

Time and Situational Reference in the Book of Haggai: On Religious- and Theological-Historical Contextualizations of Redactional Processes

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1. Introduction

1.1 Hag-IZech in the Book of the Twelve

The argument which will be presented here begins with the well-founded thesis that *Hag-IZech* (or *Hag-Zech-Mal**)¹ follow after a deep – probably even the deepest – break in the Book of the Twelve and thus represent a – or even the – *fundamental redeployment in the thematic sequence of the Twelve* as a composition. This broad consensus is based upon synchronic as well as diachronic observations and evaluations:

(1) *Synchronically*, it is an elementary, widely accepted observation that the transition from Zeph to Hag represents the most striking change within the sequence of the Book of the Twelve: (a) The Biblical narrative of history leaps over the exilic period by attaching the Neo-Babylonian constellation in the Book of Zephaniah (after Obad; Hab-Nah) directly to reports of the building of the new temple in the Persian era promoted by Haggai (and further pursued in the books of Zechariah and Malachi). Hag-IZech moreover presents a distinctive theology of history. (b) In both books, the high priest Joshua and the governor or special emissary Zerubbabel perform a central leadership function. (c) Thematically, the historical-theological perspective is manifested by the progression from judgment against Israel-Judah and the nations (in Nah-Zeph)² to the temple-centered restitution of Israel in the midst of the nations (in Hag-Zech).³ (d) In addition, Hag-Zech differs from the

1 Unless otherwise indicated, in this article Zech/IZech designates more precisely Zech 1–8.

2 See already Kaiser, *Grundriß*, 2:106, and others.

3 Cf. Bosshard and Kratz, "Maleachi," Steck, *Abschluß*, 33–55.

rest of the Book of the Twelve also with respect to the chronological system of headings and subheadings,⁴ which date the events described in the books exactly to the day in the first years of Darius I.

In sum, one can state with Aaron Schart: "Der tiefste Einschnitt liegt zwischen Zeph und Hag: An dieser Stelle wird das babylonische Exil mit einer Schweigepause übergangen."⁵

(2) *Diachronically*, these findings led the newer redaction-critical research with good reason to surmise that the Haggai-Zechariah-corpus forms the concluding pivot point of the redaction history of the Twelve – in contrast to the Two-Prophets-Book (Hos–Am respectively) to the Four-Prophet-Book Hos–Am–Mi–Zeph⁶ as the (older) nucleus in the front section of the Book of the Twelve.

1.2 A Two-Prophets-Book: Hag–IZech

In this context, several scholars have argued for the redaction-historical hypothesis of a Two-Prophets-Book Hag–IZech*.⁷ If one leaves open the controversy concerning the affiliation of the Malachi core,⁸ then the question arises whether a connection between Hag and IZech – which is indicated by the strong compositional arguments mentioned – marks the literary beginning of the books or whether it represents only a later editorial combination.

The following points speak in favor of the second option and is presently favored by a large majority: (a) Haggai and Zechariah are preserved as two separate prophetic books, although they represent virtually "twin prophets"⁹ regarding their general time and thematic frame. (b) However, a more precise examination reveals differences in the chronological system as well as in the thematic range. (c) More precisely, there are close cross references of the book of Haggai to specific areas within the book of Zechariah, in particular to Zech 1:1–7 and to ch. 7–8,¹⁰ suggesting a corresponding redaction-historical connection.

4 Cf. hereto Wöhrle, *Sammlungen*, 29–50.367–385.

5 Schart, "Redaktionsgeschichte," 20.

6 For Hos–Am* see esp. Jeremias, "Dodekapropheten;" Schart, *Entstehung*, 101–155; Schmid, "Nebiiim," 374; for Hos–Am–Mic–Zeph see Nogalski, *Processes*, 274–275; Schart, *Entstehung*, 156–233; Wöhrle, *Sammlungen*, 51–284; idem, "Future;" Schmid, "Nebiiim," 375.

7 Cf. esp. Lux, "Zweiprophetenbuch;" Wöhrle, *Sammlungen*, 285–385 (Lit.); Hallaschka, *Haggai*, 314–320 (summary).

8 See hereto e.g. Nogalski, *Processes*, 201–202, and recently Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 219–263.

9 Lux, *Prophetie*, VI.

10 See for an overview Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai*, XLIX.LIV.

1.3 State of research

I will now outline the current state of research. The redaction-historical approach, for good reasons, presently constitutes a prominent branch of exegesis of the prophets. One can safely begin with the basic consensus that in Hag (and IZech) a process of successive editorial/redactional formations took place.¹¹ This process reckons, more precisely, "mit einer nicht allzu komplexen Entstehungsgeschichte beider Bücher."¹²

Following the initial fundamental observations on and evaluations of the catchword-phenomenon, namely at the seams of the books, by James Nogalski¹³ in the early 1990s, Jakob Wöhrle has recently reexamined the entire Book of the Twelve. Integrating broad areas of research, he has submitted a relatively careful, manageable model, which he justifies solidly.¹⁴ For Haggai, Wöhrle plausibly differentiates between a core (*Grundschrift*¹⁵), two formative redactions (*Haggaichronik*;¹⁶ *Fremdvölker-Korpus I*¹⁷), and isolated additions (*Einzelzusätze*¹⁸). In the present context it is worth mentioning that Hag and Zech were connected for the first time in the first half of the 5th century B.C.E.¹⁹ The redactors only add productively to Zech (1:1-7, 14a β -17a α ; 2:10-14; 4:9b; 6:15; 7:1, 7, 9-14; 8:1-5, 7-8, 14-17, 19b), while Hag is taken over unchanged, with the exception of being (deuteronomistically) conditioned by inserting the conversion of the people (Zech 1:1-7) which precedes the divine care (*göttliche Zuwendung*) in Zech 1-8. Later (approx. 400 B.C.E.), the nations-corpus I (*Fremdvölker-Korpus I*) combines Hag-IZech with Joel-Amos-Mic-Zeph and adds Nah and IIZech.

The model's outline is rather convincing. Less compulsory seems to me excluding Hag 2:11-14 from the basic layer, especially if one assumes a historic prophet who then is expected to be heavily shaped by priestly categories on the one hand. On the other hand one may dispute the allocation of 2:23 to the core.

In contrast, the hypothesis presented by Martin Hallaschka proceeds in a considerably more radical and differentiated manner, starting with a

11 Cf. hereto my short summary: Leuenberger, "Herrschaftsverheißungen," 105-108 (Lit.), and recently Wöhrle, *Sammlungen*, 285-287; Hallaschka, *Haggai*, 2-14.

12 Hallaschka, *Haggai*, 4, following Boda (see however 7-14 for "komplexere Entstehungsmodelle").

13 Nogalski, *Precursors*; idem, *Processes*.

14 Cf. Wöhrle, *Sammlungen*, 285-385; idem, *Abschluss*, 14-18 and passim.

15 Hag 1:2, 4-11, 12b, 13; 2:3, 4*, 5a β , b, 9, 15-16, 18ab β , 19, 23.

16 Hag 1:1, 3, 12a, 14-15; 2:1-2, 4*, 10, 20, 21a.

17 Hag 2:6-8, 21b, 22.

18 Hag 2:5a α , 11-14, 17, 18ba.

19 The so-called word-redaction (see Wöhrle, *Sammlungen*, 367-385).

core of 6 verses from Haggai and 5 verses from Zechariah: "Der Grundbestand des Haggai-Buchs besteht aus zwei Worten (1,4.8; 2,3.9a), die den Tempel zum Thema haben."²⁰ After independent expansions, according to him, the connection of both books takes place for the first time by the dating in Zech 1:7 and related texts concerning on the one hand the renewed dwelling of Yhwh in the temple (1:16–17; 2:10–14*) and on the other hand Zerubbabel (4:6–10*). As with Wöhrle, Hallaschka argues this combination of books leaves no direct traces in the book of Haggai. Only later do various overarching redactions take place in Hag–Zech*.²¹ The limited range of his analysis, however, yields no comprehensive perspective on the formation of the Book of the Twelve.

This conclusion results more or less stringently from a consistently used subtraction method, which Hallaschka, however, neither justifies nor reflects upon methodically. Therefore, it remains unclear, how he estimates the efficiency and function of his model (for instance with regard to the literary-historical cogency).

Surveying these examples focused on recent German-speaking studies, it is obvious that the present redaction-historical research remains within a relatively restricted range of hypotheses. At the origin of all these models and of the redaction-historical approach in general stands the basic assumption that prophecy functions to interpret history in terms of the author's actual present. This observation implies the possibility of reconstructing developments within prophetic texts in correspondence to historical processes.²²

1.4 Research Perspectives

From this current standpoint, we can formulate four perspectives for further research:

(1) Essential is, as Jakob Wöhrle has emphasized,²³ a *methodical reflection* of developing redaction-historical hypotheses (including the relevant criteria such as catchwords and conceptual levels): Exegesis needs constant accompanying hermeneutics.

20 Hallaschka *Haggai*, 315; see 316 similar for Zech: "Am Beginn des Sacharja-Buchs stehen zwei kurze Visionen (Sach 1,8.9a.10.11b; 2,5–6)" (see similar for Hag and Zech Kratz, "Hosea," 281).

21 In Hag, diverse additions are to be found in 2:6–7, then 2:8 (after 450 B.C.E., possibly already Hellenistic), finally 2:20–23 was added (see Hallaschka, *Haggai*, 66–70.103–120; cf. his article, p. 171–189, in this volume).

22 Cf. e.g. Steck and Schmid, "Heilserwartungen," 9.

23 See his article, p. 3–20, in this volume.

(2) Equally important, it seems to me, would be substantive *concrete examples of individual cases*, since the constant movement between exegetical theory and practice has to be proven.

(3) On the *literary level*, the modeling can no longer take place within the range of single books, but must always keep in view the horizon of the Book of the Twelve, since overarching aspects usually begin to take effect during relatively early phases of book developments. In my view, this change constitutes an inevitable insight of the newer research, affecting the book of Haggai on several layers.

(4) Finally, an urgent desideratum consists in the effort to embody redaction-historical models more firmly by correlating them with *religious- and theological-historical constellations*. Thus it is possible, on the one hand, at least at salient points, to corroborate the redaction history of the Book of the Twelve historically, thereby securing the additional internal stratifications.²⁴ On the other hand, the religious- and theological-historical contextualizations provide sharper profiles for the corresponding redactional layers and allow one to determine their historical purposes.

In the second part of this paper, I will now try to implement these suggestions by means of a concrete example: the nationwide restitution of Israel in Hag 2:6-9 and 2:20-23.

2. The Nationwide Restitution of Israel (Hag 2:6-9, 20-23)

2.1 The Setting of Haggai

The book of Haggai 'happens' directly on the horizon of the temple's re-establishment. This theological-historical *time of change* marks the birth of postexilic prophecy, and it has gained more intensive scholarly attention over the last two decades.²⁵ This change concerns not only the literary presentation of what happened, but also proves (despite the criticism esp. of Diana Edelman) to be reliable historically.²⁶

²⁴ Cf. esp. the article of Albertz, p. 303-318, in this volume.

²⁵ Responsible for this trend are mainly the redaction-historical quest for the formation and composition of the Book of the Twelve as a unity on the one hand, and the fundamentally changed understanding of prophecy on the other hand, for which the learned and scripture-based "prophetische Prophetenauslegung" (Steck) until the 2nd century B.C.E. is of central relevance.

²⁶ Cf. Edelman, *Origins*; Dequeker, "Darius;" but see the refutation of Klein, "Contemporaries;" see also esp. Uehlinger, "Policy," 336-337; Willi-Plein, *Haggai*, 11-16, and most recently Hallaschka, *Haggai*.

With regard to the literary and redaction history, this reliability applies to the origins of Hag and Zech, and possibly to the hypothesis of a Two-Prophets-Book reported above (1.2). If so, this Two-Prophets-Book would then synthesize the preceding materials at a time that was still quite close to the events. In effect, this synthesis amounts to locating the core tradition of Hag and Zech – and possibly also the Two-Prophets-Book – in the religious- and theological-historical horizon of the second temple's founding. This contextualization is at present widely acknowledged, allowing us to move a step further.

2.2 Hag 2:6–9, 20–23

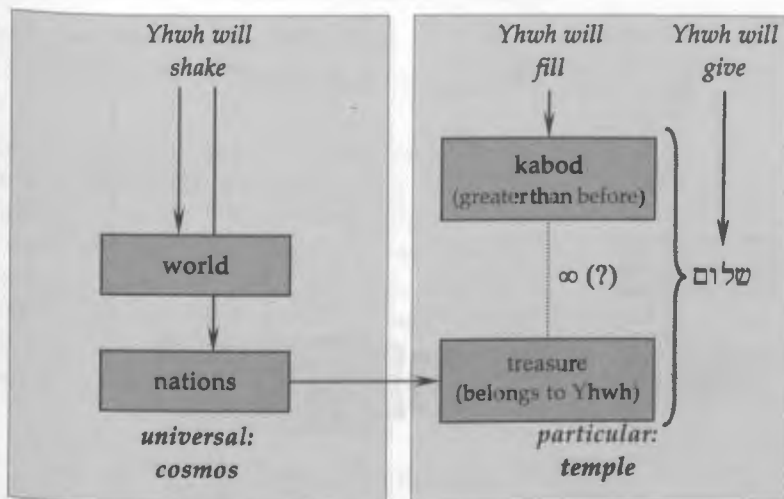
It is rather interesting to see that the general constellation of the book of Haggai – centering around overcoming the agrarian-economic distress in Jerusalem at the end of the exile by building the new temple – is very clearly transcended in the two sections of *Hag* 2:6–9, 20–23: They take into account a universal cosmos and national horizon, and they also vary with respect to formal and literary-critical aspects.²⁷

<p>כי כה אמר יהוה צבאות עוד אחת מעט היא ואני מרעיש את השמים ואת הארץ ואת הים ואת החרבה והרעשתי את כל הגוים ובאו חמדת כל הגוים ומלאתי את הבית הזה ככבוד אמר יהוה צבאות לי הכסף ולי הזהב נאם יהוה צבאות גדול יהיה כבוד הבית הזה האחרון מן הראשון אמר יהוה צבאות ובמקום הזה אתן שלום נאם יהוה צבאות</p>	<p>6 For thus says Yhwh Zebaot: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth 7 and the sea and the dry land! And I will shake all the nations, and the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says Yhwh Zebaot. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine – says Yhwh Zebaot. 9 The latter splendor of this house will be greater than the former,²⁸ says Yhwh Zebaot. And in this place I will give prosperity – says Yhwh Zebaot.</p>
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²⁷ See below the reference in note 30.

²⁸ Due to the Hebrew Syntax (see Jöüon and Muraoka, *Grammar*, §§139a.143h, but see Rudolph, *Haggai*, 41) this understanding is more probable than the alternative: "Greater will be the splendor of this latter house than the one of the former."

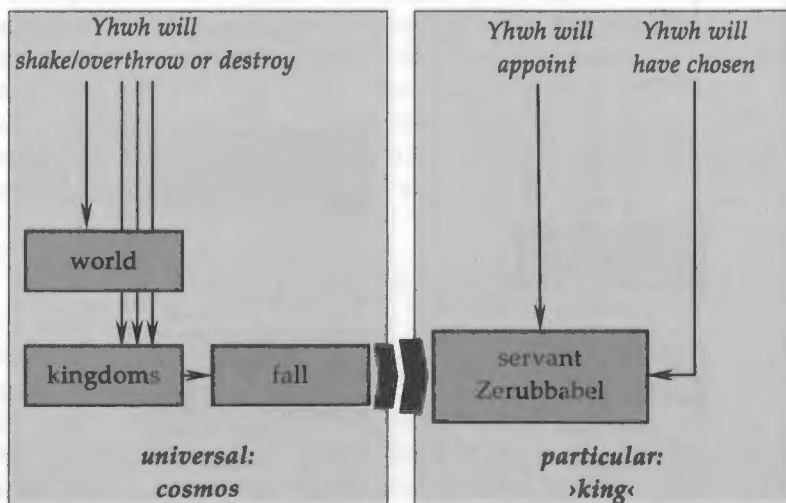
Schematically this order of events can be represented as depicted in the following graphic:



The second passage runs as follows:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>ויהי דברי־יהוה שנית אל־חגי
 בעשרים וארבעה לחדש לאמר
 אמר אל־זרובבל
 פחת־יהודה לאמר
 אני מרעיש את־השמים
 ואת־הארץ
 והפכתי כסא ממלכות
 והשמדתי חזק ממלכות הגוים
 והפכתי מרכבה ורכביה
 וירדו סוסים ורכביהם
 איש בחרב אחיו
 ביום ההוא נא־סִיְהוּה צבאות
 אֶקַחך וזרובבל בן־שאל־תיאל עבדי
 נא־סִיְהוּה
 ושמתִיך כחותם
 כי־בך כחרתי
 נא־סִיְהוּה צבאות</p> | <p>20 And the word of Yhwh came
 a second time to Haggai
 on the 24th day of the month:
 21 Speak to Zerubbabel,
 governor of Judah:
 I am about to shake the heavens
 and the earth,
 22 and I will overthrow the throne
 of kingdoms;
 and I will destroy the strength of
 the kingdoms of the nations,
 and I will overthrow the chariots
 and their riders;
 and the horses and their riders
 will fall,
 each one by the sword of his
 brother.
 23 On that day – says Yhwh Zebaot –,
 I will take you, o Zerubbabel,
 son of Shealtiel, my servant –
 says Yhwh –,
 and will make you like a
 signet ring,
 for I have chosen you –
 says Yhwh Zebaot.</p> |
|---|---|

Again, the sequence of action gives a rather similar impression to the one in 2:6–9:



In both cases a change to restitution takes place and is depicted as a concentrated movement from a universal start to a particular end. The movement anticipates events in the very near future that move from a universal shaking of sky, earth and nations (judgment on the nations by YHWH) to the particular salvation centered around the temple (2:6–9) and the chosen >king< (2:20–23) in the midst of a well-ordered cosmos.

Naturally, differences exist in the details, differences which transcend categories that refer to the temple, the king, and their constituent parts. Hag 2:6–9 is part of the argument in the word of God encompassing 2:1–9, while 2:20–23 constitutes the fourth word of God in its entirety. Taken together with the emphasis on the book's conclusion (Achtergewicht), it seems probable that we have here a final, compositional (and probably also a redaction-historical) accent. Also of interest is the aforementioned perspective on the nations which appears only in 2:22 where it accentuates total judgment against the nations, while 2:7–8 only describes the effect of the nations' shaking – the treasures come to Jerusalem (how this transfer happens is not stated). The fate of the nations is left open in 2:7–8.

This development can be understood within the book's dynamic.²⁹ At the same time, however, it shows clearly that the theme of the nations plays a (contextually differing) auxiliary function with regard to the restitution of Israel – no matter how one evaluates this development redaction-

²⁹ The nations first bring treasures into Jerusalem, where the nations nevertheless will be destroyed (cf. Joel 4:12–17). This by no means unambiguous reading is further complicated by the time frame of 2:6–9, 20–23.

historically. Finally, it is worth noting that in 2:20–23 an objective corresponding to the לְשׁוֹלֵט -state (2:9) is missing, possibly indicating that 2:6–9 and 2:20–23 involve different phases of formation.

2.3 Hag 2:6–9, 20–23 as Updates (*Fortschreibungen*)

Current redaction-historical models agree to some extent, and in my view justifiably so, in considering both sections to be later updates (*Fortschreibungen*), although the judgments for that conclusion diverge in detail.³⁰ On the whole one can state that literary-critical observations, combined with conceptual features, establish one of the most probable redactional layers in the book of Haggai,³¹ which possibly complements other additions, even though such a differentiated rolling corpus as Hallaschka, for example, proposes remains unverifiable.

2.4 Religious- and Theological-Historical Contextualization of Hag 2:6–9, 20–23

Now, is it possible to make plausible this conceptually distinct, redactional layer more precisely with regard to the postexilic history of religion and theology? It is noteworthy that recent research has proposed a Hellenistic dating of texts dealing with a judgment over the nations and the cosmos. This placement, however, should be reexamined and, in my view, modified in favor of a *late Persian origin*.

(1) In particular, according to Steck, the prophetic announcements of a general judgment against the nations and the world reflect the collapse of the Persian ecumenism. This ecumenism was understood as worldwide pacification³² and as “weltweite *Ordo*-Erfahrung sondergleichen” (unprecedented universal experience of order).³³ A similar assessment is quite common and is advocated for instance also by Konrad Schmid.³⁴

³⁰ See my overview: Leuenberger, *Gott*, 242–245 (Lit.).

³¹ With regard to content and redaction-historical arguments, it is very unlikely that 2:6–9, 21b–22 can be linked with the early Persian revolts during the first years of Darius I. (against Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai*, 53; Albertz, “Restoration,” 7; Lux, “Völkertheologie,” 111).

³² See esp. Steck, *Abschluß*, 25–60.73 111; idem, *Studien*, 163–164; Steck and Schmid, “Heilserwartungen,” 9–10.33–34.

³³ Steck and Schmid, “Heilserwartungen,” 33; more cautious Steck, *Prophetenbücher*, 119.

³⁴ Cf. Schmid, *Literaturgeschichte*, 192–194; idem, *Buchgestalten*, 181–185.305–309.

Concretely, Hallaschka also interprets Hag 2:20–23 in this sense. According to him, the section dates from Hellenistic time, because “seit dem Alexanderzug nun tatsächlich nach der 200jährigen *pax persica* die Throne der Königreiche umstürzen.”³⁵

(2) Nevertheless, one must ask whether this argumentation is really conclusive. Already a quick historical glance shows that the events and conditions in the western part of the Persian Empire were extremely and continually chaotic, at least during its last century. Namely, during the reign of Darius II (424–404 B.C.E.), Artaxerxes II (404–359/8 B.C.E.) and (soon also under) Artaxerxes III (359/8–338 B.C.E.), numerous rebellions, revolts and changes of power dominate the picture.³⁶

(3) Against this background, a late Persian emergence of texts emphasizing universal judgment against the nations appears much more plausible in term of the history of religion and theology, possibly dating sometime between the late fifth century (beginning with Darius II in 424 B.C.E.) and the middle of the fourth century.

Of course, this briefly proposed thesis requires more detailed exploration than is possible here. But if this suggestion withstands critical scrutiny, the redaction-historical dating of the relevant texts by Jakob Wöhrle (for his *Fremdvölker-Korpus I*)³⁷ and others³⁸ would gain valuable religious- and theological-historical support.

Of course, the text corpora would have to be discussed and differentiated more extensively. First of all, there seem to be theological-historical differences portraying a general judgment against the nations (with different nuances),³⁹ a cosmic world-judgment, and so-called apocalyptic conceptions of judgment. Secondly, consistent themes (esp. the issue of the nations) also show different profiles in an intertemporal perspective.

35 Hallaschka, *Haggai*, 138 cf. 69 70.117; Steck and Schmid, “Heilserwartungen,” 33. The controversial expression *כִּסֵּא מַמְלָכּוֹת* “throne(s) of the kingdoms” (v. 22) cannot exclusively be connected with either the Persian or the Hellenistic Period (see besides the commentaries esp. Lux, “Völkertheologie,” 115–118).

36 Cf. Briant, *History*, 588–690; Miller and Hayes, *History*, 524–527; Donner, *Geschichte*, 431–437; cf. specifically for Hag Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 161–164.

37 Hag 2:6, 20 possesses strong cross-references to Joel: Only in Hag 2:6, 20 and Joel 4:16 the shaking (*שָׁרַעַ*) refers to heaven and earth (see further for heaven Joel 2:10); this indicates probably a significant redaction-historical link (cf. in more detail Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 139–171 [Lit.]).

38 See for Hag 2:6–7 e.g. Gärtner, *Summe*, 328.

39 Cf. hereto the *Fremdvölker Korpus I* and *II* of Wöhrle (*Abschluss*, 23–171.191–287).

3. Conclusion

After a short review of current redaction-historical research on Hag and IZech, notably on the hypothesis of a Two-Prophets-Book Hag–IZech*, a few perspectives for further research were noted, particularly focusing on the need for correlating redaction-historical models with religious- and theological-historical constellations.

Next, an attempt was made to concretize this correlative task for Hag 2:6–9, 20–23 with respect to the expectation of a restitution for Israel by judgment against the nations and a universal judgment. Contrary to the frequent dating in the early Hellenistic era, this constellation fits much better in the late Persian period when, notably, the western part of the empire was in more or less constant uproar. If this placement is correct, then quite a distinctive redactional stage of the formation of the Book of the Twelve can be embedded in the religious- and theological-historical context of the late Persian period and it can be understood more precisely against this background.

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