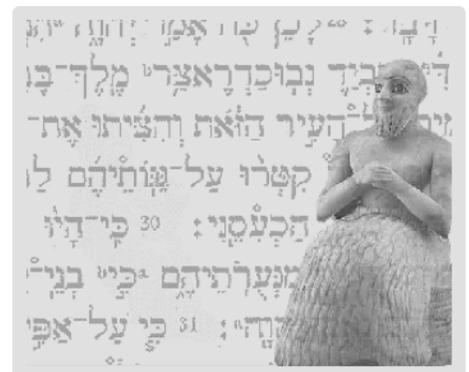


## Reading Jeremiah 19:1–13: Integrating Diachronic and Synchronic Methodologies

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# READING JEREMIAH 19:1–13: INTEGRATING DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONIC METHODOLOGIES

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The purpose of this article is two-fold. Firstly, it aims towards a reading of the message of Jer 19:1–13. This is a straightforward task, attempted many times in the history of Biblical Studies and Theology. However, this first task will be directed, and its simplicity challenged, by the second task. The second task is that it will investigate a possible method for the integration and interface of source/redaction criticism and a final form literary reading for the meaning of a text. As biblical scholarship has moved beyond the debate of synchronic versus diachronic methodology for reading the Bible, this article proposes a possible approach for using them simultaneously to enrich our understanding of its message.<sup>1</sup>

The catalyst for bringing these two aims together will be the use of the Bakhtinian understanding of dialogic truth. The intention is to offer a reading that no longer needs to be self-consciously Bakhtinian, but simply presents a compelling method of reading that uses diachronic and synchronic methodologies simultaneously and constructively.

Usually within Biblical Studies, to assert the message of Jer 19:1–13 is to assert an abstract, static idea of its theology. Traditionally within the discipline, the message to the audience of the final form would be investigated but with studies of reception history, other audiences are also important. The meaning and theology we search for is systematic, contributing in a fixed way to the theological framework of the community it was formed for and therefore useful for a system of biblical theology. Mikhail Bakhtin would call this a “monologic” conception of truth, one which can be contained within a single consciousness.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, he describes a “dialogic” conception of truth

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. J.C. de Moor (ed.), *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis* (OTS, 34; Leiden: Brill, 1995). Twenty years later, the approaches are usually allowed to lie side by side, and with most major commentaries acknowledging the need for attention to both.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. C. Emerson (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984),

in response to his reading of Dostoevsky's novels. This concept of truth is embodied in a plurality of consciousness, or what might be called a conversation of voices in a text.<sup>3</sup>

Dialogic truth is not fixed, nor is it abstract. Instead it is embodied in unmerged voices in dialogue with one another. Dialogic truth stems from the realisation that all points of view are relative to each other, an idea inspired and illustrated in Bakhtin's writings by Einstein's theory of relativity.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, in dialogism, meaning is always in production because there is no single point against which everything can be understood.<sup>5</sup> The text has meaning in dialogue with past texts and voices as well as present and future ones.<sup>6</sup> Flowing from this, this type of truth is not a system because it cannot be contained in a single consciousness. Rather Bakhtin calls it an "event,"<sup>7</sup> which is the simultaneous existence of human orientations and voices. It is this event, or simultaneous existence, which gives the truth unity, not the fact that it can be made propositional.

Although this idea of truth may seem counter-productive to the usual purpose of reading the biblical text, the usefulness of challenging a monologic concept of truth for biblical theology was articulated twenty years ago in an article by Carol A. Newsom, "Bakhtin, the Bible and the Dialogic truth."<sup>8</sup> In this

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79–85.

<sup>3</sup> For Bakhtin's work on dialogism, see particularly Bakhtin, *Problems*; the essays contained in M. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. M. Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981). For example, he describes Dostoevsky's novels as "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices" (*Problems*, 6). Two excellent studies on Bakhtin's dialogism are G.S. Morson and C. Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990) and M. Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>4</sup> We all occupy a different "time/space" and so meaning comes about from two bodies occupying simultaneous but different time/space. This time/space is called the *chronotope* by Bakhtin and is explored most fully in English translation in M. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel," in idem, *Dialogic Imagination*, 84–258. For a more accessible explanation of the chronotope, see Holquist, *Dialogism*, 107–48 and on relativity and Einstein, see *ibid.*, 158–62.

<sup>5</sup> See Holquist, *Dialogism*, 141.

<sup>6</sup> M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in idem, *Dialogic Imagination*, 276–77: "The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it—it does not approach the object from the sidelines."

<sup>7</sup> See for example Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 330–31. For an explanation of his understanding of "event" as found throughout his writings, see Holquist, *Dialogism*, 23–25.

<sup>8</sup> C.A. Newsom, "Bakhtin, the Bible, and Dialogic truth," *JR* 76

article Newsom describes Bakhtin's dialogism and its advantages for drawing theology out of composite and diverse texts of the Hebrew Bible. She confronts the divide between theologians searching for systematisation, and the particularity and variety of biblical texts. Since then, many biblical scholars, including Newsom, have used Bakhtin profitably to analyse biblical texts. For example, Bakhtin's work has been used to examine multiple viewpoints in the final form of the text and to consider genres in the biblical texts as unfinalizable and always relative to other texts.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, as Christl M. Maier and Robert P. Carroll have each argued, this recognition of multiple voices within the text is significant for hermeneutics. Post-modern interpretation of biblical texts is becoming increasingly multi-voiced. Therefore, attention to the multiple voices within a text, particularly such a composite text as Jeremiah, is crucial for generating a multiplicity of readings.<sup>10</sup>

Rather than arguing or explaining afresh the concept of dialogism, this article will explore another opening for this concept in our reading of biblical texts. It will be applied to the ongoing quest to integrate source and redaction criticism with literary readings of a text meaningfully and profitably.

If all meaning is relative to other perspectives, then the meaning of a text when it has been redacted will be in dialogue with the earlier version or tradition that has been expanded. In other words, even though these earlier traditions may have been re-interpreted, their voices are not lost because the new text, by the very nature of it existing relative to the earlier text,

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(1996), 290–306.

<sup>9</sup> Notably, see B. Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and biblical Scholarship: An Introduction* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000); idem, *How Are the Mighty Fallen? A Dialogical Study of King Saul in 1 Samuel* (JSOTSup, 365; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003); R. Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History. Part One: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges* (New York, NY: Seabury, 1980) and his following studies on the Deuteronomistic history. Other examples are K.M. Craig, *Reading Esther: A Case for the Literary Carnavalesque* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995); W.L. Reed, *Dialogues of the Word: The Bible as Literature According to Bakhtin* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993); C.A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); I. Parde, *Countertraditions in the Bible: A Feminist Approach* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); C. Mitchell, "The Dialogism of Chronicles," in M.P. Graham and S.L. McKenzie (eds.), *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* (JSOTSup, 263; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 311–26; R. Boer (ed.), *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> C.M. Maier, "After the 'One-Man Show': Multi-Author and Multi-Voiced Commentary Writing," in C.J. Sharp and C.M. Maier (eds.), *Power and Prophecy: Jeremiah in Feminist and Postcolonial Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 72–85; R.P. Carroll, "The Book of J: Intertextuality and Ideological Criticism," in A.R. Diamond, K.M. O'Connor, and L. Stulman (eds.), *Troubling Jeremiah* (JSOTSup, 260; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 220–43.

has a meaning that answers and responds to it. In practical terms, after establishing that truth cannot be reduced to propositions, we suggest that the final form of the text is best read not only in its current state, but as the result of a history of production, including authoring and redacting. Although this diachronic view does not take in all the voices and consciousness relative to which the text before us was produced, it offers an important glimpse into one line of this conversation.

Therefore, this article will read the text of Jer 19:1–13 as the succession and dialogue of voices that respond to one another, and these will be accessed through source and redaction criticism.<sup>11</sup> This process of expansions of a prophetic text responding to earlier material has been investigated notably by Odil H. Steck and Reinhard G. Kratz. In Steck's formulation, he proposes that prophetic material was reshaped for new perspectives and that successive redactions bestowed meaning.<sup>12</sup> However, Steck maintains that these redactions are directed towards a unity in a new context. He suggests that there is "a higher unity of older, revised material and the contemporary, revising material in the presentation and arrangement of the whole (!) text flow."<sup>13</sup> Kratz refers to the process of reworking and gradual supplementation of material as *Fortschreibung*. This is a process of interpretation and actualisation where the redaction makes explicit what was already found by the interpreter in the prophetic text. He writes, "The inspiration of the prophet and his interpretation are inseparable."<sup>14</sup> The study here builds upon these approaches, but by using Bakhtinian dialogism, the necessity of a final unity can be avoided. When the earlier material is redacted, it is not only re-interpreted bringing new meaning, the former meaning remains as a voice in the text in dialogue with the reinterpretation.

There are three main reasons for considering this alternative to the final form as a monologic text that has successfully overpowered the earlier voices. Firstly, Bakhtin suggests that the idea of monologic texts is the project of the enlighten-

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<sup>11</sup> Although note that the sources and redactional material may also be dialogic if we take the concept of dialogism seriously. This highlights a certain problem that much of source and redaction criticism is based on the assumption of monologic texts. It proposes that a single author of the Bible could not be like Dostoevsky and could not include more than one perspective without mediating between them. Nevertheless, I believe source and redaction criticism are more sophisticated than this, based also upon the use of words, choice of vocabulary, and particularly in the case of Jeremiah, text critical evidence.

<sup>12</sup> See O.H. Steck, *The Prophetic Books and their Theological Witness. Part One*, trans. J.D. Nogalski (Saint Louis, MO: Chalice, 2000), 94, 107.

<sup>13</sup> Steck, *Prophetic Books*, 105.

<sup>14</sup> R.G. Kratz, *The Prophets of Israel*, trans. A.C. Hagedorn and N. MacDonald (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 31–32; see also *ibid.*, 56–61 where he looks at *Fortschreibung* in the book of Jeremiah.

ment.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, whilst it would be absurd to suggest biblical writers had a consciously dialogic concept of truth, it is reasonable to suppose that monologic truth as a norm in texts is a later development, and pre-enlightenment texts, authors, and redactors would have functioned predominantly according to the alternative. Secondly, the act of reinterpretation of earlier texts, their reuse, and the remnant of tensions within texts testify to a tolerance for other voices in the text. Assuming biblical editors were not simply blind to literary art and consistency, they somehow accepted these tensions and found them meaningful. Thirdly, and this will be demonstrated at the conclusion of this article, the incorporation of Jer 19:1–13 into its current context suggests that its multiple voices were heard by the editors who placed it there.

This method of analysing voices within a single passage as a succession of expansions is not by any means the only method for analysing the text as a dialogue of voices. Closely related approaches have been proposed and applied by Carroll, Mark E. Biddle, Louis Stulman, and Margaret D. Zulick. Carroll also explores Bakhtin's notion of intertextuality, but he focuses on dialogue with other texts, unlike our focus here on dialogue with earlier material within the text.<sup>16</sup> Biddle combines both synchronic and diachronic methodologies in his analysis of Jer 7–20, and his attention to the polyphony of voices in the book is investigated through the speakers, addressees, and referents in the text. He examines their identity, characterisation and then dialogue within the historical context.<sup>17</sup> Stulman also sustains attention to the diachronic development of the text, and the importance of this development for a synchronic reading that draws out theology from discordant voices. In his reading of Jer 19:1–13, he focuses on the discordance of the passage with the message of Jer 18.<sup>18</sup> Zulick explicitly uses Bakhtin and the language of dialogism, examining oracles as successive levels of reflection on crisis. Her analysis looks at the oracles as wholes rather than examining their own history of composition.<sup>19</sup> Any methodology concerned with multiple

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<sup>15</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems*, 82: "The consolidation of monologism and its permeation into all spheres and ideological life was promoted in modern times by European rationalism, with its cult of a unified and exclusive reason, and especially by the Enlightenment, during which time the basic generic forms of European artistic prose took shape."

<sup>16</sup> Carroll, "Book of J," 223–32.

<sup>17</sup> M.E. Biddle, *Polyphony and Symphony in Prophetic Literature: Rereading Jeremiah 7–20* (Studies in Old Testament Interpretation, 2; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), see especially 8–11 on method. Unfortunately, he does not analyse Jer 19:1–13 in detail.

<sup>18</sup> L. Stulman, *Jeremiah* (AOTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 2005). On method, see 11–13 and on Jer 19:1–13, see 192–94. He describes the inclusion of a Deuteronomistic speech in an earlier sign-act in Jer 19:1–13 as providing details where the earlier form of the story lacked explanation. This is a simpler model to the one that will be used here.

<sup>19</sup> M.D. Zulick, "The Agon of Jeremiah: On the Dialogic Invention of Prophetic Ethos," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78 (1992), 125–48.

voices in the text must also acknowledge that there are multiple methodologies for reading. It is into this context, and with this awareness of many other dialogues and intertextuality that could be studied, that we now apply another method, focusing on the successive expansions of Jer 19:1–13 as a resource for accessing different voices in the text.

### TEXT OF JER 19:1–13<sup>20</sup>

1 כה אמר יהוה הלוך וקניית בקבק יוצר חרש ומזקני העם ומזקני הכהנים 2 ויצאת אל גיא בן הנם אשר פתח שער החרסות \*החרסית

וקראת שם את הדברים אשר אדבר אליך 3 ואמרת שמעו דבר יהוה מלכי יהודה וישבי ירושלם כה אמר יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל הנני מביא רעה על המקום הזה אשר כל שמעה תצלנה אזניו 4 יען אשר עזבני וינכרו את המקום הזה ויקטרו בו לאלהים אחרים אשר לא ידעום המה ואבותיהם ומלכי יהודה ומלאו את המקום הזה דם נקים

5 ובנו את במות הבעל לשרף את בניהם באש עלות לבעל אשר לא צויתי ולא דברתי ולא עלתה על לבי פ 6 לכן הנה ימים באים נאם יהוה ולא יקרא למקום הזה עוד התפת וגיא בן הנם כי אם גיא ההרגה

7 ובקתי את עצת יהודה וירושלם במקום הזה והפלתים בחרב לפני איביהם וביד מבקשי נפשם ונתתי את נבלתם למאכל לעוף השמים ולבהמת הארץ 8 ושמתי את העיר הזאת לשמה ולשרקה כל עבר עליה ישם וישרק על כל מכתה 9 והאכלתים את בשר בניהם ואת בשר בנתיהם ואיש בשר רעהו יאכלו במצור ובמצוק אשר יציקו להם איביהם ומבקשי נפשם

10 ושברת הבקבק לעיני האנשים ההלכים אותך 11 ואמרת אליהם כה אמר יהוה צבאות ככה אשבר את העם הזה ואת העיר הזאת כאשר ישבר את כלי היוצר אשר לא יוכל להרפה עוד ובתפת יקברו מאין מקום לקבור

12 כן אעשה למקום הזה נאם יהוה וליושביו ולתת את העיר הזאת כתפת 13 והיו בתי ירושלם ובתי מלכי יהודה כמקום התפת הטמאים לכל הבתים אשר קטרו על גגתיהם לכל צבא השמים והסך נסכים לאלהים אחרים פ

<sup>20</sup> The translation comes from the NRSV with the author's own modifications. The italics and indentations correspond to the expansions of the text argued below. The MT has been used with discussion of variants in the textual analysis below.

Jer 19:1 Thus said the LORD: Go and buy a potter's earthenware jug. Take with you some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests, 2 and go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom *which is at the entry of the Potsberd Gate,*

and proclaim there the words that I tell you. 3 You will say: Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am going to bring a disaster upon this place so that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. 4 Because they have forsaken me, and have profaned this place and they have made offerings in it to other gods whom they do not know nor do their fathers nor the kings of Judah; and they have filled this place with the blood of innocents

5 and have gone on building the shrines of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or decree, nor did it enter my mind. 6 Therefore behold the days are coming, says the LORD, when this place will no more be called Topheth, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of the Slaughter.

7 And in this place I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem, and will make them fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of those who seek their life. I will give their dead bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the earth. 8 And I will make this city a horror to be hissed at; everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its wounds. 9 And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and each will eat the flesh of his friend in the siege, and in the distress with which their enemies and those who seek their life afflict them.

10 Then you will break the jug in the sight of those who go with you, 11 and will say to them: Thus says the LORD of hosts: Thus I will break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it can never be made whole. *And in Topheth they will bury until there is no more room to bury.*

12 Thus I will do to this place, says the LORD, and to its inhabitants, making this city like Topheth. 13 And the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will be defiled like the place of Topheth—all the houses upon whose roofs they have made offerings to the whole host of heaven, and they have poured out libations to other gods.

### OVERVIEW OF THE COMPOSITION HISTORY OF JER 19:1–13

Although many scholars disagree on the details, it has been proposed that Jer 19:1–13 consists of a sign-act account of Jeremiah breaking an earthenware jar that has been overlaid with a speech, possibly Deuteronomistic, and then appended with 19:14–20:6.<sup>21</sup> This has been proposed on the basis of a number of features in the text.

Firstly, the command to break the flask in v. 10 is separated from the command to purchase it in v. 1, and, as William McKane says, this is “a peculiar and unnatural feature.”<sup>22</sup> A broken connection between v. 2a and v. 10 is further indicated by the different style in vv. 2b–9, an oracle using language which in some places is reminiscent of “Deuteronomistic” language and material,<sup>23</sup> and in other places reminiscent of other

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<sup>21</sup> The reconstruction of the composition history discussed here will largely follow the proposal of W. McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25* (ICC; London: Bloomsbury, 1986), 443–59. Holladay and Lundbom argue for unity of this chapter based upon the wordplay between “jug” (בִּקְבֵק) in v. 1 and “I will make void” (וּבְקִיתִי) in v. 7. Cf. J.R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20* (AB, 21a; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 836–37; W.L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1986), 536–37. However, this wordplay can be explained as the creation of a skilful redactor, as will be demonstrated below.

<sup>22</sup> McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 445.

<sup>23</sup> There is some debate as to whether the interpolated verses are Deuteronomistic, part of a larger question regarding the composition of Jeremiah. J.P. Hyatt, “Jeremiah and Deuteronomy,” *JNES* 1 (1942), 156–73 brought the idea of Deuteronomistic redaction to prominence, arguing that Jeremiah himself did not agree with the Deuteronomic reforms but the later Deuteronomistic redactions brought his writings into line with Deuteronomic ideology. Regarding Jer 19:2b–9, 11b–13, W. Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1–25* (WMANT, 41; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), 221–23 and W. Rudolph, *Jeremia* (HAT, 12; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1968), 127 argue for their Deuteronomistic character. On the other hand, A. Weiser, *Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 161–62 believes the term Deuteronomistic is misleading as the style more probably stems from a type of liturgical speech. G. Wanke, *Jeremia* (ZBK, 20; Zürich: TVZ, 1995), 180 attributes these sections to both Deuteronomistic hands and later re-working. The whole concept of Deuteronomistic Jeremiah has been disputed by H. Weippert, *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches* (BZAW, 132; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973). More recent commentaries are more sceptical as a result, e.g. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 92–101 does not mention a Deuteronomistic redaction and furthermore, he argues (836) against the suggestion that Jer 19:3–9 contains Deuteronomistic language, but is rather a mixture of rhetorical language found in Deuteronomy, Kings and Jeremiah. McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, xlix disputes the concept of a systematic editorial policy by a Deuteronomistic redactor; R.P. Carroll, *Jeremiah* (OTL; London: SCM, 1986), 41–42 acknowledges that the Deuteronomistic influence may have been previously exaggerated, and similarly Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 240 considers the prose sermons to be in a Deuteronomistic style but not from a deuteronomist’s hand.

Jeremianic material. For example “his ears ring” (תצלנה אזניו) in v. 3 is also found in 1 Sam 3:1 and 2 Kgs 21:12;<sup>24</sup> “they have abandoned me” עזבני in v. 4 is found in many other places including Jer 1:16, 2:13; “other gods whom they did not know” (לאֱלֹהִים אַחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדְעוּם) in v. 4 is similar to Jer 7:9 and identical to Jer 44:3;<sup>25</sup> “they have filled this place with the blood of innocents” (דָּם נָקִים וּמְלֹא אֶת הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה) in v. 4 recalls Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:16; 24:4)<sup>26</sup> and Jehoiakim (Jer 22:17); v. 8 bears resemblance to Jer 18:16;<sup>27</sup> and there is duplication in 1 Kgs 9:8; v. 9 contains a threat of cannibalism similar to Deut 28:53.<sup>28</sup> The direction of dependence is difficult to determine, but the correspondences do point to a distinctive style. Furthermore, the speech in vv. 3–9 has a shorter parallel in Jer 7:31–34,<sup>29</sup> with vv. 5–6 echoing 7:31–32 closely.

The original sign-act account can be further delimited to vv. 1–2a\* and vv. 10–11a, where vv. 2b–9 and vv. 11b–13 are later additions.<sup>30</sup> The phrase “Valley of the Son of Hinnom,

<sup>24</sup> On this parallel, see A.G. Auld, “Jeremiah-Manasseh-Samuel: Significant Triangle? Or Vicious Circle?”, in H.M. Barstad and R.G. Kratz (eds.), *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 1–9.

<sup>25</sup> The chronology of the book of Jeremiah itself suggests that Jer 44:3 is the later text however.

<sup>26</sup> Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 540, following J. Gray, *I & II Kings* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 705, suggests that 2 Kgs 24:4 is dependent on this occurrence.

<sup>27</sup> Note that Jer 18:16 refers to the land, whereas here it refers to the city.

<sup>28</sup> Although again, it is possible that passage is dependent on the present one. See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 541.

<sup>29</sup> A. Kuenen, *Historisch-Critisch Onderzoek naar het Ontstaan en de Verzameling van de Boeken des Ouden Verbonds*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Engels, 1863), 187–88 suggested that this is a parallel narrative account to the sermon of Jer 7:30–34, in the same way that Jer 26 is the narrative account of Jer 7:1–15, because there is only a short mention of the Valley of the Son of Hinnom in Jer 7–10 compared to the speech over the valley in chapter 19. This is followed by Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 836 and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 536–37, although as part of an argument about the unity of the chapter. Other scholars offer similar understandings but still see vv. 2b–9 and 11b–13 as an interpolation. Weiser, *Jeremia*, 162 points to the variants between 7:31–32 and 19:5–6 and so follows that they are from the same root but not borrowed directly. F. Giesebrecht, *Das Buch Jeremia*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907), 109, and D.P. Volz, *Studien zum Text des Jeremia* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1920), 166 consider the sermon to have been taken from chapter 7 rather than being parallel to it. G.H. Parke-Taylor, *The Formation of the Book of Jeremiah: Doublets and Recurring Phrases* (SBLMS, 51; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 195 also considers Jer 19:5–6 to be dependent on Jer 7:30–31.

<sup>30</sup> E.W. Nicholson, *Jeremiah 1–25* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 162–63; Thiel, *Jeremia*, 221; Weiser, *Jeremia*, 160; Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 125–27 also mentions that v. 11b is a tertiary insertion; Giesebrecht, *Jeremia*, 109–11, although he includes v. 2a in the original sign-act account; C.H. Cornill, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1905), 229–30 includes both v. 2b and vv. 11b–12a in the

which” (גיא בן הנם אשר) in v. 2a is likely to be a later addition to the sign-act because it disturbs the continuity of v. 2a and creates a difficulty in translation.<sup>31</sup> As we will see shortly, the location at the Valley of the Son of Hinnom and the Topheth were added in later layers of the oracle, and therefore it follows that this phrase would have been inserted into the sign-act only at that later time.

It is also likely that v. 11b, “and in Topheth they will bury until there is no more room to bury” (ובתפת יקברו מאין מקום לקבור) is a later addition. These words are not represented in the Septuagint manuscripts except LXX<sup>L</sup> where they are inserted at the end of v. 13.<sup>32</sup> If the parallel in 7:31–32 was followed, they would belong at the end of v. 6. This suggests they are a marginal gloss in v. 6, later relocated to before v. 12, and they would not have belonged in an early sign-act account.<sup>33</sup> Verses 12–13 include reference to the Topheth and so are also part of the later additions because the Topheth is otherwise unmentioned in the earlier sign-act. The later addition of vv. 12–13 is further suggested by the convoluted comparisons created in vv. 11–13. In v. 11, the breaking of Jerusalem is compared to the breaking of the jug, whereas, in vv. 12–13, the defilement of Jerusalem is compared to the defilement of the Topheth. The double comparison suggests a later expansion. Verses 14–15 are included by some scholars in the original sign-act account but they may also be a linking device between 19:1–13 and 20:1–6.<sup>34</sup> The verses perform this function literarily particularly

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original account. More recently, L.C. Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 225 and L. Stulman, *The Prose Sermons of the Book of Jeremiah* (SBLDS, 83; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 76–79 also consider vv. 3–9 secondary.

<sup>31</sup> The difficulty in translation occurs because of the relative particle אשר placed before the phrase “opening of the Potsherd Gate” (פתח שער החרסות). This is also thought to be a patch by McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 444 and B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (KHC, 11; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1901) 160; Cf. Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 125–26, and Thiel, *Jeremia*, 221 n. 8 understand it to be a Deuteronomistic addition, along with vv. 3–9.

<sup>32</sup> J.G. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 205 n. 17.

<sup>33</sup> There are a number of suggestions for how it came to be here in chapter 19. Volz, *Studien*, 167 argues that it was taken from an original position in v. 6 and then reinserted as a marginal correction in a different position, v. 11. In a slight variation, Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 126 thinks it was added secondarily as a gloss to v. 6 (by analogy with 7:31–32) and then taken into the text before v. 12. Janzen, *Studies*, 43 proposes that it was a clarifying gloss on “Topheth” in v. 12 and that it was taken into the text at the appropriate spot. McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 446 agrees that it was a marginal gloss. Thiel, *Jeremia*, 223–24 argues against the later addition of these words as he considers the Topheth theme an integral part of the insertion by a Deuteronomistic editor.

<sup>34</sup> Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 125–27; Giesebrecht, *Jeremia*, 169; Weiser, *Jeremia*, 161 attribute these along with the rest of the sign-act to Baruch. Thiel, *Jeremia*, 226 sees it as linking to Jer 20:1–6. McKane, *Jeremiah 1–*

as they shift the location of Jeremiah to the court of the temple and they repeat the message of disaster upon the city. Thus, we can conclude that they were composed for this purpose of linking the passages.

Another important question for this study is whether vv. 2b–9 and 11b–13 are a single composition,<sup>35</sup> a collection of elements from other contexts,<sup>36</sup> or the result of a series of exegetical additions.<sup>37</sup> This question is tied to larger questions about the composition of Jeremiah. Whilst Bernhard Duham originally proposed a three source theory, Sigmund Mowinckel's model of four sources and four redactors has been more influential.<sup>38</sup> A different model however has been proposed by McKane, which he calls a *rolling corpus*.<sup>39</sup> His model comes in conversation with Helga Weippert,<sup>40</sup> who steers McKane away from a pre-occupation with Deuteronomistic links, and with Winfried Thiel,<sup>41</sup> who draws attention to the long, and often untidy, process of developing material. However, McKane moves away from the comprehensive theological principles that Thiel attributes to a Deuteronomistic editor, and describes a process of “generation” and “triggering,” where there is a long process of exegetical amplifications without a unified theological agenda. This model receives support from Raymond F. Person's work on orality.<sup>42</sup>

Two features of the oracle suggest that it developed in a number of stages. Firstly, there is unevenness in the “Topheth” theme, as it appears only in v. 2a, v. 6, then vv. 11b–13 and v. 14. We have already observed that vv. 2a should be read as a later gloss, v. 11b probably belongs to v. 6, and vv. 14–15 were probably composed to link the text to 20:1–6. Verses 5–6, 11b

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25, 449, following Nicholson, considers them to be the last stage in the redaction, also to link them to Jer 20:1–6.

<sup>35</sup> E.g. Thiel, *Jeremia*, 219–29.

<sup>36</sup> E.g. Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 127. Allen, *Jeremiah*, 225–26 describes it as intertextuality: quotes from other contexts such as v. 3b from 2 Kgs 21:12 and v. 4b from 2 Kgs 21:16 and 24:4.

<sup>37</sup> McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, lxxv–lxxvii, 447–456.

<sup>38</sup> S. Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia* (Kristiania: Dybwad, 1914).

<sup>39</sup> See McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, l–lxxxviii. See also Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 42–43, who supports an earlier version of McKane's ideas.

<sup>40</sup> Weippert, *Prosareden*. McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, xlv–xlvi, does however object to the lack of complexity in Weippert's model of redaction.

<sup>41</sup> Thiel, *Jeremia*. McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, xliii, finds flaws in Thiel's attribution of the editorial activity to a systematic Deuteronomistic redaction.

<sup>42</sup> R.F. Person, “A Rolling Corpus and Oral tradition: A Not-So-Literate Solution to a Highly Literate Problem,” in A.R. Diamond, K.M. O'Connor, and L. Stulman (eds.), *Troubling Jeremiah* (JSOTSup, 260; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 263–71. He is looking primarily at expansions such as that found between the MT and LXX. However, these are the basis for McKane's understanding of the other expansionary processes which took place in the book's development.

also appear to be a unit because of their similarity to 7:31–32. Thus, the unevenness of the Topheth theme points to vv. 5–6, 11b and vv. 12–13 as later additions to vv. 2b–4 and vv. 7–9.

Secondly, the phrase “this place” (הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה) in vv. 3, 4, and 7 would naturally refer to Jerusalem, especially if it is correct that the Topheth theme was added later. In v. 6, “this place” refers unambiguously to the Topheth, but in v. 12, “this place” refers unambiguously to the city, Jerusalem. This suggests that vv. 5–6, 11b and vv. 12–13 were added in separate expansions from one another.

Although Wilhelm Rudolph’s argument that the verses are a collection from other Deuteronomistic material would account for this lack of uniformity, the offering by McKane<sup>43</sup> accounts for the division between Jerusalem and the Topheth as the sermon’s referent without requiring a Deuteronomistic origin and it is his proposal that we will follow here. After proposing an initial stage of 1–2a\*, 10–11\*, he proposes the addition of vv. 2b–4 and vv. 7–9 but argues that vv. 5–6, 11b were added even later, a proposal that gains traction by the doublet of vv. 5–6 in Jer 7:31–32, suggestive that the tradition existed independently. Verse 7 also flows smoothly after v. 4. Before vv. 5–6 were added, “I will break” (אֶשְׁבֵּר) in v. 11 was resumed by “thus I will do” (כֵּן אַעֲשֶׂה) in v. 12, which is expanded in vv. 12–13. Indeed vv. 5–6 were encouraged by the presence of Topheth in vv. 12–13.

The final instalments were the location at the “Valley of the Son of Hinnom” (גֵּיא בֶן הַנֶּחֱם) in v. 2a and then vv. 14–15 to link 19:1–13 with 20:1–6. Even if McKane’s *rolling corpus* might be rejected as an overall model for the composition of Jeremiah,<sup>44</sup> his proposal for the final addition of Topheth explains well the reinterpretation of “this place” from Jerusalem to the Topheth and the unevenness of the Topheth theme.

Overall, we cannot know the composition history of Jer 19:1–13 with any certainty, nor can we be sure of the process or reasons for composition.<sup>45</sup> However, the divisions proposed here give an approximation of the different voices in the text,

<sup>43</sup> McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 451–56.

<sup>44</sup> For example on the grounds that McKane (*Jeremiah 1–25*, xlvi–xlix) does not find coherence or structure in Jer 1–25.

<sup>45</sup> The main aspect of McKane’s reconstruction I might dispute is that vv. 14–15 are a later addition to bridge the addition of Jer 20:1–6 (e.g. Volz, *Studien*, 166 considers vv. 14–15 part of the original account). Without vv. 14–15, the original sign-act is left at an anticlimax, whereas these verses imply that Jeremiah has followed the instructions given to him earlier. Furthermore, the sign-act in chapter 13 has a similar pattern of instructions for the sign, followed by an oracle in vv. 8–11. However, we will follow McKane’s reconstruction for the purposes of this study, partly because there are strengths to the proposal that vv. 14–15 are a bridge, and partly so that this analysis is itself more useful in light of the inevitable uncertainty. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 391–92, offers further helpful arguments in favour of considering vv. 14–15 later: he points out that it is the first time Jeremiah is referred to as prophesying, similar to Jer 20:1, 2.

even if there are details that could be disputed. The following sections of this article will analyse each of these accretions one by one, paying attention to the voices that they are introducing, including the reinterpretation of the earlier voices. It will also be demonstrated that these voices remain essentially unmerged, despite this reinterpretation, and that the meaning of the passage arises from the conversation between the layers in the text.

Another key factor in Bakhtin's dialogic truth is that each voice has its own time/space (chronotope),<sup>46</sup> an aspect of reading which requires a strong emphasis on historical context for the voices. Thus the order in which the layers were added is important because then the time/space of each voice can at least be understood relative to each other.

From our discussion of the Deuteronomistic style of language in chapter 19, it is possible that Jeremiah was familiar with Deuteronomistic theology but was updating and responding to it.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the oracle could be placed shortly after Josiah, and the sign-act prior to this, although it is also possible that the growth of the chapter took place at a later stage with pre-existing material. Furthermore, there is no consensus on this pre-exilic date as, for example, McKane holds that the oracle was developed after the time of the monarchy because of the reference to "kings" (מלכי) in v. 3 in the plural.<sup>48</sup> Thus, we will consider only the relative date between the expansions, without being able to posit a certain historical context for each of them.

### THE SIGN-ACT (JER 19:1–2A\*, 10–11\*)

It is proposed that there originally existed an independent and coherent sign-act narrative consisting of 19:1–2a\*, 10–11\*.

These verses deliver an oracle of complete destruction upon Jerusalem through a sign-act demonstration of smashing a jug.<sup>49</sup> They begin with a standard oracle formula "thus said the Lord" (כה אמר יהוה) however the address is to Jeremiah rather than to the people. It is not until v. 11 that the Lord narrates the words to the people, again using the formula "thus said the Lord of Hosts" (כה אמר יהוה צבאות) to introduce it. Although from a dramatic point of view it is an oracle within a sign-act, a close look at verbal clues point to it being an oracle within an oracle. The primary oracle is an instruction to perform an act, but it is not reported that Jeremiah actually did

<sup>46</sup> See n. 4 above.

<sup>47</sup> See also M. Leuchter, "The Temple Sermon and the Term *mqwm* in the Jeremianic Corpus," *JSOT* 30 (2005), 93–109.

<sup>48</sup> McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 451.

<sup>49</sup> See K.G. Friebel, *Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts* (JSOTSup, 283; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999) on sign-acts in Jeremiah. Particularly helpful is his discussion of terminology and rhetorical features. He analyses this sign-act in Jer 19 and, although he reads 19:1–13 as a unity, most of his reading pertains to these key verses and will be utilized below (see especially 115–24).

so.<sup>50</sup> The drama and visual message<sup>51</sup> of the sign-act take place only in the imaginative anticipation that the oracle from God will be acted upon.

One of the primary ways that the sign-act oracle realises this drama is through the repetition of the verb “to break” (שבר) three times as the keyword in God’s intentions for judgment. Significantly, vv. 1–2a\*, 10–11\* in the original sign-act contain all the occurrences of this verb found in the whole of 19:1–20:6 and it uses a wordplay on this root. It is used literally to break the jug in v. 10 “and you will break the jug” (ושברת את העם ככה אשר); then it has the meaning of “bring disaster” to the people in v. 11 “thus I will break this people” (אשר לא יוכל להרפה עוד), a usage found elsewhere in Jeremiah (e.g. 6.14; 14.17);<sup>52</sup> then it returns, again in v. 11, to the sense of literal breaking of the jug, “as one breaks a potter’s vessel” (ישבר את כלי כאשר). The final statement has a further qualification in v. 11, “so that it can never be made whole” (אשר לא יוכל להרפה עוד). However, the verb translated “made whole” (רפה) has a primary meaning of “to heal,” which would hint back to a disaster on people, not a jug. The exploitation of the full flexibility of the word “to break” (שבר), combined with the use of “to heal” (רפה) as its antonym, points to a pithy demonstration of the link between the jug and the fate of the people. It means that disaster will come upon them but the full force of its meaning “to break” (שבר) accompanies the judgment through the presence of the jug.

The physical location described is also integral to these short verses, and again this includes wordplay on the verb “to break” (שבר). Jeremiah is told to go out of the Potsherd Gate (שער החרסות) in v. 2a. With the juxtaposition of vv. 2a and v. 10 in the earlier sign-act, the assonance between “gate” (שער) and “break” (שבר) is evident, especially as each is followed by words to do with pots—first potsherd and then the jug. Although “the potsherd” (החרסות) and “the jug” (הבקבוק) do not sound similar, they share a semantic connection, made immediate by the description of the jug as “earthenware” (חרש).<sup>53</sup> Jeremiah will break a pottery jug at the gate of broken pots.

The command to break the jug is narrated first in v. 10 before any explanation is given through the oracle within an

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Friebe, *Sign-Acts*, 20–34 on the actual performance of sign-acts. On 24–26, he notes that most of the sign-acts of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are reported literarily in the context of divine command although many do have confirmation that the prophet carried out the command.

<sup>51</sup> Some scholars have suggested that there is a magical element and that breaking the jug is a performative ritual, e.g. Rudolph, *Jeremiah*, 128; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 386–87.

<sup>52</sup> Allen, *Jeremiah*, 227.

<sup>53</sup> Note “potter, earthenware” (יוצר חרש) is more easily read as “formed of earthenware” (יצור חרש), a reading represented in the LXX (e.g. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 534). Both readings indicate that the jug is made of earthenware and so discovering the earlier reading is not necessary for our argument.

oracle. Both the witnesses within the account and the audience of the account see/learn of the command to break the jug before any explanation is given. Kelvin G. Friebel observes that the phrase “a pot broken” is a motif in the Ancient Near East, including the Bible.<sup>54</sup> Without any explanation, it would probably imply that Israel’s enemies would be broken as that is the normal context, such as in Ps 2:9 and Jer 28:11. However, this hope is overturned by the oracle within an oracle. After a lengthy formula, including the longer title “Lord of Hosts” (יהוה צבאות), the reported words begin “thus I will break” (ככה אשבר, v. 11) maintaining the tension for a little longer of an act without explanation. Finally, the object of the verb removes the tension, and destruction is spoken against the people of Judah and the city Jerusalem, rather than their enemies.

Verse 11 then explains the particular significance of the breaking of the jug (as opposed to any other object): it cannot be put back together. The jug itself does not symbolize anything about Israel, especially as it is more likely to be a metaphor for Israel’s enemies than Israel and this does not fit the context.<sup>55</sup> Rather the feature that resembles Jerusalem and inhabitants is its break-ability.<sup>56</sup> Most commentators agree that the jug would have a large spherical body and a narrow neck.<sup>57</sup> James L. Kelso suggests that this particular type of jug was selected because the narrow neck made it impossible to fix.<sup>58</sup> It may also have made the sign more visually impressive because Jeremiah would be left standing there holding the handle and the neck, with the rest of the jug broken before him. The object moving from wholeness to scattered fragments would have a visual resemblance to a city dramatically destroyed. This also emphasizes the permanence of the judgment. The sign-act read alone implies irreparable destruction on Jerusalem and its people.

Another important aspect of the short account is that Jeremiah is told to bring witnesses. Jeremiah brings “the elders of

<sup>54</sup> Friebel, *Sign-Acts*, 119–20 n. 106; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 541.

<sup>55</sup> See Friebel, *Sign-Acts*, 36–38 on coding of signs. In his analysis of Jer 19:1–13, Friebel argues it is the action rather than the object itself which seems most significant as a sign and the nature of the object is necessary for this action (116).

<sup>56</sup> As Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 385 notes, the story is therefore about an “unchangeable state of affairs.” Carroll’s reading is also influenced by his interpretation of the act as being magic (386–87), however I think even without this understanding, the use of the pottery emphasizes the permanence of destruction.

<sup>57</sup> The use of the word “jug” (בקבוק) rather than a more usual word for pottery invites speculation. The word appears elsewhere in the Bible only in 1 Kgs 14:3 and is thought to be an expensive ceramic decanter with a narrow neck. See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 539, who also notes that this is Rashi’s understanding; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 838 points to Qimchi; Allen, *Jeremiah*, 226; McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 444. For images, see R. Amiran, *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 258–61.

<sup>58</sup> J.L. Kelso, *The Ceramic Vocabulary of the Old Testament* (BASORSup, 5–6; New Haven: ASOR, 1948), 17.

the people and the elders of the priests” (ומזקני העם ומזקני הכהנים, v. 1) and brings down judgment on the people and the city. The first witnesses, the elders of the people, correspond to the first object of judgment, the people, and so it is suggestive that priests therefore correspond to “the city.” The cultic significance of Jerusalem is thus in view. Stacey<sup>59</sup> suggests that these witnesses are part of the sign-act because their horror is part of the effect. However, I would also argue that the witnesses are a part of the interpretation. The representatives of the people and the priests shows that this is where the judgment is directed. Their presence hints also at a course of action for repentance—leadership by these elders.

Overall, the sign-act is a straightforward but highly memorable oracle. Its message is simple and graphic yet open to multiple interpretations.<sup>60</sup> The precise punishment is not specified, apart from it being shattering, inferring permanence. It is implied the transgressors are amongst the priests and people because their elders are the witnesses. No hint is given as to their transgressions.

#### THE FIRST EXPANSION (19:2B–4, 7–9)

The earlier sign-act account is expanded with an oracle in 19:2b–4, 7–9, although it is possible these verses have in turn been drawn from a number of earlier traditions. The root “to speak” (דבר) is repeated three times in v.v. 2b–3a, alongside “proclaim” (וקראת), “say” (ואמרת), and “hear” (שמעו) highlighting the emphasis on divine speech. This supplement reinterprets the earlier voice by resolving some of its ambiguity, but in doing so, the supplement must also necessarily respond to the dramatic voice of the sign-act as it stood. The following analysis will demonstrate how this takes place and how the two voices remain unmerged in a Bakhtinian sense.

Although the witnesses to the sign-act in v.1 are the elders of the people and the priests, the address of the oracle in v. 3 is to the kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. The plural “kings” (מלכי) in v. 3 is unusual and the addressees are therefore not clear. William L. Holladay connects the kings to the innocent blood of v. 4 and considers Manasseh in view.<sup>61</sup> Jack R. Lundbom quotes Cheyne and Qimchi that it may be the royal family.<sup>62</sup> If Holladay is correct, then the oracle addresses an audience going backward (and forward?) in time. This

<sup>59</sup> W.D. Stacey, *Prophetic Drama in the Old Testament* (London: Epworth, 1990), 147. Cf. Friebe, *Sign-Acts*, 116 n. 98 argues against this saying they are not mentioned in this part of the sign-act.

<sup>60</sup> Stulman, *Jeremiah*, 193–94.

<sup>61</sup> Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 540. He also connects it to the child sacrifice, and therefore Ahaz, but we will return to this when we consider the final form. As Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 834 points out, innocent blood is not always associated with child sacrifice, usually referring to murders resulting from a miscarriage of justice (Jer 2:34; 7:6; 22:17; 2 Kgs 21:16). Lundbom suggests a double meaning, again a point we will return to.

<sup>62</sup> Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 805–6.

appears an unusual rhetorical device, although one which gains currency once child sacrifice is incorporated into the text (and both Ahaz and Manasseh are implicated). At present, perhaps only princes are in view.<sup>63</sup> Significantly for our reading, there is a shift to an interest in the royal family rather than priests. For our interpretation, the priests remain witnesses but they are no longer the implied transgressors or, at least, not the leading transgressors upon whom disaster will come. Now the kings or royal family of Judah are mentioned first. The address to the inhabitants of Judah also shifts the earlier designation in v. 1 of “elders of the people” (ומזקני העם). Whilst not altering the witnesses, the expansion changes the addressees and makes the witnesses of lesser importance for the indictment. The priests are sidelined and the monarchy becomes a central focus.

Another major new element is “this place” (המקום הזה) in v. 3. The implication of the word “place” shifts over time and throughout different biblical literature, and so close analysis of its referent is important here.<sup>64</sup> Firstly, it is interesting to read 19:2b–4, 7–9 alone, particularly in light of the suggestion that these verses have been appropriated from other traditions. There is evidence of some sort of illicit cultic activity in v. 4, describing offerings to other gods, but there is no indication that this took place on the site of the temple. The address to the kings based in Jerusalem in v. 3 and disaster upon “this city” (העיר הזאת) in v. 8 imply the offering took place in Jerusalem rather than specifically the temple. The verb in v. 4 translated as “profane” in the NRSV (נבר) does not necessarily have the connotation of profaning a sacred place, as attested by its only other use with this type of meaning in 1 Sam 23:7.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, “this place” in these verses refers most naturally to Jerusalem. “This place” is not necessarily a sacred place, but is rather the place where the cultic violations happened and therefore the place that will receive punishment, that is Jerusalem.

Now we read these verses in the context of their appropriation to the sign-act narrative. Verse 1 places the priests as witnesses, but, as described earlier, they are supplanted by the kings as addressees, and at this stage they recede into the background of the oracle. In v. 4 it is explicit that the people have made offerings to other gods, the priests in the temple are not

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<sup>63</sup> J.A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 446.

<sup>64</sup> See B. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 30–36 on the transformation of this term from Exod 20:24 to Deut 12:13–15. Cf. D.F. Murray, “*Mqwm* and the Future of Israel in 2 Samuel VII 10,” *V/T* 40 (1990), 290–320 shows that it can mean any appointed, appropriate place in this context. We will be returning also to Leuchter, “The Temple Sermon,” 93–109.

<sup>65</sup> It does however suggest turning something into a “foreign place” and, as Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 388 says, Jerusalem is the more obvious candidate for alienation than the Topheth, which would already have been alien from the start. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 839 adds that it probably indicates strange gods (cf. Jer 5:19; 8:19).

accused directly. On the other hand, a location is specified, the Potsherd Gate, an entry to Jerusalem. This complements vv. 2b–4, 7–9 as Jerusalem is a natural referent for “this place” (המקום הזה).<sup>66</sup> Indeed, the Potsherd Gate brings ambiguity to the oracle by virtue of being a gate, looking outwards to the surrounds of Judah as well as inwards to Jerusalem.

With this reading of the oracle, the civic and cultic become intertwined. Alongside replacing elders of the priests with kings as the addressees, it has the statement in v. 7, “I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem in this place” (ובקתי את עצת יהודה וירושלם במקום הזה), where the plans/counsel would seem to have a civic referent. However, placed alongside the accusation in v. 4 that the people have made inappropriate sacrifices,<sup>67</sup> civic and sacred become inseparable.<sup>68</sup>

The nature of the judgment foretold finds another voice with the expansion. Now, “disaster” (רעה) will come upon the place (v. 3) so great that their ears tingle at the announcement. As the disaster is expanded in vv. 7–9, it is clear that God will be the instigator but enemies will be the instruments. Furthermore, the fate of the city, whilst horrible, will not be complete annihilation. Whilst v. 7 says that they will fall to the sword, their lives will be sought, and their bodies will be eaten up by the birds and beasts,<sup>69</sup> this does not mean all will necessarily be killed. Similarly in v. 8, there will be “horror” (לשמה) and “hissing” (ולשרקה) but the opportunity for such insult implies survival. This is also indicated by the horrendous circumstances of v. 9, cannibalism in time of siege. Whilst a graphic, terrifying picture is created, it ends with survival, even if by the most gruesome means. This is in contrast to the complete shattering of the jug in the sign-act. Now, the jug will not be mended but a remnant will survive the terrible horrors. The message has gained some “flesh” in its horrors but has simultaneously introduced a voice of hope. The complete shattering, implied by the jug at the climax to this section, is now joined by a picture of devastation but not complete and lasting annihilation.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Auld, “Jeremiah-Manasseh-Samuel,” 8–9 who identifies v. 3 as the temple before become in Jerusalem in vv. 12–13 and Jerusalem and Judah in 2 Kgs 21:12. Nevertheless, this study reflects a similar process of reinterpretation for new ideology.

<sup>67</sup> This different emphases, although complementing each other well, may point to separate traditions that have been drawn on for these verses.

<sup>68</sup> These observations reflect a tendency noted by M. Leuchter in the temple sermon in Jer 7:1–15 of Deuteronomistic appropriation but with the alteration of the term “place” (מקום) to remove the emphasis on the centralisation of the cult in Jerusalem and the temple (Leuchter, “The Temple Sermon,” 93–109).

<sup>69</sup> McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 453 notes that this implies bodies in a military setting on a battlefield when read without vv. 5–6 introducing the slaughter at the Topheth.

### THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPHETH (VV. 2A\*, 12–13)

In this section the Topheth is introduced. The Topheth is also mentioned in 2 Kgs 23:10 and Jer 7:31–32, and the supposition that it was a cult site, where the sacrifice of children may have taken place, has been gleaned from these passages.<sup>70</sup> Reading the passage again with this new voice, we follow our former reading, that Jeremiah must go to the Potsherd Gate and declare judgment on “this place” (הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה), Jerusalem. He should then break the jug and declare that the people and the city will also be broken like the jug. However, this dramatic act (or command for a dramatic act) no longer needs to be heard as a climactic ending.

There is now a denouement in vv. 12–13. “This place” (הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה), Jerusalem,<sup>71</sup> will be broken like the jug, but in v. 12 it is added that it will become like Topheth. Verse 13 adds that the houses of Jerusalem and the kings of Judah will also be defiled like Topheth. Thus vv. 12–13 are voicing another dimension to what it looks like for Jerusalem to be like the broken jug.<sup>72</sup> In order to understand this simile (and simultaneously the expansion), we must understand how and why the Topheth is suddenly introduced into the text.

There are several reasons for why the simile to Topheth is introduced and for why it responds to the line of argument. It highlights the aspects of the earlier oracle that were perceived as important. Firstly, this simile to the Topheth reflects an interesting spatial dimension to the oracle. Jeremiah first looks inwards to the city as he pronounces judgment on it—it will be horror and there will be siege. He then is to break the jug and turn his eyes outwards to the Topheth, which the patch in v. 2a now informs us is at the Potsherd Gate. The city behind him will be like the Topheth in front of him.

Secondly, the Topheth seems to have entered in and out of use as a high place. It is mentioned in 2 Kgs 23:10 when it was dismantled by Josiah because of child sacrifices to Molech. When the Topheth is referred to as defiled in v. 13, it is probably alluding to Josiah’s reforms.<sup>73</sup> The Topheth is also linked

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<sup>70</sup> See P.C. Schmitz, “Topheth,” in D.N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6 (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 600–601. See also F. Stavrakopoulou, “The Jerusalem Tophet: Ideological Dispute and Religious Transformation,” *SEL* 29–30 (2012–2013), 139–43. Note that Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 267, translates the name Topheth (הַתֹּפֶת) directly as “the firepit” on the basis of its etymology (which will be discussed in the next section) and the presence of the definite article.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 127 and Thiel, *Jeremia*, 224 regard this as referring to the Topheth. However, as McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 449 points out, this requires the removal of the phrase “and its inhabitants” for which there is no cause.

<sup>72</sup> See also McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 454 on how Jerusalem remains the centre of attention.

<sup>73</sup> Notice the tendency again that even though Josianic reforms are alluded to, they are used in a context that is not interested in the temple as a sacred site, a variation on what we would expect in Deu-

with Manasseh who is accused of making his son pass through fire (2 Kgs 21:6), an act often associated with the Topheth.<sup>74</sup> In this way, the inclusion of the Topheth responds to the associations with Manasseh in the earlier voices and draws in sordid associations with child sacrifice and therefore innocent blood.

The simile now has multiple dimensions: the people had sacrificed to other gods in Jerusalem and Jerusalem was filled with innocent blood (v. 4) just like the Topheth; now Jerusalem will be laid waste like the Topheth before them as they stand at the Potsherd Gate. This parallel is brought out by the use of “this place” (הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה) to describe Jerusalem in v. 12 and then the description “like the place of the Topheth” (כַּמְּקוֹם הַתֹּפֶת) in v. 13. The use of “place” (מְקוֹם) draws the two locations into parallel.

The use of the Topheth simile highlights that inappropriate worship is still the central concern, reinforced by the description in v. 13 that they have made offerings to the host of heaven on their roofs and poured out libations to other gods. Furthermore, these verses clarify who are the transgressors leading to the judgment. We have already traced that v. 1 calls elders of the people and priests as witnesses, but v. 3 addresses the kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Verse 11 announces that the people and the city will be broken, and now v. 13 reinforces the emphasis on kings and the people (rather than priests) who have sacrificed on their roofs and therefore will become like Topheth. “This city” (הָעִיר הַזֹּאת) from v. 11 is designated by this voice as being “this place” (הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה) in v. 12 and “this place” is constituted of the houses of kings and people in v. 13, not the temple. This new voice reinforces that the concern is with Jerusalem as a city and not necessarily a sacred site.

### RENAMING THE VALLEY OF THE SON OF HINNOM (VV. 5–6, 11B)

The renaming of the Valley of the Son of Hinnom follows the formula used for aetiological place naming stories found in the Hebrew Bible narrative, only it is brought into the future tense as part of the message of a possible future.<sup>75</sup>

Firstly, we look at the meaning of the names, Topheth, Son of Hinnom, and Valley of the Slaughter, particularly in relation to the brief narrative in v. 5 that the Israelites had built “shrines” (בְּמוֹת)<sup>76</sup> and burnt their children in fire. Most schol-

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teronomistic ideology.

<sup>74</sup> This is later made explicit in 2 Chr 28:3 and 2 Chr 33:6.

<sup>75</sup> See J. Fichtner, “Die etymologische Ätiologie in den Namensgebungen der geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments,” VT 6 (1956), 372–96 for a form critical description of this formula. More recently B.O. Long, *The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament* (BZAW 108; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968).

<sup>76</sup> McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 179 notes the difficulty that בְּמוֹת is plural and suggests that it should be emended to the singular because it is singular in the LXX and Targum. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 264 keeps

ars agree that “Topheth” (התפת) has its etymology in a term for “cooking pot” or “fire place” (Aramaic/Syriac תפיא),<sup>77</sup> but it uses the derogatory vocalisation of the word “shame” (בשת).<sup>78</sup> It is curious that Topheth is so appropriate as a name for a place where children have been burnt with fire, and we must assume that it was named for this reason. We will return to this when we seek to account for the change of name.

The meaning of the Valley of the Son of Hinnom is a little more difficult. It is probably based on the name “Hinnom” (הנמ), as the construction “the Son of Hinnom” (בן הנמ) would imply.<sup>79</sup> Some scholars have grappled with the possibility that there is a play on meaning in v. 6 with the “Valley of the Slaughter” (גיא ההרגה)<sup>80</sup> such as there is for the name of Pashhur in 20:1–6. However, there is considerable debate about the meaning of “Hinnom” (הנמ), with suggestions including *hanna* (now found in Arabic) meaning “whisper,”<sup>81</sup> “sleep” (נום)<sup>82</sup> or “grace” (חן).<sup>83</sup>

Understanding the new name, “Valley of the Slaughter” (גיא ההרגה), is also helpful for understanding any potential wordplay. In both the context of vv. 5–6 and nestled within the speech of vv. 3–9, the slaughter refers to both the children who have been killed there in the past, and the transgressors who will be slaughtered there in the future.<sup>84</sup> The name comes immediately after a description of the child sacrifices in v. 5 and the renaming is connected in v. 6 by “therefore” (לכן). If v. 4 is also taken into account, then the description “they filled this place with innocent blood” (ומלאו את המקום הזה דם נקים) adds further weight to this interpretation. Therefore, the transgression, the slaughter of children in the valley, is part of the meaning of the new name. However, the name Valley of the Slaughter takes on the double meaning in the context of what

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the plural as the verb ובנו may be frequentative and many shrines were built, or Jeremiah may be exaggerating for effect.

<sup>77</sup> HALOT attributes the identification of this meaning to W.R. Smith. On the occurrence in Jeremiah, see Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 294; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 267; P. Craigie, P.H. Kelley, and J.F. Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25* (WBC 26; Dallas, TX: Word, 1991), 262; See also J. Day, *Molech: A God of Human Sacrifice in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 83. Note the LXX has “Tapheth,” suggesting the original vocalisation was perhaps תפת (Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 264). McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 179 also notes Rashi’s etymology from “drums” (תופים) from the priests beating their drums as the children were sacrificed so their fathers would not hear their cries.

<sup>78</sup> Perhaps influenced by the homonym “spit” (תפת, Job 17:6).

<sup>79</sup> McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 179, following Rudolph.

<sup>80</sup> E.g. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 269.

<sup>81</sup> HALOT, s.v.

<sup>82</sup> Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 269, building on the idea that there would have been a definite article by analogy to “the slaughter” (ההרגה). A semantic play between son of the sleep and slaughter is possible.

<sup>83</sup> Jerome, cited in McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 179. The play in meaning with Valley of the Slaughter would then be that slaughter is the antithesis of grace.

<sup>84</sup> Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 260.

follows in vv. 7–9. Here the slaughter of the transgressors is described in v. 7 as they will fall to the sword and their corpses given to the birds. The image of the exposure of corpses is particularly appropriate for the name Valley of the Slaughter. Moreover, if the supposition that v. 11b was once a gloss to v. 6 is correct, as is supported by the parallel in Jer 7:32, then the link is reinforced by the additional statement that there would be unburied bodies there.

If it is accurate that the name Topheth means cooking pot and has the vocalisation for “shame” (בשת), then the change in name would be meaningless if the slaughter is referring solely to the children who have been made to pass through fire there. The original name would capture the same, if not a more appropriate, meaning. However, the name Valley of the Slaughter is meaningful because it encapsulates both transgression and punishment.

Furthermore, I would argue that alongside any wordplay on Hinnom, there is a play on the word “son” (בן) in the original name Valley of the Son of Hinnom. The word “son” (בן) in the name “Valley of the Son of Hinnom” (גיא בן הנם) has been changed to “slaughter” (ההרגה) in the name “Valley of the Slaughter” (גיא ההרגה), signifying the shift from the sins of the past (child sacrifice) to the punishment of the future (slaughter). Indeed, this play on the word “son” (בן) in the etymology is implied by the proximity of the same noun “their sons” (בניהם)<sup>85</sup> in v. 5, and the sound play with the verb “and they have gone on building” (ובנו) in v. 5.

The inclusion of these verses adds a dramatically different voice to the existing sign-act and oracle. Firstly, these verses become a climax to Jeremiah’s rhetoric, creating a new structure for the passage through its reuse of the old. Following the description of sin in vv. 3–4, there are two parallel parts to the oracle of judgment now in vv. 6–9 and then vv. 10–13.<sup>86</sup> In each, a sign or event is described, followed by a florid description of destruction. In the first part, the word “therefore” (לכן) in v. 6 signals the culmination of Jeremiah’s description of their wickedness and the ensuing result—the Topheth will be called the Valley of the Slaughter. This is also suggested by the stock phrase in v. 6, “the days are coming” (ימים באים) projecting the oracle into the future, signifying that the consequences to the actions in the past will now be revealed. Verses 7–9 have another voice as a description of this event when the valley will be renamed.

The shift to the siege of the city in v. 9 continues vv. 5–6 because the theme of eating the flesh of their children in a siege

<sup>85</sup> Although not used as a reason for wordplay of Valley of the Slaughter, the wordplay between the Son of Hinnom and “their sons” (בניהם) in v. 5 is noted by Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 267.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 837 who outlines two sections in vv. 1–9 and 11–13, containing 4 oracles in vv. 3b–5, 6–9, 11b, and 12–13, introduced by two directives to Jeremiah in vv. 1–3 and 10–11a.

links to the child sacrifice at the Topheth. Indeed, now cannibalism is a punishment befitting the crime of sacrificing children in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom.

The second section beginning in v. 10 is indicated by the change to second person “you will break” (ושברת) and the shift from sermon to description of an act (even though it is framed within the direct speech of God to Jeremiah). The first devastating event is that the valley will be renamed the Valley of the Slaughter. The second devastating event is that the people and city will be broken like the jug. Again, this is expanded upon in vv. 12–13 describing how it will become like the Topheth by being smashed to pieces. The introduction of the Topheth into the significance and meaning of the sign-act in vv. 12–13 ties the two oracles together.

Next, we examine the effect of the insertion of vv. 5–6 on the designation of the phrase “this place” (המקום הזה) in vv. 1–13 as a whole.<sup>87</sup> We discussed earlier that it refers to Jerusalem in vv. 3, 4 and 7 when vv. 2b–4, 7–9 were read alone. However, in v. 6, it is made explicit that “this place” (המקום הזה) refers to the Topheth: “this place will no longer be called the Topheth or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom” (ולא יקרא למקום הזה עוד) (התפת וגיא בן הנם). The designation of “this place” as the Topheth is not precluded by vv. 2b–4 and, when the audience comes to vv. 5–6, it becomes apparent that Jeremiah is not looking inwards to the city from the Gate of Potsherds but outwards to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom. Thus vv. 2b–4 are now multi-voiced and “this place” could be Jerusalem or the Topheth. The disaster in v. 3 could be disaster upon Jerusalem and/or it could be disaster upon the Topheth. It will happen because, in v. 4, they profaned either Jerusalem and/or the Topheth and filled it with innocent blood. Similarly, “this place” (המקום הזה) in v. 7 could be read as either Jerusalem or the Topheth. The continuing references to “this place” with a polyphonic designation shows how these new voices are in dialogue with the earlier ones.

Furthermore, vv. 12–13 are also affected by the multi-voiced designation of “this place” and as we will see, this becomes significant for the two analogies for the judgment of Jerusalem and Judah. In v. 12, “this place” (המקום הזה) will be destroyed but “this place” can only be Jerusalem.<sup>88</sup> Verse 12 refers to “its inhabitants” (ליושביו), and its roofs where sacri-

<sup>87</sup> Wanke, *Jeremia*, 182. McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 450 disputes Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 127 and Thiel, *Jeremia*, 224 reading of “this place” referring to the Topheth throughout on account of a different understanding of the growth of the chapter. However, the term “this place” is reinterpreted throughout the growth of the chapter and is able to change its meaning. Cf. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 839 considers “this place” in v. 3b, 12 to refer to Jerusalem even in the final form; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 388 interprets “this place” to be Jerusalem in vv. 3, 7, and 14 but in v. 6 it must be Topheth and he suggests that in v. 12 it originally referred to Jerusalem but Topheth has been superimposed.

<sup>88</sup> Note that McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 454 does not deal with this point. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 841 interprets this as Jerusalem.

fices were made, making it very unlikely that it is referring to the Topheth. Furthermore, the last named place is “this city” (העיר הזאת) in v. 11. Thus “this place” in v. 12 is unambiguously Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the shift from “this place” (המקום הזה) as the Topheth in v. 6, to Jerusalem in v. 12 is given meaning by using the word “place” (מקום) once more in v. 13 “like the place of the Topheth” (כמקום התפת). The two “places” are brought together in an analogy: the place Jerusalem will become like the place of the Topheth.

This analogy however is doubled. In v. 11, Jerusalem and the people will be broken like a jug. Then in v. 12, Jerusalem will be like the Topheth. The Topheth, as we are told in vv. 5–6 will be a place of slaughter. Therefore, Jerusalem will be a place of slaughter. The result is that the multi-voiced designation of “this place” (המקום הזה) in vv. 3, 4 and 7 remains meaningful because of the very convolution of the analogy. If vv. 2b–4 and v. 7 refer to events at the Topheth, then this vision of past transgression and future punishment will also be attributed to Jerusalem because of the analogy in v. 12. Conversely, if they refer to Jerusalem, then they are also attributed to the Topheth.

Although the circling analogy is convoluted, the build up of traumatic imagery is effective. The analogies answer one another, in a way that demonstrates how voices dialogue with the voices of earlier material. The Valley of the Son of Hinnom is a multi-voiced reminder of what Jerusalem will become. Jerusalem will become like a broken jug similar to the potsherds at the Potsherd Gate, and it will become like the Topheth, which is defiled at present and will be filled with slaughter in the future.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, the comparison between Topheth and Jerusalem now becomes part of the structure of the passage. Verses 6–7 and vv. 8–9 implicitly compare the fates of Topheth and Jerusalem, and vv. 12–13 compare the two explicitly.

### A MULTI-VOICED TEXT IN ITS FINAL CONTEXT

In light of this analysis, what does this passage mean? My contention is that the passage’s meaning is found in the dialogue of all of these voices. The final redaction has its meaning only in relation to the earlier voices which it has absorbed, reused, but not silenced. To summarise this meaning as a series of propositions would undermine the entire project of dialogic truth. Instead, we will examine meaning in the categories of transgressors, transgressions, and punishment as three aspects of the dialogic meaning in this text. These three categories are to some degree arbitrary but have emerged as motifs in the foregoing analysis.<sup>90</sup> In particular, we understand each of these cate-

<sup>89</sup> Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 262 also notes the multiple levels to the comparison.

<sup>90</sup> Stulman, *Jeremiah*, 19, describes the framework of Jeremiah that contains its discordant voices as being composed of judgment and salvation. This passage centres upon judgment, a theme which incorporates these three motifs, transgressors, transgressions and punish-

gories diachronically as a series of responses to earlier or other voices.

Firstly, the transgressors in the original sign-act are implicitly the priests and people. This layer of the text is ambiguous, even timeless in its description. It lacks specificity and so is easily applied to any context. Nevertheless, it brings a combination of cultic and civil concerns in view, because the warning is heard by these elders. With the next expansion, these witnesses are answered by direct address to the kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem in v. 3. Verse 4 alludes to the sins of Manasseh, making these an immediate referent in the address to kings. The next expansion reinforces this voice in v. 11 when the kings of Judah are expanded to be kings who have made sacrifices on their roofs. The introduction of the Topheth answers the allusion to Manasseh.

Thus, the oracle is spoken to the kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem but it is heard by the elders from the priests and the people. There are multiple voices now concerning responsibility. In a final form reading we might forget the priests as transgressors, arguing that Jeremiah simply needed an audience, and any audience will do. Indeed, he is talking about cultic violation and so elders of the priests are appropriate listeners, it does not imply they are the culprits. However, in a reading with a dialogic understanding of meaning, we can hear both, there is no need for resolution. Even if we consider the witnesses as reinterpreted, no longer meaning what they used to mean, the voice is still heard in the text, even in the very assertion that there was a newly accused transgressor.

The immediate context surrounding Jer 19:1–13 also contains a dialogue about whether priests are transgressors. As the passage was expanded to incorporate Jer 20:1–6 (with vv. 14–15 added as a bridge), the priests return to view. The voice is not the same as 19:1, now it is a particular priest Pashhur who persecutes Jeremiah. Nevertheless, punishment is decreed specifically upon him as a priest. Furthermore, the passage preceding 19:1–13, presumably a juxtaposition that took place after the addition of 20:1–6, gives a different view of priests. In 18:18 persecutors of Jeremiah say “come let us make plots against Jeremiah—for instruction will not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor word from the prophet” (לכו ונחשבה על ירמיהו מחשבות כי לא תאבד תורה מכהן ועצה) (מחכםם ודבר מנביא). The priests are appropriate witnesses not because of their guilt but because they are the ones who might give instruction on witnessing the sign of the coming judgment.

Secondly we examine the transgression. Here a useful focus for our analysis of dialogue is where the transgression took place. In all redactions it appears to be sacrifices to other gods, although it could be argued that these gods differ: Baal in v. 5; the host of heaven in v. 13. However, the reinterpretation of “this place” (המקום הזה) points to the dialogue surrounding

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ment.

location. Verse 4 begins with “they have profaned this place” (וינכרו את המקום הזה), that is Jerusalem, but, with the inclusion of verses describing the Topheth, “this place” refers also to the Topheth. The sacrifices are now outside the city. Yet, the earlier redaction of v. 11 remains, the judgment will be upon all those whose roofs have been used. There were sacrifices and offerings on the roofs in Jerusalem regardless of whether they are the reason for this judgment. However, again we view this dialogically. “This place” is reinterpreted but the earlier voice is retained, even in the fact that a word needed to be reinterpreted. The judgment is about sacrifices in the Topheth, but it was about sacrifices in Jerusalem in an earlier form and that remains part of the meaning in the text’s later forms. The ambiguity of the term (attested by different interpretations by commentators) shows how the earlier voice lingers in this later version of the text.

Thirdly, we consider the punishment. There are a number of dimensions to this and we will consider the location, its permanence and its completeness. The original sign-act has Jerusalem destroyed in an irreversible and presumably complete act. Within the limits of this sign-act, the expansion answers this depiction of the punishment with a paradox: it gives gruesome details exceeding the horror of a broken jug and so responding to this sign; and yet it offers a glimmer of hope through the remnant who survives to perform the cannibalism and see the devastation. As the Topheth is introduced, both voices are heard because the annihilation of the broken jug is reinforced by the analogy to the destroyed Tophet, and yet it is specified that the punishment will only be of the transgressors, those who sacrificed on their roofs. Then, with the name change of the Topheth, the slaughter is brought outside the city to the valley further diminishing the totality of the punishment. There remains an inference that annihilation is not permanent because of the remnant left to rename the valley. We observed in our analysis that the convoluted nature of the analogies describing this punishment are a result of each movement answering the earlier voices.

The context also reflects the multiple voices on punishment within this passage. The preceding passage contains similar imagery of a potter with clay. Yet, the clay is unfired and so it could be reworked into another vessel (18:4). This contrasts the shattering of the jug in chapter 19 and yet it responds to the voices of incomplete annihilation and the surviving remnant contributed by later voices in chapter 19.

Another interesting dialogue opens up through the juxtaposition of 19:14–15 and 20:1–6. In 20:1–6, the word “all” (כל) is repeated eight times emphasising the completeness of the exile to Babylon and that all will die there. To some extent, this corroborates the early voice in 19:1–13 that the jug is shattered completely. Yet, it also responds to other elements in 19:1–13 through the bridge in 19:14–15. Here it is explicitly stated that this complete disaster comes about because Israel has not listened to these words. The implication is that “these words” are

the preceding prophecy, which contains some element of hope within its image of destruction. This is highlighted through the parallel structure of “behold, I am bringing” (הנני מביא) in v. 3 and v. 15. The first judgment was not heeded and now the second judgment will be final. Returning again to the juxtaposition with chapter 18, it also contains an opportunity to repent (18:8–10) creating a dialogue of multiple voices regarding the certainty of judgment against Israel.

### CONCLUSION

This study has offered one possible model for integrating diachronic and synchronic approaches to Jer 19:1–13 in order to understand its message. On the one hand, it respects the diversity of voices in the text deriving from its compositional and redaction history, and it acknowledges that these voices have influenced one another, responded to one another, and remain in the text. On the other hand, it contributes to the search for a message in the final form of the text. It draws meaning from the text that is complex and unable to be captured in single propositional statements. This dialogic message was useful for ancient audiences in changing historical contexts, and so may also be useful for our own theological reflection. Multiple voices were heard and used in the text throughout its history and so our own reading can be enriched by attention to the dialogue in the text, offering a valuable dimension beyond a final form literary reading.