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The Authors of the Book of Job and the Problem of Their Historical and Social Settings

Konrad Schmid (Zürich)

The shortest answer to the question of who wrote the book of Job and when and where it was written was most likely given by F. Horst: “We do not know who wrote this from his heart, nor where and when (probably in the Persian era).”¹ The question is further complicated by the fact that the majority of exegetes assume not one, but several individuals working in different time periods behind the composition of the book of Job.

Still, cautious judgement is but one of many virtues when working historically. It is just as important for historical scholarship to present well argued reconstructions. The book of Job does seem to lack transparency in regards to the social and historical contexts of its authors. Nevertheless, we may make certain observations and limitations and thus move beyond the simple *non liquet* suggested by F. Horst.

The following considerations will be focused on the “proto”-final level of the book of Job which combined the prose framework and the dialogues. This textual shape was later extended at minimum by Job 28 and the Elihu-speeches (Job 32-37)², yet its decisive theological content was created by the connection between the prose framework and the dia-

¹ F. Horst: Hiob, BK XVI/1, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1968, xii. See also C. Newsom: Considering Job, CR:BS 1 (1993), 87-118, 95: „As everyone knows, the book of Job is extremely difficult to place in a concrete historical context. Its own relation to history is cloaked by the nature of the work itself.“

² J.P. Weinberg (Was Elihu, the Son of Barachel, the Author of the Book of Job?, Trans 16 [1998], 149-166) assumes the author of the book behind the figure of Elihu; it is, however, more likely that Job 32-37 represents the first orthodox commentator on the book (see Ernst Axel Knauf: Hiobs Heimat, WO 19 [1988], 65-83; id./Ph. Guillaume: Job, in: Th. Römer et al. [eds.], Introduction à l’Ancien Testament, MoBi 49, Genève 2004, 501-510).

logues – no matter how this connection came to be from diachronic point of view.³

We could pursue several different paths in the search for answers regarding the historical and social setting of the authors of the book of Job. For one, certain marginal individual statements could point to specific institutional or political realities and thus allow the reconstruction of some historical and social conditions behind the text. It is also possible to evaluate general conceptual and theological observations to this end. Both approaches will be used here.

I. Geographic and historical boundaries

In looking for indications towards the place, time and social setting of the composition of the book of Job, we must separate intentionally created fictional elements that sketch a certain local milieu from elements that speak to the real historical background of the book.⁴ The world in which the narrative of the book of Job takes place is not necessarily an indication of the real historical world behind the text. It was possible in antiquity (if not common) to write “historicized” stories (e.g. Daniel, Judith, Tobit). Even though there is comparatively little information about the setting of the narrative – the story aims to portray a *paradigmatic* case when presenting Job –, it is possible to determine this setting quite closely: “Job’s fictitious home is north-west Arabia during the time of Nabonid, as pictured by a Palestinian during the Persian era.”⁵ This setting is supported by word-plays with Arabic (cf. 3:14;

³ See the discussion in K. Schmid: Das Hiobproblem und der Hiobprolog, in: M. Oeming/id., *Hiobs Weg. Stationen von Menschen im Leid*, BThSt 45, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2001, 9-34. Detailed models of literary growth are, for example, provided by M. Witte (*Vom Leiden zur Lehre. Der dritte Redegang [Hiob 21–27] und die Redaktionsgeschichte des Hiobbuches*, BZAW 230, Berlin/New York 1994, 193-229) and W.-D. Syring (*Hiob und sein Anwalt. Die Prosatexte des Hiobbuches und ihre Rolle in seiner Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte*, BZAW 336, Berlin/New York 2004) which, however, are open to debate.

⁴ See especially E.A. Knauf: *Supplementa Ismaelitica 4. Ijobs Heimat*, BN 22 (1983), 26-28; id.: WO 1988; id.: *Hiobs multikulturelle Heimat*, BiKi 59 (2004), 64-67.

⁵ Knauf: WO 1988, 68; see also G. Schmitt: *Die Heimat Hiobs*, ZDPV 101 (1985), 56-63, 56: „There is one, and only one, situation, in which invasions of the Sabeans (1:15) and the Chaldeans (1:17) could occur within the same locale; this is the time of Nabonid and the area of Dedan (*al-'Ula*) in north-west Arabia, where we indeed find witness to a tribe 'd by a Safaitic inscription that, unfortunately, cannot be dated precisely.” (translation mine) The inscription can be found with Knauf: BN 1983, 29.

6:18; 11:12; 19:19; 21:23⁶) and certain Arabic lexemes (6:4,17; 8:27), as well as a knowledge of Arabic culture⁸ such as clay houses without foundations (4:19,21), the burial practice of erecting stone piles (8:17), cliff inscriptions as legal documents (19:23-24⁹, cf. 21:29), or – within the secondary text Job 28 – the mining of gold (28:6). In addition, the homes of Job’s friends seem to fit this setting as they cover the entire Arabic peninsula¹⁰: Shuach points to central Euphrates in the north-east¹¹, *temani* can either refer to the Edomite landscape Teman or the oasis Tema which lies in the north-west¹² of the peninsula, and Na’ama¹³ could point to the south, although such a location remains uncertain. The creation of this setting is probably influenced by the basic attitude of the book, in which the stability of the world, as portrayed e.g. in the Priestly Code in the Pentateuch, is met with great scepticism. It was an obvious choice to set the book of Job in the context of the Nabonid era and connect it geographically to the instable political fate of the northwest-Arabian area.¹⁴

The fact that these geographical indications point to the *fictitious* narrative setting of Job and not to the *real* setting of its author¹⁵ seems

⁶ Cf. Knauf: WO 1988, 70-71. It is also possible to assume that Job’s origin in „Uz“ is also connected to Arabic *ʿAud* „change, change of time“.

⁷ Cf. Knauf: BiKi 2004, 65. Especially A. Guillaume (see e.g. his *The Arabic Background of the Book of Job*, in: F.F. Bruce [ed.], *Promise and Fulfilment* [FS S.H. Hooke], Edinburgh 1963, 106-127) has stressed the Arabic background of Job, although in an exaggerated manner. See the balanced considerations concerning the philological problem of the book Job in: M. Witte: *Philologische Notizen zu Hiob 21-27*, BZAW 234, Berlin/New York 1995, 1-3.

⁸ Cf. Knauf: WO 1988, 70f; id.: BiKi 2004, 64-65.

⁹ G. Fohrer: *Das Buch Hiob*, KAT 16, Gütersloh ²1989, 317, is thinking of the Behistun-inscription as an example.

¹⁰ For an alternative suggestion in an Edomite setting see V. Maag: *Hiob. Wandlung und Verarbeitung des Problems in Novelle, Dialogdichtung und Spätfassungen*, FRLANT 128, Göttingen 1982, 16-17.

¹¹ Cf. M. Görg: Art. „Bildad“, NBL I (1991), 295; Knauf: BN 1983, 25 n. 2, referring to S. Parpola: *Neu-Assyrian Toponyms*, AOAT 6, Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1970, 316.

¹² Cf. E.A. Knauf: Art. „Tema/Teman/Temanite“, ABD VI (1992), 346-348; E.A. Knauf: Art. „Tema/Teman“, NBL III (2001), 799; Knauf: BiKi 2004, 65 n. 11.

¹³ Cf. E.A. Knauf: Art. „Zofar“, NBL III (2001), 1224; Knauf: BN 1983, 25 n5; id.: BiKi 2004, 65 n. 11.

¹⁴ Knauf : WO 1988, 69, points to the ruin of Edom and the history of Dedan. See also J. Day: *How Could Job Be an Edomite?*, in: W.A.M. Beuken (ed.), *The Book of Job*, BETHL 114, Leuven 1994, 392-399.

¹⁵ In this manner F.H. Foster: *Is the Book of Job a Translation from an Arabic Original?*, AJSL 49 (1932), 21-45; H.-P. Müller: *Das Hiobproblem. Seine Stellung und Entstehung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament*, EdF 84, Darmstadt 1978, 25.

due to the presence of certain „‘crooked’ Arabisms“¹⁶ and especially due to the intimate knowledge of Hebrew Bible literature¹⁷ found in the book of Job: It can hardly have been written anywhere but in Jerusalem.¹⁸ There are several indications that the books of the Hebrew Bible were not very widely spread during the Persian era. On the contrary, we should reckon with the fact that they were primarily authored, read and handed down in the temple in Jerusalem.¹⁹ The high degree of intertextuality in the book of Job²⁰ points directly to this place of origin. We unfortunately know very little of the precise inner organisation of the temple and its presupposed temple school. Who and how many people worked there? How was this school interconnected to the daily workings of the temple on a personal and institutional level? Due to a lack of sources, these questions will have to remain by and large unanswered.²¹ But we will see that the book of Job with its critical theology at least proves a broad inner diversity of this temple school.

In regards to the time of origin of a book of Job that comprises the framework *and* the dialogues, the creation of a setting during the Nabonid era leaves us with a *terminus a quo*, an allocation that converges

¹⁶ Knauf: WO 1988, 71 [translation mine]. See e.g. Job 5:26 *gadiš* / arab. *kadis*, s. Fohrer: KAT, 134.

¹⁷ See below n. 20.

¹⁸ In addition, Knauf points to the incompatibility of Job 29:6 with the fictitious setting of the book: „The combination of shepherding large herds and olive trees is typically Judaic. The olive tree, however, does not grow in Arabia” (BiKi 2004, 66 [translation mine]).

¹⁹ See the considerations in K. Schmid: Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches, WMANT 72, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1996, 35-43, with extensive bibliography.

²⁰ See M. Fishbane: The Book of Job and Inner-biblical Discourse, in: L.G. Perdue/ W.C. Gilpin (eds.), The Voice from the Whirlwind. Interpreting the Book of Job, Nashville 1992, 86-98; T.N.D. Mettinger: Intertextuality: Allusion and Vertical Context Systems in Some Job Passages, in: H.A. McKay (ed.), Of Prophets' Visions and the Wisdom of Sages (FS R.N. Whybray), JSOT.S 162, Sheffield 1993, 257–280; id.: The enigma of Job: The deconstruction of God in intertextual perspective, JNWSL 23 (1997), 1–19; Y. Pyeon: You Have Not Spoken What Is Right About Me. Intertextuality and the Book of Job, StBL 45, Frankfurt a.M. et al. 2003, see also the chart in S.R. Driver/ G.B. Gray: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job Together with a New Translation, ICC, Edinburgh 1921, lxxviii.

²¹ For preliminary observations see D.W. Jamieson-Drake: Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah. A Socio-Archeological Approach, JSOT.S 109/ SWBAS 9, Sheffield 1991; H. Delkurt: Grundprobleme alttestamentlicher Weisheit, VF 36 (1991), 38–71, 43–48; Schmid: Buchgestalten, 40-42 n. 198-200 (bibliography); E.A. Knauf: Les milieux producteurs de la Bible hébraïque, in: Th. Römer et al. (eds.), Introduction à l’Ancien Testament, MoBi 49, Genève 2004, 49-60. An intriguing overview is now provided by D.M. Carr: Writing on the Tablet of the Heart. Origins of Scripture and Literature, New York 2005.

with linguistic²² and intertextual²³ observations in the prose framework. The setting within a politically instable context may point to a comparable situation of the author during the transition from the Persian to the Hellenistic era.²⁴ Whether Ecclesiastes 6:10 provides us with a *terminus ad quem* is not quite clear²⁵. Variants of the book of Job in 11Q^tJob and the LXX show a fluidity of textual transmission that persisted for some time. Thus, it is not fully clear at what time the book of Job could be considered to be “finished”.

II. Social backgrounds

Aside from these general considerations regarding the time and place of the book of Job, we can ask further what the social backgrounds of its authors may be. It already has become clear that the writing of the book of Job presupposes some close interconnection with the Jerusalem temple. But first, one has to ask the book itself what it could reveal concerning its social background. Here, too, we must separate between the fictitious narrative world of the book and implicit clues towards the real author. Job is characterized as a large land owner, as an exceedingly wealthy²⁶ private citizen with an excellent social reputation (cf. esp. 29:7-10). This characterization seems to provide a direct contrast to the “theology of the poor” that can be found in different parts of the Hebrew Bible, especially in Second Isaiah or in the Psalms, but also in Amos²⁷. Job’s depiction as a wealthy man seems to have the aim of saying: A rich man may also be pious and god-fearing; a rich man can also be the object of divine affection. It is not very plausible, however, that the au-

²² Cf. A. Hurvitz: The Date of the Prose-Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered, HThR 67 (1974), 17-34. B. Zuckerman (Job the Silent. A Study in Historical Counterpoint, New York/Oxford 1991, 26f [cf. 205-206 n. 36]) thinks that the dialogue sections are linguistically older than the prose tale.

²³ See P. Weimar: Literarkritisches zur Ijob-Novelle, BN 12 (1980), 62-80, 80, who points to the proximity of the prose-framework to the Priestly Code.

²⁴ Cf. K. Dell: The Book of Job as Sceptical Literature, BZAW 197, Berlin/New York 1997, 166-168, 213-217; Witte: Leiden, 220.

²⁵ See L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger: Kohelet, HThK.AT, Freiburg i.Br. et a. 2004, 364.

²⁶ Regarding the so-called currency Qesitah Job 42:11 see Gen 33:19; Josh 24:32 (HALAT III, 1073).

²⁷ See in this respect the material in N. Lohfink: Option for the Poor: The Basic Principle of Liberation Theology in the Light of the Bible, Berkeley 1987; C. Levin: Das Amosbuch der Anawim, ZThK 94 (1997), 407-436.

thor of the book of Job was *himself* a large land owner.²⁸ This view would postulate a one-on-one relationship between the world of the narrator and the world of the narrative: “Simply because the characters are depicted as wealthy aristocrats, one cannot necessarily assume that the author and the audience are of that class.”²⁹ It is especially difficult to imagine the degree of theological education, assumed implicitly by the book of Job, with a non-scholar.

Therefore, it is more plausible to interpret the author as a *party liner* of Job’s social class. The high degree of scholarly knowledge regarding especially Israelite³⁰, but also Egyptian³¹, Mesopotamian³² and Greek³³ texts and subject matters seem to indicate a scribal professional from the Jerusalem temple;³⁴ this person was also educated in cosmological³⁵, astronomical³⁶, mythological³⁷, iconographic³⁸, legal³⁹, anthropo-

²⁸ As stated by Knauf: WO 1988, 73; id./Guillaume: Introduction, 506. See also F. Crüsemann: Hiob und Kohelet, in: R. Albertz et al. (eds.), *Werden und Wirken des Alten Testaments* (FS C. Westermann), Göttingen 1980, 373-393: „We can hardly doubt that the book of Job originated with a rich aristocratic class within post-exilic Israel“ [translation mine]. A survey on the problem is given by R.N. Whybray: *The Social World of the Wisdom Writers*, in: R.E. Clements (ed.), *The World of Ancient Israel*, Cambridge 1989, 227-250, 238-242.

²⁹ C. Newsom: *The Book of Job. Introduction, Commentary and Reflections*, in: *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. VI, Nashville 1996, 317-637, 327.

³⁰ See above n20.

³¹ See 8:11-12 (papyrus); skiffs of reed (9:26); Ibis (38:36); Behemot und Leviathan (40:15ff.), see also O. Keel/ S. Schroer: *Schöpfung. Biblische Theologien im Kontext altorientalischer Religionen*, Göttingen 2002, 198-211; further P. Humbert: *Recherches sur les sources égyptiennes de la littérature sapientiale d’Israël*, Neuchâtel 1929, 75-106; Th. Schneider: *Hiob 38 und die demotische Weisheit* (Papyrus Insinger 24), *ThZ* 47 (1991), 108-124.

³² Cf. J. Gray: *The Book of Job in the Context of Near Eastern Literature*, *ZAW* 82 (1970), 251-269; M. Weinfeld: *Job and its Mesopotamian Parallels - A Typological Analysis*, in: W. Claassen (ed.), *Text and Context* (FS F.C. Fensham), Sheffield 1988, 217-226; Newsom, *Job*, 328-334.

³³ Cf. M. Treves: *The Book of Job*, *ZAW* 107 (1995), 261-272; A. de Pury: *Zwischen Sophokles und Ijob. Die Schriften (Ketubim): ein jüdischer Literatur-Kanon, Welt und Umwelt der Bibel* 28 (2003), 25-27.

³⁴ Cf. M. Köhlmoos: *Das Auge Gottes. Textstrategie im Hiobbuch*, *FAT* 25, Tübingen 1999, 365f. See also the discussion in R. Albertz: *The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job*, in: J.G. Gammie/ L.G. Perdue (eds.), *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, Winona Lake 1990, 243-261.

³⁵ Cf. Job 38-41 and further Schneider: *ThZ* 1991.

³⁶ Cf. Job 9:9; 38:31 and further M. Albani: „Der das Siebengestirn und den Orion macht“ (Am 5,8). *Zur Bedeutung der Plejaden in der israelitischen Religionsgeschichte*, in: B. Janowski/ M. Köckert (eds.), *Religionsgeschichte Israels. Formale und materiale Aspekte*, *VWGTh* 15, Gütersloh 1999, 139-207; id.: „Kannst du die Sternbilder hervortreten lassen zur rechten Zeit?“ (Hi 28,32). *Gott und Gestirne im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient*, in: B. Janowski/ B. Ego (eds.), *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte*, *FAT* 32, Tübingen 2001, 181-226.

logical⁴⁰ and zoological⁴¹ matters. The introduction of “Satan” as a subaltern member of the heavenly council also points towards a priestly and therefore a learned background (cf. esp. Zech 3:1ff., 1Chr 21:1). Finally, we should mention Bildad’s argument in Job 8:8-10, who recurs back to the fathers and seems to assume a well-developed chain of tradition that could be associated with the institutionalized tradition process of the biblical scriptures at the Jerusalem temple:

For inquire now of bygone generations, and consider what their ancestors have found; for we are but of yesterday, and we know nothing, for our days on earth are but a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you and utter words out of their understanding?

But: Are these considerations not challenged by the radical “theology” (or even “anti-theology”) of the book of Job – especially as resulting from the combination of prose framework and dialogues⁴² – that seems to be *highly critical* of the known literary traditions of post-exilic Judaism? A closer look at the book of Job and its inner-biblical affiliations reveals the fact, that its stance towards the theologies of Second Temple Judaism is indeed critical, but not just negative. I will point out, very briefly, some examples⁴³.

The book of Job presents a critical evaluation of the theocratic *ordo*-concept of the *Priestly Code*, which must be considered one of the fundamental theological tenets of priestly thinking⁴⁴. In contrast to the Priestly Code, the world of Job is not so stable that even a completely righteous individual could not be thrown into complete disaster. In the end, *however*, Job “died an old man, sated with days” (Job 42:17) like Abraham and Isaak according to their Priestly presentation (Gen 25:8;

³⁷ See, e.g., Job 3:8; 15:4; 40:10-28.

³⁸ Cf. O. Keel: Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob. Eine Deutung von Ijob 38-41 vor dem Hintergrund der zeitgenössischen Bildkunst, FRLANT 121, Göttingen 1978.

³⁹ See for example the differentiated terminology in Job 9:11-16; also E. Greenstein: A Forensic Understanding of the Speech from the Whirlwind, in: M.V. Fox et al. (eds.), Texts, Temples, and Traditions (FS M. Haran), Winona Lake 1996, 241-258.

⁴⁰ Job 10:8-11.

⁴¹ Job 38-41, see Keel/ Schroer: Schöpfung, 200-211.

⁴² See above n. 3.

⁴³ See in more detail K. Schmid: Innerbiblische Schriftdiskussion im Hiobbuch, in: Th. Krüger et al. (eds.), Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen (forthcoming).

⁴⁴ See in this regard the observations by M. Fishbane: Jeremiah IV 23–26 and Job III 3–13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern, VT 21 (1971), 151–167.

35:29). In death, world's order is intact again. Therefore, the book of Job takes not just a repudiating, but an ambivalent position towards Priestly theology.

The book of Job also critically discusses the *Deuteronomistic* position: human righteousness is no final protection against downfall. And, *vice versa*, suffering not always has its reason in sin. Without any reason, Job is punished with “foul sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head” (Job 2:7), a punishment that is envisioned for Israel's disobedience in Deut 28:35. Job's catastrophe is painted in deuteronomistic colours. Even God himself can be portrayed in the book of Job as a virtual evil-doer in deuteronomistic terms (42:8 *'swt nblh*, see Deut 22:21; Josh 7:15; Judg 19:23-24; 20:6,10; 2Sam 13:12). Again, in the end, God restores Job's fortunes (42:10), even according to the law in a double way (cf. Exod 22:3,8), and thus, ultimately, God respects justice. Therefore, deuteronomistic theology as well is critically discussed in the book of Job, but not dismissed.

Prophecy is also evaluated in an ambiguous way. Job's God obviously is neither the God of the classical prophecy of doom nor the God of the salvation prophecy. In Job 4:12-17⁴⁵, Eliphaz is described as a prophet, and this passage presents the institution and the contents of prophecy in a critical way. The outcome of the revelation to Eliphaz is a traditional truth: “Can mortals be righteous before God? Can human beings be pure before their Maker?” (4:17; cf., e.g., Prov 16:2; 20:9; Ps 18:18,25; 51:4,7,9,12; 143:2). And the detailed description of how the prophetic word came to Eliphaz (4:12-16) presents the receiving of his revelation in a rather ambiguous way. The word came “stealing” (4:12) to him (cf. Jer 23:30), Eliphaz cannot discern the appearance of what is standing in front of him (4:16), and the symptoms of Eliphaz, while he is receiving the prophetic word, traditionally belong to rather profane circumstances (cf. e.g. 4:13 with 26:14; 4:13 with 20:2; Ps 94:19; 139:23). So it becomes clear from the book of Job: the institution of prophecy is no warrant for new revelation. This is especially true for the “prophecy” Job receives in Job 38-41 which contains no revelation about the test in Job 1-2.

⁴⁵ See J.E. Harding: A Spirit of Deception in Job 4:15? Interpretive Indeterminacy and Eliphaz's Vision, *Bibl.Interpr.* 13 (2005), 137–166. The textual interrelations with the book of Jeremiah are especially discussed by E.L. Greenstein: Jeremiah as an Inspiration to the Poet of Job, in: J. Kaltner/ L. Stulman (eds.), *Inspired Speech. Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, FS H.B. Huffmon, London/New York 2004, 98-110.

Another clear intertextual connection is present with the theology of the *Psalms*, in which the saving presence of God⁴⁶ is critically discussed. The most known examples is the repudiation of Ps 8:5-7 in Job 7:17-19⁴⁷. However, this rejection, as reflected by the book of Job, is inspired by the Psalms themselves: Obviously, the statement in Job 7:19 found its argument in Ps 39:14 (“Look away from me”); Job 7 is alluding to Ps 39 in manifold ways (cf. *hbl* in Ps 39:12 and Job 7:16; *pš’y* in Ps 39:9 and Job 7:21).

Ps 8:5-7: What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them (*pqd*)? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet.

Ps 39:14: Look away from me (*hš’ mmny*), that I may smile again, before I depart and am no more (*w’ny*, cf. Job 7:21).

Job 7:17-19 What are human beings, that you make so much of them, that you set your mind on them? That you visit them (*pqd*) every morning, test them every moment? Will you not look away from me (*tš’h mmny*) for a while, let me alone until I swallow my spittle?

These varied critical responses of the book of Job to traditional texts are very noticeable and point to a certain „unorthodoxy“ of the book. However, as these examples show, the theology of the book of Job is not an “anti-theology” but merely a “dialectic” theology, a theology that puts any traditional positive statement about God in perspective. The book of Job is mainly concerned with keeping human projections about the nature and activity of God away from God himself. The book of Job composes a theological criticism of – from its point of view – *pseudo*-theological concepts in the Hebrew Bible in order to preserve the divinity of God.⁴⁸ Once theology starts to take possession of God, then – as portrayed by the book of Job – this theology must be subjected to radical criticism. From this point of view, the book of Job, at least as

⁴⁶ Cf. H. Spieckermann: Heilsgegenwart. Eine Theologie der Psalmen, FRLANT 148, Göttingen 1989.

⁴⁷ Cf. Fohrer: KAT, 42 Anm. 56; 288; M. Fishbane: Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, Oxford 1985, 285f; C. Frevel: „Eine kleine Theologie der Menschenwürde“. Ps 8 und seine Rezeption im Buch Ijob, in: F.-L. Hossfeld/ L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger (Eds.), Das Manna fällt auch heute noch. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie des Alten, Ersten Testaments (FS E. Zenger), HBS 44, Freiburg et a. 2004, 244-272.

⁴⁸ For a detailed treatment of this problem see Schmid: Hiobproblem (see above n3).

a written text, could very well have originated and been transmitted in the Jerusalem temple (school).

III. Concluding remarks

If we summarize the considerations presented above, then we conclude that scribal activity, as seen in the book of Job, can probably only have taken place at one location during the Persian and Hellenistic era, namely Jerusalem. At the same time, the book of Job makes it clear that the scholarly milieu in Jerusalem was highly heterogeneous and included widely varied theological positions. The small scale and thus manageability of this milieu may also have been responsible for the intensive interaction between the various theological positions, as is documented in exemplary fashion by the book of Job, but also by the Hebrew Bible in general.