

TERMINOLOGICAL PATTERNS AND THE PERSONAL NAME יַעֲקֹב "JACOB" IN THE BOOKS OF AMOS AND MICAH

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Concordances, and today even more efficiently Bible computer programs, are an appropriate and timesaving means to gain, as it were, an insight into the "workshop" of biblical writers. Since we have no information concerning the concrete procedure of the production of biblical literature, our literary and redaction-critical models are to be assessed as very vague.¹ Therefore, any attempt to restore the *ipsissima verba* of biblical writers is doomed to failure. Consequently, we have to rely on the text as transmitted in the manifold Hebrew manuscripts and those of the ancient versions. Besides, since no author writes at random, "we can expect to find some logic or system—not necessarily conscious—behind the placement of material, and we can further assume that this placement is supposed to serve the author's goals."² In view of this sensible verdict it seems reasonable to make the *Endgestalt*, i.e., the final shape, the starting-point of any exegetical endeavors.³ The "final text" this study is resting on is the electronic version of *BibleWorks*, a text-version that has been collated against the various editions of the Hebrew Bible,⁴ which is, by the way, very similar to the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Besides, the findings presented in the following pages have not only been checked by the concordance edited by S. Mandelkern, but they have likewise been compared with the LXX as printed in the critical Göttingen edition.

The methodological approach to be applied in the present paper was also employed in two recent studies published in *AUSS*.⁵ By way of tabulating, counting, and evaluating the frequencies of the words used in a given pericope, an entity which may consist of a brief passage, a chapter, or even an entire biblical book, some terms turn out to be of structural significance; and these

¹Cf. G. Steins, *Die "Bindung Isaaks" im Kanon (Gen 22). Grundlagen und Programm einer kanonisch-intertextuellen Lektüre*, HBS 20 (Freiburg: Herder, 1999), 220.

²M. V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*, Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament, ed. J. L. Crenshaw (Columbus: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 153.

³With regard to the ongoing debate discussing the synchronic versus the diachronic approach in biblical studies, see, e.g., J. C. de Moor, ed., *Synchronic or Diachronic: A Debate in Old Testament Exegesis*, OTS 34 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995).

⁴*BibleWorks 4. The Premier Biblical Exegesis and Research Program: User Manual* (Bible Works, 1999), 219-224.

⁵W. Warning, "Terminological Patterns and Genesis 38," *AUSS* 38 (2000): 293-305; idem, "Terminological Patterns and the Term עָזָב 'Strong, Powerful' in the Pentateuch," *AUSS* 39 (2001): 233-240.

outlines based on counting a given sentential entity, word, or term have been designated "terminological patterns."⁶

As of the beginning of 2002, more than 140 terminological patterns have been discovered in the Pentateuch, primarily in Genesis and Leviticus,⁷ and preliminary research has disclosed another sixty-plus such structures in Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, Micah, Jonah, Haggai, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the Apocalypse. Whereas common words tend to be used in creating short-range linkages,⁸ rarer terms have been employed in composing long-range linguistic links.

In view of the numerous terminological patterns hitherto disclosed in the Hebrew Bible, the following conclusion may be drawn: Due to the indubitable fact that the terminological reading is based on both terminological *and* numerological notions, such a "restricted methodology" can consequently uncover only a certain part of the thematic makeup and the theological message. On the other hand, the findings of previous studies strongly suggest that in spite of the deliberately imposed restrictions, the terminological reading often corroborates and complements the results reached in previous research. At the same time it must be noted: In many cases the terminological patterns clearly cross the boundaries set by, e.g., source-critical and redaction-critical studies. In contrast to the results of these studies, the linguistic linkages present the respective *Endgestalt* as a carefully crafted literary whole. In my view, this fact underscores the importance of the final text as the (mandatory) starting point of all exegetical work. Due to the lack of any information concerning the concrete procedure of the production of biblical literature, it is of no consequence for this paper whether the perceptible homogeneity of a given pericope is rooted in its first inception and composition or whether it is the end

⁶W. Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus*, BinS 35 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 25.

⁷W. Warning, "Terminologische Verknüpfungen in der Urgeschichte," *ZAW* 114 (2002): 262-269—seen from the viewpoint of terminological patterns, the so-called "P" and "J" creation stories appear to be a homogeneous whole; idem, "Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Genesis 12, 1-3," *Bib* 81 (2000), 386-390—to a certain degree the *Urgeschichte* culminates in Gen 12:1-3; idem, "Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Genesis 15," *Hen* 23 (2001): 3-9—a seven-part structure outlines the chapter *per se* and through another two seven-part linguistic links it has been integrated into the extant text of Genesis and the Pentateuch respectively; idem, "Terminological Patterns and Genesis 17," *HUCA* 70/71 (2001): 93-108; idem, "Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Genesis 22," *Spec Christiana* 12 (2001): 30-47; idem, "Terminological Patterns and Genesis 39," *JETS* 44 (2001): 409-419. Close reading of Gen 17, 22, 38, and 39 discloses both the linguistic linkages outlining the respective pericope and the verbal links through which they have been embedded into the larger context of Genesis. In each of the latter four studies terminological patterns come to the fore that extend from Gen 2/3 to the very end of the Joseph story in Gen 50; idem, "Terminological Patterns and the Divine Epithet *Shaddai*," *TynB* 52 (2001): 149-153; idem, "Terminologische Verknüpfungen und Leviticus 11," *BZ* 43 (2002): 97-102; idem, "Terminological Patterns and the First Word of the Bible (בְּרֵאשִׁית) ('In the) Beginning,'" *TynB* 52 (2001): 267-274; idem, "Terminological Patterns and the Verb לָמַד 'Circumcise' in the Pentateuch," *BN* 106 (2001): 52-56.

⁸W. Warning, *Artistry*, points to the structuring role of common words such as אֶרֶץ "land" (53-54; 77-78; 113-115), כָּל "all" (56-57; 67-74), נָתַן "give" (78-79; 110-113), הָיָה "be" (80-81), בֶּן "son" (97-98), and אֲנִי "I" (115-116).

product of the final redactor. In any case, the only fact available to us is the extant text in all its complexity, and therefore my definition of the term "author" is as follows: The word "author" is used and understood as referring to the person(s) responsible for the respective *Endgestalt*, the person(s) who composed the literary units we call, for example, "Oracles against the Nations," "The Book of Visions," "The Book of Amos," "Micah 7," or "The Book of Micah," literary entities that did not exist prior to their being composed, whatever the prehistory of the respective parts may have been.⁹

As stated above, the terminological reading does include "arithmetical aspects," i.e., biblical texts have evidently been composed by making use of the symbolic significance the ancients ascribed to "certain numbers."¹⁰ Corresponding to the *inclusio* or envelope structure well known in biblical studies, the term "open-envelope structure"¹¹ has been coined for an outline in which the second and second-from-last resemble each other, and a terminological pattern in which the third and third-from-last, fourth and fourth-from-last, etc., positions are similar or even verbatim has been designated "equidistant structure."¹²

⁹Whereas D. U. Rottzoll, *Studien zur Redaktion und Komposition des Amosbuchs*, BZAW 243 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1996), 285-290, claims to have discovered *twelve* redactional layers (three of which are present in the six texts juxtaposed in the table), A. Scharf, *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs: Neubearbeitungen von Amos im Rahmen schriftübergreifender Redaktionsprozesse*, BZAW 260 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1998), 90-100, comes up with seven distinct layers, H. W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2. Joel und Amos*, BKAT 14/2 (Neukirchen/Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 129-138, postulates six redactional reworkings, and S. M. Paul, *Amos: A Commentary of the Book of Amos* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 4, maintains: "When each case is examined and analyzed on its own, without preconceived conjectures and unsupported hypotheses, the book in its entirety (with one or two minor exceptions) can be reclaimed for its rightful author, the prophet Amos." Cf. Th. Lescow, "Das vorexilische Amosbuch: Erwägungen zu seiner Kompositionsgeschichte," *BN* 93 (1998): 23-55; idem, "Das nachexilische Amosbuch: Erwägungen zu seiner Kompositionsgeschichte," *BN* 99 (1999): 69-101; J. Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve*, BZAW 217 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1993); idem, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve*, BZAW 218 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1993); E. Zenger, et al., *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, Studienbücher Theologie 1,1 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1995), 391-393; J. Jeremias, *Hosea und Amos: Studien zu den Anfängen des Dodekapropheten*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 13 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1996), 257-271.

¹⁰With regard to the book of Micah, G. Metzner, *Kompositionsgeschichte des Michabuches*, European University Studies, Series 23 Theology, vol. 635 (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1996), 185-196, assumes five different redactional layers, whereas H. W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 4. Micha*, BKAT 14/4 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1982) proceeds from four redactional strata, and B. M. Zapff, *Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien zum Michabuch im Kontext des Dodekapropheten*, BZAW 256 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1997) presumes two redactional levels (cf. 296-297). Furthermore, the *Forschungsgeschichte* presented by E. Ott, "Micha/Michabuch," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 22 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1992), 695-704, summarizes the various hypotheses concerning the development of the present text; R. Kessler, "Zwischen Tempel und Tora, Das Michabuch im Diskurs der Perserzeit," *BZ* (1999): 21-36; Zenger, 408-410.

¹¹L. Alonso-Schökel, *A Manual of Biblical Poetics* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblica, 1988), 191.

¹²Warning, *Artistry*, 32-33; 115-120; 156-159.

With regard to such “veiled counting”¹³ in the Hebrew Bible, the following counsel should be carefully considered:

The literary units to be scrutinized concerning the frequency of characteristic words must be clearly and distinctly recognizable as such, and if possible they should be delimited in the same way in previous research, so that the exegete will not be tempted or be exposed to the reproach that he or she places the caesura in the continuum of the text in such a way that the characteristic term occurs the desired number of times.¹⁴

Considering the fact that present-day biblical scholars rarely employ this approach, certain reservations on their part are understandable. However, at times we seem to miss significant aspects of the theological message because of not taking the *Endgestalt* at face value. Considering the results that substantiate the methodological appropriateness of this approach, it has been rightly remarked:

After having become accustomed to this aspect of art, you will no longer have any basic problems with the veiled countings of the Old Testament. You will rather realize that the significance of the components of a piece of art and their simple identifiability are not necessarily in a positive ratio to one another.¹⁵

The terminological reading of the extant texts of Amos and Micah brings to light two verbal links based on the personal name “Jacob.” It is my contention that the *Endgestalt* of Amos and of Micah are extraordinary examples and plausible evidence that in “literature the form is meaningful. . . . In literature the form creates meaning. . . . In literature the meaning exists in and through form.”¹⁶ The respective author has evidently employed the very same structuring devices used by the authors of the primeval story, the patriarchal narratives, the legal texts of Leviticus, and the oracles of Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Haggai, and Esther. In my view, it is both surprising and significant that similar stylistic means have been used by authors of biblical books belonging to very different literary genres. Ultimately, the reader is called upon to weigh the evidence personally and to decide whether the approach applied in the following pages is valid or not.

The Personal Name “Jacob” in the Book of Amos

If we tabulate the six occurrences of the name “Jacob” in the extant Hebrew text of Amos, the following outline comes to light, a terminological pattern

¹³Thus far equidistant structures have been detected in different parts of the Pentateuch, Jonah, Haggai, and Esther.

¹⁴M. Tsevat, “Abzählungen in 1 Samuel 1-4,” in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. E. Blum et al. [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990], 213, speaks of “verhüllte Abzählungen.”

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁶L. Alonso-Schökel, “Hermeneutical Problems of a Literary Study of the Bible,” *Vetus Testamentum Supplement. Congress vol. 28 Edinburgh 1974* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 7.

focusing on the prophet's intercessory plea for his people. Amos' petition for pardon appears first in 7:2 (in the context of the first vision), and it is repeated verbatim in 7:5 (in the context of the second vision). In both of these visions the word-for-word entreaty is followed by the divine promise: "'This will not happen (either),' the (Sovereign) Lord said" (7:3, 6; NIV). As can be seen in the following table, the verbatim statement has been placed in the third and third-from-last positions, and hence this outline is reckoned among the equidistant structures. Due to the LXX translators' reading "Jacob" instead of the personal name יִשְׂחָק "Isaac" in 7:16, this equidistant structure does not show in the Greek text.

Furthermore, close reading of the table makes us detect the terminological and thematic correlation of the first and last, and second and second-from-last positions. The first and last texts both mention the "house of Jacob." In 3:13-15 the Lord's judgment is pronounced against the house of Jacob:

"Hear this and testify against the house of Jacob," declares the Lord, the Lord God Almighty. "On the day I punish Israel for her sins, I will punish the altars of Bethel; the horns of the altar will be cut off, and will fall to the ground. I will smash the winter house along with the summer house; the houses adorned with ivory will be destroyed and the mansions will be demolished," declares the Lord.

Yet 9:8 contains a message of hope for (the remnant of) the house of Jacob: "Indeed, the eyes of the Sovereign Lord are on the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it from the surface of the earth—yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob," declares the Lord." The clear-cut antithetic arrangement of the two texts, one being a dire threat of judgment and the other being a promise of hope, cannot be overlooked.

The same antithetical arrangement seems to be true for the second and second-from-last texts. The phrase יַעֲקֹב נִאִין "pride of Jacob" occurs first in a dire message of judgment: "I abhor the pride of Jacob and detest his fortresses" (6:8), i.e., the Lord rebukes Israel because of her haughtiness and trusting in her own (military) strength. The semantic antithesis between Israel's haughtiness and pride (6:8) and "the Pride of Jacob" in 8:6 could hardly be more explicit, because in the latter the term יַעֲקֹב נִאִין seems to function as a divine epithet.¹⁷

The following table evidences the artistic arrangement of the personal

¹⁷Cf. H. N. Rösel, "Kleine Studien zur Auslegung des Amosbuches," *BZ* 42 (1998): 12-13; Jeremias, 257-271. In the extant text of Amos the Lord is thrice the subject of the verb שָׁבַע "swear," and hence it might be helpful to illustrate its structuring role of the verb by juxtaposing the three texts.

4:2	Adonai	YHWH has sworn by his holiness
6:8	Adonai	YHWH has sworn by himself
8:7		YHWH has sworn by the Pride of Jacob

In view of 4:2 and 6:8 where the Lord swears by "his holiness" and "by himself" respectively, it seems sensible to interpret the "The Pride of Jacob" also as a divine circumscription.

name “Jacob” in the *Endgestalt* of the book of Amos; and, second, the articulate thematic antithesis between the first and last, and second and second-from-last positions seems likewise self-evident. In contrast to many a modern study on the book of Amos claiming clearly recognizable redactional layers, we may therefore conclude: The author of the final text has employed the personal name “Jacob” as one of the twenty-plus terminological patterns, linguistic links that will be presented elsewhere, by means of which a major part of the book has been outlined. Furthermore, this terminological pattern is obviously based on both terminological and thematic considerations:¹⁸

3:13	Hear this and testify against the	<i>house of</i>	Jacob
6:8	I abhor the	<i>pride of</i>	Jacob
7:2	<u>Who will raise</u>		<u>Jacob, as he is so small?</u>
7:5	<u>Who will raise</u>		<u>Jacob, as he is so small?</u>
8:7	The Lord has sworn by the	<i>Pride of</i>	Jacob
9:8	yet I will not totally destroy the	<i>house of</i>	Jacob

Exegetical inferences: The two central texts belong to the first and second visions, and therefore they should be interpreted in this context: When the Lord appears in vision and speaks, Amos is the first who speaks, even before the Lord can convey his message.

¹⁸The hypothesis of authorial deliberateness is further substantiated by the terminological pattern based on the tenfold occurrence of the verb *רָאָה* “rise, raise,” an outline in the center of which we again find Amos 7:2, 5:

2:11		I	raised	up some of your sons to be prophets
5:2a	the virgin Israel has fallen, she will never		rise	again
5:2b		and no one	raises	her up
6:14		for soon I will	rise	against you
7:2	<u>Who will</u>	<u>raise</u>	<u>Jacob, as he is so small?</u>	
7:5	<u>Who will</u>	<u>raise</u>	<u>Jacob, as he is so small?</u>	
7:9		and I shall	rise	with my sword against the house of Jeroboam
8:14	they shall fall and never		rise	again
9:11a	on that day I shall		raise	David’s booth that has fallen
11b		and I shall	raise	his ruins

Amos flings himself into the breach as intercessor. . . . That action is unique in the annals of Israel and of its prophets. The only other successful intercession of this kind recorded in the Bible is credited to Moses, who intervened in the crisis of the golden calf. . . . He is a dedicated partisan of his people and will soon again intercede. . . . Amos knows that the message is urgent and the time short. His intercession buys time, but no more than that.¹⁹

The ancient author has apparently managed to let terminological pattern and theological message correspond perfectly.

The Personal Name "Jacob" in the Book of Micah

If we tabulate the eleven occurrences of the name of Israel's eponymous ancestor, an exquisite equidistant structure comes into view whereby the whole book has been outlined, except for the first five verses. Significantly, this outline can likewise be shown in the LXX. In the "center" of this outline, in the fifth and fifth-from-last positions, the heads and leaders of Micah's day, "the authoritative members of the Judean establishment who held in their hands the reins of society,"²⁰ are addressed. These heads and leaders were possibly officials who functioned as judges in deciding legal matters in the city gates, and it certainly was their responsibility to "know" justice, i.e., "to act justly and to love mercy" (Micah 6:8), and it is these political leaders who have been singled out as the object of his denunciations. Because of their being the prophet's addressees, it is noteworthy that the term קִבִּי "leader" occurs only twice in Micah (3:1, 9), a fact that seemingly supports the intentionality of the equidistant structure. Although it is impossible to establish in the following table any clear-cut antithetic arrangement of the first and last, second and second-from-last, etc., positions, as is the case in Amos, the following conclusion cannot be contradicted: By way of deliberately distributing the eleven occurrences of the name "Jacob," the verbatim address to the people's leaders has been positioned in a fine structural balance, and by doing so the author of the *Endgestalt* has been rather successful in outlining the entire book, except for the first five verses (see figure below).

Exegetical inferences: A fine congruence of terminology (heads and leaders being addressed) and theology (the respective context of 3:1, 9 clearly elucidates that those who should have been the watchmen of judicial justice and public welfare, who should have guarded the old morality of social equity, the men at the top, were marked by moral perversity) underlines the prophet's challenge. Micah, who had been called to be a watchman for the house of Israel, to hear the Lord's exhortations, and to warn his contemporaries (cf. Ezek 33:7), reprimands those who should have been upholders of the social concern laid

¹⁹F. L. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Amos: A Translation with Introduction and Commentary* AB 24A (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 729.

²⁰L. C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 317.

down in the covenant stipulations; but who, alas, were foremost in perverting law and moral order.

1:5	All this is because of	Jacob's	transgression
1:5	What is	Jacob's	transgression?
2:7	Should it be said, O house of	Jacob:	
2:12	I will surely gather all of you,	Jacob	
3:1	<u>listen</u> to this <u>you leaders of</u>	<u>Jacob.</u>	<u>you rulers of the house of Israel</u>
3:8	to declare	Jacob	his transgression
3:9	<u>listen you leaders of</u> the house of	<u>Jacob.</u>	<u>you rulers of the house of Israel</u>
4:2	to the house of the God of	Jacob	
5:6	The remnant of	Jacob	will be in the midst of many people
5:7	The remnant of	Jacob	will be among the nations
7:2	You will be true to	Jacob	and show mercy to Abraham

Conclusions

Although there is at the present moment no consensus whatever about, when, and through whom the books named after two eighth-century prophets reached their present form, and the date about their composition differs considerably, the two preceding equidistant structures based on the distinct distribution of the personal name "Jacob" seemingly support the textual integrity of the respective *Endgestalt*.

In the context of the ongoing discussion of the development of the books of Amos and Micah and the formation of the "Book of the Twelve," the results of this study should be considered. My contention is that in scrutinizing the function of the catch-words that allegedly/actually interlink different minor prophets, we ought to be mindful of the following: First, we are to bring to light the linguistic links in the extant text of each of the Twelve; and only then, in a second step, may we venture to search for terms and phrases by means of which the compilers of the Dodekapropheton have arranged them in the order they presently have in the Hebrew Bible.