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**Composing the Book of Jeremiah
Relocating the Oracles against the Nations in the Masoretic Text**

an Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in
Philosophy and Religious Studies

by Brenna Salverson

under the mentorship of Drs. Daniel Pioske and Jason Slone

Abstract

The thesis conducts a textual critical analysis of the Book of Jeremiah's placement of the oracles against the nations in the Masoretic Text and Septuagint. The following questions will be explored: 1) are the oracles against the nations a late addition to Jeremiah? 2) does the Masoretic Text relocate the oracles against the nations? and 3) do keywords and phrases that occur in the oracles against the nations appear in the content preceding and following the oracles in the Masoretic Text and Septuagint? Implications of the questions include the radical scribal decision to rearrange the Book of Jeremiah and the problem of arranging an anthology in a primarily oral society.

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Acronyms

DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls

LXX: Septuagint; Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible

LXX-Jer: the Septuagint's version of the Book of Jeremiah

NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint

MT: Masoretic Text; Hebrew version of the Hebrew Bible

MT-Jer: the Masoretic Text's version of the Book of Jeremiah

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version of the Bible

OAN: oracles against the nations

Introduction

Writing, as a technology, was invented in the fourth millennium BCE. Sumerian is the world's first recorded language and hails from Mesopotamia, not far from ancient Israel, the region of this thesis's concern.¹ Those in Israel and previous populations of Canaan must have been at least aware of writing early on, although production of texts became prevalent from the ninth century BCE and onward.² Most ancient Israel writing served a governmental purpose,³ and writing was not for the transmission of culture.⁴ Indeed, the earliest religious text in the epigraphic record dates to the late ninth or early eighth century BCE in Israel.⁵ From this place and time where writing as we know it today was alien, the Hebrew Bible emerged.

To better understand the development of biblical writings, we must consider this collection of texts within their own context. In the ancient Near East, there were neither authors nor books but rather scribes and streams of tradition.⁶ "Scribe" is not strictly synonymous with "author."⁷ Biblical scribes were "transmitter[s] of tradition" and

1. Christopher A. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 11.

2. Joachim Schaper, "Hebrew Culture at the 'Interface between the Written and the Oral,'" in Schmidt, *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writings*, 326.

3. Rollston, "Scribal Curriculum during the First Temple Period: Epigraphic Hebrew and Biblical Evidence," in Schmidt, *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writings*, 79.

4. William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 61.

5. Schaper, 14.

6. Karel Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 4.

7. The closest word in Classical Hebrew to "author" is "sofer," or scribe. Schniedewind, 7.

unconcerned with claiming a text as their own.⁸ The texts they worked with were not books, at least in the technological sense. They were not engaging with codices, or pages bound between covers; they were writing on material from ostraca to clay tablets to papyrus or leather scrolls.⁹ Lastly, scribes did not write one Hebrew Bible. There was and is not an original, final Hebrew Bible from which all other Bibles were copied.

Multiple Versions of the Hebrew Bible

We have four physical collections of the Hebrew Bible: the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), Masoretic Text (MT), Samaritan Pentateuch (SP), and Septuagint (LXX). They do not all agree textually and diverge at several points. Some smaller variants include graphic, oral/aural, and memory. Graphic variants are skipped lines and other imperfect copying. Oral/aural are from mishearing an oral performance and substituting similar sounding words. Memory variants come from memorizing a tradition and result in substituting in a synonym, rearranging lines without changing meaning, and misquoting.¹⁰ These multiple versions of the Hebrew Bible are not limited to smaller textual variants. Other variations are expansion, conflation/combination, harmonization, and intra- and extra-textual coordination.¹¹ Expansions add phrases and lines. Conflation and combination merge texts. Harmonization makes texts agree and strives to remove

8. Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 7–9.

9. Schniedewind, 61; Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 177.

10. David Carr, “Orality, Textuality, and Memory: The State of Biblical Studies,” in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writings: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production*, ed. Brian B. Schmidt (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015), 167.

11. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 145.

discrepancies between texts. Textual coordination harmonizes the text at hand with an outside text.

To reduce these differences to variants, however, does a disservice. The variants point to the presence of multiple texts that were aware of each other. DSS particularly attest to the presence of multiple texts that date back into antiquity. Five renditions of the Book of Jeremiah, not including non-canonical manuscripts, were found in cave four at Qumran. In antiquity, none of them took precedence over the other; rather, they shared equal authority that lay more in the texts' general message rather than in the precise order of words.¹²

Text multiplicity partially results from a culture that was not imbued with written texts. Ancient Israel was primarily an oral culture.¹³ This oral context promoted carrying tradition in one's memory, both personal and communal.¹⁴ Engagement with written texts bears the marks of this orality. The Hebrew language did not have a word for "to read" but rather *qara*' or "to call out, proclaim."¹⁵ That is, texts were read out loud¹⁶ or verbally recited from memory.¹⁷ Text composition and production, too, had oral qualities.

Language with more oral tendencies is less intricate and contains fewer subordinate

12. Sidnie White Crawford, "The Fluid Bible," *Bible Review* 15, no. 3 (1999), <https://www.baslibrary.org/bible-review/15/3/15>, 2; Eugene Ulrich, "The Evolutionary Composition of the Hebrew Bible," in Kloppenborg and Newman, *Editing the Bible*, 24.

13. Daniel D. Pioske, *Memory in a Time of Prose: Studies in Epistemology, Hebrew Scribalism, and the Biblical Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, in press, 2018), 16; Schaper, "Hebrew Culture," 332; Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 11.

14. Carr, "Orality, Textuality, and Memory," 164.

15. Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 48.

16. Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 12.

17. Robert D. Miller, II, "The Performance of Oral Tradition," in Schmidt, *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writing*, 182.

clauses and long noun groups.¹⁸ In certain biblical texts, usually poetry, those oral qualities are present. Furthermore, the presence of multiple versions and doublets, or the same story told twice, parallel performing the same story to separate audiences as an oral performer would do. While the oral influence was no doubt prevalent and subconsciously so, not all texts were purely oral in origin.¹⁹ Indeed, the earliest manuscripts that we do have are the results of a long process of scribal transmission.²⁰

Text Production and Scribalism

Scribes were the ones balancing these two modes that often overlapped. While scribes were trained to write and to write well, they were immersed in the streams of tradition such that they were intellectuals, sages, and scholars.²¹ They sought to preserve communal tradition and wrote as such.²² Part of their writing included following standard conventions, writing in a certain script, adhering to a particular orthography, and so on.²³ Scribes were also responsible for updating and preserving texts. Writing materials did not preserve well in the Palestinian climate, and the simple action of unwinding caused a scroll to deteriorate.²⁴ More content would need to be added to the text in the form of expansions or additions. As such, a scroll would need to be rewritten and replaced every

18. Frank H. Polak, “Language Variation in the Book of Jeremiah and its Cultural and Social Background,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jeremiah*, in progress, eds. Louis Stulman and Edward Silver (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190693060.013.19>), 20.

19. Stuart Weeks, “Literacy, Orality, and Literature in Israel,” in *On Stone and Scroll: Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies*, eds. James K. Aitken, Katherine J. Dell, and Brian A. Mastin (Göttingen: De Gruyter, 2011), 472.

20. Carr, “Orality, Textuality, and Memory,” 171.

21. Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 57–59.

22. Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 6.

23. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy*, 113.

24. Van Der Toorn, 75, 23.

two or three generations.²⁵ The other option, which decreased cost of text production, was to sew on additional material at the end of the scroll.²⁶ Scribes did not simply write and preserve; they were actively engaged in the formation and transformation of the Hebrew Bible.²⁷ They were the ones introducing variants, both intentionally and unintentionally.

Once a text is recorded in writing, it begins to fossilize, unlike its fluid oral cousin. A written text does not change per its context²⁸ nor does it personalize its language.²⁹ Written texts become a standardization of transmission³⁰ and serve an archival function to remember a given tradition.³¹ Over time and with the recognition of text as written, a text loses the flexibility, suppleness, and dynamism of orality; it does not quite encapsulate what once existed in performance and voice alone. A text tells one version, and variations between it and other versions become recognizable.³²

The differences between the texts we have today allow us to see how these religiously authoritative texts developed and allow us to shed light on how scribes understood the development, production, and preservation of traditions in written text. Textual differences are particularly notable in the Book of Jeremiah.

25. Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 149.

26. Gerald J. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 115.

27. Van Der Toorn, 110.

28. Weeks, "Literacy, Orality, and Literature," 478.

29. Carr, "Textuality, Orality and the Shaping of the Ancient Mind," in *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10.

30. Carr, 170.

31. Van Der Toorn, 15.

32. Carr, 7; Weeks, 478.

Variations in the Book of Jeremiah

The Book of Jeremiah is a collection of oracles, confessions, and narratives attributed to the prophet Jeremiah that spans fifty-two chapters. Much of the content is centered around the Babylonian siege against Jerusalem, the city's destruction in 586 BCE, and the resulting Judahite exile. Some of the Jeremiah material is devoted to oracles against the nations (OAN), a common genre within biblical prophetic literature. These oracles prophesy that nations other than Judah and Israel will be destroyed. Like most biblical texts, the composers and editors of this text are unknown; writers in antiquity did not generally sign their names. Indeed, texts—especially given the oral tradition—tended to be thought of as communal tradition.³³ Within Jeremiah, Baruch, a scribe in Jerusalem, is credited with writing down some of Jeremiah's oracles (Jer. 36 NRSV). While this could be true, prophetic traditions tended to be preserved by a given prophet's followers and then, later on, written by a scribe.

Regardless of who did the remembering and writing of the Jeremiah tradition, the Book of Jeremiah is physically preserved in three traditions: LXX, MT, and DSS. LXX is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, and MT is the Hebrew version. DSS preserves multiple copies of Jeremiah, many of which are severely fragmented. The Jeremiah scrolls at Qumran include versions that are proto-LXX and proto- and semi-MT, which were discovered in the same cave.³⁴ The scrolls at Qumran show that the LXX and MT versions of Jeremiah (LXX-Jer and MT-Jer, respectively) are likely descended from

33. Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 6.

34. Armin Lange, "Texts of Jeremiah in the Qumran Library," in *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Lundbom, Jack R., Craig A. Evans, and Bradford A. Anderson (Boston: Brill, 2018), 281–2.

earlier texts and underwent scribal decisions and compositional changes, both intentional and unintentional.

LXX- and MT-Jer are notably different from each other. LXX-Jer is approximately 16 percent shorter than MT-Jer. Furthermore, LXX- and MT-Jer organize the content differently, particularly the OAN block. LXX- and MT-Jer order the OAN block as follows:

Table 1. OAN Order in LXX- and MT-Jer

LXX (NETS)	MT (NRSV)
Elam (25:14–19)	Egypt (46)
Egypt (26)	Philistia (47)
Babylon (27–28)	Moab (48)
Philistia (29:1–7)	Ammon (49:1–6)
Edom (29:8–23)	Edom (49:7–22)
Ammon (30:1–5)	Damascus (49:23–27)
Kedar (30:6–11)	Kedar (49:28–33)
Hazor (30:6–11)	Hazor (49:28–33)
Damascus (30:12–16)	Elam (49:34–39)
Moab (31)	Babylon (50–51)

Additionally, LXX-Jer places the OAN block at 25:14 while MT-Jer places the OAN block at 46:1.

These differences between LXX- and MT-Jer preserve part of the texts' developmental process and the practices of two scribal traditions. I find the placements of the OAN block of particular interest. The movement of chapters' worth of text is not typical of biblical texts, even when comparing textual versions. MT-Jer places the OAN block at the end of Jeremiah. Such placement typically reflects how a scroll would be

physically updated: sewing more material onto the end and thereby adding text. However, I contend that MT-Jer's placement of the OAN block does not reflect earlier textual versions from which it descends. I argue twofold: 1) the OAN block is not a late addition to Jeremiah and 2) that MT-Jer pulled the OAN block from LXX-Jer's placement at 25:14 and relocated it after 45. This matters because MT-Jer radically breaks scribal trends in biblical text production found in the Hebrew Bible. As such, it throws into question the motivations behind the arrangement of the text that later served as the basis of popular English translations of the Bible, including the King James Version and the New Revised Standard Version.

To begin evaluating my claim, I will present existing scholarship on LXX-Jer's and MT-Jer's arrangements of the Book of Jeremiah. I will then discuss the methods I used to conduct this study and provide textual analysis. Based on the analysis, I will argue for MT-Jer's relocation of the OAN block and examine the resulting implications.

Literature Review

The Book of Jeremiah was likely not written by the prophet Jeremiah as biblical prophets generally did not write.³⁵ Any authorship is attributed authorship given to the text by scribes.³⁶ Without Jeremiah's autobiographical lens, scribes relied on the personal and collective memories of Jeremiah's followers and supporters.³⁷ The resulting text, or at least some sections of it, is a compilation of oracles and narratives around the prophetic figure.³⁸

Van Der Toorn breaks Jeremiah into three main parts: chapters 1–25, MT-Jer 26–45 (LXX-Jer 32–51), and the OAN.³⁹ Chapters 1–25:13 are older material to which MT-Jer 26–45 and the OAN were added.⁴⁰ Other scholars delineate the material by genre: poetic prophetic text, third-person biographical narrative, prose prophetic paraenesis, and the OAN.⁴¹

Jeremiah in DSS, LXX, and MT

How these units are represented and arranged in the textual form depends on which version of Jeremiah with which one engages. Jeremiah appears and is materially

35. Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 38, 186.

36. Van Der Toorn, 38.

37. Van Der Toorn, 188.

38. Van Der Toorn, 16, 123.

39. Chapter 52 is likely a late addition and operates as a summary of Jeremiah. Van Der Toorn claims it to be an appendix. Van Der Toorn, 195.

40. Hermann-Josef Stipp, "Two Ancient Editions of the Book of Jeremiah," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jeremiah*, in progress, eds. Louis Stulman and Edward Silver (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190693060.013>), 106.

41. Polak, "Language Variation," 219.

holistically preserved in two traditions: LXX and MT.⁴² LXX is a Greek translation of a Hebrew version that was edited in Alexandria, Egypt, and did not become part of the canon.⁴³ It dates to between the third and second centuries BCE.⁴⁴ MT is the sole surviving Hebrew version that preserves the Masoretes' consonantal form and later became canonized.⁴⁵ It dates to 1000 CE in the form of the Aleppo Codex, although its stable transmission began circa 100 CE.⁴⁶ In MT, Jeremiah is 16 percent longer than in LXX.⁴⁷ Generally, the material is considered an expansion of LXX and not cut from MT. MT-Jer's expansions mostly reuse pre-existing material and, while mostly short in length, do include a few longer passages. LXX-Jer does contain some expansions, although fewer and short in length.⁴⁸ Furthermore, LXX- and MT-Jer both reorder the material.⁴⁹ The rearrangement is due to the movement of the OAN block (LXX-Jer 25:14–31 and MT-Jer 46–51) and the reordering of the individual OAN.

LXX and MT are not the only surviving textual witnesses to Jeremiah, albeit the most materially holistic. Upon the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, various manuscripts of Jeremiah were found: 2QJer, 4QJer^a, 4QJer^b, 4QJer^c, 4QJer^d, 4QJer^e, DSS F.Jer 1, DSS F.Jer 2, and XJer? Collectively, they attest to the parent text of LXX, otherwise

42. LXX's translations include Armenian Georgian, Christian Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Old Church Slavonic, Old Latin and Syro-Hexapla. MT's translations include Aquila, Hexapla, Karaite and Rabbanite Arabic, Peshitta, Symmachus, Targum Jonathan, Theodotion, and Vulgate. Lange, "Texts of Jeremiah," 281.

43. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, 154.

44. Andrew G. Shead, "The Text of Jeremiah (MT and LXX)," in Lundbom, Evans, and Anderson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 255.

45. Lange, 281.

46. Pioske, "Writing and Rewriting," (lecture, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA, April 6, 2021); Shead, 255.

47. Ulrich, "The Evolutionary Composition," 24.

48. Shead, 272.

49. Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 131; Ulrich, 24.

known as the Vorlage, and MT, and some do not align with either.⁵⁰ I will outline those that speak to LXX- and MT-Jer.

2QJer and 4QJer^c are classified as semi-Masoretic, although it is uncertain if they are from the same or separate manuscripts.⁵¹ 4QJer^a is the longest and oldest Jeremiah manuscript at Qumran and is classified as proto-Masoretic.⁵² Three manuscripts reflect the MT scribal tradition and bear witness to earlier forms of MT-Jer. 4QJer^b mostly agrees with LXX-Jer over MT-Jer,⁵³ although it reads several times with MT-Jer.⁵⁴ It is a Hebrew text that aligns with LXX's arrangement and length.⁵⁵ Generally, the manuscript is said to attest to the Hebrew parent of the translation of LXX-Jer.⁵⁶ 4QJer^d situates itself somewhere between LXX- and MT-Jer. It reads several names shorter like LXX-Jer⁵⁷ and aligns with LXX-Jer's arrangement.⁵⁸ It also reads in six places with MT-Jer against LXX-Jer.⁵⁹ The mixed alignments point to either 4QJer^d preserving a text descending somewhere between MT-Jer and a shared ancestor⁶⁰ or reflecting an unknown version.⁶¹ In total, the Qumran manuscripts attest to early versions of both LXX- and MT-Jer. They

50. Lange, "Texts of Jeremiah," 281.

51. Lange, 282, 286.

52. Shimon Gesundheit, "The Question of LXX Jeremiah as a Tool for Literary-Critical Analysis," *Vetus Testamentum* 62, no. 1(2012): 31; Lange, 282–3.

53. Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 200.

54. Lange, 291.

55. Gesundheit, 7; Emmanuel Tov, "Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX of Jeremiah 27 (34)," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 91, no. 9(1979): 75.

56. Van Der Toorn, 20; Lange, 289; Ulrich, "The Evolutionary Composition," 36.

57. James Frohlich, *The Relationship between MT and LXX in Jeremiah 39(46):1–41(48):3 and 52* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 11.

58. Gesundheit, 7.

59. Frohlich, *The Relationship between MT and LXX*, 20.

60. Lange, 300.

61. Gesundheit, 31.

did not appear as single and finalized versions; rather, they descended from and were preserved in earlier texts. Unfortunately, the Jeremiah manuscripts at Qumran are quite fragmented and preserve limited text.

To better compare Jeremiah across traditions, I will turn to LXX and MT.

Scholars have offered several ways through which LXX- and MT-Jer are related. Some have argued that LXX is prior to MT and vice versa. Such a direct relationship contends with the rule of thumb that older material is expanded and preserved.⁶² As such, MT would descend from LXX. Many arguments have been made for a Vorlage, or the shared text from which both LXX- and MT-Jer descended. The Vorlage may be the direct parent of LXX- and MT-Jer. Janzen posits that LXX- and MT-Jer mainly reflect a redactional stage of the same book.⁶³ The Vorlage may be more distant than direct parentage, such as the Vorlage being a text written during the third Babylonian exile in 582 BCE that split into one developed in Alexandria and one developed in the exiled Judean royal court.⁶⁴ Some scholars specify that LXX-Jer reflects an earlier version and that MT-Jer reflects a later version, without necessitating when the Vorlage occurred.⁶⁵ All of these rely on the model that both LXX- and MT-Jer started as individual scrolls. Earlier in their development, the Jeremiah tradition may have existed as a loose collection of texts that were then ordered and set into a single document. If so, LXX- and MT-Jer are simply

62. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 67.

63. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, 132.

64. Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 154.

65. Frolich, *The Relationship between MT and LXX*, 12; Moon Kwon Chae, "Redactional Intentions of MT Jeremiah Concerning the Oracles against the Nations," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134, no. 3(2015): 580–1.

different organizations of the collection.⁶⁶ Regardless of textual descent, at the very least, the two versions interfaced in some way. While they are quite different in length and arrangement, they also share much of the same material. As Shead notes, “six sevenths of common text precludes the possibility that the two texts arose independently.”⁶⁷

Divergences between LXX- and MT-Jer

The primary divergences between LXX- and MT-Jer occur around the OAN. MT-Jer includes expansions. LXX- and MT-Jer order the OAN differently within the block. LXX-Jer orders them as Elam, Egypt, Babylon, Edom, Ammon, Kedar, Hazor, Damascus, and Moab. MT-Jer organizes the OAN as Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, Elam, and Babylon. The OAN block appears in two different locations in LXX- and MT-Jer. The OAN block appears at 25:14–31 in LXX-Jer and at 46–51 in MT-Jer.

Like the rest of Jeremiah, the OAN witness some expansions in MT-Jer comparative to LXX-Jer, including whole verses⁶⁸ and shorter snippets.⁶⁹ Notably, the longest MT-Jer additions are the superscript and postscript to the OAN.⁷⁰ They seek to name and conclude the OAN block where LXX-Jer does not.⁷¹ MT-Jer also expands in chapter 25. These expansions share the redactional tendencies found in the repositioning

66. Nathan Mastnjak, “Jeremiah as Collection: Scrolls, Sheets, and the Problem of Textual Arrangement,” *Catholic Bible Quarterly* 80, no. 1(2018): 43.

67. Shead, “The Text of Jeremiah,” 256.

68. See MT-Jer 25:13b–14, 46:1, and 49:6. Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 154.

69. See MT-Jer 46:26b, 47:1, 48:47a, 49:6, and 49:34. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, 111; Stipp, “Two Ancient Editions,” 111.

70. Carolyn J. Sharp, “‘Take Another Scroll and Write’: A Study of the LXX and the MT of Jeremiah's Oracles against Egypt and Babylon,” *Vetus Testamentum* 47, no. 4(1997): 492.

71. Sharp, 492.

of the OAN.⁷² While the expansions themselves are expected, the location of some expansions may dovetail with the rearrangement of the OAN.

The reordering of the OAN within the block has been explained in a few ways. Where the first half (1–25) was consistently ordered and so fixed, the second half switched its order and was still fluid,⁷³ including the OAN. The unfixed nature of this collection of oracles indicates that the OAN likely circulated independently prior to being added to chapters 1–25 and the rest of the material.⁷⁴ The differing internal ordering of the OAN block has been argued as reflecting geographic location, the list of nations in the Cup of Wrath (MT-Jer 25:15, LXX-Jer 32), and historical succession of empires.⁷⁵

Scholars have posited a few reasons as to why the OAN are relocated in LXX- and MT-Jer, including theological versus chronological order,⁷⁶ symmetrical construction,⁷⁷ post-exilic context, and three-phase judgment.⁷⁸ The social context of the post-exilic Judean society would be considerably more positive than during the Babylonian exile.⁷⁹ Disregarding chapter 52, where LXX-Jer ends somewhat hopefully with Jehoiachin's release, MT-Jer ends on the more hopeful note of judgment against the

72. Chae, "Redactional Intentions," 591.

73. Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 155; Mastnjak, "Jeremiah as Collection," 34.

74. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, 115; Jack R. Lundbom, "Language and Rhetoric in Jeremiah's Foreign Nation Oracles," in Lundbom, Evans, and Anderson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 211.

75. Chae, 586; Janzen, 116; Stipp, "Two Ancient Editions," 100.

76. Bob Becking, "Jeremiah's Book of Consolation: A Textual Comparison Notes on the Masoretic Text and the Old Greek Version of Jeremiah XXX-XXXI," *Vetus Testament* 44, no. 2 (1994): 147.

77. Alexander Rofé, "The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 101, no. 3(1989): 390.

78. Stipp, 101.

79. Chae, 592.

other nations, including Babylon, the destroyer of Jerusalem.⁸⁰ The relocation of the OAN block, then, came about with the more positive outlook of post-exilic Judea. Another scribal reason for MT-Jer's arrangement may have been to place Babylon's destruction last. With the OAN starting at chapter 46, the book builds up the disaster from Judah to the nations to Babylon itself.⁸¹ The nation behind all the destruction finally gets destroyed in a climactic end-of-text location.⁸²

Regardless of the OAN placement in LXX- and MT-Jer, the OAN seem to share similarities with its surrounding content in both versions. LXX-Jer situates the OAN prior to the Cup of Wrath, which describes the destruction of all nations.⁸³ MT-Jer situates the OAN, which starts with Egypt and ends with Babylon, between a series of prophecies concerning Egypt and chapter 52's mention of Babylon.⁸⁴

Within the discussion thus far, much scholarship looks at whether LXX- or MT-Jer preceded the other. Realistically, the ordering of either can be seen as authentic.⁸⁵ For some scholars, MT-Jer takes precedence, and LXX-Jer's arrangement is a reworking. Partially, the superiority, and therefore earlier nature, is given because MT was considered the Textus Receptus of the Hebrew Bible for centuries.⁸⁶ As such, LXX-Jer would be responsible for placing the OAN at 25:14.⁸⁷ Others, however, uphold that LXX-

80. Chae, "Redactional Intentions," 585.

81. Stipp, "Two Ancient Editions," 102.

82. Stipp, 112.

83. Chae, 582.

84. Stipp, 102.

85. Becking, "Jeremiah's Book of Consolation," 164.

86. John Van Seters, "The Genealogy of the Biblical Editor," in Kloppenborg and Newman, *Editing the Bible*, 9.

87. Shead, "The Text of Jeremiah," 276.

Jer's placement of the OAN is more original than MT-Jer's.⁸⁸ MT-Jer, then, would be responsible for relocating the OAN to chapter 46. Another argument follows from the OAN being an individually circulating collection. The unordered collection of the OAN may have been picked up by both LXX- and MT-Jer and incorporated into the two textual versions as their own arrangements.⁸⁹

Literature Review Conclusion

The “superiority” of LXX- and MT-Jer is difficult to establish. Then again, superiority is hardly a word that would be applied to texts in antiquity. The relationship between LXX- and MT-Jer hinges on their shared material and the fact that the material was arranged differently, not necessarily on which has greater authority. As DSS embodies, multiple versions of Jeremiah were present in the same space and were aware of each other. Those versions attest to earlier renditions of LXX- and MT-Jer and positions neither as more “important.” They do point out which arrangement may have been the scribal norm and if MT-Jer relocated the OAN block.

88. Chae, “Redactional Intentions,” 582.

89. Mastnjak, “Jeremiah as Collection,” 40.

Methods

The divergent OAN block placements in LXX- and MT-Jer bear witness to different scribal decisions and tactics. It would seem that the scribes had different concerns when choosing where to place a text within another text and how to engage with textual preservation. Particularly, it throws into question how late additions were added to a pre-existing text. The primary questions of this study are 1) is the OAN block a late addition to Jeremiah? and 2) does MT-Jer relocate the OAN block at chapter 46?

A textual addition has certain qualities that flag it as late. Scholars are able to detect seams, or places at which once-separate texts were juxtaposed. Seams that cause more disjunction usually denote later additions. Scribes often tried to harmonize texts. They strove to smooth inconsistencies and vestiges of literary growth,⁹⁰ such that they would be undetectable in the text's final form.⁹¹ Smoothing these inconsistencies between two given texts may involve borrowing material and keywords and phrases and incorporating them into the seam itself. If the OAN block is a late addition to Jeremiah, then it would not have smoothed out inconsistencies and would have rougher seams. As such, I pose a secondary question to scaffold the primary questions: do keywords and phrases that occur in the OAN block appear in the content preceding and following the OAN in LXX- and MT-Jer?

To answer this question, I will primarily engage with text criticism by comparing LXX- and MT-Jer. As previously discussed, these traditions diverge significantly and provide an excellent case study for the treatment of textual (re)arrangement. I will

90. Gesundheit, "The Question of LXX Jeremiah," 36.

91. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 136.

supplement the comparative text analysis with discussion of archaeological findings, including DSS, and other scholars' work on scribalism, ancient Near Eastern text production, LXX and MT comparisons, and Jeremiah's OAN.

Selected Translations

Ideally, I would perform the text analysis in the languages in which LXX and MT were written. Due to my limited resources, I am unable to read either koine Greek or biblical Hebrew and conducted the study in English. I use the English translations available through Georgia Southern University's Henderson Library.

I use Albert Pietersma and Marc Saunders's translation of LXX-Jer as it appears in the New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS). This translation is based on Joseph Ziegler's translation with a few deviations.⁹²

For MT-Jer, I use the English translation of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible. The Old Testament committee of the NRSV based the English translation off of the Hebrew and Aramaic version preserved by the Masoretes.⁹³ Some deviations occur as the committee saw parts of the text that required correction and so utilized ancient Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, and Latin versions that were prior to the Masoretes.⁹⁴ These perceived errors are said to be from copying and are marked by footnotes in the NRSV. They are primarily small phrases and appear once in the passages

92. Albert Pietersma and Marc Saunders, "Jeremias: To the Reader," in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, eds. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 876.

93. Bruce M. Metzger, "To the Reader," in *The New Student Bible, New Revised Standard Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 20.

94. Metzger, 21.

I use in my study. As such, the non-Masoretic corrections will not impact my study, and the NRSV provides a usable English translation of MT-Jer.

I will not compare MT and LXX to the Jeremiah scrolls at Qumran as the material would be minimally helpful for studying the textual arrangement of Jeremiah. Most do not have enough preserved material to provide insights into the arrangement of the book as a whole or to observe the presence of keywords and phrases.⁹⁵

Selected Keywords and Phrases, Jeremiah Texts, and Intrabiblical Prophetic Texts

I will analyze select texts for keywords and phrases that occur in the OAN. The keywords and phrases bridge the discrepancies between the OAN and the bookending content by alluding to and posing similar ideas. That is, the keywords and phrases indicate that the texts were revised to agree, or harmonized, although they were likely not juxtaposed at an earlier point in time. For harmonization to be successful, the keywords and phrases must appear in relatively close proximity to the OAN block. I restrict the search for keywords and phrases to the chapters directly before and after the OAN block. That is, I will look at chapters 25 and 32 in LXX-Jer and chapters 45 and 52 in MT-Jer. I will pay particularly close attention to the sentences directly preceding and following the OAN block as these are the closest textual bridges between passages. These include 25:13 and 32:1 in LXX-Jer and 45:5 and 52:1 in MT-Jer.

95. I was unable to access English translations of 2QJer or 4QJer^{a, b, c, d} through my available resources. Furthermore, the manuscripts are quite fragmentary, and most do not preserve the location of the OAN. 4QJer^c does include 25:15–17, 25:24–26, 26:10–13, 27:1–3, 27:13–15, 30:6–9, 30:17–31:4, 31:4–14, 31:19–26. Since 4QJer^c is proto-Masoretic, it may establish that the OAN block does not appear at 25:14–31. I cannot say with certainty due to the limitations of my language knowledge.

In these passages, I will look for keywords and phrases that allude to the content in the OAN. These include references to physical location in geographic proximity to Judah and Israel: nations, all the nations, land, place, and specific nation names. Key phrases may mention variations of destruction: destruction, destroy, bring against, annihilation, punish, and waste. If the content bookending the OAN block include these keywords and phrases, the scribes harmonized the bookending content and the OAN block. The more key phrases that are present increases the harmonization between the OAN block and its surrounding content; more similar ideas are present between the two passages and draw them closer together. Mention of nation names addressed in the OAN create a strong sense of harmonization because the phrases are precise and specifically address what the OAN address. “All the nations” is stronger than “nations” or “that land” as it addresses a group of nations, as is found in the OAN. Key phrases about destruction against a land, lands, a nation, or nations show stronger harmonization than simply destruction or simply nation because the OAN discusses multiple nations being destroyed.

If the scribal desire for harmonization is high, the text may contain expansions that create content similarities and include the keywords and phrases. Expansions typically appear on the seam between two texts. As such, I will observe the sentences directly preceding and following the OAN block for expansions. I will compare corresponding texts in LXX- and MT-Jer to see where expansions are present. That is, I will compare LXX-Jer 25:13 and MT-Jer 25:13–14; LXX-Jer 32:1 and MT-Jer 25:15–16; MT-Jer 45:5 and LXX-Jer 51:35; and MT-Jer 52:1 and LXX-Jer 52:1. I will use the

outlined key words and phrases to determine if any detected expansions seek to harmonize the OAN block with its surrounding content.

To shed further light on the scribal decision of textual placement found in Jeremiah, I will look toward other biblical texts and their placement of the OAN. I will observe the OAN placement in Isaiah and Ezekiel in both LXX and MT. Like Jeremiah, both texts are biblical prophetic literature. As such, they will follow similar genre norms and scribal traditions. Scribes were trained to follow standardized forms,⁹⁶ and so I expect that Isaiah and Ezekiel will help establish the scribal trend for OAN placement within the larger texts. Furthermore, Isaiah and Ezekiel are similar in length to Jeremiah. Jeremiah's length of 52 chapters falls between the two texts with Isaiah having 66 chapters and Ezekiel having 48. I will analyze the texts for keywords and phrases as outlined for Jeremiah.

96. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy*, 111-13.

Text Analysis

I will begin the comparative text analysis and search for the harmonizing keywords and phrases with LXX-Jer and then turn to observe MT-Jer. I will analyze both LXX- and MT-Jer for expansions that include the keywords and phrases directly preceding and following the OAN block. I will discuss the collective results, if scribes seemed to be harmonizing the bookending content with the OAN, and if LXX- or MT-Jer demonstrate more harmonization along the OAN block seams. I will then observe Isaiah's and Ezekiel's OAN placements and compare them to LXX- and MT-Jer.

LXX- and MT-Jer OAN Block Placements and Harmonization

LXX-Jer OAN Block Placement and Harmonization

In LXX-Jer, the OAN block begins at chapter 25:14 and finishes at the end of chapter 31. That is, the OAN block is sandwiched by content regarding Judah and the confessions of Jeremiah. The initial LXX-Jer OAN, the oracle against Elam, is preceded by a passage detailing God sending prophets to whom the people did not listen and God promising to devastate the land. The last LXX-Jer OAN, the oracle against Moab, is followed by a passage describing all the nations being forced into drunkenness. The bookending content contains the keywords and phrases found in the OAN and seems to almost transition in and out of the OAN block.

LXX-Jer Content Preceding the OAN Block

The line preceding the Elam oracle says, "And I will bring upon that land all my words that I have spoken against it, everything written in this book" (Jer. 25:13 NETS).

The passage clearly mentions "land," which is one of the keywords. "Land," in this

context, hails back to the “paternal family from the north” (Jer. 25:9 NETS). Since Jeremiah addresses the destruction of the first temple, that northern paternal family is the Babylonians. Within the OAN block, there is an oracle against Babylon, although it is the third oracle, not the first. The indirect reference to the Babylonians, which is likely the result of a gag rule, matches the keyword of a nation’s name. The reference to the Babylonians creates a looser connection since the oracle against Babylon is two chapters after the reference. While LXX-Jer chapter 25’s last line creates a loose connection between chapter 25 and the OAN block, it does include the keywords pulled from the OAN and harmonizes chapter 25 with the content addressed in the OAN block.

Furthermore, LXX-Jer chapter 25 mentions bringing the Babylonians “against this land and against its inhabitants and against all nations around it” (Jer. 25:9 NETS), which is later referenced as “the whole land” (Jer. 25:11 NETS). The OAN block discusses nations that are in relative geographic proximity to Jerusalem, and so the previous content seems to be alluding to the nations mentioned in the OAN block. The use of key phrases mentioning land and all the nations develops a strong connection between chapter 25 and the OAN block. The reference to Babylon and all the nations compounds and harmonizes the content in chapter 25 with the content in the OAN. The seam is relatively smoothed out, and the previous content almost seems to introduce the OAN block.

LXX-Jer Content Following the OAN Block

Harmonization along the OAN block’s seams also occurs after the last OAN, the oracle against Moab, as the content continues with the oracles regarding Judah and the confessions of Jeremiah. The line following the last OAN reads, “Thus did the Lord, the God of Israel, say: Take from my hand the cup of this unmixed wine, and you shall make

all the nations, to them to whom I send you, drink” (Jer. 32:1 NETS). This line includes a couple of the key phrases. Most obviously, it mentions “all the nations.” The OAN block addressed several nations and 32:1 hails back to that content. The line also says that the nations are to drink wine. The following verse expounds by saying that the nations will go out of their minds and a dagger will be sent among them (Jer. 32:2 NETS). In other words, the nations will be so drunk that they will suffer until they go insane. This aligns with the keywords destroy and punish. In terms of the dagger, the nations are to be physically harmed, perhaps even to the point of death. This matches with the keyword destroy. Chapter 32 uses the keywords and phrases to connect to the preceding OAN content and harmonize the two passages.

References to the OAN content continue in chapter 32 and build on the broad statement about all the nations suffering. In 32:4–12, LXX-Jer lists specific nations’ names: Judah, Egypt, Philistia, Ascalon, Gaza, Akron, Azotus, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon, Dedan, Thaiman, Ros, Elam, and Persia. Directly stating nations’ names strongly connects to the OAN content. However, of the seventeen nations in the list, only six of the nations mentioned in the OAN block appear: Egypt, Philistia, Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Elam. It does not name four in the OAN block: Babylon, Kedar, Hazor, and Damascus. Most notably, LXX-Jer chapter 32 does not name Babylon, although the oracle against Babylon is the longest in the block, stretching across two chapters. Listing the names directly references the OAN content but does so imperfectly. Referencing other, non-OAN nations align with the topic of nations but seems to miss the mark. Harmonization has taken place because of the keyword’s presence and allusions to the OAN content. Harmonization has also occurred in the sense that we can see where the

text does not perfectly align. Two previously loosely-related texts were positioned and reworked to allude to each other, and we see vestiges of when they were not.

The content bookending the OAN block in LXX-Jer contains several of the keywords and phrases that appear in the OAN content. Collectively, the preceding and following material references nations, nations' names, and variations of destruction and therefore strongly alludes to the OAN content. Notably, the keywords and phrases do not perfectly align with the OAN content and indicate that the seam was not always smoothed out. Thus, scribes strove to harmonize the bookending content with the OAN block in LXX-Jer. This is particularly noteworthy upon comparison to the placement of the OAN block in MT-Jer.

MT-Jer OAN Block Placement and Harmonization

In MT-Jer, the OAN block appears at the end of the oracles regarding Judah and the confessions of Jeremiah and before chapter 52. The initial OAN, the oracle against Egypt, follows Jeremiah's oracle concerning Baruch, and the final OAN, the oracle against Babylon, leads into a summary of the destruction of Jerusalem. Like LXX-Jer, the content includes some of the keywords and phrases. Unlike LXX-Jer, the keywords and phrases do not strongly connect and allude to the OAN content.

MT-Jer Content Preceding the OAN Block

Directly before the OAN block, MT-Jer says, "Do not seek them; for I am going to bring disaster upon all flesh, says the LORD; but I will give you your life as a prize of war in every place to which you may go" (Jer. 45:5 NRSV). This line does not mention the nations directly. Tenuously, it mentions "every place," which is a keyword and could be interpreted as the nations in the oracles. However, "place" could be any location in

which Baruch ends up; it does not specify a nation in close proximity to Judah and Israel. While “place” is a keyword, it does not reference nations nor OAN content. The harmonization is lightly done, if at all.

A stronger connection seems to be built with the phrase “I am going to break down what I have built, and pluck up what I have planted—that is, the whole land” (Jer. 45:4 NRSV). The line includes the keyword “land” and so seems to allude to the lands described in the OAN block. When put in context, land seems to be the exiled Judahites; it is a metonymy. Land, then, is not alluding to foreign nations and thus is not acknowledging the OAN content that is to come. A stronger allusion to the OAN content is the description of destruction. God warns of breaking down the land. This line matches the keywords of destruction and waste. Chapter 45 somewhat harmonizes with the OAN block because it shares the idea of land being destroyed. Overall, though, harmonization between chapter 45 and the OAN block is not strong. Land tenuously relates to the OAN material by being a keyword, and the two passages share the idea of destruction, which is a weaker keyword than nations or land.

A stronger content similarity appears in MT-Jer chapter 44, which records Jeremiah prophesying that God will destroy Egypt if the Judahites seek haven there. Directly naming Egypt fits into the keyword of a nation’s name. Furthermore, Egypt is the first OAN to appear in MT-Jer. The repetition of Egypt is relatively close, albeit two chapters apart, and creates a connection between the preceding content and the OAN block. However, other nations in the OAN block are not referenced. Thus, chapter 44 includes a keyword but between the distance and referencing only one nation, the allusion

to the OAN content is weak. Harmonization occurs because there are references to the OAN but lightly so.

The strongest reference to the OAN block that MT-Jer boasts is “the word of the LORD that came to the prophet Jeremiah concerning the nations” (Jer. 46:1 NRSV). This line directly introduces the oracles and the nations and states what the OAN block is. However, it seems to be a superscript, or “introduction,” and several superscripts appear throughout Jeremiah.⁹⁷ As such, this line seems to be a common rhetorical and/or textual trend. It acknowledges the OAN block in a cut-and-dry manner. It is not the interwoven series of keywords and phrases as is found in the bookending content of LXX-Jer. The light harmonization along the OAN block seems also occurs following MT-Jer’s OAN block.

MT-Jer Content Following the OAN Block

None of the keywords and phrases appear in the line following the last OAN, the oracle against Babylon: “Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign; he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem” (Jer. 52:1 NRSV). There is no reference to the OAN content via mention of nations or destruction. The only nation of concern is Judah, specifically the city of Jerusalem. The lack of keywords and phrases prevents the connection between the OAN block and chapter 52’s first line. There is a distinct lack of harmonization between the two passages

⁹⁷ e.g., “The word that came to Jeremiah for all the Judeans living in the land of Egypt” (Jer. 44:1 NRSV), “The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of King Jehoiakim” (Jer. 35:1 NRSV), and “This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD” (Jer. 21:1 NRSV).

The rest of the following content acts as a summary of Jeremiah with passages from the Book of Kings. Generally, it does not name nations or land. The “king of Babylon” or some variation thereof appears several times. The specific nation name is a keyword and alludes to the oracle against Babylon. The connection strengthens since Babylon is the last OAN and appears directly prior to chapter 52. However, the king of Babylon is mostly mentioned in relation to the siege against Jerusalem. The focus is not on a foreign nation but rather on Judah. The connection is looser because the reference is not of a foreign nation. On the same token, the king is often the subject of sentences and, as such, thoroughly blamed for Jerusalem’s destruction. Babylon becomes a major focus of the passage because of the king, and perhaps the king is a synecdoche for the entirety of Babylon. As a result, the references to Babylon connect to the last OAN against Babylon. The passage also often mentions forms of destruction, from putting out Zedekiah’s eyes to breaking walls (Jer. 52:11, 14). These variations of destruction match well with the keywords destroy and annihilation. The naming of the nation and idea of destruction draw the OAN block and chapter 52 together. There is a sense that a scribe harmonized the two passages, particularly via the discussion of Babylon.

The content bookending the OAN block in MT-Jer contains some of the keywords and phrases that appear in the OAN content. The references include nations’ names (i.e., Egypt and Babylon), land, place, and destruction. Several of the keywords do not allude to the OAN content but rather unknown physical locations or Judah. The strongest allusions come from naming Egypt and Babylon; other nations are not named. The harmonization occurs strictly around the first and last OAN. The preceding and following content do not harmonize with the OAN as a block.

Comparing Harmonization along LXX- and MT-Jer OAN Block Seams

Both LXX- and MT-Jer use the keywords and phrases, specifically nations, land, place, nations' names, and destruction. Such referential terms allude to the OAN content and connect the OAN block to the preceding and following content. As such, some harmonization occurs along the OAN block seams. LXX- and MT-Jer do not, however, use the allusions to the same degree.

LXX-Jer's keywords and phrases more directly allude to the foreign nations in the OAN. It mentions nations in the plural, all the nations, and lists multiple nations by name. The use of nations broadly addresses locations in close geographic proximity to Judah and Israel and more strongly ties chapters 25 and 32 to the OAN block because the OAN as a unit addresses multiple nations. MT-Jer, in contrast, does not mention nations broadly. It mentions "place," which operates rather vaguely and could be anywhere, not necessarily nations within geographic proximity to Judah and Israel. MT-Jer names only two nations in proximity to the OAN block, unlike the Cup of Wrath list found after LXX-Jer's OAN block. MT-Jer focuses on Egypt and Babylon, not multiple nations. The passages tie together at the edges in MT-Jer; they do not connect to the OAN block holistically like LXX-Jer.

MT-Jer's references to Egypt and Babylon appear further away in the text than LXX-Jer's references to nations and land. The reference to Egypt is in MT-Jer chapter 44, two chapters prior to the start of the OAN block, and the oracle against Egypt, in chapter 46; and the reference to Babylon is in chapter 52 after the end of the OAN block, and the oracle against Babylon, in chapter 51. LXX-Jer situates the references to nations and land in chapters 25 and 32, directly before and after the OAN block in 25:14–31. On

the basis of chapters as indicators of proximity, LXX-Jer positions its references closer to the OAN block and thus more strongly ties the passages together. As a result, LXX-Jer's OAN block is more harmonized in its location.

Compounding on the chapter proximity, LXX-Jer uses more keywords and phrases in the sentences preceding and following the OAN block than MT-Jer. LXX-Jer uses the keyword *land*, which substitutes for *Babylon*, in the sentence directly prior to the first OAN. The reference is loose because the first OAN is not *Babylon* but *Elam*. Directly following the last OAN, LXX-Jer posits the phrase “all the nations.” Both sentences also mention destruction in some form. The references, regardless of how loose, appear in the sentences that directly precede and follow the OAN block. In comparison, MT-Jer mentions *place*, which is not geographically specified, and destruction prior to the first OAN and mentions none of the keywords in the sentence following the last OAN. In the sentences directly preceding and following the OAN block, LXX-Jer includes more keywords and phrases than MT-Jer. The proximity of the references brings the OAN block closer to the bookending passages and creates a stronger sense of harmonization.

Based on the keywords and phrases and their locations, LXX-Jer more strongly harmonizes the OAN block with its bookending content than MT-Jer does. The seams are less noticeable because of the allusions and appear to be more smoothed out. Scribes may have promoted further harmonization by including expansions with the keywords and phrases along the OAN block seams.

Textual Expansions along the OAN Block Seams

To further promote textual harmonization, scribes may have added material with the keywords and phrases to the content bookending the OAN block. To see if this phenomenon occurs, I will compare the LXX- and MT-Jer texts that directly occur before and after the OAN block to see if material was added. Since MT-Jer primarily contains the expansions, I expect more expansions to appear in MT-Jer. LXX-Jer may have expansions that I cannot observe because I am unable to compare it to another text, either in DSS or as of yet unknown.

I will compare the text that precedes the beginning of LXX-Jer's first OAN by juxtaposing LXX-Jer 25:13 and MT-Jer 25:13–14. I will compare the text that follows the end of LXX-Jer's last OAN by analyzing LXX-Jer 31:44 and MT-Jer 48:46–47. I will compare the text that precedes the beginning of MT-Jer's first OAN by analyzing MT-Jer 45:5 and LXX-Jer 51:35. I will compare the text that follows the end of MT-Jer's last OAN by analyzing MT-Jer 52:1 and LXX-Jer 52:1.

LXX-Jer OAN Block Seams

LXX-Jer 25:13 and MT-Jer 25:13–14

Let us compare the text that directly precedes where LXX-Jer's OAN block appears. In LXX-Jer, the OAN block begins after 25:13. In MT-Jer, the LXX-Jer OAN block would have occurred after 25:13–14.

LXX

And I will bring upon that land all my words that I have spoken against it, everything written in this book.

MT

I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations.

In this passage, LXX and MT are remarkably similar. They both maintain that God will bring the written text's content against "that land," which is the gagged phrase for Babylon. MT-Jer differs by specifying that Jeremiah prophesied the content and the prophecies are against all the nations. MT-Jer adds the key phrase "against all the nations" and thereby strongly connects to the OAN content. If the OAN block appeared in MT-Jer between 25:14 and 15, such an expansion would harmonize with the OAN content. Furthermore, the expansion references the nations broadly, unlike the keywords found in MT-Jer chapters 45 and 52. And yet, MT-Jer does not place the OAN block between 25:14 and 15.

MT-Jer has an additional sentence at 25:14 before where the OAN block would appear: "For many nations and great kings shall make slaves of them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and the works of their hands" (Jer. 25:14 NRSV).⁹⁸ This expansion, too, adds keywords and phrases. The line says "many nations," which references the nations broadly, and strongly alludes to the OAN content. The keyword is tempered, though, because the nations are punishing "them." The recipient of the punishment, another keyword, is Babylon, which is a specified nation name. The use of

98. This additional material is expected. Scholarship has shown that LXX-Jer boasts a shorter version and MT-Jer has a longer version.

“many nations,” while plural, focuses more on a single nation being ultimately punished. As such, the use of nations is a keyword but not strictly used to allude to the multiple nations addressed in the OAN block. Regardless of how strong the reference is, if this additional MT sentence appeared in LXX-Jer, it would provide a stronger allusion to the OAN block. However, LXX-Jer does not include this line, and MT-Jer does not turn to the OAN block after 25:14.

LXX-Jer, then, is not adding material that we can observe to promote harmonization. If there are expansions to help with harmonization, they are already in place and have smoothed out the seam. MT-Jer provides expansions that would harmonize with the OAN block if the oracles were between MT-Jer 25:14 and 15. These expansions are likely harmonizing the early portion of chapter 25 with the Cup of Wrath passage at 25:15 that provides the list of nations that are to be made drunk. These expansions notably demonstrate that MT-Jer does use nations as a term that addresses multiple nations, although MT-Jer does not use nations in the plural in chapters 45 and 51.

LXX-Jer 32:1 and MT-Jer 25:15–16

Let us compare the text directly following LXX-Jer’s OAN block. In LXX-Jer, the OAN block ends with 31:44, and so we will observe 32:1. In MT-Jer, the LXX-Jer OAN block would have ended before 25:15, and so we will observe 25:15–16.

LXX

Thus did the Lord, the God of Israel,
 say: Take from my hand the cup of this
 unmixed wine, and you shall make all
 the nations, to them to whom I send you,
 drink, and they are vomiting and will go
 out of their minds before the dagger that
 I am sending among them.

MT

For thus the LORD, the God of Israel,
 said to me: Take from my hand this cup
 of the wine of wrath, and make all the
 nations to whom I send you drink it.
 They shall drink and stagger and go out
 of their minds because of the sword that
 I am sending among them.

These passages are quite similar. Aside from a few words, they align closely. Both describe God telling Jeremiah to make the nations drink and the nations going out of their minds from the destruction. Again, LXX-Jer does not add material that contains keywords and phrases comparative to MT-Jer. Thus, harmonization is not occurring through expansions. Unlike LXX-Jer 25:13 and MT-Jer 25:13–14, MT-Jer does not include an expansion at MT-Jer 25:15–16. MT-Jer does not provide additional keywords that would have harmonized with the OAN block.

MT-Jer OAN Block Seams***MT-Jer 45:5 and LXX-Jer 51:35***

Let us now turn to the texts that appear before MT-Jer's OAN block. The MT-Jer OAN block is directly preceded by 45:5. This passage appears at 51:35 in LXX-Jer.

MT

And you, do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for I am going to bring disaster upon all flesh, says the LORD; but I will give you your life as a prize of war in every place to which you may go.

LXX

And you will seek great things for yourself. Do not seek them, because, behold, I am bringing evil upon all flesh, says the Lord, but I will give your soul as a windfall in every place, there where you may go.

Again, the passages are similar, aside from a few differing words. The passages both discuss God telling Baruch to not seek great things because destruction is coming and God giving Baruch his life/soul wherever he is. MT-Jer does not add more material with keywords and phrases prior to the OAN block to harmonize chapter 45 and the OAN block. This is notable because MT-Jer included expansions before the Cup of Wrath passage at MT-Jer 15:13–14 that promote harmonization. Yet, harmonizing expansions do not appear directly prior to the OAN block itself.

MT-Jer 52:1 and LXX-Jer 52:1

Finally, let us compare the text that directly follows the MT-Jer OAN block. In MT-Jer, the OAN block is followed by 52:1. In LXX-Jer, this text is found at 52:1.

MT

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign; he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

LXX

It being Sedekias' twenty-first year he began to reign—and he reigned eleven years in Ierousalem

This passage appears practically identical in both MT- and LXX-Jer. Both introduce Zedekiah's reign and where he reigned from. Again, we observe that MT-Jer

does not seek to add material with keywords and phrases to harmonize the OAN block with the following text, although harmonization and the use of keywords does occur in the Cup of Wrath passage.

Comparing Expansions along the OAN Block Seams in LXX- and MT-Jer

Neither LXX- nor MT-Jer include expansions in the content preceding and following the OAN block, at least comparative to each other. Thus, LXX- and MT-Jer do not use expansions with keywords and phrases to harmonize the OAN block with its bookending content.

The only expansion in the bookending content would be at 25:13–14 in MT-Jer. Scribes likely expanded at that point to harmonize the earlier portion of chapter 25 with the Cup of Wrath. These expansions note that MT-Jer uses key phrases like nations and all the nations, although it does not always choose to do so in other parts of the text.

Expansions do occur at the beginning and end of the OAN block, although they were not previously discussed. Notably, these lines are the longest MT-Jer additions.⁹⁹ One expansion acts as a superscript: “the word of the LORD that came to the prophet Jeremiah concerning the nations” (Jer. 46:1 NRSV). This line includes the keyword nations and so references the OAN content. It does not, however, harmonize well with chapter 45. Rather, it calls out the OAN block as a literary unit that differs from the previous material. The text is no longer talking about the exiled Judahites in Egypt; it is talking about the OAN. The other expansion acts as a postscript: “Thus far are the words of Jeremiah” (Jer. 51:64 NRSV). It, too, does a poor job of harmonizing the OAN block

99. Sharp, “Take Another Scroll and Write,” 492.

with its bookending content. It does not include any keywords or segue into chapter 52's summary of Jerusalem's siege. This postscript may close the OAN block, which certainly fits "the words of Jeremiah;" it may also close the Book of Jeremiah as a whole. As such, its addition may not have been a scribal move toward harmonization; it may have merely demarcated the end of the book.

On the whole, observable textual expansions are not used to harmonize the OAN block with its bookending content. The expansions that do occur in MT-Jer are not where MT-Jer locates the OAN, demarcate the beginning of the OAN block, and note the ending of the book. Therefore, LXX-Jer's OAN block seems remain smoother and more harmonized than MT-Jer's because of the inclusion of the keywords and phrases and the lack of expansions. I will now turn to other prophetic texts to observe the placements of their OAN blocks and attempts to harmonize with bookending content.

Isaiah's and Ezekiel's Placements of OAN Block

I will observe the placement of the OAN block in Isaiah and Ezekiel to see if keywords and phrases are present and if the OAN block is thereby harmonized with its bookending content. The OAN block appears in chapters 13–32 in Isaiah and in chapters 25–32 in Ezekiel. Isaiah's and Ezekiel's OAN address nations that both appear and do not appear in Jeremiah's OAN. Isaiah begins its OAN with Babylon and ends with Edom. Ezekiel addresses Ammon first and closes with Egypt. Between LXX and MT, the OAN block remains in the same location in both Isaiah and Ezekiel. They do not witness the same movement of OAN material that occurs between LXX- and MT-Jer. The OAN block appears in the approximate middle of both prophetic texts. That is, the OAN block does not appear at the ends of the texts, unlike MT-Jer. Such placement reflects the

arrangement of the OAN block in LXX-Jer. Further parallels with LXX-Jer's arrangement appear with the use of strategic placement and keywords. I will first analyze the content that directly precedes and follows the OAN block in Isaiah and then turn to Ezekiel.

Isaiah's OAN Block Harmonization

Chapter 12 precedes the start of Isaiah's OAN block. It offers thanksgiving and praise to God. It does not mention any of the keywords or phrases and is not concerned with the OAN that follows it. The closest references to nations, nations' names that appear in the OAN, and destruction occur in chapter 13. There are allusions to the OAN content but across a textual gap. The connection between the OAN block and the preceding material is loose and does not harmonize the OAN block with its bookending content.

The material following the OAN block provides a stronger sense of harmonization. Chapter 24 discusses laying waste, desolating, and generally destroying the earth's surface (Isa. 24:1 NRSV). This aligns with the keywords destruction and waste. "Earth" operates similarly to the keyword land. However, it is not attached to nations, aside from one reference that places the earth and the nations in tandem (Isa. 24:13 NRSV). Chapter 24 alludes to the OAN mostly through ideas of destruction and not through mention of nations. Thus, the passages are drawn together and harmonized in this sense. The harmonization is not overly strong, especially in comparison to LXX-Jer.

Ezekiel's OAN Block Harmonization

Chapter 24 appears before the OAN block. It provides a metaphor in which Jerusalem is compared to a rusty pot that is purified by fire and then describes Ezekiel serving as a sign that Jerusalem will be destroyed. The metaphor focuses on purification rather than destruction, and none of the keywords or phrases are present. Ezekiel performing the sign discusses the lack of mourning and does not mention the keywords and phrases. The preceding material does not allude to the OAN content and does not tie together the OAN block and preceding material. The content simply shares the similarity of being oracles: one against Jerusalem and the other against nations. The harmonization is slight, if present at all.

The chapter after the OAN block better connects to the OAN. Chapter 33 mentions bringing a sword against the land and a sentinel who is to warn the people that the sword is coming. This matches with the keywords land and destruction. "Land" in context references the house of Israel and not a foreign nation. The allusion to the OAN is loose, but the keyword is present. The following material alludes to the OAN content but not strongly. Thus, the harmonization is lightly done.

Comparing Isaiah's and Ezekiel's OAN Block Harmonization to LXX- and MT-Jer

Isaiah and Ezekiel do not generally provide keywords and phrases that appear in the OAN content. If the keywords and phrases are present, they mostly reference destruction in some form. There is considerably less concern with addressing nations. More keywords and phrases appear after the OAN block. This may indicate that the following material was more aware of the OAN block, either through harmonization or because it was added after the OAN. Overall, the OAN block is not tightly connected to

its bookending content, and harmonization does not seem to be a priority. Nevertheless, the bookending content loosely references the OAN content.

LXX-Jer's use of the keywords nations, all the nations, land, and destruction develops considerably stronger allusions to the OAN. Scribes sought to smooth out the seam in ways that Isaiah, Ezekiel, and MT-Jer are not as concerned about. MT-Jer shows more evidence toward harmonization than Isaiah and Ezekiel. While it primarily focuses on referencing the first and last OAN, it more tightly ties the OAN block to its bookending content through mention of nations and destruction, whereas Isaiah and Ezekiel primarily allude to the OAN through destruction.

Text Analysis Conclusion

Despite the varying strengths of harmonization, there is a trend toward harmonizing the OAN block and its bookending content. Scribes worked to connect different passages, and we can see that. How strong that connection seems to depend on the text.

LXX-Jer's bookending content includes several of the keywords and phrases that appear in the OAN. It does not include observable expansions that work to incorporate the keywords and phrases. The OAN block seems to be quite harmonized with its surrounding material. The harmonization is by no means perfect. The OAN still have their superscripts that flag them as individual entities, and Cup of Wrath's nation list does not completely match the nations in the OAN. Nevertheless, LXX-Jer is quite concerned with meshing the OAN block with its surrounding content.

MT-Jer, too, incorporates many of the keywords and phrases. It is less concerned with alluding to the OAN as a unit. Rather, it focuses on Egypt and Babylon, which are

the first and last OAN, respectively. Such focus on these two nations only works because of MT-Jer's OAN order. If the OAN followed LXX-Jer's order, the references to Egypt and Babylon would fall flat because they appear as the second and third OAN, respectively. MT-Jer does not include expansions that incorporate more of the keywords in the content that surrounds its placement of the OAN block. It does include an expansion that references nations as plural at 25:13–14. Thus, MT-Jer chooses not to allude to the OAN block as a whole and only ties the bookending content to the first and last OAN. MT-Jer could have increased the harmonization of the OAN block with its bookending content through the keywords “nations” and “all the nations.” Regardless, MT-Jer does harmonize the OAN and its surrounding text.

Comparatively to LXX- and MT-Jer, Isaiah and Ezekiel are less concerned with incorporating the keywords and phrases. The OAN block mostly relates to its bookending content through variations of destruction. The harmonization is light and yet is still present.

In total, LXX-Jer notably strives to embed the OAN block within its surrounding material. This is in-line with LXX-Jer as a whole. LXX tends to smooth inconsistencies and “blur the signs of gradual literary growth.”¹⁰⁰ As a result, it seems that the OAN is intended to be in this particular textual location and as if there was enough time and scribal activity to have shaped it as such. I will now argue that LXX-Jer's OAN placement preceded that of MT-Jer's placement and thus, the OAN is not a late addition comparative to the Book of Jeremiah as a whole.

100. Gesundheit, “The Question of LXX Jeremiah,” 36.

Discussion

The harmonization of LXX-Jer's OAN block with its bookending content has ramifications for understanding how the text was developed. I primarily argue that the OAN block is not a late addition to Jeremiah because of the observed harmonization compounded with other observations of its placement and insights from other biblical scholars. I will pose an argument that the OAN block appears to be a late addition to the Book of Jeremiah before refuting. I will conclude with my final argument that MT-Jer pulled the OAN block from LXX-Jer's placement at 25:14 and relocated it after chapter 45.

The OAN Block Appears as a Late Addition

The OAN block seems like it is a late addition to the Jeremiah texts because of the observed differences between LXX- and MT-Jer. Particularly, the shifting arrangement of Jeremiah and the placement of the OAN block at the end of MT-Jer suggest the late nature of the OAN block.

The rearrangement of the OAN block, both within the block and within Jeremiah, indicates a textual fluidity characteristic of late texts. Writing, by nature of the medium, begins to fossilize a text because it does not change per its audience and context.¹⁰¹ As a text gains perceived authority and fossilizes into the written medium, it is less likely to change.¹⁰² Some parts of a given text collection may be more fixed than others.¹⁰³

Notably, the rest of Jeremiah's texts do not move around, albeit they are expanded upon

101. Weeks, "Literacy, Orality, and Literature," 478.

102. Crawford, "The Fluid Bible," 6.

103. Mastnjak, "Jeremiah as Collection," 34.

in MT-Jer. Like the OAN block, most of Jeremiah seems to be a collection of separate oracles¹⁰⁴ and may have existed on separate shorter scrolls and sheets.¹⁰⁵ One may expect more movement in the rest of Jeremiah because of the early uncompiled physical nature, and yet they do not move. The Jeremiah texts were likely set in place and preserved as such in both MT- and LXX-Jer. Since the OAN moved within the block and within Jeremiah, the oracles had yet to fossilize as writing and/or to gain enough authority to fix in place. The OAN block thus seems to be a later addition to the Book of Jeremiah.

The placement of the OAN block at the end of MT-Jer also suggests the later nature of the oracles. Scribes updated scrolls in two ways: 1) producing a new scroll and 2) physically appending material to the end of the scroll.¹⁰⁶ The production of a new scroll was an expensive endeavor.¹⁰⁷ A papyrus scroll, which was made of the cheapest scroll material, was worth about the wages earned in one to two weeks,¹⁰⁸ which does not include other costs such as ink, reed pens, and labor. Appending material onto a scroll would be the more affordable option. Later textual material, then, would appear in a linear and chronological fashion as the scroll grew. The MT-Jer OAN block appears at the end of the scroll and so seems to be a later addition. In light of MT-Jer's placement of the OAN block, LXX-Jer's placement may simply indicate that the LXX scribes were able to produce a new scroll and rearrange the OAN block as they saw fit.

104. Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 123–4.

105. Mastnjak, "Jeremiah as Collection," 34.

106. Van Der Toorn, 148; Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, 115.

107. Schaper, "Hebrew Culture," 333; Rollston, *Writing and Literacy*, 125; Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 10.

108. Van Der Toorn, 19.

The technologies of written text and scrolls aside, there is a trend in the studied prophetic literature that shows additions¹⁰⁹ appearing at the end of the written texts. Jeremiah's first half, chapters 1–25, were set before the latter half, chapters 26–52 in MT-Jer,¹¹⁰ and perhaps indicate that the latter half was a later addition. The later material is found linearly later in Jeremiah, which reflects adding on material to existing texts. Isaiah witnesses similar material addition. Scholars attribute First Isaiah (chapters 1–39) to Isaiah ben Amos who lived in the eighth century BCE. Second Isaiah (chapters 40–55) is typically attributed to an anonymous prophet during the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BCE.¹¹¹ Second Isaiah is a later addition that appears after the First Isaiah material. Like Jeremiah, later additions are found linearly later in the texts. Ezekiel, too, orders material additions chronologically. Chapters 38–39 and 40–48 are often thought of as later additions¹¹² and appear later in the text. These prophetic texts establish a trend that later additions appear at the end of texts in chronological order. Based on this trend and MT-Jer's placement of the OAN block, it seems that the OAN block was a late addition.

Jeremiah's OAN block seems to be a late addition. The fluid arrangement of the OAN block comparative to the rest of Jeremiah's texts seems to indicate a late nature.

The MT-Jer's placement of the OAN block aligns with placement of late texts in light of

109. Textual additions are considerably large amounts of text, usually making up whole chapters within our modern demarcation. I do not conflate additions with textual expansions. All three prophetic texts contain expansions that appear throughout the bodies of the texts and are usually a sentence fragment or sentence. Due to the OAN block's larger content volume, scribes would likely treat it as an addition.

110. Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 155.

111. Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Prophetic Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 48.

112. Sweeney, 158–59.

scroll technology and text production. Lastly, intrabiblical texts develop a trend to place later material at the end of texts.

The OAN Block Is Not a Late Addition

I disagree that the OAN block is a late addition to the Book of Jeremiah. While it may be an addition, the OAN block demonstrates qualities such that it is not late compared to the rest of the book. The older seams comparative to MT-Jer, intrabiblical trend of medial placement, reflection of characteristics of earlier strata, and LXX-Jer preserving an earlier version than MT-Jer indicate that the OAN block is not a late addition.

The OAN Block Seams Are Older in LXX-Jer

I argue that the seams at the start and end of the OAN block are older in LXX-Jer than in MT-Jer. Over time, scribes tend to smooth out seams as they harmonize and coordinate texts within themselves.¹¹³ As previously observed, LXX-Jer strongly harmonizes the OAN block with its bookending content through keywords and phrases. MT-Jer also strives to harmonize the OAN block with its surrounding content but not to the same degree as LXX-Jer. MT-Jer's seams are rougher and thus are younger than LXX-Jer's.

As previously noted, MT-Jer includes expansions at the onset and outset of the OAN block, i.e., a superscript and postscript. Typically, additions and expansions are bracketed by mirrored phrases.¹¹⁴ For example, the oracle against Elam in LXX-Jer

113. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 145.

114. Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 130.

begins with “What Ieremias prophesied against the nations of Ailam” and ends with “this word came concerning Ailam” (Jer. 25:14, 26:1 NETS). MT-Jer adds a superscript that makes the same move as the one in the oracle against Elam. That is, the superscript marks the addition of the OAN block as a whole. In contrast, LXX-Jer does not include this superscript; it does not mark the OAN block as an addition. The MT-Jer superscript makes the seam more apparent and rougher, which points to the seam being younger. LXX-Jer’s lack of the superscript keeps the seam smoother and therefore indicates an older seam.

Through the comparison of LXX-Jer’s and MT-Jer’s OAN block seams, we see that LXX-Jer’s seams are smoother and more strongly harmonize the OAN block with its bookending content. Scribes chose to smooth out LXX-Jer’s seams, and that process takes a few generations of text. Thus, LXX-Jer’s seams, and thereby OAN block placement, seem to be older. The age of the seams means that the OAN block was not later placed in the middle of LXX-Jer. They were not a later addition to the Book of Jeremiah. MT-Jer shares much of its content with LXX-Jer and the OAN are quite similar in content. Considering that the OAN are not a late addition to LXX-Jer and the amount of shared material, MT-Jer did not add the OAN block late.

The OAN Block as Part of Earlier Strata

I argue that the OAN block is not part of the later addition and is part of the earlier material found in chapters 1–25. The OAN block falls directly on the addition seam at 25:14 in LXX-Jer. The placement at chapter 26 allows for the potential to be part of the pre-existing material or the addition. While there is an evident seam between the OAN block and the preceding material, there are several seams throughout Jeremiah,

likely because it is generally characterized as a collection of oracles and narratives. The existence of this seam does not strictly alienate the OAN block from chapters 1–25. The LXX-Jer placement at chapter 26 compounds with the harmonization of the OAN block with its bookending content and intrabiblical trends of the OAN block appearing in earlier materials suggest that the OAN block was earlier than the later addition.

As previously observed, LXX-Jer strongly harmonizes the OAN block with its bookending content through keywords and phrases. MT-Jer, Isaiah, and Ezekiel also strive to harmonize the OAN block with its surrounding content but not to the same degree as LXX-Jer. That is, LXX-Jer seems more aware of the OAN content as if the scribes were writing, or at least reworking, the text toward the OAN block.

The harmonization at 25:14 is even more noteworthy because the oracle against Elam seam does not attempt to connect to the previous passage. It simply introduces itself with a label, summarily “against Elam.” The work of keywords falls to the material preceding the OAN block, not the OAN itself. As scribes wrote the preceding text in chapter 25, they must have been aware that the OAN block would follow and so incorporated the content similarities. Because of the early text’s awareness of the OAN material, the OAN block likely existed prior to the later addition.

Furthermore, the intrabiblical trends of the OAN block placement seem to indicate that the OAN blocks appear in the earliest strata. In Isaiah and Ezekiel, the OAN blocks appear before all the identified later additions and within the earliest material. Isaiah places the OAN block at chapters 13–23. That is, it appears in the first half of the sixty-six chapters and begins 20 percent of the way through Isaiah. Ezekiel also places the OAN block midway in its material. The OAN block stretches across chapters 25–29.

It appears in the latter half of the forty-eight chapters and starts 52 percent of the way through Ezekiel. LXX-Jer follows this trend. The OAN block spans chapters 25:14–31. It sits approximately halfway through the fifty-two chapters and begins 48 percent of the way through Jeremiah. MT-Jer does not mimic the other OAN block placements. It sticks the OAN block at chapters 46–51, and the OAN start 92 percent of the way through Jeremiah.

The OAN seem to be a necessary part of the prophetic genre prior to later textual developments and additions. The scribes composing Jeremiah would be aware of this genre norm and how other prophetic texts incorporate the OAN, particularly in a medial location. Scribes were trained to employ standardized formats¹¹⁵ and often pulled in outside texts.¹¹⁶ For example, Jeremiah 52 quotes from Samuel-Kings to describe the temple and Jeremiah 15:16 alludes to Ezekiel eating a scroll to become a prophet (Ezek. 3:1 NRSV). The scribes writing Jeremiah were aware of other prophetic texts and their materials. As such, they would likely follow the genre norms and scribal trend of including the OAN early on. For Jeremiah, the OAN block would, then, be part of the early material in chapters 1–25.

The OAN block appears to be part of the earlier material found in chapters 1–25. The block's placement in LXX-Jer at chapter 26 allows for it to be part of the earlier strata. The harmonization of chapter 25 and the OAN indicate a textual awareness that anticipated the inclusion of the OAN block. Intrabiblical texts witness the OAN appearing in earlier materials such that the OAN were an early genre norm and expectation; scribes likely strove to incorporate the OAN early on in Jeremiah to reflect

115. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy*, 111–13.

116. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 145.

this trend. Overall, then, the OAN block was not a late addition to the Book of Jeremiah because it was likely part of the earlier material, not the later addition.

LXX-Jer Preserves an Earlier Version of Jeremiah

To compound my argument, I turn to a rule of thumb in biblical studies. Generally, the expansion and preservation of older material is the rule.¹¹⁷ That is, newer texts expand upon older texts, and texts generally do not cut material. MT-Jer clearly expands quite a bit—by 16 percent. If I adhere to the rule of thumb, then LXX-Jer preserves the older tradition, and MT-Jer is the younger text. LXX-Jer witnesses the presence of the OAN. As such, the OAN block is not a late addition to MT-Jer, although it appears at the end of the book as if it were physically sewn onto a scroll. The OAN block is likely not a late addition to the Book of Jeremiah given its medial placement in the text.

Furthermore, LXX as a whole is characterized as a literal translation of its parent text.¹¹⁸ The translator represented each morpheme of the Hebrew parent in the Greek text. Even when a direct translation did not fit with Greek standard usage, the translation maintained the isomorphism. When structural items align with Greek standard usage, it occurs exclusively at the phrase and clause level. Greek literary style, too, deferred to isomorphism.¹¹⁹ If the translator was being that literal on the micro-level, i.e., words and phrases, they would not likely rearrange the text according to their own thought

117. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 67.

118. Pietersma and Saunders, “Ieremias,” 876; Shead, “The Text of Jeremiah,” 261.

119. Pietersma and Saunders, 876.

process.¹²⁰ They seek to preserve in translation, and, I argue, they would seek to preserve in arrangement. They would maintain the internal order of the OAN block and its placement within Jeremiah as a whole. Additionally, the LXX translator would have maintained the keywords and phrases that attest to the harmonization around the OAN block. They likely would not add those words and phrases. Thus, the OAN block would remain embedded in the surrounding content via the keywords and phrases in the Vorlage. The OAN block, then, likely was placed after chapter 25 in the earlier version that LXX-Jer preserves. Thus, the OAN block was not a late addition to MT-Jer and likely not to the Book of Jeremiah.

Between the expansion rule and the literal nature of the LXX translation, the OAN was likely present in the Vorlage. LXX-Jer is not adding the OAN block later on. Thus, it is not a late addition. Furthermore, the OAN block was likely placed after chapter 25 in the Vorlage. It was not placed at the end as MT-Jer attests. Thus, the argument that late additions were sewn on at the end of scrolls and so the OAN block of MT-Jer was late does not stand.

Discussion Conclusion

Based on my arguments, I conclude that the OAN was present in and with earlier Jeremiah versions and/or material and was not a late addition. The OAN block's placement in LXX-Jer has smoother seams that indicate more scribes had more time to integrate the OAN block into the text. The OAN block was likely prior to the late addition to Jeremiah, i.e., chapters 26–52. The OAN block was likely placed in the

¹²⁰ Shead, "The Text of Jeremiah," 262.

Vorlage that the LXX preserves literally and so was present in its location prior to MT-Jer's placement. Thus, the Jeremiah OAN block was not a later addition. It was present in earlier material.

As a result of my conclusion, MT-Jer must have pulled the OAN block from chapters 25:14–31 as LXX-Jer preserves and relocated it at the end of the Book of Jeremiah, or chapters 46–51. In other words, scribes chose to relocate the OAN despite earlier scribal choices in earlier versions to which LXX-Jer attest. Scribes did reconstruct and reconnect tradition.¹²¹ However, scribes were also trained to write toward genre norms, text standardizations, and text harmonization. Furthermore, the MT-Jer OAN block placement is not consistent with the Masoretic style. Isaiah and Ezekiel in MT do not move the OAN block as a unit or rearrange the oracles internally within the OAN block, although they do witness the trend towards harmonization. MT-Jer seems to go off on its own in terms of textual arrangement. What MT-Jer is doing, then, is extremely strange and important. MT-Jer chooses to move the OAN block to the very end; it rips the OAN block from its previous location in a way that defies scribal trends and traditions and the affordances of scroll technology.

121. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 296.

Implications

MT-Jer's relocation of the OAN block goes against textual and scribal trends, particularly in terms of text organization. It witnesses that not all texts are organized in a textually chronological manner that mirrors the physical growth of a scroll. Scribes could rearrange texts; it was an option. To dismiss MT-Jer's rearrangement as an outlier or unfounded move would reduce MT-Jer's decision. While our available materials suggest that rearrangement is not the norm in prophetic literature, we may simply not have access to manuscripts, whether decomposed or as of yet unearthed, that would further attest to biblical texts' rearrangement. Regardless, such rearrangement was hardly arbitrary. Scribes had a reason for the relocation of the OAN block as we can see through grouping of texts in scrolls, the expense of text production, and the standardized aspects of text.

The Jeremiah scrolls at Qumran attest to an awareness of what texts were included in a given scroll. It is no mistake that Jeremiah-attributed and -related texts were grouped into a scroll and not compiled with, say, Isaiah-attributed and -related texts. Scribes had the option to mix and match the texts in various scrolls. They could have thrown together a document helter-skelter in hopes to simply record and thereby remember. Instead, we see that the material is in some way assumed to be Jeremianic. Furthermore, scribes chose what Jeremiah texts were included on the scroll, which were later canonized as the Book of Jeremiah. At Qumran, Jeremiah apocrypha were found in the same cave as the later canonized Jeremiah literature.¹²² For whatever reason, likely regarding bids for Jeremianic credibility, the scribes chose to add certain Jeremiah texts

122. See Israel Antiquities Authority, *The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library*, https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/search#q='Jeremiah'+AND+site_en:'Qumran,%20Cave%204'.

to certain scrolls. They were aware that they were materially placing certain content together and that such placement meant the included texts talked to each other. If the scribes were intentional about what material was placed within scrolls, they were likely intentional about the relocation of Jeremiah's OAN block.

Scribal intentionality becomes further evident with the expensive nature of text production. Papyrus was worth one to two weeks' wages, and other materials, like leather and parchment, were more expensive. Labor was less expensive than the materials but costly all the same since scribes were in limited supply.¹²³ The relocation of the OAN block would require a new scroll and therefore the costs. Otherwise, I imagine the relocation process would be similar to cutting the OAN block out of the scroll material, cutting the OAN into individual oracles, and cobbling everything back together in the desired order. Such a process seems unnecessarily difficult and materially messy; I doubt it would take place. Thus, due to the expenses of text production, scribes would need good reason to undertake the task of relocating the OAN.

Scribes appear to be incredibly aware of the written tradition, at least based on what we can observe from texts. Texts followed a standardized script and orthography. That is, letters evolved consistently.¹²⁴ Scribes had to be aware of the written tradition to follow this steady evolution. The graphic aspect of scrolls was also consistent. Letters and words were hung from a hang line, and scrolls were neatly split into columns. We do not often run into crooked scrawls, although some DSS bear evidence of text running

123. Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 19.

124. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy*, 109.

vertically.¹²⁵ Generally, scrolls maintain a consistent visual appearance that attest to scribes being aware of traditions. Scribes also wrote in standardized forms and followed genre norms. All prophetic literature contains OAN; this was a standard for the genre. Scribes also knew of other texts and incorporated them into a given text. Jeremiah contains passages that are not only aware of but quote from the Book of Kings. The brief summary of evidence indicates that scribes were too aware of tradition to simply ignore it. To go against the grain and expectations, they would need good reason.

While there is a reason for the relocation of the OAN, it is difficult to pinpoint the why. Perhaps Chae is correct, and the rearrangement stems from a post-exilic hope.¹²⁶ At the least, we can say the rearrangement indicates that not all scribal decisions were purely technological and geared toward strict preservation. The OAN's relocation is not based on scroll technology because it would have been spliced from the middle of a scroll. Preservation is not the strict preservation of modernity because rearrangement would have been considered preservation of tradition within the oral culture.

At the very least, we can observe that organization matters. An oral culture, arguably, would not have much need for a text other than in terms of a memory safety deposit box.¹²⁷ Most people were not reading; they were hearing and telling. The order, then, would not matter and demand a rerouting of tradition. MT-Jer would have been satisfied with LXX-Jer's placement of the OAN block and would not have decided that

125. See 4QJer^a. Israel Antiquities Authority, *The Leon Levy*, <https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/home>.

126. Chae, "Redactional Intentions," 585.

127. Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 23.

the OAN block needed to be placed in a particular order and appear in a particular location in the text. And yet, scribes relocated and rearranged the OAN.

The OAN, then, present a problem of anthology. Scribes considered how the OAN would appear on the page as a compilation. They were considering how the OAN worked together as a unit and how the unit worked with the rest of Jeremiah. They were determining what story arc best fit Jeremiah. Of course, as they did so, they sought to preserve the pre-existing tradition. They simply reframed the Book of Jeremiah via rearrangement.

Conclusion

Jeremiah is strange in its diverging organizations within LXX and MT. The OAN block is primarily at the heart of this divergence. LXX-Jer locates the OAN in a medial position, whereas MT-Jer locates the OAN at the end of the text. MT-Jer's OAN block end placement first appears to match the typical scribal decision to add material onto the Jeremiah scroll, and therefore, it would seem that the OAN block is a late addition to the Book of Jeremiah. However, I argue that the OAN block is not a late addition to Jeremiah based on my studies of the presence and strength of harmonizations. LXX-Jer more strongly harmonizes the OAN block with its bookending content than MT-Jer. MT-Jer does not attempt to harmonize the OAN and surrounding content with expansions. Isaiah and Ezekiel both harmonize their OAN blocks with their surrounding content. Of the four studied texts, LXX-Jer by far has the strongest sense of harmonization along its OAN block seams. LXX-Jer, then, has older seams and thus an older placement of the OAN block. The older placement of the OAN block in the middle of the text indicates that the OAN block was not a late addition to Jeremiah. If the OAN block was not a late addition, then MT-Jer relocated it to the end of the text from the medial location preserved in LXX-Jer.

Such relocation breaks from scribal trends. Other biblical manuscripts do not witness the same textual movement found in Jeremiah. The OAN block appears mid-text in other prophetic literature and is generally harmonized with its surrounding text. Furthermore, scribes sought to preserve tradition and were trained to observe genre norms. They chose to rearrange a preserved text and break the textual organization norm. While the decision seems radical considering what we know of scribal norms in antiquity,

the scribes must have had good reason for the rearrangement. The rearrangement of MT-Jer itself demonstrates that scribes cared about textual organization. These scribes would not have relocated and reordered the OAN if placement was arbitrary, if scrolls were memory storage, or if scribes simply needed to follow written tradition. They were dealing with a problem of anthology posed on a physical manuscript. How they compiled the anthology and arranged the text made for a different telling of Jeremiah.

Indeed, the retelling of a text is expected in a society where text was more like recipes: a rough sense of the necessary ingredients and improvisation within reason.¹²⁸ While MT-Jer does not completely follow the scribal trends of the OAN placement, it does preserve much of LXX-Jer and expands on it. If we borrow from Chae and claim that the changes are literary, social, and historical in nature, then scribes recontextualized the story to their present time. In other words, scribes had an eye toward preservation and an eye toward the current time.

When we consider this today, we have much to learn. We are linear readers. We read codices, and we do so, typically, from cover-to-cover, or so the phrase goes. Where the OAN appear in Jeremiah matters to us modern-day folks. We use the cover-to-cover reading model to have a literary understanding of the rest of the text. That is how we are trained to read; we pick up context clues and breadcrumbs.

We then apply our reading skills to biblical texts that are based on the MT, such as popular English translations the King James Version and the New Standard Revised Version. Historically, KJV has been *the* text for English readers. There are even bumper

128. Pioske, *Memory in a Time*, 72.

stickers claiming, “If it ain’t King James, it ain’t Bible.”¹²⁹ To make such a claim is bold. KJV preserves MT-Jer, which preserves a textual arrangement that is strange and does not match textual trends. Why should we be reading it? LXX-Jer is more in-line with textual trends. Yet, LXX-Jer misses much of the textual growth that MT-Jer contains. I do not claim either version to be more authoritative or somehow “more holy writ.” I simply claim that we should be critical of the biblical writings we have. We cannot turn a blind eye to textual variations. We must pay them mind and use the comparison for a richer understanding. After all, MT-Jer’s arrangement had its purposes that balanced preservation and retelling. We could learn a thing or two from biblical scribes behind MT-Jer’s arrangement: keep one eye toward preservation and one toward situating biblical texts within our own context today.

129. Tailer Ransom, photograph, email message to author, March 27, 2023.

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