Writing Religion: A Comparative Study of Ancient Israelite Scribes, their Writing Materials and their Methods Used in the Writing of the Hebrew Prophecies

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ABSTRACT

Writing Religion: A Study on the Scribes, Materials and Methods Used in the Writing of the Hebrew Prophecies

A thesis presented to the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies

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In this thesis, Moore attempts to explain the development of Hebrew prophetic texts based on comparative evidence from other ancient Near Eastern (ANE) cultures. He investigates three different but connected topics followed by two case studies that apply the results of his investigations to Hos 1-3 and Ezek 18. The first study explores the social horizon of literacy in the ANE. Moore shows that knowing an ancient Hebrew writer's social context can aid in an interpretation of the text. He questions the long standing view that only elites were literate in the ANE. The second study focuses on different mediums on which ancient writers wrote. Circumstantial evidence leads to the conclusion that wax-boards were likely used in ancient Israel and Judah for various literary genres, including letters, and for drafting purposes. A final study examines
various prophetic texts from the ANE to determine which literary genres were likely used in the textualization of the Hebrew prophecies. Moore opines that some, if not many, Hebrew prophecies were first written as letters. Applying these findings to Hos 1-3, he demonstrates that Hos 1-3 underwent a Judahite redaction after an original writer composed Hos 1-3 as a letter to a king. This historical reconstruction explains the enigmatic problem of shift in grammatical person between Hos 1-2 and Hos 3. A second case study on Ezek 18 claims that a writer composed Ezek 18 as a letter to the leaders of Jerusalem. Based on its distinct literary units, five prophetic utterances and two didactic expansions, Moore reconstructs how it was drafted and proposes that it may have been drafted on wax-boards. The study proposes new ways of thinking about redaction criticism, scribal activity, and the Hebrew prophets.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: 
INTRODUCTION ..............................................................................................................1

CHAPTER 2: 
THE SOCIAL HORIZON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LITERACY .......................5

CHAPTER 3: 
WRITING MATERIALS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON PROPHETIC TEXTS ............32

CHAPTER 4: 
PROPHETIC TEXTUALIZATION AND REDACTION: 
A COMPARATIVE STUDY .........................................................................................67

CHAPTER 5: 
HOSEA 1-3 A CASE STUDY .................................................................................105

CHAPTER 6: 
EZEKIEL 18 A CASE STUDY ................................................................................123

CHAPTER 7: 
CONCLUSIONS ......................................................................................................139

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................................................................................142
# LIST OF CHARTS

Summary Chart of Hosea 1-3 ........................................................................................118

Chart of Prophetic Utterances in Ezekiel 18 .................................................................125

Summary Chart of Ezekiel 18 ......................................................................................131
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This work is an attempt to reconstruct the world of the ancient Hebrew scribes and prophets. As with any adventure, the journey promises difficulties and poses problems that require creative though rational problem solving. At times, the path is an impasse, a vast crevasse lacking evidences on which any conjecture can stand, much less traverse. At other times, the way is stymied by previous scholarly presuppositions and arguments. Some of these existing barriers are faithful guide rails; they keep the traveler, the scholar, on the safest and most logical path. Other barriers hide viable roads to the past. Despite the foreseen pitfalls, this study promises new insights into the lives, the social setting, of those responsible for writing some of the most influential words in human history. By the end of this study, I hope to bring the reader to the point at which the world of the ancient Hebrew scribes comes into better view.

In the pages that follow, I will triangulate three investigations to provide insights into how the Hebrew prophecies were written. My study is guided by three inquiries: What type of person wrote the Hebrew prophecies? What are the practices involved in writing texts for the first time, especially prophecies, and on what types of materials? Lastly, in what literary form were prophecies first written?

These three questions address the initial composition of prophetic texts. The
process of a writer writing a text for the first time is called the process of textualization.¹ It refers to a true process not merely one act. By this I mean that a writer (or many writers) develops a text in multiple stages, and the process is not complete until the writer has stopped developing the text. For example, a newspaper reporter witnessing an event first hand may draft or take notes on the the event including writing quotes and testimonials. This drafting process is but one of many stages the text will go through before the reporter finishes a complete article. Even the small editorial changes the reporter's editor makes before the article goes to press constitutes a stage in the textualization process. Once the article is published all other changes are supplementary and thus redactional.

In biblical studies, redaction criticism often works backward from the last stages of a text's development stripping away layers of text in order to reach the "original composition." Redaction critics rarely define what they mean by "original." My goal in this thesis is to help provide some empirical goals for redaction criticism, so much as the evidence allows. I will provide in this thesis a model of the process of textualization of Hebrew prophetic utterances and explain in general the genre and literary structure ancient writers used when they textualized prophetic utterances.

To create this model, I employ the comparative method throughout this study. I do not, however, use the method indiscriminately. The comparative method is valuable

1. I use this term differently than some. I use it with reference to the utility and functionality of writing a text for the first time. This is starkly different than W. Schniedewind, How the Bible Became a Book (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3 who uses the term in relations to the "transference of authority from oral to written."
in ancient Near Eastern (ANE) studies so long as the comparisons demonstrates a widespread phenomenon among the cultures compared. In some cases the phenomenon is so widespread that anthropological data becomes a valuable pieces of evidence. In most cases, however, comparisons must be limited to similar trends found among the ANE cultures, that is trends which are comparable on a social or pragmatic level. Equally as valuable as the similarities that the comparative method highlights are the contrasts that it ferrets out. This thesis will uncover many idiosyncrasies of Hebrew prophets and of the writers who textualized their words.

In the next chapter I will explore literacy in the ANE and its implications for the initial textualization of the Hebrew prophecies. Using comparative and anthropological data, I will show that the long standing view that only the elite had access to literacy does not reflect the anthropological or ANE data. I propose that the social setting in which an ANE literate person existed was complex and the term "elite" is misleading. Moreover, the social setting of an ancient writer influenced the text he or she wrote, and this influence can be seen in the writings of the Hebrew prophets.

In a third chapter I propose a new hypothesis about the writing materials ancient writers used to textualize Hebrew prophecies. I question the assumption that papyri was the primary writing medium on which texts were written. Instead, I propose that wax-boards were used in the initial textualization of many text types in general and prophetic texts in particular. My theory explains the dearth of primary material from the eighth through the sixth centuries in ancient Israel and Judah. I then use my findings to show that the limits of wax-boards are responsible for the short length of many Hebrew
prophetic utterances.

In the fourth chapter I study ANE prophetic texts to find a common literary formula and genre used when writing prophetic utterances. I show that Mari, Assyrian and Northwest Semitic (NWS) texts provide apt comparisons for studying the textualization process of Hebrew prophetic utterances. These comparison reveal that many Hebrew prophecies were textualized in epistolary form. Then, at a later period, the letter containing these prophetic utterances were redacted into a larger prophetic collection.

In a final chapter I apply my findings to case studies from the Hebrew Bible (HB). I look first at Hosea 1-3. After removing the chapters' redactional layers, I posit that Hosea 1-3 was written as a letter before it was incorporated into the Book of Hosea. I show how this theory explains the previously unresolved problem of shift in grammatical person between chapters 2 and 3.

In the second study I examine Ezek 18 and demonstrate that it too was originally written as a letter. The writer wrote it in drafts, which explains its distinctive literary subunits, five prophetic utterances and two didactic expansions.

This thesis posits many new ideas about the development of prophetic texts particularly the textualization of prophetic utterances.
CHAPTER 2
THE SOCIAL HORIZON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LITERACY

The only phenomenon with which writing has always been concomitant is the creation of cities and empires, that is the integration of large numbers of individuals into a political system and their grading into castes or classes. Such, at any rate, is the typical pattern of development to be observed from Egypt to China, at the time when writing first emerged: it seems to have favoured the exploitation of human beings rather than their enlightenment. . . My hypothesis, if correct, would obliged us to recognize the fact that the primary function of written communication is to facilitate slavery. The use of writing for disinterested purposes, and as a source of intellectual and aesthetic pleasure, is a secondary result, and more often than not it may even be turned into a means of strengthening, justifying or concealing the other.2

A text emerges from a specific social setting. The writer behind a given text has a voice, opinions and worldviews that shape the writer's word choice. The writer's social context forms his or her opinions of the subject matter about which he or she writes. Therefore in a study investigating the textualization of the Hebrew prophecies, it is fitting to explore the social context of literacy in the ANE in order to understand the motivations and abilities a writer had when textualizing the Hebrew prophecies.

Who wrote the Bible? This question has been popularized in various titles from books to documentaries; it is provocative. But answering this question, would not significantly advance the search for the Bible's meaning. For all of the Bible's authors are

likely otherwise unknown individuals from the distant past. For instance, what value is there in claiming that Baruch wrote a particular section of Jeremiah (a claim which at this point cannot be validated) if nothing is known of Baruch outside of the few references in Jeremiah? The question then should not be who wrote the Bible, rather what type of person wrote the Bible? Or, for this study, what type of person wrote the Hebrew prophecies of the eighth through late sixth centuries B.C.E? Answering this question assures insights into the milieu of the prophets and scribes. It has the potential to explain the relationship between a scribe and a prophet and the social stratum from which prophetic texts grew.

The textualization of the Hebrew prophecies was complex. Prophetic texts were not written in a vacuum. Yet there are few pieces of textual data that hint at or state the textualization process behind their composition. The paucity of references comes as no surprise since the objective of a prophetic text is not to explain how the text came about but to commentate on a specific interest of the prophet, the deity via the prophet, and/or the audience. Some prophets were capable of writing, yet sometimes a second

3. Here the Book of Romans is a model example. In Rom 16:22 Paul's amanuensis, Tertius, signs the epistle. Other than this epistle Tertius is unknown in classical literature. The questions commentaries such as C.E.B. Cranfield, Romans (Edinburgh: Clark, 1979), 2 pose about Tertius' signature can be asked of any book for which an amanuensis may be involved. He states, "But it is necessary to ask whether Tertius means by ὁ γράφων τὴν ἐπιστολὴν (i) that he wrote the letter in long-hand to Paul's dictation, or (ii) that he took it down in shorthand as Paul dictated it and then subsequently wrote it out in long-hand, or (iii) that, acting as a much more independent secretary, he himself composed the letter in accordance with Paul's instructions." These questions are particularly valid for a study of Hebrew prophetic texts if it is assumed that, at times, the phenomena of a prophet's experience physically debilitates him from writing his own dictation thus needing an amanuensis.

4. Isa 8:1 and Hab 2:2. Cf. n. 56 below.
individual was responsible for writing down a prophet's message or for narrating the 
prophet's biography. It is unclear if this second individual wrote as a prophet's 
amanuensis or on behalf of a third party, such as the state, who had something to gain 
from a prophet's messages. Determining whether the writer was the prophet, his 
amanuensis or a third party recorder will drastically alter the interpretation of a prophetic 
text. Therefore, it is necessary to answer what type of person wrote these texts. This 
problem raises the larger question of literacy in the ANE.

In this chapter, I will posit what type of person was literate in the ANE in general. 
There are clear dangers in generalizing an ANE social phenomenon such as the social 
parameters of literacy. Disparate data from different cultures separated in some cases by 
more than a thousand years does not constitute an ideal databank. But the dearth of 
primary or secondary Israelite or Judahite sources from the eighth through the sixth 
centuries requires me turn to other data. Since general anthropological trends can be 
found among literate cultures (as Levi-Strauss so keenly noted in the quote above), 
making anthro-historical comparisons among ANE cultures is acceptable so long as it is 
done cautiously. I will briefly survey what is know of literacy in various ANE cultures, 
then propose a general model of the ANE literate person. This model will logically 
pertain to the writers of the Hebrew prophecies.

This model will provide an empirical lens, which will give a new perspective on a 
redactional study of Hebrew prophecy. No commentator of Hebrew prophecies can 
avoid the social issues evident in these texts. Providing a model for the social class of a
scribe who could have first written these prophecies can provide a modern scholar with an interpretive vantage point that no commentator of prophetic texts has yet employed.

Studies on Israelite Literacy and the Need for a New Perspective

The textual finds of ancient Palestine allude to various uses of writing in many different cultures including the ancient Israelite and Judahite cultures of the Hebrew prophets. These finds pale in comparison to the libraries and archives unearthed in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Anatolia as well as the finds from the classical Mediterranean world. Suggestions about literacy levels in these regions vary among scholars, but nearly all now agree that literacy rates were very low in all periods prior to and through the sixth century. My own findings support these claims that only a few were literate in the

6. Suggestions range from one percent per Schniedewind, How the Bible Became a Book, 25 (without citation) to as high as 10 percent in Attic speaking Greece and 15% in Italy (W.V. Harris, Ancient Literacy [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989] 114, 267). Others tend to generalize about how widespread literacy may be. For instance A. Millard, "Knowledge of Writing in Iron Age Palestine," Tyndale Bulletin 46 (1995): 211 claims, that writing was used "beyond the basically administrative" in Iron Age Palestine. For more references on literacy in ancient Palestine cf. C. Rollston, Writing and Literacy in Ancient Israel (Atlanta: SBL, 2010), 132. Hoffner claims that "in ancient times only a minority of the population was literate—mostly but not by any means exclusively, scribes" (Letters from the Hittite Kingdom [Atlanta: SBL, 2009], 4). Beaulieu shows that advanced literacy was rare among first millennium cuneiform writers ("Late Babylonian Intellectual Life," in The Babylonian World [ed. G. Leick; New York: Routledge, 2007], 473). Lesko, "Literacy," OEANE 2:297-299 claims that literacy in ancient Egypt was between 1-5 percent. In the Rabbinic period estimates are not are high but still low. C. Heczer, ed., The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 331 writes, "Rabbinic texts concerning education and Torah study need to be considered in a context in which literacy—meaning the ability to read documents, letters, and simple literary texts—was probably below 10-15 per cent of
ancient world.

Literacy, however, does not presuppose a particular social class. It is common place to assume that ancient literate peoples, especially the writers of the Hebrew prophecies were members of the social elite. Rollston bluntly states, "Sometimes scholars will refer to the number of times 'reading' and 'writing' is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible and assume that this demonstrates that elites and non-elites could read and write. However, I would contend that the Hebrew Bible was primarily a corpus written by elites to elites." With all due respect to Rollston, this claim does not reflect the social reality of ancient Israel or any other ANE society, nor it does reflect the anthropological realities of literacy among human cultures. The majority of literate persons were not elites. Instead many literate persons were subordinates who transcended their own social class and often worked for the elites because the elites were often not literate.

Literate persons were valuable in their respective trades but were, as many scholars have noted, tradesmen themselves. This tradesman versus elites distinction is evident in the Hebrew prophecies but more clearly seen in other ANE texts. Furthermore, since so few ANE texts reflect on who is writing them and what the writer's social standing is, it becomes necessary to tease out sociological data from the writers' final products. While the ANE data precludes determining an exact percentage of literate persons, it does provide insights into the social standing of an ANE writer and the types of texts, the genres, they wrote.

the population."

7. Rollston, Writing and Literacy, 133.

9
Genre as a Window to a Scribe's Social Class: An Anthropological Observation

Classifying a text according to genre is a major step of interpretation, and a researcher may infer something about the scribe's social class from the text's content and genre. Nearly all discussions today assume that the social class that produced nearly all, if not all, extant genres is that of the elites. Few scholars define what they mean by terms such as "elite," "intelligencia," or "literati," but the contexts of their writings imply that they refer only to those playing a special role in the government or religious infrastructure.

This statement may hark back to Gunkel's *Gattungsforschung*, but I intend it with reference to sociolinguistic theories of interpretation. While the statement best aligns with performance theory, a theory of interpretation which considers the performer and the audience in relation to the genre in which the communication appears, sociolinguistic theories must remain functional models of interpretation in anthro-historical reconstructions because the historian, unlike the sociolinguist, is working with limited data. For a brief definition of performance theory cf. D.L. Shaul and N.L. Furbee, *Language and Culture* (Prospect Heights, Il.: Waveland Press, 1998), 223-225.

S. Sanders, "Writing and Early Iron Age Israel," in *Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan* (eds. R.E. Tapp and K.P. McCarter; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 106, n. 15 rightly questions the use of the term "elite." He writes, "We tend to give explanations from the viewpoint of a patron or consumer, but what if we think of writing from the view point of its producers? Doing so might entail seeing them as entrepreneurs of knowledge who held a monopoly on a specialized craft." Thinking in this paradigm (one which applies to every specialty apprentice trade) allows for scribal culture to
This assumption is so commonplace in biblical scholarship that it is difficult to trace its origins, but it perhaps reflects a complete rejection of theories proposed by those such as Albright and Lemaire who unabashedly argued that large sections of the population had access to schooling and that learning the Semitic alphabetic scripts were an easy task.\textsuperscript{11}

Elite in this thesis refers to people who exist in the highest class of society. These people are influential on their culture and exist in powerful positions. They gain these positions often through their wealth or influence, which gives them social leverage to effect change in society. For example, the legendary scribe and counselor to Sennacherib, Ahikar, was literate and elite. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the scribes in Elephantine who transmitted Ahikar’s wisdom literature were elite. This types of observation calls into question the relationship between literacy and elitism.

In their landmark survey of the historical development of literacy in traditional societies, the anthropologists Goody and Watts (1968) comment on the development of writing in the ancient world. They argue:

\begin{quote}
become a organic part of a society and an enterprise rather than an idealized occupation.
\end{quote}

In the protoliterate cultures, with their relatively difficult non-alphabetic systems of writing, there existed a strong barrier between the writers and the non-writers; but although the 'democratic' scripts make it possible to break down this particular barrier, they led eventually to a vast proliferation of more or less tangible distinctions based on what people had read.\textsuperscript{12}

Recent anthropological studies have disproved their claim that non-alphabetic scripts were social barriers by showing that students can learn non-alphabetic scripts, such as Chinese, in as much time as alphabetic scripts.\textsuperscript{13} However, Goody's and Watt's observation that the genre, "what people had read," plays a role in social distinctions holds true.

When they explored modern societies they found that the types of materials people read produced "social differentiation" within the same socioeconomic stratum of society. They astutely claim, "Achievement in handling the tools of reading and writing is obviously one of the most important axes of social differentiation in modern societies; and this differentiation extends on to more minute differences between professional specializations so that even members of the same socioeconomic groups of literate specialists may hold little intellectual ground in common."\textsuperscript{14} If this ground breaking observation is taken seriously and applies to ancient literate societies, it complicates the social matrix of literate peoples in the ANE. It reveals that a person familiar with one genre of writing may intellectually transcend his or her socioeconomic stratum and may

\textsuperscript{14} Goody and Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," 58.
interact within another according to the genre of literature that he or she reads and writes.

In light of this anthropological axiom, a more complex picture of the relationship between literacy and socioeconomic standing in the ANE takes shape. The implication of this observation for ANE literacy is: those composing "elitist texts" do not need to be elite. Literate persons existing in a lower socio-economic stratum can create a "social differentiation" between themselves and those in their own socio-economic class. But their socio-economic standing does not change. The genre of literature, "what they read [and write!]" creates this differentiation. Thus an ANE literate person can intellectually operate on a different level than the rest in his or her socio-economic class. If then a literate person writes and reads for someone in an elite standing, the literate person can intellectually operate at the elite level even though the literate person may exist in a lower socio-economic class. Literate persons then give the appearance of being elite though they may not be.

It cannot be assumed that the corpora of extant texts reflects the social horizon of those writing the texts. Indicators found within the literary genre of given texts may

15. While it may sound complicated, the argument is very rational and can be observed in everyday society. For example, a tradesman who habitually reads political news articles may be able to speak intelligently to a real politician even though the tradesman is not himself a politician. Now, should the tradesman write on a political issue, he may be able to present that issue with as much political acumen as a politician, and a person reading his work may not be able to determine, on the surface, whether the tradesman was a politician or not. The reader would likely assume that the tradesman is a politician. It is this type of assumption that is widespread in ANE scholarship. A scholar reading a text concerned with elites assumes that the writer was elite when in reality this need not be the case. An iconic example of this would be the famous American philosopher Eric Hoffer, known as the longshoreman philosopher, who produced seminal treatises on American social theory while working in the San Francisco docks.
serve as clues to the socioeconomic relationship between the writer and the target audience. This is a critical observation when narrowing the genre of study to Hebrew prophetic texts since it has long been noted that these texts are concerned with socioeconomic issues and the mistreatment of the lower classes by the elites. At the same time, the writers of Hebrew prophetic texts show a keen awareness of international and state workings, such that the texts appear to have been composed by a social insider, who had access to the political or cultic elite. But can a writer of a prophetic text be an insider in both the impoverished and elite classes?

Two social variables may operate at the same time in this problem. First, not all prophets fall into the same social stratum. Some prophets are cultic functionaries and operate, perhaps occupationally, in the cult. Prophets such as Isaiah fit into this category. He had access to the temple and counseled the king; he was elite according to the definition above. And not coincidentally, he was literate. Despite his high social standing, he decried the injustices against the poor.

On the other hand, some such as Habakkuk were literate (Hab 2:2) but do not appear to have functioned in the cult. In fact, Habakkuk was a humble outsider decrying against those in power (1:2-4). In my opinion Habakkuk's context is one of a soldier or conscript because the language of his prophecy shows how attuned he was to war.  

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16. Hab 2:1 is perhaps the clearest indication, "On my watch let me stand and station myself on the rampart." His awareness of Assyrian despoiling techniques are also telling. 1:15 conveys the image similar to that found on the stele of Esarhaddon, which portrays the king caring away other kings with fishhooks through their jaws, "he will bring up all of her with a fishing hook, he will drag him in his net, and he will gather him
Despite his more humble social standing he shows a keen awareness of political issues.
The sociological distance between prophets such as Isaiah and those such as Habakkuk
make it clear that literacy operated at various levels of society, and warrants further
investigation into the levels of society at which literacy operates.

The second social variable corresponds to the social class of the writer, who was
not the prophet. The famous reference to Baruch, Jeremiah's amanuensis falls into this
category. According to the tradition found in Jer 36, Baruch was an official scribe; he
operated in the circle of the most elite royal scribes. Is he an example of an elite
recording Hebrew prophetic utterances?

These two social variables require more information about ANE literacy, and only
exploring ANE comparative data can I further delimit the social standing of an ANE
literate person.

The Social Standing of Literate Persons According to ANE Textual Evidence

Mesopotamian Texts

Moving from anthropological observations to textual data, a sampling of texts from
Mesopotamia reveals that as early as the Ur III Period, economic, literary, law, religious,
and other genres of texts coexisted in at least two languages. A societal upheaval in the

17. For economic texts, receipts, cf. the Turam-ili collection which exhibits a strong
Akkadian milieu despite many of the products in the documents are written with
Sumerian logograms (S.J. Garfinkle, "Turam-ili and the Community of Merchants in the
Ur III Period birthed the Old Babylonian period (OB), which in turn produced texts written in both Sumerian and Akkadian. These texts mark the inception of the Sumero-Akkadian hybrid literary culture that extended into the latest periods of cuneiform writing, which attests to a diversified corpora of genres and to writers operating in different languages.\textsuperscript{18} The OB period witnessed an increase in texts pertaining to state commerce such as contracts and deed and also brought an international expansion.\textsuperscript{19} By the Neo-Assyrian (NA) period (during the time of many Hebrew prophets), Assyrian scribes wrote primarily in Akkadian. They continued producing the various genres of texts found in earlier periods, and in larger numbers. The large production of texts in the NA Period continued into the Neo-Babylonian Period. The vast archives of these later periods comprise primarily economic and administrative texts though literary, religious, and other genres of texts are well attested. In this latter period alphabetic and cuneiform scribes coexisted though no papyri with alphabetic texts have been known to survive, so scholars can only speculate as to their content and genre.

Moreover, the relationship between alphabetic Mesopotamian writers and cuneiform writers is unclear. All scholars writing on Mesopotamian schooling represent literate persons only in part because they only discuss cuneiform schooling systems.

\textsuperscript{18} B.J. Foster, \textit{Before the Muses} (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005), 44.
\textsuperscript{19} For a variety of texts cf. the exercises in J. Huehnergard, \textit{A Grammar of Akkadian} (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005). It was during the OB Period that cuneiform became prominent in Anatolia.
Cuneiform scribes writing Akkadian, and especially Sumerian, were writing in a literate language. Presuming those writing in an alphabetic script wrote in the vernacular as was the case in the West, the cuneiform scribes' occupation was more esoteric than, and perhaps more prestigious than, those writing in the alphabetic script.

Little is know about the scribes who wrote these diversified Mesopotamian texts. Visicato has shown that Mesopotamian scribal culture grew out of a temple sociology in which priests were the first literate peoples in the earliest periods. Early Sumerologists, such as Kramer, believed that only the elite people in elite positions were literate. Recent findings, however, show that literate merchants existed as early as the Ur III period writing receipts and ledgers. These finds pose a problem for Kramer's long standing view and help broaden the scholarly perspective of the complexity of literacy in ancient Mesopotamia.

Few people were literate in ancient Mesopotamia. These few, however, represent many sectors of society. Priests, businessmen and business owners, state employees, and others were literate. These positions stand in contrast to the professional scribe. Literate

20. G. Visicato, *The Power and the Writing* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2000), 233 argues that the DUB.SAR ("scribe" as a unique term) emerged from the activity of the SANGA priests by means of "the transformations and crises in the society in which they worked" during the Ur III period (233). Before this time an independent scribal social class did not exist according to the data found in Sumerian texts.


persons functioned in both the public (state) and private sectors of society. Different periods in Mesopotamian history saw different levels of literacy. Foster claims that literacy may have been more widespread in the earlier periods than in the later periods. I believe that this may be a false observation. Akkadian tended towards a literary language, and Sumerian was certainly only literary, in the later periods. Yet Akkadian coexisted with alphabet literature in ancient Mesopotamia. Since the textual finds only account for the cuneiform sources, the data is skewed. In later periods professional cuneiform scribes began reflecting on their occupation. These reflections praise the more difficult and esoteric learning of Sumerian, and as such, may be polemics against those who were capable of writing in the vulgar tongue.

One text's reflection on the scribal trade (tupšarrūtu) shows that professional scribes who learned Sumerian became a valuable commodity in society, which implies that those who new only Akkadian, or perhaps the alphabetic script, were less important. This text reads, "The scribal art is not easy to learn. . .when you are a

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23. M. Jursa, *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium BC* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010), 286-294 shows that vast numbers of private archives existed. In addition, many of the individuals who owned private archives had their hand in various forms of trade and some were even entrepreneurs. Cf. 306-315 for charts of the various archives and their various business endeavors. From the vast archives in the NA and NB periods its hard to imagine a sector of society that did not find need of a literate person. One might assume that slaves were illiterate, but in Egyptian society many slavers were literate and their masters were not.


youngster you will suffer." It implores the student to "strive," "work hard," "do not be careless," and "do not neglect it." As a result the scribe will gain "prosperity." The final legible lines mention inscribing a stele, drawing up a field and settling accounts presumably for the state because there are fragmentary references to the palace and corvée service.27

This text shows that by the NA period, an actual occupation "the scribe" existed, but the scribe's meager beginnings suggests that he did not come from the elite class.28 It was an occupation in which money can be made, presumably because it was valuable to society and not many were capable of reading and writing, particularly in Sumerian.29

27. It is very curious that school texts do not reflect the genre of texts a writer must be skilled in to produce state documents. Nearly all of the extant exercise texts are literary and not economic in genre, yet the economic texts (contracts, deed, receipts, etc.) all have very carefully learned structures. For all practical purposes, knowing the Epic of Gilgamesh, the culminating work of the Mesopotamian schools, is as useful to a state scribe as a modern US postal worker knowing how to copy the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. For more on this problem see the next paragraph.
28. Similar texts are prominent in Greek and Latin. In these texts the elites who became literate did not attend the arduous schools, but had private tutors. See below.
29. On the other hand Vanstiphout, "Memory and Literacy in Ancient Western Asia," *CANE* 4:2188 argues that we do not know the extent of scribal social status. He opines, "We have no indication, and some doubt that [a] system of promotion is based on academic or administrative excellence, rather than upon family relations." This profoundly obvious insight considers the real possibility of cronyism among ancient scholars which may not have allowed hardworking scribes the opportunity to thrive in their field because they were not of the same socioeconomic/familial stock or did not come from the right school. Despite the meritocratic claims of post-WWII higher education—the paradigm that likely provoked Vanstiphout to write such a statement—today, elite institutions worldwide have been criticized for the similar practices (cf. P.W. Kensington and L.S. Lewis, *Studies of Elite Schools and Stratification* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Eicher and Garcia-Peñalosa, *Institutions, Development and Economic Growth* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), esp. 191-214; B. Martin, "Academic Patronage," *IJEI* 5/1 [2009]: 3-19). This, albeit prooftexting, at least reminds the researcher 1) that multiple levels of social tension operate at once in a given institution, ancient or modern, implying that people of various social levels coexist in the
But it was still an occupation meaning that Mesopotamian scribes belonged to a working class. The top of the scribal class had access to the elites though the bottom of the scribal class probably did not.

Egyptian Texts

Like Mesopotamian materials, Egyptian texts demonstrate that not all Egyptians scribes belonged to the elite but many belonged to the working class. In Egypt, scribes were a necessary part of government functions as Wente explains well: "Upon completing his education, the student became a full-fledged scribe, normally employed in the department of government."³⁰ He insightfully adds, "the title of scribe did not, however, necessarily indicate rank. Indeed from the point of view of the bureaucratic elite, writing was something that subordinates should do."³¹ Although the pupils of scribal schools filtered into state employment, strangely, scribal education was not tailored for governmental work. As James notes, the scribes first learned how to copy literary works such as the Book of Kemit.³² Only at the advanced stages of learning did a student begin working with mathematical and geographic texts, but still these do not seem to reflect the texts

³⁰ F. E. Wente, "The Scribes of Ancient Egypt." CANE 4:2217. Wente refers to data from the New Kingdom.
that a state scribe would most likely write, such as contracts.\textsuperscript{33}

Later Egyptian texts, like later Mesopotamian texts, attest to texts that praise the scribal trade. The famed Chester Beatty Papyrus IV dating to the New Kingdom praises the scribal trade and glorifies the production of books. Unlike the above Mesopotamian text, this papyrus does not laud governmental service. Instead it sets the scribe apart from governmental workers. It reads, "[Scribes] did not make for themselves pyramids of copper or stelae of iron. They could not leave children as heirs to pronounce their names; they made as heirs for themselves the writings and books of instruction which they have compiled."\textsuperscript{34} Apart from the enigmatic phrase about not leaving progeny, the text glorifies the scribe's literary works. While Egyptian monumental and burial inscriptions often display literary texts,\textsuperscript{35} Egyptians appear to have not prepared their pupils for governmental service to the degree that might be expected.

While the Egyptian elite viewed many of their scribes as subordinates, at least one Egyptian scribe was both elite and a prophet, Neferyt. The Prophecy of Neferyt is one of the few surviving Egyptian prophetic texts, and it supplies insights into the (perceived) socio-religious standing of a literate prophet. Neferyt is introduced in the text a "lector-priest of Bastet" who is a valiant citizen, excellent writer, and the wealthiest of his peers (I 10-11). He was brought to the king by the behest of the royal court to give sagacious

\textsuperscript{33.} James, \textit{Ancient Egypt}, 96.
\textsuperscript{34.} Translation from James, \textit{Ancient Egypt}, 96.
\textsuperscript{35.} Cf. E.A.W. Budge, \textit{The Book of the Dead} (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books), 3-23. Various versions of the \textit{Book of the Dead} are found on tombs. Even prominent scribes are sometimes mentioned in these tomb records (13).
advice to the king. He was extraordinary in all ways, and his exceptional persona elevated him to an elite status. With the exception of a distinct few like Neferyt, many Egyptian scribes were not elites.

Anatolian Texts

Anatolian evidence supports and expands the idea found in Egypt and Mesopotamia that peoples from various social classes shared literacy. The entire archive of Hittite texts comes from ancient state libraries and the genres of the texts are primarily legal, economic, and religious. It might be assumed from the evidence that the Hittites had a more centralized use of writing than Egypt or Mesopotamia. This, however, could be merely the luck of the archaeological find and/or the result of writing materials used (see the following chapter). Regardless, the Hittite colophons are of extreme importance for this study because of the rich scribal data retained in them. Karasu describes how a colophon explains "the procedure by which [a] tablet was written" and how a tablet may have been written under the supervision of (\textit{PANI} PN lit. "in the presence of PN") the chief scribe. Various types of supervisors such as an \textit{UR.MAḪ.LÛ}, or a \textit{GAL.DUB.SAR} (\textit{MEŠ}) "chief

\begin{enumerate}
\item[36.] B.J. Collins, \textit{The Hittites and Their World}, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 100. Of the religious texts no "prophecies" like those found in the other ANE cultures exists. Omen and other divinatory texts are the closest in genre to the Hebrew prophecies.
\item[37.] Compared to Mesopotamian colophons, Hittite colophons are generally clear and easy to read. Mesopotamian colophons on the other hand are generally difficult to read because they can gravitate towards cryptic messages and a type of gematria (cf. E. Leichty, "The Colophon," in \textit{Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim} (ed. R.M. Adams; Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1964): 147-154.
\item[38.] C. Karasu. "Observations on the Similarities and Differences between the Hittite and the Babylonian-Assyrian Colophons," In \textit{Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten}
scribe(s)," played an active role in overseeing the production of written tablets.\textsuperscript{39}

In Hittite, the title "DUB.SAR "scribe" is a general term, which can refer to a secondary office. Many types of royal officials used this title. Karasu explains:

Certain officials such as "A.ZU.SAG, "chief medical officer", "A.ZU.TUR 'assistant medical officer' or 'young medical officer', EN URU Hurma and EN URU Nerik 'city lords', DUMU.E.GAL 'the palace official', UGULA E.GAL 'the chief official of the palace' and GAL "MUHALDIM 'the chief cook' are seen to have taken up the job of the scribe as a second branch.\textsuperscript{40}

Two types of scribes were responsible for archival work, wax-board-scribes and clay-tablet-scribes. A clay-tablet-scribe takes the general title "DUB.SAR, but a wax-board-scribe takes the title "DUB.SAR.GIŠ (lit "the wood scribe).\textsuperscript{41} Wax-board-scribes were responsible for reconnaissance work and collecting data,\textsuperscript{42} and "in addition to their professional duties, used to undertake duties in various rituals and ceremonies in the palace and in the temples."\textsuperscript{43} Wax-tablet-scribes "did not have as much significance among the Hittite social classes."\textsuperscript{44} Clay-tablet-scribes were of higher social rank and responsible for overseeing the making and archiving of clay texts.

Out of the Hittite colophons a complex social stratification among palace workers

\textsuperscript{41.} Karasu "Some Considerations," 119 is uncertain if "DUB.SAR.GIŠ refers to a "chief" scribe or not. The implication is that wax-boards were functional. Wax-boards were made of wood and covered with wax. Cf. next chapter.
\textsuperscript{42.} They were sometimes modified with KASKAL "on the road." Cf. Karasu, "Some Considerations," 119, 121, and the next chapter.
\textsuperscript{43.} Karasu, "Some Considerations," 119.
\textsuperscript{44.} Karasu, "Some Considerations," 119.
and scribes emerges.\textsuperscript{45} The Hittite colophons are the clearest example that ANE scribal culture was stratified and that literacy was a valuable commodity in various sectors of society. Various tradesmen were literate, and perhaps it was literacy that caused these individuals to rise thru the ranks of their own trade and become part of the palace's working class.

Further Evidence from the Classical World

Although classical texts emerge from a different period than ANE texts, extensive studies on classical literacy complement a study on ANE literacy. The evolution of literacy is commensurate with the evolution of society, and it must be borne in mind that Greek and Latin did not evolve independent of the ANE.\textsuperscript{46} Most classical texts, however, survive from the Hellenistic period, and the evolution of literacy in the Hellenistic world proves consistent with what is shown above in earlier ANE societies. For these reasons, the classical world is an apt model of comparison with ANE cultures. Temporally and geographically it is the closest model for comparison, more so than other post industrial

\textsuperscript{45} Scribal training occurred within a craftsman-apprentice or teacher-student relationship. Karasu claims that the trade was familial. A father would train his son, or only a trustworthy individual of high status in the community could apprentice to be a scribe (Karasu, "Some Considerations," 118-119).

\textsuperscript{46} Comparable historical trends exist between Indo-European languages of the late second and early first millennium and those West Semitic languages of the same time. The Greek alphabetic script derives from ANE sources at approximately the same time that ANE cultures adopt the alphabetic script in mass. Cf. Harris, Ancient Literacy, vii-viii. Furthermore, the syllabic linear scripts used in the Mediterranean died with the dark ages of the Late Bronze Age and the reemergence of writing came with the adoption and adaptation of the Phoenician alphabet script c.750 B.C.
cultures.

According to Harris, those among various social classes were literate in the Hellenistic world. Some elites, soldiers, slaves and freemen were literate in various degrees and in various places. Economic factors certainly played a role in education, and as such every major enterprise and institution in society valued a few literate peoples; these literate persons tended to be slaves. Literacy, at least in the state-held army, helped a soldier rise in rank. Various accounts show that a surprisingly high number of legionaries were literate, and literacy was a glass ceiling for promotion to the rank of a centurion.

On the other hand, the society's most elite did not need to be literate because they had literate slaves much like we find in Egypt, but this does not preclude the fact that literacy was more accessible to the elite, as is the case with most commodities in any society. The classical elites who learned to read and write did not undergo schooling the same way others did, they could afford personal tutors, where as others had to attend schools.

48. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 283 bureaucratically notes, "It is hard to imagine that anyone except the very poorest can have been deterred by this expenditure [the price of schooling]; yet many people lived on a few *asses* a day or quite outside the nexus of cash." There is unequivocal evidence that some slaves were educated in various places, but this remained exceptional (257), even though "a large portion of Roman clerical work was carried out by slaves and freedmen" (259).
49. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 254-255 finds that as many as 34% of cavalrymen in the Veteran Gallica squadron in Egypt were literate, and the case was similar in Pseclis. Harris continues that "literacy correlates with military rank" and that among these statistics "no senior rank was open" to an illiterate man.
Preliminary Conclusions on the Social Status of a Literate Person

According to the textual evidence, in general, literate persons in the ancient world existed in various sectors of society; literacy is not limited to the elite. Few were literate in the ANE, and those few were valuable in their respective social positions and in their respective sectors of society. While clear socio-economic and class divides appear among ANE scribes, to what extent gender played a factor is uncertain. But many of these literate persons did not belong to the elite class, especially in Mediterranean cultures. The job of writing was often relegated, that is, it was consigned to an inferior personnel though official scribes who ran in elite circles did exist. Many working class individuals had a functional knowledge of literacy, and in some cases slaves were literate. An actual occupation "scribe" existed in every major ANE culture, but the social standing of the individuals working as scribes appears to vary.

Anthropological evidence sheds light on this variation. It shows that a scribe does not have to belong to the socioeconomic class for which he writes. Textual genres may be indications of the complicated social horizon of which scribes are a part. While some elites were occupational scribes, other occupational scribes may have been subordinates who wrote elite texts for the elite using the language of the elite. If this is the case than Levi-Strauss' hypothesis holds true: literacy may be a way of "strengthening, justifying or concealing" the "exploitation of humans rather than their enlightenment."

Determining the gender of a writer can be difficult because names are not always used, and when used, its not always clear what gender a person is based on his or her name. Women were writing in the ANE but how many is unclear. For example, the letters of Šibtu, a Mari informant, record prophecies (cf. chapter 4).
Hebrew Prophetic Writers

The above observations reshape and complicate the image of those responsible for writing the Hebrew prophecies. Many previous scholars held to a disciple-type model for the textualization and preservation of prophetic texts. To be sure, many prophets had what van der Toorn calls "a large community of followers and sympathizers." However, it must be borne in mind that the theory that the prophets had disciples, is only a theory and one not well supported in the textual records. On this matter Davies writes, "The view that the prophets had disciples who preserved and updated the sayings of their masters has never been supported by anthropological or literary evidence; it merely supplies a convenient mechanism whereby these edited compositions can be traced back to an individual prophet."

Those who maintained the texts of the Hebrew prophets do not need to be sympathizers with the prophets. Prophets were important in the political arena because their insights into the deity's will could prove an advantage for those in power. For this reason, many literate peoples were employed by the state for state reconnaissance. Many prophetic utterances, such as those at Mari, ended up in state archives, and by implication, the same can be said of Hebrew prophecies. Only van der Toorn has speculated about whether archives played an integral role in the preservation of Hebrew prophetic texts. He claims that while there may have been temple archives of prophetic texts.

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messages "it is unlikely that they played a decisive role in the composition of the prophetic books of the Bible."\textsuperscript{54} This seems to contradict his heavy emphasis on the Jeremiah/Baruch model of prophet and disciple.\textsuperscript{55} For, Baruch was a סֵפֶר (עַלְמַר) "an official) scribe" who worked for the palace.

All occurrences of סֵפֶר (עַלְמַר) in the HB refer to a person serving as an official employee of the state. Baruch was certainly one of these employees. He had access to the king and to the elite scribes who worked at the highest levels of state affairs. But when it comes to those writing the vast majority of prophecies, Baruch stands out as the exception and not the rule. No other prophetic writer is mentioned in the HB, much less has large narrative sections devoted to his work (Jer 32, 36).

It should not be surprising from the above study, that many people who are not referred to as a סֵפֶר (עַלְמַר) "a scribe" could כָּתַב "write," including prophets.\textsuperscript{56} Some prophets certainly belonged to the elite circles of society, such as Ezekiel the priest. Belonging to the priesthood gave him access to literacy, so he may have written some of his own prophecies. Other prophets, such as Habakkuk seem to belong to a more humble stock but was still capable of writing (Hab 2:2). Moreover, anonymous writers wrote the majority of Hebrew prophetic texts,

I have now mentioned three different types of people who my be responsible for writing a Hebrew prophecy: a prophet's follower (an amanuensis), a state informant, or

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\textsuperscript{54} Van Der Toorn, \textit{Scribal Culture}, 184.
\textsuperscript{55} Van der Toorn, \textit{Scribal Culture}, 182-204.
\textsuperscript{56} Just among the Hebrew prophets, Habakkuk (Hab 2:2), Ezekiel (Ezek 37:16), and Isaiah (Isa 8:1) are clearly literate.
the prophet himself. The only internal evidence that a prophet's follower wrote prophecies comes from the story of Baruch. But this can be furthered by the pragmatic claim that the texts survive only because they have been maintained by generation of followers. State informants, on the other hand, whether working directly for the state or for the temple are perhaps the most likely to have written prophetic texts. The Hebrew prophets, especially, are politically active individuals. The state has the financial means and the interest in hiring reporters to survey the kingdom and keep watch over mantic activity. Lastly, the prophet himself may have an interest in writing down his prophecy to reach a larger audience.

Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated that it is extremely difficult to profile an ancient literate person. In general a text's interpreter must be keen to the fact that some ANE writers likely existed in two worlds: the lower socioeconomic strata in which they lived and the elite environment in which they worked. Moreover, not all literate ancients were scribes. Every sector of society which found a use for writing likely had a few literate members in that sector. For this reason I have been careful to reserve the term "scribe" for those filling the official office of scribe. I have and will continue to use "writer" to refer to those who are literate, but may have not been scribes. Textual genres may also indicate this social variegation because a given sector of society would require the literate person to write in a given genre.

The literate person in a given sector was one of the more valuable peoples in that
sector. In some sectors of society literacy may have been a prerequisite to promotion, such is the case in the military. This shows there were clear advantages to being literate, which indicates that not many people were literate in a given sector of society. There was, however, a designated occupation of "the scribe." This designation was a royal or religious one and constitutes what previous scholars have called "the elite." Literate underlings, whose works were often the original accounts of reconnaissance, serviced the office of the chief scribe.

These findings bring this study closer to answering the question posed at the beginning of this chapter: what type of person wrote the Hebrew prophecies? The ANE writer in general cannot be type-casted; he or she may transcend social strata. The complicated themes and genres found in the Hebrew prophecies are indications of this. For the Hebrew prophets are known for being social critics and even social critics of the elite scribes (Jer 8:8; Nah 3:17). Their messages display an acute awareness of international politics, elitist lifestyles and the plight of the impoverished. It must always be remembered that the Hebrew prophecies are first and foremost texts; they are products of literate people. They display awareness of scribal tools, and, most importantly in light of this chapter, they are keenly aware of the social stratification of ancient Israelite and Judahite literate circles.

I have avoided ancient Canaanite data in this survey because of its paucity. The little evidence that does exist shows that a level of literacy in an alphabetic tradition
existed in Israel before the eighth century—contra Schniedewind and others. The reason for this lack of data is due to, in my opinion, the materials used. The following chapter will address the materials used in the scribal trade and how they facilitated the literary construction of the Hebrew prophecies.

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57. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 63. Carr, "The Tel Zayit Abecedary in (Social) Context," in *Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan* (eds. R.E. Tappy and K.P. McI Carter; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), esp. 124-126, who revised his view after the discovery of the tenth century Tel Zayit abecedary, is the most cogent argument in my opinion. He, like Schniedewind, originally argued that writing was not practiced in the tenth century (D. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996], 221). He now cautions, "Researchers have decided what we should have found in the archaeological record, were there a Solomonic kingdom with an emergent literature. Then because their relatively unscrutinized expectations have gone unfulfilled, they have decided there was no Solomonic kingdom or associated literature. . .[The Tel Zayit] inscription could be evidence for the concentration of writing in similar administrative centers [similar to the one in which it was found] of ancient Judah." ("The Tel Zayit Abecedary in (Social) Context," 127-128).
CHAPTER 3
WRITING MATERIALS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON PROPHETIC TEXTS

Since many literate persons belonged to the working class, they may not have had access to or the means to acquire many of the writing materials needed to compose texts. For instance, some materials such as papyrus were not readily available in Israel and Judah. This means that those writing the Hebrew prophecies for the first time, were limited to materials that they had access to. In turn, these materials limited the writing process in terms of overall length, the speed at which the text could have been composed, and the script the writer could use.

The objective of this chapter is to supply, as much as possible, an empirical real-life limit for redactional criticism of the Hebrew prophets. In theory, redactional criticism finds layers and additions in a text that can be removed to reveal an older, more original reading. Logically, the final stage of redactional criticism meets the process of textualization; the most original layer of a text is that which was first put into writing. An exploration into the limits of writing materials can explain how a text may have first been composed, and can serve as a limit for redactional criticism so that it does not remove or

58 My intention with this statement is to offer a simplistic working definition. Certainly the process is more complex than this and the process' goals are more specific Cf. Hadjiev, The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos, BZAW 309 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 25-40; Schart, Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs BZAW 260 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 21-29; Wöhrle, Die Frühen Sammlungen des Zwölfprophetenbuches BZAW 360 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 12-19.
In this chapter, I will answer the question: how and on what did writers who textualized the Hebrew prophecies write? I will make a detailed analysis of different writing mediums, of the genres typical of each writing medium, and of the physical limits of each medium. My findings challenge the long standing claim that papyrus or parchment were the primary materials on which writers composed texts in ancient Israel and Judah. Through comparative, internal and epigraphical evidence, I will demonstrate that wax-boards were used in ancient Israel and Judah during the time of the Hebrew prophets. Wax-boards were used in the ANE for writing epistles, writing divinatory texts, or for drafting purposes. Prophecies are often associated with an epistolary genre in the HB (i.e. Jer 29) and the ANE (Mari). The Hebrew prophecies are the only ancient Hebrew texts to fall into the genre of divinatory texts, and redactional criticism has shown that the Hebrew prophecies have undergone revision. I deduce that, although wax-boards were not the only medium used by those first writing the Hebrew prophecies, they were likely the primary medium used to textualize the prophetic utterances.

In light of this new finding, I examine many prophetic utterances from selected Hebrew prophets. I show that wax-boards may determine the length of many prophetic utterances. This means that wax-boards provide a textual terminus ad quem for redactional reconstructions.

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59. Comparative evidence presented in the next chapter will show that prophetic utterances often took their first literary form in the shape of an epistle.

60. Prophetic utterances are sections of the prophecy attributed to the voice of deity. They normally begin כה אמר יהוה or כה אמר יהוה.
A Preliminary Look at Prophetic References to Writing Materials

The few references to writing mediums in the Hebrew prophecies show that prophets wrote on many different materials. Isa 8:1 mentions a גליליון גדול, the actual meaning of which is uncertain. Jer 36, Ezek 2:9, 3:1-3, and Zeph 5:1-2 refer to a מגלה "a scroll." Is 30:8, Jer 17:1, and Hab 2:2 make reference to a גלולה, the meaning of which is debated. Jer 17:1 also makes mention of writing on קרנות מזבחות "horns of altars." In Ezek 37:16, 20 the prophet writes on עץ "wood," which is often translated "sticks" on the basis of the LXX (ῥάβδον). Lastly, the general term ספר "document" appears at least 42 times in the Hebrew prophets and could pertain to multiple types of materials.

References to styli in prophetic texts are even more sparse than those references to writing mediums. Isaiah used a חרט to write on the גליליון גדול in Is 30:8. Jeremiah claims that the ספרים "scribes" used an עט "pen." Jeremiah, also says that the sins of Judah are engraved on a metaphorical tablet and altar horns with an עט ברזל "bronze stylus" which has a צפרן שמיר "diamond point(?)" (Jer 17:1).

The scant evidence resents conclusions about which material was better suited for which type of literary genre. Prophecies are recorded on a גלולה in Isa 30:8 and Hab 2:2, they are recorded on a scroll in Jer 36. The paucity of internal references to writing

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61. Targum Onkelos translates the term as גלולה רב "a large tablet (wax-board?)." The Syr. can mean either scroll, tablet, or some other material according to Syr commentators (cf. Payne Smith 1:720). The LXX interprets it as τόμον καινοῦ μεγάλου "a large new tome."

Cf. Block, Ezekiel, 400 surprisingly comments on Isa 8:1 better than many Isaiah commentaries. Cf. Block's references. Y. Hoffman, Isaiah (Tel Aviv: Chronicles, 2002), 53 [Hebrew] interprets it as a papyrus scroll. The true meaning remains elusive.

62. גלולה is elliptically mentioned in Jer 31:33 as simply לבה.
materials leaves the reader wandering what did those writing prophetic texts use to write with?

Clay, papyri or parchment?

Most studies dealing with ancient Israelite and Judahite writing materials consider the use of clay, papyri or parchment. (This is not withstanding the use of stone, but stone was reserved for monumental or dedicatory purposes and not for the everyday craft of writing.) Certainly these three materials were used in ancient Palestine at various times; this is clear from the archaeological record. Each of these materials, however, poses a problem to the historian attempting to paint a comprehensive picture of ancient writing practices.

Clay Ostraca

It is difficult to claim that literate ancient Israelites and Judahites used clay as their writing medium of choice. While the vast majority of surviving documents are clay, specifically ostraca, there are relatively few documents compared to other clay writing cultures such as the Hittites or the Mesopotamians. Furthermore, the extant Israelite and Judahite archives come from very specific archaeological sites dating to very narrow time periods. The ostraca also exhibit a very limited range of literary genres.

Arad and Lachish constitute the two main textual find spots in ancient Judah and

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no comparable archive has yet to be unearthed in ancient Israel. These spots date to the end of the Judean monarchy though many findings at Arad are still disputed. The texts are written on various shaped ostraca; many are pot sherds. Other ostraca are more "page" shaped clay pieces, such as the Lachish letters. All of the ostraca at these two sites are written in ink though a few examples of incised ostraca or sherds have been found at other sites.

The narrow genre of the Arad and Lachish ostraca makes it difficult to claim that ostraca was a widely used writing medium. Nearly all these texts are military in nature. Ostraca such as the Lachish letters record official correspondence between military personal, a commander and a lower ranking informant. The vast majority of the large Arad findings are fragmentary military letters concerned with rations or ration lists. Such administrative texts are typical of nearly all other ostraca found throughout ancient Israel and Judah. This poses a significant problem for the scholar reconstructing the craft of everyday writing because there is no reason to believe that a sophisticated and organized society with literate persons limited its written correspondence to administrative and military documentation.

65. For examples, including the Gezer Calendar cf. Ahituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 156-156, 249-257.
66. The meaning of the recently discovered Qeiyafa ostracon is still disputed. It displays extremely early paleography, and whatever its date, it has little bearing on this study. Should it prove to be an ostracon written in a non-military or non-administrative genre, it will be one of a kind. For the inscription cf. E. Puech, “L’Ostracon de Khirbet Qeiyafa et les Débuts de la Royauté en Israël,” *RB* 117 (2010): 162-184.
67. Hyatt, "The Writing of an Old Testament Book," 76 theorizes, "It would not be wholly surprising if archaeologists should some day uncover small portions of prophetic
Papyri

Clay Ostraca was the primary writing medium used for official state documentation in the late Judean monarchy, but papyrus was also in use at the time. The Egyptians perfected the process of making papyrus in the third millennium B.C. and likely imported it to ancient Palestine by the second millennium B.C. 68

Only one ancient Judahite papyrus survives, the "Papyrus from the First Commonwealth Period." 69 It is a palimpsest. The underwritten original text was a personal letter and the overwritten text is a list of names with numerals. 70 Only one other ancient Palestinian papyrus dates to this period, the seventh century Moabite papyrus called the "Mazrêḥ Papyrus," which is "formulated as a divine decision." 71 This indicates that genres other than military correspondence and administrative texts were written on papyri in ancient Palestine during the Judean monarchy. 72

Considering these two texts Ahituv ironically claims, "Papyrus was surely the most common material used for writing alphabetic texts during that period; only this one has been found." 73 His argument is one from silence, 74 but similar claims are

books, or even other Old Testament works written down (or dictated) by the prophets, their disciples, ancient wise men, or others." In the nearly seventy years since Hyatt wrote this, hundreds of pieces of ostraca have been found, but not one is prophetic.

71. Ahituv, Echoes from the Past, 427.
73. Ahituv, Echoes from the Past, 213.
74. Many bullae with administrative seals, which previously sealed papyrus documents, have been found. But because the the papyri which they once sealed has
commonplace in biblical studies. Because papyrus easily biodegrades or is easily
destroyed, it is unlikely that much will ever be recovered from the historically war-torn
and moist environment of ancient Palestine.\(^{75}\) Besides, as will be shown below, papyri
was not an abundant commodity in the region.

Parchment

A similar argument is made for the use of parchment in ancient Israel and Judah. No
ancient piece of parchment survives, but some have claimed that various references to
writing mediums in the Bible refer to parchment. For example, Avi-Yonah opines that
Baruch's scroll of Jeremiah was written on parchment because had it been written on
papyrus, "the king could have easily torn it up or simply flung the whole thing into the
fire...There would have been no need to 'cut it with a penknife.'"\(^{76}\) Despite this obscure
and questionable example, it is impractical to assume that parchment served an everyday
function for the ancient writer.

\(^{75}\) The Hebrew bullae found in the city of David dating to the seventh or sixth
century demonstrate that papyrus was used in the royal center of the city of David. Cf.
of West Semitic Seals* (Haifa University: Haifa, 2000) and R. Deutsch, *Biblical Period
Hebrew Bulla* (Archaeological Center Publication: Tel Aviv, 2003).

18-19. M. Haran, "Book-Scrolls in Israel in Pre-Exilic Times," in *Essays in Honour of
for papyrus. Duke, "Parchment or Papyrus: Wiping out False Evidence," argues against
Haran's method but for his conclusion.
Formulating a New Perspective

Due to the cost and laborious production of parchment it is highly unlikely that parchment would have been an every-day writing medium for ancient writers. The evidence leads towards a similar conclusion for papyri. Papyrus production is unknown in ancient Palestine because the climate is not suitable for growing *cypres papyrus* the plant used to make papyri. Only a small marsh existed there in antiquity, at Lake Huleh in Northern Palestine.\(^\text{77}\) Israel controlled this region in the eighth century, but it was never controlled by Judah. This means that all papyri was imported from Egypt into Judah during the Judean monarchy.

This economic hindrance likely explains why the late Judean monarchy used ostraca for many of its military and administrative records. Ink and clay would have been the most economical writing medium in the late eighth through early sixth centuries, particularly in times of war when trade-routes supplying papyrus could have been compromised. Despite clay's weight and fragility—it breaks and chips easily—Judah's monarchy used clay as a primary writing medium for many hundreds for administrative texts only.

Furthermore, clay, papyrus and parchment come with a significant disadvantage, they require ink. Ink, which was made from lampblack (soot) and gum arabic (sap),\(^\text{78}\) must have been a cumbersome material to use, particularly for a writer in an unstable environment, such as a reporter doing reconnaissance. In addition, the monotonous


\(^{78}\) Cf. *ISBE*, 2:826.
practice of dipping a pen in ink obstructs a writer's ability to fluidly draft a document.

The classical writer Quintillion puts it clearly, "[Using parchment] although of assistance to the eye, delays the hand and interrupts the stream of thought owing to the frequency with which the pen has to be supplied with ink."\(^{79}\) In addition to the cumbersome nature of ink writing mediums, neither ostraca, papyri, nor parchment allow a writer to make many errors. Once an ink writing medium has dried it can be scraped clear and turned into a palimpsest, but should a writer make an error while composing, the writer's only hope is to try to wash or sponge the ink off with water jeopardizing the whole work and introducing more materials into the practice of writing.\(^{80}\)

Scribal Errors

One of the startling facts of NWS epigraphy is the paucity of serious errors among the various documents. Scholars have argued that the orthographic consistency in Old Hebrew orthography is due to the statistical variability of the writing system. For example, Weeks claims, "It is really quite hard to come up with alternative spellings of a word when the alphabet offers little or no choice of characters to represent a given sound."\(^{81}\) Those who oppose this observation, such as Rollston, due so on the grounds of


\(^{80}\) Erasure as an editing technique appears in Hebrew, Greek and Latin biblical texts. This is of a different nature than erasing while in the act of writing, but for this technique, which employs the use of "cancelation dots," cf. E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 56. For erasures in the DSS cf. E. Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approached Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), see "cancellation dots" in index.

matres lectionis, which are just grounds because limited orthographic trends in the use of matres lectionis are evident in the extant corpora. But even Rollston concedes that "The Old Hebrew orthographic conventions reflect synchronic consistency and diachronic development." My argument does not hinge on consistency of matres lectionis or even diachronic development, for Rollston convincingly supports his claim, rather I argue that the dearth of spelling, syntactical and grammatical errors or erasures in the extant corpora are unprecedented if the documents that exist were not first drafted. Although there is little evidence that drafting took place, the consistency and quality of the documents implies otherwise.

Writing is a more thoughtful act than speaking, therefore, composing a coherent final product takes careful planning. Modern studies on the development of reading and writing show that the creative process involved in the translation from orality to the written word does not reflect that of the spoken word unless the spoken word is well rehearsed. Advanced writers, ancient or modern, compose cogent texts free of obvious orthographic errors, mixed syntaxes, and missing words because they draft their

82. Rollston, Writing and Literacy, 108.
84. K. Perera, "Language Acquisition and Writing," in Language Acquisition (eds. P. Fletcher and M. Garman; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 499. One of the major theses in Small, Wax Tablet of the Mind, is that classical writers composed texts mentally. They rehearsed them multiple times in their mind. They would mentally punctuate their texts (184) and compose many texts in correlation with their memory's recognition; for the classical writer (and I would argue also for the ancient writer) accuracy was conditioned by "gist" (191-192). This does not preclude written drafts, for even Plato struggled with drafting the first lines of The Republic (154).
compositions in stages.

Modern studies prove that the proofing processes is an advanced stage in the development of literacy; producing a text relatively error free must involve proofreading.\textsuperscript{85} The extant ancient texts written in ink are coherent and well written but exhibits no signs of proofreading. The logical conclusion drawn from the evidence is that proofreading and drafting had to have occurred on a separate document. This document must have either been destroyed or made of biodegradable materials because the drafts have not survived in the archaeological record.\textsuperscript{86}

Given that papyrus and parchment were expensive, it is unlikely that ancient Israelite, and especially Judahite, writers drafted their documents on these mediums. Only two other possibilities remain. First, these ancient writers could have drafted their work on ostraca. At least one ostraca palimpsest exists, Arad 31, but its underwritten material is a rudimentary economic text of a list of names with numbers. Its underwritten text was not a draft of the overwritten text. The underwritten text is so simplistic that

\begin{itemize}
  \item The possibility that a draft was orally composed is unlikely. Omitted words and major spelling errors can still occur in the actual textualization process no matter how well the text has been rehearsed. A. Hildyard and S. Hidi, “Oral-written Differences in the Production and Recall of Narratives,” in \textit{Literacy, Language, and Learning} (ed. D.R. Olsen; Cambridge: University Press, 1985), 303 verify that a twelve year schoolchild's ability to recall a narrative from a oral original to a written recall is, on average only 62% accurate. On the other hand, the schoolchild's accuracy from a written original to a written recall is 80%. I am unaware of any such study on adults, but it seems unlikely that the 18% percent accuracy gap between these processes would somewhat close.
\end{itemize}

42
drafting was likely not necessary. Had drafting complex texts on ostraca been *en vogue*, I would expect the larger textual finds spots such as Lachish and Arad to produce at least one clear example. But none has surfaced.

The second possibility is that a fourth writing medium was used that did not survive because it, like papyrus, was made of organic materials. No scholar to-date considers the use wax-boards as a productive writing medium in ancient Palestine, but comparative and biblical evidence demonstrate that Wax-boards were used as a writing medium in ancient Palestine during the times of the Israelite and Judahite kingdoms. In the following section I will show that wax-boards were used in addition to and probably more frequently than papyrus or ostraca in the initial textualization of the Hebrew prophets.

**Wax-Boards**

Wax-boards were used in the ANE from the early third millennium B.C.E. through the middle ages C.E. In fact, according to Jewish mystic texts, wax-boards were used to write the human deeds in heavenly administrative documents, and "the same practice can be inferred for earthly administration" as well.\(^\text{87}\) Until the invention of the printing press wax-boards were used for drafting and finalizing compositions. From deeds and contracts to religious and literary works, textual and archaeological evidence shows that wax-boards were used throughout the ANE in a variety of ways.

\(^{87}\) M. Bar-Ilan, "Papyrus," *OEANE* 4:246.
Comparative Evidence: The Mediterranean

As early as the second millennium B.C.E. in Anatolia the Hittites used wax-boards. Hittite colophons reveal that wax-boards were an essential part of the textualization of archival documents. Hittite colophons had two ways to indicate that a text's inception began on a wax-board. First, a text may read, *ANA GIŠ.ḪUR-kan ḫandan* "It is arranged according to a wooden tablet." This clearly indicates that the text was first drafted on a wooden wax-board and then later preserved in clay.

Second, Karasu rightly argues that a specific "wax-board-scribe" was referred to as a *KASKAL*, which literally means "(on the) road." A *KASKAL* was charged to record affairs on wax-boards and to report back to the "clay-tablet-scribes." A clay-tablet-scribe would then determine if a wax-board-scribe's text was worth copying in clay and storing in the state archives.

88. "Archival documents" i.e. documents which were collected or composed by the state and found within state libraries are all that survive of a Hittite literary tradition. Regardless of genre, all Hittite documents were, in their final form, property of the Hittite state.
89. Karasu, "Observations," 253. D. Syminton, "Late Bronze Age Writing-Boards and Their Uses: Textual Evidence from Anatolia and Syria," *AnSt* 41 (1991): 115-116 argues that this phrase refers to wax-boards on which scribes composed Luwian. The text was then later translated into Hittite when it was written on clay. Excavated stylis thought to be used on wax-boards have a pointed tip not a tip with a straight edge; pointed tips are not used for writing cuneiform. But Otten and Singer have argued, in light of the Nimrud wax-board (see below), the Hittite wax-boards could have been originally written in cuneiform because there now exists evidence that wax-boards facilitate cuneiform (cf. Syminton, "Late Bronze Age Writing-Boards and Their Uses: Textual Evidence from Anatolia and Syria," 115 n. 34.
91. Karasu, "Some Considerations," 121. Karau's hypothesizes that this word indicates a report of sorts seems to me to be very convincing.

44
Bryce argues that it was the use of wax-boards for all reconnaissance that explains the lack of literary genres which are associated with traveling:

It is likely that original letters sent to vassal rulers or foreign kings were inscribed on wax-coated wooden tablets, which were hinged and folded. If so, the highly perishable nature of this material would explain why no original letters have been discovered in Anatolia, or in any of the ancient kingdoms with whom the Hittites corresponded. 92

Since the Hittites had vassals and political interests in Syria it is likely that their scribal practices influenced ancient Palestine, and subsequently the ancient Israelites, in the centuries before the Hebrew prophets.

Wax-boards were used in the northern Mediterranean after the fall of the Hittite empire. In the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. Dionysius and Plato were both known to have composed their works originally in wax. 93 More remarkable than this, is that Homer knew of wax-board diptychs in the eight century B.C.E. when he composed the Iliad (6:168ff). Homer's reference corresponds historically to the popularization of wax-boards in Mesopotamia (see below) and the composition of many Hebrew prophets.

92. T.R. Bryce, "Anatolian Scribes in Mycenaean Greece," Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte 48 (1999): 261. Also note worthy is that various genres were composed on wax-boards. D. Syminton, "Late Bronze Age Writing-Boards and Their Uses: Textual Evidence from Anatolia and Syria," finds that religious texts, library copies of religious texts, administrative texts, letters, lists, and official documents were all composed on wax-boards. He also finds that the overwhelming references were to lists and goods. I find this as no surprise since wax-boards, diptychs in particular, were very durable, erasable and reusable. They make the best type of medium for inventory purposes of all kinds. The fact that letters and religious texts are the main literary genres preserved on wax-boards shows that wax-boards were used for traveling purposes, probably because of their durability. If dropped they are less likely to break or chip than clay, are fairly water resistant, and can be written on at any time (as opposed to clay which can only be written on when it is damp).

93. Small, Wax Tablet of the Mind, 10, esp. 154.
Comparative Evidence: Egypt

Wax-boards were not as popular in Egypt in the second millennium as they were in the northern Mediterranean. However, due to the perishable nature of wax-boards it is difficult to determine this with certainty. Egypt's abundance of papyri and scarcity of trees may have made it unlikely for wax-board writing to become widespread.\(^94\)

According to Cribiore, wooden writing media were more expensive than papyrus in Egypt during the Hellenistic Period.\(^95\) I assume this was the case in earlier periods as well, and that it may have limited the production of wax-boards in the area.

Despite the high price and limited quantity of wood, many wax-boards have been found in Egypt dating to Graeco-Roman times.\(^96\) Wooden writing media were also known to have existed prior to Graeco-Roman influence. James notes that ostraca and wooden boards coated in gesso (two mediums that will withstand deterioration and should appear in the archaeological record) were used earlier than Graeco-Roman times for drafting "contracts, deeds and letters, records of attendance at work, inventories, magical texts, oracles, etc. These materials were also used for plans and sketches."\(^97\)

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94. The oldest datable wax-board found in Egypt dates only to the second century B.C.E., BM 34186(1). For pictures of many Greco-Roman boards found in various Egyptian spots from Oxyrhynchus to Hawara cf. http://www.britishmuseum.org.

95. R. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 46-48 argues that wooden writing mediums were more expensive than papyrus. Contrary to this, it must be remembered that wax-boards are reusable, so the longevity and productivity of the material my offset the cost. J. Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 174 and 176 speculates about the exorbitant price of parchment and notes that all papyri in Judah was imported from Egypt.

96. Cf. n. 94 above.

97. James, *Ancient Egypt*, 94. Boards coated in gesso would have been written on with ink. Because of the texture of the gesso and the temporary quality of lampblack ink, the gesso boards were erasable. To my knowledge, however, no gesso boards have been
Moreover there may be evidence for wax-boards in Egypt as early as the fifth century B.C.E. One fragmentary Elephantine text, TAD D7 19 contains the phrase לוחא זיכתב "a (wax)board which he wrote." Although the reading is uncertain due to the poor condition of the text, it may be an early reference to a wax-board in an Egyptian source associated with Palestine.

Further, it is well known that the Hittites maintained correspondence with Egypt during, at least, the reign of Suppiluliuma I (c.1350-1322). It can be inferred that the two civilizations exchanged scribal practices during this time. It was through the royal scribes that international correspondence was made, and, as noted above, the Hittites heavily used wax-boards for International affairs.

Lastly, beeswax was an abundant commodity in Egypt. A stable beeswax enterprise, awareness of wax-boards through cultural exchange, and proven use of wooden writing mediums indicates that wax-board technology was within the reach of Egyptian scribes. While it is difficult to marshal the argument that wax-boards were used in Egypt during the time of the Hebrew prophecies, circumstantial evidence does not rule out the possibility.

discovered in Palestine. The plaster or clay covering the boards would have survived in the archaeological record had then been used.

Comparative Evidence: Mesopotamia

Mesopotamian writers used wax-boards during the time the Israelite and Judahite writers composed the Hebrew prophecies. According to legend, Shamash-resu-šur introduced wax-board technology to Mesopotamia from the west in the eighth century.\(^9\) In reality the technology was present in Mesopotamia as early as the Ur III period but became popular in the eighth century.\(^10\)

Examples of Mesopotamian wax-boards survive from Nimrud. There both wooden and ivory boards were found encased in watery silt in Aššur-našir-pal's palace and date to 707-705 B.C.E.\(^1\) The ivory boards formed a sixteen-leaved polyptych and were the text of the literary omen work, *Enuma Anu Enlil*.\(^2\) The inscription on the cover of the polyptych reads:

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Mallowan argues that the lack of Assyrian business documents of the ninth century "may be accounted for by an extensive use at the time of wood, wax, and perhaps other equally perishable materials to record normal business transactions of the day" (102). This argument, albeit from silence, likely also explains the lack of documentation coming from 9th-6th century Israel and Judah.

Palace of Sargon, King of the World, king of Assyria. The text series (beginning) Enuma Anu Enlil he had written on an ivory writing-tablet ($\text{le}^3\text{u}$) and deposited it in his palace at Dur-Sarrukin.\textsuperscript{103}

A piece of the wax text on one of the boards survives confirming that *Enuma Anu Enlil* was the actual text inscribed on the ivory polyptych. In addition, fragmented wooden pieces survived of other wax-boards at the same find spot.

The Nimrud boards are clear evidence, not only for the use of wax writing boards, but for (1) the use of wax-boards for more than drafting purposes and (2) the use of wax-boards for composing divinatory texts. The Nimrud wax-boards date to the time of many Hebrew prophets and contain divinatory texts which are of a similar genre to those of the Hebrew prophecies.\textsuperscript{104}

Similarly, a trove of textual data comes from the Neo-Babylonian period, dating from the time of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadrezzar until much later. In this period, literate persons used wax-boards extensively for a variety of purposes. Akkadian $\text{le}^3\text{u}$ is the technical term for a wax-board, and Macginnis\textsuperscript{1}' fair recent study collates dozens of references to $\text{le}^3\text{u}$ ($\text{gi}^\text{š}DA$) in Neo-Babylonian texts. According to these texts, not only are many types of people credited for composing on writing boards, but many of those working in the lower echelon of society used them, such as brewers, smiths, archers, gardeners and landscapers.\textsuperscript{105} The temple clerics (the *sangû*) also frequently used wax-

\textsuperscript{103.} For the text, normalization and translation cf. Wiseman, "Assyrian Writing Boards," 7, (picture) plate 1.
\textsuperscript{104.} Wax-boards in poor condition were discovered in Assur cf. O. Pedersen, *Archives and Libraries in the City of Assur*, 2 vols. (Uppsala: Ammqvist and Wiksell, 1986), 43. Both Israel and Judah were vassals to Assyria and likely shared this technology.
\textsuperscript{105.} J. MacGinnis, "The Use of Writing Boards in the Neo-Babylonian Temple Administration at Sippar," *Iraq* 64 (2002): 220-221. In the very recent D. Charpin,
boards to keep records in the temple. Wax-boards were used for economic texts of all
types, letters, medical and astrological texts, chronicles, all types of economic registers,
and receipts. There is even circumstantial evidence that some texts may have
originally been composed in clay then copied to wax-boards.

Comparative Evidence: Syria and the Levant

Further evidence reveals that wax-boards were used in Syria in the late second
millennium. Texts discovered in both Emar and Ugarit refer to wax-boards. One Emar
text refers to a "a wood-scribe" (Emar VI No. 246), which seems
conceptually similar to the Hittite . Other texts from Emar contain references to

Reading and Writing in Babylon (trans. J.M. Todd; Cambridge: Harvard University
Press, 2010), 73-74, Charpin write, "[Wax-boards] undoubtedly had an advantage over
traditional clay tablets in that it more easily allowed ascribes to write long texts, and
especially, made it easier to modify the text."

MacGinnis, "The Use of Writing Boards," 221.

MacGinnis, "The Use of Writing Boards," 221-222. He even notes that Hittite
archives contained over a thousand clay bullae thought to have sealed writing boards.

MacGinnis, "The Use of Writing Boards," 222.

Cited via D. Syminton, "Late Bronze Age Writing-Boards and Their Uses:
Textual Evidence from Anatolia and Syria," 116

D. Syminton, "Late Bronze Age Writing-Boards and Their Uses: Textual
Evidence from Anatolia and Syria," 121. The Akkadian phrase used is not rather
"tablet of wax" (RS 19.53 23). Syminton is unsure
where this term comes from (122 n. 76). RS 34.136 21 uses the ideogram,
which is often used in Hittite for "wax-board," though the rest of the text is written in
Akkadian.

In addition, Charpin, Reading and Writing in Babylon, 73-74 notes that was
a reference to a single leafed wax-board. Polyptychs were referred to as . In Hebrew
"leaf (of a wax-board)," and support of this is found in Lachish Letter 4
"I wrote to you on a wax-board. (Ahituv, Echoes from the Past, 70 seems to not be aware
of the dal tu"wax-board."
A Syrian wax-board may have been discovered in the northern Mediterranean. The only surviving wax-board in the west comes from the late bronze age ship wreck of Ulu Burun which dates to the fourteenth century B.C.E. Among the wreck, pithos KW 252 contained pomegranate seeds and parts, ballast stones, a bronze chisel, a bronze razor, and a wooden diptych with ivory hinges. The chisel in the pithos is "of a type especially common in the Levant." This does not mean that the contents of the entire pithos are from the Levant, but the likelihood that they were cannot be ruled out. Thus the wax-board may have also come from the Levant.

Although wax-boards would not have survived most environments, the styli could have. A bone stylus found at Tell Qasile was used to incise on a writing medium. Tell Qasile has produced small incised ostraca showing that, at least at this site, incising was more prominent than ink. If incising on clay was a writing technique employed at Tell Qasile, writing on wax-boards could have also existed.

Biblical References to Wax-boards

As expected, no evidence for perishable wax-boards has been found in ancient Palestine, but the HB contains references to wax-boards.

113. Cf. D. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 56, who suggest that wooden or wax surfaces may have been used in Israel, Moab and Phoenicia.
Hebrew לוח "tablet," a Semitic cognate to Akkadian leʾē-u "wax-board," appears 43 times in the HB. Of these 43 occurrences, four refer to a plank of wood, and in one reference it means shelf. The remaining 39 references refer to writing surfaces of various kinds.

The first reference (in literary order) to the writing medium לוח appears in Exod 24:12. This reference defines the specific material out of which the לוח is made, לחתה "tablets of stone." The presence of the modifier (here as an adjectival construct) suggests that a לוח was not typically made of stone otherwise the modifier need not be mentioned. All remaining occurrences of לוח in the Torah refer to the tablets of stone on which the Decalogue was written. Some of these do not use the modification ואבנ, but the modification is clearly implied. The single reference to לוח in Chronicles (2 Chr 5:10) does not appear with ואבנ, but the context explicitly states that it is referring to the tablets God gave Moses on Horeb. Thus it must also refer to tablets of stone. This leaves only five references to לוח in the HB.

The idiomatic phrase לוח לב "tablet of the heart" appears three times in the HB. It is a metaphor used "to describe the corruption of the mind as well as its cultivation." 120

117. Exod 27:8, 38:7; Ezek 27:5; Song 8:9.
118. 1 Kgs 7:36.
119. The LXX here reads πυξίνα < πυξίων wooden (wax) tablet, cf. J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie, A Greek - English Lexicon of the Septuagint, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart:Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997). Although not specifically in reference to this verse, TDOT 7:482 writes, "The frequent emphasis on the two tables of the law (Exod 31:18; 34:1; Deut 4:13; 9:11, 10:1; 1 Kgs 8:9; etc.) may indicate that they were thought of after the analogy of (rectangular!) wooden diptychs."
120. Carr, Writing on the Tablet, 148.
Jer 17:1, the oldest reference to this phrase, refers to a hard writing surface. Prov 3:3, 7:3 also do not make reference to what type of writing surface the metaphor implies. These later texts likely draw on a popular saying that goes back to Jer 17 or the context from which Jer 17 was birthed. It seems though that Jer 17:1; Prov 3:3 and 7:3 all refer to a material that was intended to be permanent. These texts refer to covenant writing, and thus imply that the writing surface on which the metaphor is built refers to etching on clay or stone.

The two remaining occurrences of לוח clearly do not refer to stone tablets. They refer to wax-boards. The first is found in Is 30:8. It reads:

עתהבואכתבהלוח–עלאתםספר–ועלחקהותהיליומאחרוןלעד

Now, go and write it on a tablet in their presence. Etch it on a document, so that it may be there, from the time to come, as a witness forever.

This verse is obscure according to the masoretic vocalization because no other clause in the HB contains the idiomatic combination:כתב verb + את "with." Despite this aberration, the idiom 쓰 + על clearly means "to write on," and here, Isaiah is to write on a לוח. The parallel clause, "Etch on a document" helps demonstrate that לוח refers


122. Jer 17:1; Prov 3:3, 7:3. In my opinion, the phrase לוח לgps evokes the image of a Mesopotamian clay amulet like the ūp šīmātī "the tablet of destinies" that Enlil wears around his neck in various epics such as the Anzu Myth. However, such inscribed amulets, if written on clay, should exist in the archaeological record. The closest evidence comes from Ketef Hinnom where silver amulets of scrolls were found with the Aarionic Blessing and sections of the ritual decalogue (Exod 34) impressed in them (Cf. Ahituv, Echoes from the Past, 49-55).

123. The translation is my own, but I follow J. Blenkinsopp, Isaiah (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 415 and read לְעֵד against the MT לָעַד.


125. A study of the term ספר in and outside the HB reveals a large variety of writing
to a writing surface that must be incised. חקק "to etch" is used for "incising" regardless of the writing medium.\textsuperscript{126} The word פל "statute" is a derivative of חקק and indicates that legal documents were written on materials that were incised. While the decalogue was purportedly written on stone, the comparative evidence presented above indicates that those incising legal materials used many other writing mediums, including wax-boards.

The use of the חקק rules out the possibility that it means an ostracon on which ink was used. It does not rule out the possibility that it means an ostracon on which a text was incised. In his seminal work on Semitic writing, G.R. Driver rightly claims that "the tablet mentioned by Isaiah and Habakkuk is as likely to have been of wood as of clay."\textsuperscript{127}

The meaning of לוחַ לוחוֹ remains unclear in Isa 30:8 and must be read in conjunction with Hab 2:2.

The meaning of לוחוֹ לוחוֹ is clearer in Hab 2:2 than in Isa 30:8. Hab 2:2 reads:

Yahweh answered me saying, "Write a vision. Make it clear on tablets so that a reader can run with it."

This text poses difficulties,\textsuperscript{128} but the meaning of לִבְאֵר קְרָא בָּו is the most

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medias that are called a ספר. Hence the general word "document" best translates this term unless it is modified by the specific type of document it refers to such as מִנְלָת ספר "papyrus document" (Jer 36:2). For a discussion cf. \textit{TDOT} 10:328-330.\textsuperscript{126} Cf. Job 13:27 where it is used as the verb "to inscribe" on copper. חקק and its biform חקה is even used of wooden objects in the carpentry trade (1 Kgs 6:35).\textsuperscript{126} G.R. Driver, \textit{Semitic Writing}, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 79-80. In footnotes to this claim he specifically refers to Isa 30:8 and Hab 2:2.\textsuperscript{127} The meaning of לבאר deserves attention. It is a dislogomena, appearing only here and Deut 1:5. Tawil, \textit{Akkadian Lexical Companion}, 43 demonstrates that חַב + בָּאֵר correlates with Akk. šaṭāru . bāru "to write down, to confirm, establish the legal truth." The difficulty of בָּאֵר vocalized as a piel impv. is made easier by Deu 1:5 in which Moses interprets the Torah. The concept is similar to that found in Akk. bāru D "to specify" which in turn may be related to bāru "a haruspex." Since only Moses and Habakkuk, both being prophets, are known לִבְאֵר "to explain" in the HB this may have been a specific divinatory word in Heb.\textsuperscript{128}
contested difficulty. Holt purposed in 1964 that the line should read, "so he may run who reads it." The LXX seems to read the text this way as well. I, however, read the text as referring to a herald who proclaims the message that is written. The social allusion behind Hab 2:2 is that of war, and as such I understand the reader to run "with" the text. Influenced from passages such as Jer 51:31 in which a runner is found in parallel with a herald during a time of war, I understand running as part of the occupation of the "reader" (אדריכל). Had the Hebrew text intended the meaning "run away," as Holt prefers, I would expect the text to use one of the various Hebrew synonyms for "flee."

According to my reading of the text, the term ירוץ, calls to mind the Hittite KASKAL "wax-board-scribe" (lit. "[on the] road"). Heraldring messages during a time of war was common in the ANE, and is seen elsewhere in the HB (e.g. Nah 2:1). If this is the case, then לוח mostly refers to the common material used to transmit message (i.e. letters). As demonstrated above, wax-boards appear to be a likely material used in the transmission of letters.

Many commentators hold that both Habakkuk and Isaiah were referring to clay tablets. But there are two problems with this assumption. First, לוח's Akkadian cognate leḫû "wax-board" argues strongly against reading "clay tablet" in these verses. A clear

131. I read ב as an instrumental ב cf. Joüon § 133c.
132. The reader is left to find parallels elsewhere in the Bible to determine the meaning of ירוץ. In addition to Holt's reading mentioned above, J.J.M. Robert, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 107-108 use Prov 18:10 to interpret Hab 2:2. He interprets it as "so that the one who reads might run into it (for refuge)."
distinction exists in Akkadian between "Clay tablet" ṭuppū and "wax-board" le³u. It seems counterintuitive that le³u would come to mean (or would come from Akkadian as a calque meaning) "clay tablet" in Hebrew.¹³³

Second, both Isaiah and Habakkuk spoke and wrote in Hebrew, so it is highly unlikely that לוח means "clay tablet" since clay is an unproductive writing medium for incising (Isa 30:8 חֵקֶק) an alphabetic scripts. Others have considered לוח to mean "ostracon," but as shown above, ostraca are not the medium of choice for writing prophecies or religious texts in ancient Israel or Judah. לוח clearly does not mean papyri since the technical term מגלה is reserved for papyri. In addition, both Isaiah and Habakkuk reside in Judah, and the distribution of מגלה as a writing medium among the Hebrew prophets is limited to those prophets known to have been living in exile in one of the two regions with marshlands and papyrus production, Egypt or Mesopotamia.¹³⁴

Due to the root's association with wooden planks in Exod 27:8, 38:7; Ezek 27:5

¹³³. Had the HB referred to clay tablets, it should be expected to use ṭuppū as the source for its loan word rather than le³u. Along these lines Nahum 3:17 helps justify this claim if, in fact, le³u as a writing medium is a loan word from Akkadian. In Nahum, the prophet refers to Assyrian clay-tablet-scribes using the loan word טפסר for Akkadian tupšarru. We should expect *טפים in Hab 2:2 had the writer referred to ṭuppū "clay tablets."

¹³⁴. Only Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah use מגלה. Within Jeremiah, only Jer 36 refers to a מגלה. This famed chapter about the Jeremiah's scroll is said to have taken place in the Judean court among royal secretaries in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Since Baruch was an official scribe (סופר) he had access to papyri. Furthermore, the narrative of Jer 36 implies that it is a redactional layer latter than the prophet's own words. The narrative refers to Jeremiah in the third person; compare this to the narrative framework of a book like Habakkuk in which much of the narrative framework appears in the first person.

Both Ezekiel and Zechariah functioned under the auspices of Mesopotamia society which used papyri.
and Song 8:9 it seems likely that לוח is a wood based writing medium. This leaves three possibilities for its meaning: either a לוח is a piece of wood on which ink is used, a piece of wood covered in gesso on which ink is used, or a wax-board. The first two options are not known outside of Egypt nor were they ever known to have been used in a traveling context such as is seen here in Habakkuk. Furthermore, had a board with or without gesso been used, חקק "to incise" makes not sense in Isa 30:8. Given the evidence, the most likely meaning of לוח is "wax-board."

Epigraphic Evidence as Evidence of Learning to Write on Wax-boards

In addition to these two explicit statements to wax-boards in prophetic composition, the epigraphic record favors the use of wax-boards in the first half of the first millennium in Palestine. The Old Hebrew script, attested on multiple stone inscriptions is a linear script which contains few wide curves and multiple strokes per letter; some letters were formed with as many as five strokes. This is not the case once a writer writes the Old Hebrew

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135. Cf. S. Ahituv, Habakkuk, in Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers, 2006), 40 [Hebrew] in which he renders לוח as סקפן (Modern Hebrew "notepad") based on the LXX. In the LXX, both in Isa 30:8 and Hab 2:2, πυξιον occurs which in all classical literature refers to wooden writing surfaces, see n. 119 above. Cf. also a similar evolution of the word "tablet" in English: tablet < table < L. tabula "plank."

136. I rule out the possibility that gesso covered wooden boards existed in ancient Israel in n. 96 above.

137. The old Phoenician script, the mother of the Old Hebrew script, survives primarily in texts written in stone. The ductus of the letters are very linear and few curves appear—mostly with wide arcs (such as in 𐤃,𐤃,𐤃,𐤃,𐤃). These arcs are limited to the medium on which they are composed. By this I mean, that stone with deeply incised letters typical of early first millennium texts, does not easily facilitate small or tightly carved arcs. The curves in the Phoenician letters become more prominent as the

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script in ink. On ostraca of the eighth and seventh centuries the Hebrew script exhibits many more curves and narrower arcs than is found in monumental texts of the same period.

The hand writing differences between ostraca and inscriptions is due in part to the writing mediums used. Ink requires the stylus to continue moving on the writing surface or else the text will blotch. On the other hand, incising requires a stylus to make more linear strokes because of the rigid writing surface which is prone to chipping as the curves of a letter become narrower.

Ostraca, such as those found at Arad and Lachish, show a writer's propensity to use multiple strokes per letter. This technique is striking since ink, because of the speed at which the writer must use the stylus and its facility for curvature, tends towards the development of a cursive script which uses as few strokes as possible. For instance, the letters of most alphabetic scripts which are predominantly written in ink use one to two (rarely more) strokes per grapheme, and more cursive scripts such as Serto and Arabic can composes whole words in one stroke. The ink graphemes found on the Arad and Lachish ostraca use more strokes than one would expect from an ink writing medium. For instance, letters such as \(h\) still require a remarkable five strokes to compose.

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Most other Old Hebrew graphemes took four or three strokes.\textsuperscript{139}

It stands to reason that writers using ink were trying to replicate the writing techniques used to produce a script similar to the monumental script. The monumental scripts were not products of ink writing techniques, rather ink scripts were products of a writing technique more closely associated with those composed on more rigid writing mediums. The writers' hands were not trained to write with ink but a medium such as a wax-board. Writing with ink was a technique that was foreign to them and they struggled, at times, to write clear letters and to adapt to the conventions of ink writing. The only economical and rigid writing medium these writers could have learned on was wax-boards.\textsuperscript{140}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{139.} It is clear that some writers at Arad struggled with the ink's tendency to blotch and the script's demand for strokes. However, the century that divides these two sites yields a development in ink writing. Lachish texts use fewer strokes on many graphemes, for instance on the $m$ and $k$. Also $h$ may have been reduced to three strokes instead of five. Regardless, many letters that are graphically complex (i.e. require many strokes) on incised materials are blotchy on the ostraca, such as $\mathcal{S}$. For clear pictures of the texts cf. Ahituv, \textit{Echoes from the Past}, 156-152. Perhaps, Arad and Lachish ostraca mark a shift in writing materials.

What could have instigated a change in writing mediums for the writers in Arad and Lachish? As noted above, these two find spots produced large amounts of military texts. Furthermore, they both date to times of war and political unrest in Palestine. The texts themselves which are predominately rations lists reveal that commodities were sparse at these sites. Presumably, sanctions and war limited the trade and production of wax and wood, the later of which had more immediate needs in times of war. It is probable that the writers had to create their own writing mediums out of the only materials they had in abundance, clay and lampblack (for ink). This does not preclude that wax-boards were not present at these sites.

\textsuperscript{140.} Perhaps an argument can be made that they learned to write by incising letters on dry ostraca. The archaeological record does not support this, as I would expect it to have had this technique been used for school exercises. Furthermore, why would a scribe draft an ostraca by incising on it then finalize it in ink?
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Wax-boards and Their Limits

My own experimentation with wax-boards has helped frame my perspective of their advantages and disadvantages. In preparation for this study I created three wax-boards. I made the first out of cedar wood working under the impression that cedar was an accessible wood species in ancient Palestine. The wood is soft, easy to carve, and light. I modeled its width (13.7cm), thickness (17mm) and the depth of the board's recessed face (2-3mm) after the Nimrud ivory board. The length (16.9cm) is approximately half that of the Nimrud boards (33.8cm) but comparable to other known boards. From a plank of 17mm wood I was able to prepare the board in approximately thirty minutes using only hand tools.

Applying the wax took approximately 30 more minutes with no prior experience, but once an initial layer of wax is on the board, the board can be baked on a flat surface for a few minutes then cooled at room temperature, and ready to be used again within 10-15 minutes. This is exponentially faster than the production of papyrus, parchment or clay. I anticipated that the cedar board would prove difficult because of cedar's tendency to warp with drastic temperature changes. The board has warped leaving it

141. Heb. "cedar" appears 73 times in the HB—a high frequency for a plant.

142. According to M. Howard, "Technical Description of the Ivory Writing-Boards from Nimrud," *Iraq* 17 (1955): 14 the tablets measure 15.6cm X 33.8cm. According to Wiseman, "Assyrian Writing Boards," 7 the recessed face was 12.5cm X 31.5cm. The British Museum provides multiple high definition pictures and measurements of many wax-boards that come from various parts of the ANE, but especially from Egypt in Graeco-Roman times (cf. britishmuseum.org).

143. After the third time baking the board, the wax and pigment separates leaving the wax frosty. When this occurs the wax must be scrapped off, melted stirred (sometimes using more wax and pigment), then reapplied. This is a minor inconvenience, but not a chore.
difficult to coat with wax. I assume the ancients experienced the same problem. This likely explains why no extant boards are made out of cedar, but out of harder woods such as walnut.

I fashioned a second and third board out of oak, which like cedar was available in ancient Palestine, and turned them into a diptych. The strength of the oak allowed me to create boards less than one third the thickness (5mm) of the cedar board without the risk of breaking or warping. The boards' dimensions are 13.8cm by 8.5cm.

Using a sharpened stylus that I made from a wooden dowel and a brass nail, I am able to write on the tablets. The wax facilitates a variety of scripts, but the more linear the script the easier it is to write and read. Deeper incising produces a clearer text, but the deeper the stroke the less curvature that can be achieved. Although cursive scripts are possible, they must be composed with shallow strokes. Shallow strokes are more difficult to read than deeper strokes and more likely to be filled in by the trace bits of excess wax scrapped up in the writing process.

Erasing is relatively easy. Using the blunt end of the stylus, I press it flat against the wax and twist slightly. This will erase an error by pressing the wax scratched up in the writing process back into the incised cavity. The erased mark can then be legibly

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144. Oak Heb. אלון was also available in ancient Palestine.
145. I modeled the size after the Ulu Burun tablets, which are slightly smaller. Many boards excavated, most surviving from Graeco-Roman times, are approximately the size of my experimental boards. For various boards cf. www.britishmuseum.org. Some Roman wax-boards comparable in size to the the Nimrud boards also survive.
146. The styli of antiquity were made of bronze. They had a pointed end used for writing and either a blunt end, presumably used for erasing, or a scrapper used to remove the wax.
Approximately 50-60 words can be clearly written in Old Hebrew script on the larger cedar board, and approximately 20-30 on each leaf of the diptych. Proportionally, wax-boards the size of those found at Nimrud could contain 100-120 clear words. These numbers are relative to script size and are estimates. At this rate a large sixteen-leaf polyptych, had such a document existed in an alphabetic tradition, could not exceed approximately 1920 words. To put this into perspective, the large ornamental ivory sixteen-leaf polyptych from Nimrud is large enough to hold the seven chapter book of Micah.

What Wax-boards Mean for Redaction Criticism of the Hebrew Prophets

Are there sections in the Hebrew prophecies that tend to exhibit the findings of this study? The above analysis leads to new ways of thinking about source criticism, redactional criticism and the textualization of the Hebrew prophets. The evidence implies that writing on wax-boards constitutes the initial stage of textualizing for some, if not many, of the Hebrew prophecies. Furthermore, some Hebrew prophecies may have been finalized on wax-boards had they been sent as letters. But can initial stages of prophetic textualization be seen in the text?

147. When I write on the wax-boards, I try to use letters approximately the size of those found on the Elephantine papyri. The writing surface size of many of the letters found at Elephantine, though written on papyri, are similar to those sizes found on extant wax-boards. Cf. pictures in TAD and references to extant wax-boards above.

148. The following chapter will demonstrate that many Hebrew prophecies were originally written in epistolary format.
The writer responsible for recording the prophet's words was limited by the average size of wax-boards, which could not facilitate long dictation. In light of this study, it is unlikely that any substantially long prophetic discourse was recorded as the prophet spoke. In any speech act, a recorder must select what content is worth recording and the ancient writer must have done the same. The ancient writer was limited by the number and size of wax-boards he used to compose a prophetic discourse. (The same may be said for prophets who wrote their own prophecies as was the case in Hab 2:2.) A writer recording a prophetic utterance (or a prophet writing his own utterance) must have relied in part on memory and used his writing medium as aide de mémoire when finalizing his work in a later draft.  

Many prophetic utterances, those statements which can be identified by the anaphoric heading כה אמר יהוה or the epiphoric closing line נאם יהוה, fit the results found in this study. The literary units that are delimited by these phrases tend to meet the length of one wax-board worth of content. Any one of the nine utterances in Amos 1-2 fit with in limits of a wax-board's writing surface. I estimated above that a small wax-board leaf could hold 20-30 words legibly, a medium sized board approximately 50-60 and large board approximately 100-120. Working under the assumption that writers used

149. See the next chapter. While the entire volume E. Ben Zvi and Floyd, *Writings and Speech in Israelite and ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (Atlanta, SBL, 2000) is dedicated to the study of prophetic orality and textualization, no essay satisfactorily deals with textualization as a means to aid a writer's memory as he or she composes the final textual draft (i.e. note taking). On the other hand, Small, *Writing on the Tablet of the Mind*, 81-140 deals extensively with this issue as it pertains to the composition of classical texts.
diptychs,150 all of Amos' utterances could fit on one large diptych.151

Likewise the prophecies against the nations in Ezek 25 would each fit on a wax-board leaf. The formula of direct address, כה אמר אדני יהוה, delimits a clear unit each of which is short and concise. The utterance in Nah 1:12, is equally as short and would fit on a diptych leaf. The utterance indicated by the signatory formula נאם יהוה at the end of Zeph 1:2-3 would also fit on a wax-board leaf. Many others throughout the Hebrew prophets also fit this criteria.

Many, but by no means all, oracles fit within this model. Knowing the practical limits of a writing medium such as wax-boards provides an empirical boundary for the redaction of prophetic utterances. It provides a general target, a textual terminus ad quem, for redactional criticism of the Hebrew prophecies. Since not all prophetic utterances clearly fit this model, the model must be borne in mind when interpreting a prophetic text, but must not be a criteria into a which an interpreter manipulates a text. The model helps guide questions, such as, why is an oracle the length that it is? But it cannot in all cases answer the question.

150. The relief from Sennacherib's Southwest Palace WA 124955, depicts two scribes. One writing on papyrus and the other a diptych.
151. There is debate as to whether all of Amos' utterances in these chapters are original or later literary constructions, cf. W. Wolff and S. Dean McBride, Joel And Amos: a Commentary On the Books of the Prophets Joel And Amos, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), and Jeremias, The Book of Amos (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 19-25 who claims that at least two utterances belong to Amos. Any two utterances from Amos 1-2 would fit on one leaf of a medium sized diptych.
Conclusion

In this chapter I set out to show that the textualization of prophetic texts often occurred on wax-boards. Circumstantial evidence proves that wax-boards were used in ancient Israel and Judah. Papyrus and clay (perhaps even parchment) were used in the final composition of many genres of literature, but some, if not many, prophecies were first drafted on wax-boards where they could easily, and cost efficiently, be edited before they took their final form on papyrus (or another ink based medium). Quintillion (sited above) writing in the first century C.E. explained this scribal phenomenon well:

It is best to write on wax owning to to facility which it offers for erasure, though weak sight may make it desirable to employ parchment by preferences. The latter, however, although of assistance to the eye, delays the hand and interrupts the stream of thought owing to the frequency with which the pen has to be supplied with ink.152

His reflection merely pens (etches?) a technique that had been in place in the ANE at least 2,000 years before he wrote—a technique that was practiced among those first writing the Hebrew prophecies.

The limits of wax-board writing played a pragmatic role in the composition of the Hebrew prophecies. Knowing that wax-boards were used in the drafting process of ancient texts helps an interpreter to formulate new questions that he or she can ask of the text. Moreover, the length of many oracular statements found within the prophets correspond, in general, to the amount of text that can fit on a wax-board. This provides a working model for redactional and source critical analysis of the Hebrew prophecies to aim for.

152. Quintillion 10.3.31. Sited from Small, Wax Tablet of the Mind, 146.
This general model must be supplemented with other factors that are typical of prophetic texts. The next chapter will explore the content of prophetic oracles. Based on comparative evidence it will investigate specific literary constructions that belong (and do not belong) in ANE prophetic literature; it will provide another and more specific model for redactional and source critical investigation of Hebrew prophecies.
CHAPTER 4
PROPHETIC TEXTUALIZATION AND REDACTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Having addressed who ANE writers were and what they wrote on, I now turn to the content of ANE prophetic texts. The goal is to find general parallels in genre or phraseology between ANE prophetic texts and the Hebrew prophecies and to use these parallels as an aid for interpreting the process of textualization and stages of redaction in the Hebrew prophecies. Unfortunately, the extant ANE data is uneven; prophetic oracles appear in very few texts throughout the ANE, and only at specific times.\(^\text{153}\) In fact, at large textual finds spots such as Ugarit or Boğazköy the convention in antiquity was to either record prophetic utterances on biodegradable writing mediums, such as wax-boards, or to not record them at all.\(^\text{154}\) Despite the vast archives of Hittite texts, scholarship only knows of prophets in Anatolia from one prayer that mentions prophets among other types of diviners.\(^\text{155}\) On the other hand, Assyrian prophecies are known from the early first millennium B.C.E., while the Mari archive (c. late-eighteenth century) contains dozens of texts that record prophetic utterances. Curiously, prophetic oracles

\(^\text{153}\) To what extent the lack of prophetic literature reflects a real lack in prophetic activity is undeterminable.
\(^\text{154}\) It is difficult to imagine, but also possible, that prophetic utterances were not common in these locations.
\(^\text{155}\) *ANET*, 396. "Plague Prayer of Mursilis" reads "If, on the other hand, people are dying for some other reason, either let me see it in a dream, or let it be found out by an oracle, or let a prophet declare it, or let all the priests find out by incubation whatever I suggest to them" (¶ a11). "O gods, whatever sin you behold, either let a prophet rise and declare it, or let the sibyls or the priests learn about it by incubation, or let man see it in a dream" (¶ b).
found at the small Mari outpost on the upper Euphrates vastly outnumber the amount of prophetic oracles found in any other ANE archive. The only ANE prophecies comparable in number to the Mari prophecies are those in the HB.  

For this study, my primary focus is to identify how ANE prophetic utterances came to be written, that is how they were textualized. A prophetic oracle or prophetic text includes a prophetic utterance, words which a writer ascribes to the voice of the deity spoken through the prophet. In addition to prophetic utterances, prophetic texts may include other literary frameworks, such as narratives statements (biographical or autobiographical) about the prophet's life, or interpretations of the prophet's message. I intend to compare the literary frameworks that contain ANE prophetic utterances with the literary frameworks that appear in the Hebrew prophecies.

I assume that in their inception many, though not all, prophetic utterances in the ANE, including utterances among Hebrew prophets, originated as oral compositions. As such, many components of the prophetic message have been lost in the textualization process. When writers wrote these utterances, they often adopted a fairly standardized

156. My objective throughout this thesis has been to explore the historical phenomenon of prophecy for which there is circumstantial data (textual evidence) to support its existence. Anthropologically speaking, an argument can be made demonstrating that prophets were likely active in many parts of the ANE, and record of them did not survive. This is no surprise since the written records that have survived indicate that prophecy was an oral activity and less of a written exercise. Unfortunately, only some prophetic texts survive throughout the ANE, and since my goal is to explain how prophecy came to be written, I focus this study in the written text not the hypothetical spoken word.

literary form that indicates to the reader that the words in this form were originally uttered.

Religious texts evolve over time, and with each change, a redactor adds a new historical layer to the texts that requires interpretation. I call this change the recontextualization of a text. The Hebrew prophets have succumbed to many redactional stages and thus have been recontextualized many times. Since my interest in this study is to uncover how a text was first composed, I focus on the prophetic utterances, those sections indicated by markers of direct speech. Even still, words attributed to the mouth of a prophet have a complex history as result of textual evolution. I suggest that there are three basic types of prophetic utterance: 1) There are textualized prophetic utterances, which are primary texts recording a speech act for the first time either while it takes place or from memory immediately after it has happened. The telling signs of a textualized prophetic utterance is: (a) the language reflects spoken rather than literary usage. Utterances may contain awkward structures, vocabulary or spelling. Or (b) they are terse. Short utterances more likely reflect the spoken word.

2) There are literary prophetic utterances which were originally composed in writing. In such cases, a writer writes an utterance using the standard markers of direct speech, but in reality the utterance had never been spoken or was spoken after it had first been composed. Utterances written from memory well after they occurred fall into this category though the issue of memory is difficult to empirically judge.

Should it somehow be determined that a prophet wrote a prophecy with the intention of proclaiming it, in the way a minister might prepare a sermon, such a prophecy would also fall in this category.
Lastly 3) there are redacted prophetic utterances. In redacted oracles, a redactor recontextualizes a pre-existing utterance by expanding it, shortening it or combining it with other texts prophetic or not. Examples of each of these appear in the Hebrew prophets and ANE literature, as will be seen. 

The Language of a Prophetic Utterance and its Literary Markers

A given prophetic text contains many literary markers that indicate the compositional layers involved in that text's production. Genre is perhaps the largest and most telling feature of any prophetic text's compositional layers. In ANE literature there are really only two meta-genres of prophetic texts: those that describe a subject using third person narrative language and those that are directed to a subject using first person (writer) and second person (addressee) formulation. Prophetic texts that describe a subject matter are written in a narrative form. They direct prophetic dialog to other characters in the narrative. 2 Kgs 20:1-11 and its parallels in 2 Chr 32:24-26 and Isa 38:1-8 21-22, is an excellent example of such a prophecy. In Neferyt, the prophet Isaiah visits an ailing king Hezekiah and prophecies to him. The Egyptian prophecies of Neferyt are also an example of a descriptive prophecy. In this text the king needs a wise counselor to engage

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I entertain the idea that there are pseudo-oracles, which are not composed or uttered by the prophet to which they are attributed (i.e. contain pseudonymity). This is clearly attested in works such as Second and Third Isaiah. Pseudo-oracles should not be confused with the phenomenon of false prophecies, which is an interpretational judgement not a historical or literary concern (e.g. Deut 13:2-5 and Ezek 13-14, 22). For more on this cf. D.N. Freedman and Rebecca Frey. “False Prophecy is True,” in Inspired Speech Prophecies in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honour of Berbert B. Huffman (eds. J. Kaltner and L. Stulman; London: Continuum, 2004), 82-87.
with, so his courtiers bring him Neferyt who then bestows his sagacious prophecies on the king.\footnote{H. Goedicke, \textit{The Protocol of Nerferyt} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).}

Prophetic texts directed to a subject are normally framed in the context of a letter. In such formations a writer directs a prophecy to the reader, the addressee. Jeremiah's letters to the exiles in Babylon (Jer 29) constitute such prophetic writings. Likewise, Mari writers retained prophecy only in an epistolary genre.

The matter of genre is, of course, complicated by the recontextualization of prophetic utterances. For example Jer 29 is a letter (or many letters) placed in the larger scroll ascribed to Jeremiah. A narrative framework (Jer 29:1-3) now introduces the letters. This narrative framework certainly did not exist in Jeremiah's original correspondence. The narrative framework replaced the letter's original address.\footnote{For a modern comparison cf. the publications of early Assyriologists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in which the Assyriologist often did not publish a text's colophon, but only its content. Fortunately, the Akkadian originals are still in museums, and the colophons can be preserved. Unfortunately, this is not the case with Jer 29.} Assyrian prophecies also demonstrate recontextualization. Scribes expanded the prophecies to include a ritual rubric, which ascribes a cultic setting to the prophecy different than the one in which it was conceived.

A further literary complication arises in the various \textit{types of oracles} that have been historically ascribed to prophets. Not all prophetic texts are prophetic utterances. Parables (Isa 5:1-7), psalms (Nah 1:3-8), lamentations (Ezek 19), visions (Isa 6),
prophetic burdens/doom oracles (Hab 1), and others[162] appear throughout the corpus of Hebrew literature known as "prophetic texts." This typological obfuscation is present in other ANE sources as well. At Mari, a prophet(ess) might engage in a type of dream incubation that produced a vision which the dreamer recounts to an informant who sends the account the king (ARM 26 323). Such texts, at least at Mari, are still considered "prophetic."[163]

As ARM 26 323 shows, it becomes difficult to distinguish at times between prophetic and other types of divinatory texts. For instance, historically scholars do not consider Hittite dream incubation texts as prophetic literature. Likewise, Babylonian tamittu's, which are divine inquiries in which the deity answers a carefully worded inquire in the negative or affirmative, are not considered prophetic. Both of these types of divinatory texts and many others are thought to have come from the deity and are portentous, but they do not express the words of the deity, which is the distinction between prophetic and other divinatory texts.

Furthermore, performance played an important role in some prophetic oracles. For instance, ARM 26 206:7-12 recounts a prophet who claims: w[uddi mīnam] ša

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162. I will not address the genre of apocalyptic literature in this study though it evolves from prophetic literature. Furthermore, the absence of prophecy in Semitic texts during the post-biblical period is an issue outside the scope of this thesis. I have left out DSS material because as J.M Baumgartner rightly states, "Beyond the biblical materials...there is no clearly self-defined institution of prophecy in the non biblical texts from Qumran" ("Prophecy," EDSS, 697). The materials that appear "prophetic" in the sectarian documents gravitate towards apocalyptic material, and, as such, are not incorporated into this study.

"Whatever of Zimri-Lim's shall I eat? Give me one lamb, so that I may eat it.' So I gave him one lamb and he ate it raw in front of the city gate." Performative prophecy appears among the Hebrew prophets as well. In Isa 8:1-4 Yahweh requires Isaiah to draft a vindictive name on a document, conceive a child with a prophetess, then name the child the vindictive name. This prophetic performance serves as a judgment against Damascus and Samaria. Performative prophecies such as these two must take a narrative form and constitute a unique type of prophecy.

Apart from genre, pronoun and person usage may serve as literary markers indicating compositional complexity. Abrupt changes in person are often indications of a composite text, two sources coming together, or a redactional layer. These changes may appear subtle and can be easily overlooked. For instance, the shift in genre between Nah 1:1-8 and 1:9-14 indicates a possible source division, but the shift in person between the two pericopes helps justify these two pericopes as distinct sources coming together. Vv. 1-8 constitute a third person psalm, while vv. 9-13 uses second and first person pronouns and verbs. 

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164. The meaning is unclear of both החרט אמורש and either the stylus used or the script used.

165. Even further, within vv. 9-13, v. 9 uses a second person m.pl. pronoun, vv. 10-11 second person f.s. pronouns, and vv. 12-14 an interchange of first person and second person (m.s. and f.s.) pronouns. The shift in pronouns combined with the literary formula כי אמר יהוה (v. 12) indicates that multiple voices are operative. 9-11 are a diatribe by the writer against the addressee in the same vein as the divine diatribe that follows in 12-14.
Pronoun divergence in a text is not always a definitive marker of source or reductional layers. An interpreter must cautiously make decisions on the basis of pronouns and person usage. For instance, it is common place for scholars to disregard the narrative epithets of prophet books in the HB. But at Mari, writers textualized prophetic utterances and included a third person narrative introduction to many though not all of the prophecies. Furthermore, distinct Mari prophecies are sometimes placed adjacent to each other in the initial textualization process. These prophecies can pertain to different subject matters and thus use different pronouns. In such cases, pronoun and person usage mark whether a prophecy belongs to the writer or to another mantic, but letters were composed in one sitting by one writer and shows no signs of distinct compositional layers. For this reasons, a critic should determine divisions based on pronouns in combination with other literary markers like genre or thematic cohesiveness.

Another literary marker is textual unevenness. Hos 1:1-2a presents a clear example of unevenness in its narrative introduction. 1:1 begins "The word of Yahweh that . . ." and 1:2 begins "The beginning of the word of Yahweh through Hosea." A clear expansion has occurred within 1:1 and 1:2 as evidenced by awkward repetition.166 Some Assyrian prophecies also exhibit similar textual disjunctions. For example, SAA 9 3.2 and 3.3 record Aššur's vindictive temperament towards the enemies of Assyria via his prophet. The ritual instructions in the prophecies' last few lines indicate the tablet (or a copy of the tablet) was used in a royal ceremony, probably Esarhaddon's coronation. In

this case, the literary unevenness is a result of variation in genre.\(^{167}\)

Literary formula is a final literary indication of source layers. Hebrew prophecies consistently use two literary formulas to indicate a prophetic utterance, כה אמר יהוה and נאם יהוה. Each formula occurs hundreds of times in the Hebrew prophecies. Other ANE collections use their own literary formulas to introduce prophetic utterances, and they are very similar to those used in Hebrew.

The complicated and composite structure of the Hebrew prophecies (as we have them today), resists attempts by scholars to conclusively determine their compositional layers or to decide whether they were textualized utterances or literary utterances. Unlike those in the HB, some ANE prophetic texts are primary documents. For this reason, I believe that the construction of and the formulas used in ANE prophecies can provide a model that an interpreter can use to determine how Hebrew prophetic utterances came to be written.

Samples from the Mari letters, Assyrian prophecies, and relevant NWS sources\(^{168}\)


\(^{168}\) I do not treat Egyptian prophecies in this paper. *ANET* 441-449 contains six texts that it classifies as Egyptian prophecies. These texts reflect divinatory activity, but in many ways do not reflect the typical prophetic formulas found in the HB. Furthermore, all six of these are monumental inscriptions, and as such, they have gone through extensive editing before being codified in stone. For example, "The Admonitions of Ipu-Wer" dates to the Nineteenth Dynasty but likely originated a thousand years earlier in the period between the Old and New Kingdoms (*ANET*, 441). While some prophecies in the HB may show signs of extreme editing comparable to these Egyptian texts, I wish to focus on texts with as few redactional problems as possible, so to provide a model that can latter be used on texts with many more redactional layers.
will provide controls that may have been operative in the textualization of Hebrew prophecies.

Mari

The Mari letters are the most natural place to start an investigation into ANE prophecy. Archaeologists found many prophetic texts among the archives at Mari. These archival records were a form of state reconnoissance by which a state informant reported the divine activity at Mari to a local king using letters. The letters reflect only those prophetic messages the state informant found worth preserving. No "prophetic text," that is a text comprising only prophetic material, survives, and it is uncertain why. Nissinen assumes, “It was apparently not the standard procedure to communicate prophecies in report format, that is, in tablets containing only the wording of the oracle proper—or if it was, such tablets were thrown away immediately after the messages had come to the notice of the addressee.”¹⁶⁹

According to Nissinen's hypothesis two types of prophetic documents may have existed, letters and discarded notes. The letters came about because the writer (or perhaps a group of writers) either witnessed the prophetic delivery first hand, or heard about it from a secondary party.¹⁷⁰ The scribe, according to Nissinen, would have then translated the message in his mind from Amorite into Akkadian while composing it with

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nearly flawless grammar in a letter to a royal official.\(^{171}\)

A second and hypothetical type of text, according to Nissinen, is a text that contained only a prophetic utterance. Had these texts existed they were either destroyed once read by the recipient, as Nissinen suggests, or, more likely, were redrafted into and letter sent to a royal official. The original draft, which the informant would have acquired or written, had to have been destroyed because no drafted documentation survives from Mari. However, if wax-boards were used in this period for drafting documents,\(^{172}\) then this might explain how a writer compiled various prophecies and other information, but left no evidence of the compiling process. I base such a theory on Hittite evidence, which used this type of drafting practice, particularly in letter writing.\(^{173}\)

The Mari prophecies display many unique literary features. A writer frequently opens a letter containing a prophecy with the following heading:

\[
\textit{ana bêlîya qibîma umma PN (of the sender) warakâma/amatkâma}
\]

To my Lord speaks as follows: PN your servant/maid servant.\(^{174}\)

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\(^{171}\) Nissinen, "Spoken, Written, Quoted and Invented," 254. Charpin, Reading and Writing in Babylon, 120 proposes a similar view. He write, "I therefore do not share the view of those such as J. Cooper, who believes that 'we may read and understand letters from Mari, Tuttel, Emar, or Alakakh as the Akkadian texts they are, but we are very aware that they may have been dictated and read out in local languages that would have been very different from the Akkadian in which they were written down.'"

\(^{172}\) The evidence is inconclusive. According to the findings of the previous chapter Wax-boards were in use in the Ur III period which predates the Mari texts by c. 200 years and during the Old Hittite period which post-dates the Mari texts by only 300 years. But there is no solid evidence that wax-boards were or were not used during the writing of the Mari letters. \(\textit{lēp}u\) appears one at Mari and must refer to "boards/planks" (cf. CAD L 156d).

\(^{173}\) Cf. p. 44-45 above. According to Hittite sources, wax-tablet-scribes would collect reconnaissance and diplomatic correspondences, but clay-tablet-scribes were responsible for codifying the wax texts in clay if the clay-tablet-scribes deemed it necessary to preserve the wax text.

\(^{174}\) All normalized text comes from Nissinen, Prophets and Prophecy. Translations
These administrative epistles often record not only a prophecy, but may include other
day-to-day operations of the vassal state using a third person narrative framework.

Sometimes a writer includes multiple prophecies in one letter.

The epistolary structure of these prophecies reveals a great deal of insight into
who wrote them and how the informant acquired and transmitted the prophecy to his or
her lord. The informants were often officials/ambassadors informing their lord of palace
affairs. At times they were priests. The informants were both male and female as
indicated by the gender of "slave" (wardu or amtu), a term of self deprecation used when
addressing a king. When the informant composed a letter, he or she would often write
that the prophet, whose message is retained in the letter, illikamma "came to me [to the
informant]" revealing that the informant did not always seek out the oracular message.

On the other hand, it is difficult, at times, to determine how the informant acquired the
prophetic utterance.

Perhaps, more often than not, the informant was a palace official observing public
and cultic activity. In other accounts it appears as though the informant was a priest

175. For example, the various letters of Šibtu often mention, ekallum šalim "the palace
is well" in a introductory line, cf. ARM 26 212:4; ARM 26 213:4.
176. In ARM 26 200 a šangûm (a priest) records the oracle of a prophetess.
177. Šibtu, was the queen of Mari and a wife to Zimri-Lim. She sent correspondences
to her husband. She reports of a servant-girl who goes into a trance in the temple and
prophesies, ARM 26 214:1-7. In ARM 26 207 ln. 3-5 Šibtu gave a drink to a male and
female to evoke a prophecy from them.
writing about his experience in the temple. Still a few other letters are ambiguous. For example, the line, "[āp]ilum ina bīt [Ḫ]išamītim Išiaḫu šumšu [i]tī-[m]a umma-mi "The prophet by the name of Išiaḫu came up to the temple of Ḫišamītim saying as follows"\textsuperscript{178}

says nothing about why the informant was at the temple to hear the prophecy.

The informants were obligated as appointed officials or sanctioned priests to write these letters. Their job was to report on what the king should know, \textit{annītam bēlī lā tē de} "This my lord should know."\textsuperscript{179} It must be borne in mind that the informant's agenda can drastically skew facts. For instance after the cultic personnel,\textsuperscript{180} Ili-ḫaznaya, approached Šibtu with a divine message from the god Annunitum about Babylon, Šibtu claims:

\begin{quote}
\footnotesize
\end{quote}

Before Ili-ḫaznaya there was a message that Annunitum sent to him, I myself inquired 5 days. The [mes]age which Annuni[tum se]nds to you and the one I inquired for are identical.

This calls into the question the accuracy of the textualization process. Prophecies are subject to those writing them down. The ideological or personal motivations of the

\textsuperscript{178.} ARM 26 195 ln. 5-7.
\textsuperscript{179.} Cf. A 1121; A 2731 and A 3760.
\textsuperscript{180.} Ili-ḫaznaya is called an \textit{assinnu}. The meaning of this term remains obscure. Assuming it did not change over time—which is a dangerous assumption—it refers to a cultic personal who either serves or is identified by some sexual trait, often interpreted as a transvestite or a male cultic prostitute. In the Descent of Ištar Ea creates an \textit{assinnu} who descends to the netherworld uninhibited and sexually pleases Ereškigal, which leads to the \textit{assinnu} tricking Ereškigal into releasing Ištar from the Netherworld (Cf P. Lapinkivi, \textit{Ištar’s Descent and Resurrection}, SAACT 6 [Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2010], ln 92ff.)
recorder play a role in which prophecies are recorded and how they are worded. What is written may not entirely reflect the message the prophet delivered.

In no less than three texts, the informant claims to have gone to a prophet to evoke a prophecy from him.\textsuperscript{181} ARM 26 207 explains how the informant evoked the prophecy. Šibtu writes, \textit{zikāram u sinništam ašqi} "I gave a drink to a man and woman." In other texts this drink appears to be water and not a hallucinogen. Durand compares this to biblical and Greek prophetic traditions to determine what type of drink she gave the oracles. He concludes that the texts are literal and the drink was merely water.\textsuperscript{182} In this text the catalyst for the prophecy worked and the \textit{zikāru u sinništu} gave a favorable oracle.

Types of Mantics at Mari

Mantic activities such as this were commonplace among the Mari prophets. Complex as they were, prophetic titles inferred the mantic quality of the prophet. Understanding a prophet's place in society helps an interpreter determine how and why a prophetic text was textualized.

For example \textit{muhḥū} or \textit{muhḥātum} likely refers to a mantic experiencing "madness" when receiving a divine word. The titles derive from \textit{maḥū} "to be mad," and perhaps reflects the crazy state of their behavior when receiving a divine word.\textsuperscript{183} This

\textsuperscript{181.} ARM 26 207, 208, 212.
\textsuperscript{182.} ARM 26/1, 392.
\textsuperscript{183.} On the physical limits of mantic activity cf. the foundational study by A. Guillaume, \textit{Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and other Semites} (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), esp. 290-412.
mad state was not limited to the *muhḫû* but was a primarily characteristic of his mantic behavior. Durand agrees and writes about the *muhḫû*, "Elle n'est attestée que deux fois, mais il est vraisemblable qu'il faille la postuler à chaque intervention du *muhḫû* ou de la *muhḫûtam*." He goes to claim that the *âpīlum* "the respondent-prophet" may have also experienced mad behavior when acquiring a divine message.

If this is the case, than *muhḫû*, *muhḫûtam*, and *âpīlum* may have been used as social labels and not occupational labels. Durand astutely notes that because of their social distance, perhaps as a vagabond, the *muhḫû* rarely left the temple or his village and had no access to the king. "Il est vraisemblable que gens comme les *muhḫûtam* ne devaient que rarement sortir du temple ou du moins de la ville où il se trouvait, et c'est ce qui peut expliquer qu'ils communiquent avec le roi par un intermédiaire." The prophet may have approached the informant, not because he was illiterate, but because the prophet knew that the informant was the only way for his message, i.e. the deity's message, to reach the king.

The *bārû* on the other hand was less localized and may have been integrated into royal personnel; *bārû* may have been an actual occupation. Durand notes, "Cependant, et c'est une différence essentielle avec le *bārû*, on ne le voit pas accompagner l'armée ou être utilisé pour prédire l'avenir des districts du royaume." Such social and occupational distinctions are extremely valuable for comparative purposes because the Hebrew term נביא indiscriminately applies to all social, mantic, or occupational

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184. ARM 26/1, 394.
185. ARM 26/1, 394.
distinctions in the Hebrew divinatory tradition. This leveling did not appear among the Mari mantics.

The social standing of the mantic and the reported location of some mantic events calls into question the possibility of having a scribe on hand to record a prophecy as it took place. Instead the prophets committed his or her prophecy either to memory or to writing so that he or she could deliver it to the king's informant. For instance, the informant Yaqqim-Addu reports that after an anonymous prophet of Dagan came to him

(illikamma):

\[
\text{anumma tē[rtam ša] idbub[a[m ašturma] ana šēr [bēliya] aštra[m] u tērtāšu ina simmištim ul iqēbēm ina puḫur štibūtim tērtāšu iddin (ARM 26 206: 28-34)}
\]

Now, [I have recorded] the or[acle that] he spoke [to me] and sent it to [my lord]. He did not utter his oracle in private, but he delivered his oracle in the assembly of the elders.

The prophet in this text delivered his message at one point in the streets and then again directly to Yaqqim-Addu, the informant. Examples such as this make it clear that, at times, the informant received the prophecy firsthand. Reports such as this show that primary sources of prophetic texts, at least at Mari in the 18th century were written in letter format for the sake of state reconnaissance.

186. It is unclear where the informant is at any given time. In some texts the informant appears the be at the palace ARM 26 208 ln 5-8. Other times, the context is that of the temple (ARM 26 209 ln 6-7, 15-16).

187. It is also probable that the prophet wrote his or her own message and delivered the text to the informant since the informant was the only line of communication to the king who lived in a different provenance.

188. Text and translation by Nissinen, Prophets and Prophecy, 38. Nissinen notes that simmištim, which he translates "private" is contested by some to mean "secret" (39 n. i).

189. References to prophets "arising" do not necessarily mean that the informant witnessed the prophecy first hand (Nissinen, "Spoken, Written, Quoted and Invented,"
Literary Structure of the Mari Prophecies

The literary structure of the Mari prophecies are fairly simple. In most cases the oracles are only a few clauses long. A narrative framework often introduces the prophet(ess) and his or her prophecy. For example:

\[
\text{ana Zimrī-Lim qibīma umma āpilum ša Šamšīma umma Šamašma (ARM 26 194: 1-3)}
\]

Speak to Zimri-Lim: As follows the prophet of Shamash:
Shamash as follows:

The prophets name may be left out as is the case in ARM 26 194:32, which simply reads:

\[
\text{umma Šamašma "Shamash as follows."} \]

A slightly longer narrative framework accompanies those oracles which the reporter explicitly claims to have received firsthand:

\[
\text{inanna qammatum ša Dagan ša Terqa [i]llikamma [k]ītam iqbēm [u]mma šīma}
\]

Now the qammatum of Dagan of Terqa came to me. Thus she said as follows:

Other divinatory accounts were recorded in the Mari letters. These are not as short in length as the prophetic utterances. For instance, the divine dream in ARM 26 232, in which a woman records her own mantic experience of a dream-vision in the first person, comprises fifteen lines and a long (in comparison) five line narrative introduction.

The dream has one short contextual reference to the letter's addressee, king Zimri-Lim

\[256\) There could have been lower ranking reporters who went out on assignment and conveyed information to the official informant, much like the sociology behind the Hittite wax-tablet-scribes and clay-tablet-scribes.

\[190\] Other narrative frameworks record the medium of divine encounter whether by means of a ritual drink (ARM 26 207 Ins. 3-5), trance (ARM 26 222 Ins. 6,13), bird divination (ARM 26 229 ln 14), vision (ARM 26 236 ln 7), or dream (ARM 26 227 ln. 5).
(line 23), which indicates why it would be of interest to the king.

In ARM 26 237 a dreamer sends her dream written in the first person to Zimri-Lim, but also records in the third person her own encounter with a prophetess. This letter exhibits a willingness to blend different types of divinatory texts, a dream and a prophetic utterance, in one letter. In fact most of the letters blend various subjects together whether divinatory, economic or administrative.

Final Observations on Mari Prophecies

The Mari informants recorded a variety of mantic experiences from a variety of cultic functionaries and religious individuals using a fairly standardized literary form and genre. At least some Mari texts represent first hand accounts of oracular and other divinatory activity. Thus they constitute primary sources. It is uncertain if the Mari letters are the initial textualization of the prophet's words because the informant may have drafted the prophecy, or the informant may have received it in writing from the prophet or another individual then later incorporated into a letter. Because there is no clear evidence that the informant used written sources to compose his or her letter, it is conceivable that most Mari letters are the initial textualization of the prophetic utterances they record. But if they are not the initial textualization, they were written close to the time the prophecies took place, and constitute the closest evidence of original prophetic texts the survive from
The texts' literary structures reveal that writers first textualize prophetic utterances within letters using an epistolary form. It seems likely that these messages were not composed in the vernacular in which the prophecy was given; they were translated by the informant or prophet from Amorite into Akkadian. The informants sending these messages adopted the ANE genre of governmental letter writing, which allowed for the informant to include more than one topic and more than one prophecy in a given correspondence in a memo-type format. *This means that prophetic utterances were first textualized with other data relevant to the social context in which the prophecy was conceived, and that the order of adjacent prophecies appears arbitrary.* Adjacent prophecies are related in so far as they exhibit the experience of the informant in between his or her reports to the royal court.

Lastly, Mari prophecies show that the writers' ideology played a role in the letters as a whole and perhaps also in the selection or composition of individual utterances. The prophetic utterances are subject to the informant's own social goal, namely to please his or her king. *It is no surprise that among the Mari prophecies, not one calls for the usurpation of Zimri-Lim the king, or for the fall of his kingdom.*
Assyrian Prophecies

In addition to Mari prophecies an other major, though significantly smaller, corpus of prophecies were discovered in Assyria. The Assyrian prophecies use a slightly different formulaic introduction than those found at Mari. A typical introduction is:

\[ a\text{-}bat\ d15\ \text{ṣa\ URU.\ arba-il\ } [x\ x\ x\ x\ x\ x] \] (K6259 1:1)

The word of Ištar of Arbela [to the king's mother:]\(^{191}\)

Parpola does not see this formula as editorial, but original to the prophecy. He explains, "Since the passage is not separated from the rest of the text by a ruling, as is usual in the case of headings, it is more likely to be part of the oracle itself and thus to be interpreted as an address formula in the vocative."\(^{192}\) Conceptually, abat DN is similar to the umma(-mī) DN found in Mari documents, but the former is more stylistic and formal. The scribes of the Assyrian prophecies name the prophet not in the introduction, as is the practice in Mari, but in the colophons. These colophons or "authorship notes," open a window to the prophet(ess)'s world; they shed light on his or her lineage and residence.\(^{193}\)

One example is:

\[ \text{ṣa\ pi-i\ MÍ.si-in-qi-ṣa-a-mur\ DUMU.MÍ\ URU.arba-il\ } (K4310\ II:9'-10') \]

By the mouth of\(^{194}\) the woman Sinqiša-amur of Arbela.\(^{195}\)

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\(^{191}\) Text and Translation from S. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, SAA 9 (Helsinki, Helsinki University Press, 1997), 34. Parpola does not normalize the text. Parpola likens this formula to Mic 1:1 and Obad 1:1.

\(^{192}\) SAA 9, LXIII

\(^{193}\) SAA 9, LXIII.

\(^{194}\) In this text Parpola argues that we must literally read ṣa pi-i "of/by the mouth" based on the formulaic parallel TA\(^{*}\) pi-i ṣa PN "from the mouth of PN" (SAA 9, LXIII).

\(^{195}\) Text and Translation from SAA 9, 5.
Parpola deduces from the similarities of the Assyrian prophetic texts that some scribes borrowed forms from older scribes when preparing a tablet. Parpola assumes that in at least one register of unnamed oracles followed by an oracle with a colophon, the colophon must pertain to the entire collection of oracles "considering the pains taken elsewhere in the corpus to specify the authors of the oracles." Parpola's conclusion must remain tentative because as Isaiah and Second Isaiah demonstrate, prophetic texts from different sources can be compiled under one heading though that heading may not describe the context of all the prophecies that follow it.

It is of no surprise that some prophets were high ranking cultic functionaries. The colophons of K2401 indicate that at least one prophet also served as an important cultic functionary. His prophecies were part of a ritual practice which were "placed before Bel-Tarbaşi and before our gods." The text further describes ritual instructions and how the tablet is to be used publicly at Esarhaddon's coronation. According to the text, a copy of the oracle was placed in the courtyard of the temple. SAA 9 3.3 preserves the instructions for the prophecy's temple use:

\[(26) \text{an-nu-u šul-mu šá ina IGI ša-al-me (27) ṭup-pi a-de-e an-ni!-u šá dš-šur (28) ina UGU ha-’u-u-ti ina IGI LUGAL e-rab (29) Ȝ—DUG.GA i-za-} \]

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196. SAA 9, LXIV.
197. SAA 9 3.2 8-9 ina igi den-tür ina igi dingir.meš-ni šá-ki-nu-u-ni.
198. SAA 9, LXIV. This concept can be likened to ascribing all of the various oracles in Ezekiel to the prophet Ezekiel because the books heading implies such. This type of assumptions does not work, of course, with Isaiah, so the claim must remain tentative.
This is the well-being (placed) before the Image. This covenant tablet of Aššur enters the king's presence on a cushion. Fragrant oil is sprinkled, sacrifices are made, incense is burnt, and they read it out in the king's presence.

Concerning this text, Nissinen remarks that these lines do not belong to the respective oracle but constitute the ritual rubric the prophecy has been adapted for. In this piece "prophetic text" transcends its genre and becomes part of a ritual performance. This supplies insight into why scribes archived these particular prophecies. This might also explain why these prophecies do not mention the prophet who spoke them.

Parpola dates the Assyrian prophecies as follows: Collection 1 written early 681 compiled 673, Collection 2 written 679 compiled 679, Collection 3 681 or 680, Collection 4 680, Oracular reports: c. 681 to c. 650. These dates are contemporaneous with or slightly predate many Hebrew prophecies. These texts were archived at Nineveh though the prophecies may have originated in districts around Nineveh. Their dating argues for a short window of time between the textualization of the oracles and the

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199. I cannot help but wonder about the similarity in name between the šulmu mentioned here and the שולموا offering in Lev. 3. The actual connection of prophets to temple remains obscure in both Mesopotamian and ancient Israelite/Judahite cultures. Some Mesopotamian texts seem to imply that prophets were integrated into the temple activities. The stylistically reversed ritual text, Farber 1977 A II a, presents a long detailed ritual for exorcism toward the end of which the sacrificial offering of bread goes to the zabbi zabbati mahbē u mahbūtī "frenzied men, frenzied women, prophets and prophetesses" (ln. 31).

200. Translation from Parpola, SAA 9, 24-25.

201. Nissinen, Prophets and Prophecy, 119-120 n. e and 121 n. l.
redactional efforts that recontextualized them. These texts did not gradually evolve over
time but changed abruptly, shortly after they were written.

Parpola makes five comparative claims about the Assyrian and biblical
prophecies:

1) Hebrew דָּבָר יהוה and a-bat d15 ša URU.arba-il "The word of Ištar of Arbela [to the
king's mother:]" are comparable. 2) The placement of the introduction of the addressee at
the beginning of the prophecy normally uses a vocative like those found in biblical
prophecies. 202 3) anāku DN is comparable to אני יהוה. 4) The prohibition lā tapallaḥ is
comparable to אל תיראו. And 5) references to the deity's past support for his people is a
theme found in biblical prophecies such as Isa 48:3-6. 203

Every extant Assyrian prophecy is addressed to royalty, or at least turned into a
royal ritual. These messages only favor the monarch. Various types of individuals are
credited for delivering the prophecies, but they have an nationalistic ethos in common.
Many of the texts simply refer to the prophet—only by sex, i.e. male or female. The
texts, on occasion, include a marker of social status for the speaker. Among the few
social statuses mentioned we find a šēlātu "votaress" (SAA 9 1.7:11) and a raggimu

202. By "vocative" Parpola must refer to a formula of direct address.
203. Text and Translation from SAA 9, lxv-ii and n. 290. Three Assyrian stylistic
criteria do not have counterparts in biblical prophecies according to Parpola: Present/
future support in which the god is with the king, a demand for praise, and cultic demands
(lxvi-ii).
"prophet" (SAA 9 3.6:31). Only one text mentions the name of a prophetess; SAA 9.7 ascribes the text to Mullissu-kabtat raggintu "Mullissu-kabtat the prophetess." The scribe behind these texts is simply a copyist since we cannot assume that the archived tablets are primary texts. They show redactional traits and recontextualizations as Parpola points out. The scribes responsible for the redaction and the recontextualization must have been cultic functionaries, diviners or priests, since the texts have taken on a productive ritual use within the state cult. Unfortunately, Insights into how the original scribes textualized these prophecies are lost.

Northwest Semitic Prophecies

Among the early to mid NWS texts, only three contain prophetic utterances. The first and most significant is the Deir 'Allah inscription. The second is Lachish Letter 3, which ascribes one word to an anonymous prophet. The last is the Zakkur inscription, which contains a long nationalistic prophecy.

Deir 'Allah

The opening lines of the Deir 'Allah inscription reads:

This is an account of Bala'am the son of Be'or. He is a seer of gods. And the god of gods came to him at night, and he [Bala'am] saw a vision like a doom oracle of 'El. And they [the gods] said to Bala'am the son of Be'or thus:

The text presents an epithet similar to those found in Assyrian and Mari. The opening line has many parallels to Hebrew prophecies (Nah 1:1, Isa 13.1, Hab 1.1, Lam 2.14).

The most significant is the parallel with Nah 1:1. Three key elements in Nahum's epithet appear in Balaam's: חזון (noun), משא, ספר. Both Nahum and Balaam are also curiously missing the word נביא.

Little is known for certain about the cultural context in which the inscription was found but Lemaire concludes that the text is part of the literary heritage of Arameen Damascus:

Si, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, la phase M/IX de Deir 'Alla faisait partie du territoire du royaume araméen de Damas et si les inscriptions du mur 36 sont la copie d'un ou de plusieurs textes littéraires araméens archaïques, cela signifie probablement que ce ou ces textes faisaient partie du patrimoine littéraire du royaume araméen de Damas dans la première moitié du VIIIe s. av. J.-C.

Furthermore, Lemaire hypothesizes that Deir 'Alla may have been a place of instruction,

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205. Cf. B. Halpern, "Dialect distribution in Canaan and the Deir Alla Inscriptions." Pages 119-139 in Working with no Data (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1987) in which he discusses the historical and philological context of the inscription in a unique way. It is most important to remember that the Deir Allah text "remind us not to make of Judahite Hebrew a monolith, an unproven norm for the north and east" (119).

but this is merely speculative.\textsuperscript{207} It is clear that the evidence is too opaque to reconstruct with certainty the scribal culture that produced this inscription. But the existence of the inscription and a few other texts incised on clay tablets demonstrate writing was active in the area for a long time.\textsuperscript{208}

Very little can be said about the textualization and redaction of this inscription. A scribe wrote the prophecy on plaster, stylizing the words with red and black ink.\textsuperscript{209} The only other known early plaster inscriptions come from Kuntillet 'Ajrud, which like Deir 'Allah, was not a royal or monumental space.\textsuperscript{210} It is safe to assume that the text does not reflect an autograph of the original text as it is unlikely that Balaam prophesied before the plastered wall as a scribe artfully recorded his prophecy. Hence, a Balaam tradition and transmission history lies behind the text; this inscription does not represent the initial stage of textualization of the prophecy it records.

The text dates to the 9th or 8th century and corresponds to the dating of the earliest

\textsuperscript{207} Lemaire, "Les Inscriptions sur Plâte de Deir 'Alla," 55. Many of Lemaire's social historical comments have come under scrutiny due to publication of his controversial book, Les écoles et la formation de la Bible dans l'ancien Israël, but his comments about the Deir 'Allah inscriptions seem feasible to me.


\textsuperscript{209} J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, Aramaic Texts from Deir 'Alla (Leiden: Brill, 1976), esp 31-96 infers the type of stylus used and analyzes the script's formation and use of compositional space.

\textsuperscript{210} Sanders, The Invention of Hebrew, 142.
Hebrew prophets. A Balaam tradition appears in the HB (Num 22-23; Mic 6:5), which makes sense considering the proximity of this text's find spot to ancient Judah. Although the inscription's epithet compares to some found in Hebrew prophecies, the language of the inscription is difficult to decipher. It is a unique dialect among the NWS family, and it is unclear whether the dialect reflects Balaam's own.

Sanders' insightful observation helps frame the socio-political setting of the inscription. He writes that the Balaam text is independent of royal affiliation in that it is not addressed to the king of Moab, but to his people עם. 211 This is a significant observation. Only this prophecy and the Hebrew prophecies exhibit a strong demotic sentiment. 212

Lachish Letter 3

This letter dates to the late sixth century B.C.E. It records a correspondence from an officer, Hosha'iyahu, to his commander at Lachish, Yaush. The remarkable literary similitude between the Lachish correspondence and the Mari prophecies helps curb the level of interpretation involved in comparing the Mari letters with Hebrew prophecies.

Lachish letter 3 reads:

211. Sanders, The Invention of Hebrew, 140-141.
212. This is one of the primary themes of Sanders' book, and an astute observation on his part.
(1) Your servant Hosha'iyahu sends [this message] de(2)claring to my lord, Yaush. (3) May YHWH cause my lord to hear a report of peace, (4) and a good report. Now open (5) [please] the ear of your servant to the text (6) that you, my lord, sent to your servant yesterday. For the heart of (7) your servant mourns because of your previous [message that] you sent to your (8) servant. For [in it] my lord said, "do you not know how (9) to read a text?" By the life of YHWH, a m(10)an has never attempted to read to me a text. Furthermore, (11) every text that comes to me, surely (12) I have read it, and I still can repeat it, (13) every detail! Now, someone has declared to your servant (14) saying, "An officer of the army, (15) Coniah the son of 'Elnathan went down to go (16) to Egypt, and (R.1) he sent word to Hodawiyahu the son of 'Ahiyahu (R.2) and his men from there. (R.3) Now, the text of Tobiyahu, the servant of the king, was brought (R.4) to Shallum, the son of Yada', from the prophet say(R.5)ing, "Beware!" Your serva[nt] sent it to my lord.

The only prophetic word recorded in this letter is כו המר "Beware!" 213 Contextually it is directed to a state official. The state messenger, the reporter, obviously truncated the prophecy or perhaps the prophecy is missing. On the other hand the literary formula

213. The word appears to be a nifal imperative, similar to that found in Isa 7:4 הִשָּׁמֵר; cf. also Jer 9:3. It is difficult to determine if this is an summary of the prophecy, a prophetic (though perhaps not divine) warning, or an incipit referring to a specific prophecy.
"the prophet says/as follows" matches that found in the Mari letters, PN umma "PN as follows," and implies that it may actually have been a word that the prophet spoke. Hosh'a'iyahu considers the prophet's word authoritative even though it may not have come from God, since it is missing a divine referent.

Lachish Letter 3 dates to the late sixth century B.C.E. It was found at Lachish. It is the product of Israelite military correspondence, and is written in epistolary Hebrew. Unfortunately it says very little about scribal practices, and even less about religious activity concerning Hebrew prophecy, except that Hebrew prophecy was politically valuable. The text is likely the initial textualization of the prophetic utterance.

KAI 202: Zakkur

A final NWS text that refers to divinatory activity is KAI 202, the stele of Zakkur. In this stele, Zakkur validates his claim to the throne based on his deeds, which are certified by a divine proclamation. The divine certification is placed in the mouth of seers. The inscription clearly states the introduction to the prophetic utterance:

Baalshamayin answered me and Baalshamayin spoke to me through seers and through messages. Baalshamayin said to me:

Like most prophetic introductions, the text uses a formula of direct address. This short
narrative introduction to the prophecy uses a unique construction דבר יד יהוה "he spoke through the mouth (lit. the hand) of seers." The idiom "through the hand of" might actually refer to a document that the seers wrote and sent to Zakkur. The phrase is found in the Ex 9:35 and Lev 10:11. It also appears in the HB with other verbs of speech such as צוה (Lev 8:36) and קרא (Zech 7:7). In all instances, the idiom is used with Yahweh as the subject of the verb. It is as if the idiom "in the hand of" substantiates the words of the deity. Regardless, it is a fairly anomalous construction and bears little on the present study. On the other hand, the formula לאמר אלי DN והאמר אליך appears three times in the Hebrew prophecies (Ezek 40:2, 44:2; Amos 7:15) and is reminiscent of many formulas mentioned above.

Like the Deir 'Allah inscription little can be said about Zakkur's redactional history. Since it is an inscription, the text must have been drafted on some standard writing medium before the words were incised on the stele. Furthermore, there is no clear indication that the words on the stele represent the actual words of a prophets. Like the Mari letters, and especially the Assyrian prophecies, the text is ideological and represents a favorable word about the king. Apart from proving that politically correct prophecies were a widespread phenomenon throughout the ANE, the Zakkur inscription provides little other evidence to further a study on the textualization of prophetic utterances.
Preliminary Conclusions: Inferences for Hebrew Prophetic Textualization and Redactional Practices

In the beginning of this chapter I proposed three basic types of prophetic texts. In the following paragraphs I will return to these text types considering the comparative evidence presented above.

Textualized Prophetic Utterances

If any texts in the ANE are the initial textualization of prophetic utterances they would be the Mari Letters. There is still some doubt as to whether the letters were drafted or used sources, but the letters themselves show no signs of redaction.\(^\text{214}\) If they are not original textualizations, they are the closest among the ancient texts. They employ a consistent literary formula when introducing a prophetic utterance. This formula is epistolary and is similar to the formula used to introduce the letter writer to the addressee.\(^\text{215}\)

Assyrian prophetic utterances also use a fairly consistent literary formula. Although the formulas are slightly different than those found at Mari, they have parallels

\(^{214}\) I understand that it was the habit in the ANE to copy a letter when sending it. This phenomenon is well attested in both the Amarna and especially the Elephantine archives. A copy, however, does not mean that the text was changed from its original textualization. Besides, as I noted in chapter 3, many if not most texts were likely drafted on organic and reusable writing materials. So, the very first drafts are lost. When I refer to the textualization of the Mari letters, the data only allows me to explore the final product of the writing process. If some of the documents are copies of the final product, this still means that they may not have undergone copying and are valuable as comparative data.

\(^{215}\) The informant writing the prophecy for the first time may alter it to incorporate it into a text. Something is always changed in a message when it moves from oral to written communication. This should not deter from this study since a study on orality is much more speculative than one on textualization because textualization has at least some data on which inferences can be made.
The Deir 'Allah inscription deviates from the formulas found in the other traditions, but this deviation may be misleading. Until more Deir 'Allah texts surface, the question must remain open. The Deir 'Allah text's opening line, however, is consistent with the opening line of Hebrew Doom oracles. This shows an ancient Palestinian consistency in the structure of at least one prophetic typology.

The length of the prophetic utterances is strikingly similar in Mari, Assyrian and many Hebrew texts. While the interpretations and narrative frameworks can be lengthy, the utterances are all relatively short. It seems that ANE deities were succinct, though the writers who contextualized their words were verbose.

There is no evidence of editing or redaction of the prophetic utterance and any tradition. This is likely because manuscripts of the same prophecy have not surfaced. Though from the ritual rubric added to the Assyrian prophecies and the care taken to write the Deir 'Allah inscription it appears that the writers and prophets revered the utterances. The Assyrian ritual descriptions show how important the word of the deity was in the minds of the people because the tablet of his words was placed in his cella. Similarly, the careful stylization of the words on the Deir 'Allah inscription show the value of the prophecy in the mind of its writer.

The same can be said of Hebrew prophetic utterances. In Hebrew prophecies there are often two layers of speech. The first opens with the phrase דבְּרֵי יְהוָה. This phrase appears only in a narrative framework. The narrative framework containing this
speech is prone to editing and change. The second layer contains formulas of direct address such as נאם יהוה or דבר אלהים. These latter two formulas must signify a more important level of speech. They may be supplemented, but the original wording does not undergo drastic change. For example, 2 Kgs 20:5-6 supplements Isa 38:5-6 when it quotes it, but it does not change the language of the utterance. On the other hand the narrative framework around the utterance, even that introduced by דבר יהוה changes. It seems that there is a tendency among biblical and ANE scribes to preserve the deity's utterances.

Literary Utterances

In the texts that I have surveyed, there is no clear evidence of literary prophetic utterances, that is, prophetic utterances originally composed in writing and not spoken. This does not rule out the possibility of such, as I am inclined to think they exist in the Hebrew prophecies such as Ezek 20:5-26.

Mari letters show an informant's tendency to interpret a prophecy when the words

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216. The most common use of this phrase in the HB is when Yahweh speaks to Moses. The narrative of the Pentateuch clearly changes over time as source critics show.
217. In Hebrew prophecies the phrase דבר יהוה. This shows that the redactors (or perhaps in the case of Ezekiel, he himself) understood the compilation to be authoritative because it contains in part a direct utterance from Yahweh. The phrase functions as synecdoche.
218. According to Accordance, there are over 500 נאם יהוה or דבר אלהים in the prophetic books from Isaiah through Malachi. Very few literary units marked by these formulas of direct address are long. This indicates that the short units may have originally been spoken, but the long units were either literary constructions or have been expand. Ezek 20:5-26 is an example of a literary utterance because literary structures such as the careful placement of למתן שם ל号楼 להוללות לציון הגרים אשר (Ezek 20:9, 14 and 22) demand that the prophecy be read to truly appreciate its language.
are cryptic. I see interpretation operative in the bulk of the Hebrew prophecies as well. Interpretation can still be considered בְּבֵית יָהֳウェָה the words of Yahweh or Yahweh's speaking to an individual. But this interpretation expounds on the actual utterance of Yahweh, which are delimited by formulas of direct address.

Redacted Prophecies

The Assyrian prophecies exhibit clear signs of redaction. No other texts surveyed show such signs. This redaction includes a narrative or ritual expansion. Signs of redaction, that is alteration to a previously finished product, do not appear in the other ANE data.

Strata of composition and drafting certainly occurred. It does not count as redaction like that seen in the Assyrian prophecies because drafting presupposes that the work is not finished. The Assyrian prophecies took completed prophetic utterances from a different source(s) and recontextualized them into a new source.

Since Mari texts show no signs of redaction, they represent the only model on which to base a theory of prophetic textualization. Certainly not all texts come about the same way, but the Mari texts may demonstrate a general typology of textualized prophecies. By their very nature prophetic utterances are a discourse and addressed to an audience. Only an epistolary format can function this way in writing. As such it is safe to assume that many prophetic utterances were textualized within the context of a letter. This means that many of the Hebrew prophetic texts have undergone vast expansions and

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219. Certainly many other ANE prophecies were redacted. In fact, I did not include a critical study of Egyptian prophecies because they show signs of extreme narrative and interpretive redactions.
changes as they have been incorporated into large collected works. Books like Jeremiah which contain chapters of third person narrative portrayals with no prophetic utterances, are literary inventions, which may or may not reflect factual events.

Further Editorial Observations

**Placement and Narrative Framework**

One of my primary conclusions from the Mari texts is that prophetic utterances were first textualized with other data that was relevant to the social context in which the prophecy was conceived, and the order of adjacent prophecies appear arbitrary. My conclusion has prompted me to propose a preliminary hypothesis about the order of some prophetic utterances in the Hebrew prophecies. I can easily see a later redactor using the information surrounding a prophetic utterance as it appears in the original letter containing the prophecy to create a narrative framework for the prophecy. This may be operative behind Jer 29:1-3 in which a redactor altered the letterhead(s) of the original letter(s) which contained proto-Jer 29. This chapter was originally written as a letter (v. 1), and I argue that the redactor used the letterhead as the basis of the narrative framework in vv. 1-3. How else could the redactor know such details about the content of the original letter had it not been in the original letter?

In addition, a redactor who finds adjacent prophecies in a source document may be compelled to keep these prophecies adjacent even though the content of the prophecies have nothing in common. Of course, a later redactor could also include a didactic
expansion between two adjacent prophecies, which have nothing in common, in order to connect the two prophecies together. Ezek 18, which I examine closely in the next chapter, demonstrates that editing occurred between the writing of the utterances and the framing of chapter 18 as a whole.

**Patriotism vs. Religiosity**

Perhaps the most glaring distinction between the Hebrew prophecies and those retained in Akkadian sources is the Hebrew prophecies' willingness to inveigh against the state. Of course these attacks on the state came with actual consequences. For instance, Jeremiah was imprisoned for prophesying against the state (Jer 32:3-5).

Assyrian and Mari prophecies, on the other hand, are nationalistic. Assyrian prophecies speak only positively of the King and his political efforts. While some Mari prophecies may inform the king of impending danger, they do not object to the king's practices. This stands in contrast to some Hebrew prophecies that predict the decline and destruction of the state and censure the aristocracy for their practices, namely the injustices do to the marginal people in society. To be sure, many Hebrew prophecies and the narrative framework in which scribes have textualized them include nationalistic sentiments (cf. Isa 37), but may also include anti-nationalistic (Jer 36) or anti-

*The Deir Allah inscription, which is directed to a popular and not political audience, shows that the practice of recording prophetic texts that favor the people, not the state, was not solely a Hebrew tradition, but a larger ancient Canaanite tradition.*

*Much debate surrounds the historicity of Jer 36. Y. Hoffman, "Aetiology, Redaction and Historicity in Jeremiah xxxvi," VT 46 (1996): 179-189 surveys the literature on the matter well, and claims that the author, a later redactor, wanted to "validate his scroll" by using two historical "stars" (189). I am inclined to agree with*
diplomatic (Ezek 20) reproaches.\textsuperscript{222}

This cultural distinction illustrates a different paradigm operative among Hebrew literate persons and redactors than among those in cuneiform traditions. Hebrew speaking prophets and those who write down their prophecies tend to be more peripheral characters intermediating on behalf of the people to the state.\textsuperscript{223} The difference in paradigm between the writers of Hebrew prophecies and those of other ANE prophecies, urged them to write down and preserve a more demotic text, a text that allows for the representation of the people's religious ideals and not only the state's.

This cultural distinction may also place the writers and prophets in an anti-nationalistic camp. VTE ¶ 10 which is similar to Deut 13, shows that it was in the interest of the state to ensure that anti-nationalistic sentiments, even that which a deity provokes, must be exterminated. The Assyrian (and Mari) texts conform to this national sentiment. The Hebrew prophets, however, frequently accuse the state of being guilty of religious treason.

In following two chapters, I apply my findings from chapters 2 through 4 to two difficult prophetic texts, in order to demonstrate how my findings provide new insights

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Hoffman. I however, am skeptical that Jer 36 refers to a complete "Book of Jeremiah." Despite the popularity of Jer 36 as evidence that Jeremiah had an amanuensis, Jeremiah claims to be literate in Jer 32:6-14 (esp. v. 10), and it seems to me, that because he was literate he new Baruch. This is contra the findings of van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 173-204, esp. 188-189.


into the history and development of prophetic compositions. I first look at Hosea 1-3 because it poses previously unresolved difficulties. The primary problem in Hos 1-3 is a unexplainable switch of grammatical person between chapters 1-2 and chapter 3. Using considerations from this thesis, I develop an argument that explains the grammatical shift of person between chapters 2 and 3. My argument posits an original epistolary form and describes the development of the text from a northern record into a southern religious text.

In a second case study I probe Ezek 18 for clues to its development. Based on clear literary markers in the text, I demonstrate how a proto-version of Ezek 18 developed. Like Hos 1-3, Ezek 18 was originally composed in epistolary form, which developed independently from the book as whole. My findings show that the text was drafted in logical stages. A drafting process best explains the text's various units, five prophetic utterances and two didactic expansions, and their relationship. Posing and answering fundamental questions such as how and why the text was written, allows for a new interpretation of the text's content. My final interpretation reduces the radical message of individuality and repentance some see Ezek 18 to a theme that better conforms with a Judahite perspective on history.
CHAPTER 5: HOSEA 1-3 A CASE STUDY

The text of Hos 1-3 has received much attention in the last hundred years. Most scholarly investigations on this passage are rhetorical or thematic assessments of the marriage metaphor of Hos 1-3 and its rhetorical, theological, or historical significance. Despite the numerous articles and books written on the matter, little attention has been paid to the historical development of the text. Most explorations into the text's redactional layers has occurred in the critical commentaries and some studies on the development of the Book of the Twelve.224 The studies tend to, like many redactional studies, divorce the text's development from a historical setting. Redactional arguments are rarely, if ever, linked to a socio-historical context that could explain the redactional layers in the text.

I will begin my examination by combing the text for signs of literary development. This exercise will bring me to the conundrum facing all commentators: what process of development makes sense out of the change in grammatical person from a third person narrative account in Hos 1-2 to a first person narrative account in Hos 3.

Redactional Layers in the Text of Hosea 1-3

The Superscriptions

Hos 1:1 is a superscription that places Hosea in a historical context. At first glance it does not represent the superscriptions found on Mari, Assyrian or NWS prophecies. The superscription, however, is similar to those found in other Hebrew prophetic texts such as Jer 1:1, Amos 1:1 and others. The expansive nature of Hos 1:1 contains earmarks of a later of addition. Ben Zvi rightly argues that the temporal setting of the authorship and readership of the first verse were not coterminous. Hos 1:1 should be considered a later gloss.

Hos 1:1 is an explanatory narrative line. It begins with the expected דְבָר יְהוָה "the word of the Lord," which as I noted in chapter 5, is a typical way to introduce prophetic narratives. The use of the third person indicates that this verse was not written or spoken by the prophet. The placement of Judah before Israel in 1:1αβ indicates that a Judahite scribe wrote this verse. Thus the historical horizon of one redactional layer must be Judahite. This is significant since the expected historical setting of the prophet Hosea is an eighth century northern, Israelite, context.

Hos 1:2a is perhaps one of the most unique prophetic narrative introductory lines.

227. I am reluctant to assume that 1:1 serves the same purpose as the archival colophons added to Assyrian prophecies and Akkadian and Hittite oracular inquiries, but the possibility is enticing though merely speculative.
in the HB. It is a unique structure: noun construct of the rare נחלת + infinitive construct of דבר, and includes the idiom דבר ב דבר. Wolff understands 1:2a as a superscription for 1:2b-9 as does the the Masoretic punctuation. Thus Wolff rightly interprets 1:2a as a more original superscription. The reduplication of the (consonantal) phrase דבר יהוה indicates a second heading, and, since 1:2a is the lectio difficilior of the two superscriptions, I prefer it as an original reading. Hos 1:2a has all the hallmarks of an original epithet such as those found in Mari and in Assyrian prophetic texts (see pp. 75-76, 86 above). The evidence leads me to conclude that the writer who originally wrote the text also wrote Hos 1:2a.

Hosea 1:2-2:25

The details of Hos 1-3 require an interpreter to understand the social and historical horizon of Hosea's mantic activity. Following many I assume that Hosea was a northern Israelite prophet and his prophecy resembles northern mantic qualities. I concur with Sweeney that Hosea prophesied between the death of Jeroboam and the Assyrian assault of 735. The reference to Jehu in 1:4 and the account of his slaughtering of Ahab in the Jezreel frame the politic allusions of the prophecy.

Considering the historical milieu of Hosea's prophecies, it is prudent to ask: why was Hosea's activity written down in the first place? Hosea's overt interest in political

issues would have made his prophecies of interest to the state as were the prophecies from the Mari and Assyrian prophets. In Mari and Assyria, only prophecies dealing with state affairs were written down. Could informants in Israel have made Hosea's prophecies popular by recording them as an act of state reconnaissance? To explore this question in detail it is necessary to uncover the redactional layers of the text to arrive at what parts may have been textualized by early Israelite writers.

Shifts in genre delimit the structure of Hosea's first three chapters. 1:2-9 and 3:1-5 contain narrative frameworks that are integral to the developing story line of Hosea's relationship with his wife and God's relationship with his people. Andersen and Freedman present statistical data based on "prose" markers (h, 't, 'šr) that indicate that 1:2-9 and 3:1-5 is literarily distinct from 2:4-25 which contains prophetic utterances.\(^{230}\) This general schema of chapters 1-3's larger literary parts is only a working schema.\(^{231}\) Evidence of redactional layers will shift these literary structures.

The clearest level of redaction in Hos 1-3 is that of the Judahite scribes who recontextualized Hosea's prophecy to make it palatable for a Judahite audience. Verses 1:7 and 2:2 immediately stand out as insertions because they, like the superscription of


\(^{231}\) J.L. Mays, *Hosea* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 5 hints to the complicated textual development of these chapters: "Beyond the difficulties posed by the text are those created by a combination of the collector's practices and Hosea's own style. Together the two result in a blurring of the edges of the individual units of speech."
1:1, focus on Judah not Israel. Wolff rightly understands 1:7 as an "easily recognizable" gloss. 232 He states that 2:2 with its eschatological pilgrimage "fits well with Hosea's general cultic interest, but not with the context of the saying."233 I see 1:7 and 2:2 as clear Judahite redactions. As such, they do not belong to the original layer of Hosea's prophecy.

Once the clear redactions are removed, the more difficult problems surface. The third person narrative structure beginning in 1:2bα and ending in 1:9 is a carefully constructed narrative unit. It has four distinct scene changes. The first scene begins with a formula of direct address ויאמר יהוה אל Hosea. The following three scenes are each introduced by a brief narrative line that Gomer bore a child followed by the formula of direct address and a new instruction from Yahweh to Hosea.

At first read, the story line continues into 2:1-2. But a careful examination causes the interpreter to question who the speaker is in verse 2:1. Is it Yahweh continuing his speech from 1:9 as the versification of Christian Bibles would have one think? The content of verse 2:1 is interpretive and resonates with the tone of 2:2. Wolff considers 2:1 its own unit, but 2:2a requires the context of 2:1. A writer wrote "The Judahites and

Israelites will be gathered together” in 2:2a in response to 2:1a, "And so the number of
the Israelites will be like the sands of sea which are uncountable and without number."

2:2 predicates 2:1, and therefore, 2:1-2 must constitute a unit. Furthermore, verses 2:1-2,
when read together, explain to a southern reader how and why the appellative "Israelite"
is still relevant after the northern kingdom fell, and how it came to be synonymous with
"Judahite." Thus 2:1-2 is a southern etiology and does not belong to the original layer of
Hos 1-3.

2:3 brings the reader back to the developing story line of 1:2-9. Yahweh
continues speaking to Hosea, but the writer does not use the narrative formula of direct
address to indicate Yahweh's speech. At first, the absence of this formula is startling, but
a more careful reading demonstrates the reason behind its absence. The writer uses the
formula for direct address in 2bα, 4a, 6aβ, and 9aα. The writer begins with the long
clause רָאָם יְהוָ֣ה אֵל הָוֶ֖שֶׁא (2bα), and each subsequent time uses a shorter version of
the formula, רָאָם לָ֖הוֹר יְהוָ֑ה אֱלֻיָ֖הוּ (4a) and רָאָֽם לָ֖הוֹר יְהוָ֑ה אֱלַֽיוֹ (6aβ), until 9aα which simply reads
רָאָם. It is then fitting that the final change of scene does not use the direct formula of
address at all. Furthermore, Yahweh's first line of dictation, which immediately follows
each use of the formula of direct address, begins with an imperative of קָרָא. Creatively,
the writer opts to write קָרָא at the beginning of the fifth scene because קָרָא is both
semantically and grammatically similar to קָרָא the first word in Yahweh's speech in the

110
previous scenes, and the same root used in the formula of direct address.  

From 2:3 to 2:11, the dictation of Yahweh becomes the narration. Yahweh

commands Hosea in detail what to do and say. Conceptually, the text is complex. In 1:2-9 a narrator has framed the story line in the third person, but then uses one of his characters (Yahweh) in 2:4-11 to continue the story line in that character's voice.

But how does the narrator know what Yahweh told Hosea? I see only two possible answers to this question. First, the narrator could composed the narration from his own imagination. The seems extremely unlikely because the plot is not well developed. Hos 1-3 makes no sense as an independent narrative; it is difficult to follow.

On the other hand, the second, and more likely possibility is that the narrator is reporting on his or her encounter with Hosea. The narrator is not a narrator, but a reporter similar to the informants found at Mari. Reading the text this way allows the reader to make sense out of the use of the third person narrative framework in 1:2-9 and to understand how the reporter knows the voice of Yahweh in 2:4-11. Hos 2 depicts to words of Yahweh through Hosea to the reporter. Hosea is not writing his own work in chapters 1 and 2 (though he may have been capable of it), but he is telling a reporter how and what Yahweh has communicated to him.

234. In the unlikely event that a narrative line originally appeared between 1:9 and 2:3, the line was either removed or absorbed into the Judahite redaction of 2:1-2 with no indication it once existed.
2:12-15 is the first of two prophetic utterances each indicated by the signatory formula נאם יהוה. Hosea himself may have composed these prophecies and approached the reporter with them, or more likely Hosea may have approached the reporter requesting the reporter write down the prophecies, a scenario also found at Mari and Lachish. If 2:12-15 (and the following prophecy in 2:16-25) were the divine utterances that Hosea wanted the reporter to know, the reporter needed the back story (1:2-2:11) to make sense out of the prophecies. Without a context the creative and multivalent235 prophecy 2:12-15 is difficult to understand.

2:12-15 begins as though it were a continuation of Yahweh's command to Hosea advising him on what to do his wife. Hosea will shame her (v.12), restrict her (v.13), and destroy the pleasure and provisions of her promiscuity (v.14). Verse 15 is a rhetorical device, a literary trigger. Its use of the multivalent term "master(s)" (בעל(ים) trigg) triggers in the mind of the reader the religious connotations associates with בעל and Baal worship. The utterance makes a pun that reattributes the relationship between Hosea and his wife to the relationship between Yahweh and his people. This trigger reminds the reader of

235. This term is used in rhetorical analyses and refers to a word or unit that has multiple meanings in the context in which it is used. It differs from an ambiguous term in that a multivalent term intends for a reader or listener to interpret more than one meaning in the term or unit of speech. Thus multivalence is the quality of a word that allows a word to trigger a pun. An ambiguous term, on the other hand, indicates that one meaning was intended for a word or unit, but the context does not reveal which meaning the reader or listener should interpret.
Go and take for yourself a woman of prostitution and children of prostitution for the land has prostituted itself out away from Yahweh." This wordplay in verse 15 requires the context of 1:2-2:14, thus delimiting 1:2-2:15 as a clear literary unit. The unit is irreducible into a smaller meaningful sections, and the reporter must have written it as a unit.

The second prophetic utterance (vv. 2:16-25) is of a different tone than the previous utterance. This utterance predicts restoration and hope, rather than destruction and exile. It is, as Wolff has noted, "a genuine unit." The repetition of the signatory formula נאם יהוה (vv. 18 and 23) seems suspicious to the interpreter, at first, as though the formula might mark two different units. The prophet, however, uses the signatory formula rhetorically and repeats it to emphasize his point. 2:16-25 can only be read as a complete unit. Dividing the unit into two small utterances renders each smaller utterance incomprehensible. Hence 2:16-25 is irreducible and the two signatory formulas must serve an emphatic function, which seems consistent with the oral speech that the signatory formula indicates. This is to say that the prophetic utterance of 2:16-25 was

236. Wolff, Hosea, 47. Wolff convincingly argues that "vv. 23f has a clearly marked ending that does not necessarily require a continuation. On the other hand, v. 25a requires some preceding sentence, since the suffix of זְרָעָתָה (‘I will sow her’) has no antecedent and therefore is unclear" (54).
written by the reporter and represents a first hand account of Hosea's words.

The structure of 2:16-25 is a chiasm. Verses 2:16-17 create the context for the utterance, a situation in which "I" (Yahweh) will entice his lover and bring her hope. The allusion to a proto-Exodus story (v.17) makes it clear that Yahweh is speaking not Hosea; this moves the context away from Hosea's marital problems. Is this a sign that a writer composed the second utterance of 2:16-25 independently of 1:2-2:15? 2:16-25 could be a supplement and written at a time other than what precedes it. However, since the multivalence and rhetorical triggers in it require what preceded it, 2:16-25 must have been included in the final stage of textualization and not in a later redactional stage. Moreover, the antecedent to the third masculine singular suffix "her" (2:16) must be inferred from the previous context (1:2-2:15). Even though 2:16-25 constitutes its own unit, it is contingent on the larger context of 1:2-2:15.

Hosea 3 and a Reporter's Mantic Confirmation

Hos 3 thematically belongs to Hos 1:2-2:25, but the grammatical person has changed. Instead of a biographical account of Hosea's prophecy, the text switches to an autobiographical account. ידרידא ידוהי אל. 237 Many debate whether the switch in person

237. There is no evidence in the versions that ידרידא is erroneous. The preceding and following words and lines also rule out the likelihood of haplography or dittography in either the block Aramaic script or a Paleo-Hebrew script. On two occasions in the HB
in 3:1 is a redactional seam in the text. Anderson and Freedman discuss whether chapter 3 is primary and what comes before is secondary or the other way around. According to Wolff’s line of reasoning, chapter 3 is original to the prophet as the first person pronouns indicates, and his disciples must have composed what precedes it at a later time. Based on many literary cues, Andersen and Freedman conclude the opposite, and believe that chapter 3 logically follows what precedes it. In spite of their lengthy justification for chapter 3's later penning, Andersen and Freedman manage to not return to the obvious problem: why is chapter 3 composed in the first person?

Ben Zvi attempts to solve the problem of shifting grammatical person by comparing the genres of chapter 3 with what comes before it. He argues that 2:3-25 is a divine monologue and chapter 3 is a human monologue in which "explicit human words become YHWH's word within this discourse." With all due respect to Ben Zvi, this seems to me to be an interpretive stretch. Are not all prophetic discourses human words placed in the mouth the deity and vice versa? Furthermore, Ben Zvi resists redactional analyses by claiming that Hos 3:1-5 is "in its present form is a literary unit" and that

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\[\text{אלו} \] is written defectively for \[\text{אליו} \] (1 Sam 22:13 and Ezek 9:4), but in both places the versions and other MSS indicate that the third masculine singular pronoun is the original reading. So it is improbable that \[\text{אלו} \] was mistaken for \[\text{אליו} \] as this mistake would have occurred late in the transmission history of the text, and the versions and other MSS would have indicated the error. We are stuck making sense out of \[\text{אליו} \] "to me."

"such a text therefore cannot exist separately from the book of which it is an integral part, and therefore, it cannot predate it."\(^{241}\) I will return to the problem of shifting grammatical person after examining other data in the chapter.

For the moment, I will also put on hold the difficult issue of the meaning of \(\text{עוד} \) in 3:1 and turn to the unity of the chapter as a whole. I agree in large part with Ben Zvi who argues that there are textual cues indicating that 3:1-5 should be read as a unit.\(^{242}\) With the exception of \(\text{ואת} \text{דוד} \text{מלכם} \text{דוד} \) (3:5), contra Ben Zvi, I see no reason to fracture the unit into "redactional" parts.

\(\text{דוד} \) harks back to a southern writer's recontextualization of Hosea's prophecy into a pro-southern religious text. The original northern context would not have been concerned with David. For neither Jehu nor his victim Ahab were of the line of David. The Davidic kingship was a southern ideal. Therefore the mention of David here in a northern religious text concerned with northern political problems stands out as suspicious to the interpreter and should be considered a later redactor's addition. "David" may actually update the name of an original northern king, a contemporary of Hosea. I will explore which king in particular after addressing the chapter's literary problems.

Another major literary problem hinges on the meaning of \(\text{עוד} \) in Hos 3:1. The use

\(^{242}\) Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 86.
of עוד is difficult to say the least. Scholars have spilled much ink over the placement and function of עוד can either modify ויאמר or לך.243 Ben Zvi takes the novel, and unconvincing, approach of trying to make the adverb modify both verbs.245 I favor the view that עוד modifies ויאמר because עוד tends to follow the verbs that it modifies. I propose that the emphasis lies on Yahweh speaking "a second time" (עוד ואמר) the same idea that he previously spoke, but this time to another person. The "me" referred to in 3:1 is not Hosea but the reporter.246

I proposed in Chapter 4 that the comparative evidence leads to the conclusion that some prophetic texts were first written using an epistolary format, i.e. the genre of letter writing. The difficulty of explaining the shift in pronoun usage in Hos 3, is quickly and easily resolved if we read Hosea 1-3 as a letter. The referent of the first person pronoun on אלי in Hos 3:1 refers to the letter writer, the reporter, who is explaining to his addressee the mantic activity of Hosea the prophet in 1:2-2:25. After explaining this activity the reporter informs his addressee that Yahweh spoke to him or her a second time a word that confirms the utterances Hosea spoke.

The Mari letters demonstrate this phenomenon on multiple occasions. ARM 26

244. Wolff, Hosea, 59.
246. Had the adverbial emphasis lied on אלי and not ויאמר, I would expect גם "also." Cf. Deut 34:10 in which the adverbial emphasis in לא יאמר נביא עוד is not on "another prophet" but on the second rising of a prophet.
212, 26 229, and 26 233 all describe how the informant writing the letter and recording the prophet's activity inquired of the deity himself or herself to ensure for the addressee that the prophet's words are accurate. Rationally, the informant would only write the addressee if the informant's mantic experience confirmed the prophet's message. Hos 3 serves the same purpose as the reporters' mantic verifications found in the Mari letters.

The reporter of Hos 3 was told by Yahweh to experience the same mantic activity that Hosea experienced, and this verified for the reporter that Hosea's prophecies are accurate and worth reporting.

**Summary Chart of Hosea 1-3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene 1: Plenary formula of direct address. Quotation begins with an imperative.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 2: Shorter formula of direct address. Quotation begins with an imperative of speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Judahite redactions are red. Underlined texts are formulas of direct address. Blue text highlights the use of an imperative of speech.

118
### Hosea's Original Letter and its Purpose

The length of Hos 1-3, after the Judahite redactions have been removed, constitutes a text that is short enough to be a letter. The original letter heading would have been replaced by a later redactor in the same way that Jer 29:1-3 was replaced (or lost then...
supplemented) with a narrative framework (see p. 101 above). It is possible that the prophecy was part of a letter that included other administrative information presented in a memo-type format. Then a redactor simply took the prophetic account out of the letter and combined it with other prophetic accounts (perhaps from other letters) ascribed to Hosea.

The original letter writer, like those at Mari, probably wrote on behalf of the state because the writer is interested in, more so than Hosea, the positive portrayal of the institutionalized political and religious systems. The writer supplement's Hosea's prophecy with a message that would appease the king (vv. 4-5). This points to a state sympathizer who turns Hosea's popular interests in favor of the state. Hosea speaks of the restitution of the Jezreel and its people but not of a king (2:21-23). The letter writer's supplement, makes the prophecy pro-monarchic by claiming that the Israelites will return to Yahweh and their king (3:5). The name of their king was replaced by a later redactor with שֵׁלֹם.

**Implications for the Book of Hosea and its Stages of Development**

If my assessment reflects the historical horizon in which Hos 1-3 was textualized, then a new picture of the development of the Book of Hosea surfaces. At least Hos 1-3, was first composed as a letter written by an informant who made Hosea's prophecy known to...
his king. The historical horizon of the informant must have been the domestic unrest of
Israel in the years prior to the Assyrian assault. The informant indicates that Israel is in a
time of "no king, no officials, no sacrifices, no pillars (or steles), no ephod and no
teraphim" (3:4), but that Israel will have a king once more (3:5). One can easily picture
these circumstances during the tumultuous period between the reigns of Shallum and
Hoshea, a period rife with betrayal, usurpation and civil unrest. During this period, any
one of these kings would find value in a divine proclamation assuring that the people
would turn to him. Perhaps the best candidates for this oracle would be Menahem or
Pekah, two kings who would find political advantage against an old regime of kings
whose ancestors are responsible for the genocide in the Jezreel.

The second stage of the book’s development must have included collecting the
various utterances that follow Hos 1-3. This stage would have occurred during the life of
Hosea, and thus in the north. The mantic quality of the reporter of Hos 1-3 and his
interest in priestly activity, indicated by his references to sacrifices, pillars, ephod and
teraphim, show that the informant was a cult functionary practicing in a temple
sanctioned by the addressee, the king. Such was also the case for those mantic
informants writing the Mari texts; many Mari texts record a prophet's activity at the
temple and are written by priests. If the sociology of ancient Israelite prophets is
comparable to that of ancient Mari prophets, and there is little reason to think that it is
not, a prophet like Hosea would have stayed in a localized region. Thus, record of his prophecies, or copies there of, would have been kept in the same area, in this case, the temple.

The book's third stage of development occurred in a Judahite context. The most likely scenario is that an Israelite priest from the north brought the compilation of Hosea to the south when he emigrated as a refugee during the Assyrian attacks in the north. A Judahite redactor then recontextualized the prophecies into a southern religious milieu. The impetus for incorporating Hosea into a Judahite religious corpus was likely that Hosea was a prophet of Yahweh in the north. During the reign of Hezekiah, nationalistic sentiments backed by the religious influence of an early form of Yahwism played a key role in Judah's anti-Assyrian resistance. The prophecies of Hosea would have served as a morale booster for those in the south, since Hosea, preached, on behalf of Yahweh, against the encroaching Assyrian hegemony that eventually paralyzed but did not vanquish Judah as it had vanquished Israel.

248. The Amarna and Elephantine archives shed light on the practice of letter writing in the ANE. In both archives, the practice was to ensure that both the sender and the addressee had a copy of a letter. So while proto-Hos 1-3 would have been sent to an addressee, the sender would have made a copy for himself or herself to keep.

249. Hosea must have been updated, probably at the compilation of the Book of the Twelve in a later period. The Book underwent a linguistic renovation which accounts for the insertion of medial *matres lectionis*. Perhaps updating from Northern Hebrew to Judahite Hebrew changed the syntax and vocabulary, but without earlier MSS this must remain a conjecture.
CHAPTER 6: EZEKIEL 18 A CASE STUDY

Ezek 18 a difficult passage. Greenberg explains the nature of its problems when he writes, "Plain as it seems when taken part by part, this prophecy challenges the interpreter who seeks to grasp it as a whole." In this case study I explore how Ezek 18 functions in the book. After showing that Ezek 18 is an independent composition, I examine its literary features for evidence of its development. I then employ insights from this thesis to show that Ezek 18 developed in stages. Surprisingly, these stages lend themselves to reconstructing Ezek 18 as a letter to the leaders of Jerusalem.

The Placement of Ezekiel 18 and its Date

Zimmerli claims that chapter 18 belongs to a later phase of the prophet's preaching. He bases his dating on the phrase על אדמת ישראל "in the land of Israel," which he opines must refer to the exiles. Zimmerli’s justification is questionable, and the historical setting of Ezek 18 (and the book as a whole) is hotly debated. Hals argues that the entire book is structured around the fall of Jerusalem. Chapters 1-24 arose out of a pre-587 B.C. setting, and the events of 587 vindicated Ezekiel's prophecies in these first 24 chapters. Mayfield's recent work rejects Hals' thesis claiming that Hals overlooks the

literary function of the prophecies against the nations.\textsuperscript{254} The argument over the historical setting of Ezek 18 has been waging for over a century and these most recent comments by Mayfield and Hals shows that scholarship is still undecided on the issue. Since the chapter has no chronological formula, like those found in other parts of the book,\textsuperscript{255} the exact date of Ezek 18 will never be know.

The placement of Ezek 18 in the Book of Ezekiel warrants investigation. According to Zimmerli, chapter 18 found its place between chapters 17 and 19 because it destroys "any fatalistic misunderstanding of the course of judgement" against kings found in chapters 17 and 19.\textsuperscript{256} He ascribes this insertion to a later stage of redaction which breaks up an earlier stage of redaction that had already combined chapters 17 and 19. His assumption presupposes that chapter 18 existed as an independent unit before it was included in the Book of Ezekiel.

I agree with Zimmerli’s assessment. Chapter 18 existed as a unit before it was incorporated into the Book of Ezekiel. This means that Chapter 18 has its own redactional development apart from the book as a whole. Exactly where and when a redactor incorporated it into the Book of Ezekiel is yet to be determined, so I turn to the internal development of chapter 18 to discover how the constituent parts came together to form a proto-Ezek 18.

\textsuperscript{254} T.D. Mayfield, \textit{Literary Structure and Setting in Ezekiel} (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 57-58.
\textsuperscript{255} cf. chart in Greenberg, \textit{Ezekiel}, 7.
\textsuperscript{256} Zimmerli, \textit{Ezekiel}, 72. D.I. Block, \textit{Ezekiel} (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), 555 is more dramatic: "On the surface, Ezek. 18 appears to be what geologists refer to as an erratic, a glacial deposit foreign to the environment in which it is found."
Literary Structure of Ezekiel 18

Literary markers in Ezek 18 delimit its respective units. The phrase נאם יוהו divides the chapter into five prophetic utterances. They are as follows:

Chart of Prophetic Utterances in Ezekiel 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utterance</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&quot;Why are you yourselves saying this proverb in the land of Israel: 'Fathers eat sour grapes and their children pucker. By my life declares the Lord god, You shall no longer posses this parable in Israel. Every life belongs to me. The life of a father and son alike belong to me. The life of the sinner, it shall be put to death.&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2         | ממה לכם אמאים משליים את המשל הזה על אדמת ישראל לאמר אבנכם יאכלו בכם ושני בניים תכוהנה
| 3         | هل כל נפשות לי הנפשות שלם והנה הפש צורת הנפש והנה הפש שלמה המษา
| 4         | עם כל נפשות לי הנפשות ישיב והנה הנפשות שלמה הפרעה הנפשות שלמה מעות הפשות

125
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utterance</th>
<th>If a man is righteous and does justice and righteousness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>[if] he does not eat on the mountains, [if] he does not lift his eyes to the idols of the temple of Israel, [if] he does not defile his neighbor's wife, [if] he does not sexually approach a menstruating woman, [if] he does not oppress a man [if] restores his pledge and debt, [if] he does not commit extortion, [if] he gives bread to the hungry, [if] he clothes the naked, [if] he does not lend with interest, [if] does not practice exaction, [if] he removes his hand from wickedness, [if] he exercises justice and truth among men [if] he walks in my statutes, [if] he guards justice exercising truth, [then] he is righteous. He shall surely live declares the Lord god.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>If the wicked will turn from all of his sins, which he has committed, [if] he will observe all of my statutes, [if] he will exercise justice and righteousness, then he shall surely live. He shall not die. All of his transgressions which committed will not be credited to him. by his righteousness, which had done, he will live. Do I desire the death of the wicked, declares the Lord god, when he repents from his ways? He will live!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utterance</td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| D | The House of Israel is saying, "The way of the Lord is not fair." Are my ways not, O House of Israel, or are your ways not fair? O but, I shall judge each of you, house of Israel, according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. | זמריו בית ישראל לא יתקן דרך אדני הדרכה לא חכמים בית ישראלجما דרכיכם לא ותקן יוהו.

30a | את pz בית יسرائيل ת揠ן אדני | htonl
| 30b | כלן איש דרכיך אספת | יוהו

E | Each of you return and repent from all your transgressions, so that they will not be your stumbling-block of iniquity. Each of you cast off of yourselves all your transgressions in which you have transgressed. Make for yourselves a new heart and spirit. Why should you die, O house of Israel? I am not happy when the dead die, declares the Lord god. Repent and live! | שובו והשיבו מכל פשעיכם והשליכו מעליכם את כל פשעיכם אשר פשעתם בי שמעו ו_READONLYו לכם לב חדש ורוח חידה ולא תמתו בית ישראלнакז אדני יהוה והשיבו וחי.

The signatory formula נאם אדני יהוה gravitates towards the beginning in Utterance A, but towards the end in Utterances B-E. Utterance B is a long conditional statement and bears similarities to legal casuistic laws. The content of B is C's polar opposite. Utterances C and D clearly overlap in theme and vocabulary though their genres are very different. Like B, C is a long conditional statement. Utterance D, on the

258. Mayfield, *Literary Structure*, 82-83 rightly states that this formula and the formula נאם אדני יהוה "work together to mark the textual boundaries of an oracle," but he wrongfully observes that these formulas can "occur arbitrarily within an oracle without any discernible reason." Working off of the faulty assumption that prophetic oracles were originally lengthy, Mayfield warns against using נאם יוהו "on a macro-level to structure the book as a whole." In fact, one of the few flaws of Mayfield's work is not defining what actually constitutes an oracle in Ezekiel. Block, *Ezekiel*, 33 refers to נאם יוהו as a "signatory formula," and I borrow the term from him. Hals, *Ezekiel*, 360 refers to this phrase as a "prophetic utterance formula" which is too narrow for my terminology because I employ "prophetic utterance" to refer to any activity that is attributed to the mouth of the deity.
other hand, is formulaically similar to Utterance A in which the prophet rejects popular third person saying. Utterance E is placed adjacent to Utterance D. E relates to D in themes of individual responsibility, but also to C which allows for repentance. In short, (1) Utterances A and D are formulaically similar as are B and C. (2) The content of A is different from B-D. (3) B is C's Antithesis. (4) D is a continuation of C, and (5) Utterance E is a call for repentance, which is a combination of themes found in C and D.

The inconsistent placement of the signatory formula נאם אני יהוה has long bothered scholars. I hold that Utterance A, where the message continues beyond the signatory formula, reflects a oral context. The speaker, the prophet, spoke a statement followed by the signatory formula then continued the statement. The written report reflects the oral activity of the prophet more than the editorial consistency of an editor, many of whom preferred the signatory formula to appear at the end of literary units.

Utterance A is also thematically distinct from the others. If Utterance A and B were found adjacent to each other without a larger context, there would be no conclusive way to determine the reason for their pairing. The adjacent placement of these two disparate utterances calls to mind the ordering of prophetic utterances found in Mari texts. At Mari an informant would sometimes place prophecies adjacent to each other arbitrarily and then interpret them. The Mari informant is concerned that the information in his or her letter reaches the addressee, but the informant is not obligated to order the information in a meaningful way. Such a memo-type ordering technique


259. Block, *Ezekiel*, 33 rightly notes that הנאם אני יהוה marks a change of subject in the Book of Ezekiel, but he does not explain the reason for the change of subject.
appears to function here in Ezekiel.

This begs the question, in what literary form was Ezek 18 first written. Chapter 18's narrative introduction (v. 1) is terse and serves little interpretive value, but indicates that a writer is framing a context for the prophecies. It reads, "And so, the word of the LORD came to me." This line uses the expected phrase as a narrative introduction to a prophetic text. This introduction is reminiscent of the way Mari informants would introduce prophecies to an addressee in epistolary form. This verse also uses the first person "to me," which indicates that the prophet may have penned this line.

It is very curious that the narrative framework here merely uses the tetragrammaton, while in the actual utterances the appellative is used. No systematic study to my knowledge works out the distinction between these two appellatives for God in Ezekiel. Such a study could enlighten a redactional analysis of the Book of Ezekiel and might reopen the question of whether pseudo-Ezekielian prophecies appear in the Book of Ezekiel.

Ezek 18 has two didactic expansions in chapter 18, Didactic Expansion I (vv.

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260. Cf. p. 98 above. Zimmerli understands this as "the formula for the receipt of the message," but Zimmerli's comment is misleading (Ezekiel, 374). The formula indicating that Ezekiel received a divine word appears in verse 3, . Verse 1 (דבר יוהי) establishes a narrative context for the reader.

261. The primary study of pseudo-Ezekiel is C.C. Torrey and S. Spiegel, Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy (New York: KTAV, 1970). The DSS have produced fragmentary texts that are often entitled Pseudo-Ezekiel Prophecies (cf. Baumgartner, "Prophecy," EDSS 695-699). The evidence, however, is inconclusive. In my opinion, differences in the use of God's name may indicate a pseudo-author. Of course this could also be the result of later inconsistent redactions or merely the original authors attempt at diversity. More work needs to be done on this.
10-20) and Didactic Expansion II (vv. 24-29). Didactic Expansion I is written primarily in the third person and develops a relationship between Utterances A and B. Utterances A and B make no sense without Didactic Expansion I. Didactic Expansion I correlates Utterances A and B together by the extensive explanation of sin in relation to a father and son in verses 14-20.

In the middle of this explanation lies verse 17. It serves as a literary trigger that fuses Utterances A and B in the mind of the reader by referencing "my statutes" חקותי and "my laws" משפטים (v. 17). חקותי and משפטים are also found in the Utterance B (v. 9) and used again in verse 17, which paraphrases verse 9. In this regard, verse 17 is a homiletic devise showing the text's readers how to understand God's distinct Utterances A and B. Furthermore, Didactic Expansion I links the newly fused Utterance AB to Utterance C by the use of רשים (v. 20).

The writer uses a similar technique in Didactic Expansion II to fuse Utterance D with Utterance C. The only first person references in Didactic Expansion II are found in verse 25 which is a paraphrase of the first line of Utterance D (v.29). This second paraphrase establishes the act of paraphrasing as a literary technique operative in the didactic expansions of this text.

Verses 26-27 explain the theme of repentance found in Utterances C and E, but expound on the active role the repenter plays in "making his soul live" (D-stem) את נפשו יחי. This activity is mirrored in God's active role of creating a "new heart and a new spirit" in Utterance E. This imagery fuses Utterances D (quoted in v. 29) and E together and predicates them on Utterance C.
To summarize the literary structure of Ezek 18:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Chart of Ezekiel 18</th>
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<tr>
<td>Narrative Intro (v. 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utterance A</td>
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<td>Utterance B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Didactic Expansion I</td>
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<td>Utterance C</td>
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<td>Didactic Expansion II</td>
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<td>Utterance D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utterance E</td>
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The literary features in this chapter indicate the redactional and compositional layers behind them. The chapter's literary markers delimit a clear chiastic structure in which two adjacent utterances begin and end the chapter. This is followed by didactic expansions that sandwich Utterance C in the middle of the chiasm. The didactic expansions go to great lengths to fuse Utterances A and B producing an AB unit and Utterances D and E together producing a DE unit. Thus unit AB corresponds with unit DE in the chiasm. This is furthered by the fact that units AB and DE both begin with a popular idiomatic saying.

Finally it is worth noting that this chiasm is too long to have been orally created; it must be a literary construction. Since the utterances are not literary but oral in the their
inception, the chiastic structure is a product of the writer and not the oral presentation of the prophet. Therefore, the didactic expansions are secondary and solely literary developments, but the prophetic utterances are written records of spoken words, which come before the didactic expansions.

**The Writer of Ezek 18**

The prophet Ezekiel was likely literate. According to Ezek 1:3, he was the son of a priest and therefore had access to literacy (see p. 28 above). This does not, however, mean that he wrote his own prophetic utterances. Naturally, the art of orating does not lend itself to the practice of writing. The physical demands of oration and the performance associated with it would have inhibited Ezekiel from writing down his own utterances. Had Ezekiel composed his own prophetic utterances in writing, he likely would have done so after the fact. This means that he would have relied on the memory of his own experience to write his utterances. Ezekiel is known to have recorded his own mantic experiences (visions) after they occurred (Ezek 1), so it seems plausible that he wrote his own utterances as well.

On the other hand, another individual could have written down Ezekiel's utterances as Ezekiel proclaimed them. This individual would have likely been a fellow exiled priest. As it was the practice of priests in Mari to write down the prophetic utterances spoken in the temple, so too one of Ezekiel's colleagues could have served as

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262. Notice the use of the past tense and first person throughout the narrative.
263. Mari informants also recorded their own mantic dreams and wrote them from memory after the fact, cf. ARM 26 323.

132
his recorder when he prophesied. It is also possible that one of the elders of Israel, who frequently approached Ezekiel seeking counsel (14:1 and 20:1), could have recorded the prophetic utterances. In the same way, Mari informants sought out mantics for information, so either scenario is possible.

Either of these scenarios are probably and the evidence does not lend itself to one conclusion more than the other. Whoever edited this text in its process of textualization created didactic expansions that would help the reader make sense of the prophetic utterances. My reconstruction assumes a drafting process took place in which the utterances were recorded then rewritten with didactic expansions. The final document depended on a prior document that contained the five original utterances.

As I demonstrated in chapter 3 the most likely medium on which prophetic utterances were originally composed was wax-boards, which were used in Mesopotamia.

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264. Cf. p. 78 above.
265. There is little to no evidence in the HB or ANE documentation that prophets worked alone. In fact, the evidence collated in chapter 4 above demonstrates that prophets worked with and around others whether with priests or reporters. The goal of a prophet is to be heard by people and our socio-historical reconstructions must accommodate this reality.
266. Ezek 18 shares language with three other biblical texts. First, the proverb quoted in Utterances A (v. 2) is also found in Jer 31:29. The older and reigning theory is that Ezekiel "probably depends on Jeremiah" (J.A. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 578), but B. Gosse, “La Nouvelle Alliance de Jérémie 31, 31-34: du Livre d’Ézéchiel au Livre de Jérémie,” ZAW 116 (2004): 568-580 has recently proposed a new theory that Jeremiah depends on Ezekiel, so this problem has yet to be resolved. A second possible source of dependency is Ezek 33:12-20. Greenberg, Ezekiel, 675 sees Ezek 33 dependent on Ezek 18, and I agree. A final possibility is that Ezek 18 depends on Lev 26. K.L Wong, The Idea of Retribution in the Book of Ezekiel (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 80-87 has charted out where the Book of Ezekiel overlaps with Lev 26. To me this demonstrates that Ezekiel was aware of a proto-Lev 26 but the evidence is not entirely clear that the form of Lev 26 Ezekiel knew is the current form. These three examples show that it is dubious to assume that Ezek 18 depends heavily on any other source. The content is original to the prophet.
while Ezekiel was there. The whole of chapter 18 could fit on one large Mesopotamian
diptych with leaves the size of those excavated at Nimrud, but the final product may have
been written on papyri. Of course the actual writing materials used must remain
speculative. But had the five utterances been drafted on wax-boards, this could explain
their terse and short construction. This would also make it easy for the text's editor to
insert explanations after the fact as he or she drafted the final version of proto-Ezek 18 on
papyrus. Hence, it becomes clear that Ezek 18 developed from multiple short literary
units that must have come together in drafting stages because it is unlikely that the
utterances and the expansions were textualized together since the expansions depend on
the utterances.

This brings us to the question: why was Ezek 18 written down in the first place?
Ezekiel must have had an audience in mind and his audience must have been those to
whom he could not directly speak. Otherwise, why would he want the utterances written
down? The writer would have used an epistolary form to write to those not present. As
noted above, 18:1 (דבר יהוה) resembles a narrative formula used to set up a prophetic
utterance similar to those found in Mari letters. It seems likely then that Ezek 18
originated as a prophetic letter, the letterhead of which was removed when a later
redactor edited the letter into the Book of Ezekiel.

The letter was probably addressed to a small number of people and mainly to the
political elite, an addressee found elsewhere in the book, זקני ישראל (14:1; 20:1).

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267. Cf. Dagan kī am iqbēm umma šūma "Dagan spoke thus to me saying:" ARM 26 323. Cf. also 90-91 above.
268. For an example of this cf. Jer 29:1-3 and p. 101 above.
Furthermore, Ezekiel is always up to date on current affairs as demonstrated by his adept political acumen throughout the book.\textsuperscript{269} This indicates that Ezekiel was aware of and likely participated in correspondence with the west.

Moreover, the redactor who inserted Ezek 18 between Ezek 17 and 19 clues the reader into the audience of the text.\textsuperscript{270} Chapters 17 and 19 are censures against the political elite in Jerusalem. These factors indicate that the intended audience of Ezek 18 are the leaders of Jerusalem. Thus the text was likely written as a letter to these leaders.\textsuperscript{271}

If my reconstruction reflects the historical context in which a writer conceived Ezek 18, then a new interpretation of the chapter surfaces. Chapter 18 would not be a call for popular repentance, instead, it would be a call for a few political elites to repent. Ezek 18 becomes, not a chapter of hope, but a censure against what Ezekiel considers a corrupt regime residing in Jerusalem. This regime has forsaken the ways of Yahweh in Ezekiel's opinion (vv. 25 and 29). In this sense, Ezek 18 reflects the type of judgement found throughout DtrH.\textsuperscript{272} Ezekiel considers the rulers in Jerusalem to be evil because

\textsuperscript{269} Cf. Freedy and Redford, "The Dates of Ezekiel in Relation to Biblical, Babylonian, and Egyptian Sources" which claims that Ezekiel received updates on military activity in the West, and specifically Judah's developing alliance with Egypt.


\textsuperscript{271} The length of Ezek 18 corresponds to the length of letters from many ANE cultures. For example, the papyri from Elephantine, which date to not long after Ezekiel, demonstrates that the length of many papyri letters are short. Many of the Elephantine letters were written on writing surfaces that match the surface size of wax-boards. For one of many examples cf. TAD A4.3 (the letter of the priests of YHW to Jedaniah), which measures approximates 32cm x 11cm according to Yardeni's drawing.

\textsuperscript{272} Cf. 2 Kgs 12:2 where the writer praises Jehoash because he listened to the priest,
they are not following Yahweh according to the cultic status quo. As such, they are wicked in Yahweh's sight. Or put more bluntly by using the threatening words from Ezekiel's central chiastic utterance: "If the wicked turn from all his sins which he has commented, guards all my statutes and does justice and righteousness, then surely he may live and not die" (v. 21).

Jehoiada, who instructed him.
Conclusions from Case Studies 1 and 2

In these case studies I have shown how reconstructing empirical and real-life limits for redactional analysis of the prophets can create a more holistic presentation of the textualization and literary developments of prophetic texts. Analyzing prophetic utterances with a sensitivity to a realistic understanding of literacy, the limits of writing mediums, and historical genres associated with prophetic texts, poses new questions an interpreter can ask of prophetic text. Such questions include: Why would a writer textualize prophetic utterances in the first place? Is a second party writer involved in the textualization process? Given the likely socio-economic standing of the secondary writer or the prophet, what are the writer's motivations behind the text?

By looking at Hos 1-3, I demonstrated that the interests of the writer shapes the written prophecy. But the writer reporting on Hosea's prophecy was more concerned about sending a favorable message to his royal addressee. Later redactors mistook the writer's report for a continuation of Hosea's prophecy and included it in a compilation of prophetic utterances ascribed to Hosea. This compilation was later supplemented by a Judahite writer whose edits recontextualized the Book of Hosea into a southern religious text.

Ezek 18 proved to be a more difficult text to analyze. The analysis shows that a writer drafted the actual utterances of proto-Ezek 18. The writer then redrafted them into a letter to Jerusalem's political elite. Reconstructing the way in which the text developed and the likely reason why the text developed produces a new interpretation of the text. Ezek 18 is not the radical appeal to individual responsibility and repentance that many
post-biblical and modern interpreters see it as, rather it is an appeal to a specific group of elites to return to an autonomous Judahite political structure that once again seeks its counsel from the Yahwistic cult and its functionaries.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

With this note on the social interests of the writers and redactors this study has come full circle from an investigation into the social reality of ANE literacy to actions and motivations of redactors evident in ANE prophetic texts.

The Social Horizon of Ancient Near Eastern Literacy

My investigations into the social reality of ANE literacy, into the writing mediums ancient literate persons used, and into the ANE literary features of prophetic texts each contribute to a new understanding of the textualization and redactional layers evident in the production of ANE prophetic texts, specifically prophetic utterances. ANE literate persons existed in a complex social network. They were not necessarily political elites, but were economically and socially valuable in whatever sector of society they operated in. As such they often had access to social networks outside of their own. Comparative evidence reveals that the initial textualization of some prophetic oracles, at least those at Mari and Lachish, occurred within a political landscape that brought a literate state informant in contact with a religious mantic. The political interests of the informant contributed to what the informant textualized as he or she tried to maintain a place in an upper class social network. Nationalistic ideals, or obsequious behavior, motivated an informant who was an underling, a servant, to report to his or her superior that which was most beneficial to the informant's job security.
The juxtaposition of social and religious rights and state policy restricting those rights in the Hebrew prophets may go back to the writer's and redactor's social standing. Certainly it was the scribe who chose the words to write, and thus what to preserve. So it seems unlikely that those fulminating against the state received their paychecks from the palace. In so far as the scribe was the actual prophet is yet to be clearly determined, but the results of this thesis' reexamination of literacy concludes that the prophet himself may have had a hand not just a voice in the textualization of the Hebrew prophecies.

Writing Materials and their Effects on Prophetic Texts

The writing materials used in the textualization process of prophetic texts imply important details about scribal practices, compositional construction, and redactional layers. Due to the nature of the writing mediums, I can say with a high level of probability that Hebrew prophecies were initially recorded on organic materials. Due to the economic and practical advantages of wax-board technology, many writers likely used wax-boards in drafting prophetic oracles. This provided them with the opportunity to write more quickly and accurately, but restricted the scribe to a short amount of text. It is more than coincidence that actual prophetic utterances throughout the Hebrew prophecies are often short enough to write on a wax-board. This does not mean that all Hebrew prophecies were drafted on wax-boards, but it does allow the scholar to ask a new question about the textualization and redactional history of prophetic utterances: why if so many prophetic utterances fit this model do others not?
Prophetic Textualization and Redaction: A Comparative Study

Comparative analysis of Mari, Assyrian and various NWS texts has shown that biblical prophetic utterances are marked by consistent literary formulas found in other ANE texts. The formulas of Mari and Assyrian prophecies and the Deir Allah inscription reveal that care was taken in the preservation of the deities' words. It is conceivable that later redactors, or the prophet himself, editing the work were more inclined to expand a prophetic utterance. Assyrian prophetic utterances were recontextualized into a ritual context, and informants composing the Mari letters took liberties at times to interpret the prophecy. These practices also occurred with Hebrew prophecies.

The evidence shows that many Hebrew prophecies are records of textualized utterances. A few others prophetic utterances show signs of having been literally constructed. Whether textualized from the spoken word or literary constructions, many utterances underwent stages of editing. In general the evidence leads to the conclusion that prophecies were first finalized in epistolary form. Thus they underwent redaction only when they were incorporated into the final books in which they now reside. Many of these prophecies were redacted even before they were collected into larger books.

Lastly, Hebrew prophets show a surprising lack of devotion to their king and the political elite. Unlike other ANE prophets, Hebrew prophets are driven by their own religious ideals and not by an obsequious devotion to the crown. The prophets ideals are not propagated on their own, but the writers writing the prophet's words shared the same distain for social and political injustice.
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