



ABSTRACT

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Submitted for the degree of D.Phil.

Regent's Park College,
Oxford.

Trinity Term 1991.

CONTINUITY AND DIVERGENCE:

A study of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in relation to earlier Old Testament Prophetic literature.

The purpose of this thesis is to make a thematic study of the Books of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in order firstly to identify the ways in which classical prophetic methods and traditions are continued and developed in these works and secondly to consider the reasons for any divergence in thought and style. The study is based on the hypothesis that the community of Israel underwent radical change as a result of the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile and that during the restoration period, under Persian rule, fundamental distinctions in theological understanding and the phenomenon of prophecy arose.

The thesis contains six major chapters. The first is introductory and considers the composite nature of the books and the possibility of distinguishing and dating the different strata. The second compares the status, authority and role within the community of Haggai and Zechariah with those of their prophetic predecessors. Chapter three studies the ways in which the prophetic messages were received and transmitted and includes a discussion on the development of angelology. Specific themes which are important in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 are dealt with in the next three chapters; issues relating to Israel's leadership and ideas of messianism; ideas about divine judgement and punishment upon the nation; and thoughts on the relationships between other nations, Israel and her God. Each of these compares the treatment of the themes with that found in the classical prophetic books and also considers the respective use that is made of other Old Testament material.

Conclusions were drawn in each chapter and these have been collated in the short final chapter. The study concluded that Haggai stood firmly in the classical prophetic tradition while Zechariah was more innovative in respect of prophetic method and at times radical in the theological ideas he proclaimed.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analytical and thematic study of the Books of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8. It considers the ways in which these prophets and the editors of their work continue and develop the classical prophetic methods and traditions, as found in the Old Testament, and the ways in which marked divergence is recognized. In the latter situations reasons are suggested as to the source of the ideas and the circumstances which gave rise to them. The study is based on the hypothesis that the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile caused the community of Israel to undergo profound social, cultural, political and religious change which produced fundamental distinctions in theological understanding and in the phenomenon of prophecy during the restoration period under Persian dominance.

The thesis consists of seven chapters, the last of which draws together the conclusions which were reached in preceding chapters and presents an overall confirmation of the findings. The other chapters divide equally into two halves, one of which concentrates on the Books of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 as literature, on the prophetic method displayed in them and on the prophets themselves, while the other focusses on specific themes which are pertinent to important elements within the prophecies. In each chapter every effort has been made to consider all the relevant passages and motifs in the classical prophetic books as well as the respective use that is made of other Old Testament material.

The first chapter opens with a discussion on the development of literacy in Israel and the availability of written texts in the early post-exilic period. This leads on to a study of the composite nature of the two

books and also has relevance for other parts of the thesis in which the possibility of inner-biblical exegesis is discussed. It is argued that higher levels of Israelite society were literate but while the existence of pre-exilic texts is shown to be probable, this did not allow an assumption that Haggai, Zechariah, or their close contemporaries made use of them. The division of the words of the prophets from material attributed to an editor, alongside a consideration of the process of compilation which the books have undergone, leads to the conclusion that both books were composed very soon after their messages were proclaimed, possibly by the same person who may have been Zechariah.

In the second chapter the status and authority of Haggai and Zechariah as prophetic figures are studied. They are compared with what is known about their pre-exilic counterparts and are found to stand in the same tradition in that they are both individuals raised up by Yahweh for a particular purpose in a particular age. Like their predecessors, they at times experienced difficulties in establishing their credibility and had to adopt a variety of means to demonstrate their authenticity as true prophets. They were helped in this by the fact that their message was predominantly one offering hope rather than condemnation. They were also able to benefit from the fact that the exile had vindicated the pre-exilic prophets, which provided assurance that true prophecy would be fulfilled; and so by showing themselves to be in the true prophetic tradition Haggai and Zechariah were able to enhance their credibility. In the course of this study the motif **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** is discussed and it is argued that it was a divine appellative current at the time when the first temple was established which then fell out of use. Its revival by these post-exilic prophets is claimed to be part of their effort to persuade the restored community of the need to return to the fundamental

principles of Yahwism as in the golden age of the nation under David and Solomon, for they believed that the new blessed era would only dawn when the people's faithfulness to Yahweh was renewed. The specific interest of these prophets in the rebuilding of the temple is in accord with this emphasis. It is also shown to derive from the social circumstances they were addressing rather than being indicative of any change in prophetic attitudes towards the cult, a factor which likewise explains the absence of passages concerning social injustice in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8.

The third chapter focusses on the ways in which Haggai and Zechariah received divine inspiration and on the prophetic forms they utilized to convey their messages. Much attention is devoted to Zechariah's use of visions as the dominant medium for transmission, which represents a divergence from the classical prophets' apparent preference for oracles and symbolic action. Following on from this the role of angels and in particular the significance of the interpreting angel is discussed. A brief review of Persian religion permits the conclusion that Zechariah was not influenced from that direction and it is shown that very early Israelite ideas about angels as representatives of Yahweh have been developed to accommodate the post-exilic concept of a transcendent deity with the need for an intermediary to bridge the gulf between earth and heaven. It is also argued that Zechariah develops the concept of the Satan from religious ideas which were current before the era of the classical prophets.

The theme of leadership in the community is the subject of the fourth chapter and it naturally includes a discussion about the messianic hopes which were prevalent in the post-monarchic nation. In relation to this two senior figures become the focus of attention, Joshua the priest who

had authority in the religious sphere of life and Zerubbabel, a direct descendant of the last Davidic monarch, whom the Persian overlords appointed as the civil governor in Jerusalem. It is shown that in the oracles of Haggai hopes for the restoration of the monarchy were voiced, which represent a continuity of the pre-exilic Davidic traditions. The final form of the book, however, presents the civil governor and the senior priest as having virtually equal authority and status. This may imply that a diarchic leadership was envisaged, an idea which is also expressed in one of Zechariah's visions. It is argued that Zechariah 1-8 contains evidence of the prophet's developing thought on the issue of leadership which culminates in the proclamation that a diarchy should act as an interim authority pending the time when Yahweh would raise up a new leader, the Branch, who would fulfil all the messianic hopes of the community. It is suggested that this concept was understood by the editor of Haggai's words but not by the person(s) who edited Zechariah 1-8 sometime after its initial compilation. In the final form of this book the status of Joshua has been enhanced in accord with the situation that prevailed when the second temple was fully established.

Chapter five considers the theme of Yahweh's judgement upon Israel and the attitudes of the community towards the idea of divine punishment. Many motifs drawn from traditional Old Testament passages concerning divine blessings and curses which were used by the classical prophets to express these ideas are found to be similarly accepted by Haggai and Zechariah. However while the pre-exilic prophets all threaten judgement and punishment as an inevitable consequence of the nation's failure to obey the will of Yahweh, neither Haggai nor Zechariah make any threats about the future. The emphasis throughout their prophecies is shown to be on the exile as having been the experience of divine punishment, a

painful experience from which the restored community can and must learn lessons if they wish to be blessed by Yahweh once more. It is suggested that both prophets believed that the contemporary circumstances within the community, which were difficult and demoralizing, were part of this ongoing experience of divine judgement and punishment which had begun with the exile and the fall of the temple; and that this situation would only be lifted when the temple was rebuilt. In the Book of Haggai these ideas are used to encourage the people to begin the rebuilding process while Zechariah puts greater emphasis on reassuring the community that their punishment has come to an end by making use of the 'seventy year' motif which was widely understood in the Ancient Near East as the period over which divine punishment would extend.

In chapter six the place of the non-Israelite nations within the purpose of Yahweh is the theme. The Book of Haggai is shown to continue the classical prophetic understanding whereby the best that these nations could hope for was that they be accepted into the universal kingdom of Yahweh, centred on Israel as the supreme nation, in a subservient role. In Zechariah 1-8 the Zion traditions and the concept of the pilgrimage of the nations, which are found within the classical prophetic writings, are taken up and developed and it is argued that a message offering the hope that all nations might enjoy the blessings of Yahweh equally is expressed. It is suggested that Zechariah glimpsed this concept for himself but that it was presented in a fuller way by a later tradent who appended the final oracle in the book. However this study permitted the conclusion that Zechariah had a deep theological consciousness which enabled him to develop traditional understandings in quite new ways.

The concluding chapter reasserts that Haggai was a true prophet in the

classical tradition who diverged from the message and style of his predecessors only insofar as the changed circumstances of his community necessitated. It suggests that Zechariah also continued the classical tradition but that he was at the same time innovative in respect of his prophetic style and his message to a point beyond that which his people could grasp, with the result that subsequent editors have amended some of his more radical words.

CONTINUITY

AND

DIVERGENCE

**A Study of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in relation
to earlier Old Testament Prophetic Literature**

For Mike

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AJSL	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature
ANET	<u>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</u> , Ed.J.B.Pritchard, (Princeton, Princeton University Press), 1950; 2nd Ed.1955
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BDB	F.Brown, S.R.Driver & C.A.Briggs (Eds.), <u>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</u> , 1906, re-issued 1951, (Clarendon Press, Oxford).
BHS	<u>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</u> , Stuttgart, 1977
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CB	The Century Bible
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
EV	English versions
GK	<u>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</u> , Ed.E.Kautzsch, trans.A.E.Cowley, (2nd ed.), 1910
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	<u>Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible</u>
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament

LXX	The Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NCB	New Century Bible
NEB	New English Bible
OTL	Old Testament Library
Peake's	<u>Peake's Commentary on the Bible</u> , Eds.M.Black and H.H.Rowley, (London, Nelson and Sons), 1962
RSV	Revised Standard Version of the Bible
TDOT	<u>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</u>
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

CHAPTER ONE

The Literary Composition of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8

In common with all Old Testament literature the Books of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 have attained their final form through a long history of transmission, during which the texts may have undergone several revisions. In respect of these two books, in contrast with the problem of major differences between the Masoretic and Septuagint texts of the Book of Jeremiah, the evidence of extant texts indicates no significant variations in content or order among the different recensions.¹ However a cursory reading of both books reveals distinct forms of literature in them² and there are signs in Zechariah 1-8 that an existent text has been added to or re-arranged.³ So before we embark on a study of the ways in which these two books represent a continuation of, or divergence from, classical prophetic traditions and ideas, it is necessary that the premises about origins, authorship and composition of these books which will be applied throughout this thesis are established. Three major issues underlie these premises. The first concerns the composite nature of the texts and the possibility of distinguishing the prophets' words from those which characterize the editors or any different levels of

¹ LXX text of Haggai contains additional material in several places Hag.2:9,14,21,22. It is generally agreed that this represents a later expansionary tradition.

Hebrew scrolls from the Dead Sea contained only a fragment from Zech.1-8 (1:1-4) but about two-thirds of the text of Haggai is included on a scroll from Wadi Murabba'at and this supports MT in virtually every respect. Cf. P.Benoft, J.T.Milik, R.de Vaux, Les Grottes de Murabba'at, (Oxford), 1961, pp.203-5

² For example data providing an historical context for the prophecies, Hag.1:1,15; 2:1; Zech.1:1,7 et al; oracles, Hag.1:2,4ff; Zech.1:3ff; 7:5ff et al; and vision reports, Zech.1:8ff; 3:1ff et al.

³ For example Zech.4.

redaction. The second concerns the potentiality of dating such distinct sections of material as are identified with any degree of accuracy. The third issue revolves around the availability of written Hebrew texts to the prophets and their followers or whether they had to rely on the oral transmission of older traditions.

It is appropriate to consider the third issue at the outset since it underlies conclusions that may be reached about the other two. It is widely accepted that much literature of the Old Testament attained the written form in which it has been transmitted through the work of groups such as the Deuteronomists and the Priestly Writers during the exilic and post-exilic periods. It is also agreed that oral transmission was significant in the dissemination of ideas in Israel's early history. However there is greater uncertainty and disagreement about when and how rapidly Israel developed as a literate society. Widengren has argued in relation to the major classical prophets that

"All of them (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) surely wrote down at least part of their prophecies, that much is incontrovertible."⁴

He also claims that some of Amos' and Hosea's oracles were recorded from the outset rather than being handed down exclusively by means of oral tradition. He derives these conclusions from a literal interpretation of passages which refer to a prophet's words being committed to writing⁵ and from the results of his own research into the early origins of the art of writing among other ancient peoples. Certainly archaeological

⁴ Geo. Widengren, Literary and Psychological Aspects of the Hebrew Prophets, (Uppsala), 1948, p.77. The parenthesis is ours. Similar views about classical prophecy being written from the outset are stated by R.H.Pfeiffer, Religion in the Old Testament, (A.& C.Black, London), 1961, Ed.C.C.Forman, p.88.

⁵ For example Isa.8:16; 30:8f; Jer.36:4ff.

evidence supports the existence of a Semitic alphabetic script long before the age of classical prophecy; but the availability of writing materials and the widespread acquisition of literary skills in Palestine during the period of the monarchy has not yet been established by such means.⁶ Widengren's views contrasted sharply with those of Nyberg⁷ who had argued that Israel relied heavily on oral tradition before the exile and that the written form of the Old Testament was the creation of the postexilic Jewish community. A middle course between these two extremes was adopted by Eissfeldt who has concluded about the formation of the classical prophetic books that

"Oral transmission undoubtedly played a great part in this process, but it is as certain that from an early period, fixed written forms were usual, and that the prophets that gave their names to our books themselves began the writing down of their own sayings, and that this may apply to many more sayings than is generally agreed today. The view that right down to post-exilic times only oral transmission need seriously be considered is certainly to be rejected, as also that our prophetic books were only then written down, after the hitherto exclusively oral tradition had petrified."⁸

Similarly diverse opinions exist about the earliest written accounts of Israel's history, laws and traditions.

Hebrew contains within its vocabulary three words that convey the material form of a piece of writing, 'טָבֵל' (tablet), 'סֵפֶר' (scroll) and

⁶ The existence from David's time of learned people among the court officials who could both read and write is not disputed; 2 Sam.8:17; 1 Kgs.4:3. However there are no documents in existence to indicate the type of records they maintained.

⁷ H.S.Nyberg, Studien zum Hoseabuche, Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Klärung des Problems der alttestamentlichen Textkritik, (Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift 1935:6, Uppsala: Almqvist und Wiksells), pp.1-20.

⁸ O.Eissfeldt, 'The Prophetic Literature' in The Old Testament and Modern Study, ed. H.H.Rowley, (Oxford), 1951, pp.159-60.

'סֵפֶר' (book, letter, et al.);' and three verbal concepts indicating the manner in which the text was set down, 'שָׂרַף' (engrave), 'קָטַף' (inscribe) and 'כָּתַב' (write). Both 'שָׂרַף' (engrave) and 'קָטַף' (inscribe) suggest a laborious method of drawing or writing on blocks of stone, metal, clay or wood¹⁰ which is inappropriate for lengthy documents or as a means of wider communication because of transportation difficulties. This would suggest that these terms reflect an early stage in the development of literary skills in Israel, whereas the derivation of 'כָּתַב' (write)¹¹ implies a fluent style of producing letters and words on a variety of materials indicative of a more advanced, later, level of skill.¹² This theory is supported by the fact that the word 'טַבֵּל' (tablet), which equates with the blocks of stone or metal, is connected predominantly with the means by which Moses received the law on Mount Sinai.¹³ Apart from three instances where it is used in a figurative sense concerning one's heart,¹⁴ there is only one further occurrence of 'טַבֵּל' (tablet), in Isaiah 30:8, which also includes 'קָטַף' (inscribe) in a parallel line,

"And now, go, write (כָּתַב) it before them on a tablet (טַבֵּל),

⁷ There is also a solitary occurrence of 'טַבֵּל' in Isa.8:1 which is understood as 'tablet'. However in its plural form (Isa.3:23) the idea that it represents items of clothing is usually preferred to the suggestion that it means tablets of polished metal, i.e. mirrors.

¹⁰ For example Prov.8:27; Isa.22:16; Ezek.4:1; 23:14.

¹¹ Based on the cognate Arabic word meaning 'draw', 'sew together' or 'conjoin', p.507, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, Eds. F.Brown, S.R.Driver & C.A.Briggs, 1906, re-issued 1951, (Clarendon Press, Oxford).

¹² Jer.36:4 reports that Baruch wrote (כָּתַב) at Jeremiah's dictation which implies the ability to record words with fluency and speed.

¹³ For example Ex.24:12; 31:18; 32:15,16,19; Deut.4:13; 5:22; 9:9,10 11,15,17; 1 Kgs.8:9; 2 Chron 5:10.

¹⁴ Prov.3:3; 7:3; and Jer.17:1 in which 'שָׂרַף' (engrave) is also used figuratively.

and inscribe (מִתְּנֵה) it in a book (סֵפֶר),
that it may be for the time to come
as a witness for ever."

This verse is generally assigned to the late 8th century BC;¹⁵ but it is unwise to infer from this that Israel had made little literary progress by this time since other terms are also included and the significance of the more primitive concepts may be to emphasize the enduring quality of this inscription.

The word 'מִגְזָן' (scroll) is only found in four contexts, which all originate in the exilic or post-exilic period. In Ezekiel 2:9-3:3 the picture is of an object with writing on both sides, able to be rolled up and edible. While this final characteristic ought not to be interpreted literally, the passage implies that lightweight, flexible materials had become available for writing purposes. Jeremiah 36¹⁶ presents a similar picture of a material with words written on it in numerous columns which could be sliced with a sharp instrument and was easily burned.¹⁷ This passage also contains the sole occurrence of 'יָדָן' (ink),¹⁸ a substance which suggests that quills or reeds were in use as writing implements¹⁹ in Israel by the time of the exile. The remaining instances of 'מִגְזָן'

¹⁵ R.E.Clements, Isaiah 1-39, (NCB), Marshall, Morgan & Scott (Publications) Ltd., 1980, pp.243-9 indicates recent scholarly opinion.

¹⁶ Verses 2,4,6,14,20,21,23,25,27,28,29,32. In Jer.36:8,10,11,13, 18 and 32 'סֵפֶר' indicates precisely the same meaning; cf also Isa.34:4. It is also worth noting the conjunction of 'מִגְזָן' (scroll) and 'סֵפֶר' (book) in Jer.36:2,4; Ezek.2:9 and Ps.40:8(MT).

¹⁷ Jer.36:23.

¹⁸ Jer.36:18

¹⁹ The word 'טֵי' (pen) is rarely used and it means an implement for engraving (Job.19:24; Jer.17:1) or any other tool utilised by scribes (Ps.45:2; Jer.8:8). Consequently it sheds no light on the development of literary skills.

(scroll), Zechariah 5:1f and Psalm 40:8(MT) offer no further insights.

The term 'סֵפֶר' is used most often in the Old Testament to convey a piece of writing and it is capable of a wide variety of interpretations. It derives from a verbal concept indicating to 'count', 'number', 'take a census' and thus it may originally have represented an official record or register required for the proper administration of society.²⁰ There are many instances where this term is used to refer to a record of the "Chronicles of the Kings of Israel"²¹ which suggests that some form of written historical annals were produced in Israel during the monarchy. A similar reference to a record of "the acts of Solomon"²² adds credence to the possibility that these were written contemporaneously with each monarch's reign and were available as source material to the writers of the Deuteronomic History. Indeed brief poetic excerpts from collections known as the "Book (סֵפֶר) of the Wars of the LORD"²³ and the "Book (סֵפֶר) of Jashar (or Upright)"²⁴ suggest that written accounts of Israel's pre-monarchic struggle against her enemies may also have been in existence from an early date. However nothing is known about the form that these 'books' took, nor about the information they contained. The references indicate a long history of literary capability in Israel; but as state officials were probably responsible for the production of the annals, they cannot be interpreted as probative of widespread literacy in Israel

²⁰ Such records may underlie the genealogies produced much later by the Priestly Writers. For example, Gen.5 where the list is referred to by the term 'סֵפֶר'.

²¹ 1 Kgs.14:19; 2 Kgs.1:18; + another 31 in Kings; 1 Chron.9:1; +9.

²² 1 Kgs.11:41.

²³ Num.21:14f.

²⁴ Josh.10:13; 2 Sam.1:18ff; and 1 Kgs.8:53 (LXX).

from an early date.²⁵ Similar comments apply to the many references in which 'רָפָר' conveys the idea of a letter sent between kings, members of the court, or to high ranking officials.²⁶ Whether or not court scribes were called on to produce these documents it is apparent that these passages say nothing about the ability of the ordinary populace to read and write. However they do indicate the availability of easily portable writing materials and suggest that, in matters of state, letters were a regular method of communication from the time of David, if not earlier.

In other passages 'רָפָר' is used to indicate the written record of God's covenant with Israel²⁷ and of his laws;²⁸ and it is the term given to the document containing God's law which was discovered in the temple in Josiah's reign.²⁹ These references imply that Israel's priests were another literate section of society from quite an early period but this is not surprising in view of the close links between court and temple

²⁵ T.Henshaw, The Writings, (Allen & Unwin), 1963 and W.McKane, Prophets and Wise Men, (SCM), 1965 both make a link between 'wise men' and a learned class of Israelite society which they identify as state officials and political statesmen respectively. McKane argues that schools to train young men for these responsibilities may have existed in Israel from the time of Solomon, as is known to have been the case in other Ancient Near Eastern cultures. While their duties may have been wider ranging than McKane suggests, his arguments support a theory that literary skills were developed in Israel by the time of the monarchy but that they were confined within the privileged sections of society.

²⁶ For example 1 Kgs.21:8,9,11; 2 Kgs.5:5,6,7; 10:1,2,6; 20:12 and 2 Sam.11:14,15.

²⁷ Ex.24:7. For a wide range of opinions about the origins of this verse see B.S.Childs, Exodus, (OTL, SCM Press), 1974, pp.499-502 and J.P.Hyatt, Exodus, (NCB, Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd), Revised Ed.1980, pp.254-7. These also apply to v.4a which suggests that Moses wrote the words of the LORD. Another text that refers to Moses writing in a book, Ex.17:14, is assigned to the Deuteronomic redactor by Hyatt (pp.184f) and there is no early evidence in support of Moses' literacy.

²⁸ Deut.31:24,26; Josh.1:8.

²⁹ 2 Kgs.22:8,10,11,13,16; 23:2,3.

throughout the monarchy.³⁰ However there is still the question of how widely the skills and materials necessary to produce written documents were to be found outside official or court circles, and how early.

From Deuteronomic times 'רְפָּא' was also used to indicate documents such as a bill of divorce,³¹ a deed of purchase,³² or an indictment;³³ but whether individuals wrote these themselves, as Deuteronomy 24:1,3 implies, or relied on the services of official scribes is a matter for subjective determination. Indications of more widespread literacy among the people of Israel appear in the account of the survey conducted prior to the apportionment of the land at Shiloh;³⁴ in the story of Gideon's encounter with a young man of Succoth;³⁵ and in Isaiah's symbolic action relating to the naming of his son.³⁶ The first passage does not suggest that the three men from each tribe were selected for their extraordinary literary skills equipping them to record the results of their survey. On the other hand they must have been chosen from among the leaders of each community and thus any skills they possessed need not be indicative of general competence; and in fact the text may not imply anything more than a diagrammatic representation of the land being produced. Although the passage is believed to derive from an earlier literary source used by the compiler of the Book of Joshua its origins are uncertain and it

³⁰ Cf. Deut.17:18ff; 1 Sam.10:25.

³¹ Deut.24:1,3; Jer.3:8; Isa.50:1.

³² Jer.32:10,11,12,14,16,44.

³³ Job 31:15.

³⁴ Josh.18:2-10.

³⁵ Judg.8:13f.

³⁶ Isa.8:1ff.

may reflect the norms of Hebrew society in an age much later than the period to which it refers. Similar caution about the reliability of the text as an accurate record of events must apply to the second passage concerning Gideon. It suggests that both he and the captured youth were literate and that they had writing materials readily available. However the text does not specify nominally who recorded the information³⁷ which has led to suggestions that a scribe must have been at hand;³⁸ but these are unsubstantiated. On the translation and interpretation of the text, though, the long standing opinion of G.F. Moore still holds good.

"There is as little reason to depart from the usual meaning of the verb (גִּדְוֹן) as there is to infer from it that the Israelites of Gideon's time could all read and write."³⁹

It follows that literacy and the materials needed to pursue these skills may have had a long history in Israel. The symbolic action attributed to Isaiah in the last passage only had significance if a sizeable number of people could read what he had written, although it is arguable that Uriah the priest and Zechariah were called on as witnesses because they were literate and able to convey the words to an illiterate audience. The text says that the prophet wrote on a 'בִּדְוֹן יָדָא' (large tablet),⁴⁰

³⁷ The English pronoun 'he' is included in the Hebrew verb which would usually be understood to relate back to the immediate antecedent, which is 'him', which in turn refers back to 'the young man of Succoth'. However it is possible to translate the verb impersonally and to infer that another person did the writing. Cf NEB's translation.

³⁸ Such views seem to be a reaction against the possibility of the youth's literacy. See the comments on this of J.D. Martin, The Book of Judges, (CBC, Cambridge University Press), 1975, p.105.

³⁹ G.F. Moore, Judges, (ICC, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh), 1895, p.225.

⁴⁰ R.E. Clements, in Isaiah 1-39, p.94, comments on the emendation of 'בִּדְוֹן' to 'בִּדְוִיא' (reed, papyrus) proposed by K. Galling, Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästinavereins 56, 1933, pp.209ff, a publication which was not available to me. I have been unable to find any support for the suggestion that 'בִּדְוִיא' be translated 'papyrus' instead of being given its usual meaning 'stone, lot'. Consequently I do not believe that this

presumably of clay, which is credible in view of the brevity of the inscription and its need to be publicly displayed; but it does not deny that other materials may also have been in use at the time. It has been shown that conclusions drawn from these three passages are inevitably coloured by one's predetermined and subjective view of Israel's literary ability at varying times in her history and so they do not aid a search for objective evidence about the growth of literature in the nation. In contrast, evidence that illiteracy existed into the post-exilic period is found in Isaiah 29:11f,⁴¹ although the implications are that it was less commonplace at that time.

This survey of relevant passages in the Old Testament results in a finding that the higher strata of Israelite society appear to have been literate from the beginnings of the monarchy, maybe even earlier, and that the necessary writing materials were available. It has also been shown that matters of state and cultic importance were written down from the same time. Therefore it is a possibility that the preaching of the classical prophets could also have been put down in writing at the time, or soon after, it was uttered, either by the prophets themselves or by those who heard them. Questions must be asked though about the people who might have done this because the prophets' words were often directed against prominent members of society who tended to disregard the oracles until they were subsequently proved true, perhaps at a much later date. Did the prophets gather round them educated disciples, as Isaiah 8:16 is

passage adds to our knowledge of Israelite writing materials in the 8th century BC.

⁴¹ This prose passage is clearly dependent on vv.9f and has been dated to the 5th century BC. See Clements, Isaiah 1-39, p.238.

sometimes taken to imply?⁴² No hint of this appears in words of other eighth century prophets who are portrayed as rather solitary figures and uniquely in Jeremiah do we read of the prophet having a personal scribe. However, the very existence now of the early prophecies implies that the prophets had a few followers who recognised the truth of their messages and the importance of passing on their teaching to others but the method used for their transmission is impossible to establish on the basis of the available evidence. Is it more likely that written records of Amos' and Hosea's words survived the disaster of the Assyrian conquest of Israel; or that they were preserved in the memories of a few Israelites who escaped south to Judah? Both these scenarios are conceivable and it is equally possible to construct a logical argument for and against each one to explain the re-application of these prophecies in the southern kingdom prior to the exile. The truth is that we do not know; but the scant evidence found in the Old Testament permits the hypothesis that the Israelites placed greater reliance on written documents than on oral tradition throughout the monarchic age. This is a subject which merits deeper study but we feel justified to conclude that Haggai and Zechariah probably had access to some legal, cultic and prophetic literature and were not dependent only on what was remembered and repeated of Israel's religious heritage. However the availability of texts implies nothing about the use to which these prophets may have put such material.

Let us now turn to consider the compilation of each book. In Haggai the speeches of the prophet are set in a framework which provides precise chronological data and identifies the audience being addressed.

⁴² For a very different interpretation of the 'disciples' see Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.100f.

It is generally agreed that this framework is editorial⁴³ but scholarly opinion divides over its extent and origins. A major contributor to the discussion is Beuken⁴⁴ whose detailed analysis of the text has led him to conclude that the framework derives from a Chronistic milieu. This view has been questioned by Mason⁴⁵ who argues in favour of an earlier editor who may have belonged in the Deuteronomistic school. There is a danger of allowing a subjective hypothesis about a text to determine the criteria which are applied to distinguish different levels of material and therefore it is essential, as far as is possible, to reach objective decisions about what constitutes the framework before theorizing over its origins. It must also be borne in mind that the Book of Haggai may contain editorial material which has no direct connection with the framework; and one instance of this is Haggai 2:5a. Persuasive reasons for regarding this clause, absent from the Septuagint text, as a scribal gloss have been presented by Ackroyd⁴⁶ and it is widely agreed that this appeal to the Sinaitic tradition is out of context in the passage.⁴⁷

⁴³ The theory that the prophet Haggai was responsible for all the material in the book and that he chose to record it in the third person was proposed by O.Eissfeldt, The Old Testament An Introduction, Trans. P.R.Ackroyd, (Blackwell), 1965, p.428. This suggestion is considered plausible by R.L.Smith, Micah-Malachi, (Word Biblical Commentary 32), Waco, Texas, 1984, p.148, although he believes it is more probable that one of Haggai's near contemporaries wrote the framework for his oracles.

⁴⁴ W.A.M.Beuken S.J., Haggai-Sacharja 1-8 - Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der frühnachexilischen Prophetie, (Assen), 1967.

⁴⁵ R.A.Mason, 'The Purpose of the "Editorial Framework" of the Book of Haggai', VT 27, 1977, pp.413-21. Cf his recent suggestion that the Book of Haggai was edited in a 'temple milieu'; Rex Mason, Preaching the Tradition, (Cambridge University Press), 1990, p.195.

⁴⁶ P.R.Ackroyd, 'Some Interpretative Glosses in the Book of Haggai', JJS 7, 1956, pp.163-7.

⁴⁷ See for example D.L.Petersen, Haggai & Zechariah 1-8, (OTL, SCM), 1965, pp.61, 66; and J.G.Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Inter-Varsity Press), 1972, p.47.

It seems logical to assign to the framework all references to the dates on which messages were delivered. These occur in Haggai 1:1,15; 2:1,10 and 20.⁴⁸ References to the prophet in the third person and to his receipt of a divine message also belong to the framework. The above mentioned verses, except 1:15, plus Haggai 1:3,12,13a contain these.⁴⁹ Other narrative material relative to the audience being addressed by the prophet and their response is likewise part of the framework in that it provides the context for, and link between, the separate messages. This is recorded in Haggai 1:1,12 and 14. These verses contain evidence to suggest that the framework does not derive from the prophet himself but represents instead the interests of a different tradition. Haggai 1:1 indicates that only Zerubbabel and Joshua are the recipients of Haggai's oracle whereas in 1:2 the prophet refers to "this people", a phrase that has no meaning unless a wider section of the community, not solely the two leaders, was listening to his words. Nor does the presentation of the book suggest a different audience for the following oracles;⁵⁰ but their concern with communal attitudes and economic circumstances demands that they were directed at the general populace rather than the leaders. Although the response of the people is recorded in Haggai 1:12,14, these verses again unduly emphasize Zerubbabel and Joshua and seem to suggest that they actually responded to the prophet's words by participating in

⁴⁸ The exact date in Hag.2:18 was almost certainly not included in the oracle as uttered by the prophet but this editorial addition does not form part of the framework.

⁴⁹ Although the opening words of Hag.2:13 and 14 are third person references to Haggai they form a constituent part of a dialogue which is being reported and thus they should not be assigned to the framework, contra C.L.Meyers and E.M.Meyers, Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, (AB v.25B), Doubleday & Co, New York, 1987, p.lxviii.

Similarly the third person references to the priests' responses in Hag.2:12,13 are integral to the passage.

⁵⁰ Hag.1:4-11.

the physical work of rebuilding the temple alongside their compatriots. This appears a somewhat improbable scenario unless envisaged purely in the context of a foundation ceremony, a theme that is not indicated by this passage.⁵¹ If all references to Zerubbabel and Joshua were omitted from the material thus far discussed, the text as a whole would present no problems and would accord with much Old Testament prophecy in which the audience has to be inferred from the substance of the oracles. This suggests that the framework's author(s) deliberately introduced the two leadership figures into the text due to a vested interest in promoting their status and role within the community.⁵²

If this is correct it raises questions in relationship to the framework about further references to Zerubbabel and Joshua in the text of Haggai. They are both mentioned again in Haggai 2:2, a verse that is couched as part of a prophetic oracle although it serves only to specify the audience for the words that follow,

"Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not in your sight as nothing?"⁵³

Since this oracle appears to be addressed to all the people and to lack special significance for the leaders, it may be argued that Haggai 2:2 is intended to enhance their profile, a function similar to that of the framework; in which case it may also be part of it. In support of this,

⁵¹ Reference is made to the foundations of the temple in Hag.2:18 and possibly in 2:15 but there is no mention of a ceremony or ritual in this connection. In contrast Zech.4:7-10a focusses on Zerubbabel's role in such a ceremony. See our discussion on pp.171ff.

⁵² These issues are the theme of Chapter 4 and only in the light of our discussion there can any conclusions be drawn about the identity of the author(s).

⁵³ Hag.2:3.

it is noted that although the people are mentioned several times in the text, it is only in Haggai 1:12,14 and 2:2 that they are called 'שְׂאֵרֵי' (a remnant).⁹⁴ The use of this terminology may be characteristic of the compiler but there is insufficient evidence within the text to warrant claims that it indicates

"the divinely chosen survivors of disaster, the purified community in which the promises of the past are made real."⁹⁵

since it could equally signify a faithful nucleus in the population, or the returned exiles, as distinct from those who remained in Judah.

As a direct consequence of assigning Haggai 2:2 to the framework it is necessary to consider the function in the text of 2:4

"Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD; work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts,".

As Beuken has argued,⁹⁶ the response to the questions raised in verse 3 about the partially reconstructed temple is provided in Haggai 2:6-9; but that does not justify a decision to regard these intervening words of encouragement as secondary. The direct address to both Zerubbabel and Joshua is more questionable, since without the framework there is no reason why they should be singled out from the community as a whole. On the other hand, nor is there a reason to deny that the prophet may have specifically mentioned them. Zerubbabel is addressed in another oracle,

⁹⁴ MT does not contain the word 'כָּל' (all) in Hag.2:2 as in 1:12,14 whereas LXX reads 'παντας' in all three verses.

⁹⁵ P.R.Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, (SCM), 1968, pp.162f. Cf.Mason, 'The Purpose of the "Editorial Framework"', p.417, who also argues for a significant usage of this term.

⁹⁶ Beuken, Haggai, pp.50-2.

Haggai 2:21-3, which undoubtedly relates to him as an individual and so it is credible to accept that the prophet also referred to him by name in this instance. The reference to Joshua appears more dubious in view of the facts that it includes his patronym and title, which produces an unnatural and clumsy form of address; it is not followed by the oracular formula 'יְהוָה אֱמַר' (says the LORD); and it is the only mention of him outside the framework. Conclusions on this issue must be subjective but if the words 'יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-יְהוֹזָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' (Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest) are removed from the text and the preceding 'אַתָּה!' (take courage) understood as a repeated exhortation to Zerubbabel, the oracle falls naturally into two parts and is well balanced. The reference to Joshua could then have been inserted after the book had been compiled so that the text conformed with the emphasis on both leaders found in the framework. Thus we conclude that Haggai 2:4, as an oracle addressed to the people and perhaps to Zerubbabel, but not to Joshua, is integral to the message of the prophet.

Ackroyd has argued⁵⁷ that Haggai 2:21a

"Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying"

should be assigned to the framework as a continuation of the preceding introductory verse. There is a certain logic to this suggestion in view of the similarity between the structure of this clause and Haggai 2:2, a verse identified as part of the framework. Since no further evidence is available, on the grounds of consistency, we will adopt this argument. Thus we believe that the framework consists of Haggai 1:1,3,12-13a,14-15 and 2:1-2,10,20-21a. With the exception of the gloss at Haggai 2:5a and

⁵⁷ P.R.Ackroyd, 'Studies in the Book of Haggai', JJS 2, 1951, pp.163-176.

additions to Haggai 2:4 and 18 discussed above,⁵⁸ the remaining material is regarded as deriving from the prophet Haggai.

Since the framework places much emphasis on Zerubbabel and Joshua it was probably written by someone who regarded them as figures of equal significance in Israel's history. Such an author could have been an ardent supporter of the temple, the edifice rather than the cult, who lived in a later period and wanted to emphasize the roles played in its reconstruction by the governor and the high priest. It is more probable however, that the author(s) thought that Zerubbabel and Joshua had wider ranging, longer term, importance; in which case the framework may have originated during the period when they both held office. The duration of Zerubbabel's governorship is unknown⁵⁹ but he went out of prominence soon after Haggai's ministry. Consequently the Book of Haggai may have attained its written form shortly after its message was proclaimed, perhaps even before the completion of the temple.

Let us now turn our attention to Zechariah 1-8.⁶⁰ The book falls

⁵⁸ P.12; n.48; and pp.15f.

⁵⁹ No evidence exists regarding this. Nor have any accounts been preserved to indicate whether he was recalled to Persia, or fell from grace, or died. It is not even known whether he survived to see the completion of the temple in 516/5BC.

⁶⁰ It is impossible to discuss in full the range of opinions which have been expressed concerning the compilation and redaction of this book. The most thorough study of these issues remains that of Beuken, Haggai, passim, who argues for one primary redaction. K.Seybold, Bilder zum Tempelbau (Die Visionen des Propheten Sacharja), Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 70, (K.B.W.Verlag - Stuttgart), 1974, pp.22-3, prefers a stratified approach. A more complex process is suggested by Lacocque in Samuel Amsler, André Lacocque, René Vuilleumier, Aggée, Zacharie, Malachie, (Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament XIc, Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel (Switzerland)), 1981, pp.45-8 involving several people in the formation of the work, including the prophet. Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.xliv-xlviii, have proposed that Zechariah, or one of his disciples,

naturally into three sections; a brief introduction, 1:1-6; a series of visions, 1:7-6:15; and a concluding collection of oracles, 7:1-8:23.⁶¹ Each section begins with a verse indicating that what follows is divine prophecy transmitted through Zechariah and a date is given. These three verses probably derive from the compiler of the book, who may have been the prophet himself,⁶² and it is likely that Zechariah 7:2f originated at the same time since these words provide a context for the following oracles. Apart from these verses and the third person introductions to oracles at Zechariah 7:4,8; 8:1,18, the first and third sections consist of oracles attributed to the prophet. There is no objective reason to deny the possibility that all of them may have been uttered by Zechariah but there are several indications in the third section to suggest that a redactor is responsible for their sequence.

Firstly it is recognized that the question asked in Zechariah 7:3 by a delegation from Bethel,

"Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as

compiled not only the book attributed to him but also the composite work Haggai-Zechariah 1-8. Suffice it to say that a definitive solution to this problem has not yet been discovered.

⁶¹ The work of A. Petitjean, Les Oracles du Proto-Zacharie, (Études Bibliques, Paris), 1969, has shown that oracles are also interspersed amid the visions. His arguments tackle the issues of the identification of individual oracles throughout Zechariah 1-8 in depth and we broadly accept his findings on this. Where our study leads to a different conclusion from Petitjean's we will discuss the material in full. In other cases we will refer to and adopt his conclusions. Chapter 3 will consider these issues in more detail in a discussion of the different forms of prophetic communication occurring in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8.

⁶² We recognize the awkward transition from 3rd to 1st person at Zech. 1:7,8 but cannot accept the claim by Mason that this indicates that 1:7 must be editorial. [R.A. Mason, The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, (Cambridge Bible Commentary on the NEB, Cambridge University Press), 1977, p.35] There is no more reason to accuse an editor of being unable to create a smooth text than to blame the prophet for this literary slip.

I have done for so many years?"⁶³

is not answered until Zechariah 8:19

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love truth and peace."⁶⁴

Several oracles are contained in the intervening passage.⁶⁵ The first, Zechariah 7:4ff, relates to the theme of fasting but it is addressed to 'כָּל-עַם הָאָרֶץ' (all the people of the land) and 'הַכֹּהֲנִים' (the priests) and it castigates them over the wrong attitudes towards fasting which had prevailed since the fasts were introduced early in the exile. It most probably originated around the same time as the question and answer, the time when the community in Jerusalem was rebuilding its structures and temple which it perceived as evidence of Yahweh's blessing on them once more; and thus a time when the validity of continuing to celebrate fasts

⁶³ This fast is generally understood as one that was instituted to commemorate the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and the city by Nebuchadnezzar on the seventh day of the fifth month 586BC (2 Kgs.25:8). Westermann has argued that this question was put to Zechariah "obviously after the restoration of the temple" [C.Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, (OTL, SCM Press), 1969, p.335] which suggests that he assigns it to a date after 516BC, contra Zech.7:1. We do not believe it is necessary to date it this late since sustained work on the rebuilding of the temple could well have prompted the thought that a new age had begun.

⁶⁴ The fasts of the fourth, seventh and tenth months are frequently linked to the successful Babylonian attack on Jerusalem (2 Kgs.25:3f; Jer.39:2), the murder of Gedaliah (2 Kgs.25:25; Jer.41:1f) and the start of the siege against Jerusalem (2 Kgs.25:1; Jer.39:1). An alternative suggestion by Ackroyd (Exile, p.207f, note 122) that they may refer to the Day of Atonement (seventh month) and other cultic rituals is noted; but there seems little to substantiate this hypothesis which we reject.

⁶⁵ There is no general agreement on how the material should be divided. Differing suggestions are made by Beuken, Haggai, pp.118-183; Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.304-419; Petersen, OTL, pp.283-312.

was under discussion.⁶⁶ However its position in the text is a result of editorial work which cannot be accurately dated. Although Zechariah 7:7

"When Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, with her cities round about her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited, were not these the words which the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets?"

is positioned as a conclusion to the oracle on fasting, it more probably begins the second oracle and refers to the pastiche of teaching typical of the pre-exilic prophets which follows in verses 9 and 10,⁶⁷ because it looks back to a prosperous period in Israel's history. This must be before the exile, an age from which no prophetic oracles about fasting have been preserved,⁶⁸ whereas it did give rise to much teaching about social justice. The oracle continues with a résumé of historical events reminding the listeners of their forebears' lack of response to Yahweh's words and his consequent punishment of them through the disaster of the

⁶⁶ Similar ideas about fasting and its abuse are expressed in Isa.58:1-12, where efforts to overcome social injustice, rather than the rituals of fasts, are extolled as conduct acceptable to God. Because of the composite nature of this passage [see Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, pp.333-340; R.N.Whybray, Isaiah 40-66, (NCB), 1975, pp.211-8] and the difficulty in assigning Trito-Isaiah to any specific stage in the early post-exilic period it would be unwarranted to suggest that Zechariah's words depend on Isa.58:1ff. It is probable that both prophecies derived independently out of closely related sets of circumstances.

⁶⁷ For example Isa.1:16f; Jer.7:5f; Amos 5:15. Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.316-322, argues convincingly for this conclusion. Contra Baldwin, Haggai, p.144, who sees Zech.7:4-14 as a unit and suggests that v.7 may refer to Isa.58:3ff; a possibility that we have rejected above.

There is no suggestion that Zechariah was quoting from the words of the classical prophets but as we have argued, pp.2ff above, there is a possibility that he had access to texts of their preaching on which to base this pastiche.

⁶⁸ Beuken, Haggai, pp.148-150 identifies the similarity in form between the questions in Zech.7:3ff and rhetorical questions occurring in classical prophecy, for example Isa.1:11; Jer.6:20; Amos 5:25. These concern sacrifice and offerings to Yahweh, however, not fasting and we dismiss any substantial connection between them and Zechariah's words.

exile.⁶⁷ This second oracle probably originated at a time when the post exilic community was feeling despondent, with the purpose of encouraging its hearers to turn to Yahweh and to look forward to a time of blessing once more. Its first proclamation may have preceded the commencement of the rebuilding project but its relevance to the issue of whether fasts are still appropriate behaviour has determined its current position in the text. This appears to be a decision of the book's compiler and may imply that the compilation occurred when this was still a current issue.

The following five brief oracles⁷⁰ have no direct relevance to the theme of fasting. They express messages of hope which in turn become more utopian in promise and they owe their position in the text to the compiler of Zechariah 1-8 who uses them to lead up to the response given in verse 19 to the original question about fasts. The circumstances in which they were initially uttered are hard to determine since it can be argued that they constitute a literary unit which pre-dates the return from exile in Babylon;⁷¹ that each oracle is from a different period of Zechariah's ministry;⁷² or that they are the latest strand of oracular material, having an eschatological focus and deriving from the prophet or his tradents no earlier than during the rebuilding of the temple.⁷³

⁶⁷ Zech.7:11-14. These words are considered in more detail on pp.254ff.

⁷⁰ Zech.8:2; 3; 4-5; 6 and 7.

⁷¹ Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.365-383.

⁷² For varying approaches to this option see Baldwin, Haggai, pp.140,148-150; Beuken, Haggai, pp.156-183; Smith, Micah-Malachi, p.231.

⁷³ Ackroyd, Exile, p.206, assigns them to Zechariah when the temple had been completed.

Many scholars have commented⁷⁴ on the similarity between Zechariah 8:2,

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath."

and the opening of an oracle in the report of Zechariah's first vision,

"Cry out, Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion."⁷⁵

likewise between Zechariah 8:3

"Thus says the LORD: I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain."

and clauses contained in the oracles which follow the third vision

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you, says the LORD. ... and I will dwell in the midst of you, ... And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem."⁷⁶

These similarities have led Mason to propose that Zechariah 8:1-8 is an exposition of the prophet's oracles, akin to the levitical-type sermons of the Chronicler, deriving from a later generation.⁷⁷ He identifies

⁷⁴ For example, Baldwin, Haggai, p.149; Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp. 429-30; Petersen, OTL, pp.297-9; and Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.367-71.

⁷⁵ Zech.1:14b.

⁷⁶ Zech.2:14-16(MT).

⁷⁷ R.Mason, 'The Prophets of the Restoration' in Israel's Prophetic Tradition, eds.R.Coggins, A.Phillips & M.Knibb, (Cambridge University Press), 1982, pp.148-9. Like Petitjean (see note 71 above), he suggests that the progression of thought in the oracles indicates the unity of this passage. His claim that the passage is "elaborated with mythical details of the (future) paradisaical conditions that will ... obtain" fails to address the fact that the text declares that some of these conditions had previously been experienced in Jerusalem and were thus a realistic hope for the community.

Mason's more recent, detailed study of this subject, Preaching the Tradition, identifies many similarities between this and other passages in Zechariah 1-8 and the material he now calls 'addresses' in the Books of Chronicles. We accept his findings but challenge his conclusion that this implies a similar date for all the material. It is surely possible

the passage as an example of inner biblical exegesis and the fact that it incorporates an idea of the fulfilment of an hope expressed in Isaiah

"Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city"⁷⁸

adds support to this argument. However his attribution of this 'sermon' to Zechariah's traditions must be questioned. There is no reason to deny that Zechariah could have reiterated oracles, initially uttered with a different purpose, and have expanded on them to convey another more far-seeing message of hope and assurance to the people. Nor should it be claimed that the use of Isaianic material implies a later date, for it has been argued⁷⁹ that Zechariah quite probably had access to classical prophetic texts. The crux of the matter is whether an eschatological perspective must be considered as alien to Zechariah's prophecies, which focus predominantly on the period when the temple was being rebuilt, or whether he also addressed the restored community in Jerusalem about an indefinite future time when all God's people would be gathered into his chosen city. It is feasible that Zechariah reconsidered his message as the building work progressed with no dramatic evidence of the new age coming into being and proclaimed the need to await the return of all the exiles before experiencing the fulfilment of the divine promises.⁸⁰

that the Chronicler's 'addresses' could have been styled on material from the early post exilic period.

⁷⁸ Isa.1:26b. Cf Zech.8:3,8. Although Zechariah uses 'עִיר - יְשֻׁבָּת' to convey the idea of the faithful city rather than 'קְרִיָּה נְאֻמָּה' as in Isaiah, there is little doubt that they mean the same.

⁷⁹ See above, pp.10f.

⁸⁰ The mention of east and west as the locus of God's scattered people is unusual because the north was generally associated with the location of the Babylonian captivity, Zech.2:10(MT); Jer.31:8. Ackroyd, Exile, p.213, suggests that the compass points relate to the powers of Babylonia and Egypt. This is feasible since they were responsible for the two major captivities in Israel's history, although these directions may have been specified simply as a broader reference to the diaspora.

Therefore we are not prepared to reject the possibility that this sermon represents part of the oral ministry of the prophet Zechariah.

The following oracle, Zechariah 8:9-13, also has the form of a sermon¹ which, according to the transmitted text, is addressed to both the "house of Judah and house of Israel". This likewise projects the experience of blessing for both Yahweh's people and the nations, forward to a time when the tribes of the old northern kingdom would have been restored alongside the community centred on Jerusalem, a hope proclaimed during the exile.² It is recognized that these words of address do not equate with the audience described in the opening verse of the oracle,

"you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouths of the prophets, since the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built."

or references to them as "the remnant of this people" in verses 11,12, which led Wellhausen and others to reject both vocatives from the text as a gloss,³ while more scholars reject only the reference to Israel.⁴

¹ Beuken, Haggai, pp.156-73 argues that this is the first part of a levitical sermon which extends to verse 17. His opinion that the two parts are integral is accepted by Baldwin, Haggai, pp.151-4 while Smith, Micah-Malachi, pp.235-7 argues for three sections vv.9-13c, 13d-15 and 16-17.

² Ezek.37:15-22. Cf. Jer.23:6; 33:7; these convey a similar hope but their date of origin is less certain.

³ J. Wellhausen, Die Kleinen Propheten, (Berlin), 3rd ed., 1898, pp.45,187; K. Marti, Das Dodekapropheton erklärt, (Tübingen: Mohr), 1904, p.425; F. Horst, in T. H. Robinson and F. Horst, Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten, (Handbuch zum A. T., XIV), (Tübingen), 3rd ed., 1964, p.242; and Beuken, Haggai, p.168 who assigns each to a different hand.

⁴ Mitchell, in H. G. Mitchell, J. M. P. Smith, J. A. Bewer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah, (ICC), (T&T Clark, Edinburgh), 1912, pp.96,214; E. Sellin, Das Zwölfprophetenbuch, (Kommentar zum A. T., XII), (Leipzig), 1922, pp.481-2; cf. Ackroyd, Exile, p.215, note 144.

Nonetheless, as Petitjean has argued,⁸⁵ other references which mention the two houses in formulaic style follow the sequence of Israel before Judah;⁸⁶ and this weakens arguments that a later writer has inserted a stereotypical formula into an existing oracle to broaden its scope. The refusal to reject these words as secondary recognizes that Zechariah was able to acknowledge both Yahweh's immediate concern for the restoration of the community in Jerusalem⁸⁷ and his ongoing purposes which offered hope on a universal scale.⁸⁸ This overall tenor of the book represents the continuation of those aspects of exilic prophecy which focus on the hope for the reunification of Israel and Judah. The proposal that this sermon derives from a tradent of Zechariah remains legitimate though for the opening verse indicates that it is referring back to the words of prophets who were active when the temple was being rebuilt; and as far as is known Haggai and Zechariah were the only ones prophesying at that time.⁸⁹ However the content of this sermon does not allude directly to any words of Zechariah⁹⁰ whereas it is much more closely related to the message of Haggai. The words of encouragement 'תִּתְּקַח יְדֶיךָ' (Let your hands be strong) enclosing it are reminiscent of the exhortation 'וְתִתְּקַח' (take courage) which is repeated in Haggai 2:4 and the substance of the

⁸⁵ Petitjean, Oracles, pp.404-5.

⁸⁶ Jer.5:11; 11:10,17; 13:11; 31:27,31; 33:14.

⁸⁷ For example Zech.1:14-17 and 2:5-9(MT).

⁸⁸ For example Zech.1:11; 2:15(MT) and 6:5-7.

⁸⁹ Ezra 5:1.

⁹⁰ Contra the suggestion of Lacocque, Aggée, Zacharie, Malachie, pp.47-8, that Zech.8:9-17 is a résumé of the prophet's message.

message appears to be dependent on Haggai 1:6-11 and 2:15-19.¹ It is dangerous to argue from silence but there may have been contemporaries of Haggai who supported his ministry and reinforced his words in the community; and if so this could account for the mention of more than one prophet in Zechariah 8:9.² Thus it is not necessary to deny that this sermon could have been delivered by Zechariah although exactly when it originated is far from certain.³

The final oracle in this section, Zechariah 8:14-17, falls into two halves which convey Yahweh's purposes and the behaviour required of the people respectively.⁴ Its opening words

"As I purposed to do evil to you when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts"

reflect the closing words of Zechariah 1:1-6

"As the LORD of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us."

and look back on the exile as the intentional punishment from Yahweh on

¹ Zech.8:10 and Hag.1:6 both refer to inadequate wages. Zech.8:12 presents a reversal of Hag.1:10f, a blessing proclaimed as a future hope in Hag.2:19. Zech.8:9 and Hag.2:18 indicate the crucial turning point in the community's fortunes as the foundation of the temple rebuilding.

² The use of the singular construct 'פִּי' (mouth) before the plural 'נְבִיאִים' (prophets) suggests that they all proclaimed the same message as if with one voice, which is not a true appraisal of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah.

³ Taken together the two sermons Zech.8:1-8 and 9-13 offer similar eschatological hopes to those expressed in Isa.65:17-24 although there is certainly no direct dependence between them. This suggests that they may have originated out of like contexts. However, the uncertainties surrounding the composition and date of the Isaianic passage make it impossible to draw any helpful conclusions regarding the origins of the words in Zechariah 1-8.

⁴ Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.428-31, argue that vv.16-17 are a distinct unit which they identify as a "coda" to the 7 oracles that they believe make up Zechariah 8:2-15.

Judah in terms similar to those which Jeremiah used to predict it

"For thus says the LORD, 'The whole land shall be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end. for I have spoken, I have purposed; I have not relented nor will I turn back.'"⁹⁵

These passages all contain the verb 'נָחַץ' (purpose) in its regular sense of indicating that an hardship was divinely intended;⁹⁶ but uniquely in biblical literature the following verse

"so again have I purposed (נָחַץ) in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not."⁹⁷

uses it to introduce a promise of divine blessing. This transition from past judgement, evoked by the disobedience of previous generations, to future blessing reiterates the thrust of the message of Zechariah 1:12-17 and the similar change of emphasis which marks the opening of chapter 8; but by adopting the traditional language of woe to convey a promise of weal the words are made to create a greater impact on their audience. However the second half of ^{the} oracle, verses 16-17, introduces a cautionary note since it lays down conditions which must be met in order to receive the promise's fulfilment. These verses reiterate Zechariah 7:9-10 which is itself a pastiche of pre-exilic classical prophecy⁹⁸ and the close identity of the language between 8:17a and 7:10b suggests an intention to link these two passages. Moreover the format of the complete oracle parallels the progression of the series of oracles comprising Zechariah 7:4-8:13. If this is deliberate, as it appears, it may indicate that it

⁹⁵ Jer.4:27-8. Cf. Lam.2:17.

⁹⁶ See also Jer.51:12. When used with a human subject the verb invariably introduces evil intentions; for example Gen.11:6; Deut.19:19; Pss.31:14; 37:12 and Prov.30:32.

⁹⁷ Zech.8:15.

⁹⁸ See above p.20, n.67. Here there may also be an echo of Amos 5:10,12.

was composed as a précis of this teaching by the compiler of the section who perhaps intended to replace the long passage that intervenes between question and answer with this alternative briefer version. Therefore we conclude that Zechariah 8:14-17 is a literary composition dependent on the preceding series of oracles and deriving from the collator of that material; but we consider it unwise to conjecture as to his identity or the period in which he wrote.

The remaining verses of the third section of Zechariah 1-8 consist of two brief oracles 8:20-22 and 23⁹⁹ which pick up on the promise of future joy - expressed in the previous oracle that answered the question about fasting - and apply its message beyond the restored community in Jerusalem to other groups of people including the Gentile nations.¹⁰⁰ The first of these is linked linguistically with Zechariah 7:2 in that both passages refer to people travelling to Jerusalem, from one or more cities, 'בְּקִרְבֵי אֶת-פְּנֵי יְהוָה' (to entreat the favour of the LORD). Since it has already been suggested that 7:2f derives from the compiler of the book,¹⁰¹ this raises questions as to whether the oracle has been added

⁹⁹ Contrary to Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.419-38 who argues that Zech.8:18-23 is a single literary unit which corresponds in thought and structure to Zech.2:14-17(MT). He indicates how scholarly opinion has divided on this issue, with full references, on pp.419f. É.Lipiński, 'Recherches sur le livre de Zacharie', VT 20, 1970, pp.42-6, considers that Zech.8:20-23 constitutes a single unit which he attributes to the redactor of the book. More recently Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.432-55, Petersen, OTL, pp.312-20 and Smith, Micah-Malachi, pp.238-41 have opted for the tripartite division to which we adhere.

¹⁰⁰ Lipiński, 'Recherches', p.43, contrary to most scholarly opinion argues that there is no universalistic message in these words but that only Jews and proselytes are implied here. His interpretation of the phrase 'מִכָּל לְשׁוֹנֹת הַגּוֹיִם' (from all the tongues of the nations) lacks any persuasive force in our opinion.

The interpretation of these oracles in the light of classical prophetic traditions is dealt with on pp.289ff.

¹⁰¹ See above, p.18.

at a later date especially as it follows a carefully constructed section at the end of the book. However its message of promise for those people still to be gathered into Jerusalem in the future is found elsewhere in the prophecies of Zechariah¹⁰² and the universalism of verse 22,

"Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favour of the LORD."

is similar to that expressed in 2:15a(MT), an oracle associated with the visionary material,

"And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people,".

Unless one argues that none of these passages originates with Zechariah the prophet, an hypothesis without any logical foundation,¹⁰³ there is little reason to single out 8:20-22 as being secondary. It is probable that the compiler recognized this oracle as a fitting climax to the book and positioned it so that the prophecies conclude with a far reaching message of hope rather than with the emphasis on the restored community in Jerusalem in the present age. If this is so he may have formulated the introduction to the oracles, Zechariah 7:2, in a way that forged a link between the two sections; and we believe that this offers the best explanation for the probable direction of dependency.

The final oracle, Zechariah 8:23, expresses a yet more futuristic hope but in more particular terms;

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go

¹⁰² For example Zech.2:9(MT); 8:7f.

¹⁰³ Beuken, Haggai, pp.325f,327, argues concerning Zech.2:15a(MT) and 8:20ff that they have their origins "noch nach der chronistischen Redaktion" but he is unable to provide any convincing reasons in support of such a late date.

with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

It portrays the Jewish people as fulfilling their ancient calling to be those through whom the one true God is revealed to the world nations,¹⁰⁴ a hope that goes beyond anything that Zechariah proclaimed in visions or oracles. These words develop the message of the preceding oracle and project its realization forward to an indefinite future time. While it is not impossible that Zechariah himself glimpsed this prospect, it is more probable that this oracle should be attributed to a later author because it seems to relate to a time when the Jews had become a clearly distinguishable group within society and when there was reason for it to be said that God was with them, which could imply a time when the temple structures had become well established once more. In any case it would appear that these words were appended after the oracular sections of Zechariah 1-8 had been compiled.

The foregoing discussions of Zechariah 7 and 8 have led to the conclusion that this material, with the exception of 8:23, may all have originated with the prophet and we have found no evidence excluding the possibility that he could also have compiled the section, although there is equally nothing definite to substantiate this hypothesis. It appears likely, however, that the compilation occurred before the rededication of the temple and the establishment of fixed religious systems and so it must have been completed very soon after the conclusion of Zechariah's prophetic ministry.

The series of visions which constitutes the major element of the

¹⁰⁴ For example Gen.12:3; Isa.11:10; 42:6f.

book is clearly composite in that it is a mixture of both visions and oracles, all of which are attributed to the prophet. Although this need not imply that anyone besides Zechariah was involved in its compilation, before the redaction of the vision sequence is further considered, it is appropriate that the integrity of the eight visions is discussed because the authenticity of the fourth, Zechariah 3:1ff, is widely disputed.¹⁰⁵ Amongst the arguments which have been put forward to indicate why this should be regarded as an addition to the series is the fact that it is introduced by 'וַיִּרְאֵנִי' (then he showed me) rather than the usual formula 'וַיִּשָׂא אֶפְשֵׁי יַיִן וַיִּרְאֵ' (and I lifted my eyes and saw).¹⁰⁶ However the first, fifth and seventh visions also have distinctive introductions,¹⁰⁷ which render this argument rather weak. The fact that Zechariah only observes the action of the fourth vision without asking questions is regarded as a significant divergence from the style of the other visions in which the prophet's queries about what he sees are answered by an interpreting angel. However he does not ask any questions in the sixth vision either in which he is given an explanation by an unidentified companion;¹⁰⁸ and

¹⁰⁵ In depth discussion of the issues together with other relevant references is offered by Beuken, Haggai, pp.282-303; C.Jeremias, Die Nachtgesichte des Sacharja, (Göttingen - Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 1977, pp.201-25; Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.179-97, 213-22; Seybold, Bilder, pp.48-57; et al.

¹⁰⁶ Zech.2:5(MT) and with minor variations 2:1(MT); 5:1; 6:1, the openings of the third, second, sixth and eighth visions. The phrase also occurs midway through the seventh vision, Zech.5:9, introducing the second phase of action.

¹⁰⁷ Zech.1:8; 4:1; and 5:5 which uses the vocabulary of the formula as an imperative addressed to the prophet whereas it is a statement made by the prophet in the other 4 instances.

¹⁰⁸ Zech.5:1-4. The identity of the companion depends on whatever originally preceded this vision. If it was always the fifth vision, Zech.4:1-6a,10b-14, then the figure is the interpreting angel; but that identification in turn raises problems over Zech.5:5, the link between the sixth and seventh visions, which suggests that this angel approaches the prophet afresh.

in the third vision he questions a participant within the scene while a second angel addresses the interpreting angel.¹⁰⁹ It is noted that the divine being in Zechariah 3:1ff is identified as 'מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה' (the angel of the LORD) but since this figure also appears in the first vision¹¹⁰ this issue cannot be used to support arguments that the fourth vision differs from the others in a unique way. It is accepted that the vision in question is the only one in which a named, historical person (that is Joshua), appears but since the substance of the individual visions is different this does not provide a reason to doubt its authenticity. There is a great tendency in contemporary scholarship to discover points of similarity in biblical passages and to use them to justify hypotheses about their common origins or authorship. However the absence of such similarities does not automatically imply that a passage which purports to be part of a series can be rejected for there is no rule requiring a prophet to conform to a single style. Therefore, recognizing that the fourth vision appears somewhat different from the others, we nonetheless conclude that it should be regarded as an authentic vision of Zechariah.

It remains valid to question whether he received all eight visions in a single experience - and if so whether they came in the sequence in which they are recorded - or whether the series is a compilation of separately received visions. It cannot be denied that Zechariah could have had one continuing visionary experience in a single night, which is implied by the textual presentation of this section in that it begins

"On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month
... in the second year of Darius, the word of
the LORD came to Zechariah ... 'I saw in the

¹⁰⁹ Zech.2:5-9(MT).

¹¹⁰ Zech.1:11,12.

night, and behold, ...'¹¹¹

and proceeds to record all eight visions in series. However it does not state categorically that this all occurred at the same time and because the date attached to the following oracular section is almost two years later¹¹² it is legitimate to infer that the visions were received during that intervening period. Since none of the visions refers to historical incidents and they tend to include supernatural features, there are no objective criteria against which they can be accurately dated and this means that they could equally have been received at other times during Zechariah's ministry and collated into a series.¹¹³ Any decisions on this issue depend on how each one is interpreted and this is inevitably influenced by the way they are presented in the text. Some scholars see a definite structure within the cycle¹¹⁴ and without doubt a logical progression of thought can be recognized.¹¹⁵ None of the visions relies on the foregoing material in any way, though, and each can be understood in isolation. Alternative ways of ordering the text which would produce

¹¹¹ Zech.1:7f.

¹¹² Zech.7:1 refers to the fourth day of the ninth month in the fourth year of Darius.

¹¹³ Among those who claim to identify distinct historical settings from differing periods within the visions are K.Galling, 'Die Exilswende in der Sicht des Propheten Sacharja', VT, 1952, pp.18-36 and L.G.Rignell Die Nachtgesichte des Sacharja, (Lund: Gleerup), 1950, p.243.

¹¹⁴ Baldwin, Haggai, pp.80f,93, argues that they follow a chiasmic pattern; Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.liv-lviii, conceive the structure in terms of superimposed circles centring on the vision in Zechariah 4.

¹¹⁵ The individual visions will be considered in more depth in the ensuing chapters of this thesis but for the present it can be said that their content depicts Yahweh's dealings with his people and the nations from the circumstances of the exile, through the return to Jerusalem and the re-establishment of its religious and political systems, to the resolution of the problem of sin and evil and the recognition of divine universal sovereignty.

an equally logical sequence can also be suggested.¹¹⁶ Thus it appears that subjective hypotheses are the only ones which can be used to reach a conclusion and consequently we will remain open-minded as to when the visions were received and proceed on the basis that their sequence is due to the work of a compiler.

On the whole the visions show no evidence of having been subjected to editorial processes - apart from the inclusion of oracles among them to which we will turn next - which may indicate that they were committed to writing from the outset, or at least from the time of their initial compilation into a series. However, the exception to this is the vision of the lampstand,¹¹⁷ in which verse 12

"And a second time I said to him, 'What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the oil is poured out?'"

not only breaks the normal pattern of question and answer by posing this further question before the original one had received a response but it also introduces additional features, 'branches' and 'golden pipes' which were not mentioned in the initial description of the scene.¹¹⁸ It ought

¹¹⁶ For example the eighth vision, Zech.6:1-8, could follow on from Zech.1:13 as it continues the theme of horses which patrol the earth at Yahweh's behest; the sequence of the sixth and seventh visions could be reversed without problems for their interpretation; or alternatively the sixth could follow the third since both involve taking measurements and refer to Yahweh's authority over Jerusalem and its environs. NEB has adopted a radical re-ordering of the fourth and fifth visions, reading Zech.4:1-3,11-14,3:1-8,9c-10,9ab,4:4-5,10b,6-10a, which provides one solution to the exegetical problems in the Hebrew text. It is unlikely that the original text could have been disturbed to this extent during transmission and it is questionable whether translators can be justified in producing what amounts to a new redaction of the material.

¹¹⁷ Zech.4:1-6a,10b-14.

¹¹⁸ Contra Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.255-7, 274ff, who state that this verse "is in essence a rephrasing and amplification of the first question ... in verse 11."(p.274).

to be noticed as well that this question is not supplied with an answer. This verse is widely recognized as an addition to the text and we have no hesitation in concurring with this conclusion, whilst acknowledging that diverse views exist about the intention of the interpolator, which it is inappropriate for us to discuss at this point.¹¹⁹ It is probable that a later tradition was responsible for these words but there are no grounds to justify an attempt at being more precise about their origins.

Let us now consider the oracles which are interspersed among the visions.¹²⁰ It is conceivable that all of them could have been uttered other than in the context of the visions to which they are now attached; but it is also possible that they had no independent existence. In this second case one must either attribute them to a tradent of Zechariah or claim that they derive from the latter part of his ministry after he or a close associate had previously compiled the vision cycle. Indeed, it may be that each of the five passages has a different history leading to the conclusion that the vision cycle has undergone a complex process of redaction. In view of the claims we have already made based on some of this material¹²¹ and to prepare the ground for the chapters that follow, it is necessary that we attempt to establish a coherent position on these issues.

There are difficulties over the precise meaning of the text and we note that two alternative readings are suggested by the editors of BHS.

¹¹⁹ Petersen, OTL, pp.234-7, provides a good summary of the various opinions with full references and offers a new solution: "Verse 12 may well have been designed to obfuscate the quite clear and potentially 'blasphemous' picture created by the interpreted vision." (p.236).

The whole vision and its interpretation are discussed on pp.210ff.

¹²⁰ Zech.1:14-17; 2:10-17(MT); 3:8-10; 4:6b-10a and 6:9-15.

¹²¹ See above pp.22f,29.

The first vision is followed by three separate oracles¹²² which have been formed into a literary unit by means of the introductory order to the prophet to proclaim the words and the concluding statement which reiterates the significance of them.¹²³ In this context the oracles are quite naturally equated with 'דְּבָרֵי טוֹבִים דְּבָרֵי נְחֻמִּים' (the gracious and comforting words) spoken by Yahweh to the interpreting angel which he in turn transmitted to the prophet and commanded him to proclaim.¹²⁴ While the vision could have ended without an explanatory proclamation of these words, it seems probable that an oracle was appended from the outset to provide an interpretation and the first of this group

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. And I am very angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little they furthered the disaster."

is most appropriate since it includes references to both Jerusalem and the nations. It is possible that the third oracle

"Cry again, Thus says the LORD of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity,"

was a continuation of this since its mention of 'עָרַי' (my cities) offers a direct response to the question asked about 'עָרֵי יְהוּדָה' (the cities of Judah) in the vision.¹²⁵ However, since these words look forward to a time when Yahweh's blessings will be experienced throughout Judah it is feasible that they could have originated in many different contexts.

¹²² Zech.1:14b-15, 1:16 and 1:17a.

¹²³ Zech.1:14a and 17b respectively. The reference to Yahweh in the third person in v.17b makes it unlikely that this is a continuation of the preceding oracle in which Yahweh speaks in the first person.

¹²⁴ Zech.1:13f.

¹²⁵ Zech.1:12. For a full discussion of the meaning of 'תִּפְּצוּן' (they shall overflow) see Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.63-9 and the works referred to there.

The second oracle, in contrast, focusses attention on the restoration of Jerusalem and the place of the temple in it and although it was probably initially uttered with a different purpose, it appears that the compiler has used it to amplify the abstract concept of Yahweh's jealousy. It seems to derive from a period before any real progress had been made on rebuilding the temple and city. Its purpose may have been to encourage the community in Jerusalem, in a time of low morale, to recognize both Yahweh's positive intentions for them and the onus on them to complete the work on the temple as a precursor to experiencing the fulfilment of his promises. As such this oracle could have been uttered around the same time that Haggai was prophesying, although it could equally derive from an earlier date and have been addressed to a group who had not yet returned from exile. This leads us to conclude that the oracular unit was probably compiled at the same time as the vision cycle from one or two oracles which formed the original interpretation to the first vision and one or two oracles¹²⁶ proclaimed by Zechariah on a prior occasion.

The next group of oracles to be considered, Zechariah 2:10-17(MT), follow the third vision but there has been no attempt made to link them to it in a direct way. The group is a loose composition of perhaps five separate sayings,¹²⁷ which exhort people living in exile to return to Jerusalem where they will first experience for themselves the presence and protection of Yahweh and then see the advent there of other nations

¹²⁶ This depends on what is decided about the third oracle.

¹²⁷ Zech.2:10-11, 12-13, 14, 15-16, 17(MT). Because of the way this material has been put together it is difficult to distinguish all the sub-units with any degree of certainty. For a review of theories on the structure of this section see Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.89-94. Cf. Petersen, OTL, pp.172-186 and Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.172-8, for more recent theories.

who want to acknowledge him as their God and receive his blessings. The section ends with the emphasis on the universal sovereignty of Yahweh, an emphasis similar to that implied by the closing words of the previous vision.¹²⁸ The wording of Zechariah 2:17(MT)

"Be silent(שָׁמֵט), all flesh, before the LORD; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling."

is reminiscent of Habakkuk 2:20,

"But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence(שָׁמֵט) before him.",

a verse which is used to conclude a series of prophetic woes. In both instances a universal response is demanded and reference is made to the dwelling place of Yahweh;¹²⁹ but there is a greater sense of expectancy in Zechariah of an imminent divine initiative. A call to prepare for such an initiative is expressed in much the same terms in Zephaniah 1:7

"Be silent(שָׁמֵט) before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand;"

although this text does not mention the temple. It is possible that the words in Zechariah have been influenced by these earlier prophetic uses but there is no indication of direct dependency on either of them. Some have maintained that this cry for silence originated in the pre-exilic cult;¹³⁰ but whilst this setting may account for its development into a formula that could be used to bring a series of oracles to an end, there is no justification for Elliger's conclusion that this verse was added

¹²⁸ Zech.2:9(MT).

¹²⁹ Zech.2:17 contains the word 'מִבְּיֹמֵי' (habitation) which could refer to his heavenly abode rather than the earthly temple. This would be appropriate for words spoken before the temple had been rebuilt.

¹³⁰ For example Ackroyd, Exile, p.181; Mason, Haggai, p.45. Both Hab.2:20 and Zeph.1:7 are generally attributed to a period towards the end of the monarchy.

to the text when the section was read in the renewed temple.¹³¹ It is equally possible that the compiler of this section included the standard formula at the end as it was appropriate in the context of the previous vision. However it is apparent from the overall content of the section that it relates not solely to one vision but to all three which precede it. Consequently the passage must have been composed at the time of, or subsequent to, the compilation of the vision cycle. Since it can be completely removed from the text without disturbing its continuity, the latter option must be considered probable. However this does not imply that the material derives from a period later than Zechariah's ministry, because the individual oracles may well have originated around the time when the separate visions were received by the prophet. The urgency of the appeal to those in exile

"Ho! ho! Flee from the land of the north, says
the LORD; ... Ho! Escape ..."¹³²

is intended to encourage people to return from Babylon and it conveys an idea that it could be dangerous not to do so.¹³³ This oracle would not have seemed out of place following Zechariah 1:15 and it can equally be related to the context of the second vision's threat against the nations which sent Judah into exile; and so it is likely that it derives from a similar stage in the prophet's ministry as those two visions. A close association of ideas between the second oracle of the group, verses 8-9,

¹³¹ K.Elliger, Das Buch der Zwölf Kleinen Propheten, Vol.2, (Das Alten Testament Deutsch, 25, Göttingen), 6th Ed., 1967, p.119.

¹³² Zech.2:10-11(MT). V.11 is read as an imperative addressed to Zion as the corporate people of God, contra RSV and W.Rudolph, Haggai; Sacharja 1-8; Sacharja 9-14; Maleachi, (Kommentar zum Alten Testament XIII/4, Neukirchen), 1976, pp.86-7, who do not adopt a vocative reading.

¹³³ This need not indicate that Zechariah began his preaching in Babylon as the appeal has more force if it is uttered from Jerusalem. Contra Ackroyd, Exile, pp.148f.

and the second vision can also be detected, which may suggest that they originated in similar circumstances.

The following three verses all contain the idea of Yahweh coming to dwell among his people, or in Jerusalem specifically; and they create the impression that this is in the process of taking place. Although it would be quite legitimate to suggest that they originated shortly before the completion of the temple, in which Yahweh could once again make his dwelling place, there is no reason to deny that these oracles could have been proclaimed much earlier than this as words of hope. The last words of the third vision

"For I will be to her a wall of fire round about, says the LORD, and I will be the glory within her."

convey a similar promise which lends support to this possibility. It is also noted that Zechariah 2:16(MT) concludes with an identical clause to the one used to end the oracular unit attached to the first vision 'וּבְחַרְתִּי וּבְיָשָׁנָה' (and [the LORD] will again choose Jerusalem).¹³⁴ Since it is impossible to determine whether they both derive from the same hand, or whether one is dependent on the other, this does not assist in dating these oracles. However an emphasis on the significance of Jerusalem is evident in several of Zechariah's visions and oracles,¹³⁵ in contrast to Haggai's prophecies which do not once mention the city by name. This may add a little weight in favour of the argument that these words were

¹³⁴ Zech.1:17. The same vocabulary is used to denote the concept of Jerusalem's election in Zech.3:2. Petitjean, Les Oracles, p.71 draws attention to the fact that Zechariah 1-8 is the only prophetic book to refer to Jerusalem in these terms which are more commonly associated with the election of the Davidic house. Cf. Hag.2:23.

¹³⁵ Zech.1:12; 2:2(MT); 2:6,8(MT); 3:2 and Zech.1:14,16(twice); 7:7; 8:3(twice),4,8; [8:15]; 8:22 respectively.

originally Zechariah's own; and in the absence of any contrary evidence we will regard Zechariah 2:14-16(MT) as being comprised of sayings which were predominantly spoken by the prophet. Therefore we conclude with regard to the whole section that it is a collection of sayings deriving from different stages of Zechariah's ministry which was added into the vision cycle after it had attained its original form. Its inclusion in the text possibly took place at the time when the oracles which form the opening and closing sections of the book were added.

The fourth vision concludes with an oracle, Zechariah 3:6-7, which is integral to its message and was probably part of the original unit. After this three further oracles have been appended, of which the first two mention Joshua who was the subject of the vision. The last one,

"In that day, says the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbour under his vine and under his fig tree."

is apparently addressed to the community in general and promises a time of peace and prosperity in the coming new age.¹³⁶ This depends, for its concept of weal, on the picture presented as the prevailing situation in Solomon's reign just prior to the construction of the first temple,

"And Judah and Israel dwelt in safety, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon."¹³⁷

although it goes further by portraying the new era as one in which there is a spirit of consideration for others and of generosity. Thus it is

¹³⁶ Zech.3:10, based on an interpretation of 'In that day' in a technical, eschatological sense.

¹³⁷ 1 Kgs.5:5(MT). The same description of an era of peace occurs in Mic.4:4, a passage the origins of which has oft-times vexed scholars. (See for example, J.L.Mays, Micah, (OTL, SCM Press), 1976, pp.93-9.) It is consequently inappropriate to discuss any question of interdependency between the references in Micah and Zechariah 1-8.

likely that Zechariah 3:10 was initially proclaimed when the temple was being rebuilt as an encouragement to the people to hasten its completion and thereby inaugurate this promised time; and so there is no reason to deny that it originated with the prophet Zechariah. Its position in the text gives it a different significance dependent on the preceding oracle whereby future weal is associated with the cleansing of the land. This must reflect the purposes of the compiler of this section.

The first of this group of oracles, Zechariah 3:8, is addressed to Joshua and his 'friends who sit before (him)', in contrast to the one which concluded the vision and was spoken to him alone. This indicates that it begins a distinct unit, a suggestion which is reinforced by the fact that the scene has moved from the vision's depiction of the divine council to an earthly setting. The purpose of the oracle is to announce the coming of a divine servant identified as the Branch, a title which occurs again in Zechariah 6:12. There is every likelihood that these two verses are connected; and until the significance and origins of this motif have been fully discussed¹³⁰ it is inappropriate to speculate as to whether or not this oracle should be attributed to Zechariah. In the next brief oracle, Zechariah 3:9, Joshua is referred to as part of the wider audience being addressed but who the recipients of the message are is not clarified. Its content

"For behold, upon the stone which I have set before Joshua, upon a single stone with seven facets, I will engrave its inscription, says the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the guilt of this land in a single day."

raises a multitude of questions for exegetes which cannot be answered in

¹³⁰ This issue is the subject pp.201ff.

isolation from other passages in Zechariah 1-8¹³⁹ but it is evident that its author holds Joshua in high regard and believes he has a significant role to play in the fulfilment of Yahweh's purposes. This could suggest that the oracle originated in the context of an affirmation about the authority of the priesthood; but we ought to remain open-minded at this stage as to whether it could have been proclaimed by Zechariah. We have little doubt, however, that the compiler of Zechariah 3:8-10 intended to portray Joshua as an important figure in the life of the community and there is a real possibility that this passage was added to the text when the temple had been completed to give support to the priesthood's claims that they were the divinely appointed leaders for the new era. If this can be substantiated it suggests that the passage was added after the book had otherwise attained its final form, implying that it should not be attributed to the compiler of Zechariah 1-8 but to a later editor.

All the oracles which have been considered thus far have followed one of the visions in the cycle but the next group, Zechariah 4:6b-10a, disrupt the text of the fifth vision. The focal point of the vision is a lampstand, which is agreed to be an article used in Israel's worship, flanked by two olive trees. The oracles, on the other hand, are related to Zerubbabel and concern the building of the temple. There is no way, as the text stands, for 4:10b

"These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth."

to be interpreted as a continuation of the oracles which precede it; nor can an oracle addressed to Zerubbabel be a proper response to 4:4ff.,

"And I said to the angel who talked with me,

¹³⁹ For example Zech. 3:5; 4:7; 4:10b. These matters are considered in pp. 193ff.

'What are these, my Lord?' Then he said to me, ".

Undoubtedly the oracles have been inserted into an existing text¹⁴⁰ and the abrupt way that it has been effected suggests a deliberate intention to give an alternative interpretation of the material without obscuring its original meaning. This indicates that an editor with a particular theological standpoint was responsible for incorporating these oracles into the text rather than the compiler.

The oracles appear to derive from the period before or during the reconstruction of the temple, which means they could certainly have been proclaimed by Zechariah. However, they are the only specific references to Zerubbabel in Zechariah 1-8¹⁴¹ and without other evidence in support any claim that Zechariah prophesied directly to the governor has to be conjectural at this stage. The function of the oracles is to emphasize the importance of Zerubbabel's role in connection with the temple and to show that this was a divine appointment. Therefore they may have been included to strengthen the position of the governor against that of the

¹⁴⁰ The original order of this material, its division into separate oracles and its position within the text are issues which have prompted much scholarly discussion since Wellhausen, Kleine Propheten, pp.39-46, 182 suggested moving them to after Zech.4:14. For example Mitchell, ICC, pp.161,190-4, argues that the section should be re-ordered 4:8-10a, 6aß-7 and placed between Zech.6:14 and 15; while B.Halpern, 'The Ritual Background of Zechariah's Temple Song', CBQ 40, 1970, pp.167-90, wants to move the whole section to between Zech.3:8 and 9. (p.169) Amsler, Aggée, pp.92-5, identifies 3 distinct oracles 4:6aßb, 7 and 8-10a. A survey of views is given by Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.207-15 who argues himself, unconvincingly in our opinion, that 4:8 should be moved to the beginning of the section. [Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.250, incorrectly assert that Petitjean suggests 4:8-10a,6b-7 as the arrangement of the text.]

¹⁴¹ Suggestions that Zerubbabel should be read instead of Joshua in Zech.3:9 and 6:11 are not appropriate for discussion here. See pp.193f, 197ff.

priest in the question of leadership.¹⁴² If this is so, these oracles present an opposing viewpoint to those appended to the vision relating to Joshua. As Zerubbabel disappeared from prominence abruptly, possibly before the temple was completed, it follows that any struggle for supremacy between the two figures must have occurred while Zechariah was active or very soon afterwards. It also follows that these oracles must have been added to the text around the same time since there would be little point in trying to enhance Zerubbabel's status when he was no longer on the scene. This in turn argues for an early compilation of the vision cycle, possibly of the whole book, because one would expect that a later compiler would have omitted material which had no further relevance and disrupted the text.

The final group of oracles associated with the vision cycle forms its conclusion, Zechariah 6:9-15. They are not directly linked with the eighth vision but since that ended with the concept of Yahweh at work in Babylon, it is not unnatural to follow it with a passage that tells of exiles returning to share in the work of restoration with those already resident in Jerusalem. The section is introduced by a standard oracular formula, verse 9, but the rest of the material is a mix of instructions, proclamation and comment which is capable of many interpretations. As the passage is now comprised the instructions

"Take from the exiles ... silver and gold, and
make a crown, and set it upon the head of

¹⁴² It has been suggested that the oracles limit Zerubbabel to the role of temple builder rather than enhance his status. Mason, Preaching the Tradition, p.209, comments that these oracles show that "like David and Solomon and other faithful Davidic rulers, Zerubbabel is called to be temple builder" and not a ruler. We will argue against this in Chapter 4 by showing the high honour associated with this role.

Joshua, ... the high priest;¹⁴³

are addressed to the prophet but other scenarios are easily envisaged in which a coronation is performed by someone else. These words could then have been an oracle proclaimed by the prophet to that person. The crown is again the subject of verse 14 which can be viewed as the continuation of the instructions about where it is to be located, or as a subsequent comment about it. These three verses probably originated out of one set of circumstances but any conclusions about who spoke the words, or when, depend on the prior resolution of all other difficulties associated with the text.¹⁴⁴ We must remain open-minded as to whether they derive from Zechariah. They could have stood alone as a unit in the text without an explanatory proclamation. The oracle which now intervenes,

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall grow up in his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD, and shall bear royal honour, and shall sit and rule upon his throne. And there shall be a priest by his throne, and peaceful understanding shall be between them both.'¹⁴⁵

purports to be addressed to the recipient of the crown and can be taken to mean that 'the Branch' is being applied as a title to that person or that attention is being drawn to another figure so named. However the description given of the role of the Branch identifies him most probably as Zerubbabel, which adds to the overall problem of interpreting this whole section and seems to be a different identification from the one

¹⁴³ Zech.6:10-11. The textual problems relating to whether 'קִטְרוֹת' (crown) is singular or plural and the consequent issue of whether Joshua or Zerubbabel, or both were crowned is discussed on pp.198ff.

¹⁴⁴ It is not necessary to infer from Zech.6:14 that the temple was standing when it was uttered for it could be indicating what was to be done in the future. Contra Mason, 'The Prophets', p.147.

¹⁴⁵ Zech.6:12-13.

implied by Zechariah 3:8.¹⁴⁶ There is a possibility, though, that this oracle has been compiled from two distinct sayings as this might explain the repeated clause that ends one verse and opens the next.¹⁴⁷ In which case either or both of them may have been inserted by an editor with the intention of amplifying or amending the original text. Many situations could have given rise to the prophecy about the Branch; but since the second verse refers to co-operation between a royal figure and a priest, a theme associated with the interpretation of the two olive trees in the fifth vision, there is no need to doubt that Zechariah proclaimed this initially and it is possible that it could have been one of a group of oracles which were originally attached to the end of that vision. It is acknowledged that these suggestions are all hypothetical; but it is very evident that the person responsible for the final version of Zechariah 6:9-14 was not the initial compiler of the material. However his work must have been completed soon after the compilation for reasons similar to those we have given regarding the compilation of Zechariah 4.

There remains to be discussed the function of Zechariah 6:15 in the passage. It is made up from three components, of which the second

"and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you."

is a prophetic comment on the reliability of his message as in Zechariah 2:13,15(MT) and 4:9. The opening clause

"And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD;"

¹⁴⁶ See p.42 above and the discussion on pp.201ff.

¹⁴⁷ Unless the second version containing the emphatic pronoun 'אֲנִי' (It is he) was intended to replace the first whereas both were included in the text accidentally. The future perspective of these clauses must imply that they derive from a time before work began on the rebuilding of the temple.

has been understood as the original ending of the eighth vision,¹⁴⁸ the conclusion of an oracle beginning at verse 13¹⁴⁹ and as part of a final editorial comment along with 15c.¹⁵⁰ It is ambiguous as to whether it refers to those still in exile or to people of other nations and without knowing its initial context this cannot be determined; but nor can it be assigned a context until this issue has been decided. Consequently we cannot reach any conclusions on this clause which would bear objective scrutiny. The final clause of the verse,

"And this shall come to pass, if you will
diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God."

may be a quotation from the opening words of Deuteronomy 28:1¹⁵¹ which the compiler has used to conclude the entire vision cycle although it could have been applied to a smaller section of material. It serves to emphasize that the fulfilment of Yahweh's promises as revealed in vision or oracle depends on the right response of his people. These words are consequently an appropriate way of making the transition from the vision cycle to the remaining oracles and we attribute them to whoever compiled the initial text of Zechariah 1-8.

The foregoing discussions have led to the conclusion that with the exception of Zechariah 4:12 and 8:23 the material may have derived from

¹⁴⁸ J.W.Rothstein, Die Nachtgesichte des Sacharja. Studien zur Sacharjaprophete und zur jüdischen Geschichte im ersten nachexilischen Jahrhundert, (Beiträge zur Wissenschaft von Alten Testament 8, Leipzig), 1910, p.198. More recently Baldwin, Haggai, p.137.

¹⁴⁹ Petitjean, Les Oracles, p.300.

¹⁵⁰ It is also noted that Mitchell, ICC, pp.190-4, attaches the verse to the oracles of Zechariah 4 which he moves and rearranges thus: Zech.6:9-14; 4:8-10, 6b-7; 6:15.

¹⁵¹ Textually the difference is that Zechariah 6:15c is written in the plural whilst Deuteronomy 28:1 has a singular addressee.

the prophet and that the book was initially compiled during his active ministry. It has been argued that the process of compilation began with the vision cycle, which included some oracles attached to the first and fourth visions from the outset. Then the closing chapters were compiled and perhaps at the same time added to the vision cycle together with the introductory oracles, Zechariah 1:1-6, the oracles comprising Zechariah 2:10-17(MT) and Zechariah 6:15. Soon after this Zechariah 4:6b-10a was added or moved from a former position. All of this literary composition may have been carried out by Zechariah or someone working alongside him. Shortly afterwards Zechariah 6:9-14 was inserted or altered to its final form by someone with a different theological understanding.¹⁵² Later on when the temple was complete and its systems established Zechariah 3:8-10 was added to the text and 8:23. These conclusions indicate that both Zechariah 1-8 and the book of Haggai were compiled around the same time, which gives rise to the possibility that the same person, who could have been Zechariah, was responsible for both books. In turn this suggests that they were literary compositions which were not preceded by a period of oral transmission and, as we concluded in the opening section of this chapter, there is no reason to doubt that the society of which Zechariah was a part possessed both the skills and the materials needed to produce such works.

¹⁵² It is possible that an earlier version of this passage had already been part of the text.

CHAPTER TWO

The Prophetic Authority of Haggai and Zechariah

The books of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 contain little information about the individuals to whom they are attributed and there is likewise a paucity of reliable allusions to them elsewhere in the literature of the Old Testament. Apart from Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 where both Haggai and Zechariah, the son of Iddo, are together referred to as prophets, Haggai is not mentioned; and although the name Zechariah occurs more frequently in Biblical literature it evidently enjoyed greater popularity as a name and probably the references are to a number of different individuals.¹ It is interesting to note that the names Haggai and Zechariah together have been incorporated into the titles of some Psalms in the versions;² but these only indicate the interpretations by later traditions of the two figures and their association together and do not provide any factual information about them. External evidence concerning Haggai or Zechariah is also unavailable since neither individual is referred to in any texts from the ancient Near East. Consequently we must exercise caution before making claims about their lives, their status in the community and the role they performed.

The name Haggai probably has an etymological connection with 'אג', a pilgrim feast but there is no reason to doubt its authenticity as a

¹ For the references concerned and comment on the issue of identity see pp.53ff and nn.12,13 and 19.

² In LXX: Pss.137 (EV.138); 145-8 (EV.146-8). In Syriac: Pss.125f (EV.126f); 145-8 (EV.146-8). In Old Latin: Ps.64 (EV.65). In Vulgate: Pss.111 (EV.112); 145f (EV.146f).

personal name.³ However it provides no clues about the origins or background of its possessor since no other Biblical character bears this name⁴ and therefore we cannot determine whether it had royal, priestly or peasant connotations. In the book bearing his name 'Haggai' occurs a total of nine times; in five instances the title 'חֲזַקְיָהוּ' (the prophet) is appended,⁵ in one he is referred to as 'מֵלֶכֶת יְהוָה' (messenger of the LORD),⁶ and in the other three only his name appears. No genealogical details are recorded about him nor is anything mentioned about his home, his life, or his work, before or after he proclaimed his message. Thus there is no direct indication as to whether Haggai had been among those deported to Babylon, whether he was a member of the group of returned exiles who had been born in exile, or whether he had lived in Judah all

³ T.André, Le Prophète Aggée, (Paris), 1895, p.8, suggested that the book may have been an anonymous work to which the name Haggai was given because the prophecies were all uttered on Feast Days. However he himself concedes that the 24th day of the 9th month (Hag.2:10,20) cannot be established as a Hebrew festival and without this his hypothesis must be rejected as speculative.

⁴ Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.8, suggest that Haggai is an Aramaic form of the Hebrew name Haggi and that it became a common name in Jewish circles in the post-exilic period. We note three other Old Testament characters with names deriving from the same root, Haggith (2 Sam.3:4; 1 Kgs.1:6,11; 2:13; 1 Chron.3:2), Haggiah (1 Chron.6:30) and Haggi (Gen. 46:16; Num.26:15), who are a wife of David, a Levite, and a son of Gad, respectively; but no helpful connections can be made between these individuals and the prophet of the Book of Haggai.

⁵ Hag.1:1; 1:3; 1:12; 2:1; and 2:10. We recognize D.L.Petersen's detailed study The Roles of Israel's Prophets, (JSOT Supplement Series), 1981, in which he distinguishes the significance of the differing Hebrew words used to refer to 'prophets'. However in view of the predominance of the term 'חֲזַקְיָהוּ' throughout the Old Testament literature we are not convinced by his conclusions. R.R.Wilson, Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel, (Fortress Press), 1980, pp.135ff,253ff presents a more balanced study of the various Hebrew terms that occur, which recognizes some significant distinctions in the way differing traditions use them, although more especially in early texts.

We do not believe that it is significant that this is the only term for prophet occurring in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8.

⁶ Hag.1:13. See pp.69f for our comments on the use of this title in Haggai and pp.108ff for a discussion of its wider significance.

his life.

It has been argued that the absence of a patronym itself provides an indication of Haggai's background. One possible explanation is that the absence of genealogical details is intended to show that Haggai was not from the circle of those who placed much emphasis on genealogy, a group which is usually associated with those who had been in exile and as developing into the Priestly Writers. Meyers and Meyers⁷ tentatively suggest that Haggai might have been a returned exile whose pedigree was inappropriate for a Hebrew prophet; and that to identify him by means of his ancestry, or by reference to a Babylonian town from which he came would not have been acceptable. Petersen's argument⁸ points to the lack of genealogy for Haggai, in contrast to the details given for Zerubbabel and Joshua,⁹ as being a way of emphasizing Haggai's calling as a prophet whose authority comes from Yahweh alone while the governor and high priest receive their authority, partially at least, by dint of their human genealogy. In contrast, Baldwin's suggestion¹⁰ that referring to Haggai as 'the prophet' was sufficiently specific because there were so few active prophets or because he was well known in the small community in Jerusalem is equally plausible; and perhaps this is the most credible option in view of the apparent rarity of the name. All the viewpoints merit consideration; but in the end we recognize that these hypotheses are essentially arguments from silence and that the lack of personal

⁷ Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.8.

⁸ Petersen, OTL, pp.17f.

⁹ The social position and father's name is given for both men; Hag.1:1,12,14; 2:2; and 2:4 (re: Joshua only); 2:21,23 (re: Zerubbabel only, with half the information in each reference).

¹⁰ Baldwin, Haggai, p.27.

background information speaks more about the writer of the framework to the Book of Haggai than the prophet himself. A final comment is needed on the lack of identification details in respect of Haggai. Although it is unusual in the Old Testament for such details about a prophet to be omitted from the book attributed to him, the same situation applies with regard to Habakkuk and Obadiah; and where details are included both the quantity and emphasis given are so variable¹¹ that it would be foolish to claim that there was a classical prophetic tradition concerning such matters which is not being continued in the Book of Haggai.

Turning now to consider the person of Zechariah we note that his name clearly associates him with an Israelite background since it means 'Yahweh has remembered' and implies a belief that Yahweh will continue to act for the benefit of his people. The frequency with which this name occurs in the Old Testament¹² and the diversity of the characters who possess it¹³ indicate a general popularity from which nothing can be gleaned regarding the status of the prophet we are considering. His name occurs a total of four times in Zechariah 1-8; twice without any further elaboration¹⁴ and twice more with the additional identification

¹¹ Compare for example the genealogy of Zephaniah in Zeph.1:1 with the identification of Micah, by place of origin alone, in Mic.1:1.

¹² In one or other of its two forms 'זְכַרְיָהוּ' or 'זְכַרְיָהוּ' Zechariah occurs 39 times outside the Book of Zechariah and of these only two, Ez.5:1 and 6:14, are undisputed references to the prophet of the book.

¹³ A king of Israel, the son of Jereboam II, 2 Kgs.15:8; a Levite, 1 Chron.15:18; a priest, 2 Chron.24:20; a contemporary of Isaiah, Isa. 8:2; a member of the group which returned from exile with Ezra, Ez.8:3; et al.

¹⁴ Zech.7:1,8.

'בֶּרֶכְיָהּ בֶּן-יִדּוֹ הַנָּבִיא' (son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, the prophet).¹⁵ However, far from clarifying the identity and background of the prophet, the genealogical details increase the confusion.

In Ezra 5:1; 6:14, where the reference is undoubtedly to the same Zechariah, he is called 'son of Iddo' and although this could validly be construed as 'grandson of Iddo' there is no way of determining categorically whether that would be the intended interpretation.¹⁶ One way of coping with the discrepancy is to argue that 'son of Berechiah' in Zechariah 1:1 and 7 is a subsequent addition to the text, perhaps inserted by someone who wrongly identified our prophet with Zechariah, son of Jeberechiah, who was an associate of Isaiah.¹⁷ However for this scenario the interpolator must have been unaware of the historical chronology, or have chosen to disregard it for some theological reason; and he also must have made a mistake over the actual name of the father, although we concede that the error of omitting the initial *yodh* from the name in Isaiah can be very easily understood. Nevertheless we find this an unsatisfactory solution and suggest that Meyers and Meyers present a credible argument for retaining the text of Zechariah as it stands and

¹⁵ Zech.1:1,7. The suggestion of Wilson, Prophecy and Society, pp.288f that the title 'בֶּרֶכְיָהּ' could apply to Iddo rather than Zechariah is noted but considered improbable because in Hebrew construction it is normal for the word order to be subject name, genealogical descent, subject office/title - for example Jer.1:3; 20:1; Ezek.1:3; Hag.1:1,12, 14; 2:2. See also R.R.Wilson, Genealogy and History in the Biblical World, (Yale University Press), 1977, for a study of genealogical interpretation.

¹⁶ See Petitjean, Oracles, p.17f for a full discussion of the issues involved.

¹⁷ Isa.8:2. Mitchell, ICC, pp.81f strongly favours this option.

for reconciling it with the references in Ezra.¹⁸ Whatever the precise relationship between Zechariah and Iddo, he is the forebear who provides the evidence that Zechariah was from a priestly family.¹⁹ That he was both a priest and a prophet is certainly a possibility but we believe Mitchell overstates the case in saying,

"The fact is so patent that it is not necessary to cite internal evidence in support of it (37'), for example, where one might perhaps detect a special interest in the priesthood."²⁰

However his priestly connections indicate that his origins were somewhat similar to those of his prophetic predecessors Jeremiah and Ezekiel.²¹

Any further claims relating to Zechariah's probable age when he began prophesying or whether he was a member of the group that returned from exile in Babylon depend on the reliability attached to the witness of Nehemiah 12.²² If Iddo, Zechariah's grandfather, returned to Judah with Zerubbabel ca 538BC then the prophet might have been little more than a child at that time and still a young man when he prophesied. If Nehemiah 12:12ff refers to the same Zechariah then it reinforces this suggestion by indicating that he became head of the Iddo family during the high priesthood of Joiakim, who succeeded Jeshua, the high priest

¹⁸ Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.91f. They indicate that it is more probable that 'son of Iddo' is the addition to the text of Zechariah.

¹⁹ The references which substantiate this are Neh.12:4 and 16. We recognize the difficulties in regard to the historical accuracy of Ezra-Nehemiah and that the Zechariah of v.16 may be a figure other than the prophet (See Petitjean, Oracles, pp.15ff.); but notwithstanding this, it is clear that the family Iddo was known as a priestly family in the post-exilic era.

²⁰ Mitchell, ICC, p.81.

²¹ Jer.1:1; Ezek.1:3.

²² See above n.19 and compare the record with that of Ezra 2.

when Haggai and Zechariah were prophesying ca 520BC.²³ In the absence of any historical data to the contrary it may be reasonable to accept the traditional view that Zechariah spent the early part of his life in Babylon. However we ought to be wary of making other claims dependent upon this hypothesis.

We turn our attention now to the messages of Haggai and Zechariah to discover whether indications about the personal circumstances of the prophets are embedded there. Haggai 2:3, in making a clear reference to the temple, contains the questions:

"Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not in your sight as nothing?"

Some scholars infer from this that Haggai is asking whether there are some listening who, like him, personally remember the Solomonic temple before its destruction in 587BC.²⁴ For this to be possible a person would have to be at least seventy years of age and thus the claim is made that Haggai must have prophesied when he was an old man. However this appears to be a clear example of eisegesis because in this verse Haggai makes no claims about himself. Although the authority which he apparently commanded²⁵ may imply an older rather than a younger person,

²³ Hag.1:1,12,14; 2:2,4; Zech.3:1ff; 6:11.

²⁴ A claim that others suggest this is made by most commentators; but we are unable to discover any modern scholar who does so. H.Ewald, Die Propheten des Alten Bundes, Vol III, (Göttingen), 1868, p.178, puts forward this hypothesis and it appears to have been accepted as probable by some of his contemporaries.

Jewish and Patristic Christian tradition maintain that Haggai grew up as an exile in Babylon and this may be the basis for the suggestion.

²⁵ This was clearly the perception of the compiler of the editorial framework who records that Haggai was able to gain the audience of both the governor and the high priest and that his words were obeyed by these officials and the people, Hag.1:1,12,14; 2:2,4,21.

this need not be the case. However, the question of his authority may have significance in regard to determining whether Haggai was himself one of the returned exiles or not. To some extent our conclusion about this issue is dependent upon the decisions arrived at concerning the relationships within the community; but we must be wary of falling into the trap of circularity in pursuing this line of argument.

Hanson has argued at length for there being serious conflict between those who returned from exile in Babylon and the people who had always remained in Palestine.²⁶ If his theory is correct then Haggai's authoritative position in relation to the leaders of those who returned would imply without doubt that he was a member of that group. He claims that the Book of Haggai contains indications of the strenuous opposition that was directed against the restoration efforts of the hierocratic group after the return from exile.²⁷ The only verses which appear to us in any way indicative of opposition are Haggai 1:2,

"This people say the time has not yet come to
rebuild the house of the LORD."

and possibly Haggai 1:9b,

²⁶ P.D.Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic, (Fortress Press, Philadelphia), 1975. Pp.240-262 specifically refer to Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 but his argument is developed through all the preceding sections. He argues that Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel represented totally distinct schools of thought during the exile and that Trito-Isaiah is the product of the Isaianic school which remained in Palestine. Haggai and Zechariah he identifies firmly with the Ezekiel tradition and those who had been in exile. We believe he perhaps presses his argument too far and exaggerates the conflict which arose within the community when many returned to Jerusalem from exile; although we do not doubt that many sharp differences of opinion among the various factions had to be resolved and not always without pain. Nonetheless many aspects of his argument are quite persuasive, particularly when they are considered in the light of R.P.Carroll's study of dissonance and reinterpretation within the prophetic traditions - When Prophecy Failed, (SCM), 1979.

²⁷ Hanson, Dawn, p.243.

"Because of my house that lies in ruins, while you busy yourselves each with his own home."

but it must be seriously questioned whether this can be interpreted as 'strenuous' opposition and, in addition, Hanson's argument requires that 'הָעָם הַזֶּה' (this people) in verse 2 be understood as those representing the Palestinian group only. However the prophet must be addressing the same group of people in verses 4ff. Consequently they must also be the ones referred to as 'רְכֻל שְׂאֵרֵי הָעָם' (all the remnant of the people) in the editorial framework at verse 12 who

"obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet".

This surely casts doubt on their identification as solely those who had never been in exile since the concept of 'שְׂאֵרֵי' (remnant) is usually associated with the last remaining members of a people;²⁸ or those who survive a catastrophe;²⁹ or it is used as a technical term for the purified remnant of Israel.³⁰ Each of these categories might equally include, if not specifically imply, those who returned from Babylon.³¹

²⁸ For example Amos 1:8; Isa.14:30; Jer.11:23; 25:20.

²⁹ For example Jer.8:3; 24:8; Ezek.5:10; 9:8; Amos 5:15.

³⁰ For example Isa.37:4; Jer.23:3; Mic.2:12; 5:6,7; Zeph.2:7; Zech.8:6,11,12.

³¹ This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the issues relating to the identification of the people. Various scholars have tried to equate the different terms occurring in Haggai with specific groups but these arguments cannot be sustained in respect of all the instances of 'this people' (Hag.1:2; 2:14), 'the remnant of the people' (Hag.1:12, 14; 2:2), 'the people' (Hag.1:12, 13) and 'you people of the land' (Hag.2:4). See, for example, R.J.Coggins, Samaritans and Jews, (Basil Blackwell), 1975, pp.48-51; E.W.Nicholson, 'The Meaning of the Expression הָעָם הַזֶּה in the Old Testament', JSS XI, 1965, pp.59-66; H.G.May, '"This People" and "This Nation" in Haggai', VT XVIII, 1968, pp.190-7; E.Würthwein, 'Der 'Am Ha'arez im Alten Testament', BWANT 69, 1936, pp.51-71. We agree with Petersen, OTL, p.47 that the only real distinction being made in Haggai is between the leaders of the community and the ordinary populace.

Besides this, verse 12 suggests that whatever opposition they directed towards Haggai collapsed very easily. It seems that Hanson has allowed his hypothesis to colour his reading of the text far too much; and while it need not be denied that division and opposition were quite probably realities experienced in the community addressed by Haggai, there is no supporting evidence in the text nor anything to suggest that Haggai belonged to one party or the other.

Beuken, on the basis of a study of material similar to that considered by Hanson, has reached the opposing conclusion; that Haggai had always lived in Palestine.³² This is partly inferred from verses in Haggai which focus on agricultural matters, and which Beuken identifies with a particular Form.³³ He argues that

"Haggai bringt in dieser Gattung Erfahrungen aus dem Bauernleben"³⁴

and furthermore he concludes with regard to Haggai, on the basis of his perspective on these issues, that

"Er ist ein Sohn aus der jüdischen Bauernschaft. Die Arbeit auf dem Feld und die Sorge um die Ernte bestimmen sein Denken. Dabei lebt er aus urjahwistischem Glauben."³⁵

We will argue in Chapter 5 that the agricultural language adopted by Haggai is derived from the traditional concepts of blessing and curses.

³² Beuken, Haggai, pp.221-9. Like Hanson he recognizes significant variations in perspective between the prophecies of Trito-Isaiah and Haggai but his argument leads him to conclude that it was the former who arose from among the exiles in Babylon.

³³ Hag.1:6,9; 2:16. Beuken refers to the Form of 'Futility curses' (Wirkungslosigkeitsflüche). For discussion of these and related issues see pp.226ff.

³⁴ Beuken, Haggai, p.227.

³⁵ Beuken, Haggai, pp.228-9.

Thus we believe that Beuken is mistaken in his claim that this emphasis on agricultural motifs throws any light on the background of Haggai.

Neither Hanson nor Beuken has provided a satisfactory solution to the enigma of the figure of Haggai and we must remain open-minded about whether or not he had been in Babylon. The indications in both the framework and the oracles are that Haggai was able to gain an audience with the leaders of the community who had come from Babylon and that he viewed them in a favourable light.³⁶ Together these may suggest that Haggai had a long standing relationship with these people and had known them in Babylon before returning to Jerusalem.³⁷ However this is no more than conjecture, and the likelihood that many relationships were established and/or severed during the eighteen years since the first group of exiles returned to Judah must be taken into account. It seems that a tradition has grown up that both Haggai and Zechariah came back from Babylon with Zerubbabel; but whilst this may in fact be correct, little evidence can be brought in its support. In reality it may have more to do with the linking together of Haggai and Zechariah due to their common purpose in respect of the rebuilding of the temple and a belief that this implied they were among the exiles in Babylon who were influenced by the temple theology of the Ezekiel tradition.

The fact that Haggai's prophecies focus on the rebuilding of the

³⁶ Hag.1:1,12; 2:2,4,21ff.

³⁷ If we are correct in assigning at least the reference to Joshua in Hag.2:4 to the hand of the editor (see pp.15f above), then it is only the framework that indicates a relationship between Haggai and the high priest. However we have no grounds to doubt the accuracy of the editor's perception about the relationship of the prophet with both the leaders.

temple and the cult could indicate a personal interest in this issue and suggest that he, like Zechariah, had priestly family connections. On the other hand Van Hoonacker's³⁹ conclusion drawn from Haggai 2:11,

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: Ask the priests to decide this question,"

that Haggai cannot be a priest himself is very persuasive. The absence of any reference to Haggai in connection with priestly families in Nehemiah 12 adds weight to this conclusion.³⁷ An alternative way of explaining this focus of interest is to adopt the view of Johnson that Haggai was a 'cultic prophet',⁴⁰ a member of a definite group which had particular responsibility for the temple and its worship. This option is accepted by Blenkinsopp⁴¹ as being the correct designation "in all probability" not only in respect of Haggai but also for Zechariah. He argues that Haggai 2:11-14 portrays the complementary relationship of a cultic prophet and the priests and that, in a similar manner, Zechariah is presented in this role in 7:2ff as a prophet among

"the priests of the house of the LORD of hosts and the prophets"⁴²

to whom a delegation came to enquire about fasting. Another passage which might indicate that Zechariah belonged to a prophetic group is Zechariah 8:9,

"Let your hands be strong, you who in these days

³⁹ A. Van Hoonacker, Les Douze Petits Prophètes, (Études Bibliques) Paris, 1908, p.546.

³⁷ See above n.19 and the discussion of references to Zechariah in Neh.12 on pp.55f.

⁴⁰ A.R.Johnson, The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel, 2nd.Ed., (Cardiff), 1962. On Haggai and Zechariah specifically, p.64f.

⁴¹ Joseph Blenkinsopp, A History of Prophecy in Israel, (SPCK), 1984, p.232.

⁴² Zech.7:3.

have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets, since the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built."

On the other hand, although neither Haggai nor Zechariah mentions the other by name, nor gives any direct indication of the other's existence, it is possible that 'the prophets' in both passages quoted above are simply these two men and not references to a larger group.⁴³

Before it can be decided whether or not Haggai and Zechariah fit the role of cultic prophets it needs to be established that such figures continued to function in the post-exilic period. There can be little doubt that professional cultic prophets, who were attached to Israel's places of worship and who could be consulted by anyone seeking 'רָצָה' (a word) from Yahweh, existed throughout the monarchic period.⁴⁴ At times their integrity was challenged by the classical prophets - for example Micah accused them of corrupting their office and divining for money,⁴⁵ while Isaiah condemned them for being drunkards and erring in their visions and messages⁴⁶ - but these allegations were directed against particular individuals or groups rather than the institution per se. Similarly just before the exile and the fall of Jerusalem the reputation of the cultic prophets was seriously challenged by Jeremiah and Ezekiel who accused them of prophesying falsely,⁴⁷ of offering false optimism,⁴⁸

⁴³ Although the book of Haggai records no prophecies from him after the second year of Darius, we have no evidence to prove that he could not still have been prophesying 2 years later.

⁴⁴ Johnson's The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel, presents a very good case for this.

⁴⁵ Mic.3:5,11.

⁴⁶ Isa.28:7ff.

⁴⁷ For example Jer.5:31; 27:16; Ezek.13:6.

of speaking in Yahweh's name when they had no divine words to utter;⁴⁸ in other words of failing to fulfil their legitimate function. Again it was the holders of the office at that time who were criticised; and while these accusations were levelled in a general way the two classical prophets were proclaiming the need for the institution to be reformed rather than abolished. However, when the exile came followed shortly by the fall of Jerusalem, the falsity of the cultic prophets' words was recognized and this created widespread disillusionment about them among those left in the homeland⁵⁰ as well as those exiled to Babylon. Since the members of the institution had failed to proclaim reliable messages and in view of the fact that there was no longer an official cultus in Jerusalem or Babylon in which they could function,⁵¹ it would seem quite probable that cultic prophecy as a respected and influential institution died out.⁵² Johnson does not go so far as this but argues regarding the

⁴⁸ For example Jer.8:11; Ezek.13:10.

⁴⁹ For example Jer.14:14; Ezek.13:6f.

⁵⁰ Lam.2:14 and 4:13 express this viewpoint.

⁵¹ It is recognized that some form of cultic activity continued to take place at the temple after the first wave of deportations to Babylon even though many of the officials had been amongst those taken into captivity, (Jer.39:1-9 and 41:4-5). Whether such activity still took place amid the temple ruins after 587/686 BC until the new temple was built is uncertain. Lam.1:4 indicates that the site was desolate whereas Zech.7:3ff suggests that some worship did continue although it is far from clear whether the fasts and mourning were communal acts, or even whether they took place in Jerusalem. However, Ezra 3:2ff records that ritual worship recommenced at the rebuilt altar on the temple site in 538 BC. The historicity of this text is questionable, though, and in any case it contains no mention of cultic prophets. There is no evidence of organized worship in Judah during the exile or the early years after the return; and while the community in Babylon may have remained faithful in prayer and praise, for example Ps.137, without the temple or any other sanctuary their full ritual worship in which cultic prophets would have been involved could not have continued.

⁵² We are not herewith affirming the Jewish tradition that prophecy died in the exile, but specifically referring to cultic prophets as a professional institution.

reaction against them in Babylon,

"that their loss of prestige ultimately found permanent expression in the work of the P school ... (in which) ... the cultic prophets appear as leaders of a number of choirs or, better perhaps, musical guilds ... who enjoy special responsibility for the musical side of the Temple worship and thus obviously form a part of the Temple personnel; but now, being merged with the other Levitical orders, they are all in evident subjection to the (Aaronite) priesthood."³³

It is recognized that this transformation of the role of cultic prophet into that of temple singer has taken place in the Priestly Writings but this hypothesis does not account for what happened to cultic prophets in the interim period, during the exile and early restoration years. Nor does it indicate the stages by which the community's attitudes towards them must have developed in that time.

The only Biblical records of those who returned from exile are Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 12, both of which derive from the milieu of the Priestly Writers. It is therefore neither surprising, nor helpful for determining the issue of cultic prophecy, to discover that they mention singers and temple servants³⁴ but not prophets. The absence of any references to 'נְבִיאִים' (prophets) in the exilic works of Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel 40-48 may be significant, although there is the need to be cautious about basing any claims on what is not included within a book. The same applies regarding Trito-Isaiah, a work almost contemporaneous with that of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8, which also lacks any references to prophets. In fact in Old Testament literature relating to the post-

³³ Johnson, Cultic Prophet, p.69. Note also the references cited by Johnson in note 2 in support and the evidence he presents in the following pages.

³⁴ Ezra 2:41,43,58,65,70; Neh.12:8.

exilic period references to prophets are usually in the context of their ancestors' failure to heed the words of the true prophets.⁵⁵ There are references to the non-existence of prophets in Psalm 74:9⁵⁶ and to their removal from the land in Zechariah 13:2ff.⁵⁷ This latter text signifies that some form of prophecy occurred in the community long after the time of Haggai and Zechariah but it is not clear that it was cultic prophecy. However in Nehemiah's time it appears that prophets connected with the authorities and the temple were a recognized part of society,⁵⁸ although they are presented as minor figures who act on the instruction of human masters rather than as those who speak the word of God. In contrast to this Nehemiah 9:32-34 seems to suggest a higher regard for prophecy as an institution, which may imply that Clines is correct in saying

"the merits of the true prophets seem to have cancelled out the memory of the false prophets.",⁵⁹

although he acknowledges that these verses may be the reflections of a

⁵⁵ For example Ezra 9:11; Neh.9:26,30; Dan.9:6,10.

⁵⁶ It is recognized that this psalm may have derived from a cultic setting, although this is considered unlikely. Dates ranging from 587BC to 167BC have been suggested for its origins. A.A.Anderson, Psalms (73-150), (NCB), 1972, pp.537-8 discusses the main options briefly.

⁵⁷ This passage is notoriously difficult to assign to a specific date but the late Persian or early Greek era is likely. For a survey of the relevant issues see Smith, Micah-Malachi, pp.169-73 and 242-9 and the works cited there; but note the comments of R.J.Coggins, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, (JSOT Old Testament Guides, Sheffield), 1987, p.62, concerning the inaccuracy there of some details.

It is usually believed to refer to 'false' prophets but as Mason argues, CBC, p.121, it may reflect an understanding based on Jer.31:31ff that prophecy was no longer necessary.

⁵⁸ Neh.6:7; 6:10-14.

⁵⁹ D.J.Clines, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, (NCB), 1984, p.198.

later period.⁶⁰

Having regard for the scant amount of evidence available it cannot be decided conclusively whether cultic prophecy continued in an unbroken line throughout the exile and beyond, or not. It is possible that a few of these functionaries still prophesied after the fall of Jerusalem, in both Judah and Babylon, although their credibility would probably have been low. It may have increased at the time of the return from exile, although the fact that the high hopes of the Zion traditions failed to materialise is likely to mean that any upsurge in reputation was short lived. Thus while the possibility remains that cultic prophecy as an institution was still a reality at the time of Haggai and Zechariah, we seriously question that its members were viewed authoritatively by the people or the leaders of the community.

Let us return to consider whether Haggai and Zechariah themselves were cultic prophets; we have already indicated that the former was in a position of apparent authority,⁶¹ which argues against the probability. As Zechariah 1-8 does not specify the prophet's audience there is less information from which to infer his standing in the community. Chapters 3 and 4, as they now appear in the text,⁶² perhaps indicate a perceived

⁶⁰ We accept the view of many commentators that this prayer, Neh.9:6-37, which is not attributed to any person in MT, is probably composite and a late addition to the text and thus not indicative of the situation in the time of Ezra/Nehemiah. See J.M.Myers, Ezra, Nehemiah, (AB), 1965, pp.165-70 for a full discussion and analysis of the theology and traditions which appear to have influenced the compiler.

⁶¹ See pp.56f and 60.

⁶² We have discussed the arguments against the authenticity of Zechariah 3 on pp.31f where we concluded in favour of it being original to the text. Matters relating to the composite nature of both chapters were considered on pp.34f,41-45 and the interpretation of the material

authority to address the community on behalf of Joshua and Zerubbabel in their roles as high priest and governor; if so Zechariah's standing may have been similar to that of Haggai. However there is one clause which recurs several times

"Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me."

that seems to imply that Zechariah's credibility was questioned.⁴³ This could argue for him as a cultic prophet struggling to gain recognition, although the classical prophets had similar experiences of being doubted and challenged by their contemporaries.⁴⁴ Another point which may have relevance in determining this issue concerns the optimism of the message proclaimed by both Haggai and Zechariah. It was the hopeful aspect of pre-exilic cultic prophecy which had been shown to be false optimism⁴⁵ and this had brought discredit on the institution. Thus it seems highly improbable, during a period when the people were feeling downhearted,⁴⁶ that the community would have readily heeded cultic prophets with a new message of hope. We conclude therefore against Haggai and Zechariah being professional cultic prophets, preferring to view them as standing in the same tradition as the classical prophets who were individually raised up by Yahweh. In respect of Zechariah, however, it is possible that he may have been a priest turned prophet, who benefitted in his struggle to be taken seriously from the fact that his message continued the prophetic work begun by Haggai.

is discussed in Chapter 4.

⁴³ Zech.2:13(MT),15(MT); 4:9; and 6:15. The significance of these words is discussed more fully later in this chapter, see pp.79ff.

⁴⁴ For example Jer.15:15ff; 18:18ff; 20:10; Amos 7:10ff.

⁴⁵ See pp.62f and n.48.

⁴⁶ Hag.1:2,6; 2:16; Zech.8:10.

We have already indicated that the problem of discerning between true and false prophecy had been a real one in the pre-exilic period.⁶⁷

In retrospect people could apply the test of Deuteronomy 18:21f,

"And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' - when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the LORD has not spoken"

but this was not helpful at the time of a proclamation⁶⁸ and it is noted alongside this that the fulfilment of one proclamation from a prophet did not automatically authenticate any other utterance he made.⁶⁹ Thus it was appropriate for a prophet's credibility to be established in some other way as an attempt to ensure that his message was heeded and acted upon. One method adopted in the major classical prophetic books was to emphasize the validity of the prophet's call by recounting his personal experience of Yahweh and the receipt of his commission.⁷⁰ This feature

⁶⁷ See pp.62f. For a full treatment of the problems of "false" prophecy see J.L.Crenshaw, Prophetic Conflict, (BZAW 124), 1971, pp.13-38 and 46-61 especially.

⁶⁸ Cf Jer.28:9.

⁶⁹ Deut.13:1-3.

⁷⁰ Isaiah's calling and commissioning are related in the context of his vision of the LORD of hosts in the temple. Isa.6:1ff.

It is generally agreed that Isa.40:6-7 (or 8) constitute a brief account of the call and commission of Deutero-Isaiah.

Isa.61:1-3 is presented in a manner akin to that of a prophetic call and is considered as this by scholars who argue for Trito-Isaiah as an individual prophet. However it is more accurately an account of an anointing and it was perhaps composed to emphasize the dependency of Isa.56-66 upon Deutero-Isaiah.

Jeremiah's commissioning as 'a prophet to the nations' appears as the prologue to his ministry, Jer.1:4-10. This is reinforced by two visionary passages, 1:11-12 and 13-19, which also extend his mission.

The prophet Ezekiel's call and commission are accompanied by his vision of 'the glory of the LORD', (Ezek.1:4-3:15).

It is arguable whether Hosea 1-3 should be interpreted as an account of the prophet's call; if so it suggests that Hosea, over a long period of time, gradually became aware of what Yahweh was calling him to proclaim.

Amos recounts his call experience very briefly, and in a matter of

is absent from both Haggai and Zechariah 1-8;⁷¹ but since this absence also applies to most of the minor prophetic books it is unwise to infer anything about traditions in this respect. So let us now consider any material in the texts relating specifically to the issue of a prophet's authenticity or to a perceived need for the provision of some means by which the prophetic message can be verified.

In the Book of Haggai there are no passages in which an argument is presented in order to 'prove' the prophet's credibility. Instead of this all the emphasis is placed on establishing the divine source of Haggai's proclamations through the repeated presentation of him as the mouthpiece for Yahweh's words. In the framework he is referred to as one 'sent' by the LORD⁷² and as 'the messenger of the LORD' who spoke 'with the LORD's message'.⁷³ The language of these expressions derives from the concept of Yahweh's divine council, a concept which underlies

fact way, as a simple direct commission, (Amos 7:15).

These issues are considered in more depth by N.Habel, 'The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives', ZAW 77, 1965, pp.297-323.

⁷¹ Zech.1:14 includes the imperative 'קרא' (Cry out!) [Cf. Isa.40:6] which could be interpreted as indicative of a prophet's commissioning. However we do not believe it has this significance here because a) it is spoken by an angel, rather than Yahweh, in the context of a vision which the prophet experienced; b) it introduces a specific message rather than an ongoing prophetic mission; and c) it is repeated in Zech.1:17 as the introduction to a second message. Although it functions as a command to prophesy, it does not represent an initial call.

⁷² Hag.1:12.

⁷³ Hag.1:13. We note that the word 'מִסְרָאֵי' translated 'message' is unique in the Hebrew Bible. LXX understood it as a plural form of 'messenger' but this cannot be correct. The consonantal text is the same as for the plural construct of 'מִסְרָאֵי' (work), a word which is used in the following verse about the 'work', i.e. building, of the temple. As Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.35 suggest, the vocabulary of 1:14 may have influenced the choice of 'מִסְרָאֵי', rather than the usual 'דְּבָרָא' (word), to refer to the communication which the prophet had from Yahweh.

the imagery of much Old Testament literature⁷⁴ and is consequently not indicative of any one particular tradition. The issue will be discussed more fully in connection with the angelology in Zechariah's visions,⁷⁵ so suffice it to say at this point that the imagery denotes a special, close, relationship between Yahweh and the prophet. The framework also includes formulaic introductions to the oracles which consist of the clause 'the word of the LORD came by (הָיָה בְּיַד) Haggai the prophet'⁷⁶ or its variant form 'came to (בָּיָד) Haggai'.⁷⁷ This latter form is the one found most frequently in Old Testament prophetic literature,⁷⁸ and it is favoured to introduce the oracles of Zechariah,⁷⁹ but since both the alternative formulae occur in Haggai, this should perhaps caution us against claiming too much significance for either of them. However it has been argued that the former wording is indicative of the tradition in which Haggai's oracles were collected and so the evidence for this should be considered before we continue.

EXCURSUS

Beuken⁸⁰ has suggested that the use of the phrase - the word coming 'by the hand of' a particular prophet - is significant and characteristic of the Chronistic milieu in which the book of Haggai was edited and which

⁷⁴ For example Gen.1:26; Job 1:6ff; Ps.8; Isa.6:8. The possible connection between the concept of the 'sending' of a prophet and the Moses traditions is discussed below, pp.84f.

⁷⁵ See pp.108ff.

⁷⁶ Hag.1:1,3; 2:1. S.Mandelkern, Concordantiae, (Lipsiae, Veit et Comp.), 1896, p.452, inaccurately indicates that Hag.2:10 also contains this phrase. There is no indication in BHS that the text of 2:10 has been disputed regarding this matter.

⁷⁷ Hag.2:10,20.

⁷⁸ For example Jer.1:2; 11:1; 14:1; Ezek.1:3; 11:14; Hos.1:1; Joel 1:1; Mic.1:1; and Zeph.1:1.

⁷⁹ Zech.1:1,7; 7:1,8.

⁸⁰ Beuken, Haggai, p.28.

had in turn been influenced by the Deuteronomists. However his argument is based on a limited number of occurrences of the phrase in the Books of Kings and the Chronicler's writings, whereas, as Mason rightly points out, it is used more widely and diversely than Beuken indicates.⁸¹ What the phrase conveys is the concept of the prophet as the instrument, or agent, of the LORD; and so its association with Moses in the Priestly Writings is quite appropriate in view of the Sinai traditions where he receives the LORD's commands on the tablets and delivers them to the people.⁸² This Priestly usage may have influenced the occurrence of the phrase in the Chronicler's writings, particularly as some instances of it also relate to Moses.⁸³ In respect of the Deuteronomists, however, since their writings do not allude to one specific past relationship between a prophet and the LORD, we can detect no other reason for their stress on the concepts of 'instrumentality' or 'agency' in references to the relationship between individual prophets or prophetic traditions and the LORD, apart from the desire to accord a high status to the office of prophet. This suggestion though, is weakened by the recognition that the Deuteronomists also make use of the alternative phrase to introduce prophets' oracles.⁸⁴ When the use of this phrase in literature outside the direct influence of the Deuteronomists and the Chronicler is taken into consideration⁸⁵ we are not convinced that it is right to associate this phrase with any particular tradition. It appears more appropriate

⁸¹ Mason, 'The Purpose of the "Editorial Framework"', pp.414-6. We disagree with his statement, however, that where this phrase occurs in Kings "it is always associated with a particular prophet." (p.415).

We have identified 58 instances of the phrase in connection with the giving of the word, the commandments or the ordinances of the LORD through a specified prophet or prophets. Of these 27 refer to Moses as the conveyor of the message, being found mainly in the Priestly strand of the Pentateuch: Ex.9:35; 35:29; Lev.8:36; 10:11; 26:46; Num.4:37,45, 49(following MT, but we recognize the problems existing in this verse); 9:23; 10:13; 15:23; 17:5(EV 16:40); 27:23; 36:13; and in Joshua 14:2; 20:2; 21:2, 8; 22:9; but also in Deuteronomistic passages: Judg.3:4; 1 Kgs.8:53,56; and the writings associated with the Chronicler: 2 Chron. 33:8; 34:14; 35:6; Neh.8:14; 9:14.

There are 16 instances where a named prophet is mentioned (or 17 if we count Mal.1:1) which mainly reflect Deuteronomistic influences: 2 Sam.12:25 (Nathan); 1 Kgs.12:15 (=2 Chron.10:15); 14:18; 15:29 (Ahijah); 1 Kgs.16:7,12 (Jehu); 1 Kgs.16:34 (Joshua); 1 Kgs.17:16; 2 Kgs.9:36; 10:10 (Elijah); 2 Kgs.14:25 (Jonah); Isa.20:2 (Isaiah); Jer.37:2; 50:1 (Jeremiah); 1 Chron.11:3 (Samuel).

The remaining 14 instances refer to unnamed prophets or messengers and occur in a broad spectrum of Old Testament literature: 1 Sam.28:15; 2 Kgs.17:13,23; 21:10; 24:2; 2 Chron.29:25; 36:15; Ezra 9:11; Neh.9:30; Ezek.38:17; Dan.9:10; Hos.12:11; and lastly in Zechariah 7:7,12.

⁸² Ex.31:18; 32:15ff; 34:1ff,27f,29,32.

⁸³ See n.81 above.

⁸⁴ For example 1 Kgs.16:1 [although LXX suggests the reading '712' (by the hand of) here also]; 18:1.

⁸⁵ For example Isa.20:2; Ezek.38:17; Mal.1:1 and Dan.9:10.

to recognize it as an expression in common usage which could be utilised to emphasize the relationship of the person(s) referred to with the LORD and thus also to emphasize their authority.

Thus it would appear that there is no justification for the claims that the occurrence of the phrase 'by the hand of' in Haggai has traditional significance. It is used as an appropriate means of stressing Haggai's authority as a prophet from the LORD, who should therefore be heeded.

In the passages which contain the prophet's message this emphasis is continued by means of the frequent use of oracular formulae, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (Thus said Yahweh) or אִמְרַת יְהוָה (utterance of Yahweh) not just at the beginning or end of a prophecy but often in the middle also.⁶⁶ This feature is likewise found in similar sections of Zechariah 1-8,⁶⁷ which reinforces the theory that these two books were collated by one person or within the same traditional circle. In every oracular section of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 the prophets speak in the name of 'the LORD',⁶⁸ or more often 'the LORD of hosts'⁶⁹ and the frequent repetition of the divine name functions to emphasize that their authority is from Yahweh alone and to give validity to their prophecies.

The frequency with which the divine appellative יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (LORD

⁶⁶ Hag.1:7,8,9; 2:4(3 times); 2:6,7,8,9(twice); 2:23(3 times). This feature occurs elsewhere, for example Jer.39:16,17,18; but it is most usual for oracular formulae to indicate distinct proclamations, for example Isa.44:2; 44:6; Jer.17:5; 17:19; Amos 1:3ff; 1:6ff.

⁶⁷ Zech.1:3(3 times); 1:14,16(twice),17; 2:10(MT)(twice); 8:2,3,4,6 (twice),7.

⁶⁸ Hag.1:8; 1:13; 2:4(twice); 2:14 and 2:17. Zech.1:4; 1:16; 2:10 (MT)(twice); 2:14(MT); 8:3 and 8:17.

⁶⁹ Hag.1:2,5,7,9; 2:4,6,7,8,9(twice),11 and 23 (twice). Zech.1:3 (3 times),4,16,17; 2:12(MT); 3:7,9,10; 4:6; 8:12; 7:9,13; 8:2,4,6(twice) 7,9,11,14(twice),19,20 and 23.

of hosts) occurs in both books, 14 times in Haggai and 44 in Zechariah 1-8, necessitates that we consider its significance in connection with classical prophetic traditions. Mettinger's⁹⁰ detailed analysis of the usage of this title in the Old Testament indicates that out of a total of 284 occurrences, 251 are in prophetic literature. This suggests that it may be a prophetic motif but when its spread throughout the prophetic corpus is considered certain significant facts become apparent. Apart from its usage in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8, it is found predominantly in Isaiah,⁹¹ Jeremiah,⁹² Zechariah 9-14⁹³ and in Malachi.⁹⁴ However it is completely absent from Ezekiel.⁹⁵ Before any prophetic significance in the use of the title can be understood, though, its origins ought to be considered. In an earlier work Mettinger⁹⁶ argues that

⁹⁰ Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, The Dethronement of Sabaoth, (Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series 18, CWK Gleerup), 1982, trans. Frederick H. Cryer, p.12.

⁹¹ 56 times in Isaiah 1-39 and 6 in Deutero-Isaiah.

⁹² 82 instances in MT; but only 10 in LXX.

⁹³ 9 instances.

⁹⁴ 24 instances. In addition we note that there are 9 occurrences in Amos, which appears significant in proportion to the overall length of the book; but none of these represent the identical title, being rather 'הַיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְּבָאוֹת' (the LORD, the God of hosts) or in one instance 'אֱדֹנָי הַיְהוָה צְבָאוֹת' (the Lord, GOD of hosts). See H.W. Wolff, Joel and Amos, (Fortress Press, Philadelphia), 1977, pp.287-8 for comments on the title's use in Amos.

⁹⁵ The significance of the distribution of the title in the Old Testament was first pointed out by Ludwig Köhler, Theologie des Alten Testaments, (Neue Theologische Grundrisse), Tübingen, 1936, pp.31-33. He placed Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi as sufficiently close contemporaries to have been influenced by similar ideas but recognized that this created a problem in respect of Ezekiel.

⁹⁶ Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, 'YHWH SABAOTH - The Heavenly King on the Cherubim Throne', trans. by S. Westerholm, in Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays, ed. Tomoo Ishida, (Yamakawa-Shuppansha, Tokyo), 1982, pp.109-138.

See also O. Eissfeldt, "Jahwe Zebaoth", Kleine Schriften III, (Tübingen), 1966, pp.103-23 and B.N. Wambacq, L'épithète Divine Jahvé

"the divine designation of יהוה צבאות had its *Sitz im Leben* in the milieu of the Solomonic temple. Around the cherubim throne and the ark a theological complex of ideas takes form in the Jerusalem cultic tradition, having at its center the notion of God as king." (p.117).

His argument implies that the 'hosts' were understood as heavenly beings who constituted the divine council around Yahweh rather than as Israel's earthly armies.⁷⁷ He continues by suggesting that the title may have originated even earlier in Israel's history, in the cult at Shiloh⁷⁸ but concludes that

"at the latest during Solomon's reign, but possibly already earlier יהוה צבאות played a central role as the designation of the God of the dynasty and empire." (p.136).

His argument indicates that the term began in the context of worship and links it firmly with the temple theology of the monarchic period out of which developed the Zion traditions.⁷⁹ This leads him to claim that

"The high frequency in Isaiah, Haggai, and Zechariah is also understandable in view of the affinity of these prophets to the Jerusalem tradition."⁸⁰

We can accept this explanation in respect of Isaiah; but with regard to

S^oba'ot, (De Brouwer), 1947.

⁷⁷ We note that the title appears in apposition to 'the God of the armies of Israel' in 1 Sam.17:45. These combined expressions probably extend the concept of Yahweh's authority rather than being intended as parallel to one another.

⁷⁸ Mettinger, 'YHWH SABAOTH', pp.128-135. B.C.Ollenburger, Zion the City of the Great King, (JSOT Supp. Series 41, Sheffield), 1987, pp.37f,177f also believes that there is a firm association between the title and Shiloh and argues against the suggestion that the Jerusalem cult retrojected it onto Shiloh.

⁷⁹ Mettinger recognized the questions that this raised concerning the rare use of the title in the Deuteronomistic history and its absence in Ezekiel and his study went on to show how the 'name' theology became dominant in the former tradition, whilst in the latter the concept of the 'glory' of Yahweh developed; The Dethronement, passim.

⁸⁰ Mettinger, The Dethronement, p.13.

Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 the matter does not seem to be so self evident. Whilst some aspects of the Zion traditions are undoubtedly continued in these books,¹⁰¹ it is equally apparent that they have been influenced by the theology of Ezekiel¹⁰² where, as it has already been indicated, the title is not used at all and of Deutero-Isaiah¹⁰³ where it is rare.

Mettinger's arguments give no account for the Jeremianic use of the title except an oblique reference to the fact that Jeremiah does not mention Josiah's reform!¹⁰⁴ This may be linked to Kessler's theory¹⁰⁵ that the title became suspect around the time of Manasseh because of its openness to syncretistic interpretation. This tendency, according to Kessler, explained the reluctance of the prophet to use the title 'LORD of hosts' in Deutero-Isaiah and its complete absence in Trito-Isaiah.¹⁰⁶ But what are we to make of the re-appearance of the title in Jeremiah, a book which is generally accepted as containing strong indications of Deuteronomistic redaction and which might therefore have been expected to reflect the 'name' theology of that tradition? This issue is further

¹⁰¹ For example Zech.1:14,17; 2:14,16(MT). Relevant motifs and traditions are discussed in the ensuing chapters.

¹⁰² For example Haggai's interest in ritual purity, Hag.2:11ff cf. Ezek.44:19,23; the reference in Zech.2:9(MT) to Yahweh in terms of glory cf. Ezek.1:28; 3:23; 9:3; 10:4 et al; and the emphasis on the importance of the new temple in all three books.

¹⁰³ For example the appreciation of Yahweh's universal sovereignty, Hag.2:6ff,21f; Zech.1:10f cf. Isa.44:6ff; 45:14ff and the idea of Yahweh leading his people back to Jerusalem and inaugurating a new age, Hag.2:9 Zech.8:7f,13 cf. Isa.40; 52:7ff; 55:12f.

¹⁰⁴ Mettinger, 'YHWH SABAOth', p.137, note 118.

¹⁰⁵ W.Kessler, 'Aus Welchen Gründen wird die Bezeichnung "Jahwe Zebaoth" in der späteren Zeit gemieden' in A.Lehemann ed. Gottes ist der Orient (Fs.O.Eissfeldt), Berlin, 1959, pp.79-83.

¹⁰⁶ Kessler, 'Aus welchen Gründen', p.82. He also believed that it prompted the development of the 'name' theology in Deuteronomy; p.81.

complicated because of the greatly differing number of occurrences of the title in the Hebrew as compared with the Greek text.¹⁰⁷ Generally, within modern scholarship, it is accepted that the more original version of Jeremiah is represented by the Greek text¹⁰⁸ and after studying the occurrences of the title Janzen has come to the conclusion

"that the epithet יהוה צבאות is not a genuine characteristic of the book of Jer. (occurring only six times originally), let alone a theologoumenon as it seems to be in 1 Isa."¹⁰⁹

He believes that the inclusion of the title in the Hebrew text is an example of the expansionary process which has taken place there; but he offers no suggestion for the addition of this particular title, other than that it was already there a few times and so perhaps was a natural option. We consider that the frequency with which the appellative יהוה צבאות occurs within the Hebrew text of Jeremiah, in complex descriptive phrases,¹¹⁰ is supportive of Janzen's argument.¹¹¹ If we accept the

¹⁰⁷ MT has 82, LXX has 10, but only 6 occurrences are common to both texts.

¹⁰⁸ Wambacq, Jahvé S'ba'ot, pp.84-9, adopted the general principle of accepting the text of MT where it differed from LXX in all cases, including the book of Jeremiah, and thus failed to consider whether the marked differences between the texts had significance in respect of the development and use of the title.

¹⁰⁹ J.G.Janzen, Studies in the Text of Jeremiah, (Cambridge, Mass), 1973, p.80. See especially Section IV, 'The Proper Names in Jeremiah' part (b), 'Divine names', pp.75-86.

¹¹⁰ For example 'the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel', 7:3; 16:9; 29:4,8,21,25; 35:13,18,19; 42:15,18; 44:2,11,25; 50:18; 51:33; et al.; 'the LORD of hosts is his name', 10:16; 31:35; 50:34; 51:19; 'the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God', 23:36; 'O great and mighty God whose name is the LORD of hosts, great in counsel and mighty in deed', 32:18f; 'the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts', 48:15; 51:57.

¹¹¹ We recognize that the more recent work of Sven Soderland, The Greek Text of Jeremiah - a Revised Hypothesis, (JSOT Supplement Series 47), 1985, argues that both MT and LXX may represent independent primary redactions of Jeremianic material. We cannot enter into a discussion of the merits of this work here but acknowledge that the hypothesis must not be rejected out of hand. If Soderland is correct then this suggests

traditional hypothesis about the text of Jeremiah and Janzen's arguments then it is conceivable that the title was added to the book of Jeremiah about the same time that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah were active or that their words were being collected together. This leads to the conclusion either that Haggai and/or Zechariah, or those responsible for editing their words, were influential upon the expansionary editing of the text of Jeremiah,¹¹² or that another common influence underlies the re-introduction of יהוה צבאות as the dominant name of Yahweh in the post-exilic period of the restoration.

It is quite improbable that either the Priestly Writers or the Chronicler were responsible for this re-introduction of the title since it is virtually absent from their works.¹¹³ Nor is there any evidence that neighbouring cultures of the Ancient Near East had similar titles for their gods which could have influenced Israel's re-adoption of this appellation. Although the instances of יהוה צבאות occur throughout the books of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 it is particularly frequent in the oracular sections¹¹⁴ which suggests that the prophets themselves, rather than their editors, may have been responsible for re-introducing it. We

that the title 'LORD of hosts' may be original to the prophet Jeremiah, although it could still have been added to the text in a similar way to that suggested by Janzen.

We have not been able to discover any work that specifically deals with the origins and significance of the title 'LORD of hosts' in Jeremiah and suggest that this could be a topic for further research.

¹¹² We can find no grounds for suggesting that the process of influence could have operated in the reverse direction.

¹¹³ It occurs nowhere in the P material of the Pentateuch nor in Ezekiel; it is likewise absent from Ezra and Nehemiah and appears only 3 times in Chronicles in passages which parallel instances of its use in 2 Samuel, (1 Chron.11:9 = 2 Sam.5:10; 1 Chron.17:7,24 = 2 Sam.7:8,26).

¹¹⁴ See p.72 and n.89.

can only conjecture as to why they chose to use this ancient name for Yahweh rather than continuing the 'name' or 'glory' theology, of the Deuteronomists or Ezekiel respectively, which would have been natural; but we believe it was because of the importance that they attached to the temple and the re-establishment of the cult. The Zion traditions as expressed in 2 Samuel 7 and affirmed in some Psalms from the cult of the first temple¹¹⁵ and in the prophecies of Isaiah of Jerusalem,¹¹⁶ include the title יהוה צבאות; and these were the basis of the theology of the Jerusalem temple. It is probably directly on this material that Haggai and Zechariah drew. By re-introducing the name applied to Yahweh in the cult of Solomon's temple, they were legitimating the new temple, which was being rebuilt with their encouragement, as being the place where Yahweh still chose to make his dwelling. They were also demonstrating that the cult which they were seeking to re-establish was in accord with Israel's true Yahwistic faith as in the days of the Davidic/Solomonic empire when Yahweh's blessings had been the experience of his people. Through this they sought to emphasize their own position as adherents of the authentic religious traditions of Yahweh's people. This deliberate association with the roots of Israel's faith, before her disobedience, punishment and eventual exile, expresses the realization by Haggai and Zechariah of the need for the restored community to enter anew into the covenant relationship with Yahweh, to be obedient to his demands and to offer worship acceptable to the LORD of hosts as in the days of old; but to do so as a new community which had learned the lessons of the past.

Thus we conclude with regard to the title יהוה צבאות that it

¹¹⁵ For example Pss.46;48;84 and 89.

¹¹⁶ For example Isa.8:18.

belonged originally to the cult and the theology of the Jerusalem temple in the early monarchic period rather than being a classical prophetic motif. Haggai and Zechariah re-introduced it as the dominant name for Yahweh at the time of the rebuilding of the temple and it subsequently became a prophetic motif of the post-exilic period¹¹⁷ which was then incorporated back into some classical prophecy by late editorial hands.

Apart from being used very frequently within the oracular formulae in Zechariah 1-8, this motif also appears in the four occurrences, each within the oracular sections of the book, of the formulaic sentence

"Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me."¹¹⁸

This is clearly related to the problem of prophetic verification,¹¹⁹ and the most natural interpretation is that it was addressed to a doubting

¹¹⁷ This conclusion extends and makes more specific that of Wambacq, Jahvé S'ba'Ot, who had concluded about the development of the title that: "Avant l'exil il y avait plusieurs constructions. Après la captivité, l'expression a reçu une forme fixe." (p.194).

¹¹⁸ Zech.2:13(MT), 15(MT); 4:9 and 6:15. Each occurrence in the Hebrew text is slightly different, primarily in respect of the person of the verb which is determined by the audience addressed. 2:13 and 6:15 are 2nd.pl.m. being directed at a group of people and 2:15 is 2nd.s.f. since it is directed at Israel as the 'daughter of Zion'. [Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.169 are in error when they say that this verse in contrast to 2:13 "contains the plural of "to know".] Both 2:15 and 6:15 end with the words "to you" ('ךָ יִדְעוּ' and 'לְךָ יִדְעוּ' respectively). Zech.4:6b-10a which includes the remaining instance of the formula is problematic in several ways. (See our comments on pp.43f.) Although a few versions contain the plural form, the verb in 4:9b(MT) is 2nd.s.m., which may indicate an understanding of it as directed at Zerubbabel. However, the way it concludes with the plural form 'לְךָ יִדְעוּ' (to you), is appropriate to an understanding of 4:9 as directed to the people about Zerubbabel, rather than to him. Despite these variations there is little doubt that we are dealing with the same formulaic words in each instance.

¹¹⁹ See our earlier discussion of the issue on pp.68f.

audience in order to gain credibility for Zechariah's message.¹²⁰ The formula asserts that the prophecy's validity and thereby the prophet's authenticity, would be realised when the event came to pass. It is most probably based upon the ideas of Deuteronomy 18:21f but in Zechariah the expression has been formulated positively, rather than negatively, which stresses the certainty that the prophecy would be fulfilled. It perhaps intimates as well that the hearers who were currently sceptical would themselves experience its fulfilment and thus suggests an expectation of this as imminent.

Before the dependence or otherwise of this formula on any other prophetic material can be discussed, it is necessary to consider whether it is original to the book of Zechariah 1-8 or a later addition. This question was first raised by Marti¹²¹ who argued that doubt concerning Zechariah's mission was unlikely to have arisen during his lifetime; and

¹²⁰ We note that Baldwin argues that this is not necessarily the case since the words may predominantly "reflect the prophet's unshakable conviction that his word will be fulfilled." (Haggai, p.110) However she does not consider the possibility of the formula being an editorial addition which is clearly relevant to the interpretation of the words.

M. Buttenwieser, 'Remarks on the importance of Zachariah as a Prophet [Zach. I-VIII]' in Studies in Jewish Literature issued in honour of Prof. Kaufmann Kohler, (Berlin), 1913, argued that this formula illustrated the general situation of Zechariah 1-8, "on the one hand, the sublime faith of the prophet, and, on the other the utter lack of faith on the part of the people." (p.71)

However, it is questionable whether we have any justification for assuming that Zechariah, or any prophet, ever enjoyed the feeling of total assurance in himself or his message. In the Goldenson Lecture of 1955 published as 'Of a Truth the Lord Hath Sent Me' in Interpreting the Prophetic Tradition, ed. H.M. Orlinsky, (Hebrew Union College Press), 1969, pp.1-19, in which he considers the source of Jeremiah's authority, Sheldon H. Blank makes the perceptive comment that "Jeremiah's supreme attempt to assure his people that God had sent him, and his own quest for certainty, they are not really two things but one." (p.6). In contrast to Baldwin's and Buttenwieser's views above, the same may be true of Zechariah.

¹²¹ K. Marti, 'Die Zweifel an der prophetischen Sendung Sacharjas', BZAW 27, 1914, pp.281-297.

he went on to conclude that the formula was probably added during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, or even later. We disagree with his opening premise, because, as we have sought to demonstrate, the whole issue of prophetic authenticity was a current concern in the restoration period. Besides this, although the rebuilding of the temple, in accordance with Zechariah's words, had been completed ca 515BC, the reality was that the prophecies about Zion in Zechariah 2:10-16(MT) - including two instances of the formula - were still awaiting fulfilment during the Ezra/Nehemiah era. There can be no logical reason why anyone in that situation would believe that the addition of this formula should help to confirm the authority of the prophet; at best it would indicate that his credibility could not be determined until his words came to be fulfilled sometime in the future. At worst it would draw attention to the lack of fulfilment and so cast doubt on his credibility. Sellin¹²² realized the inadequacy of Marti's argument and suggested that Zechariah himself was responsible for adding the formula into the collection of his original prophecies some time prior to the completion of the temple. This hypothesis has been largely accepted by modern scholarship¹²³ and we agree that this is the most probable explanation concerning the occurrence of the formula in Zechariah 4:9 and 6:15. The issue is harder to determine with regard to the formula's use in Zechariah 2:10-16(MT), although they may also have originated with Zechariah. Alternatively soon after the completion of the temple had validated Zechariah's credibility someone else, who recognised the use of the formula in 4:9 and 6:15 as a motif, might have

¹²² E.Sellin, Das Zwölfprophetenbuch, (KAT Band XII), Leipzig, 1930, pp.470f.

¹²³ See Petitjean's Les Oracles, pp.124-127 for a discussion of some of the more important views with the relevant references, and p.127 note 1 in particular, outlining his reasons for adopting this line.

added it to the end of the prophecies concerning the nations in 2:13,15 (MT) to stress the certainty that these hopes would also be fulfilled. We must remain agnostic about the origins of the formula in Zechariah 2 but believe that both other occurrences derive from the prophet himself or from whoever collated the material together before the work on the temple was finished. Therefore we conclude that the formula is original to the book of Zechariah 1-8.

Many scholars have noted a similarity between the words of this formula in Zechariah 1-8 and those of one which recurs in Ezekiel,

"Then you (they) shall know that I am the LORD."¹²⁴

This is generally believed to have originated in the actual words of the prophet Ezekiel¹²⁵ and thus pre-dates the time of Zechariah. This could suggest Zechariah's dependence upon the formula in Ezekiel. He may have followed Ezekiel's style of using a formula repeatedly to reinforce the point being made, although it is probable that this method of emphasis was a common practice among both orators and writers.¹²⁶ The content of the formulae, however, seems to argue against any dependence. In both books the purpose is to stress that the divine word spoken through the prophet is all powerful and its accomplishment guaranteed; nevertheless there is a subtle distinction between the two expressions. The emphasis of the words in Ezekiel is on the power and authority of Yahweh while in Zechariah 1-8 it is on the authenticity of the prophet as a man sent by

¹²⁴ For example Ezek.6:7,10,13,14; 7:4,9,27; 11:10,12; 12:15,16,20; 13:9,14,21,23.

¹²⁵ J.W.Wevers, Ezekiel, (NCB), 1969, pp.37f.

¹²⁶ For example in Amos 1:3,6,9,11,13; 2:1,4 and 6 the repeated use of the formula "For three transgressions of ... and for four, I will not revoke the punishment."

Yahweh as distinct from someone who is motivated by the 'vox populi', or his own personal aspirations.

However there is another expression found twice in Ezekiel,

"then they will know that there has been a prophet among them."¹²⁷

which puts emphasis on the prophetic figure in a similar way to that of the formula in Zechariah; and also one in Jeremiah,

"then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet."¹²⁸

The first of these statements conveys virtually the same message as in Zechariah - that irrespective of the people's acceptance of the words of the prophet, their fulfilment will prove to them the authenticity of, in this case, Ezekiel - but it differs in that it lacks reference to Yahweh or the sending of the prophet. Therefore it is unlikely that they are interdependent and more probable that both expressions draw separately on Deuteronomy 18:21f. The latter statement from Jeremiah parallels the words in Zechariah more closely but its contextual setting gives it a quite different emphasis. As Carroll indicates,¹²⁹ these words relate to the same Deuteronomic passage but they focus on a distinction between war oracles and peace oracles. The thrust of Jeremiah 28:9 is that peace oracles, in contrast to war oracles, do not have the backing of a tradition of being authentic and consequently they can only be justified by their fulfilment; and the inference is that such oracles will not be fulfilled but will be shown ultimately to have been false prophecies. Therefore it is improbable that the formula in Zechariah 1-8 depends on

¹²⁷ Ezek.2:5 and 33:33.

¹²⁸ Jer.28:9. Cf. Jer.26:15.

¹²⁹ R.P.Carroll, Jeremiah, (OTL), 1986, pp.544f.

Jeremiah 28:9 because in each instance it follows a prophecy of weal for Israel, a context which renders it most inappropriate for the deliberate use of words which might, because of their derivation, draw attention to a passage which implies inauthenticity for such prophecies.

This leads to the conclusion that Zechariah's formula does not depend on any of the similar expressions in classical prophecy but that they all derived separately from the traditions of Deuteronomy. However the emphasis on the prophet as the one 'sent' by Yahweh may be connected with the Moses traditions.¹³⁰ One passage in particular,

"And Moses said, 'Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord. If these men die the common death ... then the LORD has not sent me.'¹³¹

begins with words so similar to the formula

"Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me",

that it might be suspected that this is where the origins of Zechariah's words lie. But if this was so, why was the final clause of the first sentence not adopted into the formula also, as that would have expressed precisely and reinforced the very point that the formula seeks to make? Moses asserts that the fulfilment of his prophecy will prove that he is acting and speaking at the instigation of Yahweh and not of himself. In the same way the formula in Zechariah 1-8 serves to authenticate the prophet as one sent by Yahweh by reference to the assured fulfilment of his proclamations. It is improbable that anyone, knowing the text of

¹³⁰ Exodus 3-4 relate the 'sending' of Moses and the confirmation of him as Yahweh's spokesman.

¹³¹ Num.16:28f. The passage containing these words is usually attributed to the JE strand of the Pentateuch which suggests that its origins are certainly earlier than Zechariah 1-8.

Numbers 16:28 and wanting a formulaic expression to validate the words of a prophetic figure, would have used only the opening words of this passage. We conclude that these passages are independent of each other and are examples of a wide range of expressions used to enhance the status of a prophet which feature throughout the Old Testament prophetic literature. It appears that the clause in Zechariah 1-8 continues a stylistic tradition in which formulaic words are used for emphasis; and we suggest that the inclusion of the appellative 'הַנְּהוֹתָ אֶת־בְּרִאֲוֹתַי' accords with the reasons for the re-introduction of this title outlined above.

The only other feature in Zechariah 1-8 which is possibly related to the prophet's attempts to ensure that his messages were accepted as divinely inspired is his use of an interpreting angel within the visions that he experiences and records.¹³² That the visions themselves were shown to Zechariah by Yahweh is made clear by the way the book presents them, even though the prophet only states this fact specifically on one occasion.¹³³ However the prophet does not relate his own interpretation to the community but stresses that the meaning of what he saw was also given to him through an angel who was Yahweh's heavenly messenger. This negates any suggestions that Zechariah might have misunderstood and be mistaken in his prophecies; and emphasizes his validity as a spokesman for Yahweh. The issue of the use of visions and angels in Zechariah 1-8 in relationship to the traditions of classical prophecy will be a major aspect of the following Chapter and so the matter need not be discussed further at this point.

¹³² Zech. 1:8ff; 2:2ff(MT); 3:4ff; 4:1ff; 5:5ff; 6:4ff.

¹³³ Zech. 2:3(MT).

We have argued that both Haggai and Zechariah were concerned to emphasize their authenticity as prophets sent by Yahweh. Their divine commission was the only thing to which they could draw attention as they sought to persuade the people and the leaders of the community to heed their messages and to act upon them. This emphasis was both maintained and reinforced in the compilation of their words. Unlike some of the pre-exilic classical prophets, there is no suggestion that either Haggai or Zechariah experienced direct opposition or hostility personally.¹³⁴ To an extent this was probably because their prophecies did not condemn and threaten ill towards their hearers; but it may also signify that the prophets had to contest a general attitude of apathy or despondency both towards themselves as prophets and regarding their messages of hope for the future. Certainly they experienced some difficulties in convincing their audience about their calling as messengers of Yahweh, as did the classical prophets before them, albeit that they arose for different reasons. However, in contrast to their predecessors they did ultimately succeed in eliciting a positive response to their messages about the temple and the community.

Despite the uncertainties about the family background of the two men, we can state that they were both very much part of the community and not 'outsiders' as Amos had been.¹³⁵ They were also accepted by the official Persian authorities in Jerusalem as persons having a positive contribution to make to the restoration of society there. We can only

¹³⁴ See pp.57ff where we have refuted Hanson's claim that there was strenuous opposition against the hierocratic group to which he believes Haggai belonged; but we recognize that he does not suggest that Haggai was the recipient of any personal hostility. Cf. Isa.28:14; 30:9,15f; Jer.6:10; 15:10,15; 20:2,7ff; 26:8ff; 37:13ff; 38:4ff; Amos 7:12.

¹³⁵ Amos 1:1 and 7:10-14.

argue from silence as to whether either of the prophets had an official group of disciples around him, or a scribe as a companion;¹³⁶ but it is unlikely in view of the lack of established religious structures during the years when Haggai and Zechariah were prophesying.¹³⁷ We conclude that little can be determined about these prophetic figures; but that which can be said is sufficient to indicate that they stand in the same traditions as the classical Old Testament prophets. They were both men called by Yahweh at a particular time to proclaim the divine message to Israel; and in order to gain prophetic credibility they drew on the long established religious traditions of the people, as did their pre-exilic predecessors, to reinforce their authenticity. This link with classical prophecy is claimed by Zechariah through his direct references to the teaching of the former prophets who had been proved correct;¹³⁸ and this is probably another method he adopted to strengthen his credibility with the people. Haggai and Zechariah were concerned about religious issues primarily but these manifested themselves in their involvement with the reconstruction of the temple and with the establishment of an authentic leadership for the restored community. These matters had political significance and some connection with the realm of politics had likewise been the experience of their classical predecessors; indeed it is an inevitable consequence of all true prophetic activity. Unlike the major

¹³⁶ See our comments on p.10f and n.42 regarding the significance of Isa.8:16 on this issue. Jer.36 states that Baruch was the amanuensis of Jeremiah; but we note Carroll's suggestion that he may be a figure created by the deuteronomistic tradition. See R.P.Carroll, From Chaos to Covenant, (SCM), 1981, p.151.

¹³⁷ Wilson, Prophecy and Society, especially Chapter 2 and pp.252, 290-1, has argued that every prophet needed a support group in order to survive and we accept his conclusions. However, such communal support does not of necessity imply a fixed group of followers.

¹³⁸ Zech.1:6 and 7:8ff.

pre-exilic prophets, neither Haggai nor Zechariah focussed attention on the ethical standards of their society, a topic which was prominent in classical prophecy, but this is indicative of the political and social circumstances rather than being a significant divergence in the post-exilic prophetic role. Ethical norms and behaviour tend to deteriorate when societies have become settled and complacent, when life for large numbers in the community has become comfortable and when the problems caused by war or disaster have gone out of recent memory. Such were the situations against which Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah were called to prophesy; but for Haggai and Zechariah the circumstances were quite different. They were part of a community attempting to establish itself after exile, to develop behavioural standards and administrative practices, to set ethical norms; and so the problems of failing morality would not arise until later. That they did is evidenced by the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah and the prophecies of the Book of Malachi. To sum up, we believe that our study of Haggai and Zechariah as prophetic figures has shown that they both lie in the main stream of Israel's prophetic traditions and that their roles within their community illustrate no significant divergence from those of their predecessors.

CHAPTER THREE

The Style and Form of Prophecy in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8

A feature common to all Old Testament prophecy is the conviction of the individual prophet that he has received a message from Yahweh which he must convey to another person or group of people. The message always came to the prophet in a personal way through an encounter with Yahweh; and the content is generally referred to as 'דְּבַר יְהוָה' (the word of the LORD).¹ The texts indicate that it could be received by means of 'hearing' the words directly,² or in the 'seeing' of a vision;³ although it appears that the distinction between these two forms of communication became blurred at an early stage, at least in the understanding of those who collected a prophet's words.⁴ Frequently the prophet conveyed his message to the intended recipients exactly as he had received it in the form of a spoken oracle introduced by the words 'כִּי אָמַר יְהוָה' (Thus says the LORD)⁵ or something similar.⁶ On other occasions the verbal

¹ For example 1 Kgs.17:2,8; 22:19; Isa.1:10; 38:4; Jer.1:2,11,13; Ezek.1:3; 3:16; Hos.1:1; 4:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 3:1; Mic.1:1; Zeph.1:1 and Mal.1:1. Cf. Isa.55:11.

² For example 1 Kgs.22:19-23; Isa.6:8-10; Jer.1:4-10; Ezek.1:28(b)-2:8.

³ For example Amos 7:1-9; Jer.4:23-26.

⁴ See for example Amos 1:1 and Micah 1:1 which refer to the 'word' being 'seen'. Whilst it is recognized that the differing terminology applied to prophetic individuals, 'רֹאֵה' (seer), 'נְבִיא' (prophet), and 'אִישׁ אֵלֹהִים' (man of God), may have had some significance originally in respect of how the prophet received divine communications, we do not believe that such distinctions were applied in, or after, the period of the classical prophets. See above p.51, n.5.

⁵ For example 2 Sam.12:7; 1 Kgs.17:14; 2 Kgs.3:16; Isa.44:2; Jer. 2:5; 4:27; Ezek.11:5; Amos 1:3,6,9,11,13; Obad.1; Mic.3:5; Nah.1:12.

⁶ For example Isa.1:10; Hos.4:1; Amos.1:2; 3:1; 5:1; Mic.6:1.

expression was by means of a parable.⁷ However, sometimes the prophet was commanded to transmit his message by a different means, such as his behaviour,⁸ or by the symbolic naming of a child.⁹ These various means of receiving and transmitting prophetic messages are found throughout pre-classical and classical Old Testament prophecy. This chapter will consider the extent to which these traditions are continued by Haggai and Zechariah and whether any significant divergences are apparent.

The Book of Haggai contains no information concerning the way in which the prophet received his message from Yahweh. The text says that "the word of the LORD came by (or 'to') Haggai the prophet"¹⁰ without indication of any extraordinary circumstances surrounding this. Thus it is probable that Haggai received his commission in like manner to his prophetic predecessors through an auditory and/or visionary experience. The way in which he conveyed his message was invariably through oracles addressed to the whole community or specific members of it,¹¹ which was

⁷ For example 2 Sam.12:1-4,7; Isa.5:1-2. Cf.Hos.12:10.

⁸ For example Isa.20:2f; Jer.27:2ff; Ezek.4:1-3,4-8; 5:1ff; Hos. 1:2; 3:1.

⁹ For example Isa.7:3; 8:3f; Hos.1:4,6,9. C.Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech, trans. H.C.White, (Lutterworth Press, London), 1967 is a study of the varied verbal forms adopted by prophets to transmit their messages, including a survey of previous work in this area. This concentrates on oracular forms, although a short section (pp.199-204) considers legal procedure, disputation, parable, lament and prophetic torah. I found no wider study of prophetic forms including behaviour and symbolic actions. W.D.Stacey, Prophetic Drama in the Old Testament, (Epworth), 1990, became available too late for inclusion in my research.

¹⁰ Hag.1:1,3; 2:1,10,20. This form of introduction is common in Old Testament prophetic literature; for example Jer.1:2; 11:2; Ezek.1:3; 11:14; Hos.1:1; Mic.1:1. See the excursus on the use of the distinctive terminology 'בְּיַד' (by the hand of) and 'אֶל' (to) on pp.70ff.

¹¹ Hag.1:2,4-11,13(b); 2:2-9,11-19,21-23. These oracles include the standard formulae 'כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה' (thus says the LORD) as introduction [Hag.1:2,5,7; 2:6,11], or 'אָמַר יְהוָה' (says the LORD) to conclude them

totally in accord with mainstream prophecy. One passage, Haggai 2:11ff,

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: Ask the priests to decide this question, 'If one carries holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and touches with his skirt bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any kind of food, does it become holy?' The priests answered 'No.' Then said Haggai, 'If one who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?' The priests answered, 'It does become unclean.' Then Haggai said, 'So it is with this people, and with this nation before me, says the LORD;"

is distinctive, however, in that the prophet's message derives partially from a direct communication from Yahweh and partially from the mediation of human agents, priests, whom Yahweh directed Haggai to consult. In this passage, which is a conflation of the commission given to Haggai as well as an account of its fulfilment, the priests are asked to give a ruling, or torah,¹² on matters of holiness and uncleanness. The answers given are then related to the condition of the community being addressed by Haggai in accordance with Yahweh's word to him.¹³ There is a passage in Zechariah 1-8 which narrates a similar questioning of priests about matters of ritual, Zechariah 7:2-3;

"Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech and their men, to entreat the favour of the LORD, and to ask the priests of the house of the LORD of hosts and the prophets, 'Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as

[Hag.9,13; 2:4(twice),8,9,14,17,23(twice)].

¹² J. Begrich, 'Die priesterliche Tora', BZAW 66, 1936, pp.63-88, argued that only matters of holiness could be the subject of torah decisions. This view was challenged by A.Renker, Die Tora bei Maleachi, (Freiburg), 1979, among others. We agree with those who argue that the priests were asked to provide torah on a wider range of issues.

¹³ Much attention has been given to identifying which 'people' and 'nation' are meant but the argument is not relevant to our discussion. We believe that Haggai is speaking of and to the community of which he is a part. For detailed studies see, for example, J.W.Rothstein, Juden und Samaritaner, (Leipzig), 1908, pp.5-41; K.Koch, 'Haggai's unreines Volk', ZAW 79, 1967, pp.52-67; and H.G.May, "This People" and "This Nation", pp.190-7.

I have done for so many years?"

and together these suggest that it was accepted practice around the time of the restoration to consult the priests in this way.

The idea of seeking priestly torah derives from the understanding that among the responsibilities of the priesthood were the requirements both to teach the 'torah'¹⁴ and to give authoritative rulings on matters of ritual and related issues.¹⁵ Much of the Old Testament literature giving details of these priestly duties occurs in sections of Leviticus which are generally attributed to the Priestly Writers. They probably originate, therefore, from around the time of, or later than, Haggai and Zechariah 1-8. However it is clear that the tradition has more ancient beginnings¹⁶ in that two of the 8th century prophets felt justified in rebuking the priests for failing in their responsibility as teachers;

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God....."¹⁷

"...its priests teach for hire..."¹⁸

¹⁴ Lev.10:11; Deut.31:10-13; 33:10; Ezek.44:23. Cf. 2 Kgs.17:27f; 2 Chron.15:3.

¹⁵ For example Lev.10:10. This passage concerns the duties of the Aaronite priests, while in Deut.17:8-13; 21:5 the Levitical priests are considered competent to give torah decisions in legal cases, (Cf. Deut. 19:17). However this distinction is not significant for the matters we are considering.

¹⁶ P.J.Budd 'Priestly Instruction in Pre-Exilic Israel', VT 23, 1973, pp.1-14 considers the development of the forms such instruction could take. He argues that 'Direction' (the term he equates with the form of torah we are discussing) must have had deep pre-exilic roots because it sometimes dealt with issues arising from ancient taboos.

¹⁷ Hos.4:6.

¹⁸ Mic.3:11(a). Deut.33:10 (see n.14 above), part of the 'Blessing of Moses', also probably originated in the 8th century BC. S.R. Driver, Deuteronomy, (ICC), 3rd ed., 1902, pp.386-9 discusses the issues.

and references to this priestly function are also found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.¹⁹ These passages all support the suggestion that the classical Old Testament prophets had experience of priestly torah being sought by their contemporaries and that they believed in the concept of offering such torah as a proper function of the priesthood; hence they condemned its malpractice when necessary. However, throughout the literature of the Old Testament Haggai 2:11ff is the only instance where the process of priestly torah actually being sought and given is recounted.²⁰ Thus while we accept Budd's analysis of this passage,

"The answers given to the two questions take the form of the simple negative (lo'), and an affirmative taking up the terms of the question (yitma'). These are impersonal forms....."²¹

and his conclusion that the form of the question most likely determined the form in which the torah was given,²² we believe that he pursues his argument too far when he uses this one example to hypothesize about the 'Gattung' of priestly torah. The only valid statement which can be made is that Haggai 2:11ff represents a form of priestly torah current in the

¹⁹ Jer.18:18; Ezek.7:26; 22:26. Cf. Jer.2:8; Deut.17:18; 31:9,26 in which the priests have charge of the 'torah'. The parallel text of Isa.2:3/Mic.4:2 may reflect the same view of priestly responsibilities; but uncertainties surrounding its origins prevent its use in support of any argument. See n.102, pp.291f for further discussion.

²⁰ While priestly torah is apparently sought in Zech.7:3f, the answer, given in Zech.8:18f, comes in the form of an oracle from the prophet and not from the priests. In the sections which institute the duties of the priests, for example Leviticus 13, it is an account of the procedures to be followed in giving priestly torah that is written, not an account of a real instance of the process.

²¹ Budd, 'Priestly Instruction', p.5.

²² Begrich, 'Die priesterliche Tora', pp.74ff discusses in greater detail both the impersonal form of torah and the relationship between the form of the question and that of the answer. However he considers a wider range of question and answer passages, e.g. Mic.6:6-8; Isa.33:14-16; Pss.15 and 24:3-6, which are not examples of priestly torah and this lessens the significance of his conclusion.

late 6th century BC; but whether it followed the common practice of that period or any pre-exilic traditions cannot be known.²³

However, while the danger of claiming too much on scant evidence is recognized, the fact that priestly torah is sought by the prophet in Haggai 2:11ff may signify that he enjoyed a different relationship with the priests from that of his classical predecessors. A picture of mutual recognition and co-operation is conveyed by this passage, which is reinforced by the way in which the texts of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 present both the prophets as adopting a positive attitude towards Joshua the high priest.²⁴ In contrast the classical prophets, including the priest-prophet Ezekiel, express only condemnation of the priests;²⁵ and record incidences of direct conflict and confrontation with them.²⁶ Whilst their criticism may have been directed at the priests who abused

²³ Similarly the style adopted by the Priestly Writers in Leviticus may reflect the post-exilic experience of priestly torah and say nothing about its earlier form. M.Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, (Clarendon Press, Oxford), 1985, pp.281-298, argues that Hag.2:11-14 is an example of aggadic exegesis in prophetic literature. His argument however, is concerned with the content of the passage, claiming that it is an "exegetical analogy" dependent upon a regulation such as that in Lev.6:20. He does not consider the earlier forms of priestly torah, nor any ways in which it is used to convey a prophetic message; and thus his study does not add to our discussion.

²⁴ Hag.2:4; Zech.3 and perhaps 6:11. The framework to the book of Haggai makes frequent reference to Joshua, Hag.1:1,12,14; 2:2, and it is this work of the compilers, rather than the prophet himself, which puts emphasis on the relationship between prophet and priest. However in doing this the editors may simply have been reflecting the reality which they had experienced. The role of Joshua and his significance in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 is a major theme of Chapter 4.

²⁵ For example Isa.28:7; Jer.6:13; 14:18; 23:11; Ezek.7:26; 22:26; Hos.4:4ff; Mic.3:11; and Zeph.3:4. The visions of the temple in Ezekiel 40-48 which include references to the arrangements for the priests are of a different nature in that they relate to a future, restored temple system and not to the prophet's present appreciation of the priesthood.

²⁶ For example Jer.20:1-6; 26:8; Amos 7:10-17.

their position and authority rather than at the priesthood in general, just as they criticised the exponents of false prophecy,²⁷ nevertheless the absence of positive statements about the priesthood by the classical prophets suggests that they had a low regard for the whole institution, or at least viewed the priests as subordinate figures dependent on the prophets for their instruction.²⁸

If the difference between the relationship of prophets and priests at the time of Haggai and Zechariah and that during the period of the classical prophets has not been overstated, then this suggests that the experience of the exile brought about a significant change. That the authority of the priests increased greatly while they were in Babylon is generally accepted²⁹ but this does not of itself explain the improvement in prophet/priest relations, for it could have led to a dominance of the prophets by the priests which is not the case.³⁰ It may be that the harmonious relationships in the restored community relate to an attempt to return to what was perceived as the ideal period of Israel's history, the time when she was a united kingdom under David and Solomon and the first temple was built. As the community, encouraged by Haggai and Zechariah, began to rebuild its temple as in the days of Solomon, so also the prophets and priests re-established their relationship akin to

²⁷ See the discussion of this issue on pp.62f.

²⁸ For example Jer.5:31; 27:16.

²⁹ The rise in authority of the priests probably accompanied a change in emphasis in their role whereby they became teachers of the law and its custodians. Examples from the post-exilic literature to support this theory are 2 Chron.15:3; Ez.7:6,10,11,12,21,25; 8:1-9 and Mal.2:7.

³⁰ As the development of modern Judaism began in the later post-exilic period, authority passed to the priests who attained the dominant position over all other cultic groups.

that which existed when Nathan the prophet and Zadok the priest jointly anointed Solomon king.³¹ In this way the restored community could show that it had learned from the preaching of the classical prophets and had turned back from the disobedience of earlier generations to the ways of Yahweh.

Let us now consider the ways in which Zechariah both received and communicated his messages from Yahweh. As in the Book of Haggai the standard form of introduction, "the word of the LORD came to Zechariah (or 'to me')",³² is used with all the passages containing the substance of Zechariah's message. Many of these have the form of oracles³³ which were received from Yahweh and transmitted directly to the people by the prophet; and these suggest that Zechariah, like Haggai, to this extent conformed to the mainstream classical prophetic methods. The only other indication as to whether the method of communication was auditory or visionary is Zechariah 1:7f which continues with the words 'רָאִיתִי הַלַּיְלָה' (literally : I saw, the night).³⁴ This statement introduces the first of a series of eight visions which are presented in the text as a unit

³¹ 1 Kgs.1:32-39.

³² Zech.1:1,7; 4:8; 6:9; 7:1,4,8; 8:1,18.

³³ For example Zech.1:1ff; 4:9f; 6:9ff; 7:4ff and 8:1ff.

³⁴ The Hebrew text has no preposition which argues against the RSV translation 'in the night'. BDB offer two possible translations: 'this night' in the sense of the one just past, i.e. 'last night', and 'by night'. Petersen, OTL, pp.138f opts for the temporal sense 'last night' while Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.109f prefer the stative interpretation indicating the condition of darkness which pertained. We do not believe that these two meanings are mutually exclusive but both contribute to an understanding of the description that follows. However we suggest that the compilers of Zechariah 1-8 intended the temporal interpretation to be accepted since they appended a precise date to this report.

consequent upon Zechariah 1:7.³⁵ Before these visions can be compared with others in the Old Testament prophetic literature and any underlying traditions discovered, it is necessary to determine what constitutes a vision. It has already been stated that whole prophetic works came to be thought of as visions;³⁶ so there is a need to establish some basic criteria, applicable to Zechariah's visions, which will enable similar passages to be distinguished for comparison. Several scholars have made studies of prophetic visions which provide varying ways of categorizing them, usually into three types based on their content. Sister³⁷ argued that for a vision this was always a theophany, self explanatory images, or symbols which required interpretation. The categories which Horst³⁸ identified were, 'die Anwesenheitsvisionen' (presence-vision),³⁷ 'die Wortsymbolvisionen' (word-symbol-vision) which included 'Wortassonanz' (word-assonance) and 'die Geschehnisvisionen' (event-vision). Long⁴⁰ identified 'Oracle-visions', 'Dramatic Word-visions', and 'Revelatory-

³⁵ Zech. 1:8-11; 2:1-4(MT); 5-9(MT); 3:1-5; 4:1-6a, 10b-11, 13-14; 5:1-4; 5-11; and 6:1-8. The suggestion that the fourth vision, 3:1-5, was not part of the original series has been considered and rejected on pp. 31f. We follow the consensus of opinion in viewing Zech. 4:6b-10a as an interpolation which is not directly related to any of the visions. Beuken, Haggai, pp. 258-74 argues that Zech. 4:10b, 6a^b-7 is the original message element of the fifth vision. We cannot accept the relevance of these words to the context of this vision though we recognize that the use of the introductory formula 'the word of the LORD came to me' in 4:8 may support a claim that only verses 8-10a have been interpolated.

³⁶ See p. 89 and n. 4 above.

³⁷ M. Sister, 'Die Typen der prophetischen Visionen in der Bibel', Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums 78, 1934, pp. 399-430.

³⁸ F. Horst, 'Die Visionsschilderungen der alttestamentlichen Propheten', Evangelische Theologie, Vol 20, 1960, pp. 193-205.

³⁹ We understand this to be similar to Sister's 'theophany'.

⁴⁰ B. O. Long, 'Reports of Visions among the Prophets' JBL 95, 1976, pp. 353-365.

Mysteries-Visions'. Each of these categories could be applied to one or more of the visions in Zechariah 1-8⁴¹ and they will prove to be useful distinctions for our discussions. However another study by Amsler⁴² which considers how visions are utilised in the overall presentation of a prophet's message in its literary form rather than the circumstances of their receipt,⁴³ is particularly appropriate for our purposes. He distinguishes between two kinds of visionary literature in the classical prophetic corpus. One category consists of passages in which a prophet reports what he has previously 'seen';⁴⁴ and these are not identified as visions per se. The other contains 22 passages which include the eight visions in Zechariah 1-8.⁴⁵ He argues that all these passages consist of a description of what the prophet saw,⁴⁶ which initiates a dialogue with God or his agent and finally the divine word is proclaimed to the audience. We accept this analysis and believe it can also be applied to the non-classical prophetic visions;⁴⁷ and thus it establishes general criteria by which passages from the Old Testament can be identified as 'visions'. Amsler goes on to claim that more profound messages are

⁴¹ The visions are considered individually later in this chapter.

⁴² S.Amsler, 'La Parole Visionnaire des Prophètes', VT 31, 1981, pp.359-362.

⁴³ Amsler accepts that the texts are literary compositions and that the relationship between text and actual vision can never be determined; and we agree with this assertion.

⁴⁴ Examples he gives are Isa.21:2; 7; Jer.4:21; 23ff.

⁴⁵ Amos 7:1-3; 4-6; 7-9; 8:1-3; 9:1-4; Isa.6:1-11; Jer.1:11-12; 13-16; 24:1-10; 38:21-22; Ezek.1-3; 8-10 + 11:22-25; 37:1-14; 40-48. We question the inclusion of Jer.38:21f in this category preferring to call it a report of a previous vision.

⁴⁶ He also suggests the texts appear to indicate that the actual 'vision' was for the benefit of the prophet only.

⁴⁷ For example, the vision of Micaiah in 1 Kgs.22:19ff.

communicated through this form of vision, since the language of metaphor and analogy in the descriptions enters into the reader's imagination and prepares the way for the message. He concludes by saying:

"Dans le processus de la communication de la parole de Dieu au peuple, le récit de vision accentue fortement le moment de la *réception* du message, tandis que l'oracle met l'accent sur le moment de sa *transmission*."⁴⁸

He appears to have correctly identified a common method of operation for these visionary passages at a literary level and since this indicates a similarity of style between the compilers of Zechariah 1-8 and those who compiled the books of Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel it supports the view that Zechariah 1-8 stands in the mainstream of classical prophetic literature in respect of the use of this literary form even though some features of the visions may suggest divergence from prophetic norms.⁴⁹ However this discussion began by considering the ways in which Zechariah the prophet received his message from Yahweh and as we return to this matter it is necessary to appraise his visions as individual incidents, rather than purely as literature. If this perspective is adopted and they are compared with the rest of Amsler's group of twenty-two - and with other visions outside the classical prophetic corpus - then points of distinctiveness may be discovered, which will require us to consider

⁴⁸ Amsler, 'La Parole Visionnaire', p.362.

⁴⁹ It is claimed by some scholars that the visions of Zechariah 1-8 represent an early stage in the development of apocalyptic literature; for example R.North, 'Prophecy to Apocalyptic via Zechariah', Supp.VT22, 1972, pp.47-71; S.Amsler, 'Zacharie et l'Origine de l'Apocalyptique', Supp.VT22, pp.227-31; and D.S.Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, (SCM Press), 1964, pp.88f. We would deny this and argue for the origins of apocalyptic literature as something much more complex than a linear development out of prophecy. This issue is not relevant to our thesis but for a variety of views see C.Rowland, The Open Heaven, (SPCK), 1982; P.D.Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic; M.A.Knibb, 'Prophecy and the Emergence of the Jewish Apocalypses', in Coggins, Phillips & Knibb, Israel's Prophetic Tradition, (Cambridge), 1982, pp.155-180.

whether other traditional influences have contributed to the formulation of Zechariah's visions as well.

Before we turn to look at the structure and content of the vision passages in Zechariah 1-8 it is necessary to consider if the mention of 'night' in 1:7 is significant with regard to Zechariah's consciousness at the time of his experience(s). Night could imply that he 'saw' these things through the medium of dreams while he was sleeping rather than in a wakeful state; but against this it is acknowledged that the text of Zechariah 1-8 always uses forms of 'ראה' (see)⁵⁰ about these experiences and never mentions 'חלום' (dream). Petersen presumes

"a fundamental similarity between dreams and visions, a relation recognized by ancient Greeks (waking [hypar] and dream [onar] visions) as well as modern investigators"⁵¹

and he cites literature about dream behaviour suggesting that a series of four to six dreams, mostly in colour, is the normal human experience during one night's sleep.⁵² He then proceeds to refer to Zechariah's "visions/dreams".⁵³ There is no reason to doubt the findings of modern psychology about dreams but we deny that the terms 'vision' and 'dream' are interchangeable in the literature of the Old Testament. Dreams are often referred to as the medium through which God makes things known to

⁵⁰ Qal pf. Zech.1:8; 4:2; impf. 2:1,5; 5:1,9; 6:1; pt.act. 4:2; 5:2 (twice); imv. 5:5; and Hiph. impf. 1:9; 2:3; 3:1.

⁵¹ Petersen, OTL, p.111.

⁵² Among the works cited are A.Rechtschaffen, P.Verdone, J.Wheaton, 'Reports of Mental Activity During Sleep', Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal 8, 1963, pp.409-14 and C.Padgham, 'Colours Experienced in Dreams', British Journal of Psychology 66, 1975, pp.25-8.

⁵³ Petersen, OTL, p.139.

individuals; to Abimelech,⁵⁴ Jacob,⁵⁵ Laban,⁵⁶ Joseph,⁵⁷ the butler and the baker in Egypt,⁵⁸ Pharaoh,⁵⁹ a comrade of Gideon,⁶⁰ Solomon;⁶¹ or is expected to communicate;⁶² but in each of these instances both receiver and interpreter of the dream are non-prophetic figures.⁶³ Indeed none of the named prophets in the Old Testament is attributed with receiving a dream, whereas prophetic messages are often referred to as visions⁶⁴ apart from the actual visions which the prophets claim to have seen.⁶⁵ However some reference is found to dreams and dreamers in the prophetic corpus, primarily in Jeremiah where the implication is that prophets who claim to have received their messages in dreams are liars who have not

⁵⁴ Gen.20:3,6.

⁵⁵ Gen.28:12; 31:10,11.

⁵⁶ Gen.31:24.

⁵⁷ Gen.37:5,9; 42:9.

⁵⁸ Gen.40:5,8,9,16.

⁵⁹ Gen.41:1,5,7,17ff.

⁶⁰ Judg.7:13.

⁶¹ 1 Kgs.3:5,15.

⁶² For example by Saul, 1 Sam.28:6,15.

⁶³ That a distinction is always made between dream and prophecy in the Old Testament is recognized by Abraham J.Heschel, The Prophets, (Harper and Row, New York), 1962, p.461, who argues that "Even the night visions of the postexilic Zechariah are not to be understood as dreams."

References to Nebuchadnezzar's and Daniel's dreams (Dan.2:1ff;7:1) are excluded because the book dates from the second century BC and thus is irrelevant to our discussion. Also, contra Heschel, we dispute that Daniel was a prophet and the book's content prophecy, in any real sense.

⁶⁴ For example Isa.1:1; 2:1; Amos 1:1; Obad.1; Mic.1:1; Nah.1:1; and Hab.1:1.

⁶⁵ For example 1 Kgs.22:19; Isa.6:1; Ezek.1-3.

been sent by Yahweh.⁶⁶ Similarly in Deuteronomy the dreamer of dreams is set alongside the prophet who deceives.⁶⁷ There is only one passage in the Old Testament, Numbers 12:6ff, which suggests that Yahweh might speak to a prophet in a dream;

"Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech; and he beholds the form of the LORD."

but this is designed to emphasize the uniqueness of Moses as a prophet of Yahweh as compared with other more lowly individuals who aspired to prophesy.⁶⁸ Thus we do not believe that this passage negates the claim that prophets were dismissive of dreamers and not dreamers themselves. The foregoing points to a clear division in the Old Testament use of dreams and visions whereby the latter belong predominantly in the realm of prophecy as one means by which Yahweh communicates his word,⁶⁹ while dreams as the medium of God's communication belong to the patriarchal age and the earliest period of the monarchy before the rise of prominent prophetic individuals.⁷⁰ It is interesting to note in support of this

⁶⁶ Jer.23:25-28,32; 27:9f; 29:8f. Cf. Zech.10:2. Isa.29:7,8 refers to the human experience of non-inspired dreams while Joel 3:1(MT), which post-dates Zechariah 1-8, expresses the hope for the future that people will all receive God's spirit and then prophesy, dream or see visions.

⁶⁷ Deut.13:2,4,6(MT).

⁶⁸ Deut.18:15ff expresses the Israelite understanding of Moses as the first and greatest prophet who began the prophetic succession. The passage from Numbers indicates that a prophet with whom Yahweh speaks in a vision or a dream stands in this authentic line of succession and has Mosaic authority.

⁶⁹ Occasionally non-prophetic figures are attributed with seeing visions also, for example Israel/Jacob, Gen.46:2; Balaam, Num.22:31.

⁷⁰ Reference to God using both dreams and visions less specifically occurs in Job 7:14; 33:14f. It is noted that Job's story is set in the patriarchal age whereas the book probably dates from the 3rd century BC.

This assertion about the distinction in the Old Testament between

that all the Genesis passages which refer to dreams come from what is known as the E source/document, which is usually dated to the 9th/8th centuries BC,⁷¹ the period before the rise of classical prophetism. We conclude, therefore, that as the prophets gained ascendancy and the community came to expect Yahweh to address them through prophets, then dreams as a means of divine revelation were devalued.

It follows from this that the visionary language in Zechariah 1-8 accords with the classical prophetic tradition in this respect and it argues against a suggestion that the prophet's experiences were dreams. However before the idea of Zechariah as a dreamer is rejected altogether it is necessary to consider whether Genesis 46:2

"And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night, and said, 'Jacob, Jacob.' And he said, 'Here am I.'"

has an implication for our understanding of Zechariah 1:8. Jacob, along with the other patriarchs, is elsewhere referred to as a dreamer;⁷² and to interpret this incident as another dream is the most natural option. If the words 'בְּמַקְאוֹת הַלַּיְלָה' (in visions of the night) mean 'in dreams',⁷³ then can it be denied that 'רָאִיתִי הַלַּיְלָה' (I saw, the night) may likewise

dreams and visions does not deny the psychological connections between the two phenomena. As Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.127, have indicated, our best analogy for understanding the concept of visions remains that of the dream world "which contains a mixture of the real and the unreal, the remembered and the imagined. ... Similarly for visions: they are supernatural yet contain real objects and real people."

⁷¹ Some scholars would date this material, at least in part, even earlier and suggest it precedes the J source. For example Z. Weisman argues that the Jacob material assigned to E originates before the beginnings of the monarchy. (In a paper delivered in Oxford Nov.14.88)

⁷² See n.55 above.

⁷³ Cf. Job 33:15; Isa 29:7 which equate a dream with a vision of the night and Job 20:8 where the one is parallel to the other.

imply a dream state? Some instances of 'חֲזוֹן לַלַּיְלָה' state explicitly that it is the time when God communicates through dreams⁷⁴ but equally there are references to other forms of divine communication at night;⁷⁵ and so the question must be left open. Zechariah 4:1f,

"And the angel who talked with me came again, and waked me, like a man that is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, 'What do you see?'....."

further complicates the issue for although it makes clear that Zechariah was awake when he experienced the fifth vision, this could also suggest that he was asleep for the previous one and that it was, therefore, more accurately a dream! Wheeler Robinson related this verse to the complete cycle of visions suggesting that

"The night visions of Zechariah are probably not dreams so much as products of the borderland between sleep and waking, if we may judge from his own remark (4:1)."⁷⁶

It is invalid to generalize in this way and furthermore we do not accept that a semi-conscious state is implied in Zechariah 4:1 because the language is that of simile, as used in Ezekiel's visions of God.⁷⁷ The way in which this verse is used to introduce the vision serves to claim a heightened state of awareness for Zechariah as he received the divine communication, an awareness that was brought about by his encounter with the angel and was greater than that of normal consciousness to a degree equivalent to the distinction between wakefulness and being asleep. In this case the claim relates only to the passage which follows and so it

⁷⁴ Gen.20:3; 31:24 and 1 Kgs.3:5 (the parallel passage 2 Chron.1:7 omits the reference to a dream).

⁷⁵ Gen.32:22-31; Num.22:19-20; 2 Sam.7:4=1 Chron.17:3; Cf. Mic.3:6.

⁷⁶ H.Wheeler Robinson, Redemption and Revelation, (Nisbet & Co. London), 1942, p.145.

⁷⁷ For example Ezek.1; 8 and 10.

does not allow any implications to be drawn about Zechariah's state of consciousness when he experienced the previous vision.

On balance it is probably correct to understand Zechariah as a visionary, not a dreamer, who stands firmly in the prophetic tradition. However the possibility cannot be totally discounted that alongside this conformity with the classical prophets, Zechariah's experience is being likened to that of the early dreamers, especially Jacob and Solomon, to indicate also a continuity with the founders of Israel's faith whose obedience to God's purposes, revealed to them in dreams, led eventually to the building of the first temple. The significance of Zechariah's references to angels which are also linked with the early stages of Israel's faith is our next consideration; but first it is appropriate to reflect upon the religion of Persia, the dominant power in Zechariah's age, to determine whether this could have been a contemporary influence on his thought, which would negate any suggestion that he drew on more ancient Old Testament traditions. Whether Persian religion could have been a source on which Zechariah depended in respect of other issues, either conceptually or in a literary way, will also be considered.

Excursus

There is no extant literature in a Persian language from this period^{7*}

^{7*} In 'The Religion of Cyrus the Great', Achaemenid History III-Method and Theory, Eds. Amélie Kuhrt and Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, (Leiden), 1988, pp.15-31, Mary Boyce indicates that no system for recording pronouncements in an Iranian language in writing existed at the time of Cyrus and no Old Persian inscriptions date from his reign. It appears that the art of writing only developed in Persia quite late in the Achaemenid period and certainly the situation did not change in the decade between Cyrus's death, 530BC, and the 2nd year of Darius, 520BC.

The "Avesta", the holy book of Zoroastrianism containing the "Gathas", poems allegedly composed by the prophet Zoroaster, is written in an otherwise unknown language, Avestan, which is believed to be an earlier forerunner of Old Persian but from a period pre 1000BC. Apart from this text the teachings of Zoroaster were handed down orally to the

and consequently we have to rely on Babylonian and Greek texts relating to these times,⁷⁹ or archaeological discoveries, for evidence of the religious ideas which prevailed in the Empire.⁸⁰ However from these it seems probable that Zoroastrianism had spread westward from Eastern Iran by the early 6th century BC, so that this was the religion followed by Cyrus and his descendants and the one generally accepted in this period by the Persians.⁸¹ This being so, then the Jewish community at the time of Haggai and Zechariah had probably gained some knowledge of the major doctrines of this faith,⁸² although it may be significant that the Old Testament contains no mention of the name of Zoroaster's god, Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord), the Creator God, nor of his divine opponent, Angra Mainyu, the Hostile Spirit.⁸³ These two uncreated divinities give rise to the ethical dualism which lies at the root of the faith, a concept which was alien to the Jewish belief in the one God from whom came all things, good and bad;⁸⁴ and a concept which was also absent from all the Semitic religions with which Israel had earlier come into contact. The dualism of Zoroastrianism makes it improbable that an identification of

time of the Sasanians, 3rd-7th century AD. Mary Boyce, Zoroastrians, (Routledge & Kegan Paul), 1979, p.17.

⁷⁹ Mary Boyce, A History of Zoroastrianism, Volume Two: Under the Achaemenians, (Leiden/Köln E.J.Brill), 1982, p.67.

⁸⁰ This makes it highly improbable that there could be any literary dependence between Zechariah 1-8 and texts relating to Persian religious beliefs.

⁸¹ Mary Boyce, A History of Zoroastrianism, pp.41f, and in 'Persian Religion in the Achaemenid Age', The Cambridge History of Judaism, Vol 1 Introduction, The Persian Period, Eds. W.D.Davies and L.Finkelstein, (Cambridge), 1984, pp.285f. See also J.M.Cook The Persian Empire, (J.M.Dent & Son Ltd. London), 1983, pp.147ff. For a full account of the doctrines of this faith see Mary Boyce, Zoroastrians.

⁸² Morton Smith, 'II Isaiah and the Persians', JAOS 83, 1963, pp.415-21, argues that this exilic prophet was greatly influenced by Zoroastrians. He states that Isa.40-48 contains propaganda for the Persians which derives from Persian inspiration and suggests that the creation doctrine in II Isaiah and the monotheism expressed there are influenced by Zoroastrian ideas. We believe that his claims stretch the evidence too far in relation to these issues but accept that the prophet may have had some knowledge of Zoroastrianism and that this affected the development of his thought. See also Morton Smith, 'Jewish Religious Life in the Persian Period', The Cambridge History of Judaism, Vol 1 Introduction, The Persian Period, Eds. W.D.Davies and L.Finkelstein, (Cambridge), 1984, pp.219-78.

⁸³ This contrasts with references to the gods of other nations who are rejected, scorned or mentioned in other ways that recognized their existence, for example Judg.11:24; 1 Kgs.11:5,7; 2 Kgs.23:10; Isa.46:1 Jer.2:23; 32:35; 50:2. Persians are recorded as speaking of 'the God of Heaven', for example Ez.6:9,10.

⁸⁴ For example Deut.11:13-17; Isa.45:5-7; Amos 5:8f.

Yahweh with Ahura Mazda could account for the absence of any reference to this god; and it is more likely an indication of Jewish disinterest in Persian religion because it was not threatening to lead to syncretism or apostasy and its adherents were not hostile towards their own beliefs and practices.⁸⁸ Alongside each of the opposing gods, Zoroastrians believed in a pantheon of lesser divinities. In the case of Ahura Mazda the pantheon consisted of six Yazatas (Beings worthy of worship), or Amesha Spentas (Holy Immortals), who were hypostases of qualities such as Truth and were thought to strive under their lord to further good and defeat evil, each in their particular area of concern; but they were clearly gods in their own right and not simply messengers or agents. The opposing pantheon was made up of Daevas who always sought to inflict evil and frustrate good. Zoroaster proclaimed that only Ahura Mazda and his pantheon were to be worshipped and taught doctrines of resurrection and of a Last Day of Judgement (Frashokereti) when Ahura Mazda would finally overcome Angra Mainyu. On this day the righteous would enter into an eternal existence of untroubled goodness and peace on earth with Ahura Mazda and the wicked would be utterly destroyed. It was believed that the souls of those who died were judged at death and the departed soul of a hero, a 'fravashi', conceptualized as a winged female being inhabiting the air, was thought able to help and protect any descendants who made satisfactory offerings, although

"salvation for the individual depended on the sum of his thoughts, words and deeds, and there could be no intervention, whether compassionate or capricious, by any divine Being to alter this."⁸⁹

The cult had neither temples nor idols but the faith had a strict moral code, and far reaching purity laws. The absence of idolatry and the concern for morality and purity were ideals which were held in common by Zoroastrians and the Jewish community, though the practical consequences of these latter ideals were quite distinctive in the two faiths. For example the Zoroastrian concept of purity led to the exposure of their dead so that the corrupting flesh could be quickly devoured by birds and animals before the bones were then collected and buried. To Jews this practice would have been abhorrent, as would the Zoroastrian practice of 'khvaetvadatha' or next-of-kin marriage, attested to as a contemporary feature of the faith by Cambyses' marriage to two of his full sisters,

⁸⁸ James Barr, 'The Question of Religious Influence: The Case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity', JAAR Vol.LIII, 1985, pp.201-235, comments on the lack of references to Persian religion in OT texts and the absence of Hebrew loan words from Zoroastrianism. He concludes that, "at least in the first century or so of Persian rule, Jews who were in contact with Iran paid rather little attention, favorable or unfavorable, to the religion of the dominant nation. If they knew the peculiar characteristics of that religion, they kept them to themselves and said nothing about them."(p.213-4) We believe the latter statement to be the most likely.

⁸⁹ Boyce, Zoroastrians, p.29.

which was regarded as a highly meritorious religious duty.⁸⁷ The faiths also had a totally different understanding of fire. For Zoroastrians it was a pure element, used as the focus of all worship and prayers, which must never be defiled; whereas Israel burned sacrificial offerings,⁸⁸ those guilty of certain incestuous relationships,⁸⁹ their rubbish⁹⁰ and used fire as a weapon of destruction.⁹¹ These distinctions in doctrine and practice between Zoroastrianism and Israel's traditional beliefs are so significant that any influence of the former on Zechariah's language and imagery should be very apparent.

Let us now consider the frequent references in Zechariah's visions to 'מַלְאָךְ', in the sense of an angelic messenger of Yahweh.⁹² Zechariah claims to converse with an angel in each vision except the 4th and 6th⁹³ and in the 1st and 3rd a second angel also appears, identified in the former instance as 'מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה' (the angel of the LORD).⁹⁴ This figure is specifically referred to again as one of the characters in the 4th vision⁹⁵ and it is probable that the other two occurrences of 'מַלְאָךְ' in this vision⁹⁶ relate to the same individual. Since 'מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה' does not

⁸⁷ Compare the Jewish laws about incest Lev.18:6ff; 20:11ff.

⁸⁸ For example Lev.4.

⁸⁹ Lev.20:14.

⁹⁰ Job 2:8.

⁹¹ For example Josh.11:11ff; Judg.9:20.

⁹² Zech.1:9,11,12,13,14; 2:2,7,7(MT); 3:1,3,4,5,6; 4:1,4,5; 5:5,10; and 6:4. It does not occur in the oracular sections of Zechariah 1-8.

⁹³ Zech.1:9,13,14; 2:1,7(MT); 4:1,4,5; 5:5,10; and 6:4. The role of this angel in Zechariah 1-8 and its wider implication is discussed more fully on pp.112ff.

⁹⁴ Zech.1:11,12; 2:7(MT). The references in Zech.1:11f may be glosses, although there is no objective evidence to support this theory. This issue and the ambiguities in the text are discussed in n.108 below.

⁹⁵ Zech.3:1,5. The reference in 3:6 introducing the oracle depends on the use of this term within the vision.

⁹⁶ Zech.3:3,4.

occur with this meaning in the classical prophetic literature;⁹⁷ and the sole mention of an angel anywhere in it is Hosea's comment on Jacob's experience beside the Jabbok

"He strove with the angel and prevailed;"⁹⁸

it is clear that Zechariah is introducing a concept which is alien to his prophetic predecessors.

With regards to its derivations, it is improbable that Zechariah could have drawn on Persian religious ideas. The angels are portrayed as male figures⁹⁹ who move about the earth like humans;¹⁰⁰ and there is no suggestion that they are to be worshipped. Thus they differ totally from the 'fravashi'¹⁰¹ and all the lesser divinities of the Zoroastrian pantheon, which are the only Persian concepts that could have influenced Zechariah's understanding of angels. In contrast, when the patriarchal narratives of the Old Testament are considered, frequent references are found to either 'מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה' (the angel of the LORD), or 'מַלְאָךְ (יְהוָה) אֱלֹהִים' (the/an angel of God),¹⁰² who appears to humans and engages them in

⁹⁷ Except Isa.37:36 which occurs in the section from 2 Kings that has been incorporated into the Book of Isaiah. In Hag.1:13 the prophet is emphasizing his calling as a messenger of Yahweh. Mal.2:7 uses it to describe the priestly role which reflects a later development.

⁹⁸ Hos.12:5(MT). Cf. the account of this incident in Gen.32:22-31.

⁹⁹ Zech.1:8,11

¹⁰⁰ A.R.Johnson, The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press), 2nd Ed., 1961, p.32, with regard to Judg.13:2ff, the visitation of Manoah and his wife, argued that the descriptions of incidents make it hard to determine whether an 'angel' is a terrestrial or a celestial being; but in each instance the reaction of the human who is visited indicates a belief in the latter.

¹⁰¹ See above p.107.

¹⁰² Gen.16:7ff; 22:11,15; Ex.3:2; Num.22:22-35 and Gen.21:17; 31:11 respectively. These verses are all attributed to the J/E source(s) of the Pentateuch and are accepted as deriving from an early date.

conversation. The same figure also occurs in connection with Israel's Judges;¹⁰³ and a few other references relating to the first half of Israel's monarchic period indicate 'מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה' (the angel of the LORD) as Yahweh's agent in punishing Israel,¹⁰⁴ in battle on her behalf¹⁰⁵ and as the conveyor of Yahweh's word to the pre-classical prophet Elijah.¹⁰⁶ In this early literature the angel's appearance is mainly in the context of a dream or visionary experience of the human character, which is the same context presented in Zechariah 1:11,12 and 3:1-5. The passages always indicate that the angel acts or speaks on behalf of the deity, to an extent whereby in many instances it appears synonymous with Yahweh or God, which the text often makes explicit.¹⁰⁷ It appears that a similar close identification, almost synonymity, between the motif 'מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה' (the angel of the LORD) and Yahweh is found in Zechariah's use of it, at least in Chapter 3,

"Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, 'The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke

¹⁰³ Judg.2:1,4; 5:23; 6:11-24; and 13:3-21.

¹⁰⁴ 2 Sam.24:16ff. Cf. 1 Chron.21:15ff.

¹⁰⁵ 2 Kgs.19:35 = Isa.37:36. Cf. 2 Chron.32:21.

¹⁰⁶ 1 Kgs.19:7; 2 Kgs.1:3,15. The figure appears again in Pss.34:8 (MT) and 35:5,6. The former Psalm is attributed to the time of David but its acrostic form argues more probably for a post-exilic date. The date of the latter is very uncertain but it may also be post-exilic.

¹⁰⁷ For example Gen.16:7-13; Ex.3:2,4; Judg.6:11-23; 13:3-22. This is argued by P.D.Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, (Harvard Semitic Monographs, Cambridge, Mass.), 1973, pp.66f.

For a discussion of the motif 'מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה' in the early literature of the Old Testament see G.von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol.1, trans. D.G.M. Stalker, (Oliver & Boyd), 1962, pp.285-9.

you!'....".¹⁰⁸

Therefore we suggest that Zechariah is not introducing a new concept by means of this motif; but is re-introducing a theological understanding of God's interaction with humans which existed before the development of classical prophetism. By re-adopting these earlier ideas Zechariah is emphasizing that the theology underlying the temple rebuilding programme is closely akin to that of the formative years of the first temple; but he is also addressing the problem, which began to arise in the post-exilic era, of coping with an understanding of God as being transcendent and yet still able to communicate with his people.

A similar dependent relationship probably exists between the references to one or more angel(s) acting as representative(s) of Yahweh or God which are found in the patriarchal narratives¹⁰⁹ and the concept of the other angelic beings in Zechariah's visions. However, when the roles played by these angelic beings are considered it appears that one of the angels in Zechariah 1-8 is distinctive. In the early literature which has been discussed, angels frequently appear as the subject of a

¹⁰⁸ Zech.3:1f. The Syriac text reads 'מִלְאַךְ יְהוָה' and not 'יְהוָה' at the beginning of v.2.

Zech.1:11,12 presents several problems in interpretation; and it is far from certain how many characters are included in this vision or whether some are referred to in differing ways. In addition BHS suggests that the motif 'מִלְאַךְ יְהוָה' may be a gloss in both instances and that the main verb in 1:11 should be singular, not plural, although there is no manuscript evidence in support. Accepting the Hebrew text as it stands, whether 'מִלְאַךְ יְהוָה' is synonymous with Yahweh in 1:11 is open to debate; but it cannot be in 1:12 because the angel addresses Yahweh. If 1:12 is emended to read 'הַמְלַאֲךָ הַדֹּבֵר בִּי' (the angel who talked with me) as in 1:9,13,14, then Yahweh's reply in 1:13 follows naturally and it makes the identification with Yahweh of 'מִלְאַךְ יְהוָה' in 1:11 more probable.

¹⁰⁹ Of Yahweh: Gen.18-19:15; 24:7,40; Ex.14:19; 23:20,23; 32:34; 33:2; Num.20:16; and of God: Gen.28:12; 32:2(MT); and 48:16.

dream or vision in which they convey a divine message;¹¹⁰ or are just heard,¹¹¹ or seen.¹¹² In Zechariah 1-8, while all the angels appear in the prophet's visions, one of them 'הַמְלַאֲךָ הַלֵּוִי בְרִי' (the angel who talked with me) rather than being the focal point of what is seen, acts as an interpreter to the prophet.¹¹³ He draws the prophet's attention to specific features and explains their meaning; and in the context of the vision cycle these explanations also serve to convey Zechariah's message to the people. This method of conveying a message - vision with *angelus interpres* - is recognized as a distinct genre which was extensively used by later apocalyptic writers.¹¹⁴ Its appearance in Zechariah 1-8 raises two areas for discussion; firstly the derivation of the concept of an interpreting angel and secondly the need for one.

It is commonly suggested that the introduction by Zechariah of an interpreting angel who mediates Yahweh's message to him is an innovative feature of his prophetic style¹¹⁵ which is quite distinct from that of the classical prophets. Nevertheless the same scholars also recognize a similarity between Zechariah's interpreting angel and the superhuman

¹¹⁰ For example Gen.16:7ff; 18-19:5; Judg.6:11ff; 1 Kgs.19:5ff.

¹¹¹ For example Gen.22:11,15; Judg.2:1,4; 2 Kgs.1:3,15.

¹¹² For example Gen.28:12; 2 Sam.24:16ff.

¹¹³ Zech.1:9,13,14; 2:2,7(MT); 4:1,2,4,5,6a,10b,13,14; 5:5,6,8,10,11; 6:4,5,8. According to the text of Zechariah 1-8 the antecedent for the pronoun 'he' in 5:2 and 3 is the interpreting angel speaking at the end of Chapter 4 but the identity of the speaker in this sixth vision is not specified. Cf. Zech.2:3,4(MT) where according to the text Yahweh is identified as the author of the vision and as the one who explains its meaning. Similarly in Zech.2:6(MT) the text indicates that the man who is the subject of the vision provides the explanation for the prophet.

¹¹⁴ P.D.Hanson, The Dawn of Apocalyptic, p.250.

¹¹⁵ For example, Mitchell, ICC, p.103; Meyers & Meyers, AB, p.114.

figure who is associated with two of Ezekiel's visions;

"Then I beheld, and, lo, a form that had the appearance of a man; below what appeared to be his loins it was fire, and above his loins it was like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming bronze. . . . Then he said to me, 'Son of man, lift up your eyes now in the direction of the north.' So I lifted up my eyes toward the north, and behold, north of the altar gate, in the entrance was the image of jealousy."¹¹⁶

"behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like bronze, with a line of flax and a measuring reed in his hand; and he was standing in the gateway. And the man said to me, 'Son of man, look with your eyes, and hear with your ears and set your mind upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you; declare all that you see to the house of Israel.'¹¹⁷

and suggest that there may be a link between these ideas. A connection is possible because, although not specifically called an angel, this is what the description and function of the 'man' imply; but Ezekiel does not question the figure, whose words to him are instructions and not interpretation, which is quite different from the communication between Zechariah and his interpreting angel. At a linguistic level there is another connection between the former Ezekiel passage and Zechariah 1-8. The man's command in Ezekiel 8:5, 'שׂוּ אֵינֶיךָ' (lift up your eyes), is identical to that of the interpreting angel in Zechariah 5:5 and the response of Ezekiel, 'שׂוּ אֵינֶיךָ' (so I lifted my eyes), is the same as Zechariah's in 5:9. This could imply Zechariah's dependence on Ezekiel

¹¹⁶ Ezek.8:2,5 adopting the emendation 'אִישׁ' (man) for 'אֵשׁ' (fire) in 8:2 as suggested by LXX.

¹¹⁷ Ezek.40:3f. We believe that the vision comprising Ezek.40-48 has been appended to the Book of Ezekiel after its original compilation. Thus it is probable that this description of the 'man' depends on that in Ezek.8:2. We do, however, recognize the view of J.W.Wevers, Ezekiel, pp.206-209, (et al) that these chapters contain an original core vision of the prophet, Ezek.40:1-37,48-41:4 and 42:15-20, which argues for both these descriptions having a common origin.

for this visionary language, a suggestion supported by the fact that the exact words 'וָאֲנִי אֶשָׂא עֵינָי' (and I lifted my eyes) occur as the introduction to four more of Zechariah's visions¹¹⁸ but are found nowhere else in the classical prophetic corpus.¹¹⁹ However there are other instances of similar vocabulary being used in a visionary way both in the prophetic literature¹²⁰ and the earlier patriarchal and historical narratives¹²¹ and it is probable that all this visionary language derives primarily from the literal use of this vocabulary.¹²² Thus there is no evidence to justify a claim that Ezekiel's prophecies underlie the concept of Zechariah's interpreting angel. On the other hand the E strand of the patriarchal narratives again provides a passage which is worthy of comparison with Zechariah's thought. Genesis 31:10ff

"In the mating season of the flock I lifted up my eyes, and saw in a dream that the he-goats which leaped upon the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled. Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that leap upon the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go forth from this land, and return to the land of your birth.'"

records a dream of Jacob in which the angel of God appears, speaks to

¹¹⁸ Zech.2:1,5(MT); 5:1; and 6:1. We note, however, that Zechariah invariably continues with the verb 'רָאָה' (see) which is not the case in Ezekiel.

¹¹⁹ The same words also occur in Dan.8:3 and 10:5 but these verses must be dated after Zechariah 1-8.

¹²⁰ Isa.49:18a (= 60:4a); 51:6; and Jer.13:20.

¹²¹ Gen.18:2; 31:10,12; Josh.5:13. It is also in the post-exilic 1 Chron.21:16 but not the earlier account of this incident, 2 Sam.24:16ff.

¹²² Gen.13:10,14; 22:4,13; 24:63,64; 33:5; 43:29; Num.24:2; Deut.3:27; 4:19; Judg.19:17; 2 Sam.18:24; Ps.121:1; Isa.40:26 and Jer.3:2. Its metaphoric use, as in Ezek.23:27, also derives from the literal meaning.

the dreamer and explains to him the meaning of what he sees, which is a scenario similar to that presented in Zechariah's visions. The passage also contains the visionary language 'אָרָא וְרָא' (I lifted up my eyes, and saw) and 'רָאֵה וְרָא' (lift up your eyes, and see) in the identical form to that adopted in Zechariah 1-8. We concede that there is not the same sense of real dialogue between Jacob and the angel as that engaged in by Zechariah and that the interpretation is given to Jacob by the angel without a prompting question;¹²³ but the similarities between the two forms cannot be denied. It may be that Zechariah knew this passage and although there is no evidence that his concept of an interpreting angel depends directly upon it, it may have influenced his thought as he formulated his ideas. It has already been argued¹²⁴ that Zechariah derived the notion of angels conversing with humans in dreams or visions from the patriarchal narratives, especially the E strand; and he may have drawn on ones that relate to Joseph as an interpreter of dreams¹²⁵ as he developed the idea of his heavenly interpreter. Joseph, asked by the butler and baker to interpret their dreams, says,

"Do not interpretations belong to God?"¹²⁶

and similarly in respect of his conversation with Pharaoh,

"It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favourable answer."¹²⁷

¹²³ We note that in Zech.5:1-4 the interpretation is given without a prompting question.

¹²⁴ See above pp.109ff.

¹²⁵ Gen.40 and 41. The relevant parts of these chapters are also attributable to E. G.von Rad, Genesis, (OTL), Rev.Ed. 1972, pp.26f,371, gives an account of the significance of dreams and their interpretation in the theology of the Elohist.

¹²⁶ Gen.40:8.

¹²⁷ Gen.41:16.

thereby stressing the divine origin of all interpretation. If Zechariah was influenced by this theological understanding in the same way that he adopted other old theological ideas, then it was natural for him to look to a divine figure to provide the interpretations for his own visions. As he had already re-introduced angels as divine representatives to cope with the theory of a more remote, transcendent, God then the concept of an interpreting angel would be an appropriate solution. Thus we agree that Zechariah was being innovative in this respect but we suggest that his ideas were inspired as a consequence of his re-applying old theology in the post-exilic context.

Now that the derivation of this concept has been discussed we turn to consider the necessity for an interpreter and the significance of this for Zechariah's relationship to the classical prophetic traditions. While there is express or implied reference to the angelic interpreter in all but the fourth of Zechariah's visions, the function he performs is not identical in each instance which suggests that there may be more than one reason for his presence. Although explanation is sought by the prophet nearly every time, his lack of understanding about what he sees arises for different reasons. An interpreter is needed to help him understand his second and fifth visions¹²⁸ because the objects they contain, horns being approached by smiths and a lampstand flanked by two olive trees, while not strange in themselves,¹²⁹ appear in surprising

¹²⁸ Zech.2:1-4(MT). and 4:2-6a,10b-14.

¹²⁹ There is general agreement as to what the horns symbolize but no consensus as to the identification of the horns in the vision and it does not seem possible to determine the issue. The various suggestions include a four horned helmet as depicted in the Megiddo ivories, G.Loud, The Megiddo Ivories, (Chicago), 1939, p.10; animal horns, J.G.Baldwin, Haggai, p.104; R.M.Good, 'Zechariah's Second Night Vision (Zech 2,1-4)', Biblica Vol.63, 1982, pp.56-59; C.Jeremias, Die Nachtgesichte, p.131 and

combinations which make it hard for him to draw an appropriate analogy. Zechariah knows what he is seeing; but not what it means. He is thus in a similar position to the classical prophets Amos and Jeremiah¹³⁰ but while they receive divine oracles which provide the explanation,¹³¹ he confers with the interpreting angel who explains the symbolism to him so that the message becomes clear. Since Zechariah received some messages by means of divine oracles, an explanation must be sought as to why in these two visions the interpreting angel functions as an alternative to this. As already indicated this may be linked to a developing belief in the transcendence of God but there may be another reason that influenced Zechariah and caused him to express his messages from Yahweh in this distinctive way. We suggest that it is the means by which Zechariah transmitted his messages, rather than the way he received them, that has determined this difference. That all Zechariah's visions display a literary style has been noted by Mason¹³² who associates this trait with the probability that Zechariah 1-8 was committed to writing at an early stage of its development. However it is possible that a literary format was the original means of communicating the visions to the people.¹³³

the horns of the altar, B.Halpern, 'The Ritual Background', pp.177-8. All these options would have been recognizable by the prophet but his bland description does not convey his insight to his audience.

¹³⁰ The visions of the plumb line and the basket of summer fruit, Amos 7:7-9; 8:1-3; and of an almond rod, a boiling pot and two baskets of figs, Jer.1:11-16; 24:1-10. To this extent our view accords with Horst's claim, 'Die Visionsschilderungen', pp.201f, that all these visions fall within the general group 'den Wortsymbolvisionen'.

¹³¹ By analogy in Amos 7:7-9; Jer.1:13-16 and 24:1-10; and by word assonance in Amos 8:1-3 and Jer.1:11-12.

¹³² R.A.Mason, 'The prophets of the restoration', p.145 and CBC, pp.6,10 and 29.

¹³³ See above p.34. This does not imply general access to written documents at this stage but the people may have listened while a learned person read the prophet's words aloud. J.Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient

If so, Zechariah might have introduced the concept of an interpreting angel into his vision reports as a means both of portraying the divine component and of adding to the vividness of the overall picture. On the other hand, when he was communicating orally with his people, either to expand on the message contained in a vision report¹³⁴ or to address them about different matters as in Zechariah 7-8, he had no reason to deviate from the prophetic norm of conveying his message through the medium of divine oracles.

Zechariah's lack of understanding in both the visions recorded in chapter 5 arises from the fact that he sees surreal objects; firstly a huge, disproportionate flying scroll, then an ephah with a leaden lid containing a female figure, which is lifted up and carried away through the air by two winged women.¹³⁵ Despite both scrolls and ephahs being ordinary objects which Zechariah might have often seen, the composite visions are unlikely to have been prompted by him looking at the objects

Israel, (Basil Blackwell, Oxford) 1962, pp.141-148, also speaks of literary visions. However he uses the term as a contrast to ecstatic visions and means an inspiration received by the prophet in the form of a visual creation of the imagination. He argues that literary visions lack a sense of completeness and suggests that Zechariah's first three and eighth visions are all in this category, whilst the remaining four display ecstatic characteristics. It does not seem accurate to call any of Zechariah's visions 'ecstatic', nor do we find Lindblom's arguments about the differences between them all convincing.

¹³⁴ We agree with Petersen, OTL, p.120, that the oracles in Zech. 1:7-6:15 "are not inserted willy-nilly among the visions but comprise reactions to issues raised by the visions."

¹³⁵ There is a close similarity between the description of these women and that of a Zoroastrian 'fravashi' (see p.107) but this may be no more than a superficial likeness. There is no evidence to suggest that Zechariah understood the Persian concept of such beings, nor that he intended to imply it through this vision. It is more likely that he was influenced by Persian religious imagery as he sought for a means to describe supernatural beings.

in their natural setting¹³⁶ and the meaning of what he saw in these two instances could not have been self evident.¹³⁷ It can be argued that the strange images which he describes are somewhat akin to the imagery in the complex visions of God in Ezekiel 1 and 8-10; but whereas Ezekiel was recounting a theophanic experience which forced him to use language in a richly metaphoric way, Zechariah's visions were not of God, they were the means by which God communicated messages to the prophet and his people. Thus it is surprising that Zechariah was shown bizarre visions that required an interpreter before he was able to make sense of them. However we believe that the speeches of the interpreting angel indicate why the message had to be conveyed with his aid; because he does more than simply interpret what the prophet sees. In both visions the angel

¹³⁶ When in use by readers or scribes a scroll would only be partially unrolled to allow access to an area perhaps little more than one foot square. When not in use scrolls were stored in jars or boxes. The ephah was a measuring container of about one bushel capacity used particularly in grain trading, (e.g. Ruth 2:17; Amos 8:5), or for the storage of other dry goods.

It is impossible to determine whether a prophetic vision arose as a consequence of the prophet looking at ordinary objects and being divinely inspired to recognize a deeper significance in them or whether it was always a totally supernatural experience. Although we can argue against the likelihood of a vision being prompted by a normal sight, for example it is hard to conceive that Ezek.37:1ff was based on an actual valley filled with bones seen by the prophet, we can never prove that a vision of commonplace items, for example a basket of summer fruit, Amos 8:1-3, or baskets of figs placed in the temple, Jer.24:1ff, was grounded in reality. Some visions probably did derive from actual experience but even where this seems to be the most natural explanation, the truth may be that the prophet gained his insight by other means and then chose to express it through everyday images so that people readily understood his message. Amos apparently saw visions of the supernatural, a fire drying up the cosmic sea, Amos 7:4, and of the familiar, a plumb line against a wall, Amos 7:7, indicating that prophetic traditions accepted both kinds as valid ways of expressing divine communication. Thus the possibility, or not, of Zechariah's visions being initiated by familiar sights will not be a contributory factor in determining whether he is continuing, or diverging from, the traditions of classical prophecy.

¹³⁷ The interpretation of individual visions is not relevant to the issue we are considering. Specific visions are discussed in subsequent chapters in which their content and the theme being studied are related.

identifies one feature with an abstract concept - the scroll with a curse, and the woman in the ephah with wickedness¹³⁸ - and thereby introduces a new element into the explanation which the prophet could not have perceived. Such concepts do not lend themselves to pictorial analogy, in the way that Amos saw visions of locusts devouring crops and fire burning up the ground¹³⁹ and recognized them as analogies for the destruction that was to come on the nation; and thus a distinctive style had to be developed. Therefore we conclude that Zechariah's desire to communicate abstract concepts through the medium of visions was another reason for the introduction of the interpreting angel into his visions.

The content of Zechariah's three remaining visions in which the interpreting angel is present create no problems of recognition for the prophet because they all feature sights that would have been familiar to him; indeed actual situations may have inspired them.¹⁴⁰ In the first and eighth visions Zechariah sees several horses, some with riders and in the latter vision they are drawing chariots.¹⁴¹ In Persian society horses were the normal means of transport and therefore Zechariah may have become used to seeing messengers or officials on horseback, alone

¹³⁸ Zech.5:3 and 8.

¹³⁹ Amos 7:1-3 and 4-6.

¹⁴⁰ Zech.1:8ff; 2:5ff(MT); and 6:1ff.

¹⁴¹ Zech.1:8-12 and 6:1-8. The text of 1:8-12 only mentions one rider although the use of plural forms in 1:11, 'וַיֵּצְאוּ' (they answered), 'וַיֹּאמְרוּ' (they said) [we note the suggested emendation to singular form of both these verbs included in the apparatus of BHS] and 'וַהֲרִיחוּ' (we have been patrolling) probably indicates that all the horses had riders. Except when chariots occur in a mythological context, which is not our immediate concern, they were usually associated with the nobility and military use. However, Israel was apparently an important centre for chariot trade, J.Bright, A History of Israel, 3rd Ed., (SCM), 1981, p.216f and thus people may have been used to seeing these vehicles.

or in groups, as well as seeing the animals at rest.¹⁴² Similarly he would have been familiar with the governmental system of the Persian Empire whereby officials were sent out to patrol a district and to supervise the administration in the area. It seems probable that this political structure influenced the description of both visions in their references to people being sent out on patrol and returning from such a patrol to report on what they have seen.¹⁴³ The problem for Zechariah as the observer of both visions is to understand what function these particular characters have. The interpreting angel's role is firstly to reveal to Zechariah their identity as agents of Yahweh; and secondly to explain to him the task in which they are engaged.¹⁴⁴ The last vision indicates that the interpreting angel is not only a representative of Yahweh who conveys the divine message to the prophet but that he also has authority to command other agents in the vision to commence their

¹⁴² The Persian use of horses is well attested both pictorially and in early literature; for example by Herodotus, History, Book VII, 98. We do not believe that the colours of the horses, as recorded in both visions, are of symbolic significance. We follow Petersen's view that:

"The colors that Zechariah reports here comprise three of the five - and in Zech. 6, four of the five - basic body colors of horses. Further, these body colors are all attested in antiquity. These three colors yield a distinct flavor of verisimilitude to the vision. Zechariah is reporting typical horses with typical horse colors." (OTL, p.141.)

Others have sought to reconcile the number and colours of the horses in the two visions and to discover deeper significance in these details. A summary of suggestions is found in Baldwin, 'Additional Note on Zechariah's Horses', Haggai, p.138-40.

Horses had been used in pre-exilic Israel; but generally by the wealthy and royalty, or in military contexts e.g. Gen.47:17; 2 Sam.1:6; 15:1; 1 Kgs.5:6; 20:1,20f,25; Isa.2:7; Amos 4:10. Under Persian rule the animals probably became more common in all parts of the empire.

¹⁴³ Concerning the sending out, Zech.1:10 and 6:7; and the return. 1:11.

¹⁴⁴ Zech.1:9f and 6:5f. In the first vision the actual revelation comes through the words of one of the characters but the text implies that it is the action of the interpreting angel which instigates this.

divine commission.¹⁴⁵ This highlights the fact that the interpreting angel is a participant in this visionary tableau rather than being an impartial observer standing alongside Zechariah.

Before we consider connections with other Old Testament traditions that this suggests, let us discuss the remaining vision in this group of three with which we began. Zechariah must have seen several men with measuring lines in the vicinity of the temple building; and one such individual probably underlies his third vision,

"And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a man with a measuring line (מִזְרָן וְסֵבֶל) in his hand! Then I said, 'Where are you going?' And he said to me, 'To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its breadth and its length.' And behold, the angel who talked with me came forward, and another angel came forward to meet him, and said to him, 'Run, say to that young man, "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of men and cattle in it. For I will be to her a wall of fire round about, says the LORD, and I will be the glory within her."'"¹⁴⁶

rather than there being any connection with the heavenly figure in Ezekiel's temple visions described as

"a man, whose appearance was like bronze, with a line of flax and a measuring reed (קֶמֶר וְסֵבֶל) in his hand".¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Zech.6:7.

¹⁴⁶ Zech.2:5-9(MT). Zech.1:16 also refers to a measuring line but uses different vocabulary 'מִזְרָן'. The implication of the line being "stretched out over Jerusalem" in 1:16 is that the reconstruction of the city is Yahweh's will and it is going to take place; but as in Ezek.47:3 and Jer.31:38-9 this vocabulary envisages Yahweh's active involvement in this renewal and has eschatological overtones. This is dissimilar from the picture in Zechariah's vision of a line used literally to measure the size of the city and there does not appear to be a direct connection between the two passages.

¹⁴⁷ Ezek.40:3. See above, p.113 and n.117, in respect of this passage and the derivation of Zechariah's interpreting angel. The man in Zech.2:5,8(MT) is clearly not identical with the interpreting angel

Zechariah's question indicates that it is the purpose of this man which intrigues him, not his identity. A significant aspect of this vision is that the query is directed towards the man rather than the interpreting angel; and the text indicates that he received his explanation directly from this person and not through an intermediary. This implies that Zechariah was more than an unseen onlooker; he must have been an actual participant in this scene for there to have been two-way communication. The response he receives from the man is purely factual, however, and does not convey the divine message. The real significance of the vision is expressed through the speech of the interpreting angel,¹⁴⁸ which is addressed to another unidentified angel, who is instructed to repeat

which strengthens our earlier argument. Despite these comments on the absence of interdependence with regard to detail between Ezek.40:3 and Zech.2:5(MT) we recognize that the content of Zechariah's vision is related to sections of Ezekiel's temple visions. Ezek.45:1-8 and 48:15-end include exact measurements for the apportioning and use of the land within the boundary wall around Jerusalem. The man seen by Zechariah is acting in accordance with this plan but the actual message of the vision Zech.2:8f(MT), presents a contradictory picture and a very different theological perspective. We believe that Zech.2:5-9(MT) is intended to offer an alternative theology to that of the Ezekiel passages and is a response to them. A more detailed consideration of the variations in the theology of Zechariah from that of Ezekiel 40-48 can be found in D.L.Petersen, 'Zechariah's Visions: A Theological Perspective', VT 34, 1984, pp.195-206.

¹⁴⁸ We agree with Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.152, that this is the correct interpretation of an ambiguous text. It is possible to argue that the unidentified angel is the speaker while the interpreting angel runs to convey the message, the view adopted by Baldwin, Haggai, p.106. This latter view presents the interpreting angel in a subordinate messenger role and yet the other angelic figure is not accorded a title indicating that he has authority, nor does he summon the interpreting angel into his presence but rather makes the approach himself. Thus we reject this interpretation as improbable.

The translation offered by Petersen, "Then, as the angel who had spoken with me was going away, another angel was coming to meet him. The latter said to the former, 'Run, speak to that young man: Jerusalem'" (OTL, p.167) indicates adoption of the same view as Baldwin. However in his comments he states, "The angelic intermediary with whom Zechariah had spoken earlier commands another of the semidivine beings to run and speak a divine oracle to the young man." (p.169) which represents the alternative interpretation. We suggest that some revision is required - he cannot have it both ways!

these words of Yahweh to the man with the measuring line rather than to the prophet. As in the eighth vision it is clear that the interpreting angel participates in the scene and that he has the authority to issue commands to other characters. The one person with whom he fails to communicate in this vision is Zechariah; but because the prophet also stands within the visionary scene he is able to appreciate its meaning by overhearing the divine oracle contained in the angel's command, with no need for an intermediary.

Thus the primary role of the interpreting angel in these visions is to ensure that the divine message is received by Zechariah; and to this extent it does not differ from his role elsewhere in Zechariah 1-8. The distinction lies in his participatory role within the visions. We have demonstrated this in respect of the third and eighth visions and we suggest that it may also be the correct interpretation of the first one, since there is implied communication between the interpreting angel and others of the participants. If this line of argument is continued and the presence of Zechariah in the eighth vision recognized together with the direct communication between himself and the angel in the other two, then a strong probability can be inferred that the prophet is observing all three visions from within and not standing as an external onlooker. The fact that they are all dramatic visions¹⁴⁹ in which the participants appear as 'normal' animate beings with whom Zechariah is able to relate, lends credibility to this suggestion. Zechariah's fourth vision¹⁵⁰ also

¹⁴⁹ We disagree with Horst's classification as 'Wortsymbolvisionen' of Zechariah's 3rd vision together with the 2nd, 5th, 6th and 7th, 'Die Visionsschilderungen', pp.193ff; and Lindblom's suggestion that it lies somewhere between a 'pictorial' (static) and a 'dramatic' (active) vision, Prophecy, p.124.

¹⁵⁰ Zech.3:1ff.

displays the same general characteristics excepting the absence of the interpreting angel. This vision features several figures among whom are the angel of the LORD, the Satan, and an identifiable human, Joshua the high priest. Joshua's presence marks a significant distinction between this and the other visions, although it demonstrates the possibility of human participation in such a setting; and we believe that Zechariah's own contribution to the drama

"And I said, 'Let them put a clean turban on his head.' So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments; and the angel of the LORD was standing by."¹⁵¹

provides clear evidence that once more he participates in the vision.

If this interpretation is accurate it raises questions about the setting of these visions and the identity of the participants. The third vision contains no information about its location, neither does the fourth, although it conveys the atmosphere of a judicial gathering. The mountains of bronze in the final vision necessitate a supernatural setting; whilst the first vision describes a natural, scenic, location without implying anywhere specific. The participants in these visions, apart from Joshua and Zechariah, are identified as angelic beings or divine agents although they are all portrayed in human form. These factors imply that Zechariah has been transported out of the natural world into a heavenly situation inhabited by divine beings. Throughout the classical prophetic corpus there exists an underlying presupposition

¹⁵¹ Zech.3:5. LXX omits 'וַיֹּאמֶר' (and I said) reading 'καὶ ἐπιθέτε' (and put) instead; also Vg. and Pes. read the third person 'he said'. We agree with Baldwin, *Haggai*, p.114 note 2, that these readings appear to be "an accommodation to the expected sense" and are unlikely to represent the original text. This and related issues are discussed by N.L.A. Tidwell, 'Wa'omar (Zech 3:5) and the Genre of Zechariah's Fourth Vision', *JBL* 94, 1975, pp.343-355.

that a prophet has authenticity on account of his direct access to the divine presence;¹⁵² but belief in the existence of a divine council of Yahweh into which true prophets can be admitted is made explicit in Jeremiah's denouncement of false prophets

"For who among them has stood in the council of the LORD to perceive and to hear his word, or who has given ear to his word and listened? ... But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people."¹⁵³

This indicates that the reason for the prophetic access to the council was in order to receive the divine message;¹⁵⁴ and thus the concept of this council accords with the situation envisaged and entered into by Zechariah since he appears among the participants and receives a divine

¹⁵² These issues have been discussed in the previous chapter. The visions of God experienced by Isaiah and Ezekiel which record their call and commission, (Isa.6:1ff; Ezek.1-3:15), illustrate the belief.

¹⁵³ Jer.23:18,22.

¹⁵⁴ Gerald Cooke, 'The Sons of (the) God(s)', ZAW 76, 1964, pp.22-47 rightly stresses the distinction between admittance to the divine council and membership of it and the fact that prophets were granted only the former opportunity. Edwin C.Kingsbury, 'The Prophets and the Council of Yahweh', JBL 83, 1964, pp.279-286, argues that it was only to receive a special kind of message. He suggests that a prophet stood in the council of Yahweh as part of his cultic role, probably during the New Year ritual, while the fates were being fixed for the coming year by Yahweh and his council; and that the prophet then announced the fates to the waiting congregation through an oracle. He suggests that a prophet needed one such experience to set him apart as a true prophet but that the experience may have been repeated. Kingsbury argues on the basis of five elements which he identifies as being common to these prophetic experiences but in our opinion he is guilty of reading too much into the texts in several instances and of claiming associations with the New Year on very scant evidence. Thus we reject his conclusions about the timing or the purpose of the divine council and the prophets' connection with it. We also disagree with his claim that "prophetic experiences which include a confrontation of the prophet with Yahweh and his council ... are lacking in the experiences of the post-exilic prophets." (p.279) and with his denial of Zech.3:1-5 as an example of this experience on the grounds that "The presence of the intermediary precludes the direct experience of the prophet in the council of Yahweh" (p.279 Note 1). This latter statement is logically invalid; and in any case Zechariah's interpreting angel, the intermediary, is also absent from this vision.

message which he then communicates to others.¹⁵³ Jeremiah's words, though, contain no details about the constituent members of the council and it is noted that the other classical prophets who refer explicitly to the attendants of Yahweh in a similar conceptual context, Isaiah and Ezekiel, picture them displaying non-human characteristics.¹⁵⁴ Thus it is unlikely that Zechariah depends directly on classical prophecy for his portrayal of the divine council. However the vision of the pre-classical prophet Micaiah,

"I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all
the host of heaven standing beside him on his

¹⁵³ Gerald Cooke, 'The Sons of (the) God(s)', comments on the use of the verb 'ָמַדְּ' (to stand) within passages which refer to the divine council and suggests that it may have been a "stereotyped or technical term" to indicate those who were present in the heavenly court (p.40). This association between the verb 'to stand' and the council of Yahweh had been previously noted by F.M.Cross in 'The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah', JNES 12, 1953, pp.274-277; but he argued for a more precise usage, suggesting that it is a technical term used in relation to those appearing before Yahweh, rather than with him, as he is seated on the throne in the assembly. The verb 'ָמַדְּ' is not used of Zechariah but it does occur in Zech.1:8,10,11 and 3:1(twice),3,7 in relation to various divine beings including the Satan and to Joshua who are all participants in these visionary scenes. We believe this lends support to our theory that the prophet Zechariah is being depicted in a divine council setting.

¹⁵⁴ Isa.6 describes the attendants of Yahweh as winged seraphim and Ezek.iff as highly complex living creatures. Zechariah adopts neither of these concepts in his portrayal of angelic beings.

It is generally believed that dialogue in the heavenly council is the context of Isa.40:1-8; see Frank M.Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic, (Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Massachusetts), 1973, pp.187-8 and 'The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah', pp.274-277; R.N.Whybray, Isaiah 40-66, (NCB), 1975, pp.48-51. However the passage contains no information about the heavenly beings who are speaking and therefore it could not have influenced Zechariah's portrayal. Similarly it is suggested that Isa.40:13-14 relates to the divine council but it refers to the function of the members and not to their nature. R.N.Whybray, The Heavenly Counsellor in Isaiah xl 13-14, (CUP), 1971, pp.46f argues that in Israel divine council members never come to life as real personalities; they have no names, history nor permanent and distinctive functions. He claims the exception is the Satan in Job 1-2. We believe that the Satan in Zech.3 is another clear exception and that the individuation of some council members which occurs in Zechariah 1-8 may mark a transitional stage in the development of the doctrine of named angelic members which appears in Daniel and later apocalyptic literature.

right hand and on his left; and the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, 'I will entice him.'¹⁵⁷

provides a fuller description of the divine council which may represent the concept envisaged by the classical prophets; and this could in turn have been influential upon Zechariah. One significant difference is that whereas the figure of Yahweh is the central focus of this vision, none of Zechariah's visions mentions his presence at all;¹⁵⁸ nor do the settings bear any resemblance to a heavenly throne room. However this does not argue against the possibility of influence in respect of the depiction by Zechariah of the council members, whom Micaiah identifies as *כָּל־צְבָאֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם* (all the host of heaven) and *רוּחַ הַיְיָ* (the spirit).¹⁵⁹ Despite the fact that every other instance of *כָּל־צְבָאֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם* in the Old Testament is a reference in negative terms to heavenly bodies which had

¹⁵⁷ 1 Kgs.22:19b-21.

¹⁵⁸ Although Zech.3:1f suggests that the 'angel of the LORD' and Yahweh are virtually synonymous titles, this is to convey the authority of the angel as the ultimate divine representative. We do not believe that Zechariah is claiming to have been in the presence of Yahweh. See also pp.110f and n.108 above.

¹⁵⁹ The significance of the definite article in this context is uncertain and translators generally adopt an indefinite interpretation. See standard grammars on this matter, for example GK, §126, pp.404-10. John Gray *I & II Kings*, (OTL), 1964, p.403, suggests that 'the' spirit may be an instance of the generic definite article meaning 'a spirit'. However James Barr in 'The Determination of the Definite Article in Biblical Hebrew', a paper presented at Oxford on 23rd. January 1989, suggests it may be erroneous to presume that the Hebrew 'ה' was always used to indicate determination and it may have a wider significance.

It has been conjectured that *יְהוָה* (the adversary) should be read instead of *רוּחַ הַיְיָ* (spirit) which would reinforce the suggestion of a link between this passage and Zechariah 3:1ff. However as Gray, *Kings*, p.403 states, this is unjustified and misses the point of the passage wherein 'the spirit' represents "the supernatural, divinely inspired power of prophecy". We conclude that attempts to make this connection are wrong.

been deified as in the Assyrian astral cults,¹⁶⁰ in this vision it is clear that the phrase has a different meaning for they are perceived positively as attendants of Yahweh who converse with him, each offering varying counsel in response to his question. Gray argues that in this passage the phrase *כְּבָרֵי-צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם* refers to

"heavenly beings as an organized force or army under Yahweh"¹⁶¹

which he likens to the beings in Psalm 103:21 who are commanded,

"Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, that do his will."

and this interpretation supports a suggestion that Zechariah is drawing on Micaiah's vision for his own presentation of a divine council made up of angelic beings. However we recognize a weakness in Gray's argument in that he seems to ignore the comparatively late date of this Psalm.¹⁶² Consequently he does not consider the probability that it represents a

¹⁶⁰ Deut.4:19; 17:3; 2 Kgs.17:16; 21:3,5(= 2 Chron.33:3,5); 23:4,5; and Jer.8:2; 19:13. These all either warn Israel against worshipping these 'gods', or condemn her for such idolatry and apostasy. There is another instance of this phrase, Isa.34:4 where it may mean no more than the stars as bodies which are created by Yahweh and under his control; the same interpretation as that implied by references to 'the heavens and all their host', e.g. Gen.2:1; Ps.33:6; Isa.45:12 of Jer.33:22.

J.W.McKay, Religion in Judah under the Assyrians, (SCM, London), 1973, passim but especially Chapter VI pp.45-59 & 108-119, argues that a star cult did exist in Judah but, that while it was doubtless influenced in part by contact with Assyrian beliefs, its roots lay in popular local superstition and were fed by a wider range of similar religious beliefs.

¹⁶¹ J.Gray, Kings, p.402. He does not comment on the significance of this passage as a stage in the development of Israel's understanding of this term; but suggests that the conception of the heavenly court scene was probably originally borrowed from Canaanite mythology, for example the accounts of El in the Ras Shamra texts. In 'Hosts, Host of Heaven', The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol II, (Abingdon Press), 1962, pp.654-6, B.W.Anderson argues that on analogy with the divine assemblies known in Canaan and Babylon, Israel conceived Yahweh as presiding over a heavenly council composed of a mighty army of angels as his servants.

¹⁶² It is generally thought to be late post-exilic due to its many allusions to Deutero-Isaiah, (for details see for example, A.A.Anderson, Psalms (73-150), (NCB), 1972, p.712).

later stage in the development of Israel's understanding of the 'hosts' of Yahweh than that prevailing at the time when Micaiah's prophecy was being recorded.¹⁶³ Since it is invalid to use a late text as the basis for inferring the meaning of an earlier one, Gray's interpretation is left without any independent textual support although it does not argue against it being correct. Another argument against any dependence by Zechariah on Micaiah's vision arises from a recognition that Psalm 103 originates in the post-exilic period. The above quotation relates to Yahweh's 'hosts'; but the preceding verse includes a specific reference to his angels (מַלְאָכָיו);

"Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word."¹⁶⁴

This appears to indicate that a distinction was made between these two categories at some point after the exile and it raises the possibility that Zechariah would have understood a similar differentiation between the phrase 'מַלְאָכָיו' and angels. Thus, although we accept that the prophetic traditions determined Zechariah's concept of a divine council, we believe that his depiction of it displays no evidence of classical or pre-classical prophetic dependence.

Consequently, we must turn to consider other possible influences on his presentation. Allusions to the existence of a divine council are found in three places in Genesis where God speaks for himself and others

¹⁶³ Whether the text of this prophecy represents an original form dating from around the time of Ahab's death at Ramoth-gilead (ca.853BC), or whether it is largely the work of the Deuteronomists before or during the exile is a matter of uncertainty. (See Gray, Kings, pp.368-372, 394f for a discussion of this issue.) It is unlikely that the Deuteronomists initiated the reference to 'all the hosts of heaven' and more probable that the text has earlier pre-exilic origins.

¹⁶⁴ Ps.103:20.

in terms of "let us" or "like us".¹⁶⁵ These references imply belief in a plurality of divine beings acting in harmony with God but it is unsafe to conjecture whether they were thought of as gods, angelic beings, or other heavenly creatures,¹⁶⁶ or how the actual council was perceived. Two passages in Deuteronomy¹⁶⁷ express similar beliefs,

"The LORD .. came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand."

"When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage."

although they represent different understandings of the council members, one suggesting it consisted of myriads of undefined celestial beings and

¹⁶⁵ Gen.1:26; 3:22; 11:7. The latter two references are attributed to J whilst the other is in the Priestly account of creation.

The 'sons of God' in Gen.6:1-4 also belong to the heavenly realm; but they are portrayed acting independently of God's will rather than as members of a council with whom he consults.

¹⁶⁶ The concept of a divine pantheon conflicts theologically with the henotheism and later monotheism of Israel's Yahwistic faith. It is widely accepted, nevertheless, that the polytheistic faiths of Israel's neighbours, especially Canaanite and Mesopotamian mythologies, were influential on her earliest religious beliefs whereby traces of an acceptance of the concept of a pantheon can be found in early Hebrew literature. See for example, Frank M. Cross, Canaanite Myth; H. Wheeler Robinson, 'The Council of Yahweh', JTS 45, 1944, pp.151-157; E.T. Mullen, The Assembly of the Gods - The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature, (Harvard Semitic Monographs, Scholars Press, Chico, California), 1980. However, Max E. Polley, 'Hebrew Prophecy Within the Council of Yahweh, Examined in its Ancient Near East Setting', in Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method, ed. C.D. Evans, W.H. Hallo and J.B. White, (Pittsburgh, Pickwick Press), 1980, pp.141-156, suggests that early Israel did believe in a pantheon, writing,

"Apparently the spiritual beings in the council began as gods within the pantheon and were gradually reduced in status to angelic beings assembled to praise Yahweh and convey his messages to mankind." (p.154 Note 26)

¹⁶⁷ Deut.33:2; and Deut.32:8f reading 'בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים' or 'בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים' (sons of God) instead of 'בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל' (sons of Israel) with LXX, a fragment from Qumran and other versions.

the other implying divine figures equal to the number of earthly nations who were the gods of those nations. Zechariah's first and last visions include references to participants patrolling the earth but they do not suggest that individuals had special areas of responsibility, nor that they went to particular nations;¹⁶⁸ and so it is improbable that this latter passage influenced Zechariah's depiction of the council. In the Psalms there are several references to the divine council

"Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings (lit. sons of gods 'אֱלֹהִים בְּנֵי'), ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; worship the LORD in holy array."¹⁶⁹

"Do you indeed decree what is right, you gods? Do you judge the sons of men uprightly?"¹⁷⁰

"God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement: 'How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? ...' I say, 'You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like men, and fall like any prince.'¹⁷¹

"Let the heavens praise thy wonders, O LORD, thy faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones! For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings (lit. sons of gods 'אֱלֹהִים בְּנֵי') is like the LORD, a God feared in the council of the holy ones, great and terrible above all that are around him?"¹⁷²

which portray the council members as divine beings who are subservient

¹⁶⁸ References to compass points in Zech.6:5,8 show the universal nature of the patrol. The identification of which chariot went in a particular direction is a descriptive statement of fact rather than an indication of special responsibility.

Within the Old Testament the concept of patron angels of nations is not expressed until the time of the Book of Daniel, e.g. Dan.12:1.

¹⁶⁹ Ps.29:1f.

¹⁷⁰ Ps.58:2(MT). Reading 'אֱלֹהִים' for 'אֱלֹהִים'.

¹⁷¹ Ps.82:1-2,6-7.

¹⁷² Ps.89:6-8(MT).

to Yahweh, the leader and supreme authority in the council.¹⁷³ Apart from its duty to join in the worship of Yahweh, nothing more concerning the function of the council is revealed in the first and last passages. The second and third excerpts both depict Yahweh in a judicial setting with his council around him; indeed the whole of Psalm 82 is a portrayal of the divine council in session. Yahweh accuses the divine beings who are the council members of making wrong judgements; and these charges against them emphasize the judicial role with which they as the council had been entrusted. Zechariah's fourth vision in which Joshua stands accused by the Satan awaiting judgement similarly depicts the council in a judicial role; and we also believe that the idea of supervision and judgement lies at the root of the descriptions, in Zechariah's first and eighth visions, of the patrols which roam the earth and report back to Yahweh in the divine council. Thus the possibility is raised of there being some connection between Zechariah's presentation of the council and that found in the Psalms; but the question of any interdependence is complicated by the uncertainties about the origins of these Psalms.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ The subordinate nature of the members of the divine council in relation to Yahweh is highlighted by G. Ernest Wright, The Old Testament Against its Environment, SCM Press, 1950. He accepts that the concept of the council may be a survival from polytheism but quite rightly notes that its members "possess no independent authority or even existence or worship. Their being and authority are derived, not primary. The believer is led by them to the worship of their source, Yahweh; they are thoroughly devaluated while he is exalted." (p.38)

¹⁷⁴ Scholarly debate over the dates and interpretation of these psalms is diverse because polytheistic ideas seem to underlie the references to the divine beings, which conflict with the traditional understanding of Yahwism. Many believe that Ps.29 is an old Canaanite hymn to Baal which has been adapted for Israelite worship and that it may have originated as early as 10th century BC; others date it to the post-exilic period due to suggested links with the prophetic literature. Ps.58 has been dated to the early period of the monarchy and considered one of the oldest in the Psalter; on the other hand links with the late post-exilic concept of guardian angels are claimed. Less precise remarks are made about Ps.82 although the extremes of 'great antiquity' and the Hellenistic age are suggested. Ps.89 is linked to various

It appears that one emphasis of them all is the exaltation of Yahweh over all other divine beings, a feature of Israel's early faith which distinguished it from that of her neighbours. Consequently it seems that arguments are strongest for viewing the references in these Psalms to the council against the background of Canaanite polytheism and for accepting them as early compositions which reflect a transition away from this influence towards the development of true Yahwism.¹⁷⁵ Thus we may conclude that Zechariah has been influenced in his portrayal of the divine council by these psalms which depict its members in a subordinate relationship to Yahweh and with a judicial function. If we are right in assigning these Psalms to an early date, then it is probable that they were used in the worship of the first temple and that they reflect the theological presuppositions of that time. We suggest that Zechariah has drawn on these early ideas which he understands as representative of the true Yahwism of the temple and that he has used them, alongside his re-introduction of angels, to develop his distinctive presentation of the divine council in a way that is nonetheless faithful to the theology he seeks to uphold.

events during the monarchy and it is generally agreed that much of it derives from the pre-exilic period although it has been claimed that it was composed in its present form around 520BC. For a concise survey of these views, with references, see Anderson, Psalms, pp.232ff; 429ff; 591ff; 630ff. Recently R.B.Salters in a paper delivered to the Society for Old Testament Study on 20th July 1988 in Oxford has argued that an early date for Ps.82 is the most credible.

¹⁷⁵ This view is shared by Max E.Polley, 'Hebrew Prophecy Within the Council of Yahweh', who argues that in Ps.82 "Hebrew monotheism [is seen] in the making as the so-called divine beings (formerly immortal) are declared to be mortal." (p.146) We acknowledge that the final form of these psalms may derive from a later period; but maintain that they contain core material reflecting the earliest theological beliefs of Israel. Accordingly we are not persuaded by arguments suggesting that the earthly king's court provides the background for the concept of the divine council because we believe that Israel held these beliefs before the establishment of her monarchy.

The appearance of the Satan as a member of the divine council in Zechariah's fourth vision has already been noted and the derivation of this character must be considered. The text records a vision of Joshua standing before the angel of the LORD

"and Satan (שָׂטָן) standing at his right hand to accuse him (לְיָמֵינוּ). And the LORD said to Satan (שָׂטָן־בְּאֵי), 'The LORD rebuke you, O Satan (שָׂטָן)! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?'"¹⁷⁶

A striking similarity between this passage and the prologue to Job¹⁷⁷ is immediately recognized in that they both portray the divine council and the figure of Satan appears in both in a role which indicates a degree of conflict between him and God. There can be little doubt that these passages are connected. However while the Satan in Job plays an active role as the instigator of Job's misfortunes,¹⁷⁸ in Zechariah's vision he is a static figure who remains silent and who is himself the recipient of divine rebuke. The accusation which the Satan laid against Joshua is not specified in the text and so the assumption that it questioned his fitness for the position of high priest can only be inferred from the latter part of the vision in which he is cleansed. Thus, in that Joshua did require cleansing to fit him for the role, the evidence is lacking to assume that the Satan was rebuked for accusing him falsely.¹⁷⁹ There are no grounds for attributing malevolence to him, nor for claiming that he was being antagonistic towards Yahweh;¹⁸⁰ although we accept that the

¹⁷⁶ Zech. 3:1b-2.

¹⁷⁷ Job. 1:1-2:10.

¹⁷⁸ Job 1:9-11; 2:3-6. He acts only with divine permission.

¹⁷⁹ Contra D.S. Russell, The Method and Message, p.237.

¹⁸⁰ Contra J.G. Baldwin, Haggai, p.113 who claims to detect both maliciousness and opposition to God's will; and H. Gunkel, The Folktales in the Old Testament, trans. by M.D. Rutter, (The Almond Press), 1987,

absence of specific reference to a hostile attitude within the text does not negate the possibility that the figure was perceived in these terms. However the reason for the rebuke remains a matter of conjecture. The Satan is portrayed in Zechariah as a prosecuting counsel who fulfils a necessary role in the council, whose own character and motivation are regarded as inconsequential and who remains nothing more than a shadowy functionary. This contrasts with the developed personality attributed to the Satan in Job; therefore we suggest that the writers of Job have drawn on the presentation of the Satan in Zechariah and that there is no question of there being any dependence in the other direction.¹⁸¹

It is unlikely that Persian religious ideas influenced Zechariah's understanding of the Satan, because as a council member he is subject to the authority of Yahweh and in no way resembles either Angra Mainyu, the Hostile Spirit of Zoroastrianism, or one of the pantheon of Daevas.¹⁸² A suggestion by Gunkel that a Babylonian folktale figure, who originally performed savage tricks on his own, may underlie the concept¹⁸³ has no textual support and we do not consider that the Satan in Zechariah 3:1f displays sufficient characteristics of this type to justify such claims.

pp.98f who calls the Satan an "evil prosecutor".

¹⁸¹ We have already indicated a date for the Book of Job around the 3rd century BC (p.102 n.70) when the prologue was shaped even though its story may have had earlier origins. We believe many people have been guilty of reading ideas from the later doctrine of the Satan into the text of Zechariah and that a wrong (in our opinion) assumption that the prologue to Job pre-dates Zech.3:1f has prompted scholars to embellish their interpretations of his role in Zechariah's vision.

¹⁸² See above pp.106ff. Zoroastrian dualism was influential on the development of the doctrine of the Satan in later Jewish and Christian writings but these influences do not appear in the literature of the Old Testament.

¹⁸³ H.Gunkel, The Folktale, pp.98f.

Consequently let us turn to the earlier Old Testament literature itself to discover whether Zechariah is drawing on existent theological ideas.

Apart from its use in Zechariah 3 and in Job, 'שָׂטָן' as a noun is found in ten Old Testament passages¹⁸⁴ and as a verb in five others.¹⁸⁵ None of these passages comes from the prophetic writings, nor does the concept of the Satan appear anywhere in the classical prophetic corpus, which suggests that Zechariah may again be drawing on early Israelite theology. All the references confirm a root meaning of an 'adversary' or 'accuser', the latter option being associated particularly with legal contexts; and thus Zechariah's use of this language accords with general practice. Several references to 'שָׂטָן' concern human opponents,¹⁸⁶ some of whom are raised up by God, but there is no suggestion that these have influenced the depiction of the Satan in Zechariah. However, Psalm 109 may provide the background for the use of 'שָׂטָן' in a judicial setting;

"4 In return for my love they accuse me (שָׂטָן וְיָגִידוּ)
even as I make prayer for them. So they reward
me evil for good, and hatred for my love.

¹⁸⁴ Num.22:22,32; 1 Sam.29:4; 2 Sam.19:23(MT); 1 Kgs.5:18(MT); 11:14,23,25; Ps.109:6 and 1 Chron.21:1. 'Satan' may be used as a proper name in this final passage which interprets the idea of 'the anger of the LORD' in 2 Sam.24:1. It certainly originated later than Zech.1-8. None of these references has the definite article appended and it is often suggested that its use in Zechariah 3:1 indicates that the word is being used as a title such as 'the Prosecutor', (for example Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.183). This could imply an understanding that this figure was a regular, identifiable member of the divine council. We believe the text uses the word as an appellative which "merely defines the role which the being plays in a particular situation." (T.H.Gaster, 'Satan', IDB Vol 4, p.224)

¹⁸⁵ Pss.38:21(MT); 71:12(MT) and 109:4,20,29.

¹⁸⁶ 1 Sam.29:4 the Philistines fear David would be an adversary of them in battle; 2 Sam.19:23(MT) David accuses the sons of Zeruah of trying to make him act unjustly; 1 Kgs.5:18(MT) Solomon equates a lack of adversaries with a time of peace; and 1 Kgs.11:14,23,25, Hadad and Rezon are adversaries of Solomon who cause mischief. Pss.38:21(MT) and 71:12(MT) refer to wicked adversaries who oppose a good man.

Appoint a wicked man against him; let an accuser (ׁׁׁׁ) bring him to trial. When he is tried, let him come forth guilty; ... ²⁰May this be the reward of my accusers (ׁׁׁׁ) from the LORD, of those who speak evil against my life! ... ²¹May my accusers (ׁׁׁׁ) be clothed with dishonour."

This psalm uses 'ׁׁׁׁ' to indicate a prosecuting counsel and the idiom for bringing someone to trial, 'יִצְמַד עַל-יְמִינָי' (literally, stand at his right hand), in the same way that the language is used in Zechariah 3:1. It also recognizes the supreme authority of God to act as judge in the case and thus the similarity between the passages is quite marked except for the distinction that Zechariah's vision is of a heavenly courtroom while Psalm 109 supposes an earthly setting. Whether these passages are directly connected or both depend on general legal usage of these words cannot be determined. Psalm 109 is frequently assigned to a post-exilic date, though the evidence offered in support of this is inconclusive;¹⁸⁷ thus it would be unwise to claim any dependence on it by Zechariah. It is therefore a real possibility that the initial use of 'ׁׁׁׁ' in a legal context in the literature of the Old Testament is that in Zechariah 3.

Thus far it appears that Zechariah has developed the concept of the Satan independently of earlier biblical traditions; but there is one further passage in Numbers relating to Balaam which may be illuminating:

"But God's anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as his adversary (ׁׁׁׁ). Now he was riding on the ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand; ... Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand; and he bowed

¹⁸⁷ A similarity between the malediction in Ps.109:6-20 and that in Jer.18:19-23 is cited along with the claim that Jeremiah's words must precede the Psalm; a claim which we consider quite arbitrary. For brief comments and references see Anderson, Psalms, pp.758ff.

his head and fell on his face. And the angel of the LORD said to him, 'Why have you struck your ass these three times? Behold I have come forth to withstand (יִטָּן) you, because your way is perverse before me;' ¹⁸⁸

This incident occurs in an earthly setting but the 'יִטָּן' is identified as an angel of the LORD and is thus a heavenly being as in Zechariah.¹⁸⁹ While he opposes Balaam in a literal way by blocking his path, the real opposition is directed against the intentions of Balaam and comes in the latter verses in the form of an accusation. As God's representative the 'יִטָּן' is portrayed as an accuser and although this is not in a judicial context, it indicates another point of similarity between the passages. The picture of the 'יִטָּן' as an angel with a drawn sword in his hand may be a graphic means of portraying him as a hostile figure, a concept that is not explicitly included in Zechariah's description.¹⁹⁰ However, it may rather be intended to emphasize the power and might of Yahweh. The phrase 'יִטָּן בְּיָדוֹ' (with a drawn sword in his hand) occurs twice in the above passage about Balaam¹⁹¹ and in only two other places in the Hebrew bible.¹⁹² Each of these references indicates an angelic being,

¹⁸⁸ Num.22:22-32. The Balaam stories, Num.22-24, are within the JE section of the Pentateuch; this particular passage is generally assigned to the J strand. It may have originated as an ancient folktale, for as Snaith remarks, speaking animals are a common feature of such literature the world over. N.H.Snaith, Leviticus and Numbers, (NCB), 1969, p.176.

¹⁸⁹ We recognize that the Satan and the angel of the LORD both appear as separate figures in Zech.3:1. However we do not believe that 'יִטָּן בְּיָדוֹ' implies a particular angel with a permanent role; but rather that it stresses the source of the being's authority. Consequently it is justifiable to interpret Zech.3:1 as meaning that Joshua was standing before an angel of the LORD with the Satan, another angel of the LORD, standing at his right.

¹⁹⁰ See pp.135f above.

¹⁹¹ Num.22:23 and 31.

¹⁹² Josh.5:13 and 1 Chron.21:16.

acting explicitly on behalf of Yahweh, as the figure with the sword;¹⁹³ and the angel's behaviour each time in relation to the use of the sword demonstrates its purpose as the means of executing Yahweh's judgement in a situation. There is no suggestion of malevolence, nor of hostility in the character; he is rather an obedient servant acting on orders. There are insufficient grounds to claim that the portrayal of the Satan in Zechariah 3 depends directly upon the angelic adversary in Numbers 22; however we do believe that the latter passage provides a credible source from which the concept of the Satan, as presented firstly in Zechariah and subsequently in Job and 1 Chronicles, has been drawn and developed. We conclude therefore, that early theological ideas underlie Zechariah's depiction of the Satan, in the same way as they prompted his concept of other angelic beings in the divine council.

This concludes our consideration of the visionary passages within Zechariah 1-8 with regards to the way in which the prophet presents them as his means of receiving and conveying Yahweh's messages; and to the concepts and motifs in them that Zechariah has initiated, re-introduced, or developed in order to express his ideas about, and understanding of, the communications he received from Yahweh. We have demonstrated that Zechariah stands in the classical prophetic tradition as a visionary but that many of the theological ideas inherent within his visions come from

¹⁹³ Num.22 and 1 Chron.21 identify the figure as 'מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה' (the angel of LORD); Josh.5:14 indicates that he is 'שָׂרֵי צְבָאֵי יְהוָה' (commander of the army [or hosts] of the LORD), while the following verses confirm that he is a divine being. The reference in 1 Chron.21:16 occurs in the chapter which begins with the figure of Satan, a chapter that relates to the ordering of a census by David and Yahweh's angry response. The text does not require an identification between the Satan and the angel; but nor does it render it impossible. The account in 2 Sam.24, on which the Chronicler depends, begins with reference to the anger of the LORD and subsequently records an angel of the LORD 'working destruction' on behalf of the LORD, ideas which are clearly related.

an earlier age, originating in the faith that was proclaimed in Israel's first temple, the faith which Zechariah seeks to uphold in the temple which is being rebuilt. Let us now turn to consider the visions in the context of the whole of Zechariah's ministry and the issues this raises relevant to the continuation, or not, of classical prophetic traditions.

It has already been indicated that within classical prophecy the phenomenon of visionary experience was a regular feature although it was not a constituent part of every prophetic book.¹⁷⁴ Nonetheless, the contribution made by any visions to the overall message of an individual prophet was varied. In the classical books they are predominantly, but not invariably, presented as isolated occurrences;¹⁷⁵ and they represent only a small proportion of each prophet's experience,¹⁷⁶ often being related more specifically to his calling by Yahweh than to the message he proclaimed.¹⁷⁷ In contrast the passages in Zechariah 1-8 which are directly related to the visions constitute the major part of the book and convey the main elements of its message. At a literary level this represents a significant divergence from the classical prophetic books. However, as with all prophetic collections, we must be cautious against presuming that the text of Zechariah 1-8 accurately reflects either the

¹⁷⁴ For example no visions are recorded in the books of Hosea, Micah or Haggai.

¹⁷⁵ Examples of single visions are Isa.6:1ff; Jer.24:1ff; 38:21f; Ezek.1:4ff; 37:1ff; while a pair are recorded in Jeremiah 1:11ff and three occur in series in Amos 7:1f,4 and 7f.

¹⁷⁶ We do not regard Ezekiel 40-48 as genuine visions but as a distinct composition by a priestly group, perhaps based on a brief core vision, which was appended to the book after its original compilation.

¹⁷⁷ Isaiah's only vision represents the receipt of his prophetic calling; Ezek.1:4ff performs the same function; Jer.1:11,13 occur in the context of the prophet's call; and although Amos' visions are not a part of his call they surround the passage (7:14f) which refers to it.

dominant style of the prophet's ministry or the content of all his prophecies. The collection of oracles in Zechariah 7:4-8:23 which are attributed to him and the others amid the visionary passages, indicate that Zechariah adopted the more traditional oral style of proclamation on some occasions to convey his message. It has been shown¹⁹⁸ that the collected oracles include a pastiche of traditional prophetic teaching. If this was typical of Zechariah's preaching, it may indicate why few oracles have been preserved. If he often re-iterated the messages of the classical prophets, then it is apt that the compilation focusses attention on the visionary passages in which the prophet conveyed to the community in Jerusalem the significant and new aspects of his message from Yahweh.

Our discussion so far has concentrated on the way both Haggai and Zechariah received their messages from Yahweh and on the methods they adopted to convey them verbally. In this all Haggai's prophecies have been considered but in Zechariah 1-8 there is one passage which concerns the activity of the prophet rather than his words and this may be an example of symbolic action being used as the means of communication:

"Take from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon; and go the same day to the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah. Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown,¹⁹⁹ and set it upon the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest;.. And the crown²⁰⁰ shall be in the temple of the

¹⁹⁸ See pp.18ff above.

¹⁹⁹ MT reads *קִטְרוֹת* a plural form implying 'crowns'. The problems this raises are not significant for the issue under discussion and we will follow the text of the RSV at present. See pp.198ff.

²⁰⁰ MT again reads a plural form *קִטְרוֹת*.

LORD as a reminder ('יְהוָה') to ..."²⁰¹

The text does not stipulate that Zechariah complied with Yahweh's orders but nor is there any indication to the contrary and the implication must be that he did. We note that a similar situation arose in Haggai 2:11ff where the reader had to infer that the prophet had obeyed from the rest of the passage.²⁰² This may reflect a belief by the compilers of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 that it was unthinkable to imagine that a true prophet might have disobeyed a command from Yahweh and so it was unnecessary to include a statement simply indicating obedience. However, the absence of definite confirmation distinguishes this passage from most examples of symbolic action in the classical prophetic corpus,²⁰³ although this is not sufficient reason to deny that the same means of communication is being adopted. Another difference, which may have greater significance, is that whereas the classical prophets become, in themselves, the symbol

²⁰¹ Zech.6:10-11,14. In MT the form of the names which conclude v.14 differ from those in v.10 but this issue has no relevance to the matter under consideration. For a discussion on this see for example Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.340-3,364; or Petitjean, Oracles, pp.275-7.

²⁰² See above p.91.

²⁰³ Passages which relate both commands to perform some symbolic action and compliance by the prophet are Isa.8:1f; 20:2; Jer.13:1-2,4-7 [we recognize the improbability of the action outlined in vv4-7 and the lack of an audience to appreciate its symbolism]; 27:2-28:11; 32:6-15; Ezek.24:15ff; and Hos.1:2f; 3:1f. Jer.25:15ff also appears to be in this category but it is clearly not intended to be understood literally. Jer.16:1-4 in which the prophet is commanded not to marry cannot be responded to by any immediate action and is thus of a different type.

Passages where no indication of the prophet's compliance is given are Jer.19:1-2,10-11; 43:8-13 and Ezek.4-5. However the first example raises doubts whether the symbolism would have been recognized, in the second it is hard to believe that compliance could have been effected; and the passage from Ezekiel concerns a complex and extended series of actions which are not totally compatible and therefore may not be meant literally. Consequently it is understandable that no details of the prophet's obedience are given in these instances.

The frequency of the references to symbolic action in Jeremiah and the problems inherent in many of them suggest that they may be a product of literary composition rather than actual incidents. A discussion of these passages can be found in Carroll, Chaos to Covenant, pp.130-5.

which conveys Yahweh's message - Isaiah walking around naked, Hosea's marriage, Ezekiel failing to mourn his wife's death in the traditional way²⁰⁴ - the actions performed by Zechariah are not the symbol. He is responsible for obtaining the crown and using it to crown Joshua; but the symbolism is seen in the crowned figure and the crown placed in the temple as a memorial. Thus while Zechariah is depicted as continuing a traditional prophetic method of communication to some extent, it is in a divergent form and we agree with Petersen that this

"should dissuade us from construing Zechariah's action here as a mere symbolic action."²⁰⁵

A consideration of the content of these verses reveals a portrayal of Zechariah as the recipient of silver and gold, from recently returned exiles, out of which is fashioned an article that is ultimately to be placed in the temple as a memorial. This is a very different role from any adopted by the classical prophets. However this portrayal has much in common with passages from the Priestly sections of Exodus and Numbers which relate to Moses:

"The LORD said to Moses, 'Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me an offering; from every man whose heart makes him willing you shall receive the offering for me. And this is the offering which you shall receive from them: gold, silver and bronze, ...'"²⁰⁶

"The LORD said to Moses, ... 'And you shall take the atonement money ('הַכֹּפֶרֶת', silver) from the people of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tent of meeting; that it may

²⁰⁴ Isa.20:2; Hos.1-3; Ezek.24:18ff.

²⁰⁵ Petersen, OTL, p.279, n.10. Contra Petitjean, Oracles, p.303; Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.338f,349; et al.

²⁰⁶ Ex.25:1-3. Ex.35:4ff records Moses' address to the people and their response; and an account of how the offerings were fashioned for use in the tabernacle.

bring the people of Israel to remembrance (or 'be for a memorial [זָכָרוֹן] for the people of Israel') before the LORD, so as to make atonement for yourselves."²⁰⁷

"On the day when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, ... the leaders of Israel, ... offered and brought their offerings before the LORD, ... Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Accept these from them, that they may be used in doing the service of the tent of meeting, ...' "²⁰⁸ This was the dedication offering for the altar, on the day when it was anointed, from the leaders of Israel: twelve silver plates, twelve silver basins, twelve golden dishes ... "²⁰⁹

and a passage relating to the booty from the defeat of the Midianites;

"And Moses and Eleazer the priest received the gold from the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tent of meeting, as a memorial (זָכָרוֹן) for the people of Israel before the LORD."²¹⁰

The similarity of motifs between these passages and that in Zechariah is quite striking. Silver, gold, or both are taken as offerings by Moses in connection with the tabernacle or the tent of meeting: the silver and gold taken by Zechariah are most probably offerings for the work on the temple.²¹⁰ Except in Numbers 31:54 Moses, the prophetic figure, and not the priest, is the recipient of the gifts: likewise Zechariah, the prophet, and not Joshua, the priest, takes the offerings. A portion of some offerings received by Moses are to become a memorial in the tent of

²⁰⁷ Ex.30:11,16.

²⁰⁸ Num.7:1-84. This passage records in full the identical offering made by each of the twelve leaders.

²⁰⁹ Num.31:54.

²¹⁰ Cf. Ezra 2:68f which records leaders of those who returned to Jerusalem offering gold and silver for this purpose.

We note the characteristic use of זָכָרוֹן (take from) in these passages, which appears to be used as a "technical priestly expression, found several times in the Pentateuch (Exod 25:2; Num 18:26-28; Lev 7:34), for taking certain kinds of offering." (Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.338.)

meeting for those who gave them: part of that received by Zechariah is to be used as a memorial for the returned exiles who made the offerings. We believe that an identification between Zechariah and Moses is being made deliberately; and in view of the fact that all the references to Moses come from different strata of the Priestly writings, some of which may post-date Zechariah, it may be that the material has been formulated in this way during the final compilation of Zechariah 1-8.

We have now considered all the ways in which Haggai and Zechariah received and transmitted their messages from Yahweh and the indications are that both prophets stood within the mainstream classical prophetic tradition. They both proclaimed oracles; while Zechariah also related his visionary experiences and may have engaged in symbolic activity to further the communication of his message. However the way in which they have developed these standard prophetic forms shows some divergence and evidence of influence from other traditions, in addition to reflecting an acceptance of the concept of a more transcendent God. Some Persian influence on Zechariah has been demonstrated; but this was from the socio-political field and not a product of any contact with Zoroastrian religious ideas. Motifs, themes and theological ideas, especially in Zechariah's prophecies, suggest a close dependence on the religious faith and understanding of early Israel and we have concluded in several instances that Zechariah was re-introducing concepts which were current at the time of the first temple. Our overall conclusion is that both prophets remained true to their prophetic lineage in the transmission of their messages but that they adopted language and ideas which emphasized their desire to re-institute the Yahwism of those who worshipped in the temple before the time of Israel's disobedience and decline.

CHAPTER FOUR

Leadership in the Restoration Community and Messianism

Throughout her history Israel, as a nation, accepted that Yahweh was her sovereign ruler; but this did not diminish the people's desire for a recognizable human leadership to govern them. This leadership had been exercised through the monarchy, and in respect of cultic matters by the priesthood, during most of the period when the classical prophets were active; but the institution of monarchy and the temple both came to an end at the time of the Babylonian exile. The community addressed by Haggai and Zechariah, some seventy years later, was under the imperial rule of the Persians; but the question of national leadership was still a relevant issue and this was inevitably connected to some extent with the messianic hopes of Israel.¹ These related themes of leadership and messianism are the subject of this chapter.

The references which have significance are Haggai 1:1,12,14; 2:2,4 and 21-23; and Zechariah 3:1-10; 4:2-14 and 6:10-14. In these passages the identifiable characters who are accorded leadership roles are Joshua the high priest² and Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah;³ but some of the material connected with these themes in Zechariah 1-8 is less specific and may be referring obliquely to these individuals or to other unnamed

¹ R.E.Clements, 'The Messianic Hope in the Old Testament', JSOT 43, 1989, pp.3-19 gives a brief historical outline of Old Testament and Biblical scholarship's recognition of such an hope. He surveys the material and considers the origins and development of this hope in the biblical literature.

² Hag.1:1,12,14; 2:2,4; Zech.3:1-9; 6:11.

³ Hag.1:1,12,14; 2:2,4,21-23; Zech.4:6b-10a.

personages.⁴ Before we consider particular passages and the implication each has concerning the continuation of classical prophetic traditions, let us establish, as far as is possible, the identities of Joshua and Zerubbabel and the status of each in both the community in Jerusalem and the Persian governmental systems.

All references to Joshua in the book of Haggai identify him as son of Jehozadak and as 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' (the high priest). His identification is the same in Zechariah 6:11 whereas his patronym is omitted throughout Chapter 3 in which his name alone occurs three times⁵ and with the title 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' appended twice more.⁶ He is mentioned several times in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah⁷ as a priest who, with Zerubbabel, returned from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem and began to work on rebuilding the temple. Confirmation that he had been in exile, indeed suggesting that he had probably been born in exile, is gathered through a combination of passages from Chronicles and Kings. 1 Chronicles 5:29b-41(MT) contains a genealogical list of the descendants of Aaron and it concludes with a reference to Joshua's father, Jehozadak, being sent into exile. It also identifies Seraiah, who according to 2 Kings 25:18⁸ was the chief priest (כֹּהֵן הָרִאשׁוֹן) at the time of the fall of Jerusalem and was put to death by the King of Babylon, as Joshua's grandfather. Together these references

⁴ Zech.3:8; 4:2-6a,10b-14; 6:12.

⁵ Zech.3:3,6,9.

⁶ Zech.3:1,8.

⁷ Ez.3:2,8; 5:2; 10:18; Neh.12:26. In each reference he is called 'יֵשׁוּעַ בֶּן-יֹזָדָק' (Jeshua, son of Jozadak) but it is agreed that the same individual is indicated by these alternative spellings. Neh.7:7; 12:1 probably refers to the same Jeshua.

⁸ The parallel account in Jer.52:24 contains the same title.

provide indirect evidence that Joshua was a Zadokite priest and a true descendant of Aaron; and that he was the legitimate heir to the senior priestly office within the Israelite cultic system. Joshua's hereditary background and his religious significance must have been known by the Persian hierarchy who authorized his departure from Babylon in, or some time after, 538BC.⁹ In their eyes Joshua must have been acceptable as a figurehead for the religious community in Jerusalem and someone who was unlikely to cause political problems for the empire.

The title of 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' (high priest) is regularly used in the Mishnah and Talmud and it is generally agreed that it was applied to the supreme leader of the Jewish religious community in the late post-exilic period and into the Christian era. However the title occurs rarely in the Old Testament,¹⁰ which increases the problem of establishing when in Israel's history the official designation 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' (high priest) was introduced for the holder of the senior priestly position. De Vaux, on the basis of its use in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8, claims it certainly existed from the beginning of the return from exile;¹¹ and it has been suggested¹² that the application of this title to Joshua in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 marks the earliest instance of its use. This raises the questions whether one of these prophets inaugurated it and whether the full connotations associated with the later understanding of the title

⁹ Ez.2:2.

¹⁰ Outside Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 it appears in Num.35:25,28 and perhaps 32 (following LXX); Josh.20:6; 2 Kgs.12:11(MT); 22:4,8; 23:4; 2 Chron.34:9; Neh.3:1,20; 13:28.

¹¹ R.de Vaux, Ancient Israel, trans. J.McHugh, (Darton, Longman and Todd), 1961, p.398.

¹² For example Mitchell, ICC, p.44; Petersen, OTL, p.46; Rudolph, Haggai, p.31.

were intended by its innovator. On the other hand Gallig believes that this title was not instituted until after the temple had been rebuilt,¹³ which implies either that all the references in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 to Joshua as 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' are editorial, or that the designation was given to him before or during the rebuilding, in a somewhat premature way, without conferring its full, later, implications in respect of his status in the Jerusalem community.¹⁴

To attempt to resolve some of these issues let us look at the uses of 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' in the Old Testament literature which refers to the pre-exilic period.¹⁵ In the Holiness Code the phrase is used descriptively rather than in a titular sense,

"The priest who is chief (הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל) among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil is poured, and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not ...".¹⁶

¹³ K.Galling, Studien zur Geschichte Israels im persischen Zeitalter, (Mohr, Tübingen), 1964, p.135. J.Morgenstern, 'A Chapter in the History of the High-Priesthood' American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures Vol.LV, 1938, pp.1-24; 183-97; 360-77, argues on the basis of an Aramaic letter from Elephantine in 408BC referring to Johanan as the high priest that, "Unquestionably he was the first to bear this title." (p.367) Johanan had taken office in 411BC. Whilst Morgenstern's argument that the senior priest's title changed alongside a developing theological concept of a transcendental Deity is attractive the paucity of literature from the Persian period makes it unwise to claim that no priest was accorded the title 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' before Johanan. All arguments from silence must be viewed very cautiously. J.W.Bailey, 'The Usage in the Post Restoration Period of Terms Descriptive of the Priest and High Priest', JBL 70, 1951, pp.217-225, argues that the title probably did not become fixed until well into the Maccabean period.

¹⁴ K-M.Beyse, Serubbabel und die Königsertwartungen der Propheten Haggai und Sacharja, (Stuttgart), 1972, p.33 note 1.

¹⁵ References to Eliashib as 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' in Neh.3:1,20; 13:28 date from, and relate to, a later period than that of Haggai and Zechariah. Consequently they are irrelevant to our discussion.

¹⁶ Lev.21:10. This translation is determined by the context of the passage and the preposition 'בין' (among) as the following word.

This passage indicates a senior priest singled out from among equals but without a special title. Although the origins of this passage cannot be ascertained with any degree of accuracy,¹⁷ it probably accords with the understanding of the Priestly Writers responsible for the book's final compilation. This supports the view that, even though one priest was recognized as a leader with special duties, the title 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' was not given until the cult was re-established in the second temple. Other passages attributed to the Priestly Writers in the Books of Numbers and Joshua, dealing with laws of blood revenge and cities of refuge, also contain the designation 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' in a way that suggests an officially held appointment:

"the congregation shall rescue the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and ... shall restore him to his city of refuge, to which he had fled, and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest (הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל) who was anointed with the holy oil. ... For the man must remain in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest (הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל); but after the death of the high priest (הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל) the manslayer may return to the land of his possession."¹⁸

"And he shall remain in that city until he has stood before the congregation for judgment, until the death of him who is high priest (הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל) at the time: then the slayer may go again to his own town and his own home, to the town from which he fled."¹⁹

Regardless of when these literary accounts are dated, the custom they

¹⁷ The Holiness Code is generally attributed to a group of priests writing before the Priestly Writers (P) but after those who composed Deuteronomy (D). (For example N.H.Snaith, 'Leviticus' in Peake's, p.241) An earlier date, before D and before the reign of Josiah (ca 640BC), is advocated by L.E.Elliott-Binns, 'Some Problems of the Holiness Code', ZAW 67, 1955, pp.26-40. There may be more than one stratum of material in the Code originating from different times; but these issues cannot be considered here.

¹⁸ Num.35:25,28.

¹⁹ Josh.20:6. LXX omits the reference to the high priest's death and the second half of the verse.

refer to is certainly ancient, purporting to have originated in pre-monarchic times, which could suggest that the office and title of high priest had early beginnings. However, two arguments can be levelled against this. Before the days of Solomon's temple there could not have been one high priest for the nation and the character mentioned in the above passages can only be understood as the chief Levitical priest in each city of refuge; a very different role from that of virtual head of state as the post exilic High Priest became. Secondly, the parallel regulations about cities of refuge in Deuteronomy 19:4-13 refer neither to the priesthood, nor to a duration for which refuge must be sought. This suggests that the references to a high priest have been included in the P passages to emphasize the priests' importance throughout Israel's history, due to the perspective of those who formulated the material. Thus we do not believe that these passages indicate the ancient use of the term 'יִהְיֶה לָּךְ הַגָּדוֹל';²⁰ but probably reflect the theology of priests writing shortly before the title was introduced.

The four remaining Old Testament passages which refer to the term 'יִהְיֶה לָּךְ הַגָּדוֹל' all relate to the monarchic period. In the reign of Jehoash (ca 840-801BC) when Jehoiada was the senior priest monies were required for repairs to the temple. According to 2 Kings 12:10ff(MT),

"Then Jehoiada the priest (יִהְיֶה לָּךְ) took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar on the right side as one entered the house of the LORD; and the priests who guarded the threshold put in it all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD. And whenever they saw that there was much money in the chest, the king's secretary and the high priest (יִהְיֶה לָּךְ הַגָּדוֹל) came up and they counted and tied up in bags the money that was

²⁰ Contra Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.181.

found in the house of the LORD."²¹

Commentators²² appear to understand the term 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' in this text as a reference to Jehoiada and suggest that it may be an editorial addition which reflects the post-exilic use of the term. The other references to Jehoiada, though, have not been edited in this way for he is regularly spoken of simply as 'הַכֹּהֵן' (the priest).²³ However, the context does not require the person identified as 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' to be Jehoiada and it is certainly possible that a different priestly official with financial responsibilities is intended by this term. Whilst we are cautious about the historical credibility which can be accorded to Chronicles, support for this possibility is found in the parallel account of these events in 2 Chronicles 24:11,

"And whenever the chest was brought to the king's officers by the Levites, when they saw that there was much money in it, the king's secretary and the officer (וְכֹהֵן הַגָּדוֹל) of the chief priest (כֹּהֵן הָרֵאשִׁית) would come and empty the chest and take it ..."

which refers to a subordinate of the chief priest as one of the figures responsible for dealing with the money.

The second and third passages which contain the term 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל'

²¹ Textual difficulties exist concerning the altar (הַמִּזְבֵּחַ) and its position in the temple; and the reading 'וְיִצְרְוּ' (and tied up) and its meaning. These problems are irrelevant to our discussion. For possible solutions see J.Gray, Kings, p.528, notes e and f; or G.H.Jones, 1 & 2 Kings Vol.II, (NCB), 1984, pp.492f.

²² For example Gray, Kings, p.531; J.Skinner, 1 & II Kings, (CB), p.345; Morgenstern, 'A Chapter in the History', p.2; Bailey, 'The Usage in the Post Restoration Period', p.220. Among those commenting on the use of the title in Haggai and Zechariah who accept the identification of Jehoiada as the high priest in this passage are Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.180; and Petitjean, Oracles, p.166, note 3.

²³ 2 Kgs.11:9(twice),15; 12:3,8,10(MT). It is hard to understand why an editor would insert 'גָּדוֹל' (high) on just one occasion rather than adding it to several other passages as well.

attest to a similar situation in the reign of Josiah, two centuries later, whereby Shaphan, the king's secretary, is commissioned regarding money collected for repairs to the temple:

"Go up to Hilkiah the high priest (הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל), that he may reckon the amount of the money which has been brought into the house of the LORD....' And Hilkiah the high priest (הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל) said to Shaphan the secretary, 'I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD."²⁴

The parallel passage, 2 Chronicles 34:8f, retains the term 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' for Hilkiah in the context of the money but in relation to the law book reverts to 'כֹּהֵן' (the priest). It is agreed that Hilkiah was senior priest at this time, a fact that has prompted the claim that the term is an editorial addition. However, since it is absent from most references to Hilkiah,²⁵ it is possible that it has specific significance in this context, not in the sense of the post-exilic title, but as a reference to a financial function; and that it is original to the text. The final occurrence of this term weakens this argument unfortunately, since it is another reference to Hilkiah in which the king orders

"Hilkiah, the high priest (הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל), and the priests of the second order (כֹּהֲנֵי הַמִּשְׁנָה), and the keepers of the threshold, ..."²⁶

to clear the temple of items associated with idolatry or apostasy. This incident, without a parallel in Chronicles, does not concern financial matters and we concede that the word 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' appears to identify Hilkiah as the senior priest in contrast to his subordinates; although it may be significant here that the task given is not strictly sacerdotal. Thus it remains possible that the term 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' (high priest) was used in

²⁴ 2 Kgs. 22:4, 8.

²⁵ 2 Kgs. 22:8, 12, 14; 23:24; 2 Chron. 34:14, 15, 18, 20, 22; 35:8.

²⁶ 2 Kgs. 23:4

pre-exilic times to indicate any senior priest who had special duties connected with the fabric of the temple and its upkeep. If this was so the application of the term to Joshua may represent a continuation of this understanding because there is little doubt that the rebuilding of the temple and the financing of this project were major aspects of his responsibility as senior priest in the time of Haggai and Zechariah.²⁷ This leads us to conclude that the designation of Joshua as 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 may accurately reflect the way he was known and be original to the text; but that it does not carry with it the connotation of the later post-exilic title. Furthermore, a corollary of this is that when the cult was re-established in the second temple, presumably while Joshua continued as the senior priest,²⁸ the natural choice for a title for the holder of what had become a unique office was the term 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' as it was already regularly associated with him.

Let us now consider the figure of Zerubbabel. In Haggai he is

²⁷ This hypothesis is akin to the view of Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.181, who suggest: "Haggai and Zechariah may have revived 'high priest' as a general title, not just a separate title used only when the 'chief priest' had extra financial tasks, because in the Persian period the chief priest took on as his regular role the fiscal responsibilities only irregularly attached to the chief priesthood during the period of the monarchy." However, we prefer to talk of the 'continuation' rather than the 'revival' of the term and do not believe it is appropriate to equate Joshua's responsibilities during the temple rebuilding with the regular fiscal duties of later priests in the established temple system.

²⁸ It is not known how long Joshua remained the senior priest, nor is his date of death recorded. Attention has often been drawn to the lack of reliable data regarding the genealogy of the high priests in the post-exilic period. The issue is discussed by G.Widengren, 'Problems in Reconstructing Jewish History in the Persian Period', in Israelite and Judaeon History, eds. J.H.Hayes and J.Maxwell Miller, (SCM, London), 1977, pp.503-509; see also F.M.Cross, 'A Reconstruction of the Judaeon Restoration', JBL 94, 1975, pp.4-18.

identified as the son of Shealtiel, **שְׁאֲלִיֵּאל** (governor) of Judah 3 times,²⁹ with just the patronym twice,³⁰ as **יְהוֹנָתָן** of Judah once³¹ and by his name alone once more.³² In Zechariah 1-8 Zerubbabel's name, without further details occurs 4 times in one short oracular section.³³ He is mentioned in Ezra and Nehemiah,³⁴ along with Joshua, among those who returned from exile. The date of his return has prompted much scholarly discussion; but there is insufficient evidence to allow a more exact conclusion than that it was after 538BC but no later than 520BC.³⁵ The fact that his

²⁹ Hag.1:1,14; 2:2. The variant spellings are not likely to be significant.

³⁰ Hag.1:12; 2:23.

³¹ Hag.2:21.

³² Hag.2:4.

³³ Zech.4:6,7,9,10.

³⁴ With his patronym in Ez.3:2,8; 5:2; Neh.12:1. His name alone is used in Ez.2:2; 4:2,3 and Neh.7:7. There are parallels to some of these in 1 Esdras 5:8,48,56,68,70; 6:2.

³⁵ The difficulty arises because Ezra 1:8,11b indicates that Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah led the return to Jerusalem, sanctioned by Cyrus and yet Ezra 2:2; 3:2,8 suggests Zerubbabel and Joshua as the leaders of the return at that time. 1 Esdras 3:1-4:63 relates a story about three of Darius' bodyguards, one of whom is identified as Zerubbabel (1 Esd.4:13) who, according to this book, led a second group of exiles back to Jerusalem in 520BC. S.A.Cook, 'The Age of Zerubbabel' Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, ed. H.H.Rowley, (T.& T. Clark, Edinburgh), 1950, pp.19-36 suggested that this passage represents the original LXX text and that it confirms that Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel belonged to the reigns of Cyrus and Darius respectively. We accept the likelihood that confusion arose because there were two or more waves of returning exiles after 538BC; but are not persuaded of the historicity of 1 Esdras. It seems probable that the writer of 1 Esdras introduced the story in an attempt to remove the confusion over the identities and dates of Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel.

It has been claimed that Sheshbazzar is to be identified with Shenazzar in 1 Chron.3:18 (see for example W.F.Albright, 'The Date and Personality of the Chronicler', JBL 40, 1921, pp108-110; J.Bright, A History of Israel, p.362; Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.11) and that he was thus an uncle of Zerubbabel. However, we join with those who are persuaded by the rejection of this claim put forward by P-R.Berger, 'Zu den Namen **שְׁשַׁבְצָר** und **שְׁנַבְצָר**', ZAW 83, 1971, pp.98-100; and believe that no evidence of kinship can be established.

name is Babylonian in origin suggests that he was born in exile when the Israelite community had settled down to life there. This favours a late rather than an early date. Another reference to Zerubbabel in Nehemiah 12:47 uses just his name but equates his status with that of Nehemiah, the governor appointed by the Persians in the following century.³⁶ It is hard to ascertain the function and authority of a 'מִשְׁתָּרֵט' (governor) in the Persian administration because the title was apparently applied to individuals who had varying degrees of responsibility over satrapies or smaller provinces.³⁷ There is little doubt, however, that a holder of the title 'מִשְׁתָּרֵט' was officially appointed by the Persian rulers to be responsible for administrative and especially fiscal matters in a given geographic area.³⁸ Thus for Zerubbabel to have the designation 'מִשְׁתָּרֵט' indicates that he had gained the respect of his overlords who presumably believed he would be loyal to them, rather than fearing that he would incite rebellion among his compatriots. This is somewhat surprising for

³⁶ The word 'מִשְׁתָּרֵט' identifies Nehemiah as governor once, Neh.12:26, and he uses it with reference to his own position twice, Neh.5:14,18. It is also used to refer to the former governors of Judah, Neh.5:15; but in this book another word 'מִשְׁתָּרֵט' also occurs frequently to denote the position of governor, Neh.7:65(=Ezra 2:63),70 and as Nehemiah's title, Neh.8:9; 10:2.

³⁷ References in the Hebrew sections of the Old Testament are Ezra 8:36; Neh.2:7,9; 3:7; Esth.3:12; 8:9; 9:3; and in the Aramaic parts Ezra 5:3,6,14; 6:6,7,13. See Petersen, OTL, pp.23-27 and Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.13-16 for summaries of the arguments about the division of the empire and the status of the regional authorities.

The word 'מִשְׁתָּרֵט' in Hebrew and Aramaic is a loan word and it is generally accepted that its occurrence in 1 Kgs.10:15(=2 Chron.9:14); and in 1 Kgs.20:24; 2 Kgs.18:24(=Isa.36:9) where it is understood as a military captain or commander, reflects a late hand emending or adding to the texts.

³⁸ H.Jagersma, A History of Israel in the Old Testament Period, (SCM), 1982, p.196; trans. by J.Bowden, Geschiedenis van Israël in het Oudtestamentische Tijdvak, (Kampen), 1979.

the evidence indicates that Zerubbabel was a descendant of David,³⁹ kin to Jehoiachin and Zedekiah the last kings of Judah,⁴⁰ and thus a natural focus for the monarchic and messianic hopes of the Hebrew nation. The Persians could hardly have been ignorant of Zerubbabel's Davidic lineage and we have to agree with Ackroyd's claim⁴¹ that they took a calculated risk when appointing him to participate in the re-establishment and administration of the community in Jerusalem. In view of his ancestry there is no doubt that Zerubbabel's authority to exercise leadership would have been recognized by his own people and his return to Jerusalem probably provided some sections of the community, at least, with a great sense of encouragement.

Let us now consider the texts of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 and the specific references to Joshua and Zerubbabel. In the framework to the Book of Haggai both men are spoken of together as the main recipients of

³⁹ 1 Chron.3:1-19. This passage, which records the descendants of David down to Zerubbabel and his sons, indicates Zerubbabel's father as Pedaiah, a younger brother of Shealtiel who would thus be his uncle. All other references to Zerubbabel's ancestry indicate that Shealtiel was his father. H.G.M.Williamson, 1 & 2 Chronicles, (NCB), 1982, p.57 argues that because the list in Chronicles dates from a later period and puts Zerubbabel in a less exalted position in the Davidic dynasty that this reference is likely to rest on sound tradition. However it can also be argued that the Chronicler's list reflects the failure of the royal/messianic hopes vested in Zerubbabel and consequently accords him a more lowly position. Whatever the reason for the discrepancy, various ways of reconciling it have been suggested. Mitchell, ICC, p.43 favours following LXX and reading Shealtiel instead of Pedaiah; but we recognize with Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.10, that LXX may have inserted Shealtiel to resolve the difficulty which otherwise exists. A suggestion that Shealtiel died childless and that Zerubbabel was born to his brother Pedaiah in accordance with the law of levirate marriage (Deut.25:5-10) is widely accepted [for example W.Rudolph, Chronikbücher, (Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Tübingen), 1955, p.29; L.H.Brockington, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, (CB, New Series, London), 1969, p.53; and Williamson, as above] and is the most convincing.

⁴⁰ 2 Kgs.24:12ff,17ff; 25:7,27ff; Jer.39:1ff; 52:1ff,31ff.

⁴¹ Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, pp.164f.

the prophet's messages⁴² although, as has been indicated,⁴³ the content of most of the oracles appears to be directed at the people in general. In these passages Zerubbabel is invariably mentioned first, a fact which emphasizes his importance in relation to Joshua as Hebrew syntax tends to stress the first element in a sentence, although this distinction may have been slight.⁴⁴ It is clear that this perception of the two men, which accords them a high profile in the book, reflects the view of the compiler of the material. Thus it is appropriate to delay a discussion of the significance of this portrayal until the words of the prophets have been studied to ascertain their understanding about these figures and the leadership of the community.

There are no more references to Joshua, either by name or title, in the book of Haggai. This need not, of itself, reflect anything about the prophet's perception of Joshua's role within the community since his prophecies were primarily related to the rebuilding of the temple rather than the operation of the cult; and thus we would not expect a reference to a priest in this context. In the classical prophetic corpus mention of a priest by name is rarely found⁴⁵ but there is no reason to question that the classical prophets accepted the cultic status of the senior

⁴² Hag. 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4.

⁴³ See p. 13 above.

⁴⁴ J. Becker, Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament, trans. D.E. Green, (Fortress Press, Philadelphia), 1980, p. 66 claims the primacy of Zerubbabel is significant.

⁴⁵ Isaiah calls on Uriah the priest as a witness, (Isa. 8:2). Jeremiah is opposed by ^{by} Pashhur the priest, against whom the prophet then prophesies, (Jer. 20:1ff). Zephaniah the priest is mentioned in Jer. 29:25ff; 52:24; but not as the recipient of a particular oracle. The latter reference also includes the name of Seraiah, the chief priest. Amos is challenged by Amaziah the priest of Bethel and responds with a prophecy against him, (Amos 7:10ff).

priests of their day. Similarly it may be imprudent to attach too much significance to the absence of any allusion to Joshua in Haggai 2:11-14, the passage relating to priestly torah. Failure to mention him here can be construed in two contrasting ways; either as indicative that Haggai considered Joshua's position as being too exalted for him to be involved in the routine priestly duty of conveying torah interpretations, or as evidence that Haggai perceived the high priest's role as no different from that of his pre-exilic predecessors and that he was thus unworthy of any specific mention. There is no evidence to support either option but we tentatively favour the latter, on the basis of a hypothesis that if Haggai believed that Joshua had a new and significant leadership role then he would have spoken specifically about it, as he did with regard to Zerubbabel.

An oracle of promise addressed solely to Zerubbabel concludes the book, Haggai 2:21-23,

"Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders; and the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his fellow. On that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, says the LORD, and I will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the LORD of hosts."

It begins with divine instruction to the prophet regarding the intended recipient of the message, referring to Zerubbabel in terms of the power and status granted to him by earthly political rulers without mention of

his Davidic descent.⁴⁶ The oracle continues with a proclamation of the power and sovereignty of Yahweh over every political institution. It appears that a deliberate contrast is being presented to emphasize the complete lack of power of Zerubbabel to alter the political situation for the Israelite community in Jerusalem and the might and intention to enact dramatic change throughout the whole world possessed by Yahweh. Although we accept Sauer's claim that the verses echo themes from royal psalms,⁴⁷ we do not consider that the connection is sufficiently close to permit any suggestion that it is intentional or significant; and therefore we reject Petersen's consequent argument that

"This connection enables one to maintain that Haggai was drawing on traditions associated with the coronation of Israel's kings, and in so doing, to place the role of Zerubbabel as Davidide within a strong political context."⁴⁸

On the contrary, the function of Haggai 2:21-2 is to counter any view of Zerubbabel as someone who might gain power through human military action and become a ruler with an empire like David, or like the Persian king Darius, by omitting reference to his Davidic lineage and by illustrating the insignificance of all earthly positions of status compared with the supreme authority of Yahweh. The final verse then addresses the status that Yahweh will give to Zerubbabel 'אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל' (on that day). Although this phrase was regularly used as a connective formula, especially in

⁴⁶ We reject the suggestion of Beuken, Haggai, p.79 that the title 'governor of Judah' in this oracle is an anachronism which derives from a later tradition.

⁴⁷ Ps.2 and especially Ps.110:5b-6. G.Sauer, 'Serubbabel in der Sicht Haggais und Sacharjas', BZAW 105, (Das ferne und nahe Wort, Festschrift Leonhard Rost, ed. F.Maas), 1967, pp.199-207. Both psalms are pre-exilic in origin and the latter may be one of the earliest to survive.

⁴⁸ Petersen, OTL, p.100.

later prophetic writings.⁴⁷ it does not indicate a new thought here but introduces the main point of the oracle.⁵⁰ It refers to the future time when Yahweh will overturn the whole natural order, an event which has more eschatological significance than just implying the overthrow of the Persian Empire in political terms.⁵¹ However it is evident that Haggai viewed these happenings as being imminent, for otherwise they could not be related to a change in Zerubbabel's status brought about by Yahweh at that particular time.

In this latter part of the oracle Zerubbabel's Davidic kinship is mentioned and significantly his political status is omitted. There is little doubt that this is intentional⁵² since the verse consists totally of language associated with prominent Old Testament traditions. Four significant motifs are used - 'קָח' (take), 'עַבְדִּי' (my servant), 'טָבַח' (signet ring), 'בָּחַר' (choose) - and before we can determine what their use by Haggai was implying about Zerubbabel, it is necessary to consider their implication in the various traditions. The verb 'קָח' (take) is common in Hebrew; but there are some passages where it clearly indicates

⁴⁷ For example, Isa.24:21; 26:1; 27:1,2,12; Zech.12:3,4,6,8,9,11; 13:1,2, etc; and Amos 9:11.

⁵⁰ Beuken, Haggai, p.79. P.A.Munch, The Expression Bajjôm Hahu' - Is it an Eschatological Terminus Technicus, (Avhandling utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi I, Oslo), 1936, pp.9-15 suggests that the expression functions as a temporal adverb in this context. He further argues, *passim*, that in the Old Testament it is nowhere necessary to regard the phrase as an eschatological *terminus technicus*, although this does not deny that some passages in which it occurs are eschatological.

⁵¹ Contra K.Seybold, 'Die Königserwartung bei den Propheten Haggai und Sacharja', Judaica 28, 1972, pp.69-78, who argues that there is no eschatological thought here; and Beuken, Haggai, pp.78ff who interprets the oracle in a fundamentally political way.

⁵² Contra the editor of BHS who suggests the patronym may be an addition here.

the special election by Yahweh of an individual,⁵³ or group.⁵⁴ Several of these come from the classical prophetic corpus; but two are from the words of the pre-classical prophets Nathan and Ahijah,⁵⁵ while others derive from the different Pentateuchal strata.⁵⁶ Therefore it appears that this use of 'קָמַץ' was adopted by writers from different traditions and times; and thus no specific traditional significance can be attached to its use by Haggai except for the general intention to indicate that Zerubbabel has been specially selected for Yahweh's purposes. The verb 'בָּחַר' (choose) is an associated idea which occurs in similar contexts to 'קָמַץ' (take), where it refers to individuals,⁵⁷ groups,⁵⁸ or places⁵⁹ chosen for a purpose by Yahweh. However, apart from a few exceptions,⁶⁰ 'בָּחַר' occurs with this implication only in Deuteronomistic writings,⁶¹ the Chronistic books⁶² and Deutero-Isaiah.⁶³ In Deuteronomy Israel is

⁵³ For example Abraham, Gen.24:7; Josh.24:3; David, 2 Sam.7:8 = 1 Chron.17:7; Jeroboam, 1 Kgs.11:37; Nebuchadrezzar, Jer.43:10; Amos, Amos 7:15; cf Gen.2:15.

⁵⁴ For example Yahweh's people, Ex.6:7(MT); Deut.4:20; Ezek.36:24; the Levites, Num.3:12; 8:16,18; 18:6; cf. Isa.66:21.

⁵⁵ 2 Sam.7:8 and 1 Kgs.11:37 respectively.

⁵⁶ From J, Gen.24:7; from D, Deut.4:20; and from P, Ex.6:7(MT); Num.3:12 et al. Josh.24:3 closely follows these traditions.

⁵⁷ For example Levi, Deut.18:5; Aaron, Ps.105:28; Abraham, Neh.9:7; Saul, 1 Sam.10:24; David, 2 Sam.6:21; 1 Kgs.8:16(=2 Chron.6:6); Solomon, 1 Chron.28:5,6,10; 29:1.

⁵⁸ For example Yahweh's people, Deut.4:37; 7:6; 1 Kgs.3:8; Levites, Deut.21:5.

⁵⁹ For example Jerusalem, 1 Kgs.8:44,48 (= 2 Chron.6:34,38); 14:21; Ps.132:13; the place for Yahweh's name dwell, Deut.12:5,11,14; 14:23,24.

⁶⁰ Pss.33:12; 47:5(MT); 78: 67,68,70; 89:19; 105:26; 132:13; 135:4; Isa.14:1; Ezek.20:5 and notably Zech.1:17; 2:16(MT); 3:2.

⁶¹ Deuteronomy, 28 times; 1&2 Samuel, 6 times; 1&2 Kings, 11 times.

⁶² 1&2 Chronicles 16 times of which 4 parallel usages in Kings; Nehemiah twice.

identified as a chosen people⁶⁴ but references in the Deuteronomistic history relate mainly to the themes of Israel's kingship⁶⁵ or Jerusalem and the temple⁶⁶ which derive from the Davidic/Zion traditions.⁶⁷ The books of Chronicles contain only 12 occurrences of 'בָּחַר' (choose) in addition to those that parallel words in Kings. In these the Levites,⁶⁸ David/Judah,⁶⁹ Solomon⁷⁰ and Jerusalem and its temple⁷¹ are specified as chosen, uses akin to the Deuteronomistic ones. Thus Beuken's argument that 'בָּחַר' is a favourite verb of the Chronistic redactor as well as the Deuteronomist appears to be overstated;⁷² and his consequent proposal that Haggai 2:23b is a secondary clause which derives from a Chronistic milieu is not persuasive. Beuken apparently ignores Deutero-Isaiah's use of 'בָּחַר' and yet it occurs eight times⁷³ always in association with

⁶³ 7 times.

⁶⁴ For example Deut.4:37; 7:6,7. (Also in 1 Kgs.3:8).

⁶⁵ In general 1 Sam.16:8,9,10 (also Deut.17:15); of Saul, 1 Sam.10:24; of David, 2 Sam.6:21; 1 Kgs.8:16; 11:34; cf.Pss.78:70; 89:19.

⁶⁶ The city in 1 Kgs.8:44,48; 11:13,32,36; 14:21; 2 Kgs.21:7;23:27; cf.Pss.78:68; 132:13; and the Jerusalem temple as the place which Yahweh chooses for his name to dwell, in Deut.12:5 (+19 times); Josh.9:27.

⁶⁷ R.E.Clements, God's Chosen People, (SCM Press), 1968, pp.45-9, argues that the Deuteronomists recast the concept of election in a way that democratized it from its focus on the king in favour of the nation. This is accepted but their emphasis on the Horeb covenant did not deny the validity of the Davidic covenant nor prevent them from continuing the traditions which developed from it.

⁶⁸ 1 Chron.15:2; 2 Chron.29:11. The Deuteronomists also call the Levites chosen, Deut.18:5; 21:5; 1 Sam.2:28.

⁶⁹ 1 Chron.28:4.

⁷⁰ 1 Chron.28:5,6,10; 29:1.

⁷¹ 2 Chron.6:6; 7:12,16; 12:13.

⁷² Beuken, Haggai, pp.80-83.

⁷³ Isa.41:8,9; 42:1; 43:10; 44:1,2; 45:4; 49:7.

the concept of 'עַבְד' (servant). Apart from Isaiah 49:7 each instance refers to the chosen one as 'עַבְדִּי' (my servant), as in Haggai 2:23; and this epithet occurs another five times in Deutero-Isaiah.⁷⁴ The text of Deutero-Isaiah raises many questions about the identity of the servant⁷⁵ but there is no justification for Petersen's claim that the election of the Davidic city is meant by Isaiah 41:8; 43:10; and 49:7.⁷⁶ The facts which do emerge from Deutero-Isaiah are the regular association of 'בָּחַר' (choose) and 'עַבְדִּי' (my servant) and the clear correlation between the idea of a servant, in personal terms, as chosen by Yahweh from amongst others to be his possession and to be used for his purposes.

Let us now consider how traditions other than Deutero-Isaiah use the epithet 'עַבְדִּי' (my servant). Aside from its mundane meaning 'עַבְדִּי' is frequently used in speech attributed to Yahweh to refer to someone in close relationship with him, whom he has appointed to fulfil a special purpose. Among the important figures in Israel's history who are thus described are Abraham⁷⁷ and Moses;⁷⁸ and the whole nation is referred to

⁷⁴ Isa.42:19; 44:21; 49:3; 52:13; 53:11. Isa.44:21 expresses the same idea a second time with the words 'עַבְדִּי-לִי' and a similar expression is used in Isa.49:6, 'נִי עַבְדִּי'.

⁷⁵ The nation understood collectively is indicated by Isa.41:8,9; 43:10; 44:1,2; 45:4; 49:3 (though it is widely accepted that 'Israel' is a gloss here); an individual is implied by Isa.42:1,19; 49:6,7; 52:13; 53:11; and opinions differ as to whether the individual is a messianic or prophetic figure. The complexities of this subject cannot be entered into here; for a survey of the issues and an extensive bibliography see H.H.Rowley, 'The Servant of the Lord in the Light of Three Decades of Criticism', The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament, London, 1952, pp.1-57.

⁷⁶ Petersen, OTL, p.104. He also wrongly, in our opinion, cites Isa.14:1 as having the same implication. This verse probably derives from the final redaction of the Isaianic corpus (for comment on this see R.E.Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.138-9) which post-dates the compilation of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 and so it is irrelevant to our discussion.

⁷⁷ Gen.26:24. Cf.Ps.105:6,42.

in this way in terms of Jacob.⁷⁷ However it is undoubtedly in relation to David that the term occurs most often, referring either to him as an individual or to his line of descent.⁸⁰ David had been anointed as king over Israel at Yahweh's instigation;⁸¹ and as Yahweh's servant he was to save Israel from her enemies.⁸² He was granted a promise that his house and throne would continue for ever⁸³ and it is to this promise that many Old Testament references to David as servant allude,⁸⁴ especially in the Deuteronomistic traditions. These traditions also stress the obedience of David to Yahweh's ways and commands⁸⁵ and portray him as the ideal king who was truly Yahweh's earthly representative. The idealistic view of David as obedient servant, founder of an everlasting royal dynasty and the one through whom Yahweh would save his people gave rise to the

⁷⁸ Num.12:7,8; Josh.1:2,7; 2 Kgs.21:8; Mal.3:22(MT). Cf. Ex.14:31; Josh.1:13,15; 8:31,33; 1 Kgs.8:53,56; 2 Kgs.18:12. Others addressed by this term are Caleb, Num.14:24; Isaiah, Isa.20:3; Eliakim, Isa.22:20; and Hezekiah, 2 Chron.32:16.

⁷⁹ Jer.30:10f = 46:27,28; Ezek.28:25; 37:25. Cf the identification between Israel or Jacob and servant in Dt.Isa. See above note 74.

⁸⁰ 2 Sam.3:18; 7:5,8 (= 1 Chron.17:4,7); 1 Kgs.11:13,32,34,36,38; 14:8; 2 Kgs.19:34; 20:6; Ps.89:4,21(MT); Isa.37:35; Jer.33:21,22,26; Ezek.34:23,24; 37:24,25. Cf. 1 Kgs.8:24ff (= 2Chron.6:15ff); Pss.78:70; 132:10; et al.

⁸¹ 1 Sam.16:1-14. Cf.Ps.89:21(MT). This Psalm's date and unity is disputed but it may have been composed around the time of Haggai and Zechariah in the light of the hopes for a renewed Davidic kingdom held by some at that time. See for example A.A.Anderson Psalms, pp.630f.

⁸² 2 Sam.3:18.

⁸³ 2 Sam.7:5ff. Cf.Ps.89:4(MT).

⁸⁴ 1 Kgs.11:13,32 et al; 2 Kgs.19:34(=Isa.37:35); 20:6; [the belief in Jerusalem as inviolable also features in these passages]; Jer.33:21f, 26. These sections from Jeremiah, absent in the Greek text, are most probably late additions, possibly originating sometime after the second temple had been rebuilt and thus post-dating Haggai. See R.P.Carroll, Jeremiah, pp.70, 637ff.

⁸⁵ For example 1 Kgs.14:8.

traditions about a 'new', future, David whom Yahweh would raise up to be the leader of his people,⁶⁶ which in later Judaism developed into full-blown eschatological messianism. Every instance of the epithet 'עֲבָדִי' (my servant) considered so far has been applied to characters within the people of Yahweh; but in Jeremiah Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, is so described.⁶⁷ This reference, together with the use of 'עֲבָדִי' in Deutero-Isaiah, indicates that classical prophecy understood the epithet to have wider implication than only as a description of Israel's kings; and thus Haggai's application of these ideas must be considered against the background of the three different traditions which could all have exerted influences on his thought.

The final motif for consideration before conclusions can be drawn about Haggai's understanding of Zerubbabel's role is that of מְשִׁיחַ

⁶⁶ Ezek.34:23f; 37:24f. These passages probably date from a period no earlier than that of the restoration of the Jerusalem community, that is round the time of Haggai and Zechariah. See for example S.Mowinckel, He That Cometh, trans.G.W.Anderson, (Blackwell, Oxford), 1956, pp.15-18. Wevers, Ezekiel, pp.29,181,183ff,196ff argues that later traditionists who were responsible for these passages were probably active at the very end of the exile rather than in the post-exilic period.

Cf. Isa.9:1-6(MT); 16:5; Hos.3:4f; Amos 9:11 which are also widely accepted as being late, possibly post-exilic, additions to these texts.

⁶⁷ Jer.25:9; 27:6 (the name is recorded as Nebuchadnezzar in this passage); 43:10. Although the epithet 'עֲבָדִי' is absent in every case in the Greek text (generally thought to be more original than MT) scholars believe that 27:6 MT represents the original text, which indicates that this is a classical prophetic usage. This is discussed by Carroll, Jeremiah, pp.492,527,725; and W.Zimmerli and J.Jeremias, The Servant of God, (Studies in Biblical Theology 20, SCM), 1957, p.21, n.48.

Petersen, OTL, p.103 argues that Cyrus, the Persian king, is also viewed as עֲבָדִי (servant) of Yahweh in Isa.45:1. In fact the text uses the words 'מְשִׁיחַ' (to his anointed) about Cyrus, a description which is more significant than the designation 'עֲבָדִי' (my servant) since it would convey the idea of a king appointed by Yahweh for his people.

In the Wisdom tradition, in the prologue and epilogue to the Book of Job, the non-Jew Job is also called 'עֲבָדִי' by Yahweh, Job 1:8; 2:3; 42:7,8(twice). These references probably post-date Haggai (see p.102, note 70) but the tradition may have applied the epithet to faithful followers of Yahweh in an earlier period.

(signet ring). A 'מִטְּבֵּל' was an engraved⁸⁸ signet or seal used in legal or official contexts⁸⁹ which was possessed by people with some authority and could be worn on a cord⁹⁰ or as a ring.⁹¹ It was also a mark of authorization that a representative might use on behalf of its rightful owner.⁹² In Ezekiel 28:12 the king of Tyre is addressed as having been a 'model signet'⁹³ until he sinned; and while this passage is difficult to interpret it suggests that anyone so called should be understood as a representative of Yahweh. These references indicate the general meaning of the term underlying Haggai's use of it but 'מִטְּבֵּל' occurs in one other passage which seems to be related to Haggai 2:23. Jeremiah 22:24ff,

"As I live, says the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet ring (מִטְּבֵּל) on my right hand, yet I would tear you off and give you into the hand of those who seek your life ... even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. I will hurl you ... into another country ... and there you shall die. ... Thus says the LORD: 'Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days; for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David, and ruling again in Judah.'"

contains a very harsh judgement against Coniah, or Jehoiachin, the young king of Judah who ruled for only three months before he was deported to Babylon.⁹⁴ This passage does not identify the king as Yahweh's signet

⁸⁸ Ex.28:11,21,36; 39:6,14,40.

⁸⁹ 1 Kgs.21:8; Job.38:14. Cf Jer.32:10,11,14,44; Neh.10:1,2(MT).

⁹⁰ Gen.38:18,25.

⁹¹ Esth.3:12; 8:8,10.

⁹² 1 Kgs.21:8. This is an instance of dishonest use.

⁹³ Vocalizing מִטְּבֵּל as a noun rather than a participle.

⁹⁴ 2 Kgs.24:8. Cf 2 Chron.36:9 which gives his age as 8 yrs. This is surely incorrect in view of the condemnation levelled against him.

but suggests that even if he had had this special relationship, Yahweh would nonetheless have rejected him and sent him into exile. It closes with a clear statement that the dynastic line of David has come to a complete end. If Haggai 2:23 is interpreted in the light of these words it appears to be both a deliberate reversal of them and a reaffirmation of the dynastic promise contained in the Davidic covenant, because Zerubbabel, Jehoiachin's grandson, is selected by Yahweh to be like his 'חֲטָטָא' (signet ring) and to be the earthly representative of Yahweh's rule after he has initiated the eschatological upheaval.⁹⁵ As Carroll argues however,⁹⁶ it is difficult to understand why Jehoiachin is spoken of so harshly in Jeremiah,⁹⁷ especially when the brevity of his reign is acknowledged; and therefore this raises questions as to when the passage originated and when it attained its final form. A possible solution is offered by Carroll who proposes that the words which attack Jehoiachin personally, including the reference to 'חֲטָטָא' (signet ring), constituted the original text and that they began as a form of support for Zedekiah, the newly appointed, pro-Babylonian, king. The final words of the section, Jeremiah 22:30, directed against the descendants of Jehoiachin, are then understood as an editorial expansion deriving from an anti-Zerubbabel movement in the early Persian period. It is likely that such a faction existed in the differing groups which made up the community in

⁹⁵ This interpretation is proposed by Baldwin, Haggai, p.54; Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.69-70; P.A.Verhoef, The Books of Haggai and Malachi, (New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Grand Rapids : Eerdmans), 1987, p.147; et al.

⁹⁶ Carroll, Jeremiah, pp.437f, 441ff.

⁹⁷ A different perspective is presented in the closing words of the book, Jer 52:31ff, which suggests that at least two differing strands of tradition about Jehoiachin influenced its composition and redaction.

Jerusalem⁹⁸ and since Zerubbabel vanished from the scene without record it may be that they were influential.⁹⁹ If this interpretation of Jeremiah 22:24ff is accepted as the most probable, then it follows that Haggai's use of *חֲתָמִים* (signet ring) may depend on the original passage and be meant to contrast Zerubbabel, a Davidic descendant who is again being chosen by Yahweh, with the rejected king, the Davidic Jehoiachin. Haggai 2:23 is then seen not as the reversal of a Jeremianic prophecy about the downfall of the dynasty but as the refocussing of the Davidic traditions on Zerubbabel as representative of Yahweh and his authority in the coming eschatological era.

This argument is supported by the use of the verb *בָּחַר* (choose) in Haggai 2:23b. As has been indicated, this is closely associated with the Davidic traditions; but we acknowledge the validity of Meyers and Meyers' comment¹⁰⁰ that it is not used in relation to Davidic kings who attained their position by virtue of dynastic succession, a process which precluded the exercise of choice by Yahweh. However once the line had been broken by the exile, it became appropriate to proclaim that Yahweh was again choosing a Davidic descendant to be his representative as earthly leader of the Jerusalem community; and to be both his servant (*עֶבֶד*) and his signet ring (*חֲתָמִים*). It appears that Haggai was drawing predominantly on the Davidic traditions, as transmitted through various literary groups including classical prophecy, in his proclamation to

⁹⁸ For varying views on this issue see Hanson, Dawn, pp.79-203 and 209-69; and Morton Smith, Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old Testament, 2nd ed, (SCM), 1987, pp.80ff. Cf our comments on pp.57ff.

⁹⁹ For comment on the fate of Zerubbabel see p.17, n.59 above.

¹⁰⁰ Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.70.

Zerubbabel. However, his words are not simply a direct continuation of these ideas since they also reflect Deutero-Isaiah's wider concept of a chosen servant and require Yahweh's eschatological activity to effect their realization. The promise to Zerubbabel indicates that when Yahweh acts a new relationship will be entered into and this will mark the re-establishment of the Davidic covenant in the new age.

In the light of the foregoing discussion it appears that Haggai's use of these motifs has messianic connotations but this is far removed from suggesting that he understood Zerubbabel to be the Messiah,¹⁰¹ a concept which belongs to a later age. It appears probable that Haggai envisaged imminent eschatological activity by Yahweh which would result in political independence for the community in Jerusalem and necessitate there being a political leader; and that Zerubbabel would be that leader appointed by Yahweh. Haggai's inclusion of the Davidic patronym and the use of traditional motifs in relation to him stress his royal lineage and suggest that the prophet was anticipating some form of restored monarchy for the community in the new age, centring on Zerubbabel. The new rule was to be distinctive from the pre-exilic monarchy but still heir to the Davidic covenant and promises, with Zerubbabel as the chosen earthly representative, as a new idealized David, leading the community.

The references by name to Zerubbabel in Zechariah 1-8 present a very different understanding of his role, however. These occur in two adjacent oracles, Zechariah 4:6b-7 and 8-10a, which have been inserted

¹⁰¹ This clear distinction is similarly made by R.T. Siebeneck, 'The Messianism of Aggeus and Proto-Zacharias', CBQ 19, 1957, pp.312-328, who stresses that Haggai's prophecies look to the future and concludes that the prophet viewed Zerubbabel as a prototype of the future Messiah.

into the text of the vision of the lampstand flanked by olive trees.¹⁰²

The first of these,

"This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts. What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain; and he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'"

is addressed to Zerubbabel and refers neither to his Davidic descent nor to his political status. It is widely agreed that it concerns his role in the temple rebuilding project; but there is much contention over the exact interpretation of particular phrases in it - 'מַיִי-אַתָּה הָר־הַגָּדוֹל' (What [literally - who] are you, O great mountain?); 'הָאֶבֶן הַרְאֵשֶׁת' (the top stone); and 'תִּשְׂאוֹת יְיָ יַחַד יִשָּׂאוּ' (amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it'). As each phrase may have significance for an understanding of Zechariah's presentation of Zerubbabel, they need to be considered in turn. The apostrophic question 'מַיִי-אַתָּה הָר־הַגָּדוֹל' has been variously interpreted as addressed literally to Mount Zion,¹⁰⁴ to opposing political forces in

¹⁰² See p.43ff, n.140, above. We find no convincing evidence for denying these oracles to Zechariah's authorship, contra Galling, Studien, pp.137-8 who argues that they are an anonymous fragment, from oracles of Haggai perhaps, which have been inserted. However we believe that the compiler or redactor is responsible for their textual position.

¹⁰³ Textual questions concerning the lack of the definite article with 'הָר' understood as a vocative when one is given with its adjective; or whether it is legitimate to transfer the final 'ה' from the personal pronoun 'אַתָּה' to become the 'missing' article, do not affect the meaning of the phrase and thus need not be considered at length. We find no reason for radical emendations of the text. For syntactical comments see GK, §126, w-x and for the alternatives suggested by the versions and various scholars, Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.252-4.

¹⁰⁴ Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.244ff. Their argument is partially based on a claim that 'temen' in Sumerian and subsequent Mesopotamian building texts means an enormous platform erected for the foundations of the new building. Although there is a text from the late 8th century BC relating to Sennacherib which contains the exclamation "O foundation-platform" in such a context (cited in R.S.Ellis, Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia, (Yale University Press), 1968, pp.176f) as Ellis, pp.147-50. has shown this term appears to have a wider range of meaning, implying either the actual foundations or a deposit in them. Also it

differing guises or physical obstacles such as the heap of rubble on the temple site;¹⁰⁵ and Petersen tentatively suggested that it was directed at Joshua the high priest.¹⁰⁶ It is clear that the mountain represents some problem which will be overcome by Zerubbabel, although only through divine power, thereby enabling him to succeed in the task committed to him. Galling has drawn attention to the similarity of this thought to Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy about the return to Jerusalem from exile;

"make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level and the rough places a plain."¹⁰⁷

Both passages relate to restoration in Jerusalem and both emphasize that the respective plan and its success are dependent on divine initiative. However, while Deutero-Isaiah's words conjure up events on a grandiose, almost miraculous scale, the oracle in Zechariah is focussed rather more narrowly on a specific difficulty. It is probable that Zechariah was familiar with Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy and thus it may have prompted his use of the analogy of mountain and plain but it is improbable that

must be noted that the re-building of a temple on the ruins of earlier foundations is taking place in Jerusalem, not the preparation of a new site. Since Meyers and Meyers' argument has little other evidence to commend it we believe it must be rejected.

¹⁰⁵ Ackroyd, Exile, p.173, note 8 lists several suggestions with bibliographic references. Where a specific power is identified it is generally based, not on the evidence of this passage alone, but on the scholar concerned's perspective on all Zechariah 1-8 and perhaps Haggai.

¹⁰⁶ D.L.Petersen, 'Zerubbabel and Jerusalem Temple Reconstruction', CBQ 36, 1974, pp.366-72 and OTL, pp.239f. He suggests there may be some deft word play between 'גִּבְעוֹן הַגָּדוֹל' (great mountain) and 'הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל' (the high priest). This interpretation may seem to be a possibility, albeit a remote one, if the oracle is read in its context in MT in the midst of the other material relating to Joshua and the community leaders. Since this is not its original setting, a point accepted by Petersen, the lack of any evidence elsewhere in Zechariah 1-8 to suggest conflict between Joshua and Zerubbabel enables us to reject this option categorically.

¹⁰⁷ Isa.40:3b-4. Galling, Studien, p.140. Cf. Isa.42:15.

direct literary links exist. Although Ackroyd¹⁰⁸ cautions against too literal an interpretation of Zechariah 4:7, it may be that a study of the building practices in Ancient Mesopotamia can shed some light on the kind of procedures which the Jerusalem community considered as essential for the successful rebuilding of the temple; and provide an indication of how the motifs and phrases should be interpreted.

Excursus

A careful study of this subject has been made by Ellis¹⁰⁹ based on finds from archeological excavation and textual evidence. He does not suggest that his conclusions can be transposed on to other cultural groups but there is every likelihood that Israel would have known her neighbours' practices and that she herself would have adopted some kind of similar ritual for corresponding occasions. Dating from the third millennium BC the cylinders of Gudea of Lagash record a religious ritual performed by the ruler relating to the laying of foundations for a new temple.¹¹⁰ This involved the ceremonial making of a special brick which was then sprinkled with oil, dedicated and laid in the foundations by Gudea. It appears that the ancient Mesopotamians greatly valued the continuity of worship on one site to the extent that in some periods, especially the Neo-Babylonian, the kings went to great trouble to ensure that the new building was on the exact spot of the old temple.¹¹¹ The procedure apparently involved clearing the site of rubble to expose the original foundations, perhaps a search for an identifiable brick or deposit laid by the ruler at the time when the temple was first built¹¹² and the laying of another brick or deposit adjacent to or on top of this one by the current ruler. Then the rebuilding could be undertaken. One text from Warka dating from the much later Seleucid period, relates to the same situation, indicating the ritual to be performed by the 'kalû', a professional singer of religious lamentations which were intended to

¹⁰⁸ Ackroyd, Exile, p.173.

¹⁰⁹ Ellis, Foundation, passim. The scope of this work extends beyond temple buildings to include palaces and public buildings, with some reference to ordinary house building rituals as well. See also Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.216-26 and 257-9 who has drawn together much of the relevant material independently of Ellis.

¹¹⁰ Ellis provides a transliteration of the text with translations, notes and references, Foundation, pp.170-2, 22.

¹¹¹ Ellis, Foundation, pp.12-14. He cites texts of Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus, pp.180-3.

¹¹² Ellis, Foundation, pp.26-9 argues that it was probably the special foundation brick, which would have been inscribed or made in a significantly different way, that was sought, at least in theory even if in practice they had to make do with one of the former, ordinary bricks because they could not locate the original foundation brick.

placate the gods:

"When the wall of a temple falls into ruin, in order to demolish and refound that temple, the diviner shall investigate(?) its site.... The builder of that temple shall put on clean clothes and put a tin bracelet on his arm; he shall take an axe of lead, remove the first brick, and put it in a restricted place. You set up an offering table in front of the brick for the god of the foundations, and you offer sacrifices."¹¹³

Another text from the 7th century BC relating to Esarhaddon¹¹⁴ provides a link between Gudea's cylinders and the Warka text, in that it refers to the king making a special brick himself which is then identified as the 'first brick' (libittu mahritu), the term used in the Warka text. This adds credence to the suggestion that there was a basic continuity in these procedures through a very long historical period in that area. Common to texts from all periods is the important role of the king or prince who is generally referred to, in first or third person terms, as the builder of the temple.¹¹⁵ The evidence all suggests that the royal personage physically participated in the foundation rituals at least and that this was understood to be essential for the successful conclusion of the building project. It also appears to have been common practice for the 'builder' to deposit in the foundations of the temple, or in some other part of the structure, pegs or tablets of various material which were sometimes inscribed.¹¹⁶ Tablets may have been contained in boxes but this was not always the case. Inscribed tablets from the palace built by Sargon II, late 8th century BC, confirm this practice:

"I wrote my name on tablets of gold, silver, copper, tin, lead, lapis lazuli, and alabaster, and I deposited (them) in their (several palaces') foundations."¹¹⁷

Although this practice evidently ceased after the last of the Assyrian kings and was not adopted by any of the Neo-Babylonian rulers, Ellis remarks:

"It is rather surprising that the custom was briefly revived by the Achaemenids. A number of square tablets of stone, clay, and precious

¹¹³ Ellis, Foundation, p.184.

¹¹⁴ Cited by Ellis, Foundation, p.177 and discussed pp.26ff.

¹¹⁵ Ellis, Foundation, pp.20-26. Convention ascribed the building of any public or important structure to the ruler or occasionally other high ranking official.

¹¹⁶ Ellis, Foundation, pp.46-107.

¹¹⁷ Ellis, Foundation, pp.102 and 176.

metal with inscriptions of Achaemenids ... have been found. Three have been found in situ at Persepolis. Two shallow, neatly made stone boxes with lids, each containing two square plates of gold and silver, ... On each of the plates was a trilingual inscription to Darius."¹¹⁸

Could it perhaps be the case that the Persians 'rediscovered' the custom of burying foundation deposits through contact with Israel? If Israel had regularly followed the same practice as had the Assyrians, it may have retained a place in her traditions through the Babylonian period and then been put into effect by the community which returned from exile to Jerusalem and began to rebuild the temple. The accepted dates for the Jerusalem temple, 520-516BC, and the palace at Persepolis, ca 518-16 BC onwards, allow the possibility of influence in that direction. In the absence of any other explanation for the custom's re-introduction by the Persians, we believe our suggestion provides a credible solution. If it is correct, then it requires that Israel's traditions concerning building foundations closely resembled those of her Mesopotamian neighbours.

In the light of the foregoing discussion it appears probable that 'הַר-הַגְּדֹלָה' (great mountain) refers to the pile of rubble which had to be cleared from the ruined temple site to enable Zerubbabel and the workers to gain access to the foundations. In this context Gallings's claim that the phrase 'בְּרוּחִי' (by my spirit) in Zechariah 4:6 should be understood in terms of the dynamic force of Yahweh's storm-wind which would effect this clearance of the site also makes good sense.¹¹⁹ This understanding

¹¹⁸ Ellis, Foundation, p.104. The quotation identifies the ruler as Darius II although the two references in Appendix B pp.195,196f show Darius I as the ruler involved. The correct reading should be Darius I. See E.F.Schmidt, Persepolis I, (The University of Chicago, Oriental Institute Publications Vol.LXVIII), 1953, pp.70,77-79 and Figs.42 A-B and 43. He indicates that Darius I founded the site, planned the buildings and began the construction.

The Apadana, the royal reception room where these deposits were located, was apparently begun by Darius I and finished by Xerxes. See U.Schneider, Persepolis and Ancient Iran, (University of Chicago Press) 1976, pp.1-2. She indicates that the exact date for the founding of Persepolis is unknown but it "is assumed that Darius I began work on the platform and its structures between 518 and 516 BC."(p.1)

¹¹⁹ Gallings, Studien, p.141. Cf. Ex 15:10; Isa.11:15; 27:8; 30:28; Ps.147:18; Job 26:13 for examples of the effects achieved by such winds. Zechariah may be using this reference to wind by analogy, rather than literally, to indicate that Yahweh's power will enable the large task to

of the context may likewise clarify the meaning of the other difficult phrases; but care must be taken not to beg the question regarding their interpretation.

The second contentious motif, 'הָאֶבֶן הַרְאֵשֶׁת' (the top stone), caused great difficulty to the translators of the versions¹²⁰ and has continued to do so. Those who interpret Zechariah 4:6b-10a as a unit focussing on the completion of the temple¹²¹ argue that it refers to the final stone of the building which Zerubbabel brings out before the people and places as the headstone, the last stone of the project. However evidence that ceremonies were associated with the laying of a final capstone, or that a stone was ever specially selected and retained for this purpose is not attested anywhere in Hebrew or ancient Near Eastern texts, which casts doubt on this interpretation.¹²² It may be that 'הָרֵאשֶׁת' is a feminine noun¹²³ in apposition to 'הָאֶבֶן' meaning 'the stone, the top one', that is 'the headstone', though scholars have proposed various other ways to deal with the 'problematic' final 'ה'.¹²⁴ Another option which appears not to have been suggested is that a 'נ' has been dropped from the text which ought to read 'הָרֵאשֶׁתָּה', the feminine form of the adjective 'רֵאשֶׁת'.

be speedily completed. Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.251-63 concludes in favour of the same interpretation for the 'mountain' and 'by my spirit'. He cites passages from Nehemiah, dating from a later period, in support of his arguments as well as Mesopotamian texts.

¹²⁰ See Petitjean pp.241-3.

¹²¹ Baldwin, Haggai, pp.120-2; and Ackroyd, Exile, pp.172-4.

¹²² Cf. Ps.118:22; Isa.28:16; Job 38:6 referring to the cornerstone of the foundations.

¹²³ BDB, p.911. See also A.S.Carrier, 'The Hapax Legomena of the Minor Prophets', Hebraica V, 1889, p.212.

¹²⁴ Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.243ff surveys the suggested options.

(former); although forms of this adjective, each time with this meaning, occur in four more of Zechariah's oracles.¹²⁵ If this is correct, the motif is recognized as a reference to an original foundation stone which Zerubbabel searches for in the exposed foundations and brings or carries out, the regular meaning of 'גָּזַר' in the hiphil, into the sight of the people. This stone would have been retained until, together with a new identifiable stone, it was replaced in the foundations by Zerubbabel as the building work began in earnest.¹²⁶ Interpreted thus, the picture presents a credible backdrop for the final words of the oracle.

The third contentious phrase 'הִשְׁמָעוּ אֶת הַקּוֹל' which concludes the oracle is generally agreed to represent some kind of acclamation by the people in response to Zerubbabel's actions; but the vocabulary used raises several questions. The noun 'הִשְׁמָעוּ' (shouts) occurs only in the plural in the Old Testament to indicate loud noises made by people or the forces of nature.¹²⁷ Its derivation connects it with the concept of devastation or ruins¹²⁸ but, apart from the possibility that Zechariah chose his vocabulary with word association in mind, it is clear that it would be improper to translate it other than as 'shouts'.¹²⁹ The scene

¹²⁵ Zech. 1:4; 7:7, 12; 8:11.

¹²⁶ See pp. 174ff above. É. Lipiński, 'Recherches sur le livre de Zacharie' *VT* 20, 1970, pp. 30-33, argues that the original foundation stone is the one intended by this motif. However, he suggests it would have been retained until the building was completed and then laid as the headstone by Zerubbabel. For reasons already given we reject this view.

¹²⁷ Isa. 22:2; Job 39:7 and Job 30:22; 36:29.

¹²⁸ *BDB*, p. 996 suggests 'חָשַׁב' as the root, indicating that this may be an alternative form of 'חָשַׁב' (make a din, crash into ruins).

¹²⁹ Meyers and Meyers, *AB*, pp. 248f discuss the attractiveness of making a connection with the idea of ruins and reasons for rejecting it. Syntactically the word is interpreted as an accusative of manner, as proposed by Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, p. 614. See also *GK*, §118 m-r.

is most probably a ritual associated with the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone.¹³⁰ a theory supported by the account in Ezra 3:10f of the foundation of the new temple:

"And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests ... sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, ... And all the people shouted with a great shout¹³¹, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid."

The precise meaning of the repeated exclamation 'יָיָי' (grace, grace) is debatable because the word carries the idea of favour or acceptance with God or man¹³² and that of grace or beauty.¹³³ The latter sense is found predominantly in the Wisdom literature where in one instance, in Proverbs 17:8, it is associated with the word 'אֶבֶן' (stone). Although there is a linguistic similarity with Zechariah 4:7, where the sight of the stone prompts the exclamations,¹³⁴ the context in Proverbs is not that of ceremonial foundation stones but rather that of dishonourable human transactions. Therefore we reject the idea that these passages are in any way connected and the suggestion that the exclamation should be translated 'it is beautiful'.¹³⁵ The more probable interpretation is to understand the acclamations in the context of a ceremony akin to the

¹³⁰ See pp.174f re Gudea's cylinders and the 'kalû' ritual.

¹³¹ The word used, 'תִּשְׁמְעוּן', is the more common one for shouts of war or of joy; for example Amos 2:2; 1 Sam.4:5,6; Ps.47:6(MT).

¹³² For example Gen.6:8; Ex.33:12; Num.11:15; Pr.3:4 (with God) and Gen.32:6(MT); 1 Sam.1:18; 2 Sam.14:22; Est.5:8; 7:3.

¹³³ For example Pr.1:9; 3:22; 4:9; 5:19; Nah.3:4.

¹³⁴ There seems no justification for Petersen's suggestion, OTL, p.238, that the words are directed to Zerubbabel since this necessitates emending the final word of text from 'אֶבֶן' to 'יָיָי', a change for which there is no textual support.

¹³⁵ Contra Ackroyd, Exile, p.172. Cf Mitchell, ICC, p.192.

Mesopotamian 'kalû' ritual whereby God's favour is being sought for the rebuilding project in recognition that it can be successful only if Yahweh wills a new dwelling place and blesses the work. The stone which Zerubbabel brought out from the ruined temple provided direct continuity between the old and the new, both in a literal sense and ritually; and the religious ceremony in which the people and the priests participated ensured the divine favour which was needed at the outset of the work to guarantee its success.

It is evident that the elements of Zechariah 4:6b-7 satisfy the context of a ceremony associated with the laying of a foundation stone similar to those attested in Ancient Mesopotamia. Since it was the king who regularly played a significant role in such ceremonies relating to the building of a temple, acting as a divine representative,¹³⁶ the fact that Zerubbabel is named as the prominent participant may suggest that he was thought of in a royal capacity. The text emphasizes in verse 6b

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,
says the LORD of hosts",

that divine authority and initiative underlay his participation and this accords with the general understanding of the royal role. However there is evidence that in the king's absence another high ranking official could fulfil this role¹³⁷ and so care must be taken not to presume that Zerubbabel's Davidic ancestry was the sole reason for him being accorded

¹³⁶ See p.174; also A.S.Kapelrud, 'Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings', Orientalia, Nova Series 32, 1963, pp.56-62. Kapelrud argues that the king acted as a representative of the god(s) in ancient Middle Eastern temple building. He relates his arguments primarily to 1 Kgs.3-9 and 2 Chron.1-2 in which King Solomon is the temple builder; but he also mentions Ex.24:12-40 in which Moses, who is usually linked with prophecy rather than royalty, is builder of the tabernacle and Ezek.40-48 which is a vision of a completed temple.

¹³⁷ See above n.115.

this honour.¹³⁸ Since Israel had no human king Zerubbabel may have been considered the appropriate person to take part in the ritual because he was the senior political official in the community, the governor. The oracle contains neither patronym nor title however, so it is unwise to argue categorically for either option without supporting evidence.

The second oracle, Zechariah 4:8-10a,

"Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.'"

undoubtedly refers to Zerubbabel's role as temple builder and suggests that he will oversee its completion. As our discussion of the preceding oracle has shown, the opening clause of this one does not refer to the laying of a cornerstone at the base of new temple foundations but to the ritual use of a stone from the former building in connection with the start of the rebuilding work over the original foundations.¹³⁹ Whether the prophecy that Zerubbabel would be involved in the completion of the

¹³⁸ It is important to recognize the very high status attached to the role of temple builder, contra the view of Mason, 'The Prophets of the Restoration', p.148, that in the Zechariah tradition "Zerubbabel has been reduced ... to the role of Temple builder alone".

¹³⁹ This interpretation eliminates the alleged problem of conflict between this passage and Ezra 5:16 in which the laying of the temple foundations is attributed to Sheshbazzar in 538 BC. Even if there was an earlier attempt by Sheshbazzar to rebuild the temple it is evident that it proved abortive. Convention would therefore have required the ritual ceremony to be repeated at the outset of the new start in 520 BC. A.Gelston, 'The Foundations of the Second Temple', VT 16, 1966, pp.232-5 discusses this issue from a different perspective. He concludes that it is unnecessary to reject the idea of an abortive attempt to rebuild made by Sheshbazzar, basing his argument on the use of 'TO' (to found). He does not argue for the historical accuracy of the account in Ezra; nor do we make any judgements on this issue.

temple was fulfilled or not cannot be ascertained due to a complete lack of evidence; and this question has to be left open. In the last verse a contrast between scorn and celebration is presented but it is uncertain what is meant by 'the day of small things'. It probably relates¹⁴⁰ to the meagre materials available for the rebuilding and the small scale of the plans in comparison with the grandeur of Solomon's temple. In which case it presents a similar message to Haggai 2:3,

"Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not in your sight as nothing?"

a passage that is also connected with the time when the rebuilding was about to begin above the old ruins. The concluding words of the oracle contain the expression 'קִיָּאֵן וְהַבִּדְיָן' (the stone, the tin),¹⁴¹ nouns which are in apposition, whereby the latter defines the material of the former object,¹⁴² and which are often interpreted as a plummet.¹⁴³ This is

¹⁴⁰ Meyers and Meyers AB, pp.252f suggest that some people may have doubted Zerubbabel's ability to perform the king's ritual role in the foundation ceremony since he was only governor and not king. Therefore they may have regarded the occasion as unimportant and unlikely to result in divine favour being granted to the project. This opinion may have been expressed; but if Zerubbabel's status was the problem it is difficult to see how any action of his could then cause rejoicing. This view is consequently rejected.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Num.31:22; Ezek.22:18,20; 27:12 where 'בִּדְיָן' is included in lists of metallic elements.

Arguments based on emendations of the text which read a form of the verb 'בִּדְיָן' (be divided, separate), following the Syriac text, have prompted the claim that a 'special' or 'chosen' stone is implied by the expression. (For example, Ackroyd, Exile, p.172, note 5; and Baldwin, Haggai, pp.122f.) The stone can then be the same as that referred to in Zech.4:7. S.Bullough, Obadiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai and Zechariah, (London), 1953, p.114. argues for this interpretation on the basis of reading 'גִּדְיָן' (great) for 'בִּדְיָן'. These arguments all accord with the context of the foundation ceremony but we find no justification for emending the text. Galling, Studien, pp.144-6 also follows the Syriac text but argues that the expression refers to the Urim and Thummin and that the oracle relates to the installation of Joshua as high priest by Zerubbabel. His argument is unconvincing in our opinion.

¹⁴² GK, §127 h.

possible although tin is not the most suitable metal for a plummet. It seems improbable though, that Zerubbabel, a political figure, would be involved in the actual rebuilding in this technical and important way even if he did theoretically oversee the whole project. The more likely explanation is that the expression referred to a metal tablet, probably inscribed in some way, which Zerubbabel ceremonially deposited in the foundations, in view of the people, during the ritual.¹⁴⁴ Thus, as in the preceding oracle, Zerubbabel is portrayed fulfilling the role that was normally the prerogative of the king; but once again there are no textual references to his royal lineage to support the hypothesis that this passage intends to stress his claims to monarchic status. There is little doubt that in both these oracles Zechariah presents Zerubbabel as the senior civil leader of the community, as someone with the authority to perform ritual duties which in a monarchy would have been carried out by the king. This suggests that Zechariah accorded him more importance than the high priest, Joshua, and it is probable that Zerubbabel's royal ancestry was a significant factor recognized by the prophet as enhancing Zerubbabel's claims to a leadership position. However the evidence does not permit us to draw the conclusion that Zerubbabel is unquestionably portrayed as proleptic king.¹⁴⁵

Before we consider the other possible references to Zerubbabel in Zechariah 1-8 it is appropriate to discuss the presentation of Joshua in

¹⁴³ Following LXX, for example, RSV; Mitchell, ICC, p.191. However cf Amos 7:8 where 'קֶלֶב' occurs meaning 'plumb line'.

¹⁴⁴ See p.175 above. Petersen, OTL, pp.238, 243f; and Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.235f, propose this. While Meyers and Meyers reject the interpretation of the object as a 'technical' building deposit they also link its function with the foundation ritual, AB, pp.253f.

¹⁴⁵ Contra the presumption of Petersen. OTL, p.240.

this book. He is named as the subject of the vision and its associated oracles in Zechariah 3, being accorded his title twice, at the outset of each section.¹⁴⁶ The vision portrays Joshua, as the official senior priest, standing accused by the Satan within the divine council.¹⁴⁷ In the divine speech addressed towards the accuser, Zechariah 3:2, Joshua is referred to by means of a question,

"Is not this a brand (אֵשׁ) plucked from the fire (אֵשׁ)?"

the imagery of which implies that he has been rescued from a devastating situation. The question is reminiscent of words in Amos 4:11;

"I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were as a brand (אֵשׁ) plucked out of the burning (אֵשׁ); yet you did not return to me,' says the LORD."

and these passages are the only two in which 'אֵשׁ' (brand) occurs in the Old Testament.¹⁴⁸ Although different words are used for the concept of fire, which negates the probability of literary dependency, there is no doubt that both phrases convey the same meaning;¹⁴⁹ and thus they may be connected. Suggestions that the phrase had become proverbial¹⁵⁰ by the time of Zechariah may be correct; and yet the significance of Amos 4:11 as a whole - the total devastation wrought by God and his rescue of his

¹⁴⁶ Zech.3:1,3,6,8,9. The oracle in vv.6-7 relates to the context of the vision; vv.8-10 is a distinct oracular response to the vision.

¹⁴⁷ See above pp.124ff, 135f.

¹⁴⁸ The plural form also occurs once as a contemptuous reference to two foreign kings, Isa.7:4.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. S.Talmon, 'Synonymous Readings in the Textual Traditions of the Old Testament', Scripta Hierosolymitana 8, 1961, pp.335-83.

¹⁵⁰ R.S.Cripps, The Book of Amos, (SPCK, London), 1929, p.175; and Ackroyd, Exile, p.154, note 43.

people from the brink of almost certain destruction¹⁵¹ - envisages a scenario akin to the experience of the people addressed by Zechariah. To them the 'fire' represented the destruction of the nation as she was sent into exile; and they no doubt perceived the community's return to Jerusalem as their rescue from the exile by Yahweh. Thus it is possible that the text of Amos underlies Zechariah's use of this question rather than him simply adopting a common expression. If this is correct, then the identification of Joshua as the brand implies that he stands accused as representative of the entire community, not as an individual;¹⁵² and not as the figurehead of the priesthood. That the problem does not rest in Joshua himself is also apparent from the next stage of the vision,

"Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, 'Remove the filthy garments from him.' And to him he said, 'Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with rich apparel.' And I said, 'Let them put a clean turban on his head.' So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments;"¹⁵³

because the speech and ritual both emphasize that the filth lies in the clothes that he is wearing rather than his person and that the cleansing is effected without the performance of the lustration rites required in

¹⁵¹ H.W.Wolff, Joel and Amos, trans. W.Janzen et al, (Hermeneia, Fortress Press), 1977, pp.221-2 claims that comparisons with Sodom and Gomorrah are always used to denote total destruction. Cf Deut.29:22(MT); Isa.13:19; Jer.49:18; 50:40. Thus the emphasis is on the miraculous rescue and not the partial destruction.

¹⁵² Contra Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.187ff who believe this vision relates primarily to Joshua's suitability for the role of high priest, although they recognize that he also functions as a representative of the community at a secondary level.

¹⁵³ Zech.3:3-5a.

all cases of priestly uncleanness.¹⁵⁴ Whether the nation's uncleanness results from the contamination of exile in Babylon, or relates to the lack of the temple and cultic ritual is irrelevant to this discussion. However, since it affects every member of the community, including the priests, it cannot be resolved by normal purification rites. Joshua, as the religious head of the community, bears the 'יִצְרָאֵל' (iniquity, guilt) for all the people in his filthy clothing;¹⁵⁵ but in this situation he is unable to effect its removal. The symbolism of the text indicates that cleansing is attained only by an act of divine grace which Joshua experiences in a representative capacity through the removal of the filthy garments and their replacement with חִסְדֵי־אֱלֹהִים' (rich apparel). The precise meaning of חִסְדֵי־אֱלֹהִים' is uncertain¹⁵⁶ although the other instance of it in the Old Testament, Isaiah 3:22, is in a list of finery linked with material wealth and social status.¹⁵⁷ Beuken understands it as a

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Lev.22:1-6. It is improbable that the clothing was meant to imply a state of mourning, contra Ackroyd, Exile, p.185, for several reasons. The context implies that the clothes have become filthy as a consequence of the 'fire' from which Joshua has been rescued and are not a ritual response to it. The word 'מִלְּבָשָׁתוֹ' (filthy) is strong language which can mean excrement (Deut.23:14(MT); Ezek.4:12) and thus it is more suited to indicate uncleanness than grief, cf. Isa.4:4; Prov.30:12. The text of v.4 states that iniquity is the issue, although we recognize the possibility that the relevant statement may be a gloss added to the text to negate any slight ambiguity which may otherwise have existed. See Mitchell, ICC, pp.151f,153.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Ex.28:36-38 in which Aaron is to take upon himself the 'יִצְרָאֵל' of the people in connection with the sacrifices they offer; and Num.18:1 which broadens the areas in which guilt may be incurred to matters of the sanctuary and the priesthood.

¹⁵⁶ It derives from the root 'צָרַף' and is generally thought to have a meaning linked to the idea of 'draw' off, withdraw'. Thus BDB p.323 suggest 'robe of state', something taken off in ordinary life; but it may simply imply an outer garment which is regularly removed.

¹⁵⁷ Isa.3:18-23 is probably a later addition to the text but its origin and date are uncertain. Consequently speculation as to whether Zechariah could have known this passage is to no avail. See Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.50ff.

reference to the high priest's regalia arguing that "without doubt" the vision alludes to the investiture of the high priest.¹⁵⁸ We do not accept this interpretation of the passage since it is more probable that the term 'בגדי קדש' (holy garments) would have been used if the high priestly robes were meant.¹⁵⁹ It seems that 'מקנת צניות' is used to stress the contrast between the clean, pure, rich apparel, indicative of all that is the very best, with which Joshua is re-clothed as distinct from the filthy clothes removed from him. As representative of the community Joshua is pictured being cleansed of all iniquity and, at the same time, receiving divine favour; it is a picture of the reinstatement of Israel and her cultic system.

The 'קניף' (turban) which is placed on Joshua's head at the end of the passage could be interpreted as the reaffirmation of him personally as senior priest since the turban was the distinguishing feature of his regular priestly attire compared with that of other priests.¹⁶⁰ However a different word 'קנפית', albeit deriving from the same root, invariably occurs to denote the turban in the legislative descriptions of the high priestly regalia.¹⁶¹ There is no reason to doubt that the same item of headgear is meant in Zechariah 3:5 but we believe that the use of 'קניף'

¹⁵⁸ Beuken, Haggai, p.284.

¹⁵⁹ For example, Ex.28:2,4; 29:29; 39:1,41; 40:13; cf Ex.29:21.

¹⁶⁰ Caps were the normal headdress of priests. Ex.28:4,37,39,40; 39:27f. The significance of priestly vestments and their ritual use is discussed by M.Haran, 'The Complex of Ritual Acts inside the Tabernacle' Scripta Hierosolymitana 8, 1961, pp.272-302, especially pp.279-85.

¹⁶¹ Ex.28:4,37,39; 29:6(twice); 39:28,31; Lev.8:9; 16:4. The other instance of the word in the Old Testament is in Ezek.21:31(MT) where it refers to the headdress of the king of Babylon which is removed as part of his punishment. However its context is associated with the idea of the remembrance of guilt, concepts reminiscent of Ex.28:36-38, and thus the word may have been deliberately chosen to create effect.

instead of 'תְּכֵן־לְךָ' is intentional. In its three other occurrences in the Old Testament¹⁴² it conveys an image of royalty or splendour, as distinct from having any priestly connotations. In Zechariah's vision it certainly does not imply that any monarchic hopes were vested in Joshua. Therefore we suggest that it functions primarily to symbolize the splendour of the divine favour and blessings being bestowed on the community as represented by Joshua, while at a secondary level only it reaffirms his priestly role.

The unusual syntax of the oracle addressed to Joshua after this symbolic drama creates uncertainty regarding its implication. The text contains an oracular formula followed by two conditional clauses,

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk
in my ways and keep my charge,"¹⁴³

which express the commitment that is required towards Yahweh and his purposes by his people;¹⁴⁴ and thus Joshua could still be understood in a representative capacity. The content of the following two clauses,

¹⁴² Isa.3:23; 62:3; and Job 29:14. It is possible that all these passages are contemporary with, or later than Zechariah 1-8, (see above n.157), which renders any discussion about mutual influence of little value. Nevertheless, the fact that 'תְּכֵן־לְךָ' (rich apparel) and 'תְּכֵן־לְךָ' (turban) both occur in Zech.3:4f and Isa.3:22f suggests that there is a connection even though it may be an indirect one.

¹⁴³ Zech.3:7a.

¹⁴⁴ The first requirement is one demanded from all Yahweh's people, which is frequently expressed in the deuteronomistic literature, for example Deut.8:6; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16; 1 Kgs.2:3; 3:14; 11:33,38; cf Ex.18:20. The second idea may relate more specifically to priestly ritual service - the interpretation favoured by Baldwin, Haggai, p.115 who notes the occurrence of the word 'תְּכֵן־לְךָ' (charge) nine times in Numbers 3, a chapter dealing with the duties of the Levites - although this word also has the more general meaning of a command or obligation, for example Gen.26:5; Num.9:19,23; Lev.18:30; Isa.21:8; Hab.2:1. Since the text does not qualify the charge in any way it is probably wiser to interpret it in the general sense of a demand for obedience towards all Yahweh's commands.

beginning 'וְעַתָּה' (literally, 'and moreover'), indicates that the focus is concentrated on Joshua personally from hereon; but a problem arises over whether to construe the clauses as the continuation of the protasis, or part of the apodosis. Scholars who favour the latter option translate the rest of the verse as an outline of the three privileges that Joshua, as high priest, is to receive as a reward for his obedience:

"(וְעַתָּה) then you shall rule my house (בְּיָמֶיךָ) and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here."¹⁶⁵

However, the adverb 'וְעַתָּה' does not normally introduce a consequent clause¹⁶⁶ and it can legitimately be interpreted in this context to mean 'and moreover if'.¹⁶⁷ Either way the emphatic force of 'וְעַתָּה' serves to draw attention to the additional authority in respect of the temple that Joshua, in his capacity as the senior priest, is to exercise.¹⁶⁸ He is to execute judgement in the temple¹⁶⁹ and to have responsibility for its

¹⁶⁵ Zech.3:7b. Ackroyd, Exile, p.187 argues for this alternative, suggesting that the emphatic 'וְעַתָּה' is best understood as an introduction to a firm promise. Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.194, follow Ackroyd. See also Mitchell, ICC, pp.154,160; Baldwin, Haggai, p.115 and most English versions of the text.

¹⁶⁶ Rare examples are Gen.13:16; Jer.31:36,37; 33:21,26; Zech.8:6.

¹⁶⁷ Both Beuken, Haggai, pp.291-3 and Petersen, OTL, pp.186,203-7 argue for this interpretation.

¹⁶⁸ Although 'בְּיָמֶיךָ' and 'בְּבֵיתֵךָ' can be legitimate referents for the 'house of Judah/Israel' and the 'royal palace courts' respectively (for examples Zech.8:13; 1 Kgs.7:8) and despite the fact that 'שֹׁפֵט' (judge) regularly has a personal object rather than a place, the parallelism of the words argues in favour of them both referring to the temple, (cf 1 Chron.28:6 where the same two terms are juxtaposed as references to the temple). In support of this conclusion is the consistency with which the words 'my house', when attributed to Yahweh, imply his dwelling place (for example Isa.56:5,7; Jer.11:15; 23:11; Ezek 23:39; Hag.1:9; Zech.1:16).

¹⁶⁹ Although the text lacks an appropriate preposition which this interpretation strictly requires, we agree with Mason, 'The Prophets', p.147 and Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.195 that the regular emphasis of 'שֹׁפֵט' should be understood here rather than the general notion of 'govern'

precincts. Before the exile it appears that the final earthly authority in these matters was the king¹⁷⁰ and thus it is possible that, in the absence of a monarchy, the clauses indicate the transfer of former royal prerogatives to the senior priest.¹⁷¹ This interpretation necessitates that no hopes were being fostered for a restored monarchy in the figure of Zerubbabel; and it would imply a significant rise in Joshua's status. However, the evidence of Deuteronomy 17:8-11

"If any case arises requiring decision ... which is too difficult for you, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God will choose, and coming to the Levitical priests, and to the judge who is in office in those days, you shall consult them, and they shall declare to you the decision. Then you shall do according to what they declare to you from that place which the LORD will choose; ..."

suggests that from early times judicial authority in serious cases had rested with the Levitical priesthood and that after the time of Josiah this had been exercised at the Jerusalem temple. Passages can also be cited to show that the priests had always had a general responsibility for the smooth running of places of worship as well as for the ritual performed there.¹⁷² Thus the force of the clauses in Zechariah 3:7 may be to emphasize that the priesthood, in the person of Joshua the senior

(see BDB, p.192 which attests Zech.3:7 as a unique usage of 'לִפְתֹּחַ') which is frequently adopted.

¹⁷⁰ For example 1 Kgs.2:27; 8:4f; 2 Kgs.16:10ff; Jer 21:12; 22:16; Amos 7:13. Cf J.Morgenstern, 'A Chapter in the History', pp.5-13 and the comments on his understanding by A.Cody, A History of Old Testament Priesthood, (Pontifical Biblical Institute), 1969, p.103.

¹⁷¹ This position is held by C.Jeremias, Nachtgesichte, p.216 and Baldwin, Haggai, p.115.

¹⁷² For example Lev.8:35; Num.18:5. Cf Ezek.40:45. The Priestly Writers of Ezekiel 44:15ff also recognize 'acting as a judge' in the temple to be a function of the Levitical priests.

priest, is to regain¹⁷³ its longstanding judicial role and to accept the responsibility of it. This interpretation stresses the reinstatement of rightful authority which had never been retracted but which had perhaps been diminished towards the end of the monarchy. It does not indicate an enhancement of Joshua's status in fact but requires him to assume a more significant role in practice; and thus it is compatible with hopes for a restored monarchy or with recognition of the overall authority of a civil governor. This emphasis on the return to the situation which pertained in the earlier days of Israel's faith and history appears to be the more probable alternative; and therefore in our opinion it makes most sense to recognize these clauses as conditions which remind Joshua of his responsibilities in these matters and constrain him to fulfil all that is required of him. Thus we suggest that the clauses introduced by 'וְאִלְּךָ' should be translated

"and moreover if you will execute judgement in my house and if you will take charge of my courts"

as they build up to the one new privilege promised to Joshua that is set out in the final clause:

"and I will give you the right of access¹⁷⁴ among those who are standing here."

The context establishes that Joshua is being promised right of access to the divine council. As indicated in Chapters 2 and 3 this privilege was granted to true prophets; and in the classical prophetic traditions this

¹⁷³ Contra Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.195 who argue that "something unusual is being predicated on the priesthood" by the emphatic use of the personal pronoun 'אִלְּךָ' (you).

¹⁷⁴ We recognize the difficulty inherent in 'וְאִלְּךָ' (right of access) - for the different grammatical possibilities see Mitchell, ICC, p.160 - but believe that the traditional translation can be defended; contra Beuken, Haggai, pp.293ff who argues that it means "Männer, die gehen" (individuals who go).

theme was referred to as a mark of a prophet's authority. However there is no evidence to suggest that Zechariah intended to portray Joshua as both priest and prophet, nor is it correct to associate such access with the prerogatives of kings since they invariably depended on the prophets to mediate the word of Yahweh.¹⁷⁵ Therefore another significance must be sought and it is feasible that the purpose of granting divine access to Joshua is not that he might hear the pronouncements of Yahweh but to enable him to present intercessions on behalf of the people. The role of priest as intercessor is well attested in pre-exilic texts concerning Moses, Aaron and Samuel¹⁷⁶ and it is probably to this priestly function that Zechariah's oracle refers.¹⁷⁷ Joshua is personally promised that his intercessions will enter directly into the divine hearing and be answered by Yahweh if he accepts and fulfils the responsibilities of his role as senior priest. This promise enhances Joshua's status as priest above that of his pre-exilic counterparts and offers him a relationship with Yahweh akin to that enjoyed by the most important priestly figures in the nation's history. Understood in this way Zechariah 3:7 restates the importance of the priesthood, affirms Joshua as its senior member,

¹⁷⁵ For example 2 Sam.7:4ff; 1 Kgs.22:5ff; 2 Kgs.19:1ff=Isa.37:1ff; contra C.Jeremias, Nachtgesichte, p.218 and Mason, 'The Prophets', p.147. The latter cites Jer.30:21 to support his claim about the king's role as mediator but that passage presents a future hope rather than reflecting pre-exilic fact.

¹⁷⁶ For Moses, Exod.14:15a; 32:11ff,30ff; Num.12:13 (all attributed to E); Num.14:13ff (JE); Deut.9:18ff; for Samuel, 1 Sam.7:8ff; 12:16ff; for all three Ps.99:6. Cf Jer.15:1. The P tradition lays more emphasis on Aaron, for example Num.16:44-8.

¹⁷⁷ The idea of the king as priest occurs in a few Old Testament texts, for example Gen.14:17ff; Ps.110:4; but the kings of Israel/Judah are not generally depicted in an intercessory priestly role in the historical books (an exception is Solomon's prayer, 1 Kgs.8) and were probably never regarded as priests in the Hebrew sense of the word (thus Cody, Old Testament Priesthood, p.103). Thus it is wrong to suggest that a royal function was being transferred to Joshua.

and enhances his position by making direct access to the divine presence unambiguously available to him. This probably marks the beginning of the process within Judaism of the elevation of the senior priest to that of High Priest but it certainly does not mark its culmination.

The oracle that concludes Zechariah 3 is an appendix to the vision of the divine council and has an earthly setting. It is addressed to Joshua in a context whereby the seniority of his status is accepted by a group of men who sit before him.¹⁷⁸ The oracle includes a reference to a servant of Yahweh identified only as 'the Branch' but it is evident that someone other than Joshua is intended - we will return to discuss this matter later in the chapter. Attention is then focussed back onto the person of Joshua by the continuation of the oracle in verse 9;

"For behold, upon the stone which I have set before Joshua, upon a single stone with seven facets (literally - eyes¹⁷⁹), I will engrave its inscription, says the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the guilt of this land in a single day."

The crucial issue in this passage is the identification of the stone and this cannot be separated from questions concerning the dislocation of the text and suggestions that Joshua was not originally named here.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Zech.3:8a. Cf Gen.43:33 for the idiom 'sitting before'.

¹⁷⁹ É.Lipiński, 'Recherches sur le livre de Zacharie', pp.25-55, argues from a linguistic standpoint and on the basis of gender that the word is an aramaism which means a spring or river source. He refers for support to Beuken, Haggai, p.287, n.4. We are not convinced by his argument and note that Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.209, suggest that in the post-exilic period there was a shift from the classical standard to that of using feminine numbers with feminine nouns. BDB, pp.744f lists 'יָי' as a feminine noun with two distinct meanings - 'eye' and 'spring' (of water) - but there seems to be no credible argument in favour of the latter option in Zech.3:9.

¹⁸⁰ A review of the main arguments is given by Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.173-184. We find no justification for replacing Joshua's name with Zerubbabel's and reject the arguments based on this premise as conjectural. It also appears unwise to make any claims on the basis of

Although many interpretations have been suggested, these basically fall into two groups. Firstly, it is argued that the stone has a function in the actual building of the temple; and secondly that it is a gemstone which formed part of the high priest's regalia. From the first category the most credible suggestion is that of Petitjean who argues that it is the foundation stone which Zerubbabel will lay in the new building; and that Yahweh is the one who engraves the inscription on it because he, rather than his earthly representatives, is the real builder of the new temple and his name and the memory of his activity will be perpetuated in this way.¹⁸¹ The stone is understood as being set before Joshua, in his priestly capacity, so that he can perform the required rituals prior to the laying of the stone by Zerubbabel. This interpretation relies on the hypothesis that Zechariah 3:9 and 4:6b-10a were originally part of a collection of oracles connected with the ceremony relating to the laying of the foundations of the temple. This seems to be a strong probability and thus we are inclined towards this explanation, although we recognize the validity of Baldwin's comment about the difficulty of using a seven

the supposed date of this oracle because this cannot be objectively determined: indeed a scholar's interpretation of the oracle usually influences the date (s)he assigns to it and thus the argument becomes circular. We do not believe that a direct relationship exists between the words 'שִׁבְעָה עֵינָיו' ([with]seven eyes) in 3:9 and the interpretation offered about the lampstand vision in 4:10b, "These seven are the eyes of the LORD...", because the content of the oracle cannot be likened to any aspect of the vision. Although it is conceivable that Zech.3:9 and 4:6b-10a may once have been part of a distinct collection of oracles and that they were connected in some way, the latter has without doubt been inserted into the text of the visions by an editor and thus it is illogical to use this passage as an intermediary link to justify a claim that 'שִׁבְעָה עֵינָיו' refers to the eyes of Yahweh in Zech.3:9.

¹⁸¹ Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.179-85. His argument depends on there being a correlation between ancient Mesopotamian practices and those of the Jerusalem community; see our discussion pp.174ff above.

faceted stone in a building.¹⁸² However, if we are correct the promise about the removal of guilt in the final clause must indicate that the initiation of the rebuilding of the temple, a project in which the high priest Joshua and the governor Zerubbabel perform significant rituals, is the necessary community response towards Yahweh that will prompt him to cleanse them and to renew their relationship with him. We are aware that this interpretation sits uneasily in the context of Zechariah 3 as a whole which began with a visionary depiction of the cleansing of the community. Thus the compiler(s) of the chapter must have understood the oracle in a different way, which leads us to another legitimate approach to the text.

The alternative way of explaining the purpose of the stone, as an item of priestly regalia, was expressed in some detail by Mitchell.¹⁸³ He argues that the 'eyes' of the stone are the facets of a jewel¹⁸⁴ and that this item can be equated with the gold plate which is the subject of Exodus 28:36-8;

¹⁸² Baldwin, Haggai, p.116. Since Mesopotamian cultures placed a variety of objects in building foundations (see above pp.175f) it is possible that Israel did likewise. The foundation stone may have had a symbolic shape, the meaning of which eludes us, or it may be that a gemstone intended as a foundation deposit is the item described. This difficulty is insufficient to negate the theory.

¹⁸³ Mitchell, ICC, pp.157-9. We are not convinced by some of his reasons for rejecting other options which had been proposed but believe that his positive comments present a credible argument. Petersen, OTL, p.211 believes this is the most satisfactory explanation. A similar interpretation is offered by P.R.Ackroyd, 'Zechariah' in Peake's, p.548.

¹⁸⁴ This accords with the use of 'יָצַד' to mean the gleam of a jewel or of metal in Ezek.1:4,7,16,22,27; 8:2; 10:9; Dan.10:9. Wellhausen, Kleine Propheten, p.181, argued along similar lines that an ornamental gemstone was implied, although he had claimed that the inscription was to be the name of Zerubbabel and that the stone was an indication that he was to be the future king. We find neither textual support nor other justification for this hypothetical suggestion.

"And you shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, 'Holy to the LORD.' And you shall fasten it on the turban by a lace of blue; it shall be on the front of the turban. It shall be upon Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take upon himself any guilt incurred in the holy offering which the people of Israel hallow as their holy gifts; it shall always be upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD."

Zechariah's words cannot be dependent on this Priestly ordinance which in all probability describes the costume, not of Aaron, but of the post-exilic High Priest.¹⁰⁵ However the similarity of motifs found in this passage and in Zechariah 3:9 suggests that there may be some association. Firstly, they both relate to the senior priest; secondly a significant item is to be engraved; and thirdly they are both connected with an idea of corporate removal of guilt.¹⁰⁶ The major difference is that whereas in Exodus 28 Yahweh gives instructions, for the making of the plate, the words to be engraved on it and the purpose of it, which the people of Israel are to carry out; in Zechariah 3:9 Yahweh retains the initiative

¹⁰⁵ Mitchell accepts that the Exodus passage reflects the priestly attire of the Second Temple period and thus post-dates Zechariah; but he suggests that the senior priest may nonetheless have worn this type of stone on his headgear in pre-exilic times. This has to be accepted as a possibility but the suggestion is without support from any undisputed pre-exilic texts. M.Haran has argued, Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel, (Oxford), 1978. pp.5-6, that the literature attributed to P, including all the Priestly ordinances for the cult in Exodus, is a product of circles of priests in the first Jerusalem temple and that it reflects pre-exilic ritual. It is accepted that some of the rituals described were probably based on priestly practices during the monarchic period; but we are not persuaded by his argument and agree with general scholarly opinion that P may be dated to the post-exilic period.

Haran has argued elsewhere ('The Complex of Ritual', p.284) with conviction that Ex.28:38b indicates that the engraved plate was worn by Aaron 'regularly', that is at appointed times, and not 'always' as it is usually translated in EV.

¹⁰⁶ Petersen, OTL, pp.211f suggests a link between the 7 'eyes' in Zech.3:9 and the inscription 'Holy to Yahweh' in Ex.28:36. He contends, incorrectly in our opinion, that the latter could be construed with 7 consonants as 'יְהוָה' (that is omitting the final 'ה' of the divine name). This is based on pure speculation as the text gives no hint as to what the inscription will be and it is presented as a future reality.

himself and indicates that he will effect his purpose without the need of any intermediary. This disparity in the two passages is significant; but it remains possible that they could both refer to an object intended for use in a priestly atonement ritual.¹⁸⁷ One further point of contact is recognized if Zechariah 3:9 is understood as a divine oracle which is directly linked with the preceding vision. The vision concluded with a turban being placed on Joshua's head;¹⁸⁸ the oracle intimates that the stone has been set before him, a concept akin to a plate being fastened to the front of the High Priest's turban. We suggest that this is the interpretation of the oracle adopted by those responsible for the final ordering of the text, whereby Joshua, in his priestly capacity, is cleansed on behalf of the whole community by Yahweh and then receives from him a stone to be worn on his headgear which will enable him in the future to intercede for the guilt of the people. Joshua's status as the religious head of the community and leader of the priesthood is enhanced by this interpretation and it is intended to reinforce the conditional promise of a special relationship with Yahweh that is offered to Joshua in Zechariah 3:7. As already stated, we do not believe this was the original meaning of Zechariah 3:9 but that this interpretation was given to it some time after the completion of the temple, when the high priest was beginning to be perceived in the community as the undisputed leader in matters beyond the purely cultic.

The final reference to Joshua by name occurs in Zechariah 6:11, a

¹⁸⁷ Although nothing is known about the actual procedures of such rituals prior to the Second Temple period, it is accepted that they were part of the pre-exilic cultic activity and that the Priestly literature reflects a development of earlier practice rather than an innovation.

¹⁸⁸ Zech. 3:5. See pp. 187f and n. 161.

verse which is itself problematic and which becomes more complex in the light of the oracle which follows it. The text reads.

"Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown (קֶטְרוֹת), and set it upon the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall grow up in his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD, and shall bear royal honour, and shall sit and rule upon his throne. And there shall be a priest by his throne, and peaceful understanding shall be between them both."' And the crown (קֶטְרוֹת) shall be in the temple of the LORD"

One issue concerns whether קֶטְרוֹת is singular or plural¹⁸⁹ but the more significant matter for our discussion is whether Joshua was the original figure identified in this passage. The claims that 'he shall build the temple' and 'bear royal honour' appear to be more appropriate references to Zerubbabel. Thus Mitchell has argued that Joshua cannot have been in the original text.¹⁹⁰ He continues,

¹⁸⁹ In Zech.6:11 MT and LXX read a plural form, whereas the Syriac and Targum texts read a singular. The same problem arises in Zech.6:14 and Job 31:36. The latter context demands a singular interpretation which has prompted scholars to argue that 'רַת' may be understood as a singular ending deriving from old Phoenician. In brief the problems created by the plural in Zechariah are, a) it is improbable that more than one crown would be placed on an individual's head; b) a qualifying number is expected as the instruction seems to be given with specific purposes in mind; and c) in 6:14 the verb requires a singular subject. A wide variety of responses is discussed by Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.279-82; by Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.349-53; and by Baldwin, Haggai, p.133. These caution us against the folly of claiming to know how the text originally read or what the writer intended. Thus we conclude with Petersen, (OTL, p.275), that the plural should be read following the principle of *lectio difficilior*.

¹⁹⁰ Mitchell, ICC, pp.185f, 189f. P.R.Haupt, 'The Visions of Zechariah', JBL 32, 1913, pp.107-22 also argued that Zerubbabel was the subject of this material. He interpreted the passage as a proclamation that Zerubbabel was to be both king and high priest after the manner of Melchizedek (Gen.14:18ff; Ps.110:4). However he also claimed that the vision in Zech.3 should be understood in terms of Zerubbabel standing before the king of Persia's messenger (cf Ezra 4-6) rather than Joshua in the divine council. We consider that he offers no justification for his subjective alterations to the text of Zech.3-4 and so we reject his

"If, therefore, a name was mentioned here, it must have been that of Zerubbabel. Perhaps, as Wellhausen maintains,¹⁹¹ the latter half of the verse entire is an addition; which means that the prophet left it to his readers to supply the name of Zerubbabel. The present reading is a clumsy attempt, by an anxious scribe, to bring the prophet into harmony with history. Neither Zerubbabel nor any other descendant of David ever again ruled as king in Jerusalem, but, in process of time, the high priest became the head of the entire community. It is this condition of things, unforeseen by Zechariah, which the changes in the text were intended to justify."

On the face of it this hypothesis answers the major difficulties; but unfortunately neither Mitchell's nor Wellhausen's suggestions will stand close scrutiny. There is no textual support for Zerubbabel to be read in place of Joshua; the omission of Zechariah 6:11b leaves the following oracle without an addressee and thus other emendations of and additions to the text have to be proposed and justified; and the evidence does not support the idea that later scribes deliberately and radically altered texts that they were copying.¹⁹² Another hypothesis suggests that both Joshua and Zerubbabel were named as recipients of a crown;¹⁹³ but again there is the problem of explaining when and why reference to Zerubbabel was removed from the text and Ackroyd admits that his suggestion that it

views out of hand.

¹⁹¹ For Wellhausen's argument see Kleine Propheten, p.185.

¹⁹² There is a remote possibility that a section of the community may have tried to proclaim Zerubbabel king, an action that prompted the Persian authorities to remove him from the scene because it challenged their rule, although this is pure speculation since nothing is known of what happened to Zerubbabel. In this case Zech.6:11 could originally have referred to it; but this does not explain the clumsy alteration of the text because in these circumstances every reference to Zerubbabel with monarchic connotations would have had to be excised.

¹⁹³ Either one crown each or the same one being transferred from one to the other. K-M.Beyse, Serubbabel und die Königserwartungen, pp.38-42; D.R.Jones, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, (Torch Bible Commentary), 1962, p.92. See also P.R.Ackroyd, 'Zechariah', in Peaks's, p.649 and Exile, pp.196-7.

was accidental is not very satisfactory. Van Hoonacker¹⁹⁴ attempted to account for the reference to Joshua by suggesting a textual change from 'בְּרֹאשׁ' (on the head of) to 'לְפָנָיו' (before). His argument envisaged that the crown was brought before the high priest in a religious ceremony for his blessing prior to its use in Zerubbabel's coronation; but there is no justification for the emendation and the hypothesis appears to be a desperate attempt to explain a difficult text.

Consequently an interpretation must be sought which is based on Joshua as recipient of the crown. In the Old Testament the word 'קִטְרוֹן' (crown) is sometimes associated with royalty¹⁹⁵ although it occurs more often in a figurative sense symbolizing honour or status.¹⁹⁶ Thus it is possible for Joshua to have been crowned to signify the honour accorded him as senior priest without it implying monarchic aspirations focussing on him.¹⁹⁷ However, it is more probable that the crown was understood as a symbol of kingship and that when it occurred the coronation had symbolic or proleptic significance. If so Joshua may have been crowned on behalf of Zerubbabel by a group who hoped for the restoration of the

¹⁹⁴ Van Hoonacker, Les Douze, pp.631-2.

¹⁹⁵ 2 Sam.12:30 (=1 Chron.20:2); Jer.13:18; Ezek.21:31(MT); cf. Song 3:11; Est.8:15.

¹⁹⁶ Job 19:9; 31:36; Prov.4:9; 12:4; 14:24; 17:6; Isa.28:1,3; 62:3; Lam.5:16; Ezek.16:12; 23:42.

¹⁹⁷ The Priestly Writers refer to a 'קִטְרוֹן' (crown of consecration) as part of the high priest's regalia. Ex.29:6; 39:30; Lev.8:9. Other uses of 'קִטְרוֹן' in P, Num.6 passim; Lev.21:12, suggest that this crown was perceived as a symbol of religious significance rather than honour; and while 'קִטְרוֹן' may be connected with the status accorded to the High Priest in the second temple period, it could equally reflect some kind of crown that formed part of the senior priest's attire during pre-exilic times. Since 'קִטְרוֹן' also occurs with the meaning 'kingly crown', 2 Sam.1:10; 2 Kgs.11:12 (=2 Chron.23:1); cf. Pss.89:40(MT); 132:18; Prov.27:24, it may be unwise to assume that either Hebrew word for crown had a distinctive meaning at the time of Zechariah.

monarchy.¹⁹⁸ The text as it stands permits this interpretation and it may be the meaning that the compilers intended to convey. However there is another option. If the final clause of v.12 and all v.13 were not part of the original oracle,¹⁹⁹ then the coronation of Joshua is best understood as a symbolic act pointing to the status of another character identified only as the Branch. In both these options Joshua is accepted as the religious head of the community and therefore a suitable person to play a representative or symbolic role; but nothing significant about Joshua himself is conveyed through his receipt of the crown.

The identity of the one referred to as $\pi\alpha\lambda\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\tau\eta$ (Branch) is the topic to which we next turn our attention. The title occurs in Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12, passages which are both oracles addressed to Joshua:

"behold, I will bring my servant the Branch"

"Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for

¹⁹⁸ Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.282-6 argues that Joshua's crowning by the prophet is linked with the monarchic hope attached to Zerubbabel. He claims it is a symbolic action which took place before or soon after Zerubbabel returned from exile and he associates this oracle with the reference in Zech.3:8 to Joshua and friends as 'men of good omen'. Cf. Ackroyd, Exile, p.197 and Mason, 'The Prophets', pp.147f.

¹⁹⁹ The content and style of Zech.6:13 do not seem in accord with the rest of the passage because a) the opening clauses almost certainly refer to Zerubbabel and express monarchic hopes; b) the reference to 'a priest' in words supposedly addressed to Joshua is strange and the pronoun 'you' would be more natural; and c) the final clause includes an awkward third person reference to 'them'. Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.286-99 identifies several indications of disunity in Zech.6:10-14 but we do not agree with his conclusions that vv.10-12 form one oracle which was uttered before Zerubbabel began the rebuilding work while vv.13-14 constitute another oracle originating after this when the work was under way. We believe that v.13 records the earlier oracle and that vv.10-12,14 date from a time when the temple was, or almost was, complete.

The virtual repetition of Zech.6:12c in 13a has prompted theories that one or the other was not original to the text. (Petitjean presents a good survey of the arguments in pp.286-91) We suggest that 6:13a was original and that 6:12c is an intentional duplication of that statement which the compiler added to v.12 to make a definite link between the two sections that he was adjoining.

he shall grow up (נִצַּח) in his place".

The basic meaning of נִצַּח is an horticultural term relating to the new growth or shoot of a plant²⁰⁰ and thus it is evidently being used in a metaphoric way in these passages.²⁰¹ Instances of plant imagery are not unusual in classical prophecy²⁰² but there are two other occurrences of the word נִצַּח where it appears to refer to a human figure, in Jeremiah 23:5-6 and 33:15-16

"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch (נִצַּח), and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'"

"In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch (נִצַּח) to spring forth (נִצַּח־וְצִמָּה)

²⁰⁰ As a verb it also means 'to grow' of hair, for example, Lev. 13:37; Judg.16:22; 2 Sam.10:5 (=1 Chron.19:5); Ezek.16:7.

²⁰¹ S.Mowinckel, He That Cometh, pp.19f,120,160, drew attention to the fact that the name Zerubbabel is usually understood to mean 'shoot of Babylon' and argued that Zechariah adopted the term נִצַּח (shoot) as a deliberate reference to Zerubbabel. See also Ackroyd, Exile, pp.174 n.12, 195f; Petersen, OTL, p.276; and H.Ringgren, The Messiah in the Old Testament, (SCM), 1956, p.36; who comment on the same link. However, since the name Zerubbabel is Babylonian and derived from a semitic word 'zeru', rather than a Hebrew word, it is probable that at least part of the community in Jerusalem would have failed to understand the alleged word play and thereby missed the significance of the term. In support of this we note that Jeaneane D.Fowler in Theophoric Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew, (JSOT Supp.Series 49), 1988, pp.258,299, has argued that 'zeru' is an Akkadian term meaning 'seed' or 'progeny' which occurs in compounds to indicate 'son of'. If she is right the suggested semantic link between Zerubbabel and נִצַּח is shown to be an imaginative attempt by modern scholarship to interpret a complex passage rather than a real feature of the ancient prophetic text.

²⁰² For example Isa.11:1 refers to the Davidic dynasty in terms of נִצַּח (shoot), גִּבְעוֹן (stump), צֶמַח (branch) and שְׁרָשְׁמֵי (roots) [cf also Isa.11:10]. However there is a strong possibility that these verses are of post-exilic origin and it may be that the use of this type of imagery did not begin until around the time of the exile. (See Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.121ff, 125f.)

The concept נִצַּח (shoot) is found in Ezek.16:3ff; 17:2ff, texts which describe Yahweh's dealings with Jerusalem/the house of Israel.

for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'"

and one or both of these passages may be directly related to its use in Zechariah 1-8.²⁰³ An interdependence between these two Jeremianic texts can scarcely be denied²⁰⁴ but their interpretation is disputed as is the date of origin of the earlier passage. Mowinckel argued that these are

"later prophecies in the book of Jeremiah, which refer to Zechariah's *semah* prophecy and predict a *semah saddik*, a legitimate Shoot for David; the adjective means 'rightful' as well as 'righteous', 'just'."²⁰⁵

He also suggests that they illustrate the way in which later prophetic writers adopted Zechariah's motif and began to use it as a technical

²⁰³ It is sometimes claimed that Isa.4:2 is also relevant to this issue. Scholars have argued that the verse, which refers to 'the branch (πῦξ) of the LORD' in parallel with 'the fruit of the land', has a messianic sense [for example Mowinckel, He That Cometh, pp.15f,18,164; and J.G.Baldwin, 'Semah as a technical term in the Prophets', VT 14, 1964, pp.93-7; her exegesis of this passage has been criticised, rightly in our opinion, by Kirsten Nielsen, There is Hope for a Tree, trans. C.& F.Crowley, (JSOT Supp. Series 65), 1989, pp.180-7]. We reject the claim of Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.203, that the context of this verse is "the future expectation of a Davidic scion" because it contains no mention of David, only Yahweh. Furthermore, we hold to the view that Isa.4:2 is an addition to the Isaianic corpus dating from the Persian period, which in all probability post-dates Zechariah's prophecies [see Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.53f] and thus could not have been influential upon his use of the term πῦξ'. See also the discussion of Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.193-8, who concludes that Isa.4:2 may be pre-exilic but also that the context requires πῦξ' to be interpreted as the luxuriant growth given by Yahweh to mark the new era.

²⁰⁴ It is generally agreed that Jer.33:15f is post-exilic and the later of the two, an hypothesis supported by the fact that the whole of Jer.33:14-26 is lacking in LXX. In all probability this passage post-dates Zechariah 1-8 and consequently we need not consider it further.

²⁰⁵ Mowinckel, He that Cometh, p.161; see also pp.19f and pp.456f, Additional Note VII. In his argument he comments on an equivalent expression in Phoenician literature used to denote "the legitimate heir to the throne, who is also chosen by the deity" (p.161); but these are much later texts which are consequently irrelevant to our discussion. (See Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.199-202 for a review of the literature relating to this subject.)

Messianic term, although he emphasizes that a supernatural understanding of the Messiah had not developed at this stage and the hope was for an earthly ruler from the line of David. In contrast Carroll²⁰⁶ recognizes the possibility of wordplay between the name 'יהוה אלהינו' (the LORD is our righteousness) and 'זדקיהו' (Zedekiah, which means 'my righteousness is the LORD'), the name given by the Babylonians²⁰⁷ to the last king of Judah whom they appointed after taking Jehoiachin captive. He argues that the content and context of Jeremiah 23:5-6 suggest that

"The oracle may be understood as an inaugural celebration of Zedekiah's legitimate claim to be king."²⁰⁸

which would mean that it originated just before the exile and is thus an earlier use of the motif 'מִנְחָה' (Branch) than Zechariah's. Carroll's arguments persuade us that Jeremiah 23:5-6 pre-dates Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12; but this does not negate Mowinckel's conclusion about the meaning of the motif 'מִנְחָה' (Branch) in Jeremiah's oracle. The figure referred to in this way is envisaged as a descendant of David who will be a king and will rule over Israel as the representative of Yahweh's sovereign rule. It is unlikely that Zechariah chose the same motif independently of Jeremiah and therefore the probability is that he used 'מִנְחָה' (Branch) in the same way. Consequently it can be argued that he was referring to Zerubbabel, the only prominent Davidic figure in the period, and that he

²⁰⁶ Carroll, Jeremiah, pp.445-7.

²⁰⁷ 2 Kgs.24:17.

²⁰⁸ Carroll, Jeremiah, p.446. He goes on to discuss an alternative interpretation whereby the oracle may reflect expectations for a time of salvation after the exile; but his argument does not suggest that the oracle comes from the post-exilic period. Ringgren, The Messiah in the Old Testament, pp.35f also makes the link between the names and assigns Jer.23:5-6 to the reign of Zedekiah, although he argues that 'Branch' is a reference to a coming king and not the current occupant of the throne.

was expressing hopes for the restoration of the monarchy in him;²⁰⁹ but we have to ask, in this case, why Zechariah adopted this ambiguous motif when elsewhere he identified the governor by name.²¹⁰ Furthermore this interpretation is only possible in Zechariah 6:11-12a if the coronation of Joshua is understood as proleptic for Zerubbabel; and it can apply to Zechariah 3:8 only if the relevant clause is assigned to a time prior to Zerubbabel's arrival in Jerusalem since it projects into the future the advent of the Branch. We have already rejected the first proviso²¹¹ and can find no evidence or support for the latter theory²¹² and so we must seek a different interpretation.

The Jeremianic concept of the motif $\pi\eta\zeta'$ (Branch) cannot apply to Joshua, the high priest, who was not of David's lineage; and the context of the motif's occurrence in Zechariah 3:8 indicates that the compilers understood it to refer to a figure other than Joshua.²¹³ Therefore we

²⁰⁹ A. Petitjean, 'La Mission de Zorobabel et la Reconstruction du Temple - Zach., III, 8-10', Ephemerides Theologicae Louvanienses, Vol 42, 1966, pp. 40-71, argues on these lines that 'Branch' refers to Zerubbabel who is viewed not in messianic terms but as the legitimate successor to the royal throne.

²¹⁰ Zech. 4:6b-10a.

²¹¹ See above pp. 200f.

²¹² It would be very difficult to explain why an editor had added the clause into Zech. 3:8 if this theory was correct.

²¹³ Contra M. Barker, 'The Two Figures in Zechariah', Heythrop Journal Vol 18, 1977, pp. 38-46, who believes that the title is given to Joshua. She argues that Zechariah's use of the motif $\pi\eta\zeta'$ (branch) is akin to that in Isa. 4:2 where, she claims, it has priestly significance. We do not accept her interpretation of Isa. 4:2 and consider a direct connection between this verse and Zechariah's use of the motif highly improbable. See above n. 203.

Zech. 6:12 is ambiguous. $\pi\eta\zeta'$ (Branch) could be meant as a title for the one crowned, although attention may be being directed towards a different figure. The text has no definite article but refers to וְאִישׁ (a man) named 'Branch' which may support the second option. Thus it is unlikely that the prophet or the compilers applied the motif to Joshua.

suggest that Zechariah adopts the motif 'מִשָּׁח' to point away from current historical figures towards a future leader for the community.²¹⁴ He appears to have no specific individual in mind but uses the motif as a typological identification for the ruler in the new age that Yahweh will inaugurate. In Zechariah 3:8 the oracle of Yahweh refers to the Branch as 'עֶבְדִי' (my servant)²¹⁵ a term which has Davidic dynastic connotations but which also has wider eschatological implications. In Zechariah 6:12 the idea of the Branch as part of a dynastic succession rather than an ultimate messianic ruler is also expressed in the clause 'וְיִצְמַח מִתַּחְתָּיו' (literally - and from under him [someone] will grow up). Thus it seems that the motif 'מִשָּׁח' (Branch) is used by Zechariah to indicate a future Davidic ruler who will be raised up by Yahweh and on whom a new dynasty will be founded. Although this hope relates to a new situation which is somewhat eschatological in character, the prophet probably believed that such a ruler would come to the fore once the community's cultic life was re-established in the new temple, hence the symbolic crowning of Joshua as a prefigurement of this hope. This interpretation of the motif makes sense in the contexts of Zechariah 3:8,10 a passage which concludes with a promise of a more paradisaical state and of 6:10-12b,14.²¹⁶ Whoever inserted Zechariah 6:13 into the latter prophecy failed to catch this eschatological vision of the prophet and interpreted the motif 'מִשָּׁח' in

²¹⁴ Baldwin comes to a similar conclusion in 'Semah as a technical term', pp.94-7, although her argument is based on different premises and assumes that Zechariah's use of the motif derives from its occurrence in Isa.4:2 and both Jer.23:5-6 and 33:14-26. We believe she is mistaken in this and cannot accept her suggestion that the "prophet is depicting an obscure man rising to great power and majesty, sitting as king upon his throne" (p.96).

²¹⁵ The traditions underlying the use of this motif, as it appears in Hag.2:23, have been discussed on pp.165ff and it probably has similar significance in Zechariah's usage.

²¹⁶ See above n.199.

relation to Zerubbabel and the monarchic hopes that they still retained for him.

We have argued that Zechariah 6:13 originated in the early part of the prophet's ministry and related to Zerubbabel. The opening clause identifies him as the temple builder but the following clauses refer to his status in the community. The text records that he will bear 'גִּיָּו' (splendour or majesty) and will sit and 'שָׁמַר' (rule or have dominion) on 'כִּסֵּא' (his throne). Although it is often claimed that this language is indicative of kingship²¹⁷ this is not necessarily so. The concept 'גִּיָּו' (splendour) is regularly applied to Yahweh in relation to his creative power and kingship in the Psalms;²¹⁸ and it also occurs with regard to earthly kings in Psalms and some prose texts.²¹⁹ However it is used to imply 'manly vigour' in Proverbs 5:9, 'authority' in Numbers 27:20, 'beauty' or 'abundance' in Hosea 14:7(MT) and to describe the 'majestic' snorting of a horse in Job 39:20. Similarly, while 'שָׁמַר' (rule) occurs occasionally in regard to kingly rule²²⁰ and to Yahweh's sovereignty²²¹

²¹⁷ For example Petersen, OTL, p.277; Mitchell, ICC, p.187; Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.358-60.

²¹⁸ For example Pss.8:2; 96:6; 104:1; 111:3; 145:5; 148:13.

L.G.Rignell, Die Nachtgesichte des Sacharja, (Lund), 1950, pp.231f argued that these references to Yahweh did not imply royal majesty and that in Zech.6:13 it was Joshua who was to bear 'גִּיָּו' (splendour). His thesis suggested that the four clauses were directed towards Zerubbabel and Joshua alternately before the final one which referred to them both. We are not persuaded by his interpretation of the passage.

²¹⁹ Pss.21:6; 45:3; Jer.22:18; 1 Chron.29:25; Dan.11:21. The last two references undoubtedly belong to a later period than Zechariah 1-8.

²²⁰ For example 2 Sam.23:3 (David); 1 Kgs.5:1 (Solomon); Isa.19:4 (a king over Egypt). The verb is also used of David's descendants in Jer.22:30; 33:26 but these passages probably post-date Zech.6:13 and the language they contain may have been influenced by this verse. See above pp.168ff and 203,n.204.

there are many more instances where it implies the power or authority exercised by ordinary humans over individuals, groups, or abstract forces,²²² which suggests that it should not be understood as synonymous with 'מָלַךְ' (reign, be king) but in a broader sense of having authority. The noun 'כִּסֵּא' (throne) is undeniably used for the seat of kings, the throne as a symbol of their rule²²³ but it can also refer to the seat of a priest,²²⁴ of an honoured guest,²²⁵ a conspicuous seat²²⁶ and the seat of a governor.²²⁷ While it is recognized that the phrase 'יָשָׁב עַל-כִּסֵּאוֹ' (sit upon his throne) is significant in relation to royal succession in Deuteronomistic texts,²²⁸ this exact phrase does not actually appear in Zechariah 6:13 where the component parts are separated by the verb 'שָׁמַר' (rule); and thus it may be unwise to attach too much significance to a supposed stereotypical phrase. We suggest that whilst Zechariah 6:13a can be understood as indicative of monarchic hopes vested in Zerubbabel, it can equally be interpreted in terms of the honour and authority which

²²¹ For example Judg.8:23; Ps.22:29; Isa.40:10; 63:19. Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.360 recognize the different nuances of 'שָׁמַר' (rule) but then argue on the basis of a small number of instances that Yahweh's universal sovereignty as it is represented on earth by a Davidide is the appropriate interpretation in Zech.6:13. We believe they are guilty of allowing their preconceptions about the passage to influence their exegesis of it.

²²² For example Gen.3:16; 4:7; 37:8; 45:8,26; Ps.19:14(MT); Prov.16:32; 17:2; Isa.3:4,12. Cf. Gen.1:18; Hab.1:14.

²²³ For example Ex.11:5; 12:29; 2 Sam.7:16; 1 Kgs.2:19; Ezek.26:16.

²²⁴ For example 1 Sam.1:9; 4:13,18.

²²⁵ 2 Kgs.4:10.

²²⁶ Prov.9:14.

²²⁷ Neh.3:7.

²²⁸ For example 1 Kgs.1:13,17; 2:12; 3:6; 2 Kgs.13:13; Jer.13:13.

are his in his official capacity as civil governor.²²⁹ The text of the opening clause of Zechariah 6:13b 'וְיָסֵב עַל-כִּסֵּאֵי' is disputed²³⁰ but we find no grounds for rejecting the Hebrew. The contentious matters relate to the words 'עַל-כִּסֵּאֵי' (on his throne) as they could refer back to the previous clause or might indicate the priest's seat.²³¹ Those who claim כִּסֵּאֵי (throne) symbolizes royalty assume the former option and resolve the problem of a priest sitting on such a throne by translating the phrase 'by (or beside) his throne'.²³² This is then understood to imply that Joshua, whose status as priest is lower than that of the proleptic king, stands alongside Zerubbabel who is seated on the throne. However we have shown that 'כִּסֵּאֵי' need not have these connotations and can refer to a priest's seat.²³³ Thus the clause probably indicates that a priest will sit on his own seat, that is will be recognized as authoritative, just as Zerubbabel will. Zechariah probably omitted Joshua's name from this clause and referred less specifically to 'כֹּהֵן' (a priest) to emphasize that the authority belonged to the senior priest

²²⁹ Our consideration of Zerubbabel's status in Zech.4:6b-10a led to a similar lack of certainty on this issue. See above pp.171-183.

²³⁰ LXX has a quite different text meaning "and the priest will be on his right hand". Mitchell, *ICC*, pp.188,189 adopts this reading and identifies the two characters as Joshua and Zerubbabel. Beuken, *Haggai*, p.281 believes it is better to take the LXX reading as the more original text. The NEB and JB both follow LXX in their translations.

²³¹ Both Barker, 'The Two Figures', p.44 and Baldwin, 'Semah as a technical term', p.96, have argued that the significance of this clause is that it asserts that the Branch [they disagree on his identification] who according to their exegesis is accorded royal status in Zech.6:13a, will also function as priest. Thus they translate 'and he will be a priest on his throne'. We have already rejected their views on other grounds, see above nn.213,214.

²³² Thus RSV; Petersen, *OTL*, p.273. The preposition 'עַל' can have this meaning although it is not the dominant or original one. See *GK*, §119 aa-dd.

²³³ See above n.224.

by virtue of his office and not because of any personal merit. This interpretation accords both the civil and the religious leaders of the community a similar level of authority and esteem. It also prophesies that after the temple's completion leadership would be exercised by a diarchy. The final clause of Zechariah 6:13 comments on the harmonious relationship which the two rulers will enjoy when this arrangement is constituted.

The concept of diarchic rule is unknown in the classical prophetic literature²³⁴ and it had not been exercised throughout Israel's history, nor was it a system which pertained among her neighbours. Thus, if our interpretation of Zechariah 6:13 is correct, the prophet was proclaiming a totally new constitution. Such a radical suggestion might be thought incredible but we believe that the idea is also expressed in Zechariah's fifth vision.²³⁵ There is wide agreement that the elaborate lampstand seen by the prophet represents the presence of Yahweh and his universal sovereignty. However it is the other objects included in the vision

"And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."²³⁶

and the interpreting angel's explanation of them in Zechariah 4:14

"These are the two anointed (literally - sons of oil) who stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

that relate to the issue of a diarchy. It is most probable that the two olive trees represent two human figures who have a special relationship

²³⁴ G.von Rad, The Message of the Prophets, (SCM), 1968, [trans.by D.M.G.Stalker from Die Botschaft der Propheten, (Siebenstern Taschenbuch Verlag), 1967], p.253 comments on the uniqueness of this prophecy.

²³⁵ Zech.4:2-6a,10b-14.

²³⁶ Zech.4:3. The description is repeated with slight variation in Zech.4:11 which requests an interpretation.

with Yahweh as his attendants or agents;²³⁷ and the positioning of them on either side of the symbol of the deity indicates that the two are given equal status. The figure two appears to be being stressed by the way it is repeated unnecessarily in verses 11,14 where the simple plural would have sufficed and this may be an intentional emphasis on the fact that two people share this relationship. However the unusual expression 'בְּנֵי-הַיַּיִן' (sons of oil) used to describe them adds to the problem of establishing their identity and significance rather than clarifying the issue.²³⁸ One use of 'בֶּן' (son) in Hebrew is to denote a member of some particular group; but when it conveys this meaning the group is always unambiguously defined by the adjoining absolute noun²³⁹ which is not the case in this passage. The figures may be called 'sons' to make it clear that humans are signified by this phrase or, on the other hand, because in relation to Yahweh the idea of sonship indicates someone dear to him and chosen by him for a purpose.²⁴⁰ In the latter case, anyone in the community seeking to understand Zechariah's vision could only interpret the 'sons' in terms of men already perceived as having significant roles and as fulfilling Yahweh's purposes; and the only possible candidates are Joshua and Zerubbabel. Many scholars claim the phrase 'בְּנֵי-הַיַּיִן'

²³⁷ The identity of the actual objects seen by the prophet is not significant to our discussion. Possibilities include ritual objects for use in the temple, attendants of Yahweh in the divine council, or, as suggested by A.S.van der Woude, 'Die beiden Söhne des Öls (Sach.4:14): messianische Gestalten?' in Travels in the World of the Old Testament, Festschrift M.A.Beek, (Assen), 1974, pp.262-8, fertility figures.

²³⁸ Isa.5:1 contains an equally obscure phrase 'בְּן-הַיַּיִן' (a hill a son of oil) which is usually translated 'a very fertile hill'. There is no apparent connection between the two passages.

²³⁹ For example prophets, 2 Kgs.2:3,5,; priests, Ezra 2:61; exiles, Ezra 4:1; foreigners, Gen.17:12; 2 Sam.22:45; Ezek.44:7,9.

²⁴⁰ For example Ex.4:22f; 2 Sam.7:14; Ps.2:7; Jer.31:20; Hos.11:1f; cf. Deut.32:5; Isa.1:2,4; Jer.3:22.

means anointed'²⁴¹ identifying the two as Joshua who had been anointed high priest and Zerubbabel who, it is argued, the prophet believed was soon to be anointed as king. However this exposition must be rejected since the word 'שֶׁן' (oil) is never used to imply anointing oil, for which 'שֶׁן' is always used, but to denote the freshly harvested oil from olives.²⁴² Similarly, while it is recognized that olive oil was used by the priests to tend the lamp that burned continually in the cult,²⁴³ it was the refined, purified oil (שֶׁן) that was required for this purpose; and thus there are no grounds for asserting that the phrase 'בְּגֵי-תֵי-שֶׁן' implies cultic officials with an abundant supply of oil for the lamp.²⁴⁴ Other scholars have argued from a different standpoint that the figures are both priests.²⁴⁵ This suggestion has some credibility because the

²⁴¹ Baldwin, Haggai, p.124; Becker, Messianic Expectation, p.66; K-M. Beyse, Serubbabel und die Königserwartungen, p.76; Gallig, Studien zur Geschichte, p.137; Halpern, 'The Ritual Background', p.177; Jeremias Nachtgesichte, p.184; Mason, CBC, p.48; Mitchell, ICC, p.165; Rudolph, Sacharja 1-8, pp.107f; and K.Seybold, Bilder zum Tempelbau, p.77.

²⁴² Nearly every occurrence of 'שֶׁן' (oil) is in conjunction with grain and/or wine in the context of agricultural blessings, firstfruits, or tithes offered to priests/Levites. For example Deut.7:13; 12:17; 18:4; Num.18:12; 2 Chron.32:28; Neh.10:38,40(MT); Jer.31:12; Hos.2:10,22 (MT); Joel 2:19,24. See p.238 for our discussion on its usage in Hag. 1:11.

²⁴³ Ex.27:20f; Lev.24:1-4.

²⁴⁴ Baldwin, Haggai, p.124 offers the translation 'full of oil' as the probable meaning but does not make a link with any priestly duties.

The idea that the 'trees' sustain the 'lamp' is expressed only in Zech.4:12 with its reference to 'branches' and 'pipes' although the text indicates that 'בְּתֵן' (gold) is poured out through them. Despite the difficulty of this imagery we find no justification for the emendation to read 'oil' as in RSV et al. Since we have already indicated, pp.34f, that this verse has been interpolated into the vision it is irrelevant for our current discussion.

²⁴⁵ Morgenstern, 'A Chapter in the History', p.5 argues that the two figures are Joshua, the chief priest and his assistant chief priest; but we note that he also assumes 'שֶׁן' means anointing oil, pp.187ff.

Barker, 'The Two Figures', pp.45f argues that one figure is Joshua and the other the leader of an opposing group of priests, although she can only cite later texts (1 Enoch and Damascus Document) to support her

priests were entitled to the tithes of 'יִצְהָר'. However Zechariah 1-8 contains no indication of any prominent priest, apart from Joshua, who might warrant being portrayed alongside him, as an equal, in an elevated position such as this. Consequently we reject this interpretation too.

The connection between the olive trees and 'יִצְהָר' (oil) is evident and since the latter occurs regularly in contexts which indicate that it results from Yahweh's blessing²⁴⁶ it may be that its significance is to convey the idea of divine favour on the two figures represented by the trees. In Hebrew the use of 'בֶּן' (son) followed by an abstract noun can sometimes be translated as 'deserving, worthy of'²⁴⁷ or in a way which expresses that the person possesses the concept referred to;²⁴⁸ and thus the meaning of 'בְּנֵי-יִצְהָר' may be that the two figures are worthy of divine blessing or indeed have been so blessed. This interpretation can apply individually to Joshua in his capacity as the senior priest and to Zerubbabel in his role as overseer of the temple rebuilding. However it is also applicable to the presentation of these two men as joint leaders of the community. In the vision they appear as equals, as two who enjoy a close relationship with Yahweh, as those who serve him and also act as his representatives on earth; and the message of the vision is that this

suggestion that priestly rivalry probably existed at this time.

To our knowledge no-one has claimed that 'בְּנֵי-יִצְהָר' should be read without the definite article and understood to mean literally 'the sons of Izhar (יִצְהָר)', a Levite mentioned in genealogies Ex.6:18,21; Num.3:19; 16:1; 1 Chron.5:28; 6:3,23; 23:12,18. However Halpern, 'The Ritual Background', p.177 suggested that the phrase may have been meant as a deliberate pun of this Levitic clan.

²⁴⁶ See above n.242.

²⁴⁷ For example Deut.25:2; 1 Sam.26:16; 2 Sam.12:5.

²⁴⁸ For example 1 Sam.14:22; 18:17; 2 Sam.2:7; 3:34; Hos.10:9; Num.17:25.

arrangement is both ordained and blessed by Yahweh. The new community is to be ruled as a diarchy in which the civil governor, Zerubbabel and senior priest, Joshua have joint authority with equal status and divine blessing on their leadership.

This completes our consideration of the material that reflects how Haggai and Zechariah viewed the question of leadership in the community and conclusions on this issue can now be drawn. It has been argued that Haggai had nothing distinctive to say about Joshua, the senior priest, and that he regarded Zerubbabel, a Davidic descendant, as the person on whom the mantle of king would fall when the monarchy was restored in the wake of Yahweh's eschatological activity. This would be initiated once the temple had been rebuilt. This indicates that he appears to stand in the mainstream classical prophetic tradition, looking for a new David to be ruler of Israel, a king who would truly represent Yahweh's sovereign rule among his people. Haggai envisaged a new beginning rather than a continuation of what monarchy had become prior to the exile; but at the same time he looked back to David, the chosen servant of Yahweh and to the covenant made with him, hoping that in Zerubbabel the promises would all be fulfilled. On the other hand Zechariah had more complex opinions on how the new community was to be ruled. He held the office of senior priest in high regard, proclaiming that Joshua would enjoy the status and privileges of the greatest of Israel's priestly figures if he would accept the responsibilities which were incumbent upon him because of his position. Thus he appears to be enhancing the status of the priesthood but not extending Joshua's authority beyond the temple and cultic realm. He focusses attention on Zerubbabel's role as the overseer of the temple rebuilding project but he never indicates whether Zerubbabel's authority

to perform this important task derives from his role as civil governor, or because he is of Davidic lineage and proleptic king. We can conclude from this that Zechariah was not an ardent proponent of the restoration of the monarchy, though it would be unwise to claim that he was totally against it in the early stages of his ministry. Some oracles indicate a pragmatic concern that the temple is reconstructed in the proper way so that it will be acceptable to Yahweh and be a means of blessing for the new community; and that the senior civil and religious figures fulfil their traditional roles in this matter rather than the emphasis being on the future leadership.

It is when Zechariah turns his attention to the period after the completion of the temple and the question of community rule that his distinctive ideas become apparent. We believe that he had a short term and a longer term vision on this subject. It appears that, like Haggai and his prophetic predecessors, he believed the Davidic covenant had not been irrevocably broken and that Yahweh would once again raise up for his people a new ruler who would be an idealized David. This ruler, whom he identified as the Branch, would only come to the fore when the community had demonstrated its commitment to Yahweh and his ways and re-established the cult in the temple. When this would occur was dependent solely on Yahweh; and Zechariah did not believe that any contemporary figure fulfilled the criteria for this position of supreme leadership. Since the advent of the Branch was projected into the future, Zechariah also considered the matter of an interim rule to take effect as soon as the temple was finished which would enable the people both to establish themselves as a cohesive community, obedient to the ways of Yahweh, and to prepare themselves for the new age that was coming. We believe that

it was this interim rule which he envisaged as a diarchy between Joshua and Zerubbabel; and that he probably believed that the Branch would come during the lifetime of these two men.

It appears that the compiler(s) of Zechariah 6:9-14 were unable to grasp the two different stages to which the prophet was referring in his separate proclamations and thus they attempted to compile the material into a unit that equated the Branch with Zerubbabel and put him forward as the future Davidic ruler. This composition must have been completed before Zerubbabel disappeared from the scene and before the temple was finished. However, we believe that Zechariah 3 attained its composite form after the temple had been rebuilt and that those responsible for drawing this material together did so with the intention of enhancing the status of Joshua as high priest and promoting his claim to authority in the community in the absence of any other natural ruler.

Finally we can return to decide the significance of the portrayal of Zerubbabel and Joshua in the framework to the Book of Haggai. Since this work presents Zerubbabel in a positive role it is evident that it was formulated during the period when he was directing the rebuilding of the temple and before he disappeared from the scene. Thus it must have been completed soon after Haggai had proclaimed his message. It appears to enhance the status of Joshua into a position of leadership alongside Zerubbabel, which results in a picture similar to the diarchy prophesied by Zechariah. We have argued that this idea was unique to him and that it was not grasped by those who were initially involved in collating his separate oracles. Therefore it is unlikely that any of the same people were responsible for formulating the framework to Haggai's message. It

is possible that Zechariah himself was responsible for this work²⁴⁹ and that he purposely played down the emphasis on Zerubbabel in the oracles by presenting Joshua and Zerubbabel in complementary roles. This would have enabled him to reinforce his own message about a diarchy and at the same time create the impression that his near contemporary prophetic predecessor shared his vision for the leadership of the community in the immediate future. If Zechariah did not compose the framework personally then we believe that it must have been written by a close follower of his who had grasped his vision.

As far as is known the diarchy never came into being.²⁵⁰ Perhaps the group which had hopes for the restoration of the monarchy sought to proclaim Zerubbabel king and thereby prompted his sudden removal from the scene or he may have just faded from prominence. Whatever occurred it is apparent that the completion of the temple did not usher in the new age of Yahweh as the community had hoped; and so they began to look to the future again. In the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah they found promises of a new idealized David, chosen by Yahweh to be their leader, in which they could put their hope. After the time of Haggai and Zechariah and by a process of gradual development this eventually became a truly messianic hope for an ultimate ruler.

²⁴⁹ In support of this we draw attention to the use of שְׂאֲרֵית (remnant) in Hag.1:12,14; 2:2 and Zech.8:6,11,12 and our comments on pp.15.17.

²⁵⁰ In later Jewish writings, the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs and the Dead Sea Scrolls, evidence is found to suggest that hopes for twin messianic figures to lead the community had persisted or been re-born. See Russell, The Method and Message, pp.312-23 and G.Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, 3rd ed., (JSOT Press), 1987, pp.53f.

CHAPTER FIVE

Judgement on Israel and the Punishment of the Nation

The concept of Yahweh as one who judges and punishes his people, when necessary, is prominent throughout the Old Testament and especially in the classical prophetic literature. Several passages in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 refer to this theme of Yahweh's judgement and punishment upon Israel and this chapter concentrates on how these ideas are used and developed in these books.

Within the Book of Haggai material relating to Yahweh's judgement upon, and displeasure with, the community of his people is contained in 1:4,6,9,10-11 and 2:16,17.¹ These verses are oracles spoken by the prophet, as distinct from the narrative and framework passages in the book, and they are addressed to the people in general.² In Zechariah 1-8 the relevant material occurs in the oracular introductory and closing sections - 1:2-6; 7:5-6,11-14; 8:10,13,14 - and in two of the visions, 1:12 and 5:3-4. The relationship of the theme to the message in all the references is varied and while the distinctions are not always clear cut

¹ Hag.2:14 also implies Yahweh's displeasure because of what the people offer him, but the issue is that of 'uncleanness' rather than 'judgement', a theme that recurs in Zech.3:3ff and 5:5-11, and it is not appropriate to discuss these matters here. Whether Hag.2:19 suggests that the prevailing agricultural situation is indicative of continuing judgement upon the people, or that it signifies that Yahweh's blessings are beginning to be experienced is uncertain because of ambiguity in the text. We believe the latter to be the case and thus this verse is not relevant to our discussions in this chapter.

² It is the framework to the oracles which suggests that the prophet was addressing Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, rather than the people (1:1; 2:1,4) but the content of the oracles argues more strongly that the people who are experiencing the agricultural and economic hardships are the direct recipients of the prophet's message. The composition of the framework was discussed on pp.11-17.

we recognize the expression of the theme through a past, present and future orientation. The material will be approached, wherever possible, according to these sub-divisions beginning with the present perspective.

Yahweh's displeasure with his people in the contemporary situation because they have not reconstructed the ruined temple in Jerusalem is expressed in Haggai 1:4,

"Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses, while this house lies in ruins?"

but whether this is also intended to be an implicit condemnation of the people's own luxurious style of houses is dependent upon the translation of 'פִּנְיָנִים' as 'panelled' or 'roofed'. Opinion among scholars is divided over this with the weight numerically in favour of the former³ rather than the latter.⁴ The biblical evidence⁵ supports the translation 'panelled' conveying the idea of a luxurious covering within a building; but the context of 1:4 suggests, on the contrary, that poor economic conditions were prevailing which argues strongly against the likelihood of any of the people being able to afford luxuries. Therefore it seems that 'roofed' is the more appropriate translation and that the emphasis is on the contrast between the properly built houses of the community and the ruined temple of Yahweh. Thus this prophecy indicates judgement but in a way intended to make the hearers appreciate that their self-interest is dishonouring to Yahweh and to motivate them into rebuilding

³ Ackroyd, Exile, p.155; BDB, p.706; Driver, CB, p.155; T. Henshaw, The Latter Prophets, (George Allen and Unwin Ltd.), 1958, p.243f; Petersen, OTL, p.48.

⁴ Baldwin, Haggai, p.40; Mason, Haggai, p.16; D.Winton Thomas, 'The Book of Haggai', Interpreter's Bible, IV, (New York), 1956, p.1041.

⁵ 1 Kgs.6:9; 7:3,7; Jer.22:14 (emended); and Ezek.41:16 (emended).

the temple. This approach is significantly different from that of Amos 3:15,

"I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall come to an end, says the LORD",

which contains similar thoughts except that the condemnation is directed at the affluent for their self-interest and greed. In Amos, however, punishment and destruction from Yahweh are prophesied as the consequence of the lack of honour being given to him and the total self-centredness displayed by the people.

Zechariah 1:12 also appears to refer to the present experience of the community as that of continuing judgement and punishment:

"O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these seventy years?"

This verse, particularly in the use of the phrase 'עַד־מַתַּי' (how long?), follows the style of a lament directed towards Yahweh, examples of which are most frequent in the Psalms.⁶ Commenting on the use of 'עַד־מַתַּי' in Psalm 6:4, Kraus has written,

"Es ist der Schrei dessen, der unter der Gewalt des Zornes Gottes vergeht."⁷

which describes well the idea conveyed through the use of this motif in Zechariah 1:12. In the classical prophetic literature the same phrase

⁶ Pss. 6:4; 74:10; 80:5; 82:2; 90:13 and 94:3. Pss. 13:1-3 and 79:5 contain the same idea but use the phrase 'עַד־מַתַּי' in the first example and 'מַתַּי־עַד' in the second to express the concept "How long?"

⁷ H-J. Kraus, Psalmen, (Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament, Leipzig), 1958, p. 49. We do not agree with his suggestion that Hab. 2:6 is another prophetic example of this same use of the motif, since there it is part of a woe directed against an evil-doer. Cf commentaries on Habakkuk for discussion of the textual problems and the use of this phrase in the verse.

occurs most often in Jeremiah, though usually in oracles addressed to the people;⁸ and only in 12:4 is it a complaint of Jeremiah directed to Yahweh. The one other example of this phrase in a prophetic lament is Isaiah 6:11, in the context of the prophet's call. Perhaps the only significant comment that can be made about such laments is that they were traditionally associated with the cult and the temple,⁹ a setting not applicable to Zechariah 1:12 since it is part of a vision which serves to encourage the people to rebuild the community and the temple in Jerusalem.

The concept of 'אָרַם' as a verb meaning 'love, have compassion' is directly related to its meaning as a noun, 'womb'. As Wolff writes:

"אָרַם means the natural love parents have for their children..., a close tie that joyfully and unconditionally embraces the child as the weaker person, especially in time of need."¹⁰

The idea that Yahweh has this kind of love and compassion towards his people is expressed throughout the Old Testament.¹¹ However references to the withdrawal from this relationship by Yahweh, the implication of

⁸ Jer. 4:14, 21; 23:26; 31:22 and 47:5. 1 Kgs. 18:21 and Hos. 8:5 are other prophetic examples of this use and these are akin to Ex. 10:3; Num. 14:27 and 1 Sam. 16:1.

⁹ The context of Jer. 12:4 does not indicate where the prophet was but the passage has much in common with the individual laments of the Psalms.

¹⁰ H.W. Wolff, Hosea, trans. G. Stansell, (Hermeneia, Fortress Press), 1974, p. 20.

¹¹ For example, Ex. 33:19; Deut. 13:18; 2 Kgs. 13:23; Pss. 103:13; 116:5; Isa. 14:1; 49:13; 54:8; 60:10; Jer. 12:15; 31:20; Ezek. 39:25; Mic. 7:19. Some scholars, for example Phyllis Trible in God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality, (Philadelphia), 1978, pp. 33ff, argue strongly that the imagery of maternal love and compassion is almost exclusively implied by this vocabulary but we believe this is making too much of etymological links.

Zechariah 1:12, are fewer.¹² It is in Hosea, with regard to the name of the second child נִצַּן רִחְמֵהוּ ,¹³ that the concept of Yahweh's negation of his fundamental relationship with his people is given fullest expression and it may be that this prophecy has influenced much Old Testament usage of this language. There is no suggestion that Zechariah 1:12 depends directly on this or any other passage but it is noted that Psalm 79, one of the lament psalms, in verse 8 also includes the idea that Yahweh has withheld his compassion. Though this Psalm could have been composed as late as the time of the Seleucids,¹⁴ it is probable that it relates to the events of 587BC and consequently it may have been a lament used on occasions of national fasting such as those mentioned in Zechariah 7:5; 8:18f.¹⁵ If this is the case it could have influenced the language of Zechariah 1:12.

The final clause of 1:12 makes clear that the absence of Yahweh's mercy is perceived as indicative of his anger towards his people and it includes a reference to "seventy years" which also occurs in Zechariah 7:5. In both cases it apparently relates to the period leading up to the time when the words were spoken, that is circa 520/518BC, and thus it roughly equates to the time since the Babylonian exile began.¹⁶ However the concept of a seventy year period is also found in Jeremiah

¹² Isa.9:16; 27:11; Jer.13:14; Hos.1:6; 2:6,25.

¹³ Hos.1:6ff. See F.I.Andersen & D.N.Freedman, Hosea, (AB), 1980, pp.187ff for a careful study of Hosea's use of נִצַּן .

¹⁴ For comments on the problems of its dating see A.Weiser, Psalms, trans. H.Hartwell, (OTL), 1962, p.544.

¹⁵ See Anderson, Psalms 73-150, p.577.

¹⁶ From 587BC, the fall of Jerusalem and the second stage of the exile, to 520/518BC is 67/69 years.

25:11,12; 29:10, relating to the duration of Babylonian domination and in Isaiah 23:15-18, with reference to the punishment of Tyre.¹⁷ In respect of the Jeremiah passages "seventy years" may be an approximation for the period between Babylon's rise to supremacy in 605BC and her conquest by Cyrus in 539BC, that is sixty-six years.¹⁸ While the period between the downfall of the Jerusalem temple and its rebuilding is traditionally calculated as seventy-one years, 587-516BC, the "seventy years" of Jeremiah certainly does not refer directly to the period of the ruined temple; and thus it appears that Zechariah 1:12 cannot be dependent on the Jeremiah passages. Fishbane has drawn attention to the way in which the concepts of sabbath rest and the desolation of the land, as expressed in Leviticus 26:34-35, have been incorporated into the interpretation by the Chronicler of the Jeremianic "seventy year" prophecy.¹⁹ Zechariah 1:12 certainly contains no indication of direct links with these concepts but the possibility cannot be discounted that this association of ideas developed in the early post-exilic period and that it had some influence on the way the motif of "seventy years" was utilised by the prophet and understood by the people. Isaiah 23:15ff is generally interpreted as referring to a symbolic rather than an exact period and this may be the explanation in both Jeremiah and Zechariah.

¹⁷ Other references in Dan.9:2,24; 2 Chron.36:21 are undoubtedly later than Zechariah and dependent on the passages in Jeremiah. Isa.23:15-18 may also be a late, perhaps even second century, addition but it contains no indication that it is directly linked with Jeremiah.

¹⁸ This suggestion was first proposed by B.Duhm, Das Buch Jeremias, (Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament, Tübingen and Leipzig), 1901, p.230. For detailed discussion of these issues see C.F.Whitley, 'The Term Seventy Years Captivity', VT.IV, 1954, pp.60-72; A.Orr, 'The Seventy Years of Babylon', VT.VI, 1956, pp.304-306; P.R.Ackroyd, 'Two Old Testament Historical Problems of the Early Persian Period', JNES 18, 1958, pp.23-27; and P.Grelot, 'Soixante-dix semaines d'années', Biblica 50, 1969, pp.169-80.

¹⁹ 2 Chron.36:18-21. M.Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation, pp.480f.

The symbolism could be linked to the span of human life as stated in Psalm 90:10

"The years of our life are threescore and ten,
or even by reason of strength fourscore;"

However scholars more commonly recognize similarities with the Assyrian inscription on the "Black Stone of Esarhaddon" concerning Marduk and the period of Babylon's desolation²⁰ and then accept Luckenbill's conclusion that there was a tradition in the Ancient Near East of understanding seventy years as:

"a perfectly proper period for an ancient
oriental city to lie desolate."²¹

It must be noted though, that Luckenbill's argument depends on inference from the Old Testament passages which we are considering. He does not establish by any other means the existence of a traditionally symbolic motif related to seventy years desolation which could be utilised in the Assyrian text. Therefore Old Testament scholars who use his conclusions concerning the Assyrian text to support arguments that Isaiah, Jeremiah or Zechariah are making use of the same traditional motif are guilty of arguing in a circle to substantiate their claims.

This does not deny the possibility that a 'seventy year' period was traditionally symbolic for the length of time for the desolation of a city or a temple; but there is no evidence concerning where or how it

²⁰ For a transcription and translation into German of the text see R.Borger, Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien, (Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft 9, Graz), 1956, p.15. See also D.D.Luckenbill, 'The Black Stone of Esarhaddon', A.J.S.L., Vol.41, 1924, pp.165-173; R.Borger, 'An Additional Remark on P.R.Ackroyd', JNES Vol.18, 1959, p.74; É.Lipinski, 'Recherches sur le livre de Zacharie', pp.38-39 and the articles listed in n.18 above.

²¹ Luckenbill, 'The Black Stone', p.167.

originated. There may be an indication to support this conclusion in Haggai 1:2:

"This people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD."

although many other explanations related to the pertaining economic or social situation can equally be put forward concerning the inference of this verse.²² Therefore no more can be said than that it is probable that 'seventy years' was perceived as a round figure rather than an exact number; that it may have related to a person's lifespan; that it was traditionally associated with periods of desolation or punishment; and perhaps with concepts of sabbath rest. If this is correct Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5 may reflect the continuation and the development of such a motif.

Taken as a whole Zechariah 1:12 indicates that the community ought to see its present experience as part of an ongoing period of judgement and punishment from Yahweh beginning with the exile and the destruction of the temple. However as seventy years have now almost passed Yahweh's compassion can be anticipated and the people can begin to look for signs of renewal and blessing. The prophet's message is one of encouragement - punishment does not last forever!

²² Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.19-21 draw attention to the problems of translation and interpretation posed by the Hebrew text of this verse and to some of the solutions which have been offered. They argue that this verse relates to Jer.25:11-12 and 29:10 and suggest that Jeremiah's words would have been taken seriously and understood to imply that the end of Israel's subjugation would come after 70 yrs, i.e.the end point was approaching.

The use of 'זמן' (time) in Ezekiel (7:7,12; 21:30,34(MT); 35:5) in connection with the day of Yahweh's judgement raises the possibility of the word having become a technical term in the post-exilic period linked to the concept of Yahweh's return to his people. Although the need for a temple is associated with Yahweh's return, it does not equate with the idea of his coming in judgement and therefore this interpretation must be rejected in respect of Hag.1:2.

In Haggai 1:6

"You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages earns wages to put them into a bag with holes."

the prophet draws the attention of the people to the bad harvest they have experienced, their general economic hardships and the problem of inflation. He seems to be referring to specific recent, indeed current, experiences and the way in which he presents the phrases creates the clear impression that these circumstances result from the community's activity having been thwarted and their hopes dashed, rather than this being purely a series of unfortunate coincidences. Haggai is seeking to make his hearers realise that this is Yahweh's activity because he is displeased at their neglect of the ruined temple. Thus it is no accident that he speaks of these particular situations in this way. The subject matter and style of presentation are both reminiscent of the traditional 'blessings and curses' and 'rewards and punishments' associated with Israel's law codes in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26, which would have been familiar to the people.²³ This kind of material is frequently identified with 'treaty curses' which, it is argued, formed a concluding section to treaty documents throughout the ancient Near East.²⁴ It has commonly been suggested that treaty concepts were incorporated by Israel

²³ Some verbal similarity exists between *יְרַעְתֶּם חֲרִיבָה וְהָבִיא מְעַט אֲכֹלִים* (Hag.1:6) and *יִרְעַע רֹב תְּבוּאָה הַשָּׂדֶה וּמְעַט תֹּאמְרֵי* (Deut.28:38) and *וְיִרְעַתֶּם וְזָא תִשְׁבְּעוּ* (Lev.26:26). There is no suggestion, however, either of quotation or of direct borrowing of this material from the Law Codes by the prophet.

²⁴ Biblical scholarship frequently refers to the Hittite suzerainty treaties in this connection, for example G.E.Mendenhall, 'Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition', *BA* 17, 1954, pp.50-76, although latterly more attention has been paid to the Assyrian treaties. See also D.J.McCarthy *Treaty and Covenant*, 2nd Ed., (Rome Biblical Institute), 1978, Chapter 4 in particular and the extensive bibliography.

into the idea of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and herself; although Nicholson has shown that little of lasting value has resulted from research in this area.²⁵ While we recognize similarities between the formulation of Israel's covenants and that of some ancient treaties it appears that they are analogous rather than directly dependent on one another and therefore we agree with McCarthy's conclusion that:

"The treaty analogy for the relation of Yahwe and Israel is thus a flowering of a development, not a root from which covenant ideas grow."²⁶

Hillers²⁷ argues for closer connections with the ancient treaties and he identifies a particular category of curse which threatens the frustration of human activity as a consequence of any disobedience by the signatory to the treaty. This he calls a 'Futility' curse.²⁸ He contends that examples of the futility curse are common in Old Testament prophetic books²⁹ and claims that Haggai 1:6 is another "clear example". We agree with Beuken's findings on this verse, along with 1:9 and 2:16, that it continues the pattern of giving a description of the activity followed by an account of its frustration. He states,

"Die Einmaligkeit dieser Themen weist darauf hin, dass diese Gattung während und nach dem Exil noch nicht zu Klischees erstarrt war. Im Gegenteil, sie erweist sich als noch voll lebendig, natürlich in den Autoren, die sie

²⁵ E.W.Nicholson, God and His People, (Oxford University Press), 1986. See Chapter 3 for a survey of recent studies in this area and pp.81f for his conclusions.

²⁶ McCarthy, Treaty, p.293.

²⁷ D.R.Hillers, Treaty Curses and the Old Testament Prophets, (Biblica et Orientalis 16), 1965.

²⁸ Hillers, Treaty Curses, pp.28f.

²⁹ He cites Hos.4:10; 5:6; 8:7; 9:12; 9:16; Amos 5:11; and Mic.3:4; 6:14-15. Hillers, Treaty Curses, p.29.

verwenden, aber auch in der Oberlieferung, denn in der einen oder anderen Weise sind jene von ihr abhängig. Zusammenfassend können wir sagen: die Wirkungslosigkeitsflüche Haggais sind als Gattung nicht eine Schöpfung des Propheten; sie haben eine lange Vorgeschichte."³⁰

Beuken then indicates a distinction in Haggai's use of the traditional form saying that,

"Andererseits sind es keine Klischees: nach Inhalt und Thematik muss man ihnen einen eigenen Charakter zuerkennen."³¹

Whilst agreeing with this it appears that the significant distinction in Haggai's use of 'futility curses', as defined by Hillers, is that Haggai is referring to actual events rather than future possibilities and we would argue that this verse cannot be called a futility curse per se.

Petersen appears to accept Hillers' basic thesis but suggests that Haggai uses the curses in a different way, as historiography,³² arguing that the prophet regards the rebuilding of the temple as a covenant duty the failure to comply with which has resulted in the realization of the futility curses. He rightly comments that:

"Such a view represents a significant reformulation of the covenant norms, a focusing on the cult center per se, something that is markedly absent from other covenant stipulations preserved in the Hebrew Bible."³³

³⁰ Beuken, Haggai, pp.195-6. For his full arguments about the form of 'futility curses' which he calls 'Wirkungslosigkeitsflüchen' see pp.190-197.

³¹ Beuken, Haggai, p.196.

³² Petersen, OTL, p.50. He cites Amos 4:8 as another example of the same use of the past tense. However this ignores the distinction whereby Haggai is speaking of his hearers' personal experience whilst in Amos the prophet is making a much more generalised statement about the behaviour of Yahweh towards his people.

³³ Petersen, OTL, p.50.

This is a bold suggestion to make about a prophet's understanding of covenant, particularly when there is no direct reference to the concept of covenant in the Book of Haggai. It may be, rather, that the prophet is using earlier cultic material traditionally associated with covenant concepts but is applying it to his current situation in a new way, somewhat in the style of a modern preacher.

However there may be evidence that Haggai's use of traditional motifs associated with 'curses' was influenced by prophetic literature. The concept of wages being insufficient to provide for one's material needs is not found in the works of the classical prophets;³⁴ but it is reiterated in Zechariah 8:10, a verse implying even harsher conditions in that it suggests that wages were not paid at all.³⁵ The motif of hunger and its satisfaction is sometimes used in Old Testament prophetic literature in passages which offer a hopeful message;³⁶ and its reverse in messages of condemnation.³⁷ However there is insufficient similarity between these passages and Haggai 1:6 to substantiate a theory that they have been influential upon, or influenced by, Haggai's message. There is one passage, though, Micah 6:14-15,

"You shall eat, but not be satisfied, and there shall be hunger in your inward parts; you shall put away, but not save, and what you save I will give to the sword. You shall sow, but not reap;

³⁴ The concept of wages being put in a bag is probably associated with the development of a monetary system and the minting of coinage within Israel (cf R.Loewe 'The Earliest Allusions to Coined Money', Palestine Exploration Quarterly 87, 1955, pp.141-150) and thus it is a concept which could not have been utilised in a much earlier period.

³⁵ See pp.24ff and especially n.91 in respect of the relationship between Zech.8:10 and Hag.1:6.

³⁶ Isa.23:18; 66:11; Ezek.39:19; Joel 2:26 et al.

³⁷ Isa.9:19; Hos.4:10; Ezek.7:19 et al.

you shall tread olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil; you shall tread grapes, but not drink wine."

which includes several of the motifs that are found in Haggai 1:6 and the possibility that Haggai made use of this, earlier, prophecy warrants examination.

The suggestion of any direct quotation by Haggai of Micah's words, either verbatim or distorted by poor remembrance, can be discounted immediately.³⁸ Verbal comparison indicates some common vocabulary, as the concepts of 'יָרַע' (sow), 'אָכַל' (eat), 'שָׂבַע' (be satisfied) and 'שָׁתָה' (drink) occur in both prophecies; but never in an identical form and the sequence of the motifs is different. This latter point, however, is not conclusive because the text of Micah 6:9-16 is problematic and scholars have suggested a re-ordering of the sentences.³⁹ Although Micah 6:13⁴⁰ indicates that the experience of Yahweh's judgement has begun for the people because they have turned away from his ways (v.16), the actual prophecy in vv.14-15 has a clear future orientation and it accords with the form of a futility curse. Mays is correct in stating that futility curses are used in classical prophetic literature to announce the way in which Yahweh will punish his people; also in his conclusion that these curses are thus

"not an attempt to sketch an accurate picture of external events but a code to interpret disaster

³⁸ This does not deny that Haggai might have known the prophecies of Micah and be alluding to them. However we would be entering the realm of subjectivity if we tried to determine whether Haggai's words were an allusion or an independent prophecy.

³⁹ Mays, Micah, pp.143ff.

⁴⁰ Reading 'יָרַע' for 'שָׂבַע' of MT. cf LXX.

as YHWH's reaction to breach of covenant";⁴¹

but he is not correct in asserting that this is the case in Haggai 1:6. Haggai is presenting an accurate, albeit selective, picture of external events which his hearers can identify as their own experience. Another difference is that the prophet makes no reference to any breaches of the covenant relationship by the people. What Haggai does is threefold. He makes his hearers consider their situation; by his choice of words he prompts them to recall the concepts of curses and Yahweh's punishment; and he links this to the fact that the temple still lies in ruins. Once this has been done he allows the people to draw the only reasonable conclusion, that they are now experiencing Yahweh's punishment because they have not built the temple.

It seems that there is no evidence to suggest Haggai's dependence upon Micah 6:14-15 in particular; but the effectiveness of the prophecy in Haggai 1:6 relies upon a general awareness of futility curses and the use of them in law codes and prophetic proclamations. In 1:6 Haggai is drawing on the traditional curse material in a similar manner to that of the earlier prophets. Again like them, he uses it in relation to the people's experience of Yahweh's displeasure; but that is where the similarity ends. Unlike his prophetic predecessors Haggai does not just tell his hearers what they have done wrong and what is likely to be the consequence, he addresses them in a way that makes them think things out for themselves. Haggai was able to do this because he firmly believed that the cause of the community's impoverished circumstances was their failure to rebuild the temple and Yahweh's displeasure at this. However his style of presentation suggests an appreciation of the human tendency

⁴¹ Mays, Micah, pp. 147f.

to respond more positively when one has oneself determined the necessary course of action, as distinct from simply being told what to do! This may have some bearing on why the people responded to Haggai's preaching while the message of earlier prophets frequently went unheeded.

The opening clause of Haggai 1:9,

"You have looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away."

appears to continue the notion of frustrated activity as the present experience of the community but no specific topics are mentioned. This could imply a change of reference by the prophet from that in 1:6 where it was the agricultural and economic situation to a more general concern about the lack of fulfillment of the high hopes for a glorious future in Zion which had been promised by the prophets of the exile, in particular by Deutero-Isaiah.⁴² However, in the light of the following clauses, which refer to something being "brought" and "blown upon" by Yahweh, it is more probable that the subject of the harvest or of the offerings, matters akin to those in 1:6, is again the reference. The concept 'נפח' (breathing or blowing) when used in relation to Yahweh's activity can mean an outpouring of his life giving spirit,⁴³ or be an expression of

⁴² Petersen, *OTL*, pp.51f proposes this interpretation for the first clause; but when this is looked at in relation to the following clause it is hard to understand how someone could 'bring home' the fruition of an 'eschatological' hope, which would be the necessary implication. Unless the two clauses are viewed as being totally independent of each other, Petersen's suggestion cannot be accepted. He does not separate them in this way himself, nor is there textual support for such an idea and so we reject his interpretation.

⁴³ For example Gen 2:7; Ezek 37:9-10.

his anger.⁴⁴ In its context in Haggai 1:9 it can only have the negative connotation and consequently be an example of an expression of Yahweh's displeasure.⁴⁵ Whether this displeasure is shown towards that which the people bring in as their harvest - in other words the scant harvest is reduced even further as if it had been blown away; or whether it is a rejection of what the people bring as an offering to Yahweh can only be determined in the light of the interpretation of 'קִבְּרֵי'.⁴⁶ On balance we suggest that the idea of bringing the harvest home is more probable. Either way it is apparent that the prophet is reminding his hearers once again through this expression of how they have experienced the judgement of Yahweh against themselves. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that Haggai is using a particular prophetic idea of the way in which Yahweh acts.

The neglect of the temple ruins is clearly expressed in the second

⁴⁴ For example Ezek 22:21. Winton Thomas, IB, pp.1042, draws attention to two other passages (Isa.11:4; 40:14) where the "breath" or "blowing" of Yahweh has a harmful effect. While these may lend support to an argument in favour of understanding a negative interpretation of the concept in Hag 1:9 it must be noted that different vocabulary is used - 'קִבְּרֵי' in the first example and 'נִשְׁפָּה' in the second.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, ICC, p.48 suggests that the prophet probably had in mind a sudden gust of wind, perhaps alluding to the expression of the psalmist in Ps.18:16. However he notes a superstition of the East which was still current among Moslems at the turn of this century concerning the magical effect of breath, whereby it was believed that if anyone whistled over a threshing floor heaped with grain then the devil was likely to come and take away part of the harvest during the night. He concludes, contra Wellhausen, that it is improbable that Haggai would have intended to suggest that Yahweh engaged in magic in exercising his judgement upon his people.

⁴⁶ Petersen, OTL, p.52 outlines the issues regarding this as a reference to the people's own homes or the temple but does not consider the possibility that the people may still have been making offerings, including those of firstfruits, at the ruined temple site. Cf Ezra 3:2ff. Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.29, in contrast state categorically "that the altar was functional at this time" and claim that sacrifice is undoubtedly meant. We cannot agree with their certainty about this.

part of Haggai 1:9,

"Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while you busy yourselves each with his own house."

as being the reason for Yahweh's displeasure;⁴⁷ and this serves as an introduction to verses 10-11 which express the activity of Yahweh as a consequence of this in the immediate past experience of the community:

"Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I have called for a drought upon the land and the hills, upon the grain, the new wine, the oil, upon what the ground brings forth, upon men and cattle, and upon all their labours."

These verses list what Yahweh has done to affect adversely the growing seasons, the harvests; and to make life harsh for all living creatures. They consist almost entirely of motifs which are both common within, and very important to, any agricultural community. Most frequently the two verses are treated as a single unit and this appears to be the correct understanding of the passage, although it is recognized that v.10 is expressed impersonally while v.11 is a first person oracle of Yahweh, which could possibly argue against unity.⁴⁸ The text of Haggai 1:10a is difficult in MT and both emendations and omissions have textual as well as scholarly support; and this makes it yet more problematic to ascertain whether the prophet was drawing on earlier prophetic material.

⁴⁷ The selfish, materialistic concerns of the people represent a secondary reason for Yahweh's displeasure. This verse perhaps reflects the message of Amos 3:15 even more closely than Hag.1:4. See pp.219f.

⁴⁸ F.S.North, 'Critical Analysis of the Book of Haggai', ZAW 67-68, 1955-56, pp.25-46, takes a very extreme view and suggests that all but about 10 verses of the Book of Haggai are secondary. He maintains not only that 1:10-11 is secondary but that v.10 results from two separate additions to the text while v.11 is composed of an original clause to which no less than 5 separate glosses have been added at different times. There appears to be no justification to accept any of these suggestions.

The word 'בִּטְנָה', literally 'from dew', has to be emended to make any sense of the clause. Sometimes it is suggested that it should read 'גִּטְנָה' (rain), whilst mostly it is preferred that the concept 'dew' be retained. Both the dew and the rain are important to agriculture in Israel at different times in the growing season;⁴⁹ and not unnaturally the Old Testament contains many references to them in relation to Yahweh as the one who both sends them upon the earth⁵⁰ and withholds them from the earth.⁵¹ The specific connection between the dew and the heavens occurs elsewhere in passages relating to blessings.⁵² On the other hand there is no reference to the heavens withholding dew although in Amos 4:7 Yahweh claims to have withheld the rain:

"And I also withheld the rain from you when there were yet three months to the harvest".

As in Haggai this is a report of an event which has already taken place and there can be little doubt, considering the context of the clause in Amos, that the action was an expression of Yahweh's displeasure. This, however, supports neither the suggested reading of 'גִּטְנָה', nor the possibility of direct dependence on Amos 4:7 by Haggai since completely

⁴⁹ M.Noth, The Old Testament World, trans. V.I.Gruhn, (A.C.Black : Fortress Press), 1966, p.31 provides an account of the necessity of the dew in certain parts of the nation.

⁵⁰ Gen.7:4; Lev.26:4; Dt.11:14; 28:12; Ps.147:8; Jer.5:4; Joel 2:23; Mic.5:6

⁵¹ Gen.8:2; Dt.28:24; Zech.14:17.

⁵² Gen.27:28,39; Dt.33:13. The text of Dt.33:13 is uncertain and some Mss have 'בִּטְנָה' (from above) instead of 'בִּטְנָה' (from dew) or any other reference to dew. Hos.14:6 is another example in which Yahweh promises to be like the dew to Israel, again a concept of blessing. Zech.8:12 also uses this motif in the context of Yahweh's blessings; but as we have indicated on pp.25f and n.91 this is probably an example of inner biblical exegesis which is dependent on Hag.1:10.

different vocabulary is used in the two verses.⁵³

In Amos 4:7 the purpose of withholding the necessary moisture from Israel is to cause a poor harvest. Haggai 1:10b likewise connects these two ideas although the general word for agricultural produce 'יבול' is used rather than 'קציר' (harvest). Old Testament passages which include references to 'הארץ' (the earth) and its produce relate them as examples of Yahweh's blessing⁵⁴ and the removal of this blessing in the case of disobedience. There is no evidence that these motifs were developed in any particular way in prophetic literature and their use in Haggai seems to depend on the general traditions of blessing and curse, whereby they are cited as evidence of Yahweh's displeasure.

Haggai 1:11 refers to a drought which would make more sense if v10 had spoken of both the dew and the rain being withheld although the same word 'יָבֹשׁ' is used in Judges 6:37,39,40 in the sense of dryness as being an absence of dew. The only other place where this word has the meaning 'drought' is in Deuteronomy 28:22⁵⁵ and it is interesting that 'drought' as a concept is only directly mentioned twice more in the Old Testament, in Jeremiah 14:1 and 17:8 where the word used is 'בַּצָּרָה'. The citation in Deuteronomy concerns the consequences to be anticipated as a result of disobedience and thus a connection can be made between this reference

⁵³ Amos uses 'מנר' for 'withhold' as distinct from 'כִּלְאוֹ' in Haggai and 'גֶּשֶׁם' for 'rain'.

⁵⁴ Lev.26:4; Dt.11:17; Pss.67:7; 85:13; Ezek.34:27; Zech.8:12. This final reference expresses the opposite situation of both statements in Hag 1:10 in a promise of future blessing by Yahweh upon his people and the likelihood of interdependence between these two passages has been discussed on pp.24ff.

⁵⁵ MT actually reads 'בַּצָּרָה' (with the sword) but the consonants are the same as would be required for 'with drought' as in EV.

and Haggai's prophecy; but the choice of vocabulary in 1:11 may be for a different reason. The consonantal text of 'חֲרֵב' (drought) is the same as for 'חֲרָב' (waste or in ruins), a description applied to the temple in 1:4,9. Thus the prophet may be using a deliberate word play to stress the connection between Yahweh sending a drought and the temple still lying in ruins. This is a technique designed to make one's hearers take note which is used elsewhere in the prophetic books.⁵⁴ It has greatest effect when used in public speaking but the point is not totally lost on the written page either. There is no reason to believe that Haggai 'borrowed' the concept of word play from either Amos or Jeremiah but his use of it lends credence to suggestions that prophetic figures were from the educated sections of society and were those who had some familiarity with wisdom traditions.

Haggai 1:11 continues with a series of motifs illustrating that the 'drought' affected all productivity of human, animal and plant life and all parts of the land. A period of drought is a fairly frequent event in the region but there is no external evidence indicating that such an extreme situation arose in the time of Haggai. Although Haggai 1:11 is expressed in the past tense as if referring to things already experienced by the community, the tone of the verse does not imply the description of an actual set of circumstances. It seems more probable that traditional motifs have been drawn together to emphasize the scope and seriousness of Yahweh's judgement and to imply that its consequences will continue to be experienced in the future. This is a method similar

⁵⁴ Amos 8:1-2; Jer.1:11-12. Contrary to their use in Haggai, these examples both occur in connection with visions which the prophets relate to their current situation. Amos links 'צִבּוֹר' (summer fruit) with 'צִבּוֹר' (the end), while Jeremiah connects 'אֲשֵׁל' (almond) with 'אֲשֵׁל' (watching).

to that adopted by other prophets to add force to their proclamations of punishment⁵⁷ or to expand the picture of blessings still to come.⁵⁸

The combination of 'דגן' (grain), 'תירוש' (new wine) and 'זית' (oil) as a unified concept is very prominent in Deuteronomy and passages that bear evidence of Deuteronomistic influence but it also occurs in writings outside this school.⁵⁹ The combination of solely the first two products is found in more passages.⁶⁰ It is suggested that these are characteristic products of a settled agricultural community and Mayes notes the use of the same three motifs in Ugaritic texts.⁶¹ In every instance of this expression the vocabulary is indicative of the products in their natural, unprocessed state,⁶² emphasizing their connection with the fertility of the land which was understood to be always dependent upon the activity of Yahweh. In Haggai the all-encompassing intention of this motif is given more force by the following phrase וְעַל אֲשֶׁר תוֹצֵא הָאֲדָמָה (and upon what the ground brings forth) which explains, rather than adds to, the tripartite motif. In common with the usage elsewhere in the prophetic literature,⁶³ the motif is used in Haggai to recall the

⁵⁷ For example Joel 1:11-12; Mic.6:15.

⁵⁸ For example Amos 9:13ff.

⁵⁹ Dt.7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 18:4; 28:51; Num.18:12; 2 Chron. 31:5; 32:28; Neh.5:11; 10:39; 13:5,12; Jer.31:12; Hos.2:10,24; and Joel 1:10; 2:19.

⁶⁰ Gen.27:28,37; Dt.33:28; 2 Kgs.18:32; Ps.4:8; Isa.36:17; 62:8; Hos.2:11; 7:14; and Zech.9:17.

⁶¹ A.D.H.Mayes, Deuteronomy, (NCB), 1979, p.187.

⁶² Cf Hag.2:12 where the words applicable to the processed products are used for wine (תִּירֹשׁ), oil (זֵיתֹן), and food (מִאֲכָל). See Driver, CB, p.157 for a discussion about the meaning of 'תירוש'.

⁶³ Jer.31:12; Hos.2:10,24; and Joel 2:19.

promises of blessing associated with the fertility of the land of Canaan but in contrast its failure is threatened as evidence that Yahweh is not blessing the community at this time. The motif is used in a similar way in Joel 1:10 but there is no suggestion that its usage in Haggai is dependent on anything other than a common, ancient, tradition.

The latter part of Haggai 1:11 extends the effects of Yahweh's displeasure to all animate creatures. It suggests that any efforts they make to provide for themselves, which are really attempts to overcome Yahweh's punishment by relying on their own abilities, are similarly being frustrated as evidence of judgement and displeasure. Both phrases 'upon men and cattle' and 'upon every work of their hands' are general expressions, the former used to distinguish 'animal' from 'plant' life,⁶⁴ while the latter always refers to agricultural work and its produce.⁶⁵ Therefore we conclude that it is improbable that the prophet was either drawing on, or developing, any specific prophetic tradition but rather that he was utilizing commonly understood motifs to emphasize his message.

We have argued that within Haggai 1:9-11 there are several motifs which appear to derive from widely accepted traditions and that they are used by the prophet to make his message more vivid. He refers to the present and immediate past experiences of the community in terms of these traditional motifs to enable his hearers to recognize that the happenings are all consequences of Yahweh's judgement. The punishment

⁶⁴ Ex.9:9,22; Jer.7:20; 21:6; 27:5; but cf Num.31:47 where it has a more particular meaning and Eccl.3:19 where the emphasis is the lack of distinction between man and beast.

⁶⁵ Dt.28:33; Job.10:3; Pss.78:46; 128:2; and Ezek.23:39.

is deserved because the temple is being neglected; but the inference of the final verse in the section is that the difficulties will continue in the future unless the people act in obedience to Yahweh and rebuild the temple.

The final reference to judgement in Haggai occurs in 2:16-17,

"how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten; when one came to the winevat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. I smote you and all the products of your toil with blight and mildew and hail; yet you did not return to me, says the LORD."

As in Haggai 1:6 the content of 2:16 relates to the lack of food and drink; but while 1:6 was a reference to the prevailing situation, here it is expressed as a remembrance of how things used to be. Petersen⁶⁶ argues that the prophet is indicating that the meagre harvests which had been put into storage used mysteriously to disappear by the activity of Yahweh as a continuation of his punishment on the community. Although this interpretation can be explained as the consequence of mould or disease developing in the stored produce, it makes possible a suggestion that Yahweh 'magically' reduced the stores. The danger allowed by this understanding is avoided by Mitchell⁶⁷ who argues that the distinction was between the yield that was anticipated from the unprocessed harvest and that which was actually attained. Following this latter exegesis Haggai 2:16 simply expresses, in a different way, the bad harvests which had been the experience of the people before they began to rebuild the temple and thereby to remove the cause of their punishment. The style of expression is unusual but if Mitchell is correct in his understanding

⁶⁶ Petersen, OTL, pp.90-91.

⁶⁷ Mitchell, ICC, p.69.

then Haggai could be alluding to Isaiah 5:10,

"For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah."

in which a similar punishment, expressed in explicit terms is threatened against Israel's leaders.⁶⁸ The purpose of Haggai 2:16 is to remind the community that their past experience was that of Yahweh's punishment; but the reminder is to serve as an encouragement not to flag in zeal now that the work of rebuilding the temple has begun, or else the situation may return to that of judgement and punishment as a consequence.

Haggai 2:17 is also an expression of the way Yahweh acted towards the community in their recent past and again it relates to agricultural disaster. However, this verse takes the people's thoughts back a stage further than 2:16 to the time when the crops were still standing in the fields before the harvest.⁶⁹ This could be a technique designed to create greater impact but the lack of any connecting word between 2:16 and 17 as would be normal syntactically must be noted. This raises a question as to whether 2:17 is original to Haggai, which is reinforced by its similarity to Amos 4:9,

"I smote you with blight and mildew; I laid waste your gardens and your vineyards; your fig trees and your olive trees the locust devoured; yet you did not return to me, says the LORD."

The first four words of the two verses 'וְהָיָה אֲתֶכֶם בְּעֵצְבוֹן וּבְיִקְמוֹן' are

⁶⁸ Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.25 note the similarity in Hag.2:16, Isa.5:10 and a curse in one of the Tell-Fekherye texts - "Even if he should sow a thousand measures, may he get half [as much] therefrom"- which is probably ninth century BC. This suggests that the concept of equating a reduction in the expected harvest with punishment was accepted quite generally in the ancient Near East.

⁶⁹ The disasters which are mentioned would not affect produce that had already been gathered in to storehouses.

identical; they both end with the same closing oracular formula; and the final clause of 2:17 'וְאִין־אָתְּכֶם אֲנִי' (literally - 'and not you [direct object] to me') may be connected with 'וְלֹא־שִׁבַּתְתֶּם צְדִיקִי', the refrain which occurs in Amos 4:6,8,10 and 11 as well as in 4:9.⁷⁰ The Hebrew text of the final clause appears to be corrupt in that the verb is lacking;⁷¹ but every attempt to interpret it seems to suggest a lack of response by the people⁷² which is the meaning of the refrain in Amos. Smith states that the

"whole verse 2:17 is a paraphrase of Amos 4:9 plus a reconstruction of Amos' expression, "yet you did not return to me."⁷³

but this ignores the inclusion of 'וּבְבָרָךְ' (and with hail) in 2:17 and reduces the whole of lines 2 and 3 of Amos 4:9 to the phrase 'אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂהָ יְדֵי־כַסֵּם' (all the products of your toil). Ackroyd argues that 2:17 is an interpretative gloss based almost entirely on Amos 4:9⁷⁴ but it is very difficult to understand why a scribe would add this as a gloss here, after a verse concerned with the gathered harvest, rather than after a

⁷⁰ LXX uses the language of the Amos refrain in Hag.2:17. See BHS for details of textual variants.

⁷¹ Contra Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.61ff who argue at length for the accuracy of the text. Beuken, Haggai, p.210, note 4, also claims that the construction of the text is admissible, citing several articles on the use of the particle 'אין' in support.

⁷² For example see Petersen OTL, pp.86f note e.

⁷³ R.L.Smith, Micah - Malachi, Word Biblical Commentary 32, (Waco, Texas), 1984, p.159. It should be noted however that on p.161 he makes a subtly different comment that, "2:17 depends heavily on Amos 4:9. In fact some scholars see this as a scribal gloss from Amos."

⁷⁴ P.R.Ackroyd, 'Some Interpretative Glosses in the Book of Haggai' JJS 7, 1956, p.166. This is a different opinion from the one which he expressed in his earlier article 'The Book of Haggai and Zechariah I-VIII', JJS 3, 1952, in which he concluded about the allusion to Amos 4:9 in Haggai 2:17 that "it would appear most likely that Haggai himself adapted, consciously or unconsciously, words which were familiar to him." (p.7.)

verse such as Haggai 1:11 which is related to the agricultural situation more generally.⁷⁵ This is not to deny that part of verse 17 may be a scribal gloss, since any suggestion that the people did not turn back to Yahweh fits rather oddly into the context of an oracle spoken after the work on the temple has begun, which was surely an indication that the people had responded and turned back. The final clause and the oracular formula may well be a gloss from a scribe who recognised the similarity between 2:17 and Amos 4:9 and added in words that he believed would be the completion of a quotation.⁷⁶

In biblical texts the concept 'מִדְּבַל' (mildew) only appears in conjunction with 'בִּדְבַל' (blight).⁷⁷ While the exact nuance of the words is difficult to determine, it is clear that in each instance they are understood as being sent by Yahweh as an attack on the agricultural produce. In Deuteronomy 28:22 they form part of a curse and this is probably the derivation of their usage in Amos 4:9 where the prophet does not refer to a specific historical occurrence but points out that this kind of disaster, which Israel has experienced in the past, is judgement from Yahweh.⁷⁸ The concept 'בְּדָב' (hail) belongs primarily to

⁷⁵ Beuken, Haggai, pp.210f notes that the theme of 2:17 is closer to that of Hag.1:10f than its preceding verse but nevertheless argues that it is the work of a glossator.

⁷⁶ The availability of texts of pre-exilic prophecy in the early post-exilic period has been indicated on pp.2-11.

⁷⁷ Dt.28:22; 1 Kgs.8:37; 2 Chron.6:28; Amos 4:9. Cf Gray, Kings, p.208 for an interpretation of 'blight' or 'blasting' and 'mildew'.

⁷⁸ Cf J.L.Mays, Amos, (OTL), SCM, 1969, pp.76ff and H.W.Wolff, Joel and Amos, pp.210ff for full examinations of the interpretation of Amos 4:9 in its context.

the account of the plagues sent by Yahweh upon Egypt.⁷⁷ In Exodus 9:25 the notion of hail destroying the crops of the field at the instigation of Yahweh is expressed and this is a tradition which would almost certainly have been known by Haggai. The phrase adopted in Haggai 2:17 to denote what was smitten by hail 'אַתְּ כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם' (literally - every work or product of your hands) can imply all kinds of human enterprise⁸⁰ although there are two groups of references in which it conveys a more specific meaning, either as an expression to denote man-made idols⁸¹ or, predominantly in Deuteronomy, to indicate agricultural produce.⁸² The context suggests that this agricultural connotation is the most probable but this raises the question as to why a different phrase has been used here from the one in Haggai 1:11,⁸³ which clearly had this implication. Since the phrase in 2:17 is the same as the one in 2:14, where a wider interpretation of work is probably required,⁸⁴ then it is possible that a more general meaning should be understood in this instance; but it may simply be that the writer had this phrase to the forefront of his mind and used it as there was little danger of it being misinterpreted in its context.

⁷⁷ Ex.9:18,22,23,24,25,26,28,29,33,34; 10:5,12,15; and Pss.78:47, 48; 105:32; but cf Josh.10:11; Pss.18:13,14; 148:8; Isa.28:2,17; 30:30.

⁸⁰ For example Dt.2:7; Job 1:10; Ps.90:17; and Isa.65:22.

⁸¹ For example Dt.4:28; 27:15; Ps.115:4; Isa.2:8; Hos.14:4; and Mic.5:13.

⁸² Deut.14:29; 16:15; 24:19; 28:12; 30:9.

⁸³ See p.239 and n.65 above.

⁸⁴ It is not clear whether the specific work of rebuilding the temple is being referred to in this context as suggested by Mason, 'The Prophets of the Restoration', p.144, or whether it implies all activity associated with community life; but it cannot be restricted to mean only agricultural produce.

The possibility of Haggai 2:17 being an editorial addition to the text, plus a subsequent gloss cannot be discounted, but we have found no compelling arguments for this view. If it is editorial, the addition is intended to emphasize the judgement that had been experienced in the past before the work on the temple began and the editor may have felt it was necessary to sharpen up the less specific expression of judgement in the previous verse. However we believe it is more probable that Haggai was responsible for the major part of 2:17 and that he used it to remind the community of how bad things used to be in their past in contrast to the current situation. This enabled him to encourage his hearers that things would be better still as they continued to work on the temple and through this prompted Yahweh to act towards them with blessing. Whether the words come from the prophet or from an editor, it is probable that a direct quotation from Amos 4:9 is used deliberately to begin the verse. This could account for the absence of any connecting word such as 'l' or 'וְאֵל' . However, since the concepts which continued the Amos passage were inappropriate to the context of Haggai 2:17, a more apt one was drawn from the Exodus traditions to amplify what would otherwise have been a stark and isolated clause. This argument presupposes that a text of Amos's prophecies was available to the originator of 2:17,⁹⁵ or that the words had been handed down verbatim by oral transmission; and that such words were perceived by the restored community in Jerusalem as having religious significance and authority in the sense of what might nowadays be termed 'scripture'. If this accurately assesses the significance of 2:17, then it may mark a transition from the more widespread practice of using general traditional material in an updated context and it is quite a different application of prophetic words from that whereby the whole

⁹⁵ We argued in favour of this hypothesis on pp.2-11 above.

message of a prophet was redirected to a new audience and situation such as is believed to have occurred with Amos's prophecies in Judah in the years leading up to the Babylonian exile. It may be that the practice of citing short passages of 'scripture' to reinforce whatever was being expressed developed in the restoration period and that Haggai's use of Amos 4:9 is an early example of this.

The material in Haggai which has been considered all deals with the issues of judgement and punishment primarily from the perspective of a present orientation even though the immediate past experience of the community was incorporated into the prophet's message in a few places; and this was also the case with Zechariah 1:12. However in the prologue to Zechariah,

"The LORD was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Thus says the LORD of hosts: Return to me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. Be not like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.' But they did not hear or heed me, says the LORD. Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever? But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? So they repented and said, As the LORD of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds so he has dealt with us."⁹⁰

the focus is on the more distant past, on the proclamations of judgement from the former prophets against the 'fathers' of the present generation and one of the purposes of these verses is to encourage those listening to Zechariah to learn the lessons from their history and the experiences of their ancestors and thus not suffer similar judgement and punishment

⁹⁰ Zech. 1:2-6.

themselves.⁸⁷

It is generally agreed that this prologue has been edited but there is much less unanimity about to what extent, when and by whom.⁸⁸ A consequence of the editorial process is that the text as it stands is ambiguous regarding whether verses 3 and 6b relate to the repentance of the current generation or whether they also record the events of the past. Since Zechariah 1:1 dates the commencement of his ministry to the eighth month of the second year of Darius, that is two months after Haggai's initial prophecy prompted the repentance of the people,⁸⁹ it would seem unnecessary for Zechariah to call for their repentance again. However the prophet, or editor, might have considered it an appropriate introduction to his message to remind the community from the outset that their repentance towards Yahweh was a pre-requisite for his return to them.⁹⁰ If 1:6b refers to the past it is a direct contradiction of 1:4, which makes it improbable that this is the correct interpretation. Also as the exile was understood to be the result of the people's failure to repent a past interpretation would not fit the historical context. Thus it is more likely that Zechariah 1:6b reiterates the repentance of the

⁸⁷ Another purpose of the section concerns the establishment of Zechariah's credibility as a prophet, an issue which was discussed on p.87.

⁸⁸ For example Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.97, date the editorial framework to the time just prior to the rededication of the temple, ca.515BC, whilst Beuken, Haggai, pp.84ff, links it to the Chronicler's time a century or so later. These issues have been considered on pp.17f and 48f.

⁸⁹ Hag.1:12. Hag.1:1 dates the prophecy to the first day of the sixth month of that year.

⁹⁰ In the Hebrew text those referred to as 'them' in 1:3 cannot be the 'fathers' of 1:2 and the imperative form 'וְאָמַרְתֶּם' (and you say) in 1:3 argues for the verse being directed at Zechariah's generation.

current generation as expressed in Haggai 1:12 although it is impossible to know if there is any direct link between these two passages. Clearly the motivation for repentance in Zechariah is quite different from that in Haggai; because whereas Haggai focussed on the traditional concept of agricultural blessings and curses, in Zechariah an appeal to history and the remembrance of the exile as evidence of Yahweh's righteous justice is used to prompt the change of heart.^{'1}

The substance of Zechariah 1:3 is similar to calls to repentance in the words of the pre-exilic prophets^{'2} but the succinct phraseology is not reminiscent of any particular earlier proclamation.^{'3} The notion of drawing attention to Yahweh's anger with previous generations as in 1:2,4 and 6 is a feature commonly found in the prophetic writings^{'4} and other Old Testament literature;^{'5} however concerning this latter point there is a distinction, highlighted by Petitjean,^{'6} that in contrast to all the examples cited Zechariah does not couple the condemnation of the past generations with criticism of the current one. It is striking that

^{'1} We note, however, that Zech.1:2-6 contains some motifs which are connected with Deuteronomy 28, the traditional 'blessings and curses' passage even though it does not stress this aspect of the language. See p.251 below.

^{'2} For example Isa.1:19; Jer.3:12-15; 29:12-14; Hos.14:1-4.

^{'3} It is noted that the exact wording used in Zech.1:3 occurs also in the later prophecy of Mal.3:7, which suggests that these words of Zechariah may have become an accepted formulation for calling the people to repentance in later generations. (See also n.95 below.)

^{'4} For example Isa.65:7; Jer.2:5; 3:25; 7:25-6; 34:14-17; Ezek.2:3; 20:4,30,36; Hos.9:10; Amos.2:4.

^{'5} For example Lev.26:39-40; Num.32:8,14; 1 Sam.12:15; 2 Kgs.17:13-15; Ps.106:6-7. Note also the similarity between 2 Chron.30:6-9 and Zech.1:3-4 which adds support to our comments in n.93 above.

^{'6} Les Oracles, pp.23f.

throughout Zechariah 1-8, with the possible exception of 7:6,⁹⁷ there is not one word of Yahweh's direct criticism against the community that is re-establishing itself in Jerusalem but rather it is a message of hope and encouragement.

In Zechariah 1:4 there is what purports to be an actual quotation from the 'former prophets', that is, those who addressed their fathers' generation:

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds."⁹⁸

Although these precise words do not occur in the Old Testament as it has been received, the vocabulary 'שוב' (return), 'דרך' (way), 'הרע' (evil) and particularly 'מעשׂוֹתָיִם' (deeds), also the style are similar to several passages,

"Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings."

"Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and wrong doings,"

"Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your doings,"⁹⁹

which strongly suggest Jeremianic origin or influence for the 'quoted' words in Zechariah 1:4.¹⁰⁰ Against this Beuken has suggested that the 'quotation' resembles some passages in Ezekiel as well.¹⁰¹ However the

⁹⁷ See our discussion of this verse below, pp.253f.

⁹⁸ Cf our discussion of the relationship between Hag.2:17 and Amos 4:9 and the recognition of 'scripture' in the restoration period on pp.241ff.

⁹⁹ Jer.18:11b; 25:5a; 35:15a

¹⁰⁰ Petitjean, Les Oracles, p.39 presents the detailed evidence to substantiate this suggestion and cites all the relevant prophetic texts.

¹⁰¹ Beuken, Haggai, pp.97f.

links he makes do not appear sufficiently close to indicate any direct relationship with Zechariah because in Ezekiel, with the exception of

"Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds."¹⁰²

'עֲשֵׂת' is used for 'deeds' rather than 'מַעֲשֵׂי' and there is only one example with very similar vocabulary, Ezekiel 33:11b,

"turn back, turn back, from your evil ways;"

that is presented as a direct call to repentance. The final sentence in Zechariah 1:4 is also reminiscent of many passages in Jeremiah¹⁰³ and, while the expression of the people's disobedience towards Yahweh is not confined to that prophetic book alone,¹⁰⁴ this supports the theory that it was the prophecies of Jeremiah threatening the disaster of the exile which were in the mind of the originator of Zechariah 1:2-6. The exile is being presented as the punishment of Yahweh on his people in the past because of their failure to heed his words delivered by the prophet Jeremiah. This serves as an encouragement to the current generation to remain obedient and to hearken to the words of Yahweh which come to them through the prophet of their own time.

In Zechariah 1:6a there are two phrases which are often associated with deuteronomistic influences: 'דְּבַרֵּי יְהוָה' (my words and statutes) and 'עַבְדֵי יְהוָה הַנְּבִיאִים' (my servants the prophets).¹⁰⁵ The former phrase does not

¹⁰² Ezek.36:31.

¹⁰³ For example Jer.8:19; 7:24,26,28; 29:19; 32:23; 34:14; 36:31.

¹⁰⁴ For example Ex.6:9; Num.14:22; Josh.5:6; Judg.2:20; 2 Kgs.17:14; 18:12; 2 Chron.33:10; Neh.9:34; Ps.106:25; Isa.66:4; Ezek.12:2; Hos.9:17.

¹⁰⁵ Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.45ff; Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.95f and Beuken, Haggai, pp.101f.

recur precisely in the Old Testament and references to 'statutes' are rare within the classical prophetic literature¹⁰⁶ being found mainly in Deuteronomy and the Psalms.¹⁰⁷ It is unlikely that the phrase depends directly on any other Old Testament text although there can be little doubt that it is associated with the concept of Yahweh's commandments and statutes expressed in Deuteronomy 28:15,45, particularly in view of the occurrence of the verb 'אָשַׁף' (overtake) in both Zechariah 1:6a and Deuteronomy 28:2,15,45. The latter phrase occurs in Amos 3:7¹⁰⁸ and several times in 2 Kings and Jeremiah¹⁰⁹ but considering the apparent influence that has been detected of Jeremiah's prophecies on the author of Zechariah 1:2-6 it is possible that there is direct dependence on the use of the phrase in Jeremiah 35:15

"I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, 'Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your doings,' But you did not incline your ear or listen to me."¹¹⁰

or other similar verses in that work.¹¹¹ The purpose of Zechariah 1:6a

¹⁰⁶ The exact word, the plural of 'פִּי', is used with the same connotation only in Amos 2:4; Ezek.11:12; 20:18,25 and 36:27.

¹⁰⁷ 21 times in Deuteronomy and a similar number in Ps.119. See Mandelkern, Concordantiae, pp.420-1 for the references.

¹⁰⁸ This and other deuteronomistic passages in Amos are discussed by W.H.Schmidt, 'Die deuteronomistische Redaktion des Amosbuche', ZAW 77, 1965, pp.185-8.

¹⁰⁹ 2 Kgs.9:7; 17:13,23; 21:10; 24:2 and Jer.7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4. Both these works are generally recognized as having been compiled in a deuteronomistic milieu.

¹¹⁰ Baldwin, Haggai, p.90, believes that Zech.1:4 is most probably intending to quote this verse from Jeremiah. If she is correct it supports the suggestion now being put forward.

¹¹¹ Jer.7:25 or 29:19. Regarding the latter cf.n.103 above. It is of course possible that Zechariah may have been directly influenced by a deuteronomistic school that was active during and after the exile; but this would not nullify the suggestion that this section depends on words from Jeremianic material.

is to convey the fact that Yahweh's punishment was justly experienced by previous generations. This partially serves to persuade the current generation to remain obedient to Yahweh, to which end it is successful, hence Zechariah 1:6b; but to a greater extent it is to do with the issue of prophetic validity.

In respect of the prologue as a unit, it clearly draws on material from earlier sources and bears evidence of having been edited at some stage but we cannot agree with Beuken's assessment of no less than seven layers of material, each dependent on a different source tradition.¹¹² As Petersen has suggested, the prologue is presented as

"a pastiche of.....typical prophetic formulae,
typical prophetic rhetoric, typical prophetic
vocabulary."¹¹³

but we believe that this style was adopted deliberately and that use was made of known passages from earlier prophets, particularly Jeremiah, to stress to the current generation that although their ancestors needed a disaster to teach them, there now existed an opportunity to learn from history without the need for punitive measures.

In Zechariah 7 and 8, the oracular section following the visions, there are several passages which refer to judgement and punishment in a similar manner to the prologue by looking back to the generation that suffered the exile and to the reasons for this disaster. The section begins with a question on fasting, Zechariah 7:3, to which the answer is not given until Zechariah 8:18f and these verses are used to frame the retrospective material. A suitable link is made through Zechariah 7:5-

¹¹² Beuken, Haggai, p.111.

¹¹³ Petersen, OTL, p.135.

6. an oracle about fasting;

"Say to all the people of the land and the priests, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted? And when you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves?"

This clearly implies Yahweh's displeasure with the religious practices of previous generations during the exile; but it is noteworthy that the issue is that of fasting rather than any other aspect of cultic worship. As Baldwin has indicated¹¹⁴ this theme scarcely occurs in the pre-exilic prophets¹¹⁵ while it is the prominent idea in Isaiah 58, a passage which probably originated around the time of Haggai and Zechariah.¹¹⁶ Focus on this issue probably arose out of the circumstances of the post exilic period as the restored community wrestled to discover the effectiveness and viability of fasting in their new situation.¹¹⁷

Although indicting the practices of the past Zechariah 7:6 also suggests that the current generation are no better in this respect. The criticism is not expressed in the strong condemnatory terms as used by the pre-exilic prophets¹¹⁸ but through rhetorical questions, a style

¹¹⁴ Baldwin, Haggai, p.144.

¹¹⁵ Jer.14:12; 36:6,9. It also occurs in Joel 1:14; 2:12,15 but it is likely that the date for the whole of Joel may be post-exilic. Fasts are mentioned as a part of the pre-exilic cult in the historical books, for example 1 Sam 7:6; 2 Sam.12:16; 1 Kgs.21:9,12 and in the Psalms, for example Pss.35:13; 69:11.

¹¹⁶ The relationship between Zech.7:3ff and Isa.58 was discussed on pp.19f and nn.66 and 67.

¹¹⁷ Cf. the discussion of the theme of fasting in Petersen, OTL, pp.285ff.

¹¹⁸ For example Hos.4:1ff; Amos 4:4ff; Mic.6:6ff.

reminiscent of the wisdom traditions.¹¹⁹ Nor does the prophet continue by outlining the consequences for the people if they do not amend their religious ways; but he invites them to look at what happened in the past and to draw the appropriate conclusions for themselves. The only other motif of specific interest in this oracle is the 'seventy years' motif but the significance of this has already been discussed in relation to its occurrence in Zechariah 1:12.¹²⁰ Here it acts as nothing more than a general term for the whole period since the exile began.

Zechariah 7:11-14 closely parallels the prologue in its references to the failure of earlier generations to heed the words of the prophets of their day; and in its purpose within Zechariah 1-8. Motifs which are common to both passages are the 'refusal to hearken', in 7:11,12,13 and 1:4; the disregard of the 'former prophets', in 7:12 and 1:4,6; and the fact that Yahweh consequently judged and punished them, in 7:14 and 1:6. The actual language used is not the same as in the prologue but it shows links with motifs and traditions which, although they occur in various parts of the Old Testament, are especially prominent in both Deuteronomy and Jeremiah; for example the stubbornness of the people in Zechariah 7:11.¹²¹ Several of these links are apparent in the description of the judgement and punishment in Zechariah 7:13-14

"As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear," says the LORD of hosts, "and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known.

¹¹⁹ There is perhaps some similarity between this way of presenting criticism and that adopted in Hag.1:4 to encourage the rebuilding of the temple.

¹²⁰ See pp.222-5.

¹²¹ Jer.5:23; 6:28 make use of 'רָדַף' as in Zech.7:11. Cf the use of 'רָדַף' in Deut.9:6,13,27; 10:16; Jer.7:26; 17:23; 19:15.

Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and the pleasant land was made desolate."

The idea that Israel failed to listen to Yahweh throughout her history is frequently expressed¹²² but the corollary recorded in verse 13, that Yahweh refused to hear his people's call, is also found only in Jeremiah 11:11b

"Though they cry to me, I will not listen to them."¹²³

Other shared motifs are the imagery of a whirlwind storm as the agent of Yahweh in dispersing his people;¹²⁴ the phrase 'אֲשַׁר אֶבְרַח וְאֶעֱזָב' (which they had not known);¹²⁵ and the concept of the land being desolate.¹²⁶ Although this may suggest evidence of deuteronomistic influence on this section of material, or a dependence on prophecies of Jeremiah, links can equally be made with some passages in the Book of Ezekiel, as has been shown in respect of the last motif. Such connections can be made with ideas in each verse of this section from Zechariah. For example,

¹²² For example, Deut.9:23; Jer.7:13,24,26; 11:8,10; 17:23; 25:3,7; 35:17; 44:5. Cf 2 Kgs.17:14; 18:12. Also Isa.65:12; 66:4 which is roughly contemporaneous with Zechariah 1-8.

¹²³ Beuken, Haggai, pp.129-132, has argued that both this text and Zechariah's words derive from a Levitical milieu but with Petersen, OTL, p.294, we believe this language has a broader provenance than the one priestly group since it occurs in Prov.1:24ff; Mic.3:4 and a similar expression is found in Ezek.8:18b; but as this final reference is absent in LXX it may be unwise to base arguments on it. Cf. Isa. 59:1f.

Mitchell, ICC, pp.202f,205, argues that the words in Zech.7:13 which are under consideration should be regarded as a gloss. We are not persuaded by his reasoning.

¹²⁴ For example Jer.23:19; 25:32; 30:23. This imagery also occurs in Ps.83:16; Isa.29:6; 40:24; 41:16 and Hab.3:14 and thus we infer that it was common metaphorical language in Old Testament times.

¹²⁵ Cf Deut.28:33; Jer.15:14; 16:13; 17:4; 22:28.

¹²⁶ For example Jer.4:7; 18:16; 19:8; 25:9; 51:29 also Jer 3:19. A similar concept is also found in the prophecies of Ezekiel, for example Ezek.12:20; 14:15f; 15:8; 33:28f; 36:33-36.

the call of Ezekiel emphasizes the rebellious, stubborn nature¹²⁷ of the nation to which he is sent; the people's refusal to listen is again an issue;¹²⁸ there is mention of the involvement of Yahweh's 'רוּחַ' (spirit) in the transmission of prophecy;¹²⁹ and the rare word 'שָׁמַר' (adamant) occurs as in Zechariah 7:12.¹³⁰ The concepts of Yahweh's wrath against his people and his scattering of them among the nations are both found in Ezekiel although the vocabulary is different from that in Zechariah 7:12,14.¹³¹ Thus it appears that Zechariah adopted ideas and motifs in common usage and did not draw on any specific tradition to convey the idea of Yahweh's criticism of and anger with his people prior to the exile. As with the prologue, these verses appear to be a pastiche which draws on a variety of sources in order to present the historic fact of the exile as a lesson to the current generation.

The connections between Zechariah 8:10

"For before those days there was no wage for man
or any wage for beast, neither was there any
safety from the foe for him who went out or came

¹²⁷ Ezek.2:3ff; 3:7; where 'הַשָּׁמַר' is the concept used. Cf n.121 above.

¹²⁸ Ezek.2:5,7; 3:7,11.

¹²⁹ Zech.7:12 and Ezek.2:2; 3:12.

¹³⁰ Ezek.3:9. The use is not identical in that Zechariah applies it to the hardness of the people's hearts whereas in Ezekiel it is given to the prophet by Yahweh as a form of strength or courage to enable him to counter the resistance of the people. (Cf. Ezek.11:19 and the concept 'heart of stone'.) Jer.17:1 is the only other occurrence of 'שָׁמַר' with this meaning, where it describes the hardness of an etching tool.

¹³¹ The concept of wrath is conveyed by 'חָמָה' in Ezek.5:13; 6:12; 7:8; 8:18; 20:21 + 25 times whereas Zech.7:12 uses another word 'חָמָה' as in Zech.1:2,15; 8:14; and cf. Deut.29:27; Jer.10:10; 21:5; 32:37; 50:13. In Ezekiel 2 verbs are used to indicate the scattering or dispersal of the people 'נָחַת' 5:10,12; 6:8; 12:14,15 et al and 'פָּצַח' 11:16,17 et al; they occur together in 20:23; 22:15. In Zech.7:14 the concept of 'רָצַח' (storm away) is used; cf a similar use in Hab.3:14.

in; for I set every man against his fellow." and Haggai 1:6 have already been considered¹³² but its relevance to the theme of judgement and punishment can now be discussed. The context in Zechariah 8 makes clear that 'before those days' refers to a time prior to the commencement of the temple rebuilding but this could imply either the immediate past of the people being addressed or be a comment on the circumstances in Jerusalem during the exilic period. It seems probable that the former is intended but this raises the question of the identity of 'the foe' since external enemies were not a threat to Jerusalem in the early years of Persian rule while the area of Palestine had remained vulnerable to incursive forces during Babylonian domination. However if 'קָרַץ' is understood to derive from a different basic meaning of its root 'קָרַץ' and translated as 'distress',¹³³ it becomes probable that the word indicates that the same hardships were affecting the inhabitants of the city and those in the surrounding countryside in the restoration period. This might easily have given rise to hostile relationships within the community, as is suggested by the final clause of verse 10 which affirms that these circumstances were a consequence of Yahweh's will and part of his ongoing punishment of his people because of their failure to get on with the reconstruction of the temple. The motifs in this verse do not appear to depend on any one tradition since, as Petitjean has shown,¹³⁴ the association of 'אָדָם' (man) and 'בְּהֵמָה' (beast) and the idea of person being set against person are found across the spectrum of Old Testament

¹³² See above pp.24ff and n.91; also pp.229f.

¹³³ Cf. Ps.4:2; Isa.5:30. 2 Chron.15:6 has the feminine form of this noun 'קָרַץ' but the similarity between Zech.8:9f and 2 Chron.15:5-7 supports this understanding of the word. Possible connections between these two passages are discussed by Mason, Preaching the Tradition, pp.49-51.

¹³⁴ Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.391-4.

literature. The thrust of this section of Zechariah 8 moves from that of judgement to promise of blessing in verses 11ff but it concludes by making a clear contrast between the punishment of the past and the hope for the future in verse 13

"And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, . . . , so will I save you and you shall be a blessing. . . .",

in terms of the Deuteronomic motifs of blessing and curse.

A similar transition in fortune enacted by Yahweh is expressed in Joel 2:17b-19

"Spare thy people, O LORD, and make not thy heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples "Where is thy God?" Then the LORD became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people. The LORD answered and said to his people, 'Behold, . . . I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.'"

in terms of the chosen people being $\text{בְּאֵינֶיךָ בְּיָמֶיךָ}$ (a reproach among the nations). The same language occurs in Ezekiel¹³⁵ in connection with the punishment of Yahweh; but the specific concept of Judah as $\text{בְּאֵינֶיךָ בְּיָמֶיךָ}$ (a curse among the nations) is found only in Jeremiah as a consequence of Yahweh's threat to punish which is linked with the events of exile¹³⁶ and this appears to be the usage underlying that in Zechariah 8:13. The hearers of his words are being made to recognize that their punishment, which began with the exile, is only now coming to its true end as they work on the rebuilding of the temple and thus receive Yahweh's blessing.

The contrast between the expression of Yahweh's past anger towards

¹³⁵ Ezek. 5:14,15; 22:4; 36:15.

¹³⁶ Jer. 29:18 which includes reference to בְּאֵינֶיךָ (curse) and בְּאֵינֶיךָ (reproach); Jer 26:6; cf. Jer. 24:9 and 44:8.

his people and the different situation which will pertain in the future is once more indicated in Zechariah 8:14f. The statements connected with judgement and punishment

"As I purposed to do evil to you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts,"

demonstrate Yahweh's justification for his actions in a way that recalls the closing words of the prologue. Both passages utilize the verb 'זמך' (purpose),¹³⁷ which occurs elsewhere in relation to Yahweh's intentions only in terms of the punishment of exile.¹³⁸ One of these references, Jeremiah 4:28b,

"for I have spoken, I have purposed; I have not relented nor will I turn back."

predicts the certainty of Judah's downfall and similarly reinforces the assertion that Yahweh would not relent (זמך) of his decision. It seems possible that once again a Jeremianic prophecy underlies the material in Zechariah, influencing the choice of vocabulary and stressing to the current generation that the exile was a punishment which their ancestors deserved. However the point being made in Zechariah is the reality that their punishment is now over and the prophet, as in the prologue, urges his hearers to learn lessons from the past as they look with new hope to the future.

Throughout Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 only one passage has anything approaching a future orientation in its consideration of the concept of judgement and punishment. Zechariah 5:3-4

¹³⁷ Zech.1:6; 8:14. It occurs also in 8:15 in respect of Yahweh's new intentions to bless, the only instance where it has these positive connotations.

¹³⁸ Jer.4:28; Lam.2:17; cf. Jer.51:12.

"This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land; for every one who steals shall be cut off henceforth according to it, and every one who swears falsely shall be cut off henceforth according to it. I will send it forth, says the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by my name; and it shall abide in his house and consume it, both timber and stones."

provides an explanation for the vision of the flying scroll in Zechariah 5:1-2 and it is probable that the whole concept is derived from passages about curses¹³⁹ in Deuteronomy, especially 29:19f and Numbers 5:11-31. The curse is portrayed as being effective in the contemporary situation and also in the future but although it goes out over 'the whole land' it does not bring judgement and punishment upon the nation as a corporate entity. The significance of the passage is that it concerns the cleansing of the community by means of dealing with individual sinners; as Ackroyd has accurately commented,

"In this vision the declared oath (not curse) of God is shown to be effective; it is a writ which has the effect of distinguishing between innocent and guilty. The innocent have nothing to fear from it, but to the guilty it becomes a curse and destroys."¹⁴⁰

and thus it is material of a different type from the passages dealing with the judgement and punishment of Yahweh upon his people as a nation with which we are concerned in this chapter.

Excursus

Scholars often suggest¹⁴¹ that the concept of individual responsibility developed during the exile and cite Jeremiah 31:29-30 and Ezekiel 18:1-4

¹³⁹ For detailed discussions of the interpretation of 'קִלְעָר' (curse) see H.C.Brichto, The Problem of "Curse" in the Hebrew Bible, (JBL Monograph Series Vol.XIII), 1963, pp.1-76 and J.Scharbert, 'קִלְעָר' TDOT Vol.I, pp.261-6.

¹⁴⁰ P.R.Ackroyd, Exile, p.204.

¹⁴¹ For example E.W.Heaton, The Old Testament Prophets, (Penguin Books), Rev. ed. 1961, p.99.

as passages which originate these ideas. However Barton has argued that the issue in those texts is that of solidarity between the generations rather than individuals¹⁴² and it may be that individualism did not really develop until during the period of Zechariah.¹⁴³ The idea in the passage of the offender's house being 'consumed' as well as the person being punished is a concept found in Old Testament literature dating from a time after Zechariah¹⁴⁴ which might suggest that Zechariah is involved in its inauguration and development; however we are persuaded against this view by Petersen's claim that

"Similar language is attested in curses present in ancient Near Eastern treaties; thus Seffre I, C21-23: 'So may the gods overturn that man and his house and all that is in it and may they make its lower part its upper part.' On the basis of this data we may affirm that Zechariah is using standard curse traditions."¹⁴⁵

Our consideration of the passages in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 that relate to Yahweh's judgement and punishment of Israel has indicated that both prophets demonstrate continuity of classical prophetic ideas. In common with his predecessors, Haggai held the view of Yahweh as the one who controlled the elements, the rhythms of nature and the secrets of fertility and believed that Yahweh would use his control of agriculture as a means of showing pleasure or displeasure toward the activity of his people. Haggai similarly draws on the motifs found in the traditional blessings and curses passages but is prepared to broaden the application of such material to situations beyond strictly covenantal obligations which are nevertheless displeasing to Yahweh. Although Zechariah 1-8

¹⁴² J.Barton in a lecture delivered in Oxford, November 24 1986.

¹⁴³ Hos.14:10b(MT) contains similar ideas about distinguishing the upright from the transgressors but this is generally agreed to be a late addition to the text from the exilic or post-exilic period. Wolff in Hosea, p.239, suggests that this may have been composed in sapiential style as a special conclusion to the Book of Hosea. See also our comments on Zech.8:23 on pp.296ff.

¹⁴⁴ For example, Ezra 6:11 and Dan.2:5; 3:29.

¹⁴⁵ Petersen, OTL, p.251.

does not make explicit use of these traditions we have found indications that they have been influential on the ways in which ideas of judgement and punishment are expressed and developed there. Within the visionary sections of Zechariah 1-8 the use of traditions and motifs common to texts from the Ancient Near East as well as the classic prophetic books was also noted. This perhaps offers support for the widely held belief that the exilic period marked the move away from the oral transmission of ideas to a system based rather more on literature, as this would help explain the availability of a wide range of material to the prophets and their editor(s). Certainly the oracular sections of Zechariah 1-8 show some dependence on a good knowledge of Jeremiah's prophecies at least, as well as the books of the Torah, and actually claim to cite previous prophecy, thereby according it the status of what might now be called 'scripture'. This is a feature which is distinctively new and although the words used do not exactly conform to any known passage, which would be expected if someone was copying from a text, the fact that exact words from Amos appear to be quoted in Haggai suggests that texts were available and that the practice of direct 'borrowing' or quoting was beginning to be developed.

The relevant passages in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 have each been considered from past, present or future perspectives and this has shown a significant difference between these prophets and their predecessors. While earlier prophets were proclaiming Yahweh's judgement as something yet to come, Haggai and Zechariah were active in the period when this judgement was perceived as already having taken place in the events of the exile. Consequently they no longer use a future perspective by threatening disaster as a punishment but lay stress on the reality of

the punishment that has already been experienced in their own situation and in the events of the exile. Through this they encourage the people to learn for themselves and to infer what is required of them if they want to receive blessings from Yahweh. This is an appropriate method to adopt with a people who are showing evidence of response but, although it is heavily veiled, underlying their prophecies is still the implicit suggestion that Yahweh will continue to judge and punish the community if it fails to respond to him.

CHAPTER SIX

Israel, Yahweh and the Nations of the World

All the prophetic books of the Old Testament display an awareness that Israel's ultimate destiny is connected to her relationships with the other nations around her; and that Yahweh's relationship to these nations is another factor which has a bearing on Israel. The Books of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 include several passages which refer to these issues, sometimes only indirectly, and it is upon these sections that we now focus attention.

Within Haggai there are two references, 2:6-7 and 2:21-22. Both are part of oracles in which Yahweh makes known his future intentions towards the earth and the consequences which will ensue. In Zechariah 1-8 relevant material is contained within oracles, 1:15; 2:10-17 (MT); 6:15; 8:7 and 8:20-23; and visions, 1:10-11; 2:1-4 (MT); 4:10b,14; 5:11 and 6:5-8, and these verses concern further aspects of the issues.

It is evident in Zechariah 1-8 that Yahweh is perceived as having sovereignty over the whole earth. In the first and last visions, the horses sent by Yahweh to patrol the earth are not restricted to any geographic area but go to "all the earth" and to "the four winds of heaven", indicating a universal scope.¹ Likewise, in the vision of the lampstand, reference is made to the eyes of Yahweh which "range through

¹ Zech.1:11 and 6:5 respectively. Petersen, OTL p.144, notes the similarity in the language to that of the charge to the Satan in Job 1:6; 2:2. In Job, however, it is unclear as to whether the scope of the Satan's wanderings was restricted or not. Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.115 argue that a universal scope is implied in Job 1:6; 2:2 and make similar comments about God walking in the garden in Genesis 3:8.

the whole earth";² and in two places Yahweh is referred to as "the Lord of all the earth".³ This title is applied elsewhere to Yahweh, in Psalm 97:5;⁴ Joshua 3:11,13; and Micah 4:13,⁵ although there is doubt about the originality of the latter references which may derive from a period later than Zechariah 1-8.⁶ Such a precise formulation of the concept of Yahweh's universal sovereignty is not found in the classical prophetic books. In Isaiah 10 there is a suggestion that Yahweh's authority and power surpasses that of all earthly nations in that Assyria is portrayed as a tool being used in the furtherance of Yahweh's purposes; but there is no explicit statement about the nature of his kingship. In Ezekiel 1 although it may be correct to interpret the prophet's vision as one of a God whose authority extends world wide, an alternative interpretation can imply that Yahweh's sovereignty was total throughout the domain of his people Israel and his heavenly realm without it extending elsewhere. Where ideas of universal sovereignty are expressed in prophecy during

² Zech.4:10b. This concept is almost exactly repeated in 2 Chron. 16:9, a passage which originated later than Zechariah 1-8 and which may be an example of the Chronicler's exegesis of earlier texts.

³ Zech.4:14 and 6:5.

⁴ The universal Kingship of Yahweh is expressed in several of the Psalms, for example 46:11(MT); 47:3,8(MT); 96:1,9,13; which are linked with the royal theology and Zion traditions. The same concept is found in Ps.2, the enthronement psalm, in which the earthly king is presented as the agent of Yahweh's kingship and the extent of the rule is limited only by the degree to which the human ruler fails to live up to his calling.

⁵ Mitchell, ICC, p.115, is incorrect when he states that this phrase is used "not at all in the other prophetic books."

⁶ It must be noted that arguments suggesting that the title is a later addition to the text in Josh.3:11,13 begin with the presupposition that it originates during a later period, which seriously weakens their force. Cf. John Gray, Joshua, Judges and Ruth, (NCB, Oliphants), 1967, p.62. Mays, Micah, p.107ff suggests that Mic.4:13 may be a post-exilic expansion of 4:11f and he provides credible reasons for this conclusion.

the exile⁷ and in some of the more eschatological passages from other periods,⁸ they remain a hope for the future rather than being current belief.⁹

There is less evidence in Haggai concerning the scope of Yahweh's sovereignty although the clause 'I will shake the heavens and the earth, (and the sea and the dry land)' in 2:6 and 21¹⁰ appears to suggest that the effects of his activity could be felt throughout the totality of the universe. Together with the evidence in Zechariah 1-8 there would seem to be some grounds for suggesting that hopes for Yahweh's universal rule were turned into firm belief during the post-exilic era and that Haggai and Zechariah may have contributed to the development of this idea.¹¹

It is stated that every prophetic book in the Old Testament except Hosea includes oracles against non-Israelite nations.¹² Haggai 2:7,22

⁷ For example, Isa.48:20, 49:6.

⁸ For example, Isa.14:26; 24:1ff. It is recognized that the dates of both these passages are disputed (see for example the discussion of Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.145-7 and 196-201) but their origins are not relevant to the substance of our argument.

⁹ It is concerning the eschatological hope expressed in Deutero-Isaiah, and not the reality of belief, that Ringgren argues; "From the fact that Yahweh is the creator of the world ... the prophet draws the conclusion that Yahweh is unique and incomparable, the lord of all the world and its history." Helmer Ringgren, Israelite Religion, (SPCK), 1966, [trans. David Green from Israelitische Religion, (W.Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart), 1963], p.289.

¹⁰ LXX repeats "and the sea and the dry land" as in Hag.2:6

¹¹ Some support for this suggestion comes from J.Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, pp.403ff, who argues that Yahwistic monotheism and the idea of Yahweh as God of the universe receive different expression in post-exilic prophetic literature and he cites Zech.4:10 as an example of this.

¹² John H.Hayes "The Usage of Oracles against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel" JBL 87, 1968, pp.81-92.

and Zechariah 1:15; 2:4(MT); 2:13(MT) contain this type of material, which indicates that they stand in the main prophetic tradition in this respect. Christensen argues more specifically that the oracle against the nations is so central a form of prophetic speech and so common that we

"must assume it to be a basic and integral part of the prophetic message and outlook";¹³

but such a statement fails to give sufficient weight to the immense diversity of subject matter within, and the function of, oracles against the nations. Oracles such as these require consideration under several sub-divisions.

In many prophetic books several oracles directed against named foreign nations are grouped together¹⁴ but it would be totally wrong to assume that such collections always served the same purpose in prophetic literature.¹⁵ The fact that neither Haggai nor Zechariah 1-8 contains a collection of oracles against the nations is probably because that kind of material would not reinforce the messages of either book, rather than it being indicative of any divergence from prophetic traditions.

¹³ Duane L. Christensen, Transformations of the War Oracle in Old Testament Prophecy, (Scholars Press for Harvard Theological Review), 1975, p.1. In this work he traces the development of oracles against the nations and comments on their function in different contexts; but he does not distinguish the various types which are found in prophetic literature.

¹⁴ For example, Isa.13-23; Jer.46-51; Ezek.25-32; Amos 1:3-2:5; Zeph.2:4-15 and Zech.9:1-8.

¹⁵ J. Barton, Amos's Oracles Against the Nations, (Cambridge University Press), 1980, passim, comments on the widely held view that the oracles against the nations in Amos served to encourage Israel in situations of war, pointing out that this is blatantly not the purpose of Amos 1:3-2:5. He also questions the benefits to be gained from form critical study of such oracles in respect of their origin and usage in general terms.

Single oracles directed against specifically named nations are more widespread throughout the whole prophetic corpus than collections¹⁶ but again these are absent from Haggai and Zechariah 1-8. One reason for this relates to the prevailing political situation in the region. Although minor uprisings were occurring in parts of the Persian Empire, the Jewish community were involved neither as agitators nor as those under attack. Therefore no nation in particular was viewed as the enemy and the Persian overlords were regarded quite positively, as benefactors who were allowing the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple.¹⁷ The second reason is that the major concern of both prophetic books is that of the restoration of the temple and the worshipping community; consequently to include oracles against any particular nation would have no relevance.

Nevertheless, despite the lack of this type of oracle in either book, there is clear evidence of a negative attitude towards Babylon in Zechariah 2:10f(MT); 5:11;¹⁸ and probably in 2:2-4(MT). The designation of Babylon as "the land of the north" in Zechariah 2:10(MT), even though geographically it does not lie to Judah's north, indicates continuity with the classical prophetic traditions whereby the north is understood as the direction from which Israel's enemies would come and from which

¹⁶ For example Isa.34:5-17; 45:14-17; 63; Jer.25:12-14; Ezek.21:28-32; Joel 4:19; Amos 9:12; Obad.1-14; Mic.5:4-5(MT); Zech.10-11; and Mal.1:2-4.

¹⁷ Summaries of the historical background to Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 can be found in Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.xxix-xi and Petersen, OTL, pp.19-27.

¹⁸ It is accepted that 'the land of Shinar' implies Babylon (cf. Gen.10:10; 11:2; 14:1,9; Josh.7:21; Isa.11:11; Dan.1:2). In Zech.6:6,8 there is also reference to the north country but the traditional motif, 'the land of the north', is not used.

the exiles would return.¹⁹ The endurance of these traditions into the time of Zechariah is not unexpected; but that Babylon should still be identified as the enemy is perhaps surprising²⁰ because the Persians had gained supremacy in the region and Babylon was now a subject people like Judah and no longer a threat.

It could be, because many of the exiles were still in the region of Babylon²¹ and had not returned to Judah, that Babylon continued to be regarded as in some way opposing the restoration in Jerusalem. Another possibility is that the remembrance of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587BC was etched so deeply upon the consciousness of the Jewish people that 'Babylon' came to be used to symbolize any, or all enemy people.²² Whatever the correct interpretation of 'Babylon' is within Zechariah 1-8 it nevertheless implies the expression of hostility

¹⁹ Jer.6:22; 10:22 and Jer.3:18; 16:15; 23:8; 31:8. It is quite probable that the much older Baal Zaphon traditions from Syrian-Canaanite mythology underlie the whole concept of 'the foe from the north' in classical prophecy. See B.Childs, "The Enemy from the North and the Chaos Tradition," JBL 78, 1959, pp. 187-198. Some scholars suggest that 'the north' should be understood figuratively as all the places to which Judah was exiled; for example, Baldwin, Haggai, p.108, but this is improbable in Zech.2:10(MT) in the light of the direct reference to Babylon in the following verse.

²⁰ The problem of determining when Zechariah's prophecies were initially proclaimed was recognized on p.21. The possibility that some of them originated during the exile, whilst the oppressor nation was still Babylon, is acknowledged although we have found no evidence to substantiate this.

²¹ It should be noted that the exiles were also dispersed in other regions, for example Egypt (Jer.43:7)

²² Within the Christian tradition in the Book of Revelation Babylon is used symbolically for the current enemy power, and the possibility of a similar Jewish use during the post-exilic period cannot be discounted. That Edom was so used in the 'Damn Edom' theology has been convincingly attested by Bruce C.Cresson, "The Condemnation of Edom in Postexilic Judaism", The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays ed. James M.Efird, (Duke University Press), 1972, pp.125-148.

towards specific nations. Its use seems to be related to that of the oracles against specific nations in the classical prophetic tradition.

As we turn to consider passages concerning non-specified nations in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8, it is necessary to distinguish those which threaten judgement or punishment on the nations, from others which offer them a hopeful future. In the first category the relevant verses are Haggai 2:7; 2:22 and Zechariah 1:15; 2:1-4(MT); 2:12-13(MT);²³ while Zechariah 2:15(MT) and 8:20-23 are in the second. In Haggai 2:22 the prophet conveys Yahweh's message of future disaster for the nations:

"(I am about) to overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders; and the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his fellow."

It is widely recognised that the language of this verse is linked to important Old Testament themes and traditions. As Beuken noted²⁴ the verb 'שָׁדַד' (to overthrow) is utilised concerning the defeat of Sodom and Gomorrah.²⁵ Haggai uses it in a different but connected way, which is designed to prompt recall of Yahweh's past activity and to suggest that

²³ The removal of wickedness to the land of Shinar, Zech.5:1-11, could be interpreted as punishment upon Babylon but the vision is really concerned with the cleansing of Israel. The choice of destination may have been determined simply because it was suitable and not as an expression of judgement.

Whether Zech. 6:8 is an expression of Yahweh's anger or not depends on the interpretation of 'וְהָיָה אֶת־רִגְלֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ'. It seems most probable that the verse is a comment on the calm situation under the sovereignty of Yahweh, as a result of his prior activity, rather than being indicative of judgement. See Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.329-331 and Beuken, Haggai, p.249, note 2 for discussions of the arguments and relevant literature.

²⁴ Beuken, Haggai p.80

²⁵ Gen.19:25,29; Deut.29:22(MT); Isa.13:19; Jer.49:18; Lam.4:6; and Amos 4:11. Jer.20:16 probably alludes to the same past event as well, despite the cities not being specifically named; contra Petersen, OTL, p.99.

his future activity will be similar but more universal. Kingdoms and nations will be the recipients of Yahweh's wrath and so, more precisely, will their martial forces. Chariots, horses and riders all recall the tradition of the Reed Sea in Exodus 14:9ff but are also more generally used in the Old Testament to denote the military power of nations.²⁶ Haggai may be drawing on both uses, not just the general one, since the verb 'יָרַד' (to go down) is also part of the Reed Sea tradition;²⁷ but these are linguistic links only and rather tenuous. The concept of 'יָרַד' (going down) occurs more often in prophecy in connection with defeat or the descent into Sheol²⁸ and this usage is more relevant to Haggai's message. The other linguistic association found in Haggai 2:22 is the similarity between the last phrase 'אִישׁ בְּקַרְבּוֹ אֶקְרָא' (every one by the sword of his fellow)²⁹ and the expression of the holy war traditions, especially as found in Ezekiel 38:21, 'קַרְבּוֹ אִישׁ בְּאֶחָיו תִּהְיֶה' (every man's sword will be against his brother).³⁰ Both of these statements may be connected to the concept of divine confusion initiated as a curse by Yahweh on those who disobey his will, a theme which is developed from Deuteronomy 28:20,28. These links, together, reinforce the suggestion that Haggai 2:22 is concerned with the eschatological judgement of the

²⁶ For example, Deut.20:1; Josh.11:4ff; Isa.31:1; Jer.46:9; 51:21.

²⁷ Ex.15:5.

²⁸ For example Isa.5:14. Mitchell, *ICC*, p.79, indicates that this is the natural sense of the verb. Beuken, *Haggai*, p.80, n.1 adopts a similar interpretation and cites the following examples: Isa.32:19; Jer. 13:18; 48:15; Lam.1:9; and Ezek.26:16; 30:6.

²⁹ The editor of BHS indicates this phrase as a probable gloss but offers no textual evidence in support. This suggestion is not adopted in the commentaries and we find no grounds to reject the given text.

³⁰ Cf. Judg.7:22 and Zech.14:13.

nations.³¹ All these associations indicate that the prophet was quite familiar with Israel's traditions but there is no evidence to suggest any direct dependence upon earlier prophetic material. On the contrary the indication is that Haggai felt able either to utilise or to adapt traditional motifs to strengthen his message.

Both Haggai 2:7 and 2:22 are connected with the concept of Yahweh 'shaking' things, an action which conveys a sense of displeasure:

"For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all the nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with splendour, says the LORD of hosts"³²

"I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, and to overthrow the throne of the kingdoms; I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, ..."³³

Earthquakes probably lie at the root of the Hebrew understanding of *וַיִּרָד* (shaking); but early in Israel's history this language became associated with the theophany traditions,³⁴ which were developed by the psalmists and prophets.³⁵ As the concept appears within Haggai, the 'shaking' is the activity of Yahweh rather than the consequence of his appearance *per se*;³⁶ which has prompted some scholars to argue, with Jeremias, that

³¹ For comments on the possibility of interpreting this passage politically rather than eschatologically, see below p.274

³² Hagg.2:6-7.

³³ Hagg.2:21bf.

³⁴ For example, in the Song of Deborah, Judg.5:4.

³⁵ For example, Ps.68:9; Ezek.38:20; Nah.1:5.

³⁶ Cf. 2 Sam.22:8 (=Ps.18:8); Isa.24:18,19; 64:1(MT); Jer.10:10; Ezek.38:18ff; Joel 4:16(MT).

this is a distinctive use of these traditions.³⁷ However the similar idea is also found in Isaiah 13:13:

"Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and
the earth will be shaken out of its place, ..."

It is generally recognized that Isa.13:1-14:23 is a late addition to the text as its concerns are with Babylon and the events of Judah's exile. There is no reason, though, why it could not date from during the exile and thus be an earlier expression of the development of these traditions from that in Haggai. On the other hand it may post date Haggai; but the evidence is not available to resolve the uncertainty. The problems of circularity in arguing for the stages of development of ideas in the Old Testament literature are highlighted in the work of Childs in relation to this concept of 'שֹׁרֵץ'. Based on the premise that Isaiah 13:13 and 24:18f are both non-original passages which date from after the exile he concludes

"that the word שֹׁרֵץ became embedded in the chaos tradition of Israel, and developed into a technical term for the eschatological chaos during the post-Exilic period."³⁸

Consequently he suggests that the references to 'שֹׁרֵץ' in Haggai relate to the eschatological judgement of the nations by Yahweh.

This may be correct; but any conclusions must be drawn from the evidence within the text. The context of Haggai 2:21ff must imply that the punishment, by Yahweh, of the nations opposed to his purposes is part of the 'shaking' activity. While Haggai 2:6-7 could be interpreted as the converting, rather than the punishing, activity of Yahweh, it is improbable that identical language should be used twice by a prophet, in

³⁷ Jörg Jeremias, Theophanie, (Neukirchen-Vluyn), 1965, pp.66-69.

³⁸ Childs, 'The Enemy from the North', p.190.

close proximity, to imply different things. Accordingly these passages must both be expressions of Yahweh's universal judgement. They each imply that the events are imminent,³⁹ however it is arguable whether the prophet had in mind the eschatological upheaval soon to be instigated by Yahweh or actual political activity. Some scholars argue that Haggai is thinking of the disorder within the Persian empire, relating to Darius' accession, as an opportune time for Judah to declare her independence under a Davidic ruler, Zerubbabel.⁴⁰ However there is neither biblical nor historical evidence to suggest that Judah attempted an insurrection and in the circumstances such action could have been little more than a forlorn hope. It is more likely that the passages are eschatological,⁴¹ since in both language and content they are related to ideas about the inviolability of Jerusalem and its centrality as the place to which the nations will be drawn by Yahweh; and to the idea that there would be a decisive day when Yahweh's purposes were all fulfilled. These concepts are part of the Zion traditions as expressed in the Psalms, for example Psalm 46:2ff⁴²

³⁹ Although the phrase 'יָעוֹד אֶחָד מִעֵט הָיָא', Hag.2:6, is textually difficult in MT and the versions there is no evidence to suggest with Carroll, When Prophecy Failed, p.161, that it is a gloss. His arguments about the ways in which people cope with the cognitive dissonance of unfulfilled prophecy are compelling in a general sense but must be seen as speculative in this instance. See also Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.52, who argue semantically for the originality of the phrase.

⁴⁰ For example, Jerome Kodell, Lamentations, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Obadiah, Joel, Second Zechariah, Baruch, Vol 14, Old Testament Message - A Biblical-Theological Commentary, (Michael Glazier, Inc.), 1982; and Roger N.Carstensen, 'The Book of Haggai', The minor prophets and the Apocrypha, Vol V Interpreter's Concise Commentary, Ed. Charles M. Laymon, (Abingdon Press), 1983, pp.134-140.

⁴¹ Mason's assertion that the eschatological hope is the central and only message of Haggai's preaching perhaps overstates the situation; 'The Prophets of the Restoration', pp.137-154.

⁴² Cf. Ps. 48.

"Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God will help her right early. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. ..."

and the classical prophets;⁴³ and a continuation of the prophetic 'Day of Yahweh' motif as illustrated in Ezekiel 30:2bf

"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Wail, "Alas for the day!" For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations".⁴⁴

Explicit expression of Yahweh's anger against the nations is found in Zechariah 1:15

"And I am very angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little they furthered the disaster."

and 2:1-4(MT), the vision of the horns and smiths. No specific nations are named in either reference as the focus of Yahweh's wrath. However there are conflicting indications in 2:2(MT) and 2:4(MT) which affect the vision's interpretation in respect of the identity of the nations.⁴⁵ Babylon had been the nation responsible for scattering Judah; but if the reference to Israel's defeat is included, then Assyria also comes under the judgement of Yahweh. These options suggest only two nations, both of which had already been defeated, while the imagery of four horns and

⁴³ For example, Isa2:2ff; Jer.3:17f.

⁴⁴ See also Ezek.38:19; 39:7-8; Obad.15ff; Mic.5:14(MT); Zeph.3:8. Cf. Zech.12:1ff. The origins of this motif are discussed by G.von Rad, 'The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh', JSS 4, 1959, pp97-108.

⁴⁵ LXX omits 'Israel' in 2:2(MT) and some scholars have suggested deleting 'Israel and Jerusalem' in this verse because only Judah is mentioned in 2:4(MT); but no textual evidence can be cited in support.

four smiths argues for a wider interpretation. Within the Old Testament the figure four is often used to represent totality rather than an exact number⁴⁶ and the same idea is found in ancient Assyrian writings where the kings refer to themselves in their titles as 'king of the four rims of the earth'.⁴⁷ Within Zechariah 1-8 this usage of the number occurs relating to horses, chariots and winds⁴⁸ and therefore it seems probable that the four horns imply the totality of Israel's adversaries and not specific individual nations.⁴⁹ If this interpretation is correct then, similarly, the four smiths must be understood as a representation of the total judgement pronounced against these nations.⁵⁰ While it appears somewhat surprising that 'סִיָּפִיָּ' (smiths) should be associated with acts of destruction rather than construction, there is biblical precedent for this in Ezekiel 21:36(MT)

⁴⁶ For example Jer.49:36; Ezek.37:9; Dan.7:2; cf. Gen.2:10ff; Ezek.1:5ff.

⁴⁷ Examples of this title applied to Tiglath-Pileser I, Shalmaneser III, Esarhaddon et al can be found in the collections of historical documents from the Assyrian period in A.N.E.T. pp.267, 274-5, 276, 281, 289, 292, 297 and a similar concept of totality being represented by the 'four quarters (of the world)' is found in a document about the Banquet of Ashurnasirpal II, p.558.

⁴⁸ Zech.1:8-11; 6:1f,6; and 6:5 respectively.

⁴⁹ Many attempts at identifying the four horns with historic enemy nations were made in the Christian Patristic period; and other ideas have been suggested since then, dependent on the context presupposed by the commentator. Among the possibilities are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece and Rome.

⁵⁰ Good, 'Zechariah's Second Night Vision (Zech 2,1-4)', pp.56-59, has argued, based on Ugaritic texts, that 'סִיָּפִיָּ' should be translated as ploughmen and not smiths. This leads him to an interpretation of the vision whereby the enemy nations are threatened, not with destruction, but with removal from Israel's territory back to their proper places. Despite the appeal of this suggestion, the hypothesis must be rejected as unsubstantiated because there is no evidence of any other Ugaritic influences in Zechariah 1-8 and it does not accord with the normal usage of 'סִיָּפִיָּ' in the Old Testament, cf Isa.40:20; 44:12; Jer.10:3,9; Hos.8:6; 13:2; 2 Chron.24:12.

"And I will pour out my indignation upon you; I will blow upon you with the fire of my wrath; and I will deliver you into the hands of brutal men, skilful to destroy (תִּרְשָׁי מִשְׂקֵיטִים).

There may be direct relationship between this text and Zechariah 2:3-4(MT) but as the relevant section of Ezekiel is generally attributed to his school and not to the prophet himself, we cannot be certain which text predates the other.⁵¹

In classical prophecy Yahweh's anger against any nations which threaten or harm Israel is usually expressed succinctly and in very straightforward terms; and the destruction which will be experienced as a consequence is also described in clear simple language.⁵² Although Zechariah 2:1-4(MT) uses a visionary form which requires interpretation, it seems to continue in this tradition rather than being associated with the surrealistic and fervent descriptions of Yahweh's judgement which occur in passages like Isaiah 34:1-4.⁵³

Let us return to consider Zechariah 1:15. Its context suggests that the phrase 'the nations that are at ease' equates with 'all the earth remains at rest' in Zechariah 1:11 with regard to the territorial scope, although different concepts of tranquility are indicated through the use of distinctive vocabulary. The combined expression 'שְׁבֵת וְשָׁקֵט' is

⁵¹ See Wevers, Ezekiel, p.127.

⁵² For example Isa.41:11; Jer.12:14; 30:11; 46:28; Ezek.36:5.

⁵³ Literature such as this is sometimes associated with the term 'proto-apocalyptic', a genre which we believe should not be applied to any material in Zechariah 1-8.

A summary of the scholarly discussion about Isaiah 34-35 is given in Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.271-2, which indicates general agreement that the passage cited is an addition to the text of Isaiah from a time during, or after, the exile.

(the cessation of activity and being undisturbed) in 1:11 implies peace and stability in the political arena;⁵⁴ on the other hand the adjective 'שָׁלוֹם' (at ease) in 1:15 has both positive and negative connotations. The positive concept of being secure in the protective care of Yahweh,⁵⁵ occurs twice only within the Old Testament⁵⁶ and this clearly cannot be the sense of Zechariah 1:15 in the context of Yahweh's anger towards the nations. The negative concept is that of complacency or arrogance and this is the more common use of the adjective.⁵⁷ If this interpretation is adopted, the implication of 1:15a is that Yahweh's wrath is directed against all the nations which are inactive and self satisfied and thus not fulfilling his purposes. Further reason for the arousal of his ire comes in 1:15b through the indication that Yahweh had intentionally used these nations as instruments of punishment upon his people but that they exceeded the plan. This notion of Yahweh using foreign nations for his purposes continues the classical prophetic traditions,⁵⁸ as does the understanding that the nations always retained the freedom to go beyond his purposes.⁵⁹ Any attempt to identify the nations precisely would

⁵⁴ Cf. Judg.3:11.

⁵⁵ This is the meaning which apparently derives from the verbal root 'שָׁלוֹם', be at peace, rest securely. See BDB, p.983 and GK, p.152, §55d.

⁵⁶ Isa.32:18 and 33:20.

⁵⁷ 2 Kgs.19:28 (=Isa.37:29); Ps.123:4; Amos 6:1; Isa.32:9,11; cf. Job 12:5.

⁵⁸ For example, Isa.10:5ff (Assyria); 45:1 (Cyrus); 47:6 (Babylon); Jer.20:4ff; 21:4ff (Babylon). In each of these instances, unlike Zech. 1:15, the identification of the nation concerned is clearly expressed.

⁵⁹ Isa.47:6; cf. Isa.40:2.

conflict with the universal scope suggested in Zechariah 1:8-11⁶⁰ and therefore we conclude that "the nations" in Zechariah 1:15 implies the same totality of adversary nations as those threatened with punishment in Zechariah 2:1-4(MT).

The final passage concerning Yahweh's anger against unspecified nations is Zechariah 2:12-13(MT),

"For thus said the LORD of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations which plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye: 'Behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall become plunder for those who served them. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me.'"

a difficult section of text owing to the uncertain meaning of the phrase אֲחַד כְּבוֹד שְׁלַחְנִי (literally - after glory he sent me) in verse 12a(MT)⁶¹. As the text stands, a literal reading suggests that the prophet was sent to the nations. This could mean either that he himself was to go there, or that his message was to be directed to the nations. No passage in Zechariah 1-8, nor in other literature, indicates that the prophet was actually sent to another nation and his oracles are all addressed to Israel. An acceptable solution is to interpret the prophet's mission as one 'concerning' the nations rather than 'to' them.⁶² This option

⁶⁰ Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.121, argue that Zech.1:15b "complicates the task of identifying the 'nations'" and suggest that it may belong to an earlier period and be referring to the Assyrians and Babylonians. The difficulty only arises, however, because they interpret "the nations" in 1:15a as a specific reference to the Persians.

⁶¹ A useful summary of the problem and the range of solutions suggested by various scholars can be found in Smith, Micah - Malachi, p.196. Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.164-6 give a fuller assessment of the issues.

⁶² Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.165. Cf. the references cited there.

accords with our previous comments⁶³ about the universal sovereignty of Yahweh and the understanding that Israel's future could not be worked out in isolation from that of other nations. The nations referred to are those which 'plunder' Israel. The participle 'הַשֹּׁבְבִים' is usually translated as '(the nations) who plundered' and understood to imply the Babylonians; however, it can be taken as a reference to a continuous despoliation of Israel,⁶⁴ an interpretation which suggests that the domination of Israel by any foreign nation be seen as 'plundering' or 'despoiling' her, rather than the events occasioning her subjugation.

In either case, the clause 'הִנְנִי מִנִּיף אֶת-יָדַי עַל יְהוּמָה' (Behold, I will shake my hand over them) expresses Yahweh's active judgement against such nations consequent upon his anger towards them. The concept 'הִנְנִי' (shake or wave) occurs often in the Priestly writings in connection with the 'wave offerings';⁶⁵ and in other passages it is frequently related to the action of wielding tools.⁶⁶ In prophetic literature, however, it is used either for the hand signal that begins military style action by Yahweh on behalf of his people, or in the sense of a hostile brandishing of the arm.⁶⁷ In Zechariah 2:13a(MT) it is most probably related to the idea of Yahweh initiating action against the nations in favour of Israel although the sense of the other prophetic usage is also included. This

⁶³ See pp.264ff.

⁶⁴ This is the translation preferred by Elliger, Kleinen Propheten, p.117. Cf. Jer.50:10; Hab.2:8 and Ezek.39:10.

⁶⁵ Ex.29:26; Lev.7:30; 8:29; 9:21; 10:15; et al.

⁶⁶ For example, Ex.20:25; Deut.27:5; Josh.8:31; Isa.10:15.

⁶⁷ Isa.13:2 and Isa.11:15; 19:16 respectively. Cf. Isa.9:11(MT) and Ezek.6:14 for the use of 'הִנְנִי' (to extend or stretch out) which has a similar sense, perhaps combining the two concepts to some extent.

suggests that a prophetic motif is perhaps being continued in Zechariah but in view of the serious doubts that are expressed about the origin of the Isaianic passages where it occurs, this may not be the case.⁶⁸ Such issues cannot be resolved with certainty but we note that, apart from the prophetic references indicated, 'נָתַן' conveys this sense elsewhere only in Job 31:21 and possibly Sirach 12:18, which were both undoubtedly composed after Zechariah 1-8. Therefore Zechariah 2:13a(MT) may mark the initial use of this motif.

The consequence of the action which Yahweh initiates against the nations is not their total destruction but a reversal of roles; the nations who dominated Israel are to be her servants. This same idea is expressed in Isaiah 14:2b

"they will take captive those who were their captors and rule over those who oppressed them."

and Ezekiel 39:10b,

"they will despoil those who despoiled them, and plunder those who plundered them, says the Lord GOD."

both of which are eschatological passages dating at the earliest from during the exile. These ideas may indicate a development of the concept of transferring Yahweh's 'cup of wrath' from Israel to her tormentors as in Isaiah 51:22b-23a.⁶⁹ A similar concept, the reversal of Israel's

⁶⁸ Isa.11:10-16 is dated to the 4th century BCE by Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.125,132,170; and to the Hellenistic period by Otto Kaiser, Isaiah 1-12, New Edition, (OTL), 1983, p.268 and Isaiah 13-39, (OTL), 1974, p.2. Isa.13:2 could be from the late 8th century BCE, or from during the exile, according to Clements and while Kaiser agrees that the prophecy may have originated then he insists that in its present form it is post exilic. Isa.19:16 they both date to the 4th century BCE.

⁶⁹ Driver, CB, p.193, suggests that Isa.51:22b-23a expresses the same idea as the other verses under discussion; but it contains no clear indication of Israel attaining a dominant position, saying only that she will no longer be downtrodden.

circumstances to those of good fortune, is indicated in Isaiah 61:6b-7;

"you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory. Instead of your shame you shall have a double portion, instead of dishonour you shall rejoice in your lot; therefore in your land you shall possess a double portion; yours shall be everlasting joy."

a prophecy which may depend upon Isaiah 40:2⁷⁰ and dates from about the same time as the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. The substance of verse 6b is similar to that of Haggai 2:7 where the thought that the nations will bring treasure to Israel as a result of Yahweh's judgement on them is expressed;⁷¹ although in Haggai the wealth is not transferred to benefit the people but to fill Yahweh's house with splendour.⁷² This treasure is not gained by being forcibly taken from the nations, neither do they bring it as a free will offering; it is brought as tributes.⁷³ The same combination of motifs, wealth brought to Israel and subservient nations which recognize the sovereignty of Yahweh, is found in Isaiah

⁷⁰ Contra Whybray Isaiah 40-66, pp.243f.

⁷¹ See above pp.273f. Trito-Isaiah contains other passages associated to this theme. For example, the idea of the wealth of the nations being made available for Zion's use in Isa.66:12; and the concept of the people of Israel being brought back to Zion from the nations as an offering to Yahweh in Isa.66:20.

Zech.1:17 also contains a prophecy relating to Israel's future prosperity but since it is not directly linked to any action involving other nations, it is not relevant to our present discussion.

⁷² This idea of foreigners' wealth being offered to Yahweh is also found in Micah 4:13 where it is Israel, as the victors over the other peoples, who make the offering. We have already noted that this verse contains the phrase "the Lord of the whole earth", as in Zech.4:14 (see p.265 above) but we are unable to make any positive statements about the possible use of Mic.4:13 in Haggai and Zechariah because of uncertainty as to when it originated. It is unlikely to be pre-exilic and probably is part of the post-exilic development of the book as suggested by Mays, Micah, pp.108-109.

⁷³ Contra Baldwin, Haggai, p.48 and Mason, CBC, p.20, who both note close similarities between this passage and Isaiah 60:5-7 and argue that the offerings are being brought by the nations gladly and in worship of Yahweh. We agree with Petersen, OTL, p.68, that Hag.2:6-7 contains "a punitive undertone toward the nations, an element missing from Isa.60".

45:14;⁷⁴ but there is no evidence for any interdependence between this prophecy and Haggai 2:7. Isaiah 45:14 is an eschatological prophecy of restoration for Israel, while Haggai 2:6-7 concerns the eschatological judgement of the nations by Yahweh and its consequences.

It is clear that themes related to those in Haggai 2:6-7 and Zechariah 2:13a(MT) occur in other passages from the post-exilic period but no interdependence nor common dependence on an earlier prophecy can be established. It is most probable that the eschatological hopes of Deutero-Isaiah and the older Zion traditions so prominent there, all underlie the post-exilic prophecies which emphasize that Yahweh is the universal king and speak of Israel's reversal of ill-fortune or rise to supremacy.⁷⁵ That Haggai 2:6-7 is eschatological has been concluded;⁷⁶ and a similar conclusion must be drawn in respect of Zechariah 2:13a(MT) for no-one could have believed Israel was capable of gaining ascendancy politically in the context of the return from exile.

Zechariah 6:15 has aroused much scholarly disagreement⁷⁷ and

⁷⁴ Isa.49:22f is a striking portrayal of nations being subservient to Israel which may imply their acknowledgement of Yahweh's sovereignty but it lacks any connection with wealth. In this passage members of the diaspora are being brought back by the nations.

⁷⁵ The theme of the spoiling of Egypt, Ex.12:33-5, may be being picked up in Deutero-Isaiah since the prophet makes many links between the return from exile and the exodus from Egypt. However there is no justification for claiming that Haggai or Zechariah are deliberately alluding to this theme.

⁷⁶ See pp.273ff above.

⁷⁷ Many commentators explain it as an editorial comment on the vision cycle. Mitchell, ICC, p.192, proposes moving it to follow 4:7; Petitjean, Oracles, pp.300-3, argues for it basically being part of an oracle 6:13-15ac; Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.365, suggest it may be the summing up of the prophet himself.

whether it refers to nations other than Israel is far from clear. The phrase 'those who are far off' may either imply the exiles who have not yet returned to Jerusalem⁷⁸ or it could equally suggest that foreigners will come 'and help to build the temple'. It is possible that Gentiles might have been permitted to assist with the reconstruction; but this would probably have been restricted to work on the outer courtyards.⁷⁹ There was apparently no difficulty in relation to purification attached to the source and supply of building materials⁸⁰ and this could likewise be construed as helping to build. If this latter case was meant, it may be a similar idea to that of Haggai 2:7, although it can also be argued that they come voluntarily as in Zechariah 2:15 and 8:20-23.⁸¹ It might be that the ambiguity was intentional on the part of the writer but it is evident that we cannot argue for one particular interpretation with certainty. Problems of a like nature arise in connection with Zechariah 8:7 as to the meaning of 'my people from the east country and from the west country.' In its context, that of an eschatological prophecy of a transformed society in Jerusalem, it could legitimately be interpreted in universalistic terms. It is more probable, however, that the people are true Israelites who had been dispersed to many places by the exile

⁷⁸ Cf. Zech. 2:10-11(MT); 6:10.

⁷⁹ Cf. Jer. 51:51 where the defiling effect of aliens' presence in the holy places of the temple is expressed.

⁸⁰ For example 1 Kgs. 5:15ff(MT) in connection with Solomon's temple and Ezra 3:7 concerning the second one.

⁸¹ This is the view of Baldwin who argues also that 'the temple' should be interpreted in an eschatological sense here, since the actual rebuilding work was already well on the way to completion. Haggai, pp. 137-138.

and that Zechariah 8:7 expresses ideas akin to Jeremiah 30:10,11.⁸² In this case it is not relevant to our discussion of references to non-Israelite nations.

The remaining passages for consideration in this chapter are those which offer a more hopeful future for the nations. These hopes, which are linked to the concept of universalism, occur in Zechariah 2:15(MT); 8:20-22 and 23. In all of these passages the nations enter into a new relationship with Israel's God and thus with Israel but in each case the ideas are linked to different classical traditions and given distinctive expression. The context of Zechariah 2:15(MT) is the proclamation in v.14(MT) that Yahweh is coming to Jerusalem to dwell among his people. This could relate to the temple implying that when the rebuilding work was complete, then Yahweh would return to live in his house. However, the language of the verse, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion;" is similar to that of Isaiah 12:6

"Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,"

and Zephaniah 3:14

"Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!"⁸³

eschatological passages which are reminiscent of the Enthronement Psalms

⁸² (= Jer.46:27,28). See Petitjean, Oracles, pp.379-80 for a discussion of the use of 'שׁוּב' (save) in prophetic oracles.

The references to 'east' and 'west' may relate to the course of the sun and imply everywhere (cf. Pss.50:1; 113:3; Isa.59:19; Mal.1:11) but see Ackroyd, Exile, p.213 for the suggestion that Babylon and Egypt are specifically meant.

⁸³ Both passages are considered to be additions to their texts from exilic or post-exilic times and so the influence, if any, between them and Zech.2:15(MT) could be in either direction. See Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.128-9 and J.P.Hyatt, 'Zephaniah', in Peake's, pp.640-642.

and the Zion traditions.⁸⁴ The personification of either Jerusalem or its people is usually implied by the phrase 'daughter of Zion';⁸⁵ but this does not necessarily indicate a connection with actual, historical events and there is close similarity between its use here and in Isaiah 62:11

"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.'"

and Micah 4:8

"And you, O tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you it shall come, the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."

where the eschatological hopes of the Zion traditions are prominent.⁸⁶ Therefore it is probable Zechariah 2:14ff(MT) should be interpreted as an eschatological prophecy.

As a consequence of this argument Zechariah 2:15(MT):

"And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of you,"

is best understood as a reference to the eschatological Day of Yahweh.⁸⁷ The concept of this prophecy is that of non-Israelite nations being converted and accepted into the covenant alliance between Yahweh and his

⁸⁴ Psalms 47; 93; 96-99 are usually called the Enthronement Psalms and Psalms 46; 48; 76; 84; 87 and 122 the Psalms of Zion. See Weiser, Psalms, pp.52-66 for a discussion of these categories.

⁸⁵ For example, Isa.1:8; 52:2; Jer 4:31; Lam.1:6; 2:18.

⁸⁶ There is no indication of dependence by Zechariah upon either of these references but they support the suggestion that these hopes were given a new emphasis during the exilic and post-exilic periods.

⁸⁷ The phrase 'אִתְּךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא' (in/on that day) is a technical term used in prophecy to express the future eschatological time. Cf. Amos 9:11; Hos.2:18; Jer.25:33; Hag.2:23.

people. The language of the verse provides reinforcement of the idea of covenant, for when the verb 'הִתְּוַבֵּן' (join) is used in relation to the link between peoples it is in the context of a treaty or covenant⁸⁸ and the phrase 'וְהָיוּ לִי עַמִּי' (and they shall be my people)⁸⁹ is the one used in Jeremiah 31:33 and 32:38 in relation to the new covenant. The idea of individual proselytes was not alien to the Hebrew people⁹⁰ but here it is nations, not individuals, which are spoken of and it is significant they take the initiative to approach Yahweh. As Rowley has written in respect of this passage;

"Here it is of interest to note that while the process of election is reversed, the result is the same. In the time of Moses God first chose Israel to be His people, and then Israel in response chose Him to be her God; here the Gentiles are thought of as choosing Him to be their God, and then God choosing them to be His people. In either case God and people belong together in mutual loyalty, and the proselytes are thought of as sharing the inheritance of Israel."⁹¹

It is suggested that Zechariah 2:15(MT) inaugurates the fulfilment of the covenant promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3b⁹² but there are no

⁸⁸ For example Isa.56:6; Jer.50:5. Cf. Isa.56:3.

⁸⁹ LXX and Syriac versions have 'his' rather than 'my people', reading 'יָדָו' instead of 'יָדָו'. Wellhausen, Kleine Propheten, pp.39-46, suggested this emendation without outlining an argument in its favour and Petersen, OTL, pp.173,182-3, opts to follow LXX arguing that the transitions between the first and third person in the text of this verse are the result of deliberate editorial work. We suggest that the text requires no emendation when the parallel clauses in Zech.2:13b,15b(MT) are recognised as editorial comments. (Cf. our discussion pp.80ff.)

⁹⁰ For example Isa.56:3,6.

⁹¹ H.H.Rowley, The Biblical Doctrine of Election, (Lutterworth Press), 1950, p.87.

⁹² Baldwin, Haggai, pp.111,155-6 and Albert Gelin, Aggée Zacharie Malachie, (La Sainte Bible, les Éditions du Cerf, Paris), 3rd Ed., 1960, p.29.

direct connections between the two passages and the 'many nations' of Zechariah are less comprehensive than 'all the families of ^{the} earth' as in Genesis. The same distinction between 'many' and 'all' is recognized in relation to the interpretation of Zechariah 2:15(MT) as the acceptance by the nations of God's invitation to them expressed in Isaiah 45:22f

"Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.'"

Perhaps the distinction was unintentional on the part of the writer or not meant to be significant; alternatively he may have used 'many' to emphasize the free choice offered to the nations, whereas to use 'all' might have suggested an element of compulsion underlying their actions. This freedom of choice for the non-Israelites, whereby the initiative of response to Israel's God is theirs, is also evident in Zechariah 8:20-22 and 23; and it is an element in the theology of Zechariah 1-8 which significantly distinguishes these passages from some of the prophecies concerning the pilgrimage of the nations in Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah where it is God who clearly takes the initiative."³

Although Zechariah 2:15(MT) is invariably associated with the traditions about the nations' pilgrimage to Zion,"⁴ it does not mention any physical approach towards Yahweh's dwelling place; the emphasis is wholly on the change in relationship between the nations and Israel's God. Undoubtedly the clause in 2:15(MT), 'and I will dwell in the midst

³ For example Isaiah 45:14; 49:22f; 56:6-8 and 66:18ff.

⁴ All the major commentaries make these links either directly or by means of relating this passage closely to Zech.8:20ff and thus to the traditions.

of you', is related to the Zion traditions and those about the dwelling of God upon the holy mountain; but we dispute the argument, put forward by Mitchell, that it implies that the prophet

"is not a thorough-going universalist ... (and that) ... Yahweh ... cannot be everywhere worshipped; but ... the new temple at Jerusalem is the shrine, and the only one, of the God of the whole earth."⁹

The passage draws upon the language of the pentateuchal traditions about the 'tent of meeting' as the dwelling place of Yahweh,⁶ ideas which in turn were taken up into the Davidic and temple traditions;⁷ but in its context it does not imply that Yahweh will have a special relationship with Israel that excludes non-Israelites in some way. It expresses, rather, the eschatological concept of Zion as both the dwelling place of Yahweh and the focal point for all his people who will include, on that day, the many nations who have chosen to enter the covenant.

The theme of the pilgrimage of the nations is associated with the final prophecies of Zechariah 1-8, for the concept of nations or peoples going to seek Yahweh and travelling towards Jerusalem is the main idea of Zechariah 8:20-22,

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favour of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I am going.' Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favour of the LORD."

and it is also implicit in 8:23,

⁹ Mitchell, ICC, p.144.

⁶ Ex.25:8ff; 29:44ff; Lev.16:16; 26:11; Num.16:3; 35:34.

⁷ For example 1 Kgs.6:9-13; Ezek.37:24b-28; 43:6-9.

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

We have already commented on the distinction between these passages and those in which there is an element of coercion. It is also recognized that they lack any suggestion that the pilgrims come as tribute bearers, or as servants of Israel.⁹⁸ These prophecies though, are not the only ones in the classical prophetic literature to contain suggestions of unqualified universalism, for the parallel prophecies of Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-3⁹⁹ have several concepts in common with Zechariah 8:20-22 and 23. One is that of nations going to Jerusalem or Zion and to Yahweh acknowledging his authority and seeking to learn from him;¹⁰⁰ but it is expressed in different terms and there is no evidence to suggest close links between these passages. The only textual connections within the prophecies are references to 'עַמִּים' (peoples) and 'גוֹיִם' (nations) which are both fundamental to the content but are such widely used terms that

⁹⁸ Contra the underlying concept of Isa.45:14; 49:22f; 60:10-14 and Hag.2:7.

⁹⁹ There can be little doubt that these two prophecies record the same original saying although the differences in the Hebrew text argue against one being a direct copy of the other for several reasons:-

a) Micah contains extra words in v.1 'וְהָיָה' and v.3 'וְעָדְדוּן' and concludes the prophecy with an additional verse which appears to be original to that context.

b) The participle 'בָּנִין' stands in a different place in the sentence in Mic.4:1 to that in Isa.2:2.

c) Phrases concerning 'עַמִּים' (peoples) and 'גוֹיִם' (nations) are nearly always the opposite way round in the two texts.

d) A few other similar minor linguistic or stylistic variations.

It is probable that in both situations the prophets are drawing on a saying from oral tradition. See Mays, Micah, pp.93-96 for discussion of these issues.

¹⁰⁰ Zech.8:21,22 and Isa.2:3 (= Mic.4:2).

they do not assist in determining any question of interdependence.¹⁰¹ There is great diversity of scholarly opinion concerning the date of the Isaiah/Micah prophecy.¹⁰² While we favour the view that in both cases it is a later addition to the text and agree with Mays that

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob"¹⁰³

appears to presuppose the existence of the temple on Mount Zion and is probably more applicable to the post- than the pre-exilic temple,¹⁰⁴ we are conscious of the danger of circularity and of assuming that ideas about the peaceful pilgrimage of nations to Jerusalem must come after Deutero-Isaiah's prophecies, or indeed be post-exilic, because they are similar to the thoughts in Trito-Isaiah, Haggai and Zechariah. The Isaiah/Micah prophecy is clearly eschatological in outlook but there is no evidence to reject outright the possibility that an unknown prophet preaching early in the exile, or even before then, could have had this lofty vision of a time when all the earth would recognize Yahweh as God and his peace and justice would be universally experienced. Thus we can

¹⁰¹ Petitjean, Les Oracles, p.432 and n.1, argues that the exact expression 'גוֹיֵי עֲזָרָה' (strong nations) only occurs in Zech.8:22 and Mic.4:3. He raises the question as to whether this is indicative of any interdependence but then concludes that it is not. We agree with this conclusion; but also believe that it is dangerous to try and make claims on the basis of two word phrases especially when the vocabulary involved is frequently used in such varied contexts and literary forms. Several of the similar phrases he cites in the footnote could have been chosen for the contexts under discussion without materially altering the sense and vice versa.

¹⁰² Some attribute it to Isaiah ben Amoz, some to Micah and some suggest a date after the rebuilding of the temple in 515 BC. For a full discussion see Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.39-42; Mays, Micah, pp.95-98; G.von Rad, 'The City on the Hill', The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, (Oliver and Boyd Limited, Edinburgh), 1965, pp.232-242; and the literature cited by them.

¹⁰³ Isa.2:2; Mic.4:1.

¹⁰⁴ Mays, Micah, p.96.

only speculate as to whether Zechariah 8:20-22,23 continue and develop earlier prophetic ideas or whether they are significant in respect of the origins of these concepts.

Two other short prophecies which suggest that non-Israelites will freely go to Jerusalem and be accepted by Yahweh are Isaiah 14:1b and Jeremiah 3:17. Neither of these passages bear any marked resemblance to those in Zechariah; the first referring to aliens cleaving to the house of Jacob, and the second to all nations gathering to Jerusalem as 'the throne of the LORD'. The uncertainties surrounding the date of Isaiah 13:1-14:23 have already been commented upon¹⁰⁶ and there is widespread scholarly agreement that Jeremiah 3:17 is an addition to the text which dates at the earliest from the exilic period.¹⁰⁶ Therefore we suggest that no direct relationship between these prophecies and Zechariah 8:20-22,23 can be established.¹⁰⁷

Thus we conclude that Zechariah 8:20-22 and 23, in their present formulation, are not directly dependent upon any other prophecies; but internally there are indications that they are drawing on concepts and motifs which are found elsewhere in the prophetic corpus. Although a

¹⁰⁵ See p.273 above.

¹⁰⁶ See J.Bright, Jeremiah, (AB), 1965, pp.25-27 and W.Holladay, Jeremiah I, (Hermeneia - Fortress Press, Philadelphia), 1986, pp.60,64 and 77. Cf. the literature cited there.

¹⁰⁷ The five prophecies grouped together in Isa.19:16-25 indicate that Egypt, and Assyria (vv.23,24f), will worship Yahweh and be accepted by him but they say nothing about these peoples journeying to Jerusalem. Indeed there are clear implications that the worship will take place in Egypt and it is probable that the material dates from the late Persian period. (See the discussion in Clements, Isaiah 1-39, pp.169-173.) Consequently there appears to be no connection between these passages and the prophecies of Zechariah which are being considered.

distinction is often found within the Old Testament with regards to the use of 'גו' (nation) and 'עַם' (people) whereby the former is used for political groupings and the latter to indicate the consanguinity of the group of people, or their relationship to a deity - and in particular to denote the bond between Israel, the chosen people, and Yahweh; the nouns are frequently used in the plural as poetic parallels, or in other ways suggesting synonymity.¹⁰⁰ This would appear to be the situation in Zechariah 8:22 where the combined expression 'עַמְּיָם רַבִּים וְגוֹיִם יְצוּרִים' (many peoples and strong nations) serves to emphasize the scale of the pilgrimage envisaged. There is no question but that 8:23 refers to non-Israelites but the correct interpretation of 'עַמְּיָם' (peoples) in 8:20 is less certain. Most commentators link Zechariah 8:20-22 to the tradition of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion¹⁰¹ but Petersen also directs our attention to the similarity between verses 20-21

"Peoples ... of many cities ... (going) ... to entreat the favour of the LORD"

and Zechariah 7:2

"the people of Bethel ... (sent) ... to entreat the favour of the LORD"

suggesting that this provides a second level of meaning for the oracle contextually.¹¹⁰ He further suggests that the significance of the term 'peoples' is that they are city dwellers.¹¹¹ Meyers and Meyers¹¹² argue

¹⁰⁰ For example, Gen.27:29; Pss.33:10; 47:4; 67:4-6; Isa.2:2-3; 11:10; 14:6; 17:12; 30:28; 33:3; 49:22; Jer.51:58; Ezek.36:15; Mic.4:1-3; Hab.2:8,13. For a summary of these issues see R.E.Clements, 'gōy', TDOT Vol 2, 1977, pp.426-32. Cf. A.Cody, 'When is the chosen people called a Gōy?', VT 14, 1964, pp.1-6.

¹⁰¹ See Beuken, Haggai, p.179; Mason, CBC, p.72, [It is noted that N.E.B. adopts the translation 'nations' for 'עַמְּיָם' at this point.]; Mitchell, ICC, pp.215-6; Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.429ff.

¹¹⁰ Petersen, OTL, p.316.

¹¹¹ Petersen, OTL, pp.317-8.

for a different significance, basing their ideas on the theory that in Amos' oracles the concept of a special relationship between Israel/Judah and certain groups of "peoples" is found. They suggest that the prophet may be deliberately following Amos' concept in Zechariah 8:20, whereby the term 'peoples' indicates groups which are culturally akin to Israel as distinct from the major foreign nations like Egypt. Our studies in Amos lead us to reject this interpretation for several reasons,¹¹³ in particular the fact that 'עַמִּים' (peoples) does not occur in Amos.¹¹⁴ We find no evidence of the terms 'עַם' (people) and 'גוֹי' (nation) having any specifically prophetic interpretation, believing that they carry the normal range of Old Testament meanings.

We have noted above the repetition in Zechariah 8:21 of the phrase 'בְּחַנּוּת אֶת־פָּנָי יְהוָה' (to entreat the favour of the LORD) as in 7:2 and we recognize its further occurrence in 8:22. This precise construction is used nowhere else in the Old Testament; but the combination of the Pi'el of 'חנן' with forms of 'פָּנָי' is used on seven other occasions which all imply the same particular meaning for the phrase.¹¹⁵ In each instance the entreaty is made in the belief that it may persuade Yahweh to act on behalf of the petitioner, either in a situation of imminent danger, or

¹¹² Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.435-7.

¹¹³ See for example the analysis of the oracles against the nations in Mays, Amos, pp.22-54 and Barton, Amos's Oracles passim.

¹¹⁴ The root is found in three different formulations but only in a total of 7 places throughout the whole book. 'עַם' occurs in Amos 1:5 referring to the people of Syria; 'עַמִּים' in 3:6 for people in general as inhabitants of a city; 'עַמִּי' is used in the phrase "my people Israel" in 7:8,15; 8:2; 9:14 and as a reference by Yahweh to Israel in 9:10.

¹¹⁵ Ex.32:11; 1 Sam.13:12; 1 Kgs.13:6; 2 Kgs.13:4; 2 Chron.33:12; Jer.26:19; Dan.9:13. A similar usage is found in Mal.1:9 where 'אֱלֹהִים' replaces 'יְהוָה' as the deity.

by ceasing to be angry. Meyers and Meyers correctly indicate that the petitioner is invariably a king, prophet, or person of official status; and they argue on this basis that those who entreat Yahweh in Zechariah 8:21, and perhaps also 8:22, are leaders of cities and nations rather than the populace in general.¹¹⁶ However, in Zechariah 7:2 and 8:20ff there is no suggestion that Yahweh is angry with the petitioners or that they are in imminent danger from anyone and thus it is probable that the prophet is not using the concept of entreating Yahweh in the established way. In Zechariah the phrase appears to imply a recognition of Yahweh's authority and that the petitioners, as members of Yahweh's people, are going to Zion to worship and to ask for his blessing. In this case it is virtually synonymous with the cultic usage of 'שָׁאַ' (seek),¹¹⁷ the verb with which it is paralleled in a chiasmic form in Zechariah 8:21,22 which reinforces our argument. This suggests that the phrase 'פָּנֵי (חַנּוּן) יְיָ' (entreat the favour of the LORD) which had a specific meaning in the monarchic period of Israel's history lost its precision in the post-exilic era, so that in Zechariah it can be applied to any people making general petitions. A further occurrence of this phrase in Psalm 119:58 lends credence to this suggestion, for the petitioner, an unidentified psalmist, does not appear to have any particular situation or danger in mind when he says:-

"The LORD is my portion; I promise to keep thy words. I entreat thy favour with all my heart; be gracious to me according to thy promise."¹¹⁸

This psalm is usually attributed to the wisdom traditions rather than

¹¹⁶ Meyers and Meyers, AB, pp.384,438 and 439-40.

¹¹⁷ This usage occurs throughout the Old Testament, for example in Ezek.33:7; 2 Sam.12:16; 2 Chron.15:4; Ps.40:17; Isa.51:1; Jer.50:4; Dan. 9:3; Hos.7:10.

¹¹⁸ Ps.119:57-58

the cult and it is thought to be post-Deuteronomic, with a suggested date of the third or second centuries BC,¹¹⁹ which may imply that the application of the phrase in Zechariah became the interpretation that was adopted into normal usage in the post-exilic community.

Zechariah 8:23 provides a fitting climax to the book with a vision of the nations bonding themselves to Israel and together, as the united people of God, going forward to Zion. This oracle contains many motifs from Israel's traditions and begins with the eschatological formula expressed, unusually, in the plural 'בַּיָּמֵי קְדֻשָּׁתָהּ' (in those days). The plural form occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament in passages which are generally assigned to a late date;¹²⁰ but in this instance it may have been influenced by the vision of the eschatological age in Zechariah 8:6ff where the glory of the future days is contrasted with the hardship of the former days.¹²¹

The concept of "ten men from the nations of every tongue" must be intended to imply the whole human race.¹²² The number 'ten' is used in varied symbolic ways in the Old Testament but the most common symbolism,

¹¹⁹ See Anderson, Psalms (73-150), p.807.

¹²⁰ Jer.3:16,18; 5:18; 50:4; Joel 3:2; 4:1; and Neh.13:15.

¹²¹ See Petitjean, Les Oracles, pp.434-5 for detailed comments on this issue. É.Lipiński, 'Recherches sur le livre de Zacharie', pp.42-6, argues that Zech.8:20-23 is the work of the redactor of Zech.1-8 and suggests, unconvincingly, that the plural formula is not eschatological but refers back to the days of the prophet Zechariah.

¹²² Contra Lipiński, 'Recherches', p.43, who suggests that Jews and proselytes are meant and not foreigners.

its usage here, is that of completeness.¹²³ Reference to every tongue emphasizes the universal scope of this oracle and behind this vision of all humanity drawing together before God there may lie the ancient story of the confusing of the tongues at Babel.¹²⁴ The double occurrence of the verbal concept 'קָּח' (seize or grasp) in relation to taking hold of a robe in this verse stresses the eagerness of the new arrivals¹²⁵ and their intention not to be shaken off; but the verb is also used in the sense of holding fast to Yahweh's requirements in Isaiah 56:2,4, and 6 and there may be a suggestion of this interpretation also in that the foreigners are accepting and holding on to Yahweh. The text refers to 'קַּיִשׁ' (corner or hem) rather than the complete garment and this has a religious significance in that the priestly legislation commanded that tassels be attached in that position.¹²⁶ The same word is also used in connection with a marriage pledge¹²⁷ but whilst the concept of the union of foreigners and Israelites is appropriate to the context, it is more probable that 'קַּיִשׁ' is significant as a means of recognition, for only those men with tassels on their robes could be identified with certainty as adherents of Yahweh.

¹²³ For example, Gen.31:7; Lev.26:26; Num.14:22; Josh.22:14; Judg. 17:10; Ruth 4:2; 1 Sam.1:8 and Jer.41:8. See also Meyers and Meyers, AB, p.440, on this issue and their comments on the further symbolism of the 10:1/foreigner:Jew ratio.

¹²⁴ Gen.11:1-9. For penetrating comments on the relationship between the universalism in Zechariah 1-8 and the Yahwist's message concerning the abrahamic promise of blessing see H.W.Wolff, "Kerygma of the Yahwist", (trans. W.A.Benware), Interpretation 20, 1966, pp.131-58.

¹²⁵ Petitjean, Les Oracles, p.435 and n.4, presents much textual support for this interpretation.

¹²⁶ Num.15:38.

¹²⁷ Ezek.16:8; Ruth 3:9.

In the Old Testament the appellation 'יְהוּדִי' (Jew) only occurs in the singular here and in the Book of Esther¹²⁸. This fact is often used in support of their argument by commentators who suggest that Zechariah 8:23 is a very late addition to the text. However, with Petersen, we note the presence of the singular gentilic in Jeremiah 34:9 and of the plural in Jeremiah 52:28,30 and suggest that the importance of the term 'יְהוּדִי' in Zechariah 8:23 is that it emphasizes the individual venerator of Yahweh, not the corporate group of Israelites.¹²⁹ In Chapter 5¹³⁰ it was argued that the concept of individualism may have been a post-exilic rather than exilic development. This does not deny some interest in the individual round the time of the exile, for example in the man, Jeremiah the prophet. However we put forward the proposition that the concept of individual faith was being developed during the period of Zechariah and that it was more clearly formulated in the days of the second temple.¹³¹

The final sentence of the verse, and of the message of Zechariah 1-8, comes from the non-Israelites saying,

"Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you".

It is significant that Elohim is used because that is the all-embracing designation for God and the most fitting in the universalistic context of this passage where Yahweh, the name for the God of Israel, might have

¹²⁸ Esth.5:13; 6:10; 8:7; 9:29,31; 10:3. Cf. the feminine form in 1 Chron.4:18.

¹²⁹ Petersen, OTL, p.319.

¹³⁰ See pp.260f above.

¹³¹ We have argued that this verse was appended sometime after the completion of the temple but feel it is unwise to attempt to be more specific. See pp.29f and 48f above.

seemed too nationalistic.¹³² The combined phrase 'אֱלֹהֵינוּ עִמָּנוּ' (God is with you) has prompted suggestions for several different Old Testament allusions behind the text. The Immanuel prophecy, Isaiah 7:14, is often referred to,¹³³ as is Isaiah 45:14;¹³⁴ or texts such as 1 Samuel 17:46 and 2 Kings 1:6,16 which are concerned with the recognition of God's presence with Israel by foreigners, may have some significance. It is also possible that the idea of God being present where a righteous way of living is pursued,¹³⁵ or in the inviolable city of Zion where he is universally exalted,¹³⁶ is related to the phrase 'אֱלֹהֵינוּ עִמָּנוּ'. However we believe with Petitjean that the expression

"évoque, en effet, de nombreux textes relatifs aux événements majeurs de l'histoire de l'alliance entre Jahvé et son peuple: l'alliance avec les Patriarches, les Juges, les monarques et avec le peuple tout entier."¹³⁷

The hopes and encouragements for Israel of Deutero-Isaiah, as expressed in Isaiah 41:8-13¹³⁸ underlie this phrase also and it is because of this long history of Yahweh's presence with his people evidenced in their experiences that the non-Israelites can say with confidence "for we have

¹³² See Gelin, Aggée, p.29 for further comments on this viewpoint.

¹³³ Cf. Isa.8:8,10. See Van Hoonacker, Les Douze, p.648. Petersen, OTL, p.320, n.4, incorrectly attributes this view to Petitjean who in fact only records it as one of the views adopted by others; see Les Oracles, pp.436-7.

¹³⁴ See Mitchell, ICC, p.216 and Gelin, Aggée, p.43 note a.

¹³⁵ Amos 5:14 which has the longer expression for the deity, 'the LORD, the God of hosts'.

¹³⁶ Ps.46 expresses this most clearly.

¹³⁷ Petitjean, Les Oracles, p.437 and notes 3,4,5 and 6 where he gives numerous Old Testament references in support.

¹³⁸ This passage presents the future for the nations in negative terms in a way that suggests that they will realise their lack of good fortune is because God is with Israel and not with them.

heard that God is with you." No destination for this final pilgrimage is specified in contrast to Zechariah 8:21 where the same opening words 'נִצְּחָה' (Let us go) are uttered as the non-Israelites set out towards Zion. In these closing words the concept is of Jews and non-Israelites together going forward with God and as the recipients of his blessings.

Our conclusion in respect of these passages which offer to the non-Israelite nations the hope that they too will be accepted into the people of God, is that they draw on many different prophetic strands which refer to the Zion traditions and the pilgrimage of the nations. However in Zechariah 1-8 the ideas are developed and extended to the point where the concept of true universalism rather than the domination of the world by Israel is verbalised. The more traditional prophetic concepts of Yahweh's judgement on the nations for their sins against Israel and the ideas of the subservience of the other nations towards the chosen people are, certainly, also found within Zechariah 1-8; and in Haggai the destiny of the non-Israelites is not taken beyond these positions. However that could not be the fulfilment of God's purposes. In Zechariah 1-8 the prophet is given a glimpse of the eschatological hopes for humanity, a picture of all mankind drawing together into the presence of the universal sovereign LORD. This was a new concept which exceeded the visions in Trito-Isaiah, prophecies which were roughly contemporary with Haggai and Zechariah 1-8, where Israel was promised a dominant position in Zion¹³ and although there are other prophetic passages which hint at this concept we have indicated that they probably come from the hand of later redactors or editors, not the classical prophets themselves. The concept was not accepted, though, by all who

¹³ Isa.60:1-22; 65:17-25; 66:18-20.

followed after the time of Haggai and Zechariah as is evident from the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah where exclusivism is promoted; but the ideas were not allowed to die and they received new expression in later works such as Jonah and they live on still within the Christian tradition.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions

This thesis has tried to demonstrate that two intertwined lines of development are evident in the Books of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8. On the one hand, that there are clear signs that both the prophets and the literary works which bear their names represent a continuation of pre-exilic prophetic style and traditions; and on the other hand, that the social, political and cultural circumstances of the restoration period brought about a changed religious consciousness out of which divergent styles of prophecy and traditions developed. Conclusions were drawn in each chapter pertinent to the specific themes under consideration and it only remains for us to gather together those findings in order to reach an overall conclusion about the place and significance of Haggai and Zechariah within the Old Testament prophetic corpus.

In the opening chapter we considered the development of literary skills in Israel and concluded that by the time of Haggai and Zechariah society was becoming more literate. It was argued that their prophecies were recorded as literature at an early stage of their history, perhaps even from the outset, with a consequence that they show little sign of having been significantly altered by editorial or redactional expansion. Our findings allowed us to suggest that texts of earlier prophetic works and religious annals were available to Haggai and Zechariah which would have created opportunities for detailed points of contact between their words and those of their predecessors; however it was recognized that availability of written material cannot be taken to imply that it was used. This led us to consider the status of the prophets within their

community and the effectiveness of their ministries.

It was shown in respect of both men that their sole authority to prophecy lay in their divine calling and to this extent they stand in the same tradition as Israel's classical prophets as individuals raised up by Yahweh for a particular purpose. In common with their pre-exilic counterparts they struggled at times to establish credibility among the people; but they succeeded in eliciting a better response from their audience than did most of their predecessors. This can be attributed to the content of their messages and the situation in which they proclaimed them rather than to any extraordinary prophetic ability. Their mission was to encourage the population of Jerusalem to recognize themselves as the people of God once more and to re-establish their community around a new temple. They were able to draw on the benefits of hindsight and the proven truth of the classical prophets' words; and their advantage was that of being able to proclaim a blessed future awaiting all who heeded them rather than having to tell of coming judgement. This focus on the temple and religious identity illustrated that Haggai and Zechariah both believed that it was necessary to return to the roots of their faith and for worship to be offered by the restored community as it had been in the early days of Solomon's temple. Discussion of the motif *יהוה צבאות* (LORD of hosts) showed this emphasis in their theological understanding and demonstrated that in this respect they drew little from classical prophecy but went back to the traditions of even earlier times. Having discovered this divergence in content it was to Haggai's and Zechariah's chosen methods of prophetic proclamation that we turned our attention.

It was shown that oracles, visions and symbolic action were forms

of prophecy which they used in common with their classical predecessors. It appears that Haggai favoured the traditional style of oral ministry proclaiming oracles to the gathered community. Zechariah also adopted this method but in conjunction with a much greater use of visions as a means of proclamation. Our discussion of these led to a consideration of Persian religion and of the topic of angelology. Although there was evidence that Zechariah's visions were influenced by Persian ideas this was at a socio-political level and we were able to demonstrate that the theological concepts were heavily dependent on patriarchal traditions and the understanding of faith current at the time of the first temple. Zechariah was in accord with his own age in recognizing the transcendent nature of God but used the very ancient idea of an angel as the visible representation of the deity in a new way as an intermediary bridging the gulf between heaven and earth. The complex structure of the visions and oracles and the fact that together they become the means of transmission for Zechariah drew us to conclude that he conveyed a major proportion of his message through literature rather than by oral ministry. This marks a definite step in the development of prophetic method which nonetheless drew on classical styles and it sets Zechariah apart as a significant figure in the history of prophecy.

Haggai and Zechariah were both found to have much in common with the earlier prophets when the idea of leadership within the community was considered. A continuation of the Davidic traditions was evident in both books in connection with their attitude towards Zerubbabel's role. In Haggai we found several close links with classical prophetic passages which indicated a straightforward continuity of ideas in this respect. The situation was much more complex in Zechariah 1-8 and we were led to

conclude that Zechariah's own understanding developed significantly in the course of his ministry and that it is his final theological position which is reflected also in the framework to the Book of Haggai. This envisaged a diarchic rule between the religious and civil leaders of the community until the time when Yahweh would raise up a new David to be ruler. We believe that Zechariah's thinking was a result of his realisation that Yahweh's new age was not being brought in immediately through the rebuilding of the temple, together with his appreciation of the enhanced status which should be accorded to Joshua as the senior priest. Again we see Zechariah standing in the mainstream of classical prophetic tradition and yet also diverging from it as an innovator of important new concepts. It is evident from the subsequent course of Judaism that his hopes and eschatological vision were not generally accepted. This is also apparent from the final edition of his book in which it is seen that modifications to his thought, according an even higher position to Joshua, have been made by other hands.

Close links with classical prophetic traditions were discovered in respect of Haggai's and Zechariah's understanding of Yahweh's judgement on his people. Many motifs and ideas had been drawn from the words of the pre-exilic prophets or from the same traditional sources which they followed and there were indications that Haggai may have deliberately quoted a passage from Amos as he tried to convey his own message. There were significant differences though in the way Haggai and Zechariah used these references to divine punishment. We concluded that this resulted from their perception of the exile as having been a deserved punishment, from which Yahweh's people had to learn their lesson and through which they could discover new hopes for the future. New hopes were expressed

also for the non-Israelite nations. In Haggai there was little emphasis on this theme and the prophet's thought continues the classical ideas of Israel's ultimate supremacy over the nations of the world.

In Zechariah 1-8, however, the concept of the pilgrimage of the nations, which had developed through the different periods of classical prophecy, is presented finally as a hope for the universal recognition of Yahweh's sovereignty and the joining together of all nations as the people of God. The traditional understanding of a subservient role for the nations was also evident in the book and this led us to conclude that Zechariah only glimpsed the possibility of universal salvation and that it was a subsequent tradent who appended the oracle which expresses this hope most clearly. Nevertheless we believe that Zechariah is shown to be a prophet with a deep religious consciousness whose theological insight enabled him to suggest a significantly new concept to the people of his time.

To sum up, we have been able to demonstrate that Haggai was a true prophet in the classical tradition. His message and style of prophecy differed from that of his predecessors only insofar as the circumstances of his community had moved on within the purposes of Yahweh. He had a new hopeful message to proclaim and faithfully fulfilled his calling as Yahweh's prophet. At one level the same can be said of Zechariah but he has also been recognized as an innovator in respect of his style and the content of his prophecies. Through him the people were challenged to be open to a new experience of Yahweh and were offered a different view of the future but they were unable to grasp his vision and hope.

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