

Exile as Purification. Reconstructing the “Book of the Four”

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I. Previous Studies

In doing his pioneer work on the redactional history of Book of the Twelve, James Nogalski discovered that the core of the four prophetic books, Hosea, Amos, Micah and Zephaniah, had probably formed an older redactional unit composed during the exilic period.¹ He named it the “Deuteronomistic corpus” after Dtr phrases and topics in its redactional layer. In this estimation he took up the observations of Werner H. Schmidt on a Dtr redaction of the book of Amos² and of Jörg Jeremias on an exilic edition of the book of Micah.³ Additionally, Nogalski observed that the headings of those four books take a similar shape, set under the common title of יהוה דבר and dated during the reigns of Israelite and Judean kings. He noticed that two prophets from the North are followed by two from the South in an obvious systematical and chronological order. He pointed out, that these two phases of prophecy are deliberately linked in the beginning of the book of Micah (Mic 1:2-9). Finally he uncovered several catchwords that linked these four books together. So, in his view the “Deuteronomistic corpus” comprised Hosea 1-14, Amos 1:1-9:6, Mic 1-3+6, and Zeph 1:1-3:8a*. However, Nogalski was aware that his hypothesis was not yet fully developed, because he was not able to investigate all the text of the four books in detail.⁴

¹ James Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 217; Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1993) 278–80; idem, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 218; Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1993) 274–75.

² Werner H. Schmidt, “Die deuteronomistische Redaktion des Amosbuches. Zu den theologischen Unterschieden zwischen dem Propheten und seinem Sammler,” *ZAW* 77 (1965) 168-193.

³ Jörg Jeremias, “Die Deutung der Gerichtsworte Michas in der Exilzeit,” *ZAW* 83 (1971) 330-354.

⁴ Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 278.

Fortunately, Nogalski's hypothesis was confirmed and further developed by Aaron Schart.⁵ By calling the Book of the Four the "D-Korpus" (abbreviated "DK"), he indicated that the composition had its own specific language and topics, which cannot be identified with those of the typical Dtr literature (DtrH, JerD) completely.⁶ Having investigated in detail the book of Amos literary-critically, Schart pointed out more redactional links than Nogalski had and was able to describe a particular set of theological intentions for this composition. In contrast to Nogalski, he supposed that the books of Hosea and Amos were already connected in the late pre-exilic period and presumed that the addition of the books of Micah and Zephaniah took place in two steps. In my view, however, these last two assumptions seem to complicate the thesis unnecessarily and are less convincing.⁷ Regardless, the "D-Korpus" reconstructed by Schart agrees mainly with Nogalski's Book of the Four, apart from some smaller modifications and uncertainties (Hosea*; Amos 1:1-9,10*; Mic 1,1-3,12*; 6,1-16*; Zeph 1,1-3,8* [11-13?]).⁸

In spite of such impressive results, the redaction-historical work concerning the Book of the Twelve is still on shaky grounds. For example, Erich Bossard-Nepustil, one of the co-founders of this new approach, in spite of his general agreement with Nogalski, disputed the thesis that the book of Zephaniah belonged to Deuteronomistic corpus.⁹ Moreover, Ehud ben Zvi has raised several material and methodological objections,¹⁰ which

⁵ Aaron Schart, *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs* (BZAW 260; Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1998).

⁶ Schart, *Entstehung*, 46.

⁷ The linguistic and structural correspondences between Hosea and Amos (e.g., calls for hearing in Hos 4:1; 5:1; Amos 3:1; 5:1 and the opening sections Hos 4:1-3; Amos 3:1-2), as already pointed out by Jörg Jeremias ("Die Anfänge des Dodekapropheten: Hosea und Amos," *Hosea und Amos: Studien zu den Anfängen des Dodekapropheten* [FAT 13; Tübingen: Mohr, 1996] 34-54), can be explained sufficiently by the assumption that the pupils of both prophets knew each other and do not call for a literary dependency.

⁸ According to Schart (*Entstehung*, 316-17) the DK-redaction can be identified in following verses: Hos 1:2b*; 2:6; 3:1*; 4:1*; 5:1-2*; 8:1b; 14:2-4; Amos 1:1-2, 9-12; 2:4-5, 10-12; 3:1b, 7; 4:6-11*; 5:11, 25-26*; 8:4-7, 11-12; 9:7-10; Mic 1:1, 2b, 5a, 6-7, 13b; 2:3*; 6,2-16; Zeph 1:1, 6, 13b, 17aß.

⁹ Erich Bossard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1-39 im Zwölfprophetenbuch: Untersuchungen zur literarischen Verbindung von Prophetenbüchern in babylonischer und persischer Zeit* (OBO 145; Fribourg & Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 344-350. His argument that without the book of Zephaniah the supposed parallels with Isa 1-39 would fit better is too hypothetical to be convincing.

¹⁰ Ehud ben Zvi, "Twelve Prophetic Books or 'The Twelve.' A Few Preliminary Considerations," *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of*

should be taken seriously. I will only take up three of them, which seemed to me of the most interest for our subject. First, neither the Book of the Twelve, nor the supposed Book of the Four ever received a comprehensive heading.¹¹ Thus none of the Minor Prophets is necessarily a part of the composition, but can still be read and interpreted as a separate volume. Second, the argument that redactors used catchwords to form redactional links between different prophetic books seems to be doubtful,¹² since the mere fact that one more or less unspecific word occurs in two different literary units can be accidental in many cases. Interpreting such cases as deliberate links is arbitrary and unconvincing. Third, there is the danger that an interpretation on the wider redactional level can conceal the original meaning of a certain book and may lead to misunderstanding.¹³ Thus, the question of how properly to interpret a big redactional unit, in which not only the redactor, but also the older voices edited by him say their own word at the same time should be answered.

II. Methodological Reflections

When I was confronted with the decision few years ago of whether I should deal with the new thesis of the Book of the Four in my new textbook about the exilic period,¹⁴ I was skeptical and hesitated for a long time. The whole enterprise seemed to me too difficult and too complex, the objections too serious against it. I have to confess, though, that Nogalski and Scharf convinced me as far as the Book of the Four is concerned that there are basic pieces of evidence that are not touched by Ben Zvi's objections. Moreover, I think it is possible to overcome most of the methodological and hermeneutical problems he raised and to arrive at more certainty.

First, I think we should restrict what we are entitled to call an "intentional link." The mere occurrence of the same word in two different literary units is not sufficient. There must be a specific expression consisting of several words, a reiterated word or several words, before we can speak of a catchword at all. Moreover, both literary units, or at least one of the units comprising the catchword, must be secondary in their or its context; only then we are allowed to speak of an intentional redactional link.

John D. W. Watts (eds. James W. Watts and Paul R. House; JSOTSup 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 125-156.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 137, 151.

¹² *Ibid.*, 139-49.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 126-27

¹⁴ Cf. Rainer Albertz, *Die Exilszeit: Das 6. Jahrhundert* (Biblische Enzyklopädie 7; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001) 164-85.

Second, each one of the four books under consideration should be investigated in detail. Only if the full range of tradition-historical and literary-critical levels of every book is clarified will there be a basis for correctly identifying all passages that probably belong to the redaction of the Book of the Four. This identification is crucial, since we may not start with the assumption that the redaction of the Book of the Four speaks a language that can clearly be specified as Dtr. Schart had already noticed some differences between the two. As far as I can see, the redactor's language, which undoubtedly shows many Dtr idioms of some kind, is also heavily influenced by Hosea, and less by Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah (or Jeremiah and Isaiah either). Thus, in reconstructing the Book of the Four we may not look for Dtr-stamped passages exclusively. Those passages may belong to the redaction, but need not. Also, there are passages that show no Dtr features, but may belong to it anyway. What is decisive is not the language and the style of the passage, but its redactional nature, its intention, and its dating relative to the redaction history of the book.¹⁵

Two examples will make this point clearer. On the one hand, Mic 6:1-13, mentioned by both Nogalski and Schart, clearly shows Dtr features, but it cannot belong to the Book of the Four because its position and its motives point clearly to the post-exilic period.¹⁶ On the other hand, Mic 5:9-13 contains no typical Dtr language, but shows many connections to all four prophetic books. Specifically, it has clear features of a compositional text and is connected with other passages, which are already recognized as part of the redactional layer (Mic 1:6-7, 13b). Therefore, it probably belonged to the Book of the Four. What can be learned from redactional history in other parts of the Hebrew Bible (Pentateuch, DtrH, Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah, Jeremiah) is also valid for the Book of the Four: redactors should not be restricted only to smaller additions, since often they were authors who could contribute larger parts to the books they were editing.

Third, I plead for the use of both the composition-critical and the redaction-historical method in order to gain more certainty in reconstructing a

¹⁵ It may be dangerous, I am aware, to weaken the stylistic criterion, so I plead for supporting the 'Tendenzkritik' with redactional, compositional, and literary-historical arguments.

¹⁶ Micah 6-7 clearly constitutes a later addition to the book. Mic 6:1 presupposes the framing of the earlier chapters by means of 1:2 and 5:14. This framing presents the book as YHWH's dispute with the foreign nations. This is a new perspective in contrast with Micah 1-3 as a whole, and it is exilic at the earliest. Consequently, the disputation in Mic 6:2-7 about Israel's proper offerings (which presupposes the existence of the temple cult) must be post-exilic. For this dating see Hans W. Wolff, *Dodekatonpropheten: Micha* (BKAT XIV/4; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), xxxii-xxxiii, 144-45; Rainer Kessler, *Micha* (HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 1999) 47, 255-56.

redactional unit. To demonstrate the existence of a Book of the Four, one has to show for it a sensible and structured composition, constituted by a programmatic beginning, a sequence of sub-units, and a meaningful conclusion. Of course, such a redactional composition like the Book of the Four, whose existence must be deduced from the larger Book of the Twelve, cannot be as clear in its structure as a literary unit that was independently formulated. Nevertheless, some kind of unity, some kind of progress, and some kind of a final solution should be discernible, if there was a rational editor at work that wanted to give any clear pieces of advice to his audience. Thus, such a prophetic composition, supposedly written in the later exilic period, cannot end in total destruction and hopelessness, particularly since it started with a much more hopeful perspective in the book of Hosea (2:16-17; 3:5; 11:8-11; 14:2-9). Thus, it is very unlikely that Zeph 3:8a formed the end of the Book of the Four, as Nogalski proposed.¹⁷ It seems to me that Schart was on better grounds in asking whether the end should not be seen in the promise in Zeph 3:11-13.¹⁸ On the basis of the composition-critical method the decision is clear: either Zeph 3:11-13 ended of the Book of the Four or that book never existed. Additionally, because this decision can be literary-critically confirmed by the insight that Zeph 3:1-8b^a.10-13 constitutes a literary unit,¹⁹ we have a clear result with a high degree of probability.

Fourth, I argue for a tradition-historical interpretation of such a complex redactional unit as the Book of the Four appears to be. In my view, the interpretation cannot be restricted to the redactional level, because the older levels of the prophetic traditions constitute the biggest part of the text and have to be recognized in some way. Still, the problem is to determine to what degree they should be recognized and how far they participate in shaping the theological profile of the whole composition. What shall we do with those passages which do not fit that profile properly or even oppose it in some way? I would like to propose that the interpreter should start with the redactional passages in order to determine the main theological intentions of the editor. Then one should study how far these intentions agree or differ with the messages offered by the older layers of the given prophetic books. Finally, one should describe in detail what the editor has learned from the

¹⁷ Cf. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 175–78. It seems that Nogalski meant Zeph 3:8b^a. He noted some uncertainty concerning 3:9-11.

¹⁸ Cf. Schart, *Entstehung*, 214; he noted several links to central parts of Hosea, Amos, and Micah.

¹⁹ Cf. the same address of Jerusalem and several verbal correspondences: מַבְקֶרְבֶּךָ Zeph 3:3, 5, 11, 12; עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם Zeph 3:7, 11, עֲשֵׂה עוֹלָה Zeph 3:13, cf. 3:5. God's judgement in Zeph 3:8 is directed against the officials of Jerusalem (3rd person plural!) accused in 3:3–4 and removed in 3:11. Zeph 3:8b^β.9-10 belongs to a later redaction with a universal horizon, cf. 1:3a^β.b.18b; 2:10-11.

traditions of one prophet or the other, what he has altered, what he has interpreted in a new fashion, and what he has put aside. Thus, the result can be the description of a vivid dialogue between the editor and the prophetic voices that he wanted to present in a new shape.

III. My Own Proposal

A. The Headings

As Nogalski and Schart have already shown, the best starting point for the hypothesis is constituted by the headings of the four books (Hos 1:1; Amos 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1). The four prophets are ordered in a chronological line, starting from the days of Uzziah and Jeroboam II (Hosea, Amos), continuing through the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (Hosea, Micah) and ending with the days of Josiah (Zephaniah). Hosea was set in the first position and given a long-lasting career that overlapped Amos, the oldest of the four prophets. (The reason for the inversion will be shown later.) Apart from the book of Amos, which preserved an older type of heading ("words of Amos"), the other three books are all titled as "word of YHWH" (דבר יהוה). The title shows that the Book of the Four claims to comprise the one word of God, which was revealed to the four prophets over the course of about 150 years concerning Israel and Judah. In the first stage of the book (Hosea, Amos) the divine word concerned Israel (Amos 1:1); in the second phase (Micah, Zephaniah) it shifted from Samaria to Jerusalem (Mic 1:1). Thus we can see the redactor's intention not only to parallel YHWH's judgments on Israel with those of Judah, but also to point out the common divine message of these four prophets that his exilic audience should hear.

B. Micah

As Nogalski pointed out, the transfer of the word of YHWH from Samaria to Jerusalem, hinted at already in Mic 1:1, is realized in Mic 1:2-9.²⁰ YHWH's theophany first resulted in a prophecy of doom over Samaria (1:6-7) and then continued as an "incurable stroke" against the gate of Jerusalem (1:8-9). Nogalski considered Mic 1:2-4 as a literary unit. That would lead to the consequence that the whole overture of the book of Micah must be considered redactional and could not be dated before the Persian period.²¹ To

²⁰ Cf. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 129-137; he is followed by Schart, *Entstehung*, 177-181; Kessler, *Micha*, 80-94.

²¹ So consequently Kessler (*Micha*, 80-5) who argues that Mic 1:2-7 must be considered as *vaticinium ex eventu* that presupposes the chapter 6 (cf. the links between Mic 1:2 and 5:14; 6,1), which can clearly be dated in the Persian period; cf. note 16 above.

prove that the Four-Prophets-Redactor (FPR) actually connected a form of the book of Micah with the other three prophetic books, it is of crucial importance to recognize the redactional traces in Mic 1:2-9. Wolff has pointed out that Mic 1:2, including transitional first two words of 1:3 (כִּי הִנֵּה), belongs to a later edition of the book that stresses the universal dimension of its message.²² Already in 1938 Alfred Jepsen showed that the theophany originally ran directly towards Jerusalem and thus Mic 1:5b-7 is to be considered secondary.

- Micah 1,5a For the crime of Jacob is all this,
for the sins of the house of Israel.
- 5b What is the crime of Jacob?
Is it not Samaria?
And what are the high places of Judah?
Are they not Jerusalem?
- 6 I will make Samaria into a ruin in the field
a place to plant vineyards.
I will pour out her stones into the valley,
and uncover her foundations.
- 7 All her images shall be smashed;
all her Ashera shall be burned by fire;
all her idols I will lay waste.
For she collected them as the fee of a harlot,
so to the fee of a harlot they shall revert.²³

The secondary character of this passage becomes clear if one realizes that the two terms “Jacob” and “Israel” in v. 5a (which elsewhere in the book of Micah clearly denote the Southern kingdom; cf. Mic 3:1, 9; cf. 1:14-15; 2:7) are reinterpreted by the two questions of v. 5b. There, “Jacob” – the redactor wanted the audience to acknowledge – meant “Samaria,”²⁴ while “Israel” referred to “Judah.” From this reading of 1:5a, the FPR concluded (in 1:5b) that Micah had also prophesied over the Northern Kingdom. Thus he found the warrant to add his view that YHWH had pronounced a verdict against Samaria (1:6) similar to that on Jerusalem (3:12).

²² Wolff, *Micah*, xxviii-ix, 14-5, 23-4; cf. the doublet Mic 1:2b and 3a and the lack of any universal perspective in 1:3-9. Both divergent perspectives are artificially connected by the term כִּי. YHWH’s judgment over his people is a warning for the nations that something similar could happen to them (5:14).

²³ The English translation is taken from James L. Mays, *Micah: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1976) 41, 45-6.

²⁴ Actually, as it turns out, the word referred only to some part of the Northern Kingdom, not the whole people.

Moreover, he aligned the prophetic messages by introducing Hosea’s accusation against idolatry (cf. Hos 1:2; 2:12, 14; 4:17; 11:2) into the prophecy of Micah. The redactor agreed with Hosea that the typical sin of the North had been idolatry, but he was of the opinion that likewise the people of the South, who trusted wrongly in the temple (Mic 3:11), turned the holy place into an illegitimate high place (cf. הַרְבֵּי in 1:5b and 3:12).

In the view of the FPR, Zion’s “chief sin” was her illusionary trust in weapons, especially horses and chariots, as he announced in Mic 1:13b, a passage long considered secondary.²⁵ But his general statement about the sins of Jerusalem and God’s judgment on the city can be found in 5:9-13, a passage that constitutes an alien body in the context of the salvation oracles of Micah 4-5 and could have originally followed directly the concluding prophecy of doom in 3:9-12.²⁶ As already mentioned, the text is highly compositional. It has many connections to the other books²⁷, and the close links between Mic 5:9, 12-13 on the one hand and 1:13b, 6-7 on the other verify that it belongs to the same redactional layer.

Micah 5,9 It shall be in that day, oracle of YHWH,
 I will cut off your horses from your midst
 And I will wreck your chariots.
 10 I will cut off the cities of your land
 And I will overthrow all your fortresses.
 11 I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
 And you have no soothsayers.
 12 I will cut off your images
 And your pillars from the midst.
 You shall not bow down again
 to the work of your hands.

²⁵ Ibid., 52; cf. Wolff, *Micha*, 18; Kessler, *Micha*, 108.

²⁶ Cf. the same expression בִּכְרִיב in Mic 3:11 and 5:9, 12; in the passage 5:9-13, with the addressee in the 2nd Pers., now punctuated as masc. gender according to 5:6-7, probably Jerusalem has been meant originally. The verse 5:14 concerned again with the nations, belongs to a later universal redaction (cf. 1:2; 6:1). Also the introduction 5:9aa modelled on 4:6, might be a later addition. Perhaps the verse 5:8, understood as lament of the people, could have served as a bridging link to 3:12. In my view all the salvation oracles in between must be seen as later additions; cf. Albertz, *Exilszeit*, 170.

²⁷ Concerning the horses and chariots in Mic 5:9b cf. 1:13; Hos 10:13; 14:4; concerning the cities and fortresses in 5:10, 13 cf. Hos 8:14; 10:14; 13:10; Amos 5:9; Zeph 1:16. The sorceries and soothsayers are forbidden in Deut 18:10, which reminds one of the Dtr list in Jer 27:9. Concerning the idols, pillars and Asherim in 5:12 cf. Hos 3:4; 10,1-2; Mic 1:7. The expression “work of your hands” in 5:12 reminds one of Hos 14:4b.

13 I will root out your Asherim from your midst
And I will destroy your cities.

The thesis that Mic 5:9-13 derived from the FPR, a possibility which has been overlooked so far by scholars like Nogalski and Schart, has two far-reaching consequences. First, it reveals how the exilic redactor understood the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah in 587 B.C. In his view, YHWH's judgment had to be understood as an act of purification. By his judgment YHWH wanted to separate Judah from all those things that had led the people to sin against him: weapons, fortresses, sorceries, idols and other cult symbols. Thus the loss of all these things, a loss Judah had lamented following the catastrophe, must have come about for her benefit.

Second, the passage Mic 5:9-13, which once constituted the end of the exilic book of Micah, does not stand in isolation. On the contrary, the concept of purifying judgment constitutes the redactional chain of the whole composition. Passages comprising the same concept can be also found at the end of the book of Amos (9:7-10) and at the end of the book of Zephaniah (3:11-13). Another passage occurs in the beginning of the book of Zephaniah (1:4-6) that shows close verbal and motive correspondences to Mic 5:9-13.²⁸ So all these passages were probably composed by the same redactor. If we have a look at the book of Hosea we can notice two similar passages: first Hos 3:1-5, where YHWH withdraws all the benefits from his adulterous wife for a long time; and second 14:2-4, where – after YHWH's judgment – a contrite Israel himself pledges that it will no longer trust in weapons and idols, but only in God. Both passages belong to the inherited Hosean tradition and therefore do not fit the redactional concept totally; nevertheless the FPR integrated them into his composition. If we include the two Hosean passages into our consideration, the Book of the Four shows a clear compositional structure. We have one purification passage at the end of each of the four books (Hos 14:2-4; Amos 9:7-10; Mic 5:9-13; Zeph 3:11-13), and one additional purification passage in the beginning of the first and of the last book each (Hos 3:1-5; Zeph 1:4-6). The unifying concept of an ongoing purification, combined with that clear symmetric structure are – apart from the headings that Nogalski has shown – another strong argument for the thesis that a redactional composition, which comprises these four prophetic books, really existed. The following investigations will confirm this.

²⁸ Cf. the typical *והכרתיו*, four times in Mic 5:9-12 and one time in Zeph 1:4b; cf. also the long enumeration of objects that will be wiped out.

C. Zephaniah

As already mentioned, Mic 5:9-13 is closely linked with Zeph 1:4-6. This passage stands outside the “Day of the Lord” composition (1:7-2:4) and is redactional throughout.²⁹ In the view of the FPR, YHWH’s purifying judgment in the days of Hezekiah was repeated in the days of Josiah. All the cults of foreigners that invaded Judah during the 7th century would be wiped out, including their priests, idols and worshippers. Schart has already pointed out that the strange expression “the rest of the Baal” (שאר הבעל) can only be understood in the wider horizon of the Book of the Four.³⁰ It includes all that remained after Hosea’s damnation of Baalism (Hos 2:10, 15; 7:15; 11:2, 7; 13,1). As often noticed, there exist clear parallels between Zeph 1:4-6 and 2 Kings 23 (cf. esp. vv. 4-5, 12).³¹ So the FPR wanted to interpret Josiah’s cult reform in the sense of a purifying judgment, which had been announced by Zephaniah.³²

However, the cleansing of the cult from idolatry did not remove all the sins of Judah. At the end of Zeph 1:4-6 some people are mentioned “who have not sought (בקש) YHWH or consulted (דרש) him.” By that clause the FPR created the possibility of appending Zephaniah’s prophecy about a horrible day of wrath (1:7-2,4*)³³ that would come over all the vain officials and the ill-gotten riches of Jerusalem. YHWH had to announce another judgment that would remove the corrupt upper class. In the view of the editor, only the pious poor who seek YHWH (בקש) and do his law perhaps would have a chance (2:3a).

This divine judgment is demonstrated in the second part of the book, Zeph 2:5-3,13*.³⁴ According to my literary-critical analysis, this part is en-

²⁹ Schart (*Entstehung*, 107–109) attributed only Zeph 1:6 to the “D-Korpus.” As Klaus Seybold (*Satirische Prophetie: Studien zum Buch Zephanja* [SBS 120; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1985] 85) has shown, the whole passage has Dtr. features and is redactional throughout.

³⁰ Cf. Schart, *Entstehung*, 209.

³¹ Cf. Marco Striek, *Das vordeuteronomistische Zephanjabuch* (BBET 29; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1999) 95–106.

³² Similarly, Seybold, *Satirische Prophetie*, 85.

³³ Zeph 1:13b (cf. Amos 5:11); 1:17aß; 2:3a (cf. Amos 8:4) are insertions of the FPR into the older composition.

³⁴ The oracles in Zeph 3:14-20 do not presuppose a partial salvation any longer and are therefore later additions. Further, 3:14-15 shows influences of Deutero-Isaiah and can be dated in the late exilic time (539-520 B.C.). The rest of the oracles are even later. For the dating of the first edition of Deutero-Isaiah in the year 521 B.C., see Albertz, *Exilszeit*, 296-301.

tirely composed by the FPR,³⁵ using older materials like oracles against foreign nations (2:5-6, 8-9a, 12, 13-15) and a hymn verse (3:5). Combining prophecies of doom against foreign nations with those threatening doom against Jerusalem, he wanted to create a counterpart to Amos 1:3-2:16 and to give a similar message. YHWH's threatening word (דבר יהוה) had come over the nations (Zeph 2:5) and caused heavy destructions, especially of the Assyrian empire (2:13-15), but the elite of Jerusalem did not learn their lesson (3:2), as YHWH hoped they would (3:6-7). Instead, they continued with their cruel and corrupt activity (3:3-4), so God in his justice (3:5) decided to pour out his anger over this arrogant upper class (3:8abα) and remove it from Jerusalem (3:10). After this last purifying judgment, YHWH would start a new history with the "humble and poor people," who were left in Jerusalem (3:11). So, at the end of his composition the FPR draws an ideal picture of a totally purified society without any officials, palaces, fortified cities, arms, and idols, which would have learned to trust only in God and to avoid any deceit and injustice (3:12).

D. Amos

Having established the conclusion of the Book of the Four, it is possible to reconstruct its earlier form with near certainty. As far as the redactional portions in the book of Amos are concerned, scholars have reached more of a consensus. Schmidt, who discovered the Dtr. redaction in the book of Amos, ascribed to it the following verses: Amos 1:1*; 1:9-12; 2:4-5; 2:10-12; 3:1*, 7; 5:25-26.³⁶ Wolff considered adding Amos 8:11-12.³⁷ Examining these results in his detailed investigation, Schart arrived at a similar result. His major differences are the addition of Amos 4:6-11; 8:4-7; 9:7-10 to the texts named before.³⁸ If we examine these additional passages, we will get different results: As Wolff and Jeremias had already shown, Amos 4:6-13 constitutes a literary unit;³⁹ thus this passage belongs to an exilic redac-

³⁵ Striek (*Zephanjabuch*, 169-171, 187) has ascribed the verses Zeph 3:2, 7 to a Dtr redaction with sound reasons (cf. Jer 7:28, 35:13 both JerD), but it is impossible to remove them from their wider context. Consequently the whole composition belongs to that redaction. Only Zeph 2:7, 9, 10-11; 3:8bβ, 9-10 are later additions.

³⁶ Cf. Schmidt, "Die deuteronomistische Redaktion," 169-190.

³⁷ Cf. H. H. Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2: Joel und Amos* (BKAT XIV/2; Neukirchenvluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969) 136-37.

³⁸ Cf. the listing in Schart, *Entstehung*, 317; he also included Amos 5:11, but that is uncertain.

³⁹ Wolff, *Amos*, 253; Jörg Jeremias, *Der Prophet Amos* (ATD 24/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995) 47-56. Bossard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen*, 348, considered all the Amos doxologies as part of Book of the Four redaction, but that is even more improbable.

tion which prepared the book of Amos for its use in the cult. This redactional layer, to which the other doxologies 5:8-9 and 9:5-6 also belong in my view, precedes the Book of the Four.⁴⁰ In contrast to Schart’s opinion, the passage Amos 8:4-7 should be dated pre-exilic,⁴¹ because the Sabbath mentioned here still has the shape of a lunar festival (par. שַׁבָּת), celebrated every fortnight, rather than the shape of a weekly celebration separated from the moon cycle, which was introduced during the exilic period.⁴²

However, Schart’s insight that with Amos 9:7-10 the FPR created a new conclusion to the book of Amos is a very nice advance in our research. This is especially so since Nogalski’s opinion that the book should end in 9:1-6 with the purpose “to pronounce the destruction of Israel”⁴³ would not fit the hopeful perspective that we have found at the end of the books of Micah and Zephaniah. My compositional argument confirms Schart’s redaction-critical decision very nicely: the passage Amos 9:7-10 deals again with a purifying judgment of YHWH.

The main problem the FPR had to struggle with was the radical and total divine judgment that Amos and his early pupils had announced: Israel would come to its end (Amos 8:2); even experiencing the exile would not improve its chances of survival (9:4). That view seemed to exclude any hope. On the one hand, therefore, the redactor tried to explain this horrible judgment of God by stressing the sins that Israel had committed. It had not only promoted injustice and oppressed the poor, but it had also – as could be seen in the expulsion of Amos – repressed the word of God proclaimed by the prophets (2:11-12). Therefore, in the throes of the disaster, the word

⁴⁰ Cf. Albertz, *Exilszeit*, 177-78. Schart’s view is founded on the observation that Amos 8:8 constitutes a redactional link between 8:4-7 and the doxology in 9:5-6. Since he regards 8:4-7 as part of the redaction of the Book of the Four, he is forced to conclude that the doxologies presuppose these verses. But Amos 8:4-7 is older; see below. On the contrary, by inserting the verb שָׁרַף into Mic 1:3, the FPR probably establishes a link to the doxology in Amos 4:13.

⁴¹ In my view the passage is part of a late pre-exilic edition of the book, to which the passages Amos 1:2; 3:13-14; 5:26; 8:4-7, 9-10, 13-14; 9:1-4 belong. I also reckon with an earlier edition of the late 8th century B.C., which comprised Amos 1:1-8:3*. For more details see Albertz, *Exilszeit*, 177-78.

⁴² Cf. the pre-exilic parallels 2 Kgs 4:23; Isa 1:13; Hos 2:13; Lam 2:6 for differences from the exilic praxis shown in Deut 5:12-15. For the probable development cf. Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (2 vols; OTL; Louisville: Westminster, 1992) 2:408-410.

⁴³ Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 121.

of YHWH (דבר יהוה) was no longer available, although Israel would need it now more than daily bread (8:11-12).⁴⁴

On the other hand, the FPR tried to open the end of the book to the possibility of survival by appending a new ending.

- Amos 9:7 Are you not like the Cushites to me, Israelites? – oracle of YHWH –
 Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt,
 the Philistines from Caphtor, and Aram from Kir?
 8 Behold, the eyes of Adonay-YHWH are on that sinful kingdom,
 I will wipe it off the face of the earth.
 However, I will not wipe out the house of Jacob totally.
 9 Behold, I will give my orders
 and I will shake [...] ⁴⁵ the house of Israel
 as a sieve is shaken to and fro
 and not a pebble falls on the ground.
 10 By the sword all sinners of my people shall die,
 who say: “You will not let the disaster come near and meet us.”

First, the FPR rejected any attempt to avoid the terrible prophecy of Amos by referring to the election of Israel. What could be learned already from Amos 3:1-2 was that Israel was no less guilty than its neighbors so far as sinfulness was concerned. Second, the editor restricted the application of the awful message that YHWH had fixed his eyes on evil (9:4) with regard to the “sinful kingdom,” which would be wiped off the face of the earth (9:8a). Israel as a whole, as the redactor interpreted the older prophecy, was not that kingdom and would not be wiped out totally (9:8b). It would, to be sure, have to undergo a purifying judgment in which God would shake all Israel in a big sieve. All those who still denied the word of God prophesied by Amos would be kept in the sieve and killed by the sword. As for those who accepted the prophetic message and corrected themselves, we may infer they would have the chance to bypass the sieve and constitute God’s new people.

We must now raise the question of how the abolition of the “sinful kingdom” is to be understood. Schart thinks that the kingdom of the Northern state is meant, not only here but in the Book of the Four throughout.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Notice the use of the singular in Amos 8:12 as in the headings. The plural in 8:11 is textually uncertain. Cf. the use of בְּקֶטֶף as in Zeph 1:6; 2:3; the clause might be modelled on Hos 5:6.

⁴⁵ Delete בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם as a later addition, which spoils the parable. It interpreted the diaspora existence rather than the foreign invasion as the purifying instrument.

⁴⁶ Cf. Schart, *Entstehung*, 227-229.

He refers to the fact that most of the criticism against kings and kingship occurs in the books of Hosea (1:4; 3:4; 5:1; 7:7; 8:4; 10:7, 15; 13:9-11) and Amos (7:11). Additionally, of course, the post-exilic editor who appended Amos 9:11-12, announcing the reestablishment of the Davidic kingdom, understood 9:8b in such a restricted sense. To me, however, Schart's understanding seems to be mistaken. We have to remember that some criticism is raised also against the Judean royal family in Zeph 1:8, and that in the vision of the ideal future society of Jerusalem at the end of the whole book (3:11-13) no Davidic king is mentioned. If we take into account that the FPR wanted to make parallel the messages of the Northern and Southern prophets in order to present them as the "one word of YHWH" to his exilic audience, it will be improbable to suggest that he wanted to underline a difference between them at just that crucial point of future kingship. I think the Judah passage (Amos 2:4-5) in the overture (1:3-2:16) inserted by the FPR, testifies that he wanted to apply the whole book of Amos to a Judean audience. To report a verdict against the Northern kingdom alone would simply make a theoretical statement, so Schart's interpretation seems unlikely.

We know from other texts that the question of whether the Davidic rule should be restored was hotly debated during the exilic and the early post-exilic period (2 Kgs 25:27-30; Jer 22:24-30; Hag 2:20-23; Isa 55:5).⁴⁷ Amos 9:8 can easily be understood as a voice in this discussion. Since all promises of a new Davidic kingdom in Hos 3:5, Amos 9:11-12, and Mic 5:1-2 are later additions, and never belonged to the Book of the Four, it is most probable that the FPR – as radical as the Dtr. pupils of Jeremiah – intended to proclaim a general rejection of Israelite and Judean kingship. For FPR the monarchy belonged to the institutions that caused the people to sin against God.⁴⁸ Therefore it had to be removed by YHWH like other state attributes such as arms and fortresses. Understood in this way, the book of Amos too fits in the series of purifying judgements investigated so far (Mic 5:9-13; Zeph 1:4-6; 3:11-13).

E. Hosea

Finally, at the beginning of his work the FPR positioned the book of Hosea. This choice was by no means natural. It distorted to some degree the chronological order of the composition. Since Amos was the oldest prophet it should have been placed first. Probably this decision has a theological

⁴⁷ Cf. Rainer Albertz, "In Search of the Deuteronomists: A First Solution to a Historical Riddle," in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed T. Römer; BETL 147; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2000) 1-17; idem, *Exilszeit*, 249-50.

⁴⁸ Cf. Amos' expulsion from Bethel, the monarchic sanctuary (Amos 7:13). It is pronounced by the priest Amaziah, but surely ordered by the king.

basis. As will be seen from many motives and ideas that shaped the whole composition, the book of Hosea achieved paradigmatic significance for the editor. Moreover, Hosea has the most developed perspective of salvation of all four books. So it was suitable for the entrance of a work that aimed at having a look beyond the catastrophe.

A serious problem in research into the Book of the Four is that so far nearly no traces of a Dtr. edition of Hosea have been found. Since the work of Lothar Perlitt, only Hos 8,1b had been accepted as a Dtr. addition.⁴⁹ Schart proposed adding more verses, taking Hos 1:1, 2b*; 2:6; 3:1*; 4:1*; 5:1-2*; 8:1b; 14:2-4 as part of the "D-Korpus." However, his proposals are not all equally convincing. In 3:1b β we can find a Dtr. expression ("although they resort to other Gods"; cf. Deut 31:18, 20). The insertion of the phrase יהוה יברך יהוה into 4:1 may have been made by the FPR. Perhaps there might be a slight realignment in Hos 5:1-2*.⁵⁰ Hos 1:2b and 2:6 are admittedly redactional, but they belong to the older composition of Hosea 1-3*. Further, the passage Hos 14:2-4 does play an important role in the Book of the Four, but cannot be ascribed to the FPR in my view, because vv. 2a α and 5a α are already cited in Jer 3:22a and must be dated earlier.⁵¹ Thus only Hos 1:1; 3:1b β ; 4:1*; 8,1b can be considered certain.

Be that as it may, some other verses considered secondary and ascribed to Judean redactions or not assigned at all,⁵² are appropriate candidates for the FPR, provided we do not look for Dtr. features exclusively but also for topics that fit well with other redactional passages in the Book of the Four. In Hos 1:5, 7 the well-known theme of destroying weapons is taken up prominently (cf. Mic 5:9); and in Hos 8:14, a verse that can surely be dated late exilic, the building of palaces and fortified cities is said to be a special sin of Judah. This latter accusation is similar to Zeph 1:16 (cf. Mic 5:10).⁵³ The polemic against cult places outside Jerusalem in Hos 4:15 constitutes a

⁴⁹ Lothar Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (WMANT 36; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969) 146-152.

⁵⁰ Schart, *Entstehung*, 186-87.

⁵¹ Jörg Jeremias (*Der Prophet Hosea* [ATD 24/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983] 171-72, ascribed Hos 14:2-9 to the pupils of Hosea, perhaps after they fled to Judah around 722 B.C. I regard Jer 3:19-4:2 as part of Jeremiah's early prophecy, which was still directed to Northern Israelites, spoken before the death of Josiah, 609 B.C., cf. Rainer Albertz, "Jer 2-6 und die Frühzeitverkündigung Jeremias," *ZAW* 94 (1982) 20-47.

⁵² Cf. the listing presented by Jörg Jeremias, "Hosea/Hoseabuch," *TRE* 15:586-598, esp. 592.

⁵³ Cf. the allusions to Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 44:2; 51:13). The compositional character of the verse can be seen in the fact that the announcement of judgment refers to Amos 1:4 et al.

redactional link to Amos 8:14; also the secondary polemic against idols in Hos 8:6a fit the topic of idolatry (cf. Mic 1:6-7; 5:12-13). Finally, the clearly secondary remark about Israel's refusal to turn back in Hos 11:5b, which takes up Jer 5:3; 8:5 and reminds one of Zeph 3:2, may be ascribed to the FPR. Thus, in all probability, the hand of FPR can be seen in Hos 1:1, 5, 7; 3:1b β ; 4:1*, 15; 8:1b, 6a, 14; 11:5b. To be sure, these verses constitute only traces, but they show that the book of Hosea demonstrably belongs in the Book of the Four.

Otherwise I agree with Schart's statement that the small amount of redactional work in Hosea can be explained by simply saying that "Die D-Redaktion ihre theologische Konzeption in dieser Schrift auch ohne größere Eingriffe ausgesprochen fand."⁵⁴ Actually, in the book of Hosea the FPR could find all the topics that were important to him: the basic evil of idolatry (Hos 2:4-17; 4:14-14 et. al.; cf. Mic 1:6-7; 5:12-13; Zeph 1:4-6), a sinful trust in arms and allies (Hos 5:11-14; 7:8-9, 10-11; 8:9; 10:13-14; 14:4; cf. Mic 1,13b; 5:9-10, 13; Zeph 1:16), a criticism of kingship (Hos 1:4; 3:4; 5:1; 7:7; 10:7, 15; 13:10-11; cf. Amos 9:8) and of the officials (Hos 5:1-2; 7:3-7, 16; cf. Zeph 3:3-4). Even social criticism, otherwise untypical for Hosea, appears once (Hos 4:1-2). Multiplied by Amos and Micah, it founded the "social gospel" at the end of the Book of the Four (Zeph 2:3; 3:11-13). Finally the important topic of rejecting the prophets, with which the redactor dealt in Amos 2:10-11 (cf. 7:9-17; Zeph 3:2, 7), appeared in Hos 9:7-9, 17.

The FPR did not need to add substantially to the Hosean prophecy, but he did want to underscore some of its themes. He used Hosea's verdict against the Northern Kingdom announced in the overture of the book (Hos 1:4) to introduce his criticism of weapons (1:5). Not only would Israel's kingship come to an end, but also its bows would be broken. In contrast to Israel's condemnation symbolically pronounced by Hosea, the editor announced a divine rescue of Judah that would happen not by arms and war, but by mysterious, God-like measures (1:7). This overture fits perfectly in a book that will go on to tell about the removal of the kingdom (Amos 9:8), of arms and fortresses (Mic 5:9-10; Zeph 1:16), and arrogant officials (Zeph 3:11) by divine, purifying judgments, leaving only a poor and humble people at the end.

The awful aberrations of the North denounced by Hosea led the FPR to teach his audience a lesson. With his warning to Judeans in Hos 4:15 not to visit the cult places in Gilgal, Bethel and Beersheba, he perhaps wanted to prevent the exilic people's abandoning the centralization of the cult achieved under Josiah because of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem

⁵⁴ Schart, *Entstehung*, 169.

by the Babylonians. By inserting the Dtn.-Dtr. term ברִיית in Hos 8:1b he wanted to show that all the misdeeds of Northern Israel that Hosea had condemned in this chapter were transgression of God's covenant and violations of his תּוֹרָה written in the book of Deuteronomy. When the FPR repeated in Amos 2:4 a similar accusation against Judah (מֵאִם תּוֹרַת־יְהוָה), he wanted to equate the transgressions of the two nations on a fundamental theological level. Although the sins of Israel and Judah were different in some respect, they both had broken the covenant. The Judeans could not boast to their Northern brothers.

More than in the other three books, Hosea offers the possibility of a new beginning after destruction. Several promises of salvation occur here, either originally included in prophecies of doom (Hos 2:4-17; 11:1-11) or attached later (2:18, 21-22; 14:2-9). Most of the salvation oracles of the book⁵⁵ can be dated pre-exilic, thus preceding the FPR. So we can imagine that they were of crucial importance for him, since he wanted to open future prospects for the exilic generation. It can be shown that he developed all the theological concepts of his work on the basis of what is said about the relation between divine judgement and salvation in the Hosean prophecy.

In the book of Hosea one can find a repeated movement from judgment towards salvation (Hos 2:4-18, 21-22; 3:1-5; 4-11; 12-14). In accordance with this structure, the FPR arranged his work generally in that way, with passages comprising the hopeful purifying judgments being set at the ends of the books (Amos 9:7-10; Mic 5:9-13; Zeph 3:11-13). By that arrangement he surely wanted to give his exilic audience a piece of advice: any chance for survival could be found only by accepting YHWH's judgment, not by denying its results.

From the book of Hosea, the FPR could learn that judgment and salvation are both part of God's lawsuit (רִיב) with his unfaithful people (Hos 2:4; 4:1, 4; 12:3). Both are founded in God's passionate love; both aimed to bring his beloved people back to him (2:4-17; 11:1-11). Thus, all judgment of YHWH aimed at Israel's repentance (2:9b; 5:15; 11:11; 14:2-4); all judgement of God had a pedagogical intention. It never ended his relationship to Israel, but aimed at making a new start possible. This insight drawn from Hosea permitted the FPR to alter the hopeless ending of the books of Amos and Micah.

Moreover, from Hosea the FPR learned that God's judgment itself consists of saving elements. By removing all his blessings (Hos 2:11, 14; 9:2) YHWH intended to lead Israel to the recognition it owed all its wealth to

⁵⁵ The salvation oracles Hos 2:1-3, 20, 23-25 are considered post-exilic additions, cf. Jeremias, *Hosea*, 48-9.

God. By removing all the things that led Israel astray, from the baalized cult to the bull icon of Bethel (2:13, 15, 19; 9:4-5; 10:5), Israel could be brought back to YHWH.

All these elements are bound together in the symbolic act in Hos 3:1-5* where the prophet is ordered to marry an adulterous woman in order both to keep her away from all her lovers and to withdraw from her all loving care. This symbol act comprises at the same time love and punishment, and it aimed at Israel’s return to her divine husband. The second part of the passage runs as follows:

Hosea 3:3 Then I said to her:

“Many days you will sit in my house
and not play the harlot

and have no intercourse with a man, nor I with you.”

4 For the Israelites will sit there without king or official
without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim;⁵⁶

5 but after that the Israelites will turn back

and will seek (שָׁקַח) YHWH, their God, [...]

and will anxiously approach to YHWH and to his goods [...].⁵⁷

The divine punishment consists of the withdrawal of all that Israel has loved instead of God and all that seduced it to apostasy: the kingdom, the officials, the sacrifices, cult places, and all oracle instruments.

I think that the FPR developed his concept of purifying judgment directly from this Hosean idea of divine punishment, founded on God’s love and aiming at Israel’s education. Moreover, it seems to me that Hos 3:1-5* especially constitutes the textual basis on which the FPR modelled his own purification passages. The stylistic feature of listing those things that YHWH would withdraw, reminds one of Mic 5:9-13; Zeph 1:4-6; 3:11. It is not by chance that four of the six elements named in Hos 3:4 are literally taken up in those passages and that the remaining two elements have their material equivalents.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ephod and teraphim should be interpreted here as oracle instruments; see Judg 17:5; 18:14-20; 1 Sam 23:9-12; 30:7-8; Ezek 21:26; and Jeremias, *Hosea*, 56.

⁵⁷ Jeremias (*Hosea*, 57–8) ascribed Hos 3:5 to an early addition because it was presupposed in Jer 2:19 (Syr., Vetus Latina). In any case it preceded the FPR. However, post-exilic additions to v. 5 were, according to Jeremias, the ill-fitting phrase “and David, their king” and the eschatological formula “at the end of the days.”

⁵⁸ Concerning מַלְאָכִים cf. מַלְאָכִים in Amos 9:8; concerning שָׁר cf. Zeph 3:3, 11; concerning זָבִיחַ cf. Amos 5:25; concerning מַצְבֵּה cf. Mic 5:12. Concerning the oracle instruments cf. the sorceries and soothsayers in Mic 5:12.

Of course there is a little difference between the two concepts: Hosea spoke of withdrawal, the editor of purification. The latter used harsh words in order to stress the total destruction and complete removal of all the seducers.⁵⁹ However, even this difference can be explained by the Hosean prophecy. Hosea underlines several times that Israel's return to God would be difficult (Hos 6:1-6; 7:10, 16) or even impossible (11:7). Since Israel became so enslaved by its seducers, YHWH was forced to use severe measures to heal its apostasy (14:5). The FPR developed this idea just a bit further. Since Israel was incapable of dissociating itself from all those seductive powers, God himself would destroy them with all his might. By his purifying judgement, the scene would be so completely cleansed that no relapse would be possible. Thus the book of Hosea can be considered the model that shaped the concept and the structure of the Book of the Four.

IV. Concluding Remarks

The drastic way in which Israel's salvation is realized according to the Book of the Four excludes the idea that the new beginning could be done by restoring the pre-exilic conditions simply. On the contrary, by pronouncing that state attributes like the kingship, the officials, the fortified cities, palaces, chariots, horses and other weapons are removed by God forever, the book pleads for a radical new start. Not the old upper class, but the poor and humble, who should be immune to arrogance and injustice, would characterize the future society.

Judged by this concept the FPR belonged to the most radical groups of the exilic period.⁶⁰ He stood in opposition to the group behind the DtrH, who pleaded for the full restoration of the pre-exilic state, though in the shape that it had found during the reforms of Josiah. Also the reform priests around Ezekiel wanted a radical new start, but they still reckoned with the old elites, the priest and the king, although the latter, according to this group, would be much more restricted in power. More radical were the authors of the Dtr books of Jeremiah, who rejected the restoration of the Davidic rule and pleaded for a religious and moral renewal of all the people. But they did not denounce the upper class at all.

As can be seen, the FPR was generally oriented towards the Dtn and Dtr theology, but this orientation was in no way exclusive. His theology and language were also strongly influenced by the four prophets whose books he edited. As shown, he was most closely related to Hosea. Amazingly

⁵⁹ Cf. הכרית Mic 5:9-12; Zeph 1:4; השמיד Amos 9:8; שבר Hos 1:5.

⁶⁰ For details concerning the different exilic literature and their tradents cf. Albertz, *Exilzeit*, 163-323.

enough, the FPR referred also to the prophet Isaiah, especially to his criticism of enthusiasm for military might (Isa 14:32; 30:1-5, 15-16; 31:1-3), which was only partly taken up by the pupils of Hosea (Hos 14:4).

Since the FPR seems to know the DtrH (cf. Zeph 1:4-6 and 2 Kgs 23:4-5, 12) and the first edition of JerD (cf. Zeph 3:2 and Jer 7:28), he can probably be dated in the later exilic period (after 550). Because of the relationship to Isa 47:8, 10 in Zeph 2:15, and to Ezek 22:25-31 in Zeph 3:3-4, 8 one could consider a location in Babylonia. But Hos 4:15 deals with a concrete Judean problem, so a location in Judah seems to me more likely. However, this hypothesis should be taken cautiously until a more precise historical and social classification will be possible.

V. Summary

Proposing some methodological clarifications, the hypothesis developed by Nogalski and Schart that there existed a Book of the Four is developed further. The book consists of the passages Hosea 1-14 (without 2:1-3, 20, 23-25; 3:5ab); Amos 1:1-9:10; Mic 1:1, 3-3:12; 5:8-13; Zeph 1:1-3:13*. It constitutes an intentional composition, structured by a chain of passages that proclaim YHWH's ongoing purifying judgments: Hos 3:1-5*; 14:2-5 (where judgment had already been announced in the tradition), and Amos 9:7-10; Mic 5:9-13; Zeph 1:4-6; 3:1-13* (where judgment is newly formulated). By his judgments YHWH separates Israel and Judah from all those things and persons that have led the people to sin against him: the cult, the idols, the kingdom, the weapons, the fortresses, and the upper class. Thus, in the view of the book, all those losses, which had been lamented between 732 and 587 B.C., actually happened for the benefit of Israel. Moreover, God's purifying acts radically determine Israel's new start after the exile.

The work of the Book of the Four redaction can especially be seen in Hos 1:5, 7; 3:1bb; 4:1*, 15; 8:1b, 6a, 14; 11:5b; Amos 1:1b, 9-10, 11f.; 2:4-5, 10-12; 3:1b*, 7; 5:25(?); 8:11f.; 9:7-10; Mic 1:1, 5b-7, 13bβ; 5:8(?), 9-13; Zeph 1:1, 3-6, 13b, 17aβ; 2:3a; 2:5-3:8bα*, 11-13 (without 2:7, 9, 10-11; 3:8bβ-10).