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By

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Ancient and Medieval Interpretation of the Complaints of Jeremiah

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Poem prayers in the book of Jeremiah use strong, sometimes accusatory, language, in the first person, in speaking to God. They stand out from the rest of the book, with little or no connection to preceding and following sections. The traditional list includes Jeremiah 11:18-20, 12:1-6, 15:10-11, 15:15-18, 17:14-18, 18:18-23, 20:7-10, and 20:14-18.

Modern interpreters call them “confessions,” “laments,” or “complaints,” noting similarities between these and Gunkel’s “laments of the individual,” though most do not include all elements of the lament genre. “Complaint” best describes their strong emotional content, addressed to God, connected with specific misery that does not resolve into praise.

This dissertation considers ancient and medieval interpretation of these complaints, with particular focus on Jeremiah’s harsh language. It looks at the traditional list of complaints, plus Jeremiah 4:10, an accusatory sentence; first in the Masoretic Text, then in the ancient versions: Septuagint, Targum, Vulgate, and Peshitta. It considers the meaning of the words of the complaints and how these were transmitted.

It then considers a representative sample of interpretation in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Syriac. It includes Greek and Latin patristic; Latin medieval; Jewish ancient, rabbinic, and medieval; and Syriac ancient and medieval interpreters. It

examines their choice of words, content and mode of interpretation, and methods of dealing with Jeremiah's strong complaints and accusations.

Reverent interpretation by ancient and medieval interpreters transmitted these texts very carefully, with few emendations, including some slight softening of Jeremiah's harsh language. The texts were handed down in "streams of tradition" in language groups. Interpreters found meaning for the texts in the details of Jeremiah's life, but did not limit understanding to this original meaning. They considered theological questions raised by his complaints and related them to communities of their own day.

Their conviction that these texts would reveal useful insights about God and God's work with, and expectations of, humanity, was shown in practices valuable for our own day: carefully transmitting each text, paying close attention to its details, seeking connections between these texts and the rest of Scripture, and considering theological implications and applications to communities.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Oddity of the Complaints of Jeremiah

Parts of the first half of the book of Jeremiah (Jer 4:10, 11:18-20, 12:1-3, 15:10-12, 15:15-18, 17:14-18, 18:18-23, 20:7-10, and 20:14-18) fit poorly into either their immediate context or usual prophetic proclamation. Mostly poetic in structure and rhetorical devices, they seem dropped into the text, either prose or poetry, with little if any connection to what precedes and follows them. Unlike most prophetic proclamation, in which a prophet speaks for God (“Thus says the Lord”), almost all of these complaints show Jeremiah speaking to God. Jeremiah’s language is passionately personal, often harsh and accusatory. In tone and structure, the complaints seem more closely related to many psalms, and the books of Habakkuk and Job, than to other prophetic material.

The vivid, intensely personal portrayal of the prophet’s pain also occurs elsewhere in the book of Jeremiah. The cry of “My anguish! my anguish!” (Jer 4:19) is at the coming of disaster; a similar cry mourns that “My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick” (Jer 18:18). Such laments share the far from calm assessment of a miserable situation, but lack the protesting address to God found in the complaints.

The sharpness and length of Jeremiah’s protests stand out in the prophetic literature. Their tone of protest is uncommon, although a few other prophets, beginning with Moses, cried out to God, sometimes in accusation. When the people wanted meat, Moses cried, “Why have you treated your servant so badly?” (Num 11:11). When Elijah reached Mount Horeb, out of the reach of the pursuit of Jezebel,

he protested to God that he had been “very zealous for the LORD,” that he alone was left, and “they are seeking my life, to take it away” (1 Kings 19:10). Habakkuk, in the form of a lament, questioned God’s looking on the treacherous in silence, “when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they” (Hab 1:13), but resolved into faith and trust (Hab 3:17-18). Jonah, sulking because God did not destroy Nineveh, argued that he was right to be “angry enough to die” (Jon 4:9). Jeremiah’s complaints share the tone of protest of these few, but their length, number, and attribution to one speaker set them apart.

The complaints seem much more closely related to the many psalms, usually called psalms of lament, in which the psalmist recounts miseries of the righteous and prosperity of the wicked, and questions God’s slowness to act to set this right. In protest, they are related to the poetic parts of the book of Job. Their vivid description of personal feelings is similar to that in the lament psalms and the book of Job. The book of Lamentations similarly mourns in stark description, showing anguish at the disaster of the siege and capture of Jerusalem, but only in Lam 2:20 does it present a protest directed to the Lord.

1.2 Ancient and medieval interpretation of these complaints

1.2.1 Why study the complaints of Jeremiah?

1.2.1.1. Candor in prayer and the lament tradition

The value and necessity of candor in prayer are presented by both Scripture and many modern interpreters. Jeremiah’s complaints are cited by many modern interpreters as examples of this honest kind of prayer.

In Job 42:7, the LORD calls Job's harsh accusations, rather than his friends' defense of God's ways, speaking "what is right." The lament Psalms, more numerous than those of any other genre, provide words of complaint that often, but not always, resolve into praise. The book of Habakkuk, organized as an extended lament, provides similar complaint and resolution.

Many modern interpreters welcome this frankness in prayer. For example, John Coburn, in *Prayer and Personal Religion*, points out that attempted deception of God, with words of praise at the time of rage, cannot succeed and cuts off possible communion, the goal of prayer.¹

The experience of many affirms the usefulness of lament psalms, for both individual and liturgical, corporate, prayer. Even the imprecatory psalms, because they are addressed to God, have been found acceptable and valuable prayer. This kind of candid prayer, even when not polite, has helped many in desperate situations of pain and fear, for example, in hospital waiting rooms and intensive care units.

Some interpreters, and many people of faith, however, consider such outcries inappropriate. Many today believe that only praise and thanksgiving are to be voiced to God. In an earlier example, a Jewish midrash on Habakkuk 3:1 takes the obscure word שְׁגִינֹת as "unwittingly" or "erringly," implying that Habakkuk's prayer in Chapter 3 is a confession that his complaints against God (in Hab 1:1-4, 12-17) were made in error and ignorance.²

¹ John B. Coburn, *Prayer and Personal Religion* (Layman's Theological Library; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), 16-18.

² *Mid.T.* 90:7, quoted in Shalom Coleman, "The Dialogue of Habakkuk in Rabbinic Doctrine," *Abr-Nahrain* 5 (1966), 79, note 104.

The harsh language of the complaints of Jeremiah occasions questions of how interpreters of all ages dealt with their rudeness. Did they welcome their candor? or condemn them, as irreverent?

1.2.1.2. Why study ancient and medieval interpretation of the complaints of Jeremiah?

A class on Targumic Aramaic introduced the very reverent treatment of the Hebrew text by the Targums, in which the Targums removed anthropomorphisms and possibilities of ascribing unworthy actions or motives to God. This raised the question of what the Targums would do with the harsh language of laments.

The harsh language of Jeremiah's complaints is welcomed by many modern interpreters, who agree with Walter Brueggemann that "these passages are models for the depth of honesty that is appropriate in prayer."³ It seemed unlikely that ancient and medieval versions and commentaries, which share the reverence of the Targum, would agree with Brueggemann.

For each of Jeremiah's complaints, this dissertation considers ancient and medieval interpreters, starting with Greek, Aramaic, Latin, and Syriac translations of the Bible, and continuing with a sampling of commentaries in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Syriac.

Its particular interest is in actions resulting from the conflict of beliefs about God, God's action in provision of Scripture, and how human beings ought to speak about and to God. It considers the following questions:

What did they consider important in each text?

³ Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998), 114.

How did they deal with obscurities in the text?

If God, who is all truth, has, as they interpreters believed, inspired holy Scripture in every smallest detail and intended it for illumination and edification, what did these interpreters do with words in Scripture, of a holy, true, prophet, that attack and accuse God of wrongdoing?

How did they transmit each text? Did they change the words of Scripture? Did they soften Jeremiah's harsh language?

Did they conclude that he did not say these words? Did they think he was wrong in using these harsh, rude words? Would they think the words were sinful, and that Jeremiah needed to repent? Would they ascribe the words to weakness on Jeremiah's part?

Alternatively, would they think that his descriptions of God were accurate, and that he was right to speak thus?

Did they consider the language appropriate from anyone else (e.g., Israel)?

To whom did they refer these texts? To Jeremiah only? To Jeremiah as a type of Christ? To Christ only? To the community of Israel?

Did they, like some modern interpreters, celebrate Jeremiah's honesty in prayer?

Did reverence for God's word through Scripture outweigh reverence expected from a holy prophet?

What modern questions did they not ask of these texts?

Why is it important to examine these ancient and medieval interpretations?

A hope, for this research, was that it might reveal methods of dealing with difficulties and conflicts found in Scripture, methods that might be useful today, for Christian or Jewish individuals and communities, who also hope to hear God's word through Scripture.

1.2.2 Selection of name for these texts

The focus of this dissertation is on interpreters' dealing with the content of these passages, especially with Jeremiah's harsh language. There are parallels with the form of individual lament, shown specifically in the many lament psalms, but this dissertation is not primarily concerned with form-critical details. Some of these passages fit parts of the lament pattern. They all involve first-person protest and complaint, most, but not all, directed to God (Jer 4:10, 11:20, 12:1-3, 15:15-18, 17:14-18, 18-19-23, 20:7-10). For this work, the term "complaint" therefore seems the best description of these passages.

1.2.3 Boundaries of the pericopes

The passages chosen for this work include: Jer 4:10; 11:18-20; 12:1-3; 15:10-12; 15:15-18; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-9; and 20:14-18. They come from Baumgartner's list of *Klagegedichte* and those "related in content," with some additions and deletions based on this work's focus on Jeremiah's language.⁴

The one-sentence complaint in Jer 4:10 is not part of an extended lament and therefore not mentioned by Baumgartner. It is included because it contains language

⁴ Walter Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament* (ed. David M. Gunn; trans. David E. Orton, of *Die Klagegedichte des Jeremias*: BZAW 32; Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1917; Sheffield, England: Almond Press, 1987), 41-78. For a discussion of Baumgartner's list, see Section 1.3.2, pp. 13-15. See also Appendix 6, "Texts of Jeremiah's complaints chosen by modern interpreters," pp. 430-431.

similar to that in Jer 20:7. Like other complaints, it occurs suddenly, with little relation to the surrounding verses.

Jeremiah's complaint in 11:18-20 is set between his proclamation of the Lord's words to the people in 11:15-17 and those of the Lord to Jeremiah in 11:21-23. His complaint stands out in its first person address to God.⁵

Jeremiah's complaint in 12:1-3 is preceded by God's clear response in 11:21-23. The verses which follow, 12:4-6, are probably part of God's response to this complaint. Baumgartner includes all of 12:1-6 in his list of passages "related in content" to the lament form. This work looks only at Jeremiah's words of complaint, in 12:1-3.

Jeremiah's cry of woe, with the Lord's response, in 15:10-12, is another of Baumgartner's passages "related in content." It is preceded by the Lord's words of judgment in 15:1-4, and words directed specifically to Jerusalem in 15:5-9, and followed by more of the Lord's judgment, in 15:13-14. It is not clear whether the odd verse 15:12 belongs with 15:10-11 or 15:13-14. This work follows Baumgartner, including it with 15:10-12.

Baumgartner considered all of Jer 15:15-21 a lament, since it includes both Jeremiah's complaint (15:15-18) and the Lord's strong response (15:19-21). Many interpreters agree (see Appendix 6). This dissertation considers only Jeremiah's words (15:15-18) and not God's response.

Jer 17:14-18 is preceded by the Lord's description of the cursed and the blessed (17:5-11), in words similar to Psalm 1 and Proverbs, and a song of praise.

⁵ Baumgartner includes God's response in 11:21-23 as part of the lament form; this dissertation does not, rather, focusing on Jeremiah's words.

Many interpreters agree with Baumgartner in setting the boundaries of Jeremiah's complaint at Jer 17:12-18.⁶ Some consider 17:12-13, the song of praise, an introduction to the "confession."⁷ Many others, including this work, omit 17:12-13, and see the complaint as 17:14-18.⁸

In Jeremiah 18, Jeremiah's experience at the potter's house (18:1-12) is followed by the Lord's proclamation against Israel (18:13-17) and the conspiracy against Jeremiah (18:18). Most interpreters, including this work, follow Baumgartner

⁶ Baumgartner, 51. Those who agree include: Ferdinand Ahuis, *Der klagende Gerichtsprphet* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1982), 185; John MacLennan Berridge, *Prophet, People, and the Word of Yahweh* (Zürich: Evz, 1970), 137; Walter Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones: Listening for the Prophetic Word in Jeremiah* (ed. Patrick D. Miller; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 216; Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 277; Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms* (completed by Joachim Begrich; trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1998; translation of 4th edition of *Einleitung in die Psalmen: die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels*; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985, 1933), 121; A. H. J. Gunneweg, "Konfessionen oder Interpretation im Jeremiabuch," in *Sola Scriptura* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 61; Norbert Ittmann, *Die Konfessionen Jeremias* (WMANT 54; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 49; Timothy Polk, *The Prophetic Persona* (JSOT Supplement Series 32; Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1984), 131; Henning Graf Reventlow, *Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia* (Gerd Mohn: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1963), 205.

⁷ Polk, 133, follows Baumgartner, 51, in considering 17:12-13 a "hymnic invocation."

⁸ These include: Michael Avioz, "The Call for Revenge in Jeremiah's Complaints (Jer 11-20)," *Vetus Testamentum* 55 (2005), 429; Sheldon H. Blank, "The Prophet as Paradigm," in *Prophetic Thought: Essays and Addresses* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1977), 33; John Bright, *Jeremiah* (Anchor Bible; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965), lxvi, 119; A. R. Diamond, *The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context: Scenes of Prophetic Drama* (JSOT Supplement Series 45; Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1987), 79; Terence E. Fretheim, *Jeremiah* (Macon, Georgia: Smith & Helwys, 2002), 187; William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah I* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 358; James Philip Hyatt, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *The Interpreter's Bible* (vol. 5; New York: Abingdon, 1956), 782; William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah* (The International Critical Commentary; vol. 1: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 408; Kathleen M. O'Connor, *The Confessions of Jeremiah: their Interpretation and Role in Chapters 1-25* (25 (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 94; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), 45; Mark S. Smith, *The Laments of Jeremiah and their Contexts: a Literary and Redactional Study of Jeremiah 11-20* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1990), 2; J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980), 88.

in including this plot with Jeremiah's complaint of 18:19-23.⁹ A few agree with O'Connor that 18:19 is an "editorial prose expansion" of the complaint.¹⁰

Jeremiah 20 opens with Pashhur's actions against the prophet (20:1-3a) and Jeremiah's proclamation of the Lord's word against Pashhur (20:3b-6). These are clearly marked off from the beginning of Jeremiah's complaint (20:7). The end of the complaint is not so clear. Baumgartner considers Jer 20:7-9 "related in content" to the laments.

The "widest consensus" of modern interpreters considers 20:7-18 Jeremiah's last complaint.¹¹ Many of these separate out 20:14-18 as a "cursing poem."¹² Others separate the complaints, taking 20:7-13 as the first complaint.¹³

This work agrees with Lundbom¹⁴ in expanding the complaint to include 20:10, and omitting 20:11-13. The affirmation of 20:11-12 and song of praise of 20:13 seem not to belong to the complaint, but rather to bracket it, separating it from the cursing poem of 20:14-18.

Most modern interpreters agree that the "cursing poem" of 20:14-18, considered "related in content" by Baumgartner and Gunkel,¹⁵ does not fit the form of

⁹ Baumgartner, 56. Those who agree include: Ahuis, 185; Avioz, 429; Berridge, 114; Blank, 33; Bright, lxvi; Brueggemann 2006, 216; Diamond, 11; Fretheim, 187; Gunkel, 121; Gunneweg, 61; Holladay, 358; Hyatt, 782; Ittmann, 36; O'Connor, 1; Reventlow, 205; Thompson, 88.

¹⁰ O'Connor, 55. Carroll, 277; Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible 21A; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 634; McKane, xcii; Polk, 208; and Smith, 2, think the complaint starts with verse 19.

¹¹ Diamond, 11. Agreeing with him are: Carroll, 277; Gunneweg, 61; Holladay, 358; Ittmann, 36; O'Connor, 1; Reventlow, 205.

¹² Holladay, 548; Ittmann, 26; O'Connor, 81.

¹³ These include: Avioz, 429; Bright, 33; Brueggemann 2006, 216; Fretheim, 187; Hyatt, 782; Smith, 2.

¹⁴ Lundbom, 634.

¹⁵ Baumgartner, 76; Gunkel, 121.

an individual lament.¹⁶ It is not directed to God, but it corresponds in tone to

Jeremiah's other complaints, sharing their harsh language. It is therefore considered in this work.

1.3 History of setting these apart

1.3.1 Who set these apart

Modern interpreters separated out these passages from other parts of the book of Jeremiah, calling them "confessions," "laments," or "complaints."

But modern interpreters were far from the first to notice their similarity to psalms. Ancient translators attributed psalms to Jeremiah. In several manuscripts of the Septuagint translation of Psalm 64, in the superscription, Jeremiah is listed along with David as an author. In some manuscripts, the superscription reads, "To the end. A Psalm for David, a song. Of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, from the account of the exile, when they were about to go out."¹⁷ This superscription appears in slightly different form in the Vulgate Psalm 64 *iuxta LXX*: "To the end. A Psalm of David. A song. Of Jeremiah and Haggai, of the word of traveling, when they were beginning to set out."¹⁸

¹⁶ These consider 20:14-18 separately: Ahuis, 185; Berridge, 114; Bright, lxvi; Brueggemann, ???; Fretheim, 187; Hyatt, 782; Lundbom, 634; Smith, 2; Thompson, 88; Gerhard von Rad, "The Confessions of Jeremiah," in *Theodicy in the Old Testament* (Issues in Religion and Theodicy 4; ed. James L. Crenshaw; trans. Arlis John Ehlin; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 95 ; first published in *Evangelische Theologie* 3 (1936) 265-76.

¹⁷ Psalm 64, *Psalmi cum Odis, Septuaginta* (Vol. 10; Ed. Alfred Rahlfs; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 183 (my translation). These additions appear in Bo = Bohairic; Sa = Sahidic; La = Vetus Latina; Ga = Gallican; and L = the Lucianic revision of LXX.

¹⁸ Psalm 64 *iuxta LXX*, *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* (3rd revised edition; rev. Robert Weber; ed. Boniface Fischer et al.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), 846, my translation.

Several of the same manuscripts added “of Jeremiah” to the superscription of Psalm 136 LXX.¹⁹ This appears in the superscription of Psalm 136 *iuxta LXX* in the Vulgate.²⁰

In the 19th and early 20th century, interpreters concerned with authorship and literary history of biblical texts wondered which came first, psalms that sounded like Jeremiah, or Jeremiah’s complaints that sounded like psalms.²¹ Interpreters of the psalms recognized that verses and whole psalms used very similar, sometimes identical, language and “plaintive tenderness” that “reminds one of Jeremiah.”²² They considered whether circumstances in David’s or Jeremiah’s life more closely fit the words of each psalm.

Those who, like Hengstenberg, attributed the psalms to David, following a traditional interpretation of the many superscriptions, לְדָוִד,²³ thought that Jeremiah, who lived later, imitated David’s works. Those who, like Ball, Driver, Giesebrecht, or Briggs, decided that some psalms were products of the exilic or Second Temple period, thought that some of these psalms imitated Jeremiah’s complaints.²⁴

Interpreters disagreed about which psalms to attribute to David and which to Jeremiah. Some, like Ball, attributed psalms such as Psalms 23, 26, and 27 to the

¹⁹ Psalm 136, *Septuaginta*, 319. This appears in Bo, Ga, L, along with the Vulgate and Hesychius.

²⁰ Psalm 136 *iuxta LXX*, Vulgate, 940.

²¹ See extensive discussion of “The History of the Question,” Chapter 1, in Baumgartner, 13-17.

²² Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms* (Vol. 1; trans. Francis Bolton; Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1949, from the 2nd, revised, 1867 edition), 381, referring to Psalm 31.

²³ E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms* (Vol. 2; trans. P. Fairbairn and J. Thomson; Clark’s Foreign Theological Library; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1846), e.g., 367.

²⁴ Cf. C. J. Ball, *The Prophecies of Jeremiah* (New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1890), 10; S. R. Driver, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1907), 118; F. Giesebrecht, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Section 3, vol. 2, part 1 of *Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*; ed. W. Nowack; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907), 114, about Jer 20:10, “used word-for-word in Ps 31:14”; Charles Augustus Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (vol. 1; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1914), 264, about Psalm 31:14.

priest Jeremiah, because of their references to temple worship.²⁵ Others, like Hengstenberg, while recognizing that “the history of Jeremiah . . . is altogether one peculiarly well fitted to represent to us the situation of the subject” of Psalm 69, nevertheless maintained that David could have written it and others, such as Psalm 40.²⁶ Delitzsch, carefully considering Psalms 40 and 69, “closely related as twin-Psalms,” ascribed Psalm 40 to David and Psalm 69 to Jeremiah, since “it admits of being much more satisfactorily explained from the life of Jeremiah than that of David.”²⁷ Driver saw the identical words, “I heard the whispering of many - terror all around!” in Psalm 31:13 as a quotation of Jer 20:10.²⁸

Some authors and editors separated out poetic passages in Jeremiah, including these complaints. In the Masoretic text, some (Jer 17:14-18, 18:18-23, 20:7-12; 20:14-18), but not all, of the complaints are set off by *setumah*, from surrounding passages. T. K. Cheyne thought that unspecified parts of the book of Jeremiah “might fitly be called ‘The Confessions of Jeremiah.’”²⁹ Schmidt considered the introduction of poems into the book of Jeremiah the work of “copyists and editors”; for several, such as Jer 12:1-6, he saw “nothing . . . that is suggestive of Jeremiah,” with the speaker rather being “the nation disturbed by the continued disfavour of Yahwe.”³⁰ He attributed Jer 20:12 to a quotation of Psalm 7:10 and suspected that Job 3:2ff, parallel to Jer 20:14-18, was the original.³¹

²⁵ Ball, 10.

²⁶ Hengstenberg, 367.

²⁷ Delitzsch, Vol. 2, 277.

²⁸ Driver, 118.

²⁹ T. K. Cheyne, *Jeremiah: His Life and Times* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1888), 2.

³⁰ Nath. Schmidt, “Jeremiah (Book)” in *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (Vol. 2; ed. T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black; Men of the Bible; New York: Macmillan, 1903), 2388.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2389.

1.3.2 Gunkel and Baumgartner

The major change in modern interpretation of these complaints resulted from Hermann Gunkel's form-critical insights on the psalms. In "Die Psalmen" (1913), Gunkel pointed to literary genres (*Gattungen*) that showed a "widespread poetic style that extends over multiple peoples and entire thousands of years."³² He considered the psalms "folk poetry" rather than "art poetry,"³³ because they do not name individuals, unlike David's lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:19-27). Each such poem would have been sung by people in a specific worship setting. Gunkel considered "the researcher's goal" to be "to observe things in the context in which they were originally found."³⁴

Gunkel divided the psalms into different genres: hymns, communal laments, laments (*Klagelieder*) of an individual, and thanksgivings of an individual. Each group belonged to or derived from "a special occasion in the worship service."³⁵ Each form had expected components. Gunkel pointed to individual laments, both in the Psalter and in the prophets, "especially Jeremiah," that were not in a cultic style, but through which the older form, from a worship setting, could be retrieved.³⁶

Beyond the psalms, Gunkel related the communal and individual lament forms to prophetic proclamation. The prophets, as intercessors for the people, would

³² Hermann Gunkel, "Die Psalmen," in *Reden und Aufsätze* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), 96, my translation.

³³ *Ibid.*, 98.

³⁴ Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (completed by Joachim Begrich; trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1998), 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁶ Gunkel, "Die Psalmen," 108.

use the form of the communal lament in times of present or impending distress.³⁷

He made a specific connection with Jeremiah's complaints:

So also Jeremiah, a delicate and earnest nature, suffering greatly under the struggle with his people . . . brought his most individual and inmost experiences before God in prayer and chose, for these outpourings, the form of the 'lament of the individual,' customary at that time and also repeatedly preserved in the psalms.³⁸

These complaints, rather than imitating "complaint song liturgies," were "a new creation by the prophet"³⁹ and not tied to the cult.

Walter Baumgartner, in *Die Klagegedichte des Jeremias* (1917), considered Gunkel's descriptions of genres of the psalms the key to understanding similar passages in Jeremiah. He agreed with Gunkel that "Jeremiah composed within the form of the psalms of lament but did not invent the psalms of lament type."⁴⁰

Using Gunkel's form of the "lament of the individual," Baumgartner separated out certain parts of the book of Jeremiah, based on their form and vocabulary. He called them "complaint songs" or "poems of lament"⁴¹ (*Klagegedichte*): Jer 11:18-20; 15:15-21; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:10-13. Other poems, as we have noted, he termed "related to them in content"⁴²: Jer 12:1-6; 15:10-12; 20:7-9; 20:14-18.

Baumgartner thought that Jeremiah "took hold of that type of song which came closest to his experiences and feelings, the individual song of lament."⁴³ Their

³⁷ Hermann Gunkel, *Die Propheten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917), 135, my translation.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 136.

³⁹ Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, 314.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴¹ Baumgartner, 41.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 96.

“authenticity”⁴⁴ was shown by both form and content. Baumgartner looked carefully at each poem, relating its components both to the vocabulary and to the standard subject matter of a song of lament: invocation of the deity, lament, petition, assurance of being heard, vow, and sometimes hymnic thanksgiving.⁴⁵

He classified some poems as not in the lament style: 11:21-23, “purely prophetic,” did not belong to the “poems of lament”; 15:10-12, not addressed to Yahweh, was a “Job-poem”⁴⁶; 20:14-18, also not addressed to Yahweh, was a “self-curse.”⁴⁷

The poems classified as “poems of lament” contained both the “generally fixed content” of the literary type of “songs of lament” and a “prophetic element . . . mixed in with it.”⁴⁸ Differences from the style of the psalms showed the “individuality of the prophet,”⁴⁹ in “creating a kind of dialogue between human being and God by combining this prophetic song of lament with the oracle.”⁵⁰

1.4 Interests of modern interpreters of Jeremiah’s complaints

Although this dissertation is concerned with ancient and medieval interpretation of these complaints, it is helpful, to provide context, to provide a brief review of interests of modern interpreters. Modern interpretation of Jeremiah’s complaints falls into two main categories, corresponding to modern separation of

⁴⁴ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 77.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 90.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 100.

exegesis, “the attempt to discover what the text *meant*”⁵¹ in its original setting, from what the text might *mean* later. For the first, it employs analysis of the form and function of the texts, sometimes seeking their place in history. Some modern interpretation also then adds evaluation of the usefulness of these texts for individuals and communities.

1.4.1 Analysis of form, function, and setting

Most modern interpreters agree with Baumgartner in setting apart certain texts in the book of Jeremiah as “confessions,”⁵² “laments,”⁵³ “private prayers,”⁵⁴ “dialogs with Yahweh, personal lyrics,”⁵⁵ or “complaints.”⁵⁶ They agree on their “relative uniqueness . . . within the prophetic corpus.”⁵⁷ They work from Baumgartner’s list of “poems of lament” (*Klagegedichte*) and “related poems”; some disagree with which texts to include and verse boundaries. Most agree with Gunkel and Baumgartner that these texts are related to the psalms of lament, and that considering their relationship to the standard lament form helps in understanding them.

The questions that modern interpreters ask of these texts relate to history, form, and function.

⁵¹ Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors* (2nd edition; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 40.

⁵² Berridge, 114; Bright, lxv; Diamond, 13; Gunneweg, 61; Holladay 1986, 358; Franz D. Hubmann, *Untersuchungen zu den Konfessionen Jer 11,18-12,6 und Jer 15,10-21* (Stuttgart: Verlagen Echter und Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1978), title; Rodney R. Hutton, *Fortress Introduction to the Prophets* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 103; Hyatt, 782; Ittmann, 1; O’Connor, 1; Polk, 127; von Rad 1936, 88.

⁵³ *Klagelieder*: Gunkel 1913, 95, 1917, 136; Reventlow, 210. *Klagegedichte*: Baumgartner, title, 41. *Klagen*: Ahuis, 185. Laments: Carroll, 277; Fretheim, 187; Frederick C. Holmgren, “The Elusive Presence: Jeremiah 20:4-11,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 (2006), 369; Lundbom, 634; McKane, xcii; Smith, title, xv. Lamentations: Walter Brueggemann, *The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 63.

⁵⁴ Blank, 23.

⁵⁵ Thompson, 88.

⁵⁶ Avioz, 429; Floyd, 397; Gerstenberger, 396; Gunkel 1933, 121; Holladay 1986, 358 (better than “confessions”).

⁵⁷ Diamond, 11.

1.4.1.1 Concern about history

Those who are concerned about history ask whether it was Jeremiah who said or wrote these complaints, when they were said and written, and in what historical setting(s).

Some take the texts as from Jeremiah and think that they can be dated: for example, Hyatt, to “the latter half of Jehoiakim’s reign”⁵⁸; Holladay, for Jer 15:10-19, to “two different settings” in “the winter of 601-600” and “the summer of 594”⁵⁹; Lundbom, for Jer 11:18-20, to “a date in Josiah’s reign.”⁶⁰

Most, however, follow Gunkel, who thought that the problem of “assigning a date” for lament psalms was not “the most important.”⁶¹ They think the same applies to poems written in the lament form, since a text “cast into the mold of some conventional form of speech . . . does not primarily reflect unique historical events but social and cultic habits and institutions.”⁶² For Jeremiah’s complaints, Baumgartner found “no allusions to external or political events, which alone could serve us a reference points.”⁶³

Modern interpreters differ on whether these provide biographical material about Jeremiah. For Hyatt, these poems help provide a “study of the prophet’s personality”⁶⁴; Bright regards “these little self-revelations” as “authentic reflections

⁵⁸ Hyatt, 782.

⁵⁹ Holladay 1986, 448.

⁶⁰ Lundbom, 639.

⁶¹ Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, 19.

⁶² Erhard Gerstenberger, “Jeremiah’s Complaints: Observations on Jer 15:10-21,” *JBL* 82 (1963): 393-4.

⁶³ Baumgartner, 97.

⁶⁴ Hyatt, 782.

of actual experiences in the prophet's life."⁶⁵ Von Rad thinks that the "confessions - those most intimate and solitary conversations with God" show Jeremiah "speaking purely out of his own unique situation as a prophet," even when he speaks out of "his own inner problematic, his suffering, and his despair."⁶⁶ Blank considers the confessions "primary literary sources for the understanding of Jeremiah, the messenger prophet."⁶⁷

Other interpreters are sure that these texts are not autobiography. Reventlow, who considers the texts communal laments (see Section 1.3.1.2), thinks, about Jer 11:18-20 and the other texts, that "there is no indication that [they have] anything to do with the personal fate of Jeremiah."⁶⁸ Carroll considers "the autobiographical approach" to them "too anachronistic to be correct," since "writing biographies and autobiographies is not a feature of ancient Semitic culture."⁶⁹ O'Connor agrees that "the anachronistic nature of this biographical criterion [for their preservation and collection] should arouse suspicion about its validity."⁷⁰ Fretheim agrees that the texts "are no simple reflection of the life of the prophet"⁷¹; Hutton, that they do not provide "a real-life picture of the historical Jeremiah."⁷²

Rather than considering the confessions biography, many see them presenting the persona of the prophet as a type or paradigm. Von Rad considers Jeremiah "a

⁶⁵ Bright, lxv.

⁶⁶ Von Rad, "The Confessions of Jeremiah," 88-90.

⁶⁷ Blank, 28.

⁶⁸ Reventlow, 256, my translation.

⁶⁹ Carroll, 277-8.

⁷⁰ O'Connor, 2.

⁷¹ Fretheim, 188.

⁷² Hutton, 104.

witness to God not only by virtue of his charisma, but in his very humanity.”⁷³ For Gerstenberger, the deuteronomist has assembled these poems to point to the prophet as a “paradigmatic figure,” parallel to “weak and unreliable Israel.”⁷⁴ Blank considers Jeremiah an “analogy and paradigm”; the confessions are “comparable with, but more subtle than, the acted-out communication of Ezekiel.”⁷⁵ Ahuis and Gunneweg see the prophet as the “suffering servant of God,”⁷⁶ “the exemplary suffering and praying righteous one.”⁷⁷ For Hutton and Polk, the persona of the “faithful servant who has been deceived and abandoned”⁷⁸ acts as a “model of obediential suffering,”⁷⁹ showing not only the suffering of the people but “also the anguish of God”⁸⁰ at the destruction of the nation.

1.4.1.2 Concern about form

Working from Gunkel’s and Baumgartner’s relating the form of these texts to that of the psalms of lament, interpreters ask questions about their structure, including the boundaries of pericopes and whether they fit the lament form, the type of lament (individual or communal?), and an original *Sitz im Leben*. They look for elements of the lament form but note that not all of them “appear in the various laments, and that the order of the elements might be changed.”⁸¹

Modern interpreters disagree about the boundaries of these texts. Most

⁷³ Von Rad, “The Confessions of Jeremiah,” 98.

⁷⁴ Gerstenberger, 407.

⁷⁵ Blank, 29, 31.

⁷⁶ Ahuis, 182, my translation.

⁷⁷ Gunneweg, 78, my translation.

⁷⁸ Hutton, 103.

⁷⁹ Polk, 129.

⁸⁰ Hutton, 104.

⁸¹ Avioz, 430.

“follow . . . Baumgartner’s choice and demarcation,”⁸² with some variations, and relate them to the usual components of a psalm of lament. Most agree on Jer 11:18-20, 12:1-6; 15:10-12; 15:15-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23, and 20:7-9 or 10.

In addition, some include Jer 11:21-23, the Lord’s word to the people of Anathoth, as “a normal word of judgment.”⁸³ Some include 17:12-13 as an introductory part of the complaint 17:14-18, agreeing with Gunkel and Baumgartner (“a festive, hymnic introduction”⁸⁴). Carroll, McKane, Smith, and Lundbom separate out 18:18 as “self-standing prose” before the lament poem, 18:19-23,⁸⁵ designed “to supply a context and an occasion for vv 19-23.”⁸⁶

Interpreters disagree about how much of Jer 20:7-13 is a “complaint,” “lament,” or “confession.” The dramatic change in mood between Jer 20:7-9 or 10 and 20:11-13, and especially the song of praise of 20:13, have led some to end the poem with 20:9 (e.g., Ahuis, Baumgartner, McKane) or 20:10 (Lundbom). Lundbom calls 20:11-13 a separate “ringing song of deliverance.”⁸⁷ Fretheim, O’Connor, and Smith, however, relating Jer 20:7-13 to the usual components of laments, consider the song of praise an integral part of the poem.⁸⁸ O’Connor thinks that “the argument of the confessions reaches its fullest expression” in this last of the series, using “the full form of the psalm of individual lament” to “confess Jeremiah’s confident trust and praise” in a poem appropriately termed a “confession.”⁸⁹

⁸² Berridge, 114.

⁸³ Ibid., 167.

⁸⁴ Baumgartner, 51.

⁸⁵ Lundbom, 825.

⁸⁶ McKane, 437.

⁸⁷ Lundbom, 634.

⁸⁸ See table relating components of laments to Jeremiah’s complaints in. Smith, 2.

⁸⁹ O’Connor, 94.

Jeremiah's curse of the day that he was born, in 20:14-18, is included by many with the complaints, though Baumgartner considered it only "related to them in content" in form, rather, a "self-curse."⁹⁰ Ittmann, Holladay, McKane, O'Connor, and Smith agree that it is not a lament. O'Connor considers it "a cursing poem, placed after the confession [20:7-13] for redactional purposes."⁹¹ Smith considers it and 15:10-15 curses, with "little formal similarity to the laments."⁹²

Several modern interpreters add other cries of pain by Jeremiah to their list of complaints. Among these are Jer 4:19-21 ("my anguish!")⁹³; 5:3-5 ("O Lord, do your eyes not look for truth?")⁹⁴; 8:18-23 ("they have healed the wound of my people lightly")⁹⁵; 10:19 ("Woe is me because of my hurt!")⁹⁶; 10:23-24 ("Correct me, O Lord, but in just measure")⁹⁷; 17:5-8 ("Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals")⁹⁸; 17:9-10 or 9-18 ("The heart is devious").⁹⁹ McKane also adds the communal laments of 14:2-10 and 14:17-15:4.¹⁰⁰ All these provide a poorer fit with the individual psalms of lament.

Most modern interpreters take these complaints to correspond to the form of the laments of the individual in the psalms.

⁹⁰ Baumgartner, 63, 77.

⁹¹ O'Connor, 89.

⁹² Smith, 2.

⁹³ Bright, lxvi; Lundbom, 634.

⁹⁴ Bright, lxvi.

⁹⁵ Bright, lxvi; McKane, xcii; von Rad, 8:18-9:1, 92.

⁹⁶ Lundbom, 634; McKane, 10:19-25, xcii.

⁹⁷ Hyatt, 782; Lundbom, 634.

⁹⁸ William L. Holladay, *The Architecture of Jeremiah 1-20* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1976), 153.

⁹⁹ Hyatt, 782; McKane, 17:9-18, xcii.

¹⁰⁰ McKane, xcii.

Reventlow, however, considers them collective laments, rooted in cultic liturgies. They are not then “intimate confessions of the heart”¹⁰¹ connected with Jeremiah’s own experiences. Reventlow acknowledges that these texts speak in the voice of an individual, but “behind the individual form hides a collectively meant lament.”¹⁰² He is sure that “the ‘I’ that appears here is completely encompassed in the ‘we’; it is nothing other than the representative and embodiment of the community.”¹⁰³

Although most other interpreters disagree with Reventlow and relate these texts to individual laments, they agree with von Rad that Jeremiah was “definitely not speaking unofficially” and that the texts “come out of the very midst of his prophetic office.”¹⁰⁴ Berridge points out that Jeremiah’s “individual experience cannot be detached from that which will later be the experience of his people.”¹⁰⁵ He thinks that though “it is unmistakably the individual Jeremiah who speaks,” not “a cultic functionary,” these “confessions” were “part of his proclamation” as a prophet, “a public confession of the bond which united Jeremiah with the people to whom he spoke.”¹⁰⁶

But O’Connor emphasizes that, given Jeremiah’s adversarial relationship with his people, “the ‘I’ of these poems must be understood as the personal voice of

¹⁰¹ Reventlow, 210, my translation.

¹⁰² Ibid., 256.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 259.

¹⁰⁴ Von Rad, “The Confessions of Jeremiah,” 97.

¹⁰⁵ Berridge, 130.

¹⁰⁶ Berridge, 155, 157, 159..

Jeremiah and can in no way be interpreted to represent the voice of the community.”¹⁰⁷

1.4.1.3 Concern about function

Many modern interpreters look at both the possible original function of these complaints, and reasons for preserving them. Were they part of Jeremiah’s original proclamation? Did they serve another function for redactors who put together the book of Jeremiah?

Ittmann thinks that “Jeremiah’s reflections about his own difficulties” were not primarily about himself, but should rather be seen “as an answer to problems of specific changing historical periods.”¹⁰⁸

O’Connor speaks most plainly of the function of the confessions, both in their original setting, and in the book of Jeremiah, as put together by a redactor. In their original setting, the confessions served a “public prophetic function in the life of the prophet,”¹⁰⁹ “to establish the authenticity of Jeremiah’s claim to be the true prophet of Yahweh,”¹¹⁰ against the accusations that his prophecy was false. In the “new literary context” provided by the redactor of the book of Jeremiah, they were then used “to illustrate why the curse against the nation had to be enacted.”¹¹¹

Those who see the complaints presenting the prophet as paradigm think that these texts were directed to humiliated Israel. Gerstenberger sees the addition of 15:13-14 to the complaint of 15:10-12, as designed to provide “God’s reassuring and

¹⁰⁷ O’Connor, 92.

¹⁰⁸ Ittmann, 19, my translation.

¹⁰⁹ O’Connor, 3.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 85.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 160.

forgiving word,”¹¹² in the time after Israel’s defeat in 587 B.C. For Blank, Jeremiah, told not to marry or have children, provides an “analogy and paradigm”¹¹³ for the people who are about to experience devastation. Ahuis thinks that the “affirmation of suffering,” in the presentation of the prophet as the suffering servant of God, is directed to three exilic audiences: those remaining in Judah and Jerusalem, the exiles in Babylon, and possibly also the “small colony” in Egypt.¹¹⁴

1.4.1.4 Concern about Jeremiah’s harsh language

Modern interpreters acknowledge the harshness and oddity of Jeremiah’s language. This “bold and bitter language to level at Yahweh, without phraseological parallel in the OT,”¹¹⁵ contains “terrible accusation,”¹¹⁶ “severe reproach against Yahweh,”¹¹⁷ “profound assaults on God,”¹¹⁸ and “bitter, ironic misrepresentation of the divine character and the prophetic mission.”¹¹⁹

Many call this language “well-nigh blasphemous,”¹²⁰ “deeply rebellious, not to say blasphemous,”¹²¹ “virtually blasphemous.”¹²² Interpreters differ on whether Jeremiah was justified in using such language. Bright thinks that Yahweh’s response in Jer 15:19-21 shows that “Jeremiah, for all his angry outbursts, knew perfectly well that such talk was unworthy of his prophetic calling, and might well cost him his

¹¹² Gerstenberger, 396.

¹¹³ Blank, 29.

¹¹⁴ Ahuis, 182, my translation.

¹¹⁵ Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 461.

¹¹⁶ von Rad, 90.

¹¹⁷ Baumgartner, 50.

¹¹⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones: Listening for the Prophetic Word in Jeremiah* (ed. Patrick D. Miller; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 164.

¹¹⁹ Diamond, 76, about Jer 15:15-18.

¹²⁰ Bright, 132, about Jer 20:7.

¹²¹ Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 553, about Jer 20:7.

¹²² Thompson, 90, about Jer 15:18.

prophetic office if persisted in.”¹²³ Lundbom agrees that “Yahweh’s vigorous response [Jer 15:19-21] indicates that the prophet has transgressed normal decency in registering his complaint.”

Jeremiah’s strident calls for God’s vengeance on his adversaries (Jer 11:20, 12:3, 17:18, 18:18-23) caused difficulty for many interpreters. Blank, however, points out that these “vindictive cries” are “characteristic of the individual lament” and “partake of the nature of a plaintiff’s plea in a court of justice.”¹²⁴ Baumgartner thinks that their frequency in songs of lament “may go some way toward excusing Jeremiah.”¹²⁵ For Avioz, “it is the honor of God that is at stake,” when Jeremiah’s adversaries despise the “messenger of God”; Jeremiah’s “call for revenge” is therefore “an appeal to make justice,” for the “vindication of God.”¹²⁶

Fretheim, who is “doubtful that the language is properly designated as accusatory,”¹²⁷ points out that language of deception (as in Jer 20:7) is used for God elsewhere (e.g., 1 Kgs 22:20-22 and Ezek 14:9). This indicates to him that “Jeremiah is not being innovative, let alone rebellious or blasphemous.”¹²⁸ Quell, while calling Jeremiah’s prayer “rebellious,” considers it an “act of faith.”¹²⁹

1.4.2 Modern usefulness of Jeremiah’s complaints

Several modern interpreters focus on the use of Jeremiah’s complaints by believers. They place them with the psalms of lament, Job, and Habakkuk, in a

¹²³ Bright, 112.

¹²⁴ Blank, 26.

¹²⁵ Baumgartner, 45.

¹²⁶ Avioz, 434-5.

¹²⁷ Fretheim, 298, about Jer 20:7.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 299.

¹²⁹ Gottfried Quell, *Wahre und Falsche Prophetie* (Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie 46; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1952), 104, my translation.

tradition that encourages plain speech to God. This tradition of lament is seen as a great gift to faithful individuals and communities, throughout the ages.

Jeremiah, who “speaks the truth into a world of falsehood and self-deception,” makes “profound assaults on God,” that are “both self-preoccupied petition and concerned intercession,”¹³⁰ These complaints provide for Holmgren “a model . . . for an honest relationship with God,” that shows that “it is not an act of unfaith to release our inner thoughts in lament.”¹³¹ Lament texts, including the complaints, provide “feet-on-the-ground realism” that enables believers “to speak honestly to God.”¹³² Fretheim agrees that “accusatory language” may be used by “people of deep and genuine faith,” and that “this is the type of honest interaction that God encourages in relationships.”¹³³

1.5 Other related texts in Jeremiah that were not considered

Besides the traditional “confessions” or “complaints,” other texts in Jeremiah show Jeremiah’s pain, questioning, and outrage.

Jer 4:19-21 portrays Jeremiah’s anguish at the devastation of the “whole land,” when “disaster overtakes disaster.” Jer 8:18-22 depicts Jeremiah’s grief at the “hurt of my poor people” and questioning why their “health” has “not been restored,” but adds the Lord’s question of why they provoked him with idols. In Jer 5:3, the question, “O Lord, do your eyes not look for truth?,” leads into acknowledgment of the people’s obduracy.

¹³⁰ Brueggemann, 164.

¹³¹ Holmgren, 367-8.

¹³² Ibid., 368.

¹³³ Fretheim, 299.

The closest parallel with Jeremiah's outrage shown in the complaints occurs in Jer 14:7-9, where the Lord is questioned as "a stranger in the land . . . a mighty warrior who cannot give help," in the midst of a prayer that the Lord act "for your name's sake."

These texts were not considered in this work. Further study of ancient, medieval, and modern interpretation of Jeremiah could include them.

1.6 Approach of this dissertation

This dissertation looks at ancient and medieval interpretation of the complaints of Jeremiah, in the following order:

Chapter 2 presents the Hebrew text of these complaints, as found in the Masoretic Text (MT) and fragments from Qumran. For each text, it considers translation questions, looking at important words and odd or obscure expressions.

Chapter 3 considers how these texts were transmitted by the ancient versions: Greek (Septuagint and "the Three"), Targum Jonathan, Latin (Vulgate and Vetus Latina), and Peshitta. For each text, as with MT, it considers translation questions, including important words and obscurities. It then compares texts in each version with MT and other versions and looks at possible reasons for differences, especially in transmitting Jeremiah's harsh language toward God.

Chapter 4 considers a representative sample of major ancient and medieval commentaries on these texts: Qumran, Greek, Latin, Jewish, and Syriac.

These commentaries are drawn from lists in modern commentaries on the book of Jeremiah, general introductions to the history of interpretation, and reference works such as *Biblia Patristica*, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, and *Reallexikon für*

Antike und Christentum. For each language group, specialized commentaries provided further possibilities.

Modern commentaries that cite ancient and medieval interpretation:

Holladay, William L. *Jeremiah I*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.

Lundbom, Jack R. *Jeremiah 1-20*. Anchor Bible 21A. New York: Doubleday, 1999.

McKane, William. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*. International Critical Commentary. Vol. 1: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986.

Introductions to the history of interpretation:

Saebo, Magne, ed. *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation*. Vols. 1 and 2. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996 and 2008.

Kannengiesser, Charles. *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*. Vols. 1 and 2. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Wenthe, Dean O., ed. *Jeremiah, Lamentations*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 12. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Reference works:

Biblia Patristica. Centre d'analyse et de documentation patristique.

Paris: Centre nationale de la recherche scientifique, 1975-2000.

Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique. Paris: Beauchesne, 1974.

Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum. Edited by Ernst Dassmann. Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1996.

For each commentary, Chapter 4 looks at the form of the scriptural text that was transmitted, from MT or one of the versions. It presents the commentary's interpretation; it groups some common views together. It discusses interpretative methods used, especially with regard to Jeremiah's harsh language. For each "stream of tradition," it concludes with an analysis of methods, problems, and concerns, and a summary of interpretative results.

Chapter 5 presents summaries and conclusions.

Seven appendices provide further depth of information.

Chapter 2 The Hebrew Text

2.1 Jeremiah's Complaints in the Masoretic Text

See Appendix 2, pp. 364-401, for texts and translations.

2.1.1 Specific complaints in the Masoretic Text

2.1.1.1 Jeremiah 4:10

2.1.1.1.1 Use of נָשָׂא in the Masoretic Text

Hebrew: נָשָׂא הָיִיתָ הָשָׂא from נָשָׂא

you have surely deceived deceive, cheat (Hiphil)

The verb נָשָׂא is not very common in Sense II, “cheat, deceive” (Hiphil, “cheat, deceive,” Niphal, “entertain false hopes,” HALOT, 728). Many who may deceive are human beings. The Rabshekah warns the people that Hezekiah may deceive them (2 Kgs 18:29 = 2 Chr 32:15 = Isa 36:14); prophets and diviners may deceive the exiles (Jer 29:8); “your friends” may deceive Edom (Obad 1:7). But the serpent (Gen 3:13), “the pride of your heart” (Jer 49:16 and Obad 1:6), and death (Ps 55:16) also deceive.

In three instances, it is God who may deceive. In 2 Kgs 19:10 // Isa 37:10, Assyrian messengers warn Hezekiah not to trust “the god you depend on,” for he may “deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.” Israelites, who might be thought to know better, also see the possibility of God’s deception. In Isa 19:13, the princes of Noph (Memphis) have been deluded

(נִשְׁאַל, Niphal) by the LORD, who “has poured into them a spirit of confusion”

(Isa 19:14). In Jer 4:10, it is the Lord GOD who has deceived “this people and Jerusalem.”

2.1.1.1.2 Could Jer 4:10 be a rhetorical question?

English translation of Jer 4:10 appears straightforward, as Jeremiah’s strong accusation against God: “Ah, Lord GOD, surely you have deceived this people and Jerusalem.” Jer 4:10 is translated as a statement by the Septuagint (LXX), the Targum, and the Peshitta (P), along with most modern translations. The Vulgate, however, has 4:10 as a question, “Did you therefore deceive this people and Jerusalem?” Since Hebrew questions do not have to be marked by interrogative words or particles and can be indicated “merely by the rising intonation,”¹ and there are many examples of rhetorical questions that “expect a strongly negative answer,”² this is a possibility. This would reduce the force of Jeremiah’s complaint, in both Hebrew and Latin.

2.1.1.2. Jeremiah 11:18-20

2.1.1.2.1 The unusual image of 11:19b

נִשְׁחִיתָהּ עֵץ בְּלֶחֶמוֹ Let us destroy a tree/wood in/with its/his food/bread.

This odd image has occasioned much commentary. Some of the versions read this differently (see Sections 3.1.1.2 LXX, 3.2.1.2 Targum, and 3.3.1.2 Vulgate).

¹ Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (vol. 2; trans. and rev. T. Muraoka; Subsidia Biblica 14/II; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000), 609.

² Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 326.

The Hebrew words are straightforward. “Wood” or “tree,” עֵץ, is a very common word in MT, describing a group of trees, an individual tree, wood as a material, objects or buildings made of wood, or sticks, pieces of wood (HALOT, 863). “Bread” or “food,” לֶחֶם, is also very common. It may describe specific kinds of bread, but often, more generally, food. Metaphorically, it may refer to misery (Deut 16:3), tears (Ps 80:6), adversity (Isa 30:20), anxious toil (Ps 127:2), and manna (Neh 9:15, Ps 105:40 and 78:25).

2.1.1.2.2 The verb נִשְׁחִיתָה, “let us destroy,” from שָׁחַת (Hiphil cohortative)

The common verb שָׁחַת occurs in the Niphal, Piel, Hiphil, and Hophal (HALOT, 1470-1472). All the meanings have to do with ruin or destruction. In the Hiphil, it means “to ruin, destroy” or “to annihilate, exterminate,” but also “to behave corruptly.”

The destruction described by the Hiphil may be caused by human beings, wild animals, or God. Israelites, including Jonathan and Joab and their forces, Benjaminites, Midianites, Philistines, Ammonites, Moab, the army of Aram, the king of Babylon, the king of the Medes, the evil out of the north, Pharaoh Neco – all these may “destroy” or “ravage” cities, lands, peoples, or individuals in war. An unusual mark of David is that he did not destroy Saul, given the chance (1 Sam 26:9, 15). Tumors and rats (1 Sam 6:5), a lion, birds and wild animals may also destroy a people.

Often it is God or God’s angel who destroys. Those destroyed are people and the whole earth (Gen 6), Sodom, many in the land of Israel by pestilence (1 Chr

21:12), the pride of Judah and Jerusalem (Jer 13:9; 15:6), the wall of Zion (Lam 2:8). But often, the promise is that, as God did not destroy the Israelites in the wilderness (Ps 78:38), God will not destroy Israel, Judah or the house of David (2 Kgs 8:19, 13:23; 2 Chr 21:7).

In this instance, **נִשְׁחִיתָהּ** must mean “Let us destroy,” or “Let us ruin.” In none of the other Hiphil uses of **שָׁחַת** does it mean anything like “throw.” The readings in LXX (ἐμβάλωμεν, “let us throw”), Targum (נִרְמִי, “let us throw”), and Vulgate (*mittamus*, “let us send”) must therefore reflect either a misreading or a different *Vorlage*. In *BHS*, W. Rudolph suggests for LXX and Targum either **נִשְׁלִיכָהּ** “let us throw” or **נִשְׁיִתָּהּ** “let us set”; for Vulgate, **נִשְׁלַחָהּ** “let us send.”³ “Throwing” or “sending” “wood” into his “bread” or “food,” however, also presents interpretative challenges.

2.1.1.3. Jeremiah 12:1-3

An oddity in this passage is **יִלְכְּדוּ** (12:2). It appears to be verbal hendiadys with **עָשִׂי** using **לָכַד** rather than **לָרַ**, to emphasize the continual making of fruit.

The versions show some difficulty with this word. LXX, ἐτεκνοποίησαν, “they bore children,” could reflect a *Vorlage* of **יִלְדוּ**. Peshitta **ܡܠܐ** and Targum **קִנּוּ**

“they obtained gain” or “become rich” seem in keeping with the sense of the

³ W. Rudolph, Footnote 19a, Jeremiah 11:19, *BHS*, 805.

complaint, but unrelated to this Hebrew word. Vulgate *proficiunt* , “they advance,” is most closely related to the Hebrew word.

2.1.1.4. Jeremiah 15:10-12

In 15:11 MT, it is unclear whether LORD protected from the enemy or caused the enemy to hurt.

In 15:11aa, שְׂרוּתְךָ (Kativ) or שְׂרִיתֶיךָ (Qere) has a number of possible meanings, discussed by HALOT (p. 1652). The Kativ may mean “your release” or “I do not treat you with hostility” (less likely); the Qere, “I released you.” The differing readings of LXX (κατευσθησονται αὐτοῖς “of those prospering”), P (אֶבְרַח אֶל־אֶל־אֶל־אֶל “I will not forsake you”), Targum (סופך “your end”) and Vulgate (*reliquiae tuae*, “your remains”), both reflecting a possible שְׂרִיתֶיךָ = שְׂאִרִיתֶיךָ, show the discomfort of the versions with MT. W. Rudolph suggests a possible *Vorlage* of שְׂאִרִיתֶיךָ “I have served you.”⁴ HALOT (1653) prefers “your release” or “I have served you.” My translation follows the Qere.

In 15:11ab, הִפְגַּעְתִּי shows the ambiguity of פגע in both Qal and Hiphil (HALOT, 910). In Qal פגע may mean “meet someone,” either in friendship or, more often, in enmity, but also “urge,” “plead,” or “intercede.” The fewer Hiphil occurrences share these different meanings. God commands lightning to “strike” (Job

⁴ W. Rudolph, Footnote 11b, Jeremiah 15:11, *BHS*, 812.

36:32); the LORD has “laid on him” (the servant) “the iniquity of us all” (Isa 53:6).

In Isa 53:12, the servant “made intercession”; in Isa 59:16, the LORD was appalled that there was none to “intervene”; and in Jer 36:35, three courtiers “urge” the king not to burn the scroll.

Which meaning is appropriate for Jer 15:11? Did the LORD “intervene” for you? or “let the enemy strike you”? The first appears to make good sense, as a parallel with “I released you for good.” Ancient versions vary in how they deal with this. P clarifies that it is the LORD who caused the attack. This disagrees with LXX and Vulgate, where the LORD stood or helped “against the enemy,” and the Targum, where “the enemy will oppress them” (the inhabitants of the land). Modern versions vary equally widely.

2.1.1.5 Jeremiah 15:15-18

2.1.1.5.1 Differences in translation

In 15:16, the strange image of the prophet “eating” God’s words (Kativ) or word (Qere) is plain in Hebrew, but a problem for the versions. In LXX, it is “those who rejected thy words” who are to be consumed. In the Targum, the prophet “received and confirmed” (קִבֵּל וְקִיַּמְתִּין) God’s words. P has removed the difficult image; instead, the prophet has kept and done his commandments, as in Deuteronomy 15.5.

In 15:18a, the pain is “endless” (נֶצַח) and the wound “incurable” (אִנְשָׁה).

The versions vary. P agrees with LXX (στερεά) and Targum (תְּקִיפָא), reading the

wound as “serious” (נַסֵּל), rather than “incurable” (אֲנוּשָׁה). Greenberg

thinks that P and LXX may have been “influenced by a perception of the underlying sense of נִצַּח ‘to triumph’, so that they read ‘strength’ into the first element of the parallel phrases, and translated the second in conformity.”⁵

2.1.1.5.2 Deceitful waters in 15:18

Hebrew: הִיוּ תְהִיָּה לִי כִמּוֹ אֶכְזָב מַיִם לֹא נֶאֱמְנוּ

Will you [or it] be to me deception, waters that are not faithful?

A similar expression is found in Isa 58:11, using a verb (כִּזַּב Piel, “lie, deceive”) related to אֶכְזָב, “deception.”

וְהָיִיתָ כְּגֶן רוּחַ וּכְמוֹצָא מַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכְזְבוּ מִימֵיוֹ:

And you [my people] shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not deceive.

The noun אֶכְזָב “deception” (HALOT, 45) occurs only in Jer 15:18b and

Mic 1:14. In Micah, the houses of אֶכְזָב, a town also mentioned in Josh 15:44, are

to be “a deception (אֶכְזָב) to the kings of Israel.” The prophecy is a play on the

⁵ Gillian Greenberg, *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Jeremiah* (Monographs of the Peshitta Institute 13; Leiden, Brill, 2002), 158.

name of the town, related to the common verb כָּזַב “lie, deceive” and noun כְּזָב

“lie” (HALOT, 468).

The verb כָּזַב (Piel) means “lie, deceive.” The Israelites, children of transgression, daughters of your people, a preacher of falsehood, all lie to God and this people. Emphatically, God does not lie (Num 23:19; Ps 89:35), nor does the vision God gives (Hab 2:3). Job and Elisha also do not lie. Isa 58:11 has the only example of waters that do not deceive. The noun כְּזָב refers to many examples of people lying: Samson, false gods, false witnesses, false prophets, kings, Ephraim, and Judah. Divinations and visions can also lie, to Israel and other nations.

In all these uses as verb and noun, there is no suggestion that God may be the deceiver. Jer 15:18b stands apart, in accusing “you” of being “deception, water that is not reliable.” This image of God as untrustworthy waters that “fail” contradicts Jeremiah’s own image of God as “the spring of living water” (Jer 2:13 and 17:13).

Because, however, the verb תִּהְיֶה could be either 2ms (“you will”) or 3fs (“it will,” referring to the wound מַכָּה, a feminine noun), the Hebrew is ambiguous. This clause may then also be read as “Will it [rather than you] be to me as deception, water that is not reliable?” Thus LXX and Vulgate read, “it (the wound) has indeed become to me as deceitful water.” P preserves a clear reference to “you.” The Targum expands to “Let not your Memra be lies for me, like a fountain whose waters give out.”

2.1.1.6. Jeremiah 17:14-18

2.1.1.6.1 Translation questions in Jer 17:16

In 17:16aa, there are several possible translations of the verb **אַצְתִּי**. The root **אָץ** (HALOT, 23) appears in the Qal as “be urgent” (Exod 5:13), but more often, as “be in haste” to do something (Josh 10:13, the sun that “did not hurry to set”; Prov 19:2; 28:20, and 29:20, someone “in a hurry”), and once, to be “too narrow” (the hill country of Ephraim, Josh 17:15). In the Hiphil, angels “urge” Lot to leave (Gen 19:15), and in Isaiah’s vision (22:4), the prophet asks “all of you” not to “urge to comfort me.”

Versions of **אַצְתִּי** vary: LXX has “I have not been weary” (ἐκοπίσσα), the Targum expands to “I did not delay (**עֲכִיבִית**) about your Memra,” P has “I did not cease (**לֹא פָצַעְתִּי**) from you,” and the Vulgate has “I was not troubled” (*et ego non sum turbatus*). Many modern versions take the meaning here as “run away” (NIV, NRSV) or “hurried away” (NAU). “I did not hurry away” seems in good accord with the meaning of the rest of the clause.

In 17:16aa, the meaning of **מִרְעֶה** is also obscure. The common verb **רָעָה** has two primary meanings (HALOT, 1258-1262). The first has to do with animals in a pasture: “feed, graze; drive out to pasture; protect as a shepherd; pasture,” and metaphorically, “lead” or “rule.” The Qal participle, **רֹעֶה**, is used as a substantive,

for “shepherd,” or, metaphorically, for “ruler,” including as a designation for God.

The second meaning is related to רֵעַ “friend, companion,” and, as a verb, “get oneself involved with” (Qal), “join oneself to someone (Piel), or “befriend” (Hiphil). Either meaning of the Qal participle, “from being a shepherd”, or “from getting involved”, fits poorly with “after you.” The Vulgate retains “shepherd,” that “I was not disturbed, following after you, a shepherd.” LXX changes “shepherd” to “following” (κατακολουθῶν), in “I did not grow weary, following after you.” The Targum seems to keep the “shepherd” image, turning it into “to prophesy against them”⁶ Different vowel pointing of the Hebrew text, as מִרְעָה, produces “from wickedness/evil.” This option is followed by P: “I did not cease from you in wickedness/evil.”

In 17:16ab, “a disastrous day” (יֹם אָנוּשׁ, MT) could be repointed as אָנוּשׁ

יֹם “a day of a man.” This option is followed by P, LXX, and the Vulgate. The Targum clarifies the sense of the MT as “the evil day that you are bringing on them”

2.1.1.6.2 Use of מַחֲתָה in Jer 17:17

Hebrew אֶל-תִּהְיֶה-לִּי לְמַחֲתָה

Do not become a terror for me.

⁶ *The Targum of Jeremiah* (The Aramaic Bible 12; trans. Robert Hayward; Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1987), 99, n. 17.

מִחֲתָה “terror; ruin; corruption” (HALOT, 572), from

חָתַת Qal: be shattered, be filled with terror; Niphal: be broken to pieces,
be dismayed, be terrified; Piel: dishearten; Hiphil: shatter
(HALOT, 365)

The common Hebrew verb חָתַת holds meanings both of breaking and of terror or dismay, in all *binyanim*. In the Qal, cities, nations, Job’s friends, the wise, and idols are “dismayed”; Israel’s enemies (Moab, Teman) are “broken” or “shattered.” In the Niphal, the set piece, “Do not fear or be dismayed” (אֲלֹ-תִירָא וְאֲלֹ-תִחָת) occurs in Deuteronomy, Joshua, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. Not being dismayed, in parallel with not fearing, occurs in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. In each case, the basis for lack of fear is God’s presence, for protection. The two occurrences in the Piel show both “breaking” and terror: Babylon’s bows are “broken,” and it is God who “terrifies” Job with dreams.

Several occurrences in the Hiphil refer to terror. God as the cause of terror or breaking occurs in Job and Jeremiah. Contempt of families, but also God’s dreams and vision, terrify Job. Hiphil as “breaking” is clear in Isa 9:4 (“the rod of the oppressor”), and likely in Jer 1:17 (“Do not break down [“be dismayed” תִּחָתֶיךָ Niphal] before them, or I will break you [אֶחָתֶיךָ Hiphil]) and Jer 49:37 (“shatter” Elam; this could also be “terrify”).

The noun **בִּחְתָּה** participates in both meanings, of “ruin” or “destruction,” resulting from “breaking”; and “terror” or “horror,” resulting from “terrifying.” In Ps 89:40, the “ruin” is literal, of David’s strongholds. Repeatedly, in Proverbs, “ruin” or “destruction” is a metaphor, for the “babbling” or mouth of a fool or those “opening their mouths wide,” poverty, the way of the LORD, evildoers, and the condition of a people without a prince. As “terror” or “horror,” it refers to justice for evildoers, (Prov 21:15), the LORD (Jer 17:17), and Moab (Jer 48:37).

In MT, the “terror” (**בִּחְתָּה**, 17a) that God might be for Jeremiah is echoed in Jeremiah’s wish that his persecutors may be terrified (**יִתְחַתּוּ**) and that he may not be terrified (**אִתְחַתּוּ**, all from **חָתַת**). The idea that God might cause this “terror” is consonant with God’s action in Job 33 (Piel) and Jer 1 (Hiphil), but in stark contrast with the repeated assurances and commands not to fear (Niphal), based on God’s protective presence, from Deuteronomy through the prophets.

2.1.1.7 Jeremiah 18:18-23

2.1.1.7.1 Use of **שִׁחָה** in Jer 18:20 and 22

Hebrew **כִּי־כָרוּ שִׁחָה לְנַפְשִׁי** “for they dug a pit for my life” Jer 18:20

כִּי־כָרוּ (שִׁחָה) [שִׁחָה] לְלַכְדָּנִי “for they dug a pit to catch me”

Jer 18:22

שִׁחָה (18:20) and Ketiv : **שִׁחָה** Qere : **שִׁחָה** (18 :22)

שִׁיחָה “trapper’s pit; gorge, precipice” (HALOT, 1439)

שִׁיחָה “pit, trap” (HALOT, 1477)

Many Hebrew words refer to “pits,” “wells,” or “cisterns.” Many passages speak of a literal pit, like those into which Joseph’s brothers threw him (Gen 37), into which a neighbor’s animal falls (Exod 21:23) or in which the Israelites (1 Sam 13:6) or David (2 Sam 17:9) may hide; or a literal cistern, like the one into which Jeremiah’s enemies threw him (Jer 38). The wisdom commonplace, that the one who digs a pit falls into it, uses differing Hebrew words for “pit” (בֹּרַי Ps 7:15; גִּימְצִי Eccl 10:8; שְׁחֹתָ Prov 28:10; שִׁיחָה Ps 9:15 and Prov 26:27; שִׁיחָה Ps 57 :6).

Enemies may dig a pit to catch a person or a people (the “arrogant,” Ps 119:85; the nations, Ezek 19:4,8; Jeremiah’s enemies, Jer 18:20, 22). Prisoners are kept in pits (Isa 24:22) and the dead are flung into pits (Absalom, 2 Sam 18:17; men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria, Jer 41:7). “Going down to the Pit” is a common metaphor for dying in Psalms, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.

The rare word for “pit” שִׁיחָה is used in Jer 18:20 and 22 (Qere). It appears as a literal “pit” in Jer 2:6, a description of a “land of deserts and pits.” Otherwise, it appears as a metaphor in Prov 22:14, describing “a strange woman” as a “deep pit” and 23:27, describing a prostitute as a “deep pit.”

Except for Israelites and David hiding in pits from their enemies, being in a pit is a disaster that usually results in death. Jeremiah’s complaint indicates that his enemies hope to kill him.

2.1.1.8. Jeremiah 20:7-10

2.1.1.8.1 Translation questions in 20:10

In MT, מִגֹּר מִסְבִּיב in Jer 20:10 quotes the LORD's naming Pashhur in Jer 20:3, as no longer Pashhur but “terror on every side”; in Jer 20:4, the LORD is “making you a terror (מִגֹּר) to you and all your friends.” All of this is in the context of the coming deportation to Babylon.

In 20:10, שִׁמְרִי צִלְעִי is pointed as “watching my stumbling” (צִלְעִי, “stumble, fall,” HALOT, 1030). P interprets this as those “hating me in their heart”; the Targum, as those “who hide to do me evil.” With different pointing (צִלְעִי) it could be rendered “guarding my side” (צִלְעִי I, “side, rib,” HALOT, 1030). Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, and Vulgate read it thus.

2.1.1.8.2 Use and meaning of פתה in Jer 20:7 and 20:10

20:7 פִּתִּיתֵנִי יְהוָה וְאַפְתָּ “You have enticed me, O LORD, and I was enticed”.

from פתה (HALOT, 984-5)

“persuade” (HALOT, following Clines-Gunn), entice, seduce

פִּתִּיתֵנִי Piel Perfect 2ms + 1cs suffix “entice”

וְאַפְתָּ Niphal Imperfect Vav-Consecutive 1cs

let oneself be deceived, let oneself be taken for a fool”

(HALOT), enticed

20:10 אִלִּי יִפְתֶּה “maybe he will be enticed”

יִפְתֶּה Pual Imperfect 3ms

“let oneself be persuaded, be persuaded” (HALOT),

be enticed

In modern commentary, the meaning of פִּתָּה in Jeremiah and elsewhere is disputed. Possible translations here in Jeremiah include “deceive,”⁷ “persuade,”⁸ “seduce,”⁹ “show to be a fool,”¹⁰ and “entice.”¹¹

⁷ “Deceive”: Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 398; Ellen F. Davis, *Wondrous Depth: Preaching the Old Testament* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox), 14; Terence E. Fretheim, *Jeremiah* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2002) 291; William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah I* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 558; William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah* (The International Critical Commentary; Vol. 1: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 467; Kathleen M. O'Connor, *The Confessions of Jeremiah: Their Interpretation and Role in Chapters 1-25* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), 71; Chou-Wee Pan, פִּתָּה, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (vol. 3; ed. Willem A. VanGemeren; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1997), 714-5; J. M. M. Roberts, “Does God Lie?” in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 129; S. D. Snyman, “A Note on PTH and YKL in Jeremiah XX 7-13,” *VT* 48 (1998), 562; NIV (Jer 20:7); NRSV (Ezek 14:9).

⁸ “Persuade”: Carroll, 398; D. A. Clines and D. M. Gunn, “‘You tried to persuade me’ and ‘Violence! Outrage!’ in Jeremiah 20:7-8,” *VT* 28 (1978): 20; Davis, 14; M. Saebo, “God’s compelling persuasion,” in פִּתָּה *pth* to be gullible,” *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (vol. 2; ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann; trans. Mark E. Biddle; Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1997), 1039; S. D. Snyman, “A Note on PTH and YKL in Jeremiah XX 7-13,” *VT* 48 (1998), 562; HALOT, פִּתָּה, 985.

⁹ “Seduce”: John Bright, *Jeremiah* (Anchor Bible; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965), 129, 132; Walter Brueggemann, *The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 170; Carroll, 398; Davis, 14; Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets: An Introduction* (vol. 1; Harper Torchbooks; New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 113; Holladay, 558; Kathleen M. O'Connor, “Lamenting Back to Life,” *Interpretation* 62 (2008), 43; Saebo, human “seductive or deluding persuasion,” 1038; J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980), 459; Tanakh (Ezek 14:9).

¹⁰ “Show to be a fool”: Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (The Old Testament Library; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 224; Rudolf Mosis, “Ez 14,1-11 – ein Ruf zur Umkehr,” *BZ* 19 (1975): 168; Gottfried Quell, “du hattest mich betört,” *Wahre und Falsche Prophetie* (Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie 46; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1952), 102; Saebo, 1038.

¹¹ “Entice”: Carroll, 398; Michael Fishbane, “‘A Wretched Thing of Shame, A Mere Belly’: An Interpretation of Jeremiah 20:7-12,” *The Biblical Mosaic* (Semeia Studies; ed. R. M. Polzin and E. Rothman; Philadelphia: Fortress and Chico: Scholars, 1982), 169; Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20: A*

Many see a sexual connotation. Clines and Gunn disagree. They see “many occurrences of *pitta* . . . where any sexual overtone is far from probable.”¹² They prefer “persuade” and think that Jeremiah’s complaint is that God has forced, rather than deceived, him.¹³ Mosis agrees, that “neither on the basis of its actual use nor indeed on the basis of its original root meaning does *pth* Piel therefore necessarily and from itself evoke an erotic-sexual seduction.”¹⁴ Mosis, relating פתה to פתִּי (“simple,” HALOT, 989), thinks that “*pth* Piel thus means to make someone into a fool, to bring him forward as a fool and as such to manifest.”¹⁵

Possible meanings of פתה in Jer 20:7 and 20:10 are indicated by many other passages in the Hebrew Bible.

Most uses of פתה involve some form of deception. In Exod 22:16, “when a man seduces (יִפְתֶּה Piel Imperfect) a virgin,” פתה has a clear meaning of sexual deception. Job 31:9, “If my heart has been enticed (נִפְתָּה Niphal Perfect) by a woman,” also refers to sexual deception. In Deut 11:16, however, “Take care, or you will be seduced (יִפְתֶּה Qal Imperfect) into turning away, serving other gods” involves deception, sexual only metaphorically.

New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (Anchor Bible 21A; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 851, 854-5; Victor H. Matthews, *More than Meets the Ear: Discovering the Hidden Contexts of Old Testament Conversations* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2008), 16; Pan, 714-5; NIV (Ezek 14:9); NRSV (Jer 20:7); Tanakh (Jer 20:7).

¹² Clines and Gunn, 20.

¹³ Clines and Gunn, 27.

¹⁴ Rudolf Mosis, “Ez 14,1-11 – ein Ruf zur Umkehr,” *BZ* 19 (1975): 168, my translation.

¹⁵ Mosis, 167, my translation.

In 2 Sam 3:25, Joab warns David that “Abner son of Ner came to deceive you” (לִפְתֹּחֶךָ Piel Infinitive Construct), warning of danger in war. The false witness against a neighbor “deceives” (פָּתִיתָ Piel Perfect) with his lips (Prov 24:28).

Clear deception by God occurs in 1 Kgs 22:20-22 and the parallel in 2 Chr 18:19-22. The LORD sends a “lying spirit” (22:22) to “entice (יִפְתֹּהּ Piel Imperfect) Ahab, so that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead” (22:20). In Ezek 14:9, the LORD makes clear that any deceived (יִפְתָּהּ Pual Imperfect) prophet has been deceived by the LORD himself (פָּתִיתִי Piel Perfect, “I have deceived”).

Whether deception occurs in other instances is unclear. Sinners, who attempt to “entice you (יִפְתֹּנֶךָ Piel Imperfect)”, “my son,” (Prov 1:10) to “ambush the innocent,” and “the violent” who “entice” (יִפְתֹּהּ Piel Imperfect) their neighbors” (Prov 16:29) may or may not deceive. The “simple” (פֹּתֵהּ Qal Participle) slain by jealousy in Prov 5:2 may or may not have been deceived. Those who “flatter” (יִפְתֹּוּהוּ Piel Imperfect) God “with their mouth” (Ps 78:36) are at least trying to deceive, whether or not they can succeed. In Hos 2:16, the LORD declares that “I will now allure (נִפְתִּיחָהּ Piel Participle) her [“your mother”], and bring her into the wilderness.” Ephraim, a “silly (פֹּתֵהּ Qal Participle) dove” (Hos 7:11), is perhaps easy to deceive, to convince to call upon Egypt or go to Assyria.

The many references in the Psalms and Proverbs to the “simple” (פְּתִי , closely related to פִּתְּה), either in terms of their waywardness or folly (Prov 1:22, 32; 7:7; 8:5; 9:4; 9:16; 14:15; 14:18; 19:25; 21:11; 22:3) or of the LORD’s protection and making wise (Ps 19:7; 116:6, 119:130; Prov 1:4) may be to those “inexperienced, easily seduced, but needing instruction and capable of learning” (פְּתִי, HALOT, 989). These also may be easy to deceive.

Some instances lack deception. When the Philistines, in Judg 14:15, ask Samson’s wife to “coax “ (פִּתְּה Piel Imperative) your husband to explain the riddle to us,” and in Judg 16:5, Delilah to “coax (also פִּתְּה) him, and find out what makes his strength so great,” there is nagging involved, with a possible sexual component, but no deception. The “babbler” (פִּתְּה Qal Participle) may not be intentionally a gossip who “reveals secrets” (Prov 20:19). The one who hopes that a ruler may be “persuaded” (יִפְתְּה Pual Imperfect) by patience (Prov 25:15) need not engage in deception.

Most examples have some underlayer of persuasion of something not good, or something that does not seem good. For example, in Hos 2.16, when God calls “your mother” into the wilderness, if it looked good, God would not need to lure her there, It seems that *pth* involves some sort of “lure”.

“Entice” seems the best translation: it involves a “lure,” not necessarily sexual. “Entice” does not necessarily lead to something bad, though it usually does.

Deception, if any, is in making the prospective gain what it is not, in reality. Cline and Gunn's "persuade" misses the negative moment of Jeremiah's accusations, the outrage at being lured into something (here, probably being a prophet) under false pretences.

Most ancient versions retain the idea of "deception." The Peshitta does not appreciably soften Jeremiah's accusation against God: God is still seen as "deceiving," though without a necessary sexual connotation. LXX (ἡπάτησάς με "you have deceived me," from ἁπατάω) and Vulgate (*seduxisti me*, "you have led me astray", from *seduco*) also speak of "deceiving," though with more of a sexual connotation. The Targum, however, softens the accusation, as "you have confounded me" (שִׁבַּשְׁתָּנִי, from שִׁבַּשׁ Paal, "entangle, confound, overpower"); the verb still represents a negative and unwelcome action on God's part.

2.1.1.9 Jeremiah 20:14-18

Jeremiah's outcry is closely related in thought to those of Job 3:1-11 and 10:18-19 and uses some of the same language. Job's demand that the day perish, in which he was born, and that the night be seized by thick darkness, that announced a man-child (Job 3:3-6), convey similar thoughts as Jer 20:14-15, in different Hebrew words. Job's question, "Why did you bring me out from the womb?" (10:18) and Jeremiah's "Why did I come out from the womb?" use the same Hebrew roots. Job's wish that he might have been carried "from womb to grave" (מִבֶּטֶן לְקֶבֶר) is closely related to Jeremiah's wish that "my mother would have been my grave, and her womb forever pregnant."

Both Job and Jeremiah are railing against the God that they know made them. Job sees that God “fashioned me like clay,” that “your hands fashioned me” (Job 10:8, 9) and “brought me forth from the womb” (10:18) and that in God’s hand “is the life of every living thing” (12:10). In Jeremiah’s call, the LORD told him, “before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you” (Jer 1:5). Cursing the day that either was born is a very strong accusation against the God who formed them and provided for their birth. LXX, Targum, P and Vulgate all retain this strong accusation.

2.2 Jeremiah’s Complaints in texts from Qumran: 4QJer^a and 4QJer^c

See Appendix 2, pp. 364-401, for texts and translations.

2.2.1 Specific complaints in the texts from Qumran

The fragments of the complaints of Jeremiah found in 4QJer^a and 4QJer^c are very close to MT. Some spelling differences occur in 11:19, 17:14, and 17:16. Some texts have additions above the line; most put the text in better accord with MT. Some have erasures; these also increase accord with MT.

2.2.1.1 Jeremiah 4:10: not in these texts

2.2.1.2 Jeremiah 11:18-20: The small fragments of Jeremiah 11:19-20 include a spelling difference, יִזְכֹּר for יִזְכָּר, probably with the same meaning, though the form is unexpected.

2.2.1.3 Jeremiah 12:1-3: 4QJer^a provides only הִתְקַם כּ, corresponding to

הִתְקַם כְּצֹאן “Tear them apart, like a flock” (MT) in 12:3.

2.2.1.4 Jeremiah 15:10-12: not in these texts

2.2.1.5 Jeremiah 15-18: not in these texts

2.2.1.6 Jeremiah 17:14-18: 4QJer^a of Jer 17:14-18 has two spelling differences, four additions, and one erasure, in comparison with MT.

In 17:14, **וארפה** means either “I shall heal” or is “a rare spelling of the Hebrew word (**וְאַרְפֵּא**) found in MT.”¹⁶ In 17:16, **אצותי** may be from a “by-form **אֲצִי**” (HALOT, 23) of **אִיצָה**, with the same meaning, “I did hurry.”

Additions above the line include **אתה** (17:14), **לא** (17:16, to make it clear that I did *not* hurry), **ח** (17:17, to the very fragmentary **למחחתה**), and **ון** (17:18, to make the word **שברון**, “destruction”). All bring 4QJer^a closer to MT.

The one erasure, of **ת** in 17:18, makes the verb an imperative, “shatter them,” as in MT, rather than an imperfect “you will shatter them.”

2.2.1.7 Jeremiah 18:18-23: 4QJer^a adds **עול** “perversity, injustice” (HALOT, 797) above a fragmentary line that may have included **עונם** “their iniquity,” as in MT.

Two erasures bring 4QJer^a into closer accord with MT: **רברי** (18:19, “my words,” instead of “my opponents”), and **על עונם** “upon their iniquity” (18:23). In 18:19, 4QJer^a does provide **יריבי**, in accord with MT, in contrast with a possible LXX

Vorlage of **יריבי**.

¹⁶ *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* (trans. and comm. Martin Abegg, Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999), 392.

2.2.1.8 Jeremiah 20:7-10: The small pieces of **4QJer^c** follow MT very closely.

2.2.1.9. Jeremiah 20:14-18: The very small fragments of Jer 20:14-18 in 4QJer^a agree with MT.

2.2.2 Accord with MT.

As seen in these fragments, both 4QJer^a and 4QJer^c agree closely with MT.

Except in 18:19, these very small fragments do not provide enough material for comparison with LXX.

Chapter 3 The Versions

3.1 Jeremiah's Complaints in Greek Versions: the Septuagint and "the Three"

3.1.1 Septuagint renderings of specific complaints

See Appendix 2, pp. 364-401, for texts and translations of these complaints.

3.1.1.1. Jeremiah 4:10

3.1.1.1.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Jer 4:10 LXX corresponds closely to MT

3.1.1.1.2 Use of ἀπατάω for נִשָּׁא and other Hebrew verbs

Hebrew: הִנֵּשְׂאָה נִשָּׂאָה from נִשָּׂא

you have surely deceived deceive, cheat

Greek: ἀπατῶν ἠπάτησας from ἀπατάω

you have surely deceived deceive, cheat; distract, seduce

(Lust, 61)¹

In the Septuagint, the verb ἀπατάω is used to translate the Hebrew verbs

נִשָּׂא Hiphil (Sense II "cheat, deceive," HALOT, 728); סוֹת Hiphil ("mislead, incite;

entice," HALOT, 749); תִּלְלֵל Hiphil ("mock, trifle with," HALOT, 1740), and פִּתְּהָ

Qal, Piel, Niphal, and Pual ("entice," as above, Section 2.1.1.8.2, "Use and meaning of פִּתְּהָ").

¹ Lust = J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie, *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (rev. ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003). Page references to Lust are incorporated in the text of this work.

Translating נָשָׂא, ἀπατάω is used for the serpent who deceived the woman (Gen 3:13), Hezekiah who might be deceiving the people of Jerusalem, according to the Assyrian messengers (2 Chr 32:15 = Isa 36:14), and prophets and diviners who may deceive the exiles (Jer 29:8).

In two cases, however, it is God who may deceive. The Assyrian messenger warns the people of Jerusalem that “your God” may promise deceptively that Jerusalem will not fall to the king of Assyria (Isa 37:10). In Jeremiah 4:10, Jeremiah accuses God of deceiving the people, by promising peace.

In a unique case, with God as the subject, the verb סוֹת is used in a positive sense in Job 36:16: Elihu tells Job that “he has allured you out of distress into a broad place where there was no constraint.”

In Job 31:27, the one translation of פָּתָה Qal as ἡπατήθη clarifies the Hebrew meaning. Job protests that it is not the case that his heart “was deceived” (LXX); this meaning agrees with “was gullible” (HALOT, Qal, 984). The other uses of ἀπατάω translate פָּתָה Piel, Niphal, and Pual. These all involve deception.

Some have a sexual meaning or connotation: in Exod 22:15, a man “seduces” a virgin; in Judg 14:15, “his wife” is to “coax” Samson; in Judg 16:15, it is Delilah who is to “coax” Samson. Others do not: Joab warns David that Abner came to “deceive” him (2 Sam 3:25); the lying spirit, sent from God, is to “deceive” Ahab (1 Kgs 22:20-22; 2 Chr 18:19-21). With future passive ἀπατηθήσεται “he may be deceived,” translating the Pual, Jeremiah may be “deceived” by “every man of my peace”

(כָּל אֲנִיִּשׁ שְׁלֹמִי). In Jer 20:7, Jeremiah cries out to the LORD, that “you deceived me” (ἡπάτησάς με) and “I was deceived” (ἡπατήθην).

From these examples, with the exception of Job 36:16, Greek ἀπατάω portrays a negative action of deception. This deception sometimes, but not always, may have a sexual connotation. God may do this deceiving, or arrange for a “lying spirit” to do it. Neither in Jer 4:10 nor in Jer 20:7 does LXX soften Jeremiah’s accusation that God did deceive the people and Jeremiah.

3.1.1.2 Jeremiah 11:18-20

3.1.1.2.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

In much of Jer 11:18-20, LXX corresponds closely to MT. In a slight difference in 11:18, LXX has an imperative addressed to the Lord, “make known to me!”, rather than the perfect of MT, “the LORD made me know.”

In 11:19 LXX are several differences. The lamb led to be sacrificed is “innocent,” as in P, rather than “pet” (MT), “choice” (Targum), or “tame” (Vulgate). Jeremiah’s opponents’ plan is specified as “evil,” as in the Targum. In 11:19b LXX is the major difference. The evil plotters plan to “throw,” rather than “destroy,” wood/a tree in his/its bread/food.

3.1.1.2.2 Use of ἐμβάλλω for שחַת

Hebrew: נִשְׁחִיתָה עֵץ בְּלֶחֶמוֹ

Let us destroy a tree/wood in/with its/his food/bread.

נִשְׁחִיתָה “let us destroy” from שחַת Hiphil Cohortative

“ruin, destroy; annihilate, exterminate; behave corruptly” (HALOT, 1470-72)

Greek: ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ

Let us throw a tree/wood into his food/bread.

ἐμβάλωμεν “let us throw” from ἐμβάλλω

“Active: cast/throw in(to); lay or put in(to)” (Lust, 194)

In LXX, ἐμβάλλω stands in the place of many different Hebrew verbs: אָסַף

(“put”), טָוַל (“throw”), נָפַל Hiphil (“deliver, throw”), נָתַן “put, set, throw”), פָּלַח

Piel (“put”), פָּקַד Hiphil (“commit, throw”), שָׂם (“put, throw”), שָׁלַךְ (“put,

throw”), תָּקַע (“drive back, throw”). It also translates the Aramaic ܐܬܝܬܐܝܬܐ , as

Nebuchadnezzar’s aides “throw” Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace .

In most cases, the Greek word is a straightforward translation of the Hebrew or Aramaic, indicating “throw” or “put.” In Jer 11:19, the Greek word seems unrelated to the Hebrew.

Those who “throw” or “put” are individuals: sailors, Saul, destroyers, Joseph and his brothers and master, Aaron, Moses’ mother, Moses, Joshua, a priest, Elisha, the kings of Assyria, Pashhur, the company of prophets, guards. The LORD also “puts” or “throws” God’s word (into Balaam’s mouth), a spirit (into the king of Assyria), a hook (into the nose of the king of Assyria), “the bowl of my wrath” into “the hand of your tormentors.” What they “throw” or “put” varies widely: bones,

cedars, manna, a covenant, utensils, stones and timber, flour, first fruits, words, a cup, money, their neck, taxes, and in Ps 40:3, trust in the LORD.

With the possible exception of **הָסֵן**², none of the Hebrew words translated by ἐμβάλλω refers directly to destruction, although Saul “planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines” (NRSV 1 Sam 18:25), and Nebuchadnezzar’s throwing the stones and timbers of Tyre into the sea, the “hook” for the king of Assyria, and the “bowl of my wrath” would all bring destruction. All of these, however, straightforwardly translate ἐμβάλλω as “put” or “throw.”

The translation of Jer 11:19 is therefore surprising. Could “wood” have reminded the translators of Moses’ throwing wood to sweeten the water (Exod 15:25)? Greek ἐμβάλλω would then be an attempt to clarify a difficult text.

Or, as Rudolph suggests³, could LXX, Targum, and Vulgate have been working from a different *Vorlage*? This seems more likely.

Jeremiah’s accusations in LXX 11:18-20 are no softer than, though somewhat different from, those in MT.

3.1.1.3 Jeremiah 12:1-3

Here LXX corresponds closely to MT, usually each Hebrew word to its Greek rendering. In 12:2, however, the odd **יְלִכֵּי**, probably in hendiadys with **עָשִׂי**, to

² For **הָסֵן**, HALOT (74) also lists the meaning of “destroy” (1 Sam 15:6: Saul warning the Kenites to withdraw from the Amalekites, lest he destroy them, translated προσθῶ “I increase”; Zeph 1:2f that the LORD will “sweep away everything from the face of the earth,” translated ἐκλείψει “I will forsake”). Could the translators of LXX have remembered this meaning of “destroy: and connected it with **שָׁחַת** “destroy”? Unlikely! given the other meanings of **הָסֵן** (“bring in, gather, receive, withdraw, take away,” HALOT, 74).

³ W. Rudolph, Footnote 19a, Jeremiah 11:19, *BHS*, 805. See discussion in Section 2.1.1.2.2, “The verb **נִשְׁחַתְּהוּ** “let us destroy.”

indicate the continual making of fruit, appears in LXX as ἐτεκνοποίησαν, “they bore children.” This would reflect a *Vorlage* of ילדו, or such a reading, to suit the context better. In 12:3, LXX has omitted MT’s “Tear them apart, like a flock for slaughter!”, possibly considering as sufficient “Sanctify them for a day of their slaughter.”

Neither of these differences softens Jeremiah’s complaint.

3.1.1.4 Jeremiah 15:10-12

3.1.1.4.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Jer 15:10-12 LXX differs considerably from the Masoretic Text. In 15:10, “I did not lend, nor did they lend to me” is broadened to “I did not help, nor has anyone helped me.” MT’s “all are cursing me” gains the addition, “my strength failed.”

In 15:11, because LXX omits “the LORD said,” several pronouns have different referents. It is hard to see a relationship between κατευσθύνοντων αὐτῶν “their prospering” and the obscure Hebrew שְׁרוּתְךָ (Kativ; “your release”) or שְׁרִיתֶיךָ (Qere, “I released you”).

“Truly I stood before you,” with εἰ μὴ representing the Hebrew idiom אִם לֹא (“surely”), indicates that the prophet stood before the LORD, “for good,” for his adversaries, in the time of “their” calamities (those of the adversaries), and against their enemy. This is contrary in meaning to one reading of the Hebrew, in which the LORD intervened for the prophet. It corresponds to Jeremiah’s plea in

18:20, that the LORD remember his “standing before your face, to speak good things on their behalf.”

The question in 15:12, obscure in Hebrew (“Will iron shatter iron from the north and bronze?”) is equally, but differently, obscure in Greek (“Will iron and brass covering be known?”)

Jeremiah’s complaints remain strong in 15:10-12 LXX, not softened from MT.

3.1.1.5 Jeremiah 15:15-18

3.1.1.5.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Jer 15:15-18 LXX differs considerably from the Masoretic Text. In 15:15, LXX leaves out “Do not take me away!” This makes “not in forbearance” modify “revenge me,” making God’s forbearance not desirable. It would act as a reduction in revenge, rather than as a mercy to Jeremiah.

In 15:16, “your words” have not been “found” (MT מְצָאִי) but are being “rejected” by those who confer disgrace on the prophet (15:15). W. Rudolph suggests as a possible *Vorlage* for LXX ἀθετούντων (“those rejecting”) מְנַאֲצִי “from those spurning,” with four of the same letters, in different order.⁴ Rudolph also suggests כִּלְּם “consume them” as a *Vorlage* for LXX συντέλεσον αὐτούς, in place of MT לֹא־כִלְּם. This could follow from the unpointed Hebrew text, if נ were missing.

⁴ W. Rudolph, *BHS*, 813.

In 15:16, LXX also changes the odd image of the prophet “eating” God’s words. The people who reject “your words,” not the words, are to be consumed.

In 15:17, in MT, the meaning of “nor did I exult” follows closely “I did not sit in the company of jokers.” In LXX, ἐὺλαβούμην (“I feared”) is connected with “on account of” (“from the face of”) your hand. The prophet was filled with “bitterness” (πικρίας), a broader sense than “a curse” (עִנָּה).

In 15:18 are many differences. “Why is my pain endless?” (MT) becomes more personally pointed, “Why are those vexing me overpowering me?” (LXX) In LXX, the wound is “severe” (στερεα) rather than “incurable” (אִנְיָשָׁהּ). This agrees with the Peshitta (ܬܠܝܬܐ) and Targum (תק'פא). The statement in MT that “it [the wound] refused to be healed” is a question in LXX: “Whence shall I be healed?” In 15:18b, MT is ambiguous. It is either “you” (the LORD, 2ms) or “it” (the wound, 3 fs) that is “like deception, water that is not reliable.” In LXX, it is clear that it is “it” (the wound, fs) that is “like lying/false water; it has no faithfulness.”

Jeremiah’s complaints in 15:15-18 LXX remain strong, while removing the possibility that God might be unfaithful.

3.1.1.5.2 Use of ψευδὲς for אִכְזָב in 15:18

Hebrew: אִכְזָב מִיִּם לֹא נֶאֱמָנוּ “deception, waters that are not faithful”

A similar expression is found in Isa 58:11, using a verb (כָּזַב, “lie, deceive”)

related to אֶכְזֹב, “deception.”

וְהָיִיתָ כְּגֵן רוּחַ וּכְמוֹצָא מַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכְזָבוּ מִימָיו:

And you [my people] shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not deceive.

LXX: ὕδωρ ψευδὲς οὐκ ἔχον πίστιν

lying/false water; it has no faithfulness.

And Isa 58:11:

καὶ ἔσῃ ὡς κήπος μεθύων καὶ ὡς πηγή ἣν μὴ ἐξέλιπεν ὕδωρ

And you shall be like a well-watered garden, and like a spring/fountain, from which water has not failed.

Here the water might fail, but does not lie.

The noun ψεῦδος (“lie,” Lust, 673) and adjective ψευδής (“lying, false, untrue,” Lust, 672) are very common in LXX, translating a variety of Hebrew nouns:

כַּחַשׁ (“infirmity; lie, deceit,” HALOT, 470), כָּזַב (“lie,” HALOT, 468), and, most

commonly, שֶׁקֶר (“breach of faith, lie,” HALOT, 1648-1650). The adjective

ψεῦδής usually translates part of a Hebrew construct chain: a “false” or “lying”

vision (ὄρασις ψευδής) is a “vision of worthlessness” (וִזְיוֹן שָׁוְיָ, Ezek 12:24 and

many other times) or “vision of a lie” (וִזְיוֹן שֶׁקֶר, Jer 14:14). The “lying/false

water” (ὕδωρ ψευδές) of Jer 15:18 is an apposition in Hebrew

(אֲכָזֵב מִיָּם).

Visions, images, dreams, hopes, words, including oaths and evidence, and tongues may be false or lying. Usually, it is people who lie, using these, often with “lying lips” (Prov 12:22, 17:4). Many are prophets with “false visions” (many in Jer and Ezek). They lie to the LORD, to “all” (many times in Prov), to Israel.

Surprising uses of ψευδής include the “vain hope” of the war horse (Psa 32:17), the “delusion” of the hills (Jer 3:10), and the “lying/false” water of Jer 15:18.

In only one instance, reported in both Kings and Chronicles, it is the LORD who instigates a “lying spirit” (πνεῦμα ψευδὲς 1 Kgs 22:22-23 = 3 Kgdms 22:22-3 LXX // 2 Chr 18:21-22) to deceive Ahab, through the prophecy of all the prophets except Micaiah ben Imlah. Here LXX does not soften the account of God’s actions.

In Jer 15:18, however, LXX removes the strong accusation against God, as in one reading of MT. LXX agrees with the other possible reading of MT. The image of God as untrustworthy waters that “fail” would contradict Jeremiah’s own image of God as “the spring of living water” (πηγὴν ὕδατος ζωῆς Jer 2:13) and “spring of life” (πηγὴν ζωῆς Jer 17:13). Instead, it is the “wound” that is “like lying waters.”

3.1.1.6 Jeremiah 17:14-18

3.1.1.6.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Jer 17:14-18 LXX has numerous differences from MT.

In 17:16, the obscure Hebrew לֹא־אֶחְזָקָה, probably “I did not hurry,” is rendered as a clearer οὐκ ἐκοπίασα, “I did not grow weary.” LXX retains the idea of “following after you,” probably as an interpretation of the obscure מִרְעָה אַחֲרֶיךָ,

“from being a shepherd after you.” In 17:16ab, “a disastrous day” (יֹם אֲנִיִּשׁ), (MT) could be repointed as יֹם אֲנִישׁ, “a day of a man.” This option is followed by LXX, P, and the Vulgate. Tov’s conclusion seems likely, that the LXX translator did not recognize the meaning of אֲנִיִּשׁ, as also in LXX Isa 17:11 and Jer 17:9.⁵

In 17:17 LXX, Jeremiah asks the LORD not to be a “hostile stranger” (ἀλλοτριώσις, “estrangement”), rather than a “terror” (מִחְתָּהּ) to him (see below). Jeremiah asks that God “have pity” (φειδόμενος) on him, rather than declaring that “you are my refuge” (מִחְסִי, a common word in the Psalms for God’s protection).

In MT, the “terror” (מִחְתָּהּ, 17a) that God might be for Jeremiah is echoed in Jeremiah’s wish (17:18) that his persecutors may be terrified (יִחַתּוּ) and that he may not be terrified (אֶחָתָהּ, all from חָתַת). In LXX, there is no echo of ἀλλότριος (17:17) in the two verbs in 17:18, though they echo each other (πτοηθείησαν, “let them be terrified,” and μὴ πτοηθείην, “let me not be terrified”).

3.1.1.6.2 Use of ἀλλοτριώσις in the place of מִחְתָּהּ in 17:17

Hebrew אֶל-תִּהְיֶה-לִּי לְמִחְתָּהּ

Do not become a terror for me.

מִחְתָּהּ “terror; ruin; corruption” (HALOT, 572), from

⁵ Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (2nd ed.; Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), 113.

תתת Qal: be shattered, be filled with terror; Niphal: be broken to pieces,

be dismayed, be terrified; Piel: dishearten; Hiphil: shatter

(HALOT, 365)

The Hebrew verb holds both meanings, of breaking, and of terror or dismay.

Greek: μή γεννηθῆς μοι εἰς ἀλλοτρίωσιν

Do not be a hostile stranger to me

ἀλλοτρίωσις “estrangement”;

here, “hostile stranger,” as ἀλλότριος (Lust, 29)

In LXX, ἀλλότριος is a common translation for אֲחֵרִי (other; later,

following; of another kind, HALOT, 35); זָרָא (strange; non-Israelite; prohibited,

HALOT, 279); נָכַר (foreigner, foreign country, HALOT, 700), and נָכַרִי (foreign,

foreigner, strange, HALOT, 700).

In Jeremiah, translating אֲחֵרִי, ἀλλότριος generally refers to “other” gods, worshipped and served by the people and leaders of Judah “to your own hurt” (Jer 7:6, among many examples). Translating אֲחֵרִים, ἀλλότριος (in plural) refers to “strangers” or “foreigners,” foolishly loved (Jer 2:25, 3:13) or unwillingly served (Jer 5:19, 30:8 MT = 37:8 LXX).

In other prophets, ἀλλότριος (in plural) translates unfriendly אֲחֵרִים. They devour Ephraim’s strength (Hos 7:9) and standing grain (Hos 8:7); they cast lots for Jerusalem (Obad 1:11); they have devoured and overthrown the land (Isa 1:7); falling

into their hands is a disaster (e.g., Ezek 7:21, 11:9, 28:10, 30:12). Translating

נְכַרִי, ἄλλότριος refers to a “foreign” or “strange” god, in Mal 2:11 and Isa 43:12.

Nowhere else in LXX does ἄλλότριος represent מִחֲתָה, “terror.” The

Greek word, however, also presents an unwelcome and negative possibility. The word does not refer to friendly foreigners; a “strange” god is not a help to the people of Ephraim or Judah. In 17:17 LXX, Jeremiah sees the possibility of God as a hostile “foreigner.” This is still a strong accusation, though couched in different terms than the “terror” of MT.

3.1.1.7 Jeremiah 18:18-23

3.1.1.7.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Much of Jer 18:18-23 LXX is similar to MT. Among the differences are a strong contrast and a clarification; others may have come from reading different pointing of the same consonants.

In 18:18 LXX, his opponents “will hear” (ἀκουσόμεθα). This is a surprising contrast with MT “let us not listen attentively.” Other versions agree with MT; these suit the context better.

In Jer 18:19, “my opponents” (רִיבִי) shares four letters with רִיבִי (“my dispute, lawsuit,” HALOT, 1225), a possible *Vorlage* of LXX δικαιώματός μου (my “ordinance, decree; justification, legal right; justice; rightful due,” Lust, 154), P חַלְבִּי. (“my wrong”), and Targum עֲלֵבְנִי (“my grievance”). LXX 18:19 δικαιώματός μου would correspond to LXX 11:20, δικάϊωμα μου, for רִיבִי.

In 18:20, instead of MT's metaphor of "they dug a pit for my life," LXX has "they spoke words against my life, and hid their trap for me." This retains the "pit" or "trap," but clarifies its meaning by expansion, including "words" against the prophet's life. In 18:22 LXX, a word spoken is in place of MT "dug a pit" (שיחה Ketiv). Rudolph suggests that this λόγος may come from שיחה ("thoughtful contemplation, meditation," HALOT, 1321), read without pointing either vowels or shin/sin.⁶ Tov thinks that "שיחה/שוחה (pit) was apparently not known to the translators, who reflected the more common שיחה (conversation)."⁷ These possibilities seem likely.

In 18:23, MT "let them be overthrown" (מִכְשָׁלֵיהֶם) is rendered "let their weakness" (ἡ ἀσθενεία αὐτῶν), both "before you." Rudolph suggests that a possible *Vorlage* for the Greek may be מִכְשָׁלָם ("their stumbling-block, hindrance, offense," HALOT, 582).⁸ Both of his suggestions seem possible.

The differences between 18:18-23 LXX and MT do not soften Jeremiah's complaint.

3.1.1.7.2 Use of κόλασις for שוחה in 18:20

Hebrew כִּי־כָרוּ שוחה לנפשי for they dug a pit for my life

שוחה (18:20) "trapper's pit; gorge, precipice" (HALOT, 1439)

⁶ W. Rudolph, Footnote 22a, Jer 18:22, *BHS*, 819.

⁷ Tov, *Text-Critical Use* . . . , 112.

⁸ W. Rudolph, Footnote 23c, Jer 18:23, *BHS*, 819.

Greek καὶ τὴν κόλασιν αὐτῶν ἔκρυψάν μοι

and they hid a trap for me

κόλασις “chastisement, punishment; vengeance; that which brings about punishment, stumbling block, trap” (Lust, 347)

As a “trap” or “stumbling-block,” the comparatively rare word κόλασις translates מִכְשׁוֹל in Ezekiel as a metaphorical stumbling-block to those who have “taken their idols into their hearts “ and “will bear their punishment” (Ezek 14:2; 44:12 NRSV). Only in Jer 18:20 does κόλασις translate שְׁוִתָּהּ.

Unlike P, LXX does not use the same word in Prov 22:14 and 23:27, as in Jer 18:20, to translate MT’s שְׁוִתָּהּ. In Prov 22:14, the “mouth of a transgressor” (στόμα παρανομίου), in place of the “mouth of a strange woman” (פִּי זָרוּת) is a “deep pit” (βόθρος βαθύς). Prov 23:27 LXX is very different from MT. Instead of פִּי־שׁוֹתָהּ עֵמֶק זֶנֶה, “for a prostitute is a deep pit,” LXX reads πίθος γὰρ τετρημένος ἐστὶν ἀλλότριος οἶκος, “for a strange house is a pierced jar.” In LXX, there is no verbal connection between Jer 18:20 and Prov 22:14 and 23:27.

3.1.1.8 Jeremiah 20:7-10

3.1.1.8.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Much of Jeremiah 20:7-9 is similar in LXX and MT.

In Jer 20:7, LXX ἡπάτησάς με “you have deceived me” carries an accusation similar to MT פִּתְּיָנִי (see 3.1.1.8.2, below).

In 20:8, LXX changes “I speak, I cry out, I call,” to “with a bitter word, I will laugh.” LXX πικρῶ, “bitter,” could come from a כ – ב confusion of MT מְרִי, “as often as,” with מְרִי, “bitter ones.” The “bitter word” intensifies the speech, but in a different direction. Rather than Jeremiah calling, “Violence and destruction!”, he is called “faithlessness and distress!”, the content of the “disgrace” and “mockery” that the word of the Lord has become for him.

In 20:9 LXX agrees with P that the fire is “burning,” rather than “locked up” “in my bones.” Instead of “struggling to endure” (MT), the prophet is “totally weakened” (LXX), explaining why “I am not able to bear.”

In 20:10 LXX is very different from MT: instead of “terror from every side” (מִגִּזְרֵי כָּל עֵדָה), LXX reads συναθροισθέντων κυκλόθεν (“gathered round about”). This is close to P, where the many were “coming together from round about me,” and the Targum, “those gathered together round about.” W. Rudolph thinks that this reading may be related to a derivation of מִגִּזְרֵי from אָגַר “bring in (harvest)” (HALOT, 11).⁹

In MT, מִגִּזְרֵי מִסְבִּיב in Jeremiah 20:10 quotes the LORD’s naming Pashhur in Jeremiah 20:3, as no longer Pashhur but “terror on every side”; in Jer 20:4, the LORD is “making you a terror (מִגִּזְרֵי) to you and all your friends.” All of this is in the context of the coming deportation to Babylon. LXX, the Targum, and P lack this

⁹ W. Rudolph, Footnote 10a, Jer 20:10, *BHS*, 822.

quotation. In Jer 20:3 LXX, the LORD names Pashhur Μέτοικον (“alien resident,” Liddell and Scott, 1121). In Jer 20:4 LXX, the LORD is giving him and all his friends to μετοικίαν “deportation.” In Jer 20:3 Peshitta, Pashhur is called ܠܫܝܒܐ (“a sojourner”) and ܠܫܝܒܐ (“beggar”). In Jer 20:4, the LORD is making him “a sojourner” (ܠܫܝܒܐ) to himself and his friends. “Sojourner” in P agrees with Jer 20:3 LXX.

These readings may derive from a second meaning of מְנוּחָה, “temporary abode of a מְנוּחָה, land of domicile, sojourning” (HALOT, 184). They both clarify an obscure name and make a firmer connection with the coming Babylonian captivity. Since, however, neither P nor LXX carries over the obscure name to Jeremiah 20:10, the pun carrying the connection among Jeremiah’s bitter words is lost.

“Every man of my peace” (כָּל אֲנֹשׁ שְׁלוֹמִי) is interpreted as “all his friends” (πάντες ἄνδρες φίλοι αὐτοῦ). In 20:10 MT, the word “watch” is a participle in Hebrew, “those watching my stumbling” (שֹׁמְרֵי צַלְעִי). In 20:10 LXX, “watch” is an imperative, “Watch over his thought!” (τηρήσατε τὴν ἐπίνοιαν αὐτοῦ). This close “watching” agrees well with their plan to “conspire!” (ἐπισύστητε), and gather information, so that they may “prevail over him.” Perhaps they are not ready to “denounce” (הַגִּידוּ) but need this information.

3.1.1.8.2 Use of ἀπατάω for פתה in 20:7 and 20:10

Hebrew

20:7 פתיתני יהוה ואפת You have enticed me, O LORD, and I was enticed.

from פתה (HALOT, 984-5)

פתיתני Piel Perfect 2ms + 1cs suffix “entice” (see Section

2.1.1.8.2)

ואפת Niphal Imperfect Vav-Consecutive 1cs

“let oneself be deceived, let oneself be taken for a fool”

(HALOT), enticed

20:10 אולי יפתה “maybe he will be enticed”

יפתה Pual Imperfect 3ms

“let oneself be persuaded, be persuaded” (HALOT),

be enticed

Greek

20:7 ἡπάτησάς με κύριε καὶ ἡπατήθην

You deceived me, O Lord, and I was deceived.

ἡπάτησάς 2nd Aorist Active 2s from ἀπατάω “deceive”

ἡπατήθην Aorist Passive 1s from ἀπατάω “deceive”

20:10 εἰ ἀπατηθήσεται maybe he will be deceived

ἀπατηθήσεται Future Passive 3s from ἀπατάω “deceive”

See discussion of ἀπατάω “deceive” in Section 3.1.1.1.2. Unlike MT,

LXX uses the same verb in Jer 4:10 and 20:7, 10, for deception by God. LXX does not soften Jeremiah’s complaint in either text.

3.1.1.9 Jeremiah 20:14-18

3.1.1.9.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

LXX Jeremiah 20:14-18 is a very close rendering of the MT. In 20:15, LXX simplifies “male son” (בֶּן זָכָר) as “male” (ἄρσεν). In 20:16, LXX adds that the LORD overthrew the cities “in fury.” In 20:17 LXX, Jeremiah would have been killed “in” (ἐν μήτρᾳ μητρὸς), adding “mother’s,” rather than “from” the womb (מִרְחֹם).

In 20:18 LXX, the prophet’s days “continued” (διετέλεισαν) rather than “came to an end” (וַיִּכָּלֶי) in shame. The Greek word could also reflect another meaning of διατελέω (Lust, 147, “to continue doing or being; continue”; Liddell and Scott¹⁰, 415, “1. bring quite to an end, accomplish; 2. continue doing or being”) and thus also mean “came to an end.”

Jer 20:14-18 LXX does not soften Jeremiah’s outcry against the God who made him, but retains MT’s strong accusation.

¹⁰ Liddell and Scott = LSJ = H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon with a Revised Supplement* (rev. Henry Stuart Jones; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Page references to Liddell and Scott are incorporated in the text of this work.

3.1.2 Hexapla Differences from LXX renderings of Jeremiah's Complaints

Quotations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion are from Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum*.¹¹ See texts and translations in Appendix 3, pp. 402-415, “The ‘Three’ and the Septuagint.”

3.1.2.1 Jeremiah 4:10 : No differences.

3.1.2.2 Jeremiah 11:18-20

The significant difference is in Jer 11:19: LXX ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον “let us throw wood/a tree into his food/bread”, vs. Symmachus διαφθείρωμεν ἐν ξύλῳ τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ “let us destroy in a tree/wood his bread/food.” Symmachus, as in the Hebrew נִשְׁחִיתָהּ עֵץ בִּלְחֶמֶהּ “Let us destroy wood/a tree in its/his bread/food,” has “destroy” rather than “throw,” but reverses what is to be destroyed.

3.1.2.3 Jeremiah 12:1-3

In Jer 12:2, both Aquila and Symmachus translate יִלְכוּ directly, as “they went” (Aquila) and “advancing” (Symmachus). Neither reads the interpretation of LXX, “they bore children.” This could indicate that LXX worked from a *Vorlage* of יִלְדוּ rather than יִלְכוּ.

3.1.2.4 Jeremiah 15:10-12

“The Three” differ both from MT and LXX in Jer 15:10-12. In Jer 15:10, Aquila and Symmachus follow MT, “I did not lend, nor did anyone lend to me.”

¹¹ Frederick Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt: sive Veterum Interpretum Graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum Fragmenta* (Vol. 2; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875).

Theodotion retains “lend” but reverses who did not owe whom. In 15:11, Aquila interprets the obscure Hebrew שְׁרוּתְךָ (Ketiv, “your release”) as “your remnant” and uses ἀπῆντησά σοι “I met/encountered you” to translate הִפְנֵתִי. The “calamities” here belong to the prophet, not his adversaries, as in LXX. Symmachus makes it clearer that the Lord’s action was on behalf of the prophet. The question in 15:12, obscure in MT and LXX, is equally, but differently, obscure in Aquila and Symmachus.

3.1.2.5 Jeremiah 15:15-18

In Jer 15:16-18, Aquila and Symmachus are much closer to MT than LXX. In 15:16, Aquila retains both God’s word being “found” and the odd image of the prophet “eating” God’s word. For one reading of Symmachus, “your words” are “my food”; for the other, the clearer and softened sense is that “I received them.” In 15:17, Aquila and Symmachus retain “I rejoiced,” attaching it to “before your hand” rather than to “did not sit” (as punctuated in MT). In 15:18, the pain is “a victory” (Aquila) or “continuous” (Symmachus), close to MT “endless” and very different from LXX “those vexing me.” It is the wound that is “incurable,” as in MT, rather than “severe” (LXX). As in MT, the statement is that wound refuses to be healed, unlike the question of LXX. The water, “not reliable” in MT, “lying” in LXX, is clarified as “ceasing.”

3.1.2.6 Jeremiah 17:14-18

In Jer 17:16, Aquila and Symmachus show substantial differences from both LXX and MT. They render the obscure לֹא-אֲצַחֵּתִי as “I did not prevail/strengthen”

or “I did not urge,” possible translations of אָרַץ, along with “hurry, be in haste.”¹²

Reading מִרְעָה as מִרְעָה (same letters, different pointing), it is “wickedness”

rather than “a shepherd” that was not urged. Their reading does not clarify this difficult passage. In 17:17, Aquila and Symmachus are close to MT, asking that God not be a “terror,” rather than the “hostile stranger” of LXX.

3.1.2.7 Jeremiah 18:18-23

In Jer 18:19-23, Aquila and Symmachus are much closer to MT than LXX.

In 18:19, they translate יְרִיבַי as “my adversaries” (ἄντιδίκων) rather than “my

justification” (probably from רִיבַי), in LXX. In 18:20 and 18:22, they retain the

digging, a pit (Aquila, as in MT), or destruction (Symmachus), rather than the

interpretation of LXX, that they “spoke words.” In 18:23, Aquila translates MT

directly as “may they be caused to stumble before you”; LXX interprets this as “let their weakness be before you.”

3.1.2.8 Jeremiah 20:7-10

In several places in Jer 20:7-10, Aquila and Symmachus are closer to MT than

to LXX. In 20:7, Aquila translates פְּתִיתָנִי “you have enticed me” as ἔθελξάς με,

“you have beguiled/enchanted me.” Aquila repeatedly uses θέλω, “enchant,

bewitch; cheat, cozen; charm, beguile,”¹³ rather than ἀπατάω, “deceive,” as in LXX,

to represent different forms of פתה in the Hebrew Bible (cf Exod 22:16; Job 5:2,

¹² אָרַץ, “urge; be in haste with,” HALOT, 23.

¹³ θέλω, LSJ, 788.

31:27; Ps 18:8; Prov 1:4, 14:15, 19:25; Hos 2:14, 7:11). This appears to be a “stereotyped” use of $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\gamma\omega$, as a “symbol for [a] Hebrew word.”¹⁴ Only in Exod 22:16 is this in the context of sexual seduction.

In 20:8, neither Aquila nor Symmachus adds “with a bitter word,” as in LXX. In 20:9, Aquila and Symmachus are closer to MT, with “weary to bear” rather than “totally weakened.” In 20:10, the “peaceful” men are “guarding my side” in Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, as in a differently pointed Hebrew text (see Section 2.1.1.8.1, about 20:10 in MT), in contrast with the imperative in LXX, “Guard!”

3.1.2.9 Jeremiah 20:14-18

The few differences show Aquila and Symmachus closer to MT. In 20:14, the day is not to be “blessed,” as in MT, rather than “longed for” (LXX). In 20:15, Aquila preserves the Hebrew tautologous infinitive construction as a participle followed by a finite verb. In 20:18, the days “were used up” (Aquila), corresponding better to MT “came to an end” than LXX “continued.”

3.1.3 What this shows about LXX translation in Jeremiah’s complaints

3.1.3.1 Differences between MT and LXX Jeremiah

The text of the book of Jeremiah differs greatly in LXX and MT, in both length and order. The text in LXX is “shorter than MT by one-seventh.”¹⁵ Major sections of the text of Jeremiah occur in a different arrangement, “most clearly visible

¹⁴ Staffan Olofsson, *The LXX Version* (Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 30; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1990), 78.

¹⁵ Emanuel Tov, “The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in Light of its Textual History,” Chapter 24 in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 363.

in the different location of the oracles against foreign nations (Chapters 46-51 in the MT)” and from 25:13 through Chapter 31 in the LXX; the oracles are also arranged in a different order.¹⁶

These differences raise questions about the literary history of the book of Jeremiah. Many have asked which Hebrew text came first, a longer proto-Masoretic text or a shorter proto-Septuagint text. Emanuel Tov terms the shorter text Edition I (ed. I), the longer, Edition II (ed. II). He observes that:

1. “Since the translation of the LXX in Jeremiah is “relatively literal where the two texts overlap, it is unlikely that the translator would have abridged his Hebrew *Vorlage*. This implies that the brevity of the LXX reflects a short Hebrew text.”¹⁷

2. Most of the elements found in MT but lacking in the LXX (minuses) “can easily be explained as additions in ed. II.”¹⁸

3. “The additional elements (pluses) found in ed. II often do not suit their context.”¹⁹

4. In MT chapters 27-29, the name of the king of Babylon, not found in LXX chapters 27-29, is given in the later form of Nebuchadnezzar; in the rest of the book, in its “original form, Nebuchadrezzar.”²⁰

¹⁶ Emanuel Tov, “Some Aspects of the Textual and Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah,” Chapter 8 in P.-M. Bogaert, *Le Livre de Jérémie* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 148.

¹⁷ Tov, “The Literary History . . .,” 363.

¹⁸ Emanuel Tov, “Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint of Jeremiah 27 (34),” Chapter 22 in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 316.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 317.

5. Fragments of the text of Jeremiah from Qumran fall in two categories: proto-Masoretic (4QJer^{a,c}) and ones “very similar to the underlying text of the LXX, both in the length and in the differing arrangement of the text” (4QJer^{b,d}).²¹ The latter demonstrate the early existence of a text of Jeremiah shorter and in different order than that of MT.

6. Where the “text of Jeremiah runs parallel with that of Kings (mainly Jeremiah 52//2 Kings 224-25), the short text of the LXX of Jeremiah is also found in 2 Kings (both in MT and in the LXX).”²²

Other versions (Targum, Vulgate, and Peshitta) differ from MT only “in minor details . . . on the whole these versions reflect the text of MT.”²³

Tov concludes that “the LXX of Jeremiah was based on a short Hebrew *Vorlage*, similar to 4QJer^{b,d}.”²⁴ This he calls edition I. The editor of edition II, which corresponds to MT, then added new material, including new details and clarifications, and rearranged sections. For the prose sections of Jeremiah, this conclusion has been generally accepted.

3.1.3.2 Differences between MT and LXX texts of the complaints of Jeremiah

3.1.3.2.1 Differences in meaning of vocabulary, not placement or length

These substantial differences between the texts of Jeremiah in MT and the LXX, however, do not occur in the complaints of Jeremiah. The complaints are largely poetic, and as Holladay points out, “the propensity of *M* to offer expansions

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Tov, “Some Aspects . . .,” 147.

²⁴ Tov, “Literary History . . .,” 364.

over *G* . . . is a characteristic of the prose sections, not the poetic ones.”²⁵ In the complaints of Jeremiah, MT and LXX stand in considerable agreement, regarding both placement in the book of Jeremiah and length of each text. Their differences are on the level of vocabulary use rather than arrangement or length. As can be seen in Appendix 2, Parallel Biblical Versions (pp. 364-401), correspondence is usually close to word-for-word.

Qumran fragments including Jeremiah’s complaints come only from 4QJer^a and 4QJer^c (see Section 2.2, pp. 49-51). None come from either 4QJer^b or 4QJer^d; they do not show accord with LXX.

Differences in meaning of vocabulary are considered in this work. As in Wyckoff’s article on Exodus 24:9-11, because no “‘proto-LXX’ Hebrew textual witness” for the complaints of Jeremiah has been recovered, this work employs “the MT as a concrete point of comparison” with LXX Jeremiah.²⁶

3.1.3.2.2 Causes of differences

3.1.3.2.2.1 Many causes

The many, mostly slight, differences between LXX and MT in Jeremiah’s complaints may have a number of causes. Some differences may come from interpretation or clarification of obscure passages, sometimes providing more logical images. Others appear to come from different *Vorlagen*, either consonantal, or with the same consonants and different vowel pointing. Still others are simply different, and it is hard to see any connection. In two cases, LXX presents the opposite of MT.

²⁵ William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26-52* (Edited by Paul D. Hanson; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 3.

²⁶ Eric John Wyckoff, “When Does Translation Become Exegesis? Exodus 24:9-11 in the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint,” *CBQ* 74 (2012), 678.

But LXX rarely softens Jeremiah's harsh language toward God. The differences do not seem to reflect differing theological exegesis, by adding or deleting elements of the Hebrew text.²⁷ The translation does seem "relatively literal."²⁸

3.1.3.2.2 Diamond's view: vocalization

A. R. Pete Diamond presents a contrasting view. He considers the Hebrew text of edition 1 and edition 2 for many of Jeremiah's complaints "the same," with differences of content arising primarily from "different vocalization or division of a common consonantal text."²⁹ He thinks that these "differences in pointing should be taken as a reflection of a tradition of interpretation."³⁰ In his view, the LXX text (representing edition 1)³¹ is more closely linked with generic Israelite lament, presenting "an early stage in the portrait of Jeremiah as intercessor and 'lamerter' on behalf of a community under judgment."³² The MT text (representing edition 2)³³, with specifics of Jeremiah's role as a prophet, then connects with "early stages of the portrait of Jeremiah as a second Moses and rejected messenger constructed by Dtr."³⁴

Some of Diamond's examples do fit his distinction between generic cultic and specifically prophetic diction. The only one that involves difference in vocalization is the direct address, characteristic of laments, in Jer 11:18 LXX (κύριε γνώρισόν μοι καὶ γνώσομαι "Lord, make me know, and I shall know" possibly from

²⁷ Emanuel Tov, "Theologically motivated exegesis," in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible* (Supplements to VT 72; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 259.

²⁸ Emanuel Tov, "The literary history of the Book of Jeremiah in light of its textual history," in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, 363.

²⁹ A.R. Pete Diamond, "Jeremiah's Confessions in the LXX and MT," VT 40 (1990): 35.

³⁰ Ibid., 43.

³¹ Ibid., 35.

³² Ibid., 42.

³³ Ibid., 35.

³⁴ Ibid., 42.

הוֹדִיעֵנִי וְאַדְעָהּ, in contrast with MT הוֹדִיעֵנִי וְאַדְעָהּ, “made me know and I knew”).

Some of his other examples, however, though they show the distinction he indicates between generic lament and prophetic diction, do not involve different vocalization. In Jer 15:16, the difference between MT “your words were found” (נִמְצְאוּ), and LXX “those rejecting (τῶν ἀθετούντων, possibly מִנְאֲצִי your words,” involves a rearrangement of letters and ו/ו confusion. In Jer 15:10, the LXX “my strength failed” is simply a plus. In Jer 15:18, the LXX reading that it is the wound, not the LORD, that is like lying water with no faithfulness, does not involve different vocalization; the Hebrew of MT can be read as “you” (2ms) or “it” (3fs).

Other differences, that Diamond does not discuss, indicate different *Vorlagen* rather than vocalization. For example, in Jer 11:19, there appears no logical connection between MT “let us destroy” (נַשְׁחִיתָהּ) and LXX “let us throw” (ἐμβάλωμεν), and in Jer 20:10, MT “watching my stumbling” (שֹׁמְרִי צִלְעִי) and LXX “watch his thought!” (τηρήσατε ἐπίνοιαν αὐτοῦ) also lack connection.

Some differences indicate confusion of consonants rather than different vocalization. In Jer 12:2, MT “they advanced” (יָלְכוּ), taken as hendiadys with פָּרִי to mean “they continually made fruit”) may, by כ/ד confusion, be read as לָקְחוּ to mean “they continually made fruit”) may, by כ/ד confusion, be read as LXX ἐτεκνοποίησαν, “they bore children” (יָלְדוּ). In Jer 18:20, 22, MT שוֹחָה or שִׁחָה “pit,” may, by ש/ש confusion, have been read as שִׁחָה “meditation,”

corresponding to LXX ῥήματα “words” (18:20) or λόγον “word” (18:22). In Jer 20:8, MT “whenever I speak” (מִיָּדַי אֲדַבֵּר), by ד/ר confusion, could be read as LXX “with my bitter word” (πιικρῶ λόγῳ μου probably מִיָּדַי דַּבֵּר).

There are also simple differences in vocalization that seem unconnected with Diamond’s distinction, e.g., in Jer 17:16, LXX “day of man” (ἡμέραν ἀνθρώπου probably יוֹם אָנוּשׁ) in place of MT “disastrous day” (יוֹם אָנוּשׁ).

Diamond’s analysis of differences between LXX and MT texts of Jeremiah’s complaints accounts for a few of the observed variants. The following discussion considers many possible sources of these differences.

3.1.3.2.2.3 Examples of different causes

Many differences may come from attempts at clarification. In a possible clarification, in 15:10, LXX broadens MT’s “I did not lend, nor did they lend to me,” to “I have not helped, nor has anyone helped me.” The LXX addition of “my strength failed” could also bring the complaint closer to a generic lament. In further clarification, in 15:18b LXX, it is the wound, not the Lord, which has become “like lying water.” This may represent a softening, removing “the full force of the accusation of Yahweh.”³⁵ In 18:20 and 18:22, “for they spoke words against my life” may possibly be a clarification of “they dug a pit for my life.” This may also come from a different reading of pointing (see below). In 15:16, LXX changes the odd image of the prophet “eating” God’s words to an imperative, “Consume them!” referring to those who reject God’s words. Since Aquila and Symmachus retain

³⁵ Diamond, 40.

“eating” or “food,” this change appears to be an interpretation, perhaps for the sake of clarity. In 20:9, the fire is “burning” (LXX), rather than “locked up” in his bones. Both changes may be for the sake of clarity. In 20:10, “those watching my stumbling” is rather an imperative, “Watch over his thought!” fitting with their plan to “conspire!”

Several differences may be connected with different *Vorlagen*. In 11:19, there does not appear to be a logical connection between “let us destroy” (MT) and “let us throw” (LXX) wood in his food/bread. Rudolph’s suggestions of *Vorlagen* of נְשִׁיתָהּ or נְשִׁלָּהּ seem possible.³⁶ In 12:2, either a *Vorlage* of ילדו or such a reading for intelligibility seems likely for ἔτεκεν ποσὶ ἡσάων “they bore children.” In 15:16, Rudolph suggests מְנַאֲצִי “from those spurning” [your words] as *Vorlage* for “those rejecting.” This has four of the same letters as MT נִמְצְאוּ “they were found,” though in different order.

As with Diamond’s analysis, it appears that different vowel pointing of the same consonants may account for some of the differences. In the obscure 17:16aa, LXX appears to have read רעה in accord with MT, as רֶעָה, and interpreted “shepherd” as “following” after you. Aquila and Symmachus, however, agree with P in reading as “wickedness,” probably from רָעָה. In 17:16ab, LXX agrees with P and Vulgate, in reading “a day of man” (יּוֹם אָנוּשׁ), rather than “a disastrous day” (אָנוּשׁ יּוֹם). In 18:19, LXX reads “my justification,” probably from רִיבִי, instead of “my

³⁶ W. Rudolph, Footnote 19a, Jer 11:19, *BHS*, 805.

adversaries,” יִרְיָבִי. Aquila and Symmachus, however, retain “my adversaries.”

In 18:20 and 18:22, Rudolph suggests that the great difference between LXX “they attempted a word” and MT “they dug a pit” may come from reading שִׁיחָה (“pit,” 18:22 Ketiv) as שִׁיחָה (“thoughtful contemplation”), in a text without vowels or marking of *shin* vs. *sin*.³⁷ Tov points out that this “changed the meaning of the context in which the verb did not fit any more . . . accordingly the translators adapted the translation of the verb to their respective objects.”³⁸ In 20:10, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion disagree with LXX and are closer to a reading of the consonants of MT. In MT, שָׁמְרִי צִלְעִי is pointed as “watching my stumbling” (see Section 2.1.1.8.1). With different pointing (צִלְעִי) it could be rendered “guarding my side,” as they do.

In several cases, the connection between MT and LXX is unclear, and some differences are surprising. In 20:8, LXX “with a bitter word, I will laugh” stands in the place of MT “I speak, I cry out.” LXX also makes the outcry “Faithlessness and distress!” a mockery of Jeremiah, rather than Jeremiah’s own words. In 15:17, LXX “I feared” seems unrelated to MT “nor did I exult.” In 15:18, the statement, “It refused to be healed” has become a question, “Whence shall I be healed?” In 17:17, LXX “hostile stranger” is different from MT “terror,” though still a negative view of what God may be. As Zlotowitz says, “while ἀλλοτριώσις (‘estrangement,

³⁷ W. Rudolph, footnote 22a, Jer 18:22, *BHS*, 819.

³⁸ Emanuel Tov. “Did the Septuagint translators understand their Hebrew text?,” in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, 209.

hostility') is hardly as strong as **בְּחֵתָהּ** ('dismay, terror'), God is not exactly spared here."³⁹ In 20:10, Rudolph thinks that LXX "many gathered around" might come from a derivation of **בְּגִזָּר** ("terror") instead from **אָנַר** ("bring in harvest").⁴⁰

In two cases, LXX conveys the opposite meaning from MT. In 18:18 LXX, Jeremiah's adversaries "will hear" his words; in MT and other versions, they declare, "Let us not listen to his words." In the obscure 15:11 LXX, the prophet has intervened for his opponents; in 15:11 MT, either the LORD intervened for the prophet, or let the enemy strike him.

3.1.3.3 LXX treatment of the strong language of the complaints of Jeremiah

LXX of Jeremiah's complaints contains most of Jeremiah's strong accusations against God. In 4:10 and 20:7, he accuses God of "deceiving" the people and him. The "hostile stranger" that God might be (17:17) is different from the "terror" (MT), but also negative. In 20:14 LXX retains Jeremiah's outburst against the God who made him.

In 15:18, however, the clarification that it is the wound, not God, which is like lying waters, agrees with one possible reading of MT that reduces the accusation against God.

³⁹ Bernard M. Zlotowitz, *The Septuagint Translation of the Hebrew Terms in Relation to God in the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: Ktav, 1981), 97.

⁴⁰ W. Rudolph, footnote 10a, Jeremiah 20:10, *BHS*, 822.

3.2 Jeremiah's Complaints in Targum Jonathan

See Appendix 2, pp. 364-401, for texts and translations of these complaints.

3.2.1 Specific complaints in Targum Jeremiah

3.2.1.1. Jeremiah 4:10

3.2.1.1.1 Differences from Masoretic Text (MT)

In the Targum, additions change the focus of Jeremiah's complaint and remove the accusation against God. The LORD God did not deceive or lead astray the people and Jerusalem; rather, it was the prophets of falsehood. This could be a "converse translation," a resolution of a "rhetorical question,"⁴¹ unmarked as such in MT ("Did you indeed deceive this people?"), but marked as a question in the Vulgate.

The content of the deceit remains the same, that "You shall have peace!" The Targum clarifies that, a "sword has reached to the life," means that "the sword slaughters among the people."

3.2.1.1.2 Jeremiah 4:10 Use of טעא for נשא

Hebrew:	הַשָּׂא הַשָּׂאָהָתָּ	from	נשא
	you have surely deceived		deceive, cheat (Hiphil)
Targum	נְבִיִּי שְׁקָרָא מִטַּעַן	from	טעא
	the prophets of falsehood have led astray		lead astray, deceive (Aphel)

In the Targums of the Former and Latter Prophets, טעא is a verb of many purposes. The wide variety of meanings of the Hebrew words represented by טעא,

⁴¹ Michael L. Klein, "Converse Translation: A Targumic Technique," *Biblica* 57 (1976): 532.

both Peal and Aphel, indicates that more than simple translation has occurred in many cases. Repeatedly, metaphors in MT of the Former and Latter Prophets are rendered non-metaphorically in the Targum, using **אפֿהל**. This may have been done to clarify, but certainly, to interpret, the Hebrew text.

Those who deceive (“lead astray,” **אפֿהל** Aphel) are primarily human beings:

Abner (2 Sam 3:25), Solomon’s wives (1 Kgs 11:2-4), Jeroboam (2 Kgs 17:21), Jezebel (1 Kgs 21:25), Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:9). Nations and cities may lead astray (Ephraim, Judah, Edom, Nineveh). Leaders, princes, astrologers, trusted friends, allies, and, especially, false prophets, may lead people astray. The people themselves may lead astray: all those in the land of the Chaldeans (Jer 22:27), all those in the land of Egypt (Jer 44:14), the remnant of Israel (Jer 42:20).

In several cases, however, the Targum preserves the Hebrew text, that it is God who may lead astray. A spirit comes from the LORD to entice Ahab to go to battle (1 Kgs 22:21-22 // 2 Chr 18:22). The Assyrian messengers warn Hezekiah not to let God deceive him (2 Kgs 19:10 // Isa 37:10). The name of the LORD leads nations astray (Isa 30:28). The LORD has cast into the minds of Egypt a spirit of deception (Isa 19:17). The LORD has misled the false prophet, who will nevertheless pay for his deceptive words (Ezek 14:9). The LORD will lead Gog astray (MT “drive you forward”) to bring him up from the farthest ends of the north (Ezek 39:2). In every case except the warning to Hezekiah, God leads astray foreign nations, a false prophet, or a wicked king. There is no suggestion, except by Assyrian messengers,

who do not know the true situation, that God might deceive God's own people or a righteous king or prophet.

In two cases, including Jer 4:10, the Targum is different from MT. In Jer 4:10, it is the false prophets, not the LORD, who lead the people and Jerusalem astray. In Isa 63:17, MT asks "Why, O LORD, do you make us stray from your ways?" The Targum asks rather, "Why, O Lord, will you despise us, to err from the way that is straight before you?" In both cases, the Targum has removed the possibility that God might deceive God's people.

3.2.1.2. Jeremiah 11:18-20

3.2.1.2.1 Differences from MT

There are numerous differences between MT and Targum Jer 11:18-20. The lamb is "choice" or "chosen, select" (Jastrow, 155)⁴², perhaps more valuable than "pet" or "familiar, close friend" (HALOT, 54). Jeremiah's adversaries' plots are specified as "evil plans." Kidneys and heart are "revealed before," rather than "tested by," the LORD.

The primary difference is in the content of the "evil plans." They are directed to "destroy him from the land of Israel," rather than "the land of the living." To accomplish this, the odd image, in MT Jer 11:19b, **נִשְׁחִיתָהּ עֵץ בְּלֶחֶמוֹ**, "let us destroy a tree/wood in/with its/his food/bread," is rather,

נִרְמִי סָמָא דְּמוֹתָא בְּמִיכְלִיה "let us cast deadly poison into his food."

⁴² Jastrow = Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* (New York: Judaica Press, 1996; reprint of 1903 edition). Page references from Jastrow are incorporated into the text of this work.

3.2.1.2.2 Jeremiah 11:19: Use of **רמא** in the place of **שחת** and **סמא דמותא**

in the place of **עץ**

Hebrew: **נִשְׁחָתָהּ** let us destroy, from **שחת** Hiphil cohortative

Targum: **נִרְמִי** let us throw/cast, from **רמא** Peal

and

Hebrew: **עץ** wood/tree (a very common Hebrew word)

Targum: **סמא דמותא** poison of death = a deadly poison

The primary difference between MT and the Targum is the verb “let us destroy” (**נִשְׁחָתָהּ**), rendered in the Targum as “let us throw” (**נִרְמִי**). This also occurs in LXX (ἐμβάλλωμεν, “let us throw”) and the Vulgate (*mittamus*, “let us send”). As discussed in Section 2.1, in the MT, the Hebrew verb **שחת** (Hiphil cohortative) never means “throw,” but rather, “ruin, destroy.” W. Rudolph’s suggestions of different possible *Vorlagen*, for LXX and Targum either **נִשְׁלִיכָהּ** “let us throw” or **נִשְׁיָתָהּ** “let us set,”⁴³ therefore seem plausible.

The Aramaic verb **רמא** (“throw, cast, put” Peal) appears many times in Targum Jeremiah. In all but two cases, it fits the meaning of the Hebrew text. The most common translation is of **שלך** Hiphil (“throw down, away”).

⁴³ W. Rudolph, Footnote 19a, Jeremiah 11:19, *BHS*, 805.

In Targum Jeremiah, the two odd uses, departing from the Hebrew text, are the interpretation of “to drink the waters of the Nile” (MT) as “to throw your males in the river” (2:18), and here, reading “destroy a tree/wood in its food” as “throw deadly poison into his food” (11:19). These imply either interpretation or different *Vorlagen*.

Given the different verb, “throw,” what was to be thrown? Unlike LXX, Targum Jeremiah interprets the “wood” or “tree.” If the reference were to Exod 15:25, where the wood sweetened the water so that it was drinkable, wood would be expected to help the “food” or “bread.” Since, however, this “wood” comes from Jeremiah’s adversaries, who want to “cut him off from the land of the living,” the Targum interprets it as a **סִמָּא דְּמוֹתָא**, a “poison of death.” The Targum elaborates that Jeremiah’s enemies may “destroy him from the land of Israel” rather than simply “cut him off from the land of the living.”

3.2.1.3. Jeremiah 12:1-3

3.2.1.3.1 Differences from MT

Differences between the Targum and MT change the relationship between God and Jeremiah and remove metaphors.

In 12:1, the Targum changes Jeremiah’s relationship to God from that in MT. In 12:1 MT, Jeremiah acknowledges that God is “righteous” “when I lodge a complaint to you.” In 12:1 Targum, God is “too righteous (for me) to contend against your word.” Any complaint is contention, but it cannot be “to you”; it would have to be “against your word.” In 12:1 MT, Jeremiah “will speak legal claims to you”; in 12:1, he is “asking a question of judgments from before you.” Speaking is too strong;

directing even a question cannot be “to you” but rather, “before you,” in a construction typical of the Targum

In 12:2, the Targum removes the metaphors, “you planted them,” “they were also firmly rooted,” “they also continually made fruit.” In their place are interpretations: “you established them,” “they are strong,” “they have grown rich,” “they have also acquired possessions.” Jeremiah’s accusation is still strong: it is the LORD who has provided all this for the wicked.

In 12:2 MT, the wicked are “near to you with their mouths, but far from their kidneys” but in 12:2 Targum, it is the “words of your Law” that are near to them, and “your fear” that is far from their kidneys.

In 12:3 MT, Jeremiah states that “you know me, you see me and test my heart with you.” In 12:3 Targum, it is rather that “all is known and revealed before you.” It is the “hearts of those who take pleasure in your fear,” rather than Jeremiah’s heart, that the LORD tests. Targum 12:3 also adds “the wicked,” making clear just whom the LORD should “ordain as sheep for the slaughter!”

None of these changes soften Jeremiah’s accusation against God, that the prosperity of the wicked results from God’s own actions.

3.2.1.4. Jeremiah 15:10-12

3.2.1.4.1 Differences from MT

In 15:10, the Targum clarifies that it is all the “inhabitants,” rather than the land itself, with whom Jeremiah quarrels. Like P, the Targum reverses the order of Jeremiah’s plaint about lending. The Targum also broadens it to all those who “have

no power over me” (MT “nor did they lend to me”), and that he does “not demand from them” (MT “I did not lend”).

In MT, 15:11 is unclear. In 15:11a, neither the Ketiv (שְׁרוּתְךָ “your release”) nor the Qere (שִׁרִיתְךָ “I released you”) corresponds to the Targum סוּפֶךָ (“your end”), which might reflect a *Vorlage* of שִׁרִיתְךָ = שְׁאִרִיתְךָ (HALOT, 1652). In 15:11b, those who suffer the distress of the “time of misfortune” (MT) are reversed in the Targum. In one reading of MT, the LORD “intervened” for the prophet in that time, but in the Targum, it is the LORD who brings the “adversary upon them; then the enemy will oppress them.” In the Targum, those in distress then “make supplication of you,” asking the prophet’s help.

The Hebrew words are plain in the question in 15:12 MT, “Will iron shatter iron from the north and bronze?,” but their meaning is less clear. The Targum retains the words: iron (twice), brass, the north, shatter, but arranges them differently to make a clearer prediction, adding kings to remove any metaphor.

Clarifications in 15:10 and 15:12 do not address the anguish of Jeremiah’s complaint. In 15:11 Targum, however, the LORD’s words are unambiguously positive, unlike one reading of 15:11 MT. In the Targum, God promises a good end for Jeremiah and oppression by the enemy for his adversaries.

3.2.1.5. Jeremiah 15:15-18

3.2.1.5.1 Differences from MT

In 15:15, the Targum replaces “you know” and “know!”, referring to God, with “it is revealed before you”; and “remember me!” with “let my memorial come in before you.” In each case, this removes the direct description of God’s actions.

“Your Memra” appears several times in 15:15-18. In 15:15, the prophet received shame “on account of your Memra,” rather than “on your behalf.” In 15:16, “your Memra” renders “your word,” that became a joy. In 15:17, “your Memra” renders “your hand,” before which he did not rejoice. In 15:18, Jeremiah asks that “your Memra” not be lies, rather than whether “you” will be “like deception.” In each case, the actions of “your Memra” are God’s actions.

In 15:16, rather than stating that “your words were found,” Jeremiah says that “I received your words,” perhaps to avoid the implication that God’s words could be lost. The odd metaphor, “and I ate them,” is replaced with “and confirmed them.”

In 15:17 MT, Jeremiah did not sit in the company of those being merry, joking, playing, or dancing (שחקן Piel, HALOT, 1315). In the Targum, they are rather singing or praising (שבח Pael, Jastrow, 1512), a possibly less secular activity. Targum 15:17 clarifies that the “cursing” with which the LORD has filled Jeremiah consists of “prophecies.”

In 15:18, “my wound” is “strong,” or “serious,” as in LXX and P, rather than “incurable.” The Targum expands and explains MT’s “water that is not reliable” as “like a fountain whose waters cease.” It is “your Memra” that Jeremiah begs not be like this deception. Since God provides the Memra, the waters that give out still

stand in contrast to Jeremiah's image of God as "the spring of living water" (Jer 2:13 and 17:13).

The translation of 15:18 is disputed, depending on whether the verb **יִהְיֶה** is read as a jussive or an imperfect. Either is possible. The translation given here, "Let not your Memra be lies for me, like a fountain whose waters cease," is based on that of Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*.⁴⁴ Smolar and Aberbach, however translate this "Your *Memra* shall *not* be false unto me, like a spring of water whose water ceases," and conclude that "even a false prophet cannot 'pervert' the words of the living God."⁴⁵ Levine agrees that "Jeremiah's lament over God becoming to him 'like a deceitful river, like waters that fail (15:18)' is piously reversed in meaning, so that it becomes not blasphemy but faithful trust."⁴⁶

3.2.1.5.2 Use of **כִּדְבִין** and **מִימְרָא** in 15:18

Hebrew: **הֲיִו תְּהִיָּה לִי כִּמּוֹ אֶכְזָב מַיִם לֹא נֶאֱמָנוּ:**

Will you [or it] indeed be to me like deception, water that is not reliable?

Targum: **לֹא יִהְיֶה מִימְרָךְ לִי כִּדְבִין כִּמְבוּעַ דְּמִין דְּפִסְקִין מוֹהִי:**

Let not your Memra be lies for me, like a fountain of water whose waters cease.

⁴⁴Robert Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah* (The Aramaic Bible 12; trans. Robert Hayward; Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1987), 94.

⁴⁵Leivy Smolar and Moses Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* (New York: KTAV, 1983), 143.

⁴⁶Etan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of the Bible* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 81, n. 4..

A similar expression is found in Isa 58:11, using a verb (כִּזַּב Piel, “lie, deceive”) related to אֶכְזֹב, “deception.”

וְהָיִיתָ כְּגֵן רוּחַ וּכְמוֹצָא מַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכְזְבוּ מִימָיו:

And you [my people] shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not deceive.

Targum Isa 58:11:

וְתִהְיֶה נֶפֶשְׁךָ מְלֵיא תַפְנוּקִין

כְּגִינַת שְׁקִיא דְּמַרוּא וּכְמַבּוּעַ דְּמִיין דְּלֹא פִסְקִין מוּהִי:

And your being will be full of comforts like an irrigated garden that is saturated and a fountain of water, whose waters do not cease.

In Targum Isa 58:11, the waters may “cease” but do not “deceive.”

3.2.1.5.2.1 Use of כִּדְבָא

In Targum Jeremiah, the noun כִּדְבָא “lie” appears here (15:18) and in 14:14, about the prophets of falsehood, who teach lies. In 5:12, the verb כִּדַּב, translating כָּחַשׁ Piel (“lie, deceive”), tells of the house of Israel and the house of Judah, who have lied about the Memra of the LORD.

3.2.1.5.2.2 Use of מִימְרָא

In Targum Jeremiah, מִימְרָא is a common rendering of aspects of God’s being and action. It stands in place of God’s word (דְּבַר, 15:16); hand (יָד, 15:17);

mouth (פה, 15:19 and 23:16); heart or mind (לב, 32:41 “with all my heart”); soul/being or himself (for נפש, 51:15 God swearing by himself; 6:8 “lest my being turn from you”; 14:19 “does your heart [being] loathe Zion?”); eye or sight (עין, 16:17 “from my sight”; 24:6 “I will set my eyes on them for good”); face or presence (פנה, 23:39 “from my presence”; 32:31 “from my sight”; and voice or sound (22 times for קול). The question is of hearing and obeying God’s voice (קול), rendered מִיִּמְרָא, in all but 35:8 (obeying the voice of Jonadab, the ancestor of the Rechabites) and 25:30 (hearing God’s roaring). In all these renderings, except 35:8, the use of מִיִּמְרָא serves to remove the attribution of anthropomorphic characteristics to God, while affirming that the actions are from God.

3.2.1.6. Jeremiah 17:14-18

3.2.1.6.1 Differences from MT

Differences from MT include changing the focus of people’s complaint from God to the prophet and elaboration and explanation of unclear images.

In 17:15 MT, people question, “Where is the word of the LORD?” and demand, “Let it come!” The Targum removes the possibility that the word of the LORD could be lost or delayed. Rather, the problem lies with the prophet: will “what you prophesied in the Name of the LORD” “be confirmed” (or have you been mistaken)?

In 17:16 and 17:17, in customary Targum expressions, “your Memra” replaces “you”; and “it was revealed before you” replaces “you know” and simply “before you.”

In 17:16, the Targum clarifies images and removes a metaphor. The obscure 17:16 MT probably means “I did not hurry away from being a shepherd after you.” In removing the metaphor of the shepherd, the Targum interprets what being a shepherd involves: prophesying “against them, to make them return to your worship.”⁴⁷ The “disastrous day” (MT) is interpreted as “the evil day which you are bringing upon them.”

In 17:17 and 17:18, the Targum removes “terror.” In 17:17, the plea is that “your Memra” not become a “misfortune” (תבר) rather than a “terror” (MT מִחֲתָה), both with the underlying meaning of “breaking.”

In 17:18 Targum, the two pleas both ask that the enemies be “put to shame” and that Jeremiah not be “put to shame” (בהת, CAL, “be ashamed,” Jastrow, 142, “be stirred up, confounded, in disorder,” and כלם Itpael, CAL, “to be shamed,” Jastrow 645, “be put to shame”). This contrasts with MT for the second plea, that “they may be terrified, but may I not be terrified” (from חתת, the root of מִחֲתָה). Terror may be gone, but the enemies are still to be destroyed with “double destruction.”

⁴⁷ *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 99, n. 17.

3.2.1.6.2 Use of **תברא** for **מַחֲתָה** in 17:17

Hebrew **אַל-תִּהְיֶה-לִּי לְמַחֲתָה**

Do not become a terror for me.

מַחֲתָה “terror; ruin; corruption” (HALOT, 572), from

חתת Qal: be shattered, be filled with terror; Niphal: be broken to pieces, be

dismayed, be terrified; Piel: dishearten; Hiphil: shatter

(HALOT, 365)

Targum **לֹא יְהִי מִימְרָךְ לִי לְתַבְרָא**

Let not your Memra become a misfortune for me.

תברא “break, fracture; breach, misfortune” (Jastrow, 1645)

In Targum Jeremiah, the common noun **תברא** expresses a strong misfortune, usually ruin or disaster that the LORD brings on nations and peoples, either directly or by use of another, often invading, nation. In many cases, this noun is added to a prophecy of disaster for clarification. For example, in 27:7 MT, Nebuchadnezzar is to wait “until the time of his own land comes”; the addition of the Targum makes it clear that what will come is “the breach” of his land.

The noun **תברא** may also render the cognate **שבר**, taken either as the “great destruction” coming to Judah (6:1), Moab (48:3), or Babylon (50:22, 51:54), or as the

very grievous “wound” of “my people” (6:14, 8:11, 8:21, 14:17, 10:19, 30:12, 30:15), which may come directly from the LORD (30:15).

All these actions by God are disastrously unwelcome.

Though Targum Jeremiah removes the word “terror” and attributes the possibility of “misfortune” to “your Memra,” it retains a negative view of God’s relationship with the prophet: God is responsible for God’s Memra. Jeremiah’s cry in the Targum is different from that in MT, but not appreciably softened.

3.2.1.7. Jeremiah 18:18-23

3.2.1.7.1 Differences from MT

As in earlier passages, the differences between the Targum and MT in Jeremiah 18:18-23 clarify and change some referents and eliminate metaphors.

In 18:18, what “shall not cease from the priest” is “teaching” (אַרְאָה), a variant reading of אֹרִיתָא, also meaning “Torah.” The “word” that shall not cease from a “prophet” (MT) has become “instruction” (אַלְפָּן), from a “scribe.” The metaphor, “let us smite him with the tongue,” is removed, and its meaning clarified as “let us bear false witness against him.”

In 18:19, the Targum replaces an imperative, “Listen attentively to me, O LORD!” with the more reverent passive, “my case is revealed before you, O LORD.” Also in 18:19, the “voice of my opponents” (MT) has been replaced with “my grievance” (Gropp, 203⁴⁸) or “humiliation, insult” (Jastrow, 1080). As in LXX and P, this may also represent a reading of MT רִיבִי as רִיבִי, “my dispute, lawsuit,” as in

⁴⁸ Gropp = Douglas M. Gropp, *Dictionary to Targums Onqelos and Jonathan* (Unpublished, February 17, 2004).

11:20. “My grievance” may represent what the opponents have been saying about Jeremiah, while denying them standing to speak to God.

In 18:20 and 18:22, the Targum clarifies that the pit dug “for my life” (MT) was “to kill me.” In 18:20, what Jeremiah spoke about his adversaries “for good” (MT) is rather, “firm” or “upright words”; this removes the possibility that his adversaries were good.

In 18:21, the Targum clarifies that these adversaries are to be hurled out “to the hands of those who kill with the sword,” removing the metaphor of the “hands (= power) of the sword.” In 18:23, just what God is to “do to them” (MT) is spelled out as “take revenge on them.”

None of these changes soften Jeremiah’s complaint.

3.2.1.7.2 Use of פַּחִית for שׁוּחָה in 18:20 and 18:22

Hebrew, 18:20

כִּי־כָרוּ שׁוּחָה לְנַפְשִׁי for they dug a pit for my life

שׁוּחָה (18:20) and Ketiv : שִׁיחָה Qere : שׁוּחָה (18 :22)

שׁוּחָה “trapper’s pit; gorge, precipice” (HALOT, 1439)

שִׁיחָה “pit, trap” (HALOT, 1477)

Targum, 18:20 and 18:22

אַרְי כָּרוּ פַּחִית לְמָקְטְלִי for they have dug a pit to *kill* me

פַּחִית = פַּחְתָּא “cavity, pit” (Jastrow, 1154)

In Targum Jeremiah, פְּחִית appears only in 18:20 and 18:22. This rare word does not appear in the Targums of other Former or Latter Prophets. It does appear in Targum Onkelos of Leviticus 14:37, referring to “pits” in the walls of possibly infected houses. The many other “pits,” “wells,” or “cisterns” in the Hebrew Bible are rendered with different Aramaic nouns, most commonly, גּוּב (“pit,” Jastrow, 217) for Hebrew בּוֹר (“cistern; pitfall; world of the dead,” HALOT, 116), כּוּמְצָא (“trap, pit,” Jastrow, 621) for Hebrew פֶּתַח (“opening,” HALOT, 988), and שְׁחַת or שִׁיחַ (“pit, grave,” Jastrow, 1530) for Hebrew שַׁחַת (“pit, trap, grave,” HALOT, 1473).

Unlike MT and P, Targum Prov 22:14 and 23:27, in referring to the dangers of the “strange woman” as a “pit,” does not use the same word as Targum Jeremiah (18:20, 22). In Targum Proverbs, גּוּמְצָא (“pit,” Jastrow, 223) is used to render שְׁחַת (22:14 and 23:27) and שִׁיחַ (27:27). As in LXX, there is no verbal connection between Jer 18:20, 22, and Prov 22:14 and 23:27.

3.2.1.8. Jeremiah 20:7-10

3.2.1.8.1 Differences from MT

Differences in Targum Jer 20:7-10 from MT include using different images, some softening of the harshness of the prophet’s accusation, and making references more specific, often by adding details. A difference in 20:10 may reflect a different *Vorlage*.

In 20:7 Targum, the prophet's strong accusation in MT, "You have enticed me, and I was enticed," is still negative, "You have confounded me, and I was confounded" (see 3.2.1.8.2 Use of **שָׁבַשׁ** for **פָּתָה**, below), but "removes a potential blasphemy."⁴⁹

In 20:8, the Targum specifies that Jeremiah's speaking and crying out was "when I prophesy" and adds that he was "weeping." In the Targum, his prophecy is against people, "robbers and plunderers," rather than simply the cry "Violence and destruction!"

Targum Jer 20:9 specifies that it was "his words" that were "like a burning fire" in the heart of the prophet. In an image different from MT, LXX, and P, these words were "washing my bones," rather than being "locked up in my bones" (MT) or "burning" (LXX, P).

In 20:10, the Targum, like LXX and P, refers to "the many who are gathered together round about," very different from MT's "terror on every side"

(**מִגֹּר מְסָבִיב**). W. Rudolph thinks that this reading may be related to a derivation of **מִגֹּר** from **אָגַר** "bring in harvest" (HALOT, 11).⁵⁰ Referring to "many who are gathered together round about" changes the connection to the LORD's renaming Pashhur in Jer 20:3. In MT, Pashhur is called "terror on every side." In the Targum, Pashhur is instead called "those who kill with the sword shall be gathered against you round about." While changing the new name, the Targum, unlike LXX and P, retains some connection between these texts.

⁴⁹ *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 105, n. 5.

⁵⁰ W. Rudolph, Footnote 10a, Jeremiah 20:10, *BHS*, 822.

In 20:10, “Every man of my peace” is retained by the Targum, possibly meaning “my confederates.” What they were doing is obscure in Hebrew, probably “watching my stumbling,” although possibly, with different pointing, “guarding my side” (see discussion in Section 2.1.1.8.1 “Translation questions in 20:10”). The Targum’s “who hide to do me evil” is a negative view of their plots, corresponding to but different from the first, more likely, MT translation.

In 20:10, unlike MT, LXX, and P, the Targum does not repeat the verb from 20:7; his adversaries hope that “he will go astray” (using the verb **טעא**, as in Jer 4:10), rather “be confounded.”

3.2.1.8.2 Use of **שבש** for **פתה** in 20:7

Hebrew Jeremiah 20:7 **פְּתִיתֵנִי יְהוָה וְאַפְתָּ**

You have enticed me, O LORD, and I was enticed.

from **פתה** (HALOT, 984-5)

פְּתִיתֵנִי Piel Perfect 2ms + 1cs suffix “entice”

וְאַפְתָּ Niphal Imperfect Vav-Consecutive 1cs

“let oneself be deceived, let oneself be taken for a fool”

(HALOT), enticed

and 20:10 **אֲלִי יִפְתָּה**

Perhaps he may be enticed...

יִפְתָּה Pual Imperfect 3ms

“let oneself be persuaded, be persuaded” (HALOT),

be enticed

Targum Jeremiah 20:7 **שְׁבִישְׁתִּי יְיָ וְאַשְׁתַּבֵּשִׁית**

You have confounded me, O Lord, and I have been confounded.

from **שבש** (Jastrow, 1518) entangle, confound, overpower

שְׁבִישְׁתִּי Pael Perfect 2ms + 1cs suffix

you have confounded me

וְאַשְׁתַּבֵּשִׁית Itpael Perfect 1cs

and I was confounded

but not in 20:10 Rather, **יִטְעֵי** he may go astray, from **טעא**

The rare verb **שבש** appears in Targum Jeremiah here in 20:7 and in 50:36. In

50:36, it translates **וְנָאֲלוּ**, “may they [the diviners] be made fools.” In Targum Ezek

24:10, very different from Ezek 24:10 MT, the warriors are to “be confounded”

(**שְׁבִישְׁוֹן**). Outside Targum Jonathan, in Targum Ps 80:12, branches (**שְׁבִישִׁין**) are

“sent forth” (**שְׁבִישִׁין**), in Targum Lam 1:14, “they were entangled (**וְאַשְׁתַּבְּשׁוּ**) like

branches (**כְּשְׁבִישִׁין**) of a vine.” All the verbal uses share a connection with the noun

שבשא, “ramification, branch” (Jastrow, 1519). All share the “entangling”

characteristic of branches: one who is “entangled” is indeed “confounded” and

probably made to be a fool.

The other uses of פתה in MT (e.g., Exod 22:16, Deut 11:16, Hos 2:14)

do not appear as שבש in the Targums.

As a translation of פתה, שבש in the Targum may be “avoiding a strong anthropomorphism,”⁵¹ of the LORD “enticing” the prophet, but the somewhat softened accusation is still negative. Being “confounded” or “entangled” by the Lord (a phytomorphism?) is also strongly unwelcome.

3.2.1.9. Jeremiah 20:14-18

3.2.1.9.1 Differences from MT

Most of Targum Jer 20:14-18 is similar to MT, except for differences in 20:16 and 20:17.

In 20:16, the Targum, like LXX, adds “in his anger” to the LORD’s overthrowing the cities. The Targum replaces “and he was not sorry” with “not to be inhabited,” perhaps to avoid the possibility that God might regret an action.

In 20:17 are more substantive differences. The positive wish that the man who announced Jeremiah’s birth would instead have killed him (MT) is replaced with a negative wish “that he had not said concerning me, that I had died.” This avoids both wishing that another had sinned, in killing him, and wishing for his own death. The image, “that her womb [would be] forever pregnant,” odd if indeed Jeremiah had died in it, is replaced and clarified as “that I would have been as though I had not existed.”

⁵¹ Alberdina Houtman and Harry Sysling, *Alternative Targum Traditions: The Use of Variant Readings for the Study in Origin and History of Targum Jonathan* (Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture 9; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 180.

Making both wishes negative may well “eliminate” the “possibility” “that Jeremiah was cursing his prophetic call ‘from the womb’,”⁵² but puts this verse in considerable disagreement with 20:14, “Cursed be the day on which I was born.”

Jeremiah’s outcry in 20:14-18 is unevenly softened in the Targum. In 20:14, as in MT, Jeremiah curses the day of his birth, coming close to railing against the God who made him, who knew him in the womb and consecrated him before his birth (Jer 1:5). In 20:17, however, he negates the wish that he had died before birth.

3.2.2. What this shows about Targum translation in Jeremiah’s Complaints.

Much of the Targum of Jeremiah’s complaints follows MT very closely, giving an Aramaic word for each Hebrew word. There are, however, significant differences, sometimes additions, sometimes replacements of words or thoughts. Both similarities and differences are in accord with the idea of Targum as “a Jewish Aramaic interpretative word-by-word translation of the biblical text in exegetical dependence on its wording.”⁵³ Thus “Targum not only translates the Hebrew Bible; it also gives it *meaning* by means of interpretation, commentary, supplying of missing details, the making precise of what might appear vague, and by the introduction of aggadah.”⁵⁴ In this way, “Scripture had absolute priority”; the Targum served as a “bridge to the understanding of Scripture.”⁵⁵ The Targum was “*not* independent but explanatory.”⁵⁶

⁵² *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 105, n. 12.

⁵³ Houtman and Sysling, 18.

⁵⁴ Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 21.

⁵⁵ Philip S. Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures,” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Martin Jan Mulder; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 239.

⁵⁶ Levine, 40.

Some differences from MT may indicate a different *Vorlage*. Many differences, however, indicate interpretation beyond a simple word-for-word rendering. Clarification of obscure texts, often by removal of metaphors or addition of more precise words; removal of anthropomorphic images; and more reverent speaking of God: all result in a different picture of God and God's actions with humanity.

Differences that may indicate a different *Vorlage* are found in Jer 11:19, 20:9, and 20:10. In Jer 11:19, the Targum agrees with LXX that a “tree” or “wood” is to be “thrown” into the prophet’s food, rather than with MT that a “tree” or “wood” is to be “destroyed in its food.” Since the Hebrew verb שָׁחַת never means “throw,” a different *Vorlage*, using שָׁלַךְ or שִׁית, seems likely. In 20:9, the “words,” instead of being fire “locked up in my bones” (MT), are “washing my bones”; the relation between these phrases is unclear. In 20:10, the Targum, agreeing with LXX and P, reading “many who are gathered round about,” instead of MT “terror all around,” may read the same MT *Vorlage* מְגֹרֵר as derived from a different root (אָגַר rather than גָּרַר).

Targum Jeremiah often clarifies an obscure text by additions that give a more precise meaning. In 11:19, the “wood” that is to be “thrown” into the prophet’s “food” is “poison of death.” In 12:3, those “ordained as sheep for slaughter” are “the wicked.” In 15:17, the “curse” with which God has filled the prophet is clarified as “prophecies of cursing.” The “water that is not reliable” (15:18) is “a fountain of water whose waters cease.” The “pit” that his opponents have dug (18:20, 22) is

designated “to kill me.” What God will “do to” the men to be killed is specified as “take revenge on them” (18:23). When Jeremiah speaks or cries out (20:8 MT), he prophesies (Targum). What is “like a burning fire” in Jeremiah’s heart, unclear in MT, is “his words” (20:9).

Clarification also comes by removing metaphors. In 12:2 Targum, the “plant” metaphor is completely gone. “You established them” stands in place of “you planted them”; “they are strong, they have grown rich,” in place of “they were also firmly rooted”; “they have also acquired possessions,” in place of “they also continually made fruit.” In 15:10, it is the “inhabitants of the land” rather than the “land” itself with whom Jeremiah quarrels. In the obscure 15:12, “iron,” “iron from the north,” and “bronze” are designated as “a king . . . as strong as iron” and “a king . . . as strong as iron and brass,” providing a clear prediction. In 15:16, the odd image that the prophet “ate” God’s words has become that he “confirmed” them.

In 17:16, the Targum clarifies that “being a shepherd before you” (MT) means prophesying. In 18:18, Jeremiah’s opponents declare, “Let us smite with the tongue” (MT); the Targum interprets this as “let us bear false witness against him,” removing the metaphor. In 18:21 MT, Jeremiah asks that God “hand them over to the hands of the sword.” Since swords do not have hands, the Targum expands and clarifies that this handing over is “to the hands of those who kill by the sword.”

Other changes replace a clear Hebrew term with an equally clear, but different, Aramaic idea. In 18:18 Targum, it is “instruction,” rather than “a word,” that will not cease from a “scribe,” rather than a prophet. In 20:8, Jeremiah’s cry of

“Violence and destruction!” is, instead, directed to specific people: “robbers and plunderers.”

The Targum’s great reverence toward God is shown by removal of the possibility of human standing before God, indicating the great distance between God and any human: the prophet, the people, or the wicked.

God is “too righteous” to contend with or even question (12:1), rather than simply “righteous, when I lodge a complaint” (MT). An imperative in 18:19, “Listen attentively to me, O LORD!” (MT) is replaced with a more reverent passive, “my case has been revealed before you, O LORD.”

In 18:19, it is “my insult” or “humiliation” that is “heard before you” (Targum), rather than “the voice of my opponents” (MT), possibly indicating that his adversaries do not have the standing to speak to God.

In 15:16, rather than saying “your words were found” (MT), the prophet states, “I have received your words.” In 17:15 MT, the people ask, “Where is the word of the LORD?” and demand, “Let it come!” In the Targum, it is rather the prophet that they question: will “what you prophesied in the Name of the LORD” “be confirmed”? Both texts remove the possibility that the word of the LORD might be lost or delayed.

Reverence is also shown by removal of anthropomorphic images of God’s attributes or actions. The wicked are near “to the words of your Law” (12:2); they cannot be near “you.” The prophet can be sure that “all is known and revealed before you” (12:3; 15:15; 17:17), but not that “you know.” In 18:23, rather than “you, O LORD, know all their plans” (MT), “all their plots . . . are known and revealed before

you.” In 15:15, “on your behalf,” “your word,” “your hand”; and in 17:16, 17, “you,” are all replaced by “your Memra.”

A possible change for the sake of reverence is in 15:18. Depending on whether **יְהוָה** is translated as a jussive, “let it not,” or an imperfect, “it shall not” (both possible), the Targum either agrees or disagrees with Jeremiah’s concern in MT that God might be for him “like deception, water that is unreliable.” If the Targum agrees with MT, this is a strong complaint against God. If it disagrees, Jeremiah is rather affirming his trust in God.

Some differences in the Targum indicate a different view of what God would or would not do. In Jer 4:10, it is not God who deceived the people and Jerusalem, but the false prophets. In 20:7, the prophet uses the unusual verb **שָׁבַשׁ** to complain that God “confounded” or “entangled” him, rather than “enticed” him. This remains a negative action, but does not share with MT **פָּתָה** connotations of sexual seduction. In 20:16, referring to the cities that God overthrew, the Targum adds, “not to be inhabited.” The difference from MT, “and he was not sorry,” may indicate a view that God does not regret an action.

Changes in 20:14-18 in the Targum may reflect more reverence toward God, but are inconsistent. In 20:14, Jeremiah curses the day he was born. Since God knew him “before I formed you in the womb” and consecrated him, appointing him a prophet (Jer 1:5), this complaint comes perilously close to cursing either the God who made him or his prophetic call from God. In 20:17, the wish in MT that the man who announced his birth would have killed him “from the womb” is changed diametrically

in the Targum. Here the wish is that “he had not said concerning me, that I had died from the womb.” This appears to contradict his wish that he had not been born and the irreverence expressed in 20:14.

In the Targum, Jeremiah does complain of God’s actions (20:7, “you have confounded me”), but in a softer voice than in MT. Targum Jer 4:10 has removed the accusation that God deceived the people and Jerusalem. In 15:18, it may be “your Memra,” rather than “you,” who may be like “a fountain whose waters give out,” and in 17:17, it “your Memra” that may be a “misfortune” for him. Since God acts through God’s Memra, there is still a complaint against God.

3.3 Jeremiah's Complaints in Latin Versions: Vulgate and Vetus Latina

3.3.1 About the Vulgate and Jerome's views on translation

The Vulgate version of Jeremiah comes from Jerome's translation of the prophets *iuxta Hebraeos*, based on the Hebrew text, rather than either LXX or the Old Latin (Vetus Latina). It was probably made in 393 and sent with translation of the rest of the prophets to Pammachius in 394.⁵⁷

The translation was controversial. Jerome argued for translating from Hebrew and against the accepted status of LXX in letters, prefaces, and treatises. In the preface to his commentary on Ecclesiastes, "the first Latin commentary to be based on the Hebrew text," he refers to the Hebrew text as the "source of truth" (*fonte ueritatis*).⁵⁸ In a letter to Pope Damasus (*Ep.* 20), he states that "we therefore must pass over the little streams [*rivulis*] of opinion and rush back to the very source [*fontem*] from which the Gospel writers drew . . . the Hebrew words themselves must be presented."⁵⁹ In *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, he declares that Origen ("Adamantius"), in his books, though not in his sermons, "is overcome by the Hebrew truth [*Hebraica veritas*]."⁶⁰

In Jerome's time, the common view of LXX was that it was not just a translation, but rather was verbally inspired by God, for the sake of Gentiles. A

⁵⁷ Pierre Nautin, "Hieronymus 2.4 Publikationsdaten," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (vol. 15; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 310.

⁵⁸ Jerome, *Comm. Eccles.*, CCL 72, 249, quoted and translated in Dennis Brown, *Vir Trilinguis: A Study in the Biblical Exegesis of Saint Jerome* (Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1992), 60.

⁵⁹ Jerome, *Ep.* 20.2, quoted and translated in Andrew Cain, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 55.

⁶⁰ Jerome, *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim = Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, quoted and translated in C. T. R. Hayward, *Saint Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 30.

“chain of tradition,” including apostolic use, had produced LXX as “the true biblical text,” a “Bible of the Gentiles.”⁶¹ This version “contained not only the biblical message, but the correct interpretation of it.”⁶² According to Augustine, the “divine dispensation which was accomplished through the latter translators . . . gave one voice to them all, judged to be appropriate for Gentiles.”⁶³

Jerome made four major arguments against the privileged status of LXX.

First, he pointed to the existence and use by the church of other Greek recensions of the Old Testament. In Origen’s Hexapla, his citing of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion (“The Three”), and use of the Hebrew for correction of his Hexaplaric LXX, implied the importance of the Hebrew text. By Jerome’s time, three recensions of LXX were used: Origen’s Hexaplaric LXX, in Palestine; that of Lucian, in Asia, and that of Hesychius, in Egypt; a *trifaria varietas* (“threefold variety”).⁶⁴ Jerome also showed that the book of Daniel was read in churches “not according to the version of the LXX, but that of Theodotion.”⁶⁵ These various uses by churches showed recognition of “the inadequacy of the LXX,” that “the original version of the LXX is not extant,” and that therefore “a return to the original Hebrew is necessary.”⁶⁶

Second, Jerome, to deprive LXX of its apostolic authority, claimed that New Testament citations of the Old Testament do not agree with LXX readings, but rather

⁶¹ Adam Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible: a Study of the Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim* (Oxford Classical Monographs; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 29.

⁶² Kamesar, 32.

⁶³ Augustine, *Doct. Chr.* 2.22, quoted and translated in Kamesar, 34.

⁶⁴ Jerome, *Praef. in Par. (IH)* 9-12, cited in Kamesar, 35.

⁶⁵ Kamesar, 59.

⁶⁶ Kamesar, 60-61.

with the Hebrew text. (Modern scholarship has shown that “many citations follow neither the Hebrew nor the LXX”⁶⁷).

Third, Jerome revisited the legend of the 70 (or 72) translators (LXX) working for King Ptolemy and miraculously producing the same result. Jerome did not see Jewish translators working for a Gentile king as a benefit, leading to an inspired stream of tradition directed to Gentiles. Rather, he thought that the translators deliberately mistranslated, changing words that implied polytheism or absurdity, or that predicted Christ. The translators produced a “distortion for pagan Platonists.”⁶⁸ Jerome shares some views of a Jewish tradition, shown in a later rabbinic legend, about deliberate changes.⁶⁹

Fourth, Jerome was sure that it is not possible to translate accurately what one does not understand.⁷⁰ Since Christ illuminates Scripture, translators after Christ’s coming had benefits of understanding that LXX translators lacked.

Jerome wrote extensively, usually in polemical situations, about his method of translation, both of Scripture and of other texts. In a letter to Pammachius, he said that “I proclaim freely that when translating from Greek (except in the case of holy scripture, where even the order of the words is a mystery) I translate sense for sense and not word for word.”⁷¹ Even in translating Scripture, “what is most important to him is that the *meaning* of the text, rather than the exact *wording*, is brought out in the translation, and also that the language into which the translation is made is

⁶⁷ Kamesar, 64.

⁶⁸ Kamesar, 65.

⁶⁹ See Katja Vehlow, “The rabbinic legend of the Septuagint in Abraham ibn Daud’s writings,” in *The Multiple Meaning of Scripture: The Role of Exegesis in Early-Christian and Medieval Culture* (ed. Ineke van ‘t Spijker; Commentaria 2; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 41-59.

⁷⁰ Jerome, *Praef. in Is.* 13-16, *Praef. in Job (IH)* 22-3, cited in Kamesar, 68.

⁷¹ Jerome, *Ep.* 57, 5 (CSEL 54, 508), quoted and translated in Brown, *Vir Trilinguis*, 105.

respected.”⁷² As Jerome says, “Where there is no difference in the sense, we should translate idiomatically and use euphonious language.”⁷³

Brown summarizes Jerome’s method of translation with the following steps:

1) find the meaning of the Hebrew text; 2) compare this with Jewish interpretation; 3) use LXX when it does not differ from the Hebrew text; 4) consult Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion; 5) preserve as much of the Old Latin as possible, and 6) blend this “into a single, uniform, smooth Latin version.”⁷⁴

3.3.2 Vulgate renderings of specific complaints

See Appendix 2, pp. 364-401, for texts and translations of these complaints.

3.3.2.1. Jeremiah 4:10

3.3.2.1.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

In Jer 4:10, the Vulgate translates אַלֵּיָנוּ with “Alas!” (*heu*) three times, unlike LXX and P, which omit the exclamation.

The primary difference between the Vulgate and MT is that the Vulgate makes Jeremiah’s strong accusation, “surely you have deceived this people and Jerusalem,” into a question, “Did you then deceive this people and Jerusalem?” LXX and P retain the accusation and do not turn this into a question.

The change in the Vulgate is a considerable softening of Jeremiah’s complaint, unless MT is a rhetorical question. Since Hebrew questions do not have to be marked by interrogative words or particles and can be indicated “merely by the

⁷² Brown, 114-5.

⁷³ Jerome, *Ep.* 106, 55 (*CSEL* 55, 275), quoted and translated in Brown, 115.

⁷⁴ Brown, 120, referring to Jerome, preface to *Comm. Eccles.*, *CCL* 72, 249.

rising intonation,”⁷⁵ and there are many examples of rhetorical questions that

“expect a strongly negative answer,”⁷⁶ this is a possibility.

English translations of the Vulgate show the question. The Douai Bible translates Jer 4:10, “And I said: Alas, alas, alas, O Lord God, hast thou then deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying: You shall have peace: and behold the sword reacheth even to the soul?”⁷⁷ The more recent Ronald Knox translation has, “Alas, alas, Lord God, said I, can it be that thou hast deceived thy people, deceived Jerusalem, by telling them they should have peace, and here is the sword threatening our very lives?”⁷⁸

3.3.2.1.2 Use of *decipio* for נִשָּׁא

Hebrew: הַשִּׂיחַ הַשִּׂיחַ from נִשָּׁא

you have surely deceived deceive, cheat

Latin: *ergone decepisti* from *decipio*

did you then deceive? catch, ensnare, entrap, beguile, deceive,

cheat (White, 166)⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (vol. 2; trans. and rev. T. Muraoka; Subsidia Biblica 14/II; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000), 609.

⁷⁶ Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 326.

⁷⁷ Jeremiah 4:10, *The Holy Bible, translated from the Latin Vulgat* (First Stereotype, from the 5th Dublin Edition; rev. and corr. according to the Clementin Edition of the Scriptures; Philadelphia: Eugene Cumiskey, 1825).

⁷⁸ Jeremiah 4:10, Ronald Knox: *The Old Testament* (vol. 2; trans. Ronald Knox; New York: Sheed & Ward, 1950), 1168.

⁷⁹ White = *The White Latin Dictionary* (ed. John T. White; Chicago: Follett, 1960). Page references from White are incorporated into the text of this work.

In the Vulgate, the very common verb *decipio* is used to translate a wide variety of Hebrew verbs. The uses do not correspond exactly to translations of these Hebrew words by LXX ἀπατάω.

Translating נִשָּׂא, *decipio* is used for the serpent who deceived the woman (Gen 3:13), Hezekiah who might be deceiving the people of Jerusalem, according to the Assyrian messengers (2 Chr 32:15); the king of Judah, who might deceive himself (Jer 37:9), and arrogance that deceives Edom (Jer 42:20).

In two cases, however, it is God who may deceive. The Assyrian messengers warns the people of Jerusalem that “your God” may promise deceptively that Jerusalem will not fall to the king of Assyria (Isa 37:10). In Jer 4:10, Jeremiah asks whether God has deceived the people, by promising peace.

In the one case of translating סֹרַר Hiphil, God “removes a heart” (מִסִּיר לֵב), NRSV, “strips understanding”) from leaders of the earth (Job 12:24). The Vulgate interprets this removal as God deceiving them.

Decipio is also used to translate פָּתָה Qal, Niphal, Piel, and Pual. The translations of פָּתָה Qal as *decipiatur* in Deut 11:16, “let not your heart be deceived,” and פָּתָה Pual as *decipiatur* in Jer 20:10, “perhaps he may be deceived,” agree with “be gullible” or “let oneself be persuaded” (HALOT, Qal, 984). Two deceptions have a sexual connotation: in Judg 16:15, it is Delilah who is to “coax” Samson (פָּתָה Piel), and Job protests that his heart has not been enticed by a woman” (Job 31:9, פָּתָה Niphal). Others, all of פָּתָה Piel, do not: Joab warns

David that Abner came to “deceive” him (2 Sam 3:25); the lying spirit, sent from God, is to “deceive” Ahab (1 Kgs 22:20-22 // 2 Chr 18:19-21); it is the LORD who has deceived a prophet (Ezek 14:9).

From these examples, Latin *decipio* portrays a negative action of deception, only rarely with a sexual connotation. God may do this deceiving (Jeremiah, Ezekiel), arrange for a “lying spirit” to do it (Kings, Chronicles), or deceive by “removing a heart” (Job). Assyrian messengers warn that “your God” may deceive the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Isa 37:10); Jeremiah questions whether God has done this (Jer 4:10).

The expression by the Vulgate of Jeremiah’s accusation as a question is surprising, unless MT is a rhetorical question. Except for the Vulgate, versions, ancient and modern, treat MT as a strong statement. From their perspective, the Vulgate considerably softens Jeremiah’s complaint.

3.3.2.2. Jeremiah 11:18-20

3.3.2.2.1 Similarities to and differences from M

The primary difference between the Vulgate and MT is in Jer 11:19. In MT, Jeremiah’s opponents plot, “Let us *destroy* wood/a tree in its bread/food”; in the Vulgate, they plot, “Let us *send/throw* wood/a tree into his bread.”

3.3.1.2.2 Use of שחת and *mitto*; עץ and *lignum*

Hebrew נִשְׁחִיתָהּ עֵץ בֶּלֶחֶמוֹ

Let us destroy a tree/wood in/with its/his food/bread. (11:19b)

Latin *mittamus lignum in panem eius*

Let us send/throw a tree/wood into his bread

Hebrew: נִשְׁחִיתָהּ “let us destroy” from

שָׁחַת Hiphil Cohortative “ruin, destroy; annihilate,
exterminate; behave corruptly” (HALOT, 1470-72)

and עֵץ “tree, wood”

Latin: *mittamus* “let us send/throw” from

mitto many meanings, having to do with “send” or “throw”
and *lignum* “tree” or “wood”

In the Vulgate, both *mitto* and *lignum* are very common.

Mitto is commonly used to mean “send” or “throw,” but not “destroy.”

It is most often used to translate שָׁלַח Qal (“stretch out; let free; send,” HALOT, 1512-1513). Messengers, prophets, armies, words, proclamations, and letters are sent, or not: Jeremiah and Ezekiel emphasize the distinction between prophets truly sent by the LORD and those who falsely portray themselves as sent. Plants also “send” their roots or sprouts. *Mitto* also translates several Hebrew verbs meaning “put” (e.g., נָתַן and שָׂם). *Mitto* is also commonly used to translate שָׁלַךְ Hiphil (“throw,” HALOT, 1528-1529). Usually, objects are thrown: wood, blood, stones, meat, a spear, arrows, millstone, a head, other gods, a mantle, flour, hooks, material from a ship. God “throws” wind (Job 27:22), hail (Ps 147:17), a storm (Jonah 1:4). Rarely, a person or people are thrown: Joseph (Gen 37:20, 24), Jeremiah (Jer 38:9),

Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego (throughout Dan 3), Daniel (throughout Dan 6), and Jonah (Jonah 1:12, 15).

The very common *lignum*, translating עֵץ, refers to both “tree” and “wood,” mostly literal. A few are figurative, e.g., the fable of the trees (Judg 9) told by Jotham against Abimelech, a cedar of Lebanon as Assyria (Ezek 31). “Wood” or “a tree” that is thrown occurs in Exod 15:25 (the wood that made the bitter water sweet), Num 19:6 (cedarwood, part of the offering of the red heifer), 2 Kgs 6:6 (the wood that made the stew safe to eat), and here in Jer 11:19.

The Vulgate *mittamus lignum* corresponds closely to the Greek ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον (“let us throw wood”) and somewhat to the Targum נְרַמֵּי סִמָּא דְּמִוֹתָא (“let us throw deadly poison”). In Jer 11:19, the Latin, Greek, and Aramaic words for “throw” seem unrelated to the Hebrew, “destroy.”

Could the “wood” have reminded the Greek and Latin translators of Moses’ throwing wood to sweeten the water (Exod 15:25) or Elisha’s saving the stew (2 Kgs 6:6)? If so, the Targum’s “deadly poison” is a surprise. Or, as Rudolph suggests⁸⁰, could LXX, Targum, and Vulgate have been working from a different *Vorlage*? This seems more likely.

3.3.1.3. Jeremiah 12:1-3

3.3.1.3.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Here the Vulgate corresponds closely to the Masoretic Text. It retains the “fruit” metaphors in 12:2, but renders the odd יִלְכֶּה differently. This verb is probably

⁸⁰ W. Rudolph, Footnote 19a, Jeremiah 11:19, *BHS*, 805. See discussion in Section 2.1.1.2.2 “The verb נִשְׁחִיתָהּ “let us destroy.”

in hendiadys with עָשָׂה, to indicate the continual making of fruit. It appears in the Vulgate as *proficiunt*, “they advance” or “they profit.” In context, “they profit” makes most sense, but the “advance” meaning may preserve a connection with הֵלֵךְ.

Jeremiah’s demand in 12:3 is also different, that the Lord “collect them” (*congrega eos*), all the wicked as a flock, rather than “tear them apart” (הִתְקַם). This change could have been made for better sense: first collect them, then consecrate them for slaughter.

3.3.2.4. Jeremiah 15:10-12

3.3.2.4.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

In the Vulgate, Jer 15:10-12 has fewer differences from MT than other versions. In 15:11, the Vulgate renders the Hebrew idiom אִם־לֹא (“if not” = “surely”) word-for-word with a Latin idiom *si non* (“if not” = “surely,” an affirmative⁸¹). In MT, 15:11 is unclear. In 15:11a, neither the Ketiv (שְׁרוּתְךָ “your release”) nor the Qere (שִׁרִיתְךָ “I released you”) corresponds to the Vulgate *reliquiae tuae* (“your remains”), which, however, is close to the Targum סוּפְךָ (“your end”). These might both reflect a *Vorlage* of שִׁרִיתְךָ = שְׁאֵרִיתְךָ (HALOT, 1652). In 15:11b, the Vulgate agrees with one possible reading of MT, that the Lord “helped you” (MT, “intervened for you”) in the time of torment. The question in 15:12, obscure in Hebrew (“Will iron shatter iron from the north and bronze?”) is

⁸¹ W. E. Plater and H. J. White, *A Grammar of the Vulgate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), 27.

somewhat less obscure in Latin (“Will iron be joined to iron from the north and copper?”)

3.3.2.5. Jeremiah 15:15-18

3.3.2.5.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Jer 15:15-18 in the Vulgate follows MT very closely. It retains the Hebrew idiom, “from the face of your hand” (מִפְּנֵי יָדְךָ), as *a facie manus tuae* “from the face of your hand,” both meaning “before your hand.” In 15:18a, the wound is *desperabilis*, “without hope.” This agrees in sense with Hebrew אִנוּשָׁה, “incurable.”

In 15:18b, MT is ambiguous. It is either “you” (the LORD, 2ms) or “it” (the wound, 3 fs) that is “like deception, water that is not reliable.” In the Vulgate, as in LXX, it is clear that it is “it” (the wound, fs) that is “like lying/false water; it has no faithfulness.”

3.3.2.5.2 Use of אֶכְזָב and *mendacium* and *mendax* in 15:18

Hebrew: אֶכְזָב מַיִם לֹא נֶאֱמְנוּ “deception, waters that are not faithful”

Latin: *mendacium aquarum infidelium* lying, untrustworthy waters

A similar expression is found in Isa 58:11, using a verb (כִּזַּב Piel, “lie, deceive”) related to אֶכְזָב, “deception.”

וְהָיִיתָ כְּגֵן רוּחַ וּכְמוֹצֵא מַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכְזָבוּ מִימּוֹ:

And you [my people] shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not deceive.

Vulgate Isa 58:11:

eris quasi hortus inriguus et sicut fons aquarum cuius non deficient aquae

And you [my people] shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

Here the waters might fail, but do not lie.

The noun *mendacium* (“untruthfulness, lying; a lie, falsehood”) and adjective *mendax*, (“lying,” both in White, 374), are very common in the Vulgate, translating several Hebrew words. Most commonly, they translate שָׁקֵר (“breach of faith, lie,” HALOT, 1648-1650). In Jeremiah, the word especially refers to false prophets. They also refer to the “lying spirit” that the LORD used to deceive prophets, to entice Ahab to go to war (1 Kgs 22:23//2 Chr 18:22). The Vulgate does not soften this account of God’s actions. Only in Jer 15:18 does *mendacium* refer to waters.

The not very common adjective *infidelis* (“that cannot be relied upon, not trustworthy, perfidious, unfaithful, faithless,” White, 291) translates many different Hebrew expressions: “children in whom there is no faithfulness,” (לֹא־אֱמֵן, Deut 32:20); a “faithless” person (בּוֹגֵד, “treacherous,” Prov 25:19); princes that are “rebels” (סּוֹרְרִים “the stubborn,” Isa 1:23); the “arrogant” (זָרִים, Isa 13:11); prophets who are “faithless persons” (אֲנָשֵׁי בְגָדוֹת, “persons of treacheries,” Zeph 3:4), and, only in Jer 15:18, “unfaithful waters.” Except in Jer 15:18, the adjective refers to people.

In Jer 15:18, the Vulgate agrees with LXX and one reading of MT, in removing the strong accusation against God, that God might be untrustworthy waters. As in LXX, the image of God as waters that “fail” would contradict Jeremiah’s own image of God as “the spring of living water” (*fontem aquae vivae* Jer 2:13) and “vessel of living waters” (*venam aquarum viventium* 17:13). Instead, it is the “wound” that is “like lying waters.”

3.3.2.6. Jeremiah 17:14-18

3.3.2.6.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

The Vulgate of Jer 17:14-18 has several differences from MT.

In 17:16, the obscure Hebrew לֹא־אֲצַחֵי, probably “I did not hurry,” is rendered as a clearer *non sum turbatus*, “I was not disturbed.” The Vulgate retains the idea of “following you,” but adds, “a shepherd.” This interpretation of the obscure מִרְעֶה אַחֲרָיִךְ, “from being a shepherd after you,” reverses who is the shepherd. In MT, it is Jeremiah; in the Vulgate, it is the Lord.

In 17:16ab, “a disastrous day” (יּוֹם אָנֹכִי, MT) could be repointed as יּוֹם אָנוֹשׁ, “a day of a man.” This option is followed by the Vulgate, LXX, and P

In 17:16b Vulgate, “what has come out from my lips,” a careful rendering of MT מוֹצֵא שְׁפָתַי, “was right (*rectum*) in your sight.” Here, *rectum in conspectu tuo* (*rectum*, “straight, right, upright, correct, proper, appropriate, befitting,” White, 526, *in conspectu tuo*, “in your face”) renders נֹכַח פְּנֵיךְ (“straightforward,” or “opposite,” HALOT, 698-699,) “your face.”

In 17:17, the Vulgate agrees with MT, that Jeremiah is asking the LORD not to be “terrors” (*formidini*, translating מַחֲתָהּ) to him (see 3.3.1.6.2, below).

In 17:18a, Jeremiah’s plea that his persecutors may be “put to shame” (יִבְשׁוּ) is changed to “may they be confounded” (*confundo*, “pour together; mingle in confusion; confound, confuse, disturb,” etc., White, 136), a different but not appreciably softer fate.

In MT, the “terror” (מַחֲתָהּ, 17a) that God might be for Jeremiah is echoed in Jeremiah’s wish (17:18) that his persecutors may be terrified (יִחַתּוּ) and that he may not be terrified (אֶחַתָּהּ, all from חָתַת). In the Vulgate, there is no echo in *formidini* (17:17) of the two verbs in 17:18, though they echo each other (*paveant illi*, “let them quake with fear,” and *non paveam ego*, “let me not quake with fear”).

3.3.2.6.2 Use of מַחֲתָהּ and *formidini*

Hebrew אֶל-תִּהְיֶה-לִּי לְמַחֲתָהּ

Do not become a terror for me.

מַחֲתָהּ “terror; ruin; corruption” (HALOT, 572), from

חָתַת Qal: be shattered, be filled with terror; Niphal: be broken to pieces, be

dismayed, be terrified; Piel: dishearten; Hiphil: shatter

(HALOT, 365)

The Hebrew verb holds both meanings, of breaking, and of terror or dismay.

Latin *non sis mihi tu formidini*

Do not be terrors to me

formido “fearing; fearfulness, fear, terror, dread; awe, reverence; that which produces fear, a frightful thing” (White, 241)

“Terror,” *formido*, in the Vulgate, translates a variety of Hebrew words. This “terror” may come from adversaries that are human (the Israelites, Deut 2:25, 11:25; Assyria and Elam, Ezek 32; Nebuchadrezzar, Jer 49:29; the Jews, Esth 9:2) or natural (Leviathan, Job 41:5). Terror may afflict the wicked (Job 18:11, 21:10; Ps 14:5) or the Psalmist (Ps 55:5).

Very often, however, this terror comes from God, either directly (Exod 15:16; Deut 28:67) or by means of the “sword” of an enemy (Ezek 7:18). Jeremiah’s plea that God not be “terrors” has a strong basis in Israelite history. The Vulgate does not soften Jeremiah’s cry.

3.3.2.7. Jeremiah 18:18-23

3.3.2.7.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Most of Jer 18:18-23 Vulgate is similar to MT. The very few differences clarify the text. In 18:20, the Vulgate clarifies that it is “I” who “had turned away your displeasure from them.” In 18:23, the Vulgate spells out just what Jeremiah asks God to “do to them” (MT), as “consume them!”

3.3.1.7.2 Use of שׁוֹחָה and *fovea*

Hebrew כִּי־כָרוּ שׁוֹחָה לְנַפְשִׁי for they dug a pit for my life

שׁוֹחָה (18:20) and Ketiv : שִׁחָה Qere : שׁוֹחָה (18 :22)

שִׁיחָה “trapper’s pit; gorge, precipice” (HALOT, 1439)

שִׁיחָה “pit, trap” (HALOT, 1477)

Latin: *quia foderunt foveam animae meae* (18:20) for they dug a pit of my soul

quia foderunt foveam ut caperent me (18:22) for they dug a pit to catch me

fovea “pit; pitfall; snare” (White, 242)

The common Latin word *fovea* is used by the Vulgate to translate several Hebrew words. Translating גִּימְיָן in Eccl 10:8 and שִׁחָת in Pss 7:15 and 9:16, and Prov 26:27, *fovea* refers to the wisdom commonplace, that the one who digs a pit may fall into it. *Fovea* may translate a “cistern” (גִּבְיָא, Isa 30:14) or “pits” into which evildoers will be flung (מַהֲמָרוֹת, Ps 140:11). Rendering the related words פֶּחַ, פִּחַת and פִּחְתִּים, *fovea* may be figurative (the nations as a “snare” to the Israelites, Josh 23:13) or literal (David possibly hiding in “pits,” 2 Sam 17:9; Absalom tossed into a “great pit,” 2 Sam 18:17). It occurs as part of the list of horrors that will come over all the earth (Isa 24:17-18, פֶּחַ וּפִחַת וְנֶפֶחַ. “terror, and the pit, and the snare” = *formido et fovea et laqueus*) or over Moab (Jer 48:43, פֶּחַ וּפִחַת וְנֶפֶחַ = *pavor et fovea et laqueus*). *Fovea* renders a set of “pits” using the letters ש and ח: “pitfalls” (שִׁיחָה, Ps 119:85) dug by the “arrogant,” a “pit” dug in “my path” (שִׁיחָה, Ps 57:7), a “pit” dug for the wicked (שִׁחָת, Ps 94:13), a “pit” dug for Jeremiah and in Proverbs (שִׁיחָה, Jer 18:20 and 18:22 Qere; Prov 22:14 and 23:27).

In Prov 23:29, *foveae* (“pits”) is probably a misreading of שִׁיחַ (“complaining”) as שִׁיחָה (“pit”), using an unpointed Hebrew text.

Like the Peshitta, the Vulgate uses the same word in Prov 22:14 and 23:27, as in Jer 18:20 and 18:22, to translate שִׁיחָה. In Prov 22:14, the “mouth of a strange woman” (פִּי זָרוֹת = *os alienae*) is a “deep pit” (שִׁיחָה עֲמֻקָּה = *fovea profunda*). In Prov 23:27, the “prostitute” (זֹנָה = *meretrix*) is a “deep pit” (שִׁיחָה עֲמֻקָּה = *fovea profunda*). Unlike LXX and Targum, the Vulgate preserves this verbal connection between the Proverbs and Jeremiah texts.

3.3.2.8. Jeremiah 20:7-10

3.3.2.8.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Slight differences in shades of meaning, between Jer 20:7-10 MT and Vulgate, occur mostly in choice of Latin words to render the Hebrew. In 20:7 Vulgate, Jeremiah’s outcry is that God has “led me away” (*seduxisti*) rather than “enticed me” (פָּתִיתַנִּי; see discussion below). In 20:8, rather than crying out “Violence and destruction!” (וְשָׁד וְחָמָס), Jeremiah cries out “Injustice and desolation!” (*iniquitatem et vastitatem*), a broader indictment. In 20:9, he “fails to bear, not enduring” (*defeci ferre non sustinens*); this implies but does not state his “struggle to endure” (וְנִלְאִיתִי כָּל־כֹּל).

More differences occur in 20:10. The Vulgate translates מִגֹּר מְסָבִיב (“terror from all around”) literally as *terrorem in circuitu* (“terror in a circuit”). It

does not, however, retain the pun with Pashhur's name from 20:3, where he is renamed *Pavorem undique*, also meaning “fear on all sides,” and 20:4, where he and his friends are given into *pavorem*.

Jeremiah's adversaries demand, “Pursue! and let us pursue him!” (*persequimini et persequamur eum*), rather than “Denounce! and let us denounce him!” (הַגִּידוּ וְנִגִּידְנֹה). Both *persequor* and נִגַּד Hiphil can be used in legal situations; *persequor* (“follow after, pursue; take vengeance on; prosecute,” White, 458) would show the result of the denunciation in MT.

His adversaries are described in MT as שְׂמֹרֵי צַלְעֵי, “those watching my stumbling.” Pointed as שְׂמֹרֵי צַלְעֵי, these are “those guarding my side.” This agrees with the “Three” and the Vulgate, *custodientes latus meum*. In an unpointed text, either is possible.

His opponents hope that Jeremiah may be “deceived” (*decipiat*). Unlike MT, which uses forms of פָּתָה in both verses, the Vulgate here uses a different verb from 20:7 (“led away,” *seduxisti, seductus*). It uses here the same verb (*decipio*) as in 4:10.

3.3.2.8.3 Use of פָּתָה and *seduco*

Hebrew Jeremiah 20:7 פָּתִיתָנִי יְהוָה וְאֶפְתָּ

You have enticed me, O LORD, and I was enticed.

from פָּתָה (HALOT, 984-5)

פָּתִיתָנִי Piel Perfect 2ms + 1cs suffix “entice”

וַאֲפַתְּ Niphal Imperfect Vav-Consecutive 1cs

“let oneself be deceived, let oneself be taken for a fool”

(HALOT), enticed

and 20:10 אִלִּי יִפְתָּהּ

Perhaps he may be enticed

יִפְתָּהּ Pual Imperfect 3ms

“let oneself be persuaded, be persuaded” (HALOT),

be enticed

Latin Jeremiah 20:7 *seduxisti me Domine et seductus sum*

You led me away, O Lord, and I was led away

seduxisti you led away,

and *seductus sum* “I was led away”

from

seduco lead aside or apart; draw aside; lead away, carry off; set

aside, put by; remove, separate; put asunder, separate,

divide (White, 559)

Jeremiah 20:10 *decipiat* “he may be deceived”

from

decipio catch, ensnare, entrap, beguile, deceive, cheat (White,

166)

See discussion of *decipio* “deceive” under 3.3.1.1.2 (Jer 4:10). Unlike MT, the Vulgate uses the same verb in Jer 4:10 and 20:10, but a different verb in 20:7.

In the Vulgate, *seduco* translates a variety of Hebrew verbs. The misleading that *seduco* describes is usually done by human beings. In Exod 22:16, a man “seduces” a virgin (פִּתְּהָ); in Deut 7:4, Israelites are warned not to intermarry with the peoples of the land, lest their sons be turned away (סֹר) “from following me.” The Rabshakeh warns the people of Jerusalem that Hezekiah may “deceive” (נָשָׂא, 2 Kgs 18:29 // Isa 36:14) them into trusting the Lord to deliver them.

Manasseh “misled” (תָּעַה, 2 Kgs 21:9 // 2 Chr 33:9) Judah and Jerusalem. “Another woman” may “intoxicate” (שָׂגָה, Prov 5:20) “my son.” Leaders (Isa 9:16), prophets and diviners (Jer 23:32, 29:8, Mic 3:5), shepherds (Jer 50:6) all may “lead astray” (תָּעַה) “my” people. “Trusted friends” have “seduced” King Zedekiah (Jer 38:22).

Rarely, it is God whose actions are described by *seduco*. The Assyrian messengers warn Hezekiah not to let “your God . . . deceive you” into thinking that Jerusalem will escape Assyrian capture (נָשָׂא, 2 Kgs 19:10). In Jer 20:7, the prophet accuses God of leading him astray. In Ezek 39:2, the Lord GOD tells Gog that he will “turn you around (*circumagam te*) and drive you forward (שִׁשְׂאֲתִיךָ, *seducam te*)” to lead him “against the mountains of Israel.”

Among these uses of *seduco*, only three have a sexual connotation: the man seducing a virgin (Exod 22:16), an Israelite intermarrying with one of the people of the land (Deut 7:4), and the young man in danger of being “intoxicated” by “another woman” (Prov 5:20).

Although the more general meaning of “lead away” or “lead astray” seems more likely for Jer 20:7, Jeremiah’s accusation against God in the Vulgate is still strong. Only in Jer 20:7 does an Israelite use *seduco* to speak of God misleading one of God’s own people.

3.3.2.9. Jeremiah 20:14-18

3.3.2.9.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

In the Vulgate, Jer 20:14-18 has few differences from the MT. In 20:16, the “war cry” (תְּרוּעָה) at noonday is instead “wailing” (*ululatum*). Either fits the context. In 20:18 Vulgate, the prophet’s days are “consumed,” equivalent to “come to an end,” but “in disorder,” rather than “in shame.”

Jer 20:14-18 Vulgate does not soften Jeremiah’s outcry against the God who made him, but retains MT’s strong accusation.

3.3.3 Vetus Latina The only significant difference, among the various Vetus Latina fragments of the complaints of Jeremiah, occurs in one containing Jer 20:7.

3.3.3.1 Translation

Vulgate	Vetus Latina ⁸²
^{VUL} Jeremiah 20:7 seduxisti me Domine et seductus sum fortior me fuisti et invaluisti factus sum in derisum tota die omnes subsannant me	Jeremiah 20:7 Delectasti me et delectatus sum tenuisti et potens factus es. factus sum in risum, omnem diem consummaui. subsannatus

⁸² *Par Palimpsestorum Wirceburgensium. Antiquissimae Veteris Testamenti Versionis Latinae Fragmenta* (edit. Ernst Ranke (Bonn, 1871), 286, in *Vetus Latina: die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel*; Collected by Peter Sabatier and edited by Arzabtei Beuron.; Microfilm. = Cod. Wirc. (Ranke, 1871). This is “dating to the sixth century” (Martin Noth, *The Old Testament World* (trans. Victor I. Bruhn; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 344).

Vulgate	. Vetus Latina
You have led me away, O Lord, and I was led away. You were stronger than me, and you prevailed. I have become in derision all the day; all ridicule me.	You have enticed me away – or – you have delighted me – and I was enticed away – or – delighted. You controlled, and you became mighty. I have become in laughter, I finished every day ridiculed.

3.3.3.2 Similarities to and differences from MT

Hannes Bezzel⁸³ points out that this fragment from Codex Wirceburgensis plays a “singular role” in the group of translations of Jer 20:7, “standing completely alone.” It omits “the Lord” and indicates that the “speaker has rejoiced.” This is indeed different from Jeremiah’s outcry in MT, LXX, Targum, Vulgate, and P.

Bezzel’s reading of this fragment depends on one possible meaning of *delecto*. According to White (171), however, *delecto* has several meanings: “to allure (from the right path); to entice away; to seduce; to delight, please, amuse.” In this context, “entice away” seems a more appropriate translation than “delight.”

3.3.4 What this shows about the Vulgate translation in Jeremiah’s Complaints

The Vulgate of Jeremiah’s complaints shows fewer differences with MT than LXX or the Targum. It maintains a close correspondence between the Latin and Hebrew texts. This may result from Jerome’s emphasis on the necessity of referring to the “Hebrew truth” (*Hebraica veritas*).⁸⁴ Some differences appear to provide

⁸³ Hannes Bezzel, *Die Konfessionen Jeremias* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 216 (my translations).

⁸⁴ Jerome, “Preface,” *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* (trans. C. T. R. Hayward, *Saint Jerome’s Hebrew Questions on Genesis*; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995), 30.

clarification of obscure passages, sometimes with more logical images. Several differences appear to come from different *Vorlagen*, either consonantal, or with the same consonants and different vowel pointing. Few differences soften Jeremiah's sharp outcries.

Close correspondence with the Hebrew text appears throughout the translation. This is generally shown in choice of words that overlap well in meaning.

In several cases, it goes further, translating Hebrew idioms word-for-word. For example, in 15:11, the Hebrew idiom אִם-לֹא, literally "if not" but idiomatically "surely," is rendered *si non*, also literally "if not" but also idiomatically "surely." In 15:17, מִפְּנֵי יָדְךָ, "from the face of your hand" = "from before your hand," is rendered word-for-word as *a facie manus tuae*, "from the face of your hand" = "from before your hand."

In 15:16, the Vulgate, unlike LXX, the Targum, and P, retains the odd image of the prophet "eating" God's words. As in MT and P, in 18:20 and 18:22, the Vulgate uses the same word for "pit" (*fovea*) as in Proverbs 22:14 and 23:27, preserving the verbal connection. In 20:10, the Vulgate, however, does not preserve the pun on Pashhur's name (Jer 20:3: *Pavorem undique* = "fear on all sides"); it translates "terror on all sides" literally (as *terrorem in circuitu*).

Some differences clarify unclear or illogical passages. In 12:3, Jeremiah asks, perhaps more logically, that the Lord "collect" all the wicked as a flock, rather than "tear them apart" (MT), before consecrating them for slaughter. In 15:11 in the Vulgate, as in LXX, the prophet has intervened for his opponents; this chooses one

possible meaning of 15:11 MT, where either the LORD intervened for the prophet, or let the enemy strike him. In 15:12, the obscure question, “Will iron shatter iron from the north and bronze?” (MT), is somewhat less obscure as, “Will iron be joined to iron from the north and copper?” In 17:16, MT “from being a shepherd after you” is reversed, to “following you, a shepherd”; God, not Jeremiah, is the shepherd. In 18:23, Jeremiah’s request that God “do to them” (MT) is spelled out as “consume them!” In 20:8, Jeremiah’s cry of “Violence and destruction!” (MT) is broadened to “Injustice and desolation!” In 20:10 MT, Jeremiah’s adversaries plan to “denounce” him; in the Vulgate, they plan to “pursue” or “prosecute” him. Both texts use legal terms; their action in the Vulgate seems a result of their earlier denunciation.

Some changes may be connected with different *Vorlagen*.

In 11:19, there does not appear to be a logical connection between “let us destroy” (MT) and “let us send” (*mittamus*), similar to LXX and Targum “let us throw,” wood in his food/bread. Rudolph’s suggestions of *Vorlagen* of נְשַׁלִּיכָהּ or נְשִׁיתָהּ seem possible, for all these.⁸⁵

Different vowel pointing of the same Hebrew consonants may account for some of the differences. In 17:16ab, the Vulgate agrees with LXX and P, in reading “a day of man” (יֹם אָנוּשׁ), rather than “a disastrous day” (יֹם אָנוּשׁ). In 20:10, the Vulgate agrees with Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, against LXX. In MT, שְׁמִרְי צִלְעִי is pointed as “watching my stumbling” (see Section 2.1.1.8.1). With different pointing (צִלְעִי) it could be rendered “guarding my side,” as they do.

⁸⁵ W. Rudolph, Footnote 19a, Jeremiah 11:19, *BHS*, 805.

The Vulgate of Jeremiah's complaints retains most of Jeremiah's strong accusations against God, with the possible exceptions of 4:10 and 15:18b.

In 4:10 MT, Jeremiah's strong accusation is that God has "surely deceived" the people. In the Vulgate, this has become a question, "Did you then deceive?" This appears a considerable softening, unless MT is a rhetorical question.

In 15:18b, the Vulgate, like LXX, clarifies that it is the wound, not the Lord, that has become "like lying waters." This may represent a softening, though based on one possible reading of the Hebrew text.

No softening occurs in 17:17, as Jeremiah begs that God not be "terrors." In 17:18, the plea that the persecutors be "confounded" (Vulgate) is different, but not appreciably softer, than that they be "put to shame" (MT). In 20:7, Jeremiah's accusation that God has "led [him] away" is also different, but no weaker than that God has "enticed" him. In 20:14 the Vulgate retains Jeremiah's outburst against the God who made him.

3.4 Jeremiah's Complaints in the Peshitta

See Appendix 2, pp. 364-401, for texts and translations

3.4.1. Peshitta renderings of specific complaints

3.4.1.1. Jeremiah 4:10

3.4.1.1.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Peshitta Jer 4:10 adds only “I pray” (ܐܪܒܐ) to Jeremiah’s accusation of

God’s deception. Otherwise, it renders MT very closely.

3.4.1.1.2 Use of ܐܪܒܐ for נשא

Hebrew: הַיֵּשׁ הַשֵּׂא הַשֵּׂא from נשא

you have surely deceived deceive, cheat

Syriac (Peshitta) ܐܪܒܐ ܐܪܒܐ ܐܪܒܐ ܐܪܒܐ

truly you have indeed led astray (Aphel)

In the Peshitta of the prophets, ܐܪܒܐ appears in the Peal, Ethpeel, and

Aphel,

In the Peal, ܐܪܒܐ (“wander, err, go astray, fall in error, be led into the wrong

way; be missing, lost, perish; be forgotten, disregarded; forget, err, mistake”, P-S⁸⁶,

⁸⁶ P-S = *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (ed. J. Payne Smith; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1998). Page references from P-S are incorporated into the text of this work.

177-8) translates a range of Hebrew words, many of which do not correspond to Hebrew תעה.

Most commonly, שכח translates שכח Qal, “forget,” and Niphal, “be forgotten”; or תעה Qal, “err, go astray.” In the Ethpeel, נטה (“be led astray, deceived; be missing, out of sight, forgotten”, P-S, 178) renders שכח Niphal, “be forgotten” and נטש Pual, “be neglected.”

In the Aphel, נטה (“cause to wander, lead astray, deceive, seduce; cause to lose, deprive, rob”, P-S, 178) renders a wide variety of Hebrew verbs, including הבל Hiphil “delude,” נשא Hiphil, “deceive,” סות Hiphil “deceive,” נדח Hiphil “drive away,” הבל Hiphil “delude, make vain,” עלל Piel “injure,” פתה Piel “entice, deceive,” שוב Piel “lead astray,” שכח Hiphil “cause to forget.” In the Peshitta, all these refer to “leading astray.”

Those led astray are nations or parts of nations: “my people,” Judah, Israel, Jerusalem, but also Edom, Egypt, and Babylon. Most of those leading astray are false prophets, other leaders, shepherds, allies, and princes. Lies, terror, a proud heart, a spirit of whoredom also lead astray.

In four cases, however, it is God who may be deceiving or leading astray. The Assyrian messengers warn Hezekiah, in the name of their king, not to let “your God

on whom you rely deceive (לִבְלִי from נָשָׂא Hiphil) you by promising

that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria” (Isa 37:10).

Israelites, who might be thought to know better, also see the possibility of God’s deception. Isaiah (63:17) asks, “Why, O LORD, do you make us stray

(לִבְלִי from תָּעָה Hiphil) from your ways?” Jeremiah complains (4:10),

“truly you have indeed led this people and Jerusalem astray” (לִבְלִי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ

from נָשָׂא Hiphil). And the LORD tells Ezekiel (14:9), “If a prophet is deceived and

speaks a word, I, the LORD, have deceived (מִלְּפָנֶיךָ) that prophet.”

In each case, the Peshitta renders the Hebrew closely and does not soften the accusation against God.

3.4.1.2 Jeremiah 11:18-20

3.4.1.2.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Peshitta Jer 11:18-20 renders MT very closely, including retaining the strange image of “let us destroy a tree in its bread” (11:19b).

3.4.1.2.2 Use of מִלְּפָנֶיךָ Pael for שָׂחַת Hiphil in Jer 11:19b

נִשְׁחִיתָה עֵץ בְּלֶחֶמוֹ Let us destroy a tree/wood in/with its/his food/bread.

נִסְבֵּל מִסֵּם בֶּלֶם we will/let us destroy a tree/wood in its/his bread/food

נִשְׁחִיתָהּ let us destroy, from שָׁחַת Hiphil cohortative

נִסְבַּל let us destroy, from סָבַל Pael

In the Peshitta of the prophets, סָבַל appears in the Pael (“travail, be in pains of childbirth; twist, falsify; spoil, mar, corrupt; become corrupt, depraved; destroy, spoil, ravage,” P-S, 123-4) and Ethpaal (“be brought forth with travail; be corrupted; be destroyed, P-S, 124).

In the Pael, סָבַל most often translates שָׁחַת, both Piel and Hiphil, both meaning “ruin, destroy, annihilate.” The one who does or does not destroy is usually the LORD. He destroys “my servants,” “the pride of Judah,” kingdoms (using Babylon as his “war club”), “my people,” Jerusalem, the inhabitants of the land, the wall, and Babylon. He does not destroy Israel, in the wilderness. Other nations and cities, and their leaders (Edom, Babylon, Nineveh, many nations, Philistines, those “from the north,” Nebuchadnezzar); wild animals, lions, and locusts; thieves and shepherds also “destroy.” It is mostly people that are “destroyed,” but also the walls of Tyre, the fourth beast’s dominion (Dan 7.26), and wine.

Only in Jeremiah 11:19 (“let us destroy a tree in its bread/food”) and Daniel 4:23 (the “watcher,” in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream) is a “tree” destroyed.

In Jeremiah 11:19, נִסְבַּל clearly translates the Hebrew נִשְׁחִיתָהּ “let us destroy.” Here the Peshitta agrees with the Masoretic Text, against LXX

(ἐμβάλωμεν “let us throw”), Targum (נְרִינִי “let us throw”), and Vulgate (*mittamus*, “let us send”). The Peshitta preserves the obscurity of MT’s “let us destroy a tree in its food.”

3.4.1.3 Jeremiah 12:1-3

Here the Peshitta corresponds closely to the Masoretic Text, usually each Hebrew word to its Syriac rendering. Where different words are used, as with the “rich, all of them lying” (עֲשִׂירִים כָּל־הֵמָּה שֹׁכְבִים), compared with “all those committing treachery are at ease” (שְׁלֹו כָּל־בִּגְדֵי בִגְדֵי), a similar meaning is conveyed. Those who lie do “commit treachery”; those “at ease” or “secure” (שְׁלֹו) may well be “rich, prosperous, flourishing.”

3.4.1.4 Jeremiah 15:10-12

In 15:10, P reverses Jeremiah’s complaint, making not being a debtor precede not being a lender. P clarifies MT by adding an “adversative particle”⁸⁷ to indicate that all still curse or revile Jeremiah.

In 15:11-12, P clarifies that it is the enemy that attacks from the north, paraphrasing by “bringing the reference to the north from verse 12 into verse 11.”⁸⁸ In P, it is the enemy that is like iron and brass. Where MT is ambiguous, whether LORD protected from the enemy or caused the enemy to hurt, P also clarifies that it is the LORD who caused the attack. This disagrees with LXX and Vulgate, where the

⁸⁷ Gillian Greenberg, *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Jeremiah* (Monographs of the Peshitta Institute 13; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 34.

⁸⁸ Greenberg, 181.

LORD stood or helped “against the enemy,” and the Targum, where “the enemy will oppress them” (the inhabitants of the land).

3.4.1.5 Jeremiah 15:15-18

3.4.1.5.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

The main difference between MT and P is in 15:16a. P has removed the strange image of the prophet “eating” the LORD’s words. Instead, the prophet has kept and done his commandments, as in Deuteronomy 15.5. Greenberg points out that “in an unpointed text the meaning ‘eat’ at **וַאֲכַלֵּם** was not identified; perhaps the translator understood the root **כָּלָה** ‘to complete.’”⁸⁹

In 15:18a, P agrees with LXX (στεινός) and Targum (תקיפה), reading the wound as “serious” or “mighty” (עָלִיז), rather than “incurable” (אִנּוּשָׁה).

Greenberg thinks that P and LXX may have been “influenced by a perception of the underlying sense of **נָצַח** [for “my pain” **נִמְכָּתִי**, in the first part] ‘to triumph’, so that they read ‘strength’ into the first element of the parallel phrases, and translated the second in conformity.”⁹⁰

In 15:18b, P agrees with one reading of MT, that the “lying waters, that are not trustworthy” or “deception, water that is not reliable” refer to “you” (the LORD). This differs from a reading of MT followed by LXX and Vulgate: “it (the wound) has indeed become to me as deceitful water”, and Targum: “Let not your Memra be lies for me, like a fountain whose waters give out.”

⁸⁹ Greenberg, 65.

⁹⁰ Greenberg, 158.

3.4.1.5.2 Deceptive waters in 15:18

Hebrew: אֲכֻזָּב מַיִם לֹא נֶאֱמָנוּ “deception, waters that are not faithful”

A similar expression is found in Isa 58:11, using a verb (כָּזַב Piel, “lie, deceive”) related to אֲכֻזָּב, “deception.”

וְהָיִיתָ כְּגֶן רוּחַ וּכְמוֹצֵא מַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכְזֹּבוּ מִיָּמִיו:

And you [my people] shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not deceive.

Syriac: ܡܫܬܠܐ ܠܝ ܐܬܝ ܡܬܐ ܒܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܬܠܡܬܝܬܝܢ

And you were to me like lying (ܒܪܐ) waters, that are not trustworthy.

And Isa 58:11:

ܡܫܬܠܐ ܐܬܝ ܦܘܬܬܐ ܕܚܝܐ

ܐܬܝ ܡܬܠܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܬܠܡܬܝܬܝܢ

And you will be like a flowing garden, and like a spring of water, whose water is not failing.

Here the water fails, but does not lie.

The adjective ܒܪܐ, (“lying, false”, P-S 205) is uncommon in P of the

prophets. Beyond Jer 15:18, it refers to “lying words” (Dan 2:9, translating Aramaic

חַבֵּב (כְּדָבָה) and to a spirit revealing falsehood (Mic 2:11, שֶׁקֶר כִּזֵּב). The verb

in the Pael, means either “lie, deceive,” or “fail” (P-S, 204). It translates either כִּזֵּב

(“lie, deceive, fail”, HALOT, 468) or כַּחֵשׁ (“deny; keep secret; tell lies, delude; let

someone down; feign obedience”, HALOT, 469-70), both Piel. Prophets, children of

sorcerers, women, seers, a house, and the city of Nineveh “lie” or “deceive” (either

כִּזֵּב or כַּחֵשׁ). Since wine, oil, and an olive tree may “fail” (כַּחֵשׁ Piel), in Jer

15:18, the waters also may “fail” rather than “lie.”

The accusation against God remains strong in P, as in one reading of MT.

The image of God as untrustworthy waters that “fail” contradicts Jeremiah’s own

image of God as “the spring of living water” (Jer 2:13 and 17:13).

3.4.1.6 Jeremiah 17:14-18

3.4.1.6.1 Similarities and difference from MT

Some differences between P and MT reflect different vowel pointing of the Hebrew text. In 17:16aa, the obscure “from being a shepherd” (מִרְעֵה, MT) could be repointed מִרְעָה, “from wickedness/evil.” This option is followed by P.

In 17:16ab, “a disastrous day” (יּוֹם אֲנֹשׁ, MT) could be repointed as

יּוֹם אָנוּשׁ “a day of a man.” This option is followed by P, LXX, and the Vulgate.

In MT, the “terror” (בְּחִתָּהּ, 17a) that God might be for Jeremiah is echoed in

Jeremiah’s wish that his persecutors may be terrified (יִחַתּוּ) and that he may not be

terrified (אַחַתָּה, all from חָתַת). Similarly, in P, the “ruin” or “breaking”

(אֵלֶיךָ) that God might be for Jeremiah is echoed by Jeremiah’s wish that his

persecutors be broken (לֹאֵלֶיךָ) and that he may not be broken (אֵלֶיךָ ,

all from אֵל).

3.4.1.6.2 Use of אֵלֶיךָ for מַחֲתָה

Hebrew אֶל-תִּהְיֶה-לִּי לְמַחֲתָה

Do not become a terror for me.

מַחֲתָה “terror; ruin; corruption” (HALOT, 572), from

חָתַת Qal: be shattered, be filled with terror; Niphal: be broken to pieces, be

dismayed, be terrified; Piel: dishearten; Hiphil: shatter

(HALOT, 365)

The Hebrew verb holds both meanings, of breaking, and of terror or dismay.

Syriac ܠܐ ܕܡܚܬܐ ܠܐ ܕܡܚܬܐ

Do not become a ruin for me.

In the Peshitta of the prophets, the verb ܠܠܝܢ and the noun ܠܠܝܢܐ are

both very common. The noun ܠܠܝܢܐ (“breaking, crushing; shipwreck; discomfiture; ruin; fracture, wound, part, piece, the prey”, P-S, 604) may translate the Hebrew “calamity” (אִיד), “prey” (טֶרֶף) , “terror” (מִחֲתָה or חֲתִית), “destruction” (שֹׁבֵר or שֹׁד), or “wound” (שִׁבֹּר). “Calamity” comes from the LORD, to Moab, Esau, Kedar, and Egypt. Judah and Nineveh are considered “prey” to a lion, a figure for prophets or the LORD. Foreign nations, but also the LORD, bring “terror.” “Destruction” comes mostly from the LORD, to foreign nations (Moab, Babylon, Egypt) or Jeremiah’s enemies, but most often, to Jerusalem. The grievous “wound” of God’s people comes from the LORD. Only Isa 30.26 promises that the LORD will bind it up.

This very strong word describes terrible results, most attributed to the LORD, both in MT and in P. Since it is the LORD who brings such “wounds,” such “destruction,” even on God’s own people, Jeremiah has good cause to fear that the LORD may bring these to him.

Here also, the Peshitta does not soften Jeremiah’s cry, in MT.

3.4.1.7 Jeremiah 18:18-23

3.4.1.7.1 Similarities to and differences from MT

Most of Jer 18:18-23 Peshitta renders MT very closely, with slight differences in 18:19 and 18:22.

In 18:19, it is the sound of “my wrong” (חַלְכַּר), rather than “my opponents” (יְרִיבֵי) that the LORD should hear. The Syriac word is the one used in the Targum, עֲלֵבְנִי (“my grievance”); both could come from a reading of יְרִיבֵי as רִיבִי “my lawsuit, dispute,” as could LXX δικαιώματός μου.

In 18:22, P adds “for my life” to “they dug a pit,” making 18:22 agree with 18:20, while retaining “to lay hold of me,” as in MT.

Neither of these changes softens Jeremiah’s cry.

3.4.1.7.2 Use of חַמְצָה for שׁוּחָה in 18:20 and 18:22

Hebrew כִּי־כָרוּ שׁוּחָה לְנַפְשִׁי for they dug a pit for my life

שׁוּחָה (18:20) and Ketiv : שִׁיחָה Qere : שׁוּחָה (18 :22)

שׁוּחָה “trapper’s pit; gorge, precipice” (HALOT, 1439)

שִׁיחָה “pit, trap” (HALOT, 1477)

Syriac ܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ that they dug a pit for my life

ܡܚܕܐ “pit, pitfall; trench” (P-S, 64) same in 18:20 and 18:22

In the Peshitta of the prophets, it is only in Jer 18:20 and 18:22 that

ܡܚܕܐ translates שׁוּחָה. In Isaiah (24:17, 24:18) and Jeremiah (48:23, 48:24),

אֶרֶץ translates פֶּתַח (“pit, trapping pit; ravine”, HALOT, 924), in

combination with פָּחַד (“trembling, dread, danger, fear”, HALOT, 922), that befall the “inhabitant of the earth” or Moab.

The Peshitta of Prov 22:14 and 23:27 uses אֶרֶץ to translate שְׂוִיחָה, as in Jer 18:20 and 18:22, for the “strange woman” or the prostitute as a “deep pit.”

This retains the verbal connection from MT.

3.4.1.8 Jeremiah 20:7-10

3.4.1.8.1 Similarities and differences from MT

Most of Jer 20:7-9 is similar in the Peshitta and MT.

In 20:9, however, P agrees with LXX that the fire “burned fiercely,” rather than being “locked up” “in my bones.”

In 20:10 P shows substantial differences from MT. Instead of “terror from every side” (מִגֹּר מִסְבִּיב), the many were “gathering from round about me”

(הַרְבֵּה בָּרַצְוּ מִסְבִּיב). This is close to LXX, συναθροίζομένων

κυκλόθεν (“gathered round about”), and the Targum מִתְכַּנְשִׁין סְחוּר־סְחוּר

(“gathering round about”). W. Rudolph suggest that this reading is related to a derivation of מִגֹּר from אָנַר “bring in (harvest).” (HALOT, 11).⁹¹

⁹¹ W. Rudolph, Footnote 10a, Jeremiah 20:10, *BHS*, 822.

In MT, **מִנְגּוֹר מְסָבִיב** in Jer 20:10 quotes the LORD's naming Pashhur in Jer 20:3, as no longer Pashhur but "terror on every side"; in Jer 20:4, the LORD is "making you a terror (**מִנְגּוֹר**) to you and all your friends," all in the context of the coming deportation to Babylon. The Peshitta lacks this quotation. In Jer 20:3 Peshitta, Pashhur is called **ܐܠܐܝܢܐ** ("a sojourner, stranger, foreigner," P-S 609) and **ܐܠܐܝܢܐ** ("a vagrant, mendicant, beggar," P-S 127, from a "development in Syriac" to "one who goes around, a beggar"⁹²). In Jer 20:4, the LORD is making him "a sojourner" (**ܐܠܐܝܢܐ**) to himself and his friends. "Sojourner" in P agrees with Jer 20:3 LXX, in which the LORD names Pashhur **Μέτοικον** ("alien resident," LSJ, 1121). In Jer 20:4 LXX, the LORD is giving him and all his friends to **μετοικίαν** "deportation."

These readings may derive from a second meaning of **מִנְגּוֹר**, "temporary abode of a **גֵּר**, land of domicile, sojourning" (HALOT, 184). They both clarify an obscure name and make a firmer connection with the coming Babylonian captivity. Since, however, neither P nor LXX carries over the obscure name to Jer 20:10, the pun carrying the connection among Jeremiah's bitter words is lost.

A further clarification in P makes "every man of my peace"

⁹² Greenberg, 182.

(כָּל אֲנָשׁ שְׁלוֹמִי) “all of them who were asking about my welfare/peace with

their mouth,” בָּלֶמַד וְזָלַל כְּצִלְעִי בְּפִתְמוֹתָם. But “those

watching my stumbling” (שֹׂמְרֵי צִלְעִי) are rendered differently as “hating me in

their heart” (לֵב בָּלֶמַד לִי חָסְדִּי). The first part of what these say,

“Denounce! and let us denounce him!” (הַגִּידוּ וְנִגִּידְנֻהוּ) shares animus against

Jeremiah with “Show him to us! Let us stand against him!”

(לֵב בָּלֶמַד לִי חָסְדִּי), but in very different terms. This “involves a

degree of deviation from the Hebrew which is most unusual in the Peshitta.”⁹³

3.4.1.8.2 Use of פתח for צול in 20:7 and 20:10

Hebrew Jeremiah 20:7 פְּתִיתֵנִי יְהוָה וְאַפְתָּ

You have enticed me, O LORD, and I was enticed.

from פתח (HALOT, 984-5)

פְּתִיתֵנִי Piel Perfect 2ms + 1cs suffix

“persuade” (HALOT, following Clines-Gunn), entice,

seduce (see Section 2.1.1.8.2 Use and meaning of פתח)

וְאַפְתָּ Niphal Imperfect Vav-Consecutive 1cs

⁹³ Greenberg, 184.

“let oneself be deceived, let oneself be taken for a
fool” (HALOT), enticed

and 20:10 אִלִּי יִפְתָּהּ

Perhaps he may be enticed...

יִפְתָּהּ Pual Imperfect 3ms

“let oneself be persuaded, be persuaded” (HALOT),
be enticed

Syriac Jeremiah 20:7 ܕܠܝܢܐ ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ

You have enticed me, O LORD, and I was enticed.

from ܕܠܝܢܐ (P-S 560)

ܕܠܝܢܐ Pael Perfect 2ms + 1cs suffix

“cajole, beguile, entice; seduce”

ܕܠܝܢܐ Ethpaal Perfect 1cs

“be cajoled, enticed”

and 20:10 ܕܠܝܢܐ ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ

Perhaps he may be enticed

ܕܠܝܢܐ Ethpaal Imperfect 3ms

“be cajoled, enticed”

The verb **צָהַל** is uncommon in the Peshitta and translates **פָּתָה**, following

MT closely. In Exod 22:16, as in MT, it refers to a man who “seduces” a virgin who is not engaged to be married. In Deut 11:16, it is connected with idolatry, in the warning that your heart may not be “seduced” or “enticed” into turning away, serving other gods. In Hos 2:14, the LORD is planning to “allure” or “entice” “your mother” (Israel) into the wilderness where he will provide hope. These are all connected with persuasion, but with a bit of deception; most do not all involve sexual seduction. Jer 20:7 and 20:10 therefore may be rendered “entice.”

The Peshitta does not appreciably soften Jeremiah’s accusation against God. God is still seen as “deceiving,” though without a necessary sexual connotation.

3.4.1.9 Jeremiah 20:14-18

The Peshitta of Jer 20:14-18 is a very close rendering of the MT. The major exception is that the man who announced Jeremiah’s birth to his father “thought to” or “believed” (**חָשַׁב**) him rather than “brought news” (**בָּשַׂר**) to him. The similarity

of the letters (s, b, r and b, s, r) and the different meaning of the Syriac **ܚܫܒ**

(“scorn, despise,” P-S, 49) indicate a possible misreading of the MT for the sake of clarification of meaning. LXX, Targum, and Vulgate all retain the idea of “bringing news.”

3.4.2 What this shows about Peshitta translation in Jeremiah's Complaints

As Michael Weitzman says, the Peshitta translations show “a combination of fidelity with intelligibility.”⁹⁴ This is apparent in P's translations of Jeremiah's complaints. In most cases, translation follows the MT very closely, sometimes against LXX, Targum, and Vulgate. In a “sporadic”⁹⁵ use of LXX, P agrees with LXX and/or Targum against MT. In several cases, P clarifies a possibly obscure MT reading by additions or changes. In at least one case, P seems to have misread MT. But notably, P does not soften Jeremiah's accusations against God, even when the Targum or LXX does.

In disagreement with LXX, Targum, and Vulgate, in 11:19, P preserves the obscurity of MT's phrase, “Let us *destroy* wood/a tree in its bread/food,” rather than the clearer “let us *throw* wood on its/his bread/food.” In 15:18, P agrees with one reading of MT that “lying waters, that are unreliable” refer to “you” (the LORD), rather than to a “wound” (LXX, Vulgate).

In 17:14, P disagrees with MT, LXX and Vulgate, but agrees with Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, in reading רעה as “evil” (רעה) rather than “shepherd” (רעה). In 20:10, P agrees with LXX and Targum in translating מסביב as “gathered all around.” P, LXX, Targum, and even the Vulgate, which retains “terror,” miss the pun reference to Pashhur's name in 20:3.

⁹⁴ M. P. Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 62.

⁹⁵ Weitzman, 78.

In 15:11-12, P clarifies an ambiguity in MT, stating that it is the LORD who caused the attack. This disagrees with LXX and Vulgate, where the LORD stood or ran “against the enemy,” and the Targum, where “the enemy will oppress them” (the inhabitants of the land). In a further clarification in 18:22, P adds “for my life” to correspond to 18:20; the Targum makes a similar addition, unlike LXX or the Vulgate.

In 20:15, P, in disagreement with MT, LXX, Targum, and Vulgate, seems to have misunderstood the Hebrew, and Targumic Aramaic בָּשַׂר (“bring news”). Since Syriac ܒܫܪ has a very different meaning (“scorn, despise”), it appears that P substituted ܠܒܐ (“think to, believe”) for the sake of intelligibility.

P’s careful rendering of MT preserves Jeremiah’s strong accusations against God. In 4:10, P, like LXX, does not soften the accusation that the LORD has deceived the people, unlike the Targum, where the false prophets have done this. In 15:18, the “lying waters” refer to God, rather than to the “wound.” In 17:17, P agrees with MT and Vulgate that God may be a “terror,” rather than a “stranger” (LXX), or God’s Memra a “misfortune” (Targum). In 20:7, P retains the accusation that God “entices” (MT), like LXX “deceives” and Vulgate “misleads,” rather than the Targum’s “confounds.”

Chapter 4 Jeremiah's Complaints in Ancient and Medieval Commentaries

4.1 Qumran *Hodayot*

In 1QHodayot^a, a scroll of “psalms from Qumran,”¹ are three short quotations from the complaints of Jeremiah. With quotations and paraphrases from several Psalms, Hosea, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Lamentations, these phrases are incorporated into prayers of thanksgiving and lament.

Jeremiah's self-description as “a man of strife and a man of quarreling” (15:10, אִישׁ רִיב וְאִישׁ מָדוֹן) is used twice.

In 1QH^a 10.14, the writer, set “like a banner for the elect of justice, like a knowledgeable mediator of secret wonders” (1QH^a 10.13), has “become a man of contention (אִישׁ רִיב) to the mediators of error, [but a man of pea]ce to all who view truth.”² Here the strife is with “men of deceit” (1QH^a 10.16), the “assembly of the wicked” (1QH^a 10.12).³

In 1QH^a 13.22-23, the writer, the “target of sl[ander],” is a “cause for quarrel and argument (לְרִיב וּמִדְּנִים) to my neighbours, for jealousy and anger to those who have joined my covenant, for challenge and grumbling to all my followers.”⁴ Here the strife is with the members of the community, “all those who had joined my council” (1QH^a 13.24).⁵

¹ Svend Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran* (Aarhus: UniversitetsForlaget, 1960).

² Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (vol. 1; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 163.

³ Ibid.

⁴ García Martínez and Tigchelaar, 173.

⁵ Ibid.

In 1QH^a 16.30, the writer's "disease has increased to bitterness and an incurable pain which does not stop" (1QH^a 16.27-28), and "grows like a searing fire enclosed in [my] bones (כַּאֲשֶׁ בּוֹעֵר עֲצוֹר בְּעִצְמוֹי) whose flame consumes for days without end."⁶ The description of the fire, here seen as disease, is similar to that in Jer 20:9 (כַּאֲשֶׁ עֲצוֹר בְּעִצְמוֹתַי בְּעֶרְתִּי), "like a burning fire, locked up in my bones"), but the context is different. In Jer 20:9, it is the prophet's plan not to speak in God's name that has brought this fire. In 1QH^a 16.24, it is the removal of the writer's hand that has brought the heat, from which there is no refuge. In both cases, not doing what God intends produces the fire.

The quotations do not refer to Jeremiah's life but are used in prayer for the new situation of the writer, in accord with Qumran use of Scripture, in which the texts were "interpreted as being aimed at and fulfilled in the community."⁷

⁶ García Martínez and Tigchelaar, 183.

⁷ Holm-Nielsen, 307.

4.2 Greek Commentaries

4.2.1 About patristic exegesis

References to Jeremiah's complaints in Greek and Latin patristic commentaries were found in *Biblia Patristica*, volumes 1 through 7.⁸

4.2.1.1 Assumptions and methods

Patristic exegesis of Scripture, in both Greek and Latin, shares foundational assumptions.

Holy Scripture has been given by God, in inspiration of human authors, in every small and large detail. The "will of God . . . directed what such human authors had to say."⁹ Its purpose is illumination of humanity, for the sake of growing into God's purposes of love. Its diversity and obscurity have been put there by God. This makes interpretation possible only by reverent use of God's help. All the diversity in Scripture relates only one unified message, "one story of the creation and redemption of humanity through God's decisive action."¹⁰

Because "all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful" (2 Tim 3:16), every inspired detail includes each word, each turn of phrase, each ordering of sections. Because each word can illuminate, detailed determination and examination of each is necessary. Study in scriptural context may clarify meaning, but since Scripture is a

⁸ *Biblia Patristica* (vols. 1-7; Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1975-2000). These include: v. 1, Des origines à Clément d'Alexandrie et Tertullien; v. 2, Le troisième siècle; v. 3, Origène; v. 4, Eusèbe de Césarée, Cyrille de Jérusalem, Epiphane de Salamine; v. 5, Basile de Césarée, Grégoire de Nazianze, Grégoire de Nysse, Amphiloque d'Iconium; v. 6, Hilaire de Poitiers, Ambroise de Milan, Ambrosiaster; v. 7, Didyme d'Alexandrie; Suppl., Philon d'Alexandrie.

⁹ Augustine, *Teaching Christianity* (*De Doctrina Christiana* = *Doc. Chr.*; trans. Edmund Hill; ed. John E. Rotelle; The Works of Saint Augustine I/11; Augustinian Heritage Institute; Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 1996), 2, 6; 131. Quotations from *Doc. Chr.* are Hill's translation.

¹⁰ Brian E. Daley, "Christ, the Church, and the shape of Scripture: what we can learn from patristic exegesis," in *From Judaism to Christianity: Tradition and Transition* (ed. Patricia Walters; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 269.

unity, insights from other uses of the same word, in very different contexts, may be even more useful.

The key to understanding the one message of Scripture, in all its diverse expressions, is God's own Word, the Logos made flesh in Jesus Christ. His life, death, and resurrection make it possible to understand each plain or obscure meaning found in these texts. The "Rule of Faith" preserved by the church speaks clearly of God's purposes in Jesus Christ. It is a sure guide to understanding Scripture, and the first resort for clarifying ambiguity.¹¹ In the Old Testament, experiences of the patriarchs, prophets, and the people of Israel prefigure those of Christ. It is Christ's experiences that clarify their meaning.

Conversely, since Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24), and those who do not know the Scriptures know neither God's power nor his wisdom, "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ."¹²

Patristic interpreters find the surface meaning of many parts of Scripture obscure or unhelpful for spiritual growth, but do not think that this exhausts the possibilities of meaning. According to Augustine, when a passage "cannot be referred either to good, honest morals or to the truth of the faith," the reader "must know that it is said figuratively."¹³ Equally, when "the sense of the words, if they are

¹¹ Augustine, *Doc. Chr.*, 3, 2.

¹² Jerome, *Explanatio in Esaiam* (*Comm. Isa.*; *Commentaires sur le prophète Isaïe*; ed. R. Gryson et al.; *Vetus Latina*; *Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel* 23; Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 1,1,13, my translation.

¹³ Augustine, *Doc. Chr.*, 3, 14; 176.

taken literally, is absurd,” the reader should ask whether the words are said in a “trope,” or figure of speech.¹⁴

Interpreters look for, and find, deeper or higher spiritual meaning in the sacred words. This may exist in association of words from different parts of Scripture (e.g., bread, in Jer 11:19, signifying the body of Christ, from the Gospels). It may be in the form of types, prefigured in a person or practice, and realized in Christ (e.g., Joshua, prefiguring Christ). It may also be in the form of allegory, where each word or concept stands for and points to a different word or concept (e.g., reading the Song of Songs as an “imagery of spiritual passion that loves God without the distractions of earthly and created things”¹⁵).

The spiritual meaning is the important one for the interpreters of Scripture to convey. This shows the power of scripture “to illuminate and disclose the order and pattern of all things.”¹⁶

All of this interpretation is for the life of the church: “the application of Biblical events, warnings and prophecies to the life of the contemporary Church was not a secondary step, beyond ascertaining its ‘original’ meaning. It *was* its meaning.”¹⁷

4.2.1.2 The *Testimonia* tradition in Greek and Latin texts

Many Greek and Latin patristic commentaries include *testimonia*, topical packets of Old Testament texts used in teaching and controversy. These collections,

¹⁴ Ibid., 3, 40-41; 187.

¹⁵ John J. O’Keefe and R. R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 104.

¹⁶ O’Keefe and Reno, 11.

¹⁷ Daley, 269-70.

used by both Jews and Christians, consist of “scriptural proof-texts, organized under specified headings, that function as ‘witnesses’ or ‘proofs’ of particular beliefs.”¹⁸ Christian *testimonia* “belong to the *adversus Judaeos* literature, an apologetic and/or polemical genre that sought to define basic Christian identity and beliefs over against Jewish objections.”¹⁹

The *Testimonia* considered here are drawn from lists in *Biblia Patristica* and Martin Albl, “*And Scripture cannot be broken.*”

Testimonia “come from a period where Christians saw in themselves the right to explain the christological significance of the Old Testament, because they considered that its authentic meaning.”²⁰ They therefore exhibit considerable “freedom with regard to the biblical text,” incorporating additions, excisions, and merging of texts, and quoting “only the significant part of a text or sentence in the Bible.”²¹ Their modifications “are intentional . . . with the purpose of making the application of these texts to Christ more precise.”²² They “enjoyed a great authority . . . the non-standard scriptural readings which they preserve . . . were treated as scripture even when it was known that they were not part of scriptural manuscripts.”²³

¹⁸ Martin C. Albl, “Introduction,” *Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa: Testimonies against the Jews* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), xiii. See also extensive discussions in Martin C. Albl, “*And Scripture cannot be broken*”: *The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (NovTSup 96; Leiden: Brill, 1999).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Jean Daniélou, “La vie suspendue au bois,” Chapter 4 in *Études d’exégèse judéo-chrétienne (Les Testimonia)* (Théologie historique 5; Paris: Beauchesne, 1966), 55, my translation.

²¹ Jean Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity* (trans. David Smith and John Austin Baker; ed. John Austin Baker; vol. 3 of *A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea*; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 275.

²² Jean Daniélou, “Introduction,” *Études d’exégèse judéo-chrétienne (Les Testimonia)* (Théologie historique 5; Paris: Beauchesne, 1966), 7, my translation.

²³ Albl, “*And Scripture cannot be broken*,” 158.

Common characteristics of *testimonia* include: “quotations that deviate considerably from known scriptural texts . . . composite quotations; false attributions . . . use of the same series of texts in independent authors; editorial or interpretive comment indicative of a collection; evident lack of awareness of the biblical context of a quotation; and use of the same exegetical comments in independent authors.”²⁴

Whether these collections come from written or oral tradition is disputed. J. Rendel Harris thought they came from a “single, authoritative ‘Testimony Book’ that was compiled before the earliest NT writings.”²⁵ C. H. Dodd, while accepting “the general thesis that early Christians drew on a specific body of OT texts,” attributed these to “early Christian oral tradition.”²⁶ Discovery of documents such as 4QTestimonia, among the Dead Sea Scrolls, showed that “written scriptural excerpt collections were in use at a time contemporary with earliest Christianity.”²⁷ More recent studies of the *Epistle of Barnabas* (probably between 70 and 100 C.E.) and Justin’s *First Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho* (both c. 155) “have established that these second-century works made use of extensive, sophisticated, and authoritative written *testimonia* collections.”²⁸

²⁴ Albl, “Introduction,” xv.

²⁵ Albl, “Introduction,” xiv, referring to J. Rendel Harris, *Testimonies* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916-20).

²⁶ Albl, “Introduction,” xv, referring to C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Nisbet, 1952).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Albl, “Introduction,” xv, referring to Pierre Prigent, *Les testimonia dans le christianisme primitif: L’Épître de Barnabé 1-16 et ses sources* (Ebib; Paris: Gabalda, 1961) and Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr’s Proof-Text Tradition. Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (NovTSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1987).

The collections include polemic against Jewish observances, messianic prophecies, and texts about Christ's passion and resurrection.²⁹ They were used in paschal homilies (Melito, *Peri Pascha*) and controversy, e.g., by Tertullian as "the written conclusion to an originally oral debate between a proselyte Jew and a Christian."³⁰ They were prepared for prebaptismal instruction (e.g., Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*) and as a "summary, designed to facilitate memorization," to help in "forming the first lineaments of [the] faith."³¹

Testimonia collections appear in different combinations in different commentaries. They commonly center on a significant word or phrase, often without regard to its Old Testament context. Some center on "stone" (as already in the New Testament, e.g., Matt 21.42//Mark 12.10//Luke 20.18//Acts 4.11, quoting Ps 118:22), or "lamb" (e.g., the Paschal lamb in Exodus, or the silent lamb before its shearers, Isa 53:7). A common set centers in the Greek word ξύλον, "tree" or "wood," and its Latin rendering *lignum*, taken to refer to Christ's crucifixion.

Jer 11:19 LXX appears in many of these *Testimonia*. The "pet young ram led to the slaughter" (11:19a) appears with other "lamb" texts (e.g., Isa 53:7-8). Jeremiah's adversaries' plot, "Let us throw wood/a tree into his bread/food" (Jer 11:19b LXX, but not MT), appears repeatedly with Deut 28:66 (sometimes, e.g., in Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.* 11.9, with the addition of *in ligno*) and a Greek form of Ps 96:10 ("Say you to the Gentiles: the Lord has reigned from the tree"; "from the tree" not

²⁹ Daniélou, "Introduction," 10.

³⁰ Albl, "And Scripture . . .", 129.

³¹ Albl, "And Scripture . . .", 132, quoting Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum*.

found in MT, LXX, or Vulgate³²). The plot is understood as prefiguring “throwing” the cross (“a tree”) onto the body (“the bread”) of Christ.

4.2.2 Greek patristic texts

Unless otherwise noted, all Greek patristic texts quote Jeremiah’s complaints as rendered in LXX.

4.2.2.1 Brief mentions of Jeremiah’s Complaints

4.2.2.1.1 *Testimonia* using Jeremiah 11:19

See Appendix 5, “Rendering of Jeremiah 11:19 in Greek and Latin commentaries,” pp. 422-429.

4.2.2.1.1.1 Justin Martyr (c.100-c.165) *Dialogue with Trypho* 72.2³³

In *Dialogue with Trypho* 72.2, Justin Martyr states Jer 11:19 in words very close to the Septuagint, “I was like a lamb carried to be sacrificed; they thought out a plan about me, saying: “Come let us throw [ἐμβάλωμεν] wood into his bread/food, and let us rub him out from the land of the living, and let his name be remembered no longer” (my translation).

He uses this quotation, along with many others, to accuse Jews of removing or changing passages from Scripture that predict Christ’s crucifixion. He states that “this pericope from the words of Jeremiah is still found in some copies of Scripture in the Jewish synagogues (for it was deleted only a short time ago) . . . and it is proved from these words that the Jews planned to crucify Christ himself and to slay him.”³⁴

³² St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* (ed. Michael Slusser; trans. Thomas B. Falls; Selections from the Fathers of the Church, Vol. 3; Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 113, n.7.

³³ St. Justin Martyr, 112

³⁴ Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 72.3.

In *Dial.* 72 and 73, Justin quotes passages he attributes to Esdras, Jeremiah, and Ps 95.10, and refers to Isaiah's and Jeremiah's prophecies of the lamb led to slaughter. All of these indicate to him that the Jews "are so confused by such words that they resort to blasphemy."³⁵

Justin's polemic against "the Jews" has no reference to the text of Jer 11:19 in the Masoretic Text, not deleted but different ("let us destroy a tree/wood in his/its bread/food"; see Section 2.1.1.2.2). The text he used also does not agree with that of Symmachus (διαφθείρωμεν ἐν ξύλῳ τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ: "let us destroy in/by a tree/wood his bread/food").

His use of this quotation from Jer 11:19b LXX, including "putting" or "throwing" wood on his bread, is at the head of a long chain of *Testimonia*.

4.2.2.1.1.2 Melito of Sardis (d. c. 190) *Peri Pascha* 63:67³⁶

In most of *Peri Pascha*, Melito treats Old Testament models as types through which to see the saving work of Christ: "If you look carefully at the model, you will perceive him through the final outcome."³⁷

In *Peri Pascha* 63, Melito combines Jer 11:19 with Deut 28:66, Ps 2:1, and Isa 53:7, as *Testimonia* "proclaimed by many prophets to the mystery of the Pascha,

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Melito of Sardis, *Sur la Pâque* (trans. Othmar Perler; Paris: Cerf, 1966).

³⁷ Melito of Sardis, *Peri Pascha* 57, quoted by Oscar Skarsaune, "2.2. Melito of Sardis," in "The Development of Scriptural Interpretation in the Second and Third Centuries – except Clement and Origen," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: History of Its Interpretation* (vol. 1; ed. Magne Saebo; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 412.

which is Christ.”³⁸ Melito quotes almost exactly from the Septuagint, in “the only explicit statement of the proof from prophecy in Melito.”³⁹

4.2.2.1.1.3 Origen (c. 185-c.254) *Commentary on St. John* 1.135; 6.53.273⁴⁰

In *Comm. John* 1. 135, Origen quotes Jer 11:19a LXX, “I am like an innocent lamb led to be sacrificed,” as one of many metaphors used in the prophets that refer to Christ. In *Comm. John* 6.53.273, he ties this text to Jesus, using the declaration of John the Baptist about Jesus in John 1:29 (“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”) and Isa 53:7 (“a lamb silent before the shearer”).

4.2.2.1.1.4 Origen *Peri Pascha* 48.33-36⁴¹

In *Pasc.* 48.33-36, Origen quotes Jer 11:19a LXX, “Like a blameless lamb led to the slaughter, I was in ignorance,” and they “were devising an evil plot against him,” as the prophecy whose fulfillment was that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor 5:19). The text from Jeremiah is embedded in quotations from the New Testament about Christ’s saving death and resurrection.

4.2.2.1.1.5 Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-c.340) *Demonstratio Evangelica* = *Demons.* 1.10.36⁴²

Eusebius relates Jer 11:18 LXX, “I was led as a lamb to the slaughter,” to Isa 53:4-9, especially 53:7, “as a sheep he was led to slaughter,” and to John the Baptist’s

³⁸ Melito of Sardis, *Sur la Pâque*, 94 = *Peri Pascha* 65, my translation.

³⁹ Skarsaune, 413.

⁴⁰ Origen, *Commentaire sur Saint Jean* (vols. 1 and 2; trans. Cécile Blanc; SC 120; Paris: Cerf, 1966).

⁴¹ Origen, *Treatise on the Passover* = *Peri Pascha* (trans. Robert J. Daly; Ancient Christian Writers 54; New York: Paulist Press, 1992).

⁴² Eusebius of Caesarea, *The Proof of the Gospel, being the Demonstratio Evangelica of Eusebius of Caesarea* (vol. 1; trans. W. J. Ferrar; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920).

cry in John 1:29, “Behold the Lamb of God,” to show that Christ was the “Lamb that was foretold.”⁴³

4.2.2.1.1.6 Eusebius of Caesarea *Exegetica e Jeremia* = *Exeg. Jer.* 33⁴⁴

Eusebius quotes Jer 11:18-19 from LXX. He relates “as an innocent little lamb led to be sacrificed, I did not know” to Isa 53:7, “as a sheep he was led to slaughter, and as a lamb before the one shearing him was speechless.” He sees the cross and passion revealed in Jer 11:19 LXX, “Come let us throw wood into his bread,” since “his body was bread, as he teaches to the disciples, saying, “Take, eat, this is my body,” and this was near the wood, corresponding to the cross.”⁴⁵

4.2.2.1.1.7 Athanasius (c. 296-373) *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* = *Incarn.* 35.3⁴⁶

In a collection of prophecies relating to the cross, Athanasius surrounds Jer 11:19 LXX with Deut 28:66, “You shall see your Life hanging before your eyes, and shall not believe,” and Ps 22:16-17, “They pierced my hand and my feet, they numbered all my bones, they divided my garments for themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing.” He concludes that “a death lifted up, and that takes place on wood, can be none other than the death of the cross.”⁴⁷

⁴³ Ibid., 1.10.37.

⁴⁴ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Exegetica e Jeremia* 33 (PG 22:1159). No critical edition was available.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (trans. and ed. by A Religious of C.S.M.V.; Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary, 1989, c 1946), 66-67), and Athanasius, *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* (*NPNF*² 4:55).

⁴⁷ Ibid. 67.

4.2.2.1.1.8 Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315-86) *Catechesis* = *Cat.* 13.19⁴⁸

Cyril quotes Jer 11:19 LXX about a lamb, wood, and a remembrance. The lamb “that is carried to be a victim” corresponds to John the Baptist’s designation of Jesus as “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29). The wood, that Jeremiah’s adversaries plan to “put” on his “bread,” is the “Wood of the Cross”; the “bread,” the Lord’s body, that “bore the figure of bread.”⁴⁹ Their evil intent, that “his name be remembered no more,” has been thwarted: “before the sun His name abides in the Church.” Cyril concludes from Deut 28:66 that “it was truly Life which hung upon the Cross.”⁵⁰

4.2.2.1.1.9 Gregory of Nazianzus (329-89) *Oratio H* 38.16⁵¹

Gregory briefly refers to Jesus as a lamb offered up, as in Isa 53 and Jer 11:19, in the midst of his recital of Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and ascension: Jesus is tempted, conqueror of the tempter, served by angels, healing every disease and infirmity, giving life to the dead, driving out demons, feeding thousands, walking on water, handed over, crucified, offered up as a lamb, offering as a priest, buried as a man, resurrected as God, ascending to heaven and coming in glory.

4.2.2.1.1.10 Gregory of Nyssa (c.330-c.395) *De Tridui Spatio* = *Trid.* 6.277.1⁵²

Following a quotation of Isa 9:6 (“Unto us a child is born”), Gregory states that this is the child, this is the son, “As a sheep to slaughter he was led, and as a lamb before the one shearing him was speechless” (Isa 53:7), “the innocent lamb being led

⁴⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis 13* in *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem* (vol. 2; trans. Leo P. McCauley and Anthony A Stephenson; The Fathers of the Church; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Discours 38-41* (trans. Paul Gallay; SC 358; Paris: Cerf, 1990).

⁵² Gregory of Nyssa, *De Tridui inter Mortem et Resurrectionem Domini Nostri Iesu Christi Spatio* 6.277.1, in *Sermones Pars I in Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (vol. 9; ed. Ernest Gebhardt; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 276-7.

to be slaughtered” (Jer 11:19 LXX) and “the bread, to which they will throw wood” (referring to Jer 11:19 LXX).⁵³ All these apply to the one born of a virgin, whose name is called Emmanuel.

4.2.2.1.1.11 Pseudo-Chrysostom *Fragmenta in Jeremiam* 11:19⁵⁴

The writer takes Jer 11:19, “Let us cast a tree/wood into his bread/food,” to mean “Let us crucify him, as accursed, nor shall he die a common death, but in concord with wickedness.” The wood also means a “deadly root”⁵⁵; this will enable them to “rub him out from the land of the living.”

4.2.2.1.1.12 Pseudo-Epiphanius *Testimony Book* = *Test.* 51.4 (“4th century or slightly later”)⁵⁶

Two parts of Jer 11:19 LXX appear in a collection of *Testimonia* about Christ’s crucifixion that includes Isa 53:7, Wis 2:20 (“Let us condemn him to a shameful death”), and Ps 21:17 LXX (“They pierced my hands and my feet”).

4.2.2.1.1.13 Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa *Testimonies against the Jews* = *Test.* 6.3⁵⁷ (“around 400 C.E.”⁵⁸)

Jer 11:19 LXX is quoted in the midst of Chapter 6, “Concerning [his] Passion,” many *Testimonia* about Jesus’ trial (Isa 3:12-14; Ps 2:1-2; Lam 4:20), the suffering servant (Isa 53:4-9, 12; Isa 50:6; Isa 53: 2-3, 8), and others (Ps 21:17-19; Jer 11:19a and b; Zech 11:12-12; Jer 32:6-9).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Jeremiam* (PG 64:797). No critical edition was available.

⁵⁵ Pseudo-Chrysostom, Jer 11:19, my translation.

⁵⁶ *A Pseudo-Epiphanius Testimony Book* (ed. and trans. Robert V. Hotchkiss; Texts and Translations 4; Early Christian Literature Series 1; Missoula, Montana: Scholars’ Press, 1974).

⁵⁷ Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa, *Testimonies against the Jews* (trans. Martin C. Albl; Writings from the Greco-Roman World 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), xvii.

⁵⁸ Albl, “*And Scripture cannot be broken*,” 142.

4.2.2.1.1.14 Pseudo-Ignatius *Ignatian Epistle to the Antiochenes* 3⁵⁹

Chapter 3 consists of *Testimonia* about Christ's life and death. In prophecies about the passion, the writer quotes Isa 53:7 and Jer 11:19a, "and I, like an innocent little lamb, led to be slaughtered."

4.2.2.1.1.15 *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* = *Dial. TA* 10.20, 55.5⁶⁰

The *Dialogue* purports to record a debate between a Christian (Timothy) and a Jew (Aquila), "during the archbishopric of Cyril of Alexandria" (412-444); it "may represent the essence of actual Jewish-Christian discussion and debate as it could have been conducted after the firm establishment of Christianity in the fifth and sixth centuries."⁶¹

In the *Dialogue*, "the Christian" accounts for differences between the Greek and Hebrew texts of the Old Testament by telling of a "plot that took place by Aquila the translator against the divine scriptures" (*Dial. TA* 39.4). Aquila, a Christian who became a Jew, produced a new translation that "covers up the testimonies to the Messiah" (*Dial. TA* 40.20). According to "the Christian," "one should receive the 'Seventy Two' translators as speaking from the Holy Spirit" (*Dial. TA* 40.23).

"The Christian" presents a series of *Testimonia* tied to the details of Jesus' life and passion; in the midst of these is Jer 11:19b LXX (*Dial. TA* 10.20). Later, in response to "the Jew"'s request that he "show to us from the beginning that he willingly suffered and that he foreknew this" (*Dial. TA* 55.1), in another series of

⁵⁹ Pseudo-Ignatius, *Ignatian Epistle to the Antiochenes* (The Apostolic Fathers; vol. 2, section 2; rev. and trans. by J. B. Lightfoot; London: Macmillan, 1885).

⁶⁰ *The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*. Chapter 3 in *Ancient Jewish-Christian Dialogues* (trans. William Varner; Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 58; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004) = *Dial. TA*.

⁶¹ Introduction to *Dial. TA*, 137.

Testimonia, “the Christian” quotes all of Jer 11:19 to show that Jeremiah, who “knew about his own suffering,” therefore “speaks this as in the presence of Jesus” (*Dial. TA* 55.5).

4.2.2.1.2 Other brief mentions of Jeremiah’s Complaints

4.2.2.1.2.1 Clement of Alexandria (c. 150- c.215) *Stromateis* 3.38.4; 3.100.1, 4⁶²

In *Stromateis* 3.38.4, Clement quotes Jer 12:1, “Why is the path of the wicked easy?”, to counter the idea in a Gnostic interpretation of Mal 3:15, “They opposed God, and found salvation,” that “all prophetic words are a recording of the words of God.”⁶³ In Mal 3:15 and Jer 12:1, these are rather the words of “Jews who complain that the other nations are not punished even though they sin.”⁶⁴

Jer 20:14 In *Stromateis* 3.100.1, 4, Clement quotes Jer 20:14, “Accursed be the day on which I was born – may it never be blessed,” but is concerned that this prophetic word might be taken to mean that birth itself is “an accursed thing.” Clement quickly adds Jer 20:18, “Why was I born to see trouble and toil? Why have my days come to fulfillment in shame?”, to make it clear that Jeremiah “has withdrawn in impatience at the sinful disobedience of the people” and was “in danger of persecution through the disobedience of their audience.”⁶⁵

⁶² Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* (trans. John Ferguson; The Fathers of the Church; Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 279 and 319.

⁶³ J.N.B. Carleton Paget, “The Christian Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Alexandrian Tradition: 2.5.1 The Literal Sense,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* (part 1; ed. Magne Saebo; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 494.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Clement, *Strom.* 16.2.

4.2.2.1.2.2 Origen (c. 185-c.254) *Commentary on the Gospel according to*

Matthew = *Comm. Matt.* 10.18⁶⁶

Jer 20:7, 9 In *Comm. Matt.* 10.18, Origen considers whether Jesus' words, that "a prophet is not despised except in his own country" (Matt 13:57), apply only to himself or to all prophets. Origen cites examples to show that not all prophets were despised in their own towns, but considers these words "completely true, in an allegorical sense." Later, he tells of the sufferings of prophets, including Moses, Isaiah, and Zechariah. He includes Jeremiah, who said, "I said, I will no longer speak, and I will not name the name of the Lord" (20:9), and "I have been continually the object of ridicule" (20:7), in words similar but not identical to those in LXX.

4.2.2.1.2.3 Origen *Contra Celsum Preface* = *Contra Cels. Pref.* 5.14-15⁶⁷

Jer 20:7 Origen's argument against the "deceptive" (ἀπατηλόν) writings of Celsus cites Paul's warning in Colossians 2:8 against being deceived by philosophy and a "vain deception" (κενή ἀπάτης) according to human tradition. He contrasts this with the "deception that is not vain" which Jeremiah had experienced, when he "dared to say to God" (5.13), "You have deceived me, and I was deceived; you have been stronger than I and more powerful" (Jer 20:7, in words close to LXX).⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Origen, *Commentaire sur l'Évangile selon Matthieu* (vol. 1; trans. Robert Girod; SC 162; Paris: Cerf, 1970).

⁶⁷ Origen, *Contre Celse* (vol. 1; trans. Marcel Borret; SC 132; Paris: Cerf, 2005).

⁶⁸ Note that in this French translation the Greek verb, adjective and noun, all from ἀπατάω, here rendered "deceive," "deceptive," and "deception," are all related to *séduire*, "seduce."

4.2.2.1.2.4 Origen *Homilies on Leviticus* = *Hom. Lev. 8.3.37-41*⁶⁹

Jer 20:14-18 Considering Jeremiah's cursing of the day that he was born (Jer 20:14-16), Origen concludes that "there is in corporal birth something that seems to merit curses of this kind" (*Hom. Lev. 8.3.44*). He points out that "only sinners rejoice in such a birth" (*Hom. Lev. 8.3.23*), giving the examples of Pharaoh (Gen 40:20) and Herod (Mark 6:21). Later, he quotes Ps 50.7 LXX, "I was conceived in iniquity, in sin my mother conceived me," to show that "every soul which is born in the flesh contracts an impurity of 'iniquity and sin'" (*Hom. Lev. 8.3.68-9*).

4.2.2.1.2.5 Origen *Homilies on Numbers* = *Hom. Num. 20*⁷⁰

Jer 20:14 Origen states that "in everything that we do, our soul gives birth and brings sons into the world." It is therefore essential to know what thoughts and actions are produced. If they are in accord with the Law and the Word of God, our soul gives birth to a spirit of salvation, but if contrary to the law, our soul gives birth to sins. Origen considers that when the saints, such as Jeremiah (20:14) or Job (3:1), cursed the day of their birth, it was because they thought about these accursed births.⁷¹

4.2.2.1.2.6 Gregory of Nazianzus (329-89) *Oratio H 40.40*⁷²

Jer 17:16 Gregory quotes, "I have not desired a day of man" (Jer 17:16 LXX; different from MT), as part of ascetic aspiration to direct all desires to God. From the example of the Passover, where Israelites were to "gird up their loins" (Exod 12:11),

⁶⁹ Origen, *Homélie sur le Lévitique* (vol. 2; trans. Marcel Borret (into Latin and French); SC 287; Paris: Cerf, 1981). Translations from French are mine.

⁷⁰ Origen, *Homélie sur les Nombres* (trans. André Méhat; SC; Paris: Cerf, 1951), 396-7.

⁷¹ My paraphrase.

⁷² Gregory of Nazianzus, *Discours 38-41* (trans. Paul Gallay; SC 358; Paris: Cerf, 1990).

he concludes that continence is necessary for any escape from Egypt or the Destroyer. The goal is to become a “man of desires, those of the Spirit.”

4.2.2.1.2.7 Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330-c.395) *Homilies on Ecclesiastes* = *Eccles.*

2.302.8 ⁷³

In *Eccles.* 2.301-303, reflecting on Eccl 1:13-14, Gregory considers “how being became the slave of non-being, how the unreal dominates being” (*Eccles.* 2.301.3). He is concerned to show that God is not the source of evil, but that “the good gift of God, that is, freedom of action, became a means to sin through the sinful use mankind made of it” (*Eccles.* 2.301.19).

Jer 20:7 In *Eccles.* 2.302.8, he gathers scriptural passages that seem to implicate God in sin: “He gave them up to shameful passions” and “depraved reason” (Rom 1:26, 28); “He hardened Pharaoh’s heart” (Exod 9:12); “Why did you make us go astray, Lord, out of your way? You hardened our hearts, so that we did not fear you” (Isa 63:17); “He made them go astray in a pathless place out of the way” (Ps 106:40 LXX), ending with Jeremiah 20:7: “You have deceived me and I was deceived.”

He concludes that “a correct understanding does not conclude that anything bad has been put in human nature by God, but blames our capacity to choose, which is in itself a good thing, and a gift of God granted to our nature, but through folly has become a force tipping the balance the opposite way.” ⁷⁴

⁷³ Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on Ecclesiastes* (ed. Stuart George Hall; trans. Stuart George Hall and Rachel Moriarty; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993).

⁷⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eccles.* 2.302.8.41-46, their translation.

4.2.2.1.2.8 Basil of Caesarea (c.330-79) *Adversus Eunomium* =

Adv. Eun. 5.2⁷⁵

Jer 12:1 As part of a long demonstration that the Scriptures are from God, Basil paraphrases three passages from Jeremiah LXX: “O Lord, but I shall speak judgments to you, ‘Why do the wicked prosper?’” (Jer 12:1); “Woe is me, mother, as what did you bear me?” (Jer 15:10); ending with “Thus says the Lord” (Jer 30:2).

4.2.2.1.2.9 Basil of Caesarea *Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah* = *Comm. Isa.*

2.65⁷⁶

Jer 20:7 Considering “the word that came to Isaiah” (Isa 2:1), Basil gives examples of the prophetic word introduced with and without the phrase “of the Lord.” Both Isaiah (1:1, “the vision which Isaiah saw”) and Jeremiah (25:4, “the word that came to Jeremiah”) lack this phrase. Basil considers that because “they were speaking to an unbelieving and disputatious people that had entirely apostatised from God, they kept silence over the name of the Lord, with a view to the acceptance of their words.” They knew that such people would mock “those who spoke to them as if in the person of the Lord,”⁷⁷ Jeremiah being the example, “I continued to be mocked for the whole day” (Jer 20:7).

⁷⁵ Basil of Caesarea, *Adversus Eunomium* 5:2 (PG 29:766). Because “books 4 and 5 of *Adversus Eunomium* are very generally considered pseudo-basilian” (Introduction, Basil of Caesarea, *Contre Eunome* (trans. Bernard Sesboüe; vol. 1; SC 299; Paris: Cerf, 1982), 61, my translation from French), no critical text is available.

⁷⁶ St. Basil the Great, *Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah* (trans. Nikolai A. Lipatov; Texts and Studies in the History of Theology 7; Cambridge: Mandelbachtal, 2001).

⁷⁷ Basil, *Comm. Isa.* 2.65.

4.2.2.1.2.10 John Chrysostom (c.347-407) *Homily on Colossians* =

*Hom. Col. 6 v.8*⁷⁸

Jer 20:7 Commenting on the letter's warning not to be "taken captive" by philosophy (Col 2:8), Chrysostom notes that "he added, *and vain deceit*," and makes a distinction with "good deceit; such as many have been deceived by, which one ought not even to call a deceit at all." This he attributes to Jeremiah's words, "O Lord, you have deceived me, and I was deceived" (Jer 20:7), and to Jacob's deceit of his father (Gen 27), which he calls "not a deceit, but an economy."⁷⁹

4.2.2.2 Extended Commentaries on Jeremiah's Complaints

4.2.2.2.1 Origen (c.185-c.254) *Homilies on Jeremiah: 1, 10, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20*⁸⁰

4.2.2.2.1.1 About Origen's exegesis

Origen commented extensively on both the Old and New Testaments. Extant are *scholia*, "brief notes . . . in which he dealt with points of particular obscurity or difficulty,"⁸¹ commentaries on various biblical books (e.g., Psalms, Song of Songs, Matthew, John), and sets of homilies following liturgical use of various books (e.g., Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Samuel), and exegesis in other writings.

⁷⁸ John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (trans. J. Ashworth; Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1848), 246-7.

⁷⁹ Chrysostom, *Col. 6.8*, p. 247.

⁸⁰ Origen, *Homélies sur Jérémie* (vols. 1 and 2; ed. Pierre Nautin; trans. Pierre Husson and Pierre Nautin; SC 232 and 238; Paris: Cerf, 1976 and 1977). Translations into English are mine, from the Greek and the French.

⁸¹ M. F. Wiles, "Origen as Biblical Scholar," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (vol. 1; ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 454.

His exegesis in these shows his conviction that all Scripture is “inspired to the last word . . . a harmonious, self-interpreting whole.”⁸² Since Scripture is “the permanent incarnation of God, exegesis constitutes encounter with the Logos.”⁸³

Origen considers it essential to determine the exact words of a text and therefore compares the received Greek text (LXX) with other versions, referring to the Hebrew text. Though he “invariably regards the reading witnessed in the Hebrew and/or the versions as the more accurate,” he often “expounds both passages, that prevalent in the churches and that prevalent in the Hebrew scriptures.”⁸⁴

Since “the authors of Scripture composed their writing with literary precision,” Origen considers it necessary that interpreters “attend to its precise literary features.”⁸⁵ Interpreters need an “accurate understanding of the meanings of words and of the things clarified by the topic of linguistics,” such as resolving “homonyms and ambiguities and figurative and literal uses of language and punctuation.”⁸⁶

Origen sees Scripture as a unity. Therefore, definition of “unknown or difficult terms” proceeds best by using “clearer passages to illuminate related, yet obscure passages,” explaining “Scripture by Scripture.”⁸⁷

In *Peri Archon*, Book 4, Origen defines three meanings for Scripture. The “somatic” or “bodily” sense is the “literal meaning of the text that edifies the hearer

⁸² J. N. B. Carleton Paget, “Origen as Exegete of the Old Testament,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: History of Its Interpretation* (vol. 1; ed. Magne Saebo; Part 1: Antiquity; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 504.

⁸³ Paget, 509.

⁸⁴ Paget, 505 and Note 168, 506, referring to *Hom. Jer.* 14.3, about Jer 15:10.

⁸⁵ Peter W. Martens, *Origen and Scripture; The Contours of the Exegetical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 54.

⁸⁶ Origen, *Philocalia* 14.2/SC 302, 408.1-410.9, quoted and translated by Martens, 32-33.

⁸⁷ Martens, 54, 61.

by true history or moral instruction.”⁸⁸ This is the useful literal sense. The “psychic” or “soul’s” sense is a “figurative meaning that speaks to the hearer’s duty to live morally,” while the “pneumatic” or “spiritual” sense “centers on Christ, conveying insights about the Incarnation, church and Eschaton.”⁸⁹

These meanings correspond to parts of a human being: the body, soul, and spirit, that would “reside in perfect harmony” when a person achieves “perfect imitation of Christ.”⁹⁰ Through the three meanings, Scripture conveys “God’s own virtue and wisdom,” Jesus Christ, “both the teacher and ultimate content of Scripture.”⁹¹

Most texts have a “somatic” or “bodily” sense, but some do not. When the literal, “straightforward reading of the text,”⁹² “the meaning of the words as they stand on the page,”⁹³ is not edifying, because of “snares, obstacles . . . impossibilities,”⁹⁴ or absurdities, it is not a “somatic” sense. Origen states that “occasionally the records taken in a literal sense are not true, but actually absurd or impossible.”⁹⁵ These difficulties, the *skandala*, have been included by the Holy Spirit, who “wrote Scripture and structured it to edify the hearer and lead him toward

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Ann Dively Lauro, *The Soul and Spirit of Scripture within Origen’s Exegesis* (The Bible in Ancient Christianity 3; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 76. I follow Lauro’s use of the Greek transliterations, “somatic,” “psychic,” and “pneumatic,” in preference to possibly ambiguous “bodily,” “soul’s” or “moral,” and “spiritual.”

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Lauro, 4.

⁹¹ Lauro, 4.

⁹² Lauro, 3.

⁹³ Paget, 522.

⁹⁴ Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen* (The Early Church Fathers; London: Routledge, 1998), 33.

⁹⁵ Origen, *PA = On First Principles* 4.3.4/C=GK 740, 328.13-15, quoted and translated by Martens, 50.

salvation.”⁹⁶ God planned these “to force the intelligent interpreter to get beyond the obvious sense of the text.”⁹⁷

All biblical texts contain “psychic” and “pneumatic” meanings, whether or not they contain “somatic” meaning.⁹⁸ These two nonliteral, figurative senses work together to “lead Scripture’s hearers through a transformation toward the spiritual life that signifies salvation.”⁹⁹ Progressing to the “spiritual” meaning allows the hearer to “confront the intention or βούλημα of Scripture.”¹⁰⁰

Not every passage has three meanings, but “Scripture meets the needs of rational creatures at different levels of progress.”¹⁰¹ All three meanings “address every individual human soul . . . edify the soul at its various levels of progress toward a full understanding of Scripture’s truths; and . . . direct this progress by functioning as a body, soul, and spirit.”¹⁰²

This exegesis can “draw out of Scripture those teachings of Christ through which the souls, to whom the teacher addresses his exegesis, can be advanced toward perfection.”¹⁰³

4.2.2.2.1.2 Origen’s exegesis of Jeremiah’s complaints in homilies

Origen’s comments on Jeremiah exist as brief mentions in other commentaries and extensive homilies on Jeremiah 1-20. These homilies, the only ones currently

⁹⁶ Lauro, 34.

⁹⁷ Trigg, 33.

⁹⁸ Lauro, 59.

⁹⁹ Lauro, 33.

¹⁰⁰ Paget, 526.

¹⁰¹ Trigg, 33.

¹⁰² Lauro, 77.

¹⁰³ Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen’s Exegesis* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 43.

available in Greek, address some but not all of Jeremiah's complaints; Origen does not mention Jer 4:10, 18:18-23, or 20:14-18.

In these homilies, Origen follows a general pattern of first citing the verse or verses, usually quoting from LXX, but often adding and usually discussing words present in the Hebrew text but missing from LXX, and occasionally supplemented by readings from "the Three." He then explains the literal sense, looking very carefully at each word. He then expresses "the intention of the text, which is something that lies beyond that which is stated . . . to teach the hearer,"¹⁰⁴ and finally, applies this understanding to the readers or hearers of the homily. The first two correspond to treating the text πρὸς τὸ ῥῆτον (*Hom. Jer. 1.12*); the last two to πρὸς ἀναγωγήν, "the meaning which lifts the soul."¹⁰⁵

For understanding Jeremiah's complaints, Origen primarily focuses on seeing "the Savior present in the prophet,"¹⁰⁶ but often also looks carefully at Jeremiah's own situation. Especially in Homilies 19 and 20, Origen is concerned about the portrayal of God presented in the prophets' words.

4.2.2.2.1.2.1 Specific homilies

4.2.2.2.1.2.1.1 Homily 10: Jer 11:18-20

In Homily 10, Origen relates 11:18-20 exclusively to Christ. He hears the Savior comparing himself to an "innocent lamb led to be sacrificed" (11:18) and relates this to Isa 53:7 ("was led as a lamb to the slaughter"). The vengeance from

¹⁰⁴ Torjesen, 50.

¹⁰⁵ Torjesen, 51.

¹⁰⁶ Origen, *Homily* 10.1.18.

God that Jeremiah seeks to see (11:20) is to be Jerusalem “surrounded by armies . . . its desolation near” (Luke 21:20).

But Origen finds 11:19b (“Come, and let us throw wood into his bread”) difficult. He asks “how to relate” the “evident fact” of the crucifixion to this, and declares, “It is work, to understand” (10.2.6).¹⁰⁷ He concludes that the “bread of Jesus is the word through which we are nourished” (10.2.7), and that the “wood” thrown on it has made the “bread” stronger (10.2.16). He refers to Moses’ throwing wood into the bitter water, making it sweet (Exod 15:25) and thinks that “the passion of Jesus Christ, coming into his word, has made his bread sweeter” (10.2.20). Before this wood entered the bread of his word, his voice did not “go out through all the earth” (Ps 19:4), but since the “bread” received strength from the “wood,” “the word of his teaching has taken possession of all of the inhabited world” (10.2.26). This “wood” has sweetened the Law of Moses, making it “agreeable to read and know” (10.2.31).

4.2.2.2.1.2 Homilies 14 and 15: Jer 15:10, 15-18

In Homilies 14 and 15, Origen discusses at length textual questions regarding Jer 15:10b. The LXX, “I have not helped, nor has anyone helped me” (οὔτε ὠφέλησα οὔτε ὠφέλησέν με οὐδεὶς), does not agree with Aquila and Symmachus (οὐκ ἑδάνεισα, οὔτε ἑδάνεισάμην “I have not lent, nor was I lent to,” which agrees with MT and Vulgate) or Theodotion (οὐκ ὠφείλησα, οὔτε ὠφείλεσέ μοι οὐδεὶς “I have not owed, nor has anyone owed me,” which agrees with the Peshitta). Origen agrees with the reading of Theodotion, among “the most

¹⁰⁷ Origen, *Homily* 10.

exact copies which agree with the Hebrew” (14.3.8), even though “most of the copies of the edition of the Seventy do not have this reading”; he thinks they have “a copying mistake” (15.5.17).

In Homily 14, Origen refers both the LXX and his preferred reading of 15:10b to the experience of Jeremiah. For the LXX reading, he concludes that Jeremiah was not able to help his people, because they refused to listen to him; he therefore did not get a benefit of gladness of having helped them. For the reading Origen prefers, Jeremiah did all he should have, for the people, and therefore owes them nothing else. They owe nothing to him, because they refused to receive the riches he offered them. In Homily 15, Origen applies the text he prefers to Christ. No one owes him anything, because “he has pardoned all their debts” (15.5.20).

Regarding Jer 15:10a, Origen relates the “common explanation” (14.5.24), that this applies better to Jeremiah, who prophesied since his childhood (14.5.7), than to other prophets; he also refers to Philo’s interpretation of Jeremiah’s “mother” as the Wisdom of God (see Section 4.4.2.1). In considering the phrase, “pleaded with [or “judged,” διακρινόμενον] in all the earth,” however, he concludes that this cannot apply to Jeremiah, as this would be absurd. Rather, “Jeremiah was named in place of our Lord Jesus Christ” (14.5.44). Since Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), Origen thinks it possible that “not as God did the Savior say, ‘Woe to me, mother,’ but as a man,” troubled in his human soul (14.6.35-38). In the persons of the martyrs (14.7.5) and in Christian doctrine (14.8.3), Christ is indeed “judged in all the earth.”

Later in Homily 14, Origen applies Jer 15:15-18 to both Jeremiah and Christ. Jeremiah, persecuted and in disgrace, could well have said, “Revenge me before those pursuing me, without forbearance” (15:15). Origen also applies the words to Christ, considering the fall of Jerusalem after Christ’s passion evidence that God did not show forbearance (14.13.13-25). Granting that Jeremiah had “carried disgrace because of you, from those rejecting your words” (15:15-16), Origen thinks that the cry, “Consume them!” (συντέλεσον αὐτοὺς, which could also be “finish them!” or “make an end to them!”), is more suited to words spoken by the Savior, for it was indeed an “end for the region of Jerusalem and the people,” after “the crime committed by the people against our Savior” (14.14.13).

Origen considers three possibilities in interpreting Jer 15:18. The “severe wound” may be a prophecy of the cross of the Savior, it may refer to the sufferings of “all the just, in whom the Lord receives a severe wound,” or it may refer to the prophet himself, since he also suffered what is related in the prophecy. It is the “wound” that has “become to me like lying water, with no faithfulness,” because “the wound does not remain, but passes” (14.18.14). He does not elaborate on just how the wound is not permanent.

4.2.2.2.1.1.3 Homily 17: Jer 17:16

In Homily 17, Origen relates the statement, “I did not grow weary following after you” (Jer 17:16), to Matt 11:28 (“Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will refresh you), and concludes that “there is no weariness when one follows Jesus, the very fact of following removes weariness” (17.6.11). Origen contrasts the “day of man” that Jeremiah did not desire (17:16) with “the day of

God”; he exhorts his hearers to “cease to love life and to desire a human day, and seek to see that other day, where we will obtain beatitude in Christ Jesus” (17.6.30).

4.2.2.2.1.1.4 Homilies 19-20: Jer 20:7

Origen devotes most of two homilies to Jeremiah’s complaint, “You have deceived me, and I was deceived” (Jer 20:7), seriously considering the difficult question, “Does God deceive?” In Homily 19, Origen needs help with Jer 20. He first commends that “we ask that Jesus come, that he manifest himself to us, and teach us now what is written in this passage” (19.10.30). When he starts to consider Jer 20:7, he again commends that “we ask anew for Jesus to come, invite him at least to come in a more manifest and illuminating way, so that when he comes he may teach all whether, in what follows, the prophet spoke in truth, as befits belief about a prophet, or in falsehood, which is not permitted to say of a holy prophet” (19.15.6).

In Homily 19, Origen points out that parents need to deceive little children. Since we are “all little children for God, and we need to be treated like little children” (19.15.4), Origen concludes God does indeed deceive, for our good. He gives the example that God, through Jonah, deceived the people of Nineveh, that “in three days, Nineveh will be destroyed” (Jonah 3:4), and thereby moved them to repentance, which saved them. Origen thinks that “the prophet was initially like a small child: he listened and feared, he was brought up and after this, having become an adult,” it was then that he said to God, “You have deceived me, and I was deceived”(19.15.117).

In Homily 20, Origen returns to the question of whether it is appropriate to ascribe deceit to God. He cites a Hebrew tradition, brought to him by “a man who had fled because of his faith in Christ and because he had forsaken the Law for

something higher, and who had come where we lived” (20.2.13). In this tradition, God wanted to send Jeremiah to prophesy to all the nations, of his own free will, rather than by being constrained. God presented Jeremiah with a cup “from which you will make all the nations drink” (Jer 32:15). Jeremiah understood this as a cup of punishments. He did not suspect that Israel would also have to drink from it, and “only after he took the cup did he hear said, ‘And you will make Jerusalem drink first’” (20.2.50). “He therefore expected one mission, and another befell him” (20.2.51); at this point he said, “You have deceived me, O Lord, and I was deceived.”

Origen then turns again to the metaphor of the father, who must deceive his child by hiding his love. He adds the metaphor of a physician or surgeon, who hides bitter medicine under honey, or a scalpel under a soft sponge, for a needed amputation. Since the patient would not agree to painful necessities, the physician, to be a help, must deceive. Origen concludes that “such is God’s way of acting” (20.3.34), because there are “bitter remedies that the most just and most wise man needs” (20.3.35). He thinks that the prophet understood that he had been deceived by God for his own good, and then would wish for such deceit (20.3.74). Such “profitable deceit” (20.4.2) confuses the princes of Egypt (Isa 19:14) or may keep widows from remarrying (20.4.3-32), keeping them in a happier state. When this deceit comes from God, it is to be desired by all.

In Jer 20:9, Origen sees Jeremiah confessing his sin in determining not to speak any more in God’s name. This came because he “experienced a human feeling” (20.8.28), when the word of the Lord had become for him “a disgrace” and “an object of mockery” (Jer. 20:8). But God prevented this sin, by providing what

was like “fire kindled, burning in my bones” (Jer 20:9), and “Jeremiah rejected the sin at the very moment he was speaking” (20.8.51).

Origen concludes Homily 20, his last homily on Jeremiah, with Jer 20:11-12, that the one who “tests the righteous” is “the Lord,” who “is with me like a mighty warrior.” He does not comment on Jer 20:14-18.

4.2.2.2.1.2.2 Origen’s exegesis

Origen’s exegesis of Jeremiah’s complaints starts with very careful consideration of the Greek text, usually from LXX. Each word of the text has both surface and deeper meanings, which must be in accord with the word’s own properties. These properties, which are common knowledge, help Origen understand the word’s meaning in each context. Origen usually refers a text to experiences of Christ, passages from the New Testament, and the later history of Jerusalem. Some texts, however, he limits to the experience of the prophet. This careful analysis sometimes leads him to interpretation that differs from that of other patristic writers.

For example, in considering the obscure “wood” that is to be “thrown” onto “bread” (Jer 11:19b), his conclusion that the “bread” is “the word through which we are nourished” depends on the ability of bread to sustain. Unlike the standard use of Jer 11:19b in the *Testimonia*, Origen’s use does not immediately identify the “bread” with Christ’s body. As in the *Testimonia*, Origen relates the “wood” to the Cross, but then considers both a property of wood, its strength, and the use made of wood by Moses, in making water sweet. From these understandings, he can conclude that the wood of the cross strengthens and sweetens the word given.

His careful reading of Jer 15:10a leads him to conclude that the text cannot apply to the prophet Jeremiah, since he was not judged “in all the earth.” Here, since the literal reading of the text would be absurd, a figurative meaning must be intended, and the text must refer to the Savior. Origen cites the “common explanation” of this text, while disagreeing with it.

Origen recognizes the difficulty of the question, “Does God deceive?,” based on Jer 20:7; he asks in prayer for help. In his lengthy answers, he appeals to common knowledge of a father’s deception of a child and a physician’s deception of a patient, each for a good purpose. He compares God’s actions to these good deceptions and concludes that God can and does deceive humans for their good, that Jeremiah recognized this and desired God’s deception, and that all should do the same.

Origen also relates a Hebrew tradition of God deceiving Jeremiah into prophesying. According to this tradition, it was when Jeremiah realized that he would have to prophesy doom to Jerusalem and its land that he burst out, “You have deceived me, and I was deceived.” From this tradition, Jeremiah’s outburst does not sound like realization that God deceived him for his own good. This tradition seems rather to retain Jeremiah’s anger at being deceived. For Jer 20:7, Origen retains differing explanations of the same text.

In Origen’s homilies on Jeremiah’s complaints, Jeremiah appears as the suffering prophet, “not weary in following” the Lord (17:16), showing “the Savior present in the prophet” (Hom. 10.1.18). Jeremiah speaks of his sufferings and hopes for vindication, but does not accuse God of wrong-doing. The possibility that God might be a “hostile stranger” (Jer 17:17, LXX) to him is not addressed in these

homilies. Instead, Jeremiah has come to acceptance of Origen's view, that God had in fact deceived him, but since it was for his good, he would wish for more such deceit (Hom 20.3.74). Jeremiah's "human feeling" (20.8.28), that led him close to the sin of refusing to speak of God (Jer 20:9), God has happily thwarted by God's fire in his bones, that made him reject the sin. Origen's Jeremiah preserves a much more positive view of God than do Jeremiah's complaints.

4.2.2.2 Theodoret of Cyrus (393-453) *Commentary on the Prophet Jeremiah*¹⁰⁸

The Greek text of Jeremiah's complaints quoted by Theodoret is similar, but not identical, to that of LXX. In numerous places, Theodoret supplies words or phrases that occur in the Masoretic Text of Jeremiah but not in LXX. Some may reflect the "standard text" used in Antioch, "the version edited by Lucian in the third century."¹⁰⁹ Theodoret occasionally also compares the Greek rendering with that in a Syriac version.

In his commentary on Jeremiah's complaints, Theodoret first refers them to the prophet's own experiences, but occasionally then sees them as foreshadowing the experiences of Christ. As in Diodore of Tarsus, any *θεωρία* ("sublime meaning") "must arise naturally and logically out of the plain sense of the passage."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Prophet Jeremiah*, in *Commentaries on the Prophets* (vol. 1.; trans. Robert Charles Hill; Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006). Greek text in PG 81: 576-616. No critical edition was available.

¹⁰⁹ G. W. Ashby, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus as Exegete of the Old Testament* (Grahamstown: Rhodes University Publications Department, 1972), 13.

¹¹⁰ Ashby, 21.

Jer 4:10 Theodoret quotes Jer 4:10 as a question, “Surely you would not use deceit to deceive God’s people and Jerusalem, saying, ‘There will be peace,’ and lo, the sword has touched their very lives?”¹¹¹ As discussed in Section 2.1.1.1.2 (p. 31), “Could Jer 4:10 be a rhetorical question?,” this is a possibility, followed by the Vulgate, possibly by MT, but not by LXX, the Targum, and the Peshitta. Making this a question whose expected answer is “no” suits Theodoret’s understanding, that “the prophet was not speaking factually in saying this.”¹¹²

Jer 11:18-20 Theodoret relates Jer 11:18-20 to the experiences of both Jeremiah and “Christ the Lord,” in whom these “were foreshadowed.” In each case, he first considers Jeremiah’s experiences; he does not “discount their immediate application to Jeremiah’s situation before proceeding to see them fulfilled more completely in the case of Christ’s passion.”¹¹³

Regarding 11:18, he relates “like an innocent lamb being led out to be sacrificed I did not know” to the prophet “not expecting troubles,” because “he did not heed carefully the Lord’s promises,” thinking “he would be in no way be tried by difficulties,” based on Jer 1:18 (“I set you today as a fortified city”). In fact, “the divine word, however, promised not that, but that he would be superior to the troubles” (Jer 1:19).¹¹⁴ Theodoret then applies the verse to Christ, “in a different sense: as the lamb led out to slaughter does not know what it will suffer, he in accepting the passion follows those leading him.” For the wood put on the bread in 11:19, Theodoret first looks at how this could apply to the prophet and concludes that

¹¹¹ Translation by Hill, 39. In PG 81 this is punctuated as a question.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Hill, 209, endnote 6.

¹¹⁴ All translations by Hill, 66.

it cannot. Then he applies this to Christ, since “he called his own body bread”;

“this bread they nailed to the wood, thinking to snuff out his memory.”¹¹⁵

Jer 12:1 Theodoret takes 12:1 to mean that “it would not be out of place for me to think of putting a question to you,”¹¹⁶ about why the wicked flourish. In quoting 12:3, Theodoret adds words found in the Masoretic Text and Theodotion, but not in LXX: “Gather them together like sheep for slaughter.” He adds the Syriac “prepare” to the Greek “purify,” to understand the sheep “set apart.”

Jer 15:10-11 Theodoret quotes 15:10-11 in words very close to LXX. He presents both Syriac and Greek possibilities for the meaning of “I earned no benefit, nor did anyone benefit me”; the Syriac, “I am not a debtor,” meaning “I neither owed nor lent anything,” and the Greek, “having benefited no one or taken a benefit from the hands of others,” that he was therefore “brought into this life to no purpose.” The curses that surround him “are my only reward from those hearing my prophecies,” those for whom he had prayed to the Lord.¹¹⁷

In quoting 15:15, Theodoret agrees with the Masoretic Text against LXX, with “do not take me” added to “in your forbearance.” This, as in MT and P, makes “your forbearance” apply to the prophet, not his opponents. He refers to unnamed other manuscripts that read the verb as “cast me.” In 15:16, he takes συντέλεσον αὐτούς (my translation: “consume them!”; Hill’s translation, “put them into effect!”) to refer to the Lord’s words, not those who did them treacherously (Hill, “set them aside”); this is a possibility. He asks that, “since they think I prophesy falsehood, and

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 67.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 68.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 79.

instead they give credence to the promises of the false prophets, confirm your words with deeds.”¹¹⁸ The prophet preferred “fear of God” to sharing a table or laughter with them.

Since Theodoret does not comment on 15:18, he has no mention of either a wound or God being “like false water.”

Jer 17:14-18 In quoting 17:14-18, Theodoret agrees with LXX. In 17:14, he takes Jeremiah as saying, “I throw myself on your providence, and beg to attain salvation from you.” In 17:16, he takes “I did not long for a day of man” (my translation) as referring to “a delay in retribution” to which “I did not want them to fall victim.” In 17:17, he renders “do not be a hostile stranger to me” (my translation) as “he asks to enjoy God’s care.”¹¹⁹ This seems a softening of Jeremiah’s complaint.

Jer 18:18-23 From Jer 18:18-23, Theodoret quotes only 18:18, in words generally similar to LXX, with one major exception. He then summarizes very briefly the rest of the chapter. Plots against Jeremiah (18:18a) “bring the three highest institutions to testify against him— priesthood, prophecy and wisdom – and they know the power and reliability of each gift. Since there was no gainsaying their words, they not only opposed him but also made plans for his death.”¹²⁰

Theodoret quotes 18:18b as “Come, let us make our assault on him by word, and not heed all his pronouncements.” This agrees with MT, Targum, Vulgate, and Peshitta, but not with LXX, which lacks “not.” According to the Göttingen Septuagint apparatus, this also agrees with the Lucianic Recension, the Armenian

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 79-80.

¹¹⁹ Other translations are from Hill, 84.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 86.

version, and Chrysostom.¹²¹ The quotation also makes more sense in the context.

The “assault on him by word” is taken as “concoct calumny against him.”

Jer 20:7-10 In Jer 20:7-10, most of Theodoret’s quotations follow LXX closely, except for some words in 20:9 that appear in MT and the Vulgate, but not in LXX or P.

Theodoret does not soften Jeremiah’s accusation in 20:7 (“you have deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me, and you prevailed”). He attributes it to “irritation with the resistance constantly shown him”, and that, “trusting in the purity of his conscience he adopts forthrightness (παρρησία) towards the Lord.” The deceit was of the young Jeremiah, who “shunned the role of prophecy.” The Lord “promised to make me superior to the adversaries and to give me the appearance of a bronze wall and iron pillar. Now I have become a laughingstock.” Theodoret, however, thinks that it was not “the miseries and abuse happening to him” that “bite” (δάκνουσι, my translation) the prophet, but “the mockery made of the divine oracles.”¹²²

In 20:9, the quotation includes “in my heart,” not found in LXX, but found in MT, Targum, Vulgate, Peshitta, and the Lucianic Recension, as well as “the Three,” the Ethiopian and Armenian versions, and Origen, Chrysostom, and Ambrose.¹²³ The fire is described as “confined (συνεχόμενον, my translation; “affecting,” Hill’s translation) in my bones,” as in MT and Vulgate, but omitted in LXX and P.

¹²¹ Notes on Jer 18:18, *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum* (vol. 15: Ieremias, Baruch, Threni, Epistula Ieremiae; ed. Joseph Ziegler; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957).

¹²² Hill, 88.

¹²³ *Göttingen Septuagint*, Jer 20:7 notes, 250.

Theodoret calls this fire “the prophetic charism” that “afflicted him when he was unwilling to speak out.”¹²⁴

Jer 20:11-13 Jer 20:11-13 is a hymn of praise which fits strangely between the complaints of 20:7-10 and Jeremiah’s cursing of the day of his birth, in 20:14-15. In Theodoret’s view, the placement is deliberate, giving “pride of place to the hymn of praise so as to remove any occasion of blasphemy.”

Jer 20:14-15 The curses in 20:14-15 come from Jeremiah’s “deep grief” and “surpassing pain,” in which he “latched upon the day, something inoffensive, and the person who reported the birth to his father – a person of no particular importance.”¹²⁵

Theodoret generally transmits and interprets Jeremiah’s complaints without softening them, though at times turning them in surprising directions. In 12:1, Theodoret agrees that Jeremiah has a right to question the Lord. When Theodoret takes “consume them!” (or “put them into effect!”), in 15:16, to refer to the Lord’s words, rather than to Jeremiah’s opponents, he portrays Jeremiah more sympathetically. In 20:7, he attributes Jeremiah’s anger to the “mockery made of the divine oracles,” rather than to his own pain, but in 20:14-15, Jeremiah’s cursing is explained as the result of “deep grief” and “surpassing pain.”

Two exceptions appear in Theodoret’s treatment of 4:10 and 17:17, with a possibility of 20:14-15. Reading Jer 4:10 as a rhetorical question with an expected negative answer turns Jeremiah’s accusation of the Lord into one of the false prophets. In 17:17, his interpretation of “Do not become a hostile stranger to me” as “he asks to enjoy God’s care” appears a considerable softening of a negative picture

¹²⁴ Hill, 88.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 89.

of God. Theodoret's linking of the hymn of praise in 20:11-13 with Jeremiah's cursing in 20:14-15 indicates his concern that the cursing might be blasphemous.

4.2.2.2.3 Olympiodorus of Alexandria (early 6th c.) *Fragmenta in Jeremiam*¹²⁶

The Greek text of Jeremiah's complaints is almost identical to that in LXX, with only a few transpositions of words. He considers all of Jeremiah's complaints except Jer 4:10. In this commentary, Olympiodorus sometimes contrasts two senses, the "literal" (πρὸς τὸ ῥητὸν) and the "allegorical or spiritual meaning"¹²⁷ (πρὸς διάνοιαν). The following considers some of Olympiodorus' comments.

Jer 4:10 Olympiodorus has no comment on Jer 4:10.

Jer 11:19 In Jer 11:19, Olympiodorus connects Jeremiah's "innocent little lamb" with the sheep led for slaughter in Isa 53:7; both refer to "the Lord." He gives two possible meanings for "let us throw wood." First, they may use some "deadly herb, so that eating, he might suffer pain." And second, "they fastened the bread of life to the noble cross."

Jer 12:1 In Jer 12:1, when Jeremiah defends himself to the Lord, and asks why the wicked prosper, Olympiodorus clarifies that he does not "speak out of envy." In 12:2, Jeremiah is "not praying for them" when he asks, "purify them for a day of slaughter"; rather, that the coming retribution be prepared.

¹²⁶ Olympiodorus of Alexandria, *Fragmenta in Jeremiam* (PG 93: 649-672), from "a catena edited by Ghisler in 1623" (Henry Chadwick, "The Mind of Olympiodorus, Deacon of Alexandria," Chapter 14 in *Studies on Ancient Christianity* (Aldershot, Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 4). No critical edition was available. All quotations are my translation.

¹²⁷ Chadwick, 2.

Olympiodorus interprets the odd “May it be, O Lord, their prospering!”

(Jer 15:11) as Jeremiah’s wish and prayer, that “those conspiring against me” would “turn to you,” as he “was asking good things for them.”

Jer 15:18 In Jer 15:18, Olympiodorus takes the “severe” wound, which “has surely become to me as false water,” to be “the deceit of the false prophets which also struck the people.” The “false water” also represents the “baptisms of the heretics.”

Jer 17:17 In praying that the Lord not be a “hostile stranger” (Jer 17:17), Jeremiah prays that, “in the hard and exacting day of the judgment, do not stand up against me as a stranger and adversary, O Lord, but sparing me, forgive me my sins.”

Jer 20:7 For Jer 20:7, “you deceived me,” Olympiodorus considers different possibilities. “Deceit” may be “good deceit, the change from the worse to the better,” or, alternatively, quoting Aquila, “you enchanted me, and I was enchanted.” He concludes that Jeremiah reproached God: “you let me go in such great crises,” because he thought that “they would become better through your predictions, and they have not.”

Jer 20:9 In Jer 20:9, when Jeremiah decided not to speak any more, “because no one is persuaded,” it was the “zeal for God” that was like fire within him.

Jer 20:14-18 In commentary on Jer 20:14-16, Olympiodorus contrasts “literal” and “allegorical” meanings. When Jeremiah curses the day of his birth and the man who brought the news of it to his father, a “literal” meaning sees that Jeremiah will bring destruction to the people; an “allegorical” meaning makes the “man” the devil, who seeks to tempt humans. The “outcry in the morning” (Jer 20:16) may be in a “literal” sense “quickly,” or, in an “allegorical” sense, from the devil, when “the true sun,

Jesus, our Lord” appears. The “shout at midday” may in a “literal” sense be “the voice of enemies” coming to Ananias, the false prophet; in an “allegorical” sense, the shout is of the defeat of the devil at the Lord’s crucifixion.

4.2.2.2.4 Pseudo-Chrysostom *Fragmenta in Jeremiam*¹²⁸

The Greek text of Jeremiah’s complaints found in these fragments is very close, and often identical, to that of LXX. Where it differs, that will be mentioned.

Jer 4:10 In Jer 4:10 (“O Sovereign Lord, surely deceiving” and “Peace will be to you”), God’s deception is like that of fathers correcting their children. The answer to “Where did he say to these, ‘Peace will be to you’?” is found earlier, in Jer 4:1, where the good to come depends on Israel’s return to God.

Jer 11:19 In Jer 11:19 (“But I was like an innocent lamb led to be sacrificed, not knowing that they thought out an evil plan about me”), “some take these [words to refer] to Christ,” but they also refer to the prophet, who “suffered outrages” in his “simplicity.”

Jer 11:19b (“Come, let us throw wood/a tree into his bread/food, and let us rub him out from the land of the living”) can mean “let us crucify him.” The “wood” can also be “a deadly root.”

Jer 15:10 The cry of despair in Jer 15:10, (“Woe is me, as what you bore me, mother, a man pleading a cause and pleaded with by all the earth!”), has come because the prophet gave up hope of persuading God and was “in straits.” He despaired, because of the “terrible sufferings” he received from the Judeans, even though he was “innocent of all debts.”

¹²⁸ Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Jeremiam* (PG 64: 797, 869, 903, 907, 928, 929). No critical edition was available. All quotations are my translation.

Jer 15:18 In Jer 15:18, it is the “severe” wound that “has become to me like false water; it has no faithfulness.” This wound is his prophecy. “Just as water has no standing place, so they consider that truth does not belong to my words. Just as water slips away and does not stand still or remain, so also my words appear now here, now there. And it leaps from one place to another and does not have faithfulness.” Because he does not see the result of his words, the prophet has no comfort.

Jer 20:7 Jeremiah’s “audacious” words in 20:7 (“You deceived me, O Lord, and I was deceived”), that appear to say that God deceives and “jests with us,” come from his pain. He remembers that God had promised, “As a fortified wall of brass I will set you, and they will fight against you, but by no means will they prevail over you” (Jer 1:19), but he “did not shut him up.” Jeremiah is angry because people revile him, thinking that he was lying in his prophecy because “God did not immediately bring punishment.” God has “prevailed” over him, bringing “insult and derision” as well as plots and dangers.

Jer 20:9-10 When Jeremiah determined not to “name the name of the Lord” or “speak in his name” (20:9), he felt the “guilt of the silence . . . not from despising God, but from seeing the abundant evil of the fellow-countrymen.” The “fire burning, kindled, and gripped in my bones” (different from LXX and similar to MT “locked up in my bones”) “ran across my mind” and made him weakened and unable to bear the “censure of many gathered against me” (20:10). Those who purported to be his friends conspired, hoping to find “some accusation in his deeds.”

4.2.3 Greek “stream of tradition” in these texts

Greek patristic commentary on the complaints of Jeremiah used common methods and transmitted common interpretations from the time of Justin Martyr well into the 6th century. Careful attention to the words of the text, use of associative linkage of words, and figurative language, were all characteristic of these writers. They all worked first from the text in LXX. Origen and Theodoret also referred to other witnesses: the Hebrew and “the Three” (Origen) and the Syriac (Theodoret).

Most writers referred the texts to the life, passion, death and resurrection of Christ, seeing Christ prefigured in the sufferings of Jeremiah. Origen and Theodoret saw more possibilities of reference specifically to the prophet, without immediate invocation of Christ.¹²⁹

The outstanding example of this common tradition occurs in the *Testimonia*. Reading the “innocent lamb” carried without its knowledge to slaughter as Christ, and the “wood” “thrown” on the “bread” as his crucifixion, persisted in conjunction with many other Old Testament texts, often in the same combinations. Pseudo-Chrysostom and Olympiodorus, however, added the possibility that the “wood” might be a “deadly root,” as well as prefiguring the cross. Origen, while retaining the allegory of “wood” as the cross, read the “bread” as the “word through which we are nourished” (*Hom. Jer.*10.2.7).

Greek patristic commentary shared certain worries about the complaints of Jeremiah. In Jer 4:10 and 20:7, the prophet accused God of deceiving first the people, then himself. Gregory of Nyssa wondered whether this implicated God in sin.

¹²⁹ See discussion of the work of Antiochene interpreters, including Theodoret, in Section 4.5.1, About Syriac exegesis of the Old Testament, pp. 280-290.

Theodoret transformed Jer 4:10 into a question with an expected negative answer.

Origen's lengthy discussion in two homilies concluded that God's deceit is real, and for the good of the one deceived. Chrysostom and Olympiodorus agreed that this was "good deceit."

Jeremiah's cursing the day of his birth and the one announcing it (Jer 20:14-18) was also problematic. Clement of Alexandria made it clear that it was Jeremiah's "trouble and toil" that provoked this outburst, rather than birth itself being accursed. Origen, however, concluded that "there is in corporal birth something that seems to merit curses of this kind" (*Hom. Lev.* 8.3.44). Theodoret agreed with Clement that the complaint came from Jeremiah's pain and grief, and because a hymn of praise preceded the curses, Jeremiah was not guilty of blasphemy. Olympiodorus read the text both literally, presaging Jeremiah's bringing destruction to his people, and allegorically, seeing the announcer as the devil, and the "shout at midday" (Jer 20:16) as that of the defeat of the devil at Christ's crucifixion.

Greek patristic commentary also used these texts to combat false teaching. Clement, in ascribing Jer 12:1 to the prophet's and his people's words, countered arguments by Gnostics that all scriptural texts were spoken by God. Using Jer 11:19 LXX, Justin Martyr argued that Jews had removed texts predicting Christ's passion. The *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* expanded this to a plot by Aquila to change the words of Scripture. Origen contrasts good deceit by God with the deceptive practices of Celsus. Olympiodorus identifies the "false water" of Jer 15:18 with the baptisms done by heretics.

Origen's homilies made specific connections of the words of Jeremiah's complaints with Christian practice. Origen connected the prophet's lack of "weariness in following" with Jesus' promise to the "weary and heavy-laden," concluding that "there is no weariness when one follows Jesus" (*Hom. Jer.* 17.6.11). At the end of his long discussions about whether or not God deceives, Origen encouraged all to seek such good deception from God.

4.3 Latin Commentaries

4.3.1 Ancient Latin texts

References to ancient Latin commentaries citing Jeremiah's complaints were found in *Biblia Patristica*, volumes 1-7.¹³⁰

4.3.1.1 Brief mentions of Jeremiah's Complaints

4.3.1.1.1 *Testimonia* using Jeremiah 11:19

4.3.1.1.1.1 Tertullian (c.160-c.225) *Adversus Judaeos* 10.12¹³¹

In *Adversus Judaeos* 10.12, Tertullian endeavors to prove that "the promised Christ had come," and that therefore "Christians are beneficiaries in God's plans."¹³² He argues from Scripture for his view that "the Christians had replaced the Jews."¹³³

Tertullian quotes Jer 11:19 in the midst of a series of Old Testament texts fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ. These agree closely with the group cited in *Testimonia* in many Greek commentaries, since at least the time of Justin Martyr. They include "the Lord has reigned from a tree," attributed to Ps 95:10, which does not occur in LXX, but in "two Greek manuscripts and the main Coptic version of the LXX"¹³⁴; Isa 9:6, and Ps 21:17 and 22 (LXX). Tertullian points out that these cannot refer to David or any other king of the Jews, since they did not "reign from a tree,"

¹³⁰ *Biblia Patristica* (vols. 1-7; Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1975-2000). These include: v. 1, Des origines à Clément d'Alexandrie et Tertullien; v. 2, Le troisième siècle; v. 3, Origène; v. 4, Eusèbe de Césarée, Cyrille de Jérusalem, Epiphane de Salamine; v. 5, Basile de Césarée, Grégoire de Nazianze, Grégoire de Nysse, Amphiloque d'Iconium; v. 6, Hilaire de Poitiers, Ambroise de Milan, Ambrosiaster; v. 7, Didyme d'Alexandrie; Suppl., Philon d'Alexandrie. Notably, they do not include Augustine.

¹³¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Judaeos*, in Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian* (The Early Church Fathers; London: Routledge, 2004).

¹³² Introduction to Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.*, 65.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 113, n. 7.

only a cross is “placed on his shoulder” (Isa 9:6), and piercing of hands and feet (Ps 21:17 LXX) and the “horns of the unicorn” (Ps 21:22 LXX) refer only to crucifixion.

Tertullian quotes Jer 11:19 in words corresponding to those in LXX. The “wood” “put into his bread” must be the “tree,” already shown to be the cross, “put against his body,” since “he named his body as bread.”

4.3.1.1.1.2 Tertullian *Adversus Marcionem* 3.19; 4.40¹³⁵

In *Adversus Marcionem* 3.19, Tertullian uses the same texts and arguments to show that “only the new king of the new ages, Christ Jesus, [the king] of new glory, has lifted up upon his shoulder his own dominion and majesty, which is the Cross, so that from thenceforth . . . he did as Lord reign from the tree.” He sees Jer 11:19 as a “hint of this tree,” since “he who gave bread the figure of his body is the same as he whose body the prophet had of old figuratively described as bread.”¹³⁶

In *Adversus Marcionem* 4.40.4, in discussion of Christ’s own Passover, in which he took bread, which he “made into his body,” Tertullian again quotes Jer 11:19, to show “how ancient was this figure of the body of Christ, who himself speaks by Jeremiah.”¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* (ed. and trans. Ernest Evans; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

¹³⁶ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 3.19.3.

¹³⁷ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.40.4.

4.3.1.1.1.3 Commodianus (c. 220) *Carmina apologeticum* 273-4¹³⁸

Commodianus quotes Jer 11:19b, “let us put wood in bread,” in the midst of a series of *Testimonia* to Christ’s passion, all from LXX (Ps 21:17, Wis 2:12, 20; Deut 28:66). Here Jeremiah “shows by a figure the cross” (*Carm. apol.* 273).

4.3.1.1.1.4 Novatian (d. 257-8) *De Trinitate* 9.7¹³⁹

In the midst of Old Testament *Testimonia* supporting the articles of the “Rule of Faith,” “the baptismal Symbol of the Roman Church,”¹⁴⁰ Novatian cites Isa 53:7-8, “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before His shearer is dumb; so He opened not His mouth in his lowliness.” This is closely related to Jer 11:19a, “like an innocent lamb led to be sacrificed.”

4.3.1.1.1.5 Cyprian (d. 258) *Testimonia ad Quirinum* 2.15; 2.20¹⁴¹

In *Testimonia ad Quirinum* 2.15, Cyprian gathers Old and New Testament texts to show that “Christ is called a sheep and a lamb who was to be slain.” After Isa 53:7-9, 12, he cites Jer 11:18-19, in words corresponding to LXX.

In *Test.* 2.20, the texts are to show “that the Jews would fasten Christ to the cross.” Three mention spreading out hands: Isa 65:2 (to a disobedient people); Ps 140:2 LXX (as a evening sacrifice), Ps 87:9 LXX (as part of calling on the Lord “the whole day”). He cites Jer 11:19 in the midst of usual *Testimonia* texts (Deut 28:66, Ps 21:16-22 LXX, Zech 12:10), and adds Ps 118:120 LXX (“Pierce my flesh with

¹³⁸ Commodianus, *Carmen apologeticum* (ed. Bernhard Dombart; CSEL 15; Vienna: C. Geroldi Filium Bibliopolam Academiae, 1887; New York: Johnson Reprint, 1968).

¹³⁹ Novatian, *De Trinitate*, in *The Trinity; The Spectacles; Jewish Foods; In Praise of Purity; Letters* (trans. Russell J. DeSimone; The Fathers of the Church; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1974).

¹⁴⁰ Novatian, *Trin.* 9, 42, n. 1.

¹⁴¹ Cyprian, *Testimonia ad Quirinum*. In Vol. 3, part 1 of *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera* (edit. R. Weber; CCSL 3,1; Turnholt: Brepols, 1972), 48-49, 57-59 = Latin text. And *Testimonia ad Quirinum* (ANF 5:521, 524). No more recent translation was available.

nails through fear of Thee”; Hebrew: “let my flesh tremble through fear of you”), Zeph 1:7 (“the Lord has prepared his sacrifice”), and a strange rendering of Num 23:19 (“Not as a man is God suspended”; Hebrew, “does God lie,” LXX, “is God deceived”).

Cyprian cites but does not discuss all these texts.

4.3.1.1.1.6 Lactantius (c. 240-320) *Divine Institutes* 4.18.27¹⁴²

In Chapter 18 of Book 4 of the *Divine Institutes*, Lactantius considers “the Lord’s passion, and that it was foretold.”¹⁴³ He quotes Jer 11:19, in words corresponding to LXX, in a group of *Testimonia* (Isa 50:5,6 and 53:8-10, 12, the Sibyl, Ps 21:16-18 (LXX), 68:22 (LXX) and 93:21, 22 (LXX), Esdras (as in Justin Martyr), Deut 28:66, and Zech 12:10), to show that the elements of Christ’s passion were “announced both by the utterances of the prophets and by the predictions of the Sibyls.”¹⁴⁴ He is clear that prophets and King David did not speak these words about themselves, but rather about Christ.

In Jer 11:19, “the wood signifies his cross, and the bread his body; for He Himself is the food and the life of all who believe in the flesh which he assumed, and on the cross upon which he was suspended.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Lactantius, *Institutions Divines* (vol. 4; trans. and ann. Pierre Monat; SC 377; Paris: Cerf, 1992). And *The Divine Institutes* (ANF 7:121).

¹⁴³ Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 4.18 title (ANF 7:119).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 4.18.13, ANF 7:120 and *Institutions Divines*, 167 (“the words of the prophets and the oracles of the Sibyls had announced,” my translation).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 4.18.28, *Institutions Divines*, 173, my translation. Also in ANF 7:121.

4.3.1.1.1.7 Rufinus (c. 345-410) *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* =

Symb. 23¹⁴⁶

In a long list of *Testimonia* relating to Christ's passion and death, Rufinus cites Jer 11:19 in words corresponding to LXX. He sees all these texts confirming "by the testimony of prophets" that "the life of the whole world hung suspended from the wood" of the cross.¹⁴⁷

4.3.1.1.1.8 Pseudo-Augustine *De Altercatione Ecclesiae et Synagogae* = *Alt. ES* ¹⁴⁸

In a series of *Testimonia* about a Savior who extends his hands (Isa 65:2), a life "hanging before your eyes day and night" (Deut 28:66), and the Lord who "reigned from a tree" (Ps 95:10 LXX, as quoted in Justin and others), *Alt. ES* cites Jer 11:19b, in words corresponding to LXX. All these illuminate the "miracle of the passion" (*Alt. ES* 1135).

4.3.1.1.1.9 Evagrius? (346-99) *Dialogue of Simon and Theophilus* = *Alt. Sim.* ¹⁴⁹

Testimonia relating to Christ's passion are provided in response to "Simon's" citation of Deut 21:23, "Cursed is the one hanging on a tree." The series is designed to show that Christ did not sin but needed to suffer, to fulfill the Scriptures (*Alt. Sim.* 1174 C; and *Dial.* 24, p. 117). It includes Lam 4:20, Ps 21:17-20 (LXX); Isa 55:2; Deut 28:66; Ps 140:2, Zech 12:10; and Ps 87:10. Jer 11:19, in words corresponding to LXX, is embedded in the group, with no extra discussion.

¹⁴⁶ Rufinus, *A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* (trans. J. N. D. Kelly; Ancient Christian Writers 20; London: Longmans, Green, 1955).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 58.

¹⁴⁸ Pseudo-Augustine, *Concerning the Dispute between the Church and the Synagogue* = *De Altercatione Ecclesiae et Synagogae* (PL 42:1131-40). Translations are my own.

¹⁴⁹ Evagrius? *Dialogue of Simon and Theophilus* = *Alt. Sim.* (PL 42:1175-6) and William Warner, "The Dialogue of Simon and Theophilus," *Ancient Christian Dialogues. Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* 58 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2004), 87-119 = *Dial.*

4.3.1.1.2 Other brief mentions of Jeremiah's complaints

4.3.1.1.2.1 Cyprian (d. 258) *Epistulae* 73.6.1; 782.22¹⁵⁰

Cyprian addresses the question of whether baptism by heretics such as Marcion confers the grace of forgiveness of sins. He thinks that a man “receives according to what he believes” and if “his beliefs are false, so he cannot receive what is true” (*Ep.* 73.5.3). Cyprian relates the “question of a godless and spurious baptism” to Jer 15:18, “it became to me as lying water without faith.” He considers this “lying and faithless water” to be none other than “water which assumes the lying resemblance of baptism and thwarts the grace of faith by its shadowy imitation” (*Ep.* 73.6.1).

He concludes that it is only “those leaders who are set in authority within the Church and have been established in accordance with the law of the gospel and the institution of the Lord” who “have the lawful power to baptize and to grant forgiveness of sins” (*Ep.* 73.7.2).

4.3.1.1.2.2 Ambrose (c. 339-397) *De Mysteriis* = *Myst.* 4.23¹⁵¹

In a long discussion of baptism, Ambrose warns that there is also a “lying water” (*aqua mendax*, as in Jer 15:18 Vulgate). This is the “baptism of unbelievers,” which “does not heal, but pollutes” (*Myst.* 4.23, my translation).

¹⁵⁰Cyprian, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage* (vol. 4; trans. and ann. G. W. Clarke; Ancient Christian Writers No. 47; New York: Newman Press, 1989).

¹⁵¹Ambrose, *Des Sacrements. Des Mystères: Explication du Symbole = De mysteriis = Myst.* (trans. and ann. Bernard Botte; SC 25bis; Paris: Cerf, 1980).

4.3.1.1.2.3 Ambrose *De Paenitentia* = *Paen.* 1.7.31¹⁵²

In a discussion rejecting the “rebaptisms” done by Novatian, Ambrose accuses Novatian of declining the Lord’s invitation to the feast that includes the “good and the bad, the feeble, the blind and the lame” (*Paen.* 1.7.30, paraphrasing Matt 22:8-10 and Luke 14:21-23). In contrast, the Church, God’s family, “does not say, ‘I am healthy; I do not seek a physician’,” but rather “Heal me, Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved.” Here Ambrose paraphrases Jer 17:14, relating the text to the Church.

4.3.1.1.2.4 Ambrose *Expositio Psalmi 118* = *Exp. Psalm.118* .14.26¹⁵³

In a discussion of the free will of prophets, Ambrose first cites Jer 1:6-7, to show that God did not allow Jeremiah to decline his prophetic vocation on the basis of youth, because he would supply him “gray-headed faith of wisdom.” Ambrose then quotes Jer 20:7 and 20:9, in words similar but not identical to the Vulgate, to show that God provided what was “in my heart like a blazing fire, burning in my bones” to keep Jeremiah from “denying his duty.” This would “inspire the desire of prophetic revelation,” so that he might “run together of free will to the approaching duty” and “not yield by necessity.”

¹⁵² Ambrose, *La Pénitence* = *De Paenitentia* (trans. and ann. Roger Gryson; SC 179; Paris: Cerf, 1971). English translations are mine.

¹⁵³ Ambrose, *Expositio Psalmi 118* (*Sancti Ambrosii Opera*. Part 5; ed. Michael Petschenig; CSEL 62; Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1999). English translations are mine.

4.3.1.2 Extended Latin commentary: Jerome, *Commentary on Jeremiah*¹⁵⁴

Jerome's commentary on Jeremiah starts with quotation of each verse in the Latin of the Vulgate. He often then comments on differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts, considering primarily LXX but, occasionally, one of "the Three."

In interpretation, Jerome considers Jeremiah's own situation, relation to Christ, and relation to the situation in the church. He relates "the consensus of all the churches" (*Comm. Jer.* 11:18, lib.2:110), as well as some "Hebrew" traditions.

Jer 4:10 Jerome may translate Jer 4:10 as a question, taking LXX also as a question (see Section 2.1.1.1.2, "Could Jer 4:10 be a rhetorical question?", but compare translation as statement in Graves' commentary¹⁵⁵). Jerome thinks that the question comes because the prophet was "troubled." Jeremiah saw a disagreement between the prophecy in Jer 4:9, "the heart of the king and the heart of princes will perish, and priests are aghast, and prophets will be thrown down," and God's earlier promise, in Jer 3:17, "in that time they will call Jerusalem the throne of God." He therefore "reckons it to have lied," but "does not understand that many things are promised after a time, but this of the near future time." Jerome relates this to Paul's question in Rom 11:1, whether God has rejected his people; this is answered, "By no means!"

Jer 11:18-20 In interpretation of Jer 11:18-20, Jerome relates the "consensus of all the churches," that they understand "these sayings" to refer to Christ. The "lamb led

¹⁵⁴ *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi in Hieremiam Prophetam, Libri Sex* (ed. Sigofredus Reiter; *CSEL* 59; Originally published Vienna: T. Tempsky, 1913; Reprinted New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1961). All translations are my own.

And Jerome, *Commentary on Jeremiah* (trans. and notes by Michael Graves; ed. Christopher A. Hall; Ancient Christian Texts; Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2011).

¹⁵⁵ Jerome, *Commentary on Jeremiah*, 28.

to the slaughter,” who “did not open his mouth” (Isa 53:7), “did not know” (Jer 11:18). Jerome quotes Paul (2 Cor 5:21) to indicate that what he did not know was sin. The “wood on his bread” refers to the “cross on the body of the Savior,” since he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven” (John 6:41). The plans, to “root him out from the land of the living” were “planned with an evil soul.”

The plea in Jer 11:20 that God let him “see your revenge on them,” consists of the Son asking the Father to administer his justice, to “render to the people what is deserved.” Since the Son asked forgiveness, from the cross, for those who repented, this revenge applies only to “those who persevere in wickedness.” Jerome refers to “Jews and our Judaizers,” who think that all this is said “of the person of Jeremiah, who because of prophecies of future things and the evil assault of captivity,” suffered thus from the people. Jerome counters that since they did not crucify Jeremiah, these texts did not apply to him.

Jer 12:1-3 Jerome considers the questions and statements in Jer 12:1-3 about the prospering of the ungodly to refer to heretics. It is they who, “when they are ungodly, their way is prospered and they beget sons, those whom they deceive in heresy, and they do not act uprightly.” By doing all this, “they rob the church.” But their flourishing is not “a stumbling block.” Rather, they are “fed for the sacrifice,” collected so that they “may be struck mortally unto death and then may be sanctified, they may be killed with an ecclesiastical sword,” for “truly the killing of heretics is their salvation.”

Jer 15:10-11 In interpretation of Jer 15:10-11, Jerome considers several difficulties. Could Jeremiah be a “man of discord in the whole earth”? Unlike Origen, who thinks

this could not apply to Jeremiah, Jerome points out that “in the whole earth” may be a figure of speech (syndecdoche), in which a whole is put for a part. It may therefore refer to the land of Judea, and the man may be Jeremiah. Jerome also thinks that it fits the Savior, judged by all the philosophers and nations.

On the question of whether it is fitting to ascribe to the Savior, “Woe to me, my mother!” Jerome cites Mic 7:1-2, where the prophet, agreeing with the person of Christ, bewails the lack of fruits and then the perishing of the just one from the earth. Jerome concludes that the “one and the same Son of God” speaks of God, “now according to the flesh, now according to the Word.”

In consideration of Jer 15:10b, Jerome compares the Vulgate with readings of LXX and Theodotion. They all agree that this text refers to Christ. Jerome takes “I did not help, nor did anyone help me” (LXX) as meaning “no one truly wishes to receive so much as I longed to give.” This reading is similar to Origen’s (see Section 4.2.2.2.1.2), though applied to Christ rather than to Jeremiah. Applied to Christ, no one helped him, since “the salvation of the creature truly is profit to the creator.” Theodotion’s “I did not owe” Jerome takes as “no one gave to me, what I desired to receive.” Jerome takes “all revile me” to refer to “heretics and also the erring,” since they “believe wrong things and blaspheme worse things.”

Jerome refers Jer 15:11 to Jeremiah. He hears the Lord saying to him, “Do not consider the present, but the future; truly your remains and your last things will be good.” Jerome also thinks this may refer, “according to the flesh,” to the Savior, who did indeed pray from the cross for his enemies. Jerome points out that Jeremiah also prayed for the people.

Jer 15:15 In quoting Jer 15:15, Jerome gives both his Vulgate translation and LXX. He does not comment on the LXX “from these, who reject your words; consume them!” He takes “your words were found, and I ate them” (Vulgate) to mean “they are turned to food for me,” “so that they were turned into joy for me.” He also thinks it possible that the sense may be that “nevertheless I rejoiced that I was obedient to your precepts.”

Jer 15:18 Jerome states that the wound that “refuses to be healed” and “false waters, without faithfulness” in Jer 15:18 are ascribed by “the Hebrews” to “the person of Jerusalem.” It is Jerusalem who “would sit and be filled with bitterness” and whose pain is “everlasting.” The “false waters” are the optimistic words of prophets, “by which fortunate things were being promised to her”; they have gone by like a lie.

Jerome thinks the text refers better to the prophet, who did not “sit in the assembly of mockers” because “he feared the hand of God weighing on him” (Jer 15:17). He “had no intervals” of pain, and his “wound was made strong.” But his consolation, as in Origen, was that the wound was “like water, false and going by. Just as truly waters are going by as they flow, they are seen, and they glide away, so also every attack of the enemies . . . goes by.” Jerome encourages all “not to sit in the assembly of mockers . . . but always to fear through the judgment of God,” and to place “hope in the Lord God . . . and to expect judgment” from the righteous judge, at the end, when “bitterness like flowing water has fallen away.”

Jer 17:14-18 Jerome refers the plaint in Jer 17:14-18 to the prophet Jeremiah. It is he who, in Jer 17:14, like the hemorrhaging woman in the Gospels (Matt 9:20-

23//Mark 5:25-34//Luke 8:43-48), appeals to the “true physician . . . whose health is in his wings.”

In Jer 17:15, the people reproach Jeremiah with concealing or delaying the purpose of the Lord. Jeremiah responds that he was not eager for this end, did not desire “either longer life or favorable things which are of this world,” and did not deceive. For Jer 17:17, Jerome cites both the Vulgate, of Jeremiah asking that God not be “terrors” to him, and LXX, that God not be a “stranger” to him, “sparing me in the evil day.” He takes these to mean, “Do not spare me in the present age, which is evil, but render to me according to my sins, so that I may have eternal rest!”

Jer 18:18 Jerome attributes the evil plans in Jer 18:18, involving “false accusations,” to “both at that time, the Jews against Jeremiah or the Lord, the Savior, and today, of heretics against his servants.” The one for whose life a pit was dug (Jer 18:20) is both Jeremiah, “in the type of the Savior,” and Christ, in whom the text is “more fully” fulfilled. The “sudden thief” in Jer 18:23 may be Nebuchadnezzar, if the text is about Jeremiah, but “truer and better,” the Roman army, if it is about Christ. Jerome does not consider the prayer that God “not appease their injustice” contrary to an earlier prayer for the people; the punishment is rather for those who “persist in their sin” and is “for an example to others.”

Jer 20:7 Jerome connects Jeremiah’s outcry in Jer 20:7, “You misled me, O Lord, and I was misled” (Vulgate) or “You deceived me, O Lord, and I was deceived” (LXX) to Jeremiah’s call. When he heard the Lord saying, “I have set you a prophet to the nations” (Jer 1:5), Jeremiah thought he would proclaim judgment not against “the people of the Judaeans” but “against diverse nations round about,” and therefore

“he willingly took on prophecy.” When, instead, it was the “captivity of Jerusalem” that he preached, “he sustained persecutions and difficulties.” When this captivity did not come instantly, the people derided him as a liar.

Jerome considers the different rendering of LXX, “because with my bitter word I will laugh at prevarication and invoke trouble,” to mean that “I know present sadness is being changed to future joy.” He will therefore “willingly sustain misery and iniquity and affliction, so that . . . I may counterbalance brevity of injury with an eternity of happiness.”

When the word of the Lord became for Jeremiah a “reproach and also a derision,” because “tardiness of prophecy” the people “think to be falsehood,” Jeremiah thought not to speak in his name any more (Jer 20:9). He then was unable to bear what was like “scorching fire and enclosed in my bones.” Jerome relates this to Paul’s compulsion to proclaim the Gospel (1 Cor 9:16, 17) and states that “truly when the divine word is conceived by the soul but not brought forth a fire burns in the breast.”

Jerome concludes that most teachers in the church are blamed and pursued by many, as friends turn to “aim ambushes,” but that they should say with Jeremiah, “the Lord is with me, as a mighty warrior” (Jer 20:11).

Jer 20:14-18 In considering Jeremiah’s cursing the day of his birth and the person who announced his birth, and his desire that he had been destroyed in the womb, in Jer 20:14-18, Jerome quotes Job 3:3, “accursed be the day, in which I was born,” and 3:20, “why is light given to the wretched and life to them, who are in bitterness of soul?” Quoting Matt 26:24, that “better it would be for him, if he had not been born,”

Jerome states that “it would be better not to exist than to exist wickedly.”¹⁵⁶ From these he concludes that “we may prefer quiet death to wretched life.” Jeremiah’s desire for “eternal conception” Jerome considers hyperbole, but his preference of death to life is summed up in the cry, “Why have I come out of the womb, in order that I might see toil and pain, and my days be devoured in confusion?”

Jerome relates a “Hebrew” tradition, that reckons the date of the birth of Jeremiah in “the fifth month, in which Jerusalem was captured and the temple overthrown.” He does not see how this can be related to the words of Job, unless by “prefiguration and prediction of future things.”

In Jerome’s exegesis of Jeremiah’s complaints, he usually starts with the experiences of the prophet Jeremiah, and often, but not always, sees these prefiguring those of Christ, considering carefully whether each text is fitting for referral to Christ. He makes connections with the church of his day, referring to both the consensus of church interpretation and the opponents of the church. He also refers to Hebrew tradition, usually to question it, sometimes in polemic against “Jews and our Judaizers.” He connects these texts with Christian hope for God’s help in present difficulties and for eternal life.

In these complaints, Jerome sees the prophet Jeremiah suffering greatly, often “in the type of the Savior.” Jerome takes 11:18-20 to refer only to Christ, in concord with church tradition, and contrary to the views of “Jews and our Judaizers,” since only Christ was crucified. In Jer 15:10-11 and 18:18-23, Jerome sees both Jeremiah

¹⁵⁶ Jerome, *Commentary on Jeremiah*, 125, Michael Graves’ translation.

and Christ described. He takes care to show that the lamentation of Jer 15:10 is not inappropriate for Christ, in his human nature.

Jerome does not connect the prophet's experiences related in Jer 4:10, 15:18, 17:14-18, 20:7-10, and 20:14-18 with those of Christ. For Jerome, the prophet Jeremiah does indeed question God: in 4:10, whether God has deceived, and in 12:1, why the wicked prosper. In 15:18, there is hope for the prophet in spite of the wound that refuses healing, since it is like "false waters," that pass on by. In 20:7, the prophet accuses God of deception; Jerome does not soften but explains the basis of this accusation. Jerome also does not soften Jeremiah's cursing the day he was born; he rather explains why someone might do this, using texts from Job.

Jerome cites "Hebrew" tradition in commentary on Jer 11:18-20, 15:18, and 20:14. He denies that 11:18-20 could refer to Jeremiah, in spite of all his sufferings at the hands of the people, because of its clear reference to the cross. He relates the Hebrew tradition of ascribing the wound that refuses healing (15:18) to the sufferings of Jerusalem, but thinks the text applies better to the prophet. Because he sees Job's complaints prefiguring Jeremiah's, Jerome does not think the Hebrew tradition that Jeremiah's month of birth was the same as that of the fall of Jerusalem can explain Jeremiah's cursing the day of his birth.

In his commentary, Jerome makes repeated connections with the church of his day. It is heretics who prosper and "beget sons," (Jer 12:1 LXX) and thereby "rob the church." Those who "revile" Christ, prefigured by the prophet (15:10b), are "heretics and the erring." The "false accusations" of 18:18 are made by "heretics against his servants." Most teachers in the church are blamed and persecuted by those they

thought were their friends (20:10). They, and all, should trust in the Lord, as a “mighty warrior,” and trust in the coming judgment of God, when “bitterness like flowing water has fallen away.” They are to seek the eternal rest, given by God who has not spared them in this life (cf. 17:17), and where “present sadness is being changed to future joy” (cf. 20:7).

4.3.2 Medieval Latin commentaries

References to medieval Latin commentaries citing Jeremiah’s complaints were found in the following, in addition to the general sources cited in the Introduction:

Froehlich, Karlfried. *Biblical Interpretation from the Church Fathers to the Reformation*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2010.

Gibson, Margaret T. *The Bible in the Latin West*. The Medieval Book. Vol. 1. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1993.

Hailperin, Herman. *Rashi and the Christian Scholars*. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963.

Smalley, Beryl. *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1952.

4.3.2.1 About medieval Latin exegesis

Early medieval Latin interpretation of the Old Testament continued emphases of patristic interpretation. Like Jerome,¹⁵⁷ interpreters looked for the “Hebrew truth” of passages, “Hebraic truth bequeathed through Origen, published through Jerome,

¹⁵⁷ Jerome, “Preface,” *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* (transl. C. T. R. Hayward, *Saint Jerome’s Hebrew Questions on Genesis*; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995), 30 (*hebraica veritas*).

praised through Augustine, and confirmed through Josephus.”¹⁵⁸ Some consulted Jewish tradition.

They looked for and found more than one sense of scriptural passages. The later well-known rhyme, “probably attributable to the thirteenth-century scholar Augustine of Dacia,” which repeated ideas “deriving ultimately from John Cassian,”¹⁵⁹ summarized four senses:

Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,

Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.

Here, the literal teaches “about historical details”; the allegorical, “about what we believe”; the moral, “how to behave”; and the anagogical, “about where we are headed, that is, to heaven.”¹⁶⁰ Following Origen, early medieval interpreters considered the spiritual senses most important.

By the 12th century, emphasis on teaching and preaching the Bible in the schools was reflected in emphasis by the Victorines (Hugh, Andrew, and Richard) on the literal or historical sense of the text as the necessary foundation for any other interpretation. Hugh of St. Victor, in the *Didascalicon*, “stressed that the literal sense should be studied before any other, and the allegorical sense of Scripture could never overtly contradict its literal sense.”¹⁶¹ The literal sense was the foundation of a

¹⁵⁸ Bede, *ep.* 3 (PL, 94, 675 AB), quoted and translated in Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture* (Vol. 3; trans. E. M. Macierowski; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009), 178; trans. of *Exégèse médiévale*, 3: *Les quatre sens de l'écriture*; Éditions Montaigne, 1961).

¹⁵⁹ Lesley Smith, “2.1. Nicholas of Lyra and Old Testament Interpretation,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* (Vol. 2; ed. Magne Saebo; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 55.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Frans van Liere, “The Literal Sense of the Books of Samuel and Kings; from Andrew of St. Victor to Nicholas of Lyra,” in *Nicholas of Lyra: the Senses of Scripture* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 60.

house; spiritual senses could be its walls and roof.¹⁶² Knowledge of the Hebrew text was essential; Hugh of St. Victor, in notes on Genesis, stated that “the Greek texts are truer than the Latin, and the Hebrew texts are truer than the Greek.”¹⁶³ But in this work, “the student of Scripture should stand solidly in the truth of spiritual understanding . . . the Old Testament prophetic text can only be understood in the context of its New Testament fulfilment.”¹⁶⁴

This emphasis on the literal sense corresponded closely to the Jewish interpreter Rashi’s attempt to find the *peshat*, the *sensus historicus* or *literalis*, for each word and phrase. This is its “*first* meaning as that word or phrase came into being, and that word or phrase, too, in its context.”¹⁶⁵ Both Hugh and Andrew of St. Victor made use of commentaries of the “school of Rashi.”¹⁶⁶

In the 13th century, the meaning of the “literal sense” changed, although “a continuous tradition of Hebrew study”¹⁶⁷ continued. Application of Aristotle’s four major causes, that “governed all activity and change in the universe,”¹⁶⁸ led to a focus on the human author of a text. In the “Aristotelian prologue,” the author was the “efficient cause or motivating agent”; his subject matter, the “material cause”; his “literary style and structure,” the “formal cause”; and “his ultimate end or objective in

¹⁶² Smith, 56.

¹⁶³ Hugh of St. Victor, PL 175:32; quoted and translated in Herman Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 106.

¹⁶⁴ From Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon* 6.4, p. 121; *Didascalicon* 6.6, pp. 123-124, summarized by Ineke van ‘t Spijker, “The Literal and the Spiritual: Richard of Saint-Victor and the multiple meaning of Scripture,” in *The Multiple Meaning of Scripture: The Role of Exegesis in Early-Christian and Medieval Culture* (ed. Ineke van ‘t Spijker; Commentaria 2; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 234.

¹⁶⁵ Hailperin, 40.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 105, 107.

¹⁶⁷ Deana Copeland Klepper, “Nicholas of Lyra and Franciscan interest in Hebrew scholarship,” in *Nicholas of Lyra: The Senses of Scripture* (ed. Philip D. W. Krey and Lesley Smith; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 289.

¹⁶⁸ A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic literary attitudes in the later Middle Ages* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 5.

writing,” the “final cause.”¹⁶⁹ For a scriptural passage, this “final cause” would be the “role of the particular biblical book in leading the reader to salvation.”¹⁷⁰

Here the “literal sense” became identified with the intention of the author, either divine or human. Since the human author used literary devices, such as parables, metaphor, or other figurative language, these were also part of the “literal sense.” Thomas Aquinas, following Augustine,¹⁷¹ maintained that “the literal sense is the only basis from which an argument over biblical interpretation can proceed”; but “in the Bible, and only in the Bible, the author’s intention can and does include both literal sense and spiritual senses.”¹⁷² Thus, “everything included under the authorial intention of the ultimate biblical author could be seen to pertain to the literal sense, signifying divine truth either directly or through metaphor, parables, and symbols.”¹⁷³ Later, Nicholas of Lyra maintained that “the parabolic sense of Scripture belonged to its literal, not its spiritual sense”; since the prophets pointed toward Christ, the literal sense of their prophecies could and did include Christological interpretation.¹⁷⁴

4.3.2.2 Medieval Latin commentaries

4.3.2.2.1 Rabanus Maurus (776 or 784-856) *Expositio super Jeremiam*¹⁷⁵

In his commentary on Jer 11:18-19, 15:17-18, and 20:7-8, Rabanus Maurus adds little to his literal and extensive quotations of commentary by Jerome and

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Karlfried Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation from the Church Fathers to the Reformation* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 522.

¹⁷¹ Minnis, 73.

¹⁷² Ibid., 545-546.

¹⁷³ Bert Roest, “Mendicant School Exegesis,” in *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (ed. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly; New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 186.

¹⁷⁴ Van Liere, “The Literal Sense . . .,” 73.

¹⁷⁵ Rabanus Maurus, *Expositio super Jeremiam* (PL 111:893-896; 933-936; 963-965). Translations are my own.

Origen. His commentary was part of a Carolingian effort of “revision and clarification of the Fathers, so that they might be intelligible to modern readers.”¹⁷⁶

In his introduction to Jerome’s and Origen’s comments on Jer 11:18-20, Rabanus Maurus commends understanding the texts “doubly, that is equally history and allegory.” Not losing the “truth of history” is important, as is not neglecting “to receive the usefulness of allegory in opportune places.” This is proved “in many places of sacred Scripture, and also in the present place” (Jer 11:18-19), where Jeremiah “joined himself to telling the passion of Christ under his person.”

In commentary on Jer 15:17-18, Rabanus Maurus simply quotes Jerome and Origen. In his introduction to Jerome’s commentary on Jer 20:7-8, Rabanus Maurus points to Jeremiah’s steadfastness: “although he is afflicted because of [his accusations against king, priests, and people] by penalties and pains from this, yet he did not cease from [his] preaching office,” because of “the strength of the Holy Spirit acting within him.”

4.3.2.2.2 Odo of Cluny (879-942) *Collationum Libri Tres* = *Coll. Lib. Tres* 1.39, 2.15, 3.16¹⁷⁷

Odo of Cluny connects texts from Jeremiah with teaching about original sin, the need to maintain virginity, and the requirement for preachers to speak aloud to reprove sin.

In *Coll. Lib. Tres* 1.39, Odo considers Jeremiah’s saying to the Lord, “From the face of your hand I was sitting alone, because menacing filled me” (Jer 15:17).

¹⁷⁶ Margaret T. Gibson, *The Bible in the Latin West* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame, 1993), 6.

¹⁷⁷ Odo of Cluny, *Collationum Libri Tres* 1.39, 3.16 (PL 133:546, 562, 602). Translations are my own.

The menacing comes from penalties given to sinners, because of original sin.

From his experience of these, the prophet knows “not to mingle himself with confusion of carnal desires.”

In *Coll. Lib. Tres* 2.14 and 2.15, the one who would maintain the grace of virginity and resist faults needs to “be humbled under the power of the hand of God,” and say, with Jeremiah, “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed” (Jer 17:14).

In considering Jeremiah’s “seeking silence” rather than speaking in God’s name (Jer 20:9; *Coll. Lib. Tres* 3.16), Odo cites Ps 38:3 LXX, about the experience of “true preachers.” They cannot continue to keep silence about the “evil deeds of the unjust” but “burst forth in voice” to reproach them. Odo connects the fire that blazes up within the psalmist (Ps 38:3 LXX) to what Jeremiah felt in his heart. This is the “zeal of charity in holy men” that compels them to speak aloud, in spite of the “abuses of many.”

4.3.2.2.3 Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) *Sermones de diversis* =

*Serm. div. 5.5*¹⁷⁸

In Sermon 5, on the text of Habakkuk 2:1, Bernard writes to his “beloved brothers” about sinners coming to God. Each must stand at his “guard-post” (Hab 2:1), leaning with all strength on the rock that is Christ. They then may enter the “first degree of contemplation,” continually considering what is the will of God. Since all offend, and “our meanderings offend the straightness of his will,” all must humble themselves “under the powerful hand of God” (1 Peter 5:6). They are to pray with

¹⁷⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones de diversis* = *Sermons divers* (vol. 1; trans. Pierre-Yves Émery; rev. Françoise Callerot; SC 496; Oeuvres complètes 22; Paris: Cerf, 2006). Translation from French is mine.

Jeremiah, “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved”

(Jer 17:14), and with the psalmist, “Lord, have pity on me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against you” (Ps 40:5 LXX). These thoughts may purify the “eye of our heart” so that we may “hold ourselves in the Spirit of God.”

4.3.2.2.4 *Glossa Ordinaria* (c. 1140 for about a century)¹⁷⁹

The *Glossa Ordinaria*, the “ubiquitous text of the central Middle Ages,” contained the entire text of the Bible surrounded by “marginal and interlinear comments and explanations, drawn for the most part from patristic texts.”¹⁸⁰ It served as a “work of reference,” which “made patristic exegesis conveniently accessible.”¹⁸¹ This “presented everywhere the combined theological authority of Scripture and Tradition in an easily accessible form.”¹⁸² It could be used as a “starting-point from which references could be followed up and considered in full in their original context.”¹⁸³

The patristic texts were sometimes quoted word-for-word, sometimes paraphrased or summarized. The *Glossa* “is a particularly good example of medieval

¹⁷⁹ *Biblorum Sacrorum cum Glossa Ordinaria*. Vol. 4. [cited 11 May 2010]. Online facsimile of edition, Venice, 1603. Online: <http://www.archive.org/bookreader/print.php?id=biblorumsacror04strauoft&server=ia341>. This is not the *editio princeps*, “printed by Adolph Rusch of Strassburg, undated, but probably 1480-81” (Lesley Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 13). All translations from the *Glossa Ordinaria* are my own.

¹⁸⁰ Lesley Smith, “Introduction,” *The Glossa Ordinaria* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 1.

¹⁸¹ Margaret T. Gibson, “The Twelfth-Century Glossed Bible,” *Stud Pat* 23 (1989): 243.

¹⁸² Karlfried Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation from the Church Fathers to the Reformation* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), V, 15.

¹⁸³ G. R. Evans, “Exegesis and Authority in the Thirteenth Century,” in *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers* (ed. Mark D. Jordan and Kent Emery, Jr.; Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies 3; Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 101.

intertextuality, the conscious borrowing and re-articulation of old material in a new form.”¹⁸⁴

In the Venice edition of the *Glossa Ordinaria* for the complaints of Jeremiah, the Vulgate version of each text appears in large type in the center of the top of each page. Surrounding it, in much smaller type, are quotations and paraphrases of commentary by Jerome, “effectively Rabanus, himself using Jerome.”¹⁸⁵ This is followed by those of other patristic writers, including Origen, Theodoret, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, and Augustine, along with a very few brief unattributed comments.

These commentaries correspond to Greek and Latin commentaries cited above, with the following additions.¹⁸⁶

Gregory, commenting on Jer 15:16-18, relates Jeremiah’s sitting alone, as resulting “from the disturbance of temporal longings,” but far more, from the fear of “eternal punishments.”

Augustine relates Jer 20:7, “I have become in derision,” to “adulterous unions,” in which “a penitent is not able to be reconciled, while persevering in his wantonness.” He emphasizes that those who have freely chosen continence must necessarily keep it, and cannot forsake it “without damnation.”

Gregory, commenting on Jer 20:9, sees Jeremiah seeking silence, but not persisting in it “when he perceived growing evils,” because “he carried the fire by the

¹⁸⁴ E. Ann Matter, “The Church Fathers and the *Glossa Ordinaria*,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West* (vol. 1; ed. Irena Backus; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 109.

¹⁸⁵ M. T. Gibson, “The Place of the *Glossa ordinaria* in Medieval Exegesis,” in *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers* (ed. Mark D. Jordan and Kent Emery, Jr.; Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies 3; Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame, 1992), 10.

¹⁸⁶ I was not able to locate the source of these quotations from Gregory and Augustine.

zeal of charity.” He relates this to when “the hearts of the just are set on fire” and cannot share in sin by allowing iniquity, by their silence.

In the midst of patristic commentary on Jer 20:14-18 is an unattributed tradition according to which Jeremiah was born in August, the same month that Jerusalem was “laid waste by the Chaldeans and the Romans,” on the very same day, and that this is why he cursed the day of his birth. This corresponds to Jerome’s “Hebrew tradition,” that he refutes in his commentary (see Section 4.3.2.2).

In the Venice edition, the middle of each page is devoted to the *Postillae* of Nicholas of Lyra (see Section 4.3.2.6). For each verse, these comment on the “literal sense throughout, but without totally neglecting the spiritual senses, which, [he said], others had already sufficiently treated.”¹⁸⁷

At the bottom of some pages is a section labeled “Moraliter,” also by Nicholas of Lyra, from his *Postilla moralis*, which provided “tropological applications,”¹⁸⁸ relating texts to medieval Christian teachings and practices.

4.3.2.2.5 Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274) *In Jeremiam prophetam expositio*¹⁸⁹

4.3.2.2.5.1 About Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on Jeremiah

An early work of the Dominican, Thomas Aquinas, *Doctor Communis* or *Angelicus*,¹⁹⁰ is a “literal exposition”¹⁹¹ of Jeremiah, reaching to chapter 42. This was

¹⁸⁷ Froehlich, XIII, 14.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *In Jeremiam prophetam expositio*. [cited 16 December 2011]. Online Parma edition, 1863: <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/cph.html>. All translations from the Latin are my own. Thomas’ quotations from the Psalms are numbered according the Vulgate version.

¹⁹⁰ “Thomas Aquinas,” in *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (2nd ed.; ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 1371.

¹⁹¹ W. A. Wallace, J. A. Weisheipl and M. F. Johnson, “Thomas Aquinas,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (vol. 14; 2nd ed.; Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2002), 25.

probably a “cursory” lecture, in the Paris tradition, “rapid by definition,”¹⁹² not providing details of different interpretations, but aiming “to make the literal sense of the text understood.”¹⁹³ Thomas would have read this between 1248 and 1252, when he was a “bachelor” under Albert the Great at Cologne.¹⁹⁴

This “literal” exposition, *ad litteram*, seeks to understand the “letter” of the text, which is “the whole intention of the inspired writer,” whether expressed “in plain language or symbolically or metaphorically.”¹⁹⁵

Thomas reads the Bible “*biblice* (biblically),” in “the Parisian manner,”¹⁹⁶ clarifying “the sense of a text by citation of parallel passages.”¹⁹⁷ For each text, Thomas provides a careful outline of each section and sub-section, arranged like the outline of an argument. He then cites words or phrases, connecting them with the same or similar words or phrases from the rest of Scripture, often providing two or more examples. Thomas quotes these from the Vulgate translation; in these comments, he does not consider other versions.

In this commentary, he quotes extensively from the Hebrew Bible, especially from the Psalms, Isaiah, and Job, in addition to other parts of Jeremiah, and Lamentations, which he ascribes to Jeremiah. He quotes also from the deuterocanonical/apocryphal books of Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Tobit, and 1 and

¹⁹² Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (vol. 1: The Person and His Work; trans. Robert Royal; Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 27.

¹⁹³ P. Glorieux, “L’enseignement,” 119, quoted in Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 27.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁹⁵ Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), 300.

¹⁹⁶ M.-D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas* (trans. A.-M. Landry and D. Hughes; Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), 243.

¹⁹⁷ C. Spicq, “Saint Thomas d’Aquin Exégète,” *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (vol. 15, part 1; Paris: Librairie Letouzey, 1946), 722, my translation.

2 Maccabees. Using the New Testament to clarify the meaning of the Old, he quotes some phrases from the gospels of Matthew, Luke, and Job, along with 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 John, Hebrews, and Revelation.

He adds some, usually brief, interpretation to these quotations. In several instances, he presents more than one interpretation of a phrase or section, letting them stand without making a choice among them.

In these “cursory” commentaries, Thomas always starts with the words of the text. He applies them first to Jeremiah and his experiences. Later, he sometimes makes a brief reference to the person and work of Christ. In these comments on Jeremiah’s complaints, Thomas rarely refers to tradition: once to “the Gloss” (*Glossa Ordinaria*), once each to Augustine and Gregory, and once to Jewish tradition.

4.3.2.2.5.2 Thomas Aquinas’ exposition of Jeremiah’s complaints

The commentaries consider the words of each passage in great detail. These are some highlights.

4.3.2.2.5.2.1 Interpretation of specific complaints

Jer 4:10 In *Lectio* 3 on Chapter 4, Thomas takes the brief complaint in Jer 4:10 as an expression of the “astonishment” of Jeremiah at the coming of enemies to Jerusalem. This is the end of a series of “astonishments”: first, of all the Judaeans together, then, of their princes, and finally, of the prophet. God had not deceived them; rather, they all had misunderstood God’s promise in Jer 3:17, that the nations would gather to Jerusalem “in the name of the Lord,” to refer to the present, rather than the far off future.

Jer 11:18-20 In *Lectio* 4 on Chapter 11, Thomas contrasts the meaning *ad litteram* of Jer 11:18-20, which applies to Jeremiah, with the “prefiguring of the passion of Christ” indicated by “the Gloss,” since “what is fulfilled in the present in Jeremiah, this was prophesied about the Lord in the future.” When Jeremiah says that God showed him the plots of his adversaries (11:18), “you showed,” he needed this revelation because his innocence prevented his suspecting them. Christ also, “according to humanity,” received knowledge from God, when, “like a lamb, I did not know” (11:19).

Applied to Jeremiah, Thomas reads the “wood” in 11:19 as that of the yew-tree; when his adversaries planned to “put” this “on his bread,” they intended that he, “thus poisoned, may die.” Read “mystically” (*mystice*), Thomas adds, to the traditional identification of the wood put on bread as the cross on the body of Christ, another possibility, that “through the wood of the cross we raise up the stumbling block of his teaching . . . which is bread.”

The vengeance sought by Jeremiah in 11:20 is promised by the Lord in 11:21 against the men of Anathoth. Thomas sees these “mystically” signifying the men of Jerusalem who persecuted Christ.

Jer 12:1-3 Considering Jeremiah’s argument “about the justice of punishing” in Jer 12:1-3 (*Lectio* 1 on Chapter 12), Thomas first relates “just are you, O Lord” to the same phrase in Psalm 118:137. The argument he relates to Job 13:3, “I desire to argue with God”; both Jeremiah and Job “hold the place of an opponent.” He contrasts them with Habakkuk (2:1), who waits for God’s answer as a “respondent.”

Jeremiah’s calling “down infliction of punishment” in 12:3 is part of his argument.

He is saying that “because you are just, it cannot be that you do not punish the wicked.”

Jer 15:10 In *Lectio* 1 on Chapter 15, Thomas outlines the “final rejection of the speech of the prophet before the people.” He first considers this rejection, then its cause, the obstinacy of the people. He makes clear that this rejection came “not from a defect of praying” by Jeremiah, but “from a defect of the people for whom it is prayed,” since even Moses and Samuel would not be able to turn God’s heart toward the people (Jer 15:1). Jeremiah’s reaction in 15:10 comes from his despair “of the welfare of the people.”

In *Lectio* 2, Thomas relates Jeremiah’s complaint, “Woe is me!” (15:10), to the strife and discord which assail both him and Job (18:18), but also as “fulfilled in Christ.” The consolation of the Lord consists in “advancement in good things” (15:11) by God’s help, and affliction of adversaries (15:12-14). The obscure image of “iron from the north and copper” (15:12) Thomas takes as a warning to the Judaeans (with the strength of iron joined with the impatience of copper) not to ally themselves with the Chaldeans (iron from the north).

Jer 15:15-18 In *Lectio* 4 on Chapter 15, Thomas first considers Jeremiah’s complaint in 15:15-18. He divides the complaint into Jeremiah’s awareness of the “solace of divine consolation” (15:15a, “remember me and visit me”), his own merit (15:15d-17), and wonder at pain (15:18). The odd phrase, that Jeremiah “ate” God’s word, he takes as “he delighted” in it, citing Psalm 118:103, “how sweet are your words to my taste.”

Thomas takes Jeremiah's question, "Why is my pain perpetual?" (15:18), to come from his "wonder" that his many prayers and merits have not caused the tribulation to withdraw. He relates this question both to the Lord's pronouncement in Jer 30:12, "Your hurt is incurable," and to a Jewish tradition that the question "is said in the person of Jerusalem." Thomas considers the simile of "lying waters, untrustworthy" a consolation; it is the difficulties that Jeremiah experiences that are transitory.

Jer 17:14-18 At the end of *Lectio* 2 on Chapter 17, after discussion of vain trust in riches (about 17:11), and the hope of the just (17:12), Thomas relates Jeremiah's petition in Jer 17:14, "heal me . . . save me." The healing is from the "weaknesses of sin, and the difficulties in which I am wrapped."

In *Lectio* 3, he relates the mockery of unbelievers in 17:15 to similar desire for the Lord's quick action, in Isa 5:19 and Amos 5:18. The "day of man" that Jeremiah did not desire (17:16) is either the "present life" or "prosperity and present glory."

Jeremiah's petition that God not be to him "terrors" (17:17) means that "only your indignation do I fear." When Jeremiah asks that his persecutors be destroyed with "double calamity" (17:18), this is either "by sword and famine" or "in soul and body."

Jer 18:18-23 In *Lectio* 4 on Chapter 18, Thomas first considers the details of the persecution of Jeremiah (Jer 18:18), then the prophet's speech (18:19-23), including petition for hearing and for punishment of his adversaries. Thomas sees their "persecuting their preachers in the figure of the persecution of Christ." Their

argument that “the law shall not perish” is contradicted by Ezek 7:26, where “the law will perish from the priest.”

The deceptive “pit” that Jeremiah’s adversaries dug to take his life (18:20, 22) occasions a “hiding of punishment, so that they may not be able to guard against” it. When the Lord brings a “robber” (18:22, taken to be Nebuchadnezzar) as a surprise, “it is just that they be deceived, who wished to deceive” Jeremiah.

In his petition for God’s hearing, Jeremiah cites his own actions on behalf of the people. He both points out their “sin of ingratitude” and protests that giving evil for good is “not customary, not just.” At the end of *Lectio* 4, Thomas returns to speaking good on others’ behalf, here citing actions of Christ: his petition from the cross for forgiveness (Luke 23:24), his advocacy with the Father (1 John 2:1), and his mediating the new covenant (Heb 12:24).

Jer 20:7-10, 14-18 In *Lectio* 2 and *Lectio* 3 on Chapter 20, Thomas considers Jeremiah’s complaints in Jer 20:7-10 and 14-18 as part of one complaint, first, lamenting “inflicted obligation” (20:7-10), and second, “the origin of birth” (20:14-18).

In *Lectio* 2, considering Jeremiah’s outburst, “you enticed me” (20:7), Thomas understands Jeremiah to be saying that he “received an occasion of deception” from God’s words, in that he believed that he was to prophesy against other nations, not the Judeans, from whom he suffers persecution. Thomas is clear, however, that Jeremiah “does not wish to lay the charge of deception against God, because he would have been blaspheming.”

When Jeremiah tried to “resign inflicted obligation” in 20:9, “he was truly not wanting to throw pearls before swine” (Matt 7:6). But the “ardor of love” was what burned within him and made him fail in his purpose.

Thomas devotes much of *Lectio* 3 to the question of whether Jeremiah’s cursing, of the day of his birth, the announcer of his birth, and the man who did not kill him at birth, is sinful. He first presents the case that it is. Since saints ought to glory in tribulations (Rom 5:3), “Jeremiah ought not, because of tribulations, to burst forth in cursing.” Cursing a day or cursing a man means cursing one of God’s creatures; this, too, is wrong. Further, cursing an innocent man, such as the one who did not murder him, is sinful.

Thomas then quotes Augustine, that tribulations are bad in themselves, since they “contradict the nature of good”; therefore, “to abhor them with a natural hatred is not sin.” He quotes Gregory, that “looking to the nature of a certain day” to determine whether it merits a curse cannot be understood *ad litteram*, and relates this also to certain men. He concludes that Jeremiah was “speaking hyperbolically” to show his horror and misery, in his suffering. He relates each curse to other biblical complaints, especially those of Job (3:11) and Mattathias (1 Macc 2:7).

At the end of *Lectio* 3, Thomas returns to the question of God’s enticing and prevailing (20:7). He presents other positive types of enticements: “dragging by persuasions,” “alluring by consolations” (Rev 10:10), and “strengthening by promises” (Jer 4:10). When God prevails, he corrects (Isa 8:11, keeping him from going “the way of this people”), drags away from harm (Hos 2:6, hedging a way with thorns), and binds in love (Hos 11:4, with “fetters of love”).

4.3.2.2.5.2.2 Thomas' interpretation

In this “cursory” commentary on the complaints of Jeremiah, Thomas speaks for God’s justice and trustworthiness. He negates the possibility that God has deceived either the people or Jeremiah. Their perception of deception comes from their misunderstanding of God’s promise to Jerusalem (4:10) and plan for Jeremiah’s prophecy (20:7). For Thomas, God does indeed “entice” (20:7); this is not deception, and Jeremiah does not blaspheme by thus accusing God.

Thomas does not censure Jeremiah’s arguing with God in 12:1-3; his invocation of punishments for his adversaries point to God’s justice. God’s justice is demonstrated by his bringing sudden, hidden punishment, in the form of Nebuchadnezzar, on those who hid a trap for Jeremiah. Human injustice is shown by their returning evil for Jeremiah’s good actions. Thomas mentions Jeremiah’s prayers and merits, and the amazement that these did not remove his pain. He presents differing views of the possible sinfulness of Jeremiah’s cursing the day of his birth, the announcer of it, and the man who did not kill him at birth. His conclusion, that Jeremiah was speaking hyperbolically, both recognizes a rhetorical feature in the text and allows for expression of Jeremiah’s suffering.

Thomas relates three texts to the experiences of Christ. He agrees with “the Gloss” that 11:18-20, *ad litteram* about Jeremiah, prefigures Christ. He sees the “strife” and “discord” that Jeremiah describes in 15:10 “fulfilled in Christ,” and the persecution of Jeremiah in 18:20-23 prefiguring the persecution of Christ. He ties Jeremiah’s speaking good on behalf of his enemies to Christ’s petition from the cross, advocacy with the Father, and mediating the new covenant.

4.3.2.2.6 Nicholas of Lyra (c. 1270-1349) *Postilla litteralis super totam*

*Bibliam = Postillae Perpetuae*¹⁹⁸

4.3.2.2.6.1 About Nicholas of Lyra

Among the many works of the Franciscan, Nicholas of Lyra, “*Doctor planus et utilis* (“the plain and useful doctor”),¹⁹⁹ is his extensive commentary on the Old and New Testaments, the *Postillae Perpetuae*. This consisted of two works, the *Postilla litteralis* and the *Postilla moralis*, popular “among preachers, both mendicants and seculars.”²⁰⁰ The form of the “running, continuous commentary”²⁰¹ of the *Postilla litteralis* was different from that common to most patristic interpretation, which read Scriptures topically or for proof-texts. This form, using *postillae*, “the elucidation of the scriptural text in verse succession,”²⁰² was characteristic of biblical commentary by Thomas Aquinas, and also by Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi, 1040-1105; see Section 4.4.4.1). Lyra uses Rashi’s commentary extensively, quoting Rashi “on almost every page,”²⁰³ usually by name, as Ra.Sa.

Lyra aimed “to follow the simple, natural literal sense of Scripture . . . to avoid the harmonizings of scriptural passages and the accumulation of references on a word or subject (*concordantia*), the object of which was to bring them into

¹⁹⁸ Nicolaus de Lyra, *Postilla litteralis super totam Bibliam = Postillae Perpetuae*. Printed at the bottom of each page of *Bibliorum Sacrorum cum Glossa Ordinaria* (Venice edition).

¹⁹⁹ Hermann Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 144.

²⁰⁰ Froehlich, V, 19.

²⁰¹ Hailperin, 138.

²⁰² Hailperin, 142.

²⁰³ Hailperin, 138.

agreement.”²⁰⁴ Here his commentary differs from Thomas Aquinas’ clarifying the sense of a word or phrase by citation of other biblical uses of the same one.

Lyra saw two senses in exegesis, the *sensus litteralis seu historicus*, that of the “outer Scripture,” whose “signification comes from an immediate understanding of the words,” and the *sensus mysticus seu spiritualis*, whose “signification comes from the things signified by the words.”²⁰⁵ As in Thomas Aquinas, the literal sense is that intended by the author, either human or divine (and can therefore include allegory, as in Judg 9:8-15). Prophecy, divinely inspired, had “two ‘literal’ senses: one referred to its immediate context, and the second referred to its prophetic fulfillment in Christ’s passion and resurrection”; both meanings were intended by the prophet.²⁰⁶ According to Lyra, the literal sense is the “foundation of the building,” because “from it alone any argument can be brought to prove or declare what is doubtful.”²⁰⁷

4.3.2.2.6.2 Nicholas of Lyra’s exegesis of Jeremiah’s complaints

4.3.2.2.6.2.1 *Sensus litteralis*

4.3.2.2.6.2.1.1 Interpretation of specific complaints

In each case, Lyra comments verse-by-verse, and sometimes on parts of verses, from the Vulgate text, looking carefully at the meaning of each word and its application to the life of Jeremiah.

Jer 4:10 Following the Vulgate, Lyra takes Jer 4:10 as a question. He interprets God’s deception as God permitting the people to be deceived by false prophets,

²⁰⁴ Hailperin, 144.

²⁰⁵ Nicolas de Lyra, *Prologus secundus, De intentione auctoris et modo procedendi* (Venice, 1588), 3G, quoted by Hailperin, 256-7.

²⁰⁶ Frans van Liere, “Andrew of Saint-Victor and his Franciscan critics,” in *The Multiple Meaning of Scripture* (ed. Ineke van ‘t Spijker; Commentaria 2; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 296.

²⁰⁷ Lyra, *Ibid.*, 3F, quoted by Hailperin, 257.

“feigning to speak for your sake.”²⁰⁸ Lyra takes the preterite, in the sword that “has arrived,” to indicate the future for the “inmost heart of the people and princes.”

Jer 11:19 In commentary on Jer 11:19, Lyra agrees with Thomas Aquinas that the “wood” that is to be “thrown on his bread” is from the “yew-tree, a poisonous one.” “Some of the wood of that tree, cut piece by piece, they were wishing to put in the food of Jeremiah . . . in order that thus he might die and not denounce them further.” Unlike patristic interpreters, Lyra does not refer any of Jer 11:18-19 to the experiences of Christ, but only to Jeremiah, suffering “the malice of the people of Judah.”

Jer 12:1-3 In Jer 12:1-3, the “ungodly” whose prosperity Jeremiah laments are taken by Lyra to be the men of Anathoth, mentioned in Jer 11:21 and 12:6, priests who “with divine praises were praising God,” though God was “far from their kidneys,” “because they were adulterers” (referring to Jer 5:8). Lyra emphasizes that Jeremiah, in his lament, was speaking to God “not in the manner of dispute or argument, but in the manner of a humble question, as of a disciple, asking the master teacher, wishing to be taught by him.” Jeremiah did not harm, but “wished to benefit” his adversaries. It is Jeremiah’s “divine zeal for justice” that leads him to ask God to “collect them as a herd and make them holy in the day” of slaughter (12:3).

Jer 15:10-11 Lyra divides Jer 15:10-11 into Jeremiah’s lament (15:10) and “the consolation of the Lord” (15:11). In 15:10, Jeremiah laments “because of the persecution of the men of Anathoth.” Lyra interprets “I did not lend on interest” as “I

²⁰⁸ All translations of Lyra’s *Postillae* are my own.

had no transaction to owe temporal things with them, from which they might be able to hate and persecute me.”

He thinks “all revile me” is “because he was making their faults known.”

Lyra quotes John Chrysostom, that “he truly runs into enmity, the one who makes slanderers known.”

In “the consolation of the Lord” in 15:11, Lyra supplies a phrase, as in a “mode of speaking among the Hebrews,” to read, “unless an end of this trouble should come to your good, let it not be believed of me.” For the difficult phrase, “Surely I ran to [or helped] you in the time of affliction” (Vulgate), Lyra quotes the Hebrew as “surely I made you run.” He cites two interpretations of Ra.Sa. (Rashi), both involving running to Jeremiah, one of Zedekiah’s messengers (Jer 37), the other of Nebuzaradan (Jer 40). The affliction is either of Jeremiah, in prison, or, of Zedekiah, the priests and the false prophets.

Jer 15:16-18 In commentary on Jer 15:16, Lyra interprets “and I ate them” (your words), as “I received as it were sweet food.” He gives Rashi’s explanation of “your word was made to me in gladness,” as describing Jeremiah’s reaction “from the beginning when you sent me to make known to the people,” as a “cause of joy” to a man “when he is illumined by divine revelation.” In Jer 15:17, Lyra reads “bitterness” (*amaritudi.*, as in LXX), rather than the Vulgate “threatening” (*comminatione*) as what filled Jeremiah. He sees as its cause Jeremiah’s “revealing the destruction of the city, and the dissolution of the temple.” Jeremiah’s perpetual pain (15:18) was “because he was seeing that the city and temple would not be rebuilt in his time.” By a comparison with “unfaithful waters” (15:18), Jeremiah indicates

that “temporal consolation was failing to him, when he was needing it, just as the water of a torrent might be more necessary in the summer than in the winter.”

Jer 17:14-18 Lyra takes Jeremiah’s prayer, “Heal me,” (Jer 17:14) as recognizing “the infirmity of sin,” from which “I am not able to be healed except by you,” since no one, however just, is “free from all sin.” His adversaries’ question, “Where is the word of the Lord?” (17:15), means, “Where is the punishment of captivity which you declared to us in the name of the Lord?” They are certain that this will not come, “because you are a false prophet.” The “day of man” that Jeremiah has not desired (17:16 LXX and Vulgate) is “fleshly and pleasure-loving life.” Lyra takes “Do not be to me” (17:17) as “Do not let [the punishment that you are bringing to the people] come over me.” When Jeremiah asks that his persecutors be confounded (17:18), this is “not longing for punishment of the people, but assenting to divine justice.”

Jer 18:18-23 In commentary on Jer 18:18-23, Lyra states that since the Jewish priesthood, council of elders, and prophets had been established by God, most believed that “they would always endure,” and therefore despised the “words of Jeremiah declaring the contrary.” When they plotted to “strike with the tongue” (18:18), they were “accusing him of being a false prophet, and thus letting him die.” When they “dug a pit for my soul” (18:20), they were “seeking to lead it out from the body, maliciously.” The “robber” to be brought on them suddenly (18:22) is Nebuchadnezzar, with his army.

Jer 20:7-10 In commentary on Jer 20:7-10, Lyra expounds “doubly” Jeremiah’s outcry, “You have misled me, and I was misled” (20:7), first affirming that “since God is truth in essence, he is not able to mislead anyone, or to deceive, according to

truth, but only according to false estimation.” In Lyra’s first possibility, Jeremiah is “portraying the horror of sensitivity in view of persecution . . . even if he had accepted persecution according to deliberation of reason,” parallel to Christ’s first pleading that the cup be taken from him (Luke 22), then accepting it. Jeremiah here laments that when “you sent me to prophesy, I ran into such evil, that on the part of the senses, I shudder beyond measure.” His second possibility is that Jeremiah’s words show what his adversaries were saying of him, with the sense, “If I have been misled, as the priests and false prophets are saying, I was misled by you, which, however, is impossible.”

According to Lyra, that “you were stronger than I” (20:7) does not imply that God used “violence that cannot be borne by free will,” but rather “a bent that is turned to the divine will.”

When Jeremiah “judged according to the impulse of the senses” and planned not to prophesy any longer (20:9), it was “the word of the Lord” that became “like a scorching fire” in his heart. He “failed” in his resolution to keep silent.

Lyra quotes Rashi, understanding Jeremiah’s adversaries’ plan to deceive him (20:10) as dragging him to their way of thinking. When they “pursue” him, they are seeking “his death, because if he had retracted the first prophecy . . . he would be considered convicted of falsity of prophecy, and thus he could be killed, according to the law.”

Jer 20:14-18 Lyra considers Jeremiah’s cursing the day of his birth (Jer 20:14) not words “of impatience and despair,” but rather, the expression of “the horror of senses in view of imminent evil, which reason, however, was tolerating patiently.” This

corresponds to the similar outburst from Job, “the example of patience” (Job 3:3).

Lyra also considers the possibility that this may be “the words of Jeremiah reciting the words of his adversaries.”

When Jeremiah curses the man who brought the news (20:15), this also may come from the senses or refer to his adversaries.

Lyra concludes by citing those who explain Jeremiah’s words as coming “out of sudden confusion of mind,” but written here “so that we may not despair of pardon, if at some time we produced undue words out of confusion of mind.” They may also speak “in the person of a people thus about to be afflicted by the destruction of the city.”

4.3.2.2.6.2.1.2 Lyra’s interpretation

In Lyra’s *Postilla litteralis* on Jeremiah’s complaints, the biblical text is always related to the experiences of Jeremiah, and only once to those of Christ. He does not take Jeremiah as a type of Christ, nor his enemies as types of those of Christ or the Church. His adversaries are people of Jeremiah’s day: false prophets, priests, the wise, the men of Anathoth. The “robber” who is to “come suddenly” upon the people (18:22) is Nebuchadnezzar. The “wood” to be “thrown” on “his bread” is poison from a specific tree. The ones “running to you in a time of affliction” (15:11) are either Zedekiah’s messengers or Nebuzaradan. Only in Jeremiah’s horror of the senses, expressed in 20:7, 9, and 14, does Lyra see a parallel with Christ’s asking that the cup be taken from him.

For help in understanding these texts, Lyra draws once from Chrysostom (15:10) and repeatedly from Rashi (15:11, 15:16, 20:10). He refers to only three

other biblical texts, to Jer 5:8, about the wickedness of the ungodly (12:1-3), to Luke 22, about Christ's horror at his coming death, and to Job 3:3, for a curse of a natal day (20:14).

Several aspects of the biblical texts concern Lyra: the questions of whether God does deceive, whether Jeremiah's harsh requests for his adversaries are with "avenging zeal" (11:20), and whether Jeremiah speaks "rashly of divine things" (12:1); and Jeremiah's desire not to prophesy, and his curse of his natal day (20:9, 14).

In commentary on 4:10, Lyra decides that God has allowed deception, permitting the false prophets to deceive the people, speaking as if from God. In commentary on 20:7, however, Lyra is very clear that "since God is truth in essence, he is not able to mislead anyone, or to deceive." Since God does not deceive, another explanation is needed for Jeremiah's outburst. Here, in 20:9 and 20:14, Lyra concludes that this comes from a recoil of the senses, in horror at persecution, and that this may come from a "sudden confusion of mind."

Lyra sees Jeremiah's lament about the prosperity of the wicked (12:1-3) as a proper question from a disciple to a master teacher, not as an outcry against God's justice.

Lyra does not consider Jeremiah's emphatic demands for God to act against his adversaries as coming from "longing for punishment" (17:18, 18:19), but rather from his "assenting to divine justice" (17:18); these reflect a "divine zeal for justice" (12:3), "mostly because they were wishing to hinder the divine word" (11:20).

4.3.2.2.6.2.2 *Moraliter* (also by Lyra)

These brief reflections connect the texts to medieval thought and practices. These applications do not correspond to either Lyra's *sensus litteralis* or his *sensus mysticus*. The literal sense of the text "must be understood first; it is the 'foundation' – the *Moralitates* make up the 'living abode' above the foundation."²⁰⁹

For example, the deception of the people in Jer 4:10 came "through suggestions of demons," and the accursed day of Jeremiah's birth (Jer 20:14) corresponds to the birth of sin, whose father is the devil, in a person; this birth of sin is cursed "through true penitence."

The *Moraliter* reflections also connect Jeremiah's experiences to those of good teachers and preachers, who suffer persecution from evil men, to whom "the teaching of truth may be hateful" (Jer 15:10 and 17:15). Here, those who "plot plots" against Jeremiah (18:18) represent "evil clerics and evil priests, who plot against poor preachers," getting "prelates" to take away their "power of preaching and of hearing confessions." Such "poor preachers" may well be those of Lyra's own Franciscan order.

4.3.3 Latin "stream of tradition" in these texts

Latin patristic and medieval interpreters of the complaints of Jeremiah use both short, topical references and longer, extended commentaries.

The Latin *Testimonia* patristic tradition follows that in Greek, using Jer 11:19 LXX in a common list of texts taken to predict Christ's passion.

²⁰⁹ Hailperin, 142.

The few other brief patristic uses relate parts of Jeremiah's complaints, read in LXX texts, to controversy in the church. Cyprian takes the "lying waters" of Jer 15:18 to refer to the "spurious baptism" of heretics like Marcion; Ambrose relates these to the "baptism of unbelievers." Ambrose contrasts the church's right asking the Lord for needed healing (Jer 17:14) with Novatian, who would say, "I am healthy; I do not seek a physician."

Most brief uses do not relate the complaints directly to the experience of Jeremiah or Christ. Ambrose, an exception, sees God's providing what was "like a blazing fire, burning in my bones" (20:9) as God's mercy, preventing Jeremiah from "denying his duty" of prophetic speech.

The extended commentary by Jerome relates the complaints to the experiences of Jeremiah, Christ, and the church. Jerome starts with Jeremiah's experiences, some, but not all, of which he considers types of those of Christ. In reference to the church of his day, he cites both "the consensus of all the churches" and disputes with heretics and "the erring."

Jerome looks carefully at different readings of the texts, referring to the Hebrew, different Greek renderings, including LXX, "the Three," and his own Vulgate. He knows and cites, usually to refute, views of "Jews and our Judaizers," "the Hebrews," and "Hebrew tradition."

Much medieval commentary on the complaints of Jeremiah consisted of gathering and clarifying patristic writings. Rabanus Maurus, affirming the use of both history and allegory, cites and paraphrases mostly Origen and Jerome. The

Glossa Ordinaria provided a ready reference to patristic commentary, tied to the Vulgate text.

The brief references by Odo of Cluny and Bernard of Clairvaux continue the patristic tradition of topical quotations tied to church teaching, about original sin, virginity, and the need to reprove sin.

Thomas Aquinas' "cursory" lectures look carefully at the words of each text, applying them first to Jeremiah's experiences. In three cases, he sees these as prefiguring or being fulfilled in those of Christ.

Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla litteralis* ties each text carefully to the life of Jeremiah. Only in consideration of Jeremiah's "horror of the senses" does he refer to Christ's similar experience. Lyra does not read Jeremiah's experiences as prefiguring either those of Christ or the church. For help in interpretation, he frequently cites interpretation by Rashi. Lyra's much shorter *Moraliter* for some of the texts tie them to church teaching and practice, including polemic against those who restrain the activities of "poor preachers."

Among the Latin interpreters of Jeremiah's complaints considered in this dissertation, only Jerome, Thomas Aquinas, and Lyra considered the question of whether God does deceive, looking at Jer 4:10 and 20:7. Jerome, for both texts, gives bases for Jeremiah's accusations. For 4:10, he concludes that Jeremiah was "troubled" and did not understand that some prophecies are for nearer, some for later times. For 20:7, he relates Jeremiah's disillusionment, when he learned that he was to prophesy against his own nation, not just its adversaries. In both cases, Jeremiah did

not understand God's purposes. In neither case does Jerome conclude that God did deceive.

Thomas Aquinas follows Jerome's interpretations. He concludes that God does indeed "entice" but may not be accused of deception. For Lyra, God did allow the false prophets to deceive the people (4:10), but God emphatically does not deceive, "according to truth, but only according to false estimation." Jeremiah's accusation in 20:7 therefore came from his "horror of the senses."

Whether Jeremiah was right to question God is addressed straightforwardly by Lyra, regarding 12:1-3. He concludes that Jeremiah addressed these questions reverently, as a disciple asking a teacher, and not in dispute or argument. Jerome simply relates the questions, from the "troubled" prophet. Thomas Aquinas relates Jeremiah's argument to that of Job, in contrast with Habakkuk's "standing." He sees the argument pointing to and illuminating God's justice.

4.4 Jewish Commentaries

References to Jewish interpretation of the complaints of Jeremiah come from the following, in addition to the general sources cited in the Introduction:

Graboïs, Aryeh. “L’exégèse rabbinique.” Pages 233-260 in *Bible de tous les temps. IV. Le Moyen Âge et la Bible*. Directed by Pierre Riché and Guy Lobrichon. Paris: Beauchesne, 1984.

Hailperin, Herman. *Rashi and the Christian Scholars*. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963.

The Jewish Study Bible. Edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler. Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. (several articles)

Tomes, Roger. “The Reception of Jeremiah in Rabbinic Literature and in the Targum.” Pages 233-253 in *The Book of Jeremiah and its Reception: Le Livre de Jérémie et sa réception*. Edited by A. H. W. Curtis and T. Römer. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997.

Wolff, Christian. *Jeremia im Frühjudentum und Urchristentum*. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 118. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1976.

4.4.1 About Jewish exegesis

Ancient Jewish interpretation of the Bible shares common assumptions with other ancient interpreters, including patristic writers, that the Bible is

a fundamentally cryptic document; one great Book of Instruction . . . a fundamentally *relevant* text; perfect and perfectly harmonious . . . [with] no

mistake . . . [speaking] with one voice; somehow divinely sanctioned, of divine provenance, or divinely inspired.²¹⁰

Ancient Jewish interpretation of the Bible starts with inner-biblical interpretation, in which later writings in the Jewish canon reinterpret parts of earlier writings. There are many examples of this phenomenon, including the books of Deuteronomy (reinterpreting Exodus through Numbers) and 1 and 2 Chronicles (reinterpreting the books of Samuel and Kings), sometimes “understood as a kind of midrash,”²¹¹ along with many shorter quotations and allusions.

A classic example of reinterpretation involves Jeremiah 29:10, in which the Lord promises that “when Babylon’s seventy years are completed I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.” In Dan 9:2, this prediction is cited; in Dan 9:24, it is reinterpreted as “seventy weeks” of years. Here is “an early case of classical Jewish scriptural interpretation,” in which “midrash...is a biblical means of relating to the Bible.”²¹²

None of the complaints of Jeremiah is explicitly quoted or reinterpreted in the Hebrew/Aramaic Bible. Questions of God’s involvement with false prophecy, however, are treated in 2 Kings and Ezekiel, and Job curses the day of his birth in words similar to Jeremiah’s.

Ancient post-biblical non-rabbinic interpretations include the versions of the Septuagint (see Section 3.1) and the Targums (Section 3.2); *pesharim* and sectarian

²¹⁰ James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it was at the start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 15, 15, 17, 18.

²¹¹ H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (trans. Markus Bockmuehl; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 257.

²¹² Benjamin D. Sommer, “Inner-biblical interpretation,” in *The Jewish Study Bible* (ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler; Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1832.

writings from Qumran; philosophical commentary by Philo; retellings of biblical texts, including “pseudepigrapha,” a “misleading and anachronistic” term for writings ascribed to various authoritative figures²¹³; and historical writings of Josephus.

The complaints of Jeremiah are addressed only by the versions (LXX and Targum Jonathan), Qumran *Hodayot*, Philo, the apocalyptic 4 Ezra, and the haggadic 4 Baruch. In 1QHodayot^a (Section 4.1), quotations from Jeremiah are incorporated into prayers of thanksgiving and lament, fitting the situation of the community of Qumran.

Philo attempted to “show through interpretation that biblical texts have universal significance,” in order to “authorize Judaism” to his Greco-Roman audience.²¹⁴ He considered that “only the Mosaic law enables those who follow it to live by the Stoic mandate of life in accordance with nature.”²¹⁵ In *De Confusione linguarum* 39-51 (Section 4.4.2.1), Philo found “universal significance” for Jeremiah’s struggles, relating them to those of all the wise.

The apocalyptic book of 4 Ezra, a portion of 2 Esdras, consists of laments over the destruction of Jerusalem. The Ezra protagonist paraphrases Jeremiah’s question (20:17) of why he was born, if he was to see “the travail of Jacob.”

The “prophetic haggadah”²¹⁶ in 4 Baruch (Section 4.4.2.2) is ascribed to Baruch, Jeremiah’s scribe. It relates that Jerusalem could not be destroyed until

²¹³ Hindy Najman, “Early Nonrabbinic Interpretation,” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, 1836.

²¹⁴ Najman, 1840.

²¹⁵ Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, “The Bible in the Jewish Philosophical Tradition,” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, 1951.

²¹⁶ Jens Herzer, “Introduction,” *4 Baruch (Paraleipomena Jeremiou)* (ed. Abraham J. Malherbe; translation, introduction and commentary Jens Herzer; Writings from the Greco-Roman World 22; Leiden: Brill, 2005), xxxv.

Jeremiah left, a theme used by a later rabbinic account (Piska 13:14, *Pesikta de Rab Kahana*, Section 4.4.3.2).

Rabbinic interpretation of the Bible shared the common assumptions of ancient interpreters, that the Bible “was essentially a cryptic document . . . perfect . . . always relevant . . . [and] of divine origin,” adding that the Written Torah was “only one of two revelations God had given to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai.”²¹⁷ The Oral Torah was preserved in the traditions of the rabbis. Their literature “arose mostly out of the attempt to adapt the Torah as the Jewish rule of life to changing conditions,” following the “fundamental hermeneutical principle to interpret the Torah from the Torah.”²¹⁸ They “believed that sacred texts contain timeless wisdom; but when preserved in writing, this timeless wisdom becomes in time obscure or difficult to understand, and must therefore be explained.”²¹⁹

Since this Scripture was “dictated, written and edited with divine inspiration, that is, through the ‘holy spirit,’”²²⁰ “there is no detail of the text, however insignificant it may seem, that does not carry meaning.”²²¹ They “scrutinized its every detail in search of hidden meaning . . . relevant to the situation of the interpreter and his listeners . . . a message of immediate value and applicability.”²²²

Commenting on Deut 32:47, “[this law] is no empty thing for [from] you,” Rabbi

²¹⁷ David Stern, “Midrash and Jewish Interpretation,” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, 1866.

²¹⁸ H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (trans. Markus Bockmuehl; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 18.

²¹⁹ Yaakov Elman, “Classical Rabbinic Interpretation,” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, 1844.

²²⁰ Rimón Kasher, “The Interpretation of Scripture in Rabbinic Literature,” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Martin Jan Mulder; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 548.

²²¹ Elman, 1848.

²²² Kugel, 19.

Akiva (d. c. 135 CE) said, “If it seems empty, it is *from* you – on account of your failure – for you do not know how to study its meaning properly.”²²³

Jewish interpretation of the Bible “over the centuries was marked by various levels of interpretation . . . variable in method and meaning and relationship from antiquity on, and especially throughout the Middle Ages.”²²⁴ Four levels have been called the PaRDeS system of interpretation, the “‘Garden’ or ‘Paradise’ of interpretation”²²⁵: *Peshat* (the literal sense); *Remez* (allusive sense), *Derash* (homiletical sense), and *Sod* (secret or allegorical sense).²²⁶ Other terms for different methods were also used: “different schemata could be used by different interpreters depending on their interests and emphasis.”²²⁷ Only *peshat* and *midrash* (or *derash*) are found in rabbinic and medieval uses of the complaints of Jeremiah.

Peshat “seeks to expose the meaning of scripture by considering its context, using philological insights and with historical ‘awareness.’”²²⁸ Its “literal” interpretation may oppose metaphorical interpretation, though in Talmudic times it may be “merely an opinion sanctified by long tradition or teaching authority.”²²⁹ It considers carefully the rules of biblical language and recognizes the existence of synonyms in “repetitions in the Bible that neither add to nor detract from the meaning of the text.”²³⁰ It recognizes contradictions among texts and may attribute them to

²²³ Akiva, *Gen. Rab.* 1:14, quoted by Stern, 1864.

²²⁴ Michael Fishbane, “Bible Interpretation,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies* (ed. Martin Goodman; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 697.

²²⁵ Fishbane, “Bible Interpretation,” 698.

²²⁶ Aryeh Grabois, “L’exégèse rabbinique,” *Le Moyen Âge et la Bible* (Bible de tous les temps 4; ed. Pierre Riché and Guy Lobrichon; Paris: Beauchesne, 1984), 233.

²²⁷ Fishbane, “Bible Interpretation,” 698.

²²⁸ Kasher, 553.

²²⁹ Strack and Stemberger, 256.

²³⁰ Kasher, 557.

different speakers, but does not resolve them in the manner of *midrash*. *Peshat*

“sought to reconstruct the meaning of the Bible in its time setting, to answer the question of ‘what the Bible meant.’”²³¹

Derash and *midrash* pose “the question of ‘what the Bible means.’”²³²

Midrash, in rabbinic usage, “means especially ‘research, study’ and is distinguished, as ‘theory’ from the more essential practice”; also, “concretely the result of interpretation or writings containing biblical interpretation.”²³³ In rabbinic use, *midrash* does not necessarily “imply a particular method of biblical interpretation in contrast with *peshat*,” as it does in medieval usage.²³⁴

Midrash is directed to “an audience hungry for a response to its immediate needs and to the desire to have Scripture speak in the present moment”;²³⁵ *midrash* is “always . . . *realization*,” coming from “Israel’s consciousness of an inalienable solidarity with its Bible.”²³⁶

Since “the Bible is, in its entirety, the word of God,” Scripture has “eternal meaning.”²³⁷ Every “expression, word, and even letter of every sentence is significant”²³⁸; there is nothing superfluous. The understanding of these words may be according to their rabbinic usage rather than as in the rest of the Bible; sometimes *midrash* may not follow the rules of Hebrew grammar. The text may “contain many

²³¹ Kasher, 577.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Strack and Stemberger, 256.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Stern, 1874.

²³⁶ Strack and Stemberger, 259.

²³⁷ Stern, 1874.

²³⁸ Kasher, 560.

different levels of meaning”;²³⁹ *midrash* shows “delight in multiple, polyvalent traditions of interpretation.”²⁴⁰ Where a *peshat* meaning reflects poorly on a rabbinic conception of God, an allegorical meaning is provided. No contradictions among texts are allowed to stand; some midrashic interpretation resolves each.

Some medieval Jewish interpretation saw a reaction against midrashic excesses. Commentaries, ascribed to a single author, laid out principles for interpretation. Saadia Gaon (882-942) looked at the “plain meaning of the words,” venturing further afield only if “experience and sense perception contradict the plain meaning . . . if reason contradicts the plain sense . . . when verses contradict each other . . . when a verse contradicts established tradition.”²⁴¹ Looking very carefully at the Hebrew of the biblical text, Menahem ben Jacob ibn Saruq (mid-10th century) compiled a Hebrew dictionary of biblical roots.

In strong contrast with midrashic polyvalent explanations, Abraham ibn Ezra (1089-1164) thought that “the text had only one meaning, which could be obtained only through the application of the rules of grammar”; this “could not contradict the demands of reason” or *halakhah*.²⁴²

Rashi (1040-1105) preferred to interpret according to *peshat*. In his “blend of contextual exegesis and ethical homiletics,” he did not reject all *midrash*, but only “rabbinic comments which read the text out of context.”²⁴³ He quoted a talmudic

²³⁹ Kasher, 572.

²⁴⁰ Stern, 1874.

²⁴¹ Barry D. Walfish, “Medieval Jewish Interpretation,” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, 1878.

²⁴² Walfish, 1882-3.

²⁴³ Walfish, 1887.

dictum, “A biblical passage can never lose its *peshat* meaning.”²⁴⁴ For him, the “*peshat* meant the contextual sense of a sentence on its own terms or even with the help of midrashic tradition.”²⁴⁵

Radak (1160-1235) used *peshat*, *midrash*, and philosophical ideas in his commentaries. He quoted “*derashot* (homiletical interpretations of the Sages) and [incorporates] midrashic methods and sensibilities into his *peshat* exegesis.”²⁴⁶ His “work in biblical grammar and lexicography” resulted in “a sensibility for the syntax, type, and narrative thread of literary units which stands over against the methods of rabbinic interpretation and the *darshanim* (preachers) of his day.”²⁴⁷

Ibn Ezra referred briefly to Jeremiah 11:19, in his discussion of the meaning of the word לַחֲמִי. Rashi and Radak wrote extensive commentaries on Jeremiah, including consideration of Jeremiah’s complaints.

4.4.2 Ancient Jewish Texts

4.4.2.1 Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE – 50 CE) *De Confusione linguarum* = *Conf. 39-51*²⁴⁸

In the midst of his arguments in *De Confusione linguarum*, about the Tower of Babel story, Philo paraphrases Jeremiah 15:10, as “Oh, mother, how great you bore

²⁴⁴ Rashi, *Commentary on Lamentations*, quoted in Herman Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 36-7.

²⁴⁵ Fishbane, “Bible Interpretation,” 688.

²⁴⁶ Walfish, 1886.

²⁴⁷ Fishbane, “Bible Interpretation,” 688.

²⁴⁸ Philo, *De Confusione Linguarum: Introduction, Traduction et Notes* (trans. J. G. Kahn; Oeuvres de Philon d’Alexandrie Vol. 13; Paris, Cerf, 1963). And Philo, “The Confusion of Tongues,” in *Philo IV* (Loeb Classical Library; ed. T. E. Page; trans. F. H. Colson; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949), 8-119. Translations, unless otherwise noted, are mine, from Greek and French.

me, a man of strife and a man of unpleasantness to all the earth! I did not owe, nor did they owe me, nor did my strength fail, from their curses” (*Conf.* 44).²⁴⁹

His rendering is related to but different in meaning from LXX. The first words change Jeremiah’s lament (“Woe is me,” in MT and the versions) into a celebration of his strength from birth (“how great you bore me”). In 15:10b, Philo’s use of οὐκ ὠφείλησα οὐδὲ ὠφείλησάν μοι (“I did not owe, nor did they owe to me”) corresponds to the Greek of Theodotion and Origen, and the Syriac of the Peshitta, rather to the LXX (ὠφέλησα οὐτε ὠφέλησέν με οὐδεὶς, “I have not helped, nor has anyone helped me”). Colson thinks “there is little or nothing to choose between the two” renderings.²⁵⁰

In the last clause, Philo adds οὐδὲ (“nor”), reversing the meaning of LXX. In *Conf.* 51, he cites this in somewhat different words, with the same reversed meaning. Kahn considers these differences “proof that Philo cites the Bible from memory.”²⁵¹ Rather than lamenting that “my strength failed, among those cursing me,” Jeremiah celebrates that his strength did not fail, in spite of their curses.

Philo uses these differences in his argument that this “representative of the prophetic choir” is one of the “wise,” who are “implacable enemies of the wicked,” and use “reasoning” in their defense (*Conf.* 45). All the wise grieve over peace in which wickedness reigns. They then address “their mother, their nursemaid, wisdom” with the words, “Oh mother, how great you bore me!,” rejoicing in their “strength in

²⁴⁹ Cf Colson translation in Loeb Classical Library, “O my mother, how great didst thou bear me, a man of combat and a man of displeasure in all the earth! I did not owe, nor did they owe to me, nor did my strength fail from their curses.”

²⁵⁰ Colson, 553, n. 44.

²⁵¹ J. G. Kahn, Philo, *Conf.*, 65, n. 3, my translation.

hating evil” (*Conf.* 49). A wise man, “by nature a man of peace,” is “a man of displeasure and combat” because he is “against those who dishonour the much-prized loveliness of peace” (*Conf.* 49, Colson translation).

For Philo, the strength of this wise man did not fail (Jer 15:10c). Rather, “with all [his] might and main [he] clung to the divine truths” and “did not bend under their ill-treatment, but used [his] strength to reproach those who refused to effect their own purification” (*Conf.* 51, Colson translation). All those who do not cease to have zeal for knowledge and for virtue are by nature “objects of controversy” (*Conf.* 52). Those who do not examine all that the senses perceive do not realize that they deceive themselves and place themselves under folly’s yoke (*Conf.* 54).

While reversing the meaning of Jeremiah’s complaint, in this revised form, Philo recognizes and speaks of the reality of the struggles of the wise, as he celebrates their value.

4.4.2.2 4 Ezra 5:35 = 2 Esdras 5:25 in NRSV Apocrypha²⁵² (end of 1st c. CE)

The apocalyptic book called 2 Esdras includes portions otherwise called 5 Esdras (2 Esdras 1-2), 4 Esdras (2 Esdras 3-14), and 6 Esdras (2 Esdras 15-16).

The portion called 4 Esdras = 4 Ezra appears in Latin as an addition to the Vulgate. It was “written in Hebrew by an anonymous Jew in Israel near the end of the first century CE”²⁵³ and translated into Greek and many other languages; the Hebrew and Greek have been lost, but Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Georgian, Armenian, Arabic, and Coptic versions exist. It consists of laments over the destruction of

²⁵² 2 Esdras, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (ed. Michael D. Coogan; 3rd edition; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). The commentary is by Theodore A. Bergren.

²⁵³ Bergren, 2 Esdras, NRSV Apocrypha, 320.

Jerusalem, nominally by Ezra, looking at the destruction caused by Babylon. The Ezra protagonist questions God's justice and engages in lengthy dialogue with the angel Uriel, who insists on "the limitations of human reasoning."²⁵⁴

In Chapter 5, Ezra rehearses God's selection of Israel and asks the Lord, "Why have you hand the one over to the many . . . and scattered your only one among the many?" (2 Esdras 5:28). In his "agonies of heart," he paraphrases Jer 20:17, asking, "Why then was I born? Or why did not my mother's womb become my grave, so that I would not see the travail of Jacob and the exhaustion of the people of Israel?" (2 Esdras 5:35). The angel responds with requirements impossible for a mortal and says, "Just as you cannot do one of the things that were mentioned, so you cannot discover my judgment, or the goal of the love that I have promised to my people" (2 Esdras 5:40).

4.4.2.3 4 Baruch = Paraleipomena Jeremiou²⁵⁵ (1st c. C.E.; probably around 130 C.E.)

4 Baruch was "originally the work of a Jewish author that was given an additional ending by Christian circles."²⁵⁶ It shares ideas with *2 Baruch* (see Section 4.5.2.1.1). The Jewish writing, a "prophetic haggadah,"²⁵⁷ dates from after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 C.E. and probably "in the years leading up to the Bar Kokhba War, around 130 C.E."²⁵⁸ The Christian redaction (9:10-32),

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ *4 Baruch (Paraleipomena Jeremiou)* (ed. Abraham J. Malherbe; translation, introduction and commentary Jens Herzer; Writings from the Greco-Roman World 22; Leiden: Brill, 2005).

²⁵⁶ Jens Herzer, "Introduction," *4 Baruch*, xxxi.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., xxxv.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., xxxiv.

using “Jeremiah as a Christian witness to the Messiah,”²⁵⁹ probably dates from after the failure of the Bar Kokhba rebellion, in 135 C.E.

In *4 Baruch* 5:18 is related that Baruch and Jeremiah must leave the city of Jerusalem “because their prayers represent a protective wall around the city and prevent God’s judgment.”²⁶⁰ This corresponds to Jeremiah’s intercessory role in the Bible (Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14; 15:1, 11; 18:20). Jeremiah and Baruch then “become witnesses to God’s handing over of the city.”²⁶¹

4.4.3 Rabbinic texts

4.4.3.1 *Midrash Rabbah Lamentations 3 = Mid.Rab.Lam. 3*²⁶²

In “The Proems of the Sages” on the book of Lamentations, R. Abba b. Kahana quotes Jer 15:17, “I sat not in the assembly of them that make merry, nor rejoiced.” He takes this to mean that the Community of Israel said to the Holy One, “Sovereign of the Universe, never did I enter the theatres and circuses of the heathen peoples and make merry and rejoice.” In comment on “I sat alone because of Thy hand,” he points out that “Pharaoh’s hand attacked me, but I sat not alone. Sennacherib’s hand attacked me, but I sat not alone. Since, however, Thy hand attacked me, I sat alone.” He then quotes Lam 1:1, “How sitteth solitary.” The footnote indicates that “only when God forsook me could my enemies make me desolate.”²⁶³

²⁵⁹ Ibid., xxxv.

²⁶⁰ Herzer, Chapter 1, *4 Baruch*, 47.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² *Midrash Rabbah Lamentations (Proems)* (trans. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon; London: Soncino, 1939).

²⁶³ *Mid.Rab.Lam. 3*, 6, n. 3.

4.4.3.2 *Pesikta de Rab Kahana Piska 13.14* = *Pesik. Rab. Kah. Piska 13.14*²⁶⁴

The *Pesikta de Rab Kahana* “does not offer a running commentary, but commentates on lectionary pericopes from the synagogal liturgy.”²⁶⁵ *Piska 13:14* quotes Jeremiah 20:7, “O Lord, Thou hast enticed me, and I was enticed.” Alberdina Houtman and Harry Sysling point out that whereas “the Palestinian Targum follows Targum Jonathan in choosing the verb שִׁבַּשׁ [“entangle, confound”] as an equivalent to Hebrew פָּתָה, avoiding a strong anthropomorphism . . . the Palestinian Midrash *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* uses Aramaic שָׂרַל [“persuade, entice,” as in the Peshitta], maintaining the anthropomorphism.”²⁶⁶

Piska 13:14 says that “during all the days that Jeremiah was in Jerusalem, it was not destroyed, but when he went forth from it, it was destroyed. It was of this going forth that Jeremiah said . . . Thou didst set out to entice me, and I let myself be enticed.” It was in the Lord’s telling him that Hanamel would come to ask him to buy his field that “Thou didst overcome me, and didst prevail over me.”

4.4.3.3 *Pesikta Rabbati 21.16, 26.1-2, 6* = *Pesik. Rab. 21.16, 26.1-2, 6*²⁶⁷

In *Pesikta Rabbati*, a medieval compilation of homilies tied to Torah texts for specific days, *Piska 21* and *Piska 26* both cite Jer 20:7. They relate very different traditions about its meaning. *Piska 26* also discusses Jer 20:14 at length.

²⁶⁴ *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* (trans. William G. Braude and Israel J. Kapstein; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1975).

²⁶⁵ Strack and Stemberger, 318.

²⁶⁶ Alberdina Houtman and Harry Sysling, *Alternative Targum Traditions* (Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture 9; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 180.

²⁶⁷ *Pesikta Rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts, and Special Sabbaths* (vol. 2; trans. William G. Braude; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). Translations of *Pesikta* are Braude’s.

In *Piska* 21.16, Jer 20:7, “O Lord, Thou hast enticed me, and I was enticed; Thou hast shown me strength, and hast prevailed over me,” is taken as the words of the congregation of Israel to the Lord: “Master of the universe, Thou didst entice me before Thou gavest the Torah to me, and so I set the yoke of commandments upon my neck and I was punished because of my violation of them. Had I not accepted the Torah I would have been like one of the nations, getting neither reward nor punishment.”²⁶⁸ The rest of this section cites the Ten Commandments, one by one, saying that God has enticed and prevailed over Israel, requiring what is not required of other nations.

Piska 26, an “unusual attempt to create a continuous narrative about Jeremiah from his birth to after the fall” of Jerusalem, may have been intended “for the first sabbath after 17 of Tammuz.”²⁶⁹ In Jer 20, the prophet’s reproaches of God and cursing the day he was born have “words of unmatched harshness in the prophets.”²⁷⁰

Piska 26.1-2 starts with God’s calling Jeremiah from his birth. Jeremiah’s protests that he is too young (Jer 1:6) are unavailing; the Lord responds, “Is it not because thou art a child that I love thee?” When Jeremiah is directed to “take this cup of wrath and make the nations drink,” he takes it, then asks, “Whom shall I make to drink first?” On hearing “Jerusalem and the cities of Judah . . . for they are the chief of all earthly kingdoms,” Jeremiah bursts forth in cursing the day he was born (20:14). *Piska* 26 quotes Jeremiah as saying, “Woe unto me because of thee, Mother

²⁶⁸ *Piska* 26.16, *Pesikta Rabbati*, 439.

²⁶⁹ Joseph Heinemann, “A Homily on Jeremiah and the Fall of Jerusalem (*Pesiqta Rabbati*, *Pisqa* 26),” in *The Biblical Mosaic: Changing Perspectives* (Semeia Studies; ed. Robert Polzin and Eugene Rothman; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 28, 27.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

Zion! I thought I was to prophesy good things and consolations, and lo, I prophesy for thee infliction of punishment!”

Piska 26.6 relates a “striking deviation from Scripture,”²⁷¹ in which Jeremiah successfully departs from Jerusalem, to go to Anathoth to buy a field (in the Bible, Jeremiah attempts to leave but is arrested, Jer 37:11-15). According to *Piska* 26, “as soon as Jeremiah left Jerusalem, the angel of the Lord came down from heaven, set his feet against the walls of Jerusalem, and breached them.” The Babylonians did not conquer the city; rather, “a conquered city ye have conquered, a dead people ye have killed.” When the Babylonians were on the Temple Mount, they saw “four angels descending, in their hands four flaming torches which they placed at the four corners of the Temple, setting it on fire.”²⁷² When Jeremiah was returning from Anathoth, he saw the smoke and hoped that it was “smoke of incense” from Israel’s repentance. When he saw the Temple a “heap upon heap of stones and the wall of Jerusalem broken down,” it was then that he “cried out to God, saying, ‘Thou hast enticed me, and I was enticed; Thou hast overcome me, and hast prevailed’” (Jer 20:7).²⁷³

Piska 26.6 (in *Pesikta Rabbati*) and *Piska* 13.14 (in *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*, above) agree, that “Jeremiah interprets the command to go to Anathoth as a deception on the part of God; God tricked [Jeremiah] by sending him out of the city, so that he could destroy it – just as God tricked him at his commissioning by giving him the false impression that his prophecy would be one of consolation.”²⁷⁴ “The implication

²⁷¹ Ibid., 36.

²⁷² *Piska* 26.6, 534-5.

²⁷³ *Piska* 26.6, 536.

²⁷⁴ Heinemann, 37.

is that the fall could not occur so long as Jeremiah was in the city.”²⁷⁵ These also imply that God did indeed deceive Jeremiah, for God’s purposes.

4.4.3.4 *Midrash on Psalms = Midr. Pss. 90.2*²⁷⁶

In a discussion of the “four who directed their prayers to God after they had chided the Holy One,” Jeremiah, Habakkuk, David, and Moses, R. Judah bar R. Simon taught, “But were not their very prayers chidings of Him?” He cites Jer 12:1, “Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with you,” as “I who am here today and tomorrow in the grave, should I plead with Thee? Of what avail?” He then cites Hab 3:1-2, Ps 17:1, 14, and Deut 9:26, without further discussion.²⁷⁷

4.4.4 Medieval Jewish interpretation

4.4.4.1 Rashi (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac; 1040-1105) *Commentary on Jeremiah*²⁷⁸

4.4.4.1.1 About Rashi’s exegesis

Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo ben Itzhak = Solomon ben Isaac) “was the first of all Jewish commentators in the West to write a commentary on the *whole* of the Hebrew Scriptures, as far as length of years permitted him to do it.”²⁷⁹ He “read the Bible through,” rather than “by topics.”²⁸⁰ He wrote in Hebrew, supplemented with medieval (Old or Provençal) French words (in Hebrew script), for clarification.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 36.

²⁷⁶ *The Midrash on Psalms* (trans. William G. Braude; Yale Judaica Series 13; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), Book 4, 90.2.

²⁷⁷ Braude, the translator, adds, “Nevertheless, Jeremiah went on to chide, “Yet let me talk with Thee of Thy judgments; wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?”

²⁷⁸ Rashi, *Commentary on Jeremiah* in *Mikraot Gedolot with Peirush Malbim, Yermiyahu* (Jerusalem: Mekor HaSfarim, n.d.). [cited 20 April 2010]. Online English translation: http://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/print/true/aid/16001/showrashi/true. This is the translation used, unless otherwise noted.

²⁷⁹ Herman Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 31 (his italics).

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 39.

His intent was “to explain the scriptural passage according to its *peshat*.”²⁸¹ *Peshat*, or the *sensus historicus*, was the meaning of a word or phrase in “the sense in which the first author used it – whether his intention was to make the word or words speak concretely, allegorically, parabolically, etc.”²⁸²

He did not reject all *derash* or haggadic midrash, but repeated “the talmudic dictum which he elevated into an exegetical principle: ‘A biblical passage can never lose its *peshat* meaning,’ however many other interpretations may be given to it.”²⁸³ He preferred historical and literal interpretation, “but when he could not find a satisfactory explanation according to this method, and, if tradition at the same time offered one, he resigned himself to the haggadic method.”²⁸⁴ He compared “literal exposition and *aggada* to the two sparks of interpretation, which fly in different directions, and each . . . as important as the other.”²⁸⁵

4.4.4.1.2 Rashi’s exegesis of Jeremiah’s complaints

Rashi’s commentary on Jeremiah consists of brief quotations of parts of a verse, as found in MT, followed by discussion of the word or phrase. For clarification, he often translates a Hebrew word into medieval French or refers to another use of the same word in Scripture. In places, he elucidates the passage by explaining grammatical constructions. He quotes traditional interpretation and often refers to the commentary of “Jonathan” (Targum Jonathan). He makes concrete references to contemporaries of Jeremiah, both adversaries and supplicants.

²⁸¹ Rashi, *Commentary on Lamentations*, quoted in Hailperin, 31-2.

²⁸² Hailperin., 32.

²⁸³ Ibid., 36-7.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 41.

²⁸⁵ Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), 151.

Jer 4:10 In commentary on Jer 4:10, Rashi relates the verbal phrase **השאת**

השא (“you have surely misled”) to the French *tenter* and to the expression in Gen 3:13, “the serpent misled me” (**השיאני**). He then applies this to the false prophets, who prophesy peace for the people.

Jer 11:19-20 Rashi begins commentary on Jer 11:19 with discussion of the phrase **אלוף ככבש**. He cites differing interpretations, first, that of Dunash (10th century Spanish interpreter) and Judah son of Kudish, that this refers to “a lamb and a bull” (possibly reading **אלוף** as **אלף**). He adds biblical pairs that omit the copula “and” (Hab 3:11, Isa 38:14), to show that this could also be a pair. He then refers to Menahem (another 10th century Spanish interpreter) and Targum Jonathan, who render this a “choice lamb.” For the phrase **נשחיתה עץ בלחנו**, Rashi agrees with the interpretation of Targum Jonathan, “Let us put poison (**סמא דמותה**), as in Targum) into his food.”

Rashi sees Jeremiah’s demand in 11:20, “Let me see your vengeance against them,” as a curse specifically against the people of Anathoth.

Jer 12:1-3 In consideration of Jer 12:1, Rashi first gives the reason for Jeremiah’s desire to argue with the Lord: “so that You will let me know Your way.” He then gives two possibilities of just who the wicked may have been, whose way has prospered. His first explanation is “that You have given greatness to Nebuchadnezzar . . . and made him succeed in destroying Your house.” Another possibility is “that he was crying and complaining about the men of Anathoth.”

Rashi refers again to the men of Anathoth, considering 12:3, “You have known me.” He interprets הִתְקַם (“tear them apart”) as “draw them out,” citing the French, *détache-les*, and הִקְדִּישׁם (“sanctify them”) as “prepare them” (הַזְמִינֵם; as in Targum וְזִמְנִינוּ, “appoint them”).

Jer 15:10-12 In Jer 15:10, “Woe to me, my mother,” Rashi again sees as the cause of Jeremiah’s complaint “that his townsmen hated him because of his castigations.”

For the obscure שְׁרוּתְךָ (Kativ; Qere, שִׁרְיִתְךָ; probably, “I released you”) in 15:11, Rashi presents differing interpretations, without choosing between them. Menahem took it to mean “a remnant” (שְׁאֵרִית); Dunash, “an expression of release.” He also cites a biblical use of a similar root in Aramaic (Dan 5:12, “untying,” מְשֻׁרִי) and Jer 40:4, “I have released you” (different root).

In a useful grammatical point, Rashi explains the expression אִם־לֹא as literally, “if not,” but as “an expression of an oath,” meaning “surely.” He interprets הִפְגַּעְתִּי (either “I intervened” or “I caused to strike”) as “I will cause to beg.” In time of evil, “they will beg you to supplicate God for mercy upon them”; this refers either to Zedekiah, who asked Jeremiah for intercession (Jer 21:2) or Nebuzaradan, who asked him to come to Babylon.

For the obscure 15:12, “Will iron shatter iron from the north and bronze,” Rashi makes the concrete reference to Nebuchadnezzar, who comes from the north, noting that “iron that comes from the north is harder than other iron.” He also gives

the possibility that this could refer to Pharaoh, who may be harder iron than Nebuchadnezzar; he notes that Targum Jonathan “is inclined toward this direction.”

Jer 15:15 In considering Jer 15:15, Rashi cites Targum Jonathan’s rendering, “Do not grant a reprieve for my humiliation,” to mean “Do not take my cause to leave it for your long suffering, but hasten and avenge me.” For 15:17, “your words were found and I ate them,” Rashi interprets as “eagerly at the beginning, and they were a joy for me, for I thought that now they would listen to me.”

Jer 15:18 In consideration of Jer 15:18, Rashi cites the Hebrew **הִיוּ תְהִיָּה** (“you are surely”), before explaining that the comparison with a “failing spring” means that “like a man whose trust has been cut off from him . . . you allow me to suffer at their hands.” Rashi does not identify the failing spring with the “grievous wound” (LXX and Vulgate) or “your Memra” (Targum). This appears a clear reference to God.

Jer 17:15-18 Jeremiah’s adversaries’ question, “Where is the word of the Lord?” (Jer 17:15), Rashi interprets as “the retribution which you prophesy.” Rashi interprets 17:16, “I did not hurry away from being a shepherd after you (**יִמְרָעָה אֶחְרִיךְ**) (**לֹא־אֲצַתִּי**), as “I did not hasten to urge you to bring them because I am a good shepherd, who goes after you to beg mercy for them.” The “woeful day” that Jeremiah did not “wish for” is “the illness of their retribution.” Rashi cites Targum Jonathan, that “I did not hesitate from telling them Your message and to return them to you if they would hearken to me.”

Rashi takes אֶל-תְּהִיָּה-לִּי לְמַחֲתָה (‘‘Do not be a terror for me!’’, 17:17)

to refer to God’s mission for Jeremiah, rather than to God. Jeremiah here asks that the mission not ‘‘be to me for a ruin.’’ The pursuers that are to be put to shame (17:18) are, once again, the men of Anathoth.

Jer 18:18-22 The men of Anathoth appear again in Jer 18:18; they are the ones ‘‘plotting plots.’’ As in Targum Jonathan, Rashi sees their plan to ‘‘strike him with the tongue’’ as to ‘‘testify falsely against him.’’ The husbands who are to be ‘‘slain by death’’ (18:21) are to be ‘‘slain by the angel of death.’’ Rashi quotes 18:22 (‘‘to seize me’’) rather than 18:20 (‘‘for my life’’) for the pit dug by Jeremiah’s adversaries. Here he differs from the Targum, in which the pit is ‘‘to kill me’’ in both verses. Rashi interprets this pit to mean ‘‘that they suspected him of intimacy with a married woman, as it is stated (Prov 23:27): ‘For a harlot is a deep pit.’’’

Jer 20:7-10 Rashi interprets Jeremiah’s cry, ‘‘You enticed me, O Lord, and I was enticed’’ (20:7) as referring to God’s call ‘‘to go on your mission.’’ It is God who has ‘‘made your strong hand heavy upon me to go against my will.’’ When Jeremiah speaks to the people, it is not ‘‘good for them but prophecies of violence and spoil’’ (20:8). When Jeremiah thinks not to speak, what is in his heart ‘‘like a burning fire’’ (20:9) is, according to Rashi, ‘‘the prophecy,’’ like Targum Jonathan’s ‘‘his words.’’

In interpretation of 20:10, Rashi agrees with Targum Jonathan in reading מְגֹרֵר as ‘‘gathered’’ (see discussion in Section 3.2.1.8.1 ‘‘Differences from MT’’ for the Targum), rather than as ‘‘terror.’’ For Jeremiah’s adversaries’ conspiracy, ‘‘Denounce! and let us denounce him,’’ Rashi cites Dunash’s interpretation, that this

was “an actual expression of telling,” meaning “tell false things about him . . . to the king.” Rashi sees their hope that “he may be enticed” as that “he will listen to us and stray after us,” corresponding to Targum Jonathan’s “Perhaps he will go astray.”

Jer 20:14-18 Rashi takes אָרוּר הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יֻלְּדֵתִי בּוֹ (Jer 20:14, “Cursed be the day in which I was born”) rather as “the day in which I was begotten,” quoting the medieval French *engenrer*. This he takes to be “the time of conception,” and relates the tradition that “through compulsion Hilkieh performed the marriage act by day, for he was fleeing from before Manasseh, who was slaying the prophets.”

The “cities that the Lord overturned” Rashi identifies as Sodom and Gomorrah (20:16); the “he” that did not put Jeremiah to death in the womb is “the angel of death” (20:17). The “toil and grief” (20:18) that Jeremiah has seen are “the destruction of the temple.”

Rashi’s commentary on Jeremiah’s complaints seeks to make the *peshat* of each word and phrase plain to his readers. For clarification, he cites grammatical rules (the oath formula in 15:10) and words in the French of his time (4:10, 12:3, 20:14). To understand the meaning of words, he refers to other biblical texts with the same or similar words (Gen 3:13, for 4:10; Hab 3:11 and Isa 38:14, for the lack of a copula in 11:19; Dan 5:12, for 15:10; Prov 23:27, for 18:22).

He makes very concrete associations for each text, identifying people and places. Jeremiah’s adversaries are repeatedly identified as the “men of Anathoth” or “his townsmen” (11:20, 12:1, 12:3, 15:10, 17:18, 18:18). Those who have deceived the people with misleading prophecies of peace are “the false prophets” (4:10); the

wicked who prosper may be Nebuchadnezzar or the men of Anathoth (12:1); those who ask him to pray for them may be Zedekiah or Nebuzaradan (15:11); the “iron” that may defeat other “iron and bronze” may be Nebuchadnezzar or Pharaoh; the cities destroyed by God are Sodom and Gomorrah; Jeremiah’s “pain and grief” result from the destruction of the Temple (20:18).

Rashi uses the resources of other commentaries. He cites Targum Jonathan repeatedly (11:19, 15:12, 15:15, 17:16, 18:18, 20:9, 20:10), usually following the Targum’s interpretation without comment, only once comparing it with other commentaries (11:19). He also cites the 10th century Spanish interpreters Dunash and Menahem. Rashi accumulates these interpretations, without deciding on one final reading of each passage.

In his commentary on Jeremiah’s complaints, it is only in 20:14 that Rashi includes *derash*, in the story of Hilkiah’s duress that led to Jeremiah’s conception. Even here, the interpretation hangs on the understanding of the verb יִלְדֵתִי, as “I was conceived,” rather than “I was born.” Rashi does not elaborate on this reading of the Pual of יָלַד.

The picture of God that emerges from Rashi’s brief commentaries stands in contrast with that from many patristic sources. God has indeed allowed the false prophets to deceive the people (4:10) and has “enticed” Jeremiah to prophesy, overpowering him and giving him no chance to refuse. Nevertheless, it is permissible for Jeremiah to argue with God (12:1), so that he may come to “know your way.” Rashi interprets the “failing” or “unreliable” spring of 15:18 as God allowing

Jeremiah, who trusted in him, to suffer. In none of these passages does Rashi either soften Jeremiah's accusations or account for them on the basis of Jeremiah's pain. He simply lets them stand, as they do in the biblical text.

4.4.4.2 Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1164) *Commentary on Exodus* = *Comm. Exod. 16.4*²⁸⁶

In commentary about Exodus 16:4, Ibn Ezra discusses the word לֶחֶם. He states that “[this] word [means here also] food [מֵאֵכָל]. You find it said [in reference] to bread in the real sense [כְּמִשְׁמַעוֹ] [and] also [in reference] to meat; correspondingly [it is called], ‘A food offering by fire’ [Lev 3.11]. Also it is used [with reference] to fruits, correspondingly [it is called]: ‘We will destroy [the] tree in its fruit’ [בְּלֶחֶמוֹ] [Jer 11:19].”

4.4.4.3 Radak (Rabbi David Kimchi; 1160-1235) *Commentary on Jeremiah*²⁸⁷

4.4.4.3.1 About Radak's exegesis

Rabbi David Kimchi (Radak) was the youngest of the Kimchi family of biblical interpreters and grammarians. His father, Joseph Kimchi (Rikam), contributed to Hebrew grammar, wrote an anti-Christian polemical treatise and a commentary on the Pentateuch, and “devoted [himself] to making Arabic-Jewish works available to the Jews in Europe through Hebrew translation.”²⁸⁸ Born in Spain,

²⁸⁶ Abraham Ibn Ezra, *Abraham Ibn Esras Langer Kommentar zum Buch Exodus* (vol. 1; trans. Dirk U. Rottzoll; Studia Judaica 17/1; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 442. Translation from German is mine.

²⁸⁷ Radak, *Commentary on Jeremiah* in *Mikraot Gedolot with Peirush Malbim, Yermiyahu* (Jerusalem: Mekor HaSfarim, n.d.). Translations are my own.

²⁸⁸ “Kimhi,” in *The New Encyclopedia of Judaism* (ed. Geoffrey Wigoder; New York: New York University Press, 1989), 458.

he fled to Provence to escape persecution. His sons, Moses and David, lived in Provence. His elder son, Moses Kimchi (Remak), wrote a Hebrew grammar and commentaries on Proverbs, Ezra and Nehemiah, and Job. The Kimchis were part of the Spanish school of biblical interpretation, concentrating on presenting the *peshat* or plain meaning of each text.

David Kimchi also drew on Provençal traditions of *derash*, as well as the Talmud, Targum, Rashi, his father's commentaries, and other Spanish authors. He described himself as "a gatherer after the reapers," "i.e. an elucidator of predecessors' views rather than an independent thinker."²⁸⁹ He "saw his word as an extension of the rationalist, linguistic Spanish *peshat* tradition," devoting "considerable space to *derash*, culled from various rabbinic sources," but separating it clearly "from his *peshat* exegesis through formulas like 'our Rabbis say,' 'in the Midrash appears,' 'there is a *derash*.'"²⁹⁰ In this way, he incorporated "midrashic values into his own *peshat* method."²⁹¹

Radak endeavored to show that stylistic features, as well as specific words, of each text contributed to its meaning. In contrast with the midrashic view that each part of a repetition had a separate meaning, he saw "repetition of the idea in different words" as a "standard literary technique, showing that "distinct biblical formulations can express the same idea."²⁹² He also observed that "the prophets typically use

²⁸⁹ David Kimchi, *Mikhlol* 1a, quoted by Mordechai Cohen, "3. David Qimhi (Radak)," in "The Qimhi Family," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* (vol. 1, part 2; ed. Magne Saebo; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 397.

²⁹⁰ Cohen, 397-8.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 398.

²⁹² Ibid., 402.

metaphor and rhetoric for dramatization.”²⁹³ For example, in his commentary on 1 Kgs 22:19-23, Radak rejected the idea that God could have sent a “lying spirit” to mislead King Ahab, “arguing that God could not have sent false prophecy, since ‘prophecy is true by definition.’ . . . Instead, he argues that Micaiah actually fabricated this vivid scene, using poetic dramatization to frighten and thereby prevail upon Ahab.”²⁹⁴

4.4.4.3.2 Radak’s exegesis of Jeremiah’s complaints

Radak follows Rashi’s pattern of brief quotation of part of a verse, as found in MT, followed by discussion of the word or phrase, in longer explanations than those of Rashi. He occasionally cites parallel biblical texts and quotes traditional interpretation, by his father (Joseph Kimchi, 1105-1170), Saadiya (882-942), and especially, Targum Jonathan. Only rarely does he identify Jeremiah’s adversaries with specific contemporaries.

Jer 4:10 In commentary on Jer 4:10, “You have surely deceived,” Radak attributes the success of the “prophets of deception” to the Lord’s “forbearance.” Because of this, “the multitude of the people thought that the Lord spoke through” these prophets. But it was “I, the Lord, [who] enticed that prophet . . . in order to reveal their lies and their evil.” Radak refers to Ezek 14:9, for further explanation of how the Lord does this. He cites Targum Jonathan, that these were “the prophets of deception” who led the people astray, and “our teacher Saadiya” that the Lord has “revealed the prophets of deception.”

²⁹³ Ibid., 399.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 400.

Jer 11:18-20 Radak starts commentary on Jer 11:18 with a quotation of the “interpretation of my honored father of blessed memory” (Joseph Kimchi), that what the Lord made Jeremiah know was that “they were plotting to feed me deadly poison.”

On 11:19, Radak quotes the Targum, that like a “choice lamb” that did not know it was being brought to the slaughter, Jeremiah was being brought by his “relatives and kinsmen, to eat with them,” not knowing that “they were bringing me to kill me.” He uses the Targum’s interpretation, that it was “poison of death” that they planned to put in his food (since “bread included all food”), with “wood that is deadly poison.” He refers to Moses’ throwing the wood to make the bitter water sweet (Exod 15:25) as “a wonder in the midst of a wonder.” That they hoped to remove him “from the land of the living,” Radak takes as “from this age” and then cites the Targum, “from the land of Israel,” without commenting on the differences. He cites “Let him be remembered no more” as meaning “among the living, the double of the idea in repeating words.”

In 11:20, Jeremiah says, “For to you have I revealed my cause.” Radak focuses on “to you,” pointing out that Jeremiah thinks “I have no brother or close relative, for my cause to be revealed, for they plotted to kill me.”

Jer 12:1-3 Radak considers Jeremiah’s complaint to God about why the wicked prosper (Jer 12:1) not to “be in order,” since God is righteous. It is like a debate with a friend, engaged in because the prophet is “perplexed in this.” Radak thinks Jeremiah’s statement that “You planted them” (12:2) “showed that the prosperity of the wicked comes to them from God, not by the way of chance for them.” When

Jeremiah asks, “Tear them apart like a flock for slaughter,” he is asking that any of the wicked who “are at rest” be torn apart “from their place of rest, for their evil.”

Jer 15:10-12 Radak takes the two words כָּלָה מְקַלְלֵנִי (“all are cursing me”), at the end of Jer 15:10, as derived from the roots קָלַל (“declare cursed”) and כָּלָה (“be contemptible (Niphal) or “treat contemptuously (Hiphil)). The phrase then means “everyone is cursing me and treating me with contempt,” and the prophet has “said in one word, two ideas.” Radak agrees with Targum Jonathan in reading the questionable שְׁרוּתְךָ (Ketiv; Qere, שְׁרִיתְךָ) in Jer 15:11 as “your end,” probably reflecting a *Vorlage* of שְׁאִרִיתְךָ (see Section 3.2.1.4.1). This results in “surely your end will be for good.” The “iron” in the obscure 15:12 may represent Nebuchadnezzar, since “Babylon is north of the land of Israel.”

Jer 15:15-18 In commentary on Jer 15:15, Radak reads “Do not take me away, in your forbearance” as “If you will refrain from your anger against them . . . do not kill me, until I see your retribution on them.” This agrees with the idea of Targum Jonathan, “Do not give a duration for my humiliation.”

God’s words of prophecy that “were found” (15:16) are “sweet” to Jeremiah, and “therefore he said, ‘and I ate them.’” When Jeremiah “did not sit in the company of jokers” (15:17), he did not enjoy the “joy of the body” but rather “the joy of wisdom,” the “joy of my heart” from “your word.”

For Radak, in referring to the “deceitful spring,” where someone trusts to find water and does not (15:18), Jeremiah does accuse God. It is “you” who have “become to me like deception.” Radak quotes the beginning of Jeremiah’s prophecy,

where God said, “Behold, I give you today as a fortified city, and as an iron pillar, and as a wall of bronze” (Jer 1:18). When there was no end to his adversaries’ taunting and striking him, Jeremiah “would murmur against God,” saying, “Why is my pain endless? Surely you have become to me like deception.” Jeremiah’s “incurable” wound is “strong and heavy,” also with an appearance like a “deception.”

Jer 17:14-18 For Radak, it is this “wound and the pain,” the “being despised and the cursing,” from which Jeremiah “sought healing” (Jer 17:14). When Jeremiah declared that he did not wish for the “disastrous day” (17:16), that was “the day of the prophecy...a day strong and heavy.” He did not desire this, but declares to God that “you forced me.” Radak interprets “Do not be a terror (or ruin) to me” (17:17) as “do not be the cause to me, in my prophecy, that I will be shattered (or a terror) before them.” This parallels the Targum’s “Let not your Memra become a misfortune for me.”

Jer 18:18-22 In commentary on Jer 18:18, “For Torah will not perish from a priest,” Radak quotes Jeremiah’s adversaries as saying, “What will we lack if he dies? For the Torah will not be lost on account of this, for the rest of the priests know it. And there are the wise among us, masters of counsel, and there are prophets among us, who will say words of prophecy to us, and they will not be like this one, who does not prophesy for us, but only evil.” On this basis, they would “slander him to the king, with evil words, enough that he would kill him.” Since “they will not listen attentively to me,” Jeremiah begs the Lord to hear his prayer (18:19).

The pit that “they dug for my life” (18:20) and “the pit and the snares” (18:22), Radak takes as “deadly poison that they ran to make him drink.” This is like

a pit into which a man falls “without his knowledge.” This is their “repaying . . . evil for good,” since Jeremiah “spoke good about them before” God and prayed for them. Since God has revealed their deadly plot, Jeremiah is now “permitted to pray for evil about them, just as they plotted to kill” him (18:21).

Jer 20:7-10 Radak considers carefully Jeremiah’s strong words in 20:7, “You have enticed me, and I was enticed. You overcame me and you prevailed.” He sees these coming “from the midst of his pain,” after “Pashhur struck him and put him into the stocks.” Jeremiah then sees God as having “enticed” him, “as a man entices his friend,” at the time of his commission to prophesy. He had resisted this, but was “enticed by [God’s] words.” Radak makes a distinction between Jeremiah’s words in 20:7, “words of pain about his being (or life),” that God “did not impute to him . . . as sin,” and those in 15:18, “you have become to me as deception,” which “was a sinful word towards God.” It was because those in 15:18 were sinful that God said in 15:19, “If you turn back, I will take you back.”

When Jeremiah thought not to speak in the Lord’s name any more, what was “in my heart like a burning fire” (20:9), that he could not contain, was “the word of the Lord.” In commentary on 20:10, about “terror from every side,” Radak quotes Targum Jonathan, that this was “talk of a gathering,” but preserved the Hebrew phrase, as “causing me terror from every side, this from here and this from there.” When Jeremiah’s adversaries plan to “denounce him,” that is to “tell a false word against him . . . to the king.” When they hope that “he may be enticed,” it is to “eat and drink with us.” They will take revenge, as they “provide drink for him, the poison of death.”

Jer 20:14-15 Radak connects Jeremiah's cursing the day that he was born (Jer 20:14) with Job's similar complaint (Job 3:2), as part of "afflicting their being" by "the righteous." Radak is "amazed" by Jeremiah's curse of the man who brought the news to his father (20:15), for "perhaps he was a good man...and it was a sin for Jeremiah, in cursing him." He adds the *derash* that "it was known to him that Pashhur . . . was the one bringing the news."

Radak's commentary on Jeremiah's complaints generally addresses the *peshat* of each text, looking both at the meaning of specific words and their use in context. He points out repetition, in which the same meaning is relayed "double" (Jer 11:19), as well as a combination of two ideas in one word (Jer 15:10).

For illumination of these texts, Radak refers to other biblical texts (e.g., Ezek 14:9, for Jer 4:10; Exod 15:25, for Jer 11:19; Jer 1:18, for Jer 15:18, and Job 3.2, for Jer 20:14). He cites other interpreters: Saadiya (4:10), his father, Joseph Kimchi (11:18), and Targum Jonathan (4:10, 11:19, 15:11, 15:15, and 20:10), usually without further discussion of differences. He connects some of Jeremiah's contemporaries with parts of the complaints: the false prophets (4:10), his kinsmen (11:19, 18:18), Nebuchadnezzar (15:12), "the king" (who would hear false testimony, 18:18), and Pashhur (20:7, 20:15). He makes many fewer such connections than does Rashi, for the same texts.

In commentary on Jeremiah, Radak makes one use of *derash*, in the story that it was Pashhur, Jeremiah's adversary, who was the man who announced Jeremiah's birth to his father (20:15).

The portrait of God in Radak's commentary differs from that of other interpreters, and from Radak's own in commentary on 2 Kgs 22:19-23. There God does not deceive, and there is no such thing as false prophecy. In Jeremiah, however, God does indeed "entice," both the false prophets (4:10) and Jeremiah, from the time of his prophetic commission (20:7). God has also "forced" Jeremiah's compliance (17:16). It is God, not chance, who provided the prosperity of the wicked (12:1). Jeremiah also accuses God of deception (15:18), of not providing what God promised at Jeremiah's call.

Complaint to God is sometimes, but not always, legitimate. Because Jeremiah is in such pain, his accusations in 20:7 are not deemed sinful. His question in 12:1, about the prosperity of the wicked, however, even though it comes from a "perplexed" prophet, is "not in order." Jeremiah's accusation that God is like a "deceitful spring" (15:18) is considered sinful, as shown by God's response in 15:19, demanding repentance.

4.4.5 Jewish "stream of tradition" in these texts

Ancient and medieval Jewish interpretation of the complaints of Jeremiah occurs both as short quotations of a specific verse, and as extended, verse-by-verse commentaries on the book of Jeremiah.

Short quotations of verses in the *Hodayot* and Philo serve the purposes of each writer, but do not contribute to the ongoing tradition found in later writings..

The *Hodayot* from Qumran incorporate quotations of Jer 15:10 and 20:9 into prayers of thanksgiving and lament that refer to the situation of the Qumran community. The "man of strife and man of quarreling" (Jer 15:10) is at odds with the

wicked, some within the community. The “fire locked up in my bones” (Jer 20:9) comes, as to Jeremiah, from not doing what God intends.

Philo paraphrases Jer 15:10 in his discussion of the struggles of the wise. By adding οὐδὲ to the last clause, he reverses its meaning from lament to celebration of successful strife against those under the yoke of folly.

Midrashim, from 4 Baruch through rabbinic texts, use single verses from Jeremiah’s complaints as bases for traditions about Jeremiah and the people of Israel.

The tradition that Jeremiah had to leave Jerusalem for God to be able to destroy it occurs in 4 Baruch, *Pesikta de Rab Kahana* 13:14, and *Pesikta Rabbati* 26:6, as also in 2 Baruch (Section 4.5.2.1.1). In 4 Baruch, it is Jeremiah’s (Jer 18:20) and Baruch’s effective intercession for Jerusalem that form “a protective wall around the city and prevent God’s judgment.” In both *Pes. Rab. Kah.* 13.14 and *Pes. Rab.* 26.6, it is God’s destruction of Jerusalem, after luring Jeremiah to Anathoth, that provokes Jeremiah’s outcry, “You have enticed me, and I was enticed” (Jer 20:7).

Pes. Rab. 26.1-2 connects Jeremiah’s cursing the day of his birth (Jer 20:14) with his prophetic call. Jeremiah first took God’s cup of wrath, thinking it was for “the nations”; when he realized that the disaster he was to prophesy was for Jerusalem and Judah, he spoke this curse.

Pes. Rab. 21.16 attributes the outcry of Jer 20:7 to the congregation of Israel. They cry out, at length, that God has “enticed” them in giving them the Torah, requiring of them what God does not require of other nations.

In the very brief reference to Jer 12:1 in *Midrash Psalms* 90:2, Jeremiah is cited as one of the “four who directed their prayers to God after they had chided the Holy One.”

The brief grammatical reference by Abraham Ibn Ezra clarifies the meaning of the word לִפְנֵי in Jer 11:19, by considering its use in Exod 16:4 and Lev 3:11. Ibn Ezra then takes the odd “let us/we will destroy a tree/wood in its bread/food” to mean “We will destroy [the] tree in its fruit.”

Extended commentaries on the book of Jeremiah start with Targum Jonathan. Rashi and Radak often cite the Targum, sometimes following its lead in interpretation.

In commentary on Jer 4:10, Rashi and Radak agree with the Targum that it was the false prophets that led the people astray. Rashi adds that God allowed them to do this; Radak, that God enticed them to do this so that their lies might be revealed.

Rashi and Radak agree with the Targum, about Jer 11:19, that what Jeremiah’s enemies planned to put into his food was “deadly poison.”

Jeremiah’s complaint in 12:1 MT is too strong for the Targum; God is “too righteous” for him to “contend against your word.” Radak considers this complaint “not in order.” Rashi, however, thinks that Jeremiah is arguing with God “so that you will let me know your way.” Radak agrees with the Targum that the prosperity of the wicked (Jer 12:2) has come from God, and adds that it does not come from chance.

In commentary on Jer 15:10, Radak agrees with the Targum that God promises a good end for Jeremiah. The Targum, Rashi, and Radak all add clarifying

references to Jer 15:12, relating the “iron” and “bronze” to “kings” (Targum) and specifically, Nebuchadnezzar (Rashi, Radak) or Pharaoh (Rashi).

Unlike the Targum, Rashi and Radak retain the image of the prophet “eating” God’s words (Jer 15:16), “eagerly at the beginning” (Rashi) and because they were “sweet” (Radak).

In the Targum, the “fountain whose waters cease” (15:18, Targum) would be God’s Memra. In Rashi, “you,” who “allow me to suffer at their hands . . . like a man whose trust has been cut off from him,” points to God. For Radak, Jeremiah does accuse God of “becoming to me like deception.” In different words, the Targum, Rashi, and Radak retain Jeremiah’s accusation against God; Radak considers this accusation sinful.

The “shepherd” (רֹעֶה, Jer 17:16) that the Targum interprets as prophesying against the people, Rashi rather takes as a “good shepherd, who goes after you to beg mercy for them.” The Targum takes the “woeful day” (יִם אָנֹכִי, 17:16) that Jeremiah did not desire, as “the evil day which you are bringing on them”; Rashi, as “the illness of their retribution”; Radak, as “the day of the prophecy.”

Jeremiah’s plea that God not be a terror (מִזְחָתָהּ) to him (17:17) is taken by the Targum to mean that God’s Memra not be “a misfortune” (תִּבְרָה). Rashi and Radak retain MT מִזְחָתָהּ; Rashi, with Jeremiah asking that his own mission not be a “ruin”; Radak, that God not cause him to be a terror (or ruin, or shattered) before his adversaries.

The “pit” that Jeremiah’s enemies dug for him (Jer 18:20, 22) is taken by the Targum as a way to kill him. Radak agrees and interprets this pit and the “snares” (18:22) as “deadly poison that they ran to make him drink.” Rashi, however, relates this “pit” (שִׁיחַ) to the same word in Prov 23:27, “for a harlot is a deep pit” and concludes “that they suspected [Jeremiah] of intimacy with a married woman.”

Jeremiah’s strong accusation of God in 20:7 (“you have enticed me, and I was enticed”) is softened slightly by the Targum to “you have confounded me, and I was confounded.” Rashi and Radak retain the Hebrew; they relate the complaint to Jeremiah’s commission and his later realization that his prophecy was not of good for his own people. Radak does not consider this outcry sinful, unlike that in 15:18, because Jeremiah spoke “from the midst of his pain,” when he had been struck and put into the stocks.

The Targum, Rashi, and Radak agree that what was “like a burning fire” (20:9) in Jeremiah’s heart, when he intended to speak no more in the name of the Lord, was “the word of the Lord” (Radak), the “prophecy” (Rashi), “his words” (Targum).

Radak relates Jeremiah’s cursing the day of his birth (Jer 20:14) to Job’s similar cursing, and “afflicting their being” by righteous sufferers. The Targum translates 20:14 without comment. Rashi, however, relates a tradition that this curse referred instead to the time of Jeremiah’s conception, when his father, Hilkiyah, fleeing from the evil king Manasseh, “performed the marriage act by day.”

Jeremiah’s wish that the man who brought the news of his birth to his father had instead killed him (20:17) is reversed by the Targum, to “that he had not said

concerning me, that I had died.” This avoids wishing both for the sin of the messenger and Jeremiah’s own death. Radak is “amazed” that Jeremiah would dare the sin of cursing this messenger, for he may have been a good man, but then adds the tradition that Jeremiah knew that this man was Pashhur, his enemy.

Jewish tradition engages several of the same questions as Greek and Latin traditions, with some different answers.

To the question, “Does God deceive?”, Radak’s Jeremiah cries out that God has become like a deception, a spring whose water is unreliable (15:18). Radak, however, considers this complaint sinful. Rashi’s Jeremiah here accuses God of betrayal of trust, since God lets him suffer.

Rashi, Radak, and *midrash* traditions are clearer that God does entice. It was God who enticed the false prophets (4:10) to deceive the people (Radak), and it was God who enticed Jeremiah to prophesy, at the time of his commission. *Pes. Rab.* 26.1-2 concurs, that Jeremiah agreed to prophesy under a false impression that the “cup of wrath” would be directed to his nation’s enemies. God’s luring Jeremiah from Jerusalem so that God could destroy it is found in 4 Baruch, *Pes. Rab Kah.* 13:14, and *Pes. Rab.* 26:6. According to these traditions, Jeremiah’s outcry that “you have enticed me, and I was enticed” is based on reality.

Traditions disagree about whether Jeremiah’s strong complaints were legitimate. The Targum does not agree that Jeremiah may contend with God; God is “too righteous” for this (Jer 12:1). Rashi, however, thinks this dispute is designed to teach Jeremiah God’s ways. Radak considers Jeremiah’s accusation in 15:18 sinful, but the outcries in 20:7 and 20:14 legitimized by Jeremiah’s pain. The Targum’s

slight softening of Jeremiah's outcry in 20:7 may reflect discomfort with Jeremiah's harsh language.

In interpretation of the obscure plan of Jeremiah's adversaries, "Let us destroy wood/a tree in his/its bread/food" (11:19), Rashi and Radak follow the Targum. The "wood" that is "put" (Targum) on his "bread" they take to be "deadly poison." Radak interprets the "pit" they have "dug" for him (18:20, 22) as the same poison.

4.5 Syriac Commentaries

This dissertation considers a representative sample of Syriac commentaries on Jeremiah available in Greek and Syriac, from 2 *Baruch* = *Syriac Apocalypse* (probably between 70 and 135 C. E.) through Bar Hebraeus (1226-1286). It does not consider commentary written in Arabic.

References to these commentaries come from the following, in addition to the general sources cited in the Introduction:

Griffith, Sidney H. *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Murray, Robert. *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*. Rev. ed. Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2004.

Van Rompay, Lucas. "Antiochene Biblical Interpretation: Greek and Syriac." Pages 103-123 in *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation*. Louvain: Peeters, 1997.

4.5.1 About Syriac exegesis of the Old Testament

In the Syrian world of the 4th and 5th centuries, "a bilingual region with diverse cultural traditions,"²⁹⁵ some interpreters of the Old Testament wrote in Greek, others in Syriac.

The writings of the Greek exegetes, Diodore of Tarsus (d.c. 390), Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350-428), and Theodoret of Cyrus (c. 393-c. 466), particularly Theodore of Mopsuestia's rules for biblical interpretation, exerted considerable influence on later Syriac exegesis.

²⁹⁵ Lucas Van Rompay, "Antiochene Biblical Interpretation: Greek and Syriac," in *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation* (Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 122.

They focused on “the historical facts narrated in the Bible,” and saw the Old Testament as a “literary unity.”²⁹⁶ They saw Old Testament history as one part of “God’s all-encompassing plan” of salvation, that did “not derive its meaning from a subsequent phase,” but worthy to be “evaluated . . . in its own right.”²⁹⁷

Diodore, the “first real representative” of this Antiochene group, insisted on “literal exegesis” instead of “allegorism.”²⁹⁸ He stated that

we do not forbid the higher interpretation and allegory, for the historical narrative does not exclude it, but it [sc. historical narrative] is on the contrary the basis and substructure of loftier insights . . . We must, however, be on our guard against allowing the *theoria* to do away with the historical basis, for the result would then be, not *theoria*, but allegory.²⁹⁹

Theodore of Mopsuestia, who studied under Diodore, was called “the blessed interpreter”³⁰⁰ by the later “Nestorians.” He accused allegorists “of making the biblical text say . . . what each interpreter wishes and not explaining what in fact is in the text.”³⁰¹ For him, the task of the exegete was “to explain the difficult expressions in the text,” including the meaning of figurative language,³⁰² interpreting each biblical text “first of all in its immediate context, in the manner in which its first readers must

²⁹⁶ Van Rompay, “Antiochene . . .,” 108.

²⁹⁷ Van Rompay, “Antiochene . . .,” 122.

²⁹⁸ Manlio Simonetti, “Theodore of Mopsuestia,” in Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (vol. 2; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 803.

²⁹⁹ Diodorus, *Diodori Tarsensis Commentarii in Psalmos*, ed. Jean-mMarie Olivier, CCSG 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1980), 7; Translation adapted from John N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper, 1958), 76-77, quoted in Michael Maas, *Exegesis and Empire in the Early Byzantine Mediterranean: Junillus Africanus and the Instituta Regularia Divinae Legis*. With the Latin text established by Heinrich Kihn translated by Michael Maas (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 17; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 96.

³⁰⁰ Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 131.

³⁰¹ Simonetti, 804.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 808.

have understood it.”³⁰³ For an Old Testament event to be a “type” of one in the New Testament, it had to be similar and have a meaning in its own age, but a clearly superior reality later. He allowed only three such “types”:

- a. the saving blood on the doorposts on the eve of the Exodus and the saving blood of Christ during the passion [cf. 1 Cor 10:11, Heb 9:13]
- b. the raising up of the serpent in the wilderness the raising up of Jesus on the Cross [cf. John 3:14]
- c. Jonah’s three days in the belly of the great fish Jesus’ three days in the belly of the earth [cf. Matt 12:40-41]³⁰⁴

His work resulted in a “drastic reduction of the Christological interpretation of the Old Testament.”³⁰⁵ Some later interpreters welcomed this “respecting the letter of the text”; others opposed a “system which . . . put such an accent on the human side.”³⁰⁶

John Chrysostom, who also studied under Diodore, agreed that one should “interpret biblical passages as they were originally intended by their authors,” but stressed the importance of “relating them to the larger story of God’s plan of salvation history given in the Old and New Testaments,” by *Θεωρία* , “spiritual illumination into the deeper meaning of divine revelation . . . given through the words and events of a christologically directed Bible.”³⁰⁷

Theodoret (see Section 4.2.2.2) undertook to “explain scripture by scripture,” since all scripture is “the work of a single Spirit.”³⁰⁸ He focused on the letter of the text, “aided by rhetorical analysis,” and related to “history and concrete

³⁰³ Lucas Van Rompay, “La littérature exégétique syriaque, et le rapprochement des traditions syrienne-occidentale et syrienne-orientale,” *ParOr* 20 (1995), 222, my translation.

³⁰⁴ Maas, 101.

³⁰⁵ Simonetti., 820.

³⁰⁶ Van Rompay, “La littérature exégétique . . .,” 223, my translation.

³⁰⁷ Bradly Nassif, “Antiochene *Θεωρία* in John Chrysostom’s Exegesis,” in *Exegesis and Hermeneutics in the Churches of the East* (Select Papers from the SBL Meeting in San Diego, 2007; ed. Vahan S. Hovhannessian; New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 54.

³⁰⁸ Jean-Noël Guinot, “Theodoret of Cyrus,” in Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (vol. 2, Leiden: Brill, 2004), 896.

realities.”³⁰⁹ He pointed to “types” that illuminated difficult texts, while preserving their “reality and historical dimension,” rather than substituting a “second meaning,” as in allegory.³¹⁰

Exegesis of the Old Testament in Syriac, rather than Greek, may be divided into two major categories, before and after the split into East- and West-Syrian interpretation.

The earliest Syriac texts, from the 2nd to the 4th centuries, come from a “great diversity” in Syriac Christianity.³¹¹ They make only allusions to the Old Testament; none “deals explicitly with the interpretation of the OT.”³¹²

Aphrahat (1st half of 4th c.) and Ephrem (c. 306-73) use Syriac quotations from the Old Testament in their expositions, in a form “almost identical to the Peshitta, the Syriac translation of the Hebrew Bible.”³¹³ They were also “aware of the existence of alternative readings, if not of other biblical versions, which might have an equal claim to authority.”³¹⁴

In his “Demonstrations” (see Section 4.5.2.1.2), Aphrahat, the “Persian sage,” passed on the teaching he had received, with “scriptural *Testimonia* for each topic.”³¹⁵ This teaching, “not primarily exegetic,” pointed to “essential aspects of Christian

³⁰⁹ Guinot, 907.

³¹⁰ Guinot, 905.

³¹¹ Lucas Van Rompay, “The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* (vol. 1, part 1, edited by Magne Sæbo; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 618.

³¹² Ibid., 619.

³¹³ Ibid., 614.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (vol. 2, Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1392.

life.”³¹⁶ Christ, in his typological interpretation, appeared “as the one who shares much with OT figures . . . yet surpasses them.”³¹⁷

Ephrem’s works (see Section 4.5.2.2) provide the “first Syriac representatives of the specific genre of exegetical commentaries.”³¹⁸ In his prose commentaries, he made limited use of types and symbols, with the “basis in the plain meaning of the text.”³¹⁹ He explained “OT history largely within its own framework,” sure that “everything did happen exactly as it is reported in the Bible.”³²⁰ In the preface to his commentary on Genesis, he stated that Moses wrote about symbols, types, and prefigurations.³²¹ These “types” may be “hints or signals of Christ’s work of salvation.”³²²

Particularly in his *memre* (“metrical homilies”) and *madrashe* (“teaching songs”),³²³ he proclaimed his “symbolic vision,” which is “not restricted to the Bible, but holds true for the whole world, in which the believing eye will discover everywhere revelatory symbols of Christ.”³²⁴ He considered it “incorrect...to concentrate solely on the literal meaning of Scripture, without being aware of its inner meaning (or ‘hidden power’).”³²⁵ In seeing both “literal” and “spiritual” senses of

³¹⁶ Van Rompay, “Christian Syriac . . .,” 620.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 621.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 623.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 627.

³²⁰ Ibid., 623-4.

³²¹ Ibid., 623.

³²² Van Rompay, “Antiochene . . .,” 121.

³²³ Sidney H. Griffith, “Ephraem the Exegete,” in Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (vol. 2; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1399.

³²⁴ Van Rompay, “Christian Syriac . . .,” 626.

³²⁵ Ibid.

each text, he referred “in a typological way to the ultimate economy of Salvation in Christ and in the church.”³²⁶

Ephrem shares with the Antiochene interpreters insistence “on the abiding value of the natural sense of an Old Testament passage and what it meant in its own time and context” and rejection of “artificial allegorical interpretation.”³²⁷ He differs with them in pointing to the wealth of “manifest symbols, which in turn, by God’s grace, disclose to the human mind those aspects of the hidden reality or truth which are within the range of the capacities of human intelligence.”³²⁸

The anonymous *Book of Steps* (mid to late 4th c.; see Section 4.5.2.1.3) uses quotations from the Old Testament to support its program for renewed human perfection, in terms of extreme asceticism. The writer, “basing himself on the plain meaning of Scripture . . . applies a ‘metaphoric’ or ‘symbolic’ interpretation,” with “less developed” use of symbols than in Aphrahat or Ephrem.³²⁹

The split into East- and West-Syrian groups of interpreters occurred in “the heyday of Syriac literature, the period from the 4th to the 6th century.”³³⁰ It followed doctrinal disagreements about the person of Christ; decrees of church councils, especially the condemnation of the works and supporters of Theodore of Mopsuestia by the council of Constantinople II (553); and imperial attempts, especially by Justinian I, to coerce uniformity. Both East- and West-Syrian interpreters traced their

³²⁶ Griffith, “Ephraem . . .,” 1404.

³²⁷ Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (rev. ed., Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2004), 31.

³²⁸ Griffith, “Ephraem . . .,” 1417.

³²⁹ Van Rompay, “Christian Syriac . . .,” 629.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 640.

origins to the Syriac-speaking academic community of Edessa. They worked from the Syriac text of the Peshitta, with occasional quotations from “the Greek” (LXX).

Starting with Narsai (c. 399-502), East Syrian interpreters of the Old Testament were called “Nestorians,” misleadingly, by their adversaries, largely for their adherence to the teachings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, “the blessed interpreter.” Narsai, first in Edessa, then in Nisibis, followed closely the methods of Theodore and attached “great historical value to the OT,” seeing in its history God’s instruction and guidance of humanity by “revelations, prophecies and types.”³³¹

East Syrian interpreters shunned allegory. While they recognized that some Old Testament events and people represented “types” which were realized more fully in Christ, they severely restricted the number of these. Later interpreters allowed for more “spiritual” meanings of texts, but always in addition to the foundational “historical” meaning.

For example, a Latin primer on exegesis, *Instituta Regularia Divinae Legis*, written by Junillus Africanus, a *Quaestor Sacri Palatii* (“chief legal minister of the Roman empire”³³²) under Justinian I, purports to transmit methods of exegesis from “Paul the Persian,” connected with the East Syrian “school” of Nisibis. Junillus allows allegorical interpretation only of the book of Proverbs,

because if we are willing to admit allegory everywhere outside the proverbial form of discourse, in such a way that the truth of the narrative is weakened, we are giving our enemies room to interpret the Divine Books however they wish.³³³

³³¹ Ibid., 635.

³³² Maas, 1.

³³³ Junillus Africanus, *Instituta Regularia Divinae Legis*, 477:8-11, in Maas, 137.

In contrast, however, with Theodore's allowing "only four Psalms that prophetically announce the Messiah"³³⁴ (Pss 2, 8, 44 (45), 109 (110)), Junillus cites 26 examples of Old Testament "foretellings" of Christ, more than half from the Psalms.

West Syrian interpreters of the Old Testament, beginning with Jacob of Serug (451-521), were called "Monophysites" or "Jacobites" by their adversaries. They "resisted the introduction of Antiochene exegesis and Christology."³³⁵ They eventually followed the theology and methods of interpretation of Cyril of Alexandria and the Patriarch Severus of Antioch (c. 465-538; see Section 4.5.2.1.4), whose Greek "Cathedral Homilies," soon translated into Syriac, "articulated the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria."³³⁶

Compared to Narsai, Jacob of Serug found many more Old Testament "types" fulfilled in the New Testament, and read many more texts messianically. For Daniel of Salah (mid 6th c.), the historical setting of a Psalm was "only the first step towards understanding the full meaning, which is not the historical meaning."³³⁷

In the Islamic period, from the Muslim conquests in the 7th century, the division continued between East- and West-Syrian interpreters. By the time of the "Syriac Renaissance"³³⁸ of the 12th century, the two branches of "Syrian exegetes

³³⁴ Maas, 93.

³³⁵ Van Rompay, "Christian Syriac . . .," 638.

³³⁶ Griffith, *The Church* . . ., 134.

³³⁷ Ibid., 639.

³³⁸ P. Kawerau, *Die Jakobitische Kirche im Zeitalter der syrischen Renaissance*, quoted in Lucas Van Rompay, "Development of Biblical Interpretation in the Syrian Churches of the Middle Ages," Chapter 36 in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* (vol. 1, part 2; edited by Magne Saebø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 574.

gradually allowed more scope for views which differed from those which to which they originally adhered, and therefore came much closer to each other.”³³⁹

East Syrian interpreters, in the “Church of the East,” wrote exegetical teachings and defenses of doctrines in both Syriac and Arabic.

In Syriac, Theodore bar Koni (fl. c. 792), a “faithful pupil of Theodore of Mopsuestia,”³⁴⁰ wrote a “summary presentation of the doctrine of the Church of the East in the form of an extended commentary on the whole Bible,”³⁴¹ called *Scholion* (see Section 4.5.3.1). This consists of *scholia*, explanations of difficult passages, in question and answer format. In a section in questions on the Psalms, he rejected allegorical interpretation, distinguishing it from the historical.³⁴²

Išo‘bar Nun (d. 828), in “Selected Questions” on both Old and New Testaments, “respectfully [quoted] Theodore of Mopsuestia,” but also provided “a spiritual, not to say allegorical, explanation.”³⁴³

Išo‘dad of Merv (c. 850)’s *Commentary on the Old Testament* (see Section 4.5.3.2) incorporated “many fragments of exegesis from earlier times.”³⁴⁴ His “theological concepts and exegetical principles largely [reflected] the ideas of Theodore of Mopsuestia as they were transmitted in Išo‘dad’s time,”³⁴⁵ but also come from a “broad spectrum”³⁴⁶ of other authors, including Ephrem and Išo‘bar Nun. He borrowed “Greek” quotations from Paul of Tella’s Syro-Hexaplaric version of the

³³⁹ Van Rompay, “Development . . .,” 576.

³⁴⁰ Van Rompay, “Development . . .,” 566.

³⁴¹ Griffith, *The Church* . . ., 43.

³⁴² Van Rompay, “Development . . .,” 566.

³⁴³ Ibid., 567.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 569.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 570.

Old Testament. His use of other authorities served to “counterbalance Theodore’s views”³⁴⁷ on certain biblical books.

In 613-617, the West Syrian Paul of Tella directed the production of the Syro-Hexapla, a “full Syriac translation of the Greek Bible . . . based on Origen’s Hexaplaric recension of the LXX.”³⁴⁸

Among West Syrian interpreters, Jacob of Edessa (c. 640-708) “most effectively articulated Jacobite doctrine and practice.”³⁴⁹ His interpretation in commentaries on biblical books, “of which only fragments are known through *catenae*,” was “historical in the Antiochene style,” with occasional additions of “spiritual theory . . . with symbolic and allegorical elements.”³⁵⁰

The Old Testament portion of the *Catena* of Severus, “completed in a monastery near Edessa in 861,” contains “excerpts from Ephrem and Jacob of Edessa,”³⁵¹ along with quotations from other authors. The text of the commentary on Jeremiah attributed to Ephrem in the Assemani Roman edition of Ephrem’s works (see “Ephrem,” Sections 4.5.2.2.1 and 4.5.2.2.3) is taken from this *Catena*.

The surviving biblical commentaries of Moses bar Kepha (c. 815-903) include a commentary on the Hexaemeron and on the Psalms. In the first, he provided a survey of translations of the Old Testament and “a broad panorama of exegesis,” including “historical” and “all kinds of non-literal explanation.”³⁵² He quoted Greek

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Van Rompay, “Christian Syriac . . .,” 615.

³⁴⁹ Griffith, *The Church* . . ., 135.

³⁵⁰ Kannengiesser, *Handbook* . . ., 1442.

³⁵¹ Van Rompay, “Development . . .,” 564.

³⁵² Ibid., 563.

and Syriac writers, including Ephrem, Jacob of Serug, Jacob of Edessa, and a few references to “Theodore the Nestorian” (Theodore of Mopsuestia).

The commentary on the whole Bible by Dionysius bar Salibi (d. 1171) includes double commentaries, “factual” (historically based) and “spiritual” (allegorical), on most of the books of the Old Testament, and three commentaries on Jeremiah (see Section 4.5.3.3). He presented his work as a “compilation of various older sources,”³⁵³ quoting extensively from earlier interpreters, especially the East Syrian Išoʿdad of Merv.

In his *Storehouse of Mysteries* (*Auṣar Raze*), Bar Hebraeus (1226-1286; see Section 4.5.3.4) provided a “biblical handbook,” with commentaries on all the books of the Bible. In an attempt to “collect and summarize all the exegetical traditions of Syrians,”³⁵⁴ he quoted extensively from Bar Salibi, without “maintaining the division between factual and spiritual commentaries,” and from Išoʿdad of Merv, adding “spiritual” interpretation to the “factual” or historical sense of Scripture. Bar Hebraeus “stands at the end of the creative period of Syriac literature.”³⁵⁵

4.5.2 Ancient Syriac texts

4.5.2.1 Brief mention of Jeremiah’s Complaints (other than Ephrem)

4.5.2.1.1 2 Baruch = Syriac Apocalypse (probably between 70 and 135 C.E.)³⁵⁶

³⁵³ Ibid., 573.

³⁵⁴ Van Rompay, “La littérature exégétique . . .,” 234, my translation.

³⁵⁵ Van Rompay, “Christian Syriac . . .,” 613.

³⁵⁶ *The Apocalypse of Baruch* (trans. and ed. by R. H. Charles; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896).

This work, originally in Greek, is available in a 6th century Syriac manuscript from the Ambrosian Library of Milan. It shares ideas with 2 Esdras (see Section 4.3.1.1.2.1) and 4 *Baruch* = *Paraleipomena Jeremiou* (see Section 4.4.2.2).

In 2 *Baruch* 2.1-2, God tells Jeremiah to leave the city of Jerusalem, “because your works are to this city as a firm pillar, and your prayers as a strong wall.” This corresponds closely to 4 *Baruch* 5:18, which relates that Jeremiah’s and Baruch’s prayers prevent God’s judgment on the city.

4.5.2.1.2 Aphrahat (early 4th century) *Demonstrations*³⁵⁷

Aphrahat, the “Persian Sage,” wrote in the Persian Empire at a time of persecution by the Sassanid king, Shapur II (310-379). His twenty-three “Demonstrations,” written between 337 and 345,³⁵⁸ are arranged in an alphabetic acrostic, with one additional “recapitulation of the history of salvation.”³⁵⁹ They are “based mainly on the Bible and are replete with quotations and biblical arguments” but are not primarily exegetical; rather, they concentrate on “essential aspects of Christian life.”³⁶⁰

In *Demonstration* 5.8, “About Wars,” Aphrahat relates the “stones of fire” on which the prince of Tyre walked (Ezek 28:14) to the “sons of Zion and sons of

³⁵⁷ Aphraate le Sage Persan, *Les Exposés* (vol. 2; trans. Marie-Joseph Pierre; SC 359; Paris: Cerf, 1989). Unless otherwise noted, quotations are my translations from French.

And Aphrahat, *Demonstrations I* (trans. Kuriakose Valavanolickal; Catholic Theological Studies of India 3; Changanassery, Kerala, India: HIRS Publications, 1999); and Aphrahat, *Demonstrations II* (trans. Kuriakose Valavanolickal; Moran ‘Eth’o 24; Kottayam, Kerala, India: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 2005).

And Aphrahat, *Demonstrations*, in *Patrologia Syriaca* (part 1; vol. 1; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1894, and part 1, vol. 2; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1907).

³⁵⁸ Lucas Van Rompay, “The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation. 2. Aphrahat” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* (vol. 1, part 1; ed. by Magne Saebo; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 620.

³⁵⁹ Marie-Joseph Pierre, “Introduction,” *Les Exposés*, 42.

³⁶⁰ van Rompay, 620.

Jerusalem.” The fire that will burn these stones is the word of the Lord, as in Jer 5:14, “my word in your mouth like a fire, and this people will be like wood,” and Jer 20:9, “the word of the Lord was in my heart like a burning fire, that burned in my bones.” He concludes that “Hiram, prince of Tyre, walked among the prophets, who are called stones of fire.”³⁶¹

In *Demonstration* 14.45, “Exhortations,” responding to a “quarrel and dissension” among his “brothers,” Aphrahat gives many biblical examples of teachers whose words were “reviled and contested”: Moses, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Baruch, the Savior, and Paul. In the list, Aphrahat combines and paraphrases accounts of Jeremiah: his “own brothers” hated him and “threw him into the pit” (Jer 38:6, about the king’s officials in MT); “false prophets” were sent from Babylon to keep him from prophesying (Jer 11:21, the men of Anathoth in MT); he tried not to speak, but was compelled by the “burning fire” of the word of the Lord to continue (Jer 20:9).³⁶²

In *Demonstration* 18.7, “Against the Jews on virginity,” Aphrahat connects Jer 17:16, “I have not desired the day of man,” with the Lord’s command to him not to take a wife, or to have sons or daughters (Jer 16:2). He argues against the Jewish conclusion that Jeremiah was not to have this family because they would die of hunger, retorting that “the one who gave Jeremiah favor in the eyes of the king of Babylon, if he had begotten children, would have been able to keep them from havoc and famine.”³⁶³ Aphrahat thinks that when the Lord suddenly took away Ezekiel’s

³⁶¹ Aphrahat, *Demons*. 8, 333.

³⁶² Aphrahat, *Demons*. 14.45, 695-7.

³⁶³ Aphrahat, *Demons*. 18.7, 758.

wife, the “desire of his eyes” (Ezek 24:16-18), he freed him from a “pernicious yoke.”³⁶⁴

In Demonstration 23.54, “On the cluster of grapes,” after a long rehearsal of God’s actions of salvation, Aphrahat makes a prayer “with confidence” before God. He begs that God not be “patient with our humiliation and shame,”³⁶⁵ as Jeremiah (15:15) asked, “Do not take me, in your long-suffering.”

In Demonstration 23.64, Aphrahat lays out the “great and bitter sins”³⁶⁶ of the last kings of Israel, ending with their breaking an oath “by the God of Israel” not to revolt against Nebuchadnezzar. It was when Jeremiah called them and all in Judah not to revolt that his adversaries threw him into a cistern and said, “Come, let us strike him with the tongue, and not hearken to his words” (Jer 18:18).

4.5.2.1.3 *The Book of Steps: Liber Graduum* (mid to late 4th century)³⁶⁷

This “intentionally anonymous” work for “an equally anonymous Christian community, probably located in the Persian-controlled Adiabene region,” consists of 30 *memre* or discourses, depicting “the struggle for Christian perfection” in a “picture of early asceticism evolving within Syriac ecclesiastical structures.”³⁶⁸ It shows a “two-level hierarchy” in the community: the “Upright ones,” who live and work in

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Aphrahat, *Demons*. 23.54, translated by Valavanolickal, vol. 2, 295.

³⁶⁶ Aphrahat, *Demons*. 23.64, translated by Valavanolickal, vol. 2, 305.

³⁶⁷ *The Book of Steps: the Syriac Liber Graduum* (trans. Robert A. Kitchen and Martien F. G. Parmentier; Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 2004).

³⁶⁸ Robert A. Kitchen, “Making the imperfect perfect: the adaptation of Hebrews 11 in the 9th *Memra* of the Syriac *Book of Steps*,” in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity* (ed. by Lorenzo DiTommaso and Lucian Turcescu; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 227.

the secular world, having families and serving the needy, and the “Perfect ones who are dedicated to a higher and limitless life of asceticism and prayer.”³⁶⁹

The *memre* include “biblical exegesis, exposition of the two steps” and “several exhortatory sermons.”³⁷⁰

Memra 9 considers the problem of the violence shown by the Old Testament prophets, not fitting for the Perfect ones. Though these prophets “had a love that conformed to the Ten Commandments and the New Testament” and “walked according to the will of the almighty Lord,” because the Lord “had sent them to kill their enemies,” the Lord “held them back from perfection.”³⁷¹ Because God sent Jeremiah “violently against them,” his enemies revile him (Jer 15:10).

The Lord may “cast them down even below Uprightness,” which “does not curse or harm anyone” (*Memra* 9.3). When Jeremiah tried to hold himself back from cursing them, “the thing I hate someone doing to me,” it was “the Word of the Lord” that “came upon me like fire” and compelled him to descend from Uprightness and curse them (a paraphrase of Jer 20:8-9). Because it was God who commanded him and other prophets, God caused them to “transgress unwillingly” and they were “not to blame” (*Memra* 9.4). *Memra* 9 contrasts this situation with “today,” when “God asks people to love one another and not do to their brothers, the sons of Adam, whatever detestable thing a person may do to them” (*Memra* 9.4).

³⁶⁹ Kitchen, 228.

³⁷⁰ Preface, *The Book of Steps*, x.

³⁷¹ *Memra* 9.1, *The Book of Steps*, 87.

4.5.2.1.4 Severus of Antioch (ca. 465-538) *Cathedral Homily 108*³⁷²

The *Cathedral Homilies* are sermons given between 512 and 518, while Severus was Patriarch of Antioch. Severus' strong opposition to the dogmatic formula of Chalcedon led to his flight to Egypt in 518 and subsequent condemnation by an imperial approval of a synodal edict of 536. As a result, these and other works of Severus are not available in Greek. Paul, bishop of Callicicum on the Euphrates, also exiled in 518, produced a Syriac version of the *Homilies*, which was revised by Jacob of Edessa in 701.³⁷³ The French translation by Maurice Brière is of this Syriac version.

In the *Cathedral Homilies*, “the preaching of Jeremiah is personally affirmed by Severus, who feels himself invested, like the prophet, with a public mission, in the face of the calamities which his people suffer, or the vices which disfigure the collective witness of his faith.”³⁷⁴

In *Cathedral Homily 108*, Severus answers a question brought by one of the faithful³⁷⁵ about Jer 20:14-18, Jeremiah's cursing the day of his birth and the man who brought his father the news. Severus argues that Jeremiah and Job, in such cursing, were not blaspheming, “conquered by a certain faintheartedness (μικροψυχία = ܡܝܟܪܘܨܚܝܐ) and a vile discouragement, without

³⁷² Severus of Antioch, *Homily 108, Les Homiliae Cathédrales de Sévère d'Antioche, traduction syriaque de Jacques d'Édesse* (ed. and trans. by Maurice Brière; *Homilies 104-112; Patrologia Orientalis* 25; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1976), 719-731. All translations into English are mine.

³⁷³ Pauline Allen and C. T. R. Hayward, *Severus of Antioch* (London: Routledge, 2004), 31.

³⁷⁴ Charles Kannengiesser, “Jérémie chez les Pères de l'Église. 4. Sévère,” in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (vol. 8; Paris: Beauchesne, 1974), 900. Translation from French is mine.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

nobility.”³⁷⁶ Rather, Jeremiah was “deploring mystically the general suffering of human nature,” that has come because of sexual reproduction after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, since no one can “tear out the sin of his origin and his roots.”³⁷⁷ Severus sees Jeremiah pointing prophetically to the one childbirth needed for the healing of humanity, that provided by the Mother of God.

About Jeremiah’s cursing the one who brought his father the news that a “male child” was born (Jer 20:15), Severus insists the messenger was lying. Only Christ, born of the Virgin, is truly “male.” All other humans, from the time that a woman sinned in acting first, contrary to God’s design for the male to be the “head” (*chef*), are “sick of feminization,” “paralyzed by a lack of virile and natural energy.”³⁷⁸ Only Christ, the “first born male”³⁷⁹ since the transgression of Adam, was able to conquer sin and death. Christ made all humans able to participate in his condition, removing them “from childbirth that brings forth females” and bringing them to spiritual regeneration, making them males “in whom there is no trace of the sin that feminizes.”³⁸⁰

Before Christ, humans had not received this gift and were “born for death”³⁸¹; Jeremiah is right that they would be better off not to have been born.

4.5.2.2 Ephrem (c. 306-373)

4.5.2.2.1 About texts attributed to Ephrem

³⁷⁶ Severus, *Homily* 108, 224.7, 730.

³⁷⁷ Severus, 215.5-15, 721.

³⁷⁸ Severus, 219.18, 725; 219.5, 723.

³⁷⁹ Severus, 219:8, 724.

³⁸⁰ Severus, 219.13, 17, 725.

³⁸¹ Severus, 219.18, 725.

Although Ephrem was a prolific writer, many works attributed to him are almost certainly not his. His writings, all in Syriac, were translated into “nearly every language of the Christian world: Greek, Armenian, Latin, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Slavonic, Georgian, and Syro-Palestinian.”³⁸²

“The Greek works attributed to Ephraem, while sometimes reflecting his spiritual teaching, do not for the most part come from his pen,” but rather from a “Graeco-Syrian monastic establishment” that “helped to produce an icon of Ephraem, the monastic paragon, that owed little to what we know of the Syrian teacher and biblical commentator.”³⁸³ These texts “do not exist in Syriac, and are almost certainly not by Ephrem.”³⁸⁴ Works found in Armenian are more likely to be genuine.³⁸⁵

Ephrem was known as an exegete of Scripture. He wrote prose commentaries and verse “homilies” (*memre*) and “teaching songs” (*madrashē*). Among the many Old Testament commentaries attributed to Ephrem, “only the Syriac commentaries on Genesis and Exodus are generally considered by modern scholars as likely to be in large part genuine works of Ephraem.”³⁸⁶

The three texts considered in this dissertation are all dubiously attributed to Ephrem. The *Epistola ad Montanos*, a prose Letter to the Mountain Ascetics, found

³⁸² “General Introduction,” *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Selected Prose Works* (trans. by Edward G. Mathews, Jr. and Joseph P. Amar; ed. by Kathleen McVey; The Fathers of the Church 91; Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 39.

³⁸³ Sidney H. Griffith, “Ephraem the Exegete: Biblical Commentary in the Works of Ephraem the Syrian,” in Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (vol. 2; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1396.

³⁸⁴ “General Introduction,” 39.

³⁸⁵ “General Introduction,” 40.

³⁸⁶ Griffith, 1402-3.

in Syriac, is not considered genuine by Beck, largely because it reflects monastic conditions later than the time of Ephrem.³⁸⁷

There are doubts about the authenticity of *Exposition of the Gospel*, “an anti-Marcionite work attributed to Ephraem and preserved only in Armenian.”³⁸⁸ Its translator, George Egan, however, thinks that “only Ephrem Syrus fits the facts of the situation”³⁸⁹ given in this treatise.

The text of the lengthy commentary on Jeremiah (Section 4.5.2.2.3), found in Assemani’s Roman edition of Ephrem’s works, is almost certainly not by Ephrem. Rather, it “is taken from an exegetical chain of Jacobite origin, from the 9th century.”³⁹⁰ This *Catena Patrum*, compiled by Severus of Antioch in 861 C. E., contains “extracts and abstracts from many writers, including Jacob of Edessa and Greek Fathers such as S. Basil,”³⁹¹ called by Severus “a *commentary in short*, mainly based on Ephrem and Jacob of Edessa.”³⁹²

The Assemani edition, “one of the most confusing and misleading works ever published,”³⁹³ “swarms with errors.”³⁹⁴ It also provides a Latin paraphrase by Peter Mobarek; this differs often from the Syriac. The attribution of this commentary to

³⁸⁷ Edmond Beck, “Vorwort,” in *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones IV* (ed. and trans. by Edmond Beck; CSCO 335; Scriptores Syri 149; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1973), xi.

³⁸⁸ Griffith, 1405.

³⁸⁹ George A. Egan, “Introduction,” in *Saint Ephrem, An Exposition of the Gospel* (ed. by George A. Egan; CSCO 291; Scriptores Armeniaci 5; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1968), xviii.

³⁹⁰ Charles Kannengiesser, “Jérémie II. Chez les pères de l’Église,” in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (vol. 8; Paris: Beauchesne, 1974), 892. Translation from French is mine.

³⁹¹ F. Crawford Burkitt, *S. Ephraim’s Quotations from the Gospel* (Texts and Studies; Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature; Vol. 7, No. 2; Cambridge: University Press, 1901; reprinted by Kraus Reprint Limited; Nendeln/Liechtenstein, 1967), 87.

³⁹² Bas ter Haar Romeny, “Ephrem and Jacob of Edessa in the Commentary of the Monk Severus,” in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock* (ed. by George A. Kiraz; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008), 540.

³⁹³ F. Crawford Burkitt, 4.

³⁹⁴ Edmond Beck, “Éphrem le Syrien (saint),” in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (Vol. 4; Paris: Beauchesne, 1960), 790. Translation from French is mine.

Ephrem may come from “a certain school tradition.”³⁹⁵ Though not by Ephrem, these “precious vestiges” may be useful witnesses to Syriac interpretation, “notwithstanding the approximate character of the *scholia* transmitted by the catenist and in spite of the liberties taken by the Latin translator.”³⁹⁶

The two other texts, also probably not from Ephrem, may also show valuable aspects of Syriac interpretation.

4.5.2.2.2 Brief mentions of Jeremiah’s Complaints

4.5.2.2.2.1 “Ephrem,” *Epistola ad Montanos*, *Sermon 4*³⁹⁷

Ephrem connects the fire that the Lord came to throw upon the earth (Luke 12:49) with the Word of God. He presents the experience of a householder into whose house fire is thrown, who seeks to rescue valuables, as a metaphor for human response to the fire of the Word of God that fell on the earth. As the householder flees to mountains, valleys, and ravines, so humans flee from the fire of the Word of God. As a householder carries away any possible treasure, so they “let their riches ascend to heaven in their gifts” and “follow their treasure with a tranquil spirit.”³⁹⁸ They do not look back toward what is being burned.

“Because he promised the heavenly kingdom to them,”³⁹⁹ the fire burns within them, as in Jer 20:9 (quoted from the Peshitta). It is the fire of the love of Christ that blazes in the wise, “because his Word burns in them.”⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁵ Griffith, 1403.

³⁹⁶ Kannengiesser, “Jérémie II . . .,” 892. Translation from French is mine.

³⁹⁷ Ephrem, *Epistola ad Montanos*, in *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones IV* (ed. and trans. by Edmund Beck; *CSCO* 334, *Scriptores Syri* 148 (Syriac) and *CSCO* 335, *Scriptores Syri* 149 (German translation); Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1973). All translations into English are mine.

³⁹⁸ Ephrem, *Epistola*, *CSCO* 335, 46.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

4.5.2.2.2 “Ephrem,” *Exposition of the Gospel 19-20*⁴⁰¹

In *Exposition* 19-21, Ephrem speaks of the teaching of the Lord as fire, connecting it with the fire that the Lord came to throw upon the earth (Luke 12:49). He cites God’s word to Jeremiah, “I give my words in your mouth, Jeremiah, as fire, and this people shall be as wood, and you shall consume them” (Jer 5:14, paraphrased), and Jeremiah’s complaint in 20:9, “thy oracles in my mouth were as fire, for it is enflamed and burns in all my bones” (also paraphrased, in words different from the Peshitta). These were words of prophecy, “the rejoicer and helper of Jeremiah,”⁴⁰² that did not harm but aided him.

Because Jesus called his teachings fire, he made “clear that they are the same as the former prophecy.”⁴⁰³ This fire of the Lord “in our hearts gives pleasure to us,” “if we shall be firm and true through faith,” and “intoxicates and urges us to preach the way and to perfect it, as Jeremiah.”⁴⁰⁴

In both of these uses of Jer 20:9, the fire of the Word of God is perceived as powerful but a welcome gift. In both, Jeremiah is presented as a model of faith, rather than as complainer.

⁴⁰¹ Ephrem, *Saint Ephrem: an Exposition of the Gospel* (trans. George A. Egan; CSCO 292; Scriptores Armeniaci 6; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusCSCO, 1968), 13.

⁴⁰² Ephrem, *Exposition* 20.19, 13.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 20.15, 13.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 20.25-28, 13.

4.5.2.2.3 “Ephrem,” *In Jeremiam Prophetam*⁴⁰⁵

“Ephrem” first cites many verses of Jeremiah, usually in words identical to those of the Peshitta. Long or short commentary follows, which looks carefully at the experiences of Jeremiah, often citing similar Old Testament passages; it only rarely refers to Christ.

Jer 4:10 “Ephrem”’s quotation of Jer 4:10 follows the Peshitta, other than lacking “Jerusalem,” among those “you led astray.” The prophet spoke of the devastation of the “sword” coming “as far as the life,” and the “peace” that the Lord had promised, leading people astray. This peace, that the prophet had anticipated being for his own people, is rather “kept for perfection, the time that the Messiah will come, and fulfill the words of the prophets.”

Jer 11:19-20 The quotation of Jer 11:19-20 follows the Peshitta. How the men of Anathoth “took counsel concerning the death of Jeremiah” was in saying, “Let us destroy (ܐܝܬܝܢ) a tree/wood in/with its food/bread.” “Ephrem” gives two interpretations, one as “Let us give (ܐܝܬܝܢ) wood to him as food,” which means “striking him with the wood,” in which he “swallowed up blows”; or “crucifying him.” A second interpretation, of “Let us destroy the wood,” consists of “burning him up,” as wood is destroyed in “bread that is being baked.”

⁴⁰⁵ Ephraem, *In Jeremiam Prophetam*, Pages 98-132 in *Sancti patris nostri Ephraem Syri Opera omnia quae exstant Graece, Syriace, Latine: in sex tomos distribuata: ad mss Codices Vaticanos alioque castigata, multis aucta, interpretatione, praefationibus, notis, variantibus lectionibus illustrata* . . . (vol. 2; Rome: Ex typographia Vaticana, Jo. Mariae Henrici Salvioni, 1732-1746). Cited 7 May 2010. Online at Syriac Studies Reference Library: <http://contentdm.lib.bvu.edu/cdm4/results.php?CISOPI=all&CISOFIELD1> or <http://www.lib.bvu.edu/dlib/cua>. Translations from Syriac are mine.

Here the “type is mystically shown forth in Jeremiah,” as “the Jews destroyed him, baking not with wood but with stones.” It is perfected in “our Lord,” as “they destroyed the tree with its bread,” by crucifying “him upon a tree.”

Jer 12:1 In considering Jeremiah’s question in Jer 12:1 about why the way of the wicked prospers, “Ephrem” refers to Job, David, and Habakkuk, who also wondered at the “mystery of [God’s] patient endurance.” Since God’s “spirit was good and longsuffering toward the sons of Adam,” he promised “good things” to the penitent. Jeremiah is therefore a “sign” to the Jews, “calling and exhorting to service to their God.”

Jer 15:10-11, 17-18 Jeremiah’s complaints in Jer 15:10-11 and 15:17-18 follow the Peshitta. “All the land” (15:10) is taken as the “land of Israel, and the peoples against whom he prophesied hard things.” “Ephrem” again connects Jeremiah’s complaint with that of Habakkuk, “Why have you shown me iniquity and deceit, and I see rapine and evil before me?” (Hab 1:3). As in the Peshitta, God’s words in Jer 15:11, “I will not abandon you, in what is good,” are taken as a promise to Jeremiah, “that help that is prepared for him later will come to fruition.” This will come “by the hand of the Chaldeans, who hate his people”; this will fulfill the word of his prophecy.

“Ephrem” does not cite or comment on Jer 15:12-16. The “congregation of the scoffers” (Jer 15:17) among whom Jeremiah has not sat, are “the prophets of deceit,” who mocked him, as he prophesied “bad things prepared for us.” The “wrath” with which he was filled was “for the way of life of the prophets . . . and the people.”

The “false, lying waters, that were not trustworthy” (Jer 15:18) are the “waters of trial” (מִי מִנִּיחַ) prescribed in Num 5:18 (מִי מִנִּיחַ מִי מִנִּיחַ).

This “water of bitterness” was to distinguish between a woman who has in fact committed adultery and one whose husband suspected her unjustly. Here Jeremiah has seen priests being “false, lying waters,” negligent, deceitful, not trustworthy, and not distinguishing between “the wicked” and “those who did not do wickedly.” For “Ephrem,” Jeremiah asks God not to be like such “lying waters,” but rather to make clear distinctions.

Jer 17:16-18 “Ephrem” does not cite or comment on Jer 17:14-15; citation of Jer 17:16-18 follows the Peshitta, with one exception. In Jer 17:16, “I did not cease from you in wickedness” means “when those hating me were pursuing me, I did not turn my face from you.” As in the Peshitta and LXX, it is “the day of man” that Jeremiah did not desire. “Ephrem” takes this as “the day of his marriage feast” or “good things that men desire.” All that “went out from my lips” is his prophecy.

In Jer 17:17, the citation adds “my prophecy.” Thus, the cry is that “my prophecy,” rather than “you,” not be for “ruin.” In Jer 17:18, it is the “wicked who are attacking me to kill me” on which Jeremiah desires “double destruction.”

Jer 18:18-21 In comments on Jer 18:18, “Ephrem” gives many possible interpretations. Jeremiah’s opponents, priests, the wise, and prophets, thought that they and the law would perish either from his prophecy, or at his death. They were “persuading the people that they had cause to persecute” Jeremiah, because he was “a deceitful and lying man, who proclaims slaughter to the priesthood, the law, and

prophecy,” “presuming to bring these to an end, that were not being destroyed.”

They intend to “strike with the tongue” the one who “causes pain to us with his tongue.”

His opponents repay “evil for good” to the one who “sought the redemption of murderers, when begging mercy” from God (Jer 18:20). “Ephrem” is concerned about whether Jeremiah, in asking that “their sons” be given to “famine” (Jer 18:21), is “seeking for vengeance” in “an evil inclination of his nature.” Rather, this is “a fitting revelation of the prophet,” relating “judgment sufficient to” iniquity.

Jer 20:7 “Ephrem” takes Jer 20:7, “You enticed me, O Lord, and I was enticed” (as in the Peshitta), to refer to “in that he said he was to be a prophet for him,” citing Jer 1:10. Considering Jer 1:19, “that they will fight with him and will not conquer him,” Jeremiah saw only “the distress in that time” and not “his future departure.” “Ephrem” considers that, in thus “refusing,” “perhaps he erred from the path of propriety.”

Jer 20:14 Jeremiah’s cursing the day that he was born (Jer 20:14, in words very similar to the Peshitta) and the man who thought to gladden his father by the news, “Ephrem” considers “words that were undisciplined,” “of no sense,” “only signs of the pain” that he was suffering. “Ephrem” notes that “the spirit says,” of similar words from Job, “that he did not sin or blaspheme against God with his lips.” Noting “greater” words in the Psalms, “Ephrem” declares that “it is not proper to confuse the words of the prophets with the utterances of the rest of upright men,” and again notes that Jeremiah, rather than “seeking vengeance in human form,” was “prophesying about what was to come.” These words, “concealed from us and above our mind,”

Jeremiah wrote “by means of the words of the spirit,” “determined for them, for the prophets.”

The *catena* of interpretations of the complaints of Jeremiah ascribed to Ephrem focuses on the experiences of the prophet. Only in consideration of Jer 11:19 is Jeremiah considered a “type” of Christ. Even here are interpretations in addition to the identification of the “wood” with the cross, traditional in Greek and Latin *testimonia*.

The commentary shows concern about whether Jeremiah gives in to a human desire for vengeance, but concludes that the harsh words in Jer 18:21 and 20:14 reflected prophecy of what was in fact to come to the wicked.

The reading of the “lying waters, that were not trustworthy” (Jer 15:18), as the priests’ misuse of the bitter waters that discriminated between a sinful and a falsely accused woman (Num 5:18), is unusual. Jeremiah’s plea to God, that God not be false like the priests, but show clearly who acts wickedly and who does not, is consonant with his question in Jer 12:1 about why the wicked prosper.

In asking that “my prophecy,” rather than “you” (the Lord), not be “ruin” for him (Jer 17:17), “Ephrem’s” citation softens Jeremiah’s cry slightly. Other complaints, in Jer 4:10 and 20:7, are not softened, but the commentary does consider Jeremiah’s limitations. In accusing God of “enticing” him, Jeremiah may have “erred from the path of propriety,” In cursing the day of his birth and the man who thought to gladden his father, Jeremiah spoke words “of no sense” that simply showed his pain. “Ephrem” warns readers, however, not to “confuse the words of the prophets

with the utterances of the rest of upright men,” for what is “concealed from us and above our mind” was written “by means of the words of the spirit.”

4.5.3 Medieval Syriac texts

4.5.3.1 Theodore bar Koni (792), *Scholion*⁴⁰⁶

The *Scholion* of Theodore bar Koni, a “teacher in the Nestorian school at Kaskar in Iraq,”⁴⁰⁷ presents “a compilation of all that is best and most useful in the works of the major teachers in his tradition”,⁴⁰⁸ as an “exposition of Christian faith, in the form of a long catechism proceeding by questions and answers.”⁴⁰⁹ It “consists of eleven chapters or treatises (*memre*),” of which “the first nine contain questions and answers about passages in the Old and New Testaments.”⁴¹⁰ These “summary discussions of difficult or obscure passages in the scriptures” are called *scholia*, following Jerome.⁴¹¹ At the end of his discussion of each book or group of books, Theodore gives “brief interpretations of difficult words and phrases.”⁴¹²

The latter prophets are discussed in the fourth chapter (*Memra* 4). In *Memra* 4.41, about “the sense of words in Jeremiah,” Theodore refers to two of Jeremiah’s complaints.

⁴⁰⁶ Theodore bar Koni, *Livre des Scolies I. Mimre I-V* (French text: Seert recension; trans. by Robert Hespel and René Draguet; CSCO 431; Scriptorum Syri 187; Louvain: E. Peeters, 1981; and Syriac text: CSCO Scriptorum Syri Series Secunda 65; Paris: Charles Poussielgue; and Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1910). Translations from French are mine.

⁴⁰⁷ Sidney Griffith, “Theodore bar Koni’s *Scholion*: a Nestorian *Summa Contra Gentiles* from the first Abbasid century,” in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (ed. by Nina G. Barsoian et al.; Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Center for Byzantine Studies, 1982), 54.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁰⁹ Theodore bar Koni, “Introduction,” *Livre des Scolies*, 2.

⁴¹⁰ Griffith, 55.

⁴¹¹ Griffith, 58.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 63.

Jer 12:1 About Jer 12:1, “Why does the way of the wicked prosper?”,

Theodore maintains that this is “not that he blames, but in order to learn,” citing Ps 10:1 (“Why do you stay far, O Lord?”) and Hab 1:2 (“How long, O Lord, shall I cry without your hearing?”).

Jer 15:18 The “lying waters” of Jer 15:18 are “the waters that run for a short time in torrent and which disappear rapidly,” or “mirages which are seen by the thirsty in the summer.”⁴¹³ Theodore does not discuss Jeremiah’s plea that the Lord not be like these.

4.5.3.2 Išoʿdad of Merv (c. 850), *Commentary on Jeremiah*⁴¹⁴

The commentary of Išoʿdad of Merv on the prophets is the “only continuous” Nestorian commentary preserved, the “most complete witness to Nestorian exegesis of the prophets.”⁴¹⁵ In the commentary on Jeremiah, “all the prophecies are applied directly, and with one exception [Jer 23:5] to pre-Christian facts.”⁴¹⁶ The commentary cites the biblical text in Syriac, Greek, and Hebrew. Many passages are similar to those in Theodore bar Koni’s *Scholion*, especially in consideration of “difficult” biblical words; this may imply use of a common source.⁴¹⁷

Except for Jer 4:10, Išoʿdad comments on at least some part of each of the complaints of Jeremiah. In each case, he first quotes the Syriac, in words identical to those of the Peshitta.

⁴¹³ Theodore bar Koni, *Memra* 4.41.15, 19.

⁴¹⁴ Išoʿdad of Merv, *Commentaire d’Išoʿdad de Merv sur l’Ancien Testament V. Jérémie, Ézéchiél, Daniel* (ed. by Ceslas van den Eynde; CSCO 328; Scriptorum Syri 146 (Syriac text); trans. by Ceslas van den Eynde; CSCO 329; Scriptorum Syri 147 (French translation); Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1972). Translations from French are mine.

⁴¹⁵ Išoʿdad of Merv, “Preface,” xxiii.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vi.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, xxii.

Jer 11:19 In consideration of Jer 11:19, Išoʿdad takes the Syriac, “let us destroy the tree with its bread,” to mean, “the tree with its fruits.” The tree is the person of the prophet; its fruits are his words. Jeremiah’s enemies hope to destroy both the prophet and the words “by which he prophesied disasters against us.” Citing the Greek, “Let us throw wood into his food,” Išoʿdad then adds another possibility, “Let us mix wood, some deadly poison, with his food, so that he may die.”

Jer 12:1 Išoʿdad agrees with Theodore bar Koni that Jeremiah’s “I am speaking judgment before you” (Jer 12:1) is not a reproach toward God, but rather, that “I want to learn” and “to teach others.” Many prophets have spoken similarly, “not that they blamed God and his mercy, but because they saw many commit crimes without correction . . . and wanted to know why such occasions for crimes were given to them.”

Jer 15:10 Jeremiah’s complaint, “Woe to me, my mother, that you bore me!” (Jer 15:10) is the beginning of the prophet’s telling “the afflictions that his compatriots made him suffer because he prophesied to them.” Jeremiah calls himself “judge” and “accuser,” not because his parents or God commanded this, but because he prophesied judgment and accusation.

Jer 15:11 Išoʿdad takes God’s words in Jer 15:11 to mean that it is the people, not Jeremiah, that God will not “leave [rather than “forsake”] in what is good.”

Jer 15:17-18 In Jer 15:17, God has filled Jeremiah with anger by giving him knowledge of all the evil actions of the people. Išoʿdad quotes Eccl 1:18, that “one who increases knowledge increases sorrow.” In Jer 15:18, the “pain” of which

Jeremiah complains is “spiritual pain,” from not seeing his prophetic words fulfilled, and suffering the mockery of the people. “Lying waters, not trustworthy,” come from rain or snow; they last only a short time, since they are not replenished from springs. It is the words of his prophecy that are like these, “for I speak every day but they do not come to pass, and I am mocked as an imposter.”

Jer 17:16 The “day of man” that Jeremiah “did not desire” (Jer 17:16, as in the Peshitta and LXX, but not MT) Išoʿdad takes as “the honors, the desirable goods, the commerce, and the life of the world or of man.” He quotes John 8:56, that “he desired to see my day,” to indicate that “I desired your commandments more than all the desirable things of the world.”

Jer 18:18 In Išoʿdad’s view, Jeremiah’s opponents, saying, “the law will not perish from the priests, nor intelligence from the wise, nor a word from the prophets” (Jer 18:18), thought that “if Jeremiah is allowed to prophesy, the people will be persuaded by him, and, as a result, respect for the priests, the guardians of the law, will diminish; the law itself, full of good for the people, will be abolished; the thoughts of the wise, our counselors and our teachers, will be underrated; and the prophecy that strengthens and encourages us, and also promises us good on the part of God, will be disparaged.” Išoʿdad compares this to what was said about the Savior, “If we let him do this, all will believe in him” (John 11:48).

Jeremiah’s enemies’ words, “Come, let us strike him with his tongue,” mean, “Let us suppress him, so that he may speak no more and no more make the sound of his words heard.”

Jer 20:7 Išoʿdad takes Jeremiah’s “You have enticed me” (Jer 20:7) to refer to the beginning of his acting as a prophet. “And I was enticed” means that he did not wish to do this. Išoʿdad does not comment further on this complaint.

Jer 20:14 For Išoʿdad, Jeremiah’s cursing of the day he was born (Jer 20:14) does not mean that he was cursing the day or hated his life. Rather, by “day” he aims at “those who beset him so that he may also suffer the curse, in the way he curses the days and the messenger.” He also speaks this way to “indicate the wickedness of his compatriots.”

The commentary of Išoʿdad of Merv on the complaints of Jeremiah focuses on the words and experiences of Jeremiah, without relating them to Christ, except for one specific reference. In this, he sees an analogy between Christ’s adversaries’ worries that people would believe in him and Jeremiah’s adversaries’ similar worries (Jer 18:18), but does not refer to Jeremiah as a “type” of Christ.

Išoʿdad reads the “wood/tree” in Jer 11:19 as referring either to the prophet himself or to poison put in his food. He makes no reference to the Greek and Latin *Testimonia* tradition of reading this wood as the cross.

Išoʿdad continues his focus on Jeremiah’s experiences by reading the “lying waters, untrustworthy” (Jer 15:18) as Jeremiah’s own perception of his unfulfilled prophecies. There is no question of either God (as in MT) or Jeremiah’s wound (as in LXX and the Peshitta) acting as “lying waters.” Išoʿdad makes it clear that it is Jeremiah’s own assessment, rather than God’s command, that makes him describe

himself as “judge” (15:11). Išoʿdad does not comment on the merits of Jeremiah’s outburst in 20:7, but simply relates it to Jeremiah’s call.

In his focus on Jeremiah’s experiences, Išoʿdad attributes Jeremiah’s complaints to Jeremiah’s suffering at the hands of his enemies. Except in comment about Jer 12:1, where Jeremiah’s question about the prosperity of the wicked is read as a request for enlightenment, not a reproach against God, he does not address the propriety of Jeremiah’s language, addressed to God.

4.5.3.3 Dionysius Bar Salibi (“first quarter of 12th century”⁴¹⁸-1171), *Commentary on Jeremiah*⁴¹⁹

Dionysius Bar Salibi, baptized Jacob Bar Salibi, was a bishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church, which “defined itself in opposition to . . . the Chalcedonian churches . . . and the Syriac-speaking church in Persia, the Church of the East.”⁴²⁰ He was called “the star of his generation” by the Patriarch Michael the Great.⁴²¹ He wrote extensively, including “homilies and liturgical works; canon law; commentaries on classical and patristic texts; polemical works; theological works; biblical commentaries.”⁴²² These included “the largest and most complete commentary on the

⁴¹⁸Stephen Desmond Ryan, *Dionysius Bar Salibi’s Factual and Spiritual Commentary on Psalms 73-82* (Cahiers de la Revue Biblique 57; Paris: J. Gabalda, 2004), 4

⁴¹⁹Edward C. V. Petch, *A Critical Edition and Translation of Dionysius Bar-Salibi’s Commentaries on Jeremiah and Lamentations* (vols 1 and 2, Ph.D. diss., The University of Sydney, 2003). All English translations of Bar Salibi’s Syriac are by Petch, Vol. 2, unless otherwise noted.

⁴²⁰Ryan, 1.

⁴²¹Ibid., 7.

⁴²²Ryan, 8.

Old testament preserved in Syriac.”⁴²³ For most books, this was a dual commentary: a “factual” or “literal” (ܠܒܝܬܐ) and a “spiritual” (ܠܒܝܬܐ ܕܪܘܚܢܐ).⁴²⁴

For the book of Jeremiah, Bar Salibi wrote three commentaries, in which there is not “a clear distinction between ‘literal’ and ‘spiritual.’”⁴²⁵ He describes the first as “upon the authority of the Septuagint,”⁴²⁶ the second, “according to the wording of the Peshitta,”⁴²⁷ and the third, “a mixture of literal and spiritual.”⁴²⁸ He uses the term “Septuagint” to refer to the Syro-Hexapla.⁴²⁹ The first commentary has more quotations from the Syro-Hexapla, fewer from Išo‘dad of Merv, and some allegorical or Christological *scholia*; it may be called “spiritual.”⁴³⁰

For each verse or part of verse, Bar Salibi first quotes the biblical phrase in Syriac, from either the Syro-Hexapla or the Peshitta, then adds interpretation. He quotes extensively from earlier interpreters, especially Išo‘dad of Merv; a “clear intent of the author was to record the opinions of previous commentators.”⁴³¹ From the brevity of the biblical quotations, Petch concludes that the commentary “was meant to be read *along side* a text of Jeremiah, and not in place of it or as a separate work inspired by it,”⁴³² to “expound the meaning of difficult or opaque verses.”⁴³³

⁴²³ Ryan, 14.

⁴²⁴ Ryan, xviii.

⁴²⁵ Petch, Vol. 1, 5.

⁴²⁶ Petch, Vol. 2, 2.

⁴²⁷ Petch, Vol. 2, 13.

⁴²⁸ Petch, Vol. 2, 50.

⁴²⁹ Petch, Vol. 2, 150, n.3.

⁴³⁰ Petch, Vol. 1, 7.

⁴³¹ Petch, Vol. 1, 10.

⁴³² Petch, Vol. 1, 12.

⁴³³ Petch, Vol. 1, 14.

Jer 4:10 In comment on Jer 4:10 (BS III, 60), Bar Salibi takes אֲנִי בָּבֶלֶת (“I pray”) as “a petition on [the] behalf [of the people].” When Jeremiah says, “How utterly you have deceived” (אֲנִי בָּבֶלֶת אֲנִי בָּבֶלֶת, “led astray”) he means that he is now seen as an “imposter” by the people, because he “had been proclaiming peace to them by these earlier (things), and now you command me that I should speak (of) the sword and exile approaching and standing at the gate.” This relates the people’s experience of deception to Jeremiah, rather than to the Lord.

Jer 11:18 In comment on Jer 11:18 (BS III, 76), Bar Salibi takes the Syriac **ܕܡܝܢ** as an imperative, “show me!”, agreeing with LXX, rather than as a perfect, “he showed me,” as in MT, V, and Tg. This is the prophet’s prayer “that he might be

separated from the wickedness” of the people and shown what they “are planning against me.” This prayer he sees answered, “Truly you showed me.”

Jer 11:19 Bar Salibi paraphrases Išoʿdad of Merv, about Jer 11:19, “Let us destroy the tree with its bread,” in both BS II (24) and BS III (76). Here, the “tree” is Jeremiah’s “individual existence” and its fruit (“its bread”), “the words of his prophecy.” In BS II, Bar Salibi adds that the “tree” may be the cross of Christ, “whom the Jews destroyed, by the cross.” Petch notes that this could also be translated, “that the Jews destroyed *the tree* on its cross,” referring to “the concept of Jesus as the tree of which Christians are the branches.”⁴³⁴

Jer 12:1 In comment on Jer 12:1, “you are in the right, O Lord, when I lay my case before you,” Bar Salibi notes that Jeremiah is “marveling at divine providence” (BS III, 76). In both BS II (24) and BS III (76), he quotes Išoʿdad, that this means that Jeremiah is “willing to learn,” so that he “might teach others,” about why God “is patient in his Spirit toward the impious, without punishment.” In BS II (25), about Jer 12:2, he takes Jeremiah’s cry, “You planted them,” to indicate “a planting from Abram,” resulting in “thousands and thousands” in the “days of David.”

Jer 15:10 In BS III (82), on Jer 15:10, Bar Salibi quotes Išoʿdad, that Jeremiah’s cry of woe against his mother is the beginning of his telling “the sufferings that he endured from the people, because of his prophetic gift,” and that it “is not the parent who bore him that he rebukes, but the people.” As in Išoʿdad, the “man of judgment and man of rebuke” are what Jeremiah “names himself.” In BS II (26), on Jer 15:10,

⁴³⁴ Petch, Vol. 2, 154, n. 62.

it was “because of my difficult prophecy that was about them” that “all of them curse me.”

Jer 15:11 In BS III (82), on Jer 15:11, Bar Salibi agrees with Išoʿdad that “I will not leave you [ܣܒܒܐ ܐܝܬܝܢ] in what is good” refers to the people, not the prophet.

He adds that this means “without punishment, because of the things you are doing to the prophet,” and that this punishment is the Babylonian coming against them.

Jer 15:17 Bar Salibi quotes Išoʿdad, in BS II (27) and BS III (83), that the “anger” with which Jeremiah has been “filled” by God, in Jer 15:17, comes from the “knowledge that you set in me” because of the “evil deeds” of the people.

Jer 15:18 Jeremiah’s “prevailing” pain (Jer 15:18a) is his “mental pain, which was not over until he had seen the outcome of the words of his prophecy.” Here (BS II, 27, and BS III, 83) Bar Salibi quotes Išoʿdad, who quotes Theodore bar Koni. The “false waters” of Jer 15:18b Bar Salibi explains two ways. In both BS II (27) and BS III (83), he quotes Išoʿdad, that these are waters “from rain” that “are only for a fleeting time.” As in Išoʿdad, these Jeremiah compares to his own words “before the people,” since, after speaking, “they are no more.”

In BS II (27), Bar Salibi also paraphrases “Ephrem,” that these are waters of trial, as in Num 5:18. When the priests did not distinguish between “those who acted foolishly and those who did not act foolishly,” people were “deluded by the wickedness of the priests.”

Jer 17:14-18 Jeremiah's plea, "Heal me, O Lord" (Jer 17:14), Bar Salibi (BS III, 87) sees as his seeking that God "make an appropriate end for his messages." That Jeremiah did not "cease" (Jer 17:16) in "evil straits" (עֲלֵצָה) is taken by Bar Salibi (BS III, 87) to mean that he did not "neglect your worship." The "day of the son of man" (17:16, מִיּוֹם בְּנֵי אָדָם, as in LXX and P, but not MT) that he did not "desire" Bar Salibi reads in a possibly messianic sense. In BS II (29), this refers to "his feast, his rule, his glorious desires," in a possible paraphrase of the non-messianic reading of Išoʿdad. For BS III (87), "his rule and his ideas and the rest of his desires," Petch thinks that "Jeremiah is being portrayed as not sharing the desires of the people of his time."⁴³⁵ The prophecy, "what went out from my lips" (Jer 17:16) is, in BS II (29), "the prayer which was on behalf of his people," but was "for slaughter" (rendering "ruin"). The "double destruction" (17:18, BS II, 29) is "for the evil ones who are setting upon me to kill me," as in the commentary attributed to "Ephrem."

Jer 18:18-20 In comment on Jer 18:18, the plot by Jeremiah's adversaries, Bar Salibi quotes the same interpretation of Išoʿdad in both BS II (30-31) and BS III (88). The perceived danger is that the people will believe Jeremiah, and that therefore the "honor of the priests" and the opinions of the wise will be "held in contempt," and the Law itself will be "rendered ineffective." They therefore plot to "slay him, and not listen to the noise of his words." Bar Salibi (BS II, 31) reads אֶל־הַלֵּל in Jer 18:20

⁴³⁵ Petch, Vol. 2, 159, n. 140.

as active, “Has he repaid?” This active reading agrees with LXX, ἐῖ

ἀνταποδίδοται, “will he give back?” rather than the passive (Pual) MT הֲיִשָּׁלֵם,

“will it be repaid?” Though the passive is more likely in Syriac (Ethpeel of ܗܝܫܠܐ,

Payne-Smith, 463), Bar Salibi reads the question as “Has he repaid the evil of the slaughter in exchange for the supplication that was on their behalf?”

Jer 20:7-8 Bar Salibi presents different comments on Jer 20:7, “you enticed me,” in BS II and BS III. In BS II, he takes “you beguiled me, o Lord so I was beguiled” (Petch translation) to mean “inasmuch as he is fleeing and not prophesying as he was compelled and sent.” Using a different word from the Peshitta “you subdued me”

(ܡܫܠܬܐ), Bar Salibi takes “you won me over” (ܡܠܬܐ)⁴³⁶ to mean that, because

of this, “he turns afresh that he might speak.” In BS III (89), Bar Salibi quotes Išōʿdad, relating the “beguiling” or “enticing” to Jeremiah’s call. Here he quotes the Peshitta “you subdued me,” that “when I am not willing, (still) you sent me.” The “reproach” in Jer 20:8 Bar Salibi (BS III, 89) considers “the prophet being mocked and reproached by the people because of the message of the Lord that he had been speaking to them.”

Jer 20:14-18 Quoting Išōʿdad, Bar Salibi (BS III, 90) takes Jeremiah’s cursing the day of his birth (Jer 20:14) to mean “cursing, by virtue of the day, those who oppress

⁴³⁶ My translation, from ܡܠܬܐ, Payne-Smith, 45.

him.” The “trumpet blast at midday” (Jer 20:16, BS III, 90), that the man who announced his birth is to hear, is “of the horns of the captors coming against him . . . until everything that he has is devoured, in the likeness of the towns of the Sodomites.” The wish that his mother had been “his grave” (Jer 20:17) means that “it would have been better for me that I should die in the belly of my mother.”

Bar Salibi’s commentary on the complaints of Jeremiah focuses on Jeremiah’s experiences. Following Išoʿdad closely, often quoting him exactly, he relates each complaint to Jeremiah’s life and prophecy. Only in comment on Jer 11:19 does he mention a connection with the cross of Christ. In comment on Jer 17:16, only in BS II, with the addition of “his feast” (ܡܠܟܐ) and his “glorious” (ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ) desires, may Bar Salibi make a messianic reference.

In relating all the complaints to Jeremiah, Bar Salibi softens Jeremiah’s accusations. In Jer 4:10, it is the prophet, rather than the people, that God has led astray (“deceived”). In 12:1, Jeremiah is “marveling at God’s providence,” seeking enlightenment rather than accusing. God’s promise of 15:11 is of punishment for the people, providing justice. As in Išoʿdad, it is Jeremiah’s words, rather than God, that are like “deceptive waters.” Bar Salibi agrees with Išoʿdad that 20:7 refers to Jeremiah’s call. In BS II, on Jer 20:7, a milder, “you won me over,” rather than “you subdued me,” results in Jeremiah’s resuming prophecy.

4.5.3.4 Bar Hebraeus (1226-1286), *Auṣar Raze = Scholia on the Book of Jeremiah*⁴³⁷

Gregorius, Abu al-Faraj, “customarily called Barhebraeus,” lived through “a substantial part of the thirteenth century,” during the Mongol invasions of Western Asia.⁴³⁸ Because of his “many books on many subjects,” he may be considered “the most prominent person in the Jacobite Syrian church.”⁴³⁹

In the *Auṣar Raze*, or *Storehouse of Mysteries*, he provides *scholia* on “many passages of the bible text throughout the whole of the old testament and the new.”⁴⁴⁰ For each, he quotes the Peshitta text, gives brief commentary, often quoting other interpreters, and sometimes refers to the Greek text. He comments briefly on some parts of the complaints of Jeremiah. Although Bar Hebraeus usually uses “Bar Salibi’s works as a source for his own biblical commentaries,”⁴⁴¹ in these comments, he more often uses the commentary of Išoʿdad of Merv, sometimes as quoted by Bar Salibi.

Jer 11:19 In comment on Jer 11:19, Bar Hebraeus takes the Peshitta rendering, “Let us ruin the wood with his food,” to mean, “as wood is ruined by food which is cooked, so let us ruin it by burning the body of the prophet.” This is similar to a comment in “Ephrem,” on using wood to bake bread. Bar Hebraeus takes the Greek,

⁴³⁷ Henry Hammersley Walker, “The Scholia of Bar Hebraeus on the Book of Jeremiah” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1930). His translation of the *scholia* is the one used here.

⁴³⁸ Frank Garrett Ward, *The Scholia of Barhebraeus on the Book of the Twelve Prophets* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Libraries, 1935), 2.

⁴³⁹ Walker, 1.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ryan, xvi.

“Come, let us cast wood,” to mean “a deadly drug in his food which he will eat and die,” as in Išoʿdad.

Jer 15:11 Like Išoʿdad and Bar Salibi, Bar Hebraeus takes God’s words in Jer 15:11 to mean that it is the people, not Jeremiah, that God will not “leave [rather than “forsake”] in prosperity.”

Jer 15:17-18 The “anger” with which God has filled Jeremiah (**Jer 15:17**) is “jealousy.” Bar Hebraeus reads Jer 15:18 as, “Have I been to me like treacherous water which is not reliable?” This is a possible reading. In unpointed Syriac, the verb (ܬܠܩܬ) may be either 2nd masculine singular (“you have been”) or 1st common singular (“I have been”). In Hebrew, it may be either 3rd feminine singular (“it [the wound] will be”) or 2nd masculine singular (“you will be”); it may not be 1st common singular. Walker takes this as a question, based on context. Bar Hebraeus takes this as referring to Jeremiah: “because the anger delays, my words are not coming true.” As in Išoʿdad and Bar Salibi, this reading points to Jeremiah’s own words as “not reliable.”

Jer 17:16 The “day of mankind” that Jeremiah did not desire (Jer 17:16, as in the Peshitta and LXX, but not MT) is “worldly desires,” as in Išoʿdad.

Jer 18:18 When Jeremiah’s opponents plot, “Come on, let us think up a scheme against Jeremiah” (Jer 18:18), they are plotting “murder, since he was exposing priests and scribes and prophets.”

Jer 20:7 As in Išoʿdad and Bar Salibi (BS III), Bar Hebraeus takes

Jeremiah's cry, "Thou didst cajole me, Lord, and I was cajoled" (Jer 20:7), to refer to his agreeing to prophesy, when the Lord told him, "I have given you authority over nations and kingdoms" (Jer 1:10) and "they will struggle with you but not overcome you" (Jer 1:19).⁴⁴²

Jer 20:15 When Jeremiah curses the man who brought his father news of a baby boy (Jer 20:15), "he was not giving way to cursing the non-offender," "if he did not know that no man announced to his father."

All the *scholia* refer only to the experiences of Jeremiah; Bar Hebraeus does not mention any connection with those of Christ.

Bar Hebraeus omits or changes some of Jeremiah's strong language. He does not cite Jeremiah's questioning God about the prosperity of the wicked (Jer 12:1-2). His reading of Jer 15:18, referring it to Jeremiah, removes the possibility of accusing God of being like "treacherous waters." He does not address either the rectitude of Jeremiah's cry in 20:7 or the possibility that God might deceive.

4.5.4 Syriac "stream of tradition" in these texts

Syriac commentaries on the complaints of Jeremiah show the value given to transmitting tradition, both of Scripture and of other interpreters.

Careful attention is paid to specific words of Scripture, both in brief mentions and extended commentary. Commentaries are based on the Syriac version of each complaint, usually in words identical to the Peshitta. Where this text agrees with

⁴⁴² Note that Walker's rendering of ܠܚܝܬ as "cajole" rather than "entice" also removes some of its negative moment.

LXX and not with MT, as in Jer 17:16 (that “the day of man,” not a “disastrous day,” is what Jeremiah did not “desire”), commentaries work from the Peshitta. They make some other use of the Greek text: Bar Salibi (about Jer 11:18 and 18:20) and Išoʿdad and Bar Hebraeus (about Jer 11:19). The unpointed Syriac text allows Bar Hebraeus a reading of Jer 15:18 that differs from other commentaries.

Interpreters make numerous connections with other parts of Scripture. Since every word of Scripture is considered inspired, connections with other specific words can clarify meaning. Aphrahat connects the “fire” in Jer 20:9 with other fire in Scripture, to conclude that the prophets are “stones of fire.” Severus and “Ephrem” (*Jeremiah*) connect Jeremiah with Job, both cursing the day of birth (Jer 20:14). “Ephrem” sees Jeremiah’s question about the prosperity of the wicked (Jer 12:1) as part of a tradition including Job, David (the Psalms), and Habakkuk; for this text, Theodore bar Koni also cites a psalm and Habakkuk. “Ephrem” and Bar Salibi think the “lying waters” (Jer 15:18) are the “bitter waters” of Num 5:18. Išoʿdad relates Jeremiah’s unhappy knowledge in 15:17 to Eccl 1:18, the “day” that he did not desire (17:16) to a desired day in John 8:56, and Jeremiah’s opponents’ worries in 18:18 to those of Christ in John 11:48. Bar Salibi relates God’s “planting” in Jer 12:2 to God’s planting of Abram, and its flourishing by David’s time.

In all these connections, there are few references to Christ. Most interpreters, before and after Theodore of Mopsuestia and his rules for interpretation, looked first at the immediate context of texts. They related to Christ only texts whose Christological meaning was clearly superior to that understood by the texts’ first readers.

Aphrahat lists “the Savior” among the many whose words were “reviled and contested.” Only “Ephrem,” commenting on Jer 11:19, sees Jeremiah as a “type,” whose perfection is shown in Christ. For Severus, Jeremiah’s cursing the day of his birth points prophetically to the one childbirth needed by humanity, that provided by the Mother of God, who gave birth to the only person “truly male.”

Išo‘dad relates the fear of Jeremiah’s opponents that people would believe him, rather than them, to similar worries by opponents of Christ. In comment on Jer 4:10, “Ephrem” explains that the peace, that Jeremiah proclaimed and thought would be for his time, was actually for the time of the Messiah. One of Bar Salibi’s comments on Jer 17:16, about “the day of the son of man,” may also refer to the Messiah’s “feast, rule, and glorious desires.”

There are also few connections with church doctrine or daily life. Aphrahat relates Jer 17:16, “I did not desire the day of man,” to God’s command to Jeremiah not to marry or have children, and to the benefits of virginity. The *Book of Steps* contrasts violence and curses proclaimed by the prophets, including Jeremiah, with perfection of Uprightness. Severus relates Jeremiah’s cursing the day of his birth to the miserable condition of humanity resulting from sexual reproduction since Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden.

The overwhelming focus in the extended commentaries is on the experiences of the prophet Jeremiah. This emphasis serves to soften a few of Jeremiah’s complaints by changing the focus from God’s actions to those of the prophet and his opponents.

Commentary on specific verses shows some of a Syriac “stream of tradition,” in which interpreters use some but not all of earlier views.

Jer 11:19 Commentaries give different interpretations of Jeremiah’s opponents’ plot, “Let us destroy the tree in its bread” (Jer 11:19). “Ephrem” provides two possibilities. The first, possibly related to the Greek (“let us give wood into his bread”), means “striking him with wood” and may mean “crucifying.” Here Jeremiah provides the type that is fulfilled in Christ. “Ephrem’s” second view, using “destroy,” shows plans to burn up Jeremiah, as wood is consumed in baking bread. Bar Hebraeus uses this second view as one possibility.

Išoʿdad gives two different possibilities. Taking the “tree” as the prophet and “its fruit” (its “bread”) as his words, they plan to destroy both. Citing the Greek, “let us throw,” Išoʿdad thinks that they plan to throw deadly poison into his food. Bar Salibi agrees with the first; Bar Hebraeus with the second. Bar Salibi also thinks that the “tree” may be the cross of Christ. Only he and “Ephrem” relate this verse to Christ.

Jer 15:18 The “lying, not trustworthy” waters of Jer 15:18 are taken by “Ephrem” as the “bitter waters” of Num 5:18, which priests used to distinguish between right and wrong accusations of adultery. Since priests in Jeremiah’s day did not make right distinctions, “Ephrem” and Bar Salibi (BS II) saw them deluding the people. In a very different interpretation, these “lying waters” are taken by Theodore bar Koni, followed by Išoʿdad and Bar Salibi (BS III), as waters from a torrent, from rain or snow, rather than from a spring, that then vanish. They, and also Bar Hebraeus, relate these to Jeremiah’s perceptions of his unfulfilled prophecies. None

of these addresses the propriety of Jeremiah's plea that God not be like these waters.

Jer 17:16 The "day of man" or "day of the son of man" (Jer 17:16, יְדֵי־בְנֵי־אָדָם) that Jeremiah "did not desire" is taken by all to be worldly desires.

Aphrahat and "Ephrem" relate this to marriage; Išo'dad and Bar Hebraeus to various desirable goods in the life of the world. Only Bar Salibi makes a possible connection to the rule of the Messiah.

Jer 20:7 "Ephrem," Išo'dad, Bar Salibi, and Bar Hebraeus agree that Jer 20:7, "you enticed me," refers to Jeremiah's call to prophesy. All relate this to Jeremiah's initial call, which he resisted. Bar Salibi (BS II) also points to Jeremiah's subsequent "fleeing and not prophesying . . . as he was sent." When God "won him over" (20:7), Jeremiah spoke anew.

Jer 20:14 When Jeremiah curses the day of his birth (20:14), Severus thinks that he was not showing "faintheartedness" but rather reflecting in general on humanity's miserable condition. "Ephrem," however, considers these words to be "of no sense," coming out of the prophet's pain. Išo'dad, followed by Bar Salibi, thinks the word "day" is a figure, in which the curse applies to those oppressing the prophet.

These commentaries address the propriety of Jeremiah's strong words only obliquely. Severus makes clear that Jeremiah's cursing the day of his birth was not an ignoble act, but an accurate prophetic description of the human condition.

"Ephrem" (Jeremiah) considers Jeremiah's violent words in 18:21 to come not "from

evil inclination” but rather as a revelation of fitting judgment. He does think that Jeremiah may be “erring from the path of propriety,” when he cries, “You enticed me” (20:7). “Ephrem” also considers Jeremiah’s cursing the day of his birth a result of his pain, “words of no sense.” “Ephrem” in *The Exposition of the Gospel*, however, sees Jeremiah as a model of faith, to whom the Word of God is welcome and a joy.

The *Book of Steps*, concerned about the curses and violence proclaimed by all the prophets, which is not fitting for the Perfect ones, concludes that it was God who commanded these, who made the prophets “transgress unwillingly,” and that therefore they were “not to blame.” When Jeremiah asks God about why the wicked prosper (Jer 12:1), Theodore bar Koni, followed by Išoʿdad and Bar Salibi, sees this not as Jeremiah blaming, but seeking to learn from God.

A few instances of possible softening of Jeremiah’s complaints occur in “Ephrem,” Theodore bar Koni, Išoʿdad, Bar Salibi and Bar Hebraeus. In commentary on Jer 17:17, “Ephrem” adds “my prophecy,” making that, not “you” (the Lord), what might be a “ruin” for Jeremiah.

Theodore bar Koni, Išoʿdad, and Bar Salibi make it clear that Jeremiah is not reproaching God, but seeking enlightenment, in Jer 12:1. For “Ephrem,” this questioning makes Jeremiah “a sign” to the Jews.

For Bar Salibi, it is Jeremiah, not God, who is considered an imposter, in Jer 4:10. On Jer 20:7, Bar Salibi II uses a milder verb, “you won me over,” rather than “you subdued me,” to show God’s influence that resulted in Jeremiah’s resuming his

prophecy. For Bar Hebraeus, it is “I” (Jeremiah), not “you” (God), who may be like the “lying waters” of Jer 15:18.

5. Summary and Conclusions

5.1. Summary

Ancient and medieval interpretation, Jewish and Christian, of the complaints of Jeremiah, began with the versions. Versions and commentaries considered each word of each sacred text carefully, seeking clarity in obscure passages, agreeing that revelation was intended.

Commentators sought the meaning of the complaints using different methods: literal/historical, allegorical, midrashic, and typological. They handed down interpretations in “streams of tradition,” with connections within and between language groups.

They found different references for the specifics of the complaints: many to Jeremiah alone, some to Jeremiah as a type of Christ, some to Christ alone, some to the church or the community of Israel.

Versions and commentaries handled Jeremiah’s harsh language in a variety of ways: some softened it, many let it stand without comment. Commentators presented different views about the propriety of directing such harsh language to God, the accuracy of Jeremiah’s complaints, and what these said about God.

These interpreters did not consider most questions addressed by modern interpreters (see Section 5.1.6, “Modern questions not addressed by ancient and medieval interpreters,” pp. 348-349). What they sought was to understand God’s revelation through the details of the sacred text.

5.1.1 Transmission of the text

The biblical text for these complaints was transmitted very carefully, but in slightly different forms.

The Hebrew of the Masoretic Text (MT) corresponds very closely to that in the fragments from Qumran.

Many differences from MT in the versions appear to result both from attempts at interpretation or clarification of obscure texts. An irreducible minimum, however, appear to come from different *Vorlagen*, whose relation to MT is unclear.

Differences in the Septuagint version (LXX) and those of “the Three” are mostly slight (See Section 3.1.3, “What this shows about LXX translation in Jeremiah,” pp. 74-83). Many may come from interpretation or clarification, some from different *Vorlagen*.

Some differences and additions in Targum Jonathan may indicate different *Vorlagen*. More indicate interpretation and clarification, beyond its word-for-word rendering of Hebrew, in the direction of showing more reverence toward God (See Section 3.2.2, “What this shows about Targum translation in Jeremiah,” pp. 104-109).

The Vulgate shows fewer differences from MT. Its few differences provide clarification; several may come from different *Vorlagen* (See Section 3.3.4, “What this shows about the Vulgate translation in Jeremiah,” pp. 131-134). The single fragment from Vetus Latina (Section 3.3.3, “Vetus Latina,” pp. 130-131) provides one possibly significant different translation of one word.

Most of the Peshitta version corresponds very closely to MT, with an occasional agreement with LXX against MT. In several cases, the Peshitta clarifies

an obscure MT reading (See Section 3.4.2, “What this shows about Peshitta translation in Jeremiah,” pp. 151-152).

Commentary on these complaints followed different “streams of tradition,” largely constrained by the interpreter’s choice of biblical text.

The first extant evidence of working from the Hebrew text comes in the *Hodayot* from Qumran. Among Christian interpreters, Origen and Jerome specifically referred to the Hebrew text. In Jewish tradition, rabbinic *midrashim* and homilies, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Radak followed the Hebrew text.

The Septuagint text was followed by the great majority of Christian interpreters: Greek, Latin, and some Syriac. Philo’s paraphrase, rereading the text in an opposite direction, also appears to have come from LXX. Origen also considered texts from “the Three,” in comparing Hebrew and Greek readings of the same passage.

The Targum version with commentary provided an authoritative tradition of interpretation for Rashi and Radak.

The Peshitta was used by most Syriac interpreters. Theodoret, while using mainly LXX, made some references to a Syriac version, which might be the Peshitta. Some Syriac interpreters paraphrased their references. Other Syriac commentaries quoted “alternative readings, if not other versions, which might have an equal claim to authority.”¹

¹ Lucas Van Rompay, “The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* (vol. 1; ed. Magne Saebo; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 614. He cites Ephrem’s *Commentary on Genesis*, which quotes Gen 49:23 Peshitta and Targum Onkelos, and Eusebius of Emesa, about Gen 3:22, in LXX and Targum Onkelos.

5.1.1.1 Jeremiah 17:17: An example of interpretation using different versions

Commentary on Jer 17:17 demonstrates that different commentaries worked from different versions. The “disastrous day” of the MT, that Jeremiah did not “wish for,” appeared in the Targum and Rashi as the “woeful day,” and in Theodoret as a day of retribution for his opponents. The “day of man” of the LXX (and Vulgate and Peshitta) appeared in Greek, Latin, and Syriac commentaries. Most took this to refer to present life, with worldly pleasures, for some including marriage and children. Only Bar Salibi made a possible messianic reference, in which the “day of the son of man” referred to the “feast, rule, and glorious desires” of one to come.

5.1.1.2 Jeremiah 11:19: An example of interpretation in “streams of tradition”

An outstanding example of different “streams of tradition” occurs in commentary on Jer 11:19. Interpreters took the obscure Hebrew (and Peshitta) text, in which Jeremiah’s adversaries plan to “destroy wood/a tree with/in its bread/food,” and the different but equally obscure Greek (and Targum and Vulgate) text, “throw wood/a tree on his/its bread/food,” in several directions.

A long line of Christian *Testimonia*, working from LXX, interpreted this text allegorically. They considered it a clear prediction of Christ’s crucifixion, with the “wood” being the cross, “thrown” onto the “bread,” Christ’s body. Jerome cites this interpretation as the “consensus of all the churches.”

The Targum, while agreeing with LXX on “throw” rather than “destroy,” took the “wood” as a deadly poison that they planned to “throw” into the historical Jeremiah’s food. Jewish tradition, in Rashi and Radak, preserved this view. Thomas

Aquinas, Nicholas of Lyra, Išoʿdad of Merv, and Bar Hebraeus also agreed with this possibility.

Interpreting “bread” or “food” allegorically as “word,” Origen saw the word of Jesus, made stronger by the “wood” of the cross. Thomas Aquinas saw it as Christ’s teaching, made a “stumbling block” by the cross. For Išoʿdad and Bar Salibi, the “tree” was the person of the prophet; its “bread” was its fruits, which were his words, to be “destroyed” by his opponents.

5.1.2 Methods of dealing with obscurities in the texts

Obscurities in revelatory texts posed problems for the versions and their interpreters, since every word was important, designed to lead to understanding.

Many differences between MT and the versions appear to result from attempts to clarify obscurities. For example, Jeremiah’s plaint that “they dug a pit for my life” (18:20 MT), is clarified by LXX as “they spoke words against my life, and hid their trap for me,” and by the Targum, “to kill me.”

Jeremiah’s odd image, “Your words were found, and I ate them” (15:16 MT), is retained by the Vulgate, but interpreted differently by the Targum and Peshitta, as “I received your words and confirmed them” (T) and “I kept your commandments and did them” (P). LXX makes the verb an imperative, referring to those rejecting God’s words: “Consume them!”

The “tree” or “wood” that Jeremiah’s enemies plan to “destroy” (MT, P) or “throw” (LXX, T, V) onto “his bread” (Jer 11:19) is clarified by the Targum as “poison of death” that they plan to put in his food.

The Targum also interpreted and removed many metaphors, notably, the plant metaphors of Jer 12:2, regarding the prosperity of the wicked. MT's accusation that "you planted them; they were also firmly rooted; they also continually bore fruit," the Targum interpreted as "you established them; they are also strong, they have grown rich; they have also acquired possessions." When Jeremiah's opponents say, "Let us strike with the tongue" (18:18), the Targum reads "let us bear false witness."

Since both Jewish and Christian traditions regarded Scripture as a harmonious whole, they both worked to illuminate the meaning of obscure words in one context by understanding their meaning, or that of related words, in other contexts. Rashi and Radak further clarified meaning by applying rules of Hebrew grammar.

For further understanding, some interpreters, such as Origen, Theodoret, Jerome, and Išōḏad of Merv, compared renderings of texts in different versions. In his Hebrew commentary, Rashi explained some obscure terms by giving their medieval (Old) French equivalents.

Ultimately, for Christian commentaries, Christ was the key to interpretation. The *Testimonia* tradition provides a central example, in which each word of the obscure plan of Jeremiah's adversaries, "let us throw wood on his bread/food" (11:19 LXX), is taken to refer to Christ's crucifixion.

5.1.3 Referents of the complaints

Interpreters, Christian and Jewish, referred these complaints in a variety of directions. A large group of interpreters, both Christian and Jewish, thought they spoke only of Jeremiah, his experiences, and his contemporaries. A significant

number of both Christian and Jewish interpreters, however, read the texts figuratively or allegorically, seeing their primary reference to someone or something else.

A substantial group of Christian and Jewish interpreters referred these texts primarily or solely to the prophet Jeremiah. Greek commentaries by Clement, Origen, Basil, Theodoret, Olympiodorus, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Pseudo-Chrysostom all emphasized Jeremiah's experiences. Latin commentaries, especially those of Jerome, Aquinas, and Lyra, sought meaning in Jeremiah's own context, as did Syriac commentaries of Theodore bar Koni, Išoʿdad of Merv, Dionysius bar Salibi, and Bar Hebraeus. The medieval Jewish interpreters Rashi and Radak stressed *peshat* meaning by looking at Jeremiah in his context.

This interpretative work, seeking to understand the complaints by looking at Jeremiah in his own context, resembles modern interpretation that focuses on the possible historical setting of the complaints. These ancient and medieval interpreters, however, differed from such modern interpreters as Benjamin Jowett, who thought that "Scripture has one meaning – the meaning which it had to the mind of the Prophet or Evangelist who first uttered or wrote, to the hearers or readers who first received it,"² according legitimacy only to this first meaning. Ancient and medieval interpreters, even when looking first at Jeremiah's context, did not deny additional

² Benjamin Jowett, "On the Interpretation of Scripture," in *Essays and Reviews* (9th ed.; London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1861), 378. Also quoted in David C. Steinmetz, "Uncovering a Second Narrative: Detective Fiction and the Construction of Historical Method," in *The Art of Reading Scripture* (ed. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003), 62.

possible meanings beyond the “literal” or *peshat*. They also did not reconstruct possible contexts differing from those given in the canonical text.

Those interpreters, both Christian and Jewish, who did not limit themselves to Jeremiah’s context, read the texts in a wide variety of ways.

Many used these specifics to seek further understanding of God’s ways. For example, Jeremiah’s accusation in 20:7 led Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, Olympiodorus, Pseudo-Chrysostom, and Aquinas to question and ponder whether God does in fact deceive or entice, and whether good deceit does exist (see Section 5.1.5.1, Does God deceive?, pp.341-343).

Jewish *haggadah*, in 4 Baruch, *Pesikta de Rab Kahana*, and *Pesikta Rabbati*, added to the biblical text of 20:7 an explanation, in which the Lord had to lure Jeremiah out of Jerusalem so that it could be destroyed.

Some Christian interpreters saw Jeremiah’s experiences as a “type” that was perfected in those of Christ. With Origen, they saw “the Savior present in the prophet.” The “gentle lamb led to the slaughter” (11:18) was commonly referred to Christ. “Ephrem” saw Jeremiah, when the “tree” was to be “destroyed with its bread” (11:19, Peshitta) as a type of Christ, being crucified. Origen, Jerome, and Thomas Aquinas saw the “strife” and “discord” (15:10) more fully realized in Christ. Origen thought that the “severe wound” (15:18) could refer to Jeremiah, the just who suffer, and to Christ.

Many interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, made specific connections between Jeremiah’s complaints and their communities.

Qumran *Hodayot* related short quotations from the complaints to strife within their community.

Rabbinic Jewish *Midrash Rabbah* (*Lamentations*) and *Pesikta Rabbati* related complaints to the whole congregation of Israel, which did not enter or rejoice in heathen theaters or circuses (*Midrash Rabbah*, about Jer 15:17), and complained to the Lord, who had “enticed” them to accept the gift of the Torah with its heavy requirements (*Pesikta Rabbati*, about Jer 20:7).

Many Christian patristic writers used Jeremiah’s complaints in controversy that defined Christian identity, versus Jews, heretics and unbelievers. The large *Testimonia* tradition took Jer 11:19, based on LXX, as a prediction of Christ’s crucifixion. The “false waters” of 15:18 were baptisms by heretics (Olympiodorus, Cyprian) or unbelievers (Ambrose). The wicked who prosper (12:1-2) were heretics, who “rob the church” (Jerome). The deception practiced by God was for good, unlike that of Celsus (Origen, about 20:7).

Interpreters also related the complaints to Christian doctrine, that “there is no weariness when one follows Jesus” (Origen, about 17:16), that one might sit alone in “fear of eternal punishment” (Gregory, about 15:16-18), and that all sinners need healing (Bernard, about 17:14). Some related the texts to ascetic ideals and practices: Aphrahat, to the merits of virginity (about 17:16), the *Book of Steps*, to non-violence expected of the Upright, and Severus, to misery of humanity resulting from sexual reproduction (about 20:14).

Other Christian interpreters related Jeremiah’s sufferings and complaints to those of preachers in the church. Since true preachers cannot keep silent (Odo of

Cluny, quoting 20:9), they may be beset by opponents (Jerome). These good teachers and “poor preachers” may suffer, as Jeremiah did (18:18), from the plots of evil men (Nicholas of Lyra).

5.1.4 Interpretation of harsh language

Differences in dealing with Jeremiah’s harsh language of accusation against God are shown especially in versions and commentaries on Jer 4:10, 12:1-2, 15:18, 17:17, 20:7, and 20:14.

5.1.4.1 Specific texts

5.1.4.1.1 Jeremiah 4:10: God’s deception

Ancient and medieval versions and interpreters gave different accounts of Jeremiah’s accusation in 4:10, that God has deceived the people and Jerusalem. All related this to the historical Jeremiah, while showing concern about whether God does deceive. The Vulgate, followed by Jerome and Nicholas of Lyra, softened the complaint by making it a rhetorical question, unmarked but possible in Hebrew. Theodoret did the same, adding that here Jeremiah was “not speaking factually.” Thomas Aquinas agreed that God had not in fact deceived the people. He, Jerome, and “Ephrem” thought that the people misunderstood the promises of peace as for their time, rather than for the future. Rashi, Radak, and Nicholas de Lyra, however, saw God, in forbearance, allowing the false prophets to deceive the people. Only Pseudo-Chrysostom thought, like Origen in his comments about Jer 20:7, that God’s deception was good, like that of fathers deceiving their children.

Modern interpreters recognized the “sharpness” of this complaint.³

Thompson thought that “at first glance Jeremiah’s comments appear to be blasphemous,” but concluded that this utterance was “not so much a considered judgment, but the spontaneous reaction of a man who felt deeply about the tragedies of life, whether his own or those of others,” and who considered the false prophets “as much under God’s control as were the prophets of Ahab when faced by Micaiah (1K. 22).”⁴ Fretheim considers the words “Jeremiah . . . genuinely voicing the complaints of the people” who “believed that God had inspired the [false] prophets.”⁵

5.1.4.1.2 Jeremiah 12:1-2: prosperity of the wicked

When Jeremiah questioned God, in 12:1-2, about the prosperity of the wicked, a tradition in several languages considered his questions “not out of place” (Theodoret). Rashi, Theodore bar Koni, Išo‘dad of Merv, and Bar Salibi thought that he was not blaming God. Rather, he was seeking to learn from God, so that he might teach others. They agreed that he was “marveling at divine patience” (Bar Salibi).

Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 3.38.4), however, thought that this question showed that some words of Scripture were not words of God, but rather Jewish complaints.

Only Radak explicitly considered the complaint “out of order.”

Except for Jerome’s allegorical reading of the “wicked” as “heretics,” they all related the complaint to Jeremiah’s experiences with his contemporaries.

³ See, e.g., Berridge, 109; Holladay, 1986, 140.

⁴ Thompson, 1980, 222-3.

⁵ Fretheim, 103.

Modern interpreters, such as Holladay, O'Connor, and Lundbom, consider Jeremiah's language "forensic, also uncommonly bold," "censorious," possibly "citing Yahweh as an unindicted coconspirator for allowing the wicked to go as far as they have."⁶ They agree that the wicked did not become prosperous by chance; rather, "Yahweh deliberately plants them so they thrive."⁷ These interpreters do not judge the propriety of such language.

5.1.4.1.3 Jeremiah 15:18: "lying, untrustworthy waters"

The referent of the "lying, untrustworthy" waters of Jer 15:18 varies with the versions. In MT, it may be "you" (God) or "it" (the incurable wound); in LXX and the Vulgate, it is the wound; in the Targum, "your Memra"; and in the Peshitta, "you" (God) or "I" (Jeremiah). Commentaries reflected these differences.

Working from MT, Rashi, Radak, and Nicholas de Lyra saw Jeremiah complaining that God has been like a "failing spring" (Rashi), that did not bring consolation, like a torrent needed more in summer than in winter (de Lyra). Radak considered Jeremiah's accusation of God's deception sinful

Some who followed LXX, and thought that the "wound" was what was deceitful, read the words positively, indicating that Jeremiah's difficulties were transitory (Jerome, Aquinas), since the wound "does not remain, but passes" (Origen). Olympiodorus, however identified the wound as the deceit of the false prophets; Pseudo-Chrysostom, as Jeremiah's own unfulfilled prophecy. Several read the "lying waters" allegorically, as the baptism of unbelievers or heretics (Olympiodorus, Cyprian, Ambrose).

⁶ Lundbom, 643, 645; see also Holladay, 1986, 376; O'Connor, 16.

⁷ Holladay, 1986, 376; see Lundbom, 645.

Most Syriac interpreters identified the “lying waters” with water from rain or snow, rather than springs. Išo‘dad of Merv, Bar Salibi, and Bar Hebraeus related these to the unfulfilled words of Jeremiah’s prophecy. For Bar Hebraeus, it was “I” (Jeremiah), rather than “you” (God), who was like these untrustworthy waters. “Ephrem” and Bar Salibi, however, made a completely different reference, to the “waters of trial” of Num 5:18.

Modern interpreters work from MT, in which the “lying waters” refer to God. They agree that the complaint comes from Jeremiah. Most agree with Baumgartner that the complaint is a “severe reproach against Yahweh, which should not be tempered by changing the text into a question.”⁸ Lundbom, however, thinks that the charge could be a question, showing that “perhaps Jeremiah does not fully believe what he is saying.”⁹ Bright points out the contrast with Jer 2:13, where the Lord is called “a fountain of living water”; Diamond sees this as a deliberate “parody.”¹⁰ Bright, considering God’s answer in Jer 15:19-21 a “second call” to Jeremiah, thinks that “Jeremiah, for all his angry outbursts, knew perfectly well that such talk was unworthy of his calling”; Lundbom, that “the prophet has transgressed normal decency in registering his complaint.”¹¹ Baumgartner, however, thought that God did not “take it amiss,” from his faithful servant.¹² Fretheim agrees that “Jeremiah has

⁸ Baumgartner, 50; e.g., von Rad, “Confessions,” “terrible accusation,” 90; Berridge, “a charge against Yahweh,” 130; Thompson, “virtually blasphemous charge,” 90; Holladay, 1986, “bold and bitter language,” 461; Diamond, “the accusation reduces Yahweh to the status of Israel’s idols,” 75; O’Connor, “strident,” 93.

⁹ Lundbom, 746.

¹⁰ Bright, 107; Diamond, 75.

¹¹ Bright, 112; Lundbom, 746.

¹² Baumgartner, 50.

not sinned,” as he was “working from within the lament tradition” in which a “faithful relationship with God” may include seeking “to hold God accountable.”¹³

5.1.4.1.4 Jeremiah 17:17: God as a “terror” or “hostile stranger”

Jeremiah’s begging God not to be a “terror” (MT) or “hostile stranger” (LXX) to him, in 17:17, was softened by Theodoret to asking “to enjoy God’s care.”

Olympiodorus and Jerome related this allegorically to a day of judgment. In a slight softening, Rashi, Radak, and “Ephrem” thought that it was Jeremiah’s mission of prophecy, rather than God, that might cause him ruin.

Several modern interpreters see this complaint as a “mild reproach,” followed by Jeremiah’s assurance that God, and only God, can be his refuge.¹⁴ In a slight softening, Baumgartner has Jeremiah ask that God not be “a disappointment to me.”¹⁵

5.1.4.1.5 Jeremiah 20:7: “you have enticed me”

Many ancient and medieval interpreters struggled with Jeremiah’s complaint in 20:7, “you have enticed me, and I was enticed” (MT and Peshitta). Some of the versions softened the language slightly, removing some possible connotations of sexual seduction: “you have deceived me, and I was deceived” (LXX), “you have confounded me, and I was confounded” (Targum), “you have led me away, and I was led away” (Vulgate). Jeremiah’s accusation against God, whether of deception or entangling or misleading, remained problematic.

Most interpreters related the complaint to Jeremiah’s call to be a prophet, when first, he resisted the call, but then was assured by God that “I am with you to

¹³ Fretheim, 241.

¹⁴ Polk, 141; see also O’Connor, 50.

¹⁵ Baumgartner, 52.

deliver you” (Jer 1:8, NRSV). His misery, both at the need to prophesy doom to his own countrymen, and from their persecution against him, occasioned his outcry.

Commentators differed on whether God ever does deceive anyone, including Jeremiah (see Section 5.1.5.1, “Does God deceive?”, pp 341-343).

Modern interpreters also struggle with Jeremiah’s “bitter, passionate reproach,” in “bold, but incomparably vivid images.”¹⁶ Some agree with Heschel that the language accuses God of seduction and rape.¹⁷ For some, “the language verges on the blasphemous.”¹⁸ They see Jeremiah “identifying Yahweh as the enemy,”¹⁹ as “brute force, as deceptive, beyond any conventional norm.”²⁰ Diamond, however considers the cry “ironically addressed to Yahweh,” without the sexual connotations.²¹ Fretheim, noting that similar “language of deception is used (approvingly) for God in other prophetic texts” (I Kings 22:20-22; Ezek 14:9), thinks that Jeremiah’s language is not “accusatory” nor “innovative, let alone rebellious or blasphemous”; he thinks that “this is the type of honest interaction that God encourages in relationships.”²²

5.1.4.1.6 Jeremiah 20:14-15: cursing the day of his birth

¹⁶ Baumgartner, 74; cf Bright, “well-high blasphemous,” 132; Holladay 1986, “deeply rebellious, not to say blasphemous,” 553.

¹⁷ Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets: An Introduction* (Harper Torchbooks; New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 113. See Section 2.1.1.8.2, “Use and meaning of פִּתְיוֹן in Jer 20:7 and 20:10,” pp. 43-48, above. Those who see a sexual connotation include: Bright, 129; Berridge, 152; Carroll, 398; Holladay, 552; McKane, 470. Diamond, 110, thinks such connotations unlikely; Lundbom, 855, that “the verbs then have nothing to do with seduction and rape.”

¹⁸ Thompson, 457. Cf. Bright, “well-nigh blasphemous,” 132; Holladay 1986, “deeply rebellious, not to say blasphemous,” 553.

¹⁹ Carroll, 398. Cf. Diamond, “portrayal of the prophet as the victim of a divine enemy,” 110.

²⁰ Holladay 1986, 553.

²¹ Diamond, 111.

²² Fretheim, 299.

Many ancient and medieval interpreters attributed Jeremiah's cursing both the day of his birth and the one who brought the news of it to his father (20:14-15) to his "deep grief and surpassing pain" (Theodoret). Aquinas thought he was speaking hyperbolically, to show his misery; Lyra, out of "confusion of mind"; "Ephrem," "words of no sense," coming from his pain. Jerome connected this curse with the similar one by Job, since "we may prefer quiet death to wretched life."

Clement attributed these words to Jeremiah's "impatience," making clear that birth itself is not accursed. Origen, however, thought that corporeal birth merits curses, and Severus of Antioch, that Jeremiah was deploring the misery of the condition of all humanity since being thrown out of the Garden. Reading this "day" allegorically, Išoʿdad of Merv and Bar Salibi took it to mean those "who beset him."

Various Jewish midrashic traditions explained Jeremiah's cursing. Jerome cited a "Hebrew" tradition that Jeremiah was born on the same day of the month that Jerusalem was "laid waste by Chaldeans and Romans." *Pesikta Rabbati* related the curse to Jeremiah's call, when he discovered that the cup of wrath was for Judah and Jerusalem. Rashi cited a *derash* that the curse was for the day Jeremiah was begotten, when his father, fleeing, "performed the marriage act by day." Radak connected this curse with Job's. He was concerned about Jeremiah's cursing the messenger but concluded with the *derash* that he was Jeremiah's opponent, Pashhur.

Modern interpreters consider Jeremiah's "self-curse" a result of "intense despair."²³ This "unreasoned outburst"²⁴ is "tantamount to cursing his prophetic

²³ Baumgartner, 77. Cf. Bright, "well-nigh suicidal despair," 134; McKane, "despair," 490.

²⁴ Lundbom, 869.

call.”²⁵ Lundbom points out that Jeremiah “at least stops short of cursing the divine name, which would have been blasphemous,” but “he borders on blasphemy” here.²⁶

5.1.4.2 Propriety of Jeremiah’s harsh language

Starting with the versions, ancient and medieval interpreters showed concern about the propriety of such words, addressed to God.

A few interpreters referred to other biblical questioners of God, without deciding on the propriety of such questions. Thomas Aquinas cited Job, who argued with God, and Habakkuk, who waited on God, as examples of questions like that of Jer 12:1. Theodore bar Koni cited questions in Ps 10:1 and Hab 1:2 that resemble Jer 12:1, in seeking understanding of God’s ways. “Ephrem” cited Job, David, and Habakkuk, who also wondered at God’s patience.

Both versions and commentaries produced some softening of Jeremiah’s accusations. The Vulgate and several commentaries read the emphatic statement of 4:10 (“You have surely deceived”) as a rhetorical question with an expected negative answer. Versions and commentaries exploited ambiguity in 15:18 MT to compare the “wound,” not God, to “lying waters.” Commentaries on 17:17 saw Jeremiah’s mission of prophecy, not God, as his possible “ruin.” Versions converted Jeremiah’s accusation of 20:7 (“You enticed me”) to accusations with fewer sexual connotations.

Rarely, commentaries read very different meanings from the text. Philo reversed Jeremiah’s complaint in 15:10, changing a cry of anguish into a celebration

²⁵Thompson, 90, and Holladay 1986, 548; O’Connor, “curse of his prophetic vocation,” 80.

²⁶Lundbom, 869.

of the victory of “the wise.” Less drastically, Theodoret changed Jeremiah’s plea in 17:17, that God not be a “terror,” to one to “enjoy God’s care.”

Most who did not soften these harsh exclamations attributed them to Jeremiah’s suffering and consequent confusion of mind. They were concerned, with Thomas Aquinas, to free him from any suspicion of blasphemy.

Only a few interpreters marked Jeremiah’s words as inappropriate. Radak called Jeremiah’s questioning God about the prosperity of the wicked (12:1) “out of order, since God is righteous,” and his comparison of God to “lying waters” (15:18) “sinful.” “Ephrem” thought that, in Jeremiah’s outburst in 20:7, “perhaps he erred from the path of propriety.”

“Ephrem,” however, while noting words like 20:14-18 from Job and Psalms, considered 20:14-18, “undisciplined . . . words of no sense” that Jeremiah uttered because of his pain,. He warned readers “not to confuse the words of the prophets with the utterances of the rest of upright men,” for what is “concealed from us and above our mind” was written “by means of the words of the spirit.” Could this be a warning for others not to use such words?

5.1.5 How ancient and medieval interpreters addressed some theological questions raised by Jeremiah’s complaints

Jeremiah’s complaints raised many possible questions about the nature of God, God’s actions in the world, and what God expects of humanity; the following are a few of them.

5.1.5.1 Does God deceive? (Jer 4:10, 20:7)

Versions used words of slightly different meanings to translate Hebrew

נָשָׂא (“deceive,” Jer 4:10) and פָּתָה (“entice,” Jer 20:7, 10). LXX used ἀπατάω (“deceive”) for both. The Targum used טַעָא (“lead astray, deceive”) in 4:10 and שִׁבַּשׁ (“confound, entangle”) in 20:7. The Vulgate used *decipio* (“deceive”) in 4:10 and *seduco* (“lead away”) in 20:7. The Peshitta used ܠܥܠܝܐ (“lead astray”) in 4:10 and ܠܦܬܝܐ (“entice”) in 20:7. These translations share the idea that God may lure people to belief or action that they would not otherwise have or do. MT (4:10), LXX (4:10 and 20:7), Targum (4:10), Vulgate (4:10), and Peshitta (4:10) include the accusation of deception by God.

Beginning with Origen, a few interpreters thought that God did indeed deceive human beings, for their own good. Origen compared this good deceit, “deception that is not vain” (*Contra Cels. Pref.* 5.13) to that necessary for parents and physicians (*Hom. Jer.* 19 and 20); this is so good that Jeremiah should wish for more of it. John Chrysostom called this good deceit, “which one ought not to call deceit at all” (*Hom. Col.* 6.8). Olympiodorus (*Frag. Jer.* 20:7) and Pseudo Chrysostom (*Frag. Jer.* 4:10) agreed that there could be good deceit by God. Thomas Aquinas spoke of God’s positive enticements, shown to Isaiah and Hosea (*In Jer. Lectio* 3 on Chapter 20).

In strong contrast, Gregory of Nyssa (*Eccles.* 2.301.19) thought that scriptural passages which seem to implicate God in sin, including Jer 20:7, rather show human misuse of God-given freedom of choice. Theodoret and Jerome took Jeremiah’s

accusation in 4:10 as a rhetorical question, with an expected negative answer.

Thomas Aquinas was sure that God had not deceived the people of Jerusalem (4:10); rather, they had misunderstood God's promises, and when Jeremiah cried out in 20:7, it was "You have enticed me," rather than "You have deceived me," because it would have been blasphemy for him to accuse God of deception (*In Jer. Lectio 2* on Chapter 10).

Nicholas of Lyra saw 4:10 as a question; any deception by God was in permitting deception by the false prophets. Regarding Jer 20:7, Lyra was sure that "since God is truth in essence, he is not able to mislead anyone, or to deceive, according to truth, but only according to false estimation." It was Jeremiah's pain and "horror of sensitivity in view of persecution" that had produced his "confusion of mind" (*Postillae litteralis* on Jer 20:7-10 and 20:14). Theodoret (*Comm. Jer.* 20:7) attributed Jeremiah's words to "irritation"; Pseudo-Chrysostom, to pain (*Frag. Jer.* 4:10).

Jewish interpreters thought that it was "enticing" that God had done.

Several midrashim pointed out examples. God had "enticed" Jeremiah to leave Jerusalem, so that God could destroy it (*Pesik.RabKah.* 13.14, *Pesik.Rabb.* 26.6); when he was returning from Anathoth, he saw the smoke of the Babylonians' burning, and, at that point, accused God in the words of 20:7. At Sinai, God had "enticed" the community of Israel to accept the Torah (*Pesik.Rabb.* 21.16); they did not appreciate the difficulty of its commandments. God had "enticed" Jeremiah to prophesy against Zion (*Pesik.Rabb.* 26.1-2).

Rashi and Radak agreed that God had allowed or “enticed” the false prophets to deceive the people (4:10), and God had “enticed” Jeremiah to prophesy, at the beginning of his ministry (20:7). All this “enticement” involved a measure of deception, in God’s hiding from both Jeremiah and the community of Israel the consequences of these actions.

Among Syriac interpreters, “Ephrem” agreed with Thomas Aquinas that Jeremiah and the people had misunderstood God’s promises for Jerusalem (4:10). Išo‘dad of Merv, Bar Salibi, and Bar Hebraeus agreed with Jewish interpreters that God had “enticed” Jeremiah to prophesy.

5.1.5.2 Is it appropriate to pray for God’s retribution?

Except for the *Book of Steps*, ancient and medieval interpreters had no problem with Jeremiah’s calling for God’s retribution upon the wicked, even in violent terms. This was to be God acting out God’s justice.

5.1.5.3 Did God plant the wicked? (12:2)

The Targum removed the metaphor of “planting,” but retained Jeremiah’s accusation that God “established” the wicked. Radak considered the “planting” an affirmation that the prosperity of the wicked comes from God, and not from chance. Others did not directly address this metaphor.

5.1.6 Modern questions not addressed by ancient and medieval interpreters

Questions asked of these texts by ancient and medieval interpreters differed greatly from those asked by modern interpreters.

Almost all ancient and medieval interpreters started by referring these complaints to the historical Jeremiah and his adversaries. They did not ask whether

Jeremiah had in fact spoken these words. Interpretation was based on Jeremiah's experiences, whether or not they were a type of Christ's or the community's experience, or an allegory.

Ancient and medieval interpreters did not consider the "complaints" as a formal group, separating them out from the rest of the book of Jeremiah. They did not look at the structure of the canonical book of Jeremiah, nor did they seek understanding of the complaint texts by considering their function within this structure. They also did not separate the work of exegesis from that of theological reflection.

Their interest was in the content of each text, in what revelation God had placed there for communities. They expected and found illumination, by focusing on the meaning of words and what these said about God and their communities.

5.2. Conclusions

Very reverent ancient and medieval interpreters of Jeremiah's complaints, beginning with the versions, demonstrated their reverence by meticulous handling of these texts, looking at every detail for the revelation they were sure was intended, since "all Scripture is inspired by God is and is useful" (2 Tim 3:16; see Sections 4.2.1.1, "Assumptions and methods" of patristic exegesis, pp.155-157, and 4.4.1, "About Jewish exegesis," pp. 242-249). They assumed that these texts had been designed to reveal truth about God, the prophet, and humanity in general, and that this truth was to be useful for their communities.

Interpreters started by careful transmission of the texts, in different forms. For these texts, some of the differences between the Masoretic Text and the versions can

be traced to attempts at clarification, but a small, but irreducible, minimum points to different *Vorlagen*. The versions produced some softening of Jeremiah's harsh language (e.g., the Vulgate reading Jer 4:10 as a rhetorical question; choice of words for 20:7 with fewer sexual connotations: LXX, "deceive," Targum, "confound"). The Targum also replaced metaphors with plain speech (e.g., 12:2) and removed some anthropomorphic images and the possibility of human standing before God.

Commentaries then worked from the different texts provided by MT and the versions, producing different "streams of tradition," corresponding to their different religious communities.

There was little cross-fertilization of traditions, with the following exceptions. The *Testimonia* tradition carried over from Greek to Latin interpreters. Jerome cited "Hebrew" traditions about Jer 11:20, 15:18, 20:14, mostly to refute them. Nicholas of Lyra was the outstanding exception: he repeatedly quoted Rashi by name, and approvingly.

One interesting possible contact between traditions occurs in interpretation of Jer 11:19. The Targum, Rashi, and Radak all took the "wood" that was "thrown" on "his bread" as poisonous. Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas of Lyra, Išoʿdad of Merv, and Bar Hebraeus agreed, without referring to the Jewish interpretation. Did they know of it?

Ancient and medieval interpreters assumed that Scripture was a unified whole, all designed for revelation, and that Jeremiah had spoken the words attributed to him. If his words were hard to understand, uses of the same word elsewhere in Scripture could clarify their meaning. An understanding of Hebrew grammar could also

illuminate. If what these words appeared to reveal about God was not in accord with their other understandings of God, or helpful for their community, a deeper search for meaning was needed. Some, following Origen, considered the deeper, spiritual meaning the most important one to find. Many others, with Rashi, emphasized that additional understandings could only be valid if they were based on the *peshat*, plain meaning.

Christian interpreters, seeing Old and New Testaments as a unity, saw Christ and Christ's experiences as the key to understanding any scriptural text. The *Testimonia* tradition, therefore, considered it entirely appropriate to read Jer 11:19 as primarily about Christ's crucifixion, while recognizing that Jeremiah had said the words.

Another large group of Christian writers, however, including Jerome, Aquinas, Lyra, Theodore bar Koni, Išoʿdad of Merv, Dionysius bar Salibi, and Bar Hebraeus, found meaning by keeping the focus on Jeremiah and his experiences.

Ancient and medieval interpreters, starting with the versions, recognized the harshness of Jeremiah's complaints addressed to God. Some commentaries, following the versions, softened the references slightly, while keeping the accusatory tone. Only a few changed reversed Jeremiah's meanings (Philo, about 15:10; Theodoret, about 17:17). Few called Jeremiah's complaints inappropriate or sinful. Many more attributed their strong language to Jeremiah's suffering, both from what God required him to proclaim, and at the hands of his adversaries. Almost all referred these words to the prophet Jeremiah; only a few *midrashim* referred them to the whole community of Israel.

Unlike modern interpreters, ancient and medieval interpreters did not question whether Jeremiah had said these words. They did not break apart criticism of the texts from interpretation. They did not separate out a group of “complaints” from the rest of the book of Jeremiah; nor did they search for connections among the complaints or with the Psalms. They did not look for the role these texts played in the canonical book of Jeremiah. They recognized Jeremiah’s harsh language, accounted for it from his suffering, but, unlike many modern interpreters, did not celebrate it as candid prayer, “the type of honest interaction that God encourages in relationships.”²⁷

.5.3 Value of ancient and medieval interpretation of the complaints of Jeremiah

Because the questions asked of the texts by ancient and medieval interpreters were different from those asked by modern interpreters, their answers generally do not fit into modern categories. “Insights and resources” for our different time, however, may come from using their interpretation as a “conversation partner.”²⁸

5.3.1 “Insights and resources” from the activities of ancient and medieval interpreters

They sought and found illumination from study of Scripture, paying close attention to texts, clear or obscure. They were sure that these texts were intended for all, not just their first recipients, and that God speaks, as well as spoke, through them.

They transmitted texts very carefully, whether or not they agreed with the texts’ view of God. They dealt with texts as they were, with few emendations. Only a

²⁷ Fretheim, 299.

²⁸ Stephen Fowl, “Introduction,” *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (ed. Stephen E. Fowl; Blackwell Readings in Modern Theology; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1997), xvii.

few softened Jeremiah's harsh language. Most were very gentle in assessing the propriety of this language, attributing its outrageousness to Jeremiah's pain.

They sought out the meaning of each word, comparing its use in these texts with use elsewhere in Scripture. They were aware and appreciative of figurative language and did not confuse it with absurd literal understandings.

Some compared and contrasted different versions of each text.

Many started by seeking meaning for the text in its immediate context, but they did not limit understanding to a hypothetical original meaning.

They trusted that these texts were intended and designed to be useful and revelatory, and they were open to illuminating connections among texts.

They recognized different levels of meaning, among them, literal (including figurative) and spiritual. They saw that words may have useful meanings beyond the "plain," first meaning.

They sought understanding of God, within faith traditions. In wrestling with difficult texts (e.g., 4:10 and 20:7, about God deceiving), they assessed the value of the text's portrayal of God, God's actions in the world, and what God expects of humanity. They drew theological conclusions, since theological reflection was part of their exegesis. These conclusions differed; e.g., Origen and few others concluded that God does indeed deceive, for our good; most others emphatically denied that God could deceive.

They expected and found application to their own communities, as part of the meaning inherent in the texts.

In transmitting interpretations in different “streams of tradition” they made available insights from different time periods to their communities. Conversation with them makes these available to Christians and Jews today.

5.3.2 Less helpful traditions

Some assumed that different versions or interpretations of a text were designed to mislead (e.g., Justin Martyr, about Jewish transmission and interpretation of 11:19).

A few changed the text to fit their own philosophy (Philo, about 15:10) or theology (Targum, e.g., about 4:10, attributing deceit to the “prophets of falsehood” rather than God).

Some used the texts polemically, against their own or their communities’ opponents (e.g., the *Testimonia* tradition, about 11:19; Olympiodorus and Cyprian, about 15:18 as the baptisms by heretics; Jerome, repeatedly).

5.3.3 Benefits and problems with modern interpretation

Modern interpreters also look carefully at the details of each text, but for different purposes.

Their careful examination of different versions of the same text handed down in streams of interpretative tradition shows that these different versions may not have come from the same *Vorlagen*. This has the beneficial result that modern interpreters are less likely to ascribe differences to deliberate, malicious, misleading.

The assumption, however, that only the original meaning of the text is authentic and valid, that “a text cannot mean what it could never have meant,”²⁹ can limit their interpretation to meaning available by historical analysis. With Jowett, many think that “the true use of interpretation is to get rid of interpretation, and leave us alone in company with the author,”³⁰ getting rid of later distortions. This corresponds to “the supreme rule of interpretation,” “to discover and define what the writer intended to express.”³¹

Interpreters differ on just which author is intended. Many focus on the meaning provided by only the human author of each text, in the author’s or the text’s historical context, and separate theological reflection from exegesis.

Those, however, who look to God as the author, hope to find “the true meaning of the biblical text” as “what God intended it to mean when it was first spoken.”³² This would agree with Thomas Aquinas’ “literal” sense as “the meaning which the [divine] author intends.”³³ The interpreter would then “carefully investigate what meaning the sacred [human] writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words.”³⁴ These interpreters include theological reflection, considering such meaning inherent in the texts provided by God.

²⁹ Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors* (2nd edition; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 53.

³⁰ Jowett, 378.

³¹ *Divino afflante Spiritu*, Encyclical of Pope Pius XII, September 30, 1943. [cited 21 August 2012]. Online: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_30091943.

³² Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2003), 30.

³³ Thomas Aquinas, quoted in Steinmetz, “Superiority . . .,” 30.

³⁴ *Dei Verbum*: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation solemnly promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI, on November 18, 1965, 11. [cited 21 August 2012]. Online: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const.19...

Both groups find keys to interpretation in the hypothetical historical setting, either of the persons involved in a text, or the text itself; details of the application and transformation of hypothetical commonly used forms; and the structure of the canonical book in which the form is found.

In relating the complaints of Jeremiah to a standard lament form, modern interpreters are able to account for their harsh language, as typical of the form. This includes the fierce calls for God's retribution, seemingly inappropriate for God's spokesman, but acceptable as a legitimate part of this form.

Modern concern for a logical structure for the book of Jeremiah sees as odd the complaints' lack of connection with the texts which surround them. Regarding the complaints as permutations of traditional laments makes their placement in the book a possible contribution to understanding of their meaning, in the context of either the historical Jeremiah or the redactors of the canonical book.

Their focus on a single original meaning, in an attempt to "see or imagine things as they truly" were to the first hearers without "the refinements or distinctions of later times,"³⁵ however, makes it hard to see what use these texts may have for any of these later times. Separation of biblical criticism from any application evades the question of whether the texts are revelatory. Cutting off possible theological reflection runs counter to Christian and Jewish reasons for preserving these texts throughout the ages: finding them authoritative and revelatory, and through them hearing God.

³⁵ Jowett, 338.

Some recent interpreters have addressed these concerns. Some agree with Brevard Childs that “in the end, it is the canonical text that is authoritative, not the process, nor the self-understanding of the interpreter.”³⁶ They share a renewed focus on the importance of the meanings of the texts themselves, beyond that of hypothetical predecessors. Some recognize the legitimacy of a variety of meanings for texts: in Jeremiah’s day, for the book’s first readers; for Christians and Jews through the centuries; for Christians and Jews today, understanding that the value of Jeremiah’s complaints is not limited to their effect on their first audience. With Steinmetz, they think that “it is not anachronistic to believe such added dimensions of meaning exist. It is only good exegesis.”³⁷ Many agree with ancient and medieval interpreters that the texts were designed to be revelatory.

Interpreters of our day, including those who do apply texts to meaning today, reflect their own theological understandings. For example, those who commend Jeremiah’s harsh language as a model for honest prayer reflect modern value assigned to honesty above subservience. Current appreciation for diverse insights appears in welcoming those provided by different streams of interpretative tradition.

5.3.4 Contributions today of ancient and medieval interpretations of the complaints of Jeremiah

In “conversation” with ancient and medieval interpreters of the complaints of Jeremiah, interpreters today may well learn from their insights and practices. Those today can also seek illumination, by careful and reverent consideration of texts found

³⁶ Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (The Old Testament Library; Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001), 4.

³⁷ David C. Steinmetz, “Uncovering a Second Narrative: Detective Fiction and the Construction of Historical Method,” *The Art of Reading Scripture* (ed. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003), 65.

to be revelatory by communities of many ages. Ancient and medieval questions asked of texts were different from modern questions. Some of their questions and answers, however, point to aspects of truth about God and God's dealings with humanity that may be useful to communities beyond their own.

Individuals and communities today may well learn from, even perhaps "adopt," ancient and medieval "hermeneutical principles": "the assumption that the text is meaningful; the demand that interpretation be answerable to the text; and the principle that all interpretations merely realize the text's possibilities."³⁸ These principles provide valuable practices: paying close attention to the details of the texts in the context of all of Scripture; dealing with texts as they are, whether or not they agreed with them; not limiting the understanding of texts to their immediate historical contexts, but recognizing useful meanings beyond the literal; including theological reflection as an essential part of exegesis; and expecting and finding helpful applications, understanding that meanings of the texts are designed to help communities.

³⁸ Alan Cooper, "Biblical Studies and Jewish Studies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies* (ed. Martin Goodman; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 26-7.

Appendix 1 Textual, translation, and concordance resources

1. Text:

1.1 Hebrew

1.1.1 Masoretic Text

Masoretic Text (MT) is from BibleWorks 6. BibleWorks Copyright 1992-2003 BibleWorks, LLC, using text from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia BHS*. Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. 4th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990.

Footnotes to text of Jeremiah are from W. Rudolph. “Jeremiah.” *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia BHS*. Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. 4th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990. = W. Rudolph, *BHS*.

1.1.2 Qumran texts

4QJer^a is from E. Tov. *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*. Vol. 15. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, plates xxiv-xxix, 145-170.

4QJer^c is from E. Tov. *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*. Vol. 15. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, plates xxx-xxxvi, cols. viii and ix, 188.

1.2 Greek

1.2.1 Septuagint

Septuagint (LXX) is from BibleWorks 6. BibleWorks Copyright 1992-2003 BibleWorks, LLC, using text from *LXX Septuaginta*. Edited by Alfred Rahlfs. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt/Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935.

1.2.2 “The Three”

Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion (“The Three”) are from Frederick Field. *Origenis Hexaplorum*. Vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875.

1.3 Targum Jeremiah

Targum Jeremiah is from BibleWorks 6. BibleWorks Copyright 1992-2003 BibleWorks, LLC. The text is based on Sperber (below), modified by CAL (below), using Tiberian pointing. Words in my added brackets are variants listed in Sperber; many are unpointed.

Sperber: *The Bible in Aramaic*. Edited by Alexander Sperber. Vol. 3 The Latter Prophets according to Targum Jonathan. Leiden: Brill, 1962.

CAL: *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Hebrew Union College. Cited 1 September 2011. Online: <http://cal1.cn.huc.edu>.

1.4 Latin

1.4.1 Vulgate

Vulgate (Vg) is from BibleWorks 6. BibleWorks Copyright 1992-2003 BibleWorks, LLC, using text from *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, Vulgate Latin Bible (VUL). Edited by R. Weber, B. Fischer, J. Gribomont, H. F. D. Sparks, and W. Thiele [at Beuron and Tuebingen] Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969, 1975, 1983.

1.4.2 Vetus Latina

Vetus Latina is from Microfilm of *Vetus Latina: die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel*. Collected and edited by Erzabtei Beuron. Beuron: Erzabtei Beuron, 1954.

1.5 Peshitta

Text of the Peshitta (P) is from the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Hebrew Union College. Cited 1 May 2010. Online: <http://cal1.cn.huc.edu>. Its font is Estrangelo Edessa 18 point.

2. Translation:

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

2.1 Hebrew

Hebrew translation into English uses *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Edited by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner. Translated and edited by M.E.J. Richardson. Leiden: Brill, 2001. = HALOT

2.2 Greek

Greek translation into English uses both:

H. G. Liddell and R. Scott. *Greek-English Lexicon with a Revised Supplement*. Revised by Henry Stuart Jones. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. = LSJ
and J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie. *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*. Revised edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003. = Lust

2.3 Targumic Aramaic

English translation of the Targum and other Aramaic words uses
The Targum of Jeremiah. The Aramaic Bible Vol. 12. Translated by Robert Hayward. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1987.
and Douglas M. Gropp. *Dictionary to Targums Onqelos and Jonathan*. Unpublished, February 17, 2004.
and Marcus Jastrow. *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature*. New York: Judaica Press, 1996. Reprint of 1903 edition.

2.4 Latin

Latin translation into English uses:

John F. Collins. *A Primer of Ecclesiastical Latin*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985.

and *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968-1982.

and *The White Latin Dictionary*. Edited by John T. White. Chicago: Follett, 1960. = White

and W. E. Plater and H. J. White. *A Grammar of the Vulgate*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926.

Other translations of the Vulgate:

Douai translation of the Vulgate: *The Holy Bible, translated from the Latin Vulgat*. First Stereotype, from the 5th Dublin edition. Revised and corrected according to the Clementin Edition of the Scriptures. Philadelphia: Eugene Cumiskey, 1825.

Ronald Knox: *The Old Testament*. Translated by Ronald Knox. Vol. 2. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1950.

2.5 Syriac

Syriac translation into English uses *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*. Edited by J. Payne Smith. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1998. = P-S

The Syriac font used in the body of the dissertation is SPEdessa 12 point, a Legacy SP font from the Society of Biblical Literature.

3. Concordances:

3.1 Hebrew

John R. Kohlenberger III and James A. Swanson. *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998.

3.2 Greek

Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath. *A Concordance to the Septuagint*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1998. = H-R

3.3 Targumic Aramaic

A Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets.

Vol. 7. Kings (II). Edited by Bernard Grossfeld. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

Vol. 10. Isaiah (II). Edited by Johannes de Moor. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Vol. 13. Jeremiah (II). Edited by Floris Sepmeijer. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

Vol. 14. Jeremiah (III). Edited by Floris Sepmeijer. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

Vol. 16. Ezekiel (II). Edited by Thomas Finley. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Vol. 19. The Twelve. Edited by Alberdina Houtman. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

3.4 Latin

Novae Concordantiae Bibliorum Sacrorum Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem Critice Editam. Edited by Boniface Fischer. Stuttgart: Fromman-Holzboog Verlag, 1977.

3.5 Syriac

Konkordanz zur syrischen Bibel. Die Propheten. Edited by Werner Strothmann, Kurt Johannes, and Manfred Zump. Göttinger Orientforschungen. Series 1 Syriaca.

Vol. 25. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984.

2.1 Jeremiah 4:10

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Masoretic Text	Septuagint	Qumran	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
And I said, “Ah, Lord GOD, surely you have deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying. ‘There will be peace for you,’ and a sword has reached to the life/throat.”	And I said, “O Sovereign Lord, surely deceiving, you deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, ‘Peace will be to you.’ and behold, the sword reached unto their life/soul.”	no text	And I said: “Receive my prayer, O LORD God! Therefore behold: the prophets of falsehood are leading astray this people and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: ‘You shall have peace! But now, behold: the sword is slaughtering among the people.”	And I said, “Alas! alas! alas! Lord God. Did you therefore deceive this people and Jerusalem, saying, ‘Peace will be to you,’ and behold, the sword reached up to the soul?”	And I said, “I pray, O Lord God, truly you have indeed led this people and Jerusalem astray, that you said, “Peace will be for you,’ and behold a sword came as far as the life.”

2.2 Jeremiah 11:18-20

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 159	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם אֲזַי הָרְאִיתִנִּי וְאֶדְעָה מִעַלְלֵיהֶם:	LXT 11:18 κύριε γνώρισόν μοι καὶ γνώσσομαι τότε εἰδόν τὰ ἐπιτηδεύ- ματα αὐτῶν	no text	TAR 11:18 וַיִּי אֶלְפִּנִי וְאֶלִּיפִית בְּכִין אֲחִיזִיתִנִּי עוֹבְדֵי הוֹן [בַּע וּבְדִיהוֹן]	VUL 11:18 tu autem Domine demonstra- sti mihi et cognovi tunc ostendisti mihi studia eorum	1118 ܠܝܝܝܐ ܠܝܝܝܐ ܠܝܝܝܐ ܠܝܝܝܐ ܠܝܝܝܐ ܠܝܝܝܐ ܠܝܝܝܐ ܠܝܝܝܐ

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 159	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
And the LORD made me know, and I knew; then you made me see their deeds.	O LORD, make known to me, and I shall know. Then I saw their practices.	no text	And the LORD taught me, and I learned: then you made me see their works.	But you, O Lord, showed me, and I knew. Then you showed me their desires.	The LORD showed me, and I know. Truly, you showed me their deeds.
<p>19 ואֲנִי כִכְבֵּשׁ אֶלֶיךָ יִבְלֶה לְטִבּוֹחַ וְלֹא יִדְעֵתִי כִּי-עָלִי חָשְׁבוּ מִחֲשָׁבוֹת נִשְׁחִיתָהּ עֵץ בְּלַחְמוֹ וְנִכְרַתְנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים וְשָׁמוֹ לֹא יִזְכֹּר עוֹד:</p>	<p>LXX 11:19 ἐγὼ δὲ ὥς ἀρνίου ἁκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογί- σαντο λογισμὸν ποιηρὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψω- μεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἐτι</p>	<p>ולוא [ידעתי] I did not know Note: "The recon- struction of line 1 is not certain." (DJD 15, 159). עד] יוזכר</p>	<p>TAR 11:19 וְאֲנִי כְּאִימֵר בְּחִיר דִּי לְנִכְסְתָא [ד] יְלַמִּיכְסְתָא מִתּוֹבֵל וְלֹא יִדְעִית אֲרִי עָלִי חֲשִׁיבֵי [חשיבו] [עלִי] עֲשִׁיתוֹנִין בִּישִׁין אֲמָרִין [איתו] נִרְמֵי סָמָא דְּמוֹתָא [במיכליה] בְּמִיכְלוֹהִי וְנִשְׁיַצִּינִיה מֵאֶרְעָא דִּישְׁרָאֵל וְשָׁמִיָּה</p>	<p>VUL 11:19 et ego quasi agnus mansuetus qui portatur ad victimam et non cognovi quia super me cogitave- runt consilia mittamus lignum in panem eius et eradamus eum de terra viventium et nomen eius non memore- tur amplius</p>	<p>1119 אֲנִי כְּאִי אֲמִיר בְּחִיר כִּנִּי נִכְסְתָא וְלֹא יִדְעִית אֲרִי עָלִי חֲשִׁיבֵי אֲמָרִין נִרְמֵי דְּמוֹתָא בְּמִיכְלוֹהִי וְנִשְׁיַצִּינִיה מֵאֶרְעָא דִּישְׁרָאֵל וְשָׁמִיָּה</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>בְּגִדֵי בָגֶד: Righteous are you, O LORD, when I lodge a complaint to you. Surely, I will speak legal claims to you. Why is the way of the wicked successful? All those committing treachery are at ease!</p>	<p>ἀθετοῦντες ἀθετήματα Righteous are you, O Lord, when I defend myself before you. Nevertheless, I will speak judgments to you. Why does the way of those acting wickedly prosper? They flourished, all those dealing treacherously, with breaches of faith.</p>		<p>אֲרִיזְתָּת רְשִׁיעִיָּא מִצְלָחָא [מִצְלָחָן] [שְׁלָן] שְׁלֹן שְׁלִינָא כָּל מִשְׁקָרִי שְׁקָר: O LORD, you are too righteous [for me] to contend against your word. But I am asking from before you a question of judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? All who utter falsehood are secure, at ease!</p>	<p>est omnibus qui praevaricantur et inique agunt Just indeed are you, O Lord, if I argue with you. Nevertheless, I may speak just things to you. Why is the way of the ungodly caused to succeed? It is well, to all who do not act uprightly and act unjustly!</p>	<p>ܡܝܠܟܐ : ܡܚܣܬܝܢ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܚܬܐ Righteous are you, O LORD, that I go to law with you. But I am speaking judgment before you. Why is the way of the wicked successful, and the rich, all of them lying?</p>
<p>2 נִשְׁעַתְתֶּם גַּם־שָׂרֵשׁוּ יִלְכוּ גַּם־עָשׂוּ פְּרִי קְרוֹב</p>	<p>LXX 12:2 ἐφύττευσας αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐρρίζω- θησαν ἐτεκνο- ποίησαν καὶ</p>	<p>no text</p>	<p>TAR 12:2 קִימְתִּינוּ אִף תְּקִיפוּ עֲתֵרוּ אִף קִנוּ נִכְסִין קִרְיִבִין</p>	<p>VUL 12:2 plantasti eos et radicem miserunt proficiunt et faciunt fructum prope es</p>	<p>1202 ܢܝܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ ܡܚܬܐ ܡܚܬܐ ܡܚܬܐ ܡܚܬܐ ܡܚܬܐ ܡܚܬܐ</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>But you, O LORD, know me. You see me and test my heart with you. Tear them apart, like a flock for slaughter! Sanctify them for a day of killing!</p>	<p>But you, O Lord, know me. You have tested my heart before you. Sanctify them for a day of their slaughter!</p>	<p>Tear them apart, like [a flock]</p>	<p>אתְּקִינִינוּן [אתְּקִינִינוּן] כַּעֲנָא לְנִכְסְתָא וְזַמִּינִינוּן לְיוֹם קָטוֹל: But as for you, O LORD, all is known and revealed before you, for you test the hearts of those who take pleasure in your fear. As for the wicked, ordain them as sheep for the slaughter, and appoint them for the day of slaughter!</p>	<p>And you, O Lord, knew me. You saw me and tried my heart with you. Collect them, as a herd to sacrifice, and make them holy in the day of slaughter!</p>	<p>סוֹחֵ אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מִלֵּאָה. But you, O LORD, know me and see me and try my heart before you. Prepare them like sheep for slaughter, and summon them to the day of slaughter!</p>

2.4 Jeremiah 15:10-12

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	Qumran	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>10 אֲנִי -לִי אֲנִי כִי יִלְדִתִּנִי אִישׁ רֵיב וְאִישׁ</p>	<p>LXT 15:10 οἷμμοι ἐγὼ μῆτερ ὡς τίνα με ἔτεκες ἄνδρα δικαζό-</p>	<p>no text</p>	<p>TAR 15:10 וְיִ לִי אֲנִי אֲרִי יִלְדִתִּנִי לְמַהוּי גִבֵּר דִּין</p>	<p>VUL 15:10 vae mihi mater mea quare genuisti me virum rixae virum</p>	<p>1510 וְיִ לִי אֲרִי יִלְדִתִּנִי לְמַהוּי גִבֵּר דִּין</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	Qumran	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
surely I let the enemy strike you, in a time of misfortune, and in a season of distress.”				enemy.”	
<p>12 הִירֵעַ בְּרִזָּל בְּרִזָּל מִצָּפוֹן וְנִחְשָׁת׃</p>	<p>LXX 15:12 εἰ γνωσθή- σεται σίδηρος καὶ περιβό- λαιον χαλκοῦν</p>	no text	<p>TAR 15:12 מֶלֶךְ דְּתִקְיָה כְּבִרְזָלָא [כִּפְרִזְלָא] יִסַּק לְסַעִיד מֶלֶךְ דְּתִקְיָה כְּבִרְזָלָא [כִּפְרִזְלָא] וְכִנְחָשָׂא יִיתִי מִצִּיפּוֹנָא [עֲלוּהִי] עֲלֵה [לְמַתְבְּרִיָּה] לְמַתְבְּרָה׃</p>	<p>VUL 15:12 numquid foederab- tur ferrum ferro ab aquilone et aes</p>	<p>1512 ܘܡܨܬܐ ܚܕܐ ܦܘܠܬܐ ܐܚܕܐ ܨܥܬܐ</p>
Will iron shatter iron from the north and bronze?	Will iron and brass covering be known?		A king who is as strong as iron shall come up to help a king who is as strong as iron and brass: he shall come from the north; he has	Will iron be joined to iron from the north and copper?	who is hard like iron and like brass.”

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	Qumran	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
O LORD, you know. Remember me, and see to me, and take revenge for me on my persecutors. Do not take me away, in your forbearance. Know that I carry disgrace on your behalf!	O Lord, remember me and consider me and revenge me before those pursuing me, not in forbearance. Know that I carried disgrace because of you,	no text	As for you, it is revealed before you, O LORD; let my memorial come in before you, and command me to do well for myself. Punish my enemy and exact retribution for me from my pursuers; and do not give a duration for my humiliation. It is revealed before you that I received rebukes on account of your Memra.	O Lord, you know. Call me to mind, and visit me, and preserve me from those who pursue me. Do not take me up, in your forbearance. Know that I sustained reproach for you.	O LORD, you know me, remember me and save me! And take vengeance for me on my persecutors. Do not take me, in your long-suffering. Know that I received reproach for your sake!
^{WTT} 15:16 נִמְצָאֵי דְּבָרֶיךָ וְאִכְלָם וַיְהִי (דְּבָרֶיךָ) [דְּבָרֶיךָ] לִי לְשִׁשּׁוֹן וּלְשִׁמְחָת לְבָבִי כִּי־נִקְרָא שִׁמְךָ עָלַי יְהוָה	^{LXT} 15:16 ὕπὸ τῶν ἄθετόν- των τοὺς λόγους σου συντέ- λεσον αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔσται ὁ λόγος σου ἐμοὶ εἰς εὐφρο- σύνην καὶ χαρὰν καρδίας	no text	^{TAR} 15:16 קְבִילִית לְפִתְגֻמְךָ וְקִימִיתִינוּ וַיְהִי מִימְךָ [פִּיתְגֻמְךָ] לִי לְבִיעַ וּלְחִדּוֹת לְבִי אֲרִי אֶתְקִרִי שִׁמְךָ	^{VUL} 15:16 inveni sunt sermones tui et comedi eos et factum est mihi verbum tuum in gaudium et in laetitiam cordis mei quoniam	1516 ܐܢܝܬܐ ܢܡܥܬܝܢܝ ܐܚܒܐ ܐܬܝܬܝ ܡܢ ܐܡܪܐ ܐ ܢܝܬܝܢܝ ܠܒܝܬܝ ܠܚܝܬܝ ܠܡܨܚܝܬܝ ܠܠܒܝ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܐܬܝܬܝ ܥܠܝܬܝ

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	Qumran	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>אלהי צבאות:</p> <p>Your words were found, and I ate them, and your word was a joy to me, and the rejoicing of my heart, for your name was called upon me, O LORD God of hosts.</p>	<p>μου ὅτι ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐπ' ἐμοί κύριε παντοκράτωρ</p> <p>from the ones rejecting your words. Consume them! And your word will be to me into mirth and joy of my heart. For your name has been called upon me, O Lord Almighty.</p>	no text	<p>עלי יי אלהי צבאות :[אלהא]</p> <p>I received your words and confirmed them, and your Memra became for me rejoicing and the joy of my heart: for your Name has been called over me, O Lord God of Hosts.</p>	<p>invocatum est nomen tuum super me Domine Deus exercituum</p> <p>Your words were found, and I ate them, and your word was made to me in gladness and in joy of my heart, for your name was called over me, O Lord God of hosts.</p>	<p>וזה אלהי שלום:</p> <p>And I kept your commandments and did them. And your word was to me a delight, and the joy of my heart. For your name is called upon me, O LORD God of hosts.</p>
<p>WTT 15:17 לא־ישבתי בסוד משחקים ואעלז מפני ידך בדרך ישבתי כי־זעם מלאתני:</p>	<p>LXT 15:17 οὐκ ἐκάθισα ἐν συνεδρίῳ αὐτῶν παιζόντων ἀλλὰ εὐλαβοῦμένη ἀπὸ προσώπου χειρός σου κατὰ μόνας</p>	no text	<p>TAR 15:17 לא יתיבית בסיעת משבחין ולא חדיתי מן־קדם מימרך פריש [פריש] יתיבית</p>	<p>VUL 15:17 non sedi in concilio ludentium et gloriatus sum a facie manus tuae solus sedebam quoniam comminatione</p>	<p>1517 לא גאבא בבטשא גמבאשנא אל גשלא מ סג אבג סכלסגו, גאבא מ</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	Qumran	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
I did not sit in the company of jokers, or exult. From before your hand, I sat solitary, for you filled me with a curse.	ἐκαθήμην ὅτι πικρίας ἐνε- πλήσθην I did not sit in their council of mockers, but I feared on account of your hand. Apart I sat because I was filled with bitterness.	no text	אֲרִי נְבוֹאֵן [נְבוֹאָה נְבוֹאָת] דְּלוּט מִלִּיתָנִי: I did not sit in the company of those who sing, and I did not rejoice before your Memra. I have sat alone, for with prophecies of a curse you filled me.	replesti me I did not sit in the assembly of mockers, or boast. From the face of your hand, I was sitting alone, because you filled me with threaten- ing.	הוּם לֹא חֲבֵלָה I did not sit in the congregation of scoffers, but I feared from before your hand, and I sat alone, because you filled me with anger.
WIT 15:18 לָמָּה הָיָה כְּאֵבִי נֶצַח וּמִכְתִּי אֲנוּשָׁה מֵאֲנָה הֶרְפָּא הָיָה תַּהֲוָה לִי כְמוֹ אֲכֹזֵב מִיָּם לֹא נֶאֱמַנּוּ:	LXT 15:18 ἵνα τί οἱ λυποῦντές με κατισ- χύουσίν μου ἢ πληγὴ μου στερεά πόθεν ἰαθήσομαι γινομένη ἐγενήθη μοι ὥς ὕδωρ ψευδὲς οὐκ ἔχον πίστιν	no text	TAR 15:18 לָמָּה הָיָה [הוּת] כִּיבִי לֹא־פָרַשׁ וּמִחְתִּי תְּקִיפָא מִסְרָבָא [לִמְסַרְבָּא] לֹא־תִסָּאָה לֹא יְהִי מִימָרְךָ לִי כְּדַבִּין	VUL 15:18 quare factus est dolor meus perpetuus et plaga mea despera- bilis rennuit curari facta est mihi quasi menda- cium aquarum infidelium	1518 לִמָּה מִיָּה כְּאֵבִי חַטָּא מִסְרָבָא, מִסְרָבָא מִסְרָבָא לִי לִמָּה חֲסֵה לִי חֲסֵה לִי חֲסֵה

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	Qumran	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
Why was my pain endless, and my wound incurable? It refused to be healed. Will you [or it] indeed be to me like deception, water that is not reliable?	Why are those vexing me overpowering me? My wound is severe. Whence shall I be healed? It has become to me like lying/false water; it has no faithfulness.	no text	<p>כְּמִבּוֹעַ דְּמִין דְּפִסְקִין מוֹהִי:</p> <p>Why was my pain perpetual, and my wound strong, refusing to be healed? Let not your Memra be lies for me, like a fountain whose waters cease.</p>	Why is my pain perpetual and my wound without hope? It refuses to be cured. It has become to me like lying, untrustworthy waters.	<p>ܚܘܿܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܥܡܝܬܐ</p> <p>Why was my pain strong, and my wound serious, and not willing to be healed? And you were to me like lying waters, that are not trustworthy.</p>

2.6 Jeremiah 17:14-18

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 163	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>^{WTT} 17:14</p> <p>רָפְאֲנִי יְהוָה וְאַרְפָּא וְאוֹשַׁעַה כִּי הוֹשִׁיעַנִי תְּהִלָּתִי אַתָּה:</p>	<p>^{LXT} 17:14</p> <p>ἰσααὶ με κύριε καὶ ἰαθήσομαι σώσόν με καὶ σωθήσο- μαι ὅτι καύχημά μου σὺ εἶ</p>	<p>רפאני יהוה וארפה הושפני ונאושה [כי] תהלתי אתה</p>	<p>^{TAR} 17:14</p> <p>אַסִּינִי יְיָ וְאַתְסִי פְּרוֹקְנִי וְאַתְפְּרִיק אֲרִי תוֹשִׁבְּחִתִּי אַתָּה:</p>	<p>^{VUL} 17:14</p> <p>sana me Domine et sanabor salvum me fac et salvus ero quoniam laus mea tu es</p>	<p>1714</p> <p>ܐܫܢܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܐܬܐܠܐܫܐ ܦܘܨܡܐ ܐܬܐܦܝܡ ܡܠܟܐ ܘܐܫܒܚܬܐ ܐܬܐܡܐ</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 163	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
Heal me O LORD, and I shall be healed. Save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise.	Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed. Save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my glory/boast.	Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed. Save me, and [I shall be saved, for] you are my praise. Note: אתה is an addition, above the line.	Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; redeem me, and I shall be redeemed, for you are my praise.	Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed. Save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise.	Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed. Redeem me, and I shall be redeemed, for you are my praise.
<p>WTT 17:15 הִנֵּה־הֵמָּה אֹמְרִים אֵלַי אִיהָ דְּבַר־יְהוָה יָבוֹא נָא:</p> <p>Behold, they are saying to me, “Where is the word of the LORD? Let it come!”</p>	<p>LXT 17:15 ἰδοὺ αὐτοὶ λέγουσι πρὸς με ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος κυρίου ἐλθάτω</p> <p>Behold, they are saying to me, “Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come!”</p>	<p>הנה המה אמרים לי איה [דבר יהוה יבוא] נא</p> <p>Behold, they are saying to me, “Where is [the word of the LORD? Let it come!]”</p>	<p>TAR 17:15 הא אינון אמרין לי אן דאתנביתא בשמה דיין יתקיים כען:</p> <p>Behold, they are saying to me, “Where is what you prophesied in the Name of the LORD? Let it be confirmed now!”</p>	<p>VUL 17:15 ecce ipsi dicunt ad me ubi est verbum Domini veniat</p> <p>Behold, they themselves are saying to me, “Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come!”</p>	<p>1715 מה מב אמרי לי איה פה גמור למה מה</p> <p>Behold, they are saying to me, “Where is the word of the LORD? Let it come now!”</p>
<p>WTT 17:16 ואני לא אצתי</p>	<p>LXT 17:16 ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ</p>	<p>ואני לא אצתי</p>	<p>TAR 17:16 ואנא לא</p>	<p>VUL 17:16 et ego non sum</p>	<p>1716 אנא כבשלה</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 163	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>מִרְעָה אַחֲרֶיךָ וַיּוֹם אָנוּשׁ לֹא הִתְאַוִּיתִי אֹתָהּ יָדַעַת מוֹצֵא שִׁפְתִּי נֹכַח פְּנֵיךָ הָיָה:</p>	<p>ἐκοπίασα κατακο- λουθῶν ὀπίσω σου καὶ ἡμέραν ἄνθρωπου οὐκ ἐπεθύ- μησα σὺ ἐπίστη τὰ ἐκπορευ- όμενα διὰ τῶν χειλέων μου πρὸ προσώπου σοῦ ἐστίν</p>	<p>מִרְעָה אַחֲרֶיךָ וַיּוֹם אָנוּשׁ לֹא הִתְאַוִּיתִי אֹתָהּ יָדַעַת מוֹצֵא שִׁפְתִּי נֹכַח פִּיךָ הָיָה</p>	<p>עֲכִיבִית עַל מִימָרְךָ מִלְּאַתְנַבְּאָה [לְאַתְנַבְּאָה] עֲלִיהוֹן לְאַתְבוֹתְהוֹן לְדַחֲלָתְךָ וְלִיוֹם בִּיש דָּאֵת מִיחִי עֲלִיהוֹן לֹא חֲמִידִית אֵת גְּלִי [אִיתְגְּלִי אִיתְגְּלִי] קְדָמְךָ אַפְקוֹת סְפוֹתִי גְּלִי קְדָמְךָ הָיָה:</p>	<p>turbatus te pastorem sequens et diem hominis non desideravi tu scis quod egressum est de labiis meis rectum in conspectu tuo fuit</p>	<p>לֹא פָגַע מִנִּי אַעֲבֹד אַעֲבֹד וְלֹא מִנִּי וְכֹנֵעַ לֹא וְיָדָע סְפוֹתִי וְנֹכַח פִּי שִׁפְתִּי סֹגֵר אֶפְסִי סֹפֵר</p>
<p>But I did not hurry, away from being a shepherd after you; and a disastrous day I did not wish for, you know. The pronounce-ment of my lips was before you.</p>	<p>But I did not grow weary following after you, and I did not long for a day of man, you know. What went forth through my lips is before your face.</p>	<p>But I did not hurry from being a shepherd?/ from wicked-ness? after you, and a disastrous day/ day of man I did not</p>	<p>But I did not delay about your Memra, from prophesying against them, to lead them back to your fear. And I did not long for the evil day which you are</p>	<p>And I was not disturbed, following you, a shepherd, and the day of man I did not desire, you know. What has come out from my</p>	<p>But I did not cease from you in wickedness. You know, you yourself, that the day of a man I did not desire, and anything that went out from my lips was before your face.</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 163	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
		<p>wish for, you know. The pronounce-ment of [my] lips was before you.</p> <p>Note: לא is a correction, above the line.</p> <p>אצותי is possibly from by-form אציץ, with same meaning as אוץ (HALOT, 23)</p>	<p>bringing upon them. As for you, what goes forth from my lips was revealed before you: it was revealed before you.</p>	<p>lips was right in your sight.</p>	
<p>^{WTT} Jeremiah 17:17 אֶל־תִּהְיֶה לִי לְמַחֲתָה מִחֲסִי אֶתֶּה בַּיּוֹם רָעָה:</p>	<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 17:17 μη γενηθης μοι εις αλλοτρι- ωσιν φειδό- μενός μου έν ήμέρα πονηρα</p>	<p>אל תהיה לי ל מ[ח]תה מחסי אתה ביום רעה]</p>	<p>^{TAR} Jeremiah 17:17 לא יהי מימך לי לתבר [כרבין] רוחצני את בעידן עקא:</p>	<p>^{VUL} Jeremiah 17:17 non sis mihi tu formidini spes mea tu in die adflic- tionis</p>	<p>1717 ܐܡܫܐ ܐܢܝ ܠܡܚܬܐ ܐܠܝ ܐܬܗ ܒܝܝܡ ܪܥܐ</p>
<p>Do not become a terror to me!</p>	<p>Do not be a hostile stranger to me, having</p>	<p>Do not become [a terror] for me! You</p>	<p>Let not your Memra become a misfortune for</p>	<p>Do not you be terrors to me! You</p>	<p>Do not be a ruin/breaking for me! But overshadow</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 163	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
May those pursuing me be put to shame, but let me not be put to shame. May they be terrified, but may I not be terrified. Bring upon them the evil day and [with] double destruction shatter them!	Let those pursuing me be ashamed, and let me not be ashamed. Let them be terrified, and let me not be terrified. Bring upon them an evil day, [with] double ruin crush them.	May those pursuing me be put to [shame]... but let me [not] be put to shame. May they be terrified, [but] let me no[t] be terrified. Bring upon them the day of evil and double destruction ?? [you] shatter them! Note: {ם}[י]ן ין is a correction, above the line. {ם} is an erasure. {ת} is an erasure, making the text more like MT.	May those who pursue me be confounded, but let me not be confounded. May they be put to shame, but let me not be put to shame. Bring an evil day upon them, and break them with double breaking!	May those who pursue me be confounded, and let me not be confounded. Let them quake with fear, and let me not quake with fear. Bring upon them a day of distress, and with double calamity destroy them!	May my persecutors be ashamed, but let me not be ashamed. May they be broken, but let me not be broken. Bring upon them the day of disaster, and break them with double breaking!

2.7 Jeremiah 18:18-23

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 165	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
WTT 18:18 וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָכֵן וַנַּחֲשִׁבָה עַל-יִרְמְיָהוּ מִחֻשְׁבוֹת כִּי לֹא-תֵאַבֶּד תּוֹרָה מִכֶּהֱן וְעֵצָה מִחֻכָּם וְדָבָר מִנְּבִיא לָכֵן וְנִפְהֹו בְּלִשׁוֹן וְאֵל נִקְשִׁיבָה אֵל כָּל-דְּבָרָיו:	LXT 18:18 καὶ εἶπαν δεῦτε λογισώμεθα ἐπὶ Ἰερεμίου λογισμόν ὅτι οὐκ ἀπολείται νόμος ἀπὸ ἱερέως καὶ βουλὴ ἀπὸ συνετοῦ καὶ λόγος ἀπὸ προφήτου δεῦτε καὶ πατάξωμεν αὐτὸν ἐν γλώσσῃ καὶ ἀκουσόμεθα πάντας τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ	[ויא]מר לכו ונחשבה על ירמיהו מחשנות כי לא תאבד תורה מכהן ועצה [מחכם] ודבר מנביא לכו ונכנהו בלשון ואל [נקשיבה] אל כל [דבריו]	TAR 18:18 וַאֲמָרוּ אִיתּוּ וְנַחֲשִׁיב עַל יִרְמְיָה מַחֲשָׁבָן אַרִי לֹא תִפְסֹוק [אוֹרִיתָא] אוֹרָאָה מְכַהִין וּמִיַּלְךְ מַחֲכִים וְאַלְפָן מִסְפָּר [אִיתּוּ] אִיתִי וְנִסְהַדְנִיה סְהַדוֹן דְּשִׁקֵּר וְלֹא נְצִית לְכָל פְּתָגְמוּהִי:	VUL 18:18 et dixerunt venite et cogitemus contra Hieremiam cogitationes non enim peribit lex a sacerdote neque consilium a sapiente nec sermo a propheta venite et percutiam us eum lingua et non adtendamus ad universos sermones eius	1818 ܘܝܥܡܪܘ ܕܗܝܢ ܠܚܫܒܬܐ ܥܠ ܝܪܡܝܐ ܡܚܫܒܐ ܟܝ ܠܐ ܬܐܒܕ ܬܘܪܗ ܡܚܬܐ ܘܥܨܐ ܡܚܚܡ ܘܕܒܪ ܡܢܒܝܐ ܠܚܝܢ ܘܢܩܨܝܒܐ ܐܠ ܕܒܪܝܝ: And they said, “Come, let us plot a plan against Jeremiah, for law shall not perish from a priest, and

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 165	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
counsel from a sage, nor a word from a prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not listen attentively to all his words.”	counsel from a sage, and a word from a prophet. Come, and let us strike him with a tongue, and we will hear all his words.	from a priest, nor counsel from a sage,] nor a word from a prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not [listen attentively to all his words.] Note : ונכנהו a form with “energetic nun,” with same meaning as ונכהו	from a sage, nor instruction from a scribe. Come, and let us bear false witness against him; and let us not listen to all his words.	from a priest, nor counsel from a sage, nor talk from a prophet. Come, and let us strike him with the tongue, and let us not pay attention to all his talks.”	nor a word from the prophets. Come, let us strike him with his tongue, and let us not hearken to all of his words.”
<p>WTT 18:19 הַקְשִׁיבָה יְהוָה אֵלַי וּשְׁמַע לְקוֹל יְרִיבִי:</p> <p>Listen attentively, O LORD, to me, and hear the voice of my</p>	<p>LXT 18:19 εἰσακού- σόν μου κύριε καὶ εἰσακού σον τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ δικαιώ- ματός μου</p> <p>Give ear to me, O Lord, and hear the voice of my justification</p>	<p>הַקְשִׁיבָה [יְהוָה] אֵלַי [וּשְׁמַע לְקוֹל {דְּבָרַי} יְרִיבִי]</p> <p>[Listen attentive-ly, O LORD,] to me, [and] hear the</p>	<p>TAR 18:19 גְּלִי קִדְמָךְ יְיָ דִּינִי [רִיבִי] וּשְׁמַע קִדְמָךְ עֲלֵבְנִי:</p> <p>My case is revealed before you, O LORD, and my grievance</p>	<p>VUL 18:19 adte- Domine ad me et audi vocem adversario- -rum meorum</p> <p>Pay attention, O Lord, to me, and hear the voice of</p>	<p>1819 יְהוָה מִלִּי שְׁמַע חֲלֹבִי.</p> <p>Hearken to me, O LORD! And hear the sound of my wrong!</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 165	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
opponents!		voice of {my words} my oppo- nents! Note: דברי is an erasure.	is heard before you.	my adversa- ries!	
^{WT} 18:20 הַיִּשְׁלֵם תַּחַת-טוֹבָה רָעָה כִּי -כָרוּ שׁוֹחָה לְנַפְשִׁי זָכַר עֲמֹדִי לְפָנֶיךָ לְדַבֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם טוֹבָה לְהָשִׁיב אֶת-חֲמַתְךָ מֵהֶם:	^{LXT} 18:20 εἰ ἀνταπο- δίδοται ἀντὶ ἀγαθῶν κακά ὅτι συνελά- λῃσαν ῥήματα κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς μου καὶ τὴν κόλασιν αὐτῶν ἔκρυσάν μοι μνήσθητι ἐστηκότος μου κατὰ πρόσωπόν σου τοῦ λαλῆσαι ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀγαθὰ τοῦ ἀποστρέ- ψαι τὸν θυμὸν σου ἀπ’ αὐτῶν	הַיִּשְׁלֵם תַּחַת טוֹבָה רָעָה כִּי כָרוּ שׁוֹחָה לְנַפְשִׁי זָכַר עֲמֹדִי לְפָנֶיךָ לְדַבֵּר עַל-נִי טוֹבָה לְהָשִׁיב [אֶת] חֲמַתְךָ מֵהֶם	^{TAR} 18:20 הַאֲפֹשֶׁר לְשַׁלֵּם טַבָּתָא חֲלָף בְּשַׁתָּא [בִּישָׂא] אַרִּי פַּחִית [פַּחִין] יִיעוֹל כָּרוּ לְמַקְטָלִי דְּכַרְן מְקָמִי קְדָמְךָ לְמַלְלָא עֲלִיהוֹן פְּתַגְמִין תְּקַנִּין לְאַתְבָּא יְת חֲמַתְךָ מִנְהוֹן:	^{VUL} 18:20 numquid redditur pro bono malum quia foderunt foveam animae meae recordare quod steterim in conspectu tuo ut loquerer pro eis bonum et averterem indignatio -nem tuam ab eis	1820 אֲוֹפִי כַּעֲבָד עַל לְבָבָא: וְעִפִּי לְמַעַן לְעַמְדָא וְעִפִּי מִנְהוֹן מִלְלָא לְמַעַן לְבָבָא: לְמַעַן עַבְדָא מִנְהוֹן:

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 165	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>בְּחֹרֵיהֶם מִכִּי־חָרֵב בְּמִלְחָמָה:</p> <p>Therefore give their children to famine, and hand them over to the power of the sword, and let their wives be bereaved of children and widows, and let their men be slain by death, their young men struck dead by a sword in battle.</p>	<p>αὐτῶν γενέσθω- σαν ἀνηρημέ- νοι θανάτῳ καὶ οἱ νεανίσ- κοι αὐτῶν πεπτω- κότες μαχαίρᾳ ἐν πολέμῳ</p> <p>Therefore give their sons to famine and gather them together to the power of the sword. May their wives become childless and widows, and their men be taken away by death, and their young men having perished by the sword in battle.</p>	<p>בְּחֹרֵיהֶם [מִזְ] כִּי חָרֵב בְּמִלְחָמָה</p> <p>[Therefore give their children to famine, and hand them over to the power] of the sword, and let [their] wives [be bereaved of children and widows, and let their men be slain by death, and their young men struck] dead by a sword in battle.</p>	<p>קְטִילִי [קְטוּלִי] מוֹתָא עוֹלֵימִיהוֹן מִטְעֵנִי חָרְבָא [חָרֵב] בְּקָרְבָא:</p> <p>Therefore give their children to famine, and deliver them to the hands of those who kill with the sword, and let their wives be bereaved of children and widows, and their men be killed by death, their young men wounded by the sword in war.</p>	<p>confodian- tur gladio in proelio</p> <p>Therefore give their sons into famine, and lead them into the hand of the sword. May their wives be without children and widows, and their men destroyed by death, their young men pierced by the sword in battle.</p>	<p>ܩܬܠܝܬܝ ܡܘܬܐ ܥܘܠܝܡܝܗܘܢ ܡܬܥܝܢܝ ܚܪܒܐ ܚܪܒ ܒܩܪܒܐ</p> <p>Because of this, give their children to famine, and deliver them to the power of the sword. May their wives be bereaved and widows, and may their men be slain by death, and their youths slain by the sword in battle.</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 165	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
Do not cover their iniquity, and do not wipe out their sin from before you, and let them be overthrown before you; in the time of your anger, do to them.	me to death. Do not let their iniquity go unpunished, and their sins do not wipe out from before you. Let their weakness be before you; in your time of anger, do among them.	against me for death. Do not] cover their [iniquity] ({upon their iniquity}) [and their sin from before you do not wipe out, and may they be over-thrown/ caused to stumble before you; in the time of your anger, do to] them. Note: [עול] is a addition or correction, above the line.	revealed before you. Do not forgive their debts, and do not let their sins be wiped out from before you; but let them be stumbling, thrown down before you; in the time of your anger, take revenge on them!	against me, unto death. Do not appease their iniquity, and let their sin before your face not be abolished. May they be falling down in your sight; in the time of your rage, consume them!	pardon their iniquity and do not blot out their sins, from before you. Let them be fallen before you, and in the time of your rage, do with them.

2.8 Jeremiah 20:7-10

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^c , 188	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
WTT 20:7 פְּתִיתֵנִי יְהוָה	LXT 20:7 ἡπάτησάς με κύριε καὶ	פְּתִיתֵנִי יְהוָה	TAR 20:7 שְׁבִישְׁתֵּנִי יְי	VUL 20:7 seduxisti me Domine et	2007 ܥܠܐܝܬܝܢ ܡܢܝܗ

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^c , 188	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>וַאֲפַת חִזְקַתְנִי וְתוֹכַל הָיִיתִי לְשִׁחּוֹק כָּל יְהוּם כָּלָה לְעַג לִי:</p> <p>You have enticed me, O LORD, and I was enticed. You overcame me, and you prevailed. I have become a laughing-stock all the day; everyone is deriding me.</p>	<p>ἡπατήθη ἐκράτησας καὶ ἡδυνάσθης ἐγενόμην εἰς γέλωτα πᾶσαν ἡμέραν διετέλεσα μυκτηρι- ζόμενος</p> <p>You deceived me, O Lord, and I was deceived. You prevailed, and you were able. I have become laughter every day; I am continually mocked.</p>	<p>] ואפת חזקתני ותוכל הייתי לשחוק כל היום כלה לעג לי</p> <p>You have enticed me, O LORD, [and I was enticed. You overcame me, and you prevailed. I have become a laughing-stock] all the day; everyone [is deriding me.]</p>	<p>וַאֲשַׁתְּבִשִּׁית תְּקִיפַתְנִי וַיְכִילַת לִי הָיִיתִי [לְלַעִיב] לְלַעֹב כָּל יוֹמָא [יוֹמִיא] כּוֹלְהוֹן מְחִיכִין בִּי:</p> <p>You have confounded me, O Lord, and I have been confounded; you have seized me, and have prevailed over me. I have become a mockery all the day: all of them laugh at me.</p>	<p>seductus sum fortior me fuisti et invaluisti factus sum in derisum tota die omnes sub- sannant me</p> <p>You have led me away, O Lord, and I was led away. You were stronger than me, and you prevailed. I have become in derision all the day; all ridicule me.</p>	<p>אֲשַׁתְּבִלַּא טַפְסַתְנִי אֲכַלְמַא מִמֵּנִי לְמַסְכָּא חַלְמַא אֲכַלְמַא מְחַסְכִּי בִּי.</p> <p>You have enticed me, O LORD, and I was enticed. You have subdued me and you have prevailed. I have become ridicule all the day, and all of them are mocking me.</p>
<p>WTT 20:8 כִּי-מָדִי אֲדַבֵּר אֲזַעֵק חֲמָס וְשָׂד אֶקְרָא</p>	<p>LXT 20:8 ὅτι πικρῶ λόγῳ μου γελάσομαι ἄθεσίαν καὶ</p>	<p>] כי מדי אדבר אזעק חמס ושד</p>	<p>TAR 20:8 אֲרִי בְּזִמְנֵי דְאַנָּא מְתַנְבִּי אַנָּא</p>	<p>VUL 20:8 quia iam olim loquor vociferans iniquita- tem et</p>	<p>2008 אֲכַבֵּחַ וּמַחְלָא מִמֵּנִי מְלַחֵם</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^c , 188	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>כִּי הָיָה דְּבַר יְהוָה לִי לְחֶרֶף וּלְקֶלֶס כָּל־הַיּוֹם:</p> <p>For whenever I speak, I cry out, I call, “Violence and destruction!” For the word of the LORD was to me for disgrace and for mockery all the day.</p>	<p>ταλαιπω- ρίαν ἐπικαλέ- σμαι ὅτι ἐγενήθη λόγος κυρίου εἰς ὀνειδισ- μὸν ἐμοὶ καὶ εἰς χλευασμὸν πάσαν ἡμέραν μου</p> <p>For with a bitter word, I will laugh. “Faithless-ness and distress!” I will call on. For the word of the LORD became a disgrace to me and an object of mockery all my day.</p>	<p>אָקרא] כִּי הִיה דְּבַר יְהוָה לִי לְחֶרֶף וּלְקֶלֶס כָּל הַיּוֹם</p> <p>[For whenever I speak, I cry out, I call, “Violence] and destruc- tion!” [For the word of the LORD was to me for disgrace and for mockery] all the d[ay.</p>	<p>מְרִים קְלִי בְּכִי וּמִצֹּחַ וְעַל חֲטוּפִין וּבְזוּזִין אֲנָא מִתְנַבִּי אֲרִי הוּה פְּתָנְמָא וְדִיּוּ לִי לְחִיסוּדִי וְלִלְעִיב כָּל יּוֹמָא [יּוֹמִיא]:</p> <p>For at the time when I prophesy, I lift up my voice, weeping and crying out; and I prophesy against robbers and plunderers; for the word of the Lord has become for me rebukes and mockery all the day.</p>	<p>vastitatem clamito et factus est mihi sermo Domini in obpro- brium et in derisum tota die</p> <p>For now I speak as formerly, crying out. I cry out “Injustice and desola- tion!” And the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all the day.</p>	<p>ܠܐ ܩܠܦܬܐ ܟܠ ܕܒܪ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܠܝ ܠܚܪܦܐ ܘܠܩܠܝܣ ܕܟܠ ܗܝܘܡ: ܐܪܝ ܗܘܐ ܦܬܢܡܐ ܕܝܝܝ ܠܝ ܠܚܝܣܘܕܝ ܘܠܠܥܝܒ ܕܟܠ ܝܘܡܐ [ܝܘܡܝܐ]:</p> <p>And in the time that I was speaking and crying out, about plunderers and about destroyers, I was proclaiming, because the word of the LORD was to me for shame and derision every day.</p>
<p>WTT 20:9 וְאִמְרָתִי לֹא־אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ</p>	<p>LXT 20:9 καὶ εἰπα οὐ μὴ</p>	<p>ב only</p>	<p>TAR 20:9 וְאִמְרָתִי לֹא</p>	<p>VUL 20:9 et dixi non recordabor eius neque</p>	<p>2009 ܐܫܚܝܕܐ ܘܠܐ</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^c , 188	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>וְלֹא אֶדְבֵּר עוֹד בְּשִׁמּוֹ וְהָיָה בְּלִבִּי כְאֵשׁ עֶצֶר בְּעֻצְמוֹתַי בְּעֶרְתִּי וְנִלְאִיתִי כְּלָכַל וְלֹא אֵיכָל:</p> <p>And I say, “I will not remember him, and I will not speak any more in his name.” Then there is in my heart like a burning fire, locked up in my bones, and I struggle to endure, and I am not able.</p>	<p>ὀνομάσω τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου καὶ οὐ μὴ λαλήσω ἔτι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς πῦρ καιόμενον φλέγον ἐν τοῖς ὀστέοις μου καὶ παρεῖμαι πάντοθεν καὶ οὐ δύναμαι φέρειν</p> <p>And I said, “I will by no means name the name of the Lord, and I will by no means speak any longer in his name.” And it became as fire kindled, burning in my bones, and I am totally weakened, and I am not able to bear.</p>		<p>אֶדְכְּרִינִי וְלֹא אֶמְלִיל עוֹד בְּשִׁמְיָה וְהָיָה [וְהָיָה] פְּתֻמּוּהִי בְּלִבִּי כְּאִשָּׁא בְּעֶרָא שְׂטָפִין יָת גְּרָמִי וְלֹא יִתִּי לְסִבְרָא וְלֹא יִכִּלִּית:</p> <p>And I said, “I will not remember him, and I will not speak any more in his name.” And his words were in my heart like a burning fire washing my bones, and I labored to endure, and I was not able.</p>	<p>loquar ultra in nomine illius et factus est in corde meo quasi ignis exaestuans clausus- que in ossibus meis et defeci ferre non sustinens</p> <p>And I said, “I will not remember him, nor speak further in that name.” And it has become in my heart like a scorching fire, and enclosed in my bones, and I failed to bear, not enduring.</p>	<p>אֶדְבֹר כִּי, הֵלֵךְ אֶחְלֵל וְהָיָה בְּעֻצְמוֹתַי כְּמִתְּחֵלָה כְּחֵץ כְּחֵץ וְנִפְגַּע מִכָּל כְּחֵץ מִכָּל לְחֻשְׁבוֹתַי הֵלֵךְ אֶחְשָׁב</p> <p>And I said that I would not remember him, and I would not speak again in his name. And there was in my heart like a fire that caught fire and burned fiercely in my bones, and I sought to endure, and I was not able.</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^c , 188	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
him!" every man of my peace, those watching my stumbling. "Maybe he will be enticed, and we will prevail over him, and we will take our revenge on him."	against him!" all his beloved men. "Watch over his thought, if he will be deceived, and we shall prevail over him, and we shall take our vengeance on him."		"Tell, and we will tell him!," say all the men of my peace, hiding to do me evil. Perhaps he will go astray and we shall prevail over him, and take revenge on him."	pursue him," from all the men who were my peace-makers and guarding my side. "If by what means he may be deceived, and we may prevail against him, and we may take vengeance from him"	were asking about my welfare with their mouth and hating me in their heart. "Show him to us! Let us stand against him! Perhaps he will be enticed by us, and we will exact our vengeance on him."

2.9 Jeremiah 20:14-18

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 167	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
^{WTT} 20:14 אָרוּר הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָלַדְתִּי בּוֹ יוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָלַדְתָּנִי אִמִּי אֶל־יְהוָה	^{LXT} 20:14 ἐπικατάρατος ἡ ἡμέρα ἐν ᾗ ἐτέχθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἡ ἡμέρα ἐν ᾗ ἔτεκέν με ἡ μήτηρ μου μὴ ἔστω ἐπευκτῇ	אָרוּר הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָלַדְתִּי בּוֹ יוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָלַדְתָּנִי אִמִּי אֶל־יְהוָה	^{TAR} 20:14 לִיט יוֹמָא דְאַתְיָלִידִית בֵּיה יוֹמָא דִּילִידְתָּנִי [דִּי יִלְדְתָנִי] אִמִּי [בֵּיה] אִמִּי לֹא יְהִי בְרִיךְ׃	^{VUL} 20:14 maledicta dies in qua natus sum dies in qua peperit me mater mea non sit benedicta	²⁰¹⁴ לֵב מֵא גִּאֲוֵלְגֹּג כֹּחַ מֵא גִּאֲוֵלְגֹּג אֲחַבֵּל עֲמָס כֹּחַ׃

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 167	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>WTT 20:17 אֲשֶׁר לֹא -מוֹתַתְנִי מִרְחֻם וְתִהְיֶה -לִי אִמּוֹ קִבְרִי וְרִחְמָה הָרַת עוֹלָם:</p> <p>That he did not kill me from the womb, and that my mother would have been my grave, and her womb forever pregnant.</p>	<p>LXT 20:17 ὅτι οὐκ ἀπέκτεινέν με ἐν μήτρᾳ μητρὸς καὶ ἐγένετό μοι ἡ μήτηρ μου τάφος μου καὶ ἡ μήτηρ συλλήμ-ψεως αἰωνίας</p> <p>That he did not kill me in mother's womb, and that my mother would become my grave, and the womb of pregnancy everlasting.</p>	<p>אֲשֶׁר לֹא מוֹתַתְנִי מִרְחֻם וְתִהְיֶה לִי אִמּוֹ קִבְרִי וְרִחְמָה הָרַת [עוֹלָם]</p> <p>That [he did not kill me from the womb, and that his mother would have been my grave, and her womb forever pregnant.]</p>	<p>TAR 20:17 לִּי דְּלֹא אִמֶּר [אִמְרוֹ] עָלַי דְּמִיתִית מִמַּעֲיִין [בִּטְנָא] וְהוֹת לִי פֻּן אִמִּי קִבְרִי וְהוֹת כִּד לֹא הָוִית:</p> <p>Would that he had not said concerning me, that I had died from the womb, and that my mother would have been my grave, and that I would have been as though I had not existed.</p>	<p>VUL 20:17 qui non me interfecit a vulva ut fieret mihi mater mea sepulchrum et vulva eius conceptus aeternus</p> <p>Who did not destroy me from the womb, and my mother would have become a grave for me, and her womb an eternal conception.</p>	<p>2017 גִּלְגֵּל אֲחֻסְתָּנִי בְּכֻחָהּ סִמָּה לִּי וְגַם אִמִּי מִבֶּטֶן סִבְכָּה כְּלֻמָּה לְחַיִּי.</p> <p>That he did not kill me in the womb, and my mother would have been a grave for me, and my conception forever in the womb.</p>
<p>WTT 20:18 לָמָּה זֶה מִרְחֻם יֵצְאֵתִי לְרֵאוֹת עָמָל וְיָגוֹן</p> <p>quare de vulva egressus sum ut viderem laborem et dolorem et</p>	<p>LXT 20:18 ἵνα τί τοῦτο ἐξῆλθον ἐκ μήτρας τοῦ βλέπειν</p> <p>only first</p>	<p>לָמָּה דָּנָן מִבִּטְנָא נִפְקִית לְמַחְזֵי עָמַל וְדוֹן</p>	<p>TAR 20:18 לָמָּה דָּנָן מִבִּטְנָא נִפְקִית לְמַחְזֵי עָמַל וְדוֹן</p>	<p>VUL 20:18 quare de vulva egressus sum ut viderem laborem et dolorem et</p>	<p>2018 לְחַיִּי נִפְסָה מִן מִכְסָּה לְחַיִּי חַלָּה</p>

Masoretic Text	Septuagint	4QJer ^a , 167	Targum	Vulgate	Peshitta
<p>וַיֵּצֵא בְּבֶשֶׁת יָמָיו:</p> <p>Why then did I come forth from a womb to see trouble and grief, and my days come to an end in shame?</p>	<p>κόπους καὶ πόνους καὶ διετέλεσαν ἐν αἰσχύνῃ αἱ ἡμέραι μου</p> <p>Why this, that I came from the womb to see troubles and distress, and my days continued in shame?</p>		<p>וְסָפוּ בְּבִהְתָּא יָמָיו:</p> <p>Why then did I come forth from the womb to see trouble and weariness, and my days come to an end in shame?</p>	<p>consume- rentur in confu- sione dies mei</p> <p>Why did I come forth from the womb, that I might see toil and pain, and my day might be consumed in disorder?</p>	<p>ܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܢ ܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܢ ܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܢ ܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܢ ܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܢ</p> <p>Why did I go out from the womb to see pain and misery? And my days are spent in disgrace.</p>

Appendix 3 “The Three” and the Septuagint

Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion (“The Three”) are from Frederick Field.

Origenis Hexaplorum. Vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875.

3.1. Jeremiah 4:10

No differences.

3.2. Jeremiah 11:18-20

LXX	Hexapla Texts
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 11 :18 κύριε γνώρισόν μοι καὶ γνώσομαι τότε εἶδον τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα αὐτῶν</p> <p>O LORD, make known to me, and I shall know. Then I saw their practices.</p>	<p>MT: מְהֵרָה אֲנִי אֶרְאֶה then you caused me to see</p> <p>(Field, 602)</p> <p>Aquila τότε ἐγνώρισάς μοι then you made known to me</p> <p>Symmachus τότε ἔδειξά μοι then you showed me</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 11:19 ἐγὼ δὲ ὥς ἄρνιον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων ἐπ’ ἐμὲ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν ποιηρὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἔτι</p> <p>But I was like an innocent lamb led to be sacrificed, not knowing that they thought out an evil plan about me, saying, “Come and let us throw wood/a tree into his bread/food, and let us rub him out from the land of the living, and let his name be remembered no longer.</p>	<p>(Field, 602)</p> <p>Aquila/Symmachus (Σ) ἐγὼ δὲ ἡμην ὥς ἀμνὸς εἰθισμένος (Σ τιθασὸς) ἄγ’ ἔμπκ εὐκ σφᾶγῆν, καὶ οὐκ ἦδειν. But I was like a tame lamb being led to slaughter, and not to know.</p> <p>(Field, Addition, 40)</p> <p>Aquila ξύλον ἐν ἄρτῳ αὐτοῦ wood/tree in his bread</p> <p>Symmachus διαφθείρωμεν ἐν ξύλῳ τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐξολοθρεύσωμεν αὐτὸν.</p> <p>Let us destroy in/by a tree/wood his bread/food, and let us utterly destroy him.</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 11:20 κύριε κρίνων δίκαια δοκιμάζων νεφροὺς καὶ καρδίας ἴδοιμι τὴν παρὰ σοῦ ἐκδίκησιν ἐξ αὐτῶν ὅτι πρὸς</p>	<p>(Field, 602)</p> <p>Aquila/Theodotion καὶ κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων and the Lord of hosts</p> <p>Symmachus σύ δὲ κύριος τῶν</p>

LXX	Hexapla Texts
<p>σὲ ἀπεκάλυψα τὸ δικαίωμά μου</p> <p>O LORD, judging just things, testing kidneys and hearts, let me see the vengeance from you out of them, for to you I have revealed my case.</p>	<p>δύναμεων and you, O Lord of hosts</p> <p>Symmachus ὁ ἐρευνῶν examining Aquila τὴν κόλασιν ὑπο σοῦ ἐξ αὐτῶν the punishment from you out of them.</p> <p>Aquila/Symmachus τὴν δίκην μου my right</p>

3.3. Jeremiah 12:1-3

LXX	Hexapla Texts
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 12:1 δίκαιος εἶ κύριε ὅτι ἀπολογήσομαι πρὸς σέ πλὴν κρίματα λαλήσω πρὸς σέ τί ὅτι ὁδὸς ἀσεβῶν εὐοδοῦται εὐθήνησαν πάντες οἱ ἀθετοῦντες ἀθετήματα</p> <p>Righteous are you, O Lord, when I defend myself before you. Nevertheless, I will speak judgments to you. Why does the way of those acting wickedly prosper? They flourished, all those dealing treacherously, with breaches of faith.</p>	<p>(Field, 603)</p> <p>Aquila δίκαιος εἶ, κύριε, ὅταν δικάσωμαι σέ. Righteous are you, O Lord, when I plead my cause to you.</p> <p>Symmachus δικαιότερος σὺ, κύριε, ἐὰν διαλέγωμαι πρὸς σε. More righteous are you, O Lord, whenever I converse with you.</p> <p>Symmachus ἀλλ' ὅμως κρίματα λαλήσω ἔμπροσθέν σου. But nevertheless I will speak judgments before you.</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 12:2 ἐφύτευσας αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐρριζώθησαν ἐτεκνοποίησαν καὶ ἐποίησαν καρπὸν ἐγγὺς εἶ σὺ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῶν καὶ πόρρω ἀπὸ τῶν νεφρῶν αὐτῶν</p> <p>You planted them; they took root, they bore children and made fruit. You are nearby to their mouth and far off from their kidneys.</p>	<p>MT: ^{לְכָן} ^{וַיֵּצְאוּ} ^{פָּרִי} they went, they made fruit = they continually made fruit</p> <p>Aquila ἐπορεύθησαν ... they went</p> <p>Symmachus προκόπτοντες, ποιοῦσι καρπόν. advancing, making fruit.</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 12:3 καὶ σύ κύριε γινώσκεις με δεδοκίμακας τὴν καρδίαν μου ἐναντίον σου</p>	<p>Aquila/Symmachus ἔγνωσ με. You knew me.</p> <p>Aquila μετὰ σοῦ with you</p> <p>Symmachus τὴν μετὰ σου the one [the</p>

LXX	Hexapla Texts
<p>ἄγνισον αὐτοὺς εἰς ἡμέραν σφαγῆς αὐτῶν</p> <p>But you, O Lord, know me. You have tested my heart before you. Purify them for a day of their slaughter.</p>	<p>heart] with you</p> <p>Theodotion ἄωροισον αὐτοὺς ὡς πρόβατα εἰς σφαγὴν, καὶ ἄγνισον αὐτούς. Gather them as sheep for slaughter, and purify them.</p> <p>Aquila/Theodotion ἀγίασον αὐτούς Consecrate them.</p> <p>Symmachus ἀφόρισον αὐτούς Separate them.</p>

3.4. Jeremiah 15:10-12

LXX	Hexapla Texts
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 15:10 οἶμμοι ἐγὼ μῆτερ ὥς τίνα με ἔτεκες ἄνδρα δικαζόμενον καὶ διακρινόμενον πάσῃ τῇ γῇ οὔτε ὠφέλησα οὔτε ὠφέλησέν με οὐδεὶς ἢ ἰσχύς μου ἐξέλιπεν ἐν τοῖς καταρωμένοις με</p> <p>Woe to me, mother, as what you bore me, a man pleading a cause and pleaded with by all the earth! I have not helped, nor has anyone helped me. My strength failed, among the ones cursing me.</p>	<p>(Field, Addition, 42) Symmachus μήτηρ μου my mother</p> <p>Aquila ὅτι ἔτεκές με ἄνδρα μάχης καὶ ἄνδρα ἀηδίας. that you bore me, a man of combat and a man of unpleasantness Symmachus ὅτι ἔτεκές με ἄνδρα εἰς μάχην καὶ εἰς ἀηδίαν. that you bore me, a man to combat and a man to unpleasantness (Field, 612)</p> <p>cf MT: לֹא־נָשַׁנְתִּי לְאִשׁוּבִי I did not lend, nor did they lend to me. Aquila οὐκ ἐδάνεισα, οὔτε ἐδάνεισάν μοι. I have not lent, nor did they lend to me. Aquila/Symmachus οὐκ ἐδάνεισα, οὔτε ἐδάνεισάμην. I have not lent, nor was I lent to. Theodotion οὐκ ὠφείλησα, οὔτε ὠφείλεσέ μοι οὐδεὶς. I have not owed, nor has anyone owed me.</p>

LXX	Hexapla Texts
<p>LXT Jeremiah 15:11 γένοιτο δέσποτα κατευθυνόντων αὐτῶν εἰ μὴ παρέστην σοι ἐν καιρῷ τῶν κακῶν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως αὐτῶν εἰς ἀγαθὰ πρὸς τὸν ἐχθρόν</p> <p>May it be, O Lord, their prospering! Truly I stood before you, in the time of their calamities, and in the time of their oppression, for good, against the enemy.</p>	<p>cf MT: אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (שְׁרוּתָהּ) [שְׁרִיטָהּ] לְטוֹב אֱלֹהֵינוּ הִפְנַעְתִּי בְּכָבֶד בְּעַתְרָהּ וּבְעַת צָרָה אֶת־הָאִיִּב׃</p> <p>The LORD said, “Surely I released you for good. Surely I intervened for you, in a time of misfortune, and in a season of distress with the enemy /or/ Surely I released you for good, surely I let the enemy strike you, in a time of misfortune, and in a season of distress.”</p> <p>Aquila εἶπεν κύριος εἰ μὴ τὸ ὑπόλειμμά σου ἦν μοι εἰς ἀγαθόν, εἰ μὴ ἀπήντησά σοι ἐν καιρῷ κακῶν καὶ ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως. The Lord said, “Surely your remnant was to me for good. Surely I met/encountered you in a time of calamities and in a time of affliction.”</p> <p>Symmachus εἶπεν κύριος εἰ μὲν ὑπελειφθης εἰς ἀγαθόν, εἰ μὴ ἀντέστην ὑπὲρ σοῦ ἐν καιρῷ κακῶν. The Lord said, “Surely you were left for good, surely I withstood for you in a time of calamities”</p>
<p>LXT Jeremiah 15:12 εἰ γνωσθήσεται σίδηρος καὶ περιβόλαιον χαλκοῦν</p> <p>Will iron and brass covering be known?</p>	<p>Aquila μὴ ἀρμόσει σίδηρος ἐν σιδήρῳ ἀπὸ βορρᾶ, καὶ χαλκός; Will not iron be suited to iron from the north, and bronze?</p> <p>Symmachus μὴ κακώσει σίδηρος ἐν σιδήρῳ ἀπὸ βορρᾶ, καὶ χαλκόν; Will not iron do evil in iron from the north, and bronze?</p>

3.5. Jeremiah 15:15-18

LXX	Hexapla Differences
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 15:15 κύριε μνήσθητί μου καὶ ἐπίσκεψαί με καὶ ἁθώωσόν με ἀπὸ τῶν καταδιωκόντων με μὴ εἰς μακροθυμίαν γνώθι ὡς ἔλαβον περὶ σοῦ ὀνειδισμόν</p> <p>O Lord, remember me and consider me and revenge me before those pursuing me, not in forbearance. Know that I carried disgrace because of you,</p>	<p>(Field, 613-4)</p> <p>cf. MT: אֲתָה יְדַעַתְּ יְהוָה O LORD, you know.</p> <p>Aquila/Symmachus/Theodotion σὺ ἔγνωσ, κύριε O Lord, you know.</p> <p>Aquila ἐδίκησόν με Vindicate me!</p> <p>Symmachus ποίησόν με ἐκδίκησιν. Do vengeance for me!</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 15:16 ὑπὸ τῶν ἀθετούντων τοὺς λόγους σου συντέλεσον αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔσται ὁ λόγος σου ἐμοὶ εἰς εὐφροσύνην καὶ χαρὰν καρδίας μου ὅτι ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐπ' ἐμοί κύριε παντοκράτωρ</p> <p>from the ones rejecting your words. Consume them! And your word will be to me into mirth and joy of my heart. For your name has been called upon me, O Lord Almighty.</p>	<p>cf MT: נִמְצְאוּ דְבָרַי וְאָכַלְתִּים יְהוָה (דְּבָרַי) לִי לְשִׂשׂוֹן וְלִשְׂמֵחַת לִבִּי Your words were found, and I ate them, and your word was a joy to me, and the rejoicing of my heart.</p> <p>Aquila εὐρέθησαν λόγοι σου, καὶ ἔφαγον αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐγενήθη λόγος σου ἐμοὶ εἰς χάραν Your words were found and I ate them, and your word became a joy for me.</p> <p>Symmachus εὐρίσκοντο οἱ λόγοι σου τροφή μοι (another Symmachus: καὶ προσεδεχόμεν αὐτοὺς) καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ λόγος σου ἐμοὶ εἰς χάραν. Your words were being found food for me (another: and I received them), and your word became a joy for me.</p> <p>Aquila/Symmachus/Theodotion κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων O Lord God of hosts.</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 15:17 οὐκ ἐκάθισα ἐν συνεδρίῳ αὐτῶν παιζόντων ἀλλὰ εὐλαβούμην ἀπὸ προσώπου</p>	<p>Aquila/Symmachus ἐν συναγωγῇ ποιζόντων in a congregation of mockers</p>

LXX	Hexapla Differences
<p>χειρός σου κατὰ μόνας ἐκαθήμην ὅτι πικρίας ἐνεπλήσθην</p> <p>I did not sit in their council of mockers, but I feared on account of (from the face of) your hand. Apart I sat because I was filled with bitterness.</p>	<p>cf MT וְאֶעֱלֹז מִפְּנֵי יָדְךָ or exult. From before (from the face of) your hand.</p> <p>Aquila καὶ εἰσαυρισασάμην ἀπὸ προσώπου χειρός σου But I exulted from the face of your hand. Symmachus καὶ ἐχάρην διὰ τὴν χεῖρα σου. But I rejoiced because of your hand. Aquila/Symmachus ἐμβριμήσεως (filled with) indignation</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 15:18 ἵνα τί οἱ λυποῦντές με κατισχύουσίν μου ἢ πληγή μου στερεὰ πόθεν ἰαθήσομαι γινομένη ἐγενήθη μοι ὡς ὕδωρ ψευδὲς οὐκ ἔχον πίστιν</p> <p>Why are those vexing me overpowering me? My wound is severe. Whence shall I be healed? It has become to me like lying/false water; it has no faithfulness.</p>	<p>^{WTT} Jeremiah 15:18 לָמָּה הָיָה כְּאֵבִי נֶצַח וּמִכְתִּי אֲנוּשָׁה מֵאֲנָה הֲרַפָּא הָיָה תַּהִיָּה לִי כִּמּוֹ אֶכְזָב מַיִם לֹא נֶאֱמָנוּ: ס</p> <p>Why was my pain endless, and my wound incurable? It refused to be healed. Will you [or it] indeed be to me like deception, water that is not reliable?</p> <p>Aquila ἵνατί ἐγενήθη τὸ ἄλγος μου εἰς νῖκος; Why has my pain become a victory? Symmachus εἰς τί ἐγένετο τὸ ἄλγημά μου διαμένον; Why has my pain become continuous? Symmachus καὶ ἡ πληγή μου ἀνίατος and my wound incurable Aquila/Symmachus ἠπεΐθησεν ιαθῆναι. It refused to be healed. Aquila/Symmachus ὡς ὕδωρ ἐκλείπον as ceasing water</p>

3.6 Jeremiah 17:14-18

LXX	Hexapla Differences
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 17:14 ἴασαί με κύριε καὶ ἰαθήσομαι σῶσόν με καὶ σωθήσομαι ὅτι καύχημά μου σὺ εἶ</p> <p>Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed. Save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my glory/boast.</p>	<p>(Field, 618)</p> <p>cf MT תְּהִלָּתִי תִּשְׁלַח my praise. Aquila ἀίνεσίν μου my praise</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 17:15 ἰδοὺ αὐτοὶ λέγουσι πρὸς με ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος κυρίου ἐλθάτω</p> <p>Behold, they are saying to me, “Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come!”</p>	<p>Aquila/Theodotion add δὴ now!</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 17:16 ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ ἐκοπίασα κατακολουθῶν ὀπίσω σου καὶ ἡμέραν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἐπεθύμησα σὺ ἐπίστη τὰ ἐκπορευόμενα διὰ τῶν χειλέων μου πρὸ προσώπου σου ἐστὶν</p> <p>But I, I did not grow weary following after you, and I did not long for a day of man, you know. What went forth through my lips is before your face.</p>	<p>cf MT</p> <p>וְאֲנִי לֹא-אַצְתִּי מִרַעָה אַחֲרָיִךְ But I, I did not hurry, away from being a shepherd after you.</p> <p>Aquila ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ ἐκραταίωσα ἀπὸ κακίας ὀπίσω σου. But I, I did not prevail/strengthen, from wickedness after you. Symmachus ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ ἠπείχθην ἀπὸ κακίας ὀπισθεν σοῦ But I, I did not urge, from wickedness after you.</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 17:17 μὴ γενηθῆς μοι εἰς ἄλλοτρίωσιν φειδόμενός μου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ πονηρᾷ</p> <p>Do not be a hostile stranger to me, having pity on me in an evil day.</p>	<p>cf MT</p> <p>אַל-תִּהְיֶה-לִּי לְמַחֲמָה מִיָּדְךָ Do not become a terror to me! You are my refuge.</p> <p>Aquila/Symmachus εἰς πτόησιν, ἐλπίς μου [εἶ] σύ as a terror; you are my hope.</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 17:18 καταισχυνθήτωσαν οἱ διώκοντές με καὶ μὴ καταισχυνθείην ἐγὼ πτοηθείησαν αὐτοὶ καὶ μὴ πτοηθείην ἐγὼ ἐπάγαγε ἐπ’</p>	<p>no notes in Field</p>

LXX	Hexapla Differences
<p>αὐτοὺς ἡμέραν πονηράν δισσὸν σύντριμμα σύντριψον αὐτούς Let those pursuing me be ashamed, and let me not be ashamed. Let them be terrified, and let me not be terrified. Bring upon them an evil day, [with] double ruin crush them.</p>	

3.7 Jeremiah 18:18-23

LXX	Hexapla Differences
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 18:18 καὶ εἶπαν δεῦτε λογισώμεθα ἐπὶ Ιερεμیان λογισμὸν ὅτι οὐκ ἀπολείται νόμος ἀπὸ ἱερέως καὶ βουλὴ ἀπὸ συνετοῦ καὶ λόγος ἀπὸ προφήτου δεῦτε καὶ πατάξωμεν αὐτὸν ἐν γλώσση καὶ ἀκουσώμεθα πάντας τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ</p> <p>And they said, “Come, let us plot a plan against Jeremiah, for law shall not perish from a priest, and counsel from a sage, and a word from a prophet. Come, and let us strike him with a tongue, and we will hear all his words.</p>	<p>(Field, 620-621)</p> <p>(Field, Addition, 43) Aquila/Symmachus λογισμούς plots</p> <p>Aquila/Symmachus ἀπὸ σοφοῦ from a wise man</p> <p>Symmachus περιηγήσωμεν let us surround (him with the tongue)</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 18:19 εἰσάκουσόν μου κύριε καὶ εἰσάκουσον τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ δικαιώματός μου</p> <p>Give ear to me, O Lord, and hear the voice of my justification!</p>	<p>cf MT</p> <p>יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְשָׁמַע לְקוֹל יְרִיבָי׃ ^{WTT} Jeremiah 18:19 Listen attentively, O LORD, to me, and hear the voice of my opponents! Aquila πρόσχες pay attention! Aquila/Symmachus τῶν ἀντιδίκων μου my adversaries</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 18:20 εἰ ἀνταποδίδονται ἀντὶ ἀγαθῶν κακά ὅτι συνελάλησαν ῥήματα κατὰ τῆς</p>	<p>cf MT כִּי־כָרוּ שׁוֹחָה לַנֶּפֶשׁ For they dug a pit for my life.</p>

LXX	Hexapla Differences
<p>ψυχῆς μου καὶ τὴν κόλασιν αὐτῶν ἔκρυψάν μοι μνήσθητι ἐστηκότος μου κατὰ πρόσωπόν σου τοῦ λαλήσαι ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀγαθὰ τοῦ ἀποστρέψαι τὸν θυμὸν σου ἀπ' αὐτῶν If he will give back bad things in return for good things? For they spoke words against my life/soul, and hid their trap for me. Remember my standing in front of your face to speak good things on their behalf, to turn back your fury from them.</p>	<p>Aquila . . ὥρυξαν βόθρον [s. βόθυνον] τῇ ψυχῇ μου. for they dug a pit (a hole) for my life. Symmachus ὅτι ὥρυξαν διαφθοράν ... for they dug destruction ...</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 18:21 διὰ τοῦτο δὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτῶν εἰς λιμὸν καὶ ἄθροισον αὐτοὺς εἰς χεῖρας μαχαίρας γενέσθωσαν αἱ γυναῖκες αὐτῶν ἄτεκνοι καὶ χῆραι καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες αὐτῶν γενέσθωσαν ἀνηρημένοι θανάτῳ καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι αὐτῶν πεπτωκότες μαχαίρᾳ ἐν πολέμῳ Therefore give their sons to famine and gather them together to the power of the sword. May their wives become childless and widows, and their men be taken away by death, and their young men having perished by the sword in battle.</p>	<p>cf MT יְהַגְרֵם hand them over Aquila κατὰσπασσον ... destroy בְּחֻרֵיהֶם their young men/chosen Aquila καὶ ἐκλεκτοί and the select</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 18:22 γενηθήτω κραυγὴ ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις αὐτῶν ἐπάξεις ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ληστὰς ἄφνω ὅτι ἐνεχείρησαν λόγον εἰς σύλλημψίν μου καὶ παγίδας ἔκρυψαν ἐπ' ἐμέ May there be an outcry in their houses. You will bring upon them robbers unawares, for they attempted a word for my capture, and they hid snares for me.</p>	<p>cf MT גִּדְרֵי a raid Aquila εὐζωνον light troops (well- girded) Symmachus πειρατήριον gang of raiders כִּי־כָרוּ (שִׁחָה) [שׁוּחָה] לְלַכְדֵּנִי וּפְחִים טָמְנוּ לַרְגְלֵי: For they dug a pit to catch me, and fixed nets for my feet. Aquila ὅτι ὥρυξαν βόθρον</p>

LXX	Hexapla Differences
	[s. βόθυνον] (ἵνα) λάβωσί με. for they dug a pit to take me Symmachus ὅτι κατεσκεύασαν διαφθοράν ... for they constructed destruction
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 18:23 καὶ σύ κύριε ἔγνωσ ἅπασαν τὴν βουλήν αὐτῶν ἐπ' ἐμέ εἰς θάνατον μὴ ἁθωώσης τὰς ἀδικίας αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν ἀπὸ προσώπου σου μὴ ἐξαλείψης γενέσθω ἡ ἀσθένεια αὐτῶν ἐναντίον σου ἐν καιρῷ θυμοῦ σου ποιήσον ἐν αὐτοῖς</p> <p>And you, O Lord, know all their counsel concerning me to death. Do not let their iniquity go unpunished, and their sins do not wipe out from before you. Let their weakness be before you; in your time of anger, do among them.</p>	<p>Aquila μὴ ἐξιλάσῃ περὶ τῆς ἁνομίας αὐτῶν. Do not make atonement concerning their lawlessness. Aquila καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία αὐτῶν ἐκ προσώπου σου μὴ ἐξαλειφθείη and let not their sin be covered from your face. cf MT וְיִהְיֶה לָהֶם מִכְשָׁלִים לְפָנַי (וְיִהְיֶה) and let them be overthrown/may they be caused to stumble before you Aquila γενέσθωσαν ἐσκανδαλισμένοι (s.ἐσκανδαλωμένοι) πρὸ προσώπου σου. may they be caused to stumble to your face.</p>

3.8 Jeremiah 20:7-10

LXX	Hexapla Differences
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 20:7 ἡπάτησάς με κύριε καὶ ἡπατήθην ἐκράτησας καὶ ἡδυνάσθης ἐγενόμην εἰς γέλωτα πᾶσαν ἡμέραν διετέλεσα μυκτηριζόμενος</p> <p>You deceived me, O Lord, and I was deceived. You prevailed, and you were able. I have become laughter every day; I am continually mocked.</p>	<p>(Field, 624-625) cf MT פָּתִיתַנִּי יְהוָה וְאָפַתְתָּ You have enticed me, O LORD, and I was enticed. Aquila ἔθελξάς με, κύριε, καὶ ἐθελχθην. You enchanted/beguiled me, and I was beguiled. cf. MT וַתִּגְבַּלְתָּ לִּי וַתִּשָּׂא לִּי כֹחַ כָּל-הַיּוֹם You overcame me, and you prevailed. I have become a laughing-stock all the day. Symmachus περιεκράτησάς μου</p>

LXX	Hexapla Differences
	<p>δυνατώτερος ὢν· ἐγενόμην εἰς καταγέλωτα δι' ὅλης τῆς ἡμέρας. You controlled me, being stronger. I became as a laughing-stock through the whole day. cf MT כָּל־הָעָם לֵעָג לִי everyone is deriding me. Aquila πᾶς ἐμπαίζει μοι everyone mocks me Symmachus πᾶς τις καταφλυαρεῖ μου everyone keeps on chattering about me.</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 20:8 ὅτι πικρῶ λόγῳ μου γελάσομαι ἄθεσίαν καὶ ταλαιπωρίαν ἐπικαλέσομαι ὅτι ἐγενήθη λόγος κυρίου εἰς ὄνειδισμὸν ἐμοὶ καὶ εἰς χλευασμὸν πᾶσαν ἡμέραν μου</p> <p>For with a bitter word, I will laugh. “Faithlessness and distress!” I will be called. For the word of the Lord became a disgrace to me and an object of mockery all my day.</p>	<p>cf MT כִּי־מַדְי אֶדְבֵּר אֶעֱרָא וְשִׁי קִנְיָן אֶקְרָא For whenever I speak, I cry out, I call, “Violence and destruction!” Aquila ὅτι ἀπὸ πλήθους λαλήσω καὶ κεκράξομαι, ἀδικίαν καὶ προνομὴν ἐκάλεσα. For from a multitude I will speak and will cry out, “Wickedness and plunder!” Symmachus ὅτι ἀφ' οὗ κηρύσσω, ὦ ἀδικία, ὦ ταλαιπωρία, βοῶ. For from which I proclaim, “O wickedness! O distress!” I cry aloud.</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 20:9 καὶ εἶπα οὐ μὴ ὀνομάσω τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου καὶ οὐ μὴ λαλήσω ἔτι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς πῦρ καιόμενον φλέγον ἐν τοῖς ὀστέοις μου καὶ παρῆμαι πάντοθεν καὶ οὐ δύναμαι φέρειν</p> <p>And I said, “I will by no means name the name of the Lord, and I will by no means speak any longer in his name.” And it</p>	<p>cf MT בְּלִבִּי in my heart Aquila/Symmachus/Theodotion ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου in my heart [not in LXX]</p> <p>cf MT וְנִלְאִיתִי בְּלִלְאִי וְלֹא אֶכְרָל and I struggle to endure, and I am not able. Aquila καὶ ἐκοπίασα ὑποφέρειν, καὶ οὐ δυνήσομαι [φέρειν]. and I grew weary to bear, and I will not be able [to bear]. Symmachus καὶ ἐκπώθην ὑποφέρειν, μὴ δυνάμενος</p>

LXX	Hexapla Differences
<p>became as fire kindled, burning in my bones, and I am totally weakened, and I am not able to bear.</p>	<p>φέρειν. and I was wearied to bear, not being able to bear.</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 20:10 ὅτι ἤκουσα ψόγον πολλῶν συναθροισμένων κυκλόθεν ἐπισύστητε καὶ ἐπισυστῶμεν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄνδρες φίλοι αὐτοῦ τηρήσατε τὴν ἐπίνοιαν αὐτοῦ εἰ ἀπατηθήσεται καὶ δυνησόμεθα αὐτῷ καὶ λημψόμεθα τὴν ἐκδίκησιν ἡμῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ</p> <p>For I heard censure of many gathered round about, “Conspire! and let us conspire against him!” all his beloved men. “Watch over his thought, if he will be deceived, and we shall prevail over him, and we shall take our vengeance on him.”</p>	<p>cf MT לֵךְ וְנִגְדָהּ וְנִגְדָהּ וְנִגְדָהּ וְנִגְדָהּ וְנִגְדָהּ “Denounce! and let us denounce him!” every man of my peace, those watching my stumbling. Aquila ἀναγγείλατε, καὶ ἀγγελουῶμεν αὐτῷ, πάντες ἄνθρωποι εἰρηνικοί μου, φυλάσσοντες τὸ κλίτος μου. “Declare, and let us declare to him!” all my peaceful men, guarding my side. Symmachus λέγοντων, λαλήσατε, καὶ διαφημίσομεν αὐτὸν, ἄνδρες εἰρηνεύοντες πρὸς μὲ, φυλάσσοντες τὰς πλευράς μου. saying, “Speak! and make known to him!” O men making peace, guarding my side. Theodotion διώξατε, καὶ διώξωμεν, πάντες ἄνθρωποι εἰρηνικοί μου, φυλάσσοντες τὴν πλευράν μου. “Pursue, and let us pursue!” all my peaceful men, guarding my side. cf MT וְנִגְדָהּ our revenge Aquila τὴν κόλασιν ἡμῶν our punishment/vengeance/trap Symmachus τὴν τιμωρίαν ἡμῶν our retribution/punishment/retaliation</p>

3.9 Jeremiah 20:14-18

LXX	Hexapla Differences
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 20:14 ἐπικατάρατος ἡ ἡμέρα ἐν ᾗ ἐτέχθην ἐν αὐτῇ ἡ ἡμέρα ἐν ᾗ ἔτεκέν με ἡ μήτηρ μου μὴ ἔστω ἐπευκτή</p> <p>Cursed be the day in which I was born! The day in which my mother bore me, let it not be longed for!</p>	<p>(Field, 625-626) cf MT :לֹא־יְהִי בִרְוָהּ let it not be blessed Aquila/Symmachus εὐλογημένη</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 20:15 ἐπικατάρατος ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ εὐαγγελισάμενος τῷ πατρί μου λέγων ἐτέχθη σοι ἄρσεν εὐφραινόμενος</p> <p>Cursed be the man who proclaimed good tidings to my father, saying, “A male is born to you,” rejoicing.</p>	<p>cf MT שְׂמַחַת שְׂמַחַת greatly gladdening him. Aquila εὐφραίνων εὐφρανεν αὐτόν rejoicing, he gladdened him</p>
<p>^{LXT} Jeremiah 20:16 ἔστω ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ὡς αἱ πόλεις ἃς κατέστρεψεν κύριος ἐν θυμῷ καὶ οὐ μετεμελήθη ἀκουσάτω κραυγῆς τὸ πρωὶ καὶ ἀλαλαγμοῦ μεσημβρίας</p> <p>Let that man be like the cities that the Lord overthrew in fury and did not repent. Let him hear an outcry in the morning and a shout at midday.</p>	<p>cf MT וְלֹא־נִחַם and was not sorry/did not repent Aquila/Symmachus παρεκλήθη he was comforted – or – he relented/repented.</p>

LXX	Hexapla Differences
<p>LXT Jeremiah 20:17 ὅτι οὐκ ἀπέκτεινέν με ἐν μήτρᾳ μητρὸς καὶ ἐγένετό μοι ἡ μήτηρ μου τάφος μου καὶ ἡ μήτρα συλλήμψεως αἰωνίας</p> <p>That he did not kill me in mother's womb, and that my mother would become my grave, and the womb of pregnancy everlasting.</p>	<p>Aquila ὅς οὐκ ἐθανάτωσέ με ἐκ μητρᾶς who did not kill me from the womb</p> <p>Symmachus ὅτι οὐκ ἐθανάτωσέ με ... because he did not kill me</p> <p>Aquila (καὶ) μήτρα αὐτῆς κυήσεως ... and the womb of her pregnancy ...</p>
<p>LXT Jeremiah 20:18 ἵνα τί τοῦτο ἐξῆλθον ἐκ μήτρᾶς τοῦ βλέπειν κόπους καὶ πόνους καὶ διετέλεσαν ἐν αἰσχύνῃ αἱ ἡμέραι μου</p> <p>Why this, that I came from the womb to see troubles and distress, and my days continued in shame?</p>	<p>cf MT וַיֵּכְלוּ בְּבִשְׁתִּי יָמַי and my days came to an end in shame</p> <p>Aquila (καὶ) ἀνηλώθησαν (and) they were used up/destroyed</p>

Appendix 4

Jeremiah's Complaints in Ancient and Medieval Texts and Commentaries

Name	Date	Reference	Jeremiah text	Testimonia?
Qumran				
Hodayot	?	1QH ^a 10.14; 13.22-23; 16:30	15:10; 15:10; 20:9	no
Greek				
Justin Martyr	c.100- c.165	<i>Dialogue with Trypho</i> = <i>Dial.</i> 72:2	11:19	yes
Melito of Sardis	d.c.190	<i>Peri pascha</i> = <i>Pasc.</i> 63:67	11:19	yes
Clement of Alexandria	c.150- c.215	<i>Stromateis</i> = <i>Strom.</i> 3.38.4; 3.100.1,4	12:1; 20:14,18	no
Origen	c.185- c.254	<i>Commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew</i> = <i>Comm. Matt.</i> 10.18	20:7, 9	no
		<i>Commentary on St. John</i> = <i>Comm. John</i> 1.135; 6.53.273	11:19	yes
		<i>Contra Celsum</i> Preface = <i>Contra Cels. Pref.</i> 5.14-15	20:7	no
		<i>Homily on Leviticus</i> = <i>Hom. Lev.</i> 8.3.37-41	20:14-16	no
		<i>Homily on Numbers</i> = <i>Hom. Num.</i> 20	20:14	no
		<i>Homily 10 on Jeremiah</i> = <i>Hom. 10 Jer.</i>	11:18-12:9	no
		<i>Homily 14 on Jeremiah</i> = <i>Hom. 14 Jer.</i>	15:10-15:19	no
		<i>Homily 1 on Jeremiah</i> = <i>Hom. 1 Jer.</i>	about 15:10	no
		<i>Homily 15 on Jeremiah</i> = <i>Hom. 15 Jer.</i>	15:10 and 17:5	no

Name	Date	Reference	Jeremiah text	Testimonia?
		<i>Homily 17 on Jeremiah = Hom. 17 Jer.</i>	17:11-16	no
		<i>Homily 19 on Jeremiah = Hom. 19 Jer.</i>	20:7	no
		<i>Homily 20 on Jeremiah = Hom. 20 Jer.</i>	20:7-12	no
		<i>Peri Pascha = Pasc.. 48.33-34</i>	11:19	yes
Eusebius of Caesarea	c.260- c.340	<i>Demonstratio Evangelica = Demons. 1.10.36</i>	11:19	yes
		<i>Exegetica E Jeremia = Exeg. Jer. 33, PG 22</i>	11:18-19	yes
Athanasius	c.296- 373	<i>De Incarnatione = Incarn. 35.3</i>	11:19	yes
Cyril of Jerusalem	c. 315- 86	<i>Catechesis = Cat. 13.19</i>	11:19	yes
Gregory of Nazianzus	329-89	<i>Oratio = Or. H 38.16; 40.40</i>	11:19; 17:16	yes; no
Gregory of Nyssa	c.330- c.395	<i>De Tridui Spatio = Trid. 6.277.1</i>	11:19	yes
		<i>In Ecclesiasten homiliae = Eccles. 2.302.8</i>	20:7	no
Basil	c.330- 79	<i>Adversus Eunomium = Adv. Eun. 5.2</i>	12:1	no
John Chrysostom	c. 347- 407	<i>Homily on Colossians = Hom. Col. 6. v. 8</i>	20:7	no
Theodoret of Cyrus	b.c. 393	<i>Commentary on Jeremiah = Jer. , PG 81</i>	4:10	no
			11:18-20	no
			12:1-6	no
			15:10-11, 15-17	no
			17:14-18	no
			18:18-21	no
			20:7-18	no

Name	Date	Reference	Jeremiah text	Testimonia?
Pseudo-Chrysostom	??	<i>Fragmenta in Jeremiam</i> = <i>Frag. Jer.</i> , PG 64	11:19; 15:18; 20:7	yes; no; no
Pseudo-Epiphanius	??	<i>A Pseudo-Epiphanius Testimony Book</i> = <i>Test.</i> 51.4	11:19	yes
Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa	2 nd half of 4 th c.	<i>Testimonies against the Jews</i> = <i>Test.</i> 6.3	11:19	yes
Pseudo-Ignatius	??	<i>Epistle to Antiochenes</i> = <i>Ep. Ant.</i> 3	11:19	yes
Timothy and Aquila	5 th -6 th c.	<i>Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila</i> = <i>Dial. TA</i> 10.20, 55.5	11:19	yes
Olympiodorus of Alexandria	early 6 th c.	<i>Fragmenta in Jeremiam</i> , PG 93	11:19-20; 12:1-2; 15:10-18; 17:16-18; 18:18-20; 20:7-10; 20:14-18	no
Latin				
Tertullian	c.160-c.225	<i>Adversus Judaeos</i> = <i>Adv. Jud.</i> 10.12	11:19	yes
		<i>Adversus Marcionem</i> = <i>Adv. Marc.</i> 3.19; 4.40	11:19	yes
Commodianus	c. 220	<i>Carmina apologeticum</i> = <i>Carm.</i> 273-4	11:19	yes
Novatian	d. 257-8	<i>De Trinitate</i> = <i>Trin.</i> 9.7	11:19	yes
Cyprian	d. 258	<i>Epistulae</i> = <i>Ep.</i> 73.6.1; 782.22	15:18	no
		<i>Testimonia ad Quirinum</i> = <i>Test.</i> 2.15; 2.20	11:19; 11:18-19	yes
Lactantius	c.240-320	<i>Divine Institutes</i> = <i>Div. Inst.</i> 4.18.27	11:19	yes
Ambrose	c. 339-97	<i>De Paenitentia</i> = <i>Paen.</i> 1.7.31	17:14	no
		<i>Explanatio Psalmorum</i> = <i>Expl. Psalm.</i> 12. 35.3; 37.34	11:19; 11:18	no

Name	Date	Reference	Jeremiah text	Testimonia?
		<i>Expositio Psalmi 118</i> = <i>Exp.</i> <i>Psalm. 118.14.26</i>	20:7	no
		<i>De mysteriis</i> = <i>Myst.</i> 4.23	15:18	no
Jerome	c.342-420	<i>In Hieremiam Prophetam</i> = <i>Comm. Jer.</i> 1.75; 2.110; 3.2-3; 3.52-54; 3.57-8; 3.77-9; 4.8-10; 4.22; 4.28	4:10; 11:18-20; 12:1-3; 15:10-11; 15:15-18; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-10; 20:14-18	no
Rufinus	c.345-410	<i>Commentary on the Apostles' Creed</i> = <i>Symb. 23</i>	11:19	yes
Pseudo-Augustine	?	<i>De Altercatione Ecclesiae et Synagogae</i> = <i>Alt. ES</i> , PL 42.1131-40	11:19	yes
Evagrius?	346-99	<i>Dialogue of Simon and Theophilus</i> = <i>Alt. Sim.</i> PL 42.1175	11:19	yes
Medieval Latin				
Rabanus Maurus	776 or 784-856	<i>Expositio super Jeremiam</i> = <i>Exp. Jer.</i> , PL 111	11:18-20; 15:17-18; 20:7-8 all quoting Jerome and Origen	no
Odo of Cluny	879-942	<i>Collationum Libri Tres</i> = <i>Coll. Lib. Tres</i> 1.39; 3.16 PL 133	15:17; 20:9	no
Bernard of Clairvaux	1090-1153	<i>Sermones de diversis</i> = <i>Serm. div.</i> 5.5	17:14	no

Name	Date	Reference	Jeremiah text	Testimonia?
Thomas Aquinas	c. 1225-1274	<i>In Jeremiam prophetam expositio</i>	4:10; 11:18-20; 12:1-3; 15:10-11; 15:15-18; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:1-7; 20:14-18	no
Nicolas de Lyra	c.1270-1340	<i>Postillae, in Glossa Ordinaria</i>	4:10; 11:18-20; 12:1-3; 15:10-11; 15:15-18; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:1-7; 20:14-18	no
Jewish				no
Philo	20 B.C.E.-50 C.E.	<i>De confusione linguarum = Conf.</i> 39-51	15:10	
4 Esdras (in Vulgate)	?	4 Esdras 5:35	20:17	no
<i>4 Baruch = Paraleipomena Jeremiou</i>	2 nd c.	<i>4 Baruch</i>	legend about Jeremiah	
Midrash Rabbah	c. 5 th c.	<i>Lamentations Proem = Midr. Rab. Lam. 3</i>	15:17	
Pesiqta de Rab Kahana	5 th c.	<i>Pesiq. Rab. Kah. Piska 13.14</i>	20:7	
Pesiqta Rabbati	6-7 th c.? 845?	<i>Pesiq. Rab. 26.16; 26.4</i>	20:7; 20:14	
Midrash on Psalms	7-11 th c.	<i>Midr. Pss. 90.2 Book 4</i>	12:1	
Rashi	1040-1105	Commentary on Jeremiah = <i>Comm. Jer., in Miqra'ot Gedolot</i>	4:10; 11:18-20; 12:1-3; 15:10-11; 15:15-18; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:1-7; 20:14-18	
Ibn Ezra	1089-1164	<i>Commentary on Exodus = Comm. Exod. 16.4</i>	11:19	
Radak (David Kimchi)	1160-1235	Commentary on Jeremiah = <i>Comm. Jer., in Miqra'ot Gedolot</i>	4:10; 11:18-20; 12:1-3; 15:10-11; 15:15-18; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:1-7; 20:14-18	

Name	Date	Reference	Jeremiah text	Testimonia?
Syriac				no
2 Baruch = Syriac Apocalypse	?	2 Baruch 11:2	legend about Jeremiah	
Aphrahat	early 4 th c.	<i>Demonstrations</i> = <i>Demons.</i> 8.14	20:9; 17:16	
Ephrem	c. 306- 73	<i>Sermons 4 Epistola</i>	20:9	
		<i>Exposition of Gospel</i>	20:9	
		<i>Commentary on Jeremiah</i> , attributed to Ephrem	4:10; 11:18-20; 12:1-3; 15:15-18; 17:14-18; 18:18- 23; 20:1-7; 20:14-18	possible for 11:19
Book of Steps	mid 4 th c.	<i>Liber Graduum</i> 9.2, 4	15:10; 20:8	
Severus of Antioch	c. 465- 538	<i>Homily</i> = <i>Hom.</i> 108	20:14-15	
Theodore bar Koni	c. 792	<i>Scholion</i>	12:1; 15:18	
Išoʿdad of Merv	c. 850	<i>Commentary on Jeremiah</i> = <i>Comm. Jer.</i>	11:19; 15:10; 15:18; 20:7	
Dionysius Bar- Salibi	d. 1171	<i>Commentary on Jeremiah</i>	4:10; 11:18-19; 12:1; 15:10-11; 15:17-18; 17:14, 16, 18; 18:18, 20; 20:7-8; 20:14, 16	
Bar Hebraeus	1226- 1286	<i>Auṣar Raze</i> = <i>Scholia on the Book of Jeremiah</i>	11:19; 15:11; 15:17-18; 17:16; 18:18; 20:7; 20:15	

Appendix 5 Rendering of Jeremiah 11:19 in Greek and Latin commentaries

Septuagint	Justin Martyr, <i>Dial.</i> 72:2	Melito of Sardis, <i>Pasc.</i> 63:67	Origen, <i>Comm. John</i> 1.135; 6.53.273	Origen, <i>Hom. Jer.</i> 10
ἐγὼ δὲ ὡς ἄρνιον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνω ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν πονηρὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἔτι	ἐγὼ ὡς ἄρνιον φερόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτὸν ἐκ γῆς ζώντων καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ οὐκέτι	ἐγὼ ὡς ἄρνιον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι ἐλογίσαντο ἐπ' ἐμέ κακὰ ἐιπότες δεῦτε ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ	ἐγὼ δὲ ὡς ἄρνιον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι ἐλογίσαντο ἐπ' ἐμέ κακὰ ἐιπότες δεῦτε ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἔτι	ἐγὼ ὡς ἄρνιον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνω ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἔτι
Other OT texts attached	Ps 96:10 *	Deut 28:66; Ps 2:1; Isa 53:7-8	Isa 53:7	Exod 15:25; Isa 53:7

* Ps 96:10 is quoted by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Pseudo-Augustine as “Say you to the Gentiles: The Lord has reigned from the tree.” “From the tree” does not appear in MT, LXX, or Vulgate. It does appear in “two Greek manuscripts and the main Coptic versions of the LXX.”¹

¹ Note 7, page 113 of St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*. Translated by Thomas B. Falls (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003.)

Septuagint	Origen, <i>Pasc.</i> 48.33-36	Eusebius, <i>Demons.</i> 1.10.17,21	Eusebius, <i>Exeg. Jer.</i> 33	Athanasius, <i>Incarn.</i> 35:3
ἐγὼ δὲ ὥς ἄρνιον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν πονηρὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτόν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἐτι	like a blameless lamb led to the slaughter I was in ignorance, for they were devising an evil plot against him.	I was led as a lamb to the slaughter.	ἐγὼ ὥς ἄρνιον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτόν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἐτι	But I as an innocent lamb brought to be slain, knew it not; they counselled an evil counsel against me, saying, Hither and let us cast a tree upon his bread, and efface him from the land of the living.
Other OT texts attached	all NT except Exod 12:11, Psa 24:7, 9, 8, 10	Isa 53:4-9	Isa 53:7	Deut 28:66; Ps 22:16

Septuagint	Cyril of Jerusalem, <i>Cat.</i> 13:19	Gregory of Nazianzus, <i>Or. H</i> 38:16	Gregory of Nyssa, <i>Trid.</i> 6.277.1	Theodoret of Cyrus, <i>Jer.</i>
<p>ἐγὼ δὲ ὥς ἀρνίον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν πονηρόν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τόν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτόν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἔτι</p>	<p>I was as a meek lamb that is carried to be a victim; did I not know it? They devised a wicked counsel against me, saying, “Come, and let us put wood on his bread, and cut him off from the land of the living. And let his name be remembered no more.”</p>	<p>ὥς ἀμνόν προσαγόμενον</p>	<p>τό ἀρνίον τό ἄκακον τό ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι</p>	<p>ἐγὼ δὲ ὥς ἀρνίον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τόν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτόν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ τό ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἔτι</p>
Other OT texts attached	Deut 28:66; Isa 53:7	Isa 53:7	Isa 53:7	no others

Septuagint	<i>Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila</i>	Olympiodorus, <i>Frag. Jer.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Adv. Jud.</i> 10:12	Tertullian, <i>Adv. Marc.</i> 3:19, 4:40
<p>ἐγὼ δὲ ὥς ἄρνιον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν πονηρὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἔτι</p>	<p>ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν πονηρὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ</p>	<p>ἐγὼ δὲ ὥς ἄρνιον ἄκακον</p> <p>ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον</p> <p>καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ οὐκέτι</p>	<p>venite mittamus in panem eius lignum et conteramus eum a terra vivorum et nomen illius non memorabitur amplius</p>	<p>adversus me cogitaverunt cogitatum dicentes venite coiciamus lignum in panem eius</p>
Other OT texts attached	Ps 40:8, 73:8; Isa 37:22,23; 57:3,4; Wisd 2:12, etc.	Isa 53:7	Ps 96:10 ; Isa 9:6; 53	Ps 22; Ps 96:10 ; Isa 9:6

Septuagint	Novatian, <i>Trin.</i> 9:7	Cyprian, <i>Test.</i> 2:15, 2:20	Lactantius, <i>Div. Inst.</i> 4.18.27	Ambrose, <i>Expl. Ps.</i> 12 37:34; 35:3
<p>ἐγὼ δὲ ὡς ἀρνίον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν πονηρὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτόν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἔτι</p>	led as a sheep to the slaughter	<p>Ego sicut agnus sine malitia perductus sum ad victimam: in me cogitaverunt cogitatum dicentes: venite,</p> <p>mittamus lignum in panem eius et eradamus a terra vitam eius et nomen eius non erit in memoriam amplius</p>	<p>ego sicut agnus sine malitia perductus sum ad victimam: in me cogitaverunt cogitationem dicentes: venite,</p> <p>mittamus lignum in panem eius et eradamus a terra vitam eius et nomen eius non erit in memoria amplius.</p>	<p>sicut agnus ductus ad immolandum et nescivi.</p> <p>iniciamus lignum in panem eius</p>
Other OT texts attached	Deut 28:66; Isa 7:14, 11:1, 35:5-6, 53:7-8, 55:3-5, etc.	Exod 12:3-12; Isa 53:7-9, 12	Deut 28:66; Ps 22:16-18; Ps 94:21, 22; Isa 53:8-10, 12; Zech 12:10	no others

Septuagint	Jerome, <i>Comm. Jer.</i>	Rufinus, <i>Symb.</i> 23	Commo- dianus, <i>Carm.</i> 273-4	Pseudo- Augustine, <i>Alt. ES</i>
<p>ἐγὼ δὲ ὥς ἀρνίον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν πονηρὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἔτι</p>	<p>et ego quasi agnus mansuetus, qui partatur ad victimam, et non cognovi, quia super me cogitaverunt consilia, dicentes:</p> <p>Mittamus lignum in panem eius, et conteramus eum de terra viventium, et nomen ejus non memoretur amplius.</p>	<p>Come, and let us put wood upon His bread, and let us cut Him off from the land of the living.</p>	<p>Venite, mittamus lignum in pane!</p>	<p>Venite, mittamus lignum in panem eius</p>
Other OT texts attached	Isa 53:7	Deut 28:66; Isa 53:7; many others	Deut 28:66; Ps 22:17; Wisd 2:12, 20	Deut 28:66; Num 23:19; Ps 96:10; Isa 65:2

Septuagint	Evagrius? <i>Alt. Sim.</i>	Thomas Aquinas, <i>In Jer.</i>	Nicholas of Lyra, <i>Postillae</i>
<p>ἐγὼ δὲ ὥς ἀρνίον ἄκακον ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων ἐπ' ἐμέ ἐλογίσαντο λογισμὸν πονηρὸν λέγοντες δεῦτε καὶ ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκτρίψωμεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ γῆς ζώντων καὶ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ μνησθῇ ἐτι</p>	<p>Venite mittamus lignum in panem eius et eradicemus a terra vitam eius.</p>	<p>et ego quasi agnus, et non cognovi</p> <p>mittamus lignum</p> <p>eradamus</p>	<p>mittamus lignum</p>
Other OT texts attached	Deut 21:23, 28:66; Num 23:19; Ps 22; 87:10, 140:2, 119:120; Isa 65:2; Zech 12:10	Psa 93:11; Isa 53:7-8	no others

Appendix 6 Texts of Jeremiah's complaints chosen by modern interpreters

Author, date, page	Name given	Passages
Gunkel, 1913, 95	<i>Klagelieder</i> (Psalms)	<i>Jeremia: individueller Klagelieder nicht-kultischer Art</i>
Gunkel, 1917, 136	<i>Klagelied</i> (Die Propheten)	Jeremiah used form of <i>Klageliedes eines Einzelnen</i> (individual lament)
Baumgartner, 1917, 41-78	<i>Klagegedichte</i> (poems of lament)	11:18-20, 21-23; 15:15-21; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:10-13 related in content: 12:1-6; 15:10-12; 20:7-9; 20:14-18
Gunkel, 1933, 121	individual complaint songs, imitated by Jeremiah	11:18-20; 15:15-21; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:10-13 related passages: 12:1-6; 15:10-12; 20:7-9; 20:14-18 4:10 is part of "communal complaint"
von Rad, 1936, 88-95	confessions	8:18-9.1; 12:1-5; 15:16-20; 20:7-9; 20:14-18 "no attempt at completeness"
Hyatt, 1956, 782	confessions; better, outcry	10:23-24; 11:18-12:6; 15:10-21 17:9-10; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-13; 20:14-18
Gerstenberger, 1963, 392	complaints	15:10-21
Reventlow, 1963, 205	<i>Konfessionen</i> ; better, <i>Klagen</i> (laments)	11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18 all communal
Bright, 1965, lxvi	confessions	11:18-12:6; 15:10f; 15:15-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-13; 20:14-18 also 4:19-21; 5:3-5; 8:18-23 Jeremiah's anguish
Berridge, 1970, 114	confessions	11:18-23; 12:1-5; 15:10-12; 15:15-21; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-9; 20:14-18 following Baumgartner
Holladay, 1976, 151	confessional	17:5-8; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:13
Blank, 1977, 33	confessions, better, private prayers	11:18-23, 12:6; 12:1-5; 15:10-11; 15:15-20; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-11
Thompson, 1980, 88	dialogs with Yahweh, personal lyrics	11:18-23; 12:1-6; 15:10-12; 15:15-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-13; 20:14-18
Ittmann, 1981, 36	<i>Konfessionen</i>	11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18 but 20:14-18: a curse

Author, date, page	Name given	Passages
Ahuis, 1982, 185	<i>Klagen</i> (laments)	11:18-23; 12:4ab, 6; 15:10;15:11-16:21; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-9; 20:10-13; 20:14-18
Gunneweg, 1983, 61	<i>Konfessionen</i>	11:18-12.6; 15:10-21; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18 following Baumgartner
Polk, 184, 208	confessions	11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17: (12-13), 14-18; 18:19-23; 20:7-18
Carroll, 1986, 277	laments	11:18-12.6; 15:10-21; 17:12-18; 18:19-23; 20:7-18
Holladay, 1986, 358	complaints	11:18-23; 12:1-6; 15:10-11; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18 20:14-18 “cursing”
McKane,1986, xcii	laments	8:18-23; 10:19-25; 12:1-5 (6); 14:2-10; 14:11-16; 14:17-15:4; 15:10-21; 17:9-18; 18:19-23; 20:7-9 includes communal laments
Diamond, 1987, 11	confessions	11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18 “widest consensus”
O’Connor, 1988, 1	confessions	11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18 “generally known” but 20.14-18 is “cursing poem”
Smith, 1990, 2	laments	11:18-23; 12:1-6; 15:15-21; 17:14-19f; 18:19-22a; 20:7-13 20.14-18 “curse” not “lament”
Lundbom, 1999, 634	personal laments; confessions	4:19-21; 10:19; 10:23-24; 11:18-20; 12:1- 3; 15:10-12; 15:15-18; 17:13-16a; 17:16b- 18; 18:19-23; 20:7-10; 20:14-18, with other similar passages
Fretheim, 2002, 187	laments	11:18-20; 12:1-4; 15:10, 15-18; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-13, 14-18
Avioz, 2005, 429	complaints	11:18-12:6; 15:15-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-13 no 20:14-18
Brueggemann, 2006, 216; 2007	confessions; lamentations	11:18-23; 12:1-6; 15:10-21; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-13, 14-18

Appendix 7 Abbreviations used in this dissertation

BFCT	Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologiek
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
Bo	Bohairic manuscript of Septuagint
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i>
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum</i>
CurTM	Currents in Theology and Mission
<i>Dial.TA</i>	<i>Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila</i>
<i>DJD</i>	<i>Discoveries in the Judean Desert</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
FC	Fathers of the Church
GK	H. Görgemanns and H. Karpp. <i>Origenes: Vier Bücher von den Principien</i> . 3 rd ed. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992.
HALOT	<i>Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)
H-R	<i>Concordance to the Septuagint</i> (Hatch and Redpath)
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>L</i>	Lucianic revision of Septuagint

La	Vetus Latina
LSJ	<i>Greek-English Lexicon with a Revised Supplement</i> (Liddell, Scott, and Jones)
Lust	<i>Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint</i> (Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie)
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
P	Peshitta
<i>ParOr</i>	<i>Parole de l'orient</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia graeca</i> (Migne)
PL	<i>Patrologia latina</i> (Migne)
PO	<i>Patrologia orientalis</i>
P-S	<i>Compendious Syriac Dictionary</i> (Payne-Smith)
PS	<i>Patrologia syriaca</i>
Sa	Sahidic manuscript of Septuagint
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i>
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
<i>StPatr</i>	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
T	Targum
V	Vulgate
VL	Vetus Latina
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>

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Septuagint: from *LXX Septuaginta*. Ed. Alfred Rahlfs. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt/Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935.
Targum: from *The Bible in Aramaic*. Ed. Alexander Sperber. Vol. 3. Leiden: Brill, 1962.
Vulgate: from *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatem Versionem*. Ed. R. Weber et al. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969, 1975, 1983.

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