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Prophetic 'Bat-'Ammî' Answers God and Jeremiah¹

Zusammenfassung:

Dieser Artikel leistet einen Beitrag zur aktuellen Diskussion um biblische Prophetinnen. Er untersucht die besondere Rhetorik und die herausfordernde Botschaft einer namenlosen Prophetin im Buch Jeremia wie auch in den Klageliedern, die mit Jeremia in einem Dialog der Klage steht. Etliche neuere Fachbeiträge legen einen literarischen und ideologischen Fokus auf die beunruhigende Figur einer – von männlichen Propheten geschaffenen und scharf verurteilten – weiblichen Person (Tochter Zion). Die vorliegende Studie geht insofern über diese Beiträge hinaus, als sie von einem mündlich-poetischen Kontext ausgeht und annimmt, dass sowohl Jesaja als auch Jeremia mit 'Bat-'Ammî' eine bestimmte Prophetin angesprochen haben, die von der rhetorisch überlegenen, konstruierten Figur der Tochter Zion überschattet wurde. Anhand von genauen Textanalysen kommt die Autorin zur Annahme einer bestimmten Prophetin im Dialog mit Jeremia, und sieht Prophetinnen als eigenständige mündlich-poetische Darstellerinnen, die, wenn auch nicht vollständig, von Redaktoren, Übersetzern und Jahrhunderten der Überlieferung namenlos gemacht und vereinnahmt wurden.

Sing girl sing

daughter of my people sing...

rise sister

rise and dance...²

These opening lines are from a poem called "Daughter of My People, Sing!" that echoes the customs and rhythms of oral performance, composed by Kenyan poet Micere Githae Mugo more than thirty years ago. The poet constantly alludes – by 'daughter' and 'girl' and also 'man' – to real persons in her traditional community, people who sang songs for the many occasions of life. The introduction to her volume of poetry laments how traditional poets like Mugo have been forced by colonial teachers and missionaries to abandon their indigenous poetry and way of performing, while western poetry classics and conventions instead were imposed on them. "For a poet not born of the western world ... to

unquestionably accept the Western mode of writing poetry, is to deny himself/herself the validity of an origin – to deny a mother culture and thus stop the water of life flowing through his/her very veins.”³ It is no accident that the above poem, “Daughters of My People, Sing!” opens that entire volume, to retrieve, and call for, the singers and their legacy.

A woman prophet's voice in Jeremiah?

This paper aims to continue a topic from the SBL session on women biblical prophets (2007) and further develop my work in analyzing poetic dialogue in the biblical books of Jeremiah and Lamentations that included proposing a woman singer/poet embedded among other voices. In my 2002 book *The Singers of Lamentations*,⁴ I undertook an oral poetic analysis of that dialogue found between the prophet Jeremiah (at times communicating God's voice and perspective) and what I assessed to be a woman poet or singer's voice (who I then called 'Jerusalem's poet') embedded in both books.⁵ This implicit dialogue spills over and expands exponentially with her/their specific concerns and peculiar styles from the book of Jeremiah into the book of Lamentations. I treated the two voices on an equal footing as composers/performers who may have existed in the context, each with integrity and some independence, and momentarily bracketed the question of what control or dominant ideology of an author/editor/redactor might be imposed. I examined what is going on in the interplay of the larger text(s) within which their speeches fall, as well as each voice's perspective. Moreover, that study considered *how* each poetic voice uses genres, uses particular poetic images to build themes, uses favored terms, rhetorical techniques, and how each emphasizes particular content in response to the supposed context. The outcome of that analysis showed great consistency of each – of the Jeremianic prophetic voice across the books, and the woman poetic singer's voice across the books, even as they grappled with the fray of the 6th c. destruction, and its aftermath, of Jerusalem and Judah.

While my original proposal above suggested that the woman included in the dialogue was likely a lament singer (as in lament psalms), in more recent studies (2007; 2008)⁶ I have proposed that her challenging rhetoric so pushes the boundaries of lament and then-current theology that it is fair to ask whether she may have been *a woman prophet* in the context. Here I would like to lay out an argument for this consideration.

“Daughter Zion”

In the above studies, I did not follow only a literary critical route taken by many interpreters (both liberal and conservative), which posits that the *only* woman rendered by these biblical texts is a persona or metaphor of the city constructed by a dominant, likely male, poet or prophet. In that view, the common prophetic strategy invokes ‘Daughter Zion,’ fashions her portrait, and then puts words in her mouth. To be sure Jeremiah does undertake this rhetorical practice in the book of Jeremiah. And the biblical tradition of creating a persona of Daughter Zion is definitely a strong one; the persona appears regularly across prophetic books (nearly 30x with this exact phrase, but over 150 times when one includes other similar phrases, *bat* plus a geographic name like Jerusalem, or simply the city name ‘Zion’). A number of recent womanist and feminist studies have importantly explored the literary personification of Zion/Jerusalem, including the sometimes misogynist attitude of prophets (and therefore God) toward the female persona, and therefore toward women in that culture.⁷

In *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets*, Carleen Mandolfo exposes how YHWH’s dialogue with the persona Daughter Zion in the book of Jeremiah does not measure up to “genuine” dialogue. It is not genuine dialogue because it depends upon the usual patriarchal construal of Daughter Zion as unfaithful wife whose indirect discourse is rendered in ways that serve YHWH’s argument only, with Daughter Zion brutally and unmercifully punished by God’s inextinguishable anger. Thus YHWH and his prophet Jeremiah, Mandolfo says, ‘do not author responsibly’ in a genuine dialogue. They do not listen, they do not answer, and they do not give Daughter Zion true voice.⁸ She suggests Jeremiah and all the prophets, with their ‘master narrative’ participate in an oppressive practice that justifies violence against women or other undesirable groups, and that essentially undermines the entire prophetic/Yahwistic agenda. Only in Lamentations, she suggests, does Daughter Zion find her voice and talk back. Mandolfo’s (and others’) analyses are needed in deconstructing what we cannot morally accept in God or prophet.

Yet, I must ask: is a metaphor/persona, which is suggested to be a tool controlled by agents in an oppressive system, itself an *autonomous author* able to talk back with intentionality? I don’t think so. You or I can rehabilitate the metaphor so that we make it talk back. But

apart from the incisive imagination of constructive theologians now, such (de)(re)construction in my view, already in the 6th century, obviously had to have *a real human moral agent making that happen* in the originating context in Jerusalem or among the survivors – that is, a dissident singer. Why couldn't it have been a woman singer? This is what I proposed in 2002 in my work, *The Singers of Lamentations*.

A woman in genuine dialogue with YHWH and the prophet

That is, a woman singer attempted to be in genuine dialogue with YHWH and the prophet already in the book of Jeremiah, in Jer 4, 8, and 10, and the initiation of that dialogue spilled over into Lamentations' full-blown treatment; no one needs to make space for such a dissident singer who is more than a constructed, controlled persona (Daughter Zion); the singer has been right there all along, not only *not listened to* by YHWH, but *not listened to* by generations of interpreters and scholars. Her words are unintroduced direct discourse, just as Jeremiah's words are often unintroduced direct discourse (and *unlike* most constructed characters or personae elsewhere who are usually identified when they speak). Indeed, there is a trace, perhaps more than a trace!, of genuine dialogue in these two biblical books, which is complex and nuanced and should not be completely reduced to gender stereotyping and a constructed female persona. The array of texts also reveals Jeremiah to be torn between his prophetic task of judgment and his empathy for the people; he did his share of dishing out offensive misogynist rhetoric, yet I propose he moved beyond that, when everything collapsed, to genuine dialogue in the book of Lamentations, passionately drawn into dialogue by a real *partner* who could go toe to toe with him. Apart from his failure to move the people to avoid disaster, in my view his most important contribution was being willing to be in dialogue with a women poet/singer. And there had to be a scribe sympathetic to the dialogue to include/inscribe it in these two books of Jeremiah and Lamentations, even though the woman is sadly never *ascribed*. But enough about the mens' role.

What does the woman (prophetic) singer say in Jeremiah? In Jeremiah 4:19-21:

“My insides! my insides! I *labor in anguish!*
The walls of *my heart!*
My heart is in turmoil;

I cannot keep silent;
 for the sound of the shofar I hear – my very being! –
 the alarm of battle.
 The clamor of destruction upon destruction–
 [crushing upon crushing],
 indeed! – the whole land is devastated.
 Suddenly my tents are devastated,
 my curtains in a moment!
 How long must I see the signal,
 hear the sound of the shofar?!” (4:19-21)

This is a *description of distress* common in a lament or dirge, though more explicit than formulaic descriptions, and suggests the unfolding devastation being witnessed. The woman’s voice is not directly responded to by Jeremiah or YHWH.⁹ That the larger text at this point depicts the prophet Jeremiah as *not hearing* the woman’s lament above is evident in his statement following right on its heels in Jeremiah 5:3:

O Lord, your eyes, do they not look for truth?
 You have struck them,
 but they *felt no anguish*;
 You have consumed them,
 they refused *to take correction*. (5:3ab)

Yet the woman’s lament above precisely said she *was* ‘feeling the anguish’ (4:19). This *non sequitur*, seam, or rupture in the flow suggests we have a different voice than Jeremiah trying to join the dialogue, no doubt through the aid of a sympathetic scribe.

Then, again in Jer 10:19-20,¹⁰ the woman singer raises more of the same terms and concerns, but she is about to move to a new level of lament and theological challenge in the urgency of the moment. Note she picks up and responds to Jeremiah’s term, “correction”:

Correct me, YHWH, but with justice,
 and *not with your anger*, lest you diminish/belittle me! (24)¹¹

A confession like this is unprecedented in the psalms. I have argued that this is *one of the most stunning theological challenges to YHWH* in the Hebrew Bible. It is embedded in a prophetic book *consumed* with YHWH's anger, and raises the all-important question about YHWH's justice toward his people.¹² Moreover, nowhere does the prophet Jeremiah make this particular theological appeal to YHWH in this book (though he at times passionately defends the people).¹³ Indeed, Jeremiah and YHWH in the book of Jeremiah do not question the general prophetic/theological theme of a deity who punishes out of anger; it is Jeremiah's difficult calling and task to express God's judgment and anger. These points support the argument that we have here *a different voice* and not merely a persona whose speech Jeremiah is manipulating for condemnation. This singer admits needing correction, but her plea holds a challenge as to *how* YHWH will deal with wrongdoing.¹⁴ She does not ask for mercy, but simply that YHWH will correct or punish according to justice, not anger (note that she does not even ask for YHWH's righteousness, but by asking for justice apparently feels divine justice is lacking).¹⁵ The plea implies that justice *puts limits on YHWH's response*, while YHWH's anger can be all-consuming. The poet's lament prayer is thus a theological window into her view of who YHWH is, and also, who she is.¹⁶ Who would offer such a challenge? Who, being familiar with lament and claiming some authority in theological matters? Beyond a temple singer, I suggest we have here *an unnamed woman prophet* who takes a rather different stance than Jeremiah. However, as I have shown in my study, *Singers of Lamentations*, she will win him over and in Lamentations they join forces and voices in bringing expanded complaint against YHWH, *about his anger*, and allowing devastation, particularly of the innocent children. Indeed, they more than pave the way for the dialogical debate in Job. However, here in the book of Jeremiah YHWH is depicted as not hearing or responding to the woman prophet's contrition, or to her challenge.

The woman's voice ends her lament above with a typical, formulaic call for YHWH's just vengeance on her enemies, but it too is modified to current terms and issues.

Pour out your wrath

on the peoples that have not known you,
and upon the clans that have not called on your name;
for they have devoured Jacob;
they have devoured him and consumed him,
and have desolated his pasture-abode. (25)¹⁷

She suggests (sardonically?) that YHWH's anger should instead consume the people who do not know YHWH.

The woman prophet's several speeches here in the book of Jeremiah are surrounded by YHWH's and Jeremiah's endless negative rhetoric about the city, construed as "Daughter Zion" or "Jerusalem." However, the woman prophet's speeches are also placed in very close proximity to Jeremiah's use of the term of endearment, *Bat-'ammî*, 'daughter of my people.'¹⁸ Again, let us not overlook the likely role of the scribe in joining these components to reflect the context.

Bat-'ammî, 'daughter of my people'

Let us dwell on the term *Bat-'ammî, 'daughter of my people'*; it does not follow the standard formula – of *bat* plus a geographical name that refers to a city or region – used for the many, usual constructed personae of the city of Jerusalem or Zion, a practice also commonplace in the ANE (e.g., Daughter Babylon).¹⁹ This at least begs the critical question: is there a difference in rhetorical usage? Is this term to be interpreted as just another metaphor or constructed persona by the prophet?

Indeed, the prophet Ezekiel uses the phrase "*daughters of your people (b^enôt 'amkha; 13:17) who prophesy out of their own imagination;*" the phrase clearly refers to those women whom Ezekiel and God deem are prophetesses acting or speaking improperly (indeed, God says to him in that verse, "Now–*ben-adam (son of man/humanity) – set your face against the b^enôt 'amkha (daughters of your people).*"²⁰ The use of such phrases for real people in the context is suggested also by the rhetoric of the prophet Hosea who was asked to marry a woman whose supposedly real children had symbolic names, including his son: '*lo-ammi*' (not my people). In Jeremiah's speech right before the woman's speech in Jer 10:21, he says, "How foolish are the shepherds (leaders), for YHWH they did not seek (*darash*)" (as they should 'inquire' of the prophet or prophets what is God's word or direction). In his context, is this an aside to his dialogue partner?

I propose that Jeremiah's use of *Bat-'ammî* is, unlike Ezekiel's scathing phrase above, more like a term of endearment for a woman prophet (who attracts his appellative for her by nature of her utterances) and with whom he may have been in dialogue.

There is only one other instance, to my knowledge, outside of the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations, where this phrase *Bat-'ammî* appears – it is in Isaiah 22:4 where first Isaiah appears to use the term in his tearful anguish at the time of the threatened devastation of Jerusalem by the Assyrians in the late 8th c.²¹

If one assumes *Bat-'ammî* is simply Isaiah's poetic construct of Jerusalem, then one's translation will follow that interpretation. (Interestingly, *Bat-'ammî* often occurs at the end of a line and translations put it in construct with the word that precedes, where this is not always necessary.) Thus NRSV renders Isaiah's words within the 'oracle concerning the valley of vision:'

... Therefore I said:
 "Look way from me,
 let me weep bitter tears;
 do not try to comfort me
 for the destruction of my beloved people [*Bat-'ammî*]." (Isaiah 22:4)

However, we recall that Isaiah had a wife or partner who was a woman prophet (Isa 8:3). If we consider that *Bat-'ammî* might refer to her, our translation might follow this interpretation:

... Therefore I said:
 "Look way from me,
 let me weep bitter tears;
 do not try to comfort me
 concerning the destruction, *Bat-'ammî*." (Isaiah 22:4)

Let us at least entertain the possibility that the unusual term, *Bat-'ammî*, could be the male prophet's reference to a female prophet with him as he laments the downfall of the city. Re-consider a re-translating of nuance in those texts where Jeremiah also uses the term (and

apart from Isaiah, he seems to be the only one who referred to *Bat-'ammî*). Consider whether it is possible to re-interpret or re-translate texts with *Bat-'ammî* where it appears in a few of Jeremiah's speeches, not as reference to a personification but as a woman prophet he is addressing in dialogue:

Bat-'ammî, put on sackcloth,
and roll in ashes;
make mourning as for an only child,
most bitter lamentation:
for suddenly the destroyer
will come upon us.
(Jeremiah 6:26; following NRSV except for 'Bat-'ammî')

... from prophet to priest
everyone deals falsely.
They have treated the wound, *Bat-'ammî*, with carelessness,
saying 'Peace, peace' when there is no peace. (Jeremiah 8:10c-11)

I noted above how I interpret Jeremiah 8:18 to be the woman prophet's lament.

"My joy has gone; grief is upon me; *my heart* is faint."

It is immediately followed by Jeremiah's discourse:

Hark, a voice, the cry of *Bat-'ammî*,
from distant places in the land.
(Jeremiah 8:19)

Jeremiah again:

For the destruction/hurt, *Bat-'ammî*,
I am hurt,
I mourn, and dismay seizes me.
Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why then has the healing²² not happened, *Bat-'ammî*? (8:21-22)

Women prophets in the Bible

In Mayer Gruber's 2007 study in this journal, "Women's Voices in the Book of Micah,"²³ he suggests the presence of women prophets' rhetoric in Micah 6-7 suggested by the female imagery, perspective, and feminine grammatical forms. He is not surprised, therefore, that Miriam is mentioned as a leader (implied prophet) with Moses and Aaron in Micah 6:4. He suggests that while women prophets are of course referred to in the Bible, this topic and possibility is neglected by scholars. He also notes the pervasive "tendency to ignore female voices by turning them into personifications."²⁴ He attributes the problem to both "malestream"²⁵ and "femalestream"²⁶ scholarship that is reticent about identifying a woman's composition contained in the Bible.²⁷

Wilda Gafney's recent careful scholarly work, *Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets in Ancient Israel* (2008)²⁸ brings together many important elements towards a greater understanding of women biblical prophets. She identifies two key suggestive patterns in the socio-historic contexts for locating unnamed women prophets in the Bible. These include that (1) women prophets and men are sometimes characterized in biblical texts as lament singers and musicians or composers (see her references); prophets and music performance are also joined in Mesopotamian prophetic tradition of the *munabbiatu* (believed to be a cognate term to Hebrew *nabi*); (2) that men prophets were sometimes regarded as a 'father' figure (as Isaiah); likewise, the prophet Deborah is called a 'mother'; their followers or disciples in bands or so-called guilds are regarded as sons, and Gafney suggest women prophets would likely be called daughters. We recall that the prophetess Huldah was depicted in the Bible as consulted by Josiah a bit earlier than the Jeremiah context (2 Kings 22:14-20); perhaps *Bat-'ammî* was a young prophetess follower of Huldah, or of Jeremiah. Finally, there is the oft-noted text in Joel 2:28: "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."

Now further, lest we think this may be just all so hypothetical, consider the following ways apart from the obvious big picture of the Bible in which women prophet's words are rarely recorded, how the biblical Masoretic text and other versions and traditions (including rabbinic and Talmud) are often ambivalent about women prophets (sometimes positive, sometimes negative), or occasionally erase them from the picture. (These points are also from Gafney):

(1) how Miriam, even apart from the negative view of her in Numbers 11, is not named in the genealogy in Exodus 6:20 in the MT, but she is included by name in the Septuagint version of that text;

(2) in addition to the example above in Ezekiel, how Noadiah is denigrated in the book of Nehemiah, perhaps as Gafney suggests because she critiques policy; however, Gafney notes that in the Septuagint version of that text, Noadiah is deemed a male prophet;

(3) how in the MT, Isaiah's woman or wife is called a prophetess, but in the Qumran text (1Q Isa^a) she is referred to by the masculine form of the term for prophet.²⁹

In sum, the biblical and post-biblical traditions, and their male leaders and compilers of texts were conflicted about women prophets, especially in comparison to an apparent more ready acceptance in Mesopotamian cultures. One wonders what really was God's view of woman prophets in Israel.

Let me return to my focus. I propose that we have embedded in the book of Jeremiah and in Lamentations the possibility of the preservation of a woman prophet's voice. Perhaps she was called *Bat-'ammî* (an appellative that perhaps alludes to a tradition of women prophets),³⁰ who was given first, *some voice* in the book of Jeremiah, and then, *a lot of voice* in Lamentations apparently by an increasingly sympathetic male prophet (Jeremiah) and a sympathetic scribe. Yet, the credit goes to *Bat-'ammî*, who in spite of all the odds, when everything was collapsing, refused to be silent, and found some unexpected allies. Finally, may we interpret *God's silence* at the end of Lamentations somewhat differently in light of this woman prophet's challenging discourse there, in dialogue with Jeremiah? Perhaps God was not merely angry, but surprised, chastened, and pondering.

¹ This paper was presented at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting in 2008 in Boston in the Women in the Biblical World session. I have slightly changed the title.

² Micere Githae Mugo, "Daughter of My People, Sing!" (Kampala, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1976), 1-4; copyright Micere Githae Mugo; cf. also Hazel Krantz' use of the term in her book about Henrietta Szold, *Daughter of My People: Henrietta Szold and Hadassah* (New York: Lodestar Books, 1987).

³ Ibid. Introduction by Njuguna Mugo (vii).

⁴ For a detailed analysis of the poetry of these two singers, see Nancy C. Lee, *The Singers of Lamentations: Cities under Siege, from Ur to Jerusalem to Sarajevo* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002).

⁵ See *Tal Ilan's* suggestive study, "Gender and Lamentations: 4Q179 and the Canonization of the Book of Lamentations," *lectio difficilior* 2/2008. See also Steve Cook, "Habakkuk 3, Gender, and War," *lectio difficilior* 1/2009.

⁶ Nancy C. Lee, "Prophet and Singer in the Fray," in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen*, ed. John Goldingay (JSOTS 459; New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 207; also in "Singers of Lamentations: (A)Scribing (De)Claiming Poets and Prophets," in *Lamentations in Ancient and Contemporary Cultural Contexts*, eds., N. C. Lee and C. Mandolfo (Symposium 43; Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 45-46.

⁷ Renita Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Carleen Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007); Julia M. O'Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor: Theology and Ideology in the Prophets* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2008); and Christl Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space, and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

⁸ Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, 11-16.

⁹ A number of scholars departed from traditional interpretation to regard this speech as belonging to the city or Daughter Zion – Kenro Kumaki, W. Holladay, Christl Maier – speech that hitherto had been deemed to be Jeremiah's lament; yet they still see the metaphorical city/D Zion speaking, her speech constructed by Jeremiah.

¹⁰ I also read a single line outburst from the woman's voice in Jeremiah 8:18 (E) due to similarity or re-use of terms she employs in other speeches: "My joy has gone; grief is upon me; *my heart* is faint." Notice in Jeremiah's rendering of YHWH's words right before the woman singer's lament in 10:19, the use of feminine imperative and feminine participle, which seems to refer rather graphically to a suffering person, rather than a metaphor for the city: "Gather up your bundle from the ground, O you who live under siege!" (10:17).

¹¹ YHWH's speech in the book of Ezekiel is suggestive of the very action that the woman's voice in Jeremiah 10:24 speaks against. YHWH says, because Jerusalem "has rebelled against my *judgments/justice* . . . [I will] carry out *judgments/justice* against you *with anger and fury* (Ezekiel 5:6, 15; cf. Ezekiel 20:8-9, 13-14, 21-22, 33-38).

¹² The only psalmic confessions that come close to this plea in Jeremiah 10:24 are in Psalm 38 (“O YHWH, do not reprove me with your wrath or *correct* me with your *anger*”), and similarly Psalm 6, but they fall short of asking YHWH to correct instead according to *justice*.

¹³ Note Mayer Gruber’s comment that the female prophet he identifies in Micah 6-7 also takes on a stance of admitting sin or confessing, unlike the male prophet; Mayer I. Gruber, “Women’s Voices in the Book of Micah,” *lectio difficilior* 1/2007, page 5; <http://www.lectio.unibe.ch> 1 (accessed September 29, 2009).

¹⁴ Cf. the confessional laments: Psalms 6, 25, 32, 38, 39, 40, 41, 51, 90, 106, 107.

¹⁵ I am grateful to my student, Tony Stavropoulos, for the question about justice that led to this observation about righteousness. R. Carroll said the female voice asks YHWH for “discipline in due proportion”; Carroll notes the appearance of this phrase again in Jeremiah 30:11 in YHWH’s answering consolation, only *to Jacob* (*Jeremiah*, 263): “I will *correct* you *with justice*.” But *to Jerusalem* in the very next lines YHWH says (!): “I have struck you with the blow of the enemy, with cruel *correction*, because your iniquity is great . . .” (30:14). It is as though YHWH may have heard the woman’s prophet’s earlier challenge and followed through on the idea *for the persona Jacob*, but not for ‘the daughter.’ LXX changes the pronoun object in 10:24: “Correct *us*, YHWH”! (noted by M. Biddle, *Polyphony and Symphony in Prophetic Literature* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univ. Press, 1996), 100.

¹⁶ Following S. Balentine: “Prayer as a means of characterization . . . reveals both the pray-er and his or her conception of God,” *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible* (Fortress Press, 1993), 25; Balentine draws from M. Greenberg’s study, *Biblical Prose Prayer, as a Window to the Popular Religion of Ancient Israel* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983), 15. Greenberg’s category includes prayers in prophetic oracles in addition to narratives (7).

¹⁷ Scholars have suggested that vs 25 is a quote of Psalm 79:6-7, a communal lament whose content is about the destruction of Jerusalem [Robert Carroll, *Jeremiah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 261; M. Biddle, *Polyphony*, 96], yet it is just as possible that that psalm is influenced by this poet’s/singer’s speech in Jeremiah 10:25.

¹⁸ In Jeremiah’s rhetoric, his use of *Bat-'ammî* often coincides with his description of her “crushing” – does he only render the city persona’s destruction, or might he be addressing the woman singer? Jeremiah’s use of “crushing/destruction” is a leitwort in the poetry of the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations (Jeremiah 8:11, 21; 14:17; Lamentations 2:13 and 4:10). In my earliest work on these texts, I suggested the term of endearment was Jeremiah’s reference to the personified city. Here I am modifying my view to suggest that the term of endearment refers to the woman prophet in dialogue.

¹⁹ See F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp’s study on this, “The Syntagma of *bat* Followed by a Geographical Name in the Hebrew Bible: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning and Grammar,” *CBQ* 57 (1995): 451-470.

²⁰ See the helpful study on this text and women prophets there by Nancy R. Bowen, “The Daughters of Your People: Female Prophets in Ezekiel 13:17-23,” JBL 118 (1999): 417-433.

²¹ The term *Bat-'ammî* appears 14x (or 15x if one includes the LXX Jeremiah 9:6), elsewhere *only in* Jeremiah and Lamentations; it appears to be generally maintained in Septuagint readings as θυγατρος του λαου μου.

²² Translating this term as a feminine Qal passive participle (literally ‘being healed’), rather than a noun in construct with *Bat-'ammî* (usually translated as ‘the healing of Daughter of My People’).

²³ Mayer I. Gruber, “Women’s Voices in the Book of Micah.” This also follows in the spirit of Phyllis Tribble’s suggestion that we need to attend to women hidden in the shadows in biblical texts, to draw them out.

²⁴ Ibid, 5.

²⁵ Gruber employs the term “malestream” from Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999), 3.

²⁶ Gruber suggests that “femalestream” biblical scholars unfortunately at times have “bought into the male chauvinist reading of Hebrew Scripture” (“Women’s Voices in the Book of Micah,” 3); he suggests “the reticence to pay attention to the voices of previously unrecognized women in Hebrew Scripture reflects the phallo-centric thinking from which both men and women in modern western society suffer” (ibid, 4).

²⁷ Gruber, ibid, 3-5.

²⁸ Wilda C. Gafney, *Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

²⁹ Ibid, 79; 111-114; 105.

³⁰ I am grateful to Naomi Graetz who responded to my SBL presentation of a woman prophet in Jeremiah and Lamentations that perhaps *Bat-'ammî* was a collective appellative for woman prophets, a tradition lost.

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