



Jeremiah
Closer Up
The Prophet and the Book

Jack R. Lundbom

JEREMIAH CLOSER UP



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To
William L. Holladay
with whom I first studied Jeremiah at the
Near East School of Theology, Beirut

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PREFACE

Jeremiah Closer Up. Closer up from what? Much current Jeremianic scholarship, whether it reverts to the radical source-critical work of Bernhard Duhm, or builds on Duhm and form criticism (substituting ‘traditions’ for ‘sources’) in doing redaction criticism, or brings ideology into the enterprise, leaves us with a prophet who has disappeared from view, or nearly so, and a book the composition of which has disappeared into a hazy mist of the middle exilic, late exilic, or postexilic periods. Some would say all three. Much of this current work, in my opinion, is highly subjective, and at best – not to say what it is at worst – becomes an exercise in scholarly ingenuity. Often it depreciates beyond any reasonable bound the biblical witness, substituting in its place the scholar’s own imagined reconstruction of how things really played out. My work in Jeremiah proceeds along other methodological lines, also bringing in at points the fruit of other scholarly work I find to be credible. I work then not with just one method, but with a plurality of methods.

So far as the book of Jeremiah is concerned, I follow my teacher David Noel Freedman in taking its completion in both Babylon and Egypt prior to 560, roughly the same time the Primary History (Genesis through 2 Kings) was completed. Freedman dates the postscript in Jer. 52.31-34 and 2 Kgs 25.27-30 to c. 560. By the middle of the sixth century the tie had been made between the completed book of Jeremiah and the completed Primary History. My text-critical work on the Hebrew and (shorter) Greek (LXX) texts of Jeremiah, which is presented in the lead essay, has led me to the conclusion that LXX Jeremiah was translated from a Hebrew text surviving in Egypt that suffered substantial word loss (haplography), a common scribal error, over a period of some 350 years. A fragment of the short Hebrew text turned up at Qumran (4QJer^b). The longer Hebrew text then has not undergone large scale expansion, and stands as the better text of Jeremiah. This effectively rules out a writing and editing of the Jeremiah book in the middle exilic, late exilic, or postexilic periods.

A modest foray into form criticism led me to conclude that Baruch ben Neriah, and to a lesser extent his brother Seraiah, were the scribes of record writing, compiling, and editing the Jeremiah book. This effectively rules out oral tradition in any appreciable amount functioning

to preserve traditions about Jeremiah. The book was largely—one is tempted to say entirely—a scribal work from the time Jeremiah's first scroll of oracles was written up in 605. The idea that traditions about Jeremiah survived in oral tradition for a significant period is a romantic assumption surviving from early form criticism, and does not make a whole lot of sense if (1) the late 7th century was a 'scribal age', as Muilenburg claimed it was both in Israel, Assyria, and elsewhere in the ancient Near East; and (2) we have a clear statement in chap. 36 of the Jeremiah book that the prophet's words were committed to writing in 605, and that this scroll when rewritten after its destruction by the king was enlarged with more writing of the same (Jer. 36.32).

So far as Jeremiah the prophet is concerned, I think the book as we now have it gives a rather good look at the man and the ministry he carried out, in some cases a considerably sharpened look at his preaching over against the audience he addressed. This conclusion comes not simply from a renewed attempt to do the sort of historical criticism carried on by Jeremiah scholars in the last century, although I have never reacted against John Skinner and others the way Robert Carroll has. True, we are not as confident today about historical conclusions reached earlier, which means we need to correct those views, not jettison the historical quest altogether. It is naïve to think we can dispense entirely with historical criticism.

My primary method in working with the text of Jeremiah has been rhetorical criticism, which treats with greater respect and leads to a greater respect for the text that has come down to us. Rhetorical criticism has brought the prophet into much clearer focus, particularly as he and his preaching are seen over against the audience originally addressed. With a proper delimitation of oracles—in both poetry and prose—we see more clearly the arguments that are going on. We have a sharpened view on the many dialogues in the preaching, and how the laments in some cases have been integrated into other literary genres. I have attempted a close reading of the text, letting it give the message to me rather than me bringing my own views to the text. When the text speaks to issues in the current day, as often it does, then applications can and should be made. But I begin with the biblical text, not with theory or ideology, convinced that battles in our discipline are won or lost ultimately on the ground, not in the air.

If there is a thread running through the present collection of essays, the first three of which deal mainly with the book of Jeremiah, and the remaining five of which deal with Jeremiah the prophet and his preaching, it is that by a proper and careful reading of the biblical text and the employment of relevant methodologies both the prophet and the book can be seen closer up than many present-day commentators imagine.

Needless to say, we are still dealing with an ancient book emanating from a world far removed from our own, and whatever confidence I have expressed in the veracity of the biblical witness should not be taken to mean that we can know all we wish to know. There are still plenty of questions that remain, and much depends on interpretation, but one can do much better in the study of Jeremiah than wander aimlessly in ambiguity and darkness.

The first and third essays reproduce and expand slightly a lecture on 'Text, Composition, and Historical Reconstruction in Jeremiah' that was given at the University of California, San Diego, Cambridge University, and most recently at Durham University. This lecture was published in the short-lived journal, *The Biblical Historian* 2/1 (2005), pp. 1-11. Portions of this article reprinted here were undertaken with the kind permission of the editor of this journal, David Miano. The essay on 'Rudimentary Logic in Jeremiah' is here presented for the first time.

The essay on 'The Laments of Jeremiah' was presented as a lecture in February, 2007 to students in a Psalms class conducted by my colleague, Dr Brooks Schramm, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, PA. It was later given in September, 2008 to theological students at the Menighetsfakultet (Norwegian School of Theology) in Oslo, Norway. The essay on 'Jeremiah and the Created Order' was delivered in March, 2007 to students at the Debrecen Reformed University in Debrecen, Hungary. The essay on 'Jeremiah and the (New) Covenant' was delivered at the same time to students at Debrecen Reformed University, the Lutheran Theological University in Budapest, and the Martin Bible School in Martin, Slovakia. In September, 2008 it was given to students at the Menighetsfakultet in Oslo. These three essays were also given as lectures in 2007-2008 to my students at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong. Essays on 'Jeremiah and History' and 'Jeremiah and the Nations' are here presented for the first time.

Jack R. Lundbom
The Divinity School
University of Chicago
All Saints Eve, 2009

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible Series
ANET ³	James B. Pritchard (ed.), <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> (3rd edition with Supplement; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969)
ATD	Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BWAT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CB	Century Bible
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBSC	Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DLZ	<i>Deutsche Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>
<i>EncPhil</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i>
<i>EncRhet</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Rhetoric</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
<i>HebSt</i>	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IB	<i>Interpreter's Bible</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JDT</i>	<i>Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint
M ^A	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible according to the Aleppo Codex
M ^L	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible according to the Leningrad Codex
M ^P	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible according to the St Petersburg Codex of the Prophets
MT	Masoretic Text
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament

OTS	<i>Oudtestamentische studiën</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Old Testament Message
PC	Pulpit Commentary
QJS	<i>Quarterly Journal of Speech</i>
RGG ²	<i>Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> (2nd edn)
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum, Supplement Series
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

THE TEXT OF JEREMIAH

The LXX and MT

The text of Jeremiah has attracted considerable attention over the past two centuries. The LXX is one-eighth shorter than MT (Graf: 2700 words less), and orders its materials differently after 25.13a. Scholarly work on the text up through the 1960s is summarized in Gerald Janzen's 1963 Harvard dissertation, published a decade later.¹ Janzen included in his work transcriptions of two Dead Sea Scroll fragments,² 4QJer^a and 4QJer^b, and reported how 4QJer^b had come to impact the study of the Jeremiah text. 4QJer^a was the longer text represented in MT, 4QJer^b the shorter text represented in the LXX. These two fragments, together with another from Cave IV, 4QJer^c, have now been published in their entirety by Emanuel Tov.³ A Cave II fragment, 2QJer, was published earlier by M. Baillet.⁴ Both of these latter texts are proto-Masoretic, like 4QJer^a.

Scholars of the 19th century assessed the two text traditions differently. Movers⁵ favored the shorter LXX text, recognizing in it some loss due to haplography, but thinking that divergences could more often be attributed to glosses and secondary expansion. Graf⁶ came to quite a different conclusion. He favored the longer MT, arguing that the LXX text was a corrupt form of the Hebrew text currently available. The problem, he said, lay mainly with the translator, who made deliberate changes.

1. J. Gerald Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 1-9.

2. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, pp. 173-84.

3. 'Jeremiah', in Eugene Ulrich *et al.* (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4. X. The Prophets* (DJD, 15; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 145-207 + plates.

4. 'Jérémie', in M. Baillet *et al.* (eds.), *Les 'Petites Grottes' de Qumrân, I-II* (DJD, 3; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 62-69 + plates.

5. Karl Franz Movers, *De utriusque recensionis vaticiniorum Ieremiae, graecae alexandrinae et hebraicae masorethicae, indole et origine commentatio critica* (Hamburg: Fridericus Perthes, 1837).

6. Karl Heinrich Graf, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1862).

Hitzig⁷ and Giesebrecht⁸ in their commentaries were more or less eclectic in selecting preferred readings, with Giesebrecht paying particular attention to divergences between MT and LXX and judging the two text traditions in an even-handed manner. He believed the MT contained secondary material, but thought the LXX tended to abridge verbose passages and omit doublets in its *Vorlage*; here and there it betrayed evidence of scribal ignorance and scribal error. Giesebrecht also noted, as no scholar has since, the consistent support shown for the Hebrew text in other ancient Versions (Origen, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Lucian, Syriac, Targum Jonathan, and Vulgate). Even when he did go with the LXX, Giesebrecht would cite Versional support for MT.

But things changed considerably with Duhm,⁹ who showed consistent preference for the shorter LXX. Duhm also emended the MT freely, coming up with retroverted readings from the Greek that he deemed superior to readings in MT. Also, his view that large amounts of Jeremiah prose were secondary and postexilic went well with his assumption that MT represented an expanded text. Cornill, in his textual notes and later commentary on Jeremiah,¹⁰ worked along the same lines as Duhm, usually deleting portions of MT that were not present in LXX. A preference for LXX readings was expressed also in the studies of H.P. Smith¹¹ and Streane,¹² although Streane in his commentary¹³ backed away from the more radical judgments of Duhm, as Peake had done in his commentary.¹⁴

Paul Volz, in an early study of the Jeremiah text,¹⁵ approved generally of the shorter LXX readings, and when it came to writing his

7. F. Hitzig, *Der Prophet Jeremia* (2nd edn; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1866 [originally 1841]).

8. D. Friedrich Giesebrecht, *Das Buch Jeremia* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1894).

9. Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (KHC; Tübingen and Leipzig: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1901).

10. Carl Heinrich Cornill, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text* (trans. C. Johnston; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1895); *Das Buch Jeremia* (Leipzig: Chr. Herm. Tauchnitz, 1905).

11. Henry Preserved Smith, 'The Greek Translators of Jeremiah', *JTS* 4 (1887), p. 199.

12. A.W. Streane, *The Double Text of Jeremiah together with The Lamentations* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co, 1896), pp. 3-15.

13. A.W. Streane, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah together with The Lamentations* (CBSC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952; originally 1913).

14. A.S. Peake, *Jeremiah*, I (CB; New York: H. Frowde, 1910); *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, II (CB; New York: H. Frowde, 1911).

15. Paul Volz, *Studien zum Text des Jeremia* (BWAT, 25; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1920).

commentary¹⁶ he judged a considerable number of words, phrases, messenger formulas, and entire passages in MT to be secondary, and deleted them. Of the more recent commentators who have made critical judgments of the Jeremiah text, e.g., Rudolph,¹⁷ Bright,¹⁸ Thompson,¹⁹ Carroll,²⁰ McKane,²¹ and Holladay,²² all except Carroll and McKane have rejected the radical interpretations of Duham, yet all continue to believe that the divergence in length between LXX Jeremiah and MT Jeremiah is largely due to MT Jeremiah being an expanded text. Holladay, who relies heavily on Janzen, usually but not always goes with the LXX in his Jeremiah commentary, and an unconcealed preference – better, a strong bias – in favor of the LXX can be seen in the Jeremiah commentary by McKane, who applies the *brevior lectio potior* ('short text is preferable') principle to virtually every variant reading in the book. One can also discern a *Tendenz* in favor of the LXX in the apparatus of *Biblia hebraica*, about which I will have more to say shortly.

The issue has mainly been whether the LXX translator abridged his Hebrew *Vorlage*, or proto-MT expanded over time by taking on secondary material. Commentators, of course, have recognized with Movers that the LXX in places is corrupt, suffering from both scribal ignorance²³ and scribal error. The most common scribal errors are haplography (accidental omissions) and dittography (accidental duplications); however, since MT is generally thought to be an expanded text, alleged dittographies in MT have tended to outnumber alleged haplographies in LXX. Even so, scribal error has remained a relatively minor issue. The main issue has been whether the LXX translator abridged his Hebrew *Vorlage*, or whether proto-MT has grown because of taking on secondary material.

16. Volz, *Der Prophet Jeremia* (KAT, 10; 2nd edn; Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung D. Werner Scholl, 1983; originally 1928).

17. Wilhelm Rudolph, *Jeremia* (HAT; 3rd edn; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968; originally 1947).

18. John Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB, 21; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965).

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

20. Robert P. Carroll, *The Book of Jeremiah* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986).

21. William McKane, *Jeremiah*, I (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986); *Jeremiah*, II (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996).

22. William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah*, I (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); *Jeremiah*, II (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1989).

23. See e.g., T.K. Cheyne, *Jeremiah*, I (PC; London: Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., 1883), p. xvii; and S.R. Driver, 'The Double Text of Jeremiah', *The Expositor*, 3rd Series 9 (1889), pp. 333-36.

A Short Hebrew Text of Jeremiah

With the Dead Sea discoveries came some important conclusions regarding the transmission history of the Jeremianic text, also the text of Samuel, which, like Jeremiah, contains significant – though many fewer – variations between MT and LXX. Frank Cross has concentrated on the Qumran fragments of Samuel (4QSam^a, 4QSam^b), and found that these support the LXX, which in this case happens to be a longer text than MT. The shorter MT of Samuel is seen to have suffered rather extensively from haplography.²⁴ The work of Cross thus brought new respect to the earlier view of Wellhausen that LXX Samuel was a more original text than MT Samuel, and this is the generally accepted view today.

A fresh textual study of Jeremiah was left to Gerald Janzen, a student of Cross. Finding among the Dead Sea Scrolls a Hebrew fragment supporting the shorter LXX text of Jeremiah, 4QJer^b, even though it was a very small fragment, containing only Jer. 9.22 [Eng 9.23]–10.18, was of great significance, for now it could be argued that the shorter LXX Jeremiah was not an abridgement after all, but the translation into Greek of a Hebrew text of comparable length, localized in Egypt, where the translation was made. This view, which builds on the theoretical work of Cross regarding the history and provenance of the biblical text,²⁵ is now widely accepted. Cross takes proto-MT to have a Babylonian provenance, and proto-LXX to have an Egyptian provenance.

But the short 4QJer^b cannot be said along with LXX Jeremiah to be a better and more original text. Cross is right about LXX Samuel being a more original text than MT Samuel, where it has been demonstrated concurrently that MT Samuel has suffered considerable loss due to haplography, but comments by him²⁶ about ‘the short, superb text of Jeremiah’, made with reference to the small fragment of 4QJer^b containing Jer. 9.22 [Eng 9.23]–10.18, are wide of the mark. This text is in no way ‘superb’, but rather a corruption just like LXX Jer. 9.22 [Eng 9.23]–10.18. Both 4QJer^b and the LXX are in manifest disarray after 10.4, and the consensus is growing that MT 10.1–10 is much the better text – poetically, structurally, and in terms of coherence – than its shorter version.²⁷ Even Cornill,

24. Frank M. Cross, ‘The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judean Desert’, *HTR* 57 (1964), pp. 284–90; P. Kyle McCarter, *I Samuel* (AB, 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 5–8.

25. Cross, ‘The History of the Biblical Text’; ‘The Evolution of a Theory of Local Texts’, in Frank M. Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon (eds.), *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 309.

26. Cross, ‘The History of the Biblical Text’, p. 298; *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (3rd edn; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), p. 181.

27. Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20* (AB, 21A; New York: Doubleday, 1999), pp. 580–82.

who was no partisan of MT, said that the LXX here was ‘very corrupt and in a mutilated condition’.

Cross reached his conclusion largely on the basis of Janzen’s dissertation, where Janzen was said to have shown ‘that a large portion of the plusses of MT in Jeremiah stem from expansionist tendencies’ and that the ‘short text [of Jeremiah] represented at Qumrân and in the Septuagint is exceedingly well preserved’.²⁸ Janzen had indeed come to these conclusions, but neither is correct. At the same time, Janzen’s work does make a contribution to the study of the Jeremiah text, and the present essay is therefore not intended simply to refute generalizations he and others have made regarding MT Jeremiah and LXX Jeremiah, but to show that when it came to identifying omissions in LXX Jeremiah attributable to haplography, Janzen did not go far enough.

Janzen does concede that ‘haplography is perhaps the most common scribal error’,²⁹ and supports this by identifying 63 probable haplographies in LXX Jeremiah.³⁰ Some of these he believes occurred in the transmission of the Hebrew *Vorlage*. This ‘high incidence of haplography’ is said to be due to an inactive history of transmission for the LXX in Egypt, during which time omissions went undetected and uncorrected.³¹ Janzen, then, does not believe that shorter is always better, and to this extent he is very much in the tradition of Hitzig, Giesebrecht, Rudolph, and others who see for Jeremiah a complex textual history in which more than one tendency is at work. But in the end, Janzen sides with the majority who believe that MT Jeremiah is longer primarily because of expansion. He says that instances of conflation and expansion in MT are ‘far more frequent’ than omissions in LXX attributable to scribal error.³² Janzen also believes that 4QJer^b, supporting as it does the LXX of Jer. 10.1-10, confirms the methodological validity of moving from the LXX by retroversion to a supposed Hebrew *Vorlage*.³³ Finally, Janzen follows rather often in his work commentators who imagine that scribes in the MT tradition supplemented an already embellished Jeremiah prose with yet more embellishment, quarrying words and phrases from other parts of Jeremiah or from elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

In support of his view that ancient texts expanded over time, Janzen³⁴ cited Albright who spoke in 1940 about ‘the tendency of ancient Oriental

28. Cross, ‘The History of the Biblical Text’, p. 287 n. 28.

29. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 9.

30. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, pp. 117-19.

31. Janzen, ‘Double Readings in the Text of Jeremiah’, *HTR* 60 (1967), pp. 446-47; *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 120.

32. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 9.

33. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 7.

34. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, pp. 9, 191-92.

scribes and compilers to add rather than to subtract'.³⁵ Janzen speaks further about 'the general absence of a tendency to condense in the Greek Old Testament'.³⁶ This being the case, LXX Jeremiah is not likely to be an abridgement of its Hebrew *Vorlage*. Rather, it translates a short Hebrew text that was extant in Egypt. But this early statement by Albright does not address the problem of scribal error. Albright later spoke specifically to scribal omissions in a statement that has gone largely unnoticed. In it he said that there is 'increasing evidence from the Qumran Scrolls that our Hebrew originals, once edited in antiquity, suffered far more from omissions by copyists than from additions'.³⁷ Janzen, as we said, did cite 63 probable cases of haplography in LXX Jeremiah, more than Giesebrecht or Rudolph, and at first glance this might be thought a considerable number. But one would think that a study of 'zero variants', which is what Janzen was primarily about,³⁸ would have entailed examining each variant to see whether or not haplography might explain the omission. This Janzen evidently did not do, for as it turns out, 63 LXX haplographies fall far short of the arguable number in the book.

Haplography in the Short Hebrew Text

In my *Jeremiah* commentary for the Anchor Bible³⁹ I identified 330 arguable cases of LXX haplography, most of which are the result of homoeoarcton or homoeoteleuton.⁴⁰ This number includes 56 of Janzen's 63 examples, to which I have added another 274 examples. The 330 haplographies represent a loss of 1715 Hebrew words. Graf,⁴¹ as we mentioned, stated that LXX Jeremiah lacked 2700 words of MT Jeremiah, which means that haplography can account for well over half this total (64%). While this does not explain all the differences in length between MT Jeremiah and LXX Jeremiah, it goes some distance in suggesting what has in fact taken place. The LXX translator(s) of Jeremiah had before them a defective Hebrew *Vorlage*, or to put it another way, they were translating from 'a bad Hebrew Bible'. So what we have in the received text of Jeremiah is

35. W.F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 46.

36. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 9.

37. Albright, 'Some Remarks on the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy xxxii', *VT* 9 (1959), p. 341.

38. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 8.

39. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36* (AB, 21B; New York: Doubleday, 2004); *Jeremiah 37-52* (AB, 21C; New York: Doubleday, 2004).

40. Lundbom, 'Haplography in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Jeremiah', *HebSt* 46 (2005), pp. 301-20.

41. *Der Prophet Jeremia*, p. xliii.

not so much proto-MT expansion by busy scribes in Babylon, but proto-LXX loss by careless and inattentive scribes in Egypt. A reason for scribal error occurring on such a large scale is not hard to find. Jeremiah poetry and prose literally teem with repetition and *accumulatio*, with the prose particularly heaping up nouns in twos, threes, and fours, and balancing longer phrases in parallelism. The likelihood of haplography occurring in discourse of this type is much greater than it would be in discourse where repetition and accumulation are rare or non-existent.

The bulk of these scribal errors occurred in the Hebrew *Vorlage* to the LXX, which is to say the shortening took place while the text was still in Hebrew, before the translation into Greek was made. I noted in my commentary only a few inner-Greek haplographies, and perhaps a more concerted effort to find errors of this type might turn up additional examples. As for omitted doublets (usually the second occurrence), and other zero variants in the LXX, it remains an open question, in my view, whether these are proto-LXX abridgements or proto-MT expansions. If it is true that ancient texts tended to expand rather than contract, then abridgement is less likely at any time. But one of my other conclusions after working through the whole of Jeremiah is that repetitions in MT not present in the LXX often show themselves to be necessary in the discourse, also in the compilation of discourse. They give structure to the prophetic oracles and provide catchwords between discourse units; if they are omitted, both the rhetoric and composition of the book are compromised. This leads me to believe that LXX Jeremiah betrays a decided aversion to repetition (like that of some modern critical scholars), providing yet another reason for opting in favor of the longer Jeremiah text.

Preference for the longer MT Jeremiah brings us into harmony with ancient authorities and ancient textual witnesses. The LXX is the only ancient witness other than 4QJer^b to the shorter Jeremiah text. The other Versions, e.g., Origen's Hexapla, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Lucian, Targum Jonathan, Syriac, and Vulgate, consistently support MT. The Qumran fragments 2QJer, 4QJer^a, the oldest Qumran text dated c. 200,⁴² and 4QJer^c, are all proto-MT. And Jerome, with very few exceptions, goes with the Hebrew in his commentary. We should also not forget that the Rabbis, at some point, rejected the shorter Jeremiah text in favor of the longer text, and this preference is reflected in the medieval Jewish commentaries of Rashi, Kimḥi, and others. So in antiquity the Hebrew text of Jeremiah was given definite preference by both Jews and Christians. It is only with nineteenth-century German scholarship, beginning with Movers, that the shorter Greek text was thought to be better.

42. Cross, 'The Evolution of a Theory of Local Texts', p. 308.

A final word about *Biblia hebraica*, for which Rudolph Kittel was the ‘Jeremiah’ editor in *BH*¹, and Wilhelm Rudolph the ‘Jeremiah’ editor in *BH*³ and *BHS*. Rudolph, who can be said to represent a moderate, sensible, and mid-twentieth-century consensus view regarding the text of Jeremiah, assumed with most everyone else that *MT* Jeremiah was larger than *LXX* Jeremiah because the *MT* preserved an expanded text. His comments—and lack of comments—in the apparatus to *Biblia hebraica* make this clear, which in turn have influenced the direction in which Jeremiah scholarship has moved. In the apparatus some *LXX* omissions are misleadingly reported, and many more are not reported at all. Of the omissions that are reported, in most cases no comment is made. When there is a comment, it is usually a recommendation to delete. Only in a relatively few cases is a *LXX* omission attributed to haplography.

In another article⁴³ I have given a complete listing of what *Biblica hebraica* says or does not say about the 330 arguable *LXX* haplographies in my list. Here, I provide simply a summary:

1. The editor of *BHS* cites without comment 152 of my 330 examples. The apparatus simply says > \emptyset .
2. Of the 330 examples, in 53 cases the *BHS* editor either recommends deletion, questions deletion, says or implies that *MT* is expanded, or avers that the shorter *LXX* reading is correct. The longer *MT* reading is said to result from a dittography or a doublet, or more often to be an expansion taking in words from other biblical texts.
3. In 11 of the 330 examples, the *BHS* editor notes the omission but reckons it differently.
4. In 7 cases, the *BHS* editor suggests or concludes that *MT* suffers from corruption, and advises either emendation or relocation.
5. In 13 of the 330 examples, the editor of *BHS* says the *LXX* omission is attributable to haplography, homoeoarcton, or homoeoteleuton.
6. In 16 cases, the *BHS* editor fails to note a *LXX* omission, but does give a partial or different *LXX* reading.
7. There are 9 cases where the *BHS* editor does not note a *LXX* omission, but nevertheless takes *MT* to be expanded, questions whether it is expanded, or implies expansion in recommending comparison with one or more other texts.
8. There are 69 cases where the *BHS* editor makes no mention at all of a *LXX* omission.

43. Lundbom, ‘Haplography in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of *LXX* Jeremiah’.

This tally is important in two respects. First, it shows that the Jeremiah apparatus in *Biblia hebraica* fails to mention a number of LXX omissions. There are other examples besides the 69 listed here, which are only cases where I have argued that haplography explains the omission. To get the full picture, one would need to check each LXX reading against each MT reading in the whole of Jeremiah, as the apparatus in *Biblia hebraica* is incomplete and sometimes inaccurate.

Secondly, we see that where the editor(s) of *Biblia hebraica* have interpreted the data, they are clearly of the opinion that MT is an expanded text, and that the shorter LXX text is better and more likely to be original. The fact that *BHS* identifies only 13 haplographies in the book, when I have found 330 arguable cases, shows beyond any doubt that the editor(s) simply were not looking for what was there, or in this case not there, with the result that a controlling *Tendenz* caused them to misinterpret the data.

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