoritative readings, based on a high degree of literary competence, and constructed texts in conjunction with those readings. Implied author and implied reader or reader community converge; each reading in fact erases the memory of the historical author, as well as all preceding versions of the text (58–59). A consequence is that all readings were synchronic (58); a successful redaction would be one which suppressed all its antecedents. Thus an historian engaged in trying to discern the intellectual history of Yehud must start with texts as they would have been received, understood, interpreted and reconstituted, despite the inevitable dangers of circularity, indeterminacy, and the potential multiplicity of interpretive communities, which affect any historical argument (60–63). Redactional-critical approaches, he claims, are in fact more vulnerable to these criticisms (63).[15]

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[14] Another reader-oriented approach, largely influenced by U. Eco, is represented by E. W. Conrad, "Forming the Twelve and Forming Canon" in *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, 90-103. Significantly, Conrad's work mostly concerns the intertextual links between superscriptions to prophetic books, and does not lend support to the TH.

[15] Ben Zvi's approach has some affinity with the canonical-critical one, in that its focus is on the community in which the texts were authoritative, and their contribution to community construction. The

In the next part of the essay (64–72), Ben Zvi provides detailed arguments against the TH. He points out that we have no evidence as to when the Twelve were grouped on one scroll, or whether any ancient readers read them as a unity. There is no *pesher* of the Twelve, for instance, nor any rabbinic interpretation that sees them as anything other than separate books. That there were different sequences of the books suggests that the order was malleable, similar to Ketuvim (69–72). He continues (72–77) by contending that the superscriptions are *prima facie* evidence that the Twelve were intended to be read as separate books. They signal to the reader that a unique discourse, attributed to a particular named prophet, is beginning. He concedes to Nogalski that the superscriptions may have had a macrostructural function, but only if one assumes the TH in advance (77).[16] Further, the endings of books often demarcate them.[17] Likewise, the style of a book may distinguish it from others (78–79). A good example is Hosea, whose linguistic peculiarities are often explained by its northern origins.[18] Another argument Ben Zvi adduces is that the TH would postulate a genre that is otherwise unattested. Whereas each of the individual books conforms quite markedly to the model of the prophetic book, there is nothing like the Twelve. It may be an anthology, as Martin Beck suggests, but if so, it differs from other biblical anthologies in not being attributed to a particular culture hero, like David or Solomon (79–80).

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difference, however, is that the canonical-critical perspective is teleological and theological; in other words, texts are understood and, in part, evaluated as foundational to the future Jewish and Christian communities. Ben Zvi is, in contrast, interested in the intellectual life of Yehud, which is of course largely theological, irrespective of its afterlife in Jewish and Christian discourse.

[16] For an elaborate theory of superscriptions in the Twelve on three levels of the redactional process, see J. D. W. Watts, "Superscriptions and Incipits in the Book of the Twelve" in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 110-24.

[17] Ben Zvi provides a whole list, including the endings of the major prophetic books of Isaiah and Ezekiel (78). Jeremiah is obviously a special case. See further, Ben Zvi, "The Prophetic Book: A Key Form of Prophetic Literature" in M. A. Sweeney and E. Ben Zvi (eds), *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty First Century* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 276-97 (286).

[18] Those who are familiar with Ben Zvi's work on Chronicles will recognize his case that the creation of a marked style, for instance LBH (Late Biblical Hebrew), is a choice that establishes the individual voice of a book in contradistinction from others. See Ben Zvi, *History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles* (London: Equinox, 2006), 30 and passim, and his "The Communicative Message of Some Linguistic Choices," E. Ben Zvi, D. V. Edelman and F. Polak (eds), *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics and Language Relating to Persian Israel* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 269-90.

All these considerations converge, Ben Zvi says (80), on a single central point. Ancient readers did not relate to books in themselves, but as vehicles for authoritative teachings coming from the great visionaries of the past, and ultimately from God. The prophetic book gave them access to the prophet himself. Books such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel conveyed the message and personality of those figures.[19] There could be no Book of the Twelve, simply because there was no one called The Twelve (82–83).

Ben Zvi concludes his essay by returning to methodological considerations and their practical implications (85–96). This is divided into four parts: i) implications for memory studies. How did ancient readers remember and construct their past? ii) implications for openings and endings, and how one evaluates catchwords; iii) issues for the model of reading; iv) the identification of central themes versus marginal texts. These are clearly very important and will require further attention.

Nogalski responds to Ben Zvi, as well as his other critics, in a brief section of his essay (16–22). He makes two main points. The first is that it is no objection to the TH that the book has no superscription. The Torah has no superscription, yet "few would doubt the interconnectedness of the edited works" (17). Similarly, Psalms have no overall superscription, even though individual psalms do. Nonetheless, it is widely recognized that the arrangement of the Psalms has been subject to editing.[20] Nogalski, however, does not address the positive aspect of Ben Zvi's argument, that the superscriptions serve to identify the individual books. His second point relates to catchwords. Nogalski holds that books are linked together through common catchwords. Ben Zvi doubts that they would have been discernable, or that they would have over-ridden the clearly marked boundaries between texts.[21] Nogalski responds that Ben Zvi's criteria are over-exacting, and that the persuasiveness of the parallels depends both on the multitude of catchwords and on their contextual appreciation.

Nogalski does not engage, however, with the fundamental difference between himself and Ben Zvi, namely that between redactional and reader-oriented approaches, or with Ben Zvi's central point, that ancient readers thought in terms of prophets

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[19] Even as they erased those figures through reinventing them in social memory. See pp. 58-59.

[20] In addition to the references supplied by Nogalski (17, n. 15), one should note the many detailed structuralist readings of P. Auffret, e.g., *La Sagesse a bâtî sa maison: études de structures littéraires dans l'Ancien Testament et spécialement dans les psaumes* (OBO, 49; Fribourg: Editions universitaires, 1982), 407-437, on Pss 15-24.

[21] Nogalski is reacting to some comments in Ben Zvi, "Twelve Books or 'The Twelve'," 135-37, 139-42.

rather than of books, and that books were only meaningful insofar as they preserved the voices and messages of the past.

I can only add a few questions to this debate, from the perspective of a literary outsider. My primary interest is not in the history of the text's composition, in how it may have been understood by its first readers, in what it tells us about community construction and memory in ancient Yehud. I deal with the text as a work of art, with its metaphors, wordplays, and other figures of speech; with the development of symbolic and associative fields; with language of great depth and beauty. Some of the poetry of the Twelve is indeed of extraordinary quality, as is the prose narrative of Jonah. As Ben Zvi says, however, the boundaries between literary and historical discourse are porous (48). The work cannot but refer to its world, and speak for its world. An historical awareness, no matter how tentative, informs all our reading. For that reason the debate between Nogalski and Ben Zvi concerns me. It might be thought that I side with Ben Zvi; after all, he adopts an explicitly synchronic approach, since that is the way the primary communities of readers understood the texts. It is true, moreover, that I agree with most, if not all, of his points. However, I have learnt much from redaction critics, like Nogalski and his mentor, O. Steck, since they ask questions which must concern every literary critic: Why is this particular word chosen in this place? How does it link up with other words in other places? What can it suggest about the intellectual horizons and ideological interests of authors and readers? How are texts put together? Questions like these are perhaps more important than the answers, since they open the mind to the fractures and difficulties in the text. Opposition is true friendship.

The first question is what is a whole? We in literary studies find this an extremely complex and difficult question, especially if we are exposed to deconstruction. Any aesthetic and imaginative work is the product of a tension, between the drive towards coherence, towards asserting the unity of the world, history etc, and the tendency towards fragmentation – or let us say the world's resistance. In biblical studies, it is even more difficult, first of all because of overt or covert theological agendas,[22] and secondly, because we do not know what

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[22] The agenda is overt in the case of canonical-critics, but it may also be discerned in the approach of House, *The Unity of the Twelve*, for whom the underlying plot is a version of "salvation history." In general, "final form" criticism, as promoted, for instance, by rhetorical criticism, appealed to conservative as well as literary scholars, especially in America, since it promised to preserve the integrity of the Bible against the corrosive effects of documentary theory. It should be noted that Nogalski, in his guest editoral introduction to the special issue of *Interpretation* on the Book of the Twelve, "Reading the Book of the Twelve Theologically" *Interpretation*

constituted literary unity in the ancient world, or whether such unity was intended.[23] For that reason, I deal, on the whole, with very small portions of text, which are relatively clearly demarcated, and the vast vistas supposed by the TH induce a certain agrophobia.

In the case of the prophetic books, it is easy to see the relative unity of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They are unified as quasi-biographies of their respective prophets as well as structurally. Ezekiel, in particular, is enclosed between two matching visions, one in exile, the other of the restored temple; it is organized according the conventional three part pattern of oracles against Israel, oracles against the nations, followed by oracles of salvation; it divides neatly in the middle; and is characterized by hypertrophic .patterns of repetition and reversal.[24] Jeremiah is a more difficult case, because of its different versions in MT and LXX; nonetheless the mostly poetic passages in chapters 1–20 correspond, more or less, to the mostly prose narratives in chapters 21–45.[25] Isaiah is a more difficult case still. There has been a great deal of work in the last 30 years on the interconnections between the different parts of the book, not least by Nogalski's *Doktorvater,* Odil Steck, and one can see how it would serve as a model for the redaction history of the Twelve.[26] At the same time, any reader

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61 (2007), 115-24, adopts an explicitly theological agenda—perhaps in line with the journal in which it was published.

[23] Of course, such unity may be intended or imputed. However, at least in the case of most literary and artistic works, such as Greek drama or vases, we do know that they exist as self-contained entities, and then have to judge their aesthetic success. With biblical texts like the Twelve, we are on much less certain ground.

[24] M. Greenberg (*Ezekiel 1-20*, AB, 22; New York: Doubleday, 1983; *Ezekiel 21-37*, AB, 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1997) has argued that Ezekiel is "the product of art and intelligent design" (26), with insistent and obtrusive structuration. An example of the mirroring effect is the reversal of the oracle against the mountains of Israel in chapter 6 in chapter 36. For two recent treatments of the motif of exposure of corpses in Ezekiel and its relation to the structural semiotics of the book, see F. Stavrakopoulou, "Gog's Grave and the Use and Abuse of Corpses in Ezekiel 39: 11-20" *JBL* 129 (2010), 67-84 (69, 83-84) and J. T. Strong, "Egypt's Shameful Death and the House of Israel's Exodus (Ezekiel 32.17-32 and 37.1-14)" *JSOT* 34 (2010), 475-504.

[25] For a detailed structural, though to my mind somewhat mechanical, reading of Jeremiah, see J. R. Lundbom's 3 volume Anchor Bible commentary (*Jeremiah 1-20,* AB, 21; Doubleday: New York, 1999; *Jeremiah 21-36*, AB, 21B; Doubleday: New York, 2004; *Jeremiah 37-52*, AB, 21C; Doubleday: New York 2004). M. Kessler (ed.) *Reading the Book of Jeremiah: A Search for Coherence* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004) is a valuable collection of essays on the issue.

[26] Despite various precursors, the modern study of the unity of Isaiah was stimulated by two articles: R. Rendtorff, "Zur Komposition des Buches Jesaja" *VT* 34 (1984) 295-320 (ET "The Composition of the Book of Isaiah" in R. Rendtorff, *Canon and*

of the Book of Isaiah has to take into account the immense stylistic, thematic, figurative and contextual distance between Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah, and the very different atmosphere and subject matter of Trito-Isaiah. Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Isaiah is unified, at least in part, by its attribution to a single prophet, and its transmission of narratives about him.[27] This is evidently true in chapters 1–39, but even in 40–66, many scholars see the prophetic figure as being either modeled on the prophet or putatively identified with him.[28] As with the Twelve, there are numerous catchwords and thematic continuities, such as the motif of blindness and deafness,[29] and it has a clear two part structure.[30] At the same time, P. Willey

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Theology: Overtures towards an Old Testament Theology [tr. M. Kohl Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994], 146–69), and R. E. Clements, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah" *Int* 36 (1982), 117–29. It has since developed an enormous literature. Odil Steck's seminal contribution from the point of view of redaction criticism was *Bereitete Heimkehr: Jesaja 35 als redaktionelle Brücke zwischen dem Ersten und dem Zweiten Jesaja* (Katholisches Bibelwerk: Stuttgart, 1985), but see also his collected articles in *Studien zu Tritojesaja* (BZAW, 203; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991) and *Gottesknecht und Zion: Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterojesaja* (FAT, 4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992). For a convenient summary of current views, see H. G. M. Williamson, "Recent Issues in the Study of Isaiah" in D. G. Firth and H. G. M. Williamson (eds) *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches* (Nottingham and Downer's Grove; Apollos, 2009), pp 21–39. Williamson himself has been no mean contributor to the debate, particularly in *The Book Called Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994). See also the various essays in R. F. Melugin and M. A. Sweeney (eds) *New Visions of Isaiah* (JSOTSup, 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), and A. J. Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim (eds) *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (Atlanta: SBL, 2009), both emanating from the SBL Formation of Isaiah Seminar.

[27] See Peter Ackroyd, "Isaiah I–XII: Presentation of a Prophet" (VTSup, 29; Brill: Leiden, 1978), 16–48, and "Isaiah 36–39: Structure and Function" in W. C. Delsman et al. (eds), *Von Kanaan bis Kerala: Festschrift für J. P. M. van der Ploeg* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 3–21. Ackroyd notes the schematic reversal of Isaiah's contretemps with Ahaz in chapter 7 in Hezekiah's faithful response in chapters 36–38.

[28] Ulrich Berges, *Jesaja 40–48* (HKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2008), 90, for Deutero-Isaiah, and Burkhard Zapff, *Jesaja 56–66* (Neuer Echter Bibel; Würzburg: Echter, 2006), 390, for Trito-Isaiah, are representative examples. Many scholars, for instance, think that 40:1–11 schematically reflects and reverses Isaiah's vocation scene in ch.6, as does 61:1–3a.

[29] On these linkages, see especially R. E. Clements, "Beyond Tradition-History: Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah's Themes" *JSOT* 31 (1985), 95–113.

[30] Another very well-established structural marker is the reprise of Isaiah 1–2:4 in Isa 65–66. See Joëlle Ferry, *Isaïe: "comme les mots d'un livre scellé" (Is 29,11)* (Paris: du Cerf, 2008), 39–66; D. M. Carr, "Reaching for Unity in Isaiah" *JSOT* 57 (1993), 61–80; A. J. Tomasino, "Isaiah 1.1–2.4 and 63–66, and the Composition of the

and B. Sommer have both argued that Deutero-Isaiah has at least as many affinities with Jeremiah as with Proto-Isaiah; it could well have formed a supplement to that book.[31]

In the Book of the Twelve, it would be even harder, I would have thought, to find any kind of poetic unity. An ancient reader would have to overcome not only the hugely disjunctive effect of the superscriptions, but even more the radically different subject matters, styles, and the powerful internal coherence of each of the respective books. Amos and Hosea, for instance, can only be lumped together as part of a Book of Four by ignoring their extraordinary individuality and closely worked internal structures, like the mirroring of the oracles against the nations in Amos 1–2 in the vision sequence of Amos 7–9,[32] or the alternation of parallel chapters in the middle section of Hosea.[33] It is, of course, possible to read the Twelve as a whole, and clearly Nogalski, House and others have done so. As Ben Zvi remarks, moreover, "as readers approach it as one book, they are bound to 'discover' structures, macrostructures, general themes, and other markers of textual coherence" (64).[34] The more one works with a text, as Nogalski has done with his two books, the more interconnections will become apparent. The consensus, or what Ben Zvi calls the grand hypothesis, is the product of vast and careful labour. But it is also the result of a choice. Nogalski looks for anomalies, especially at the beginning and end of books, and treats them as evidence for secondary redaction,

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Isaianic Corpus" *JSOT* 57 (1993), 81-98; R. Rendtorff, "Zur Komposition" and many others.

[31] P. T. Willey *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (SBLDS 161; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); B. Sommer *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). A certain degree of contingency affects all literature.

[32] Amos begins with a set of formulaic oracles against the nations, whose ultimate object is Israel; it ends with a set of equally formulaic visions, whose climax is the destruction of the Temple, but then which surprisingly reverts to the nations. Each sequence turns on the threshold between forgiveness and non-forgiveness. See, generally, J. R. Linville *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination* (SOTS; Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2007) and F. Landy, "Smith, Derrida, and Amos," W. Braun and R. T. McCutcheon (eds), *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith* (London: Equinox, 2008) 208–30 (226).

[33] The correlations are in fact much more complex. Hosea 8 is closely echoed in Hosea 10, and chapter 9 in 11; however, there are also correlations between Hosea 7 and 8, and between 8 and 9. See Francis Landy, *Hosea* (Readings; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 124, 136.

[34] Ben Zvi gives the Bible itself as the most evident example of a literary corpus that has been treated for centuries as an organic whole (64, n. 37). The TH, at least in canonical-critical form, may be a gesture in that direction.

whose function is to link the book in question to others. A good example is Hos 14:8a, which is alleged to be slightly discordant, but which is lexically connected to the beginning of the following book, Joel.[35] Another choice would be to look for literary connections with its context in Hosea, for instance its place in the standard agricultural triad of corn, wine and oil, and to attempt to account for its syntactic awkwardness.[36]

The assumption behind Nogalski's approach is that there is such a thing as a pure, simple, literary text, for example that without Hos 14:8a, the chapter would be smoother and somehow "better." Such an ideal does not exist, which is the reason for the dissolution of the text into ever more complicated redactional layers. Whatever the markers of internal coherence, every prophetic book (except perhaps Obadiah?) is presented as a collection of discourses, delivered at different times and places, with perhaps different points of view.[37] More fundamentally, many if not all prophetic books thematize the problem of poetic language and unity in a symbolic world that collapses and has to be thought anew. Linville, for instance, writes "(Amos) forces the reader to attempt to make order, even as it continually deconstructs any order created."[38] Hosea, likewise, is notorious for its fractured

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[35] The phrase in question is ישבו ישבי בצלו יחיו דגן, "Those who sit in its shade will give life to grain" (Ben Zvi discusses alternative translations on p. 87, n. 87). ישבי occurs in Joel 1:2 and 14, as יושבי הארץ, "those who dwell in the land," and דגן is found in 1:10 (*Literary Precursors*, 276; *Redactional Processes*, 13–14). The problem is that ישבו, "they shall return," implies a post-exilic context, according to Nogalski; however, following the predictions of destruction and exile throughout the book, it seems entirely appropriate. Nogalski's thesis that Joel is a complex interpretation or reinterpretation of Hosea, for instance involving the use of key agricultural terms in Hosea 2, is beyond the scope of this essay to examine in detail. See Ben Zvi, 87–88.

[36] For a representative sample, see Landy, *Hosea*, 173–74; the detailed discussion in Ben Zvi, *Hosea* (FOTL, XX1A/1; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 298, who stresses its multivalence; and A. A. Macintosh, *Hosea* (ICC; London: T & T Clark, 1997), 574–75.

[37] One may note, for instance, the disjunctive effect of introductory formulae like "Hear the word of YHWH." There are many instances of prophets (or God) apparently changing their minds, and indeed it is a major issue in Jonah. A good example is the contradiction between Hos 9:3, in which Israel is destined to return to Egypt, and Hos 11:4, where it will not return to Egypt. Most commentators emend or interpret the text in various ways. For a discussion of rhetorical function of the contradiction, see Landy, *Hosea,* 139. See also Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 239, who suggests a *qere/ketib* dynamic, oscillating between לא and לו.

[38] *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, 53. Linville's book is replete with such quotations. See also Y. Sherwood and J. D. Caputo, "Otobiographies, Or How a Torn and Disembodied Ear Hears a Promise of Death (A Prearranged Meeting Between Yvonne

syntax, its insoluble ambiguities, its complex and tortuous metaphors, through which it tries to communicate the horror and vacuity of its represented world and the failure of the Israelite metanarrative, as well as the inexplicable and unimaginable utopia on the other side of the disaster.[39] Each book, then, is strongly marked as an individual entity; centripetal tendencies overwhelm centrifugal ones. The TH, to be successful, would have to provide sufficient counterweight to this dynamic. At the same time, it would internalize, and exacerbate, the difficulty of finding an adequate poetic language and of integrating the poetic world, common to Amos, Hosea and others. Its unity would have to incorporate disunity, and would be radically subverted by it.

The second question involves contrast. Nogalski, as I have mentioned, argues for unity largely on the basis of catchwords, citations, and common themes. However, in literature in general, and the prophetic books, in particular, contrast is an equally important structural principle.[40] For instance, in the book of Isaiah, it is hard to avoid the contrast between the first twelve chapters, which culminate in the glorification of Zion, and the oracles against the nations in Isa 13–23.[41] The relationship between the two blocks is antithetical, with very few lexical correspondences, and conforms to a well-known

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Sherwood and John D. Caputo and the Book of Amos and Jacques Derrida," Y. Sherwood and K. Hart (eds) *Derrida and Religion: Other Testaments* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 209–39, and Yvonne Sherwood's earlier "Of Fruit and Corpses and Wordplay Visions: Picturing Amos 8.1–3," *JSOT* 92 (2001), 5–27. Sherwood is fond of the Midrashic saying, quoting Amos 3:8, that prophetic metaphor "break(s) open the ear in its capacity for hearing" ("Of Fruit and Corpses," 16; "Otobiographies," 224). The quote is from Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael *Bahodesh* 4.11. Lauterbach's translation, in fact, says the opposite, "that the ear might get it in accordance with its capacity for hearing. The original text reads, לשבר האוזן מה שהיא יכולה לשמוע [Lauterbach] or לשכך האוזן מה שהיא יכולה לשמוע [Horowitz-Rabin, as per Bar Ilan Response and see text-critical apparatus in Lauterbach] and see context there, esp. Mek. *Bahodesh* 4.7–16.

[39] On this, see Landy, *Hosea*, passim. A good account is H. Fisch, "Hosea: A Poetics of Violence," *Poetry with a Purpose: Biblical Poetics and Interpretation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 137–58.

[40] For the combination of strong contrast with equivalence in the poetic function (which affects all self-aware, aesthetically influenced language), see A. Berlin *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1985), 11–13. Berlin is basing herself on Jakobsonian poetics, as mediated through Jakobson's student, L. Waugh, in "The Poetic Function and the Nature of Language" *Poetics Today* 2/1a (1980), 27–52.

[41] Some scholars include the so-called Little Apocalypse (Isaiah 24–27) in this section, but it is clearly distinguished from the oracles of Isa 13–23 by its lack of the distinctively generic label משא, and even more by the inclusivity of its subject matter.

rhetorical pattern in the prophets, whereby judgement against the nations succeeds that against Israel and leads to a synthesis or reversal.[42] In the Book of the Twelve, one might expect similar dialectical relationships. There are hints of this in Nogalski's work. For instance, the transition from Nahum to Habakkuk bridges the fall of Assyria and the rise of Babylon (37).[43] In an essay in *Interpretation*, he writes about "contrasting messages," illustrating it with the antithesis between Jonah and Nahum.[44] This, however, is seen as being a theological problem, not as a structural principle.[45] Likewise, at times Nogalski suggests that Joel 1 represents the lack of fulfillment of the Hoseanic promise in Hos 14:2–10.[46] Irrespective of how good his comparisons are, one would have expected some explicit indication in the text, on the lines of "Why have Hosea's (or the former prophets') predictions not come to pass?," unless one already assumes a text continuum. From this point of view, Haggai would have made a much better sequel to Hosea. In general, however, as I have noted, unity is established through catchwords and common themes. Leaving aside the issue of catchwords for the moment, what is remarkable about the themes is their generality and homogeneity. It is hard to imagine a biblical book that is not concerned with "the fertility of the land, the fate of God's people, and the theodicy problem."[47] Moreover, there does not

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[42] Another example is the juxtaposition of oracles of hope with oracles of judgement, as we find repeatedly in Isa 1–12.

[43] There are other connections too. For instance, both Nahum and Habakkuk are entitled מַשָּׂא. However, Nogalski links them principally through their use of theophanies (Nah 1:2–8; Hab 3), which, he claims, refer indirectly to the particular imperial enemies each book addresses. Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 143–48, distinguishes between a wisdom-oriented layer of Hab 1 and an anti-Babylonian commentary; only secondarily was Habakkuk directed against the Babylonians, so as to fit its context in the Book of the Twelve. However, I do not see any trace of a direct reference to the Babylonians in the relevant passages in Hab 1.

[44] "Reading the Book of the Twelve Theologically," 116.

[45] Remarkably, Nogalski thinks that in this respect the Twelve are unlike other prophetic writings: "(it) requires us to rethink what we assume to be the nature of prophetic literature and prophetic pronouncements" ("Reading the Book of the Twelve Theologically," 115).

[46] *Redactional Processes*, 21. Similarly, A. Schart writes, "Only those who have first read Hosea are prepared to understand Joel's prophecy" ("The First Section of the Book of the Twelve Prophets: Hosea-Joel-Amos" *Int* 61 (2007), 138–52 (142). See also Schart *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs*, 266. Without the presupposition that Joel follows Hosea, and that therefore the crisis in Joel 1–2 needs explanation, there is no evidence for this in the text.

[47] "Recurring Themes," 125. Ben Zvi (95) makes the same point: "All of them can be explained in term of the general discourse of the period with no recourse to the TH."

seem to be anything particularly distinctive about what the Book of the Twelve has to say about these topics.[48] The one exception is "the day of the Lord," which is somewhere in between a theme and a catchword. Nogalski says, "The Day of YHWH functions as a recurring concept in the Book of the Twelve more prominently than in any other prophetic corpus."[49] However, if one looks at the occurrences of the term, one notices that it appears five times in Joel (1:15; 2:1; 2:11; 3:4; 4:14) and not at all in the two largest books, Hosea and Zechariah.[50] The concept is all pervasive in the prophets, albeit with slight terminological variations.[51] How, for instance, should one evaluate יום לה', "a day for YHWH," in Isa 2:12? Or יום נקם לה', "a day of vengeance for YHWH" in Isa 34:8 (cf. also 61:2 and 63:4)? Obviously, they belong to the same conceptual field, despite the phraseological difference. In other words, the choice to look for similarities rather than differences and contrasts results in a certain sameness, and a difficulty in distinguishing the Twelve from other corpora.

Thirdly, Ben Zvi , as already mentioned, argues that redactional criticism is far more vulnerable to issues of indeterminacy and circularity than his reader-oriented approach. With every level of complexity, the uncertainty incrementally increases.[52] But it is also a poetic problem. Redaction criticism works on the principle that every level and voice in the text has to represent a single and specific point of

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[48] Indeed, Nogalski often refers to its closeness to the book of Isaiah (as well as other prophetic writings), e.g., *Redactional Processes* 280. See also Collins, *The Mantle of Elijah*, 37–87, which parallels the two.

[49] "Recurring Themes," 125. See also R. Rendtorff, "How to Read the Book of the Twelve as a Theological Unity" in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 75–86, who states that the concept of the "Day of the Lord" "does not appear at all in other writings" (77)—a rather more dramatic statement of the position than Nogalski's.

[50] Other places where it occurs are Amos 5:18 and 20, where the statements are dialogically interlinked; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7 and 1:14 (twice); and Mal 3:23, in a context that is often held to be a conclusion to the whole of the *Nebi'im*. It is also missing from Micah, Jonah, Habbakuk, Nahum and Haggai.

[51] See also Ben Zvi (95, 97), who includes also references in Lamentations (1:12; 2:1, 21, 22). For a critical discussion, arguing that "the day of YHWH" is neither a fixed term nor a fixed concept, see Daniella Ishai-Rosenbloom, "Is יום לה' (The Day of the Lord) a Term in Biblical Language?" *Bib* 87 (2006), 395–401.

[52] Ben Zvi, 63 n. 34. For instance, a proposal with two-thirds (2/3) probability will decrease to four-ninths (4/9) at the second stage and to only 16 in 81 chances of being correct at the third stage. For a similar argument, see J. Berman, "A Response: Three Points of Methodology" *JHS* 10 (2010) Article 9 (Saul M Olyan, ed., "In Conversation with Joshua A. Berman *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2008"), 42–46, available online at http://www.jhsonline.org.

view and have a specific vocabulary. That means that there is very little scope for poetic originality, for the interplay and juxtaposition of different ideological positions, and for metaphorical complexity. If, for instance, Wehrle discerns no less than seven redactional levels in Obadiah,[53] it seems odd, to say the least, that anyone should have bothered to make it an independent composition. The multiplication of levels leads to a multiplicity of monochromatic readings, and thus is in tension with approaches that stress large scale literary structures and sustained and nuanced argument. At stake is our model of writing in Ancient Israel: are we thinking in terms of great poets, comparable to those of Ancient Greece, or of an accretion of supplements, each minutely modifying the text in its own preferred direction? Of course, we do not have to think in terms of an absolute choice between these models, but we do have to be aware that they work against each other. Obviously there were redactors; the more redactors one supposes, however, the more questions obtrude about how their work came to be universally accepted, and how they concealed themselves so thoroughly (and yet, according to redaction critics, so transparently) in the text. On the other hand, if the writers were poets,[54] one can conceive of them stretching the resources of language, producing daring images, and recreating the world in their imagination. The poets, as represented in the text, are thinkers and visionaries, who communicate the messages of the deity, and have a complex relationship with the source of their inspiration.[55] Then, as Robert Carroll tells us, we have to find an appropriate critical language for visionary poetry, one that is itself visionary, or has

[53] J. Wehrle *Prophetie und Textanalyse der Komposition Obadja 1–21. Interpretiert auf der Basis textlinguistischer und semiotischer Konzeptionen* (ATSAT, 28; St. Ottilien: EOS, 1987).

[54] See the famous debate between Graeme Auld and Robert P. Carroll: A. G. Auld, "Prophets in the Looking Glass: Between Writings and Moses" *JSOT* 27 (1983), 3–23, and Carroll, "Poets Not Prophets: A Response to 'Prophets through the Looking Glass'" *JSOT* 27 (1983), 25–31. Carroll writes, "They were certainly poets, probably intellectuals, and possibly ideologues" (25).

[55] My Canadian Society of Biblical Studies presidential address "I and Eye in Isaiah or Gazing at the Invisible" (2010) and "Where is Isaiah in Isaiah?," H. Liss and M. Oeming (eds) *Literary Construction of Identity in the Ancient World* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 283–300, both concern the relationship of the poetic self to the poetry of Isaiah and to God, developing ideas in my earlier "Vision and Voice in Isaiah" *JSOT* (2000), 19–36 (reprinted in F. Landy, *Beauty and the Enigma and Other Essays on the Hebrew Bible* [JSOTSup, 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001], 371–91). It is something of a truism that the self is a modern invention. I think it is belied by the complex self-awareness of Isaiah and other ancient poets. On this, see further M. Möller, "The Powers of a Lost Subject: Reinventing a Poet's Identity in Catullus's *Carmen* 8," H. Liss and M. Oeming (eds), *Literary Construction of Identity*, 145–64.

the capacity to understand visions.[56] Yvonne Sherwood aptly compares the poetry of Amos to that of the Surrealists,[57] and is herself such a critic.

In that case, texts that redactional critics deem supplementary and evidence of adaptation to other texts or new ideological imperatives may be explicable on poetic grounds. A good example is Amos 9:11–12. Nogalski thinks that the reference to Edom in 9:12a has been inserted to anticipate Obadiah.[58] However, it also recollects the OAN section in Amos 1–2, and in particular the condemnation of Edom in 1:11–12. In that case, what is important is the detail that "my name is called upon them."[59] Significantly, neither this, nor virtually any component of the verse, is reflected in Obadiah.[60]

Nogalski (40–46) attributes the composition of the Book of the Twelve to the Levites, on the grounds of their proximity to the Temple; their literacy and teaching function; their role in the shifting power politics of the Second Temple period; and finally and most importantly, their responsibility for the composition and performance of cultic poetry, like the Psalms. The incorporation of pre-existing cultic material, such as Hab 3 and Nah 1:2–7, into the books of the Twelve in the later stages of redaction is for him important evidence of the direction in which these groups wished to take them.

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[56] "Blindness and the Vision Thing," C. C. Broyles and C. A. Evans (eds) *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 79–93 (93). The companion piece to this article is "Revisionings: Echoes and Traces of Isaiah in the Poetry of William Blake" J. Davies, G. Harvey, and W. G. E. Watson (eds) *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed: Essays in Honour of J. F. A. Sawyer* (JSOTSup, 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 226–41.

[57] When I first started working on the Song of Songs many years ago, it was because of its affinity to the surrealist poetry I was then reading: André Breton, Octavio Paz, Garcia Lorca. See Sherwood, "Of Fruit and Corpses and Wordplay Visions," 10–16.

[58] *Literary Precursors*, 276. The conclusion of Amos (9:11–15) has often been seen as a later addition. One notes, for instance, Wellhausen's celebrated dismissal of it as "roses and lavender" following the obviously better "blood and iron" (see the discussion in Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Vision*, 15, with references).

[59] See Landy, "Smith, Derrida, and Amos," 225–26 for a fuller discussion. I suggest that the verse includes both imperialist and universalist fantasies, both a comforting circularity and an irreducible difference.

[60] The most obvious correlation, indeed, is with Amos 1:11–12, namely, the motif of the fraternity of Jacob and Esau (Obad 10–13). This perhaps is too frequent to be significant. On the symbolic importance of Esau's brotherhood, see E. Ben Zvi *A Historical-Critical Study of the Book of Obadiah* (BZAW, 242; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1996), 238–46.

In the context of the TH, this may be convincing, except that there is no reason to suppose that the literati responsible for the collection of the prophetic and other books should have been confined to the Levites. Not only Levites, for instance, had a vested interest in fertility.[61] More generally, however, Nogalski's proposal implies that there is something anomalous in the presence of cultic poetry in the prophetic books. That is indeed strange, given, for instance, the prevalence of doxologies in Amos, or of hymns in Isaiah. Prophetic literature, like all literature, draws upon a huge repertoire of culturally available genres. Conversely, with a poem like Hab 3, there is very little which identifies it as liturgical. It is entitled תפלה לחבקוק הנביא, "a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet," and given a musical or stylistic designation על שגינות ("in the mode of the *shigioniot*");[62] similarly it ends, למנצח בנגינות "To the choirmaster. On stringed instruments" (3:19). However, there is nothing in it that would lead us to suppose that it was composed to be performed as part of a service. The "prayer" could be composed and recited anywhere, and would be perfectly appropriate for a prophet, as poet and mystic – and indeed as an alternative site of sanctity. To turn to a cross-cultural example, Sappho's great hymn to Aphrodite does not mean that she was a priest, or that it was composed for use in a Temple.

I would like, finally, to turn to a couple of issues in Ben Zvi's concluding methodological section. The first is what Ben Zvi calls "sequential vs. branched modes of reading" (90–94). Exponents of the TH invariably imagine readers reading sequentially, for example Hosea being essential for the understanding of Joel, or going straight from Amos to Obadiah. On the contrary, Ben Zvi points out, the literati of Yehud (and presumably much wider circles too) had access to a vast body of literature, which they had at their fingertips. They did not need to have read Hosea first to understand Joel, since it was part of their cultural repertoire that sin breeds catastrophe (91). Reading was in fact rereading, retracing familiar paths through texts, linking them with other texts; as Ben Zvi says, "texts evoking texts" (94). Especially in a culture largely oral and in which reading was logistically cumbersome, memorization and collective exegesis was immensely important. So alongside the sequential axis, every text carried with it innumerable associations and allusions, every text was the key to a whole culture. This is what Ben Zvi means by "web-like" or "branched" reading, that one will follow the

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[61] Nogalski (43) suggests that Levites had "a vested interest in the fertility of the land because their livelihood depended on it."

[62] The meaning of שגיונות is utterly unclear, as with many psalm superscriptions. See M. A. Sweeney *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, vol. 2, 480, and "Structure, Intent and Genre in the Book of Habakkuk: *VT* 61 (1991), 80. A variant occurs in Ps 7:1.

textual traces wherever they will go. This, of course, is true of modern readers, especially scholars, as well as ancient ones, whenever they treat texts with any degree of seriousness. Words thus acquire resonance.

I would add that a consequence was the simultaneity of the corpus, in which everything could refer to everything else. Ben Zvi writes, "it does not matter whether the cross-reference or allusion involves books within the twelve, or within the fifteen, or for that matter within the entire authoritative corpus available to the literati" (94). As a result, and given readers' absorption in texts, they would often think in terms of sound bites, memorable quotes, floating about and combining in different ways in the literary soup of their minds. It may not yet have been the case, as in later rabbinic thought, that the boundaries between books broke down completely, so that the ideal sage was one "who linked Torah to the Prophets, and the Prophets to the Writings" (Song Rab. 1.10), or even that the dialectical relations between books were forgotten, since these were the communities which constituted them, but that *in practice* readers and interpreters would use particular texts or bits of text in distinctive ways in particular circumstances, בלכתך בדרך, in going on the way (Deut 6:7).

This has a bearing on Ben Zvi's incisive critique of Nogalski's procedure for establishing connections between contiguous books through catchwords at their beginnings and ends (86–90). As Ben Zvi says (86–87), this has implications for how one interprets those beginnings and endings. Whereas Ben Zvi regards them as strongly disjunctive, Nogalski thinks that they are redactionally sutured together. Ben Zvi notes that the catchwords are frequently very common words, taken out of context, and that unless the reader were strongly oriented towards perceiving them, they would be unnoticeable.[63] As Ben Zvi remarks (89), very few texts would fail this test. However, at the same time other generically or spatially remote texts may intrude. For instance, several scholars have noted that the imagery of Hos 14:2–9 is uncannily similar to that of the Song of Songs.[64] One might think that it has been displaced from the Five *Megillot*. Rather than rearrange the entire Bible, one should note that as strongly marked as they are in their individuality, texts are never autonomous. One can read Hosea in the light of the Song of Songs or vice versa,[65] or at least hear the fugitive voice of a different reality in it.

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[63] An example of such a reader is Nogalski himself.

[64] See, for instance, M. J. Buss *The Prophetic Word of Hosea* (BZAW, 111; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1969), 109; Ben Zvi, Hosea, 297; Landy *Hosea*, 172–74. Sweeney gives further references, noting that "many interpreters have noted the affinity between the language of verses 6–8 and that of the Song of Songs" (*The Twelve Prophets*, 139).

[65] See Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes, "The Imagination of Power and the Power of Imagination: An Intertextual Analysis of Two

My second observation, based on Ben Zvi's conclusion, concerns main themes and marginality. Ben Zvi argues that any emphasis on the main themes of the Twelve will necessarily downplay non-unifying themes (95). This, in particular, affects Jonah, which Ben Zvi sees as a metaprophetic book,[66] since it is not at all concerned with the Day of YHWH, the fertility of the land, the destiny of Israel etc. As a tale, it is markedly different from all the other books of the Twelve.

But this is true of all the books. All of them have their curious, intense details, their moments of quirkiness, their sense of marginality, whether Hosea's strange marriage or Zechariah's equally strange visions. And this strangeness, fragmentariness, being Twelve and not One, is their legacy to us.

Biblical Love Songs; the Song of Songs and Hosea 2" *JSOT* 44 (1989), 75–88, which, however, does not discuss Hos 14. For van Dijk-Hemmes the Song of Songs is a positive, and non-patriarchal, antithesis to the sadism and pornographic language of Hos 2.

[66] E. Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah: Reading and Rereading in Ancient Yehud* (JSOTSup, 367; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003). By metaprophecy, Ben Zvi means that Jonah is a parable that comments on all other prophetic books and on the institution of prophecy itself.