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Listening to the Trauma of Refugees in Jeremiah 40–44*

Zusammenfassung

Die journalistische Recherche über die Ereignisse im September 2015, die zur kurzzeitigen Öffnung der Grenzen in Österreich und Deutschland für Flüchtlinge auf der Balkanroute führte, bildet den Hintergrund für die Lektüre der Erzählung über die „Ägyptenflüchtlinge“ in Jeremia 40–44. Dabei werden die unterschiedlichen Perspektiven – die Sicht des Erzählers, des Propheten Jeremia und der in Jeremia 44 zu Wort kommenden Judäerinnen und Judäer – sichtbar. Mithilfe der von Soziologen um Jeffrey Alexander und Neil Smelser entwickelten Theorie des „kulturellen Traumas“ kann die in Jeremia 40–44 dominierende Sicht als Ideologie der nach Babylonien Exilierten (der sog. „Gola“) entlarvt werden, die Juda als „leeres Land“ propagiert und die Verantwortung dafür den in Ägypten siedelnden Judäerinnen und Judäern zuweist.

1. Introduction

“The night, in which Germany lost control” – this was the title of the well-known German weekly “DIE ZEIT” on August 18, 2016.¹ During the night from Friday, September 3 to Saturday, September 4 in 2015, Austria and Germany opened their borders for refugees, mostly from Syria, who had spent weeks in Hungary without being registered in the European Union. In a joint effort, twelve journalists of important newspapers tried to reconstruct the events of that night.² They found out that two young Syrian men had organized a march of about 500 refugees from a Budapest train station to the highway in the direction to Vienna, the capital of Austria. Their aim was to get media coverage for their march of hope and to confront the Hungarian administration to take notice of their situation and their wish to leave Hungary in order to go to Germany. According to European law, such choice was not possible because every refugee has to be registered in the first country he or she sets foot. As Germany is surrounded by other European countries, no refugee would meet this criterion.

And, even if any of the refugees would reach Germany, according to the so-called Dublin procedure, they would be sent back to the country they entered first. The Hungarian Prime Minister, Victor Orbán, who had prided himself with building a fence around his country, took this unexpected opportunity and let these people go, in order to put political pressure on Austria and Germany and make them accept some of the refugees stranded in Hungary. He informed the Austrian Chancellor, Werner Faymann, and the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, through diplomatic channels and organized buses that would take the marching people to the Austrian border. During this night, a series of phone calls, text messages and conferences of staff and emergency units ensued and under this pressure, Merkel decided to open the German-Austrian border for these refugees. What the politicians and officials feared most was media coverage of police stopping desperate refugees, images of tear gas and water guns, of violence against helpless men and their families. Once the border was open, the news spread fast through social media so that even more people in Syria, Turkey and Greece set out to reach the inner states of the European Union. Even before this weekend, there was an official twitter tweet of the German Federal Agency of Migration and Refugees, saying, “Germany currently does not pursue the Dublin procedure with regard to Syrian citizens.”³ This statement, the subsequent rumors and the news about the opening of the border eventually led to the arrival of over a million refugees in Germany in 2015 – even people from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Northern African countries took this chance by marching through the Balkans. Arriving in large numbers, not all refugees could be registered upon entering and a lot of them disappeared and now live illegally in Germany or other countries of the European Union. What first appeared as a humanitarian act of compassion by Merkel – well applauded from various sides – caused political turmoil in Germany, among them personal ruptures in the leading conservative party. There were fierce debates between those willing to welcome the refugees and those threatened by their numbers, and an iridescent right-wing party whose supporters organized marches against the politics of welcome. Whereas thousands of Germans of all ages volunteered in camps and schools to take care of the refugees, others joined the opponents, and a few even set fire on refugee homes. I would say that the German administration soon regained control and quite effectively administered the refugees, especially since after the closure of the external European frontier there were hardly any new arrivals. Yet, the political situation has changed and the debate about German identity, values, and culture will go on for years.

Why do I tell this story? Firstly, because it reads like an Exodus story: two young men decide to start marching with a crowd of desperate refugees to the country of their hope and despite all odds and against all legal provisions, they reach this land.⁴ Secondly, this story of determined refugees has a parallel in the story of Judeans setting out to Egypt in Jeremiah 40–44. Both stories narrate situations after or during war where some people flee to a foreign land

out of fear for their life and because they see no future for themselves in their country of origin.

2. Exodus to Egypt – A Story about Refugees in Jeremiah 40–44

The story in Jeremiah 40–44 can be summarized as follows: After the Babylonians have conquered and sacked Jerusalem, they choose for their administrative center the town of Mizpah north of Jerusalem, which has not been destroyed. They appoint a certain Gedaliah, grandson of Shaphan from an influential Judean family, as their governor (40:5). Many survivors, among them some military officers, assemble in Mizpah seeking protection and food. Yet there is rumor that one officer, a certain Ishmael of royal descent would attempt to assassinate Gedaliah – probably due to a fierce strife between two groups of royal officials about politics in the days before Jerusalem fell. Gedaliah does not listen to the rumor and even invites Ishmael and ten of his men to dine with him. At this occasion, Ishmael murders Gedaliah and causes carnage among 80 pilgrims who happen to pass by. Afterwards, Ishmael takes many Judeans hostage (41:1–10). Another former military officer, Johanan and his men, however, pursue Ishmael, who is able to escape to the Ammonites, while the hostages are freed (41:11–15). Now these Judeans fear Babylonian retaliation for the killing of their governor. Jeremiah, who is among the group, however, comes up with a striking choice: If they decide to stay in Judah, God will build them up and the Babylonian king will be merciful. If they decide to go to Egypt, they will die by the sword, by famine and pestilence (42:22, cf. 42:16–17). Yet, Johanan and his men do not believe Jeremiah. They set out to Egypt, and take all the Judeans, even Jeremiah and Baruch, with them (43:5–7). After arriving in Tahpanhes, a town in the Eastern Nile Delta, Jeremiah announces through a symbolic performance that Nebuchadnezzar will come and subdue them again (43:8–13). Finally, Jeremiah 44 records the poisoned dialogue between Jeremiah and the Judeans who live in Egypt about the reasons of their current calamity. In this dialogue, their controversial positions clash. While the Judeans argue that they suffer this fate due to neglect of a goddess called “Queen of Heaven,” Jeremiah accuses them of idolatry and abandonment of YHWH, the god of Israel.

Obviously, both stories of refugees, past and present, include situations that may have traumatic effects on people. If one would ask any of the groups involved, they would tell the story differently, namely out of their own perspective. In this essay, I will read the story in Jeremiah 40–44 against the background of the contemporary refugee story by using a concept developed within the novel field of trauma studies. So far, only a few exegetes have used trauma studies as a foil to interpret biblical texts.⁵ Yet, their results are highly promising in that they offer a way to interpret the complex and often conflicting prophetic discourse in the

books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel from an ideological-critical perspective.⁶ For instance, this lens helps postmodern readers to contextualize the imagery of disorder and shattered beliefs in the book of Jeremiah and to sense its significance for ancient readers. In an effort to reveal the suppressed and “muted” voices of those Judeans who ended up in Egypt in Jeremiah 44, my reading accords with feminist interpretations of this chapter.⁷

3. The Theory of Cultural Trauma as Heuristic Tool

In this essay, I will focus on the way trauma is remembered collectively by using the functional definition of an international group of sociologists around Jeffrey Alexander and Neil Smelser who developed a theory of cultural trauma.⁸ According to Alexander, Smelser and others, “[c]ultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.”⁹ Studying the long-term social effects of slavery in the United States, the Holocaust, and postcommunist societies, these sociologists argue that “[t]rauma is not something naturally existing; it is something constructed by society.”¹⁰ By constructing cultural trauma, societies “not only cognitively identify the existence and source of human suffering but ‘take on board’ some significant responsibility for it.”¹¹ This is not to say that cultural traumas are not real or unrelated to experience. Alexander solely adopts a constructivist position and uses Durkheim’s concept of “religious imagination” as intrinsic to any process of representation: Such imagination “seizes upon inchoate experience from life, and forms, through association, condensation, and aesthetic creation, into some specific shape.”¹² Alexander describes the phases of the social process of cultural trauma as follows. For traumas to emerge at the level of the collectivity there is a claim of social agents, so-called carrier groups (a term of Max Weber) who articulate “a fundamental injury, an exclamation of the terrifying profanation of some sacred value, a narrative about a horribly destructive social process, and a demand for emotional, institutional, and symbolic reparation and reconstitution.”¹³ This claim is addressed to the public by a sort of speech-act, “a compelling framework of cultural classification”¹⁴ producing a master narrative that plausibly describes the nature of the pain, the nature of the victim, the relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience, and the attribution of responsibility. For the latter, it is critical to establish the identity of the perpetrator. Such a master narrative is distributed by the common media of the respective collectivity and thus may involve power struggles and include different voices to be effective. If such process is successful, the collective identity will be revised, the trauma included and further memorized by monuments, museums or ritual routines. With regard to this theory and the two stories about refugees, I would argue that it seems

obvious that the current war in Syria will eventually lead to a cultural trauma process among Syrians. Yet, it is unclear what effect the refugees in Germany will have on German national identity. In Jeremiah 40–44, however, we find a master narrative about the cultural trauma of Jerusalem's fall and Judah's demise as an independent state, a story that indeed names the pain, the victims, the perpetrators and their respective responsibilities. What interests me, is the different viewpoints presented in this narrative, the struggles over meaning, and the carrier groups who through this story successfully shaped the cultural memory of the post-exilic community.

In the following, I will focus on the characters and reasoning presented in Jeremiah 40–44 in order to search for the underlying ideological claims. In applying the theory of cultural trauma, I will look for clues to analyze the contents and function of Jeremiah's dispute with the refugees in Jeremiah 44.¹⁵

4. The Master Narrative about the Fate of Judean Survivors in Jeremiah 40–43

In listening to these refugee stories, one encounters a multitude of agents and agendas. At first sight, it is hard to perceive whose interests are being served. Jeremiah 40–43 presupposes that Jeremiah's message of doom against Judah and Jerusalem has become true: Jerusalem and its temple are in ruins; most of the leading officials are deported to Babylon; some military and some people who survived assemble in Mizpah. In this situation, Jeremiah advises them to stay in Judah. As Jeremiah is the acclaimed divine spokesperson, his voice is the most dominant in the whole book, and especially in the dialogue in Jeremiah 44. Yet, the common people just try to cope with loss and hunger. They set out to a land they think is secure and thus are not willing to listen to the prophet.

Against the background of the described situation in Germany and with regard to the mixture of politics, opposing groups, personal strife, fear and hope, I can no longer side with Jeremiah, the true prophet, but I am eager to listen to the refugees, to hear *their* story. It is obvious that Jeremiah 40–44 is not an objective historical account but a narrative with a certain ideology and possibly with different identity claims. In order to reveal these ideologies, I will focus on the characters and their views as presented by the narrator.¹⁶

Not all of those Judeans who fled to Egypt are innocent victims of war. There is Johanan, a former commander of the Judean army, and his men who were fighting against the Babylonians.

Although Johanan warns Gedaliah of Ishmael (40:15) and frees the hostages, he and his men fear Babylonian retaliation after the governor's assassination (41:18) and thus decide to go to Egypt. For this reason, the narrator calls them "the insolent men" (הַעֲנָשִׁים הַזֵּדִים ; 43:2). As a parallel, one may imagine those who first participated in the Syrian war but were fed up or

hurt and then took refuge in Turkey, Greece or Germany.

The people appear as a plaything of different groups. These survivors of Jerusalem's destruction are described as “men, women, and children – of the poorest in the land – those who had not been exiled to Babylon” (40:7) and as Judeans who were in Moab, Ammon, Edom and other regions and then came back to Mizpah (40:11). They seek protection from Gedaliah, are taken hostage by Ishmael, and freed by Johanan whom they follow.¹⁷ In reading this story, one can imagine all sorts of political and personal struggles in this group. Some of them may side with Gedaliah who has collaborated willingly with the Babylonians, some of them may sympathize with Ishmael who seems to prepare an anti-Babylonian coalition with the Ammonites. The narrator, however, does not tell the people's viewpoint – but only how the other characters view them. Six times they are called “Judah's remnant” (שְׁאֵרֵי יְהוּדָה; 40:15; 42:15.19; 43:5; 44:12.28) and this title's theological connotation indicates that God has saved them.¹⁸ Because these Judeans follow Johanan to Egypt, Jeremiah indicts them heavily. As the text does neither mention a flight nor any use of force (cf. 41:16–18) the people appear to leave Judah voluntarily. Their motivation is only indicated in words of Jeremiah and God, but reiterated nine times, namely that they wish “to live as strangers” in Egypt (גֵּרִי; 42:15.17.22; 43:2.5; 44:8.12.14.28). This rendering carries a hopeful undertone in that it alludes to the sojourn of Abraham in Egypt (cf. Genesis 12:10). Similarly, the common people of Syria were and still are a plaything of the different antagonists in the war. What should they do? Who would accuse them if they flee to foreign countries in search of food and shelter?

Astonishingly, the prophet Jeremiah is not a leading figure in the first part of the story. After being released by the Babylonian chief of the guards (40:1–2), he stays with Gedaliah among the people in Mizpah (40:6). During the events around the murder of Gedaliah he is not mentioned and only afterwards, Johanan and the people ask him for a word of God (42:2). From this moment, Jeremiah warns the people several times to not go to Egypt and he portrays both God and the Babylonian king as benevolent and merciful (42:11–12). While offering a clear alternative – staying in Judah under Babylonian hegemony or willingly seeking rescue from war and hunger in Egypt (42:10.14) – the prophet argues for the first option and announces hunger, sword, and famine upon those who may opt for going to Egypt. One may imagine a person like Jeremiah in the Syrian war, a prophet who argues that God wants people to stay in the country because they will be secure under Assad or any of the militias. Who would believe such a prophet?

The narrator clearly sides with Jeremiah by characterizing Johanan and the Judeans as disobedient towards the divine word (43:4) and as falsely accusing Jeremiah of lying (43:2). It is obvious that from the narrator's point of view, all the people who survived in Judah as victims of war willingly chose the wrong option and thus are responsible for their own demise and for the total depletion of Judah from Judeans in the aftermath of Jerusalem's destruction

(41:16; cf. 2 Kings 25:26). This notion would later amount to the myth of the empty land (cf. 36:29; 2 Chronicles 36:21).¹⁹ Thus, despite my expectation, the story's overall perspective is not to explain the viewpoint of those who fled to Egypt and either oppose or fear Babylonian hegemony, but to favor a collaboration with the Babylonians.²⁰ This is surely a pro-Golah view of history issued by the elite carrier group who was deported to Babylonia and thought of itself as the true remnant of Judah.²¹ Whose story about Syria do we trust? Who can view these events as an objective observer? Each party tells its own story and nobody seems to be only a victim of events.

The narrator's ideology, however, breaks down at one point – when he lists all the groups that came to Egypt with Johanan and his men, and at last mentions Jeremiah and Baruch (43:5–7). Why do Jeremiah and Baruch join the march to Egypt? According to Jeremiah 43:5, Johanan “took” (תקל) the people and the two men to Egypt, which may or may not include force, but no opposition on their part is mentioned.²² Therefore, the fact cannot be concealed that it is the Judeans in Egypt who have God's prophet in their midst.²³ While Jeremiah and Baruch ended up in Egypt, the carrier group who authored the story in Jeremiah 40–43 lived in Babylonia and tried to write off both the Judeans in Egypt and those who survived in Judah. In Jeremiah 44, the prophet Jeremiah is presented as arguing their case. Against the contemporary stories of the refugees from Syria, it seems clear that the pro-Golah perspective is partial and one-sided at best. Thus, I will now turn to the “muted” voice of the Judeans in Egypt.

5. The Dialogue between Jeremiah and Those Who fled to Egypt (Jeremiah 44)

Jeremiah 44 presents a dialogue between Jeremiah and “all the Judeans living in the land of Egypt, living in Migdol, Tahpanhes, and Noph, and in the land of Pathros” (44:1). Since this setting is highly stylized and the chapter does not develop the plot further, it was most probably added later to the narrative in order to further condemn the Judean diaspora community in Egypt.²⁴ If one compares the length of speech, Jeremiah comes out on top with 24 verses over against four verses that the people speak. Jeremiah addresses his audience as witnesses to both Jerusalem's fall and Judah's desolate situation and keeps reiterating two reasons for this calamity. First, the people have abandoned their God and venerated other deities (44:3.5.8.21) and second, they did not listen to God and the prophets he sent (44:4.23).²⁵ Moreover, the prophet equals the survivors to their disobedient ancestors (44:9.21.23) and denounces them to be unwilling to repent (44:5.10).²⁶ God's reaction to such behavior will be complete extinction of all those who live in Egypt and being remembered only as a curse and a mockery among all the nations on earth (44:8). While Jeremiah's argumentation follows the stereotypical Deuteronomistic reasoning of other prose speeches in

the book, it is worthwhile to cite the people's words in 44:16–19, which according to v. 19 offer the perspective of the women especially²⁷:

“We will not listen to you in the matter about which you spoke to us in the name of YHWH. On the contrary, we will do everything that we have vowed – to make offerings to the Queen of Heaven and to pour libations to her, as we used to do, we and our fathers, our kings and our officials, in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty to eat, we were well-off, and suffered no misfortune. But ever since we stopped making offerings to the Queen of Heaven and pouring libations to her, we have lacked everything, and we have been consumed by the sword and by famine. And when we make offerings to the Queen of Heaven and pour libations to her, is it without our husbands' approval that we have made cakes in her likeness and poured libations to her? (44:16–19; Tanakh translation of the Jewish Publication Society 1985)

In their speech, the women positively link themselves to the customs of their ancestors and the time before the fall of Jerusalem. They explain their current misfortune with the neglect of a female deity, the veneration of which involved the whole family as stated in Jeremiah 7:18, “The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the Queen of Heaven.” Thus, they resort to a religious practice that they think is beneficial for their life.

While the veneration of a goddess is clearly attested in pre-exilic Judah by biblical and archaeological sources, there is a rich scholarly discussion about the identification of the Queen of Heaven.²⁸ Without being able to rehearse the debate I would just like to point out that this citation of the Judean women serves a double function within the plot. On the one hand, the women's words demonstrate that there is major opposition to Jeremiah's viewpoint. On the other hand, the citation verifies Jeremiah's verdict of idolatry and thus strengthens the prophet's position. In sum, the authors of chapter 44, an influential carrier group in exilic times, present a line of argument similar to the pro-Golah perspective in chapter 40–43: Jeremiah portrays the people's suffering as consequence of their own folly, not of Babylonian aggression.²⁹ He even accuses the survivors of voluntarily cutting off themselves from their Judean homeland (44:7).³⁰

Yet, can one assume that none of the refugees in Egypt survived? Historically speaking, Jeremiah's prophecy of sword, famine, and pestilence was falsified. There was a large Judean diaspora in Egypt, among them the military colony of Elephantine and a vivid community in Alexandria. Jeremiah 44 even acknowledges this history by a gloss that mentions fugitives who eventually escape the sword (פְּלִטִים, 44:14), by the following statement: “Only the few who survive the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah” (44:28a).

Conclusion

I would like to summarize in what way the experience with actual refugees and the theory of cultural trauma enlighten my reading of Jeremiah 40–44. Observing the current war in Syria from afar and listening to the stories of some refugees has sharpened my awareness of conflicting claims about political and social disaster in the biblical narrative. Both in the narrative in chapters 40–43, in which Jeremiah plays a minor role, and in the prophet’s speech in Jeremiah 44, I have detected a pro-Golah perspective that favors the exiled Judeans living in Babylonia over against those who fled to Egypt. Using the theory of cultural trauma as a heuristic tool, one may read Jeremiah 40–44 as a master narrative that shapes the collective identity of post-exilic Judeans. Certainly, Jerusalem’s destruction by the Babylonians was remembered as a traumatic event in Israelite history and the book of Jeremiah witnesses to this cultural trauma. Within the book, however, at least two different representations of the trauma are offered. The leading idea that God punished Jerusalem because of the continuing idolatry of all Judeans aims at reversing the roles of perpetrator and victims by self-blaming the audience. This concept holds all Judeans responsible for Jerusalem’s fall. There is, however, a sub-theme, namely to blame the non-elite Judeans who survived in Judah and were not exiled to Babylonia for the ultimate depletion of Judah. Jeremiah accuses the refugees to Egypt as disobedient to God’s word and cites their view as an example of idolatry. Therefore, their voice is muted, their viewpoint dismissed, and the true remnant of Israel located in Babylonia. While this effort to write off part of the exilic Judean community from history did succeed ideologically, not historically, one can detect the power of the Babylonian carrier group in reclaiming Jeremiah’s message of new hope and restoration only for itself and despite the fact that Jeremiah was among those who settled in Egypt. As a result, the book of Jeremiah became a monument of cultural memory confirming the notion that cultural traumas are socially produced, upheld, and memorized – and eventually ideologically misused.

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¹ DIE ZEIT, no. 35, August 18, 2016, front page: “Die Nacht, in der Deutschland die Kontrolle verlor.”

² Their protocol of events was published in DIE ZEIT, no. 35, August 18, 2016, 2–4, 6–7, and 9.

³ DIE ZEIT no. 35, August 18, 2016, 3. The statement was issued August 25, 2015 after somebody had leaked an internal memo of the agency.

⁴ Josef Joffe, DIE ZEIT's current editor, explicitly alluded to the Exodus narrative: "Tausende von Flüchtlingen, die in Budapest gefangen waren und dann wie die Kinder Israels selber loszogen; ihr Schilfmeer war die österreichische Grenze." DIE ZEIT no. 35, August 18, 2016, 12.

⁵ As an introduction see Elizabeth Boase and Christopher Frechette, (eds.), *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma* (Semeia Studies 86; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2016); Eve-Marie Becker, Jan Dochhorn, and Else K. Holt, (eds.), *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions: Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond* (Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014). See especially the essay of Kathleen M. O'Connor, "How Trauma Studies Can Contribute to Old Testament Studies," in the latter volume, pp. 210–222.

⁶ See, e.g., Kathleen M. O'Connor, *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012); Ruth Poser, *Das Ezechielbuch als Traumaliteratur* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 154; Leiden et al.: Brill, 2012).

⁷ For the concept of "muted" voices see Athalya Brenner and Fokkeli van Dijk-Hemmes, *On Gendering Texts: Female and Male Voices in the Hebrew Bible* (Biblical Interpretation Series 1; Leiden et al.: Brill, 1993), 25–29. For a feminist interpretation of Jeremiah 44 see, e.g., Renate Jost, *Frauen, Männer und die Himmelskönigin: Exegetische Studien* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995); Kelly A. Whitcomb, "The Queen of Heaven or YHWH of Hosts: Does the God of Israel Protest (In)sufficiently in Jeremiah 44?," *Conversations with the Biblical World* 33 (2013): 82–97.

⁸ Cf. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). This book is the product of a yearlong dialogue among sociologists working at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences about collective traumas. Developed discursively and based on empirical studies, this theory formulates prerequisites, aspects, and effects of a "trauma process" that offers a matrix for different traumas of collectives.

⁹ Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 1.

¹⁰ Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 2.

¹¹ Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 1.

¹² Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 9.

¹³ Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 11.

¹⁴ Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 12.

¹⁵ For a similar attempt to interpret Jeremiah and Lamentations as representations of cultural trauma see Else K. Holt, “Daughter Zion: Trauma, Cultural Memory and Gender in OT Poetics,” in *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions* (see n. 6), 162–176. Holt focuses on the voice of the female figure in Jeremiah 2 and Lamentations 1–2, 4 and links it to YHWH’s lament in Jeremiah 8–9.

¹⁶ The observations presented here are indebted to two studies: Keith Bodner, *After the Invasion: A Reading of Jeremiah 40–44* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) and Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit: Studien zur Textentwicklung von Jer 26, 36–43 und 45 als Beitrag zur Geschichte Jeremias, seines Buches und jüdischer Parteien im 6. Jahrhundert* (Bonner Biblische Beiträge 82; Frankfurt am Main: Hain, 1992). While Bodner presents a close reading of the final text, Stipp studies the differences between the Masoretic Text and the Greek version and develops a source and redaction-critical thesis.

¹⁷ The Masoretic Text has a plus in Jeremiah 41:13 “they were glad.”

¹⁸ The Hebrew term שְׁאֵרִית “remnant” refers to the theological concept of divine rescue; cf. Jutta Hausmann, *Israel’s Rest: Studien zum Selbstverständnis der nachexilischen Gemeinde* (Beiträge zur Wissenschaft des Alten und Neuen Testaments 124; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987), 106–114 and 214.

¹⁹ See Robert P. Carroll, “The Myth of the Empty Land,” *Semeia* 59 (1992): 79–93.

²⁰ As argued in detail by Stipp, *Parteienstreit* (see n. 16), 270–271; similarly, Bodner, *After the Invasion* (see n. 16), 150.

²¹ The pro-Golah perspective in the book of Jeremiah has been intensively studied, see, e.g., Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung des Jeremiabuches* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 118; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978); Carolyn J. Sharp, *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in the Deutero-Jeremianic Prose* (Old Testament Studies; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2003).

²² Stipp, *Parteienstreit* (see n. 16), 257, detects no use of force. In contrast, many commentators assume Jeremiah’s and Baruch’s compulsory abduction to Egypt; cf., e.g., Norbert Lohfink, “Die Gattung der ‘Historischen Kurzgeschichte’ in den letzten Jahren von Juda und im Babylonischen Exil,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 90 (1978): 319–343; 335; Siegfried Herrmann, *Jeremia* (Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament 12, Lfg. 1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990), 25; Georg Fischer, *Jeremia 26–52* (Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament; Freiburg: Herder, 2005), 420–421.

Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah, Volume II* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 723, stresses the ideological claim of this verse and calls the prophet “a pathetic victim of other people’s fears and plans” (724).

²³ For the significance of this note see Lohfink, “Die Gattung der ‘Historischen Kurzgeschichte’,” 334.

²⁴ So with Stipp, *Parteienstreit* (see n. 16), 202–204; Bodner, *After the Invasion* (see n. 16), 128–135, stresses its rhetoric as an interpretation of the narrated events.

²⁵ The sermon’s prose style and the stereotypical accusation represent features of the exilic layer of the book, which has often been named “Deuteronomistic”; cf. Winfried Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 26–45* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 52; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981), 69–81.

²⁶ Bodner, *After the Invasion* (see n. 16), 133, detects here an ironic trait: “...the remnant’s mindset and conduct in Egypt have now denied themselves any remnant. This group was given the gift of a second chance after the invasion, but have forfeited their opportunity by leaving Judah and offering the same aberrant sacrifices in Egypt as they did at home.”

²⁷ So also Bodner, *After the Invasion*, 139. The New Revised Standard Version even adds in v. 19 that the women are speaking the following words.

²⁸ See the summary in Christl M. Maier, “Himmelskönigin (Dez. 2010),” in *Wissenschaftliches Bibellexikon im Internet*,

cf. <http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/21218/> [October 25, 2016].

²⁹ With Bodner, *After the Invasion* (see n. 16), 133.

³⁰ As another sign to verify his message of doom, Jeremiah announces that Pharaoh Hophra will be given into the hands of his enemies and thus end up like the Judean king Zedekiah (Jeremiah 44:30). Many commentators interpret this verse as a prophecy *ex eventu*, i.e., after the fact, because in 570 BCE, according to several independent sources, this Egyptian ruler was overthrown by Amasis, his former general. Cf. Alexander Schütze, “Apries, Wahibre (engl.) (April 2010),” in *Wissenschaftliches Bibellexikon im Internet*,

cf. <http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/de/stichwort/13565/> [October 25, 2016].

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