

THE LEGACY OF JOSIAH IN ISAIAH 40–55

Marvin A. Sweeney

I

Interpreters of the book of Isaiah—and of Isa 40–55 in particular—have long noted a fundamental distinction between Isa 40–48 and Isa 49–55. Isaiah 40–48 focus especially on the figure of Jacob as a representation of the exiled nation of Israel as a whole. Isaiah 40–48 also emphasize the role of King Cyrus of Persia as the divinely appointed monarch who inaugurates a new age for the exiled Israelites by allowing them to return to their homeland in Jerusalem. Isaiah 49–55 focus especially on the Bat Zion or Daughter Zion figure to represent the humiliated city of Jerusalem who now looks forward to the coming restoration as her husband ΥHWH and her exiled children return to her. Blenkinsopp explains the interrelationship between these two textual blocks by maintaining that Isa 40–48 take up the contemporary political situation of the exiled nation Israel and that Isa 49–55 take up the internal situation of the community.¹ Goldingay and Payne maintain that Isa 49–55 also emphasize the servant of ΥHWH as an individual whereas Isa 40–48 emphasize the corporate aspects of the servant.² Insofar as the commission to leave Babylon in Isa 48:20–21 so clearly marks the conclusion of a major subunit in the work of Second Isaiah, interpreters have posited that Isa 40–48 marks a first stage

1. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 186.

2. John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*. Vol. 1 (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 19.

in the prophet's career,³ the conclusion of the work of Second Isaiah,⁴ or the first stages in the history of Second Isaiah's composition.⁵

With the rising influence of structural form criticism, rhetorical criticism, and intertextuality in biblical exegesis,⁶ more and more interpreters have come to recognize that the distinctions between Isa 40–48 and Isa 49–55 represent different stages or foci in the prophet's argumentation.⁷ Patricia Tull Willey's study of intertextuality in Second Isaiah is particularly insightful in this regard as she examines the interrelationships between the male Servant of YHWH (Israel and Jacob) and the female figure Bat Zion (Jerusalem) both within the work of Second Isaiah and in relation to the various intertextual references, such as Jeremiah and Lamentations, apparent in the text.⁸ She notes the interplay of masculine plural, masculine singular, and feminine singular address forms employed throughout Isa 40–55 to indicate that both figures appear in parallel movement throughout the work of Second Isaiah as figures who have suffered at the hands of their enemies and of YHWH and who are promised by YHWH a joyful return of exiles from distant lands. Both figures clearly give voice to the theological concerns, questions, and aspirations of the exiled Jewish community at the outset of Cyrus's reign and the beginning of the restoration of Zion.

Yet a key question remains open, namely, why does Second Isaiah choose to portray the interplay between the male servant figure Jacob or Israel and the female figure of Bat Zion? It is well known that Second Isaiah draws heavily on various traditions, such as the creation traditions that depict YHWH's sovereignty over the natural world; the ancestral traditions concerning Abra-

3. E.g., Menahem Haran, "The Literary Structure and Chronological Framework of the Prophecies in Is. xl–xlvi," in *Congress Volume: Bonn 1962* (VTSup 9; Leiden: Brill, 1963), 127–55.

4. E.g., Julian Morgenstern, "The Message of Deutero-Isaiah in Its Sequential Unfolding," *HUCA* 29 (1958): 1–67; *HUCA* 30 (1959): 1–102.

5. E.g., Rosario Pius Merendino, *Der Erste und der Letzte: Eine Untersuchung von Jes 40–48* (VTSup 31; Leiden: Brill, 1981).

6. See Marvin A. Sweeney, "Form Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Applications* (ed. S. L. McKenzie and S. R. Haynes; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 58–89; Patricia K. Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," in McKenzie and Haynes, *To Each Its Own Meaning*, 156–80.

7. E.g., Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4 and the Post-Exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (BZAW 171; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 65–95.

8. Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (SBLDS 161; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); cf. Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

ham, Sarah, Jacob, and others to portray YHWH's covenant or relationship with Israel; the Exodus and Wilderness traditions employed here to portray a new exodus from Babylon; and the royal Davidic tradition employed here to justify the role of Cyrus as YHWH's messiah and Temple builder and Israel as the recipient of YHWH's eternal promise to David at the conclusion of the Babylonian exile. It is also well known that the figures of Israel/Jacob and Bat Zion/Jerusalem are key figures in the marriage traditions of ancient Israel that are employed to address questions of exile and return. Jacob leaves his homeland for Aram, and serves twenty years in exile before returning to his homeland in Israel with his wives Rachel and Leah, their handmaidens, and their children only to lose his beloved Rachel as she gives birth to their second son Benjamin. Whereas Jacob/Israel serves as the groom in the ancestral traditions, he serves as the wayward bride in the prophetic representations of the covenant between YHWH and Israel as a failed marriage in clear need of restoration between YHWH the groom and Israel in Hos 1–3 and Jer 2. A similar metaphor of failed marriage in need of restoration is employed for the portrayal of the relationship between YHWH and Jerusalem in Ezek 16. Zephaniah 3:14–20, however, emphasizes a time of restoration insofar as it portrays Jerusalem as the abandoned Bat Zion whose husband YHWH and exiled children are now returning to her.

Indeed, the marriage traditions of ancient Israel, whether they are between Jacob and Rachel and Leah; YHWH and Israel; or YHWH and Jerusalem, are clearly constitutive elements in Second Isaiah's portrayal of Israel's and Zion's exile and restoration. And yet interpreters must note another dimension of these figures, viz., the degree to which the figure of Jacob/Israel is identified with northern Israel in both the ancestral and the prophetic traditions and the degree to which Bat Zion/Jerusalem is identified with southern Judah in the prophets. Indeed, the interplay between the northern figures Israel, Jacob, or Rachel and the southern figure Bat Zion or Jerusalem is often a characteristic feature of Judean texts from the time of Josiah and other settings that envision the restoration of a unified Israel as the exiled or afflicted north returns to the south. In an effort to determine why Second Isaiah employs the Jacob and Bat Zion figures to address the questions of exile and restoration at the end of the Babylonian exile and the outset of the Persian period restoration, this paper analyzes Second Isaiah's use of both figures in relation to the traditions from which they are drawn, including the ancestral traditions concerning Jacob, Rachel, and Leah in Gen 25–35; the traditions of YHWH's marriage with Israel in the northern prophets Hosea and Jeremiah, and the traditions of YHWH's marriage with Jerusalem/Bat Zion in the southern prophets Zephaniah and Ezekiel. Insofar as these traditions appear to give expression to King Josiah's

failed efforts to reunite northern Israel with southern Judah in the late seventh-century B.C.E.,⁹ this paper maintains that Second Isaiah's use of the Jacob and Bat Zion figures draws upon the earlier Josian paradigm for the restoration and reunification of northern Israel and southern Judah.

II

Second Isaiah's use of the Jacob/Israel figure in Isa 40–48 emphasizes an interplay between the portrayal of YHWH's role as creator and king of Israel and the exodus tradition that takes up Jacob's exile and return.¹⁰ Although the prolog in Isa 40:1–11 focuses on Jerusalem/Zion, subsequent material addresses Jacob/Israel, asking if Jacob/Israel knows YHWH's role as creator and redeemer from old (Isa 40:27–28). Isaiah 41:8–9 identified Jacob as YHWH's servant and the seed of Abraham whom YHWH has chosen and whom YHWH will help and redeem in a scenario in which all creation participates in the projected scenario of Jacob's redemption (Isa 41:5–20). The first servant song in Isa 42:18–25 identifies Jacob and Israel as YHWH's blind and deaf servant given over to despoilment and plunder, and Isa 43:1–8 again promises that YHWH is Jacob/Israel's creator who will see to the return of the people from the ends of the earth. Isaiah 43:22–28 charges Jacob/Israel with failing to worship YHWH, but Isa 44:1–8 identifies YHWH as Jacob/Israel's king and creator, who reassures the servant Jacob of blessing and redemption. Isaiah 44:21–22 exhorts Jacob/Israel to remember YHWH's past actions on behalf of the nation and promises to wipe away the nation's sins in an effort to call for their return to YHWH and to Jerusalem as Cyrus restores Jerusalem and rebuilds the Temple. Isaiah 45:1–8 emphasizes that YHWH the creator and G-d of the servant Jacob has chosen Cyrus for the sake of YHWH's people. Isaiah 46:3–4 calls upon Jacob/Israel to recognize that YHWH has brought down Babylon, personified in Isa 47:1–5 as the humiliated maiden Babylon. The final appeal to Jacob in Isa 48:1–22 reiterates the promises to the ancestors of numerous offspring

9. For discussion of Josiah's reform and its impact on biblical literature, see Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

10. For commentaries and studies on Second Isaiah, see esp. the above-noted works by Westermann, Goldingay and Payne, Tull, and Sommer. In addition, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001); Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40–55*; Klaus Kiesow, *Exodustexte im Jesajabuch. Literarkritische und motivegeschichtlichen Analysen* (OBO 24; Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979).

(Isa 48:19) and calls upon the servant Jacob to leave Babylon for a journey through the wilderness that will bring the nation home (Isa 48:20–22).

Although Isa 40–48 employs the creation and exodus/wilderness traditions to construct its portrayal of YHWH as sovereign of creation and redeemer of Israel, the choice of Jacob/Israel as the means to portray the exiled nation is an apt one, particularly in relation to the role that the ancestor Jacob plays in Israelite tradition. Jacob is the key ancestral figure who is exiled from his land to Aram to find a bride and returns to the land of Israel after twenty years service when he has finally found his brides and fathered his sons. Indeed, the association of Jacob with exile is a powerful insofar as goes into exile a second time to Egypt to escape famine in his homeland and ultimately to find his lost son Joseph.

Interpreters largely see the Jacob traditions in Gen 25:19–35:29 as the product of a combined JE and P tradition that reflects upon Jacob and his wives as foundational figures in the early history of Israel,¹¹ but it is also important to recognize that the Jacob traditions also give expression to the political and historical realities of much later times.¹²

Indeed, the basic narrative structure of the Jacob traditions, including both Jacob's conflicts with his brother Esau and his relationship with his wives Rachel and Leah and their father Laban appear to have been composed as a reflection on northern Israel's relationships with Edom and Aram during the ninth century B.C.E.¹³ The Jacob narrative emphasizes that the key male figures, Jacob, Esau, and Laban, are eponymous ancestors for the nations Israel (Gen 32:28; 35:10); Edom (Gen 25:30); and Aram (Gen 31:47) respectively. Furthermore, the emphasis on puns to illustrate the meanings of the names of the key male figures in the narratives, including Jacob, Esau, and Laban as well as Jacob's twelve sons, highlights the geographical and political concerns underlying this narrative insofar as the puns also identify boundaries between Israel, Edom, and Aram and the twelve tribal and geographical components of the kingdom of Israel.

11. For current assessment of the Jacob tradition in Genesis, see Antony F. Campbell and Mark A. O'Brien, *Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts Introductions, Annotations* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

12. For treatment of the Jacob traditions as a block rather than as the product of sources, see Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition des Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1984), 5–270; cf. Rolf Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch* (JSOTSup 89; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990).

13. See Marvin A. Sweeney, "Puns, Politics, and Perushim in the Jacob Cycle: A Case Study in Teaching the English Hebrew Bible," *Shofar* 9 (1991): 103–18.

Thus, the description in Gen 27:11 of Jacob as a “smooth” (Hebrew, *ḥālāq*) man and Esau as a “hairy” (Hebrew, *śā’ir*) man recalls the place names Mt. Halak and Mt. Seir in Josh 11:17 that mark the boundaries between Israel and Edom. Esau’s willingness to trade his birthright to Jacob for some lentils, described in Gen 25:30 in Hebrew as *hāādōm*, “red stuff,” and his description in Gen 25:25 as a “ruddy” (Hebrew, *ādmōnī*) and a “hairy” (Hebrew, *kēadderet śē’ar*, lit., “like a hairy mantle”) likewise reinforces Esau’s identification with Edom (Hebrew, *ēdōm*) and Seir (Hebrew, *śē’ir*). The name Laban, Hebrew, *lābān*, means “white,” which is associated with the Valley of Lebanon (*hallēbānōn*) that defines the boundaries between Aram, Phoenicia, and Israel in Josh 11:17. Likewise the Hebrew reference *gal’ed*, “heap of witness,” in Gen 31:47 to the pillar set up by Jacob and Laban as a boundary marker between their respective territories recalls the location Baal Gad (Hebrew, *ba’al gād*) which also marks the boundary between Israel and Aram in Josh 11:17 and the tribe of Gad that inhabits the region together with the half tribe of Manasseh.

The various puns employed to interpret the names of Jacob’s sons highlight the tribal units that constitute ancient Israel. The name of Reuben (*rē’ūbēn*), first-born son to Jacob and Leah means, “YHWH has seen (*rāā*) my affliction” and “now my husband will love me (*yēḥābanī*)” according to Gen 29:32; Simeon (*śim’ōn*) is so-named “because YHWH heard (*šāma*) that I was unloved” in Gen 29:33; Levi (*lēwī*) is named because “this time my husband will become attached (*yillāweh*) to me” in Gen 29:34; and Judah (*yēhūdā*) is named because “this time I will praise (*ōdeh*) YHWH.” When Bilhah gives birth to Dan, Rachel states, “G-d has vindicated me (*dānannī*)” in Gen 30:6, and when Naphtali is born, Rachel states, “a divine/fateful contest I waged (*nap-tūlē ḥlōqīm niptaltī*) with my sister” in Gen 30:8. When Zilpah gives birth to Gad (*gād*), Leah states, “What luck (*bā’ gād*)!” in Gen 30:11, and when Asher (*āšēr*) is born, Leah states, “What fortune (*bē’āšrī*)!” in Gen 30:12. When Leah gives birth to Issachar (*yisśāškār*), she exclaims, “G-d has given me my reward (*śēkārī*)” in Gen 30:18 (cf. Gen 30:16), and when Zebulun (*zēbulūn*) is born, Leah states, “G-d has given me a choice gift (*zebed*); this time my husband will exalt me (*yizbēlēnī*)” in Gen 30:20. No pun is uttered when Leah’s daughter Dinah is born in Gen 30:21. When Joseph (*yōsēp*) is born, his mother Rachel states, “G-d has taken away/gathered (*āsap*) my disgrace” and “May YHWH add (*yōsēp*) another son for me” in Gen 30:23–24. When Rachel dies while giving birth to Benjamin (*binyāmīn*), Jacob names him “son of the right hand (*binyāmīn*)” in Gen 35:18 to indicate his exalted status.

The locations of major events during Jacob’s return to Israel from Aram to face his brother Esau also evoke puns, which point to Israel’s presence on the east bank of the Jordan River. When Jacob departs from Aram and sees

angels of G-d in Gen 32:1–3, he exclaims, “This is G-d’s camp (*maḥānēh*).” Jacob divides his family into two camps (*šēnē maḥānôt*) in Gen 32:8–9, 11 to better protect his family should Esau decide to attack. Both of these puns explain the city name Mahanaim, whose precise location is unknown although it was located along the River Jabbok in the tribal territory of Gad or Manasseh. When Jacob wrestles with the “man of G-d” at Peniel by the River Jabbok, several puns indicate the region. The verb *wayyēābēq*, “and he wrestled” in Gen 32:24 indicates the name of the River Jabbok (*yabbōq*). The place name Peniel/Penuel (*pēnīēl/pēnūēl*) is named because of Jacob’s statement, “I have seen a divine being (*ēlōqīm*, lit., “god”) face to face (*pānīm ʾel pānīm*)” in Gen 32:31–32. The River Jabbok served as the boundary between Gad and Manasseh in the Trans-Jordan, and Peniel served as an important administrative center for the northern kingdom of Israel shortly after its founding by Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:25). The man of G-d explains Jacob’s change of name to Israel (*yisrāēl*) in Gen 32:29 with the statement, “for you have striven (*sārītā*) with divine and human beings and prevailed.” Finally, Jacob journeys to the city of Sukkot (*sukkôt*) to make stalls (*sukkôt*) for his cattle. Sukkot was also situated near the junction of the River Jabbok with the Jordan River in the Trans-Jordan.

Although the puns employed in the Jacob narrative may serve in part as entertainment, their geo-political functions must not be overlooked. The puns ascribed to the twelve sons of Jacob define the twelve tribal units that make up the united people of Israel throughout early Israelite tradition. The puns associated with the Trans-Jordanian region are particularly important because they point to locations associated with the tribes of Gad, Manasseh, and perhaps Reuben early in Israel’s history as well. Altogether, the puns point to an ideal twelve tribe structure of Israel that fills the land west and east of the Jordan in accordance with the ideal tribal allotments of Josh 13–23 and Num 34. But the contents of the narrative, particularly the interrelationships between Jacob, Esau, and Laban must also be taken into account. Insofar as these figures serve as eponymous ancestors for Israel, Edom, and Aram, the interrelationships—or more properly conflicts—between these characters must be considered in relation to the interrelationships and conflicts between their corresponding nations must also be considered. Biblical sources in 1 Kgs 16–2 Kgs 14 indicate that Israel was reunited in the ninth century B.C.E. under the reign of the Omride dynasty of northern Israel, which counted Judah and Edom among its vassals.¹⁴ Nevertheless, this was a period of con-

14. For treatment of texts in Kings, see Marvin A. Sweeney, *I and II Kings: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2007).

flict in which Israel was attacked by Aram in the Trans-Jordan during the reigns of the Omride monarchs Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram, and conflict with Aram continued during the reigns of the Jehide monarchs Jehu, Joash, and Jehoahaz as well. Ahab was able to strike a treaty with the Aramean King Ben Hadad following an aborted Aramean invasion of Israel at Aphek east of the Sea of Galilee in 1 Kgs 20:26–34. Nevertheless, Ahab was killed in battle with the Arameans at Ramot Gilead, located in the Trans-Jordan. With the death of Ahab, the overthrow of his son Jehoram by his general Jehu while the conflict continued at Ramot Gilead, and finally Jehu containment by the Arameans following his revolt, it appears that Israel lost the Trans-Jordan to the Arameans until it was regained by Jehoahaz. There was also conflict with Edom during this period, which broke away from King Jehoram of Judah, himself a vassal of the Omride King Jehoram at this time, according to 2 Kgs 8:20–24. Although Israelite control of the Trans-Jordan was reestablished by the reign of King Jeroboam of Israel, there is no indication that Edom was ever recovered by either Israel or Judah.

The conflicts between Jacob and Esau and between Jacob and Laban in the Genesis narrative appear to reflect the historical events of the ninth century B.C.E. Israel entered into conflict with Aram in the Trans-Jordan and ultimately settled its boundaries with Aram, first in the time of Ahab and later by the time of Jeroboam. Likewise, Edom began as a vassal of Israel/Judah during this period but ultimately broke away from Israel/Judah, likely due to the reverses that Israel suffered against the Arameans.

These considerations indicate that the Jacob narrative was composed at least in its basic form at some point following the ninth century B.C.E., perhaps in the eighth century B.C.E. when northern Israel had restored its boundaries under Jeroboam and had the opportunity to reflect on its history. But if the basic narrative was composed at such an early date, interpreters must also reflect on the impact it would have had on readers in later periods, particularly following the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/1 B.C.E. when the narrative would have been brought south and read by Judeans. The narratives concerning Jacob's/Israel's exiles and reverses on the one hand and his return and restoration to the land of Israel on the other would have played an important role in Judean attempts to reunite Israel and Judah and to restore Davidic authority over the north, either during the reign of Hezekiah whose revolt against Assyria failed so spectacularly or during the reign of Josiah whose efforts to reunite the nation in the aftermath of the collapse of the Assyrian Empire were cut short by his early death at Megiddo at the hands of Pharaoh Necho of Egypt. In the late-monarchic period, the Jacob traditions of Jacob's own exile and return to the land would have given

expression to Israel's defeat and exile at the hands of the Assyrians and the prospects for Israel's restoration and reunification with Judah in the aftermath of Assyria's downfall. Such a narrative could well have played a role in motivating attempts by either Hezekiah or Josiah to reunite Israel and Judah and to restore Davidic authority over the north.

III

Interpreters will never be able to know the precise form of the Jacob traditions in the late-monarchic period or even the degree to which they influenced Hezekiah or Josiah, but Jer 30–31, which portray the return of Israel to Zion and the reunification of north and south provides some clues concerning the impact of this tradition in the book of Jeremiah.

The present form of Jer 30–31 clearly presupposes the Babylonian exile insofar as it posits that both Israel and Judah together must be restored in the aftermath of exile and disaster.¹⁵ Such perspectives appear at the outset of the oracular block in Jer 30:3–4, which portray YHWH's promise to restore the fortunes of both Israel and Judah and return them to the land promised by YHWH to their ancestors. They appear in several other subunits of this text as well. Jeremiah 31:27–30 declares that the time to uproot, to pull down, to destroy, and to bring disaster to both Israel and Judah is over and that the time to build and to plant has come. Jeremiah 31:31–34 declares that YHWH will make a new covenant with Israel and Judah—unlike the former covenant with the ancestor that the people broke—in which YHWH will put divine Torah in the hearts of the people so that YHWH will be their G-d once again. Finally, Jer 31:38–40 envisions the restoration of the city of Jerusalem as a result of YHWH's promises never again to uproot or overthrow the people.

It is striking that each of these passages concerned with the restoration and return of both Israel and Judah is introduced by a common formula, *hinnēh yāmim bā'im*, “behold the days are coming,” whereas the other primary formula throughout the passage is the so-called prophetic messenger formula, *kōh 'amar yhw*, “thus says YHWH,” which introduces the other prophetic oracular speeches that constitute this unit in Jer 30:1–2; 30:5–11; 30:12–17; 30:18–31:1; 31:2–6; 31:7–14; 31:15; 31:16–22; 31:23–26; 31:35–36; and 31:37. Indeed, if the oracles introduced by the *hinnēh yāmim bā'im* for-

15. For discussion of Jeremiah 30–31, see esp. Marvin A. Sweeney, “Jeremiah 30–31 and King Josiah's Program of National Restoration and Religious Reform,” in his *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature* (FAT 45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 109–22.

mula are removed from the passage, the remaining oracles introduced by the *kōh ʾamar yhwh* formula display a sequence of oracles that are concerned not with the restoration and return from exile of both Israel and Judah but only with the restoration and return of Israel/Jacob to Zion.

Jeremiah 30:1–2 serves as an introduction to the unit insofar as it presents simply YHWH’s command to the prophet to write down the following oracles. Jeremiah 30:5–11 portrays a time of trouble for Jacob, a common designation for northern Israel, and Jacob’s anticipated return to its G-d and David, the king that YHWH will raise for them. The oracle also addresses Jacob as “servant Jacob” in v. 10, a common designation in Second Isaiah. Jeremiah 30:12–17 promises healing from wounds to an addressee who is unclear until after the closing oracular formula of v. 17a. Although Zion emerges as the addressee in v. 17b, its placement after the closing oracular formula suggests later interpretation of a text addressed to another figure. Jeremiah 30:18–31:1 promises the restoration of the fortunes of Jacob’s tents and the restoration of the covenant relationship with the classic formula, “You shall be my people, and I will be your G-d,” again applied to the clans of Israel in Jer 31:1. Jeremiah 31:2–6 recalls the wilderness traditions when Israel became YHWH’s bride (cf. Hos 2; Jer 2) to address Israel as “maiden Israel” in v. 4. The passage also portrays the planting of the hills of Samaria and the proclamation from the heights of Ephraim that the people should go up to Zion to appear before YHWH. Jeremiah 31:7–14 employs characteristic language applied to northern Israel, such as the call for Jacob’s rejoicing, the return of the remnant of Israel, Ephraim the first born of YHWH, to portray YHWH’s gathering Israel from the ends of the earth and YHWH’s ransoming of Jacob so that they will rejoice on the heights of Zion. Jeremiah 1:15 portrays Rachel, the avowed bride of Jacob and mother of Joseph and Benjamin, weeping for her lost children. Joseph, of course, is the father of Ephraim and Manasseh, the two key tribes of northern Israel, and Benjamin is the tribe of Saul, the first king of the north. Jeremiah 31:16–22 calls upon Ephraim to cease weeping and for Maiden Israel to return. Jeremiah 31:23–26 envisions the time the actions of the G-d of Israel will be recognized in the land of Judah and its towns; again, an apparent supplement in v. 26 envisions the habitation of Judah’s land and towns. Jeremiah 31:35–36 portrays YHWH’s promise to the offspring of Israel that they will always be a nation. Finally, Jer 31:37 reiterates YHWH’s promise to the offspring of Israel in relation to the permanence of heaven and earth.

Altogether, this survey of the oracles introduced by the prophetic messenger formula presents a portrayal of YHWH’s promises of restoration to Israel, Jacob, Maiden Israel, Rachel, and Ephraim, all references to the northern kingdom of Israel, that they will be restored and returned to YHWH at Zion

and to David, the founder of the Judean dynasty. Oracles introduced with the formula, “behold the days are coming,” address the restoration of both Israel and Judah, and several instances indicate that an Israelite oracle has been supplemented so that it refers to Jerusalem or Judah. Such a phenomenon indicates that an early cycle of oracles concerned with the restoration of northern Israel to Zion has been reworked so that the edited cycle calls for the restoration of both Israel and Judah. The settings for each of the two stages in the composition of this text are clear; the concern with the restoration of Israel to Zion was a primary concern of the reform of King Josiah who ought to restore Davidic rule over the north in the aftermath of the fall of Assyria in the late seventh century B.C.E., and the concern with the restoration of both Israel and Judah presupposes the Babylonian destruction and exile of Jerusalem and Judah. Insofar as the superscription of the book of Jeremiah maintains that the prophet began his career in the thirteenth year of King Josiah and that it extended to the eleventh year of Zedekiah, that is, the year of Jerusalem’s destruction, it appears that the prophet composed the earlier cycle in support of Josiah’s efforts to reunite Israel and to restore Davidic rule over the north but later updated the cycle to account for the reverses suffered by Judah, culminating in the Babylonian exile, following the death of Josiah.

But the oracular sequence also demonstrates the degree to which the figure of Jacob, initially as representative of the northern kingdom of Israel and subsequently as representative for both Israel and Judah together, was viewed as a paradigm for Israel’s exile and restoration in the book of Jeremiah during the late-monarchic and early-exilic period. It likewise demonstrates the first efforts to associate Jacob with the marriage tradition that identifies Israel as YHWH’s bride in the wilderness (Hos 2; Jer 2), insofar as it employs Rachel, Jacob’s favored wife as a symbol for Israel’s mourning in Jer 31:15 and immediately shifts to a portrayal of Ephraim’s lamenting and Maiden Israel’s return to Zion in the following oracle in Jer 31:16–22. Insofar as Jer 30–31 employs some characteristic phraseology and concerns of Second Isaiah, for example, “have no fear, my servant Jacob” (Jer 30:10); “the anger of YHWH shall not turn back until it has completed His purposes; in the days to come you shall perceive it” (Jer 30:24); “I will bring them in from the northland, gather them from the ends of the earth—the blind and the lame among them (Jer 31:8); “I will lead them to streams of water, by a level road where they will not stumble” (Jer 31:9); “hear the word of YHWH, O nations, and tell it in the isles afar, say, He who scattered Israel will gather them” (Jer 31:10); “for YHWH will ransom Jacob, redeem him from one too strong for him” (Jer 31:11); and “thus says YHWH, who established the sun for light by day, the laws of moon and stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea into roaring waves, who name

is YHWH of Hosts” (Jer 31:35). From these parallels, it appears that Jer 30–31 provided an important basis for the oracles of Second Isaiah to develop the themes of YHWH’s redemption of Israel, Israel’s return to Zion, and at least some of basis for the portrayal of Bat Zion as YHWH’s restored bride.

IV

Like the Jacob traditions of Gen 25–35, the portrayal of Israel as the bride of YHWH in the wilderness has deep roots in northern Israelite tradition, particularly in the work of the prophets, Hosea and Jeremiah.¹⁶ Both have affinities with the north, Hosea because of his concerns with the Jehide dynasty of northern Israel and Jeremiah because he is from Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. Both envision the wilderness period as an ideal period in which YHWH and Israel were betrothed, much like Jacob and Rachel in Haran, but both portray Israel’s subsequent abandonment of YHWH for other lovers. Such a portrayal differs from the wilderness traditions of the Pentateuch which portray Israel’s murmuring against YHWH from the outset. In both Hosea and Jeremiah, the marriage tradition is employed to critique northern Israel in relation to the concerns of the time in which each book is written and read, Hosea in relation to the last years of northern Israel and again in the time of Josiah, and Jeremiah in the time of Josiah and afterwards.

The book of Hosea presents the work of the prophet Hosea, who lived during the last years of the northern Israelite monarchy.¹⁷ The superscription maintains that he lived during the reigns of the northern Israelite monarch Jeroboam ben Joash (786–746 B.C.E.) and the southern Judean monarchs Uzziah (782–742 B.C.E.), Jotham (742–735 B.C.E.), Ahaz (735–715 B.C.E.), and Hezekiah (715–687/6 B.C.E.). Interpreters explain the discrepancy in the reigns of the king by maintaining that Hosea left northern Israel for the south where his work was edited and published. Reasons for his departure might include his trenchant critique of the Jehide dynasty, particularly while Jeroboam ben Joash remained on the throne, or possibly the Assyrian assaults against northern Israel and its ultimate destruction of the kingdom although

16. For discussion of the marriage traditions in the prophets, see especially Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2003); R. Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery (Isaiah 50:1–3 and 54:1–10, Hosea 1–3, and Jeremiah 2–3)* (SSN; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1999).

17. For discussion of Hosea, see Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets* (vol. 1; Berit Olam; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2000), 1–144; Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, 256–72.

this process did not begin in earnest until ca. 735 B.C.E. In any case, Hosea's critique of Israel would have served Judean efforts to reestablish Davidic rule over the north during the reigns of Hezekiah and later Josiah.

The basis for Hosea's critique of northern Israel lies in his charges that Israel has abandoned YHWH to pursue other lovers. Although such a contention lends itself easily to a strictly religious understanding in which the people were worshipping other gods, closer examination of the issue indicates that Hosea was especially opposed to the Jehu dynasty's alliance with the Assyrian Empire. King Jehu (842–815 B.C.E.), the founder of the dynasty, is depicted submitting to the Assyrian monarch Shalmaneser III in the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III,¹⁸ and King Joash ben Jehahaz (802–786 B.C.E.) is listed among the vassals of Adad Nirari III.¹⁹ The Jehide alliance with Assyria was motivated by the continuing pressure from the Arameans, both during the reign of the Omrides and the early reign of Jehu. Israel's alliance with Assyria meant that Aram would be surrounded and contained, and the period of peace enabled Jeroboam ben Joash to reestablish Israelite control over a kingdom that extended from Lebo-Hamath in northern Aram to the Sea of the Aravah in the south. Hosea's critique emphasized Israel's submission to Assyrian interests to establish a trade route between Egypt and Assyria. Egypt of course was Israel's enemy in the pentateuchal tradition, and Israel's ancestors, including Jacob and his wives Rachel and Leah, had come from Haran in Aram. Although Hosea never calls for the assassination of the king, Jeroboam's son Zechariah was assassinated in 746 B.C.E. A period of instability then followed as pro-Assyrian and pro-Aramean parties vied for the throne and assassinated opposing monarchs until Israel was dragged into war with Assyria by the pro-Aramean monarch Pekah. Although Pekah was eventually killed, pro-Aramean forces continued to push for revolt against Assyria until the kingdom was destroyed in 722–721 B.C.E.

Hosea's own critique of Israel begins with a narrative in Hos 1:2–2:3 in which YHWH instructs him to marry Gomer, described as a woman of harlotry, and bear children with her. Readers will never know whether Gomer was actually a harlot or simply described as one by her accusing husband, but she clearly symbolizes Israel, whom the prophet accuses of harlotry for abandoning YHWH. The children born of the marriage are given names that symbolize the prophet's critique of the Jehide dynasty, that is, the first son is named Jezreel to recall the city where Jehu overthrew the House of Omride;

18. *ANEP*, 351–55.

19. S. Page, "A Stele of Adad Nirari III and Nergal-ereš from Tell al Rimnah," *Iraq* 30 (1968): 139–53.

the second child, a daughter, is named Lo Ruhamah, a Hebrew term that means “no mercy” to symbolize YHWH’s lack of mercy for Israel; and the third child, a son, is named Lo Ammi, “not my people,” to symbolize YHWH’s break in the relationship with Israel.

The following section in Hos 2:4–3:5 begins with Hosea’s reflection on his divorce of Gomer and his accusations against her. As the passage progresses, however, it soon becomes clear that the speaker shifts from Hosea to YHWH and the wife from Gomer to Israel to demonstrate that Hosea’s failed marriage with Gomer is symbolic of YHWH’s failed relationship with Israel. After detailing the accusations against Israel, YHWH, now the husband in the relationship, decides that he loves his estranged bride Israel and cannot live without her. As a result YHWH determines to restore the relationship with Israel, and the passage concludes with YHWH’s instructions to Hosea to restore his relationship with a harlot. Although interpreters are not entirely certain that the woman is Gomer, the restored relationship symbolizes YHWH’s intention to restore the relationship with Israel.

One of the most telling features of this passage appears in Hos 3:4–5, which maintains that Israel will go for a long time without king and officials, but will ultimately return to YHWH and David their king. Although this passage may have envisioned the restoration of a northern king, the present form of the passage clearly envisions restored Davidic kingship over the north. Such a contention clearly serves the efforts to restore Davidic rule over the north at the time of Hezekiah’s revolt against Assyria in 705–701 B.C.E., and Josiah’s later bid for independence and restored Davidic rule over the north in 640–609 B.C.E. Although Hosea may well have looked for the restoration of a righteous (to him) northern monarchy, the book was later edited and read to support Judean interests, particularly those of King Josiah’s program for the reform and restoration of Jerusalem and Judah/Israel, in the aftermath of northern Israel’s destruction.

The late-seventh/early-sixth century B.C.E. prophet Jeremiah likewise plays an important role in this scenario. As observed above, Jer 30–31 presupposes the return and restoration of both Israel and Judah in the aftermath of the Babylonian exile, but underlying the present form of the text is an earlier oracle by the prophet that envisioned the return of northern Israel to southern Davidic rule. Such a scenario of course supports Josiah’s program of reform and restoration, but the prophet was compelled to change his views following the unexpected death of Josiah at Megiddo in 609 B.C.E. and the subsequent decline of Judah.

Although the marriage metaphor applied to Israel or Judah is not clear in Jer 30–31, it is very clear in Jer 2:1–4:2 in which the prophet depicts Israel

as YHWH's bride in the wilderness.²⁰ Although Israel initially followed YHWH in the wilderness, the prophet charges that the people abandoned YHWH to pursue other gods. The contemporary (for Jeremiah) issue appears in Jer 2:18 in which he claims that the people have gone to Egypt to drink the waters of the Nile and to Assyria to drink the waters of the Euphrates, a charge akin to Hosea's concerns a century earlier. Such a claim recalls Josiah's efforts to free the nation from the control of the Assyrian Empire and its Egyptian vassals in the late latter half of the seventh century B.C.E. as the power of the Assyrian empire waned and Egypt stepped in to replace its former patron in an attempt to fill the gap.

Although much of Jer 2:1–4:2 presupposes images of Israel and Jacob, the passage appears as part of a larger block of material in Jer 2–6, which begins with condemnations of Israel and appeals for its return to YHWH, but shifts in Jer 3:6–13 and 4:3–6:30 to charge Judah and Jerusalem with abandoning YHWH and to call for their return to YHWH as well. Insofar as the oracle displays two very different objects of concern, Israel in the first part of the oracle and Jerusalem and Judah in the second part of the oracle, it appears that Jer 2–6 has undergone a process of redaction and expansion much like that of Jer 30–31, viz., an oracle concerned with the restoration of (northern) Israel to Jerusalem and Judah has been expanded to call for the restoration and return of Judah and Jerusalem as well. Such a scenario fits well with a young prophet Jeremiah who supported Josiah's calls for the return of northern Israel to Davidic rule, but who was forced to rethink his position following Josiah's death in 609 B.C.E. For Jeremiah, Josiah's unexpected death meant that YHWH was not yet finished bringing judgment to the nation, that is, Judah would also experience judgment like northern Israel before any promised restoration of all Israel could take place.

Judean prophets also take up the marriage motif for portraying the relationship between YHWH and the nation, but they focus on the metaphorical portrayal of Jerusalem as Bat Zion, "Daughter Zion," rather than on Israel as a whole, as the bride of YHWH. Although there are hints of sexual characterization for Israel in earlier Judean prophecy (generally charges of harlotry and the like for abandoning YHWH, e.g., Mic 1:6–7), the full application of the marriage motif does not emerge in Judah and Jerusalem until the reign of Josiah and after in the books of Zephaniah and Ezekiel.

20. For discussion of Jer 2–6, see Marvin A. Sweeney, "Structure and Redaction in Jeremiah 2–6," in Sweeney, *Form and Intertextuality*, 94–108.

The superscription of the book of Zephaniah in Zeph 1:1 places the work of the prophet during the reign of King Josiah of Judah (reigned 640–609 B.C.E.).²¹ Although many interpreters argue that the book is the product of exilic or post-exilic redaction, my own work argues that the major portion of the book stems from the prophet himself with only light editing in Zeph 1:1 and 3:20. Overall, the book of Zephaniah is written to support Josiah's program of religious reform and national restoration and reunification. It employs charges of apostasy and impending judgment as means to persuade its audience to return to YHWH and thereby to support Josiah's plans.

The marriage metaphor figures prominently at the end of the book in Zeph 3:14–20. This oracle concludes an oracular sequence in Zeph 3:1–20 which anticipates the restoration of Jerusalem and the return of its exiles once the period of Jerusalem's punishment has been completed. In the context of Josiah's reign, the period of punishment is coming to a close and the time of restoration is at hand.

Zephaniah 3:14–20 begins in vv. 1–15 with exhortations to Bat Zion, also called Israel and Daughter of Jerusalem, that she should rejoice, cry aloud, and be glad because YHWH has annulled all judgments against her. The following segment in vv. 16–19 portrays the coming day in which Jerusalem/Zion will be reassured that she need fear no further threat as YHWH her G-d as returned to her. The initial portrayal of YHWH is as a triumphant warrior, but the imagery immediately shifts to YHWH's rejoicing over Jerusalem and an enigmatic statement in v. 17, *yahāriš b'ēhābātō*, literally, "he shall plow/be silent in his love," followed by "he will rejoice over you in jubilation." The Hebrew verb *hṛš*, which means both "to plow" and "to be silent," is particularly problematic here as scholars have struggled to ascertain its meaning. Examination of the use of the verb *hṛš* as "to plow" indicates that can be employed metaphorically to portray sexual relations (e.g., Judg 14:8) and that cognate terms for plowing are employed in the Sumerian Love Songs and the Babylonian Harab myth to describe sexual relations as well.²² When v. 17 is read in this matter, the portrayal of YHWH's return to Zion emerges as a portrayal of the return of the groom, YHWH, to the formerly abandoned

21. For discussion of Zephaniah, see Marvin A. Sweeney, *Zephaniah* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); idem, "Metaphor and Rhetorical Strategy in Zephaniah," in *Relating to the Text: Interdisciplinary and Form-Critical Insights on the Bible* (ed. T. J. Sandoval and C. Mandolfo; JSOTSup 384; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 120–30.

22. Yitzchak Sefati, *Love Songs in Sumerian Literature* (Bar Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Language and Culture; Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1998), 90–92; Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harab Myth* (SANE 2,101; Malibu: Undena, 1984).

bride, Bat Zion. The remaining elements of the oracle in vv. 18–19 promise that YHWH will bring to an end the punishment inflicted on Zion's people and the "reproach" suffered by Zion. The term "reproach," Hebrew *herpâ*, is generally employed to describe the humiliation of women who have lost their men in war or otherwise been abandoned by their own men and left to their captors. With the end of this period of humiliation for Bat Zion, YHWH promises to end the affliction, gather those who have strayed, and exchange disgrace for honor and reputation. Verse 20, perhaps a later editorial addition to the text, clarifies the meaning of v. 19 by stating explicitly that YHWH will gather Zion's people, bring them home, make them renowned among the peoples of the earth, and restore their fortunes.

In short, the marriage motif appears in Zeph 3:14–20 as a means to describe YHWH's restoration of Zion as a returning husband who restores his bride. Although this text is written in support of Josiah's reform, it is read as a general portrayal of restoration after the time of Josiah.

Ezekiel likewise employs the marriage metaphor to portray the relationship between YHWH and Jerusalem in Ezek 16, but his use of the motif focuses especially on judgment rather than on restoration.²³ Such a concern with judgment is hardly surprising since Ezekiel is a Zadokite priest exiled to Babylonia with King Jehoiachin in 597 B.C.E. and he serves as a major interpreter of the fall of Jerusalem and Babylonian exile in 587/6 B.C.E. and following. Ezekiel's work does include oracles of restoration as well, although they do not employ the marriage motif. It is striking that Ezekiel would have been born, raised, and educated in the context of Josiah's reform. His oracle of restoration in Ezek 37:15–28 envisions the reunification of Joseph, that is, northern Israel, and Judah around the Jerusalem Temple and under the rule of a righteous Davidic monarch.²⁴ Such an oracle indicates Ezekiel's acceptance of the basic Josian perspectives of reunification and restoration of Israel and Judah under Davidic rule, but the experience of the destruction of Jerusalem and Babylonian exile would have compelled him to rethink this paradigm. His vision of the restored Temple in Ezek 40–48 envisions an ideal portrayal of the Twelve

23. For discussion of Ezekiel 16, see especially Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as YHWH's Wife* (SBLDS 130; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), esp. 61–63, 64–72, 91–109. For a general orientation to Ezekiel, see Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Prophetic Literature* (IBT; Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 127–64.

24. See Marvin A. Sweeney, "The Royal Oracle in Ezekiel 37:15–28: Ezekiel's Reflection on Josiah's Reform," in *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past: Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite History in Honor of John H. Hayes* (ed. B. E. Kelle and M. B. Moore; LHBOTS 446; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 239–53.

Tribes of Israel around the Temple and a restored creation, so that at least his visions of the future are still rooted to a degree in the principles of Josiah's reform, but he must account for the realities of judgment in the aftermath of Jerusalem's destruction. As a Zadokite priest, Ezekiel's understanding of Jerusalem's destruction employs a paradigm for purging the city and Temple of its iniquity, much like the scapegoat ritual of Lev 16 symbolizes the purging of the nation at Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement, and the reconstitution of a purified Temple in place of the Temple that was lost.

Ezekiel 16 portrays the history of YHWH's early relationship with Jerusalem in relation to the marriage motif. The passage portrays YHWH's discovery of Jerusalem as an abandoned baby in the wilderness, born to an Amorite father and a Hittite mother. The abandoned baby Jerusalem is described as unwashed from its birth fluids, having an umbilical cord that is not cut, and left lying in the open. YHWH takes care of the abandoned baby until she grows to adulthood, at which time YHWH spreads his robe over her and entered into a covenant with her (vv. 7–8). Insofar as Jerusalem had reached the time for love, the spreading of YHWH's robe signifies a marital relationship with Jerusalem and the covenant signifies a marriage contract, which YHWH fulfills by providing the now young woman Jerusalem with clothing, jewelry, and food in keeping with the responsibilities of a husband in the ancient world. From v. 15 on, the passage describes Jerusalem's abandonment of YHWH, described in keeping with the marital metaphor as sexual betrayal and harlotry with the Assyrians, Chaldeans (Babylonians), and anyone else who passed by. YHWH's response to such action is to gather all of Jerusalem's lovers and strip her bare before them of the clothing, jewelry, and support that YHWH had formerly given her and to turn her over to the mob. The remainder of the passage focuses on YHWH's indignation, charges that Jerusalem's behavior is in keeping with sinful behavior of her Amorite and Hittite forebears, and that Jerusalem's behavior was even worse than Sodom's and Samaria's. In the end, YHWH promises to restore the relationship with Jerusalem, but only after the punishment against her has been carried out.

In sum, the marriage motif has left a deep impression on both Israelite and Judean prophecy, both to portray YHWH's judgment against Israel or Jerusalem as a means to punish the purportedly wayward bride for abandoning her husband and to portray YHWH's willingness to restore the relationship once the bride has suffered her punishment. Notably, every one of the texts that employs this motif is tied in one way or another to the Josianic reform.

V

Biblical literature includes major textual traditions concerning Jacob's journey to Aram to find a bride and his return to the land of Israel as well as those concerning the portrayal of YHWH's relationship with Israel or Jerusalem as a marriage relationship. Both sets of texts are employed to depict Israel's or Jerusalem's exile from the land and realized or potential return once the period of exile is over. Although these texts were composed over the course of various periods, including the mid-ninth through early-eighth centuries B.C.E. for the Genesis traditions concerning Jacob, through the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries B.C.E. for Hosea, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Ezekiel, all are linked in one manner or another to Josiah's reform.

These traditions constitute at least a portion of the material from which Second Isaiah could draw in composing Isa 40–55. Of course, interpreters will never know if there are other materials no longer present in the Bible, but the materials concerning Jacob and the marriage relationship examined here constitute an adequate basis for Second Isaiah's construction of Jacob/Israel and Bat Zion/Jerusalem as the primary Israelite/Judean figures in Isa 40–55. That these texts are all linked to Josiah's reform is crucial for understanding Second Isaiah's construction of Jacob and Bat Zion in relation to the fundamental issues of exile and return. Josiah's reform anticipated a period of return from exile following a long period of Israelite exile and Judean subjugation to the Assyrian Empire. In the case of northern Israel's exile, many Israelites had fled from the Assyrian onslaught, still others were displaced by the Assyrians either to distant countries or to nearby lands, such as Philistia, to serve Assyrian interests, and even others remained in the land. In the case of southern Judah's period of subjugation, again many were killed off or displaced by the Assyrian invasions and displacement, others had fled to safer areas, and still others remained in the land, particularly in the city of Jerusalem. Insofar as Josiah's program envisioned the return of exiles, the return of northern Israel to Davidic rule, and the purification of the Jerusalem Temple at the center of a restored and reunited Israel, Josiah's reform provides the template on which Second Isaiah employed the figures of Jacob and Bat Zion to construct a new scenario of exile and return at the close of the Babylonian exile.

Such a scenario, with its portrayal of Jacob and Bat Zion, was not taken piecemeal from texts related to Josiah's reform, but represents a process of reflection and reinterpretation of these figures as portrayed in earlier texts.

The Jacob traditions emphasize Jacob's exile to Haran, his love for Rachel, and his return to the land of Israel with his beloved bride and family. But Rachel died far too early in life while giving birth to Benjamin, and Leah was never able to take her place in Jacob's heart as indicated by his unqualified

love for Rachel's sons, Joseph and Benjamin, in comparison to his other children. Second Isaiah was able to draw extensively on the portrayal of Jacob as a figure for exile to a foreign land and return to the land of Israel throughout Isa 40–48. Perhaps Rachel's initial barrenness plays a role in Second Isaiah's construction of Bat Zion as a barren bride, but Sarah could also serve in this capacity. Furthermore, Rachel was never abandoned by her husband, she did not lose her children, and she was not an exiled figure in Genesis. Second Isaiah may have drawn on the image of Rachel weeping for her lost children in Jer 31:15, but such an image represents further reflection on the Rachel figure in Jeremiah beyond Genesis.

In constructing the image of Bat Zion as the abandoned bride whose husband and children would now return to her, Second Isaiah had to turn to the bridal traditions of the prophets. The portrayal of Israel as $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$'s bride in Hosea and Jeremiah and Bat Zion or Jerusalem as $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$'s bride in Zephaniah and Ezekiel is clear. In the cases of Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, the bridal traditions posits a disruption of the relationship. The bride, Israel, or Bat Zion/Jerusalem is there accused of abandoning her husband, $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$, who purportedly cares for her and provides for her. She is off pursuing other lovers. In each of these cases, the text posits a restoration of the relationship when $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$ will eventually forgive the wayward bride following a period of punishment. In the case of Zephaniah, Bat Zion's abandonment of $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$ is presupposed, but this issue is addressed by the exhortations to return to $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$ and to avoid such apostasy before any punishment is realized. Zephaniah ultimately focuses on the image of $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$'s return to the bride, Bat Zion, as the scenario of restoration is laid out. Zephaniah presupposes the return of Bat Zion's exiles, which provides some basis for Second Isaiah's depiction of the return of Bat Zion's children. But Jeremiah's depiction of Rachel weeping for her lost children would also have contributed to Second Isaiah's depiction. Zephaniah's depiction of Bat Zion as the restored bride seems to be fundamental to Second Isaiah's portrayal of Bat Zion, but the portrayal of the wayward bride in Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel must also play a role in constructing $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$'s earlier abandonment of the bride. In the end, the Bat Zion figure replaces Rachel in relation to Second Isaiah's portrayal of the exiled and returning Jacob.

VI

The influence of the conceptualization of Israel's restoration and reunification around the Jerusalem Temple and the House of David on Second Isaiah's scenario of exile and return in Isa 40–55 should come as no surprise. Josiah's

seventh-century reform program addresses the same fundamental issues of exile and restoration taken by Second Isaiah at the end of the Babylonian Exile in the late-sixth century B.C.E. Second Isaiah's construction of the images of Jacob and Bat Zion presupposes reflection on the earlier traditions concerning Jacob and Israel or Bat Zion as the bride of YHWH and the reconstruction of the images of Jacob and Bat Zion to fit the needs of the time, but such reflection and reconstruction has been witnessed before in biblical tradition. The Isaiah tradition developed extensively in relation to Josiah's reform²⁵; Jeremiah was compelled to rethink his early support for Josiah's reform following the king's death as he began to understand that Judah and Jerusalem would suffer judgment prior to restoration much like northern Israel²⁶; and Ezekiel was compelled to adjust images of the purification of the Temple and the construction of an ideal twelve tribes of Israel around the Temple in relation to the realities of the Babylonian exile.²⁷ Second Isaiah was compelled to do the same, although the realities of the time called upon the prophet to rethink the tradition in relation to the rise of Cyrus and the prospects for restoration as the period of the Babylonian exile came to a close.

25. See Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39 with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 31–62, esp. 57–59.

26. Marvin A. Sweeney, "The Truth in True and False Prophecy," in Sweeney, *Form and Intertextuality*, 78–93.

27. See Sweeney, "The Royal Oracle in Ezekiel 37:15–28"; idem, "Ezekiel's Debate with Isaiah," *Congress Volume: Ljubljana 2007* (ed. A. Lemaire; VTSup; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

