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ONCE AGAIN THE TERM *MAŚŚĀ'* IN ZECHARIAH 9:1; 12:1 AND IN MALACHI 1:1: WHAT IS ITS SIGNIFICANCE?[1]

ABSTRACT

The article argues that *maśśā'* in Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and in Malachi 1:1 refers to written prophecy. The phrase *dĕbar yhwh*, which follows this term, gives authority to this phenomenon, as do the frequent occurrences of formulas marking divine speech in the Book of Malachi, and to some degree in Zechariah 9-14. In addition, the lack of divine revelation in these materials indicates that prophecy in the old sense of the word changed some time after the prophets Haggai and Zechariah conveyed their message. However, some features of Malachi 1:1, Zechariah 11:4, and Malachi 1:2-5 provide continuity with these prophets and with pre-exilic prophecy (Hos. 12:11, 14; Zech. 7:7; Hag. 1:1, 3; 2:1), as well as with Moses and the law. *Maśśā'* in Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and in Malachi 1:1 covers these aspects of prophecy and connects to the oracles concerning the nations in Isaiah 13-23, which are introduced by the same term.

1. INTRODUCTION

The meaning of the term *maśśā'* at the beginning of Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and Malachi 1:1 has puzzled

1 It is a privilege to discuss this topic in a *Festschrift* to Prof. Fanie Snyman, who has made important contributions to the debate, most recently in his fine commentary on the Book of Malachi. This article is also written in gratitude for many years of friendship and stimulating co-operation with Fanie, both in Bloemfontein and at international conferences.

scholars for a long time.[2] In all three instances, the term is followed by the phrase *dĕbar yhwh*. For this reason, there was a widespread opinion in the 19th and 20th centuries that the Book of Malachi, together with Zechariah 9-11 and 12-14 formed three (written) appendices to Zechariah 1-8, or perhaps even to the Book of the Twelve Prophets. This supposition occurs, for instance, in the middle of the 19th century in Ewald's (1840; [2]1867:80-81) studies of the prophets, and was taken up and developed by Eissfeldt (1934; [4]1976:595) in the first part of the 20th century. Later, however, other scholars such as Childs (1979:491-492; quotation 491) questioned this view by pointing at some striking differences in both form and function of the word cluster in Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and Malachi 1:1. He concluded that the elements of similarity are "very superficial ones". It is, therefore, likely that the Book of Malachi was a collection of its own.

Since the turn of the millennium, scholars have contributed other suggestions, especially on the basis of new knowledge of so-called written prophecy (*Schriftprophetie*) in the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, recent studies of *maśśā'* in other prophetic books have offered fresh interpretations of its meaning and function in Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and Malachi 1:1. Finally, in the case of Malachi, the frequency of formulas marking divine speech in this book has also been used in an attempt to explain what kind of prophecy is introduced by *maśśā'*.

This article presents and discusses these issues in recent research and provides some arguments that may shed more light on the meaning and significance of the term *maśśā'* in Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and Malachi 1:1.

2. THE TERM *MAŚŚĀ'* IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS

2.1 Introducing written prophecy?

In 2002, Floyd (2002:401-422), partly following Sweeney (1996:213, 534), suggested that *maśśā'* is a form-critical tag that introduces a special genre of prophetic literature. This view draws on a (unpublished) dissertation by Weis (1986), who contended that the *maśśā'* texts reflect a shift in the history of prophecy from a dynamic oral to a fixed literary phenomenon. It appears that the latter suggestion, in particular, has gained support in other recent studies, to which I will return below. In 2006, however, Boda correctly criticized the definition of *maśśā'* as a genre tag and argued that

2 For surveys of discussions of the term *maśśā'* in earlier and recent research, see Sæbø (1969:137-140); Weyde (2000:36-37, 57-61); Floyd (2002:401-422); Noetzel (2015:43-48); Boda (2017a:136-147).

maśśā' indicates a renewal of prophecy along the lines of earlier prophecy. In the recently published revision of his article (2017a), Boda resumed his view.[3]

A different theory was launched by Willi-Plein (2006:431-438), who contended that *maśśā'* refers to written oracles or collections of visions and words, which were not heard by their audience. For this reason, *maśśā'* was applied to words against the nations such as those in Isaiah 13-23, and to visions such as those introduced in Isaiah 13:1, Nahum 1:1, Habakkuk 1:1, and Lamentations 2:14. Willi-Plein argues that a similar use of the term also occurs in Jeremiah 23:33-40, a passage to which I will return below. From these observations Willi-Plein infers that the term *maśśā'* later could introduce written prophecy, which explains its occurrences in Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and Malachi 1:1.

In support of Willi-Plein's view, one may add an observation by Kessler (2011:119) that Edom, in Malachi 1:2-5, is referred to in the third person, only Israel is addressed, which implies that the message was not heard by Edom. Thus, this passage can also indicate that *maśśā'* was favoured to introduce oracles against the nations. Moreover, it is likely that the Malachi passage is the product of written prophecy.

2.2 *Maśśā'* and the Word of YHWH

Another view of *maśśā'* occurs in three recent studies, all of which argue for a close connection between this term and the ensuing phrase *dĕbar yhwh* in Malachi 1:1 and Zechariah 9:1; 12:1. In his commentary on the Book of Malachi, Meinhold (2006) emphasizes that *maśśā'* has several functions, one of which it shares, in many occurrences, with the phrase *dĕbar yhwh*, for instance that also an oracle called *maśśā'* comes (*hāyāh*) to a prophet, as in Isaiah 14:28: "In the year that King Ahaz died this oracle came" (*hāyāh hammaśśā' hazzeh*).[4] Moreover, not only *maśśā'*, but also *dĕbar yhwh* can be connected to a vision: "The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth […], which he *saw* concerning Samaria and Jerusalem" (Mic. 1:1). Meinhold (2006:4-10) concludes that, in these examples, *maśśā'* and *dĕbar yhwh* come close to one another and seem to be interchangeable.

3 Boda (2017a:138-152) gives a detailed presentation and evaluation of Weis's theory, and argues that *maśśā'* is an editorial tradition-historical marker, which ultimately bolsters the status of prophecy in the Persian period.

4 Similarly, it is related in Micah 1:1 and Haggai 1:1 that the word of YHWH (*dĕbar yhwh*) came (*hayah*).

In his commentary on the Book of Malachi, Kessler (2011:98) argues for a genitive (construct) relationship of *maśśā'* to the phrase *dĕbar yhwh* in Malachi 1:1 (and Zech. 9:1; 12:1), which gives the translation "Der Ausspruch des Wortes JHWHs" (oracle of the word of YHWH). He contends that this genitive relationship connects *maśśā'* to the specific "word of YHWH theology", which occurs in Hosea 1:1, Joel 1:1, Micah 1:1, and Zephaniah 1:1.

Furthermore, in his commentary on the Book of Malachi, Snyman (2015) argues that there are three possible relations between *maśśā'* and *dĕbar yhwh* in Malachi 1:1: either the genitive relationship (as Kessler suggests), or the appositional one resulting in the translation "An oracle: The word of the Lord", or the possibility to keep the two phrases separate. Snyman prefers the last option and translates: "A prophetic announcement/ message. A word of Yahweh." By favouring this reading, he remarks that the phrase *dĕbar yhwh* "characterizes the content of the book as a word from Yahweh, indicating nothing else than divine revelation" (Snyman 2015:24).

In her monograph on the Book of Malachi, Noetzel (2015:46-47) takes a different approach. She contends that *maśśā'* has multiple dimensions (*erscheint mehrdimensional*) in Malachi 1:1 and should be interpreted against the background of false and true prophecy, which connects Malachi 1:1 to the eight references of *maśśā'* in Jeremiah 23:33-40, where the term is related to the word of YHWH, possibly also implying the meaning burden laid on someone. A similar reference occurs in 2 Kings 9:25 relating that YHWH had uttered an oracle against the king: *yhwh nassa' 'alaw 'æt ha-maśśā' hazzæh*. This mode of expression also seems to imply the meaning fate or destiny. Noetzel argues that these passages confirm the multiple dimensions of the meaning of *maśśā'* in Malachi 1:1, and that the LXX supports this interpretation. In all these occurrences, as well as in Nahum 1:1, Habakkuk 1:1, and Zechariah 9:1; 12:1, the LXX translates *maśśā'* as *lemma*. These are all the occurrences of that translation in the Hebrew Bible, and the Greek term implies a conversation, in which someone receives a word of the living God: *lemma* (derived from *lambano*) is *etwas "Empfangenes*". On this basis, Noetzel draws the conclusion that, in Malachi 1:1, *maśśā'* means "true prophetic oracle" (*wahrer Prophetenspruch*), and this is supported by the phrase *dĕbar yhwh*. This meaning, Noetzel continues, explains why the LXX, in the oracles against the nations in Isaiah 13-23, prefers other translations of *maśśā'* than *lemma*: *horasis* ("vision") or *rema* ("matter"). In these texts, *maśśā'* is not qualified by *dĕbar yhwh*.

2.3 Divine revelation and continuity with earlier prophecy

In Noetzel's and Snyman's views, *maśśā'* in Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and in Malachi 1:1 is closely linked to the idea of divine revelation, expressed by the phrase *dĕbar yhwh*. They also emphasize this point by referring to the mode of expression in Haggai 1:1, 3; 2:1, which read "the word of YHWH (*dĕbar yhwh*) came (*hayah*) by the prophet Haggai (*b*^{e}*yad haggay*) to (*'æl*) Zerubbabel". In Malachi 1:1, the terminology is the same, but without the verb *hayah*. I will discuss this difference in a later chapter.

Moreover, in Haggai 1:13, the prophet is called YHWH's messenger (*mal'ak yhwh*), which connects to the phrase in Malachi 1:1: "my messenger" (or the personal name Malachi?);[5] the phrases "by (*b*^{e}*yad*) my messenger (or Malachi?)" and "by (*b*^{e}*yad*) the prophet Haggai" provide links to other prophets such as Zechariah (Zech. 7:7: "by the hand of the former prophets") and Moses (Hos. 12:11: "by the hand of the prophets"; see v. 14). Noetzel (2015:53–55) correctly states, "Malachi continues the work of Haggai, who continued the work of the earlier prophets in the footsteps of Moses." Similarly, Snyman (2015:24) writes that the phrase *b*^{e}*yad* "carries with it the notion of authority", as it does when it is used in references to other authoritative persons such as Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, prophets, and YHWH's messengers (2 Chr. 36:15).[6]

However, if their interpretation is correct, which I think it is, the question arises as to why *maśśā'* occurs in Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and in Malachi 1:1. Would it not suffice to say *dĕbar yhwh*, alternatively that "YHWH's word came to"? Perhaps it was necessary to relate *maśśā'* to divine revelation, because such a connection was not obvious. Before I examine this suggestion in more detail, it may be fruitful to scrutinise the occurrences of *maśśā'* in other prophetic literature, to find out whether they can contribute to the issue.

5 The interpretation of *mal'akî* in Malachi 1:1 was already a matter of debate in the early translations: the LXX reads "his messenger", the Targum identifies it with Ezra the Scribe, whereas Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion interpret it as a proper name.

6 See similarly already Weyde (2000:61).

3. *MAŚŚĀ'* IN ISAIAH 13-23: DOES IT REFER TO PROPHETIC REFLECTION ON DIVINE SPEECHES?

There are twenty-eight occurrences of *maśśā'* in the prophetic books.[7] In most of these and in Isaiah 13-23, in particular, the term introduces words concerning foreign nations or cities: Babylon (13:1), Philistia (14:28), Moab (15:1), Damascus (17:1), Egypt (19:1), and Tyre (23:1). Moreover, in Isaiah 21, *maśśā'* refers to words concerning foreign areas, Babylon (21:1), Edom (21:11), and a desert plain, possibly Arabia (21:13). A somewhat peculiar use occurs in Isaiah 30:6, where *maśśā'* introduces words concerning the animals of Negeb, and in Isaiah 22:1, where *maśśā'* is related to words concerning the valley of vision, probably Jerusalem.[8]

A striking feature of these occurrences is that only a few of them explicitly introduce divine speeches. Moreover, in many of them, it is difficult to decide who the speaker is, either the prophet or YHWH. It has been suggested that the translation "oracle" of *maśśā'* in these texts may have been dictated by convention, which presupposed that the words in these passages stemmed from the prophet and thus required no further clarification.[9] However, upon closer scrutiny, the issue is somewhat more complicated.

For example, in Isaiah 13:11-13a, a first-person speech of YHWH occurs in the words concerning Babylon, but this speech is intertwined with a speech of the prophet in verses 9-10, 13b. The taunt against the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14 reads,

> I will rise up against them, says the Lord of hosts (*n^{e}'um yhwh ṣ^{e}bā'ôt*), and will cut off from Babylon name and remnant [...], says the Lord [...] and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction, says the Lord of hosts (vv. 22-23; see v. 24).

Nowhere else in this taunt are there any indications that YHWH is speaking, and YHWH is referred to in the third person. Similarly, in Isaiah 14:30, there is a brief speech of YHWH in the words against the Philistines. Isaiah 15:9 and 16:14 relate brief divine speeches concerning Moab.

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7 In the Hebrew Bible, there are sixty-seven occurrences of the term *maśśā*', of which thirty-five refer to something heavy that is carried, such as a donkey's burden (Ex. 23:5). In other instances, the word seems to convey a figurative meaning: for example, when Moses complains that he had to bear the burden of all the people in the wilderness (Num. 11:11). In this article, I primarily examine the occurrences in prophetic literature.

8 See Wildberger (1978:497, 809, 813-814).

9 See Meier (1992:243-246).

In Isaiah 17, which contains an oracle (*maśśā'*) concerning Damascus (v. 1), there is a speech of YHWH in verses 3 and 6 marked by the formula *n^{e}'um yhwh* ("says YHWH") followed by "of hosts" and of "God of Israel", respectively. It cannot be excluded, however, that the entire passage, which comprises verses 1-6 (or only vv. 1-3?) should be considered a speech of YHWH.[10]

In addition, the following passages relate brief speeches of YHWH: Isaiah 19:2-6 (concerning Egypt); 21:6-7 (concerning the wilderness of the sea); 22:14 (concerning the valley of vision); 22:15, 19 (concerning Shebna); 22:20-25 (concerning Eliakim), and 23:12 (concerning Sidon). These are the only speeches that can be clearly identified as divine speeches in Isaiah 13-23. Elsewhere in this collection, YHWH is either referred to in the third person or not mentioned at all. Thus, divine speeches seem to occupy only small sections of these chapters. Moreover, it is difficult to decide whether other "sub-voices" are heard in some of them and whether, as for instance in Isaiah 21, a monologue or a dialogue is related.[11]

It appears that the lack of references to a divine revelation, the brevity of the YHWH speeches, and the uncertainty regarding the speaking subject in these *maśśā'* words have not attracted sufficient attention in research. One should ask: Do these features answer why *maśśā'* occurs in these texts, and do they refer to a special kind of prophecy, which can be characterized as (written) interpretation of earlier prophetic traditions?

Perhaps one may suggest, on the basis of the above evidence, that words against foreign peoples introduced by *maśśā'* in Isaiah 13-23 included both divine speeches and later *reflections or comments* on them by the prophet or his disciples (or the editors), since the latter are longer and a speech of YHWH does not occur in each instance.[12]

An argument that can support this suggestion occurs in the words concerning Moab, related in Isaiah 15-16. These words are introduced by the term *maśśā'* in Isaiah 15:1, and they end, in 16:13, with the statement, "this was the word that YHWH spoke to (*'æl*) Moab in the *past* (*me'āz*; my

10 Meier (1992:244, n. 2) correctly remarks that the boundary of the words associated with Damascus in chapter 17 is problematic, since verses 4ff. make no reference to Syria; the geographical perspective in these verses is Israel. Meier, therefore, limits the words concerning Damascus to verses 1-3.

11 See the different views referred to in Meier (1992:244, n. 6).

12 This suggestion comes close to Wildberger's (1978:497-498) view that the collection in Isaiah 13-23 contains words from the prophet Isaiah as well as later oracles against the nations, presumably from exilic and post-exilic times. See also Sæbø (1969:138-140).

emphasis)". In the rather long collection of words between the introduction and the end, only one verse, in 15:9, explicitly seems to relate a speech of YHWH; this verse contains a word of judgement reading, "yet I will bring upon Dimon (MT; Q^a; the Vulgate reads Dibon) even more – a lion for those of Moab who escape […]". Perhaps YHWH also speaks in what is related in 15:5: "My heart cries out for Moab." Or is the prophet speaking in this instance? Following these words concerning Moab in the past, Isaiah 16:14 continues,

> But now YHWH says, 'In three years, like the years of a hired worker, the glory of Moab will be brought into contempt […] those who survive will be very few and feeble.'

This verse relates a new, fresh message from YHWH: a word of judgement against Moab.

Against this background, it seems reasonable to suggest that the collection of words concerning the peoples (nations) that are introduced by *maśśā'* in Isaiah 13-23 should be viewed as prophetic messages, oral or written, which were based on brief speeches of YHWH, some of which had probably been spoken in earlier times. In this collection, these divine speeches were applied and extended to a later situation, and transmitted together with fresh words from YHWH. Both the earlier YHWH speeches and their later application are characterized by the term *maśśā'*.

4. *MAŚŚĀ'* IN ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS IN OTHER PROPHETIC BOOKS

In the Book of the Twelve Prophets, in very few texts, *maśśā'* introduces words concerning foreign peoples (or areas), who are referred to in the third person: Nineveh (Nah. 1:1), the Chaldeans (Hab. 1:1), and, in Zechariah 9:1-8, Hadrach, Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, Sidon, Philistia, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ekron. However, in the words of salvation in Zechariah 9:9-13, Zion and Jerusalem are addressed in the second person.

In some of these occurrences, as observed earlier, *maśśā'* refers, or is juxtaposed to the *vision* of a prophet (*hazôn/hāzāh*, Isa. 13:1; Nah. 1:1). Lamentations 2:14 provides a special example: *maśśā'*, in the plural, refers to false visions of the prophets.

This last-mentioned instance takes us to the use of *maśśā'* in Jeremiah 23:33-40, where the term occurs as much as eight times. In this passage, there seems to be a word play on *maśśā'*, since it is applied with different meanings. In some places, it means oracle, while in others

it means burden. Jeremiah 23:33-40 relates that the word *maśśā'* should no longer be used because false prophets and priests misused it when they spoke words of salvation instead of words of punishment in times characterized by faithlessness (Jer. 23:9-32; Lam. 2:14). Later, however, after the punishment had been executed (in the Exile), it would be possible to use *maśśā'* again and apply it to prophetic words of judgement or salvation. Evidence of such rehabilitation is its occurrence in Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and Malachi 1:1.

A special case also occurs in 2 Kings 9:25, relating that YHWH had uttered an oracle (message) against the king of Israel (King Akab), concerning Israel: *yhwh nasa' 'alaw 'æt ha-maśśā' hazzæh*. The context indicates that fate or destiny is implied in the meaning of *maśśā'*. There is probably a word play between this term and the verb *nasa'*, "lift (out)".

Finally, there is another remarkable feature in most of the above occurrences of *maśśā'*. They are not connected to divine revelation. Formulas such as "the word of YHWH came to", or "YHWH spoke to", or "the word that YHWH spoke", or "thus says YHWH", are all absent. This peculiarity is similar to what we observed in the oracles to the nations in Isaiah 13-23. They contain few references to divine revelation.

Thus, in nearly all the occurrences of *maśśā'* in the prophets, the term probably conveys the meaning oracle or message.[13] In words concerning foreign peoples, countries, areas, and cities, *maśśā'* is followed by announcements of judgement. In the few passages where *maśśā'* introduces words to or concerning Israel/Judah, there are words of judgement and words of salvation. This conclusion strengthens Willi-Plein's interpretation of the term *maśśā'*, referred to earlier.

These features become even more remarkable when compared with two other major collections of oracles against foreign peoples such as those in Jeremiah 46-51 and Ezekiel 25-32; 35, as well as with the smaller collections in Amos 1-2 and Obadiah. They are *not* introduced by *maśśā'*, and they also have in common that they are frequently marked as divine speech by formulas such as "the word of YHWH came to (*hayah*)" (Jer. 46:1; 47:1; Ezek. 25:1; 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; 29:1; 30:1; 31:1; 32:1; 35:1), or "the word that YHWH spoke concerning […] by the prophet" (Jer. 50:1), or "thus says YHWH" (Jer. 51:1; Am. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; Ob. 1). All these phrases thus refer to divine revelation as the source of the message that follows them. This common feature corresponds to a characteristic of the message. Divine speech *prevails* in Jeremiah 45-51 and Ezekiel 25-32; 35.

13 See also the Bible translations NRSV and REB: oracle; NJB: proclamation; NJPS: pronouncement.

In Amos 1-2 and Obadiah 1, the speech of YHWH runs as a scarlet thread throughout the words against the peoples.

From this evidence, one may draw the conclusion that the editors preferred to introduce oracles against foreign peoples by *maśśā'*, which, to a large extent, were based on earlier revelation and had been extended by reflections and comments.

5. *MAŚŚĀ'* AND DIVINE SPEECH IN ZECHARIAH 9-14 AND IN THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Can these observations and somewhat tentative conclusions shed light on the meaning of *maśśā'* in Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and Malachi 1:1, and explain why it is used in these instances? In search of an answer, one should notice two particular features of these superscriptions: There are no references to a divine revelation given to the prophet, such as those in other prophetic books, expressed for instance by "the word of YHWH came to" (for example, Jer. 1:1; Ezek. 1:3; Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Mic. 1:1). Nor are there any such references in the materials that follow in Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi.

However, there *may* be two exceptions: Zechariah 11:4 reads, "thus (*koh*) says YHWH my God" and Malachi 1:4 reads "thus (*koh*) says YHWH of hosts". The former phrase's occurrence is remarkable, since elsewhere in Zechariah 9-14, the formula "thus says YHWH" is not used, whereas in Zechariah 1-8, it occurs as much as nineteen times, of which fifteen occurrences are in chapters 1 and 8, most often in the extended form "thus says YHWH of hosts".[14]

Commenting on these differences in the book of Zechariah, Meier (1992:224) contends that the marking of divine speech in the first eight chapters "[…] seems to be of peculiar significance to a degree not true of chs. 9-14". This view should be modified, since in Zechariah 9-14, there are as much as seven occurrences of another formula marking divine speech – the formula *n^{e}'um yhwh* – of a total amount of twenty occurrences in the entire Book of Zechariah.[15]

14 Zechariah 1:3, 4, 14, 16, 17; 8:2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14, 19, 20, 23. Only 1:16 and 8:3 (MT) have the short form "says YHWH"; in 8:3, several manuscripts as well as old translations add "of hosts". In 1:16, the same addition occurs in one Hebrew manuscript and in the Peshitta; see the apparatus in the BHS.

15 This amount is in the Masoretic text; the LXX omits the phrase in Zechariah 1:3; 13:2. The seven occurrences of the formula *n^{e}'um yhwh* in Zechariah 9-14 occur in 10:12; 11:6; 12:1, 4; 13:2, 7, 8.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the formula *'āmar yhwh* ("says/said YHWH") is never used in Zechariah 9-14, whereas it occurs four times in Zechariah 1-8, in the extended form "says YHWH of hosts" (1:3; 4:6; 7:13; 8:14). In two of these instances, it is closely related to the previous formula "thus says YHWH of hosts" (1:3; 8:14). This evidence *may* indicate that, in the Book of Zechariah, *'āmar yhwh* was preferred in passages that clearly connect the divine message to a prophet who experienced YHWH's revelation.

In Malachi 1:4, the formula "thus (*koh*) says YHWH of hosts" is remarkable, since it occurs only there in the book of Malachi, which elsewhere is replete with the formulas *'āmar yhwh* and *'āmar yhwh ṣ^{e}bā'ôt* (Mal. 1:2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14; 2:2, 4, 8, 16 [extended by "the God of Israel"], 16; 3:1, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19, 21), whereas *n^{e}'um yhwh* occurs once (1:2).

This evidence suggests that the occurrences of the formulas marking divine speech in Zechariah 11:4 and in Malachi 1:4 require an explanation.

5.1 Zechariah 11:4

In Zechariah 11:4, the formula "thus (*koh*) said (says?) YHWH my God" introduces a report by the prophet informing what YHWH had instructed him to do: "Be a shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter." It is somewhat unclear how far the divine instruction goes and where the prophetic speech takes over.[16] Such a first-person report can be compared with first-person messenger reports in other prophetic books, which are introduced by similar formulas and usually contain a message that the prophet is commanded to communicate. In Zechariah 11:4, however, the formula introduces an *action*, which YHWH laid upon the prophet in the past. For this reason, the past tense is appropriate: "Thus *said* YHWH my God".[17] Thus, in this instance, the function of the formula is unusual: "it serves to introduce the narrative supplement to the preceding poetic oracles" (Meier 1992:225).

Why is this formula used in Zechariah 11:4? Perhaps the extension "my God" can provide an answer. Both the combination of the two divine names and the suffix "my" are peculiar. Elsewhere, the two terms YHWH and *'elōhîm* are frequently combined (the latter with or without suffix), but

16 See the survey of YHWH speech and prophetic speech in Zechariah 11 given by Sæbø (1969:234).

17 In accordance with the NRSV: "Thus said the Lord my God"; see further Sæbø (1969:234).

in formulas such as "thus says YHWH" introducing oracles, the two terms never occur together, except in Zechariah 11:4.[18]

And why is the first-person suffix "my God" used in this verse? Meyers and Meyers (1993) contend that there is one biblical background for this phrase, where a prophet's close relationship with YHWH is being emphasized, namely when Moses claims that he is teaching the people the law "just as YHWH my God has charged me" (Deut. 4:5).[19] The phrase "YHWH my God" also occurs in the people's words quoted in Deuteronomy 18:16 and expresses the close relationship between the people and YHWH. Moreover, there are other points of similarity between these passages and those in Zechariah 11:4-17 and 13:2-9, both of which reflect a tension between true and false prophets. The unknown prophet presented in the Zechariah texts was called to be a shepherd in Israel, God's people, who had broken the covenant; he has the same close relationship to God as Moses once had. This privilege gives him the authority to convey a message from God. The prophet's self-understanding as a prophet apparently brought him in conflict with others who claimed to be prophets. The formula "thus said YHWH my God" not only gave him prophetic authority, but also connected him to Moses and to the promise that God would raise up for the people a prophet like Moses.[20]

Why was this continuity with Moses established in Zechariah 11:4? One may assume that it reflects a change of prophecy and of the prophet's mission, which required a new basis for its legitimacy. In Zechariah 9-14, there is no mention of a divine revelation, of a prophetic vocation. However, the authority to communicate a message from God could be based on a person's obedience to the law. This is the case with Joshua (Josh. 1), and it can also be observed in the Book of Chronicles, where the message of the true prophets and of other charismatic leaders was based on the law (2 Chr. 19:1-7; 24:19-20; 25:14-16). In Zechariah 11:4-17 and 13:2-9, obedience to the law of Moses is at stake: the prophet, who was sent by YHWH, is contrasted with the false prophets, who speak lies in the name of YHWH and accept idolatry (13:3, 7). A similar contrast occurs in Deuteronomy 13:2-6 [Eng.: 13:1-5). The unknown prophet presented in the Zechariah passages is like Moses.

18 See Meyers & Meyers (1993:248-249).

19 In several psalms, a worshipper says "my God" to express confidence in God (Ps. 22:12; 31:15; 38:22-23 [NRSV: 22:1; 31:14; 38:21-22]); in other texts, the phrase marks a distinction between the God of Israel ("my God") and other gods (Num. 22:18; 2 Sam. 24:24; 1 Kgs 5:18-19 [NRSV 5:4-5]; see Ruth 1:16: "my God").

20 Meyers & Meyers (1993:250; see 249).

However, there are also other textual connections. In Zechariah 11:4-17, there are several links to Ezekiel 34:1-31 and 37:15-28. The Zechariah passage represents a fusion of allegorical and sign-act forms, which may be due to reliance on Ezekiel 34, with its extended metaphor of shepherd and flock imagery, and on Ezekiel 37, with its sign-act. Moreover, the contrasts between the foolish shepherds and the one good shepherd as well as the union of Israel and Judah are common topics in the Ezekiel texts, which are reused and partially reversed in Zechariah 11. All three passages use the shepherd motif for human leadership.[21] The links between these texts may shed light on the formula *koh 'āmar yhwh* in Zechariah 11:4, which refers to spoken words of YHWH in the past.

5.2 Malachi 1:4

Why does the formula "thus (*koh*) says YHWH of hosts" only occur in Malachi 1:4, whereas other formulas marking divine speech are frequently used throughout the book?

In Malachi 1:4, the formula introduces words of punishment against Edom (vv. 2-5), to which parallels occur in other texts such as Isaiah 34:5-17; Jeremiah 49:7-22; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 36:5, and Obadiah. The passage in Malachi 1:2-5 also draws a connection to the narratives in the Pentateuch relating that YHWH preferred Jacob to Esau (Gen. 25:23; Mal. 1:2-3). It should be noted that, compared with the other prophetic words of punishment against Edom, only that in Malach 1:2-5 also refers to the Esau tradition in Genesis. Moreover, the formula "thus says YHWH of hosts" (Mal. 1:4) also introduces the above-mentioned words against Edom in Jeremiah 49:7 (see v. 12: "thus says YHWH"), whereas in Ezekiel 25:12; 36:5 and Obadiah 1, we find "thus says YHWH God". Obadiah 4 and 8 also apply the formula *n^{e}'um yhwh*, which occurs in Malachi 1:2 as well.

Against this background, one may suggest that the words of judgement against Edom in Malachi 1:2-5 apply earlier words of judgement against this nation which are related in the prophets. In the Malachi passage, these words are combined with references to YHWH's rejection of Esau, as related in Genesis.[22] The relationships to other biblical traditions are strong in the Malachi passage, and the formula "thus says YHWH of hosts" in verse 4 may be explained in light of this use: the formula itself was embedded in these materials.

21 On the links between these three texts, see further Boda (2017b:159-164). Boda (2017b:153-154) argues that Zechariah 11:17 is a separate unit, for which reason he does not include it in Zechariah 11:4-16.

22 See Weyde (2000:100-101).

However, there is more to be said. The formula also gives authority to the message in Malachi 1:2-5. In this regard, it has the same function as the other formulas marking divine speech elsewhere in the Book of Malachi, in which there are no explicit references to divine revelation. This means that the formula "thus (*koh*) says YHWH of hosts" in Malachi 1:4 has the same double function as the formula "thus (*koh*) said YHWH my God" in Zechariah 11:4.[23]

Finally, it is not without significance that the words concerning Edom in Malachi 1:2-5 come immediately after the superscription (v. 1). Thus, in both Zechariah 9:1 and Malachi 1:1, the term *maśśā'* is closely related to words of judgement concerning foreign peoples.[24] This connects these words to oracles concerning the nations in other prophetic books, which were analysed earlier.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SOME PROSPECTS

The above analysis confirms Willi-Plein's view that the materials in Zechariah 9-14 and in the book of Malachi are examples of written prophecy (*Schriftprophetie*), as indicated by the term *maśśā'*. The present author also shares the position taken by other scholars that Malachi continues the work of Haggai and other earlier prophets, since Malachi interprets the law. Therefore, the Book of Malachi has the same authority as the other prophetic books have. For this reason and as emphasised by Snyman and Noetzel, *maśśā'*, in Malachi 1:1, is closely connected to the idea of divine revelation, as confirmed by the following phrase *dĕbar yhwh*.

Our observations added three arguments in support of these views. First, on the basis of the terminology in Zechariah 11:4, the notion of divine authority can also be applied to Zechariah 9-14, since the unknown prophet behind this collection walks in the footsteps of Moses and Ezekiel.

Secondly, the frequency of formulas marking divine speech in the Book of Malachi and, to some extent, in Zechariah 9-14 indicates that these collections were by no means regarded as inferior to divine speech based on revelation to a prophet, which we find elsewhere.

23 In Isaiah 65:25, there is a similar function of "says/said YHWH". This verse quotes words of promise in Isaiah 11:9, and the quotation ends with the formula "says/said YHWH", which does not occur in Isaiah 11:9.

24 Similarly, Wöhrle (2008:253-255) argues, on the basis of his redaction-critical approach, for a close connection between *maśśā'* in Malachi 1:1 and the words concerning Edom in verses 4-5.

Thirdly, in Isaiah 13-23, the oracles concerning foreign nations, which are introduced by the term *maśśā'*, reveal a similar picture. In this material, there are remarkably few references to revelation and speeches of YHWH, and these speeches are brief compared with the prophetic reflections on them, which occur in their literary contexts. It seems that Zechariah 9-14 and the Book of Malachi continue and develop a similar kind of prophetic activity introduced by *maśśā'*, and that they also strengthen its legitimacy by connecting it to the authority of Moses, Ezekiel and other prophets. It is, therefore, not surprising that Zechariah 11:4 and Malachi 1:2-5 connect to both the law and the prophets. The latter passage is the only announcement of judgement against Edom in the prophetic literature that explicitly refers to the Esau tradition in Genesis.

These peculiarities indicate that the law (the torah) and the authority of Moses exerted a strong influence on post-exilic written prophecy.

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