

Lotta Valve

Early Modes of Exegesis

Ideal Figures in Malachi as a Test Case





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PREFACE

My doctoral dissertation “Early modes of exegesis: Ideal figures in Malachi as a test case” consists of five case studies where the five biblical personalities mentioned in Malachi (Jacob, Levi, Moses, Elijah, and Esau) are in focus. By somewhat differing approaches, I discuss the function of these persons in Malachi, together with some aspects of their rewritten afterlife which in varied measure is influenced also by Malachi.

On one hand, I aim at highlighting the impact of Malachi on especially Second-Temple rewritings of the Bible. My aim is *not* to present a systematic inquiry into Malachi’s influence in subsequent early Jewish exegesis, but nevertheless I hope my study can be a contribution to research on Malachi. On the other hand, my case studies serve as illustrations for a certain kind of reading which ancient exegetes applied to their sacred texts. It is my belief that a better appreciation of this perspective, previously advanced by e.g. Renée Bloch, Michael Fishbane and James Kugel, will open new horizons in Bible scholarship in general, in both Old Testament and New Testament research.

I begun this project in 2007, and originally, all the studies were meant to appear as separate articles. I have published three articles that relate to this project, and a fourth one will be published in 2015. However, for practical reasons concerning a pending post-doctoral project, I chose to re-work the articles into the present monograph so that my defense of thesis would not be delayed any further. Chapters on Jacob and Moses will appear in the present dissertation with slight modifications from their original publications.¹ The chapter on Elijah is a reworking of two articles.² Drafts of chapters on Esau

¹ ”Typological Use of Traditions of the Jacob Cycle in the Book of Malachi,” in: E.Koskenniemi & P. Lindqvist (eds), *Rewritten Biblical Figures*, SRB 3, Åbo Akademi University & Eisenbrauns 2010: 27–46. “Moses and Elijah at Horeb and at the End of Malachi,” in: E. Koskenniemi & J. C. de Vos (eds), *Holy Places and Cult*, SRB 5, Åbo Akademi University & Eisenbrauns 2014: 101–121.

² “The Case of Messenger-Elijah: The Origins of the Final Appendix to Malachi (3:23–24),” in: H. M. Niemann and M. Augustin (eds), *“My Spirit at Rest in the North Country” (Zechariah 6.8): Collected Communications to the XXth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Helsinki 2010*, BEATAJ 57, Frankfurt a.M. etc.: Lang, 2011: 93–

and Levi have been presented as papers in conferences, but they have not previously appeared in any form.

For this dissertation, I thus chose to retain the original idea about five separate studies in one book. From the beginning I regarded it as the only reasonable way to handle my complex subject and illustrate the diversity it incorporates. Therefore, the referencing begins anew in each chapter. It is possible for the reader to consult the case studies quite separately and even without reading the Introduction section (I), but a full kaleidoscopic view will emerge when the book is read in its totality.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the encouragement and support that I received from several persons. My supervisor Professor Antti Laato never ceased to believe in my ability to complete this project, even if it was much overdue. His enthusiasm, humor and cheerfulness, as well as his both broad and deep understanding of the field of exegesis make him an ideal supervisor to any doctoral student, and it is to Prof. Laato that I am indebted for the realization of my dissertation. My sincere thanks to him.

I had possibility to discuss parts of my thesis on several forums, both domestic and international. First of all, I want to thank the members of the exegetical seminar at our faculty for several fruitful discussions. Many thanks especially to Prof. emeritus Karl-Gustav Sandelin, Prof. Kari Syreeni, Adjunct Prof. Risto Nurmela, Dr Pekka Lindqvist, Dr Sami Yli-Karjanmaa, Dr Josef Forsling, Kristian Norrback, Stefan Green, and Jonas Nilsson. During the years, I have also had opportunity to attend the joint symposia of Old Testament exegetes in Finland and Sweden. My thanks in this regard go especially to Prof. Göran Eidevall for important viewpoints concerning my work. I want also to thank the many women exegetes at Helsinki University, especially my fellow doctoral students, for the warm encouragement and sisterly support that I have felt.

103. "Elijah, the Servant, and Phinehas: The Exegetical Tradition behind Ben Sira's Portrayal of Elijah's Coming (Sir 48:10–11)," in: P. Lindqvist & S. Grebenstein (eds), *Rewritten Prophets and Prophetic Texts* [preliminary title], Åbo Akademi University & Eisenbrauns, forthcoming in 2015.

The conferences and symposia of the Studies in the Reception History of the Bible (SRB) network have been an essential platform for the exchange of ideas, and I want to thank especially Professors Jacques van Ruiten, Pancratius Beentjes, Lukas Bormann, Martin Tamcke, and Adjunct Professors Erkki Koskenniemi and Anni Maria Laato for their encouragement. A fourth very central forum for the development of my work has been the OTSEM doctoral training network, with its excellent combination of professional tuition and opportunity to make new friends. My warm thanks go to all OTSEM members, especially Professors Corinna Körting and Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme and Dr Martin Hallaschka for valuable suggestions regarding my work. Professors John Barton and Karl William Weyde kindly accepted the invitation to be the pre-examiners of my final manuscript, and I thank them for their many constructive remarks.

This work was made possible with the financial support of several institutions, principally the Åbo Akademi University and its Foundation and Rector, as well as the Finnish Graduate School of Theology. I thank Head of the Graduate School Prof. Martti Nissinen for accepting my application, as well as for the possibility to discuss my work in the the annual symposia that I attended during my years (2010–2011) at the graduate school.

Finally, my deepest thanks go to my family. My husband Ilkka Valve has supported me in every stage of my work and offered many fruitful viewpoints concerning the nuances of Greek and Latin words. Our children, Kaarina who is now teenager, and Pauli who was born in the middle of this project, have graced our lives with their joyful presence.

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, in memory of my beloved father.

Turku/Åbo, October 2014

Lotta Valve

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I INTRODUCTION

1. The book of Malachi, tradition history, and reception history

Even if this study is focused on exegetical techniques pertaining to the book of Malachi and to the later usage of the book, it is nevertheless useful to summarize some of the research that has been done on the book itself, its historical context and general ideology. This background information is essential for an understanding of the book's ideological biases, which certainly have influenced also later readings of it. In most recent scholarship, there is a growing tendency of ascribing the book to dissident priestly circles. These origins, if true, may explain the, in proportion to the length of the book, rather wide use of Malachi e.g. in the *Book of Jubilees* and, later on, also in Qumran.¹ It is, of course, somewhat difficult to determine whether Malachi was transmitted in its early textual history precisely by these kinds of groups, or if its ideology was recognized and rediscovered in later situations which called for an actualization of its message.

1.1 Prolegomena to the book of Malachi

A pertinent difficulty in scholarship on Malachi has been that the book itself offers no direct clues about its author and date of composition. The issues touched upon in the book seem to refer to actual problems of the day. These troubles include cultic negligence with impure offerings (Mal 1:6–14) and inadequate tithes (3:6–10), mixed marriages and divorces (2:10–16), social injustice (3:5), crop failure (3:10–12) and a general religious and moral negligence (2:8–9, 17; 3:13–15). These are features that in themselves could point towards several different periods of time.

¹ See the chapters on Levi and Moses below.

However, there is a traditional near-consensus among scholars of a date in the rather early Persian period, probably in the first half of the fifth century BCE. This date is based upon both historical considerations and linguistic analyses. In the beginning of the book (1:2–5), there is a reference to the ruined state of Edom, and it is possible to claim a date in the sixth century to Edom’s destruction.² Many scholars discuss the term *peḥah* mentioned in 1:8 and its possible reference to a governor in the Persian administrative system.³ It seems also clear that there is a temple and a cult, so the temple cannot be ruined (1:8, 10; 3:1, 10). However, one of the most compelling reasons for dating Malachi near the middle of the fifth century has been the issue of mixed marriages and divorces, i.e. the perceived connections between Mal 2:10–16 and the accounts in Ezra 9–10 and Nehemiah 13.⁴ Scholars are, however, divided about the exact dating of Malachi in relation to Ezra (458–) and Nehemiah (445–).⁵ The question is whether Malachi should be viewed as a contemporary of one of them, or perhaps as their predecessor.⁶ Andrew Hill, who has made a linguistic analysis of the book, suggests that Malachi was written in the first quarter of the fifth century.⁷ A date near 475 BCE for the bulk of the book thus seems rather plausible, if one wants to find an average upon which most scholars can agree.

As regards the author, there are researchers who hold to the traditional view according to which the book is a prophecy of a person called Malachi, as

² See, e.g., John R. Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989, 147–161; idem, “Edom in history,” *ABD* vol 2. New York: Doubleday 1992: 287–294.

³ See Julia M. O’Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990, 114–120 for an extensive critical discussion.

⁴ There have always been scholars who would rather see a reference to idolatry in this passage. Thus, e.g., C. C. Torrey, “The Prophecy of ‘Malachi’,” *JBL* 17 (1898): 1–15, here 9–10; Abel Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple*, Lund: Gleerup, 1965, 27–34; O’Brien, *Priest and Levite*, 66–69; David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi: A Commentary*, London: SCM Press, 1995, 194–203. My contention is that the author is using cultic vocabulary in an ironical manner, because his message is intended especially against the priests, cf. Neh 13:28. I discuss this matter in my chapter on Levi.

⁵ I thus subscribe to these traditional dates for Ezra and Nehemiah.

⁶ William J. Dumbrell, “Malachi and the Ezra-Nehemiah Reforms,” *RTR* 35 (1976): 42–52 suggests a date briefly before Ezra’s arrival, i.e. ca 460. Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1998, Appendix A) lists the opinions of scholars on this matter up to his date.

⁷ Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1998, 80–84; 395–400.

attested in the Hebrew text of its superscription, 1:1.⁸ Most scholars, however, view the word מלאכי as an appellative and perceive some kind of a connection between the superscription and verse 3:1, where the same word occurs. Opinions divide regarding the implications of this assumed relationship, and it is often noticed that the superscription in the Septuagint has ‘by his messenger’ (ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ) instead of the name Malachi. Many scholars argue that it is not plausible that a later redactor would have chosen the name Malachi for the prophet under influence of verse 3:1, because the focus of that verse is clearly on a future figure.⁹

I agree with David Petersen in that the Septuagint most probably has retained the original form of the superscription, which was מלאכי. It is not at all unthinkable that a ך has been accidentally shortened to ך in the copying process, or alternatively, someone intentionally changed the form in some stage of the transmission history of verse 1:1. Because the word מלאכי was attested in 3:1, it was accepted and retained also in the superscription, and interpreters began gradually to view the word as the prophet’s name.¹⁰ Moreover, the fact that Haggai is called מלאך יהוה in Hagg 1:13 is evidence of that this kind of a title could be applied to a prophet in post-exilic times. With regard to Malachi, the interesting question which one can speculate upon is that the superscription may have its real background in Mal 2:7, where the priest is designated as “a messenger of the Lord Sebaot.” If this claim is true, it may indicate that the redactor who included the original superscription perceived of the author as a priest. As noticed already above, a priestly background for the author is strongly favored also by many recent commentators.¹¹

⁸ Thus, Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi: The Divine Messenger*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987, 27–29; and, with some reservations, O’Brien, *Priest and Levite*, 52–53; Hill, *Malachi*, 15–18. Glazier-McDonald argues that the name may be an abbreviated form of Malachiyah(u).

⁹ So e.g. Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1979, 493; Hill, *Malachi*, 16–17.

¹⁰ Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi*, 165–166. Cf. Brenda J. Shaver, “The Prophet Elijah in the Literature of the Second Temple Period: The Growth of a Tradition,” PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001, 73.

¹¹ See, e.g. Karl William Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching: Prophetic Authority, Form Problems, and the Use of Traditions in the Book of Malachi*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000, 13, 63–64; Rex Mason, *Preaching the Tradition: Homily and Hermeneutics after the Exile*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990, 237, 245 (with some reservations); Michael H. Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, Part 2, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, 571–572, 575.

In the past 25 years especially, a view according to which the Book of Malachi is written, not oral, prophecy has gained wide acceptance.¹² The prophet's careful reuse of earlier traditions certainly points to this direction. However, redaction-critical considerations cannot be left out from the assessment of this issue; and it is in my judgment quite possible that in addition to written redactional layers, the book also includes oral prophetic traditions.¹³ However, this contention is impossible to prove, as the final form of the book clearly bears evidence of exegetical and literary skill. It is on the other hand also quite possible that the didactic form of the book witnesses of teaching, which plausibly was oral activity.¹⁴

1.2 A brief survey of previous scholarship, with special regard to tradition-historical considerations

The recent three decades have witnessed an increased interest in the book of Malachi both as a document of the post-exilic era and as an example of the reuse of earlier scriptural traditions. Earlier, this 'recycling' tendency in Malachi was of course also recognized, but it was generally not appreciated, as the whole book was measured against earlier prophetic books and was thus seen as an unoriginal imitation of them. The remark of W. M. L. de Wette is very typical of his day, the early nineteenth century:

In Vortrag, Rhythmus und Bildern eifert Maleachi nicht ganz unglücklich den alten Propheten nach; doch fühlt man immer den matten, erstorbenen Geist, der wohl versuchen, aber nicht vollenden kann, und seines Stoffes nicht mächtig ist.¹⁵

¹² This was the starting-point in Helmut Utzschneider's analysis: *Künder oder Schreiber? Eine These zum Problem der „Schriftprophetie“ auf Grund von Maleachi 1,6 – 2,9*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 1989.

¹³ Cf. the remarks of Mason, *Preaching*, 256; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, 334.

¹⁴ See Mason, *Preaching*, 235–236, 256; and cf. Weyde, *Prophecy*, esp. 397.

¹⁵ Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette, *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in die kanonischen und apokryphischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, Dritte verbesserte Auflage, Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1829, 359.

Occasionally, one may encounter something of this attitude still in recent times. Thus, Hill writes in summarizing his exhaustive commentary on Malachi,

The fact remains, however ungracious, that the prophet Malachi was at best a product of his age. The classical era of Yahweh's prophet as 'vizier' had passed - - - . Malachi is a man of words only, feeding upon the ideas (and oracles) of his preexilic predecessors - - -. ¹⁶

However, surprisingly positive assertions could also be heard already in the nineteenth century. Charles Cutler Torrey writes, "Originality and earnestness are marked characteristics of the book in all its parts."¹⁷ Despite occasional voices like Torrey's, and the monumental work of Alexander von Bulmerincq,¹⁸ Malachi gained relatively little attention up to the 1970s. Mention should be made, though, of Egon Pfeiffer's seminal article from 1959.¹⁹ His study about the six disputation speeches in Malachi outlined the structure of the book in a way that very few have challenged.²⁰

The renewed interest in Malachi, especially in the English-speaking scholarly community, seems to have begun above all with Beth Glazier-McDonald's commentary in 1987 and Julia O'Brien's study in 1990. At roughly the same time, also other studies on Malachi began to appear, which indicates a simultaneous interest in the book in several universities. Attention was paid especially to the internal coherence of and textual links between the twelve Minor Prophets, James Nogalski being a pioneer in this field of schol-

¹⁶ Hill, *Malachi*, 363.

¹⁷ Torrey, "Prophecy of Malachi," 15.

¹⁸ Alexander von Bulmerincq, *Der Prophet Maleachi*, 2 vol:s, Tartu: J. G. Krüger, 1926–1932.

¹⁹ Egon Pfeiffer, "Die Disputationsworte im Buche Maleachi," *EvTh* 12 (1959): 546–568.

²⁰ Pfeiffer was not the first to divide Malachi into these six units (1:2–5; 1:6–2:9; 2:10–16; 2:17–3:5; 3:6–12; 3:13–21). He himself refers to Otto Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* 2, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1956, 544. Eissfeldt, for his part, treats the division as if it were quite natural. (See Weyde, *Prophecy*, 18–20 for an extensive discussion about Pfeiffer's predecessors and their characterizations of the units in Malachi.) Those few modern scholars challenging the view advocated by Pfeiffer include Weyde, *Prophecy*, 280–324, who is inclined to place verse 3:6 as a conclusion to the previous oracle, and Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, 561–562, who divides the book to only two main parts (excluding the superscription in 1:1) with a break between verses 2:16 and 2:17.

arship.²¹ In the Anglophone world, Petersen's valuable commentary appeared in 1995, followed by Hill's exhaustive commentary in 1998, which summarized much of previous research done on Malachi. Weyde's extensive study of Malachi appeared in 2000, and Floyd's novel analysis of the book's structure also in 2000. Below, I present briefly the main concerns of two studies on Malachi that I have used extensively, and discuss at length a third one, that of Weyde, because his book is by far the most important study of Malachi for my research purpose.

Glazier-McDonald's primary assumption, which she also seeks to prove in her book, is that Malachi is genuine prophecy in poetical form and contains no later additions.²² Her preliminaries of course heavily influence her findings, a feature which weakens the overall quality of her study.²³ Glazier-McDonald's work has nevertheless turned out to be a valuable contribution to scholarship on Malachi. She engages in true dialogue with also old works, such as those of Torrey or von Bulmerincq. Thus, she has made the work of these scholars more accessible to later generations, and her own suggestions regarding the interpretation of specific passages are often interesting. Glazier-McDonald shares the presupposition of most scholars, that Malachi is a post-exilic book. Probably partly for this reason, she does pay attention to similarities between other biblical texts and Malachi. However, Glazier-McDonald often only lists out certain similarities in phrasing but does not thoroughly discuss the possible impact of earlier texts on the message of the prophet. It seems that her defense of Malachi's originality in effect prevents her from admitting possible instances of biblical interpretation in the book.

O'Brien, on the other hand, sets a radical thesis according to which the book of Malachi stems from the years 605–500.²⁴ Her main question, which is reflected in the title of her book, is whether 'priest' and 'Levite' are synonymous concepts in Malachi, and she answers this question in the affirmative. However, O'Brien's most significant contribution lies in her claim that Malachi should be viewed as an adapted covenant lawsuit, or *rib*. Other scholars

²¹ James Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve*. Berlin: de Gruyter 1993. Idem, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve*. Berlin: de Gruyter 1993.

²² Cf. Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 6.

²³ Cf. Bruce Malchow's review in *JBL* 108 (1989): 127–128.

²⁴ O'Brien, *Priest and Levite*, 133, 147.

have criticized O'Brien's approach at this point, and it is true that her attempt to present the whole book in this rather narrow scheme is not always very convincing.²⁵ However, O'Brien's systematical highlighting of covenantal themes in Malachi was a welcome novelty at the time of the publication of her book.²⁶ Regrettably, O'Brien does not always engage in full discussion with scholars who have written more generally on the *rib* form or procedure before her, because a more thorough analysis of their contributions would perhaps have strengthened her case.²⁷ For my reading of Malachi, O'Brien's analysis has been helpful, as she shows way to a deeper understanding of covenantal thematic in Malachi and its possible origins in the referential world of the ancient Near East.²⁸

The publication of Karl William Weyde's study on the reuse of traditions in Malachi was an important landmark in Malachi scholarship at the turn of the millennium. Firstly, Weyde's very exhaustive and objective treatment of almost all earlier work on Malachi makes his study an invaluable tool for subsequent scholars. Secondly, Weyde was the first to systematically examine the author's strategies of applying earlier traditions and texts.

In his methodology, Weyde firstly poses a form critical question to determine the course of his study. Without quite subscribing to O'Brien's analysis of Malachi as a modified *rib*, Weyde nevertheless concludes that the prophet's accusations are built on laws, and he consequently focuses especially on the novel application of legal texts in Malachi.²⁹ In his study, Weyde makes care-

²⁵ E.g. Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, 564–566; Hill, *Malachi*, 32–33. Cf. also Weyde's cautions (*Prophecy*, 29–30).

²⁶ She had, though, a precursor in Steven L. McKenzie & Howard N. Wallace, "Covenant Themes in Malachi," *CBQ* 45 (1983): 549–563.

²⁷ E.g. Berend Gemser, "The *Rib*- or Controversy-Pattern in Hebrew Mentality," in: M. Noth & D. Winton Thomas (eds), *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, VTSupp 3, Leiden: Brill, 1955: 120–137; Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets," *JBL* 78 (1959): 285–295; James Limburg, "The Root רִיב and the Prophetic Lawsuit Speeches," *JBL* 88 (1969): 291–304.

²⁸ Below, I shall discuss these features in Malachi, mainly in my chapter on Moses, but somewhat also in the other chapters. O'Brien's influence was more visible in my master's thesis, which was entitled "Covenant in Malachi" ("Förbundet i Malaki," Åbo Akademi University, 2007 [in Swedish]) and was devoted to the *rib* question.

²⁹ Weyde, *Prophecy*, *passim*, but see especially his methodological remarks on p. 49.

ful distinctions between forms of texts and always notes when a reuse of a given text has implications regarding its form.

As regards the criteria against which the possible allusions in the texts are to be measured, Weyde is restrictive and considers the approach of e.g. Nogalski to be too generous.³⁰ Weyde refers to the works of M. Seidel and Benjamin Sommer who have attempted to find more specific criteria for determining the interdependence of texts.³¹ According to Weyde, Seidel showed that a literary reference to another text is often indicated by inversion in the Hebrew Bible, i.e. instead of direct quotations, authors often use paraphrases where the order of words or phrases has been reversed. Weyde discusses the cases in Malachi where “Seidel’s law” may be operative, and pays also otherwise careful attention to chiastic devices within Malachi.

Weyde, in carefully examining other scholars’ arguments, refers in several instances also to the work of Michael Fishbane, with both approval and criticism.³² This interaction between these two scholars is of importance to me, because both have influenced my own work. In the following, I shall thus briefly discuss Weyde’s assessment of Fishbane’s interpretation of Malachi 1:6–2:9 and clarify my own standpoint concerning this particular text.

Weyde remarks first generally that it is not altogether clear how Fishbane’s view of inner-biblical exegesis differs from the more common notion of tradition history, even if Fishbane himself claims a difference in methodology.³³ According to Fishbane’s definition,

[W]hereas the study of tradition-history moves back from the written sources to the oral traditions which make them up, inner-biblical exegesis starts with the received Scripture and moves forward to the interpretations based on it. In tradition-history, written formulations are the final of many oral stages of *traditio* during which the traditions themselves become au-

³⁰ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 50–52.

³¹ M. Seidel, “Parallels Between the Book of Isaiah and the Book of Psalms,” *Sinai* 38 (1956) [Hebr.]. Cited in Weyde, *Prophecy*, 52, 121, 203, 210, 213, 309, 400. Benjamin D. Sommer, “Exegesis, Allusion and Intertextuality in the Hebrew Bible: a Response to Lyle Eslinger,” *VT* 46 (1996): 479–489. (Sommer refers to the approach of Eslinger, “Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category,” *VT* 42 [1992]: 47–58.)

³² See e.g. Weyde, *Prophecy*, 47.

³³ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 42.

thoritative; by contrast, inner-biblical exegesis begins with an authoritative *traditum*. To be sure, the oral traditions would not be transmitted were they not, to some degree, authoritative in the first place. But the authority of these traditions is singularly assured by the very process of their transmission and final stabilization. Inner-biblical exegesis, on the other hand, takes the stabilized literary formulation as its basis and point of departure. Responses to it are thus interpretations of a basically fixed *traditum*, despite the somewhat fluid record of the most ancient biblical manuscripts and versions.³⁴

I see the point made by Fishbane, even if Weyde is right in that the difference may in practice be small. In the concrete analysis of texts, a methodological difference between tradition-historical study and the study of inner-biblical exegesis can be difficult to maintain. However, Fishbane's emphasis on the interpretative aspect has been important for my own methodological point of departure. Fishbane's view thus has resemblance especially to Renée Bloch's stress on the midrashic characteristic in all, also the earliest, biblical interpretation. I will discuss Bloch's view in more detail in the introductory chapter 3.

The most comprehensive criticism that Weyde delivers to Fishbane concerns Fishbane's interpretation of Mal 1:6–2:9 as an example of “aggadic exegesis” of the Priestly Blessing of Numbers 6:24–27.³⁵ According to Weyde's form-critical view, Fishbane's analysis is not complete, because Fishbane does not consider the legal background of the Malachi passage, which, according to Weyde's examination, is mostly Leviticus 22:17–25, but also Deuteronomy 28:15–68.³⁶

In my view, both Weyde and Fishbane are right in their analyses, which are not at all mutually exclusive. Their interpretations do not actually even concern precisely the same words or themes in the lengthy Malachi passage. Weyde stresses, certainly rightly, the feature that the prophetic accusation is built on legal texts,³⁷ and he shows convincingly which these texts are. How-

³⁴ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 7–8.

³⁵ See Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 332–334. This is the only text in Malachi with which Fishbane deals at some length; however, he mentions briefly also Mal 3:5 (*Biblical Interpretation*, 294). Weyde discusses this reference in *Prophecy*, 305–307.

³⁶ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 118–122; 162–164.

³⁷ Cf., in this particular instance, O'Brien's view of Malachi as adapted *rib*.

ever, also Fishbane must be correct in his contention that the author makes ironical use of the Priestly Blessing. It is very probable that Mal 2:2 includes a key for this interpretation: אֲרוּתִי אֶת בְּרִכּוֹתֵיכֶם וְגַם אֲרוּתִיהָ “I will curse your blessings; yes, I have cursed it (already)...” In my view, the prophetic author’s application of all these traditions on his intended audience of priests causes his warning to have double effect. The author presents a not-so-veiled threat that the Priestly Blessing, which the priests recited over the people, and which they most probably saw as a certain guarantee for God’s benevolence towards both them and the people, has been turned into a curse towards them. This situation, in turn, is due to the priests’ and the people’s failure to keep the covenantal stipulations, of which they are reminded in the accusation parts of Mal 1:6–2:9, as shown by Weyde.

To summarize this chapter, research on Malachi has gradually led to a common acceptance and appreciation of the book’s value not only as a document of the early post-exilic era, but also as actualization of previous traditions. Whether this enterprise is called “use of traditions” or “biblical interpretation” is perhaps partly a matter of nomenclature, despite Fishbane’s remarks to the contrary. In my view, Malachi, being an early post-exilic document, stands at a watershed in this regard. We cannot be quite sure about the exact textual form of all the traditions that the author had at his disposal, and in this regard, Weyde’s stress on the tradition-historical method in the investigation of Malachi is sound. However, in certain instances, Malachi clearly bears evidence of similar interpretation of traditions as is known from later *midrash*. The inclusion of the final verses 3:22, 3:23, and 3:24 to Malachi, in turn, witness of a midrashic reading of the book itself by a later editor/later editors. And finally, Malachi has also been used in subsequent Second-Temple (and even later) literature, mainly as building material to illustrate some traditions from especially Genesis (and Exodus) that later authors apparently deemed as being in need of explication. I turn to the concrete examples in the Case Studies section (II). In the following chapter, I shall however discuss some definitions concerning biblical interpretation, as well as the difference between hermeneutical and historical approaches to texts.

2. Methodological preliminaries

In this and the following chapter, I shall discuss some central aspects in the research of biblical interpretation and define my own position in this large discipline. Basically, I will take Renée Bloch's, Michael Fishbane's and James Kugel's approaches as my points of departure.¹ A contribution which I hope to make in this dissertation is my emphasis on the use of *gezera shava* or related (nameless) techniques where the ancient interpreters compared identical words and phrases of Scripture to yield new interpretations. I will devote *gezera shava* a more thorough treatment in the next chapter.

In the current chapter, I will dedicate some pages to a discussion on the slightly problematic designation 'rewritten Bible.' I advocate an adjustment of that term, because it causes confusion. As was noted in the previous chapter, Fishbane uses the simple but admittedly vague designation 'biblical interpretation' for all phenomena that can be recognized to interpret traditions that are recounted in the Bible² in some form. I think that as a generic term, Fishbane's alternative can be defended. However, in chapter 3 I will explain why I prefer the term *midrash* that e.g. Bloch used. In the present chapter, I also discuss the tension between the so-called hermeneutical and historical approaches to biblical interpretation. I will argue that these approaches are not mutually exclusive and that scholars should be able to pursue both of them. In this study, however, I use the hermeneutical approach.

¹ Renée Bloch, "Midrash," L. Pirot, A. Robert & H. Cazelles (eds), *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, vol 5, Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1957, 1263–1281. Translated into English by Margaret Howard Callaway, in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice* (ed. W. S. Green; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 1:29–50; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985; James L. Kugel, *In Potiphar's House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts*, 2nd ed., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994

² Of course, the designation 'Bible' itself is also problematic, and therefore this definition is not quite satisfactory (cf. below on 'Rewritten Bible').

2.1 The question of ‘rewritten Bible’

Research of biblical interpretation, as many other fields of scholarship, has by time been divided into several sub-fields and schools of thought. In this specific area, a large discussion concerning terminology has developed during decades of scholarship. I want to briefly discuss the concept of ‘rewritten Bible’ that has caused a considerable debate. By discussion on this notion, I also aim at highlighting some central problems that persist in the research of biblical interpretation. Concerning rewritten Bible, there are basically two competing views: the more restricted one of Geza Vermes and the scholars following him, and a more generous one, perhaps first introduced by Daniel Harrington.

‘Rewritten Bible’ according to Geza Vermes and his adherents: a literary genre

‘Rewritten Bible’ was first used as a term by Geza Vermes in his influential work *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (1961). He employed this label to describe how, “in order to anticipate questions, and to solve problems in advance, the midrashist inserts haggadic development into the biblical narrative – an exegetical process which is probably as ancient as scriptural interpretation itself.”³ It is worth noting that in this initial formulation, Vermes refers to an “exegetical process,” which might give a clue that also in his own mind, the newly-created term “rewritten Bible” denotes first and foremost a technique. However, as seen above, he also mentions “haggadic development in(to) the biblical narrative” and goes on to give the Palestinian Targum, Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities*, Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, *Jubilees*, and the Genesis Apocryphon as examples. This selection indicates that also he primarily had in mind texts in which the narrative has a continuous flow. It is precisely these works that scholars following him have designated as ‘rewritten Bible,’ or more lately, ‘rewritten Scripture.’⁴

³ Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (Studia Post-Biblica IV, Leiden: Brill, 1961), 95.

⁴ A growing awareness and sensitivity to issues of canon has led to modifications in terminology. Thus Sidnie White Crawford prefers the expression ‘Rewritten Scripture’ to point out that the earliest rewritings were rewritings of sacred traditions that were written but not yet canon-

However, even if all scholars agree upon central texts such as *Jubilees*, the precise limits of this group of writings are hard to define. In the borderlines, there are texts which some scholars are willing to include, some not. That is, certain texts can be considered to be too near the parent text and some else too far. Quite many scholars are of the opinion that no biblical translations should be included in the rewritten Bible concept. However, there are several traces of biblical interpretation in the Septuagint. The Targums are a case of their own, as they are translations containing expansions with interpretative elements. Other scholars maintain that many writings in the testament and apocalypse genres include so much extrabiblical material that they cannot really be considered rewritten Bible, but rather as novel compositions that have their starting point in certain stories of the Bible.⁵ (The term ‘parabiblical’ has sometimes been used for this group of texts.⁶) Still others hold that the new composition must be narrative and therefore exclude e.g. the Temple

ized into a complete collection of texts. See her *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 1–15, where she defines her standpoint in the field of scholarship. James Kugel has, in his turn, employed the designation ‘Retold Bible’ to emphasize the originally often undoubtedly oral character of the traditions. See Kugel, *In Potiphar’s House*, 264–268.

⁵ Daniel Machiela pursues these questions as follows, “First, how significant must the *interpretive element* be for a work to not be considered Scripture? Here a text such as 4QReworked Pentateuch (4Q364–367) is particularly thorny, since exegetical intrusions into the scriptural text are relatively minimal. Second, and on the other end of the spectrum, how much *biblical narrative* must be present? 1 Enoch, Life of Adam and Eve, Ascension of Isaiah, 4 Ezra, Baruch, Aramaic Levi, and similar texts give pause in this regard, since their explicit scriptural grounding is very thin indeed.” (Daniel A. Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon: A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13–17*, STDJ 79, Boston: Brill 2009, 5a. His italics.)

⁶ H. L. Ginsberg appears to have used this term originally to denote roughly the same phenomenon and the same texts that are included in Vermes’ ‘rewritten Bible’ (Ginsberg, review of J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave 1: A Commentary. Theological Studies* 28 [1967]: 574–577). Most recently Daniel Falk has used the term in this sense (*The Parabiblical Texts: Strategies for Extending the Scriptures among the Dead Sea Scrolls*, London: T & T Clark, 2007). White Crawford adopted this category to denote the more loosely biblical texts mentioned above, those that according to her are not ‘rewritten Bible.’

Scroll which is rewritten law.⁷ In sum, no real consensus is reached regarding the limits of this genre.

‘Rewritten Bible’ according to Daniel Harrington and others: an interpretative process

A more generous approach sees ‘rewritten Bible’ as roughly synonymous with biblical interpretation. The focus is thus more on the interpretative techniques than in classifying writings in which these techniques occur. Daniel Harrington summarizes as follows: “[I]t seems better to view rewriting the Bible as a kind of activity or process than to see it as a distinctive literary genre of Palestinian Judaism [...]”⁸ In his article “Rewritten Bible” in the *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, George Brooke writes: “Rewritten Bible is a label that is suitable for more than just narrative retellings of biblical stories. It is a general umbrella term describing the particular kind of intertextual activity that always gives priority to one text over another.”⁹

Somewhat similar but perhaps still more flexible views are advocated by members of the Åbo Akademi University based SRB network in the *Studies in Rewritten Bible* [now: *Studies in the Reception History of the Bible*] volumes produced to date. Thus, Antti Laato and Jacques van Ruiten write in their editorial introduction to the first volume of the series that the term Rewritten Bible “should not be regarded as a genre, ancient or modern, but as wide umbrella covering the different types of afterlife of the biblical material.”¹⁰ Erkki Koskenniemi and Pekka Lindqvist continue in their methodological introduction in the same book on similar lines, stressing the difficulty to find limits for the genre ‘rewritten Bible.’ In their opinion, “[t]he only reasonable

⁷ Philip S. Alexander emphasizes this narrative aspect in his “Retelling the Old Testament” (in: D. A. Carson & H. G. M. Williamson [eds], *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988: 99–121).

⁸ Daniel J. Harrington, S. J., “The Bible Rewritten (Narratives)” (in: R. A. Kraft & G. W. E. Nickelsburg [eds], *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, Atlanta: Scholars 1986: 239–247), 243.

⁹ George J. Brooke, “Rewritten Bible,” (in: L. H. Schiffman & J. C. VanderKam [eds], *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2:780b.

¹⁰ A. Laato and J. van Ruiten (eds), *Rewritten Bible Reconsidered: Proceedings of the Conference in Karkku, Finland*. SRB 1. Turku & Winona Lake: Åbo Akademi University & Eisenbrauns, 2008, 2.

solution seems to abandon the use of the term ‘rewritten Bible’ as a definition of a genre.”¹¹

A meta-level analysis of the two usages of ‘rewritten Bible’

Those scholars who prefer the stricter designation are often of the opinion that the new usage of the term ‘rewritten Bible’ is a fatal disservice to the whole concept. Moshe Bernstein expresses this outlook in the following way: “I believe that all rewritten Bible is biblical interpretation, but not all biblical interpretation needs to be subsumed, or should be subsumed, under the classification ‘rewritten Bible’.”¹² Moreover, “[W]hen ‘rewritten Bible’ becomes a process rather than a genre, much of the value of Vermes’ tight descriptive classification has been lost.”¹³ Similarly, Sidnie White Crawford criticizes the ÅAU usage of the term and remarks that she would have preferred a different term for this quest, “one reflecting the idea of the ‘interpretive afterlife’ of biblical texts”.¹⁴

In Bible studies in general, the disagreement regarding the proper use of words is at least partly due to that the scientific vocabulary first developed in German, and then in French and English, not to mention other minor languages. Different schools of scholarship can have both a distinctive vocabulary and a certain way to use more common words, but much depends also on the individual mind. One needs only to read a few books concerning biblical interpretation or biblical books in general, and observe how scholars use the words ‘form’ and ‘genre.’ For some, the words are synonymous and interchangeable. Others use these words to denote different things, but sometimes, what a person calls ‘form’ may be another’s ‘genre.’ Still, in the context of an individual piece of scholarship, it is normally quite possible to understand

¹¹ Erkki Koskeniemi & Pekka Lindqvist, “Rewritten Bible, Rewritten Stories: Methodological Aspects,” *Rewritten Bible Reconsidered*: 11–39, here 15.

¹² Moshe J. Bernstein, “‘Rewritten Bible’: A Generic Category Which Has Outlived its Usefulness?”, *Textus* 22 (2005): 169–196, here 177.

¹³ Bernstein, “Rewritten Bible,” 178.

¹⁴ Sidnie White Crawford, review of *Rewritten Bible Reconsidered*, RBL 05/2009. “Interpretive life of biblical texts” is the term used by Kugel in the subtitle of *In Potiphar’s House* and later. In my opinion, it is by all means an appropriate substitute for ‘rewritten Bible’ in the wider sense, but more clumsy. The clear advantage of Kugel’s term is that it is not ambiguous.

what an author intends to say. It is only in comparison that difficulties concerning nomenclature arise.

An observation that can be made is that the term ‘rewritten Bible’ in any case is a modern meta-level category. This point has been emphatically made by Laato in particular.¹⁵ It is, of course, necessary in scholarship (and natural to the human mind) to sort out and describe things and to put them into categories. The problem with genre classifications, how useful tools they otherwise may be, is however that they rather force scholars into too high a bird-eye perspective than facilitate our struggle with the individual documents.

The designation ‘rewritten Bible’ was thus initially created by a certain scholar some fifty years ago to describe an ancient phenomenon. Hence, there is actually little point in arguing about the limits of *that* term. A much more fruitful approach would be to discuss the definition and boundaries of *ancient* concepts, in order to understand them better. It is at any rate so that the ancient interpreters hardly thought for example in terms of ‘continuous’ versus ‘lemmatized’ ways of writing out their interpretation. The question in their diverging approaches to Scripture seems mostly to be about somewhat differing traditions and schools of thought, as well as how the canonicity of the biblical texts was viewed.¹⁶

Given all this, it seems unavoidable that concerning the term ‘rewritten Bible’, some people will instinctively think about Vermes’s genre. There is actually nothing to be done about this, given the ambiguous nature of the term. History will show whether the wider use of ‘rewritten Bible’ eventually will rule out the narrower one.¹⁷ Meanwhile, confusion can hardly be avoided.

¹⁵ Antti Laato, “Gen 49:8–12 and Its Interpretation in Antiquity: A Methodological Approach to Understanding of the Rewritten Bible,” in: E. Koskeniemi & P. Lindqvist (eds), *Rewritten Biblical Figures*. SRB 3. Turku & Winona Lake: Åbo Akademi University & Eisenbrauns, 2010: 1–26, here 3.

¹⁶ Bernstein puts this aptly when discussing the limits of the rewritten Bible genre in the “biblical text end” of the spectrum (cf. Machiela’s thoughts, footnote 5 in the present chapter), “[M]atters of canon and audience may play a role. One group’s rewritten Bible could very well be another’s biblical text!” (“Rewritten Bible,” 175.) The matter of canonicity versus sacredness of a text is important, and I will deal with it in the following chapter.

¹⁷ This is not the wish of Bernstein, who concludes his article concerning the proper use of the term (“Rewritten Bible,” 196), “If - - - we were to give up the category ‘rewritten Bible’ as a genre by using it in the looser sense employed by many scholars, then we shall simply have to

2.2 Hermeneutical and historical approaches

There are also other questions that are often pondered and argued upon in biblical scholarship: Should the individual documents that contain biblical interpretation be viewed more in their own terms or in comparison to one another? And should the documents be explained more in internal or external terms, i.e. as hermeneutical readings or as documents of a certain era in history? These two approaches have often been connected with the names of James Kugel and Jacob Neusner, respectively.

The hermeneutical approach of James Kugel and Daniel Boyarin

James Kugel is well-known for his magnum opus *Traditions of the Bible*, where he lists out certain ancient interpretative motifs and explains their exegetical origins.¹⁸ *In Potiphar's House* includes a more thorough methodological introduction to his approach. Basically, Kugel sets out an agenda where the ancient exegetes as readers and interpreters of Scripture are in focus. By a procedure which he calls 'reverse-engineering' he attempts at showing how certain interpretations developed. This means that he first identifies the way of reading which the ancient exegetes applied to a certain text, and after this, he explains their way of reasoning to his own readers.¹⁹

To illustrate how Kugel thinks, I choose one representative example. According to him, it is plausible that the simple but awkward statement in *Jubilees* that Jacob lived in tents and learnt to write (see *Jub.* 19:13–17) is based on the same tradition that can be detected in a targumic motif that occurs together with the mention of Jacob's living in tents (Gen 25:27). The targums state that Jacob studied in a schoolhouse (*Targum Onqelos*, *Targum Neophyti* & *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* Gen 25:27). Kugel explains this fact so that plausibly it was argued that the curious plural *tents* in Gen 25:27 had a hidden significance. A reasonable assumption for the ancient exegetes would have

find another generic term to replace its narrow usage, an exercise which I do not believe to be worth the effort."

¹⁸ James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.

¹⁹ *In Potiphar's House*, 1–10.

been that Jacob had two tents, one of which was meant for home and the other for school. This reasoning, of course, as Kugel himself remarks, is dependent on two basic presuppositions that the exegetes must have shared: they valued education, and they set out to glorify Jacob. If their aim had been to vilify Jacob, they would have invented a more dubious function for the other tent. Their basic question that triggered the explanation was, at any rate: “What does it mean that Jacob lived in *tents*?” The nearly logical later outcome of this reasoning is, according to Kugel, at the same time a witness to that the ultimately exegetical origins of the tradition had been forgotten. It is, namely, that Jacob studied in two academies (*Genesis Rabba* 63:10).²⁰

Daniel Boyarin represents a rather similar reading strategy in his *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*²¹. However, he seeks to connect his approach with modern literary theory, which makes his methodological reflections more complicated than Kugel’s beautifully simple methodological guidelines.²² The kernel in Boyarin’s and Kugel’s lines of thought appears to be the same, though. In the words of Boyarin, “we try to understand how the rabbis read the Torah in their time – taking seriously their claim that what they are doing is reading, and trying to understand how a committed reading of the holy and authoritative text works in the rabbinic culture.”²³

The historical or documentary approach of Jacob Neusner

Jacob Neusner, for his part, is more concerned to set out individual documents as such and at the same time in a wider historical perspective. He himself once summarized the difference between his approach and that of Kugel in this way, “[T]raits of the text of Scripture provoke the exegetical work that yields the rabbinic exegesis (Kugel’s view), not the particular interests of the

²⁰ See Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*, 354, 365–366; *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 137–138. One can emphasize that this exegetical treatment of Jacob (as outlined by Kugel) also inevitably contemporized the patriarch. By elevating Jacob to a scholar’s status, the sages could better identify themselves with him.

²¹ Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990.

²² Cf. Boyarin’s later book *Sparks of the Logos: Essays in Rabbinic Hermeneutics* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), especially its fourth chapter “Midrash as Literary Theory” (pp. 89–113).

²³ Boyarin, *Intertextuality and Reading*, 15.

documents that present that exegesis (which is my view).”²⁴ Neusner stresses especially the interests and biases of the groups that stand behind the traditions. He sets out his approach in a dialectical way characteristic of him in his *Wrong Ways and Right Ways in the Study of Formative Judaism*.²⁵ There he criticizes Kugel for an “ahistorical and anticontextual” approach.²⁶ Also the literary approach represented by Boyarin’s predecessors receives Neusner’s critique.²⁷

Can the two approaches be reconciled?

Those viewing the matter from outside have noted that the two sets of agenda just address different questions. Martin Jaffee has dealt with this issue in a constructive way in his review of Boyarin’s *Intertextuality and Reading*.²⁸ There, he offers fruitful viewpoints how both scholars, Boyarin and Neusner, could learn from one another.²⁹

Also Pekka Lindqvist has argued that these two sets of agenda by no means are mutually exclusive and that they can very well be employed in the same study, as he does in his study concerning the interpretive life of the Golden calf story. According to him, the question is only how far from the text one keeps the magnifying glass, and one must adjust it according to one’s needs.³⁰ I think this is a good metaphor and would add that one may sometimes need both a magnifying glass, eyeglasses and a telescope if one aims

²⁴ In Neusner’s review of Karin Hedner Zetterholm’s book *Portrait of a Villain*, JQR 95 (2005): 705–709, here 705.

²⁵ Jacob Neusner, *Wrong Ways and Right Ways in the Study of Formative Judaism: Critical Method and Literature, History, and the History of Religion*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. Cf. his *Midrash as Literature: The Primacy of Documentary Discourse* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), which is a response to Kugel’s article “Two Introductions to Midrash” (in: G. H. Hartman & S. Buddick [eds], *Midrash and Literature*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986: 77–103).

²⁶ *Wrong Ways and Right Ways*, 59.

²⁷ *Wrong Ways and Right Ways*, 31–58.

²⁸ Martin S. Jaffee, “The Hermeneutical Model of Midrashic Studies: What It Reveals and What It Conceals,” *Prooftexts* 11 (1991): 67–76.

²⁹ Carol Bakhos treats this same issue at length in her “Method(ological) Matters in the Study of Midrash” (in C. Bakhos [ed.], *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash*, SJSJ 106, Leiden: Brill 2005: 161–187).

³⁰ Pekka Lindqvist, *Sin at Sinai: Early Judaism Encounters Exodus 32* (SRB 2, Turku & Winona Lake: Åbo Akademi University & Eisenbrauns, 2008), 20–21.

both at a genuine ‘internal’ understanding of an individual exegete’s work, a grasp of a single document and a broad perspective concerning its historical context.

Some of the disagreement between Kugel’s and Neusner’s schools is clearly based on misunderstanding each other. Kugel does not deny that ideologies and biases play a role in the generation of explanations for certain exegetical problems (cf. the example of Jacob and the tents above). In this regard, ancient exegesis indeed most often is what modern scholars label *eisegesis*, i.e. reading explanations into the text. In addition to this, Kugel has certainly shown some attention to historical questions, e.g. for the interdependence of documents.³¹ This historical treatment is all the more visible in his latest works concerning *Jubilees*. There he also discusses the ideological biases of that book and their possible origins.³² *Traditions of the Bible*, for its part, should be seen as an encyclopedic handbook, a treasury for other scholars to consult and boost research upon; and to blame that book for lack of historical method is to bark the wrong tree.³³ Neusner, in his turn, may not have been sufficiently acquainted with the hermeneutical method in his earlier works,³⁴ but has taken up the invitation and written books also in response to that approach.³⁵ Thus, it seems that even if a basic difference between the two methods must be maintained, a certain synthesis is quite possible for researchers. It is actually needed if we are to plow new paths in research.

My five case studies are more or less training in ancient hermeneutics, which means that in this doctoral project, I have exercised primarily with Kugel’s reader-oriented method. However, I acknowledge willingly the need

³¹ See, among others, his “Levi’s Elevation to the Priesthood in Second Temple Writings,” *HTR* 86 (1993) 1–64.

³² James L. Kugel, “The Interpolations in the *Book of Jubilees*,” *RevQ* 24 (2009) 215–271; idem, *A Walk through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of its Creation*, SJSJ 156, Leiden: Brill 2012.

³³ In his introductory chapter, Kugel explicitly alerts the reader that he has intentionally left all historical aspects out. *Traditions of the Bible*, 37.

³⁴ Cf. Boyarin’s rather harsh critique towards him in *Intertextuality and Reading*, 13–14.

³⁵ See especially Jacob Neusner, *Reading Scripture with the Rabbis: The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Trinity Press, 2005). The question will of course remain whether his method here is compatible to that of Kugel. Cf. also Neusner’s *Analysis and Argumentation in Rabbinic Judaism* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2003) and *Rabbinic Categories: Construction and Comparison* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

for historical awareness about the impact that these early exegeses may have had on later discussions in Judaism and Christianity. A wide historical synthesis in this dissertation would, however, have required another approach from the beginning. In that case, I should have included more interpretative texts from different eras to allow comparison and to answer questions of possible development that might have occurred due to historical reasons. However, like Kugel, I do defend the methodological primacy of the hermeneutical approach. In the words of Bruce Fisk, “scholarly preoccupation with the social, historical and ideological settings of early Jewish biblical interpretation runs the risk of ignoring its fundamentally exegetical nature.”³⁶

³⁶ Bruce N. Fisk, “One Good Story Deserves Another: The Hermeneutics of Invoking Secondary Biblical Episodes in the Narratives of *Pseudo-Philo* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,” in: C. A. Evans (ed.), *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition*, London: T & T Clark 2004: 217–239, here 218.

3. The ancient interpretative techniques

It is in order in this concluding chapter of the Introduction section to summarize my understanding of how one could view the ancient texts with the same eyes as their first commentators viewed them.¹ The decisive features of this attitude have been discussed at length by especially James Kugel and were exemplified above in chapter 2. However, in the present chapter I will discuss Renée Bloch's view of the midrashic process, as I am essentially in close sympathy with her approach to the subject. I will also devote a section to the use and development of ancient midrashic techniques, above all the *gezera shava*.

3.1 *Darash* and *midrash*: a “seeking” mode of thought as a ground for the ancient exegete's work

Renée Bloch, whose early death ended a promising career, discussed the concept of “midrash” in two seminal papers published in 1957.² Methodologically, her strategy was to focus on the actual usage of the verb *darash* and especially its participle *midrash*. Her approach to this concept was deeply hermeneutic, as she sought to trace its origins and meaning to its earliest attestations in the Hebrew Bible and proceed to its later development.

Bloch thus concluded that the word *midrash* occurs twice in the Hebrew Bible, both times in Second Chronicles (13:22 and 24:27), where it appears to designate the sources that the Chronicler used.³ We cannot however be sure whether these texts, “*midrash* of prophet Iddo” and “*midrash* of the Book of Kings,” included such interpretative material that we are accustomed to call

¹ I am well aware that to assert that a modern scholar could have such an understanding of the mind of the ancient readers is reminiscent of the historicism of 19th century Romanticism. My aim is however not to simplify a complex historical reality. What I claim is that a certain mindset concerning the sacred texts is a necessary prerequisite for even a remote understanding of the ancient exegetes. It is this mindset that I seek to illustrate in this study and that James Kugel, in particular, has illustrated in his various works.

² Renée Bloch, “Midrash,” L. Pirot, A. Robert & H. Cazelles (eds), *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, vol 5, Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1957, 1263–1281. Translated into English by Margaret Howard Callaway, in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice* (ed. W. S. Green; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 1:29–50.

³ Bloch, “Midrash,” 29.

midrash, even if Bloch regards this as probable.⁴ It may thus be more fruitful to see how the verb *drsh* is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Bloch contends that “in all its uses, secular or religious, it [*drsh*] evokes the idea of a directed search.”⁵ Siegfried Wagner, in his *ThDOT* entry, opines that the original meaning of the verb is difficult to determine, but “[i]f one insists nonetheless on trying to find a general definition, then ‘go to see’ and ‘search for,’ or ‘go’ and ‘inquire about (of),’ are about as close as one can come (cf. Dt. 12:5).”⁶

Bloch highlights specifically an exhortation in a post-exilic text, Isaiah 34:16: *ה' ספר ה' דרשו מעל ספר ה' Seek in the book of the Lord* and argues that it means that the reader is urged to examine the earlier prophecies about Edom.⁷ This is, of course, just one of the possible ways to interpret this specific passage.⁸ If

⁴ Bloch, “Midrash,” 30: “[I]t is likely that when the Chronicler used the term *midraš* he was alluding to the [sic!] historical works which glossed Scripture for the purpose of instruction and edification.” Saul Lieberman however notes that the Septuagint renders the term as βιβλίον in 2 Chr 12:22 and as γραφή in 24:27. As he remarks, these terms do not yet convey a technical meaning. Lieberman however points out that some *Hexapla* manuscripts do translate מדרש in 2 Chr 13:22 as ἐκζητήσις ‘enquiry.’ (Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1950, 47–48.) The word ἐκζητήσις does not occur in the Septuagint, and in the New Testament it occurs only in (some important manuscripts of) 1 Tim 1:4. One could ask whether the obviously pejorative usage of this term, or indeed the whole passage in 1 Tim 1:3–7, is intended as polemic against traditional Jewish midrashic activity. To me, this interpretation seems plausible.

⁵ Bloch, “Midrash,” 30.

⁶ Siegfried Wagner, “דָּרַשׁ *dārash*; מִדְרָשׁ *midrāsh*,” in: G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* vol. 3, (tr. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley & D. E. Green), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978: 293–307, here 294.

⁷ Bloch, “Midrash,” 30.

⁸ Many commentators focus rather on the wild animals that are mentioned in Isa 34:13–15 and the occurrence of these same species elsewhere in the Bible. Thus, Willem Beuken maintains that the ‘book of the Lord’ signifies both the Torah and some collection that later became the Prophets, as he notices that most of the animals are mentioned somewhere in these parts of the Bible, apart from לַיִלִית and קָפוּ that are *hapax legomena*. (Willem A. M. Beuken, *Jesaja* 28–39, *HthKAT*, Freiburg im Breisgau : Herder, 2010, 310; idem, *Isaiah: Part 2*, vol. 2, Isaiah chapters 28–39, *HCOT*, Leuven : Peeters, 2000, 290 and 302.) (Regarding the word לַיִלִית, many readers would of course see a reference to the female night demon Lilith and not an animal.) Peter Miscall contends that the ‘book of the Lord’ probably signifies the scroll mentioned in Isa 34:4, but he also remarks interestingly that verse 16 might include a parody of Noah’s Ark. (Peter D. Miscall, *Isaiah*, Sheffield : JSOT Press, 1993, 86.) Hans Wildberger opines that the ‘book of the Lord’ denotes the Book of Isaiah. (Hans Wildberger, *Jesaja*, *BKAT* 10.3, *Jesaja* 28–39, Neukirchen-Vluyn : Neukirchener Verlag, 1982, 1349–1350.) Wagner, “דָּרַשׁ,” 299, states only that “[t]he passage undoubtedly presupposes occupation (*darash*) with a fixed text.”

Bloch's thesis is accepted, however, the following verb וקראו could be translated as *and read (aloud?)*⁹, which would make sense in the context.¹⁰ A compelling thought is that the author of this verse has perceived in his mind an ideal reader who is engaged in exegetical activity and therefore able to understand the purpose of his exhortation.¹¹

Especially characteristic of Bloch's approach is her emphasis on canon and its development. Bloch sees midrashic activity in certain processes that have usually been considered purely redactional, such as the incorporation of the Priestly material into the Pentateuch.¹² Her view of canon may hence be somewhat difficult to grasp from today's perspective, as her emphasis on the midrashic aspect causes her to date the beginnings of the canonization of Scripture rather early.¹³ Bloch thus sees the canonization process as very gradual. To my mind, Bloch's highlighting of the relationship between a text and its *midrash* is indeed important, and her emphasis on the midrashic aspects of inner-biblical exegesis has certain implications. *Midrash* is essentially an interpretation of a *sacred text*. *Midrash* proper should thus be considered as interpreting a text which really is *holy as a text* and cannot anymore be simply altered. If we do accept that such activity can be detected e.g. in the P versions of Genesis narratives, then we must also assume that these Priestly authors probably had access to written sources that had reached a degree of

⁹ The verb קרא, the basic meaning of which is "call" appears in the sense of "read" e.g. in Deut 17:19 and Exod 24:7.

¹⁰ Beuken's proposals mentioned above in footnote 8 could of course also be understood in this vein.

¹¹ I discuss the concept of 'Ideal Reader' below, footnote 19.

¹² Bloch, "Midrash," 38. Samuel Sandmel discusses the basically same idea more fully in his "The Haggada within Scripture," *JBL* 80 (1961): 105–122. In that article, he seeks to demonstrate midrashic (in his terminology, haggadic) activity for example in the double/triplet stories in Genesis 12:9–20; 20:1–18 and 26:1–16 (a patriarch, a matriarch and another man); Genesis 16 and 21 (the two expulsions of Hagar). Michael Fishbane disagrees with his view concerning the first one of the motifs; he does not discuss the Hagar story. See Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, 11–12; 283–284.

¹³ Bloch, "Midrash," 34–37. Bloch subscribes to a rather traditional view which sees the activity of Ezra as an important landmark especially in the canonization of the Torah.

sacredness. The Priestly authors did not want to alter these texts; so they added their own versions as doublets.¹⁴

However, ‘sacred’ (or, rather, ‘holy’) is a general term used in Comparative religion, whereas ‘canon’ is a more technical term used of literature. To avoid confusion, this distinction should perhaps not be blurred. Bloch is of course right in implying that the status of certain texts as holy gradually led to their canonization. However, Bible scholars often perceive of the terms ‘canon’ or ‘canonical’ as related to a somewhat final collection of a corpus of texts, or at least to a somewhat final form of a book.¹⁵ The existence of inner-biblical exegesis as a phenomenon nonetheless suggests that certain smaller pieces of text were considered as authoritative (or, ‘holy’) in their precise wording, even before these pieces were compiled to books. In this way, Bloch’s view of a very gradual canonization process is probably correct. For example, it is relatively easy to understand that the author of the book of Malachi has re-used some form of the Priestly Blessing (which is now recorded in Num 6:24–26) in an ironical manner in his rebuke of the priests of his own day, as Michael Fishbane has convincingly demonstrated.¹⁶ Scholars do in any case agree that the Priestly Blessing is an ancient liturgical text which reflects the

¹⁴ The ultimate origins of various doublet stories in the Bible may then of course be discussed separately, but it is not my intention to do it here. In the chapter on Jacob, I discuss some aspects of this phenomenon regarding the Jacob accounts in Hosea, Genesis, and Malachi. Normally, doublet stories are simply viewed as two (or sometimes several) versions of the same tradition. However, it is not at all impossible to sometimes detect midrashic expansions that indicate that one version is later than the other. Cf. Sandmel, “Haggada,” 111, who sees an introduction of apologetics concerning especially Abraham in the second account of Hagar’s expulsion (Genesis 21).

¹⁵ Nahum Sarna [for the 2nd edition revised by S. David Sterling] explores in his entry for ‘Bible’ in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* the question of sacredness versus canonicity in the following way, “Not everything that was regarded as sacred or revealed was canonized; but sanctity was the indispensable ingredient for canonicity. It was not, in general, the stamp of canonization that conferred holiness upon a book – rather the reverse. Sanctity antedated and preconditioned the formal act of canonization, which in most cases, simply made final a long-existing situation. Of course, the act of canonization, in turn, served to reinforce, intensify, and perpetuate the attitude of reverence, veneration, and piety with which men approached the Scriptures and itself became the source of authority that generated their unquestioned acceptance as the divine word.” In: M. Berenbaum and F. Skolnik (eds), *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Vol. 3. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007, 575–576.

¹⁶ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 332–334. Cf. above in the introductory chapter 1.

blessings that were uttered in the Jerusalem temple.¹⁷ It is thus conceivable that Malachi's intended audience recognized his allusions. But, in the view of how redactional processes concerning individual books of the Bible are usually perceived, it may be somewhat harder to grasp why an author such as the one who wrote Mal 3:23 served his midrashic exegesis of Mal 3:1–2 as an afterthought to the book, rather than introducing the explanation into the text in its 'proper' place.¹⁸ The sensible answer seems to be that for this exegete, the book of Malachi already was 'holy'; it was divinely inspired prophecy that could be interpreted, but not altered. An interesting question that perhaps must remain unanswered is how long time it took for a certain piece of text to achieve such a status.

The line of reasoning illustrated above however seems insufficient when 'rewritten Bible' proper is considered. There, the interpretation is actually done in a way of 'rewriting,' and consequently, the end result is a new text. At the same time, the new text witnesses to a certain approach to its base text as sacred. In the new midrashic compilation, difficult words, grammatical obscurities and other anomalies in the base text are solved and explained. However, recognizing this tendency in that kind of a 'rewritten' midrashic work requires an ideal reader who has access to the base text and who has been able to pose and ponder the same questions as the midrashist.¹⁹ These preliminar-

¹⁷ The silver amulets unearthed in the Ketef Hinnom burial site in 1979, and dated to ca 600 BCE, include a form of the Priestly Blessing that slightly differs from the variant that survives in Numbers 6. In addition to this text, the amulets apparently include also references to some forms of Deuteronomic texts. See the extensive treatment in Erik Waaler, "A Revised Date for Pentateuchal Texts? Evidence from Ketef Hinnom," *TynBull* 53 (2002): 29–55. (Waaler dates the amulets even earlier, 725–650 BCE.)

¹⁸ See below in the chapter on Elijah.

¹⁹ For the concept of the "Ideal Reader" of a given text, there are several theories in literary criticism; some label this reader (or a variant of the basically same concept) as the "implied reader" (thus Wolfgang Iser, *Der implizite Leser: Kommunikationsformen des Romans von Bunyan bis Beckett*, München: Fink 1972) or the "informed reader" (thus Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1980, 48). But for an especially useful analysis, see Charles J. Fillmore, "Ideal readers and real readers," in: D. Tannen (ed.), *Analyzing Discourse: Text and Talk*, Georgetown University Round Table on Languages & Linguistics 1981, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press 1982: 248–270. Initially, Fillmore and his research partner Paul Kay constructed their concept of an abstract 'Ideal Reader' as a practical tool for educational purposes, as their research focused on the intelligibility of texts used for measuring the reading skills of schoolchildren. Their construction of this hypothetical figure is very detailed, as they list out

ies require that the midrashist and his reader knew a rather similar base text, and this most probably also indicates a degree of canonicity. A question that has been raised, though, is whether e.g. the author of *Jubilees* actually intended to replace Genesis by his own rewritten version.²⁰ This problem is not easy to solve. To me, it seems somewhat more probable that *Jubilees* in this regard represents a kind of ‘wisdom’ literature that is not designed to replace its base text, but to gloss a sacred text to an intended audience who was able to understand and appreciate the specific goals and emphases of the rewritten version.²¹

All this said, *midrash*, in its original meaning, seems *not* to denote a free retelling of certain traditions in new words, but rather an interpretation that is very attentive to features in the base text which was viewed as sacred by the midrashist. However, nowadays there are two basic understandings of the word *midrash*: a very wide one, where the word can be used for all kinds of representations of biblical motifs in literature, arts etc.;²² and a very narrow one, where the word denotes concrete attestations of a rabbinic method of interpretation where the text and its commentary are separated from one another, this ‘genre’ thus being in some extension the opposite of ‘rewritten

specific qualities that the Ideal Reader should have in relation to their specific example text. James Kugel does not use an Ideal Reader as a tool when explaining how the ancient exegetes read texts, but his process of ‘reverse-engineering’ could, if wished, very well be presented in the same terms as Fillmore’s and Kay’s construction.

²⁰ See the survey of scholarship by Hindy Najman in her *Past Renewals: Interpretative Authority, Renewed Revelation and the Quest for Perfection in Jewish Antiquity*, SJSJ 53, Leiden: Brill, 2010, 191. She herself supports a view according to which *Jubilees* was not intended as a replacement of Genesis. (Similarly also Sidnie White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, 80–82.) For a more extensive treatment of Najman’s view of the matter, see Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, SJSJ 77, Leiden: Brill, 2003, 43–50.

²¹ Cf. Childs’s rather similar assertion concerning Chronicles: “[I]t is a basic error of interpretation to infer from this method of selection that the Chronicler’s purpose lies in suppressing or replacing the earlier tradition with his own account. . . . [T]he Chronicler’s frequent method of repeating large sections of earlier material to which he supplies a theological explanation of its causes indicates that the author views his work, not simply as a supplement, but as a necessary explication of the tradition.” Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, London: SCM Press 1979, 646–647.

²² Often labeled as “contemporary” or “modern” *midrash*. The US-based Institute of Contemporary Midrash has sought to promote contemporary interpretation of the Hebrew Bible by arranging e.g. courses and seminars (www.icmidrash.org).

Bible' (when this term is defined in the more limited sense).²³ *Midrash* is, in the essence of the word, the most precise term that we have at our disposal when early biblical interpretation is concerned, simply because it, or at least the related verb *darash*, appears to be a word used by the biblical authors themselves for an interpretative activity (cf. the example of Isa 34:16 above). I doubt whether the term *midrash* can anymore be restored to universally gain the same meaning in which e.g. Bloch used it; but despite possible misunderstanding,²⁴ I still consider this term to be the most precise one scholars can use.

3.2 How *midrash* was conducted: the *gezera shava* and other techniques of ancient exegesis

If *midrash* thus denotes "seeking," how should this seeking quite concretely be done? It is probable that the *gezera shava* is the most simple and primitive midrashic technique, but this technique probably also has its pre-phases in oral alliteration and paronomasia.

It is well known that ancient Jewish exegetes applied the exegetical technique which the Rabbis later labeled *gezera shava*, i.e. interpretation based on the use of the same word or phrase in two places in Scripture.²⁵ How one was allowed to apply the *gezera shava* method was later on strictly regulated by rabbinic rules, but I believe it is safe to assume that the most primitive form of this method involved exegetical activity based on uncommon words and phrases shared by two or three texts in Scripture. The notion that rare words

²³ See G. G. Porton, "Midrash, Definitions of," in: J. Neusner & A. J. Avery-Peck (eds), *Encyclopaedia of Midrash: Biblical Interpretation in Formative Judaism*, Leiden: Brill, 2005, 520.

²⁴ Cf. Peter R. Ackroyd, "The Chronicler as Exegete," *JSOT* 2 (1977): 1–32, here 22: "Its [the term *midrash*'s] later, very precisely defined, use inevitably means that if it is used in relation to earlier stages, which may provide pointers to that full development, there is the danger of confusing those earlier stages with the more elaborate and precise form. - - - Some terms are necessary for the description of earlier stages in the evolution of what eventually becomes more precisely defined. Probably it will be necessary always to qualify any use in reference to earlier material, and to avoid such terms as 'proto-midrash' since they may be held to prejudge the nature of the development. We may expect to find exegetical procedures which did not evolve towards the later fixed form; later exegesis is in any case not limited to formal *midrash*."

²⁵ See, for example, David Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 17–18.

usually caught the attention of ancient exegetes seems plausible. In the chapter on Elijah below, I seek to demonstrate this contention by showing how an ancient exegete, i.e. the author of Mal 3:23, concluded that the messenger of Mal 3:1 is Elijah. The exegete's technique was based on the *gezera shava* method, as he compared Mal 3:1–2 to the Elijah cycle in Kings and relied on the cumulative evidence of shared keywords that, in this specific case, also could support an alternative reading of Mal 3:2. Then, later exegetes such as Ben Sira (or, as I argue, already his predecessors) compared the few Scriptural occurrences of the word *mal'akî* 'my messenger' to one another to shed yet new light on certain issues and yield new interpretations concerning Elijah. And finally, New Testament authors who probably considered Ben Sira as authoritative Scripture, proceeded to new interpretations concerning Elijah, partly based on evidence from Ben Sira. New Testament scholar Carol Stockhausen explains the creative state of mind and the perception of a 'canonical text' which lie behind the earliest applications of the *gezera shava* technique as follows,

The Jewish scriptures were, already in the first century and long before, regarded as a unity as the word of God for Israel and its heirs. In Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy Moses is constantly depicted as receiving the word of God and communicating it. The prophets most of all enunciate a message directly from God to the people, as the standard form of the prophetic oracle indicates. Particularly in the Pentateuch and the prophetic corpus, then, the verbal expression of the biblical text itself was perceived as a direct communication through Moses or the prophet from God himself, in virtue of which that verbal expression was both valuable and unified. The unity of the word of God as preserved in the books of Moses and the prophets, in content and so also in verbal expression, based on their divine authorship, is the necessary presupposition of the *gezera shava* as an exegetical technique. Though the rabbinic standardization of that technique is known to us from post-Christian times, the New Testament itself provides the evidence of similar mutual interpretation of verbally linked non-legal texts in the first century.²⁶

²⁶ Carol Kern Stockhausen, *Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant: The Exegetical Substructure of II Cor. 3,1-4,6*, Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1989, 26–27.

The *gezera shava* is the second one in the lists of the seven hermeneutical rules (*middot*) of Rabbi Hillel and the thirteen rules of Rabbi Ishmael; the first one in the lists is the *kal-va-homer* analogy.²⁷ If anything can be inferred from the order of the rules in these lists is of course not certain, but to me it seems plausible that the rules counted first were perceived of as the most fundamental ones.²⁸ The third and fourth rules of Hillel's list, *binyan av mikatuv ehad* and *binyan av mishene ketuvim* seem to be more or less extensions of the *gezera shava* rule, as their original base is in the comparison of similar expressions in different verses, but these are then used in creating more abstract principles of explanation that can be applied to other texts. However, the *gezera shava* also most probably had pre-phases in even earlier interpretative techniques.

There is evidence from the ancient Near East that some of the quite earliest interpretative practices concerned the interpretation of dreams. Scholars have emphasized that certain aspects in early scriptural interpretation were derived from this kind of mantic activity.²⁹ Especially the *peshet* interpretation in Qumran has often been connected to these roots.³⁰ In the Bible, the Book of Daniel is interesting in this regard, as it comprises several pieces of interpretation of dreams and visions, but also includes the famous *mene, mene, tekel, upharsin* riddle (Daniel 5). Daniel's interpretation of the mysterious words clearly plays with homonymous roots, as he gives two interpretations for each of the words: מנא: "calculate" and "finish"; תקל: "weigh" and

²⁷ The *kal-va-homer*, 'light and heavy' means that a lesser case has implications on a more important case under similar conditions: "if X pertains to Y, so X certainly pertains to Z which is more important than Y." This technique can perhaps even more directly be connected to the demands of rhetoric than the *gezera shava* analogy. The *kal-va-homer* is well attested in Paul's letters. The perhaps clearest and most representative example of Paul's use of this method can be found in his lengthy reasoning on Jews and Gentiles as the cultivated and wild olive branches (Romans 11:21–24).

²⁸ Stockhausen describes the *gezera shava* as the "simplest of exegetical methods." Stockhausen, *Moses' Veil*, 27.

²⁹ In his *Biblical Interpretation*, Fishbane devotes a whole section to mantological exegesis (pp. 443–524).

³⁰ Lou H. Silberman, "Unriddling the Riddle: A Study in the Structure and Language of the Habakkuk Peshet (1Qp Hab.)," RQ 3 (1961): 323–364; Asher Finkel, "The Peshet of Dreams and Scriptures," RQ 4 (1963): 357–370; Michael Fishbane, "The Qumran Peshet and Traits of Ancient Hermeneutics," in A. Shinan (ed.), *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Vol 1, Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press 1977: 97–114.

"lack"; פָּרַס: "divide" and "Persia." From this example can be inferred that interpretation based on paronomasia, i.e. puns applying homonymous roots, was well-established at least by 150 BCE, but probably already much before that time. Well-known examples from earlier prophetic texts are the שָׁקֵד as both "almond tree" and "attentive watching" in Jeremiah 1:11–12; as well as the קִיץ "summer fruit" and the קֵץ "end" in Amos 8:1–2.³¹

In the scholarship on Chronicles, the aspect of scriptural interpretation has been pointed out, even though more often scholars have pursued questions that relate to the Chronicler's historiographical method.³² Thomas Willi was one pioneer in the research of the Chronicler's interpretative strategies. Willi concludes that the Chronicler perceived of the Books of Kings as an authoritative, "prophetic" text which he sought to interpret.³³ This opinion accords well with Bloch's insistence on that a 'midrashic' way to read older texts was operative rather early. Willi discusses also the Chronicler's use of the *gezera shava* method and highlights, importantly in my view, the possibility that homonymous words could be connected regardless of their actual meaning in their own contexts.³⁴

It seems to me that if paronomasia reflects the starting point or pre-phase of the *gezera shava* method, the Masorah is the logical end point of the *gezera shava*. As it now stands, the Masorah (in its various forms in different maso-

³¹ Cf. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 451.

³² Of course, scholars have usually realized that questions of the Chronicler's exegetical and historiographical methods cannot really be separated from one another, as both relate to his treatment of his sources. The real issue is how the Chronicler's stance towards his sources was like; whether he viewed these as 'holy texts' or not. See Isaac Kalimi's illuminative treatment of the matter: "Was the Chronicler a Historian?" in: M. P. Graham, K. G. Hoglund & S. L. McKenzie (eds), *The Chronicler as Historian*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1997: 73–89.

³³ Thomas Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung: Untersuchungen zur literarischen Gestaltung der historischen Überlieferung Israels*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972, esp. 241–245. Cf. also William M. Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1995.

³⁴ Willi, *Chronik als Auslegung*, 135–136. Cf., however, Childs's disagreement on the matter. He contends that the Chronicler never uses the principle of *gezera shava* in such a formal, speculative manner, but so that the contextual aspect is retained. (Childs, *Introduction*, 651.) Regardless the way in which the *gezera shava* technique is used in Chronicles, it is my contention that the author of Mal 3:23 used it precisely in such a 'formal' way as described by Willi; so that this kind of usage seems nevertheless to have been current approximately as early as Chronicles were written.

retic manuscripts) is usually perceived only as a statistic calculation of the occurrence of identical words in Scripture. It is conceivable, however, that this comparison and calculation is the joint work of several generations, and that its starting point can be found in the actual demands of scriptural interpretation in Second Temple times. The Masorah witnesses that words were indeed calculated in their various grammatical forms and not unified according to their roots. Thus, it is plausible that for example a word such as *mal'akî* was carefully distinguished from the other occurrences of the relatively common word *mal'ak*.

In sum, midrashic interpretative techniques were applied to previous texts rather early. The necessary presupposition for this kind of activity was that the earlier texts were viewed as sacred. They were presumably well-known for the readers on one hand, but nevertheless, or precisely because of that, they also called for interpretation and actualization. In the next section (II), that of my five case studies, I illustrate how midrashic interpretative techniques are operative in Malachi and in the reception history of that book.

II THE CASE STUDIES

1. Jacob: Typological use of Jacob traditions in Malachi

1.1 Introduction: Tradition history and reception history

As was maintained in the Introduction section (I), there has in the recent decades been a growing interest in how common themes have been used and ideas been developed in the biblical era. Interpretative activity can thus be found already in the Bible itself. A classical volume about this intertextuality in the Bible is Michael Fishbane's *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. He uses the term "inner-biblical exegesis" for the phenomenon.¹

In the following, I shall take this approach as my point of departure and examine how Jacob traditions have been used in the book of Malachi. Andrew Hill has pointed out that the mentioning of Jacob in Mal 1:2 signalizes that the author wants to remind the community of postexilic Yehud about God's covenant love for their eponymous ancestor and, by implication, exhort them to be like Jacob in his trust in and obedience towards God.² I think Hill's observation gives one possible key for reading the whole book, given the significance of the opening verse for the tone and message of the book.³

Moreover, I shall argue that Malachi reflects a late stage in the development of Jacob traditions inside the Bible and paves the way for a later schematic portrayal of Jacob. The opening verses of Malachi already indicate a permanent dichotomy between Jacob and Esau; a concept which became a standard in Judaism in the subsequent centuries, regardless the tradition recounted in Genesis that the two brothers were reconciled. The portrayal of

¹ Fishbane notices, however, that he is indebted to Nahum Sarna for the term. Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, viii.

² Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi*. Garden City: Doubleday 1998, 164.

³ Compare with Weyde's statement: "The Jacob tradition was well known and obviously significant for the prophet who conveyed the message in Malachi." (Karl William Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching: Prophetic Authority, Form Problems, and the Use of Traditions in the Book of Malachi*. Berlin: de Gruyter 2000, 246.) However, Hill and Weyde do not develop these thoughts in full.

Jacob that one can discern in Malachi comes, though, closer to the one that we now have in Genesis than to any *earlier* traditions about him in the Bible and thus probably indicates that there has been a shift in the interpretation of these traditions during the exilic and early post-exilic times. As a matter of fact, many of the allusions to Jacob traditions in Malachi can only be seen in close comparison to Genesis 25-49. This may mean that the author is actually rewriting some form of the Jacob cycle in Genesis⁴ for certain purposes which I hope to shed some light upon.

As for conceptuality in the book of Malachi, scholars have often noted that the author's use of the names of biblical characters must be understood typologically, with reference to the traditions associated with them.⁵ This is especially visible in the case of Moses and Elijah who are mentioned in the three last verses of the book.⁶ Karl William Weyde has shown that conceptuality of ideas is characteristic of the book of Malachi.⁷ For example, he compares Mal 1:2-5 to earlier declarations against Edom, especially to Ezekiel 35, and finds that the text in Malachi is much more conceptual than the older texts. The statement against Edom in Malachi is almost proverbial, and no explanation for God's rejection of Esau is presented. Weyde thinks that Mal 1:2-5 (and Ob 4) builds a bridge from earlier texts against Edom to post-biblical literature, where Edom is a symbol for the enemy and a pseudonym for Rome.⁸ I shall argue that the book of Malachi constitutes also a bridge from earlier traditions about Jacob to post-biblical literature, where Jacob by time becomes the most prominent patriarch, whose glory exceeds that of Abraham and Isaac.

⁴ If we accept the view of most scholars, according to which the book of Malachi was written approximately during the years 500-445 B.C.E., then the book of Genesis most probably was still under formation, and the author of Malachi most probably did not know Genesis in its definite form including P. Therefore, to say that the author of Malachi modifies the Genesis account according to his own needs may not be exactly correct. Be that as it may, however, the use of Jacob traditions known to him show a striking similarity to the use of them in Genesis, when compared, e.g. to the use of these same traditions in Hosea 12. (See below.)

⁵ These opinions will be discussed more thoroughly below. For a discussion and examples of what the term "typology" means when applied to inner-biblical exegesis, see Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 350-379.

⁶ These verses, Mal 3:22-24, are, however, most often agreed to be secondary appendixes. (See below in the chapters on Elijah, Moses, and Esau.)

⁷ Weyde, *Prophecy*, especially his "Conclusions" on p. 401.

⁸ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 85, 96, 102-103, 108.

As typological allusions to Jacob in prophetic literature are regarded, one cannot avoid taking Hosea 12 into account. As a prologue to my treatment of Malachi, I shall briefly discuss the positions that have been taken concerning Hosea 12 and its relation to the Genesis story about Jacob. I hope to illustrate in which regard Malachi reflects a remarkably later stage in the development of the concept 'Jacob' than Hosea does.

1.2 Jacob typologies from Hosea to Genesis

The references to Jacob in Hosea 12:2-4, 12 have been a notorious *crux interpretum* among scholars. The verses read,

(2) The Lord has an indictment against Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways, and repay him according to his deeds. (3) In the womb he tried to supplant his brother, and in his manhood he strove with God. (4) He strove with the angel and prevailed, he wept and sought his favor; he met him at Bethel, and there he spoke with him. - - - (12) Jacob fled to the land of Aram, there Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he guarded sheep. (NRSV)

No definite consensus has been reached whether the author portrays Jacob negatively, in which case his intention is to say that his own community is similar to Jacob, or positively, in which case he contrasts Jacob's life and deeds with those of his own contemporaries.⁹ The view that Hosea uses Jacob traditions negatively is, however, more prominent. It is, in my opinion, also confirmed by a straight-ahead typological reading of verse 2, and especially if

⁹ Those who advocate a negative view of Jacob in Hosea 12 include, e.g., Fishbane (*Biblical Interpretation*), Stephen L. McKenzie ("The Jacob Tradition in Hosea XII 4-5," *VT* 36 [1986] 311-322), William D. Whitt ("The Jacob Traditions in Hosea and their Relation to Genesis," *ZAW* 103 [1991] 18-43), and Ehud Ben Zvi (*Hosea. Forms of the Old Testament Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2005). Peter R. Ackroyd ("Hosea and Jacob," *VT* 13 [1963] 245-259) advocates a positive view. M. Gertner ("The Masorah and the Levites," *VT* 10 [1960] 241-284) and Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman (*Hosea*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980) do not decide.

one substitutes 'Israel' for 'Judah' for the sake of parallelism, as has often been suggested.¹⁰

A principal assumption in older scholarship has been that the Jacob traditions known to the prophet Hosea must be the same that have been collected in the book of Genesis, and that the prophet only uses them very freely and shortly to make his point. Variations are therefore due to the sketchy language of the book of Hosea.¹¹ This view has been challenged by W. D. Whitt who thinks that the references to Jacob in Hosea 12 reflect an earlier stage of traditions that were more thoroughly elaborated to a literal form by the pre-priestly authors of Genesis.¹² I find Whitt's reconstruction principally convincing, especially when he discusses how common motifs occur in traditions and how they can be attributed to several persons. For example, he points out that the statement in verse 4a, *In the womb he supplanted his brother*¹³, can be regarded as a variation of the tradition which in Gen 38:27-30 is ascribed to Zerah, who supplanted his brother Perez by sticking his hand out first, thereby stealing the birthright. According to Whitt, the story about Jacob, Esau and the lentil soup in Gen 25:27-34 belongs to some other tradition or is a literal composition. Whitt observes also that we cannot even know who Jacob's brother was – he may or may not have been Esau in the tradition known to Hosea.¹⁴

¹⁰ So, e.g., Ackroyd, "Hosea," 248; S. H. Smith ("Heel' and 'Thigh': the Concept of Sexuality in the Jacob-Esau Narratives," *VT* 40 [1990] 464-473) 470, and Whitt, "Jacob Traditions," 23 note 24. According to them, the name 'Judah' reflects the re-application of the oracle by a later southern redactor. However, this is not strictly necessary, if also the mentioning of Judah in Hos 12:1 is understood to be a negative typological reference to the patriarch, meaning perhaps something like *And Judah still rules with 'El and is faithful to temple prostitutes*. As this interpretation of קְדוּשִׁים is considered, Gertner ("Masorah," 283-284) thinks that this Judah-typology in Hosea 12:1 is an example of early "prophetic 'midrash'" on Gen 38. As I concur with Whitt in advocating a more radically historical approach towards the traditions, I would rather suggest that Hosea's reference to Judah *could* reflect some early version of the Judah - Tamar-story.

¹¹ For this basic point of departure see, e.g., Gertner, "Masorah," Ackroyd, "Hosea," Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, and McKenzie, "Jacob Tradition."

¹² See Whitt, "Jacob Traditions."

¹³ Whitt's translation. He argues for that the verb עָקַב means "to supplant".

¹⁴ Whitt, "Jacob Traditions," 28-30.

When arguing for that v. 13 ought to be understood in a cultic sense, meaning that Jacob served as a priest in his wife's family in Aram, Whitt notes in passing that also Moses became a priest at his father-in-law's house.¹⁵ Actually, if one alters the names¹⁶ and perhaps understands the preposition כ in a more locative sense, the statement in Hos 12:13 could very well be about Moses who is probably alluded to in the next verse: *By a prophet the LORD brought Israel up from Egypt, and by a prophet he was guarded*. There are apparent similarities between the stories about the marriages of Jacob and Moses in the Genesis/Exodus accounts, as fleeing to another country (Genesis 28/Exodus 2), meeting the girls at the well and giving water to the sheep (Genesis 29/Exodus 2), and, later on, serving and keeping the sheep for the father-in-law (or attending in cultic service, if Whitt's interpretation about the original meaning of the verbs is accepted – Genesis 29-30/Exodus 3). This suggests that these traditions about Jacob and Moses might originally have been rather similar, perhaps two variants of a same theme. This possibility has been discussed at length by Albert de Pury in his various works. He thinks that the stories about Jacob and Moses were two concurring legends about Israel's origins. The Deuteronomists advocated Moses, which, e.g., led to the avoidance of mentioning Jacob by name in Deut 26:5 and to the re-attribution of some features of the Jacob story to Moses. As far as Hos 12:13-14 is concerned, de Pury sees there an antithesis between Jacob and Moses. According to him, Hosea who is himself a prophet as Moses was, advocates Moses and opposes Jacob.¹⁷ One could notice in passing that such a dichotomy is not more to be found in Malachi, even if the reference to Moses in the appendix in 3:22 is short and the focus is clearly on the Torah more than on Moses: *Remember the teaching of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel*.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid., 40.

¹⁶ Jacob to Moses and Aram to Midian.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Albert de Pury, "The Jacob Story and the Beginning of the Formation of the Pentateuch," in: T. B. Dozeman (ed.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2006: 51-72.

¹⁸ See further in the chapter on Moses below.

If Whitt's assumptions about tradition history are correct, Hosea is probably quoting some very old traditions about Jacob. Both Whitt and Steven McKenzie suggest that the sayings in Hosea may be relatively faithful quotations of traditions from Bethel.¹⁹ This suggestion has strong support, because only in 10:15 and 12:5c is Hosea using the real name of the cultic place ('House of God'), which indicates that he is quoting; everywhere else he uses the mocking name Beth-Awen ('House of idolatry'). This interpretation helps also to explain the embarrassment, which scholars have suffered while trying to determine whether the Jacob traditions in Hosea 12 must be understood in a positive or negative sense. The traditions as such are positive; they are proud sayings about the ancestor Jacob from the ancient cultic place of Beth-el, which was, according to tradition, founded by him (Genesis 28). Hosea, however, is using these traditions negatively because he regards the cult at Bethel as apostate, and for him also its founder Jacob was apostate. Whitt argues for that Hos 12:5c must be understood in such a way that the name of Jacob's god was Beth-El. According to him, verses 6-7 are later glosses which serve to remark that the god referred to actually is YHWH, not (Beth-)El. Whitt regards also the word מלאך 'angel' in verse 5a as a gloss; he thinks that Jacob according to the original tradition strove with אֱלֹהִים himself.²⁰ Robert Coote remarks, "The cult of Bethel was specifically an archaizing cult of Canaanite El, while most northerners themselves probably thought they were worshipping Yhwh, but with more ancient and more original iconography."²¹ If we then assume that the Deuteronomistic movement owes much to a prophetic opposition originating from the north, it is easy to see the connections between Hosea's and Amos's critique towards the cult at Bethel and the unwillingness that the Deuteronomists, according to de Pury, had towards the Jacob traditions, if indeed Jacob was specifically connected with Bethel at the eighth and seventh centuries.²²

¹⁹ Whitt, "Jacob Traditions," 41, McKenzie, "Jacob Tradition," 319-320.

²⁰ Whitt, "Jacob Traditions," 31-36. He emends the preposition to the name of the god, as many scholars before him have done. See the discussion on his page 32.

²¹ Robert B. Coote, "Hosea XII," VT 21 (1971): 389-402. Quotation from page 390.

²² As to Jacob's 'foreignness,' Whitt finds that the story in Gen 31:17-35, where Rachel steals her father's idols, and Jacob's mentioning of foreign gods in Gen 35:2-4, can be late reflections of a tradition about how Jacob brought a new cult from Aram to Bethel. Furthermore, Whitt

The ambiguity of the Jacob traditions that are cited in Hos 12:4-5, 13 is, however, not removed in the eyes of the modern reader, if one accepts that they are traditional sayings from Bethel which originally served to glorify Jacob. If Jacob really supplanted his brother in the womb, as verse 4a suggests, is that an admirable deed? Peter Ackroyd, when arguing for that Hosea uses the Jacob traditions positively (and interpreting the text strongly in the light of Genesis), points out that the fact that Jacob took his brother's place was due to divine favor, God's will which could not be resisted.²³ This is certainly the impression one gets from the Genesis account. But when one does not read the Hosea text in the light of Genesis but on its own, one could suggest that Jacob's cunningness rather was something that really was regarded as admirable by the audience. It is perhaps somewhat comparable to many peoples' traditional fables about the clever fox or rabbit. There are certain other elements in the Hosea account of Jacob that suggest that Jacob has traditional heroic characteristics. Whitt remarks that Jacob very probably was in the old traditions described as a man of unnatural strength, which is visible in that he, according to Whitt's reading of Hos 12:5a, dared to strive with 'El himself, which no ordinary man would have dared to do. Whitt observes that a tradition of Jacob's unusual strength is preserved also in Gen 29:10 where he rolls the stone from the well's mouth.²⁴

Whitt thinks that most of the sayings about Jacob in Hosea 12 were consciously altered or re-interpreted by the pre-priestly authors of Genesis. He sees a strong political and nationalistic tendency behind the changes, which served to present the ancestor Jacob in a better light.²⁵ What is, I contend, more important is that the Hosea account in itself is ambivalent, as shown above. Even if Hosea uses the Jacob traditions ironically, in essence they are positive. This explains not only the embarrassment, which modern scholars

thinks that God's mocking speech to the maiden Jerusalem in Ezek 16:3 should be taken seriously, so that the statement *Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite* literally refers to Jacob and his wife and thus reflects another (according to Whitt an earlier) tradition than the account of Jacob's marriage in Genesis 29. Whitt, "Jacob Traditions," 40-41.

²³ Ackroyd, "Hosea," 258.

²⁴ Whitt, "Jacob Traditions," 33.

²⁵ Ibid., *passim*, especially the conclusions on pages 41-43.

have felt when conflicted with the text. It helps also to explain why a tradition like the Jacob cycle in Genesis can have emerged. The possibilities to a more positive interpretation are latent in the Hosea version and can be actualized by a new reading of that text, or, indeed, by preserving and actualizing the old positive interpretation of the traditions.²⁶ Of course, one cannot completely rule out the possibility that the changes made by the authors of Genesis are highly intentional in the way suggested by Whitt, given the fact that the authors certainly did not work in a vacuum. Rather, they were probably men of also political importance, above all in the times of the final shaping of the Genesis story.²⁷ However, it is at least as possible that for example the explanation for Jacob's name in Gen 25:26; 27:36 combines two popular etymologies about the meaning of his name, given peoples' almost universal tendency to find etymologies for names.²⁸ It is not necessarily so that the connotation of "cheat" was consciously softened by taking up the apparent similarity with the word for "heel" and creating a new tradition from that basis, as Whitt thinks.²⁹ On the other hand, intentionality can be discerned in the interpolation of the doxology and parenesis in Hos 12:6-7, which probably reflects the same concerns for right worship, that are visible in the Yahvistic and Priestly strata in the Genesis account.

The survey above illustrates a long cultural development in the use and interpretation of Jacob traditions from eighth-century Hosea to fifth-century Genesis. One could notice in passing the positive equation of the people of Israel with Jacob/Israel in Second Isaiah, especially in the Servant texts. This

²⁶ Ben Zvi gives more than one possible understanding for the terse and difficult expressions in Hosea 12 and shows how the intended readers would theologically have interpreted the text according to their particular readings. (He focuses solely on the reception and interpretation of the Hosea text in postexilic Yehud.) Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 241-265.

²⁷ For this, see, e.g., Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period. Volume 2: From the Exile to the Maccabees*. London: SCM Press 1994, 437-443.

²⁸ Thus, the presence of two explanations for Jacob's name in the Genesis story most probably reflects the phenomenon which James Kugel calls "exegetical overkill." In the words of Kugel: "Overkill comes about when the author of a particular text is aware of two separate versions of a story or two different explanations for some phenomenon and, unable or unwilling to decide between them, he seeks to incorporate both in his own retelling. In doing so, he frequently ends up "overkilling" something in the story, giving two reasons for why something happened or two different ways in which it took place." James L. Kugel, *In Potiphar's House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, 38.

²⁹ Whitt, "Jacob Traditions," 28-31.

suggests a process during the Exile, an often-mentioned process which is detectable in several exilic and post-exilic texts when compared with earlier texts, namely the rise of the patriarchs. Especially the Abraham figure gains prominence in these later texts. According to Rainer Albertz's sociological analysis, this is due to the new circumstances during the Exile. After the loss of kingship and the dissolution of the state structure, the Israelites returned to a kind of a pre-monarchic society which was mainly formed by families. The patriarchal traditions became important models of identification. Furthermore, the unconditional promises addressed to the patriarchs offered a future hope for the nation.³⁰

The author of the book of Malachi was post-exilic and knew the story of Jacob in a form which comes close to the Genesis version. I will now turn to investigate how Jacob traditions are used in Malachi. I argue that the use of these traditions is typological; 'Jacob' is a concept of the right Israelite way of life for the author. For the sake of convenience, I accept the division usually ascribed to Egon Pfeiffer, according to whom there are six parts ("Disputationsreden") in the book of Malachi³¹, and I use this division in my analysis.

1.3 Jacob typology in Malachi

Mal 1:1 - Rewriting an earlier message?

Both Weyde and Michael Floyd have from different premises reached the conclusion that the word מִשָּׁנָה that appears in the title of the book of Malachi means approximately 'reinterpretation of an earlier message'³². Floyd bases

³⁰ See Albertz, *Israelite Religion*, 404-406.

³¹ See Egon Pfeiffer, "Die Disputationsworte im Buche Maleachi," *EvTh* 12 [1959] 546-568, especially 554. Scholars have relatively commonly agreed upon this division (so, e.g., Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi – The Divine Messenger*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987, 2, 19-23; Julia M. O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*. Atlanta: Scholars Press 1990, 57-60; David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi: A Commentary*. London: SCM Press 1995, 167-233). For a different view, see e.g. Michael H. Floyd, *Minor Prophets. Part 2. Forms of the Old Testament Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2000, 561-562.

³² "Prophetic reinterpretation of a previous revelation" is Floyd's definition. (Michael H. Floyd, "The מִשָּׁנָה *Massa*' as a Type of Prophetic Book," *JBL* 121 [2002] 401-422. The definition is to be found on pages 409-410.)

his investigation on Richard Weis's earlier research³³ and focuses on common characteristics in the text passages in the Hebrew Bible that have been entitled מַשָּׂא.³⁴ Floyd does not answer the question of the actual meaning of the title, because he thinks that the concept מַשָּׂא cannot be explained by etymology.³⁵

Weyde, on the other hand, finds the clue for his interpretation of the term מַשָּׂא from its use in Chronicles. He states that the picture, which emerges from the use of the term in Deuteronomistic history, is a limited one, meaning most often only "burden". In Chronicles, however, the term is used more widely. The right translation is not always clear, but most often the word appears to mean "carrying".³⁶ In 1 Chr 15:22,27, however, the context seems more to require musical activity.³⁷ M. Gertner states that the noun in this text changes its physical meaning³⁸ and comes to denote the spiritual activity of the Levites, namely singing and recitation.³⁹ Weyde thinks that it is very possible that the term מַשָּׂא was also applied to the teaching activity of the Levites, and this was precisely interpretation and actualization of earlier traditions.⁴⁰

That the book of Malachi as a whole is actualization of earlier traditions, as its title according to Floyd and Weyde suggests, has been impressively confirmed by Weyde's research in particular.⁴¹ Malachi is especially rich in traditions pertaining to covenant theology/ies. Now I shall leave the other side, the actualization of the Sinai covenant, and its priestly expansions, for less consideration. The author's actualization of the covenant of the patriarchs must, however, often be taken into consideration, as his use of traditions of the Jacob cycle cannot otherwise be properly treated.

³³ Richard Weis: "A Definition of the Genre *Massa'* in the Hebrew Bible". Ph.D. diss. Claremont Graduate University 1986. Cited in Floyd, "*Massa'*," *passim*.

³⁴ See Floyd, "*Massa'*," 402 note 3 for these passages.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 403.

³⁶ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 66. For the use of the term מַשָּׂא in Chronicles, see 1 Chr 15:22,27; 2 Chr 17:11; 20:25; 24:27; 35:3.

³⁷ *Ibid.* This is also how the NRSV has interpreted the term in 1 Chr 15:22,27.

³⁸ Which obviously was carrying the ark. See 2 Chr 35:3.

³⁹ Gertner, "Masorah," 252. (Cited also in Weyde, *Prophecy*, 66.)

⁴⁰ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 67. For the recent view according to which the author of the book of Malachi is probably to be found among the (priests or) Levites, see, e.g., Rex Mason, *Preaching the Tradition: Homily and Hermeneutics after the Exile*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990, 237, 245; Hill, *Malachi*, 213; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 13, 63-64; Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, 571-572.

⁴¹ Weyde focuses on the author's use of earlier traditions. Weyde, *Prophecy*, 57-393.

Mal 1:2-5 - Jacob chosen, Esau rejected

As suggested in the beginning of this chapter, the statement about God's love for Jacob and hatred for Esau in Mal 1:2 probably has significance for the reading of the book. For example Weyde has pointed out that the fact that an oracle where the people themselves question God's love for them has been placed in the beginning of the book signalizes that this question was central for the author.⁴² He also considers Mal 1:2-5 to be a salvation oracle for Israel, not an accusation.⁴³ Hill, on the other hand, suggests that there can be three groups to whom the author wants to deliver his message. The first group consists of the pious, whom Hill calls the "faithful remnant."⁴⁴ To these people the message of God's love is a message of joy. The second group is those that have become apathetical and despaired because of the failed salvation oracles of Haggai and Zechariah. These people need to be reminded about the right covenantal theology. The third group consists of cynics and skeptics who need to be warned.⁴⁵ This division should be kept in mind in the subsequent analysis, because different patriarchal typologies can be applied to these different groups.

As for the verb אהב 'love', its Deuteronomic use is well known, with all its covenantal associations with the verb בחר 'choose'.⁴⁶ Many scholars have noticed that Malachi's concept of love here is similar to the Deuteronomic concept.⁴⁷ God's choice of Jacob, and hence, the community of postexilic Yehud, is visible precisely in God's rejection of Esau, namely the land of Edom. But this statement of God's love for Jacob and hatred for Esau is preceded by a formula marking divine speech, נאם ה', which does not occur elsewhere in this book.⁴⁸ It is perhaps possible that the formula here, with its position in the

⁴² Weyde, *Prophecy*, 110-111.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁴⁴ Hill, *Malachi*, 162. Compare with Zech 13:8-9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 162-163.

⁴⁶ See especially Deut 7:7-8. See also Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1972, 81-84, 333, 368.

⁴⁷ So, e.g., Stephen L. McKenzie and Howard N. Wallace, "Covenant Themes in Malachi," *CBQ* 45 (1983) 549-563, 555-556; Petersen, *Zechariah*, 168; Hill, *Malachi*, 165; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 81-82.

⁴⁸ For some considerations, see Hill, *Malachi*, 150 and Weyde, *Prophecy*, 98-101.

middle of sayings about Jacob and Esau, serves to emphasize the centrality of the Jacob/Esau traditions for the reading of the Book of Malachi.

This schematic use of ‘Jacob’ and ‘Esau’ denoting Israel and Edom is, of course, a well-known phenomenon in the Bible⁴⁹, but the use is as conceptual as in Malachi only in Obadiah, a book which is usually dated to the exilic period, partly because of its similarity to Jeremiah and because of historical considerations. Paul Raabe emphasizes that it is precisely the relationship of Israel and Edom as “brothers” which serves to underline the severity of Edom’s crime in attacking Israel. He also thinks that the book functions partly as a warning against Edom and is thus not an expression of national hatred.⁵⁰ Now, in view of this, the step to Malachi is not very long. In the opening verses of Malachi, Esau clearly denotes Edom, but then the focus is shifted: a dichotomy is to be found within Israel. In this respect, the fate of Edom functions as a warning for Israelites themselves. It is perhaps not too far-fetched to contend that for the author of Malachi, Esau/Edom is also to be found within Israel, as M. Krieg already has suggested.⁵¹ Actually, the following part of Malachi can be understood precisely in this sense.

Mal 1:6-2:9 - Esau and Jacob: One should not despise his birthright, and one ought to seek God's favor honestly

The main topic in this passage is the priests’ unfair conduct both in matters of offering and in teaching. The priests are accused for despising God’s name (1:6) and the altar (1:7-8,12-13), for teaching falsely (2:8-9), and for breaking the covenant of Levi (2:4,8).

Hill remarks that the verb בזה ‘despise’ occurs five times in Mal 1:6-2:9. He thinks that its use in this passage must allude to its use in Gen 25:34, where it is stated that Esau “despised” his birthright by selling it to Jacob for a meal. According to Hill, this means that the priests of postexilic Yehud, too, have despised their birthright, namely the covenant of Levi. Therefore they are in

⁴⁹ See, e.g., already Jer 49:8,10. Cf. Amos 1:11.

⁵⁰ Paul R. Raabe, *Obadiah*. Garden City: Doubleday 1996, esp. 42-44.

⁵¹ Matthias Krieg, *Mutmaßungen über Maleachi: eine Monographie*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag 1993, 139-142.

danger of losing their privileges.⁵² Hill's interpretation is interesting, because it means that the typological use of Esau in Malachi is not limited to Esau's application to the people of Edom, as in Mal 1:2-5. It can be expanded to the next passage of the book, there bearing the association "a man who despises the privileged position which God has given him". Also this observation underlines the importance of the concept that Jacob and Esau were brothers. Both had a possibility to be blessed, but Esau neglected it.

One expects that when an allusion to Esau is included in Mal 1:6-2:9, one would find a complementary allusion to Jacob within the same passage. Indeed, it has been recognized that Mal 1:9 probably alludes to Gen 32:31.⁵³ The right interpretation of Mal 1:9a is, however, debated. The phrase reads, ועתה חלו נא פני אל ויהנונו "And now implore the face/favor of God, so that he may be gracious to us". The question is who is speaking to whom and whether the exhortation is ironical or not.⁵⁴ According to Weyde's interpretation, which I find very plausible, the verse is best to be seen as a modified, ironical quotation of the priests' cultic language by the prophet.⁵⁵ A significant change to the common formulas occurs, however, in that YHWH is substituted by El, and this makes an allusion to Gen 32:31 probable – or that, indeed, such a traditional saying from Peniel had been preserved and was known to the author of Malachi. This allusion should be interpreted in terms of contrast between the contemporary priests and Jacob. In Peniel, according to the Genesis account, Jacob strove with a man/God, prevailed and was blessed. God was thus gracious towards Jacob, as he himself states in Gen 33:11. The priests, on the contrary, do not honestly entreat God's favor, and thus cannot receive his mercy.⁵⁶ One could perhaps say that according to the author of the book of Malachi, the priests are assuming that they are like Jacob, but actually they are acting like Esau.

⁵² Hill, *Malachi*, 176-177.

⁵³ So Helmut Utzschneider, *Künder oder Schreiben? Eine These zum Problem der "Schriftprophetie" auf Grund von Maleachi 1,6-2,9*, Frankfurt am Main 1989, 50; Hill, *Malachi*, 182, and Weyde, *Prophecy*, 139-140.

⁵⁴ For these considerations, see, e.g., Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 53-54; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 134-138.

⁵⁵ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 134-138.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 140-141.

It could still be observed that the occurrence of the root חנן 'be gracious' links Mal 1:9 more closely to the description of Jacob's acting in Hos 12:5 than to the account in Gen 32:22-32. As stated in Hos 12:5, Jacob (or the angel, depending on the reading) "wept and sought his (i.e. the angel's or Jacob's) favor." Whitt thinks that Hosea also here is using the Jacob tradition ironically. It reveals Jacob's true nature that he first dared to strive with God, and when he found out that he could not prevail, he changed his tactics and tried to implore God to save his life.⁵⁷ It can be considered a possibility that the author of Malachi has recognized some of the irony in Hos 12:5 and transformed it so that the irony is now applied to the priests, not to Jacob. Alternatively, the author has quoted the tradition in Hos 12:5 in the same light as the author of Gen 32:27 and thus interprets Jacob's deed positively, as an honest plea to gain the blessing.

Mal 2:10-16 - Jacob contrasted with Esau and Judah: The concern for the religious unity of God's people

The main topics of this passage are commonly agreed to be mixed marriages and divorces.⁵⁸ The accusation is delivered to the community as a whole, even if the cultic language suggests that the priests still are among the mainly accused.⁵⁹ The problems of interpretation in this passage are manifold and cannot be here discussed in detail. It suffices to state that v. 10 and 15 probably should be read together as allusions to the creation story in Genesis 2. The

⁵⁷ Whitt, "Jacob Traditions," 24-25, 33.

⁵⁸ So, e.g., Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 113-120; Mason, *Preaching*, 245-249; Hill, *Malachi*, 223, 255-259; Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, 602-605; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 275; Markus Zehnder, "A Fresh Look at Malachi II 13-16," VT 53 (2003): 224-259. The other view is that the passage deals with idolatry in a metaphorical language. For argumentation for this view, see Abel Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple*, Lund: Gleerup 1965, 27-34; O'Brien, *Priest and Levite*, 66-69, and Petersen, *Zechariah*, 194-203.

⁵⁹ Observe the use of e.g. the root חלל 'profane' and the word קדש 'holy', and the threat in verse 12 and the accusation in verse 13. In addition to the language one can note that in Mal 2:8 the priests are accused of breaking the covenant of Levi. This same accusation is heard in Neh 13:29 precisely because of the priests' mixed marriages. The way Levi acted according to Gen 34, and his grandson Phinehas according to Numbers 25, suggests that the concept "Levi" is associated with a concern for the exclusivity of God's people as opposed to mixed marriages. For this, see Utzschneider, *Künder oder Schreiben?* 64-68, and the chapter on Levi here below.

main goal of the difficult verse 15 would then be that the woman is as valuable as the man because God created them both.⁶⁰

There are indications in Mal 2:10-16 that suggest that this passage should best be interpreted in light of patriarchal traditions. This is especially visible in verses 11-12 that clearly make use of Genesis 38. There are, however, also some other words or expressions that can be taken as allusions to the Jacob cycle, as *ה' העיד בינך ובין אשת נעורייך* 'foreign god' (Mal 2:11 - Gen 35:2), 'The Lord was a witness between you and the wife of your youth' (Mal 2:14 - Gen 31:50), or the more conceptual expressions *אב* 'father', *אל* 'God' and *ברית אבותינו* 'covenant of our fathers' in Mal 2:10.

The order and the parallelism in the rhetorical questions in Mal 2:10, "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?" suggests that the word *אב* should be interpreted as referring to God, not to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob.⁶¹ The LXX, however, reverses the questions: *οὐχὶ θεὸς εἷς ἔκτισεν ὑμᾶς οὐχὶ πατὴρ εἷς πάντων ὑμῶν* 'Has not one God created us? Have we not all one father?' In this rendering, the mentioning of "father" could perhaps better be seen as separated from the first question and thus referring to someone of the patriarchs. It is probable that the clause is deliberately ambiguous, because God is referred to as father in Mal 1:6 and implicitly in Mal 3:17, but at the same time a reference to Jacob in Mal 2:10 as a key for the reading of Mal 2:10-16 is probable. Ambiguity is found also in the phrase *ברית אבותינו*. Scholars commonly agree that it refers to the Sinai covenant⁶² and cite the stipulations against mixed marriages in Exod 34:16 and Deut 7:3-4.⁶³ Steven McKenzie and Howard Wallace, however, think that the reference is mainly to the covenant of the patriarchs. They contend that the phrase can refer to both Jacob and Levi who have been mentioned earlier in the book.⁶⁴ Then Jacob should probably be seen as the ancestor of the people and Levi specifically as the ancestor of the priests. The most likely interpretation, I think, is that the phrase is deliberately ambiguous, denoting both the Sinai

⁶⁰ See Weyde, *Prophecy*, 258-267 and Zehnder, "Fresh Look," 236-251.

⁶¹ Hill, *Malachi*, 224.

⁶² So, e.g., Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 88; Petersen, *Zechariah*, 197; Hill, *Malachi*, 227-228; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 235 note 66.

⁶³ See Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 88.

⁶⁴ McKenzie and Wallace, "Covenant Themes," 551-552.

covenant and the covenant of the patriarchs. The word אֱל for God should be understood in the same way as in Mal 1:9, as a subtle reference to the older (Genesis/Hosea) traditions about Jacob in Peniel or Bethel. In addition, there is a contrast between this אֱל אחד 'one God' and the אֱל נכר 'foreign god' that is mentioned in the next verse.

The references to Judah in Mal 2:11 are obviously to the postexilic community of Yehud. When the verse is read typologically, however, an allusion to the tradition recorded in Gen 38:1-10 becomes apparent.⁶⁵ The statement "Judah has profaned the holiness of the Lord, which he loves, and has married a daughter of a foreign god" refers to the patriarch Judah, who married a Canaanite woman. The author of the book of Malachi depicts him as a violator of "the covenant of our fathers", namely Abraham's, Isaac's and Jacob's concern for the unity of God's people, as it is recorded in Genesis.⁶⁶ In this typology, comparison of Judah with Esau also becomes apparent, as the authors of Genesis clearly have a polemic against Esau's intermarriages.⁶⁷

When one postulates that Mal 2:11 should be read typologically, it becomes more obvious that the difficult phrase עַר וְעֹנֶה (literally: 'the one awake and the answerer') in verse 12 refers to Judah's sons Er and Onan. There are at least four main proposals for the interpretation of this phrase, but a common feature is that the words are understood to complete one another, so that the actual meaning for the phrase is 'everyone'.⁶⁸ One interpretation is that the words are juridical terms.⁶⁹ Other scholars think that the phrase should be understood sexually.⁷⁰ Still others have maintained that the phrase is archaic and refers to a nomadic way of life.⁷¹ All these proposals could fit to the context in Mal 2:12, and it is practically impossible to decide which one

⁶⁵ This has been noticed by Gertner. "Masorah," 284 note 1, and Weyde, *Prophecy*, 246.

⁶⁶ According to Genesis 24, Abraham sent his servant to his home country to bring a wife to Isaac, and according to Gen 27:46-28:9, Isaac sent Jacob to the same family to marry. It should, however, be observed that the concern in Genesis seems to be more the ethnical unity of the people, whereas in Mal 2:10-16 religious unity is above all in focus.

⁶⁷ See Gen 26:34; 27:46; 28:6-9.

⁶⁸ See O'Brien, *Priest and Levite*, 69, 71 and Weyde, *Prophecy*, 245.

⁶⁹ So O'Brien, *Priest and Levite*, 69-72. Compare with Hill, *Malachi*, 235 and Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, 605 who prefer to read עַר 'a witness' for עַר.

⁷⁰ So Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 94-99 and Petersen, *Zechariah*, 194.

⁷¹ See the references in Weyde, *Prophecy*, 242-243.

should be preferred. What seems to be clear, however, is that an allusion at the same time is made to Er and Onan. They were cursed and died, and therefore the curse in Mal 2:12 should be understood as a threat that the “latter-day Judah,” too, shall lose his offspring, hence his family would be “cut off from the tents of Jacob.”⁷² That Judah has married “a daughter of a foreign god” recalls perhaps Jacob’s exhortation to his household before their return to Bethel: “Put away the foreign gods that are among you” (Gen 35:2). In this way, Jacob’s conduct is presented in two ways antithetically to Judah’s. Jacob did not intermarry, and he wanted everyone in his household to give up foreign gods; Judah, on the contrary, married a foreign woman who obviously had her own religion. As Judah echoes Esau of the earlier parts of Malachi, it can be maintained that the antithetical typology of Jacob and Esau is visible also in Mal 2:10-16.

If Mal 2:10-12 concerns intermarriages, verses 13-16 deal mainly with divorces.⁷³ In verse 14, the statement “The Lord was a witness between you and the wife of your youth” recalls Laban’s words to Jacob in Gen 31:50.⁷⁴ The issue in Gen 31:43-55 is the covenant between Laban and Jacob. Laban states that the Lord watches between them when they are absent from one another. He continues: “If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives in addition to my daughters, so even if no one else is with us, remember that God is a witness between you and me.” The topic in Gen 31:50 is not divorce, but one can argue that the hypothetical situation that Laban refers to is reminiscent of the one described in Mal 2:10-16. Therefore the author of Malachi has considered suitable to use Jacob’s life as an example also here. Jacob did not intermarry, his household rejected all foreign gods, and now, moreover, Jacob treated well his two Israelite wives, did not divorce and took no other wives.

Gertner notes in passing that specifically Mal 2:11,13 represent “a ‘mid-rashic’ application of the story of Judah and Tamar to (a) contemporary sit-

⁷² Weyde, *Prophecy*, 245-246.

⁷³ For a comprehensive treatment of the interrelationship of these issues, see, e.g., Zehnder, “Fresh Look,” 230-231. According to him, mixed marriages were more usual than divorces, but some divorces were caused by the husband’s wish to take a new, foreign wife.

⁷⁴ The similarity between these two texts has been noticed also by Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 102.

uation.”⁷⁵ Unfortunately, he does not elaborate this statement at all. It could perhaps be proposed that the weeping that is described in verse 13 could be reminiscent of Tamar’s despair because of Judah’s unfair conduct, as he did not give her to his youngest son. The reference in verse 11 should, however, be to Judah’s wife as maintained above, not to Tamar, as Judah and Tamar did not actually marry. Then, it is another issue that Tamar presumably was a Canaanite as well, and that Judah’s two sons married her.

Mal 2:17-3:5 - The Lord is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and rescues the pious

Mal 2:17-3:5 has always been a riddle for scholars. This statement concerns especially verse 1 with its three mysterious characters, מלאכי 'my messenger/my angel', האדון 'the lord', and מלאך הברית 'the messenger/angel of the covenant'. It suffices to state that there are two main lines of interpretation concerning the intended meaning of the passage. The first one is that the aim of the text is to announce the coming of a priestly or levitical Messiah figure, whose task is restore the “covenant of Levi” of Mal 2:4, 8 by purifying the “sons of Levi”.⁷⁶ The other interpretation is that the main goal of the passage is to announce the coming of the Lord himself, and that the text in its original setting contains no messianic expectations. Scholars who advocate this view most usually understand the messenger figure/s to be celestial being/celestial beings and cite above all the Exodus traditions in defense of their view.⁷⁷

I would maintain that Mal 3:1 combines the two main ingredients of the book, namely the Sinai- covenantal and the patriarchal traditions, with cultic language. It is obvious that the first part of the verse is an allusion to Exod

⁷⁵ Gertner, “Masorah,” 284, footnote 1. Gertner’s observation of a “midrashic” process is apt, and he thus uses this term in the same way as I have chosen to use it in this study.

⁷⁶ This interpretation has been advocated by Bruce V. Malchow (“The Messenger of the Covenant in Malachi 3:1,” *JBL* 103 [1983] 252-255), Weyde (*Prophecy*) and partly Mason (*Preaching*).

⁷⁷ See, e.g., Adam Simon van der Woude, “Der Engel des Bundes: Bemerkungen zu Maleachi 3,1c und seinem Kontext,” in: J. Jeremias and L. Perlitt (eds), *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1981, 289-300; Hill, *Malachi*, and compare with Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, who, however, thinks that מלאכי is a prophet.

23:20, but it echoes also Isa 40:3.⁷⁸ It should also be clear that the phrase האדון “the lord whom you seek” refers to YHWH, with special association to his cult in the temple.⁷⁹ I assume that ומלאך הברית אשר אתם “and the messenger of the covenant whom you eagerly await” is meant to stand in poetical parallelism with the previous clause; hence, the reference is to YHWH also here. This view has been maintained especially by Glazier-McDonald,⁸⁰ but been rejected by e.g. Malchow who contends that YHWH nowhere is termed מלאך.⁸¹ There is, however, a text where God is so termed, namely Jacob’s blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh in Gen 48:15-16. Claus Westermann thinks that המלאך ‘the angel/messenger’ in this text should be understood as a synonym (“Wechselwort”) for God, with special reference to his rescue acts in Gen 21:17 and 22:11. Westermann maintains also that Jacob’s blessing is based upon an older tradition which has been reworked so that the reference to God has become tripartite, a feature which serves to emphasize association to later cultic language. Westermann remarks that this theology shows that the present form of the blessing is exilic or postexilic, and he contends that Gen 48:15-16 is the most important and obvious example of a link between patriarchal traditions and cultic life.⁸² Therefore, I assume that the reference in the word ברית in Mal 3:1 is especially to the covenant of the patriarchs, but, at the same time, also to the Sinai covenant and to the angel associated with it, to whom מלאכי in the beginning of the verse alludes.

What is most important, however, is that the theophany takes place in the temple. The language suggests that Mal 2:17-3:5 is intended to serve as a serious threat to the impious, above all to the corrupted priests, but at the same time as a salvation oracle to the pious. They shall be redeemed from all harm (as stated in Gen 48:16 with reference to Jacob) on the day when the Lord acts, when the מלאך comes to his temple and rescues them as he rescued the

⁷⁸ Practically all scholars advocate one of these views, and e.g. Petersen (*Zechariah*, 209-211), Hill (*Malachi*, 265-266) and Weyde (*Prophecy*, 288) think that both references probably are intended.

⁷⁹ See, e.g., Hill, *Malachi*, 268-269 and Weyde, *Prophecy*, 290-291. For a later, quite different, interpretation of this phrase, see the chapter on Elijah below.

⁸⁰ Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 130-131.

⁸¹ Malchow, “Messenger,” 253.

⁸² Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag 1982, 213-214.

patriarchs. The pious, therefore, should trust in God as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did.

Mal 3:6-12 - Jacob and his sons: To test God's reliability and to give the full tithe

The issue in Mal 3:6-12 is crop failure, which the author interprets as the result of the people's failure to give tithe. The people are exhorted to return to God and give their tithes. If they do so, God promises to send his blessings.⁸³

What the things are that the people according to Mal 3:8 have "robbed" (קבע) from God is somewhat debated, but the reference probably is to two types of tithes. The people were supposed to give one tenth-part of their crops to the Levites, and the Levites were then supposed to offer one-tenth of this to God. When Mal 3:8-10 is compared to Neh 10:35, 37-40; 12:44 and 13:5-12, the picture emerges that the people in Judah in early postexilic times did not practice the tithe.⁸⁴

The story about Jacob's dream at Bethel, and his promise to give one tenth-part of everything that God gives him back to God, is commonly understood to be an etiological story, designed to represent the origin of Israelite tithing practice.⁸⁵ This means that Jacob's tithe was the most important typological model which the author of Malachi had at his disposal, and it is probable that Jacob is being used as an ideal model figure also here. One could perhaps suggest that the very uncommon verb קבע is meant as an anti-thetical pun on Jacob's name. Jacob gave tithe to God; the people, on the contrary, are robbing God. However, the phrase בני יעקב 'sons/children of Jacob' in Mal 3:6 requires also some comment.

There are two alternative ways to understand the aim of Mal 3:6. The first one is that the verse is meant positively, the meaning of it being "For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, have not perished".⁸⁶ The

⁸³ The form of this passage is somewhat disputed. For example, McKenzie & Wallace ("Covenant Themes," 555) characterize it as a salvation oracle, Hill (*Malachi*, 320) as a summons to repentance, and Weyde (*Prophecy*, 325-328) and Floyd (*Minor Prophets*, 614-615) as an exhortation.

⁸⁴ Petersen, *Zechariah*, 215-217.

⁸⁵ Hill, *Malachi*, 305.

⁸⁶ This view has been advocated by e.g. O'Brien (*Priest and Levite*, 75); Glazier-McDonald (*Malachi*, 173); Petersen (*Zechariah*, 212), and Hill (*Malachi*, 291).

other alternative is that the verse is meant negatively, the meaning of it being approximately “I the Lord have not changed, and you, O sons of Jacob, are the same as always”.⁸⁷ This, then, could contain a subtle negative reference to Jacob, reminiscent of that in Hosea 12.⁸⁸ I would, however, rather contend that the reference here is not to Jacob himself, but that the whole phrase בני יעקב should be taken typologically, so that it denotes his twelve sons.

It has been noticed that God's exhortation in Mal 3:10, to put him to the test, is unique.⁸⁹ As the verb בהן is considered, Weyde remarks that this verb is used in connection with the oath formula לא אֵם also in Gen 42:15-16, as it is in Mal 3:10. Weyde contends that this combination seems to imply that the reliability of someone is tested: in Gen 42:15-16, Joseph tests the reliability of his brothers; in Mal 3:10, God exhorts the people to test his reliability.⁹⁰ Concerning the word ברכה 'blessing' (probably a metonym for rain) in Mal 3:10, Weyde remarks that the nearest equivalent for it is the phrase שמים מעל 'blessings of heaven above' in Gen 49:25, which probably also denotes rain, and that the language in these two texts is thus conceptual.⁹¹ However, Weyde uses these observations merely as grammatical evidence and does not consider the possibility that the sayings in Malachi and Genesis could also otherwise be interrelated.

I would maintain that the phrase בני יעקב is a possible key for the reading of Mal 3:6-12.⁹² The passage can then be taken as an allusion to some of the traditions recorded in Genesis 41-50. Jacob's ten sons came to Egypt precisely because of crop failure, which is the issue in Mal 3:6-12. The author has probably wanted to show his audience that bad years were a phenomenon which the patriarchs, too, were familiar with. The passage seems especially to allude to the dialogue between Joseph and his brothers, as it is recorded in Genesis 42. God is typologically put in Joseph's place and the community of postexilic

⁸⁷ See the discussion in Weyde, *Prophecy*, 318-321. He contends that the verse and the verb ללה mainly is meant positively but contains also a threat.

⁸⁸ Weyde (*Prophecy*, 320-321) maintains that the mention of Jacob has this double reference.

⁸⁹ Petersen, *Zechariah*, 217. Compare with Hill, *Malachi*, 311-313 and Weyde, *Prophecy*, 333-334.

⁹⁰ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 334.

⁹¹ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 335-336.

⁹² I thus disagree with Weyde (*Prophecy*, 314-324) who includes Mal 3:6 to the previous passage, dividing the passages "2:16-3:6" and "3:7-12".

Yehud to the place of his brothers. The situation is, however, turned upside down, because the people are now exhorted to test God's reliability, not vice versa.

The sons of Jacob did not perish through the famine, and so shall the 'latter-day children of Jacob' not perish, if they obey God's commandment to bring the full tithe to the storehouse. Joseph had stored one-fifth of the grain in the cities, and when the years of famine came, he opened (פתח, Gen 41:56) the reserves, so that the people got food. Later, he wanted to test his brothers who had also come to Egypt to buy food, but finally he showed mercy towards his brothers, and they got everything in abundance from him (Genesis 45). One could perhaps argue that the promise, which God gives in Mal 3:7, 'שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם' (re)turn to me, so I will (re)turn to you', albeit a common exhortation from God's side, should also be read with reference to the Joseph tradition. Indeed, Jacob commanded his brothers to return to Egypt⁹³, actually to bring (הביא, Gen 42:34) Benjamin to Egypt, and when they did so, Joseph finally revealed himself to them and was gracious towards them. Now the community is exhorted to test God by bringing (הביא, Mal 3:10) one-tenth of the grain to God's storehouse. Then they will see if he opens (פתח, Mal 3:10) the windows of heaven and gives his people the agricultural blessings, which he once gave through Joseph and which perhaps were specifically associated with Joseph (Gen 49:25).

Mal 3:13-21 - Jacob and the righteous rewarded

The tone of the Book of Malachi changes in the last passage. McKenzie and Wallace go as far as to remark, "The outlook is apocalyptic."⁹⁴ Indeed, Mal 3:13-21 seems to advocate a sharp dichotomy between the righteous and the wicked.⁹⁵ It is, in my opinion, not too far-fetched to contend that the initial contrast between Jacob and Esau is visible still here. It is now, though, present

⁹³ The verb שוב is used for the brothers' action in Gen 43:10; 44:13. The verb is very commonly used also in the metaphorical sense (see, e.g., Hill 1998, 322-323), but one could notice in passing that this kind of an exhortation to return to God is heard also in Hos 12:7.

⁹⁴ McKenzie and Wallace, "Covenant Themes," 563.

⁹⁵ For some considerations, see, e.g., Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 223-226; Petersen, *Zechariah*, 223; Hill, *Malachi*, 342; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 362-364.

in an extremely conceptual manner, as the passage contains no clear reference to Esau.⁹⁶ A reference to Jacob is, however, to be found in Mal 3:20.

The phrase *זרחה השמש* 'the sun rose', or its equivalents, occur in eleven places in the Hebrew Bible.⁹⁷ Weyde contends that none of the other ten occurrences of the phrase is a likely reference for the understanding of Mal 3:20, because of the unique description for the sun in this verse: *שמש צדקה ומרפא בכנפיה* 'the sun of righteousness with healing in its wings'.⁹⁸ I would, however, contend that Gen 32:32 is a very probable reference. The verse reads: *ויזרח לו השמש כאשר עבר את פנואל והוא צלע על ירכו* 'The sun rose for him, as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip'. Mal 3:20 contains exactly the same formula: *זרחה לכם יראי שמי שמש צדקה* 'the sun of righteousness shall rise for you who fear my name'. None of the other nine occurrences of the phrase for sunrise contains the formula that the sun would rise *ל* 'for' someone, and this is probably significant.

Therefore, it can be maintained that the Peniel event has been used as a typological model also in Mal 3:20, as it has been used in Mal 1:9. The pious have complained for God's righteousness, but they shall be rewarded - quite in the same way as Jacob, according to the Genesis account of the Peniel event, strove with God, prevailed and was blessed. The book of Malachi appears thus to have a somewhat chiasmic structure, when God's statement of his love for Jacob in Mal 1:2 is read together with Mal 3:20.⁹⁹ A final note concerns the word *מרפא* 'healing'. It perhaps has some connection with the thought that the righteous shall "go out leaping like calves from the stall." On the Day of the Lord shall Jacob, i.e. the righteous, no longer limp, but leap.

⁹⁶ Cf., however, my discussion on the more implicit references in the chapter on Esau below.

⁹⁷ See, e.g., Weyde, *Prophecy*, 372, footnote 100.

⁹⁸ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 372-376. Weyde's analysis results in that the phrase is very conceptual, even if the idea of the wings of the sun probably originates from ancient Near Eastern iconography. Weyde contends that the phrase "sun of righteousness" has its origin in royal ideology, which is applied to God. The latter part of the phrase, "with healing in its wings" originates according to Weyde from the use of the word *מרפא* 'healing' in the book of Jeremiah. This notion has then been combined with the idea that God protects people under his wings, an idea which is visible especially in some psalms. Compare with Hill, *Malachi*, 349-352.

⁹⁹ Concerning a chiasmic structure in Malachi, see further the chapter on Esau below.

1.4 Conclusion

The survey above indicates that traditions about Jacob have been more influential for the author of Malachi than has hitherto been recognized. Many scholars have paid attention to single references to patriarchal traditions in the book of Malachi but have not read the whole book in light of its opening verse 1:2. When the book is read with this verse in mind, however, it becomes apparent that the dichotomy between Jacob and Esau does not merely denote Israel and Edom as, e.g., in Obadiah, but that, conceptually, both brothers are to be found within the post-exilic Israelite audience to whom the author delivered his message. Jacob serves thus as an example of a right Israelite way of life and denotes the righteous within the audience. This is an important shift from the more ambiguous attitude towards him that is often discernable in older biblical texts (e.g., in Hosea 12) and can best be explained by exilic development. Malachi paves the way towards the conceptual portrayal of Jacob as a true Israelite hero who did nothing wrong. Such a concept became a standard one in Judaism in the subsequent centuries, as is discernable already in e.g. *Jubilees* or *Sifre Deuteronomy* and is fully developed in the *Midrash Rabbah*. For Malachi, Esau denotes everything wrong and bad within Israel. His foreignness is not as explicitly emphasized as in later Jewish literature;¹⁰⁰ rather, Malachi underlines that if Israelites despise the privileges that God has given them, their fate will be the same as Esau's. This warning is delivered especially to the priests, but also to other Israelites who have not stayed loyal to God's covenant. In this regard, Malachi, together with Third Isaiah, represents also a post-exilic development towards a more apocalyptic outlook where a dichotomy between the righteous and the wicked is visible.

¹⁰⁰ Cf., however, the chapter on Esau below.

2. Levi: The role of Malachi in the rewriting of Genesis 34 in *Jubilees* 30

2.1 Introduction: the priestly concerns in Malachi

Recently, Sidnie White Crawford has argued that there was a distinctive line of biblical interpretation during the Second Temple period: “the priestly-levitical/Essene line of interpretation.”¹ She finds traces of this interpretative line especially in the Aramaic Levi document, *Jubilees*, the Temple Scroll and the Genesis Apocryphon, and writes:

Certain emphases are noticeable in these works: the use of, or polemic in favor of, the solar calendar, an emphasis on the Levites and the choice of Levi as a priest, the idea that the Law was observed by the righteous ancestors before Moses, and that the priestly office was exercised by at least some of the righteous ancestors (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac) before Levi. We also noticed the prominence of the Watcher myth, the extension of temple purity to everyday life, and the notion of a written tradition of revelation from God, beginning with Enoch and stretching down through the generations.²

I think White Crawford has touched upon important points. If some prehistory for this line of interpretation is presumed, then the Book of Malachi stands out as a valid candidate. As I argued above in the chapter on Jacob, Malachi makes Jacob an implicit observer of the Torah. The book has also certain emphases on issues of purity; additionally, it elevates Levi and mentions a “book of remembrance.”³ In my view, it is even possible that the elevation of Levi over Judah, which is a visible trait in *Jubilees* 31 (where Isaac blesses these two grandsons of his but gives Levi pride of place), could partly have its background in a certain reading of Malachi 2:4–12, if this passage was

¹ Sidnie White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2008, esp. 15; 146–148.

² White Crawford, *Rewriting*, 146–147.

³ I discuss this reference (Mal 3:16) and its relationship to Mal 3:22 below in the chapter on Moses.

taken in a strictly typological fashion, as eulogy of Levi and critique of Judah.⁴ The idea of Levi's superiority over Judah, in turn, is probably connected with the elevation of priesthood over kingship, and also a priestly messiah over a royal messiah, in certain Qumran texts.⁵

As concerns previous tradition history, Malachi seems to represent partly similar priestly concerns as its exilic predecessor Ezekiel, even though there are also obvious differences in the outlook of these two books. In the chapter on Elijah, I illustrate a case where Ezekiel and Malachi most probably have been read together to generate a new tradition concerning Elijah's equation with Phinehas. In the current chapter, I will examine the possible influence of Malachi on the rewriting of the Shechem story (Genesis 34) in *Jubilees* 30 and thus show how the Malachi text has bearing on the issues of temple purity/sexual purity and Levi's role as a priest, which White Crawford has identified as central features in the "priestly-levitical/Essene" interpretative line.

The background of Malachi and the book's relation to Priestly theology are debated issues that have been discussed e.g. in the studies of Julia O'Brien and Karl William Weyde.⁶ It is often claimed that Malachi represents clearer affinity to Deuteronomy in vocabulary, and Weyde's thorough survey confirms this picture. On the other hand, the book's particular concerns for cultic matters, purity and endogamy relate it closely to Priestly theology as represented in both the Pentateuch and Ezekiel. Weyde, in particular, has shown how often Malachi actualizes texts from Leviticus (and also Numbers); this feature is especially apparent in Mal 1:6–2:9.⁷ O'Brien dates Malachi very early but, correspondingly, relates also the origins of the Priestly theology to early times, as she claims that Malachi indeed "reflects much of the language and ideology of P."⁸

⁴ For the probability that Malachi refers to the patriarch Judah in verse 2:11, see the discussion in Karl William Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching: Prophetic Authority, Form Problems, and the Use of Traditions in the Book of Malachi*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000, 246; and above in the chapter on Jacob.

⁵ For this remark, see White Crawford, *Rewriting*, 77. Such Qumran texts are, for example, the Rule of the Congregation (1QS^a) and the Temple Scroll (11QT^a et al).

⁶ Julia M. O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990; Weyde, *Prophecy*.

⁷ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 112–214, and the indices on pp. 427–430.

⁸ O'Brien, *Priest and Levite*, esp. 143–148. Quotation from p. 144.

The exegetical processes that are involved in the generation of a tradition are often complex and need to be surveyed in parts. In the following, before turning to *Jubilees*, I shall describe the path that led ancient readers to the juxtaposition of Genesis 34 and the book of Malachi. An essential subordinate theme is the priesthood of Levi, which is a given feature of many Second Temple texts. I shall thus begin my investigation with that theme.

2.2 Levi's priesthood in Second Temple writings

The priesthood of Levi is one of the problems that ancient interpreters of the Bible faced when reading the book of Genesis. Levi, the ancestor of the levitical priesthood, is, as is well known, *not* presented as a priest in Genesis. From antique interpreters' point of view, however, Levi was a priest, and this supposition of theirs is widely reflected in the literature of the Second Temple period.⁹ There are at least a couple of obvious reasons why ancient interpreters held Levi for a priest.

Firstly, the whole concept of Levites seems to imply that their ancestor, too, was a priest. How could he otherwise be the ancestor of the priests? Even if this sounds like a poor circular argument to modern ears, this way of thinking was natural for antique interpreters of the Bible. They had in their minds certain categories that had undergone a long development in their culture, and these categories were projected back to more ancient times when interpreting the Bible. As Levi is concerned, it was thus obvious for antique interpreters that he was a priest, simply because the priests/Levites bear his name.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the patriarchs became by time archetypes for certain characteristics, the background for which can often be found in Genesis, albeit mostly in a very vague way.¹⁰ In the previous chapter, I argued how the author of the book of Malachi already seems to apply the

⁹ For this notion, see Robert Kugler's thorough examination of the subject: *From Patriarch to Priest. The Levi-Priestly Tradition from Aramaic Levi to Testament of Levi* (Atlanta: Scholars Press 1996). Cf. also James Kugel's studies that are discussed below.

¹⁰ When referring to the patriarchs, people commonly mean Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I prefer, though, to include also Jacob's sons into this category, because the title seems to be justified in the light of the attention and role that they get in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and that Levi, in particular, gets also elsewhere.

Jacob traditions in a typological way, thus making the way clear for later interpretations where Jacob is being presented as thoroughly good and Esau as totally bad.¹¹ Later on, especially in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the lives of Jacob's sons are also used for illustrating certain virtues. The Levi figure in Genesis can be interpreted so that he assumes a characteristic which is prominent for certain other Levites in the Bible, namely zeal for the sake of the Lord and for the exclusivity of Israel as God's own people.

The story of the rape of Dinah by Shechem and the vengeance of her brothers Simeon and Levi in Genesis 34 is, actually, the only story in Genesis, in which Levi has some prominence, and therefore it was very significant for ancient authors who wished to elaborate upon Levi. Genesis 34 was, thus, interpreted so that the touching points of that story with Exodus 32 and, especially, Numbers 25 were recognized. According to Exodus 32, the Levites took Moses's side in the schism concerning the golden calf. In Numbers 25, Levi's descendant Phinehas was granted a perpetual priesthood and a covenant of peace after he had killed an Israelite man and the Moabitess whom this man had 'married'.¹² As also Genesis 34 reports a situation in which a marriage between an Israelite and a foreigner is about to take place, Levi's

¹¹ See also the chapter on Esau below.

¹² I leave aside the debated question whether marriage proper had taken place between the couple. For the sake of convenience, I use the term "intermarriage" about all interethnic sexual unions. For reflections about the nature of the issue in Numbers 25, see, e.g. Helena Zlotnick Sivan, "The Rape of Cozbi (Numbers XXV)," *VT* 51 (2001): 69–80; Horst Seebass, "The Case of Phinehas at Baal Peor in Num 25," *BN* 117 (2003): 40–46. S. C. Reif ("What Enraged Phinehas? A Study of Numbers 25:8," *JBL* 90 [1971]: 200–206) contends that a, according to him more likely, tradition-historical interpretation of the passage does not necessarily involve any sexual relation between Zimri and Cozbi, but rather that Cozbi was a priestess in a local tent-shrine (קבה) and was killed there; thus, only one translation for the difficult recurring word קבה in Num 25:8, which is usually understood both as 'womb' and 'inner chamber of a tent', is actually needed. As Reif himself observes, the now current interpretation of the story took early over the presumed original intention of it, as the sexual interpretation is the one advocated by the Septuagint and all subsequent translations and rewritings. If Reif's suggestion about the original focus of the story is correct (and it might well be), we supposedly have to do with a very early midrashic explanation based on a presumed word-play on the term קבה. A further interesting feature is that in Reif's interpretation of the story, a cultic polemic has been transformed into a polemic concerning sexual purity. This possibility may shed some better light on the treatment of intermarriage issues elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, e.g. Ezra 9–10, Nehemiah 13, and Malachi 2 (see below).

action makes him, in the eyes of ancient readers, a zealot against intermarriage.

A third, albeit perhaps less obvious text which might have generated the idea that Levi himself received the priesthood has been pointed out by James VanderKam. In 1 Sam 2:27–28, a man of God says to the priest Eli (NRSV),

Thus the Lord has said, “I revealed myself to the family of your ancestor in Egypt when they were slaves to the house of Pharaoh. I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to offer incense, to wear an ephod before me; and I gave to the family of your ancestor all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel.”

VanderKam argues that this text plausibly could be used to support a tradition according to which Levi himself was chosen to priesthood after his arrival in Egypt.¹³ The general issue is, of course, whether a distinction can be made between the patriarch and the Levites when a person named Levi is being used as a typological example; thus, Moses’ blessing of the tribe of Levi (= “Levi”) in Deut 33:8–11 could also be a point of reference.

The exegetical motifs that are present in texts that tell about Levi’s elevation to priesthood have been studied thoroughly by James Kugel in his various works.¹⁴ He finds four different motifs:

1. Levi was elevated to priesthood as a reward for his zeal at Shechem.
2. Levi had a dream-vision in which he was consecrated into priesthood.
3. Isaac, who was a priest himself, anointed Levi as his successor.
4. Jacob gave Levi to the Lord as a human tithe.

These motifs are usually not all present in every text; *Aramaic Levi* comprises motifs 2 and 4, *Testament of Levi* employs motifs (1), 2 and 3, but *Jubilees*

¹³ James C. VanderKam, “Isaac’s Blessing of Levi and His Descendants in Jubilees 31,” in: D. W. Parry & E. C. Ulrich (eds), *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues*, STDJ 30, Leiden: Brill, 1999: 497–519, here 519.

¹⁴ James L. Kugel, “Levi’s Elevation to the Priesthood in Second Temple Writings,” *HTR* 86: 1–64; *Traditions of the Bible. A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1998), 431–435; *The Ladder of Jacob: Ancient Interpretations of the Biblical Story of Jacob and his Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2006), 115–168.

includes them all.¹⁵ Motif 1 is clearly an elaboration upon Genesis 34. Motifs 3 and 4 are also in a way integral to the Jacob cycle in Genesis, as they both seem to be designed for explaining how Jacob's votive to give a tithe, which he makes when first in Bethel (Genesis 28), indeed was fulfilled when he returned to Bethel (Genesis 35), even if this detail is not stated explicitly in Genesis itself. According to the innovative explanation of *Jubilees*, Jacob could not offer when first in Bethel, because he was not a priest; therefore it was necessary that his son became a priest to fulfill his father's vow. Actually, Jacob first asked Isaac, who indeed was a priest according to *Jubilees*, to come to him to Bethel, but as the elderly father could no longer travel, Jacob made a journey to Hebron to him with Levi and Judah, where his father blessed these two grandsons of his and instructed Levi in matters of priesthood. Back in Bethel, in addition to the other promised tithes, Jacob also gave Levi as a human tithe to serve permanently as priest in Bethel.¹⁶ However, motif 2, namely Levi's dream-vision seems to be ultimately derived from the description of Levi as an ideal priest in Malachi 2, as Kugel also has noticed.¹⁷ To this passage I now turn.

2.3 Malachi 2:4–7 as a background for Levi's priesthood

The author of Malachi, when rebuking the priests of his own day, uses Levi as a measure (Mal 2:4–7, RSV):

(4) So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may hold, says the Lord of hosts. (5) My covenant with him was a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him, that he might fear; and he feared Me; he stood in awe of My name. (6) True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. (7) For the

¹⁵ In his discussions on *Jubilees*, Kugel often emphasizes that the phenomenon of "overkilling" traditions, i.e. including separate traditions in one retelling, is very typical of this particular book. See, e.g., James L. Kugel, *A Walk through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of its Creation*, SJSJ 156, Leiden: Brill 2012, 374.

¹⁶ For a paraphrase of the *Jubilees* account, see, e.g., Kugel, "Levi's Elevation," 2–5, 17–27.

¹⁷ Kugel, "Levi's Elevation," 30; *Ladder of Jacob*, 144–145.

lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

The concept of Levi as an ideal figure can thus have been familiar already to the author of Malachi; alternatively he is the inventor of this whole idea. It is virtually impossible to decide whether it is more probable that the author of Malachi was the first to invent the idea of Levi as the ideal priest, or that the idea was common knowledge by his time; a tradition that left marks to later interpretations as well, despite its absence from Genesis. Assuming that the Book of Malachi was written approximately during the years 500–445 BCE, the Book of Genesis most probably was still under formation and the author of Malachi might perhaps not have had an exactly similar written source to rely upon; therefore, to say that the author modifies the Genesis account may not be exactly correct. As it stands, Mal 2:4–8 is, however, our earliest written witness about the idea of Levi as a priest.¹⁸

Several scholars of Malachi have paid attention to the terminological connections between the description of Levi's covenant with the Lord in Mal 2:4–8 and the covenant of peace and perpetual priesthood which was granted to Phinehas according to Num 25:10–13. Links have also been seen between the Malachi text and Moses' blessing of "Levi" in Deut 33:8–11. David Petersen emphasizes Malachi's overall affection to Deuteronomic language. He thinks that Deut 33:9 is the basis for the description of Levi in Malachi 2, because covenant loyalty is in focus in both texts.¹⁹ Beth Glazier-McDonald, on the other hand, stresses the connection between Num 25:10–13 and Mal 2:4–5; she thinks that the author most probably has consciously modeled his description of Levi's covenant after Phinehas's covenant.²⁰ Julia O'Brien maintains that Mal 2:4–5 is dependent on both Deut 33:8–11 and Num 25:10–13, but that the author creates his portrayal of the ideal priest freely employing

¹⁸ See also Helmut Utzschneider's discussion on the subject in *Künder oder Schreiber? Eine These zum Problem der „Schriftprophetie“ auf Grund von Maleachi 1,6 – 2,9*, (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 1989) 69–70.

¹⁹ David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1995), 190.

²⁰ Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi: The Divine Messenger* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 77–80. This is also Utzschneider's (*Künder oder Schreiber?* 69–70) opinion.

these earlier traditions.²¹ As I noticed above, this may be true, but it is equally possible that the concept of Levi as priest was current in the fifth century.

Be this as it may, Kugel's observation that the motif of Levi's dream-vision is derived from Mal 2:4–7 seems nevertheless to be correct. Kugel concludes that the description of Levi in Mal 2:4–7 was interpreted so that the words do not merely denote Levi's permanent nature, but rather describe the circumstances under which the covenant between the Lord and Levi was made. Levi's behavior, especially standing in awe of (literally, "in front of") the Lord's name, suggested this option. Kugel notices, in addition, that it is possible to construct the last words in verse 5 in a different way. The phrase *ומפני שמי נחת* *הוא*, which is usually translated, "and he stood in awe of my name" is grammatically rather problematic in itself, with the curious combination of *מפני* "from in front of" and *שמי* "my name." The phrase could, with hardly any more forced interpretation as the more common reading, also be understood as "and he descended from before of my name," or, alternatively, "from (my?) heavens." This interpretation involves taking the word *נחת* as if it were *qal* perfect of the root *נחח* "go down, descend" rather than the more uncommon *nifal* perfect of *חנח* "be shattered, terrified," and possibly also *שמי* as if it were some kind of a construct state of *שמים* "heaven(s)." Besides, in Kugel's view, some ancient readers might have understood the final statement in Mal 2:7, *כי מלאך ה' צבאות הוא* "because he is a/the messenger of the Lord Sebaot" as rather pointing to some angel who might have been present in heaven at the same time as Levi was elevated into priesthood and perhaps instructed him into it, and this understanding is possibly reflected in the *Testament of Levi*. If ancient readers interpreted Mal 2:5 (and 2:7) along these lines, it plausibly was rather obvious to them that Levi had made a heavenly voyage.²² To me, Kugel's suggestion is attractive, because it clearly again demonstrates the possibility that the consonantal text could be read in several ways.²³

Kugel's observation is, in my opinion, very interesting in also other ways. It shows either that the Levi passage in Malachi was rather frequently used by

²¹O'Brien, *Priest and Levite*, 104–106.

²²For still more details in support of this interpretation of Mal 2:4–7, see Kugel, "Levi's Elevation," 30–36; *Ladder of Jacob*, 144–150.

²³Cf. the chapter on Elijah below.

ancient interpreters of the Bible when elaborating upon the Levi figure in Genesis, or that the passage at least had generated a tradition which had by time become common knowledge, even if its origins perhaps no longer were actively noticed. However, because intermarriage is a prominent theme in Malachi 2:10–16 (the section that follows immediately after the description of Levi as an ideal priest), I asked myself whether the book of Malachi has been used also in retellings of the Shechem incident in Genesis 34 and, at the same time, perhaps also has some bearing on Kugel’s motif 1 listed above. I think I have found an affirmative answer to these questions, but before turning to *Jubilees* 30, I must remain for a while within the book of Malachi.

2.4 The book of Malachi as a framework for retelling Genesis 34

It is possible that the author of Malachi himself was actually the first to make the connection between the Shechem tradition, now recounted in Genesis 34, and the Phinehas tradition in Numbers 25. Helmut Utzschneider has suggested this possibility. If so, then Mal 2:4–7(8) (or at least verse 6) should perhaps be read as a kind of creative exegesis of Genesis 34 employing Numbers 25 as a proof text.

Utzschneider thinks that the “iniquity” or “sin” from which Levi “turned many away from” (Mal 2:6) cannot be any theological abstract, when one supposes that it really is the Levi figure in Genesis that is depicted in Mal 2:4–7. According to Utzschneider, the reference is to some concrete event in Levi’s life, and he claims that this must be the Shechem incident.²⁴ By slaying the inhabitants of Shechem’s town, Simeon and Levi not only took revenge for the rape of their sister but also prevented future intermarriages between Israelites and Shechemites.²⁵ For the author of Malachi, Levi’s deed was actually more effective than Phinehas’s, because Levi was able to totally prevent the

²⁴ Utzschneider, *Künder oder Schreiber?*, 67.

²⁵ The tradition history of Genesis 34 is a complicated issue as such, but there seems to be an underlying tradition that Jacob would have accepted the marriage of his daughter to Shechem and thus approved also future marriages between the nations, whereas the two sons acted against their father’s will as is indicated by his reproach of them in Gen 34:30 and 49:5–7. Early biblical commentators developed many creative ways to handle this delicate issue. For a treatment of some of these, see Kugel, *Ladder of Jacob*, 36–80.

mixed marriages, whereas Phinehas could only reduce the harm already done. Therefore, it appears that in the ancient eyes of the author, Levi is even more admirable than Phinehas and suits better as an ideal figure.²⁶

Utzschneider's suggestion is interesting when one considers the context in Malachi. It has been a standard solution in Malachi scholarship to divide the book into six main sections, i.e. 1:2–5; 1:6–2:9; 2:10–16; 3:1–5; 3:6–12, and 3:13–21.²⁷ This division is also often reflected in the added subtitles of modern translations. Most scholars interpret sections 2 and 3 so that Mal 1:6–2:9 is a dispute against the priests and/or Levites, whereas Mal 2:10–16, which concerns intermarriages and divorces, is directed against the whole people. I think, however, that the issue may be more nuanced. We must remember that the biblical text was transmitted mainly with only chapter division and we should not let later considerations blur this fact. I believe that in the eyes of ancient readers, the transition between verses 9 and 10 has *not* marked the beginning of a new section, which is almost unrelated to the previous one. It was probably either seen as representing a quite natural flow of thought, or, if the break was indeed considered abrupt, one would certainly seek to find a continuous meaning in the text.²⁸ Let us take a look at the passage (Mal 2:8–12, RSV).

(8) But you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by your instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says

²⁶ Utzschneider, *Künder oder Schreiber?*, 67–68. In this context, one should perhaps leave the more modern moral evaluation of Levi's and Phinehas's deeds aside. For some reflection on the matter, see, however, John J. Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence," *JBL* 122 (2003): 3–21. Cf. also idem, *Does the Bible Justify Violence?* (Chicago: Fortress Press 2004).

²⁷ See the brief discussion on the origins of this division on p. 7, footnote 20.

²⁸ Kugel, for example, has discussed the tendency of joining Scripture into a harmonious flow in ancient exegesis. He finds, e.g., that a continuous, explicatory reading of Gen 35:22–26 is reflected in the tradition according to which Jacob had no relations with Bilhah after the incident with Reuben (*T. Reub.* 3:15; *Jub.* 33:9). Gen 35:22–23 states, "(22) While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine; and Israel heard of it. And the sons of Jacob were twelve. (23) The sons of Leah: Jacob's firstborn Reuben, and Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun..." Plausibly it was argued that the number of Jacob's sons was a *consequence* of his "hearing" of the matter; i.e. he never begot more sons. This reading may be reflected both in the Masoretic accentuation and, indeed, also in our verse division where "And the sons of Jacob were twelve" is counted into verse 22, not verse 23 where it more logically belongs. See Kugel, *Ladder of Jacob*, 96–99.

the LORD of hosts, (9) and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you have not kept my ways but have shown partiality in your instruction. (10) Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers? (11) Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. (12) May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob, for the man who does this, any to witness or answer, or to bring an offering to the LORD of hosts!

Could it not be that also the continuation of the chapter, or perhaps indeed the whole book, was interpreted along some priestly lines, i.e. that a strong connection was seen between the previous description of Levi as an ideal priest (and the rebuke of the contemporary priests) and the polemic against mixed marriages beginning in verse 10?

In my opinion, it is not too far-fetched to suggest that this was the case. Actually, it is possible that some sociological circumstances into this direction may have been operative in the original context in Malachi. Mal 2:10–16 is a notoriously difficult text, but most scholars share the opinion that the point of the text is to oppose intermarriage and divorce.²⁹ The minor view is that the polemic is against idolatry and the author is using metaphorical language, portraying Israel as married to the Lord.³⁰ I think that the confusion may, at least partially, be due to the author's ample use of cultic vocabulary – a fact which has led some scholars to regard the language as metaphorical. It is, however, in my opinion far more probable that the author uses cultic vocabulary, because he directs his words primarily to the priests. He shows how the

²⁹ So, e.g., Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 113–120; Rex Mason, *Preaching the Tradition: Homily and Hermeneutics after the Exile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990) 245–249; Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi*, New York: Doubleday, 1998, 223, 255–259; Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, 602–605; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 275; Markus Zehnder, “A Fresh Look at Malachi II 13–16,” VT 53 (2003), 224–259, and, perhaps most pointedly, Gordon Paul Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage, Developed from the Perspective of Malachi*, Leiden: Brill 1994.

³⁰ This view is shared by e.g. Abel Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple* (Lund: Gleerup 1965) 27–34; O'Brien, *Priest and Levite*, 66–69, and Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi*, 194–203.

priests' behavior in marital affairs affects their validity as priests. Therefore, his language contains a certain amount of harsh irony, which has often been recognized to be a characteristic feature of the book of Malachi.³¹

My suggestion may gain support from the expression used in Neh 13:29, i.e. Nehemiah's prayer that the Lord should remember the priests על גאלי הכהנה וברית הכהנה והלויים "concerning their defilement of the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites," an accusation which in language and content is reminiscent of the one delivered at the priests in Mal 2:8, שחתם ברית הלוי "You have corrupted the levitical covenant." The subject of Nehemiah's accusation seems to be precisely the priests' intermarriages, one case of which Nehemiah had just reported in verse 28. Let us take a look at the intermarriage issue in Neh 13:23–29 (NRSV):

(23) In those days also I saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; (24) and half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke the language of various peoples. (25) And I contended with them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair; and I made them take an oath in the name of God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. (26) Did not King Solomon of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin. (27) Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?" (28) And one of the sons of Jehoiada, son of the high priest Eliashib, was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; I chased him away from me. (29) Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, the covenant of the priests and the Levites.

Actually, the question of intermarriage in Nehemiah 13 is rather similar to the one in Malachi 2 (when the Malachi text is interpreted along the lines suggested above). The accused ones in Neh 13:23–27 are "Judeans" (Neh 13:23), while the report in verses 28–29 moves on to concern specifically the

³¹ For irony towards the priests elsewhere in Malachi, see, e.g., Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 332–334; Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 51–54; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 140–141.

priests (or at least one line of the high priestly family). This feature corresponds to Malachi 2:10–16 which, in my opinion, is directed towards the whole people but especially towards the priests. Both texts conform also to the reports in Ezra 9:1–2 and 10:10–24, where the priests and Levites are singled out as specific groups among the persons who had taken a foreign wife.³² An interesting feature in common is also that both Malachi and Nehemiah evoke a warning example from history: Nehemiah refers to Solomon, whereas Malachi points to the patriarch Judah, probably in line with his interest in patriarchal traditions.

It thus seems possible that the concept of a priestly covenant was explicitly related to endogamy by the time of Malachi, Ezra, and Nehemiah. According to the priestly laws of purity in Leviticus 21, the high priest was obliged to marry a virgin within his own family line to obtain progeny fit for the priesthood (Lev 21:14–15). This law seems to have been operative in the minds of the authors of Malachi, Ezra, and Nehemiah, save that Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history contain also a general prohibition and warnings against exogamy, specifically with the seven Canaanite nations (Deut 7:2–4; Josh 23:12). It is clear that the prohibition in Deuteronomy 7 is the law applied to the people on the whole, as it is specifically cited in Ezra 9:12 and Neh 13:25. Nevertheless, the fact that the priestly groups are singled out in both Nehemiah and Ezra and, according to my interpretation, implicitly in Malachi, suggests that the priests in general were supposed to hold a higher standard of purity in matters of matrimony, and this thought may owe something to the priestly law concerning the marriage of the high priest. That one of the high priest's grandsons had married a foreign woman was thus highly scandalous in Nehemiah's eyes, and therefore worth a separate report.

I thus suggest that a certain reading of the book of Malachi, especially Malachi 2, had a role in the formation of a concept of Levi being an ideal

³² The similarities in the social setting as it is reported in these texts have been noticed by Joseph Blenkinsopp (*Isaiah 56–66*, Garden City: Doubleday 2003, 296) when commenting on the critique towards the priests in Isa 66:1–4. For the chronology of Malachi, Ezra and Nehemiah, all alternatives are represented among scholars; I regard as probable that their order was the one mentioned here. I think, however, that their careers altogether took only some four decades at the most. In the post-exilic milieu, it seems fairly possible that the phenomena that Malachi attacks can still be present during Nehemiah's time twenty or thirty years later.

priest who is a zealot against intermarriage. The possible influence of Malachi in retellings of Genesis 34 in Second Temple literature has, to my knowledge, not been examined thoroughly. Utzschneider has, though, made a brief remark concerning this issue. The focus of his work is inside the book of Malachi, and therefore, in support of his interpretation of Mal 2:6, he only mentions the well-known connections³³ between Genesis 34, *Jubilees* 30:18, and *Testament of Levi* 5 as a proof that an exegetical tradition which connects Genesis 34 to opposition to intermarriage indeed has existed. However, he asks an important question,

Unser Seitenblick auf die Jub und das TestLev hat demgegenüber ergeben, dass erzählende Überlieferungen von Levi als idealem ersten Priester erst recht spät und als Auslegungen von Gen 34 überliefert sind. Könnte es sein, dass sich eine solche Erzählung erst im Laufe der Zeit herausgebildet hat und der Mal-text ein erster Anstoß oder Ansatz zu diesen späteren Text- und Erzählungsbildungen gewesen ist?³⁴

Utzschneider continues by reflecting upon the issue himself,

Wenn dem so wäre, dann wäre die Kotextualität das Medium von Rezeptivität und Produktivität zugleich: Der Autor von Mal 2,4–6 hätte die Geschichte Num 25 gelesen, nach ihren und den Gesichtspunkten ihrer Zeit (kontextuell) in seinen Texten umgesetzt und damit den Anstoß zu einer neuen Erzählung vom Bundesschluss mit dem Stammvater aller Priester, Levi, gegeben, deren Formulierung späteren Zeiten vorbehalten war.³⁵

This question is, in my opinion, worth more profound consideration. It is, of course, possible and perhaps even probable that Numbers 25 served as a model for Mal 2:4–7, as is claimed by many commentators. But a view that there is some larger intertextuality between Numbers 24–25 and Malachi 2 might, in fact, also be supported by recalling the phrase אהלי יעקב “tents of Jacob” in Mal 2:12.³⁶ The opening words of Balaam’s blessing of Israel in

³³ “Kotextualität” is Utzschneider’s term. Utzschneider, *Künder oder Schreiber?* 67.

³⁴ Utzschneider, *Künder oder Schreiber?* 70.

³⁵ Utzschneider, *Künder oder Schreiber?* 70.

³⁶ This phrase in exactly the same form occurs in the Hebrew Bible only in Jer 30:18 (הנני שב) “See, I shall restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob”). Jeremiah 30, with its

Num 24:5 are: *מה טבו אהליך יעקב משכנתך ישראל* “How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel!” Mal 2:12 involves a threat to “cut off” (כרת) “from the tents of Jacob” (מאהלי יעקב) the offspring of a man who intermarries.³⁷ It is interesting to notice that later in the narrative frame of Numbers, Num 31:16, it is specified that Balaam initiated the catastrophe of Numbers 25 by advising the Moabite women to seduce the Israelite men. Early exegetical traditions connect this motif with Balaam’s prophetic words to Balak in Num 24:14 and thus imply that this future prospect was somehow embedded already in the blessing scene.³⁸ An allusion to Numbers 24–25 in Mal 2:12 seems probable to me. Mal 2:12 most likely involves an exegetical procedure; the verse is intended to evoke simultaneously the memories of both Balaam’s blessing (Num 24:5) and the warning example of Zimri (25:14) in the audience. Glazier-McDonald has suggested that the difficult phrase *ער וענה* in Mal 2:12 has sexual overtones.³⁹ In addition to probably pointing to Judah’s two sons Er and Onan, the words might perhaps also denote the partners in a sexual union; thus, a reference to Zimri and Cozbi (Num 25:8) could be suggested. Consequently, Mal 2:12 seems to include a double allusion to both Numbers 24–25 and Genesis 38. These references strengthen the possibility that Mal 2:12 includes a threat imbedded in a veiled blessing, in much the same vein as Michael Fishbane has shown to be the case in the ironic use of the Priestly blessing in Mal 1:6–2:9.⁴⁰

But if Malachi 2, in turn, really has been operative in later texts as suggested by Utzschneider, one would expect that it had left clearer marks to these, as an example of early biblical exegesis, and not merely generated some vague ideas. That Malachi has influenced the motif of Levi’s dream-vision has been

promises about a new time to come, is otherwise loaded with references to Jacob, but it is possible that the specific mention of “the tents of Jacob” alludes to Num 24:5.

³⁷ Or, possibly, the man himself (cf., e.g., the NRSV translation). See the discussion on the preposition ל in Weyde, *Prophecy*, 238–240. To me, it seems plausible that the reference is to the man’s offspring.

³⁸ See, e.g. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* on the matter.

³⁹ In that case, these connotations might exist in the verse in addition to and despite the very probable associations to Judah, his wife, and the sons Er and Onan in Mal 2:11–12. I discuss the possible interpretations of the phrase *ער וענה* briefly in the chapter on Jacob. See also the discussion in Weyde, *Prophecy*, 241–246. For Glazier-McDonald’s view, see *Malachi*, 94–99.

⁴⁰ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 332–334.

shown by Kugel. However, that this could be the case also in retellings of Genesis 34, or in other texts that employ Levi as a model against intermarriage, has not actually been investigated.

In the following, I shall discuss the possible influence of Malachi in just one rewriting of Genesis 34, the one in *Jubilees* 30. I hope to shed some light upon the way in which the book of Malachi may have been used as a catalyst in homilies against intermarriage also elsewhere.

2.5 Influence of Malachi in *Jubilees* 30

Introduction

According to scholarly consensus, *Jubilees* was originally written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek, most probably in the second century BCE. Fragments of the Hebrew version have been found at Qumran, some fragments were even earlier known in Greek, and some larger portions of the book have been preserved in Latin, but as a whole, *Jubilees* is known only in Classical Ethiopic (Ge'ez). The author retells Genesis and the first part of Exodus in the form of Moses' apocalypse by an Angel of the Presence. *Jubilees* is well known for its distinctive, very creative and often bold way of rewriting the biblical narratives.

As regards the redaction history of the book, a view according to which *Jubilees* is a composite work is gradually gaining acceptance. In Michael Segal's version of this outlook, a redactor gathered together earlier narrative rewritings of Genesis – Exodus, adding references to legal texts and some more emphases of his own, e.g. the chronological frame which is a prominent feature in the book.⁴¹ Segal employs his analysis of redactional layers only to selected passages in *Jubilees*, and chapter 30 is not among those texts. Segal does discuss *Jubilees* 30, though, when he proposes a new interpretation for the important albeit still somewhat unclear term *te'udah* in the recurring phrase “Torah and *te'udah*,” taking his point of departure in the occurrence of the term in *Jub.* 30:19. In that discussion, he does not really focus on the

⁴¹ Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology*, SJSJ 177, Leiden: Brill, 2007, esp. 317–324.

redactional layers in *Jubilees* 30; yet it seems somewhat probable to me that the editorial insert begins in 30:7. Segal writes,

The story as a whole is presented in *Jubilees* as a paradigm against intermarriage. Following a discussion of intermarriage, characterized by the terminology of the legal passages in *Jubilees*, the text turns in vv. 18–23 to the election of Levi, as a reward for his zeal which he demonstrated in the story of Shechem and Dinah.⁴²

Kugel, in turn, in his recent commentary on *Jubilees*, posits an earlier author who also was interested in legal matters, and a later editor (whom Kugel calls “the Interpolator”) who disagreed with the first author’s agenda at certain points and added his own emphases in a very distinctive way. As regards *Jubilees* 30, Kugel views verses 8–17 and 18–23 as two separate interpolations originating from this later editorial work.⁴³ In Kugel’s view, verse 7 stems from the hand of the first author of the book, who drew a brief moral and legal lesson out of the Shechem story. It was only the Interpolator who developed the legal implications in full.⁴⁴

There are no Hebrew or Greek fragments of *Jubilees* 30, but the Latin text of this chapter is extant. The complicated transmission history of the text of course poses some challenge. The Ge’ez version has the advantage of being in a Semitic language, but as the translation in any case has been made from Greek, it may not reflect the original Hebrew quite accurately. The Latin may, in turn, reflect the Greek somewhat better than the Ge’ez does. In the following discussion, I refer to the Latin version of *Jubilees* 30 and compare it to the Vulgate of Malachi when needed.⁴⁵ For the extensive citations from the book, I shall however use James C. VanderKam’s English edition, which has been made from the Ge’ez version.⁴⁶

⁴² Segal, *Jubilees*, 292.

⁴³ Kugel, *Walk through Jubilees*, 287.

⁴⁴ Kugel, *Walk through Jubilees*, 259–262.

⁴⁵ This procedure is not without problems, as Jerome translated the Old Testament directly from Hebrew, whereas the Latin translation of *Jubilees* has been made from Greek. There is, however, not yet a critical edition of the Vetus Latina text of Malachi available.

⁴⁶ James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, Louvain: Peeters 1989.

Jubilees 30 is a prime example of the author's technique of rewriting. In rewriting Genesis 34, the author makes significant changes to the story, to the effect that the sense of the Shechem account, which in Genesis deals perhaps mainly with schisms inside the families and between generations, is changed to a warning against marriages between Jews and gentiles.

In recent decades, the exegetical techniques employed in the book have received much scholarly attention. John C. Endres's *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees* (1987) has been influential in this field. He deals extensively with the author's way of rewriting the Shechem account, but some details which I regard as significant have escaped his attention. I think that the author of *Jubilees* is consistently citing also Malachi 2, in addition to other priestly emphases, to support his interpretation of the Shechem story. This feature suggests that the author may indeed have thought along the same lines as Utzschneider has in his reading of Malachi 2:6.

Endres shows how the author of *Jubilees* presents the account of the rape of Dinah in such a way as to cause moral indignation in the reader and to remove absolutely every possible charge of frivolity from Dinah's side.⁴⁷ This is done by telling that the girl was a child of twelve years; that she had been robbed by the men of the town; and that they had carried her away to Shechem's house where he raped her.⁴⁸ The author of *Jubilees* then presents the following proceedings of Jacob and his sons in this way (*Jub.* 30:3-4):

(3) He [Shechem] begged her father and her brothers that she be given to him as wife. Jacob and his sons were angry with the Shechemites because they had defiled their sister Dinah. They spoke deceptively with them, acted in a crafty way toward them, and deceived them. (4) Simeon and Levi entered Shechem unexpectedly and effected a punishment on all the Shechemites. They killed every man whom they found in it. They left absolute-

⁴⁷ It is stated in Gen 34:1 that Dinah "went out to visit the women of the land," and in later rabbinic writings this was taken as a hint at that she herself was at fault. See *Genesis Rabba* ad loc.

⁴⁸ Endres pays special attention to the non-biblical mention of Dinah's age. He concludes that it does not quite even match *Jubilees*'s own chronology, nor are the attempts to explain the age by later regulations about a Jewish girl's age of maturity convincing; he thinks the purpose of the mention of Dinah's age is "simply to point out the heinous nature of the crime." (John C. Endres, S. J., *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees*, Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America 1987, 127.)

ly no one in it. They killed everyone in a painful way because they had violated their sister Dinah.

As has been noticed by several commentators, the author omits the whole episode of the circumcision of the Shechemites and blurs the Genesis account in such a way as to wipe off the contradictory or suspicious elements in the story.⁴⁹ He then hastens ahead to a further apology of the brothers' deed, telling that it was heavenly-decreed (*Jub.* 30:5-6):

(5) Nothing like this is to be done anymore from now on - to defile an Israelite woman. For the punishment had been decreed against them in heaven that they were to annihilate all the Shechemites with the sword, since they had done something shameful in Israel. (6) The Lord handed them over to Jacob's sons for them to uproot them with the sword and to effect punishment against them and so that there should not again be something like this within Israel - defiling an Israelite virgin.⁵⁰

That Simeon and Levi "uprooted the Shechemites with the sword" and, according to *Jubilees'* account, took no women and children as captives (contra Gen 34:29), is most probably an indication that the author has meant that the law of חרם, total destruction for the seven Canaanite nations, was operative in this case.⁵¹

Dedication of children to Molech: Lev 18:21; 20:2-3 and Mal 2:11-12

What follows then in *Jubilees* is a lengthy section which seems to be mostly connected to Lev 18:21; 20:2-3 and thus moving to another direction, i.e. toward the prohibition of intermarriage.⁵² *Jub.* 30:7-10 reads:

(7) If there is a man in Israel who wishes to give his daughter or sister to any foreigner, he is to die. He is to be stoned because he has done something sinful and shameful within Israel. The woman is to be burned be-

⁴⁹ See Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 129.

⁵⁰ For some reflections about this motif "God Ordered the Shechemites' Death" in the intertestamental literature in general, see Kugel *Ladder*, 65–69.

⁵¹ See Deut 7:1–2; cf. 20:16–17. Below in the chapter on Esau, I discuss the concept of *herem* more thoroughly.

⁵² Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 133–135.

cause she has defiled the reputation of her father's house; she is to be uprooted from Israel. (8) No adulterer or impure person is to be found within Israel throughout all the time of the earth's history, for **Israel is holy to the Lord. Any man who has defiled** (it) is to die; he is to be stoned. (9) For this is the way it has been ordained and written on the heavenly tablets regarding **any descendant of Israel who defiles** (it): 'He is to die; he is to be stoned'. (10) This law has no temporal limit. There is no remission or any forgiveness; but rather the man who has defiled his daughter within all of Israel is **to be eradicated** because he has given one of his descendants to Molech and has sinned by defiling them.

This interpretation of Lev 18:21; 20:2-3, i.e. that "giving one's child (lit. זרע 'seed') to Molech" means intermarriage, is widely attested in Second Temple and later literature.⁵³ The expression may occasionally mean giving one's child to intermarriage. However, even more often it implies that when intermarrying, a person (an Israelite man) begets children who are at risk of being led into idolatry by their other parent (mother).⁵⁴ The concept that "**Israel is holy to the Lord**" is probably ultimately derived from Exod 19:6, and the implications of this idea for resisting intermarriage are reflected also in Ezra

⁵³ Already the Septuagint may have a variant of this interpretation: καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ σπέρματός σου οὐ δώσεις λατρεύειν ἄρχοντι, and the interpretation of "Molech" as "foreigners" is explicit in the Latin of *Jub.* 30:10: "ab omni semine eius dedit aliegena[e] et in pie egerunt intaminare illud."

⁵⁴ See, e.g., *Tg. Ps.-Jon.* Lev 18, and the discussion in Geza Vermes, "Leviticus 18:21 in Ancient Jewish Bible Exegesis" (Jakob J. Petuchowski and Ezra Fleischer [eds.], *Studies in Aggadah, Targum and Jewish Liturgy in Memory of Joseph Heinemann*, Jerusalem: Magnes 1981: 108–124); Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 135–137; Cana Werman, "Jubilees 30: Building a Paradigm for the Ban on Intermarriage," *HTR* 90 (1997): 1–22, here 15; Martha Himmelfarb, "Levi, Phinehas, and the Problem of Intermarriage at the Time of the Maccabean Revolt," *JQS* 6 (1999): 1–24. Himmelfarb has suggested that other concerns than marriage between Jews and gentiles lay behind the interpretation of these verses in the *Book of the Watchers*, *Aramaic Levi* and 4QMMT; namely the priests' failure to marry daughters from priestly families. I think that Betsy Halpern-Amaru, who has written a careful study of genealogies in *Jubilees*, probably comes closer to the point when stating that a priestly standard of marital purity seems to have been extended to all descendants of Israel (B. Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women in the Book of Jubilees*, Leiden: Brill 1999, esp. 149–155; cf. Endres *Biblical Interpretation*, 139–147). The scriptural foundation for this claim would lie in a literal reading of Exod 19:6. Such a concept, if wide-spread, could even explain the otherwise rather puzzling verse Tob 4:12, where Tobit advises Tobias to take a wife from his own family and makes the strict endogamy of the first three patriarchs a model.

9:2. But that this holy nation should not be “**defiled**” connects, in my opinion, *Jub.* 30:8 also to Mal 2:11 חָלַל יְהוָה קֹדֶשׁ ה' אֲשֶׁר אָהַב וּבָעַל בֵּת אֶל נָכָר *Judah has defiled the Lord's holy one/holiness/sanctuary and married a daughter of a strange god.* This verse, which, according to the interpretation accepted above, concerns intermarriage, can in itself, together with its continuation in verse 12, already include an intermarriage-related interpretation of Lev 20:3.⁵⁵ Besides, as noticed above, Mal 2:11 should probably be understood as a reference to the patriarch Judah, who married a Canaanite woman. Judah was literally a “**descendant of Israel**” (*Jub.* 30:9). In Mal 2:12, the man who intermarries is threatened by the same punishment of כָּרַת that is employed in Lev 18:29; 20:3, i.e. that he and his descendants will be **eradicated** from Israel. Now, this is not to claim that the author of *Jubilees* would have cited Malachi in just these cases, as the Pentateuchal basis for the homily in *Jubilees* is easy to establish, but to point that the two works may share a common exegetical tradition.

The whole nation at fault; no acceptance of the offerings: Lev 20:4-5 extended by Mal 2:9,13

What then follows in *Jubilees* is a homiletic instruction by the angel (*Jub.* 30:11-16):

(11) Now you, Moses, order the Israelites and testify to them that they are not to give any of their daughters to foreigners and that they are not to marry any foreign women because it is despicable before the Lord. (12) For this reason I have written for you in the words of the law everything that the Shechemites did to Dinah and how Jacob's sons said: 'We will not give our daughter to a man who has a foreskin because for us that would be a disgraceful thing'. (13) It is a disgraceful thing for the Israelites who give or take one of the foreign women because it is too impure and despicable for Israel. (14) Israel will not become clear from this impurity while it has one

⁵⁵ If so, that can again either show the exegetical creativity of the author of Malachi or indicate that such an interpretation of the laws concerning the dedication of children to Molech had already become current in the fifth century. It is interesting to note that b. *Sanh.* 82a employs Mal 2:11: “Whoever has intercourse with a Gentile woman is as one who has become the son-in-law of an idol, as it is written, ‘He has consorted with the daughter of a strange god’. Has the strange god a daughter? This means only intercourse with a gentile woman.” (Translation from Vermes, “Leviticus,” 117.)

of the foreign women or if anyone has given one of his daughters to any foreign man. (15) For it is blow upon blow and curse upon curse. Every punishment, blow, and curse will come. **If one does this or shuts his eyes to those who profane his holy name, then the entire nation will be condemned together** because of all this impurity and this contamination. (16) **There will be no favoritism or partiality; there will be no receiving from him of fruit, sacrifices, offerings, fat, or the aroma of pleasing fragrance so that he should accept it.** (So) is any man or woman in Israel to be who defiles his sanctuary.

This section contains exhortations and warnings, which is typical of the angel's speeches in *Jubilees*. What is particularly interesting from my standpoint, however, is the last verse (30:16). That **"there will be no favoritism or partiality"** can reasonably be understood just as a further explanation of the previous verse, **"If one does this or shuts his eyes to those who profane his holy name, then the entire nation will be condemned together"**. However, where does this thought ultimately come from? As VanderKam points out, it seems to be a further rendering of the Leviticus passage discussed above, namely verse 20:4.⁵⁶ I think, however, that some thematic parallels to Malachi 2 are also discernable here. In Mal 2:9, the priests are accused for partiality in their teaching. As the accusations in Mal 2:10-16 also are delivered at the people in general, this stresses the people's shared fault.

I only wonder why *Jub.* 30:16 continues in such a curious way. How do the two clauses in that verse actually belong together? The Latin syntax is quite cryptic here, *Et non erit ut accipiat personam et non accipiet sacrificium et olocaustomata neque odorauitur odore suauitatis suscipere ipsud*. It seems to me, though, that the Lord would be the subject to both occurrences of the verb *accipio* "take, receive", and then the thought in the beginning of the verse would perhaps rather be that he does not approve the person who is going to give the offerings. The possible confusion is, actually, quite understandable, if one assumes that the original Hebrew text of *Jub.* 30:16 has included some form of the idiomatic expression נשא פנים "lift the face."⁵⁷ This phrase is used both of God's mercy towards the people, as in the Priestly

⁵⁶ VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 196.

⁵⁷ It could perhaps be noticed that also the Latin word *persona* principally means "mask."

Blessing in Num 6:26, and of human beings' acceptance of one another. Sometimes the expression can have the nuance of favoritism or partiality, as in above-mentioned Mal 2:9.⁵⁸ The book of Malachi contains three occurrences of the phrase, in addition to 2:9 also in 1:8, 9. The issue in Mal 1:8 is that not even a governor would accept an unfit animal and behave friendly towards the person who brings it to him. In Mal 1:9 the author asks whether the priests of his own day believe that the Lord thus would show mercy towards them.⁵⁹ Michael Fishbane has shown how the section Mal 1:6-2:9 involves an "aggadic exegesis" of the Priestly Blessing. By several allusions and word plays, the author of Malachi has transformed the essential contents of the blessing to a curse towards the priests themselves. One of the word plays is the play with the three different meanings of the phrase נשא פנים.⁶⁰

When one considers the continuation in *Jub.* 30:16, "**There will be no receiving from him of fruit, sacrifices, offerings, fat, or the aroma of pleasing fragrance so that he should accept it,**" an allusion to both above-mentioned Mal 1:8-9 and, especially, Mal 2:13 is probable. The relevant section of Mal 2:13 reads מאין עוד פנות אל המנחה ולקחת רצון מידכם *there will no longer be a turning to the offering or a taking (of anything) with pleasure from your hand*. As VanderKam explicates, even his rendering of the Ge'ez "from him" would literally be "from his hand."⁶¹ The Vulgate of Mal 2:13 also uses this same literal expression: *non respiciam ad sacrificium nec accipiam placabile quid de manu vestra*. That the author of *Jubilees* explicates the offerings so exhaustively may be due to his general concern for proper sacrifices;⁶² a concern which is shared by the author of Malachi as well.

The thought that a man or woman "**defiles his** [the Lord's?] **sanctuary**" by intermarriage can reasonably be inferred from *Jubilees'* application of Lev

⁵⁸ For more examples, see L. Köhler & W. Baumgartner, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*, 3. Auflage, נשא.

⁵⁹ The Vulgate of Mal 1:8 translates the relevant phrase as follows, *offer illud duci tuo si placuerit ei aut si susceperit faciem tuam dicit Dominus exercituum*; and in verse 1:9, *si quo modo suscipiat facies vestras dicit Dominus exercituum*. In Mal 2:9, the phrase is translated as *non servastis vias meas et accepiestis faciem in lege*. Thus, the Vulgate of Mal 1:8,9; 2:9 employs the same two verbs *accipio* and *suscipio* that are used also in the Latin of *Jubilees* 3:16.

⁶⁰ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 332–334.

⁶¹ VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 197.

⁶² For this, see, e.g., Kugel, "Levi's Elevation," 18.

20:3. This sanctuary is obviously to be equated with the holy people of Israel of *Jub.* 30:8-9, even if there are two different words involved in these cases. This equation of the people and the temple may reflect a similar concept as the one in Mal 2:11, where the word שֶׁדֶק is ambiguous, designing something holy, the people of Israel, or the sanctuary; most probably the word there has all these connotations.⁶³ This detail, too, points to a common exegetical tradition shared by the authors of Malachi and *Jubilees*.

Levi's righteousness: Exodus 32, Numbers 25, Deuteronomy 33, Psalm 106, and Malachi 2

The account in *Jubilees* continues then with an exaltation of Levi because of his deed (30:17-23), presented in such a way that the angel orders Moses to proclaim a testimony about Levi to Israel:

(17) For this reason I have ordered you: 'Proclaim this testimony to Israel: 'See how it turned out for the Shechemites and their children - how they were handed over to Jacob's two sons. They killed them in a painful way. It was a just act for them and was recorded as a just act for them.' (18) Levi's descendants were chosen for the priesthood and as Levites to serve before the Lord as we (do) for all time. Levi and his sons will be blessed forever because **he was eager to carry out justice, punishment, and revenge on all who rise against Israel.** (19) So blessing and justice before the God of all are entered for him as a testimony on the heavenly tablets. (20) **We ourselves remember the justice which the man performed during his lifetime at all times of the year.** As far as 1000 generations will they enter (it). It will come to him and his family after him. He has been recorded on the heavenly tablets as a friend and a just man'.

It can reasonably be assumed that this description of Levi owes much to Exodus 32 and Numbers 25, possibly also Deuteronomy 33, as Endres suggests.⁶⁴ Perhaps the fact that the angel tells Moses to proclaim these things is in itself a clue that such records are to be found in the Pentateuch. However, the Latin phrase for "**he was eager to carry out justice, punishment, and revenge on**

⁶³ The Vulgate of Mal 2:11 translates: *contaminavit Iudas sanctificationem Domini quam dilexit et habuit filiam dei alieni*. Compare with the Latin of *Jub.* 30:16: *polluens sanctificationes*.

⁶⁴ Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 148–151.

all who rise against Israel” (*Jub.* 30:18) is *aemulatus est veritatem ut faceret iudicium et defensionem ab omnibus qui positi sunt super Istrahel*, which perhaps conveys a slightly different meaning from the Ethiopic which VanderKam has translated into English.⁶⁵ This description of Levi, especially the phrase *aemulatus est veritatem* “he aimed at truth” may recall the more general description of Levi’s virtues in *Mal* 2:4-7, especially verse 2:6. This may be the case also with the ambiguous clause **“we ourselves remember the justice which the man performed during his lifetime at all times of the year,”** which seems to be intended to designate some more permanent righteousness of Levi, extending beyond the Shechem incident.

Also the Phinehas tradition in *Ps* 106:31 deserves attention, as his pertinent righteousness is there emphasized in quite the same way as Levi’s righteousness is in *Jubilees*. Christine Hayes has drawn attention to the similarity in the descriptions of Abraham in *Gen* 15:6 and Phinehas in *Ps* 106:31, as the phrase “it was reckoned to him as righteousness” is found in connection with only these two biblical characters. Levi and Simeon in *Genesis* 34 share the same designation in *Jubilees*’ interpretation, which is also examined by Hayes. The Abraham of *Jubilees* is, according to her, “the original champion of strict endogamy.” Abraham is also entitled “a friend of God” in *Jub.* 19:9.⁶⁶ Hayes concludes, “Abraham and Levi are both ‘friends of God,’ and Simeon and Levi are reckoned to be righteous, linking them both to Abraham and to Phinehas. Indeed it would appear that the term ‘righteous’ is at times identified with opposition to intermarriage.”⁶⁷ This is the impression that one really gets when reading various texts of the Second Temple period, and Hayes’s suggestion provides an interesting glimpse to the possible origins of this connotation.

⁶⁵ So also VanderKam (*Jubilees*, 198).

⁶⁶ The biblical background for this thought is of course *Isaiah* 41:8.

⁶⁷ Christine E. Hayes, “Intermarriage and Impurity in Ancient Jewish Sources,” *HTR* 92 (1999): 3–36, here 23–24.

Levi's righteous deed eternally recorded: Mal 3:16

The angel continues his speech to Moses (*Jub.* 30:21-23):

(21) I have written this entire message for you and have ordered you to tell the Israelites not to sin or transgress the statutes or violate the covenant which was established for them so that they should perform it and be recorded as friends. (22) But if they transgress and behave in any impure ways, they will be recorded on the heavenly tablets as enemies. They will be erased from the book of the living and will be recorded in the book of those who will be destroyed and with those who will be uprooted from the earth. (23) On the day that Jacob's sons killed (the people of) Shechem, **a written notice was entered in heaven for them** that they had carried out what was right, justice, and revenge against the sinners. It was recorded as a blessing.

Also this whole final section of the speech seems to be connected to Exodus 32, especially by the final statement, "It was recorded as a blessing" (a hint at Exod 32:29). This section involves also the for *Jubilees* characteristic mention of the heavenly records and tablets, which is in this case reasonably inferred from Exod 32:32-34. However, the phrase in *Jub.* 30:23 concerning Jacob's sons, "**a written notice was entered in heaven for them**" might reflect Mal 3:16, *a book of remembrance was written in his presence for those who fear the Lord and revere his name*.⁶⁸ This possibility suggests that a somewhat coherent reading of the book of Malachi, stretching even beyond chapter 2, might indeed have existed, at least for the author of *Jubilees*.

⁶⁸ In the chapter on Moses below, I argue that Exod 32:34 was operative in the inclusion of Mal 3:22 as an appendix to Malachi.

2.6 Conclusion

The exegetical techniques which the author of Malachi employs have probably been recognized and further developed by certain authors of intertestamental and later literature, a conclusion which also Utzschneider has hinted at. I hope to have shown that this is the case at least with regard to *Jubilees*'s rewriting of Genesis 34, where the characterization of Levi as an ideal priest and a zealot against intermarriage, partially derived from Malachi 2, is operative. This brief investigation in the use of the Book of Malachi in *Jubilees* 30 has suggested that Malachi might have been more influential in early biblical exegesis than has hitherto been recognized. The book really seems to constitute a bridge between biblical narrative and law on one side and later rewritings of the biblical narratives on the other side of the river. The use of Malachi in *Jubilees* further highlights the influence of Priestly theology in Malachi, as the book was utilized by a later author with a distinctively priestly outlook.

3. Elijah: The Messenger, the Servant, and Phinehas

3.1 Introduction: the appendices to Malachi (3:22–24)

The book of Malachi ends with verses that most scholars regard as two appendices.¹ The first one of these in the Masoretic text is an admonition to remember the Torah of Moses (Mal 3:22), after which the author declares the coming of the prophet Elijah before the great and terrifying Day of the Lord (Mal 3:23–24). In the Christian Bible, these verses constitute the ending of the Old Testament and have hence been regarded as significant by Christians, especially because of the Elijah-role which is attributed to John the Baptist in

¹ The most permanent argument for this view is that the final verses of Malachi are different from the rest of the book; the vocabulary and style are quite dissimilar to the preceding. Several commentators have also paid attention to the distinctively Deuteronomistic character of the verses, even if it is admitted that Malachi as a whole bears Deuteronomistic traits. (For this, see, for example, David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi: A Commentary* [London: SCM Press, 1995], 228; Henning Graf Reventlow, *Die Propheten Haggai, Sacharja und Maleachi* [ATD 25/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993], 160–161; Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi* [Anchor Bible 25D; Garden City: Doubleday, 1998], 368–369.) However, especially verse 22 is typically Deuteronomistic in its hortatory style and its use of words as “my servant Moses,” “Horeb,” “statutes and ordinances.” There seems also to be a break in the flow of thought between the announcement of the day of the Lord in verses 17–21 and the admonitory verse 22—even if one should always be cautious with this argument, especially when referring to prophetic literature where discourses vary. The minor view, according to which the final verses are integral to the bulk of the book, is represented by, for example, Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi: The Divine Messenger* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 243–270; Julia M. O’Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 79; Michael H. Floyd, *Minor Prophets: Part 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 612–614, 622–626. See also idem, “The מִשְׁחָ as a Type of Prophetic Book,” *JBL* 121 (2002): 401–422. Also Petersen contends that “whether the author is the same as the one responsible for either the primary or secondary material in the dialogues is impossible to determine” (*Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi*, 228). There is also a redaction-historical school, according to which the book of Malachi has been object to extensive reworking. See, for example, Adam Simon van der Woude, “Der Engel des Bundes: Bemerkungen zu Maleachi 3,1c und seinem Kontext,” in *Die Botschaft und die Boten* (ed. J. Jeremias and L. Perlitt; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 289–300; Matthias Krieg, *Mutmaßungen über Maleachi: Eine Monographie* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1993); Arndt Meinhold, *Maleachi* (BKAT 14/8, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000–2006).

the Synoptic Gospels.² The Masoretic text of Malachi 3:23–24 [Eng. 4:5–6] reads,

הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בוא יום ה' הגדול והנורא:

(3:23) *See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.*

והשיב לב-אבות על-בנים ולב בנים על-אבותם פן-אבוא והפיתי את-הארץ חרם:

(3:24) *He will turn the hearts of fathers to their sons and the hearts of sons to their fathers, so that, when I come, I will not strike the land with destruction.*

The purpose of this chapter is to study these two final verses of the book of Malachi and to offer some insights into how they became part of the book. My starting point is the opinion of the majority of scholars, that Mal 3:22–24 are to be regarded as somewhat later additions to the book of Malachi. My initial question is a relatively simple one: Why, actually, was the messenger of the covenant of Mal 3:1 identified as Elijah?

I thus share the presupposition of several scholars in seeing a connection between Mal 3:1 and 23–24; hence, Elijah serves as an identification of the messenger. The wording in Mal 3:23 is explicit enough to suggest a conscious reference back to 3:1:

הנני שלח מלאכי ופנה־דרך לפני

(3:1) *See, I am sending my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me*

הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בוא יום ה'

(3:23) *See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the Day of the Lord comes*³

The case is, however, not quite universally agreed. For instance Henning Graf Reventlow and Karl William Weyde express doubts about this equation.⁴

² See especially the exhaustive study by Markus Öhler, *Elia im Neuen Testament: Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des alttestamentlichen Propheten im Neuen Testament* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997).

³ Brenda Shaver has argued that the author of Mal 3:23 recognized the allusion in Mal 3:1 to Exod 23:20 and thus chose to quote the Exodus verse even more closely. This seems very plausible. See Brenda J. Shaver, "The Prophet Elijah in the Literature of the Second Temple Period: The Growth of a Tradition," PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001, 107–108; and cf. the discussion below in the chapter on Moses.

⁴ See Reventlow, *Propheten*, 161; Karl William Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching: Prophetic Authority, Form Problems, and the Use of Traditions in the Book of Malachi* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 393.

According to their line of interpretation, the messenger of Mal 3:1 is not to be identified with Elijah. Weyde maintains that the tasks of these two characters are different. In his view, the editor who wrote the appendix just borrowed a mode of expression from 3:1 which explains the similarities between the verses.

3.2 Textual history and its implications for the interpretation of the appendices

The perhaps most pertinent issue concerning the verses, when taken as added, is to what they are additions: to the book of Malachi only, or to the Twelve Prophets, or to the Prophets in general, or even to the Torah and the Prophets?

A prevailing opinion in Malachi scholarship has been that the concluding verses must be regarded as a final note to the whole prophetic canon. Scholars advocating this position include, e.g., Andrew Hill, David Petersen, and Weyde.⁵ Hill contends that “the complete two-line blank space separating 3:22–24 from 3:21 [פ] is strong evidence the Masoretes regarded these three last verses as an appendix to the book of Malachi (and the entire prophetic corpus?).”⁶ However, the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* seems to be mistaken here, as in the Leningrad Codex there is only a minor division [פ] between verses 21 and 22.⁷

Scholars who think that the final verses of Malachi serve as a colophon to a canon of texts have, however, seldom addressed the question why Malachi (including 3:22–24) is, according to Russell E. Fuller’s edition, followed by Jonah in the Qumran scroll of the Twelve Prophets, 4QXII^a. The case is odd,

⁵ Hill, *Malachi* (AB 25D, New York: Doubleday, 1998), 41, 45, 363–366; Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1995), 232–233; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 388–393.

⁶ Hill, *Malachi*, 27. Minor divisions are indicated by פ in the BHS. The letters פ and פ are however not present in the Leningrad Codex where the divisions are marked by leaving the end of a line blank (=פ) or leaving a blank line in the text (=פ).

⁷ This, in turn, may imply that the copyists regarded verses 22–24 as an integral part of the book and not as any appendices at all.

as the scroll was preliminarily published as early as in 1988,⁸ but the view that the final verses of Malachi are an ending to a larger corpus of texts has pertained up to recent years.⁹ To my knowledge, the only scholar who seriously addressed the issue and proposed a solution was Odil Hannes Steck. He posits a conscious, theologically motivated deviation at Qumran from the, according to him, already-fixed order of the Minor Prophets.¹⁰ Fuller, however, criticizes him for a predetermined tendency to preserve the priority of the Masoretic text.¹¹ Philippe Guillaume, for his part, criticizes Fuller's reconstruction of the scroll concerning Jonah's place, but admits that Malachi is indeed followed by some other text in 4QXII^a.¹²

If one rejects Steck's theory, one could perhaps also argue that the order of the books in 4QXII^a is dependent on some practical issues rather than on a fixed, different view of their sequence. But be that the case, then 4QXII^a shows that the order of the Minor Prophets was not considered definite or perhaps not even as important in the middle of the second century BCE (where Fuller dates the scroll), or at least not in Qumran.¹³ Altogether, the result of the evidence from 4QXII^a is that the ending of Malachi loses its potential to be primarily a summary of the prophetic corpus.¹⁴ Therefore, it

⁸ It appeared as Fuller's Ph.D. dissertation, "The Minor Prophets Manuscripts from Qumrân, Cave IV" (Harvard University, 1988). The final edition is his "The Twelve" in Eugene Ulrich et al (eds.), *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 15: Qumran Cave 4.10, The Prophets* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): 221–318. See also idem, "The Text of the Twelve Minor Prophets," *CR:BS* 7 (1999): 81–95.

⁹ See, e.g. Klaus Grünwald, "Von der Ver-Wandlungen des Profeten: Die Elia-Rezeption im Alten Testament", idem & H. Schroeter (Hg.), *Was suchst du hier, Elia? Ein hermeneutisches Arbeitsbuch* (Rheinbach-Merzbach: CMZ-Verlag, 1995): 43–54, here 51; Arndt Meinhold, *Maleachi* (BK: AT 14/8, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000–2006), 408; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 402; and especially Hill, *Malachi*, 12: "Both Jewish and Christian traditions have always positioned Malachi last among the Twelve Prophets." R.F. Parson criticizes him at this issue in his review, *JBL* 118 (1999), 728.

¹⁰ Steck, "Zur Abfolge Maleachi-Jona in 4Q76 (4QXII^a)," *ZAW* 108 (1996): 249–53.

¹¹ "Text of the Twelve," 84.

¹² Guillaume, "The Unlikely Malachi-Jonah Sequence (4QXII^a)," *JHS* 7, article 15 (2007), 10 pages. (I thank Hervé Gonzalez for this reference.)

¹³ Cf. Philippe Guillaume, "A Reconsideration of Manuscripts Classified as Scrolls of the Twelve Minor Prophets (XII)," *JHS* 7, article 16 (2007), 12 pages.

¹⁴ Theoretically, the possibility would still remain that Mal 3:22–24 would originally have been written as a colophon to some canon of texts, but that the copyists of 4QXII^a (or their predecessors) would not have understood this but treated the verses as an appendix to Malachi only.

seems natural to assume the minority position, previously taken by e.g. Brevard Childs, that Mal 3:22–24 serve as appendices to the book of Malachi only.¹⁵ Consequently, the place of Malachi at the end of the prophetic corpus in the Hebrew Bible is probably determined precisely by the apt conclusion of the book, rather than vice versa.¹⁶ This standpoint is, of course, of decisive importance when the verses are being interpreted, as the clue for the interpretation is thus to be sought within the framework of Malachi itself.¹⁷

3.3 Touching points between Malachi 3:1–5 and the Elijah cycle in 1–2 Kings

But my main question still remains: Why precisely Elijah was chosen? Scholars usually observe that this is due to the tradition that he was taken into heaven alive and therefore was able to return.¹⁸ This reason, however, is rather vague and seems not to be a satisfactory explanation. After all, Enoch would have been a possibility too — and who says that a past-time figure had to be chosen at all? There must be some *internal* reasons why Elijah was identified as the messenger.

I have already quoted Mal 3:1 which is the perhaps most famous and crucial verse in the book and is situated approximately in the middle of it. Let us still look at the wider context:

הנני שלח מלאכי ופנה־דרך לפני ופתאם יבוא אליה־יכלו האדון אשר־אתם
מבקשים ומלאך הברית אשר־אתם חפצים הנה־בא אמר ה' צבאות:

Below in this chapter, I shall argue that this, however, is not the case. In the next chapter on Moses, I continue the discussion with regard to the arrangement of the two appendices (3:22 and 3:23–24) in the Masoretic text and the Septuagint.

¹⁵ Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 495.

¹⁶ Cf. Fuller, “Text of the Twelve,” 84: “If the order preserved in 4QXII^a is not secondary to that in MT, then suggestions regarding the redactional function of Mal. 3.22–24 will have to be reformulated.”

¹⁷ This is to contrast e.g. Meinhold, who holds that the sixth disputation of Malachi (Mal 3:13–21) is already secondary and therefore comments (*Maleachi*, 408): “Die Nachworte werden somit schwerlich als weiterer oder speziellen Mal-Schluß verfaßt worden sein“.

¹⁸ This statement can be found in, e.g., Grünwald, “Ver-Wandlungen”, 50; Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 135; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 392, and Reventlow, *Maleachi*, 161.

3:1 *See, I am sending my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight — indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.*

ומי מכלכל את־יום בואו ומי העמד בהראותו כי־הוא פֹאשׁ מצרף וכברית מכבסים:

3:2 *But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stay upright when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap*¹⁹.

When one reads Malachi 3:2, one is unavoidably confronted with the question: *Who* is “like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap?” It seems reasonable to assume that the ancient interpreters also posed this question, as Mal 3:1 really is a riddle. Are there three or two characters or only a single character — and if two, which two of the three should be equated? These questions have been answered in all logically possible ways in Malachi scholarship, and the identification of the person(s) has been vividly debated, but no consensus has been reached.²⁰ I shall now not go into that problem, but the variety of scholarly opinions shows that whatever the original intention of the author of Malachi might have been, the verse is open to multiple interpretations.²¹ To me, it is likely that an ancient reader would have drawn the conclusion that the person who is “like a refiner’s fire and fullers’ soap” is the nearest antecedent of the description, i.e. the messenger of the covenant.²²

Ben Sira is our first evidence for the later influence of Malachi’s depiction of Elijah, and his portrait of him has received much attention. A significant feature is the early appeal to authority of Scripture in 48:10: “it is written,” concerning precisely Elijah’s comeback as described in Mal 3:23-24,

¹⁹ The word בְּרִית appears to mean actually ‘alkali’ or ‘lye’, but I have used the traditional translation ‘soap’, which is somewhat more convenient in English.

²⁰ The options thus are that either there are three persons; or two persons are equated in three possible ways; or there is only one person. For an extensive survey of the scholarly opinions on this matter in the 20th century, see Weyde, *Prophecy*, 284–291. See also Hill, *Malachi*, 286–289.

²¹ Cf. David M. Miller, “The Messenger, the Lord, and the Coming Judgement in the Reception History of Malachi 3,” *NTS* 53 (2007): 1–16, here 6: “Unfortunately, preoccupation with what Malachi meant sometimes results in a failure to consider other plausible ways Malachi may have been construed by ancient readers.”

²² Note, in addition, the homonymous word (בְּרִית) for covenant and soap, which could have served as a further hint for the interrelatedness of these matters. Cf. Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 148.

הכתוב נכון לעת להשבית אף לפני] [²³ל
להשיב לב אבות על בנים ולהכין ש]

(Sir 48:10) ... *about whom it is written that he is appointed for the time to calm (God's) wrath before [it breaks out in fury], to turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons and to restore the t[ribes of Israel].*

Fire, however, is a theme that also, though perhaps less obviously, connects Ben Sira's description of Elijah with the book of Malachi:

עד אשר קם נביא כאש ודבריו כתנור בוער
(Sir 48:1) *Until a prophet arose like a fire, and his words (were) like a burning oven*

כִּי־הוא כֹּאֵשׁ מִצְרֶף
(Mal 3:2) *For he is like a refiner's fire*

כִּיהֵנָּה הַיּוֹם בֹּא בֹעֵר כְּתִנּוֹר
(Mal 3:19) *See, the day comes, burning like an oven*

It seems reasonable to assume that the editor of Malachi who wrote the appendix also had the theme of fire as one of his keys when concluding that the messenger of the covenant was Elijah. Perhaps Elijah was associated with fire in popular lore? We cannot know for sure, but both the narrative in Kings and the evidence from Ben Sira may point to that direction.²⁴

Is, though, fire a sufficient key for contending that the messenger who is “like a refiner’s fire and fullers’ soap” must be Elijah who possibly was associated with fire? If the association was strong enough, the case might be so. I believe, however, that there is more to it than that. A very careful reading of the related verses in Malachi (3:2–5) might shed light to the question.

Now I shall finally take the task of examining the interpretative strategies by which the author of Mal 3:23–24 concluded that the “messenger of the covenant” of Mal 3:1 was Elijah. Above, it was argued that the messenger (being “like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap”) was understood as Elijah at least because of the keyword “fire” (אֵשׁ), as evidenced by Ben Sira. But what about the other words in question, מצרף וכברית מכבסים? Elijah certainly

²³ Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts*, Leiden: Brill, 1997.

²⁴ See 1 Kings 18:38; 2 Kings 1:10, 12, and cf. also Sir 48:3, 9. See also note 27 below.

had nothing to do with metallurgy and hardly anything to do with washing, even if he was indeed involved in some water-related matters.

Zarephath

The name of the town where he settled might, though, provide a partial answer. The noun צרפת 'Zarephath'/'Sarepta' could be construed as qal perfect feminine 3. sg of the root צרף 'refine', and the locative צרפתה (which is the only grammatical form in which the name of the town occurs in 1 Kings 17:9, 10) as the same form plus feminine singular accusative suffix. This is just to point out that ancient speakers of Hebrew were without doubt familiar with homonymous words to the town's name and its locative, i.e. feminine forms from the verbal root צרף. Actually, Köhler and Baumgartner regard as a possibility that the name of the town was derived from this same root.²⁵ Perhaps the town was known for metallurgy? We do not know, and the results of archaeology do not give any hints about this.²⁶ Be that as it may, however, the phrase כַּאֵשׁ מִצֶּרֶף could, if wished, be understood as "like a fire from (=מ) Zareph(ath)," or perhaps still better, "like a man from Zareph(ath)," as the words אֵשׁ and אִישׁ are also homonymous.²⁷ In my opinion, this is not to press the issue quite unreasonably much, and in any case, the root צרף functions at least as a catchword. And thus, who was "a man from Zarephath" if not Elijah when he appeared to Ahab after the two years' drought (1 Kings 18)?²⁸

²⁵ This explanation seems to be fully accepted in the etymological thoughts of late 19th century. Bible dictionaries from this period, now available also online, often state that the name of the town means smelter or forge, or metalworking shop. See the definitions in *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (1884): "smelting place;" *Strong's Concordance* (1890): "refinement;" *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (1897): "smelting-shop, a workshop for the refining and smelting of metals." Also Brown, Driver and Briggs take צרפת to mean "smelting-place." How these 19th century authors actually gained their information, or whether they just reasoned the meaning, however remains unclear. This explanation for צרפת is, in any case, not present in their immediate predecessor Gesenius.

²⁶ See James B. Pritchard, "Sarepta in History and Tradition," in John Reumann (ed.), *Understanding the Sacred Text: Essays in honor of Morton S. Enslin on the Hebrew Bible and Christian Beginnings* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1972): 99–114.

²⁷ Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella point out this word play in Ben Sira 48:1, taking it as an allusion to the same word play concerning Elijah in 2 Kings 1:10, 12. (*The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes* [Anchor Bible 39, New York: Doubleday, 1987], 53.)

²⁸ After I had independently figured out this possible alternative reading "Zareph(ath)," I found out that some fifty years ago, Bruce Dahlberg had made basically the same discovery by suggesting that the beginning of verse 3:3, "and he will sit as a refiner" could, if wished, be read

Fullers' soap

Now, the next step is to scrutinize the phrase כְּבֵרִית מַכְבֵּסִים “like fullers’ soap.” There is, of course, the word play between the homonymous words for “covenant” and “soap,” but this is not of help, as Elijah is not *explicitly* associated with any covenant in Kings — if he were, the case would be simple enough. However, the word combination of washing (כָּבַס) and soap (כְּבֵרִית) occurs in only one other text in the Hebrew Bible, Jeremiah 2:22. The issue at stake there is the peoples’ “walking after Baals.” It seems justified to assume that the editor who wrote Mal 3:23–24 here has seen a connection to Elijah’s deeds. In Jer 2:22, the people are accused of remaining dirty despite of their washing themselves with soap and alkali. The people also deny that they have gone astray after Baals (Jer 2:23):

כִּי אִם־תִּכְבֹּסִי בַנְתָּר וּתְרַבִּי־לֶךְ בְּרִית נִכְתָּם עֹונֶךְ לִפְנֵי נֶאֱמַר אֱדֹנִי ה':
אֵיךְ תֹאמְרִי לֹא נִטְמָאתִי אַחֲרֵי הַבְּעָלִים לֹא הִלַּכְתִּי

(Jer 2:22–23) *Even if you **washed** yourself with lye and used much **soap**, you would remain stained by your guilt in front of me, says the Lord God. How can you say, “I am not defiled, **I have not followed the Baals**”?*

This two-minded conduct in cultic matters recalls Elijah’s words in 1 Kings 18:21, where he blames the people for their unwillingness to decide and commands them to choose between the Lord and Baal and not try to follow both:

אֱמֹה' הָאֱלֹהִים לִכּוּ אַחֲרָיו וְאִם־הַבְּעַל לִכּוּ אַחֲרָיו וְלֹא־עֲנוּ הָעָם אֹתוֹ דְּבַר:

*“If the Lord is God, follow him; if **Baal**, follow him”! But the people did not answer him a word.*

“and he will return from Zareph(ath).” This is indeed very probable and serves as a further support of my contention. However, Dahlberg defends total unity of authorship for Malachi and consequently believes that he has found a subtle wordplay; that is, according to him, the author hints in a veiled way at Elijah, only to reveal his true identity in verse 23. Dahlberg’s conclusion thus differs essentially from mine and could be compared to Michael Floyd’s views of intertextuality in Malachi that are presented below in the chapter on Moses. See Bruce T. Dahlberg, “Studies in the Book of Malachi,” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1963), 149–150.

Thus, it seems to me that an ancient reader could have established a connection between Mal 3:2 and 1 Kings 18:21 by using Jer 2:22–23 as a proof text.

The seeking of a “lord”

The author of Mal 3:23 could, in addition to verse 3:2, have found an important clue also in verse 3:1 itself. The phrase **הַאֲדֹן אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם מִבְקָשִׁים** “**the lord** whom you are **seeking**” probably refers in its original context to the Lord God.²⁹ However, the ancient exegete, who conceivably already had found Elijah in verse 3:2, very likely read this phrase in conjunction with the story about the “seeking” of the ascended Elijah in 2 Kings 2:16–18.

In the Elijah cycle in 1 and 2 Kings, Elijah is repeatedly reported as being hidden. He hides himself for the first time already in the beginning of the narrative concerning him (1 Kings 17:3), when he resides at the Cherith River, and I believe it is significant that this act of hiding was done on God’s specific order. In the next chapter, the prophet Obadiah encounters Elijah and discusses with him. He mourns over Elijah’s habit of hiding himself (i.e. that the spirit of the Lord carries Elijah to unknown places) and wants to be sure that Elijah really is going to show himself to Ahab (1 Kings 18:10–12). In the following chapter (1 Kings 19), Elijah hides himself from Jezebel, first in the wilderness and then on the Horeb Mountain. Later in this narrative, he also covers his face with his cloth, an act which could be regarded as an additional instance of hiding oneself (19:13). And finally, in 2 Kings 2, Elijah ascends, but the prophet disciples from Jericho assume that the spirit of the Lord has thrown Elijah somewhere, i.e. that he is again hidden from them. On the permission of Elisha, they set out to seek Elijah, but do not find him.

In 2 Kings 2:16, the prophet disciples address Elisha with the following words, **לֵכוּ נָא וִיבְקֹשׁוּ אֶת אֲדֹנֶיךָ** “Let them go and **seek your lord**.” Elijah had disappeared and was thus sought, but he was not found. The author of Mal 3:23 had an ingenious solution to this problem: Elijah’s new coming was actually already announced in Scripture – in Mal 3:1!³⁰

²⁹ Cf. the discussion in the chapter on Jacob above.

³⁰ Also this detail, I discovered, was noticed already by Dahlberg (“Studies,” 148), but again with a claim that it supports the unity of Malachi.

Elijah appears

There are, however, some further details in Mal 3:2 that need to be examined. Just before describing the qualities of the messenger of the covenant, the author asks,

ומי מכלכל את־יום בואו ומי העמד בהראותו

But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stay upright when he appears?

Could this, too, have something to do with Elijah? Probably so. The niph'al of the verb ראה is not very common, and the infinitive הראות occurs only eleven times in the Hebrew Bible, two of which are Mal 3:2 and 1 Kings 18:2. The verb is, actually, rather central with regard to Elijah's conduct in 1 Kings 18. In verse 1, God commands Elijah, לך הראה אל־אהאב *Go and show yourself to (=appear to) Ahab*, and verse 2 states, וילך אליהו להראות אל־אהאב *Elijah went to show himself to (=appear to) Ahab*. The case is still repeated by Elijah's oath in verse 15, היום אראה אליו *Today I shall show myself/appear to him*. So the whole phrase in Mal 3:2 could be taken as describing the ominous character of Elijah's appearance to Ahab and, by implication, that of the future messenger:

Who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stay upright when he appears? For he is like a man/fire from Zareph(ath) and like fullers' soap.

To endure and to care for

There is, however, still another possibility to understand the first half of the question, ומי מכלכל את־יום בואו *Who can endure the day of his coming?* The pilpel of the verb כול is not either very common, and it is far more often used in the meaning "provide with food, care for" than "endure, bear." In the first meaning, the verb is used twice in 1 Kings 17. Elijah was first sustained by the ravens by the Cherith River (in 1 Kings 17:4, the Lord says, היה מהנחל תשתה *You shall drink from the river, and I have commanded the ravens to sustain you there*), and, what is more important, then by the widow of Zarephath. In verse 9, the Lord commands Elijah,

קום לך צרפתה אשר לצידון וישבת שם הנה צייתי שם אשה אלמנה לכלכלך:

*Arise and go to Zarephath which belongs to Zidon and settle there. See, I have commanded a widow there **to sustain you**.*

It is perhaps not quite too far-fetched to suggest that an ancient reader could have read the verb **לכלל** also in Mal 3:2 in this fashion.³¹ Admittedly, the object marker **את** causes some problem, as the preposition **ב** would actually be needed to convey the meaning *But who can sustain (him) **on** the day of his coming?* However, the treatment of prepositions in ancient interpretations was often rather fluid, as evidenced, e.g., by diverse deliberate readings of **כ** instead of **ב** and vice versa. If one wishes to retain the proper translation of **את**, a rendering of the type *But who can care for/support the day of his coming* could perhaps also be reasonable for an ancient reader as a hint at 1 Kings 17. And in any case, if one wants to reject these proposed translations as forced, the verb **לכלל** would still function as a catchword between Malachi 3:2 and 1 Kings 17.³²

The widow and the orphan

There is still a further, albeit only slight, point of resemblance between Malachi 3:1–5 and 1 Kings 17. This is the somewhat haphazard mention of “the widow and the orphan” in Mal 3:5, which might have been considered syntax-breaking, even if it is necessarily not so in biblical language. The verb **עשק** can mean both ‘to rob’ and ‘to oppress’ and thus defines two categories, the wage of the hireling as well as the widow and the orphan.³³

³¹ To suggest this is not to deny that the author of Mal 3:23–24 would have understood the verb *primarily* in the meaning ‘endure, bear’ as intended by the original author. On the contrary, in Mal 3:2 he has most probably seen a connection to the description of the Day of the Lord in Joel 2:11 (where the hiphil of the verb **כּוּל** is used in this sense), as he borrows some of Joel’s imagery to Mal 3:23 as well. See, e.g., Hill, *Malachi*, 376–377, 385; and cf. my view of the matter in the chapter on Moses below.

³² A much weaker case is the resemblance between **וערבה** “will please” in Mal 3:4 and **הערבים** “ravens” in 1 Kings 17, as **ערב** has several homonymous meanings. However, it is very interesting that according to A. L. Oppenheim as cited by Michael Fishbane, in a Mesopotamian dream interpretation there is a play between *aribu* “raven” and *irbu* “will enter.” This, however, may be purely coincidental. See Fishbane, “The Qumran Peshet and Traits of Ancient Hermeneutics,” *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies 1977): 97–114, here 103.

³³ Cf. Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 165; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 307 note 120.

וקרבתי אליכם למשפט והייתי עד ממהר
 במכשפים ובמנאפים ובנשבעים לשקר
 ובעשקי שכר שכיר אלמנה ויתום ומטי-גר
 ולא יראוני אמר ה' צבאות:

So the proper rendering of Mal 3:5 would be:

*I shall draw near to you for judgment, and I shall be a swift witness against sorcerers, adulterers and false swearers; and those who rob the wage of the hireling and **oppress the widow and the orphan**, and who turn away the stranger and do not fear me, says the Lord of Hosts.*

However, the verse could also be construed as follows:

*I shall draw near to you for judgment, and I shall be a swift witness against sorcerers, adulterers and false swearers; and those who rob the wage of the hireling — **the widow and the orphan**— and who turn away the stranger and do not fear me, says the Lord of Hosts.*

It is possible that an ancient reader thought that the mention of the widow and the orphan was somehow sudden or emphasized, in the way outlined above, and took this as a further hint at 1 Kings 17, where the widow and her son play a prominent role.

Thematic resemblances between Mal 3:6–12 and 1 Kings 17

The topic of Mal 3:6–12 is crop failure. In verse 10, the people are urged to “bring the whole tithe into the storehouse,” whereupon the Lord promises to send blessing, which probably is a metonym for rain.³⁴ This means that the author is urging the people to give away the small amount of food which they have left, and only after doing so, they would be blessed. This situation resembles the one reported in 1 Kings 17.³⁵ The widow fulfilled Elijah’s request and baked a loaf of bread first for him of the small amount of ingredients that she had left. After this, she was blessed with flour and oil, even if the rain did not yet fall. There is also a strong possibility that because of being a rain-maker, Elijah was specifically associated with rain in popular lore, which

³⁴ Cf. the discussion in the chapter on Jacob above.

³⁵ Thus also Dahlberg, “Studies,” 148.

would serve as a further resemblance between these texts for an ancient interpreter.

3.4 Ben Sira on Elijah

Pancratius Beentjes has recently surveyed Ben Sira's view of Elijah in Sir 48:1–11.³⁶ However, in his article Beentjes concentrates more on Ben Sira's description of the historical Elijah and leaves verses 10–11 for less consideration. I paid some attention to Ben Sira's account of Elijah above in the present chapter, but I would now like to investigate especially verse 48:10 more closely in order to find out whether there are roots to the whole cluster of later speculations about Elijah's coming that verifiably flourished in the New Testament times and later.³⁷ I believe there are such roots, and I also try to sort out how these ideas may have found their way to Ben Sira.

For this end, I adopt the methodology of James Kugel by using a hypothetical figure which I call 'an/the ancient exegete'. This code name designates Ben Sira's presumed predecessors from whom he inherited his ideas.³⁸ I thus believe that at least in the case of Sir 48:10–11, very little of the underlying exegesis should be attributed to Ben Sira himself; rather, the statements in these verses bear marks of traditional, inherited interpretative patterns. A pertinent difficulty in research of biblical interpretation is that certain ideas are simply stated in texts, without any reference to how they originated. In the following, I shall attempt at unraveling the techniques that led the ancient exegete to certain conclusions that are later reflected in Ben Sira and subsequent texts.

³⁶ Pancratius C. Beentjes, "Ben Sira's View of Elijah (Sir 48:1–11)," E. Koskeniemi & P. Lindqvist (eds.), *Rewritten Biblical Figures*. SRB 3, Åbo Akademi University & Eisenbrauns 2010: 47–56.

³⁷ Matt 11:1–15; 16:13–15; 17:9–13; 27:46–50 *par*; Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 48; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Exod 6:18, etc. (see below).

³⁸ For Kugel's method, see his *In Potiphar's House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), esp. 1–10. – Above in this chapter, I have mainly used the code name "author of Mal 3:23" for another ancient exegete. In the current instance, however, I do not have such a precise name to use, because the inventor of the exegetical ideas that have left traces to Ben Sira cannot be identified at all.

Assumptions about Ben Sira's background knowledge

In the following, I shall repeat the Hebrew text given above and give also the Greek text of Sir 48:10 with their respective English translations.

הכתוב נכון לעת להשבית אף לפני []
להשיב לב אבות על בנים ולהכין ש[]ל

... about whom it is written that he is appointed for the time to calm the wrath before [it breaks out in fury?], to turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons and to restore the t[ribes of Israel].

ὁ καταγραφεὶς ἐν ἐλεγμοῖς εἰς καιροῦς κοπάσαι ὀργὴν πρὸ θυμοῦ
ἐπιστρέψαι καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ καταστῆσαι φυλὰς Ἰακωβ

... who is destined in the words of doom for an appointed time to calm the anger before wrath, to reconcile the heart of the father towards the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob.

As we see, Sir 48:10 is opened by a participle referring to Elijah (as are the five preceding verses) – a feature which is difficult to mediate in English. However, pure grammatically, the beginning of the verse leads its reader to understand that certain things are written about Elijah; namely, that he is ready for some appointed time (לעת, εἰς καιροῦς) to do the works that are then listed. The whole clause is actually a lengthy statement, which seems to reflect ‘common knowledge’ that Ben Sira has taken over. Already his similar use of participles in the beginning of this verse and in the preceding record of the historical Elijah indicates this kind of continuity. Because the description of the historical Elijah consists of details that the audience presumably knew (even if Ben Sira may have shown creativity and rhetorical ability in his arrangement of these details), the same should be the case with verses 10–11. It is rather difficult to maintain that Ben Sira now suddenly continues his apostrophe by creating new ideas which were totally unexpected for his intended audience.

Brenda Shaver, who has argued for the same view as I present here, points out that it is generally thought that Ben Sira was not very interested in eschatological matters, and thus it would be rather strange if he were composing such things here. The listing of things that “are written” about Elijah rather

suggests that traditional ideas are put together and expressed poetically, as in the *Laus Patrum* (Ben Sira 44–49) in general. Perhaps the ideas that were connected with Elijah’s return were so common knowledge that even a less eschatologically oriented person simply could not consider leaving them out.³⁹ The task of the modern exegete is thus to find out how Ben Sira’s assumptions may have originated.

3.5 Elijah and Second Isaiah’s Servant

Sir 48:10 seems to contain a free quotation from Mal 3:24 combined with a reference to Isa 49:6:

Mal 3:24 MT

והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם פן אבוא והכיתי את הארץ חרם

And he shall turn the hearts of fathers to sons and the hearts of sons to their fathers, so that when I come, I will not strike the land with destruction.

Mal 3:23 LXX

ὁς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ μὴ ἔλθω καὶ πατάξω τὴν γῆν ἄρδην

And he shall restore the heart of a father towards a son and the heart of a man towards his neighbor, so that I will not come and destroy the land utterly.

Isa 49:6 MT

ויאמר נקל מהיותך לי עבד להקים את שבטי יעקב ונצורי ישראל להשיב ונתתיך לאור גוים
להיות ישועתי עד קצה הארץ

³⁹ Shaver, “Prophet Elijah,” 146–149. Some scholars have also opined that Sir 48:10–11 are secondary to the bulk of the book, precisely due to the eschatological focus which they deem alien to Ben Sira. So, e.g., Burton L. Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic: Ben Sira’s Hymn in Praise of the Fathers*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985, 17–18; 199–203.

He says: It is not enough that you are a servant to me, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the remnant of Israel; but I have given you as a light to the nations, so that my salvation would reach to the end of the earth.

Isa 49:6 LXX

καὶ εἶπέν μοι μέγα σοί ἐστὶν τοῦ κληθῆναι σε παῖδά μου τοῦ στήσαι τὰς φυλὰς Ιακωβ καὶ τὴν διασπορὰν τοῦ Ισραὴλ ἐπιστρέψαι ἰδοὺ τέθεικά σε εἰς διαθήκην γένους εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς

And he said to me: It is a great thing for you to be called my servant to establish the tribes of Jacob and to recover the dispersion of Israel. See, I have given you for a covenant of a people, for a light of the gentiles, so that you would be for salvation to the end of the earth.

This allusion to the second of the ‘Servant Songs’⁴⁰ is very interesting and should, in my opinion, bring to mind the question why it has been made. Scholars have generally agreed upon the intended allusion, even if it is often noticed that Ben Sira does not quote Isa 49:6 quite *verbatim*, as he replaces עֲקִיב with לִהְיוֹת, and, perhaps, יַעֲקֹב with יִשְׂרָאֵל. The Greek translator alters the case with Jacob/Israel, possibly to reflect the LXX of Isa 49:6 more accurately, but he has instead moved the words ἐπιστρέψαι and (ἀπο) καταστήσαι from their occurrences in the LXX of Mal 3:23 and Isa 49:6 to opposite places, i.e. καταστήσαι to the quotation from Isa 49:6, and ἐπιστρέψαι to the quotation from Mal 3:23.

It is often pointed out that Ben Sira’s replacement of “Jacob” with “Israel” is connected with his evoking of Northern traditions in this part of the *Laus*

⁴⁰ Duhm’s classical concept of ‘Servant Songs’ is probably in many ways both anachronistic and outdated, but has the undeniable advantage of clarity, because all scholars know that Isa 42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–11, and 52:13–53:12 are the intended passages. In my opinion, the designation could still be used as a heuristic tool, but preferably in quotation marks. (Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia übersetzt und erklärt*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1892.) For some critique concerning the concept of ‘Servant Songs’, see Christopher R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah: An Historical and Critical Study*, London: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed, 1963, 117–191; for a more detailed refutation, see Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs: A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom*, Lund: Gleerup, 1983.

Patrum.⁴¹ This may well be the case, but it must nevertheless be noted that 1QIsa^a 49:6 reflects the same reading as Ben Sira, i.e. has “Jacob” and “Israel” in opposite places compared with the MT. Besides, it is quite possible that the strategies of citing texts, especially in the Greek Sirach, generally reflect the technique of paraphrase (παράφρασις), which was very wide-spread in antiquity.⁴² Thus, it seems to me that Ben Sira, for one reason or another, possibly chose a different verb for the raising/restoration and simply quoted a similar text as the one reflected in 1QIsa^a in the case of Jacob/Israel.⁴³ The grandson corrected his grandfather’s text concerning Jacob/Israel towards the textual form which later became the basis of the Masoretic text, but as he recognized the two scriptural allusions (Mal 3:23 and Isa 49:6), he possibly either translated freely or chose two different verbs from the LXX of these verses to make his language more elegant, i.e. to avoid tautology in repeating some form of the verb ἵστημι (which had been the case if he were quite faithful towards the cited phrases in the LXX).⁴⁴

Beentjes, too, regards as remarkable that Ben Sira has connected Elijah with Second Isaiah’s Servant.⁴⁵ Beentjes notes as well that Sir 48:10 is the only occurrence of the introductory formula “it is written” (הכחורב) in the entire book of Ben Sira, and he agrees that the allusions to Mal 3:23–24 and Isa 49:6

⁴¹ E. g. Beentjes, “Ben Sira’s View,” 51, 55–56. Beentjes suggests also that the name Israel serves as a hint at the eschatological restoration of the twelve tribes into one ‘Israel’ of old.

⁴² Redaction criticism is needed, but an aspect which takes the rhetorical strategies of antiquity seriously should perhaps be emphasized still more in scholarship. For an exercise in this ‘new’ method, see Timothy A. Brookins, “Luke’s Use of Mark as παράφρασις: Its Effects on Characterization in the ‘Healing of Blind Bartimaeus’ Pericope (Mark 10.46–52/Luke 18.35–43),” *JSNT* 34 (2011): 70–89, esp. 72–76.

⁴³ We cannot exactly know how the Hebrew text of Isaiah that Ben Sira quoted looked like, so there might even be a possibility that his text had the verb form להכין instead of להקים (even though 1QIsa^a has להקים, so Ben Sira’s choice is not here supported by this scroll).

⁴⁴ The designations ‘grandfather’ and ‘grandson’ are here used as heuristic tools, to illustrate a possible procedure (cf. my designation of ‘the ancient exegete’). In reality, the textual and transmission history of Ben Sira is probably more complicated and may involve some influence from at least the Syriac Peshitta text to the Hebrew MS B (which is the only extant Hebrew manuscript that we have for this verse). The question of Syriac influence was profoundly discussed already by Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M., *The Hebrew Text of Sirach*, The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1966, with reference to all scholarship on Ben Sira predating him. And of course, the questions of what kind of a version of the Septuagintal texts the Greek translator had at his disposal, and how often he used it to check his translation, are also debated issues.

⁴⁵ Beentjes, “Ben Sira’s View,” 56.

are both dependent on that formula.⁴⁶ Thus, in the light of the obviously ‘traditional’ character of Sir 48:10, the question actually is: Was the Servant so commonly understood to be Elijah that Ben Sira was able to state that Isa 49:6 was written about Elijah? And if the case indeed is so, how did the idea originate?

The fact that Ben Sira used a text from Second Isaiah is perhaps not surprising as such, when one considers the importance of this book. In the early postexilic times Second Isaiah had already been quoted and elaborated, not only in Third Isaiah but also e.g. in Mal 3:1, in which Isa 40:3 is cited.⁴⁷ And because Elijah is a prominent character in Mal 3:23–24 which seek to explain Mal 3:1, this association can, of course, already be an explanation for Ben Sira’s evoking of texts from Malachi and Second Isaiah in connection with Elijah.⁴⁸ I am, however, inclined to think that there is something rather much more behind the scene.

In addition to Mal 1:1 and 3:1, there are altogether three texts in the Hebrew Bible where the form מלאכי occurs: Exod 23:23 and Exod 32:34, which will be discussed below in the chapter on Moses, and Isa 42:19 which is important for the problem addressed in this chapter. If, now, Elijah already was understood as *the* מלאכי of the Book of Malachi, then the form, when it occurs somewhere else, surely had implications for an ancient exegete applying the technique of *gezera shava*. Isa 42:19 reads,

⁴⁶ Beentjes, “Ben Sira’s View,” 51.

⁴⁷ David George Clark, “Elijah as Eschatological High Priest: An Examination of the Elijah Tradition in Mal. 3:23–24,” Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1975, emphasizes the parallels between Isaiah 49 and the whole book of Malachi. According to him, the author of Malachi has consciously used this chapter as a whole, not only the ‘Song’ in verses 1–6, and has probably also read Isaiah 49 in connection with Isaiah 42. According to Clark, the author of Malachi already aims at the identification of his “messenger” with the Second Isaian Servant, a claim that I personally do not regard as convincing, as I believe that the identification is later. (See especially his pp. 30, 57–64.) Clark does not, however, consider the parallels between the Elijah cycle in Kings and Isaiah 49 (see here below). In my opinion, scholarship would benefit from that Clark’s often valuable suggestions were thoroughly investigated. His work is often referred to in subsequent literature, but relatively little proper use has been made of it. This is all but expectable given the problematic structure of the study which makes it difficult to understand.

⁴⁸ Even though Isa 40:3 does not belong to the ‘Servant Songs’, and the “voice” is not to be identified with the servant, the similarity between Isa 40:3, Mal 3:1 and Mal 3:23–24 might have been explicit enough for Ben Sira to evoke a Second Isaian frame of reference for Elijah.

*Who is blind, if not my servant, and deaf as my messenger whom I send? Who is as blind as the one whom I sent (?)*⁴⁹; and as blind as the servant of the Lord?

To modern minds, this proposed connection may look rather absurd. The descriptions of the servant and the messenger are indeed not very flattering, and in their original Second Isaian context these figures designate the stiff-necked Israel.⁵⁰ However, I do suppose that the use of *gezera shava* already required a somewhat 'mechanistic' approach to the Word of Scripture as sacred (an attitude which is later witnessed in the word calculations in the Masorah). I thus claim that the ancient exegete thought along these lines: "If this text is one of the very few occurrences of the word מלאכי in the whole Scripture, then it surely must have something to do with the מלאכי *per excellence*, Elijah?" Perhaps the ancient exegete would not have accepted this conclusion as such without *any* further proof; but it turned out that there was abundantly extra support for this conclusion.

Very weighing initial support was probably gained from the fact that Elijah calls himself "your" (the Lord's) servant in 1 Kings 18:36. Of course, he is not the only biblical person to do so, but his statement could conceivably be seen as a sufficient proof that Elijah was, in addition to being the Lord's Messenger, also his Servant.⁵¹ Thus the two attributes could be juxtaposed in relation to him in the same way as they are juxtaposed in Isa 42:19.

The second argument is weaker, because the question whether the LXX of Isa 49:6 is based on a Hebrew text which included the word ברית, 'covenant', for the Greek διαθήκη, is difficult to solve. If, however, this is the case, then the occurrence of this word in Isa 49:6 could have served as a further hint at

⁴⁹ The word משלם is very difficult and has been interpreted in several ways (KJV: "he that is perfect;" NRSV: "my dedicated one;" ERV: "he that is at peace with me"). The word is likewise often emended to משלח, cf. the translation above.

⁵⁰ In the LXX this case has been made emphatically, because the plural is used: καὶ τίς τυφλὸς ἀλλ' ἢ οἱ παῖδες μου καὶ κωφοὶ ἀλλ' ἢ οἱ κυριεύοντες αὐτῶν καὶ ἐτυφλώθησαν οἱ δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ.

⁵¹ Elijah is called "his (=the Lord's) Servant" also in the LXX of 1 Kings 21:28 (3 Kingdoms 20:28): καὶ ἐγένετο ῥῆμα κυρίου ἐν χειρὶ δούλου αὐτοῦ Ἡλίου "The Lord's word came by the hand of his servant Elijah". The MT has only אל אליהו התשבתי "to Elijah the Tishbite." But also in the MT, Elijah is called "servant" in retrospect in 2 Kings 9:36 and 10:10.

Elijah for an ancient exegete and explain why Ben Sira quoted precisely this verse of all the potential servant passages.⁵² But in any case, the same phrase “covenant of people” occurs in a similar setting also in Isa 42:6 and 49:8.⁵³ Now we are of course at the same time presuming that Elijah indeed was commonly understood to be both מלאך הברית and מלאכי “the messenger of the covenant” with reference to Mal 3:1. This interpretation is probable in view of the likelihood that האדון “the lord” in Mal 3:1 also was understood as Elijah, as I argued above. In this case, the ancient exegete was thinking that only one person was described in Mal 3:1, by three different epithets.⁵⁴

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the servant passages in Second Isaiah are really a riddle. Modern scholars of course posit redactional layers,⁵⁵ but it is quite conceivable that ancient readers were puzzled by the multiple and contradictory roles of the “servant.” In an almost poetical manner, Jim Adams describes the situation which is reflected in the final form of the Book of Isaiah.

In short, the ongoing debate concerning the servant arises from the final form as it presents a complex figure that is identified and anonymous, apparent and ambiguous, understandable and paradoxical. Specifically, the text depicts the servant as a king who will establish justice, while at the same time, the servant rejects Yahweh’s commands. The servant is a prophet and also the recipient of that message. The servant is blind, deaf, and imprisoned in certain instances and righteous, obedient, and insightful in others. The servant is clearly collective Jacob-Israel and yet at times the servant appears more as an individual. Perhaps the most paradoxical

⁵² There might be some additional proof for the centrality of the ‘Second Servant Song’, as the Enoch Parables (1 Enoch 37–71) apply especially Isa 49:1–2 to the “Son of Man” character, as is emphasized by Antti Laato, *Who Is the Servant of the Lord? Jewish and Christian Interpretations on Isaiah 53 from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, SRB 4, Turku & Winona Lake: Åbo Akademi University & Eisenbrauns 2012, 115.

⁵³ For the assumed unity of the servant passages, see below.

⁵⁴ I argue that regardless of the intention of the original author, the ancient exegete construed above would have applied this option, i.e. what Hill calls the “single-character approach.” (Hill, *Malachi*, 286–289.)

⁵⁵ See, e.g. the well-known surveys by Odil Hannes Steck in his *Gottesknecht und Zion: Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterocesaja*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1992. Cf. also Ulrich Berges, “The Literary Construction of the Servant in Isaiah 40–55: A discussion about individual and collective identities,” *SJOT* 24 (2010): 28–38.

aspect is how servant Jacob-Israel has the task of restoring servant Jacob-Israel.⁵⁶

So, given this perplexing nature of the “Servant” in Second Isaiah, it seems to me quite possible that the identification between Elijah and the Servant, which underlies Sir 48:10, is ultimately based on Isa 42:19. If this argument is correct, it is notable in that it indeed indicates a somewhat coherent reading of the Book of Isaiah, or at least its servant passages, because Ben Sira quoted Isa 49:6. David Clark, in a passing comment which does not actually have anything to do with my argument here, opines that even if the “servant” in Isa 42:19 often is understood as Israel, it is not implausible that ancient interpreters associated this servant with the one in the ‘Servant Songs’.⁵⁷ This may well be the case, even if it must be admitted that no more *direct* trace of this kind of an individualizing interpretation concerning precisely verse 42:19 can be seen in the ancient texts. However, the Isaiah Targum does turn verse 42:19 to a somewhat positive assertion of repentance of Israel, so it is obvious that there was always a possibility to read certain verses in a more favorable light.⁵⁸ As regards the ancient exegete, who was familiar with the Hebrew consonantal text, a natural procedure was probably to look whether the text could be vocalized in alternative ways or if the words in the verse also had some quite other, homonymous meanings. It seems possible that the ancient exegete found such ways of reading Isa 42:19 and that these alternatives at least sufficiently actualized the Elijah cycle in Kings.

The Servant and Messenger are thus described in Isa 42:19 by two adjectives, עֵוֶר “blind” and חֵרֵשׁ “deaf.” But incidentally, both words in their consonantal forms occur precisely once in the Elijah cycle, and in places which the ancient exegete might have deemed as important. In these passages, the words mean something else. In the Elijah narrative (2 Kings 1:8), Elijah was immediately identified by King Ahaziah because of his appearance which included a **leather** belt (אַזְזֹר עוֹר). Ahaziah says, after hearing the report about

⁵⁶ Jim W. Adams, *The Performative Nature and Function of Isaiah 40–55*, London & New York: T & T Clark International, 2006, 104.

⁵⁷ Clark, “Elijah,” 58.

⁵⁸ Regarding the Isaiah Targum, this tendency is very striking in its rendering of Isaiah 53. See Laato, *Who Is the Servant*, 129–163.

this unknown man, אליה תשבי הוא “It is Elijah the Tishbite!” So, it seems fairly plausible that the ancient exegete concluded that the word עור in Isa 42:19 could have something to do with Elijah’s leather belt. Perhaps the phrase מי עבדי מ עור כי אם עבדי meant that the servant was supposed to be somehow ‘skinny’, or wear clothes of leather.⁵⁹ The other word תרש could, in turn, be connected to the introduction of Elisha into the story. When called by Elijah, Elisha was currently **plowing**, תרש (1 Kings 19:19). True, the one to be sent back according to Mal 3:23 was Elijah, not Elisha, but the exegete might well have assumed that the coming Elijah may have some ‘Elisha-like’ characteristics as well.⁶⁰ After all, Elisha was Elijah’s disciple, and he had been granted a “double portion” of Elijah’s spirit (2 Kings 2:9). It seems that in Ben Sira 48:12, this phrase is interpreted very literally, so that Elisha made “twice as many wonders” as Elijah, a statement which undoubtedly makes him a very important character.⁶¹ Another option, which does not involve any actual *gezera shava* exegesis but freer reasoning, is that the exegete applied the word תרש, which can denote any skilled craftsman,⁶² to ‘Elijah’s’ activity as a smith/metal smelter in Mal 3:3–4, even though the word תרש does not occur in these verses.⁶³

⁵⁹ The substantive עור can also denote the hide of an animal, or the skin of a human. As regards later reception history, Mark’s detailed description of John the Baptist’s appearance (Mark 1:6) is of course meant to evoke the image of Elijah as several scholars have noticed; the camel “hairs” are meant to allude to Elijah’s appearance as a “hairy man,” (2 Kings 1:8), and the leather belt to the second part of the description. However, there has always been considerable discussion whether Elijah’s being “hairy” means that his body is hairy, or that he wears a hide as a cloth. This latter alternative would actualize an underlying עור concept in a more pronounced way.

⁶⁰ I wonder whether the rather strange LXX variant of Isa 42:19 actually bears some remote reminiscence of an interpretation where the תרש phrase, even though now in plural, with the servant-master allusion evident in the LXX, originally was connected precisely to Elijah and Elisha. See footnote 50 above.

⁶¹ As concerns a later development of these traditions, it is often pointed out that Luke diminishes the Elijah-like characteristics of John the Baptist and seems rather to present *Jesus* as the new Elijah. However, as Raymond Brown already noticed, many of the characteristics applied to Jesus in Luke resemble also, and even more closely, those of Elisha. See Raymond E. Brown, “Jesus and Elisha,” *Perspective* 12 (1971): 85–104.

⁶² Cf. the polemic against smiths and carpenters who make idols in Isa 44:12–13; the word תרש is used of both these craftsmen and only the wider context reveals how the word should be translated into English in each case.

⁶³ This might then, in turn, have been an early variant of the reasoning which the Rabbis later labeled *hekkesh*, i.e. inference from theme or content, if direct verbal analogy is lacking.

There is, however, a grammatically still better way to construe an alternative reading of Isa 42:19. This means taking the words עָרַשׁ and הָרַשׁ as verbs. In this way, the beginning of the verse could be read as follows, “Who rose, if not my servant; and remained silent like my messenger whom I will send?”⁶⁴ Interpreted this way, the verse interacts with Isa 41:2, 25 and 45:13 – when these verses are actualized in a new way in a Second Temple milieu, without reference to the probably originally intended Cyrus figure. However, that Elijah could be connected with this kind of reasoning does not, then, involve any *gezera shava* exegesis but more probably that of the *hekkesh* type, i.e. inference from content. Elijah ‘rose’ i.e. was suddenly introduced to the scene. We saw above that Ben Sira, for his part, uses the verb קָוַם in Sir 48:1: עַד אֲשֶׁר קָוַם “until a prophet rose.” The הָרַשׁ verb, in turn, could perhaps be connected to Elijah’s silently waiting for God’s question in the Horeb narrative (1 Kings 19:13), even if the verb is not used in the text. It is in any case almost certain that this kind of a reading of Isa 42:19 was operative in later interpretations of Elijah, as will be exemplified with the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* passage below.

The Elijah cycle itself and Isa 49:1–7 also have some features in common, and if we now assume that the ancient exegete, employing the *gezera shava* method, started at the verbal connections between Mal 3:1, Isa 42:19, and 1 Kings 18:36 and then continued by scrutinizing the other servant passages of Isaiah for thematic resemblances, these common features would certainly have served as ‘additional and definite proof’ for his case. Thus, a thematic link between Elijah and the Servant becomes more obvious when one thinks about the theme of prophetic consciousness and suffering. This theme is visible both in the Elijah cycle in Kings and in the Servant passages in Second Isaiah. The similarities are perhaps most remarkable precisely between the ‘Second Song’ in Isa 49:1–7 and Elijah’s prayer in 1 Kings 18:36–37, as well as his encounter with the Lord at Horeb in 1 Kings 19.

For Isa 49:4–6 and Elijah’s prayer in 1 Kings 18:36–37, one can notice that trust in God and a confidence that the work has not been in vain, as well as the task to “turn” or “bring back” (שׁוּב) the Israelites, whether concretely (Isa 49:5–6) or spiritually (1 Kings 18:37) is visible in both accounts. Secondly,

⁶⁴ I am indebted to Antti Laato for this valuable suggestion.

despair and a certain tiredness towards the task is recognizable both in Isa 49:4a and 1 Kings 19:4. Thirdly, and I believe most importantly, it is very plausible that a connection has been seen in Elijah's rebuilding of the altar (1 Kings 18:30–32) and the Servant's task of restoration, as the twelve tribes of Jacob are explicitly mentioned in 1 Kings 18:31. This tradition probably underlies later interpretations concerning Elijah's role in the restoration process, e.g. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Deut 30:4, where Elijah's task is to gather the Diaspora:

Even if you are dispersed unto the ends of the heavens, the Word of the Lord will gather you together from there by the hand of Elijah the great priest, and from there He will bring you by the hand of the King Messiah.

3.6 Elijah and Phinehas

An interesting detail concerning Ben Sira's Bible interpretation in 48:10 is also that he *may* already refer to Phinehas's deed (Num 25:11) by the phrase *להשבית אף* "to turn away wrath." This possibility has been suggested by Alexander Rofé in a footnote, but I have not seen that anyone would ever have made anything of his suggestion.⁶⁵ When one thinks about the case, Rofé's proposal begins to seem plausible. Later commentators have perhaps been misled by the fact that Elijah's task as reported in Mal 3:24 also involves the verb *שוב*. But actually, to turn the hearts of some people toward one another is a different task from turning away God's wrath; this is what Phinehas did according to Num 25:(4,)11.

The identification of the priest Phinehas with Elijah is a well-known later tradition, especially in the Targums and in the rabbinic material, as well as famously in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* where Phinehas and Elijah are one composite person. The actual origins of the tradition have, however, been debated. James Hayward sought to connect the rise of this idea

⁶⁵ Alexander Rofé, "The Onset of Sects in Postexilic Judaism: Neglected Evidence from the Septuagint, Trito-Isaiah, Ben Sira, and Malachi," J. Neusner et al (eds.), *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism. Essays in tribute to Howard Clark Kee*, Philadelphia: Fortress 1988: 39–49, here 45 note 29 (p.49). Rofé writes, "Sir. 48:10 paraphrases Num 25:4 in his praise of Elijah. Plausibly he was already acquainted with the midrashic identification of the two fighters against Baal."

to John Hyrcanus and his adherents, whereas Martin Hengel thought that the idea originated among the Zealots.⁶⁶ To me, it appears that Hengel put the origins of the Phinehas-Elijah tradition far too late. It may of course be possible (or even probable) that the Zealots saw the two great zealots of Israel's history, Phinehas and Elijah, somehow as their ancestor(s). But we have no direct evidence of this matter, due to lack of literature pertaining to the Zealots. Therefore, Hengel's theory remains purely hypothetical.

Hayward's conclusion about John Hyrcanus as the 'first Phinehas-Elijah' seems more reasonable, but some questions still remain. It may be true that the Hasmoneans claimed their descent from Phinehas to assure their right to the high priesthood. It may likewise be true that John Hyrcanus, according to Josephus, was known for his gift of prophecy, and that he destroyed the temple on Mt. Gerizim.⁶⁷ These characteristics might resemble those of Elijah. However, is it probable that "a process of reflection on the deeds, descent, and character of John led someone - - - to equate Phinehas with Elijah"⁶⁸? Is this a satisfactory explanation for the emergence of the whole idea? Is it not more probable that the idea already existed, at least in some form, in John's days, and that he was acting according to this concept, thus fulfilling the expectations of his adherents? If this is the case, then it must be contended that the Phinehas-Elijah idea is ultimately an exegetical one.

When the issue of Phinehas-Elijah is addressed in commentaries, it is commonly acclaimed that the overall conceptual background for the idea of the unity of these two men is that both are characterized by their zeal (קנא) in the biblical accounts of them (Num 25:11, 13; 1 Kings 19:10, 14). Actually, there are several additional common features between Phinehas and Elijah in the accounts of Numbers and Kings. Another trait which they share and which perhaps is to be understood with reference to their zeal is that they do not actually act in the right order; i.e. Phinehas takes the law in his own hands and Elijah begins the trial without praying first. This characteristic has often

⁶⁶ Robert Hayward, "Phinehas – the same is Elijah: The Origins of a Rabbinic Tradition," *JJS* 29 (1978): 22-34; Martin Hengel, *Die Zeloten. Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I bis 70 n. Chr.* Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Spätjudentums und Urchristentums 1, Leiden: Brill 1961, 151-181.

⁶⁷ For this, see Josephus' *Ant.* xiii, 255-257, 299-300; *Bell.* I, 68.

⁶⁸ Hayward, "Phinehas," 32.

been noticed, too. “Zealots do things their own way,” as Moshe Reiss puts it.⁶⁹ A third point in common is that Elijah in effect acts as priest at Mount Carmel.⁷⁰ A fourth trait which unites Phinehas and Elijah is that not only Phinehas but also Elijah in fact militate against mixed marriages and their consequences. The Deuteronomistic author implies that the reason for King Ahab’s worship of Baal was his marriage to Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31–33; 18:18). A fifth common feature is that both Phinehas and Elijah struggle against the worship of at least some local manifestation of the same god, Baal.

Many scholars also recognize that the connection between Phinehas and Elijah is very much dependent on a certain reading of the book of Malachi.⁷¹ Several of these issues were touched upon in the previous chapter on Levi, but I will briefly summarize the central points here: A person named Levi is described as an ideal figure in Mal 2:4–7, and a covenant which God made with him is specifically mentioned in 2:4, 8. In the context of Malachi, this “Levi” must be understood as the ideal priest who is contrasted with the priests of the author’s day. Nowhere in the Hebrew Bible, though, is it quite *directly* stated that God would have made a covenant with Jacob’s son Levi.⁷² The Malachi text, however, resembles strongly the account of God’s covenant with Phinehas in Num 25:11–13.⁷³ On the other hand, the mysterious “messenger of the covenant” in Mal 3:1c can be understood to be a priestly figure, an ideal (high) priest to come, whose task is to purify the Levites (Mal 3:2–4).⁷⁴ The

⁶⁹ Moshe Reiss, “Elijah the Zealot: A Foil to Moses,” *JBQ* 32 (2004): 174–180, here 175. Reiss refers to Elijah; for discussion of the phenomenon when applied to Phinehas, see e.g. Paul Steinberg, “Phinehas: Hero or Vigilante?” *JBQ* 35 (2007): 119–126.

⁷⁰ See especially Clark, “Elijah,” 124–188.

⁷¹ For some elaboration of this statement see, e.g., Hayward, “Phinehas,” 23; Alexander Zeron, “The Martyrdom of Phinehas-Elijah,” *JBL* 98 (1979): 99–100.

⁷² See, however, the discussion in the chapter on Levi above.

⁷³ This similarity has repeatedly been noted by scholars. See, e.g., Glazier-McDonald: *Malachi*, 77–80; O’Brien: *Priest and Levite*, 104–105; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 183. As regards the background for the “covenant with Levi,” Deut 33:8–11 and Exod 32:29 have often been mentioned in addition to Num 25:11–13.

⁷⁴ This suggestion is, however, but one of several alternatives to interpret this figure in the original context in Malachi. As I have argued, the identification of the messenger with Elijah in Mal 3:23 became the most prominent interpretation. But it is notable that Elijah also gets significantly priestly characteristics in later interpretations (for this issue, see Clark, “Elijah”, and cf. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Deut 30:4 quoted above). It is almost certain that Mal 3:1–5 has been one of the sources for this development.

mentioning of a “covenant of perpetual priesthood” to Phinehas in Num 25:13, perhaps together with the fact that Phinehas is still mentioned in Judg 20:28, and that his death is not reported in the Bible, led some ancient interpreters to think that Phinehas is immortal.⁷⁵ This thought can be connected also to the priestly interpretation of Mal 3:1: because Phinehas is alive, he can be sent as the messenger of the covenant. Phinehas could perhaps also be sent as Elijah, as the birth of Elijah is recorded neither; he just suddenly appears on the scene in 1 Kings 17. On the other hand, as I have explained, Mal 3:23–24 seek to identify the messenger/s of Mal 3:1 with Elijah. Therefore, a certain, admittedly very complex, reading of Malachi would indicate that Levi = Phinehas = the messenger of the covenant = Elijah.⁷⁶ This reading is very probably reflected in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Num 25:12–13, where God says to Moses about Phinehas:

Swear to him with an oath in my name: See, I am decreeing for him my covenant of peace. And I will make him the messenger of the covenant, and he shall live forever to proclaim the news of redemption at the end of days.

This promise seems to combine Num 25:10–13 with Mal 2:4–7; 3:1 and 3:23–24, and which is, in this case, even more remarkable, perhaps also Isa 61:1–2.⁷⁷ Of course, the dating of various material in the Targums is always a very complicated issue, and the possibility of some direct or indirect Christian influence to this passage cannot be totally excluded, but I regard as a quite plausible possibility that Elijah was rather early associated with the Servant in a broad meaning, covering also other Isaiah passages than 42:19 and 49:6.

However, there is still an additional possibility, again based on the simple *gezera shavah* method, to argue that the connection between Phinehas and Elijah indeed is primarily exegetical and probably also rather ancient. The

⁷⁵E.g. *Sifre Numbers* 131: “For until this very time he has not departed, but still lives and makes atonement until the resurrection of the dead.” See the discussion about “Phinehas the Immortal” in James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge: Harvard 1998), 811–813.

⁷⁶ See Shaver, “Prophet Elijah,” 221–222. She outlines the Malachi – Numbers 25 connection briefly and calls it aptly a “rather complicated midrashic process.”

⁷⁷ Notice also Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Exod 6:18: *He [Kohat] lived until he saw Phinehas, that is, Elijah the high priest, who will be sent to the exile of Israel in the end of days.*

background of this argument is the similarity between Ezekiel 22 and the Book of Malachi, but it involves also 2 Kings 2:17 and Ps 106:23, 30.

A neglected detail: Ezekiel 22:30

Ezekiel 22 is a chapter that in the context of that book seems to be modelled after chapter 13.⁷⁸ However, in this case even more interesting are the striking parallels, both in theme and in vocabulary, to the book of Malachi. To my knowledge, no scholar of Malachi has to this date highlighted the issue. The most crucial verse appears to be verse 30:

ואבקש מהם איש גדר גדר ועמד בפרץ לפני בעד הארץ לבלתי שחתה ולא מצאתי

And I sought from among them for a man who would repair the wall and stand in the breach before me on behalf of the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I did not find him.

It is even more remarkable that the LXX version is very different:

καὶ ἐζήτουν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἄνδρα ἀναστρεφόμενον ὀρθῶς καὶ ἐστῶτα πρὸ προσώπου μου ὁλοσχερῶς ἐν καιρῷ τῆς γῆς τοῦ μὴ εἰς τέλος ἐξαλειψαὶ αὐτήν καὶ οὐχ εὔρον

And I was seeking from among them a man who behaved rightly and stood in front of me completely in the time of the land so as not to wipe it out utterly, and I did not find him.

There are three features in these Hebrew and Greek texts that deserve attention:

1) The task of the person that the Lord “sought” according to the Masoretic text was supposed to be the same that is reported about Phinehas in Ben Sira 45:23. Let us have a look at the Hebrew and Greek texts of this verse.

וגם פינחס [] אלעזר בגבורה []
בקנאו לאלוה כל ויעמד בפרץ עמו
אשר נדבו לבו ויכפר על בני ישראל

⁷⁸ This notion might, then, have some implications for the following, because the “false” prophets are accused in Ezekiel 13.

And also Phinehas, (so)n of Eleazar, in his strength (....) He was zealous for the God of all and stood in the breach of his people, because his heart encouraged him, and he atoned for the children of Israel.

καὶ Φινεες υἱὸς Ελεαζαρ τρίτος εἰς δόξαν ἐν τῷ ζηλῶσαι αὐτὸν ἐν φόβῳ κυρίου καὶ στῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν τροπῇ λαοῦ ἐν ἀγαθότητι προθυμίας ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξιλάσατο περὶ τοῦ Ἰσραηλ

Phinehas son of Eleazar is third in glory, because he was zealous in the fear of the Lord and stood firm, when the people turned away, in the noble eagerness of his soul; and he made atonement for Israel.

The phrase עמד בפרץ “stand in the breach” is otherwise only attested about Moses in Ps 106:23; in near vicinity of the verses concerning Phinehas in that Psalm.

2) The LXX translator of Ezek 22:30 has paraphrased the verse quite extensively, resulting in a lengthy description that in content is conspicuously similar to the description of Levi in the MT of Malachi 2:5-6:

בריתי היתה אתו החיים והשלום ואתנן לו מורא וייראני ומפני שמי נחת הוא
תורת אמת היתה בפיהו ועולה לא נמצא בשפתיו בשלום ובמישור הלך אתי ורבים השיב
מעון

My covenant with him was of life and peace, and I gave to him fear; and he feared me; he stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity.

The LXX of Mal 2:5-6 shows, though, no *direct* similarities in wording to the LXX of Ezek 22:30:

ἡ διαθήκη μου ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῷ ἐν φόβῳ φοβεῖσθαι με καὶ ἀπὸ προσώπου ὀνόματός μου στέλλεσθαι αὐτόν. νόμος ἀληθείας ἦν ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀδικία οὐχ εὗρέθη ἐν χεῖρεσιν αὐτοῦ ἐν εἰρήνῃ κατευθύνων ἐπορεύθη μετ' ἐμοῦ καὶ πολλοὺς ἐπέστρεψεν ἀπὸ ἀδικίας

My covenant of life and peace was with him, and I gave it to him. He feared me with fear, and he was taken away from the presence of my name. The law of truth was in his

*mouth and no injustice was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and turned many from injustice.*⁷⁹

However, the lack of direct similarity in wording is not an issue here, as the LXX versions of Ezekiel and Malachi probably originate from quite different translators. It is more important that the generally righteous character of the person is exhaustively described.⁸⁰ The LXX of Ezek 22:30 may thus plausibly be connected to an exegetical tradition which already involved Levi (or Phinehas) in the interpretation of this particular verse. Levi's righteousness is emphasized in all Second Temple texts where he has some prominence. The author of *Jubilees* paraphrases, "We ourselves remember the justice which the man performed during his lifetime at all times of the year" (*Jub.* 30:20).

3) The enigmatic phrase in the LXX of Ezek 22:30, ἐν καιρῷ τῆς γῆς "in the time of the land" must suppose a Hebrew parent text where the phrase בעד הארץ "in behalf/for the land" was read as בעת הארץ "in the time of the land." This reconstruction is not at all impossible, given that only one extra stroke of the pen of the scribe is needed to convey this variant.

Let us now have a new look at Ben Sira's description of Phinehas and Elijah. It appears that the Greek addition of ἐν φόβῳ κυρίου "in fear of the Lord" into the description of Phinehas (Sir 45:23) may owe something to the description of Levi in Mal 2:5-6.⁸¹ But the mention in Sir 48:10 that Elijah

⁷⁹ The translation of the phrase ἀπὸ προσώπου ὀνόματός μου στέλλεσθαι αὐτόν is difficult. J. Noel Hubler (*The New English Translation of the Septuagint*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009) translates, in accordance with the NT usage of the verbal phrase ἀπὸ – στέλλομαι (e.g. 2 Thess 3:6), "that he avoid the presence of my name." However, I regard as a more probable option that the LXX of Mal 2:5 here bears reminiscence of the theme "Levi's Heavenly Voyage," where the Hebrew phrase ומפני שמי נחת הוא (which was translated above as "he stood in awe of my name") was interpreted as "and he descended from before of my name." See the chapter on Levi above; and further, James L. Kugel, "Levi's Elevation to the Priesthood in Second Temple Writings," *Harvard Theological Review* 86: 1–64, here 30–36; idem, *The Ladder of Jacob: Ancient Interpretations of the Biblical Story of Jacob and his Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2006), 144–150 (Kugel does not, however, discuss the Septuagint variant).

⁸⁰ One could consider the possibility that in addition to formal *gezera shava* exegesis, the *hek-kesh* exegesis could have been operative in this case. Cf. above the discussion of the interpretative possibilities of Isaiah 42:19.

⁸¹ Cf. Benjamin G. Wright, *No Small Difference. Sirach's Relationship to its Hebrew Parent Text*, Atlanta: Scholars Press 1989, 168, note 95 (p. 293), who notices this addition but supposes the reason for it be that "the 'fear of the Lord' is an important theme in Sir."

would wait or be prepared for some appointed time (לעת/Gr. pl. εἰς αἰσους), resembles in my opinion so strongly the odd mention of the “time of the land” in Ezek 22:30, that the resemblance cannot be accidental. One recalls Mal 3:24 where the future task of Elijah is announced. In this verse, a destruction which awaits the whole land or earth (ארץ/ך) is evoked as in Ezek 22:30. So, perhaps Ben Sira really means that Ezek 22:30 was written about Elijah. If this is the case, it is conceivable that a simultaneous reference to Phinehas, and perhaps to Elijah’s role as a ‘new Moses’ is also intended.

On the other hand, the mention that the “man” in Ezek 22:30 was “sought after” but “not found” very probably evoked an interpretative pattern which actualized Elijah in the mind of the ancient exegete. As was argued previously in this chapter, Elijah was plausibly generally associated with the notion of ‘hiddenness’, due to the repeated mention of him behaving like this in 1–2 Kings. I discussed above the possibility that the phrase “the lord whom you are seeking” was one of the operative texts in the reasoning which led an ancient exegete (the author of Mal 3:23) to the conclusion that the messenger figure of Mal 3:1 was Elijah. It seems to me rather plausible that in the same vein, this seeking-and-not-finding-a-person theme led some other ancient exegete (Ben Sira’s nameless predecessor) to connect Ezek 22:30 with Elijah.

To illustrate a further development of this tradition, I quote Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 48:1,

At that time Phinehas was verging toward death, and the Lord said to him: “Behold you have passed the 120 years that have been established for every man. Now rise up and go from here and dwell in the desert on the mountain and dwell there many years. I will command my eagle, and he will nourish you there, and you will not come down again to mankind until the appointed time arrives and you will be tested at the appropriate time; and then you will shut up the heaven, and by your mouth it will be opened up. Afterwards you will be raised up to the place where those who were before you were raised up, and you will be there until I remember the world. Then I will bring you, and you will get a taste of death.”⁸²

⁸² Cited according to the edition and translation of Howard Jacobson (*A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum, with Latin Text and English Translation*, Leiden: Brill, 1996). The *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* is commonly held to be a first-century CE

This report witnesses to a somewhat complicated exegetical development, with two stages in the hiddenness of Phinehas-Elijah (i.e. Phinehas first returns as Elijah, and then Phinehas-Elijah comes back a second time). (Phinehas-)Elijah's 'silent waiting' for his right time to appear could plausibly be connected to the reading of Isa 42:19 advocated above. The specific mention of the "appointed time" (Lat. *tempus*), when Phinehas would be "tested" may, in turn, well be connected to an exegetical tradition involving Ezekiel 22:30. Plausibly this is the same tradition which led Ben Sira to use the phrase "stand in the breach," which occurs also in Ezek 22:30, in his description of Phinehas.

In conclusion to this treatment of the early stages of the Phinehas-Elijah tradition, I thus regard as plausible that the origins of the connection between these two characters are primarily exegetical and were not prompted by any actual 'historical' reasons, contrary to what was maintained by Hengel and Hayward. It is of course quite conceivable that the Phinehas-Elijah concept was later employed by John Hyrcanus and possibly also by the Zealots for political purposes, as these two scholars suggested. To me, it is fairly reasonable to think that at least John Hyrcanus utilized a tradition which was already well-established rather than created a completely new concept to legitimate his claims for priesthood.

3.7 Further developments

Of the ideas visible in Sir 48:10, the association of Elijah and Phinehas grew only stronger and more pronounced by time, as can be seen in the Targums and the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*. On the contrary, in the case of the Isaian Servant, for example the Targumic renderings concerning Elijah/Phinehas only repeat the same kind of allusions as Ben Sira already does, but the relation between the Servant and Elijah is nowhere elaborated any further. Above, I attempted at a reconstruction of the thinkable origins of this

work, even though Jacobson dates it to the second century. It is preserved in Latin; however, it was most probably composed in Hebrew and translated first to Greek (like *Jubilees*, the textual history of which was discussed above in the chapter on Levi).

connection. The question still remains why this possible Servant association did not leave any clearer marks to subsequent tradition.

I believe that the answer to this question is to be found in the complexity of messianic expectations during the Second Temple period and later. Elijah gets undeniably messianic characteristics in Targumic interpretations and plausibly also in the fragmentary 4Q558 and 4Q521⁸³, but some other, more royal features that were associated with the Messiah, e.g. the Second Zecharian ones, could not easily be connected with him.⁸⁴ Apparently this diversity concerning the messianic expectations is reflected both in the Qumranic notion of the two Messiahs and in the obvious dissonance that can at times be glimpsed in the Gospel accounts of Jesus and John the Baptist and people's expectations concerning them.

The question is: What new light would it shed on subsequent Elijah traditions if we accepted that Elijah indeed was associated with Isaiah's Servant in a broad meaning, covering perhaps all the servant passages? To my mind, it would at least explain the enigmatic saying attributed to Jesus in Mark 9:12–13. *Where* is it written that people would do with Elijah whatever they liked?⁸⁵ Also, whence does the later tradition of Elijah's martyrdom originate?⁸⁶ I cannot understand any other proper reason for this tradition than that Elijah was, at least slightly, associated also with the Servant of Isaiah 53. If the damaged verse Ben Sira 48:11 were extant, I think that we would find there something connected with a 'life-saving' role of Elijah (perhaps associated with Isa 53:11?) that would also better explain why the people assume that Jesus cries

⁸³ Observe that Isaian servant passages (especially Isaiah 61) are paraphrased also in these texts. For Elijah's role in the eschatological expectations at Qumran, see the illustrative survey of Géza G. Xeravits, *King, Priest, Prophet: Positive Eschatological Protagonists of the Qumran Library*, Leiden: Brill 2003, esp. 184–190.

⁸⁴ Laato emphasizes the role of Zechariah 9–14 for Jesus' self-understanding of his messianic task. See Laato, *Who Is the Servant*, 168–183.

⁸⁵ I do not think that 1 Kings 19:2, 10, 14 alone qualify as an answer to this question.

⁸⁶ For Elijah's martyrdom, see Zeron, "Martyrdom," and Richard Baukham, "The Martyrdom of Enoch and Elijah: Jewish or Christian?" *JBL* 95 (1976): 447–458 who do not, however, consider the possible influence of the Second Isaian Servant to the emergence of this concept. Cf. also *LAB* 48:1 cited above; the ending of this passage suggests that (Phinehas-)Elijah will finally die.

after Elijah on the cross (Mark 15:34–36; Matt 27:46–49).⁸⁷ But in the current state of affairs, this is mostly argument *ex nihilo*. As Beentjes laments, it is really a pity that Ben Sira 48:11 has been corrupted, all the more because the theological significance of this verse was undoubtedly great. The Greek and the Syriac are also at variance with one another, so we have no real way to know how the Hebrew text looked like.⁸⁸

These different and plausibly somewhat concurring interpretations of Elijah's eschatological role may help to understand the argument between Jesus and John the Baptist that can be seen in the Gospel accounts just beneath the surface. Thus, Matt 11:1–6 (cf. Luke 7:18–23) can be regarded as a subtle disputation on the precise characteristics of Elijah. In my interpretation of this 'Q'⁸⁹ account of the encounter, John actually asks whether Jesus is the coming new 'Elijah'.⁹⁰ Jesus agrees, but by his answer signals to John that he wants to emphasize the 'Servant' aspects more than the fiery and zealous elements that John had possibly been waiting for and associates with Elijah (cf. Matt 3:11–12; Luke 3:16–17).⁹¹

The final redactions of all four Gospels reflect the view that gradually became predominant in Christianity: that John was Elijah, who was the precur-

⁸⁷ Ulrich Kellermann hypothesizes that Elijah had been ascribed this kind of a role. See his "Elia als Seelenführer der Verstorbenen oder Elia-Typologie in Lk 23,43 'Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein'," *BN* 83 (1996): 35–53.

⁸⁸ Beentjes, "Ben Sira's View," 53.

⁸⁹ I feel sympathetic towards the so-called Farrer-Goulder-Goodacre hypothesis and thus regard as a possibility that Luke knew both Mark and Matthew; therefore, it is not strictly necessary to postulate 'Q' here.

⁹⁰ Apart from the reference to Ps 118:26 which is reflected in the Hosanna quotations of all four Gospels (Mark 11:9; Matt 21:9; Luke 19:38; John 12:13), I thus regard as probable that ὁ ἐρχόμενος here in John's question is also a reference to the ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται phrase in the LXX of Mal 3:1. The ultimate background of this whole concept of the "Coming One" could possibly be traced back to a Hebrew present participle (אֵלֶּיךָ), which might well be, in addition to the occurrence of this participle in Ps 118:26, here also a reference to the three instances when the verb בָּרָא is used in describing the activity of the coming messenger figure in Mal 3:1–2.

⁹¹ How the continuation of the discourse in Matt 11:7–15 should be viewed is another issue. It is quite possible that we have an almost direct demonstration of two concurring interpretations here (an earlier and a later redactional phase), or, alternatively, an 'Elijah-prophet-succeeded-by-a-more-Elisha-like-prophet' scheme. There is hardly any way to tell how the historical Jesus and John the Baptist may have thought about the matter, and I feel it is wise not to speculate about it, at least not here. Cf., however, D. Gerald Bostock, "Jesus as the New Elisha," *ExpTim* 92 (1980): 39–41, who argues that the historical Jesus identified John the Baptist as Elijah and may thus well have perceived of himself as Elisha.

sor of the Messiah, and Jesus was the Messiah himself. However, this leading interpretation is based on another reading of Mal 3:1; one involving at least two different characters. The complicated *gezera shava* process described above rather points to an earlier, traditional reading, where the whole verse was associated with one 'Elijah' with multiple roles. Above, I sought to demonstrate that this kind of a reading underlies Ben Sira 48:10 and very probably also the various Targumic renderings concerning Phinehas and/or Elijah.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the concept of Elijah coming back was not any *ad hoc* invention of the editor who wrote Malachi 3:23–24), nor an idea that goes back to some hoary antiquity. Instead, it is the result of conscious and careful exegesis of Malachi 3:1–5 made by the editor. Posing a question about the identity of the messenger of the covenant, he sought for possible threads in the text that he had at his disposal. The occurrence of certain themes and keywords, common to Malachi 3 and 1 Kings 17–18, drove him to the conclusion that the expected messenger was the prophet Elijah, and he wrote his discovery as an exegetical note in the end of the Book of Malachi. Thus, the old supposition that Mal 3:23–24 should be regarded as a final note to a canon of texts (whether the Twelve Prophets, the Prophets, or the Torah and the Prophets) should be abandoned, especially since the publication of 4QXII^a already has made this theory problematic. Malachi's place at the end of the canon is probably determined precisely by its concluding verses.

As regards Ben Sira's interpretation of Elijah's coming, a close reading of Sir 48:10 indicates that the formula "it is written" is meant to imply that the future Elijah has altogether four tasks, signalled by the phrases נכון לעת, להשיב לב אבות על בנים, להשבית אף, and להכין ש[]. Ben Sira thus bears evidence of traditions according to which Elijah will appear as

- 1) The mysterious "man" whom the Lord sought according to Ezek 22:30, that is:
- 2) Phinehas
- 3) The eschatological messenger as stated in Mal 3:23–24
- 4) Second Isaiah's Servant.

Hence, in addition to Malachi's "messenger," both Second Isaiah's Servant and Phinehas were probably associated with Elijah by the time of Ben Sira. At least we may conclude that Ben Sira associates Elijah with the servant, and in light of later evidence is it probable that he also refers to Phinehas by the phrase להשבית אף. It thus seems to me that the Phinehas-Elijah tradition, the origins of which have been debated for a long time, is ultimately exegetical and at least as old as Ben Sira. It can still of course be discussed whether all these interpretations have resulted from Ben Sira's personal creativity, but as I argued; I regard as probable that Ben Sira was already acquainted with these ideas.

Thus, in conclusion, Ben Sira 48:10 has proved to be a very important verse for the detection of interpretative patterns that get a more pronounced form in later texts. If we did not have this verse, or if it were extant only in Greek, we would probably not be able to perceive the underlying *gezera shava* exegesis at all. The interpretative patterns that once were generated by this kind of an exegesis persist in later texts, regardless of the language of their composition, but they are much more difficult to spot.

4. Moses: The lawgiver at Horeb and at the end of Malachi

4.1 Introduction: the “Torah of Moses” in Malachi 3:22

As was maintained in the previous chapter on Elijah, the Book of Malachi ends with two appendices. The second one according to the Masoretic text, i.e. the declaration of the coming of the prophet Elijah before the great and terrifying Day of the Lord (Mal 3:23–24) was treated above. It will be my task in this chapter to discuss the first appendix, the admonition to remember the Torah of Moses (Mal 3:22 MT). For the sake of clarity, I quote the relevant verses.

זכרו תורת משה עבדי אשר צויתי אותו בחרב על כל ישראל חקים ומשפטים

Remember the Torah of my servant Moses as I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel—statutes and ordinances. (3:22)

הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בוא יום ה' הגדול והנורא
והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם פן אבוא והכיתי את הארץ חרם

See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

He will turn [the] heart[s] of fathers to [their] sons and [the] heart[s] of sons to their fathers, so that, when I come, I will not strike the land with destruction. (3:23–24)

Much less consideration has been devoted to the first appendix in scholarship than to the second one. However, Mal 3:22 has certain emphasis in the Septuagint because the sequence of the appendices there has been reversed: verses 23–24 are followed by verse 22, which provides a somewhat gentler ending to Malachi than that of the Masoretic Text:

22 (23 MT) καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω ὑμῖν Ἡλιαν τὸν Θεσβίτην πρὶν ἔλθειν ἡμέραν κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ 23 (24 MT) ὃς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ μὴ ἔλθω καὶ πατάξω τὴν γῆν ἄρδην 24 (22 MT) μνήσθητε νόμου Μωσῆ τοῦ δούλου μου καθότι ἐνετείλάμην αὐτῷ ἐν Χωρηβ πρὸς πάντα τὸν Ἰσραὴλ προστάγματα καὶ δικαιώματα

22 (23 MT) *See, I will send you Elijah the Tishbite before the great and terrifying Day of the Lord comes.* 23 (24 MT) *He will restore the heart of a father to the son and the heart of a man to his neighbor, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.* 24 (22 MT) *Remember the law of my servant Moses as I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel—statutes and ordinances.*

This variation in the arrangement of the appendices may support the contention that the final verses indeed consist of two separate appendices, the sequence of which was originally fluid.¹ Another reason might be that the appendices have been inverted to avoid ending a reading with a curse.² Be that as it may, the Septuagint does not show any significant differences to the Masoretic Text in the wording of verse 22, whereas verses 23–24 differ from MT considerably, a fact which has gained much scholarly attention.³ However, these differences between the versions are not of primary interest in this chapter.⁴

My aim in this chapter is to trace the relationship between the final verses of Malachi and the central biblical tradition about the Sinai/Horeb Mountain, that is, the making of the covenant between the Lord and Israel. My main interest lies in the much neglected verse 3:22 and its place within Malachi. Which indications are there in the book of Malachi itself that have led a later editor/later editors to associate Moses and Horeb with the bulk of the book?

As stated above, the prevailing scholarly opinion is that Mal 3:22–24 should be regarded as supplementary verses, but the question still remains whether the verses make up two separate additions, one about Moses and another concerning Elijah. Most commentators assume two additions, but, for example, Alexander Rofé and David Petersen treat Mal 3:22–24 as a single epilogue to the book.⁵

¹ See, for example, Arndt Meinhold, *Maleachi*, BKAT 14/8, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981, 408–409.

² For this argument, see e.g. Brenda J. Shaver, “The Prophet Elijah in the Literature of the Second Temple Period: The Growth of a Tradition” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 104.

³ See, for example, the lengthy discussion in Shaver, “Prophet Elijah,” 119–121.

⁴ I discuss the LXX of Mal 3:24 briefly below in the chapter on Esau.

⁵ Alexander Rofé, “The Onset of Sects in Postexilic Judaism,” in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism* (ed. J. Neusner et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 39–49, here

A widespread opinion in Malachi scholarship has been that the concluding verses must be regarded as a final note to at least the Twelve Minor Prophets, or perhaps the whole prophetic canon, and are thus more or less loosely connected to the book itself. In the chapter on Elijah, I argued that this cannot be the case, in view of both the evidence of 4QXII^a (4Q76) and internal reasons. I thus sought to demonstrate that the introduction of Elijah to Mal 3:23 represents a ‘midrashic’ interpretation of Mal 3:1–2 by a later editor, stemming from his deliberate alternative reading of that verse.

The view according to which Mal 3:22–24 are a cover which closes the Former and Latter Prophets cannot however be ruled out offhand. The phrase “my servant Moses” is very notably attested in Josh 1:1–2, whereas Mal 3:23 *seems* to include a citation from Joel 3:4.⁶ I would however like to emphasize that if this meaning for the appendices is really intended, it is in any case a meaning which the editor/s added to verses that were primarily designed for clarifying some obscurities in Malachi. He/they may well have been creative enough to serve double ends. This claim requires also that the closing verses of Malachi were originally written in a setting where it was already customary to place Malachi last among the Prophets, even if this order obviously was not fixed everywhere (cf. 4QXII^a). But there is still a possibility, especially if the appendices stem from two hands, that the Deuteronomistic allusion to Moses as the Lord’s servant and the possible quotation from Joel were not originally intended to form any envelope to the Former and Latter Prophets. I actually think that this is the case. In the following, I will make a brief excursus to illustrate how I view the intertextuality between Mal 3:2, 23 and Joel 2:11; 3:4.

45; David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi: A Commentary*, London: SCM Press 1995, 227–231.

⁶ For a summary of scholarly opinions on these issues, see Karl William Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching: Prophetic Authority, Form Problems, and the Use of Traditions in the Book of Malachi* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 390–392.

Malachi 3:2; 3:23, and Joel 2:11; 3:4

Many scholars thus maintain that the reference to the Day of the Lord in Mal 3:23 is connected with Joel 2:11; 3:4. The phrase, which is quite identical in Mal 3:23 and Joel 3:4, might perhaps also be a traditional way to characterize that Day. Most scholars of Malachi (and Joel) assume that it is the author of Mal 3:23 who quotes Joel 3:4.⁷ However, I think that the problem is many-faceted and may involve intertextuality in at least two stages.⁸

The question of “enduring” or “bearing” the day of the messenger’s coming (בּוֹל, Mal 3:2) may well have led the editor who wrote Mal 3:23 to apply the *gezera shava* method, i.e. to draw an exegetical conclusion out of a similar question in Joel 2:11. For the sake of clarity, I quote all four verses,

Joel 3:4, הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לְדָם וְהַיָּרֵחַ לְחֶשֶׁךְ לִפְנֵי יוֹם יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא
The sun darkens and the moon becomes blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

Mal 3:23, הִנֵּה אֲנִי שֹׁלֵחַ לָכֶם אֶת אֱלִיָּה הַנָּבִיא לִפְנֵי יוֹם יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא
See, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

Mal 3:2, וּמִי מִכְלֵל אֶת יוֹם בּוֹא
And who can endure the day of his coming?

Joel 2:11, גָּדוֹל יוֹם יְהוָה וְנוֹרָא מְאֹד וּמִי יִכְלִינּוּ
The day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can endure it?

The question which was asked in Mal 3:2 most probably brought to the mind of an ancient exegete a similar question in Joel 2:11. Thus, at the same time as the exegete in writing Mal 3:23 made clear that the messenger figure in Mal 3:1–2 was Elijah, he also reported that the “day” envisaged in Mal 3:2 indeed was *the* (הַ) great and terrible day of the Lord that already was described in colourful language in Joel 2. In this way, the author of Mal 3:23 invites, by the way of citation, his reader to consult the book of Joel for further information.

⁷ See the summary in Weyde, *Prophecy*, 390–392.

⁸ There might be three stages, if one assumes that already Mal 3:2 was influenced by Joel 2:11. This is possible.

As regards Joel 3:4, some scholars assume that the latter half of Joel stems from a different author than Joel 1–2. Joel 3–4 may perhaps date from the early Hellenistic period because of a rather apocalyptic outlook and the specific mention of the Greeks (בני היוונים) in 4:6.⁹ A possibility worth consideration is therefore that the author of Mal 3:23 first cited Joel 2:11, and after this, the editor who wrote Joel 3–4 quoted Mal 3:23 *verbatim* to show his understanding and approval of the intertextuality intended by the author of Mal 3:23.¹⁰

I thus contend that both appendices, Mal 3:23–24 but also Mal 3:22, are primarily appendices to the book of Malachi only, as has previously been argued by, for example, Brevard Childs.¹¹ Malachi's place at the end of the Prophets is consequently more probably determined by its fitting conclusion, than vice versa. This means also that the reason for the addition of the appendices must first and foremost be sought in the book itself, and I continue here this seeking with regard to verse 3:22.

The identity of the “Torah of Moses” and the relation between the two appendices

Michael Floyd is one of the scholars who defend the minority view of total unity of authorship for the book of Malachi. He focuses strongly on what could be called the overall message of the book. Regarding Mal 3:22 he presents an interesting argument in support of his contention.

Floyd thinks that the phrase in Mal 3:16, ויכתב ספר זכרון לפניו ליראי ה' "a book of remembrance was written in his presence for/concerning those who fear the Lord and revere his name," does not refer to a heavenly collection of individuals' deeds or their future fate, as most scholars maintain,¹² but to the book of Torah which is kept in the temple ("in

⁹ For this option, see e.g. Shaver, "Prophet Elijah", 111.

¹⁰ This is not to claim that the author of Joel 3:4 specifically wanted to show respect towards an unknown earlier exegete. It is probable that he rather viewed the intertextuality between Joel 2:11, Mal 3:2 and Mal 3:23 as divinely inspired.

¹¹ Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 495.

¹² For example, Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi – The Divine Messenger*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987, 220–221; Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1998, 339–340; 361–362.

his presence”) and which was written literally for (ל) the Lord-fearing. According to Floyd, this Torah comprises at least Deuteronomic traditions. He thinks that this identity of the book is revealed in Mal 3:22, using the “remembering” (זכר) as a catchword. Floyd maintains that the Torah functions “in the meantime as an incentive to the same process of conversion” that will be Elijah’s task in due time.¹³

Floyd’s contention regarding the interpretation of the preposition ל might in fact to be supported by the Septuagint tradition, where a dative is used for the ל:

ταῦτα κατελάλησαν οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ καὶ προσέσχεν κύριος καὶ εἰσήκουσεν καὶ ἔγραψεν βιβλίον μνημοσύνου ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ **τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸν κύριον καὶ εὐλαβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ**¹⁴

Those who fear the Lord discussed this matter, everyone with his neighbour; and the Lord heeded and listened, and he wrote a book of remembrance in his (own) presence for those who fear the Lord and revere his name.

As maintained above, I disagree with Floyd about the basic presupposition regarding the integrity of Mal 3:22 to the bulk of the book. However, I am inclined to think that he is correct in his observations about the “book of remembrance.” I believe, however, that the question about the intention of the original author should be put aside. We cannot decide, at least not for the moment, whether the author of 3:16 had the Torah or a heavenly book of deeds and/or names in his mind. The case should rather be explained as the editor’s reading of Mal 3:16. It is quite possible that this author of verse 22 thought about the “book of remembrance” as the Torah precisely in the way explained by Floyd and thus used the verb זכר as a catchword and a hint at that his comment should be read in light of verse 16.

¹³ Michael H. Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, Part 2, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, 624.

¹⁴ It should be remembered, however, that some of the Septuagint translations aim at being as literal as possible, even if this attempt may result in incorrect Greek, whereas other translations are very free. Thus, one cannot usually make any *definite* conclusions about the original sense of a text from its Greek version.

This suggestion, however, raises a question about the relationship between Mal 3:22 and 23–24. Viewed in the way explained above, verse 22 alone would serve as a fitting conclusion to the book of Malachi, somewhat reminiscent of the ending of Qohelet (12:13–14). And, as I maintained in the previous chapter, Mal 3:23 is an exegetical reading of especially Mal 3:2. It seems nearly as if one editor was concerned to reveal the identity of the “book of remembrance,” and another editor that of the “messenger of the covenant.” Seen this way, the appendices seem rather disconnected. The scholars who think that Mal 3:22 and 23–24 stem from two different authors may thus be quite correct.¹⁵ As I maintained above, it may be that by coincidence two editors wrote a conclusion that seemed to bring together the Torah and the Former Prophets, or even the Former and the Latter Prophets, and was thus later seen as an appropriate conclusion to the Torah and the Prophets. However, the exegetical techniques employed are reminiscent of one another. Both appendices witness to midrashic activity, and admittedly there are many connections between Moses and Elijah as well. So the possibility cannot be ruled out that the appendices still stem from the same author—or perhaps a same school of thought.

But what about Horeb then? Is it at all meaningful to discuss the mountain if Mal 3:22 and 3:23–24 do not actually belong together? If one assumes that the appendices stem from two different editors, it could perhaps be suggested that the author of verses 23–24 just added the word **בְּהָרֵב** “at Horeb” to verse 22 to make at least some link between his new appendix and the previous ending of the book; after all, the mountain is the most obvious one of the things that connect Elijah to Moses.¹⁶ As regards the name of the mountain,

¹⁵ See Hill, *Malachi*, 41, 45, 363–366; Weyde, *Prophecy*, 389, 393. It is not, actually, even strictly necessary to suppose that verses 23 and 24 stem from the same editor, as verse 23 alone is sufficient to reveal the “true identity” of the messenger.

¹⁶ The parallels between Moses and Elijah have often been noticed. Scholars have thought that the Elijah cycle has been partially modelled after the Moses story. However, the influence can also have gone the other way round, or some popular themes might have been recurring with regard to several characters; cf. also the parallels between the stories of Jacob and Moses (discussed also above in the chapter on Jacob). See, for example, the thorough discussion in Shaver, “Prophet Elijah,” 58–62, 106–107. Cf. also Moshe Reiss, “Elijah the Zealot: A Foil to Moses,” *JBQ* 32 (2004): 174–180; and David J. Zucker, “Elijah and Elisha: Part I: Moses and Joshua,” *JBQ* 40 (2012): 225–231.

even if the name Sinai most probably was known to the author, it is conceivable that Horeb was chosen because of its Deuteronomistic association to Elijah (1 Kings 18:8).¹⁷ I believe, however, that this is not the only solution to the case. There are many more complicated connections between Moses, Elijah, Horeb, and Malachi. I shall now turn to some of these.

Mal 3:1 is the perhaps most famous verse in the book. Let us have a new look at this verse:

הנני שלח מלאכי ופנה דרך לפני ופתאום יבוא אל היכלו האדון אשר אתם מבקשים
ומלאך הברית אשר אתם חפצים הנה בא אמר ה' צבאות

See, I am sending my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

Aside of the questions discussed above in the chapter on Elijah, there are also other features in this verse that call for attention. What seems to me especially important is the title מלאכי “my messenger,” as the word has obviously lent itself to the later heading of the book, Mal 1:1: מלאכי ביד ישראל אל דבר ה' אשר ישראל ביד מלאכי, “burden [?] of the word of the Lord over Israel by Malachi.”¹⁸ This feature hints at the centrality of the word מלאכי for ancient interpretations of the book. The editor who wrote Mal 3:23 also recognized the original author’s allusion to Exod 23:20 in Mal 3:1 as he quotes the beginning of the Exodus verse more closely, without the changes made by the author of 3:1.¹⁹

¹⁷ For this, cf. Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 247. In my view, the old discussion on whether or not ‘Malachi’ knew P should finally be put aside as research in the formation of traditions has amply demonstrated that the preservation and development of traditions was many-faceted. The answer is in any case clear with regard to verse 3:22. It is here assumed to be an addition so that “Sinai” would definitely have been an alternative even if one would argue for a late Priestly character of that name. (Personally, I side with those who think that also the name Sinai is ancient.)

¹⁸ Cf. my discussion on this matter in the Introduction section and in the chapter on Jacob.

¹⁹ This neglected detail has been highlighted by Shaver, “Prophet Elijah,” 107–108.

Exod 23:20:

הנה אנכי שלח מלאך לפניך

See, I am sending a messenger²⁰ before you

Mal 3:1:

הנני שלח מלאכי ופנה דרך לפני

See, I am sending my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.

Mal 3:23:

הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בוא יום ה'

See, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the day of the Lord comes.

I thus contend that when seeking for possible threads for the identity of the mysterious messenger, an ancient interpreter would apply the *gezera shava* method and examine in which other texts the word מלאכי, in exactly that case, occurs.

In addition to Mal 1:1 and 3:1, there are only three texts in the Hebrew Bible where the form מלאכי occurs: Exod 23:23, Exod 32:34, and Isa 42:19. Isa 42:19 was discussed above in the chapter on Elijah. Exodus 23:23 serves, naturally, as a continuation of Exod 23:20, which the author of Mal 3:1 quite obviously quoted. However, the occurrence of the same word in Exod 32:34, where Moses pleads for his people and the Lord replies, may be significant, as the Sinai/Horeb account is thus brought together with the word מלאכי:

ועתה אם תשא חטאתם ואם אין מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת ויאמר ה' אל משה מי אשר
חטא לי אמחנו מספרי
ועתה לך נחה את העם אל אשר דברתי לך הנה מלאכי ילך לפניך וביום פקדי ופקדתי
עליהם חטאתם

*“Forgive them their sin! But if you do not, please blot my name out of the book which you have written.” The Lord said to Moses: “Whoever sins against me, him I shall blot out of my book. And now, take the people to the place I said to you. See, **my messenger** shall go before you. But on the day of my visitation, I shall punish them according to their sin.” (Exod 32:32–34)*

²⁰ The text has often been corrected to מלאכי *my messenger*, which is attested in the Septuagint, Vulgate, and the Samaritan Pentateuch; cf. the Masoretic text of Exod 23:23.

Now, the noteworthy feature concerning the relationship between Mal 3:16 and 3:22 is the existence of a book also in Exod 32:32–33. What kind of a book is this? Is it a heavenly ‘book of life,’ or is it something else?

4.2 The Torah and the covenant in ancient Near Eastern context

“Heavenly books” are a specific theme of discussion in scholarship of the Bible and pseudepigraphic intertestamental writings. Such books are mentioned in many texts in the Hebrew Bible, but with somewhat differing terms. The often recurring interpretation of these books is that they contain the names of the righteous that will be saved in the last days.²¹ As mentioned above, this is also the main interpretation of the term ספר זכרון “book of remembrance” in Mal 3:16, a view that Floyd challenged by his claim that the book denotes the Torah. However, it is interesting to notice that these two connotations need not be mutually exclusive, especially not with regard to Malachi. The background of the concept must only be traced to more ancient times to see the connection.

As was discussed briefly in the Introduction section, Julia O’Brien has maintained that the book of Malachi ought to be seen as an adapted ריב, or covenant lawsuit.²² Her view has received substantial critique from especially Floyd and Andrew Hill, but I think the kernel in her claim is correct.²³ It is true that O’Brien’s detailed scheme of Malachi as ריב works best in the beginning of the book, up to verse 2:9, and that Malachi in any case represents a very late and strongly modified form of covenant lawsuit (providing that this designation is accepted). However, it cannot be overlooked that ברית “covenant” is a strikingly often recurring term in Malachi (2:4, 8, 10, 12), as is also מלאך “messenger” (1:1; 2:7; 3:1)—and these merge in verse 3:1 to the significant “messenger of the covenant.” And it is also true that the book is made up of questions, answers, and accusations, whether this technique then should be

²¹ For this, see Charles R. Smith, “The Book of Life,” *Grace Theological Journal* 6 (1985): 219–230.

²² Julia M. O’Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990, 61–84.

²³ Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, 564–566; Hill, *Malachi*, 32–33.

called a discussion, a dispute, or a trial.²⁴ Thus, I do contend that O'Brien is right in that Malachi displays markedly covenantal features together with a setting that bears some resemblance to a court case.²⁵ And I also assume that this kind of a context could readily be supposed for the book by an ancient interpreter.

The background of especially the Book of the Covenant and Deuteronomy in ancient Near Eastern treaties and law codes is a wide topic of research. The background of biblical laws and the Sinai covenant has been sought in Hittite, Aramaic, and Neo-Assyrian vassal treaties.²⁶ The impression that "covenant" is a crucial term also in Malachi is enforced by the use of certain ancient covenantal categories in the book: father—son (1:6; 3:17), servant—master (1:6), a great king (1:14), סגלה "favourite" (3:17).²⁷

I would like here to draw attention to those ancient Near Eastern texts where it is declared that the treaty has to be engraved and stored in the temple for public reading. This stipulation is to be found in some of the Hittite treaties.²⁸ Moshe Weinfeld, for his part, has maintained that Deuteronomy resembles the Neo-Assyrian treaties, and he has remarked that Deuteronomy 31 attests to an idea of a public reading and storing of the law.²⁹ Thus, there seems to be a real background for Floyd's contention that the "book of remembrance" might perhaps already in the original setting of Mal 3:16 refer to

²⁴ For different characterizations of Malachi, see the comprehensive survey of earlier scholarship in Weyde, *Prophecy*, 3–48.

²⁵ For some reflections, see also Steven L. McKenzie and Howard N. Wallace, "Covenant Themes in Malachi," *CBQ* 45 (1983): 549–563.

²⁶ For this, see the classics of Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972); and Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978); and Eckart Otto's various studies on Deuteronomy, e.g. *Das Deuteronomium: politische Theologie und Rechtsreform in Juda und Assyrien*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999.

²⁷ For some biblical background, cf. the words of subjection by king Ahas to Tiglat Pileser in 2 Kings 16:7: "עבדך ובנך אני" "I am your servant and son," and the way King of Assyria calls himself "the great king" in a diplomatic context in 2 Kings 18:19, 28/Isa 36:4, 13. For examples from the ancient Near East, see, among others, McKenzie and Wallace, "Covenant Themes". For discussion on the proper interpretation of the term סגלה, see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 226 n. 2.

²⁸ See F. C. Fensham, "Clauses of Protection in Hittite Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament," *VT* 13 (1963): 133–143, esp. 142–143. He refers to the treaties between Suppiluliuma and Mattiwaza, and Muwattalis and Alaksandus.

²⁹ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 66. Cf. Exod 24:4, 7; Josh 8:30–35. For the practice of reading, cf. also the narrative in Nehemiah 8–9.

the Torah. A recent, very interesting archaeological discovery also adds weight to the claim.

Back in 1936, a temple was discovered at Tell Tayinat in south-eastern Turkey.³⁰ The remarkable similarities in architecture to how the biblical temple of Solomon could have looked like were immediately recognized. New excavations were made at the place in 2008 by Timothy Harrison of the University of Toronto and his team, and another temple was found in the vicinity of the first one.³¹ In the inner sanctuary of this temple, the archaeologists found a cache of cuneiform tablets, including a copy of Esarhaddon's vassal treaty. The similarities between this treaty and the curses of Deuteronomy 28 have, in turn, long since been recognized.³² Victor Hurowitz writes about the new discovery:

[T]he discovery of a vassal treaty in the inner cella of a temple identical in architecture to Solomon's Temple is the closest parallel imaginable to the placing of the Tablets of the Covenant (the treaty between God and his people) in the Temple as described in 1 Kings 8.³³

Stipulations that a written copy of a treaty should be put before the god who is the divine witness of that treaty can be found in some of the Hittite texts,

³⁰ These excavations were part of the University of Chicago's Syrian-Hittite Expedition, and the temple which was found then is the "building II" in the identification system of the now current excavations. For a summary and discussion (with some critique) of these earlier excavations, see Timothy P. Harrison & James F. Osborne, "Building XVI and the Neo-Assyrian Sacred Precinct at Tell Tayinat," *JCS* 64 (2012): 125–143, esp. 126–130.

³¹ For a preliminary summary, see Victor Hurowitz, "Solomon's Temple in Context," *BAR* (March/April 2011): 46–57. For the seasonal excavation reports of Harrison's team, visit the homepage of the project at www.utoronto.ca/tap where they can be downloaded. For a recent summary of the most important findings, see Harrison & Osborne, "Building XVI." In that article, the excavators now conclude that the temple (building XVI) is part of a larger religious complex that dates from the late 800th or early 700th century. They see this building complex as part of an Assyrian effort to rebuild the city of Kunulua (which was the former Syro-Hittite royal city) into an administrative capital of the Assyrian empire.

³² See the discussion in Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 116–129; and cf. Bernard M. Levinson, "Esarhaddon's Vassal Treaty as the Source for the Canon Formula in Deuteronomy 13:1," *JAOS* 130 (2010): 337–347.

³³ Hurowitz, "Solomon's Temple," 56. Cf., however, the caution expressed by Harrison and Osborne ("Building XVI," 139–140). They warn for making too hasty statements, noting especially similarities and differences in architecture in excavated temples in the broad Near Eastern area.

forming an extra-biblical parallel for the story in 1 Kings 8 (and Exod 40:20).³⁴ Now, however, archaeology has finally verified the existence of this custom in ancient Near East. Harrison and Osborne also suggest that the shape and placement of the treaty tablets in the Tell Tayinat temple indicate that they were intentionally designed to fill a votive function; the oath takers were expected to visit the temple regularly and see the tablets.³⁵ In light of all this, there is a strong possibility that the phrase in Mal 3:16, “a book of remembrance was written in his presence,” actually contains the same kind of very old covenantal undertones that are visible elsewhere in Malachi.

What does zikkārôn denote?

Another aspect concerns the book of Mal 3:16 as an object, that is, ספר זכרון “book of remembrance.” Karl William Weyde has remarked that this phrase is unique in the Hebrew Bible and also conceptual in the same manner as some other expressions in Malachi are highly conceptual (for example, בריתי “my covenant with Levi,” מלאך הברית “messenger of the covenant”).³⁶ Most commentators have, however, referred to Esther 6:1 where the phrase ספר הזכרונות דברי הימים “book of memorable deeds, the words of the days” occurs. It seems that the reference there is to a diary. Willy Schottroff, who has written the perhaps most exhaustive grammatical survey of the verb זכר, maintains that זכרון in the sense of “record book” occurs in Exod 17:14; Mal 3:16; Est 6:1, and (in the Aramaic equivalent) Ezra 4:15 and 6:2.³⁷

³⁴ This stipulation is found at least in the treaties between Hattusili III of Hatti and Ulmi-Teshshup of Tarhuntassa, and Tudhaliya IV of Hatti and Kurunta of Tarhuntassa. See Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* (2d ed.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 111, 123. The first of these passages reads “This treaty tablet has already been made, and it shall be placed in Arinna in the presence of the Sun-goddess of Arinna.”

³⁵ Harrison & Osborne, “Building XVI,” 137. They refer to the earlier study of Steymans and the joint study of Lauinger about this practice. See Hans Ulrich Steymans, “Die literarische und historische Bedeutung der Thronvolgereidigungen Asarhaddons,” in M. Witte et al (eds), *Die deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke : Redaktions- und religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven zur “Deuteronomismus”-Diskussion in Tora und Vorderen Propheten*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006: 331–349, here esp. 343–344; Jacob Lauinger, “Some Preliminary Thoughts on the Tablet Collection in Building XVI from Tell Tayinat,” *JCSMS* 6 (2012): 5–14.

³⁶ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 362.

³⁷ Willy Schottroff, “Gedenken” im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament: Die wurzel zākar im Semitischen Sprachkreis (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964), 300–305.

The perhaps most notable feature concerning the word זכרון is its overwhelmingly priestly character. In the Pentateuch, the noun may only occur in the Priestly material and in any case mostly denotes cultic objects that are meant to evoke remembrance, as the breastpiece of the high priest (Exod 28:12 etc.), or more abstract cultic ideas such as the New Year festival (Lev 23:24).³⁸ Hermann Eising pays special attention to the interesting occurrence of the word in Exod 17:14 and asserts that “a book preserved in the sanctuary could also be a way of remembering—always assuming that there was a sense of obligation to consult it and be reminded.”³⁹ Childs, for his part, writes:

The study of zikkārôn greatly increases our understanding of the Priestly concept of memory . . . The concern of the Priestly theology is not to relate present Israel to a past event. There is no tension between past and present because the past mediated an eternal order. Rather, the concern is to maintain the sacred order and relate Israel to it. The memorials as cultic objects serve to insure Israel’s relation to God by reminding both God and Israel.⁴⁰

With the notably priestly concerns of Malachi in mind, it may not be at all far-fetched to suggest that the ספר זכרון of Mal 3:16 has precisely the cultic function described by Childs, rather than just being some simple ‘record’.⁴¹ The “book of remembrance” may at the same time be both the Torah that God has given humans (Israel) to hear (and perhaps quite concretely also see as a ‘cultic object’), and a Torah through which God himself remembers his

³⁸ Hermann Eising, זכר *zākhār*, TDOT 4:77–79. Brevard Childs, who has written on the same subject, ascribes Exod 13:9 to D and Exod 17:14 to JE; see Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 68. However, Childs makes a sharp distinction between a passive and an active sense of *zikkārôn*, putting Mal 3:16 (together with, for example, Est 6:1) to the passive group of *memoranda* which he considers to be without “any significant theological meaning” (p. 67), whereas the active group of “memorials” consists mainly of the Priestly occurrences of the word. Childs concentrates his survey on this latter group. I, however, doubt whether his distinction can be maintained; in any case it does not fit the use of the term in Mal 3:16, as I here argue.

³⁹ Eising, *zākhār*, 78. Cf. the chapter on Esau below, where I also discuss Exod 17:14.

⁴⁰ Childs, *Memory*, 68.

⁴¹ Contra Childs, *ibid.*, 67.

people.⁴² The background of this possibility must only be sought in the very origins of the “Torah.”

4.3 Names, covenantal stipulations, and heavenly books

If one looks more closely at the idea of a treaty from a historical point of view, it is obvious that the names of the parts of the covenant are engraved in the document. Thus, at least at the abstract level, the “Moses’ law” document that is referred to also in Mal 3:22 should contain both the names of the parts and the covenantal stipulations. Indeed, the Bible seems to witness to this kind of surprisingly individualized use of the covenant concept still in later times. The other covenant part is not always named only “Israel,” even if this name, denoting at the same time both the patriarch and the people, of course also has significant covenantal undertones.⁴³ It is notable that in Nehemiah 10, in a situation that could be described as a covenant renewal ceremony, the individuals who sign the document are mentioned by name. The text reads (NRSV):

Because of all this we make a firm agreement in writing, and on that sealed document are inscribed the names of our officials, our Levites, and our priests. Upon the sealed document are the names of Nehemiah the governor, son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah; Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah, Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah; these are the priests. And the Levites: Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel; and their associates, Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah, Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, Hodiah, Bani, Beninu. The leaders of the people: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai, Hariph,

⁴² Eising (*zākhar*, 68) remarks that “in contrast to recollection of God’s acts in history, human recollection of the law is comparatively rare” and cites Mal 3:22 as one of these very few instances. It may be that the exhortation *זכרו תורת משה עבדי*, “remember the law of my servant Moses,” is simply an example of a late or otherwise miscellaneous use of the verb *זכר*. However, the rarity may also add weight to the claim that the mention of the Torah in Mal 3:22 really refers back to the “book of remembrance” of 3:16 using the verb as a catchword, as Floyd suggests.

⁴³ Cf. the discussion on Jacob traditions above in the chapter on Jacob.

Anathoth, Nebai, Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, Ahiah, Hanan, Anan, Mal-luch, Harim, and Baanah. The rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to adhere to the law of God, their wives, their sons, their daughters, all who have knowledge and understanding, join with their kin, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and his ordinances and his statutes.⁴⁴

An interesting post-biblical example can be found in the Damascus Document (CD 3:3), according to which Isaac and Jacob were “recorded as friends of God and his allies forever” (ויכתבו אוהבים לאל ובעלי ברית לעולם), a phrase which in the context would suggest a heavenly record.⁴⁵ However, the phrase at the same time certainly belongs to an ancient covenantal frame of reference. Loyalty, “love” (in Hebrew the root אהב) occurs very often in the grant terminology.⁴⁶ The expression בעלי ברית “allies, companions” designates covenantal partners, as the literal interpretation of the term already suggests.⁴⁷ For the Damascus Document in general, it is interesting that CD 20:18–21 is, in effect, a lengthy paraphrase of Mal 3:16–18. Here the “book of remembrance” seems mostly to denote a heavenly record of those individuals that will be saved in the last days.

Malachi 3:16 and the whole cluster of ideas surrounding that verse get an interesting rewriting in 4QInstruction.⁴⁸ In 4Q417 2 i 14–18, the “Under-

⁴⁴ One can here notice a concentrate of the same kind of Deuteronomic formulations as in Mal 3:22. Notice especially the ending of Neh 10:30: **ללכת בתורת האלהים אשר נתנה ביד משה עבד האלהים** ולשמור ולעשות את כל מצות ה' אדנינו ומשפטיו וחקיו. Cf. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 336–337.

⁴⁵ Abraham is mentioned as a “friend” already in the previous verse, CD 3:2. He is also “recorded as a friend of the Lord on the heavenly tablets” according to *Jub.* 19:9 (cf. *Apoc. Abr.* 9:6). The biblical background for the idea of Abraham as a “friend” can be found in Isa 41:8—a verse that is loaded with covenantal terms.

⁴⁶ See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 74–78

⁴⁷ Cf. Gen 14:13.

⁴⁸ 4QInstruction is usually considered to be a non-sectarian text, dating from the early second century, but it is quite possible that it comes from some predecessor groups to the sectarians, as it has several points of contact with the sectarian texts. See, e.g., Émile Puech, “Ben Sira and

standing One” (i.e. the disciple who is instructed in the text) is summoned to recall the difference between spiritual and fleshly people. Only the spiritual people are able to understand the “book of remembrance” which has been given to them to meditate upon. This clear dichotomy between two groups of people most probably comes from the broader context of Malachi 3:13–21. I quote the text according to Geza Vermes’s reconstruction and translation.

And you will understand the beginning of your reward at the memorial of the time that has come. Engraved is the decree and all the visitation is determined. For God’s ordinance is engraved over all the in[iquities] of the sons of Seth. And a book of memorial is written before Him for those who keep His word. And this is the vision issuing from the meditation on the book of memorial. And He gave it as a heritage to mankind and to the people of the spirit. For his (man’s) shape is modelled on the holy ones, but meditation belongs no more to the fleshly spirit, for it cannot distinguish between g[ood] and evil according to the judgement of its spirit.⁴⁹

The passage in 4Q417 is not without difficulties regarding its proper interpretation. The most important problem concerns the phrase in verse 16, ספר זכרון, which Vermes has paraphrased as “the vision issuing from the meditation on the book of memorial.”⁵⁰ Some other scholars see in 4Q417 a vision of some otherwise unknown person named “Hagu” (?) being mentioned.⁵¹ It seems to be implied in the text, though, that the “book of remembrance” includes ordinances, but that the real meaning of this book is revealed only to those who have the correct understanding of it.

Qumran,” in A. Passaro & G. Bellia (eds), *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008: 79–118, here 91–92. For alternative views, cf. the summary in Daniel J. Harrington, S. J., *Wisdom Texts from Qumran*, London: Routledge, 1996, 41. The specific allusions to Malachi can be found in one manuscript, 4Q417.

⁴⁹ Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Revised edition, London: Penguin, 2004, 432–433.

⁵⁰ Roughly the same interpretation is advocated by Armin Lange (*Weisheit und Prädestination: Weisheitliche Urordnung und Prädestination in den Textfunden von Qumran*, Leiden: Brill, 1995, 53): “die Vision der Erklärung ist das Buch der Erinnerung” and John J. Collins (*Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, 125): “This book of remembrance is also called ‘the Vision of Meditation’.”

⁵¹ See the exhaustive survey in Matthew J. Goff, *The Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction*, Leiden: Brill 2003, 87–94. He discusses also alternative reconstructions of the text.

In his examination concerning the “book of life” concept in the Bible, Charles Smith emphasizes the shift in meaning of the term “book of life” and related terms in the intertestamental period. According to him, the earlier use of the concept was related to the “recipients of conditional covenantal blessings” whereas the New Testament use of the phrase points to a list of the “recipients of the unconditional blessing of eternal life.”⁵² However, Smith disregards certain interesting passages, among them Mal 3:16, as he thinks that they are lists of deeds, not names, and thus are not of importance to his subject.⁵³ It must, however, be asked whether this distinction can be made at all. Smith does not include extra-biblical texts in his survey, but according to Maurice Baillet’s (and Herbert Haag’s) interpretation, the phrase כול הכתוב בספר החיים “everything that is written in the book of life” in 4QDibHam^a (4Q504) 6:14 denotes the Law of Moses!⁵⁴ It really seems that the different meanings of the ‘book’ concept cannot be easily separated.

Smith is right, though, in that some development has indeed occurred with regard to the ‘book’ idea during the biblical period. This development is visible in the generally more eschatological outlook of the later texts, that is, being recorded in God’s “book” does not merely signalize earthly welfare as a result of the covenantal blessings, but also—and perhaps primarily—an eternal life. On the other hand, also the idea that the book is kept not in the temple but in heaven “in the presence of God” may accord better with a later date. This is, however, *not* to say that this kind of a concept could not have existed as early as at the time when the bulk of the book of Malachi was written. On the contrary, ancient Near Eastern texts do contain references to heavenly record-keeping. In Mesopotamia, a divine scribe called Nabu was in charge of these records.⁵⁵ But it is also most interesting to notice that precisely the shrines dedicated to Nabu often seem to have contained large numbers of

⁵² Smith, “Book of Life,” 219.

⁵³ Ibid., 220–221.

⁵⁴ Maurice Baillet, “Un recueil liturgique de Qumrân, Grotte 4: ‘Les paroles des luminaires’,” *RB* 68 (1961): 195–250, here 232. Herbert Haag, כתב *kātab*, *TDOT* 7:381. Cf., however, e.g. Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 379, who clearly understands the phrase as referring to righteous individuals.

⁵⁵ See Shalom M. Paul, “Heavenly Tablets and the Book of Life,” *JANES* 5 (1973): 345–354.

written tablets.⁵⁶ So, any clear-cut dichotomy between heavenly and earthly matters was certainly not made.

Floyd regards both Mal 3:16 and 3:22 as integral parts of Malachi and thus thinks that the focus is concretely on the temple also in those verses, as in many other places in Malachi. If we, however, assume that Mal 3:13–21 are already secondary and somewhat later than the bulk of the book—and there is substantial indication that this could be the case⁵⁷—then the rise of apocalyptic (which is also in other ways evident in Mal 3:13–21) could perhaps still more readily suggest a ‘heavenly’ concept for the “book of remembrance” in Mal 3:16. Consistent with the idea that the book is kept in heaven in the presence of the Lord is that the Lord can also wipe off the names of those particular persons who have not kept the covenant. This thought seems to be implied already in Exod 32:32–33.

Therefore, to me it is quite conceivable that Mal 3:16, in its original context in the Book of Malachi, incorporates simultaneously both ancient covenantal undertones and a more eschatological outlook. Mal 3:16 was conceivably interpreted by the author of verse 22 in the context of Torah and the covenant. The same verse was, though, interpreted by many other antique interpreters in a more eschatological frame of reference incorporating allusions to the ancient notion of heavenly record-keeping. Most modern scholars have also interpreted Mal 3:16 in this latter way.

I thus see a line of development from ancient Near Eastern treaties via the different strata of the Hebrew Bible to the concept of “heavenly tablets” and “books” which are prominent in *Jubilees* and the Enoch literature. The extended “law” is written on the heavenly tablets according to *Jubilees*, but *Jubilees* also mentions archaic books. There is an idea that some books were inherited in a succession from Abraham and Jacob to Levi. In light of the covenantal background that was outlined above, it seems that no significant difference can be made between “books” and “tablets.” It is obvious that both words denote the “law” in some extended meaning.⁵⁸ The scheme in *Jubilees*

⁵⁶ For this notion, see Harrison & Osborne, “Building XVI,” 137, and cf. Lauinger, “Preliminary Thoughts,” 10.

⁵⁷ For a balanced survey of the pros and cons of this view, see Weyde, *Prophecy*, 382–387. Cf. also my discussion on the subject in the chapter on Esau below.

⁵⁸ See, for example, *Jub.* 45:16.

is ultimately that the tablets of the law have always been pre-existent in heaven. Florentino García Martínez arrives in his survey at the conclusion that they are “at once the pre-existing Torah, the Book of Destiny, and the Oral Torah.”⁵⁹ Hindy Najman, for her part, has maintained that the “angel of the presence” who dictates everything to Moses in *Jubilees* must be understood as the Exodus-angel, a notion which underlines this angel’s association with Moses.⁶⁰ I would, moreover, contend that this detail also slightly adds to the obvious affinity of *Jubilees* to Malachi.⁶¹ Books play a rather important role also in the Enoch literature. Thus, in *1 Enoch* 93:2; 103:2, Enoch is given access to “the tablets of heaven ... and the writings of the holy ones.” Enoch himself is in charge of books that he passes on to future generations (e.g. 82:2; 104:12–105:1).

The evidence that I evoked from the Qumran material is by no means exhaustive, but also these few examples indicate that both the Torah and ancient covenantal concepts were still associated with phrases involving books, in passages where the straightforward interpretation would concern a heavenly book or record. The example from 4QInstruction regarding a “book of remembrance” indicates a concept rather similar to the one in *Jubilees*.⁶²

Does the Lord himself write the “Book of Remembrance”?

Another point in the Hebrew and Greek texts of Mal 3:16 however still deserves attention. The Hebrew (MT) uses a passive voice for the writing: וְיִכְתֹּב סֵפֶר זִכְרוֹן, “a book of remembrance was written,” whereas the Greek uses an active: καὶ ἔγραψεν βιβλίον μνημοσύνου ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ “and he wrote a book of remembrance in his (own) presence.” Only another vocalization would, however, be needed to convert the Hebrew text to the active. Can we assume that the Septuagint here has retained the more original sense of the

⁵⁹ Florentino García Martínez, “The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees,” In: M. Albani et al. (eds), *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997: 243–260, here 259.

⁶⁰ Hindy Najman, “Angels at Sinai: Exegesis, Theology and Interpretive Authority,” *DSD* 7 (2000): 313–333. See also her *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

⁶¹ Cf. the chapter on Levi above.

⁶² Thus also Goff, *Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom*, 93: “4QInstruction’s book of remembrance has been associated with the heavenly books and tablets in *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*. ... [It] is with God in heaven. ... It is a heavenly book to which the elect have access.”

text? If this is the case, then the connection to Exod 32:32–33 would be even more probable. In Exod 32:32, Moses calls the book “the book that you [the Lord] have written.” The active aorist ἔγραψας is used also here as in Mal 3:16. Also the expression for the Lord’s presence is the same:

Exod 32:32–33: 32 καὶ νῦν εἰ μὲν ἀφεῖς αὐτοῖς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἄφες εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐξάλειψόν με ἐκ τῆς βίβλου σου ἢ **ἔγραψας** 33 καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν εἴ τις ἡμάρτηκεν **ἐνώπιόν μου** ἐξαλείψω αὐτὸν ἐκ τῆς βίβλου μου

Mal 3:16: καὶ **ἔγραψεν** βιβλίον μνημοσύνου **ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ**

That the Lord himself wrote the tablets of the Law is, on the other hand, stated in Exod 31:18 (cf. Exod 24:12): **לחת אבן כתבים באצבע** “stone tablets written by [his] finger”; **πλάκας λιθίνας γεγραμμένας τῷ δακτύλῳ τοῦ θεοῦ** “stone tablets written by the finger of God.” The idea of God’s writing is thus notably attested in the Sinai narrative. One could still add that a threat of an ultimate punishment is very prominent in both Exod 32:34 and Mal 3:24, even if the modes of expression are admittedly different. For this reason, it is difficult to argue for any factual dependence here. However, because there are also other features that connect Exodus 32 to Malachi,⁶³ a connection might exist even here.

4.4 Conclusion

The figures of Moses and Elijah at the end of Malachi are not there by coincidence. The reason for their being there is, however, not that an editor or two editors just wanted to write an epilogue to the Torah and the Prophets, as has often been assumed. Rather, both Moses and Elijah are essentially associated with the text of Malachi. They are also both connected with the Sinai/Horeb Mountain. The latter name for the mountain was chosen in Mal 3:22 because

⁶³ Cf. also the elevation of Levi/the Levites in Exod 32:26–29 and Malachi 2. Few have claimed that Malachi here would be directly dependent on the Exodus account, but a dependence on Num 25:10–13 is often suggested. The portrayals of Phinehas in Numbers 25 and the Levites in Exodus 32 are on the other hand often compared when the idea of a Levitical covenant is discussed. See, for example, Weyde, *Prophecy*, 177–183; and cf. the chapter on Levi above.

it is the only one of the two that can literally be related to both Moses and Elijah (in the Deuteronomistic framework). I think, however, that the significance of this mountain to the appendices is not so superficial. Of special importance concerning the meaning of Mal 3:22 is the mysterious “book of remembrance” in Mal 3:16 and its connection with Moses and the Sinai covenant, especially Exod 32:32–33. This connection is more clearly visible in the Greek than in the Hebrew text, which suggests either that the Septuagint in some instances has retained the more original sense, or that the translators have interpreted the Hebrew text along certain lines.

That the word מלאכי occurs in exactly that case in Exod 23:23 and 32:34 is important for the correct interpretation of Mal 3:16 and its attempted explanation in 3:22. Through a juxtaposition of verses including the word מלאכי, the Sinai/Horeb account is brought together both with a concept of a (heavenly) book and, at the same time, with the whole book carrying the name of מלאכי (Mal 1:1). In my opinion, Mal 3:22 represents a very similar type of exegetical note as the following verses Mal 3:23–24. It is presumably an attempt to identify the “book of remembrance” of Mal 3:16 as the Torah of Moses. In my opinion, the making of the covenant at Sinai/Horeb as a fundamental moment in history is in concrete focus in Mal 3:22; the reference is not just sweepingly to the law in general. In this way, the appendix also neatly summarizes the archaic covenantal traits that are visible in many places in Malachi. It is in this light that the nearly Deuteronomistic admonition to “remember the law of Moses” and the specific mention of the Horeb Mountain should be understood.

5. Esau: Jacob's 'foreign' brother

5.1 Introduction: Esau in Malachi

As I contended in the chapter on Jacob, it is rather significant that the book of Malachi opens with a discourse of the Lord's love for Jacob and hatred for Esau. It is perhaps still more noteworthy that Esau is the first name which is mentioned in Malachi. This fact alone indicates that 'Esau' might be an important key concept for the right understanding of the message of the book. In the chapter on Jacob, I discussed the importance of patriarchal traditions for the author of Malachi and sought to demonstrate that Jacob plays a major role in the book, and that his righteous conduct is presented in many ways as antithetical to that of Esau and, possibly, Judah.

In this final chapter, I shall develop the 'Esau' theme further by tracing the birth of the idea that Esau is a foreigner and denotes everything that is foreign, bad or detestable. This concept is very prominent in rabbinic literature¹, but its origins are not altogether clear. First, I will briefly summarize the scholarly opinion concerning Esau's equation with the people of Edom. Secondly, I will examine the relationship between Obadiah and Malachi. Of special interest is, then, the Septuagint of Mal 3:19. The verse appears to be a minor text-critical case, but it may have had certain impact on the development of the idea of 'Esau-foreigner'. This detail is usually not commented upon in Malachi scholarship, and to my knowledge, its possible influence to later interpretations has not yet been highlighted. I comment on also the Septuagint of Mal 1:4 and 3:15, as these verses may be related to the matter. Thirdly, I will discuss the probability that the concept of *herem* had some general association with Esau and his descendants and that this notion has certain significance for the proper understanding of the last word in Malachi.

¹ For this issue, see, e.g. Friedrich Avemarie, "Esau's Hände, Jakobs Stimme. Edom als Sinnbild Roms in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur," In: Reinhard Feldmeier & Ulrich Heckel (hrg.), *Die Heiden. Juden, Christen und das Problem des Fremden*, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 1994: 177–208; Carol Bakhos, "Figuring (out) Esau. The Rabbis and Their Others," *JJS* 58 (2007): 250–262; Gerhard Langer, "'Brother Esau?' Esau in Rabbinic Midrash," in: A. Laato & P. Lindqvist (eds), *Encounters of the Children of Abraham from Ancient to Modern Times*, Leiden: Brill 2010: 75–94.

I will try to illustrate how the double notion of Esau's brotherhood, on the one hand, and his complete rejection and 'otherness' on the other (as expressed most pointedly in the opening verses of Malachi) underlies the hostility both towards actual Edom and later and more figuratively also other nations, specifically Rome. As my main point, however, I shall argue that the figure of Esau serves to highlight the dichotomy in Israel which is visible already in the (perhaps at least to some extent secondary) closing oracle of Malachi (3:13–21), and thus serves as a warning for the Israelites themselves.

5.2 Esau's equation with Edom

The historical problems associated with the stories about Jacob and Esau on one hand, and in relation to actual Israel and Edom on the other, are manifold. According to most scholars, the brotherhood-and-rivalry scheme between the two brothers, as depicted in Genesis and Malachi, is best explained by close neighborhood between the two peoples Israel and Edom, and a vague knowledge among the peoples that they are somehow related, perhaps because of similarities in language or religion.² However, scholars are usually very cautious in accepting any historical connection between the oracles concerning Edom in earlier (especially prophetic) literature and the story about Jacob and Esau in Genesis. Tracing the early origins of the story of Jacob and Esau has proved to be difficult, and the equation of Esau and Edom may be secondary.³ We read (Gen 25:24–30):

² There is an extensive literature on Edom, of which John R. Bartlett's life's work is without doubt the most significant. See Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites*, JSOT Press: Sheffield 1989. Edom's relation to Israel is highlighted, e.g., in Bert Dicou, *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist. The Role of Edom in Biblical Prophecy and Story*, Sheffield: JSOT Press 1994; Diana Vikander Edelman (ed.), *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He is Your Brother. Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*, Atlanta: Scholars 1995; Bruce C. Cresson, "The Condemnation of Edom in Post-Exilic Judaism," in: J. M. Efrid (ed.), *The Use of Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring*, Durham 1972: 125–148; Elie Assis, "Why Edom? On the Hostility towards Jacob's Brother in Prophetic Sources," *VT* 56 (2006): 1–20; Bradford A. Anderson, "Edom in the Book of Numbers: Some Literary Reflections," *ZAW* 124 (2012): 38–51; and in several commentaries to the Book of Obadiah.

³ That is, while in the Genesis account the affinity of two peoples may well be the original etiological theme, the birth story and its expansions concerning the characters and conduct of the two brothers may nevertheless belong to another cycle of folk tales about two brothers. See William D. Whitt, "The Jacob Traditions in Hosea and their Relation to Genesis," *ZAW* 103

When her time to give birth was near, there were twins in her womb. The first came out all red, as if he were wearing a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. After this, his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when they were born. When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob became a quiet man, living in tents. Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob. Jacob was cooking a stew, when Esau came in from the field, and he was starving. Esau said to Jacob, "Let me guzzle some of that red, that red stuff, for I am starving!" Therefore he was called Edom.

As has been noticed by several commentators, this passage in Genesis includes actually two separate explanations for the equation of Esau and Edom (עֵדוֹם=red/brown): 1) The baby boy was reddish; 2) Esau wanted to eat the red stew. This feature corresponds to the two explanations given for Jacob's name in Genesis 25:26 (עָקַב=heel) and 27:36 (עָקַב=he betrays). These constitute a case of what James Kugel calls "overkill," i.e. two or more explanations for a single motif; a phenomenon which usually reflects the conflation of originally separate traditions.⁴

Except for Genesis 36, there are three texts, all in prophetic books, where a connection between Esau and Edom is made explicit: Jeremiah 49:7–11; the Book of Obadiah as a whole, and Malachi 1:2–5.⁵ As has been maintained by several scholars, Obadiah seems to have been modeled after Jeremiah 49:7–11, a text which, in turn, may incorporate earlier traditions as well.⁶ However,

(1991) 18–43, here 28–30. Whitt focuses on the reconstruction of early forms of and the literary development of the Jacob story. He argues that the stories about Jacob and Esau, and Zerah and Perez (Genesis 38) are doublets of the same motif and that we cannot be sure of the original name of Jacob's brother, given its absence in the terse account in Hosea 12:4. Cf. James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible. A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now*, New York: Free Press 2007, 710–711.

⁴ See James L. Kugel, *In Potiphar's House. The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts*, Cambridge: Harvard 1994, 256–257.

⁵ Amos 1:11 is thus not included here, as the reference there is just to a violence that Edom has done to his brother, who also goes without a name. Of course, the text is commonly regarded as a witness to the tradition about Jacob and Esau, but we cannot be absolutely sure about its original meaning.

⁶ See, e.g. Juan Manuel Tebes, "The 'Wisdom' of Edom," *BN* 143 (2009) 97–117.

I think it is significant that only in Obadiah and Malachi, all four names Edom, Esau, Israel, and Jacob are present at the same time, and the identification of the peoples with the ancestors is thus quite unambiguous, at the same time as they are referred to together. Mal 1:2–5 reads,

I have loved you, says the Lord. But you say, “How have you loved us?” Was not Esau Jacob's brother? – Utterance of the Lord – Yet I loved Jacob but Esau I hated; I made his mountains a desolation and gave his heritage for jackals of the desert. If Edom says, “We are shattered but we will return and rebuild the ruins,” so says the Lord of hosts: They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called ‘the wicked country’ and ‘the people with whom the Lord is angry forever’. Your own eyes will see this, and you will say, “Great is the Lord beyond the borders of Israel!”

The way in which this connection is made in Malachi suggests that the concept of Esau/Edom was well-known to the author and his presumed audience; the transition in the oracle from Esau to Edom follows a quite natural line of thought. This feature should be regarded as a proof for the existence of a commonly-assumed tradition of Esau's equation with Edom, similar to the one in Jeremiah and Obadiah (and the one recorded very explicitly in Genesis 36). However, as especially Karl William Weyde has pointed out, the complete rejection of Esau in Malachi is a novelty, compared with earlier oracles against Edom, in that the wording is almost proverbial and no reason for the refutation is given.⁷ It thus seems that by the time of Malachi, Esau and Jacob had perhaps already gained a more far-fetched symbolic function in the minds of the audience.⁸ This possibility suggests also that the author of Malachi had the earlier oracles concerning Edom in his mind, in addition to the Jacob/Esau traditions. Was he referring especially to Obadiah? Before attempting to answer this question, I must make an excursus to a textual variant in Malachi.

⁷ Karl William Weyde, *Prophecy and Teaching: Prophetic Authority, Form Problems, and the Use of Traditions in the Book of Malachi*, Berlin: de Gruyter 2000, 85, 96, 102–103, 108.

⁸ See David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi: A Commentary*, London: SCM Press 1995, 173, who comments on the conceptuality of the figures ‘Jacob’ and ‘Esau’ in this text.

5.3 Edom in Obadiah and in Malachi

The text-critical case of Malachi 3:19 MT/4:1 LXX: arrogance or foreignness?

A detail that has hardly ever gained any scholarly attention is the Septuagint variant of Mal 3:19 (= 4:1 LXX). In the MT, the verse reads,

כי הנה היום בא בער כתנור והיו כל זדים וכל עשה רשעה קש ולהט אתם היום הבא אמר
ה' צבאות אשר לא יעזב להם שרש וענף

*See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the **arrogant** and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.*

In the LXX, the verse reads (4:1),

διότι ἰδοὺ ἡμέρα κυρίου ἐρχεται καιομένη ὡς κλίβανος καὶ φλέξει αὐτούς καὶ ἔσονται πάντες οἱ **ἀλλογενεῖς** καὶ πάντες οἱ ποιοῦντες ἄνομα καλάμη καὶ ἀνάψει αὐτούς ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ ἐρχομένη λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ καὶ οὐ μὴ ὑπολειφθῇ ἐξ αὐτῶν ῥίζα οὐδὲ κλημα

*See, the day of the Lord is coming, burning like an oven, and burns them up, and all **foreigners** and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord Almighty, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.*

Now, in itself, this variant is a simple case. In the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint the word זדים ‘arrogant ones’ obviously read זרים ‘foreigners’. However, Andrew Hill, commenting upon the MT of Mal 3:19, suggests that the verse is dependent on Jeremiah 42:17 and 43:2. He remarks that in the entire prophetic corpus, the word זדים occurs only in Isa 13:11; Jer 43:2, and Mal 3:15, 19. In a very sketchy and therefore complicated argument, he quotes William Holladay’s commentary to Jeremiah in defense of his view. I quote Hill,

Holladay (1986:275) translates “insolent” but omits the disputed word *zēdīm* as a gloss in Jer 43:2 given its absence in OG. He has suggested that the intrusion of *zēdīm* in 43:2 is the result of the misreading of an early gloss noted in OG in Jer 42:17 (*καὶ πάντες οἱ αλλογενεῖς = wēkol hazzārīm*).

The reverse argument seems as plausible, with *kol-hā'ānāšim wekol-hazzēdīm* original to the MT in Jer 42:17. Since the word *zēdīm* had been misconstrued as *zārīm* (“alien, foreigner”) very early in the translation of the Hebrew into Greek, the phrase *wekol-hā'ānāšim hazzēdīm* in Jer 43:2 was altered because *hā'ānāšim hazzārīm* would have been nonsensical in the context. All this is to say that Malachi’s use of the clause *wehāyū kol-zēdīm* suggests dependence upon this reconstruction of Jer 42:17 (*wehāyū kol-hā'ānāšim [wekol-hazzēdīm]*) or upon the MT of Jer 43:2 – given the prophet’s penchant for phraseology from Jeremiah and Ezekiel.⁹

Oddly enough, Hill (who generally focuses on the MT in his commentary) pays no attention whatsoever to the LXX of the very text he comments upon (Mal 3:19/4:1), even if this comparison could have still strengthened his argument that some intertextuality between Mal 3:19 and the Jeremiah text(s) is involved.¹⁰ However, it is difficult to see any connection between the texts with regard to their contents, apart from the general tone of threat, even though the LXX variant καὶ ἔσονται --- πάντες οἱ ἀλλογενεῖς in Jer 42:17 (49:17) corresponds exactly to the LXX phrase of Mal 3:19. Jer 49:17 LXX (= 42:17 MT) reads,

καὶ ἔσονται πάντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ πάντες οἱ ἀλλογενεῖς οἱ θέντες τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτῶν εἰς γῆν Αἰγύπτου ἐνοικεῖν ἐκεῖ ἐκλείψουσιν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῷ λιμῷ καὶ οὐκ ἔσται αὐτῶν οὐθεὶς σωζόμενος ἀπὸ τῶν κακῶν ὧν ἐγὼ ἐπάγω ἐπ' αὐτούς

And all the people and all the foreigners who are planning to leave to Egypt to dwell there shall die of the sword or of hunger and no-one will be able to save them from the evil which I shall impose on them.

It is, however, quite thinkable that the Greek translator of Malachi used a mode of expression which possibly was familiar to him from the Greek trans-

⁹ Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi*, Garden City: Doubleday 1998, 347.

¹⁰ Hill (*Malachi*, 335) does comment on the similar phenomenon in Mal 3:15, though: “The LXX misread *zēr* for the MT *zēd*, translating *allotriós*, “stranger, foreigner, enemy.” Thus, Hill does not consider the possibility of intentionality in the LXX translation. I discuss the case of Mal 3:15 below.

lation of Jeremiah. We should not underestimate the impact of rote learning on people in antiquity.¹¹

Edom as a foreigner and as “stubble” in Obadiah and Malachi?

To make a comparison between Obadiah 11, 18 and Malachi 3:19 LXX may be more fruitful than remaining at the Jeremiah text. It appears that the word זרים is quite crucial for the assumed interrelatedness of these verses. In Ob 11, “Esau’s” conduct during the fall of Jerusalem is described as follows,

ביום עמדך מנגד ביום שבות זרים חילו ונכרים ועל ירושלם ידו גורל גם אתה כאחד מהם
באושערי

On the day that you stood aside, on the day that foreigners carried off his wealth, and strangers entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you too were like one of them.

This verse alone could be sufficient for the emergence of a concept “Esau-foreigner.” I believe, however, that when the verse is read together with Mal 3:19 LXX and Ob 18, more weight can be added to this argument.

The similarity between Ob 18 and Mal 3:19 is interesting. Ob 18 reads,

והיה בית יעקב אש ובית יוסף להבה ובית עשו לקש ודלקו בהם ואכלום ולא יהיה שריד
לבית עשו כי יהוה דבר

The house of Jacob shall be a fire, the house of Joseph becomes a flame, and the house of Esau becomes stubble; they shall burn them and consume them, and there shall be no survivor for the house of Esau; because the Lord has spoken.

Now that the word זרים ‘arrogant ones’ in Mal 3:19 is replaced by an assumed זרים ‘foreigners’, with Ob 11 in fresh memory, an idea of Esau perhaps also being a foreigner can be discerned. Is this interpretation a conscious choice of

¹¹ As regards a possible midrashic motif of ‘Esau’s’ sojourn in Egypt, such a motif is actually to be found, but only in the presumably Medieval or Early Modern *Sefer ha-Yashar*. In chapter 57, there is a curious and elaborate description of a war between the descendants of Jacob and Esau, apparently depending on the corresponding accounts found in *Jubilees* 37–38 and in the medieval *Midrash Va-Issa’u*. However, only in the *Sefer ha-Yashar* version, Esau’s descendants follow Jacob’s descendants to Egypt to wage war there. It is virtually impossible to know whether this elaboration of the story is based on an exegetical process which involved Jer 42:17 as a proof text, but this possibility could perhaps be cautiously considered.

the Septuagint translator? Or, indeed, did already the copyist/redactor who wrote the Hebrew *Vorlage* make this connection intentionally? I am inclined to think that this was not originally the case, even if the possibility cannot be completely ruled out.¹² However, the interpretation certainly has had some influence on later (re)readings of the text, as we shall soon see.¹³

The comparison made above raises also the old question about the dating of Obadiah, and about the relationship between Obadiah and Malachi. To my mind, the most interesting detail common to Mal 3:19 and Ob 18 is the, as it appears, unique treatment of the word שָׁקַד ‘stubble’. As Weyde has pointed out, there is no actual comparison between the wicked and stubble in these verses,¹⁴ but only a plain statement that the House of Esau (Obadiah) or the wicked (Malachi) *are/will be* stubble.¹⁵ The language is thus elliptic and conceptual. Ob 18 is in fact very interesting in that it attempts at a full-scale simile or allegory: The house of Jacob is fire; the house of Joseph, a flame; the house of Esau, stubble. This is, however, not quite the case in Mal 3:19, where the Day of the Lord is the agent of the destruction, and not the tribes of Israel.¹⁶

Is Esau to be equated with the arrogant according to Malachi 3:19–21?

Did the author of Malachi 3:19 nevertheless consciously borrow Obadiah 18 concerning the word שָׁקַד? In other words, is the “stubble” of Mal 3:19 to be

¹² Cf. the discussion above on Jeremiah 42:27 and 43:2. It perhaps deserves an additional comment that also verse 2:3 in the MT and LXX of Malachi may be dependent on a complex reading that suggests an interrelationship with the contradicting MT and LXX of 1 Sam 2:31. (See the extensive discussion in Weyde, *Prophecy*, 159–164.) This possibility raises an interesting question about the early stages of transmission of Malachi, and, indeed, also the question whether exegetical activity of the *gezera shava* type also was sometimes employed with regard to the Greek versions. Charles A. Kimball, *Jesus’ Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke’s Gospel*, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994, 107 argues that Luke’s fusing of texts from Isa 61:1 and 58:6 in Luke 4:18 is due to the occurrence of the word ἄφεςις in the Septuagint of both Isaiah verses, even though MT employs two different words. Thus, in Kimball’s view, Luke used the *gezera shava* principle with regard to his base text, the Septuagint.

¹³ See below on *Genesis Rabbah* 78:5.

¹⁴ In several other oracles, the object of God’s punishment will burn like (שָׁקַד) stubble. See Exod 15:7; Isa 40:24, 41:2, 47:14; Jer 13:24; Nah 1:10; Ps 83:14.

¹⁵ Weyde, *Prophecy*, 369.

¹⁶ True, also the righteous take part of the destruction in that they shall tread the wicked under their feet, but this scene cannot, in my view, quite be compared to the one in Ob 18.

equated with the “stubble” in Ob 18 and hence be read as a reference to the house of Esau? To my mind, this possibility should not be ruled out, given the similar and unique treatment of the word, even if the image in itself is relatively common. Obadiah most probably antedates Malachi by a century or so. A remarkable difference between Obadiah and Mal 1:2–5 is that while the former predicts Edom’s future disaster, the latter refers to it as something already happened. Many scholars think that there is no actual reason to consider Obadiah as a *vaticinium ex eventu* prophecy, precisely due to its general and traditional character; in Mal 1:3–4, on the other hand, many see a reference to Nabonidus’s campaign against Edom, probably in the year 553.¹⁷

Considering now the treatment of Esau in Malachi, I side with those who think that there are some hints to him in the book even beyond the opening oracle. Thus, I agree with e.g. Andrew Hill and Bruce Dahlberg in seeing a connection between Esau’s disrespect of his right to primogeniture and the priests’ conduct as described in Mal 1:6–2:3, as the key verb בִּזָּה ‘despise’ appears in both texts.¹⁸ Also in the polemic against intermarriages, Mal 2:10–16, a subtle antithesis between Jacob and Judah (but also Esau) is probably intended, as I maintained in the chapter on Jacob. So, even if it is true that the focus of the opening oracle of Malachi is the fate of the actual nations Israel and Edom, a somewhat figurative reading of ‘Esau’ into the accused parts of the subsequent oracles is, in my opinion, intended. Some commentators have especially opted for the identification of the wicked as ‘Esau/Edom’ in Mal 3:13–21,¹⁹ but without making a connection with Gen 32:32, a verse which should be considered in this regard, together with its later reception.

¹⁷ For this see, e.g., Paul R. Raabe, *Obadiah*, AB 24D, New York: Doubleday 1996, 54–55 and the references there.

¹⁸ Cf. the chapter on Jacob above, and Hill, *Malachi*, 176–177; Bruce T. Dahlberg, “Studies in the Book of Malachi,” Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University 1963, 123–137. Dahlberg (p. 126) makes the apt observation that Esau’s reasoning in Gen 25:32, לֹמֶה זֶה לִי בְכֹרָה “Of what use is a birthright to me?” is precisely the same sort of a question that the priests and the people pose throughout Malachi.

¹⁹ See Rex Mason, *Preaching the Tradition. Homily and Hermeneutics after the Exile*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990, 241. Cf. Matthias Krieg, *Mutmaßungen über Maleachi. Eine Monographie*, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag 1993, 141–142.

As I have previously argued, the beginning of Mal 3:20 should be read as a deliberate allusion to Gen 32:32 and that it thus refers to the righteous as Jacob.²⁰ Mal 3:20–21 read,

But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.

It should be observed that a tradition which connects Mal 3:19 with Gen 32:32 is recorded in *Genesis Rabbah* 78:5,

AND THE SUN ROSE FOR HIM, etc. (32,32). R. Berekiah commented: The sun rose in order to heal him, but for others only to give light. R. Huna said in R. Aha's name: **It was indeed thus: the sun healed Jacob and burned up Esau and his chiefs**. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to him: 'Thou art an earnest for thy descendants: even as the sun healeth thee while it burns up Esau and his chiefs, so will the sun heal thy descendants while it burns up the heathen.' It will heal them: *But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings* (Mal 3, 20); it burns up the idolaters: *For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace*, etc. (*ib.* 19)²¹

This tradition may well reflect a reading of Mal 3:19 where זרים was replaced by זרים :

Even as the sun healeth thee while it burns up Esau and his chiefs, so will the sun heal thy descendants while it burns up **the heathen**. It will heal them: *But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings* (Mal 3, 20); it burns up **the idolaters**: *For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace*, etc.

²⁰ See the chapter on Jacob above.

²¹ Cited according to the translation of H. Freedman (*Midrash Rabba Genesis*, 3rd ed., London: Soncino Press, 1983).

The “heathen” would thus be equivalent also to the biblical זרים²², even if the word used in this rabbinic passage is עבדים.²³ In this rabbinic reasoning, a connection between Esau and the heathens is made explicit on the basis of Mal 3:19. On the other hand, “wickedness” is also the prime characteristic, one should perhaps say epithet, of Esau in rabbinic literature. This feature may in turn, at least partly, be derived from the epithet for Edom in Mal 1:4, גבול רשעה ‘wicked country’.²⁴

Malachi 3:15

In the Septuagint of Malachi 3:15, there is however a somewhat similar case as the one recorded in Mal 3:19. The “arrogant” are replaced by “foreigners” also in this verse:

ועתה אנחנו מאשרים זדים גם נבנו עשי רשעה גם בחנו אלהים וימלטו

*And now we praise **the arrogant** happy; those who do evil are **being rebuilt**; they test God but escape.*

καὶ νῦν ἡμεῖς μακαρίζομεν ἄλλοτρίους καὶ ἀνοικοδομοῦνται πάντες ποιοῦντες ἄνομα καὶ ἀντέστησαν θεῷ καὶ ἐσώθησαν

*And now we eulogize **the foreigners**, and all who do lawlessness **are rebuilt**, and those who oppose God are saved.*

It appears that the Greek translator here may have seen a connection to Mal 1:2–5, partly because the same verb בנה is used in Mal 1:4 and 3:15. Also this feature has been retained in the translation, where the verb ἀνοικοδομέω is used in both instances:

²² “Idolatry”, or unauthorized cultic praxis, is often in the Hebrew Bible associated with “foreignness.” Recall, e.g., the “foreign fire” (אש זרה) that Nadab and Abihu brought in front of the Lord, after which they were consumed by the Lord’s fire, Lev 10:1; Num 3:4.

²³ This later rabbinic usage of the word עבדים ‘servants’ to denote ‘nations’, is, of course, anticipated in biblical texts such as Josh 9:6–11; 1 Sam 17:9. Recall, in addition, the message that Rebekah received concerning her twins according to Gen 25:23, רב יעבד צעיר “The elder shall **serve** the younger.”

²⁴ For some other considerations, see James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 354–356.

(Mal 1:4a) διότι ἔρεῖ ἡ Ἰδουμαία κατέστραπται καὶ ἐπιστρέψωμεν καὶ **ἀνοικοδομήσωμεν** τὰς ἐρήμους

*Idumea says: We have been destroyed, but we shall return and **rebuild** the wilderness.*

In sum, the Septuagint gives support to the interpretation of scholars such as Rex Mason and Matthias Krieg, that the “wicked” of Mal 3:13–21 could be connected with the notion of ‘Esau’ in the beginning of the book.

To conclude, it is initially difficult to say whether the author of Mal 3:(15)19–21 wanted to equate his “arrogant” and “evildoers” with Esau. There appears to be some hints in subsequent Jewish literature where this connection has been made, but it is difficult to be sure of the intention of the original author. There remains, however, the possibility opted by some scholars, that Mal 3:13–21 (or some parts of that text) are secondary to the original message of the book.²⁵ Firstly, it is true that the tone and structure of this passage differ from the previous material. Secondly, verse 3:12 would fit perfectly as a hopeful chiastic ending where the “lovely land” (אַרְצֵי חַפְצִי) of Israel is contrasted with the “wicked country” (גְּבוּל רָשָׁעָה) of Edom (1:4). However, precisely because of the peculiar structure of Mal 3:13–21, it is difficult to know how the assumed growth of the text should be reconstructed.²⁶ An option could nevertheless be that only verses 19–21 are secondary, in view of that a new chapter begins at 3:19 in the LXX (4:1). If, then, these verses are to be considered secondary, this might strengthen the possibility that a later editor has wanted to ‘hide’ both Jacob and Esau in verses 19–21, presumably to form a chiasm with the opening verses of Malachi.

²⁵ See the summary made by Weyde (*Prophecy*, 360–361, 382–387). Recently, Arndt Meinhold has argued that verses 13–21 are secondary: *Maleachi* (Biblicher Kommentar: Altes Testament 14/8, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag 2000–2006), 408.

²⁶ Cf. Steven L. McKenzie and Howard N. Wallace, “Covenant Themes in Malachi,” *CBQ* 45 (1983) 549–563, who arrive at a considerable difficulty in their reconstruction of the presumed growth of the text, a fact which they themselves admit (p. 563).

5.6 Malachi 3:24 and the *herem*

How should the last verse of Malachi be interpreted grammatically?

In the chapters on Moses and Elijah, I discuss the probability that Mal 3:22–24 are later additions to the Book of Malachi and not to any larger corpus texts as scholars generally have supposed. In the chapter on Elijah, I focused on Mal 3:23, and in the chapter on Moses, on Mal 3:22. In these chapters, I left verse 3:24 for less consideration. However, being the concluding verse of Malachi according to the Hebrew text, verse 24 is in my opinion rather crucial for understanding the message of the book in its present form. It is conceivable that the editor who wrote this verse had specific concerns and wanted to make a memorable ending for the book.²⁷ The problem of *herem* will be discussed separately below, but also the grammatical structure of the verse deserves some attention. For the sake of clarity, in the following discussion I will still once quote Mal 3:24 according to the MT and the LXX.

In Hebrew, Mal 3:23–24 run as follows,

הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בוא יום יהוה הגדול והנורא
והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם פן אבוא והכיתי את הארץ חרם

See, I shall send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord arrives. He will turn the hearts of fathers to children and the hearts of children to their fathers so that when I come, I will not strike the land with herem.

To my knowledge, no scholar has questioned whether Mal 3:23 and 3:24 belong together. These verses have always been treated as one single appendix. This is all but natural given the way how verse 24 is connected to the previous verse by a *waw consecutivum*. However, for the purpose of explaining Mal 3:1(–5), verse 23 would suffice, as the messenger is there identified as Elijah.

²⁷ This contention can be maintained, I believe, regardless of whether verse 24 was written before or after verse 22 was added. (As was discussed in the chapter on Moses, verse 22 constitutes the last verse in Malachi according to the Septuagint). It is in any case true that verse 24 was the last verse of Malachi at some point in the tradition history of the book; either it was added after verse 22 (and 23), or verse 22 was added afterwards as a new conclusion.

The question of the redaction of Mal 3:23–24 is virtually impossible to solve. I think it must be admitted, though, that the structure in this lengthy sequence is not the most likely one could expect. One certainly finds quite new concerns and ideas in verse 24, and I think it is possible to view verse 24 as an afterthought to verse 23. Therefore, it is not absolutely unlikely that verse 24 is secondary to verse 23. It *may* be that someone considered an ending in verse 23 (possibly preceded by verse 22) terse and, what is more important, thought there was something still to say. This idea is attractive because it opens for a possibility that a third redactor also had real concerns, similar to those of the two first ones in form but perhaps not in content. But, of course it may also be that the author of verse 23 had several ideas and that he, after having reported his solution to the messenger problem, reveals some of those other thoughts in verse 24. There is no way to know, and the question of authorship perhaps has no real significance here. The case should only *not* be treated with a presumption that the author of verse 23 simply added some random notes about Elijah's future task and its implications to make up verse 24.

Mal 3:24 is a difficult verse when Elijah's mission is concerned. Above, the Hebrew version of the text was given. In Greek, it runs as follows (Mal 4:5 LXX),

ὃς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν καὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ μὴ ἔλθω καὶ πατάξω τὴν γῆν ἄρδην

He will restore the heart of the father to the son and the heart of a human to his neighbour, so that I will not come and destroy the world utterly.

The Greek thus already shows a certain interpretation of the verse in question, especially with regard to the first half, and has not either retained the ambiguity that characterizes the second half of the verse in Hebrew. If the LXX is not dependent on a differing Hebrew text, then the translator has made significant changes that may be due to difficulties that already he had in the interpretation of the verse. The possibility that he had a different *Vorlage* is at least not supported by the 4QXII^a version of Mal 3:22–24. Everything

that is visible in that scroll coheres with MT, even though the text is fragmentary.

What does it actually mean, then, to “turn the hearts of fathers to children and the hearts of children to their fathers”? This debated question probably has implications also for the threat that concludes the book. For the grammatical construction of the MT, there are two possibilities. The more obvious one was given above. There, the preposition על ‘upon’ was understood as the same sense as אל ‘to’, which is normal variation in Biblical Hebrew. A minority view is that the preposition על should be understood in its other meaning ‘with’, which gives the following translation,

And he will turn the heart of the fathers together with that of the children.
And the heart of the children together with that of their fathers [to me].²⁸

Beth Glazier-McDonald and Aharon Wiener have advocated this translation,²⁹ but other scholars have rejected it as forced.³⁰ Most commentators do not even consider this alternative. In any case it is not supported by the LXX or the majority of the Jewish exegetical tradition.

If, indeed, the traditional rendering is the one intended by the text, one should be able to make something out of it. Several explanations have been offered. It is common to maintain that the meaning of Elijah’s task is connected to the historical situation in which the appendix was written.³¹ Thus, scholars speculate that there were conservative and liberal fractions in Jewish culture during the Hellenistic time; perhaps the younger generation often grew assimilated to Greek customs, which their parents could not accept.³²

²⁸ Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi – The Divine Messenger*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987, 243.

²⁹ Aharon Wiener, *The Prophet Elijah in the Development of Judaism: A Depth-Psychological Study*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1978, 35.

³⁰ E.g. Shaver, “Prophet Elijah,” 112–114.

³¹ If a citation from Joel 3:4 in Mal 3:23 is accepted and if it is assumed that verse 24 stems from the same editor or at least roughly the same time as verse 23, we arrive at about the years 300–200 for the composition of the appendix. If the case of intertextuality between Joel and Malachi is viewed in the way that I maintained above in the chapter on Moses, the appendix might even be slightly older than that.

³² E.g. Alexander Rofé, “The Onset of Sects in Post-exilic Judaism: Neglected Evidence from the Septuagint, Trito-Isaiah, Ben Sira, and Malachi,” J. Neusner et al (eds.), *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee*, Philadelphia 1988: 39–49.

Brenda Shaver notes that this may be how the LXX translator has understood the verse; in the LXX, Elijah's role is to create harmony in the society at large.³³

As for the LXX, the translator's solution might also have something to do with the mention of a father/man and a son in Mal 1:6; 3:17 and a person and his neighbour in Mal 3:16. To me, this alternative seems plausible. It has often been pointed out in Malachi scholarship that verses 1:6 and 3:17 interact; in the former, the Lord as a father accuses the son (Israel and specifically its priests) for improper conduct; in the latter, he promises to show mercy upon the repentant as "a man show mercy to his son who obeys him" (יהמל איש על בנו העבד אתו; αἰρετίζει ἄνθρωπος τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν δουλεύοντα αὐτῷ). In Mal 3:16, the ones who fear the Lord talk "to one another" (איש את רעהו; ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ, the same phrase as in Mal 4:5 LXX). Reconciliation is definitely a theme in this small section of Malachi, and it is not at all unthinkable that the LXX translator of Mal 3:24 borrowed the idea from there.

Shaver herself however doubts that the LXX solution conveys the intended meaning of the Hebrew reciprocal expression of fathers and sons. She maintains that the phrase probably has some covenantal background, in the light of the prominence of covenantal language elsewhere in Malachi.³⁴ Also Julia O'Brien has argued for this option.³⁵ It is true that the language of father and son is common covenantal terminology especially with regard to a landlord and a vassal (e.g. 2 Kings 16:7), and in Mal 1:6 there certainly is an allusion to this kind of language. However, to claim the same with regard to Mal 3:24 is somewhat vague, as the whole curious phrase and especially the plural call for special attention there. The more exact background for the language in Mal 3:24 thus needs still to be clarified. It seems clear to me that it is not of use to search for it in the Hebrew Bible, at least not directly. The phrase is unique, and all the other occurrences of "fathers and sons" in the Hebrew Bible are contextually unrelated to Mal 3:24. It is of course reasonable to assume that the background of the expression in some way is in the Bible, because Mala-

³³ Shaver, "Prophet Elijah," 120.

³⁴ Shaver, "Prophet Elijah," 117–119, 121.

³⁵ Julia M. O'Brien, *Priest and Levite in Malachi*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990, 79.

chi as a whole, including the appendices, is reinterpretation of traditions. But then the idea must be inferred.

A possibility is to assume that Israel's forefathers are the fathers mentioned in Mal 3:24. This is potential in view of the prominence of especially the Jacob traditions elsewhere in Malachi (given that the editor who wrote Mal 3:24 recognized this tendency).³⁶ Then one would of course ask how these forefathers who have passed by for centuries ago could "turn their hearts towards the children." But one has only to point out Isa 63:16: **כִּי אַתָּה יְיָ אֱבֹרָתֵנוּ לֹא יָדָעָנוּ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יָכִירָנוּ** *You are our father, even if Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us.*³⁷ This citation from Third Isaiah is from roughly the same time as the bulk of Malachi, and from later Second Temple texts we know that the importance of the forefathers only grew by time. They became central figures in the literary genre of testaments and related literature. Therefore, it is possible that these forefathers are meant also here. A trace of this interpretation may actually be found in a later text. In my opinion, the option that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) has something to do with Mal 3:24 should be seriously considered, especially when its context in the Gospel of Luke is taken into account.³⁸

³⁶ See the chapter on Jacob above.

³⁷ Cf. Shaver, "Prophet Elijah," 115–117.

³⁸ It has, in any case, been shown that traces of Mal 3:23 and its interpretation can be found in all the (synoptic) gospels, albeit with different theological emphases with regard to the identification of either John or Jesus as Elijah. These kinds of tradition historical surveys are almost a field of its own in NT exegesis. See the brief discussion in the chapter on Elijah, and for further information e.g., John A.T. Robinson, "Elijah, John and Jesus: an Essay in Detection," *NTS* 4 (1958): 263–281; Markus Öhler, *Elia im Neuen Testament: Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des alttestamentlichen Propheten im Neuen Testament*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997; idem, "The Expectation of Elijah and the Presence of the Kingdom of God," *JBL* 118 (1999): 461–476; David M. Miller, "The Messenger, the Lord, and the Coming Judgement in the Reception History of Malachi 3," *NTS* 53 (2007): 1–16. – As regards the parable of the rich man and Lazarus on the other hand, Simon Perry has recently argued that the story should be viewed as pointing towards Abraham and his first heir, Eliezer of Damascus who is mentioned in Genesis 15:2 (Lazarus being the Greek equivalent for the name Eliezer/Eliezar). See Simon Perry, *Resurrecting Interpretation: Technology, Hermeneutics, and the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus*, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2012, esp. 168; 194–198. If Perry's thesis is accepted, the story functions as a warning that lineage from Isaac is not a guarantee for salvation, and this notion, of course, may in the Lucan framework have a connection with Luke's general empha-

In Bible translations, the construction **פֶּן אָבֹא וְהִכִּיתִי** is often translated in the same way as in the LXX.³⁹ Many commentators opine, though, that a better translation is, *lest that I, when I come, should strike*. The arrival of the Lord would thus not be optional; only the punishment would.⁴⁰

I side with those who understand the verbal construction in the latter sense and thus translate Mal 3:24b, *so that I, when I come, should not strike the land with herem*. It is interesting to notice, in addition, that the construction with **פֶּן** is heavily Deuteronomic and evokes covenantal associations. The Israelites are warned for many transgressions by this formula (see, e.g. Deut 6:12). Also this feature connects Mal 3:24 strongly to a covenantal context.

The meaning of herem in Mal 3:24

As was maintained above, the LXX solution should be translated, *so that I would not come and destroy the world utterly*. Some translators of the Hebrew text arrive at the same conclusion and hence maintain that *herem* in the end of the verse should be understood as “totally” or the like.⁴¹ Thus, they either actually translate the LXX, or imply that even if the background of the word is in the old covenantal concept of *herem*, the meaning has shifted by time so that this covenantal background at the most only was a vague echo in the usage of the word by the time Mal 3:24 was written. I disagree with this view, see below.

The problems of translating the word **חֵרֶם** into Greek, as is envisaged by the terms that have been applied in the LXX,⁴² illustrate the semantic field of this apparently very ancient concept. What can at least be said is that translating **חֵרֶם** as ‘ban’ or ‘curse’ appears to be somewhat misleading for Biblical

sis on gentile mission. But actually, that lineage from Isaac does not guarantee salvation is quite the same claim as I am making regarding Jacob, Esau and the concept of *herem* in Malachi.

³⁹ Nearly all English translations apply this ‘literal’ translation for the verse.

⁴⁰ E.g. Shaver, “Prophet Elijah,” 118. This rendering is explicit in the Finnish 1992 Bible, as well as in the Swedish 2000 Bible.

⁴¹ Of the English translations, at least Young’s Literal Translation (1862/1898) applies this option.

⁴² ἀνάθεμα is the preferred translation, but cf. Ezek 44:29: ἀφόρισμα. N. Lohfink contends that the original meaning of ἀνάθεμα probably was ‘votive offering placed in the temple’ (ThDOT **חֵרֶם**, 182).

Hebrew, even if this became one of the essential meanings of the word in Classical Hebrew.⁴³ Those who translate Mal 3:24b in a variant of the expression *so that I will not devote the land to destruction* are more accurate in their interpretation.⁴⁴

Herem is essentially a concept of the Deuteronomistic History, above all the Book of Joshua. It is part of the narrative scheme concerning the conquering of the cities and means their total destruction which seems to have cultic significance.⁴⁵ Occurrences of the term in the Priestly material or in prophetic texts related to the sacred are rarer, most notable in Leviticus 27 and Numbers 18. In these texts, votive offerings are the subject. It is very probable that these two meanings (votive offering and destroying the Canaanite cities) are originally interrelated, as can be seen e.g. in the expression *אִישׁ חֶרֶם* regarding the Syrian king Ben-Hadad in 1 Kings 20:42.

My point of departure concerning Mal 3:24 was that it is probably the latest addition to Malachi, regardless of if it was added together with Mal 3:23 or even later. I thus argued that the dichotomy between the righteous and the wicked that is visible in Mal 3:13–21 reflects the initial conflict between Jacob and Esau in Mal 1:2–5. I also maintained that it is possible, perhaps even probable, that Mal 3:13–21 is already secondary to the original book that could well have ended in verse 3:12.

Chiastic structure was a device in use in the Second Temple period, as can be seen e.g. in the final redaction of Isaiah. As mentioned above, Mal 3:12 would have been a perfect chiastic ending for the book, stressing the promise given to “Jacob” in the beginning of the book, as well as the contrast between the ruined country of Edom and the lovely land of Israel. Also 3:21 could have served as a chiasm, stressing more the punishment of ‘Esau.’ If, however,

⁴³ This shift in meaning seems to be precisely the same that has occurred to the Greek word *ἀνάθεμα*. Translating *חֶרֶם* as ‘ban’ or ‘curse’ has been common especially in older Bible translations (such as the King James Version, Luther’s 1545 German Bible or the Finnish 1776 Bible), but it is applied also in newer ones, such as the New Revised Standard Version. In Rabbinic Hebrew, the meaning of *חֶרֶם* is often precisely ‘excommunication’.

⁴⁴ E.g. the Finnish 1933 Bible and the Swedish 2000 Bible.

⁴⁵ Josh 6:17; 8:26; 10:1,28; 11:20, etc.

two exegetical notes (3:22 and 3:23) were needed to clarify some obscurities in Malachi, then the chiasm suffered. It had to be restored in verse 24.⁴⁶

So, I argue that the concept of *herem* in Malachi must be seen as a reference to Esau/Edom.⁴⁷ I illustrate this contention with two texts taken from Exodus and Isaiah.

In Exod 17:8–16, the Israelites fight against the Amalekites. Verse 14 is of special interest with regard to Malachi. There, the Lord says to Moses,

כתב זאת זכרון בספר ושם באזני יהושע כי מחה אמהה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים

Write this memorial in a book and put it into Joshua's ears: I will indeed wipe out the memory of Amalek from under the heaven.

If, now, an earlier redactor (i.e. the author of Mal 3:22) had identified the “book of remembrance” of Mal 3:16 as the Torah and possibly also seen a specific connection to Moses and the Sinai event in Exod 32:32–34⁴⁸, a slightly later ancient exegete (i.e. the author of Mal 3:24) could well have elaborated the statement even further.⁴⁹ For surely this account in Exod 17:8–16 also was a part of the Holy Torah of Moses, and the conspicuous mention of “memorial” and “book” called for special attention. The obligation to remember Amalek’s evil deeds is repeated in Deut 25:19, but from a slightly different angle: the denial of the Edomites/Amalekites to give way to the Israelites is stressed (see also Num 20:14–21; 24:20). Of course, the ancient exegete was well aware that the punishment against the Amalekites was not total: Saul failed due to his negligence (1 Samuel 15), and even David did not completely succeed (1 Sam 30:17). It is possible that the editor reasoned that Israel may be under threat because of this failure.⁵⁰ After all, in Deuteronomistic theology it had

⁴⁶ If the LXX sequence of verses 22–24 is original to a Hebrew text, then this textual variant might indicate that the text of Malachi was also transmitted by groups who perhaps did not pay so careful attention to a possible chiasmic structure.

⁴⁷ So also Erich Bosshard and Reinhard Gregor Kratz, “Maleachi im Zwölfprophetenbuch,” *BN* 52 (1990): 27–46, here 46. (I thank Martin Hallaschka for this reference.)

⁴⁸ See the chapter on Moses above.

⁴⁹ I want however to stress that it is still quite possible that there was only one redactor with multiple concerns.

⁵⁰ The redactor might of course have already taken this in a more figurative or metaphorical meaning, as the *implied* ‘Israel and Edom’/‘Jacob and Esau’ elsewhere in Malachi do not either

been a commonplace to explain the disaster of the exile by the Israelites' devotion to foreign gods – and this idolatry was ultimately due to their failure to totally root out the seven Canaanite nations that should have stood under the obligation of *herem* (Deut 7:1–6). It deserves additional emphasis that the verb παρατάσσω, which is employed in the Septuagint of Exodus 17:9,10 occurs also in the Septuagint of Malachi 1:4:

(Exod. 17:9a) εἶπεν δὲ Μωυσῆς τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπίλεξον σεαυτῷ ἄνδρας δυνατοὺς καὶ ἐξελθὼν **παρατάξαι τῷ Αμαληκ** αὔριον

*Moses said to Joshua: Choose for yourself powerful men and go out and **draw up in battle-order against Amalek** tomorrow.*

(Mal 1:4b) καὶ ἐπικληθήσεται αὐτοῖς ὅρια ἀνομίας καὶ **λαὸς ἐφ' ὃν παρατέτακται κύριος** ἕως αἰῶνος

*And they will be called 'borders of lawlessness' and '**the people against whom the Lord has drawn up in battle-order for ever**'.*

Thus, it seems that the Greek translator of Malachi has made connections between the “Esau/Edom” of Mal 1:2–5 and the tradition concerning the Amalekites which is recounted in Exodus 17. This was probably due to similar exegetical reasoning as I have also otherwise sought to demonstrate in the current chapter.

Another text that may be of importance concerning the final *herem* of Mal 3:24 is Isa 34:5:

כִּי רוּתָהּ בַּשָּׁמַיִם חֶרֶב־הִנֵּה עַל אֶדְוֹם וְעַל עַם חֶרְמִי לַמִּשְׁפָּט

*When my sword has drunk enough in heaven, see, it will come down upon Edom (and) upon **the people that I have dedicated to destruction**, to judge (them).*

Isaiah 34 is one of the earlier oracles of Edom that may have influenced Mal 1:2–5; it is therefore quite possible that a later redactor returned to this text to form a chiasm for the Book of Malachi. However, the ׀ in the phrase וְעַל עַם חֶרְמִי might also have led the ancient exegete to think that the ׀ is a simple

refer to these actual characters but to the ‘righteous’ and the ‘wicked’ of the presumed audience.

conjunction (instead of an explicative ו) and that the ‘people whom the Lord has dedicated to destruction’ is some quite other people than Edom. The worst scenario would then be that the people intended for destruction is Israel itself, despite all covenantal promises.⁵¹ This possibility might be strengthened by an alternative reading of the condemnatory verse Isa 34:9, because it is not absolutely clear in this verse that Edom is referred to; the reference could in principle be to “Zion” mentioned in verse 8.⁵² In light of all this, it is conceivable that Mal 3:24 and especially the last word *herem* functions as a veiled threat that the punishment that Esau and his descendants the Amalekites once avoided will come upon Israel if they do not repent.

5.5 Conclusion

The observations made above have been intended for showing that the Book of Malachi, especially when read together with the Book of Obadiah, may have had an impact on the emergence of the idea of Esau being a foreigner. A connection between Mal 3:19–21 and the Jacob/Esau story was found in *Genesis Rabbah* 78:5, a fact which indicates that an exegesis connecting these texts was known to the Rabbis. However, as I sought to demonstrate also in the chapter on Jacob, it is feasible that a connection between ‘the righteous’ and ‘Jacob’ on one hand and ‘the wicked’ and ‘Esau’ on the other was made already by the first author of Malachi and was recognized and developed by subsequent editors. It is also possible that the author of Mal 3:24 wanted to make a specific connection to Esau and his descendants by choosing the emphatic *herem* as the last word in his appendix to the book. In consequence, it appears that the reasons for the later common identification of Esau with foreign nations, especially Rome, are not merely external. That is, while historical development certainly has been a central cause for the growth of this tradition, the origins of it are firmly anchored to the biblical text.

⁵¹ The ancient exegete could, for example, have thought about the rhetorical pattern in Amos 1–2, where the gradual condemnation of neighboring peoples culminates in the sudden inclusion of Judah and Israel in this list.

⁵² Of course, this alternative is rather nonsensical in the context, but it is nevertheless grammatically possible.

III CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study, I have discussed the concept of *midrash*, with my point of departure in the earlier studies of especially Renée Bloch, Michael Fishbane, and James Kugel. I thus concluded that *midrash*, denoting ‘seeking’, ‘enquiry’ was a method that was used in the interpretation of texts that were deemed as authoritative. In my five case studies, I sought to demonstrate that certain midrashic interpretative techniques were operative already by the time when the Book of Malachi was written (ca 475 BCE), and that this book was later interpreted according to these same techniques of ancient exegesis. The earliest midrashic techniques included paronomasia (puns applying homonymous roots), *gezera shava* (interpretation based on the occurrence of the same word in two texts, even when these words were actually only homonyms), and *hek-kesh* (interpretation based on similarity in content or theme). My study also showed that Pentateuchal traditions were those which were most often reinterpreted and actualized, both in Malachi and in those later rewritings of Scripture that used Malachi as building material. This conclusion is natural, because the Torah obviously was the first part of Scripture that received authoritative status. However, both in Malachi and in the later reception history of this book, also traditions pertaining to the Former and Latter Prophets are prominent.

In my first case study I contended that the author of Malachi consistently applies traditions pertaining to the patriarch Jacob very positively, and at the same time in a way which requires attention from the reader’s side. The author was plausibly writing for an audience that was able to understand his viewpoints. His use of the Jacob traditions portrays Jacob in much more favorable light than is the case in Hosea 12 or even in the Jacob cycle in Genesis. Thus, the author’s application of Jacob traditions paves the way for the later schematic portrayal of Jacob as the true Israelite hero who did nothing wrong. The author also makes Jacob an implicit observer of the Torah. This notion, that the patriarchs observed the Torah long before it was given to

Moses, is a prominent feature in many later Second-Temple rewritings of Genesis.

My second case study moved from ‘inner-biblical exegesis’ and tradition history more into the direction of reception history, as I described how notions of Levi’s priesthood that are taken from Malachi 2 were operative in retellings of Genesis 34 in Second Temple times. I chose to illustrate this contention with one retelling, the one found in *Jubilees* 30. I also discussed the probability that Malachi, with its emphases on temple purity and sexual purity, i.e. themes influenced by Priestly theology, has generally been one important component in the rise of a priestly-levitical/Essene line of interpretation, which Sidnie White Crawford has identified in certain Second-Temple rewritings of Scripture. This notion, however, provides also an interesting glimpse into the tradition and transmission history of Malachi. I contended that the view which e.g. Karl William Weyde and other recent scholars of Malachi have expressed, that Malachi could have its background in priestly circles, is probably correct. It is, in my view, also likely that the author should be sought among dissident priestly groups, i.e. comparable groups to those in which the author(s) of *Jubilees* belonged and that later formed the Qumran community.

In the third case study, the one concerning Elijah, I sought to show that the introduction of the prophet Elijah to Malachi 3:23 was a midrashic exegesis of Malachi 3:1–2. A later editor saw himself as compelled to write an exegetical note concerning the identity of the messenger figure of Mal 3:1, because he had come to the conclusion that this messenger is the prophet Elijah. That the editor wrote this note in the end of the book rather than introducing his discovery somehow in Mal 3:1 indicates that he already viewed the text of Malachi as authoritative and did not want to alter it. Ben Sira 48:10–11, in turn, evidences of a further midrashic reading, where Mal 3:1, 23 were associated with other texts, most notably Isaiah 42:19, with the *gezera shava* method. This procedure resulted in the conviction among certain ancient exegetes that the Servant figure in the book of Isaiah was in fact Elijah. This notion, in turn, was very important also for the generation of traditions that are reflected in the New Testament Gospels. It is my contention that New Testament texts should be examined with this exegetical development firmly in mind.

In my fourth case study, I discussed the possibility that Mal 3:22 is yet another exegetical explanation, now of Mal 3:16. I sought to illustrate also how Exodus 23:23 and 32:34 probably led an ancient exegete, applying the *gezera shava* method, to refer to Moses in Mal 3:22. I also discussed tradition-historical features relating to ancient covenantal concepts that are visible in Malachi and that could be connected to the “book of remembrance” of Mal 3:16. I thus concluded that both an ancient notion of a treaty which is kept in the temple, and a more apocalyptic concept of a heavenly ‘book of destiny’ are visible in Mal 3:16. I discussed a few cases where Mal 3:16 has been used in subsequent literature and concluded that the verse has often been interpreted in an apocalyptic frame of reference, featuring a dichotomy between the righteous and the wicked. This is a notion which is most probably taken from the general thematic in Mal 3:13–21.

With my fifth case study, I formed a chiastic structure to my case studies section by discussing Esau and his role as Jacob’s ‘foreign’ brother. I demonstrated that the roots to the later common concept of Esau’s foreignness are partly to be found in Malachi, especially its Septuagint version, where the “arrogant” of the Hebrew text are twice replaced by “foreigners.” The translator also appears to make a connection between Edom and Esau’s later descendants, the Amalekites. These features point to intentional interpretation along certain lines in the Greek translation. On the other hand, it is possible that already the author of Malachi used the Book of Obadiah and also other traditions pertaining to Edom in forming his statement of God’s love for Jacob and hatred for Esau. Thus, it can be concluded that the later common identification of Esau with foreign nations, especially Rome, is not only due to later historical reasons, but has a basis in the interpretation of Scripture in Second Temple times. I also maintained that the choice of *herem* as the last word in the last appendix to Malachi was intended to evoke associations to Esau/Edom and form a chiastic structure in Malachi.

I want to conclude my study with two points. Firstly, I wish to have convinced my readers of the nature of the midrashic processes involved especially in the inclusion of the appendices (3:22–24) to Malachi. The nature of these appendices has long been debated in Malachi scholarship. I hope to have

settled the question by showing that the appendices represent midrashic interpretation of certain passages in Malachi, and I have confidence in that this is my lasting contribution to the scholarship on Malachi.

Secondly, I want to emphasize that the interpretative (midrashic) aspect should always be kept in mind in the research of both biblical texts and their later rewritings. Biblical interpretation was a long, continuous process. Therefore, for example in New Testament research, it is not enough to simply compare New Testament texts with Old Testament texts. The interpretative processes and new developments that occurred in the intertestamental period should always be taken properly into account. Therefore, I hope my study can be a contribution that illustrates and underlines the necessity of co-operation across discipline borders in Bible scholarship.

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Lotta Valve

Early Modes of Exegesis

Ideal Figures in Malachi as a Test Case

In this study, the author illustrates which kind of reading strategies ancient Jewish exegetes applied to their sacred texts. She contends that these exegetes often compared identical words and phrases in Scripture to yield new interpretations. This strategy, which the rabbis later called the *gezera shava*, is one of the earliest midrashic techniques. Because early exegetes used an unvocalized Hebrew text, they often found out ingenious and surprising ways to explain difficult passages by using similar-looking words which in another context had a different meaning.

Valve exemplifies these ways of reading with five case studies where the five biblical personalities mentioned in the post-exilic book of Malachi are in focus. These persons are the brothers Jacob and Esau, Jacob's son Levi, Moses the lawgiver, and Prophet Elijah. Valve discusses the function that these persons have in Malachi, but she also illuminates how these persons have been used in subsequent early exegesis and how these interpretations have been influenced by Malachi.



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