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Jeremiah – “The Prophet like Moses”?

1. Introduction

1.1 The Link to Deuteronomy 18

The very last clause of the Torah begins, “And a prophet like Moses did not rise again in Israel” (Deut 34:10). This refers back to the divine promise quoted by Moses in Deut 18:18, “I will raise up for them a prophet from the midst of their brothers like you,” which he had already mentioned three verses earlier: “YHWH, your God, will raise up a prophet from your midst, from your brothers, like me” (v. 15). The tension between the repeated announcements of a prophet equal to Moses in Deut 18 and its non-fulfilment points in two directions: it indicates that the divine promise has *not yet been realised* by the conclusion of the Torah, and that its *fulfilment is still to be expected*.

This *open motif remains a topic for discussion* for the community of those who believe in the God of the Torah. Is he faithful to his word? And who might be the prophet who is equal to Moses, by far the most important and dominant figure in Israel’s history? The Book of Jeremiah¹ responds to this issue. In its very first chapter, it proposes the prophet Jeremiah as the expected and promised successor of Moses.

The key to such an understanding is to be found in Jer 1:9 where God, as he touches Jeremiah’s mouth, says: “Behold, I give my words in your mouth.” This picks up the continuation of the divine promise in Deut 18:18: “And I will give my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them everything which I will command him.” Renate Brandscheidt has interpreted Jer 1:9 as “*dramatization*” of Deut 18, adding to the mere words a unique divine gesture underlining and visualizing them.² No other text of the Hebrew Bible uses the phrase נתן דברי בפה, “to give my words into the mouth,” with God as a subject.³ Thus, an “exclusive relationship”⁴ unites Jer 1 and Deut 18.

The second characterisation of the prophet like Moses, to “speak everything which I will command,” is also present in Jer 1. The phrase דבר כל-אשר צוה occurs in God’s response to Jeremiah’s objection at the end of v. 7, and again in v. 17, both times as a command. Besides these three instances in the opening chapter of Jer, which allude to the “law for the prophet” in Deut 18:15–22, Jer refers to it quite often later on,⁵ so that it seems reasonable to conclude for Jer that there is a deliberate dependence on it. Jer uses it as a key text to claim authority for “Jeremiah” and for its own message, to disqualify the pretensions and proclamations of other prophets, and to question their legitimacy.

¹ From this point on, “Jer” will be used for either the book or its author, whereas “Jeremiah” refers to the historical or literary figure of the prophet.

² Renate Brandscheidt, *Bestellt über Völker und Königreiche*, 30; Matthias Köckert, *Zum literargeschichtlichen Ort des Prophetengesetzes Dtn 18*, is one of the few holding the opposite position, supposing Deut 18 to be dependent on Jer 1.

³ In the New Testament, Acts 3:22 and 7:37 pick up Moses’ quote of the divine promise in Deut 18:15. Peter, in his speech in Acts 3, interprets the coming of Jesus as its realisation.

⁴ The term “exclusive relationship” designates a literary link by a marked expression occurring only in two texts or books; for example, מצא קשר (“to find treason”) connects 2 Kgs 17:4 and Jer 11:9 and is not found anywhere else, thus forming a strong bond between them. Jer contains a large number of such links, and they serve as a helpful tool not only for establishing the intertextual links of Jer, but also for gaining insight into its composition.

⁵ E.g., Jer 14:14, 20:9, 23:32, 26:16, 28:9, 35:13, and 44:16 show close connections to Deut 18.

1.2 The Debate about the “Original” Text of Jeremiah

Any serious biblical study has to start with the text. For Jer, this is a very delicate issue, as recent years have brought about a *significant shift in the evaluation of the two main textual traditions* of Jer. From antiquity, readers viewed the MT as generally offering the preferable reading.⁶ However, this began to shift in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as scholars such as J.D. Michaelis and F.C. Movers began to give preference to the Greek version.⁷ This would continue with German scholars in the twentieth century (Duhm, B.H. Kittel, Cornill, Volz, Rudolph), and with English language scholars such as H.P. Smith and Streane, then surviving in the works of Bright, Thompson, Holladay, Janzen, Cross, Tov, McKane, and others. This view sees the Greek version, or its supposed Hebrew “Vorlage,” as closer to the presumed original of Jer.⁸

At first glance, the recent preference for the Septuagint of Jer seems to have strong support. The Greek text of Jer is approximately one sixth shorter than the Hebrew—if one applies the criterion of *lectio brevior potior*, this favours the LXX of Jer.⁹ The order of Jer MT has the oracles against foreign nations, unusually, at the close of the book, as chs. 46–51, whereas in the LXX they are in the middle, as Jer 25–31, corresponding to the normal sequence of prophetic books.¹⁰ The Qumran manuscript 4Q71, with traces of Jer 9:22–10:21, sides in some cases with the LXX version, and this is taken as proof for the latter’s priority.¹¹ However, several studies in the last few years have pointed to *difficulties in the majority position*. Oliver Glanz has analysed the many changes in the communication structure of Jer, occurring in person, gender, and number.¹² He concludes that Jer MT is the most complicated text, followed and supported by the Qumran manuscripts, and that the LXX of Jer deviates the most, exhibiting a tendency to diminish such shifts and thus making it easier to understand. Two studies on Jer 10, which is a focal point in the discussion about the text of Jer because of 4Q71, present plausible harmonisations and other deliberate changes in the Greek version.¹³

⁶ One of the first to explicitly vote for such a position was St. Jerome, *In Hieremiam Prophetam*, Prologus, 2.

⁷ On these developments see Franz D. Hubmann, *Bemerkungen zur älteren Diskussion um die Unterschiede zwischen MT und G im Jeremiabuch*.

⁸ Other representatives of this position include Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, Adrian Schenker, and Hermann-Josef Stipp. A decisive factor for this change was the work of J. Gerald Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, with a provisional rendering of five Jer manuscripts from Qumran. For an overview of the contrasting opinions, see the entries of Richard D. Weis, “Textual History of Jeremiah”, in: Armin Lange (ed.), *Textual History of the Bible, Volume 1B*, and, in the same volume, Georg Fischer, “7.3 Jeremiah: Septuagint” (2016).

⁹ The problem with such reasoning is that it transfers an argument valid for textual critical *comparison within one language* to a translation. When one has to render an original in another language, one can easily either lengthen or shorten it. As Jer is very repetitive, the latter is explicable.

¹⁰ The usual order, schematically, is judgement upon Israel – judgement upon other nations – salvation for Israel. Only Jer MT deviates so drastically from it; this could also be interpreted as *lectio difficilior*. There is still the banquet scene and its sequel in Jer 32 LXX, as closure for these oracles, which in MT 25:15–38 are a prelude to and announcement of what will come later.

¹¹ Also 4QJer72a, with the text of Jer 43:4–6, goes together with the LXX in some instances. For the problems of such an interpretation see Georg Fischer, *Jeremia. Der Stand* (2007), esp. 21–22.

¹² Oliver Glanz, *Understanding Participant-Reference Shifts in the Book of Jeremiah*.

¹³ Antonio Favale, *Dio d’Israele e dei popoli*, and James Seth Adcock, “Oh God of Battles!”

The research of Shimon Gesundheit on Jer 25, the “deviation point” regarding Jer’s structure,¹⁴ arrives at the same result. In my eyes, Jer MT generally deserves priority, offering a more complex reading, whereas the differences of the LXX version can easily be explained as resulting from the process of translation.¹⁵ Therefore it seems not only legitimate, but necessary to take Jer MT as the basis for Jer studies.

*

The purpose of the above introductory remarks is twofold. The first part aims to show that Jer, in its very first chapter, claims Jeremiah as the *announced successor of Moses*, and equal to him. The second section pleads for caution with respect to the privileged position and esteem attributed to the Greek version of Jer in recent years, pointing to *serious problems* with it and suggesting that Jer MT is the better basis for investigations into this book.¹⁶

Against this background, we may now go on to scrutinise in detail the *relationship between Moses and Jeremiah*. I will proceed in three steps. As Moses is the main figure of the Torah, I will first (in section 2) deal with the concept of תורה in Jer, and its use therein. If Jeremiah is the promised prophet like Moses, it must show up in some way in his book. At the same time, “like” does not mean “identical”; this implies that Jeremiah, in some way, “deviates” from his predecessor and shows new traits (3). Finally (4), the direct comparison of the two figures will make clear that Jeremiah, in many respects, is quite different from Moses.

2. The Authority of the Torah in Jeremiah

2.1 The Passages with תורה in Jeremiah

There are eleven passages with תורה in Jer.¹⁷ Its meaning—“instruction, teaching, Torah”—is open and its usage in Jer is *varied and ambiguous*. Five occurrences show the phrase הלך בתורה “to walk in the instruction / Torah,”¹⁸ and four of them state that this has not happened, the exception being Jer 26:4, where it is a warning. This indicates a problem with God’s teaching / Torah, namely that time after time it is not heeded by the people.

Such a *negative connotation* is already present in the first instance for תורה in Jer 2:8. It carries an accusation: “those handling / grasping התורה don’t know me.”¹⁹ God judges those people who are closely connected with “the instruction / Torah” to be far from him in their behaviour. Similarly, Jer 8:8 and 18:18 also have negative undertones. The context of the first passage questions the conviction of the “we”-group to possess יהוה תורת יהוה by disqualifying the

¹⁴ Shimon Gesundheit, *The Question of LXX Jeremiah*.

¹⁵ For further arguments, see Fischer, *Jeremia. Der Stand* (2007), 17–53; idem, *Zum Text des Jeremiabuches* (1997), 305–328; and Andreas Vonach, *Jeremias*. Jack Lundbom, *Haplography in the Hebrew Vorlage of LXX Jeremiah*, offers another argument for priority of the MT, based on haplography.

¹⁶ The link between Deut 18:18 and Jer 1:9 may serve as a typical example. In Hebrew, the correspondence between the two texts is very close: ונתתי דברי בפיו and ונתתי דברי בפיו, whereas in the LXX Deut 18:18 has και δώσω τὸ ῥῆμά μου ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ and Jer 1:9 δέδωκα τοὺς λόγους μου εἰς τὸ στόμα σου. The meaning of the two phrases is similar, but the wording differs significantly and does not convey the precise connection existing in Hebrew.

¹⁷ The main study for this topic is Christl Maier, *Jeremia als Lehrer der Tora*. She, too, assumes that תורה in Jer may also refer to written scrolls (293–294), thus allowing for “Torah” to be intended by it.

¹⁸ Jer 9:12 (English 9:13; here verb and preposition are in a relative clause, following תורה after some words in between); 26:4; 32:23; 44:10, 23. They all relate תורה by suffixes to God.

¹⁹ For the importance and significance of this passage see Georg Fischer, *ותפשי התורה לא ידעוני* (2016).

scribes' handling of it twice as שקר ("deceit"). Jer 18:18 conveys the false attitude and illusory confidence of the group opposing Jeremiah that "תורה will not disappear from the priest" and that they therefore need not heed his words and may beat him. Two other passages, Jer 6:19 and 16:11, also criticize the community, with respect to תורה, of having despised and not kept its commands.

The *one positive exception* in Jer's use of תורה is in the passage concerning the New Covenant, where God declares: "I will give תורתִי in their midst, and on their heart I will write it" (31:33). However, the other ten occurrences, too, show in the background a deep appreciation for God's תורה, and they question the way in which some religious officials and the people in general deal with it. Some passages, like 8:8 and 31:33, are connected with "writing," and might thus point to scrolls, maybe even the five books of the Torah. In any case, God's previous "instruction," be it written or communicated in another form, is a key concept for Jer and an undisputed basis for the book.

2.2 The Usage of the Torah in Jeremiah

The use of תורה in Jer shows the book's esteem for God's teaching. This attitude is confirmed by the *many close links of Jer with all books of the Torah*. Some examples may give an idea of the way in which Jer deals with them.²⁰

Jer 4:23–26 describes Jeremiah's vision of the earth as תהו ובהו, the heavens without light, and with neither humans nor birds in them. This refers back to Gen 1, and is obviously a *reversal* of the first creation narrative.²¹ The *Book of Exodus serves as a source* many times, for example in the motif of bringing out from Egypt,²² with the Decalogue quoted in an abbreviated manner in Jer 7:9, and with references to events at Mount Sinai (see Jer 31:32 for the "old" covenant there).

Connections with the Book of *Leviticus* are less visible, though there is a strong and exclusive link found in the phrase געלה נפש "the soul abhors," connecting Lev 26:11, 15, 30, 43 and Jer 14:19. It is significant that Jer does not refer to the cultic stipulations, but picks up a heavily loaded emotional expression of God's promises and threats from the book's concluding section. The oracle concerning Moab in Jer 48 draws on the Book of *Numbers* in several instances. The place names in vv. 21–24 are in part identical with locations mentioned in Num 21 and 32–33. Furthermore, Jer 48:45–46 look like a combination of Num 21:28–29 with Num 24:17.

The *Book of Deuteronomy is the main source* for Jer. The link to Deut 18 (see above 1.1) showed that Jer deliberately chooses the image of Moses as prophet from there for its portrayal of Jeremiah, and takes the "law of the prophet" as an aid in the discernment of prophecy (cf. the instances in note 5). Moreover, Jer quotes Deuteronomy very often: main focal points are the former and the latter frame, among them especially Deut 4–5 and 31–32, with Deut 28 being the peak in the intensity of the links.²³

²⁰ The connections are so many that it is not possible to give a complete list here. For a more systematic presentation of some major links see Fischer, ותפשי (2016), 891–911, and earlier Fischer, *Jeremia. Der Stand* (2007), 134–136.

²¹ Birgit Trimpe, *Von der Schöpfung zur Zerstreung*, 55–84.

²² Jer 7:22, 25; 11:4 and elsewhere; cf. Georg Fischer, *Zurück nach Ägypten?* (2014). On the importance of "Egypt" in Jer, see Michael P. Maier, *Ägypten – Israels Herkunft und Geschick*.

²³ For the latter, see Georg Fischer, *Fulfilment and Reversal* (2012). It is important, however, that Jer also picks up promises of Deuteronomy and the Torah. A clear example is Deut 4:29 being referred to in Jer 29:13; cf. further the discussion in the article "The Book of Jeremiah: Realization of Threats of the Torah – and also of Promises?" (above, p. \$\$\$). More generally

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The picture emerging from the remarks above is that Jer exhibits a *knowledge of all the Books of the Torah*, and even of its presumably late texts (such as Lev 26; Deut 32).²⁴ The links with it can best be interpreted by perceiving Jer as quoting and alluding to them; the ideas of “reversal” (Gen 1 in Jer 4) and “fulfilment” (e.g. of the curses of Deut 28, often in Jer) suggest that the former texts are extant, and that Jer works with them. Even “late” passages, such as the final chapters of Lev and Deut, show up as sources for it. Thus Jer deliberately presents its message as a sequel to the Torah, elaborating and reflecting on it.

Jer uses the books of the Torah *constantly*, starting with the first chapter, in poetry (Jer 4), prose (Jer 7), prayer (Jer 14), salvation texts (Jer 29; 31), and right up to the final section, the oracles against foreign nations (Jer 48). This points to a common literary technique pervading the whole Jer scroll, which can also be observed with respect to the relationship with other books of the Hebrew Bible (see 3.2 below).

It is not only the word תורה, which is important for Jer; Jer is also familiar with many texts of the books of the Torah and displays a high degree of appreciation for them. This feature is necessary for the consideration of the aspect “*like Moses*.” As Moses is the dominant figure in four scrolls of the Torah, Jeremiah, as his successor, must have a similar orientation and values as prophet akin to those of his predecessor to whom he is supposed to be equal. Such a *similarity between them* is apparent in many aspects. Moses and Jeremiah are both presented as God’s favourite dialogue partners.²⁵ Both have to suffer attacks because of their divine mission (Exod 5:21; Jer 11:18–21, etc.) and for both it is important that God’s messages are communicated without any abbreviation (Deut 4:2; 13:1; Jer 26:2). The outstanding frequency of Jer’s links with Deuteronomy, the scroll with the highest percentage of Moses-speeches, underlines further, on a literary level, the closeness between the two prophets.

3. Going Beyond Moses

However, Jeremiah is *no “copy”* of Moses. As he is situated later in “history,”²⁶ it is only natural that new themes, problems, solutions, and orientation should show up in his book. The different setting of Jer leads the reader to expect such changes and further developments, compared with the figure of Moses, and this is indeed visible in Jeremiah and his book.

3.1 Distance from the Concepts of the Torah

Moshe Weinfeld, in his seminal article on “spiritual metamorphosis” in Jer,²⁷ highlighted a number of passages where Jer displays *stances different from what is usual or even prescribed in the Torah*. Among them are the neglect of the Ark of the Covenant (Jer 3:16–17), the critique of sacrifices (Jer 7:21–23), the new wording of oaths, surpassing the motif of the old

on this topic of the connections between Deuteronomy and Jer, see Georg Fischer, *Der Einfluss des Deuteronomiums* (2011).

²⁴ Both texts, in their final form, refer to the exile and are therefore assumed to be post-exilic: for Lev 26 see Thomas Hieke, *Levitikus 16–27*, 1100; Eckart Otto, *Deuteronomium 23, 16–34, 12*, 2166, interprets Deut 32 as reaction to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.

²⁵ On Moses, cf. Georg Fischer, *Das Mosebild der Hebräischen Bibel* (2000), especially 89–90.

²⁶ Jer 15:1 mentions Moses and thus presupposes knowledge of him. Additionally, the many books in between Deuteronomy, where the death of Moses is reported at the end, and 2 Kings, which at its closure talks about the time when Jeremiah lived, point to a great distance in time.

²⁷ Moshe Weinfeld, *Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel*.

Exodus out of Egypt (Jer 16:14–15 // 23:7–8),²⁸ and the idea of a “new covenant” (Jer 31:31–34) which has God’s תורה “inscribed” directly on the heart, instead of on stones as in Exod 31:18; 34:1–4, 27–28. All these are significant changes with respect to prescriptions of the Torah²⁹ and move in the direction of a different kind of piety, which is more interested in a *personal, individual relationship* with God.

The latter shows up very clearly in Jer 31:34, the final verse of the “new covenant” passage, granting to everybody an intimate knowledge of God, and opposing this to teaching it.³⁰ Jer even dares to *go against the law* such as in the case where God offers a different option to the divorced woman who has become another man’s wife. Whereas the relevant ruling in Deut 24:1–4 excludes the possibility of return, God, in Jer 3:1–4:4, not only allows it, but actually invites her to do so (3:12, 14). A second instance is the law of an apostate city. Deut 13:13–19 sees evil men “going out of her midst” (v. 14) as a reason, and with the result that this city will become a תל עולם which will never be rebuilt (v. 17). In the second poem of the scroll of consolation, the phrases “and the city will be rebuilt on its tell” and “his ruler goes out from its midst” in Jer 30:18, 21 pick up precisely the wording of Deut 13 and reverse it, thus abrogating this law.³¹ Deut 13 had, in veiled form, talked about the fate of Jerusalem at the Babylonian conquest; Jer, written much later, may already refer to its restoration, as a sign of undeserved and unexpected divine grace.

The observations above indicate that Jer presents *a stage beyond the Torah*; it is based on it, and presupposes it, but relativizes some of its ideas and offers new solutions to difficulties unresolved there, or to issues that show up as problematic later on. In this respect, Jeremiah / Jer sometimes even takes a stance “against” Moses.

3.2 A Broader Background

Above (in section 2) the Torah has emerged as a reference work for Jer. However, Jer uses not only the Torah, but also the Former Prophets and several of the Latter Prophets. It thus greatly *extends the “horizon” of Moses* and of the writings connected with him. This points to wider interests and a desire to enter into dialogue with other prophetic literature.

The *closeness of Jer to deuteronomistic literature* is widely recognized³² and undeniable. I will briefly mention here some elements from the respective books. The “kingdoms of Hazor” (Jer 49:28) are exclusively linked to Josh 11:10. The ironic exhortation to cry to other gods for help in Judg 10:14 is the closest parallel to Jer 11:12. God’s promise to David in 2 Sam 7, to establish his house / dynasty and be a father to his descendants, is the basis for Jer 31:9 and other texts in Jer.³³ The Books of Kings, finally, are the main source for Jer’s historical

²⁸ See the similar attitude in Isa 43:16–21, especially v. 18–19; cf. Ulrich Berges, *Jesaja 40–48*, 300–303.

²⁹ For the importance of the Ark of the Covenant, see Exod 25:10–22; sacrifices are highly valued, e.g. in Lev 1–7; to pass on the memory of the Exodus is prescribed in Exod 12:14, 17, 42; 13:3, 8–10, 14–16.

³⁰ With piel למדל, in contrast to the insistence on teaching and learning in Deuteronomy; for this see Georg Braulik, *Das Deuteronomium und die Gedächtniskultur Israels*.

³¹ This interpretation has been suggested by Eckart Otto, *Gottes Recht als Menschenrecht*, 76; he refers to Georg Fischer, *Das Trostbüchlein* (1993), 191–192. Both phrases are the closest parallels, the one with “tell” is even an exclusive relationship.

³² See, for example, the two volumes of Winfried Thiel as major systematic treatment of Jer’s connections with it. Winfried Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1–25*, and Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 26–45*.

³³ Michael Pietsch, “*Dieser ist der Sproß Davids ...*”, 75–92, notes especially the connection with Jer 33:14–26.

framework, starting in Jer 1:2–3, and reaching the climax in the final chapter 52, almost entirely, and often verbatim, taken from 2 Kgs 24:18–25:30.³⁴ The long quote of the end of 2 Kings is a sign that Jer is even later and that it could also have had knowledge of the previous books.

The affinity to the “Deuteronomistic History” is frequently interpreted as an indication of a “dtr redaction” of Jer.³⁵ However, there are two main arguments which speak against such a hypothesis. First, Jer’s language and ideas are often different from dtr thinking and sometimes contradict it, as Helga Weippert, J. Gordon McConville and others have shown.³⁶ Second, the many references to the Latter Prophets (see below) point to a wider spectrum of intellectual and theological discussion than mere dtr thoughts and orientation. Therefore, it seems better to *refrain from labelling Jer “deuteronomistic”* and from assuming its composition to be the work of dtr editors.

The connections with several of the *Latter Prophets are still more intriguing* than the relationship with dtr literature. Generally accepted are Jer’s references to Hosea, Amos, Micah and “First” Isaiah,³⁷ as those prophets are chronologically situated earlier than Jer. A question of debate relates to the links with the second part of Isaiah, with Ezekiel, and with other books of the Twelve.³⁸ Several expressions in Jer 10:3–4 seem to presuppose the critique of the idols in Isa 44:9–20 as background.³⁹ Jer 6:7 and 20 speak of “violence and destruction” (חמס ושד) being heard in Jerusalem and of God’s disinterest in “incense from Sheba,” thus contradicting the new salvation for it, as announced in Isa 60:6, 18.⁴⁰ These and other links hint at *Jer drawing even from texts of “Deutero-” and “Trito-Isaiah.”*

The case of the relationship with Ezekiel is similarly disputed. The majority position takes Ezek as later than Jer. However, several studies of Henk Leene⁴¹ point in the other direction, namely, of *Ezekiel as a source for Jer*. Whereas the reference to the process of the refinement of bronze and iron in Jer 6:28–29 in itself is hard to understand, taking Ezek 22:9, 18–21 as background renders it comprehensible. The criticism of false prophets and their announcement of “peace” in Ezek 13 receives an extended treatment in several texts of Jer (6:9–15, in part parallel to 8:10–12; 14:13–18; 23: 9–40, etc.). The proverb of eating sour

³⁴ Many of Jer’s references in between—e.g. in Jer 22; 24:1; and 32:1–2, etc.—also presuppose the knowledge of the relevant texts in the books of Kings. For the relationship of 2 Kgs 24:18–25:30 with Jer 52 see Georg Fischer, *Jeremia 52 – ein Schlüssel zum Jeremiabuch* (1998), and for its significance and function within Jer, see idem, *Jeremia. Prophet über Völker und Königreiche* (2015), 29–32.

³⁵ In this direction, besides Thiel (note 32 above), see also Rainer Albertz, *Die Exilszeit*, 236–242, who reckons with at least three dtr redactions.

³⁶ Helga Weippert, *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches*; J. G. McConville, *Judgment and Promise*; William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 56–58.

³⁷ Cf. Hetty Lalleman-de Winkel, *Jeremiah in Prophetic Tradition*, showing the influence of Amos and Hosea on Jer; Silvana Manfredi, *Geremia in dialogo*, demonstrating for Jer 4–6 also dependence on Micah and Isaiah.

³⁸ For the traditional view of dependence, see, e.g., Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 86–88 on Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah, and 81–84, on Ezekiel. This position is based on a preconceived dating of the respective texts.

³⁹ Angelika Berlejung, *Die Theologie der Bilder*, 391.

⁴⁰ Georg Fischer, *Partner oder Gegner?* (2007), 77. “Incense from Sheba” is an exclusive relationship.

⁴¹ Hendrik Leene, *Ezekiel and Jeremiah*; idem, *Blowing the Same Shofar*, and recently idem, *Newness in Old Testament Prophecy*.

grapes and the dull teeth of the next generation in Ezek 18:2 is elaborated in Jer 31:29.⁴²

These and other indications suggest that Jer could be seen as dependent on Ezek.

Besides Amos, Hosea, and Micah, other Books of the Twelve have served as *sources for Jer*. Obadiah 1–5 have been reused in Jer 49:9, 14–16.⁴³ A part of the last verse of Nahum, on the downfall of Nineveh (Nah 3:19: “for your brokenness”), is applied to Zion in Jer 30:12,⁴⁴ and the maltreatment of the woman in Nah 3:5 is the closest parallel to Jer 13:22, 26. Habakkuk 2:13 (“and people labour for fire, and nations get tired for nought”) is exclusively related to Jer 51:58, the final verse of the oracles against Babylon, and expanded there: “and people labour for nought, and nations for fire, and they get tired.”⁴⁵

The links mentioned above show *Jer's use of at least half of the twelve* Minor Prophets. As the Book of Zechariah knows Jer,⁴⁶ they open a “window” into the genesis of Jer and the Twelve. Jer seems to have originated when the books of the other Major Prophets, Isaiah and Ezekiel, as well as a large part of the Minor Prophets were already extant. Jer could pick up motifs and phrases from them, and did so very extensively. Taking this high degree of intertextuality seriously is thus a key for an appropriate understanding of Jer, and these “dialogues” with a multitude of scrolls of (what later became) the Hebrew Bible are the reason for its “mosaic” character and, in part, for the complexity of its composition. Jer incorporates a much richer background than Moses.

3.3 An International Horizon

In a similar direction, the *relationships with other peoples* are different. Moses is elevated at the Egyptian court, is married to a Midianite woman, Zipporah, and mentions other nations (e.g. in Exod 15:14–15; Deut 2:26–3:11; 23:4, 8). However, the relationship is often “distanced” or hostile, even with respect to the people to whom his wife belonged (see Num 25; 31). The focus of Moses’ activity is Israel, and leading them to the encounter with God at Sinai and later towards the Promised Land.

The outlook of *Jer is more universal*. Right from the beginning he is appointed as a “prophet for the nations” (Jer 1:5). YHWH’s title “king of the nations” in 10:6 corresponds to this, and both expressions are unique. The frequency of creation motifs or allusions to creation⁴⁷ is another sign of this worldwide, even cosmic perspective of Jer.

Jeremiah’s designation as “prophet for the nations” is exemplified throughout his book. Similar to the way in which Israel is dealt with, Jer offers *salvation also to foreign nations* (Jer 12:16), and reversal of fate after judgment.⁴⁸ The position of the oracles against the foreign nations at the end of the book, in Jer 46–51, gives them decisive weight; this

⁴² Gordon H. Matties, *Ezekiel 18 and the Rhetoric of Moral Discourse*, 141–142.

⁴³ Birgit Hartberger, “An den Wassern von Babylon ...”, 182–183, 201–203.

⁴⁴ Fischer, *Das Trostbüchlein* (1993), 190.

⁴⁵ For the differences of the Hebrew and Greek versions of the quote of Hab 2:13 in Jer 51, see Fischer, *Jeremia. Der Stand* (2007), 26–27. Jer LXX inserts a negation, and thus turns around the meaning of the text.

⁴⁶ Among others, Konrad R. Schaefer, *Zechariah 14: A Study in Allusion*, and, more generally, Risto Nurmela, *Prophets in Dialogue*.

⁴⁷ See Jer 4:23–26; 5:22, 24; 8:2, 7; 10:12–13, etc.; cf. Helga Weippert, *Schöpfer des Himmels und der Erde*.

⁴⁸ The phrase *שוב שבות* “to turn around the fate” is applied to Israel (e.g. in 29:14; 30:3, 18; 31:23, etc.), but also to Moab, the Ammonites, and Elam (Jer 48:47; 49:6, 39). Furthermore, Egypt, too, receives a promise of restoration at the end of 46:26.

corresponds to the key roles of Egypt and Babylon, which frame them.⁴⁹ Thrice YHWH calls Nebuchadnezzar “my servant,”⁵⁰ showing his esteem for him and attributing to him an international function.

Jer has a very long list of nations in Jer 25:18–26 and mentions a large number of foreigners by name.⁵¹ This mirrors a close interaction between these people, and a cultural exchange, also testified to by details in Jer 46 and 50–51. These are signs that *Jer is much more open to others*, and interested in their fate, than Moses and most of his fellow prophets. Jeremiah’s “friendly” stance towards foreigners is also a source for many of his conflicts, as the narrations in Jer 27–29 and 37–38 show. Jer is marked by an international and universal orientation. In this it differs greatly from most of the Torah and many of the prophetic books.

3.4 New Aspects with Regard to the Torah

Section 3.1 above has presented issues where Jer takes a stance different from the Torah. Here I wish to focus on new or more developed motifs in Jer that are signs of a later time, or another orientation.

a) *The role of “Jerusalem.”* The Torah does not mention Jerusalem once, although, for example, the “King of Salem” in Gen 14:18 may be a hidden reference to it.⁵² In contrast to this, Jer uses the name 102 times, out of 660 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible, only surpassed by 2 Chronicles with 120 mentions. This *emphasis on Jerusalem* is a new feature, in comparison with the Torah. Parallel to it, כשדים “Chaldeans” and King Nebuchadnezzar occur very often,⁵³ indicating the Babylonian threat leading to the destruction of Jerusalem. The downfall of Jerusalem is a focus in Jer and highlighted by the dynamic leading to the final chapter 52.⁵⁴

b) *The presence of the temple.* Whereas the Torah only knows of a sanctuary to be transported as Israel makes its way through the wilderness (Exod 25–31 *passim*) and of the place where YHWH will choose to put his name (Deut 12:5), the prophet *Jeremiah sees the temple* in Jerusalem, visits it (Jer 19:14) and proclaims God’s messages there (e.g. Jer 26:7). He criticizes the false trust in it (Jer 7:4) and relativizes the importance given to it by the sanctuary texts of the Torah.⁵⁵

In addition, Jeremiah frequently has *conflicts with priests* and prophets present in the temple. Main confrontations are those with the priest Pashhur (Jer 20:1–6) and the prophet Hananiah (Jer 28). They display fundamentally different attitudes. The “official” staff of the temple and

⁴⁹ Egypt in Jer 46; for its role in Jer see Michael Maier, *Ägypten*. The downfall of Babylon, in Jer 50–51, is the climax, bringing to an end a perilous and damaging foreign influence and domination; John Hill, *Friend or Foe?*, has aptly grasped its function within Jer. Jer 2:18, 36 (using both times “Ashur,” instead of Babylon) are warnings against a too narrow orientation towards these superpowers.

⁵⁰ Jer 25:9; 27:6; 43:10; all these “provocative” designations for the foreign king who was responsible for Jerusalem’s destruction are missing in the LXX. Cf. Klaas A.D. Smelik, *My Servant Nebuchadnezzar*.

⁵¹ Only Gen 10, with the listing of the descendants of Noah’s sons, is longer, containing seventy names. For this international perspective of Jer, see Georg Fischer, *Gottes universale Horizonte* (2013), and idem, *Der weite Blick des Völkerpropheten* (2014).

⁵² In this sense Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, 409–410.

⁵³ “Chaldeans” is found forty-six times in Jer, out of eighty in the HB; “Nebuchadnezzar” has thirty-seven occurrences in Jer, out of sixty-two in the HB.

⁵⁴ The concentration on Jerusalem and the catastrophe of 587 BCE is a distinctive feature of Jer; see Georg Fischer, *Don’t Forget Jerusalem’s Destruction!* (2016).

⁵⁵ Georg Fischer, *Zur Relativierung des Tempels im Jeremiabuch* (2005).

many other prophets are mostly opposed to Jeremiah and his proclamations,⁵⁶ and this becomes a major source of suffering for him.

c) *A changed perspective.* The Torah is *describing a very distant past*, centuries, if not millennia (Gen 1–11) back in time. Even Moses, chronologically, is situated in the period before the “entry” into the land, i.e. not before the twelfth century BCE. There are no sure reference points that would allow us to correlate him with historical events. Despite the fact that it is dated far back in time, that Moses never actually enters the Promised Land, and that it only occasionally looks “forward” into the future,⁵⁷ the Torah nevertheless intends to *give directives for Israel’s life to come*. The setting of the narrated time remains in the past, yet the aim is to influence decisively the community reading these scrolls.

The perspective of Jer, however, is different from that of the Torah. It depicts the events of a much later time, that is, the seventh and sixth century BCE, as actually present. Readers perceive Jeremiah walking and talking with his contemporaries, although Jer must have been written around two centuries later.⁵⁸ This means that Jer, similar to the Torah, describes the past, but chooses another way of presentation, linking its central figure Jeremiah to “known” characters and places and thus drawing the addressees into more lively encounters. Whereas the Torah is mostly oriented towards the future existence of the people, the main focus of Jer is *on understanding a terrible, disastrous past, and reflecting upon it*.

Jer, too, has announcements for the future, in two directions. Most of them “predict” Jerusalem’s fall—in fact, they are *vaticina ex eventu*. However, there are also positive outlooks given, concentrated especially in Jer 29–33, and sometimes inspired by Isaian texts.⁵⁹

d) *An inverted movement.* The dynamic of the Torah and of Jer also differ markedly. The movement in Exodus to Deuteronomy is directed *towards the Promised Land*, starting from Egypt. Finally, the people can see that the fulfilment of God’s promises to give them a country is close at hand.

In Jer, this process is reversed. The people are already in the country, and at the end of the narrative section, in Jer 43–44, they deliberately choose, against God’s advice, to *go back to Egypt*.⁶⁰ They do so in spite of having promised to listen to what God will say (Jer 42:1–6),

⁵⁶ However, there are exceptions, such as the priest Zephaniah in Jer 29:29. For the role of the priests in Jer see Corrine Patton, *Layers of Meaning: Priesthood in Jeremiah MT*, and Georg Fischer, *Träger religiöser Verantwortung im Jeremiabuch* (2008).

⁵⁷ For example in Exod 13:11; Deut 4:27–30; 6:11, etc.; in biblical terminology, however, the future is “backward” (cf. Jer 17:11; 29:11, among other passages).

⁵⁸ The intertextual links do not allow for an earlier composition of Jer than the fourth century BCE: If Jer could draw on the entire Torah, the whole Dtr History, the Books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and at least half of the Twelve Minor Prophets, it cannot have been written before the end of the Persian Period. The classical position can be found in Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 70–74 and 80, who sees most of the texts as having originated in the prophet’s lifetime. Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52*, attributes in his Appendix XI (582–585) still more texts to the prophet himself; the only exceptions are Jer 51:46 and 52:31–34 from the time after Nebuchadnezzar’s death 562 BCE, and Jer 52:12c from after 539 BCE.

⁵⁹ For example Jer 30:10–11, with close connections to “Deutero”-Isaiah; see Fischer, *Das Trostbüchlein* (1993), 189–190.

⁶⁰ This process starts already in Jer 41:17–18, which picks up the respective note from 2 Kgs 25:26. The enormous expansion of this motif “going down to Egypt” in Jer 42–44 is a signal of its importance, acknowledged by J.M. Abrego de Lacy, *Jeremías y el final del reino*, and recently by Keith Bodner, *After the Invasion*. The position of these chapters in Jer, as the last narrative about Judeans (besides Jer 52), conveys a final, disastrous image of them.

and finally end up with an explicit declaration in favour of idolatry (44:15–19). What God graciously gave them, is thus despised and recklessly abandoned.

e) *Intercession*. One of the outstanding events in Moses' life is his *plea for the sinful people* in Exod 32:11–13. Though personally innocent, he remains loyal to them, intervenes in their favour and even rejects God's offer to make a "great nation" out of him (v. 10). Later on, he continues to intercede on behalf of the community (Num 14:13–19; in 16:22 together with Aaron), and in Deut 9:18, 25–29 he reminds the people of his commitment to them at Mount Sinai, thus emphasizing his intercession. Other prophets, like Samuel (1 Sam 7:5, 9; 12:23) and Amos (Amos 7:1–6), follow Moses' lead in interceding for Israel.

Not so Jeremiah. Three times, God explicitly *forbids him* to intercede (Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:11)⁶¹ and, shortly afterwards, in Jer 15:1, referring to Moses and Samuel, declares his complete refusal to accept any further pleas for the people. This is a sign of an entirely different situation and relationship of the community with God. Whereas in the Torah Moses, even in very tense moments, could still "find God's ear" and move him to be gracious, this is forbidden to Jeremiah, for most of the time.⁶² The divine interdict signifies that the depravity of the people is so bad that there is no hope for the present.

*

Looking back at these new aspects in Jer, four elements (the exception being point c above) *depict a deterioration*. What Moses "envisioned" for Israel's future, which turned out to be true, has been lost in the interim. The Temple and its city, Jerusalem, have been destroyed (a and b). The people, chosen to be God's "priestly kingdom and holy nation" (Exod 19:6), is on the way to giving up its special status and identity, unable to learn from the disasters of 597 and 587 BCE, and reversing the salvation given in the Exodus by turning back to Egypt (d).⁶³ They are relentless in their refusal to listen and in their rebelliousness, along with many of the religious functionaries, priests and prophets. Nevertheless, Jer does offer a few grains of hope, but only for the future (see notes 56 and 59).

4. Jeremiah: A Different Figure

The remarks above result in an *ambivalent picture*. On the one hand, there is an obviously deliberate linkage with the Torah by using it as a foundation, supporting its main ideas, and in portraying Jeremiah as the promised successor to Moses by picking up Deut 18 in a unique manner and in manifold ways. On the other hand, Jer simultaneously maintains its distance with respect to the Torah, and Jeremiah, its central figure, "like" Moses in some ways, is, taken overall, quite different from him. Luis Alonso Schökel has illuminated this latter aspect by calling Jeremiah an "anti-Moses"⁶⁴ and listing various elements for Jeremiah which show a reversal of motifs connected with Moses, among them the return to Egypt. There are also other important differences between the two figures.

4.1 Acceptance and Authority

⁶¹ For this motif in Jer, see Benedetta Rossi, *L'intercessione nel tempo della fine*.

⁶² No significant change occurs until Jer 33:3 where God invites him to call upon him, yet this envisions a time after the downfall of Jerusalem. Similarly, Jeremiah's prayer on behalf of the remnant of Judah in 42:2–4 is situated after this catastrophe.

⁶³ Aptly caught by Michael Maier, *Ägypten*, 303, describing Israel's way in Jer as "aus Ägypten nach Ägypten." For further differences between the Torah and Jer see Fischer, ותפשי (2016), 904–909.

⁶⁴ Luis Alonso Schökel, *Jeremías como anti-Moisés*.

Moses, in his third objection during his calling (Exod 4:1 “And if they do not believe me ...”), anticipated possible resistance by the people, correctly foreseeing what would come to pass several times during his mission.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, he is the main figure of the Torah and *generally respected* throughout his life. Opposition to him mostly results in problems (e.g. Num 12), and may even cost one’s life (Num 16). What he says is mandatory, and nobody ranks higher than him, as leader of his people. At the end of his life, Israel mourns him for a whole month (Deut 34:8).

Jeremiah, on the contrary, is *mostly rejected*, and his message is not heard. Others confront and accuse him, which causes him great suffering, and he is even subjected to torture (Jer 20:2–3). Whereas 2 Kings does mention the prophet Isaiah several times, and his proclamation is heeded (in chs. 19–20), Jeremiah does not appear in this book at all.⁶⁶ Even after seeing that what he announced has turned out to be true, the leaders and the people do not trust him.⁶⁷ Others make decisions about him, for example in putting him into the prison (Jer 37:15, 21) or throwing him into a cistern (Jer 38:6). His life ends without any information being offered about his death, burial, or a mourning period.

4.2 Various Roles

The figure of Moses in the Torah is *puzzling and very complex*. He is God’s main dialogue partner, linked to nearly all laws, either by mediating or by proclaiming them, and is central to Israel’s faith. He is a leader, a judge, has cultic functions⁶⁸ and ties to foreigners (his Egyptian education and his Midianite wife Zipporah). YHWH attributes to him the role of “God” with regard to Aaron and Pharaoh (Exod 4:16; 7:1), and the final remark in Deut 34:10 presents him as a unique “prophet.”

The portrayal of Jeremiah is *similarly multifaceted*, yet different. Jer 1 contains a kind of summary of his roles.⁶⁹ By descent, he is a priest (Jer 1:1), probably going back to Abiathar who was banished by King Solomon to Anathoth (1 Kgs 2:26–27), Jeremiah’s home village. This may explain the opposition to the priests of the temple, of the lineage of Zadok. By God’s call, he is a “prophet for the nations” (Jer 1:5); this universal dimension shows up again in 1:10 where God confers on him worldwide authority to “pluck up and tear down, ... to build and to plant.”⁷⁰ Jer 1:11–14 portray him as a visionary, along the lines of Amos and others, even receiving divine praise for it (v. 12: “You have done well in seeing ...”). In Jer 1:18, God makes him “a fortified city, an iron column, and bronze walls,” describing thus the prophet’s role in replacing, in a better way, the ruined temple and city of Jerusalem.⁷¹ Jer 6:27

⁶⁵ To mention a few passages: Exod 5:20–21; 6:9; 14:11–12; 15:24 etc.; there are also others in the Book of Numbers.

⁶⁶ Only later “historical” books pay tribute to him: 2 Chr 35:25; 36:12, 21–22; Ezra 1:1; see also Dan 9:2.

⁶⁷ See Jer 37:18–20, where Jeremiah, in a discourse with King Zedekiah, challenges him by referring to the other prophets’ disappearance. See also Jer 43:2–4, where military leaders blame him for deceit and they and the people do not heed his warning not to go down to Egypt.

⁶⁸ For example, in building an altar (Exod 24:4) or in “ordaining” priests (Lev 8–9), although not being a priest himself.

⁶⁹ See Fischer, *Jeremia. Prophet über Völker und Königreiche* (2015), 16–29.

⁷⁰ All other instances of this list of verbs have God as subject, and the closest parallel to פָּקַד hiphil is the appointment of Gedaliah as governor (Jer 40:5). Arnold Stiglmair, “Prophet” und Gottesherrschaft, connects Jer 1:10 with kingly traits.

⁷¹ G. Fischer, „Ich mache dich ... zur eisernen Säule“ (1994), 447–450.

adds further the role of “tester” of his people to Jeremiah, and in Jer 15:19 God offers him the opportunity to be “like his mouth,” that is, as a kind of official speaker, which is unique. A large number of roles is typical for Moses as well as for Jeremiah, yet their respective *profiles are different*. The former has much to do with establishing law and faith, the latter with the problems, which arise when the community does not abide by them.

4.3 Long “Biographies”, and “Insight” into Thoughts and Feelings

The Torah and Jer share *similar features* in the portrayal of their prophets. Both focus extensively on them and present a kind of “biography,” allowing the reader to gain some impression of their life.

Yet they have *distinguishing marks here*, too. Exodus to Deuteronomy depicts Moses’ life from childhood to death, with many events at an early time that cannot be fixed in a regular chronology. For Jeremiah, God claims to have known him even from before his conception (Jer 1:5), and at the end he disappears without trace, Jer 44 being the “last” mention of him. In contrast to Moses, he can be “dated,” as there are many indications of the years of reign or important actions of Judean and other known kings.⁷² Moses is presented as existing “outside” of “history;” Jeremiah is situated right in the middle of it and can be connected to “real” events.

Moses and Jeremiah both share long encounters with God. They are graced with an extraordinary intimacy with him, and the biblical narrators allow the addressees to “participate” in these dialogues. Even more, they give access to what the prophets think and feel, albeit to a differing degree. Whereas Moses’ inner thoughts and feelings are reported occasionally,⁷³ Jer dedicates much *more space to the “inner processes”* of its prophet. Jeremiah laments vociferously,⁷⁴ often even accusing God, especially in the confessions (e.g. Jer 15:18; 20:7). This focus on the “inward life” of God’s messenger is a new orientation and a sign of an increased interest in the personal struggles of humans.

5. Conclusion: A Different Type of Prophet

Moses and Jeremiah are both outstanding. They are very close to God, receiving his word “directly,” and are portrayed at length. Nevertheless, they differ greatly in many respects, including that of being a “prophet.” Moses is the only “real” prophet during his lifetime,⁷⁵ and the prophetic role accounts for only a minor part of his life; in fact, besides Deut 18:15, 18 and 34:10, he is never called so. Other tasks, like leading the people out of Egypt or transmitting divine law are more dominant themes for Moses.

For Jeremiah, on the other hand, being a prophet is his *main mission*, starting right from the beginning of his life (Jer 1:5), and is universal in its scope (cf. 3.3 above). His portrayal is a combination of features taken from the prophets in the scrolls of the “Former Prophets” (the Dtr History), for whom events in their lives are described (e.g. Nathan, Elijah), and of the “Latter Prophets” to whom books are attributed by name. Conflict with colleagues is a major theme in Jer, leading to many clashes in Jeremiah’s life, and this topic is developed much

⁷² For a timetable see Yair Hoffman, *Jeremiah: Introduction and Commentary, Volume 1*, 70, and Georg Fischer, *Jeremia 1–25* (2005), 81 and 99–100.

⁷³ E.g. in Exod 3:3; 9:30; Lev 10:20; Deut 31:27, 29.

⁷⁴ Jeremiah’s first word is already typical of him: אהה (“Alas!”; Jer 1:6).

⁷⁵ The other instances of נביא “prophet” applied to individuals in the Torah are references to Abraham (Gen 20:7) and to Moses’ brother Aaron in Exod 7:1, in relationship to him. Besides that, Moses’ wish and God’s declaration in Num 11:29 and 12:6 use this term, and there are the cases of the misleading prophets in Deut 13:2–6 and 18:20–22.

more in Jer than in any other book of the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁶ In contrast to them, Jeremiah is the only one ever to be accorded the privilege of being God's "mouth" (15:19). Probably the most distinctive feature of Jer is his suffering, which takes up motifs of "YHWH's servant" in Isaiah⁷⁷ and is expanded to an extreme degree, making Jeremiah a role model for a persecuted prophet, a theme used later for Jesus (Matt 16:14).

⁷⁶ Among many others, see more recently the treatment of A.C. Osuji, *Where is the Truth?*, and for criteria for discernment, Georg Fischer, *Jeremia 26–52* (2005), 79–82.

⁷⁷ Georg Fischer, *Jeremiah, God's Suffering Servant* (2013), especially 77–89.