In the Second Temple period the title “prophet” is used pejoratively (as in false prophet) of contemporary figures. The positive connotation of the title is mostly reserved for classical figures of antiquity. The non-titular forms referring to texts as prophecy or a person as filled with a spirit of prophecy are used only slightly less sparingly. Additionally, books could be labeled as “prophets” even if no author is named in the book. Many other texts claim association with prophecy or succession of prophetic roles, such as inspired interpreter, apocalyptic visionary, historiographer, and hymnist. A significant number of texts are too fragmentary for us to be certain whether authorship was attributed to the classical prophet directly or to an inspired interpreter.

In the Second Temple period we see the emergence of an informal list of individuals readily and often called “the prophets.” This list is not coterminous with those individuals called prophets in literature that became canonical. For example, Abraham and Miriam, called prophets in Genesis 20:7 and Exodus 15:20 respectively, are not typically listed as prophets. From Samuel-Kings only Elijah is frequently mentioned, while Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggar, Zechariah, and Malachi are nearly forgotten. Even Samuel and Nathan do not capture the ongoing imagination as much as Elijah, propelled by the eschatologically suggestive conclusion to Malachi. Meanwhile, several of those often listed as prophets are not given the title in the books attributed to them. As is often the case, the use of the title “prophet” in a book can be a different matter than association with prophetic roles and the retrospective judgment of subsequent generations.

The existence of an informal category of classical prophets can be seen in Ben Sira’s praise of the ancestors (44–50), which uses the title “prophet” more narrowly than the function of prophecy. Ben Sira seems to count as prophets Moses (aided by Joshua, 46:1), Samuel (46:13, 15, with Nathan called a successor, 47:1), Elijah (48:1, with Elisha as successor, 48:8), Isaiah (48:22), Jeremiah (49:7), Ezekiel (called a visionary, not a prophet, 49:8), and the twelve prophets (49:10), presumably referring to Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Understandably, Ben Sira does not mention Daniel as a prophet. Even later texts rarely refer to Daniel as a prophet (Matt 24:15 the most notable exception). This fact and the exclusion of the book of Daniel from the proto-canonical category “prophets” (more below) suggest that by the second century BCE an informal list of classical prophets had begun to stabilize. The rare exceptions when later authors extend the category through association (e.g., 4 Ezra 1:1) do not undermine the emergence of the category of classical prophets.

At the same time, Ben Sira illustrates how the concept of prophecy is not limited to the office of prophet, particularly in reference to himself (Sir 24:33, see also 44:3). Elsewhere, non-title forms of the root for prophecy are associated with Enoch (Jude 1:14), Noah (Jub. 8:18), Jacob (Jub. 31:12), David (11QPs 27), the Teacher of Righteousness (Pesher Habakkuk 7), etc. These cases are only the tip of the iceberg of the much broader category of texts that avoid the title “prophet” but strongly evoke association with prophetic figures and functions. The category of texts associated with prophecy (but not prophets) could include all hymnody, apocalyptic visions, and inspired interpretation.

Additionally, the category of “prophets” and associated literature can include not only named figures and their books (including Joshua and Samuel), but the sometimes anonymous literature of historiography (including Judges and Kings). The tripartite canon suggested in the grandson’s Foreword to Ben Sira (approximately 132 BCE) may already reflect this judgment. The earliest evidence of the underlying logic may be suggested in the historical books excluded from the surviving canonical category of “Prophets,” the books of Chronicles. Chronicles claims that the prophets Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Iddo, and Shemiah not only delivered oracles but also kept and interpreted historical records (1 Chron 29:29; 2 Chron 9:29; 12:15; 13:22). Even though the books of Chronicles were ultimately not included in canonical category of prophets along with Samuel-Kings, the claim that historiography is a form of prophecy seems to have been appreciated at least by Josephus (Ag. Ap. 1.37). Josephus not only associates himself with named prophets (especially Jeremiah), but extends the notion that historiography is prophetic.

Even if we set aside the texts associated with prophetic functions and roles, as well as texts associated with adopting prophetic personae (New Jeremiah, New Elijah, New Moses), and focus only on texts associated with the classical named prophets, we find a wide range of degrees of association. The ambiguity is exacerbated when the texts available to us are fragmentary, or if we distinguish stages of composition and reception history. In the case of Habakkuk it would seem that we can distinguish the canonical book as having authorship attributed to the named prophet, as opposed to Pesher Habakkuk creating an authorial distinction for the inspired interpreter. In the case of Moses, some books attribute themselves to Moses as author or first recipient (Deuteronomy, Jubilees, Temple Scroll), while others are attributed to Moses in the course of reception history (Genesis). In the case of Jeremiah, we have at least two forms of a book attributed to Jeremiah, as well as Lamentations and Baruch associated with Jeremiah during the Second Temple period. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls up to three Jeremiah Apocrypha have been identified, but it is not clear whether authorship was attributed to Jeremiah, as opposed to something else we might prefer to call inspired interpretation of Jeremiah or revivals of the prophetic spirit attributed to Jeremiah. Similarly, fragments have been labeled by modern editors “Pseudo-Ezekiel.” These fragments seem to be independent of a second book of Ezekiel or “Ezekiel Apocryphon” known to Josephus and some Church Fathers. Even as the Second Temple period sees a stabilization of the category of “classical prophets,” the production of literature following the model and/or authority of these figures varies widely.
"messengers" (rasul, rusul), bringers of a divine revelation via an angel Arabic: ملاکہ, malāʾikah); and "prophets" (nabi, pl. anbiyāʾ), lawbringers that Muslims believe were sent by God to every person, bringing God's message in a language they can understand. Knowledge of the Islamic prophets is one of the six articles of the Islamic faith, and specifically mentioned in the Quran. Prophets and prophecy in the ancient Near East / by Martti Nissinen with contributions. by C. L. Seow and Robert K. Ritner; edited by Peter Machinist. p. cm. — A great number of texts do not quote words of the prophets but mention them in different contexts and in association with people representing different kinds of professions and social roles. These texts not only give the only available evidence of prophecy in certain periods and places, but also let prophets appear in a variety of social, cultic and lexical contexts. This is the only occurrence of Latarak, possibly associated with Nergal, and assisted by the "standing gods" who, judged from their position, play the role of servants. b A garment of unspecified quality; probably a cloak worn on specific ritual occa