

Seit der Aufnahme von Jes 7,14 im Reflexionszitat von Mt 1,23 wird der Vers meist als Heilsweissagung, wo nicht als messianische Weissagung interpretiert. Die dann bestehende Spannung zu Jes 7,17 wird in der Forschung entweder diachron (ursprünglich Drohwort, dann heileschatologische Bearbeitung oder umgekehrt) oder durch Verteilung von Heil und Unheil auf verschiedene Adressaten gelöst. Im vorliegenden Aufsatz, der Jes 7,1–17 als Einheit auffaßt, wird ein anderer Lösungsweg vorgeschlagen, der ohne literarkritische Schnitte auskommt. Das Immanuelzeichen wird als bloßes Zeichen ernstgenommen und allein vom angegebenen situativen Kontext her gedeutet. Die Spannung zwischen v. 14–16 und 17 wird im Sinne eines »zwar . . . aber« aufgelöst: Die Szene zwischen Ahas und Jesaja ist von der Struktur der griechischen Tragödie her zu erklären, in der der Held von der Gottheit durch ambivalente Aussagen auf seinem Weg in den Untergang verstärkt wird, und in der kurz vor der Katastrophe noch eine vermeintliche Wendung zum Positiven eingeführt wird.

Prophets and Prophecy in Jeremiah and Kings

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O Introductory

There are still very many open scholarly questions about ›prophecy‹ in the Hebrew Bible. The origin and the earlier biblical sense of the noun *nby'* are far from clear¹. Equally disputed are the relationship between this noun and the two verbal themes of *nb'* – and indeed whether there is a distinction in sense between these verbal themes². Overlapping and complicating these lexical issues are historical and religious problems: how far was ›classical prophecy‹ an offshoot or mutation from ›institutional prophecy‹? were there significant differences in practice and terminology between north (Israel) and south (Judah)³? And – as if these difficulties were not enough – we have to keep asking how far the results of anthropological and sociological field-studies⁴ may properly be applied to texts from the Bible many of which are highly edited and so themselves far from being ›raw data‹.

¹ Relevant material is usefully presented in two recent papers by J. R. Porter: ›*bny hnby'ym*, JTS 32, 1981, 423–429; ›The Origins of Prophecy in Israel‹, in R. Coggins, A. Phillips, M. Knibb (edd.), *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*, 1982, 12–31.

² A. Jepsen's account of the development of the senses of the two themes (in: Nabi, 1934) is presented in A. Guillaume, *Prophecy and Divination*, 1938, 114–115.

³ Argued forcefully recently by R. R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, 1980; and D. L. Petersen, *The Roles of Israel's Prophets*, JSOTS 17, 1981.

⁴ In addition to the studies of Wilson and Petersen just cited, cf. also M. J. Buss, ›The Social Psychology of Prophecy‹, in J. A. Emerton (ed.), *Prophecy*, BZAW 150, 1980, 1–11.

This study concentrates on the books of Kings and Jeremiah, and that for two main reasons: It is in these two books that most biblical instances of noun and verb forms from *nb'* are to be found. And we are fortunate that it is also there that we are given some control over our understanding of editorial procedures by the existence of largely parallel texts – MT and LXX in the case of Jeremiah; and Kings and Chronicles in the case of the history of the monarchy. Accordingly the line of approach will be as follows: The terminology of ›prophecy‹ in Jeremiah will be set in the context of the usage in the other books of the Latter Prophets, classified, and the contribution of the Hebrew and Greek traditions explored. Next the usage in Kings will be studied; and compared with that in Chronicles. And finally some lines of possible future research will be sketched.

But to anticipate: it is not now clear to me that any positive or complimentary use of the singular noun *nby'* in the Hebrew Bible was contemporary. Or – put negatively and more bluntly – a good ›prophet‹ was always a dead one! Never is the plural of the noun used for ›prophets‹ who are otherwise specified or named in the text. It is mostly used of groups or bands; and only occasionally – and then in stereotyped language – of an unnamed series of ›prophets‹ of the past. In the singular its commonest use is as a title with a proper name – and it is not at all clear that the individuals so designated were ever members of a group of ›prophets‹. Then I find no distinction in sense between the two verbal themes. One or the other is preferred in different literary contexts: the *niphal* in the Latter Prophets and the *hithpael* in Numbers, I Samuel and I Kings – with four instances of each in Chronicles. However all the exceptions to what has just been stated appear to conform to a sub-pattern: the alternate theme is used only in contexts where the main theme is frequent; the sense seems no different; and so the variation may be taken as being entirely stylistic⁵.

1.0 *Latter Prophets*

In the Latter Prophets apart from Jeremiah the usage of the noun and verb associated with *nb'* can be readily presented: outside Ezekiel the evidence is relatively meagre, and in that book it is reasonably homogeneous.

1.1 In the collections associated with Isaiah, Micah, and Zephaniah (all pre-exilic figures) prophets are little mentioned, and where they are it is to be criticised as ›others‹⁶. Exceptionally, Isaiah is titled ›prophet‹ three

⁵ The *niphal* is used in a ›*hithpael*-context‹ in I Sam 10 11; 19 20 and I Reg 22 12 (= II Chr 18 11). The reverse is true in Jer 14 14; 23 13; 26 20; 29 26.27 and Ez 13 17; 37 10 – the *niphal* is the only theme used in the Book of the Twelve.

⁶ Is 3 2; 9 14; 28 7; 29 10; Mic 3 5.6.11; Zeph 3 4.

times in chs. 37–39. In Amos and Hosea the usage is rather more nuanced⁷: but there is no suggestion that Hosea was himself a ›prophet‹; and that label is specifically rejected by Amos in 7.14. On the other side, *nby'* is found as a title of Habakkuk, Haggai, and Zechariah in the books bearing their names – and of Elijah in the book of Malachi⁸. And Zechariah, in ch. 1.7f., has warm comments about the ›former (ie. earlier) prophets‹.

The verb never occurs in Isaiah and is very rare in the book of the twelve. It is used favourably in Joel 3.1 (universally considered late) and in Amos⁹. However it is a dangerous phenomenon in Zech 13.3.4 – a passage clearly related to Amos 7.10–17.

1.2 If the evidence just mentioned already suggests a cleavage between earlier and later usage of the noun *nby'*, we find contact with both usages in the book of Ezekiel. The noun occurs 15 times: (a) Prophets are criticised in chs. 13; 22 (×7). (b) The occurrences in 7.26 (cf. the proverb in Jer 18.18) and chap. 14 (×4) are rather more neutral. (c) The only positive plural usage is in (the late?) 38.17 – ›my servants the prophets of Israel‹. (d) The singular is used twice of Ezekiel himself: as a mark of approval, but not (yet?) a title, in 2.5 and 33.33 where it is said that the people ›will know that there has been a prophet amongst them‹.

The verb is much commoner (×35). In the plural it is used four times, always in the company of the noun: three times in the hostile ch. 13, and once positively in 38.17. However it is used most often (×31) of Ezekiel's own business: in stereotyped commands from God that introduce many sections of his message¹⁰.

1.3 To sum up this brief review: Ezekiel shares both the contemporary criticism of ›prophets‹ found in Isaiah, Micah, and Zephaniah and the respect for certain ›prophets‹ found in Zechariah. The two passages which style him a ›prophet in the midst‹ are not unlike the (post-exilic only?) use of ›prophets‹ as a title with a name. And the regular positive use of the verb in Ezekiel of his own function may be relevant when we seek to understand why in Amos 7 the designation ›prophet‹ is rejected but the activity of ›prophesying‹ acceptable.

⁷ Am 2.11.12; 3.7; 7.14; Hos 4.5; 6.5; 9.7.8; 12.11.14.

⁸ Hab 1.1; 3.1; Hag 1.1.3.12; 2.1.10; Zech 1.1.7; Mal 3.23.

⁹ Am 2.12; 3.8; 7.12.13.15.16 – the same contexts as the noun (cf. note 7).

¹⁰ The recurring form ›son of man . . . prophesy . . . and say‹ is most reminiscent of the almost regular formula that introduces the divine commands through Moses in Leviticus and Numbers.

2.0 *Jeremiah*

The situation in Jeremiah is very much more complex. First of all the verb and noun under discussion are used more frequently in this book than in the rest of the Latter Prophetic corpus together – the verb, even more often than in Ezekiel; and the noun, much more often than the total for the other books. Secondly, the Jeremiah tradition is available to us in substantially different forms – the longer (MT) Hebrew book and the shorter (LXX) Greek one¹¹. And thirdly, although the data are differently evaluated in terms of authenticity and authorship, many scholars operate with a distinction between prose and poetry in the text of Jeremiah¹².

In fact, although the distinctions between Hebrew and Greek, and prose and poetry, are worth bearing in mind when gathering statistics, the matter is not as complicated as it might be. Unlike the situation in other biblical books where MT and LXX diverge significantly, the Greek Jeremiah – although ordered differently from the traditional Hebrew – does not contain material additional to it. The Greek simply translates a stage in the evolution of the Hebrew tradition earlier than that enshrined in the Masoretic text. The longer, more developed Hebrew text offers us no poetry new to the text translated into Greek; and may be regarded as an extension of the prose tradition common to the two versions. It is sufficient therefore for us to collect statistics from three categories of material in the MT: (a) its poetry (as recognised in say BHS or RSV); (b) the prose translated in the Greek Jeremiah; (c) the prose reflected only in the received Hebrew.

2.1 In what I am taking to be poetry, the noun *nby'* is used 12 times and the verb 4 times. The noun is commoner in the plural; but even where the singular is found (6 13; 18 18; 23 11), it is used generally – and so in every case prophets are being referred to as a group or class. The four instances of the verb all have the plural noun as their subject: in the poetry in Jeremiah ›prophesying‹ is only an activity of ›prophets‹.

In two cases only of the twelve is ›prophet‹ a neutral term: in 2 30 (›your own sword devoured your prophets‹)¹³ and 18 18, which may be a

¹¹ Two important discussions of this are available in P.-M. Bogaert (ed.), *Le Livre de Jérémie*, BETL 54, 1981: E. Tov, ›Some Aspects of the Textual and Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah‹, and P.-M. Bogaert, ›De Baruch à Jérémie: Les Deux Redactions Conservées du Livre de Jérémie‹.

¹² Recently W. McKane, ›Poetry and Prose in the Book of Jeremiah‹, Vienna Congress Volume, SVT 32, 1981, 220–237; R. P. Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant*, 1981, esp. 9–13. For a warning that the distinction may be too ›western‹, cf. J. L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 1981, 77–83.

¹³ In a note on this verse (ZAW 89, 1977, 418–420) Y. Hoffmann proposes removing by emendation this ›unparalleled indictment‹.

traditional saying about what is expected of priest, wise man and prophet respectively (Ezek 7.26 is very similar). In the other ten cases, Jeremiah's poetry criticises the ›prophets‹ for their ›prophesying‹ on their own in 5.13; 23.13.14.21; along with the priests in 5.31; 6.13; 23.11; and in company with priests and others in 2.26; 4.9. As for the tenth passage, it is an open exegetical question whether ›priests/those who handle *torah*/shepherds/prophets‹ of 2.8 are simply priests and prophets, each alternatively defined, or a larger grouping of four classes.

Although ›prophets‹ are generally criticised in Jeremiah's poetry, although they are never praised, and although Jeremiah's own role is neither compared nor even associated with theirs, ›prophesy‹ is not in itself a pejorative term in this poetry. In fact the four cases where the verbal form is used are typical of the reasons adduced: ›they prophesy by Baal (bb'l 1), 2.8; 23.13; ›falsely‹ (bšqr), 5.31; ›without my speaking to them‹, 23.21.

2.2 In the shorter prose tradition, common to MT and LXX, there are several further examples of each of these categories of usage from the poetry.

2.2.1 Jeremiah speaks neutrally of prophets of past or present in 28.8.9 when suggesting in response to Hananiah that prophets who warn many be taken at face value, while those that offer positive promises require future confirmation.

2.2.2 ›Prophets‹ are blamed as a group on their own in 19 further verses (14.13.14.15²; 23. (x)9; 27.9.15.16.18; 29.8; 37.19).

2.2.3 They are criticised with the priests only in 14.18 and 23.33.34.

2.2.4 And they are further blamed with other groups in society in the following prose passages – 8.1; 13.13; 26.7.8.11.16; 29.1; 32.32.

These 32 occurrences of the noun just listed are in line with the usage of the noun in Jeremiah's poetry, and they represent a very large majority of the instances of the noun in the prose tradition common to LXX and MT. However there are 10 (possibly 11)¹⁴ further instances which break new ground:

2.2.5 Five passages talk positively of a past series of Yahweh's ›servants the prophets‹ – 7.25; 25.4; 26.5; 35.15; 44.4.

2.2.6 And five passages specify Jeremiah himself as a ›prophet‹: four by using the title after his name – 42.2; 43.6; 45.1; 51.59, while 1.5 reports his commission as ›prophet to the nations‹.

Although still used less than the noun, the verb appears much more often in the prose than in poetry, and no longer simply describes the activity of those already designated ›prophet‹ in the text.

¹⁴ The possible eleventh instance is the reference to Hananiah in 28.1, discussed below in paragraph 2.5.

2.2.7 It is used neutrally with the noun in 28.8.9 (cf. 2.2.2).

2.2.8 It appears in criticism of present *>prophets<* some 16 times (14.14².15.16; 23.16.25.26.32; 27.10.14.15².16²; 29.9; 37.19).

2.2.9 However it is also used of the activity of individuals who are not otherwise styled *>prophet<* in the immediate context of the passages concerned: 8 times of Jeremiah himself – 11.21; 19.14; 20.1; 26.9.11.12; 29.27; 32.3; twice positively of others – 26.18 (Micah of Moreshet) and 26.20 (Uriah); and five times negatively of others – 20.6; 28.6; 29.21.26.31.

Mention of Hananiah as a *>prophet<* in 28.1 may require modification to what has been stated in 2.2.6 and 2.2.9. However treatment of this question can conveniently await our handling of the testimony of the separate MT tradition (see 2.5).

2.3.1 The MT offers four additional cases of criticism of *>prophets<* as a group. In one of these, 8.10, we find a repetition of poetry already listed – 6.13¹⁵. The other three cases are 23.15.37 (within the chapter specifically devoted to criticism of the prophets) and 27.14.

2.3.2 There is one further reference to prophetic servants of the past, in 29.19.

2.3.3 Quite the biggest growth is in the further 24 instances of the title *>prophet<* being applied to Jeremiah himself – the first case of this is in 20.2, which is already after the bulk of the book's poetry. In 18 cases, the name 'Jeremiah' is already in the text translated by LXX. In six passages, the name too has been supplied from the context.

2.3.4 And the new development in the MT, unless it is already attested in the opening verse of the Greek chapter corresponding to 28.1, is the application of the title *>prophet<* to Hananiah six times in chapter 28 (in addition to the six times in that chapter where Jeremiah is also so styled).

2.4 Criticism of prophets and their activity of *>prophesying<* figures in all three sections of the inherited Hebrew text of Jeremiah which we have distinguished.

2.4.1 It forms almost all that is said about prophets in what is widely accepted as the poetry of the book.

2.4.2 Such criticism remains quite the largest element in the rest of the text that is common to Hebrew and Greek. However in this part of the material some new features appear, mostly in the usage of the verb: (1) it becomes used in criticism not just of prophets in general, but also of certain named individuals who are nowhere termed *>prophet<*; (2) even more novel, it is used positively ten times of the activity of Jeremiah mostly,

¹⁵ A usual example of poetic material in a MT *>plus<* – but not *fresh* poetic material (cf. 2.0 above).

but also of Micah and Uriah; (3) this positive use of the verb for individual activity overlaps with occasional use of the noun as a title of Jeremiah and, probably more significant, with the strategic designation of Jeremiah as ›prophet‹ at the beginning of the book; (4) in this section of the book we also meet positive reference to an otherwise obscure group of Yahweh's ›servants the prophets‹.

2.4.3 In the tradition peculiar to the MT there is a small expansion of the theme of prophetic criticism which dominates elsewhere. But most noteworthy is the multiple insistence that Jeremiah is himself a ›prophet‹, and (in ch. 28) that Hananiah is one too.

2.4.4 If we possessed only Jeremiah's poetry, we would be forgiven for supposing that Jeremiah was no more a prophet than he was a priest, prince, elder, or ruler. In the completed Hebrew text, it is quite clear that one of the key issues of the book concerns true and false prophecy – with Jeremiah as the true prophet. In the shorter prose text known to the Greek translators we glimpse some intermediate stages in this development.

2.5 Before comparing this suggested analysis of the Jeremiah tradition with the use of ›prophetic‹ terminology elsewhere in the Latter Prophets, a short discussion is appropriate of the introduction to the clash between Jeremiah and Hananiah in Jer 28. Apart from the way in which they style the two protagonists, MT and LXX are virtually indistinguishable throughout the chapter. Our Hebrew text epitomises the MT of Jeremiah as a whole in presenting the conflict as being between ›Jeremiah the prophet‹ and ›Hananiah the prophet‹ – in almost every case in which either name appears, the title *hnby'* follows immediately. By contrast, the Greek report never titles Jeremiah, but introduces Hananiah as *ho pseudoprophetes* in verse 1, reverting to the plain name thereafter. Did the Greek translators find *hnby'* applied to Hananiah in the shorter Hebrew text available to them? Or is their *pseudoprophetes* an exegetical response to the manifest purport of the story? Hananiah is certainly a ›prophet‹ in the developed Hebrew text – was he already one in the shorter common tradition? Proof is impossible – but I think not. I suggest that this verse represents the exception that proves the rule which holds elsewhere: that the Greek simply translates a text which was extended to produce the MT. Certainly no-one other than Hananiah and Jeremiah is styled ›prophet‹ even in the longer Hebrew. Moreover ›false prophet‹ is used elsewhere in the Greek (6.13; 26.7.8.11.16; 27.9; 29.1.8) only of ›prophets‹ as a group, and in fact only of ›prophets‹ in conjunction with other blameworthy classes such as priests.

2.6 Our stratification of the usage of ›prophetic‹ terminology in the book of Jeremiah can be readily correlated with the much sparser information in the neighbouring biblical books.

2.6.1 The recurrent poetic critique of ›prophets‹ is reminiscent of that in Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, and Ezekiel.

2.6.2 The occasional neutral reference to them may be paralleled in Amos 2 and Hosea.

2.6.3 The more rapid development of verb than noun in connection with the hero of a ›prophetic‹ book is paralleled in Ezekiel, and is reminiscent of Amos 7 (and 38), where ›prophesy‹ is acceptable, but ›prophet‹ not.

2.6.4 The unique, but clearly deliberately placed designation of Jeremiah as ›prophet‹ in 15 is similar to what is said of Ezekiel in 25 and 33.33.

2.6.5 Talk of Yahweh's ›servants the prophets‹ is found elsewhere in the Bible in some clearly quite late texts: Zech 16; Dan 9.6.10; Ezra 9.11 – and in slightly varied form in Ez 38.17 und II Chr 36.16. The only other occurrences are in Am 3.7, and 5 times in 2 Kings, whose date is still to be established.

2.6.6 Increased use of ›prophet‹ as a title of Jeremiah in the later tradition may be correlated with the use of the title in Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi – and in a prose narrative appended to the traditions of Isaiah of Jerusalem.

2.6.7 Use of this title for a single member of the opposition – Hananiah – is quite unique.

2.7 It would appear that the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah preserve valuable information for any reconstruction of the development of ›prophetic‹ terminology. It would appear that neither figure used the noun *nby'* of himself, or the related verb of his own activity. Only in the subsequent presentation of their traditions did verb and (more slowly) noun become acceptable terms of reference. Can the earlier history of these terms be clarified in the narrative books of the Bible?

3.0 *Kings*

Kings is our other main repository of ›prophetic‹ terminology. Outside the books of the Latter Prophets which we have already surveyed, the noun *nby'* and its related verbal forms occur as often in *Kings* (some 85 times) as in all the other biblical books together. Yet the incidence of this terminology in the book is far from regular: more than half the instances are in five chapters of I Reg, I Reg 1 – Nathan is titled ›prophet‹ 9 times; I Reg 13 – 8 mentions of the prophet from Bethel who intercepted the ›man of God‹ from Judah; I Reg 18 – Elijah and prophets of Yahweh and of Baal on Mount Carmel (12 times); I Reg 20 – 5 instances within the series of narratives attached to the Ahab/Ben-hadad campaign; I Reg 22 – the royal counsellors consulted by Micaiah (11 times).

Another approach to a preliminary survey is to consider larger sections of the book rather than individual chapters. In many ways a three-fold division of the total material in Kings – after I Reg 16 and II Reg 10 – is more appropriate than the inherited section into two ›books‹.

3.1 Of the instances of the noun in Kings (80), almost half (38) are in the plural – and most of these (33) occur in the middle third of Kings, the Elijah/Elisha cycle.

3.1.1 Yahweh's prophets are mentioned 5 times in I Reg 18 & 19 – in 18 4.13²; and 19 10.14.

3.1.2 Prophets of Baal (and Asherah) appear 8 times: in I Reg 18 19². 20.22.25.40; 19 1; and in II Reg 10 19.

3.1.3 Prophets of the King of Israel make seven appearances: in I Reg 22 6.10.12.13.22.23; and in II Reg 3 13.

3.1.4 The hero of the final narrative of I,20 is related to prophetic groups in different phrases in vv. 35 and 41.

3.1.5 *bny hnby'ym*, mentioned in one of these expressions (I Reg 20 35), make 10 further appearances in the Elisha stories – II Reg 2 3.5.7.15; 4 1.38²; 5 22; 6 1; 9 1.

3.1.6 The only other instance of the plural in this middle third of Kings is also the first of a series of passages later in 2 Kings.

3.1.7 This series later in 2 Kings consists of five references to Yahweh's ›servants the prophets‹ – in 9 7; 17 13.23; 21 10; 24 2.

3.1.8 The last plural use of the noun occurs in II Reg 23 2 where the various sections of the populace are listed in whose presence Josiah read the Law in the sanctuary.

3.2 The instances of the noun in the singular fall fairly neatly into three groups.

3.2.1 It is used of the unnamed ›prophet‹ of Bethel in I Reg 13 (8 times) and II Reg 23 18; and of further unnamed prophets in I Reg 20 13.22.38 and II Reg 9 4.

3.2.2 It appears as a title following a proper name: 9 times in I Reg 1 (Nathan); 11 29 and 14 2.18 (Ahijah); 16 7.12 (Jehu); 18 36 (Elijah); II Reg 14 25 (Jonah); 19 2 and 20 1.11.14 (Isaiah); 22 14 (Huldah). (In general, in the matter of ›prophetic‹ terminology there is little variation between MT and LXX in Kings; however the Greek of I Reg 18 36 is quite different from the Hebrew – one of the differences being the absence of the title after Elijah's name.)

3.2.3 In the remaining instances – all in the middle third of the book – the singular *nby'* is apparently stressed, and accords Elijah or Elisha a peculiar rank:

3.2.3.1 In I Reg 18 22 (and in words reminiscent of 19 10.14) Elijah complains that he only is ›left over *nby' lyhwh*‹.

3.2.3.2 In I Reg 19 16 he is instructed to anoint Elisha ›prophet in his place‹.

3.2.3.3 Two of the three references to Elisha in II Reg 5 – the Naaman story – appear similar: most clearly Elisha's invitation to Naaman ›that he many know that there is a prophet in Israek‹ (v. 8); and probably also the Israelite maid's wish that her lord might be ›with the prophet who is in Samaria‹ (v. 3). Thirdly, in v. 13, Elisha is simply referred to by Naaman's staff as *hnby*'.

3.2.3.4 The description in II Reg 6 12 of Elisha as ›the prophet who is in Israek seems to belong in this group, although it could be regarded as a fuller form of title.

3.2.3.5 The last two instances of the singular *nby*' are in Jehoshaphat of Judah's question, posed identically in I Reg 22 7 and II Reg 3 11 – *h'yn ph nby' lyhwh* (*wd*) *undrsh* . . . (in II Reg 3 and I Reg 22 (LXX) without '*wd*, and in I Reg 22 (MT) with).

3.3 Some correlation may be attempted between the talk of ›prophets‹ in Kings just surveyed and the use of the same terminology in Jeremiah and other of the Latter Prophets.

3.3.1 The title ›prophet‹ is only given to an approved named figure – the only exception is Hananiah in the MT of Jeremiah.

3.3.2 The instances of *nby*' denoting the peculiar role of Elijah or Elisha (noted at 3.2.3) are most reminiscent of Ez 2 5 and 33 33: ›they will know that a prophet has been among them‹ – and to a lesser extent of the commission of Jeremiah in 1 5.

3.3.3 Yahweh's unheeded ›servants the prophets‹ play a similar role in Kings to that in Jeremiah (and Ezekiel and Zechariah).

3.3.4 ›Prophets of Baalk remind us of Jeremiah's ›prophets‹ who ›prophesy by Baalk.‹

3.3.5 And ›prophets‹ who are part of the royal establishment in Kings may be those whom Jeremiah naturally lists as part of the established leadership.

3.3.6 In the (admittedly only) two passages where the LXX offers a different account from MT's talk of a ›prophet‹, it may be that similar considerations have produced the fuller MT in Kings as were operative in Jeremiah:

3.3.6.1 In the recasting of the prayer in I Reg 18 36 the opportunity is taken to add the title ›prophet‹ to Elijah's name.

3.3.6.2 Then the briefer form of Jehoshaphat's question in I Reg 22 7 (LXX) signals at the outset a clear distinction between the ›prophets‹ the king of Israel has consulted and a ›prophet of Yahweh.‹ This distinction is more blurred – and the story possibly more effective – in the MT, where Micaiah is *another* of the same allegiance rather than one of a *different* allegiance.

3.4 The two cases just discussed can do no more than suggest that there may have been some editorial adjustment to the material about ›prophecy‹ in Kings' narrative of the period of the monarchy. It is only when Kings is compared with Chronicles that we are given a lever to force its secrets, just as the LXX helps unlock the doors of MT in Jeremiah. It is commonplace in contemporary scholarship to suppose that the Chronicler had available to him a text of Samuel/Kings (or indeed all of the Former Prophets) in much the same form as we know it¹⁶. However some initial observations persuade me that this assumption requires some probing¹⁷.

3.4.1 The first of these concerns Yahweh's ›servants the prophets‹ who figure five times in 2 Kings but do not reappear in the same form in Chronicles – despite their role in both Daniel and Ezra. Certainly two of the Kings contexts (9.7; 17.13.23) have no parallel in Chronicles. But the other two do have:

3.4.1.1 The accounts of Manasseh's reign begin to diverge significantly in v. 10 of each of II Reg 21 and II Chr 33: in Chron Yahweh simply speaks to Manasseh – but in Kings he speaks of him *byd·'bdyw hnby'ym*.

3.4.1.2 In II Chr 36, Jehoiakim's reign is dispatched in four verses (5–8). Double the material is provided in II Reg 23.36–24.6; and at the heart of the ›additional‹ material are talk of ›the word of Yahweh spoken by his servants the prophets‹ (24.2) and of ›the sins of Manasseh‹ (24.3).

3.4.1.3 Since ›his servants the prophets‹ appear in three other passages in 2 Kings it seems more likely that they have been added to 21.10 and 24.2 after the Chronicler used the text of Kings than that the Chronicler saw fit to make deletions. Moreover the Chronicler does offer his own summary of the faithful prophetic witness in 36.15–16: there they are styled *ml'kym* rather than *'bdym*; and – even more significantly as pointer to the source of his inspiration – these messengers had been sent ›persistently‹ (*hškm wšlwḥ*): since this phrase is paralleled only in Jeremiah, and since the Chronicler uses it just after his only mention of Jeremiah (36.12) it is likely that he has drawn the theme from Jeremiah, not Kings.

3.4.2 The next observation concerns the ascription of the title ›prophet‹ to certain named individuals in Kings and Chronicles. While Kings uses this title 20 (or 21) times – see 3.2.2 above – Chronicles has it 14 times. The first of these (I Chr 17.1) is in the portion of Chronicles parallel to Samuel, not Kings, and is in fact identical to II Sam 7.2. It is all the more striking that only one further instance of the title in Chronicles – the mention of ›Huldah the prophetess‹ in II Chr 35.18 – perfectly corresponds to a passage in Kings (II Reg 23.22). Is the Chronicler responsible for such

¹⁶ The position is usefully sketched in H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 1982.

¹⁷ I have discussed this issue more fully in a related paper, ›Prophets through the Looking Glass: between Writings and Moses‹, JSOT 27 (1983), 3–23.

a radical rewriting of the ›prophetic‹ tradition in Kings? Or is the variant usage in Kings and Chronicles of the title ›prophet‹ to be explained – in part at least – through scribal or editorial procedures like those which added *hnby'* 30 times to the names of Jeremiah and Hananiah as part of the production of the fuller (MT) text of Jeremiah? Chronicles certainly offers independent material on the ›prophets‹; but it does not remodel all the inheritance of the book of Kings:

3.4.2.1 The story of the King of Israel, Jehoshaphat of Judah, and Micaiah son of Imlah appears virtually identically in II Chr 18 and I Reg 22 1–35 – and the few differences relate to ›prophecy‹ only once: in 18 6 ‘*wd* is read before *nby'* *lyhwh* as in MT of I Reg 22 7.

3.4.2.2 Two of the remaining dozen titles are in passages only slightly varied from Kings: mention of ›Isaiah the prophet‹ in II Chr 32 20 is certainly related to II Reg 19 1–2; and ›Samuel the prophet‹ is used in II Chr 35 18 to date the period rather more precisely after which proper celebration of passover had lapsed, than does II Reg 23 22 which talks more generally of the period of the Judges.

3.4.2.3 Six times the title ›prophet‹ appears in Chronicles’ stereotyped cross-references at the end of a report of a reign to relevant material elsewhere – mostly (now at least) in Kings: in I Chr 29 29; II Chr 9 29; 12 15; 13 22; 26 22; 32 32. The ›prophetic‹ authorities quoted there are Nathan (twice), Ahijah, Shemaiah, Iddo, and Isaiah (twice).

3.4.2.4 Only Shemaiah (II Chr 12 5), Elijah (21 12), Nathan (29 25) and Jeremiah (36 12) appear with their titles – either as intermediaries or as authorities from the past – in narrative peculiar to the Chronicler.

3.4.2.5 Mention of five further passages between II Chr 20 and II Chr 29 will complete this brief review of the use of the noun *nby'* in Chronicles: In 20 20, and in terms almost identical to Isa 7 9, ›belief in Yahweh your God‹ is developed in terms of ›belief in his prophets‹. According to 24 19, ›prophets‹ were sent to warn Joash of his apostasy after the death of Jehoiada the priest. In 25 15–16, a passage reminiscent of Amos’s dialogue with Amaziah priest of Bethel, Yahweh sends ›a prophet‹ to counsel King Amaziah of Judah. Then uniquely Oded, who challenges the northern army as it brings back to Samaria too many captives and too much spoil from Judah, is introduced (28 9) in the words: *wšm hyh nby' lyhwh 'dd šmw*. Finally, and in a rather clumsy phrase, the authority for Hezekiah’s stationing the Levites with musical instruments in the sanctuary which is given first in 29 25 in the name of ›David and Gad the king’s seer and Nathan the prophet‹ is underscored at the end of the verse in the words *byd-nby'yw*.

3.4.2.6 We might add that verbal forms of *nb'* make eight appearances in Chronicles: four in II Chr 18, the Micaiah story, exactly as in I Reg 22; three in I Chr 25 1.2.3, where David arranges for the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun to ›prophesy‹ with various musical instru-

ments; and lastly in II Chr 20.37, where – in addition to I Reg 22.49 – there is a brief report of Eliezer >prophesying< against Jehoshaphat.

3.5 The Chronicler has clearly developed the material on >prophecy< which he inherited. Having pinpointed the concern of the expanding Jeremiah tradition with the same topic, we should not be surprised at this. We have already noted (3.4.1.3) that Jeremiah is the likely source for the Chronicler's material in the final chapter. And the verb >send< which he uses with >prophet< not only in II Chr 36.16 but also in 24.19 and 25.15 is commonplace in the book of Jeremiah, but rare in Kings. Would the Chronicler, so interested in >prophecy<, have deleted congenial material in his sources¹⁸?

3.6 We should now review some of the evidence that points to a late expansion of >prophetic< material in Kings. And first we should sketch the situation in the wider literary context of Kings: the Former Prophets as a whole.

3.6.1 The plural of the noun and the related verbal forms are found only in the narratives concerning Saul within 1 Samuel. >Prophets< are listed in I Sam 28.6.15 with >dreams< (and *wrym*) as means by which Saul had attempted to make contact with Yahweh before resorting to the medium at En-Dor. Then both noun and verb are used several times in each of 10.1–16 and 19.18–24: those stories where Saul's remarkable behaviour in association with bands of >prophets< leads to the identical question – *hgm š'wl bnby'ym*.

3.6.2 As a title with a proper name, >prophet< appears 5 times in Judges and Samuel (the term >prophet< is completely absent from Joshua: first book of the Latter Prophets). The first reference to Deborah in Jud 4.4 describes her as *'sh nby'h*. Then Gad is styled >prophet< in I Sam 22.5 and II Sam 24.11; while Nathan is similarly mentioned in II Sam 7.2; 12.25. Only two of these five titles are in passages paralleled in Chronicles: we

¹⁸ In fact Chronicles has derived only, I, 21.12 (= II Sam 24.13) and II, 6.34 (= I Reg 8.44) from its supposed source. In II, 7.20 it offers the preferable *'slyk* in place of *'shl* of I Reg 9.7. Kings' other instances of *'shl* are in II, 2.2.4.6; 17.13.25.26 (none of which are paralleled in Chronicles), and in II, 24.2, which is part of the more extensive >plus< to II Chr 36.5–8 already discussed at 3.4.1.2 above. In Jeremiah, *'shl* with divine subject is very much more common – and the objects of the verb can be neatly classified: (a) agents of harm to Judah – 8.17; 9.15; 16.16; 24.10; 25.9.16.27; 29.17; 43.10; 48.12; 15.2; (b) Jeremiah himself – 1.7; 19.14; 25.15.17; 26.12.15; 42.5.21; 43.1.2; (c) a hypothetical prophet – 28.9; (d) >his servants the prophets< – 7.25; 25.4; 26.5; 29.19; 35.15; 44.4; and, *with the verb always negative*, (e) prophets individually or together – 14.14.15; 23.21.32; 27.15; 28.15; 29.9.31. Only in three cases in Jeremiah is *'shl* used in the different sense of >send away< – in 24.5 and 29.20 of the exiles . . . from Judah; and in 28.16 of Hananiah . . . off the face of the earth.

have already noted that II Sam 7.2 is identical to I Chr 17.1; however, the prophet in 24.11 is only one of two pluses to the account in I Chr 21.10 of the intervention of 'Gad, seer of David'.

3.6.3 The next passage is rather interesting. Jud 6.8 talks of Yahweh sending an '*yš nby'* to the people of Israel in response to their cries because of the Midianites¹⁹. Jud 6.7–10 separate the first mention of Israel's cry for help (6.6) from the appearance to Gideon of Yahweh's *ml'k* reported in 6.11f. Scholarship has been divided over whether to ascribe these verses to the main (or sole) Deuteronomist, or to a subsequent Deuteronomistic edition. Cross has reported the interesting absence of these four verses from one of the few fragments of Judges to have been found at Qumran – a fragment which contains the balance of 6.3–13. V. 7a is also lacking from LXX. I suggest that we are dealing here with a 'prophetic' addition from a hand much later than would normally be intended by the phrase 'secondary Deuteronomistic editor'. At least this deserves noting along with the pluses in II Sam 24.11.

3.6.4 The final two instances of 'prophet' in Judges-Samuel both concern Samuel himself. One is in the parenthetical I Sam 9.9 which interrupts in a somewhat stilted way the story of the lost asses of Saul's father. It tells us that 'seer' – here unusually *r'h* – was the earlier term for 'prophet': but it does so in a narrative which mostly calls Samuel 'man of God' (vv. 6.7.8.10) and will only use the problem-term 'seer' once in v. 11. The other occurs in the conclusion to I Sam 3. This chapter reads like a much re-written orthodox introduction to the theme of biblical prophecy – it is certainly strategically placed within the whole Prophetic Canon²⁰. In a manner unparalleled in any biblical chapter, almost every term associated with the whole phenomenon of prophecy makes an appearance: the chapter is framed by talk of *dbr yhwh* (vv. 1.21) which also appears in v. 7; *bzwn* makes a rare appearance in v. 1 – the Former Prophets will see it again only in II Sam 7.17; two themes of the verb *r'h* are used – *qal* in v. 2, and *niph'al* in v. 21, and the related noun is used in v. 15; the *niph'al* of *r'h* in v. 21 is strengthened by the same theme of *glh* in the concluding phrase; and Samuel is styled 'servant' in vv. 9.10. The concluding two verses (20–21) begin: 'And all Israel knew from Dan to Beer-Sheba *ky n'mn sm'l lnby' lyhwh'*.

3.6.5 The interpretation of the Saul material need not delay us here. It is clearly of a different order to most of what we have been discussing in this paper – although it may contain vital information about the earlier

¹⁹ The unique expression '*yš nby'* occasions more surprise than the similar '*šh nby'h*' in Jud 4.4 – on the one hand there are fewer instances of *nby'h* to compare with Jud 4.4; on the other, '*šh*' is more readily used before nouns denoting female activity or status than '*yš*' before male ones.

²⁰ This too is discussed more fully in the paper cited in note 17 above.

history of the noun and verb under discussion, especially if much of the remaining usage of these terms is seen to derive from the (later?) post-exilic period. The other texts, though few, have provided several suggestions that ›prophetic‹ terminology where it occurs represents late editorial interests.

3.7 We are in a position now to make a few suggestions about where and how later ›prophetic‹ interpretation may have helped shape the present text of Kings.

3.7.1 Addition of the title ›prophet‹ to a proper name could never have been difficult – and indeed its removal from any text never affects the interpretation of what remains.

3.7.2 In I Reg 18 22 (see 3.2.3.1) it is quite likely that the present *'ny nwtty nby' lyhwh lbdy* has been supplemented by *nby' lyhwh*. In 19 10.14 we read simply *w'wtr 'ny lbdy* – there Elijah, protesting his zeal for Yahweh, complains he is now on his own, Israel having abandoned Yahweh's covenant, torn down his altars and slain his prophets by the sword: it is neither said nor strictly implied that Elijah is a prophet. Similarly, if we read 18 22 without *nby' lyhwh*, we find a lone Elijah noting the uneven odds as he confronts Baal's 450 prophets – but not implying that he *is* one. In fact two details ought to draw our critical attention to this phrase: it separates *lbdy* further than is customary from the word which it emphasises; and it is itself rare – we have just noted its use (3.6.4) at the end of the programmatic I Sam 3 20; and in Kings it reappears only in I 22 7 and II 3 11 (to be discussed immediately). Elijah is titled ›prophet‹ once in Chronicles and again at the end of Malachi; it is easy to read I Reg 18–19 as if he was one; the addition of *nby' lyhwh* to 18 22 simply makes that plain.

3.7.3 The phrase ›prophet of Yahweh‹ is only one of several links between I Reg 22 and II Reg 3 noted in the Commentaries. It is certainly arguable that the Micaiah story is the earlier text – II Reg 3 will not then be an early element of the Elisha-traditions. The only other biblical occurrences of the phrase are in II Chr 18 6 (identical to I Reg 22 7) and 28 9 where the unusual formulation (see 3.4.2.5) is doubtless also inspired by the Micaiah story. That story will then provide the *terminus a quo* for the remaining biblical usage of our phrase.

3.7.4 Several of the remaining references to Elisha as a ›prophet‹ are in II Reg 5–6 (noted in 3.4.3.3 & 4). We have already suggested (3.3.2) that they are closer to Ez 2 5 and 33 33 than to any other element in the whole ›prophetic‹ tradition! And that again may suggest a *terminus a quo*.

3.7.5 Finally I Reg 19 16 links Elijah and Elisha as ›prophets‹, in the command to Elijah to anoint Elisha ›prophet in his place‹. The phrase is striking – and indeed the only other biblical passage to link ›prophet‹ with ›anointing‹ is Psalm 105 15 (= I Chron 16 22) in an interesting allu-

sion to the patriarchal narratives – but an allusion in which neither term appears in its proper sense.

3.7.6 The literary and religious setting of the distinct narratives in I Reg 13 and 22 which deal with authentic and inauthentic prophecy may not be far distant from the circles who emphasised this theme in the developing Jeremiah tradition.

3.7.7 And so finally back to Yahweh's *>servants* the prophets^c in Kings.

3.7.7.1 We have already noted (3.4.1) that they may not have made their appearance in II Reg 21.10 and 24.2 until after the Chronicler had used his shorter text of Kings.

3.7.7.2 In II Reg 9.7 Jehu is told on his anointing that Yahweh wishes to *>avenge on Jezebel the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of Yahweh*. It is easy to view *dmy 'bdy hnby'ym* an addition to an original *dmy (kl) 'bdy yhwh* to give precedence to Yahweh's *>prophetic* spokesmen.

3.7.7.3 They are next cited in a verse with several interesting and novel features – II Reg 17.13, at the heart of the explanation of Israel's fall: *>Yahweh warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer: »Turn from your evil ways and keep my commands and my ordinances according to the whole torah which I commanded your fathers and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets«*. There is no space here for proper discussion, only a series of observations: *a* Both *'wd* (*>warn*) and *ślh* (*>send*) are rare in Kings²¹. *b* *bzh* (*>seer*) occurs in Kings only here; and in fact the translation just offered masks a considerable textual problem – this may have been caused by the secondary insertion of either *>every prophet* or *>every seer* into the original draft. *c* Judah makes an early and unmotivated appearance here in a discussion of Israel's fall – the moral for her is drawn explicitly later (in vv. 19–20). *d* Perhaps most important: the balance of Prophets and Law, present in many such late biblical passages, has already been achieved in our verse before the addition of the concluding *>and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets* – indeed, since the prophets are not normally credited with the *mediation of* the Law (only its proclamation), only a loose relation may be intended between this relative clause and the preceding sentence.

3.7.7.4 Their fifth appearance is only ten verses later. In 17.23 MT reads: . . . *k'sr dbr byd kl-'bdyw hnby'ym*. Yahweh has already been specified as the subject of the first verb in the verse, and so repetition is unnecessary. However *yhwh* is attested after *dbr* in some Hebrew MSS and in the Syriac and Greek traditions: *>Yahweh removed . . . as Yahweh*

²¹ For references to *ślh* see note 18 above. Apart from II Reg 17.15, the only other occurrence in Kings of *h'yd* is in I Reg 2.42. The biblical passages most reminiscent of II Reg 17.13.15 are Deut 4.26; Jer 11.7; Zech 3.6; and Neh 11.26.29.30.34.

had said. If their testimony to a second appearance of the divine name is to be preferred, then two observations follow: the addition of ›by his servants the prophets‹ would be exactly like that in 21.10 (see 3.4.1.1); and the loss of *yhwh* from our main Hebrew MSS had been facilitated by the altered balance of the sentence.

4.0 A Balance

4.1 Much of what has been sketched in the foregoing is far short of proof, and it is important to stress that this paper has only attempted to clarify the history of *terminology*. However I hope to have rendered it at least plausible that ›prophet‹ and ›prophesy‹ only came to be attached to those whom we regard as the towering prophets of the bible in a period no earlier than when Jeremiah and Ezekiel became similarly re-presented.

4.2 The implications of these observations for ›canonical criticism‹, for the debate over the ›Deuteronomistic History‹ and the relations between Kings and Chronicles, and for clarification of the earlier biblical meaning of *nby*' and its related verb, must be a matter for further study²².

After a brief account of *nby*' and its related verbal themes in the other books of the Latter Prophets, this article reviews the changing use of ›prophet‹ and ›prophesy‹ in the development of the Jeremiah tradition: from poetic nucleus, through the prose *Vorlage* of the LXX, to the expanded MT. Comparison of the same terms in Kings and Chronicles reinforces the conclusion that their positive use represents a relatively late phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible.

²² And these are the main stuff of my ›Prophets through the Looking Glass‹ – cf. note 17 above.