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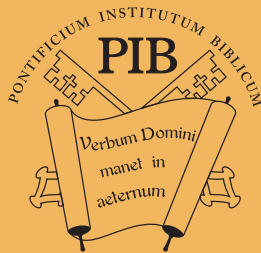
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The Redemptive Inversions of Jeremiah in Romans 9–11



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SUMMARIUM

Commentationes

<i>P. Dubovský: Why Did the Northern Kingdom Fall According to 2 Kings 15?...</i>	321-346
<i>J. Burnight: Does Eliphaz Really Begin “Gently”? An Intertextual Reading of Job 4,2-11.....</i>	347-370
<i>M. Rastoin: Cléophas et Lydie: un “couple” lucanien hautement théologique.....</i>	371-387
<i>M. Reasoner: The Redemptive Inversions of Jeremiah in Romans 9–11.....</i>	388-404
<i>L. Stolz: Das Einführen des Erstgeborenen in die οἰκουμένη (Hebr 1,6a).....</i>	405-423

Animadversiones

<i>K. Kirchmayr: Die Bedeutung von 666 und 616 (Offb 13,18).....</i>	424-427
--	---------

Res Bibliographicae

<i>G. Galvagno: In attesa di un paradigma condiviso: commentari a Esodo.....</i>	428-441
--	---------

Recensiones

Vetus Testamentum

<i>T.C. Butler: S. GILLMAYR-BUCHER, <i>Erzählte Welten im Richterbuch</i>.....</i>	442-446
<i>R. Schäfer: B.U. SCHIPPER, <i>Hermeneutik der Tora</i>.....</i>	446-450
<i>L. Mazzinghi: J. BARBOUR, <i>The Story of Israel in the Book of Qohelet</i>.....</i>	450-454
<i>M. Gilbert: M. EDWARDS, <i>Pneuma and Realized Eschatology in the Book of Wisdom</i>.....</i>	454-457

Novum Testamentum

<i>D. Arcangeli: P.F. BARTHOLOMÄ, <i>The Johannine Discourses and the Teachings of Jesus in the Synoptics</i>.....</i>	458-461
<i>M. Marcheselli: Z. GARSKÝ, <i>Das Wirken Jesu in Galiläa bei Johannes</i>.....</i>	462-465
<i>P. Basta: L. NOVAKOVIC, <i>Raised from the Dead According to Scripture</i>.....</i>	466-469

Varia

<i>J. Sievers: B. MAHIEU, <i>Between Rome and Jerusalem</i>.....</i>	470-472
--	---------

Nuntii personarum et rerum

<i>Pontificium Institutum Biblicum. Annus academicus 2013-2014. II semestre.....</i>	473-474
--	---------

Libri ad Directionem missi.....	475-479
--	---------

The Redemptive Inversions of Jeremiah in Romans 9–11

Paul's explicit dependence in Romans 9–11 on Isaiah is well known. Isaiah is Paul's favorite source for the explicit quotations from the prophets¹. However, especially in this section of Romans where Paul is wrestling with the question of whether or not God's word concerning Israel has failed, more is going on with the scriptures than simply explicit quotation. Romans chapters 9–11 attempts to reconfigure the inherited scriptures in order to make sense of a moment in which the Jews do not seem to be following the message that will lead to the culmination of Israel's role as a nation of priests for the world. Thus, in Rom 10,6-10 we observe a Christological gloss over Deut 30,12-14. Rom 9,24-26 plays with Hosea so that a prophecy once referring to a rejected Israel coming back to its spiritual inheritance signifies how foreign nations will become Israel. Hays has referred to Paul's images for Israel in Romans 9 as "scandalous inversions", in which Israel is placed into the roles of Ishmael, Esau and Pharaoh². Less noticed but just as crucial for our understanding are the "redemptive inversions" that Romans 9–11 makes of Jeremiah's language regarding Israel. This reconfiguring of scripture by inversion must be carefully tracked, for recognition of the dissonant intertextuality that emerges between Romans 9–11 and Jeremiah sharpens the overall effect of this central section of Romans. Romans 9–11 inverts Jeremiah to emphasize God's redemption of Israel: Paul asks Jeremiah's question about God's faithfulness and salvation for Israel, specifically raised in the first twenty chapters of Jeremiah. The text of Romans 9–11 goes on to invert Jeremiah's response by including a prayer for Israel's salvation and a picture of Israel as a cultivated olive tree

¹ See especially F. WILK, *Die Bedeutung des Jesajabuches für Paulus* (FRLANT 179; Göttingen 1998) and J. R. WAGNER, *Heralds of the Good News. Isaiah and Paul "In Concert" in the Letter to the Romans* (NTSupp 101; Leiden 2002).

² R. B. HAYS, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT 1989) 67.

whose excised branches will be grafted in again, because God's word toward Israel has not failed.

By "dissonant intertextuality", I mean what Sommer means by "reversal". Dissonant intertextuality is the use a text makes of an antecedent text in a way that contradicts, reverses, or shifts the focus of meaning of the antecedent text in order to fit a recognizably distinct agenda in the borrowing text³.

Before we begin the comparisons that highlight the dissonant intertextuality between Romans 9–11 and Jeremiah 1–20, it might be useful to note that this section of Jeremiah figures elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. Thus G. R. O'Day, following Fishbane's presentation of inner biblical exegesis as response to a crisis, has shown against the dominant reading of 1 Cor 1,26-31 how that text uses Jer 9,22-23 to argue that the Corinthians' wise, strong, and rich status is not what they should glory in, but rather that these Corinthians should glory in the cross⁴. In that case only the object of the implied audience's boasting is changed. Jeremiah's audience is to glory that they know God; Paul asks his Corinthian audience to glory in Christ Jesus. The boasting text of Jer 9,24 that Paul quotes in 1 Cor 1,31 and 2 Cor 10,17 also lies behind the boasting Paul describes in Rom 5,2.11.

More recently and closer to our passage, T. Berkley has argued that Paul uses Jeremiah chapters 7 and 9 in Romans 2⁵. As Paul did in 1 Corinthians, Paul adjusts or inverts Jeremiah to express a point for his Roman audience: Jeremiah says that "all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart", just like the Gentiles who practice circumcision. Paul applies this in a straightforward way to the boasting Jewish interlocuter of 2,25. Then Paul sharpens Jeremiah's criticism by stating in Rom 2,26 that uncircumcised Gentiles who follow God's decrees will be considered circumcised in heart⁶. Even D.-A. Koch, who argues against any direct quotations of Jeremiah

³ B. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*. Allusion in Isaiah 40–66 (Stanford, CA 1988) 36-46.

⁴ G. R. O'DAY, "Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: A Study in Intertextuality", *JBL* 109 (1990) 265-266.

⁵ T. W. BERKLEY, *From a Broken Covenant to a Circumcised Heart*. Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2:17-29 (SBLDS 175; Atlanta, GA 2000) 82-90.

⁶ Berkley suggests that Paul can make this move, assigning the status of circumcised to uncircumcised people, based on a reinterpretation of Genesis 17,

in the Pauline corpus and only recognizes citations from Isaiah, the twelve prophets, and Psalms in Romans 9–11, grants that Jeremiah would thoroughly fit Paul’s concerns ⁷.

Now that we are about to examine evidence for inversions of Jeremiah in Romans 9–11, I must answer a possible objection. Someone may well ask me: “How can you, whoever you are who reads Romans, claim to know what Paul was thinking? How can you know what was in Paul’s mind; how can you judge Paul to be intentionally avoiding quotations of Jeremiah while inverting Jeremiah’s categories?” My response is first to concede that I cannot prove Paul’s intentions ⁸. For example, it is impossible to decide if Augustine’s complete omission of any reference to Donatism, the hottest controversy in which he was embroiled while writing the *Confessions*, is intentional or not. Here as well, I am carefully avoiding any claim regarding Paul’s intentions. But when the first scroll of Jeremiah is aligned with Romans 9–11, there are conceptual and literary clues that point to a relationship of dissonant intertextuality, though no quotations are made. Paul may not be consciously inverting Jeremiah, but when his chapters on the salvation of Israel here in the middle of Romans are read alongside Jeremiah’s early, negative oracles regarding Israel’s redemption, there is significant evidence for intertextual inversion. The thesis of this article is that Romans 9–11 inverts Jeremiah 1–20 while singing “in concert” with Isaiah 40–55, resulting in an inversion similar to what happens in Jeremiah’s own book of comfort ⁹.

in which Abraham moves from uncircumcised to circumcised by actually undergoing the prescribed rite (*ibid.* 147). Cf. also Jer 4,4.

⁷ D.-A. KOCH, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*. Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus (BHT 69; Tübingen 1986) 45–46 and 46 n. 9.

⁸ See H. G. M. WILLIAMSON’s (“Isaiah 62:4 and the Problem of Inner-Biblical Allusions”, *JBL* 119 [2000] 739) concluding comment in an article in which he questions B. Halpern’s claim that Isaiah 62,4 is alluding to Jeremiah: “In the case of inner-biblical allusions, as opposed to full citations, it will never be possible finally to prove that a writer was consciously dependent on one source rather than another, especially when much of the vocabulary to which appeal is made is relatively common”.

⁹ Cf. WAGNER, *Heralds of the Good News*, and see W. L. HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah 2. A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26–52* (Minneapolis, MN 1989) 148–201 on “this fresh scroll of hope” (201).

I. Dissonant Intertextuality between Jeremiah and Romans 9–11

First, the driving question in Romans 9–11 regarding the trustworthiness of God is more similar to what drives the early chapters of Jeremiah than it is to Isaiah ¹⁰. In Jer 4,10, the prophet claims that God’s word has deceived Israel. Paul asserts that God’s word has not failed (Rom 9,6a) ¹¹. While there is no verbal parallel here, if one had to choose between Isaiah and Jeremiah when identifying a canonical background for the intense questions of Romans 9–11, Jeremiah would be the choice. Romans 9–11 plumbs the depths of God’s abandonment of Israel, a prophetic *topos* more characteristic of Jeremiah than of Isaiah.

Second, three times in this section of Jeremiah, God commands the prophet not to pray for his people (Jer 7,16; 11,14; 14,11-12), a prohibition that seems based on a rejection of Israel ¹². In the third of these references, Jer 14,11-12, God replies to Jeremiah’s prayer for the Lord’s salvation with not only a prohibition against praying for Israel, since he would not hear such a prayer, but also a prediction that he will cut them off by sword, famine and death, specters whose danger Paul has already explicitly denied for those who love God (Rom 8,35.38). But the prohibitions against prayer that seem more directly inverted in Romans are Jer 7,16 and 11,14. Both these prohibitions of the prophet’s prayer for his people are followed by descriptions of the futility of the sacrificial cult, a religious practice possibly alluded to in the mixed criticism — “I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” ¹³. Jer 11,14 is linked to Rom 10,1 by the catchword δέησις. After the divine oracle’s rhetorical questions against Judah’s zeal in the next

¹⁰ On the parallels between Paul as prophetic figure in Galatians with Jeremiah, see S. EASTMAN, *Recovering Paul’s Mother Tongue*. Language and Theology in Galatians (Grand Rapids, MI 2007) 63-84.

¹¹ LXX Jer 4:10 is καὶ εἶπα ᾧ δέσποτα κύριε, ἄρα γε ἀπατῶν ἠπάτησας; This verse has already been linked to Romans by C. BRYAN, *A Preface to Romans*. Notes on the Epistle in Its Literary and Cultural Setting (New York 2000) 159.

¹² The references for these three prohibitions against praying are the same between the MT and the LXX. Cf. Dmitri’s remark to Alyosha, “Don’t pray for me, I’m not worth it” in F. DOSTOYEVSKY, *The Brothers Karamazov* (trans. C. Garnett; New York 1957) 150.

¹³ Rom 10,2; cf. Jer 7,16.21; 11,14-15.

verse, “Can vows and holy meat ward off evils from you? Or will you escape from these?”, we find Jeremiah’s description of Israel as an olive tree, which we shall consider below. Besides the emphatic insistence that Paul is praying for his people’s salvation at Rom 10,1, we may also note that the beginning and ending of this section on Israel contain prayer language related to the place of Israel in the divine economy ¹⁴.

Third, against Jeremiah’s word (Jer 7,29) that God has *rejected* his people — ἀπεδοκίμασεν κύριος καὶ ἀπώσατο τὴν γενεὰν τὴν ποιούσαν ταῦτα, the same verb appears in Rom 11,1 to assert that God has *not* rejected them — Λέγω οὖν, μὴ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ; μὴ γένοιτο ¹⁵. The catchword “reject” is found in exactly the same inflection in both texts, ἀπώσατο.

Fourth, against Jeremiah’s word that his people will fall (Jer 6,15b) — διὰ τοῦτο πεσοῦνται ἐν τῇ πτώσει αὐτῶν καὶ ἐν καιρῷ ἐπισκοπῆς αὐτῶν ἀπολοῦνται, εἶπεν κύριος, Rom 11,11 asserts that the chosen people have not stumbled so as to fall — Λέγω οὖν, μὴ ἔπαισαν ἵνα πέσωσιν; μὴ γένοιτο.¹⁶ Verbal links are the catchwords πίπτω (“fall”) and παίω (“stumble”) that are found in both texts. While I am not arguing for Paul’s conscious, intentional inversion of these Jeremiah texts, it may be noted here that Rom 11,11, which uses these two key words from Jer 6,15b while contradicting that text, begins its question with “I say, then” (λέγω οὖν). Perhaps this is marking an inversion from a previous text, as if the Romans text is signaling “In contrast to Jeremiah, I say then ...” ¹⁷.

Fifth, Rom 11,16-17 juxtaposes two metaphors for God’s people — the first fruits section of a lump of dough, then an olive tree with roots and branches. Most Romans commentators find nothing in Paul’s scriptures behind his unexpected assertion that if the first

¹⁴ Rom 9,3 (cf. Exod 32,32); 11,33-36.

¹⁵ Jer 7,29b (see also Lam 5,22); Rom 11,1.

¹⁶ Cf. also Jer 8,4 — Ὅτι τάδε λέγει κύριος Μὴ ὁ πίπτων οὐκ ἀνίσταται; — with Rom 11,11. Origen has already noticed the connection between Jer 8,4 and Rom 11,11 in his commentary (8.8.30-32; ed. C. Hammond Bammel 682).

¹⁷ Paul may be tapping into the introductory prophetic *topos* of the prophets, “It shall no more be said ... , but ...” (Isa 47,5; 62,4; Jer 3,16; 7,32; 16,14; 19,6; 23,7; 31,29).

fruits are holy then the whole lump becomes holy¹⁸. But in Jer 2,3, Israel is called the Lord's first fruits in a divine oracle. Then in what M. Fishbane has argued is a shift to the prophetic voice, these holy first fruits are described as being eaten, bringing guilt upon those who consume them. Fishbane shows how this text in Jeremiah is a reworking of Lev 22,14-16, a prohibition against laypeople consuming food consecrated by being offered to the priests¹⁹. The connection between Jeremiah and Romans are the catchwords ἅγιος, ἀρχὴ γεννημάτων in Jeremiah and ἀπαρχή in Romans, and a conceptual link of comprehensive inclusion, signaled by πάντες οἱ ἔσθοντες and πᾶσα πατριὰ οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ in Jer 2,3-4 and the φύραμα in Rom 11,16. Instead of Jeremiah's emphasis on the guilt of those who have eaten Israel, which Fishbane takes to be a reference to the military destruction of Israel by her enemies²⁰, or the waywardness of Israel, including her priests and teachers of the law, that follows in Jer 2,5-8, Jeremiah's metaphor is inverted to say that the first fruits make the whole lump holy. It is as if the Romans text disagrees with Jeremiah's exegesis of Lev 22,14-16. Jeremiah uses the priestly text to describe the guilt of those who consume Israel, guilt arising from the contaminating, "holy" char-

¹⁸ M. HARTUNG, "Die kultische bzw. agrartechnisch-biologische Logik der Gleichnisse von der Teighebe und vom Ölbaum in Röm 11.16-24 und die sich daraus ergebenden theologischen Konsequenzen", *NTS* 45 (1999) 129-130, and C.E.B. CRANFIELD, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh 1979) 563, offer no scriptural antecedents beyond the general priestly rules of the first fruits found in Num 15,17-21 and Lev 19,23-25. Hartung also mentions 1 Cor 7,12-16 as exemplifying the principle of sanctification Paul offers in Rom 11,16a ("Die kultische bzw. agrartechnisch-biologische Logik" 130). D.E. AUNE, "Distinct Lexical Meanings of ΑΠΑΡΧΗ in Hellenism, Judaism and Early Christianity", *Early Christianity and Classical Culture. Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (eds. J.T. FITZGERALD – T.H. OLBRICHT – L.M. WHITE) (NTSup 110; Leiden 2005) 121-122, notes the connection between Rom 11,16 and Num 15,20-21, but misses the possibility that Paul is inverting Jeremiah's use of first fruits in Jer 2,3.

¹⁹ M. FISHBANE, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford 1985) 300-304. I am indebted to J. Kaminsky for this reference.

²⁰ M. FISHBANE, *Biblical Interpretation*, 302. W. L. HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah 1. A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1–25* (Philadelphia, PA 1986) 85, also sees "military conquest" behind "eat" here. Holladay's connection of this text in Jeremiah to a similar use of first fruits in Hos 9,10 helps us see another first fruits text that Paul is inverting (ibid. 84).

acter of first fruits when wrongly consumed. But Paul focuses on the sanctifying power of the first fruits themselves. The holiness that inheres in the first fruits, which brings guilt to erring consumers in both Leviticus and Jeremiah, is viewed by Paul as potent to bring holiness to the whole batch of food from which the first fruits sample is taken. Holiness transferred to erring consumers who then become guilty is inverted in Romans 11,16 to holiness that passes from the first fruits to the whole lump from which the first fruits are taken, with no mention of guilt²¹. The possibility that Romans is performing an inverse allusion to Jeremiah is made more probable when one notices that the next image in Romans 11, the cultivated olive tree, is an allusion to the olive tree of Jeremiah 11 that gets burned up and possibly also echoes the description of Israel as a wild vine in Jeremiah 2.

Sixth, against Jeremiah's word that his people have become an olive tree that God will burn up, making its branches useless (Jer 11,16), Rom 11,17.23-24 assert that Israel is a cultivated olive tree whose excised branches will be readily grafted in again²². Jeremiah's use of the olive tree is based on Hos 14,7, a prophet that Paul also quotes in this section of Romans. While Rom 11,17-24 may simply be based on Hos 14,7, it is just as likely, in view of the connections between Romans 9–11 and Jeremiah 1–20 mentioned above, that the olive tree metaphor in Romans 11 is inverting Jer 11,16. This inversion might be prompted by Hos 14,7, which is a more positive picture of Israel as an olive tree than that offered in Jer 11,16. LXX Hos 14,7 begins by describing Israel's growing branches: πορεύσονται οἱ κλάδοι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσται ὡς ἑλαία κατὰ καρπός... This would help to explain why the metaphor in Romans 11,16.24 draws attention to the holy and natural branches of a cultivated (more fruitful) olive tree. This is also the place to acknowledge that

²¹ Holladay's (*Jeremiah 1*, 84-85) suggestion that Jer 2,3 matches his own emendation of Amos 6,1, in which those of Zion are "the pick of the first (fruits) of the nations, the cream of the crop of the house of Israel" is especially attractive for understanding how Paul may be playing with the *topos* of Israel as first fruits. While he wants to retain the language of first fruits for Israel (Rom 11,16), the realities of his missionary efforts lead him to suggest that the nations come in first, then the Jews (Rom 11,25-26).

²² This connection has already been observed by A. T. HANSON, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* (London 1974) 121-124, who suggests that Rom 11,17-24 offers a midrash on Jer 11,16-19.

the olive tree metaphor in Romans 11 represents another sort of inversion besides the literary reversal with the early chapters of Jeremiah. The Romans 11 portrait of the cultivated olive tree that receives wild branches grafted into it “subverts the prevailing practice among olive cultivators”, as Esler has shown so well²³.

Before presenting the verbal parallels in the olive tree intertextuality proposed as the sixth connection between Jeremiah and Romans 9–11, I offer two possibilities that are best grouped with the olive tree complex of intertextual links: Jeremiah’s picture of a *foreign* vine that turns to *bitterness* (Jer 2,21). There are no catchwords between the description of Israel as a vine that has gone awry, becoming a foreign or wild vine in Jer 2,21 and Romans 11. However, the description of this vine as foreign — נכרית in MT; ἄμπελος ἡ ἄλλοτρία in LXX— seems to be explicitly switched in Romans 11. For the olive tree metaphor in Romans 11 repeatedly emphasizes that the branches that have been cut off from the cultivated olive tree still retain their identity as belonging to that cultivated tree *by nature* (κατὰ φύσιν in 11,21 and οὗτοι οἱ κατὰ φύσιν ἐγκεντρισθήσονται τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐλαίᾳ in 11,24). Jer 2,21 exclaims how the choice vine has turned to bitterness — πῶς ἐστράφη εἰς πικρίαν. The word πιότης in Romans 11,17 may be a reaction to πικρία. In his discussion of the “reversals” that Deutero-Isaiah makes of Jeremiah, B. Sommer notes that often there is a common word both texts share. He also notes a case in which similar sounding words function as the catchword for such reversals; מִקָּיָה in Isa 54,2 picks up מִקָּיָה in Jer 10,20²⁴. It is possible that the reworking of Jeremiah’s olive tree metaphor in Romans 11 includes an alliterative move from Jeremiah’s “bitterness”, πικρία in LXX Jer 2,21, to the “fatness”, πιότης, in Rom 11,17²⁵.

The clear catchwords in the association of Jeremiah’s olive tree in Jeremiah 11 and Paul’s olive trees in Romans 11 are the feminine ἐλαία (Jer 11,16; Rom 11,17.24) and the plural κλάδοι (Jer 11,16; Rom 11,16.19.21). Just as we saw an inversion of the foreign vine to the olive branches that continue to belong to the cultivated olive

²³ P. F. ESLER, “Ancient Oleiculture and Ethnic Differentiation: The Meaning of the Olive-Tree Image in Romans 11”, *JSNT* 26 (2003) 103-124; quotation from 123.

²⁴ SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture* 39.

²⁵ LXX Jer 15,17 also has πικρία.

tree when comparing Jer 2:21 with Romans 11, so here we see an inversion between the branches that are useless and get burned up in Jer 11,16 and the branches that continue to be the branches that belong by nature to the tree that can easily be grafted back into it (Rom 11,24).

Seventh, in more consonant intertextuality with Jeremiah, there is a claim in Rom 11,32 that God has shut up all to disobedience that he might have mercy on all. We have already seen how God tells Jeremiah not to pray for mercy on the Jewish people (Jer 7,16; 11,14; 14,11-12), a prohibition Paul emphatically breaks (Rom 10,1). But in the restoration oracle of Jer 12,15-17, God promises to have mercy on his people's Gentile neighbors, provided they learn the ways of God's people and swear by God's name²⁶. Jeremiah's paragraph concludes by threatening total destruction on those among the nations who will not listen to God (Jer 12,17), a threat that is softened to the brief warning that unfaithful Gentiles can easily be cut off from the tree on to which they were grafted (Rom 11,22). The olive tree metaphor in Romans 11 seems to invert Jeremiah's own bleak portraits of divine judgment on Israel and the nations in this section of the prophet and agree more with the hopeful whisper that is audible in this section. Indeed, this restoration oracle of Jer 12,14-17 places God's people in some form of parity with the Gentiles, a relationship that Romans affirms while still asserting the Jewish people's advantages²⁷. With regard to the idea of showing mercy, then, traced through the word ἐλεέω, Romans 9-11 inverts Jeremiah's warnings against the Jewish people on the way to ending at a place very near to Jeremiah's promise of universal restoration held in tension with warning against unfaithfulness to the God of Israel.

While all these connections are not equally compelling, there is enough going on between Jeremiah 1-20 and Romans 9-11 to argue that W. D. Davies is wrong in rejecting Paul's use of Jer 11,16 in Romans 11. Davies's instincts are right that the olive tree metaphor is addressing anti-Semitism and showing that ethnic Jews do have an advantageous position over unfruitful Gentiles, but his rejection of Jer 11,16 is possibly flawed by a tacit assumption that

²⁶ HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah 1*, 391: "This passage offers an astonishing message of 'universal' restoration".

²⁷ See Rom 2,11; 3,1-2.29-30; 11,28-32.

Paul always employs images and terms from his scriptures to score the same points they do in their original contexts. The link to a Synagogue of the Olive in Rome that Davies also rejects may also be at work here, as well as a correction of Gentile pride by describing the Gentile olive branches as wild and hence unfruitful²⁸. My study of the relationship between Jeremiah 1–20 and Romans 9–11 does not silence the other echoes that exegetes have heard resonating in Paul’s olive tree metaphor. Indeed, given the way that Paul transforms the peace propaganda of imperial Rome in this letter, the olive branch’s signification of peace should not be overlooked²⁹. My argument in this article is that in Romans 9–11 some dissonant intertextuality is definitely happening in relation to Jeremiah 1–20. This thesis includes a claim that the olive tree metaphor in Rom 11,17-24 must be read alongside the olive tree metaphor of Jer 11,16.

II. The Anxiety of Influence

Verbatim quotations are one of the few ways one could argue for intentional inversion, or the conscious outworking of an anxiety of influence. In most of Romans 9–11 Paul does not quote from Jeremiah in this way, and in any event I am not identifying and cannot prove that the seven, mostly dissonant connections listed above between Jeremiah 1–20 and Romans 9–11 are conscious, intentional inversions. Still, we must ask what is going on between the

²⁸ W.D. DAVIES, “Paul and the Gentiles: A Suggestion concerning Romans 11:13-24”, *Jewish and Pauline Studies* (ed. W.D. DAVIES) (Philadelphia, PA 1984) 158-161; “In Jer 11:16-17 the olive becomes an object of the divine judgment — a motif alien to Paul’s purpose in Rom 11:17” (159). P. LAMPE (*From Paul to Valentinus. Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* [trans. M. Steinhauser; ed. M. D. JOHNSON; Minneapolis, MN 2003] 431 n. 10) offers CIG 9904; CIJ 1:281; 509 as evidence for a συναγωγή Ἐλαίας in Rome.

²⁹ On peace as a *theologoumenon* in Romans see K. HAACKER, “Der Römerbrief als Friedensmemorandum”, *NTS* 36 (1990) 25-41; idem, *The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Cambridge 2003) 45-53; as a transformation of imperial peace propaganda, *ibid.* 116-19. On the olive branch as a sign of peace, see M. KOZAKIEWICZ, “Appendix: The Headgear of the Female Statue”, *Subject and Ruler. The Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity* (ed. A. SMALL) (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement Series 17; Ann Arbor, MI 1996) 137, and Octavian’s coins in *Roman Imperial Coinage* I, 59 no. 252 pl. 5 and no. 253.

text of Jeremiah and the text of Romans. Those in the field of literature are sometimes more alert to this sort of dissonant intertextuality than we students of the New Testament are, who tend to look for quotations or positive allusions when we attempt to retrace Paul's exegesis. Purists among my readers have my permission to cringe at the following examples. Though their contexts are far removed from the New Testament's use of the Old Testament, I offer the following examples of the anxiety of influence, just so we can be more alert to it within the Christian canon of scripture. The "sacred parody" of the 17th century British poets, especially George Herbert, took secular conventions and inverted them or adapted them for sacred purposes. Jane Austen's "Northanger Abbey" parodies Gothic romance by making fun of characters' imaginations (such as they would be shown in Gothic romances) as she moves toward more realistic fiction. Similar phenomena occur in other genres: the impressionist Debussy quotes Wagner the romanticist and then introduces laughing sounds to show his rejection of such musical phrasing³⁰.

Harold Bloom's "The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry" suggests five ways in which authors display dissonant intertextuality in relation to antecedent texts. In his discussion of one of these ways, what Bloom calls "Daemonization or The Counter-Sublime", he writes, "So many songs of triumph, read close, begin to appear rituals of separation, that a wary reader may wonder if the truly strong poet ever has any antagonist beyond the self and its strongest precursor"³¹. Is there a sense in which Jeremiah is a strong, or the "strongest precursor" for Paul, against whom Paul is asserting his independence?

I will not allow my argument to rest on the *personae* of Paul and Jeremiah to explain the anxiety of influence Paul perhaps experienced regarding Jeremiah. But the biographical contours of these two messengers to the nations are remarkably similar³². Paul, a member of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11,1), designated apostle

³⁰ DEBUSSY, "Golliwogg's Cakewalk" (a movement from *Children's Corner*) quoting from WAGNER, *Tristan und Isolde*.

³¹ H. BLOOM, *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry* (London 1973) 110.

³² With special attention to Galatians, EASTMAN (*Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue*, 67-68, 76-84) highlights similarities in prophetic call, self-presentation and suffering that Paul shares with Jeremiah.

to the nations from his mother's womb, would find it dangerous en route to Jerusalem to cite Jeremiah the member of Benjamin who is designated prophet to the nations from his mother's womb, for Jeremiah is the prophet with connections to the house of Eli and Abiathar who relativizes the Jerusalem temple by equating it with the tabernacle at Shiloh³³. Paul is anxious for a better reception in Jerusalem than Jeremiah received³⁴. But these connections, tempting as they are within psychological analysis, have no place in an argument that is simply finding some dissonant intertextuality between Jeremiah 1–20 and Romans 9–11 while making no claim regarding Paul's intentions. Let us return to the literary comparison of Romans 9–11 with the opening chapters of Jeremiah.

III. Intertextuality That Avoids Quotation

We can fill out our understanding of the relationship between Romans 9–11 and these opening chapters of Jeremiah by returning to B. Sommer's work on intertextuality between Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah. Sommer's identification of "reversals" that Deutero-Isaiah employs seems to be the most helpful analogy for what is going on here between the text of Romans 9–11 and Jeremiah. Sommer documents how Deutero-Isaiah uses material from Jeremiah, including material from chapter 2 and chapter 10. These chapters are in the same section of Jeremiah that I am suggesting Romans 9–11 redemptively inverts³⁵. Sommer argues that Deutero-Isaiah, even with these reversals, "reinforces Jeremiah's position as a prophet, because in repeating Jeremiah's words in the form proper for his own day he brings them new validity"³⁶. One example he offers is the use of language from Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylon, telling them to settle, build houses and plant gardens in Babylon (Jer 29,4-6), which Isaiah 65 then inverts by using the same language for what will happen in Jerusalem (Isa 65,18-23). This sort of adaptation may be what is happening in Romans 9–11, a text so tenaciously certain of Israel's future salvation

³³ Jer 1,1.5; Gal 1,15-16; see Jer 7,1-15 and the discussion in J.D. LEVENSON, *Sinai and Zion* (San Francisco, CA 1985) 165-169.

³⁴ Rom 15,30-32; Jer 38,1-28.

³⁵ SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 36-40.

³⁶ SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 41.

that it inverts the language of judgment in Jeremiah 1–20 to communicate the contours of this future redemption.

Of course, Romans 9–11 has other relationships with Jeremiah beside redemptive inversions. Romans 9,21 echoes the potter story of Jeremiah 18. Indeed, Paul’s point in 9,21 that the potter is free to make different vessels from the same lump (φύραμα, the same word that is used to say how the first fruits sanctifies the whole lump in 11,16) is developed more in Jer 18,1-12 than it is in Isa 29,16, the text he ostensibly quotes. Isa 29,16a is linked in the targums by verbal parallels with Jer 18,6b, as Ross Wagner has shown, to suggest that Isaiah 29,16 was read alongside Jer 18,6³⁷. Why does Paul not quote from Jeremiah if Jeremiah is expressing his point about God’s freedom to form Israel as God wishes? Perhaps it is because the potter paragraph in Jeremiah 18 includes the calamity oracle against Judah and Jerusalem in verse 11. Paul could not risk anyone reading a quotation from Jeremiah on the potter and associating it with the prediction of evil upon Judah and Jerusalem. Just as Paul does not quote from blocks of the book of Isaiah that contain judgment oracles against Jerusalem and the Jewish nation³⁸, so perhaps the potter analogy in Romans 9 avoids quoting Jeremiah, the prophet of judgment whose book is framed by the fall of Jerusalem, when he is writing a letter to show that he is not against the Torah or its people, shortly before traveling to Jerusalem³⁹.

The advance that I seek to make in our understanding of the use of the scriptures in Romans is therefore to prompt consideration that even in places where the letter to the Romans does not quote scripture, it is wrestling intensely with scripture. Koch missed this by explaining away places like 1 Cor 1,31; 2 Cor 3,6 and 10,17, and claiming that Paul nowhere clearly quotes from Jeremiah⁴⁰.

³⁷ WAGNER, *Heralds of the Good News*, 70-71 n. 88.

³⁸ WAGNER, *Heralds of the Good News*, 344 n. 5: “The only major blocks of material in Isaiah from which Paul does not draw quotations or allusions in Romans are the pronouncements against the nations in Isaiah 13–23, the various oracles in chapters 30–35, and the historical narrative in chapters 36–39”. It should also be noted that the first two “blocks of material” listed include prophecies against Jerusalem (22,1-14) and against the Jewish nation (30,8-17). Paul may not explicitly quote from Jeremiah for the same reason that he does not quote from these sections of Isaiah that include warnings of judgment against God’s people.

³⁹ Jer 1,3; 46,3; Rom 3,1-2.21.31; 4,1-25; 7,12.14; 9,1-5; 15,30-32.

⁴⁰ KOCH, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*, 45.

Koch's explanation for why Paul does not quote from Jeremiah arises from his sense of the very limited role that Jeremiah played in the Judaism contemporary to Paul, an explanation that is questionable in view of the paucity of evidence we have for pre-70 first-century Judaism and the ample citations of Jeremiah that Koch admits in the rest of the NT⁴¹. The letters of Romans and 1 Corinthians wrestle with Jeremiah even without quoting him.

IV. The Lone Quote of Jeremiah in Romans 9–11

But there is one quotation from Jeremiah in Romans 9–11. At Romans 11,27 we see an example of what Fishbane and Sommer call “reprediction”, where a prophetic prediction is announced again. Here Paul quotes LXX Jer 38,33a (MT 31,33a) — αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη (“This is the covenant”). With ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν (“when I will forgive their sins”), Paul is clearly quoting Isa 27,9 (ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀμαρτίαν), but it is worth noting that the forgiveness of sins is at the end of Jeremiah's list of promises following the phrase “This is the covenant” that Paul quotes (see LXX Jer 38,34d — καὶ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι). While not all scholars of the Jewish scriptures are as ready to find “reprediction” as Fishbane and Sommer are, in light of the Hosea quotations in Rom 9,25-29 it appears that Paul can quote from the prophets in order to import a prediction into his own generation. Sommer notes how Deutero-Isaiah draws on chapters 30–33 of Jeremiah as the “richest mine” of Jeremiah's texts that he uses positively in reprediction⁴². Sommer shows how texts like Isa 42,5-9 and Isa 54,10 recall the language of MT Jer 31,31-36. While Deutero-Isaiah minimizes or ignores some extreme aspects of Jeremiah's new covenant language, he still seeks to show that his prophecies fit the general program of this section of Jeremiah⁴³. We have already observed that in Romans 9–11 there are

⁴¹ “Doch entspricht ihre Nichtbeachtung bei Paulus der offenbar recht geringen Rolle, die sie im zeitgenössischen Judentum gespielt haben” (KOCH, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*, 46; citations of Jeremiah in NT and early Christian literature, *ibid.* n. 11).

⁴² SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 46.

⁴³ SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 46-50.

some “reversals” or redemptive inversions from the first third of the book of Jeremiah that are similar to some “reversals” found in Deutero-Isaiah. Now in Romans 11,27 we see a reprediction of the new covenant in a way analogous to Deutero-Isaiah’s edited repredictions. The new covenant language of Jeremiah surfaces alongside a redeemer passage from Isaiah that is inverted to say that the redeemer comes out of Zion, a change that Sommer might call “historical recontextualization” and that Wagner calls “a fundamental interpretive shift” couching Isa 59,20 in a Diaspora perspective⁴⁴. All this is simply to offer evidence for my point that the text of Romans 9–11 makes use of Jeremiah in ways very similar to how Deutero-Isaiah uses Jeremiah. Though there are no verbatim quotations of Jeremiah until Rom 11,27, these chapters in Romans reconfigure the largely negative portrait of Israel in Jeremiah 1–20. The allusive, redemptive inversions give way to a positive reprediction when Paul finally does quote from a more positive section of Jeremiah in Romans 11,27.

In light of the quotation from LXX Jer 38,33a (MT Jer 31,33a) in Romans 11,27a one might be able to claim that the inversions of material from Jeremiah 1–20 are simply following the inversions Jeremiah himself offers in his hopeful scroll, centered on MT chapters 30–33 (LXX chapters 37–40), but actually comprising MT chapters 26–36 (LXX chapters 33–43)⁴⁵. This is a scroll of hopeful words that Jeremiah is told to write (MT Jer 30,1-3; LXX Jer 37,1-3). The reversal, the dissonance in intratextuality within Jeremiah, is due to God. Jeremiah is dismayed by the shift of YHWH’s will from definite judgment to a hopeful future (MT Jer 32,24-25; LXX Jer 39,24-25)⁴⁶. In personal correspondence, Holladay comments on this shift: “It is fascinating that in all this there is no trace of Jeremiah’s saying ‘I *misunderstood* God in all those years in which I set forth his judgment,’ nor of accusing God of *deceiving* him with

⁴⁴ SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 52-54; WAGNER, *Heralds of the Good News*, 284.

⁴⁵ This suggestion was made to me by T.D. Still on November 24, 2002. W.L. HOLLADAY guided me to follow this suggestion further in a letter of March 2, 2004.

⁴⁶ HOLLADAY, *Jeremiah 2*, 22-23 (dates the hopeful scroll to 597 and suggests that Baruch wrote chapters 26 and 36 to bracket the scroll) 206-212, 220 (gives exegesis of sections of the hopeful scroll that contain the reversal that YHWH is showing towards the Judean people).

regard to judgment (indeed he accuses God of deceive [*sic*] the *optimists*, 4:10), nor of trying to persuade Baruch to suppress that earlier, judgmental scroll that became the core of chapters 1–20. It is all out there in this awesome divine shift”⁴⁷.

V. The Reconfiguration of Scripture in Romans 9–11

The exegesis of scripture in Romans 9–11 is not simply a recitation of proof texts to support Paul’s understanding of the mystery of Israel, as if all he needed to do were enter these proof texts into his computer as an elaborate password that will give him a complete purchase on God’s plan for Israel. Whether intentional or not in the letter’s composition, a reader’s recognition of the reversals of Jeremiah 1–20 provide increased understanding of these central chapters in Romans and the whole letter’s argument.

The significance of these chapters’ relationship to Jeremiah, encapsulated in the inversion of the olive tree whose branches are burned up into the cultivated olive tree with plenty of fatness, whose branches are cut off but can easily be re-grafted onto the tree, is that Paul’s positive approach to corporeal Israel is underscored. It becomes very difficult to view Israel here as simply a re-defined Israel, a cipher for the church. The chapters offer a reading of Jeremiah that bring one to the vision of God’s mercy even now (accepting with Barth the second $\nu\upsilon\upsilon$ in Rom 11,31) on Paul’s kinsfolk according to the flesh⁴⁸. Baxter and Ziesler’s exegetical in-

⁴⁷ HOLLADAY, letter of March 2, 2004, his emphases.

⁴⁸ The external evidence is fairly strong, with \aleph B D*, but I do admit that the significant witnesses \mathcal{P} ⁴⁶ and 1739 lack it. K. BARTH, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. E.C. Hoskyns; London 1933; reprint ed., 1980) 420, renders 11,31 as “even so have these also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shewn to you they also may now obtain mercy” and comments on the second “now”: “What can this mean, but that now — the eternal ‘Now’ which de-thrones ‘Here’ but exalts ‘There’, and displays both ‘Here’ and ‘There’ the freedom and the majesty of God — now the elect are sureties for the reprobate, that they, bearing the burden of the elect, may participate also in the mercy which belongs to the elect. And so the new invisible title of all humanity is made manifest in the ‘Now’ of revelation” (421). BRYAN follows BARTH here, quoting his *Church Dogmatics* 2.2.305 regarding the same verse: “What this striking second $\nu\upsilon\upsilon$ (*sic*) makes quite impossible for Christian anti-Semitism (he that has ears to hear, let him hear) is the relegation of the Jewish question into the realm of eschatology” (BRYAN, *A Preface to Romans* 183, see also 193).

instincts about the function of the olive tree in Romans 11 are confirmed by this broader study of the dissonant intertextuality between Romans 9–11 and Jeremiah. The olive tree example in Rom 11,17-24 has as its main point the “rejuvenation” of ethnic Israel, as do the redemptive inversions of the first scroll of Jeremiah ⁴⁹.

One wonders if the only verbatim quotation from Jeremiah in this section, LXX Jer 38,33a in Rom 11,27, is offered as a resolution to the tensions that the inversions have been arousing in the preceding paragraphs of Romans 9–11. Finally, the letter to the Romans openly joins the prophet it has been allusively inverting and with one voice they declare: “and this will be my covenant with them, when I forgive their sins” ⁵⁰.

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SUMMARY

This article presents seven points of focused dissonance between Jeremiah and Romans, by identifying how Romans 9–11 inverts the judgment language of Jeremiah 1–20 against Judah. Without claiming that the inversions in Romans 9–11 are intentional, the article argues that the inversions of this section of Jeremiah are similar to the inversions that Deutero-Isaiah performs on this same section of Jeremiah, identified by B. Sommer. The inversions of Jeremiah that occur in Romans 9–11 highlight these chapters’ positive stance toward corporeal, ethnic Israel, and provide another argument against interpreting “all Israel” in Rom 11,26 as the church.

⁴⁹ A. G. BAXTER - J. A. ZIESLER, “Paul and Arboriculture: Romans 11.17-24”, *JSNT* 24 (1985) 25-32, especially 29.

⁵⁰ An earlier version of this paper was presented on November 24, 2002 in the Pauline Epistles section of the AAR-SBL meeting in Toronto. I am indebted to all those who offered comments there. J. Kaminsky and W. L. Holaday read the paper later and contributed very helpful comments. All the mistakes and weaknesses of this paper remain my own responsibility.