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**JAKOB WÖHRLE,
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OF JONAH INTO THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE**

A PROPHETIC REFLECTION ON DIVINE FORGIVENESS: THE INTEGRATION OF THE BOOK OF JONAH INTO THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE

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1. INTRODUCTION

It has often been recognized that the book of Jonah as well as several other passages in the Book of the Twelve are influenced by the so called grace formula (“Gnadenformel”) from Exod 34:6–7, in which Yhwh is described as a gracious and merciful God (Joel 2:12–14; Jonah 3:9; 4:2; Mic 7:18–20; Nah 1:2b, 3a; Mal 1:9a). However, the literary connection of these passages has not been defined exactly so far.

In previous research, for example, Raymond C. van Leeuwen presumed that the same redaction, which integrated the book of Jonah into the Book of the Twelve, was responsible for Joel 2:12–14; Mic 7:18–20; Nah 1:2b, 3a and for some further additions (Hos 4:10; Joel 4:21; Mic 4:1–5).¹ Additionally, Burkard M. Zapff, Ruth Scoralick and Gerhard Vanoni supposed that at least some of these passages could derive from a common redaction and were added for the context of the Book of the Twelve.² However, the relationship of these passages has not been explained by a redaction critical analysis of the individual books, and the intention of these passages within the Book of the Twelve has not been defined in detail.

¹ Cf. R.C. van Leeuwen, “Scribal Wisdom and Theodicy in the Book of the Twelve,” in: *In Search of Wisdom* (eds. L.G. Perdue et al.; FS J.G. Gammie; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993) 31–49.

² Cf. B.M. Zapf, *Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien zum Michabuch im Kontext des Dodekapropheten* (BZAW 256; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 1997) 241–79; R. Scoralick, *Gottes Güte und Gottes Zorn. Die Gottesprädikationen in Exodus 34,6f und ihre intertextuellen Beziehungen zum Zwölfprophetenbuch* (Herders Biblische Studien 33; Freiburg et al.: Herder, 2002) 212–13; G. Vanoni, “Spuren übergreifender Redaktionsarbeit im Jonabuch?” in: *Wort JHWHs, das geschah ...* (Hos 1,1). *Studien zum Zwölfprophetenbuch* (ed. E. Zenger; Herders Biblische Studien 35; Freiburg et al.: Herder, 2002) 123–37.

In the following, at first the formation of the book of Jonah is considered (section 2). Based on this, the literary connections (section 3) and the compositional relationship (section 4) between the passages of the Book of the Twelve, which are influenced by the grace formula, are explained. At last, the intention of these passages is defined (section 5).

2. THE FORMATION OF THE BOOK OF JONAH

Based on a new redaction critical analysis, which cannot be presented in detail here,³ the book of Jonah can be divided, mainly, in a primary layer and a secondary layer:

Primary layer	1:1–5a, 7, 8aαb, 9, 11–13, 15 2:1, 11 3:1–5 4:5, 6*(without יהוה and without להציל to גדולה), 7–9
Secondary layer	1:5b, 6, 8aβ, 10aβ, 14, 16 2:2–10 3:6–10 4:1–4, 6*(יהוה and להציל to גדולה), 10–11
Further addition	1:10bβ

The primary layer—dated to the beginning of the Hellenistic period—is concerned with the fact that Yhwh’s willingness to save the humans goes beyond the borders of his own people.⁴ Jonah

³ Cf. J. Wöhrle, *Der Abschluss des Zwölfprophetenbuches. Buchübergreifende Redaktionsprozesse in den späten Sammlungen* (BZAW 389; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 2008) 365–99.

⁴ The intention of the book of Jonah has been discussed frequently. Thereby, it has often been supposed that this book is characterized by a universalistic theology, cf. for example J. Wellhausen, *Die kleinen Propheten* (4th ed.; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 1963) 222; K. Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton* (KHC 13; Tübingen: Mohr, 1904) 245; A. Weiser, *Die Propheten Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona, Micha* (vol. 1 of *Das Buch der zwölf kleinen Propheten*; ATD 24; 2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956) 214; W. Rudolph, *Joel – Amos – Obadja – Jona* (KAT 13,2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1971) 325; H.W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 3. Obadja und Jona* (BKAT 14,3; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1977) 64–65; O. Kaiser, “Wirklichkeit, Möglichkeit und Vorurteil. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Buches Jona,” in: *Der Mensch unter dem Schicksal. Studien zu Geschichte, Theologie und Gegenwartsbedeutung der Weisheit* (ed. O. Kaiser; BZAW 161; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 1985) 41–53, 52; H. Gese, “Jona ben Amittai und das Jonabuch,” in: *Alttestamentliche Studien* (ed. H. Gese; Tübingen: Mohr, 1991) 122–38, 134; M. Franz, *Der barmherzige und gnädige Gott. Die Gnadenrede vom Sinai (Exodus 34, 6–7) und ihre Parallelen im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt* (BWANT 160; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2003) 259; M. Gerhards, *Studien zum Jonabuch* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2006) 131. However, it has also been mentioned that the book of Jonah is generally—and not only with regard to the nations—determined by the

1–2* narrates how Jonah reluctantly obeys Yhwh’s command. After Yhwh has told the prophet to go to Nineveh, the prophet tries to escape by taking a ship to Tarshish. But Yhwh sends a storm and the ship is in danger of breaking up (1:1–5a). The mariners, by casting lots, find out that Jonah is the reason for the present distress, and they throw him into the sea (1:7–15*). After this, Yhwh sends a fish, which swallows the prophet and brings him back to the dry land (2:1, 11). Thus, on the level of the primary layer, the religious behaviour of the mariners according to Yhwh, and the religious behaviour of the prophet in the fish has not played any role yet.

In the second part of the primary layer, obedient Jonah goes to Nineveh where he warns the people who then repents. Jonah leaves the city and sits nearby to see what will happen. (Jonah 3:1–5). In the ricinus episode, Yhwh teaches Jonah a lesson to make him feel what it would be like if Nineveh was punished (Jonah 4:6*, 7–9). The original end of the ricinus-episode, however, is lost.⁵ It was replaced by verses 4:10–11, which derive from the redactors of the secondary level.

The primary layer of the book of Jonah can thus be understood as a narrative pleading for a universalistic theology. It is emphasized that Yhwh does not tolerate any resistance against his will to save the nations. It is shown that divine service is possible beyond the borders of God’s own people. It is described, which consequences the judgement of Yhwh would have. And thus it is stressed that one cannot deny the foreign nations the salvific contribution of Yhwh.

Within the passages added by the redactors of the secondary layer, which can be dated in the middle of the third century, in Jonah 1 the positive behaviour of the mariners towards Yhwh is described. They tell the prophet to pray to his God (1:5b, 6). They ask Jonah for the originator of the present distress (1:8aβ). They fear Yhwh (1:10abα), and they turn to Yhwh with prayers, with sacrifices and with vows (1:14, 16). In Jonah 2:2–10 the prayer of the prophet in the fish was added. Like the mariners, the prophet now turns to Yhwh and is saved. In Jonah 3, the redactors added a speech of the king of Nineveh in Jonah 3:6–9, in which the king

question of the conditions and the theological backgrounds of divine forgiveness; cf. D. Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah* (WBC 31; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987) 434–35; F. Golka, *Jona* (Calwer Bibelkommentare; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1991) 21; U. Struppe, *Die Bücher Obadja, Jona* (Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar. Altes Testament 24,1; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1996) 80–82; J. Jeremias, *Die Propheten Joel, Obadja, Jona, Micha* (ATD 24,3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007) 79–80. Based on the presented redaction critical analysis, it can be shown that the primary layer is mainly determined by a universalistic tendency, whereas the general question of divine forgiveness was brought in by the redactors of the secondary layer.

⁵ Cf. for the details Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 386–89.

tells his people to repent, and a short notice in Jonah 3:10, according to which Yhwh relents from the evil he has planned to do against the Ninevites. In Jonah 4, a first addition was made in 4:1–4, in which a dispute between the prophet and Yhwh is narrated. The prophet becomes angry due to the fact that Yhwh has withdrawn the judgement against Nineveh. Finally, the redactors of the secondary layer added a new interpretation of the ricinus-episode in 4:10–11. The book ends with the unanswered question that if Jonah showed pity on a tree he didn't make grow, shouldn't Yhwh pity Nineveh?

Thus, the secondary layer of the book of Jonah pursues a twofold intention. At first, the turning of the people to Yhwh is set as the condition of Yhwh's turning to the people.⁶ For Jonah 1–3 is now characterized by a threefold description of human repentance and divine salvation. In Jonah 1, the mariners fear Yhwh, they turn to him with prayers, sacrifices and vows, and they are saved. In Jonah 2, the prophet also prays to Yhwh and is saved. And finally, in Jonah 3, the Ninevites repent and Yhwh cancels his judgement. Therefore, in Jonah 1–3 the action-oriented command to turn to Yhwh is decisive.

Second, the secondary layer of the book of Jonah delivers insight into the theological reasons of divine forgiveness.⁷ According to Jonah 4:2, the prophet explains his attempt to escape from Yhwh with the fact that he knew that Yhwh is a gracious and merciful God. Thus, Yhwh's willingness to forgive is here said to be a fundamental attribute of his character. Because Yhwh is gracious and merciful, he reacts to human repentance, as it is described three times in Jonah 1–3. Additionally, at the end of the ricinus-episode in 4:10–11, Yhwh's pity on the Ninevites is explained by the fact that he has made them. Yhwh's creation of man is given as the reason for his willingness to forgive.

The question of divine forgiveness, already present in the primary layer of the book of Jonah, is thus elaborated on the level of the secondary layer in a twofold way—an action-oriented and a theological way. The people's turning to Yhwh is the condition of Yhwh's turning to the people. Yhwh forgives the people because of his gracious and merciful character and because of the fact that he is the creator of man. Therefore, due to the additions of the secondary layer, the book of Jonah was rearranged from a narrative pleading for a universalistic theology to a practical-theological discourse on divine forgiveness.

⁶ Cf. H. Ewald, *Die Propheten des Alten Bundes* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Krabbe, 1840–1841) 557, who already mentioned that the book of Jonah points out “dass nur die wahre Furcht und Reue Heil von Jahve bringt;” cf. also G.H. Cohn, *Das Buch Jona im Lichte der biblischen Erzählkunst* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1969) 85.

⁷ See above note 4.

3. THE GRACE-LAYER OF THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE

The redaction-critical analysis of the Book of Jonah leads to the conclusion that this book underwent a redaction oriented on the conditions and on the theological backgrounds of divine forgiveness. Based on a redaction-critical analysis of all the other books of the Book of the Twelve it can be shown that some of them underwent a comparable redaction. This could be a hint that the secondary layer of the book of Jonah is part of a broader redaction which affected the growing Book of the Twelve as a whole.

Besides the secondary parts of the book of Jonah, the following additions to the individual books of the Book of the Twelve are oriented on divine forgiveness:⁸

Joel	Micah	Nahum	Malachi
2:12–14	7:18–20	1:2b, 3a	1:9a

In Joel 2:12–14 the people is summoned to repent with fasting, weeping and mourning because of the before mentioned agricultural catastrophe. Thereby, the gracious and merciful character of Yhwh is given as the reason for the potential salvation of the people. At the end of the book of Micah, in Mic 7:18–20, it is said that Yhwh is passing over the transgression of his people because of his kindness and mercy. According to Nah 1:2b, 3a Yhwh is slow to anger, but he does not leave his enemies unpunished. Finally, in Mal 1:9a the people is summoned to smooth the face of Yhwh so that he may be gracious.

This short overview shows that all these passages, like the secondary layer of the book of Jonah, are oriented on Yhwh's willingness to forgive. In these passages, the conditions of divine forgiveness are mentioned—mainly prayer (Joel 2:12; Jonah 1:14; 2:2–10; 3:8; Mal 1:9a) and ritual actions (Joel 2:12; Jonah 1:16; 2:10; 3:7–8). It is emphasized that Yhwh is a gracious God, who does not refuse to turn to the people (Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:10; 4:2; Mic 7:18–20; Mal 1:9a). But it is also stressed that Yhwh's willingness to forgive has its limits. For although he is slow to anger, he is angry and vengeful according to his enemies (Nah 1:2b, 3a).

Besides the rather general observation that the secondary layer of the book of Jonah and the mentioned additions to the books of Joel, Micah, Nahum and Malachi are oriented on Yhwh's willingness to forgive, it is remarkable that all these passages show obvious allusions to the well-known description of Yhwh's character in Exod 34:6, which is often called Grace-Formula ("Gnadenformel"):⁹

⁸ Cf. J. Wöhrle, *Die frühen Sammlungen des Zwölfprophetenbuchs. Entstehung und Komposition* (BZAW 360; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 2006) 196, 434; idem, *Abschluss*, 66, 262.

⁹ The term "Gnadenformel" was established by H. Spieckermann, "Barmherzig und gnädig ist der Herr ..." *ZAW* 102 (1990) 1–18, 3. For Exod 34:6 and the parallels to this formula cf., for example, J. Scharbert,

Exod 34:6 ... Yhwh is a merciful (רחום) and gracious (חנון) God (אל), slow to anger (ארך אפים) and of great kindness (חסד) and truth (אמת).

An almost literal quotation of the Grace-Formula can be found in the first of the above mentioned passages, in Joel 2:12–14:

Joel 2:12 But now, oracle of Yhwh, turn to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning. (13) And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn to Yhwh your God. For he is gracious (חנון) and merciful (רחום), slow to anger (ארך אפים) and of great kindness (חסד), and he relents from doing evil (נחם על-הרעה). (14) Who knows if he will turn and relent and leave a blessing behind him, grain offering and drink offering for Yhwh, your God?

In Joel 2:12–14, the appeal to react to the present distress with fasting, weeping and mourning, is motivated in 2:13 by a quotation of the Grace-Formula.¹⁰ However, compared to Exod 34:6, in Joel 2:13 the attributes “gracious” חנון and “merciful” רחום are mentioned in reverse order, and unlike Exod 34:6, Joel 2:13 does not end with a reference to Yhwh’s truth (אמת), but with the statement that Yhwh relents from doing evil (נחם על-הרעה).¹¹

Significantly, in Jonah 4:2—a verse added by the redactors of the secondary layer of the book of Jonah—a quotation of the Grace-Formula with exactly the same variations of this formula as in Joel 2:13 can be found.¹² Unlike Exod 34:6, but as Joel 2:13, at

“Formgeschichte und Exegese von Ex 34,6f und seiner Parallelen,” *Bib* 38 (1957): 130–50; R.C. Dentan, “The Literary Affinities of Exodus xxxiv 6f.,” *VT* 13 (1963) 34–51; Scoralick, *Güte*, 10–203; Franz, *Gott*, 111–53.

¹⁰ The verbal link between Joel 2:13 and Exod 34:6 has often been seen; cf. Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 129; Weiser, *Propheten*, 115; Scharbert, “Formgeschichte,” 133; Dentan, “Affinities,” 39; H.W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2. Joel und Amos* (BKAT 14,2; 2nd ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1975) 58; Rudolph, *Joel*, 58; Spieckermann, “Barmherzig,” 12–13; J. Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 218; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 1993) 106 note 44; J. Barton, *Joel and Obadiah. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 81; Franz, *Gott*, 257; Jeremias, *Propheten*, 30–31.

¹¹ Not only the connections, but also the above mentioned differences between Exod 34:6 and Joel 2:13 have often been recognized, cf. Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 129; Scharbert, “Formgeschichte,” 133; Dentan, “Affinities,” 39; Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2*, 58; Rudolph, *Joel*, 58; Spieckermann, “Barmherzig,” 12; Barton, *Joel*, 81; Scoralick, *Güte*, 142; Franz, *Gott*, 257; Jeremias, *Propheten*, 30–31.

¹² Cf. Scharbert, “Formgeschichte,” 133; Dentan, “Affinities,” 39; Rudolph, *Joel*, 58; L. Schmidt, “De Deo”. Studien zur Literarkritik und Theologie des Buches Jona, des Gesprächs zwischen Abraham und Jahwe in Gen 18^{22ff.} und von Hi 1 (BZAW 143; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 1976) 89–90; Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 3*, 140–41; Spieckermann, “Barmherzig,” 15–16; Nogalski, *Processes*, 106 note 44; R. Lux, *Jona. Prophet*

first Yhwh's grace and then his mercy is mentioned in Jonah 4:2, and unlike Exod 34:6, but as Joel 2:13, the formula ends with the statement that Yhwh relents from doing evil:

For I knew that you are a gracious (חֲנוּן) and merciful (רַחוּם) God (אֱלֹהִים), slow to anger (אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם) and of great kindness (חַסֵּד), one who relents from doing the evil (נָחַם עַל-הַרְעָה) (Jonah 4:2).

As there is no other verse in the Old Testament, in which the attributes חֲנוּן, רַחוּם, אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם, חַסֵּד and נָחַם עַל-הַרְעָה are mentioned together, the correspondences between Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2 can be taken as an indication that Joel 2:12–14 and the secondary layer of the book of Jonah are in some way interdependent. Additionally, it is remarkable that in Jonah 3:10, which has been added by the redactors of the secondary layer of the book of Jonah, the divine reaction to the repentance of the Ninevites and holds back the judgement planned against the city, is formulated with the following words:

God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God relented from doing the evil (נָחַם עַל-הַרְעָה), that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it (Jonah 3:10).

Thus, in Jonah 3:10 the phrase נָחַם עַל-הַרְעָה is used for the description of Yhwh's forgiveness, which is documented in Joel

zwischen 'Verweigerung' und 'Gehorsam'. Eine erzählanalytische Studie (FRLANT 162; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992) 190; Scoralick, *Güte*, 142; Franz, *Gott*, 257; Jeremias, *Propheten*, 106.

¹³ In previous research it is commonly assumed that Jonah 4:2 depends on Joel 2:13; cf. Rudolph, *Joel*, 363; Golka, *Jona*, 90; Nogalski, *Processes*, 273 note 79; E. Bosshard-Nepustil, *Rezeptionen von Jesaja 1–39 im Zwölfprophetenbuch. Untersuchungen zur literarischen Verbindung von Prophetenbüchern in babylonischer und persischer Zeit* (OBO 154; Freiburg, Schweiz / Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, 1997) 424; A. Scharf, *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuches. Neubearbeitungen von Amos im Rahmen schriftenergreifender Redaktionsprozesse* (BZAW 260; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 1998) 288; Franz, *Gott*, 259 note 191; A. Schüle, "Meinst Du, dass dir Zorn zusteht?. Der theologische Diskurs des Jonaschlusses (Jona 3,6–4,11)," *TLZ* 131 (2006) 675–88, 680; Jeremias, *Propheten*, 107. However, sometimes it is also claimed that on the contrary Joel 2:13 depends on Jonah 4:2, cf. J. Magonet, *Form and Meaning. Studies in Literary Techniques in the Book of Jonah* (BBET 2; Frankfurt a.M. / Bern: Lang, 1976) 77–79; S. Bergler, *Joel als Schriftinterpret* (BEATAJ 16; Frankfurt a.M. / Bern: Lang, 1988) 230–33; Spieckermann, "Barmherzig," 15–16 with note 41; H.J. Opgen-Rhein, *Jonaspsalm und Jonabuch. Sprachgestalt, Entstehungsgeschichte und Kontextbedeutung von Jona 2* (SBB 38; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1997) 214–15, or that both passages are dependent on a common source, cf. E. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch* (KAT 12; Leipzig / Erlangen: Deichert, 1922) 126; Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2*, 58.

2:13 and Jonah 4:2 beyond the version of the Grace-Formula given in Exod 34:6.

Further allusions to the Grace-Formula known from Exod 34:6 can be found in Mic 7:18–20:

Who is a God (אל) like you pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in kindness (חסד).¹⁹ He will again show mercy against us (רחמנו), he will subdue our iniquities, and ‘he will’ throw all ‘our sins’¹⁴ into the depths of the sea.²⁰ You will give truth to Jacob, kindness (חסד) to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old (Mic 7:18).

In Mic 7:18–20, as in Exod 34:6, the kindness (חסד) of Yhwh is mentioned in 7:18, 20, and his mercy (רחם; cf. רחום Exod 34:6) in 7:19. Additionally, in Mic 7:18 as in Exod 34:6 the appellation אל is used.¹⁵

Comparable is the addition to the book of Nahum in Nah 1:2b, 3a:

Yhwh takes vengeance on his adversaries and he rages against his enemies.^{3a} Yhwh is slow to anger (ארך אפים), and great in power, and he never lets go unpunished (Nah 1:2b).

With the phrase “slow to anger” (ארך אפים) in Nah 1:3a another element of the Grace-Formula from Exod 34:6 is taken up. Furthermore, the subsequent phrase “he does not leave unpunished” (לא ינקר) can be taken as a quotation from Exod 34:7. Due to these allusions to Exod 34, Nah 1:2b, 3a is also connected with the additions in Joel 2:12–14, Mic 7:18–20 and with the secondary layer of the book of Jonah.¹⁶

¹⁴ Read with LXX (ἀπορριφήσονται ... τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν) יהשליך and חטאותו; cf. Weiser, *Propheten*, 287; W. Rudolph, *Micha – Nahum – Habakuk – Zephanja* (KAT 13,3; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1975) 130; Jeremias, *Propheten*, 220.

¹⁵ Cf. Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 302; Spieckermann, “Barmherzig,” 1 note 4; R. Kessler, *Micha* (Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament; Freiburg et al.: Herder, 1999) 309; Scoralick, *Güte*, 143; Vanoni, “Spuren,” 125; Franz, *Gott*, 262–63; B.M. Zapff, “The Perspective on the Nations in the Book of Micah as a ‘Systematization’ of the Nations’ Role in Joel, Jonah, Nahum? Reflections on a Context-Oriented Exegesis in the Book of the Twelve,” in: *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* (eds. P.L. Redditt and A. Scharf; BZAW 325; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 2003) 292–312, 305; G. Baumann, *Gottes Gewalt im Wandel. Traditions-geschichtliche und intertextuelle Studien zu Nahum 1,2–8* (WMANT 108; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2005) 94–96; Jeremias, *Propheten*, 230.

¹⁶ Cf. Scharbert, “Formgeschichte,” 133; Dentan, “Affinities,” 39; A. Deissler, *Zwölf Propheten II. Obadja, Jona, Micha, Nahum, Habakuk* (NEchtB 8; Würzburg: Echter, 1984) 206; Spieckermann, “Barmherzig,” 1 note 4; K. Seybold, *Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanja* (ZBK.AT 24,2; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1991) 20; Nogalski, *Processes*, 106–7 note 44; K. Spronk,

The same holds true for the last of the above mentioned additions in Mal 1:9a:

Mal 1:9a But now, smooth the face of God (לֵאל) and he will be gracious to us (חַנּוּן).

In Mal 1:9a another two verbal connections to the Grace-Formula of Exod 34:6 can be found. At first, in this verse the appellation לֵאל is used again. Second, the promise that Yhwh will be gracious (חַנּוּן) can be taken as a link to the statement of Exod 34:6 that Yhwh is a gracious God (אֵל חַנּוּן).¹⁷

All in all, the secondary layer of the book of Jonah and the secondary passages Joel 2:12–14; Mic 7:18–20; Nah 1:2b, 3a; Mal 1:9a show obvious common features. All these passages are oriented on Yhwh's willingness to forgive and all these passages are determined by some distinct allusions to the Grace-Formula of Exod 34:6.

This suggests that these passages belong to the same redaction, which could be called the Grace-Layer of the Book of the Twelve. However, terminological correspondences alone are not a sufficient basis for such a far reaching assumption. For these passages could have been inserted by various redactions independent from each other. For example, in the case of Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2 it has often been recognized that these two passages show common features. But it is mostly assumed that Jonah 4:2 depends on Joel 2:13.¹⁸

Thus, the only way to show that the secondary layer of the book of Jonah and the additions to the books of Joel, Micah, Nahum and Malachi go back to the same redaction, is to show that these additions build a common composition.¹⁹

4. THE COMPOSITION OF THE GRACE-CORPUS

The secondary layer of the Book of Jonah and the secondary passages Joel 2:12–14; Mic 7:18–20; Nah 1:2b, 3a; Mal 1:9a are not only connected by their common orientation on the question of Yhwh's willingness to forgive and by the above mentioned allu-

Nabum (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Kampen: Kok, 1997) 36; Vanoni, "Spuren," 125; Scoralick, *Güte*, 143; Franz, *Gott*, 261; Zapff, "Perspective," 300; L. Perlitt, *Die Propheten Nabum, Habakuk, Zephanja* (ATD 25,1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004) 9; Baumann, *Gewalt*, 82–94.

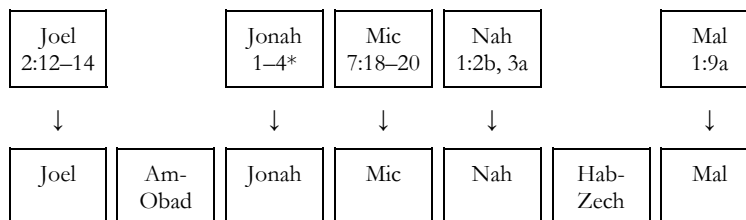
¹⁷ Cf. A. Meinhold, *Maleachi* (BKAT 14,8; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2006) 120: "Das Zusammenstellen von לֵאל mit der Wurzel *hnn* läßt an die große Gottesprädikation von Ex 34,6f. denken, wonach JHWH 'ein barmherziger und gnädiger Gott ist, langmütig und reich an zuverlässiger Güte ...'"

¹⁸ See above note 13.

¹⁹ For this methodological demand cf. in detail Wöhrle, *Sammlungen*, 24–27.

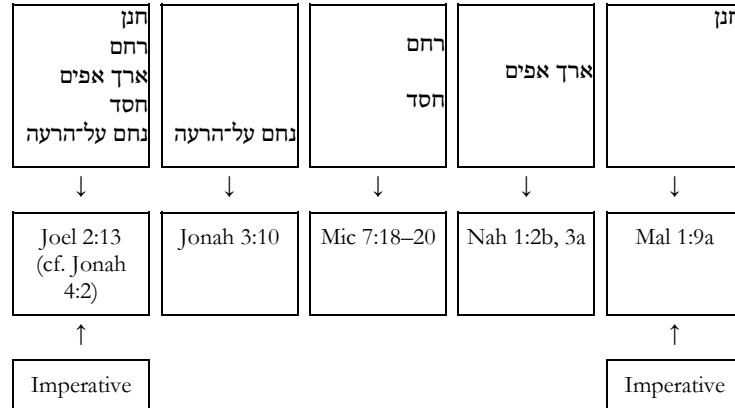
sions to the Grace-Formula of Exod 34:6. They also build a common composition in the growing Book of the Twelve, reaching on this redactional level from the book of Joel to the book of Malachi.²⁰

To begin with, the distribution of these passages over the whole corpus is remarkable. For these passages were added in the books of Joel, Jonah, Micah, Nahum and Malachi, i.e. at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the corpus, quasi as a frame and as the center of it.



However, the compositional interrelationship of these passages goes beyond this rather general observation. Only within the additions Joel 2:12–14 and Mal 1:9a, and thus only within the additions of the first and of the last book of the corpus, an imperative directed to the addressees of the book can be found (Joel 2:12, 13; Mal 1:9a). The appeal to turn to Yhwh, decisive in these two passages, thus frames the whole corpus. Second, the distribution of the individual elements of the Grace-Formula is notable. As mentioned above, the whole formula is cited—with one little difference—in Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2. Within the other additions just one or two individual terms of the Grace-Formula are taken up. Thereby, every element of the Grace-Formula in the version of Joel 2:13 // Jonah 4:2 is taken up exactly once more. The phrase נחם על-הרעה is taken up in Jonah 3:10, the terms חסד and רחם are taken up in Mic 7:18–20, ארך אפים in Nah 1:3a and חנן in Mal 1:9a. Thus, the Grace-Formula, completely cited in Joel 2:13 // Jonah 4:2, is taken up step by step fragmented in its elements in Jonah 3:10; Mic 7:18–20; Nah 1:2b, 3a; Mal 1:9a:

²⁰ A detailed description of the supposed formation of the Book of the Twelve is not possible here; cf. Wöhrle, *Sammlungen*; idem, *Abschluss*. A few remarks should suffice. At first, a collection of four prophetic books was made: the exilic Book of the Four comprising the books of Hosea, Amos, Micah and Zephaniah (cf. *Sammlungen*, 241–84). In the early Persian period the book of Hosea was taken out of this collection and replaced by the book of Joel, which can be taken as the introduction to the subsequent books on all further redactional levels of the Book of the Twelve (cf. *Sammlungen*, 436–60). At the time, when the book of Jonah was integrated into the growing Book of the Twelve, all other books of this corpus had been taken up but the book of Hosea, which was re-integrated into the Book of the Twelve at the end of its redactional development (cf. *Abschluss*, 429–37).



Thus, the secondary layer of the book of Jonah and the additions to the books of Joel, Micah, Nahum and Malachi indeed build a common composition. This can be taken as distinct evidence that these passages go back on one and the same redaction, which can be called the Grace-Layer of the Book of the Twelve.²¹ By this redaction, the book of Jonah was re-edited and for the first time taken up in the growing Book of the Twelve, and the other passages were added at the corners and at the center of the Book of the Twelve. The result of this redactional process was a new corpus of prophetic books with a new intention. This corpus can be called the Grace-Corpus.

5. THE INTENTION OF THE GRACE-CORPUS

By adding a re-edited version of the Book of Jonah to the growing Book of the Twelve and by adding the secondary passages Joel 2:12–14; Mic 7:18–20; Nah 1:2b, 3a; Mal 1:9a the redactors of these passages build a new corpus of prophetic books—the Grace-Corpus. This corpus is mainly determined by the question of Yhwh’s willingness to forgive. It specifies the conditions, the theological reasons and the limits of divine forgiveness.

Thereby, with the additions in Joel 2:12–14 and Mal 1:9a, a frame was laid around the whole corpus, in which the people are summoned to repent. In Joel 2:12 they are called to fast, to weep and to mourn, and in Mal 1:9a they are called to smooth the face of Yhwh. Thus, from its corners, the Grace-Corpus can be understood as a broad appeal to turn to Yhwh.

However, the Grace-Corpus is not only determined by this call to repent. In this corpus it is also explained, why Yhwh will react on the repentance of the people. The explanation of divine forgiveness put forward in the Grace-Corpus is mainly based on the Grace-Formula known from Exod 34:6, which is cited almost literally in Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2, and which is cited in certain

²¹ On previous approaches to the question of a common redaction history of the passages affected by the Grace-Formula see above notes 1–2.

elements within the passages added in Jonah 3:10; Mic 7:18; Nah 1:2b, 3a and Mal 1:9a. Based on the Grace-Formula Yhwh is described as a gracious and merciful God, who is slow to anger and of great kindness, and who relents from doing evil. Within the Grace-Corpus, this description of Yhwh's character is the theological key for the understanding of his willingness to forgive. Because of the fact that Yhwh is a gracious and merciful God, he turns to the people, saves them from distress and revokes the judgement he has planned to do.

In the first addition brought in by the redactors of the Grace-Corpus, Joel 2:12–14, the appeal to repent in Joel 2:12, 13a is motivated by a quotation of the Grace-Formula in 2:13b. That means, because of Yhwh's gracious and merciful character it is possible that he will save his people from the agricultural distress described in Joel 1:1–2:11. Additionally, the promise of Joel 2:15–27, according to which Yhwh will make an end to the present distress, can be taken as a first evidence that he indeed reacts upon the repentance of his people and turns to them with grace. At the beginning of the Grace-Corpus, the book of Joel can thus be understood as an exemplary description, how the people repent in a situation of distress and how Yhwh averts this distress because of his gracious and merciful character.²²

In the middle of the Grace-Corpus, the book of Jonah gives another broad portrayal of Yhwh's willingness to forgive.²³ As mentioned above, in Jonah 1–3 it is three times described how Yhwh reacts upon the repentance of the people. In the concluding chapter Jonah 4, Yhwh's willingness to forgive is again explained with a quotation of the Grace-Formula in Jonah 4:2 and by the fact that Yhwh is the creator of man in Jonah 4:10–11. With the three-fold description of human repentance and divine forgiveness in Jonah 1–3 and with the comprehensive explanation of Yhwh's willingness to forgive in Jonah 4, the book of Jonah can be seen as the theological centre of the Grace-Corpus.

Thereby, one element of the Grace-Formula plays a special role in the book of Jonah: Yhwh relents from doing evil (על-הרעה נהם; Jonah 3:10; cf. 3:9). Exemplified by the fate of Nineveh, it is stated in the book of Jonah that Yhwh is willing to cancel his planned judgement.²⁴ Thus he reacts upon the repentance of Nineveh and turns their fate.

²² Cf. Jeremias, *Propheten*, 6, who describes the intention of the present form of Joel 1–2 as follows: "... weil Israel zu Joels Zeiten dem Ruf des Propheten gefolgt ist, eine Wende der Heuschreckennot erlebt hat und daher vor dem 'Tag Jahwes' bewahrt worden ist (2, 18ff), darf es gewiss sein, dass Gott es auch zukünftig vor dem Erleiden von Schmach unter den Völkern wie im Exil bewahren wird (2, 19. 26f)."

²³ See above part 2.

²⁴ For the meaning of the term נהם describing the withdrawal of an already planned judgement see Exod 32:12, 14; Jer 18:8; Ez 14:22, and cf. for example J. Jeremias, *Die Neue Gottes. Aspekte alttestamentlicher Gottesvor-*

With the passages added to the books of Micah and Nahum, the fundamental description of Yhwh's willingness to forgive given in the books of Joel and Jonah is further developed. Thereby, in Mic 7:18–20 two elements of the Grace-Formula are mentioned: Yhwh's mercy (מִרְחָם) and his kindness (רַחֲמֵי). Because of the fact that Yhwh's character is determined by mercy and kindness, he adheres to the promises given to the fathers and passes over the transgressions of the people.

This last word of the book of Micah gives a theological explanation of the twofold way from judgement to salvation described in the preceding book (Mic 1–3 / 4–5 and Mic 6:1–7:7 / 7:8–17). According to Mic 7:18–20 the mercy and kindness of Yhwh is the reason for the fact that the judgement oracles of Mic 1–3; 6:1–7:7 have not been the final say of Yhwh but that Yhwh, as it is documented in Mic 4–5; 7:8–17, is willing to forgive.

Remarkable is the next passage, added by the redactors of the Grace-Corpus in Nahum 1:2b, 3a. In this word, added at the beginning of the book of Nahum, in which judgement is promised to the city of Nineveh, the term “slow to anger” is taken up from the Grace-Formula. Thus, in the book of Nahum it is shown by the redactors of the Grace-Corpus that Yhwh's willingness to forgive has its limits. For the statement that Yhwh is slow to anger can be understood in the context of the book of Nahum only in a way that Yhwh, though he is slow to anger, is ultimately able and willing to act in anger.²⁵

Taken together, the books of Jonah and Nahum, both of which focus on the city of Nineveh, show that even this aggressive city had a chance to avert the judgement because of Yhwh's willingness to forgive. But it is also stated that Yhwh's willingness to forgive has its limits, if a nation again acts hostile towards Yhwh.²⁶

stellung (Biblich-theologische Studien 31; 2nd ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1997) 109–13; idem, *Propheten*, 31; H.J. Stoebe, “נַחֲם,” *THAT* 2:59–66, 64–66; H. Simian-Yofre, “נַחֲם,” *THWAT* 5:366–384, 374–75.

²⁵ Cf. for example Spronk, *Nahum*, 36–37; B.M. Zapff, *Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien zum Michabuch im Kontext des Dodekapropheten* (BZAW 256; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 1997) 271; Scoralick, *Güte*, 195–96; Franz, *Gott*, 261–62; Baumann, *Gewalt*, 82–94; M. Roth, *Israel und die Völker im Zwölfprophetenbuch. Eine Untersuchung zu den Büchern Joel, Jona, Micha und Nahum* (FRLANT 210; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005) 247–48.

²⁶ Already in rabbinic Judaism it was assumed that the relationship between the books of Jonah and Nahum has to be understood in a way that Nineveh, after their first repentance documented in the book of Jonah, sinned once more against Yhwh and thus was punished as it is stated in the book of Nahum; cf. Schart, *Entstehung*, 27–28; B. Ego, “The Repentance of Nineveh in the Story of Jonah and Nahum's Prophecy of the City's Destruction – A Coherent Reading of the Book of the Twelve as Reflected in the Aggada,” in: *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* (eds. P.L. Redditt and A. Schart; BZAW 325; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter,

Against this background the often discussed problem, how the end of the book of Jonah has to be understood, can be solved. According to Jonah 4:5 the prophet leaves the city and waits in order to see, what will happen in it only after the announcement of Yhwh that he relents from doing evil against the Ninevites (Jonah 3:10). Therefore, it has often been supposed that Jonah 4:5 has either to be transposed behind verse 3:4 and thus before the announcement of divine forgiveness in 3:10,²⁷ or it has been presumed that Jonah 4:5 has to be kept on its place but has to be understood as a retrospect on the time before the announcement of divine forgiveness and has thus to be translated with past perfect.²⁸ However, the transposition of Jonah 4:5 is rather speculative, and no parallels can be given for the interpretation of the narrative forms of Jonah 4:5 as past perfect.

In the context of the Grace-Corpus of the Book of the Twelve, however, one can explain why the prophet still wants to see, what is going on in the city, after the announcement of divine forgiveness. In this context the prophet wants to observe the further behaviour of the people of Nineveh.²⁹ For according to the subsequent book of Nahum, Yhwh's willingness to relent from doing evil has not been his final say against the Ninevites. In the context of the Grace-Corpus this can only be understood in a way

2003) 155–64. Among the current approaches on the Book of the Twelve, Scoralick, *Güte*, 184–85, mentioned that the relationship between these two books has to be understood in such a way.

²⁷ Cf. H. Winckler, “Zum Buche Jona,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 2,2 (1900) 260–65, 264; Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 256; Sellin, *Zwölfprophetenbuch*, 252; W. Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten* (HKAT 3,4; 3rd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922) 193; Weiser, *Propheten*, 223; T. Robinson and F. Horst, *Die zwölf kleinen Propheten* (HAT 14; 3rd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1964) 122.

²⁸ Cf. N. Lohfink, “Jona ging zur Stadt hinaus (Jon 4,5),” *BZ* 5 (1961) 185–203, 190–93; H.W. Wolff, *Studien zum Jonabuch. Mit einem Anhang von Jörg Jeremias: Das Jonabuch in der Forschung seit Hans Walter Wolff* (3rd ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2003) 44–48; idem, *Obadja*, 136–37; Rudolph, *Joel*, 362–63; G. Vanoni, *Das Buch Jona. Literar- und formkritische Untersuchung* (Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament 7; St. Ottilien: EOS-Verlag, 1978) 20–21; Deissler, *Propheten II*, 162; Golka, *Jona*, 92; Lux, *Jona*, 146–47; Gerhards, *Studien*, 33–40; Schüle, “Zorn,” 685; Jeremias, *Propheten*, 108.

²⁹ Already Schmidt, “De Deo,” 28–29; J. Limburg, *Jonah. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993) 95; U. Simon, *Jona. Ein jüdischer Kommentar* (SBS 157; Stuttgart: katholisches Bibelwerk, 1994) 127–9; Struppe, *Bücher*, 135, explained the fact that Jonah leaves the city after the announcement of divine forgiveness with the assumption that the prophet wants to see the further behaviour of the Ninevites. However, they read the book of Jonah for its own and not in the context of the Book of the Twelve and thus they cannot explain, why no further events are mentioned in the book of Jonah.

that the repentance of the Ninevites, mentioned in Jonah 3, did not last.

In a way, it could be said that Jonah was still sitting in front of Nineveh when the city was destroyed, as announced in the book of Nahum. For there he waits in order to see, if the repentance of the Ninevites would endure. Therefore, according to the Grace-Corpus, repentance is not a single act, but a continuous turning to Yhwh.

Based on the book of Jonah, the question of divine forgiveness is thus further developed in the books of Micah and Nahum in a twofold way. At the end of the book of Micah in Mic 7:18–20, it is emphasized that Yhwh is indeed a merciful and kind God, who turns judgement into salvation. But in the subsequent book of Nahum it is also stressed that Yhwh's willingness to forgive has its limits. For although he is slow to anger, he is also able and willing to act in anger.

At the end of the Grace-Corpus, in the book of Malachi, the redactors of this corpus added one last passage, in which again an appeal to turn to Yhwh is put forward. Thereby, the last missing element of the Grace-Formula יְהוָה is taken up and it is stated that Yhwh will act gracious if the people smooth his face. Thus, in Mal 1:9a, as a concluding remark, it is once more stated that repentance is the condition of Yhwh's willingness to forgive and it is emphasized that Yhwh will react upon this repentance.

With the additions brought in by the redactors of the Grace-Corpus the growing Book of the Twelve thus gets a theological superstructure. The fact that the individual books of this corpus are determined by the sequence judgement and salvation—for God's own people as well as for the nations—is explained by the gracious and merciful character of Yhwh. Due to the fact that Yhwh is gracious and merciful he saves the people and he is even willing to relent from doing evil.

Thus, the Grace-Corpus presents a differentiated theological determination of divine forgiveness. Based on the default books taken up by the redactors of this corpus with their juxtaposition of judgement and salvation the Grace-Corpus specifies the conditions and the limits of Yhwh's willingness to forgive and it gives a theological explanation of divine forgiveness.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on a redaction critical analysis of all the individual books of the Book of the Twelve, it can be shown that the book of Jonah as well as the books of Joel, Micah, Nahum and Malachi underwent a redaction oriented on the question of Yhwh's willingness to forgive. All of these passages show specific allusions to the Grace-Formula known from Exod 34:6. Additionally, these passages build a common composition on this level of the growing Book of the Twelve as they were added at the beginning, at the center and at the end of the corpus. The insertion of the Grace-Formula in full

in Joel 2:13 and in Jonah 4:2 and its careful fragmentation and distribution between Mic 7.18–20; Nah 1:2b; Mal 1:9a to produce a second full citation strongly suggest the work of a single redactional process.

By this redaction a new version of the growing Book of the Twelve was made, which can be called Grace-Corpus. This corpus can be understood as a reflection on divine forgiveness. It deals with the conditions, the theological backgrounds and the limits of Yhwh's willingness to forgive. It states that Yhwh turns to the people, if the people turn to him. It explains that Yhwh's gracious and merciful character is the theological reason for his willingness to forgive. But it points out that Yhwh's willingness to forgive has its limits, if human repentance does not endure.