

The construction of prophetic personae as exemplars of trust

Michael A. Lyons

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF PROPHETIC PERSONAE AS EXEMPLARS OF TRUST

SUMMARY: While the exemplary function of characters in ancient Israelite narrative texts has received significant attention, the construction of exemplars in prophetic texts has not. Here I examine the techniques by which the prophetic persona in the book of Isaiah was constructed as an exemplar of trust in Yhwh, and I compare these techniques with similar ones in the books of Jeremiah, Micah, and Habakkuk. As I will show, passages describing the Isaian persona were taken up very quickly within the editorial history of the book and by subsequent authors in order to create further arguments about the importance of trust.

The theme of trust or belief¹ in Yhwh is prominent in the texts that would become the scriptures of early Judaism and Christianity², and readers of these texts have long recognized that certain characters are presented as exemplars of trust³. There is abundant evidence that

¹ On the distinction between “belief” and “trust”, see C. ZIEGERT, “Glauben und Vertrauen im Alten Testament. Eine kognitiv-linguistische Untersuchung”, *ZAW* 131.4 (2019) 607-624. According to Ziegert (here 623), the former “presupposes a content that expresses a personal counterpart and that the “believing” person considers to be true”, while the latter “assumes a (potential) danger, the avoidance of which the “trusting” person expects”. Both of these concepts will be included in the present study—though with respect to “trust”, it might in some cases be more appropriate to think of *mitigation* of danger rather than *avoidance* of it. In the passages from the book of Isaiah examined here, these concepts are mutually implicating, as is noted by J. BARTON, *Ethics in Ancient Israel* (Oxford 2013) 117-120. And as I will demonstrate, “trust” is often closely linked with a temporal element (i.e., waiting or expectation).

² For overviews, see H. WILDBERGER, “‘Glauben’ im Alten Testament”, *ZThK* 65.2 (1968) 129-159; K. HAACKER, “Glaube. II/2: Altes Testament”, *TRE* 13 (1984) 279-289; O. KAISER, “Glaube II. Altes Testament”, *RGG*⁴ 3 (2000) 944-947; W. HERRMANN, “Der Modus des Glaubens. Zur Frage der Glaubensweise auf der Grundlage des Alten Testaments”, *BZ* 54 (2010) 92-102; A. KLEIN, “‘Wie hast du’s mit dem glauben, Israel?’: Der Glaubensbegriff im Alten Testament”, *Glaube. Das Verständnis des Glaubens im frühen Christentum und in seiner jüdischen und hellenistisch-römischen Umwelt* (eds. J. FREY et al.) (WUNT 373; Tübingen 2017) 53-78; M. KÖCKERT, “‘Rettung’ und ‘Glaube’ im Alten Testament”, *Sōtēria: Salvation in Early Christianity and Antiquity*. Festschrift in Honour of Cilliers Breytenbach on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday (eds. D. DU TOIT – C. GERBER – C. ZIMMERMANN) (NovTSup 175; Leiden 2019) 3-29.

³ By “exemplar” I simply mean: the literary construction of a character with traits to be emulated by the reader (see further the end of Section 1 below). This should be distinguished from later notions of exemplarity informed by Greek cultural ideals, on which see D. LAMBERT, “Biblical Narrative as Ethics? The Limits of Exemplarity in Ancient Jewish Literature”, *DSD* 28 (2021) 423-447, here 428: “In brief, what I wish to argue is that, in the late Second Temple period and beyond, exemplarity in the fuller sense, that is, as a technology of the self or mode of self-formation—progress toward perfection through emulation—is taken up as a practice of reading only within a few specific contexts as part of an elite project linked inextricably to Hellenistic moral philosophy”. Another key difference is that unlike the tradents who produced ancient Israelite prophetic texts, ancient Greek and Roman authors were explicit about the construction and theorization of exemplary characters: see e.g. LUCIAN, *Demonax* 1-2, *Lucian*. Volume 1 (trans. A. HARMON) (LCL 14; Cambridge, MA 1913) 142-143; HORACE, *Epistles* 1.2.1-4, 17-18, *Satires. Epistles. The Art of Poetry* (trans. H. FAIRCLOUGH) (LCL 194; Cambridge, MA 1926) 262-263. See further F.S. HALLIWELL, “Traditional Greek Conceptions of Character”, *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature* (ed. C. PELLING) (Oxford 1990) 32-59; M. ROLLER, “Exemplarity in Roman Culture: The Cases of Horatius Cocles and Cloelia”, *Classical Philology* 99.1 (2004) 1-56; J. MIRA SEO, *Exemplary Traits. Reading Characterization in Roman Poetry* (Oxford 2013); K. DE TEMMERMAN, *Crafting Characters. Heroes and Heroines in the Ancient Greek Novel* (Oxford 2014) 31-45.

the exemplary roles of such characters were noted and further developed by the scribes who read these texts ⁴, and this has been the subject of a number of important studies in recent scholarship ⁵. The vast majority of these exemplars—e.g., Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Ezra, Judith—are characters in narrative texts. But what of exemplary figures in *non*-narrative texts, and in particular, prophetic texts? Did such figures exist, and did they have an impact on later readers? And if so, can we trace the process by which they were shaped? How did the composers and redactors of these largely poetic texts accomplish this, given the literary constraints under which they were operating? In this essay I will examine the techniques by which the prophetic persona in the book of Isaiah was constructed as an exemplar of trust, and compare these techniques with similar ones in the books of Jeremiah, Micah, and Habakkuk. I will then show how the construction of this Isaian persona was taken up and extended to make further arguments about trust, first within the prophetic book itself, and then in later Second Temple-period Jewish and early Christian texts. My goal is to contribute

⁴ See for example the patterning of Ruth on Abraham in Ruth 2,11-12 (// Gen 12,1-4), or the reception of Abraham as an exemplar in Jubilees 17,15 – 18,19; Philo, *De Abrahamo* 167-204; Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.222-236; Heb 11,17-22; James 2,21-23, or the reception of multiple characters (Abraham, Joseph, Phinehas, Joshua, Caleb, David, Elijah, Daniel and his friends) as exemplars in 1 Macc 2,51-60.

⁵ For studies of how exemplary figures were received and further developed in the Second Temple period, see in particular H. NAJMAN, *Seconding Sinai. The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (JSJSup 77; Leiden 2003); idem, “How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha? Imitation and Emulation in 4 Ezra”, *Flores Florentino. Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (eds. A. HILHORST – É. PUECH – E. TIGCHELAAR) (JSJSup 122; Leiden 2007) 529-536; idem, “Text and Figure in Ancient Jewish *Paideia*”, *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism* (ed. M. POPOVIĆ) (JSJSup 141; Leiden 2010) 253-265; idem, “The Exemplary Protagonist: The Case of 4 Ezra”, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Scriptures* (ed. E. TIGCHELAAR) (Leuven 2014) 261-287. See further A. Y. REED, “The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the Testament of Abraham”, *JSJ* 40 (2009) 185-212; D. V. EDELMAN – E. BEN ZVI (eds.), *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods. Social Memory and Imagination* (Oxford 2013); R. J. FOSTER, *The Significance of Exemplars for the Interpretation of James* (WUNT II/376; Tübingen 2014); C. M. BRADY, “What Shall We Remember, the Deeds or the Faith of Our Ancestors? A Comparison of 1 Maccabees 2 and Hebrews 11”, *Earliest Christianity within the Boundaries of Judaism. Essays in Honor of Bruce Chilton* (eds. A. J. AVERY-PECK – C. A. EVANS – J. NEUSNER) (Leiden 2016) 107-119; T. NOVICK, “On the Paucity of Biblical Exemplars in Sectarian Texts”, *HĀ-ĪSH MŌSHE. Studies in Scriptural Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature in Honor of Moshe J. Bernstein* (eds. B. Y. GOLDSTEIN – M. SEGAL – G. BROOKE) (STDJ 122; Leiden 2017) 248-256; S. A. ADAMS – Z. DOMONEY-LYTTLE (eds.), *Abraham in Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (LSTS 93; London 2019); D. MAIER, “Abraham’s Happiness in Second Temple Literature. Tracing the Addition of Patriarchal Emotions Across the Mediterranean”, *Blätter Abrahams* 20 (2020) 31-44; K. ANTIN, “Propagating the Israelite way of life in the book of Tobit and in Jubilees: Tobit and Noah as exemplary characters”, *JSP* 33.2 (2023) 97-111.

to our knowledge of how exemplary figures were constructed and received in ancient Jewish and early Christian reading communities.

I. THE CONSTRUCTION OF PROPHETIC PERSONAE AS EXEMPLARS

A prophetic persona⁶ emerges primarily from the use of first-person speech, particularly in statements that express the prophetic speaker's thoughts or emotions, or in speech acts of confidence, complaint, and petition—though identifying the voice attributed to the prophet is not always a simple matter⁷. For the purposes of this investigation, first-person expressions of confidence or dependence are of crucial importance. The prophetic personae arising from such statements are concretized by the names supplied in the introductions to prophetic books, and may be further developed by two additional sources of data: first-person statements that depict the prophet as separate from and in opposition to negatively-

⁶ Timothy Polk used the term “prophetic persona” to refer to “the prophet *as depicted in the text*”, a depiction that he calls a “literary-theological construct”; see T. POLK, *The Prophetic Persona: Jeremiah and the Language of the Self* (JSOTSup 32; Sheffield 1984) 10; see further 24, 56-57, 125, 165, 170-174. Note the earlier work of P.R. ACKROYD, “Isaiah I–XII: Presentation of a Prophet”, *Congress Volume*. Göttingen, 1977 (ed. J. EMERTON) (VTSup 29; Leiden 1978) 16-48, who spoke of the “presentation” of the prophet in the book of Isaiah. Others have also examined the rhetorical function of how prophetic figures are depicted in the books associated with them; see e.g. A.R. DIAMOND, *The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context. Scenes of Prophetic Drama* (JSOTSup 45; Sheffield 1987) 11-16; H.P. NASUTI, “The Once and Future Lament: Micah 2.1-5 and the Prophetic Persona”, *Inspired Speech. Prophecy in the Ancient Near East in Honour of Herbert B. Huffmon* (eds. J. KALTNER – L. STULMAN) (London 2004) 144-160; M.J. DE JONG, “Ezekiel as a Literary Figure and the Quest for the Historical Prophet”, *The Book of Ezekiel and Its Influence* (eds. J. TROMP – H.J. DE JONGE) (Aldershot 2007) 1-16; T. BULKELEY, “The Book of Amos as “Prophetic Fiction”: Describing the Genre of a Written Work that Reinvigorates Older Oral Speech Forms”, *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism* (eds. M.J. BODA – M.H. FLOYD – C.M. TOFFELMIRE) (Atlanta, GA 2015) 205-219; E.K. HOLT, “Portraits of the Prophet in the Book of Jeremiah”, *The Oxford Handbook of Jeremiah* (eds. L. STULMAN – E. SILVER) (New York 2021) 343-357; C.M. TOFFELMIRE, “The Voice and Person of the Prophet in Joel (and the Twelve)”, *CBQ* 84.2 (2022) 221-230.

⁷ Ben Zvi notes that the voice of the speaker in Micah 3 “tends to blur with YHWH’s”; see E. BEN ZVI, *Micah* (FOTL XXIB; Grand Rapids, MI 2000) 81; see also his comments (167-168) on the ambiguity of the first-person speech in Micah 7. On the difficulty of distinguishing between the voices of the prophet, Yhwh, and Israel in the book of Jeremiah, see e.g. POLK, *Prophetic Persona*, 58-126; M.E. BIDDLE, *Polyphony and Symphony in Prophetic Literature. Rereading Jeremiah 7–20* (Macon, GA 1996); J.M. HENDERSON, “Who Weeps in Jeremiah VIII 23 (IX 1)? Identifying the Dramatic Speakers in the Poetry of Jeremiah”, *VT* 52.2 (2002) 191-206.

characterized behaviours or groups of people, and third-person narratives about the prophet that have been incorporated into the book.

When prophetic books were being formed, composers and redactors made decisions about the inclusion, positioning, and shaping of traditional material, as well as the addition of new material—all factors that affect the way in which prophetic personae emerge⁸. While first-person speech may in some cases go back to a historical prophet whose words were transcribed or remembered and written down, in other cases it may be a literary creation identical to what we are familiar with in cultic poetry, where the “I” often voices the supplication or confidence of the faithful Israelite⁹. And because prophetic books are typically composite, from the standpoint of literary production the prophetic persona may also be composite—though there is no reason to believe that the authors and redactors of the books intended their readers to notice this. In any case, editorial activity certainly played a significant role in the emergence and development of prophetic personae.

Of course, not every prophetic book utilizes the construction of a prophetic persona as a rhetorical strategy, or utilizes it in the same manner¹⁰. Books such as Joel, Obadiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Malachi do not contain extensively developed prophetic personae. In other books we do find a developed prophetic persona, but not one constructed to serve as an

⁸ See the cautionary remarks of O.H. STECK, *The Prophetic Books and their Theological Witness* (trans. J.D. NOGALSKI) (St Louis, MO 2000) 9-10: “A prophetic writing presents a literary image of a prophet The received location of prophetic messages in descriptions (!) of speaking situations is primarily not a speaking situation that can be immediately reconstructed. Instead, the received location is a book. . . . Like the prophetic book itself, this prophetic image that the book presents has received little attention. This image could look quite different from the original prophet”. See also the claim by J.D. NOGALSKI, “Where Are the Prophets in the Book of the Twelve?”, *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism* (eds. M.J. BODA – M.H. FLOYD – C.M. TOFFELMIRE) (Atlanta, GA 2015) 163-182, here 182, that “the character of the collections and their sources simply shows no interest in the person of the prophet. The prophetic figures disappear behind the function of the collections associated with them whose purpose is to present the message of YHWH”; this should be understood in light of his other comments (169, 171, 173) about the disinterest evident in the Book of the Twelve regarding the life of the historical prophet.

⁹ See K. VAN DER TOORN, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA 2007) 173-204 (esp. 190-199). On the construction of the individual in lament psalms, see A.C. COTTRILL, *Language, Power, and Identity in the Lament Psalms of the Individual* (LHBOTS 493; London 2008) 1-57; on the editorial shaping of psalms of the individual for communal use, see M. MARTTILA, *Collective Reinterpretation in the Psalms. A Study of the Redaction History of the Psalter* (FAT II/13; Tübingen 2006).

¹⁰ See BULKELEY, “Prophetic Fiction”, 215.

exemplar of belief or trust ¹¹. The four prophetic books that depict a prophet as an exemplar of belief or trust are the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, and Habakkuk ¹².

I am using the term “exemplar” here in the way that T. Polk and A. Diamond have used it to speak of the persona of the prophet Jeremiah: namely, as a character with traits to be emulated by the reader ¹³. I do not mean to suggest that the personae of the prophets investigated here were constructed *only* to embody a single virtue, or that they are merely “types”. While on the one hand it is perhaps true that the personae of Isaiah, Micah, and Habakkuk are not “round” characters, their function in the book, the contents of the words attributed to them, and the compositional process result in a complexity that should not be reduced ¹⁴.

While for the sake of space I will limit my analysis of how a prophetic persona is constructed by focusing on the book of Isaiah, I will then compare the data with what can be seen in the books of Micah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah in order to identify patterns or tendencies in the techniques being used. I will also demonstrate how the statements and roles attributed to the Isaian persona were taken up and developed further within the composition itself and in later texts.

¹¹ E.g., Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Haggai, and Zechariah.

¹² The prophetic persona is least developed in the book of Micah, and most developed in the book of Jeremiah.

¹³ POLK, *Prophetic Persona*, 129, “For analytic in the concept ‘exemplar’, one would think, is the concept ‘imitation’, and it is precisely the prophetic persona’s piety, i.e. his obediential faith, that configuration of beliefs, trust, praise, and anguish expressed in the Confessions, which is to be imitated by the reader”; 196 n.31, “Jeremiah’s self as instantiated in his words, becomes an exemplar and model for imitation by the believing reader”; see also DIAMOND, *Confessions of Jeremiah*, 166, 187.

¹⁴ See POLK, *Prophetic Persona*, 150: “Even as he becomes an exemplar of trust, a wisdom-styled model of obedience in suffering, Jeremiah remains the prophetic figure of a definite time, place, and mission”. See further J. BARTON, “Characterization and Ethics”, *Characters and Characterization in Kings* (eds. K. BODNER and B. JOHNSON) (LHBOTS 670; London 2020) 1-16 (here 4). Barton explores the moral complexity of round characters in Hebrew narrative and the extent to which they can be understood to be shaped as models for imitation. He argues that in many cases, “the biblical authors were clearly aware that the people they described were not simple exemplars of this or that moral quality”.

II. THE PERSONA OF ISAIAH SON OF AMOZ

The book of Isaiah begins by associating the oracles in the book with the speech of an 8th century individual named Isaiah (Isa 1,1). But the persona of the prophet (which is only present in the first part of the book, chaps. 1–39) does not come into sharp focus until the commission report in chap. 6. Here we find first-person speech that runs intermittently through chap. 8, a feature which has led some to posit the existence of an earlier “Isaiah Memoir”¹⁵. But whatever the form of this earlier material, what we have now is an editorially complex composition in which Isaiah the prophet is a character acting in a larger drama.

In chap. 6, the prophet Isaiah is set apart from his contemporaries in three ways. First, when the prophet’s vision of the enthroned deity causes him to cry out with an acknowledgement of his impurity and the impurity of his people, a heavenly being touches his lips with a coal and proclaims that his iniquity is taken away (Isa 6,5-7). Second, the prophet volunteers to be Yhwh’s representative to the people (Isa 6,8)—a remarkable request, given the reluctance-motif that we find in other commissioning reports (Exod 4,10-13; Judg 6,14.17.36-40; Jer 1,5-8). Third, the prophet is told that his words will actually provoke increased resistance to God among his addressees (Isa 6,9-10), resulting in hard hearts and blind eyes. The entire chapter, then, distinguishes the prophet from his contemporaries,

¹⁵ The original argument for an Isaiah Memoir (*Denkschrift*) in Isa 6,1 – 9,6 was made by K. BUDDE, *Jesajas Erleben. Eine gemeinverständliche Auslegung der Denkschrift des Propheten* (Kap. 6,1 – 9,6) (Gotha 1928). For a variety of responses to the question of what material in Isaiah 6–8 may be attributed to the 8th century prophet, see O. KAISER, *Isaiah 1–12* (trans. J. BOWDEN) (OTL; Philadelphia, PA 21983) 114-117; S.A. IRVINE, “The Isaianic *Denkschrift*: Reconsidering an Old Hypothesis”, *ZAW* 104.2 (1992) 216-231; E. BLUM, “Jesajas prophetisches Testament. Beobachtungen zu Jes 1–11 (Teil I)”, *ZAW* 108 (1996) 547-568; J. BARTHEL, *Prophetenwort und Geschichte* (FAT 19; Tübingen 1997) 37-65; R.E. CLEMENTS, “The Prophet as Author: The Case of the Isaiah Memoir”, *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (Eds. E. BEN ZVI – M.H. FLOYD) (Atlanta, GA 2000) 89-101; T. WAGNER, *Gottes Herrschaft. Eine Analyse der Denkschrift* (Jes 6,1-9,6) (VTSup 108; Leiden 2006); H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, *Isaiah 6–12. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; London 2018) 103 n.54.

depicting him as concerned about his sinful condition, forgiven, and willing to speak for Yhwh (in contrast to his unforgiven and hardened fellow-Judahites).

In chap. 7, the prophet Isaiah is depicted as one who challenges King Ahaz to trust in Yhwh (7,4-9; on this, see below). But the prophet's first-person speech in chap. 6 is not picked up again until chap. 8, where he is associated with a small believing community. Isa 8,2 refers to "faithful witnesses" (עֵדִים נֹאמְנִים) who will validate his prophetic words, v. 3 to his conception of a child with a prophetess, and v. 16 to his "disciples" (לְמִדְּי) among whom "testimony" and "instruction" (תְּעוּדָה . . . תּוֹרָה, vv. 16, 20) are sealed up—a quality reflected in the prophet himself over and against those who seek instruction by divination (vv. 19-20) ¹⁶.

The construction of the prophetic persona as an exemplar of trust is facilitated in this chapter by a series of contrasts. First, in Isa 8,9-10 the faithful prophet articulates his confidence that "God is with us" (עִמָּנוּ אֵל) despite the threat of hostile nations. This is the same statement used in 7,14 (where Isaiah attempts to reassure the unbelieving King Ahaz) and in 8,8 (describing the fate of the unbelieving people in 8,6 who "refuse the waters of Shiloah"). In this way the prophet is set in contrast to his contemporaries, who fail to trust Yhwh. This distinction is also signalled and reinforced by editorially-created lexical linkages between 8,9-10 and 7,5-8 ¹⁷.

¹⁶ For arguments that v. 16 reports the prophet's speech rather than Yhwh's, see J. DEKKER, "Bind Up the Testimony: Isaiah 8:16 and the Making of the Hebrew Bible", *The Impact of Unit Delimitation on Exegesis* (Eds. R. DE HOOP et al.) (Leiden 2009) 63-88; WILLIAMSON, *Isaiah 6–12*, 307, 311.

¹⁷ After being threatened by the "going up" (עָלָה, Isa 7,1) of the Syro-Ephraimite coalition, Ahaz is challenged by the prophet Isaiah to trust in Yhwh (7,4-9). But because of Ahaz's failure to believe, Judah will be faced with the "going up" (עָלָה, 8,7) of Assyrian invasion. The vocabulary of the prophet's assurance to Ahaz in 7,4-9.14 is then taken up in the prophet's personal statement of assurance in 8,9-10: יַעֲזֹב/עוֹץ (7,5; 8,10); רָעַע (7,5; 8,9); לֹא קוּם (7,7; 8,10); חָתַת (7,8; 8,9); עִמָּנוּ אֵל (7,14; 8,10). See most recently J. STROMBERG, "Hezekiah and the Oracles against the Nations in Isaiah", *The History of Isaiah. The Formation of the Book and its Presentation of the Past* (Eds. J. STROMBERG – J.T. HIBBARD) (FAT 150; Tübingen 2021) 297-340, here 308-310; also BARTHEL, *Prophetenwort und Geschichte*, 208-215.

Isa 8,11 contains the prophet's first-person speech quoting what God says to him, warning him "not to walk in the way of this people". This further distinguishes the believing prophet from his unbelieving contemporaries. However, when we read the warning in vv. 12-13, the expected second-person singular divine instruction is actually set in second-person plural. The exhortation to the prophet to "not fear" has been turned into an exhortation to both the prophet and his supporters¹⁸. Thus the prophet's trust in God and avoidance of conspiracy-thinking is paradigmatic for a larger group.

In Isa 8,17 we see another explicit statement of belief in the prophet's mouth: "And I will wait for (חכה) Yhwh, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob; and I will hope (קוה) in him". This depicts the prophet's trust in God while simultaneously depicting a lack of trust from the "house of Jacob", which has resulted in a ruptured relationship with Yhwh. What the prophet waits for is a restored relationship between God and his people—and this expression of trust is paradigmatic for a larger audience¹⁹. The prophet continues by stating that "I and the children whom Yhwh has given to me are for signs and wonders from Yhwh of hosts" (v. 18). The symbolic roles of the prophet and his children can be seen in the meanings of their names, all of which can be understood as expressions of hope for Yhwh's deliverance²⁰.

¹⁸ See WILLIAMSON, *Isaiah 6–12*, 281: "The present passage . . . indicat[es] that for a certain group, no doubt to be identified with Isaiah's supporters, there was encouragement to stay separate without fear"; cf. 284, 294.

¹⁹ So KAISER, *Isaiah 1–12*, 197: "The kerygmatic character of the statement, which is not interested in the development of the scene as such but in its significance, stands out brilliantly . . . it contains an indirect appeal to the reader to act like the prophet, and like him to hope on Yahweh in an apparently hopeless situation".

²⁰ "A remnant will return", Isa 7,3; 10,20-22; "God with us", 7,14; 8,8.10; "Swift is the plunder, speedy is the prey", 8,1-4; "Yhwh is salvation", 7,3; 12,2-3 (note that because the names are ambiguous, both their positive and negative connotations can be exploited depending on the context). On 8,18, see KAISER, *Isaiah 1–12*, 197; see further J. HØGENHAVEN, "Die symbolischen Namen in Jesaja 7 und 8 im Rahmen der sogenannten "Denkschrift" des Propheten", *The Book of Isaiah—Le livre d'Isaïe. Les oracles et leurs relectures: Unité et complexité de l'ouvrage* (Ed. J. VERMEYLEN) (BETL 81; Leuven 1989) 231-235; J.T. HIBBARD, "From Name to Book: Another Look at the Composition of the Book of Isaiah with Special Reference to Isaiah 56–66", *A Teacher for All Generations. Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam* (Eds. E.F. MASON et al.) (JSJSup 153; Leiden 2012) 133-149 (esp. 136-139).

III. THE TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A comparison of the book of Isaiah with the books of Micah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah reveals a fairly consistent set of techniques for depicting the prophetic personae as exemplars of trust. The composers and redactors of these largely poetic texts did not have (or have to the same degree) the techniques and opportunities that were available to the composers who created exemplars in narrative texts. All four texts attribute first-person singular statements of trust to the prophet in question (Isa 8,17; Jer 11,20bβ; 16,19a; 17,12-13a.14.17b; 20,11.12b-13; Mic 7,7; Hab 3,17-19) and use similar vocabulary for these statements of trust: **נכה** (Isa 8,17; Hab 2,3)²¹; **קוה** / **מקוה** (Isa 8,17; Jer 14,8.22; 17,13a); **צפה** (Mic 7,7; Hab 2,1); **יחל** (Mic 7,7)²². All of these terms carry a temporal connotation²³. Three of the texts juxtapose singular and plural statements of trust or exhortations to trust (Isa 8,11.17 + 8,12-14α; Jer 7,13a + 7,14.17b; Mic 7,7 + 7,19a)²⁴; insofar as the reading / listening audience of these texts identifies with the faithful Israelite community depicted in the text, this juxtaposition encourages the audience to adopt the prophets' expressions of trust as their own. In two of

²¹ The reference to “waiting” in Hab 2,3 is not a first-person confession, but an exhortation to the prophet.

²² In Isaiah 1–39, other terms for trust are used for the exhortations and accusations addressed to others: **בטח** (Isa 26,4; 30,12.15; 31,15), **שקט** (7,4; 30,15), **אמן** (7,9; 28,16), and **שען** (10,20; 30,12; 31,15). For lexical distinctions in the book's references to trust that is properly placed vs. trust that is improperly placed, see H. WILDBERGER, *Isaiah 28–39* (trans. T.H. TRAPP) (Minneapolis, MN 2002) 152.

²³ The terms **נכה** and **קוה** can be used for the righteous who wait for a positive outcome from Yhwh (Pss 25,5; 33,20) or for the wicked who wait with evil intent (Hos 6,9; Ps 56,7). The term **יחל** can be used for a simple temporal expectation (1 Sam 10,8), but occurs very often in the Psalms for the hope of divine assistance or blessing. The term **צפה** is different from the others in that it combines both temporal and visual connotations: to watch for something (i.e., as a lookout).

²⁴ See E.S. GERSTENBERGER, “Twelve (and More) Anonyms: A Biblical Book without Authors”, *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism* (Eds. M.J. BODA et al.) (Atlanta, GA 2015) 119-136, here 127: “The confessional statement Mic 7:7 falls in line with those first person self-references of an unnamed proclaimer already mentioned above (Mic 1:8; 2:11; 3:1, 8), the closest parallel being Mic 3:8. The leading voice in both cases positions itself over against the indicted community. Is this an indication of an internal rift in the faith-community (cf. Isa 65–66)? Or does the collector simply present a model of steadfastness that should be followed by the congregation?”

these texts, it seems that the prophet directly speaks for the community and expresses corporate trust in Yhwh's forgiveness using plural language (Jer 14,8a.22b; Mic 7,18-20)²⁵.

Texts that employ narrative to depict the trust or steadfastness of prophetic figures include the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah. These narratives are used to situate the prophet in relation to unbelieving characters (e.g., Isa 7,10-13; 8,9-13; Jer 38,14-26; 43,1-4) and to historical crises (e.g., Isaiah 7-8; Jer 32,1-2.24-25). Of course, we also find non-narrative texts in which the prophet can be set in contrast to characters with false or misplaced trust: in Micah 3, we find a contrast between those who practice injustice yet claim to rely on Yhwh (Mic 3,11) and the prophet who is confident because of his empowerment by Yhwh's Spirit and who condemns injustice (Mic 3,8)²⁶. In Jeremiah 17, we find a contrast between "the man who trusts humanity" (Jer 17,5-6) and "the man who trusts Yhwh" (Jer 17,7-8) placed before a description of Yhwh as "the hope of Israel" (Jer 17,13 α), set next to first-person statements of confidence in Yhwh (Jer 17,14.17b), which are in turn set next to complaints about those who do not believe Yhwh (Jer 17,13 $\alpha\beta$.15).

Texts that attribute traditional speech forms found in cultic poetry (statements of complaint, petition, and confidence) to the prophet include the books of Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3) and Jeremiah (e.g., Jer 17,14-18; 20,10-13). Given that these traditional speech genres originate in cultic poetry used in Israelite communal worship, their presence in these prophetic books results in a portrait of the prophet as a faithful Israelite in distress and as an exemplar of belief in Yhwh. In both books, the prophets are confronted with Yhwh's challenging and unsettling responses to their questions and complaints (Hab 1,6-11; Jer 12,5-6; 15,19), or with the task of proclaiming the word of Yhwh despite mockery and hostility

²⁵ Or it may be the case here that the penitent community's expression of trust is constructed on analogy with the prophet's speech in Mic 7,7.

²⁶ The use of a first-person statement of confidence in Micah 3,8 was a compositional choice. After all, the composer could have simply included a prophetic condemnation of misplaced trust without positioning the prophetic persona against his opponents, as in Ezek 29,6-8.16.

(Jer 20,7-10). And by juxtaposing questioning and complaint with expressions of confidence (e.g., Hab 3,16-18; Jer 20,7-18), both books present the prophets as having made a choice to endure suffering and place their trust in Yhwh. For the prophet Jeremiah, this is depicted as a constant struggle over time.

IV. THE EDITORIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUBSEQUENT RECEPTION OF ISAIAH AS AN EXEMPLAR

In the sections above, I provided evidence to support the claim that prophetic personae were constructed in such a way as to function as exemplars of trust or belief. But how might we further validate this claim? One way would be to find evidence that elements from the depictions of these exemplary prophetic personae (whether the words attributed to them, or the figures themselves) were taken up within the editorial development of the books and used to shape *other* passages about trust or belief. This would demonstrate that the exemplary nature of the prophetic persona was recognized at a very early stage. The following examples show that this did in fact happen.

1. *Isaiah 8,11 – 9,1 and Isaiah 50,4-10*

The first example is from Isaiah 50, where the depiction of the Deutero-Isaian Servant and his disciples as trusting in Yhwh despite distress (Isa 50,4-10) has been editorially constructed on analogy with the depiction of the prophet Isaiah and his disciples (Isa 8,11 – 9,1)²⁷. In both

²⁷ See J. STROMBERG, “The Book of Isaiah: Its Final Structure”, *The Oxford Handbook of Isaiah* (Ed. L.-S. TIEMEYER) (Oxford 2021) 19-36, here 34.

contexts we see references to “disciples” (לְמוּדִים, Isa 8,16; 50,4) and to the “hiding of the face” (הַסְתִּיר פָּנָיו, Isa 8,17; 50,6)²⁸. In both contexts, the confidence of Isaiah and his followers and of the Servant is contrasted with others who attempt to “gird themselves” (אָזַר; Isa 8,9; 50,11). In both contexts, the need to “fear” (יִרָא, Isa 8,12-13; 50,10) Yhwh is emphasized. Finally, both contexts use the imagery of light and darkness: those who are contrasted with the prophet and his disciples “have no dawn” (Isa 8,20) and are in “darkness” (Isa 8,22), imagery that is then picked up and reversed in Isa 9,1, where the “those who walk in darkness” (הַהֹלְכִים בַּחֹשֶׁךְ) experience “light” (אֹרֶךְ נֶגֶד עֲלֵיהֶם). In Isa 50,10, the Servant (or his followers: the syntax is ambiguous, and probably deliberately so) is said to “walk in darkness and have no light” (הֵלֶךְ חֹשֶׁךְ וְאֵין נֶגֶד), yet he nevertheless “trusts” (יִבְטַח) in Yhwh. In this instance, the depiction of the prophet Isaiah as a paradigmatic model of trust for his disciples is used to shape the depiction of the Servant as a model of trust.

2. *Isaiah 6; 8 and Isaiah 7; 36–37*

In the second example, the depiction of the prophet Isaiah as an exemplar of trust (Isaiah 6; 8) has been editorially supplemented by and interwoven with narrative depictions of the prophet *as one who exhorts others to trust Yhwh* (Isaiah 7; 36–37). The narratives about Hezekiah in

²⁸ See H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, *The Book Called Isaiah. Deutero-Isaiah’s Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford 1994) 105-110, esp. 109: “Finally, it may be of significance that, whereas the Lord “hides his face from the house of Jacob” because they refuse to listen to him (8:17), this prophet states that “I did not hide my face from shame and spitting” (50:6) when openness to God’s word leads in turn to this rejection”. See also U.F. BERGES, *The Book of Isaiah. Its Composition and Final Form* (trans. M.C. LIND) (Sheffield 2012) 366, who notes that the speaker in Isa 50,4 (whom he understands to be a “prophetic group”) “understands itself as a legitimate successor to the Isaianic legacy. This is not simply an associative relationship to the Proto-Isaianic tradition, but a conscious application and expansion of it; the links between the two major sections gain in importance not only numerically, but also in terms of content”.

Isaiah 36–37 emphasize the importance of trust through the repetition of the verb בטח (Isa 36,4-7.9.15; 37,10)²⁹, by recounting Hezekiah’s faithful response in the midst of crisis (37,1-4.14-20), and by describing the prophet Isaiah’s assurance of Yhwh’s deliverance (37,5-7.21-35). The introduction of these narratives into the book of Isaiah was accompanied by additional editorial activity: between the first-person narratives about the prophet in Isaiah 6 and 8, we find in Isa 7,1-16 a third-person narrative about the invasion of Judah under Ahaz. Here in chap. 7 the prophet Isaiah counsels Ahaz to believe in Yhwh, just as he later counsels Ahaz’s son Hezekiah in chap. 37. The two accounts have been editorially coordinated: in each, there is an invasion of Judah (Isa 7,1-2; 36,1-2); in each, the same highly specific location is mentioned (7,3; 36,2)³⁰; in each, the prophet Isaiah says to the king “do not be afraid” (7,4; 37,6); in each, there is a “sign” (אֹת) of deliverance offered to the king (7,11; 37,30)³¹.

The narrative describes the prophet admonishing Ahaz with a play on words: “if you do not *believe*, you will not *stand firm*” (אִם לֹא תֵאֱמִינוּ כִּי לֹא תֵאֱמֵנוּ) (Isa 7,9)³². But while Ahaz ignores the prophet’s exhortation to “believe” God’s promise that he will be safe (Isa

²⁹ On the repetition of this word and on the larger rhetorical strategies in the 2 Kings and Isaian accounts of Hezekiah, see D.N. FEWELL, “Sennacherib’s Defeat: Words at War in 2 Kings 18.13 – 19.37”, *JSOT* 34 (1986) 79-90 (esp. 85-86); J.W. OLLEY, “‘Trust in the Lord’: Hezekiah, Kings and Isaiah”, *TynBul* 50.1 (1999) 59-77; see also W. DE ANGELO CUNHA, “Isaiah 39 and the Motif of Human Trust in First Isaiah”, *JBL* 141.1 (2022) 105-120.

³⁰ The location in both texts is described as תַּעֲלַת הַבְּרִכָּה הָעֵלְיוֹנָה אֶל-בְּמַסְלַת שְׂדֵה כּוֹבֵס.

³¹ On the redactional linkage of Isaiah 7 and 36–37, see P.R. ACKROYD, “Isaiah 36–39: Structure and Function”, *Von Kanaan bis Kerala. Festschrift J. P. M. van der Ploeg* (Ed. W.C. DELSMAN) (AOAT 211; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1982) 3-21, here 16-20; KAISER, *Isaiah 1–12*, 143-148; BECKER, *Jesaja*, 28-30, 47-60; W. OSWALD, “Textwelt, Kontextbezug und historische Situation in Jesaja 7”, *Biblica* 89.2 (2008) 201-220; H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, *Isaiah 6–12*, 103-105; L.L. PANOV, *Hiskijas Geschick und Jesajas Beistand. Heilstheologische Verarbeitungen der Jesaja-überlieferung in den Hiskija-Jesaja-Erzählungen* (AThANT 110; Zürich 2019) 158-165; J. STROMBERG, “Figural History in the Book of Isaiah: The Prospective Significance of Hezekiah’s Deliverance from Assyria and Death”, *Imperial Visions. The Prophet and the Book of Isaiah in an Age of Empires* (Eds. R. KRATZ – J. SCHAPER) (FRLANT 277; Göttingen 2020) 81-102. On the relationship between Isaiah 36–39 and 2 Kings 18–19, see the survey and conclusions in BERGES, *The Book of Isaiah*, 245-256, 295-299; PANOV, *Hiskijas Geschick*, 44-149.

³² For an argument that this statement encapsulates the broader notion of “faith” in the Hebrew Bible, see T. HIEKE, “‘Glaubt ihr nicht, so bleibt ihr nicht’ (Jes 7,9): Die Rede vom Glauben im Alten Testament”, *Theologie und Glaube* 99 (2009) 1-10. See further A. JEPSEN, “אֱמֵן”, *TDOT* 1:292-323.

7,4.11-14, 16) and instead seeks the protection of Assyria (cf. 2 Kgs 16:7,9), Hezekiah goes to the temple and prays to Yhwh for help (Isa 37,1.14-20). While Ahaz's lack of belief is linked to disaster (Isa 7,12-13.17-20.23-25), Hezekiah's belief results in deliverance (Isa 37,5-7.21.33-38). Ironically, the father's lack of belief sets in motion the events that become the setting for the son's choice to believe. The analogical and contrasting depictions of Ahaz and Hezekiah are the product of editorial activity highlighting the necessity for belief³³. With respect to the construction of a prophetic persona as an exemplar of trust, it is highly significant that in both Isaiah 7 and 36–37, the prophet Isaiah is the one who exhorts others to believe and offers oracles of assurance.

Tracing this process even further, Berges has argued that that the challenge to trust from Isa 7,9 was subsequently taken up and applied to a broader audience in Isa 28,16³⁴:

[T]hose who rely on Yhwh will have no cause to panic: **הַמֵּאֲמִין לֹא יִחִישׁ**. The content and linguistic similarity to 7.9b is unmistakable . . . The idea of such a definitive consequence of private piety being either salvation or disaster for the individual is based on Isaiah's demand for faith addressed to Ahaz and the Davidides (7.9b), a requirement which is renewed "catechetically". . . . The basic requirement is that of a believing trust in Yhwh alone, which reads in 7.9, "If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all". This statement, once directed to Ahaz and the Davidic royal house, now applies to the hearers who are called to join themselves to the Zion community with its maxim of faith, justice, and righteousness.

The theme of belief is rightly regarded as one of the major themes in Isaiah 1–39³⁵.

3. *Subsequent Reception of the Words and Figures of Exemplary Prophetic Personae*

³³ BECKER (*Jesaja*, 47) calls Isaiah 7 a "nachexilische Glaubenserzählung".

³⁴ BERGES, *The Book of Isaiah*, 205-206. See also KLEIN, "Der Glaubensbegriff", 76: "So überträgt der Autor von Jes 28,16 das Mahnwort aus Jes 7,9 auf den Einzelnen, von dem nun der Glaube gefordert ist".

³⁵ J. BARTON, *Isaiah 1–39* (OTG; London 2003) 117-120; H.-J. HERMISSON – E. LOHSE, *Faith* (Nashville, KY 1981) 71; KAISER, *Isaiah 1–12*, 141-148, 168; C.R. SEITZ, *Isaiah 1–39* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY 1993) 124-125, 149, 219.

It is possible to go even further and demonstrate that elements from this construction of Isaiah as an exemplary figure exerted influence on later *non*-prophetic texts in the Second Temple period. Initially, these elements are taken from the words of the prophetic persona. For example, Hans-Christoph Schmitt suggested that the Pentateuch had undergone redactional activity “in the spirit of prophecy”³⁶. According to Schmitt, there is a post-exilic editorial layer in the Pentateuch that highlights the theme of belief characteristic of Isaiah 7, expressed by the use of the verb **אמן** in the Hiphil stem³⁷. Similarly, 2 Chr 20,20—which describes King Jehoshaphat exhorting his army before a battle to “believe (**האמינו**) in Yhwh your God, and you will be established (**תאמנו**)”—alludes to the prophetic wordplay and statement of caution in Isa 7,9, “if you do not believe (**תאמינו**), you will not be established (**תאמנו**)”³⁸. The fact that such statements about trust were recognized as such and used as the basis for further literary activity demonstrates their importance in early Second Temple-period discourse about belief.

³⁶ H.-C. SCHMITT, “Redaktion des Pentateuch im Geiste der Prophetie: Beobachtungen zur Bedeutung der “Glaubens”-Thematik innerhalb der Theologie des Pentateuch”, *VT* 32.2 (1982) 170-189.

³⁷ SCHMITT (“Redaktion”, 176) notes that the occurrences of this verb in Exodus 4 (4,1.5.8.9.31) are remarkably similar to its use in Isaiah 7: “Jedenfalls liegt hier ein Glaubensverständnis vor, das dem in der jetzigen Komposition von Jes. vii 1–17* zum Ausdruck kommenden Glaubensverständnis entspricht: In beiden Fällen dient das Zeichen der Beständigkeit der den Glauben der Hörer fordernden verheißenden Wortverkündigung. Die theologische Struktur der Exodustradition wird somit von einer Vorstellung bestimmt, die ihre älteste Parallele offensichtlich im Jesajabuch besitzt”. This theme of belief runs through the entire exodus complex and culminates in Exod 14,13.31, where Israel’s belief in Yhwh and in his prophet Moses are tied together. The same theme of belief that we see in the exodus complex can also be found in the Sinai material (Exod 19,9a), the Wilderness material (Num 14,11b; 20,12), and the Patriarchal history (Gen 15,6); see SCHMITT, “Redaktion”, 175-177. For different perspectives on the dating of these texts and the development of the concept of “faith”, see S. RUDNIG-ZELT, *Glaube im Alten Testament. Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung von Jes 7,1–17; Dtn 1–3; Num 13–14 und Gen 22,1–19* (BZAW 452; Berlin 2017) 366-367; KLEIN, “Der Glaubensbegriff”, 74-78.

³⁸ See M. FISHBANE, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford 1985) 386-388; R. MASON, *Preaching the Tradition. Homily and Hermeneutics after the Exile based on the “Addresses” in Chronicles, the Speeches in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah and the Post-Exilic Prophetic Books* (Cambridge 1990) 68-71; P.C. BEENTJES, “Isaiah in the Book of Chronicles”, *Isaiah in Context. Studies in Honour of Arie van der Kooij on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Eds. M. VAN DER MEER et al.) (VTSup 138; Leiden 2010) 15-24, here 21-24. This text represents a clear exception to the claim by J. BARTON (*Ethics in Ancient Israel*, 118) that “Such appeals to people to have faith [*viz.*, *Isa* 7,9] do not after all occur anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible”.

In a later development, not only the words but also the *figure* of the exemplary prophetic persona could be taken up. For example, *Bel and the Dragon* recalls the prophet Habakkuk as an exemplar of trust: in the rewritten story of Daniel in the lions' den (*Bel* 31-39), it seems most likely that the author chose to depict Habakkuk as the one to bring food to Daniel because both characters are depicted as waiting and trusting God for deliverance (*Hab* 3,16; *θ'-Bel* 31.38)³⁹.

The same process can be seen in early Christian texts such as the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James, where both the words and the figures of the prophets discussed above are taken up. First, prophetic first-person verbal expressions of trust are taken as paradigmatic statements that can be put into the mouths of others. In *Heb* 2,13, the author puts Isaiah's expression of trust (*Isa* 8,17-18) into the mouth of Jesus: "And again, 'I will put my trust in him'. And again, 'Behold, I and the children whom God has given to me'"⁴⁰. This is part of a larger argument in which "Jesus identifies himself with the community of faith in his absolute trust and dependence upon God"⁴¹. The surrounding references make the "faith / faithfulness" (πιστός, *Heb* 2,17; 3,5-6) of Jesus paradigmatic for the Christian community: "whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the pride of hope" (*Heb* 3,6)⁴².

³⁹ So H. BEZZEL, "Habakkuk in the Lions' Den", *Prophecy and Prophets in Stories*. Papers Read at the Fifth Meeting of the Edinburgh Prophecy Network, Utrecht, October 2013 (Eds. B. BECKING – H.M. BARSTAD), (Leiden 2015), 169-82, here 178-179; also J.J. de BRUYN, "Dining in the lions' den—Bel and the dragon, verses 28–42 (Old Greek/Theodotion)", *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36.1 (2015) 1-9, here 6: "It is possible that Habakkuk is utilised by the editor/author as an embodiment of hope".

⁴⁰ Compare *Heb* 2,13 (καὶ πάλιν ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθὼς ἐπ' αὐτῷ, καὶ πάλιν ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ παιδιά ἃ μοι ἔδωκεν ὁ θεός) and LXX *Isa* 8,17-18 (καὶ ἐρεῖ Μενῶ τὸν θεὸν τὸν ἀποστρέψαντα τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου Ἰακωβ καὶ πεποιθὼς ἔσομαι ἐπ' αὐτῷ. ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ παιδιά, ἃ μοι ἔδωκεν ὁ θεός, καὶ ἔσται εἰς σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ παρὰ κυρίου σαβαωθ, ὃς κατοικεῖ ἐν τῷ ὄρει Σιών).

⁴¹ W.L. LANE, *Hebrews 1–8* (WBC; Dallas, TX 1991) 60. See also H.W. ATTRIDGE, *Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA 1989) 91: "The citation is rather an allusion to that which above all is or ought to be the characteristic of all God's children, their faithful reliance upon God. The citation thus alludes to the theme of faith or fidelity that will become increasingly important as the text develops". For the argument that in *Hebrews* 2 and 9 the author also alludes to the trusting and vindicated Isaian Servant, see D.M. MOFFITT, "Isaiah 53, *Hebrews*, and Covenant Renewal", *Rethinking the Atonement*. New Perspectives on Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension (Grand Rapids, MI 2022) 47-71, here 66-69.

⁴² The paradigmatic use of first-person expressions of prophetic trust in God continued in subsequent Christian writings: in his commentary on *Romans*, Eusebius of Caesarea places the prophet Isaiah's expression of trust (*Isa* 8,17, "I will wait for Yhwh, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him") as a quote in the mouth of "the same ones who wait for grace through Jesus Christ" (οἱ αὐτοὶ δὲ τὴν διὰ Ἰησοῦ

Second, the depiction of prophetic faith and trust in God appears to have become strongly linked to a growing interest in the persecution and martyrdom of prophets⁴³. This accounts for the statements about the prophets' faith in Heb 11,32-37 and the statements about the prophets' patience in the face of suffering in Jas 5,7-11. The references to prophets who were "strengthened out of weakness" (Heb 11,34) and who were examples of "suffering and patience" (Jas 5,10)⁴⁴ would fit a number of prophetic personae, but the reference to being sawn in half (Heb 11,37) refers specifically to traditions about Isaiah⁴⁵.

V. CONCLUSION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

In this essay I have demonstrated that the prophetic persona in the book of Isaiah was constructed as an exemplar of trust and belief. I have also identified the techniques that facilitated the construction of the prophetic exemplars in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, and Habakkuk: the use of first-person singular and plural speech to express trust or reliance (using the lexemes *מקוה/קוה, הכה, יחל, צפה*) and to present the prophet as one who speaks for the faithful (or as one separate from the unfaithful); the juxtaposition of material in order to contrast descriptions of belief and unbelief; the use of traditional language from cultic poetry; the juxtaposition of statements of confidence with statements of

Χριστοῦ περιμένοντες χάριν). See J. ZIEGLER (ed.), *Eusebius Werke*. Band 9, Der Jesajakommentar (Berlin 1975) 59; J.J. ARMSTRONG – J.C. ELOWSKY (eds.), *Commentary on Isaiah*. Eusebius of Caesarea (Downers Grove, IL 2013) 45.

⁴³ See e.g. 2 Chr 24,19-22; 36,15-16; Neh 9,26; Jubilees 1,12; Matt 23,29-31.34-35.37; Lk 6,22-23; 11,47.49-51; 13,34; Acts 7,52; *Lives of the Prophets* 1,1; 2,1; 3,1-2.19; 6,1-3; 7,1-3. On the development of this tradition, see H.A. FISCHER, "Martyr and Prophet (A Study in Jewish Literature)", *JQR* 37.4 (1947) 265-280, 363-386; O.H. STECK, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten*. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum (WMANT 23; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1967); D.M. SCHOLER, "Israel Murdered Its Prophets. The Origin and Development of the Tradition in the Old Testament and Judaism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1980).

⁴⁴ The words *κακοπάθεια* and *μακροθυμία* are not used to describe the prophetic personae in these four books, but the *concepts* are certainly present.

⁴⁵ See *Martyrdom of Isaiah* 5,1; *Lives of the Prophets* 1,1; Justin, *Dial.* 120; *b. Yeb.* 49b.

complaint in order to depict trust as a choice; and the use of narrative to depict the prophet as faithful in the midst of crisis.

The significance of these findings for the study of ancient Israelite literature is that while it is widely recognised that Israelite composers of *narrative* texts presented characters as exemplary figures embodying various virtues, I have shown that the same is also true of *prophetic* figures in *prophetic* texts, specifically with reference to the virtue of trust⁴⁶. To be sure, one can find statements in the literature that recognize the paradigmatic nature of prophetic trust⁴⁷. But to date there has not been a comparative investigation that examines the techniques by which the four prophetic personae of Micah, Isaiah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah were shaped as exemplars of trust.

I have also demonstrated that the Isaian persona thus constructed was used as an exemplar to shape *other characters within the book itself*: the depiction of the prophet Isaiah is used to describe the Deutero-Isaian Servant as one who trusts Yhwh, and the depictions of Ahaz and Hezekiah are set in contrast to each other with respect to the theme of belief, while Isaiah the prophet is described as the one who urges both to trust Yhwh. I have also shown how the Isaian persona was received as an exemplary figure by authors of later texts. This editorial

⁴⁶ Of course, prophets were remembered for other reasons as well. In the late Second Temple period, they were largely remembered as figures for their oracular abilities (Sirach 48:22, 24–25; 49:6b; Philo, *De Cherubim* 49; *Conf. Ling.* 44), for their words of comfort and admonition (Sirach 48:24b; 49:10; 2 Macc. 2:1–8; 15:11–16), or for the miracles they performed (Sirach 48:23; *Lives of the Prophets* 1:2–8; 2:3, 11–19; 12:5–7).

⁴⁷ For the book of Jeremiah, the most thorough treatment is that of POLK (see *Prophetic Persona*, 129, 132–134, 145–148, 150–151, 156, 170); he examines the persona of the prophet as exemplar in Jer 17,12–18 and 20,7–18. For the book of Habakkuk, see M.H. FLOYD, *Minor Prophets. Part 2* (FOTL XXII; Grand Rapids, MI 2000) 156; J.W. WATTS, “Psalmody in Prophecy: Habakkuk 3 in Context”, *Forming Prophetic Literature. Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (Eds. J.W. WATTS – P.R. HOUSE) (JSOTSup 235; Sheffield 1996) 209–223, here 216: “Habakkuk’s voicing of a psalm does not paint a unique portrait of the prophet. Instead, it makes his experience paradigmatic for all the faithful who wait for Yahweh’s deliverance. Psalmody depicts internal mental processes to a greater degree than any other genre of Hebrew literature, with the goal of expressing universal religious experiences in the context of worship. When literary contexts and/or superscriptions credit psalms to individuals, the resulting characterization describes not a unique individual but rather a universal experience which is available to all”; see also J. JEREMIAS, “Habakuk – ein etwas anderer Prophet”, *ZAW* 133.4 (2021) 495–511, here 508: “will das Ich des Propheten Habakuk Vorbild für alle Leser seines Buches sein. Dafür spricht besonders Hab 3, und hier nicht nur die Generalisierung der Botschaft Habakuks, die in der Verselbständigung von Hab 3 zu einem eigenständigen Psalm beobachtbar ist – das “Ich” des Propheten wird zum exemplarischen “Ich” jedes Betenden, der im Namen der versammelten Gemeinde spricht –, sondern auch die Rahmenverse der Theophanie”.

development and its subsequent reception provide evidence that prophetic exemplars of trust were seen as essential for the religious needs of ancient Jewish and early Christian communities. The authors who alluded to and reflected on the expressions of trust attributed to the Isaian persona did so in order to shape individual and communal identity and form the basis for individual and communal resilience, enabling their communities to survive in times of adversity ⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ See e.g. M. LEUCHTER, “Remembering Jeremiah in the Persian Period”, *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods. Social Memory and Imagination* (Eds. D.V. EDELMAN – E. BEN ZVI) (Oxford 2013) 384-414, here 392: “Jeremiah is thereby envisioned within the book as a sort of anchor for national identity, clarifying through his own oracles or the accounts of his deeds in the book the essential principles of Israelite religion that could sustain the people through hardship and cultural uncertainty”; see further J.D. BENTALL, “Images of resilience from the book of Jeremiah”, *Biblical and Theological Visions of Resilience. Pastoral and Clinical Insights* (Eds. N.H. WHITE – C.C.H. COOK) (London 2020) 45-57.