

Empirical Models for the Compositional History of Habakkuk

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1. Introduction

This study seeks to develop a new proposal for the compositional history of Habakkuk based on demonstrable patterns of editing from the ancient versions of the Hebrew Bible. Towards this end, it begins with a review of current empirical approaches to editorial practice and compares them with conventional redactional theories. It then reviews the data drawn from Jeremiah 1-25 that was used to build the model applied to Habakkuk. The main body of the analysis then reviews some select cases where certain passages in Habakkuk are proposed to be the result of editorial exegesis. The results as a whole are then compared to current theories of the composition of Habakkuk by working through the successive sections of the book. Crucially, while the results returned from this empirical mode of analysis are difficult to compare directly with previous redactional models, the general patterns derived from the dataset

demonstrate not only that an entirely new approach is possible, but that the evidential basis for previous redactional approaches can be called into question.

2. Editorial Practices: Empirical and Conventional Critical Approaches

At the present time, two schools of thought exist regarding the possibility of identifying relevant documented examples for analogical comparison with the processes of the literary growth of the Hebrew Bible. These empirical approaches are marked by being based on “tangible, observable ... evidence — versus hypotheses and theories.”¹ The first, and most common position draws from the evidence available from copies of different ancient Near Eastern compositions made over time. Observing the ways that scribes supplemented and modified these canonical texts (typically through new introductions or endings, or the insertion of large blocks of material) could potentially give insights into the ways that the books within the Hebrew Bible gradually achieved their final form.² Of course, debate exists regarding whether or not it would be possible to retrace these compositional steps when only the final version is available to the present-day analyst.³

1 Raymond F. Person Jr. and Robert Rezetko, “Introduction: The Importance of Empirical Models to Assess the Efficacy of Source and Redaction Criticism,” Raymond F. Person Jr. and Robert Rezetko (eds.), *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism* (AIL 25; Atlanta: SBL, 2016), 3.

2 Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), esp. 109–141.

3 Person and Rezetko, “Introduction,” 23, 35. For a response to Person and Rezetko’s conclusion that working backwards from the final form of a text to its earlier versions is

The second, and contrasting, corpus from which to draw examples of editing would be the ancient versions of the Hebrew Bible themselves,⁴ as these contain many deliberate alterations. Preference for this body of examples would lead instead to an understanding of literary growth as coming through small, isolated glosses triggered by their immediate context,⁵ rather than a deliberate agenda being imposed at once on an entire manuscript.⁶

Of course, both of these positions outlined above are at odds with the historically dominant models of compositional criticism in Hebrew Bible studies, which tend to be driven by the perception of multiple, ideologically and stylistically variegated writings being juxtaposed,⁷ regardless of whether the analyst starts from the perceived beginning of the process of a book's formation (as in classical form criticism),⁸ or whether

impossible and thus should be abandoned as a scholarly pursuit, see Reinhard Müller and Juha Pakkala, *Editorial Techniques in the Hebrew Bible: Toward a Refined Literary Criticism* (Resources for Biblical Study 97; Atlanta: SBL, 2022), 543.

- 4 For argumentation regarding why the ancient versions of the Hebrew Bible (Qumran manuscripts, Old Greek, Old Latin, Peshitta, etc.) are preferable to the scribal output of Egypt and Mesopotamia for establishing comparisons for the compositional history of the Hebrew Bible, see Müller and Pakkala, *Editorial Techniques in the Hebrew Bible*, 18, 537–38.
- 5 Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 126. Van der Toorn finds this compositional process logistically problematic on the basis of ANE scribal practices, arguing that such “expansion” could only take place “as an activity in the context of a new edition.”
- 6 Müller and Pakkala, *Editorial Techniques in the Hebrew Bible*, 531–35. For critical interaction regarding the viability of using these text-critical observations to trace editorial changes not attested in the manuscript record, see Person and Rezetko, “Introduction,” 17, 24–31.
- 7 Jacob Stromberg, “Formation of the Prophetic Books,” Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 273–75.
- 8 Colin M. Toffelmire, “Form Criticism,” Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 268–69. Toffelmire compares the classic form criticism of Wolff with the newer approach of Ben

one seeks to begin with the final form and peel back successive layers of headings, connecting material, and theological revisions.⁹ In other words, current approaches to redaction criticism begin with hypothetical theories about how biblical books develop over time, rather than being rooted in a significant body of documented textual, that is, empirical, examples.¹⁰

3. Methodology: Linguistic Analysis of MT Expansions in Jeremiah 1-25

It is the goal of the present study to apply this second empirical model to the challenging case of the book of Habakkuk. To identify likely processes of identifiable editorial activity, it begins with the results of a survey of the evidence available from the MT and OG versions of Jeremiah 1-25,¹¹ as this corpus provides an instructive body of examples

Zvi, noting that in the former there is a high degree of confidence of being able to separate original forms from later additions.

- 9 Odil Hannes Steck, *The Prophetic Books and Their Theological Witness* (trans. James D. Nogalski; St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000). See also the short summary in Paul L. Redditt, "Editorial/Redaction Criticism," Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 172–77. For an example of this approach in action, see Mark J. Boda, "From Zechariah to the Twelve: The Compositional History of the Book of Zechariah," *Exploring Zechariah, Volume 1: The Development of Zechariah and Its Role within the Twelve* (ANEM 16; Atlanta: SBL, 2017), 1–30.
- 10 This preference for theory over material evidence is visible even in the work of Wellhausen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See discussion in David J. Fuller, "William Foxwell Albright: Master Semiticist, Pioneering Archaeologist, Disputed Historian of Religion," Stanley E. Porter and Zachary K. Dawson (eds.), *Pillars in the History of Biblical Interpretation, Volume 3: Further Essays on Prevailing Methods* (McMaster Biblical Studies Series 6. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2021), 232–33.
- 11 David J. Fuller, "Scribal Expansions in Jeremiah 1–25 MT: A Linguistic Taxonomy," presented at the Korea Evangelical Theological Society Spring Meeting (April 27, 2024).

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of expanded readings. Jeremiah 1-25 provides an appropriate body of comparative evidence for inquiring into the compositional history of Habakkuk for two reasons: it is generally acknowledged that Jeremiah and Habakkuk were from the same time period,¹² and the flight of Jeremiah to Egypt near the end of his life likely resulted in divergent versions of his writings being preserved in different locations,¹³ making the textual traditions of Jeremiah a unique window into editorial practices.¹⁴ By focusing on places where the MT is longer than the OG by one full clause or more, and filtering out examples that would be better explained by transmission errors on the part of the OG translator (or present in the Hebrew source text he worked from), it is possible to derive a taxonomy of linguistically quantifiable ways that interpolations relate to their contexts. With this taxonomy in place, conclusions can be drawn regarding the passages in Habakkuk that are possibly the result of editorial exegesis.

The taxonomy drawn from this study of Jeremiah 1-25 begins with the connections between the subject of the unique clause and the surrounding subjects and entities being referenced. More specifically, the clause or clauses unique to the MT are then related to the rest of the discourse by noting: (1) whether or not their subject(s) are also the subject in any of the surrounding clauses; (2) whether or not the subject and any of the other entities in the clause(s) are referenced in any of the

12 Thomas Renz, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 208.

13 John Goldingay, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2021), 15–16, 38.

14 Müller and Pakkala, *Editorial Techniques in the Hebrew Bible*, 10, observe in their sweeping study that similar editorial activity is evident throughout the entire corpus of the Hebrew Bible and that Jeremiah “may in fact be one of the best examples of typical transmission processes in the Second Temple period. A similar picture in many other books, such as Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, corroborates the scribal processes in Jeremiah” (19).

surrounding clauses; (3) whether or not the verbal root, or any verb with the same process type occurs in any of the surrounding clauses; (4) and the overall structure of the section, based on the information gathered above.

The five categories that emerged from this analysis, in roughly descending order of frequency, are (1) Pre-existing grouping of clauses with same subject, which contains 3 sub-categories based on whether the expansion is located at the end, middle, or beginning of the grouping; (2) Same subject no more than 4 clauses away; (3) Same subject 5 or more clauses away; (4) Subject referenced in broad context but does not occur nearby as subject; and (5) Only a word other than the subject has cohesion with surrounding words. Within each of these categories it is then possible to make further observations regarding the distribution of the different types of possible connections. Due to the smaller corpus size of Habakkuk, the final three categories will not be differentiated in the present analysis. One factor that complicates the application of this model to Habakkuk is the much greater prevalence of extended poetic structures in Habakkuk. While many of the editorial expansions identified in Jeremiah are similar to the way the second line of a poetic couplet mirrors the first line, it is obviously fallacious to assume that all such parallelisms are secondary insertions. Accordingly, when carrying out the application of this model to Habakkuk, it is necessary to eliminate from consideration all such parallel lines that are part of larger groupings of poetic structures. It is also important to note that this method does not allow for comment on the order in which the different pericopes in the book were drawn together.

4. Analysis

The application of the models of editorial exegesis derived from Jeremiah 1-25 to Habakkuk returned 22 clauses that could possibly be the result of editorial expansions. (See the table in the appendix.) The text of Habakkuk was approached from the standpoint of the clausal divisions and linguistic connections throughout identified in Fuller, *A Discourse Analysis of Habakkuk*.¹⁵ It is crucial to note that the function of the proposed editorial expansions in the present study is based upon the results of this previous discourse analysis, as some of the criticisms of the redactional theories below will be drawn from the discourse analysis of Fuller, due to its value for identifying different kinds of cohesive and structuring devices, and not simply the clauses identified as interpolations alone.

This study will profile some select examples of these expansions, then turn to comparing the overall results with previous studies of the compositional history of Habakkuk.

1) Pre-Existing Groupings of Clauses with Same Subject

The present compositional analysis of Habakkuk starts with the most commonly occurring type of insertions found in Jeremiah 1-25, expansions attached to several successive clauses with the same grammatical subject. Habakkuk has thirteen places where three or more clauses in a row have the same subject, so it is appropriate to compare these passages to the similar structures in Jeremiah 1-25 and their related patterns of interpolations.

The audience of YHWH's oracle is the subject of 4 clauses in a row

15 David J. Fuller, *A Discourse Analysis of Habakkuk* (SSN 72; Leiden: Brill, 2020).

in 1:5.1-4, as they are successively commanded to look, observe, be astonished, and astonish themselves. The final two imperatives are from the *hithpael* and *qal* stems, respectively, of the root תַּנְהוּ.¹⁶ The present study proposes that it is the final clause in this chain, 1:5.4 that is the product of editorial exegesis, for the following reasons. The study of comparable structures in Jeremiah 1-25 found that such an expansion most commonly occurred at the very end of a cluster of clauses with the same subject. It is notable that 1:5.4 does not begin with a *waw* conjunction, in contrast to the two previous clauses.¹⁷ This follows the precedent of Jeremiah 7:26.4, which occurs at the end of a cluster and lacks an initial *waw*. It is also comparable to Jeremiah 12:3.2, which occurs in the middle rather than the end of its clausal cluster, but also omits a *waw* conjunction when expressing a thought parallel to that of the previous clause. The repetition of a verbal root nearby is also a feature of editorial expansions in clusters of clauses with the same subject. Jeremiah 9:12.4 inserts הֵלֵךְ (“walk”) along with a negative particle to create contrast with the use of הֵלֵךְ in the next clause, 9:13.1. Also relevant is Jeremiah 15:15.1, which inserts יָדַע (“know”) at the beginning of the grouping of clauses to mirror its usage at the end of the grouping in 15:5.5.¹⁸

The horsemen (from פָּרָשׁ) of the Chaldean occur in 3 clauses in a row from 1:8.3-5. The present study argues that the first clause in this

16 For discussion of the significance of this challenging verbal sequence, see Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 141-42.

17 Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 141-42 documents how the ancient versions generally sought to overcome this challenge by inserting a conjunction.

18 Somewhat more distantly, it is worth noting Jeremiah 14:3.5, 7 and Jeremiah 23:18.3, in which the insertion is clearly imitating a verbal root that occurs a short distance outside their respective clausal clusters.

cluster, 1:8.3, bears the marks of being the result of editorial exegesis. The data gathered from Jeremiah 1-25 showed that it is possible for an expansion to occur at the beginning of a grouping of clauses with the same subject. It is notable that 1:8.3 uses an independent noun to express the subject, when the very next clause, 1:8.4, does so as well, and with the subject occurring first in the word order. This makes it appear as though 1:8.4 was originally the clause that initiated this subject switch,¹⁹ and 1:8.3 was added later.²⁰ Comparisons with Jeremiah 1-25 lend further support. In two places in Jeremiah 1-25, the inserted clause is at the beginning of its cluster, and it is notable that in 15:15.1 the insertion independently expresses the subject with a pronoun as well. Habakkuk 1:8.3 is shorter than the two subsequent clauses with the horsemen as the subject, 1:8.4-5. This pattern of a short expansion occurring before a longer clause expressing a related thought is also found in Jeremiah 9:12.4, which, as noted above, contains the same verbal root as the next clause, 9:13.1.

2) Same Subject No More than 4 Clauses Away

The data gathered from Jeremiah 1-25 returned 5 clauses that fit this category. These insertions are not part of an existing cluster of clauses with the same subject, but may be placed next to one clause with the same subject. They also tend to have verbal processes that complement or logically follow the verbs of surrounding clauses with the same or related

19 See the discussion of “Topic (re-)activation” in Christo H. J. van der Merwer, Jacobus A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (2nd ed.; London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2017), 500-501.

20 J. J. M. Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 91-93 notably struggles with this repeated noun and the consequent line divisions implied by the MT accentuation, and opts to emend the text.

subjects. A search through Habakkuk for clauses that fit this description revealed 7 plausible cases.

Two such insertions occur beside each other in Habakkuk 1:4.2 and 1:4.3. Their subjects are justice and a villain, respectively. In the case of 1:4.2, the subject, “justice,” imitates the clause nearby with the same subject in 1:4.4, and even uses the same verbal root יָצָא (“go out”). Precedent for this kind of similarity with clauses occurring nearby is found in Jeremiah 23:38.1, where אָמַר (“say”) with a second person plural subject also occurs in the third and fifth clauses of the same verse, and also in Jeremiah 25:3.3, where the insertion of a negated שָׁמַע (“hear”) with a second person plural subject parallels the same form in the next verse in 25:4.2. Another relevant example would be in the lengthy insertion in Jeremiah 8:10.2-8:12, in which 8:12 contains three clauses with בּוֹשׁ (“be ashamed”) as the verb, following its usage in 8:9.

The next clause, 1:4.3, has a villain for the subject and begins with the conjunction כִּי. While the exact subject of the villain does not occur elsewhere in Habakkuk, this entity in the larger context of Habakkuk 1:2-4 functions in continuity with other references to various evildoers, such as the raiding, violence, strife, and contention in 1:3.3-5. Habakkuk 1:4.3 significantly develops beyond what is expressed by these previous clauses with evildoers as the subject, however, by added a direct object and having the evildoer express power over the righteous. In this it could also be influenced by 1:3.3, which uses a prepositional phrase to express that raiding and violence are “before” the prophet. This introduction of an expansion with כִּי is also found in Jeremiah 25:14.1-2, which introduces two clauses, with nations/kings and YHWH as the subjects,²¹ that explain

21 The challenging feature of this particular example is that nations/kings do not themselves occur as clausal subjects nearby.

the cause of the downfall of Babylon that is described in the previous verses. A כִּי conjunction also occurs at the beginning of the lengthy expansion in 8:10.2-8:12, in which 8:10.2-8:11 express the corruption of various leaders in society.

If 1:4.2 and 1:4.3 are both read as editorial expansions, the resultant original text would have had 1:4.4 following immediately after 1:4.1. Both of these clauses begin with the compound conjunction עַל־כֵּן (“therefore”). Precedent for occurrences of this compound conjunction to exist in close proximity is found in Habakkuk 1:15.4 and 1:16.1.

Another example of a possible editorial expansion in which the subject of the insertion occurs within 4 clauses is 1:9.1, “All of him comes for violence.” The subject is the masculine singular personification of the Chaldean.²² Previous, he has not been a subject since 7 clauses back in 1:7.1, but he is a subject only 2 clauses forward in 1:9.3. Within the larger section expressing spatial movement from 1:7.2-1:9.2, this insertion could be functioning to anticipate his resumption as a subject in the section expressing his capturing of other parties and disregard for other royal authorities in 1:9.3-1:10.5.²³ The verb בּוֹא (“go in, enter”) occurred only 2 clauses back in 1:8.4 where the horsemen were the subject. The corpus of editorial expansions in Jeremiah provides precedent for inserted clauses that repeat verbal roots that occur nearby with different subjects. Within the category of clusters of clauses with the same subject, this occurs in Jeremiah 14:3.5-7, where the lads are assigned the actions of being “ashamed” (בוֹשׁ) and “covering” (חִפּוּהַ) their heads that are attributed to the plowmen in 14:4.3-4. A similar example is found

22 For discussion of the significance of the use of the singular (as opposed to the plural form above in 1:6) for the actions of the members of the Chaldean army, see Jörg Jeremias, *Habakkuk* (BKAT XIV/5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022), 82-83.

23 See the chiasmic structure identified in Fuller, *A Discourse Analysis of Habakkuk*, 82-83.

in Jeremiah 23:18.3, where the action of “hearing” (שמיע) is inserted for “the one standing in the council of the Lord,” mirroring its usage with “the one attending to his word” in 23:18.5. Within the category of examples where the subject does not occur nearby, Jeremiah 25:26.2 inserts the king of Babylon “drinking” (שתה) in a context where “drinking” and related actions already occur multiple times in the next verse, 25:27.

3) Same Subject 5 or More Clauses Away, or Absent Entirely

Due to only two occurrences being identified for the other categories, they will be considered together in the present study.

The first such possibility is 1:7.2, “from him his justice and his authority will go out.” The justice and authority of the Chaldean do not appear anywhere else as subjects. The most significant connection between this clause and its environment has to do with the verb, “go out” (צא) and the general theme of spatial movement in 1:7.2-1:9.2 noted above. This insertion could thus be understood as a bridge that connects the general statement about the wickedness of the Chaldean in 1:7.1 with the movement of his specific associated parties in the next stretch of clauses. Precedent for this could be found in Jeremiah 15:7.4, where the Judahites “return not” from their disobedience ways, in thematic continuity with their “casting off” of YHWH and “going backward” 7 clauses back in 15:6.1-2.

However, another connection to 1:7.2 can be made further back in the book, as both the words “justice” (משפט) and “go out” (צא) occur together in 1:4.2 (also considered an insertion, see discussion in section 4.2 above) and 1:4.4. In 1:4, justice was referring to adherence to Torah, so this insertion in 1:7.2 could be a reference that deliberately contrasts the Chaldean’s “justice” with that of YHWH, the latter being seemingly

temporarily suspended.²⁴ This kind of repetition of a verb attributed to a different subject is seen in Jeremiah 25:26.2 (see above), which includes the king of Babylon in the action of drinking already performed by the leaders of the other nations. It is also visible in Jeremiah 7:2.3, which includes the prophet in the “speaking” (אמר) action performed by YHWH in 7:3.1.

A final example that is more difficult to categorize is Habakkuk 2:20.1-2. YHWH has not been the subject of a clause since 2:2.2, and has not been mentioned since 2:13.1, 2:14.1, and 2:16.4. However, YHWH is mentioned immediately afterwards in 3:2.1, raising the question of whether ch. 3 was a part of the earliest literary layer of the book. In the immediate context of the final woe oracle in 2:18-20, the statement that YHWH is in his holy temple serves to contrast with the description of no breath being in the idol in 2:19.4. Within the woe oracles as a whole (2:6b-20) the shift to focusing on YHWH and the whole earth (2:20) mimics the movement at the end of the third oracle (2:13-14) which promises a day when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of YHWH,²⁵ potentially setting the stage for the cosmic arena of ch. 3. The only expansions in Jeremiah that would be comparable are the aforementioned 25:26.2 and 7:2.3.

24 Michael H. Floyd, *Minor Prophets: Part 2* (FOTL 22; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2000), 96. Floyd states, “The injustice in which Yahweh is implicated in 1:2-4 is thus identified with the injustice perpetuated by the Babylonians in 1:5-11.”

25 Fuller, *Discourse Analysis*, 205.

5. Comparison with Previous Approaches to the Composition of Habakkuk

The results of this investigation will now be compared with previous source-critical analyses of Habakkuk. A significant question arises when one engages in this task, however: do the results of the present study complement these other studies, or do they challenge them? Given that previous approaches are generally based on identifying layers of different ideological perspectives throughout the book, how can a comparison built on a model of small editorial clarifications and explanations play out? Conceivably, the present model could simply be used to explain how the discrete portions of the major compositional layers accumulated small additions over time. Alternatively, one could argue that the empirically grounded model used by the present study is demonstrably superior to the more speculative basis of these other studies, and critique them on this basis. The present study will review the general tendencies of previous approaches to the composition of Habakkuk, and conduct some soundings into the possibility of bringing the findings of these two models into conversation with each other.

Much of the redactional work on Habakkuk is driven by a perceived incongruence between the focus of some of the book on social problems internal to Judah, while other parts deal with the imminent invasion and ferocity of the Babylonians.²⁶ While many redactional approaches to the book have been performed, the works of Peckham and Nogalski²⁷

26 For summary and discussion of critical approaches to Habakkuk through the early twentieth century, see Dennis Ray Bratcher, "The Theological Message of Habakkuk: A Literary-Rhetorical Analysis," (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1984), 328-33.

27 Brian Peckham, "The Vision of Habakkuk." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 48 (1986) 617-36;

are particularly appropriate contrasting examples due to their differing evaluations of the base layer of the composition. For Peckham, the original form of Habakkuk was a complaint about the Babylonians followed by a reflection on YHWH's past deeds.²⁸ Successive additions covered the topic of theodicy. For Nogalski, in contrast, the original "wisdom-layer" was a complaint and discussion of theodicy prompted by the prosperity of Judean evildoers.²⁹ Later expansions introduced the topic of the Babylonians.

The comparison between the results of the present study and previous approaches will be carried out by working through the sections of Habakkuk individually. In the prophet's initial complaint in 1:2-4, I identified 1:3.4-5 and 1:4.2-3 as possible editorial expansions due to the way they serve to exposit pre-existing material. Approaches that see 1:2-4 to be about injustice in Judah most often see this pericope as present in its entirety in the first layer of the book.³⁰ A notable exception is Peckham, who argues that only 1:1-3a belong to the first compositional layer, and reads them as applying to a complaint about the vision of the Babylonian invasion in portions of 1:5-11.³¹ This abridgment of the first complaint is sensible enough, as it essentially preserves the first half of 1:2-4, which

James D. Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 218; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1993).

28 Peckham, "Vision," 618-21.

29 Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 130-34, 136-38, 141-46, 151-53, 275-76.

30 Eckart Otto, "Die Theologie des Buches Habakuk," *Vetus Testamentum* 35 (1985) 274-95 (283); Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 141, 276; Jakob Wöhrle, *Der Abschluss des Zwölfprophetenbuches: Buchübergreifende Redaktionsprozesse in den späten Sammlungen* (BZAW 389; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 317; Walter Dietrich, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (trans. Peter Altmann; IECOT; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2016), 100, 135-36. A notable exception is Klaus Seybold, *Nahum Habakuk Zephaniah* (ZBK 24; Zürich: Theologische, 1991), 44-45, who places 1:2-4 in the last compositional layer.

31 Peckham, "Vision," 619-20.

focuses on the interaction between YHWH and the prophet, and leaves out the second half, in which the subjects shift to the various evildoers.³²

The present study argued that small portions of YHWH's oracle about the rise of Babylon in 1:5-11 were editorial expansions: part of the command to be amazed (1:5.4), the description of the audience not believing YHWH's work (1:5.6-7), various descriptions of the spatial movement of the Chaldean and his related parties (1:7.2; 1:8.3; 1:9.1) and other parallels describing his aggression (1:10.5 and 1:11.2). Many scholars read this pericope as being absent from the base layer of the book due to their assumption that it was originally about inner-Judean social problems.³³ However, they do see it as being inserted as a whole when it did enter the composition.³⁴ Two notable exceptions to this trend exist. Dietrich reads 1:5-10 as being part of the original layer of Habakkuk since it served to answer the prophet's outcry about injustice in Judah.³⁵ Peckham also allows for a smaller portion of it in the initial phase of the book (1:5-7a, 8-9a, 10) due to his understanding of the concern about Babylon being present from the beginning.³⁶ The problem with Dietrich's proposal is that it creates a text in which the intricate chiasmic pattern found in 1:7-11 is inexplicably cut off after the repetition of the second most inmost level.³⁷ In contrast, the elements identified as secondary

32 See Fuller, *Discourse Analysis*, 45-46, 62-63.

33 Otto, "Theologie," 283; Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 151; Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 317-18. Seybold, *Nabum*, 44-45 would again be an exception to this trend.

34 Otto, "Theologie," 283; Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 151; Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 317-18.

35 Dietrich, *Nabum*, 100-101, 133-35.

36 Peckham, "Vision," 619-20.

37 As Fuller, *Discourse Analysis*, 82-83 states, "The 'A' level describes his awfulness and guilt (1:7.1 and 1:11.3); the 'B' level describes his swift movement (1:7.2-1:9.2 and 1:11.1-1:11.2, the only action in the discourse depicted with both qatal and yiqtol verbs); the 'C' level describes his direct assaults on other parties (1:9.3 and 1:10.4-1:10.5, all with

by the present study do not eliminate the structure if they are removed. It is also worthwhile to compare the results of Peckham's analysis with relevant aspects of the present study. Peckham deletes 1:7.2, in keeping with the present analysis.³⁸ He also removes 1:9.2-3,³⁹ the case of clause 3 being particularly problematic since it removes the chiasmic counterpart to the description of the Chaldean acting upon other parties in 1:10.4-5. Peckham does not include v. 11 either,⁴⁰ which is problematic for the same reasons as identified in the discussion of Dietrich above.

For the prophet's second complaint in 1:12-17, the present study only identified two clauses that could have been the result of editorial expansions, the description of YHWH making humanity to be like fish in 1:14.1 and the additional line about the Chaldean capturing the nations in 1:15.3. For scholars who argue for an original edition of Habakkuk that focused only on problems internal to Judah, it is common to accept only a shortened version of this section that retains vv. 12a (or 1:12.1 in the terminology of this study), 13-14.⁴¹ Conversely, Peckham retains only 1:12.1-2 and 1:13.1-2, as he reads them as expressing trust in the face of

wayyiqtol verbs); and finally the inmost 'D' level highlights his derision for all forms of royal authority (1:10.1-1:10.3, which uses yiqtol verbs, except for the nominal clause where the prince is the subject)." Cf. the similar analysis found in Kenneth J. Turner, *Habakkuk* (ZECOT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023), 63, 65, 72-73.

- 38 Peckham, "Vision," 619, states, "the plight of the innocent (1:4b) is blamed on the arrogance of the Chaldeans (1:7b) and is resolved in the dictum for which the book is famous (2:4)."
- 39 Peckham, "Vision," 619, states, "its [the complaint in the original layer] reference to violence and injustice (1:3abb) is illustrated by the Chaldean policy of mass deportation (1:9b) and is repeated in the later series of invectives (2:5-6a)."
- 40 Peckham, "Vision," 619-20, states, "the ineffectiveness of the law (1:4a) is shown by the crimes and impunity of the Chaldeans (1:11), but this is finally rectified by the violent destruction of the guilty (3:13-14)."
- 41 Otto, "Theologie," 283; Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 150-51; Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 317-18.

the Babylon invasion.⁴² Dietrich offers another perspective entirely, as he views 1:12-14 as being the original layer, with the exception of 1:12.2. In his reading, the prophet is still complaining about the situation in Judah and awaits the arrival of the Babylonians.⁴³ It is difficult to stridently criticize this general tendency to separate vv. 15-17 from vv. 12-14, as it is clear that the latter is mostly about YHWH and the former is mostly about the Chaldean. However, upon closer inspection a case can be made that 1:14 intentionally bridges these two halves of 1:12-17, as it initiates a chain of references to humanity that continue into the second half of 1:12-17, has YHWH acting upon humanity using maritime imagery in a manner comparable to that of the Chaldean, and also occurs after the closing questions of 1:13.3-4, which seem to form an *inclusio* with 1:12.1.⁴⁴ On this basis, it appears problematic to include v. 14 but not vv. 15-17. This critique does not apply to Peckham, of course.

In the next major section, 2:2b-2:6a, the present study identified 2:3.2, 2:3.6-7, and 2:5.6 as possible editorial insertions. Scholars who see a base layer focused on Judah typically read 2:1-5a (2:5.4 in the terminology of the present study) as a unity.⁴⁵ This is understandable, as it eliminates the report of the Chaldean gathering nations and the nations raising the song of the woe oracles (2:5b-6a). Peckham, conversely, only includes 2:1-3, which is about the vision, removing the content about the “proud man” antagonist.⁴⁶ Dietrich includes 2:1-5a, although he holds

42 Peckham, “Vision,” 618.

43 Dietrich, *Nabum*, 133-35.

44 Fuller, *Discourse Analysis*, 100, 109-110.

45 Otto, “Theologie,” 283; Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 145-46; Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 317-18.

46 Peckham, “Vision,” 618-19. In doing so he admittedly creates a more cohesive version of this pericope, since it eliminated many of the entities in the second half that are not

to a different structure for the book by beginning the woe oracles in v. 5, and utilizing a somewhat unique translation of v. 5.⁴⁷ Once again, there is no significant antagonism between the results of the present inquiry into editorial practice and these redactional theories, since my hypotheses about editorial insertions typically only work inside of cohesive sub-units.⁴⁸

For the “woe oracles” in the second part of ch. 2, the present study only identified two places that could reasonably have come from editorial exegesis, the development of exposing nakedness from drinking in 2:16.3 and the notice about being silent before YHWH in his holy temple in 2:20.1-2. The most common redactional approach to this section of the book is to isolate an original core that was directed towards Judean evildoers, with later supplementation adapting the passage for the Babylonians.⁴⁹ The only important difference among the scholars following this approach is the question of whether 2:20 is included in this original layer.⁵⁰ Significantly, the present study argues for 2:20 being an interpolation on the basis of its establishing a connection back to 2:13-14, but none of these redactional analyses include 2:13-14 in this proposed

repeated. See David J. Fuller, “Reading Redaction in Habakkuk: Comparing the Cohesion of Various Proposals,” presented at the Canadian-American Theological Association Regional Meeting (Rochester, NY), Oct 21, 2017.

47 Dietrich, *Nabum*, 141, 156.

48 Fuller, *Discourse Analysis*, 138.

49 Otto, “Theologie,” 283; Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 130-34; Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 317-18; Dietrich, *Nabum*, 100, 153, 156. Typical among these would be Nogalski’s analysis, which identifies 2:6b-7, 9-10a, 11, 12, 15-16a, 20 as belonging to the original compositional layer.

50 Nogalski, *Redactional Processes*, 133; Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 317-18. Nogalski and Wöhrle include 2:20, although it is important to note that Wöhrle also includes the majority of ch. 3 and Nogalski does not. Otto, “Theologie,” 283 and Dietrich, *Nabum*, 100-101, 153, 156 do not include 2:20.

original layer. Secondly, the present study saw 2:20 as establishing a bridge to ch. 3, but only Wöhrle includes both 2:20 and ch. 3 in his base layer. Therefore, the present study could critique the viability of redactional analyses that include 2:20, but not 2:13-14 or ch. 3,⁵¹ as this introduces a reference to YHWH that lacks a meaningful connection to its surrounding context in keeping with the patterns of editorial expansion identified in Jeremiah 1-25. It should also be noted that Peckham excludes the woe oracles entirely from his base layer, moving immediately from the promise of the vision in 2:1-3 to the hymn of ch. 3.⁵² A final observation that should be made is that the redactional theories envision a very different kind of supplementation in the woe oracles than in the previous pericopes of 1:12-17 and 2:2b-6a. In the latter, they mostly saw the second half of these sections as being added later, whereas in the woe oracles, they had many small verses being interweaved throughout.

Relatively little needs to be said about ch. 3. The only major redactional analyses that include it in the base layer of the book are Peckham (who removes vv. 13-14) and Wöhrle (who removes vv. 16b-17).⁵³ The present study found only 3:13.1 to be a likely editorial insertion. Peckham's version removes the entire discussion of YHWH fighting the enemy army, while Wöhrle's removes the mention of a "day of distress" for the prophet's enemies and the description of agricultural devastation.

51 Thus, this critique applies chiefly to Nogalski, who ends his base layer with 2:20. That said, Nogalski's chastened version of the woe oracles is quantitatively more "cohesive" than that of the canonical form of the book, due to its elimination of clauses with entities that do not recur throughout, as documented in Fuller, "Reading Redaction in Habakkuk."

52 Peckham, "Vision," 618-19.

53 Peckham, "Vision," 618-19; Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 317.

6. Implications

Due to the vastly different methods being compared, bringing the results of the present study into dialogue with previous redactional approaches involved significant challenges. In the cases of 1:2-4, 2:2b-6a, and ch. 3, no meaningful comparison could be made between the two models. In the case of 1:5-11, the present study critiqued the redactional theories based on a chiasmic pattern present in its underlying linguistic analysis of Habakkuk. In the case of the “woe oracles” of 2:6b-20, the framework of the present study offered a critique of the redactional conclusions of Nogalski. In the case of 1:12-17, the present study argued against the redactional theories based on its reconstructed compositional history of the section.

This analysis is indicative of the limitations of comparing data generated by vastly different paradigms. Nonetheless, the overall superior evidential support for the empirically derived models of editorial exegesis should nonetheless make it a formidable challenge to the more speculative conventional redaction theories,⁵⁴ even given the narrow number of places where their respective results can be usefully compared side by side.

One more observation needs to be made, however. The overall tendencies of the redactional models profiled above can be brought into

54 Müller and Pakkala, *Editorial Techniques in the Hebrew Bible*, 28, state, “historical [source] criticism ... has not been firmly anchored in documented evidence. Its basic assumptions, methodologically possibilities, and limits have not been methodologically tested and compared with cases where one can observe how the texts were edited. The actual reconstructability of scribal changes in particular has only been assumed, but how reliable the reconstructions are has not been evaluated with regard to the documented evidence.” They further note in their conclusions that “Conventional redaction-critical reconstructions are further undermined by the nearly complete lack of documented evidence for classic redactions that would have revised entire compositions from a certain theological perspective” (542).

conversation with the dataset generated from the editorial expansions visible in Jeremiah 1-25. In particular, the longer insertions found in Jeremiah 8:10b-12 and 10:6-8, 10 are notable in that *they do not introduce anything new into their respective contexts*, but only serve to clarify and expand upon the concepts that are already present.⁵⁵ Furthermore, even an example from the Jeremiah dataset that does introduce a grammatical subject lacking precedent, Jeremiah 25:26.2, is still pointing back to an entity that was referenced earlier in the passage. Therefore, the general nature of the expansions found in Jeremiah 1-25 do not just serve as documented examples guiding the reconstruction performed in this study, but also provide evidence against the previous redactional models under review.

7. Conclusion

This study has proposed a plausible set of clauses in Habakkuk that could have arisen due to later editorial exegesis, based on a linguistic study of empirically attested phenomena in Jeremiah 1-25. In the comparison with previous redactional approaches, various literary-critical observations drawn from Fuller's *Discourse Analysis of Habakkuk* were used to bolster the critique of these previous models. In two specific cases (1:12-17 and 2:6b-20) the diachronic analysis of the present study was able to offer a critique of the previous redactional proposals. More broadly, the general

55 Similarly, Müller and Pakkala, *Editorial Techniques in the Hebrew Bible*, 534, state "Such editorial changes [harmonizations and inner-biblical exegesis], which form the vast majority of all types of editorial interventions, grew out of the older text or were its logical developments ... In the vast majority of additions there appears to be no intentional motive to alter the text by introducing something entirely new or by contradicting it ..."

patterns of supplementation found in Jeremiah 1-25 offer a paradigmatic challenge to the viability of the previous redactional models that are based on successive layers from different theological perspectives. This empirical approach can thus offer a feasible means of postulating possible editorial processes that is demonstrably better grounded in manuscript evidence than previous redactional proposals.

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Appendix: Clauses Proposed to be the Result of Editorial Exegesis

| Text and translation | Chapter:verse. clause number | Insertion Category |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| And Strife continues וְהָיָה רִיב | 1:3.4 | 2 |
| and contention arises. וּמְדוֹן יִשָּׂא | 1:3.5 | 2 |
| And justice does not go out endlessly וְלֹא יֵצֵא לְנֹצַח מִשְׁפָּט | 1:4.2 | 2 |
| For the villain hedges in the just man כִּי רָשָׁע מִכְתִּיר אֶת־הַצְּדִיק | 1:4.3 | 2 |
| Astound yourselves תִּמְהוּ | 1:5.4 | 1 |
| [Which] you would not believe לֹא תֶאֱמִינִי | 1:5.6 | 2 |
| if it were told. כִּי יִסְפָּר | 1:5.7 | 3–5 |
| from him his justice and his authority will go out מִמֶּנּוּ מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וּשְׂאוֹתוֹ יֵצֵא | 1:7.2 | 3–5 |
| His horsemen gallop וּפָשׁוּ פָרָשָׁיו | 1:8.3 | 1 |
| All of him comes for violence. כָּל־הוּא לְחָמָס יָבֹא | 1:9.1 | 2 |
| And he captures it. וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ | 1:10.5 | 1 |
| And he transgresses וַיַּעֲבֹר | 1:11.2 | 1 |

| Text and translation | Chapter:verse. clause number | Insertion Category |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <p>וַתַּעַשׂ אֱדָם כְּדִגְי הַיָּם כְּרֶמֶשׂ לֹא־מִשָּׁל בּוֹ</p> <p>You made men like the fish of the sea, like creeping things without a ruler over them</p> | 1:14.1 | 1 |
| <p>וַיֹּאסְפֵהוּ בְּמִכְמֹרְתּוֹ</p> <p>he gathers them in his dragnet</p> | 1:15.3 | 1 |
| <p>וַיַּפֵּחַ לְקֵץ</p> <p>it hastens to the end</p> | 2:3.2 | 1 |
| <p>כִּי־בֹא יָבֹא</p> <p>For it will surely come</p> | 2:3.6 | 2 |
| <p>לֹא יֵאָחֵר</p> <p>it will not delay</p> | 2:3.7 | 2 |
| <p>וַיִּקְבֹּץ אֵלָיו כָּל־הָעַמִּים</p> <p>and collects as his own all peoples.</p> | 2:5.6 | 1 |
| <p>וְהִעָרַל</p> <p>and expose your <i>own</i> nakedness</p> | 2:16.3 | 1 |
| <p>וַיְהוֶה בְּהִיכַל קֹדֶשׁוֹ</p> <p>But YHWH is in His holy temple.</p> | 2:20.1 | 3-5 |
| <p>הִס מִפְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ</p> <p>Let all the earth be silent before Him.</p> | 2:20.2 | 3-5 |
| <p>יָצָאתָ לְיִשְׁעַ עַמְּךָ לְיִשְׁעַ אֶת־מְשִׁיחֶךָ</p> <p>You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed</p> | 3:13.1 | 1 |

[ABSTRACT]

Empirical Models for the Compositional History of Habakkuk

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This study seeks to develop a new proposal for the compositional history of Habakkuk based on demonstrable patterns of editing from the ancient versions of the Hebrew Bible. Towards this end, it begins with a review of current empirical approaches to editorial practice and compares them with conventional redactional theories. It then reviews the data drawn from Jeremiah 1-25 that was used to build the model applied to Habakkuk. The main body of the analysis then reviews some select cases where certain passages in Habakkuk are proposed to be the result of editorial exegesis. The results as a whole are then compared to current theories of the composition of Habakkuk by working through the successive sections of the book. Crucially, while the results returned from this empirical mode of analysis are difficult to compare directly with previous redactional models, the general patterns derived from the dataset demonstrate not only that an entirely new approach is possible, but that the evidential basis for previous redactional approaches can be called into question.

key words

Habakkuk, Redaction, Scribal Culture, Linguistics, Functional Grammar

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