

RECEPTION OF JER 10:1–16 IN EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

Martin MEISER

1. INTRODUCTION: METHODS AND THESES

In order to achieving a sober portrayal of the reception history of Jer 10, we have to take one *caveat* in mind: when studying polemics against foreign deities, there are texts in the Bible that are similar to Jer 10 and motives which seem to come from Jer 10, but can also be found in other texts. These texts name idols who are silver and gold (LXX-Ps 113:12), who are not able to speak (LXX-Ps 113:13), who are made by artisans (Isa 40:19; 44:13; 46:6; LXX-Jer 28:17/MT-Jer 51:17; LXX-Ps 113:12).¹ Allusions to general terms of this polemics therefore cannot simply be identified as allusions of Jer 10. Moreover Jer 10:14 and Jer 28[51]:17² on the one side, Jer 10:16 and Jer 28[51]:19³ on the other side raise conflating readings. If there is no quotation formula it seems wise to look for the motive of explicit negation of creative activity of these gods or the use of the passive of ἀπόλλυμι, referred to deities. On the other hand, it seems useful to examine also the commentaries on Psalm 113 in order to describe the reception of Jer 10.

Reception of a biblical text includes both quotation within a new context, and technical commenting. After Origen's homilies on Jeremiah, it is

¹ According to H. D. Preuß, *Verspottung fremder Religionen im Alten Testament* (BWANT 92; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971), 251, Ps 115 (=Ps 113 LXX) presupposes Jer 10,1–16 and Deut 4:28.

² Jer 10:14: ἐμωράνθη πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἀπὸ γνώσεως, κατησχύνθη πᾶς χρυσοχόος ἐπὶ τοῖς γλυπτοῖς αὐτοῦ; Jer 28[51]:17: ἐματαιώθη πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἀπὸ γνώσεως, κατησχύνθη πᾶς χρυσοχόος ἀπὸ τῶν γλυπτῶν αὐτοῦ. In the manuscript tradition to Jer 28:17, the first verb ἐματαιώθη is often replaced by ἐμωράνθη (Jer 10:14); the MSS 106 and 239 offer also ἐπὶ τοῖς γλυπτοῖς instead of ἀπὸ τῶν γλυπτῶν. On the other hand, Theophilus quotes Jer 10:14 with the formula ἐπὶ τοῖς γλυπτοῖς. This reading, witnessed only by Theophilus, is probably a reading of memory and does not imply a real text-variant within the textual tradition of Jer 10:14.

³ Jer 10:16 οὐκ ἔστι τοιαύτη μερίς τῷ Ιακωβ, ὅτι ὁ πλάσας τὰ πάντα αὐτὸς κληρονομία αὐτοῦ, κύριος ὄνομα αὐτῷ; Jer 28[51]:19: οὐ τοιαύτη μερίς τῷ Ιακωβ, ὅτι ὁ πλάσας τὰ πάντα αὐτὸς ἔστι κληρονομία αὐτοῦ, κύριος ὄνομα αὐτῷ.

Jerome, Theodoret of Cyrus, Olympiodorus and Pseudo-John Chrysostom who wrote commentaries on Jer 10. Within the Fragments of Cyril of Alexandria on Jeremiah, we do not find anything on this passage.⁴ In the Literature of “Questions and Answers”, Jer 10 is not used, perhaps due to its polemical character.⁵

My first thesis refers to the well-known problem of textual criticism both of the book of Jeremiah in general and especially of Jer 10. Jerome knows that some verses that are missing in the original Septuagint are added from Theodotion, and sometimes those verses are presupposed in the exegesis. I did not find, however, an explicit text-critical discussion. Jerome only accepts the authority of the Hebrew text which is known to him. The suggestion, a Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Greek text would be the oldest text known in antiquity is far beyond his notion of textual criticism of the Bible.⁶ Hence, in order to solving the problems of textual criticism, ancient exegesis, such as in the case of Jeremiah 10, does not offer any help.

My second thesis refers to the interpretation of Jer 10. There is a difference concerning the reception between texts written earlier than 390 C.E. and texts written after the defeat of Greco-Roman religion. The difference is that after 390, the word ἀπολέσθωσαν (“let they perish”) in v. 11 is not any more actualized in anti-pagan polemics – the only exception is Augustine’s comment on Psalms. The interpretation of v. 11 is the watershed for dating texts before or after 390 C.E. This contribution is arranged accordingly.

2. CHRISTIAN EXEGESIS BEFORE 390 C.E.

2.1. New Testament, Apostolic Fathers, Apologetic Literature

In the New Testament, there are only uncertain cases of allusion, based on functional analogy: in Rom 1:22 the dullness of idolatry, in Rev 15:3–4 the superiority of God is emphasized. It is uncertain, however, whether

⁴ It would be expected in PG 70:1453b.

⁵ I did not find any references in Ambrosiaster, Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, Maximus the Confessor, Anastasius of Sinai.

⁶ Cf. M. Meiser, “Hieronymus als Textkritiker,” in *Die Septuaginta – Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse* (eds. W. Kraus and M. Karrer; WUNT 252; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 256–71.

μωραίνω in Rom 1:22 is a clear hint⁷ that Paul had Jer 10 in mind.⁸ In Rev 15:3b we find the formula βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐθνῶν from Jer 10:7 (absent in LXX, but witnessed by Theodotion)⁹, directed against the emperor's cult¹⁰; in Rev 15:4 we find only the very general phrase τίς οὐ μὴ φοβηθῆ, κύριε; some manuscripts add the personal pronoun σε, however not after the verb φοβηθῆ but after the introducing τίς. In sum, within Rev 15:4 this phrase can be an adaptation of common Biblical style.¹¹ Within the so-called Apostolic Fathers, we do not have any reception of Jer 10 at all.

An interesting controversy on Jer 10 may be found in the Pseudo-Clementine Literature. According to Pseudo-Clement, Simon has argued in favour of his doctrine (the divinity of Jesus Christ)¹² by reference on the phrase θεοὺς οὐ κακολογήσεις (Exod 22:27), emphasizing the plural θεοῦς, and he interprets Jer 10:11 in a restrictive sense: only those gods who did not create heaven and earth should perish (but not Jesus

⁷ The nearness between Jer 10:14 (μωραίνω) and Jer 28[51]:17 (ματαιόω) in the Septuagint of Jeremiah is repeated in Rom 1:21 (ματαιόω), 22 (μωραίνω).

⁸ According to J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38 A; Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 60, "Paul may have in mind Jer 10:14 particularly since it is part of the Jewish polemic against idolatry which Paul takes up in the following verses." J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AncB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 283, quotes Jer 10:14 (but not Jer 28:17) as analogy but not as source. On the other side, R. Jewett, *Romans. A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 159–60, does not discuss explicitly Jer 10:4 to this point.

⁹ It is possible that the author of Revelation knew both Greek and Hebrew/Aramaic text-traditions, but it is also possible that he read Jer 10:7 in a (proto-)Theodotion variant; cf. M. Labahn, "Griechische Textformen in der Schriftrezeption der Johannesoffenbarung? Eine Problemanzeige zu Möglichkeiten und Grenzen ihrer Rekonstruktion anhand von Beispielen aus der Rezeption des Ezechielbuches," in *Die Septuaginta – Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte* (eds. S. Kreuzer, M. Meiser, and M. Sigismund; WUNT 286; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 529–60 (555–56); J. Hernández Jr., "Recensional Activity and the Transmission of the Septuagint in John's Apocalypse. Codex Sinaiticus and Other Witnesses," in *Die Johannesoffenbarung. Ihr Text und ihre Auslegung* (eds. M. Labahn and M. Karrer; ABG 38; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012), 83–98 (97–98).

¹⁰ D. E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16* (WBC 52 A; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 853.

¹¹ According to R. H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977, rev. ed. 1997), 286; U. B. Müller, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (ÖTK 19; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1988), 275, and G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Eerdmans/Paternoster Press, 1999), 796, Rev 15:3b, 4a, recalls Jer 10:7.

¹² A. Le Boulluec, "Les citations de la Septante dans l'Homélie XVI pseudo-clémentine: Une critique implicite de la typologie?," in *Selon les Septante: Trente études sur la Bible grecque des Septante: En hommage à Marguerite Harl* (eds. G. Dorival and O. Munnich; Paris: Cerf, 1994), 441–61 (451).

Christ).¹³ Peter refuses it: Jer 10:11 does not reclaim existence for gods who were not creators because, according to Gen 1:1, there is only one god who created heaven and earth.¹⁴ In Acts Pil. 16.7, Christian claims concerning Jesus' divinity are refused by a syllogistic quotation of Jer 10:11: Gods who did not create heaven and earth should perish, and Jesus is not acknowledged as creator by the adversaries, therefore he cannot be God.

Within apologetic literature, we do not find any quotations of Jer 10 in the works of Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Pseudo-Justin, and Tertullian. Theophilus, however, quotes Jer 10:12–13 as proof of Biblical monotheism and for God's creation of world and mankind.¹⁵ Hos 13:4 in its long version, Isa 42:5–6 and Jer 10:12–13 witness the harmony of the prophets in this topic;¹⁶ atheism as refusal of the Christian truth is foolishness, according to Jer 10:14–15 and Ps 13:1b, 3a.¹⁷

2.2. Irenaeus

In the context of anti-Gnostic polemics Jer 10:11 is quoted in Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses* (written ca. 185) in order to underline the main thesis that neither the Lord nor the Holy Spirit nor the apostles named one who is not God, without any comments on the term "God". The context is Irenaeus' polemics against Gnostics who distributed Biblical sentences on God to distinct beings: it is only God Father and Jesus Christ who are called "god" in the Bible. When, according to Irenaeus, the Holy Scripture names gods, which are not really gods, the Scripture gives a clarifying

¹³ Ps.-Clement, *Homiliae*, 16.6.5f. (GCS 42, 220). The words οὐκ ἐποίησαν, ἀπολέσθωσαν ... are not read in the manuscript but to be presupposed on the base of the following ἀπόλλυσθαι.

¹⁴ Ps.-Clement, *Homiliae*, 16.8.2f. (GCS 42, 222). Simon states a contradiction within the Scripture himself (Ps.-Clement, *Homiliae*, 16.9.2–4, GCS 42, 223), whereas in Peter's following response hermeneutics, theology and anthropology are intermingled in a unique way (Le Boulluec, "citations," 457): The human similarity to God is his corporality; another deity as claimed by Simon must have another shape, but that is impossible.

¹⁵ Theophilus, *Ad Autolycon* 2.35.8 (PTS 44, 87). The reading ἐξήγαγε ἀνέμους (= MT) instead of ἐξήγαγε φῶς is witnessed also by "the Three" and LXX manuscripts.

¹⁶ The harmony between the prophets and Moses is also emphasized by Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio evangelica* 7.115–12 (SC 212, 216–20), who quotes Jer 23:23–4; Isa 40:12–13, 22, 26; 42:5–6; 44:24; 45:5; Jer 10:11–14; Ps 138[139]:7–10; Gen 14:19–22; 24:2–3, 7; Exod 3:14 in this context.

¹⁷ Theophilus, *Ad Autolycon* 2.35.11 (PTS 44, 88). The reading ἀπὸ τῶν γλυπτῶν αὐτοῦ instead of ἐπὶ τοῖς γλυπτοῖς αὐτοῦ (Theophilus, *Ad Autolycon* 2.35.11 [PTS 44, 88]) is a conflation with Jer 28:17. The reading ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς (instead of ἐν καιρῷ ἐπισκοπῆς), not witnessed in any manuscript of Jer 10 LXX, perhaps does not cogently constitute a distinct textual variant, but is probably a quote of memory influenced by Isa 10:3.

addition.¹⁸ In the case of Jer 10, the addition is not the remark that they did not create heaven and earth but the wish for their perishing (*pereant/ἀπολέσθωσαν*).¹⁹ It is this anti-Gnostic context which does not allow including any anti-pagan reception of Jer 10:11.

2.3. Clement of Alexandria

Issues of admonishing and polemics in an anti-pagan context are decisive for Clement of Alexandria (flourishing ca. 190–200) and his reading of Jer 10. In a treatise on Christian ethics, Jer 10:2 is quoted at the end of a chain of biblical quotations and paraphrases including Matt 5:20; Dan 1:10; Ps 118[119]:9–10. Jer 10:2 actualizes the necessity of obedience to God remembered in Ps 118 in direction of Christian self-distinguishing from a pagan way of life. Christians should supersede the pagans not only by their honest offspring but also by their way of life.²⁰ Jer 10:12 is quoted in a context which illustrates the apologetic claim that pagan philosophers and poets grasped much of Biblical wisdom concerning the only true God and his sovereignty.²¹ On the other side, Clement interpreted Jer 10:12 *ad vocem* ἀνορθώω allegorically, too: the Lord raised up the world by his wisdom, and his wisdom, which is his word, raises up to the truth us who had fallen prostrate before idols. That is the first resurrection from our fall.²²

2.4. Origen

In his homilies on Jeremiah (written ca. 230),²³ Origen does not comment on the textual-critical problem of Jer 10; his homily 7 on Jeremiah quotes Jer 5:19 and his homily 8 begins at Jer 10:12. Due to Gen 3:19 (Γῆ εἶ),

¹⁸ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3.6.3 (SC 211, 70–74), referring to Ps 95[96]:5; Ps 78[79]:6; Isa 44:9f.; Jer 10:11; 1 Kgs 18:21; Gal 4:8f.; 2 Thess 2:4; 1 Cor 8:4–6.

¹⁹ Within the conclusion of the quotation of Jer 10:11 (SC 211, 72), Irenaeus offers *pereant de terra quae est sub caelo/ἀπολέσθωσαν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ὑποκάτω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* instead of ... γῆς καὶ ὑποκάτωθεν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. The omission of καὶ is nowhere witnessed in manuscript transmission and can be easily explained as Irenaeus' stylistic improvement whereas the reading ὑποκάτω is witnessed at least by two manuscripts.

²⁰ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3:33.5 (GCS 52, 211).

²¹ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 5:127.3 (GCS 52, 412) = Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio evangelica* 13:13.54 (SC 307, 384). The author interprets Jer 10:12 as an analogy to Isa 10:4. (Pseudo-)Orpheus (Frgm. 246) had formulated his confession to the monotheistic Lord by taking up Isa 10:14.

²² Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 80.3 (GCS 12, 61).

²³ English Translation: J. C. Smith, *Origen: Homilies on Jeremiah: Homily on 1 Kings 28* (The Fathers of the Church; Washington: The Catholic Press of America, 1998), 74–83.

Origen reads this text allegorically, not in actual anti-pagan but in moral terms: “We need the strength of the Lord with respect to our earth (for it is written regarding Adam, You are earth), for without the power of God we are unable to accomplish what does not concern the mind of flesh.”²⁴ In the following he specifies: the “inhabited world” (οἰκουμένη) set upright by God’s wisdom is the soul which is filled by God, which has Christ, where the Holy Spirit is within it.²⁵ In his Hom. in Jer 8.7–9, Origen interprets Jer 10:14 with the help of a syllogism based on 1 Cor 13: “If every man has become foolish by knowledge, and Paul is a man, Paul has become foolish by knowledge, because he knows in part, prophecies in part, has become foolish from knowledge because he sees through a mirror” but “we become strong by the weakness of Jesus and wise by the foolishness of God.” This demonstrates that Origen understood the first ἀπό in v. 14 as causal, not in the sense “without”.²⁶

2.5. (Pseudo-)Cyprian

(Pseudo?-)Cyprian²⁷ uses Jer 10:2 in a moral context: believers should not partake in the pagan way of life.²⁸ In accordance with the genre of *Ad Quirinium*, the author does not illustrate it; the following quotations of Rev 18:4–9 and Isa 52:11 emphasize the general admonishing to keep distance against the non-Christian world. Jer 10:2–5, 9, 11 are reconsidered as proof of the topic “*de idolis quae gentiles Deos putant*.”²⁹

²⁴ Origen, *Homiliae in Ieremiam* 8.1 (SC 232, 352); English Translation: Smith, *Origen*, 74.

²⁵ Origen, *Homiliae in Ieremiam* 8.1 (SC 232, 354). E. Schadel, *Origenes: Die griechisch erhaltenen Jeremiahomilien, eingeleitet, übersetzt und mit Erklärungen versehen* (Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur; Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1980), 272, offers parallels within Origen concerning this topic.

²⁶ G. A. Walser, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus* (Septuagint Commentary Series; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 262.

²⁷ The authenticity of *Ad Quirinium*, especially of Book 3, is rather disputed. In any case, the texts mentioned here are written after 248.

²⁸ Cyprian, *Ad Quirinium* 3.34 (CC.SL 3, 128). The reading *ne ambulaveritis* presupposes μη πορεύεσθε, witnessed also in A-106 et al., instead of μη μανθάνετε.

²⁹ Cyprian, *Ad Quirinium* 3.69 (CC.SL 3, 148), quotes Ps 134:15–18; 94:5; Exod 20:23; Exod 20:4 in the former, Jer 2:19–20, 27; Isa 46:2, 5–7; Jer 28[51]:15–18; Rev 9:13–21 in the later context. Within the quotation of Jer 10:2, the wording *nolite incedere* presupposes again μη πορεύεσθε instead of μη μανθάνετε. In the following, the phrase *et conflatum aurum et argentum speciose conposita sint* presupposes the nominatives ἀργύριον and χρύσιον not witnessed in the manuscript tradition. Further, the verb ἤξει is predicate to *aurum Moab*; the word *Moab* is one of the replacing readings for Μωφας which was unknown.

2.6. Martyr Acts

Some martyr acts during the era of Diocletian contain references to Jer 10:11. Referring to Jer 10:11 the martyrs defend their obduracy in refusing offers to foreign deities.

In the acts of Carponius of Caesarea (he died probably 14.10.303) it is said: θεοί, οἱ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν οὐκ ἐποίησαν, ἀπολέσθωσαν/*Dii, qui non fecerunt caelum et terram, pereant.*³⁰

Euplius of Sicily (who died on August 12, 304) defines pagan gods as demons according to Ps 95[96]:5. The proconsul admonishes him to adore the gods, to worship Mars, Apollo, and Asclepius. Euplius, however, replied, "I worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I adore the holy Trinity, besides whom there is no god. Perish the gods who did not make the heaven, the earth, and all that is in them. I am a Christian!"³¹ This is a conflation of Jer 10:11 and Acts 4:24: *pereant dii qui non fecerunt caelum et terram at quae in eis sunt.*

Crispina of Thagara (she died on December 5, 304.) also refuses offerings to vanish, mute and polluted deities.³² These so-called deities are demons, whereas the Christian god is the God who created heaven and earth, the sea and all what is in it.³³ This last wording may be influenced by Acts 4:24. Concerning the Roman idols she says: *Dii, qui non fecerunt caelum et terram, pereant. Ego sacrifico Deo aeterno, permanenti in saecula saeculorum, qui est Deus uerax et metuendus ...*³⁴ Old Testament theology (cf. Isa 41:22f.) is also effective on her saying: *loquantur ipsi dii, et credo...*³⁵ This is again a combination with Acts 4:24 which I did not find in the commentaries on Acts, all written after 325 C.E.³⁶ Without

³⁰ *Martyrium Carponii*, Rec. Gr. 10/Rec. Lat. 2, cf. H. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs: Introduction, Texts and Translations* (Oxford Early Christian Texts; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 22–24.

³¹ *Martyrium Euplii* (rec. lat.) 5 (Musurillo 316).

³² *Martyrium Crispinae* 2.2 (Musurillo 306).

³³ *Martyrium Crispinae* 1.7 (Musurillo 304).

³⁴ *Martyrium Crispinae* 2.2 (Musurillo 304).

³⁵ *Martyrium Crispinae* 3.1 (Musurillo 306).

³⁶ I did not find any reference to Jer 10 in Didymus of Alexandria, *Fragmenta in Actus Apostolorum* (PG 39:1664ab); John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Actus Apostolorum* 11.1 (PG 60:93); Ps.-Oecumenius of Tricca, *Commentarii in Actus Apostolorum* (PG 118:101ab); The Venerable Bede, *Expositio in Actus Apostolorum* (CC.SL 121, 27); *idem, Retractatio in Actus Apostolorum* (CC.SL 121, 124). In Ammonius' of Alexandria's *Fragmenta in Actus Apostolorum* and in Cassiodorus's *Compexiones in Actus Apostolorum*, I did not find any interpretation of Acts 4 (to be expected in PG 85:1525b/PL 70:1385ab).

allusion to Acts 4:24, the reception of Jer 10:11 in context of martyrdom is repeated in the *Passio Artemii*.³⁷

2.7. Ambrose

Ambrose (340–397) uses the “wish for abolishment” in his *De fide ad Gratianum* (written 378/380) to prove the deity of Jesus Christ: the Arians who deny the creation of the world per Christum should have Jer 10:11 in mind. Should he – Ambrose asks the Arians directly – who redeemed that which was abolished (Luke 19:10), himself suffer abolishment?³⁸

Within the context of the Trinitarian debate in the fourth century, Jer 10:11 is furthermore quoted by Didymus³⁹, Pseudo-Basilii⁴⁰, and Gregory of Nyssa⁴¹, Jer 10:14 by Epiphanius of Salamis.⁴²

2.8. Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom

In Gregory’s fifth discourse of the so-called Theological Discourses (written ca. 380), a quotation of Jer 10:16 (Οὐδὲ αὕτη μέρος τῷ Ἰακώβ) is directed against Greek mythology including αἰσχρά.⁴³ Here, the prophetic word serves for Christian self-definition distancing Christianity from paganism.

³⁷ John of Damascus, *Passio S. Artemii* 33 (PTS 29, 220).

³⁸ Ambrose, *De fide* 4.4.47 (CSEL 78, 173).

³⁹ Without polemic, Didymus of Alexandria, *De Trinitate* 1:2 (Hoenscheid 182); 3:2 (PG 39:785a) quotes Jer 10:11 (ἐπι τῆς γῆς instead of ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς) as proof of Jesus Christ’s divinity, similarly he quotes Jer 10:11 against those who deny Jesus Christ’s divinity including his mediating creation, in *Trin.* 1:27 (Hoenscheid 182). Jer 10:16 and 28:19 serve this purpose as well (Didymus of Alexandria, *De Trinitate* 1:19, Hoenscheid 132): it is the Son who is not created but creating.

⁴⁰ Ps.-Basilii of Caesarea, *Contra Eunomium* 4:3 (PG 29:709b): Jer 10:11 is directed against the so-called Greek deities but not against the Son.

⁴¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Eustathium de Sancta Trinitate* (GNO 3/1:9): Indeed, the Bible calls sometimes also the Greco-Roman deities and the demons “gods,” but we are not taught by the Scripture to transfer the name of the Holy and Everlasting and Good to other beings, this would be inappropriate.

⁴² Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 76.29.6 (GCS 37:378): If we consider terms like “uncreated” only names but not referred to God’s essence, the use of our speech as such is qualified as stupidity, apart from knowledge.

⁴³ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 31.16 (SC 250, 306). Similarly, Chromatius of Aquileia (345–406) aimed Jer 10:11 (remarkable is the form of the text: ... *pereant de sub terra et de sub caelo isto*) against pagan mythology including its *turpia* (Chromatius of Aquileia, *Sermo* 23.1 (CC.SL 9 A, 150).

John Chrysostom (349–407) quotes Jer 10:11 sometimes directly in anti-pagan polemics⁴⁴ and identifies in his homilies on First Corinthians (written in Antiochia, after 386) the formula ἐξ οὐ τὰ πάντα in 1 Cor 8:6 as the highest possible characteristic of god, proven by Jer 10:11.⁴⁵ This ἐξ οὐ means “the creation and the bringing of things out of nothing into existence.”⁴⁶ Similarly, Didymus of Alexandria quotes 10:11 against the “poorest” (συμπτωχοτάτων) Greek deities.⁴⁷ Again the context is anti-pagan. One has to bear in mind that the Greco-Roman religion was still powerful in those days.

3. CHRISTIAN EXEGESIS AFTER 390 C.E.

In the following we distinguish between exegetical and non-exegetical literature. Of course, actual interests influence sometimes technical exegesis, too. However, the focus of exegesis is to explain, not primarily to actualize the text.

3.1. Exegetical Literature

3.1.1. Jerome

Interpreting⁴⁸ Jer 10:3a (*leges populorum uanae sint*) in his commentary on Jeremiah (written about 414–416), Jerome generalizes by introducing the term „wisdom“ (cf. Jer 9:22–3): *omnem humanam sapientiam futilem esse demonstrat et nullam in se habere utilitatem*.⁴⁹ According to Jer 10:4, the work of the artisan is both deceiving the *simplices* – paganism is seen

⁴⁴ John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Genesis* 34:5 (PG 53:328); *idem, Homiliae in Evangelium Iohannis* 3.3 (PG 59:50); *idem, Homiliae in Actus Apostolorum* 38.2 (PG 60:271). In his *Expositio in Psalmos*, he justifies the wording Θεός θεῶν κύριος in Ps 49[50]:1 within his Christian monotheistic context. He interprets the parallelism in Exod 22:27 (θεοὺς οὐ κακολογήσεις, καὶ ἄρχοντας τοῦ λαοῦ σου οὐκ ἔρεις κακῶς) as synonymous parallelism: therefore, also in Jer 10:11 the “deities” (Plural!) are the rulers (John Chrysostom, *Expositio in Psalmos* (PG 55:240–41).

⁴⁵ John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in 1 Cor.* 20.3 (PG 61:163).

⁴⁶ English translation (of the whole passage) by D. O. Wenthe (ed.), *Jeremiah: Lamentations* (ACCS, OT 12; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 90.

⁴⁷ Didymus of Alexandria, *De Trinitate* 3:24 (PG 39:937d–940a).

⁴⁸ Jerome’s commentary is translated into English: M. Graves, *Jerome: Commentary on Jeremiah, translated* (Ancient Christian Texts; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2011).

⁴⁹ Jerome, *Commentarii in Ieremiam* 2:85 (CC.SL 74, 102).

as characteristic for the uneducated masses, in order to construct Christianity as religious élite⁵⁰ – and setting us in error *ut religionem in divitiis arbitremur*. In his continuation, Jerome constructs another combination within v. 5 and adds an issue well-known from the *Epistula Ieremiae*, but he does not quote this text.⁵¹ In his comment on *et non loquentur*, Jerome quotes the parallel of Ps 113:13.⁵²

According to Jerome, Jer 10:6–10 is not offered in the Septuagint, but in many Septuagint manuscripts, the passage is added from Theodotion's edition. For Jerome, these verses seem to be understandable according to the literal sense; according to the tropological sense (Jerome writes ἀναγωγῆν), they are difficult: *nullus enim similis est deo uero eorum deorum, quia heretica arte finguntur*.⁵³ Heretics act according to the wisdom of this world.⁵⁴ Implicitly, Jer 9:23 is leading. It is a common rebuke that heretics are influenced by non-Biblical thinking. Who are the deities invented by the heretics, and who are the heretics? Perhaps Jerome has Gnostics in mind who invented their eons. In v. 14 he interprets the first ἀπό in the sense of “without” (*stultus factus est omnis homo a scientia*); even the wisdom of Paulus, Petrus, Moses and Abraham is reckoned for nothing when compared with the wisdom of God.⁵⁵ It might be also directed against the Pelagians: there is a double concept of righteousness, one which is immutable and the other one which is not inconsistent with our frailty (Ps 143:2) and might turn to unrighteousness but is acknowledged by the Lord. Job, Zacharias and Elisabeth are called “righteous” according to this sort of righteousness. The true Christian confesses his imperfectness together with Paul (Phil 3:12).⁵⁶

Jerome's interests on philology are reflected also in his commentary on Jeremiah. Jerome is well aware of the double meaning of רוּחַ, “wind” and “spirit”⁵⁷ and of the closest translation of צבאות with *exercituum*

⁵⁰ Cf. already *Epistula ad Diognetum* 6.1; Aristides, *Apologia* 15.3 (the Christians partake to the truth due to their knowledge of the monotheistic God).

⁵¹ Jerome, *Commentarii in Ieremiam* 2:86.2 (CC.SL 74, 102).

⁵² Jerome, *Commentarii in Ieremiam* 2:86.4 (CC.SL 74, 102).

⁵³ Jerome, *Commentarii in Ieremiam* 2:87.4 (CC.SL 74, 103).

⁵⁴ Jerome, *Commentarii in Ieremiam* 2:87.4 (CC.SL 74, 104).

⁵⁵ Jerome, *Commentarii in Ieremiam* 2:89.5 (CC.SL 74, 106).

⁵⁶ Jerome, *Dialogus adversus Pelagium* 1:15–16 (CC.SL 80, 19–21). Biblical References for that sort of righteousness are 2 Cor 3:11; 1 Cor 13:9–10, 12; Ps 138:6; Ps 72:16–17, 23, and Jer 10:14 (Jerome, *Dialogus adversus Pelagium* 1:16 [CC.SL 80, 20–21]).

⁵⁷ Jerome, *Commentarii in Ieremiam* 2:89.6 (CC.SL 74, 106). He renders רוּחַ in Jer 10:14 by “spirit” and comments: the spirit of sanctification cannot be found in the lies of the heretics.

instead of *omnipotens* or *uirtutum*.⁵⁸ In his *Book of Hebrew Names* he explains: “*Ofaz obryzum. Est autem genus auri quod Graeci κίρρον vocant.*”⁵⁹ He does not mention explicitly that Jer 10:11 is written in Aramaic, not in Hebrew.

3.1.2. Theodoret of Cyrus

“The apostles’ preaching deleted the memory of pagan idols which are in vain (μάταια); we observe the τέλος of Jeremiah’s prophecy.”⁶⁰ According to this comment on Jer 10:15 (ἐν καιρῷ ἐπισκοπῆς αὐτῶν ἀπολοῦνται), paganism as religious and cultic reality hostile to Christian groups has no relevance for Theodoret’s exegesis of Jer 10. For him, paganism is a real phenomenon only in “astronomy and astrology”⁶¹ – due to the σημεῖα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ mentioned at the beginning of Jer 10, these are the ways of the nations – but not in real cults.⁶² The prophet Jeremiah names Carthage Tharsis (Jer 10:5); this leads the exegete to a complaint that during his own era gold and silver were imported from Africa by rich people.⁶³ Jer 10:7, probably quoted according to Theodotion, causes

⁵⁸ Jerome, *Commentarii in Ieremiam* 2:89.8 (CC.SL 74, 107). For M. Graves, *Jerome’s Hebrew Philology: A Study Based on his Commentary on Jeremiah* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae. Texts and Studies of Early Christian Life and Language 90; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 115, this comment of Jerome is one example among many others to prove Jerome’s competence in Hebrew Philology, against P. Nautin, “Hieronymus,” in *TRE* 15 (eds. G. Müller et al.; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986), 304–15 (309–10).

⁵⁹ Jerome, *Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum* (CC.SL 72, 128). According to Graves, *Philology*, 125, Jerome knew also rabbinic traditions concerning קְרִיָּא.

⁶⁰ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Explanatio in Ieremiam* (PG 1:568b). This commentary was translated into English by R. C. Hill, *Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentary on the Prophets Vol 1: Commentaries on Jeremiah, Baruch and the Book of Lamentations* (Commentaries on the Prophets; Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007).

⁶¹ On astrology within Christian circles cf. *Did.* 3:4; John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Mattaeum* 75.4 (PG 58:691); Isidore of Pelusium, *Epistulae* 3:191 (PG 78:877a–c). This issue is also a topic in pre-baptismal catechesis, cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* 4:18 (Cyril quotes Isa 47:13–4 against it). A remark within Ambrose, *Homiliae in Hexaemeon* 4:12, CSEL 32/1, 118, implies that Christians justified astrology referring to Luke 21:25; Matt 24:29, but for Ambrose only *conueniens ... mensura* is acceptable when interpreting these passages. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio evangelica* 6:11.65 (SC 266, 262), and Procopius of Gaza, *Commentarii in Genesin* (PG 87/1:96d), quote Jer 10:2 (Ἀπὸ τῶν σημείων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ μὴ φοβεῖσθε) against astrology. In general, cf. T. Hegedus, *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology* (Patristic Studies 6; New York et al.: Peter Lang, 2007).

⁶² Theodoret of Cyrus, *Explanatio in Ieremiam* (PG 81:565a). – I did not find any comment on v. 1. ἀπὸ τῶν θηρίων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (instead of ἀπὸ τῶν σημείων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ).

⁶³ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Explanatio in Ieremiam* (PG 81:565ab).

anti-Jewish polemics: God is king of the nations, not only heritage of Israel.⁶⁴ Theodoret's exegesis of v. 11 does not refer in any way to the motive of ἀπολέσθωσαν but is a syllogism on Trinity based on Jer 10:11 and John 1:3 etc.: it is characteristic of God to create and not to be created; if the Son is created, he is not god in any way, but if he is creator, he is genuinely god.⁶⁵ The comment on v. 13 includes a quotation of Ps 113:3: Πάντα ὅσα ἐθέλησεν ὁ Κύριος ἐποίησεν, ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐν τῇ γῆ.⁶⁶ In the following, Theodoret applies the text to the time of Jeremiah: most of mankind fell in to worship such gods, but you (i.e. Israel) are not taught this πλάνη: from very early times on, I have elected you, and in distinctness I have appreciated you for acquaintance with me.⁶⁷

3.1.3. Olympiodorus

In his fragments on Jeremiah, Olympiodorus⁶⁸ offers very short statements in literal and tropological exegesis, but the fragments do not contain any discussion of textual criticism. His short fragment on Jer 10 does not imply any actual anti-pagan polemics. His comment on Jer 10:2 concludes by an admonition to fear not sun and moon as created things but him who has created them.⁶⁹ There is no hint, however, whether he has popular astrology as a way of life for uneducated Christians in mind or not.⁷⁰ V. 12 ("He who constructed the world in his wisdom") is commented by the topos of Christ's mediating creation⁷¹; the beginning of v. 14

⁶⁴ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Explanatio in Ieremiam* (PG 81:565b).

⁶⁵ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Explanatio in Ieremiam* (PG 81:565d–568a). Close to the situation of pre-Christian Israel but nevertheless not without anti-Jewish polemics, Procopius of Gaza, *Catena in Esaiam*, PG 87/2:2153b states in his comment on Isa 48:12: Jer 10:11 demarcates the immutability of the only God's nature from other so-called deities. Similarly, Exod 3:14 teaches the immutability of the φύσις and the ἦθος of God. The prophet anew reminds the Israelites who should rather be teachers in these issues (Heb 5:12).

⁶⁶ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Explanatio in Ieremiam* (PG 81:568b).

⁶⁷ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Explanatio in Ieremiam* (PG 81:568c).

⁶⁸ Cf. T. A. Virginia, *Olympiodorus' In Ieremiam: Critical Text and Translation* (Buffalo, N.Y.: State University of New York at Buffalo, Department of Classics, 1999). Olympiodorus is consecrated as deacon by John II Nicaiotes (505–516), cf. U. Hagedorn and D. Hagedorn, eds., *Olympiodorus, Diakon zu Alexandria: Kommentar zu Hiob* (PTS 24; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), XLIV.

⁶⁹ Olympiodorus, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam* (PG 93:649a/Virginia 18).

⁷⁰ According to Walser, *Jeremiah*, 259, this exegesis presupposes the relation of the concluding αὐτῶν not to the subject of φοβοῦνται but to αὐτὰ = σημεῖα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ = the "decans of the Zodiac". Walser suggests that this interpretation is the original intention of the Septuagint translators.

⁷¹ Olympiodorus, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam* (PG 93:649a/Virginia 18).

(Ἐμωράνθη) evokes a harsh statement: ὁ μὴ τὴν γνῶσιν ἔχων ταύτης τῆς θεολογίας μωρός ἐστίν.⁷² This implies the interpretation of the first ἀπό in the sense of “without.”⁷³ Finally, Olympiodorus comments the motive of God’s visitation by the topos of Jesus Christ’s παρουσία.⁷⁴ In his Fragments to the Epistle of Jeremiah⁷⁵ (concerning Ep Jer. 20: μελά-ωνται), Olympiodorus writes „οἱ εἰδωλάτραι ὅμοιοι ὄντες τοῖς εἰδώ-λοις and refers to LXX-Ps 113:4,⁷⁶ but does not quote Jer 10.

3.1.4. Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam*

The authorship of Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam*,⁷⁷ is uncertain. The text is written in the sixth century: anti-pagan critiques are absent; warning against Christological heresy is dominant. Olympiodorus is presupposed in one fragment.⁷⁸ The text is focused on the literal sense of Jer 10; paganism is present also in Christian circles as astrology; v. 2 is a warning against it.⁷⁹ An interesting interpretation is offered on v. 3: one should not venerate idols, but why? The important argument is not the veneration by the nations but their vanity.⁸⁰ The comment on v. 6 raises issues of theodicy: do the idols truly no harm? Yes they do, *per-mittente Deo*.⁸¹ V. 11 is interpreted as warning against a Christological heresy refuted also by reference on John 1:5 and Ps 101[102]:26, probably a heresy denigrating Christ’s divinity.⁸² The following interpretations refer on creation. Why thunders? Τοῦ καταπλῆξαι, καὶ σωφρονίσαι.⁸³ Astonishing phenomena concerning water in the air and clouds witness the wisdom of the creator. In v. 14, Pseudo-Chrysostom understood the first ἀπό in the sense of “without.”⁸⁴ In v. 15, ἀπόλλυμι is referred to a

⁷² Olympiodorus, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam* (PG 93:649b/ Virginia 19).

⁷³ Walser, *Jeremiah*, 262–63.

⁷⁴ Olympiodorus, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam* (PG 93:649 B/ Virginia 19).

⁷⁵ According to T. Boli, *Olympiodor, Diakon von Alexandria: Kommentar zum Ekklesiastes: Eine kritische Edition*, (Ph.D. diss. Heidelberg: 2004; <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/4884/1/Boli.pdf>; accessed January 6, 2015), IX; these fragments are not available in a critical edition.

⁷⁶ Olympiodorus, *Fragmenta in Epistulam Ieremiae* (PG 93:776c).

⁷⁷ Ps.-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam prophetam* (PG 64:740–1037).

⁷⁸ Ps.-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam prophetam* (PG 64:860b).

⁷⁹ Ps.-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam prophetam* (PG 64:860b).

⁸⁰ Ps.-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam prophetam* (PG 64:860b). Cf. ἐματαιώθη in Jer 28:17 LXX B/S (rendering נבצר) instead of ἐμωράνθη (Walser, *Jeremiah*, 261).

⁸¹ Ps.-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam prophetam* (PG 64:860cd).

⁸² Ps.-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam prophetam* (PG 64:860d).

⁸³ Ps.-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam prophetam* (PG 64:861b).

⁸⁴ Walser, *Jeremiah*, 262.

conquest of a city: the idols are also captured.⁸⁵ This idea is well-known from Ep Jer. 49.57–58. But it is doubtful whether the author had the *Epistula Ieremiae* in mind. Concerning v. 16, the unknown author complains about an unclear translation; the meaning of the prophet's sentence is: the portion of Jacob is not like the portion of the nations;⁸⁶ the term κληρονομία refers to Israel's election by the Lord of hosts = Lord of all.⁸⁷

3.2. Non-exegetical literature

3.2.1. Augustine

Within his *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (392–420), Augustine uses Jer 10:11 in order to underline how the Holy Scripture names gods who are not really gods. We know this argument from Irenaeus, but Augustine uses it in another way. The wording “*hic est deus noster*” is related to Jesus Christ which the non-Christian world does not acknowledge. In this context Augustine quotes also Ps 95:5, and this quotation constitutes not an anti-heretic but an anti-pagan attitude.⁸⁸

According to Augustine, Jer 10:11 describes *ad vocem pereant/ἀπολέσθωσαν* the reality of Augustine's own days, the real defeat of paganism in external life.⁸⁹ The bishop is, however, convinced of the opposite when regarding the inner mind of many of his contemporaries: *magis remanserunt idola in cordibus paganorum, quam in locis templorum*⁹⁰ (“the idols remained rather in the hearts of the pagans than in the niches of the temples”).⁹¹ On the other side, he can take this fulfillment of prophecy and the fulfillment of Jer 16:19–21 just for confirming the Christian believer's faith.⁹²

⁸⁵ Ps.-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam prophetam* (PG 64:861d).

⁸⁶ Ps.-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam prophetam* (PG 64:861d).

⁸⁷ Ps.-Chrysostom, *Fragmenta in Ieremiam prophetam* (PG 64:864a).

⁸⁸ Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalmos* 47.15.15 (CC.SL 38, 550).

⁸⁹ Cf. also Quodvultdeus, *Liber promissionum* 3:38 (CC.SL 60, 182): He quotes Deut 7:5; 12:3; (Isa 19:1 in a varied form); Jer 10:11; Zech 13:2; Ps 95:5; Luke 11:17–20; 1 Cor 8:4 under the heading *Promissio impleta in subversione idolorum atque templorum*.

⁹⁰ Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalmos* 98.2 (CC.SL 39, 1379). The bishop justifies the exact wording of the concluding phrase in Jer 10:11. The prophet does not say ... *pereant de caelo et de terra*, but ... *pereant de terra et de sub caelo*: they never were in heaven! In other literature, there are some variants of the concluding phrase; these variants, however, arose from the author's memory; with regard to theology, they are meaningless. – According to this comment of Augustine, Jer 10:11 is also part of the first liturgical lesson (before the lessons from the apostles and the gospels).

⁹¹ English translation (of the whole passage) by Wenthe (ed.), *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 89.

⁹² Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* (CSEL 25/1, 386).

3.2.2. *Theodore the Studite and John of Damascus*

According to Theodore the Studite, the adversaries of veneration of images argue with help of Jer 10:3 in order to support their position.⁹³ Jer 10:11, in his orthodox view, does not concern the veneration of images but idolatry.⁹⁴ John of Damascus, another defender of icons, is aware of the challenges offered by Deut 5:8; Ps 96:7; and Jer 10:11.⁹⁵ In general, he distinguishes between *λατρεία* which is restricted to the veneration of God, and *προσκύνησις*, being due also to the icons representing God. The iconoclasts regard the relation between archetype and image in terms of identity, whereas the defenders of icons underline the character of *ὁμοίωμα* of the icons including both representing character and difference.

4. CHRISTIAN EXEGESIS OF LXX-PSALM 113:12–16

In the commentaries on Ps 113:12–16, I have found a reference to Jer 10:9 in Cassiodorus; the exegesis of this Psalm, however, reveals parallel symptoms to the exegesis of Jer 10 hitherto presented. Many ancient exegetes have commented on the Book of Psalms; two common ancient-Christian exegetical characteristics, however, are also typical for these comments, selection of single psalms or single verses, and selection of details which are commented.

Hilary of Poitiers and Basil of Caesarea do not comment on Ps 113.⁹⁶ Jerome's *commentarioli in Psalmos* are very short; he does not offer any passage interesting for our discussion.⁹⁷ In his *Tractatus in Psalmos*, he does not comment on Ps 113 at all.⁹⁸ Augustine asks why images are so effective for human superstition, and refers to the form of a body – human beings suppose that the modelled body has the same sense as the

⁹³ Theodore the Studite, *Antirrheticus* 1.7 (PG 99:336b).

⁹⁴ Theodore the Studite, *Antirrheticus* 1.16 (PG 99:348b).

⁹⁵ John of Damascus, *De imaginibus* 1.4 (PTS 17, 75). However, Jer 10 is seemingly no standard argument. I did not find everything in Anastasius of Sinai, *Dialexis* (PG 89:1233–1286); Nicephorus the Confessor, *Apologeticus* (PG 100:533b–832a); *idem*, *Apologeticus minor propter venerabiles imagines* (PG 100:833c–850a). Ps.-Athanasius, *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* 39–41 (PG 28:621a–624b), offers no Biblical references at all.

⁹⁶ A comment would be expected in CSEL 22, 354 (Hilary) / PG 29, 484 A (Basil of Caesarea).

⁹⁷ It would be expected in CC.SL 72, 234.

⁹⁸ It would be expected in CC.SL 78, 448.

real body.⁹⁹ Christian devotional artifacts are not modelled in similarity of a human body, and we do not venerate themselves but God by themselves.¹⁰⁰ Arnobius the Younger († 455) paraphrases Ps 113 influenced by Ps 134:15, 18: *idola gentium ex quocumque metallo muta et surda et caeca sunt, similes illis sint confidentes in eis*. But he does not give any comment on or even a quotation of Jer 10.¹⁰¹ According to Cassiodorus (485–580), the author of the psalm needs five verses for describing the futility of idolatry whereas he dedicates the double measure of verses in order to emphasize the greatness of the only true God. The author mocks idolatry in a similar way like Jeremiah and emphasizes monotheism like Isaiah. The pagan should see that the comparison with his so-called gods degrades him to a level even below standard thinking¹⁰² – due to their monotheism, Jews and Christians rightly see themselves as religious and philosophical élite, unsurpassed by normal paganism, co-equated at best by monotheistic Greek thinkers who got their wisdom from Moses. Cassiodorus names Ps 113:16 a *sarcasmos* to which also Rom 1:25 is convenient.¹⁰³

According to Eusebius of Caesarea (265–339) and Pseudo-Athanasius, the idols do not have any similarity with the true god, and they do not have any similarity to animals: they have no perception (αἴσθησις). These authors, however, do not quote Jer 10.¹⁰⁴ Theodore of Mopsuestia (350–428) uses an argumentum *a minore ad maius*: if idols which have no sensitivity are incomparable to human beings, how much is it true concerning the comparison with God.¹⁰⁵ Theodoret of Cyrus, one of the latest apologists,¹⁰⁶ underlines the state of images lower than animals and emphasizes ἀλογία of making and venerating images of foreign gods.¹⁰⁷

A fragment attributed to Cyril of Alexandria († 444) opens a new field of reception, the issue of icons of Jesus Christ. Indeed, he is God, but he became a human being, therefore it is allowed to make images though he is God. We do not estimate the images as gods like the Greeks

⁹⁹ Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalmos* 113 sermo 2.5 (CC.SL 40, 1644).

¹⁰⁰ Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalmos* 113 sermo 2.6 (CC.SL 40, 1645).

¹⁰¹ Arnobius, *Commentarii in Psalmos* (CC.SL 25, 181).

¹⁰² Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum* (CC.SL 98, 1032–33, referring to Isa 4:8–9; 43:10).

¹⁰³ Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum* (CC.SL 98, 1034).

¹⁰⁴ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Commentaria in Psalmos* (PG 23:1357ab); Ps.-Athanasius, *Fragmenta in Psalmos* (PG 27:469a).

¹⁰⁵ Theodor of Mopsuestia, *Expositio in Psalmos* (CC.SL 88 A, 357).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Graecarum affectuum curatio* (PG 83:784a–1152b).

¹⁰⁷ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Interpretatio in Psalmos* (PG 80:1793a–b).

but we see God in these images.¹⁰⁸ Pseudo-Bede interprets vv. 12–15 as warning against idolatry (but it is a text-conditioned, not an actual warning) and explains v. 16 (*similes iis fiant*) not as wish but as prophecy.¹⁰⁹ That is the common way to explain such sentences – an author of a holy text cannot have malice wishes at all. That is neither a flat moral nor a mild harmonization but the answer to anti-Christian critique in which some Biblical authors are rebuked for their behavior.¹¹⁰ Sometimes such an explanation is the consequence when a passage of psalms does not fit either to the life of David or to Jesus Christ¹¹¹ and his command in Matt 5:44.¹¹²

Didymus of Alexandria (310–398), Hesychius of Jerusalem († after 451) and Nicephorus Blemmydes (ca. 1197–ca. 1269) do not comment on the anti-pagan polemics in Ps 113:12–16 LXX.¹¹³ They did not see any necessity to do this: either the undisputed clearness¹¹⁴ or the conditions of the Christian era are responsible. According to Euthymius Zigabenus († after 1118), these verses characterize the idolaters as foolish (*ἀνόητοι*), and he adds without any comment: *ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως*; however, he does not refer to Jer 10.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, *Fragmenta in Psalmos* (PG 69:1268d–1269a).

¹⁰⁹ The Venerable Bede (pseudonymous), *De Psalmorum libro exegesis* (PL 93:1043b–c).

¹¹⁰ Cf. J. G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (STAC 23; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 307 (concerning Julian the Apostate, on Moses' cruelty, *Contra Galilaeos* 184b–c).

¹¹¹ The category *πρέπον* is used also in Greco-Roman debate on appropriate theology, cf. Xenophanes, *Fragmenta* 26; Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 3:64; Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes* 12.52; for *πρέπον* in Christian literature cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 7:96.4 (GCS 17, 68), for *θεορεπές* in Christian literature cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Eustathium de Sancta Trinitate* (GNO 3/1:9); John Philoponus, *De opificio mundi* 1:2. Cf. L. Lies, "Die 'Gottes würdige' Schriftauslegung nach Origenes," in *Origeniana Sexta: Origène et la Bible* (eds. G. Dorival and A. Le Boulluec; BETHL 118; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 365–72.

¹¹² Just one example may be presented. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, Ps 68[29]:22–3 is spoken not in the optative or the imperative, yet as a prophetic prediction: he who told us to pray for our enemies (Matth. 5) – how should he wished the duration of the hearts of these enemies? (Eusebius von Caesarea, *Commentaria in Psalmos* [PG 23:749d–752]).

¹¹³ It would be expected in PTS 16, 267 (Didymus) / PG 93:1332c–d (Hesychius) / PG 142:1578a (Nicephorus).

¹¹⁴ Ancient commentators are not obliged to comment every detail in a thoroughgoing text. Jerome has formulated the duty of a commentator in the following way: *Officii mei est obscura disserere, manifesta perstringere, in dubiis immorari* (Jerome, *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Galatas* [CC.SL 77 A, 158]) – sometimes clear issues (*non obscura*) are not mentioned at all.

¹¹⁵ Euthymius Zigabenus, *Commentarius in Psalmos* (PG 128:1109d).

5. CONCLUSION

The influence of the historic watershed of 390 C.E. is not always perceptible in the history of Christian exegesis but obvious in the exegesis of texts like Jer 10 dealing with the veneration of non-Christian deities. We can observe two characteristic points within the reception history of Jer 10:

1. After 390, the defeat of the veneration of the Greco-Roman gods is seen as fulfilment of Jer 10:11. However, paganism is still alive in the form of astrology among Christian believers.
2. New theological issues associated with Jer 10 are the doctrine of Trinity, the theodicy and the problem of icons.