

DIFFERENT BEGINNINGS, DIFFERENT BOOK PROFILES: EXEGETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE HEBREW *VORLAGE* OF LXX-JER 1 AND MT-JER 1

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The differences between MT-Jer 1 and LXX-Jer 1 in terms of content and structure are striking. Since the Greek translation of Jeremiah maintains a very close relationship to its Hebrew source text (typically replacing a morpheme of the source text with a morpheme in the target text),¹ the differences in Jer 1 point to a different Hebrew *Vorlage* in comparison to the (proto-)masoretic text.² On the basis of the Greek

¹ Cf. H.-J. Stipp, *Das masoretische und alexandrinische Sondergut des Jeremiabuches: Textgeschichtlicher Rang, Eigenarten, Triebkräfte* (OBO 136; Fribourg and Göttingen: Universitätsverlag and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 7–58; E. 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* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 8; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976); A. Pietersma, “Of Translation and Revision: From Greek Isaiah to Greek Jeremiah,” in *Isaiah in Context: FS Arie van der Kooij* (eds. M. N. van der Meer et al.; VTSup 138; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 361–87.

² Differently especially Georg Fischer and Andreas Vonach, cf. A. Vonach, “Jeremias,” in *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament: Bd. II: Psalmen bis Daniel* (eds. M. Karrer and W. Kraus; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011), 2696–814, and A. Vonach and G. Fischer, “Jeremias: Das Buch Jeremia,” in *Septuaginta Deutsch: Das griechische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung* (eds. M. Karrer and W. Kraus; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2009), 1288–342. Fischer and Vonach maintain that the Hebrew *Vorlage* was all in all identical to the proto-masoretic text and they see the Greek translator-scribe responsible for most differences between the editions. However, the Qumran manuscripts 4QJer^b and 4QJer^d prove compared to MT-Jer the existence of a short and differently ordered Hebrew version of Jeremiah. See on 4QJer^b and 4QJer^d e.g. E. Tov, “The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in Light of Its Textual History,” in *idem, The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (VTSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 363–84; A. Lange, *Handbuch der Textfunde vom Toten Meer: Band 1: Die Handschriften biblischer Bücher von Qumran und den anderen Fundorten* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 297–324, and R. Saley, “Reconstructing 4QJer^b According to the Text of the Old Greek,” in *DSD* 17 (2010): 1–12. Cf. also the critical remarks of H. Engel, “Erfahrungen mit der Septuaginta-Fassung des Jeremiabuches im Rahmen des Projektes ‘Septuaginta Deutsch’,” in *Im Brennpunkt: die Septuaginta: Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung*

text, the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX-Jer 1 can be re-translated reasonably accurately.³

Within the constraints of this study it is not possible to analyse all variants in Jer 1 in detail. I will only focus on three texts, where the differences between the editions are most significant: first, on 1:1–3, the introduction to the book; second, on 1:4–7, the beginning of Jeremiah's call; third, on 1:18, a verse within the call narrative.

Since the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX-Jer should be considered in comparison to MT-Jer all in all as older,⁴ I begin in the first part of this paper with the analysis of the texts of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX-Jer 1, in the second part with those of MT-Jer 1. The thesis is that the differences in the first chapter reveal a rather different profile of both book editions: whereas in the non-masoretic edition all emphasis is on *YHWH's* message, the emphasis of the masoretic edition is on *Jeremiah* and his words. Especially the stylization of Jeremiah as representative of the "true Jerusalem" in MT-Jer 1:18 points to an interest of the proto-masoretic redactors to reshape the book in order to argue against the religious and political realities of their own time.

1. EXEGETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE HEBREW *VORLAGE* OF LXX-JER 1

1.1. The Introduction to the Book (1:1–3): YHWH's Word to Jeremiah

At first I want to present the reconstructed Hebrew *Vorlage* of the book introduction in the Hebrew text and an English translation:⁵

der Griechischen Bibel: Bd. 3 (eds. H.-J. Fabry and D. Böhler; BWANT 174; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007), 80–96, and H.-J. Stipp, "Die Jeremia-Septuaginta als theologische Programmschrift: Zur Kommentierung des griechischen Jeremiabuches in der 'Septuaginta Deutsch'," *BZ* 57 (2013): 27–45.

³ Cf. S. Talmon and E. Tov, "A Commentary on the Text of Jeremiah: I. The LXX of Jer. 1:1–7," *Textus* 9 (1981): 1–15; and particularly H.-J. Stipp, *Textkritische Synopse zum Jeremiabuch* (www.kaththeol.uni-muenchen.de/lehrstuehle/at-theol/personen/stipp/textkritische-synopse; accessed July 2015).

⁴ Cf. H.-J. Stipp, "Zur aktuellen Diskussion um das Verhältnis der Textformen des Jeremiabuches," in *Die Septuaginta – Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten* (eds. M. Karrer and W. Kraus; WUNT 219; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 630–53 (631 "globale Priorität"); K. Finsterbusch and N. Jacoby, "Völkergericht und Fremdvölkersprüche: Kommunikationsebenen in (der hebr. Vorlage von) LXX-Jer 25–32; MT-Jer 46–51 und MT-Jer 25," *JAJ* 6 (2015): 36–57.

⁵ In this study the critical edition provided by J. Ziegler, *Ieremias, Baruch, Threni, Epistula Ieremiae* (Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013) is

1 (This is) the word of YHWH, which came to Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests, who (i.e. Jeremiah) lived in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,	דבר יהוה אשר היה אל ירמיהו בן חלקיהו מן הכהנים אשר ישב בענתות בארץ בנימן
2 to whom came the word of YHWH/ which came as word of YHWH to him in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah in the thirteenth year of his reign.	אשר היה דבר יהוה אליו בימי יאשיהו בן אמון מלך יהודה בשנת שלש עשרה למלכו
3 And it came in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah until the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah until the taking of Jerusalem into exile in the fifth month.	יהי בימי יהויקים בן יאשיהו מלך יהודה עד עשתי עשרה שנה לצדקיהו בן יאשיהו מלך יהודה עד גלות ירושלם בחדש החמישי

The first words of the introduction **דבר יהוה אשר היה אל**⁶ correspond with what is found in several other prophetic books as well (Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zeph 1:1).⁷ The formula characterises the content of the book: it contains YHWH's **דבר**, i.e. YHWH's message delivered by Jeremiah. In the rest of v. 1, some more details about the prophet and his family connections are given.

In terms of syntax, the first sentence in 1:2 **אשר היה דבר יהוה אליו** is ambiguous: the **אשר** can refer back to the antecedent **ירמיהו** or to the antecedent **דבר יהוה** in 1:1. In the second case, the meaning of the Hebrew text would be tautological ("the word of YHWH ..., which came as word of YHWH to him"). As N. Jacoby has demonstrated in his study on the Greek text of Jer 1,⁸ the Greek translator, who did indeed refer the **אשר** to **דבר יהוה**, avoided the tautology on the level of the Greek language only by his brilliant idea to render the first **דבר יהוה** as $\rho\eta\mu\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ and the second one as $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$. However, in light of the tautology on the level of the Hebrew language, the first solution, i.e. the intentional

used. With regard to the analysed verses there are no significant differences between the reconstructed text by Ziegler and the text of Codex B. For text and translation of Codex B see G. A. Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus* (Septuagint Commentary Series; Leiden: Brill, 2012).

⁶ Reconstructed with regard to the type of superscription found e.g. in Hosea 1:1 (see below), cf. Talmon and Tov, "Commentary," 3. Pace Talmon and Tov, who believed that the Geek $\epsilon\pi\iota\ \text{I}\epsilon\text{r}\epsilon\mu\iota\alpha\upsilon$ in 1:1 reflects **על ירמיהו** and $\pi\rho\sigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu$ 1:2 reflects **אליו**. Since in 1:1 and 1:2 the Greek translator deliberately varied nouns (as $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ and $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$), prepositions and verbal forms, there is no need to assume such a variation in the Hebrew *Vorlage*; see especially the article of N. Jacoby in this volume.

⁷ Cf. as well the similar formulas in Ezek 1:3 and Zech 1:1.

⁸ See his article in this volume.

reference of the אָשַׁר to the antecedent Jeremiah (“to whom came the word of YHWH”), is far more likely. The deliberate repetition in v. 2 that the word of God came to him underlines the aspect of YHWH’s absolute control over the prophet.

Whereas v. 1 is a kind of general superscription, vv. 2–3 prepare the readership concerning the narrated time in the world of the book. Many commentators assign the date of v. 2b “the thirteenth year of Josiah” with YHWH’s call of Jeremiah, and the date of v. 3b “until the taking of Jerusalem into exile”⁹ with the end of Jeremiah’s mission.¹⁰ The first assignment is in light of 25:3 convincing. The problem with the second one, however, is that Jeremiah’s prophetic activity still continued after the conquest of Jerusalem (cf. LXX-Jer 47–51).¹¹ Therefore, the purpose of both dates cannot be to inform about the beginning and end of Jeremiah’s mission. I believe they should mark the textual span of the entire book, pointing to its beginning and to its end: the first text after the book introduction is YHWH’s call of Jeremiah (1:4–19), the last text in the book is the report about the destruction and exile of Jerusalem (Jer 52).

1.2. The Beginning of Jeremiah’s Call (1:4–7) and the Identity of the Book Narrator

The beginning of the narrative of Jeremiah’s call is in terms of rhetoric quite interesting. Below, the first few sentences of the narrative according to the supposed Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX-Jer are presented:

- 4 And the word of YHWH came to him:
- 5 “‘Before I formed you in the belly I knew you
and before you came forth from the womb I had consecrated you;
a prophet to the nations I had made you.’
- 6 And I said: ‘Ah, Sovereign, YHWH!
Behold, I do not know how to speak
because I (am) (too) young.’

⁹ It is likely that the Greek translator read גִּלְיָה in his *Vorlage* as noun (MT: verbal form), cf. Talmon and Tov, “Commentary,” 10–11.

¹⁰ E.g. W. McKane, *Jeremiah: Volume 1: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah 1–XXV* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 1; Walser, *Jeremiah*, 195.

¹¹ Some commentators conclude that vv. 2–3 may originally have introduced only chapters 1–39, cf. e.g. J. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Yale Bible; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 221. This, however, is rather speculative. In any case, the decisive question is what purpose both verses do have as superscription of the existing *entire* book edition.

7 And YHWH said to me:

'Do not say: <I (am) (too) young!>, because you shall go to all to whom I send you and you shall speak according to all I command you ...

1:4 is expressed in the same idiom as that which appeared in 1:1a and 1:2a: the word of YHWH came to Jeremiah (Hebrew *Vorlage*: יהי דבר יהוה אלי). It is in full accordance with the introduction to the book and the emphasis on *YHWH's* word, when the first words, which are quoted within the world of the book, are the ones of YHWH.

However, the question who quotes whom here, requires some reflection. At first sight, it is the narrator who transfers the "word of YHWH" in his introduction v. 4 into the "I" of YHWH in v. 5, who himself addresses the prophet as "you." This "you" changes in v. 6 into the "I" of Jeremiah in his answer to YHWH. Since it is Jeremiah in the world of the book, who narrates the story of this own call, quoting several times YHWH as well as his own words,¹² it is undoubtedly the prophet (and not the book narrator), who quotes YHWH in v. 5. In other words: the book narrator immediately transfers the "him" in his introduction v. 4 into the voice of Jeremiah,¹³ passing on the word to Jeremiah in the world of the book. This complex shift of voices at the very beginning of the book indicates a rather close involvement and familiarity of the narrator with Jeremiah and his life circumstances. Who is this book narrator? As the first texts in a book usually have special meaning, thus do the last ones. The very last text in the non-masoretic book edition before the final report about the destruction and exile of Jerusalem (Jer 52) is a word of Jeremiah to Baruch. I quote the translation of the supposed Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX-Jer 51:31–35 (according to the MT-Jer: 45:1–5):

¹² Jeremiah narrates that God's word came to him twice: in v. 11 and then in v. 13 שנית "a second time." This counting is consistent in contrast to the masoretic version, according to which Jeremiah in the world of the book narrates already in v. 4 that God's word came to him (see below), and cf. the observation of A. Scharf, "Die Jeremiavisionen als Fortführung der Amosvisionen," in *Schriftprophetie: FS J. Jeremias* (eds. F. Hartenstein et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2004), 185–202 (187): "Geht man vom Sichersten aus, so ist deutlich, dass sich die Berichte in Jer 1,11–19 relativ leicht aus ihrem jetzigen Kontext lösen lassen. Die Zählung 'zum zweiten Mal' in V. 13, die beide Berichte als ein selbstgenügsames Paar erscheinen lässt, steht in deutlicher Spannung zur sehr bewusst gestalteten Struktur des Kapitels Jer 1 insgesamt. Innerhalb von Jer 1 ergeht in V. 13 nämlich bereits zum dritten Mal das Gotteswort an Jeremia" (emphasis added).

¹³ In 2:1, the voice of the narrator is heard again, briefly introducing the first words which Jeremiah spoke in his new role as prophet ("And he spoke"). Without interruption the narrator quotes Jeremiah within the world of the non-masoretic book till the end of chapter 10.

- 31 The word which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah,
when he wrote these words on a scroll from the mouth of Jeremiah
in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah:
- 32 “Thus said YHWH with reference to you, o Baruch:
- 33 ‘You (i.e. Baruch) said:
<Woe is me! Woe is me! For YHWH has added sorrow to my pain.
I slept in groaning, I found no rest!>’
- 34 ‘Say (Jeremiah)¹⁴ to him (i.e. Baruch):
<Thus said YHWH:
'Behold, I bring down whom I have built up
and I pluck up whom I planted.
- 35 And you will seek great things for yourself!
Do not seek them because, behold,
I am bringing evil upon all flesh – said YHWH,
but I will give your soul as a windfall in every place
there where you may go.>’”

According to 51:31, Baruch wrote down “these words” directly from the mouth of the prophet. “These words” (Hebrew *Vorlage*: הדברים האלה) clearly refer back and should be interpreted as all words of Jeremiah and all words of God coming to Jeremiah respectively, spoken before and in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, i.e. 605 B.C.E. There is no need to limit Baruch’s role as intimate secretary of the prophet to the reported act in the year 605 B.C.E. Rather, this episode, containing the very last reference to Jeremiah in the non-masoretic book edition, has undoubtedly exemplary character: the readership can in light of this last episode finally identify Baruch with the narrator and the author of the whole book (of course not in historical terms), faithfully reporting God’s message to Jeremiah and faithfully narrating the words, acts and deeds of the prophet.¹⁵

I want to add two further considerations with regard to the section LXX-Jer 51:31–35. First, in his role as secretary narrator and author of this authoritative book, Baruch has no own personal voice in the texts. However, there is a remarkable exception in 51:33: Baruch’s voice is heard for once within YHWH’s special prophecy for him. For the readership

¹⁴ The Greek Verb should be read as εἰπόν (with Codex Vaticanus, cf. Walser, *Jeremiah*, 469–70, and NETS) and not as εἶπον (“I, i.e. Jeremiah, said to him, i.e. Baruch”), pace Ziegler, “Jeremias.” It would be most surprising if Jeremiah suddenly addressed the readership, interrupting his own speech to Baruch.

¹⁵ Cf. P.-M. Bogaert, “De Baruch à Jérémie: Les deux rédactions conservées du livre Jérémie,” in *idem, Le livre de Jérémie: Le prophète et son milieu, les oracles et leur transmission* (BETHL 54; 2d ed.; Leuven: University Press, 1997), 168–73 (169): “La mention de Baruch à fin du livre est une signature, non celle d’un auteur, mais celle d’un garant ou d’un notaire.”

most revealing is, *how* Baruch's voice is heard: it is extremely "packed" within a quotation of YHWH which itself is quoted by Jeremiah. In terms of rhetoric, everything is done to keep Baruch's voice discretely in the background.

Second, 51:31–35 provides the readership indirectly with the important background information, as to why Baruch could at all act as narrator and author of some Jeremianic texts, which clearly reflect events in the years after 586 B.C.E.: Baruch survived the catastrophe due to YHWH's promise to him.

1.3. Jeremiah as a Fortified City and a Bronze Wall (1:18)

LXX-Jer 1:18 reflects a Hebrew *Vorlage* which may be translated as follows:¹⁶

- 18aα Behold, I have made you this day a fortified city
- 18aβ and a bronze fortified wall
- 18bα to all kings of Judah and its (i.e. Judah's) officials
- 18bβ and the people of the land.

YHWH made Jeremiah like an isolated city under siege. However, this city (in contrast to Jerusalem, cf. 1:15) is so strong, particularly expressed by the figure of the bronze wall (18aβ),¹⁷ that it cannot be captured. The accent of this version of 1:18 is clearly on the divine protection for the prophet.

2. EXEGETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MT-JER 1

I turn now to the masoretic version of the selected verses in the first chapter and will especially focus on the main differences to the non-masoretic version.

¹⁶ The Hebrew *Vorlage* contains in comparison to MT-Jer 1:18 some insignificant additions (18aβ: "fortified"; 18bα: "all", "and"), which reflect the ongoing scribal activity on the non-masoretic text in the Second Temple period. However, the activity concerning the non-masoretic text was rather limited in contrast to the scribal/redactional activity concerning the proto-masoretic text, cf. Stipp, *Sondergut*, 59–65.

¹⁷ In some Egyptian texts, the Pharaoh is named as "wall of ore" or "iron wall." These titles refer to his function as protector of the land and powerful ruler, cf. S. Herrmann, "Die Herkunft der 'ehernen Mauer': Eine Miscelle zu Jer 1,18 und 15,20," in *Altes Testament und christliche Verkündigung: FS H. J. Gunneweg* (eds. M. Oeming and A. Graupner; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987), 344–52. However, in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX-Jer 1:18 (and of 15:20), "the metaphor is used in reverse: Jeremiah as bronze wall is not installed to protect the people or sustain the world order," Ch. M. Maier, "Jeremiah as YHWH's Stronghold (Jer 1:18)," *VT* 64 (2014): 640–53 (645).

2.1. The Introduction to the Book (1:1–3): Jeremiah's Words

The introduction Jer 1:1–3 in the masoretic book edition may be translated as follows:

- (These are) the words of Jeremiah
 the son of Hilkiah, of the priests,
 who (i.e. Jeremiah/Hilkiah/the priests¹⁸) (lived)
 in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,
 2 to whom (i.e. Jeremiah) came the word of YHWH
 in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah
 in the thirteenth year of his reign.
 3 And it came in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah
 until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah
 king of Judah
 until the taking of Jerusalem into exile in the fifth month.

In contrast to the non-masoretic version v. 1 begins with דברי ירמיהו. Thus, the focus is not on YHWH's message to Jeremiah, but on *Jeremiah* and his words. This type of superscription is rare; among the prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible it corresponds only to Amos 1:1.¹⁹ However, some more prophetic books provide in their superscription the name of the prophet without mentioning YHWH (cf. Isa 1:1; Obad 1:1; Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1).

The אשר in v. 2 most naturally refers back to the antecedent Jeremiah in v. 1.²⁰ The information of the אשר clause that YHWH's word came to Jeremiah is given in contrast to the non-masoretic version in v. 2 for the first time.

¹⁸ The Targum refers the אשר to Jeremiah, the Vulgate to the priests, cf. Talmon and Tov, "Commentary," 7. The ambiguity in the masoretic text means supposedly that the difference is not important: the reported details are true for Jeremiah as well as for his priestly family.

¹⁹ Cf. in addition Eccl 1:1.

²⁰ W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah: Chapters 1–25* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 14, claims that the אשר clause in 1:2a is closely analogous to the independent headings of 14:1; 46:1; 47:1 and 49:34 and assumes that 1:1 and 1:2a "were alternative superscriptions, and that what we have before us is a conflate text, which v. 2 secondarily altered to read 'to him' instead of 'to Jeremiah'." Holladay overlooks the main difference between 1:2a and the four other mentioned אשר clauses with respect to the function. The four headings (all proto-masoretic additions) have the specific function to introduce direct quotations, and that clearly wasn't the function of 1:2a, cf. to the four אשר clauses K. Finsterbusch and N. Jacoby, "אשר –Zitateinleitungssätze in Jeremia und in 1QM. Anmerkungen zu 1QM 10:6, zu der hebräischen Vorlage von LXX-Jer 26:13; 49:19 sowie zu MT-Jer 14:1; 46:1; 47:1; 49:34," *VT* 65 (2015): 558–566.

Especially noteworthy is that the superscription in 1:1a has a balancing subscription in 51:64b. This subscription is a proto-masoretic addition located directly before the beginning of the final chapter Jer 52 with the report about the destruction and exile of Jerusalem:

1:1a (These are) the words of Jeremiah	דברי ירמיהו
51:64b Thus far (are) the words of Jeremiah	עד הנה דברי ירמיהו

Both sentences form an *inclusio* and mark the text in between as “words of Jeremiah.” With respect to the content of the book text, דברי ירמיהו must be interpreted not only as the “words” *spoken by* Jeremiah, but also as words *about* the prophet, namely the many narratives about his deeds and acts.²¹ Therefore, the *inclusio* points to the special character of the proto-masoretic book edition: all emphasis is focused on the *prophet Jeremiah*.

2.2. The Beginning of Jeremiah’s Call (1:4–7) and the Identity of the Book Narrator

The call narrative begins in 1:4. I quote the first few sentences of the narrative:

- 4 “And the word of YHWH came to me, saying:
- 5 ‘Before I formed you in the belly I knew you
and before you came forth from the womb I had consecrated you;
a prophet to the nations I had made you.’
- 6 And I said: ‘Ah, Sovereign, YHWH!
Behold, I do not know how to speak
because I (am) (too) young.’
- 7 And YHWH said to me:
‘Do not say: <I (am) (too) young!>,
because you shall go to all to whom I send you
and you shall speak according to all I command you ...

In contrast to the non-masoretic version, the book narrator quotes right from the beginning of the call *Jeremiah* (“and the word of YHWH came to me”).²² In light of the masoretic book introduction, the narrator acts consistently: the masoretic book opens with “the words of Jeremiah” (1:1a),

²¹ Cf. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 222.

²² Most awkward is the opening of Jeremiah’s words in the world of the masoretic book with “and.” This points to the secondary nature of v. 4 according to the masoretic version, whereas the “and” in the supposed Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX-Jer 1:4, spoken by the book narrator, makes excellent sense.

and the first words which the narrator quotes in the world of the book are the genuine words of the prophet.²³

Who is the narrator in the masoretic book edition? As in the case of the non-masoretic edition, a look at the last episode before the final chapter Jer 52 is helpful for answering this question. I quote 51:59–64:

- 59 The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah²⁴
the son of Neriah son of Mahseiah,
when he (i.e. Seraiah) went with Zedekiah king of Judah to Babylon
in the fourth year of his reign.
And Seraiah (was) the quartermaster.
- 60 And Jeremiah wrote in a single scroll all the disaster,
which should come on Babylon,
all these (i.e. the preceding) words, which were written concerning
Babylon.
- 61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah:
“When you come to Babylon, see that you read all these words
and say:
- 62 And say:
‘YHWH, you have spoken against this place to cut it off
so that none shall dwell in it,
neither man nor beast,
because she (i.e. Babylon) shall be a desolation forever.’
- 63 And it shall be, when you finish reading this scroll,
tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates.
- 64 And say:
‘Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more,
because of the disaster which I am bringing on her (i.e. Babylon).
And they shall become exhausted.’”
Thus far (are) the words of Jeremiah.

In the masoretic book edition, the prophet himself is the last person, who writes: 51:60 contains the notice that Jeremiah wrote in a separate scroll

²³ Jeremiah in the world of the book narrates first his call (1:4–19) and then he continues narrating his first words as prophet of YHWH till the end of chapter 6 (the voice of the book narrator in the masoretic book edition is heard again in 7:1).

²⁴ This sentence differs significantly in the two book editions. According to MT-Jer 51:59, *Jeremiah* commanded Seraiah, whereas according to the supposed Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX-Jer 28:59 it is *YHWH*, who commanded Jeremiah to command Seraiah. These differences are in full accordance with the emphases at the beginning of the two book editions, cf. H.-J. Stipp, “Gottesbildfragen in den Lesartdifferenzen zwischen dem Masoretischen und dem Alexandrinischen Text des Jeremiabuches,” in *Text-Critical and Hermeneutical Studies in the Septuagint* (eds. J. Cook and H.-J. Stipp; VTSup 157; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 237–74 (268). In light of the proto-masoretic addition 51:64b (see above), which clearly points to the interest of the *proto-masoretic redactors* to present the book as “words of *Jeremiah*,” I believe in contrast to Stipp, however, that MT-Jer 51:59 is secondary (as well as MT-Jer 1:1–2) and not the supposed Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX of these sentences.

“all these words,” which clearly refer back to the oracle against Babylon (50:1–51:58). In light of v. 60 the readership is not only assured about the prophetic “authenticity” of the oracle text. Rather, the entire episode has exemplary character: the readership may learn that behind all texts in the book stands the authority of Jeremiah. The texts which the book narrator reports and quotes are “authentic” texts.

Does this last episode 51:59–64 point to Jeremiah as the author of the entire book (not in historical terms), as has been proposed?²⁵ In my view, this proposal is not convincing. In terms of levels of communication, the voice of the narrator, who reports *about* Jeremiah, and the voice of Jeremiah, who speaks in the world of the book as “I,” are right from the first chapter very clearly distinguished.

In contrast to the non-masoretic book edition, there is no special person whom the readership could identify with the narrator and author of the book. Rather, the masoretic concept is different. I only briefly point to MT-Jer 36. According to this chapter, Jeremiah had to write down the divine oracles in the fourth year of Jehoiakim on behalf of God for public reading in order to cause the Judean people to return. After the first scroll was burnt by the king, Jeremiah dictated the text again to Baruch, who wrote it on a second scroll. The scene concludes with the remarkable sentence (36:32b²⁶):

And many (words) like these were added to them (i.e. the written words).

As already several scholars have pointed out, the act of adding words is significantly not limited to Jeremiah or Baruch; rather, the passive נוסף reflects a consciousness of the ongoing growth of the Jeremiah textual tradition.²⁷ Expressed in another way: with regard to the book narrator, the readership of the (proto-)masoretic book learns that he represents *different* voices such as the voice of Baruch as well as other anonymous

²⁵ Cf. Bogaert, “Baruch,” 169.

²⁶ Once more the difference between the versions is most meaningful. LXX-Jer 43:32b may be translated as follows: “And more words than these were added to it (i.e. the second scroll).” The Greek text reflects the following Hebrew *Vorlage*: ועוד נוסף עליו דברים רבים מהמה (MT: ועוד נוסף עליהם דברים רבים מהמה). The act of adding words in the non-masoretic version is limited to the *second scroll* and therefore limited to Jeremiah or Baruch in the world of the book.

²⁷ E.g. H.-J. Stipp, “Baruchs Erben: Die Schriftprophetie im Spiegel von Jer 36,” in *Wer darf hinaufziehen zum Berg JHWHs? Beiträge zur Prophetie und Poesie des Alten Testaments: FS Ö. Steingrimsson* (eds. H. Irsigler et al.; ATSAT 72; St. Ottilien: EOS, 2002), 145–70 (166–67); E. Otto, “Jeremia und die Tora: Ein nachexilischer Diskurs,” in *idem, Die Tora: Studien zum Pentateuch: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (BZAR 9; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 515–60 (527–28).

voices of scribes. However, this does not affect the belief, expressed by the last episode on the prophet in MT-Jer 51:59–64, that through all texts in the book Jeremiah’s “authentic” voice can be heard.

2.3. Jeremiah as the True Jerusalem (1:18)

In the following translation of MT-Jer 1:18 additions in comparison to the non-masoretic version are set in *italics*, the one difference concerning the number is underlined:

- 18aα *And I, behold, I have made you this day a fortified city*
 18aβ *and an iron pillar and bronze walls*
 18aγ *against the whole land*
 18ba to the kings of Judah, its officials
 18bβ *its priests* and the people of the land.

In MT-Jer 1:18aβ, there are two significant differences in comparison to the (Hebrew *Vorlage* of) LXX-Jer 1:18aβ. The first one is the addition of the figure of the pillar. A pillar is a genuine element of a construction of a large building and in particular a representative element of a cultic place.²⁸ In the context of the second vision, which is directed especially against Jerusalem (cf. 1:15), the pillar refers most likely to the Temple in Jerusalem, as the other six occurrences of עמוד in MT-Jer do (cf. MT-Jer 27:19; 52:17, 20, 21 [2×], 22).²⁹ Besides, the cultic accent, which is completely lacking in the non-masoretic version of the verse, is underlined by the masoretic addition of the priests in 18bβ.

The second difference concerns the noun “wall,” which appears in MT-Jer 1:18aβ in the plural (חומות). This plural is awkward. In connection

²⁸ Cf. O. Keel and Ch. Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole: Neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund bislang unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen* (Quaestiones Disputatae 134; 5th ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 2001), 413. In Egyptian texts, the Pharaoh is called column in order to present him as supporter and builder of the temple, cf. M. Görg, “Die ‘ehernen Säulen’ (I Reg 7,15) und die ‘eiserne Säule’ (Jer 1,18): Ein Beitrag zur Säulenmetaphorik im Alten Testament,” in *Prophezie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel: FS S. Herrmann* (eds. R. Liwak and S. Wager; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991), 134–54. In the Dead Sea Scrolls (especially in the Temple Scroll), עמוד has first and foremost the meaning of a pillar in the Temple area, cf. H.-J. Fabry, “עמוד VII,” in *ThWAT VI* (eds. G. J. Botterweck et al.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1989), 209.

²⁹ Cf. G. Fischer, “‘Ich mache dich ... zur eisernen Säule’ (Jer 1,18): Der Prophet als besserer Ersatz für den untergegangenen Tempel,” in *idem, Der Prophet wie Mose. Studien zum Jeremiabuch* (BZAR 15; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 269–72; P. Riede, *Ich mache dich zur festen Stadt: Zum Prophetenbild von Jeremia 1,18f und 15,20* (Würzburg: Echter, 2009), 71–72; Maier, “Jeremiah,” 652.

with the singular עמוד, the singular חומה would have been much smoother: Jeremiah is made as *a* pillar and as *a* wall. It is possible that with the help of the plural חומות a protomasoretic scribe³⁰ wanted to make the reference back to v. 15, i.e. the reference to Jerusalem, even more explicit: the foreign kings will sit at the entrance of Jerusalem על כל חומותיה “against all its walls.” However, in connection with the pillar and with regard to the context the reference to Jerusalem is obvious for the readership anyway.

It is this reference to Jerusalem, which gives MT-Jer 1:18 its specific profile: Jeremiah is not only compared to any fortified city like in LXX-Jer 1:18 and its Hebrew *Vorlage* respectively. Rather, God made Jeremiah the “true” Jerusalem.³¹ Jeremiah is the representative of God’s true will in terms of cult and politics! There is no other truth in the “whole land,” i.e. among its official political and cultic representatives and among the people, as 18aγ, 18bα and 18bβ clearly point out. Furthermore, in contrast to the material Jerusalem with its main political and cultic institutions, Jeremiah, representing the true Jerusalem, will be protected by YHWH and will not be destroyed (the last point is symbolized by the materials iron and bronze³²). The proto-masoretic redactors did refer in all likelihood not only to the person of the prophet (who in fact finally died), but also to the *book* including Jeremiah’s words: this authoritative religious text is indeed indestructible.

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

I briefly want to conclude the findings in two points. First, proto-masoretic redactors made some significant changes within the first chapter, which express their fundamentally different understanding of the whole book. Not only their reshaping of the introduction demonstrates a new profile of the book as “words of Jeremiah.” But also the restructuring of the rhetoric at the beginning of Jeremiah’s call point to a redefinition of the basic book concept with regard to narrator and author, placing Baruch aside.³³

³⁰ It is noteworthy, that Peshitta, Targum and Vulgata, which usually support MT against LXX, display the singular.

³¹ Cf. Riede, *Prophetenbild*, 83; Maier, “Jeremiah,” 653.

³² The choice of the materials by the authors is meaningful: the pillars of the Temple are made of bronze and will be destroyed (cf. MT/LXX-Jer 52:17), whereas Jeremiah is made as an iron pillar; city walls are normally made of stone and may be destroyed, whereas Jeremiah is made as bronze walls, cf. Fischer, “Säule,” 271.

³³ See as well the revealing difference between MT-Jer 36:32a: “And Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch son of Neriah the scribe, and he wrote on it ...,”

In light of those changes it is in my view justified to speak of two different book editions with regard to MT-Jer and the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX-Jer.

Second, the changes are so far-reaching that they must have been made by careful and thoughtful design. This leads to the question of the reasons and rationales of the proto-masoretic redactors. To answer this question comprehensively is of course far beyond the constraints of this study. However, the changes of the proto-masoretic redactors in Jer 1:18 are especially revealing and may give an idea: the proto-masoretic redactors made Jeremiah YHWH's representative of the "true Jerusalem," fighting the cultic and political establishment of Jeremiah's time in Judah ("the whole land"). Consequently, the book which the proto-masoretic redactors understood as words of and about Jeremiah (1:1) represents the "right" divine will for Israel. Thus, it is most likely that the proto-masoretic redactors reshaped the book not least in order to use it as a *critical text* against the cultic and political establishment in Judah of their own time.³⁴

and LXX-Jer 43:32a: "And *Baruch* took another scroll and wrote on it ...," and cf. Bogaert, "Baruch," 171.

³⁴ A. Lange, "The Covenant with the Levites (Jer 33:21) in the Proto-Masoretic Text of Jeremiah in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *'Go out and Study the Land' (Judges 18:2): Archaeological, Historical and Textual Studies in Honor of Hanan Eshel* (eds. A. M. Maeir et al.; JSJSup 148; Brill: Leiden, 2012), 95–116 (114–16), observes such a critical tendency with respect to the substantial proto-masoretic addition MT-Jer 33:14–26.