VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

Decolonizing Jeremiah:

Identity, Narratives and Power in Religious Tradition

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door

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'This [..] is not exactly a search for a referential Ur-text lost in paradise; neither is it a return to the sublimated energies stockpiled and labeled "differences," nor a wish to reinstate the particulars of lives or texts gone by as "presence" […]. The intent, rather, is to play along the margins of absences, to both visit and inhabit "the space where literature can exist".'[1]

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[1] Ammiel Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs*, *Remaking Levantine Culture*, Minneapolis 1993, p. 100.

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Foreword

Well, dear reader, a PhD is not always a walk in the park. In fact, the years of research led to the following love-hate relationships: with the prophet Jerry, with Jerusalem and with the concept of free will. Nevertheless, the love-aspect is deeply felt. The past years have been very enriching on many levels.

So many people have been sources of knowledge, inspiration and wisdom. Let me begin with my *Doktorväter*: Eep and Hans. They both gave me full trust and freedom in my Jeremianic undertakings, while always being available for advice and generous in sharing their wisdom. I am very thankful for this, and hope for many more years of interaction, in good health.

I thank the Dutch branches of Sabeel and Kairos for their support, and also Kerk in Actie.

I am very grateful to the courageous, wonderful participants of the reading groups, and to the people who helped me to put them together. I learned so much from you! *Todah, shukran!*

There have been so many beautiful encounters with people who add something to this project. Nora, *habibti*, you were crucial already in a very early stage and you have remained so. So was the Sabeel office. Maja adviced me to read Ammiel Alcalay's work. Meta introduced me to a multitude of people, and together we set off to a number of inspiring encounters. *Shukran, habibti*! All friends who visited me in Jerusalem: I very much appreciated that. Audra, Ben, Matt: I loved living with three Americans. Thanks for being so welcoming to my Dutchness. There were so many more people who made that battered city a more welcoming place: Sytske, Harry, Zoughbi, Geries and Rifat in Bethlehem, Wisam and her family in Al Jib. Crucial were also the Israelis and Palestinians I met who creatively and tirelessly wage peace. I bow to you.

Home again, there was the faculty and its many wonderful colleagues. Wilbert and Gied gave the project a much needed swing. Remi saved the manuscript. Voolstra saved my life, and for both of us DG Headquarters became a place of hard work and loud laughter. Soccer too has been crucial, and, goodness: Improtheatre! Following one's impulses under guidance of the magnificent Lobke is the best thing to do after a day of struggling with Jerry.

I often felt so immersed in this research, that little attention was left for family and friends. But how I treasure my friends! – Irene, Miriam, Roel, Judith, Elke, Judith, Jacqueline, Paul, Rim, Nienke, Meta and others. I am under the impression that my (extended) family is the loveliest family . December 1st is such a good time to finish – Micha, Nathan & Jiska: *tante Jap* is on her way. Dear parents, my enthusiasm for this research, my love for bringing people together and my fascination for conflict were instigated by the two of you, and the atmosphere I grew up in. I am very thankful for that.

Janneke Stegeman, Amsterdam, December 1st, 2013.

Identity, narratives and power

1.1 Introduction

Jeremiah 32 [39][1] is a chapter evolving around the prophet's purchase of a plot of land. In many ways, the book of which it is a part poses problems to its readers, whether they are professionally or existentially invested in this tradition. Differences between the book's texts according to the traditions of the Septuagint (LXX) and the Masoretic Tradition (MT) suggest that the process of transmission had begun while the process of growth of the book had not finished yet.[2] While several overlapping and contrasting concepts seem to underline the structure of the book, chronology is not one of them. Crucial for the development of the book was the context of tensions and group conflict in the Judean society resulting from the threat of the Babylonians and the destruction of Jerusalem. Groups of influential Judeans were deported to Babylon. Others remained in the land, and again others fled to Egypt.[3] Each of these groups developed its identity[4] in interplay with the 'Jeremianic tradition'[5], often exclusively identifying itself as the heir to the tradition. Traces

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[1] As a result of a different placing of part of the material, chapter 32 in the Masoretic Tradition (MT) is chapter 39 according to the Septuagint (LXX). For the sake of brevity, I sometimes refer to the chapter as chapter 32.

[2] The book of Jeremiah according to the Masoretic tradition differs from the Greek traditions of the book. Jeremiah 32 LXX and MT can be understood as two different versions of text, indicating ongoing development of the Jeremianic tradition. One of the differences is that in LXX the so called Oracles against the Nations (OAN) that are chapters 46-51 in MT follow after 25: 13 in LXX. As a result, MT chapter 32 is LXX 39. See Janneke Stegeman, Reading Jeremiah makes me angry in W. Th. van Peursen, J.W. Dyk (eds.), *Tradition and Innovation in Biblical Interpretation*, Leiden 2011, pp. 45-68 for my view on the Masoretic and LXX versions of the chapter, and also below.

[3] Christopher Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*: *Reactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah*, Berlin 1989 p. 3.

[4] I understand identity as the 'names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.' It is a construction, that is subject to change. Identity is not 'in the main an individual affair' as 'individuals make their own identity, but not under conditions of their own choosing.' It is 'a social locus', and therefore an imagined and imaginary topos' (Stuart Hall, cited by L. Martín Alcoff in the introduction to: L. Martín Alcoff, E. Mendieta (eds.), *Identities. Race, class, gender and nationality*, Oxford 2005, p. 3). In this study, I focus on group identity as expressed in collective narratives. Within group identity, I focus on religious aspects of identity, in awareness of the overlap between religious aspects and other aspects of identity, such as nationality and ethnicity.

[5] The concept 'Jeremianic tradition' refers to all appropriations within and with the book of Jeremiah. Below I further explain the concept. I used the concept in previous publications (see Stegeman, in: Van Peursen, Dyk (eds.) 2011 and Janneke Stegeman, „Dieses Buch und Gott werden mein Feind.", Transformation und Kontinuität in Jeremia 32, in: Marianne Grohmann, Ursula Ragacs (eds.), *Religion Übersetzen, Uberzetzung und Textrezeption als Transformationsphänomene*

of these struggles for identity can be found in the book, testifying to the complicated history of its genesis.

Many attempts have been made and are being made to make sense of this complex book. Following Talstra and Oosting, however, I argue that the complexity and contradictions of the book are not difficulties to be overcome, but rather are a contribution to theology. They suggest that the process of composition demonstrates analogies with our modern demands of actualization.[6] Jeremiah 32, and biblical text in general, is disturbing also because of its layeredness and ambiguity. Ambiguity is difficult to live with and therefore often overlooked or ignored.

In this study, the characteristic complexity of the text leads to questions pertaining to the process of the growth of this tradition. Religious tradition is understood here as a complex set of narratives expressing identity.[7] What is undertaken here is an interdisciplinary investigation of these mechanisms present in the text and tradition, from the point of view that the formation of group identity in an exchange with sacred tradition is vital to the process of *tradere*. Tradition consists of and is passed on by ongoing processes of (re)defining identity by appropriation of these narratives.

Jeremiah 32 [39] is a text that went through long processes of growth in which different groups identified with the tradition, redacted the text, and became participants in the tradition. The result is a layered chapter that can be understood as interpreted tradition itself: the text testifies to processes of appropriation.[8] In addition, in the case of the book of Jeremiah, processes of textual development and textual transmission (*tradere*) overlapped, which resulted in different versions of chapter 32, of which I discuss the Masoretic and Septuagint traditions. These can be considered as two different appropriations of the chapter. Jeremiah 32 continued and still continues to be appropriated. I will discuss early Jewish and early Christian appropriations,

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von Religion, Vienna 2012, pp. 109-124).

[6] Eep Talstra, Reinoud Oosting, 'Jeremiah 32: A future and its history – actualization in writing and reading', in: Gerald West, Hans de Wit (eds.), *African and European Readers of the Bible in Dialogue: in Quest of a Shared Meaning* (Supplements to the Journal of Religion in Africa), Leiden 2008, pp. 199-218, p. 199.

[7] These narratives contain constructions of the 'other-world' (the world of gods and spirits) and the 'this-world', and the relationships between these worlds (Fernando F. Segovia, 'Mapping the Postcolonial Optic, in: Fernando F. Segovia, Stephen D. Moore (eds.), *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, London 2005, pp. 23-78, p. 24. In this study, I focus on Jewish and Christian religious tradition.

[8] In the process of *tradere*, the passing on of tradition, new recipients or heirs of the tradition appropriate the text again and again (see also Stegeman in: Grohman, Ragacs (eds.) 2012, pp. 109-124). Appropriation denotes how 'readers make sense of the author's creation in their own createdness.' Authors, redactors and readers of a text all 'make sense', 'of the author's creation and of their own lives. Readers […] never just read. They also value, apply, or neglect what they read; they try to understand the life they live' (Kari Syreeni, 'Metaphorical Appropriation', in: *Literature and Theology*, 9 (1995), pp. 321-338, p. 329). Thus, when new heirs of a text appropriate a text the narratives of these readers engage with the narratives present in the text.

along with contemporary appropriations in the conflict ridden context of Israel and Palestine. I do not fundamentally distinguish between these different phases of appropriation: the concept of the Jeremianic tradition includes the chapter with its different layers and its different version and the reception history of the chapter, including contemporary readings.[9]

This study researches processes of textual development, of textual transmission and of the reception of the chapter, and therefore combines synchronic and diachronic exegetical approaches. In addition, the study views the traditional work of the exegete – analyzing the text – and newer approaches focusing on reception history including contemporary appropriations as belonging together and mutually fruitful.[10] The aim of this study is not to describe extensively the development and reception history of Jeremiah 32, but to better understand its mechanisms of text-context interactions. In order to do this, certain episodes in the tradition are highlighted and parallels are pointed out. Thus, I am able to compare processes of transformation in different phases of the tradition and to point out parallels.

I seek to present an approach to the book of Jeremiah and its ongoing appropriations that sheds light on the character of the Jeremianic tradition. I will argue that complexity and ambiguity are central and, in a certain way, intended features of this tradition. The Jeremianic tradition is best understood in terms of ongoing struggles for (religious) identity. These struggles are also struggles about narratives,[11] language and power. I consider the Jeremianic tradition, including its history of interpretation, as a form of collective memory: a set of overlapping, contesting narratives expressing group identity.[12]

Reading Jeremiah 32 with groups in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict made me aware of the central role of imaginations of landscape in the Jeremianic tradition. More specifically then, the tradition can be called a collective memory in which relations to landscape, such as the experience of being displaced, plays a central role. Being attentive to imaginations of landscape is particularly useful to shed light on the struggles for (religious) group identity that take place in the Jeremianic tradition, given

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[9] Of course, in terms of authority and fixation, there are differences. The text in its final form according to MT or LXX have a different position in the Jeremianic tradition than for instance a contemporary Palestinian interpretation.

[10] Since Jer. 32 is interpreted tradition itself, exegesis is part of reception history. The Jeremianic tradition as a whole can be studied from the perspective of reception history.

[11] I use the words discourse and narrative interchangeably.

[12] My understanding of collective memory is based on the work of Yael Zerubavel, who writes about the Israeli national memory. She underlines the fluidity and ambiguity of collective memory and its capacity to host counter memories. 'Collective memory continuously negotiates between available historical records and current social and political agendas [..] History and memory, therefore, do not operate in totally detached opposite directions. Their relationship are underlined by conflict as well as interdependence, and this ambiguity provides the commemoration with the creative tension' (Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots, Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, London 1997, p. 5, pp. 229-231, see also below).

the centrality of space, both real and imagined. A postcolonial approach, as I explain below, enables me to pay attention to landscape in relation to power in the Jeremianic tradition.

1.2 Motivation and my own position

Counterweight[13]

There is a land that I left in sorrow.
There is a land that I inhabit in pain.
There is no third land in between.
My life follows a strange pattern.

For where I go I'm not at home
And where my home is I want to leave.
Fine grows the line between joy and sorrow
Less and less I think what I say out loud.

I did, to escape from this fate,
Invent a third landscape in my head,
A land familiar with lies and phantoms.

From deeply rooted and heavy trees
The leaden clusters of fruit hang suspended
Of all my dreams, grown feather-light.

Gerrit Komrij (1944-2012)

A poem by Gerrit Komrij beautifully captures how imaginations of landscape are intimately connected to identity. Komrij was a Dutch poet born in the North of the Netherlands who emigrated to Portugal. In this poem he expresses his desire for a third, imagined, landscape. This brings us to an important aspect of my study, in which space-identity interactions play an important role. To begin with, Jeremiah 32 is constructed around a narrative of the purchase of a field, a space that gains distinct symbolic qualities in the chapter. Imaginations of landscape are woven around this narrative of purchase, expressing a variety of future hopes and expectations. The field could be called a space of transition, both to take refuge in and to uncover new aspects of oneself and of reality.

      Like poetry, but in an even more encompassing way, one of the capacities of religious traditions is to open up a space where people can shape individual or group identity. Religious tradition is always layered, ambiguous, containing multiple voices, in which some voices are dominant, while of other voices only traces are left. People turn to these traditions in order to make

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[13] Translated from the original (Contragewicht) by Ole van Dongen.

sense of their experiences that they relate to the narratives of tradition. Religious traditions can function to explore the layeredness and ambiguity of the self and one's narratives, leading to openness and curiosity. Religious traditions can also produce fixed forms of identity, cutting off transformation and diversity. This study explores how, in the process of *tradere*, biblical tradition is a place where painful stories can be told, but it is also an arena of struggle, in which some narratives dominate and others remain hidden.

While studying Jeremiah, Carolyn Sharp[14], among others, made me realise that a crucial characteristic of the book is that it contains debates between groups distinct in place and/or time, all of them identifying with this tradition. I found this fascinating: conflict seems to be an important factor in the development of tradition. In the process of *tradere* both continuity and discontinuity play a role: new groups, who see themselves as heirs of this tradition, interact with it. In this process of appropriation, they transform, and the tradition transforms too. Thus, the tradition consists of partially overlapping and partially antithetic narratives, of which some narratives become more central than other in the process of *tradere*.

The time I spent in Jerusalem as part of this study deepened and enlivened my interest in the role of dispute and conflict in the development of religious tradition. It made me aware that religion has the capacity to inspire people towards formulating more inclusive identities, but can also function to escalate conflict.

This study is dedicated to questions of group identity and belonging, in awareness of the need to belong and the danger of exclusion in processes of appropriating tradition. Both Alcalay's words and Komrij's poem are aware of the need to belong and to identify, to be recognised, and of the impossibility often of creating a space that is home. Tradition also contains many painful experiences, and it hides as much as it exposes.

The continuous effort in this study is to identify the tensions in the process of *tradere* of the Jeremianic tradition between margin and periphery, between narratives and perspectives that are opened, while others are closed off. The ambiguous presence of the open and sealed document(s) in Jeremiah 32 MT (v. 14 'take these documents, the sealed one and the open one') can function as a metaphor of how to approach the Jeremianic tradition. These documents provide the proof of Jeremiah's purchase of land. One document is referred to as 'hidden' or 'sealed', the other as 'open', or 'read'. The ongoing tradition developed several perspectives on what the open and the closed copy refer to, for instance to the open and the hidden, eschatological Torah. Indeed, religious tradition is partially hidden and partially visible for every group approaching it, and every group of recipients discovers certain aspects and covers other. At the same time the tradition functions to cover aspects of a

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[14] Carolyn Sharp, *Prophecy and ideology in Jeremiah*, London 2003.

group's narrative, and to uncover, to make visible, to reproduce aspects of the tradition.

As I write about the way in which religious tradition interacts with group narratives, I will indicate how I have been shaped myself by these narratives, and how I position myself within the field of biblical scholarship. This study took shape in interaction with my personal interests and convictions. I am fascinated by the fact that old texts remain vibrant, can be a liberating force, but can also become ossified, and used to perpetuate exclusive identities. As a researcher then, I am interested in the nature of religious tradition, and in the processes that shape it. What can I add to the understanding of these processes as a scholar?

I grew up in a homogenous, Dutch, white, Christian context. In spite of the apparent homogeneity of that context, religious differences between the several Christian sects represented in the village were deeply felt. This potential for conflict caught my attention already as a child. However, living in Jerusalem as part of my PhD research in 2008-2009 made me more acutely aware of my interest in conflict. In many ways, being European, well educated, not poor, I am part of the 'centre', and not the 'periphery'. Jerusalem made me aware of that too, as well as of my desire to contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which religion and conflict interact.

The religious tradition of my family is that of Dutch Protestantism. My great-grandparents, or rather the churches in small rural communities in the east of the Netherlands (Salland) they visited, joined Abraham Kuyper in his religious, political and social revolution called the *Doleantie*[15]. The *Doleantie* became part of the *Gereformeerde Kerken,* a stern, Calvinist, but also 'grass-roots' branch of Protestantism. The specific type of Dutch Protestantism my family belonged to led to positive things, such as the emancipation of the 'kleine luyden'[16] in Dutch society, by stimulating interest in literature and language and highly valuing education, as well as dedication and responsibility. Its rather rigid view on life, Bible and religion did not allow for the existence of multiple perspectives, producing a rather narrow, static, rationalist, sometimes anxious, worldview. It led to support of things, such as racial and sexual prejudice, defending *Apartheid* and women's subordinated position with the help of exegesis, although anti-apartheid, gay's and women's rights movements also partially had their origin within this same protestant church tradition. It is a tradition then containing both emancipatory and liberating as well as exclusive and rigid ones. By the time I was born, feminism and modernity had reshaped at least part of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* into a quite liberal, open-minded type of church, in which I experienced enough space to develop my own religious identity. However, I did experience the anxiety and

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[15] From the Latin *dolere*, to complain.
[16] Common people.

rigidity that can also be part of the tradition, and I still at times feel impatient by what I experience as a lack of critical political awareness and interreligious openness in my tradition.

As a scholar, I count myself among scholars like Fernando Segovia, who are looking for new relevance of biblical studies, and attempt to 'decolonize' the field.[17] It is an approach of biblical texts that pays attention to the biblical texts and their history of appropriation, being particularly sensitive to power negotiations between centre and periphery. It aspires to give space to difference without being indifferent, and to inclusivity without taking over.

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[17] Segovia writes that the influx of non-Western scholars and scholars of 'ethnic and racial minorities' in biblical scholarship demands 'both fundamental retooling and fundamental rethinking on my part, away from the strictly Western critical and theological training I had received and appropriated.' He regards this as a process of decolonization (Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies, A View from the Margins*, New York 2000, pp. lx, x).

1.3 General description of the problem

1.3.1 A layered and ambiguous text

The book of Jeremiah is a complicated text on several exegetical-hermeneutical levels. The book shows cracks and difficulties in wording and structure that pose problems to every exegete, hermeneutist or 'ordinary reader' who approaches it. On the level of content, the book is also characterized by incongruity. It can be seen as reflecting disputes between geographically and temporally diverse groups in Judean society.

Different layers can be assumed and partially reconstructed on the basis of the irregularities in the *Endgestalt*[18] of Jeremiah 32, and the distinct ideological stances it takes. The ideological positions can be traced back to different groups and tensions that developed in Judean society as a result of the threat posed by the Babylonian army, its conquest of Judah and the ensuing deportations of parts of the Judean people. A consequence of these divisions among the Judean people was that the words of Jeremiah were appropriated in different and conflicting ways. When the Babylonian conquerors deported the upper class of Judean society to Babel together with king Jehoiachin,[19] Zedekiah was appointed as king and remained in Jerusalem with the people who had not been deported. Chapter 32 is situated in the context of King Zedekiah's rule. This king too was deported, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and again together with a group of Judeans. After some generations a group of those living in Babylon returned to the land. The people who had remained in Judah and those who returned were confronted with each other. These different groups all defined their identity in an interplay of their circumstances with the message of the prophet Jeremiah, understanding (only) themselves as the continuation and legitimate heirs of the tradition. The final redactor(s) of the book of Jeremiah permitted at least some traces of these groups' competing views, especially of the discussion between those who remained in Judah with Zedekiah and those who went to Babel with king Jehoiachin. However, the perspective of a group of deportees returning from Babel is dominant. The book of Jeremiah must therefore be read as an ongoing process of appropriation in which groups express their identity in the language and the themes of the tradition. An important impetus

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[18] The term *Endgestalt* refers to the text in its final form. In fact it is an abstract concept, as it suggests the existence of a undisputed final text. In reality, a diversity of textual traditions exists. See also chapters 2 and 3. I also use 'final form'.

[19] There is debate on the scope of the deportations, see for example Hans M. Barstad, 'After the "Myth of the Empty Land": Major Challenges in the Study of Neo-Babylonian Judah', in: Oded Lipschits, Joseph Blenkinsopp (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period Period*, Winona Lake 2003, pp. 3-20.

in this process is group conflict.

Interestingly, Jeremiah 32 is centred around the purchase of a piece of land: Jeremiah's cousin offers him a field for purchase, in Anathoth in the area of Benjamin. According to the chapter, the prophet is in a very ambiguous situation: he is held captive because of his treacherous attitude towards the Babylonians. The city too is in distress: it is besieged by the Babylonians. To complicate matters, the region in which the field is located, is Benjamin, an ambiguous territory from a Judean perspective since it used to be part of Israel. So, an ambiguous prophet strikes an ambiguous deal. In different layers of the chapter, this peculiar purchase is interpreted and reinterpreted, expressing a variety of competing hopes, both from an exilic perspective and from the perspective of those who remained in the land. In each reinterpretation, orientations in and imaginations of landscapes are transformed and/or overruled. The dominant narrative in the book and in chapter 32 is that of returning exiles,[20] who present the land as empty, waiting for their return. With respect to this narrative, both Jeremiah, who did not go into exile, and the region of his origin, Benjamin, are marginal and ambiguous. Still, the figure of the prophet became one of the vehicles expressing the identity of "returning exiles".

The presentation of Jerusalem illustrates briefly the changing imaginations of landscape present in the text. Whereas Jerusalem is often imagined in Jewish and Christian religious tradition as the city of promises, an ideal landscape and a space of elated imagination, one of the layers of Jeremiah 32 presents it in an entirely different light. Here, it is presented as the city of sin (v. 31). In the last layer of the chapter however, in a very imaginative way, the city does become the centre of longing (vv. 36-41).

Jeremiah 32 MT differs from the chapter in the Septuagint tradition (chapter 39 LXX). Differences in wording and structure hint at a different understanding of the chapter, as I describe in chapters 2 and 3. The ambiguity of the text is reflected and developed also in these differences, as well as in early Jewish and Christian interpretations (chapter 4).

The tradition also continues to play a role in Palestinian and Israeli imaginations of landscape, since both group narratives are connected to the Hebrew Scriptures. The Zionist narrative re-interprets ideological positions present in the text, mainly the narrative of the returning exiles. In the Zionist narrative mandatory Palestine is imagined as an empty landscape. In current

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[20] I use the concept of exile in awareness that it testifies to a limited perspective ('an Exile only exists from the perspective of people who have been deported. The people who remained in Judah did not regard the forced relocation of some of its citizenry in any special way', Jill Anne Middlemas, 'Going beyond the Myth of the Empty Land, a Reassessment of the Early Persian Period', in: Lester L. Grabbe, Gary N. Knoppers (eds.), *Exile and Restoration Revisited: Essays on the Babylonian and Persian Periods in Memory of Peter S. Ackroyd*, London 2009, pp. 174-194, p. 175).

Palestinian collective memory Israel is an erased landscape, from which references to the Palestinian narrative, villages, trees, names, etc., have been erased. Since the Zionist narrative identifies with the dominant voice in the text, the subordinate position that Palestinians have in the conflict is reinforced. However, in spite of the conflict, both groups identify with the Jeremianic tradition. In chapter 5, I analyze appropriations in this context.

A text is never neutral or unambiguous, nor is the ongoing tradition. The exegete needs to be aware that these narratives function as part of negotiations of power, containing dominant narrative as well as counter narratives, of which it sometimes contains only slight hints. Narratives of identity are morally charged, since they express what is and what is not allowed, and how belonging (including property and power) is distributed. This is true for biblical sets of narratives such as the book of Jeremiah, and for ongoing appropriations of the book in which these narratives are intermingled with other sets of narratives. Texts therefore ask for approaches that take into account questions of meaning and ethics not only as a final stage of exegesis, but on every stage and in every approach – from textual criticism to reader-response theory. Looking for what is hidden, narratives of which only traces are left, is also part of the task of the exegete.

I want to give insight in the way group identity takes shape in these diverse manifestations of the Jeremianic tradition. The question is whether analogies can be pointed out between these diverse manifestations of Jeremiah 32, and what insight this provides into the process of identity shaping in the ongoing appropriations within the Jeremianic tradition. If anything, what is it that keeps this diverse set of narratives together (chapter 6)?

1.3.2 Challenges in the field of exegesis

The challenge is also a methodological one: how to deal with the nature of the material studied? The question is how and whether different exegetical methodologies as well as interdisciplinary approaches can contribute to a better understanding of how group identity is constructed in religious tradition (chapter 1).

There is a great diversity of exegetical methods. Each method focuses on different aspects of biblical texts, and often operates in isolation from other methods. Biblical scholars tend to work in separate fields that each contribute to a better understanding of certain aspects of the text. An integrative approach to the text looking at its diverse aspects is difficult to find. Can the gaps between textual and literary analysis, between exegesis and hermeneutics be bridged? I intend to contribute to a more inclusive approach. I argue that it is fruitful to look at all approaches of biblical scholarship as studying aspects of reception history, from the point of view that the text itself is interpreted tradition.

Questions about the role of academic exegesis need to be asked: Biblical scholarship itself is another interpretative community, with its own power negotiations, dominant and subordinate narratives. What is the responsibility of the exegete in interpreting what is probably the most widely read set of texts? Thus, this study touches upon the ethical dimension of scholarship.[21] These ethical questions apply to every stage of the tradition. In all of these interpretative contexts the question is what can be said about the 'space for literature' and 'margins of absence' (Alcalay) in Jeremiah 32.

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[21] Prior writes that the moral dimension of biblical scholarship has been neglected. Prior contends that it is part of the task of the exegete 'also to comment on how these texts have been employed in each generation over the millennia since the period of their composition'. Prior applies this moral critique explicitly to the Zionist enterprise (Michael Prior, 'A moral reading of the bible in Jerusalem', in: Thomas L. Thompson, Salma Khadra Jayyusi (eds.), *Jerusalem in ancient history and tradition* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series), London 2003, pp. 16-45, pp. 40, 41).

1.4 Research questions

1. How can the layered, ambiguous tradition of Jeremiah 32 [39], which developed and continues to development through struggles for identity, be understood from a perspective that takes power negotiations into account? (central question, chapters 1 and 6)

2. Can the stumbling blocks in Jeremiah 32 (MT), visible in a synchronic analysis, be understood as part of the tradition, testifying to the shaping of identities? (chapter 2)

3. What understanding of the chapter is presented in MT and LXX in their final form? How do these understandings relate to the layeredness and ambiguity of the text? How does this relate to group identity? (chapters 2 and 3)

4. What are the interactions between Jeremiah chapter 32 [39] and its receiving communities in early Jewish and Christian exegesis? Which processes of identity development can be pointed out here? (chapter 4)

5. What are the interactions between Jeremiah 32 [39] and its receiving communities of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christians in the context of the present day Israeli-Palestinian conflict? (chapter 5)

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Introduction

This study is an inquiry of appropriation in the Jeremianic tradition, which I understand as a form of collective memory. Methodologically, this requires a method that can deal with the diversity of religious and other claims present in the Jeremianic tradition, integrating linguistic, historical-critical and literary perspectives in awareness of the negotiations of power and the shaping of identity taking place in the text as well as in later appropriations of the text.

      The starting point is an analysis of Jeremiah 32 itself in the Masoretic (chapter 2) and Septuagint traditions (chapter 3). The approach takes its point of departure in the information offered by the text itself. Incongruities in the final form are pointed out, which leads to questions requiring a combination of synchronic and diachronic approaches. This shows that the text is a layered entity, witnessing to a plurality of groups, in which certain themes are reinterpreted. The different positions are analyzed with the help of approaches from social sciences. In the analysis of aspects of the reception history this analysis is continued: in chapter 4, I analyze early Jewish and early Christian appropriations. Chapter 5 is an analysis of contemporary Israeli-Jewish and Palestinian-Christian appropriations of Jeremiah 32 in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The more empirical nature of this phase requires some methodological considerations.

      As already noted, I do not make a fundamental difference between the approach of the canonical and the later developments of this tradition that I understand as consisting of continuing processes of appropriation.

1.5.2 An interdisciplinary critical approach of Jeremiah 32 [39]

1.5.2.1   A synchronic syntactical analysis as a starting point

The study is based on a semantic and syntactic analysis of Jeremiah 32 MT (chapter 2), in keeping with the approach described by Eep Talstra.[22] In Talstra's method, the syntactic and semantic analysis comes prior to the analysis of the composition of the text.[23] The analysis of the structure of the

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[22] Eep Talstra, *Oude en nieuwe lezers, een inleiding in de methoden van uitleg van het Oude Testament*, Kampen 2002, pp. 112-122.

[23] '[S]ynchronic analysis has an 'operational priority' over the diachronic', it points out tensions in the text, that can be understood through historical reconstruction of the development of the text.

chapter is based on the information on syntax and semantics. Incongruities in text and structure, together with observations pertaining to the content of the text, are taken as hints that the text went through processes of adaptation. These tensions in the final version need to be viewed from a perspective that takes into account the processes of development of the text. Therefore, a combination of synchronic and diachronic methods and textual and literary approaches, is required to understand the text.[24] The initial synchronic linguistic analysis is the point of departure for a diachronic analysis, that aims to shed light on the editing and expansion of the text by later redactors. These two ways of looking at the text are complementary, as they each view the text from a different, but important angle.

A synchronic analysis of the *Endgestalt* of the text is applied to the chapter both in its Sepuagint and Masoretic *Endgestalt.* It enables me to describe whether, and if so, how, these differences hint at different groups who use the tradition to shape their identity.

In the next step, a redaction-critical (diachronic) analysis informed by ideological criticism, I focus on how imaginations of landscape function in the different segments of the text and which groups are reflected in these. A diachronic analysis of the text, on the basis of irregularities found in the synchronic analysis, shows the different layers present in the text.

In conclusion, the text linguistic approach as described by Christof Hardmeier and Eep Talstra, and Carolyn Sharp's focus on the disputes taking place in the book point in the same direction: they show that only a combination of methods and of perspectives can help us gain insight into the ambiguous and layered reality which the text actually is.[25] The concept of the Jeremianic tradition enables me to do so. It integrates synchronic and diachronic methods of exegesis, and it also integrates the different stages of the text tradition: the text in Masoretic and other text traditions in their *Endgestalt* (analyzed with synchronic methods), the processes leading to the text (analyzed with diachronic methods). Lastly, it also integrates processes of appropriation of the text, which is usually seen as a separate field of

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'One first reads a text as a whole, as a unity, in an attempt to establish the structure of meaning of the whole and the contributions of the constituent parts of the text to the total meaning. Then comes the diachronic question of whether all the constituent parts of the text presuppose the same time and situation of origin. One of the effects of this procedure is that all the elements of the text function in two different text descriptions' (Eep Talstra, *Solomon's Prayer, Synchrony and Diachrony in the Composition of 1 Kings 8, 14-61* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 3), Kampen 1993, pp. 81ff.

[24] See also Brian Boyle, 'Narrative as Ideology: Synchronic (Narrative Critical) and Diachronic Readings of Jeremiah 37–38', in: *Pacifica*, Vol. 26, no. 13 (2013), pp. 293-312, p. 306: 'The relation between synchronic and diachronic readings of a text becomes clearer when one considers that each subsequent editor/redactor of the narrative becomes, by that activity, a narrator.'

[25] Talstra 2002; Christof Hardmeier, 'Jeremiah 32,2-15 als Eröffnung der Erzählung von der Gefangenschaft und Befreiung Jeremias in Jer 34,7; 37:3-40,6', in: Walter Groβ (ed.), *Jeremia und die "Deuteronomistische Bewegung"*, Weinheim 1995, pp. 187-214; Sharp 2003.

hermeneutics or historical research, are all part of an ongoing tradition. The words of the prophet Jeremiah (as far as we can know anything about the historical figure of the prophet) gave the initial impetus to disputes between several groups appropriating his words, which gradually became a fixed collection.

1.5.2.2   The text as interpreted tradition

The concept of the Jeremianic tradition enables me to be attentive to the development of meaning on different levels of the tradition. Biblical scholarship is not always attentive to how the text, as tradition carrying on until today, negotiates meaning on different levels.

The historical-critical method has long dominated biblical scholarship. It started as a movement of scholars attempting to read the text itself, apart from the authority of religious communities, in order to get a better view on the text.[26] In that sense, it is disconnected from tradition. The method is interested in questions of meaning as far as meaning refers to what was intended by the author in the original context, before the text became 'corrupted' in the process of transmission and/or redaction. It led to the ideal of a pure text, losing sight of the text as interpreted text itself. The goal is to restore 'originality' and 'purity'. The meaning of a text is located in the past, in such a way that any possible connection with readers other than the original readers is lost. The closer we come to the original text, the closer we are to its meaning.

In the course of its development, historical criticism has focused on distinguishing between layers in the text in a highly sophisticated way. This approach of diachronically mapping the process of development of a text, in fact of its early reception history, is, I would argue, of great value as one of the steps in exegesis. It is not its final or crucial phase. Historical criticism's focus on the world behind the text and on the pure and original form of the text runs the risk of losing sight of the power of the text, and the reason why it has generated such a complicated development.

Literary analysis can be seen as a response to historical-criticism, preferring to look, synchronically, at the text as a whole in its *Endgestalt*.

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[26] The popularity of the method has to be understood in the context of Protestantism's ideal to purify the Roman Catholic church of surplus and corrupt accretions of tradition. In its attempt to return to the sources, of course, a new tradition was created which espoused the ideal of a return to the sources. This led to a new way of studying the basic texts of Christianity, together with the process of development of a more scientific approach to exegesis. It developed into a method studying the historical accuracy of the Bible. It led to several other methods, each interested in aspects of differentiating between 'original' and later growth, such as redactional criticism (a method interested in how the different elements that a text or book consists of were put together) and source criticism (a method attempting to trace different sources and their respective authors).

Focusing on the world of the text, it aims to make visible the literary strategies used in the text to convey its message. Several approaches developed within literary criticism, each presenting different ideas on meaning and how it is constructed. Reader-response criticism, for instance, locates meaning not behind the text (like historical criticism) or in the world of the text (like literary criticism in general), but in front of the text: the reader creates meaning in the process of appropriating a text. Literary critics do not necessarily disregard the fruits of historical criticism, but in practice it proves difficult to combine these outlooks, without a method explicitly addressing both. Proponents of either of these approaches too often fail to connect with other approaches in the field.

In this study, approaches searching for meaning in the (different layers of the) text and approaches arguing that meaning is produced by readers of the text are viewed as complementary. My aim in bringing these approaches together is to shed light on the complex processes of development of the tradition. I therefore view the study of reception history and contemporary readings, as studied for instance in liberation hermeneutics as an integral part of exegesis. The latter is a specific approach attentive to readers of biblical texts.[27] Its focus is on the reception of the text by 'ordinary readers'. The 'shocking confrontation with the intense suffering of the people and the powerlessness of the exegesis' led to a strong commitment to the reflection on the reading practice of the poor and oppressed.[28] As De Wit points out, 'recognition of the hermeneutic competence of the people' requires redefining of the task of the exegete.[29] As Segovia points out, a postcolonial perspective, integrates these diverse approaches from the point of view that all exegetical activity – both with respect to the text and with respect to reception history – and by all participants in the tradition – whether 'professional' or 'lay' readers – is contextual, and that questions of ideology and power need to applied to all stages of exegesis.[30]

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[27] See for instance Hans de Wit, 'Through the Eyes of Another; Intercultural Readings of the Bible', in: Alejandro F. Botta, Pablo R. Andiñach (eds.), *The Bible and the Hermeneutics of Liberation* (Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies), Houston 2009, pp. 39-60, p. 40.

[28] De Wit in: Botta, Andiñach (eds.) 2009, p. 40.

[29] De Wit in: Alejandro F. Botta, Pablo R. Andiñach (eds.) 2009, p. 47.

[30] Segovia 2000, pp. 26, 85: 'The vision that emerges is that of a far more inclusive discipline, where there is no such thing as a final and definitive meaning, where readings must work within the confines of textual and ideational elements, and where all interpreters are similarly influenced by and must come to terms with the interpersonal dimension of interpretation.'

1.5.2.3 Interdisciplinary research

The analysis of contemporary readings in the context of Israel and Palestine (chapter 5) led to the insight that power negotiations in relation to space are crucial for understanding the Jeremianic tradition. This study therefore combines exegetical approaches with approaches from social and cultural psychology, anthropology, postcolonial studies, conflict and postcolonial studies. The fields of (social) psychology, anthropology and conflict studies give insight into the relations between group conflict and group identity, and the role of religion. A postcolonial perspective enables me to come to new ways of understanding (religious) identity and tradition from a perspective attentive to domination and subordination. This perspective therefore plays a role in the study as a whole,[31] as I will discuss below.

I analyze the transformations taking place in the Jeremianic tradition in terms of group identity[32], focusing on religious identity.[33] Chapter 32 itself is the result of interactions between the chapter in different phases and receiving communities. Communities of readers participating in the tradition by appropriating it, thus creating new meanings and re-inventing their identity, are the hyphen bringing these discourses together. Groups receiving the tradition and appropriating it are central in this approach as the active participants shaping the Jeremianic tradition. In turn they themselves are being shaped by it.

1.5.2.4 The Jeremianic Tradition as Collective Memory

I see the Jeremianic tradition as a complex set of identity constituting discourses that engages with discourses functioning in groups inheriting the text. In each of these appropriations groups shape their identity by reconstructing and building their narratives. From the above follows that the Jeremianic tradition consists of multivocal and ambiguous sets of narratives, containing many layers, contradicting, dominant and subordinate voices, in which transformation takes place again and again. I therefore approach the Jeremianic tradition from the perspective of collective memory.

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[31] Steed Vernyl Davidson points out that they, as shared presuppositions of critical theories that they 'blur traditional disciplinary boundaries and regard meaning as indeterminate and contigent', features that also characterize postcolonial theory (See Steed Vernyl Davidson, *Empire and Exile, Postcolonial Readings of the Book of Jeremiah*, New York 2011, p. 38).

[32] In this study, I pay attention to group identity. I assume that 'groups' are responsible for shaping the Jeremianic tradition. Groups, of course, are composed of individuals, who to a greater or lesser extent have incorporated cultural codes and the narrative of their society. At the same time, an individual often takes a divergent position. It is a question whether the dissonant of an individual is decisive in the development of tradition. The role of the individual is visible to a greater extent in the reading groups (see chapter 5).

[33] For my understanding of religious identity see below.

In collective memory or narratives of group identity, social groups express their origins, history, and the in-group and out-group stereotypes in narratives that constitute their identity. These narratives express 'what is, and what should be, going on'.[34] They function as a prism through which 'society members construct their reality, collect new information, interpret their experiences, and then make decisions about their course of action.'[35]

In the experience of members of a certain society narratives of group identity often seem stable and unchanging. However, Zerubavel underlines that collective memory is not static, but continually subject to transformation. It is able to host ambiguity and even contrasting claims, so that the narratives in themselves contain seeds for transformation.[36] Transformation in collective memory is crucial for the continuity of a community: constant revitalization of narratives enables new experiences to be embedded in the collective memory.[37] Thus, a constant dialogue between the past and the present takes place in which collective memory is formed and reshaped through a process in which a social group 'reconstructs its own history from a current ideological stance.'[38]

In processes of transformation, so-called formative events play an important role. The narratives often begin with commemorations of beginnings, emphasizing 'a "great divide" between in- and out-group', which is 'used to dispel any denial of the group's legitimacy', justifying 'the group's claim as a distinct unit, often by demonstrating that its roots go back to a distant past.'[39] These formative events that function as building blocks are ambiguous and open to different interpretations. When changes occur in society, the tension between the way a formative event is understood and the present reality may become so high that the interpretation is transformed – this happens when 'the political stakes associated with their mythical meaning become too high to ignore.'[40]

The concept of collective memory has been applied in biblical studies, mainly to the New Testament,[41] but also to the Tanakh or Old Testament, for instance, in the work of Philip Davies[42]. Thus far memory studies have not

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[34] Nikki Slocum-Bradley, 'Introduction: Borders of the Mind', in: idem (ed.), *Promoting Conflict or Peace through Identity*, Hampshire, 2008, pp. 1-20, p. 8.

[35] Daniel Bar-Tal and Yona Teichmann, *Stereotypes and Prejudice in Conflict, Representations of Arabs in Israeli Jewish Society*, Cambridge 2005, p. 124.

[36] Zerubavel 1997, p. 5.

[37] Alan Kirk, 'Social and Cultural Memory', in: Alan Kirk, Tom Thatcher (eds.), *Memory, Tradition and Text* (Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies), Atlanta 2005, pp. 1-24, p. 5.

[38] Zerubavel 1997, pp. 8, 9.

[39] Zerubavel 1997, p. 7.

[40] Zerubavel 1997, p. 10.

[41] See, for instance, Kirk, Thatcher (eds.) 2005.

[42] See, for instance Philip Davies, *Memories of Ancient Israel: An introduction to Biblical History-ancient and modern*, Louisville 2008.

influenced the research on the book of Jeremiah. I apply the concept of collective memory in order to understand the processes of identity shaping taking place in the Jeremianic tradition. I aim to make visible the mechanisms of identity shaping in the tradition, as well as the moments of transformation and creativity.

Power: counter, dominant and subordinate narratives

Collective memory is a complex mix of narratives dominant in a certain group, and counter narratives, or narratives of resistance, challenging the hegemony of the dominant narrative. In other words: conflict is always a factor in narratives of identity, both in- and out-group conflict.[43]

Conflict can be defined as power negotiations taking place between opposing, dominant and subordinated actors claiming the same resources. Although the dominant actor is more powerful, it is simplistic to understand power in a non-diversified, massive way, as residing only with the dominant group, as Foucault points out. We should think of power in a dynamic way. Power is not located in one centre, but circulates, being built up out of many elements that are continually shifting.[44] Foucault does not understand power as something necessarily negative. Instead, he focuses on power as producing reality.[45]

In counter or hidden narratives, the master narrative that is the dominant narrative in a certain society is challenged by subordinate groups, living under the hegemony of the dominant master narrative. These counter narratives use the language and concepts of the dominant narrative, making use of the rights and duties explained there and the ambiguity and tensions it contains. In counter narratives subordinate groups attempt to claim their self-definition, to shape their landscape, and to define events constitutive for their identity, over against the dominant narrative[46].

Counter narratives often use the language and concepts of the dominant narrative, making use of the rights and duties explained there and the ambiguity and tensions it, *always*, contains.[47] They criticize in a veiled way, since the act of countering the dominant narrative is likely to be dangerous, and it is limited by various forms of censorship. Subordinate groups therefore

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[43] Conflict always plays a role between as well as within groups in society, irrelevant of whether this is explicitly so, simply since group identity constructs 'us' and 'them', expresses belonging and claims limited resources. Therefore, a certain tension is given. Of course, this does not always lead to (explicit) conflict. The right of 'the others' can also be recognized in collective memory.

[44] Stuart Hall, 'Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse', in: Margareth Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor (eds.), *Discourse Theory and Practice, a Reader*, London 2003, pp. 72-81, p. 74.

[45] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish, the Birth of a Prison*, London 1991, p. 194.

[46] Orayb Najjar, Power and Language: Israeli Censorship of the West Bank Press, in: Annelies Moors, Toine van Teeffelen (eds.), *Discourse and Palestine: Power, Text and Context*, Amsterdam, pp. 139-152, pp. 144-146.

[47] Scott 1990.

have to be creative in finding space to express their narratives, using, like graffiti artists, marginal spaces and 'no man's land' making use of very subtle language. These narratives are partially hidden, their language ambiguous, depending as much on what is left unsaid, but taken to be understood, as on what is said. The struggle over power involves a struggle over interpretation, narratives of identity, and expressions of identity in landscape. Counter narratives are just as much part of collective memory – resistance resides at the site of power, as Foucault writes.[48]

Foucault suggests that power relations can best be examined in terms of the strategies and counterstrategies found in master narratives and narratives of resistance. In discourse, we find both power and resistance.[49] Narratives of identity often use the language and concepts of the dominant narrative, making use of the rights and duties explained there and the ambiguity and tensions it contains. They criticize in a veiled way, since the act of countering the dominant narrative is likely to be dangerous, and is limited by various forms of censorship. Subordinate groups therefore have to be creative in finding space to express their narratives, using, like graffiti artists, marginal spaces and 'no man's land', or make use of very subtle language. These narratives are partially hidden, their language ambiguous, depending as much on what is left unsaid, but taken to be understood, as on what is said.[50] Foucault's approach makes power visible not only in terms of 'grand, overall strategies, but also on a local, more complex level'[51]. This approach can be applied to studying power mechanisms as they function in narratives.

Scott has analyzed patterns of communication between subordinate and dominant groups in society. In a situation where one group dominates another, the ideology of the ruling group is voiced in what Scott calls a public transcript. Public transcript functions in the domain of material appropriation, the domain of public mastery and subordination, and in the domain of ideological justification for inequalities. It is the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate, voicing the self portrait of the dominant elite, as well as its ideology and interests. The public transcript is 'designed to be impressive, to affirm and naturalize the power of dominant

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[48] Narratives express rights and duties and are therefore connected to power, legitimating a certain hegemony. The struggle over power involves a struggle over language, in which hegemony is expressed. Discourse of resistance is often limited, by censorship, because of danger, etc. to openly express itself. These groups therefore have to be very creative in finding space to express their message, using no man land, or, like graffiti artists, small open spaces to leave their message in the dark. These narratives are partially hidden, their language ambiguous, depending as much on what is left unsaid, but taken to be understood, as what is said. Readers, aware of this state of affairs, are able to fill in the gaps by using the 'schemas of resistance' stored in their collective memory (see Najjar in: Moors, Van Teeffelen (eds.) 1995, pp. 139-152, pp. 139-142).

[49] Jonathan Gaventa, Power after Lukes: a Review of the Literature, Brighton 2003, p. 3.

[50] Najjar in: Moors, Van Teeffelen (eds.) 1995, pp. 139-142.

[51] Hall in: Wetherell, Taylor (eds.) 2003, p. 77.

elites, and to conceal or euphemize the dirty linen of their rule'[52]. Part of this is also the negative stereotypes that powerful groups attribute to other groups in order to justify and legitimize their power'[53]. Scott points out an important vulnerability of the dominant class: any ruling group is vulnerable to be criticized on the basis of the valuable social function it claims to have, and the rules it claims to follow. The very operation of a rationale for inequality, which is part of any hegemony, creates a potential zone of dirty linen that, if exposed, would contradict the pretensions of legitimate domination.'[54] The subordinate class criticizes the ruling class using the terms and concepts invoked by the ruling class.[55]

The subordinate group reacts to this public transcript in what Scott calls 'hidden transcripts'. This is an 'alternative memory that directly opposes the master commemorative narrative, operating under and against its hegemony'[56], being 'the offstage responses and rejoinders to that public transcript.'[57] Scott writes 'the least radical step' of criticism is to criticize the ruling class 'for having violated the norms by which they claim to rule.'[58] The critique aims at the 'dirty linen'[59] any hegemonic regime produces, using the terms and concepts invoked by the ruling class. Scott underlines the importance of understanding the consciousness of the subordinate – the social experiences of indignities, control, submission, humiliation, etc.: 'the hidden transcript cannot be described as the truth that contradicts the lies told to power, it is correct to say that the hidden transcript is a self-disclosure that power relations normally exclude from the official transcript. […], a substitute for an act of assertion directly in the face of power.' [60]

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[52] Scott 1990, p. 18.

[53] Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005, p. 40.

[54] Scott 1990, p. 105.

[55] Scott 1990, p. 102. Scott adds that because the protest uses the language of dominant discourse, this becomes a 'plastic idiom or dialect that is capable of carrying an enormous variety of meanings, including those that are subversive of their use as intended by the dominant.'

[56] Zerubavel 1997, p. 10. She calls Zionism a counter narrative opposing traditional Jewish memory. This counter narrative becomes the master narrative of Zionist settlers (see below).

[57] Scott 1990, p. 111.

[58] Scott 1990, p. 92.

[59] Scott 1990, p. 103. Interestingly, Michal, a participant of the group of Jewish women uses the word 'dirty laundry' when she explains that it is uncomfortable for her to read this 'national text' with Palestinians.

[60] Scott 1990, pp. 114, 115.

Conflict as a threat to identity

Conflict[61] enforces the jeopardy in which identity formation continually finds itself: it causes stress, fear and ambiguity. Groups in more serious situations of conflict need to construct a comprehensive understanding of the conflict to safeguard group identity. Thus, conflict enforces a homogenized expression of in-group identity, and constructions of otherness with respect to out-groups.[62] Slocum-Bradley points out that 'violence between social groups [...] necessarily entails the construction of a certain perception of one's own group and that of the 'other'', which Slocum-Bradley regards as the most important cause of conflict.[63] Thus, conflict influences identity and narratives expressing identity, and in turn these narratives feed into the conflict, for instance by negative stereotypes of the other. Bar-Tal and Teichman call this 'negative psychological intergroup repertoire'. It functions to establish in-group identity firmly and to negate and undermine out-group identity. The repertoire is 'constantly activated because conflict is central to the life of the groups and is institutionalized,' so that it becomes part of collective memory, influencing the course of the conflict.[64]

The stronger the conflict is, the stronger also the need for powerful narratives of identity. In intractable conflicts – conflicts that are protracted, violent and deep-rooted,[65] – the very existence of the other is a threat to each group's own identity and existence. Such conflicts involve every aspect of life of those involved and are experienced as zero-sum: compromises are almost impossible.[66] Narratives of identity in such conflicts therefore contain elements that are mutually exclusive.

Understanding religious identity

What is continually being shaped and negotiated in the ongoing Jeremianic tradition, is (religious) group identity. Group[67] identity is never fixed, but is always in process, and within identity different aspects overlap and are interrelated. Identity is expressed in narratives, that are, like identity, always contested, ambiguous and subject to transformation. I pay attention especially to religious aspects of identity. Religion is a potent factor within identity, touching deep layers within the individual, and at the same time also

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[61] As pointed out, group identity always has conflictual aspects. Conflict is one of the driving forces in identity development. Here I allude to more serious forms of conflict.

[62] Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005, p. 375

[63] Slocum-Bradley 2008, p. 1.

[64] Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005, p. 84

[65] See Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005, p. 59. See also below.

[66] Kelman in: *The America Psychologist* 2007, p. 59, 60. Of course, the extent to which the conflict is experienced as such varies among individuals and fluctuates with the constant changes of the conflict.

[67] The word 'group' may refer to a society as a whole, or to certain groups within a society. A group is never homogenous, neither is group identity.

connecting the individual to the larger collective of tradition in past and present.[68] It is capable of playing both an escalating and a de-escalating role in conflict situations. It is not isolated from other aspects of identity, rather it tends to unify, colour and/or dominate other aspects of identity. The same is true for religious narratives, like the book of Jeremiah. In Jeremiah and its ongoing tradition, religious aspects are interwoven with the political, the economical and the cultural. In dealing with religious identity, both in the book of Jeremiah and in its ongoing tradition, it is important to be aware of this tendency of religious identity to dominate, so that other aspects are underexposed. I argue that a way of viewing religious identity is needed that is critical of constructions of boundaries and 'sameness' and allows for diversity and overlap. In this study, I understand religious aspects of identity as intimately linked to political, geographical, economical and social aspects of identity.

In establishing identity, the Jeremianic tradition creates boundaries and transgresses them, and, furthermore, continues to do so in contemporary appropriations. In this study, I want to look for new ways of examining boundaries, similarities and open spaces in identities. It matters which concepts are used to describe identity, since these concepts partially define what we see, and what remains hidden. Identity constructions as a rule downplay in-group diversity, and underline out-group differences. Differences are 'a matter of relative rather than absolute difference', not something pre-existent, but something produced.[69] Binary divisions 'simplify the complexities of 'proximate otherness', especially in defining boundaries towards out-groups very similar to the in-group.[70]

Nationality and ethnicity are concepts to create more or less homogenous group identities of groups larger than the family.[71] The concepts are part of how narratives of identity construct in-group homogeneity and out-group otherness. Ethnicity and nationality are historical phenomena, giving insight into how group identity was and is perceived, both by scholars and by non-scholars. They serve a certain ideology, being part of identity politics. Ethnicity is helpful to highlight aspects of group identity, and has been used as

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[68] See Jeffrey R. Seul, 'Ours is the way of God', Religion, Identity and Intergroup Conflict, in: *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 36, no. 5 (1999), pp. 553-569, p. 561. One of the functions of religion is to define 'the broadest possible range of relationships – to self, to others near and distant [..] and to God', answering the human need 'for a sense of locatedness', socially, geographically, temporally etc. (p. 558).

[69] Mark G. Brett citing Jonathan Z. Smith in: Mark G. Brett (ed.), *Ethnicity and the Bible*, New York 1996 (Jonathan Z. Smith, 'What a difference a difference makes', in: J. Neusner, E.S. Frerichs (eds.), *"To See ourselves as others see us", Christians, Jews, "Others" in late Antiquity*, Chicago 1985).

[70] Brett (ed.) 1996 , p. 10 (citing Smith 1985).

[71] Brett (ed.) 1996: 'Discussions on ethnicity are part of the formidable network of debates concerned with the description and explanation of social groups larger than the family' (p. 10).

a mode of resistance, but also 'to manipulate and to rule'.[72] These categories tend to construct macro-level, stable, inflexible identities, in which links between people and space are presented as 'solid, commonsensical, and agreed-upon, when they are in fact contested, uncertain and in flux.[73] They run the risk of obscuring the local, diversified, fluid character of identity, perpetuating instead constructions of otherness and 'sameness'.[74]

I pay special attention to the way in which imaginations of landscape function in group identity in the Jeremianic tradition of chapter 32. First, landscape is a very helpful metaphor given the centrality of space, both real and imagined, in the Jeremianic tradition. Relation to space is crucial in the negotiations of identity that take place in the tradition. Second, viewing identity in relation to attachments to landscape enables us to express a fluid and ever changing concept like identity in a way that is at the same time flexible, local and imaginative.

Landscape expresses longing and belonging: it expresses what the group regards as belonging to them in the present and what is longed for with respect to past and future. Landscape, like text, is not neutral, but rather contested, claimed by different groups. It is shaped and interpreted by dominant and subversive groups. In the sense that a landscape is shaped, cultivated, reshaped and taken care of by many hands, containing many layers,

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[72] Brett 1996, p. 8.

[73] Akhil Gupta, James Ferguson, 'Beyond "culture": Space, identity and the politics of difference', in: *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 7, no. 1 (1992), pp. 6-23, p. 12.

[74] Benedict Anderson points out that 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined'. A nation is a way of imagining a large community, Anderson defines it as a 'imagined political community'. As sacral monarchy slowly lost its legitimacy in 17th century Europe, a new way of imagining the monarchy had to be found. Nationalism became the way to do so (Benedikt Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, *Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London 2006, pp. 6, 7, 198). A nation-state and nationalism became ways of viewing and uniting a group of people, often diverse in terms language, religion, geographical, economical, social conditions, around a national identity, within a certain set of borders, around a certain way of organizing a state. Nationalism has played an important role in recent Western history and in the way the West, through strategies of imperialism and colonialism, have interfered in other parts of the world. It is certainly a relevant category to understand this specific Western ideology. In addition, as the concept is part of how Western Europeans and Northern Americans see the world, it has shaped OT research. It has tended to make researchers less sensitive for tensions within the Judean people, instead underlining homogeneity and continuity. The concept of ethnicity is related to nationality, being a concept from the same period. 'Ethnos' seeks to describe a more homogenous group than a nation. Ethnicity may include aspects of history, appearance, language, religion, traditions, etc. These aspects create a certain connectedness among people, but clearly no fixed or clear boundaries can be made on the basis of ethnicity. See for instance Schlomo Sand, *The invention of the Jewish people*, London 2006 , for why ethnicity fails to explain Jewish identity. A similar case could be made for the Palestinians, who are also a mixture of people with overlapping and contrasting elements of identity. Both ethnicity and nationality as constructions are in need of criticism, which takes place for instance in various sorts of postcolonial discourses.

it has much in common with a text.[75] Landscape is 'active and ever changing,' and it is continually newly interpreted. What I intend to do is to offer a modest beginning of applying the concept of landscape to the Jeremianic tradition, in order to bring to light the diversity and overlap in identity at which the tradition hints, but which it simultaneously hides.

1.5.2.5 Unearthing hidden narratives

With Barstad, I see it as the task of every scholar in memory studies to work out the relation between memory and history, a relation that is at the heart of the recent history debate. Memory is central to the present study, as the relation towards history inevitably plays a role: first, in attempting to relate identity constructions found in the book of Jeremiah to groups in Judean society, and, secondly, in relating the ongoing reception history to 'real events'.[76]

      Differentiating between collective memory as a construct and the different dominant and counter narratives existing within it implies a certain degree of deconstruction. The question remains regarding how these narratives and the memories and imaginations they contain relate to 'history' or 'reality'. Deconstruction of the tradition of the narrative and reconstruction of 'how it might have been' plays a role in this study. This is the question of how different and competing views of the past relate. What we have, is different views on the past, often containing incompatible claims. We do not have access to the past itself. It is not possible to point out exactly which narratives present in chapter 32 and the ongoing tradition are 'wrong', or 'right', and, even less, to reconstruct 'reality'. However, it is possible to

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[75] Text and landscape are both a space to live in as well as a space for imagination, shaped by human hand, and structured to serve certain means and to express something, Both contain different layers, both are subject to (changing) interpretation (requiring a measure of skill and familiarity from the reader), both are connected to memory, as well as ambiguous and containing stumbling blocks. Looking at the text as a landscape helps to see how synchronic and diachronic methods can be integrated. This view of the text makes insightful connections between different parts of the text, clauses and sections, as if the text is a landscape, and gives insight into processes of communication and how information presented in the text relates to the events and to the readers. In a text a constant process is taking place of moving between background and foreground, relating known information to new information, and negotiating communication between author, participants in the text and readers of the text.

[76] Hans Barstad, 'History and Memory: Some Reflections on the "Memory Debate" in Relation to the Hebrew Bible', in: Philip R. Davies, Diana L. Edelman (eds.), *The Historian and the Bible, Essays in Honour of Lester L. Grabbe*, New York 2010, pp. 1-10, pp. 4, 8. See also for a discussion of Assmann's and Halbwachs' positions on the relation between history and memory. Barstad criticizes Assmann, whose work he describes as 'characterized by a traditional positivistic attitude', while he follows Halbwachs' anti-positivistic attitude. With Halbwachs, Barstad underlines the discontinuity between memory and history and regards collective memory as a reconstruction of the past. Barstad does underline that 'history and memory belong together and cannot be separated' (p. 8).

distinguish different positions in the ongoing tradition of Jeremiah 32, and to connect these to possible contexts that produced such narratives. This is relevant not as a futile exercise in improbability,[77] but rather as an exercise in broadening our understanding of a religious text that has authority in our context, in an attempt to diversify the way we look not only at this text, but also at our own reality. I deconstruct and reconstruct not in order to find out 'what really happened', but to reconstruct a context in which the aspects I find in the text of Jeremiah fit. This study aims to reconstruct the narratives of which traces are found in the ongoing tradition of chapter 32 and to gain insight into the processes shaping these positions.

I would argue that this attempt to give a possible reconstruction of marginal and hidden narratives is highly relevant. With respect to chapter 32, it offers a more complete landscape of memory than can be found in the text. Such a reconstruction can open up and provoke new possibilities of understanding the chapter. In doing so, I do not wish to 'reinstate the particulars of lives or texts gone by as 'presence', but I do want to 'play along the margins of absences' in the book of Jeremiah.[78] I want to shed light on the power struggles visible in biblical narratives on a local complex level'.[79] This study constantly touches upon questions surrounding deconstruction and reconstruction of the narratives of the Jeremianic tradition, in which patterns of forgetting and remembering, covering and unearthing, continually play a role.

This attempt to unearth hidden narratives continues to be relevant to interpretations today, as chapter 5 makes clear. The character of the text indicates struggles over power and identity, but does not give a full picture of the existing narratives. Since the act of countering the dominant narrative is a dangerous activity, limited by various forms of censorship, counter narratives are difficult to trace by definition. Diachronically, the tradition has gone through many hands, transforming existing narratives by placing them into new contexts or by editing them. We are dealing with competing ideological narratives, brought together in one book, that is itself part of a meta-narrative: the Hebrew Bible. It is not hard to see that the book is shaped by struggles of identity, but it is much harder to decide exactly which forces have shaped the book, and what was at stake for the groups that shaped it. What we have are not complete sets of narratives of identity, but a text containing several overlapping and competing narratives.

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[77] Blenkinsopp rightly warns that 'in the absence of reliable data from other sources, our attempt to extract historical reliable information from uncooperative biblical texts is an exercise in probabilism' (J. Blenkinsopp, Benjamin Traditions Read in the Early Persian Period, in: Oded Lipschits, Manfred Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, Winona Lake 2006, pp. 629-646, p. 644). I fully agree, and the more ideologically charged a text is, the more difficult or impossible the task of deconstruction and reconstruction becomes.

[78] Alcalay 1993, p. 100.

[79] Hall in: Wetherell, Taylor (eds.) 2003, p. 77.

1.5.2.6   The responsibility of exegetes: a postcolonial approach

Not all exegetes see it as their task to engage with questions of meaning, let alone ethical questions connected to that. Biblical scholarship can be undertaken as the scientific study of a corpus of ancient texts. These texts, nonetheless, continue to influence people's lives and outlook on life. I argue that meaning is not something to talk about after the exegetical work is done. The meaning of a text is not located either in the world behind the text (e.g. in historical criticism), in the world of the text (literary criticism) or in the world in front of the text (reader-response theory). It rather plays a role on each of these levels. How is meaning generated in the interplay between tradition and groups of recipients? The work of hermeneutists cannot be delegated to others, but should be integrated into biblical scholarship. My claim is that it is important for the exegete to consider ethical questions related to her or his work. Even if a researcher does not share the view that the texts she or he is studying, along with their traditions, are in any way relevant, the corpus of studied texts nonetheless effects the world in which we live in different ways. This will become evident very poignantly below when we look at appropriations in the Palestinian and Israeli context.

The Jeremianic tradition asks for exegetical methods that are capable of interrogating the 'apparent given of a world in the first place divided into 'ourselves' and 'others'.' While it is necessary to be attentive to difference, the 'production of difference' also needs to be explored.[80] In this study, the first step to do so is to read the text from a linguistic-analytic point of view, in order to make visible the historical processes that shaped the text. Making visible the processes of appropriation within the text enables a reading that looks beneath constructed sameness and beyond constructed borders. I have already pointed at the role of power in religious tradition, and therefore the need of an approach attentive to that. The aim of this study is a 'renewal' of the way religious tradition is approached, 'incorporating the old into the new'.[81] My claim is that exegetes, aware that neither text nor exegesis is innocent, have a responsibility in how they perceive and describe religious identities and narratives.

Power relations between dominant and subordinate groups play a role in the processes of formation of the text, the transmission of the text and the appropriations of the text of Jeremiah 32. This study seeks to apply a critical perspective to the Jeremianic tradition of chapter 32. As already noted, I use a

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[80] Gupta, Ferguson in: *Cultural Anthropology* 1992, p. 16.

[81] Athalya Brenner, Epilogue: Babies and Bathwater on the Road, in: Caroline Vander Stichele, Todd Penner (eds.), *Her Master's Tools? Feminist and Postcolonial Engagements of Historical-Critical Discourse* (Global Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship 9), Atlanta 2005, pp. 333- 338, p. 335.

postcolonial perspective[82] in order to make the negotiations between the different narratives in the Jeremianic tradition visible.[83] I understand postcolonial studies as intimately related to other attempts of criticizing relations of domination and subordination, such as feminist, gender and queer approaches and liberation hermeneutics within biblical studies.[84] Within that field of ideological criticism, postcolonial studies focuses on power exchanges between the centre of power and the periphery. It is an approach that seeks to go beyond dichotomies presented in dominant narratives, looking for hidden and marginal voices.[85] In the Jeremianic tradition, in which connections to landscape (both 'real' and imagined) play such an important role, such a focus on the relation between power, narratives and space is promising. The perspective enables me to make dominant and hidden voices in the Jeremianic tradition visible. The postcolonial perspective applies to the Jeremianic

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[82] Segovia points out that the field of postcolonial studies is diverse and conflicted and underlines that colonialism is a diverse phenomenon. He writes: 'by *postcolonial* I mean ideological reflection on the discourse and practice of imperialism and colonialism from the vantage point of a situation where imperialism and colonialism have come – by and large, though by no means altogether so – to a formal end, but remain very much at work, in practice, as neoimperialism and neocolonialism. Thus, the postcolonial option is a field of vision forged in the wake of imperialism and colonialism but still very much conscious of their continuing [..] power (Segovia 2000, p. 121). See Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914*, Cambridge 1996, pp. 8-10 for a brief overview of European and Israeli of colonialisms.

[83] Davidson 2011 and A.R. Pete Diamond, Louis Stuhlman (eds.), *Jeremiah (dis)placed, New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*, Cambridge 2011, also approach the book of Jeremiah from a postcolonial perspective with a focus on place/space. This study is unique in analyzing appropriation within one chapter, including its ongoing history of reception, viewed as Jeremianic tradition. Davidson points out that 'postcolonial theory serves as a method of literary enquiry about geo-political power and its implications in everyday life. […] [G]iven both the role of the Bible in modern colonialism as well as the impact of imperial powers upon the fate of the ancient nation [sic] of Israel in the narrative text, the Bible serves as an appropriate site for postcolonial enquiry'. He points out that the 'Bible plays a pivotal role in the practice and perpetuation of modern European colonialism.' I also underline the power struggles taking place between Judean groups within the text: hegemony also creates inner tensions. With Davidson, I do not use '"postcolonial" as a temporal marker but rather as an indicator of the continuity of colonialism'. Davidson underlines that the Bible is a 'product of the era of colonization and domination' and therefore represents a 'discourse of resistance and accommodation to the realities of empires' (Davidson 2011, pp. 39-43). Postcolonial studies did not originate in intellectual dilemmas of the West, but began in order to meet 'the needs of the colonized other'.[83] At the same time, it has tremendous consequences for how the Bible is understood in the West (Sugirtharajah in: Dunderberg, Tuckett, Syreeni 2001, p. 551).

[84] Postcolonial theory addresses themes such as occupation, exile, displacement, belonging, forced migration. These themes 'interact and intersect with issues such as ethnicity, gender, class and political power.' (Davidson 2011, p. 45).

[85] Sugirtharajah describes postcolonial theory as an 'interpretative act of reclamation, redemption and reaffirmation', Sugirtharajah points out that it 'goes beyond the binary notions of colonised and coloniser and lays weighty emphasis on critical exchanges and mutual transformation between the two'. R.S. Sugirtharajah, 'Postcolonial Theory and Biblical Studies, in: Ismo Dunderberg, Christopher Tuckett, Kari Syreeni (eds.), *Fairplay, Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity*, Leiden 2001, pp. 541-552, pp. 550, 544.

tradition of chapter 32 as a whole: to chapter 32, its different layers and the groups behind them, and the ongoing history of appropriation of the text, including contemporary appropriations in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[86]

Negotiating narratives of collective memory

This study explicitly asks how narratives of the past are negotiated in the Jeremianic tradition. Narratives of collective memory play an important role in creating boundaries between groups and in allocating privileges and rights.[87] It follows from the above that remembering and forgetting is an act, an act that is fraught with difficult moral choices.[88] Narratives of collective memory can be reviewed, negotiated and rewritten. An ethics of memory is therefore possible, and is, in my view also necessary: the question needs to be asked about who is affected by the self-identification of a certain group, and their narratives must be negotiated with them.[89] I use the term 'narrative negotiation' to describe the conscious attempt to reformulate narratives from an ethical perspective. It is a 'process of dealing with historical and enduring injustices through the revision and negotiation of historical narratives, […] parties negotiate their narratives by *giving up* certain aspects of their collective stories and *incorporating elements* of the other's into their own'. It is 'a dialogical attempt to alter conflicting narratives through a process of give-and-take'.[90] This negotiation takes place in the 'blank space' between two existing narratives.

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[86] Sugirtharajah describes the first task of postcolonial criticism as being to reinvestigate the biblical narratives as literature written in various imperial contexts (Sugirtharajah in Dunderberg, Tuckett, Syreeni (eds.) 2001, p. 544.

[87] Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory*, Cambridge 2002.

[88] Nadim Khoury, *The Negotiation of National Narratives* (Dissertation presented to the Graduate faculty of the University of Virginia for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, August 2012), in print, p. 191.

[89] Khoury (in print), p. 113. Khoury writes that narratives 'must be "explored and negotiated" with those affected', which means the ' oppressed, forgotten, ignored, excluded, and marginalized'.

[90] Khoury (in print), pp. 5, 10. Khoury describes it as a 'multi-level game' that involves internal negotiations amongst members, and external negotiations with members of the other party'. Such negotiations are 'identity-costly' and 'identity-changing' (p. 21). Since the more powerful group usually is also more powerful in putting forward its narrative, the costs are higher to the more powerful group.

The goal is not to come to a shared narrative necessarily, but rather 'the disclosure of a world in common from diverse and possibly irreconcilable perspectives'.[91] In this study, the question is whether the Jeremianic tradition provides spaces in which different narratives be negotiated,[92] or rather spaces of exclusion. I therefore pay attention to tendencies of inclusion and exclusion.

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[91] Khoury (in print), p. 11 citing Andrew Schaap, 'Guilty Subjects and Political Responsibility: Arendt, Jaspers and the Resonance of the 'German Question' in Politics of Reconciliation', in: *Political Studies*, Vol. 49, no. 4 (2001), pp. 749-766, p. 762.

[92] Such a space resembles what Foucault calls 'heterotopia', a space that functions in non-hegemonic conditions. These are spaces of *otherness*, which are neither here nor there, that are simultaneously physical and mental, such as the space of a phone call or the moment when you see yourself in the mirror (Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', in: *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, no. 1 (1986), pp. 22-27).

1.6 Relevance

Given the challenges biblical scholarship is facing with respect to the existing diversity of methodologies, the possibilities of interdisciplinary research and the fields relevance to society, my expectation is that my research can make a contribution, modest and small-scale, to find new ways within the discipline. This study intends to cross borders in different ways. Methodologically, the different manifestations of what I call the 'Jeremianic tradition' are integrated.

The Masoretic Text is understood as an important solidification of an ongoing tradition, that was preceded by earlier stages (which to a certain extent were also transmitted – differences between MT and LXX point at this), and continued to be transmitted and newly applied. The different stages of the text tradition are connected. When the tradition is studied from this integrative perspective, the processes of appropriation in the different phases can be studied and compared. First then, the study integrates synchronic and diachronic methods of exegesis, by perceiving them as complementary and overlapping. Paying attention to the facts of the text from a synchronic perspective leads to diachronic questions. Moreover, from a diachronic point of view, textual development and the process of text transmission are interrelated. Secondly, the study sees studying the text and studying processes of appropriation of the text, often understood as a separate field of hermeneutics, as belonging together. Lastly, the study intends to cross borders between methods used in biblical studies and in other sciences. This can help to expand the perspectives by which texts are read. Exegetes sometimes focus too much on reading the text as containing religious ideas only, overlooking its other aspects and the connections and interdependencies of the religious with other realms, such as culture, politics and economics. In this study, I understand the processes producing tradition as relevant for understanding what the Jeremianic tradition is and in what way this tradition can be of value.

Through this study I want to gain insight into the processes of text-context interaction, in order to improve our understanding of how biblical texts developed. In doing so, I will be combining synchronic and diachronic exegetical approaches, thus helping to bridge this gap in exegesis. I work from the assumption that this provides insight into how these traditions function today and play a role in group identities, especially in conflict situations. The study combines traditional and newer exegetical methods with sociological and anthropological methods and will thus allow new perspectives to surface in the debate on methods of exegesis and biblical hermeneutics and in understanding religious tradition. The study will focus on the question of where we position ourselves in this tradition, both as heirs of the tradition and as scholars. The question needs to be asked regarding whether the scholar forms part of the ongoing tradition or is looking at it from the outside, from a neutral or

comprehensive perspective. The study will thus lead to questions pertaining to the moral aspects of exegesis, and to the character of religious tradition.

Secondly, the study also brings together exegesis and reception history. I look at reception history not simply as an interesting sub-discipline within biblical scholarship which often yields colourful results. Instead, all of what biblical scholarship does can be regarded as reception history, since the text itself is interpreted tradition. In the Jeremianic tradition the historical processes leading to the text in its different manifestations should be understood in combination with specific traits of the context of that certain manifestation. The connection between these often separate worlds of biblical scholars involved in exegesis and those studying contemporary appropriations is that both disciplines study processes of identity formation. In order to understand these processes, a combination of exegetical and critical hermeneutical approaches is needed. Exegetes not only analyze the tradition, but are part of the community of readers, adding possible meanings to the tradition. I intend to bring together, and show points of contact between the worlds of exegesis, which often leaves aside the questions of meaning, and that of the living, ongoing religious traditions, which exist wherever heirs of a religious tradition attempt to make sense of it in connection to their lives. Both exegetes and faith communities develop understandings of religious texts.

Thirdly, the study crosses borders between biblical studies and the social sciences by looking at the Jeremianic tradition as a form of collective memory, attentive to negations of power between centre and margins. The study combines traditional and newer exegetical methods with sociological and anthropological methods, and will thus allow new perspectives to surface in understanding religious tradition and in the debate on methods of exegesis and biblical hermeneutics. The study addresses the question of how the Jeremianic tradition continues to influence our world.

In chapter 2 I discuss Jeremiah 32 [39] according to the Masoretic Tradition. In chapter 3 I discuss the chapter according to the Septuagint, and compare the two versions. Chapter 4 discusses aspects of early Jewish and Christian reception history. Chapter 5 offers an analysis of contemporary Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Christian appropriations of Jeremiah 32 [39]. In the last chapter, chapter 6, I present my view on how to approach and understand the Jeremianic tradition of chapter 32, and religious tradition more generally. Each chapter begins with some complementary methodological considerations.

Jeremiah 32 according to the Masoretic Tradition (MT)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a semantic and syntactic analysis of Jeremiah 32 according to the Masoretic Tradition. As has been pointed out, the starting point of my research is an analysis of the text in its MT final form, in keeping with the approach as described by Eep Talstra[93] and also by Christof Hardmeier (see below). Observations made in that text lead to further investigations: incongruities found in the text hint at processes of appropriation taking place in the text. That the text contains such irregularities is not a surprise, but it is disputed how these irregularities can to be explained. Do the irregularities somehow make sense, or are they problems that ought to be overcome? I understand the irregularities in the present form of the text to have arisen in the process of composition.[94] Eep Talstra and Reinoud Oosting pose a question about the differences in the Hebrew and Greek text of Jeremiah 32 that is relevant here: 'Is textual complexity just an interesting riddle for the European scholarly mind, or is it to be read as the signal of something else?' They suggest that it should guide our thinking about the position of the Bible in theology and actual society.[95]

I understand the final form of the text as being one of the manifestations of the tradition, that, in a detailed analysis of how the different aspects fit together, shows seams, stumbling blocks and signs of diachronic development. Methodologically, linguistic analysis has priority over diachronic analysis, since 'one first reads a text as a whole, as a unity, in an attempt to establish the structure of meaning of the whole and the contributions of the constituent parts of the text to the total meaning'.[96] As Talstra and Oosting point out, beginning with observations that can be made in the text is not an

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[93] Talstra 2002, pp. 112-122.

[94] Georg Fisher underlines the interconnectedness of Jeremiah MT as a composition (Georg Fisher, Jeremia, *der Stand der theologischen Diskussion* Darmstadt 2007). Leuchter too underlines the unity of the book (Mark Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile in Jer. 26-45*, Cambridge 2008). Other scholars, such as Hardmeier (Hardmeier in: Groβ (ed.) 1995); Konrad Schmid, *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches*, *Untersuchungen zur Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jer. 30-33 im Kontext des Buches*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1996); Seitz 1989; Sharp (Carolyn Sharp, *Prophecy and ideology in Jeremiah*, London 2003); Talstra, Oosting in: De Wit, West 2008) point to traces of processes of composition in the book.

[95] Talstra, Oosting in: De Wit, West (eds.) 2008, p. 199.

[96] Talstra 1993, pp. 81ff.

attempt to be an objective reader. Rather, observations need to be made first in order to understand 'the textual composition as the result of processes of actualisation in ancient times'[97].

This approach gives insight into the structure and communicative layeredness of the text. The structure indicates what kind of communication is taking place and who is taking part in it, pointing out the role of the reader. It indicates how the text wants to be understood by stressing certain aspects and making connections between its different sections. Time is structured by defining what belongs to past, present and future.[98] Shifts in space are indicated. Talstra's approach brings to light both how the way a text is structured creates coherence, while also pointing out ambiguities and traces of diachronic development within the text. The continuing need to re-indentify with tradition, the diachronic development, led to this literature.[99]

Sometimes, the diachronic approach is seen as being alien or hostile to the nature of religious tradition. I argue rather that it takes into account that religious texts in every phase of their development are interpreted tradition. Each editor is also a narrator, and vice versa. Following the synchronic and diachronic analysis, I make an attempt to connect Jeremiah 32 to the book as a whole and to wider developments in Judean society around the Exile. I end with some hermeneutical considerations. This approach also makes clear that the work of textual criticism, which concerns developments in texts stemming from textual transmission is intimately connected to synchronic analysis as well as to the stumbling blocks thus encountered in the text,[100] as will become clear in this chapter and in chapter 3.

Jeremiah 32 MT is built around a narrative about the purchase of a

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[97] Talstra, Oosting in: De Wit, West (eds.) 2008, p. 204. They point out three attitudes towards the complexity of biblical texts: the attitude of biblical scholars who aim to explain stumbling blocks by tracing their origins, modern scholars who re-interpret stumbling blocks as fitting into the composition of the *Endgestalt*, and theologians who argue that complexity is irrelevant to contemporary processes of appropriation (p. 207). They aim to combine, as I do, academic methodology and the demand for actualization.

[98] Looking at the text divisions according to the Masoretic signs, we can suspect a mixture of theological arguments and arguments pertaining to content play a role. We find *petuchim*, a major section divider, before v. 6 and v. 16, the latter probably because the liturgical form of a prayer requires special marking. Thus, the text falls apart into three main blocks, vv. 1-5, 6-15 and 16-44. Verse 26 does not receive any special attention. The *setuchim*, a less strong divider, are found before כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהֹוָה in vv. 15 and 42, as well as before וְעַתָּה לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוֶה in v. 36, but not before the *Botenformel* (thus speaks the Lord) without כִּי in vv. 3, 14 and 28.

[99] Hardmeier in: Groβ (ed.) 1995, p. 188.

[100] Stipp writes that ´die Tekstentwicklung ist als einheitlicher exegetischer Aspekt zu bearbeiten; d. H. Daten der materiellen Textüberlieferung (Lesarten) und Kohärenzstörungen sind im Verbund zu behandeln, um die Bezeugungslage im Licht der Kohärenzstörungen und die Kohärenzstörungen im Lichte der Bezeugungslage interpretieren zu können (H.J. Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit: Studien zur Textenwicklung von Jer. 26, 36-43 und 45 als Beitrag zur Geschichte Jeremias, seines Buches und judäischer Parteien in 6. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main 1992, p. 1).

piece of land. According to this central narrative, the prophet's cousin Hanamel offers him a field for purchase, in Anathoth in the area of Benjamin. The introduction indicates that Jeremiah and the city are in situations of distress: the prophet is put in captivity because he advocates submission to the Babylonians, which is seen as treason by the king. Jerusalem is besieged by the Babylonians. To complicate matters, the field the prophet purchases is located in the region of Benjamin. The territory of Benjamin is already in Babylonians hands in the timeframe indicated in the introduction. In short, an ambiguous prophet does an ambiguous deal.

The dominant voice in the chapter, according to MT, takes exile and return as constituting factors of Judean identity.[101] With respect to this narrative of returning exiles, the prophet - who stayed in Jerusalem, but eventually, against his will, went to Egypt- is a marginal figure: Jeremiah did not experience Babylonian exile and return. The prophet became one of the vehicles expressing the identity of "returning exiles".[102] However, from a diachronic perspective, the chapter contains various interpretations of the purchase. These can be understood as expressing a variety of competing hopes, from different geographical and ideological perspectives, both within and outside of the land. In each reinterpretation orientations in and imaginations of landscapes are transformed and/or overruled. I point out traces of these narratives that are present in the chapter, and attempt to connect these to other groups in Judean society during the Babylonian hegemony.

In this chapter then, I analyze how to understand the text according to the way the Masoretic tradition presents it, followed by an attempt to reconstruct alternative narratives that the chapter contains. A complete reconstruction of ´what really happened´ in the struggles lying behind the MT chapter is impossible, as I argue below. I do feel the need to 'play along the margins of absence, to visit 'the space where literature can exist', to cite Alcalay once again. Below I present first the translation of MT chapter 32. I discuss the structure of the text and explain my view on continuity and discontinuity in the text, in discussion with Hardmeier, Migsch and Shead. I offer first a brief overview of the chapter as a whole, and of how, according to the structure of the final form, it wants to be understood. In a more detailed discussion of the sections I point out stumbling blocks in the text, both with respect to structure and content. I continue then to discuss the chapter from a diachronic point of view.

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[101] This perspective, found in vv. 36-41, reinterprets exile and return. They become symbolic concepts. This is not the voice of the 'returning exiles' also found in the chapter. As we see in chapter 5, Israeli and Palestinian readers identify this voice, that matches the Zionist narrative, as the dominant voice.

[102] As I explain below, both exile and return function as ideological concepts in different ways in the text.

2.2 Synchronic analysis of Jeremiah 32 MT

The structure below is based on Talstra's method of analysis. The text linguistic approach is innovative in the way it looks at Hebrew grammar and in the way it allows us to look at the text. The verb is seen as having a central role in the structure of a text, as the element governing other elements in a sentence. Markers, such as renominalization, deictic elements and macro-syntactic signs are taken into account as well. Traditionally, the Hebrew verb was qualified with the Time/Aspect/Mood-scheme that is applicable to Indo-European languages, but this fails to explain the Hebrew verb. Central in the text linguistic approach is that the Hebrew verb does not relate to time as a concept outside of the text, but rather expresses the sort of communication taking place and the information disclosed in the text. The way a verb functions depends on the type of text in which it is found.

2.2.1 Translation and structure[103]

1.**1** The word
2.   that came to Jeremiah from Adonai in the 10th year of Zedekiah king of Judah,
3.   the 18th year of Nebuchadrezzar
4.**2**. when the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem,
5.   and Jeremiah the prophet was confined in the court of the guard
6.   that is in the house of the king of Judah,
7.**3**. where Zedekiah king of Judah had confined him,
8.   saying:

9.Q   'Why do you prophesy
10.   saying[104]:

11.QQ   'Thus said the Lord[105]:

12.QQQ   'I myself am delivering this city into the hands of the king of Babylon
13.   and he will capture it.
14.**4**.   And Zedekiah, king of Judah, will not escape the hands of the Chaldeans,
15.   for surely he will be given into the hands of the Chaldeans
16.   and he shall speak to him face to face and his eyes to his eyes shall

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[103] The text is divided into simple sentences. 'Q' stands for discursive text (speech), in which *yiqtol* is the main tense, and 'N' stands for narrative text, in which *wayyiqtol* is the main tense.
[104] The formula לֵאמֹר introduces speech (Q).
[105] The messengers formula introduces speech (a quotation of God within the words of Jeremiah).

		see
17.**5**.		and to Babylon he will take Zedekiah
18.		and there he will remain
19.		until I take note of him.'

20.QQ	- utterance of Adonai

21.QQQ		' When you [plur] fight the Chaldeans
22.		you [plur] will not succeed.''[106]

24.**6**.N		and Jeremiah said:[107]

25NQ		'The word of Adonai came to me,
26		saying:

27.**7**.NQQ	'Take notice, Hanamel, the sun of Shallum your uncle will come to you,
28	saying:

29.NQQQ		'Buy for you my field
30		that is at Anathoth,
31		because to you is the right of redemption
32		to buy.'

33.**8**.NQN	And to me came[108] Hanamel, the son of my uncle, like the word of Adonai in the court of the guard,
34	and he said to me:

35NQNQ		'Please buy my field
36		in Anathoth,
37		in the land of Benjamin,
38		for yours is the right of possession
39		and yours is the redemption.
40		Buy it for yourself!'

41.NQN		And I knew
42		that this was indeed the word of Adonai.

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[106] Lines 21, 22 contain the addressee. It is not clear whether in lines 21, 22 God is quoted, or Jeremiah.

[107] The *wayyiqtol*-form signals a narrative text.

[108] וַיָּבֹא is the first of a series of *wayyiqtol*-forms with which the story of the purchase of the land is told.

43.**9**.		And I bought the field from Hanamel the son of my uncle
44		which is in Anathoth
45		and weighed out the money to him,
46		seventeen shekels of silver.
47.**10**.		And I signed the document,
48		sealed it,
49		had witnesses witness it
50		and weighed the money on scales.
51.**11**.		I took the document of purchase, the sealed one with the rules and the ordinances, and the open [one].
52.**12**.		And I gave the document of the purchase to Baruch, the son of Nerijah, son of Machseja, in the presence of Hanamel the son of my uncle and in the presence of the witnesses
53		who signed the document of the purchase,
54		and in the presence of all the Jews
55		who were in the court of the guard.
56.**13**.		And I commanded Baruch in their presence
57		saying:
58.**14**.NQNQ		'Thus has spoken Adonai of Hosts, the God of Israel:
59.NQNQQ		'Take these documents, this document of purchase, the sealed one and this open (one),
60		and put them in an earthenware jar
61		so that they last a long time.'
62.**15**.NQNQ		For thus says Adonai of Hosts, the God of Israel:
63.NQNQQ		'Houses and fields and vineyards will continually[109] be bought in this land.'

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64. **16**.NQN		And I prayed to Adonai
65.		after I had given the document of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah,
66.		saying:
67.NQNQ.**17**.		'Ah, Adonai Adonai!
68.		Behold, you made the heavens and the earth by your great

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[109] עוֹד + *yiqtol* can also be translated as again (see discussion below, vv. 6-15).

	power and outstretched arm.
69.	Nothing is too wondrous for you!
70.**18**.	You show kindness to the thousandth generation
71.	but repay the fathers' guilt on the lap of their children after them.
72.	O great God
73.	and mighty,
74.	Adonai of Hosts is his name.
75.**19**.	Great in purpose
76.	and mighty in deed,
77.	your eyes are open to all the ways of men
78.	to reward every one according to his ways and the fruits of his doings.
79.**20**.	You who has set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt until this day, in Israel and among men.
80.NQNQN	And you made[110] yourself a name as on this day.
81.**21**.	And you brought your people out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, and a strong hand and a outstretched arm and with great terror
82.**22**.	and you have given them this land
83.	which you swore to their fathers
84.	to give to them
85.	a land flowing with milk and honey.
86.**23**.	And they came in
87.	and took possession of it
88.	as they did not listen to your voice
89.	or walk in your law-
90.	all things
91.	you commanded them to do
93.	they did not do-
94.	you have caused all this evil to come upon them.
95.**24**.NQNQ	Indeed, the siegemounds have come to the city
96.	to take it
97.	and the city has been given into the hands of the Chaldeans
98.	who fight against it
99.	because of the sword, and the famine and the pestilence.

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[110] וַתַּעֲשֶׂה is the first of a series of *wayyiqtol*-forms (lines 80, 81, 86, 86, 87 and 94). Lines 80-94 are a narrative segment within the prayer. The *qatal*-forms in lines 88, 89, 91, 93 give background information. וַתִּקְרָא in line 94 moves the story forward again. In verse 24 (95) the perspective change to the present of the narrative.

100.	And what you have said
101.	has happened
102.	as you yourself see.
103.**25**.	Yet you have said to me,
104.	Adonai Adonai:

105.NQNQQ   'Buy for you the field with money

106.   and have witnesses witness it.'

107.NQNQ   While the city has been given into the hands of the Chaldeans!

108.**26**.N And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah

109.   Saying:

110.**27**.NQ   'Indeed, I am Adonai, Lord of all flesh

111.   Is anything too wondrous for me?'

112.**28**.   Therefore, thus the Lord has spoken:

113.NQQ   'I myself am giving this city into the hands of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon

114.   and he shall take it.

115.**29**.   And the Chaldeans will come

116.   who are fighting this city

117.   and set this city on fire

118.   and burn it

119.   and the houses

120.   on which roofs they have offered to Baal

121.   and poured out offerings to other gods

122.   to vex me.

123.**30**.   For the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah have only

124.   done evil in my eyes

125.   since their youth.

126.   For the sons of Israel only vex me with the work

             of their hands.'

127. NQ   – utterance of Adonai

128.**31**.NQQ   'For to my anger and to my wrath this city has been to me from the day

129.   on which they built her

130.   until this day

131.	so that I will remove it from my sight
132.**32**.	because of all the bad things the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah
133.	that they have done
134.	to vex me
135.	– they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

136.**33**.NQQN	They turned[111] their backs to me,
137.	not their faces
138.	though I taught them
139.	rising up early
140.	and taught them
141.	but none of them listened
142.	to receive correction.
143.**34**.	They set their abominations in the House
144.	which is called by my name
145.	to defile it.
146.**35.**	And they built their shrines of Baal
147.	which are in the valley of Ben Hinnom
148.	to make their sons and daughters pass through to Molech
149.	which I did not command them
150.	it didn't come up in my mind
151.	to do this abomination
152.	to cause Judah to sin.'

153.**36**.NQ	And now, therefore,
154.	thus Adonai the Lord of Israel has spoken concerning this city
155.	of which you [plur.] say:

156.NQQ	'It has been given into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword and by famine and by pestilence.'

157.**37**.NQQ	'Behold, I will gather them out of all countries
158.	to which I have driven them in my anger and in my wrath and in great indignation.
159.	And I will bring them again to this place
160.	and I will cause them to dwell safely.
161.**38**.	They will be my people
162.	and I will be their God

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[111] 136-152 is a narrative segment: וַיִּפְנוּ (line 136) and וַיָּשִׂימוּ (line 143) are *wayyiqtol*-forms.

163.**39**.		And I will give them one heart and one way
164.		to fear me forever
165.		for their good and for the good of their sons after them.
166.**40**.		And I will make an everlasting covenant with them
167.		that I will not turn away from them
168.		to do them good
169.		and fear for me I will put in their hearts
170.		so that they do not turn away from me
171.**41**.		I will rejoice over them
172.		to do them good
173.		and I will plant them in this land faithfully
174.		with all my heart and all my soul.'

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175.**42**.NQ   For thus the Lord has spoken:

176.NQQ   'As I have brought all these great bad thing on these people
177.   so I am bringing upon them all the good things
178.   of which I have spoken to them.
179.**43**.   Fields will be bought in this land
180.   of which you [plur] say:

181.NQQQ   'It is a desolation without men or beast
182.   it is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.'

183.**44**.NQQ   Fields will be bought with money
184.   and deeds will be written
184.   and sealed
185.   and witnesses will witness
186.   in the land of Benjamin, and in the places around Jerusalem, and in the towns of Judah, the towns of the hill country, the towns of the Shephelah, and the towns of the Negev.
187   For I will turn their fate.'

188 NQ   – utterance of Adonai.'

2.2.2 The structure of Jeremiah 32 MT

The structure of the text as a whole according to the Masoretic Tradition is complex, containing tensions. I argue below that the structure of MT is intended as ambiguous in terms of continuity and discontinuity in time and space. Looking at content, the chapter can be divided into an introduction, a narrative in which Jeremiah reports the purchase of his cousin's field, followed by a prayer and an answer to the prayer in two sections. In that reading, the chapter is centred around a sign-act.[112] Following the act are responses to it, first from the prophet (the prayer), then from God. However, looking at structure, a different picture emerges: the narrative of purchase is not central in the chapter.

sections Jeremiah 32 MT

Vv. 1	superscript: announcement of word of God
vv. 2-5	introduction to the text
Vv. 6-15	narrative of purchase
Vv. 16-25	Jeremiah's prayer
Vv. 26-35	God's answer to Jeremiah (part I)
Vv. 36-41	God's answer (part II)
Vv. 42-44	prophecy of good things after disastrous events

To begin with, the *Wortgeschehensformel* (WGF, the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord) requires attention.[113] It is a macro structural feature that is unique to the book of Jeremiah announcing a word from God.[114] Shead points out that when a WGF is followed by לֵאמֹר , it is always followed by a divine word. If it is not, as in chapter 32, a divine word does not always follow.[115] In that case, the WGF functions as a superscript.[116] However, in vv. 6

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[112] The purchase is a sign-act in the shape of a '*Selbstbericht*' (Winfried Thiel, *Die Deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 26-45*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981, p. 32).

[113] The WGF, הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהֹוָה, is unique to the book of Jeremiah and occurs ten times in the book: 7:1, 11:1, 18:1, 21:1, 30:1, 32:1, 34:1, 34:8, 35:1, 40:1, and twice with a different addressee: the people of Judah (25:1, 44:1). Five times we find אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה, a mixture between WGF and WEF (which in a way v. 6 is too). Shead points out that it is usually followed by a longer or shorter description of circumstances, a divine word and a narrative (the last two elements also occur in reversed order) (Andrew G. Shead, *The Open Book and the Sealed Book*, *Jeremiah 32 in its Hebrew and Greek Recensions*, Sheffield 2002, pp. 26, 52, 242).

[114] Shead 2002, p. 45.

[115] In chapters 7 and 30 the WGF is immediately followed by a word of God (in chapter 7 the WGF is not reflected in LXX). In chapters 21 and 40 however the WGF's are not followed by an oracle introduced by WEF or BtF. Chapter 21 instead presents a discussion between Pashur, Zephaniah

and 26 we do find a *Wortereignisformel* (WEF),[117] although the WEF in v. 6 is a variant form.[118] While v. 6 does indeed introduce a word from God, it presents Jeremiah in the 3rd person as introducing the word ('and Jeremiah said'), and not the narrator who is speaking in v. 1. In v. 26 on the other hand, the narrator is speaking ('and the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah'), like in v. 1. From this formal perspective then, v. 26 continues v. 1, so that the word of God announced in v. 26 and presented in vv. 27ff. has to be the word brought to our attention in v. 1. The word of God in vv. 27ff. functions at the same time as the answer to the prayer.

In MT, the prophet remains the speaker from v. 6 until v. 26, where the narrator takes over until the end of the chapter. Vv. 1-25 form the background to the word of God, even though with respect to content the chapter, as I explain below, is built around the narrative of purchase in vv. 5-15. Thus, the structure of the text focuses the reader's attention on the word re-announced by the narrator in v. 26, and delivered in v. 27. In this sense, vv. 6-25 offer background information, vv. 26-44 are presented as the main part of the chapter . Here, the narrator constructs a debate between God and an unidentified you-plural group that voices its views in vv. 36 and 43. This you-group, that is addressed in MT, but not in LXX, plays an important role in the MT chapter. Both quotes are embedded in refutation-speeches: vv. 36-41 and 42-44.

Within vv. 26-44 then, the prophet retreats to the background. Instead, the you-plural group becomes central. In this section, v. 36 opens with וְעַתָּה לָכֵן (and now, therefore), heightening the expectation of the reader.[119] Vv 36-41, are thus presented as the heart of the chapter. With

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and Jeremiah, in which Jeremiah does cite oracles from God, giving the people of Jerusalem the choice to remain in the city and die, or to go over to the Chaldeans and live, but none of these is introduced by the narrator. In chapter 40 the 'oracle', if we can still call it that way, isn't uttered by Jeremiah, God or the narrator, but by the chief of the guards. Chapter 34 begins with a WGF, followed by a BtF in v. 2, but nevertheless v. 6 indicates that the words spoken before were spoken by Jeremiah (the prophet Jeremiah spoke all these words). Shead therefore argues that the WGF functions as a superscript, without constituting a grammatical antecedent (Shead 2002, p. 48). Compare also chapter 11, where Jeremiah responds in the first person (v. 5) to a WGF (like in chapter 32), followed by a word of God in the first person. Also in chapter 25 the WGF is followed by a report of what Jeremiah told the people, presenting both the prophet in the first person (v. 3, 17) as well as as God (vv. 6, 7 etc), and after v. 27 God addresses Jeremiah, telling him what to prophesy to the people. In conclusion, a WGF is not always followed by a resumptive introduction and the narrator is able to switch between presenting Jeremiah and God as speaker without making this explicit.

[116] Shead 2002, p. 52. Shead argues that in v. 1 the WGF is 'part of the overarching third-person narrative framework of chs. 32-45 within which are held individual narratives and discourses'.

[117] 'The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah' (וַיְהִי דְּבַר־יְהוָֹה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר).

[118] The WEF is introduced by Jeremiah (and Jeremiah said) and reads: הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר.

[119] לָכֵן is not represented in LXX. The combination with וְעַתָּה occurs elsewhere in the book of Jeremiah in Jer. 42: 15 where LXX only has δια τουτο. It seems that the MT redactor added stress here by suggesting a causal relationship (see also chapter 3).

respect to content too, vv. 36-41 form the culmination point of the chapter, moving far beyond the concepts introduced in Jeremiah's narrative of purchase in vv. 6-15. The purchase is not mentioned in this section. In the most important communication taking place in the chapter, the narrator and this you-plural group play an important role. The prophet and the situation of the siege – the context given in the introduction – no longer play a role. There is a tension then between what is pointed out as central according to content and according to structure. My claim is that the final form of the chapter according to the Masoretic Tradition does not intend to be read as if it takes place, so to speak, on one stage, but rather guides the reader to move along with the chapter to a different time and space. Before I substantiate that claim, I now analyze these different levels more closely, combining synchronic and diachronic observations.

2.3 The text in detail: synchronic and diachronic observations

My intention in connecting synchronic observations to diachronic analysis is to gain insight into tradition as continually developing, pushed forward by the need for understanding in a new context. Tradition exists in different manifestations, of which MT represents one. MT can be understood from a synchronic perspective, but in order to gain insight into how the position voiced in this *Endgestalt* was reached, it is helpful to analyze diachronic development. This sheds light on what tradition is and what moves it forward.

Section I, vv. 1-5

This introduction, in which the narrator is speaking, places the chapter within the context of the Babylonian siege and Jeremiah's imprisonment. Verses 3-5 are a compendium of words of king Zedekiah to Jeremiah from an exilic perspective.[120] In addition, the 2nd person plural group addressed links the section to vv. 36-41 and vv. 42-44. Verses 3 -5 state that the city will be taken, Zedekiah will not escape and he will be deported to Babylon. The phrase הִנְנִי נֹתֵן אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל (behold, the city will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, v. 3)[121] presents the military action carried out by the king of Babylon as something initiated by God.[122] Verse 5 contains the expectation of deportation at least of king Zedekiah and also interprets the preceding verse as a prediction of Zedekiah's deportation.[123] This interest in the fate of king Zedekiah is not present in the other sections of the chapter. I explain below that these words can be understood ironically.

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[120] Seitz 1989, p. 246.

[121] The phrase is unique to the book of Jeremiah. In this chapter it also occurs, but slightly differently, in v. 25: בְּיַד הַכַּשְׂדִּים, וְהָעִיר נִתְּנָה בְּיַד הַכַּשְׂדִּים, in v. 28 it is almost identical to v. 3, but without הַכַּשְׂדִּים. Verse 36 has נִתְּנָה בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל. However, this time the phrase is not presented as a word of God, see also below.

[122] Seitz points out that the phrase can function conditionally, as it does for instance in chapter 38:17, 18, is used irreversibly here. (Seitz 1989, pp. 246, 247). In the context of the siege, this can be understood to voice the perspective of the 597 exiles who foresee doom for Zedekiah cs.

[123] Seitz 1989, p. 247. Both Seitz and Sharp 2003, p. 138 point to the relation of 32:1-5 and the very similar introduction in 34:1-7. Sharp explains these last verses as an oracle of judgment in ironic language, whereas 32:1-5 are a counter-prophecy from the exilic perspective to rehabilitate Nebuchadnezzar.

In verse 5, an unidentified group of 2nd person plural is addressed. The underlined lines are missing in LXX:[124]

Hebrew	Translation
וּבָבֶל יוֹלֵךְ אֶת־צִדְקִיָּהוּ	and to Babylon he will take Zedekiah
וְשָׁם יִהְיֶה	and there he will remain
עַד־פָּקְדִי אֹתוֹ	until I take note of him,
נְאֻם־יְהוָה	utterance of Adonai
כִּי תִלָּחֲמוּ אֶת־הַכַּשְׂדִּים	when you [plur] fight the Chaldeans
לֹא תַצְלִיחוּ	you [plur] will not succeed

It contains a view on the fate of Zedekiah, and addresses a you (plur)-group. Of Zedekiah it is said that he will remain in Babylon 'until I take note (פָּקְדִי) of him'. Carolyn Sharp argues that v. 5b פקד is intently ambiguous:[125] v. 5b was added in order to counter the ironic, negative view on Nebuchadnezzar that the otherwise very similar Jeremiah 34:1-5 puts forward. In Jeremiah 34:5, Zedekiah is told he will 'die in peace'. Jer. 34:5 has to be read, Sharp writes, as a 'heavily ironic proclamation to Zedekiah that he will not die in the military conflict […] but will instead be treacherously murdered by Nebuchadnezzar'. The addition 'until I take note of him' in our verse does not mean to cast a more favorable light on Zedekiah. Rather, it seeks to rehabilitate Nebuchadnezzar, who in MT is uniquely presented as a servant of the Lord.[126] In fact, this explanation matches an MT plus[127] about the temple vessels in Jeremiah 27[34]:22:

Hebrew	Translation
בָּבֶלָה יוּבָאוּ	They shall be brought to Babylon
וְשָׁמָּה יִהְיוּ	and there they will be
עַד יוֹם פָּקְדִי אֹתָם	until I take note of them
נְאֻם־יְהוָֹה	utterance of Adonai
וְהַעֲלִיתִים וַהֲשִׁיבֹתִים אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה	and bring them up and return them to this place

This chapter recounts how the temple vessels will brought to Babylon. Here, too, the foreseen period of absence, or exile, is presented as a phase that will

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[124] Shead explains the plus as a case of parablepsis in LXXV. I argue that is was added in MT. In chapter 3 where I compare LXX and MT I discuss this plus more extensively. Here I focus on the outlook of this MT plus.

[125] Sharp 2003, pp. 138, 139.

[126] Sharp 2003, pp. 136-140. The title 'my servant' applied to Nebuchadnezzar is found in the book of Jeremiah only in its MT version, in Jer 25:9, 27:6, and Jer 43:10.

[127] A 'plus' is an element that occurs in the Masoretic tradition, but not in for instance the Septuagint. In the Septuagint, it would then be a 'minus'. In the book of Jeremiah, most pluses are found in MT, although LXX contains some small pluses too.

last until God takes the initiative to end it. As in chapter 32, the verb פקד serves to 'underline the point that it is the Lord who controls and wills all of these things'[128]: the Chaldeans are a tool in the hands of God. It is therefore best to accommodate with the foreign rulers, instead of attempting to fight them, as 32:5b points out. This fits the nuanced and more positive presentation of Nebuchadnezzar in the Masoretic tradition as a whole. The effort of casting a favourable light on Nebuchadnezzar 'reaches its apex in Jeremiah 52, where it is noted that Jehoiachin is singled out for special recognition'.[129] The figure of Zedekiah 'became a means of self-definition for later generations', as Stipp points out: 'these texts are not about the last Judean king but about the writers themselves and about their communities.'[130]

A second argument why v. 5b might be an addition to MT, fitting the outlook characteristic of MT, is that the you-plural group addressed in it returns in v. 36 and 43. In these verses too, the identity of this group is not made explicit. LXX addresses a 2nd person singular in vv. 36 and 43: Jeremiah.[131] In vv. 25 and 44, where in LXX the word of God is unfolded, Jeremiah plays a decisive role only in LXX, as I explain in the next chapter.

The anonymous you-plural group is told that fighting against the Babylonians is to no avail – since God is in control. A new construction of identity from a post-exilic perspective for those Judeans who underwent the Chaldean occupation is opened up: destruction and exile had to happen, the Chaldeans are a tool in the hands of God. These lines of thinking are present in the Septuagint tradition as well as I discuss in the next chapter, but there is a tendency in the Masoretic Text to elaborate on them.

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[128] Sharp 2003, pp. 136-140.

[129] Based on a synchronic analysis of the MT text John Hill argues that the nuanced, distinct and subtle portrayal of Babylon, reflects the book's 'capacity to surprise', this positive portrait 'contributes to a legitimation of post-exilic Judah's situation of continued subjugation to the great empires of the day', and the present subjugated position is explained as an extension of the period of Babylonian occupation. Hill points out that in a later period, represented in MT, the interest in the figure of Nebuchadnezzar and his role grew (John Hill, *Friend or Foe? The Figure of Babylon in the Book of Jeremiah MT*, Leiden, 1999, pp. 212, 213, 218).

[130] Sharp citing Stipp 1992 in Sharp 2003, p. 140. Such an interest in the temple vessels (the ongoing importance of the temple) and an ironic view on Zedekiah (as a non-Davidic king) would fit Zadokite interests, rather than Shafanide interest, as I argue below.

[131] LXX has a singular here. Shead explains that textual evidence 'permits no firm decision', so literary arguments have to decide. (Shead 2002, pp. 220, 221). He does not discuss the effects of the difference.

Section II, vv. 6-15 story of the purchase

In this section Jeremiah is speaking. Jeremiah announces a word from God that he cites in v. 7, and is enacted in v. 8.The field to be purchased lies outside the city, in Anathoth,[132] and is according to the timeframe in the introduction already in the hands of the Babylonians. However, these verses do not refer to the situation of the siege, nor to the imprisonment of Jeremiah. I pay attention to the understanding of the purchase indicated in vv. 7 and 8, and to the interpretations provided and hinted at in vv. 14 and 15.

Differences between Hanamel's request announced in v. 7 and his actual request in v. 8[133], the stress on 'buying', and the focus on the details of the purchase also suggest that in fact redemption[134] is not central in the Masoretic Text:[135]

God (v. 7)	**Hanamel (v. 8)**
קְנֵה לְךָ	קְנֵה נָא אֶת־שָׂדִי
אֶת־שָׂדִי	אֲשֶׁר־בַּעֲנָתוֹת
אֲשֶׁר בַּעֲנָתוֹת	אֲשֶׁר ׀ בְּאֶרֶץ בִּנְיָמִין
כִּי לְךָ מִשְׁפַּט הַגְּאֻלָּה	כִּי־לְךָ מִשְׁפַּט הַיְרֻשָּׁה
לִקְנוֹת	וּלְךָ הַגְּאֻלָּה
	קְנֵה־לָךְ

The practice of redemption as described in the laws of Leviticus and the book of Ruth functions on the level of families, protecting them against poverty through loss of land.[136] Such laws are of importance in traditional peasant societies.[137] However, the detailed description of the purchase (vv. 9-12) draws attention to the legality of this purchase, rather than to the redemptive side of it.[138] In the Jeremiah text it is stressed that Jeremiah *buys* and buys *for himself*

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[132] The boundary between the territory of Benjamin and the 'environs of Jerusalem' lies only a few miles to the north of Jerusalem. Anathoth, with other small villages, functioned as an agricultural satellite for Jerusalem (Oded Lipschits, *The rise and fall of Jerusalem*, Winona Lake 2005, p. 209).

[133] A third variation is found in v. 25.

[134] I do not offer an overview of understandings of redemption, or the development of the concept. I understand it as the restoration of something that was lost as a consequence of failure. Restoration can be understood in geographical, religious and/or economical terms. See Shemaryahu Talmon, '"Exile" and "Restoration" in the Conceptual World of Ancient Judaism, in: James M. Scott, *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Perspectives*, Leiden 2001, pp. 107-146 for a more elaborate discussion.

[135] LXX does not contain the notion of redemption.

[136] R. Westbrook, *Property and the family in biblical law* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement), Sheffield 1991, p. 113.

[137] Norman C. Habel, *The land is mine. Six biblical land ideologies*, Minneapolis 1995, pp. 110, 114.

[138] The concept of redemption is very important in Zionism, where it is connected to the land.

(קְנֵה־לָךְ) indicating what is important here: the buying, not the redeeming.[139]

In addition, what is described here is unique and so is the way it is phrased. It is underlined that Jeremiah buys the land for himself, rather than in order to restore it to its original owner Hanamel.[140] Uniquely, in this text the word מִשְׁפָּט occurs in combination with the practice of redemption: v. 7 has מִשְׁפַּט הַגְּאֻלָּה (right of redemption)[141], v. 8, which is the fulfilment of the word of God in v. 7, reads מִשְׁפַּט הַיְרֻשָּׁה (right of inheritance). Both combinations are unique. This difference between v. 7 and v. 8 seems to make explicit that what is at stake here is not the possession of fields on the level of families: the text shifts from the family level to the level of possession of land as a people. V. 8 uses מִשְׁפַּט הַיְרֻשָּׁה instead of מִשְׁפַּט הַגְּאֻלָּה in v. 7. The term יְרֻשָּׁה calls into memory the promise of the land to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 28:4). The concept is a key to the Deuteronomistic narrative of the taking possession of the land,[142] describing the allocation of land.[143] It views land not as heritage, but 'as a territory taken possession of both legitimately and by force.'[144] Thus the text moves away from the context of the family to the realm of economy. The storage of the documents signals that time will pass before the documents will be used, and the importance of Jeremiah's act becomes reality. It provides a subtle transformation from what is presented as a case of redemption – that is of importance to the family – to the issue of land on the level of the people as a whole.

We now turn to a possible meaning of the narrative of purchase as a

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[139] The description resembles that of Boaz redeeming the property of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 4). קְנֵה־לָךְ here seems to have become part of the ritual, as well as the presence of witnesses (vv. 8-10). In this story however the verb to redeem is used (Ruth 4:4,5), in the laws of Leviticus 25: 25-28 it is not.

[140] A difference with Lev. 25 is that Jeremiah is not buying the land back, as seems to be the case in Lev. 25, but he buys it directly from Hanamel. This is *pre*demption, not redemption (Westbrook 1991, p. 59). In the text of Leviticus it is not clear whether the redeemer is to return the land to its original owner or has become the owner himself. If the latter is true, the interest of the law would be to keep land within the family, regardless of which member owns it (Westbrook 1991, p. 60, citing Pedersen). It is important to note that the laws of the Jubilee (Lev. 26-28) apply to cases where land was sold out of the family (Dalit Rom-Shiloni, personal communication). Therefore, the idea that redemption is an alternative to waiting until the Jubilee (so J.A. Fager, *Land tenure and the biblical Jubilee: uncovering Hebrew ethics through the sociology of knowledge* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement), Sheffield 1993, p. 94) does not make sense).

[141] The full phrase is מִשְׁפַּט הַגְּאֻלָּה לִקְנוֹת, the right of redemption to buy. In chapter 3 I briefly discuss the differences between MT and LXX in these verses. LXX does not contain the notion of redemption, but presents Jeremiah as 'presbyter'.

[142] Lohfink in: Gerard Johannes Botterweck, Carl Vilhelm Helmer Ringgern (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids 1986, s.v. יְרֻשָּׁה, p. 283. For example, Deut. 2:5, Josh. 1:15. The verb also occurs in v. 23 in the context of the narrative of the *Landnahme*.

[143] G. Wanke, 'Jeremias Ackerkauf: Heil im Gericht?'', in: *Prophet und Prophetenbuch, Festschrift für O. Kaiser*, Berlin 1989, pp. 267, 268.

[144] Lohfink in *Theological Dictionary* 1986, p. 283.

whole, as indicated in vv. 14 and 15. In these verses, the act is important as a sign of future economical restoration, more so than as a case of redemption, but the text hints at a different context in which the narrative might have functioned. The storage of the documents by Baruch (v. 14) indicates that the act holds a promise for future times. The introduction places the narrative of purchase in the context of the siege – although the narrative itself does not refer to it. If we presuppose the siege as the context for the narrative, the field (that lies outside the city, in Anathoth)[145] is already in the hands of the Babylonians, and Jehoiachin cs had already been deported. The narrative could then be understood as a claim of right of purchase by those exiled with Jehoiachin when they return to the land. The narrative can be understood differently when it is disconnected from the context of the siege and the land interests of deported groups. It can function in a perspective of continuity within the land, as well as from a perspective of discontinuity and absence from the land.

I now discuss in more detail at vv. 14 and 15, which both interpret the story and are integrated in the story itself:

> 14. 'Thus said Adonai of Hosts, the Lord of Israel: 'Take these documents, this document of purchase, the sealed one and this open book,and put them in an earthenware jar so that they last a long time.'15. For thus said the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel'Houses and fields and vineyards will continually be bought[146] in this land.'

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[145] The boundary between the territory of Benjamin and the 'environs of Jerusalem' lies only a few miles to the north of Jerusalem. Anathoth, with other small villages, functioned as a agricultural satellite for Jerusalem (Lipschits 2005, p. 209).

[146] עוֹד יִקָּנֶה: Oesch points out that עוֹד can express continuality (in English translation 'continually') or a new beginning ('again'). The former interpretation fits the perspective of those who remain, the latter that of the returning exiles. LXX unambiguously translates ἔτι, 'again' (Josef M. Oesch, ' Zur Makrostruktur und Textintentionalität von Jeremia 32' , in Walter Groβ (ed.), *Jeremia und die "Deuteronomistische Bewegung"*, Weinheim 1995, pp. 215-223, pp. 216-218). The temporal reference עוֹד יִקָּנֶה can be understood in two ways: עוֹד, an adverb of time, can express duration ('continually'), or repetition ('again') (L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, Leiden 1953, s.v. עוֹד). In the book of Jeremiah עוֹד + *yiktol* appears in both meanings, so that the verse can be interpreted in two different ways. The construction appears in Jeremiah 9:2 with the meaning of continually and several times in chapter 31 (vv. 4, 5, 23) in the context of consolation prophecy meaning again. The construction also appears in 33:10 where it is put in the mouth of the exiles who moan the fate of Jerusalem. In this context עוֹד means 'again'. This verse has resemblances both to 32:15 and to 32:44. Verse 43 is similar, but does not contain עוֹד. LXX, however, does have ἔτι. In my view, the story of purchase functioned in a context in which continuity in the land was underlined. I therefore translate 'will continually be bought' here. However, in the context of the chapter as a whole, and in combination with v. 43, it has to be understood 'will again be bought'.

The final form of the text contains a post-exilic perspective, that presupposes a period of absence from the land, as we saw in the introduction. However, v. 14 does not indicate absence, but rather that 'das Land für einen unbestimmten Zeitraum seinem Besitzer zwar erhalten, zur Nutzung aber entzogen bleiben wird'.[147] According to v. 14, the field is continuously in the same hands, although temporarily stored. Thus, the narrative fits the perspective on those who stayed in the land. The narrative defends the interest of a group underlining ongoing existence in the land. Several perspectives are possible.

First, Jeremiah is presented as the prophet advocating surrender to the Babylonians. From this perspective, the purchase can be understood as treason: Jeremiah buys land that is in the hands of the enemy.[148] A version of the narrative may have functioned in a pre-siege context to advocate submission to the Babylonians.[149] During the siege, as Rom-Shiloni argues, this 'symbolic act of redemption of the land serves as a comforting prophecy for the Judean remnant under Zedekiah',[150] pointing to economic revival beyond Babylonian occupation. From this perspective, the act of buying land fits Jeremiah's insistence on ongoing existence in the land.[151]

Verse 15 expands Jeremiah's field to 'houses, fields, and vineyards', still presenting restoration in economic terms. It shifts from the field in Anathoth to fields, houses and vineyards in general. The restoration is to take place in 'this land', according to v. 15. Within the narrative, 'land' refers back to land of Benjamin in v. 8. Below I discuss the role of these verses in the chapter as a whole.

Section III, vv. 16-25
Within the chapter as a whole this section contributes to the question of how Jeremiah's previous message of doom and present message of salvation beyond deportation can be combined, as phrased in v. 25. I argue that this section contains a rather refined reflection on destruction and exile that differs from the next section, vv. 26-35.

The prayer contains a doxology (vv. 17-23a) and a lawsuit (vv. 23b, 24),[152] in which the bad things happening to the city of Jerusalem and the

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[147] Schmid 1996, p. 90.

[147] Seitz 1989, p. 244.

[148] Habel 1995, p. 90.

[149] The narrative can be understood as functioning to underscore Jeremiah's solidarity with those who remained in Judah and the prophet's insisting on submission to Babylon as enabling ongoing life in the land.

[150] Dalit Rom-Shiloni, 'The prophecy for 'everlasting covenant' (Jeremiah XXXII: 36-41): An exilic addition or a deuteronomistic redaction?', *Vetus Testamentum* Vol. 53, no. 2 (2003), pp. 201-223, p. 206.

[151] Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, p. 222. It may even be that this story legitimizes those who bought land from the upper class when they were deported.

[152] Walter Brueggemann, 'A "Characteristic" Reflection of What Comes Next (Jer. 32: 16-44)', in: Stephen Breck Reid (ed.), *Prophets and Paradigms, Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker* (Journal of

Chaldean threat (vv. 23b, 24) are interpreted as a punishment for not listening to God. Prior to this, there is a narrative presenting a founding myth in which the gift of the land is in the centre of attention. First we will look at the founding myth, which expresses a view of the origins of 'your people Israel' (v. 21).

Verse 17 present God as the creator.[153] The land presented is an originally good land, אֶרֶץ זָבַת חָלָב וּדְבַשׁ (v. 22), that is given as promised,[154] as in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic books.[155] The first step in the acceptance of this gift is to 'go in and possess'.[156] The text suggests that the condition of the gift was Israel's faithfulness (v. 23). However, according to this small narrative, immediately after the people take possession of the land the people became unfaithful.

The charge (v. 23b) that follows the commemorative narrative is phrased in terms of not following God's commandments.[157] It does not refer to cultic sins, or to defilement of the land, as does the next section.[158] The punishment presented in this text is the destruction of the city (v. 24).[159] As in the quotation of v. 36 the sword, famine and pestilence are related to the Chaldeans, but God is presented as the cause of this (v. 23b).[160] This 'theodic conclusion'[161] of punishment following disobedience fits the idea of communal retribution expressed in v. 18a.[162] In contrast, v. 19 expresses the idea of individual retribution, a principle also found for instance in the sapiental

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the Study of the Old Testament Supplement), Sheffield 1996, pp. 16-32, pp. 21, 22.

[153] Also, the Exodus is referred to in v. 21.

[154] See Ex. 13:5, Dt. 1:8, Josh. 5:6 and Deut. 11:9.

[155] Habel 1995, p. 41. See Ex. 3:17, 33:3, Josh. 5:6 and Deut. 6:3, 11:9.

[156] Verse 23, Deut. 1:8, 10:11 (Habel 1991, p. 40). Again we see here the root ירשׁ (also in v. 8).

[157] Verse 23 contains three reproaches: the people did not listen to God's voice, did not walk in his law and did not do the things God commanded them to do. The focus is not on cultic misbehaviour, but on following law and commandments.

[158] See below on v. 34 for the theme of defilement.

[159] Note that the verb in v. 24 is in *qatal*-form here, as also in v. 25 and 43. It can be translated as 'I have given', looking back on the past. In vv. 3, 28 the formula begins with הִנְנִי + ptc and can be translated as 'I am giving', or as 'I am about to give'. In my view, in v. 24 and 25 the *qatal*-form expresses the city has already been given into the hands of the Chaldeans, which is consistent with the situation of the siege. The city is not pictured as destroyed (as it is in v. 36). The image is, that God had already given the city into the hands of the Chaldeans, which goes beyond the presentation in vv. 3 and 28, but this 'giving' has not yet taken effect. The נִתְּנָה in v. 43 can be understood as a statement of those remaining in the land expressing that the land surrounding Jerusalem is already occupied by the Babylonians, but in the present structure of the chapter it has to be understood as quote put in the mouth of those in Babylon, so that it can be refuted.

[160] Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, p. 209.

[161] Brueggemann in: Breck Reid (ed.) 1996, p. 23

[162] We find this in several places in the Pentateuch (e.g. Exod. 20:5,6, Deut. 5:9,10), but the language here resembles most Ex. 34:7.

tradition.[163] The section closes with a third variation of Hanamel's request (v. 25), that is now put in contrast with the reality of the siege: the fate of land and city are presented as being related.

Deportation is not mentioned in these verses, neither is the circumstance of Jeremiah's imprisonment nor the purchase of the field. The siege is mentioned in v. 25. Verses 16 (the deed) and 25 (the purchase) connect these verses to vv. 6-15 and v. 17 (nothing is too wondrous for you) to vv. 26-35. The theme of taking possession of the land is brought into the text here, telling the narrative about the gift of the land and what went wrong, and then focusing on the fate of the city as a result of the sins of the people. The purchase of the land is featured in the light of the siege of Jerusalem and appears as something illogical, a perspective not present in vv. 6-15. Jeremiah's incomprehension is the rhetorical device used to address the larger theological question raised by Jerusalem's fate.

The section closes by describing a dilemma: Zedekiah's question voiced in v. 3 ('How dare you prophesy?') is transformed into the dilemma voiced by Jeremiah at the end of the prayer: how to combine the command to buy the field with the destruction at hand (v. 25). Verse 25 creates a contrast between Jeremiah's purchase of the land and the fact that the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.[164] Different from v. 15, only a field is mentioned here, not houses, fields, and vineyards.

The section can be considered as reflecting an aspect of collective memory, establishing the origins of the 'people of Israel'.[165] We see how in vv. 20-21 continuity is established with 'your people Israel' to whom the land was given, and who then turned to sin. Narratives of collective memory also assign rights and duties to in- and out-group members. This is what happens in vv. 18 and 19, where the effects of human deeds are discussed, and also in vv. 22 and 23. According to these last verses the relationship between God and his people is such that God gave them the land, and in response the people were to listen to God's teachings. Since they did not listen, the people have to be punished.

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[163] Compare for instance Job 34:11, Prov. 31:11, 25:22. The principle is also found in Deuteronomy and Ezekiel, see for instance Ezek. 14:12-23, 18 and 33:1-20, see: M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic school*, Oxford 1972, pp. 217, 218.

[164] Both MT and LXX present this giving of the city into the hands of the Chaldeans as something that had already happened, although it has not yet taken effect, which matches the urgency of the situation presented here: 'here are the siegemounds!' (v. 24). See also the next chapter.

[165] Zerubavel writes that narratives of collective memory establish the origins of a group and point out continuity (Zerubavel 1997, p. 7) in order to demonstrate 'that its roots go back to a distant past', and to justify 'the group's claim as a distinct unit' (Slocum-Bradley in: idem (ed.) 2008, p. 12.).

Section IV, vv. 26-35

As pointed out above, v. 26 connects back to v. 6, and v. 27 is the long-awaited word of God. The prophet moves off central stage. In vv. 26-44 the you-plural group becomes central. Verses 17 and 27 connect prayer and answer. Both verses picture God as a universal god (v. 17: you made heaven and earth, v. 27: God of all flesh). In v. 17 Jeremiah states that nothing is too wondrous for God, in v. 27 God asks this as a (rhetorical) question. In the present shape of the chapter, two reflections on the destruction are placed in parallel: these verses and the previous section.

This section contains elements of a commemorative narrative, but less fully developed. In the previous section, the prayer, the moment of entering the land is pointed out as the time when the people started sinning. In vv. 26-35, however, the starting point of sinning is pointed out in v. 30 as 'since their youth' (מִנְּעֻרֹתֵיהֶם) and in v. 31 'from the day it [the city] was built (until this day)'. The city of Jerusalem is presented as entirely evil:[166] sins are connected to the city, rather than to the land. In v. 32 those who vex God are first identified as the people of Israel and Judah, and then as the kings, princes, priests, prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Both people and leaders are held responsible.[167]

The sins listed here (vv. 29b-35) are more detailed than in the prayer, and they are cultic in character. The theme of defilement occurs here, as well.[168] The focus in these verses is on the city, not the land, and defilement here does not regard the land, but the temple. In these verses, not the land, but the city has become a bad place. The defilement is not connected to the theme of dispersion and return to the land.[169] The full destruction of Jerusalem

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[166] The youth of the people (v. 30) is mentioned more often in the book of Jeremiah. The term is used to look back on history. The book of Jeremiah does this in different ways. In 2:2 and 3:4 the youth is a period of devotion. According to 3:25 'we and our fathers' have sinned 'from our youth to this day'. It is not clear which past generation מִנְּעֻרֹתֵיהֶם refers to – possibly the patriarchs or the generation of the Exodus. Also in 22:21, a chapter against the royal house, youth is the (non-specified) time when the disobedience began. In v. 31 the day that the building of Jerusalem started, thus the beginning of the kingdom, is taken as the starting point.

[167] A list similar to the second, but without men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, occurs in 2:26. The אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלֵם stem from chapters 4-20 in which only the people are held responsible for the doom, whereas in chapters 21-25 the leaders are blamed (Seitz 1989, p. 4).

[168] Verses 34, 35 are almost parallel to chapter 7:30b, 31.

[169] Defilement of the land is an important theme mainly in Jer. 2 and 3 and in Ezekiel. The verb טמא broadly has a cultic background: the land is defiled through idolatry. We find this for example in Jer. 2:7: the depiction of defilement in this chapter seems to fit the ideology of those deported to Babel. In Ezek. 36 the theme of defilement and the empty land are connected: the land is defiled through the idolatry of the people and has to be cleaned. After the destruction and deportation the people can return again.

– the evil city – is awaited in this section (vv. 30, 31).[170] The origins of the people are presented negatively: they have done nothing but evil (v. 30), Jerusalem has aroused anger from the day it was built (v. 31), and therefore it needs to be destroyed completely (v. 31). In the prayer sinning begins as the people enter and possess the land, while here the beginning of the kingdom is pointed at (and the 'youth' of the people). This section presents the perspective of utter doom for the city.

The prayer and the answer represent two perspectives on the destruction of Jerusalem. Vv. 26-35 contain a different position with respect to the Babylonian conquest than that presented in vv. 16-25. Vv. 16-25 offer a more positive and refined narrative, discussing human responsibility and presenting the origins of the addressees in a positive light. With Sharp and Seitz, I understand vv. 26-35 as containing the ideology of Jehoiachin exiles. Sharp connects the full-doom perspective of vv. 26-35 to the pro-*golah* group who see those in exile with Jehoiachin as the true community of faithful, and expect doom for those left in the city with Zedekiah. Seitz also ascribes these verses to these deportees, pressing for 'the necessity of a judgment which will bring about the final elimination of the post-597 remnant'.[171] In their ideology this destruction is the necessary condition for salvation in the future, the 597 events anticipate a fuller judgment. The remnant community has no legitimate future existence.[172] In vv. 26-35 Israel and Judah are addressed, whereas in vv. 16-25 'Israel' is addressed. These two different types of addressee are also present in the ongoing tradition, as I will show in chapter 4. I do not offer a solution for how to understand this difference. However, it is noteworthy that while the chapter addresses different groups of Judeans, these verses imagine a certain group of Judeans as 'sons of Israel', refraining from distinguishing between Judahites and Israelites.[173]

Below I offer another possibility of how the doom foreseen for the city in vv. 26-35 may have functioned.[174] I argue that the image of Jerusalem as an evil city has to be understood in connection to the image of Benjamin as the space of restoration found in vv. 6-15. It would fit the ideology of a group for whom the future does not lay in the temple and the city, but in the surrounding land. The hope expressed in vv. 14 and 15 applies to the area of

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[170] Brueggemann connects this full doom perspective to the original preaching of the prophet. However, as far as one can define Jeremiah's message, it may rather have been: 'Surrender to the Babylonians and live.' (Brueggemann in: Breck Reid (ed.) 1996). See also below for possible contexts of the full doom position.

[171] Seitz 1989, p. 224.

[172] Seitz 1989, p. 294.

[173] It might aim to construct unity between diverse Judean groups by referring back to the narratives of the united monarchy under king Saul and David. This can either be an existing identification, or a new one arising from exilic and postexilic developments.

[174] I suggests that such negative images of Jerusalem may well have functioned both in the narratives of the people who remained in the land and of those deported with Jehoiachin.

Benjamin. Below I substantiate this view on portraying Jerusalem as the space of sin and on Benjamin as the space of future using Philip Davies' suggestion of post-exilic Benjaminite-Judean tensions.

Section V, vv. 36-41: God's answer part II

> 36. Therefore, assuredly, thus Adonai the Lord of Israel has spoken concerning this city of which you say: 'It has been given into the hand of the King of Babylon by the sword and by the famine and by the pestilence.' 37. 'Behold, I will gather them out of all countries to which I have driven them in my anger and in my wrath and in great indignation and I will bring them again unto this place and I will cause them to dwell safely. 38. They will be my people and I will be their God 39. And I will give them one heart and one way to fear me forever for their good and for their sons after them. 40. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them [which involves that] I will not turn away from them to do them good and I will put my fear in their hearts that they do not turn away from me. 41. I will rejoice over them to do them good and I will faithfully plant them in this land with all my heart and all my soul.'

In this section and the next the you-plural group that was also mentioned in v. 5 again plays a role. As said above, v. 36 opens with וְעַתָּה לָכֵן (and now, therefore), heightening the expectation of the reader.[175] Verses 36–41 are thus presented as the heart of the chapter. I will now argue that with respect to content this section stands out within the chapter.

In this section and the next the you-plural group that was also mentioned in v. 5 again plays a role. Otherwise, this section hardly connects to the rest of the chapter: there is no reference to the purchase of the field by Jeremiah – or to any buying at all. The city and its destruction are not discussed here. Instead, those in exile are addressed, and the space is referred to as הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה (v. 37). The sin-punishment scheme central in vv. 16-25 and vv. 26-35 does not apply here.

The verses are a quasi-refutation speech, since the refutation (vv. 37-41) does not counter the statement and has no literary connections with it.[176] In v. 36 King Nebuchadnezzar is presented as the agent of destruction by uniquely attributing God's instruments of destruction—war, pestilence, and disease—to him. Verse 37 counters this by presenting God as the ultimate stage-manager of the exile. God is uniquely pictured as the active force of

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[175] לָכֵן is not represented in LXX (see also chapter 3).

[176] Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, pp. 202-204.

destruction.[177] The refutation continues to sketch an image of the future that differs greatly from images of economic restoration in v. 14, 15, and vv. 42-44: an everlasting covenant will govern the relationship between God and his people, in which turning away from God is no longer an option. The notion of a 'divine deed of grace without demand for obedience' is exceptional.[178] Here God 'is the only active agent of change'. Here, destruction is not awaited as in vv. 27-35, and vv. 38-41 describe the 'return' not in economic terms as in vv. 42-44, but in religious terms, as a return to God. It is a positive transformation of the people, without demanding their positive response.[179]

The plural in v. 37 suggests a situation of widespread Diaspora: the Masoretic Text reads מִכָּל־הָ֯אֲרָצֹ֯ות (plural), while the Septuagint has ἐκ πάσης τῆς γῆς (singular).[180] Apparently the group addressed in the Masoretic Text is a post-exilic group, living in a situation of wider Diaspora and experiencing themselves as still experiencing exile.

The perspective of hope expressed in vv. 36-41, embodied in the everlasting covenant, which depicts the future relation between God and people as one of perfect harmony, seems beyond the experience of any group of readers. It functions in a different way than the more tangible claims of vv. 42-44. Verses 36-41 seem to be beyond any claim of fulfilment. The section constructs a world in which the events of 587 belong to the past, but the everlasting covenant has not yet come. The group producing this insertion apparently understood itself as living in between punishment and the fulfilment of these promises. Exile and return gain a more symbolic meaning. One may live in the land, but still be in exile. The group did not consider the exile as having ended with the return. This idea was present in the post-exilic community. The Masoretic Text of the book of Jeremiah has its own particular

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[177] Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, p. 211.

[178] Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, p. 213. Dalit Rom-Shiloni 2003 demonstrates the independent character of vv. 36-41 through an examination of five unique literary features of these verses.

[179] Rom-Shiloni also points out that in the prophecy of the new covenant in Jer 31:31-34 the attribute 'new' points back to the former covenant, while עֹולָם 'projects the future, and does not mention either past commitments or prior sin of the people' (Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, pp. 217-218).

[180] Shead argues that the *Vorlage* of LXX must have been plural and that the rendering in LXX may also mean 'from the whole earth'. He points out that the question of who is gathered according to these verses is a *crux interpretum* (Shead 2002, p. 212). From this literary perspective it is reasonable that the *Vorlage* of LXX stays closer to the situation of the chapter (as also in vv. 36 and 43), while MT expands the message of the chapter.

contribution to it.[181] Exile is understood as a situation of religious shortcoming.[182] This indicates that what lies behind this insertion in the text is no longer the group pressing for return and for ownership of land and religious tradition, but a group pressing for religious renewal, a group that has Jerusalem as its centre, while also including the Diaspora. In the Masoretic Text, vv. 26-44 are situated (long) after the narrative of the purchase. The Masoretic Text takes the liberty to explicitly address the post-exilic context.[183] This version of the chapter steps over the older controversies presented in vv. 16-25.

MT focuses on vv. 36-41. This section presents a unique viewpoint of renewal by transforming the message that the text had in a previous stage and applying it to a new addressee.[184] The anonymous you-plural group opens a new construction of identity in which destruction and exile had to happen. It also offers later readers an opening to identify with the text. MT's version of the chapter thus creates space for new readers.

Section VI, vv. 42-44: God's answer part III

These verses contain a refutation-speech. In contrast to the previous section (a quasi-refutation-speech), this time the claim (v. 43) is refuted. Besides that, this section is intimately connected to the rest of the chapter, although it transforms earlier interpretations of the purchase, mainly that of vv. 14 and 15. The message of the purchase is applied here to the situation after 'all these great bad things' (v. 42) have happened, which is the situation in which the deportees find themselves.

The claim of the you-plural group explicitly imagines the land as empty. It suggests that exile and return are experiences that concern all Judeans. In this view, the future of the people lies entirely with that part of the community that returns to the land. No role exists for the large part that remains in Babylon nor for the people who remained in the land. Vv. 43[185] can

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[181] Hill points out that the placing of the Oracles Against the Nations at the end of the book is an example of how the structuring having taken place in the (final) redaction steers our understanding of the book (in chapters 46-51I, in LXX the OAN are placed after Jer. 25: 13). This position of the OAN at the end of the book reflects the self-understanding of the group behind the last redaction of the text: the book is framed by references to exile in 1:1-3 and chapter 52, thus constructing 'the world of the text as one of unended exile'.

[182] This perspective is still expressed in modern Judaism by for instance Yeshayahu Leibowitz (Gied ten Berge, *Land van Mensen: Christenen, Joden en Moslims tussen confrontaties en dialoog*, Nijmegen 2011, p. 99. 100).

[183] Shead 2002, p. 221.

[184] Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, pp. 201-223.

[185] The נִתְּנָה (*qatal*) in v. 43 can be understood as a statement of those remaining in the land expressing that the land surrounding Jerusalem is already occupied by the Babylonians. In the present structure of the chapter it has to be understood as quote put in the mouth of those in Babylon. Their outlook on the land is then refuted.

be understood as testifying to the perspective towards Judah of those exiles who, after some generations, had built up a life in Babylon and had no intention of leaving Babylon. This position is countered in v. 44 with a statement derived from v. 15, that is now applied to a larger geographical area.[186] The return is described in factual, economic terms. It is presented as the restoration of a previous situation.

Both v. 43a and v. 44a form an inclusion with v. 15. As in v. 8 and v. 15, the buying of the field is connected to the theme of land, and not to the city (as is the case in vv. 26-35). In v. 44 the promise of v. 15 is applied to the hope of the exiles to return.[187] V. 43 says 'land of which you say', whereas in v. 36 the quote is introduced with: 'the city of which you say'. The list of regions in v. 44 also shows this interest in the land and enlarges the geographical scope of Anathoth to a much wider area. Added is כִּי־אָשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבוּתָם (I will restore their fortunes): a line expressing discontinuity that can be understood as a reference to exile.

Unlike vv. 16-25, vv. 26-35 do not contain a reference to the purchase. Verses 36-41 do not refer to the purchase either. Vv. 42-44 would make sense following immediately after vv. 16-26, expressing the views of returned exiles, in contrast to the views of the Jehoiachin exiles in vv. 26-35: vv. 16-25 can be understood as containing the views of those exiles who returned to the land and claim it is theirs. Possibly, this group identified itself as 'Israel'.

The image of the land turned into a שְׁמָמָה (v. 43) stems from prophecies of complete destruction of the land or the towns of Judah.[188] It seems the exiles reuse this theme. The concept of the empty land was 'read as an ideological story controlling membership in the new community'.[189] The exiles needed this image to construct an ideology for their going back to the land. This image now perfectly fits and functions within a prophecy with an exilic perspective. The מֵאֵין אָדָם וּבְהֵמָה that follows the image of the שְׁמָמָה also occurs in Jer. 33:10, 12. In chapter 32 it can be understood to reflect the attitude of the exiles towards their homeland. It is used here to depict the land as 'empty and devoid of inhabitants' in order to 'justify the claim of returning exiles that their lands have no other rightful owners or occupants'.[190] In v. 44 the message of continuation of settlement present in the story of the purchase

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[187] Rom Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, p. 207.

[187] Rom Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, p. 207.

[188] Land: e.g. Jer. 4:7, 4:27 and 12:11, towns of Judah: 9:10, 10:22. In 34:22 (word of God, referring to the towns of Judah) and 44:22 (Jeremiah in Egypt, referring to the land) in combination with מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב. Jer. 26:9 (Jeremiah is quoted), Jer 33: 10 ('you' are quoted) and 33:12 (God is speaking) are comparable. Here we encounter the prospect of the return of daily life, as in 32:42-44, see also Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, p. 210.

[189] Robert P. Carroll, 'The Myth of the Empty Land', in: David Jobling, Tina Pippin (eds.), *Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts* (Semeia 59), Atlanta (1992), pp. 79-93, p.79.

[190] Habel 1995, p. 140.

is adapted to the situation of the exiles who hope to return to the land.[191]

Identifying Judeans living in Babylon as exiles suggests that they should 'return', to what is their land because being in Babylon means being out of place. The concepts express a claim to the land and an exclusive identity as the people of God. The concepts only apply to those who return from exile. The reality that while some groups were deported during the period of Babylonian rule, others stayed in the land is concealed. This perspective then is the dominant perspective in this chapter. The narrative of those who stayed in the land functions as a kind of counter narrative. Those who returned from Babylon to Judah were confronted with those who remained in the land, having had different experiences and having constructed a different identity.

The narrative of purchase revisited: reconstructing narratives

I consider the narrative of purchase as the starting point from which the rest of the chapter developed, even if in its present MT shape the purchase is no longer central. It is impossible to be certain about its original *Sitz im Leben*. It is, however, possible to indicate contexts in which it might have functioned before it was embedded here in the context of the siege. This attempt involves deconstruction and reconstruction of the text in order to sketch possible contexts that produced certain layers of the text. My goal is not to give a reconstruction of the reality behind the text, but to give a possible reconstruction of marginal and hidden narratives, offering a more complete landscape of memory than the texts presents.

What is problematic with respect to chapter 32 is that we do not have the story of purchase apart from its current interpretative setting, but only the story within a text that is a complex set of dominant, counter and absent narratives. In its present MT shape the chapter is post-exilic, and has an exilic perspective. The themes of exile and return, central in the dominant narrative, function as foundational myths in the narrative. They are presented as decisive mass-events befalling the Judean people and interpreted in a religious framework. Those Judeans who went from Babylon to Judah 'attempted to expunge the history of those who remained in the land during the Babylonian exile'.[192] However, the picture that can be reconstructed on the basis of inner- and extra-biblical sources and archaeology differs from the way that these events are presented in the book of Jeremiah.[193] Much more than a historical phenomenon, exile is a concept with enormous creative and formative power, decisive for how (certain) Judeans came to see themselves (religiously) and the world they lived in: in other words, a foundational myth. Exile provided a self-definition for part of the community constructing a new identity that did not

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[191] Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, p. 207.
[192] Lipschits 2005, p. xiii.
[193] See above and see also, for instance, Bob Becking, "We All Returned as One!", in: Lipschits, Oeming (eds.) 2006, p. 7.

exist in pre-exilic Judah: Israel, which in theological terms functions as an ethnic, unified group with a particular past and particular religious convictions.[194] In the landscape imagined in this narrative, Jerusalem has a central position.[195]

The view expressed in vv. 14 and 15, of ongoing existence in the land, which is the land of Benjamin is likely to have existed among those who remained in the land after the deportation of 586. Those who remained in the land wanted to emphasize that the prophet Jeremiah supported their position.[196] This purchase underscores Jeremiah's solidarity with those who remained in Judah and his conviction that submission to Babylon can mean ongoing life in the land. In connection to this, the focus on land as the space of restoration found in vv. 6-15 is important. The narrative can be explained as an attempt to urge people to stay in the *land* after the destruction of the *city*: vv. 6-15 focus on the land of Benjamin as the space of restoration. It suggests that Jerusalem is the city of sin, and Benjamin the land of the future.

This can be linked to what Hardmeier calls the *Gefangenschaft und Befreiung Jeremias-Erzählung* (GBJ-narrative).[197] Jeremiah 37:12 mentions that Jeremiah leaves the city to share in some property in Benjamin. It can be understood as the clue that led to chapter 32.[198] The GBJ-narrative criticizes the 'refusal by royal courtiers, army officers, and certain other Judahites to accept the possible benefits of Babylonian hegemony', it favours the position of those who remained in the land.[199] As Hardmeier argues, v. 15, which interprets the narrative of purchase, presents the perspective of continuity of life in the land of Benjamin after the destruction of Jerusalem as a modest

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[194] Ehud Ben-Zvi, 'What is New in Yehud? Some Considerations', in: Rainer Albertz, Bob Becking (eds.), *Yahwism after the Exile*, *Israelite Religion in the Persian Era*, Assen 2008, pp. 35, 36.

[195] Ben-Zvi in: Albertz, Becking (eds.), pp. 36, 37.

[196] Habel writes that this story is meant to explain – from a pro-Babylonian perspective – why Jeremiah is staying behind in Canaan (Habel 1995, p. 89).

[197] This GBJ-narrative (Jer 34:7; 37:3-40:6) is written from the perspective of continuity in the land. According to 37: 12, Jeremiah goes to the territory of Benjamin to share in some property there: this verse might have led to the narrative of purchase (see Hardmeier in: Walter Groβ (ed.) 1995, pp. 187 ff). Seitz too points out that vv. 6-14 fit quite well after chapter 37, at a point in time when the siege had resumed. In 37:11-15 Jeremiah unsuccessfully tries to go to Anathoth, and in 32:6-15 he does succeed with the purchase (Seitz 1989, p. 244). See also below on GBJ-narrative. The narrative of purchase may also have functioned to relieve Jeremiah from the charge of collaboration (37: 11-16) by providing a reason for why he went to Anathoth. According to Hardmeier, Jer. 32:2-15 originally functioned as the opening of the GBJ-narrative.

[198] Here, however, the verb חלק is used, suggesting that Jeremiah is one of the heirs, rather than the redeemer. LXX has ἀγοράζω. This suggests that the narrative of purchase in Jer. 32 was not originally part of the GBJ-narrative (contra Hardmeier).

[199] 'Those who left the land chose to abandon their own estates, and 'one function of such literature may be to justify the loss of land holdings to those who remained in Judah.' (David S. Vanderhooft in conversation with Oded Lipschits, SBL 2005,
<http://www.jhsonline.org/cocoon/JHS/a063.html#4>.

perspective of hope: one day the Babylonian hegemony will have ended, and life will be as it was again.[200] It fits the perspective of those who stayed in the land after deportation, underlining their continuity in the land. Jeremiah is one of the people of the land of Benjamin himself, who represents steadfastness under Babylonian dominion.

Verse 44 expands the geographical perspective: it says that fields will be purchased not only in the land of Benjamin, but also in 'the places around Jerusalem, and in the towns of Judah, the towns of the hill country, the towns of the Shephelah, and the towns of the Negev'. The hope for economical restoration is now applied to Judah as a whole, but not to Jerusalem. V. 44 reinterprets v. 15 as opening the way for the possibility of future purchase, beyond deportation.[201] Verses 6-15 contain no suggestion of discontinuity, it is only in the context of chapter 32 as a whole that the narrative expresses discontinuity, and 'the future repurchase by returnees'.[202]

Verses 1 and 3-5 are part of the new framework reapplying the narrative of purchase:[203] the narrative is situated in the context of the siege of Jerusalem in 587. At that point, Jehoiachin cs had already been deported. King Zedekiah and those with him remained in the city under siege. Understood in this framework, and taking into account the threat of destruction of the city in vv. 28-35, the narrative fits the ideology of the group Jehoiachin deportees:[204] doom to Jerusalem means the end of king Zedekiah and those who remained in the city with him.[205] According to these deportees, Zedekiah and those who remained in the land are subjected to destruction.[206] In their ideology king Zedekiah and the people who remained in the land are doomed. Hope is only for those who return from exile.

As already mentioned, vv. 26-35 can be understood as reflecting the view of the Jehoiachin exiles, who expect doom for those who remained in the land, and see themselves as entitled to the land of Judah. In vv. 16-25, Israel is

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[200] According to Hardmeier the verses present 'eine bescheidene Zukunftsperspektive nach dem Untergang Jerusalems'. This narrative remained a 'marginale Episode' that was not further developed in biblical literature (Hardmeier in: Groβ (ed.) 1995, pp. 207, 211.

[201] Seitz argues that v. 15 contains an 'unausgesprochene Heimkehrverheissung': Jeremiah's purchase is interpreted as opening 'the way for the possibility of future purchase' (Seitz 1989, p. 244). In my view, this is also true for v. 44.

[202] Seitz 1989, p. 244.

[203] See also Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, p. 207, and Hardmeier in: Groβ (ed.) 1995, p. 198.

[204] I follow Seitz, who calls this position a exilic redaction according to which 'a judgment which will bring about the final elimination of the post-597 remnant' is necessary (Seitz 1989, p. 224). Sharp however connects the expectation of full doom with Judah-based traditionists who remained in Judah after 597: 'the theopolitical contours of the Judah-based platform are constituted by […] a sense of the full, imminent and inescapable doom approaching Judah' (Sharp 2003, pp. 157, 158).

[205] The image of Jerusalem as a doomed city also fits the perspective of those who remained in the land, see below. It is possible that it was re-used by the Jehoiachin exiles.

[206] Chapter 24, for instance, presents this perspective.

addressed. It constructs a narrative in which Israel was brought out of Egypt, to receive the land and take possession of it. The Chaldean threat befalls the people of Israel. Apparently, 'Israel' is understood here as an identity that includes Israel and Judah. When vv. 42-44 are understood in connection with vv. 16-25, it presents the exile and the good things following destruction and exile as befalling 'Israel'.

Verses 36-42 take a different position. These verses do not represent the view that the future of the people of Judah lies entirely with that part of the community that returned to the land. Verses 36-41 do not contribute to the reinterpretation of the narrative of purchase. In a way, this position steps over older debates – between the group exiled with Jehoiachin, Zedekiah cs who were also exiled and those who remained in the land – of which we find remainders in the chapter. It no longer distinghuises between 'returning exiles' and other groups. It sketches an understanding of exile and belonging to which both those in the land and those in Babylon, and possibly also in other spaces of Diaspora, can identify.

2.4 A move in time and place

2.4.1 Introduction

I have argued that the text asks for a combination of diachronic and synchronic approaches, since it contains reflection on the process of *tradere*, and since this process, in my view intently, has resulted in the ambiguity that characterized the chapter. From this perspective, what do processes of transformation taking place in Jeremiah 32 say about the tradition? Seeing the tensions between content and structure, how do we envision the role of the redactor(s)? As said, I claim that the *Endgestalt* of Jeremiah 32 does not intend to be read as if it takes place, so to speak, on one stage, but rather guides the reader to move along with the chapter, through time and space.

The final shaping of chapter 32 MT has to be placed at a distance from the group conflicts in Judean society following the events of the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of part of its people. The Masoretic tradition moves away from the context of the siege in order to address new participants of the tradition in different circumstances. Here vv. 36-41 form the culmination of the chapter. The present structure points to vv. 36-41 as the heart of the chapter, verses in which the purchase no longer plays a role. I argued that the MT version of the chapter thus steps over older controversies, presenting a new perspective on exile and redemption. I now give a reconstruction of possible backgrounds to the voices present in the text.

The chapter contains ongoing interpretations of the hope for the future the purchase is seen to symbolize. In that sense, it contains a variety of perspectives on how present doom and future salvation can be understood. The only group explicitly referred to in the chapter is that of Zedekiah cs: the deportation of king Zedekiah and the destruction of Jerusalem are announced. The text situates itself during the siege of Jerusalem. If we were to read the chapter (without vv. 36-42) as taking place simultaneously, during the siege, as indicated in the introduction, it suggests that the chapter reflects the outlook of the Jehoiachin deportees, who are mocking Zedekiah cs, foreseeing full doom for them while pressing for a return among themselves and claiming all of the land, including Benjamin (v. 44). This is the perspective suggested in the Septuagint, as I argue in chapter 4. The MT on the contrary contains an explicit shift in time and place, creating a text that transforms itself under the eyes of the reader. From the pre-exilic perspective, or a perspective in which only Jehoiachin cs are deported while Zedekiah cs remain in Jerusalem, MT moves to a post-exilic perspective. The you-plural group introduced already in v. 5, is the first indication. As said, in v. 36 and v. 43 this group is referred to again as speaking about the land from a distant perspective. While vv. 42-44 phrase the exclusive perspective of the returning exiles, vv. 36-41 present a perspective

stepping over these older debates. MT presents vv. 36-42 very explicitly as the heart of the chapter, verses in which the purchase no longer plays a role.

I will now discuss this continual tension in the chapter then with respect to two important aspects of structure: time and place.

2.4.2 Temporal shift

Jeremiah 32 (Masoretic Text)

v. 1   the word that came to Jeremiah from God
       [...]
       and to Babel Zedekiah will be brought
       and *there he will be*[207]
       until I take note of him
       declares God
       if (when) you (plural) fight the Chaldeans
       you (plural) will not succeed[208]

v. 3   I am delivering ..

v. 6   and **Jeremiah said**
       the Word of God came *to me*
       saying

v. 8   and Hanamel came to me

v. 25   and the city has been given

v. 26   and the word of God came *to Jeremiah*
       saying

v. 28   I am giving this city

v. 36   **therefore**
       [...]
       the city of which you [plur] say
       'It has been given'

v. 37   behold, I gather them from all the lands

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[207] Words in italics are found in LXX, but in a different wording. In the next chapter I discuss MT and LXX differences in more depth.

[208] MT pluses, material present in the Masoretic tradition, but not in the Septuagint, are in bold print.

v. 43   the land of which you [plur] say

v. 44   and fields will be bought with money
         and a book written
         and sealed
         and witnesses will witness […]

In terms of time, the chapter moves between presenting the city as about to be given into the hands of the Chaldeans, so that its destruction is at hand (vv. 3, 28), or it is already in the hands of the Chaldeans, but not yet destroyed (vv. 24, 25). As argued, the verb in the phrase 'I have given into the hands of' in vv. 3 and 28 begins with הִנְנִי + ptc and can be translated as 'I am giving', or: 'I am about to give'. In vv. 24 and 25 the formula appears in *qatal*-form and can be translated as 'I have given', looking back on the past: from the perspective of God, the city and king have already been given into the hands of the Chaldeans, but it has not yet become reality. In v. 36 however, the city is presented as destroyed already, as is suggested in v. 36 by the addition of 'by sword, famine and pestilence' (בַּחֶרֶב וּבָרָעָב וּבַדֶּבֶר).[209] The Masoretic Text that focuses the attention of the reader on vv. 36-41 explicitly gives a new temporal reference here: after the destruction of Jerusalem, thus indicating that a different time/space framework applies to them than the one presented in the introduction.

2.4.3 Spatial shift

I now give an overview of the variety of imagined landscapes around the narrative of purchase. I argue that although Jerusalem is usually understood as the centre of Judean identity, the text focuses on the land – more precisely, on Benjamin. Implicitly, Jerusalem, the centre of political and religious power, is renounced in favour of 'the land'. A next layer expands the geographical focus to a wider area. Only the last layer switches its focus to the city, constructing Jerusalem in a wholly new way. This transfer is negotiated by a very ambiguous prophet and a plot of land in an ambiguous space, Anathoth. The text as a whole constructs a layered and ambiguous landscape, even though the narrative of returning exiles is dominant. I offer a possible ideological background and tensions for these spatial switches.

We see a shift in focus from the city to land, and back to city again, in combination with an ambiguous narrative. The purchase of land by the prophet calling for acceptance of Babylonian dominion, focusing on an area that was

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[209] See also chapter 3. In v. 43 the *qatal*-form can be understood as expressing the view of Jehoiachin-exiles.

not destroyed like evil Jerusalem, hints at a perspective of continuity in the land. Within the story of the purchase itself, vv. 14 and 15 interpret the narrative of purchase as expressing a modest perspective of continuation in economical terms, insisting that life can continue in spite of Babylonian hegemony. Jerusalem is presented as the place of sin. The very negative image of the city fits the perspective of those who stayed in the land. To them, the future lies in the territory of Benjamin. Jerusalem and the temple had not lasted. In the chapter, however, the image of destruction of the city seems also to be used by Jehoiachin exiles who negatively depict those who remained in the city with Zedekiah. To the returning exiles, the city might still have been the doomed landscape, with the land being the landscape of hope and future. Still, 'evil city' is not the final verdict on Jerusalem in Jeremiah 32. The last layer of the text switches its focus from land to city again, presenting the city as the scene for a final, fully harmonious reunification of God and people, an image that seems purely imaginative, beyond any claim of fulfilment. Here, the city seems largely an imaginative landscape.

Here space is constructed in a very imaginative way, that is far away from the rather realistic, economic construction that first explained the purchase. This last layer of the chapter creates an inclusive identity, in the sense that it includes older layers. However, a better way of putting it might be that it overrules other layers, since the debates going on there are no longer relevant. Since in the present construction the layer expressing continuity in the land is hardly visible anymore, it would be hard to argue that the landscape constructed here is, in fact, really inclusive. It is a landscape in which traces of those who remained and the significance of Benjamin to them are largely erased, although not completely.

Summarizing, in Jeremiah 32, an ambiguous prophet does an ambiguous deal, but nevertheless functions as a figure of identification for returning exiles. In the course of the narrative, we see how Jerusalem is presented as the evil city, the city of sin, from the day it was built, so that it needs to be removed from God's sight (v. 30). Instead, the land – initially the land of Benjamin, in vv. 42-44 expanded to a larger part of Judah, but without Jerusalem – is imagined as a space of hope. In the last layer of the chapter, in a very imaginative way, the city becomes the centre of longing again. How did this transfer of significance, from city to land, and back to the city again, take place? I argue that the shift can be understood in terms of changing geographical orientations as a result of Babylonian hegemony. I focus on some aspects of centre and periphery, such as the position of Jeremiah as a prophet from Anathoth, geographic tensions between Jerusalem as part of Judah and Anathoth in Benjamin. I will relate these tensions to tensions between groups favouring the development of tradition putting scribes in the centre and groups understanding the process of *tradere* as being in the hands of priests.

The different geographical imaginations in Jeremiah 32 can be

understood through the difference between a narrative in which exile and return are shaping events versus Benjaminite traditions of continuity in the land. Judeans did not necessarily understand themselves as sharing the same identity in terms of religion, culture, and geography before Babylonian hegemony. The conquest by the Babylonians brought change in Judean identities. In terms of Judean identity in relation to landscape, enormous transformations took place. As a result of the partial deportations by the Babylonians Judean society fell apart into different groups, which were geographically, ideologically and/or temporally divided. [210] Each of these groups, had to compose a new relation to the far-away, no-longer-present-landscape or no-longer-existing landscape, and compose a new relation to the new landscape.[211]

A Benjaminite-Judean power struggle is likely to have been one of the factors shaping groups in Judean society, and the book of Jeremiah. Identity in a diversity of Judean groups is what we witness being shaped and negotiated in the book of Jeremiah.

With respect to this dominant narrative of returning exiles, both Jeremiah and the region of his origin, Benjamin, are marginal and ambiguous.[212] The land of Benjamin that used to be part of Israel, became at some point part of Judah and remained so for more than a century. When Jerusalem's upper layer was deported, and the temple no longer functioned as an important locus of identity, economical and political power shifted: the province of Judah was governed from Mizpah, within the territory of Benjamin.[213] The Babylonians established Mizpah in the region of Benjamin as

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[210] King Zedekiah (Zedekiah was a puppet-king, put on the throne by the Babylonians, who hoped thus to domesticate Judah. But instead of providing them stability, he rebelled, which again resulted in deportation in 587. Zedekiah was taken to Babylon. The upper layer of society was deported, among them its aristocracy, priests, etc. Jerusalem was destroyed, and so were the important centers in the Shephelah, while many left their settlements in the Jordan Valley, the Negev and the southern hills of Judah, where Judahites soon become a minority (Lipschits 2005, p. xii.)

[211] Judean identity, like all identity, is complex and fragmented. It has ethnic, political, geographical, linguistic cultural and religious aspects and none of these alone 'is' Judean identity, and all of these aspects are continually being reshaped. Sometimes, for instance, Judean identity might include Babylon or Samaria (See also Jon L. Berquist, 'Constructions of Identity in Postcolonial Yehud', in: Oded Lipschits, Manfred Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, Indiana 2006, pp. 53-65). All texts of the Bible can be considered as texts negotiating identity. The book of Jeremiah is unique not because it describes a period in which identity was in transition, but because the book is a very complex result of those processes of identity formation in different, often opposing groups, and contains reflection on this process. I am interested in how the book of Jeremiah reflects complexities of the process of tradere, while remaining a tradition.

[212] Davidson also points at the significance of Anathoth as located in the 'tribal heartland of Benjamin where Gdaliah establishes his capital' (Davidson 2011, p. 81).

[213] Yairah Amit, 'The Saul Polemic in the Persian Period', in: Oded Lipschits, Manfred Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, Indiana 2006, pp. 647-661, p. 656.

the capital of Judah[214] and appointed Gedaliah as governor. Mizpah functioned as Judah's political centre, and as its religious centre along with Gibeon, Bethel, and perhaps Shechem as a religious centre,[215] until Jerusalem and its central position were restored. It is remarkable that Benjamin as a border territory, that used to be part of Israel, became so central.

In Babylon new identities were shaped in an environment with new cultural and religious influences. The first group of 'exiles' developed an identity different from the people who remained in the land, and the experiences of the second group of exiles again led to different narratives. The foundations for the Judaism of the Second Temple Period were laid. [216] After two generations of life in Babylon, Cyrus conquered the city in 539. A process began during which some of the Judeans in Babylon decided to return to Judah, and Jerusalem was slowly re-established.

The attitude of Benjaminites towards Judah was likely to be ambiguous at the least, since they had long been oriented towards Israel. Israelite narratives are likely to have been part of their group memory. Possibly, like Jeremiah, who was from Anathoth in Benjamin, they had been supporters of submission to the Babylonians. The figure of Jeremiah became a locus of identity for those who remained in the land. Some scholars argue that this powershift between Benjaminites and Judahites led to further narrative negotiations.[217]

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[214] Two areas remained inhabited: the region of Benjamin north of Jerusalem and the northern Judean hills south of Jerusalem. Gedaliah became the governor of Yehud, now a Babylonian province. Gedaliah was killed by one of the surviving members of the Judean royal house. When he was killed, groups of Judeans once again left, this time fleeing to Egypt, fearing Babylonian reprisals. The power vacuum led to the emergence of alternative forces. Judah during the Babylonian and Persian hegemony was like a city state in an imperial context, while within Judah itself some groups had hegemony over others (Hans Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, Tübingen 2008, p. 150).

[215] Lipschits 2005, p. xii.

[216] Lipschits 2005, p. xii.

[217] When power was relocated to Benjamin, we can imagine that the Benjaminites, in their now dominant position over Judah, incorporated Judean narratives into their existing narratives that were oriented towards Israel. Thus, Judean narratives became part of a narrative in which Israel was the central focus of identity. This 'Israel-identity' voiced by the Benjaminites began to influence the population of Judah. It is part of an invented history, that seeks to explain the integration of Judah into Israel, visible for instance in the narratives about Saul, that functioned in this period in which Benjamin was dominant and Judah subordinate. Amit writes that the Saul polemic never was a real contest to restore Saul's descendants to the throne, but expressed the Benjaminite disillusion about the House of David and their protest against the claim that the Davidic dynasty was the only legitimate option to power (Amit in: Lipschits, Oeming 2006, p. 658). Later, when Jerusalem and Judah regained the political and religious position of power, Judean historiography transformed this 'Benjaminite' account of history, by again incorporating, this time reinterpreting it in the light of Jerusalem's restoration. The Israelite narratives were not simply removed, but rather they were claimed and transformed from a Judean perspective. This explains why, throughout the Judean canonical writings, we find anti-Benjaminite, or anti-Saul, ideology. This polemic was launched during the transition from Babylonian to Persian rule by 'partisans of the Davidic dynasty' who chose to use the 'technique of the implied polemic', either out of fear, or

This development can explain the presentation of Jerusalem as a symbol of evil. To those heirs of the Jeremianic narrative who remained in the land, Jeremiah and Baruch represent continuity in the land, with the territory of Benjamin as a focus of identity. They do not identify with Jerusalem – a symbol of Judean identity – but support the Babylonians. Jerusalem may even have been a symbol of evil to them. In a later reinterpretation by the group deported in 597 B.C.E., the city still symbolizes the evil that led to destruction and deportation. This time, the perspective is of discontinuity, of being away from the land. The exiles, or some of them, imagined return as a return to the land, rather than to the city (v. 44). In the eyes of other, later groups that did focus on priesthood, Jerusalem gradually restored its position. New debates arose, like the debate between Shafanides supporting the scribal tradition, and Zadokites supporting priestly tradition, as I argue below. Verses36-42 represents a fully new perspective. Not only does it focus on the city again, it also presents the relationship between God and people in a very different way. Exile and return are now also spiritual categories.

Space is constructed in a very imaginative way that is far away from the rather realistic, economic construction that first explained the purchase. Vv. 36-42 create an inclusive identity in the sense that older layers are included in the idealized vision. However, a better way of putting it might be that it overrules other layers, since the debates going on there are no longer relevant. It overrules, since in the present construction the layer expressing continuity in the land is hardly visible anymore, it would be hard to argue that the landscape constructed here in fact really is inclusive. It is a landscape in which traces of those who remained and the significance of Benjamin to them are largely erased, although not completely.

In conclusion, MT contains an explicit and intentional shift in time and place. The Masoretic Text moves away from the context of the siege in order to address new participants of the tradition in different circumstances. Here

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because they deemed this more effective (Amit in: Lipschits, Oeming 2006, p. 658). The Israel-identity name became a term detached from the population of Samaria, 'implying a rightful [Judean] claim to its territory'. Israelite stories were revised and put in a context were they are subordinate to Judean stories. Within the Hebrew Bible we find 'a thread of Benjaminite (Israelite) stories that might have its origin in this period in which Judah was controlled from Benjamin', expressing their hope in assuming leadership and the disappointment in the house of David in a revival of Saul-narratives. These Benjaminite-Judahite differences existed already before the deportations, and continued to play a role after the return. When the position of the city became stronger, the anti-Saul polemic became more open and unambiguous, while the pro-Saul polemic went underground. According to Davies, Benjaminites nevertheless still considered themselves the 'real' Israel (Philip R. Davies, The Trouble with Benjamin, in: Robert Rezetko, Timothy H. Lim (eds.), *Reflection and Refraction, Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld*, Leiden 2007, pp. 93-111, p. 111. The Israel-identification in vv. 26-35 of returning exiles can be an attempt to counter the Benjaminite identification as the real Israel.

verses 36-41 are the heart of the chapter. Apparently, in the Masoretic Text the debates between 'exiles' and the 'people of the land' are no longer relevant, and the new perspective presented in vv. 36-41 is central. The Septuagint does not move away from the context of the siege, as I argue in ch. 4. It seems then that the interest of this version of chapter 32 is not so much to present a new perspective on (post-) exilic debates but to present a more accurate version of the chapter and a particular understanding of the role of Jeremiah. The Septuagint focuses on the prophet as a figure of identification.

The final shaping of chapter 32 MT has to be placed at a distance from the group conflicts in Judean society following the events of destruction of Jerusalem and deportation of part of its people. The Masoretic tradition moves away from the context of the siege in order to address new participants of the tradition in different circumstances. Here vv. 36-41 form the culmination of the chapter. The MT version of the chapter thus steps over older controversies, presenting a new perspective on exile and redemption. Thus, MT is a manifestation of the tradition in which different voices are brought together. This is not a final stage of development, and the ambiguities also existing in the MT text are one of the factors stimulating further development of tradition, as we see in chapters 4 and 5. From the above, it can be concluded that MT is able to step over older controversies, simply because these disputes were no longer relevant. Negotiation of narratives is the result of historical processes by which disputes of the past are transformed. In MT, different inner tensions in Judean society began to play a role. Before turning to the Septuagint, I briefly relate my findings on chapter 32 to the book as a whole, also in order to shed more light on these tensions.

2.5 Jeremiah 32 within the book as a whole (MT)

2.5.1 Introduction

Scholarly opinions on almost every aspect of the book – its dating, its composition, whether it lacks a coherent structure or rather is very subtly organized, the origin of the different position it contains, etc. – are very diverse, which is not strange, given the notorious complexity of the book. Often scholars focus either on the world behind the text and the composition history of the book or at the world of the text in its *Endgestalt*. The question whether the book of Jeremiah can be understood as a meaningful literary unit is a much debated topic. It has often been called untidy, messy, and lacking structure. At the same time scholars attempt to point out principles of organization in the book, for instance in the division between poetry and prose, often connecting this to a theory on the composition history of the book.[218] Others have isolated coherent fragments within the book, such as the book of consolation (30-33), or the Oracles against the Nations (46-51). The present shape of the book has been understood as reflecting long, complex and conflict-ridden processes of growth, whereas others understood its contradictions and complexities as (partially) carefully constructed, either by (various) redactor(s) or even mainly by one author. The latter position is a more recent trend in scholarship, which was dominated by historical-critical concerns during the 20th century.[219]

　　With respect to this position, I briefly discuss the insights of Mark Leuchter.[220] I have already discussed Hill's analysis of the role of Babylon in Jeremiah MT using a synchronic approach, from which he concludes that MT contributes to the idea of 'unended exile'.[221]

　　I will sketch the position of chapter 32 within the book in its present *Endgestalt*, but attempt to connect this to a reconstruction, in broad strokes, of the development of the narratives of the book and the historical background of different and opposing groups in Judean society. The book shows traces of an

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[218] Approaches on literary sources like that of Sigmund Mowinckel, dividing the book into A (poetry), B (prose) and C (homiletic (Deuteronomistic) material) passages, have become less common. Source A, however, is still widely accepted, and is often thought to be close to the words of Jeremiah as a historical figure, for instance in the work of William L. Holladay (Sharp 2003, pp. 2, 3).

[219] Hill 1999, p. 13

[220] Leuchter 2008.

[221] Hill (1999) writes that there has been a 'neglect of the interpretative possibilities that a synchronic reading can generate with its own particular set of questions and range of answers' (p. 11).

extensive and tumultuous growth and of competing groups struggling to identify themselves with the tradition, and also of redactional work bringing together and reworking this diverse material. As already noted, I therefore understand the book (and the Jeremianic tradition) as a form of collective memory. In order to understand the book in relation to the processes of growth that it went through, literary and historical-critical approaches need to be combined. This approach is close to Christoph Hardmeier's, who argues that the trend in research to focus on the final form risks losing 'die durchgängige Geschichts- und Erfahrungsbezogenheit der alttestamentlichen Literatur'. The *Endgestalt* clearly is an important stage, but has to be understood as 'Geschichte' itself and as 'Traditionsliteratur'.[222] I will, of course, not give a complete overview of scholarly positions, but discuss only those positions, and only very briefly, that help to clarify the processes taking place in chapter 32.

2.5.2 Bridge to chapter 4: prophets, priests and scribes

Relating chapter 32 to developments in the book as a whole, I focus on the debate between Shafanides and Zadokites. This debate is related to the shift from prophet to scribe to which the book of Jeremiah testifies. The Shafanide position focuses on scribal tradition, while the Zadokite position favours priestly tradition. I relate this to the Benjaminite-Judahite tension already discussed.

After years of scholarship mainly focused on the growth of the text, in which often the apparent messiness of the book of Jeremiah was highlighted, Hill and Leuchter approach the book from a literary perspective, underlining unity. Their insights are valuable for highlighting unifying themes and structure in the book. My main objection to these approaches is that they focus on only one of the manifestations of the Jeremianic tradition – its *Endgestalt* according to the Masoretic tradition – and idealize the degree of unity brought in by this final redaction. I agree that a unifying redaction decisively shaped the Jeremiah MT, but this redaction did not aim to rule out diversity. In my view the defining characteristic of the book is that it is interpreted tradition in itself. In that sense, there is no final redaction. The book of Jeremiah is a literary work that went through phases of growth, and has to be understood in relation to these processes of growth. Both the traces of an extensive and tumultuous growth, which the book testifies to, and the redactional work of bringing together, reworking and ordering this diverse material need to be considered.

The book of Jeremiah contains passages very critical about the temple and the temple establishment, as well as anti-king and pro-submission to Babylon. I have already discussed tensions between Benjaminites and

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[222] Hardmeier in: Groβ (ed.) 1995, pp. 187, 188. Hardmeier delves into the composition history of Jeremiah 32 on the basis of his findings in a literary and structural analysis.

returning exiles that play a role in the background of the book. I now suggest a connection between the Benjaminite position and a Shafanide position[223] – that focuses on the role of scribes in the process of *tradere* – that developed during exile. In the book of Jeremiah, the prophet is related to Shafanides. In the post-exilic period, Zadokites, according to who the continuity of tradition lay in the role of priests, opposed the Shafanide position. The Shafanides can be linked to the Benjaminites in their pro-Babylonian attitude.[224] After the conquest of Judah by the Babylonians, Gedaliah is appointed by the Babylonians as the governor of the province Yehud according to Jer 40:7-41:18. In the GBJ-narrative, this Gedaliah is presented as the grandson of Shafan, and convinced the people who remain in the land, centred around Mizpah, to serve the Babylonians (Jer. 40:9, 10). However, a surviving member of the Judean royal house, Ishmael, killed Gedaliah (2 Kgs 25:25; Jer 41:1). This murder hints at a power struggle between those who remained in the land (of Benjamin) supporting Babylonian rule and forces hoping for restoration of the Davidic throne.[225]

With Leuchter, I argue that the Shafanide-connection with Jeremiah is post-exilic: the Supplement is written from a post-exilic point of view, addressing the deported groups in 597, 587 and 582, through 'the rhetoric of inclusion'.[226] Leuchter argues that the leading aim of the redactors was to establish the authority of a group playing a crucial role in passing on the Jeremianic tradition: the (Shafanide) scribes. In Babylon, two different ways of viewing tradition surfaced, one focussing on the temple and the royal house of

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[223] The Shafanide position is named after the scribe Shafan who plays a role in the Josianic reform as reported in 2 Kings 22, 23. Shafan is also mentioned in Jer. 26, 36).

[224] Davies in: Rezetko, Lim (eds.) 2007, p. 98, 99. See also Lohfink, *Studien in Deuteronomium und zur Deuteronomistischen Literatur*, Stuttgart 1995, p. 116: Jeremiah and the pro-Babylonian Shafanides were opposed to the 'führenden Regierungskreisen die sich in nationalem Selbstbewusstsein im Vertrauen auf die göttliche Erwählung Jerusalems durchaus als Erben der Reformbewegung sahen'.

[225] Blenkinsopp describes the appointment of Gedaliah, who is not from the house of David, as governor of Judah as a sign of a new cautious Babylonian policy: it might have been a deliberate act by the Babylonians to replace the unloyal house of Judah (J. Blenkinsopp, Benjamin Traditions read in the Early Persian Period, in: Oded Lipschits, Manfred Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, Winona Lake 2006, pp. 629-646, p. 644). However, at the same time, the Babylonians gave Jehoiachin the title of king of Judah, while he remained a prisoner in Babylon (Gabriele Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism, An Intellectual History, From Ezekiel to Daniel*, Grand Rapids 2002, p. 47. Babylonian archives show that the Babylonians granted Jehoiachin the title of 'king of the land of Judah' (see also Jer. 52: 31). It served, Boccaccini writes, both as a legitimization of Babylonian rule in the eyes of those supporting the house of David and as a safeguard against attempts to restore Davidic kingship in Judah. Jehoiachin's release is the only exilic event mentioned in Deuteronomistic history. It led to a revival of monarchic hopes, but Jehoiachin died in exile. The motivation for the deportations were anti-Babylonian revolts, and those deported belonged to the upper class of society, and were likely to be anti-Babylonian. The Judeans who remained in the land were possible more ambiguous, or like Jeremiah and other Benjaminites, may have supported submission to the Babylonians.

[226] Leuchter 2008, p. 15.

David, the other one focusing on scribal tradition. The redaction of the Supplement reflects the Shafanide position. In addition to Leuchter, I argue that this position creates a link to the remain-in-the-land position of the GBJ-narrative.

I differ with Leuchter in his view on multivocacity. Leuchter does not share the view held by Sharp, Smith, Seitz and myself that redactional models highlighting conflicting perspectives in the book developed as the result of tensions between different groups in Judean society.[227] Rather, he defends the view that the multivocality of the Supplement is a conscious literary strategy. What looks like a contradiction is the intended effect of the hermeneutical method of the Deuteronomistic scribes, pointing to a 'purpose behind their inclusion in the Jeremianic text that goes beyond the preservation of opposing viewpoints'. The tensions that some scholars see, Leuchter argues, are 'actually well integrated into the overriding theme and purpose of the Supplement and reflect a careful, coherent design'.[228]

I focus on chapters 26, and 36 and the role of the Shafanides in these chapters, in opposition to the temple establishment. An anti-temple and temple-establishment voice in the book of Jeremiah warns the people not to listen to prophets who claim that everything will be alright because the temple of the Lord is among them. The book also sheds a negative light on the Judean kings, making it quite clear that future hope cannot be vested in them.[229] I have already pointed out the interest in scribes visible in chapter 32. A connection between Jeremiah and Shafanide scribes is suggested in chapters 26-42, the section Leuchter calls the Supplement.[230] Within MT, chapters 26-42 can be viewed as 'a history of YHWH's word and response to that word'.[231]

Awareness of the role of scribal activity plays an important role in the book that reflects on the move from prophet (Jeremiah) to scribe (Baruch). Chapters 26 and 36 play an important role in this. Stipp writes that these two chapters both offer a summary of the message of the prophet.[232] In chapter 26 Ahikam, son of Shaphan (v. 24), saves Jeremiah´s life. Chapter 36 connects the development of scribal authority with the narrative of the so-called Josianic

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[227] Leuchter 2008, p. 4, 5.

[228] Leuchter 2008, p. 6.

[229] Chapter 33, however, contains a different perspective: its programme of restoration entails a successor on the Davidic throne and vindication of the rights of Levitical priests, who are explicitly given temple duties (v. 18). It connects the hope of the restoration of Davidic kingship to that of the Levitical priesthood (Jer. 33:14-26, see Boccaccini 2002, p. 52). However, this restoration project failed: Zerubbabel's efforts were seen as a threat and the Persians removed him. Although he building of the temple continued, the hopes of restoration of Davidic kingship were shattered. Instead, the Zadokites, who also were a strong force in post-exilic society gained a dominant position. In chapter 4 we see how the Zadokites position is also found in Qumran documents.

[230] Leuchter 2008, p. 12.

[231] Applegate citing M. Kessler in: Curtis, Römer 1997, p. 72.

[232] Stipp 1992, p. 120

reform,[233] described in 2 Kings 22 and 23.[234] Chapter 36 indicates the influential position written works had obtained.[235] According to chapter 36, the officials tell Baruch and Jeremiah to go in hiding, in fear of the anger of the king.[236] The Shafanide claim is that during these years in which Jeremiah was a contested figure, they supported the prophet. In chapter 36, Baruch the scribe is given an explicit role. The chapter subtly hints at the revolution that the 'sustenance of prophetic authority in the hands of the scribes' entails.[237] It is unique in that it contains reflection on the new concept of scribal production of tradition.[238]

In the ideology of Shafanides, scribes and scrolls are the new focus of religious tradition, while Jerusalem – a fixed place – was less important. The Shafanides, who were according to Römer the redactors of Jeremiah and the minor prophets, supported pro-Babylonian politics. In Babylon, Shafanide priests achieved a certain independence among the deportees. To them, the future was not in a restoration of the Davidic kingdom and cult, but in a reform-movement in which scribes and scrolls were the central assets in religious tradition. The book of Jeremiah seems to have been influenced by, or was part of, such a reform-movement. These Shafanides, he argues, developed a scribal understanding of tradition, and attempted to establish the legitimacy of such a scribal tradition. For the Shafanides Levites had exegetical, scribal and juridical authority. According to Leuchter, chapters 26-45 of the book of

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[233] I will not go into the debate regarding whether or not and in which form such a reform may have taken place. The figure of the prophet Jeremiah is often connected to the Deuteronomistic school. A link is likely, given the focus on laws and scrolls to which both the narrative of the Josianic reform and (a layer of) the book of Jeremiah testify to. However, the Josianic reform is strangely absent from the book of Jeremiah. It would be far too simple to regard what Leuchter calls the 'Shafanide-redaction' as Deuteronomistic. What is important here, is that the narrative in Jeremiah is deliberately connected to that in II Kgs.

[234] According to the narrative in 2 Kings a scroll is discovered and read to the king by Shafan the scribe. In response, king Josiah repents and altars in Bethel and Samaria are destroyed. In Jeremiah 36 a scroll, dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch, is read by Baruch. A grandson of Shafan, Micaiah son of Gemeriah, son of Shafan, shares its message with other officials. The officials, who will later save Jeremiah's life, take the scroll very seriously, but king Jehoiakim burns it. Another narrative of the reform can be found in 2 Chr. 34-35.

[235] Leuchter 2008, p. 103.

[236] Stipp too connects chapter 36 to Shafanide redactional work. While in chapter 26 all officials except for Ahikam are portrayed negatively, in chapter 36 they are rehabilitated as a group. Stipp points out that the chapter mentions positive deeds of Judah's notables, especially the Shaphanides, towards Jeremiah, making sure that both the prophet and his words written down are maintained. Thus, the negative image of the princes in chapter 26 is restored (Stipp 1992, pp. 121, 127, 128).

[237] Leuchter 2008, p. 102.

[238] Davies 1998, p. 119, points out that the mechanism of dictation is all-important in chapter 26. The story punts the prophetic scroll on the same level as the Torah. It might be meant to establish the authority of the book as a supplement to Torah. Prophecy had to be established as an institution of divine guidance (Philip Davies, Pen of Iron, Point of Diamond (Jer. 17:1): Prophecy as Writing, in: Ehud Ben Zvi, Michael H. Floyd, *Writings and Speech in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*, Atlanta 2000, pp. 65-81, p. 73).

Jeremiah, the Supplement, is written from the point of view of these Shafanides.[239]

I argue that tensions over the future role of the monarchy and the nature of tradition are a (largely) external polemic influencing the book: while the Shafanide group supported scribal circles, a Zadokite group supported Zadokite priesthood.[240] After the 'return', disputes continued. It is not improbable that disputes on ownership and interpretation of tradition were intermingled with disputes on ownership of land. This leading group of exiles formed a national-religious coalition focusing on a return to Judah. They viewed restoration in terms of restoring the temple. In their imagined landscape, Jerusalem as the site of the temple was central. This Zadokite group, identifying themselves as descendants of the priest Zadok, claimed priestly leadership in post-exilic Judea. We find the Zadokite position reflected in the book of Ezekiel.[241]

The external, post-exilic polemic (that re-uses pre-exilic positions) pointed out by Leuchter is that of new 'modes of thinking'[242] over against P-tradition adhered to by the Zadokites. It is represented by Shafanides, who function as mediators of scribal, Deuteronomic, tradition.[243] The Supplement attempts to safeguard the book against the ideology of the Zadokite priesthood. It is likely that the Shafanides established a position only during and after exile, claiming the prophet as one of them.[244] This position is likely to have re-used the Jeremianic perspective of insistence of remaining in the land.

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[239] Mark Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45*, Cambridge 2008, p. 12. Leuchter distinguishes between chapters 1-25, which he understands as largely the work of the prophet himself, chapter 26-45, or the supplement, and lastly later additions such as 32:17-44 and chapter 33. Leuchter goes against those scholars who argue that the Jeremianic corpus only received shape in the hands of subsequent redactions, so that the material reflects the needs of later communities. Instead, much of Jeremiah's material (chapters 1-25) already existed in an authoritative form in the exilic period, (Leuchter 2008, p. 2, 3) and Deuteronomistic/Shaphanide scribes then added more material, but in the same spirit.

[240] Possibly initially also the restoration of the house of David (as in Jer. 33). However, these hopes were shattered.

[241] According to the Zadokite narrative the Deuteronomic experiment resulted in exile. The Zadokites adhered to the Holiness Code (Lev. 27-29) as an alternative to Deuteronomistic legislation (Leuchter 2008, p. 156). See also chapter 4: the community of the Damascus Document considers itself 'sons of Zadok', although they live away from the temple. In chapter 4 I discuss the role of the temple and temple treasures in the ongoing tradition.

[242] Leuchter 2008, p. 153.

[243] Leuchter 2008, p. 166. Leuchter argues that the Shafanide movement formed a coalition with the Levite movement present in the book of Jeremiah.

[244] Jeremiah 26: 24 according to which Ahikam son of Shaphan protected Jeremiah, and chapter 36 in which Shafanide officials play a more positive role than in chapter 26 can be explained as Shafanide attempts to claim the prophet as a Shafanide. I do not understand chapters 26 and 36 as being reports of what really happed. Rather, I read the chapters as reflecting questions on prophecy and transmission of religion that played a role in shaping the book of Jeremiah: the chapters witness to awareness of the shift from orality to writing, and the vulnerability of the written word.

The Shafanide position reinterprets existing criticism of the temple establishment in Jeremiah.[245]

In summary, a reconstruction is that when Benjamin became the new centre of power after Jerusalem's destruction, the figure of the prophet served as a role-model for those who stayed in the land, developing a Benjaminite identity in opposition to Jerusalem and Judah. In Babylon, a priestly-oriented movement developed, but also a movement oriented towards scribal tradition. In the post-exilic period, when some descendants of those who were brought to Babylon gradually returned, the Zadokite (priestly) and Shafanide (scribal) movement competed. The Shafanides connected to existing Judean-Benjaminite traditions. However, Zadokite historiography also identified with the Jeremianic tradition: the return was also seen as the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecies,[246] and Jeremiah became the prophet of return. Leuchter argues Zadokite-Shafanide tensions continued to exist. The book of Ezekiel suggests that the Zadokites became dominant. In chapter 4 we will see that tension between scribal and priestly traditions still play a role.

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[245] It seems the tendency in the book of Jeremiah to portray the Shafanides favourably continued after MT and LXX(V) went separate ways. According to Jer. 36[43]: 16 MT the officials are afraid after reading the scroll, according to LXX they consulted each other (with the connotation of plotting) In v. 25 MT has a plus: and he did not listen to them, underlining the stubbornness of the king. Also, the role of Baruch is lessened in what Stipp calls the 'prämasoretischen Phase'(Stipp 1992, p. 192). In v. 17 LXX the officials ask Baruch: 'Did you write all these words?' According to MT the question focuses on his preciseness: 'Did you write all these words from his mouth?' In the answer, v. 18, MT again reduces his role (See Stipp 1992, p. 192: according to LXX Jeremiah prophesies and Baruch writes, according to LXX Jeremiah dictates. Stipp also mentions v. 6 where MT adds אֲשֶׁר־כָּתַבְתָּ־מִפִּ. In v. 32 MT Jeremiah gives Baruch a scroll, as in chapter 32 he is the loyal servant, commanded by Jeremiah, while in LXX Baruch himself takes the scroll (Stipp 1992, p. 192).

[246] Boccaccini 2002, p. 52. Boccaccini mentions also Ezra 1:1, 1 Esd 1: 57-2:1, 2 Chr. 36: 21, *Ant* 11: 1.

2.6 A postcolonial reading

The Jeremianic tradition was shaped in a period in which the Judean people lived under Babylonian hegemony. The prophet is pictured as a marginal figure: his attempts to convince Judean kings to surrender to the Babylonians render him unpopular in royal circles. In the book of Jeremiah and in chapter 32 specifically, notions linking space and identity from a perspective of marginality, such as 'borderland', exile, return, prison (32:2), etc. play an important role. I need to underline that this tradition was shaped in a situation in which the Judean people were subjugated by the Babylonians. However, within the book the struggles take place within Judean society, that became geographically spread as a result of deportations to Babylon and the flight of a group of Judeans to Egypt. The book of Jeremiah can be viewed as literature of cultural and spatial displacement. The text witnesses to a 'survival or revival' strategy of a refugee community.[247] In this set of marginal narratives the narrative of the returning exiles is dominant. For instance, narratives of the people remaining in the land are present only in remainders, while the narratives of those in Babylon not intending to return and those in Egypt are absent. The narrative of return functions as the dominant narrative, although it is likely not always to have had this position. Negotiations over power and identity took place between the returning exiles and the people of the land, as I have shown. With respect to Babylonian hegemony, the longing for return can be viewed as a narrative of resistance.

Given the diversity of voices in the tradition, we cannot declare the 'most original', the final voice or the loudest voice (that of the returning exiles) as the 'real voice' of the text.[248] Neither is it possible to select one of the voices of the text in order to identify it as 'the voice' of the text. This has implications for how religious traditions relate to their corpus of holy texts. It renders all fundamentalisms – claiming that their position is above subjectivity or intersubjectivity – as futile. It also means that claims of being orthodox – which means: having the right interpretation – are difficult to establish. What we have, is a diversity of voices, the challenge to live with that diversity, and to create meaning in full awareness of it, without attempting to explain it away.

One of the factors for why Jeremiah is so generative is the 'marginal aspects' of the book. Jeremiah is presented as a figure of opposition, critical of the establishment. In the course of the development of tradition, new marginal groups – or groups experiencing themselves as marginal – easily identify with this tradition. However, as power is constantly shifting, Jeremiah himself

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[247] Louis Stuhlman in: A.R. Pete Diamond, Louis Stuhlman (eds.), *Jeremiah (dis)placed, New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*, Cambridge 2011, p. 13.
[248] Sharp 2003, pp. 167, 168.

becomes the spokesperson for the returning exiles, who – for a while – are dominant in Judean society. In chapter 5 we see how the dominant narrative in Israeli society identifies with the voice of the returning exiles, although from a perspective of being marginal. These diverse identifications produce further ambiguity, and therefore opportunities for new meaning.

2.7 Conclusions

My goal was to show that the ambiguity and layeredness of Jeremiah 32 are not problems to overcome, but that they point at complex processes of appropriation. Such processes are what the Jeremianic tradition consists of, and in order to understand this tradition, we need insight into these processes. I have made clear that the stumbling blocks in Jeremiah 32 (MT) testify to the shaping of identities in this chapter, which can be understood as interpreted tradition. In Jeremiah 32 in its MT final form exiles are portrayed as the bearers of the covenant and of the future between God and Judean people. However, the concepts of exile and land are reinterpreted as a spiritual condition. Exile thus becomes a unifying concept of identity. Verses 36-41 express that life in a situation of spiritual exile, awaiting redemption, is possible. This final shaping took place at a distance to the group conflicts in Judean society following the events of the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of part of its people. By that time, identities had shifted, new debates had arisen, and it became possible to include different voices into one book, adding a more unifying perspective. The debates playing a role previously became less relevant, or had been transformed. This position goes beyond the *golah*-ideology, in which there is a future only for the returning exiles. Neither the 'people of the land' nor the community that remained in Babylon nor those who fled to Egypt, had a share in this future. Vv. 36-41 sketch an understanding of exile and belonging to which both those in the land and those in Babylon, and possibly also in other spaces of Diaspora, could identify.

Below this final layer, I pointed at traces of several other layers, and offered a reconstruction. I argued that vv. 14 and 15 testify to a position of ongoing existence in the land, that can be connected to those who remained in the land, with Mizpah in Benjamin as their centre. In vv. 42-44 the geographical perspective is broadened to include not only Benjamin, but also Judah, although without Jerusalem. Restoration is still understood in economical terms. This perspective can be connected to the returned exiles: they return to the land, not to Jerusalem. I also pointed out the differences between vv. 16-25 and vv. 26-35. I argued that vv. 26-35 can be understood as voicing the perspective of the Jehoiachin exiles, who foresee doom for those who remained in the land. I connected vv. 16-25 to vv. 42-44.

I have also pointed to at tensions between scribal and priestly tradition. The book of Jeremiah reflects on the tension that comes with the process of *tradere*: the prophetic office turns into the prophetic word, and into the prophetic *sefer*. The written word is vulnerable: it can be erased, reinterpreted and rewritten. In chapter 32 this reflection is present in the person of Baruch who is given responsibility to safeguard the documents. MT expands this by extending the role of the narrator and explicitly involving a

new community in vv. 5, 36 and 43, which LXX does not do, as I point out below. Looking at it from this perspective, the differences between MT and LXX to which we turn in the following chapter reflect two different outlooks on the chapter, without one being better or more original.

I conclude that whoever was or were responsible for the final form of the text deliberately constructed an ambiguous text. These can be connected with different groups and periods in the Israelite society and their ideological perspectives. We are able to detect discussion and different groups only as far as the final redactor(s) left traces in the text. It is apparent that in this text we witness struggles for identity. That does not mean that the narratives of all these groups are included in the text. Traces of at least the group that remained in the land can be found in the text.

The synchronic approaches I discussed have difficulty acknowledging the complex processes of identity building that have led to the text as we have it. If we really want to understand what the book is about, we need to pay attention to the multivocality presented in the book. In addition, we need to go beyond that in an attempt to understand the processes leading to this multivocality. Claiming that the text is coherent and inclusive does not take into account that this text is a heavily charged ideological text, in which not all voices are heard or equal. The book contains dynamics of both inclusion and exclusion. We should not embrace its final version as an inclusive text. As a result of historical processes, a more symbolic understanding of exile developed, and in relation to that an identity in which 'Israel' functions as an inclusive identity in which all are regarded as exiles. This is a type of narrative negotiation in which time is the main factor of the negotiation: older debates are no longer relevant. Inclusion of voices becomes possible because the nature of the debates have changed – inclusion also serves a certain ideological position. Diachronic approaches run the risk of not being able to attach meaning to the book as a whole. As readers, we might conform ourselves either to the earliest words of the text, in a search for 'the real Jeremiah', or to the last words of the text, focusing on the *Endgestalt*. This, in fact, means that we privilege one position over the other and fail to recognize the layered and ambiguous character of the text.

I conclude that viewing Jeremiah 32 as collective memory, from a postcolonial perspective attentive to power negotiations between centre and periphery, is fruitful. Such an approach is not foreign to the text, but follows from the attempt to understand the stumbling blocks visible in a syntactic analysis of the text. It is clear that Jeremiah MT cannot be seen as the final stage of the Jeremianic tradition. The character of the text as collective memory has indicated that the search for an *Urtext* or pure tradition is futile. It is not possible to find one text on which a 'correct reading' can be based. This ambiguous, layered text in which negotiations between centre and periphery play an important role proved to provide a lot of space for continuing

appropriation. Thus, it continues to be appropriated by new heirs of the text, changing their narratives, and being subject to transformation itself, as will become clear in the next chapters.

Jeremiah 39 [32] according to the tradition of the Septuagint

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the understanding of chapter 32[249] according to the tradition of the Septuagint and compare the Masoretic tradition with that of the Septuagint. I do this in order to gain insight into the early development of the Jeremianic Tradition, a phase of the tradition in which the process of growth of tradition went hand in hand and overlapped with that of the transmission of tradition.

Today, Facebook, Twitter, text messages, etc. ensure a continuous and overwhelming production of texts. In these bits and pieces people constantly shape and reshape their identity. Even a Facebook 'like', or a re-tweet on Twitter – an act of simply copying a message but introducing it into a new context – constructs meaning and identity. The Septuagint (LXX) is a collection of translations of existing bodies of texts. In fact, it is the first translation ever of such magnitude and is therefore a cultural landmark in itself.[250] Jeremiah LXX can be defined as a relatively literal translation,[251] in the sense that the translator(s) attempted to render the text as faithfully as possible in terms of content (a Hebrew word is often rendered with the same Greek word) grammar (a verb is translated as a verb), word order and number of words (when MT has three words, LXX usually renders three words). Of course, this general characterization does not offer an explanation for specific instances. It does not mean that the act of translating is free of interpretation. We do not know what the Hebrew text the translator had in front of him[252] looked like, nor do we know what conscious and unconscious processes took place in the

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[249] For the sake of consistency, I refer to the discussed chapter as chapter 32, even though according to LXX it is chapter 39.

[250] See Karen H. Jobes, Moisés da Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, Grand Rapids 2000, pp. 19ff. It should also be kept in mind that LXX translates texts of high authority and esteem, and that it renders a Semitic language into an Indo-European language – a language very different in terms of grammar, structure and also vocabulary. In addition, the Greek language represents a culture very different from Semitic cultures, and LXX was made for recipients living in between Hebrew and Greek culture, no longer understanding Hebrew, but nevertheless connected to Hebrew Scripture.

[251] Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, Jerusalem 1981, pp. 52ff. Tov distinguishes between different aspects within translation technique, such as consistency, word-order and quantitative representation.

[252] It is probably safe to assume that the process of text transmission in those days was a male undertaking.

act of translating. Transferring a text, with its grammatical and lexical aspects, into another language with its own characteristics is a complex undertaking. Translating a text requires constant negotiation between different interests, such as loyalty to the original text and the desire to produce an understandable and correct translation. In addition, a translator is limited in skills, knowledge and concentration. In the case of the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek Septuagint additional factors, such as the status of the text and the absences of dictionaries and grammars, play a role. Transmitting tradition always entails a degree of transformation.

Differences between the book of Jeremiah in the Septuagint tradition and in the Masoretic tradition have generated a lot of attention in scholarship. These differences can be studied in an attempt to retrieve the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint (LXXV),[253] out of concern for establishing a better Masoretic Text[254] and to gain insight into the textual development of the Hebrew Bible. [255] Still, textual critics using LXX as a tool for textual criticism of MT like Emanuel Tov and Andrew Shead[256] are interested in the first place in the history of transmission of MT. However, the Septuagint is gradually receiving broader attention in Old Testament scholarship, as a text reflecting a certain understanding of biblical tradition. As the work on textual criticism has progressed, questions about the interpretative character of the Septuagint have been raised. Increasingly the Septuagint, as well as other translations, has been seen as presenting an understanding of a particular text at a particular time and place. My interest is not in establishing a better text, or in precisely defining the relation between the text of the Septuagint (or its *Vorlage*) and the Masoretic Text. Rather, my interest lies in the processes of transformation of tradition that are reflected in the two versions of the chapter. I ask what these two texts seek to express as two manifestations of the tradition, and what we can learn hermeneutically from the processes to which they testify.

My approach focuses on processes of reception, on the interaction between traditions and its heirs, rather than on fixed shapes. I analyze how space and time are constructed in these two texts, as well as how time and

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[253] LXXV, the *Vorlage* of LXX is the Hebrew text on which the translation of the Septuagint is based.

[254] The Septuagint, being a translation made by and for a Jews, became the authoritative text of Christianity, and was the basis for many other translations, although was abandoned by Jews as a result of this Christian appropriation. It was replaced by the Vulgata in the Western church, but is still today the authoritative text of the Eastern church. LXX became of interest again when biblical texts became the object of scientific study, given its use for textual criticism, and even more when it became clear that some of the texts discovered in Qumran reflected readings from LXX.

[255] I do not discuss the history of textual criticism of the book of Jeremiah. In my own analysis of the text, I mainly make use of the work of Emanuel Tov, Shead 2002 and Herbert Migsch, *Jeremias Ackerkauf, Ein Untersuchung von Jeremia 32*, Frankfurt am Main 1996 (see below).

[256] Shead for instance writes that he focuses on 'equivalents that are unusual and could potentially reflect textual variants', making 'no pretence at producing an exhaustive study of translation technique per se' (2002, p. 20). For Shead LXX is ultimately a tool to shed light on the history of the text, but I am interested in LXX as a text in its own right.

space change in the course of the chapter. I indicate how the antagonists have been pictured, and how the reader is invited to identify him- or herself. I point out how different concepts and realities are presented in the two texts, and which tensions and irregularities they contain.

The first step is to understand the chapter according to the Septuagint in its *Endgestalt*. Next, I assume that differences between the two texts can give insight in their specific character. The Masoretic Text inevitably developed in the process of transmission, both as a result of mistakes by copyists as well as because of exegetical or literary interventions. LXX can be helpful in gaining understanding of this process, since it may reflect a *Vorlage* (LXXV) different from MT. In the case of the book of Jeremiah, the only book shorter in LXX than in MT, LXX seems earlier than MT. However, LXX certainly also developed in the course of its transmission. Besides, LXX, being a translation, by definition contains interpretation on different levels, in addition to mistakes being made by the translator or through a lack of knowledge of Hebrew or Greek. It is clear that the attempt to define how a certain reading in LXX(V) relates to a reading in MT is a very complicated undertaking. Although I assume that the Septuagint is based on a different and shorter Hebrew text, in each instance where MT and LXX differ, it has yet to be seen what can be said of the factors playing a role. After giving an overview of the chapter according to LXX as a text in its own right. I then compare the two recensions of the chapter.

3.2 Synchronic and diachronic observations on Jeremiah 39 LXX

3.2.1 Translation[257]

MT	LXX
1.The word that came *to Jeremiah from Adonai* in the 10th year of Zedekiah **king of Judah**, the 18th year of Nebuchadrezzar	1. The word that came *from the Lord to Ieremias* in the 10th of Zedekiah year of king Sedekias, this was the 18th year of king Nabouchodonosor, **king of Babylon**
2. when the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah **the prophet** was confined in the court of the guard that is in the house of the king **of Judah**,	2. and the force of the king of Babylon raised a barricade against Jerusalem and Jeremias was being confined in the court of the guard that is in the house of the king,
3. where Zedekiah king **of Judah** had confined him, saying: 'Why do you prophesy, saying: 'Thus said the Lord: 'I myself am delivering this city into the hands of the king of Babylon and he will capture it.	3. in which the king Sedekias had shut him up saying: Why do you prophesy, saying: 'Thus did the Lord say: 'Behold, I am giving this city in the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will take it.
4. And Zedekiah, **king of Judah**, *will not escape* the hands of the Chaldeans, for surely he will be given into the hands of the king of Babylon	4. And Sedekias *will not be saved* out of the hand of the Chaldeans because in handing over he shall be handed over into the hands of the king of Babylon
and he shall speak to him face to face and his eyes to his eyes shall see	and his mouth shall speak to his mouth, and his eyes shall see
5. and to Babylon *he will take Zedekiah* and there *he will remain* **until I take note of him,'** **– utterance of Adonai** **'when you [plur] fight the Chaldeans** **you [plur] will not succeed.**	5. And *Sedekias shall enter* into Babylon and *be seated* there.
6. *and Jeremiah said:* 'The word of Adonai came to me, saying:	6. *And a word of the Lord came to Ieremias,* saying:
7. 'Take notice, Hanamel, the sun of Shallum	7. 'Behold, Hanameel, son of Salom your

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[257] Bold print: plus in MT or LXX, italics: alternative text (I pointed out those differences relevant to my argument).

your uncle will come to you,
saying:
'Buy for you my field that is at Anathoth,
because *to you is the right of redemption to buy*.'
8. And to me came Hanamel, the son of my uncle, like the word of Adonai
in the court of the guard, and said to me:
'Please buy my field *in Anathoth,*
in the land of Benjamin,
for yours is the right of possession and
yours is the redemption.
Buy it for yourself!'
And I knew that this was indeed the word of Adonai.
9. And I bought the field from Hanamel the son of my uncle **which is in Anathoth** and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver.
10. And I signed the document,
sealed it, had witnesses witness it
and weighed the money on scales.
11. I took the document of purchase, the sealed one **with the rules and the ordinances**, and the *open* [one].
12. And I gave *the document of the purchase* to Baruch, the son of Nerijah, son of Machseja, in the presence of
Hanamel the son of my uncle and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the document of the purchase, and in presence of all the Jews who were in the court of the guard.
13. And I commanded Baruch in their presence, saying:
14. 'Thus has spoken Adonai of Hosts, **the God of Israel**:
'Take **these documents**, this document
of purchase, the sealed one and this open (one), and put *them* in an earthenware jar so that they last a long time.'
15. For thus says Adonai **of Hosts, the God of Israel**:

father's brother is coming to you,
saying:
'Acquire for yourself my field that is in Anathoth because *the right to take [it] as an acquisition is yours*.'
8. And to me came Hanameel son of Salom my father's brother in the court of the guard and said to me:

'Acquire my field that is *in the land of Beniamin at Anathoth*
because the right to acquire is yours
and you are the elder.
And I knew that it was a word of the Lord.

9. And I acquired the field from Hanameel son of my father's brother and weighed out to him seventeen shekels of silver.

10. And I wrote in a document
and sealed it, and got witnesses to witness
and weighed the silver on a scale.
11. I took the document of purchase, the sealed one and
the *read* one
12. And I gave *it* to Barouch, son of Nerias, son of Maasaias, in the sight of Hanameel son of my father's brother,
and in the sight of those who were present and signed the document of purchase and in the sight of the Judeans
who were present in the court of the guard.

13. And I instructed Barouch in their sight, saying:
14. Thus did the Lord Almighty say:

'Take this document of purchase and the document that is read,
and put *it* in a earthenware jar
so that it may last many days.'
15. Because thus did the Lord say:

'Houses and fields and vineyards will continually be bought in this land.'

16. And I prayed to Adonai after I had given the document of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, saying:
17. 'Ah, Adonai Adonai! Behold, you made the heavens and the earth by
your great power and outstretched arm.
Nothing is *too wondrous* for you
18. You show kindness to the thousandth generation, but repay the fathers' guilt on the lap of their children after them.
O great God and mighty,
Adonai of Hosts is his name
19. Great in purpose and mighty in deed
your eyes are open to all the ways of men to reward every one according to his ways and the fruits of his doings
20. You who has set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt until this day, in Israel and among men. And you made yourself a name as on this day.
21. And you brought your people out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, and a strong hand and an outstretched arm *and with great terror*
22. and you have given them this land which you swore to their fathers to give to them, a land flowing with milk and honey.
23. And they came in and took possession of it, and they did not listen to your voice or walk in your law –
all things you commanded them to do they did not do – you have caused all this evil to come upon them.
24. Indeed, the siegemounds have come to the city to take it, and the city has been given into the hands of the
Chaldeans who fight against it
because of the sword, and the famine **and the pestilence**.
And what you have said has happened,

'Fields and houses and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.

16. And I prayed to the Lord after I had given the document of purchase to Barouch son of Nerias, saying:
17. 'O Lord! It is you who made the sky and the earth by your great strength and by your high and lifted arm.
Nothing *shall be hidden* from you,
18. doing mercy for thousands,
repaying the sins of fathers into the laps of their children after them.
The great and strong God,

19. the God of great council and powerful in deeds. Your eyes are on the ways of the son of men to give each according to his way.

20. You who performed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt to this day, both in Israel and among the earthborn and you have made yourself a name, as this day
21. And you brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and with wonders and with a strong hand and a high arm *and with great spectacles*
22. and you gave them this land which you swore to their fathers,
a land flowing with milk and honey.
23. And they entered and took it
and did not obey your voice
and did not walk by your ordinances
all that you commanded them
they did not do, and you have made all these evils to happen to them.
24. Behold, a crowd has come against the city to take it and the city was given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting it from before the dagger and the famine.

As you spoke, so it happened.

as you yourself see.	
25. Yet you have said to me, **Adonai Adonai**:	25. And you are saying to me:
'Buy for you the field with money and have witnesses witness it.'	'Acquire for yourself the field for money.' **And I wrote a document and sealed it and had witnesses witness it.'**
While the city has been given into the hands of the Chaldeans!'	And the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.'

26. *And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah*, saying:	26. *And a word of the Lord came to me*, saying:
27. 'Indeed, I am Adonai, Lord of all flesh. *Is anything too wondrous for me?'*	27. I am Lord the God of all flesh *Surely nothing will be hidden from me?'*
28. Therefore, thus the Lord has spoken: 'I myself am giving this city into the hands **of the Chaldeans and** into the hand of **Nebuchadrezzar**, king of Babylon and he shall take it.	28. Therefore, thus did the Lord say: 'In handing over this city will be handed over into the hands of the king of Babylon and he shall seize it.
29. And the Chaldeans will come who are fighting this city and set this city on fire and burn it, and the houses on which roofs they have offered to Baal and poured out offerings to other gods to vex me.	29. And the Chaldeans will come who are fighting this city and they shall burn this city with fire, and they shall burn down the houses in which they burned incense on their roofs to the Baal and and they poured out libations to other gods so as to embitter me.
30. For the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah have only done evil in my eyes since their youth. **For the sons of Israel only vex me with the work of their hands.'** **– utterance of Adonai**	30. Because the sons of Israel and the sons of Iouda were only doing evil in my sight from their youth.
31. 'For to my anger and to my wrath this city has been to me from the day on which they built her, until this day so that I will remove it from my sight,	31. For to my wrath and to my anger was this city from the day they built it even until these days, to remove it from my sight,
32. because of all the bad things the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah, that they have done to vex me – they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.	32. because of all the evils of the sons of Israel and of Iouda, that they have done to embitter me – they and their kings and their rulers and their their prophets men of Iouda and those that inhabit Ierusalem.

33. They turned their backs to me, not their faces though I taught them, rising up early, and taught them but none of them listened to receive *correction*.	33. And they have turned their back to me and not their face, whereas I taught them early in the morning and I taught and they did not hear to accept *instruction*.
34. They set their abominations in the House which is called by my name to defile it.	34. And they set up their defilements in the house where my name is called on it in their impurities.
35. And they built their shrines of Baal which are in the valley of Ben Hinnom to make their sons and daughters pass through to Molech which I did not command them. It didn't come up in my mind to do this abomination to cause Judah to sin.	35. And they built the altars to the Baal which are in the valley of Hinnom's son to offer up their sons and daughters to king Moloch things which I did not instruct them to do. It did not arise in my heart that they do this abomination so as to cause Judah to sin.
36. And now, **therefore**, thus Adonai the Lord of Israel has spoken concerning this city of which you [plur] say: 'It *has been given* into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword and by famine and by pestilence.' 37. 'Behold, I will gather them out of *all countries* to which I have driven them in my anger and in my wrath and in great indignation. And I will bring them again to this place and I will cause them to dwell safely. 38. They will be my people and I will be their God. 39. And I will give them *one heart and one way* to fear me forever, for their good and for the good of their sons after them. 40. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them which I will not turn away from them **to do them good** and fear for me I will put in their hearts so that they do not turn away from me. 41. I will *rejoice* over them to do them good and I will plant them in this land faithfully with all my heart and all my soul.'	36. And now, thus did the Lord the God of Israel say concerning the city of which you [sg] say: 'It *will be given* over into the hands of the king of Babylon by dagger and by famine and by pestilence.' 37. 'Behold, I am gathering them *from the whole land*, there where I dispersed them in my wrath and in my anger and in great irritation. And I will bring them back to this place and I will settle them in confidence. 38. And they shall become a people to me and I shall become a God to them 39. And I will give them *another way and another heart* to fear me all the days, both for their own good and for their children after them. 40. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them which I will not turn away from behind them and I will assign my fear to their hearts so that they may not turn away from me. 41. And I will *visit* them to do good to them and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness both with all my heart and all my soul.'
42. For thus the Lord has spoken:	42. Because thus did the Lord say:

'As I have brought all these great bad thing
on these people so I am bringing upon them
all the good things of which I have spoken
to them.
43. Fields will be bought in this land
of which *you* [plur] say:
'It is a desolation without men or beast, it is
given into the hands of the Chaldeans.'
44. Fields *will be* bought with money
and deeds *will be* written and sealed
and witnesses *will* witness,
in the land of Benjamin, and in the places
around Jerusalem, and in the towns of
Judah, the towns of the hill country, the
towns of the Shephelah, and the towns of
the Negev.
For I will *turn their fate*.'
– utterance of Adonai.'

'Just as I have brought all this great evil
upon this people, so I will bring upon them
all the good that I told them.

43. And fields shall be bought again in the
land of which *you* [sg] are saying:
'It is untrodden by human beings or animals,
it is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.
44. And *they* shall acquire fields with money
and *you* [sg] shall write in a document
and seal it and *have* witnesses witness it
in the land of Beniamin, and in the around
Ierusalem, and in the cities of Iouda, and in
the cities of the mountain
and in the cities of the Sephelah and in the
cities of the Nageb.
Because I will *bring back their exiles*.'

3.2.2 Overview of structure

The structure functions as a principle means of organizing the text and guiding the reader's understanding of the different elements and sections of the text. In chapter 2 I already indicated some of the main features of the chapter according to the tradition of the Septuagint. I now give an overview of the chapter and some of LXX's main features (in italics):

Jeremiah 39 [32] LXX

v. 1-5	introduction
v. 6, 7	re-announcement of word of God, word of God (*v. 6: narrator speaking*)
v. 8-44	story told by Jeremiah in which God's word gradually unfolds (vv. 15, 25, 44)

v. 16-44 conversation between God and Jeremiah
*(v. 25: LXX plus (*καὶ ἔγραψα βιβλίον καὶ ἐσφραγισάμην)*[258]*
v. 26: Jeremiah speaking
vv. 36, 43, 44: Jeremiah addressed
v. 37: 'land' [sg]
v. 44: LXX presents Jeremiah as active in the procedure

In the Septuagint v. 6 links back to v. 1: other than in MT, the narrator is still speaking in v. 6, referring back to the word of God announced in v. 1. Thus, the narrator presents vv. 1-7, v. 6 connects to v. 1, re-announcing the word of God. This word of God is then delivered in v. 7 ('See, Hanamel the son of your brother will come to you…'). Verse 7 is the word of God announced in v. 1, and v. 8-44 present the taking effect of this word.

Within this story, vv. 16-44 are a conversation between God and Jeremiah. In this conversation, Jeremiah appears in the first person, narrating the conversation from his perspective. Since according to the Septuagint Jeremiah announces the word of God in v. 26, and not the narrator, the prophet remains the speaker until the end of the chapter. The effect is that the whole chapter is presented as taking place in one continuous frame of time and place, as mentioned in the introduction (vv. 1-7).

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[258] 'And I wrote a book and sealed it', note that in LXX v. 25a God addresses Jeremiah ('Buy the field for money'), and then Jeremiah continues: 'and I wrote…'. This is consistent with vv. 7, where God tells the prophet only to buy the field, but does not give instructions on the procedure of purchase. In MT, Jeremiah quotes God as saying 'buy the field for money and call witnesses.'

In LXX the chapter is Jeremiah's account of the events following God's announcement of the advent of Hanamel and his offer of the field. The chapter is constructed as a dialogue between God and Jeremiah, staying within the temporal framework indicated in the introduction, according to which the city is besieged, and the prophet is in a dire situation. The accent is on the gradually unfolding word in relation to the role of Jeremiah. As the word of God unfolds, it becomes clear how crucial the role of the prophet is. In LXX the accent is on how to go about the actual practice of buying land. The Septuagint explicitly addresses Jeremiah: when land is bought, you (sg) write a document, seal it and have witnesses witness. Jeremiah is presented as the guardian of that process.

In v. 25, LXX has a plus that includes the writing of the book in the description of the process, and switches to Jeremiah as speaker.[259] Thus, LXX focuses on the actions of Jeremiah and specifically on the act of writing the document. In v. 44 as well, LXX focuses on Jeremiah's role in the details of purchase. The Septuagint explicitly addresses Jeremiah: when land is bought, you write a document (2nd person singular), seal it and have witnesses witness. In LXX then vv. 15, 25 en 44 are linked more closely, which is indicative of LXX's presentation of the prophet as the one to take care of legal details, in this case of purchasing land.

The structure of LXX is not without stumbling blocks. Jeremiah is not introduced in v. 8: the prophet simply starts to tell a story. The quotes in vv. 36 and 43 are somewhat oddly placed in Jeremiah's mouth. The switch in time and place visible in MT fits the content of the chapter, whereas LXX's insistence to remain within the timeframe of the introduction, seems somewhat artificial.

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[259] In MT, Jeremiah's own words are limited to 'and the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans'.

3.3 Comparing the two recensions

3.3.1 Textual and literary considerations combined

I will now compare the two versions of the chapter. Of importance in this comparison are not only the words used, but also the structure in which the text is presented, and the way time, space, past, present and future are constructed. I therefore combine literary, redactional and textual considerations, paying attention to structure, language, grammar, style and exegesis.[260]

If I were to position my perspective in the field, the first person to mention would be Emanuel Tov. Tov is a leading authority on the study of the Septuagint and its use in textual criticism. I make use of Tov's approach, knowledge, and insights.[261] Tov is not interested in the first place in the Greek text itself, but in its *Vorlage*[262] and the insight it provides in the transmission of the Masoretic Text. The textual critic studies the process of transmission of the text in order to gain insight into the development of the text, usually MT, and also to establish a better text. For the textual critic, the book of Jeremiah is of interest, given the relatively substantial and extensive differences between the book of Jeremiah according to the Masoretic and Septuagint traditions. The study of LXX was dominated by questions of textual criticism.[263] Tov, and to a certain extent also Shead, calls the theological developments in the Septuagint individual *theolegoumena*, 'a theological understanding of a singular point in one instance',[264] and does not ascribe a unified ideology to the text. Thus, differences between the MT tradition and LXX(V) are perceived as a puzzle to be solved, rather than as a process of transformation, testifying to a living text and a living tradition.

By focusing on the processes of identity formation reflected in both MT and LXX I enter into an aspect of the study of the Septuagint that is not part of Tov's approach. Tov acknowledges that some differences between LXX and

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[260] In the process of retroversion and evaluating retroversions, Tov takes into account many aspects of the MT and LXX text, including syntax, grammar, translation technique etc, also paying attention to the understanding of the text presented in LXX, and to the concept of context of the translator. In the work of Tov, all of these considerations help to decide whether or not a deviation is a Variant. In this research, they will be helpful in deciding the direction of the text (see Tov 1981).

[261] In 2008/2009 I took Tov's class on the Septuagint. It proved an intensive and inspiring introduction into the often painstaking work of studying the Septuagint.

[262] What really interests Tov is the underlying Hebrew text of the Septuagint, not the clarifications and interpretations introduced by the Septuagint translators (Tov, 'Jeremiah, a work in progress', in: *Bible Review* 16 (2000), pp. 32-38).

[263] Jennifer M. Dines, *The Septuagint*, London 2004, p. 22.

[264] Jobes, Da Silva 2000, p. 290.

MT require literary explanations. However, Tov explains these in terms of small-scale exegetical considerations, usually on the level of one verse, or in terms of general hermeneutical concerns of translators such as avoiding anthropomorphisms. 'Revisional activity in literary compositions bears a very personal and subjective character', Tov states.[265] I argue that a different picture emerges when the differences between the two texts are to be viewed from the perspective of the chapter as a whole, in awareness that the text is a vehicle of group identity. Tov's textual critical approach does not take into account voices of different groups and their perspectives present in the text. Tov does distinguish diachronically between different layers in the text – of the prophet and his subsequent followers[266] – but not between competing voices, either synchronically or diachronically. This does not mean that every small change in the material makes 'sense', or testifies to a certain larger set of ideas, but it might express or feed into a certain understanding of the chapter as a whole. Even small changes of a personal character from the hand of a translator or reviser can add to or play in to a different understanding of the chapter.

While most often LXX, being a translation, has a longer text,[267] Jeremiah LXX is about one-seventh shorter than Jeremiah MT. Pluses in MT sometimes consist of phrases and words, but also of larger sections: 33:14-26 and 39:4-13 are not represented in LXX. Second, some of the material is placed differently: the Oracles Against the Nations follow after Jer 25:13 in the Septuagint, while in the Masoretic tradition (MT) these are placed at the end of the book, in chapters 46-51. Last, the two texts contain different readings, or deviations (see below), spread through the chapters. Tov supports the view that in general the text of LXX reflects an shorter version of the book of Jeremiah, an assumption I follow here.[268] This presupposes that distinct versions of the book of Jeremiah existed. In the debate about whether the LXX 'reflects a Hebrew text 'earlier' and 'better' than that enshrined in the MT', Tov argues that the book of Jeremiah existed in two distinct Hebrew forms: a shorter and older one on which the LXX is based and an expanded edition that

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[265] Emanuel Tov, 'The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in Light of Its Textual History', in: *The Greek and the Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint*, Leiden 1999, pp. 363-384, p. 365.

[266] Tov distinguishes between stratum A, B and C, containing respectively poetry, biographical and deuteronomistic material (Tov 1999, p. 371).

[267] A so-called translation universal is that 'translated texts tend to be longer than the source text due to the tendency towards explicitation', Janet W. Dyk, Percy S.F. van Keulen, *Language System, Translation Technique, and Textual Tradition in the Peshitta of Kings* (Monographs of the Peshitta Institute), Leiden 2013, pp. 475, 476.

[268] Emanuel Tov, 'Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint of Jeremiah 27 (34)', in: Emanuel Tov, *The Greek and the Hebrew Bible, Collected Essays on the Septuagint*, Leiden 1999, pp. 315-331. See pp. 316, 317 for a summary of arguments supporting the assumption of a shorter Hebrew text, such as the translational character of the book, that is more faithful than free, and fragments found in Qumran that are very similar to the text of LXX. According to Tov LXXV is not only shorter, but probably also earlier.

became MT.[269] Jeremiah texts found in Qumran are taken to reflect this proto-Masoretic Text.[270] Both texts 'add secondary readings to a common text base', and can be understood as recensions. The existence of these two recensions therefore does not 'unlock the literary history of the book', but instead 'attests to the existence of a literary history'.[271] With Shead and Tov I assume that the Septuagint is based on a shorter Hebrew text.[272] This text cannot be seen as more 'original', neither can MT. Both have to be understood as distinct recensions, each having gone through processes of transmission and redaction. Shead with Tov regards the two texts as different recensions, that differ only superficially.[273] As I make clear below, in my view the two texts put forward quite different understandings of the chapter. We differ on the question of how to interpret these differences and on the degree in which they influence the outlook of the texts. When Shead and Tov do regard a deviation as intentional, they tend to see it as an isolated instance.

In the Jeremianic tradition the assumed existence of LXXV testifies to ongoing textual development while the tradition was transmitted in different versions: textual transmission began before the process of growth of the book of Jeremiah was completed.[274] As a result, a strict separation between the literary development (the process of growth of the book) and the textual development (the process of transmission of the text) of the book of Jeremiah cannot be maintained. Besides, in any process of text transmission, textual and literary developments are intertwined in the work of copyists and translators, whose work always also reflects some interpretation. I therefore connect textual questions and literary questions, combining literary critical,[275] textual critical,[276] and *Endgestalt* approaches, I look at both MT and LXX not as fixed, but as living texts, in which we witness the interaction of tradition with its heirs. Here I very briefly discuss textual and literary criticism in the study of the

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[269] Jobes, Silva 2000, p. 175.

[270] G.J. Brooke, 'The book of Jeremiah and its reception in the Qumran scrolls', in: Adrian H.W. Curtis, Thomas C. Römer (eds.), *The book of Jeremiah and its reception*, Leuven 1997, pp. 183-205, pp. 203. Brook adds that some of these probably are the closest texts to the *Vorlage* of the LXX we have.

[271] Shead 2002, p. 22.

[272] Shead 2002, p. 22. Tov in: Tov 1999, p. 364.

[273] Shead 2002, p. 25.

[274] Tov in: Tov 1999, p. 315, 316.

[275] Textual criticism studies the process of textual transmission and the textual diversity stemming from it. Literary (or redactional) criticism focuses on an earlier phase, in which the text was still in development. In the case of the book of Jeremiah (especially) these two developments overlap.

[276] Given the circumstance that no text of the OT is available in an original form, should there have been such an original form, but only in later manuscripts, transmitted by undoubtedly loyal, but not infallible scribes who in addition may also have had their exegetical inclinations, we are left with a variety of texts, often only partially legible. Textual critics of the OT aim to reconstruct the processes of transmission leading to these different versions, or to reconstruct an 'Urtext', the original text out of which all other texts developed, although this last goal is often abandoned.

Septuagint and ask how the approaches can be fruitfully combined in a comparison of LXX and MT. The detailed, complicated work of textual criticism is not relevant only in order to clarify processes of textual transmission, but also pertains to questions of meaning and interpretation. Textual transmission and textual development are intimately connected to the meaning of the text.

As I have already pointed out, differences between the two versions of chapter 32 can be explained as stemming from the process of textual development or from the process of textual transmission. In the case of the former, LXX was translated from a Hebrew text that differed from the MT tradition we now have. It is also possible that a difference stems from ongoing textual development after LXX was translated: the Greek text, the Hebrew text or both texts continued to develop, whether or not through the work of a reviser. In case of the former, the process of transmitting produced differences. The process of translation can be seen as part of this, but as stated above, also aspects of textual development were part. Inevitably, the two different versions we now have, developed out of a combination of these factors, including the influences of copyists, translators and revisers. Researchers interested in the textual development of MT focus on explaining those deviations in the Septuagint that in their judgment reflect a different *Vorlage* of LXX. In such cases, the relation between LXX(V) and MT needs to be illuminated: How do the two texts relate? Can we reconstruct which text is 'more original' or earlier? If LXX is based on a Hebrew text differing from MT, it might be that the MT text changed in a later stage, and that LXX reflects an earlier text.

A Greek reading that looks like an odd rendering of the Hebrew is called a deviation. In order to gain insight into the relation between a Greek and the Hebrew rendering a deviation is retroverted: a hypothesis of LXXV is made, that is of the Hebrew text underlying the Greek translation. Sometimes a retroversion indicates that the deviation does not point at a different *Vorlage*, but is likely to stem from a mistake or intentional act of the translator, or from the process of copying. It might be that the translator misread or misunderstood the Hebrew text,[277] or for some reason chose an uncommon translation. If on the basis of retroversion however it is likely that LXXV differed from MT, we speak of a Variant (i.e. we assume LXXV differed from MT). If a textual critic decides the deviation is a variant, it needs to be evaluated. That is, the question needs to be answered whether something can be said about the relation between the reading of MT and the retroverted reading of LXXV. Neither question can be answered with absolute certainty. For instance, below I describe how MT and LXX present a different understanding of the documents

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[277] In Jer. 32 [39]:8 MT reads הַגְּאֻלָּה (the redemption), LXX πρεσβύτερος. It might be that the translator read 'gedolah' ('the great' (f)) and translated it into the better fitting πρεσβύτερος. It is also possible that a copyist of MT read גְּדֹלָה. See also below.

of purchase. It is not possible – nor is it my goal – to decide how the two sets of readings are related. In both steps, retroversion and evaluation, textual and literary considerations may play a role. Tov writes that evaluation more than retroversion is subjective, but makes clear that the difference is gradual and that also in retroversion reaching to what the text 'originally' said in the end remains an ideal.[278] Tov and Shead give precedence to textual considerations, which is sound from the perspective of textual criticism of MT. However, such an approach runs the risk of losing sight of the text as a whole.

The question of whether a deviation goes back to a different *Vorlage* is less relevant here, as is the process of evaluation. Processes present in the text or in the translation, may be enforced in the process of transmission. In this research any deviation between the two texts is considered relevant, since any difference contributes to the text as a whole, to its structure and/or its content. Even an unconscious mistake of a copyist or translator, such as haplography[279] will steer the understanding of copyist and translator, and of future users, and thus contribute to its development. Processes of textual development (the growth of the text) and textual transmission (the act of *tradere*, of passing on tradition) are interwoven. Both processes are influenced and pushed by the changing contexts of groups appropriating and transmitting tradition. Thus, in the process of textual transmission slowly and subtly develops new manifestations of traditions are shaped.

With Tov I assume that the translation of the Septuagint is based on a *Vorlage* (LXXV) different from the present Masoretic shape of the book.[280] In my view, an earlier version of the book developed into different directions. That the book, and chapter 32 within that, developed into different directions is not too surprising, the text contains a variety of themes and tensions in structure and context. Above I therefore described Jeremiah 32 [39] in terms of a landscape, reflecting collective memory, containing traces of struggles for identity, and containing conflicting, overlapping, dominant and counter narratives. This, together with the changing circumstances of the heirs of the text, instigated the production of new meanings within the tradition.

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[278] Tov notes that a retroverted Variant 'may never have existed but in the translator's mind' (Tov in: Tov, 1999, p. 302).

[279] Haplography refers to the loss a letters in a text, or even of some words, as a result of the jumping of the eye of the copyist (or translator) from one word or letter(s) to a similar or identical word or letter(s) a bit further in the text, so that the words or letter(s) in between fell out. It is also present when words have similar or identical beginnings (*homoioarchton*) or endings (*homoioteleuton*). A plus (extra words) in a text, and a minus ('missing' words) can sometimes be explained as an instance of haplography, or the reverse phenomenon, dittography (which mostly means a copyist repeats a letter or a series of letters). A plus that could be explained as a case of haplography is the large plus of MT in v. 5, 6, see above in what follows.

[280] Tov in: Tov 1999, p. 364.

3.3.2 Three approaches of Jeremiah 39 [32]: Hardmeier, Shead and Migsch

In line with my approach to the Jeremianic tradition and Hardmeier's *Traditionsliteratur*, I combine literary and text critical considerations. The analysis of the *Endgestalt* of the recensions of the text is the starting point for researching diachronic development, both in terms of textual growth (literary criticism) and textual transmission (textual criticism). A comparison of chapter 32 [39] in its LXX and MT recensions has been made rather recently both by Andrew G. Shead and Herbert Migsch. Both make use of Hardmeier's structural analysis of Jeremiah 32. Shead differs very strictly between textual and literary considerations, leaning more towards the former, in which he is close to Tov. Migsch more often considers literary and exegetical considerations. Whereas Shead explains most variant in terms of textual transmission, Migsch more often assumes textual development, mainly by redactor, to the point where Shead criticizes him for seeing '*Vorlage* differences behind most variants'.[281]

Shead argues that the structure of the text in the two versions is the same, and differences between the two texts are of degree only. Each text added secondary readings to a common text base, though the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint was revised less extensively than the Masoretic Text. He deems a late recension of MT improbable.[282] Shead explains most deviations as non-Variants brought into the text by the translator, who didn't mutilate his *Vorlage*, but did feel a certain freedom in his renderings. He points out many instances of haplography in LXXV. In other words: Shead usually does not see intentionality in the differences. In my view, this has to do with Shead's dominant text critical perspective, which leads him to explain most differences in terms of textual transmission and the process of translation. He treats them as isolated instances that cannot be related to an overall perspective: he does not distinguish between the understanding of the chapter presented in LXX and MT. He perceives the work of the translator of LXX and the redactor of MT as mechanical, much like his own method of studying the differences between the two texts.

Migsch pays a lot of attention to the structure of the text, comparing the structure of LXX and MT. According to Migsch, LXX presents an outlook different from MT, as the result of the work of a redactor of LXXV who intentionally shaped the text. In Migsch's analysis, then, the work of a redactor of LXXV is crucial: he adapted the structure of the text, constructing LXXV as a narrative and adapting it to a new circle of recipients.[283] In his view the Masoretic Text too underwent redaction, but the structure of the text was not

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[281] Shead 2002, p. 21

[282] Shead considers it therefore unhelpful to see LXXV as MT's Vorlage.

[283] Migsch 1995, p. 33.

adapted. Within LXX he differs between the original text of LXXV, a redactor of LXXV and the translator. Of importance to him are the *Vorlage* and the work of the redactor of the *Vorlage*.

Though both scholars provide valuable insights in the text, I find both Migsch's and Shead's approaches somewhat one-sided. I position myself between Shead's text critical and Migsch's more literary approach. Shead represents the more traditional approach of the study of the Septuagint: he is interested in understanding the textual history of MT. Migsch on the other hand considers the Septuagint as a meaningful text that presents an understanding of Jer. 32 [39] different from MT. According to his analysis, crucial developments took place in LXXV. Migsch is at times too eager to bring in literary considerations. According to both approaches, the translator acted mechanically. According to Shead he made mistakes, which resulted in a different text. According to Migsch these differences were already present in LXXV, or stem from the redaction of MT. The risk of Shead's approach is that LXX(V) is only perceived through technical terms, so that we lose sight of LXX(V) as a text reflecting the process of *tradere*. As stated above, the study of the Septuagint is in a state of transition. Hardmeier's ground-breaking work in taking the structure of the text as a point of departure aims to open up scholarship to exactly this aspect of the text. Migsch on the other hand focuses very specifically on the returning exiles. He neglects, as Shead rightfully points out, text critical considerations, ascribing only minor differences to the translator.[284] Migsch carries his analysis too far by differing between original versions of both texts and a reworking by a redactor. He does point out *Kohärenzstörungen* in the two versions, and is thus able to show their ambiguity. Shead fails to relate his findings to the ambiguity of the text. This is exactly the strength of Hardmeier's approach. It enables me to make visible the aspects the text focuses on through structure and other elements as well as the ambiguity beneath and as a result of that.

3.3.3 Differences in structure

The main differences in structure are found in vv. 6 and 26 in relation to v. 1. V. 6 is decisively different in MT and LXX, as pointed out above. It is a key verse, crucial in how the two texts develop, while also being problematic. As a result of the differences, the structure of MT is more complex than that of LXX: in LXX, vv. 8-44 are one section. I pay attention especially to the way in which time and place are structured. While in the different sections of LXX time and place are constructed in continuity, in MT they are characterized by discontinuity.

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[284] Migsch 1995, p. 75, 'der LXX-Übersetzer [hat] lediglich "winzige" Wörter fortgelassen'.

sections Jer. 32 MT	sections Jer. 39 LXX
v. 1 superscript: announcement of word of God	v. 1 superscript: announcement of word of God
vv. 2-5 introduction	vv. 2-5 introduction
vv. 6-15 narrative of purchase	vv. 6-7 word of God
vv. 16-25 prayer	vv. 8-44 unfolding of the word of God: Jeremiah's narrative of the purchase and following events
vv. 26-35 God's answer	
vv. 36-42 God's answer, part II[285]	
vv. 42-44 prophecy of good things	

The two versions differ in what is pointed out as the word of God, announced in the WGF in verse 1. Verses 6 and 26 both refer to the word of God again, but while MT presents Jeremiah as the speaker in v. 6 and the narrator in v. 26, in the Septuagint the roles in v. 6 and 26 are reversed. In LXX then v. 6 reintroduces the word of God, linking back to v. 1, after the introductory verses 2-5. As a result, God's notification of Hanamel's coming in v. 7 is the word of God announced in v. 1 according to LXX. In LXX the prophet plays a central role. Here, the chapter is presented as taking place in the setting presented in the introduction: during the reign of Zedekiah, while the king of Babylon is besieging Jerusalem and Jeremiah is held in prison. This structure is quite simple. Slightly odd is that in v. 8 Jeremiah begins to speak without being properly introduced. Also, vv. 36-41 still indicate a post-exilic perspective, but this is not indicated in the structure, as in MT. In LXX the chapter is Jeremiah's account of the events following Gods announcement of the advent of Hanamel and his offer of the field. The word given in v. 7 gradually unfolds as vv. 15, 25 and 44 each point back to v. 7.

In MT the word announced in v. 1 only follows in v. 26. All previous verses, including the story of the purchase, are presented as information building the background of the word of God, in a narrative told by Jeremiah. Since after v. 26 the prophet no longer has a role in MT, the prophet mainly plays a role in the background of the chapter. MT's structure is more complex and, as I argue, intently ambiguous.

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[285] Within vv. 26-41, וְעַתָּה לָכֵן in v. 36 heightens the expectation of the reader even more. לָכֵן is not represented in LXX. The combination only occurs elsewhere in Jer. 42:15 where LXX only has διὰ τουτο. This suggests that the MT redactor added stress here and tried to suggest a causal relation.

v. 1	הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יְהוָה	ὁ λόγος ὁ γενόμενος παρὰ κυρίου πρὸς Ιερεμιαν
v. 6	וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר	καὶ λόγος κυρίου ἐγενήθη πρὸς Ιερεμιαν λέγων
v. 26	וַיְהִי דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר	καὶ ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρός με λέγων

The difference of speaker in v. 6, Jeremiah in MT and the narrator in LXX, is connected to other differences in v. 4, 5 and 6.[286] MT contains a plus in vv. 4 and 5:

v. 4	וְצִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה לֹא יִמָּלֵט	καὶ Σεδεκιας οὐ μὴ σωθῇ
v. 5	וּבָבֶל יוֹלִךְ אֶת־צִדְקִיָּהוּ וְשָׁם יִהְיֶה <u>עַד־פָּקְדִי אֹתוֹ</u> <u>נְאֻם־יְהוָה</u> <u>כִּי תִלָּחֲמוּ אֶת־הַכַּשְׂדִּים</u> <u>לֹא תַצְלִיחוּ</u>	καὶ εἰσελεύσεται Σεδεκιας εἰς Βαβυλῶνα καὶ ἐκεῖ καθιεῖται
v. 6	וַיֹּאמֶר יִרְמְיָהוּ הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר	καὶ λόγος κυρίου ἐγενήθη πρὸς Ιερεμιαν λέγων

The plus in the Masoretic Text of vv. 5 and 6 consists of two parts: 'until I take note of him, declares God' and 'if you fight the Chaldeans you will not succeed'. Shead suggests parablepsis in the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint: the eye of a copyist jumped from יִהְיֶה v. 5 to יְהוָה v. 6, and the words in between fell out.[287] The translator, confronted with the odd reading: 'and there […] Adonai to me said', would have added καθιεῖται to make sense of the text.[288] In addition, he understood אֵלַי (to me) as short for 'to Jeremiah'. In order to indicate that the formula introducing the word of God which he found in LXXV was unique[289], he translated it with an equally unique Greek formula.[290]

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[286] In the introduction (vv. 2-5) too, we see a simpler structure in LXX. In MT these verses present background information: וְאִם (v. 2), not represented in Jer LXX, signals that this information belongs to the past from the perspective of the narrator. LXX presents it as taking place simultaneously.

[287] Shead 2002, pp. 102, 103.

[288] καθιεῖται, (sit, is an unlikely rendering of יִהְיֶה. An explanation is that the translator supplied the verb καθίζω to make sense of יהיה. This would also explain the odd word order in LXX: ויהי דבר יהוה is always rendered with καὶ ἐγένετο (ἐγενήθη) λόγος κυρίου. Shead suggests that the translator transposed the verb to reflect that the *Vorlage* was unusual.

[289] הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר appears 6 times in Ezekiel, but always as a continuation of a *wayyiqtol-*

Shead however does regard a similar plus in chapter 27[34]:22 as an expansion in the Masoretic Text. In both cases, I argue, the plus makes sense as an addition specific to the outlook of the Masoretic tradition. The differences that are of interest in chapter 32 are the following: LXX presents Sedekias as the active party in v. 4: the king will go to Babylon. According to MT Zedekiah will be brought to Babylon.[291] Although Shead's solution is appealing, more needs to be said about the differences in content between the two versions. First, two complementary arguments can be given for the secondary nature of the MT: an odd rendering in v. 41 and a similar plus in chapter 27[34]:22. In LXX, עַד־פָּקְדִי אֹתוֹ (MT v. 5b) is not rendered. Normally, LXX renders פקד with ἐπισκέψομαι. Surprisingly, we do find this verb in LXX v. 41, but here it renders שוש (to delight). It is possible that MT originally had פקד, but that in a later stage a redactor of MT thought it necessary to change פקד into שוש after v. 5b was added. The reason is that in v. 5b פקד is intently ambiguous, as I argued in chapter 2.[292] As in chapter 32, LXX has an active formulation: the vessels will go to Babylon. After the addition of v. 5 פקד became too ambiguous in v. 41, and was changed. The older reading of v. 41 survived in LXX.

It is also possible that that 'until I take note of him, declares God' was left out of LXX(V). Given LXX's focus on Jeremiah as a notary, it has no interest in the fate of Zedekiah. The same could be argued for the reference to the you-group, or this was added to MT: MT constructs a shared identity beyond exile, accepting exile as a necessary fate. Although these lines of thinking are present in the Septuagint tradition as well, MT enforces them. According to LXX then both temple treasures and Zedekiah go to Babylon, without coming back. The interest in the fate of the king and the temple as we will see in chapter 4 is part of the ongoing tradition. I will now discuss the second part of the plus: 'if you fight the Chaldeans you will not succeed'.

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clause. The expected Hebrew formula would be: ויהי דבר יהוה.

[290] καὶ ἐγένετο/ἐγενήθη λόγος κυρίου is the normal Greek word order.

[291] Sharp 2003, p. 138, 139).

[292] Following Sharp, I argue that v. 5b was added in order to counter the ironic, negative view on Nebuchadnezzar that the otherwise very similar Jeremiah 34:1-5 puts forward. The addition 'until I take note of him' in MT chapter 32 does not mean to cast a more favorable light on Zedekiah, but seeks to rehabilitate Nebuchadnezzar, who in MT is uniquely presented as a servant of the Lord

Addressee: Jeremiah or anonymous you-group

As pointed out in chapter 2, a 2nd person plural-group is addressed in the MT plus. This addressee returns in v. 36 and 43 MT, where LXX addresses a 2nd person singular in vv. 36 and 43: Jeremiah.[293] In v. 5b (MT) the anonymous 'you'-group is told that fighting against the Babylonians is to no avail – since God is in control. The issue of singular versus plural is a reoccurring phenomenon: it plays a role in the way the versions present the document(s) of purchase, and in land versus lands, and a singular field versus plural fields.

MT	**LXX**
v. 36	
therefore	
[…]	[…]
the city of which *you* [plur] say:	the city of which *you* [sg] say:
'It has been given'	'It will be given […]'
v. 37	
Behold, I gather them from *all the lands*	Behold, I gather them from *the whole land*
v. 43	
the land of which *you* [plur] say	the land of which *you* [sg] say
v. 44	
deeds will be written and sealed, and witnesses will witness	*you [sg] write, seal, call witnesses*

The anonymous you-group is quoted and addressed in the quasi-disputation-speeches of vv. 36-41 and the disputation-speech of vv. 42-44 in MT. LXX addresses a second-person singular in vv. 36 and 43 (who can be identified as Jeremiah). The statements in v. 36 and v. 43 can be understood as reflecting the outlook on city (v. 36) and land (v. 43) of the 'exiles' in Babylon: they picture the city as fallen prey to evil and the land as desolated. Verses 36-41 however presents an outlook going beyond the pro-Babylon perspective, and MT's presentation matches this perspective. Verse 43 addresses those living in Babylon. Their claim in v. 42, that Judah is a desolated land, is countered, and they are exhorted to return to Judah. As pointed out above, this section on which MT focuses, vv. 36-41, is the last insertion into the text, presenting a unique viewpoint of renewal by transforming the message the text had in a previous stage and applying it to a new addressee.[294]

The anonymous you-plural group addressed here opens a new construction of identity in which destruction and exile had to happen. It also

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[293] LXX has a singular here. Shead explains that textual evidence 'permits no firm decision', so literary arguments have to decide (Shead 2002, pp. 220, 221). Shead does not discuss possible literary consequences of the difference.

[294] Rom-Shiloni in: *Vetus Testamentum* 2003, pp. 201-223.

offers later readers an opening to identify with the text. MT's version of the chapter thus creates space for new readers. LXX rather focuses on the opening offered through the person of the prophet. In v. 44 both MT and LXX speak of fields (plural). However, in LXX a second person singular (Jeremiah) is the one taking care of the legal procedure (writing, sealing, calling witnesses): here, the purchase of one field is broadened to a promise that many fields will be bought, and Jeremiah is the guarding of that process. The move in time and place that can be pointed out in MT is not found in LXX, as I now point out.

Framework of time and space

	MT	LXX
v. 1	the word that came to Jeremiah from God	the word that came from God to Jeremiah
v. 5	and to Babel Zedekiah will be brought and there he *will be*	and Jeremiah will enter Babylon and there he *will sit*
	until I take note of him, **declares God if (when) you fight the Chaldeans you will not succeed**	
v. 6	and **Jeremiah said** the Word of God came *to me* saying	and the word of God came *to Jeremiah* saying
v. 8	and Hanamel came to me	and Hanamel came to me
v. 25	'Buy for you the field for money and have witnessed witness.'	'Buy for you the field for money.' **And I wrote a book and sealed it** and had witnesses witness.
v. 26	and the word of God came *to Jeremiah* saying	and the word of God came *to me* saying
v. 36	אֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם אֹמְרִים נִתְּנָה the city of which *you* [plur, anonymous group] say 'It has been given [….]'	ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν ἣν σὺ λέγεις παραδοθήσεται the city of which *you* [sg, Jeremiah] say: 'It will be given […]'
v. 37	מִכָּל־הָאֲרָצֹות from *all the lands*	ἐκ πάσης τῆς γῆς from *the whole land*
v. 43	בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם אֹמְרִים In the land of which *you* [plur] say	ἐν τῇ γῇ ᾗ σὺ λέγεις In the land of which *you* [sg] say
v. 44	and fields will be bought with money and a book written and sealed and witnesses will witness […]	and fields will be bought with money and you will write a book and seal it and have witnesses witness […]

The two versions differ in the way time and space are constructed. The Greek text remains within the time frame as indicated in the introduction. It is a time in between: both versions present the city as being given into the hands of the Chaldeans by God, but this has not yet taken effect. The city is besieged, but not yet taken. MT in v. 36 switches to a later, post-destruction context explicitly: again we find the phrase that the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans (see also vv. 3, 25, 28). [295] This time however, it is not the word of God, but of the you-group. In addition, it reads נִתְּנָה, 'the city has been given', referring to the past.[296] Last, it is uniquely combined with the phrase 'because of sword, famine and pestilence' that indicates that the destruction had already taken place. LXX has a future tense here ($\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\omega\theta\acute{\eta}\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$).[297] It seems then that both Septuagint and Masoretic Text are exact in what they want to express, differing between the situation of city and land. But whereas LXX's timeframe is the situation of siege of the city, MT makes the move to a post-exile perspective explicit. Of course, LXX too contains a post-exilic perspective in the introduction and vv. 36-41. However, given its focus on the role of the prophet, it chooses not to express this shift in the structure of the text. MT presents a chapter more complex in its presentation of time and place and in the roles allocated to Jeremiah and the narrator, switching between the two. By doing this, MT's presentation is more consistent with the context of the chapter. The difference in outlook of the two versions become more clear when we look at some additional elements in more detail.

The switch in time in MT is also a switch in space, in both versions. Verses 16-34 elaborate on Jerusalem's precarious situation. Verse 24 sketches the immediate danger the city is in: 'behold!' is now used in combination with the siege mounds (crowds in LXX). It does not however already picture the city as having been taken and destroyed. Verse 36 moves beyond that. Verses 42-44 MT and LXX refer to the land, presenting it as a desolation. This fits the time frame of the introduction, since when Jerusalem was still under siege, the surrounding land had already been occupied.[298] Again, MT is more consistent.

As I argued in Chapter 2, MT's version of the chapter steps over the older controversies between Jehoiachin exiles and those exiled with Zedekiah of which traces are visible in vv. 26-35, and between returning exiles and

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[295] In vv. 3, 25 and 28 I understand the formula 'the city is given' as expressing that God has already given the city into the hands of the Chaldeans, but they have not yet taken it. It expresses the idea that God controls the events.

[296] In v. 25, the city is referred to as already given into the hands of the Chaldeans, which is consistent with the situation of the siege. The city is not pictured as already having been destroyed (as it is in v. 36).

[297] Shead considers $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\omega\theta\acute{\eta}\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ an exegetical rendition, probably in the interests of historical accuracy (Shead 2002, p. 251).

[298] In v. 43 LXX translates נִתְּנָה with $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\delta\acute{o}\theta\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ (Shead 2002, p. 251), which is again consistent: the land surrounding Jerusalem is already occupied by the Babylonians.

people of the land that shaped the chapter (vv. 16-25). In the verses on which the MT text focuses (vv. 36-41), a different perspective is voiced. It is not the perspective of the 'returning exiles', but the position of a later group, who claim that the exile has not ended with the return to Judah. The 'space of exile' can include people within and outside of the land. A difference between the two versions in v. 37 matches the impression that MT addresses a different group, and not the 'returning exiles' as in LXX. The Masoretic Text reads כָּל־הָאֲרָצוֹת (plural), while the Septuagint has ἐκ πάσης τῆς γῆς (singular).[299] This suggests the group addressed in the Masoretic Text is a post-exilic group living in a situation of dispersion going beyond the Babylonian exile. In their experience, exile has not ended with the return of groups from Babylon (compare the claim in v. 42, that Judah is a desolated land: this claim is countered, and the addressees are exhorted to return to Judah).[300]

The document(s) of purchase

As has already been pointed out, in the Septuagint vv. 25, 36 and 43 are linked through σὺ λέγεις, contrasting Jeremiah's statements on city and land with God's command to buy the field. In addition, in v. 25 LXX has a plus (adding the writing and the sealing to the procedure of purchase) that creates a parallel with v. 44. MT only mentions the witnessing in v. 25. Vv. 25 and 44 both take up the purchase and the legal procedure attached. Both LXX and MT have fields (plural) in v. 44, but in LXX Jeremiah is presented as taking care of the legal aspects of the fields that will be purchased.[301] In MT, Jeremiah plays no role. Apparently this aspect of the narrative of purchase is of special interest.[302] Thus, LXX focuses on the act of writing and underlines Jeremiah's role as a notary. This is connected to differences in vv. 10-14 within the narrative of purchase.

Verses 10-14 refer to the document(s), witnessing to special interest in the complicated legal procedure of the purchase. In the verses, a switch of focus from the field to the document(s) takes place. It is interesting to compare the way MT and LXX present the document(s.

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[299] Shead argues that LXXV must have been plural and that the rendering in LXX may also mean 'from the whole earth'. He points out that the question of who is gathered according to these verses is a *crux interpretum* (Shead 2002, p. 212). From this literary perspective it is reasonable that the *Vorlage* of LXX stays closer to the situation of the chapter (as also in vv. 36 and 43), while MT expands the message of the chapter. However, a similar MT plus in MT 29: 14 suggests that MT is secondary here.

[300] Palestinian readers of Jeremiah 32 pointed out that it has been part of Zionist ideology to present Palestine as 'a land without people for a people without land' (a quote from Golda Meir, a former Prime Minister of Israel.

[301] LXX has γράψεις, σφραγιῇ, διαμαρτυρῇ – a second person singular (Jeremiah) is addressed.

[302] In MT v. 44 in MT makes a shift to a more general level.

	MT	**LXX**
v. 25	[…]	[…]
	'Buy for you the field for money	'Buy for you the field for money.'
	and have witnessed witness.'	**And I wrote a book**
		and sealed it
		and had witnesses witness.
v. 26	and the word of God came *to Jeremiah*	and the word of God came *to me*
	saying	saying
v. 44	and fields will be bought with money	and fields will be bought with money
	and a book written	and you will write a book
	and sealed	and seal it
	and witnesses will witness […]	and have witnesses witness […]

In v. 10, MT and LXX refer to one document, which is sealed, and then witnessed (which suggests the witnesses sign the open part). It is not clear how the document of purchase is to be understood – in MT, the document is never referred to twice in the same way. What these verses describe, can be understood as a *Doppelurkunden*: documents of purchase that consisted of one piece of papyrus containing two copies: the top half of the papyrus (the inner copy) was rolled up and tied, and the bottom half (the open copy) remained visible. 'The open copy usually verbatim, sometimes the wording was not identical.[303] Of course, this does not mean, however, that v. 14 speaks of three (or two) documents. The ongoing tradition supports this understanding: Wacholder points out that Targum Jonathan 'clearly envisions *two* documents, and so does Rashi'. Because of the precarious situation of Jerusalem, in this case both the open and the sealed copy were buried.[304]

In vv. 11-14 however, LXX and MT present different interpretations. In LXX, v. 11 refers to one book, which also contains τὸ ἀνεγνωσμένον while v. 14 speaks of two documents, but refers to these as αὐτὸ (sg). In MT, v. 10 speaks of one document, but v. 14 of two or even three. Both versions are not entirely coherent in their presentation of the documents, which suggests that

[303] Ben Zion Wacholder,'The "Sealed" Torah Versus the "Revealed" Torah: An Exegesis of Damascus Covenant V, 1-6 and Jeremiah 32, 10-14', in: *Revue de Qumran*, Vol. 47, no. 12 (1986), pp. 351-368, p. 358.

[304] Wacholder in: *Revue de Qumran* 1986, p. 360: 'The Targum and the traditional commentators understood Jeremiah as preparing duplicate copies of the deed., one of which under normal circumstances would have been stored for safekeeping, and the other delivered to the buyer for his own records […]. But the situation in Jerusalem was not ordinary. If Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, the *sefer haggaluy* would be useless to Jeremiah, who could have been expected either to flee or to be taken in to captivity. It was because of this contingency that by divine ordinance the prophet commanded Baruch to bury *both* the *sefer … hehathum* and the *sefer haggaluy* in an earthen vessel'. 'Targum Jonathan to Jer. 32, 11.14 clearly envisions *two* documents', and so does Rashi, while Qimhi 'apparently sees *three* separate documents […] two of which were duplicate'.

LXX and MT present an understanding of a text that was already unclear. In general, MT focuses on the plurality of the documents, while the understanding presented in LXX seems to be that there is one document of purchase, although it consists of a read (MT has 'open') and a closed copy.[305]

Neither version develops the figure of Baruch, although his role in vv. 10-14 is crucial.[306] Instead, as we saw, LXX focuses on Jeremiah, while MT addresses a new audience.

	MT	LXX
v. 10	וָאֶכְתֹּב בַּסֵּפֶר	καὶ ἔγραψα εἰς βιβλίον
	וָאֶחְתֹּם	καὶ ἐσφραγισάμην
	וָאָעֵד עֵדִים	καὶ διεμαρτυράμην μάρτυρας
	וָאֶשְׁקֹל הַכֶּסֶף בְּמֹאזְנָיִם	καὶ ἔστησα τὸ ἀργύριον ἐν ζυγῷ
v. 11	וָאֶקַּח אֶת־סֵפֶר הַמִּקְנָה	καὶ ἔλαβον τὸ βιβλίον τῆς κτήσεως
	אֶת־הֶחָתוּם	τὸ ἐσφραγισμένον
	הַמִּצְוָה וְהַחֻקִּים	
	וְאֶת־הַגָּלוּי	καὶ τὸ ἀνεγνωσμένον
v. 12	וָאֶתֵּן אֶת־הַסֵּפֶר הַמִּקְנָה	καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτὸ
	בְּסֵפֶר הַמִּקְנָה	ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς κτήσεως
v. 14	לָקוֹחַ אֶת־הַסְּפָרִים הָאֵלֶּה	λαβὲ
	אֵת סֵפֶר הַמִּקְנָה הַזֶּה וְאֵת הֶחָתוּם	τὸ βιβλίον τῆς κτήσεως τοῦτο
	וְאֵת סֵפֶר הַגָּלוּי הַזֶּה	καὶ τὸ βιβλίον τὸ ἀνεγνωσμένον
	וּנְתַתָּם בִּכְלִי־חָרֶשׂ	καὶ θήσεις αὐτὸ εἰς ἀγγεῖον
	לְמַעַן יַעַמְדוּ יָמִים רַבִּים	ὀστράκινον ἵνα διαμείνῃ ἡμέρας πλείους

MT has a plus in v. 11: 'according to rule and law', which can be understood as a later addition in MT – possibly a clarification that entered the text from the

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[305] MT speaks of an 'sealed' and an 'open' [copy], LXX of a 'sealed' and a 'read'. גלה in piel is never rendered with ἀνεγνωσμένον. ἀνεγνωσμένον normally renders קרא , to read or to proclaim, as it does in for instance chapter 36.
[306] The ongoing tradition does testify to interest in the figure of Baruch, see chapter 4.

margin[307] – or as a case of haplography in LXXV.[308] Interestingly, it seems that this verse influenced later traditions of Jeremiah in the role of safe keeper. This sheds a different light on the plus. Wacholder and Bogaert relate the text to Deuteronomy and the tradition that Jeremiah saved temple treasures, in this case a hidden eschatological torah.[309] I discuss the link more extensively in chapter 4. What is relevant here, is the hypothesis of Bogaert that a redactor of Jeremiah, familiar with Jeremiah's role as a guardian of traditions, added the plus to v. 11. According to CD V Zadok discovered a second Torah, that was composed by Moses alongside the Pentateuch and was meant for the Messianic age. The tradition of the existence of a second Torah is derived from Deut. 31:26, Wacholder writes: according to Zadokite interpretation, Moses had written the text of the eschatological Torah.[310] The addition then links the hiding of the documents in chapter 32 with the tradition that Jeremiah played a role in the hiding and uncovering of the eschatological Torah. It would be a *later* tradition that entered the text from the margins. The addition 'according to rule and law' would refer to a third document, 'un document legislatif scellé don't Jérémie assure la conservation par-dela la destruction de Jérusalem et de la Judée'.[311] In this reading then, there are three documents: the document of purchase, a document containing הַמִּצְוָה וְהַחֻקִּים and another document.

[307] Bogaert argues that the insertion 'according to rule and law' has its origin in CD V, 1-6 and was inserted from the margins (Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, 'Les Documents Placés Dans Une Jarre, Texte Court et Texte Long de JR 32 (LXX 39)', in: G. Dorival, L. Munich (eds.), *Selon le Septante*, Paris 1995, pp. 53-77, see also chapter 4). This does not have to mean the construction is ungrammatical: Tsumura points out that here 'a pair of expressions, 'the sealed one and the unsealed one' is interrupted by an adverbial phrase, which is explaining the legal practice of making open and sealed copies. The 'AXB pattern', in which A and B 'keep their grammatical relationship' while X connects to the construction as a whole, he argues, is not uncommon in Hebrew (David Tosia Tsumura, 'Literary Insertion (AXB Pattern) in Biblical Hebrew', in: *Vetus Testamentum* Vol. 33, no. 4 (1983), pp. 468-482, p. 477).

[308] Shead points out that הַמִּצְוָה וְהַחֻקִּים and הַמִּקְנָה אֶת־הֶחָתוּם look similar and opts for haplography in LXXV (Shead 2002, pp. 77, 78).

[309] Wacholder in: *Revue de Qumran* 1986, pp. 361, 362: according to the epistle of Judah Maccabee cited in 2 Macc. 2 Jeremiah had hidden the Ark, the tent and the alter of incense, 'until the time that God gathers his people again.'

[310] Wacholder in: *Revue de Qumran* 1986, p. 354.

[311] Bogaert in: Dorival, Munich (eds.) 1995, pp. 53-77, p. 73.

The role of Jeremiah: prophet, notary, redeemer?

	MT	LXX
v. 7	קְנֵה לְךָ אֶת־שָׂדִי	κτῆσαι σεαυτῷ τὸν ἀγρόν μου
	אֲשֶׁר בַּעֲנָתוֹת	τὸν ἐν Αναθωθ
	כִּי לְךָ מִשְׁפַּט הַגְּאֻלָּה	ὅτι σοὶ κρίμα παραλαβεῖν
	לִקְנוֹת	εἰς κτῆσιν
v. 8	קְנֵה נָא אֶת־שָׂדִי	κτῆσαι τὸν ἀγρόν μου
	אֲשֶׁר־בַּעֲנָתוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ בִּנְיָמִן	τὸν ἐν γῇ Βενιαμιν τὸν ἐν Αναθωθ
	כִּי־לְךָ מִשְׁפַּט הַיְרֻשָּׁה	ὅτι σοὶ κρίμα κτήσασθαι
	וּלְךָ הַגְּאֻלָּה	καὶ σὺ πρεσβύτερος
	קְנֵה־לָךְ	

As we saw in chapter 2, between vv. 7 and 8 MT switches its focus from a field that has significance to a family to the level of land for the people as a whole. In MT Jeremiah explicitly is presented as the redeemer, even though it is not entirely clear what this redemption actually entails here. The concept is found in v. 7 (מִשְׁפַּט הַגְּאֻלָּה) and v. 8 (הַגְּאֻלָּה). It seems that v. 7 LXX translates v. 8 MT.[312] The concept of redemption is missing. It might be that the translator was unfamiliar with the concept, that it was added later to MT, or that LXXV did not contain it.

It is possible that MT only had מִשְׁפַּט לִקְנוֹת in v. 7 which MT clarified by adding הַיְרֻשָּׁה, while LXX(V) added εἰς κτῆσιν. This explains why LXX v. 7 does not contain the concept of redemption. In v. 8, it is possible that LXXV read *dalet* instead of *gimel* in הַגְּאֻלָּה. A female adjective attributed to Jeremiah is strange, but if this is what the translator found, πρεσβύτερος is a logical translation. Whatever took place in the development of the texts, we now have a text, LXX, presenting Jeremiah as 'the elder'. This fits his role as an exemplary figure, being the first to buy a piece of land, and functioning as a notary when others follow his lead.

In MT, the prophet is to take care of the legal details of purchasing land. The Masoretic Text does not specify who will be writing, sealing and witnessing but presents the purchase of fields as something that is part of the return. The legal procedure following such purchases is here presented as a general regulation.

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[312] MT has an infinitive in v. 7 that corresponds with LXX's infinitive in v. 8 (לִקְנוֹת κτήσασθαι) while MT's noun in v. 8 fits with LXX's noun in v. 7: הַיְרֻשָּׁה εἰς κτῆσιν.

It is possible that LXXV is written for the local Egyptian community.[313] This would offer an explanation regarding why the text focuses on Jeremiah: the book of Jeremiah links the prophet to this community. This link is also present in the ongoing tradition (see chapter 4). He regards MT 'destined for Babylon'.[314]

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[313] Shead himself does not necessarily hold this view, as regards such reconstructions of textual history are not part of his study (Shead 2002, pp. 261, 262).
[314] Shead 2002, p. 261.

3.4 Conclusions

The Masoretic Text and the Septuagint are both interpretations of a multilayered text. I assume that both texts developed out of an earlier version of the Jeremianic tradition. We can safely assume that this earlier version, like the MT and LXX reworkings we now have, suggested cohesion and unity, while at the same time being ambiguous: Zedekiah's question is not answered, prayer and reaction are only loosely connected, and the refutation in vv. 37-41 does not counter v. 36. It is a text containing many themes and elements, creating a complicated set of intertextual relations. Out of it developed (at the least) the two traditions studied here, offering distinct views on how to understand the chapter. The transformations within the chapter leave some of these themes aside,[315] while others are elaborated upon, such as the themes of exile and return, the position of God and Nebuchadnezzar. This continuing development is visible especially in the Masoretic tradition.

The Masoretic Text as a whole strengthens the idea of unending exile through its focus on vv. 36-41, thus stepping over the older controversies presented in vv. 16-25. The chapter is explicitly placed in a new context in which the Babylonian conquest belongs to the past and dispersion is more widespread. It suggests that not so much the perspective of the "returning exiles" is central here, but rather the position of those claiming that the exile hasn't ended with the return to Judah. As pointed out in chapter 2, vv. 36-41 already hint at this concept, while in MT enforces the concept by framing the book as a whole by 1:1-3 and chapter 52, thus constructing the world of the text as one of unended exile.[316] This issue returns in the discussions in the reading groups in Jerusalem in chapter 5. This perspective is decisive for the book according to MT, since it sheds light on the nature of the book and the debate taking place, 'unending exile' can surface where the debate between returnees and people of the land is overcome, and space is created for a new, more embracing, perspective.

The Septuagint focuses on the dialogue between God and Jeremiah, tying the text closer to the context of siege and confinement in which it is put and to the figure of the prophet. The prophet is challenged to look beyond destruction to a new future. Thus, the prophet himself is presented as the agent of transformation in the tradition, moving beyond and even countering previous claims of that same tradition.

Both texts have to be placed at a distance from the debates on land, God and identity following the Babylonian conquest. MT moves away from this

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[315] The identity construction in which staying in the land is central, is not developed, for instance (Hardmeier, 'Jer 32, 2-15', p. 211). It is in the ongoing tradition (chapter 4).
[316] Hill 1999, pp. 212, 213, 218

historical context of the siege presented in the chapter to a later, post-Babylonian, context. The Masoretic tradition distinguishes between Jeremiah's context and a new readership. The Septuagint presents the events as taking place in a continuum of time and place. In the Septuagint, Jeremiah's purchase of land undertaken during the siege by the Babylonians symbolizes future transactions when the Judeans will return 'from all lands', which also points at a more remote situation of widespread Diaspora. This story is largely told by Jeremiah himself, who is the model prophet who knows all, while in the Masoretic version the narrator has a much more prominent role. In the Septuagint the prophet receives the role of a notary in future purchases of fields in the land. The Septuagint presents, at least with regard to time frame and addressees, a homogenous picture of the chapter, in which Jeremiah receives a new role. The prophet has become an exemplary figure here, who is therefore more detached from history. LXX focuses on the actual practice of how to go about buying land, presenting Jeremiah as the guardian of that process. In the Masoretic Text the dialogue is not between the prophet and God, but between God and a new audience whose utterances are refuted. This text is more dynamic, creating space for a newly addressed group.

It is possible to understand LXX as addressing the community in Egypt, and MT as having a Babylonian audience in mind. I find it more important to point out that the version of the chapter according to MT underlines the processes of *tradere* by its explicit shift in space and time. LXX focuses on identification with the prophet. This can be understood as two different ways of understanding appropriation: MT understands it as becoming part of the process of *tradere*, LXX as identifying with the prophet.

Methodologically, these results underline the need for an integration of different textual and exegetical approaches. Details of the text that textual criticism brings to light, give insight into the text as *Traditionsliteratur*, shaped by historical processes. However, textual critics tend to be interested in literary considerations mainly as far as they are relevant for the procedures of retroversion and evaluation. Their primary interest is not in how deviations are relevant for hermeneutical considerations, nor how deviations play a role in transforming the text, in the process of covering and uncovering that comes with transmission of tradition. As far as Tov and Shead address literary issues, they do not connect these to the struggles taking place in the text. In their view, such questions should be addressed when the basic work of textual criticism is done. However, as I have argued, construction of meaning takes place on each level of the text. In the next chapters, especially in chapter 5 on Palestinian and Israeli appropriations, it becomes clear that questions of meaning in relation to group interests need to be taken into account. I propose here to view textual criticism as the detailed study of the processes in time and space that have shaped textual tradition. This approach focuses on textual transmission, with an open eye for the overlap between textual transmission

and textual development, and therefore textual, hermeneutical and literary considerations. Thus, textual criticism as the study of part of the process the tradition went through is relevant for these recipients of the text and indeed for all heirs of the text seeking to interact with and become part of the tradition.

The Jeremianic Tradition in early Judaism and Christianity

4.1 Introduction

Jeremiah 32 contains many themes and motives that have been elaborated upon in the ongoing tradition. In this chapter, I will sketch how certain themes and motives continued to function in the Greek and Hellenistic period, as well as, very briefly, in later Rabbinic and Islamic traditions. The documents and fragments engage with tradition. Communities identifying as heirs of the tradition find themselves in changing circumstances, in which they seek out the relevance of what has been transmitted to them. As always in the process of *tradere*, continuity and discontinuity play a role: existing traditions are 'creatively deepened and modified to make them relevant and fruitful'.[317] As we will see, the relevance of the Jeremianic tradition in this period is very immediate: the documents testify to very little awareness of distance in time and space, in spite of often rather free re-appropriations. I argue that the layeredness and ambiguity of the book of Jeremiah instigates a great variety in the ongoing tradition.

The documents discussed do not always explicitly refer to chapter 32 or to the book of Jeremiah as a whole. Rather, they elaborate on certain themes and elements present in the chapter and the book. I focus on a selection of texts in which the Jeremianic tradition somehow plays a role. I will not discuss these documents extensively, but take examples from them, in order to point out different routes that the tradition went. It is often debated whether some of the texts debated here should be viewed as either Jewish or Christian, or Christianized.[318] I will not go into this debate here. In general, I view the emerging movement centred around Jesus as one of the sects evolving out of Second Temple Judaism's diversity. The following works are discussed:

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[317] Liv Ingeborg Lied, 'Recent Scholarship on 2 Baruch', in: *Currents in Biblical Research*, Vol. 9, no. 2 (2011), pp. 238-276, pp. 259, 260. Lied discusses Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai, The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, Leiden 2003. Najman writes about pseudepigraphal literature, in which this transformative participation is even more explicit.

[318] Most works exist in several versions, and were reworked several times.

Work	Dating (approximately)
Eupolemos[319]	158 B.C.E.[320]
Damascus Document	2nd cent. B.C.E. [321]
Jeremiah Apocryphon C[322] (Qumran)	2nd cent. B.C.E. [323]
4Q390	2nd cent. B.C.E.
After 70: 2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalyps of Baruch)	late 1st cent., early 2nd cent. [324]
Ep. of Baruch (2 B.78-87)	
History of the Captivity[325] (Coptic Apocryphon)	late 1st cent. (with later additions) [326]
4 Baruch (Paraleipomena)[327]	2nd century[328]
Lives of the Prophets	1st cent. (with later additions)[329]
Cave of Treasures	6th cent.[330]

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[319] Eupolemus is a Hellenistic Jewish historian (John Joseph Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, Grand Rapids 2000, p. 47). Only fragments of the work survive, among which is a very short section on Jeremiah (Ben Zion Wacholder, *Eupolemos*, *A Study of Judeo-Greek Literature*, New York 1974, pp. 237ff).

safeguarding of the arc and the tablets it contains. It can be seen then as a correction of the scriptures (Wacholder 1974, pp. 237ff).

[320] Wacholder 1974, p. 7.

[321] With Wacholder, I understand the Damascus Document as originating in the Second Temple period, dating the sect it stems from around 150 BCE. (Ben Zion Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document*, Leiden 2007, p. 3).

[322] Several documents are referred to as Jeremiah Apocryphon or Apocryphon of Jeremiah: 4 Baruch (or Paraleipomena), History of the Captivity (also referred to as Syriac or Coptic Jeremiah Apocryphon) and the fragments from Qumran Cave 4 referring to Jeremiah (Jeremiah Apocryphon C). Also, 4 Baruch (Paraleipomena) is based on History of the Captivity (Pierluigi Piovanelli, 'In Praise of "The Default Position" or Reassessing the Christian Reception of the Jewish Pseudepigraphic Heritage', in: *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 61 (2007), pp. 233-250, p. 239). To avoid confusion, I this study I use the term Apocryphon only for the fragments from Qumran Cave 4 (Jer. Ap. C).

[323] Dimant 2001, p. 108.

[324] The work was probably written in a Jewish milieu in Palestine (Liv Ingeborg Lied, 'Those Who Know, And Those Who Don't: Mystery, Instruction and Knowledge in 2 Baruch', in: Christian H. Bull, Liv Ingeborg Lied (eds.), *Mystery and Secrecy in the Nag Hammadi Collection and Other Ancient Literature: Ideas and Practices*, Leiden 2012, pp. 427-446, p. 427).

[325] Until 1970, this document was known as History of the Captivity, afterwards it become known as the Coptic Apocryphon (Piovanelli in: *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 2007, pp. 239, 240). In order to distinguish this document from Jeremiah Apocryphon C, I refer to the document as History of the Captivity. It is a pseudepigraphic work of Jewish origin that was translated into Coptic and was transmitted by Christian scribes.

[326] Piovanelli in: *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 2007, p. 239.

[327] I regard 4 Baruch as a reworking of History of the Captivity. Piovanelli argues that History of the Captivity is the first edition*,* and that 4 Baruch is a second edition (Piovanelli in *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 2007, p. 239).

[328] Piovanelli in: *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 2007, p. 239.

[329] Wolff 1976, p. 36. The work is also known as Vitae prophetarum.

[330] Wolff 1976, p. 59. The work is also known as Syrische Schatzhöhle.

This chapter does not offer an overview of the reception history of Jeremiah 32 in this period.[331] Rather, I want to point out some examples of how elements of the tradition contained in Jer. 32 were activated during this period, while other elements were covered. I do so in order to point out parallels in processes of appropriation in the ongoing Jeremianic tradition. I perceive the tradition of Jeremiah 32 as a trove from which new groups appropriating the text take what they need to shape their identity. This is not a random process; rather, it is a necessity for groups to transform tradition to make it relevant to their experiences, while also maintaining continuity. I understand these re-appropriations as the fruits of processes of self-definition that take place in interaction with authoritative texts; processes in which group conflict often plays a role. A lot was at stake in these processes of re-appropriation of tradition: in the Graeco-Roman period Jewish communities went through transformations in space and with regard to the institutions that shaped their identity (temple, priesthood, law).[332] In such a situation re-appropriation was 'decisive for the way the community was to understand itself, who was to belong to it, how it was to go about its business.'[333]

In 4.2 and 4.3, I discuss the way a group defines itself with respect to geography and time, that is, how continuity and discontinuity in time (periodization) and space are presented. In relation to this I pay attention to how in- and out-groups are constructed and origins are defined. As we saw in chapters 2 and 3, Jeremiah 32 testifies to different social realities. I assume that the texts discussed here do not give direct information on the social situation from which they stem, but rather that a community, or communities, constructs a reality in the text. Here the concept of landscape is helpful: it clarifies that the text presents the imagined landscape of a certain group. The text informs us regarding the 'ideal landscape' of a group and how events function in memory, rather than on 'what really took place'.

The ongoing tradition testifies to tensions regarding the answer to the question what constitutes redemption or restoration, and on what should be

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[331] I have not exhaustively researched where the book of Jeremiah was used in the Hellenistic period. I have made a selection of documents mentioned in Christian Wolff, *Jeremia im Fruhjudentum und Urchristentum*, Berlin 1976 and in Adrian H.W. Curtis, Thomas C. Römer (eds.), *The book of Jeremiah and its reception*, Leuven 1997. The selected group of texts represents different places and directions, but does not intend to give a complete overview of directions in which the Jeremianic tradition developed.

[332] The works dating before 70 C.E., the period of the Second Temple, often deal with questions of identity in the Persian and Hellenistic period. The destruction of the second temple in 70, which had become a centre of wealth and power again, caused further significant transformations. Like in the time after 586, it should be kept in mind that exile functions as an ideological construct.

[333] J. Blenkinsopp, 'Sectarian Tendencies: An Aspect of Second Temple History', in: E.P. Sanders (ed.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Vol. 1, the Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries*, London 1981, pp. 1-26, p. 25.

central in tradition, and who is part of it, as the book of Jeremiah also does.[334] Recipients of tradition often experience themselves as living in between 'exile' and 'redemption' or restoration. In 4.2 I focus on continuity and discontinuity in geographical terms, paying attention to imaginations of landscape in the text. In 4.3 I focus on continuity and discontinuity in time by analyzing periodization. Intimately connected to discontinuity and continuity in time is the theme of fulfilment of redemption: in the documents discussed, a period or periods of sin are followed by exile, that is expected to be followed by redemption. In 4.4, I discuss how Jeremiah is related to the covenant and the law (4.4.1), on the one hand and the temple and the priesthood (4.4.2) on the other. These are overlapping and competing themes in how redemption and restoration are understood in the ongoing tradition. In all three paragraphs then the concepts of exile and redemption play an important role: these are often used to differentiate between the present state and the restoration that is hoped for. Time and space in the documents are often understood as a situation 'in between', while covenant, law and temple in different constellations play a role in constructing continuity with the past and in bringing about future redemption.

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[334] Restoration can be understood in geographical, religious and/or economical terms. It can be connected to the house of David, to the covenant, to the temple etc. It can be applied to several groups: to 'Israel', 'Judah and Israel', or to a group within Israel designated as loyal.

4.2 Land of exile, space of redemption: creating continuity and discontinuity in terms of space

Exile as a determinant of identity remained important in the ongoing tradition, both in and outside of the land. Exile is used to define boundaries of a community both in terms of space (where is 'exile'?) and time (how is exile constructed as a period in time?). In this section, I will focus on space. Exile not only indicates a location, but it constructs space in terms of 'belonging' and 'being away': it indicates what constitutes being in exile and what constitutes being in 'the right' space, which is often understood in terms of redemption. Exile in this way leads to a positive identification: the real people of Israel are those who experienced exile. Thus, the concept creates in and out groups. Exile becomes a period that is viewed as a necessary experience rather than as a punishment.

As we saw in chapters 2 and 3, various attitudes towards exile are found in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 32:36-41 constructs exile as a condition uniting Israel as a whole. In chapter 32, the voice of the Babylonian exiles is the loudest voice. Exile is a central concept in the book, but the book contains very little information on the life of the different groups of Judeans during exile. The account on the life of the prophet ends in Egypt, and the book of Jeremiah according to MT does too: with a prophecy against Egypt and the Judeans who went there.[335] On the basis of chapters 2 and 3 it can be said that the voice of Babylonian exiles is dominant over the voice of those who fled to Egypt and those who fled in the land. The ongoing tradition develops each of these geographical orientations, taking the liberty to diverge from information in the book: Jeremiah is associated with the people who stayed in the land, with the people in Samaria, with the exiles in Babylon and with the community in Egypt. In some works, the prophet moves from place to place. The different ways in which this takes place gives witness both to the flexibility of the figure of the prophet and of tradition, and of the interests of the groups presenting these orientations. Testifying to the ease with which Jeremiah is connected to different contexts, several late traditions claim that Jeremiah travelled to such unlikely places as Ireland.[336]

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[335] A negative view on Egypt is more central in LXX than in MT, see chapter 3.

[336] See for instance John Wilson, *Our Israelite Origins*, 1840. These traditions are a variant of 'British-Israelism', the idea that the inhabitants of Great Britain descend from the ten tribes of Israel (see also T. Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth*, Phoenix 2003).

Work	Location of Jeremiah (and Baruch)
	Jeremiah Apocryphon	Accompanies the exiles 'to the river', visits Egyptian Diaspora
After 70:	Josephus	In the land
	History of the Captivity	To Babylon, back to Jerusalem
	2 Baruch	Jeremiah leaves Jerusalem during the destruction, Baruch remains in the destroyed city
	Epistle of Baruch (2 B.78-87)	Letter to the lost tribes
	4 Baruch	Jeremiah leaves Jerusalem during the destruction, accompanies the exiles to Babylon and preaches.[337] He then returns to the land and dies there.
	Cave of Treasures	Jeremiah remains alone in Jerusalem and laments. He dies in Samaria.
	Lives of the Prophets	Jeremiah is stoned to death in Egypt
	Rabbinic Tradition	Jeremiah is located in Judah, Egypt and Babylon

I will focus on imaginations of space in relation to exile in Apocryphon C,[338] and on the ongoing development of imaginations of space as present in 2 Baruch, addressing 'all Israel'. Jeremiah becomes a representative of exilic identity here. Within the Apocryphon, I distinguish between two discourses, both addressing groups away from the land: G(olah)[339], addressing Babylonian exiles, and T(ahpanes),[340] addressing Judeans in Egypt. Interestingly, the Apocryphon preserves these two distinct perspectives.[341]

In connecting the prophet to the Judeans who went to Egypt, the Apocryphon is close to the book of Jeremiah, especially according to LXX. However, the Apocryphon also assigns a role to the prophet in relation to the Babylonian exiles, thus freely expanding tradition, or making use of a tradition that contains this element. The role Jeremiah has with respect to the Babylonian exiles is more crucial: he accompanies the Babylonian exiles to 'the river' and instructs them about 'what they should do in the land [sg] of their

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[337] According to 5: 19: Jeremiah is with them to preach the good news to the exiles and to teach them the word.

[338] The research on Jeremiah Apocryphon C is based on the text and translation by Devorah Dimant (Devorah Dimant, *Qumran Cave 4, XXI: Parabliblical Texts, part 4: Pseudo-Prophetic Texts* (Discoveries in the Judean Desert XXX), Oxford 2001, unless stated otherwise. Fragments found in cave 4 are thought to be part of six distinct copies of a document labelled *Apocryphon of Jeremiah C*. 4Q385a, 4Q387, 4Q388a, 4Q389 and, according to Dimant, also 4Q390. Dimant put this historical overview in chronological order, although what remains is not the full work.

[339] Davis in Flint, Duhaime, Baek (eds.) 2011, p. 472. The discourse is found in 4Q385a 18i:2-11.

[340] Davis in Flint, Duhaime, Baek (eds.) 2011, p. 473. The discourse is found in 4Q385a 18ii:1-10.

[341] Davis in Flint, Duhaime, Baek (eds.) 2011, p. 475.

captivity'.[342] The Jewish population in Tahpanes is addressed in a distinctively different manner: Jeremiah refuses to intercede on their behalf, instead he laments over Jerusalem. Only then, a word of God comes to him and he tells the 'sons of Israel and the sons of Judah and Benjamin' to keep the 'statutes and commandments'[343] and not to follow idols.[344] In both cases, Jeremiah is given the role of instructor in how to live away from the land. However, when Jeremiah accompanies the Babylonian exiles, the prophet is presented as reluctantly addressing the Tahpanes community. Only T contains a warning against idolatry (line 9). Davis points out that while Egypt becomes a 'symbolic representation of those who have voluntarily removed themselves from the prescriptions of Judaism', exile in Babylon 'becomes a place of purification'. T does not only contain the addressee 'sons of Israel', but also 'sons of Judah and Benjamin'. The sons of Israel, Judah and Benjamin are identified with the Egyptian Diaspora.[345] While 'Egypt' then stands for 'the whole of Israel and their persistent neglect of proper religious observance', the 'sons of Israel' in Babylon are presented as those singled out for spiritual restoration. The singular 'land' found in T seems to match the identification with the Babylonian exiles only, who are considered the sons of Israel.[346] Apparently, 'sons of Israel' has become a positive identification here, which addresses a certain group that is identified with the Babylonian exiles. In the document I will now discuss, 2 Baruch, Israel is addressed.

I will now discuss the concept of identity in relation to space in 2 Baruch.[347] The work is a response to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, probably written in Palestine, and mainly contains visions of Baruch after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Identification with the exiles remained meaningful after 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed. The document needs to overcome a deeply felt problem: if the existence of Israel lies in cult and remembrance, how can it fulfil its cultic duties? The fall of Zion and the dispossession of the land were a threat to the existence of Israel.[348] The work dramatizes the loss and destruction, presenting it as the end of everything: there is no point for the sun and the moon to spread their light anymore

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[342] Davis in Flint, Duhaime, Baek (eds.) 2011, p. 472. The discourse is found in 4Q385a 18i:2-11.

[343] 4Q385a, frg. 18 ii:7: Jeremiah tells the children of Israel, Judah, Benjamin up to keep 'my statutes and commandments', compare Jer. 32: 11 הַמִּצְוָה וְהַחֻקִּים.

[344] 4Q385a 18ii:2-5.

[345] Davis considers the sons of Israel, Benjamin and Judah addressed in T to be a 'wider audience' than the 'sons of Israel' addressed in G (Davis in Flint, Duhaime, Baek (eds.) 2011, p. 476). I suggest that 'sons of Israel' in G is to be thought of as an Israelite identity in which Judah is included. Here, all are identified as exiles and as Israel.

[346] See also chapter 3: LXX has the singular 'land', addressing the Babylonian exiles only. MT has plural 'lands', addressing either also those who went to Egypt, or a later situation of more wider dispersal.

[347] Citations from Lied 2008.

[348] Lied 2008, pp. 46 ff.

(10:12).[349] The work presents God's hidden plan of redemption, of which the destruction of temple and city are in fact part.

2 Baruch presents both Baruch and Jeremiah as having access to hidden knowledge. Jeremiah accompanies the exiles to Babylon, while Baruch remains in the desolate city where he receives his visions.[350] The work suggests that Jeremiah is concerned with preparing the community in Babylon, while Baruch is responsible for those in the land.[351] However, the two communities are presented as belonging together, and the 10 tribes are included in those in the land.[352]

2 Baruch judges Israel's history according to the sin/punishment and faithfulness/blessings scheme also present in Jeremiah 32: when Israel fulfils its duties, it is allowed to live in the promised space.[353] This 'space' is reinterpreted in the document. It presents Jerusalem as the place where law is explained and the place where the name of Israel is remembered (2 Baruch 3:4-6). Destruction of city and temple means that both activities come to an end, and that therefore the continuity of Israel as a people is under threat.[354] According to the document, the covenant and therefore the law are still valid: 'covenant obedience constitutes the key of access to covenantal space'.[355] The document thus constructs a new understanding of space, in connection to faithfulness to the law. Both time and space are defined eschatologically: what really matters lies beyond the existing world. Jerusalem as an earthly place is distinguished from Jerusalem as a heavenly space.[356] The city is to be 'removed from before me' (compare Jer. 32), but only for a limited time. God points out that there is yet another city and temple, that 'is preserved with Me, as Paradise' (2 Baruch 4:6). It will be 'restored for ever' (6:9). The text creates a second landscape that remains untouched. Part of this landscape is the vision in which an angel hides the temple treasures and vessels in the earth: the Zion

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[349] Destruction of the temple and the city is understood in cosmic terms. See Lied 2008 pp. 52 ff. for the cosmic role of the land, for instance the notion that God created the world for the sake of Israel, as a place to keep the law (compare the interpretation of the Jewish women in the next chapter: God is the creator, but remains a national God, in their view).

[350] 2 Baruch 31:1, 2 mentions a community which remained in the land with Baruch.

[351] 2 Baruch 33.

[352] Israel, understood as encompassing the ten (or nine and a half) tribes and the two tribes, is addressed in the work (Lied 2012, p. 429). Attached to 2 Baruch (2 Baruch 78-87) is a letter to the nine and a half tribes.

[353] Lied 2008, p. 3. This scheme also plays a role in the appropriation of the Jewish Israeli women in chapter 5.

[354] Lied points out that in 2 Baruch, as in contemporary Jewish texts, 'the temple, the city and the land are interdependent aspects of the same spatial entity', so that 'the loss of the temple involves the loss of the Land' (Lied 2008, pp. 40, 41)

[355] Lied 2008, p. 310.

[356] Whitters argues that the narrative shifts further and further away from city, temple and land to the land of the gentiles. He argues this 'geographical shift echoes a shift of authority from the temple to the law in the religious life of the Jews' (Lied in: *Currents in Biblical Research* 2011, p. 256).

that can be destroyed in Jeremiah's and Baruch's absence does not contain these crucial treasures (see next section). The importance of the earthly temple and city are relativized, while law and covenant become central.

Land in 2 Baruch is not 'necessarily a synonym to Palestine', but a socially constructed space. Rather than turning away from the concept of land, 2 Baruch transforms it by constructing an eschatological landscape.[357] According to Lied, 2 Baruch transforms 'the land to unite the central space of the covenant with the other world as the ultimate space of redemption'.[358] A characteristic of apocalyptic thinking is that tangible reality loses importance in favour of idealized space. Below in chapter 5, we see something similar in the interpretations of two Palestinian students, Amira and Laith: in their view, the relevance of Jer. 32 is strictly about redemption understood as referring to non-earthly space, that is not related to the land of Israel in which they live. In the interpretation of the Jewish women from Jerusalem on the other hand, the tangible land of Israel is the ultimate space of redemption.[359]

Other documents in the ongoing tradition go beyond G's presentation of Jeremiah accompanying the exiles to Babylon. They present the prophet as living in Babylon and dying there, sometimes together with Baruch. Traditions on the (location of the) death of Jeremiah also offer information on groups identifying with the prophet in terms of space. Several traditions exist on the location of his death.[360] Some traditions, staying close to the book, presume that Jeremiah died in Tahpanes, such as Lives of the Prophets (71, 3ff) and Jeremiah Apocryphon. The Christian ending of Paraleipomena also recounts that Jeremiah was stoned, but in Jerusalem, because he foretold the coming of Christ. It seems that in the original ending the prophet died from a natural cause in Samaria.[361] According to Cave of Treasures the prophet dies in the land, albeit in Samaria. He is buried in Jerusalem. An unknown Midrash quoted in Midrash Aggada also says that Jeremiah died in Egypt: he was stoned by the

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[357] Liv Ingeborg Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch*, Leiden 2008 p. 257. I concur with Lied in understanding the landscapes that are constructed in the text as imagined spaces, rather than as directly reflecting existing spaces (see chapter 1).

[358] Lied 2008, p. 30.

[359] Rabbinic tradition contains the idea of five oaths, formulated from an exilic perspective: it is not permitted to reconquer the holy land by force of arms, to rebel against the nations, to divulge the appointed time of the redemption, to despair of the final redemption, or to divulge the secret (of the calendar) to other nations, while God made the other nations 'swear not to oppress Israel to hard' (Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews: Vol. VI From Moses to Esther*, Philadelphia 1968, pp. 398, 399).

[360] Traditions also differ on whether the prophet was stoned to death – presenting the prophet as a controversial figure to the end - or whether he died from a natural cause.

[361] Wolff 1976, pp. 91, 92.

Jewish community there.[362] According to Cave of Treasures, Jeremiah dies in Samaria[363], but is buried in Jerusalem.[364] These examples present the prophet's death as taking place in a marginal area: Egypt or Samaria. The Epistle of Baruch in 2 Baruch suggests the prophet dies in Babylon[365], while according to Seder Olam 26 the prophet remained in Egypt until it was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. He was then taken to Babylon, rejoined the exiled Judeans and died there.[366]

In conclusion, the ongoing tradition freely uses the spatial elements present in the book of Jeremiah. The tradition is flexible about Jeremiah's geographical locations. The tradition is fluid, not fixed, and identification is immediate. Jeremiah and Baruch are figures of transition between the pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic periods. In general, exile is presented as an accepted punishment and the logical result of committing sins. It is necessary to undergo this punishment, so that being an exile becomes a condition for being part of tradition. As such, exile becomes a space of reflection and repentance. At the same, time 'land' also remains a tangible category. We see that identification with the Babylonian exiles tends to take preference, and there is a tendency to identify as Israel, not as Judah.

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[362] According to the Midrash, the prophet was buried by Egyptians who loved him, because the crocodiles disappeared through his prayers (Ginzberg 1968, pp. 399, 400). Seder Olam 26 however contains the tradition that Jeremiah was brought from Egypt to Babylon and dies there (Wolff 1976, p. 90, p. 92).

[363] Paraleipomena also mentions Samaria: returning exiles who had married a Babylonian woman and refused to leave her before entering Jerusalem, had to go to Samaria. Samaria is thus presented as a marginal region.

[364] Wolff 1976, p. 91.

[365] See 2 Baruch 85:3.

[366] Jeremiah also goes to Babylon according to Pesikta Rabbati 26, XVIII. He follows the blood traces of the exiles and returns upon reaching the Euphrates in order to console those left in Jerusalem (Wolff 1976, pp. 32, 93).

4.3 Periodization, continuity and discontinuity in time

An important aspect of historiography is periodization: the way in which history is divided into discernible periods.[367] It is a tool for the construction of continuity and discontinuity, giving insight into how a community views its origins, and where it locates turning points and crucial events.

I discuss three documents found in Qumran: Jeremiah Apocryphon C (also discussed in the section above), 4Q390[368] and Damascus Document (CD). In the documents an element from the book of Jeremiah is re-used in the way history is periodized: the Jeremianic 70 years of exile.[369]

Although the documents agree on the link between sin and punishment (exile), the past is presented in different ways. The documents agree in presenting the period of the First Temple as a period of sin, linking the community addressed there to the few that remained loyal to the covenant. The Apocryphon presents the period of Exodus and the 40 years in the desert in positive terms (4Q389 1, compare Jer. 32:21, 22), while the First Temple Period is presented in negative terms (4Q385a, frg. 3). The first period, that of the first temple, is a period of sinfulness that results in withdrawal of divine guidance for a period of ten jubilees (4Q387 2ii:1-5). In the second, the 'kingdom of Israel' is lost and ruled by a king who is a 'blasphemer'. According to the Apocryphon, violation of the law and defilement of the temple led to exile. By being desolate, the land pays off its Sabbaths. In the third period, a

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[367] See Sara Japhet, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period*, Winona Lake 2006, pp. 353 e.v.

[368] Following Davis I regard 4Q390 as belonging to a distinct later tradition, given its heightened cocern for the temple (C.J. Patrick Davis, Torah-Performance and History in the *Golah*: Rewritten Bible or "Re-presentational" Authority in the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah C*, in: Peter W. Flint, Jean Duhaime, Kyung S. Baek (eds.), *Celebrating the Dead Sea Scrolls, A Canadian Collection*, Atlanta 2011, pp. 467-495).

[369] In the book of Jeremiah, the period of exile or Babylonian dominion is sometimes limited to a fixed period of 70 years. In the ongoing tradition, this idea reappears. Sometimes exile, regarded as an experience shared by all Judeans, was understood to have ended with the establishment of the Persian Empire and the return of groups of exiles. However, the idea of a mass return following the decree of Cyrus is a myth. Exile did not end in 539. Instead, Neo-Babylonian hegemony was replaced by Persian hegemony, groups of Judeans over a period of a century migrated from Babylon to Judah, while others remained. Judean society consisted of a mixture of groups: different groups of 'returnees', people who remained in the land, etc. Becking points out that the concept of mass return is found in the books of Ezra, by a group claiming to be the true Israel in continuity with the prophecy of return found in the book of Jeremiah (Bob Becking, 'We All Returned as One!', in: Lipschits, Oeming, 2006, pp. 3-18, p. 11). As has been pointed out in chapter 2, the concept of ongoing exile became widespread in the Second Temple period, continuing beyond that, also among communities living in the land of Judah (Hill in: Kessler 2004 (ed.), pp. 149, 158).

second blasphemer is mentioned, the evil done in this period is considered worse than the former evil, and again consists of violation of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,[370] to the point where Israel is no longer a people. The Apocryphon is set in the 66th year of Israel's exile during a gathering in Babylon, at the river Sur, where a document is read that was sent by Jeremiah, who resides in Egypt.[371] The transition point from what is set in past tense into future tense has not been preserved, but seems to have been the aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem in 586.[372]

CD and 4Q390 see their communities as a remnant of a remnant.[373] In CD the exilic period is understood as a period of wrath. The community understands itself as living at the end of this period.[374] They live in the land, but are socially, religiously and economically separate from 'Israel', and therefore understand themselves as living in exile, waiting for redemption.[375] CD 3:1-12 casts the period from Noah until the 'ancient covenanters' (3:10) as a mostly evil period, with some exceptions (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (3:3), 4Q390 1:5 pictures the Israelites as evil, 'except for those who first came from the land of their captivity to build the Temple'.

Unlike the Apocrypon and CD, 4Q390 casts the first returnees from captivity who built the temple in a positive light.[376] CD 1:10,11 is negative about them. It suggests that the community is awaiting full redemption, understanding that as a return to the temple and the full 'execution' of the law. In 4Q390 the ongoing exile is presented from an 'exclusively internal Judaistic perspective',[377] as a time of apostasy under priestly jurisdiction:[377] 4Q390 is very critical about priestly rule in Judah.[378]

In CD an exclusive identity is created of the real Israel within Israel, with a focus on cultic behaviour. While the Apocryphon and 4Q390 (and also 2 Baruch) focus on the law, CD focuses on priestly identity: it views its addressees as sons of Zadok. As in chapter 2, tensions between an understanding of the process of *tradere* as being in the hands of the priest vs. in the hands of prophets and scribes plays a role here.

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[370] 4Q388a ii:3.

[371] 4Q389 i:5,6. Dimant reconstructs thirty-sixth year (rather than fifty-sixth), understanding 'exile' as referring to 597, when Jehoiachin was exiled (compare Jer. 52: 31). This would be the last year before the release of Jehoiachin. However, Davis reconstructs sixty-sixth, a possibility not mentioned by Dimant (Davis in Flint, Duhaime, Baek (eds.) 2011, p. 472.

[372] Dimant 2001, p. 97.

[373] 4Q390 first mentions 'those who will come first from the land of ther captivity to build the Temple' as the group excepted from doing evil (4Q30, frg. 1, line 5), narrowing this group down to the 'refugees' left among them (line 10). In line 11, the group is narrowed down.

[374] J. Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community*, Leiden 2007, p. 23.

[375] Wacholder 2007, p. 143.

[376] Dimant 2001, p. 244. When that generation comes to an end, 'in the seventh Jubilee', however, the behaviour of the people will take a turn for the worse ('They will violate everything', 4Q390 i:7,8).

[377] Davis in Flint, Duhaime, Baek (eds.) 2011, p. 481.

[378] Davis refers to Cana Werman, Davis in Flint, Duhaime, Baek (eds.) 2011, p. 470.

In conclusion, a development of periodization is visible already in the book of Jeremiah, especially in MT, in which time is viewed from the perspective of awaited redemption. Thus, time becomes an 'in between', exile is ongoing. In these documents, the focus is more on the in between. Documents such as the Apocryphon and CD testify to a way of experiencing time in which past, present and future are intermingled: 'all history serves as a blueprint' for eschatological times.[379] We also encounter this view on history in chapter 5, in the interpretation of the Jewish women and also of some of the Christian readers. For instance, to some of the readers in the group of Jewish women the text is about the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel. In such appropriations history becomes the stage on which God enacts a plan of redemption. The contextuality of the processes taking place in the text is lost out of sight. The text is viewed as containing examples and truths that have value outside of historical processes.

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[379] Wacholder 2007, p. 215.

4.4 Jeremiah, the law and the temple treasures

As we saw above, the ongoing tradition presents Jeremiah as a custodian of central aspects of tradition for later times. Continuity and discontinuity are expressed in relation to covenant,[380] kingship, and temple laws. I will now focus on Jeremiah's role as a guardian of the law (4.4.1) and of the temple treasures (4.4.2). At times, these traditions seem to represent two distinct orientations: redemption is often phrased either as existing in the full understanding of the law, or in the restoration of the temple service. As pointed out in chapter 2, the book of Jeremiah already contains tensions between scribal authority and priestly authority. Nevertheless, Jeremiah is given a role in both orientations. He is presented as safeguarding different ornaments connected to the temple, and also as a guardian and interpreter of the law. The diversity of tradition and the multiple applicability of the figure of Jeremiah also stand out in this perspective. When presented as a new Moses, Jeremiah unites both roles, being guardian both of the temple and of the law. This is the case for instance in Lives of the Prophets. Jeremiah takes care of the Mosaic heritage: the ark, the law and the things within it, hiding them in a rock.

Document	What does Jeremiah hide?	Where?
Eupolemos	The ark with the tablets	Not mentioned
Vita Jeremiae	The ark	In a cave near Moses' mountain, in the presence of witnesses
Paraleipomena	The temple treasures (Jeremiah also saves the temple fire)[381]	In the earth
2 Baruch	The ark with the tablets	In the mountains near Jericho[382]
Josephus	Temple treasures	In a mountain by Moses[383]
Rabbinic sources	Tablets of the law[384]	Taken by the Babylonians/ hidden in the temple

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[380] Some fragments suggest the covenant has been broken.

[381] The prophet celebrates the first service in the new temple. Wolff 1976, p. 75.

[382] Wolff 1976, p. 67, it is not made explicit that Jeremiah brought the ark there.

[383] Wolff 1976, p. 68.

[384] The fate of the tent and the treasures is rarely mentioned in rabbinic sources (Wolff 1976, p. 69).

4.4.1 Jeremiah and the law

Blenkinsopp states that the interpretation of prophecy and laws was a decisive factor in the dispute between groups 'disputing for recognition as the legitimate heirs of old Israel'.[385] A shift takes place in which the prophetic claim to authority is taken over by the interpreter and tradent of prophetic works.[386] In Jeremiah LXX, a shift is visible from the prophet to the scribe Baruch, reflecting an interest in and awareness of the importance of scribal activity in the passing on of tradition. Rabbinic tradition contains narratives linked to this. Mekhilta presents Jeremiah as the last prophet and reflects on Baruch's sadness at not receiving Jeremiah's prophetic authority. Baruch then went to Babylon, and remained there, viewing the study of the law as more important than rebuilding the temple.[387] It testifies to a double shift: the time of prophecy ends with Jeremiah, so that scribes become central. Second, the focus shifts from the temple to the law. The same focus on the law is visible in Eupolemus, the oldest source for the hiding of the temple treasures. In this text, the motive of temple treasures and law are both connected to Jeremiah. However, central importance is given to the prophet role in relation to the law. According to Eupolemus, Nebuchadnezzar took the gold, silver and bronze to Babylon, while Jeremiah kept the ark with the tablets. As Wacholder points out, the prophet 'guarded what is most significant: the Decalogue',[388] the gold and silver of the temple were of no avail. As has been said, Lives of the Prophets presents Jeremiah as protector of the Mosaic heritage as a whole. Tradition also focuses on the theme of interpretation and ongoing revelation. Jeremiah is presented as someone who guards and interprets the law, and uncovers its hidden aspects.

The role of instructor of the law is also given to Jeremiah in the Apocryphon. Other documents focus on the figure of Baruch instead of Jeremiah as guardian of the law, as we saw already in 2 Baruch. What plays a role here, most visibly in CD, is that the correct interpretation of law and prophecies plays a crucial function in group identity in the Second Temple Period. CD stresses that the community received full disclosure of the previously hidden laws of the covenant. It is connected to a switch from a prophetic role to the role of a scribe. The traditions therefore attempt to link these two roles, creating a 'union between scribalism and prophecy'.[389] Finally, I will discuss a tradition in which the document(s) mentioned in Jer. 32

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[385] Blenkinsopp in: Sanders (ed.) 1981, p. 24.

[386] Blenkinsopp in: Sanders (ed.) 1981, p. 10.

[387] Mekhilta Bo. Seder 'Olam and other texts however do count Baruch among the prophets. (Wolff 1976, 1976, Vol. VI, p. 411.

[388] Eupolemus 39:5 'But the gold, silver, and bronze of the Temple he sent to Babylon as tribue. Except the ark and the tablets therein; these Jeremiah retained' (Wacholder 1974, p. 237).

[389] Blenkinsopp in: Sanders (ed.) 1981, p. 23.

play a role in the tradition concerning Jeremiah as a guardian of the law. A recurring motive is that of full knowledge becoming available. The concept of hidden things is taken from Deut. 29:28,[390] but I argue that an incentive for seeing Jeremiah as someone who brings hidden things to light is found in the hidden and open copy of Jer. 32:11 and 14. Jeremiah Apocryphon, 4Q390 and the Damascus Document (and also 2 Baruch) share a belief that their community has access to the full law, or the full understanding of it. The documents testify to the conviction that Israel was punished because of its failure to keep the law. 4Q390 1:5-7 claims the community has the right understanding.[391] CD 3:12, 16 contains a comparable claim.[392] The communities behind these document see it as their task to search for these eschatological hidden things.

It seems that the idea that a hidden Torah existed alongside an open or known copy prevailed in the Hellenistic period. It fits well with the conviction of different groups that only they had access to the true exegesis of Torah, or even the true Torah. Wacholder argues that one of the texts feeding into this concept is Dt. 31:24-30. Wacholder argues it provides an exegesis of Dt. 31:24-30. The text in Deuteronomy contains a curiosity that CD takes as a reference to a second torah of Moses.[393] Wacholder argues that Jer. 32 also plays a role in CD. I argue that given the position close to Moses that Jeremiah is given in the tradition, it is rather plausible that the prophet is connected to the theme of a second, hidden Torah. The ambiguous references to the documents in Jer. 32:10-14[394] are not unlikely to have been taken as another reference to multiple copies of Torah, as CD V:1-6 actually suggests.

Jer. 32:11-14, CD V:1-6 and Dt. 31:24-30 contain references to documents that are somewhat puzzling. In addition, Jer. 32:11 contains the not entirely clear הַמִּצְוָה וְהַחֻקִּים (not represented in LXX). According to Wacholder

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[390] Hultgren 2007, p. 221.

[391] Hultgren 2007, p. 221

[392] They are the ones to whom the 'hidden things in which all Israel had strayed' (III, 14) are revealed, so that they are able to keep the right interpretation of the law. Here the renewal of the covenant applied to the observance of these laws according to their correct interpretations. The content of the covenant did not change, but is now fully revealed to them (Nitzan 2001, p. 94). The covenant of the CD community considers itself a continuation of the covenant, or, more precisely: they consider themselves the only faithful heirs.

[393] Wacholder points out that Dt. 31: 6 and v. 26 are repetitive: Jeremiah writes the poem twice. Various traditions have produced solutions for this problem. The author of CD 'evidently resolves the problem by presuming that, while the traditional Mosaic Pentateuch was deposited in the ark itself, that of another Torah also inscribed by Moses himself, but intended for the later generations and the eschatological epoch, was placed on the side of the ark'. The second torah of Moses was discovered by 'Zadok the True Lawgiver' (Wacholder in: *Revue de Qumran* 1986, pp. 351-368, pp. 354, 355).

[394] As has been explained in chapter 2, it is not clear whether MT presupposes two documents, or a single folded document. It is clear that Targum Jonathan envisions two documents (Wacholder in: *Revue de Qumran* 1986, p. 360).

CD V:1-6 is a 'conceptual amalgation' linking the open and closed copy of the deal of purchase in Jeremiah 32:6-15 to Deut. 31:24-30. In the eschatology of the Damascus Document the 'eschatological torah' is central. CD V:2,3 refers to a sealed book of Torah in the ark, that David could not read. According to CD V Zadok discovered a second Torah[395], that was composed by Moses alongside the Pentateuch and was meant for the Messianic age.[396] The scribe of CD took his understanding of 'open' and 'closed' from Jer. 32:11-14.[397] 'The sealed book of Torah' (CD V:2) and 'the open' (V:5) are taken from אֶת־הֶחָתוּם and אֵת־הַגָּלוּי in Jer. 32:11-14: the duplicate copies of the deed Baruch was ordered to hide were the duplicate copies of the eschatological Tora.[398] As pointed out in chapter 2, Bogaert[399] argues that in its turn, CD also influenced Jer. 32 MT. A redactor of Jeremiah, familiar with the tradition Jeremiah's role as a guardian of Torah as in CD V:1-6 adapted Jer. 32:11, adding הַמִּצְוָה וְהַחֻקִּים. In the understanding of this redactor, there are three documents: a document of purchase, a closed document containing rules and ordinances, and an open document.[400] It can be supposed that when CD was written, traditions connecting Jeremiah to the act of hiding, safeguarding and uncovering tradition existed, as well as traditions connecting Jeremiah and Moses. Jeremiah became the prophet who had access to both the open and the closed copy of the law. Again, in this tradition Jeremiah is closely connected to Moses.

4.4.2 Jeremiah, the temple treasures and priesthood

Above it was seen that the right interpretation of the law turned out to be a central interest in the traditions concerning the hiding of the temple treasures. It seems that Jeremiah is portrayed as a figure of transition at the cessation of worship at the temple.[401] During and after the Second Temple Period direct appeal to written Torah gained a position of importance, sometimes displacing

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[395] The tradition of the second Torah is derived from Deut. 31:26, Wacholder writes. 'Like Moses who according to Zadokite interpretation had himself written the text of the eschatological Torah, Jeremiah personally inscribed the deed, sealed it, and called on witnesses to verify the transaction' (Wacholder 1986, p. 354).

[396] David himself did not have access to this second Torah, and was therefore unaware of the prohibition on polygamy (Wacholder 1986, p. 352).

[397] Wacholder in: *Revue de Qumran* 1986, p. 359.

[398] Wacholder in: *Revue de Qumran* 1986, p. 361.

[399] Bogaert in: Dorival, Munich (eds.) 1995, pp. 53-77.

[400] Bogaert in: Dorival, Munich (eds.) 1995, p. 72. Compare also 4Q385a 18ii:7 where Jeremiah summons the children of Israel, Judah, Benjamin to keep my statutes and my commandments (see above).

[401] Dimant 2001, p. 106.

the authority of the temple and priesthood.[402] Of course, tensions existed. I will now turn to documents testifying to ongoing interest in the temple and/or the priesthood, rather than the law and prophecy. The Damascus Document presents its community as the sons of Zadok, the guardians of the true priestly traditions.

The temple treasures and the temple play an ambiguous role in the book of Jeremiah. According to chapter 27[34], false prophets prophesy that the vessels brought to Babylon with the first group of exiles will return (v. 16). Jeremiah however announces that the vessels still remaining in the temple will also 'be brought to Babylon', 'until I take note of them' 'and restore them' (v. 22). LXX has 'they will go to Babylon'.[403] Apparently, MT feels the need to add that the institution of the temple continues to play a role. Chapter 52 describes how the Chaldeans take everything that was left in the temple to Babylon. The book of Jeremiah does not show any further interest in the fate of the temple or the vessels. According to Jeremiah 39 Jeremiah was in no position to save any temple treasures, but, as has been said, the book does present Jeremiah as a guardian of valuable things.

As mentioned above, Eupolemus presents the law as crucial, rather than the temple. The ongoing tradition, nonetheless, does show interest in the temple, including its treasures, apart from the law.[404] According to Jeremiah Apocryphon C Nebuzaradan takes the vessels of the house of the Lord (4Q385a 18i:5) to Babylon. Samaritan traditions, mentioned by Josephus, locate the treasures on the Gerizim.[405] It hints at Jewish-Samaritan tensions on the ownership of tradition.

In 2 Baruch 6:7-10 Baruch sees in a vision how the ark, vessels and other attributes in the Holy of Holies are swallowed by the earth on the instruction of an angel, where they will remain until the coming of the Messiah. Here, the treasures remain in the temple, but the temple itself is reinterpreted as a non-geographical space.[406] In my view, the traditions concerning Jeremiah and the temple treasures testify to tensions between Hellenized Judeans and Judeans opposing Hellenization, and between geographically differentiated communities. Also, it testifies to reflections on which institutions continued to be of worth, and in what way.

The rabbis too are concerned about the fate of the temple treasures, at least those that are relevant to the law, claiming that the vessels were

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[402] Mark Adam Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism*, Grand Rapids 2000, p. 41.

[403] Compare 32[39]: 5. See chapter 2.

[404] In the book of Jeremiah, the ark is mentioned only in 3:16 where God foretells that the arc will be forgotten.

[405] Wolff 1976, p. 68.

[406] See above. The temple is presented as a place 'prepared beforehand', 'showed to Adam before he sinned', to Abraham and to Moses. This ideal temple or Jerusalem is preserved with god (4:2-7).

placed in *genizah* by Solomon or by king Josiah, but according to rabbi Eleazar the ark and the Decalogue were shipped to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.[407]

The theme of the temple and its treasures especially caused a re-writing in which Jeremiah's role is minimized or taken over by Jesus. Apparently, to certain Christian groups, Jeremiah's role had become too central here. In History of the Captivity, when Jeremiah commits the keys of the temple to the tower for safe keeping (chapter 29). Jeremiah is the prophet and the high priest in the end of time, the time of restoration is fixed as 'until the people return from captivity'. However, in the parallel narrative in 4 Baruch (Paraleipomena) 3:7-8, where Jeremiah commits the holy vessels to the earth, 'the gathering of the beloved one' is the signal of redemption. Restoration is understood differently, now being linked to a messianic figure. While in History of the Captivity (chapter 41) the vessels are restored and restoration is understood in the sense of a new temple, here restoration refers to Christ.[408] As we also saw in the section on space, the understanding of restoration becomes more and more detached from existing reality, in this case an earthly temple.

Lives of the Prophets, that contains Christians ideas on resurrection, places Jeremiah on a par with Moses. It presents him as the custodian of the Mosaic tradition. Jeremiah is said to have hidden the ark of the law and the things within it in a rocky cliff before the destruction of the temple. 'In the resurrection' the ark will 'come forth from the rock, and will be placed on Mount Sinai. In Lives of the Prophets the end time is presented in Christian terms as the time when the gentiles worship the cross.[409]

In conclusion, the theme of the temple treasures is used both to express traditions minimizing the importance of the temple in favour of the law, to transform it into a symbolic category, and to underline the importance of the priesthood and the temple. In both cases, the act of hiding and keeping elements of what was destroyed testifies to a desire to establish continuity with tradition. The traditions focusing on the law do so in a subtle way: elements of the temple are incorporated, but the emphasis shifts from the temple to the law.

In both cases, the prophet is always presented as a figure of transition, vital to the process of passing on tradition, in whatever terms tradition is understood. The generativity of the figure of Jeremiah reaches such a messianic level here, that in Christian circles the figure of Jeremiah is re-interpreted as Jesus, as in Paraleipomena. In Jewish traditions, we see a

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[407] Wacholder 1974, pp. 241, 242.

[408] Piovanelli in: *Nederlands Theologisch* Tijdschrift 2007, pp. 242, 243. As said, a Christian ending is added to 4 Baruch according to which Jeremiah is brought back from death, and announces the coming of Christ. Probably, the roles of high priest, and of the one who gives and explains the law applied to Jeremiah created the need for Christian re-appropriation. The prophet would otherwise endanger the uniqueness of Christ.

[409] Wolff 1976, pp. 63, 64.

response mocking Jesus.[410] Traditions exist in Islam in which Jeremiah is identified with Al Khadr.[411] It testifies to Jeremiah's generativity and his ongoing relevance.

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[410] See for example a Ben Sira-legend according to which 'wicked men from the tribe of Efraim' force the prophet to commit onanism. When 'the prophet's virgin daughter' takes a bath shortly afterwards she becomes pregnant. The son that is born is Ben Sira. Jesus, the son of Ben Sira, is contrasted with Jesus, the son of Mary, 'and the former appears in a more favorable light' (Ginzberg 1968, pp. 400-402).

[411] Al Khadr (or the Green Man, 'Khadr' is Arabic for green) is a legendary figure in Islam that is also found in Jewish and Christian legends. Interestingly, this is linked to Jeremiah's closeness to Moses. According to a tradition mentioned by the Muslim historian Al Tabari (839-923), Khadir's real name was 'Urmija ben Chilkija', living in the time of king 'Naschija' or 'Jaschija', 'als Prophet zu den Juden gesandt, um das Zeitalter Moses' zu erneuern', According to another tradition Jeremiah/Khadr doubts God upon seeing Jerusalem's destruction and is then put to death. After 100 years he is brought back to life and begins wandering around the earth. God then 'verlängerte seine Lebensdauer, „und er ist derselbe, der in den Einöden der Erde und der Länder gesehen wird"'. Friedlaender understand this as 'den Kern der Legende vom „ewigen Juden"' (I. Friedlaender, *Die Chadhirlegende und der Alexanderroman*, *eine Sagengeschichtliche und Lterarhistorische Untersuchung*, Leipzig 1913, pp. 269, 270).

4.5 Conclusions

The Jeremianic tradition is used in situations of transition. Communities make use of the tradition to position themselves with respect to land, temple, Torah and surrounding cultures. Jeremiah is a figure of transition, enabling groups to express both continuity and discontinuity with the existing traditions. The concept of exile, especially as an ongoing phenomenon, enables groups to define their identity within surrounding (Hellenistic) culture and within the existing religious diversity. Jeremiah emerges as a central figure in a period of transition: he is the last Judean prophet, negotiating a transition from temple ritual to practicing the commandments. Dimant writes that Jeremiah emerges as the national religious leader and teacher (from the Apocryphon). He lays the foundations for life in exile. Although spatial identifications are diverse, in general exile is presented as concerning all Judeans. Both with respect to time and space exile is a transforming concept. In the Damascus Document and 2 Baruch especially a linear concept of time is replaced by a view on the past in which fulfilment or redemption is a central category. Both documents construct a space that is in between unfulfilment and fulfilment, like vv. 36-41 in Jer. 32 [39].

These documents are in continuity with the book of Jeremiah in the sense that they extrapolate existing tendencies in the book. Of course, these tendencies are very diverse, and often competing, for instance when 4 Baruch shifts its focus back to Jeremiah, countering the focus of 2 and 3 Baruch on Baruch that is in line with LXX. Competition also plays a role in Jeremiah's different spatial settings. Locating Jeremiah in Babylon suits the dominance of the returning exiles in the book. So, although pointing out continuity between these documents is rather difficult given the existing diversity of the tradition, similarities are found in the way in which these documents use the Jeremianic tradition. The authority of the text seems to lie in its immediate applicability to the situation of the communities. The text is authoritative, because it is relevant. It is a flexible authority, in the sense that new appropriations can seemingly contradict existing elements of tradition. More generally, it can be said that exile becomes a central concept. In chapter 6, I will further discuss the question of continuity in the Jeremianic tradition.

In terms of identifications, these documents testify to an attitude of immediate appropriation. The communities do not seem to differ between their time and the time described in Jeremiah. Texts from the Jeremianic tradition are immediately relevant to their own situation, and can be adapted and transformed to fit in. In the next chapter, we will see how in some contemporaneous reading groups this is still the case. The texts directly interpret their own experiences. Interpretation and appropriation is the act of bridging the distance to the text. This can be done when enough continuity is

experienced with the ongoing tradition. In the documents discussed above, the problem of continuity does not seem to exist. Being part of tradition is a given. To (post)modern readers, discontinuity is generally part of the reading experience. The texts are part of a corpus to which religious communities feel connected, but at the same time these texts are seen as belonging to a different space and time. In different ways, a distance has to be bridged. In the next chapter, we will see how such a distance towards the text is experienced in reading groups. In the reading of these Jewish women the texts are part of an existing and fixed corpus of books. However, in their Jewish-nationalist reading there is no question about the way in which the text is relevant to their own context: in their experience, they live in a continuum with the text. Something similar is true for the Greek-orthodox reading of a Palestinian student: in this typological interpretation, boundaries of space and time are irrelevant. Of course, this does not mean that bridging does not take place here – it happens automatically, spontaneously and naively.

This naivety has led to great flexibility within tradition. Looking at the processes shaping identity, we see fixation and flexibility. The flexibility the tradition witnesses to, has enabled its survival. Groups of Judeans proved it was possible to remain connected to the tradition without being in the land. Similarly, the temple turned out not to be vital to the survival of Judaism. Nevertheless, the tendencies towards cultic purity as visible in Qumran can still be pointed out within Judaism and Christianity, even though the community of Qumran did not continue to exist. The tendency to view tradition as something that marches through the ages without changing, is an ongoing aspect of religious tradition. Looking at this chapter, it can be regarded as a form of fundamentalism. The act of *tradere* exists in the capacity to adapt as much as in the capacity to conserve.

What we also see in this chapter, is the tendency of recipients of the tradition to create in- and out-groups. Different groups that see themselves as heirs to the tradition do not necessarily acknowledge each other as such. Rather, they exclusively claim the ownership of tradition and identify themselves as the continuation of, for instance, the exiles.

With respect to both, continuity vs. discontinuity and exclusivity vs. inclusivity, contemporary readers cannot maintain the naivety we witnessed in this chapter. In spite of that, a (post-)modern reader aware of the many voices the tradition consists of cannot escape from clarifying his/her position towards tradition. Simply postulating an appropriation, as we see above, is not at all uncommon in the Jeremianic tradition, but it is difficult to maintain when one knows this tradition. Readers today have access to knowledge about the width of the possible appropriations and the interests that constitute the Jeremianic tradition. Contemporary readings can no longer naively deny the act of bridging, and of the balancing between continuity and discontinuity that is part of *tradere*.

Palestinian and Israeli encounters on Jeremiah

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I study interactions between the Jeremianic tradition and groups engaging with that tradition in Palestine and Israel. This analysis gives insight in how the Jeremianic tradition interacts with group narratives in a contemporary situation in which conflict plays a crucial role. In this conflict, as in Jer. 32, imaginations of landscape are central.

By analyzing the positions taken in MT and LXX and the processes behind these traditions I have gained insight into the nature of Jeremiah 32 as a continuous process of appropriation. Group conflict is one of the driving forces of this tradition, in the sense that in any set of narratives, dominant and subordinate narratives are in continuous negotiations. Positions of dominance and subordination are therefore fluid. I have also pointed out analogies and ongoing developments between mechanisms within the book itself, as well as in early Jewish and early Christian appropriations of the tradition. In both phases of the research I have sketched how religious group identity interacts with the Jeremianic tradition. We now turn to the empirical phase of the research in which contemporary appropriations within the Jeremianic tradition, namely of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christians, are analyzed. This analysis is relevant not only because both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christians consider themselves heirs of the Jeremianic tradition, but because this empirical phase offers detailed insight in how group identity and the Jeremianic tradition interact within a context of explicit, long-term group conflict. The question is whether analogies between processes taking place here and in earlier episodes of the tradition can be pointed out, in terms of group identity shaped by and shaping the ongoing development of the tradition. I pay attention to how the Jeremianic tradition of chapter 32 in this context functions as a space for negotiation and/or a space of exclusion.

Before I present my findings, insight in the Israeli-Palestinian context is needed. I therefore begin by introducing the complex context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, alongside of the narratives dominant in Israeli and Palestinian society. I also briefly point out recent developments both among Israelis and among Palestinians to review their narratives.
After presenting the Israeli and Palestinian narrative, I first present the analysis of the appropriations of four reading groups, two made of up of Palestinian Christians and two of Israeli Jews. These four groups all discussed Jer. 32 in

separate meetings. After this, I analyze encounters in which each of the Palestinian groups met with an Israeli group, again discussing the text and their interpretations of it. The first of the two Palestinian groups was connected to Bethlehem, consisting of theologians and lay people. The second Palestinian group consisted of students living in Jerusalem. The first Israeli group was composed of women, most of whom professionally worked with the Torah and Jewish tradition. All of these women lived in Jerusalem. The second group consisted of students living in Jerusalem. Encounters took place between the two groups of students and between the Bethlehemites and the Israeli Jewish women.

The groups were diverse with regard to how national and religious identity was experienced, both in comparison to other groups and internally. Especially among the Palestinian and Israeli students, identity was experienced and discussed as complex, and under threat. In the meetings of the Bethlehemites identity was experienced as under threat, but discussed much less openly than among the students. In contrast, the Israeli Jewish women tended to present their identity as an almost completely stable given, though here too tensions came to the surface. I will pay attention to how the individuals in the groups experienced the relation between national and religious aspects of identity and how this influenced their appropriations.

The participants of the groups do not represent the dominant Israeli national narrative or the dominant Palestinian national narrative, but these shape the context in which they live. Conclusions of the separate sessions and of the meetings between the groups therefore largely remain on the level of what happened in a specific place and time between this specific group of individuals. In all groups, both deconstruction and reconstruction of identity took place to some extent in interaction with the larger narratives of the Old Testament/Tanakh and the Israeli-Palestinian narrative. Insight in the Palestinian-Israeli context is therefore needed.

Method

Discussed here are identity negotiations within religious tradition on a small scale, in terms of the size of the groups and the length of the period researched. The crucial contextual factor in this context is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is a conflict in which connections to space are central. Both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christians see themselves as the heirs of the Jeremianic text, while the Jeremianic tradition plays a role in this conflict: it is experienced by the groups as being part of the Zionist narrative that is dominant in Israeli society. In contrast, it is part of the Palestinian narrative more implicitly.

In this contemporary part of the research it is possible to sketch in more detail the influence of cultural and contextual factors on the interaction between the narratives of the group and the Jeremianic tradition. As before, I

use the concept of collective memory to describe the collective Israeli and Palestinian narratives. As was argued in chapter 1, in my view traditional, comprehensive concepts used to describe identity, such as nationality and ethnicity, describe macro-level, stable, inflexible identities, that tend to overlook the local, ambiguous and fluid character of identity. As in every conflict, and even more in a long-lasting conflicts like that in Israeli-Palestine, identities are constructed that downplay in-group diversity, and underline out-group differences. It is therefore necessary to be sceptical of constructions of otherness and sameness in the Israeli and Palestinian narratives.

In a context shaped by intractable conflict, it is crucial to be aware of the role of power in negotiations of identity. As indicated in chapter 1, I use Foucault's understanding of power as dynamic and complex, examining power in terms of the strategies and counterstrategies found in master narratives and narratives of resistance. As in previous chapters, I pay special attention to imaginations of space to make clear how both Palestinians and Israelis construct diverse perceptions of landscape in connection to the Jeremianic tradition. I also use geographical orientations to describe narratives and identities within the groups. In order to clarify the relation between Israeli and Palestinian narratives, I use Scott's theory on hidden and public transcripts as presented in chapter 1. This can be summarized as a postcolonial approach; an approach of processes of the shaping of group identity that is attentive to the role of space and power.

First, I will briefly reintroduce the relationship between conflict and (narratives of) identity in general, which I brought up in chapter 1. Second, I will discuss the dominant narratives in Israeli and Palestinian society. In the analyses of the reading groups, it becomes clear how these narratives play a role in the appropriations.

5.2 Israeli-Jewish and Palestinian-Christian collective memories

5.2.1 The Israeli-Palestinian conflict

As explained in chapter 1, every society expresses its origins, history and in- and out-group stereotypes in narratives that function to constitute the identity of the group and that eventually also shape culture. Conflict, especially an intractable one deeply rooted in collective memory like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, causes stress, fear and ambiguity, so that groups living in conflict need to safeguard their group identity. Such conflicts involve every aspect of life. Narratives of identity in these cases therefore contain elements that are mutually exclusive, while the need for powerful narratives of identity is very strong. Therefore, acknowledging the narrative and identity of the other endangers one's own, so that each group needs to negate the identity of the other within its own narrative. Israeli and Palestinian narratives contain mutually exclusive convictions regarding past causes of the conflict, present status quo and future solutions. For both parties, the narrative of the other group challenges their claims to ownership of the land and its resources and their sense of belonging. At the same time, beyond the surface of the dominant narratives, overlap exists between Israeli and Palestinian identity. For instance, Mizrahi Jewish culture[412] (language, traditions, music) and Palestinian culture have a lot in common. In addition, both cultures are connected to the traditions of the Tanakh/Old Testament.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is constantly developing and changing. It began as an intercommunal conflict between a Jewish, dominantly Western, industrialized, highly mobilized movement and a decentralized, pre-industrial, rural Arab minority led by a traditional urban elite.[413] Zionism emerged as a political, nationalist movement, identifying with and claiming land (and its resources) which another people already occupied and felt attached to: Mandatory Palestine. The inhabitants of Palestine, whom I refer to as Palestinians also developed a national awareness and the longing for a Palestinian state, in part in response to Zionism. Both national narratives have historic, religious and cultural aspects. The claims to land of the two national movements are phrased in terms of narratives of either Zionism or Palestinian

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[412] A distinction is often made between Ashkenazi Jews (Jews from the European Diaspora) Mizrahi Jews (or 'oriental' Jews, that is Jews from Arab countries, and Sephardi Jews (Jews from Portugal and Spain). These groups are internally diverse, while connections and overlaps between these groups exist.

[413] Walid Khalidi, 'The Palestine Problem', in: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXI, no. 1 (1991), pp. 5-16, p. 8.

nationalism. The Israeli-Palestine conflict is a literal struggle over policy, but it is therefore also a conflict on the construction of meaning, legitimacy and memory.[414] As such, it has both interstate and communal levels.[415] However, in this study I focus on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

This is a conflict between two national movements claiming the same land. It is important to see, however, that it originated in Zionism's goal to colonize Palestine and remove its inhabitants.[416] Within the conflict, the Zionist movement is the dominant and more powerful movement. Palestinian nationalism largely formed in response to Zionism, and is fragmented and diverse. Given the power asymmetry, Palestinians, as Halabi and Sonnenschein point out, 'as the minority group, must deal with internalized oppression and with the reality of being controlled. The Jews [Israeli Jews, JS], as the majority group, must deal with being the rulers.'[417] In addition, what is taking place is not continuous conflict, but rather a slow and ongoing process of dispossession of Palestinian land.[418] Palestinian attempts to establish a state have thus far not been successful,[419] and Palestinians are divided both geographically and on account of internal strife.[420]

The spatial aspect is crucial in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: attachment to territory is the main shaper of both national movements.[421]

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[414] Slocum-Bradley cites Lederach who writes that conflict emerges 'through an interactive process based on the search for and creation of shared meaning' (Slocum-Bradley 2008, p. 8).

[415] Daniel Bar-Tal, 'The Necessity of Observing Real Life Situations', in: *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 34 (2004), pp. 677-701, p. 682; Walid Khalidi in: *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1991, p. 9. Arab countries played a role in the wars of 1948 and 1967. The peace treaty with Egypt in 1979 and with Jordan in 1994 changed the interstate dimension. The United States and the Western world play a role in the conflict too, though not an armed one. Khalidi views the interstate conflict as a derivative of the Palestinian problem.

[416] Zionism is diverse. In fact, one could speak about 'Zionisms' . However, the type of Zionism that became dominant (the 'Labor Settlement Movement') had colonization of Palestine and the removal of its original inhabitants as its goal (see Shafir 1996, pp. 16ff).

[417] Rabah Halabi, Nava Sonnenschein, 'The Jewish-Palestinian Encounter in a Time of Crisis', in: *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 60, no. 2 (2004), pp. 373-387, p. 377.

[418] Yiftachel describes how space became the 'all-assuming kernel of national identity', the 'new Jew' being 'an ever-ready settler-fighter who conquers the land' (Oren Yiftachel, 'Territory as the Kernel of the Nation: Space, Time and Nationalism in Israel/Palestine', in: *Geopolitics*, Vol. 7, no. 2 (2002), pp. 215-248, p. 228).

[419] The Palestinian Authority's (PA) position is to work towards a Palestinian State. In 1988 the Palestinian National Council called out the Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine (De Waard 2001, p. 158). However, the PA policies are controversial among Palestinians. Hamas leadership is divided between the ideal of one Palestinian state on historic Palestine and other solutions, for instance accepting a Palestinian State within the borders of 1967. Again others, focusing on internal law, argue for one democratic state and application of the Right of Return for Palestinian Refugees (see also below).

[420] Since 1968, the General Assembly of the United Nations considers the Palestinian Territories occupied, viewing the creation of Jewish settlements in these territories as illegal (De Waart 2001, p. 155).

[421] Yiftachel in: *Geopolitics* 2002, p. 216.

Below I describe how space and identity influenced each other in the development of both national narratives, creating distinct identities over time and in different spaces. To give an example: although Tel Aviv was conceptualized as Israel's new, modern, secular city, Jerusalem became a crucial flag of identity after 1967, as Zionism became more religious and Israel occupied East Jerusalem. This also led to shifting identities among East-Jerusalemites who now lived within the state of Israel, but were not given the status of Israeli citizen (see below).

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not primarily rooted in a religious dispute, yet, religion does play an important role. In origin Zionism was not a religious, but rather an anti-religious movement, as I discuss below. Nevertheless, the Tanakhic narrative of exile and return has always played a role. The role of religion in the conflict is complex. In general, it can be said that religion had played an increasingly important role in narratives of conflict and expressions of connections to land. Besides this, increasingly fundamentalist understandings of religion play a role in the conflict,[422] as is visible especially in Jewish and Islamic views on the conflict.

5.2.2 Israeli Jewish collective identity and narrative

Palestinian-Christian and Israeli-Jewish narratives of identity are connected to the same physical landscape. Both narratives aim to prove that the land belongs to the ancestors of the present adherents of the narrative.[423] The Palestinian and Israeli national narratives are interrelated in more ways: geographically, but also historically, religiously, culturally, and linguistically. The narratives are also independent in a way: both national identities were developing already before Zionism was connected to Mandatory Palestine, and before competition over this land led to profound conflict. Since images of space and territory (or imaginations of landscape) are important components of the conflict, these concepts are also central in the narratives and identities.[424]

Since Israel is the stronger party in the conflict, the Palestinian narrative remains subordinate to the Israeli narrative. As such, it appears not to have independent existence. The dominant Israeli narrative, on the other hand, appears to be the logical and fully legitimate outcome of Jewish

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[422] I understand fundamentalism here as a reaction to modern, critical approaches of religion. It takes its refuge in a absolute understanding of religious truth.

[423] Newman in Slocum-Bradley (ed.) 2008, p. 64.

[424] Newman in Slocum-Bradley (ed.) 2008, p. 63. Newman points out that territory is 'neither the sole, nor the single most important, component. Refugees and the right of return, the status of Jerusalem, the impact of settlements, along with bitterly contested historical narratives of justice, victimization and violence, are all part of the conflict arena. These components are all intricately interlinked' (p. 63).

history.[425] The Palestinian narrative is also more diverse and fragmented than the Israeli Zionist narrative, which is continually nurtured and enforced by the Israeli state: the Zionist narrative is strongly rooted in Israeli society and can be spread very effectively through education and media. The legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the PA's narrative among Palestinians is more limited, as are the means of the PA to spread its narrative. As Rashid Khalidi notes, Palestinian history is an interplay of different narratives, in which many contradictory views of self and history are combined.[426] I critically discuss both the Israeli and the Palestinian collective narrative. I perceive the Israeli narrative as a late version of colonialism.[427] Of course, both narratives in themselves consist of hidden and dominant narratives and are inherently ambiguous and contingent.[428] Thus, inevitably, the narratives I sketch below are not upheld by either all Palestinians or all Jewish Israelis. In my sketch of the Zionist narrative, I pay special attention to its religious Jewish aspects. In discussing the Palestinian narrative, I pay special attention to the role of Palestinian Christians.

As I present a critical perspective on both narratives, viewing the Israeli narrative as the dominant, and the Palestinian narrative as the subordinate, I make use of scholarly reconstructions of history to make clear how these narratives of collective memory picture the past and continually reinterpret it. Most members of society do not take part in formal historical discourse, and their image of the past is shaped by the commemorative narrative they have become familiar with through socialization.[429]

The relation of the participants of the reading groups to these narratives is complex. I have indicated that both remembering and forgetting are fluctuating processes, although narratives of identity are experienced as

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[425] See R. Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, New York 1997, p. 147.

[426] R. Khalidi 1997, pp. 10-12

[427] When Zionism prepared its plans to establish a Jewish state, colonialism was seen as a legitimate practice in Europe. However, by the time Israel was established, perspectives changed (Anja Meulenbelt, *Oorlog wanneer er Vrede Dreigt*, Amsterdam 2010, p. 91). Zionism's version of colonialism strived to posses the land, without its people. See for instance Gershon Shafir, Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge Middle Eastern Studies 16), Cambridge 2002 pp. 37, 38: 'It sought to produce a Jewish majority in Palestine and create the political, economical, and cultural institutions that could serve as the infrastructure of a Jewish nation-state.' Shafir and Peled point out that although some forms of colonialism 'were undertaken only to exploit native resources and populations', other colonialisms did involve territorial dispossession and the settlement of immigrant communities. The practice of dispossession distinguishes colonialism from empire building.

[428] Both Israeli and Palestinian society are plural societies in which different groups stress different aspects of identity and with individual differences, although national identity is presented as much more homogenous.

[429] Halbwachs points out that there is 'a distinction between scholarly constructions of the past and collective memory which is continually transformed in response to the changing needs of society', see Nadja Abu AlHaj, *Facts on the* Ground, p. 175.

stable and unchanging. We see below in the reading groups how most of the Jewish Israeli women especially experience their narrative as absolute and unchanging, while other readers, some of the students especially, are often painfully aware of the instability of narratives and identity. As has been mentioned in chapter 1, Zerubavel states that certain events are highlighted in the narrative as turning points, and are therefore 'commemorated in great emphasis and elaboration, thus acquiring a more or less mythical status'.[430] For Palestinians, the *Nakba*[431] is a crucial event. For Israeli's, the Holocaust functions as a foundational, mythical event.[432]

Israeli Jewish national identity- borders, continuity and discontinuity, hidden and dominant aspects

What I describe here is the dominant Israeli Jewish national narrative of Zionism.[433] Israeli Jewish society is mixed, its history relatively short, and it is diverse in its religious and cultural orientations.[434] There are different ways in which Jewish identity is experienced. Several external – legal, religious and sociological – norms exist, none of which provides an entirely satisfying definition. The nature and boundaries of Jewish identity have always been debated.[435] Religious Zionism defines Jewish identity in nationalist (or ethnic) and religious terms. Both aspects, I argue, are problematic. Both nationality and ethnicity are problematic concepts, as I have argued in chapter 1. After all, not all Jews regard themselves as Jewish in religious or cultural terms. In presenting the Zionist narrative, I critically discuss the way in which nationalism and religion function in Zionism.

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[430] Zerubavel 1997, p. 9.

[431] The Palestinians refer to the loss of land, flight and destruction of 1947 and 48 as Nakba, 'catastrophe'.

[432] According to Margalit and Motzkin the Holocaust 'serves a mythic function in society', A. Margalit, G. Motzkin, 'The Uniqueness of the Holocaust', *Philosophy &Public Affairs*, Vol. 25, no. 1 (1996), p. 65-83.1996, pp. 80-81.

[433] The State of Israel is conceptualized as a Jewish state, though it comprised not only Jews (and less than half of the Jewish population worldwide), but also Druze, Bedouins and Palestinians. I discuss the narrative and identity of Palestinians living in Israel under Palestinian identity.

[434] In Israeli Jewish society, European (Ashkenazi and Sephardi) identity is dominant over Mizrahi (Arabic-Jewish) identity. Although Zionism claimed to represent all Jews, but it in fact marginalized non-European Jews, 'who were not perceived as Zionists […] and hence came to be viewed as second-class citizens' (Yossi Dahan, Gal Levy, 'Multicultural Education in the Zionist State – The Mizrahi Challenge', in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 19 (2000), pp. 423-444, p. 424).

[435] According to the halakhic definition, someone born from a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism is Jewish. The state of Israel's Right of Return entitles citizenship to anyone who has a Jewish parent or grandparent, as well as to spouses of Jews, the children of spouses of Jews and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew. Silberstein notes that in Jewish studies Jewish identity is often perceived as a given. He pleads for a postmodern approach in which the focus shifts from looking for essential components to an attempt to make clear which processes are generating Jewish identity (Silberstein in: Silberstein, Cohn (eds.) 1994, pp. 2, 26).

The Jewish national narrative originates in the Zionist movement, which developed in Europe during the nineteenth century, a time in which the ideal of nationalism, sometimes understood in the sense that each ethnic group needed its own nation, blossomed. Especially in Europe, Jewish group identity was threatened by anti-Semitism[436] at the one end and assimilation at the other. A movement emerged that aimed at reinforcing Jewish identity, although now in a different shape. Zionism in its origin was a largely secular– sometimes even anti-religious movement, whose adherents sought to find a new expression of Judaism in terms of ethnic and national identity. A concern for Jewish physical and spiritual survival lies at the heart of Zionism, and therefore of its narrative.[437] According to Zionist ideology the only solution to the 'Jewish question' was for the Jews to establish their own state: the idea was developed that Jews could not remain without a nation of their own.[438] Eventually, Mandatory Palestine, or *Eretz Yisrael*, was chosen as the ideal space for the rebirth of a Jewish nation.[439] Already in an early stage, space and territory were thus at the heart of the Zionist project.[440] The national narrative functioned 'to lay claim to a particular territorial space'.[441] Territory can be called the 'main shaper' of the Jewish nation: it embodies history, memory, culture and religion.[442] Zionists thought of space in exclusive ways and in terms of purity, aiming at full economic, territorial and social autonomy. It resulted in a double territorial strategy: the creation of a Zionist nation and the denial of the existence of Palestinian identity.[443]

In this collective narrative, the Israeli landscape functions as something much more than a place to live. Rather, it functions as the only place that Jews can exist, an eternal homeland. The narrative strengthens the tie between the land and its Jewish inhabitants, 'so that new generations of Israelis will be loyal to the state, serve in the army and reject alternative claims for independence'.[444] In the reading group of Israeli Jewish women we see that they indeed refer to Israel as much more than a homeland. To them, it is also the space of Jewish redemption.

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[436] Pogroms occurred in Eastern Europe and elsewhere in Europe social and intellectual anti-Semitism grew.

[437] Zerubavel 1997, p. 36.

[438] Within Zionism, diverse positions existed. Jehudah Magnes for example did not think Jewish national identity required a Jewish state. He argued for a bi-national state. (Ten Berge 2011, pp. 91, 92).

[439] Palestine wasn't the only option considered. The British for instance proposed to create a Jewish homeland in East Africa.

[440] Yiftachel in: *Geopolitics* 2002, p. 225.

[441] Slocum-Bradley, p. 211.

[442] Yiftachel in: *Geopolitics*, p. 216.

[443] Yiftachel in: *Geopolitics* 2002, p. 224.

[444] David Newman, 'The Formation of National Identity in Israel/Palestine', in: Slocum-Bradley (ed.) 2008, pp. 61-79, p. 62.

Zionism needed a foundational narrative that presents the immigration of Jews to Palestine as a 'return' of 'exiles'. Zionism is intimately connected to the biblical narrative, regarding Tanakh not simply as a part of the Jews' religious heritage, but as the book of Jewish national history.[445] Zerubavel therefore calls the Zionist narrative a counter memory of Jewish history.[446] It became the master commemorative narrative in the early Zionist community, providing an 'ideological framework for understanding and legitimizing its vision of the future'.[447] The narrative constructs continuity of Jewish presence in the land, describing the Zionist enterprise as redemption – in early stages non-religiously in terms of modernization, but gradually in more religious terms. As such, the Zionist narrative is a post-biblical story of exile and return. According to the story, all Jews were forcibly exiled by the Romans after 70 C.E. It presents the period of absence as a time of yearning for the lost land. Zionists identify all Jews not living in '*Eretz Yisrael*' as exiles, irrespective of their position in society and how they view themselves.[448] Zionism before 1948 can be seen as a 'colonialism of the displaced', since mainly Jews who 'faced pressing circumstances and were denied the option of emigrating to the West', came to Palestine.[449] It presented itself as a movement of liberation.[450] The goal of establishing an exclusively Jewish state however quite early entailed plans to remove Mandatory Palestine's existing population.[451]

The Zionist narrative was never shared by all Israelis or even by all Jews. Indeed, only a minority of orthodox Jews supported Zionism, interpreting its efforts as a preparation for redemption. The majority of worldwide Jewry 'objected to Zionism as a challenge to traditional Jewish life and a negation of

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[445] Uri Ram, 'National, Ethnic or Civic? Contesting Paradigms of Memory, Identity and Culture in Israel', in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Vol. 19 (2000), pp. 405-422, p. 408. To give some examples, the Israeli Declaration of Independence contains references to religious concepts, and Israel's first prime minister Ben Gurion spoke of related the state of Israel to 'redemption of the land' (Masalha 2012, p. 65).

[446] Zerubavel 1997, p. 12 writes: '[t]he Zionist views of the past first emerged as countermemory to traditional Jewish memory in Europe'.

[447] Zerubavel 1997, p. 14.

[448] David M. Gunn, 'Next year in Jerusalem': Bible, Identity and Myth on the Web, in: Thomas L. Thompson, Salma Khadra Jayyusi (eds.), *Jerusalem in ancient history and tradition* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series), London 2003, pp. 258-271, p. 264. Gunn notes that here the Jewish people are described as a unitary subject.

[449] Yiftachel in: *Geopolitics* 2002, p. 224.

[450] Yiftachel in: *Geopolitics* 2002, p. 226.

[451] Shafir 2002: the dominant position within Zionism aimed to establish a Jewish nation-state in Palestine (see also above). See on Plan Dalet, the name given to the general plan for military operations to remove the Palestinian population, Walid Khalidi, 'Plan Dalet: Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine', in: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 18, no. 1. (1988) Ilan Pappe, *De Etnische Zuivering van* Palestina, Kampen 2009: chapter 4, 'De Afwerking van een alles omvattend plan, pp. 60 ff) and Masalha 2012, pp. 71 ff. Masalha writes that this plan of March 1948 'was in many ways a blueprint for the expulsion of as many Palestinians as possible'.

the belief in messianic redemption'[452], whereas ultra-orthodox Jews almost entirely renounced it.[453]

After 1948, Israeli Jewish national identity went through many transformations in which different aspects were highlighted and repressed. Within Zionism, ethnical and national aspects of identity are complexly intertwined, as are the notions of state and nation. In 1948, no Israeli nationality was recognized. Instead, the new state made an unusual distinction between citizenship and nationality. All Israelis are citizens of the state, but the state belongs to the Jewish nation. A person's nationality is defined by religious affiliation, rather than by citizenship.[454] Israeli nationality is thus constructed exclusively as Jewish Israeli identity.[455] The ideal of Israeli nationalism is a Jewish state: a state for all Jews, that is, even for Jews who do not live in Israel. The 'demographic aim' of Zionism is therefore 'to maintain and increase the Jewish majority in Israel'.[456] Non-Jewish groups within the state, such as Bedouins, Druze and Palestinians, are all citizens of the state, but do not enjoy full rights.[457]

Non-Jewish inhabitants of Mandatory Palestine and the later state of Israel play an ambiguous role in the narrative. They are often absent,[458] but at other times function as an uncivilized and archaic people[459] who did not care for the land,[460] and, lastly, are also given the role of the 'noble wildes' having preserved customs, knowledge and culture of biblical times. Members of the reading group of Jewish-Israeli women that I organized shared similarly

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[452] Zerubavel 1997, p. 15

[453] Shafir, Peled 2002, pp. 138ff.

[454] Shafir, Peled 2002, p. 145.

[455] Jonathan Cook, '"Israeli Nation" vs. "Jewish State"', *MRZine* (6 April 2010), available at: <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2010/cook060410.html>. In Israeli national identity no clear distinction is made between Jewishness and Judaism (Laurence Louër, *To be an Arab in Israel*, New York 2007, p. 10).

[456] Shafir, Peled 2002, p. 145.

[457] An example is the Israel's Right of Return that entitles citizenship to anyone who has a Jewish parent or grandparent, as well as to spouses of Jews, the children of spouses of Jews and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew, while for non-Jews the procedure to obtain citizenship is very complicated.

[458] The early Zionist movement both in Palestine and elsewhere and early Jewish settlers did sometimes recognize the presence of Arabs in the land, and some acknowledged their rights. Individuals acknowledge the presence of Arabs and advocated to treat them well (Dina Porat, 'Forging Zionist Identity Prior to 1949', in: Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict, History's Double Helix*, Bloomington 2006, pp. 47-71, pp. 49-51).

[459] Bar-Tal, Teichmann add that alongside these negative images a romantic admiration for Arab culture existed. Arabs were 'viewed as descendants of the ancient Israelites and thus as people who have a common origin with the Jews. They were thought to dress like ancient Israelites, and be brave, heroic and connected to the land like them. Diaspora Jews were thought to lack these traits. Besides, some Jews had had experiences with Arabs before coming to Israel and built up a psychological intergroup repertoire based on these, non-conflictual, relations. (Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005, pp. 93, 95).

[460] Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005, p. 102.

romantic notions of how connected Palestinians are to the land, while Israelis, they believe, have lost this intimate link with the land.

Differences between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jews created tensions in Israeli society since the beginning, which have been exacerbated more recently by the immigration of large groups of Ethiopian and Russian Jews. In addition, Israeli society is increasingly marked by debates between religious and non-religious Jews about the place of religion in society and, to a lesser extent, by debates between diverse positions towards the character of the state and occupation.

Israeli-Jewish society has a complex relation to power. A very specific view on the conflict is upheld in Israeli society, as I discuss below. The conflict is viewed primarily from the perspective of safety in Israeli society, that Israeli Jews often see their state as continually endangered. An important actor in providing safety and a powerful agent in Israel society is the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces). The Israeli narrative portrays the IDF as the most moral army of the world.[461] Criticism of occupation is avoided and seen as dangerous.

The Israeli-Jewish Narrative

Sketching how the dominant Israeli narrative imagines its past, I focus on the changing role of the Tanakh and the emergence and growth of a religious form of Zionism, which leads to tensions with non-religious Israeli Jews. Important foundations of the Israeli narrative, predating the state, are the narrative of Jewish origin and the history of the Jewish state, with the Holocaust and the 1948 war at its centre. Interestingly, in the Israeli women's group the Holocaust indeed is in the centre of their narrative, while in the students group the topic was rarely mentioned. I highlight two contextual factors underlying the Israeli narrative as a whole: ethnocentrism and a siege mentality.[462] These characteristics reflect and influence the changing narrative in different ways. I distinguish between a Hebrew stage (pre-1948) in which the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine was small and fairly homogenous, an Israeli stage in which new immigrants, usually not Zionists, came to the newly found state and a third stage in which Israeli Jewish identity became more diverse.[463]

In the 'Hebrew period'[464] identity had to be functional to the 'conquest of land

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[461] Eitan Barak (ed.), *Deadly Metal Rain, The Legality of Flechette Weapons in International Law*, Leiden 2011, p. 156.

[462] Bar-Tal and Teichman explain that this mentality stems from past intergroup experiences of persecution culminating in the attempt to distinguish European Jews in the Third Reich (see below on the Holocaust). Siege beliefs have the effect that Israelis define the world in black and white terms, expected nothing good from the outside world. Secondly, it strengthens a 'blind and fanatical support' of Israeli society, and the belief that the State of Israel is continually threatened (Bar-Tal, Teichman, 2005, pp. 96, 97).

[463] Ram in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 2000, p. 412.

[464] Prior to the first wave of Zionist immigration in 1882 Jews did already immigrate into Palestine, albeit out of a religious desire to live in Eretz Israel.

and labour and the construction of organizational and economic infrastructure of a new society'[465]. Therefore, 'a distinct national identity and culture had to be constructed'. Jewish roots in the past were recreated from a 'divinely ordained body of beliefs, norms and practices' into a secular discourse.[466] The Zionist immigrants wanted to distance themselves from their (mostly) eastern European Jewish origins[467] and from their connection with the Arab world represented by Mizrahi Jews. Mizrahi Jews had difficulty identifying with the Zionist narrative, precisely because it excluded their Arabic language and culture.[468] Early Zionism tried to free itself from two millennia of Diaspora history, which it viewed negatively,[469] linking its ideology back to biblical times. Zionism is presented as the continuation of Israelite society first founded by King David as described in the first book of Kings. Zionists imagine this biblical model as the golden age of nationhood.[470]

In the next stage, that of the state, the Holocaust and the 1948 War of Independence hold central importance to the Israeli Jewish narrative. The Israeli attitude was ambivalent about the horrors of the Holocaust and experiences of survivors immigrating into the land. The experiences of the victims, generally regarded as passive subjects, were silenced in Israeli society that glorified heroism. Only later did the Holocaust come to be remembered as the culmination of increasing anti-Semitism, representing the ever-present danger of persecution. As this view took hold, a siege-mentality began to dominate Israeli identity.[471]

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[465] Ram in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 2000, p. 407.

[466] Silberstein in: Silberstein, Cohn (eds.) 1994, p. 2.

[467] Ram in: *Studies in Philosphy and Education* 2000, p. 407.

[468] See Shafir, Peled 2002, pp. 74 ff., see also Ammiel Alcalay 1996.

[469] Zerubavel 1997, p. 17. Zerubavel does point out that, since Zionism did insist on continuity in Jewish history, it did not totally dismiss exilic history.

[470] This image of Israeli nationhood as rooted in the narratives of king David is problematic in many ways. First, the narratives of the books of Kings are not to be read as a historical report. Second, it is impossible to establish historical continuity between Zionism and ancient Israelites. Third, 'nation' is a 19th century concept that cannot simply be applied to ancient Israelite reality.

[471] In the early post-Holocaust years the horrors of the Holocaust were a taboo, and as far as it was commemoration, ghetto uprisings and partisan fights were stressed. All other aspects were regarded as un-heroic and associated with the submissive exilic Jew. The Holocaust was remembered as a disaster that strengthened the 'determination on the battlefield' (Ram in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 2000, p. 410). Later the attitude towards the Holocaust transformed through the years, partly under the influence of the trauma of the 1973 war. Israelis became aware of their vulnerability and thus focused more on the victims of the Holocaust. (Zerubavel 1997, p. 75, 76 and 192-197). Israeli identity came to be characterized by the siege mentality described above. The Holocaust is not viewed as one grim event, but as a metaphor for Jewish history. The murder of 6 million Jews while 'the world' was watching remains a basic trauma in the Israeli collective memory. At the same time, in the Israeli master narrative the Holocaust functions as a clear boundary marking the end of Exile, since it was followed by the foundation of the State. Sometimes the Holocaust and the national revival are explicitly linked. Jewish communities outside of Israel were described as 'dispersed' (Zerubavel 1997, p. 35).

According to the Zionist narrative, the Arab states are to blame for what Jewish Israelites call the War of Independence of 1948. The Arab leadership did not accept the UN resolution for partition[472] and, from the Zionist perspective, attacked the newly-established state of Israel, aiming to destroy it. The war is framed as a battle between 'a Jewish David and an Arab Goliath'[473]. Notions such as 'no expulsion' and 'purity of arms' were invented.[474] The Palestinians are pictured as cowards who fled their land, which was seen as underlining their superficial relation to it. The Arabs are thus regarded both as villains (Palestinians and Arab states) and as passive, uncivilized and cowardly (Palestinians). Repressed in the Israeli national narrative is the planned violence of 1947 and 1948. The execution of Plan Dalet had already begun before the war started. The massacre of the Palestinian village Deir Yassin occurred before the war, on April 9th 1948.[475] Israeli historians like Ilan Pappe and NGO's like Zochrot,[476] but also Palestinian scholars like Salah Abdel Jawad[477] and Masalha have recently begun an attempt to restore these silenced memories.[478]

After the war only two parts of former Mandatory Palestine were under Arab control: the West bank, which was controlled by Jordan, and the Gaza Strip, which was under Egyptian administration. In Israeli Jewish identity, the Arabs now became the most significant other, instead of Diaspora Jews. Also influencing Israeli identity was the influx of larger numbers of Mizrahi Jewish immigrants coming came from elsewhere in the Middle East. They were expected to leave behind all 'Arab' aspects of their identity. Different from the

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[472] At the time of the plan, the Jews possessed less than 7% of the land, while less than one third of Palestine's population was Jewish. The Jewish state would cover 55% of historical Palestine. The most fertile land would be situated in the Jewish state. (Pappe 2009, p. 55, W. Khalidi in: *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1991, p. 8. Khalidi writes: 'If to the Zionists partition was more than half a loaf, to the Palestinians it was less than half a baby.'

[473] Masalha points out that in reality the Arab coalition forces were divided, disorganized and outnumbered by the Zionist forces (Masalha 2012, p. 71).

[474] Masalha 2012, p. 69. Below we will see that the idea of the high morality of the Israeli army still plays a role in the reading group of Jewish women.

[475] Masalha 2012, pp. 79, 80.

[476] See <http://www.zochrot.org>. Zochrot's aim is to 'act to promote Israeli Jewish society's acknowledgement of and accountability for the ongoing injustices of the *Nakba* and the reconceptualization of Return as the imperative redress of the *Nakba* and a chance for a better life for all the country's inhabitants, so that it renounces the colonial conception of its existence in the region and the colonial practices it entails.'

[477] See for instance Salah Abdul Jawad, 'The Arab and Palestinian Narratives of the 1948 War', in: Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict, History's Double Helix*, Bloomington 2006, pp. 72-114.

[478] Masalha 2012, p. 80. Masalha points at the limits of Israeli new historians. Their revision has remained largely macro-historical, as Israeli archives contain little information on Palestinian experiences of *Nakba*. Masalha underlines that the *Nakba* is also 'memoricide': ' the Palestinians were erased from Israeli cultural memory, and Palestinian libraries and archives were destroyed too by the Zionist forces (Masalha 2012, pp. 10, 224, 225).

early settlers, they were mostly religious. The state and its elites responded by turning to the 'common denominator' of Jewish (religious) tradition.[479] As a result a different Israeli identity developed that focused more on religion.[480] One of the goals of the Israeli state in the 1950's and 1960's was to de-Arabize the land.[481] Traces of Palestinian villages were eradicated and place names were changed. The emerging 'Israeli landscape' felt to Israelis like a tiny safe place, surrounded by an overwhelming Arab majority intending to destroy them. In the 1967 war Israel occupied several territories, among them the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the West Bank.[482] It was followed by a process of colonization of these territories, aiming to 'establish a permanent presence […] and eventually annex them'.[483] The war was experienced as another defensive war of 'David' against 'Goliath', miraculously won by 'David'. The victory of 1967 and the buffer zones the occupied territories formed generated a sense of security. As a result of the 1967 victory, Israel turned from a weak and besieged nation into a strong military power in the eyes of the international community. Israel was now controlling the fate and territory of another people.[484] The interstate conflict turned into an Israeli-Palestinian conflict (though still with interstate aspects) about national identity within one land claimed by both peoples.

The occupation of the West Bank and Gaza after the 1967 war also 'brought new 'transformations […] in the patterns of memory and forgetfulness',[485] and in the way landscape was imagined. Palestinians became more visible in Israeli society, for instance, because Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza provided cheap labour. Their visibility challenged the de-Arabized Israeli landscape and made Palestinians living in Israel more visible and self-aware as well. A public debate about the future of the occupied territories emerged, exposing diversity within Israeli society. At the same time, it challenged Israel's self image. Although most Israelis continued to see themselves as threatened, and not threatening, a minority began to see the position of the Palestinians more sympathetically. At the same time, the more direct confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians enforced 'intense

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[479] Ram in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 2000, p. 409.

[480] Ram in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 2000, pp. 408, 409.

[481] Ram in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 2000, p. 410. A result too was that Jews from Middle Eastern countries were confronted with a society that expected them to drop everything Arabic about their identity.

[482] It is known in Israel as the Six Day War, in which the Israeli army fought against Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria also contributed troops and arms. Israel took control over the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the Sinai Peninsula.

[483] Shafir, Peled 2002, p. 159.

[484] Newman in Slocum-Bradley (ed.) 2008, pp. 68, 69.

[485] Ram in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 2000, p. 412.

hostility, estrangement, hatred and rejection'.[486] The 1973 War enforced a sense of vulnerability, and fear and insecurity became more dominant sentiments in Israeli society.

Meanwhile, the process of colonization brought settlers who were often religiously motivated into the territories, creating 'facts on the ground'.[487] As has already been said, Zionism reinterprets biblical themes such as exile, return and the promise of the land to support Zionist nationalist policies. The occupation of what was seen as the biblical heartland enforced ultranationalist, expansionist and fundamentalist undercurrents in society. A nationalist-religious interpretation of the Tanakh started to play a more dominant role in the Zionist narrative. The Tanakh no longer functioned mainly as a history book, but also as a book that provided religious legitimacy. The group of Israeli women, for instance, view the Tanakh from this national-religious perspective, even though they are uncomfortable with the occupation of the West Bank.

In the 1970s Palestinian scholars first began to write the Palestinian national narrative, while from the mid 1980s a school of Israelis, so called 'New Historians', began to criticize the existing Israeli narrative, and started writing a new one.[488] Lost information was uncovered and new perspectives generated, bringing to the fore, for instance, that the violence against Palestinians and their expulsion in the War of Independence had been meticulously prepared in Plan Dalet. However, these marginal attempts did not influence the Israeli narrative.

As a result of the Lebanon War in 1982 and the first Palestinian uprising, which started in 1987, this tensions within Israeli society have increased. The war and the first *Intifada*[489] made Arabs and Palestinians (more) suspicious in the eyes of Israeli Jews.[490] At the same time, Israelis became increasingly aware that the policy of maintenance of the status quo of the Occupied Territories was no longer an option[491], nor was gradual incorporation. New attitudes developed around the possibility of a two-state solution based

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[486] Ilan Peleg, Otherness and Israel's Others Dilemma, in: Silberstein, Cohn (eds.) 1994, pp. 258-280, p. 259.

[487] At the end of the 1967 war settlement in the occupied territories 'commenced spontaneously, [...] with support from the existing settlement bodies and the military, prior to official government approval.' The settlements were however approved afterwards by the Israeli government. However, later Israeli politics would also play a more leading role (see Shafir, Peled 2002, pp. 160ff for the development of the colonization of the West Bank, resulting in a process of 'creeping annexation' (p. 184)).

[488] Newman in Slocum-Bradley (ed.) 2008, p. 69. The Israeli historians for the first time were able to use Israeli and Zionist archives.

[489] Arabic for uprising. The first *Intifada* is often simply referred to as *Intifada*, the second as *Al Aqsa Intifada* (or *Intifadat al Aqsa*).

[490] Louër 2007, p. 46.

[491] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 201.

on mutual recognition.[492] Some Israeli Jews developed the view that the two communities had to be separated, either by banning entry or by ending Israeli rule. To a minority of Israeli Jews, the 'David and Goliath' imagery in their national narrative seemed unconvincing in the light of the actual power relations brought to light by the *Intifada*. These events brought to the surface two opposite forces that both have their roots in early Zionism: neo-Zionism and post-Zionism. These two paradigms both challenge mainstream Zionism. Advocates of the former argue for a more exclusive identity, while supporters of the latter challenge the very concept of Israel as a Jewish state. They both react to the tension that is given with the existence of a state claiming to be a Jewish state, while containing a non-Jewish minority.[493]

Neo-Zionism blends Zionism's focus on the land with Orthodox Judaism's focus on Halakha and its expectation of messianic redemption.[494] It extends its claims to all territories that, according to the narratives of the Tanakh, once belonged to the Israelites, elevating the Israeli Jewish community and its territory to the realm of holiness,[495] and not flinching from using violence in realizing its goals. Neo-Zionism focuses on the exclusivity of the Jews and their history of persecution.[496] (Israeli) Jewish history, and three events in particular, is reinterpreted as miraculous and carrying large symbolic meaning.[497] The conquest of the West Bank is interpreted as 'an explicit signal that God wished to bring into being, here and now, that 'Eretz Israel' long ago promised to the Patriarchs'[498]. As already noted, settlers moved into the occupied West Bank and Gaza strip as of 1967. In the beginning, most of them

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[492] Herbert C. Kelman, 'The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process and its Vicissitudes: Insights from Attitude Theory', in: *American Psychologist*, Vol. 62, no. 4 (2007), pp. 287-303, p. 287.

[493] Asima A. Ghazi-Bouillon points out that the core of the problem to both post- and neo-Zionism is the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Zionism completed its main task (a state for Jews), but did not define its borders, neither in terms of territory, nor in terms of identity. To the 'hegemonic labour Zionist discourse' only after the occupation of the Palestinian Territories in 1967 the concept of the state of Israel became problematic (Asima A. Ghazi-Bouillon, *Understanding the Middle East Peace Process*, London 2009, p. 123).

[494] Its roots go back to Rabbi Abraham Issak HaKohen Kook who was part of the Jewish community in the pre-state. Kook developed the idea that Zionism is a redemptive tool and the state of Israel the beginning of redemption. His son is the religious ideologue of the radical religious-nationalist settler movement. (Ten Berge 2011, pp. 107, 108). This identification of Judaism and state is criticized for instance by Yeshayahu Leibowitz, an orthodox Jewish philosopher. He argued that Zionism's intimate relation between state and Judaism (Ten Berge 2011, pp. 99, 100).

[495] Ram in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 2000, p. 413. Ram adds that in this process it is not so much Israeli nationalism becoming religious, as it is Jewish religion becoming nationalistic.

[496] Newman in: Slocum-Bradley (ed.) 2008, pp. 72, 76.

[497] Ram in: *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 2000, p. 415. The first event is the Holocaust, which shows that 'Jews cannot live and endure among gentiles', the second is the 1967 war (Six Day War) which is connected to the six days of creation, and the last event is the 1973 October War (the Yom Kippur War). These events are interpreted within the framework of redemption.

[498] Louër 2007, p. 52.

were religiously motivated,[499] calling the West Bank by its biblical names: Judea and Samaria. To them, these territories were not 'occupied or conquered [...] but liberated with God's assistance, and returned to their rightful owners',[500] who therefore do not have the right to give it up. They also regard the foundation of the state as being the work of God, who returns the Jews 'to their historic homeland and to eventually bring about the ultimate redemption of the Jewish people by virtue of them being present in their one and only homeland', from which they were exiled by the Romans. During the long centuries of absence they longed for the lost land.[501] The state, the army and, most importantly, the land itself is 'holy'[502]. Although the Jewish women's group shows traits of religious Zionism, they are certainly not Neo-Zionist. They have a more ambiguous attitude towards the State, even though in their eyes it is part of redemption.

Post-Zionism originates in academic discourse. It appealed especially to the younger generation,[503] born in a post-Camp David era when peace seemed possible.[504] Slowly, a limited group of Israelis began to abandon the idea that the Israeli state is existentially and collectively threatened. The Post-Zionist movement criticizes the Israeli narrative, regarding Zionism as a late form of colonialism and arguing that the state discriminates against minorities like the Palestinians. A majority of Israelis regards Post-Zionism as unpatriotic.[505] Neo-Zionists have greater political representation, especially among national-religious settlers, than post-Zionists, who are more diverse and have their base of support among academics and human rights advocates.[506] The group of Jewish students is certainly influenced by Post-Zionism. The students criticize the Zionist narrative and look for new ways of being Israeli,

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[499] The number of Israeli Jews living in according to international law illegal settlements in the Palestinian territories (including East Jerusalem) is 800.000 now. Most Israelis who now move into settlements are no longer ideologically motivated, but are simply looking for a good and relatively inexpensive (because of state support of tax reduction) place to live. A core group of settlers is fundamentalist and sometimes also violent.

[500] Newman in: Slocum-Bradley (ed.) 2008, p. 67.

[501] Gunn, in: Thompson, Jayussi (eds.) 2003, p. 259.

[502] Newman in: Slocum-Bradley (ed.) 2008, p. 73.

[503] Newman points out that 'it is precisely the success of the state which has enabled the younger age cohorts to view the state and its role within the wider global community in a completely different way. Thus it is the success of the state founder generation, not the end of ideology, which has raised questions among Israel's younger generation and future leaders, concerning their own affiliations, belongings and national identities.' (Newman in Slocum-Bradley (ed.) 2008, p. 75.

[504] The Camp David Accords were signed on September 17th, 1978, by the Egyptian president Sadat and the Israeli prime minister Begin.

[505] Bar-Tal in: *European Journal of Social Psychology* 2004, p. 691. Post-Zionist groups are being marginalized in Israeli society, since the debate it instigate reaches to the heart of Israeli society and the Israeli state.

[506] Neo-Zionist parties include and the national religious party Mafdal and parties such as Likud and *Yisrael Beitenu.* Post-Zionism is attacked as anti-Zionist, and those adhering to it as 'self-hating Jews'.

beyond traditional Zionism. However, they also feel like an endangered minority in a hostile Middle East. The Israeli attacks on Gaza in 2008/2009, during the months in which the meetings took place, brought this sentiment to the surface, and even reinforced it.

The gradual development of a section in Israeli society opening up to find a peaceful solution, created political space for negotiations. These eventually led to the Oslo agreement of 1993,[507] which was intended to be the beginning of a process that envisioned a two state resolution.[508] It aroused feelings of hope both among Israelis and Palestinians: peace seemed possible, but it also led to resistance and strong opposition.[509] The tension between accommodating and negating forces in Israeli society is visible in developments after Oslo. Both Israeli and Palestinian leadership parties avoided the implementation of the agreement, and instead of pro-peace elements fear and mistrust grew in both societies. By the time of the talks at Camp David in 2000, the agreement's bankruptcy had become clear. The dominant Israeli opinion was that Palestinians were responsible: their refusal of Barak's generous offer showed that they did not want peace, but rather worked toward the end of the state of Israel.[510] Both parties turned to their backup strategies: the Palestinians took up armed resistance, while the Israelis aggravated the occupation. The conflict was now increasingly perceived as irreconcilable, and

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[507] Kelman calls these agreements a breakthrough and a step towards conflict resolution. Both parties came to realize that meaningful negotiations require mutual recognition of each other's national identity and rights, which is impossible in a zero-sum perception of the conflict. Kelman points out that for a long time both sides did not appoint qualified negotiators, because such would implicate recognition of the other. Therefore, the Oslo agreements represent a formation of new attitudes on both sides that have developed alongside existing attitudes of fear, distrust and negation (Kelman in: *American Psychologist* 2007, pp. 290, 291).

[508] Both sides were not ready to commit themselves to a two state solution, and the final decision was left to be taken after an interim period, during which the Palestinians would gradually be given more control over the West Bank, final-status negotiation would be held and mutual trust would develop. Both parties however maintained reserve options: armed struggle for the Palestinians, and control over the West Bank for the Israelis. Leadership on both sides did not educate its public on the concessions involved in the peace process (most importantly the issues of settlements for the Israelis, return for Palestinian refugees (the refugees number 4 million people who originate from what is now Israel, their return would mean a Palestinian majority in the Jewish state) and the status of Jerusalem for both (Kelman in: *American Psychologist* 2007, pp. 292, 293).

[509] Given the fears aroused by the recognition of the identity of the enemy and the necessity of concessions implied by the negotiations and the agreement opposing forces were to be expected, Kelman points out (Kelman in: *American Psychologist* 2007).

[510] Bar-Tal in: *European Journal of Social Psychology* 2004, p. 683. The dominant Israeli view was that Barak gave them almost everything, and they responded with terror. Of course the Palestinian and Israeli narrative greatly differ on what happened in Camp David. As I discuss below in the section on the Palestinian narrative, Palestinian negotiators showed great willingness to compromise by their offer to settle for the West Bank and Gaza: only 22% of Mandatory Palestine would remain in the hands of the Palestinians (Jeremy Pressman, 'Visions in Collision, What happened at Camp David and Taba?', in: *International Security*, Vol. 28, no. 2 (2003), pp. 5-43, p. 34. Whereas Palestinians take the territory of mandatory Palestine as a starting point, to Israelis the negotiations are on the basis of the 1967 situation.

the intentions of Palestinians were seen as aiming at the end of the Jewish state.[511]

When the *Intifadat al Aqsa*[512] broke out in 2000, from the Israeli point of view the Palestinians instigated the violence as an effort by the Palestinian Authority to destroy Israel. The *Intifada* deteriorated relations between Israeli Jews and (West Bank) Palestinians, marked by high levels of violence on both sides. The opinion in politics was that there was no partner on the other side and that Israel should not surrender to terror, whereas violence was seen as the only language understood by Palestinians.[513]

Public opinion in Israeli society is still characterized by the views described above. In the Israeli perspective, the victory of Hamas in the Palestinian elections of January 2006 was yet another sign of growing Palestinian extremism, which only inspired more fear and distrust among many of Israel's Jews. Reactions in Israeli society to the attacks against Gaza in the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, repeated in November 2012, indicates that the influence of the nationalist religious fraction, featuring traits of neo-Zionism, is growing.[514] Post-Zionist grass roots peace and human rights movements oppose this development, pointing at the dangerous mix of fear, force and extremism leading to the offensive.

In conclusion, Israelis largely perceive themselves 'as a national and religious minority subject to persecution by majorities'. This self-image is visible in both Jewish-Israeli groups, though it is stronger in the women's group. In the minds of many Israeli Jews, they are 'lost in a sea of Muslim populations whose high fertility rate represent over the long term one of the main threats.'[515] Typical for Israeli society is therefore a mixture of fear and

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[511] Kelman explains that the aggressiveness of the extremists and the defensiveness of the moderates (a distinction he acknowledges is simplifying), both aroused by the peace process, merged with the failure of the process (Kelman in: *American Psychologist* 2007, p. 296).

[512] The *Al Aqsa Intifada* (or second *Intifada*) was named after the *Al Aqsa* mosque on the Temple Mount, a location sacred to both Muslims and Jews. The mosque was visited by former prime minister Ariel Sharon and this visit was perceived as a provocation by Palestinians. The protests that broke out were marked as the beginning of a series of uprisings.

[513] Bar-Tal describes the building of a separation wall between Israel and the West Bank as an expression of the desire for psychological differentiation from the Palestinians who are portrayed as perpetrators of violence and as having generally negative characteristics (Bar-Tal in: *European Journal of Social Psychology* 2004, p. 690).

[514] In the Israeli army, once secular, military rabbis have become more powerful. In the Gaza invasion of December/January 2009, other than in previous military actions, both military and civilian rabbis joined the troops to the front. Some of them presented the offensive in Gaza as a religious war aimed at expelling the gentiles from the holy land (see *Soldiers' Testimonies From Operation Cast Lead*, Jerusalem 2009, a report published by Breaking the Silence, an organization of veterans who served in the Israeli army during the Second Intifada, available from: <http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Operation_Cast_Lead_Gaza_2009_Eng.pdf>.

[515] Louër 2007, p. 18.

force:[516] the Israeli collective identity is 'defined by power over this most significant other', though Israelis perceive themselves as victims. Israeli Jews stereotype themselves 'as peace-loving people forced by circumstances to engage in violent conflict.' In the situation of 'violence, threat perception and fear' that comes with intractable conflict, a psychological repertoire was gradually built and continually enforced, reaching its peak in the period of the second *Intifada*: Palestinians are the victimizers, the Israelis are the victims and criticism from out-groups is rejected.[517] Bar-Tal and Teichman call this the 'ethos of conflict'. Beliefs connected to this include 'the justness of one's own goals, security, patriotism, unity, peace, one's own victimization, positive in-group image and the adversary's negative image'.[518] Led by this mindset the Israelis were not open to other ways of dealing with the conflict than aggression.

Linked to this self-image are beliefs 'concerning a positive in-group image and the delegitimization of Arabs': Arabs 'were seen as the sole obstacle to progress', as a threat to the Jewish existence in Israel, 'the spearhead of an implacable Arab campaign to destroy Israel'.[519] The two groups did not hold such strong antagonistic attitudes towards Palestinians.

The attempts referred to above to rephrase the Israeli narrative and include hidden and oppressed narratives continue, but remain marginal.

5.2.3 Palestinian collective identity and narrative

I focus here on Palestinians living in former Mandatory Palestine (West Bank, Gaza and Israel), However, more than half of all (ten million) Palestinians live in refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria or in Diaspora spread over the rest of the world. In addition, I focus on Palestinian Christians.

Identity by definition is to some extent challenged, and Palestinian identity is even more so. Israeli and certain international voices including Arab ones claim Palestinian identity does not exist, but is in fact Arab identity.[520]

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[516] Nadim N. Rouhana, 'Zionism's Encounter with the Palestinians: the Dynamics of Force, Fear and Extremism', in: Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict, History's Double Helix*, Bloomington 2006, pp. 115-141, p. 125.

[517] Bar-Tal in: *European Journal of Social Psychology* 2004, p. 690. Bar-Tal describes how every attack on Israeli Jews was viewed as terror and 'received immense exposure as such in the media'. Bar-Tal also proposes that in such a context other factors are not very influential. Therefore, it is highly possible that groups living in a similar situation behave similarly (p. 639).

[518] Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005, p. 117.

[519] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 204. This becomes visible for instance in Israeli schoolbooks and children's literature were the conflict is featured as eternal and all-embracing, since the Arabs seek to 'destroy the state of Israel and annihilate the Jews. […] When Arabs are mentioned, they are described as primitives who do not care about the land, have done nothing to develop it' (Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005, p. 189).

[520] The identity marker 'Palestinian' is therefore controversial in Israeli society (as is 'Israeli' in Palestinian society).

Palestinian identity has never been experienced as a strong asset like French or Dutch identity, which in the national narratives became almost a-historic or one-dimensional constructions, as uncontested identities with long histories. Palestinian collective memory is not as available, elaborated and developed as the Israeli narrative. In addition, Palestinian identity and Palestinian Christian identity to a larger extent is threatened by the ongoing occupation. As there is no Palestinian state, there is no established national Palestinian identity. Palestinian collective memory is shaped by state-controlled means only to a very limited extent. It lacks a relatively stable (state) context in which a collective narrative can be shaped, by such means as education, memorial sites, official days of commemoration, etc.[521] It had to deal with lack of democracy and free expression.[522] Recent tensions between Hamas, ruling the Gaza Strip, and Fatah, in (partial) control of the West Bank, also limit sustainment and development of shared identity.

In addition, an important factor within Palestinian identity is the geographical scatteredness of the Palestinian people. Already before 1948, Palestinian identity was locally oriented. Palestinians felt connected to the villages and small cities in which they lived.[523] After 1948, the situation became more complex. Many Palestinians became refugees. They found themselves under Jordanian (West Bank) or Egyptian (Gaza Strip) rule, others remained within what became Israel and were called 'internally displaced people', living under Israeli military rule until 1966 and as Israeli citizens afterwards. In 1967, again Palestinians became refugees, some for the second time. The occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 again created new spatial identities. Palestinians living in these areas did not become citizens of the state, although Palestinians living in East Jerusalem received a so-called Jerusalem ID. They are often more closely connected to the West Bank (to which they have access) than the Israeli Arabs (who cannot access the part of

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[521] For instance, the first Palestinian schoolbooks were prepared after 1994 when the Palestinian National Authority was established (Dan Bar-On, Sami Adwan, 'The Psychology of Better Dialogue Between Two Separate but Interdependent Narratives', in: Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict, History's Double Helix*, Bloomington 2006, pp. 205-224 , p. 206). An additional problem is that source material for historiography was partly destroyed in 1948 and incorporated in archives in Israel which are not accessible for many Palestinian historiographers.

[522] Jawad in: Rotberg (ed.) 2006, p. 94. Both Palestinian and Israeli forms of censure are meant. Jawad points out that Israel is a democracy within the borders of the Green Line, whereas in the Occupied Territories it exercises censorship to the point of controlling the books in university libraries. He cites Bienvenisti, who writes that its aim is to eradicate written 'expression that could foster Palestinian nationalist feelings, or that suggest that Palestinians are a nation with a national heritage' (p. 95). Supply to libraries in the Occupied Territories is under Israeli control. As an oppressed minority Palestinian society is not likely to allow for great diversity.

[523] 70% of the at about 1.3 million Palestinians living in Palestine in 1947 lived in rural areas (Pamela Ann Smith, 'The Palestinian Diaspora 1948-1985', in: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 15, no. 3 (1986), pp. 90-108, p. 91, citing Janet Abu Lughod, 'The Demographic Transformation of Palestine', in: Ibrahim Abu Lughod (ed.), *The Transformation of Palestine*, Evanston 1977, pp. 139-162, p. 155.

the West Bank designated as Area A[524]) and are thus more aware of the conflict. Even within the Palestinian territories, because of the cantonization of the West Bank and the severe travel restrictions to and from Gaza, a strong shared identity and narrative has not developed. As a result the Palestinian narrative, on the popular level and on the level of historiography, had remained more fragmentarily and hidden than the Israeli one.[525] We see in both Palestinian reading groups how identity, both in religious and in national terms, is problematic.

In spite of this, along with Khalidi I assume that it is reasonable to speak of a Palestinian national identity and narrative,[526] even in the absence of a Palestinian state. The narrative developed largely as a counter-narrative in a situation of oppression. Central in this narrative is the *Nakba* of 1948. For this key event of loss and failure often external reasons are given.[527] Central figures in the Palestinian narrative are peasants, who symbolize the intimate connection between the land and the Palestinians. From this perspective, Palestinians have sometimes criticized elites from their own community for having failed to defend their country, leaving the battle to the poor.[528]

Although Palestinian identity is rooted in a community culture with deep roots it can best be described as 'complex, contingent and relatively recent'[529]. Zionism functioned as an important catalyst of the Palestinian narrative. Zionist immigrants became the 'primary "other"'[530] within this narrative. Before the emergence of Zionism a Jew living in Palestine was seen as a Palestinian, spoke Arabic, and was part of Arab culture. The emergence of Zionism changed the way Palestinian identity was perceived, it now began to mean 'not Jewish'.

Israeli Arabs or Israeli Palestinians
Palestinians living in the state of Israel, or Israeli Arabs developed identities distinct from Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.[531] Israeli Arabs are

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[524] Israel divided the West Bank into Area A, B and C. The PA has full civil and security control in Area A, which includes Palestinian cities and surrounding areas (ca. 18% of the West Bank). In Area C Israel has full civil and security control, although Palestinian inhabitants fall under military law (which is true for the West Bank as a whole). Area C comprises about 62 % of the West Bank, and is growing, as a result of expanding settlements.

[525] Since Palestinian society is class-oriented, a distinction must be made between the popular narrative and the elite narrative. A third type of narrative is that of Palestinian historiography mainly since the 1980's.

[526] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 10.

[527] R. Khalidi 1997, pp. 10, 11, 34.

[528] Jawad in: Rotberg (ed.) 2006, p. 78.

[529] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 34.

[530] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 20.

[531] Within the Israeli Arabs, Palestinians who are Israeli citizens since 1948, the majority of them living in 'the Triangle' in Northern Israel should be distinguished from the Palestinians from East Jerusalem which became part of Israel after the 1967 war. The latter group is in general more

citizens of Israel, but do not share in the state's nationality. From 1948 until 1966 they lived under military rule. They comprise at about one fifth of Israel's population. As indicated above, Israeli national identity is constructed exclusively as Jewish Israeli identity.[532] Palestinian citizens could not identify with the state of Israel, 'since both the symbols of the State and a part of its legislative system were derived from the Jewish religious network'.[533] Palestinian citizens were not expected to assimilate into Israeli society, but merely to be loyal. However, since the existence of a Palestinian minority community is seen as a constant (demographic) threat to the Jewish character of the state, the position of Israeli Palestinians is continually contested. Israeli government policies aimed at fragmenting the Palestinian and other minorities into separate groups each defined by cultural and religious affiliations and their relation or degree of loyalty to the state.[534] This policy was also applied to Christians, who were considered more loyal than Muslim Arabs.[535]

Clearly, for Israeli Palestinians, tension exists between the Israeli component of identity and the Palestinian or Arab component. Louër points out that Israeli Palestinians developed from being a marginalized community into political actors since the 1980's. During the *Intifadat Al Aqsa,* Israeli Palestinians, like their counterparts on the West Bank, responded with protests. This indicates that the Palestinian component of identity among Israeli Arabs became stronger ('Palestinisation'). Israeli Jews largely interpreted this as radicalization.[536] Many Israeli Arabs to some extent identify with the State of Israel: they speak Hebrew (as a second language), have attended Israeli (higher) education, and enjoy benefits of being Israeli such as healthcare. Yet they also suffer from discrimination and recent political

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politically orientated and focuses more on Palestinian identity. Self-identification of an Israeli Arab as 'Palestinian' is a statement with political implications that sounds like radicalization to Israeli Jewish ears. Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs live largely segregated and meet only at university (all universities in Israel are Hebrew speaking, Jewish in orientation, though open to Arab students) and at work.

[532] This is a national identity in which no clear distinction is made between Jewishness and Judaism (Louër 2007, p. 10).

[533] Louër 2007, p. 10.

[534] Louër 2007, p. 13. Israeli ideology claimed that instead of a single Arab minority, there were multiple Arab minorities. Louër explains that Druze, and also Bedouins, were from the first subjected to policies intended to transform their particular cultural features into separate fully formed ethnicities. Like Israeli Jewish identity Druze identity is based on national and religious affiliations (p. 14). Expression of Druze identity functions as an avowal of loyalty- the Druze serve in the army, the central declaration of loyalty in Israeli society. A claim of Palestinian identity (as opposed to Israeli Arab) means to challenge the position allocated to the Arab citizens within the Jewish state.

[535] Louër though states that 'the Christians have been even more reluctant than the Bedouin to capitalize on their separate status to establish a place for themselves in the public sphere' (Louër 2007, p. 16).

[536] Louër however interprets this as an expression of Palestinian participation in the Israeli political system (Louër 2007, pp. 68 ff.

developments[537] have increased tensions in Israeli society, including those between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs.

Power is a problematic concept in Palestinian identity, since there is no Palestinian government. Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have only limited self-rule and, in fact, most of the West Bank is effectively under the control of the Israeli army. Tensions between Hamas and Fatah, with Hamas controlling the Gaza Strip, and the general distrust of Palestinians in the PA (see below) further weaken power structures. Palestinian political power is in crisis.[538] Palestinians living in Israel have a complex relationship to the power exerted by their state, especially where it is used to oppress Palestinians.

Palestinian Christians

For all Palestinians, national identity has been threatened by the Zionist narrative. The religious aspect of Palestinian Christians' identity has been under pressure as well. In the early years, Palestinian identity was largely trans-religious, and the Christian minority played an important role in its development.[539] The differentiation in Israeli policy towards Muslims and towards Christians, however, caused tensions, as did the radicalization mainly among some Palestinian Muslims. In the 1970s, conflict focused more on religion and an Islamic movement arose among Palestinians that challenged a uniting concept of nationalism. Violent clashes occurred between Muslims and Christians both in the Palestinian territories and in Israel.[540] Palestinian Christians, who have been and still are more educated and financially better-off than their Muslims neighbours, have been more willing and able to emigrate in the face of Israeli occupation. This has resulted in a severe demographic decline and, correspondingly, to the decline in their social and political influence. This decline has been so severe that the long-term survival of the Palestinian Christian community is in doubt.

Because Zionists claim that the Tanakh is the national book of the Jewish people, and even more because of religious Zionists claim that the foundation of the State of Israel is a redemption of the land to the Jewish people, the Old Testament has become problematic for Palestinian Christians.

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[537] In 2003 the Labour Party lost its leading role to Likud, followed by Kadima. The attacks on Gaza of January 2009 led to polarization between Israel's Jews and Arabs. Israeli Arabs organized protests, though not on a large scale. Two Arab parties were banned from taking part in elections in February 2009, after a request from Jewish nationalist parties. Identification with both Israeli and Palestinian aspects of identity thus became highly problematic.

[538] As a result of a complex set of factors, a democratic use of power is not developing. The elections in 2006 were an important step, but when the international community did not accept Hamas' victory, violence broke out, and Fatah's rule in the West Bank was in fact illegitimate, while Hams in the Gaza strip was unable to build up viable structures of power.

[539] Louër writes that '[m]any of the pioneers of nationalism were in fact Christians who, in this field, exercised up to 1973 a virtual monopoly' (Louër 2007, p. 16).

[540] These tensions often have to do with family and clan disputes, and not necessarily with religious tensions. Nevertheless, at present the nationalist consensus is jeopardized.

Palestinians are culturally, geographically and historically connected to the narratives of the Old Testament.[541] In addition, Palestinian Christians have a religious connection to this corpus. Zionism challenges both elements of Palestinian-Christian identity, being Christian and being Palestinian. Most Palestinian Christians belong to the Greek Orthodox Church, which is largely unconnected to the context of the Palestinians.

5.2.4 A sketch of the development of the Palestinian narrative

The Palestinian narrative presents Palestinian roots in the land as very deep, while also pointing out that the land has always been a melting pot of people.[542] Three periods can be distinguished. The first period is that of the Ottoman Empire ruling over Palestine, although Palestinians sometimes link their origins to the biblical Philistines, or to other peoples from this and later periods, including Judeans. This period ends with the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The second period is that of the British Empire ruling the Levant. It ends with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

In the first stage, Palestine was an administrative unit in the Ottoman Empire. To Muslims and Christians, the land was of religious importance. Urban elite especially developed a sense of connection to this specific area of land. However, most people felt more deeply connected to their villages and cities and to their families and clans than to Palestine as a place.[543] Zionist immigration began during this period. In limited circles protests rose against the immigration of Zionist Jews to the region, along with their purchasing of land. Most prominent in the opposition were Greek Orthodox Palestinians, though Muslims and other Christians shared their concerns.[544] After World War I, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of new states in the Middle East, Zionism became an even more important political force in Palestine, now under British mandate. Palestinians grew increasingly aware of the impact of Zionism on their society, and began to realize that Zionism's goal was domination of Palestine.[545] In response, Palestinian national identity

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[541] Palestinian culture contains elements of for instance the nomadic culture of the narratives about the Patriachs. Historically, some Palestinians consider themselves related to Jews who converted to Islam. Geographically, the West Bank is roughly biblical Judea and Samaria. The names of Palestinian villages sometimes still contain traces of biblical names.

[542] In popular culture Palestinians are sometimes pictured as all stemming from one illustrious tribe.

[543] R. Khalidi 1997, p. xiii.

[544] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, Boston 2004, pp. 39, 42. Smith explains that most peasants did not oppose Jewish land purchases, since the new land owners allowed them to work on the land as laborers (p. 41).

[545] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 110.

became stronger. Though not shared by society as a whole, it was shared by groups of farmers (who opposed increasing limits of their access to land) and intellectuals (who opposed Zionism out of principle).[546] In subsequent years this identity developed further and was refined. Palestinian identity was largely secular in its orientation. In marked contrast to the Zionist view on identity, Palestinian identity in this period was an inclusive territorial identity: it included all people living in Palestine, including Jews, though not the newly-arriving Zionists.[547]

The events of 1948, which the Palestinians refer to as the *Nakba* decisively shaped the Palestinian narrative as one of disaster and good things going bad. The Israeli victory left the social and political elite scattered and existing structures falling apart, annihilating aspirations of national independence.[548] According to the Palestinian collective narrative, the Division Plan could only be rejected: Palestinians felt entitled to Mandatory Palestine as a whole, not just part of it. Palestinians held the Western powers and the Zionist forces responsible for the *Nakba*, and described themselves as victims.[549] Sometimes, Jewish connections to the land have been denied in the Palestinian narrative.[550]

The *Nakba* marks the collapse of Palestinian society. Afterwards there was no public sphere in which Palestinian identity could further develop: Palestinians became scattered, without a centre of gravity, and in the eyes of the world they seemed to have disappeared, almost as if they had never existed.[551] Out of Palestine's Arab population of at about 900.000 people less than 200.000 remained,[552] sometimes being internally displaced, in what had become the state of Israel. They became Israeli citizens, but under military

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[546] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 150.

[547] Yiftachel in: *Geopolitics* 2002, p. 224.

[548] Louër 2007, p. 9. The *Nakba* brought by 'the annihilation of urban society, leaving only a handful of the poorest classes clustered in ghetto quarters' in Jerusalem, whereas the rural scene was disintegrated (p. 23).

[549] Jawad points out that the Palestinian narratives about 1948 are diverse and based on speculation and abstraction more than on empirical research. The Palestinian narrative in fact is based on the Israeli by describing the Palestinians as only passive, speaking about a war (while according to Pappe it is more accurate to speak of wide scale operations for ethnic cleansing, (Pappe 2009), by taking the Partition Plan as a point of departure (whereas according to Jawad Israeli terror attacks against Palestinians marked the beginning) and by presupposing eternal enmity between Israelis and Jews (the Orient is portrayed as anti-Semitic, and good Arab-Jewish relations for instance before 1948 are not mentioned). The Palestinian narrative tends to describe pre-Zionist relations with Jews in Palestine as a golden age, and everything afterwards as animosity (Jawad in: Rotberg (ed.) 2006, pp. 79, 83).

[550] Khoury (in print), p. 135. Khoury also points out that Palestinians sometimes held anti-Semitic views, or denied the Holocaust.

[551] R. Khalidi 1997, pp. 178, 179.

[552] Both the number of Arab inhabitants of mandatory Palestine in 1948 and the number of refugees are disputed.

rule.[553] After 1950, the majority of Palestinians were refugees. Their status remains largely unclear still today.[554] The West Bank was annexed by Jordan, and Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip. The years until 1964 are known as the 'lost years'. Nevertheless, in the refugee camps the Palestinian national movement continued, no longer under the leadership of the elites. As a Palestinian national movement did not fit the ideals of pan-Arabism, it developed partially hidden.[555] The shared experience of defeat, dispossession and dislocation functioned as a 'leveller': failure (to give shape to nationalist longings)[556] and catastrophe would later become important building blocks of the Palestinian narrative. Over the years, failure became to be portrayed as triumph, 'or at least as heroic perseverance against impossible odds'. This abolved 'the Palestinians from the responsibility of their own fate': their enemies were simply too powerful.[557]

As a result of worsening tensions between Israeli and its neighbours Egypt, Syria and Jordan, Israel attacked Egypt and Syria and occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza (and also the Golan Heights). The 1967 war was a shocking defeat for the Arab countries. Seeing how the wars of 1948 and 1967 worsened their situation, Palestinian political organizations gradually began to realize that they needed to take their fate in their own hands, instead of depending on Arab states. After initial and ongoing resistance, most Palestinians in the newly occupied territories reached a modus vivendi, refraining from political activity.[558] Many Palestinians now worked in Israel, while Israeli settlers continually and illegally moved into the West Bank, expropriating Palestinian land. The 1967 war became another landmark in the Palestinian narrative, especially for those who lived in the West Bank and Gaza:

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[553] Over the years, the *Nakba* of 1948 became a central marker of their identity, so that they refer to themselves as Arabs (or Palestinians) of 1948. See above for a description of Arab Israeli identity.

[554] In 1975, the UN established a Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, one of which is the right to return.

[555] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 181. Khalidi points out that pan-Arabism after its demise as a political force in 1967 lived on as a myth in the Western World (p. 183).

[556] R. Khalidi 1997, pp. 186-190: the Palestinians failed to express their concerns to the Ottoman and later to the British rulers, they failed to overcome internal divisions and stop Arab land sales to Zionists, and also the Arab revolt of 1936-1939 failed.

[557] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 195.

[558] Political activity was met with harsh (communal) repercussions or deportation and in daily life travelling restrictions, water shortage, and for some life in refugee camps had to be faced. In this period the Israeli government largely refrained from 'advancing formal claims to sovereignty over the areas', except for East Jerusalem (Ian Lustick, Writing the Intifada: Collective Action in the Occupied Territories, in: *World Politics* Vol, 45, 04 (1993), pp. 560-594, p. 563). The future of the occupied territories is a crucial dispute in negotiations. The West Bank is largely controlled by Israel at present, as well as the borders of Gaza. Israel argues that it needs to control the territories out of security interests. Palestinians argue the settlements are illegal, life in the West Bank is made very difficult, and a Palestinians state is made impossible now that the West Bank has been divided into cantons separated by settler roads and settlements.

in the aftermath of this war. Among Israeli Arabs a process of 'Palestinization' developed – Israeli Arabs began to stress the Palestinian component of their identity. In this period, as in Israeli society, the religious aspect of identity became more important. Islam also entered the Palestinian political scene.[559] The Palestinian narrative resurfaced under the influence of the PLO.[560] The PLO began to function as a government, albeit one without sovereignty or territory, and lacking effective means to influence the Palestinians, such as might have been provided by schools.[561] Nevertheless, it did influence Palestinians culturally, educationally and politically. The PLO used and shaped the failure-becomes-triumph narrative, thus obscuring its own mistakes. At the same time it enabled Palestinians to make sense of their history and to maintain their identity as a people. In the 1970s, Palestinian scholars first began to write the Palestinian national narrative, which led to a more self-critical approach, questioning 'whether better choices were not possible in some circumstances'.[562]

Until the 1980's the Palestinian narrative was not seen as legitimate in Israeli and Western eyes.[563] The first *Intifada* started changing perspectives. It broke out in 1987 after 25 years of occupation. In the Palestinian collective narrative, the first *Intifada* is largely remembered as a spontaneous outburst as a result of the humiliation, despair and anger that had built up during the occupation, in a period in which Israeli politics grew increasingly oppressive. The Palestinians felt that they were reclaiming their own national struggle, since the conservative and corrupt PLO was not able to negotiate attainable goals in the face of Israel's annexation politics.[564] The *Intifada* cannot be

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[559] In 1987 Hamas was established, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Islamic Jihad movement is from the same period. Already in the 1950's the Islamic Liberation Party was founded. These parties all 'subsume Palestinian nationalism within one or another form of Islamic identity' (R. Khalidi 1997, pp. 148, 149).

[560] The PLO, Palestinian Liberation Organization, formed by Arab states in 1964, aimed at liberating Palestine through armed struggle, considering the UN partition and the State of Israel illegitimate. In 1969 Fatah became the leading force in the PLO. Fatah was founded in 1959 by Yasser Arafat and other educated Palestinians living in Diaspora. It stressed Palestinian self-reliance and proposed that if Palestinians would take the initiative, other Arabs would rise to their help. Its strategy of armed struggle developed into one of diplomacy, although it's military branches still use violence. Until the Madrid Conference in 1991 in which I did not take part directly, PLO was considered a terrorist organization. During the Oslo conference in 1993 PLO leader Arafat recognized the state of Israel, and the Israeli government recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.

[561] W. Khalidi 1991, p. 11.

[562] R. Khalidi 1997, pp. 199 ff.

[563] Louër 2007, p. 46.

[564] The coalitions led by the Labor party who were in control between 1967 until 1977 'were fundamentally ambivalent about the future of the territories', and used a 'carrot-and-stick' approach. When Likud came into power 'policies of repression became markedly more brutal and less discriminating'. The effect was that the Palestinians were 'equally and dangerously at risk from a continuation of the Intifada' and were unified to stand against the occupation (Lustick in: World Politics 1993, pp. 578, 593).

explained simply with a volcano theory though;[565] it was also a 'product of a partnership between inside and outside leadership'.[566] The *Intifada* represents a fundamental break with the past, both for Palestinians and for Israelis. It strengthened the unity of the Palestinians and involved many of them in politics and forms of violent and non-violent resistance. Palestine now became the centre of Palestinian identity. Most Palestinians who are Israeli citizens, however, did not take part in the uprising. Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza reproached them for allowing 'their legal status as citizens within Israel to take precedence over their emotional, national, and even family ties' to Palestinians in the territories.[567] The *Intifada* made the international community aware of the Palestinians and their situation. The *Intifada* also convinced a number of Israelis that the occupation of the Palestinian territories could not last, and this led to the Madrid Peace conference in 1991. Although it did not change the actual situation, the *Intifada* was an acknowledgment of Palestinian identity.[568] Support for the Oslo Accord was strong among Palestinians.[569] Hopes that the occupation would end were high. In this period, as a result of growing awareness of Palestinian identity, questions surfaced that could not be raised during the "lost years". For instance, how would Palestinians ever accept the loss of part of their territories in 1948? These questions were asked, for instance, by Palestinians returning from abroad.[570] The recognition between Israelis and Palestinians of the existence of the other ended a period a mutual denial.[571]

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[565] Lustick points out that such a theory – explaining the *Intifada* only in terms of an irrational eruption of emotions – fails to take into account the 'political, organizational, and mobilizational tasks that need to be accomplished to translate diffuse anger into collective political action' (Lustick in: *World Politics* 1993, p. 587). He argues that since Israeli politics had an image of rationality and the ability to adapt among Palestinians, they expected an uprising to be effective. From this perspective, he states, the *Intifada* 'is a reflection of its antagonist' (p. 579). In the imagery of Islamic partakers in the *Intifada* however Israel is the 'evil incarnate' so that no 'accommodation with the Jewish state' is possible. To them, the *Intifada* is jihad against a blind, irrational power (Lustick in: *World Politics* 1993, p. 581).

[566] Namely the PLO and the four major fractions associated with that, as well as grass roots organizations. (Lustick in: *World Politics* 1993, p. 570). It is the 'politically correct Palestinian position' that there 'never was any real separation [..] between *Intifada* activists in the occupied territories and the "external" PLO leadership,' though sometimes it is mentioned that the PLO failed to represent the Palestinian people (Lustick in: *World Politics* 1993, pp. 570, 571). According to Lustick a parallel is visible between Zionism and Palestinian nationalism in that they both picture their development as driven from internal forces, instead of being manipulated by external forces.

[567] Lustick in: *World Politics* 1993, p. 584.

[568] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 201. In 1993, Israel and the PLO signed a Declaration of Principles. PLO leaders were now recognized as 'legitimate representatives of an accepted entity'.

[569] Two-thirds of the Palestinians supported the accords, and even 80% in 1996 (Khalil Shikaki, Palestinians Divided, in: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81 (2002), Issue 1, pp. 89-105, p. 90).

[570] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 205.

[571] R. Khalidi 1997, p. 204. Khalidi underlines that the power difference remained: Israel is an established nation-state with a strong sense of national identiy and a well-functioning political system. Palestinians at that point had a 'feeble parastate' and an 'economy in shambles' (p. 205).

During 'Oslo', however, construction of settlements and of roads connecting them continued, and the situation in the West Bank and Gaza grew worse. It led to the conviction that Israelis were responsible for the failure of the negotiations of Camp David and Taba in 2000 and 2001. In the Palestinian interpretation, Palestinian negotiators showed great willingness to compromise by their offer to settle for the West Bank and Gaza.[572] To some Palestinians, the lack of consideration for the right of return for Palestinian refugees to their villages of origin was unacceptable.

The outbreak of the second or *Al Aqsa Intifada*, according to the Palestinian narrative, was a spontaneous grass roots protest against the ongoing occupation and the incompetence of the Palestinian leadership.[573] In contrast to the first *Intifada*, this time the uprising was violent. In the period of the second *Intifada* voices calling for non-violent resistance were marginalized. Many people were killed, and fear among Israeli Jews rose steeply, prompting violent responses on the part of the IDF. The diverse political fractions were united under Fatah. Violence ended gradually, and relatively quiet years followed, although the various forms of oppression and occupation continued and expanded. Shikaki explains that the PA establishment first welcomed the *Intifada*, hoping that it would add pressure at the negotiation table. The younger generation, however, hoped to end 'the occupation on their own terms only through armed popular confrontation'.[574]

In summary, the Palestinian narrative is a narrative of good things turning bad, or a narrative of resentment, that sometimes tends to reproduce the exclusivist logic of the Zionist narrative.[575] In some instances, the pre-Zionist period is cast in a positive light, while the recent past and present are characterized by experiences of loss, living under occupation, while at the same time not being heard internationally and within the Arab world and, in the case of Palestinian Christians, by fellow Christians. They regard themselves as victims, rather than as active participants in creating their own fate. Israelis are viewed as violent, untrustworthy and unwilling to compromise, not being satisfied until the entire historical Palestine is in their hands. In some cases, the Palestinian narratives of resentment 'end up reproducing the same exclusivist

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[572] Pressman in: *International Security* 2003, p. 34. Whereas Palestinians take the territory of mandatory Palestine as a starting point, to Israelis the negotiations are on the basis of the 1967 situation.

[573] It was sparked by Ariel Sharon's visit (at that time Israel's opposition leader), to the *Haram al Sharif* and the overwhelming and brutal force with which the Israeli army responded to the protests following the visit.

[574] Shikaki in: *Foreign Affairs* 2002, p. 97. Shikaki points not only at differences between the older and younger generation in the PA, but also between nationalists and Islamists.

[575] Khoury (in print), p. 135.

and exclusionary logic they are reacting to in the first place'.[576] Palestinian society (in historical Palestine and outside of it) is divided between nationalists and Islamists, those arguing for armed resistance and those calling for non-violent resistance, those willing to compromise and those insisting on the right of return. In addition, a significant group of Palestinians have turned away from politics altogether.

At present, in East Jerusalem and on the West Bank, the process of colonization continues, while in Israel Palestinians are second-class citizens, Palestinians in Gaza live under siege and the Israeli state fails to acknowledge the *Nakba*. Palestinian resist this situation that they consider unjust. As Masalha points out, the current resistance is increasingly marked by non-violent forms of resistance.[577] Such initiatives both aim at giving voice to the silenced and unearthing hidden narratives, as at an inclusive and just solution to the conflict. In relation to this, new attitudes towards the Palestinian narrative are surfacing. Some academic voices are calling for a review of Palestinian narratives, such as Nadim Khoury[578] and Nur Masalha,[579] and put this into practice. Above I indicated Nadim Khoury's argument for the need to negotiate national narratives with those who are affected by the group's self-definition', in order to open up 'the process of national narration up to those traditionally excluded by the nation'.[580] Khoury argues that such negotiation of the Palestinian narrative of resentment would for instance mean acknowledgement of Jewish connections to the history of Palestine and rejection of elements of anti-Semitism.[581] As has already been pointed out, the aim of such negotiation is not to come to a shared narrative, but rather mutual recognition. Khoury points out that such engagement in the narrative of the

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[576] Khoury (in print), p. 135. Khoury adds that some of these narratives 'omit any Jewish connection to the history of Palestine, they impose a homogenous Arab understanding of history,' and that 'they convey schemes of anti-Semitic racism, and in some cases, Holocaust denial.'

[577] Masalha 2012, p. 255. Non-violent resistance has been an ongoing aspect of Palestinian responses to Israeli hegemony. See for instance M.E. King, *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance*, New York 2007. Non-violent resistance is based on an understanding of power that is close to Foucault's understanding: those in power can only use their power with the consent of those they seek to control. Non-violent resistance challenges this power with a 'range of widespread and sustained activities', involving pressure and coercion, attempts to 'increase the costs' of a certain policy of the adversary, to undermine its sources of power and legitimacy etc. (Adam Roberts, Timothy Garton Ash (eds.), *Civil Resistance and Power Politics, The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Ghandi to the present*, Oxford 2009, Introduction).

[578] See Khoury (in print).

[579] See Masalha 2012.

[580] Khoury (in print), p. 195. Khoury points out that this is highly difficult, since national narratives are designed to be limited to the members of a nation 'and therefore antithetical to the idea of negotiation' (p. 196).

[581] Khoury (in print), p. 135.

other is 'identity-costly' and 'identity-changing'.[582] Since the more powerful group usually is also more powerful in putting forward its narrative, the costs are higher to the more powerful group.

In both Israeli and Palestinian societies, understandings of history developed by scholars like Ilan Pappe and Nur Masalha are of importance, even if their influence remains marginal, since they point to the development of a collective memory that is non-exclusive. It is far beyond the objective of this research to propose solutions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Yet I find it relevant to notice that voices call for different ways of understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, beyond existing paradigms of ethnic, cultural and religious separation[583] as well as being attentive to Israel's dominance. Such voices, both Palestinian and Israeli voices, therefore often focus on the need to review the Israeli narrative. According to Yehouda Shenhav,[584] Ilan Pappe[585] and others the questions of the *Nakba* need to be addressed in Israeli society. What these approaches testify to is readiness to negotiate identity and narrative. In the remainder of this chapter, such readiness will turn out to be crucial.

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[582] Khoury (in print), p. 21: 'Narrative negotiation shows us that it is also identity-costly, because giving up aspects of our narrative and incorporating elements of the other's into our own can be pricy for communities that stubbornly hold on to their nationalist accounts. By the same token, this makes it identity-changing'.

[583] Ammiel Alcalay points to areas of overlap between Arab-Jewish and Palestinian identity, which he calls 'Levantine Identity'.

[584] Yehouda Shenhav, *Beyond the Two State Solution, A Jewish Political Essay*, London 2012.

[585] Ilan Pappe 2009.

5.3 Reading Jeremiah 32 with Palestinian Christians and Israeli Jews

5.3.1 Introduction

This chapter can be considered the laboratory of the method used in this study. It gives detailed insight into the Jeremianic tradition-at-work: it gives detailed insight in group interactions with the Jeremianic tradition. Besides, the Palestinian-Christian and Israeli-Jewish groups studied here, live in a context of conflict in which both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christians identify as heirs of the Jeremianic tradition.

Bringing together people of different religious, cultural and political backgrounds asks for a careful approach, especially if the groups they belong to live in animosity. In such circumstances, contact between the two groups often only enforces existing stereotypes. As with all intercultural communication, the discourse has to take place in an atmosphere of safety and needs to be as 'dominance-free'[586] as possible. Creating a completely 'dominance-free' space is not possible. Conflict and the power difference described above play a role in the encounters, as will become clear below.

In chapter 1 I mentioned the work of James Scott, who analyzed patterns of communication between subordinate and dominant groups. Scott's insights are of great value for this chapter, since such patterns are visible in the encounters between the groups. The ideology of the ruling group is voiced in what Scott calls a public transcript: the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate, voicing the self-portrait of the dominant elite, as well as their ideology and interests. The public transcript is 'designed to be impressive, to affirm and naturalize the power of dominant elites, and to conceal or euphemize the dirty linen of their rule'[587]. As has already been said, Scott points out an important vulnerability of the dominant class: any ruling group is vulnerable to be criticized on the basis of the valuable social function it claims to have, and the rules it claims to follow. Any rationale for inequality, which is part of Zionism and other forms of hegemony, creates a potential zone of dirty linen that, if exposed, would contradict the pretensions of legitimate domination.'[588] The subordinate class criticizes the ruling class using the terms and concepts invoked by the ruling class.[589]

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[586] Riches citing J. Habermas in De Wit, Jonker (eds.) 2004, p. 471.

[587] Scott 1990 , p. 18.

[588] Scott 1990, p. 105.

[589] Scott 1990, p. 102. Scott adds that because the protest uses the language of dominant discourse, this becomes a 'plastic idiom or dialect that is capable of carrying an enormous variety of meanings, including those that are subversive of their use as intended by the dominant.'

The subordinate group reacts to this public transcript in what Scott calls 'hidden transcripts'. This is an 'alternative memory that that directly opposes the master commemorative narrative, operating under and against its hegemony'[590], being 'the offstage responses and rejoinders to that public transcript'.[591] Scott writes that 'the least radical step' of criticism is to criticize the ruling class 'for having violated the norms by which they claim to rule'.[592] The critique aims at the 'dirty linen'[593] any hegemonic regime produces, using the terms and concepts invoked by the ruling class. Scott underlines the importance of understanding the consciousness of the subordinate – the social experiences of indignities, control, submission, humiliation, etc. He writes that 'the hidden transcript cannot be described as the truth that contradicts the lies told to power, it is correct to say that the hidden transcript is a self-disclosure that power relations normally exclude from the official transcript. […], a substitute for an act of assertion directly in the face of power.'

We see this criticism, aiming at the 'dirty linen' taking place below in the meetings of the Palestinians from Bethlehem. They view Jeremiah 32 as representing the Israeli dominant narrative, the public transcript on which the Israeli domination is founded. What takes place in the readings of the Palestinian group from Bethlehem can be characterized in terms of a hidden or counter transcript: they use the text, the claims and language it contains, to criticize Zionist hegemony. The Palestinians criticize the Israeli state for not following the rules as indicated in Jer. 32. For instance, they believe that the land should be bought, not taken. They also point out that according to this biblical text, the Israelis should be punished for their misconduct. One of the Israeli women is aware of this risk, as becomes clear in the encounter between the Israeli women and the Bethlehemites. She feels uncomfortable with the idea that the Palestinians read Jer. 32 since 'it is about our dirty laundry'.

5.3.1.1 Forming groups

The aim was to find Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christians willing to take part in readings sessions of Jeremiah 32, and in encounters with a group representing 'the other side' of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I looked for people willing to be part of a group, ideally forming a more or less homogenous group that I could link to a compatible partner group. The criteria for participation was defined broadly as religious adherence to either Judaism or Christianity. In order to create compatible groups, I looked for groups of students and for

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[590] Zerubavel 1997, p. 10. She calls Zionism a counter narrative opposing traditional Jewish memory. This counter narrative becomes the master narrative of Zionist settlers (see below).
[591] Scott 1990, p. 111.
[592] Scott 1990, p. 92.
[593] Scott 1990, p. 103.

groups with a more or less clear religious affiliation to a synagogue, church or religious centre.

Putting together such groups of Palestinian Christians and Israeli Jews to read Jeremiah 32 proved difficult for several reasons. First, taking part in the project is quite a commitment for participants. The topic was sensitive and the project entails at least five separate meetings. The tense context played a role in the process of finding participants for the reading groups. The request to take part in a group reading Jeremiah opened up a world of sensitivities and dangers connected to the conflict. Second, I operated in environments in which I did not always know the codes and habits for how to contact people and make appointments. Third, at the moment this effort took place, the conflict was evolving; the attacks on Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009 severely increased tensions. It took considerable time, then, to form the groups. I contacted many, many people, who referred me to other people, some of whom responded immediately and enthusiastically, while others had reservations, or even strong objections. The following two examples: I contacted a Catholic priest of American origin who teaches at Bethlehem university. He expressed strong objections to my project and advised me not to proceed with the project at all. He felt that Palestinian Christian students would not be able to stand their ground in a meeting with Israeli Jewish students, who are part of the dominant party and almost always much better equipped to read the Old Testament. However, Ophir Yarden, director of Educational Initiatives at the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI) 'spread the word' as soon as he heard about my project, and found several people interested. Yet, when they understood the project entailed not only meetings with Palestinians (which had aroused their interest), but also reading sessions within the group that would take place beforehand, they were disappointed. It was the idea of meeting with Palestinians that had aroused their interest, rather than studying the text in their own group, so they withdrew.

An important contact was Hana Bendkowsky of the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations (JCJCR), an organization attempting to overcome ignorance and prejudice between Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. She helped me to find participants for the group of Palestinian students, the Israeli students and the Jewish women.

The groups I managed to bring together were diverse in terms of the participants' political and cultural background and type of religious affiliation. Not all of the students are actively religious. Avi, one of the Jewish students, said: 'I am not a religious man', while Hibba stated that she is 'not in a religious period'. Although I aimed to find students, one of the Palestinian participants, Amira, was no longer a student. In terms of spatial identity, the participants are diverse too. Some of the Palestinians are 1948 Palestinians, or 'Israeli Arabs'.[594]

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[594] Palestinians living in Israel and holding an Israeli passport.

Laith, for instance, is the one who said: 'We in Nazareth are far away from these events [of occupation]. We have more rights.' Others, like Hibba and Amira, are so called 1967 Palestinians.[595] All members of the reading group from Bethlehem, apart from Geries who is an Israeli citizen, are Palestinians living in the West Bank, holding a Palestinian I.D. Some have a working permit that allows them to enter Israel, but most do not. Although the Jewish Israelis seem more homogenous in the discussions, within these groups too there is diversity. Among the students, Schlomo and Avi were born in Israel, while Daliah is an immigrant. Most women are immigrants as well: Anna, Shira and Michal. Only Efrat is born in Israel. Schlomo and Dalia are Mizrahi Jews while the others are Ashkenazi Jews.

Palestinian participants from Bethlehem live in a relatively developed and open predominantly Christian town on the West Bank. Participants, both Palestinians and Israelis, from the Galilee, Israel, are from a region less defined by conflict than Jerusalem and the West Bank, and are more influenced by Israeli Jewish culture. In contrast, participants, both Israelis and Palestinians, from the Jerusalem area, in contrast, live in a conflict-ridden, mixed Israeli-Palestinian part of Israel.

Method of working with the groups
In working with the groups, I aimed to reduce the influence of my presence on the process of reading as much as possible. I asked the groups to read and discuss the text as if I was present, using a method of their choice. I recorded the discussions.

I do realize that without me, the groups would not have read this text together. My presence during the meetings has influenced them. Inevitably, the presence of a foreign research with a recording machine made the participants more cautious and more apologetic. They asked questions about my background and my opinion about the text. Sometimes participant directly addressed me rather than the group members in an effort to convince me of something particularly important to her or him.

In all groups, usually after the first phase of the group interpretation, I presented my interpretation of the text to the group. I included their responses in my analysis, as one of the question of this study is whether 'professional exegesis' and 'lay readings' are mutually fruitful.

In the analysis below I will include a description of my presence and influence in each group (see also below, *role of the researcher*).

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[595] Palestinians from Jerusalem living under Israeli occupation since 1967 and holding a Jerusalem I.D.

5.3.1.2 Expectations

As I described above, Jeremiah 32, certainly in the Masoretic version, has in itself traits of a 'dominant discourse': the voice of returning exiles partially overrules other voices. The text builds a world in which the Judean people accept Babylonian rule as a justified and collective punishment, followed by an unprecedented situation of undisrupted closeness between God, land and people. A mirror-narrative of return, taken from the Tanakh, has become the dominant narrative of Israeli society. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is likewise a conflict over narratives of identity, is a contextual element greatly influencing almost all aspects of both Israeli and Palestinian society. The Zionist narrative and the Palestinian counter-narrative, are therefore the background against which any Palestinian-Israeli encounter should be understood.

In general, Palestinian readers are likely to be upset by the text, given its links to the Zionist narrative. Israeli readers are likely to identify with the text. However, Palestinian readers too are linked with the Old Testament or the Tanakh, as indicated above, while to some Israeli readers the automatic identification with the text may be problematic.

5.3.1.3 Analyzing the sessions

Method of analysis
The analysis of the separate group meetings and of the encounters is based on the method used in the intercultural Bible readings project 'Through the Eyes of Another'.[596] However, it is adapted to the specific context in which the readings took place. In addition, in contrast to the project 'Through the Eyes of Another', the encounters here were not only intercultural encounters, but also interreligious ones. In addition, the participants physically met, rather than conversing through mail, email, or Skype, as was done in this earlier project

In what follows, I first offer an analysis of the separate group meetings, after which I present the results of the encounters between the groups. In the analysis of the separate group meetings attention is given to the composition of the group and its characteristics, the process of exchange and interpretation taking place within the group, and the way the text is approached and appropriated. In the analysis of the encounters, I focus on the interaction between the members of the two groups and the effect this has on images of self, others, and the text.

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[596] The project *Through the eyes of another, Intercultural reading of the bible*, was developed in order to compare interpretations from different cultural contexts in order to specify what is culturally determined in biblical interpretation (Hans de Wit, Louis Jonker (eds.), *Through the eyes of another*, Nappanee 2004, p. 488). Groups from all over the world read the story of the woman at the well from the Gospel of John. In a second phase groups were linked to each other in order to exchange their interpretations.

Analyzing the separate group meetings
The group & its context, the group process
Forming the group: Here I describe how the group was put together, the group's context and how the meetings progressed, including my own role in this process.

Motivation: The type of motivation of the participants plays a role in the way they approach the sessions. Bar-Tal stresses the importance of fear as a factor in one's attitude towards building knowledge. This is certainly true in the context of my research. For all participants, albeit to different extents, the sessions were a source of uncertainty and fear. However, many were also dissatisfied with present beliefs and knowledge, that is, with the narrative dominant in their society to some extent or another. Those who are dissatisfied are more likely to be open to new perspectives. We see some degree of this interchange between fear and openness in all of the groups.[597]

Group process
The sessions: I give a brief description of the sessions.
The role of the researcher: Description of my role. In all groups, I asked the group members to introduce themselves and to tell about their expectations in the first meeting. After that, I asked the group to read the text together[598] and discuss the text in the way they were used to.
Group dynamics and interaction: Groups differ in the degree in which they allow for difference in attitudes and views among themselves. Some groups have a more individualistic approach to the text, in which case there is a lot of

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[597] In 'Through the Eyes of Another' a distinction is made between a cognitive and an affective type of motivation. With respect to cognitive motivation research shows a relation between a person's type of motivation and his or her capability to develop insights and convictions (Hans de Wit, *Codes and coding*, in: De Wit, Jonker (eds.) 2004, pp. 412, 413. De Wit uses Bar-Tal's article. Epistemic motivation refers to ones beliefs towards knowledge and the process of building knowledge. Bar-Tal, who writes about the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, mentions three epistemic types of motivation: *motivation for validity* ('the desire for valid knowledge or fear of receiving invalid information'), *motivation for structure* ('desire to have any knowledge which allows a closure on a given belief on a given topic') and *motivation for specific content* ('the desire to hold a given belief as truth and refrain from entertaining rival alternative hypotheses'). Groups characterized by *motivation for validity* are looking for challenge and are most likely to be open to different perspectives. *Motivation for structure* subsequently is opposed to ambiguity and uncertainty. This attitude will therefore not lead to consideration of alternative hypotheses or to collecting inconsistent information: ambiguity is avoided. Groups of which the participants share a *motivation for specific content* are most likely to hold on to what they already know. Undesirable hypotheses are rejected. The directing mechanism here is personal wishes and fears. (Daniel Bar-Tal, 'Israeli-Palestinian conflict: a cognitive analysis', in: *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 14 (1990), pp. 7-29, pp. 12, 13). In all three motivation fear is understood as central in ones attitude towards knowledge. I focus on the balancing between fear and openness that took place in the groups.

[598] All groups used several translations. The Israeli groups mainly used the Jewish Publication Society Hebrew-English Tanakh, or The Jewish Publication Society Tanakh. The Palestinian groups read in Arabic (Smith & Van Dyck 1865) along with my English translation.

discussion: the participants do not necessarily have to come to an agreement about the text. This was the case in the group of Jewish women and the two student groups. The reading process of the groups from Bethlehem, in contrast, was more hierarchical in that it was characterized by little confrontation and a less free exchange of opinion. In these cases, some members of the group are looked upon as and take up the role of experts, and their interpretation is seen as normative.

The process of appropriation
Hermeneutical aspects: the status of the text and the way it is approached: I do not distinguish between the interpretation of the text and appropriation, since in all groups appropriation took place almost automatically.[599] I do not offer a full overview of all aspects of the text discussed within the groups, but focus on the way the text functions within each set of narratives.
Heuristic keys and appropriation: I discuss different aspects of the hermeneutical processes that take place. Of importance here is each group's attitude towards the text and its status. They may read with suspicion: some readers look for the 'dangerous memory' within the text, critically approaching its message. Each person's reading may be strongly shaped by personal faith in a way that is limiting, or in a way that stimulates an open and questioning attitude. A *heuristic key* is a concept derived from different realms of life, such as the political, economic or religious realm in the group's context, defining the outlook of the participants on the text.

I discuss the type of appropriation taking place: the readers relate the text to their own lives. How do they do this, what strategy is used? Is appropriation positive or negative? I discuss whether the process of appropriation is transformative:[600] is the reader's perspective and self-image transformed?
Evaluation: Last, I summarize and compare the interpretations of the four groups.

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[599] The method used in 'Through the Eyes of Another' does make this distinction (De Wit, Jonker (eds.) 2004). As said in chapter 1, I understand appropriation as the act by which 'readers make sense of the author's creation in their own createdness.' Authors, redactors and readers of a text all 'make sense', 'of the author's creation and of their own lives. Readers [...] never just read. They also value, apply, or neglect what they read; they try to understand the life they live' (Syreeni in: *Literature and Theology* 1995, p. 329).

[600] Transformation is understood here as the result of new experiences leading to change in the perspective of a group, and therefore to a change in narratives.

5.3.2 First group: Jewish Women from Jerusalem

5.3.2.1 The group & its context, the group process

The group and its context

Forming the group: I looked for a group of more or less religious Jewish Israelis to meet with the Bethlehemite group with whom I had already had meetings. I contacted several synagogues, spoke with rabbis, but without result. Hana Bendkovsky from JCJCR then advised me to contact a modern orthodox synagogue called Yedidya. My project was advertised in the weekly newsletter of Yedidya, which describes itself as a 'halakhically-based', 'pluralist community', equally concerned about Jewish values, social justice and democracy, and 'committed to building alliances [...] between Jews and non-Jews.[601] Before long, four women contacted me through email, asking for more information ('It sounds very interesting, and if I can work out the times, I'd be glad to participate' (Shira), 'I might be interested' (Samantha) 'This sounds very interesting!' (Anna), 'I would be very happy to study', (Michal). Through email we planned meetings, which took place on March 3rd and March 17th 2009.

The group: All four women were born into Jewish families of Ashkenazi origin. Except for Michal, they are all new immigrants into Israel. They all live in West Jerusalem, a part of the city that is almost exclusively inhabited by Jewish Israelis. All women are religious, feeling at home in different streams of Judaism developed out of traditional Judaism in the 19th century, as a reaction to Reform Judaism, that is, liberal Judaism (Anna), (modern-)orthodox (Samantha, Shira) and conservative Judaism (Michal). Reform Judaism was a radical reinvention of Traditional Judaism. Conservative Judaism is in general more liberal than orthodox Judaism in its views on Torah, rabbinic interpretation and legislation. Modern-Orthodox Judaism attempts to bring together Jewish values, halakha and the secular world. It is closer to Conservative Judaism and it often closely relates Judaism and Zionism. Samantha, Michal and Shira studied Tanakh or Talmud at university and Samantha and Shira both teach at a yeshiva. All three are very knowledgeable in the Hebrew Scriptures. Anna is less so. She has a lot of experience in Christian-Jewish dialogue, though, and is therefore familiar with Christianity. As she came to Israel relatively recently, her Hebrew is less strong.

Michal works as a tour guide in Jerusalem, where she was born. She holds an MA in biblical studies, has continued studying Tanakh at a yeshiva, and, as she says 'at home we study Tanakh all the time'. She is not a member of Yedidya, but heard about the project from her husband, who receives Yedidya's newsletter. She was born Jewish, studies Tanakh 'all the time', and is

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[601] See <http://www.yedidya.org.il>.

an adherent of Conservative Judaism. Anna is originally from the Netherlands. She came to Jerusalem 14 years before, with her husband, and remained there after he died. She has been very active in Jewish-Christian dialogue in the Netherlands and started an organization to feed hungry children in East and West Jerusalem. She considers herself a liberal Jew. Shira holds an MA in Judaic Studies, with a focus on Tanakh, and teaches at the Conservative Judaism Yeshiva in Jerusalem. She describes her work as very satisfying, 'I have a tremendous amount of fun with the students'. She has been involved in encounters with Christians from Jerusalem before, but 'there are not many opportunities to meet.' She identifies with conservative Judaism. Samantha holds a PhD in Talmudic Studies ('I don't know as much Tanakh as you [the other women] do') and teaches, both Tanakh and Talmud, at Pardes, a yeshiva that attracts 'people from the whole rainbow of Jewish practices'. She identifies as orthodox. She was raised in a religious, but not orthodox home. *Identity, attitude towards society*: Being Jewish is a very dear and profound aspect of identity for each of these women. Michal says: 'I was born Jewish. It is something very unquestionable', and: 'What does it mean to be Jewish? Like: what is it like to have your right hand? Only when it hurts you realize it. This is me. I can't change it. It is always related to Holocaust, also my connection to here is about my grandmother's life, what happened between Italy and here.' Shira: 'I was born into Judaism, so it wasn't a choice for me. I am happy with the choice that was made for me.' Samantha says: 'My whole identity is Jewish.' For Michal and Shira, Jewish identity has clear boundaries that should not be transgressed. The group is more important than the individual. Michal: 'For Jewish people in the Jewish tradition, it is an axiom. You have to stay with your own identity. You have to stay different from other people.' Shira says: 'You don't have the benefit of being an individual.. You are part of a whole.. If you break away..'. Anna's position is different. She says: 'I love Judaism', but also questions what it means to be Jewish, and how well defined the boundaries really are or should be: 'But then there are two more questions: I am being the Devil's Advocate – what is identity? And secondly, what if a person gets into another group and adapts – if he stays a Mensch of course.' Anna has doubts about Jewish exclusivism: 'In Judaism, our whole tradition is about staying separated, somehow this tradition is not always so positive. There are three reasons to have a war, and the first one is religion.' She is drawn towards a more open understanding of identity: 'You can say: 'I am part of a whole, part of human kind.'

The participants share a deep love for, and a critical and concerned attitude towards Israeli society, and all have a desire to improve Israeli society. However, they tend to regard the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as something distinct from their efforts to improve their own society, which is the reason that Anna founded her organization and Samantha started a social justice track at the yeshiva in the first place. Although religion and nationality are closely

related in their discourse, they attempt to separate religion and politics when it comes to the conflict with the Palestinians.

The daily lives of the participants take place in an almost exclusively Jewish context. Palestinians are present here and there in the margins, as maintenance men, for instance, or as needy children that are fed by Anna's organization. Michal used to have Palestinian Christian friends at university, but she is not in touch with them anymore. Shira took part in intercultural dialogue programs with Palestinians before.

Motivation: All four women are enthusiastic about the project, both about studying the text and about the chance it offers to meet Palestinians. Anna says her main motivation is to meet Palestinian Christians. 'I have a big mouth when it comes to what I think [political decisions] should be, but I hardly know any Palestinians.' Shira too is interested in the meetings with the Palestinian group, since 'there are not many opportunities to meet'. Samantha says she feels isolated in her attempts to relate to social justice and Palestinian society: 'I started a social justice track here [at the yeshiva, Pardes, where she teaches], where we focus on texts that have to do with social justice, and how they interact with Israeli society. In that context I am thinking more about my own isolation and my lack of context really with people from the other [East] side of the city.' Michal says she misses the contacts with Christian students she used to have at university. It is out of social concern mainly that they are interested in meeting Palestinians. As we see below, the women largely avoid discussing one specific topic that is ambiguous and dangerous to them: politics. The women are driven by the wish to engage socially. At the same time they are held back by the fear that their own narratives of identity are endangered. Their openness, then, is limited by the fear of entering into threatening situations. This is visible when Anna criticizes the Zionist narrative or questions aspects of Jewish identity. The other women do not enter into that discussion; it seems that, for them, criticism of the Zionist narrative is too threatening. In the meetings with the partner group, we will see that among this group of Jewish women meeting Palestinians the same fear is aroused: Palestinian Christians represent a voice that has the potential to undermine the Zionist narrative.

Apart from their interest in meeting the Palestinian group, the participants look forward to gaining insight into the text. As the text is a safe ground for these women, fear hardly plays a role in this part of the exercise.

Group process

The sessions: We met three times. In the first two sessions, which took place in the city of Pardes, the women discussed the text. In the third session, at the request of the participants, we discussed my approach to the text. This meeting took place in Shira's house. Samantha was regrettably not able to be present.

Role of the researcher: The women immediately immersed themselves in studying the text. In the first two sessions, my role was limited to asking clarifying questions and to speed up the reading process here and there. In the second meeting, I again explained the aim of the project for my research. Because the women remained very interested in my project and also in my own approach to the text, we agreed that in a third meeting I would share with them my perspectives on the text. My understanding of the text as a layered text in which different groups take position, led to a discussion in which we related the text explicitly to the contemporary political context of these women. Otherwise, the women did not engage with my point of view. They seemed satisfied with their present views. They were looking for new knowledge, but did not feel the need for a new perspective.

Group dynamics and interaction: Two women, Michal and Shira, knew each other already. The others get along easily, as they share a similar background. The atmosphere is pleasant and open. There is an implicit understanding of how to go about studying the text. Most of the discussion is rather intellectual, but emotions are shared as well. The women have a quiet but enthusiastic way of discussing. They do not hesitate to ask questions, both when they do not know something and to question one other's opinions. All participants find the process of reading enriching. Each participant develops ideas on the text, usually reacting to what is coming up in the group, but not necessarily agreeing with one another. The first meeting is very detail-oriented. The second meeting is more personal, relating the text more directly to the history of Zionism and Israel, and exploring their personal narratives related to both.

The women are eager to start the discussion. Michal, Shira and Samantha are professionally engaged with the Tanakh. Discussing the text in great detail and relating it to other texts is natural for them. It is less so for Anna, whose input in the exegetical discussions is therefore modest. She seems to feel a bit insecure about the exercise. In discussing contemporary issues, however, she challenges the other participants.

5.3.2.2 The process of appropriation

Hermeneutical aspects: the status of the text and the way it is approached
The first thing said about the text is 'I love Jeremiah' (Shira). This is their text, both on a personal and at a collective (Jewish) level. Jeremiah 32 specifically is very dear to the participants. Samantha: 'This chapter from Tanakh makes me cry and I love it, I have a deep echo from it.' It is self-evident to the women that they have a place within the biblical narrative. They often say 'we' or 'us' when referring to the Judeans in the text, Shira: '*We* had Yehoiachim', Samantha: 'The point is that the land stays in the family. The land belongs to *us*.' [emphasis added]). This love for the text and feeling of ownership of it, in combination with a well-informed, detail-oriented approach, characterizes the

discussions. Appropriation is immediate and automatic. These women display no distance towards the text.

To these women, the text is many things at the same time. It represents their religious heritage, but also their cultural and national heritage. It is a source of knowledge, wisdom and history for all Jews, whether or not they are religious. The text has historical value to the women as well, because it informs them about the first crisis in Judaism: the loss of the temple and the destruction of Jerusalem. At the same time, the text functions as a blueprint and a prophecy about the future of the Jewish people, which they understand is being realized in their time. In this respect, there seems to be no distance in time and space between themselves and the event described in the text. What happens in the biblical stories is happening to the Jewish people, and is therefore relevant for all Jewish people today.

In addition, the text is a source of religious truth. Elements that seem contradictory have a deeper meaning for these women. Questions and critical remarks never make them nervous. On the contrary, they are welcomed: debate and discussion can lead to a more profound insight in the text. The text is a safe space, in which they can wander around freely, looking at it from different perspectives. Nothing can endanger the intimate connection between the women and the text. It is not problematic that different texts portray God differently. Shira: 'It is surprising how many different voices God is allowed to have. [..] It is one of the most powerful things in the Bible: different voices. The editors didn't feel the need to bring that together.'

The women, apart from Anna, often and with enthusiasm bring exegetical input into the conversation, often by linking the text to other texts from the Tanakh. Anna's approach is more spiritual, and she relates the text more to their own context.

Heuristic keys and appropriation
Central in the way the women approach the text are intimate connections between the narrative which is told within the Tanakh and the State of Israel as a safe haven, and each of these women personally. Michal expresses this very intimate link to the text, which she feels on a deeper level is fulfilled in her life: 'As I read it, I became excited. [..] I feel it talks about me. I am the fulfilling.'

To the group, although less so for Anna, Zionism lies at the heart of Judaism. The text is about destruction and a new beginning, and therefore 'to connect it to the Holocaust is the right way to read it. [It is] about the Holocaust and the State of Israel' (Michal). The Holocaust and the State of Israel are therefore discussed elaborately. The women do not differ between political and religious significance, or rather, in their discussions the state of Israel doesn't function as a political entity, but is seen as part of the redemption of the Jewish people. They do not talk about how this redemption resulted in a conflict with the Palestinians. Only in the last meeting, at which I

share my perspective, do the women discuss the conflict. Otherwise they avoid the topic, saying that they want to separate the religious from the political. Whereas Israel and Zionism to these women are personal, national and religious subjects, talking about Palestinians is politics.

Zionism: Zionism is seen as a crucial phase of transformation within Judaism after the Holocaust, parallel to transformations after two other crises, the destruction of the First and Second Temple. Shira: 'Overall we have to look at three times of major change of everything that is in Judaism. What came out was almost a sphinx, something completely new. After the First Temple Period what came back was a new type of Judaism, rooted in what was there, but there was a need for a whole new way of dealing with the world. A lot of concepts disappeared, there was no more struggle with idol worshipping. Then after the destruction of the Second Temple Judaism adapted again. And then the Holocaust which dictated change. Each time the Judaism that emerged was rooted in what was before, but it had to adapt.' Anna points out that the State of Israel 'was not founded because of the Holocaust. It started long before that with Herzl.' The birth of the State of Israel is interpreted by all the women as an event with religious significance: 'I don't see the birth of the state of Israel as a lack of continuity in the same way as I look at the difference between pre- and post-exilic. After the destruction it [Judaism] is less temple based. I don't perceive a clear break between pre- and post-Shoa Judaism. 50 years after destruction they were talking about rebuilding' (Shira). This chapter that is about the first disaster, the destruction of the temple, also has to be related to the Holocaust.

Holocaust: When the women relate Jeremiah 32 to the Holocaust and their personal and family histories (in which the Holocaust plays a central role), they do not understand this as an analogy. The connection is very real and intimate, and so is the threat they feel Israel is under. Michal says: 'Destruction of the city is Holocaust: my grandfather who did not survive, my dad who did – so my grandmother came back [to the land] with two children. They were coming from destruction, and going to building, as in this chapter. It is something we feel in my family.' Shira underlines the effect of the Holocaust on her generation, and the function of the state of Israel as a safe haven: 'My generation is still effected by the Holocaust. It didn't take a hundred seconds before the topic came out in our discussion. [..] Some of the fear he is expressing – people in modern Israel feel it: are we going to succeed? – a state of sixty years is not a big accomplishment. Are people going to say in another fifty years that it didn't work out?' Although the text points out the causes of exile and the women discuss these, they are hesitant to talk about what caused the Holocaust. Michal: 'Every time we compare prophecies of destruction or Holocaust, they [the prophecies] speak about the reason. We are very careful about that, not to speak about the reason for Holocaust. Jeremiah did not have that.'

Exile: To the women, the narratives of the Tanakh provide a link between them and the land. Exile is viewed as a punishment when the commandments have not been followed, an unnatural situation of being away from land. Exile is a temporary measure, and is, in fact, a sign of the intimate relation between God, people and land that is unique to Judaism. Samantha says: 'You can't take this land away from us, God gave it to us.' Michal: 'Before going to exile we create a connection, so the people later have a place to go back to. They have a document, written. It is a real thing. Having this in memory, all of the Tanakh, that talks about the connection of Israel and the land made the connection that enabled us to come back.' The Exodus from Egypt, the 'return' from Babylon, and finally the 'return' initiated by Zionism are connected in a very real way to them. Shira points out that the link between Jews and the land is so intimate that it is more than a possession, 'it is much, much greater than that. […] People feel the right to land. Because it is something you can't lose.' The Jeremianic narrative is the national Israeli Jewish narrative: 'It is a normal transaction, the property was in the family. It receives a national meaning here' (Shira).

Redemption: For these women, Jeremiah 32 is a blueprint in that it points towards the redemption of the Jewish people, in which the State of Israel plays an as yet unknown role. Redemption functions as a very positive framework, even though the present situation 'is not ideal', as Michal says: 'But in comparison to what happened only one generation ago it is a miracle.' Shira: 'We are living here with all our problems. Like Jeremiah who believed this land has a value. [...] When you are living on this land you feel part of the prophecy. I am not sure on which end, I am hoping the fulfilment. [....] There are a lot of things not solved. We try, we try again. It is not one try and then it is over. Now we know from experience that you can fail and try again. […] We are still waiting for these verses to become true: one heart and one way.' Samantha explains how redemption requires their participation: 'This text is not about how God gives us the land, it is about buying land. It is about our active participation in our own redemption. The sense that we [italics J.S.] were asked to buy a piece of land, even when we knew we were exiled. It is a way of committing ourselves to working on our redemption. Land that everybody around you perceived as worthless. But you understand its infinite worth, both on the theoretical and on the long term redemptive level.'[602]

Judaism and Israel: In the understanding of the women, Judaism constitutes a national link between the Jewish people: it is a religion that requires organization within a nation. Shira says: 'There is the national aspect of Judaism. The commandments are meant for a nation living in a land. The entire system is set up to be an independent nation. That is the constitution.' God is a national God. Michal says: 'He takes care of the sunrise and sunset every day,

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[602] The idea that Palestinians did not take care of the land, while the Zionists made the desert bloom, is part of the Zionist narrative.

for all the world, but still we give him a very specific and small responsibility just for us – He is a very national God.'

Critical elements that are not made fruitful

Several times, the women make critical remarks that, if elaborated upon, would lead to a revision of the religious Zionist narrative. However, they refrain from developing these thoughts. Nevertheless, I give an overview of these modest beginnings of critically viewing their own position.

Rephrasing identity: exile within the land: Anna questions the automatic equation of return and exile in the text with exile and return in Zionist terms. She came to Israel from Holland. Doesn't that make her an exile too in a way, even if she now lives in Israel?[603] Such a view implies that different constructions of exile and belonging are possible, criticising the Zionist position that Jews outside of Israel are in exile.

Connections to land: Shira points out the intimate connection with the land of Palestinians, and also the more superficial, if not artificial, connection to land of Jewish Israelis who immigrated into Israel: 'We have a carpenter who is a Palestinian Muslim. He told me about his family house, which has been in his family for generations. We don't have that. I do have a strong connection to this land, as I feel when we read this text, but I don't have a connection to one piece of land that has been in the family for centuries.'

Mechanisms of exile: if we behave bad, we lose the land: Jeremiah 32 provides one of the narratives that explain the mechanism of exile, as Michal explains: 'We are the only people who live in this feeling. The Germans behaved bad, but they are still in their country. The Poles. The Spaniards. The Americans. But they all stayed in their country. The only people who have this history, and also feeling of responsibility, if we don't behave good, we will be kicked out.' Clearly, in this respect, the text is dangerous ground, implying that immoral behaviour leads to loss of the land. Michal: 'If we steal fields, – whatever it is: like foreign workers, problems of selling women's bodies, and other things, not only between Palestinians and us, we will lose the land.' Michal acknowledges that 'we have moral problems.' However, she immediately counters the threat by adding: 'but we have high morality.' She cannot believe that the State of Israel would really behave immorally. Thus, the Zionist image of Israel as a highly moral state is upheld.

The need to re-create history: The women acknowledge that life is built up around stories, and that Palestinians and Israelis both have their own story about the conflict and about the past. Especially Michal emphasizes the need to look back in history and rephrase their story, and that the Palestinians need

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[603] Interestingly, the idea of being in exile while in the land, is found in the text as indicated in chapter 2 and also in for instance the ideas of the Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz. According to Leibowitz, the State of Israel as a Jewish state was a threat to Judaism as it defined Judaism territorially, instead of morally and religiously (Ten Berge 2011, pp. 98-100).

to do the same. She says: 'I believe in stories. I mean, you can re-create history by re-creating a story.[...] We have to recreate a story, like in South Africa. Now we have independence, and *Nakba*, only if we have a common story, we can recreate life together.' However, she thinks it is better first to focus on different issues. 'First we have to change ourselves, and realize they are people. Don't solve the problem straight, go around it.' Anna feels the need to rephrase Zionism: 'I know that I look at it very, very differently 30 or 40 years ago when I was in Holland. Israel was founded! When I heard the *hatiqvah* ['the hope', Israel's national anthem] I cried. [..] We did not hear the whole truth then. … Nowadays I find it very problematic... People lived here, they should be able to live here.' She opens up space here to reflect critically on Zionist's exclusive claim to the land, but yet again the other women are reluctant to enter into a discussion about this.

5.3.2.3 Evaluation

Jeremiah 32 is read as if it is Jewish national heritage. There is no doubt in the minds of the women that this is their text, written for them and applicable to their lives. In that sense, appropriation is automatic and uneventful. It is quite astonishing, however, how easily and naturally they become the 'we' of the text. The women do not differentiate between a religious Jewish reading and a national Jewish reading, no tension is experienced between religious and national aspects of identity. Among the Palestinian partner group this is very different, as we will see below. Here however the group's connection to the text is very intimate and goes unquestioned. The women feel the text is not only their text, but it is also about them. The women are already in the same space as the text. They do not need to make an effort to appropriate it. Anna is the only one asking questions about how Jewish identity is linked to land and to the text.

While members of their Palestinian partner group almost exclusively talk about how the text functions within the Zionist narrative, these Jewish women rarely refer to Palestinians. In their view, Palestinians are strangers with respect to the text. This is also why, as Michal expresses, it is odd to think that Christians would read the Tanakh. 'It is so different... This book, we study it all the time. It happens to be that three of us teach this book. It is a very relevant book, we read it all the time! It is part of our life if you are religious. Even if you are not religious, it is still part of our life. So you [JS] didn't really create something new [by inviting us to read this text], you understand? You did, but then you didn't. With the Christians, you did. You tell them: let's read a chapter, tell me how it is relevant in your life. It is a book of which Jews believe it is holy, you believe . .. is it holy? It is questionable.' In her mind, reading this text with a Jewish group is completely natural, since it is their text. In the Palestinian group, I brought something to them, 'that isn't part of their world'.

They do not see a connection between this text and the situation between Israelis and Palestinians, and therefore politics is not a subject relevant to discuss. Their own appropriation of Jeremiah does not strike them as political. They do not reflect on the role of the Tanakh in Zionism.

For the women, then, the continuity between the text and the nationalist Jewish ideology of Zionism is obvious. They do not discuss hundreds of years of Jewish exegesis in which a return to the land was not a central goal, but functioned mainly within liturgy, while 'exile' was interpreted in a diversity of ways.

Their personal and professional lives are built around the narratives of the Tanakh, which in their view are intimately related to the narrative of Zionism. Criticism of Zionism, therefore, threatens every aspect of their identity. Their appropriation is a closed stronghold, in which the Tanakh, nationality, identity, Zionism and Israel are closely intertwined. Anna's position in the group is rather unique. She is the only one asking critical questions. However, it seems the stakes are too high and the fears to great for a critical debate to develop. As a result, neither the Zionist narrative nor the narrative of the Tanakh are viewed from a new perspective and opened up to new questions.

Awareness of historical processes of growth within the text play no role, since the women experience themselves as living in the same space as the text. As a result, there is no distance between them and the text, no space in which new perspectives can rise and a critical attitude can develop. They do discuss transformations within Judaism, but in each period, the same parameters apply: land, God and people are intimately connected. They read in such a way that they see biblical texts as blueprints that can be applied to any new historical situation.

The women read through a framework of a variant of religious Zionism. This immediate appropriation is triggered by the voice of the returning exiles in the text, which is the dominant (and only) voice of the text, according to their perspective. Their narrative thus filters the text. They view the exiles as a marginal group, and themselves too. This group shows how a religious tradition in a fixed form closely tied to a political ideology can be a strong force both on a personal level and on the level of society. The women have to a large extent incorporated religious Zionism, even if in a mild form. Their perspective does not allow them to look beyond the convictions of their own society. It is striking that although all women honestly look for social engagement, genuine critical engagement with their religious and political narratives does not take place. This reading group is an example of how deeply the Zionist narrative is part of Israeli society, and also how this ideology creates a reading without any distance towards the text, keeping readers caught in a fixed religious national identity that hardly allows any space for a critical evaluation of religious identity and how it interacts with national identity.

5.3.3 Second group: Palestinian Christians from Bethlehem

5.3.3.1 The group & its context, the group process

The group and its context

Forming the group: On the advice of a friend, I met Dr. Geries Khoury, director of the Al Liqa Center in Bethlehem. When I told him about my PhD project, he was immediately enthusiastic and offered to organize reading sessions with people connected to Al Liqa. The sessions would be part of Al Liqa's programs, which aim to develop Palestinian contextual theology, and encourage dialogue between Muslims and Christians within Palestinian society and between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis. 'Al Liqa' is Arabic for 'encounter'. The Al Liqa Center. based in Bethlehem. is devoted to 'religious and heritage studies in the Holy Land'[604]. It was established in 1982 by Palestinian Muslim and Christian academics and religious leaders who witnessed the growing influence of Christian Zionism on the Holy Land and the emergence of religious fanaticism within Palestinian society, both among Muslims and Christians.

The group: Dr. Khoury suggested inviting two groups, one group of lay people and one group of theologians. In practice, however, both groups were a mixture of theologians and lay people. I therefore analyze the reports of the three meetings that took place as if it were one group. Geries and Mariam were present in all three meetings, while Boulus came only to the first and last ones. Daoud was only present at the second meeting, but he played an important role. Three other men, Fadi, Fareed and Andrew, were only present in the second meeting in which they played a modest, but distinct, role. Fadi and Mariam are the only members who took part in the encounters with the Israeli Jewish women.

All participants were members of the Al Liqa Center and inhabitants of Bethlehem (West Bank, Palestinian Territories), except for Geries, who divides his time between his home in a village in the Galilee (in the north of Israel) and his work in Bethlehem. The participants knew each other (fairly) well, as well as each other's opinions.

Geries was born in a Palestinian village in the Galilee where he still lives, and, as such, he holds Israeli citizenship. He belongs to the Greek Catholic Church. Geries finished a PhD in theology and philosophy and is the director of the Al Liqa Center since its foundation. Geries, having adopted my research project as part of the work of Al Liqa, is very committed to the process of reading and functions more or less as the meeting's chairperson. Boulus is from Bethlehem, where he belongs to the Melkite Church. He works in conflict

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[604] See <http//:www.al-liqacenter.org.ps>.

resolution and peace education in the Bethlehem community, and is a member of the city council. His commitment to conflict resolution and justice is apparent in his approach to the text. Daoud is a Roman Catholic priest who teaches at Bethlehem University. Both Geries, Daoud and Boulus are committed to the Palestinian Christian movement of non-violent resistance against the occupation that is, for instance, expressed in the Kairos Document.[605] The document was written during the months that the meetings took place. In fact, Geries, Daoud and Boulus were part of the committee writing the document. The process of writing has been crucial in the ongoing development of a contextual Palestinian theology. Mariam is from Bethlehem. She works as an English teacher and belongs to the Orthodox church. She is a member of Al Liqa and works there as a volunteer. She is the only woman in the group and the youngest participant. Mariam is the only one taking part in the meeting with the Jewish women. Fareed lives in Bethlehem. He holds a PhD in history and works as an associate professor at Bethlehem University. Fadi lives in Bethlehem and works as a biology teacher at St. George school in Jerusalem (he holds a work permit to travel to Israel). He tends more towards an evangelical understanding of faith than the others, which shows itself in his dominantly religious, rather a-political reading of the text, which sometimes stands in contrast to the positions of others in the group. Andrew is one of the board members of Al Liqa and a retired English teacher, living in Bethlehem.

The men dominate the discussions: they have more theological knowledge, are older, and are the majority. Mariam's contributions to the discussion are quite modest, and usually emotional, and not political in character. As we see below, in the encounter, when most of the men are absent, she becomes a central figure.

Identity, attitude towards society: The group members differ in how they view identity, especially in whether they experience the Christian or Palestinian aspects of their identities as more important. Most experience both aspects as problematic, as a result of the hegemony of the Zionist narrative. Mariam and Fadi focus on religious identity, rather than on Palestinian identity, apparently because they see the latter as problematic. Mariam says: 'God will explain everything. There is no need for my voice as a Palestinian voice.' To Fareed, his identity is clear: 'Being a Palestinian and being a Christian is two sides of the same coin for me. My nationality and faith are closely intertwined in my identity. They are both part of my cultural association and part of my upbringing.' For other members, especially Boulus, Daoud and Geries, combining being Palestinian and being Christian is experienced as highly

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[605] The Kairos-document was issued by Palestinian Christians in December 2009. It regards occupation as a sin that Christians are called to resist through non-violent resistance, based on love. See <http//:www.kairospalestine.ps>. I do not use the document, nor the other writings of the participants of this or other groups in my analysis, as the analysis is based on the group sessions.

complex. Boulus: 'Jeremiah really emphasizes identity. And he was in dialogue with God forcefully. I am really arguing about my identity. Am I the new Israeli? Or just the leftovers of the Amalekites? With my Christian identity I am proud of who I am.'

The participants live in Bethlehem and are active members of Bethlehem society. Life in Bethlehem, which is separated from Jerusalem by the wall, is greatly influenced by the occupation of the West Bank. The group members are very critical of the Israeli government's policy, which in their view rules the West Bank using the methods of Apartheid. Although Christians are a minority in Bethlehem, traditionally a relatively large number of the small city's notables were Christians. Bethlehem is a community in which the Christian population plays an important role. Its inhabitants are relatively well-to-do and well educated, as are the participants. Being members of Al Liqa, the group members actively participate in Muslim-Christian encounters.

Motivation: Geries hopes the sessions contribute to a Palestinian-Christian understanding of problematic passages in the Old Testament: 'the question is: when we read it as Palestinians, how do we understand it? Do we accept it as part of the Holy Scriptures, which are part of my faith? This is what we should really discuss deeply.' Daoud and Boulus share this view. In addition, Boulus highly values dialogue, in this case within the Christian community. The three men show openness and vulnerability in their approaches to the text. They express willingness to meet with the partner group, although their earlier Palestinian-Israeli encounters have made them a little weary. In addition, they oppose what they call 'normalization', a situation in which the oppressor and the oppressed meet, seemingly in acceptance of the situation of occupation (see below under group encounters). Thus, from the outset reading the text entails a confrontation with the hegemonic narrative, and any physical meeting even more so.

Mariam and Fadi are interested in meeting with the Israeli group. Mariam feels it is important to engage in dialogue. Fadi wants to show Jewish readers his Christian perspective on the text. All group members are eager to voice a specific Palestinian perspective on the text, whether this is understood as a primarily Christian or political perspective. The latter is true for Fareed and Andrew, who want to give witness of their Palestinian identity and uncover the immorality of the text. They do not want to meet the partner group.

Group process
The sessions: The three meetings took place at the Al Liqa Centre in Bethlehem in December 2008 and April and May 2009.
Role of the researcher: Geries enthusiastically introduces me and the reading project in the first meeting. Most other participants are more hesitant, both about reading a text that they suspect is against them, and about my possible hidden agenda. Mariam: 'I think you are doing exactly what the settlers are

doing. You are choosing one chapter, without looking at other texts.' Fareed too expresses the concern that I might 'fall into settler favouritism.' In the course of the sessions, however, trust develops, and I come to represent the outside world to them, which they hope will hear their voices. Participants often directly or indirectly address me, looking for acknowledgment of the difficulties and injustices they face in their daily lives as a result of Israeli occupation. Geries says: 'We hope that you do not forget us in your dissertation.'

Occasionally, I bring in my view on the text when participants ask for it, but not in a systematic way. They are interested in the way I read the text, but also anxious about whether this new information and approach will lead to new difficulties. I am not readily accepted as an epistemic authority by the participants, and the view on the text I present contradicts the pre-existing views of some participants. Fadi, Mariam and Daoud have difficulty seeing the text as a product of dispute and conflict. To Boulus and Geries, it is not new to recognize different layers and voices in the text, and they are enthusiastic about how insight into these layers gives space for new readings of the text. *Group dynamics and interaction*: The sessions take place in a warm and hospitable atmosphere. Geries serves coffee and sweets, jokes are made, and participants inform about each other's well being. At the same time, the text and the presence of a foreign researcher in their midst brings a certain tension. There is considerable repetition in the conversations about the text. Several factors contribute to this. First, the group meets three times in different compositions. Second, actual discussion between the participants is limited. Existing ideas are repeated, rather than new ideas being developed. The participants do not challenge each other's views. Differences in opinion are pointed out, but not discussed or explored. It might be that the participants are familiar with each other's positions to the point where they no longer expect new insights or results from disputes. Fadi's evangelical contributions clearly differ from Fareed's highly political reading, but this difference does not stir discussion. Only once does Daoud respond indignantly to a remark made by Andrew, who says: 'They made God say what they wanted him to say.' Daoud replies: 'Hey, there is inspiration in it! Come on!' This however does not spur further exchange of opinion.

5.3.3.2   The process of appropriation

Hermeneutical aspects: the status of the text and the way it is approached
Most members of the group are not very familiar with the book of Jeremiah, though this is less true for Daoud and Geries, who are both theologians.

The tension between Palestinian and Christian aspects of the participants' identities plays an important role in their readings of Jeremiah 32. The text is perceived as dangerous and threatening both to their Christian and

to their Palestinian identity. As Daoud explains, Zionism made the Bible problematic: 'We face difficulties, and this is something relatively recent, with the political interpretation. That is why many Palestinians are estranged from the Bible. We don't read it much within the churches.' To all readers, except for Fadi, the Old Testament itself is also difficult, and even sometimes a text to be regarded with suspicion. The group feels the necessity of opposing a political Zionist reading of the text, given the dominance of that narrative over their lives, and given Christian Zionist readings supporting this dominance. They want to show the flaws and injustices of the Zionist narrative, which they identify with the text. At the same time, most group members attach authority to the text, since it is part of the body of writings that Christian consider holy. They struggle with this authority, but also attempt to find new ways in which the text can be of value. There is a certain tiredness and sadness among the readers that a book that, before the occupation, was also dear to them has become so painful to read. Daoud says: 'I want to go back to love the Bible. The way I used to. Not to feel threatened, or put in the defence.'

Within the group, we see diverse attitudes towards the central problem of Zionism's claim of the Old Testament. The text brings up anger, disillusion, fear and frustration related to their experience of losing land and living under occupation. Zionist hegemony threatens both the Christian and the Palestinian aspects of these readers' identities.

Fadi attempts to resolve this tension by reading from a Christian point of view only: 'God will explain everything. There is no need for my voice as a Palestinian voice.' Central in Fadi's approach is a traditional scheme of salvation history: 'we can see that God is working in history, not in the favour of the Jewish people only, but in the favour of all people in the world.' Fadi is looking for religious truths that apply always and everywhere, not for a specific Palestinian interpretation that addresses his own context. Fadi's Christian convictions have led him to accept the text uncritically, overlooking its problematic aspects. While Fadi detaches the text from its political context, Fareed and Andrew attempt to solve the problem by stripping the text from its religious authority. While both men hold Christian and Palestinian aspects of their identity as important, neither connects his Christian identity to the Old Testament. Fareed: 'Actually I look at the Old Testament as a political book. I don't ever believe in its contents.' They have disconnected themselves from the book, focusing instead on the New Testament: 'When I read the Old Testament I wonder: how can this book be a religious book? When I read about war, Jericho for instance, it is a kind of annihilation. [...] Our gospel can be summed up in one word: love. [...] So I wonder: how did the connection come up between the Old and the New Testament?'. Both express a certain sadness about the way the Old Testament has become a hostile book: 'Everything has been politicized. I really don't know how to read the Old Testament as a believer in the gospel', and Fareed: 'There are so many things that bother me

about the Old Testament. I cannot reconcile it with the New Testament, different mentality and different outlook. Even though I am taught from early age that the two are complementing each other.' They read predominantly from a Palestinian, political perspective.

The other readers, Geries, Daoud, Mariam and Boulus, are looking for an approach that is meaningful to them as Palestinians and as Christians. They discuss the status of Tanakh in relation to the Gospels, given the problematic context of Zionism. They understand the New Testament as the hermeneutical key to the Old. It is a model in which historical processes play a role in a linear way: the newer revelation in Christ is the more complete, more developed and final revelation. Sometimes this new revelation is understood to complete and fulfil the former and sometimes simply to replace it. Geries: 'Jesus is telling me: 'I am not here to omit one word. I am here to complete it. To give you more.' Boulus argues that a development has taken place since the days of the Old Testament: 'I don't think clothes you were wearing when you were five still fit you.' Boulus adds that 'as a Christian I am obliged to believe in the whole book', but he looks at the Old Testament? 'as a literary act', 'why should I take this word by word to determine my future? When I really question a lot of it.'

In his view, one might draw general moral lessons from the text, which otherwise offers only historical lessons. The historical processes that produced the text and the religious significance of the text are unconnected. Geries says: 'Do we accept it as part of the Holy Scripture, which is part of my faith? That is really what we should discuss deeply.' Daoud and Mariam insist on reading the Old and New Testament as one corpus, in which Christ is the key of interpretation. Daoud says that without asking 'what does Jesus Christ say about this?' a Palestinian reader would get lost in texts like Jeremiah. Daoud also says that the chapter records 'an event that happened in the past' that is no longer relevant since 'there is a new history'. Geries, Daoud, Mariam and Boulus express awareness of the contextuality of their views, and the existence of a diversity of narratives, even within the biblical tradition, which are tied to specific historical circumstances. Boulus: 'There are many narratives within the Jews, or the Christians or the Moslims', and: 'if you want to justify ethnic cleansing, you will find it [in the Bible]. Fair trade? It is there.' They read with an eye to social transformation: does this text support peace and dialogue or not? Boulus' commitment to peace and justice is a dominant shaper of his interpretation. Acceptance of diversity is crucial to him: 'I come from a field that celebrates differences. I accept others as they are, and I like others to accept me. This is where I think I am from. I would like to emphasize that very much.' His devotion to diversity leads him to a layered, critical approach of the text. He displays considerable freedom in how he deals with the text: 'If I believe in the letter, I get nowhere. If I believe in the Spirit it liberates me from some rigid interpretations, I am much freer to base my views on issues of historical justice.'

Heuristic keys and appropriation

In order to shed light on the diversity of attitudes towards the text and readings produced, I disinguish between two reading attitudes: appropriations in which the Palestinian aspect of identity dominates and appropriations in which Christian aspects of identity are dominant. In both attitudes, explicitly or implicitly, the readers have to respond to the Zionist paradigm that claims this text as its own. Most participants alternate between these two attitudes, although Fadi tends to read only from a Christian point of view, while Fareed and Andrew read predominantly from a Palestinian, political perspective. In the following, I therefore focus on Mariam, Geries, Daoud and Boulus, who attempt to engage both Palestinian and Christian aspects of their identity in appropriating the text. Daoud, for instance, alternates between a 'purely Christian' reading that is non-political and a Palestinian contextual reading that is political. He says he wants to free himself from the political interpretation of the text, which 'comes from outside my own context': 'I don't want them to dictate me how I read the Bible. I want to get rid of it in my head, to read it in a purely Christian way, as a believer.' Daoud also insists there is no other way of reading than from within one's own context, and says that although 'so far Palestinians did not develop liberation theology, maybe we should', and in fact he does so himself, reading the text 'through the eyes of the Canaanites. I put myself in the shoes of those who lived there, the story is against them. The Hebrews came to invade my land. This is a political interpretation.' Geries too underlines the importance of a faithful, Christian reading: 'We need faith, deeper than you in Europe, to read the Bible and believe it. Otherwise we would just burn it. [...] Without faith, the Bible becomes our enemy, and God will be our enemy, and everything will be catastrophe. That is why we are insisting on our faith, on Jesus, on Christianity.'

Both 'Christian' and 'Palestinian' appropriations result in negative appropriations that reject aspects of the text (a), appropriations that transform or critically use the text (b), and appropriations that positively appropriate aspects of the text (c). In general, the reading enforced existing negative feelings towards the text (a). Geries: 'What is true for other chapters, is also true for this chapter: the more you read them, the more you become angry. With God and with the people.' Sometimes (b) the Zionist narrative is criticized using either the text itself or a larger narrative, such as ideals of peace and justice or a Christian framework. Finally, (c) readers at times identified with the text, either from a Palestinian perspective or from a Christian perspective.

Reading 'as Palestinian'

Since the dominant theme in the process of appropriation is how the text relates to the Zionist narrative, I therefore first discuss readings from a Palestinian perspective. These readings can be understood as forms of

resistance: a subordinated group reacts to the discourse under the hegemony of which they live their lives, as Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank. This dominant discourse is ontologically prior, in this sense these readings are not independent. The Palestinian readings are part of what Scott calls the 'hidden transcript', and bringing that discourse out into the open is risky and laden with fear.[606]

(a) *Rejection of the text*: All readers at times identify the text with the Zionist narrative, which usually leads to rejection of the text. Boulus says: 'It is the same story – an issue of land, of identity. Others are not accepted, prophets are false prophets'. He also says: 'When I read v. 43: 'Fields shall be bought, in this land, of which you say: it is without man or beast.' That is the Zionist idea! That Palestine is a land without people, and the Jews are a people without land!' Andrew says: 'I can see one of the settlers in Hebron in this text. […] The text is strengthening their beliefs, and their racism.'

(b) *Transforming and criticizing the text*: As has already been said, an important vulnerability of the dominant class is that it can be criticized on the basis of the rules it claims to follow. Interestingly, because the readers identify the text with the Zionist narrative, they criticize the Israeli hegemony using Jer. 32. Thus, they challenge this hegemony, while enforcing the stereotypical identification with the Zionist narrative. Geries says: 'We should insist that the field was not given to a Jew just because God promised them this land. He purchased it. […] You cannot take it, occupy it. You cannot kill the people and displace them.' He adds: 'Our problem today is not that all our land was sold to the Jews, not in the time of the prophets and not in the 19th and 20th century. I don't see in the present day Israel a continuation of the promise. I mean, it was the result of power, of an economic system.' Somewhat ironically, those readers who follow the Zionist reading of the text, identifying the Zionist narrative with the text, also use it to criticize the Israeli government.

(c) *Positive appropriation*: The readers also challenge the Zionists' claim about the text in their identification with the text as Palestinians. Partially, the readers accept the dominant perspective of the text by identifying themselves with the dominant group of the biblical story. Daoud identifies with the Judeans in Babylon: 'We are the exiles,' and so does Geries: 'We Palestinians

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[606] Following Scott's analysis, several factors contribute to a more developed 'hidden transcript' among West Bank Palestinians, in comparison to Palestinians living in Israel: since they are living in a Palestinian society, they are less directly influenced by the dominant discourse. They have more space to develop their own discourse. At the same time, the 'menacing power' of the Israeli occupation is stronger for inhabitants of the West Bank than for Palestinian Israelis. Encounters with Israeli Jews are less common for them, and more restricted to frameworks of powerful and powerless: they are confronted with soldiers at checkpoints, and see them driving through the streets of Bethlehem in army jeeps. An encounter, even through a text that is identified with the Israeli regime, is therefore more fear-laden. Negative images of the other group are likely to be stronger too.

are living in a crisis today. It is almost an analogy to the crisis the Jews were in: they were under occupation. But from such a crisis a sign of hope came out. I think in our present crisis there are still signs of hope.' He points out that the Palestinians did just what Jeremiah does in the text: they put their documents in an earthen jar. 'We took the keys of our homes. Jeremiah here says: you will come back and this is yours. We don't even have the right to come back. Israeli's are not recognizing that although we have the keys and the documents in an earthen jar, that we belong to this land.' Boulus also criticizes the voice of the returning exiles, regarding it as one-sided. He sees it as the dominant narrative of the ruling class in the days of Jeremiah, which is re-used by the ruling class of his days: 'There are many stories not here. For instance the story of those who stayed in Babylon who liked to be assimilated.' Boulus recognizes the demonization of the enemy in the chapter in his own life: 'I am against occupation, no matter who is the occupier, but we should not label people with these things. 'We see the same thing [anger in times of conflict] now with the peace agreements. There is a provocation, there is anger, there is projection of anger on the Palestinians, demonization of the Palestinian people. We see the same story happening with different people.' From this perspective, he attempts to make space for a diversity of narratives: 'This land is inclusive for all people. There have always been many nations living here.' He opens up the possibility of Palestinian identification with the besieged Jerusalemites in the text: 'I could identify with the people under siege.'

Daoud claims the book as Palestinian heritage, pointing out cultural and historical continuity between Palestinians and the culture of the ancient Middle East in which the Old Testament took shape: 'If you read Genesis and the Gilgamesh Epos you see a lot of similarities. In all these books you see something which has to do with our culture and history here in the Middle East and Mesopotamia.' Geries also claims this continuity, by identifying the text as part of the Christian heritage: 'This book belongs to me. More than to Lieberman[607] – who came from Russia ten years ago. I am here since generations, since the time of Abraham. This is the fruit of the spiritual tradition of my faith.'

Reading 'as Christian'
a. *Rejection of the text*: From a Christian perspective, the text is also problematic to these readers. Boulus rejects the text as exclusive: 'I see that this story is based on my catastrophe. How can the salvation of others be at my expense?', he adds: 'As a Christian I believe God is inclusive. When I read this, I don't think it gives anyone rights.' He disagrees with this image of God: 'Again: my notion of God is all-embracing, for all nations, whether they come from

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[607] Avigdor Liebermann is a Israeli politician who was minister of Foreign Affairs until his resignation in December 2012 after being charged with fraud. He is the founder of the right-wing *Yisrael Beiteinu* (Israel Our Home) party.

Abrahamic religions or not. I have a problem with how the term of God is narrowed to be a God of a group of people. And in a way God then forsakes the rest of the world.' From this perspective, the eternal covenant is problematic: 'I can't believe in this covenant. This is not a basis for religious dialogue, or for social justice, or reconciliation. It is emphasizing the issue of ownership and having papers. In a way it is a package deal to prove this is the land for this group. It is eternal ownership. […] They have *carte blanche* to do whatever they want in this land.' For him, Christianity points to something different: 'Christianity is not a theology of land. It is a spiritual transformational journey.' Geries points out the danger of using this text: it could result in an exclusive Palestinian theology. He says: 'Now, I don't believe in a Palestinian exclusive theology. All are called to the kingdom of God.'

b. *Transformation/ critique of the text:* Readers use the text to criticize Zionism from a Christian perspective, but without positively appropriating the text for themselves. Geries argues that in this text the covenant is conditional. These conditions would also apply to Zionists when they appropriate the text for themselves: 'God is giving hope to those who listen to his words and commandments. There is no chosen people and no covenant without conditions. [..] In Jeremiah 32 it is very clear that the covenant is conditional.' Mariam applies the sin-punishment scheme to Israel today, more or less like the Jewish women did: 'If we are looking at what Israel is doing: how will God pay for this? Is this what God wants them to do?'

c. *Positive appropriation:* Some readers exclusively claim the text as Christian heritage. Mariam fully appropriates the text: 'If I am faithful, I will return to the land. It is a blessing to me. I will inherit the land if I am faithful.' Geries is more careful, opening up an alternative identification rather than fully embracing it: 'You can say that the redemption symbolically came later. Like Jesus redeems us Jeremiah redeems the field.'

5.3.3.3 Evaluation

The details of the text are not given much attention in these discussions. Rather, the readers alternate between attempting to extract generally applicable religious truths from the text and stereotyping it as a Zionist text. The first view, in which religious texts are treated as having a static meaning, in which historical context does not play a significant role, is not uncommon in Christianity. I argue for a reading that takes the process-nature of these texts seriously, which leads to a different way of approaching texts. Before elaborating on that, I first discuss the approach of the text as a source of ethical principles that is typical of the readings of the Bethlehemite group, and second, I discuss inclusivism and exclusivism in these appropriations.

The Palestinians find themselves in a double subordinate position vis-à-vis the text: in the text, the voice of the returning exiles is dominant over

those who remained in the land, and, in their own context, they are subordinate to the Israelis who identify with the returning exiles. To the Palestinians readers, the text is part of an Israeli landscape in which they are largely invisible. The challenge for these readers is to identify themselves as heirs of this story and its larger corpus, while countering the claims of the dominant Israeli narrative that are connected to Tanakhic traditions present in Jeremiah 32. Appropriation can succeed if they arrive at an interpretation that enables them to be Palestinian. This means that the readers would not have to surrender to occupation, and that they counter Zionists claims about the text that leaves no space for Palestinian appropriation, while also claiming a cultural, historical link with the Old Testament. At the same time they aim to find an interpretation that legitimizes their Christianity, that is, they understand it as part of the Old Testament within the canon of Christian scriptures.

Often, the readers identify the voice of the exiles with the Zionist narrative, in accordance with the Zionists' interpretation about the text. Their readings are forms of resistance in the sense that they attempt to counter the Zionist claim of the text, which often means they reject the text itself. Their view of the text as speaking one voice does not enable them to distinguish between the voice of the returning exiles and other voices. The Zionist exclusive claim of this dominant voice is countered mostly by constructing equally exclusive readings, but now from a Palestinian perspective (by identifying with the dominant voice of the text) or a Christian perspective (by exclusively claiming the text as a Christian text). However, some readers are not satisfied with that: these group members are looking for a Palestinian and/or Christian appropriation of the text that is non-exclusive. They remain disappointed in the text and do not come to a positive appropriation, judging the text's relevance on whether it is a source of sound ethics. Boulus expresses very clearly why he does not move beyond negative appropriation, although he does recognize aspects of his own story as a Palestinian in Jer 32: 'That's why I think it is helpful to look at this, but I don't think it is helpful to normalize the relationships with others, or to look at things from that perspective. What I mean is: I couldn't look at it as a base for my relationship with others.' In the end then, in spite of moments of identification, the text is rejected. Again, the text is viewed as a massive unit, voicing one perspective. As a result, the text is viewed as space dominated by Zionism, and a Palestinian-Christian appropriation cannot materialize.

The Palestinian readers need to uncover and speak out against the Zionist exclusive claim of one voice present in Jeremiah 32. However, they hardly go beyond this negative reading attitude. What could help to come to a more diverse appreciation of the text is the recognition that in the text itself too, counter-narratives attempt to overturn the dominant narrative. Recognition of the complex historical processes underlying the texts and the

struggles for identity shaping tradition can lead to a critical reading in which hidden narratives are discovered. The text is then understood as layered and complex, containing multiple meanings, instead of a set of clear moral values and truths.

Inclusivism and exclusivism: The Palestinian readers are looking for an approach to the Old Testament that allows them to understand it from a Palestinian and Christian point of view, while maintaining the sanctity of the text. Of course, this is not a uniquely Palestinian concern: most Christian theology has always attempted to express how the Old Testament and New Testament relate and belong together. Christians often describe the latter as encompassing the fullest embodiment of revelation, Jesus Christ. At times, Palestinian Christians have been accused of tendencies towards replacement theology.[608]

The Bethlehemite group is very critical of Zionism, rejecting its use of the narratives of the Old Testament to legitimize the occupation. Fadi leaves little room for a Jewish understanding of God and the Bible that exist alongside Christian ideas, because he believes that humankind as a whole needs to accept Jesus. His view is an example of a rather rigid view on salvation history and religious tradition. In Andrew's view, the Old Testament is a racist book. This perspective is not very informed or nuanced, but, at the same time, he does not aim to disqualify Judaism. Rather, he aims to unmask Zionism's dangerous mix of religion and politics.

Exegetes can help to point a way out of such rigid readings that attempt to fit texts into a pre-existing scheme of salvation history. Perhaps even more than scholars in dogmatics, exegetes can aid in helping to provide readings that have an eye for the process-nature of religious texts, in order to overcome readings that treat the text as static and a-historical. It could help

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[608] Sometimes Christians have denied the authority of the Old Testament or rejected Judaism as a living religion in its own right, a position called replacement theology. This viewpoint understands Christians as replacing the Jews as God's people, viewing history in terms of salvation history, distinguishing between different periods. The coming of Jesus ended the period in which Judaism was relevant. This schematic and essentialist view on history does not allow for overlap between the different Judaisms during the first century and the development of one of these Judaisms into what we now see as a separate religion: Christianity. It presupposes that religious truth is an exclusively Christian affair. In this view, religious Judaism cannot be understood as a living faith that developed in its own direction and whose adherents understand the shared scriptures of Tanakh through the rabbinic traditions. Palestinians are mostly accused of supporting forms of replacement theology by Western theologians. After WOII, anti-Semitic tendencies were discovered in Western theological approaches, unfortunately only after a long history of Christian anti-semitism. The accusation of replacement theology often falls short in understanding the complex ways in which Palestinian Christians relate to the Old Testament and Judaism. I argue it is necessary to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the diverse ways in which various forms of Judaism, both religious and non-religious, and different forms of Christianity relate and interact, both to the Tanakh and/or the Old Testament and to each other. Replacement theology and the schematic and essentialist understanding of history it presupposes is one way in which of Christianity understood and related to Judaism.

readers like Geries, who are looking for inclusive readings of the text, come to an understanding of the text that is important to both Jews and Christians.

In addition, replacement theology fails to put forward sound criticism of the Zionist appropriation of the Tanakh. Religious Zionism cannot be put aside simply by rejecting it as a Jewish and therefore outdated perspective.[609] I argue that a Palestinian-Christian appropriation could benefit from taking the character of the tradition into account, using an understanding of the text that can be called descriptive rather than prescriptive. This would also give space for a Palestinian contextual reading.

Readers who identify as heirs of the text, need to connect their narratives to the narratives of the text, in order to become part of the negotiation of identity taking place there. For some Palestinian readers, this process was blocked, since the text failed to meet their ethical standards. Martha Nussbaum however writes that 'we must go beyond judging texts according to prescribed ethical standards'. Thinking of ethical judgment 'as consisting simply in the application of antecedently formulated rules' prepares readers badly for 'the actual flow of life and for the necessary resourcefulness in confronting its surprises,' Nussbaum argues.[610] Such a reading requires an awareness of the readers regarding the layeredness of their own narratives, and a readiness to engage with the narratives of tradition and of one's own context, searching for hidden voices. At the same time, when engaging with the multiple voices of the biblical texts it is vital to be aware of one's central values. I therefore argue for an ethical approach to the Jeremianic tradition. These ethical principles are not to be derived from the text, but being part of this layered and ambiguous tradition requires a sensitivity to ethical questions. For these Palestinian discussants, inclusivity is a central value. It is this value that can enable readers to negotiate narratives.

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[609] A Christian perspective can for instance make clear in what ways Christian understandings of the text differ from Jewish understanding (in acknowledgment of diversity within both). Such arguments do not have the same value and weight to Jewish readers, but they may be acknowledged as possible readings none the less. We see this below in the meeting between the Bethlehemites and the Jewish women, where Michal understands and accepts (but does not agree with) a Christian view that Jesus embodies the fulfilment of Jeremiah 32.

[610] Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, Oxford 1990, p. 38.

5.3.4 Third group: Jewish students Hebrew University

5.3.4.1 The group & its context, the group process

The group and its context

Forming the group: I met Schlomo and Avi through Hana Bendkowsky of the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations (JCJCR). I had met Daliah during a previous stay in Jerusalem. The three participants did not know each other. Attempts to find a fourth participant were unsuccessful.

The group: The group consisted of three students in their late twenties, who study education (Daliah), early Christianity (Schlomo) and history (Avi) at the Hebrew University. Daliah immigrated to Israel from Canada. She was raised in a non-religious, liberal family. She later 'found her way to Torah', and considers herself committed to Halakha. She came to Israel three years ago. Avi was born in Jerusalem, was raised in a religious home, but decided to become secular after army service. Schlomo was raised in a 'more than religious family, Zionist religious'. Today he considers himself 'a very liberal religious person', committed to Jewish law and halakha, but also to modern life.

Avi and Schlomo, because of their background, have a deep knowledge of Tanakh, biblical Hebrew as well as both rabbinic and Jewish traditions. Daliah is not fluent in Hebrew and was in the process of becoming more familiar with Judaism. The students are relatively unfamiliar with the book of Jeremiah, including its thirty-second chapter.

Identity, attitude towards society: All three participants had gone through transformations with respect to their religious identity. Daliah had turned towards Judaism, while the two young men turned away from orthodox Judaism. The two men are gay, which is an extra complicating factor in how they shape their religious identity. Both went through an intense phase of re-evaluation of the religious views they grew up with. For Avi, this resulted in distancing himself from religious tradition, but not from his Jewish identity itself. Meanwhile, Schlomo transformed his religious views, finding a delicate balance between his modern life and liberal views and his commitment to Jewish religious tradition. Daliah has a strong sense of choosing her own path, a path she describes as more spiritual than rational. She says: 'I feel I must say that I am not representing a group here. Just myself.' She feels close to traditional, orthodox Judaism and at the same time describes herself as 'very open and liberal'. She is not sure where to position herself, nor does she feel the need to do so.

An undercurrent in the discussions is how the students relate to Israeli society. The students are very aware of their context. Schlomo feels responsible for his society and the political situation. He does not necessarily relate this to the text: 'My responsibility comes from other places.' Daliah loves

Jerusalem, she says, although she is aware of its problematic aspects. Avi and Schlomo describe their relation to Jerusalem in more ambivalent terms. Schlomo: 'I like it and I don't like it.' Avi: 'During the past years it became a city that is more and more difficult for me to live in. [..] This religious charge is always here and it is difficult to live a normal life here. From the other side I really enjoy it, to walk in the Old City and Mea Shearim.' Their problematic relation towards Zionism and its relation to Jer. 32 becomes clearer during the reading sessions.

Motivation: Avi's motivation stems from his struggle with the Tanakh. He feels it is time to read Tanakh once again and he hopes to discover more about his connection to the text from the dynamics within the group. In the course of the sessions, he develops greater interest in engaging with texts from the Tanakh and to oppose the dominant Zionist reading. Schlomo says he expects to learn a lot and is interested in the research. Daliah says she doesn't know what to expect, and 'I take part in this project because you asked me and I like you.' Also, she is interested in reading with other students 'who have almost opposite backgrounds', contrasting her own non-religious upbringing and move towards religious Judaism to Avi's and Schlomo's religious upbringing.

In the course of the sessions, the students display great readiness to learn and to discover new perspectives. In a way, all three are looking for alternative ways of dealing with the problems the text raises. Schlomo and Avi grow increasingly enthusiastic about the project and the importance of dealing with religious texts, while Daliah's enthusiasm about the richness of religious tradition is enforced. Because of their eagerness to learn, they are very interested in hearing my perspective on the text.

The students are quite critical of Zionism. They all experience some degree of tension between religious aspects of being Jewish and growing up in a state that presents itself as Jewish. At one point Daliah says: 'Jeremiah is buying land in a situation of war because God is telling him. To me that is consistent with… eh….' Schlomo tries: 'the history of the Jewish people?' Daliah: 'I don't know. Religion, nation, I don't know which word to put here.' For Avi, being a Jewish Israeli is a struggle. 'Sometimes I find myself thinking that we were better off remaining in exile.' He doesn't know how to think about exile and return: 'Being here having my own state, my independence, but at the expense of someone else, and the experience of exile which led to the Holocaust, is how I live my life.' Daliah struggles too. She immigrated to Israel, and living there has religious significance for her. At the same time 'we are doing a lot of things that are not ok. How can this be redemption?.' She says: 'I was born in a time period when there was something called Israel already. I never had a reality of real exile. I was born into a family that would not use the word redemption.' For her, how she relates to these concepts remains an open question.

Fear of meeting the Palestinians as representatives of a group holding undermining views seems to play a less dominant role than in the group of Jewish women. The students feel the need to review the Zionist narrative, but are a bit reluctant to face the consequences of such a review.

Group process
The meetings: We met three times in one of the study areas of the Hebrew University between December 2008 and February 2009. In the first and second meeting, the students read and discussed the text. In the third meeting, at the request of the students, I shared my approach to the text
Role of the researcher: The students were very eager to hear my European, Christian perspective on the text and also on their views. We decided to have a third meeting in which I would share my views on the text. Differentiating between different groups in the text is a new approach to them. Daliah: 'I am at a loss. You are saying Jeremiah was written by more than one author?' She is eager to investigate the idea: 'You are guiding us now into a new reading of Jeremiah. I really would like to know what traditional Judaism has to say about this', and: 'What is nice about what you are saying is that there is a dialogue included in the text itself. Which is nice, because dialogue is positive, since in some ways tradition is frozen today.' Avi is enthusiastic: 'A reading likes this puts it into context,' even if it takes away the divine inspiration of the text: 'For me that is not a problem.' For Daliah it is. Schlomo is not sure. 'I don't care what originally happened in the context of Jeremiah. […] There is a gap of thousands of years between my life and Jeremiah. […] I don't feel the need to interpret it into my reality. Although it might be divine – a divine text should be of eternal interest.' In the end Avi says: 'That is something I have gained from these meetings. Now I have something to say [in response to Zionist interpretations]. Daliah says: 'Why did we stop the cultural dynamics? Let's get out of our box!' To Schlomo, the multivocality of the text is not necessarily positive: 'I feel you have a positive understanding of the different levels. My concern is that when you have so many different voices, where does it take us? Why is it helping?' However, the students, including Schlomo, see the value of the approach in countering the Zionist claim of the text.
Group dynamics and interaction: The meetings were lively, the atmosphere was open and honest. The participants were aware that they have different outlooks on the text. They do not perceive this as problematic. They were open to each other's perspective and ready to learn from each other. They formulate hypotheses that are then discussed (Avi: 'In the beginning when I first read it, I understood it in a certain way. I am not sure now if it is correct…'.)

5.3.4.2 The process of appropriation

Hermeneutical aspects: the status of the text and the way it is approached
In general the atmosphere of the meeting can be described as open and questioning. The students read the text in sections and discuss each section. Their approach is initially rather analytical. The starting point is to discuss passages they don't understand or find strange. They do discuss the sections in a more or less systematic way. Occasionally all participants bring exegetical input into the conversation as well. Each student had a different understanding of the relationship of the text to him- or herself. Daliah describes the book of Jeremiah as 'a stunning thing'. 'I would say this is the word of God, and God wrote the whole thing top to bottom. […] I struggle to believe that, but I believe it. That is the way I am. Quite complicated.' Schlomo is not sure how to relate to the text. 'I have some religious attitude towards it. It is complicated. I cannot define it. Maybe because this text was holy for Jews for thousands of years. Not necessarily because I believe God pointed out every word of it.' Avi describes his relation to Tanakh as complicated. 'These are founding texts for every Jew', he says. 'It is cultural, historical, beautiful, but also very political.' He is struggling with the question of what it means to him. 'There are many things that are difficult to me to read in the Bible. It is difficult to see what people make of the Bible today.' The two men are trying to understand the text, whereas Daliah is trying to relate to the text. Avi sees his own method as limited: 'I try to read it as if Jeremiah is a modern, rationalist man. […] But it is not like that maybe. He is a very religious man, this is not rational.' Avi distances himself from the orthodox interpretation he grew up with: 'We would have to take it as a fact that Jeremiah […] was a real man of God, who knew what was going to happen in the future. And I am not so sure about that.'

More explicitly, Avi finds any reading that seeks to apply it to the present problematic: 'That is what I find disturbing when people read the Bible. Immediately they search for its meaning in the present. Like when someone would read v. 44: 'again fields will be bought in this land…', and goes to buy houses in eastern Jerusalem. Daliah incorporates psychological and spiritual explanations: 'He is a religious man. He is not saying this because he is critiquing or doubting what happened in the past. He knows.', and: 'Is there any way it could be mystical and not rational?' She brings in a more creative, associative approach as well. For Daliah, borders between the text and the present dissolve: 'When I read '*bereshit bara elohim hashamayim we-et ha'aretz*' [In the beginning God created heaven and earth] in my eyes it is happening *now*. […] That is my approach, it is a very vibrant living book.' She is aware that ' you can always corrupt the text, you can make it say everything.'

Heuristic keys and appropriation

For Avi, the historical and cultural connection between Judaism and the text is an important heuristic key: the biblical text is formative for the Jewish people. He reads the text as a Jewish text about Jewish people. However, in contrast to the Jewish women discussed earlier, for him this close relationship is not necessarily positive. For all three students, and especially for Avi and Schlomo, (negative) experiences with the mixture of religion and ideology in Israeli society make them sensitive to political and ideological aspects of the text. Daliah, who has the strongest connection to the text, struggles with the possible political implications of her approach. To Daliah seeing the relevance of the text to her context does not prohibit her from seeing the related political complexities: 'When I read this, it is also happening now. Now what are my political beliefs because of that? I don't know. [..]. The return is an aspect, if there is some truth to the text: we were there, then we were not, and now we are here again. Away from politics.' To her, a reading that connects the text to the State of Israel is not necessarily a political reading. Avi and Schlomo too are aware of the openness of the text to different interpretations: 'You can go many ways with these texts. Politics are corrupt. You can always corrupt the text, you can take it to say everything.'

Avi and Schlomo are especially weary of the dangers of appropriation. To Schlomo the history of Judaism shows that relating the text too intimately to one's own reality is not a good idea: 'I don't feel the need to interpret it in my reality. […] I am very doubtful of taking it into today's political reality. I am learning from our history. Every time we did that, it turned out in some kind of a disaster.' He rather interacts with the text in another way: 'I am willing to take out the moral values of the prophet. But when it is getting to the point where it is indicating something in my life, I am more hesitant.' He is 'willing to be obligated by it,' but only when 'it can take me and the surrounding nation to a better place. If we can learn something on how people solve their dispute, let's follow.' However, Jer. 32 does not offer much in this respect. Avi is even more reluctant in applying the text: 'How do you know if you are using it for your own reasons? It is all a question of interpretation. People do take it into politics. How can you tell? That is what scares me.' Daliah recognizes it is a risky endeavour: 'The problem starts when people start to use the divine text for their own motivations.' Itt is crucial for her that the text is a vibrant, living thing that she can relate to her life. She acknowledges that how this text is relevant is a complex question: 'The truth is: I don't know. I don't have a way of knowing. There are different values in play. [..] It is a hard thing. I pray about it a lot.' Avi does find it important to try to find alternatives to harmful interpretations of the passages: since the Zionist interpretation is part of the reality they live in, he feels the responsibility to present a different appropriation: 'Everybody can approach the text and do whatever with it. But so can we. And we have a responsibility towards it. To fight the fight over the

text. […] 'I want to talk to people to make them aware of what is going on, that people abuse these texts.' He wants to show that the Zionist reading 'creates reality', 'and interpret it in such a way that it becomes part of reality', but that there are other ways of reading Jeremiah 32 too. Schlomo recognizes this: 'From a moral point of view, I am fighting for this text too.' To him, it is not 'a divine text in a political situation'. Daliah says: 'The best way to fight it in my opinion is to point at other things in our tradition.'

My views on the text help Avi in this endeavour: 'I really relate to what you said earlier about being aware of the ideology of the text as well as your own ideology. These verses are very central verses. We always go back to these verses: building homes, etc. A reading like this puts it into context. It was actually written after houses were purchased. It doesn't express divine prophecy, but it expresses a reality and a way to cope with that reality. If someone would come to me and say: you have to buy more land and fields in the West Bank, I would say: relax, you have to read this in the context. I am not sure he would be convinced, but for me it would be important.'

The conversation focuses on several aspects of the text and how they relate to Zionism. First, the students discuss the meaning of land. For Daliah, the important position of land in Judaism is positive, and the text reflects a moment central in Judaism's relation to land. 'Up to this point we, the Jewish people, hadn't known anything aside from our land and our people. There was Egypt, going through the desert, entering the land, and this was the first real exile. […] It was a very important moment, […] the first *galoet* [exile] that lasts until the present day, some would say.' She adds: 'the buying of land is a major sign of hope, even now we have that to hold on to. It is a piece of land, it is physical, not something up in the air. […] To Daliah, the centrality of land in Judaism is beyond doubt: 'The land of Israel certainly is an important piece of Judaism. The people, the land and the Torah. They are like a puzzle, when they fit together, then... it catches fire,' To Schlomo and Avi too, land is the main theme of the chapter: 'This whole chapter with all the questions and historical review gets to this point, which is: the buying of the land was a symbolic act to express that the people still have a future.' Schlomo though sheds doubt on the link between God, land and people: 'I think there are still a lot of Jews who believe that when these things will fit in the right spot God will reveal himself, and that's it. I am not saying I don't share that perspective, I don't know.'

Daliah does not support the Zionist reading of texts about land: '*Abraham Avinu* [Abraham our father] buys land too. I am making a big jump, but it is the first thing he does. In the Zionist reading Abraham is the first Zionist, because he is buying land.' Avi responds, ironically: ' That is what Jews do, they buy land.' He adds: 'Maybe the whole concept of buying and controlling land, or buying and re-controlling land is a theme in the Bible and Jewish history. It marks a new beginning. Every time there is a new beginning, they buy land.' In the course of the meetings, he becomes increasingly

outspoken. In his view, the text reflects an exclusive claim of land on religious grounds.. He says, critically: 'Of course the land is ours, it is going to be ours again, God is going to bring us back. […] That is the normal course of history. The divine course of history.' In his reading, the text matches the Zionist paradigm. The 'we' of the text matches the Zionist 'we'. 'When you read Jeremiah, it seems to me there is no question. Of course the land is ours, it is going to be ours again, God is going to bring us back. Moral questions do not arise. Jeremiah does not speak about other people.' Different from the Jewish women, who read the text in the same way, Avi does not feel personally connected to the text, but rather feels very uncomfortable.

The students discuss how the term *ge'ulah* [redemption] in the text relates to Zionism. Avi: the question is how to translate *ge'ulah* in this context, is it redemption or is it something more limited, something, I don't know, concerning taxes?' Schlomo: 'I don't know if we can even talk in this biblical time about *ge'ulah* as we use it today [in Judaism]. We use it in a more eschatological way, it is about the end of the world.' Daliah brings in Zionism: 'I feel like Zionism is a relatively new thing. It took these words that were always present and did this ingenious thing of re-informing these words, which always had a transcendent meaning, in a new way. Exile was applied to Jews outside of the state Israel. Redemption became the thing that happened after 1948. […] I try to use these words apart from the Zionist theory of reality.' Schlomo: 'It is a historical problem. It is not an invention of Zionism. Our rabbis already gave those words a political meaning. Zionism borrowed those things and put them in a political context. I don't think the rabbis talk about exile and *ge'ulah* in a metaphorical way… They are speaking about what happens here and now.'[611] The students are open to new perspectives, and eager to learn. Daliah disagrees: 'Zionism I think is brilliant in the way it reinterprets concepts. I do not agree with it much though.' But Schlomo insists: 'I don't think Zionism or the State of Israel would be able to take those words and put them in such a political context. […] I definitely think that without the rabbis we would be stuck here, with the legal perspective of Jeremiah and Leviticus.' Avi: 'I remember a few passages in the Talmud. They started to connect: *ge'ulah* is going back to Israel. The difference is that the rabbis had a strictly religious perspective of it. *Ge'ulah* was […] something to be decided by God. Whereas Zionism, as you said, took it and placed it into our world, in a political context.'

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[611] As pointed out in chapter 4, Rabbinic tradition contains the idea of five oaths, formulated from an exilic perspective: it is not permitted to reconquer the holy land by force of arms, to rebel against the nations, to divulge the appointed time of the redemption, to despair of the final redemption, or to divulge the secret (of the calendar) to other nations, while God made the other nations 'swear not to oppress Israel to hard' (Ginzberg 1968, pp. 399). Compare also for instance the orthodox Jewish philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz. Leibowitz criticizes the 'territorial Judaism' that focuses on the land (Ten Berge 2011, pp. 99, 100). Marc H. Ellis for instance argues for a re-valuation of Diaspora (see Marc H. Ellis, *Judaism does not equal Israel*, New York 2009).

[…] Daliah: 'I don't know when Zionism became such a bad word. … How did it become such a bad word?'

The students have a complex relation to Zionism. They identify with it in the sense that they are Jewish Israelis who feel connected to the land. For Daliah, this connection is also religious. Daliah: 'I never had a reality of real exile. I was born into a family that would not use the word redemption.' Schlomo: 'Exile is something negative in Hebrew usage, *galoet*. […] Today we try to get out of the negative meaning. We use a different word: diaspora.' Daliah describes what these terms actually mean to her: 'I meant it more in a spiritual way. The word exile means to me to be out of your home, not to fit. Redemption is the opposite of that. To be where you belong. To be organic, whole.' For her, this also applies to the Jewish people returning to the land from a situation of exile she describes as 'almost the invert of culture'. We didn't know how to manage, we did know we would need to hold on to things. When we came back here it was already a completely different context. I don't know if it is a redemption…. I would not call it a redemption.' Avi describes how the concepts of exile and return from exile are very ambivalent to him. Avi: 'Actually it is something I have been thinking about a lot, in a very political context. Us being here at the expense of another people. I mean the fact that we managed to be here, to establish our own state. […] So this is my starting point when I think about exile. […] Sometimes I think we would have been better off remaining in exile. […] The only way to regain a state is at the expense of someone else. .. It includes so many immoral things. Maybe the Jewish people should have given up and accept the experience of living in exile. Of course, you cannot say that after the Holocaust. That makes a major difference that completely throws me off. But between these two opposites of being here .. and the experience of exile .. is how I live my life. And I can't say I reached any final conclusion.' None of the students views the state of Israel from the perspective of redemption. However, it is the place where they live and feel at home.

5.3.4.3 Evaluation

As was the case with the Jewish women, the students understand Jeremiah 32 as a Jewish text. They use 'us' and 'we' when speaking about the text. Like the women, Daliah does not regard a reading that relates exile and return to the state of Israel as a political reading. The chief difference between the students and the women, however, is that the students dare to go much further in their criticism of Zionism.

The students were in a conversation not only with the text, but mainly with the Zionist interpretation of the text. In their perspective the text is part of the dominant discourse of the society in which they live, the 'public transcript' to use James Scott's term. These young people have become more

acutely aware of the influence the text has on their context in the course of the sessions. Schlomo says: 'Maybe I am living in a dream. More than I acknowledged in the beginning. [..] But I am surprised at how much it [Jer. 32] is in our lives. […] If we like it or not. Ignoring it might even be a bigger problem.' Avi is shocked too by the impact the text has on their reality: 'This text creates a reality through interpretation. [..].' The next question, phrased by Schlomo, is what to do about it. Avi wants to counter the Zionist reading, which he views as abuse of the text. Daliah reflects on how to reach Orthodox Jews: 'The whole orthodox world, as soon as they hear it is away from the principles of their tradition, they are not interested anymore.' The session in which I explained my approach of the text helped the students to gain a new understanding of the text, one that is able to confront Zionist ideology.

Although Avi and Schlomo do not come to a religious interpretation of the text, the text is nevertheless relevant to them, and to Schlomo it is also religiously relevant. To Avi, it has positive value as part of his cultural heritage and it is part of the dominant narrative of his society that he finds problematic. Schlomo is looking for generally applicable principles that this text does not offer him. Sharing my interpretation opens up new ways of reading the text, especially to Avi. He discovers in the process of reading that the text actually is not voicing Zionist ideology, or not only that, as he had thought in the beginning. It offers Avi an argument against Zionist interpretations. It changes the way in which he views the text: he now recognizes its layeredness. He does not come to an appropriation of his own.

5.3.5 Fourth group: Palestinian-Christian students

5.3.5.1 The group & its context, the group process

The group and its context

Forming the group: Since I had already found a group of Israeli Jewish students to read with, I aimed to put together a group of Palestinian Christian students. It was not easy to find Palestinian students who were willing to take part in the project. I suspect different factors played a role. First, I, as a foreign researcher, asked them to take part in engaging with a text that is probably unfamiliar to them. The text is looked upon as part of Israeli Jewish culture,[612] and/or of a church tradition with which they are only remotely familiar. Most Palestinian students at Hebrew University are Palestinian (Arab) Israelis. One example is Laith, a participant in this reading group. He indicates that for Palestinians living in Israel, usually in the north, the conflict is not experienced as acutely as by those Palestinians who grew up in the area around Jerusalem. For Israeli Palestinians, it is often hard to identify with Palestinians living under occupation, and it is easier to ignore the conflict.

Studying texts in groups is not a widespread custom in Orthodox churches. Rather, sacred texts are the domain of clergy and liturgy. As a result many young Christian Palestinians are not intimately familiar with their church and is traditions, while they know that most Jewish students know the texts well. As Hibba, one of the participants in this student group, said: 'I feel I can't read it [the Old Testament] because I am not a professional in it. How can I discuss it if I don't have the background?'

After months of searching, I managed to put together a group of three young people. I met Laith, a student at Hebrew University, through the JCJCR, where he had taken part in a dialogue program once before. A priest from the Melkite church of Jerusalem introduced me to Amira, a former student. The last participant, Hibba, is a student I met at the Sabeel office[613] in Jerusalem.

The group: The group consists of two students at the Hebrew University and one former student, Amira. Hibba and Amira were born in Jerusalem, while Laith was born and raised in Nazareth. During the semester in which the sessions took place, Hibba was doing a MA on the field of Conflict Resolution and Laith was pursuing an MA in Statistics. Amira, like her family, is an active member of the Melkite church. She is married and has three children. Amira

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[612] In Israeli education studying the Tanakh is part of the curriculum. It is taught as part of the national narrative. Palestinian Israelis as Israeli citizens are part of the Israeli school system. Palestinians living in the Jerusalem-area are usually holders of a Jerusalem I.D. They are not Israeli citizens, and usually go to Arabic-spoken schools.

[613] Sabeel is an ecumenical center for Palestinian Liberation theology based in Jerusalem. See <https://www.sabeel.org>.

works at an educational institute in Beit Hanina, in East Jerusalem. Laith was born into a Greek Orthodox family. He is a proud member of the Greek Orthodox church, but at the same time sometimes visits the Baptist church in Jerusalem where he was baptized. Hibba's father is a priest in the Melkite church. She is an active participant of the youth movement of Sabeel.

The participants are all fluent in modern Hebrew, but are not used to reading the biblical Hebrew. They read the text in Arabic.

identity, attitude towards society: It is probably impossible to grow up as a Palestinian Christian in the 1970's and 1980's in Israel without experiencing some kind of intercultural exchange. First, there is a high level of diversity within Palestinian society, which younger generations having grown up during a time of increasing tensions, including between Muslims and Christians. Laith and Amira both refer to tensions between Muslims and Christians.

The three young people forming this group could hardly be more different, and their positions reflect changes taking place within Palestinian society. In contrast to the group of Palestinian Christians in Bethlehem, these students have close access to Israeli Jewish society, even if their own lives largely take place within their Palestinian Israeli circles. Geography certainly is a factor here; the students live as a minority in a mixed society. The generation they belong to seems to allow for more in-group diversity and has fewer fixed ideas about what it means to be Palestinian. Age probably plays a role here too. To the generation of the Bethlehemites, the establishment of Palestinian identity, as a political and national identity, was a crucial process. To many Palestinians of that generation, the Palestinian aspect of their identity is crucial, and their opposition to Zionism is constant, fierce and central to their lives – even more so when they live in the West Bank. To the students, it is different. They belong to a generation that has become disillusioned about politics, and has partially turned away from it. It is a struggle for each of the students to give shape to the Palestinian aspect of their identity, they are very aware of and open about this struggle.

All three experience tensions between the Palestinian and Christian aspects of their identity. Amira says: 'It is a conflict, being Palestinian and reading the Old Testament.' At different times of their lives, all three have attempted to connect themselves with the Palestinian aspects of their identity, though only Hibba ever succeeded. Laith and Amira were disappointed in their quest for Palestinians identity and now focus on being Christian. According to Hibba, both religious and national identity are flexible: 'You decide what is central in your life. Being Christian, or Palestinian, or Arab. It is something subjective.' She *is* a Christian and she *is* Palestinian, even though at this point in her life she doesn't 'feel religious at all'. But: 'I am sure they can be together.' She is disappointed that the political situation is rarely addressed in Palestinian churches: 'The priest talks only about spiritual things. I expect him to relate that to politics.' Amira, an independent modern woman living in a conservative

society and neighbourhood dominated by Islam, sees herself as a minority both within Palestinian society, which is dominated by Muslims who she feels do not accept her, and in Israeli society, which is dominated by Israeli Jews. She therefore focuses on Christian identity: 'I can't find my identity as Palestinian. Because they don't consider me as Arab, as Palestinian. They look at me as Christian. And then Jews also look at me as Christian. So I am Christian, nothing else.' Hibba is an independent young woman as well, but chooses a very different path: she focuses on national, political identity. She responds: 'Five years ago, I was exactly like you [Amira]. I didn't find myself. I didn't know whether I was a Palestinian. I didn't feel it.' But Amira emphasizes that she chose to focus on Christian identity very consciously: 'I am 37. I am old. Before I tried to be Palestinian. I read a lot. I was a patriot. But it is not me. I am not anti-anybody. I am Christian.' To her, religious identity offers security: 'The people will disappoint you, the government will disappoint you. […] Jesus won't.' Laith identifies as a devote Christian. He feels his context is growing more and more secular. Laith too turned away from attempting to give substance to his Palestinian identity in disappointment after searching for what Palestinian identity entailed. Like Amira, he has ultimately found his identity in Christianity. Laith says: 'I can't deny that I am Arab, but I grew up in a different area. [..] Some years ago I was very active politically. […] Then Jesus appeared in my life little by little. I tried politics, but it didn't work. The central thing is to be with the Lord.' Both Amira and Laith are aware that disappointment caused them to turn to religious identity. They both seem satisfied with it, presenting it as the only viable option. For both, it is therefore important to safeguard religious identity as a safe spot.

Both Amira and Laith emphasize the differences between Muslims and Christians within Palestinian society: 'They [Muslims] have fears. It is a very complicated community. They suffer, especially the women.' Christians are different according to her: 'I hear about problems that exist in their society every day- that we don't have. Even though we are Arabs and they are too.' In Laith's experience, becoming a devote Christian has opened his eyes to the reality of Islam: 'I used to be very naïve, I didn't take what the Islam says seriously'.

Laith grew up in Nazareth, in a context quite different from that of the two young women. He explains: 'I grew up in a different area, in different circumstances – as an Israeli Arab.' Nazareth is a Palestinian city within the relatively peaceful part of Israel.[614] Hibba and Amira grew up in Jerusalem, a mixed city close to the West Bank, where the conflict is much more present. Laith says: 'we in Nazareth, have more rights, but we suffer from discrimination, I feel this in everyday life. […] But I am not suffering like those in a refugee camp.'

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[614] Laith is an Israeli Palestinians, a Palestinians holding an Israeli passport. After Israel's independence in 1948 they became inhabitants of the new state (see above).

Laith explains and defends his religious position vigorously, not showing any doubts. However, his firm position in the Greek Orthodox church stands in tension with his allegiance to the Baptist tradition. For instance, the 'staunch Orthodox family' of which he is proud is not happy that he was baptized in the Baptist church. While Laith underlines the importance of religious authority and orthodoxy, for Amira religion is a space in which she is free to find her own path. To Hibba, reading the text is a source of growing awareness of what it means to be Palestinian, and of resistance against occupation.

Motivation: Hibba explains that she sees herself as a both a Palestinian and a Christian: 'I like really as much as I can to prove this existence of being Palestinian, which means so much to me, and Christian, which also mean so much to me.' Being Christian also connects Hibba to the land. Hibba is interested in the intersection of religion and politics, and in finding fresh ways of looking at religion, something that plays an important role in Sabeel's programmes too. She wants to learn how she can appropriate the Old Testament as a Palestinian Christian, given the Zionist and Christian Zionist readings that dominate her context.

Amira is interested in meeting people, but has reservations about reading the text with Israelis: 'Each person has his own ideology and way of thinking and living. It is about whether you want to hear the other or not. [..] But I don't know if understanding the other and seeing that we have something in common on this text, I don't know whether it is going to promote something peaceful.'

Laith wants to develop his insight into the text and given witness to the (Orthodox) truth. However, in spite of his pride of being firmly Orthodox, he also shared that he has been baptised in a Baptist church. The tension is not surprising, since the Greek Orthodox tradition generally sees Baptist and other Western church branches as both foreign intruders and as corruptions of true Christianity. For Laith voicing his own opinions and convictions seems to be a way to search for solid ground. Laith is often disappointed by the two women, who are not very supportive of his views and seem immune to his arguments.

Group process

The sessions: We met twice in April 2009 in the educational centre where Amira teaches, a pleasant and informal environment in a Palestinian neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. The first meeting and the second part of the second meeting were dedicated to the reading and interpretation of the text. In the second half of the second meeting I introduced my perspective to the participants, at the request of the group. Hibba was not present at the second meeting. I met with her twice in one of the Hebrew University's cafeterias. The reports of these meetings are part of the analyses.

Role of the researcher: My role is limited to welcoming the participants, explaining the project, and occasionally focussing the very lively discussion. I

also share my own perspective, a few times during the meetings, and in more detail during additional meetings with Hibba that I arranged because she could not be present at the second meeting of the group. Hibba is eager to find new perspectives and tries to apply it to her situation. Laith feels uncomfortable with my views on the debates behind the text, since they do not fit his Orthodox perspective on the status of the text. Laith does not allow for a perspective on the text that differ from the Orthodox interpretation, even if he himself flirts with the Baptist church. Since Amira feels fully satisfied with her own views, she is not looking for any new perspective. In the end the text is not relevant to her, and so a new perspective isn't either.

Group dynamics and interaction: The meetings are very animated, with a lot of discussion, jokes, and intense differences of views as well as exchange of emotions and doubts. Openness is visible in the diversity of their interpretations and in the ease with which they disagree with each other. Amira and Hibba state repeatedly that being tolerant is necessary and that opinions are subjective. Although Laith is confused by their views, he too enjoys the discussions.

5.3.5.2   The process of appropriation

Hermeneutical aspects: the status of the text and the way it is approached
The participants are not very familiar with the Old Testament or the book of Jeremiah, although Laith is more familiar with it than the two women.

For Hibba and Amira interpreting the text is an individualistic undertaking, while for Laith Orthodox tradition holds the key to true interpretation, and only one interpretation can be valid. Hibba explains that she recognizes heterogeneity within Palestinian Christianity. She values openness highly: 'For me the racist is the one who isolates himself in his own world, who chooses not to open up to the other.' Since she is 'not in a religious period', she feels that she has space to approach the text critically. Although she allows for different interpretations, it is very important to her to voice the truth about occupation. This goes beyond the realm of the individual, and has political implications. The text cannot support occupation. Laith, on the other hand, tries to convince the two women of his view, which he regards as the correct, authoritative orthodox view. He interprets the text strictly from a Christian framework, which he derives from his Orthodox background and Baptist sympathies. This framework is normative to him; other interpretations he regards as subjective. Laith states that the highest form of reading is allegorically: 'If you have no faith and shallow knowledge of Christianity, you will interpret in a literal way, word by word, and this is only a story.' Laith adopts, or takes refuge in, the Coptic Orthodox interpretation of the text. In this strictly religious reading, Jeremiah becomes a model of true faith, the prophet who knows the scheme of salvation according to which history

develops: 'He was not like me and you. He was God's word to the people of Israel.' Jeremiah is fully obedient to God: 'He will accept the decision of God. He won't argue.'

Hibba feels this text is very different from the New Testament: 'I am not used to hearing God, our Christian God, say these things. I don't want to compare it, but we hear this from the Muslim God: God causes fear in them, so that they do not turn away' [v. 40]. Laith stresses that the New Testament is a continuation of the Old, 'it is the same God in the Old and the New Testament. In the New He exhibits more of his love.' The Old Testament is valuable because it educates us about the history of salvation, and because we can read the texts symbolically. Laith considers the Old Testament a critical part of the Bible. 'We cannot set it apart., we cannot neglect it.' He considers the Old Testament to be a preparation, 'it is just to cultivate the earth for the New.' For Laith, the Old Testament is a 'certification for Gods will'. For Amira, 'it is just knowledge', 'it doesn't make us better believers'.

For Amira, knowledge is intuitive and based on a personal relationship with Jesus. For Laith there can only be one truth and it needs to be expressed clearly. He frequently says: 'There is a misunderstanding about…', and after giving his interpretation he says: 'This is the most and only interpretation.' Knowledge is a system, the right understanding of dogmatics leads to a correct understanding of texts: 'there is a relationship between the level of understanding of Christianity and the level of your faith, and your ability to interpret the Bible.'

Heuristic keys and appropriation
Unlike the older generation from Bethlehem, the students do not focus on the points of agreement between the text and the Zionist narrative. These readings cannot be characterized as counter-narratives. It is obvious to them that Zionism's claim of the text is invalid, either from a religious perspective (Laith and Amira) or from a political perspective (Hibba). Rejection of the text does not take place. Hibba is aware that the Zionist narrative claims this text, but to her such identification makes little sense: 'Even if you suppose that God said that, it can't be the way it is now, with occupation.' She reads from a Palestinian perspective, relating the experience of *Nakba* and the Palestinian refugees to exile in the text.

For Laith and Amira, Zionism does not need to be discussed further, since they largely ignore political consequences of Zionism in their daily lives. Both Amira and Laith dominantly read the text from a Christian perspective. Laith reads the text as pointing forward to Jesus. The right way to read the Bible, Laith states, is to look at 'the whole picture'. Laith, following Coptic Orthodox exegesis, sees Jeremiah as Jesus, 'because both of them wept and were repelled by the people, the children of Israel. The people live in blasphemy in Jeremiah's era, as also in the days of Jesus. As Jeremiah doesn't

see the land he bought, the church develops only after Jesus. Jeremiah buys the land when he is in jail. The jail symbolizes the human body in which Jesus is imprisoned. The open contract symbolizes the sacrifice, which is understandable for believers and the closed contract stands for eschatological truth that is not yet revealed.'[615]

Although Amira agrees with Laith that the New Testament completes the Old, her very open, personal approach also allows her to be more creative. Amira's interpretation is grounded in her personal relationship with Jesus, which she describes in very intimate terms: 'He is my friend, we even exchange jokes. I love him'. This personal relation grants her insights in the text: 'If we sit here, talking about Jesus, He will [..] enlighten us. [...] He is my life, I live him. I feel from inside what is good and what is not.' Hibba reads from a Palestinian perspective, and without identifying the text with the Zionist narrative. Since she is interested in conflict resolution and in liberation theology: 'This is a problem: a lot of Christians just ignore, Christians and priests. At the mass they talk about religion, forgiveness, but they don't connect it to what happens now. I can't isolate 'I am Christian' and 'I am Palestinian'. But saying that, I don't feel religious right now.' For Hibba, it is important to come to a Palestinian contextual appropriation of the text. It is how she learned to approach the Bible at Sabeel, the centre for Palestinian Liberation Theology. 'We ask ourselves how we can connect the Bible to our reality. I was thinking about this text – I cannot isolate it from our situation.' At the same time, she is aware of the distance between her and the text. 'Once you read, you can think it is the same reality, but it is not. You always have similar circumstances – like injustice. But it is not the same.'

Laith attempts to solve the problematic aspects of the text by taking refuge in an orthodox, religious interpretation of the text, as well as by identifying himself in religious terms, rather than nationally or politically. He reads through a replacement theology paradigm, which makes the Zionist reading irrelevant to him. In addition, he says he never met anyone else who reads according to this paradigm. It seems then that the Zionist claim of the text is not problematic to him at all. If the people were disputing about land during the period of the Babylonian threat, these conflicts only shows their unfaithfulness to each other and to God. Amira also says: 'When you are a Christian, you don't care about land. That is why I wonder: why does God bother so much about the land? I as a human know him, I am so close to him.' Hibba is the only one who explicitly recognizes the problem Palestinian Christians have with the Zionist interpretation of the promise of land: 'Many people unfortunately say: "In the Old Testament we see God's promise of the land to the Israelis. So how can we say that God is faithful and not that Israeli's have the right to the land? If it is mentioned in the Old Testament? You have to

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[615] As in chapter 4, the closed document in Jer. 32 is understood here to contain eschatological truth.

be very cautious with that."'

Amira distinguishes between Judaism as a religion and Zionism as a political ideology. The Zionists, as political actors, use the promise of the land. This usage is in fact a religious concept belonging to the past, she claims. 'It is a Zionist idea, it is not about Jews, or religion.' With respect to Judaism, she uses a replacement paradigm. Since the coming of Jesus, in her view there is no longer space for Judaism as a religion: 'If you believe in Jesus, there shouldn't be Jews anymore. As a result, the Old Testament is 'a word for Christians, not for Jews.' Although she sees how the Zionist narrative harms Palestinian reality, she seeks refuges in a theoretical religious framework to 'solve' the problem of Zionism. She says about Christian Zionists: 'OK. Let them. I am not anti-Zionist, or anti-Jew. Let each one believe according to what seems right to him. Maybe they are right. I cannot say I am right. My message is good for me.' Amira doesn't mean to deny the existence of Israeli Jews as people, which is clear from her appreciation of Israeli Jewish culture. Hibba goes against Amira's claim about Judaism as religion: 'There is a great difference between the religion of Judaism and Zionism. Many people are Jewish in religion, but they do not believe in Zionism.'

In Laith's interpretation, punishment is central. It is the way God deals with people, not necessarily with Jews, but with all people. 'Who denies Him will be punished severely'. He even applies this to present-day Jewish Israeli's: 'Israeli people denied the signs' about the coming of Jesus, they will be punished. 'Even now in this date.' In Laith's view, Israeli Jews will be punished, not for injustices committed by the state of Israel, but because they fail to believe in Jesus.

According to Laith, land no longer is a relevant category for Christians. In spite of this, he also comments on Zionism's misuse of the text: 'Here it talks about buying land legally. Now they come back with force.' The same is true for Amira. Though she says the Old Testament is for Christians now, she sometimes connects the text to the reality of the conflict: if Jewish Israelis were following Jeremiah, she argues, they would buy land, but 'now most of the land here is confiscated. So it is not according to Jeremiah.' Such remarks are presented as side notes that are not relevant to their Christian understanding of the text. Only Hibba links the situation of the Palestinians today ('a catastrophe has happened') to that of the Judean people in the text. She doesn't know whether to understand this situation as a punishment, but she especially wonders 'if we will have the same result they had': 'until now things for us did not become good.' Hibba's strategy is not to compare the text to the Zionist narrative, like the Bethlehemites had mostly done, but to link the experiences of the Palestinians to the text. In doing so, she appropriates the text not in reaction to Zionism, but as an independent Palestinian reading, stemming from experiences with Zionism: 'I see us in the text. Me, as a Palestinian. It is an issue of *Nakba*.'

5.3.5.3 Evaluation

The students reflect on how their identities have been shaped. This consideration reflects that they are both aware that identity is negotiated and open to change, and that they are open to sharing their experiences. Amira and Laith share that their attempt to focus on the Palestinian aspect of their identity has not succeeded. They are not afraid or ashamed to share this, neither is Hibba hesitant to say that Palestinian identity is crucial for her, and that she does not feel religious at the moment. Hibba is confident that she will succeed in bringing together national and religious aspects of her identity. This openness and awareness indicates that the students feel freer to shape their identity than the Bethlehemites. Difference in age might play a role here, as well as the difference in space: the Bethlehemites live under occupation, the Jerusalemites in a mixed city in a situation of discrimination.

Hibba succeeds in constructing a Palestinian appropriation that is not primarily a response to Zionism. Laith and Amira have become disappointed in the ideals of Palestinian liberation, and now concentrate on religious aspects of their identity. It seems incorrect to consider this a construction of identity more independent of Zionism. Rather, their positions are more ignorant of the political aspects of their reality and the interconnection between religion and politics. Amira and Laith succeed in creating a theological lens through which Zionism is not relevant, but this does not solve the problems they face as Palestinians. Their approach only raises new questions pertaining to religion, such as how to act in the face of injustice. These questions are overlooked by their approaches in which religion appears to be unrelated to other realms of life.

Inclusivism and exclusivism: Laith's views reflect a variant of replacement theology: Israeli Jews will be punished by God, not because of injustices committed, but because they do not believe in Jesus. Both Laith and Amira in a way seek refuge in religion, away from the problematic religious context. In Amira's readings, Christian identity functions as a safe haven, in which political reality has no relevance: 'When you are a Christian, you don't care about land.' However, such an appeal to an alternative but equally exclusive reading hardly challenges the problem of the Zionist exclusive claim of the text. Also, it separates one's religious identity from other aspects of identity. Only Hibba is searching for a position in which religious and national identity can co-exist as long as that does not exclude others, such as Jews. Amira says: 'If you believe in Jesus, there shouldn't be Jews anymore. To her, a reading taking seriously the processes shaping the text is relevant.

5.3.6 Conclusions from separate group meetings: Jeremiah 32 as dominant discourse?

As argued in the previous chapter, the character of the book of Jeremiah requires a reading attentive to the historical processes shaping the text. It is a way of reading that does not look for results and propositions, but aims to take part in the negotiations and transformations taking place in the Jeremianic tradition. It acknowledges that all interpretations are contextual interpretations. In the analyses of the groups' interpretations, it became clear that, as was to be expected, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict plays a central role in the conversations. Conflict often blocked transformation as it fixed the tradition into something solidified through the identification with the Zionist narrative. This is the case most markedly among the older generation, that is, in the Bethlehemite group, and in the group of Jewish Israeli women. The Israeli Jewish women treat the text as part of their national narrative, identifying with the dominant group in the text. Michal's remark about ' dirty laundry' makes clear that to these women it is almost impossible not to see the text exclusively as theirs. Even if they acknowledge that Christians read the text, this does not affect their sense of ownership. 'We should do our laundry, but not outside. Inside.' The Palestinians take up the role of the subordinate group and find it difficult to appropriate the text outside of that paradigm. It makes clear that the transformation that is part of actual appropriation is very difficult when narratives and identities have become fixed.

It also became clear that a focus on either a strictly religious or a strictly national reading does not stimulate appropriation: Laith's and Amira's Christian reading was uncritical and failed to take seriously the context of Palestinians living under Zionist hegemony, along with the questions and struggles resulting from that. Among the Palestinian students, Laith and Amira use religious identity as a place of refuge, in order not to acknowledge political problems. As a result, they do not identify the text with the Zionist narrative: since both ignore the political aspects of the text and of their context, there is no need to further discuss the relation of the text to Zionism. Although their interpretations greatly differ, to both the Zionist claim is largely irrelevant. For Laith, the Orthodox paradigm is the only viable way of reading the text. In this allegoric interpretation time is not a factor of importance. The text is a mystical object, but its truth is only accessible from within Orthodox tradition, and interpretation is the task of priests. Although Laith feels attracted to the Baptist church, he seems reluctant to abandon this Orthodox view about religious texts and their interpretation. To Amira, faith is something personal, so much so that she is not really interested in how others interpret religious texts, nor is it relevant to her. Andrew's reading from a national perspective was not capable of creating and acknowledging a meaningful link between Palestinian Christians and the Old Testament. An uncritical blend of the two

attitudes leads to fixation as well, as we saw in the group of Israeli women: they were not able to recognize how their nationalist-religious reading is in fact very political. It leads to a completely closed narrative and a negation of tensions that do exist between national and religious aspects of identity.

On the other hand, positive factors are the insight of the interrelatedness of different aspects of identity, the overlap between those, and the tensions. This was visible in Boulus' reading. We also see this among the students, most of whom are more open about the tensions they experience in their identity. The understanding of identity among the students in general was less fixed and allowed for more ambiguity: even Amira and Laith openly discussed their struggles with their Palestinian identity. The Jewish students and Hibba approach their own narratives and identity critically, as well as the biblical narrative. In comparison to the older generation, they are less attached to religious preconceptions of what the text should be, and also of what their own identity should be. This creates space for creative appropriation and moments of transformation, both in terms of religious identity as in terms of national identity. I argue that an appropriation that takes these both elements of identity seriously, while also acknowledging their ambiguity and fluidity, can be regarded successful.

Among the Jewish women Michal sees the necessity of reviewing the Israeli national narrative, but she was reluctant to put this into practice. Besides, her view of religious identity is fixed. Among the Bethlehemites, mainly Boulus viewed the Palestinian narrative critically, but his ethical perspective of the text prevented him from appropriating it.
The Israeli students, Hibba and among the Bethlehemites mainly Geries and Boulus, were open to exegetical input about the layeredness of the text. Here, to a certain extent transformation took place. For other readers, such a view on the text conflicts with its religious character, whereas others were simply not interested.

The Jewish students and Hibba approached not only the biblical narratives critically, but were also open about tensions in their own narratives and identity. Boulus was too, but he rejected the text from an ethical perspective. They are less attached than the older generation to religious preconceptions of what the text should be, and also of what their own identity should be. This creates space for creative appropriation and moments of transformation. Hibba was most successful in dismissing Zionist claims and creating space for a contextual reading, in her case a more independent Palestinian Christian reading. Like the Bethlehemites, she combines an authentic search for a contextual Palestinian reading, that addresses the struggles stemming from Zionist hegemony, with the wish not to exclude others. Even though she has put her religious identity on hold, she manages to take seriously both her religious identity and her Palestinian identity, while arriving at an appropriation that is new and strives to be inclusive.

The Jewish students also find the Zionist claim of the text problematic and distance themselves from it. They too, like the Bethlehemites and Hibba, feel the need to free the text from the Zionist claim. As Avi puts it, 'fighting the fight' over the text is central. These students also represent 'hidden voices', going against the dominant discourse of their society. For Avi and Schlomo, the text did not have meaning as a religious text, but for Daliah it did. Daliah came to a contextual reading in which she tried to take both her Jewish and her Israeli identity seriously.

In conclusion, a reading that takes all aspects of one's identity seriously, in this case mainly religious and national identity, is successful. In addition, the ability to allow for a certain estrangement from Jeremianic narrative and one's own narratives is necessary. The space for transformation lies in the acknowledgement that one's identity and narratives are flexible and layered, as are religious narratives. Otherwise readers are caught in the immediate identification of text and Zionism, and in their own fixed identities. The question is whether an encounter stimulates such estrangement, or rather further freezes existing positions.

5.4 Encounters between the reading groups

5.4.1 Introduction

At the start of the project, I informed all participants that a meeting with a partner group was intended. The group members were to decide whether or not they wanted this encounter to take place. For most participants of both groups of students and for the Jewish women's meeting, a partner group was part of their motivation to take part in the project. Doubts about the meeting were much more severe and fundamental among the Palestinian group from Bethlehem. Meeting a group representing the oppressor could be very intense, as it arouses the trauma and pain that is part of the lives of many Palestinians. Some viewed an encounter as a form of 'normalization', as I explain below. All groups were nervous about meeting 'the others' to some extent, and turned to me for information on the other group and to voice their concerns (Amira: 'They will hate me!'). The Israeli Jewish students expressed the least concerns about the encounter, but they too were nervous.

Procedure: The participants of the groups received the reports of their partner group's meetings through email. The conversation developed much more hesitantly than in the group-meetings. The dialogue took place not directly between members of the groups, but through the transcripts of the separate meetings. This at times felt a bit artificial, and not all participants acquainted themselves with the transcripts of the partner group.

I emailed all participants a letter explaining the goal and rules of the meetings. In the beginning of the meetings, I shared this information again.

Role of the researcher: I planned the meetings, which took considerable effort and time. In preparing the meetings, there were many practical problems to overcome, as well as fears, doubts and worries to address.

My role during the meetings between the two groups was more distinct and crucial than in the group meetings. Different from in the group meetings, I took the lead. I introduced the meeting, began the conversation, and interfered when I felt it was necessary, sometimes by asking a question, sometimes by asking a participant to follow the rules of the meeting.

5.4.2 The women from Jerusalem and the Bethlehemites

Location of the encounters: The two groups met at Talitha Kumi, a Palestinian-Christian school located in Beit Jalla, on the West Bank, about ten kilometres from Jerusalem. I chose the location because it is in Area C, and therefore accessible both to holders of Israeli passports and holders of Palestinian I.D.s.[616] It is beautifully located in a green area and the Palestinian participants were happy and proud to welcome the Israelis to such a nice place. The Israeli-Jewish women brought sweets and the Palestinian group provided drinks.
Preparing the encounters: The groups met twice. Shortly before the first meeting, it became clear that most of the participants of the Bethlehemite group would not participate, each for his or her own reason. Fareed and Andrew said from the beginning that they were unwilling to be part of the encounter. Fadi and Mariam on the other hand were eager to take part. For Fadi, the interpretation of the text is a less politically charged question than for others. As such, the encounter was less complex for him than for other group members. In addition, he welcomed the encounter as a chance to testify of his Christian convictions. Mariam wanted to meet the Israeli women, but also to have the chance to share with them what it is like to live under occupation. Boulus and Daoud originally said they wanted to be part of the encounter. However, when we talked about it during the last session in the group, both excused themselves extensively, saying that they had important other obligations. Geries explained to me that some participants might see taking part in the meetings as normalization, a situation in which the occupation is viewed as a fact of life that must be dealt with. An encounter between Palestinians and Israelis that does not have resistance to and exposure of the Israeli occupation as its aims, can be defined as normalisation.[617] They are very aware that in situations of dialogue the power-difference between Palestinians and Israelis inevitably plays a role.

Geries suggested that I invite women connected to Sabeel as additional participants in the encounter.[618] One woman, Tanya, was able to come to the first encounter. She had taken part in a Jer. 32 reading session I

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[616] As pointed out above, area C is the only area in the West Bank where Israelis and West Bank Palestinians can meet.

[617] As defined by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), see <http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1749&key=>, resistance to and exposure of the Israeli occupation. Dialogue, ' if is occurs out of the resistance framework', is also understood as normalization, since it serves 'to privilege oppressive coexistence at the cost of co-resistance, for they presume the possibility of coexistence before the realization of justice'.

[618] As part of my MA thesis I met with a group of women from Sabeel. These sessions took place between November 2008 and March 2009. I remained in contact with some of the women and with the centre. Currently I am a member of the board of the Dutch Friends of Sabeel, an organization attempting to engage Dutch Christians familiar with Sabeel's efforts for a just peace.

organized at Sabeel in 2008/2009. Julian, another woman whom I did not know, also wanted to come. She was not familiar with the text yet. Tanya was present in the first meeting, and Juliana in the second. Both women are Palestinian Christian women living in Jerusalem. Geries himself fell seriously ill in the week before the encounter and remained ill for weeks, so that he wasn't able to attend both encounters, which he regretted very much.

Within the group of Jewish women, the decision about whether to meet with the Palestinian group was not controversial. In fact, they had been looking forward to it. Nevertheless, they were nervous about the encounter. Indeed, even going to the West Bank was an adventure in itself. It is not unusual for Israelis to enter the West Bank – one of the major routes from Jerusalem to the Galilee technically leads through the West Bank, and some Israelis visit family or friends living in settlements. However, such travelling takes place on roads accessible for Israeli yellow-plated cars only, giving one the impression that one is still in Israel. Visiting Area C is a different story: it means entering Palestinian territory. The women travelled together in Anna's small (yellow-plated, Israeli) car.[619] I joined them to give directions.[620] *Expectations*: Both groups link the texts to the Israeli national narrative, often regarding the text as part of the Israeli narrative. The Jewish women, except for Anna, regard the text as a Jewish text that was of concern to them and the people of Israel rather than to Palestinians. It could be expected that the Israeli Jewish readers would take up the role of defending the text in the encounters. After all, they experience the text as their possession and at the same time as having deeply personal and national importance. Michal underlines that the Old Testament is a national, Jewish book. The Israeli women are likely to focus on a personal reading of the text, not realizing that this reading has political implications. In the eyes of the Palestinian readers the Israeli Jewish women are representatives of the Israeli hegemony, and indeed the women presented themselves in the reading reports as embodying Zionism.

The Palestinians are likely to use this occasion to 'speak truth to power', to confront the Israeli Jewish women with the reality of occupation, that is at the heart of their reading experience. As West Bank Palestinians, they suffer from occupation and have very little other opportunities to voice these

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[619] Israeli cars are allowed to enter into Area A, B and C.

[620] Passing the Beit Jalla checkpoint into the West Bank is not complicated. Generally, the cars simply pass the soldier, and are rarely stopped. Going the other way around, from the West Bank into Israel, is impossible in a car with Palestinian number plates, and otherwise depends on the checkpoint (checkpoints in Area A, B and C where mostly Palestinians pass, are much more difficult than checkpoints where mostly Israelis pass). The road leads through a beautiful landscape, much enjoyed by the women in the car, and one of them exclaimed: 'I would like to live here!', and then covered her mouth with her hands, shocked to realize she had expressed the desire to become a settler. Since the road we were driving on was designed to bring drivers to settlements, not to Palestinian villages, the Beit Jalla exit had to be reached through a rather awkward manoeuvre. Again, the women felt uncomfortable when discovering this.

narratives that are normally hidden from and subversive of an Israeli perspective to Israeli Jews themselves. The narrative of the Jewish women is very close to the dominant Zionist narrative, and fits the dominant reading of the text. Besides, the Israeli narrative is known both by the Israeli and the Palestinian participants. Meanwhile, the narratives of occupation are the hidden narratives, known only to the Palestinians. These narratives hardly reach Israeli society and when the Palestinians mention them, they are breaking an unspoken code. Such criticism will be very uncomfortable to the Jewish women. They want to testify to their social engagement, but they do not want to talk about politics.

Because, unfortunately, none of the Palestinian theologians was present at the meeting, voices playing an important role in earlier discussions were not present in in these later encounters. In addition, the group is imbalanced in the sense that the Jewish women are much more knowledgeable on the text and on the Old Testament. As a result, it is difficult to enter into a meaningful discussion on the text. Intellectually speaking, the Jewish women dominate the discussion.

The encounters

Motivation: During the initial introductions, the participants identify their motivation to take part. In this phase, the participants express themselves optimistically and politely, careful not to say anything controversial. All members have high hopes, especially the Palestinians. Fadi says: 'Maybe this chapter will lead us to peace,' and Juliana: 'We are people that are so close together. Why is there war? […] We are brothers and sisters.' Mariam says: 'I am so happy to meet with you. […] It will help me, if I want to live with others, I need to know them.' Shira mentions her children as a motivation to be interested in dialogue. Anna is more prudent: 'I don't think we will solve the problems today, but one step would be wonderful.' Samantha is interested in the encounter as a chance to 'meet you, to hear your opinion.' She adds that she is interested in hearing another side of the story, and so is Shira: she wants to hear and understand a different way of reading the text. Michal says she is interested in the 'problematic sides' of the text to Christians, also concerning the political situation.
Atmosphere: The atmosphere is a bit subdued during both encounters. Clearly, the participants are nervous and not fully at ease. In general, they approach each other prudently and formally, if friendly. They even make some jokes to break the ice.
Role of the researcher: After the round of introductions I explain the set up of the encounter, and ask everybody to introduce themselves. Before I opened

the conversation, I explained guidelines for the dialogue.[621] After this, I make a list of a number of themes that the participants want to talk about. The actual dialogue begins when the questions are written down. This takes quite a lot of time, but it seems to help the participants feel more at ease. The Jewish women take the lead, and come up with a large number of quite detailed questions, which I write down on a white board. Another reason that it proves rather difficult to enter into a dialogue is that Tanya and Juliana were not part of earlier meetings and are not familiar with the transcripts.

First encounter
Both Michal and Samantha are interested in how the Palestinians are able to identify with the text, 'and read it as a text meant for everyone' (Michal).

An important difference between the two groups is that for the Israeli women in general the encounter itself it the goal. The Palestinians feel the need to talk about the occupation that dominates their lives. Tanya and Mariam, as well as Samantha, play a crucial role in bringing the Palestinian counter-narrative to the surface. Although the Israeli women want to meet 'the other', they are afraid to be confronted with the Palestinian narrative, which represents a dangerous counter-narrative to their own narrative. This comes to the surface in a conversation between Tanya and Michal, in which Tanya remarks that the goal of the encounter is to 'come to a solution.' Michal responds: 'No! We came to study a chapter in the Bible.' Already in the round of introductions, Tanya expresses her view on the roots of the conflict ('The political problem started with Herzl.'). The Israeli women are clearly uncomfortable with this claim. Michal asks Tanya to focus on her biography [as I asked the women not to enter into a discussion on the text in the round of introductions]. Tanya's emotional outburst is typical for what Scott calls 'public insubordination.' In her view, she is speaking truth to the representatives of power: she is breaking the silence. In the experience of the Israelis, though, she is doing exactly what should not be done and what they were afraid of: she is attacking them, going straight into politics.

Michal is very interested to learn about the Christian perspective on the text: 'You convinced me that it is an option to read this chapter in this way if you believe in Jesus Christ. […] It is interesting to see that it works. I think you stay both, each in a different way, very close to the text. I can understand how you get there.' However, at the same time, she is uncomfortable with discussing the text with Palestinians, as becomes clear when Mariam responds to Michal's view on main message of the chapter: 'If you behave well, you can

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[621] The guidelines I gave were: 'Within this room, everybody is equal. Listen to each other. When someone is speaking, allow him or her to finish. If you want to say something, raise your hand. Be open about your idea and convictions. You might be afraid to hurt someone by something you say. Authenticity is crucial though. When you speak, speak for yourself. Say: I think, or I feel. Lastly:: if you feel uncomfortable, feel free to say so at any time.'

live here, if you behave badly, you go away, again.' To Michal, the 'dirty laundry'-aspect of the chapter is that it uncovers the rules by which God rules the Israeli people: 'Our people is very unique. Because when we behave badly, we are punished very badly.' Seeing an opening to discuss politics, Mariam immediately responds to this: 'This is the aim – I am with you. Let's go to politics now. Do you think that the Israeli's when they took the land from the Palestinians without paying, that it is good behaviour? This is what God wants?' This debate is exactly what Michal wants to avoid: 'My problem is, this chapter for me is very private. It is about my people. It is about our dirty laundry. It is difficult to discuss it with people who are not from my nation, because to be honest it is like cleaning our dirty laundry outside. [..] We are supposed to clean it, but in the house.' The discussion from then on becomes a bit disjointed. Mariam and Tanya insist on talking about the occupation, while Fadi tries to steer the conversation towards his convictions about Jesus. Juliana and Anna look for common ground. Anna says: 'You don't have to be Christian or Jewish. [..] Everybody can go back to it [the text].' As there is no time left to focus the conversation, I ask the participants how they want to proceed. All agree to meet again. Michal says: 'In terms of [learning about] Christianity it was very interesting. In terms of modern political issues it was… a bit bad.' Tanya says: 'I am glad we met.'

However, Samantha does put politics on the agenda again. She asks whether the Palestinians present are angry about the Zionist appropriation, in the way that she had read in the transcript. The views she is interested in were voiced mainly by Geries, Daoud and Boulus. For their part, he Palestinians present seem a bit overwhelmed. Samantha's question does not lead to a conversation.

Second encounter
It wasn't possible to find a date on which all participants from the first encounter were able to come. Michal, Shira and Anna are present from the Israeli group, Samantha could not attend. Juliana and Mariam represent the Palestinian group, Tanya is absent, Geries is still ill. In this small women-only group, and without Tanya's sharp remarks, the tone of the encounter changes. The atmosphere is quieter. The women discover differences and overlap between them. The focus is on religious themes and in this relatively safe realm trust builds. Mariam introduces the context of conflict several times. Although the Israeli women ignore her input at first, she insists, and although hesitantly, a conversation on politics evolves.

The women discuss the way they deal with texts. Shira argues that both Christians and Jews 'don't live their life according to the Tanakh [only]. Christians have the New Testament, we have the oral tradition.' To her, this is a good thing, because she couldn't live for instance with how the Bible deals with foreign people. The oral tradition opens up new ways of dealing with new

situations, like their reality today. Michal is surprised that the Palestinians identify the text with the Zionist perspective: 'When Christians study this chapter it feels they read it in the same way [as we do]. And that's why they have problems with it.' Apparently she does not connect this reading to the role the Zionist narrative has in the lives of Palestinians.

Mariam says: 'what the Babylonians were doing is the same as the Israelis- look at v. 28.' She adds: 'Nobody can deny we live in injustice.' The Israeli women are reluctant to respond and a silence falls. Michal finally says something: 'When I go to the zoo, it is clear who is behind the wall: the lion. When I go to Gilo [an Israeli settlement built on the West Bank, JS], I feel Gilo is behind the wall. They built the wall around us, because we are surrounded by people who hate us. […] It is a terrible wall, but it stopped the bombing. Now let's go back to the text. I believe this wall is temporary. Nothing is forever, except for the covenant.' Nobody responds.

Mariam attempts to formulate a shared point of view, in order to fine some measure of common ground: 'We all believe that with faith and with doing good, we reach to God.' For her, being religious begins with being close to God, out of which doing good follows. For Michal, the reverse is true. She remarks that she is happy to have again gained more insight into Christianity: 'Usually we say the big difference between Judaism and Christianity is whether Jesus is God or a person. But maybe this [the different perspective on doing good] is a more important difference.' Mariam again insists on talking about the relation of the text to politics, since this is a central struggle in her own life. She takes the Jewish women's interpretation of the text as her point of departure, insisting on understanding how to link the evil deeds-punishment scheme present in the text to their context: She asks: 'But do you believe you behave well?' A silence falls. Mariam continues, in a soft, but clear voice: 'I don't believe they [the Israelis] behave well.' She adds a concrete example of what she regards as misbehaviour: 'Today it was on the news that there will be more money for settlements.' Anna says she is against this too. Michal's perspective is different. She understands reality from the perspective of redemption of the Jewish people. It is difficult to define exactly where the Jewish people find themselves on this line. Sharing her views on politics for the first time during the encounter, Anna says: 'When you ask me: do you feel you are OK? My answer is: time will tell. If we get better, the Arabs will be better to. If we get worse… It is about how people behave in this country.' Mariam insists on speaking about what she views as the concrete evils of occupation: 'How can I tell my son to love his neighbour when there is the wall not allowing him to see the other side, the other people? […] He sees that the Israeli army gets into Bethlehem any time they want. One such action will destroy everything we are trying to teach him. […] They see only Israelis with guns.' Shira responds on a personal level: 'I have a little boy growing up asking me whether he has to go into the army. Not every child on the Israeli side is

growing up looking forward to the army.' She adds: 'We depend on each other to have a normal life.'

At the end of the meeting, all agree that it was good to meet. Michal says: 'I didn't expect to hear such strong things from Christians.' She still thinks it is better to work on improving one's own community, but she also says: 'It was good to meet. It made me realize we can be together.'

Evaluation: The encounters were very demanding. In a way, though, the tone of these encounters was subdued. Most participants were very careful in what they asked and shared. No participant spoke out fully. Even Tanya's outburst was short and she stopped talking before finishing her point. The text wasn't discussed in much depth, as most Palestinian participants were not well acquainted with the text and wanted to link it to the context of occupation today. Nevertheless, eventually an authentic exchange of viewpoints and feelings took place, although the Jewish women were very hesitant or unwilling to discuss politics. Mariam realized the limits of the encounter: yes, she could speak out to these women about her struggles, but none of the people in the room were able to change the situation. The Israeli women did not want to discuss politics with Tanya. Yet, in the end Mariam does succeed in sharing her experiences of the occupation and she also received a response from the Israeli women. In the group meetings, her role had been quite modest, but in the encounters her role is crucial. While Tanya chose a confrontational approach, Mariam's approached these conversations more cautiously. Both women created a possibility for a Palestinian voice to be heard that normally remained unheard by the Israeli Jewish women.

The text functioned partially as an obstacle in the dialogue, as far as the Zionist identification wasn't challenged. It made the already dominant position of the Jewish women even more dominant.

5.4.3 The Two Students Groups

Location of the encounter: The meeting took place in a quiet and beautifully furnished room at the Hebrew University. There was a circle of chairs for the initial round of introductions, and tables with chairs for the dialogue to follow. I brought drinks and chocolate.

preparing the encounter The groups met once. Hibba cancelled at the last-minute.[622] I sent the participants the transcripts of the meetings and asked the participants to formulate questions. Although all participants were nervous, none of them had objections against meeting the other group.

Expectations: Both the Israeli and the Palestinian group are very diverse. The Palestinian students experience their Palestinian and religious identity in very

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[622] In my estimation, this did not have to do with hesitations about the encounter, but rather with her very busy life and her tendency to be a bit sloppy when it comes to keeping appointments.

different ways, and so do the Israeli students. What they share is an ambiguous attitude towards Zionism. In contrast to the encounter of the older generations, I did not expect clashes in this meeting. First, all participants are more used to encountering 'the other', for instance, in the context of taking courses together at university. Second, most participants are aware of the ambiguity of their own positions and they are open towards new perspectives (Laith is an exception with respect to religion). They are likely to allow the others space to express themselves. Last, the Israeli students are critical of the Zionist narrative, while the Palestinians do not equate the text with the Zionist narrative. Unlike in the Beit Jallah-encounters, there is not one group supporting the Jeremianic-Zionist narrative and one group opposing it. Although Hibba is likely to be outspoken in criticizing the Israeli occupation, she is not likely to express her criticism aggressively, and the Israeli students are willing to discuss difficult political issues. Religiously speaking, Laith is rather exclusive in his orthodox Christian convictions, but this is probably more problematic to him than to the others.

It will be interesting to learn whether the group members will allow for enough honesty and vulnerability for a meaningful discussion to develop. atmosphere As the meeting began, I explained the framework for the encounter and asked everybody to introduce themselves. After this, we played a game to warm up, which brought action and laughter. Before I opened the conversation, I explained guidelines for the dialogue.

The conversation was thoughtful and honest. When participants did not agree with each other, they were able to express this, without bringing the conversation to an end or loosing contact with the other participants. participants were cautious not to cause anger. Rather, they attempted to understand each other, becoming increasingly open. Hibba's explicitness about the political situation, however, would have been an interesting and stimulating addition to the encounter. Unfortunately, she was not present.

The participants share the experience that the text is difficult on several levels. Only Laith sees one valid way of reading the text. It puts him in an isolated position, and he is disappointed about what he regards as lack of faith in the others. However, Daliah recognizes the way Laith describes his relation to land – which he does in non-religious terms. This leads to an open dialogue about relations to the text and to land, along with the problematic aspects of these relations.

The encounter
Motivation: The three Palestinian students have different feelings about the meeting. Hibba is looking forward to it. Being active in Sabeel and studying conflict resolution, she is interested in this chance to discuss a biblical text with Israeli Jewish students. Amira is afraid that the Israeli Jewish students will 'hate her' when she voices her opinion, but at the same time she is looking forward

to the encounter. Laith perceives the encounter as an opportunity to express his faith. Daliah is enthusiastic about a dialogue with Palestinians

The discussion: The conversation begins hesitantly. I asked the participants to ask each other questions about the reports they have read, and after that we read Jeremiah 32 together [in my translation]. Amira says: 'I don't want to ask anything. This is their opinion, I want to respect it.' Daliah asks a question preceded by a lengthy introduction ('it is based on pre-assumptions, it makes me feel uncomfortable'), and then asks Amira about the conflict she sees between being Palestinian and being Christian. Amira says: 'As a Palestinian I should be committed to land. As a Christian I shouldn't be disloyal to the country [Israel] where I live.' She adds, with a smile, but also half-seriously: 'Did I hurt anyone?'

In contrast to the Jewish women, the students show vulnerability by expressing that they are uncomfortable with Zionism. Daliah: 'It is really difficult for me, living here for the first time… […] I feel Zionism makes it harder for me to be Torah-observant.' She and Schlomo agree that it is important to say that 'there was a longing to come back before Zionism.' Avi doesn't completely agree: 'It was something they needed to say, but they lived their lives...' Daliah: 'I think of Zionism as a cult. They take one thing and say: this is the most important thing in Judaism.' Whereas the Bethlehemite group would probably be very interested in such a statement, Amira and Laith do not respond: to them, the Zionist appropriation is not very relevant.

Laith, to whom plurality of interpretations is unacceptable, plays a central role in the encounter: he tries the hardest to understand the others, determined as he is to find out why they do not share his perspective on the text. Laith asks how the text provides a justification of Zionism. His question is not meant as a reproach; he simply fails to understand what such a reading would look like. Avi answers: 'I am against that. […] Any kind of viewing your reality through a text for me is misinterpretation.' Amira reacts: 'The dangerous thing is to believe it is a prophecy and that you should make it true.' Avi and Amira agree, but Laith is lost. From his point of view, interpretation is not an individualistic undertaking. There is one Christian way of reading this text, which is: 'Jesus is the embodied word of God. [..] The contract in the vessel is a symbol for the word of God. It is in a vessel: the unbelievers can't see it.' For him as a Christian, there can no longer be a theological claim on land, but 'we have the right, due to Christianity, to go to court, like Paul did.' Amira does not agree with this exclusive claim of true Christian interpretation, which is of interest to Daliah: 'It shows the plurality!' She tends to agree with Laith's view on land: 'What do I believe about the land of Israel as a Jew? Is it supposed to be mine? I am very uncomfortable with belonging, then I would have to say it is mine. My working definition of God is bigger than that. [..] As a Jew, there is a whole tradition that allows me to read [the text like that, but as] an individual I don't know what the link is. Very often I feel I don't fit in within

Jewish people. But also not with secular people.' Schlomo expresses refusal to connect the text to his own life. Again, Laith is shocked: 'Isn't it a message about God's deeds?' He defines the text as a faithful report of an event that has moral and religious value. To Amira, 'it is all stories. [..] The holy land is for everyone. God is the same God for everyone. Personally for me it is a relationship between me and Him.'

Difference of opinion is strongest between Laith and Avi. At the end of the meeting, Laith expresses disappointment that the others are 'mocking' 'the word of God.' He feels that not everybody took Jeremiah seriously as a prophet of God. Avi says: 'I always find it difficult even to open it and to read it. […] Even some of the things you said, Laith, you speak like you know the right way to interpret it.' Avi feels very uncomfortable about the text: 'it brings out so much friction and tension, and potential for bad things. […] The book doesn't even try to be rational, it just drops bombs.' For Laith the meeting provides 'an opportunity to sharpen the idea to see Jesus in the Old Testament', and also a 'chance to meet people, also Arab people.' Laith experiences the views of others as threatening, holding on to his own perspective. Asking the others about their views leads to the discovery that the two Palestinian girls, although they are Christians like him, do not approach the text in the way he does. *Evaluation*: In the dialogue, the text functions as a means for the participants to discover more about each other, especially in terms of one another's religious identity. The discussion made plurality visible, not only between the groups, but also within the groups. In general, the meeting offers a modest and hesitant beginning for participants to discover one another's perspectives, including both differences and similarities. In this encounter, the potential for controversy over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict encourages students to be both careful and self-aware. Confrontations are avoided and differences are explored only on the surface. Laith is the only exception, but the controversy he brings to the fore is religious in nature, and leaves no room for other views.

For the other participants, religious plurality is not problematic, and some even welcome it. The conflict and the role of the text in justifying Zionism are only touched upon. For the Jewish participants, this is a sensitive but important topic to discuss. They provide openings to start a conversation. However, for the Palestinian participants, the topic is not relevant, though admittedly this would have been different had Hibba been present.

5.5 Jeremiah 32: a mirror of conflict or a space of encounter?

The analysis of Jeremianic tradition offers insight into the interaction between religious texts, identity and conflict on a small scale. It becomes clear that conflict creates new identities and is therefore a contributor in the ongoing development of religious tradition. However, these identities tend to be fixed. Only some individuals are able to escape from categorical identifications with which they approach the text. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is intimately related to the narratives of the Bible. It can be said that the Jeremianic tradition is especially attractive to marginal voices and offers space to them because the tradition is layered. However, development of the Jeremianic tradition is not a fair, democratic process in which is ensured that all voices are heard. The act of appropriating the text can create space for transformation, where fixed identities and narratives are opened up, but this does not automatically happen.

First of all, the encounters make clear how difficult it is to have a meaningful encounter between two groups representing groups in conflict. It is not possible to break through long-existing patterns in one or two meetings. Many more encounters would have been necessary to go beyond the looming clashes in the Bethlehemite encounter and the friendly exchange between the students, and to arrive at the level of mutual trust, knowledge and recognition that is necessary for dialogue. In such a space, differences in religious and national narratives and identities, as well as overlaps, could be explored. This requires enormous commitment on both sides. It would require from Israeli participants the courage to acknowledge the oppressive politics of their state. From the Palestinians it would require the courage to meet what they view as representatives of their oppressors. An encounter requires transformation in the way conflict and identity are perceived.

Can the text function as common ground in a meeting between Israelis and Palestinians? On the basis of this research, it is accurate to say that conflict plays an important role in the process of *tradere*. The book of Jeremiah is a shared heritage for Christians and Jews, in the sense that both groups see this book as sacred. However, this is no guarantee that these groups of heirs will develop a deeper mutual understanding. These readers do not necessarily acknowledge the other as heirs. They do not always acknowledge the appropriation of the other as legitimate, because of their own exclusive reading or because they reject the exclusivism of the other. Laith has difficulty acknowledging the interpretations of fellow Christians. From a political perspective, the identification of the text with the Zionist narrative enforces the dominant position of Israeli Jews.

Davidson calls the text an 'avenue for resistance', 'a tool for anticolonial and decolonizing struggles.'[623] On the basis of the above, I find this perspective somewhat simplistic. The text contains colonizing and decolonizing forces, tendencies of resistance and tendencies of oppression. Jeremiah 32 is a texts shaped by the effects of Babylonian and Persian hegemony on Judean society. Jeremiah 32 can help to gain insight in the effects of those hegemony on the development of a diversity of positions, also regarding religion, in Judean society. However, the text is not an antidote against forces of oppression and colonization. In the case of Jeremiah 32, I therefore argue for a reading that takes the ethical aspects of the processes of appropriation seriously, without understanding Jer. 32 as a source of ethics or ready-made religious truth.

Nevertheless, without idealizing the potential of the Jeremianic tradition, this research could be of aid in pointing out how a meeting around such a text could lead to transformation, in the sense of a negotiation of identities and narratives. The meetings and encounters do show small traces of transformation. The meetings show moments of increasing insight among the participants both for the viewpoints held in the other groups and as well as the diversity of one's own group. The Jewish women venture into unknown territory by coming to Beit Jalla. Michal begins to understand a Christian appropriation of the text. Anna attempts to act as an agent of change, mostly in vain, while Mariam patiently and tenaciously searches for understanding of the Palestinian position. Hibba creatively and courageously explores new ways of being Palestinian and Christian. The Israeli students show vulnerability and courage in facing the Zionist narrative. The Bethlehemites present in the encounter eagerly search for inclusive views.

Although the text has no inherent capability of effecting conflict resolution, it does have the rather unique quality of having been shaped and understood by centuries of appropriation and re-appropriation. It continues to be authoritative to those readers. The text as a shared heritage is a potentially rich space: the act of *tradere* requires openness to be criticized, changed and transformed by the text. However, as has been pointed out, there are many factors limiting the space in which transformation can take place, most importantly an understanding of religious and national narratives as fixed and unchanging, and a lack of awareness of the way in which they interact and are fluid. Jeremiah 32 provides both the means for the encounter to take place and services as a very troubling stumbling block in the meetings. The aim of this chapter is not to provide a single model for how intercultural discussions about biblical texts might help overcome conflict. It is both helpful and problematic to use texts shaped by conflict in situations of conflict.

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[623] Davidson 2011, p. 43.

If the Jeremianic tradition is to be of value in opening up fixed positions, it needs a very careful approach, a considerable amount of time, very dedicated participants and group leaders capable of hosting such a complex process. I want to focus here on the role of exegetes in this process. Exegetes need to create space between the text and its readers in which transformation can take place. The Jeremianic tradition needs to be rediscovered as living tradition that is ambiguous and layered, and cannot be claimed exclusively. The tradition needs to be freed from readers' desires to read an internally coherent text containing beautiful religious truths, or meeting other assumptions. A more flexible approach to religious tradition is necessary, that takes into account the way the text is shaped in processes of identity formation, in which conflict usually plays a role. As is clear from the above, many religious readers object to such a view, which in their eyes does not fit the quality of the text. As a scholar of the Old Testament, I argue that this is how the text presents itself and wants to be understood. Recognition of the different voices in the text, and therefore of the important role of the community of readers to find their own voice requires new hermeneutics. This requires from readers a readiness to live with ambiguity. It requires this same readiness with respect to the narratives functioning in one's society.

When biblical scholars helps readers to discover the text in its layeredness and ambiguity, they provide the reader with a framework to connect to their own narratives. In that case, both the ambiguity of the Jeremianic narrative, of the Israeli and Palestinian narratives (and those of many others) could come to the fore. People who dare going into go hidden aspects of identity, uncovering new parts of self and of the biblical narrative are capable of finding ways out of the conflict. I want to stress that this is necessary so particularly in this case among Israeli readers, who are less aware of the existence of the Palestinian narrative and the devastating effects of Israeli hegemony.[624] What is needed is for people, not only Israelis and Palestinians but all of us, to look beyond conflict, beyond the ordinary ways that we have learned to view and subdivide the world. I am advocating not for a reading that ignores the political, conflicting contexts of a religious tradition, nor one that denies that many narratives are so hidden from us that they have become lost. Rather, I argue for a reading that acknowledges power negotiations both within the text and in present-day contexts. This perspective acknowledges also the harm that the conflict does to both Palestinian and Israeli society today, and attempts to imagine overcoming historical injustice by reformulating narratives, and addressing continuing injustices by criticizing misuse of power.

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[624] As Nadim Khoury points out, the identity-costs of narrative negotiation are higher for those in power (Khoury (in print), p. 135).

Becoming part of the Jeremianic Tradition

6.1 How to understand the Jeremianic Tradition

This study has researched the way groups negotiate religious identity, memory and authority within the ongoing tradition of Jeremiah 32. How does this tradition shape identity and how is it shaped by ongoing appropriations? In chapters 2-5, different appropriations of Jeremiah 32 [39] and its ongoing history of interpretation were analyzed in terms of group identity and interests, with special attention given to imaginations of landscape and power exchange between centre and periphery. I understood the Jeremianic tradition as a form of collective memory, viewing the text itself as interpreted tradition, and ongoing appropriations as part of that process of *tradere*. I now collect the fruits of this approach: this study used a method of analysis that is capable of opening up narratives, both the narratives of the tradition as also the narratives of the heirs of the tradition.

In chapter 2, I pointed to the narrative of purchase (vv. 5-15) as being the central story out of which the rest of the chapter evolved, even though this narrative fails to connect to all sections of the chapter. I do not mean to say that the 'real message' of the chapter lies in this narrative. Rather, this narrative is ambiguous, as is the chapter. In addition, according to the Masoretic Tradition, vv. 36-41 are the heart of the chapter, in which the purchase does not play a role. I distinguished between different layers in the chapter, offering possible explanations of how to understand the positions reflected in these layers. I presented an understanding of the shift in imaginations of landscape, understanding the negative image of Jerusalem as part of the narrative of those who remained in the land, with Benjamin as their centre. I argued that the negative image of Jerusalem was taken over by returning exile, and that only slowly Jerusalem's central position was restored. I argued that in the last layer of the chapter, vv. 36-41, testifies to a different understanding of exile, leaving space for the possibility to be in exile inside of the land, and 'in place' outside of the land.

What the differences between LXX and MT make clear, is that both structure and content play an important role in creating a meaningful, albeit ambiguous, text. I have shown that the Jeremiah 39 [32] according to the Septuagint present the whole chapter as a narrative told by Jeremiah and the

narrator. Jeremiah becomes a figure of identification detached from history here. Jeremiah 32 [39] according to the Masoretic Text explicitly shifts in space and time. Here, the focus shifts from the prophet to a new addressee. Jeremiah 32 [39] according to MT and LXX can therefore best be read as two variant interpretations of a tradition that must have existed in yet different shapes preceding these two manifestations. They both represent a stage in the development of the diverse Jeremianic tradition, leading to further developments of the tradition, on account of their being contrasting, overlapping shapes in which the tradition manifests itself. All of these manifestations are marked by their own internal tensions and ambiguities.

On the basis of chapters 2 and 3 I have concluded that given the layeredness of Jeremiah 32, an *Urtext* (a pure form of the text on which to base an analysis) does not exist. Therefore, all exegesis is reception history. It is the task of exegetes to open up the text and existing readings, making the layeredness visible and giving insight into the processes shaping tradition. The character of the text as collective memory indicated that the search for an *Urtext* or pure tradition is futile. It is not possible to find one text on which a 'correct reading' can be based. Neither is it possible to select one of the voices of the text in order to identify it as 'the voice' of the text. This has implications for how religious traditions relate to their corpus of holy texts. It renders all fundamentalisms – claiming that their position is above subjectivity or intersubjectivity – as futile. It also means that claims of being orthodox – meaning: having the right interpretation – are difficult to establish. What we have, is a diversity of voices, along with the challenge to live with that diversity, to create meaning in full awareness of it, without attempting to explain it away.

The processes of identity shaping in the Jeremianic tradition have certain dynamics. Some of these dynamics are given on account of the specific traits of the Jeremianic tradition, including its focus on land, its markedly layered and ambigous nature, the marginal position of the prophet, and, for more than in other traditions, the circumstance within which textual development and literary development went hand in hand. Other dynamics involve more general dynamics of how narratives of (religious) identity are shaped, such as the need to reshape group narratives in changing circumstances and group conflict as one of the factors stimulating *tradere*.

The capacity of the tradition to continually be reinvented, has to with its ambiguity of the figure of the prophet and the *Endgestalt* of the tradition in MT and LXX. The tradition is capable of hosting a diversity of positions. I have pointed at the way the tradition attracts marginal voices, given the marginality of Jeremiah as a prophet not going into exile, but ending up in Egypt. I have highlighted, however, that there is a danger of over idealizing the Jeremianic tradition as a tradition of marginal voices. It needs to be underlined, first, that power relations are continually shifting. The returning exiles are likely not to

have been a powerful group when they came to Judah, but their position became the loudest voice found in the chapter.

I have pointed out that, to a certain extent, the last layer of Jeremiah 32 steps over older debates, thus creating a more inclusive identity. However, this inclusive identity silences or misrepresents aspects of the complex identity of Judeans in the period before, during and after the exile. An identity has ben created that presents us with only a limited understanding of what Judean identity is about. It has to be said that from our perspective and with the resources we have, it is impossible to reconstruct 'reality' and to point out exactly where the state of affairs reflected in the book of Jeremiah is ' wrong' or ' false' or 'deceptive' . However, by combining the material from the book with insights from studies on how identity develops in situations of conflict, I pointed out what may have happened. I did so in an attempt to diversify the way we look at this text.

As we have seen, the processes of tradition building taking place in this text, have parallels with later appropriations. Not only are similar themes picked up and developed, but also the dynamics of appropriation and of using existing traditions to build group discourse often are similar. Group narratives tend to simplify 'reality' and to overstress differences, while at the same time the narratives leave traces of other realities and do not attempt to be fully coherent. Differences vis-a-vis other groups are overstressed, while differences within the groups are largely ignored.

It has become clear that a driving force of the ongoing process of *tradere* is group conflict, and that it is therefore necessary to be attentive to power negotiations in the text, and to hidden and dominant narratives. I pointed at the capacity of the tradition to host very diverse and opposing tradition, such as the voice of the people of the land underlying continuity in the land, and the 'returning exiles' claiming exile as a necessary experience. I have also pointed out that some of these debates have been overcome in the tradition: with the passing of time, some disputes become irrelevant. Again, I think optimism about the capacity of religious tradition to overcome conflict should be avoided. Rather, this study shows that religious identity is often understood in exclusive terms. I have pointed out that vv. 36-41 present a more inclusive understanding of identity. However, the passing of time is the crucial factor here in overcoming the animosity present in older debates, and the religious tradition merely functions as a basin in which the voices are held together. Nonetheless, the capacity of 'holding together' can be crucial, as I point out in chapter 5.

On the basis of chapter 4 I conclude that the ambiguity pointed out in chapters 2 and 3 and the openness of the tradition to ongoing appropriation led to a wide variety of traditions in early Jewish and early Christian exegesis. The context of the appropriations is very diverse, but the attitude towards tradition is similar. I pointed out that these documents testify to immediate

appropriation. The communities behind these texts seem to experience no distance between themselves and the religious tradition. Tradition can be freely adapted and transformed to become relevant to their new contexts. In such appropriations history becomes the stage on which God enacts a plan of redemption. The contextuality of the processes taking place in the text is lost out of sight. The text is viewed as containing examples and truths that have value outside of historical processes.

What this research makes clear, is that paying careful attention to the different aspects of chapter 32, brings out its layered character, and leads to questions on the growth of tradition and the character of religious tradition. This has relevance both for scholarship and for religious communities identifying as heirs of this tradition. On the basis of this research, the plurality of voices and conflict between those voices has been established. This method is also relevant for contemporary interpretations – in a way, chapter 5 is the laboratory of the method used in this study. It gives insight into the Jeremianic tradition-at-work. The chapter has made visible that the processes by which tradition shapes identity, which in its turn shapes tradition, are complex negotiations of group identity. It showed how the factor conflict creates very fixed identities and narratives, which makes negotiation of narratives (i.e., the kind of appropriation in which transformation takes place) very difficult. I have pointed out that the Israeli readers tend to identify with the returning exiles, seeing themselves as a marginal group. In general, they lack insight in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I have also pointed out that Palestinian readers tend to identify the text with the Zionist narrative. Generally, this leads to an enforcement of existing ideas of the conflict: Israeli readers view themselves as an endangered marginal group, Palestinians feel marginalized both by Jer. 32 and by the Zionist narrative.

I have pointed out a variety of identifications in the different chapters. For instance, Jeremiah was identified with, or closely linked to the exiles (for instance in the G-discourse of the Apocryphon), Jeremiah has been identified with Jesus (in Paraleipomena, for instance, and by Laith), and Jeremiah has been seen as an exemplary notary (LXX). At the same time, groups have identified with the returning exiles (such as the Jewish women, but also Hibba), or with the people of the land (Boulus). These identifications are part of processes of appropriation. However, I have argued for an appropriation that understands a group approaching the tradition as heirs to this complex tradition as a whole. I argued that this approach of the text is more fruitful than identification with one of the voices in the text.

I have made clear that including the analysis of contemporary reading in the work of exegesis is fruitful for understanding the text. The appropriations of the groups in Jerusalem and Bethlehem made me aware of the importance of imaginations of landscape in relation to power, a perspective that was very relevant for understanding images of space in

Jeremiah 32.

In chapter 5 I argued that simply reading the text does not stimulate negotiation of narratives. The text does not contain an antidote against conflict. However, I have pointed out moments of transformation, both in the separate meetings and in the encounters between the groups. I also pointed out attitudes that lead to closed readings and immediate appropriation, in which no transformation takes place. To begin with the latter, strictly separating between religious and national aspects of identity leads to closed readings. This was the case in Laith's reading, Amira's reading and that of most of the Jewish women. Laiths and Amira's view of religious tradition did not leave room for any contextual Palestinian significance of the text. In addition, Laith's orthodox understanding disabled him from having an understanding of Jeremiah 32 that takes its layeredness seriously. He was not able to allow for perspectives on the text different from his own. Among the Jewish women, there was no distinction between different aspects of identity. This negation of tensions that do exist between being Jewish and being Israeli lead to a fixed and closed narrative. The Israeli-Jewish women experienced the text as theirs, not being able to acknowledge the political implications of their reading. On the other hand, the insight of the interrelatedness of different aspects of identity, and the tensions between these, as in the reading of for instance Anna, Hibba and Boulus was a positive factor. Such awareness led to several critical questions.

The tendency of the Bethlehemites to identify the text with the Zionist narrative, left no room for alternative approaches of the text. A contextual Palestinian reading could not develop. Such fixed views on identity, narratives and religious tradition left very little space for transformation to occur. I concluded that retreating to exclusivist, fixed understandings of national and/or religious identity is a frequent but hopeless strategy.

Attitudes that open space necessary for the negotiation of narratives can be summarized as vulnerability, allowing for ambiguity and tension (as mentioned above), allowing for questions that cannot (immediately) be answered, and allowing for diversity and openness. The participants from the students groups especially, except for Laith, were capable of showing vulnerability with respect to their own identity and the narratives of their society. They were open about conflicts they experience between religious and national aspects of their identity. They were not only capable of seeing ambiguity and layeredness in their own national narratives, they were also open to a new understanding of Jer. 32. As a result, there was space for transformation, and openness to hear the narrative of the other. They allowed for insecurity, not demanding ultimate answers. They showed willingness to begin a quest for a more inclusive understanding of identity. Most of the Bethlehemites testified to a strong desire for an inclusive understanding of identity, which made them reject chapter 32. They were less open to a new

understanding of religious tradition.

An understanding of identity as always in development, and therefore open, as was visible for instance in Hibba's approach to the text, is required. Thus, religion is not used as a place of refuge to escape from problems, but rather as a space in which to address the central questions of life. Such a reading understands the need for a contextual reading of one's self in relation to the need of the contextual reading of the other, which leads to the desire to formulate inclusive narratives, as was the case in for instance Boulus' approach. Such a reading understands that the text is open to a diversity of meaning, as Michal discovered.

Acknowledgment of what is difficult and unresolved, both in the narratives of tradition and in one's own narratives, leads to space to ask questions, and to seek for new ways of understanding narratives. The Jewish students and Hibba approached their own narratives and identity critically, as well as the biblical narrative. They were less attached than the older generation to religious preconceptions of what the text should be, along with of what their own identity should be. Hibba's and Boulus' authentic search for contextual reading was combined with a wish not to exclude others. Not all of these attitudes can be taught. However, exegetes can help to point at the nature of the text, and therefore the (intellectual) impossibility of sticking to immobile understandings of narratives.

I have therefore also pointed out the responsibility of exegetes in stimulating a different approach to religious texts. This means pointing out the complexity and richness of this tradition, over against voices naively or more aggressively claiming the text. Exegesis can offer arguments about why exclusive readings fail to recognize the character of the text. This study shows that the analytical work of the exegete leads to the discovery of layeredness and plurality, so that taking refuge in an exclusive position is no longer an option. I hold that this approach also has value for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Here too, careful analysis can open up fixed identifications and lead to transformation.

I have concluded that it is fruitful to look at the ongoing and diverse Jeremianic tradition as collective memory, and to make a careful analysis of the different manifestations of the tradition by precisely observing patterns of communication, layers and interests. As a scholar of the Old Testament, I argue that this is how the text presents itself and wants to be understood. I have argued that recognition of the different voices in the text, and therefore of the important role that the communities of readers have into finding their own voice requires a postcolonial approach, attentive to power negotiations taking place. To some readers, like to most of the Jewish women and Laith, the text speaks with one voice, and this voice supports their position. It is a reading that does not allow for diversity and that does not take power differences into account. I have therefore underlined the responsibility of exegetes to provide

alternative readings of Jer. 32 and other texts, pointing out the ambiguity and layeredness that characterize such texts.

I have pointed out that biblical texts can be used in contexts of conflict in which the text plays a dubious role, albeit in a very careful way. Biblical tradition sometimes plays a negative role in conflict, as it does in the Zionist narrative, and, more importantly, it contains exclusivist traditions that feed into conflict. The marginalization of the perspective of the people who remained in the land in the Jeremianic tradition is an example of such exclusion. The Jeremianic tradition can therefore not be used in a naive way. However, when biblical scholars help readers discover the text in its layeredness and ambiguity, they provide the reader with a framework to connect to their own narratives. This creates space to also recognize the layeredness and ambiguity of ones own narratives. Groups who dare to go into go hidden aspects of identity, uncovering new parts of self and of the biblical narrative, are capable of reviewing and reformulating their narratives, and come to a more inclusive understanding of identity.

In addition, reading a text like Jeremiah 32 in which marginal and dominant voices play a role, asks for sensitivity to marginal voices. Questions need to be asked such as: 'Why do we read the text as we read it?' 'In whose interest is this reading?', 'Is this reading life-giving, and if so, to whom?' We saw in the reading groups that these questions are not always asked. Readers coming from the 'centre' are even more in need of such sensitivity. Readers who read from the margins are at least aware of marginal voices. The Jewish women, for instance, experienced themselves as marginalized and as victims, without taking into account those who have been excluded and victimized by the Zionist narrative with which they identify. I introduced a normative element here that is not derived from the text, but from the act of reading. I have argued for a reading that takes ethical questions seriously and is open to negotiation. I further discuss this in 6.3. and 6.4.

6.2 Continuity: what keeps the tradition together?

Identity and narratives of identity are never stable, but continually need to be adapted because contexts continually change. In religious tradition, this necessitates the ongoing process of *tradere*. Part of religious tradition is therefore a tension between the necessity to adapt and transform (discontinuity) and the need to identity as part of the ongoing tradition (continuity).

My approach of the Jeremianic tradition as a form of collective memory allowed me to make comparisons between diverse manifestations of the tradition. Each appropriation is produced in very specific circumstances, although these circumstances cannot always be reconstructed. The Jeremianic tradition has not developed coherently. Rather, each aspect of the tradition could take root and become itself a fresh stem, to which new interpretations are diachronically connected, while later interpretations influence the way earlier manifestations of the text are read. Processes in which tradition is shaped are coincidental, fragmented, even chaotic. This leads to questions regarding what holds the tradition together.

Parallels can be pointed out in appropriations of the chapter, in recurring themes and interpretation of events and characters. Coherence and continuity can be found here, for instance in the concept of exile or in the figure of the prophet himself. However, the many roles Jeremiah receives in the course of the tradition, that of a notary, a new Moses, a traitor, a man of peaceful resistance, the guard of the temple treasures, are very diverse. Exile continues to be a meaningful concept, but it is put to use in different contexts with different goals. That being said, the tradition of Jeremiah 32 proves to stimulate reflection on land, identity and exile. It brings its readership to point out their connections to land, their struggles with identity, and what imaginations of landscape are central to them.

Continuity cannot be established on the basis of the authority of the 'original text'. As has been argued, there is no 'original Jeremianic text' that is subsequently received, the text is received and interpreted tradition all along. This text has then never really reached an end-stage, but only intermediate fixed forms, such as MT and LXX, that then became subjects of processes of development, of being received, appropriated and passed on. The Greek and Hebrew text can be seen as more fixed forms of the tradition, in which the tensions between continuity and discontinuity, identity and tradition, have found a momentary balance that continues to be read and reinterpreted. They run the risk, however, of being seen as fixed forms and as speaking one authoritative voice. Such a view does not take the character of tradition into

account. Meanings are formed and transformed in the ongoing development of tradition. One meaning cannot be claimed as more true than the other. What a text means to a reader is not a stable trait of religious tradition, but is in constant flux. We should not envision that text with its context meets a reader with his or her context, but rather that both text and reader exist in shifting realities that both partially overlapping with the space of the text. That is: two layered worlds (or landscapes) between which overlap exist. In chapter 5 this overlap consists, for instance, in the shared dominant Israeli narrative and a shared (but different) sense of historical, cultural and religious connection to the text. The text has at the same time aspects that seem familiar within the landscape of a reader (as part of her or his religious or cultural heritage) and aspects that are strange. In the process of appropriation often aspects that might have seemed familiar suddenly appear as ambiguous and different, and what once seemed strange may appear as 'nearby'.

What keeps the tradition together then, is rather the fact that it continued to be passed on, being appropriated by new groups, who by this act have made themselves heirs of the tradition. The continuity is in the first place in the act of appropriating, in the experience of being addressed by this tradition – which actually may mean many things. All groups appropriating the tradition identify as heirs to this tradition. I will argue in 6.4 what I understand as being the main challenge resulting from this shared heirship today: the willingness to formulate towards inclusive narratives.

6.3 Towards a different understanding of religious texts: the contribution of biblical scholars

How does scholarship deal with the diversity of religious and other claims present in these books? This question is related to methodology, on account of the nature of the material studied. A more integral method is needed that can effectively address questions pertaining to the text tradition as a whole, not just to one aspect of it, such as the question of meaning. What matters in these texts, and what good theology consists of, I argue, is not what comes out only after all long and tedious analyses of texts are done, and the findings are put together, so that finally the question of meaning can be asked. Nor does it consist of general statements applying everywhere and always. Rather, the question of meaning plays a role at every level of dealing with the text, and in every stage that the text is going through. Meaning is not found in what is 'original', or in one shape in which the tradition manifests itself, for instance according to the Masoretic tradition. Meaning is continually (re)shaped in the processes the tradition (the interaction between texts, readership and context) is going through. This means that biblical scholars should testify to meaningful, religious readings of the text, in full acceptance of its layeredness. The richness of the text because of its layeredness should be explored and made visible, without – again – idealizing the text, and turning multivocality into an idealized image of dialogue. This study shows that such a new approach of religious texts is possible, and it leads to exciting results.

The question of the complexity of texts is also related to ethical questions particular to this type of scholarship. The texts of the Old Testament influence reality, and Old Testament scholarship negotiates how these texts are read and understood. I want to indicate how in my view religious tradition can be meaningfully studied. In the preceding chapters, I have pleaded to view the layeredness and complexity of the text as something positive, something that contains hermeneutical possibilities, rather than something that renders any quest for meaning futile. A text that contains multiple meanings and is continually in processes of reinterpretation asks to be debated, for hidden voices to be uncovered, for continuity and discontinuity to be pointed out. Exegetes should resist the need to make the texts easier to understand, smoother, fitting into existing religious ideas, etc. They should challenge themselves, as well as other readers of these texts, to acknowledge the diversity of the texts.

The Hebrew scriptures are not unique because they contain unique claims to truth or because these narratives are from a moral high level that is unique. Rather, as I have shown, its value exists in its layeredness, reflecting

the flow of life, the way in which human beings collect experiences. Conflicts, power difference and exclusiveness are therefore part of these narratives. I have argued for the importance of an approach of biblical tradition that is attentive to its layered and ambiguous character, and to the power negotiations taking place. I have presented a postcolonial approach taking its point of departure in the text and the stumbling blocks it presents as very suitable for the Jeremianic tradition. It takes the character of the text seriously, is attentive to power, to the importance of space, and to the need of negotiating narratives.

I have argued for an ethical approach to the Jeremianic tradition, not in the sense that ethical principles need to be or can always be derived from the text, but rather that being part of this layered and ambiguous tradition requires a sensitivity to ethical questions. We have seen that some of the Palestinian readers argued for an inclusive Palestinian reading of the text. I underlined the importance of this insight, that is in fact part of Palestinian and Israeli initiatives of non-violent resistance. It is an insight that is of importance for any context of appropriation of religious texts: an appropriation of a text entails a certain claim of the text, that can exclude others. This is not necessarily problematic: a Jewish interpretation of Jer. 32 as part of one's family history can co-exist with a Christian reading of the text as foreshadowing Jesus. However, when either of these readings is perceived as a closed reading, and the only possible reading, problems result. The diversity that is part of the tradition is then not acknowledged. More importantly, appropriations should take into account who have been excluded in a certain reading, and what the consequences of that exclusion are. This means that processes of appropriation are always open to negotiations, since exclusion is always part of processes of appropriation.

6.4 Negotiating narratives

The aim of this study has been a renewal of the way religious tradition is approached. The challenge is to acknowledge diversity in the text and in one's own context, and to feel compelled to find inclusive ways of reading text and self. This asks for vulnerability, openness, and the willingness to accept that there is no absolute truth or pure text to take refuge in.

Inclusive identity is somewhat counterintuitive. Social memory or narratives of identity aim to establish and strengthen identity. This is necessary, since we need identity to position ourselves in the world, even though identity is also a fragile thing. Narratives of identity, by definition, create difference and sameness, in order to establish an in- and an out-group, and erase difference where it is in fact present, in order to present a homogenous picture of the in-group. Thus, difference is pictured as something unwanted and dangerous, instead of something to embrace and enjoy. Narratives of identity have the tendency not to present the full variety present in a group. In spite of their ambiguity, these narratives have to and are intended to simplify reality. The text may easily perpetuate constructions of otherness, unless a method of analysis is used that is aware of the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion.

I have made clear that the task of a scholar attempting to shed light on ideological religious debates in Old Testament narratives is not methodologically different from doing the same in contemporary appropriations. Exegetes should be aware of their role in stimulating the awareness that diversity is part of the biblical tradition, as are power struggles and ambiguity. It is therefore the responsibility of biblical scholars to search for hidden voices, for 'the other' and for the margins, in all appropriations of the ongoing tradition of Jeremiah. This commitment is part of the willingness to be part of the journey towards inclusivity, without having found it.

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Jeremiah Ontzet: Groepsidentiteit en Conflict in de Jeremiaanse Traditie

Inleiding

Dit proefschrift is de vrucht van fascinaties en verbazing. Het begon met een levendige interesse voor de diverse, rijke, vreemde teksten van het Oude Testament, en het boek Jeremia in het bijzonder, en de niet geheel vanzelfsprekende omstandigheid dat die verhalen nog steeds worden gelezen, en onze werkelijkheid beïnvloeden. Daarbij voegde zich een fascinatie voor conflict: conflict blijkt een van de drijvende krachten achter het boek Jeremia te zijn. Cruciaal in de ontwikkeling van het boek waren de spanningen en conflicten in de Judese samenleving als gevolg van de Babylonische overheersing. De Babyloniërs namen Jeruzalem in, verwoesten de stad en deporteerden verschillende groepen hooggeplaatste Judeëers. Andere groepen Judeëers bleven in het land, en weer anderen vluchtten naar Egypte. Carolyn Sharp maakte me erop attent dat je het boek kunt lezen als een debat tussen die groepen en nog latere groepen Judeëers, die – hoewel divers qua tijden en plaatsen – zich allemaal uiteen zetten met de tradities rond die ene profeet. Die debatten moet men zich niet voorstellen als rustige dialogen. Eerder gaat het op het scherpst van de snede: van wie is het land, wie horen er bij het volk van God?

Het resultaat van die debatten, het boek Jeremia, is complex en veelstemmig. Sommige stemmen in dat debat werden dominant, van andere zijn slechts sporen terug te vinden. Een dominante stem is die van een groep gedeporteerden die na een aantal generaties uit Babel terugkeren naar het land. In hoofdstuk 2 geef ik een beschrijving van de *eindgestalte* van de Hebreeuwse tekst. Daarnaast bied ik een deconstructie en poging tot reconstructie van de verschillende lagen waaruit het hoofdstuk bestaat.

Dat de ontstaansgeschiedenis van het boek onstuimig was, blijkt ook uit de verschillen tussen de Hebreeuwse versie van de tekst (de Masoretische traditie) en de Griekse (de Septuaginta). Blijkbaar begon het proces van doorgave (en vertaling) van de traditie al toen het boek nog in ontwikkeling was. De verschillen tussen de teksten geven blijk van een eigen kijk op de betekenis van hoofdstuk 32. In hoofdstuk 3 vergelijk ik het hoofdstuk volgende Masoretische traditie en de traditie van de Septuaginta. Dat het boek Jeremia tot heel verschillende toe-eigeningen aanleiding kan zijn, blijkt ook uit vroeg-joodse en vroeg-christelijke interpretaties (hoofdstuk 4). Tot slot is een dominante stem in het boek die van de terugkerende ballingen. Het Zionisme identificeert zich met die stem, en zo speelt het boek een rol in het Palestijns-Israëlisch conflict. In hoofdstuk 5 analyseer ik lezingen in de context van dit conflict.

Dit proefschrift poogt de spanningen tussen periferie en centrum, de dominante en de verborgen stemmen, in het proces van de vorming van groepsidentiteit in de Jeremiaanse traditie zichtbaar te maken. Daarbij moet aangetekend worden dat verborgen stemmen vaak deels of bijna geheel verloren zijn gegaan. Ik meen dat een poging tot reconstructie van waarde is, en zelfs hoort tot de taak van de exegeet die zich realiseert dat tekst nog doorgaande traditie onschuldig zijn. De vraag naar de verantwoordelijkheid is van een exegeet, in het toegankelijk maken van en de omgang met een dergelijke complexe traditie, speelt dan ook een rol in dit onderzoek.

Methode

De uitdaging van dit onderzoek is ook methodisch: hoe krijg je nu vat op een traditie die divers en veelstemmig is? De sleutel die ik hier voorstel is het concept de 'Jeremiaanse traditie', die ik opvat als een vorm van collectief geheugen. Ik duid daarmee ten eerste aan dat het boek zelf geïnterpreteerde traditie is. De toe-eigening van teksten begint niet pas als het boek af is, maar vindt plaats binnen het boek: de verschillende groepen Judeëers die schuilgaan achter het boek hebben in wisselde situaties zin proberen te geven aan hun eigen ervaringen in wisselwerking met de traditie. Soms worden in de exegese benaderingen die uitgaan van de eindtekst en benaderingen die juist die eindtekst fileren tegenover elkaar gesteld. Het concept van de Jeremiaanse traditie integreert ze: de eindtekst is een van de gestalten die de doorgaande traditie heeft aangenomen.

Bovendien laat het concept zien dat benaderingen die zich interesseren voor de receptie van de tekst in feite weinig anders doen dan zichtbaar maken wat ook al in de tekst gebeurt: groepen eigenen zich de traditie toe. In die interactie transformeren zij zelf, en ook de traditie. Het boek, en ook hoofdstuk 32, bestaat dus uit uitdrukkingen van religieuze groepsidentiteit.

Kortom: de noodzaak tot uiteenzetting met de bestaande traditie, zodat een groep lezers verandert en de traditie ook, zet zich voort buiten de grenzen van het boek: de Jeremiaanse traditie bleef van belang, tot vandaag de dag. Daarmee relativeer ik het gebruikelijke protestantse onderscheid tussen Schrift en Traditie.

Ik gebruik het begrip 'collectief geheugen' om de aard van de Jeremiaanse traditie te verhelderen. Een collectief geheugen is een complexe set verhalen waarin groepen hun identiteit uitdrukken. Zo'n collectieve geheugen bevat een diversiteit aan verhalen, die elkaar ook overlappen en tegenspreken. Sommige verhalen zijn dominant, andere ondergeschikt. In iedere groep bestaan subgroepen die zich tegen het dominante verhaal verzetten. Een collectief geheugen is niet statisch, maar altijd in beweging: het past zich aan aan veranderingen in de tijd.

Het begrip Jeremiaanse traditie geeft ruimte om de traditie kritisch te

benaderen. Ik betoog dat dat nodig is, in een traditie die bestaat uit dominante en meer ondergeschikte stemmen. Hoe ga je als lezer daarmee om? Wat betekent het je te voegen in die traditie? Ik stel voor de Jeremiaanse traditie te benaderen vanuit een postkoloniaal perspectief. Dat wil zeggen: een perspectief dat oog heeft voor de rol van macht, en dan met name de machtuitwisselingen die plaats vinden tussen centrum en periferie. Dankzij de leesgroepen in Jeruzalem kreeg ik oog voor het postkoloniale perspectief, dat wil zeggen: de plek waar een groep zich bevindt, de manier waarop die plek beleefd en verbeeld wordt, en de rol van macht daarin.

Het begrip 'Jeremiaanse traditie' maakt duidelijk dat er geen principieel onderscheid is tussen de toe-eigening die plaats vindt in het boek zelf, en latere vorming van groepsidentiteit in interactie met de traditie. Mijn interesse is in de vorming van groepsidentiteit die zichtbaar is in de ontwikkeling. De noodzaak in wijzigende omstandigheden identiteit vorm te geven begrijp ik als een centrale stuwende kracht van traditie. Alle exegese, betoog ik, is contextueel en intercultureel. Dat maakt ook duidelijk dat contextuele lezingen van het boek, zoals in Israel en Palestina, net zo goed onderdeel zijn van het werk van de exegeet. Bovendien: de ontdekkingen van 'gewone lezers' zijn vruchtbaar voor de exegeet, en vice versa. Een exegeet is een lezer onder de lezers.

De Masoretische Traditie

Startpunt van mijn onderzoek is een taalkundige en syntactische analyse van Jeremia 32. Die analyse werpt licht op de uiteindelijke vorm van de tekst zoals die in de Masoretische traditie is doorgegeven. Tegelijk komen oneffenheden aan het licht, die deels een functie hebben in de Masoretische eindgestalte, maar die ook wijzen op ontwikkelingen binnen de tekst. Die eindgestalte richt de aandacht van de lezer met name op vv. 36-42, zeer hooggestemde verzen waarin de relatie tussen God en mensen wordt geschetst als een van doorgaande pais en vree.

De Masoretische eindgestalte biedt een bepaalde interpretatie van de tekst, maar is niet zonder oneffenheden. Die oneffenheden wijzen op de historische processen die de tekst hebben gevormd. In een diachrone analyse probeer ik die ontwikkeling aan te wijzen. Hoewel in de exegese diachrone en synchrone benaderingen wel eens tegenover elkaar worden geplaatst, zie ik ze als aanvullend: ook de Masoretische eindgestalte is een fase in de doorgaande ontwikkeling van de tekst traditie. Voor en na die eindgestalte heeft de tekst vele andere fasen gekend.

Tot slot doe ik een poging tot reconstructie van de verschillende stemmen in het hoofdstuk. Ik concludeer dat spanningen tussen Jeruzalem, als centrum van de politieke en religieuze macht in Judah, en het gebied van de stam Benjamin een rol spelen in het hoofdstuk. Na de belegering en verwoesting van een deel van de stad en Juda door de Babyloniers, verschoof

de macht naar Mizpah, in Benjamin. De tekst suggereert dat terugkerende ballingen zich in eerste instantie richten op het land van Benjamin en Juda - niet de stad. Pas in de laatste laag, vv. 36-42, het centrum van het hoofdstuk volgens MT, wordt de aandacht weer op Jeruzalem gericht.

Wat dan vanuit een postkoloniaal perspectief opvalt, is dat Jeruzalem er in het hoofdstuk bekaaid af komt. Getuige v. 31 moet de stad verwijderd worden van Gods aangezicht. In eerste instantie focust het hoofdstuk zich op het stuk land dat Jeremia koopt. Dat bevindt zich niet in Jeruzalem, niet in Judah, maar in Anathoth, Benjamin. Het is opvallend dat de goede boodschap die in de verzen 14 en 15 aan die aankoop gekoppeld wordt, economisch van aard is, en zich richt op Anathoth. In vv. 42-44 wordt opnieuw een belofte verbonden aan de aankoop. Dit keer is het geografisch perspectief uitgebreid: het gaat niet alleen om Anathoth, maar ook om de steden rondom Jeruzalem, de Shefelah, etc. Jeruzalem blijft ongenoemd. Pas in vv. 36-41, die ik beschouw als de laatste laag van het hoofdstuk is Jeruzalem het centrum van het toekomstperspectief. Ditmaal is dat perspectief niet economisch van aard, maar religieus – en hoe: 'zij zullen mij een volk zijn, ik zal hen een God zijn'. Het zal niet meer mis gaan tussen God en zijn mensen. Hier wordt een heel andere toon aangeslagen dan in vv. 14, 15 en 42-44. Wat is hier gaande?

Ik betoog dat de verschuiving te begrijpen valt vanuit de achtergrond van het hoofdstuk. De verwoesting van Jeruzalem, het religieuze en economische centrum van Juda, maakte dat Mizpah, in Benjamin, het nieuwe centrum werd. Benjamin was een wat ambigue gebied: voorheen hoorde het bij Israel. Het is denkbaar dat de Benjaminieten er een kritische houding ten opzichte van Juda op na hielden, en zeker ten opzichte van het machtscentrum Jeruzalem. De verwoesting door de Babyloniërs liet het gebied van Benjamin grotendeels ongemoeid. Anders dan in Jeruzalem, waar de bovenlaag van de bevolking was weggevoerd, ging het leven daar door. Dat perspectief vinden we in vv. 14 en 15. Mogelijk bestond er na de verwoesting ook onder de weggevoerde Judeëers een negatieve houding ten opzichte van Jeruzalem. Zij stelden zich in eerste instantie hun toekomst niet zozeer in Jeruzalem voor, maar eerder in het omliggende land (vv. 42-44). Pas later, nadat sommige Judeëers waren teruggekeerd, en Jeruzalem langzaamaan belangrijker werd, ontstond het perspectief dan in vv. 36-42 wordt verwoord. Hier zijn de spanningen tussen degenen die achterbleven in het land en degenen die weggevoerd werden meer naar de achtergrond geraakt. 'Balling zijn' is nu ook voorstelbaar in het land zelf, het wordt een spirituele categorie, en niet alleen een ruimtelijke.

Twee versies vergeleken: de Masoretische traditie en de Septuaginta

Wat de Jeremiaanse traditie ook bijzonder maakt, is dat het proces van tekstonwikkeling (dus de wording van het boek) nog doorging, terwijl het doorgeven van het boek (het *tradere*) al was begonnen. Als gevolg daarvan zijn er verschillende versies van het boek in omloop. Verschillen tussen de Masoretische (Hebreeuwse) traditie en de Septuaginta (de Griekse vertaling) getuigen daarvan. Waar doorgaans de Septuaginta de langere (uitgebreide) tekst heeft, is in het geval van het boek Jeremia de Hebreeuwse tekst langer. Ik ga ervan uit dat de teksten niet tot elkaar te herleiden zijn, maar twee verschillende richtingen representeren die de Jeremiaanse traditie is opgegaan. Ik vergelijk beide teksten, niet om er achter te komen wat de 'echte' of 'originele' tekst is, maar om een beeld te krijgen van de manier waarop beide versies het hoofdstuk presenteren.

In de traditie van de Masoreten speelt de verteller een belangrijke rol. In feite verdwijnt de profeet van het toneel, om ruimte te maken voor een ongeïdentificeerde groep die aangesproken (v. 5) en geciteerd wordt (vv. 26, 43). Ik betoog dat de Hebreeuwse tekst op deze manier expliciet een nieuwe groep lezers aanspreekt, en weg beweegt van de context die wordt gepresenteerd in de inleiding: Jeruzalem is belegerd, de profeet zit gevangen. Kleine verschillen in bewoordingen wijzen daar ook op, zoals de manier waarop tijd en plaats worden aangeduid. Zo maakt de Masoretische tekst explicitiet dat het een latere situatie van verspreiding op het oog heeft.

In de Septuaginta blijkt de opbouw van het hoofdstuk anders. Hier is de tekst een gesprek tussen God en Jeremiah. De profeet zelf staat in de schijnwerpers. De profeet krijgt hier de rol van notaris die garant staat voor de juiste gang van zaken bij de aankoop van land. Zo wordt de profeet een exemplarisch figuur in de omgang met de uitdagingen van de postexilische periode.

Vroeg-joodse en vroeg-christelijke interpretaties

Ook in hoofdstuk 4 blijkt de traditie flexibel: de Jeremiaanse traditie is vruchtbaar geweest voor verschillende groepen die zich wilden oriënteren in plaats en tijd. Jeremia biedt een diversiteit aan ruimtelijke aanknopingspunten. De profeet wordt in Babylon, Egypte en in het land geplaatst, maar ook in Ierland. Het concept van de (doorgaande) ballingschap is vruchtbaar voor allerlei groepen die zichzelf beleven als levend 'tussen de tijden'.

Zo krijgt Jeremia een rol in uiteenlopende christelijke en joodse interpretaties. De profeet wordt geassocieerd met de tempel en priesters, maar ook met de, concurrerende, schrijverstraditie. Zowel joodse als christelijke tradities identificeren zich met Jeremia, en geven er blijk van met elkaar te concurreren: een christelijk geschrift ziet zich genoodzaakt Jezus in te

voegen in een traditie waarin Jeremia al te messiaanse trekken krijgt. In een rabbijnse traditie wordt Jeremia's dochter zwanger van het zaad van de profeet, nadat hij zich heeft afgetrokken in bad. Uit die lijn wordt vervolgens ene Jezus geboren, die gecontrasteerd wordt met de christelijke Jezus.

Hoewel de toe-eigening in de onderzochte documenten zeer divers is, is de houding ten opzichte van de traditie steeds dezelfde: toe-eigening is onmiddellijk. De groepen achter deze teksten ervaren geen afstand tot de traditie, zodat de traditie in alle vrijheid toegeëigend in getransformeerd kan worden. In feite wordt de traditie een eendimensionale bron waaruit vrijelijk geput kan worden.

Op basis van dit onderzoek daarentegen is de pluraliteit en gelaagdheid van de traditie aangetoond. Dat blijkt ook relevant in hedendaagse toe-eigening in Jeruzalem en Bethlehem, die zich ook vaak kenmerkt door stolling. In de context van het Israelisch-Palestijns conflict betekent dat in de eerste plaats dat de tekst vereenzelvigd wordt met het Zionistisch narratief. Inzicht in de gelaagdheid kan gefixeerde toe-eigening openbreken.

Jeremia in Jeruzalem en Bethlehem

In hoofdstuk 5 volg ik de Jeremiaanse traditie naar Jeruzalem en Bethlehem. In het Israëlisch-Palestijns conflict identificeren zowel christelijke Palestijnen als Israëlische joden zich met het Oude Testament, en zien zichzelf daarmee ook als erfgenamen van het boek Jeremia. Het Zionisme compliceert dat erfgenaamschap. Ik beschrijf zowel Israëlisch-joodse als Palestjjns-christelijke collectieve identiteit in samenhang met het conflict. Die context is nodig om de Palestijnse en Joodse toe-eigening van Jeremia 32 te begrijpen. De Palestijnen zijn de zwakkere partij in het conflict, en de Zionistische identificatie met de luidste stem in het hoofdstuk versterkt. Ook is het belangrijk te zien dat de context van langdurig en van tijd tot tijd zeer gewelddadig conflict gefixeerde identiteiten creëert: de narratieven die dominant zijn in de Palestijnse als Israëlische samenleving sluiten elkaar grotendeels uit. Het Zionisme identificeert Joden die zich in de 19^e en 20^e eeuw eerst in Palestina en vervolgens in de nieuw opgerichte staat Israel vestigen met de terugkerende ballingen die de dominante stem zijn in Jeremia 32. Dat exclusieve beroep op een van de stemmen uit de tekst is niet alleen problematisch voor Palestijnen, in het bijzonder voor de christenen onder hen, maar ook voor sommige joodse Israëliërs. Andere joodse Israëliërs identificeren zich juist met het Zionisme, en lezen Jeremia 32 als een tekst die hun familiegeschiedenis beschrijft. De vraag hier is: wat kan gezegd worden over de rol van conflict in deze hedendaagse context van toe-eigening?

In analyseer de interpretaties van twee joods-Israëlische en twee Palestijns-christelijke groepen die ik heb samengebracht in Jeruzalem en Bethlehem. Van die sessies heb ik opnamen gemaakt, en daarop baseer ik mijn analyse. Ik was aanwezig tijdens de sessie, maar heb geprobeerd me zo weinig

mogelijk te mengen in het leesproces. Wel heb ik, meestal op verzoek van de groepen, mijn visie op de tekst – als gevormd door historische processen – gedeeld. De reactie van de groepen is onderdeel van het onderzoek. In een volgende fase heb ik de Palestijns-christelijke en joods-Israelische groepen gekoppeld: de groep Palestijnse studenten heeft de groep joods-Israëlische studenten ontmoet, en de groep joods-Israëlische vrouwen (op een na professionele lezers) ontmoette de Palestijns-christelijke groep uit Bethlehem, die grotendeels uit theologen bestond. Toe-eigening kan ruimte creëren voor transformatie, maar dat gebeurt niet automatisch. De vraag is: kan de tekst functioneren als een plek van ontmoeting?

In dit hoofdstuk wordt duidelijk dat het lezen van Jeremia 32 in deze context vooral spanningen naar de oppervlakte brengt. Evengoed doen zich in de leesgroepen momenten van transformatie voor. Dat gebeurt met name waar lezers in staat zijn de tekst en de dominante verhalen van hun eigen context kritisch te bekijken. Ten eerste doen de deelnemers inzichten op over de leeswijze van de andere groep. Vervolgens zijn er momenten dat er openingen zichtbaar worden in gefixeerde posities: zowel joodse als Palestijnse lezers komen tot alternatieven op de Zionistische lezing van de tekst. Een Palestijnse lezeres identificeert bijvoorbeeld de Palestijnen met de ballingen: zij zijn hun land kwijtgeraakt. Een Israelische lezer bekritiseert de invloed die de exclusieve Zionistische lezing heeft. Lezers die instaat zijn zich kwetsbaar op te stellen en zekerheden rondom hun religieuze en nationale identiteit ter discussie te stellen, blijken meer geneigd tot transformatie.

In het algemeen voelen de Israelische lezers zich gesterkt door te tekst, terwijl de Palestijnen de tekst afwijzen. Dat doen ze ook, omdat de tekst hen niet helpt in hun streven een inclusieve Palestijnse theologie te formuleren: de tekst is tenslotte zelf eenzijdig, vinden ze, en God toont zich in de tekst partijdig. Het is dus hun streven naar een ethische lezing die hen ertoe brengt de tekst af te wijzen. Ik doe een voorstel voor een alternatieve leeswijze: wie erkent dat de tekst gelaagd is en meerstemmig, komt tot een andere lezing. Het is dan niet meer mogelijk een van de stemmen in de tekst aan te wijzen als maatgevend. Het gaat ook niet aan van de tekst te verwachten dat die een blauwdruk bevat om tot vrede te komen. Eerder: wie deelneemt aan de Jeremiaanse traditie is uitgenodigd zelf eigen verhalen in gesprek te brengen met de traditie. Dat vraagt om het bewustzijn dat ook die eigen verhalen bestaan uit dominante en ondergeschikte verhalen, en dat het van belang is te zoeken naar de verborgen stemmen. Ik pleit dus voor een lezing die zich bewust is van ethische vragen, zonder te verwachten dat de tekst beantwoordt aan bepaalde ethische verwachtingen.

Deel uitmaken van de Jeremiaanse traditie

In het slothoofdstuk concludeer ik dat dit onderzoek heeft laten zien dat het vruchtbaar is voor een exegeet om het hele traject van de traditievorming en doorgave te volgen: inzicht in de gelaagde tekst is vruchtbaar voor begrip van latere interpretaties en voor de hedendaagse lezer, en het perspectief van de hedendaagse lezer helpt om inzicht te krijgen in de tekst.

Ik beschrijf wat mijns inziens een vruchtbare benadering van de Jeremiaanse traditie is. Men kan zich niet beroepen op de enig juiste interpretatie van een traditie die zich kenmerkt door veelstemmigheid. Het zoeken naar een oertekst of onbezoedelde pure bron in een traditie die vanaf het begin geinterpreteerde traditie is, is ook vruchteloos. Wat dan wel? Ik pleit voor erkenning van veelstemmigheid, en meer nog: voor actief zoeken naar verborgen stemmen, met name de stemmen die in het verhaal van de eigen groep het onderspit delven. Ik beschouw dat zoeken naar minderheidsstemmen als de taak van de exegeet die begrijpt dat de verhalen van de traditie noch de verhalen die functioneren in een bepaalde groep van lezers onschuldig zijn. Wie inziet dat de Jeremiaanse traditie complex en veelstemmig is, kan dat ook makkelijker erkennen ten opzichte van het collectieve geheugen van een samenleving.

Ik pleit voor een leeshouding die ruimte maakt voor kwetsbaarheid en openheid, en het inzicht dat er geen absolute waarheid of pure tekst is als bastion te gebruiken. Ik beschouw het als onderdeel van de taak van de exegeet te wijzen op de diversiteit van de bijbelse tradities, evenals te zoeken naar de verborgen stemmen binnen die tradities. Het maakt deel uit van een voortdurend streven naar het formuleren van meer inclusieve vormen van identiteit.