



The Origin of the Book of Zechariah

Author(s): T. K. Cheyne

Source: *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (Oct., 1888), pp. 76-83

Published by: University of Pennsylvania Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1449857>

Accessed: 18/06/2008 14:35

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=upenn>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We work with the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE ORIGIN OF THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH.

It is astonishing how critics of the Old Testament can go on studying the different books singly, overlooking the manifold points of connection between them, especially between those of the prophetic literature. Isaiah has been commented upon by, one is afraid to say, how many critics. But who has thrown any real light upon its composition except Ewald, who was more thoroughly possessed of the literary spirit than any other special student of the prophets? I do not know whether the same can be said of Ewald with regard to Zechariah. At any rate, much remains to be done, both in the Book of Isaiah and in that of Zechariah, towards determining the period and the inner meaning of the different parts of these prophecies. The problems are complicated, and no critic can safely propound a theory who is not prepared to show how it agrees with his general view of the growth of the prophecies. In other words, it is in a history of the prophetic literature that a theory on the composition of either Isaiah or Zechariah finds its best justification.

The ablest English survey of the critical problems of Zechariah is perhaps that of Dr. Perowne in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible. The author is a full adherent of the doctrine of development as applied to the prophecies (though doubtless he would qualify it by considerations of a different order), and does not allow his theological conclusions to influence his criticism. Dr. C. H. H. Wright, the Bampton Lecturer for 1878, much as he desires to be impartial, is far indeed from approaching these problems in the same liberal spirit as Dr. Perowne. It seems time, however, for the question to be re-opened, and treated, if possible, from a wider point of view.

Dr. Küper, in his work on the Prophecy of the Old Testament, asserts that the two parts of the Book of Zechariah form a harmonious whole, which corresponds throughout to the circumstances of the post-exile period, and implies the

authorship of a single person. Historical, linguistic, and stylistic peculiarities converge, he thinks, to prove this, and the fundamental ideas of the first portion are also those of the second. This is indeed a bold statement. By such a method it would be easy to prove that the whole of the Old Testament had but one author. The kernel of truth in it is that each of the three portions into which the Book of Zechariah falls, have some points in common; but as Bleek has well remarked, of what two prophetic works could the same not be affirmed? For instance, there is in all the three parts of the book an attitude of expectation, a hope of better things to come, which may, in the looser sense of the word, be called Messianic, but when we come to compare the various statements we find them very far from uniform.

In the first part of the book the religious horizon is bounded by the end of the exile, after which the prophet appears to expect the Messianic bliss (chaps. i., ii.); this may also perhaps be the case in the second part; but according to the third the Messianic age is unmistakably preceded by a painful process of purification and punishment (xiii. 9, xiv.). In the first, the Messiah is referred to as "the Branch" (iii. 8, vi. 12); in the second, as a lowly but victorious king (ix. 9, 10); in the third, not at all, for Yahveh himself is the king (xiv. 16). In the first two parts, the description of the future is comparatively simple; in the third, it is highly imaginative and obscure. Among minor details, the different attitude towards the horse is remarkable. In the first part, the horse is accounted worthy of being used as a symbol (vi. 1-7); in the second, he is to be cut off from Jerusalem (ix. 10); in the third, he is to be adorned with bells bearing the inscription, "Holiness (*i.e.*, a holy thing) unto Yahveh" (xiv. 20).

Nor if we compare the phraseology of the three parts, is the result more favourable to unity. Stähelin, a unitistic critic, mentions the following parallels<sup>1</sup>:—(a) vii. 14, comp. ix. 8; (b) ii. 14, comp. ix. 9; (c) ii. 13, comp. xi. 11; (d) viii. 10, comp. xi. 6; (e) iii. 4, comp. xiii. 2; (f) iii. 9, iv. 10 (the "eyes of God"=Providence), comp. ix. 1, 8. But what poor parallels they are! An examination will show that the combination of verbs in (a) also occurs in Exod. xxxii. 27, Ezek. xxxv. 7; that (b), (c), and (d) relate to what may not irreverently be denominated prophetic commonplaces; that though a verb in (e) is used in the uncommon sense "to put away," there are parallels for this in 2 Sam. xii. 13, 2 Chron. xv. 8, and elsewhere; and that (f) is based on a pure mistake of Stähelin's,

<sup>1</sup> *Specielle Einleitung*, p. 323.

the "eyes of God" in iii. 9, iv. 10 being used in a different sense from "the eye" and "the eyes of God" in ix. 1, 8.

But let us examine the two latter parts of the book separately. The question of their date is a most difficult one, and has been considered too prematurely as settled by the majority of philological critics, who have referred chaps. ix.—xi. to a contemporary of Isaiah, and chaps. xii.—xiv. to a contemporary of Jeremiah.

Here is the argument on both sides, for the pre-exile date, and for the post-exile, so far as it concerns chaps. ix.—xi. First, for the pre-exile date. (*a*) The kingdoms of Judah and Israel must have been both still in existence when ix. 10 was written. It is true that x. 6, 9, 10 at first sight seem to imply that the northern kingdom had been destroyed, but the expression "bring them again and place them" may only allude to the captivity of the east and north of Israel under Tiglath-Pileser, and not to the complete extinction of the state under Sargon; this is confirmed by the reference to Gilead and Lebanon in x. 10. (*b*) The foreign nations threatened in ix. 1-7 are Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon, the Philistines, Assyria, and Egypt (ix. 1-7). This agrees with the political horizon of the age of Isaiah. (*c*) Assyria and Egypt are specially mentioned as powerful and independent states in x. 11. (*d*) Soothsaying and the worship of household gods were prevalent, comp. Isa. ii. and vii. (*e*) The author of chapter ix. looks forward to the coming of the Messianic king; comp. ix. 9, 10 with Isa. ix. 7, Mic. v. 4. (*f*) There are also several points of contact between Zech. ix.—xi., and Amos, Isaiah, and Micah; comp. ix. 10 and x. 4, 5 with Mic. v. 10, Isa. ix. 5, 6; ix. 1-7 with Amos i. 3, etc.; x. 10 with Mic. vii. 12, 13.

For a post-exile date it may be argued as follows:—(*a*) It is not the practice of the older prophets to threaten punishment (as in ix. 1-7) without announcing the cause (comp. Amos i. 3, etc.). (*b*) The hostility manifested towards the Philistines suits a post-exile date (comp. Sirach l. 26), and the particular woe denounced against the Ashdodites even seems to require it, unless we maintain a view of revelation which disregards psychological points of contact. During the captivity, an Arab population had occupied the south of Palestine, and especially Ashdod. Hence the dialect of Ashdod became unintelligible to the Jews (Neh. xiii. 24), and the Arabians and the Ashdodites were natural allies against Nehemiah (Neh. iv. 7). (*c*) The reference to Javan (ix. 13) favours, if it does not require, a later date anyhow than Isaiah. The only other places where Javan is mentioned are

Ezek. xxvii. 13 (exile), Isaiah lxvi. 19 (at earliest, end of exile), Gen. x. 2 (not improbably post-exile), Joel iii. 6 (probably post-exile), Daniel viii. 21 (Maccabean). (*d*) The strong expressions used respecting the dispersion of the Jews are most easily explained by a post-exile origin (see ix. 11, 12, and comp. xlii. 7, xlix. 9 in the Second Isaiah; also x. 9, and comp. the statements of Jos. *Antiq.* XII. ii. 5, and Syncellus, p. 486). (*e*) Soothsaying and the worship of household gods were prevalent, comp. Mal. iii. 5, Jos. *Antiq.* VIII. ii. 5. (*f*) There are points of contact with writings of the Chaldean period, the occurrence of which was the main inducement to De Wette to return to the traditional opinion of the late date of the whole of Zechariah. (For these points of contact, it can be shown, are traceable in chaps. xii.—xiv., as well as in ix.—xi.) The following are some of those given by Stähelin:—Zech. ix. 2, comp. Ezek. xxviii. 3; Zech. ix. 3, 1 Kings x. 27; Zech. ix. 5, Zeph. ii. 4; Zech. ix. 12, Isa. lxi. 7; Zech. x. 3, Ezek. xxxiv. 17; Zech. xi., Ezek. xxxiv.; Zech. xi. 3, Jer. xii. 5, xlix. 19; some will venture to add with me, Zech. ix. 1-7, Joel iii. 4 (Persian period).

Summing up, I am bound to say that the arguments on both sides appear to me exceedingly strong. On the pre-exile side (*d*) is neutralised by (*e*) on the post-exile; and (*a*) and (*f*) partly so by (*d*) and (*f*). It is true that (*f*) on the post-exile side melts down to very little, but that little is not without value. The coincidences pointed out are not by any means all equally important. Bleek will only admit a clear influence of the one passage on the other in the case of Zech. ix. 10 (12?), and xi. 3 with their parallels; on which side the originality lies, he leaves undecided. I have not time to discuss the other passages with Bleek, but think it important to notice that the sentiment of Zech. ix. 12, and Isa. lxi. 7 is specially characteristic of the periods *subsequent* to Isaiah. The philosophy which these passages suggest of the restoration of Israel is evidently based on a view of the philosophy of Israel's punishment which we find first in Jeremiah (xvi. 18). Notice also under (*d*) an important parallel between Zech. ix. and II. Isaiah.

Here are the current arguments for a pre-exile date for chaps. xii.—xiv. (*a*) There is a reference to the king (xiii. 7). (*b*) The earthquake in Uzziah's reign can still be remembered (xiv. 5). (*c*) The death of Josiah is still fresh in memory. There is a touch of passion in xii. 11. (*d*) There is an allusion to the hostile attitude of Egypt towards Judah in the reigns of Josiah and Jehoiakim (xiv. 18). (*e*) Also to a persecution such as took place under Manasseh (xii. 10). (*f*) Also

in xii. 10 to Amos viii. 10, and in xi. 3 to Jer. xii. 5, xlix. 19. (g) The author complains of the prevalence of idolatry and false prophecy (xiii. 2-6).—And here those for a post-exile date. (a) There is no allusion to the kingdom of Israel; Judah is the sole subject of the prophecy, and is even called Israel, for lack of other claimants of the title, in xii. 1. (b) Nor to a king of Judah, except in xiii. 7-9, which Ewald supposes (and in my opinion rightly) to have been misplaced. (I may here by anticipation state my belief that though xiii. 7-9 did in some shape originally stand at the end of xi. 15-17, it was moved to its present position by a post-exile writer, the same who brought the section containing chaps. ix.—xiv. into its present form. This, I hope, meets Dr. Kuenen's objections, *Onderzoek* ii. 390.) On the other hand, the "House of David" receives respectful mention, so far at least as was consistent with the dignity of a messenger from God (xii. 7—xiii. 1.) Stähelin reminds us that this tone of respect entirely accords with what Jewish tradition relates of the position of the Davidic family after the Exile. (c) Nor to the Chaldeans. In fact, the description of the siege of Jerusalem in chap. xiv. is not at all like the prophecies on this subject prior to the Exile. (d) The prominence given to the feast of booths or tabernacles (xiv. 16) points to the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. For though it was probably always customary to keep some days of rejoicing in the open air, living in booths, or arbours, after the autumnal ingathering (comp. Hosea xii. 9), yet Neh. viii. 17 distinctly affirms that this feast had not been observed (in the formal way prescribed by the law) 'since the days of Jeshua, the son of Nun, unto that day.' (e) The imaginative colouring of the description of the latter days in chap. xiv. is without a parallel in pre-exile prophecy, except it be Isa. xix. 18-25, which is unique in the genuine Isaiah, and is regarded by many critics as post-exile. Bleek, indeed, tries to parry this argument by referring to the imaginative passages of Joel and Micah, while the post-exile prophets, he says, especially Haggai and Zechariah (i.—viii.) are by no means distinguished in this respect. But the reply is obvious:—1. Joel is either post-exile, or verges closely upon the exile—a very early date is untenable; 2. Micah has very little eschatology; 3. Haggai and Zech. i.—viii. only represent a small portion of the post-exile period. Zech. xiv. reminds us strongly of the predictions in the Book of Daniel (Maccabean, even according to Bleek), and Isaiah lxvi. (late in the exile, according to Bleek), not to mention Joel and Isa. xxiv.—xxvii. (f) According to Stähelin, there are the following references to prophecies of very late origin:—Zech. xii. 1,

comp. Isa. li. 13; Zech. xii. 6, comp. Ob. 18; Zech. xiii. 8, 9, comp. Ezek. v.; Zech. xiv. 8, comp. Ezek. xlvii. 1-12; Zech. xiv. 10, comp. Jer. xxxi. 38; Zech. xiv. 16-19, comp. Isa. lxvi. 23. We may also compare Zech. xii. 2 and xiv. with Joel iii. (Heb. iv.); Zech. xiv. 12 with Isa. lxvi. 24; and Zech. xiv. 17 with Isa. lx. 12; and Dr. Graetz sees a striking resemblance between chap. xiv. and Isa. xix. 16-25.

Comparing these two sets of arguments, it will be clear, I think, that the case for a post-exile date is much stronger than the other. The argument (*a*) in the first set is partly met under (*b*) in the second. As for (*d*) in the former series, it will not bear the weight placed upon it. Stähelin has pointed out<sup>1</sup> how the repeated attempts of Egypt to throw off the Persian yoke must have involved Judæa in trouble, if not in hostilities, Judæa being resolutely faithful to Persia. (This is the key to Joel iii. 19.) As to (*g*) in the second series of arguments, it can be amply proved that polytheism and soothsaying, and the lower type of prophets did not become extinct after the Restoration. Still (*b*), (*c*), (*e*), and, perhaps, (*f*), in the first series remain unaffected by anything advanced on the opposite side. Of the arguments in the second series, the only weak one is (*f*), but it is only weak through Stähelin's want of discrimination. Bleek himself admits that the parallels to Zech. xii. 1 and xiv. 16 and xiv. 16-19 are sound, and this is enough for the purposes of the argument. The thought of the Divine creatorship, and the hope of the conversion of a part of the Gentiles after the great judgment, are specially characteristic of the later prophecy. The two parallels which I have added seem to me, however, of still greater importance.

Can we wonder that, in view of all these conflicting phenomena, Dr. Perowne should pronounce that "it is not easy to say which way the weight of evidence preponderates."<sup>2</sup> How, indeed, are we to account for this apparent mixture of the characteristics of different ages? Next to the problem of what English critics persist in calling the second Isaiah, there is nothing more surprising in the prophetic literature than the problem of the so-called pre-exile Zechariah or Zechariahs. Are we to infer interpolation? But with, perhaps, one or two exceptions, chaps. ix.—xi. and xii.—xiv. are so closely welded together that analysis is impossible. De Wette is the only critic known to me who has offered a theory. He changed his opinion, however, between the third

<sup>1</sup> *Specielle Einleitung*, p. 328.

<sup>2</sup> *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, art. *Zechariah*.

and fourth editions (4th edition, 1833) of his *Einleitung*, and from a decided separatist became as decided a maintainer of the unitistic view of the Book of Zechariah. He still admitted that there was much in chaps. ix.—xiv. which pointed to a pre-exile date. But he thought he could account for this as an affectation of archaism somewhat in the spirit of the Book of Daniel. The prophet lived, according to him, in difficult times, and had to care for the safety of his person and of his discourses. It was only his enemies who would be led astray by the want of consistency in the details. This is, I admit, a tenable view, but only so long as we do not insist upon the unity of the book. A critic has no right to apply principles to the explanation of one part of a book which are not applicable to the rest. Now in the first part of Zechariah, the authorship of which is entirely free from doubt, the prophet is as far as possible from concealing either his person or his age. It is unreasonable to imagine that a passion for secrecy suddenly came upon him when composing his second part. But suppose that the Book of Zechariah is not homogeneous, then it is quite possible that a later writer should have indulged in an affectation of archaism. It was a mark of respect for the venerated writers of antiquity, and an evidence of one's own familiarity with the Scriptures, to insert as many words, phrases, or descriptions as possible, which might remind the reader of the great ages of religion.

My conclusion is that both Zech. ix.—xi. and xii.—xiv. in their present form proceed from a post-exile writer, and, probably, as the phenomena of xiii. 7-9 suggest, from the same hand. He was not, however, the same person who wrote Zech. i.—viii. (he has no visions, and his temperament is quite different), but lived nearer to that apocalyptic age of which the most noted representative is the author (if we should not rather say the authors) of Daniel. In the former part, the writer availed himself very largely of a prophecy or prophecies of pre-exile origin—hence that predominance of pre-exile phenomena which has been noticed above. In the latter, he depended more upon himself—hence in these chapters a superabundance of post-exile indications. It is to this latter part that we must go for the special characteristics of this writer (supposing that both parts came from the same pen). He has a much greater interest in the details of the future than the principal writer of chaps. ix.—xi., but, though more imaginative, he is less fervid, less impulsive, less natural. See how realistically he interprets the works of later writers, more or less similar to himself. Compare, for instance, Zech. xiv. 9 with Joel iii. 12,



Zech. xiv. 12 with Isaiah lxvi. 24, and Zech. xiv. 17 with Isaiah lx. 12 (same verb in different sense). He is, in a word, an apocalyptic prophet, which does not, of course, prevent him from possessing deep convictions, noble principles, and a real though less immediate prophetic inspiration. He has a near kinsman in spirit of the post-exile author of Isaiah xxiv.—xxvii., like him an anonymous writer, like him an imitator and an “over-worker” (if this barbarism may be allowed), inconsistent, inquisitive, and, above all, apocalyptic. It is also worthy of remark that the last verse of the latter prophecy contains a striking parallel to x. 10a, so difficult a verse on any of the ordinary hypotheses.

I am happy to think that critics of various antecedents are tending in the same direction as myself. Geiger regarded Zech. ix.—xiv. as a later appendix to Zech. i.—vii. (*Urschrift*, p. 55, *Jüd. Zeitschrift*, xi. 40). Riehm (*Messianic Prophecy*) has also a suggestive remark on the apocalyptic character of the latter part of the book. Delitzsch, too, frankly admits that the author of Zech. ix.—xiv. may reproduce older prophecies, though he believes that in their present form both parts of the book came from one writer, a sacrifice to an uncritical tradition, in which I am unable to follow him.

T. K. CHEYNE.

---