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'Every City shall be Forsaken'

Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East

edited by

Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak

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RECONSTRUCTING HAGGAI'S JERUSALEM:
DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS
AND THE SEARCH FOR AN ADEQUATE METHODOLOGICAL
POINT OF DEPARTURE

John Kessler

It is quite frequently affirmed in scholarly literature that the production of both the oracles and editorial framework of the book of Haggai can be situated in Jerusalem between 520–516 BCE.¹ In contrast to this confluence of opinion, attempts to describe the matrix from which the book arose, that is the specific demographic and sociological situation in Jerusalem, display a great degree of diversity. More specifically, the question of whether early Persian Yehud could have produced significant theological literature has been hotly debated. Given the intensity with which Persian Yehud has been studied over the past 20 years, it is appropriate to ask whether our scholarly appraisal of its social and demographic contours can move any closer to a consensus.

This study will therefore attempt three things. First, I will briefly survey three general approaches to the social context of early Persian Jerusalem and Yehud. Second, I will raise and discuss two critical questions. One addresses the role of demographic analysis in the reconstruction of ancient contexts. The second raises the question of the relationship between population density and literary output in Yehud. Finally, I will explore some conclusions and potential implications regarding our understanding of Jerusalem and Yehud in the early Persian period.

1. For example, S. Amsler, *Aggée* (CAT, XI-C; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1988), p. 10; C.L. Meyers and E.M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987), p. xliii; P.A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 10, as well as Marti, Mitchell, Sellin, Horst and Deissler.

1. Three Representative Approaches to Persian Yehud

a. *The Conflict Model*

As the designation implies, adherents of this model see intra-communal conflict as the point of entry into the dynamics of the life of the community in Yehud. While differing on the precise nature of the conflict, proponents of this approach generally share the following assumptions: (1) Yehud is seen as characterized by profound social divisions, echoes of which may be found in various biblical texts. (2) Yehud is viewed as a rather densely populated province, boasting anywhere from 50,000 to 200,000 inhabitants.² (3) The years between 587 BCE and 520 BCE, comprising the fall of Jerusalem, the exile of a portion of its inhabitants, and the subsequent return and reinstallation of a group distinguishable from the population that remained in the land, are said to constitute a significant turning point which radically altered the theological and sociological landscape of the Yahwistic faith.

Adherents of the conflict model may, broadly speaking, be divided into three major groups according to their understanding of the fundamental nature of the conflict.³ The first group, comprising P.D. Hanson, Morton Smith, R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, P.R. Bedford⁴ and

2. The following are some representative population estimates for Yehud: Weinberg: 200,000 (J.P. Weinberg, *Der Chronist in seiner Mitwelt* [BZAW, 239; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1996], pp. 37-38); Hanson: 42,000 (P.D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975], pp. 226-27); Gottwald: 'well in excess of 50,000' (N.K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985], pp. 430-31); Gottwald sees the 50,000 figure of Ezra 2 as too small for the total population of Yehud and suggests that this number represented only the privileged classes. H. Kreissig: 100,000 (H. Kreissig, *Die sozialökonomische Situation in Juda zur Achämenidzeit* [Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients, 7; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973], p. 38 n. 3).

3. This three-part categorization is meant to facilitate the understanding of these various conflictual approaches. It should be noted, however, that there is a certain degree of overlap at various points between the three groups.

4. R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, 'The Temple and the Origins of Jewish Apocalyptic', *VT* 20 (1970), pp. 1-15; Hanson, *Dawn*; M. Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old Testament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971); P.R. Bedford, 'Discerning the Time: Haggai, Zechariah and the "Delay" in the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple', in S.W. Holloway and L.K. Handy (eds.), *The*

N.K. Gottwald,⁵ among others, envisages a Jerusalem and Yehud divided primarily upon *theological or ideological* lines. According to this model, in 520 BCE the populous province of Yehud stood at a critical juncture. The theological diversity and concomitant social fragmentation which obtained before 587 BCE had continued into the exilic period. The situation had been further complicated by the return of the former deportees.⁶ With the advent of Persian rule, the community was afforded the possibility of choosing its future direction. Various sects and parties vied for political and theological control.⁷ Prophets sought to sway the masses to one or another of the opposing camps.⁸ The literature of the period, which constitutes no insignificant corpus, reflects this intra-communal theological debate. Despite agreement on the theological nature of the conflict, the adherents of this position display no unanimity regarding the specific issues under debate, the sectors of the population at odds with one another and the literary works which represent the theologies of the various groups.⁹

A second variation on the conflict theme is proposed by J.P. Weinberg and H. Kreissig who envisage a Yehud divided primarily over *economic and land tenure conflicts*.¹⁰ Here the returnees are pitted

Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for G.W. Ahlström (JSOTSup, 190; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp. 71-94.

5. Gottwald views portions of the Samaritan population as having pushed into Judah during the exile to occupy abandoned estates (*Hebrew Bible*, p. 424). He then speaks of two streams of Yahwism: Samaritan and Judahite, in conflict with each other (p. 420). He also alludes to the presence of socioeconomic and political rivalries.

6. Smith, *Parties*, p. 107; Hanson, *Dawn*, p. 260.

7. Hanson, *Dawn*, pp. 211-79; Smith, *Parties*, pp. 107-10.

8. Hanson, *Dawn*, pp. 240-62, esp. pp. 244, 246, 253, 256.

9. A brief and random survey is as follows. Hamerton-Kelly: Priestly group favouring immediate construction of the temple vs. disciples of Ezekiel who want to await the eschatological era; Hanson: Priestly-Ezekielian coalition (largely returnees) vs. disciples of Isaiah and disenfranchised Levites; Gottwald: Samaritan Yahwists vs. Judean Yahwists; Bedford: the community vs. Haggai and Zechariah (Bedford, 'Discerning', esp. pp. 74, 94). For a more detailed discussion see, L.L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian I* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 103-12.

10. H. Kreissig, *Situation*, pp. 101-105; J.P. Weinberg, 'Der 'am ha'ares des 6.-4. Jahrhunderts v. u. Z.', *Klio* 56 (1974), pp. 325-35; *idem*, 'Die Agrarverhältnisse in der Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde der Achämenidenzeit', *Acta Antiqua* 22 (1974), pp. 473-85. esp. pp. 479-81.

against the non-exiled population. According to this approach, Babylonian policy following 587 BCE had benefited the non-exiled population at the expense of the deportees. The latter, who were the former landowners (or *Eigentümern*) were dispossessed of their holdings when they were exiled. Their lands passed into the hands of the Babylonian crown. In the early part of the Babylonian period, the former tenant farmers, (or *Besitzern*) who had previously worked the land for the Judean landed class were left in place by the Babylonians.¹¹ As such they continued to work the land and surrendered a portion of the produce to the Babylonian crown or member of the nobility. These tenant farmers may also have benefited from extensive debt release.¹² As the Babylonian period advanced, however, this group ultimately gained either *de facto* or *de jure* ownership of the land, and were recognized as *Eigentümern* in their own right.¹³ Under Persian rule, with its restorationist impulse, the former landed class returned and sought to reclaim their land holdings, thus precipitating social conflict on various levels.¹⁴

11. Kreissig, *Situation*, p. 26; M.A. Dandamaev, *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran* (trans. P.L. Kohl; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 132-33. Weinberg's approach differs from that of Kreissig. According to Weinberg, even during the Babylonian period there was a certain measure of conflict between a pro-Babylonian sector of the population consisting of the 'poor of the land' who had been given agricultural plots by the Babylonians and an anti-Babylonian 'separatist' group consisting of non-deported freeholders or *Eigentümern* ('Agarverhältnis' p. 480); cf. also Weinberg, 'Demographische Notizen zur Geschichte der Nachexilischen Gemeinde in Juda', *Klio* 54 (1972), pp. 46-50, esp. p. 50.

12. Kreissig, *Situation*, p. 27.

13. Kreissig, *Situation*, pp. 27, 32. On the sale and redemption of land, cf. H.G. Kippenberg, *Religion und Klassenbildung im antiken Judäa: Eine religionssoziologische Studie zum Verhältnis von Tradition und gesellschaftlicher Entwicklung* (Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments, 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), pp. 33-41.

14. Margalith sees the conflict as being between the pro-Babylonian non-deportees and the pro-Persian returnees: O. Margalith, 'The Political Background of Zerubbabel's Mission and the Samaritan Schism', *VT* 41 (1991), pp. 312-23, esp. pp. 315-20. Kreissig (*Situation*, pp. 35-39, 101-105) sees these conflicts as relatively minor. However given the fact that he sees the population of Yehud as 60,000 before the return and 100,000 by the end of the sixth century, by any calculation the difficulties encountered in the course of the integration of upwards of 20,000 returning landowners into a reduced province with a population of 60,000 would have been of monumental proportions.

Similar views have been expressed by O. Margalith and R. Carroll, and to a lesser extent D.J.A. Clines.¹⁵ I note in passing that unlike virtually all other historians of the period with the possible exception of Gottwald,¹⁶ Weinberg views Yehud not as a geographically defined territory but as pockets of returnees living in proximity to the non-exiled population.¹⁷ Again the specific theological positions of these two conflicting groups and the literature they produced are variously understood.

A third view sees the conflict as *ethnic, political and theological*. Scholars such as Thompson and Bolin maintain that a group of returnees, by and large ethnically unrelated to the local population, were sent to Yehud to buttress Persian foreign policy initiatives.¹⁸ This group achieved hegemony and imposed not only its political control, but its theological agenda on the local population. Much of the biblical literature is an attempt by members of this group to forge a unity between themselves and the local population via a fictitious common history.¹⁹

Three observations regarding the conflict model are appropriate at this point. First, it would appear that the presence of a sizable population in Jerusalem and Yehud is a critical element in this approach. I will take up this issue in greater detail below. Second, the biblical literature is frequently seen as either the fruit of this intra-communal

15. R. Carroll, 'The Myth of the Empty Land', *Semeia* 59 (1992), pp. 79-93; D.J.A. Clines, 'Haggai's Temple, Constructed, Deconstructed, and Reconstructed', *SJOT* 7 (1993), pp. 51-77; Margalith, 'Background', *passim*. An excellent critique of the hypothesis of extensive conflict around land tenure at our period may be found in E. Ben Zvi, 'Inclusion in and Exclusion from Israel as Conveyed by the Use of the Term "Israel" in Post-Monarchic Texts', in Holloway and Handy (eds.), *The Pitcher is Broken*, pp. 95-149, esp. pp. 108-10.

16. Gottwald, *Hebrew Bible*, p. 429.

17. Weinberg, 'Demographische Notizen', p. 58; 'Agrarverhältnisse', p. 481.

18. T.M. Bolin, 'When the End is the Beginning: The Persian Period and the Origins of the Biblical Tradition', *SJOT* 10 (1996), pp. 3-15; T.L. Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archaeological Sources* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992); *idem*, 'The Exile in History and Myth: A Response to Hans Barstad', in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), *Leading Captivity Captive: 'The Exile' as History and Ideology* (JSOTSup, 278; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 101-18, esp. pp. 104-107.

19. For an insightful critique of this position see J. Pasto, 'When is the End the Beginning? Or when the Biblical Past is the Political Present', *SJOT* 12 (1998), pp. 157-202 and F.E. Deist, 'The Yehud Bible: A Belated Divine Miracle', *JNSL* 23 (1997), pp. 117-42.

polemic (so Hanson, Smith, and Hamerton-Kelly) or unwittingly revealing it (so Clines and Bolin). Third, the flow of thought in this approach is generally from sociological analogy or axiom, to text, to historical reconstruction (so Smith, Clines, and Hanson).

b. *The Populous Exilic Yehud Model*

The principal proponent of this view is Hans Barstad,²⁰ whose argumentation frequently resembles that of E. Janssen and H. Kreissig,²¹ and to a lesser extent E.-M. Laperrousaz.²² While the notion of conflict is not absent from this model, it plays a far less significant role than in the preceding position. Rather, this approach emphasizes that the population of Judah/Yehud was relatively stable and homogeneous before and after 587 BCE.²³ Furthermore, the departure and return of a small number of elite citizens did not radically affect the religious and economic life of the community.²⁴ This conclusion is based upon several related assumptions: (1) the conviction that the notions of quasi-total deportation, and its concomitant, the 'Myth of the Empty Land', are not primarily intended to be statements of historical detail, but rather essential components of ancient story-telling.²⁵ For Barstad, such notions are thus rhetorical and descriptive devices which stress the importance of

20. H. Barstad, *The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah During the 'Exilic' Period* (SOSup, 28; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996). Several of the adherents of the 'conflict' model, as we have seen, maintain high population statistics for exilic Judah (so Weinberg, 200,000). However their emphasis on the great degree of conflict which existed in the post-exilic period distinguishes them from this second position whose main emphasis is the stability and continuity in Yehud throughout the sixth century.

21. E. Janssen, *Juda in der Exilszeit: Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Entstehung des Judentums* (FRLANT, 69; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956); Kreissig, *Situation*, pp. 20-34. As noted above, Kreissig implies a level of social conflict not discernible in Barstad's work.

22. E.-M. Laperrousaz, 'Jérusalem à l'époque perse (étendue et statut)', *Transeuphratène* 1 (1989), pp. 55-65 and his extensive writings on the size of Jerusalem in *Eretz Israel, Folia Orientalia* and elsewhere.

23. Barstad, *Myth*, pp. 53-55. Kreissig (*Situation*, pp. 22-23) nuances this somewhat, and incorporates the effects of the population loss following Gedeliah's assassination into his reconstruction.

24. Barstad, *Myth*, pp. 67-71; Kreissig, *Situation*, pp. 22-23, 26. Kreissig is more hesitant than Barstad regarding the extent of economic activity during the exile.

25. Barstad, *Myth*, pp. 31-32, 53; Kreissig, *Situation*, pp. 20-21, 30-31.

the Babylonian conquest (in Kings)²⁶ or the importance of the returnees (in Chronicles).²⁷ (2) Babylonian destruction in Jerusalem was limited to breaches in the wall, the removal of the city gates, and damage to the central shrine. The residential sections of the city (which extended to the Western Hill) were left largely untouched.²⁸ (3) This densely populated exilic and postexilic Judah was the source of several major literary works such as Lamentations; Isa. 21; DH; Obadiah; Pss. 44, 74, 79, 89, 102; Jeremiah; Ezekiel; and Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah.²⁹ (4) The notion of a 'shift of gravity'³⁰ from Palestine to Babylon is pure mythology. The community which remained in Judah was vital and creative.³¹ (5) The conflict that did exist arose at a later period and was not a formative factor in the creation of the literary works mentioned above.

Let me note in conclusion that while Barstad does not explicitly state his estimate of the population of Jerusalem or Yehud, he clearly assumes it to be rather substantial.³² Furthermore the flow of his argument differs significantly from the 'Conflict' approach. He reasons from historical and archaeological data, to demographic assumptions, to potential for literary output. This line of argumentation corresponds to his basic intent which is not to reconstruct a sociohistorical context *per se*, but to argue for the potential Palestinian origin of certain literary works.

26. Barstad, *Myth*, pp. 31-34.

27. Barstad, *Myth*, pp. 41-42.

28. Here Barstad substantially follows the arguments of Janssen (*Exilszeit*, pp. 42-45) which were also taken up by P.R. Ackroyd (*Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century BC* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968], pp. 20-21). Cf. Kreissig, *Situation*, pp. 22-24.

29. Barstad, *Myth*, pp. 19-23. See also his *The Babylonian Captivity of the Book of Isaiah: 'Exilic' Judah and the Provenance of Isaiah 40-55* (Oslo: Novus Instituttet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning, 1997), pp. 86-87 and 'On the History and Archaeology of Judah during the Exilic Period. A Reminder', *OLP* 19 (1988), pp. 25-36, esp. p. 36.

30. It would appear that this *tournure* which has found its way into the warp and woof of scholarly discussion of the period originated with J. Bright (*A History of Israel* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 2nd edn, 1972], p. 345). It has become a somewhat customary way of describing the theological landscape (to mix metaphors) of the period.

31. Barstad, *Myth*, pp. 80-82.

32. Barstad, *Myth*, pp. 53-54.

c. *The Demographic Decline Model*

In contrast to the preceding, rather maximal, views of the exilic population, proponents of this view, principally C.E. Carter and E. Ben Zvi, and to a lesser extent, Magen Broshi,³³ envisage a Yehud and Jerusalem which are rather sparsely populated during the Babylonian and early Persian periods.³⁴ Aharoni similarly posited a 'population vacuum' during this period.³⁵ Carter maintains that while some increase in the population did occur in the late sixth century and early fifth century,³⁶ no significant growth occurred until the mid-fifth century. This increase may have been related to broader Persian political initiatives in the Levant as a whole. Broshi originally estimated the population of mid-fifth-century Jerusalem as approximately 4,800.³⁷ This figure was later revised downward by Carter, primarily due to his conclusions regarding the size of the residential area of the city and its population density.³⁸

33. I include Broshi here due to the relative comparison between his population estimates and those of Laperrousaz, for example. Next to the latter's estimate of the population of Jerusalem as 12,000 in the mid-fifth century, Broshi's 4,800 is quite restrained (see below).

34. E. Ben Zvi, 'The Urban Center of Jerusalem and the Development of the Literature of the Hebrew Bible', in Walter E. Aufrecht, Neil A. Mirau and Steven W. Gauley (eds.), *Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete* (JSOTSup, 244; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1997), pp. 194-209; M. Broshi, 'Estimating the Population of Ancient Jerusalem', *BARev* 4 (1978), pp. 10-15; *idem*, 'La population de l'ancienne Jérusalem', *RB* 1 (1982), pp. 5-14; C.E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period* (JSOTSup, 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); *idem*, 'The Province of Yehud in the Post-Exilic Period: Soundings in Site Distribution and Demography', in T.C. Eskenazi and K.H. Richards (eds.), *Second Temple Studies 2: Temple and Community in the Persian Period* (JSOTSup, 175; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), pp. 106-45.

35. Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* (London: Burns and Oates, 1979), p. 409.

36. Carter, 'Yehud', pp. 134-35. The same may be said for Galilee, cf. J. Briand, 'L'occupation de la Galilée occidentale à l'époque perse', *Transeuphratène* 2 (1990), pp. 109-23, esp. p. 121. A similar phenomenon may be seen in Samaria, cf. A. Zertal, 'The Pahwah of Samaria (Northern Israel) during the Persian Period: Types of Settlement, Economy, History and New Discoveries', *Transeuphratène* 3 (1990), pp. 9-29, esp. p. 12. Cf. A. Lemaire, 'Populations et territoires de la Palestine à l'époque perse', *Transeuphratène* 3 (1990), pp. 31-74, esp. p. 43.

37. Broshi, 'Population', p. 9. I arrive at this figure by multiplying Broshi's estimates of size (120 dunams) and his population coefficient (40).

38. Carter, *Emergence*, pp. 147-48; 196-201 and esp. p. 201 n. 89.

He estimates the population of Yehud as follows: Persian I (539–450 BCE) 13,350; Persian II (450–333 BCE) 20,650.³⁹ He views the population of Jerusalem as approximately 1,500 in Persian II and estimates the city's size to have been fifty percent smaller in Persian I.⁴⁰ On the basis of Carter's estimates Ben Zvi concludes that the bodies of literature which Barstad would assign to the exilic period (with one or two minor exceptions) could not have been written either during the exile or in Persian I. The reason for this, according to Ben Zvi, is that until 450 BCE the demographic and economic conditions in Yehud would not have been sufficiently developed to have sustained any significant literary activity. I will explore this issue further below.

This sparsely populated Yehud was *not marked by profound social or theological divisions*. For both Carter and Ben Zvi, one major economic challenge of the period appears to have been the need for sectors of the urban population to construct persuasive reasons why the rural community should part with a portion of its surplus to support groups such as the literati, priests, and other administrative officials.⁴¹ Ben Zvi and Carter differ with respect to the period within which the relevant biblical materials were produced. Carter sees such works as DH, P, Third Isaiah, Haggai, First and Second Zechariah, Joel, Jonah, Malachi, Chronicles and the editing of the Writings as having taken place in Yehud during the Persian period, although he ventures no specific suggestions regarding dates.⁴² He does not appear to exclude Persian I from consideration on the basis of its low population, as does Ben Zvi. I note in conclusion that like Barstad, Ben Zvi moves from demographics to potential for literary output.

2. *Two Foundational Questions*

What, then, did the Jerusalem of 520 BCE look like? Was it a hotbed of intra-communal conflict, reinforced by polemical prophetic preaching

39. Carter, *Emergence*, pp. 201–202. For his earlier figures for Yehud (10,850 and 17,000) see Carter, 'Yehud', p. 135.

40. Carter, *Emergence*, pp. 200–201, and 'Yehud', p. 129.

41. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', p. 197; Carter, 'Yehud', p. 138, esp. n. 87 and *Emergence*, p. 287 n. 80.

42. Carter, 'Yehud', p. 137 and *Emergence*, pp. 286–88. N.P. Lemche, 'The Old Testament: A Hellenistic Book', *SJOT* 7 (1993), pp. 184–85 nn. 41–42, asserts that such conditions did not exist until the Hellenistic period.

and sectarian literary output? Was it a bustling economic centre where, geopolitical changes notwithstanding, literary and economic activity continued apace? Or was it a shadow of its former self where a small and beleaguered population now sought to stay alive, and somehow, in the process, managed to rehabilitate a damaged cult site? Two foundational questions would appear to be of critical importance in determining our approach to the reconstruction of the sociology of Yehud. The first concerns demographics: which of the preceding demographic profiles is most accurate for Early Persian Yehud? The second question concerns the potential for literary output: can Persian I Yehud be considered a candidate for the production of theological literature?

a. *The Demographic Framework of Early Persian Yehud*

Well-founded demographic estimates provide a highly useful point of reference vis-à-vis competing sociological reconstructions. Methodologically, the utility of such estimates is maximized when they are introduced *before* or at very least *at the same time as* the application of sociological analogies, the reading of texts, or the reconstruction of social, political and economic circumstances. Demographic assessment thus provides the backdrop against which other factors may be considered.

Of the models presented above, only the 'Demographic Decline' position approaches the question of population levels from the perspective of a clearly formulated methodology, elaborated by a variety of researchers over a significant period of time, and applied and tested in a variety of contexts. Thus while Kreissig, Weinberg and Barstad all take into serious consideration the archaeological data relevant to the period, none attempts to translate that data into population estimates using any clearly definable methodology. We are therefore more inclined to accept the lower figures proposed by Carter and Ben Zvi, than the higher estimates presupposed in other reconstructions.

Yet having opted for these low levels, it is perhaps prudent to see them as delimiting the *lower* end of a broader range of potential population figures. This is due to the fact that it is more likely that future research will raise rather than diminish the figures proposed by Carter. Put another way, it is more likely that Persian I occupation will be posited in new sites than that it will be rejected for sites where it is currently assumed. Carter clearly states that his figures are 'provisional

at best'.⁴³ Thus a reasonable range for the population of Persian I Yehud might be somewhere between Carter's estimate of 13,350⁴⁴ and the figure of about 20,000 proposed by Albright.⁴⁵ Allowing for a similar margin for Jerusalem, that city would have a population of somewhere between 750 and 1,500 inhabitants. Such a margin also leaves room for the potential inclusion of any extra-mural population, should such have existed.⁴⁶

These population estimates call into question the viability of certain aspects of the 'Conflict' and 'Populous Judah' models. Thus, for example, to remain persuasive, the 'Conflict' model must take due account of the fact that social dynamics do indeed change as population density changes. This is especially true when the community under study is facing a significant challenge or engaged in a demanding undertaking, as was the Jerusalem community. For this reason, the contours, proportions, and intensity of the social conflict (which must of course have existed to some degree), must be analyzed and reconstructed in light of the number of people involved, and their broader economic and social situation. The various conflict based models appear to have been formulated presupposing a dense population. If the lower figures are accurate, the models must be revisited. Clearly the intensity of conflict will increase as greater population levels are pressed into limited space. One wonders how Hanson, Weinberg or Morton Smith would have worked out their conflict-based hypotheses had they begun with more modest population figures. It is worth noting that in such reconstructions the biblical numbers are at times incorporated at face value without much analysis (as Hanson does), or interpreted in a rather unconventional way (as Weinberg does).⁴⁷

Similarly Barstad, while drawing on a wide variety of significant data, does not, conclusively demonstrate that Babylonian Judah was a densely populated province. So, for example, the evidence which he provides of *some* population in exilic Judah and Jerusalem does not necessarily imply that the population there remained substantially close to its pre-587 BCE levels throughout the *entire* neo-Babylonian period.

43. Carter, *Emergence*, p. 202.

44. Carter, *Emergence*, p. 201.

45. W.F. Albright, *The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 87.

46. Cf. Carter, *Emergence*, pp. 145-47.

47. Hanson, *Dawn*, pp. 226-27; Weinberg, 'Demographische Notizen', *passim*.

Similarly his arguments regarding the economic importance of Syria-Palestine *as a whole* to the Babylonian empire does not prove the existence of a booming economy and dense population *specifically* in Judah. Furthermore his argument that the 'Myth of the Empty Land' is a literary construct used for rhetorical and ideological purposes does not *necessarily* demonstrate that no significant diminution in the population actually transpired. As we have seen, there is clear evidence which points in the direction of population decline. Samaria and Galilee appear to have experienced similar population declines in the late Babylonian and early Persian periods, and to have had population levels similar to those we are positing for Yehud.⁴⁸ Barstad cites Shiloh's estimate of the population of Jerusalem at the end of the eighth century of 25,000–40,000. He then poses the question, 'What happened to Jerusalem and to all these people'?'⁴⁹ He appears to intimate that such a question is a difficult one for 'empty landers' to answer. However the question cannot be resolved simply by affirming, as Barstad does, that the bulk of the population either stayed put or fled to sites such as Tell el-Ful.⁵⁰ Whatever we might have expected to happen based on other considerations, suffice it to say that something appears to have happened to all those people. Barstad goes on to cite E.-M. Laperrousaz as affirming a population of 12,000 in Jerusalem *during the exile*.⁵¹ However, Laperrousaz appears to refer that figure to Nehemiah's Jerusalem rather than to the Babylonian period.⁵² Furthermore Barkay's tomb excavations in the Hinnom valley (to which Barstad makes reference) demonstrates that Jerusalem was most likely occupied during the Babylonian period. However this data cannot in itself provide an adequate estimate of the population of Jerusalem at the time. Similarly S.S. Weinberg's summary of the 1967–68 Israel Department of Antiquities survey, which Barstad then cites, cannot be said to conclusively demonstrate a densely populated Yehud. It would therefore appear that the most probable profile is that of a significant demographic decline.

At this point it may be instructive to canvass the text of Haggai itself for any clues to the demographic situation the text may wittingly or

48. Briend, 'L'occupation', p. 121; Zertal 'The Pahwah', pp. 11-12. Zertal appears to posit a population of approximately 20,000 for Samaria in Persian I.

49. Barstad, *Myth*, p. 53.

50. Barstad, *Myth*, pp. 48-50; 53-55.

51. Barstad, *Myth*, p. 53 n. 19, italics his.

52. Laperrousaz, 'Jérusalem', p. 57.

unwittingly reveal. The use of Haggai may be justified on the grounds that (1) the most likely date of the book's final redaction is in Persian I⁵³ and (2) we are not attempting to elicit any detailed historical data from the text, but rather a general impression or background.

The descriptions of renovating the temple may reveal something of the general demographic situation in 520 BCE in this regard. Before any work begins, the temple is described as *חרב* ('to be waste, desolate' vv. 4, 9). In v. 4 *חרב* stands opposite a description of the peoples houses as *ספונים* or 'covered'.⁵⁴ If the contrast were simply one regarding the relative material states of the two structures in question, one would anticipate a more concrete term describing the temple's physical state of disrepair. Indeed, several such terms were available. Four examples are as follows: (1) *נתץ* ('to pull or break down') which is used passively to describe broken down cities (Jer. 4.26) or houses (Jer. 33.4; Ezek. 16.39). It may also be used actively to describe the tearing down of altars (Exod. 34.13; Deut. 7.25), towers (Judg. 8.9), houses (Isa. 22.10; Ezek. 26.9) or, significantly, the temple of Baal (2 Kgs 10.27; 11.18; 2 Chron. 23.17); (2) *הלם* ('to smite, hammer, or strike down') which is used with reference to the damaging of the wood in the temple during the Babylonian invasion (Ps. 74.6); (3) *פרץ* ('to break through, break down, break up') used passively with reference to the tearing down of the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 1.3; 2.13; 4.1; cf. Ps. 80.13; 89.41; Isa. 5.5; 2 Chron. 25.23; or (4) *הרס* ('to throw down, break down or tear down') used passively of the breaking down of cities (Ezek. 36.35), walls (Jer. 50.15), and foundations (Ezek. 30.4). Indeed, the descriptions in Jer. 52.17-23; 2 Kgs 24.13-17 and Ps. 74.4-9 appear to indicate

53. In my opinion there is no convincing reason for dating the final redaction of Haggai after 516 BCE but many persuasive arguments for placing it before that date. These include (1) the presence, form, and variations in form of the date formulae within the book (cf. R. Yaron, 'The Scheme of the Aramaic Legal Documents', *JJS* 2 [1957], pp. 33-61; J. Kessler, 'The Second Year of Darius and the Prophet Haggai', *Transuephratène* 5 [1992], pp. 63-84); (2) the lack of redactional attenuation of the optimistic oracle to Zerubbabel in 2.20-23 (cf. R.A. Mason, 'The Purpose of the "Editorial Framework" of the Book of Haggai', *VT* 27 [1977], pp. 413-21 esp. p. 417; T. Chary, *Aggée—Zacharie Malachie* [Sources Bibliques; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969], p. 12; Verhoef, *Haggai*, p. 10); (3) the lack of any mention of the completion of the temple (cf. Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai*, pp. xliii-xlv); (4) the lack of any hesitation regarding diarchic communal leadership (cf. Mason, 'Purpose', p. 421).

54. For this understanding of the term see, for example, Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai*, p. 23.

pillaging, dismantling, and desecration, rather than wholesale demolition.

The verbal root חרב ('to be dry, waste, desolate', Isa. 34.10; Jer. 26.9; Ezek. 26.19) the adjective חרב ('to be waste, desolate', Jer. 33,10.12; Ezek. 36.35, 38), and the noun חרבה ('waste, desolation, ruin', Ezra 9.9; Jer. 7.34; 27.17; 44.2, 6, 22; Ezek. 36.10), by contrast, frequently refer not to the physical dismantling of structures but the results of such destructive activity, that is a state of abandonment and depopulation which comes to a region as a result of invasion and devastation by enemies. As Carroll notes, the term implies the cessation of normal and expected activities.⁵⁵ Amsler is certainly correct in his observation, '[harev] is not to be taken as a description of the ruined state of the temple building, but, more specifically, designates a lonely and deserted place, forgotten by all, and left to die'.⁵⁶ Thus the term in 1.4 does not refer primarily to the unrepaired state of the building, but more generally to the abandonment of the site as a whole. This description seems to accord well with the notion of a depopulated or under-populated Jerusalem.

This general impression is reinforced by other details in the text. In v. 14 the people are described as coming (בוא) to do the work. Dominique Barthélemy has convincingly argued that in v. 2 the best resolution to the text critical issues regarding עת ('the time') is to construe the people as the subject of בוא (as in v. 14) and read the verse, 'It is not the time [for us] to come'.⁵⁷ He then suggests that the use of 'come' (בוא) here implies a coming to Jerusalem from other surrounding villages, thus indicating that the population of Jerusalem was not equal to the task at hand. While בוא in v. 14 could merely refer to the coming to the temple mount from the lower slopes of the eastern hill, the text nowhere implies that the people whose thoughts are expressed in v. 2 and who come to do the work in v. 14 are to be limited to the Jerusalem

55. R.P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), pp. 635-36.

56. '[harev] décrit non l'état de ruine où se trouve le bâtiment du temple, mais plus précisément la solitude d'un lieu désertique, abandonné de tous et livré à la mort' (Amsler, *Aggée*, p. 22).

57. D. Barthélemy (ed.), *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*. III. *Ezéchiel, Daniel et les 12 prophètes* (OBO, 50/3; Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), p. 924. Cf. J. Kessler, "'t (le temps) en Aggée I 2-4: conflit théologique ou "sagesse mondaine"?", *VT* 48 (1998), pp. 555-59.

population. Yet when the people do come (and I would not see the use of שְׂאֲרֵיתָה 'remnant' in 1.14 as indicating that only a portion of the population was involved in the project),⁵⁸ only the most meager of structures is produced (2.1-4).

It would seem that such images correspond more readily to a sparsely populated, economically deprived region than to a large and busy urban setting. It is difficult to imagine the temple site as being described as desolate or abandoned if it was located at the centre of a geographically circumscribed yet densely populated urban environment. Similarly such a description seems inappropriate if, as both the 'Conflict' and 'Populous Yehud' positions assume, the temple site was a place where ritual activities on behalf of a sizable population were undertaken, and theological debates raged. Indeed given the significance of the temple, if conditions had permitted, it is difficult to explain why the refurbishing of the cult site had not taken place sooner. It is unlikely to have engendered much imperial opposition in the waning years of Babylonian rule. Certainly there would have been little objection to it in the years following 539 BCE. In conclusion then, while the text of Haggai cannot be said to be determinative, one can affirm that it accords well with the hypothesis of a sparsely inhabited Jerusalem.

b. *Urbanization, Literary Output, and Population Density*

Given a demographically limited Yehud, what are the implications for literary output? This question has been posed by Carter, and revisited and expanded by Ben Zvi. For the latter, Yehud's population and its capacity for literary output are quite closely related. This conviction is integrally related to other concomitant factors such as (1) the relative percentage of highly literate members within ancient societies and the applicability of such statistics cross culturally;⁵⁹ (2) the location of these literati in urban centres;⁶⁰ (3) the provision of the economic support required by these literati via the surplus generated by the rural population;⁶¹ and (4) the nature of the literary activity of these writers.⁶²

Briefly summarized, Ben Zvi argues as follows. Biblical literature is the work of a group of 'literati'. By 'literati' he means those whose

58. *Apud* Clines, 'Haggai's Temple', p. 72.

59. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', pp. 195-96.

60. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', p. 196.

61. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', p. 199.

62. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', *passim*, esp. pp. 196-97.

literary capabilities would be sufficiently developed so as to be able to (and here I use Ben Zvi's words) to 'create' or 'compose'⁶³ significant tracts of the Bible as we have it. These 'literati' were located in urban centres.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the training and maintenance of these literati was financed by the surplus produced by the surrounding rural regions.⁶⁵ Ben Zvi notes that the percentage of literati to the total population in fourth century Egypt was between 0.25 and 0.33 per cent. He grants that this percentage might be slightly higher in Yehud.⁶⁶ He then concludes that the period during which economic conditions would have been most favourable for the production of biblical literature was Persian II. He suggests that at that period the rural population, as well as Persian imperial investment in Jerusalem would have produced conditions adequate to finance a cadre of urban literati.⁶⁷ However, he adds, economic realities would still have necessitated that these literati be 'part time' and have some other source of income.⁶⁸ Thus the bulk of the biblical literature was produced by a small, homogeneous group of contemporaries. Ben Zvi accounts for the theological and stylistic diversity in the literature produced by this relatively small group on the basis of rhetorical concerns. He maintains that these literati adopted certain styles and linguistic conventions for certain documents in order to give those texts the appearance of antiquity, and thus greater authority.⁶⁹ Therefore despite the clear differences between these texts, they were still the product of a group of contemporaries. Thus Ben Zvi concludes that while some biblical literature may have been produced in Persian I or in the Ptolemaic period, the bulk of it was produced in Persian II.⁷⁰ As we have seen, his objections to extensive literary production in Persian I relate to (a) the relatively small number of urban

63. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', pp. 198, 201.

64. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', pp. 195-97.

65. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', pp. 196-97.

66. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', pp. 196, 201, 204. As Lemaire notes, due to their former status as an ethnic minority in the Babylonian empire and their responsibilities to the crown, the returnees may have been a highly literate group (Lemaire, 'Populations', p. 44).

67. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', p. 197.

68. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', pp. 205-206.

69. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', p. 205.

70. Ben Zvi, 'Urban Center', pp. 203-204.

literati present in Jerusalem and (b) the insufficient financial resources to support them.⁷¹

Ben Zvi's arguments represent a helpful caution against the hasty attribution of specific texts to Persian I or Babylonian Yehud with little or no consideration given to the demographic situation of the period. Three attenuating factors, however, should be considered alongside his evaluation of the literary capacities of Persian I Yehud. First, this group of literati may have had resources available to them other than the surplus of rural Yehud. Jewish/Yahwistic populations existed both in Babylon,⁷² and Egypt as well as in the provinces surrounding Yehud. As Briend, Lemaire, Cohen, and Carter have noted, Yahwistic populations existed in such regions as Galilee and Samaria,⁷³ as well as Ammon, Moab, and the Edomite territory.⁷⁴ The reconstruction of the temple would hardly have been seen as an insignificant endeavour by such populations. Furthermore, just as the *pax Assyriaca* opened the borders between provinces and kingdoms,⁷⁵ there is good reason to assume that the Jerusalem community enjoyed contact with Yahwists of other regions via the *pax Persica*. Financial aid from such sectors, which may have in turn created possibilities for literary output, is entirely plausible.⁷⁶ Furthermore, even in Persian I, the installation of Zerubbabel and the general support of the Persian crown for the rehabilitation of Jerusalem as an urban centre may have reduced that city's fiscal dependence upon the surplus of the rural environs.

Second, the literary activity involved in the production of some texts

71. Ben Zvi appears to deem (b) to be more critical than (a).

72. On which see, most recently, F. Joannès and A. Lemaire, 'Trois tablettes cunéiformes à onomastique ouest-sémitique', *Transeuphratène* 17 (1999), pp. 17-33.

73. Lemaire, 'Populations', p. 64.

74. A. Lemaire, 'Les transformations politiques et culturelles de la Transjordanie au VI^e Siècle av. J.C.', *Transeuphratène* 8 (1994), pp. 9-27, esp. p. 12; *idem*, 'Les inscriptions palestiniennes d'époque perse: un bilan provisoire', *Transeuphratène* 1 (1989), pp. 87-104, esp. p. 99, 104; *idem*, 'Populations', p. 66; Zertal, 'The Pahwah', pp. 15-17; R. Cohen, 'Solomon's Negev Defense Line Contained Three Fewer Fortresses', *BAR* 12.4 (1986), pp. 40-45; I. Eph'al, 'Changes in Palestine during the Persian Period in Light of Epigraphic Sources', *IEJ* 48 (1998), pp. 114-16; Carter, *Emergence*, p. 290.

75. N. Na'aman, 'Population Changes in Palestine Following the Assyrian Deportations', *Tel Aviv* 20 (1993), pp. 106-19, esp. p. 119.

76. Cf. Carter, *Emergence*, p. 292.

may have been less extensive than that envisaged by Ben Zvi. Some of the work of the literati may have consisted of transcribing, updating, or redacting⁷⁷ earlier traditions, both written and oral which may have been circulating within Persian I Yehud.⁷⁸ Third, literary activity should not be entirely limited to the Jerusalem scribal context. As Aufrecht and Lemaire have noted, it appears probable that literary activity in Israel was not exclusively the prerogative of professional scribal schools but was also cultivated in priestly and prophetic circles⁷⁹ and to a lesser extent the more general population.⁸⁰ There is no reason to limit literary production to Jerusalem. Some literary activity outside Jerusalem may be envisaged.

This potential enlargement of the scope of more significant literary activity to both Persian I and Persian II leaves room to explain the literary diversity of the period in other ways than those which Ben Zvi has proposed. Differences of style and theological emphasis may still be accounted for by the more conventional categories of chronological and geographical difference, diversity of circles of redaction, and attachment to particular theological traditions.

At this point it may be once again useful to examine the text of Haggai. In pursuit of an understanding of Yehud's potential for literary output it is instructive to inquire as to what kind of theological traditions appear in the text.⁸¹ I propose, therefore, to ask what may be implied when one examines the *rhetorical use of theological traditions*

77. As Ben Zvi acknowledges, 'Urban Center', p. 202.

78. Cf. O.H. Steck, 'Theological Streams of Tradition', in Douglas A. Knight (ed.), *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), pp. 183-214.

79. A. Lemaire, *Les écoles et la formation de la Bible dans l'ancien Israël* (OBO, 39; Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), pp. 47-54.

80. W.E. Aufrecht, 'Urbanization and Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages', in Walter E. Aufrecht, Neil A. Mirau and Steven W. Gauley (eds.), *Urbanization in Antiquity* (JSOTSup, 244; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 116-29. Aufrecht states, 'The epigraphic evidence tells us that many more people than scribes could read and write at the end of the Iron Age in the Levant' (p. 122). Aufrecht, however, sees the biblical text as the product of professional scribes.

81. Cf. Steck, 'Theological Streams of Tradition'; and G. von Rad, 'The City on the Hill', in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (trans. E.W.T. Dicken; London: SCM Press, 1984), pp. 232-42.

within Haggai. We thus may potentially know something of the theological world of Jerusalem in 520 BCE when we examine the traditions which serve as rhetorical vehicles for the message of the book. Put another way, by examining the rhetorical strategy of the prophet Haggai as communicated by the book's narrator, one may be able to glimpse the shared theological world of narrator and intended and/or implied audience. In the text, Haggai (be he a real prophet or a literary character, or a combination of the two) makes his appeal to his hearers on the basis of a wide diversity of traditions, frequently configured in creative and innovative ways. The text of Haggai thus knows of the following traditions and motifs: the Jerusalem temple as Yahweh's dwelling place (1.2-14; 2.1-4); the priestly notions of pure and impure (2.10-19); the deuteronomistic futility curse (1.3-11); the hope placed in the Davidic line (2.20-23); the final assault on Zion and her subsequent deliverance (2.6-9, 20-23); the pilgrimage of the nations (2.6-9); the traditions of the exodus (2.5),⁸² the oracles against the nations (2.6-9, 20-23). While nothing need be posited regarding the existence of documents containing these traditions, we may be justified in seeing these motifs as integral to the theological streams of tradition (to use Steck's apt phrase) current within the community. True, the book's framer(s) could have included these motifs to create the impression of a theologically literate audience. However, even if such a fiction is granted, we must still conclude that one or a few members of the community were sufficiently versed in a diversity of theological traditions so as to have created the fiction of a theologically literate implied hearer. The literary evidence of Haggai thus presents the image of a community sharing some attachment to a variety of theological traditions evidenced elsewhere in biblical literature. The presence of such a wide spectrum of theological traditions and their innovative configuration does raise the possibility that various traditions were circulating in Persian I Yehud and that creative theological writing and redaction were possible.

In conclusion, I believe that a balanced appreciation of Yehud's literary capabilities in Persian I is critical. On one hand, it is important to maintain that the low population of early Persian Yehud does not preclude it from having been the origin of certain portions of biblical literature. Yet having argued for the possibility of literary output, the general import of Ben Zvi's analysis does indeed stand. We are dealing

82. See the commentaries on the textual issue here. With Barthélemy, I retain the disputed reference to the 'coming out of Egypt'.

with a small population, a limited number of whom would have been fully literate. This ought to caution against an overly zealous attempt to locate the origin of vast amounts of biblical literature to Persian I Yehud. Yet even given the province's limited demographic base, it would appear legitimate to attribute a modest but significant corpus of texts to Persian I Yehud, if other significant factors would appear to favour such an identification.⁸³

c. Jerusalem in 520 BCE: Toward a Minimal Reconstruction

What then can be affirmed regarding the urban centre of Jerusalem in 520 BCE? Demographic analysis strongly suggests a relatively low population. This conclusion mirrors the general archaeological impression of a sparsely populated region eking out a subsistence economy. It is also clear that Yehud constituted an independent province in the mosaic of tiny provinces that made up Syria–Palestine under Persian rule.⁸⁴ It most likely covered a region of about 20 to 25 km around Jerusalem.⁸⁵ In its initial phase local political leadership was exercised by a series of governors related by birth or marriage to the Davidic line.⁸⁶ Furthermore, there seems to be no reason to doubt that the community in Yehud was composed of both non-exiled Judeans and returnees. Onomastic evidence from late sixth century Babylon would suggest that a definable Yahwistic population may be located there at the time.⁸⁷ It is therefore not unlikely that the returnees were ethnically

83. For an example of this kind of approach, see R. Person's analysis of the 'Deuteronomistic School' against the backdrop of the early postexilic period: R. Person, *Second Zechariah and the Deuteronomistic School* (JSOTSup, 167; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), esp. pp. 146-68.

84. A. Lemaire, 'Histoire et administration de la Palestine à l'époque perse', in E.-M. Laperrousaz and A. Lemaire (eds.), *La Palestine à l'époque perse* (Paris: Cerf, 1994), pp. 16-17.

85. Carter, 'Yehud', pp. 118-19; Lemaire, 'Histoire et administration', pp. 20-21.

86. A. Lemaire, 'Review of N. Avigad, *Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Archive*', *Syria* 54 (1977), pp. 129-131; E.M. Meyers, 'The Shelomith Seal and the Judaeian Restoration, Some Additional Considerations', *EI* 18 (1985), pp. 31*-38*.

87. Johannès and Lemaire, 'Trois tablettes', *passim*. The evidence presented by Johannès and Lemaire corroborates Grabbe's affirmation of the possibility of ethnic groups remaining together in exile. L.L. Grabbe, "'The Exile" Under the Theodolite: Historiography as Triangulation', in *idem* (ed.), *Leading Captivity Captive* (JSOTSup, 278; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 80-99.

related to the non-exiled population. The presence of a Davidide among the community's leadership reinforces this impression. Non-biblical literary evidence indicates that both Hebrew and Aramaic were utilized in Yehud.⁸⁸ There is no evidence which would clearly indicate that this community or its leadership engaged in activities aimed at overthrowing Persian rule in the province.⁸⁹ It would appear that the community's leadership was diarchic in form.⁹⁰ This community undertook and completed the restoration of the damaged central shrine in Jerusalem. Broader theological conceptions, identifiable elsewhere in biblical literature, as well as prophetic encouragement, played a role in the completion of this project.

In the light of this data, it would seem appropriate to re-visit the question of why the rebuilding of the temple as described in Haggai took place when it did and of its effects on the demographic situation and the potential for literary output. We have situated the prophetic call to rebuild the temple against the backdrop of a struggling and underpopulated Jerusalem. Such a project cannot be considered in isolation from the broader forces and transitions within the Yahwism of the period, as well as broader forces within the Persian empire. As has been widely noted, early Persian Yahwism was geographically, sociologically, and theologically disparate.⁹¹ This diversity would have been especially apparent before the reconstruction of its former central shrine. As Blenkinsopp has noted, the question of the rehabilitation of Jerusalem and its temple would have increased in poignancy as the years following 587 BCE advanced.⁹² Persian imperial concerns would have similarly favored the strengthening of the provincial capital, especially following Cambyses' conquest of Egypt and the revolts subsequent to Darius's accession. The installation of Zerubbabel may be understood in the context of such initiatives. Thus prophetic and

88. E. Lipiński, 'Géographie linguistique de la Transeuphratène à l'époque achéménide', *Transeuphratène* 3 (1990), pp. 95-107.

89. Kessler, 'Second Year', pp. 80-84.

90. Mason, 'Purpose', p. 421.

91. On which see, among others, S. Japhet, 'People and Land in the Restoration Period', in G. Strecker (ed.), *Das Land Israel in biblischer Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), pp. 103-25.

92. J. Blenkinsopp, 'The Judaeen Priesthood during the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods: A Hypothetical Reconstruction', *CBQ* 60 (1998), p. 42.

Persian concerns may have coalesced to favor both the refurbishing of the temple, and the rehabilitation of the city as a whole.

As has been widely noted, once this process had begun, changes in the demographic and sociological landscape would have been inevitable. A renovated temple would require an increase in the local priestly personnel. A reinforced provincial capital would generate a cadre of civil servants of various sorts. The rehabilitation of the temple would have represented a significant step in the Persian collection of tax in Yehud.⁹³ This new urban population would require the services of artisans, merchants, scribes and a variety of other personnel. This in turn may have prompted and facilitated the production of theological literature both in Jerusalem and beyond. Thus 520–516 BCE may prove to have been a more critical moment in the history of Jerusalem than is often appreciated. Circumstances in the broader world appear to have come together to favor the development of Jerusalem in 520 BCE as they had not done since its fall. As a result, that city was transformed into a more functional and important urban centre than it had been for some time. Thus the revitalization of the temple site was intrinsically linked in both cause and effect to the political, theological, and sociological dimensions of early Persian Yehud as well as to factors beyond the borders of that province.

It has become customary to view the population growth and political developments in mid-fifth-century Yehud as a decisive moment in the province's history. Perhaps it is now time to view the changes in the urban centre of Jerusalem in 520–516 BCE as a equally critical moment in the emergence of Persian Yehud and of Second Temple Judaism as a whole.

93. Cf. J. Schaper, 'The Jerusalem Temple as an Instrument of Achaemenid Fiscal Administration', *VT* 45 (1995), pp. 528-39. Schaper's article does not address the highly interesting question of the changes in process and levy which the rehabilitation of the temple would have produced.