

JEREMIAH'S EGYPT

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JEREMIAH'S EGYPT

Prophetic Reflections on the Saite Period

by
Aren M. Wilson-Wright

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Atlanta

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2023937572

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Acknowledgments

This book began life in 2016 as a postdoctoral project at the University of Zurich and went through several transformations before reaching its current form. Along the way, I received help and support from many people and several organizations.

I would like to thank Konrad Schmid for all of his support and advice over the years. From his initial invitation to apply for a Swiss postdoctoral fellowship in 2016 to his detailed comments on each chapter, he has been nothing but helpful. My scholarship—and this book—are better for having studied with him. I would also like to thank Thomas Krüger, Jonathan Kaplan, Saralyn McKinnon-Crowley, David Crowley, Jo Ann Hackett, and Chris Hays for their comments on earlier versions of the manuscript. Jonathan Kaplan and Saralyn McKinnon-Crowley, in particular, provided crucial advice on how to frame the book's central argument.

Several other scholars kindly shared their knowledge and work with me. Special thanks are due to Paula Perlman for her expertise on Greek paleography, Chris Rollston and Eran Arie for discussing the Burnt Bullae archive with me, Na'ama Pat-El for her insight on oppositional relative clauses, John Huehnergard for his help standardizing the Akkadian transliterations, and Theresa Tiliakos for checking and standardizing the Egyptian transliterations and translations. Guy Bunnens, Heath Dewrell, and Philip Zhakevitch generously shared their work with me, some of which was or is forthcoming. The members of the ANE Research Quarantine “Library” Facebook group supplied several otherwise inaccessible secondary sources during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I presented an earlier version of chapter 6 at the joint Prophetic Texts and Their Ancient Contexts / Egyptology and Ancient Israel session at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature.

I would like to thank Chris Hays for the invitation to present at this venue and the members of the audience for their feedback.

I am grateful to Jeff Stackert, the series editor for the Ancient Near Eastern Monograph Series, and Nicole Tilford, the production manager at SBL Press, for ensuring an absolutely seamless and stress-free editorial process. My good friend, Samuel Arnet, copyedited, typeset, and indexed the entire manuscript. I would like to thank him for his preternaturally keen editorial eye (and apologize for some of the truly bizarre typos I made). Kris Udd kindly granted me permission to use his Lachish 3 font.

The research for this book was supported by a three-year grant for postdoctoral research from the Swiss National Science Foundation and the University of Zurich.

Ultimately, this book would not have been possible without the emotional and intellectual labor of my wife, Saralyn McKinnon-Crowley. She believed in this project even when I didn't. And despite having her own work, she coached me through numerous bouts of writer's block and endured a significant amount of crankiness on my part. This book is dedicated to her with love and gratitude.

Aren M. Wilson-Wright
Nijmegen
July 2020

Since I submitted the manuscript for this book in July of 2020, many things have changed for me both personally and professionally. I have moved to a different country, temporarily switched career paths, and—most importantly—began living openly as a woman. These changes and their associated sorrows and triumphs left me little time to keep up to date on Jeremiah scholarship. Accordingly, this book represents the state of my thinking and research in 2020.

Aren Maeve Wilson-Wright
Chicago
April 2023

Abbreviations and Symbols

⌈...⌋	encloses material that is partially preserved
{...}	encloses material that is restored or reprinted on the basis of linguistic analysis or other textual witnesses
[...]	encloses material that is not preserved
[[...]]	encloses material that is omitted from the earliest reconstructible form of a passage on text-critical or redactional grounds
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AfOB	Archiv für Orientforschung: Beiheft
<i>Ag. Ap.</i>	Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i>
<i>AION</i>	<i>Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli</i>
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs/Monografías sobre el Antiguo Cercano Oriente
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
<i>ASAE</i>	<i>Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BARIS	British Archaeological Reports International Series
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BdE	Bibliothèque d'étude
BE	Biblische Enzyklopädie
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium

- BHH *Biblich-historisches Handwörterbuch: Landeskunde, Geschichte, Religion, Kultur, Literatur.* Edited by Bo Reicke and Leonhard Rost. 4 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962–1966
- Bib. hist. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*
- BIFAO *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*
- BJS Brown Judaic Studies
- BKAT Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
- BN *Biblische Notizen*
- BNJ Worthington, Ian, and Felix Jacoby, eds. *Brill's New Jacoby*. Online. Leiden: Brill, 2015–
- BWANT Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
- BZAW Beiträge zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
- CAD *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2010
- CAL Stephen A. Kaufman et al. *The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* (<http://cal.huc.edu>)
- CEJL Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
- CM Cuneiform Monographs
- CrStHB Critical Studies in the Hebrew Bible
- DTA *Inscriptiones Graecae*, vol. 3, pt. 3, Appendix: “Defixionum Tabellae” (Berlin, 1897)
- DJD Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
- EA *Egyptian Archaeology*
- EBR *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Edited by Hans-Josef Klauck et al. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009–
- EPRO Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
- ErIsr *Eretz-Israel*
- FAT Forschungen zum Alten Testament
- FGH *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Edited by Felix Jacoby. Leiden: Brill, 1954–1964
- FRLANT Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
- GELS *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Takamitsu Muraoka. Leuven: Peeters, 2009
- Geogr. Strabo, *Geographica*
- GKC *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Edited by Emil Kautzsch. Translated by Arthur E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910
- GOF Göttinger Orientforschungen
- GöMisz *Göttinger Miscellen*
- HAT Handbuch zum Alten Testament

HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HeBAI	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
Hist.	Herodotus, <i>Heroditi Historiae</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
IAA Reports	Israel Antiquities Authority Reports
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
JAEI	<i>Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections</i>
JAOs	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Egyptian History</i>
JESOT	<i>Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
Joüon	Joüon, Paul, <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . Translated and revised by Takamitsu Muraoka, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2nd ed. 2006
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSTOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSSSEA	<i>Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities</i>
KAI	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . Herbert Donner und Wolfgang Röllig. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969
LÄ	<i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> . Edited by Wolfgang Helck and Wolfhart Westendorf. 6 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972–1986
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Let. Aris.	Letter of Aristeas
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSAWS	Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996
LXX	Septuagint
MHR	<i>Mediterranean Historical Review</i>
MPIL	Monographs of the Peshitta Institute
MT	Masoretic Text
NBS	Numen Book Series
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien

OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
PAe	Probleme der Ägyptologie
PBE	Piccola biblioteca di egittologia
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PTA	Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
REg	<i>Revue d'Égyptologie</i>
REG	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
RT	<i>Recueil de travaux</i>
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAK	<i>Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur</i>
SAM	Sheffield Archaeological Monographs
SANER	Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SO	Symbolae Osloenses
SLL	Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
TAD	Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt. Newly copied, edited and translated into Hebrew and English by Bezalel Porten, Ada Yardeni, 4 vols., Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1986–1999
TdE	<i>Trabajos de Egiptología</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
ZÄS	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

1.

Introduction: A Return to Egypt

The book of Jeremiah exhibits several symptoms of what might be called “Egyptomania.” It contains more references to Egypt than any other book of the Hebrew Bible except Genesis and Exodus and mentions Egypt more often than any other foreign nation except Babylon. Many of these references are highly specific, touching on Egyptian geography (Jer 2:16), religious practices (Jer 46:25), and military and political decisions (Jer 37:5).¹ Jeremiah 42:1–43:7 even preserves a tradition that the prophet Jeremiah relocated to Egypt following the assassination of Gedaliah, the Babylonian appointed governor of Judah. The reason for this “Egyptomania,” as I will argue throughout this book, is primarily historical. As recent scholarship on Egyptian-Israelite interaction has shown, the pharaohs of the Twenty-Sixth or Saite Dynasty² (664–525 BCE) ruled Judah as a vassal state for much of the late seventh and early sixth centuries BCE—the time period during which the book of Jeremiah first began to take shape. My goal in this book, therefore, is to interpret the book of Jeremiah in light of this historical background. Focusing on the experiences of Judahites living under Egyptian rule, I argue, changes how we read and interpret the book of Jeremiah in three important ways: it helps explain the antipathy toward Egypt evident in several passages of this prophetic work; it provides a historical anchor for redactional approaches to dating the text; and it places the work’s repeated calls for submission to Babylon in a different light. These calls do not present a choice between Judahite autonomy and Babylonian domination, but rather a choice between Egyptian and Babylonian control.

1. Others, of course, are related to the Exodus. Garret Galvin, *Egypt as a Place of Refuge*, FAT 2/51 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 125–26.

2. So named for their capital at Sais in the western Nile Delta.

1.1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

Despite the prominence of Egypt in the book of Jeremiah, previous scholarship on the historical context of this work has focused primarily on interactions between Judah and Babylon.³ When scholars do mention Egypt, it is usually in a specific context and with reference to a limited number of extra-biblical sources. Lester Grabbe, for example, connects Jer 43:8–13, 44:30, and 46:13–26 with the Egyptian civil war of 570 BCE and Nebuchadnezzar II's attempted invasion of Egypt in 568 BCE on the basis of the fragmentary cuneiform tablet BM 33041 and the Amasis Stela from Elephantine.⁴ He does not mention, however, that Nebuchadnezzar attempted to invade Egypt at least two other times during his long reign—once in 601 BCE, and once in 582 BCE—and that these events could furnish the historical background of Jer 43:8–13 and 46:13–26 instead. Similarly, Walter Brueggemann observes that “The capacity of Egypt to evoke such hostile commentary is no doubt rooted in 7th–6th cent. politics, where Egypt is a primary threat to a pro-Babylonian reading of political reality,” but he does not develop this idea in conversation with extra-biblical sources.⁵

Other works dealing with Egypt in the book of Jeremiah suffer from some methodological problems. Hans Barstad simply assumes a Saite-period date for many of the Egyptian references in Jeremiah and uses them to supplement the sparse Egyptian data on the reign of Nekau II (called Necho in the Hebrew Bible).⁶ But we cannot simply

3. Often to the exclusion of Egypt. Neither David Reimer nor Klaas A. D. Smelik mention Egypt in their work on the historical background of Jeremiah (David Reimer, “Jeremiah before the Exile?,” in *In Search of Pre-exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day [London: T&T Clark, 2004], 207–24; Klaas A. D. Smelik, “The Function of Jeremiah 50 and 51 in the Book of Jeremiah,” in *Reading the Book of Jeremiah: A Search for Coherence*, ed. Martin Kessler [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 93–94).

4. Lester L. Grabbe, “‘The Lying Pen of the Scribes’? Jeremiah and History,” in *Essays on Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na’aman*, ed. Yaira Amit et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 198–99. For a similar conclusion, see William McKane, *Commentary on Jeremiah 26–52*, vol. 2 of *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1986), 1139; and Beat Huwyler, *Jeremia und die Völker: Untersuchungen zu den Völkersprüchen in Jeremia 46–49*, FAT 20 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 125. Chapters 3 and 4 provide additional examples of this restricted approach to the Egyptian references in the book of Jeremiah.

5. Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 423.

6. Hans M. Barstad, “Jeremiah the Historian: The Book of Jeremiah as a

assume that the references to Egypt in the book of Jeremiah all date to the Saite period since Egypt remained an important force in Judahite life in subsequent eras. Garrett Galvin, by contrast, denies the historical reliability of the references to Egypt in the book of Jeremiah, stating that: “these images of Egypt [in Jer 46] resound with ambiguity because they are confusing and multilayered. They do not necessarily provide detailed information concerning Egypt, but rather may be written for an audience with a limited knowledge of Egypt.”⁷ At the same time, however, he dismisses much of the detailed information in the oracles against Egypt, such as the appearance of the Apis bull in Jer 26:15 LXX, as later expansions or textual variants.⁸ My approach in this book is more measured. I neither uncritically accept the historical reliability of the references to Egypt found in the book of Jeremiah nor do I dismiss all of them as later additions to the text. Rather, I assess each passage on a case-by-case basis to determine its likely historical context.

Despite the relative dearth of historical scholarship on Egypt in the book of Jeremiah, the study of cultural contact between Egypt and Israel has progressed significantly, thanks in part to the pioneering work of Bernd Schipper. In his initial foray into the subject, Schipper used archaeological and extra-biblical evidence to reconstruct the different types of Egyptian-Israelite contact that took place during the Iron Age, ranging from trade contacts in the ninth and tenth centuries BCE to Egyptian control in the Saite period. He then investigated how the biblical text reflects the events and material culture of these different periods.⁹ Since then, Schipper has refined his conclusions in a series of articles focusing on Egyptian-Judahite contact during the Saite period.¹⁰

Source for the History of the Near East in the Time of Nebuchadnezzar,” in *Studies on the Text and Versions of the Hebrew Bible in Honour of Robert Gordon*, ed. Geoffrey Khan and Diana Lipton (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 91–94.

7. Galvin, *Egypt as a Place of Refuge*, 154.

8. Galvin, *Egypt as a Place of Refuge*, 152.

9. Bernd U. Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten in der Königszeit: Die kulturellen Kontakte von Salomo bis zum Fall Jerusalems*, OBO 170 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999). In this regard, Schipper turns earlier approaches to Egyptian-Israelite contact on their heads. As Shirly Ben-Dor Evian notes, “traditional methodology isolates a specific ‘Egyptian’ detail from the biblical text, presents its Egyptian parallels, and suggests a historical background based on these parallels” (Shirly Ben-Dor Evian, “The Past and Future of ‘Biblical Egyptology,’” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 18 [2018]: 2).

10. Bernd U. Schipper, “Egypt and the Kingdom of Judah under Josiah and Jehoiakim,” *TA* 37 (2010): 200–226; Bernd U. Schipper, “Egyptian Imperialism after the New Kingdom: The Twenty-Sixth Dynasty and the Southern Levant,” in *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel: History, Imperialism and Ideology: Proceed-*

According to Schipper's latest historical reconstruction, Pharaoh Psamtik II annexed Judah in the final decades of the seventh century BCE with the twin goals of controlling the trade routes that passed through the Negev desert and maintaining a buffer state between Babylon and Egypt. To achieve these goals, Psamtik II and his successors constructed or co-opted military fortresses in Judah and fortified them—in part—with Aegean mercenary troops, imposed taxes on the population of Judah, and integrated Judahite scribes and officials into the Egyptian bureaucracy of the Levant.¹¹ While Schipper does not focus on the book of Jeremiah itself, many of his conclusions are relevant for the study of this prophetic book.

This study also benefits from new archaeological data from Daphnae (modern-day Tell Dafana, Biblical Hebrew דַּפְנָא, Greek Δάφναι) and Memphis, both of which feature prominently in the book of Jeremiah (Jer 2:16; 43:7, 8, 9; 44:1; 46:14, 19). A recently discovered stela from Tell Dafana, for example, shows that Nebuchadnezzar attempted to invade Egypt in 582 BCE. The Jewish historian Josephus mentions this event in *Ant.* 10.182, but until the discovery of the Tell Dafana Stela most scholars dismissed Josephus's account as ahistorical.¹² I will also draw on new editions of important Saite-period texts, such as the Amasis Stela from Elephantine, which provides important information about the Egyptian civil war and the attempted Babylonian invasion of 567 BCE.¹³ These new and newly reedited sources prove especially useful for reconstructing the history of the Saite period, which is the focus of the following two chapters.

ings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3–7 May 2009, ed. S. Bar, D. Kahn, and J.J. Shirley (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 268–90; Bernd U. Schipper, "Egypt and Israel: The Ways of Cultural Contacts in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age (Twentieth–Twenty-Sixth Dynasty)," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 4 (2012): 30–47.

11. Schipper, "Egypt and the Kingdom of Judah," 200, 211, 214; Schipper, "Egyptian Imperialism after the New Kingdom," 269–70, 272, 280.

12. Mohamed Abd el-Maksoud and Dominique Valbelle, "Une stèle de l'an 7 d'Apriès découverte sur le site de Tell Défenneh," *REg* 64 (2013): 1–13.

13. Anke Hona Blöbaum, "*Denn ich bin ein König, der die Maat liebt*": *Herrscherlegitimation im spätzeitlichen Ägypten—Eine vergleichende Untersuchung der Phraseologie in den offiziellen Königsinschriften vom Beginn der 25. Dynastie bis zum Ende der makedonischen Herrschaft*, *Aegyptiaca Monasteriensia* 4 (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2006), 13–14; Karl Jansen-Winkel, "Die Siegesstele des Amasis," *ZAŚ* 141 (2014): 132–53.

1.2. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

Although scholars like Schipper increasingly acknowledge the role of Egypt in Judahite life during the late seventh and early sixth centuries BCE, this new insight has yet to be applied to the book of Jeremiah. My goal in this book is to bridge the gap between these two areas of inquiry. The experiences of Judahites living under Saite rule, I argue, left their mark on the book of Jeremiah. I develop this argument over the course of five chapters.

In chapter 2, I draw on Hebrew, Babylonian, Egyptian, Classical and archaeological sources to re-tell the history of Judah in the late seventh and early sixth centuries BCE. During this time, Judah was a small kingdom caught between two rival superpowers, Egypt and Babylon. In the last thirty-five years of Judah's existence, its ruling elite switched allegiance between Egypt and Babylon at least six times, and this vacillation ultimately led to the loss of Judah's political autonomy in 586 BCE. Although the Saite pharaohs were happy to use Judah as a pawn in their ongoing struggle against Babylon, they cared little for the Levantine kingdom itself. Instead, their strategic interests lay in the trade routes linking Egypt with the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean and the possibility of preserving a buffer state between the Babylonian Empire and the Egyptian heartland. As a consequence of this strategic orientation, they offered little in the way of military support for their on-again, off-again vassal. They also continued to clash with Babylon even after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, fending off a Babylonian invasion on two separate occasions.

In chapter 3, I move from macro-history to micro-history. In particular, I examine how the Saite pharaohs' strategic orientation toward the Levant affected the population of Judah. Unsurprisingly, the elite and the non-elite had vastly different experiences of this period. Certain members of the Judahite elite participated in the Saite administration of Judah. Some, such as Pediese son of Opay, served as messengers; others, such as the anonymous scribes of Arad and Kadesh Barnea, received training in Egyptian methods of record keeping and produced administrative texts for the Egyptian bureaucracy. In return, they enjoyed access to Egyptian prestige goods such as Egyptian-inspired funerary monuments. The existence of Judahite collaborators helps explain why Judah alternated between Egyptian and Babylonian control so often: certain members of the Judahite elite owed their power and prestige to the Saite pharaohs and were reluctant to relinquish it. This constant vacillation, however, had a negative effect on the non-elite of Judah—those who served as auxiliary troops in the Egyptian army, produced rations for the mercenaries that the Saite pharaohs stationed in the Levant, and

paid the taxes which funded the Egyptian army. Continued hostilities between Egypt and Babylon exposed them to further drudgery and danger. Elites and non-elites also suffered different fates after the fall of Jerusalem. While many elite Judahites were exiled to Babylon, some non-elite Judahites became “trapped” in Egypt following the fall of Jerusalem or sought refuge from the horrors of the Babylonian campaign against Judah. They formed an important component of the Judahite diaspora in Egypt.

Drawing on the historical framework developed in chapters 2 and 3, chapter 4 identifies three passages in the book of Jeremiah that decry the injustices of the Saite period: the historical overview in Jer 2:14–19, the “cup of wrath” episode in Jer 25:15–29, and the oracles against Egypt in Jer 46:2–26. Jeremiah 2:14–19, I argue, serves to critique Judahite collaborators for their short-sighted selfishness. While they reaped the benefits of Egyptian rule, their compatriots were conscripted into the Egyptian army and often died in far-flung locales in defense of the Saite state. The “cup of wrath” episode, on the other hand, provides a map of the Saite empire and its neighbors on the eve of the battle of Carchemish and expresses the hope that Babylon will liberate Judah from Egyptian control. Finally, the oracles against Egypt in Jer 46:2–26 contain a pastiche of prophetic material reflecting on at least three different military encounters between Nebuchadnezzar and the Saite pharaohs: verses 3–12 celebrate the devastating Egyptian defeat at Carchemish in 605 BCE; verses 14–24 applaud the attempted Babylonian invasion of Egypt in 601 BCE; and the oracle fragment preserved in verse 24 commemorates either the second Babylonian invasion of Egypt in 582 BCE or the third Babylonian invasion of 567 BCE. Throughout the chapter, I note how a historical approach to dating the text of Jeremiah can supplement existing redaction-critical proposals regarding this prophetic book.

Not all Judahites escaped Egypt's orbit in 586 BCE. Members of the Judahite diaspora in Egypt continued to live under Saite rule and their experiences also influenced the book of Jeremiah. In chapter 5, I identify two texts that either originated in the Judahite diaspora in Egypt or reflect ongoing contact between this community and the remaining population of Judah: Jer 43:8–13 and 44:16–19, 24–25. I also propose and evaluate several historical scenarios to explain how these texts were incorporated into what became the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 43:8–13 was composed in the Egyptian city of Daphnae shortly before the second Babylonian invasion of Egypt in 582 BCE and may reflect a shift in attitude toward Egypt among the Judahite diaspora in Egypt. Although they had once suffered under the policies of the Saite pharaohs they now called Egypt home, and Nebuchadnezzar's repeated invasions threatened their well-being. The references to the Queen of Heaven in

Jer 44:16–19, 24–25, by contrast, reflect ongoing contact between Judah and the Egyptian diaspora around 570 BCE and provide the earliest textual evidence for Judahites living in Upper Egypt.

Chapter 6 identifies another text that may have originated in the Judahite diaspora in Egypt: Jer 51:38–39. This text, I argue, dates to the exilic period and adapts a version of the Egyptian Destruction of Humanity myth in order to condemn the lion-like Babylonians. Although they once acted as Yahweh's agents, freeing Judah from Egyptian control in 604 BCE, they have violated their divine mandate by repeatedly invading Judah and Egypt and must be punished. To do so, Yahweh prepares an alcoholic draft for his leonine subordinates that pacifies and ultimately kills them, just as the Egyptian sun god Re uses beer to subdue the lion goddess Sakhmet in the Destruction of Humanity myth. Compared to the texts analyzed in chapters 4 and 5, Jer 51:38–39 radically reevaluates Egypt and Babylon's ability to harm the everyday Judahite. It is now Babylon that poses the biggest threat to non-elite Judahites due to Nebuchadnezzar's continued campaigns in the Levant and Egypt. Egypt, by contrast, merely furnishes the symbolic language used to criticize Babylonian aggression.

The conclusion summarizes the arguments of the previous chapters and suggests two additional avenues for inquiry: the identification of Saite-period texts outside of the book of Jeremiah, and potential contact between Judahites and various Aegean populations during the Saite period.

1.3. A NOTE ABOUT TEXT CRITICISM

Any historically oriented study of Jeremiah must take into account the complicated textual history of this book. As is widely known, the Septuagint version of Jeremiah differs in both size and arrangement from the text of Jeremiah preserved in the Masoretic Text. The Septuagint version of Jeremiah is approximately one seventh shorter than the Masoretic Text version and locates the oracles against the nations in the middle of the book (following 25:14) rather than at the end (following 45:5). The oracles against the nations also follow a different order in the Septuagint compared to the Masoretic Text. Given the overall fidelity of the Septuagint translators to their Hebrew source text, the most concise explanation of these differences is that the Septuagint and Masoretic Text preserve two different literary editions of the book.¹⁴ This con-

14. See, for example, J. Gerald Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973), 181–84; Emanuel Tov, "The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in Light of Its Textual History," in *Empirical Models for*

clusion receives support from the Jeremiah manuscripts from Qumran, some of which match the Septuagint, and some of which match the Masoretic Text.¹⁵

The unique textual evidence for the book of Jeremiah necessitates caution in assessing the textual variants found in the different witnesses to this work. Although the Septuagint preserves an earlier edition of the text, it does not always preserve the best reading. The Hebrew source text of the Septuagint continued to undergo editing and expansion after the initial divergence of the Septuagintal and the Masoretic Text traditions.¹⁶ In several cases, such as Jer 25:1–14, a later editor sought to clear up inconsistencies in the text by smoothing over redactional seams.¹⁷ For this reason, I take a mediating position to the textual criticism of Jeremiah and seek to evaluate each textual variant on its own merits.

Biblical Criticism, ed. Jeffrey Tigay (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 211–37.

15. Tov, “Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah,” 211.

16. Konrad Schmid, “The Book of Jeremiah,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Literature, Religion and History of the Old Testament*, ed. Jan Christian Gertz et al., trans. Jennifer Adams-Maßmann (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 433.

17. Georg Fischer, “Jer 25 und die Fremdvölkersprüche: Unterschiede zwischen hebräischem und griechischem Text,” *Bib.* 72 (1991): 474–99; Shimon Gesundheit, “The Question of LXX Jeremiah as a Tool for Literary-Critical Analysis,” *VT* 62 (2012): 29–57.