

The History of the Text of Jeremiah

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Abstract

The history of the text of Jeremiah, its transmission and composition, has been the subject of discussion for Old Testament scholars for a long time. The source of the attraction in particular has been the divergence between the MT and the LXX. This article begins with an overall review and critique of previous scholarship with respect to the composition and transmission of the text of Jeremiah and then discusses the LXX text and the theory that the LXX text was not based on the MT, but on a Hebrew *Vorlage* which originated from the same parent-text from which the MT came into existence. The article concludes by presenting a theory that proposes the MT's superiority over the LXX.

I. Introduction

The history of the text of Jeremiah, its transmission and composition, has been the subject of discussion for Old Testament scholars for a long time. The source of the attraction in particular has been the divergence between the Masoretic Text (MT) and the Septuagint (LXX).¹ In this paper I will 1) give an overall review and critique of previous scholarship with respect to the composition and transmission of the text of Jeremiah,² 2) discuss the LXX text and the theory that the LXX text was not based on the MT, but on a Hebrew *Vorlage* which originated from the same parent-text the MT came into existence, and 3) present a theory that proposes the superiority of the MT over the LXX.

The divergence between the MT and the LXX texts of Jeremiah can be explained in terms of omissions, additions, verse and chapter

¹ T. R. Hobbs, "Some Remarks on the Composition and Structure of the Book of Jeremiah," in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies* (ed. L. G. Perdue and B. W. Kovacs; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1984), 175.

² Particular attention will be given to the different MT and LXX readings. Also, I will discuss 4QJer^b and 4QJer^c, two Jeremiah fragments discovered at Qumran.

order changes, and grammatical differences.³ Emanuel Tov explains the importance of this divergence: “The notable divergences which separate [the LXX] from the MT bring about important consequences in the field of textual criticism as well as in that of literary criticism.”⁴ In various places, the LXX omits letters, words, phrases, and even larger sections which are preserved in the MT. Graf found that about 2700 words that are found in the MT are missing in the LXX, thus leaving the Greek translation one-eighth shorter than the MT.⁵ Also, starting with chapter 25 verse 13 the LXX orders its chapters differently. The Oracles against Foreign Nations, which are found in chapters 46-51 of the MT, begin from Jeremiah 25:13 in the LXX.

Over the years Old Testament scholars have tried to explain the reason for the divergence, and two solutions are most popular:⁶ 1) the Greek translators have taken much freedom in translating the Hebrew text,⁷ or 2) the Greek translator followed a Hebrew text somewhat different from the MT.

II. A Review of Previous Scholarship

Discrepancies in length and arrangement between the MT and the LXX have been noticed as far back as the third and fourth centuries A.D. by the church fathers Origen and Jerome.⁸ However, it was the nineteenth-century Old Testament scholars who more carefully sought to explain the divergence. In his 1824 *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, Eichhorn set forth the hypothesis of two Hebrew editions.⁹ An earlier, unrevised edition which Jeremiah left in Egypt was subsequently translated into Greek. A more elaborate revision was sent to Israel where it later became the textual tradition behind the MT. M. G. L. Spohn sug-

³ J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 117.

⁴ My translation of “Les notables divergences qui la séparent du texte masorétique entraînent d’importantes conséquences dans le domaine de la critique textuelle aussi bien que dans celui ce la critique littéraire.” E. Tov, “L’incidence de la Critique Textuelle sur la Critique Littéraire dans le Livre de Jérémie,” *RB* 79 (1972): 189.

⁵ K. H. Graf, *Der Prophet Jeremia* (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1862), xliii.

⁶ There are a small number of scholars who believe that the two texts are completely unrelated to each other.

⁷ This freedom may have been motivated either by hermeneutics or style.

⁸ S. Soderlund, *The Greek Text of Jeremiah: A Revised Hypothesis* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 1.

⁹ The following paragraphs are Janzen’s summary of the modern discussion on the subject. J. Gerald Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (HSM 6; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 1-9.

gested that the translator deliberately omitted some passages, and thus argued that the translators were either careless, or took great freedoms in translating the text.¹⁰ In 1837, M. C. Movers proposed that the Greek translation might reflect an older text and thus is the more preferable reading than the complex and expanded text of the MT. K. H. Graf suggested that the differences are to be blamed on inconsistent methodology adopted by the translators. A. Scholz, however, agreed with Movers and concluded that a Hebrew *Vorlage*, which did not contain words and phrases found in the MT, was the basis for the LXX text. Janzen dismisses Workman's work as favoring the LXX right from the start. In fact, Workman exalts the Greek text at almost every point. Janzen agrees with Streane, Mover, and Scholz and sees as very probable the existence of a proto-MT text. He affirms that the Greek translation is a careful rendering of a Hebrew *Vorlage* different from the heavily expanded MT, and therefore it is the LXX text that is to be preferred.

Twentieth-century scholars continued the discussion of their nineteenth-century predecessors. F. Giesenbrecht sided with Graf and stated that the LXX translator deliberately abridged the text. Duhm and Cornill disagreed and sided with Movers and others. Volz, Rudolph, Weiser, and Bright chose to take a more moderate position on the subject and suggested that even though the Greek translators deliberately abridged their rendering of the original Hebrew text, they used this translation in varying degrees to restore the MT of Jeremiah. P. F. Frankl, C. Workman, and A. W. Streane suggested that more than one translator was probably involved in the rendering of the Hebrew text into Greek.¹¹ John Thackeray concluded that the Greek text was the work of three separate translators.¹² One translator translated chapters 1-28, the second translated chapters 29-51, and third translator/redactor translated the last chapter.¹³ In more recent studies, Emanuel Tov concluded his study by affirming that the Hebrew text was translated by only one translator, and that the original Greek translation was later revised.¹⁴ After an in-depth study of the nouns, pronouns, and prepositions in the book of Jeremiah, Raymond Martin concluded that the translator made an attempt to render the Hebrew text into Greek idiom.¹⁵

¹⁰ Janzen calls these occurrences "double readings."

¹¹ Emanuel Tov, *The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch: A Discussion of an Early Revision of the LXX of Jeremiah 29-52 and Baruch 1:1-3:8* (Missoula: Scholars, 1976), 1-4.

¹² John Thackeray, "The Greek Translators of Jeremiah," *JTS* 4 (1902-1903): 256-257.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 247.

¹⁴ Tov, *Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah*, 135-151.

¹⁵ Raymond A. Martin, "The Syntax of the Greek of Jeremiah, Part I. The

III. The LXX, the MT, and the Qumran Texts of Jeremiah

The four Jeremiah fragments discovered in two separate caves at Qumran show a closer agreement with the LXX text than with the MT, or at least, that is the conclusion of Frank Moore Cross.¹⁶ Cross argues that the plurality of distinct text types found at Qumran is a direct challenge to the previous understanding that “a single Hebrew textual tradition prevailed throughout the interval of the development of the Greek Bible.”¹⁷ The Dead Sea Scrolls point to a rather complex period in the history of the Hebrew text and its transmission at the time when the Greek translation of Jeremiah was produced.¹⁸

Both nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars suggested that the LXX text is superior to that of the MT. Janzen reached this conclusion after examining the different readings in both versions. He concluded that the MT is a “conflated” text and thus cannot be considered superior to the LXX. Janzen agrees that confluations also occur in the LXX, but he argues that these are stylistic in nature.¹⁹ He found forty-five examples of double readings, which he defines as “readings which combine variants from two or more manuscripts.”²⁰ The high number of such readings led Janzen to believe that this is evidence of a developing text tradition which was expanded “by attempts to bring divergent texts into conformity with each other.”²¹ Most of the Greek additions are minor, consisting only of a few words, while the Hebrew additions are sometimes quite long.²² These are probably clarifying cross-references and scholarly marginal notations. The number of expansions from parallel passages in the MT exceeds those in the LXX by a ratio of six to one. Also, the MT has fourteen expansions from outside of Jeremiah while the Greek has only two. From this data it may be said that “the Hebrew text underlying [the old Greek] was very conservative” with a narrow line of transmission. But “the Hebrew text tradition underlying [the MT] was highly developed with broad line of transmission.”²³ Janzen

noun, pronouns and prepositions in their case constructions,” (ThD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1957), 80-84, 154-160.

¹⁶ Frank Moore Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 161-194.

¹⁷ Frank Moore Cross, “The Evolution of a Theory of Local Texts,” in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (ed. F. M. Cross and S. Talmon; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 306-320.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, 10.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²² *Ibid.*, 36.

²³ *Ibid.*, 68.

finds that the expansions of the text were made also in the use of proper names. He concludes that the lack of haplography in the MT is due to a high number of revisions.²⁴

Soderlund sees weaknesses in Janzen's assumptions. Janzen expects his readers to induce from the 4QJer^b fragments that the entire scroll represented the shorter text. His overly narrow focus on the MT expansion and Greek omissions (zero-variants) prevents him from seeing these possible translation patterns.²⁵ Tov builds on Janzen's foundation²⁶, and affirms that "the 4QJer^b is not identical with the reconstructed *Vorlage* of the LXX."²⁷ He concludes,

While 4QJer^b is thus not identical to the *Vorlage* of the LXX, the existence of such a short and differently ordered Hebrew version of Jeremiah, coupled with the fact that the translator of Jeremiah was relatively literal and not likely to have made such changes himself, confirms the conjecture that the LXX of Jeremiah must be based on a short Hebrew *Vorlage*, similar to 4QJer^b.²⁸

Tov suggests that the LXX originated from a short parent text similar to that of 4QJer^b. However, this text was an early edition of Jeremiah which was later expanded into a second edition, the MT. McKane concurs and suggests that the Hebrew text is encountered "at an earlier stage in its history than represented by MT."²⁹ Tov discusses at length some differences found in the book of Jeremiah, where 4QJer^b concurs with the LXX.³⁰

²⁴ Ibid., 120.

²⁵ Soderlund, *Greek Text of Jeremiah*, 96.

²⁶ Tov credits Mowinckel as the originator of the two-source hypothesis. "The majority of the exegetes accept the essence of the assumption of Mowinckel, knowing that the book has two principal sources." My translation of, "La Plupart des exégètes acceptent l'essentiel de l'hypothèse de Mowinckel, à savoir que le livre a deux sources principales." Tov, "L'incidence de la Critique Textuelle," 198.

²⁷ Emanuel Tov, "The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in the Light of Its Textual History," in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (ed. Jeffrey H. Tigay; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 213.

²⁸ Emanuel Tov, "Some Aspects of the Textual and Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah," in *Le Livre de Jérémie: Le Prophète et Son Milieu les Oracles et Leur Transmission* (ed. P. M. Bogaert; Leuven-Louvain: Leuven, 1981), 146-148.

²⁹ W. McKane, "The History of the Text of Jeremiah 10:1-16," in *Mélanges Bibliques et Orientaux en L'honneur de M. Mathias Delcor* (ed. A. Caquot, S. Légasse and M. Tardieu; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukircher Verlag, 1985), 300.

³⁰ Tov, "Some Aspects," 149. This section is based primarily on Tov's article.

A. Addition of headings to prophecies (present in the MT, absent in the LXX and 4QJer^b).

Jeremiah 2:1-2

וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:
הֲלֹךְ וְקִרְאתָ בְּאָזְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר

“The Word of the LORD was (came) to me saying,”
“Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying,”

B. Repetitions of sections. Jeremiah 6:22-24 is repeated in Jeremiah 50:41-43.

Jeremiah 6:22-24

6:22 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הִנֵּה עִם בָּא מֵאַרְצֵי צָפוֹן וְגוֹי גָּדוֹל
יֵעוֹר מִיַּרְפְּתֵי־אַרְצֵי:
6:23 קָשֶׁת וּכְיִדּוֹן יַחֲזִיקוּ אֲבוּרֵי הוּא וְלֹא יִרְחֲמוּ קוֹלָם בֵּינָם יִהְיֶה
וְעַל־סוּסִים יִרְפְּבוּ עֲרוּדֵי כַּאֲשֶׁר לְמַלְחָמָה עַל־יָד בַּת־צִיּוֹן:
6:24 שָׁמַעְנוּ אֶת־שִׁמְעוֹ רָפִי יְדֵינוּ צָרָה הִחֹזְקֵתָנִי חֵיל כִּי־לָרָה:

6:22 Thus says the LORD: “Behold, a people is coming from the north country, a great nation is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth.

6:23 They lay hold on bow and javelin; they are cruel and have no mercy; the sound of them is like the roaring sea; they ride on horses, set in array as a man for battle, against you, O daughter of Zion!”

6:24 We have heard the report of it; our hands fall helpless; anguish has taken hold of us, pain as of a woman in labor.

Other such sections are 10:12-16 = 51:15-19; 23:19-20 = 30:23-24; and 49:18-21 = 50:44-46.

C. Additions of new verses and sections. The second edition of the MT added a vast number of verses, both in the prose and poetic sections. “The most remarkable addition of this kind is the prophecy of 33:14-26 on the צֶדֶקָה (righteous branch) and the durability of the covenant.³¹ This entire section is missing from the LXX.

D. Addition of new details. Jeremiah 25:20 is a good example of new details in a prose section.

Jeremiah 25:20

וְאֵת כָּל־הָעָרִב וְאֵת כָּל־מְלָכֵי אֲרֶץ הָעוּז

“And all the mixed people, and all the kings of the land of Uz...”

In the poetry sections, the new details do not consist of new factual information, but rather, these additions may be only for literary aesthetic purposes.

³¹ Tov, “Some Aspects,” 154.

Jeremiah 31:30

בִּי אִסְדָּאִישׁ בְּעוֹנוֹ יָמוּת כָּל הָאָדָם
הָאֹכֵל הַבָּסֶר וְתִקְהֶינָה שְׁנָיו:

“But everyone shall die for his own sin. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.”

E. Changes in context. According to Tov, in Jeremiah 38:9 Editor II altered the wording because it blamed Zedekiah for killing the prophet. The MT says that the prophet has died, נִיָּמָה, while the LXX uses the infinitive aorist of the verb ἀποκτείνω (to be put to death). Tov argues that Editor II was not only an editor, but also an exegete. Thus, he took the liberty of “inserting new elements in between the existing words of edition I.”³² The harmonistic additions are the filling in of details that are aimed at making the book as explicit as possible. The filling in of personal names occurs numerous times. In Jeremiah 21:2, Nebuchadnezzar’s name is added before מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל (king of Babylon), while in 28:4, the editor adds בְּרִי יְהוֹיָכִים מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה (the son of Jehoiachim, king of Judah) after the proper name יְכֹנָיָה (Jeconiah). Contextual additions were made when the details in one verse were added to make it identical with another verse within a given context. Contextual exegesis was practiced when Editor II added clarifying words or phrases in order to explain something that in his view was not clear. Thus, in Jeremiah 27:5, the phrase “The men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth,” אֲתֵתְהָאָדָם וְאֲתֵתְהַבְּסָהֶמָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ, is added to “I made the earth,” אֲנִי עָשִׂיתִי אֲתֵתְהָאָרֶץ. Tov concludes that the first edition of the book of Jeremiah was the *Vorlage* for the LXX, and that the MT is an expanded version of the same text.³³

Examining the prose sermons in Jeremiah, Stulman comes in agreement with Janzen and Tov with respect to the origins of the LXX text. He seeks to compare the MT with the LXX in order to discover the exact nature of prose sermons in the common text. The additions to the MT are said to be of exilic origin because they emphasize “the role of Babylon and its king in the divine program and favor the exiles in Babylon over against Zedekiah and those with him in Jerusalem.”³⁴ J. Lust also looks at the exilic period and particularly to “the gathering of the dispersed and their return to the homeland.”³⁵ He suggests that the

³² Ibid., 158.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Louis Stulman, “Some Theological and Lexical Differences Between the Old Greek and the Masoretic Text of Jeremiah Prose Discourses,” *HS* 25 (1984): 21.

³⁵ Johan Lust, “‘Gathering and Return’ in Jeremiah and Ezekiel,” in *Le Livre de Jérémie: Le Prophète et Son Milieu* (ed. P.-M. Bogaert; Leuven: Leuven University

theme of return from exile was added later by a redactor who interpreted Jeremiah's silence about a return as a denial of a speedy return.³⁶ A. Diamond also detects a reinterpretation of the text in Jeremiah, and he too believes that the double edition theory is valid. He writes, "The two-edition models force a recognition of the blend of text-transmissional and literary-formative stages for the book of Jeremiah."³⁷ However, after studying Jeremiah's confessions, he concludes that "the comparison of the rendering of Jeremiah's confessions in the LXX and the MT has tried to show that at the base it is not a matter of different *Vorlagen* but of vocalization."³⁸

The LXX version of Jeremiah can be considered a trustworthy translation. That this translation is from the proto-MT or another Hebrew *Vorlage* seems to come into sharper focus when we look at Tov's study of 4QJer^c.³⁹ Tov affirms that this scroll is very similar to the proto-MT. He also finds that the differences are insignificant. At times, this Qumran scroll agrees with the MT against the LXX, while other times, it differs from the MT in substantial details.

A. Agreement between 4QJer^c and the MT against the LXX. Jeremiah 8:21 and 4QJer^c (col. 4, 1.2) have שָׁמָּה הָחֹזֵקִים יָנִי, "horror has taken a hold of me." To this, the LXX adds ὥδινες ὡς τικτούσης, "pain like child bearing."

B. Difference between 4QJer^c and the MT in small details. In Jeremiah 20:4, the MT has לִמְנוּרָה "to fear," while the Qumran scroll has the word with the preposition (col. 7, 1.8). Also, in 22:11, the MT has יִשְׁיֶהוּ while 4QJer^c is missing the final consonant.

C. Differences between 4QJer^c and the MT in more substantial details. In Jeremiah 22:20, the MT and the LXX agree against the 4QJer^c (col. 13, 1.8). Where the MT has נִשְׁבְּרוּ 4QJer^c has נִשְׁפְּכוּ thus completely changing the meaning from "they are destroyed" to "they are poured out."⁴⁰ Also, in Jeremiah 31:8, where the MT has וְקִבַּצְתִּים "and I will gather them," 4QJer^c (col. 22, 1.7) has וְאִקְבְּצֵם, thus changing the verb form from a perfect plus *waw* consecutive to preterite plus a *waw* consecutive. Tov concludes that the differences between the MT, the

Press, 1981), 120.

³⁶ Ibid., 128-129.

³⁷ Peter A. R. Diamond, "Jeremiah's Confessions in the LXX and MT: A Witness to Developing Canonical Function?" *VT* 40 (1990): 34.

³⁸ Ibid., 40.

³⁹ This section is based on Tov's article "4QJer^c (4Q⁷²)," in *Tradition of the Text* (ed. G. J. Norton and S. Pisano; OBO 109; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1991), 249-276.

⁴⁰ The LXX renders it with the aorist passive 3rd plural of συντριβῶ.

LXX, and 4QJer^c are so minor and insignificant, that one needs to see a close relationship between them.⁴¹

IV. The MT as the Superior Text of Jeremiah

Although the majority of Old Testament scholars seem to be convinced that the reconstructed LXX *Vorlage* should be placed above the MT, there are those who disagree. These scholars affirm that any editing, resulting in a variation between the LXX and the MT, occurred only on the Greek or its parent text's side.⁴² Theories about editions, expansion, and local texts are granted very little credence, and if there are larger structural problems, the fault lies with the Greek or other texts which have failed to understand or interpret correctly the MT. Among such scholars that defend the Hebrew text is Shemaryahu Talmon who believes that the MT of Jeremiah exists in its complete form. He challenges Cross's theory, "I challenge anyone to give a sensible reason for labeling the short, superb text of Jeremiah from Qumran and underlying the LXX a vulgar text."⁴³ What some call expansionist, he calls an essential part of biblical literature. That the text of the MT is fuller than the LXX is the result of blurring the distinction between author and copyist and/or translator. The ancient scribe participated in the "creative literary process" of the text in which he was working, and it was not until the canon was closed that the "impact of stylistic techniques and norms on the textual transmission" stopped.⁴⁴ Authors and scribes were not part of different literary classes. This is also evidenced at Qumran where authorship and text transmission blend. The authors and scribes there "employed the same or similar literary tenets and techniques."⁴⁵ Talmon argues for a superiority of the MT's fuller reading through the use of *hapax legomena*. In Jeremiah 1:18, God says that he will make Jeremiah into a לְעִמּוּד בְּרִזָּה (iron pillar). The LXX simply does not include this expression at all.

Robert Althann agrees with Talmon and believes that the MT preserves the most complete reading of Jeremiah when compared with the

⁴¹ Tov, "4QJer^c (4Q72)," 272.

⁴² Roy D. Wells Jr., "Indications of Late Reinterpretation of the Jeremiah Tradition from the LXX of Jer 21:1-23," *ZAW* 96 (1984): 420.

⁴³ Shemaryahu Talmon, "An Apparently Redundant MT Reading: Jeremiah 1:18," *Textus* 8 (1973): 194.

⁴⁴ S. Talmon, "The Textual Study of the Bible: A New Outlook," in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (ed. F. M. Cross and S. Talmon; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 381.

⁴⁵ S. Talmon, "Textual Study of the Bible," 380.

LXX which “bears witness to abbreviating editorial activity.”⁴⁶ After focusing on grammar and poetry he suggests that both the LXX translators and the Masoretes failed to fully understand the MT which was heavily influenced by Ugaritic poetry. The Masoretes failed to recognize fourteen divine titles, and the LXX translators often did not see the poetic character of the text. The results of these shortcomings are “textual problems” and “numerous obscurities.”⁴⁷ The errors of the vocalizers and translators were the result of the passage of time. For instance, the Masoretes were vocalizing the text centuries after it was written, and thus could not always know the intentions of the original authors. At the same time, the LXX translators stood too far from a chronological standpoint to understand and appreciate ancient poetic particularities. Althann examines Jeremiah 4-6 and shows how the Masoretes and the LXX translators failed to sometimes understand the consonantal text. Two of the most common mistakes made by the LXX translators are transposition and omission. For example, in Jeremiah 5:15, the LXX failed to translated the phrase **הוּא גוֹי אֲנִיתָן הוּא גוֹי מְעוֹלָם הוּא** (“[it is] an enduring nation, an ancient nation”). Tov suggests that this was omitted by homoioteleuton,⁴⁸ while Althann believes that the phrase was omitted because “the translator did not appreciate the basic character of Hebrew poetry.”⁴⁹

Not all OT scholars are as forceful about MT superiority over the LXX as Talmon and Althann, but they still find the MT to be clearly a better rendering than the LXX. W. E. Lemke sees the MT as preserving the more difficult reading, and thus he concludes that this must be the correct one. The MT holds the primary wording while a Deuteronomistic scribe changed the LXX in order to make the text more theologically acceptable.⁵⁰ A. Rofé finds the MT to be correct in its placement of the Oracles Against the Nations.⁵¹ He believes that their placement starting with Jeremiah 25:13 is secondary and was influenced by similar oracle placements in Isaiah and Ezekiel. The same editors who were respon-

⁴⁶ Robert Althann, *A Philological Analysis of Jeremiah 4-6 in the Light of Northwest Semitic* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1983), 306.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 308.

⁴⁸ Tov believes that the bicolon might have been added by Editor II. Bright defines homoioteleuton as “the scribe’s eye leaping over the material between two sentences with similar endings.” See John Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), cxiii.

⁴⁹ Althann, 159.

⁵⁰ Werner E. Lemke, “The Near and the Distant God: A Study of Jeremiah 23:23-24,” *JBL* 100 (1981): 555.

⁵¹ *Contra* Janzen who argues for a superior LXX position and order of the Oracles against Foreign Nations. Cf. Janzen, 115.

sible for the arrangement of Isaiah and Ezekiel probably rearranged Jeremiah.⁵² The book is arranged in sections based on broad topics, and within each of those sections there is a symmetrical arrangement or ring construction. This ring construction is achieved by placing the world powers Egypt and Babylon at the poles of the section and enclosing all the other nations. When the LXX relocated the oracles, the structure was lost.⁵³

Seitz also studied the structure of Jeremiah and found the MT to have the earlier arrangement. As for recent text-critical work that has suggested an earlier Greek text, he notes that this is only on a text reading level, not the larger structure of the book.⁵⁴ He believes that the placement of the Oracles against the Nations existed independently of the main corpus of Jeremiah.⁵⁵ He agrees with Rofé that the LXX order was influenced by the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel.⁵⁶

In his study of Jeremiah 33:14-26 (the passage absent in the LXX) J. Grothe found that the Greek translators did not translate subject matter that was irrelevant for their audience.⁵⁷ To demonstrate this, he examines the longest MT passage omitted by the LXX. Jeremiah 33:14-26 deals with Jerusalem, the temple, and the Zadokite priesthood. These things would have been relevant in Palestine in the 190's, but not in Alexandria in the 130's. By that time the sanctuary had been defiled, the ruler of Jerusalem was not from the Davidic line, nor were the Zadokites the only priests. Therefore, Grothe argues that the Greek translators left this passage out intentionally.⁵⁸

V. The Unrelatedness between the LXX and the MT Versions of Jeremiah

Previous theories discussed saw the MT as an expanded edition of a text similar to the parent text of the LXX and 4QJer^b. Others think that the LXX and the 4QJer^b are shortened versions of the naturally and necessarily fuller text of the MT. There is another group of scholars that

⁵² Alexander Rofé, "The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah," *ZAW* 101 (1989): 397.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 398.

⁵⁴ C. R. Seitz, "The Prophet Moses and the Canonical Shape of Jeremiah," *ZAW* 101 (1989): 25.

⁵⁵ Bernard Gosse, "Jérémie 45 et la place du recueil d'oracles contre les nations dans le livre de Jérémie," *VT* 40 (1990): 145-151.

⁵⁶ Seitz, 25.

⁵⁷ Jonathan F. Grothe, "An Argument for the Textual Genuineness of Jeremiah 33:14-26," *CJ* 7 (1981): 190.

⁵⁸ Grothe, 189-190.

think that the MT and the LXX are too divergent, and thus they should be viewed as independent of each other, having arisen in different places and serving different needs. D. L. Christensen is the chief proponent of such a theory. He suggests that “the present text of MT is not to be explained as a simple redactional process on the part of some scribe(s) in antiquity, in which the shorter text was glossed.”⁵⁹ For instance, if Jeremiah 25:30-38 was shortened in accordance with the LXX, it would lose its metrical integrity, while the MT’s rhythmic structure can be seen in the “distribution of disjunctive accent marks.”⁶⁰ Also, if verse 38 is divided into four lines, we find two disjunctive accents in each line for a total of eight. When each verse is counted in this way, a clear structure for 25:30-38 emerges.⁶¹ The MT is here representing a tradition where the text was sung in some community in ancient Israel. At the same time, it cannot be said that the LXX is an abbreviated text. The Greek and Hebrew texts simply “represent two different points in time, within separate communities of faith.”⁶² Christensen believes that “there is not a single autograph between them.” Rather, both were canonical “within their respective communities of faith,” and a “simple evolutionary model cannot explain the differences.”⁶³ Margaliot holds the same opinion of textual unrelatedness. After examining Jeremiah 10:1-16 he comes to the same conclusion as Christensen although he does affirm that the MT does preserve a more logical structure.⁶⁴

VI. Conclusion

The issues dealing with the text of Jeremiah are complex and they have been the subject of much study. After looking at the textual evidence from the MT, the LXX, and the DSS, I conclude that indeed a Hebrew *Vorlage* could have been the text from which the LXX has been translated. This would be the same Hebrew *Vorlage* on which the Qumran scrolls were based. However, because of the similarities between the three texts, and sometimes the agreement of the MT with the Qumran texts against the LXX, I conclude that they all came from a single parent-text, the proto-MT of Jeremiah. The differences between the versions

⁵⁹ Duane L. Christensen, “In Quest of the Autograph of the Book of Jeremiah: A Study of Jeremiah 25 in Relation to Jeremiah 46-51,” *JETS* 33 (1990): 152.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁶¹ 8:4:4:8:8:8:9:9:8:8.

⁶² Christensen, “Quest of the Autograph,” 152.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁶⁴ M. Margaliot, “Jeremiah 10:1-16: A Re-examination,” *VT* 30 (1980): 307.

that have to do with additions, omissions, misreads, and mistranslations could be attributed to the LXX translators who took much freedom, both hermeneutic and stylistic, when translating the Hebrew text. Since this Hebrew *Vorlage* is not in our possession, we must admit that all the theories regarding the transmission of the text of Jeremiah are only hypotheses that still wait to be proven.